

DAY 7: Opportunity in Michigan

In Michigan alone, over 1.6 million working households – or 43 percent of households – are struggling to afford basic necessities like housing, child care, food, transportation, and technology, according to the [2019 ALICE Report](#) by the Michigan Association of United Ways. These households, also known as ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to cover the basic cost of living, called the ALICE threshold, in their counties. This means that a parent within an ALICE household may have to make trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that a child has access to preschool.

However, when you disaggregate the data, they tell a more disturbing story. Sixty three percent (63%) of Black households are struggling to afford basic necessities, which is almost double that of White households-just 36 percent.

During the recovery from the Great Recession, the number of Black households under the ALICE Threshold in Michigan increased by 11% from 2010 to 2018, while the number of White households below the threshold increased by only 1%. And since COVID-19, in households below the ALICE threshold is even greater. This means that a very large percentage of parents, especially Black parents have to make trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that a child has access to preschool.

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. We also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how ALICE, race, and other factors impact a person's housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

Today's Challenge

Option 1: Check out the [ALICE Report for the State of Michigan](#) (based on 2017 data) and dig down further into your county.

Option 2: See this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on boys.

Option 3: Read about [Raj Chetty](#), a Harvard economist committed to showing how zip code shapes opportunity. Dive into his research through the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#).

Option 4: Journal about how the data and stories in today's challenge compares with the commonly told story that the United States is a land of opportunity.

Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#), [#miuwequitychallenge](#), [#uwwcequity](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).