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Mo Housing News

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Missouri Housing Agency Participates in National Summit on Homelessness

Kansas City - On December 1, 2010, Heather Bradley-Geary of Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC) participated in a national summit in Washington, D.C. organized by the Department of Justice and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The collaborative meeting, "Searching for Balance: Civic Engagement in Communities Responding to Homelessness," was organized with the goal of developing constructive alternatives to the criminalization of homelessness.

Bradley-Geary, who serves as MHDC's Community Initiatives Manager, oversees Missouri's Balance of State Continuum of Care as well as the Missouri Housing Trust Fund, both of which provide housing and social services to the lowest-income residents of the state. Bradley-Geary is widely recognized for her contributions to ending homelessness and poverty, and her work at MHDC has received national attention. Because of the successes of Bradley-Geary and MHDC, Missouri was one of only 12 states invited to participate in the summit.

"It is truly significant that Missouri was chosen to be represented at this meeting," said Bradley-Geary. "While many states' homelessness issues arise in their urban areas, a high number of homeless individuals and families are found in Missouri's rural areas. By bringing the issue of rural homelessness to this summit, we were able to forge a more comprehensive approach to decriminalizing homelessness in general."

The summit focused on four key issues in the criminalization of homelessness: policing and outreach strategies, the justice system, a seamless system of care, and coordinated volunteerism. In early 2011, USICH will be providing to Congress the summit's recommendations, which will then be released to the states and localities for use in combating homelessness.

In addition to managing the Balance of State Continuum of Care and administering the Missouri Housing Trust Fund, MHDC also administers the federal and state funding for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing, and offers low-interest mortgage loan programs for first-time homebuyers.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Media questions should be directed to Andi Benson, communications administrator, at 816-759-6658 or abenson@mhdc.com. Follow MHDC on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and join our [mailing list](#) for the latest updates and news.