



# Building Up Bay County



# 2023 Community Needs Assessment Summary



# BECOMING THE UNITED WAY OUR COMMUNITY DESERVES

The past few years have been spent navigating through difficult times and adapting at every turn. Although we continue to see an increased need of resources, we know that together we have the ability to provide our neighbors with the tools they need to thrive.

Building up our community is no small feat, and no one individual or organization can do it alone. It will take all of us coming together, and living united, to make it happen. The data collected in this assessment should be viewed as an opportunity, giving us a roadmap of work ahead.

It is our hope that every person will find a way to engage - as a volunteer, advocate, or donor- to make Bay County the thriving community we all want to see.

Sincerely,



President & CEO  
United Way of Bay County



Senior Manager- Weinlander Fitzhugh CPAs  
Board Chair- United Way of Bay County



## Table of Contents

The Process... Page 3

Community Concerns... Page 4

ALICE In Bay County... Page 5

Results... Pages 6-8

Impact Agenda... Page 9

Bay County at a Glance... Pages 10-11

# Community Conversation Process

United Way of Bay County listened to the community to find its most critical needs through focus groups as well as with a digital survey. Focus groups included leaders of non-profit organizations and community members.

The conversation was based around trends specifically within the focus areas of health, education, and financial stability.

Data was pulled and analyzed from the 2023 Kids Count Data, 2023 ALICE report, Bay County Health Department, 211 NE Michigan Report, 2020 Census data. AND.....



The Community Needs survey was pushed out on social media channels, emails, and flyers with a QR code directly linked to it. Staff and Board members also attended public events at Bay County libraries and at the Dow Bay Area Family YMCA to assist individuals in completing the survey. Respondents varied in age from 18- >75 years old, with varying education levels and home situations. Households fluctuated from sizes of **1 to 8** with **34% unemployed**. The number one reason for unemployment was *lack of childcare* and stay at home moms.

## What Was Asked

What educational concerns do you have for our community?

**Have you ever lost a job due to transportation issues?**

Do you know how to find resources if you're in need of assistance?

**What would improve your childcare situation?**

What income and financial stability concerns do you have for yourself?

**Do you have housing related needs?**

# Our Community Says...

Not enough affordable housing

Expensive childcare

Lack in affordable healthcare

Drug use has skyrocketed

No housing for homeless

Utility and rent are too high

High Property Taxes

Mental health professionals available in schools

Access to fresh affordable groceries

Busing system is inefficient

## Common Concerns

Affordable & Accessible Housing

Safe Housing

Childcare

Mental Health Resources

Financial Education

# ALICE IN OUR COMMUNITY

**36%**

of Bay County residents are at or below the ALICE threshold

Childcare is the highest monthly expense for ALICE families

## ALICE

Asset Limited Income  
Constrained Employed

Households that earn more than the US poverty level, but less than the basic cost of living for Bay County

Top un-ment needs include:

- Housing
- Utilities
- Car repairs

**70%**

of Single Mothers fall below the ALICE threshold

**37%**

of respondents could *not* find a resource for their assistance needs

**36%**

Reported utilizing a food pantry or discount food store

The household survival budget for a family of four is

**\$57,204**

far exceeding the Federal Poverty Level of **\$31,200**

(2024 FPL)



# FINANCIAL STABILITY

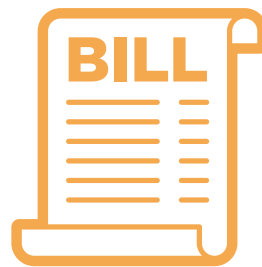


Residents have expressed concerns with financial stability in Bay County. Community members have stated that rent and mortgage payments are too high, there is a lack of good paying jobs, and many have not been able to obtain employment due to lack of child care or transportation.



**55%**

**Reported living in poverty, paycheck to paycheck, or frugally**



**25%**

**Missed a rent/mortgage or utility payment in the last 12 months due to not having enough money**



**14%**

**Have lost a job or have been unable to obtain one due to lack of transportation**



**36%**

**Reported utilizing a food pantry or discount grocery store for food on a regular basis**

# EDUCATION



Bay County residents expressed concerns with our future generations, and the lack of academic development in our school systems. Community members had concerns with affordable childcare, and tuition for college or a higher education.



