



**EMPOWER
MISSOURI**

121ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

November 15th & 16th, 2022

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotels, Jefferson City, MO

WELCOME ADVOCATES!

Empower Missouri began over 120 years ago as an annual conference. In 2022 we are gathering yet again to develop the powerful relationships and deepen the skills we will need to advance evidence based public policy to end poverty in Missouri. 13% of our neighbors in Missouri are in poverty, including over 17% of our state's kids. Thousands more struggle to provide food, stable housing, medicine, and other basic needs for their family. This is unacceptable. We know the policy solutions which can end this suffering and struggle, and working together we can ease the burden our neighbors face.

This year we are focusing on the entirety of a person's experience, including yours. None of us are just one thing, we are all a product of our experiences and community. The last few years have been long and each of us has experienced it in new and different ways. We hope you'll leave the Summit with renewed energy, knowledge, and connections to help sustain you until we can gather again. We have been thoughtful and intentional as we have planned every minute of our time together. Part of that planning includes special touches in your Empower Missouri bag, including a limited edition 5x7 print of artwork we commissioned just for the participants at this event. Our work won't stop until everyone in Missouri has the support they need to reach their own version of their full potential and fulfill their goals. It will take us all.

Thank you for joining us and taking this journey with us. If this is your first time at our Summit, we are so glad you took the time to be with us. Please talk to our staff about ways to stay connected and continue the work after we part. If you've been with us a long time we are so excited to spend time with you again, thank you for your dedication to our community. When we each do better, we all do better.

Sarah Owsley
Advocacy Director, Empower Missouri

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

SPRING FRIDAY FORUMS

Mark your calendars now for our spring Friday Forums! These virtual lunchtime sessions bring in experts from around the state and country to discuss important issues facing Missouri. Spring dates include:

- January 6th
- February 3rd
- March 3rd
- April 14th
- May 5th

All Friday Forums are held at 12:00 PM via Zoom. Topics will be announced soon, visit www.EmpowerMissouri.org/Friday-Forums for more information.



PROGRAM

EMPOWER MISSOURI'S
2022 ANTI-POVERTY
ADVOCATES SUMMIT

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH

REGISTRATION

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Magnolia Ballroom Vestibule

WELCOME KEYNOTE & LUNCH

Toriano Porter, *The Kansas City Star*
Editorial Board

12:00 - 1:30 PM

Magnolia Ballroom

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

1:45 - 2:45 PM

For session descriptions and locations,
please see pages 5-7

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

3:00 - 4:00 PM

For session descriptions and locations,
please see pages 5-7

COALITION WORKING GROUPS

4:00 - 5:00 PM

For coalition descriptions and meeting
locations, please see pages 8-9

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

5:00 - 6:00 PM

Capitol View Room

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH

KEYNOTE & BREAKFAST

Sheena Meade, *The Clean Slate Initiative*

8:30 - 10:00 AM

Magnolia Ballroom

BREAKOUT SESSION 3

10:15 - 11:15 AM

For session descriptions and locations,
please see pages 5-7

LUNCH

11:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Magnolia Ballroom

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

12:00 - 1:30 PM

For session descriptions and locations,
please see pages 5-7

COALITION WORKING GROUPS

1:45 - 3:00 PM

For coalition descriptions and meeting
locations, please see pages 8-9



THANK YOU

TO OUR SUMMIT SPONSORS

COMMUNITY SPONSORS



FASTDEMOCRACY
Be informed. Be effective. Be social



StateLineStrategies
GOVERNMENTAL CONSULTANTS
TOPEKA | KANSAS CITY | JEFFERSON CITY

SMALL BUSINESS SPONSORS



**STERLING
BANK**



MISSOURI CAN
Community Action Network

MOScout

NONPROFIT BREAKOUT SPONSORS



HOST COMMITTEE SPONSORS

Central Bank

Criminal Justice Ministry

Missouri KidsFirst

Rise Community
Development

KEYNOTE

SPEAKERS

TUESDAY KEYNOTE - TORIANO PORTER



Toriano Porter is a national award-winning opinion writer for the Kansas City Star Editorial Board. A native of St. Louis, Toriano has called Kansas City home since 2007. He is a three-time author, distinguished motivational speaker and dedicated mentor to young people in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

WEDNESDAY KEYNOTE - SHEENA MEADE



Sheena Meade is the executive director of the Clean Slate Initiative (CSI). CSI is a national bipartisan organization that builds state-based coalitions to pass legislation that automates the expungement of eligible arrest and conviction records.

