



Working to Reduce Poverty in America.

Catholic Charities USA is happy to announce that we are now offering the facilitation of Poverty Simulations for our member agencies. The Community Action Poverty Simulation breaks down stereotypes by allowing participants to step into the real life situations of others, creating empathy and understand about the hardships that millions of Americans face every day.

Poverty is often portrayed as a standalone issue - but this simulation allows individuals to walk a month in the shoes of someone who is facing poverty and realize how complex and interconnected issues of poverty really are. Examples of identified simulation are as follows:

- A single parent with limited resources and no transportation must find a way to get to work and get their child to daycare.
- An elderly person must find a way to pay for both utilities and medication.
- A young adult must care for siblings while their parent is incarcerated.
- An elderly couple must raise their grandchildren and deal with their own health and employment issues.

The Community Action Poverty Simulation is a tool that helps participants rethink the challenges that millions of low income individuals must face each and every day. More importantly, this tool helps people identify areas of change that can directly impact the effects of poverty on individuals, families and communities.

“Working in social services and advocating daily for vulnerable persons, I entered the poverty simulation with a basic understanding of what struggling families experience every day. That said, my participation in the session not only reinforced what I believed, but offered additional insight into the decision-making processes of a very low-income family.

The experience left me with a renewed intent to treat others – the vulnerable families, the service providers, even the rule-enforcing entities – with respect and patience and dignity. The simulation reinforced that all persons have value and deserve to be received with compassion, free from judgement. While I can never truly comprehend the challenges of a very low-income family, the simulation reminded me that it is important to try.”

Impressions by a previous participant

This simulation is just one part of a new, broader effort at CCUSA to engage and educate local communities to galvanize them to be grassroots advocates. While Catholic Charities leadership and staff know the hardships of poverty, many of our donors, supporters, and local community members do not. By bringing this experience to your community or organization, CCUSA can help transform your existing parish leaders, politicians, donors, community supporters, allowing them to gain empathy and motivation to act by experiencing poverty through a live-action simulation.

Cost – travel and lodging for two CCUSA staff who will facilitate simulation.

If you are interested in having a poverty simulation at your agency, please contact Kimberly Mazyck at kmazyck@CatholicCharitiesUSA.org.