

**United
Way**



Connecticut United Ways

2024 ALICE POLICY AGENDA



Connecticut United Ways

ALICE

United for ALICE

WHO IS ALICE?

ASSET LIMITED



ALICE has no safety net
in times of crisis

INCOME CONSTRAINED



ALICE's income falls
short of essentials

EMPLOYED



ALICE is working, yet
not earning enough



Why ALICE?

ALICE is a data-driven approach to provide reliable and realistic information on the cost of living specific to each state.

The ALICE Household Survival budget reflects conservative estimates of the cost of household essentials, calculated to reflect ***real costs in Connecticut.***

An alternative to the Federal Poverty Level, ALICE research indicates how many households in our communities are living paycheck-to-paycheck or falling behind.



Household Survival Budget

The **ALICE Household Survival Budget** provides the *bare minimum* for essentials by household composition, in every county.

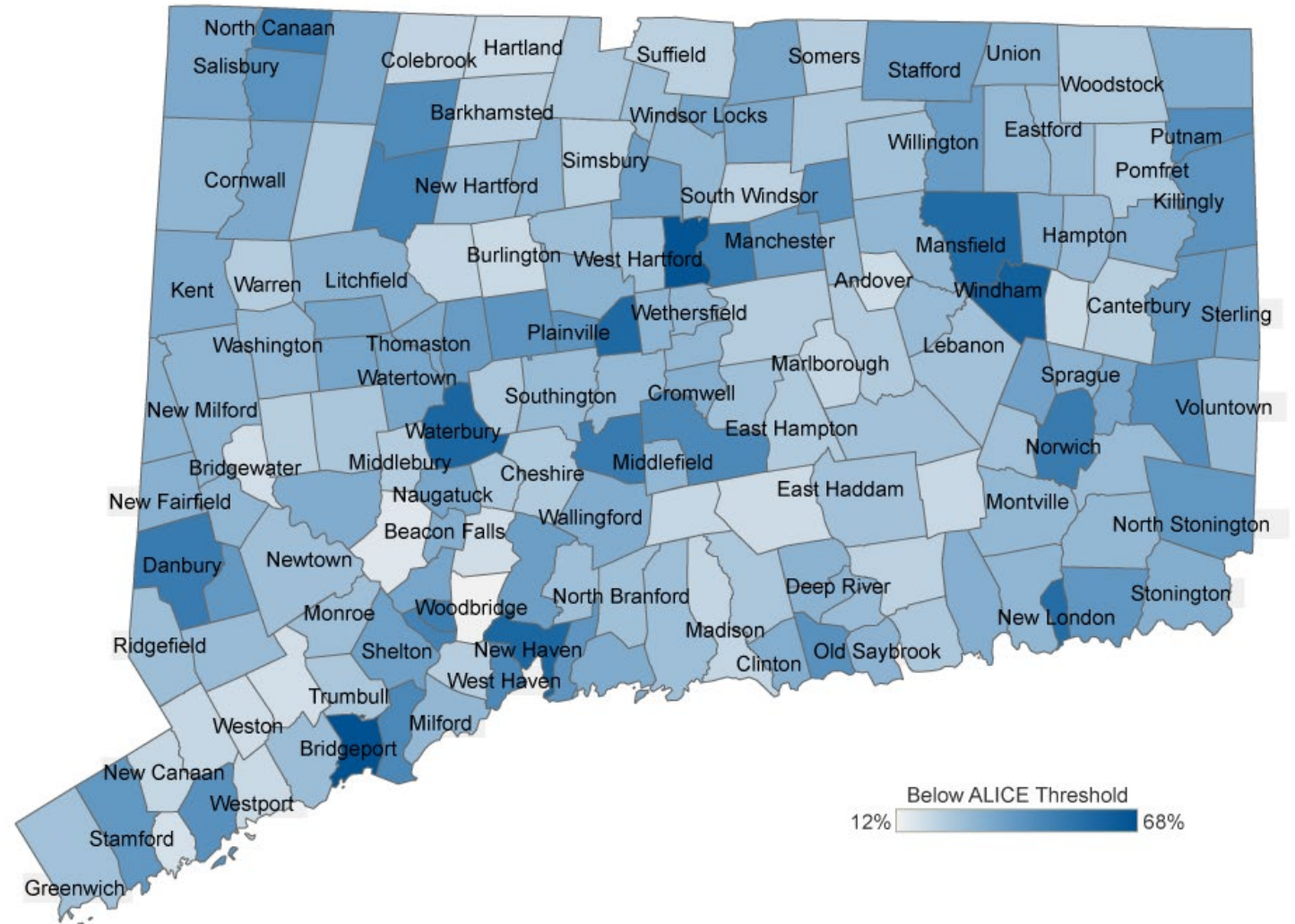
The problem is a **mismatch** between wages and the cost of basics.