Before being selected as the organization's first executive director, Sheena served in various leadership roles focused on building long-term, sustainable change for communities.

As a criminal justice program officer at Galaxy Gives, she helped develop and lead a Criminal Justice Fellowship program that helps grantees hone professional skills to build stronger, more impactful organizations.

Sheena has also served as the director of strategic partnerships at the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC) and senior advisor to the Second Chances Florida Campaign. In those roles, she developed the blueprints for fundraising, events, and grassroots organizing that helped win the landmark ballot initiative that restored voting rights for Floridians who have completed all of the terms of their sentence.

Sheena, who has been directly impacted by the criminal legal system, is a mother of five, proud wife, organizer, optimist, and leader of a national organization committed to ensuring meaningful opportunities for all, regardless of past records.

SESSION 1 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH ● 1:45-2:45 PM

UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CLEAN SLATE IN MISSOURI

Presented by: Lindsey Baker & Molly Webster,
Missouri Budget Project

Location: Capitol View Room

Across the country, states have enacted Clean Slate, or automatic criminal record expungement, policies. In 2021, less than 1% of Missourians eligible for record expungement received relief due to the high barriers currently associated with seeking expungement. In this breakout session we will discuss the economic impact of Clean Slate in Missouri: potential implementation costs, employment outcomes and wage gains associated with expungement, and proposed economic gains for the state of Missouri.

TENANT'S RIGHT TO COUNSEL

Presented by: Candace Ladd, Heartland Center for
Jobs and Freedom

Location: Tulip Room

In December 2021, tenants and workers in Kansas City came together to advocate for Tenant's Right to Counsel, a transformative new law that guarantees an attorney to every tenant in eviction court. With the eviction and housing affordability crisis impacting every city in the United States, the stakes have never been higher. This workshop will cover how tenants fought and won the strongest, most inclusive Right to Counsel in the country, the importance of a just implementation, and why cities and states need to pass Right to Counsel locally.

FOOD INSECURITY AND OLDER ADULTS: RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

Presented by: Jay Hardenbrook, AARP, and Cheryl Gibson,
Kansas City University Medical Center

Location: Rose Room

KU Medical Center has been conducting statewide research on SNAP access and SNAP usage among older adults who are food insecure. The research project findings will be presented during this workshop. Additionally, policy and advocacy opportunities that directly relate to the findings of the research will be discussed.

SESSION 2 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH ● 3:00-4:00 PM

HOW AUTOMATED EXPUNGEMENT HELPS MISSOURI'S SMALL BUSINESSES

Presented by: Shea Zwerver, Flagger Force

Location: Capitol View Room

Clean Slate allows employers to tap into a vast, underutilized, diverse, loyal and productive workforce - critical to driving inclusive growth post-pandemic, and more important than ever in the ongoing workforce shortage (with 11 million+ vacant positions). Hear directly from a business owner stationed in Pennsylvania who works in multiple states.

THE STATE OF WORKING MISSOURI

Presented by: Gina Aitch, Missouri Budget Project

Location: Tulip Room

Missouri Budget Project will present findings from their “State of Working Missouri” report that was done in partnership with Missouri Jobs with Justice. The presentation highlights barriers that prevent Missouri workers from obtaining financial and economic security. State policy recommendations that support workers and provide opportunities for working families to thrive will also be presented. Low wages, unemployment, childcare, paid sick and family leave, healthcare, and collective bargaining rights are among the topics that will be discussed.

POWER ROLE PLAY: A LOW STAKES PRACTICE FOR A HIGH STAKES REALITY!

