

## Equity Challenge Day 7: Opportunities in Ottawa & Allegan County

In Michigan alone, over 1.6 million working households – over 40 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.

Our own United Way President, Patrick Moran serves as the chair for both the Statewide ALICE Report and the statewide 21 Day Equity Challenge. The ALICE Report highlights households, also known as ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed – that 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.

In Ottawa and Allegan County, these numbers are just as concerning, with 31% and 36% respectively of households below the ALICE earnings threshold. Even within ALICE, deep disparities in racial equity exist. In the last 10 years, white ALICE families in Michigan have increased 1% compared to an 11% increase in black ALICE households.

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:** Read the ALICE Report for [Ottawa County](#) and [Allegan County](#), and [Michigan](#).

**Option 2:** Explore the data further through the [Opportunity Index](#) to see how increasing racial and socioeconomic disparities in our community are impacting opportunity. We encourage you to explore the stark differences in opportunity depending on where you live.

**Option 3:** See this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on boys.

**Option 4:** 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](#).