ALICE IN FOCUS

UNITED FOR ALICE

CHILDREN IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP:

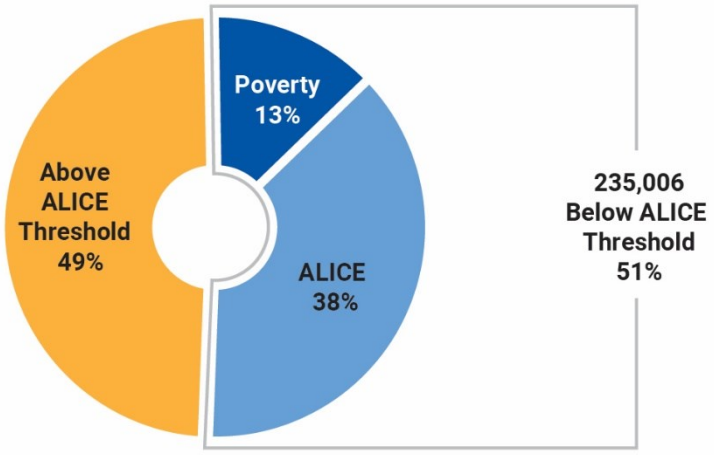
IDAHO

The number of children living in financially insecure households in Idaho continues to be systematically undercounted. According to the outdated Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 13% of children in Idaho (58,475) lived in poverty in 2022. Yet United For ALICE data shows that another 38% (176,531) — nearly three times as many — were also growing up in financial hardship. These children live in households that are **ALICE**®: **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed, earning above the FPL but not enough to afford the basics in their communities.

With poverty-level and ALICE households combined, a substantial **51% of the 464,228 children in Idaho lived in a household with income below the ALICE Threshold of Financial Survival in 2022**, ranking Idaho 32nd among all states and the District of Columbia (with 1st representing the lowest rate of children living in financial hardship). These households don't earn enough to afford housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology, and taxes — the basics needed to live and work in the current economy.

Children by Household Income, Idaho, 2022

Total Number of Children in Idaho = 464,228



Note: This research uses the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and focuses on children, whose ALICE status is determined by their household's income compared to local cost of living. ALICE analysis includes households regardless of work status, as employment is fluid and most households have members who are working, have worked, are out on disability, or are looking for work. This analysis does not include children who are unhoused or living in group quarters. In this Brief, percentages are rounded to whole numbers for ease of reading, which may result in percentages totaling 99% or 101%. All numbers are presented in the ALICE Children Data Dashboard.

Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2022

KEY FINDINGS 2022

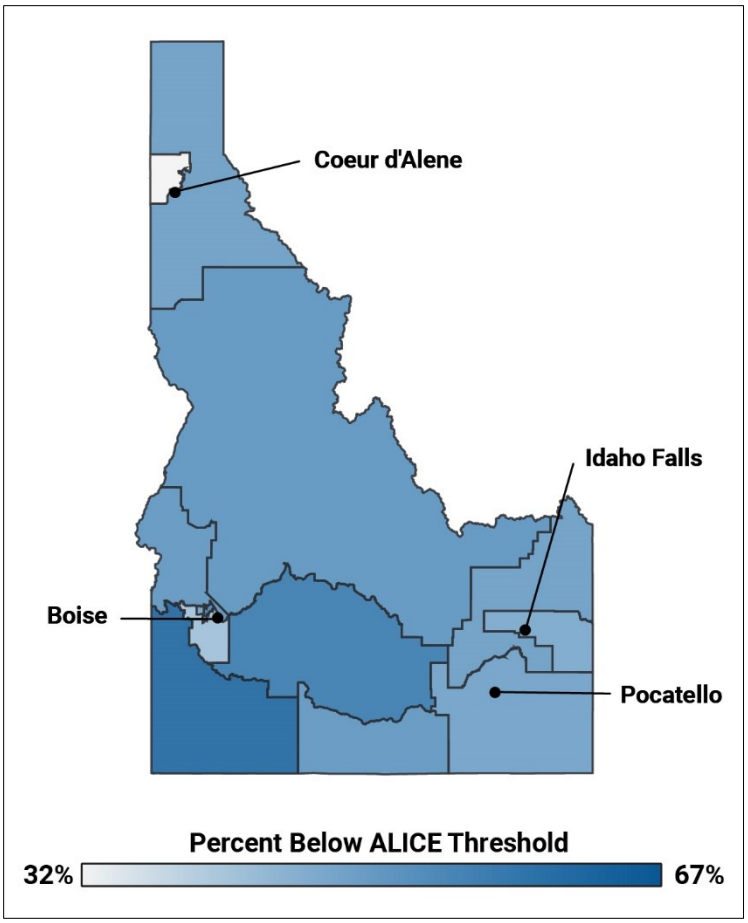
- More than half (51%) of children in Idaho lived in households experiencing financial hardship. While 13% were below the FPL, an additional 38% were ALICE.
- There were disparities by race/ethnicity due to systemic barriers to financial stability. For example, 75% of Black children and 71% of Hispanic children in Idaho lived in households with income below the ALICE Threshold, compared to 45% of White children and 20% of Asian children.
- Having working adults in the household did not guarantee financial stability: 42% of Idaho children in households with two adults in the labor force were still below the ALICE Threshold.
- Children below the ALICE Threshold often lacked access to crucial resources. More than 180,000 children below the Threshold in Idaho did not participate in SNAP, and just over 49,600 had no high-speed internet access at home.

