

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ALICE in Focus Data Reveals Staggering Statistics about Children in Pre-Pandemic Louisiana

New report and interactive tools reveal that federal poverty data undercounts how many children of all races are growing up amid financial insecurity.

Baton Rouge, La. (April 5, 2022) – A new report titled *ALICE in Focus: Children*, released by United For ALICE, reveals the disproportionate impact of financial hardship on Louisiana’s children, while also challenging the reliance on federal poverty guidelines for eligibility for assistance programs. The report finds traditional measures of poverty have severely undercounted the number of children of all races ages 18 and younger in Louisiana who are growing up in financially insecure households.

While 26 percent of all children in the state were deemed in poverty in 2019, the report shows that 31 percent lived in families defined as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). ALICE households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than what it costs to live and work in the modern economy. Combined, 57 percent of Louisiana’s children lived in households below the ALICE Threshold, with income that doesn’t meet the basic costs of housing, child care, health care, transportation and a smartphone plan. Capital Area United Way’s work prioritizes the ALICE population and funds both existing programs and new, innovative solutions for ALICE in the 10-parish Capital Area.

The majority of Louisiana’s Black and Hispanic children — 76 percent and 66 percent respectively — lived in households that couldn’t afford the basics in 2019, compared to 42% of white children, according to a new report from Louisiana Association of United Ways and its research partner, United For ALICE.

“Undercounting the number of children who are at risk can have lifelong consequences,” said George Bell, President and CEO of Capital Area United Way. “Thousands of children are locked out of receiving critical supports for stable housing, food, and quality education, all of which can inhibit healthy child development. There is a critical need for us as a community to look at this data of the ALICE population and respond appropriately.”

Because ALICE households often earn too much to qualify for public assistance, the report finds that more than 341,000 at-risk children didn’t access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP.

Other findings from *ALICE in Focus: Children* include:

- Having two working parents didn’t guarantee financial stability; 29 percent of Louisiana children lived in a home with two working adults whose income didn’t meet the cost of basic needs in 2019.
- Among households below the ALICE Threshold, families of Black children had the lowest homeownership rate at 31 percent in comparison with 89 percent of families of white children.
- Nearly 245,000 children in households earning below the ALICE Threshold had no high-speed internet access at home.

“Having accurate, complete data is the foundation for designing equitable solutions,” said United For ALICE National Director Stephanie Hoopes, Ph.D. “COVID-19 hit ALICE families so much harder than others because they struggle to build savings yet often don’t qualify for financial assistance.”

According to the new research, 42 percent of Louisiana families below the ALICE Threshold reported in the fall of 2021 that their children “sometimes or often” didn’t have enough to eat.

Visit www.cauw.org/aliceinfofocus for more information about Louisiana’s ALICE in Focus around children. More data is available through the *ALICE in Focus: Children* interactive data dashboard – which provides filters for regional and local geographies, age, race, disability status, living arrangements and household work status. Visit www.UnitedForALICE.org/Focus-Children.

ALICE in Focus: Children is the first installment in the *ALICE in Focus* Research Series, which draws from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Each installment in the series will highlight a specific segment within the ALICE demographic. Upcoming topics include people with disabilities and veterans.

The ALICE Reports for Louisiana are made possible by the generous corporate support from Entergy Louisiana. As the lead Louisiana sponsor and as a National ALICE Advisory Council member, Entergy supports ALICE research in our state and around the nation.

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Capital Area United Way

For more than 97 years, Capital Area United Way has touched thousands of lives in our 10-Parish service area. We envision a community where everyone is empowered to reach their full potential. Our mission is to solve our community’s toughest challenges by leveraging partnerships to advance the common good in education, income stability, and healthy living. To learn more visit www.cauw.org.

About United For ALICE

United For ALICE is a driver of innovation, research and action to improve life across the country for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and for all. Through the development of the ALICE measurements, a comprehensive, unbiased picture of financial hardship has emerged. Harnessing this data and research on the mismatch between low-paying jobs and the cost of survival, ALICE partners convene, advocate and collaborate on solutions that promote financial stability at local, state and national levels. This grassroots ALICE movement, led by United Way of Northern New Jersey, has spread to 24 states and includes United Ways, corporations, nonprofits and foundations in Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawai’i, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, Washington, D.C., West Virginia and Wisconsin; we are United For ALICE. For more information, visit: UnitedForALICE.org.