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United Way Releases New "ALICE" Report

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LAFAYETTE, La. -

The United Way released a report Wednesday that shows financial hardships facing so many Louisiana families.



The "ALICE" report, which stands for "Asset limited, Income Constrained, and Employed," shows that 40 percent of Louisiana families struggle to afford the basic cost of living.

With the "ALICE" report, the United Way is giving a name to the thousands who are working, but still struggling. They're hoping this starts the conversation on making reforms.

Lafayette resident Ashley Duran calls herself an "ALICE."

"I hope opening up, I think, maybe other "ALICE's" will understand, 'Hey you have a name,' and, 'Hey, we see you get by,'" said Ashley Duran.

Duran works full-time, but still struggles to afford housing, child care, food, transportation, and health care.

"We've made it so hard for people to, you know, like myself, to reach out, to say, 'Hey, like I'm struggling.' 'Hey, I can't.' And you don't want to be mistaken as someone that doesn't pull their weight. It's survival of the fittest," Duran said.

Duran isn't alone. According to the "ALICE" report, 54,000 families in Acadiana don't earn enough to consistently cover basic living expenses.

"Those stats we didn't have. We didn't know there were 377 households in Arnaudville that are struggling. So we know that now, and we know where they are, so it's going to be a tool that we can use to help us target the work that we do. And help us engage the municipalities, and the people, and the churches in those areas," said Executive Director of St. Landry-Evangeline United Way Ginger LeCompte.

"No simple solution is going to work. No 'one size fits all.' How do we better help those people who are living day to day, one emergency away from financial disaster," said President and CEO of United Way of Acadiana Margaret Trahan.

The United Way is using the hashtags "#meetALICE" and "#ALICE LA" on social media to continue the conversation and provide resources.