

COVID SAFE POVERTY SIMULATION

A poverty simulation is an experience designed to help participants understand what it is like to live in a typical low-income family trying to make ends meet from month to month. It is important to keep in mind that it is a simulation and not a game! The main objective of the simulation is to sensitize the participants to the realities that low-income people face.

The purpose of the poverty simulation is to educate the broader community. Participants encounter the real issues that low-income families deal with, the roadblocks that can be barriers to self-sufficiency, and how these factors shape behavior and beliefs. It is our hope that their experience will motivate participants to become involved in activities which reduce poverty in our community – particularly by advocating for stronger social safety net.

Simulation directions

- When directed to, open your simulation kit. In this kit you will find information about yourself (education, job, salary, family, housing etc) in the **BIO** envelope.
- Once you know who you are, it's time to make a monthly budget. Use the sheets provided to make your financial plan. You must make choices for each category and cannot skip categories.
- If you are unable to cover monthly expenses, you can seek assistance by visiting the **AID** table. Participants must follow all posted signage in order to access aid.
- Three times during the simulation (every 8-10 minutes), you will be instructed to open your **LIFE EVENT** envelope. This envelope will include information that you will have to accommodate into your monthly plan.

Debrief Discussion

- How did you feel about making these decisions?
- What did you give up?
- How did your priorities change based on the limited resources?
- How did your experience compare to others? Does anyone have spending money left over?

The Big Question

- What new insights about living in poverty has this exercise provided?
- How can we continue to learn about and reflect on the experiences of those who live in poverty?