



Missourians to End Poverty

Bringing the Community Together to End Poverty

Food Health Education Energy & Housing Family & Economic Security

www.communityaction.org

Who are the
*Missourians to
End Poverty?*

AmerenUE

Beyond Housing- St. Louis

Cafe Via Roma

Catholic Charities
Archdiocese of St. Louis

Catholic Charities of Kansas
City - St. Joseph, Inc.

Citizens for Missouri's
Children

Community Action Agency of
St. Louis County

Community Action Partner-
ship of Greater St. Joseph

Community Awareness and
Resource Exchange (CARE)

Social Concerns Office -
Diocese of Jefferson City

Eileen Wallace Consulting

Faith Beyond Walls

Gardner Capital, Inc.

Green Hills Community Action
Agency

Health Care Foundation of
Greater Kansas City

Kansas City Power and Light

Laclede Gas Company

Lutheran Family & Children's
Services of Missouri

Madsen & Wright
Governmental Consultants

Economic & Family Security Policy Statement

To reinforce the policy platform of Missourians to End Poverty, our policy statements center around the intertwined five pillars of poverty: **health care, housing & energy, economic & family security, food, and education.** Our goal is to raise community awareness and understanding of the impact of poverty as well as create concrete ideas with communities about local and state solutions to ending poverty.

The economic picture for Missouri is disturbing. The reality is that in 2009, Missouri lost 62,600 jobs, resulting in an increased unemployment rate of 9.6%. Of Missouri's entire population, the latest census figures tell us that 781,842 people live in poverty... and 263,484 of them are children.

Quality Jobs

One critical issue is getting people back to work in jobs that will sustain local economies, provide a living wage for families to support themselves, and help make communities attractive places to live and raise families. The current unemployment rate in Missouri as of December 2009 is 9.6%, the highest it has been since 1983 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Another important aspect to steady employment in Missouri is the retention of jobs. For example, elimination of state employment positions might benefit the state's budget in the short term, but adds to the growing burden of the jobless, uninsured population.

Public Policy Action Strategies

- Promote investment by public and private partnerships to address the creation of jobs and the alleviation of poverty.
- Promote job creation in the new "green" economy industries such as clean and renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, conservation and reclamation.
- Encourage all employers to offer health care benefits.

Workforce Development

398,092 Missourians received services through Missouri Career Centers—a 70% increase from the previous program year. (Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development Annual Report 2009) In order to be competitive in emerging job markets such as the "green economy", Missourians must be trained and ready.

Public Policy Action Strategies

- Leverage state and federal investments to prepare Missourians to take advantage of emerging jobs.
- Ensure that job training and educational opportunities are available statewide and across all income levels.

Missourians to End Poverty continued...

Missouri Association for Community Action

Missouri Association for Social Welfare

Missouri Budget Project

Missouri Career Center

Missouri Department of Mental Health

Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division

Missouri Family Health Council

Missouri Food Bank Association

Missouri Gas Energy

Missouri Head Start Association

Missouri Head Start Collaboration Office

Missouri Health Alliance

Missouri IMPACT

Missouri Kidney Program

Missouri National Education Association

Missouri Public Service Commission

Northwest Workforce Investment Board

Ozarks Food Harvest

Partnership for Children

Primaris/CLAIM

Ready Aim Advocate!

Salvation Army

Treasures

United Services Community Action Agency

United Way of Central Missouri

West Central Missouri Community Action Agency

Quality Child Care

Child care is a critical need for working individuals and families with children. Low income people often struggle with child care issues due to work hours that do not coincide with child care availability, transportation problems (routes or schedules), the prohibitive cost of quality care, and more. In 2008 the eligibility level for child care assistance in Missouri was 127% of the federal poverty guideline with some transitional benefits up to 139%. For a single parent trying to work and raise a child, child care benefits would be lost with an annual income of \$20,252 which equals a weekly gross pay of \$669.

Public Policy Action Strategies

Ensure access to quality child care in the home and in the community by:

- Increasing investment in child care subsidies and quality improvement so that more high-quality child care options are available and affordable for parents.
- Ensure that public pre-kindergarten programs are designed to meet the child care needs of working families.
- Improve federal and state tax codes to help families at all income levels pay for child care.

Tax Relief for Working Families

One problem low income families experience with taxation is the high burden of taxes low income families pay compared to middle and higher income families. Another is solicitation for predatory tax preparation and high interest rate tax refund anticipation loans.

Public Policy Action Strategies

- Support working Missouri families through tax relief policies including a State Earned Income Tax Credit.
- Ensure that low-income Missourians have access to quality tax preparation assistance and the information regarding the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and child care.
- Study the Missouri tax system for the purpose of reform that would make it more equitable.

Asset Development & Protection

Low income families are more likely to experience crisis due to lack of savings and assets than middle income families. Asset Development is a proven way to help low income people build wealth and stability through home ownership, development of small businesses, and higher education. In addition, participation in asset development programs increases participation in the banking system (moving people away from predatory solutions such as payday lenders) and increases financial education among participants.

Public Policy Action Strategies

- Assist families in developing financial literacy and building assets for higher education, home ownership, and small business creation.
- Revise the Family Development Account tax credit legislation to increase participation.
- Support legislation to reform payday (small dollar) loan businesses and encourage implementation of "fair and reasonable" loan practices.
- Support foreclosure prevention measures such as:
 - 90 day renter notification prior to landlord eviction
 - Mandatory mediation between homeowner and lender prior to foreclosure