Connecticut Household Survival Budget 2021		
Monthly Costs	Single Adult	2 Adults 1 Infant 1 Preschooler
Housing – Rent	\$801	\$1,111
Housing – Utilities	\$154	\$292
Child Care	-	\$2,188
Food	\$499	\$1,360
Transportation	\$357	\$834
Health Care	\$241	\$815
Technology	\$75	\$110
Miscellaneous	\$213	\$671
Tax Before Credits	\$420	\$1,505
Monthly Total	\$2,760	\$8,886
ANNUAL TOTAL Before Credits	\$33,120	\$106,632
Full-Time Hourly Wage*	\$16.56	\$53.32
Tax Credits (CTC and CDCTC)	-	(\$15,204)
ANNUAL TOTAL with Credits	\$33,120	\$91,428
Full-Time Hourly Wage	\$16.56	\$45.71

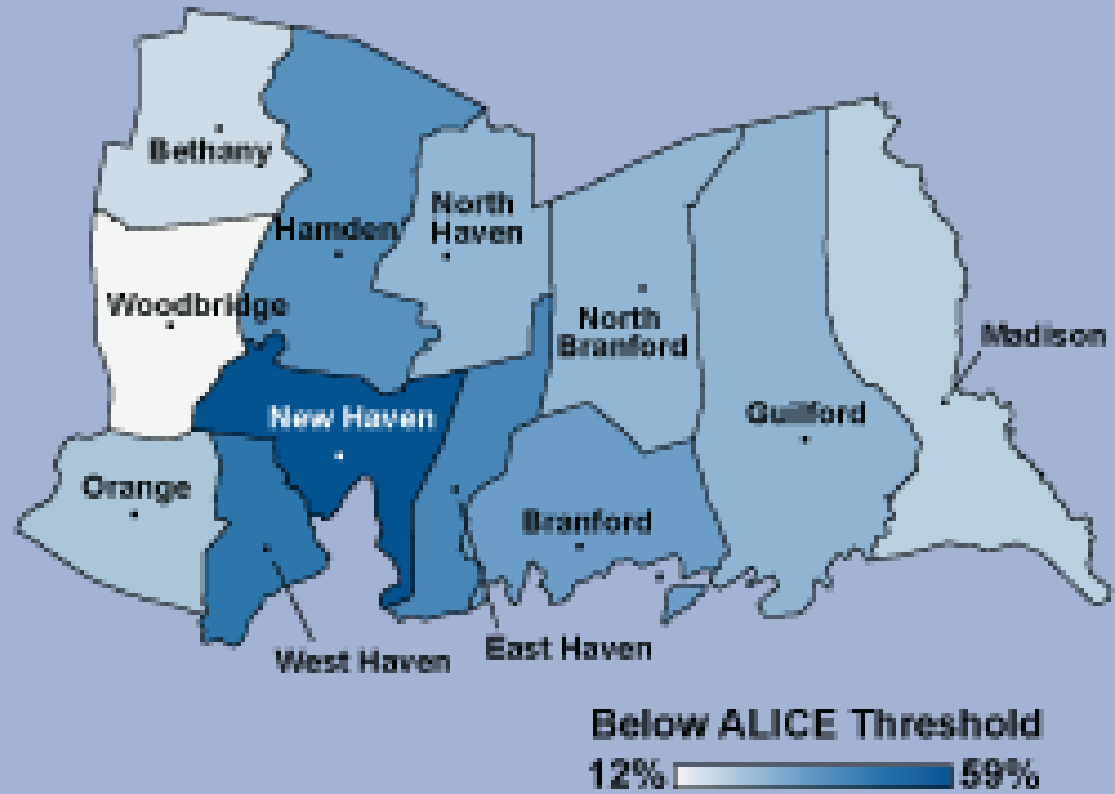
ALICE households live in every community in Connecticut.

