

AMTC NEWS



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AMTC & Associates Newsletter

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Pleased to Partner with SRAE Grant Awardees



**Angela Turner,
Principal**

“The good news is that thanks to the work we have been doing over the past 20 years, we have observed through outcome data that youth have demonstrated a desire to postpone sexual activity.”

We often hear about health risks associated with sexually risky behaviors, such as the risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Although sexually active individuals can reduce the risk of STIs with preventive measures, such as condoms, young people do not consistently use them nor do they always use them correctly. Avoiding sex altogether is the only sure way to avoid its associated risks, such as STIs, pregnancy or other regrets. This is why providing risk avoidance education to young people about non-marital sex is important.

This information can include learning about emotional and health issues, including misperceptions. For example, many sexually active youth are surprised to learn that the majority of teenagers in this country are not having sex; however, in some of the high-risk communities where we work many teens are sexually active. This demonstrates a disparity between at-risk communities versus those in the rest of the country.

The good news is that thanks to the work we have been doing over the past 20 years, we have observed through outcome data that youth have demonstrated a desire to postpone sexual activity. We have accomplished this by providing youth with correct information and support systems. This holds true across communities, whether in West Virginia or in urban St. Louis.

We will expand this work with three of our partners: Mission West Virginia, serving seven counties in West Virginia; Trinity Church, Harlem, New York; and Opportunities Industrialization Centers of South Florida (OIC-SFL), Broward County, Florida.

I am excited to work with each of these partners because . . .

MISSION WEST VIRGINIA (MWV) has the ability to cost-effectively take programs to scale. When MWV partners with a particular county and school district, the staff are all-in and their well-established support system truly makes a difference. The relationship that AMTC has with MWV as the lead organization consistently results in performance outcomes that are attained. As an evaluator, that always excites me!

TRINITY CHURCH in Florida is a partner we have worked with since 2006, and we look forward to building a relationship with Trinity Church in Harlem. They have an amazing staff that is personally committed to the work. In every classroom setting, it is clear that students connect with educators and their support system. Their amazing leadership team enables programs to be implemented with fidelity.

OIC is one of AMTC & Associates' earliest clients. They recognize that the onset of issues that families face is critical to a future success sequence, exactly what SRAE legislation addresses. OIC has a youth and a workforce development department. I am excited to observe how their staff will introduce the success sequences in conjunction with their education and training.

AMTC will assist the above-referenced partners by coordinating effective training programs and measuring performance through pre-and post-surveys. We will also provide technical assistance and a re-tooling program model if outcomes are not realized in accordance with the logic model. Through these measures, we will do all we can to help ensure that our partners are successful so that young people are making better decisions about their sexual choices and future life goals.

Angela Turner, Principal

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Tori Childs,
Field Research
Associate

Providing Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)

Teenagers who engage in risky behaviors, sexual or otherwise, often do not see the long-term consequences of those actions. It not only affects youth but our entire community. For those reasons and more, the Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children Youth and Families (ACYF) sponsors grants for organizations to deliver Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE). According to ACYF, "The purpose of the SRAE program is to fund projects to implement sexual risk avoidance education that teaches participants how to voluntarily refrain from non-marital sexual activity."¹ Programs must be evidence-based and serve populations that need services the most.

Torri Childs, Field Research Associate for AMTC, notes that these populations include but are not limited to individuals from the juvenile justice system, residential treatment facilities, runaway and homeless shelters, and those in and aging-out of foster care. Youth in poverty and sexual minorities (LGBTQ) are also served.

Individuals who are served by these programs often face multiple issues. ACYF recognizes that these factors are complex; therefore, it allows grantees to use funds to provide case management and referrals to support services in community-based organizations.

AMTC is pleased to partner with three organizations that were awarded an SRAE grant:

- **Mission West Virginia** will provide SRAE programs in seven southern West Virginia counties throughout the state. It will serve the above-referenced youth and includes two sub-awardees, Rainelle Medical Center and CASE West Virginia (Community Action of Southeast West Virginia). Over a three-year period, 1350 youth will be served.
- **Trinity Church** will provide SRAE programs in Harlem, New York. Trinity will serve the above-referenced youth, also with a focus on African-Americans and Latinos. Over a three-year period, 1600 youth will be served.
- **Opportunities Industrialization Centers of South Florida (OIC-SFL)** will implement the SRAE in Broward County, Florida. It will target ten zip codes with the highest teen birth rates in the county. In addition to serving the above-referenced youth, OIC-SFL will focus its efforts on addressing substance abuse. Over a three-year period, 1375 youth will be served.

