

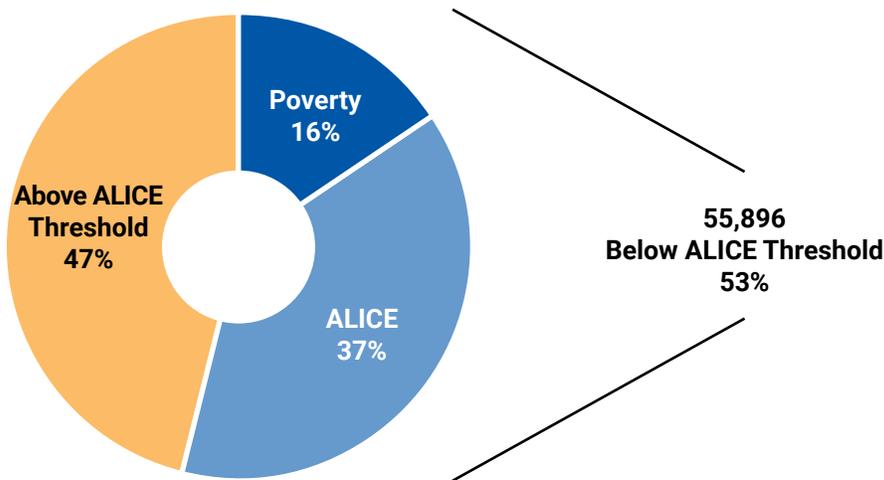
CHILDREN IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP: ESCAMBIA & SANTA ROSA COUNTIES

In Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the number of children growing up in financial hardship has been systematically undercounted. For decades, policymakers and community stakeholders have relied on the outdated Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to understand the extent of financial hardship in their communities. According to the FPL, 16% of children in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties (16,719) lived in poverty in 2019. Yet United For ALICE data shows another 37% (39,177) – more than twice as many – were also growing up in hardship, in households that earned above the FPL but not enough to afford the basics in the communities where they lived.

The reality is that nearly 56,000 children in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties – 53% of all children – lived in a household with income below the [ALICE Threshold of Financial Survival](#) in 2019. The state of Florida, at 56%, has the third-highest rate in the nation. These households included families in poverty and those who were **ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed**. ALICE households don't earn enough to afford the essentials like housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, a smartphone plan, and taxes – the basics needed to live and work in the modern economy.

Children by Household, Escambia Co. & Santa Rosa Co., 2019

Number of Children = 105,906



Note: This research uses the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS) and focuses on children, whose ALICE status is determined by their household's income compared to local cost of living. The data does not include children who are unhoused or living in group quarters. In this brief, percentages are rounded to whole numbers for ease of reading, which may result in percentages totaling 99% or 101%. All numbers are presented in the [ALICE Children Data Dashboard](#).

Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2019; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2019



KEY FINDINGS

- More than half (53%) of children in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties lived in households experiencing financial hardship in 2019. While 16% were below the FPL, an additional 37% – more than twice as many – were ALICE.
- While there are children below the ALICE Threshold across all demographic groups, 66% of Black children and 69% of Hispanic children in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties lived in households with income below the ALICE Threshold in 2019, compared to 46% of White children.
- Having working parents or guardians does not guarantee financial stability: 27% of Escambia County and Santa Rosa County children in households with two adults in the labor force were still below the ALICE Threshold in 2019.
- Children below the ALICE Threshold often lack access to resources ranging from stable housing and public assistance to education and broadband services. Almost 19,000 children below the ALICE Threshold in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties did not participate in SNAP.

WHO ARE ALICE CHILDREN?

Children below the ALICE Threshold are those under age 18 living in households with income below the basic cost of living for their communities. In 2019, 20% of children below the ALICE Threshold in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties were infants (0–2 years), 10% were preschool-age (3–4 years), and 70% were school-age (5–17 years).

Children in struggling households are from all demographic groups; they include children born in the U.S. and abroad, of all abilities and races/ethnicities, living with parents or guardians who are married or single, working or not working. Children in households below the ALICE Threshold live in rural, urban, and suburban areas.

KEY TERMS

ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

These households earn above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but cannot afford the basic cost of living in their county. While the FPL for a family of four in 2019 was \$25,750, the average bare-minimum cost of living for a family in Florida according to the ALICE Household Survival Budget was nearly \$70,000.

ALICE Threshold

Derived from the Household Survival Budget, the average income that a household needs to afford housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and a smartphone plan, plus taxes. Calculated for various household types for every U.S. state and county.

Below ALICE Threshold

Includes children in both poverty-level and ALICE households combined.

