



AMTC

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News

“Successful grant writing is built on producing measurable results. Providing specific numbers builds confidence in funders that an organization will carry out what it proposes.”

— ANGELA TURNER

The Key to Successful Grant Writing

Grants are critically important to our clients. As clients address complex issues in creative ways, grant funds allow them to do even more by expanding programs and building capacity—thereby positively changing lives and communities.

We are privileged to assist many of our clients in the grant-writing process, by providing them evidence-based program development materials and tools for their proposals. Since 1997, we’ve helped implement 142 grant programs in more than 250 communities, leveraging more than \$390 million in funded programs. We owe these accomplishments to building strong relationships and serving alongside our partners.

We’ve helped our clients build capacity by aligning their goals with the objectives set forth by funders and by doing what’s best for the individuals they serve. We’ve worked closely to map out program models, reinforce community partnerships, and implement performance and outcome measurements. This enables partners to track and report on their impact.

Successful grant writing is built on producing measurable results.

Providing specific numbers instead of vague descriptions builds confidence in funders that an organization will carry out what it proposes. A “Logic Model” is a tool that serves these purposes well (*see page 2*).

The best grant proposals require an investment of time and thorough preparation. Occasionally, though, the need may arise to complete and submit a grant within 30 days; in that case, see our list of essential tools (*on page 3*). And don’t miss the top “do’s and don’ts” for grant writing, compiled from what I’ve learned over the years. It is a pleasure to share our expertise and experiences and to support our partners throughout the grant cycle. If AMTC & Associates can do anything for your organization, please don’t hesitate to let us know.

Angela M. Turner

Angela Turner
Principal



AMTC News

Joshua Becker, Writer & Editor

4465 N. Oakland Avenue
Suite 200
Milwaukee, WI 53211
Phone: (414) 316-4530
Fax: (414) 316-4545

AMTCASSOCIATES.COM



Does AMTC write **GRANTS?**

People often view AMTC & Associates as a grant-writing service because so many of our clients receive tremendous grant awards. Although it is true that we have superb writers on our team, we do not take on clients who are solely looking to have a grant written. AMTC partners with organizations who need evaluation throughout the duration of a grant cycle. This includes comprehensive services such as program planning, formative and process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and dissemination of program results. These tools, among others, prepare our clients to write effective grants and—ultimately—to have a better likelihood of receiving funding.

Evaluation is Key

Evaluation is a strategic part of grant writing, a process that AMTC associates understand well. In fact, before AMTC Principal Angela Turner began her own company, she spent much of her early career working in the planning departments for two regional workforce boards in South-eastern Wisconsin. In this capacity, she gained great insight into the art of writing a successful grant and how evaluation is integral:

“I learned the importance of using evaluation systems to study implementation and document outcomes, successes, and challenges. I learned how to prepare detailed budgets and justify each and every cost in an agency.”

Tell the Story

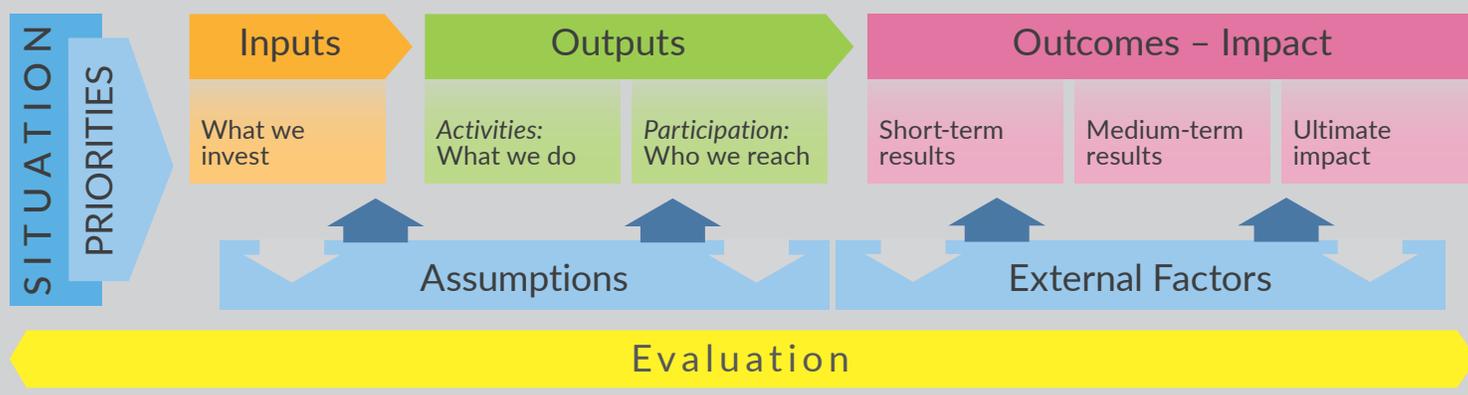
Today, Turner and associates utilize this background knowledge to provide evidence-based evaluation systems and measurements for clients. This allows clients to incorporate data-driven models into their grant writing, thereby making their proposals stronger. “You need to tell a story,” noted Turner. “You need to convince funders that their investment will produce results.”

A Good Model for Success

That’s where AMTC can help. We collaborate with organizations to improve programming with sustained outcomes and data-driven results; in turn, this evidence is documented in grants for investors to make informed decisions. “It all

The Logic Model

Logic Models such as this help organizations think through evaluative processes, which puts them in a good position for future grant writing. (Based on the Logic Model of the University of Wisconsin - Extension, <http://slideplayer.com/slide/4174710/>)



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begins with performance measurements, ongoing evaluation, and a good program model,” said Turner.

In particular, Turner turns to Logic Models as a way to think through evaluative processes and to strengthen support for grantees (see sample on page 2). Logic Models are research-based systems that function, in a sense, like roadways. By using research-based interventions and programming models, organizations have a clearer path to their destination (i.e., goals).

