

**POVERTY SIMULATION WORKSHOP**

Workshop Group:

Date:

Workshop name \_\_\_\_\_

*Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by checking the appropriate box.*

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
<i>In general:</i>					
1. People are poor because of their own actions.					
2. People living in poverty do not work hard.					
3. People living in poverty do not value education.					
4. Poor people don't manage their time and resources wisely.					
5. People living in poverty are not cooperative.					
6. Government aid (e.g., TANF, Food Stamps, etc.) is adequate for a family to meet its living expenses					
7. Poor people participate in illegal activities.					

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. I can identify key issues that might be contributing to poverty in my community.					
2. I am confident about my ability to make a positive impact on poor people in my community.					
3. I am confident about my ability to understand obstacles faced by families living in poverty.					
4. There are not any circumstances that would cause my immediate family and me to live in poverty.					
5. Lack of childcare directly contributes to one's ability to get a job and keep a job.					

As a result of this workshop, how likely are you to implement each of the following actions?

	Less likely 1	Undecided 2	More likely 3
1. View people living in poverty with an open mind to better understand their needs.			
2. Work with other related community resources to assist people who live in poverty.			
3. Seek out information that can be used to address poverty issues in your community.			
4. Share this information with others in your community			

**TURN OVER**

	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1. The simulation objectives were clearly explained.					
2. The tasks required in this simulation closely related to the objectives.					
3. The facilitator was well organized and prepared.					
4. The facilitator presented material in an understandable and interesting way.					
5. I gained knowledge and/or skills from this simulation.					
6. I would recommend the simulation and facilitator to others.					
7. The facilitator related well with the audience.					
8. The facilitator treated participants in a professional manner.					

To what degree do you feel the conditions of poverty in your community have an affect on you?

- a. Unknown- I do not know how poverty affects my life.
- b. None- My life is completely autonomous from conditions of poverty in my community.
- c. Medium- Some aspects of my life are affected by the poverty in my community.
- d. Large- Many thing in my life are affected by the conditions of poverty in my community.

Overall, how would you rate this Workshop?

- a. Not helpful
- b. Mildly
- c. Helpful
- d. Very Helpful

What do you think or feel about the use of the Poverty Simulation Workshop as a way for sensitizing people to the plight of families with low income?

Your suggestions to further improve this Workshop:

## Steps to the Future

In the course of the past 6 years the Poverty Reduction Initiative has worked with Community Partners and researched Best Practices to identify key components which impact the lives of children and families in Poverty. The following is a list of actions which we believe can positively reduce the incidence of poverty in our community and when addressed adequately will not simply manage Poverty but reduce it. This is a work in progress, and as additional items are identified they will be added to the list.

### EDUCATION

#### Learning

- Comprehensive all day 12 month 0-5 Early Childhood Education (provided to low wage workers)
- Comprehensive PreK-16 Education programs
- Training for low-income home-owners to acquire maintenance skills and resources
- Job Skills training relevant to emerging job market needs
- Literacy programs for Children and Adults
- Increase access to universities and colleges, extending financial aid
- Provide ongoing support services such as in-work training and education programs
- Financial Literacy programs in schools and community
- Establish a seamless system of high quality training programs available to all people on income support programs
- Provide ongoing support services such as in-work training and education programs

### WORK

#### Working

- Regular scheduled Minimum Wage increases based on COLA
- Job creation for local workforce at a Living Wage (full time full year employment should ensure a standard of living above the poverty line)
- Development of job opportunities in high density areas within the transportation network
- Coordinated, coherent labor matching programs to better connect people who are unemployed (or underemployed) to the needs of employers
- Green Community Initiatives
- Business incubator for local small business start-ups, including access to start-up capital and mentoring services
- Youth Summer Recreation, Arts and Jobs Programs using Youth Development models
- Part-Time workers Unemployment Insurance Benefits
- Improve access to unionization particularly for workers in small workplaces and precarious forms of work
- Support of locally owned businesses by local residents
- Hiring of local workforce for local tax supported projects

### LIFE

#### Thriving

- Reformulate the Poverty threshold computation to include benefits now received and expenses not now included such as transportation costs, child care and health care
- Affordable Pre and Post natal Health access (provided to low wage workers)
- Affordable Health, Dental and Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse Services (provided to low wage workers)
- Comprehensive care programs for physically and developmentally disabled
- Safe Affordable Child Care (provided to low wage workers)
- Community supports for Special Needs Children and Adults (Individuals with special needs should be assured a basic income system that ensures a decent standard of living with adequate supports)
- Adequate dependent care (provided to low wage workers)
- Adequate, Affordable and Fair Housing in all neighborhoods

- Comprehensive Emergency Services (Food, Shelter, Clothing etc.) Programs for those in need
- Health and Wellness programs and facilities promoting Healthy Active Lifestyles (provided to low wage workers/families)
- Access to Legal Aid and community ombudsman
- Adequate Public Safety
- Prisoner Re-Entry programs that lead to self-sufficiency
- In-Home affordable Senior Services
- Affordable Senior Care options
- Access to banking and/or traditional financial services in all neighborhoods
- Individual Development Accounts for low-income individuals
- Asset Building for Low Income residents
- Multi-Lingual Services in all community support and educational programs
- Training for low-income home-owners to acquire maintenance skills and resources

