

# United Way of Central Ohio

## When Ends Don't Meet: A Poverty Simulation



In Franklin County alone, over 206,000 people live in poverty—that's 1 out of every 5 residents. And shockingly, nearly a third of those are children.

An additional 200,000 people have incomes above the poverty line, but still can't meet basic needs for their families without some assistance, like visiting food pantries or signing up for Medicaid. In total, that's more than 400,000 central Ohioans who struggle to care for themselves, and their families, every day. But what do those daily challenges look like? Participating in a UWCO Poverty Simulation can help participants better understand the difficult, daily realities of living on little to no income and learn about ways to get involved in reducing poverty in central Ohio.

### What is a Poverty Simulation?

When Ends Don't Meet: A Poverty Simulation is an experiential event that helps participants better understand the issues and challenges of living in poverty. This simulated experience was designed by a team of professionals, advocates, volunteers and low-income individuals to provide a realistic snapshot of how poverty affects low-income families. The portrayals of real stories from families living both in generational and situational poverty go beyond the stereotype of what is seen on the news or written about in the paper. Also captured in the experience is the role that the broader community plays in their interactions with families in poverty and how policies and systems either help or hinder progress.



### What can I expect during a Poverty Simulation?



The experience is designed to offer participants a glimpse into the realities faced by individuals with low to no income. In the simulation, up to 80 participants assume the roles of up to 26 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 is conducted in a large room with the families seated in groups in the center of the room. Around the perimeter are tables representing community resources and services available to the families. These services include a bank, super center, employer, utility company and other crucial resources. Volunteers play the roles of the staff at each resource and try to make the encounter as realistic as possible.

The experience lasts from two and half to three hours and includes an introduction and briefing, the simulation exercise, and a debriefing period in which participants and volunteers discuss their thoughts and experiences.

For more information, contact your Relationship Manager or Brandi Davis at 614.227.2714 or [brandi.davis@uwcentralohio.org](mailto:brandi.davis@uwcentralohio.org).