

Break it Down Discussions

Awareness and Deliberation

Over the past decade, Alabama Possible has produced and distributed its Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet annually. The data sheet highlights rates of poverty, educational attainment, median household income, and many other valuable data points.

Starting with the 2020 Barriers to Prosperity Data Sheet, Alabama Possible generated a discussion guide that Alabamians and educators can use to guide conversations on the data included in the graphic tool. The discussion guide is designed to prompt shared understanding and, perhaps, catalyze action in communities across Alabama.

This virtual engagement series is entitled, "Break It Down: A Statewide Discussion on barriers to Prosperity in Alabama." In 2020, the series was held in the following counties: Colbert, Dallas, Madison, Pike, Tuscaloosa, and Washington Counties. Since the initial series, we have hosted discussions in Greene, Perry, Shelby, and St. Clair Counties.

Engagement Process

The Break It Down Discussion process adapted norms from The David Mathews Center for Civic Life, National Issues Forums, and the Local Voices Network. The discussion process is structured to embrace consistency and promote robust dialogue using the following key components:

- Welcome and Introductions**
- Project Goals**
- Zoom Overview**
- Norms and Agreements**
- Data Sheet Review**
- Shared Understanding**
- Group Discussion**
- Conclusion**

Ready to engage your community?

Contact Alabama Possible
info@alabamapossible.org
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Poverty Simulation Experience

This educational and professional development experience was created as a way to help business and community leaders; students, faculty, and administrators; faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and others understand the realities of poverty. During the simulation, participants will experience typical challenges faced by under-resourced families, including maintaining employment, caring for children or elderly family members, seeking public assistance, and dealing with transportation issues. Can you make it to the end of the month?

How Does it Work?

The simulation experience components include an introduction and briefing by a facilitator, the individualized simulation exercise, and a facilitated debriefing in which participants share what they have learned about living in poverty. A full simulation takes approximately 2 hours.

This experience can accommodate up to 25 participants.

Who Can Benefit?

The Poverty Simulation was designed to sensitize those who frequently work with or assist under-resourced families, as well as to create a broader awareness of the realities of poverty among policy-makers, business and community leaders, students, faculty, administrators, and more. The simulation enables participants to look at poverty from a variety of perspectives and then to recognize and discuss the potential for change within their community.

Students, Faculty, and Administrators - Business and Community Leaders – State Agencies - Nonprofits and Faith-Based Organizations – Elected Officials – Professional Development Conferences – and Others

Interested in taking the Poverty Simulation Challenge?

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Breaking Barriers Forums

The Breaking Barriers Forums are a convergence of awareness & deliberation and empathy building in a community. This phase of the Barriers to Prosperity Toolkit is designed to facilitate a discussion between community citizenry and decision-makers guiding them in identifying actionable ideas for local solutions.

How Does it Work?

The Breaking Barriers Forums engagement process incorporates a series of questions with three areas of focus:

1. What did we learn from our first conversation?
2. What do you want to do?
3. What is the way forward?

By the end of the forum, participants will be able to:

- Describe areas of common concern related to systemic issues of poverty for one's local community.
- Engage in dialogue grounded in active listening about meaningful solutions to eliminate barriers to prosperity in one's local community and Alabama.
- Identify through collaboration and critical reflection ideas for individual and community-based action.

Ready to move from deliberation to action?

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