

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

Financial Stability

June 2020

The Need for a Solid Community “Safety Net” in Livingston County

1,678 or 21.4%	Children ages 0 - 17 in Livingston County live in single-parent households who are below the poverty level (Kids Count, 2018).
\$36.41	Hourly “living wage” required for a family with two pre-school children. (2019, ALICE)
61%	Michigan jobs that <u>pay less than \$20 per hour</u> (2019, Us Bureau of Labor Statistics)
15,260	“Food Insecure” individuals (2018, Feeling America)
5,672	Students (K-12) eligible for <u>free/reduced school lunches</u> (2018-2019, Kids Count Data)
1,132	<u>2-1-1 calls/web searches</u> (2017) Top requests: 1) Electric service assistance 2) Homeless motel vouchers 3) Housing search assistance, 4) Rent payment assistance, 5) Food pantries
4.8%	Percentage of Individuals living below Federal Poverty Level (2018, Census est.)
8,236	Medicaid-eligible families (2019, MDHHS)

Meet ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed)

ALICE represents the hard-working individuals who go to work every day, but struggle to afford the high cost of living in Livingston County. According to the 2019 update of a report by Rutgers University and commissioned by United Way organizations in Michigan, **31% or 22,545 local families** are earning below the level needed to be financially stable in Livingston County, despite the fact many of these individuals are working in high growth areas such as healthcare, personal services, childcare, etc. This includes those at or below the “ALICE Threshold,” of \$72,828 for a family with two young children, and those below the federal poverty level.

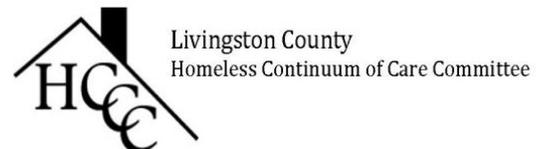
The **ALICE Report** gives us a picture of our post-recession environment; highlights some of the challenges associated with the high costs of housing, transportation, and childcare; and provides a much more accurate measure of financial hardship in this changed economy. View the entire report at www.lcunitedway.org.

What is Helping Families to Become More Financially Stable?



Several local organizations provide basic needs, financial education, budgeting, planning, and employment services. Call 2-1-1 to learn which services may be able to assist. Individual organizations should then be contacted directly to determine program eligibility.

Homeless Continuum of Care: This coalition of organizations works to coordinate a continuum of housing services from homelessness to shelter, to rent payment assistance to affordable housing. It focuses on holistic approaches to stabilizing households and growing



self-sufficiency such as the Eviction Diversion Program, which meets clients at court; quickly assesses each situation; provides legal assistance, planning, and one-time rent assistance to get back on track.



Livingston County Hunger Council: The council is working together to build a local food system that provides a hunger-free community – now and for generations to come. It is focused on building a culture of nutrition, supporting local food, and strengthening food programs.

Livingston County Literacy Coalition: Offers a free adult tutor program to help workers sharpen their skills and improve their employability.



Livingston County Community Connect: A free annual event, in early February, to get people connected to the information and services they need in a welcoming environment. Community Connect also provides free haircuts, legal consultation, health screenings, clothing, baby items, food, and more.

My Free Taxes: File your federal and state income taxes online, and access available tax credits – free for eligible households.



LERN-Livingston Employer Resource Network

Livingston Employer Resource Network: Several of the larger employers have partnered with LERN to provide workforce supports and access to resources through an on-site resource navigator/success coach. Check with your employer.

My Smart Money: Is an interactive, easy-to-use website that offers simple, useful tips and tools to help all of us manage our money.



Annual Backpack Giveaway & Kids Connect: This partnership between Livingston Education Services Agency and Homeless Continuum of Care provides free backpacks, school supplies, books, socks, clothing vouchers, fresh produce, and more to students in need. It is held in August.

Coordinated Holiday Programs: The holidays can be especially hard for low-income families, so local organizations meet each fall to coordinate programs, eliminate duplication, and serve as many families as possible during the holidays.

What Can the Community Do to Help? Although there are several organizations and collaborative groups working on improving financial stability of families, there are never enough resources to assist all individuals & families who need it. Here are ways to get involved:

- Donate money or goods to a local organization which assists people with basic needs.
- Join the Livingston County Hunger Council, visit www.livingstonhunger.com.
- Volunteer your time to help one or more of the local organizations. Contact your favorite organization to offer your help, or visit www.volunteerlivingston.org to find rewarding volunteer opportunities.
- Contact Livingston County United Way to host an “ALICE Discussion” at your workplace or organization. Help the community develop effective strategies to support working families. Call 810-494-3000, or contact arennie@lcnitedway.org.
- Organize a fundraiser or a food drive through your workplace or place of worship.
- Join one of the workgroups to bring your perspective, and help plan the best strategies.
- Attend a community forum or presentation to learn more about the needs of the community.
- Invite a workgroup member to speak at your organization or club meeting to learn more about community issues and resources.
- Advocate for policies and initiatives that will create a broader array of housing options and transportation systems to meet the needs of this rapidly changing community.

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