

Poverty Simulation Update

Community Action has partnered with Quad County Community Partnership for Protecting Children (CPPC) to host Poverty Simulations in southeast Iowa. The target audience of a Poverty Simulation are those who have never experienced poverty for themselves with the goal of increasing their awareness and empathy for those who struggle in poverty.

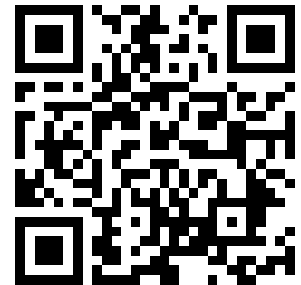
With CPPC ending, we are hope to offer one Poverty Simulation per year moving forward. There has been discussion with a group in Henry county about hosting the next Simulation to utilize funding CPPC received through a grant there.

Since Albrecht has become a trainer in 2023 we have provided this training seven times to over 443 people in southeast Iowa (this does include some duplicate volunteers).

The most recent simulation was held on May 13, 2026 in Lee County. This was a joint project with Lee County Health Department, CPPC, Lee County Economic Development Group, and Community Action of Southeast Iowa. We had 37 participants plus 22 volunteers through Building Bridges (Burlington and Lee County groups) with lived experience in poverty who helped staff the simulation. Head Start, FaDSS Specialists, and agency clients were also volunteers.

The following are responses from the most recent simulation in answer to the question, “What have you learned from this program?”

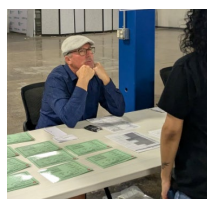
- How frustrating and overwhelming it can be to get needed help from agencies.
- People are truly trying but systems can get in the way.
- There is lack of access [to needed resources].
- [Poverty] is chaos.
- I learned about the parentification of teens.
- I have a better understanding of the level of stress and anxiety that poverty can place on an individual or family.
- The system has a lot of barriers for people.
- It opened my eyes.



26% of survey responses by participants said they had never personally experienced poverty. As a result of the Simulation, 94% said they learned at least one thing they can do to help someone in poverty. 100% said they would recommend the simulation. An additional comment noted: “This was a very thought provoking and meaningful experience. Thank you!”

Links to pictures from the day, details, and more information are available on our website:

<https://caofseia.org/poverty-simulation/> or by contacting: Rachel.Albrecht@caofseia.org 319-753-0193



- Rachel Nunnikhoven Albrecht, Planning Director, Community Action of Southeast Iowa, August 5, 2026