UNITED FOR ALICE®

CHILDREN IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP:
CONNECTICUT

The number of children living in financially insecure households in Connecticut continues to be systematically undercounted. According to the outdated Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 12% of children in Connecticut (88,047) lived in poverty in 2022. Yet United For ALICE data shows that another 32% (230,180) — more than twice 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 **44% of the 728,030 children in Connecticut lived in a household with income below the ALICE Threshold of Financial Survival in 2022,** ranking Connecticut 17th 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, Connecticut, 2022
Total Number of Children in Connecticut = 728,030

- Poverty 12%
- Above ALICE Threshold 56%
- ALICE 32%
- 318,227 Below ALICE Threshold 44%
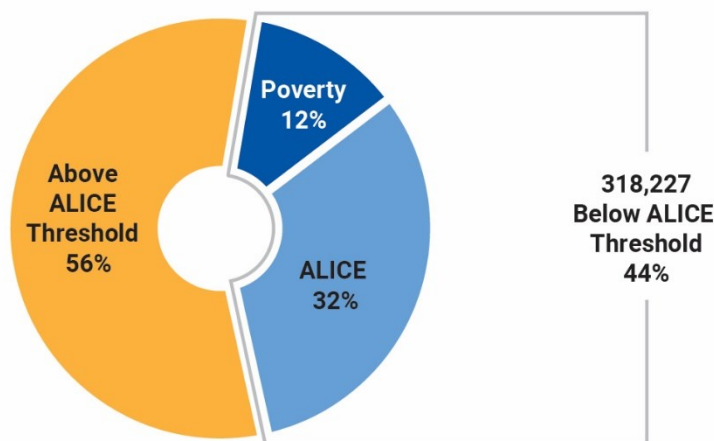
Note: This research uses the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and focuses on children, whose ALICE status is determined by their household's income compared to local cost of living. ALICE analysis includes households regardless of work status, as employment 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

- Forty-four percent of children in Connecticut lived in households experiencing financial hardship. While 12% were below the FPL, an additional 32% were ALICE.

- By race/ethnicity, Hispanic and Black children continued to face greater hardship due to systemic barriers to financial stability: 67% of Hispanic and 63% of Black children in Connecticut lived in households with income below the ALICE Threshold, compared to 42% of Asian and 27% of White children.

