



The United Way ALICE Report provides the most comprehensive look at Michigan residents who are struggling financially. Many households are living below the Federal Poverty Level, but an even greater number of households are what United Way calls **ALICE** - an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. These ALICE Fast Facts from the 2017 update represent key findings from the report and what they mean for Michigan and United Way.

United Way of Northwest Michigan is dedicated to fighting for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. Through programs that support ALICE families, workplaces, and communities, United Way is working to address the range of issues that ALICE face.

NEARLY 40% OF FAMILIES IN THE GREATER GRAND TRAVERSE REGION FALL INTO OR BELOW THE ALICE THRESHOLD

What this means: Households across our region are struggling to make ends meet. Many families and individuals in our region don't make enough to afford the basic necessities of housing, childcare, food, health care, and transportation. Despite signs of an improving economy, the cost of living continues to exceed what most wages pay. This problem has consequences not just for ALICE households, but for our broader community as well.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A CHALLENGE FOR MANY IN OUR REGION

What this means: Renters and homeowners across our region are paying significant portions of their wages for housing. The highest rates for homeowners fall in Leelanau County where more than 51% of homeowners are paying more than 30% of their income for housing. For renters, the highest rates are in Antrim County where more than 54% are paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN PARTS OF OUR REGION IS HIGHER THAN THE STATE AVERAGE

What this means: More families in our region are struggling to find employment than other communities across the state. In our region, Kalkaska County has the highest unemployment rate at 10.2% compared to the state average of 7.2%. The lowest unemployment rates are in Grand Traverse County at 4.4%.

ALICE REPORT FAST FACTS

CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY REMAINS A CHALLENGE FOR FAMILIES IN OUR REGION. MORE THAN 25% OF ALICE FAMILIES ANNUAL BUDGET IS SPENT ON CHILDCARE.

What this means: In the Household Survival Budget for a family of four, child care accounts for 25.6% of the family budget across our region. Yet for many ALICE households, 24% of earned income is not enough to pay for even home-based child care, the least expensive organized care option. When income, government and nonprofit assistance are combined, there is still a 50% gap in resources to meet the basic ALICE Threshold for childcare. One of the biggest factors in determining the economic stability of a household with children is the number of wage earners in the household. When parents cannot work due to limited or inaccessible child care, consequences are twofold – the child may not gain pre-learning skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond, and the parent has to forgo work, limiting future earning potential.

THERE IS A \$7 BILLION GAP BETWEEN ADDITIONAL WAGES OR PUBLIC RESOURCES NEEDED TO BRING THE 1.53 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS ABOVE THE ALICE THRESHOLD. THE AMOUNT NEEDED TO BRING ALL ALICE HOUSEHOLDS TO FINANCIAL STABILITY HAS GROWN FASTER THAN ANY GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

What this means: It is often assumed that ALICE households have savings to draw upon in an emergency or have access to public assistance as a last resort. However, most ALICE households have little or no savings, and are not typically eligible for public and private assistance because their earnings are above qualifying limits.

ALICE REPORT FAST FACTS

WHAT UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST MICHIGAN IS DOING ABOUT ALICE

United Way of Northwest Michigan is bringing community and business partners together to help address the conditions that will give ALICE households a chance to move above the ALICE threshold.

- United Way of Northwest Michigan is working with Alliance partners in the areas of education, basic needs, and health to address issues across our region collaboratively.
- United Way advocates for programs that support the basic needs of our community, we know that providing access to healthy food, affordable housing, and utility assistance can make a big difference for families across our community, particularly those at or below the ALICE threshold.
- United Way advocates for post-secondary education and workforce development so that ALICE households do not become trapped in low-wage jobs.
- United Way supports high quality K-12 education, so that kids from all households can prepare for a successful career and life. Student achievement and post-secondary preparedness depends on the resources and opportunities available to students in our region.

