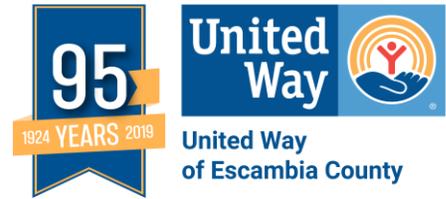


***For Immediate Release***

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**EMBARGOED UNTIL:**

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

**34% OF WORKING ESCAMBIA COUNTY RESIDENTS STRUGGLE FINANCIALLY**

Pensacola, Fla. – February 5, 2019 United Way of Escambia County today announced that of 118,702 households in Escambia County, 34% struggle to pay for basic needs such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology. Statewide, 46% of households face the same financial challenges. In Escambia County, the number of low-income workers struggling to cover essentials grew by 7% (between 2010 and 2016).

“There is enormous value in this data,” said United Way of Escambia County President & CEO, Laura P. Gilliam. “It really paints an accurate picture of the working families struggling to get by in our community.” This struggle materializes at a rate of \$26.48 per hour – what it takes a household of four in Escambia County to survive the associated costs of living.

These struggling Floridians are **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed or **A**LICE. They are households earning above the poverty line but not enough to cover the most basic of needs like food and housing. Even in affordable communities, across the board increases in everything from child care to health care plague a family’s ability to save or buy a home despite holding down a 40-hour-a-week job.

“The people reflected in this study are working and providing direct services in our community every day, Gilliam stated. “The fact that this population has grown, despite the perceived growth of our community, shows that there’s still a lot of work to be done.”

The cost of basic household needs increased steadily, outpacing the rate of inflation and wage growth. The cost for a family of four in Escambia County to meet basic needs rose 6% annually and 8% monthly, these costs rose 14% annually and 14% monthly for a single adult. Compared to Florida where the cost rose 20% per family and 12% for a single adult.

“We started a movement five years ago to raise awareness about these families who work and want to provide for their families,” said United Way of Florida President Ted Ganger. “Through the efforts of our local United Ways and their partners we can develop simple, fiscally conservative solutions that would have an immediate, positive impact on families.”

Other findings include:

- The biggest drivers of cost increases for families since the end of the recession are health care (14.5%) and taxes (23%).

- Of local municipalities, Pensacola Census County Division (CCD) had the largest percentage increase in total ALICE and poverty population at 6%, followed by Northwest Escambia CCD at 3%, and Cantonment CCD at 2%.

Florida is one of 18 states that have ALICE reports published. The research is supported in part by the Aetna Foundation, AT&T, Atlantic Health System, Deloitte, Entergy, Johnson & Johnson, KeyBank, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, OneMain Financial, RWJBarnabas Health, Thrivent Financial Foundation, Union Bank & Trust, UPS, and U.S. Venture. For town- and county-level ALICE data or to find county-by-county survival and stability budgets for six family sizes, visit [UnitedWayALICE.org/Florida](https://www.UnitedWayALICE.org/Florida).

To read an embargoed copy of the report and find county-by-county and town-level data on the size and demographics of ALICE, visit [www.UnitedWayALICE.org/Florida](https://www.UnitedWayALICE.org/Florida) with the case sensitive password LiveUnitedFL.

*United Way of Escambia County (UWEC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every citizen in our community. UWEC has operated locally for 94 years with a vision of a community United to create better opportunities for all. By investing in programs, participating in partnerships, and leveraging resources, UWEC works to meet a mission of Uniting our community to improve lives.*

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