



## Workshop Requirements:

### Participants

- A minimum of 40 and a maximum of 80 participants to portray family members
- An additional 17-20 volunteers to play the roles of resource providers
- Participants are coordinated by the host organization

### Time

- A Poverty Immersion lasts 3 hours, including the activity and a debrief discussion
- Resource provider volunteers arrive one hour earlier for an orientation.

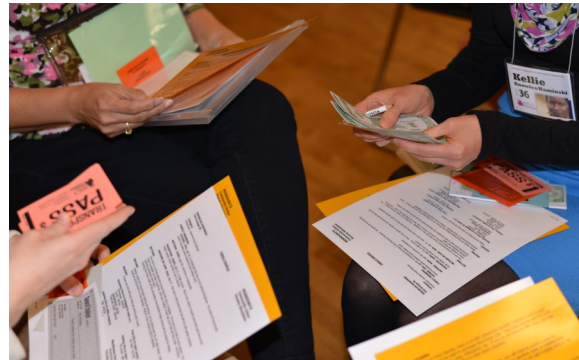
### Facility

- A large room (approx. 3,000 sq. ft.)
- 15 tables of any size, and up to 180 chairs, set up prior to the workshop
- 1-2 wireless microphones
- The facility must be available for a total of 5 1/2 hours to accommodate set up, the workshop and clean-up

### Fee

- The Poverty Immersion is a fee-based service. Contact the Metro Center for more information.

*"It was something I thought could help raise our awareness...which it has...Whether it's affordable housing or homelessness, these are all things that cities are dealing with."*



To schedule a Poverty Immersion or explore Organizational Development services offered by WSU's Metropolitan Center for Applied Research and Extension contact:

Martha Aitken  
[aitkenm@wsu.edu](mailto:aitkenm@wsu.edu)  
 206-219-2429

Visit us at <http://metrocenter.wsu.edu/>  
 Twitter: @WSUmetrocenter

# THE POVERTY IMMERSION

A VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE OF LIFE ON THE EDGE.

FOR POLICY, PROGRAM AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT





## What is a Poverty Immersion?

The Poverty Immersion is an interactive workshop that changes attitudes and challenges stereotypes about the working poor—paving a pathway toward professional growth and organizational transformation.

Participants assume the role of a family member living on limited resources. Aiding in the workshop are volunteers playing the roles of social service workers, bankers, school teachers, grocers, law enforcement, health care etc., providing a ‘community’ with whom the participants interact. It sounds simple enough until attendees are faced with the impossible daily dilemmas that are common when resources are scarce and stress is high.

The activity is followed by a facilitated debrief, customized for each organization.

## Impact

**Policy Development** - Lay the groundwork for policy changes that increase organizational and program effectiveness, and truly make a difference.

**Program Development** - Gain new insight into how poverty impacts access to programs and outreach.

**Professional Development** - Improve decision making and communication when interacting with low-income clients.

*“The workshop was phenomenal! It really...put my work...into perspective. We don’t often have the chance to be on the other side of things. I will not forget how this workshop impacted me, especially when making decisions on behalf of people and communities going forward.”*



## After the Poverty Immersion – From Empathy to Action

The Poverty Immersion is only the first step. The Metropolitan Center helps agencies and organizations take concrete actions to assess, plan, implement and evaluate sound changes in policies and programs to better serve a diverse clientele. The Metropolitan Center takes an individualized approach, recognizing each organization’s unique structure, needs and goals to craft sustainable and impactful change.

*“...yesterday one manager stopped me in the parking lot to share that he has thought of nothing else since the workshop. He has set up a meeting with his director to discuss how his department might change a policy he feels penalizes people who are poor.”*