

Report: More Than A Third Of Hoosiers Below Poverty Level

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The United Way report shows more than a third of Indiana households live below the federal poverty level, or can't afford the basic cost of living.

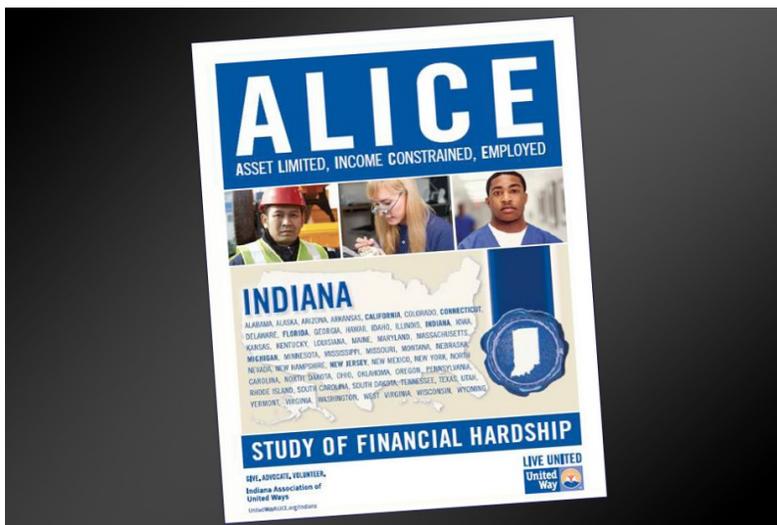


Photo: Indiana Association of United Ways

ALICE, Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, is a measure developed by the United Way to measure basic cost of living, what it calls a Household Survival Budget.

More than a third of Indiana households live either below the federal poverty level, or don't earn enough to afford the basic cost of living, according to the United Way's ALICE report released today.

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Indiana Association of United Ways Vice President Lucinda Nord says the survival budget is bare bones.

"It is affordable housing, minimal, modest transportation, child care that may or may not be at the kind of quality that's expected but the average child care costs," Nord said.

The federal poverty level is about \$23,000 a year for a family of four. The average Indiana household survival budget, what United Way calls the ALICE threshold, is about \$46,000.

Twenty-three percent of Hoosiers live in that gap, which Nord says means they often don't qualify for government support but don't make what's considered a livable wage.

And while Indiana government leaders and lawmakers often point to the number of available high wage jobs and a need for more training and education to fill them, Nord points out that isn't the only job sector that's seen growth.

"Someone still needs to work at the retail shop and at the restaurant and at the car repair place and at the preschool," she said. "And we're seeing growth in those numbers of job and not growth in wages and benefits."

The ALICE report drills data down to the county and township level, which Nord says can help communities understand the cost of living in their area and how many people are living with uncomfortable wages.