

A companion training resource to  
Poverty Race Class & Culture ([PRCC](#))

# COST OF POVERTY EXPERIENCE

## Seeing poverty through the eyes of real people...

The **Cost of Poverty Experience™** (COPE) is an immersive role play learning experience that gives participants an opportunity to experience the challenges of living in poverty first hand through the scenarios of real families who lived through them. It is designed for practitioners to see what the individuals and families they serve experience as they navigate the system of helping organizations, governmental agencies and social challenges they face living in poverty.

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## Upon completion participants will:

- Have a greater understanding of what it feels like to face the challenges of living in poverty
- Experience how the stress of living in poverty impact day to day living and decision making
- Understand how resources intended to help often work to keep people mired in poverty
- Discuss how insights from COPE might be applied to current programs & services that are intended to address poverty

## Duration:

(3.5) Hours Immersion Role Play

## Format:

Poverty Simulation Learning Activity, Initial Reflections & Learning Application Discussion





**Robert L. Caldwell**  
**Executive Director & Lead Trainer**

### **Professional Achievements**

A Columbus, Ohio native, Robert L. Caldwell, Jr. has been a practitioner and thought leader in the area of urban poverty for more than thirty years. He is the founder or co-founder of several different social service initiatives including; P.A.S. Program (Positive Alternative to Suspension), in cooperation with the Columbus Public Schools, to provide academic remediation and social service intervention for students serving out of school suspension. P.A.S. won a merit award from the Columbus Chamber of Commerce in 1995. In 1991 he helped develop the R.O.W.T.E.A.M.S. Program (*Residents Off Welfare Teaching Educating Achieving Motivating Success*), which in 1997 won the Governor's Award (Voinovich) for Excellence in Public Service in the State of Ohio. Robert also served as the Managing Director of the YWCA Family Center, an emergency homeless family shelter offering an array of support to homeless families. During his tenure, the shelter served over 1500 families and received national recognition from the National Alliance to End Homelessness.



### **Community Service Achievements**

Robert served the center city community where he and his family lived as the founder and past President of the Weinland Park Community Civic Association, a coalition of residents, social service and community organizations and city officials working to improve the quality of life for the residents of the Weinland Park Community; as an Area Commissioner representing Weinland Park on the University Area Commission (a community extension of the Columbus City Council) and as a member of the Board of Directors of Columbus Compact Corporation, the federally designated administrator of Columbus Ohio's Empowerment Zones, charged with the revitalization of Columbus' center city neighborhoods. He served as an advisor to the then Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, and served on the Mayor's (Coleman) 2012 Bicentennial Commission as Safety Committee Co-Chair; and as a Senior Fellow for the Mission Columbus Institute for Community Initiatives, a faith-based, community organization working to facilitate collaborative efforts between faith and community-based organizations. **In 2016**, Robert received a [Distinguished Service Award from The Ohio State University](#) for his work in the Weinland Park Community.

### **Collaborative Leadership Achievements**

**The Weinland Park Neighborhood Plan** – worked with the Columbus Development Department, community residents and stakeholders as the Committee Chair to develop a comprehensive economic development plan impacting over 100,000 residents, students and employees living and working in the Weinland Park and South Campus Area.

**The Schoenbaum Family Center Development** – worked with Columbus Public Schools and The Ohio State College of Education & Human Ecology to facilitate resident and stakeholder involvement in the design and development of a State-of-the-Art community-based child & family development center.