Since the first *ALICE in Focus: Children* brief (2019 data), the conflicting economic and social forces of the COVID-19 pandemic — inflation, wage growth, and the expansion and expiration of pandemic public assistance (especially relevant for households with children) — have impacted children and their families in various ways. As shown in our 2023 *ALICE in the Crosscurrents* Report, the situation for households below the ALICE Threshold improved in some respects and worsened in others, over the course of the pandemic and during its aftermath.

At the national level, the share of children living in financial hardship remained relatively unchanged from 2019 to 2022 (holding steady at 50% of all children). Yet in Idaho, both the number and percentage of children in financially insecure households increased. In 2019, 45% (204,006) of children in Idaho were below the ALICE Threshold. By 2022, the number of these children increased to 235,006 and the rate increased to 51%.

There are children below the ALICE Threshold in communities across the state (Public Use Microdata Areas, or PUMAs), at rates ranging from 67% across South Canyon and Owyhee Counties (Caldwell and Nampa) to 32% in Northeast Kootenai County (Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Hayden). **Visit the ALICE Children Data Dashboard to see additional data (for 2019 and 2022) and an interactive version of the state map.**

Percentage of Children Below ALICE Threshold by PUMA, Idaho, 2022



Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2022

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **ALICE**: **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed — households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but cannot afford the basic cost of living in their county. Despite struggling to make ends meet, ALICE families often do not qualify for public assistance.
- **ALICE Household Survival Budget:** The minimum cost of household necessities (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology), plus taxes, adjusted for different counties and household types. While the FPL for a family of four in Idaho in 2022 was $27,750, the average bare-minimum cost of living for that family was $78,240.
- **ALICE Threshold:** Derived from the Household Survival Budget, the minimum average income that a household needs to afford basic costs. Children **below the ALICE Threshold** include those in poverty-level and ALICE households combined.

WHO ARE CHILDREN BELOW THE ALICE THRESHOLD?

A child's start in life impacts their long-term health, wellness, education, and career. Family financial stability is one of the strongest predictors of current and future well-being. Financial instability not only contributes to daily experiences of stress, trauma, and hardship in the present, but it impedes a child's opportunity for future success, including higher education, a higher income, and long-term asset building.

Children below the ALICE Threshold in Idaho are those under age 18 living in households with income below the basic cost of living for their community. Children in Idaho's financially insecure households are from all locations and demographic groups; are of all ages; are born in the U.S. or abroad; are of all abilities; are of all races/ethnicities; and live with parents or guardians who are married or single, working or not working, and English-speaking or non-English-speaking.

Demographics

The largest numbers of children below the ALICE Threshold were found in the state's largest demographic groups. Yet the rate of hardship ranged substantially across groups. **In Idaho in 2022:**

Age: There were 37,355 infants/toddlers (age 0–2 years), 25,025 preschoolers (3–4 years), and 172,626 school-age children (5–17 years) living in households below the ALICE Threshold. The rates of financial hardship were slightly higher for infants/toddlers (57%) and preschool-age children (54%) than for school-age children (49%).

