

FLORIDA ALICE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



46%

of Florida households struggle to afford the basic necessities of housing, child care, food, technology, health care and transportation.

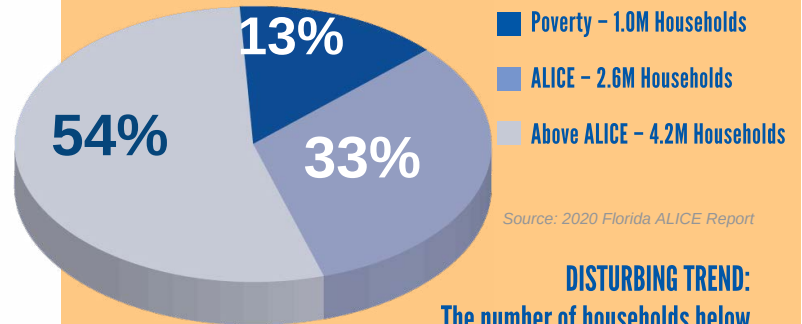


The Florida United Way network is comprised of 28 local United Way non-profits supporting every zip code in all 67 Florida Counties, and is represented by its statewide organization, United Way of Florida. This 501c(3) organization along with all Florida United Ways serve Florida's ALICE population. ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed - "Employed" is the critical word. ALICE represents households that have incomes above the Federal Poverty Limit, but consistently struggle to afford basic needs, such as housing, food, healthcare, childcare, and transportation. United Way of Florida releases a report on our ALICE population on a biennial schedule. This researched report adds valid and reliable data to back up the stories we hear about Floridians living in financial distress.

From the 2018 United Way of Florida ALICE Report, of Florida's 7.8 million households, 13% (1.0 million) lived in poverty and another 33% (2.6 million) percent were ALICE, including nearly 60% of Florida's minority families. These numbers skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic as result of challenges such as loss of work or childcare, rising prices owing to scarcity, and lack of affordable housing. This trend continues as moratoriums on evictions sunset and people face the real possibility of losing their access to stable housing.

The increasing minimum wage highlights the need to find solutions to benefits cliffs for low-wage workers and increased flexibility in eligibility for safety net programs, which low-wage workers rely on to make ends meet. Adding to the already challenging environment for programs that serve ALICE workers and families is the need for increased contracted reimbursement rates and subsidies for state-funded programs and services related to the upcoming increase in the minimum wage.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, FLORIDA 2018



Source: 2020 Florida ALICE Report

DISTURBING TREND:
The number of households below the ALICE Threshold increased by 10% from 2010 to 2018.

Our early childhood educators, who are ALICE themselves, have been essential to the workforce during the pandemic, are invariably in need of wage relief as well, while also recognizing the impact of professional credentials on the quality of education and development of the children in their care.

ALICE families live on the brink of financial disaster every day; just one eviction, medical crisis, or other unanticipated expense away from falling into poverty.

ALICE workers of all races and ethnicities are essential to the fabric of our society and our economy. ALICE works in jobs that were on the frontline during COVID-19, from healthcare professionals to early childhood educators and teachers, and to mechanics and hospitality workers; they are hardworking people we rely on every day. The future success of our communities is inextricably connected to the financial stability of Florida's ALICE households. When ALICE suffers and is forced to make difficult choices, we all face serious consequences.

The "ALICE Threshold" is the conservative cost, calculated by county and statewide, of the six basic necessities for a household to survive: housing, transportation, child care, health care, food, and technology. Between 2010 and 2018 basic household expenses increased by 20% for a Florida family of four while median wages increased only 13%.

46%
of Florida households struggle to make ends meet

60%
63% of Black households and 56% of Hispanic households live below the ALICE threshold

78%
of female-headed households live below the ALICE threshold.

46%
of all Florida families with children live below the ALICE threshold.

FINANCIAL STABILITY



SUPPORT solutions to mitigate the impact of the minimum wage increase on state-funded programs who receive contracted reimbursement rates and subsidies, and the impact on benefits cliffs that act as barriers to family economic self-sufficiency.

IMPROVE household stability through increased funding for affordable housing, eviction mitigation, and protections for victims of domestic crimes.

STRENGTHEN Florida's workforce development programs that lead to living wage jobs, support workforce transitions and lead to certificate, industry credential, or post-secondary degree.

PROMOTE understanding of Florida's 211 network and its critical role in linking ALICE families with needed services, and information-rich 211 database which provides insights of community needs.

EDUCATION



MAXIMIZE federal dollars to stabilize the early learning system including infrastructure and increasing quality capacity based on local needs.

SUPPORT adult education programs focused on literacy and GED preparation that enable access to living wage jobs.

HEALTH



INCREASE access to the Florida KidCare program.

MAINTAIN targeted funding of prevention and treatment services for all behavioral health services.

MAXIMIZE funding for home and community-based services for older adults to reduce nursing home costs and waitlists.

SUPPORTING FLORIDA'S VETERANS



EXPAND access to professional and workforce development opportunities that allow Veterans and their families to more successfully transition into civilian life.

SUPPORT recommendations of the 2020 FDVA Forward March report to reinforce best practices, reduce redundancies and implement solutions to fill gaps in serving Florida's Veterans.

The **Florida United Ways Consensus Legislative Agenda** provides policy makers opportunities to help ALICE households become more financially stable and self-sufficient through investments in **education for all** and improving opportunities to **live healthy** and **financially secure** lives, improving the economy for everyone in the Sunshine State.