Union-Snyder CAA Poverty Simulations:
About, Requirements, and Agreement

"Poverty Simulations are a series of role-playing scenarios that give participants the opportunity to learn about the realities of poverty and its impact on society as a whole. Participants adopt a new persona and family profile for the purpose of the exercise.

Participants navigate through daily tasks that many of us take for granted. During four 15-minute "weeks," those assigned adult roles try to maintain their home, feed their families, send their children to school, and retain utility services while trying to navigate local supports and resources. Those assuming the roles of children have an opportunity to see what it is like to go to school, and cope with family dynamics, peer pressure, and the need for love and attention within the context of a family in poverty. The outcome of the simulation is unpredictable and demonstrates how strategizing with limited resources can make meeting even the most basic needs very challenging for a family.

A poverty simulation can be a profoundly moving experience. It is thought provoking and promotes insightful conversation about the realities of poverty. It demonstrates the importance of a community working together to address the problem of poverty. Most importantly, it inspires action and moves people to get involved in making a difference.

As the simulation concludes, participants come together to discuss their experience. The power of this unique learning resource is its ability to provide real insight into the barriers that low-income families face daily, and to motivate participants to work for change in their communities." (Source: Community Action Partnership Lancaster)

Who are Poverty Simulations designed for?

Poverty Simulations require a large group to accommodate the family profiles provided in the CAA kit. Examples of groups that can participate in Poverty Simulations include but are not limited to:
- College student groups
- Nonprofit organizations
- Community groups
- Businesses
- Faith-based organizations
- School faculty

What happens during a Poverty Simulation?

The Setup
- The Simulation takes place in a large room with "families" seated in the middle
- Tables representing community resources and services for families line the perimeter of the room
- At least 19 volunteers are recruited to staff the resource tables (NOTE: host group must work with CAA to recruit volunteers)

The Experience
- The Simulation itself is approximately 1 hour; participants can anticipate the entire experience to last between 2-3.5 hours, depending on size of group and length of debrief
- Participants assume the identity of up to 26 different families facing poverty
- Participants role play "one month" in poverty, trying to maintain their basic needs

The Debrief
- Participants are invited to discuss their experiences and what they learned
- Participants are challenged to share their experiences with family, friends, and their community

What are the requirements to host a CAA Poverty Simulation?

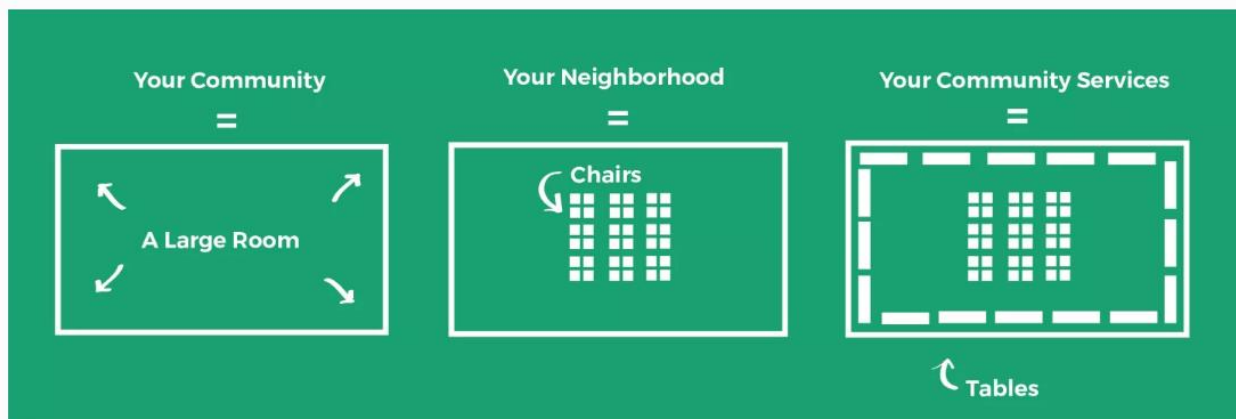**In order to host an event, your group must:**
- ☐ Work with CAA to determine a time and date that works for both parties (CAA + host group)
  - o *CAA must have at least 3 months' notice before desired Simulation timeframe*
- ☐ Recruit 40-80 participants (NOTE: It is extremely important that the number of participants fall within this range due to the logistics of the Simulation. The host group must confirm that they will have 40-80 participants one week before agreed upon Simulation date.)
- ☐ Provide a large room (approx. 3,000 square feet)
- ☐ Provide tables and chairs for the participants and volunteers
- ☐ Work with CAA to ensure at least 19 volunteers to stage the event
- ☐ Educate participants on expectations and requirements (below)

Participant Requirements & Expectations:
- Arrive on time and refrain from use of electronics during the Simulation
- Participate in an assigned role as member of a family living in poverty
- Participate in group debriefing after the Simulation
- Refrain from leaving the room at any time during the Simulation, unless an emergency arises (NOTE: participants will be asked to go to take a restroom break before the Simulation begins)
- Complete any required readings prior to attending the Simulation, as assigned by host group

Space Requirements:
- Arrange a large room that can accommodate the necessary number of tables and chairs (see below for example). Allow enough room for participants to walk around during the Simulation. We suggest at least a 3,000 square foot room for a full Simulation; hotel ball rooms, community center activity rooms, school gymnasiums, and church activity centers work really well!

Your Community = A Large Room

Your Neighborhood = Chairs

Your Community Services = Tables

Community Action Poverty Simulation©

Is there a cost to host a CAA Poverty Simulation?

We request a donation in the range of $500-$1000 to Union-Snyder Community Action Agency if the host group is a for-profit organization/business, school, or university to accommodate for staff time and resources. Nonprofit organizations may host a CAA Poverty Simulation with no cost; appropriate nonprofit verification forms are required.

Who are my contacts at Union-Snyder CAA?

- Point of Contact, Lead Logistical Coordinator: Rosemary Procopio, Community Services Coordinator, rprocopio@union-snydercaa.org
- Room Setup: Christine Hart, MIS Coordinator, chart@union-snydercaa.org
- Volunteer Coordinator, Trainer: Robyn Rinck, Administrative Director, rrinck@union-snydercaa.org; Jayme Stryker, Grant & Policy Writer, jstryker@union-snydercaa.org
- Facilitator: Emily Mrusko, Assistant Director, emrusko@union-snydercaa.org

Agreement

I have read the details of the CAA Poverty Simulation and confirm that I understand and agree with the requirements outlined in this document. I understand that CAA reserves the right to cancel the Simulation if any of the requirements outlined in this document are not met.

This CAA Poverty Simulation will be hosted at _____ (host site) on

_____/_____/_____ (date).

Host Group Representative:

_____   _____/_____/_____
(Name)   (Date)

Union-Snyder CAA Representative:

_____   _____/_____/_____
(Name)   (Date)