

CARRYING THE WEIGHT: ALICE



5–7 minute engagement activity

1. INTRODUCE ALICE – 30 SECONDS

FACILITATOR:

- “I need one volunteer to come up and sit here. This person is going to represent an ALICE household–Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.”
- “ALICE households are working, but their income isn’t enough to consistently cover the basic cost of living. They often have little or no savings when something unexpected happens.”
- “In Washington County, 23% of households are within the ALICE threshold–nearly 1 in 4.”

2. BUILD THE WEIGHT – 2 MINUTES

- Food - Hand over food items.
“You’re struggling to afford enough food for your family.”
- Unexpected Bills - Hand over bills + umbrella.
“An unexpected utility bill arrives, but you don’t have savings to cover it.”
- Child Care - Hand over clock.
“Your work schedule doesn’t line up with your children’s school schedule, and affordable child care is hard to find.”
- Family Emergency- Hand over first-aid kit + stuffed animal.
“Your child gets injured, and you have to leave work–and now face unexpected medical and equipment needs.”
- Getting Ahead - Hand over certification/book.
“You know additional education could lead to a better job, but finding the time and money feels impossible.”
- Family & Summer - Hand over art/sports supplies.
“Your kids want to participate in summer activities, but those costs weren’t in the budget.”

FACILITATOR:

- “And through all of this, you’re still trying to work, raise your children, manage your home, and be the parent you want to be.”

3. MAKE THE IMPACT VISIBLE – 30 SECONDS

FACILITATOR:

- “Now you’re carrying all of this at once.”
- “How does that feel?”

(Pause for response)

- “This is what ALICE households are often carrying—not one crisis, but the weight of many challenges happening at the same time.”
- Ask the volunteer to stand while holding everything. “Please try to stand”

4. SHOW HOW WE LIGHTEN THE LOAD – 2 MINUTES

VOLUNTEER / FACILITATOR:

- Take all items place in UW Laundry Basket

VOLUNTEER 1 – BASIC NEEDS

- “United Ways partnership with 211 connects families with food assistance, utility resources and other health & human service needs.”
- “Community partnerships provide affordable child care, after-school programs, and opportunities for children to learn and thrive.”
- “When a crisis happens, programs like h.e.l.p. corner help families access the equipment and support they need.”
- “United Way connects people with resources for education, financial literacy, employment, and career advancement.”

5. THE CLOSING – 30 SECONDS

FACILITATOR:

- “Look at what just happened.”
- “The challenges didn’t disappear. But the weight became lighter because this family didn’t have to carry it alone.”
- “Every challenge is connected and no one agency can solve the problem alone. That’s why United Way brings people, resources and agencies together to solve our toughest challenges.”
- “United Way strategically invests every dollar in local programs and initiatives to reduce barriers, strengthen families, and help everyone thrive.”

FINAL QUESTION TO THE ROOM: “What could become possible if no one in our community had to carry the weight alone?”

