

BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW

The challenges represented in the Poverty Simulation are a daily struggle for many. Across United Way's service area of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet and Waseca counties, 1 in 10 people live in poverty. Many of our neighbors face realities such as food insecurity, housing instability, homelessness, lack of reliable and affordable transportation, domestic violence, the inability to afford basic necessities, unemployment and underemployment.

But how do you fight poverty, an issue so complex?

We believe that the process begins with an increased understanding of poverty and empathy for our neighbors who are experiencing these issues firsthand.

By supporting the impact areas of Basic Needs, Health and Education, United Way aims to ensure that all individuals in our region thrive.



Greater Mankato Area
United Way

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UNITED WAY POVERTY SIMULATION



What does it feel like to live in poverty?

Greater Mankato Area
United Way



WHAT IT IS

The Poverty Simulation is an impactful and interactive experience in which 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.

Each participant takes on the role of a person living in poverty. Roles are based on real family scenarios. The goal is to make ends meet, feed your family and maintain housing for one month.

Could you survive?

LOGISTICS

- Allow 2.5 to 3 hours for the event, which includes the introduction, briefing, simulation exercise and debriefing.
- Between 30 and 80 participants assume the roles of different families facing poverty.
- Participants may be groups from one organization or a group of mixed individuals.
- 20+ volunteers facilitate the event.
- United Way will work with you to customize your debriefing period to ensure the simulation experience is most valuable and applicable to your group.

CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU.



BENEFITS

- Develops participants' understanding of living with a low income.
- Increases awareness and empathy for individuals and families living in poverty in our own region.
- Serves as a team-building activity with a community focus.
- Can serve as a training for employees who work directly with people in poverty or who develop related programs and policies.

COMMENTS

- "Eye-opening experience! Gave each one of us the 'opportunity' to live in poverty for a period of time...but we were able to go home at the end of the night and escape what others can't."
- "Worthwhile and realistic event."
- "Unexpected revelations; powerful."

UNITED WAY'S ROLE

United Way-funded programs ensure our region stays strong and balanced through Basic Needs, Health and Education. United Way holds an annual campaign to **secure funding** for its partner agencies, whose funding needs are reviewed annually by more than 80 community volunteers.

United Way also **connects people and organizations to resources** such as the free 2-1-1 community helpline and the "Get Connected" volunteer management website.

In addition, United Way strives to **convene the community**. By identifying community issues and facilitating action around them, we aim to build a better tomorrow for all ages in our region.

The Poverty Simulation is our latest effort to convene the community around an important issue in our community.

We hope this event brings an awareness of the realities our neighbors in poverty face every day and ideally serves as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue—and, ultimately, real social change.

Thank you for your interest in the United Way Poverty Simulation! For more details, please contact Elizabeth Harstad at 507-345-4551 or ElizabethH@MankatoUnitedWay.org.