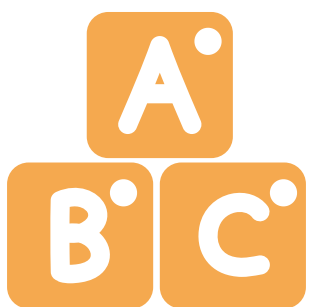
**33%**

**Reported concerns of their children's academic development**



**17%**

**Have lost a job or have been unable to obtain one due to lack of childcare**



**OVER 55%**

**3- & 4-year old's are NOT in preschool in Bay County**



**23%**

**Struggle with money for college tuition, or a higher education**



# HEALTH



Bay County residents expressed concerns with many aspects of our community's health. Community members had concerns about access to health care, mental health services, and substance abuse in Bay County.

**49%**

Have accessed mental health services for themselves or a household member in the last 12 months

Death caused by overdose has increased by

**13%**

Death caused by suicide has increased by

**60%**

**64%**

Increase in confirmed victims of child abuse/neglect

**73%**

Increase in child abuse investigations

**11%**

of respondents do not have health insurance

**18%**

of veteran respondents do not receive veteran benefits



**Mission** | To engage and empower our community to collectively impact lives

**Vision** | A thriving community where every person has access to equitable opportunities that lead to an enhanced quality of life

## Financial Stability

## Education

## Health

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Based on the findings from the 2023 Community Assessment, United Way of Bay County will work collaboratively with other Bay County non-profit organizations, schools, medical institutions, and local government to improve our current human service system.

Together, we can make a collective impact to ensure Bay County residents improve their quality of life status, and create tangible community change focused on financial stability, quality education, and access to healthcare.

### FINANCIAL STABILITY

A thriving community is possible when every person has what they need to build financial stability and resilience.

Our goal to equip individuals and families with the resources and educational tools needed to achieve financial stability and have the opportunity to improve their socio-economic status will provide a long term solution for those living in poverty or below the ALICE threshold.

### EDUCATION

We believe that every child in Bay County should have the access and support they need to grow into a successful adult. Our goal

to improve school readiness through access to affordable childcare and quality early education programs and initiatives will have a lifelong impact on our youth's success.

### HEALTH

We believe that all Bay County residents should have equitable access to health services. Our goal to create

awareness and increase access to resources and services for mental health and suicide, substance use disorders as well as domestic violence and child abuse will provide every individual in our community with the ability to achieve optimal health.