Although each organization is unique and addresses the specific needs of its regions, there are commonalities. Each will use the same evidence-based curricula. *Relationship Smarts PLUS* will be used for middle school youth and *Love Notes* will be used for high school youth. According to Childs, the curricula focuses on healthy relationships, goal setting, resisting sexual coercion, recognizing dating violence, as well as preventing youth risk behaviors.

Staff from the three organizations and AMTC Field Research Associate, Torri Childs, are excited to start programming in January:

- **Melissa Ballard, SRAE Program Manager for Mission West Virginia**
I love the broader approach of empowering teens to make healthy relationship decisions, learn better communication skills, as well as providing tools to prevent teen pregnancy and avoiding other risky behaviors. This curriculum is fun, engaging, interactive and relevant, and I know the students will benefit from it!
- **Crystal Agnew, SRAE Project Director for Trinity Church**
We are so excited about providing SRAE programming in Harlem, NYC. As we met with local schools and community agencies, we realized that there is a gap in service for this type of program. Because Harlem is located within Manhattan, it is often overlooked. But as you look closer at the zip code level data, we have identified some communities that desperately need services. And we are ready to do just that!
- **Arlene Connelly, Director of Communications & Strategic Partnerships for OIC-SFL**
OIC of South Florida is committed to training and helping individuals realize economic self-sufficiency. We are pleased to be awarded the SRAE grant. This funding opportunity allows us to further expand our reach in the area of teen sexual health and guide vulnerable youth into modifying high risk behavior and engage in a success sequence that can increase their opportunity to realize their life and career potential.

• Torri Childs, Field Research Associate for AMTC & Associates

I'm excited about this program. It's not solely focused on pregnancy prevention; it takes youth as a whole into consideration and focuses on many aspects of their lives that they need education on. It teaches them how to set goals, the importance of having a plan for their future and how to avoid risky behaviors. In essence, the program is setting them up for success.

¹U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: Administration for Children & Families: Administration on Children, Youth and Families. *Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Program: HHS-2016-ACYF-1197.*

– FEATURED ASSOCIATES –



RYAN ADOMAVICH, Evaluation Associate

• **What are your primary functions at AMTC?**

My main function involves working closely with Milwaukee County on the Pathways for Fathers and Families Project. My primary duties involve working with the project director and my fellow teammates, Sara Woods and our Principal Angie Turner to provide quality assurance, technical assistance and coaching to the numerous partners and service providers involved in the project. I also work with AMTC's numerous Teen Pregnancy Prevention clients to provide training and technical assistance on our data collection system, the Online Participant Tracking System. I assist my fellow teammates, Melanie Porterfield and Torri Childs, with both output and outcome reports for each client.

• **How do you help clients grow and sustain their organization?**

I stress the importance of the work and the data that goes into it. The work they do and the data they provide will contribute to future funding opportunities! Great outcomes cannot be ignored and if we work together to do the work properly and efficiently, our work should be able to continue through different avenues and funding streams.

• **What do you find meaningful about your work?**

In the end, I hope the funders and the community sees the great work that we are providing. When I hear someone express appreciation for the work we do and the time we put into our projects, it inspires me to keep going!

• **Could you share something interesting about yourself outside of the work environment?**

I am a huge horror movie fanatic and I have been since I was a child! I love Taco Bell and Sausage Egg McMuffins from McDonalds. Fortunately, my wife is a dietician and only allows me to eat that stuff every once in a while!



SARA WOODS, Senior Evaluation Associate

• **What are your primary functions at AMTC?**

My main areas are working closely with the Milwaukee Fatherhood Pathways program and specifically with their impact evaluation. I also assist with program quality assurance for multiple Department of Labor Reentry programs in Miami, Florida, and St. Louis, Missouri. I also coordinate the survey work for AMTC & Associates.

• **How do you help clients grow and sustain their organization?**

I have 11 years of experience working with survey collection and quality assurance. Through these two areas, I feel that our clients are able to tell "their program story" to the federal government, who throughout the years have increasingly been focused on quantitative data.

• **What do you find meaningful about your work?**

I absolutely love forming a bond with our clients and making sure we work together to monitor and improve programming. "Be the joy you wish to see in the world": I try to live by that every day because whether it is someone you meet for two seconds or have known your whole life, no one benefits from negativity.

• **Could you share something interesting about yourself outside of the work environment?**

My husband and I are expecting our second child in April 2017!