39% of Connecticut Households live below the ALICE Threshold.

In some communities, that percentage is as high as 68%.

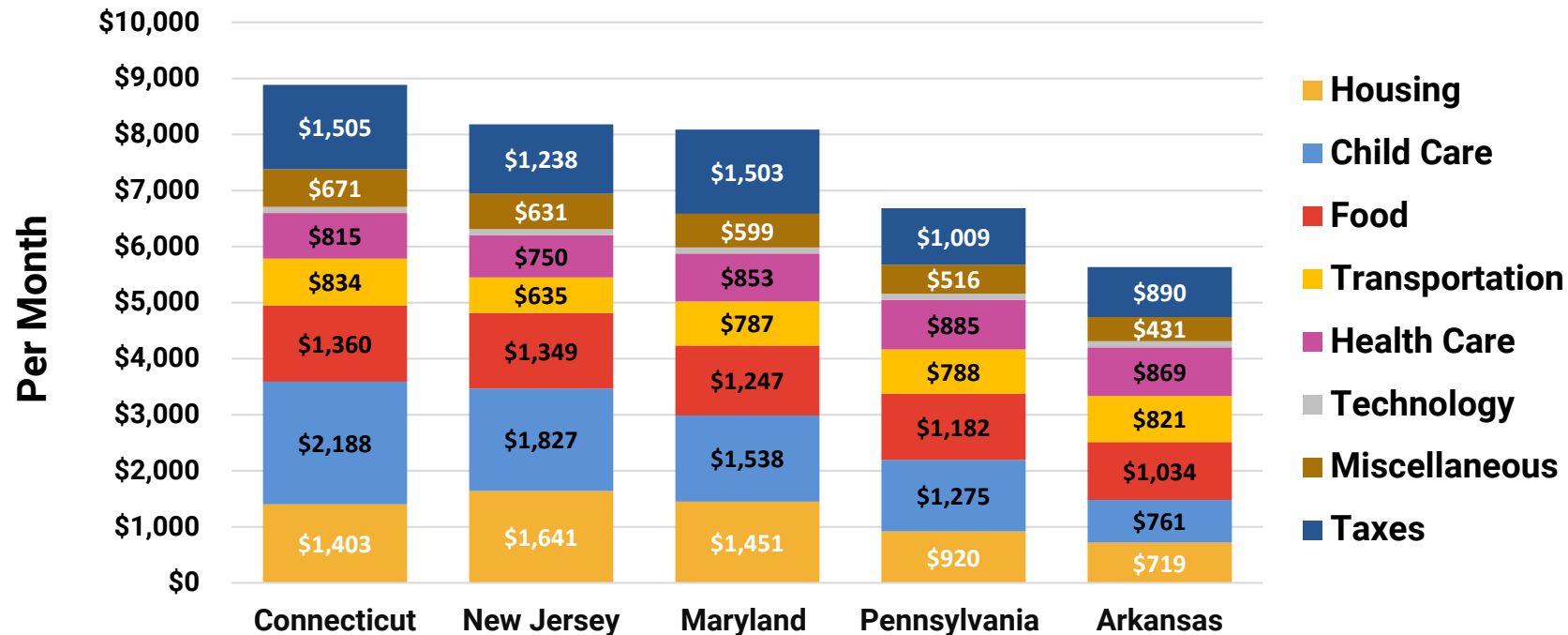


United Way of Greater New Haven, ALICE Households 2021



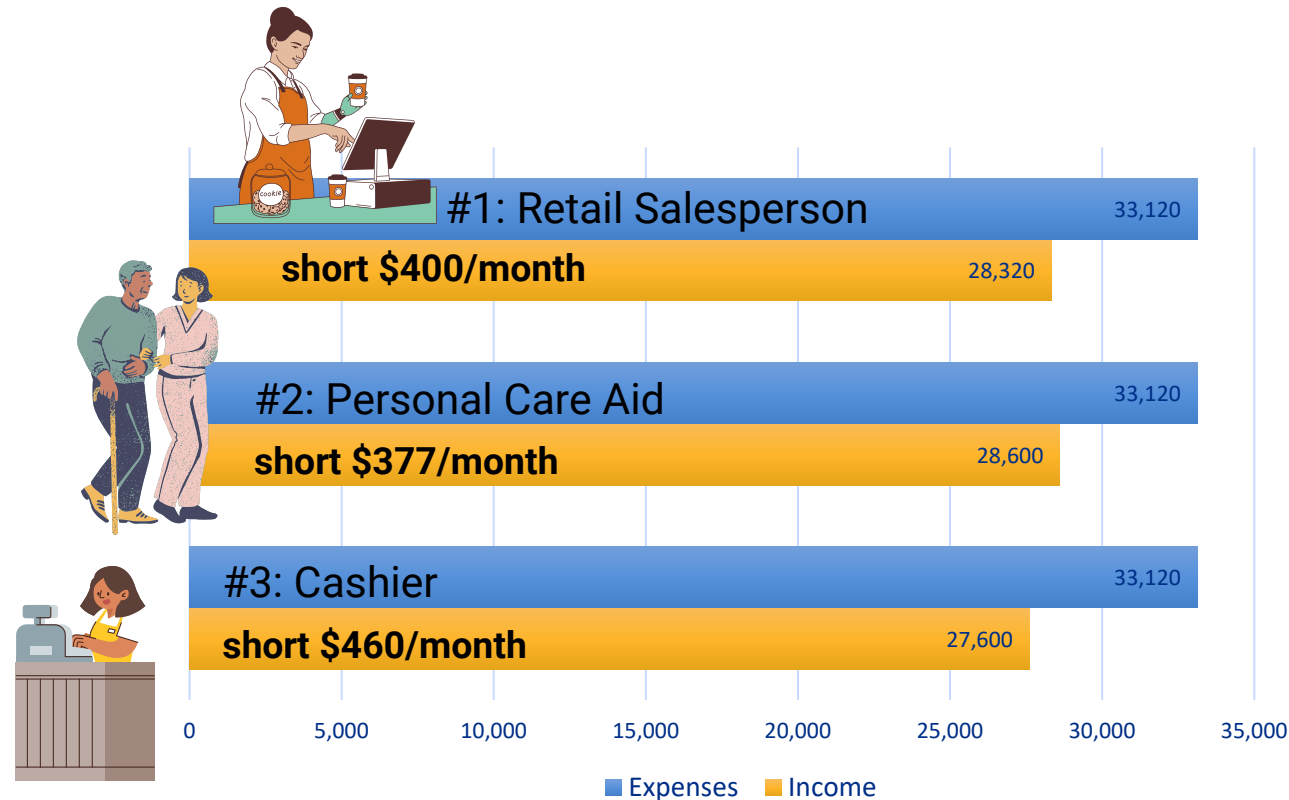
How Does Connecticut Compare?

2021 ALICE Household Survival Budget
(2 Adults, 1 Infant, 1 Preschooler)



In considering how to support struggling families across CT, we need to acknowledge the **high cost of living** in our state.

Average wages of most common Connecticut jobs compared to ALICE Survival Budget for 1 Adult (2021)



High levels of food insufficiency, continued difficulty paying bills and reduced savings are warning signs that the economic situation has worsened for households below the ALICE Threshold since 2021.

Breakdown of expenses by month: Housing \$801, Food \$499, Taxes \$420, Transportation \$357, Misc. \$213, Healthcare \$241, Technology \$75, Utilities \$154

8 of the 20 Most Common Occupations, Connecticut, 2021

Occupation	Total Employment (BLS)	Median Hourly Wage (BLS)	Percent Median Wage Change From 2019 (BLS)	Percent Workers Below ALICE Threshold (ACS PUMS)
Retail Salesperson	41,520	\$14.16	6%	32%
Personal Care Aides	38,040	\$14.30	12%	58%
Cashiers	37,600	\$13.80	17%	43%
Stockers and Order Fillers	30,160	\$17.34	29%	43%
Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers	29,060	\$20.53	2%	28%
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	24,960	\$22.73	-1%	24%
Cooks	18,930	\$16.56	11%	46%
Secondary School Teachers	16,890	\$37.72	-1%	9%

