

**EMBARGOED UNTIL Jan. 8, 2019**

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Louisiana Association of United Ways  
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**Louisiana ALICE Report update: Nearly half of Louisiana households struggle to make ends meet**

**Updated ALICE Report details size and scope of financial hardship in Louisiana**

*IMPORTANT NOTE: An embargoed copy of the report and parish-by-parish/town-level data on the size and demographics of ALICE, as well as the community conditions and costs faced by ALICE households, is available for media to review. Contact Jan Risher at [jrisher@goshiftkey.com](mailto:jrisher@goshiftkey.com) if you would like advance access. The updated ALICE document **AND INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS PRESS RELEASE** is embargoed until 12:01 a.m. Jan. 8.*

Sarah Berthelot, President/CEO of Louisiana Association of United Ways, and the CEOs of regional United Ways providing quotes (in addendum) are available for interviews. Berthelot will be hosting a **tele-press conference at 10 a.m. Jan. 8, 2019**. The press conference will include opportunities to interview Louisiana ALICE Research Advisory Committee members AND include a statement from someone who has been ALICE in Louisiana. **To join that press conference, call 415-200-1362 pin 1847760#.**

**Excel data on ALICE thresholds by parish is available upon request (also embargoed until 12:01 a.m. Jan. 8.)**

*Baton Rouge, Louisiana – New research shows that in Louisiana, 828,255 households — 48 percent — could not afford basic needs such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology in 2016, according to the ALICE Report for Louisiana released today by the Louisiana Association of United Ways, in collaboration with Louisiana United Ways.*

Louisiana's percentage of ALICE households puts it at **the third highest percentage of all 50 states.**

The original ALICE Report Update for Louisiana was released in January 2016, with an additional update released in 2017. The new report advances that information by two years, updating data sources from 2014 to 2016. ALICE, which stands for **Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**, places a spotlight on a large population of hardworking residents who work at low-paying jobs, have little or no savings, and are one emergency from falling into poverty.

The ALICE Report is the most comprehensive depiction of financial need in the state to date, using data from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census. The report includes measures, based on present-day income levels and expenses that show how many Louisiana workers are struggling financially, and why.

“There are so many Louisiana families walking their personal economic tight ropes with courage, grit and hope,” said Sarah Berthelot, President/CEO of Louisiana Association of United Ways. “However, without the ability to get ahead, they are vulnerable — one set back, one illness, one natural disaster or even one car repair can take away any and all security ALICE has worked to sustain. Until the arrival of the ALICE Project in Louisiana, these hardworking Louisianans were an invisible group.”

The 240-page updated ALICE Report for Louisiana reveals many points of data, including:

- As per the update, 48 percent of households struggle to afford the basic necessities and live below the ALICE Threshold — Nearly one in three (29 percent) of Louisiana households are ALICE and 19 percent live in poverty. **The 2016 data increases the number of ALICE household by 6 percent** while the percentage of poverty remains flat at 19 percent. This percentage represents 105,178 more ALICE households struggling to make ends meet throughout the state.
- Households living below the ALICE Threshold make up between 27 percent and 75 percent of the population in every parish in Louisiana. (These households earn above the poverty level but below the Household Survival Budget.) Childcare, representing a Louisiana family’s greatest expense, averaged \$996 per month for two children in licensed and accredited childcare.
- The average Household Survival Budget (calculation created for the ALICE report) for a Louisiana family of four increased to \$53,988 — significantly higher than the federally recognized family poverty level of \$24,300. (Single Household Survival Budget is \$19,548 with the poverty level set at \$11,880.)
- Childcare, representing a Louisiana family’s greatest expense, averaged \$996 per month for two children in licensed and accredited childcare — a \$302 increase since our 2014 ALICE update, which reported an average cost of \$694 for quality childcare for two children. As of this year, technology expenses (smart phones) are included in the ALICE survival budget. This expense was not included in previous ALICE budget calculations.
- The newest ALICE data provides information for various family types for all 64 parishes, including married couple, single adult/one child, two adults/two school-aged children, etc. For all Louisiana ALICE data, visit <https://www.launitedway.org/ALICE>.

The ALICE Report provides parish-by-parish and town-level data, and analysis of how many households are struggling.

“This ALICE Report for Louisiana is made possible by generous corporate support from the Entergy Corporation,” said Berthelot. “As our sponsor and as a National ALICE Advisory Council member, Entergy supports ALICE research in our state and around the nation. The Louisiana Association of United Ways is also grateful for the partnership of Louisiana United

Ways and the countless governmental, nonprofit and business partners who work to find ways to help ALICE.”

“Our team at Entergy is as concerned about keeping power flowing for customers who are struggling financially as we are for those who are without power because of a storm or other issue,” said Patty Riddlebarger, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility, Entergy Corporation. “What that means is a commitment to attack the root causes of poverty, which we took on as a corporate cause with the formation of the low-income customer service initiative.”

Stephanie Hoopes, Ph.D., based in New Jersey, is the director of the ALICE Project. She says the 2016 data shows that ALICE households across Louisiana are being squeezed even tighter.