Race/ethnicity: By number, children below the ALICE Threshold were predominantly White (148,125), Hispanic (63,917), or of Two or More Races (15,044). Yet due to persistent discrimination and systemic barriers to financial stability, the share of children below the Threshold was higher for some groups: 75% of Black children, 75% of American Indian/Alaska Native children, 71% of Hispanic children, 54% of children of Two or More Races, 50% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander children, 45% of White children, and 20% of Asian children were growing up in financial hardship.

Disability status: Two thirds (67%) of children with a disability were below the ALICE Threshold, far higher than the rate for those without a disability (50%). The rate of financial hardship was also high for children in households where a parent or guardian had a disability (68%) or where any household member had a disability (61%).

Nativity and language: Of the 7,406 children in Idaho who were born outside the U.S. (2% of children in the state), 50% were below the ALICE Threshold, similar to the rate for those born in the U.S. (51%). Rates were substantially higher for the 10,046 children living in a family with limited English-speaking ability (also 2% of children in the state), with 77% below the Threshold.

ALICE CHILDREN DATA DASHBOARD

The ALICE Children Data Dashboard includes interactive data on children living in hardship by:

- State, regional, and local geographies
- Demographic categories including children's age, race/ethnicity, disability, and nativity
- Household characteristics
- Children's access to key resources
- Data year (toggle between 2019 and 2022 for all variables)

UnitedForALICE.org/Focus-Children

Children by Household Financial Status and Key Demographics, Idaho, 2022

	TOTAL	BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD	POVERTY / ALICE / ABOVE ALICE THRESHOLD
ALL CHILDREN	464,228	235,006	13% / 38% / 49%
AGE			
Infant (0-2 Years)	65,898	37,355	14% / 42% / 43%
Preschool-Age (3–4 Years)	46,129	25,025	13% / 41% / 46%
School-Age (5–17 Years)	352,201	172,626	12% / 37% / 51%
RACE/ETHNICITY			
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,558	2,653	31% / 44% / 25%
Asian	5,020	1,005	5% / 15% / 80%
Black	2,719	2,041	22% / 53% / 25%
Hispanic	89,680	63,917	19% / 52% / 29%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2,035	1,017	2% / 48% / 50%
Two or More Races	27,664	15,044	22% / 32% / 46%
White	331,849	148,125	10% / 35% / 55%
NATIVITY AND LANGUAGE			
Born in U.S.	456,822	231,308	13% / 38% / 49%
Born Outside U.S.	7,406	3,698	18% / 32% / 50%
English-Speaking Family	454,182	227,299	12% / 38% / 50%
Limited English-Speaking	10,046	7,707	37% / 39% / 23%
DISABILITY STATUS			
Child With a Disability	23,161	15,421	23% / 44% / 33%
Any Household Member With a Disability	100,613	61,524	17% / 44% / 39%

Note: The groups shown in this figure overlap across categories (Age, Race/Ethnicity, Nativity and Language, and Disability Status). All racial categories except Two or More Races are for one race alone. The Hispanic group may include children of any race. View more on the ALICE Children Data Dashboard.

Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2022

Household Characteristics

Most children in Idaho live with at least one of their parents (biological or adoptive). Children may live with married or unmarried parents, single parents, grandparents, or guardians. Household composition — especially the number of working adults — has a substantial impact on children's financial stability.

In Idaho in 2022:

Living arrangements: The largest number of children below the ALICE Threshold were in married-couple households (153,853), followed by single-female-headed households (42,206). But the percentage of children below the Threshold varied by adults' marital status and partnership type: 44% of children in married-parent households, 44% of children in single-male-headed households, 77% of children in unmarried-couple households, and 79% of children in single-female-headed households were growing up in hardship.

- **Children living with grandparents:** 7% of all Idaho children (34,178) lived in a home with a grandparent, including multi-generational households and households where grandparents were raising grandchildren. More than half (57%) of children in these households were below the ALICE Threshold.

