University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

Apr 3rd, 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Experience Immigrants Have With Housing in Waterloo

Darlene Fitkin
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Experience Immigrants Have With Housing in Waterloo

Darlene Fitkin
Masters in Social Works
University of Northern Iowa

A Growing Immigration Population

Advantages for community diversity range from social and economic benefits

Problem Statement

- Housing is major challenge to successful settlement

- Housing affects social, psychological and quality of life

- Limited or no study has been done

Patacchini, E., & Venanzoni, G. (2014). Peer effects in the demand for housing quality. *Journal of Urban Economics, 83 (Supplement C), 6-17.* Retrieved from *https://doi.ort/10.1016/j.jue.2014.06.002*

Purpose of Study

- Examine immigrants' experience with housing in Waterloo

Significance of the Study

- Important to social workers

  - Help identify specific areas needing intervention

  - Maintain and sustain better housing provision

  - How to better prepare our children

Breaking the housing barriers

Method

- Qualitative Research Approach

- Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Approval Granted to do Research

Method continued

All IRB protocols were professionally observed
- ■ Permission to speak to participants
- ■ Invitation to participate
- ■ Consent form for each interviewee of the study
- ■ List of 10 questions
- ■ Individual interviews

Procedure

Participants

- 5 people aware of home environment
- Voluntary involvement and received a ten dollar gift certificate
- Each oral interview took approximately one hour
- 4 persons were interviewed

Procedure continued

Analysis

- Interviews transcribed
- REV an online transcription service
- Used Dedoose to code the transcriptions
- Developed Themes

FINDINGS

The Top Three Themes for the Findings Were

- Language Barrier

- Living Conditions

- Institutional System

Language Barrier

Burma, Malaysia and Thailand and various countries from Africa especially, Congo and Angola

✓ **Leases written in English not in language tenant could understand**

✓ **Tenant did not understand how to contact landlord**
　　　Email　　Text　　Phone　　Written note

✓ **Tenant did not know what was expected of them**
　　　When rent was due　　　How to report repairs or other issues
　　　How to pay the rent　　　How to notify if moving

✓ **Tenant did not know what to expect of the landlord**
　　　Safe environment　　　　Rodent and bug infestation free

Safety Issues

"…a lot of garbage in hallways, up the stairs…"

"…a lot of things not getting fixed or repaired in a timely manner"

"…dodge phone calls too, …when it's over 100 degrees…air isn't working…"

"…a lot of garbage and debris…broken glass and stuff."

Infestation of bugs

"… they had a huge cockroach nest…"

"…bedbugs is a real problem…"

"…cockroaches in all of the apartments…"

"…cockroaches and bedbugs…"

"…major housing problem, bugs…"

"…cockroach infestation could be prevented…"

Institutional System

Email

"You have to send them an email…"

"They would not have a computer"

'They wouldn't have computer knowledge"

"Maintenance request…through email…"

"Not all of them (have computers)"

Institutional System continued

Texting

"They don't have phone…"

"…Lost deposit because texted landlord…"

Handwritten notes

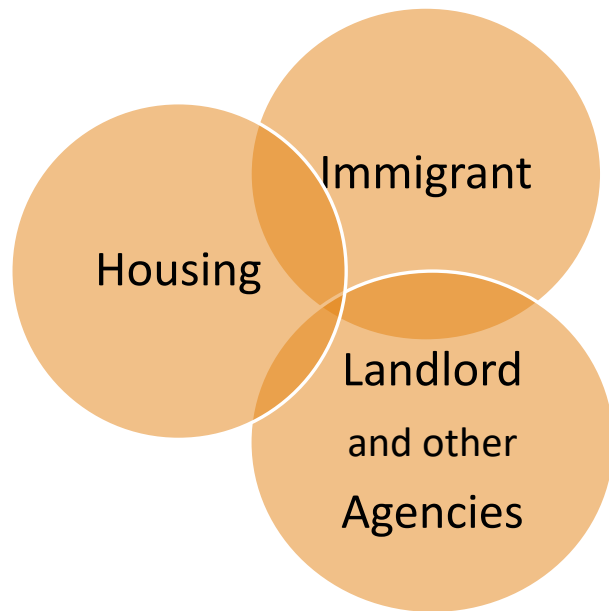"…not able to read English so they do not understand notes landlord sends…"

"…need to communicate in hand written notes to landlord…"

Limitations of Research

Small test sample

WHAT   NOW ??

Immigrant

Housing

Landlord
and other
Agencies

Advocate

How?

Nonprofit Organization

Hope In a Storm

Darlene Fitkin
&
Marie Adebiyi

501c3

Grants and Funding

- Collaborate with other agencies and UNI
- Making of film(s) to teach housing issues
- Landlord – Tenant Round Table
- Implement, housing specific, learning lab
- Continue Housing Research, As Needed

Landlords   Other Agencies   Immigrants

Thank You

Many have helped and encourage me during these last few years to acquire my MSW

- My God, Jesus, who has given me the health and mental ability
- My children for saying "Yes mom, you can do it" many times over during this journey
- My pastors and church family
- Don Wright who first pointed me in the direction of MSW "Its your most powerful degree…"
- Dr. William Downs for his encouragement and help
- Rod Library staff, especially the research staff, technical people and cleaning staff
- Social Work Department and staff that have taught me and encouraged me
- Marie Adebiyi, my friend, business partner

References

Patacchini, E., & Venanzoni, G. (2014). Peer effects in the demand for housing quality. *Journal of Urban Economics, 83 (Supplement C), 6-17.* Retrieved from *https://doi.ort/10.1016/j.jue.2014.06.002*

Sterling Codifiers, (2015). Retrieved from http://www.sterlingcodifiers.com/codebook/m_index.php?book_id=412