ALICE FACTORS

ALICE lives in every community. Surprisingly, nearly half of Pierce County’s 65 towns have 30 percent or more households earning less than what is needed to afford the basics. While each ALICE family has its own set of unique circumstances, two primary factors emerged from this study.

High Cost of Living
Based on the newly developed Household Survival Budget, it takes more than double the U.S. poverty rate of $23,550 for a family of four to afford the essentials. Despite working, ALICE and poverty-level households often need assistance to meet their most basic needs. Frequently, many of these households are still unable to make ends meet on a monthly basis. This gap in income forces families to make tough decisions like whether to pay an electric bill or fill a prescription, buy food or fill their gas tank.

Lack of High-Paying Jobs
ALICE provides vital services to our community – such as child care, health care, security, and retail services – yet is unable to make ends meet on the income these jobs provide. The Pierce County economy is increasingly dependent on low-paying, service jobs. More than half of all jobs in Pierce County pay less than $20/hour ($40,000/year if full-time). These jobs are projected to grow at double or triple the rate of medium- and high-skilled jobs over the next decade across Pierce County.

Race & Ethnicity

ALICE is men and women, young and old, of all races. Nearly 20 percent of the ALICE population is white while 37 percent are Hispanic, 29 percent African American and 17 percent Asian. Black and Hispanic households are still over-represented as a percentage of ALICE households, but overall, the race and ethnicity of ALICE households fairly closely mirrors that of the Pacific Northwest population as a whole.

ALICE ON THE MAP

ALICE in Washington

ALICE in the Pacific Northwest