Household work status: Most children (96%) lived in a household with at least one worker. As the number of workers in the family increased, the share of children below the ALICE Threshold decreased. In Idaho, 67% of children living with one adult who was working were below the Threshold; with two adults, one of them working, 62% were below the Threshold; and with two adults who were both working, 38% were below the Threshold. Among all families with two or more adults, two of whom were working, 42% of children were still below the Threshold in 2022, demonstrating that having working adults in the household does not guarantee financial stability.

While parents and guardians work in every sector, children below the ALICE Threshold are concentrated in families where adults work in occupations with low median hourly wages. These include some of the most common occupations in the state: For example, 63% of Idaho children with an adult working as a cashier, earning a median wage of $13.23 per hour, were below the Threshold in 2022.

Children by Household Financial Status and Household Characteristics, Idaho, 2022

	TOTAL	BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD	POVERTY / ALICE / ABOVE ALICE THRESHOLD
ALL CHILDREN	464,228	235,006	13% / 38% / 49%
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS			
Grandparent Living With Grandchild	34,178	19,519	16% / 41% / 43%
Married-Couple Household	351,468	153,853	7% / 37% / 56%
Single-Female-Headed Household	53,603	42,206	39% / 40% / 21%
Single-Male-Headed Household	19,915	8,717	12% / 32% / 56%
HOUSEHOLD WORK STATUS			
One Adult, One Worker	37,016	24,887	25% / 42% / 33%
Two Adults, One Worker	111,804	69,263	16% / 46% / 38%
Two Adults, Two Workers	185,522	71,399	4% / 34% / 62%

Note: The groups shown in this figure overlap across categories (Living Arrangements and Household Work Status). "Grandparent Living With Grandchild" includes any arrangement where grandparents live with their grandchild, including where parents or other adults are present. For the Household Work Status category, the number of workers is defined as "workers in the family over the last 12 months" from when the survey was conducted. View more on the ALICE Children Data Dashboard.

Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2022

INTERCONNECTED BARRIERS TO WELL-BEING

Children below the ALICE Threshold are more likely to lack stable housing, quality child care and early education, private health insurance, high-speed home internet access, and reliable food access. When basic necessities are at risk, families have to make impossible decisions — like choosing to pay for food or quality child care, for medicine or utility bills. Decisions made in one area of the budget can have both short- and long-term consequences that ripple across all other areas.

In Idaho in 2022:

Housing: Children in families without stable housing face greater risks for poor physical health, increased family stress, social isolation, and lower academic performance. Among children below the ALICE Threshold in Idaho, 40% were in families that rented and 60% were in families that owned their home. Below the Threshold, homeownership rates were lower for families of Hispanic and Black children (47% and 49%, respectively) compared to families of White children (65%) and Asian children (71%). Above the Threshold, rates were higher, but gaps remained, at 70% for families of Black children, 84% for families of Hispanic children, 86% for families of White children, and 89% for families of Asian children. Overall, 39% of children in renter households and 20% of children in homeowner households were in families that were cost burdened, paying 30% or more of household income on housing.

Education: Of all preschool-age children in Idaho, 42% were enrolled in preschool, lower than the national average (47%). Preschool-age children below the ALICE Threshold were much less likely than their peers above the Threshold to be enrolled in preschool (33% vs. 52%). A gap was also seen for teens age 15–17, with 93% below the Threshold enrolled in school compared to 98% of their peers above the Threshold.

Health insurance: Access to health insurance is critical to both wellness and financial stability for families below the ALICE Threshold, and especially for children. While most children in Idaho had health insurance (95%, the same as the national rate), 6% of children below the ALICE Threshold (14,492) did not have coverage. Children in families with income below the Threshold were also slightly more likely to have public health insurance (50%) than private health insurance (44%), while those above the Threshold were far more likely to have private health insurance (84%).