- Having working adults in the household did not guarantee financial stability: 29% of Connecticut 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 202,350 children below the Threshold in Connecticut did not participate in SNAP, and nearly 55,050 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.
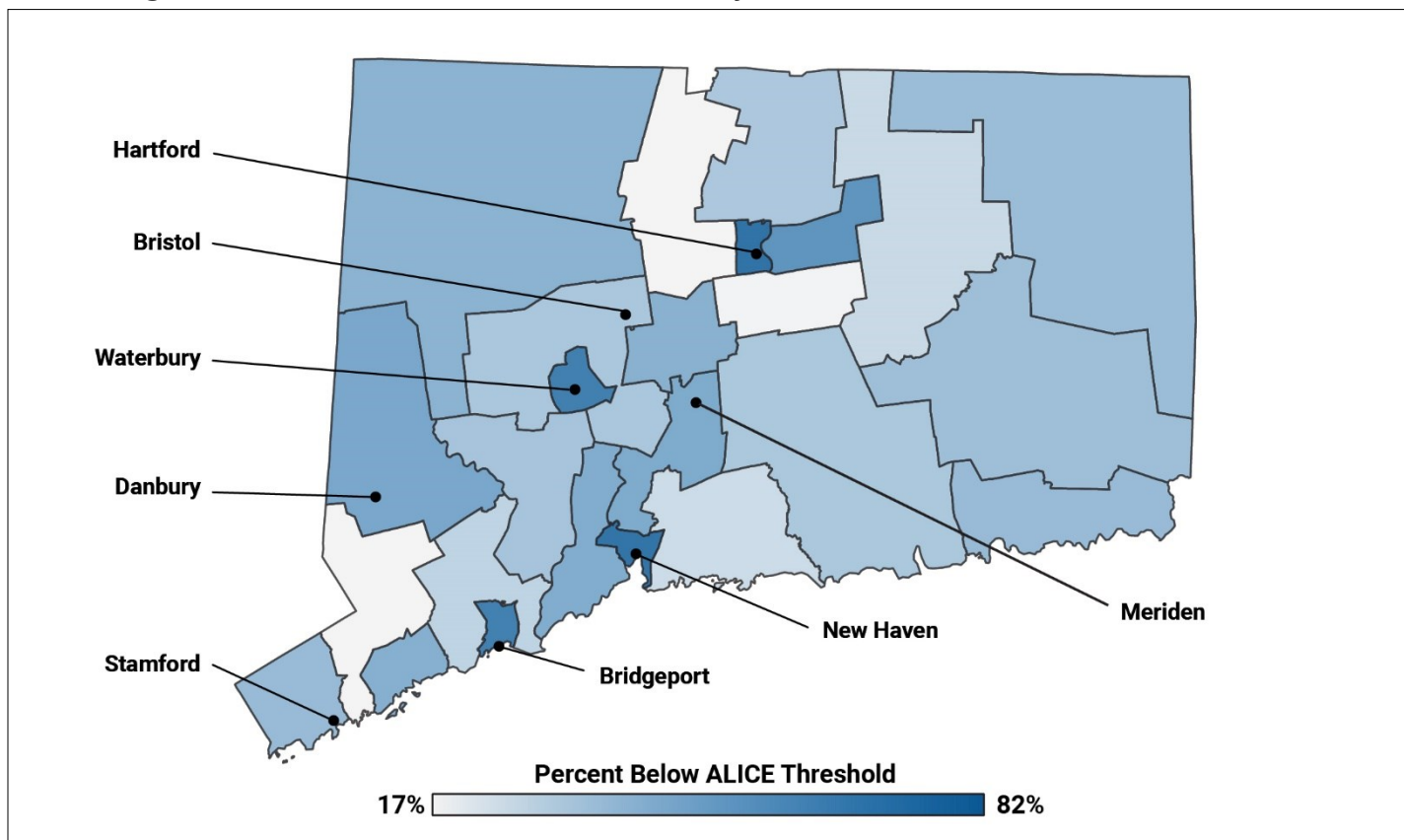
In Connecticut, from 2019 to 2022, the number and share of children living in financially insecure households continued to climb. In 2019, 42% (304,982) of children were below the ALICE Threshold. By 2022, the number of these children increased slightly to 318,227, and the rate of financial hardship rose to 44%.

There are children below the ALICE Threshold in communities across the state (Public Use Microdata Areas, or PUMAs), at rates ranging from 13% in the Western Central PUMA to 82% in the Hartford Town PUMA. **Visit the ALICE Children Data Dashboard to see additional data (for 2019 and 2022) and an interactive version of the state map.**

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 Connecticut in 2022 was $27,750, the average bare-minimum cost of living for that family was $108,324.

- **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.

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

Hartford

Bristol

Waterbury

Danbury

Stamford

Bridgeport

New Haven

Meriden

Percent Below ALICE Threshold

17% ▢▢▢▢ 82%

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

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 Connecticut are those under age 18 living in households with income below the basic cost of living for their community. Children in Connecticut'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 Connecticut in 2022:

Age: There were 54,286 infants/toddlers (age 0–2 years), 33,412 preschoolers (3–4 years), and 230,529 school-age children (5–17 years) living in households below the ALICE Threshold. The rate of financial hardship was higher for infants/toddlers (51%) and preschool-age children (48%) than for school-age children (42%).

Race/ethnicity: By number, children below the ALICE Threshold were predominantly Hispanic (133,888), White (95,301), and Black (45,989). Yet due to persistent discrimination and systemic barriers to financial stability, the share of children below the Threshold was higher for some groups: 67% of both American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic children, 63% of Black children, 42% of Asian children, 40% of children of Two or More Races, and 27% of White children were living in financial hardship.

Disability status: Children with a disability were more likely to live in households below the ALICE Threshold (62%) than those without a disability (43%). When any member of the household had a disability, 61% of children lived below the Threshold, and if a parent or guardian had a disability, children were even slightly more likely to be below the Threshold, at 66%.

