



November 18th & 19th

Stoney Creek Hotel, Columbia, Missouri



EmpowerMissouri.org/Summit



WHY ATTEND THE SUMMIT

The 2025 Anti-Poverty Advocates Summit is full of professional development opportunities for employees of nonprofit and mission oriented organizations, all at an incredible value! This two day event includes three keynote speakers, presentations on federal policy in all three of our core issue areas (affordable housing, criminal legal system reform, and food insecurity), strategy sessions, work time, and networking with our three statewide coalitions, and four additional breakout times to hear from even more experts on anti-poverty policy. The enclosed materials can help you make the case to your employer that you (and your co-workers!) should join us.

MAKING THE CASE TO YOUR EMPLOYER

Use this template to make the request to your employer:

I heard recently about this Anti-Poverty Advocates Summit from Empower Missouri. Empower has over 120 years of getting things done in Jefferson City. This event will help our organization find more success at solving systems level issues that our clients keep getting stuck on. The Summit includes national updates from Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Prison Policy Initiative, and National Low Income Housing Coalition. I'll also get to see keynotes on using Behavioral Design to support people in program goals and how Artificial Intelligence is helping and harming our communities. Breakouts I'm interested in include:

[SEE PAGES 4-8 OF THIS PACKET FOR IDEAS]

If you have any questions about the Summit or sessions you can reach out to Sarah Owsley at Empower MO, sarah@empowermissouri.org. I really think it will help me in my job role and I trust the information we get from Empower to be relevant and useful. Thanks for considering.





SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

The 2025 Anti-Poverty Advocates Summit is two days full of impactful strategy sessions, community building, and **action to fight poverty in Missouri**. Each breakout session will offer four options, centered on affordable housing, criminal legal system reform, food insecurity, organizing tools and skill-building, or other anti-poverty issues. A schedule overview is below, and full descriptions for keynote sessions on page 2, and all four breakout options in each session on pages 3 to 7.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH

REGISTRATION & NETWORKING

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

OPENING KEYNOTE & LUNCH

Inescapable AI, *TechTonic Justice*

12:00 - 1:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

1:45 - 3:00 PM

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

3:15 - 4:30 PM

DINNER

5:00 - 7:00 PM

**Sign up as part of your registration*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH

MORNING KEYNOTE & BREAKFAST

Emmie DiCicco, *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*

8:30 - 10:00 AM

BREAKOUT SESSION 3

10:15 AM - 11:20 AM

AFTERNOON KEYNOTE & LUNCH

Evelyn Stark, *ideas42*

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

12:45 - 2:00 PM

BREAKOUT SESSION 5

2:15 - 3:30 PM

**EMPOWER
MISSOURI**



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

TUESDAY OPENING KEYNOTE - TECHTONIC JUSTICE, INESCAPABLE AI

TechTonic Justice is a multidimensional, community-based effort to strengthen local justice movements and build long-term power among the people and communities that AI is leaving behind. Their research illuminates the ways in which the use of AI by governments, landlords, employers, and other powerful private interests restricts the opportunities of low-income people in every basic aspect of life: at home, at work, in school, at government offices, and within families.

The organization's Keynote Address at the 2025 Anti-Poverty Advocates Summit will urge advocates to become a part of the movement to correct course before AI of any level of technical sophistication becomes entrenched as a legitimate way to make key decisions about the people society marginalizes.

WEDNESDAY MORNING KEYNOTE - CENTER ON BUDGET & POLICY PRIORITIES

Emmie DiCicco is the State Strategies Manager on the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' Food Assistance team. She brings nearly ten years of social justice advocacy experience in journalism, grassroots organizing, nonprofit leadership, and city government.

She will illuminate the ways in which national politics are shifting, as well as the impact of those shifts on Missouri communities. Policies and programs that were once considered non-partisan and non-political have recently been targeted with deep budget cuts and harmful program changes. These changes will both limit the impact of these programs and increase the costs to the states that administer them.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is a nonpartisan research and policy institute that advances federal and state policies to help build a nation where everyone — regardless of income, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ZIP code, immigration status, or disability status — has the resources they need to thrive and share in the nation's prosperity.

WEDNESDAY LUNCH KEYNOTE - IDEAS42

Behavioral Science helps us understand human patterns and anticipate behavior. While we are each unique, we can be influenced or assisted in making both helpful and harmful choices in our day to day lives. When we use this information to help shape policies, we can better serve our communities while saving taxpayer resources. Come learn with us as Evelyn Stark, Managing Director of Financial Health at ideas42, shares how we can use emerging social science practices to implement Behavioral Design in all stages of policy making and better support our struggling neighbors.

