WHO IS ALICE?

ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) refers to hard working people in our community who earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford basic necessities like food, housing, child care, transportation, technology, and health care.

1 in 3 Whatcom County households can’t make ends meet.

United Way funds life-changing programs that help individuals and families achieve financial stability.
When we talk about individuals and families who struggle financially, we often refer to ALICE. But what does that mean? Who is ALICE?

ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. But it’s not just an acronym. These are people you know. Hard working folks with jobs who still can’t make ends meet.

Many people think the Federal Poverty Level is a measure of who’s getting by and who isn’t, but the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four is just over $26,000 a year.

ALICE is a different way of thinking about households that struggle financially. One that takes into account the true cost of housing, food, transportation, health care, technology, and child care. The ALICE threshold represents what it really costs to survive in Whatcom County. That same family of four would have to earn over $60,000 per year to meet their needs.

What does it mean to live above the Federal Poverty Level but below the ALICE threshold?

• Having to choose between buying food, filling a prescription, or paying rent.
• Constantly being one event away from disaster: an accident, a medical bill, or a cut in work hours.
• The things that could help you get ahead—reliable housing and transportation, education opportunities, and even saving money—simply can’t happen.

By supporting a network of nonprofits working to provide basic needs, increase economic mobility, and break the cycle of poverty in Whatcom County, we’re helping local ALICE households become financially secure.

ALICE refers to households earning more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living in Whatcom County. Despite being employed, many continue to struggle as wages fail to keep pace with the cost of housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, and technology needs.