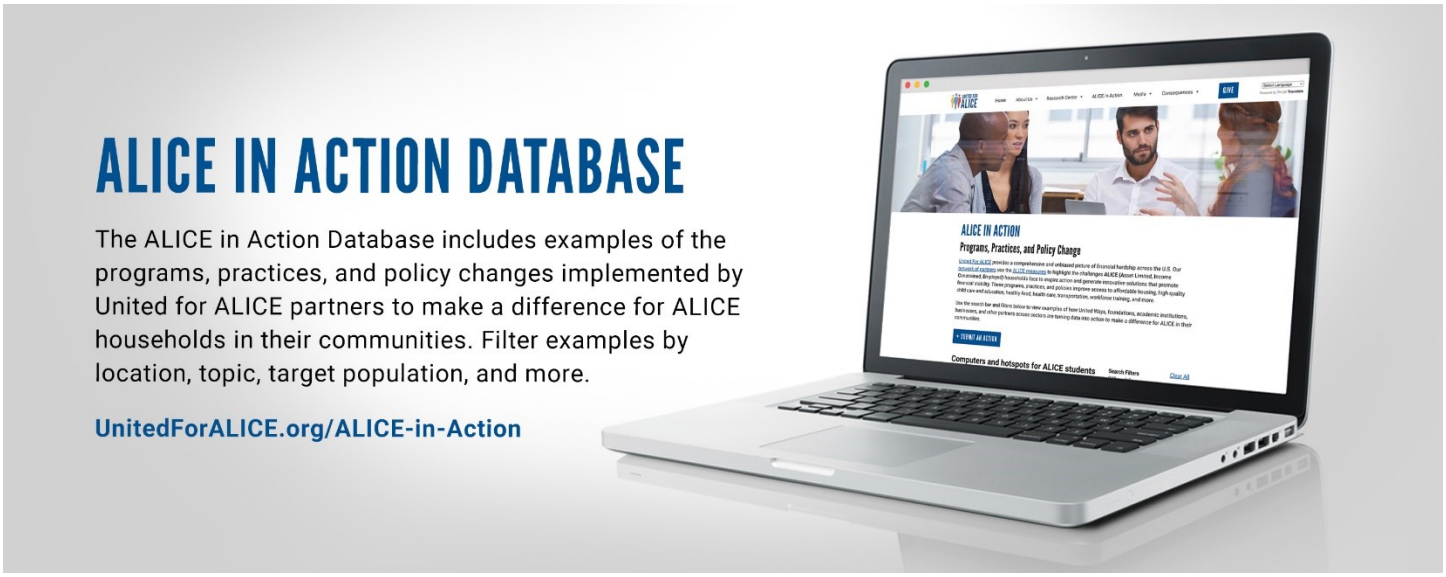
Home internet: The availability of internet access and devices for education has become increasingly essential for young people, yet the digital divide by income and race/ethnicity persists. Most children in Idaho (98%) had home internet access. However, children below the ALICE Threshold were less likely than those above the Threshold to have high-speed internet, which is essential for work and online learning (79% vs. 85%). High-speed internet rates increased for all children in Idaho through the pandemic, up from 75% in 2019 to 82% in 2022. Yet just over 49,600 children below the Threshold in Idaho still did not have high-speed internet at home in 2022.

High-speed internet rates were lower for some groups below the Threshold: 69% for Black children, 73% for Hispanic children, 75% for American Indian/Alaska Native children, 81% for White children and 82% for Asian children. By location, the percentage of children below the ALICE Threshold with high-speed internet access was highest in Northeast Kootenai County (Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Hayden), at 93%, and lowest across Bingham (Outside Fort Hall AIR), Madison, Jefferson, Fremont and Teton Counties, at 63%.

Food access: Households with children living below the ALICE Threshold were more likely to have difficulty putting food on the table. According to the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey, in 2022, 11% of Idaho families below the Threshold with children reported that sometimes or often "children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food," nearly three times higher than the rate for those above the Threshold (4%).

Public assistance: For a variety of reasons, public assistance does not reach all children in households that are struggling. While most children in poverty are eligible for assistance, ALICE children live in households that often earn too much to qualify. For example, the income eligibility threshold in Idaho for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is 130% of the FPL. Even though all children in poverty should be covered by SNAP, in Idaho the program was utilized by only 37% of children in poverty (21,885) and a mere 19% of children in ALICE households (33,057) in 2022. Of all children below the ALICE Threshold in Idaho, only 23% participated, one of the lowest rates in the nation. This left a gap of just over 180,000 children whose families were struggling to make ends meet but not participating in SNAP.

