

The following is a list of next steps that can be taken to further explore and engage in holistic poverty alleviation in your community.

Be intentional
Be courageous
Go with a friend

Go + Listen

If you've been isolated from poverty, there are many places that you can go to connect with people who are willing to share their story. Listen and learn.

- Visit a food pantry or soup kitchen. Serve. Talk to the volunteers and families who frequent there to secure food for their families.
- Commit to volunteering at your local elementary schools- choose a couple from different parts of your town/ city.
- Use a different mode of transportation than what you are used to. Maybe for you this means walking or riding public transportation to work or to shop.
- Go grocery shopping in a different part of town than where you normally frequent. Choose a location that caters to a different economic or ethnic group than your own.
- Visit various churches representing a variety of ethnic/ economic groups. Listen to the themes of their messages comparing the similarities and differences.
- Set up appointments with various change agents in your community who are working to transform their communities (ie: grassroots leaders, Non-Profits).

Partner

There are many ways to partner with individuals, neighborhoods, associations and businesses and organizations in the community. No one entity, group or individual can sufficiently address poverty. Each has a role to play. Additionally, if we play our roles independent of one another, as if each was inconsequential to the other, damaging results can occur for families and communities. If you are connected with an organization that is attempting to alleviate poverty, ask yourself the following questions:

- What role do we have to play in poverty alleviation?
- Where are we getting out of our role? Should we be partnering with others in specific ways?
- How have we isolated ourselves?
- Do we need to work towards repairing relationships in any way (with people, neighborhoods or organizations)?
- How do we go about poverty alleviation more holistically through partnerships?

Study + Reflect

We have included a short list of recommended reading to get started. These publications reflect perspectives on both the structural and individual forces that have shaped poverty and prosperity in America.

Rebuilding Communities

Our Kids, Robert Lupton
The Abundant Community, John Mcknight and Peter Block
The Careless Society, John McKnight
Coming Apart, Charles Murray

Faith Communities

When Helping Hurts, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert
Toxic Charity, Robert Lupton
The Hole in our Gospel, Richard Stearns

Race and Class and Culture

The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander
More than Just Race, William Julius Wilson
Scarcity: The New Science Of Having Less And How It Defines Our Lives, Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir

Discuss

- What stands out to you as the key factors that contribute to poverty? Have you ever tested these assumptions?
- What is your immediate reaction to the word poverty?
- What mental image does your mind conjure up? If you were really honest with yourself, do you play into the social stereotypes associated with poverty in North America?
- Are we now or have we been isolated from families in poverty?
- Is this isolation a problem? If so, how?
- What more can we do to help alleviate poverty in our community?