

## **The Role of Libraries in Addressing Homelessness and Poverty**

### *Course Description*

This course provides an in-depth look at homelessness and poverty and the role of libraries in addressing these social realities. Topics include: Background on why this role is appropriate for libraries; facts about the experience of homelessness in the United States, and how to access relevant statistics; related terms, such as: trauma-informed care, harm reduction, cultural humility, social capital, and associated social service terms. Also included are challenges and barriers for libraries and their unstably housed patrons; stereotypes of homelessness and libraries; how people experiencing homelessness are using libraries; mental and physical health; staff “burnout”; library procedures and public conduct policies; the impact of social inequities; specific examples of what libraries are doing; short term and long term actions libraries can take; and, libraries as active and meaningful partners in meeting community challenges. This class concludes with an action plan project that can serve as a guide for future librarians and those who are currently working in libraries.