

Lesson Plan

Georgia Planning Association Conference Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Lived Experience: Exploring Housing Affordability Through Experiential Learning

Created by: Carolina Rodriguez, AICP and Lina Martinez for use by planners to encourage empathy in the practice. The lesson is designed to provide just enough structure to encourage conversation. Participants are experts in their own experiences.

0900-1015 (75 minutes)

Facilitators: 2; should be someone with good facilitation skills regardless of content expertise plus a housing planner or practitioner; preferable for facilitators to have lived experience with housing challenges with sensitivity to trauma.

Class Description: Be prepared to experience what it is like to look for a home in your community that meets your family's budget. The catch: life will set your budget at 60% or less of the area median income. How do you go about finding such affordable homes? How do I get one for my family? What are the living conditions? Facilitators will guide participants through a lived experience simulation to explore the meaning of housing affordability.

Teaching Objectives:

- Connect policy and program decisions to the impacts at the household and family level encouraging empathy in the practice.
- Model an approach that planners can take in their own communities to include diverse perspectives in the planning process.

Supplies: presentation capability A/V, slide deck with AMI chart, family stories and budget worksheet handout (included).

Time	Minutes	Instructions
0900-0915	15	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Review agenda and objective slides.○ Facilitators are encouraged to introduce themselves in a way that shares life experience and hardships. Be vulnerable because this exercise asks participants to do the same.○ Introduce: What is Experiential Learning?
0915-0930	15	Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Facilitators divide class into small groups of ~4 people. Folks are welcomed to work alone if they prefer and groups may self assemble. Give group instructions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use Part 1 slide as a guide.○ Share why your group chose this family. (Reflection)

0930-0955	25	<p>Part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators review the definition of affordability. Walk participants through how to read the area median income and income limits table. Give group instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use your family story and Area Median Income tables to determine income limits and eligibility for housing programs. (Concrete Experience) ○ Share with the larger group responses to the questions on Part 2 slide. (Reflection) ○ Facilitators review slide with budgets for typical working people in a community—childcare worker, hairstylist, construction worker, teacher.
0955-1010	15	<p>Part 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators give group instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Search for housing to meet your family’s needs. (Concrete Experience) ○ Share how your group approached this. Use slide questions as a guide. (Reflection)
1010-1015	5	<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators review the sources of information used in the design of the experience. ○ Facilitators thank participants for actively engaging.

Family Stories

Note: These stories are based on people we know. Their stories embody common themes we encounter in housing work. Take care with their experiences.

1. Nicole is a single mom living in Atlanta with her 2 daughters Kate and Violet. Nicole worked for several years as a waitress. She recently was able to get a job as a receptionist at a law firm earning \$46,000 a year. The increase in pay means that she no longer qualifies for supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP). Kate is 4 years old and Violet is 12. Violet is excited to be in the middle school orchestra as a violin player.
2. Mary is a 72 year-old retired preschool teacher on social security with an annual income of \$21,960. She lives alone but her son Tony, who is 45, stays with her. Because of his felony record, his jobs are short-term and often seasonal. Tony relies on his mom to stay off the streets and helps her get to her frequent medical appointments. Mary loves her son very much and helps him out in whatever way she can.
3. The Chengs are a family of six. Mr. Cheng works as a mechanic at a nearby autoshop and sometimes does some jobs at home in his driveway. Ms. Cheng is a stay-at-home mom. She makes and sells dumplings to her Taiwanese community. Their youngest child, Jo, is wheelchair bound and nonverbal. Mr. Cheng earns roughly \$65,000.
4. Kristy is fresh out of foster care and works at a restaurant making \$12.00 an hour. She qualifies for financial aid for classes at the technical college. She has a hard time getting to class on the bus.
5. Marcus was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and suffers from combat trauma. Marcus doesn't go anywhere without his support dog Sandy. Sometimes he and Sandy sleep at a homeless encampment where he knows some other veterans. He doesn't have a source of income but does qualify for a type of housing voucher called Veterans Affairs Supporting Housing (VASH).
6. Bianca fled an abusive relationship with her 18-month old son. They've been at the shelter for 3 months, and it's time for them to move to something more permanent. She's worried they will have to sleep in her car. She does not have any family or friends in the area. She wants to work but childcare is too expensive.

Family Budget Worksheet

Use this worksheet to envision how your family might manage their income and expenses.

% AMI	
Annual income	\$
Monthly paycheck	\$
Other	\$
<hr/>	
Monthly Income Total	\$
Taxes (payroll 15.3%)	\$
Rent 1BR 30%	\$
Renter's insurance	\$
Utilities	\$
Communication	\$
Transportation	\$
Food	\$
Other:	\$
Other:	\$
Other:	\$
<hr/>	
Monthly Expense Total	\$
Leftover each month	\$
<hr/>	
a day	

