

Type of Activity	Reading and Discussion
Topic	Breadth and depth of poverty within the United States in relationship to concentration of wealth.
Level	Agitational This is an introductory exercise. It is an opportunity to examine our assumptions about who are the poor and why we are poor. It works well in new groups and can be revisited for deeper analysis by more experienced groups.
Number of Participants	Up to 12 (as a full group discussion); 12+ (using breakout groups)
Number of Sessions	1
Length of Session(s)	30 minutes to 1 hour
Materials Needed	Printed copies of “US Poverty Fact Sheet” for each participant, available at https://kairoscenter.org/study/
Recommended Preparatory Materials for Facilitators	“‘Questions Must Be Raised’: Who Are the Poor? Why Are We Poor?” by Willie Baptist and Liz Theoharis, available at https://kairoscenter.org/who-are-the-poor/ This article can be recommended to the group as further reading.

The following activity is guided by a series of discussion questions. These are in bold below. They should be adapted to fit the audience and lead to discussion that is relevant to the group.

Part 1: Reading the Fact Sheet Together

In groups where everyone is comfortable reading aloud, each person takes a turn reading one bullet point, moving around the room.

In groups where reading levels are unknown, ask for volunteers to read one section at a time. When more time is available, pause for discussion between each section of the fact sheet using the questions in Part 2. Then use the questions in Part 3 after reading all of the sections.

Part 2: Initial Responses

In larger groups (12+) break into smaller discussion groups to answer these questions. When you return to the full group, share some small group responses with the full group.

What surprises you?

What doesn't surprise you? What is familiar to you? (This could be something you know well because you have experienced it or know people who have experienced it.)

Part 3: Reflection

Who is missed when we use the federal poverty line to tell us who is poor and who is not poor?

Who benefits from the way our economy is organized? Who doesn't benefit?

How do these facts change how we think about the solutions to poverty?