As a non-profit that uses insights from behavioral science to improve lives, build better systems and policies, and drive social change, ideas42 has worked on more than 600 projects in over 55 countries.



BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 1 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH • 1:45-3:00 PM

TURNING EVIDENCE INTO INFLUENCE

Presented by: Isabel Warner & Alejandra Villegas, MOST Policy Initiative

Stories are powerful. Stories supported by data are even more compelling. Join the MOST Policy Initiative team to hear about ways to find and integrate data into your story, identify and preempt policymakers' concerns, and start crafting your own advocacy strategy. In this workshop, participants will hone their story, practice power mapping, research relevant policymakers, and begin the process of integrating data into their narrative.

THE ROAD TO HOUSING FOR ALL: AN UPDATE ON FEDERAL HOUSING POLICY

Presented by: Kayla Blackwell, National Low Income Housing Coalition

Join us for an update on federal housing policy changes from our national partner, NLIHC. The NLIHC knows the solution to solving homelessness: permanent affordable housing. They are helping to build the public and political will to implement proven solutions to support our neighbors and end homelessness in our communities. Kayla will walk participants through programs that have been impacted or are under threat under the current administration, share what she knows about how to best support our neighbors in need, and provide some action steps we can take today.

THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE, FROM WASHINGTON TO MISSOURI

Presented by: Emmett Sanders, Prison Policy Initiative

The non-profit, non-partisan Prison Policy Initiative produces cutting edge research to expose the broader harm of mass criminalization, and then sparks advocacy campaigns to create a more just society. Emmett Sanders will join us to provide an update on federal criminal legal policies and how they are impacting Missourians. He also has ideas about reforms Missouri could initiate to better support incarcerated individuals in our state, and ways we can fight back against the current administration.

HR1: WHAT'S AT STAKE IN MISSOURI

Presented by: Joel Ferber & Jamie Rodriguez, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri & Emmie DiCicco, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

This workshop will address the Medicaid and SNAP provisions of HR 1 and the ramifications for individuals and families, as well as the State. We will discuss the likely impact of these provisions and families, the impact on the State budget and state policy choices for implementation. We will highlight key issues for advocates and other stakeholders and options for minimizing the harm of the bill.



BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 2 - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH • 3:15-4:30 PM

BUILDING POWER FROM THE GROUND UP

Presented by: Jessica Tran, Kids Win Missouri

This session dives into advanced grassroots advocacy strategies that move beyond awareness into sustained impact. Participants will explore how to refine messaging, mobilize diverse coalitions, and leverage storytelling and data to influence policy. Through real-world examples and interactive tools, we'll unpack what it takes to build lasting power from the community level up. Ideal for advocates ready to deepen their practice and drive systemic change.

BRIDGE TO HOME: A REGIONAL RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

Presented by: House Everyone STL

Homelessness doesn't stop at city or county lines and neither should our solutions. Bridge to Home is a first-of-its-kind regional initiative uniting eight counties in the St. Louis metropolitan area to permanently reduce homelessness. Anchored by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments and operationally led by House Everyone STL, this collaborative strategy aligns governments, providers, funders, and community partners to close service gaps, coordinate resources, and create innovative, locally tailored solutions. Participants will learn how political coordination, community engagement, and data-driven implementation are transforming the way our region addresses homelessness.

MISSOURI'S PATH TO PRISON REFORM

Presented by: ML Smith and Clifton Davis, MoJustice

Panelists will delve into what it means to be criminalized and incarcerated in the last slaveholding state of the country: Missouri. We will talk about how the absence of oversight and accountability allows those in power to act with impunity, fostering inhumane conditions of confinement, #TripleDigitDeaths, and the proliferation of drugs. In addition, panelists will discuss the ongoing efforts to organize carceral systems impacted people across the state and what can be accomplished by building a base of empowered impacted community members.

WHO GOES HUNGRY?

Presented by: Christina Ryder, Missouri State Center for Ozarks Poverty Research

This session will explore food security data in the State of Missouri with particular emphasis on the unique challenges of different age groups, racial/ethnic groups, and differing family status. We will also discuss the food security needs of high risk and unhoused youth in Springfield, MO, and food security models currently being implemented to address the needs of food insecure households in Springfield.



BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 3 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH • 10:15-11:30 AM

PATHWAYS TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY: THE RISE PROGRAM MODEL

Presented by: Jessica Smith & Alex Light, Drew Lewis Foundation

Discover how the Drew Lewis Foundation (DLF) is transforming Missouri communities through the RISE program, a proven model for promoting upward mobility among low-to-moderate income families. This session will explore how weekly education, personalized coaching, and holistic support systems empower individuals to break generational cycles of poverty. Learn what makes RISE effective, how it can be replicated, and why community partnerships are key to long-term success.

