

Presentation by Adriane Wilson
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There are many people in Pierce County who suffer from housing insecurity like me. I've been homeless too many times before and am facing that consequence once again. In fact, I have two days before I'm homeless again. Although I've worked hard, I find myself here over and over again.

What I realized after being in this position for so many years is that it's not due to lack of effort. All too often big organizations, non-profits, city officials, make decisions about us without us. Many African Americans in Pierce County face lots of barriers, including lack of opportunity to sit at the table while decisions about our community are being made. Organizations without a trauma-informed approach only exacerbate the problems.

African Americans have purposely been excluded from participating in social networks that promote financial stability, creating barriers that many of us can't overcome. Not only should African Americans in Pierce County be at the table when decisions are made on our behalf, without our input there is not a real decision.

Lack of motivation, qualifications, integrity, are not the issue - lack of opportunity is.

We all know that dominate beliefs drive strategies that impact communities. Culturally relevant products are desperately needed. It will take African Americans over 228 years to catch up to white wealth. Redistributing income to reduce inequality, lifting heavy tax burdens on the and recognizing that black people tend to have a longer period of poverty due to coded decisions and the lasting effects of redlining are needed.

We deserve to have homes that we aren't afraid of losing and we should have the power to define what that home looks like. Risk-based pricing has also had a disproportionate impact on black consumers.

Being "low income" is a public health issue and constant displacements lasts generations. Pierce County needs to expand economic opportunities for low income families! Start by listening to what people like me have to say. We don't need others to speak for us. We can speak for ourselves.