“Despite low unemployment, wages are not keeping pace with the rising cost of necessities, squeezing ALICE households across Louisiana,” Hoopes said. “These families are particularly vulnerable to the state’s cycle of natural disasters, which continually compromise their economic recovery.”

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*The ALICE Report for Louisiana provides high-quality, research-based information to foster a better understanding of who is struggling in our communities. To produce the ALICE Report for Louisiana, a team of researchers for the ALICE Project collaborated with a Research Advisory Committee, composed of 24 representatives from around Louisiana, who advised and contributed to the report. This collaborative model, practiced in each state, ensures each ALICE Report presents unbiased data that is replicable, easily updated on a regular basis, and sensitive to local context. Working closely with United Ways, the ALICE Project seeks to equip communities with information to create innovative solutions.*

### **About Louisiana Association of United Ways**

The Louisiana Association of United Ways is an association of nine regional United Ways serving 53 parishes throughout Louisiana. Our mission is to integrate action and resources for the common good. We work across our communities to tackle challenges that affect individuals, families and whole communities — challenges that are ultimately bigger than any of us and impact our entire state. We are part of a global network of more than 1,800 United Ways, servicing communities in 41 countries.

## **ADDENDUMS:**

### **Quotes from Louisiana regional United Way CEOs (also available for interviews):**

Capital Area United Way  
George Bell, President & CEO  
Media contact: Kyle Bove  
[kyleb@cauw.org](mailto:kyleb@cauw.org)  
Phone: 225-620-8032

“Capital Area United Way is committed to serving everyone in our community, but especially those individuals and families who are considered ALICE or below the ALICE threshold. As we expected, the ALICE population in our local ten-parish region has increased significantly since the devastating flood of 2016. This valuable new ALICE data will serve as a guide for our team as we engage volunteers in making important funding decisions that will help improve the lives of thousands in our community.”

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St John United Way  
Artis Williams, Executive Director  
[awilliams@stjohnunitedway.org](mailto:awilliams@stjohnunitedway.org)  
Phone: 985-651-9118

“Based on the 2018 ALICE (Asset Limited, Income, Constrained, Employed) Report, almost one out of every two people in St. John the Baptist Parish are in the ALICE population. They can't afford the basic needs (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, cell phone access & taxes). This is one of the key reasons St. John United Way fights so hard to improve the health, education and financial stability for every person in St. John the Baptist Parish.”

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St. Landry-Evangeline United Way  
Ginger LeCompte, Executive Director  
Media Contact: Susan Fisher  
[sfisher@uwsle.org](mailto:sfisher@uwsle.org)  
Phone: 337-942-7815

“We don't shift our focus from the poverty population to those we now refer to as the ALICE population, but rather add the ALICE population to our plate. They have been invisible, but now through the ALICE Project, are sharply defined and in need of an introduction to those making policy decisions, those overseeing or developing programs, and those who can shine a light on their reality.”

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United Way of Acadiana  
Margaret H. Trahan, President and CEO  
Media Contact: Elsa Dimitriadis  
[Elsa.Dimitriadis@unitedwayofacadiana.org](mailto:Elsa.Dimitriadis@unitedwayofacadiana.org)  
Phone: 504-339-7844 (Elsa)

SHORT: “Nearly half of United Way of Acadiana’s service population is either below the poverty line or ALICE. There are no quick fixes, but armed with the data from The ALICE Project, we are able to craft and implement programs like UWA’s Incentivized Matched Savings and Volunteer Income Tax Assessment, for those in need and often overlooked.”

LONG: “United Way of Acadiana serves Lafayette, St. Martin, Vermilion and Acadia parishes, where nearly half of all residents are either below the poverty line or ALICE. By shining a light on this often-invisible population – those who are above the federal poverty level but still unable to earn enough to afford a basic household budget – we are equipped to have the right kind of conversations around real solutions. There are no quick fixes, but armed with the data

from The ALICE Project, we are able to craft and implement programs like UWA's Incentivized Matched Savings and Volunteer Income Tax Assessment, for those who are financially insecure."

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United Way of Central Louisiana  
David Britt, President and CEO  
[britt@unitedwaycenla.org](mailto:britt@unitedwaycenla.org)  
Phone: 318-308-0897

"The data in this update take the ALICE work to a whole new level, with much more detail on family types, for example. The data paint a grim picture of an increasing number of Louisiana families struggling to make ends meet, and we as a state need to grapple with the implications of this data for all of us."

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United Way of Iberia  
Corleen Aucoin Rouly, Executive Director  
[director@unitedwayofiberia.org](mailto:director@unitedwayofiberia.org)  
Phone: 337-364-0424

"ALICE has proven to be an integral part of our organization's plans for our community. This report has also been wholeheartedly accepted by our governmental administration in our city and parish for their budgetary planning."

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United Way of Northeast Louisiana  
Janet S. Durden, President  
[jdurden@unitedwaynela.org](mailto:jdurden@unitedwaynela.org)  
Phone: 318-325-3869

"The newly released ALICE data and the increase in numbers living at or below ALICE survival budget clearly becomes an imperative for community response. Increased financial stability must occur."