Presented by: Cara Pugh, Arleen Vargas, Charlene Mack, and La'Sharral Fields, Innovate Public Schools

Location: Rose Room

Power waits for no one! Jump right into a power role play to put yourself on a trajectory to win policy campaigns that our region so deeply needs. This one hour session will agitate organizers, leaders, and advocates who are ready for the next level of power building. This training is an opportunity to try new tactics, engage skills learned in previous spaces, and think on your toes as we prepare to secure a hypothetical win via role play. The hypothetical win in this session, leads to an increased probability of a win in the real world for issues that we value. A low stakes practice for a high stakes reality! And this year in Missouri, the stakes are extremely high! Join us, and exponentially expand your impact by providing the space to integrate learnings into action, so that you lead with power and impact the moment you walk in the door.

MASTERING LEGISLATIVE BILL TRACKING AND ADVOCACY USING FASTDEMOCRACY

Presented by: Anatolij Gelimson, FastDemocracy Corp.

Location: Magnolia Ballroom

In this workshop, the creators of FastDemocracy will teach you how you can leverage their technology to stay informed on Missouri legislation and bring your supporters into the legislative process. Staying up to date on Missouri legislation be a confusing and time-consuming process. FastDemocracy is a widely used bill tracker that notifies you of new bill actions and committee hearings on your priority bills, allows you to research legislation and voting records, collaborate on legislation, share your bills and create campaigns. The workshop will discuss both the free bill tracking tools and the professional tools you can leverage for your advocacy work.

SESSION 3 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH ● 10:15-11:15 AM

CLEAN SLATE'S IMPACT ON THE SUBSTANCE ABUSE COMMUNITY

Presented by: Gregory Smith, Missouri Coalition of Recovery Support Providers

Location: Capitol View Room

Participants will receive a brief overview about the sober living / reentry housing options available in Missouri and the services these programs offer. The panel will then discuss how criminal records impact the progress of residents in their recovery from substance use with particular emphasis on obstacles that criminal records pose for employment and securing permanent housing.

HOW TO PREPARE COMPELLING TESTIMONY

Presented by: Cheryl Adelstein, Jewish Community Relations Council, & Sharon Geuea Jones

Location: Tulip Room

Feel passionate about a topic or bill, but don't know what to do? Want to provide written or in-person testimony on a legislative proposal, but don't know how? In this workshop we will cover the how to's for preparing and giving great testimony from experienced advocates and legislators and give you an opportunity to practice and receive feedback.

FARM BILL 2023: WHAT TO EXPECT

Presented by: Melissa Vatterott, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, and Ellen Teller, Food Research and Action Center

Location: Rose Room

Melissa Vatterott from the Missouri Coalition for the Environment will talk the attendees through the agriculture and conservation provisions and Ellen Teller from the Food Research and Action Center will talk through the nutrition program provisions. Additionally, there will be a discussion around advocacy opportunities to ensure passage of a strong Farm Bill in 2023.

SESSION 4 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH ● 12:00-1:00 PM

BOLDER ADVOCACY TRAINING

Presented by: Victor Rivera

Location: Magnolia Ballroom

501(c)(3)s play an important role in educating the public about policy issues and actions taken by elected officials, including the President. Elected officials vote on bills, make public statements and executive decisions, and set the course for public policy on a wide range of issues. These actions may be consistent with or conflict with a nonprofit's position on an issue. After this workshop you will have a clear understanding of how to maximize your advocacy, the kinds of advocacy activities 501(c)(3)s can engage in, and when a communication is considered lobbying.

CLEAN SLATE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Presented by: Gwen Smith, Empower Missouri

Location: Capitol View Room

In this session, Empower Missouri staff will give an update on the Clean Slate campaign in Missouri. You'll hear an overview of the proposed legislation that will be introduced in the 2023 session, research on the impact that automated expungement will have on our community, and an update on the progress the campaign has made so far.



OUR WORK

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Tuesday Location: Rose Room

Wednesday Location: Rose Room

The Affordable Housing Coalition focuses on the question, 'What will it take for every person in Missouri to have access to safe and affordable housing? We support regional housing work as appropriate and expand that energy to the state and federal level, building momentum to address the housing shortage crisis. We are driven to make sure every person in our state has access to safe and affordable housing.