#### Connecting

- Comprehensive fully funded 211 Services
- County Wide Linked Transportation systems providing access to work, recreation and shopping
- Family Planning Services
- Family mentoring/coaching in life skills, planning and community services access
- Strong Families initiatives; building relationships, role models and parenting skills
- Faith and Ethic Based initiatives to promote positive values
- Comprehensive *youth development model* After School programs
- Increase Land Bank capability to abate delinquent property taxes, acquire property, bank property and transfer property to non-profit and for-profit developers willing to develop it into affordable housing.
- Development of job opportunities in high density areas within the transportation network
- Locally grown healthy food markets in communities and neighborhoods
- Promote Cooperatives (food, housing, business, other)

#### Leading

- Engagement of local neighborhood and small community organizations in decision making
- Forums and Town hall meetings targeted at low income population for input into decisions directly affecting their lives.
- Recruitment of low-income individuals into leadership roles in community and government decision making groups
- Role modeling and re-counting of success stories by those who have lived in poverty



## The Facts

- Within the state of Michigan, 14 % of individuals, or approximately **1,406,398 people**, live *below* the poverty line. [U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008]
- Michigan ranks **5th** in the nation with respect to its percentage of households with cash public assistance, surpassed only by Alaska, Maine, the District of Columbia, and Oklahoma.
- In Michigan, poverty rates are highest among children. 19% or **1,908,683 children** live in poverty [U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007]
- In Michigan, there are 1,370,399 families, with **2,394,500 children**. Among these children, 37 percent live in families that are low-income. Young children are particularly likely to live in low-income families. [National Center for Children in Poverty]
- In Michigan, 31% of single mothers live in poverty, rising to **47.4%** for mothers with *children under the age of 5*. [U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007]
- More than 8.8% of Michigan residents, or **582,690 persons**, do **not** have a high school diploma. [U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007]
- As would be expected in a state with the nation's highest rate of unemployment in 2007, Michigan's poverty rate increased and its median income decreased from 2006 to 2007.
- In addition to reflecting high rates of unemployment, the high poverty rates in Michigan's principal cities reflect the fact that Michigan cities have been less able than cities in many other states to annex surrounding land when it becomes developed. Michigan's principal cities such as Detroit, Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo would have much lower poverty rates if they were able to annex their suburbs. [U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007]
- As stark as these figures are, they **severely underestimate** the number of residents struggling in Michigan. To be considered impoverished, a resident must fall below the Federal Poverty Guidelines, meaning if a family of three earned \$18,000 per year as a household, or a family of four earned \$22,000, that they would *not* be considered as living in poverty. **Millions of our Michigan neighbors are living in poverty!!!**

## The Costs of Poverty

- It costs families an extra \$922, and individuals \$341, in healthcare premiums to cover the cost of care for the uninsured. By 2010, health insurance premiums for families who have insurance through their private employers, on average, will be \$1,502 higher due to the unreimbursed cost of health care for the uninsured. [Paying a Premium: The Added Cost of Care for the Uninsured, 2005]
- If people in Michigan could live just above the poverty line, their increased purchasing power would boost the local economy approximately \$156,000,000. [U.S. Government Poverty Threshold, 2007]

## Recommended Reading

Changing Times New Approaches: A Handbook for Deacons by Jay Van Groningen (1996). CRC Publications, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506 (616) 224-0728  
[www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org)

Holistic Hardware: Tools that Build Lives: Faith-based Life and Job Skills for Restoring Lives In Crisis by Joseph H. Holland (2000). Xlibris Corporation 1-888-7-XLIBRIS. Xlibris Corp. International Plaza 2, Suite 340, Philadelphia, PA 19113 [www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com), Orders @ Xlibris.com

Hunger No More A six-session curriculum for youth and adults (a separate set of children's materials are also included) that will help present important hunger and poverty issues to study groups in your congregation. It can be ordered or downloaded from [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) or can be purchased for \$5.00 from the CRC Publications, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave SE. Grand Rapids, MI 49506 (616)224-0728

Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America by Ronald J. Sider (1999) Baker Book House. PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287 (616)957-3110

Nickel and Dimed On (Not) Getting By America by Barbara Ehrenreich (2001), Metropolitan Books. [Barbaraehrenreich.com](http://Barbaraehrenreich.com)

Interrupting Generational Poverty: Factors Influencing Successful Completion of the Bachelor's Degree Beegle, Donna (2000) Doctoral Dissertation, Portland State University

Overcoming the Silence of Generational Poverty Beegle, Donna (October 2003) Talking Points October/November 2003 Copyright © National Council of Teachers of English Reprinted with permission

The War Against the Poor Gans, H. (1995) New York: Basic Books

Beating the Odds How the Poor Get to College Levine, A., and Nidiffer, J. (1996) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Equity of Higher Education Opportunity for Women, Blacks, Hispanics, and Low-income Students (ACT Student Financial Aid Research Report Series) Mortenson, T. (1991) Iowa City: American College Testing Program  
A Conversation about Diversity Mortenson, T. 1998, July/August).84(4), 42-43. Academe

The Displaced of Capital by Anne Winters. (2004). University of Chicago Press. 1427 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, 773.702.7700