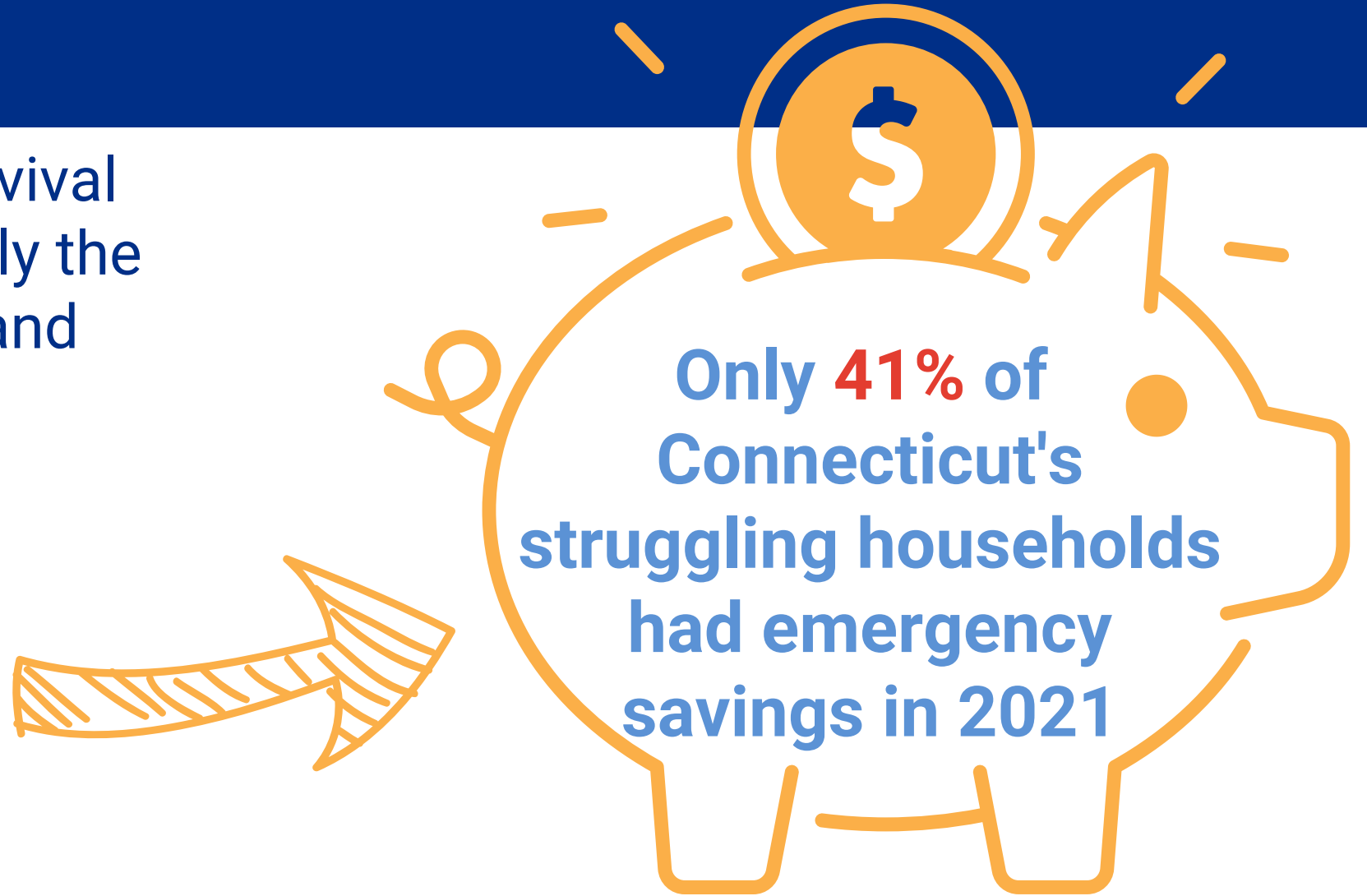
60% of the top 20 jobs in Connecticut still paid **less than \$20/hour** (\$40,000/year) in 2021.

