



# UNITED WAY **ALICE® PROJECT**

## WHO IS ALICE?

**ALICE®**, an acronym which stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed, is a way of defining our families, neighbors, and colleagues (men and women) who work hard, earn above the federal poverty level, but not enough to afford a basic household budget.

ALICE households earn more than the official US Poverty Level but less than the basic cost of living including housing, food, childcare, healthcare and transportation.

ALICE can be a new graduate just starting out in life, a young family with children or a retiree. Some households become ALICE due to an unforeseen life event; a life-altering health diagnosis, a job loss or family crisis such as divorce or a death.

The future success of our communities is directly tied to the financial stability of ALICE households.

## WHAT IS THE ALICE PROJECT?

The United Way *ALICE Project* is a collaborative effort between United Ways throughout Virginia to improve the lives of vulnerable, financially challenged ALICE households.

The first ALICE Report was completed in Morris County, New Jersey in 2007 and expanded to the whole state of New Jersey in 2012. There are now 15 state ALICE Reports representing one-quarter of the U.S. population.

By Virginia United Ways joining other participating United Ways across the country, we are working together to develop wider strategies to remove obstacles and change the course of this economic crisis in our communities. This effort is stimulating a fresh understanding of United Way, galvanizing new partnerships with funders, politicians, and the wider community.

## WHY IS THE PROJECT IMPORTANT?

The United Way *ALICE Project* raises awareness about an essential but previously hidden part of our community. It also provides a framework, language, and tools for stakeholders to understand, measure, and ultimately implement changes that improve the lives of ALICE.

The future success of our communities is directly tied to the financial stability of ALICE households. When ALICE suffers and is forced to make difficult choices, we all face serious consequences.

With as many as one-third of the population in the United States living in an ALICE household, many public and corporate policy issues must be reassessed and the scope of current solutions be reconsidered.

# WHAT DOES THE PROJECT DO?

**PRODUCES CURRENT RESEARCH:** The highest quality, unbiased data at a local and national level. It is presented in a way that is easy to understand and make actionable for businesses, government, non-profits, academia, the press, and citizens.

**LEADS A LEARNING COMMUNITY:** It provides opportunities for communities to dive deeper into the research, seek funding together, build on pilot programs, and partner on projects with a national scope.

**BUILDS ACTION:** The ultimate goal of the ALICE Project is to stimulate action that will improve the financial stability of ALICE families. The ALICE Project identifies opportunities and works with local United Ways, community partners, and government officials on grant proposals and other impact opportunities.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

### BUILD AWARENESS

- Share the ALICE Report's findings with your colleagues and leadership
- Host an ALICE event or presentation at your organization
- Discuss ALICE issues with colleagues and other business and community leaders
- Make the case for ALICE on social media

### IMPROVE ACCESS

- Consult with United Way to explore additional services and programs that can assist ALICE
- Help ALICE families connect with programs and opportunities for community support
- Share what you know about United Way funded Education, Income and Health programs

### ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

- Speak out – your voice is essential to raising the issues and opportunities for ALICE
- Recommend changes to improve the wellbeing of your colleagues and company
- Lobby for policies that improve the lives of ALICE in your town, your county and the state
- Engage the media – op-ed, letter to the editor, blog

### PARTNER FOR CHANGE

- United Way seeks partners with a wide range of talent, influence, resources and ideas

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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A project of United Ways in Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin

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