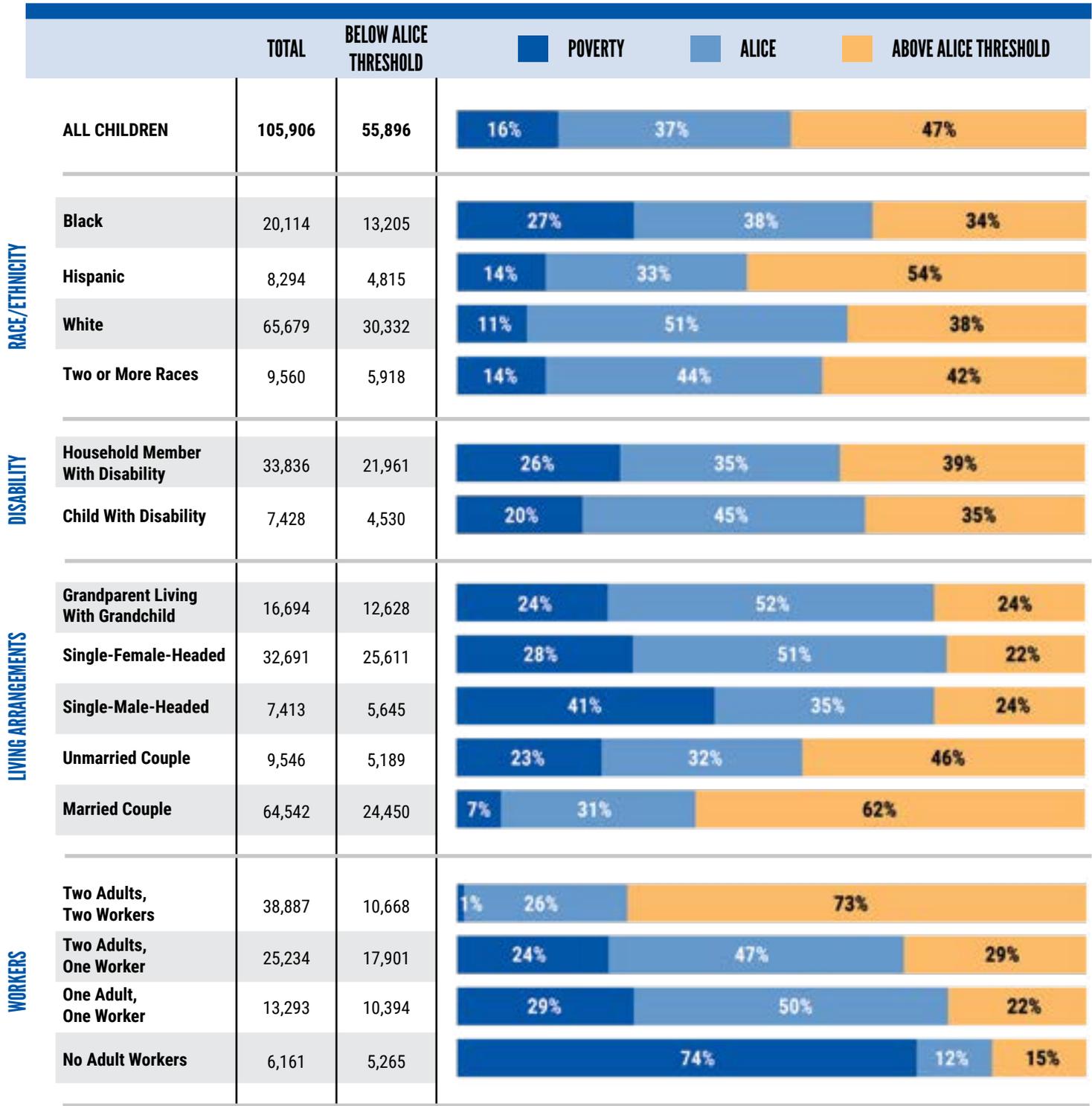
ALICE CHILDREN DATA DASHBOARD

Visit the ALICE Children Data Dashboard to explore data on children living in hardship by:

- State, regional, and local geographies
- Demographic categories including children's age, race/ethnicity, disability, and nativity
- Household characteristics like work status and living arrangements
- Children's access to critical resources

Visit UnitedForALICE.org/Focus-Children

Children by Household Financial Status and Key Demographics, Escambia Co. & Santa Rosa Co., 2019



Note: Percentages are rounded to whole numbers for ease of reading, which may result in percentages totaling 99% or 101%. The groups shown in this figure overlap across categories (Race/Ethnicity, Disability Status, Living Arrangements, and Workers). All racial categories except Two or More Races are for one race alone. The Hispanic group may include children of any race. "Grandparent Living With Grandchild" includes any arrangement where grandparents live with their grandchild, including where parents or other adults are present. For the Workers category, the number of workers is defined as "workers in the family over the last 12 months" from when the survey was conducted. View more on the [ALICE Children Data Dashboard](#).

Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2019; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, PUMS, 2019

NEXT STEPS

There's a lot more to be done to change the trajectory for ALICE children. Visit UnitedForALICE.org to learn more, then share this data with stakeholders in your community.

Learn more with:

- The [ALICE Children Data Dashboard](#), to dig deeper into related topics, demographics, and sub-state geographies
- [Resources related to children and financial hardship](#), including the references linked in this Research Brief, as well as additional resources that offer important context and even deeper analysis
- [The Pandemic Divide: An ALICE Analysis of National COVID Surveys](#) (2021) and other resources on the ALICE and COVID-19 webpage, to see the impacts of the pandemic on ALICE
- [On Uneven Ground: ALICE and Financial Hardship in the U.S.](#) (2020), to learn about the trends that contributed to a growing number of ALICE households even before the pandemic
- The [ALICE Wage Tool](#), to explore wage levels by geography and occupation

Connect with stakeholders:

- Contact [United Way of West Florida](#) for support and volunteer opportunities
- [See members of the committees that support this work](#), including the ALICE in Focus National Research Advisory Committee for Children, and the ALICE in Focus National Leadership Committee for Children
- Find your state and federal representatives and see ALICE household data by legislative district with our [ALICE Legislative District Tool](#)
- Advocate for more accurate data collection by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) for children who have been [historically undercounted](#), including (but not limited to) young children, children of color, children with disabilities, and children in low-income households

United For ALICE is a driver of innovative research and action around financial hardship. The data and analysis are shared with United Ways, corporations, foundations, government, and nonprofits to inform policy and promote positive change.

United For ALICE partners with United Way of West Florida to bring the ALICE research to our community.



The ALICE in Focus Series utilizes the Household Survival Budget and the ALICE Threshold to analyze the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS). Each "Focus" in the series highlights a different demographic group. For more details about the ALICE in Focus Series methodology, go to UnitedForALICE.org/Methodology.