Nativity and language: Of the 32,784 children in Connecticut who were born outside the U.S. (5% of children in the state), 61% were below the ALICE Threshold, compared to 43% of those born in the U.S. Rates were even higher for the 38,929 children living in a family with limited English-speaking ability (5% 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
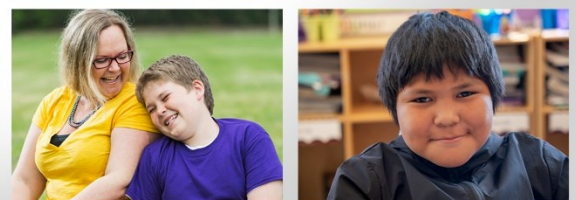
Children by Household Financial Status and Key Demographics, Connecticut, 2022

	TOTAL	BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD	POVERTY / ALICE / ABOVE ALICE THRESHOLD		
ALL CHILDREN	728,030	318,227	12%	32%	56%
AGE					
Infant (0–2 Years)	106,816	54,286	16%	35%	49%
Preschool-Age (3–4 Years)	69,875	33,412	13%	35%	52%
School-Age (5–17 Years)	551,339	230,529	11%	31%	58%
RACE/ETHNICITY					
American Indian/Alaska Native	1,221	824	22%	46%	33%
Asian	33,860	14,300	9%	33%	58%
Black	72,815	45,989	20%	43%	37%
Hispanic	200,274	133,888	22%	45%	33%
Two or More Races	58,699	23,579	12%	28%	60%
White	352,985	95,301	5%	22%	73%
NATIVITY AND LANGUAGE					
Born in U.S.	695,246	298,115	12%	31%	57%
Born Outside U.S.	32,784	20,112	19%	42%	39%
English-Speaking Family	689,101	288,272	11%	31%	58%
Limited English-Speaking	38,929	29,955	27%	50%	23%
DISABILITY STATUS					
Child With a Disability	36,839	22,967	22%	41%	38%
Any Household Member With a Disability	147,520	89,777	20%	41%	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 Connecticut live with one or both 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 Connecticut in 2022:

Living arrangements: The largest number of children below the ALICE Threshold were in married-couple households (147,914), followed by single-female-headed households (118,663). But the percentage of children below the Threshold varied by adults' marital status and partnership type: 30% of children in married-parent households, 56% in unmarried-couple households, 58% in single-male-headed households, and 78% in single-female-headed households were growing up in hardship.

- **Children living with grandparents:** 11% of all Connecticut children (79,859) lived in a home with a grandparent, which included both multi-generational households and households where grandparents were raising grandchildren on their own. Just over

half (52%) of children in these households were below the ALICE Threshold.

Household work status: Most children (95%) 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 Connecticut, 76% of children living with one adult who was working were below the Threshold; with two adults, one of them working, 52% were below the Threshold; and with two adults who were both working, 23% were below the Threshold. However, having working adults in the household did not guarantee financial stability: Among all families with two or more adults, two of whom were working, more than one-quarter (29%) of children were still below the Threshold in 2022.

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, 52% of Connecticut children with an adult working as a cashier earning a median wage of $14.01 per hour, were below the Threshold in 2022.

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

	TOTAL	BELOW ALICE THRESHOLD	POVERTY	ALICE	ABOVE ALICE THRESHOLD
ALL CHILDREN	728,030	318,227	12%	32%	56%
LIVING ARRANGEMENTS					
Grandparent Living With Grandchild	79,859	41,763	13%	40%	48%
Married-Couple Household	485,216	147,914	4%	26%	70%
Single-Female-Headed Household	151,819	118,663	33%	46%	22%
Single-Male-Headed Household	29,523	17,257	13%	46%	42%
HOUSEHOLD WORK STATUS					
One Adult, One Worker	88,100	66,858	25%	51%	24%
Two Adults, One Worker	146,009	75,488	14%	38%	48%
Two Adults, Two Workers	271,305	62,266	2%	21%	77%

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 Connecticut 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, 55% were in families that rented and 45% were in families that owned their home. Below the Threshold, families of Hispanic children and Black children had the lowest homeownership rates (32% and 36%, respectively), while families of Asian children and White children had the highest (both 64%). Above the Threshold, the homeownership rate for families of Hispanic children and Black children was much higher (77% and 82%, respectively), but still lower than for families of Asian children and White children (85% and 94%). Overall, 56% of children in renter households and 24% of children in homeowner households were cost burdened, paying 30% or more of income on housing.