Intersectionality: For some children, multiple intersecting forms of discrimination and limited access to resources make household financial instability more likely. For example, 71% of Hispanic children in Idaho were below the ALICE Threshold in 2022. For Hispanic children with a disability, the rate went up to 74%; and if their family rented their home, the rate increased to 80%.



Children by Household Financial Status and Key Indicators, All States, 2022

	Total	Household Income Status			Rent Burden	Preschool	Internet	SNAP
State (Rank)	Number of Children	% Poverty	% ALICE	% Below ALICE Threshold	% Below ALICE Threshold Paying 30% or More on Rent	% Preschool-Age Enrolled in School	% Below ALICE Threshold with High-Speed Internet Access	% Below ALICE Threshold Participating in SNAP
United States	72,094,339	16%	34%	50%	52%	47%	77%	39%
Alabama (42)	1,104,575	22%	32%	54%	48%	46%	72%	43%
Alaska (24)	173,285	14%	32%	46%	39%	41%	63%	32%
Arizona (37)	1,586,070	16%	37%	53%	52%	33%	77%	36%
Arkansas (40)	693,000	22%	32%	54%	44%	45%	70%	32%
California (48)	8,476,896	15%	42%	57%	58%	46%	80%	33%
Colorado (25)	1,207,812	10%	36%	46%	55%	52%	83%	29%
Connecticut (17)	728,030	12%	32%	44%	56%	64%	83%	36%
Delaware (11)	207,625	10%	31%	42%	39%	45%	82%	41%
D.C. (15)	123,619	16%	27%	43%	50%	78%	66%	64%
Florida (45)	4,285,475	17%	38%	55%	60%	49%	80%	38%
Georgia (46)	2,501,214	16%	39%	55%	50%	49%	76%	40%
Hawaii (31)	295,615	12%	37%	49%	56%	41%	82%	41%
Idaho (32)	**464,228**	**13%**	**38%**	**51%**	**39%**	**42%**	**79%**	**23%**
Illinois (16)	2,710,614	16%	27%	43%	50%	54%	76%	47%
Indiana (21)	1,562,606	15%	31%	46%	45%	42%	76%	32%
Iowa (6)	713,854	12%	28%	40%	45%	47%	77%	36%
Kansas (7)	684,065	13%	27%	41%	45%	47%	78%	24%
Kentucky (33)	1,001,572	21%	30%	51%	43%	37%	77%	42%
Louisiana (47)	1,055,445	24%	32%	56%	56%	54%	69%	49%
Maine (19)	242,867	10%	34%	44%	40%	38%	83%	34%
Maryland (27)	1,345,996	11%	35%	47%	55%	49%	79%	36%
Massachusetts (20)	1,331,435	11%	33%	45%	57%	58%	82%	45%
Michigan (28)	2,098,256	18%	29%	47%	52%	47%	78%	46%
Minnesota (5)	1,274,974	10%	29%	39%	49%	47%	80%	29%
Mississippi (50)	674,630	26%	32%	58%	49%	50%	66%	42%
Missouri (29)	1,358,979	16%	32%	48%	44%	43%	74%	36%
Montana (26)	233,024	13%	34%	46%	31%	31%	73%	23%
Nebraska (8)	472,831	12%	29%	41%	43%	45%	80%	30%
Nevada (49)	688,662	16%	41%	57%	57%	35%	75%	38%
New Hampshire (2)	248,473	6%	28%	34%	46%	55%	83%	27%
New Jersey (10)	1,986,050	13%	28%	42%	59%	67%	78%	37%
New Mexico (51)	453,284	23%	35%	58%	54%	39%	71%	55%
New York (41)	3,960,023	19%	35%	54%	55%	61%	74%	44%
North Carolina (39)	2,288,886	17%	36%	53%	47%	38%	77%	43%
North Dakota (1)	178,227	12%	21%	33%	24%	29%	71%	21%
Ohio (23)	2,550,190	18%	28%	46%	46%	43%	81%	44%
Oklahoma (44)	950,109	20%	35%	54%	45%	42%	72%	44%
Oregon (34)	830,894	13%	39%	52%	50%	46%	81%	43%
Pennsylvania (22)	2,605,028	16%	31%	46%	49%	45%	78%	45%
Rhode Island (13)	202,490	12%	31%	42%	49%	52%	80%	39%
South Carolina (38)	1,114,070	19%	34%	53%	48%	44%	76%	37%
South Dakota (4)	217,071	13%	26%	39%	30%	36%	77%	39%
Tennessee (35)	1,531,592	18%	35%	53%	46%	42%	76%	35%
Texas (36)	7,423,833	19%	34%	53%	55%	44%	73%	41%
Utah (14)	925,053	8%	34%	42%	45%	44%	84%	18%
Vermont (12)	113,366	11%	30%	42%	53%	70%	83%	30%
Virginia (30)	1,860,499	13%	36%	49%	49%	45%	76%	31%
Washington (18)	1,641,265	12%	32%	44%	52%	44%	80%	38%
West Virginia (43)	350,478	24%	30%	54%	43%	31%	78%	53%
Wisconsin (9)	1,236,815	13%	28%	41%	43%	41%	78%	42%
Wyoming (3)	129,389	13%	25%	38%	41%	45%	74%	29%