COALITION WORK TIME

Empower Missouri convenes three statewide coalitions: Affordable Housing, Community Justice, and Food Security. During the Summit, all three will be meeting to plan for the upcoming legislative session and discuss their policy priorities. This is your chance to influence the work of the coalitions throughout the 2026 legislative session and to network and be in community with other advocates working on housing, food security and criminal legal system reform. All are welcome to join our coalition meetings on Wednesday morning:

Affordable Housing Coalition

Staffed by: Vee Sanchez, Affordable Housing Policy Managers

Community Justice Coalition

Staffed by: Gwen Smith and Rika White, Criminal Justice Policy Managers

Food Security Coalition

Staffed by: Christine Woody and Amanda Berry, Food Security Policy Managers



BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 4 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH • 12:45-2:00 PM

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Presented by: Emily Stoinski, Safe Connections

Economic empowerment can be as healing as therapy after violence. While images of clinicians and shelters may first come to mind when thinking about supporting survivors of domestic and relationship violence, economic empowerment is a way to prevent additional harm. This session addresses economic abuse, identifying what it can look like in a relationship and how to amplify survivors' experiences in advocacy efforts.

TENANTS TAKING CHARGE

Moderated by: Vee Sanchez, Empower Missouri and Candace Ladd, Heartland Center for Jobs and Freedom

This session will include a primer on Missouri's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, how it works, and why it creates a temporary solution to a lasting problem. Hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units roll off each year, ending their period of affordability and often switching to market rate. We will discuss how that impacts communities, and what we can do to support tenants in these apartments. Tenant organizing helps refocus housing policy away from revenue generating at all costs to focus on what community members need to thrive at home. This panel of experts will discuss how tenant organizing can support the kinds of neighborhoods we all want to live in.

THE ABCS OF COURT REMINDERS: BEHAVIORAL DESIGN SOLUTIONS FOR MISSOURI

Presented by: Shannon McAuliffe, Ideas42

Missed court dates are costly—for individuals, courts, and communities—but often preventable. This session equips criminal justice advocates with practical tools and insights to promote evidence-based court reminder programs in Missouri. Learn why people miss court, how behavioral science supports reminders, and what an effective program looks like—from message design to tech options and policy levers like auto-enrollment. Walk away with clear, actionable strategies to help courts adopt this simple, powerful solution.

TURNING DATA INTO DIALOGUE

Presented by: Todd Combs, Washington University School of Public Health

This session, presented by the WIC Innovation Project and Data for Social Impact, will explore strategies for using data to enhance program delivery and community engagement. Drawing on recent projects with Missouri WIC and Operation Food Search, presenters will share findings on retailer training and participant engagement with the WICShopper app. The session will also introduce the use of "data walks" or "data parties" as structured approaches for facilitating dialogue and shared understanding among stakeholders. Attendees will consider applications of these methods within their own organizational contexts to strengthen community engagement and support programmatic change.



BREAKOUT SESSION SCHEDULE

SESSION 5 - WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH ● 2:15-3:30 PM

STABLE HOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

Presented by: Dr. Melissa Stickel

Housing insecurity isn't just a side effect of poverty — it's one of its most powerful engines. In this interactive session, we'll uncover how unstable housing drives challenges in education, health, and workforce participation, and explore practical, policy-based solutions to break the cycle. Through data walks, real Missouri stories, and collaborative strategy-building, participants will create advocacy tools they can use immediately in their communities. Leave with ready-to-use talking points and a mini housing advocacy plan to spark change at local, state, and federal levels.

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITY: FAIR CHANCE EMPLOYMENT IN MISSOURI

Presented by: Sarah Vincent, Legal Aid at Work

Stable employment is the most powerful barrier between poverty and recidivism—yet justice-impacted Missourians face systemic hiring discrimination that keeps them in cycles of poverty. In this session, participants will learn how Fair Chance Employment policies have successfully reduced recidivism and increased economic stability, why Missouri needs similar legislative protections, and how to engage employers in changing hiring practices. Attendees will leave able to articulate the connection between employment access and poverty reduction, identify strategies for advocating for a Missouri Fair Chance law, and develop tools for centering the voices of justice-impacted individuals in campaigns. Together, we will strategize how to break the cycle and secure economic justice for all.

HEALTH ON THE TABLE: EXPLORING FOOD AS MEDICINE IN MISSOURI

Moderated by: Amanda Berry, Empower Missouri

Join cross-sector leaders advancing the Food as Medicine movement in Missouri. This panel brings together experts from the food system, health care, research, community programs, and policy to explore what works now—and what's next. Panelists will share evidence, implementation lessons, and funding pathways, and map how these sectors intersect to improve food security and health outcomes for Missourians.