Data for the 20 top occupations in Connecticut, 2021, are available in the 2023 ALICE Report.

ALICE Savings/Debt

The Household Survival Budget includes only the necessities to live and work in the modern economy.

Most notably, it does not include savings or debt service.





Rates of financial hardship in Connecticut differed substantially by race and gender.

Disparities are a result of multiple factors including **persistent racism, gender discrimination and geographic barriers.**

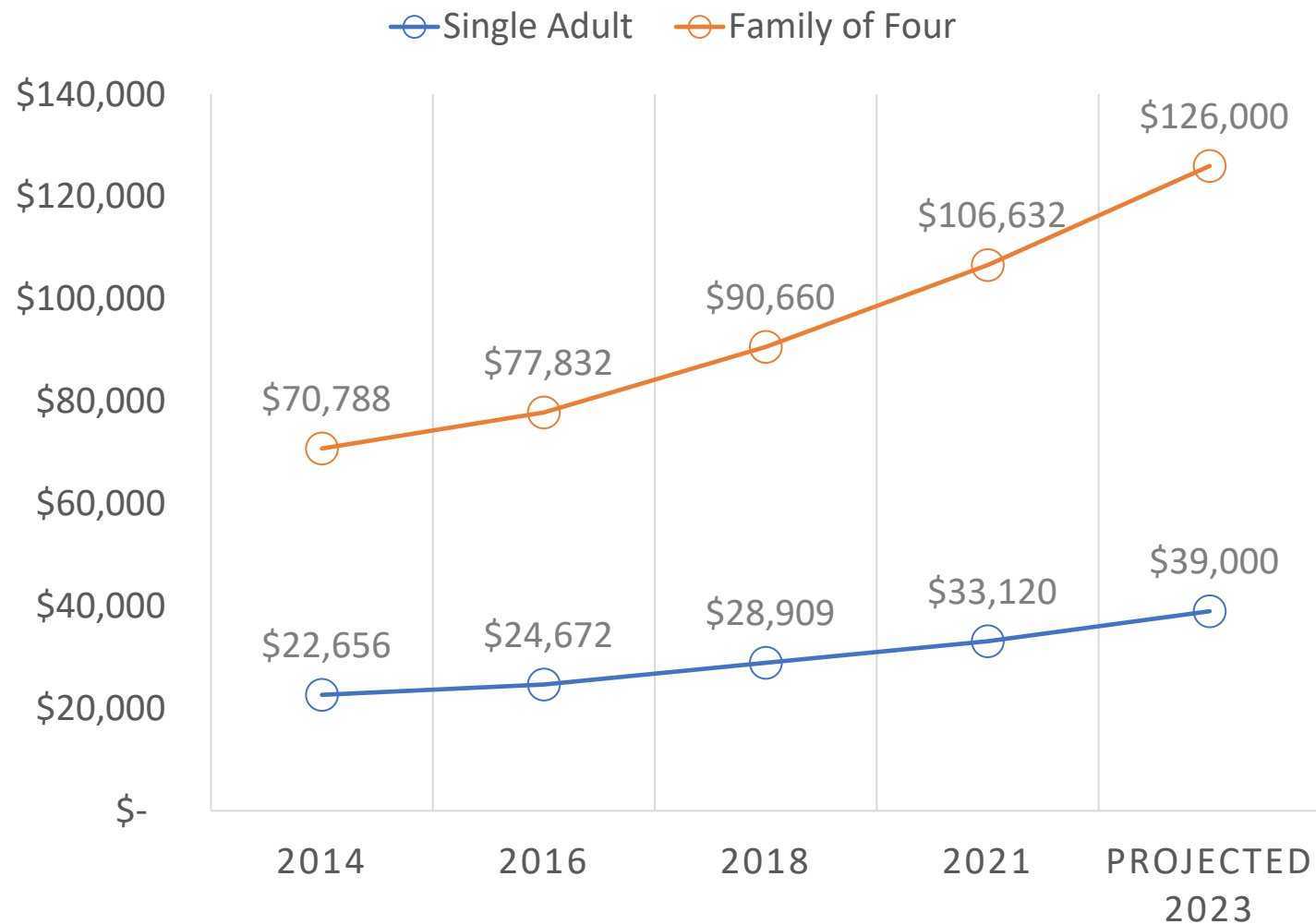
In Connecticut:

- 54% of Black households
- 57% of Hispanic households
- 68% of female-headed households with children

lived below the ALICE Threshold.

