

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COLLABORATIVE BODY

Health and Human Service Needs FACT SHEET

Financial Stability December 2015

The Need Continues for a Solid Community “Safety Net”.

4,727	Single-parent households with children under 18 years old (2014)
\$24.76	Hourly “living wage” required for a single parent with two pre-school children
63%	Michigan jobs that pay less than \$20 per hour
19,170	“Food Insecure” individuals (lacking enough nutritious food for a healthy life - 2013)
5,715	Students (K-12) eligible for free/reduced school lunches (2014-2015)
2,163	2-1-1 calls/web searches (2014) Top requests: 1) electric payment assistance, 2) food pantries, 3) rent assistance, 4) homeless motel vouchers, 5) home maintenance & minor repair.
11,500	Individuals living below Federal Poverty Level (2009-2013 average)

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 a report by Rutgers University and commissioned by United Way organizations in Michigan, 20% or **13,437 local families** are working in high growth areas such as healthcare, personal services, childcare, etc., but earning *below* the level needed to be financially stable in Livingston County, and *above* the Federal Poverty Level that would qualify them for assistance programs.

The **ALICE Report** gives us a picture of our post-recession environment; highlights some of the challenges in the years ahead; and provides a much more accurate measure of financial hardship in this changed economy. View the entire report at www.lcunitedway.org.

Livingston County United Way is inviting community discussions and engaging ALICE households to better understand today’s challenges and barriers. Working together, this community can create more effective solutions for a better future – where we all thrive.

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 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.



Utility Assistance Task Force: This group is working to identify longer-term solutions to utility assistance, such as energy-saving strategies and renewable sources of energy.



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.



Community Tools:

- **Community Forums** – Multiple basic needs services are presented in a panel format, with audience Q&A, to build awareness and generate discussions of local needs and solutions. Available for presentations to local groups, service organizations, etc., by request
- **2-1-1** – United Way supported 24/7 information and referral service for Livingston County residents, with easy access by phone or on-line search.
- **Livingston County Community Connect** – A free annual event 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.
- **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.
- **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 a Livingston County Hunger Council sub-committee, 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.com 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 dgehringer@lcunitedway.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.

Contact Anne Rennie, Community Collaborative Planner, arennie@cmhliv.org 517-586-2039