

1 million Hoosier households cannot afford the basics

By Lindsey Yates

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Population: 108,428 | **Number of Households:** 40,277
Median Household Income: \$10,615 (state average: \$16,074)
Unemployment Rate: 9.7% (state average: 8.7%)
Gini Coefficient (zero = equality; one = inequality): 0.48 (state average: 0.44)

How many households are struggling?

ALICE, an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed, are households that earn more than the U.S. poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. Combined, the number of poverty and ALICE households equals the total population struggling to afford basic needs.

Poverty	ALICE	STRUGGLING	Above ALICE
6,891 HH	9,753 HH		23,633 HH

VIGO COUNTY, Ind. (WTHI) – More than 1 million households in the Hoosier state are unable to afford the basics, that’s according to the numbers released in the recent ALICE report.

ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. The study by the Indiana Association of United Way focuses on the financial hardships Hoosiers face, shining a spotlight on the working poor across Indiana.

The data comes from a variety of sources including the U.S Census, International Revenue Service, and Indiana Department of Workforce Development. Troy Fears with United Way of the Wabash Valley said the numbers give them an idea of just how many people in the area are in need.

“It really tries to show by county how people are doing with income levels and jobs,” said Fears.

ALICE is a measure developed by the United Way to determine the basic cost of living.

“Someone who is considered “ALICE” is a working individual who makes enough money to be above the poverty line but still doesn’t qualify for federal or local support,” explained Fears.

According to the report, the survival budget for a single adult in Vigo County is \$16,175 a year, for a family of four it’s \$45,430.

"There's a lot of under employed individuals, and I think that's what this report also indicates. We've got a lot of people who are trying to make it work," said John Etling, with Catholic Charities of Terre Haute.

41 percent of households in Vigo County live below the ALICE threshold, about 24 percent are above the poverty level but below the cost of living, and 17% live below the poverty level.

"The 41% it's folks that are right on the edge of hardship," said Fears.

There are nearly 10,000 households in Vigo County that are considered ALICE, an often overlooked population.

"It's a big block of children living in those households that are being affected and possibly not having enough resources to reach their full potential," said Etling.

For local non-profits the numbers translate to more people in need.

"It also gives us an opportunity to look at some programs that we aren't as strong and supportive in, SNAP outreach for example," said Etling.

He also has a message for those who struggle to make ends meet.

"Look for those programs within their own neighborhoods and communities for assistance and not lose hope," said Etling.

The ALICE report also finds that one in three Hoosier households cannot afford the basics.