Supporting Low-Income Homeowners Through Property Tax Relief

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Low-Income Homeowners Relief Program (LIHR)

Durham Department of Social Services (DSS) created LIHR to help residents burdened by increasing property taxes.

**Qualifications for LIHR:**
- 5-year residence in current house
- Household income is ≤ 80% AMI

**Objectives of LIHR:**
1. Reduce financial hardship associated with rising property taxes
2. Help residents maintain homeownership & remain stably housed

In Durham, the current tax rate is $1.2799 per hundred dollars. Here is an example calculation of a homeowner’s property taxes:

\[ \text{Property Tax Bill} = (\text{Assessed Property Value} \times \text{Tax Rate}) \]

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**Methodology:**
We partnered with DSS to find participants for our interviews. On the LIHR application, we listed:

- Please check this box to indicate interest in participating in an interview about LIHR and related topics.
- Interviews will be approximately 1 hour long
- Conducted on Zoom or phone call
- Receive a $40 Amazon e-gift card or Visa gift card

40 applicants checked the box. Once contacted, 17 agreed to an interview with us.

**Research Question:**
How are low-income homeowners reacting to gentrification and increasing property taxes in their neighborhoods?

**Section 1:** How does LIHR support low-income homeowners?

**Section 2:** How do homeowners describe homeownership and accompanying challenges?

**Section 3:** How do neighborhood changes, if any, affect low-income homeowners?

**Section 4:** How do residents view local government’s response to housing and other issues?

**Interview Participant Demographics:**

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**Policy Recommendations**

1) Increase LIHR marketing & community outreach, and better communication with status updates.

2) Increase access to home repair assistance programs.

3) Build connections between local government and neighborhood organizations in changing areas.

4) Hold listening sessions with local government and low-income residents.