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United Way of Northwest Louisiana  
Bruce Willson, CEO  
Media Contact: Charnae McDonald  
[charnae@unitedwaynwla.org](mailto:charnae@unitedwaynwla.org)  
Phone: 318-677-2504

"Nearly one in every two people living in northwest Louisiana are in poverty or considered ALICE. Our hardworking families are faced with challenges and financial hardship because they can't afford their basic needs. That's why this updated ALICE report is a crucial tool to gauge where the work and services are needed most."

"ALICE has become our mission focus! All of programming is now tied to this crucial study."

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United Way of Southeast Louisiana  
Michael Williamson, President and CEO  
Media Contact: Kirby Jane Nagle  
[kirbyn@unitedwaysela.org](mailto:kirbyn@unitedwaysela.org)  
Phone: 501-697-0415

“The new ALICE Report paints a clear picture of financial hardship in our region. While we witnessed an overall decline in the poverty rate, almost one in two households in Southeast Louisiana is still struggling to make ends meet. United Way remains committed to creating more pathways to prosperity for individuals and families to ensure a better, brighter Southeast Louisiana for all.”

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United Way of Southwest Louisiana  
Denise Durel, President and CEO  
Media Contact: Tami Chrisope  
[tchrisope@unitedwayswla.org](mailto:tchrisope@unitedwayswla.org)  
Phone: 337-433-1088 (Tami)

“The challenges faced by hardworking, struggling community members are important to United Way of Southwest Louisiana. The ALICE Report clearly shows where our work is needed and we can be counted on for action because a thriving community requires all individuals and families to have access to a successful life.

## Research Advisory Committee quotes

**Melanie Bronfin, J.D., Executive Director**  
**Louisiana Policy Institute for Children (New Orleans)**

“The ALICE report shows once again that quality, reliable child care is unaffordable for most low-income, working parents in our state. Louisiana invests less than one-half of one percent of our state general funds on early care and education. Yet, such an investment would not only prepare our children for school, it would also support their parents' workforce participation and productivity and provide benefits to Louisiana's employers and the state's economy.”

**Jerome Cox, Ph.D., CEO**  
**Milestone Counseling Services (Shreveport)**

“ALICE families and children are asking for their voices to be heard to ensure a positive difference will be made in their lives. This report sums that goal up. We are better together.”

**Pearson Cross, Ph.D., Associate Dean**  
**College of Liberal Arts, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Lafayette)**

“As the updated ALICE report for Louisiana makes clear, the economic recovery started in 2010, has not ameliorated the condition of very nearly a majority of Louisianans, some 48% of whom live and work below the income necessary to provide a sufficient living for themselves and their families.”

**Steven J. Dick, Ph.D., Research Scientist**  
**Department of Communication, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Lafayette)**

“Helping ALICE households supports people trying to work their way to a better life. This report provides a clear view of where and how Louisiana could do a better job.”

**Jan Moller, Executive Director  
Louisiana Budget Project (Baton Rouge)**

“We’re never going to solve poverty unless we understand the true extent of the problem. A great starting point is the ALICE report, which uses data to show how hard it can be for working families to make ends meet.”

**Susan East Nelson, Executive Director  
Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families (Baton Rouge)**

“Family economic stability provides nurturing environments for children to thrive. The ALICE report is a roadmap that shows us how we can make investments that help raise our children up rather than hold them back.”

**Patty Riddlebarger, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility  
Entergy Corporation (New Orleans)**

“Entergy continues its commitment to give back to communities across Louisiana with our support of the United Way ALICE Project. As a company, we believe we can only be as strong as the communities we serve. The United Way ALICE Project report has the potential to lead the way to stronger Louisiana communities and greater economic development. We challenge organizations and individuals across the state to dig into the data and find ways to work with and improve the lives of ALICE — thereby improving our state.”

**Bill Rodier, Director/CEO  
St. Landry Development Group (Opelousas)**

“The ALICE Project has created a valuable data tool that helps us to assess and understand systemic factors in our populations that directly impact workforce considerations for our area employers.”

**Adrienne Slack, Vice president and Regional Executive  
New Orleans Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (New Orleans)**

“The ALICE update, unfortunately, indicates the number of Louisiana households below the ALICE level increased from 41 percent to 48 percent. The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta remains a committed community partner bringing focus to employment policies and labor market issues affecting low- and moderate-income individuals by acting as a bridge to connect researchers, businesses, and policymakers with innovative education and employment approaches to economic opportunity.”

**Monty Sullivan, Ph.D., President  
Louisiana Community and Technical College System (Baton Rouge)**

“United Way has once again given a voice to the ALICE population. The report is a stark reminder that a large group of Louisiana’s people is working and struggling daily to support their families. The single most effective way to elevate the ALICE population is by providing educational opportunities. Our colleges are committed to redoubling our efforts to improve the lives of the ALICE population in Louisiana.”