

Life in a State of Poverty

Poverty Simulation: Volunteers Needed

The Simulation Experience

The Poverty Simulation is designed to help participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. It is a simulation, not a game. The object is to sensitize participants to the realities faced by low-income people.

In the simulation, 30 to 75 participants assume the roles of up to 26 different families facing poverty. Some are newly unemployed. Some are recently deserted by the "breadwinner," and others are recipients of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, formerly AFDC), either with or without additional earned income. Still others are disabled or are senior citizens receiving Social Security. The task of the "families" is to provide for basic necessities and shelter during the course of four 15-minute "weeks."

The simulation is conducted in a large room with the "families" seated in-groups in the center. Around the perimeter are tables representing community resources and services for the families. These services include a bank, community action agency, local employer, social services office, pawnbroker, grocery and where possible a school.

Volunteers are recruited to staff the resource tables. Volunteers are also recruited to assume the roles of police officer, utility collector, and landlord/rent collector.

The experience lasts about 1.5 to two 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 next simulation will be

November 6.

If interested, please contact
Bianca by
October 22.

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