

Life in the State of Poverty

OBJECTIVES:

To increase awareness of the realities of life faced by low-income people

To review community resources that are available to those in poverty and to all families

Number of Participants:

40-75 per simulation



This simulation is a community education program designed to help participants begin to understand what life might be like for a typical low-income family as they work to survive from month to month. Participants assume the roles of different families facing poverty. The task of the "families" is to provide for basic necessities and shelter during the course of four 15-minute "weeks." The simulation includes employment scenarios; school requirements for the children; and unexpected situations as the month progresses.

The simulation is conducted in a large room with the "families" seated in groups. Around the perimeter are tables representing community resources and services for the families, such as a bank, a school, a pawn shop, a health care provider, a grocery store, and others. Volunteers are recruited to staff the resource tables and take on the roles of rent collectors, caseworkers, employers, and more.

The experience lasts from two to three hours. It includes an introduction and briefing; the actual simulation exercise; and a debriefing period in which participants and volunteer staffers share their feelings and experiences.



The Poverty Simulation is perfect for your leadership participants; college students; or other groups. You can also schedule the simulation for teacher/staff in-service days.

Contact your county Extension office to get the process started.