Education: Of all preschool-age children in Connecticut, 64% were enrolled in preschool, higher than the national average (47%). Preschool-age children below the ALICE Threshold were less likely than their peers above the Threshold to be enrolled in preschool (59% vs. 68%). By comparison, there was only a slight difference in school enrollment rates for teens age 15–17, with 96% below the Threshold enrolled 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 Connecticut had health insurance coverage (97%, slightly higher than the national rate of 95%), 4% of children below the ALICE Threshold (12,041) did not. Children in families with income below the Threshold were also more likely to have public insurance (60%), while those above the Threshold were far more likely to have private insurance (88%).

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 Connecticut (99%) had home internet access. While rates of access to home internet were on par for children below and above the ALICE Threshold (98% and 99% respectively), children below the Threshold were less likely to have high-speed internet, which is essential for work and online learning (83% vs. 92%). High-speed internet rates remained relatively stable for all children in Connecticut through the pandemic, rising only 1% (from 87% to 88%) between 2019 and 2022. Yet nearly, 55,050 children below the Threshold in Connecticut still did not have high-speed internet at home in 2022.

High-speed internet access rates varied by race/ethnicity for children below the Threshold: 89% of White children, 84% of Black children, 81% of Hispanic children, 80% of Asian children and 75% of American Indian/Alaska Native children had access to high-speed internet at home in 2022. By location, the percentage of children below the ALICE Threshold with high-speed internet access was highest in Capitol East PUMA (96%) and lowest in Hartford Town PUMA (68%).

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, 22% of Connecticut families below the Threshold with children reported that sometimes or often "children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food," substantially 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 Connecticut for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is 185% of the FPL. Even though all children in poverty should be covered by SNAP, in Connecticut the program was utilized by only 67% of children in poverty (58,588) and a mere 25% of children in ALICE households (57,240) in 2022. Of all children below the ALICE Threshold, only 36% participated. This left a gap of more than 202,350 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, 63% of Black children in Connecticut were below the ALICE Threshold in 2022. For Black children with a disability, the rate went up to 83%; and if the family lived in a renter household, the rate increased to 97%.

ALICE IN ACTION DATABASE

The ALICE in Action Database includes examples of the programs, practices, and policy changes implemented by United for ALICE partners to make a difference for ALICE households in their communities. Filter examples by location, topic, target population, and more.

UnitedForALICE.org/ALICE-in-Action
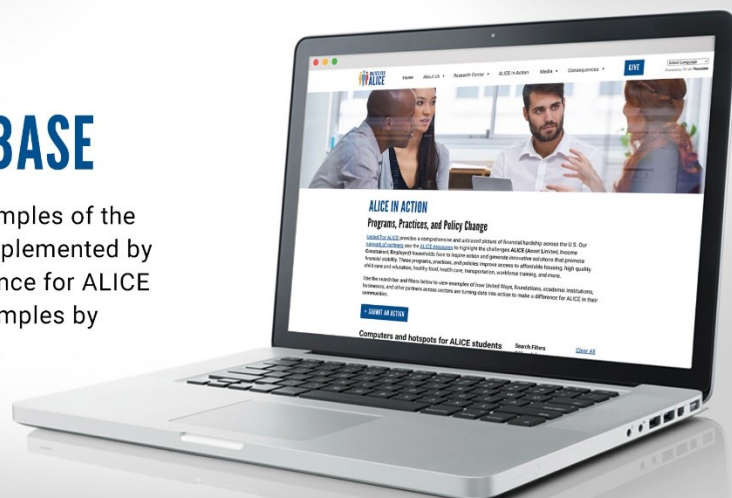
Children by Household Financial Status and Key Indicators, All States, 2022

State (Rank)	Total	Household Income Status			Rent Burden	Preschool	Internet	SNAP
	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 Connecticut's ALICE families face are interconnected, and effective solutions must be, too. Working toward these solutions will require innovation and vision, both to recognize local factors and systematically address as many areas of financial struggle as possible.

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 Connecticut, 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 and action around financial hardship. The ALICE data and analysis are shared with United Ways, corporations, foundations, government, and nonprofits, to inform policy and promote positive change.

United For ALICE partners with Connecticut United Ways to bring the ALICE research to Connecticut.

The **ALICE in Focus Series** utilizes ALICE measures — the Household Survival Budget and the ALICE Threshold — to analyze the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Each "Focus" in the series highlights a different demographic group. For more details about the methodology for the ALICE in Focus Series, go to UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology.

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