



In Richland County, 62,000 people are living in poverty*, approximately 16.7% of residents - 3.6% higher than the national average. Of these, 23,200 people living in poverty are in the City of Columbia. 12.8% of Lexington county residents, approximately 35,700 people, are living in poverty. Poverty is a root cause of many other systemic issues facing Midlands residents - economic inequity, racism, food deserts, reduced access to reliable transportation and quality education, among others. Addressing poverty can provide a pathway to creating more livable, equitable and just communities in the Midlands.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Set some guidelines.

Ask every participant to commit to creating a brave space for this conversation to take place. Four things to remember:

- Be respectful – in our language and conversation, we should be respectful to others even if we do not agree.
- Listen and learn from one another.
- Try to keep an open mind.
- The conversation itself matters – we don't have to solve challenges right now, today.

GETTING STARTED:

Make introductions. Ask each participant around the table to share their name, their neighborhood and what brought them to the table.

HAVING THE CONVERSATION:

Pose questions to spark discussion. Invite your participants to consider the following and share their responses, experiences and ideas.

1. What is your definition of poverty?
2. In what ways has poverty touched your life - situational, structural, individual or otherwise? How did you respond to that experience?
3. What would you like to see happen in your community and/or the Midlands to deal with poverty?
4. What resources exist in the Midlands to alleviate poverty and/or increase economic equity in our communities? What resources do you believe are needed?
5. What will you commit to do in the next 3-6 months to support economic equity in your community?

AFTER YOUR CONVERSATION:

Wrapping up your event.

Thank your participants for sharing their thoughts and experiences, and for being part of this important conversation. When we listen and learn from one another, powerful things can happen.

Remind them to:

- Complete the brief survey at OnTheTableCola.org being conducted by Central Carolina Community Foundation for a community report that will be shared with local leaders and stakeholders.
- Contribute to the conversation online by posting photos, ideas and experiences on social media using #OnTheTableCola.
- Consider applying for a Beyond the Table mini-grant. Central Carolina Community Foundation is awarding grants up to \$2,000 each for ideas that emerged from conversations.