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ALICE Report: Nearly half of Texas households struggle to make ends meet and 27 percent McLennan County

ALICE Report details size and scope of financial hardship in McLennan County

*IMPORTANT NOTE: An embargoed copy of the report and county-by-county/municipal-level data on the size and demographics of ALICE, as well as the community conditions and costs faced by ALICE households, are available for media to review. Contact Joelle Polisky at jpolisky@goshiftkey.com if you would like advance access. The Texas ALICE Report document **AND INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THIS PRESS RELEASE** are embargoed until **12:01 a.m. Jan. 29, 2019.***

Adrianna Cuellar Rojas, president and CEO of United Ways of Texas and United Way of Waco-McLennan County Executive Director, Barbara Mosacchio are available for interviews. **Join a Facebook Live press conference, hosted on United Ways of Texas Facebook page, at 10 a.m. Jan. 29, 2019. The press conference will feature state and local United Way leaders, Stephanie Hoopes, Ph.D., founder and director of the National ALICE Project and multiple Texas ALICE families.**

Excel data on ALICE thresholds by county is available upon request.

Waco, Texas – New research shows that in Texas, 4,025,176 households — 42 percent — could not afford basic needs such as housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology in 2016, according to the Texas ALICE Report released today by the United Ways of Texas. In McLennan County, 27 percent of households are ALICE and 17 percent live in poverty, as defined by the Federal Poverty guidelines.

ALICE, which stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mloyed, places a spotlight on a large population of hardworking residents who work at low-paying jobs, have little or no savings, and are one emergency from falling into poverty.

The Texas ALICE Report tracks struggling Texas households before and after the Great Recession (2007 and 2010) and then during the recovery through 2016. Texas is one of the fastest-growing states in the country; from 2007 to 2016, the number of the state's households increased by 22 percent. Yet economic activity and financial hardship in the state have been more uneven.

The Federal Poverty Line (FPL) is an outdated calculation and no longer provides accurate information about the number of people facing hardship across the country. Using the best available information on those who are struggling, the Texas ALICE Report offers an enhanced set of tools for stakeholders to measure the real challenges ALICE households face in trying to make ends meet. The ALICE Project develops these resources in order to move beyond stereotypes and judgments of “the poor,” and instead encourages the use of data to inform programmatic and policy solutions for those households and their communities.

“We are keenly aware that ALICE families struggle every day just to meet their basic costs of living expenses in McLennan County,” said United Way of Waco-McLennan County Executive Director, Barbara Mosacchio. “They often move in and out of poverty and crisis, and our United Way is committed to joining with our partners to increase financial resiliency for ALICE families and individuals. We are grateful to our State Association, United Ways of Texas, for helping us to create awareness and inform our local community about ALICE.”

The Texas ALICE Report is the most comprehensive depiction of financial need in the state to date, using data from a variety of sources, including the U.S. Census. The report includes measures, based on present-day income levels and expenses that show how many Texas workers are struggling financially, and why.

The 135-page Texas ALICE Report reveals many points of data, including:

- As per the report, **the 2016 data shows the number of ALICE households in McLennan County at 27 percent** while the percentage of poverty is at 17 percent.
- ALICE households earn above the poverty level but below the Household Survival Budget, created for ALICE. Childcare, representing a Texas family’s greatest expense, averaged \$910.00 per month for two children in licensed and accredited childcare in McLennan County.
- The average Household Survival Budget (calculation created for the ALICE report) for a Texas family of four increased to \$52,956 — significantly higher than the federally recognized family poverty level of \$24,300. (Single Household Survival Budget is \$19,428 with the FDL set at \$11,880.)
- Technology expenses (smart phones) are included in the ALICE survival budget.

The ALICE Report provides county-by-county, town-level data and analysis of how many households are struggling.

United Way of Waco-McLennan County is already working with local partners to assist ALICE individuals and households through community awareness, advocacy, and impact programs. United Way knows many of the people whose lives are impacted by United Way funded programs, are ALICE. Over the next year and ongoing, along with its community and state partners, United Way of Waco-McLennan County will be using ALICE data to inform programmatic and policy solutions for McLennan County households and communities.

About United Ways of Texas

The mission of the United Ways of Texas is to integrate action and resources for the common

good. UWT is an association working with local United Ways across the state representing 254 counties. Together we work across our communities to tackle common challenges that affect our local communities but are bigger than any of us — challenges our entire state faces. Along with United Ways across the country, we are part of a global network of more than 1,800 United Ways, servicing communities in 41 countries. For more information, go to www.uwtexas.org.

About United Way of Waco-McLennan County

The mission of United Way of Waco-McLennan County United Way of Waco-McLennan County strengthens the community by mobilizing resources to measurably improve lives. For nearly 90 years, United Way of Waco-McLennan County has focused on strengthening our community and creating opportunity for every resident through inspired and informed philanthropy and partnerships to address our greatest challenges. We fight for the health, education, financial stability, and safety net services of every person in McLennan County. UWWMC works with corporate, private and civic leaders to strengthen programs that support and empower children, families, and individuals. Through the generous support of our donors and the strength of our non-profit partners, we are effectively building a strong foundation for our community's future health and well-being. Alongside our community partnerships, we are working to affect equitable, systemic change in education, health, financial stability, and safety net services so that all people achieve their full potential. For more information, go to www.unitedwaywaco.org.

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