LEARN MORE AND TAKE ACTION

The challenges Idaho's ALICE families face are interconnected, and effective solutions must be, too. Working toward these solutions will require innovation and vision.

Learn more with:

- The ALICE Children Data Dashboard, to dig deeper into related topics, demographics, and sub-state geographies
- Resources related to children and financial hardship, including the references linked in this Research Brief, as well as additional resources that offer important context and even deeper analysis
- Household-level data on ALICE in Idaho, including interactive maps, ALICE Household Survival Budgets, County Reports, demographics, and more
- The ALICE Legislative District Tool, to see data by district, including state upper and lower chambers and congressional districts
- The ALICE Wage Tool, to explore wage levels by geography and occupation
- The ALICE Economic Viability Dashboard, which includes data on housing, work, and community supports for households below the ALICE Threshold
- The ALICE Budget and Income Status Tool, where users can enter household details (income, household composition, and location) to see customized household costs and ALICE income status

Explore Promising Practices:

- See examples of programs, policies, and policy changes implemented by ALICE partners to support ALICE households in our interactive ALICE in Action database
- Visit the Action Planner, which includes strategies related to housing, work, and community resources paired with key data on households below the ALICE Threshold

Connect with stakeholders:

- Contact your local United Way for support and volunteer opportunities
- See members of the National ALICE Advisory Committee on Children

United For ALICE is a driver of innovative research on financial hardship. The ALICE data and analysis are shared with United Ways, corporations, foundations, government, and nonprofits, to inform policy and promote positive change.

To bring this research to the Pacific Northwest, United For ALICE partners with **United Ways of the Pacific Northwest**, Twin County United Way, United Way of Central Oregon, United Way of Central Washington, United Way of Clallam County, United Way of Clatsop County, United Way of Columbia County, United Way of Cowlitz & Wahkiakum Counties, United Way of Grant County, **United Way of Idaho Falls and Bonneville County**, **United Way of Jackson County**, **United Way of King County**, United Way of Kitsap County, **United Way of Lane County**, United Way of Lewis County, United Way of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties, United Way of Mason County, United Way of Mid-Willamette Valley, United Way of Moscow/Latah County, **United Way of North Idaho**, **United Way of Pierce County**, United Way of San Juan County, **United Way of Skagit County**, United Way of Snohomish County, United Way of South Central Idaho, Inc., **United Way of Southeastern Idaho**, **United Way of Southwestern Oregon**, United Way of the Blue Mountains, United Way of the Columbia Gorge, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, **United Way of Thurston County**, United Way of Treasure Valley, **United Way of Whatcom County**, and United Way of Whitman County. This work is sponsored by the organizations in bold above, as well as by **Avista**, **Bayer**, **GoWest Foundation**, **Idaho Nonprofit Center**, **Oregon Community Foundation**, **The Ford Family Foundation**, and **Whatcom Community Foundation**.

For more details about the methodology for the ALICE in Focus Series, go to UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology.

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