Connecticut ALICE Household Survival Budget Over Time

The **ALICE Essentials Index**, which measures change over time in the cost of household essentials, projects an **18.2% statewide increase in the Household Survival Budget from 2021 to 2023** (before taxes).



For the average Connecticut household, depending on the available tax credits, the costs of basics in 2023 could be as high as **\$126,000** for a family of four and **\$39,000** for a single adult.

Learn more at unitedforalice.org/essentials-index.

ALICE in Action



We can help to achieve measurable change by supporting targeted investments in struggling households.

- ALICE has become common language in the **state legislature**, replacing the outdated federal poverty level in helping public officials address the economic challenges of their constituents.
- ALICE data is **disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender**, helping private and public partners quantify disparities and their impact on CT residents.
- **Public funders** utilize ALICE data to understand the true costs of living in our state, based on real and accurate information regarding the costs specific to our communities.
- **Private funders** can rely on ALICE data to tell a more accurate story of the challenges and needs of the people they serve.
- ALICE data is used by **nonprofit providers** to better understand and document the needs in their community and make the case for funding.

Advocating Together in 2024

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We Advocate for ALICE



HARD TRUTH

**1 out of 4 households can't
afford the cost of living in CT**



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We Advocate for ALICE



Connecticut United Ways support three policies that can help build a bridge to stability for Connecticut families, our essential workforce. **All directly impact the high cost of living for and the resources available to ALICE.**



1. Create a permanent, fully refundable Connecticut child tax credit (CTC).

A permanent CT CTC of \$600/child would provide dependable, flexible income to approximately 250,000 CT households and 350,000+ children.



2. Continue free, healthy school breakfasts for all Connecticut students and leverage federal funds to expand no-cost school meals.

No-cost school meals help ensure Connecticut kids are ready to learn and have the nutrition needed to be healthy.

