# **Driver's License Suspension and Self-Sufficiency**

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# BASS CONNECTIONS Education & Human Development

# **Background**

Criminal debt from low-level traffic infractions is a large-scale issue in NC

- 1 in 12 NC residents currently has unpaid criminal court debt
- 436,000+ NC drivers' licenses have been revoked for non-payment of fines as of 2017
- 1 in 7 Durham County residents has had active suspensions from Failure To Comply (FTC) or Appear (FTA) since 1980

# License suspensions from FTCs disproportionately affect low-income communities of color

- Racial Inequity: In NC, Black people are nearly 2x more likely than White people to have a license suspension
- In Durham County, Black people made up approximately 70% of FTCs despite comprising only 37% of the total population
- Economic Inequity: In NC, 55% of license suspensions were from people with incomes in the bottom third of the state

Traffic stop, fines administered Inability to Loss of job. pay fines housing, or and fees schooling License and Livelihood: A Constant Cvcle Commute dilemma: Suspension or revocation: absences or suspended driving loss of license Restricted mobility and independence

Research Question: How does Driver's License Suspension and Reinstatement Affect Life Outcomes for Durham Residents?

# **Durham Expunction and Restoration (DEAR) Program**

# Case Work Filed petitions to clear or remove old, unresolved charges from non-traffic cases Restoration Supported the reinstatement of

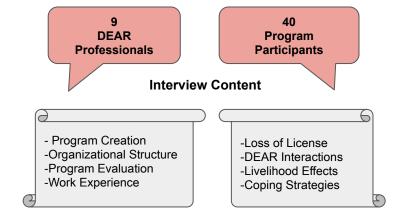
#### Supported the reinstatement of suspended or revoked driver's licenses

# By The Numbers

- \$2,500,000 in fines and fees waived
- 51,000 traffic charges dismissed
- 6,500 unpaid traffic tickets remitted
- 600 expunction petitions filed

## Methods: Qualitative Interviews

#### Interviewees



# **Findings**

### Recommendations

# State Policy:

Excessive
Punishments and
Inequitable
Outcomes

Communication.

Administrative

and

Barriers

Eliminate license suspension/revocation due to failure to pay or appear in court

# County Policy: Confusion, Poor

Create an online portal informing participants of their progress with fines, expungement, or restoration

# Small Number of Restored Licenses

### **County Policy:**

Increase funding and staffing for DEAR. Establish a fund for DMV-related fees

# Outside of Durham Present a Barrier to

Restoration

Legal Issues

## State Policy:

Institute statewide expunction and restoration programs