# BAY COUNTY AT A GLANCE

## Average Household Income

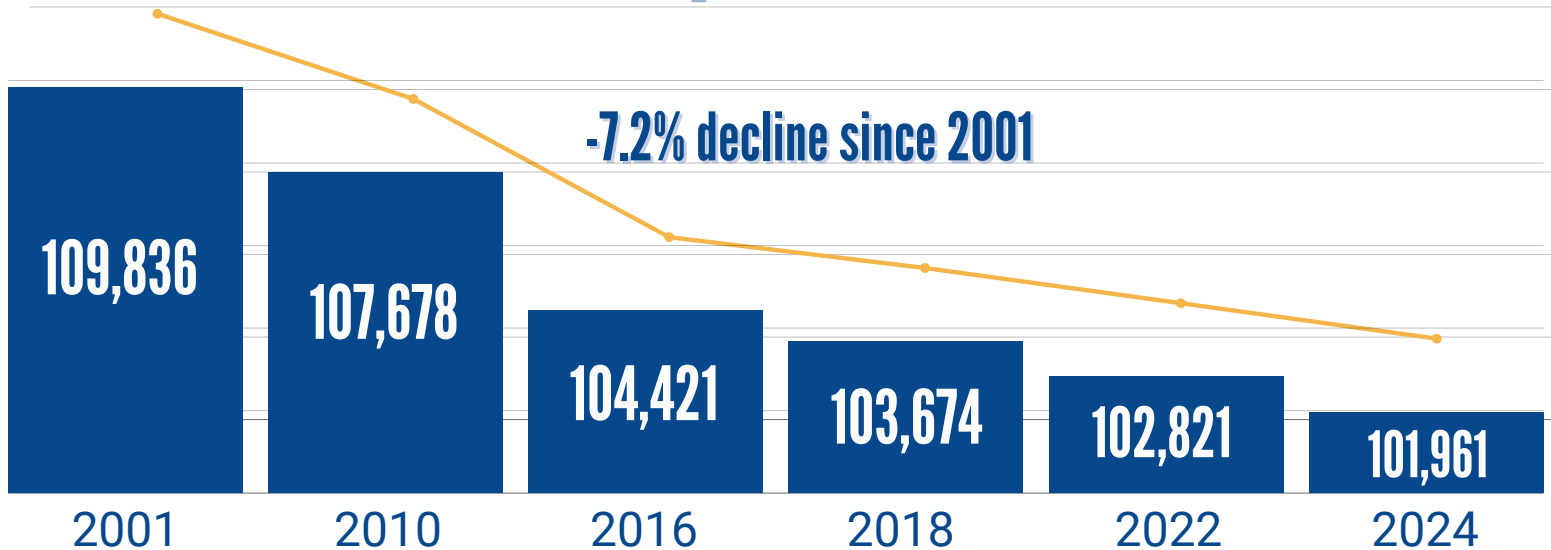


35%  
of Female Households  
live in Poverty AND

61%  
of them have  
children under the  
age of 5



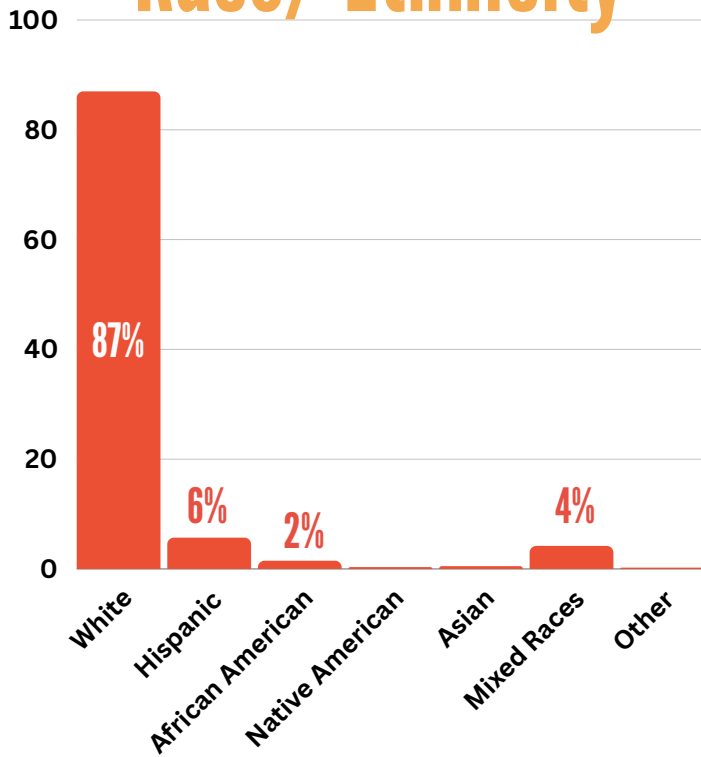
## Population



\*Data from United States Census Bureau

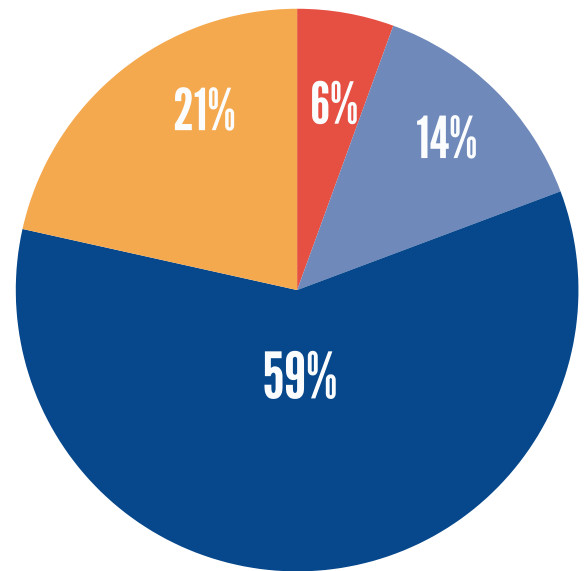
# LIVE UNITED<sup>®</sup> BAY COUNTY AT A GLANCE

## Race/ Ethnicity



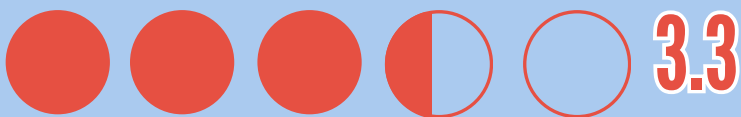
## Age

Under 5   6-17   18-64   Over 65



Bay County has a higher number of citizens over the age of 65 than the Michigan average of 18.7%

## On a scale from 1-5 Respondents Rated Bay County...



overall sense of community



overall health of the community



how safe they feel in our community



**Don't Struggle Alone:**

**Call**

**2·1·1**

Get Connected. Get Help.™

**Find ways to get involved at  
[www.unitedwaybaycounty.org](http://www.unitedwaybaycounty.org)**

**United  
Way**



TM

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