

DAY 7: ALICE Lives in Washtenaw County

Who is ALICE? ALICE stands for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed, and represents 1.5 million, or 35% of households in Michigan. According to the [2021 ALICE Report](#) by the Michigan Association of United Ways, these households earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to cover the basic cost of necessities like housing, child care, food, and transportation. This means that [a parent within an ALICE household may have to make trade-offs](#) between necessities like rent, stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that their child has access to preschool.

[In Washtenaw County, home to the most educated city in America](#), you may be surprised to learn that deep inequities persist here. [A third \(31%\) of households in Washtenaw County live below the ALICE earnings threshold \(12% below the poverty line and 19% below ALICE threshold but above poverty line\)](#) and disparities persist across communities, ranging from 12% in York Township to 44% and 60% in Ypsilanti Charter Township and Ypsilanti City, respectively. These indicate that people in our community are having vastly different lived experiences and differential access to opportunity.

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.



Did you know? [Poverty Solutions at the University of Michigan](#) works to provide insights on preventing and alleviating poverty. Leading researchers within the institute include [Dr. Vonnie McLoyd](#), [Dr. Luke Shaefer](#), and [Dr. Trina Shanks](#). If you are looking to dive further into these

topics throughout our challenge, check out Dr. Shaefer's book [\\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America](#).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Dig into the data further in the updated [2020 Washtenaw County Opportunity Index](#) to see and understand how racial and socioeconomic disparities in our community are impacting opportunity. The index uses data points across 5 categories - health, job access, economic well-being, education and training, and community engagement and stability – to measure how where you live in Washtenaw County impacts your access to opportunity.

Option 2: [Listen to this TEDTalk by Raj Chetty](#), a Harvard economist committed to demonstrating how zip code shapes opportunity. Dive into his research through the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#).

Option 4: Read this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on black boys.

Option 5: [Read this op-ed by Charles M. Bow in the New York Times on how social distancing is a privilege](#) and why the idea that COVID-19 is an equal-opportunity killer must itself be killed.

FAMILY FRIDAY

Option 6: Are you a parent or caregiver of children? [Click here for this week's Family Friday content](#), which is focused on better understanding the history of the land on which Washtenaw County was founded.

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