



Social Work 1130

Exploring Poverty Project

Overview and Rationale:

This project assesses student mastery of GE Expected Learning Outcomes 2 & 3 and Course Objectives 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, & 8). Poverty is firmly entrenched in our economic system. Even after the longest economic expansion in modern history, millions of adults and children live with incomes well below the poverty line. Social workers work to provide change in the social & economic structure so that there are opportunities for everyone to rise out of poverty. The purpose of this assignment is for you to understand the issue of poverty and how it impacts the lives of people every day. **To complete this assignment, complete the following questions and use the provided budget sheet for a family of 3.** Please be sure to answer all of the questions under each number. **You will be expected to do the following:**

- 1. Do some research on the Causes of Poverty in the U.S.** (2 -3 references)
 - What are the causes & personal costs of poverty?
 - Think about essentials needed in everyday living. Are people in poverty able to access them, some of them or none of them?
 - Was it difficult to determine these basic essentials? Why or why not?
- 2. Identify what specific Social Welfare programs (at least 3) address issues of poverty. Answer the following questions for EACH program:**
 - Who is eligible for the program?
 - What is provided by the program?
 - What is the goal of the program?
 - Do you think the program is adequate? Why or why not?
- 3. Explore the earning potential of entry level employment** (Do not need to apply for the position)
 - Summarize the job description
 - What is the salary, and what benefits are provided? Is it enough to support an individual? A family?
 - What healthcare coverage is provided for the employee? For family members?
 - What are the job requirements? Who would fit those requirements, and who would not?
 - Is this job a viable alternative to public assistance? Why or why not?
 - Do you think that gender or race might play a part in this employment opportunity
- 4. Complete a budget for a family of 3 to see how “minimum wage” compares to “livable wage”** Use the budget worksheet provided to determine a budget for family of 3, a single



parent and 2 children age 3 & 8. Assuming the parent has the entry level job/salary that you identified and discussed in Question #3. Do some research to determine what the approximate costs of each item listed on the budget form might realistically be in your community. Include the worksheet at the end of your paper and be sure to discuss the summary of the budget experience in this section.

- How does your total monthly budget compare with the federal poverty level, i.e. if these parents were making minimum wage, would they be above the poverty line and able to make ends meet?
- How does it compare with the levels of eligibility for and the benefits from current public assistance programs? Would they qualify for benefits even with both parents working fulltime?
- If this family were making minimum wage, in order to make ends meet, what do you cut from their budget?

5. Based on what you have learned, write a one page reflection including what ways we can combat poverty in our society.

Your paper should contain the following:

- Title & Reference page in APA format (paper should contain 3-5 references)
- Summary of research of causes of poverty & personal costs
- Answers to questions on the assignment outline
- 1 page of personal reflection of what you learned from this assignment
- Should be 5-6 pages in length, double spaced, and 12 pt font, 1 in margins.

Length: 5-6 Pages (double spaced), 12 point font, 1 in margins

Grading Rubric

Your paper will be evaluated using the following grading rubric out of **40** total points.

Criteria	Description
Causes of Poverty 5 points	Explanation of the causes of poverty, personal costs and access to the essentials of everyday living.
Identification of Social Welfare Programs 12 points	Paper identified 3 different social welfare programs and provided the following for each: 1. Who is eligible 2. What is provided by the program 3. What is the goal of the program 4. Do you think the program is adequate, why or why not?



Exploration of Entry Level Employment 4 points	Explanation of the job, it's requirements, salary, benefits and probability it could sustain an individual or family. Would a person be better off with this position or reliant on social services? Explanation of the role race or gender could play in this position.
Budget Worksheet 5 points	Completion of the budget worksheet. Comparison to federal poverty guidelines and impact minimum wage would have on this budget. Determination if family would qualify for other assistance programs or what cuts would need to be made from their budget.
Reflection on Poverty 5 points	The response for this section is at least one page and organized in a meaningful manner in response to the Poverty assignment.
Paper length 3 points	Paper is 5-6 pages in length
Paper Structure 3 points	The response is organized in a meaningful manner with correct spelling and grammar.
Title & Reference Page 3 points	Paper includes a title & reference page and references are in APA style.