

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 17, 2018

**Media Contacts:**

Kate Lundquist

[Marketing@unitedwaylane.org](mailto:Marketing@unitedwaylane.org) 541-741-6000

**44% of Lane County Households Can't Afford Basics  
Recession Not Over For Working Families**

In Lane County 26,588 households live below the federal poverty level. Another 38,405 are ALICE families. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. These households earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but less than what it takes to survive in the modern economy. Families living below nationally assigned poverty thresholds combined with ALICE households make up 44 percent of Lane County's 147,712 households.

NEARLY 26% of Lane County households can't afford a basic monthly budget that includes housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and a cell phone. New data released by the United Ways of the Pacific Northwest and the [United Way ALICE Project](#) shows that 44 percent of Lane County 147,712 households live one unexpected expense away from financial distress.

United Way of Lane County President and CEO, Noreen J. Dunnells said, "Given the community dialogue around lack of affordable, accessible, stable housing, I am not surprised that our ALICE families have increased in number since the last report issued in 2014. Overall the cost of housing in Oregon has risen by 31% from 2010 to 2016. This is a complex and compelling issue that we need to address with multiple strategies and innovative solutions. Community partners are working to solve the housing crisis in Lane County including the Poverty & Homelessness initiative, Better Housing together, and numerous non-profit agencies."

The United Way ALICE Project compares 2016 household costs versus incomes at the county-level in each state. National averages do not accurately represent the extent of financial struggle in Lane County communities.

The term ALICE was coined to shed light on those essential workers often overlooked by other economic indicators and policy discussions. ALICE is our child care workers, home health aides and store clerks – those men and women who work at low-paying jobs, have little or no savings and are one emergency from poverty.

The ALICE Project is a grassroots movement that seeks to redefine financial hardship in the U.S. by providing comprehensive, unbiased data to help inform policy solutions at all branches of government and in business, academia and nonprofit organizations. Launched by the United Way of Northern New Jersey at the start of the Great Recession, the research is being embraced by United Ways in 18 states, with more expected to join next year. United Ways and partners are using the data to develop policies, allocate resources and address community needs.

Additional data highlights revealed by the research include:

More than 44 percent of households in Lane County cannot afford a basic survival budget – the percentage of struggling families ranges from 47 percent in Eugene and 62 percent in Oakridge.

From 2010 to 2016 the cost of basic household expenses for a family of four (two adults with one infant and one preschooler) has risen an average of 34 percent across Lane County compared to nationwide inflation rate over that period of 9%.

#### **About the United Way ALICE Project**

The United Way ALICE Project is a collaboration of United Ways in Connecticut, Florida, Hawai'i, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. The Project has developed standardized measurements that provide a comprehensive look at financial hardship across the U.S. With this data, Project members work to stimulate a fresh, nonpartisan dialogue across the country about the importance and fragility of working families living paycheck to paycheck. [About United Way of Lane County](#)

#### **About United Way of Lane County**

United Way of Lane County works to support the education, financial stability, and health of every person in our community. United Way brings together the passionate individuals and organizations that have the knowledge and resources to get things done; engaging top leadership from every sector in developing strategies that will change systems and invest in programs and services that address our community's current social crises. To learn more visit [www.unitedwaylane.org](http://www.unitedwaylane.org)