

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Increasing Leadership and Preparedness Capacity in the Faith Based Community

Contributors: Kate Wright & Michael Thomas

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The Heartland Center for Public Health Preparedness at the Saint Louis University School of Public Health, a co-sponsor of the Meta-Leadership Summit in St. Louis, is committed to identifying how a community can continuously build and enhance leadership over time. Kate Wright attended the Meta-Leadership Summit and Post Summit Meetings in March and August 2010, respectively. Wright credits the Meta-Leadership events for helping to advance the leadership and community preparedness planning of the Heartland Center.

Building leadership is a continuous goal

The Initiative was an additional avenue by which the Heartland Center could continue its long term goals of community-level leadership development. As Wright describes, "leadership development is one of our fortes and Meta-Leadership is a great addition to our work on competence and capacity development."

Bridging the "Gap" to the Faith-Based Community

Michael Thomas observed an additional benefit of the Summit - it highlighted preparedness gaps needing further attention and action. One in particular Thomas describes is the gap between the faith-based community and preparedness planning. The Heartland Center, in collaboration with local health departments, state emergency management, United Way, Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, and others, put together a faith-based St. Louis regional partners task force that brought together 74 faith-based organizations in June 2011 for a kick-off meeting. The meeting provided an orientation for these non-traditional response agencies to preparedness planning, continuity of operations planning, and ways to increase individual preparedness. Community partners were enthusiastic to provide additional training to the faith-based community including CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) and sheltering training. Thomas explained that "for the first time, we were starting to see faith-based resources being linked to preparedness plans. It was a direct result of leadership focused on a particular issue."

The Heartland Center is still narrowing the "Gap"

The Heartland Center will continue its work to build and enhance relationships, capacity, and leadership with the faith-based community. A follow up meeting, which will focus more specifically on emergency management roles, responsibilities, and how a particular faith-based organization can be of service in times of disaster, is scheduled for January 2012.

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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