Turner emphasized, “Logic Models give me the framework to think critically and test my ideas.” In other words, with these models in place, organizations can work through processes logically rather than based on intuition. This provides essential information to include in grants.

“Logic Models
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A Client's Experience

Take, for example, a longstanding AMTC client, the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee**. This organization has an entire department devoted to planning and has utilized AMTC evaluative services and systems to inform their grant writing as well as their programming.

“Ultimately, if an organization is building performance measurements and process/implementation evaluation into their program design, they will always be ready to write a grant,” Turner explained. AMTC associates are experts in evaluation; as a result, our clients are able to present their grant proposals with strong, evidence-based outcomes. ■

Can you *Write a Grant* in 30 days?

Is it possible to write a grant within 30 days? Sure, most anything is “possible.”

But is it manageable or likely to be successful? That depends on whether an organization already has an established program, with strong systems and processes in place, long beforehand. This includes a solid program model developed over time, along with the background knowledge and tools to write a grant. Then not only is writing a grant in 30 days doable, but it can have a high likelihood of success.

It's best not to wait until the last minute, but sometimes a grant will be due within 30 days of its announcement. If a quick turnaround is necessary, be prepared with these essential tools. (Please note, these suggestions are not all-inclusive but highlight only a few important components.)

• A Written Program Design

Be specific about what your program entails, including (but not limited to) how the program will affect the target population and how many individuals will be served. Be clear about how the program aligns with goals, both practically and theoretically. Use previous evidence that supports using the program design. Include the “nuts

and bolts,” like schedules, specific lesson plans, materials, etc.

• A Firm Commitment from Collaborators/Partners

Make sure collaborating partners write a “letter of commitment” or a “memorandum of understanding” (MOU). Not only does this formally establish a relationship, but it also lends credibility to the grant.

• Organizational Chart, Job Descriptions, and Resumes

Note the staff members involved, their expertise, and how they function so that the program design runs at peak performance.

• Logic Model

Ensure that the program model is established with evidence-based best practices, based on research and curricula that has proven impactful in previous cycles.

• Know the True Costs

Be as exact and comprehensive as possible. Funders want organizations that are prudent and accountable with awarded monies.

• Data Systems and Evaluators

Having tools to assess and measure growth during the entire grant cycle is essential, along with having people assigned to carry out these duties. Assessments must be woven into the fabric of the entire grant process, not just at the end of the cycle.

* Still worth repeating: *do not wait until the grant is announced to begin implementing these systems.* *

Get to know AMTC's Principal

Angela Turner



What was the impetus for beginning your own company?

I loved my work as Lead Planner at the local workforce board in Milwaukee. We were launching one-stop job centers and implementing welfare reform efforts. Had I not had my fourth child and needed greater flexibility, I am not sure I would have chosen to go on my own. But it was the best career move of my life!

When was AMTC established?

It was formed in 1997. My first contract was a Title V teen pregnancy prevention grant with the State of Wisconsin. Current AMTC associate Ann Wolter was the Project Coordinator at the State who oversaw that contract! This led to a close working relationship with Milwaukee Public Schools. This relationship continues today through one of our clients, the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee**. Another early client was **OIC of Greater Milwaukee**, leading to collaborations that continue today with **OIC of America**, **OIC of South Florida**, the **American Indian OIC**, and **Summit Academy OIC**.

Briefly, how has AMTC grown to where it is today?

AMTC started with providing technical assistance and capacity building for teen pregnancy prevention. We quickly expanded our family focus and added healthy relationship and marriage education, fatherhood, offender reentry, substance abuse and mental health, and workforce program evaluation. We added new

partnerships with Ph.D. researchers and universities to expand our evaluation services. Today we have 24 associates assisting clients with grant implementation.

What AMTC accomplishments make you proud?

I am most proud of the long-term partnerships with clients. Many have collaborated with us for years, with several having started between 2004 and 2006. They have sustained and grown their family programs side by side with us. I am also proud of our staff and consultants. Most have been with me for over ten years. This is a testament to the work we do. It is rewarding to see our clients provide such important services.

What are your hopes for the future of AMTC?

My hope is that we remain a trusted partner with current clients, and more. If you were to ask me what I want to be doing in five years, I'd say exactly what I am doing today!

What are your personal interests?

I love to spend time with my family. We have great trips together and are planning a trip to Europe this summer. I also love interior design and gardening. I have four children and three stepchildren. The light of my life is my daughter, Sarah. She is in a new home that provides 24-hour care. I visit her six days a week and write portions of grants there. This is nothing new for Sarah. My children grew up with this understanding: do not bother mom during grant writing. She is busy!

Top Tips for Grant Writing:

Do write a grant with individuals who know your program exceptionally well.

Do make sure that the lead grant writer possesses clear and concise writing skills.

Do have the proposal written and give it to three separate individuals to read at least seven days prior to the due date; a fresh set of eyes will help with feedback.

Do make sure the organization is qualified to meet all the grant's requirements. Use those "wins" to build a track record of success. (Falling short of an important qualification could jeopardize the future with a particular funder.)

Angie's Do's & Don'ts of GRANT WRITING

Avoid These Common Mistakes:

Don't miss any of the funder's expectations by assuming your program already adequately fits, "as is," with the requirements in the grant announcement. Rarely can a square peg fit in a round hole!

Don't promise results that you cannot realistically deliver; funders will expect you to deliver.

Don't take budgetary considerations lightly.

Don't begin the grant writing process only when the grant announcement is made public. Anticipate when the grant will be announced (it's not a mystery), and plan long beforehand. Others know when a grant is coming down the pipeline. If you start planning when the announcement is posted, you are already behind schedule.