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Connecticut

3. Invest in 24/7/365 access to more than 40,000 basic needs resources for Connecticut residents.

211 I&R is an essential “one stop shop” connecting residents to multiple resources to meet their urgent needs.

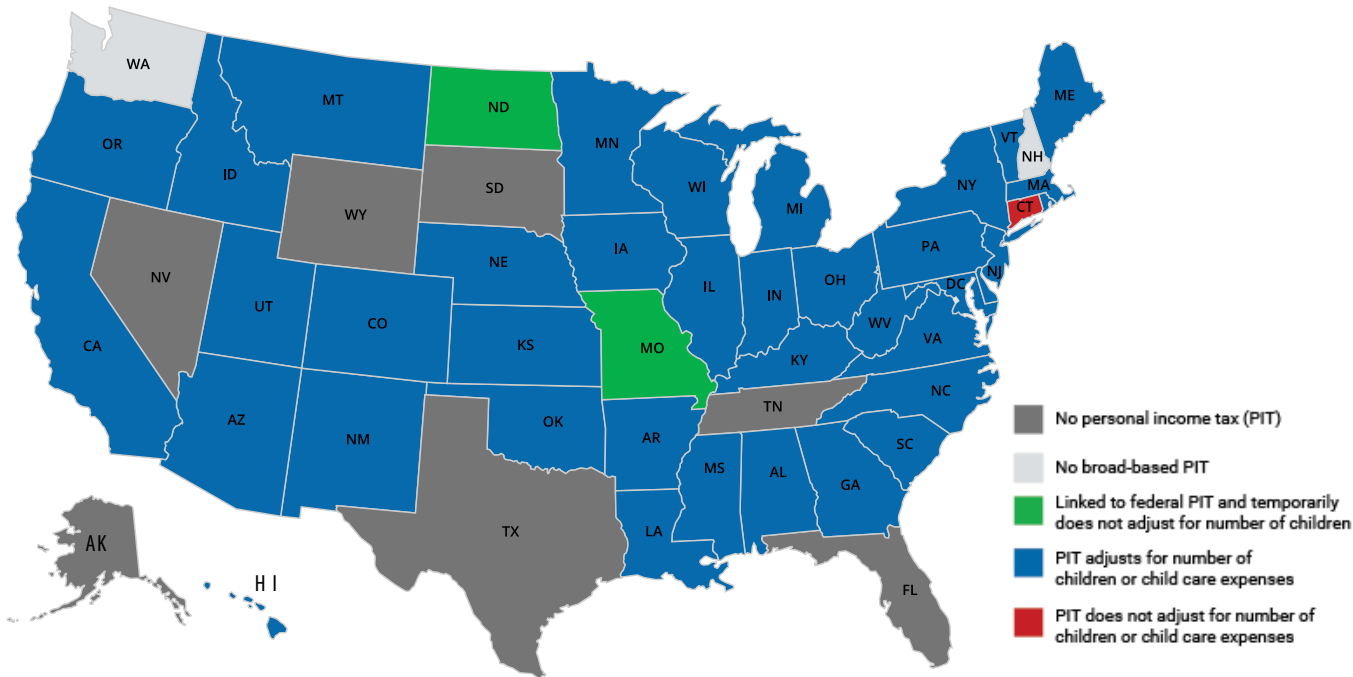


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1. Create a Permanent, Refundable CT Child Tax Credit (CTC)

Connecticut is the only high-cost-of-living state with a broad-based personal income tax that does not adjust for the number of children or child care expenses.



- The situation is urgent. Since 2021, the ALICE Essentials Index shows the actual cost of inflation for household basics is more than 18%. This blow is combined with the loss of pandemic-era federal benefits that supported ALICE families.
- A 100% refundable credit means that families who do not have a tax liability would receive the full value of the credit.
- Eligibility: up to \$100,000 annual income for a single filer, \$200,000 for joint filers.

1. Create a permanent, fully refundable Connecticut Child Tax Credit (CTC).



“By the time I’m done paying for everything I need, I’m left with **\$51** at the end of the month.” – Hadassah, Manchester Mom

2. Continue free, healthy school breakfasts for all Connecticut students and leverage federal funds to expand no-cost school meals.

Our kids should have what they need to learn. Providing students with adequate nutrition is essential for success in school, just like school buses, textbooks and technology.

- Annualize the \$16 million allocated in the 2023/24 school year to provide no-cost school breakfast for all Connecticut students in participating districts.
- Leverage federal funds to cover most of the cost to expand no-cost school meals – state funds fill only the gap between federal reimbursement and actual costs.



2. Continue free, healthy school breakfasts for all Connecticut students and leverage federal funds to expand no-cost school meals.



“My mother was a single mother who did so much for me and my sister. Keeping a roof over our heads, making sure we had food everyday too. Growing up, money was hard for us. Having two guaranteed meals Monday to Friday for school really helped my mother and many others.” - Mason, High School Student

3. Invest in 24/7/365 access to more than 40,000 basic needs resources for Connecticut residents.

211 I&R is an essential “one stop shop” connecting residents to multiple resources to meet their urgent needs.

- Steep increases in prices, increased levels of need: **people are turning to 211 for help more than ever.**
- 211 is a “**force multiplier**” maximizing public and private basic needs supports available right now for Connecticut residents.
- An additional **\$1.25 million** in new funding would allow 211 I&R to:
 - **Serve more residents to meet current demand**
 - **Decrease hold times**

Food insecurity has nearly doubled for families with children, while 211 frontline staff has decreased.

Flat funding since FY2010 means 211 has lost frontline staff needed to answer Connecticut residents' calls.



3. Invest in 24/7/365 access to more than 40,000 basic needs resources for Connecticut residents.



“At home it’s just my son and me and he is autistic. I needed energy assistance, and I reached out to 211 and they gave me information about a great program here in my area. It’s a big relief for me because I don’t have to worry about which bill to pay - I know that with this program, they got me. So, I’m able to pay other bills and not worry as much with the electric bill or the gas bill.” – Vicenta, Waterbury Mom

Let's
Discuss



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Thank you!

For more information, contact:

alice.ctunitedway.org



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