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

This legislative session, we will be focusing broadly on:

- Supporting Clean Slate Legislation to improve housing stability for people with past criminal records.
- Instituting a low or no cost non-drivers ID for people experiencing homelessness.
- Implementing eviction reform across Missouri to reduce the harms to tenants.
- Calling for programmatic improvements at the Missouri Housing Development Commission regarding Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE COALITION

Tuesday Location: Magnolia Ballroom

Wednesday Location: Capitol View Room

The Community Justice Coalition is battling the harms of mass incarceration in our communities through deep policy research, field work and legislative advocacy. We work across the five stages of the criminal legal system: Policing, Pre-Trial, Trial, Incarceration, and Re-Entry.

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

We are focused on several important policy issues in the coming year:

- Implementing automatic expungement through Clean Slate legislation.
- Regulating and limiting the use of private probation companies.
- Establishing a Department of Corrections (DOC) oversight mechanism.
- Improving the pre-release re-entry planning process for people incarcerated in DOC.

FOOD SECURITY COALITION

Tuesday Location: Tulip Room

Wednesday Location: Tulip Room

The Empower Missouri Food Security Coalition is a multi-sector team of dedicated advocates who work to ensure every Missourian has access to a sufficient amount of nutritious food. We advocate on the state and federal levels for strong safety net programs that run efficiently and effectively and are accessible to all who need them.

2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Short Term Priorities:

- Pass a bill that would require The Missouri Department of Social Services to implement the Elderly Simplified Application Project within the SNAP Program.
- Pass a bill that would opt Missouri out of the lifetime ban on SNAP for those with a drug related felony.
- Pass a bill that would require Missouri's Department of Social Services to implement The Restaurant Meals Program within the SNAP Program.
- Pass a bill that will decrease food deserts in Missouri through tax credits.
- Defend against bills that decrease the amount of food assistance or increase the barriers to accessing safety net programs.

Longer Term Priorities:

- Increase participation in the WIC Program.
- Healthy School Meals for All

ADVOCACY PARTNERS PROGRAM

In 2022, Empower Missouri launched our first cohort of our Advocacy Partners program. We have 7 direct service organizations from across Missouri who have dedicated this year to create or deepen internal advocacy capacity. We have organizations who work directly with underserved communities, those fighting for housing justice and disability rights, folks providing food assistance and more. Representatives from these organizations meet all together monthly and receive direct coaching time from our staff. They have a shared goal of systems change to ease the burdens their clients are facing. Many of these organizations have representatives at the Summit. Empower Missouri wants to thank:

A RED CIRCLE

FREEDOM COMMUNITY CENTER

**METROPOLITAN ST LOUIS EQUAL HOUSING
AND OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL**

SAVE, INC.

SHERWOOD FOREST

**ST JOACHIM AND ANN CARE SERVICE
THE WHOLE PERSON**

Our Advocacy Partners program will be recruiting this summer for the 2023/24 cohort. The program includes a cohesive package of training, coaching, administrative support, and relationship building. Over time, Empower can work with you to deepen your team's investment in and capacity for the work, with the ultimate goal of your organization running a self-sustaining advocacy program. Reach out to Sarah Owsley at Sarah@EmpowerMissouri.org for more info.

EMPOWER MISSOURI'S LEADERSHIP

STAFF

Mallory Rusch
Executive Director

Amber Foster-Hobart
Communications Director

Nay'Chelle Harris
*Development & Operations
Manager*

Holly Honig
Policy Director

Sarah Owsley
Advocacy Director

Vee Sanchez
*Affordable Housing Policy
Manager*

Amber Smith
*Affordable Housing Policy
Manager*

Gwen Smith
Criminal Justice Policy Manager

Christine Woody
Food Security Policy Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Maria Cepeda

Marilyn Chappell
Treasurer

Raquel Cooper

Stephanie Cooper

Anatolij Gelimson

Izzy Litwack

Jeffrey Lofton

Dr. Tiffany Patton

Jennifer Shotwell

Misha Blake Smith
Secretary

Marqueia Watson, MSW
President

FROM THE ENTIRE EMPOWER MISSOURI TEAM:

Thank you for joining us!



WWW.EMPOWERMISSOURI.ORG