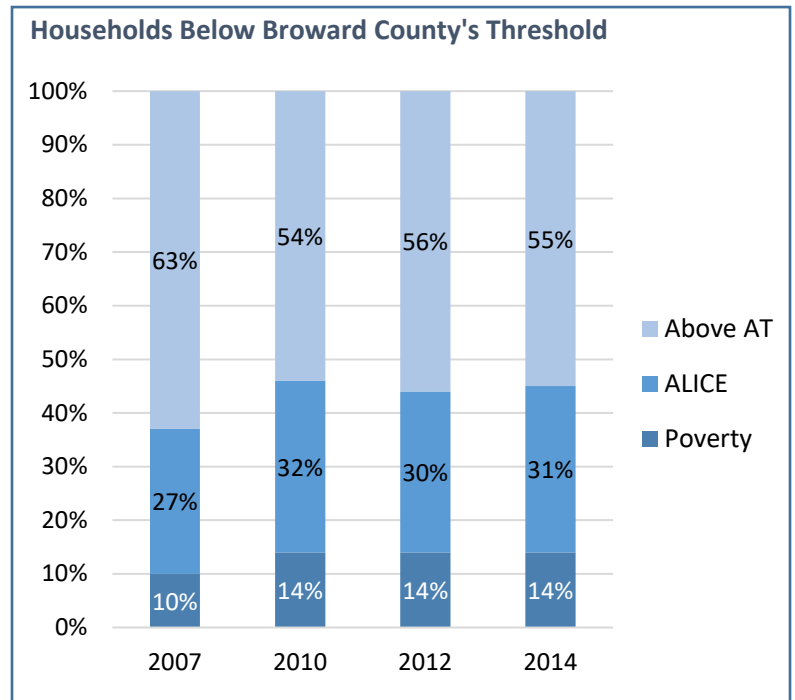


# Hispanic Unity of Florida 2019 STATE Legislative Agenda

## A Voice for Working Households

Hispanic Unity of Florida Inc.'s legislative agenda calls attention to the challenges faced by working households in our community. **ALICE** (**A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome, **C**onstrained, **E**mployed) are our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members often walking a financial tightrope, unable to afford life's basic necessities. They are men and women of all ages and races working hard to make ends meet. They are our childcare workers, teachers, mechanics, home health aides, store clerks, and office assistants; workers who provide *invaluable services* upon which our local economy depends.



Over 44 percent of Broward households fall beneath a basic survival budget, and experience severe financial strain to cover the basic necessities of housing, transportation, childcare, food, and healthcare, despite being active in the labor force. These **ALICE** households are often one emergency away from falling into poverty.

The **ALICE** Report identifies four key policy areas for the 2019 Florida Legislature that will have the most beneficial impact on working families.

- ❖ **Education**
- ❖ **Healthcare**
- ❖ **Financial Stability**
- ❖ **Immigration & Other**



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## CORE POLICY ISSUES

### Education



- **IMPROVE** and align increased investments in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for four-year-olds to quality benchmarks to improve kindergarten readiness and later school success.
- **IMPROVE** VPK by implementing a coordinated child assessment system to better understand child development. *(See separate policy paper)*
- **SUPPORT** an increase in per pupil funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), allowing Florida school districts to be competitive nationwide.
- **EXPAND** access to After School programs for at-risk children by increasing funding to the Department of Education.
- **SUPPORT** inclusion of all indicators, all assessments, all students, all subgroups of students all districts or local educational agencies, and all graded public schools, in a single, statewide accountability system and support English learners by providing them with the opportunity to be assessed in a valid and reliable manner including in their native language. *(See separate policy paper)*



### Healthcare Access

- **SUPPORT** legislation ensuring that KidCare eligibility is increased to 300% FPL
- **EXPAND** home and community-based services for older adults to reduce nursing home costs and waitlists.
- **EXPAND** funding to prevention and treatment services for substance use disorders and mental health.

### Financial Stability



- **INCREASE** funding for VITA programs in Florida (United Way lead on this) – *PLACEHOLDER – Policy Paper to come.*
- **INCREASE** access to workforce housing and utilize the Sadowski Housing Trust only for its intended purpose.
- **EXPAND** education and skills that diversify workforce development programs to close the skills gap in Florida.
- **SUPPORT** the Integrate Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programing and other housing initiatives with CareerSource Florida's workforce development programs to increase accessibility of affordable housing for families with young children in poverty.

# Hispanic Unity of Florida 2019 STATE Legislative Agenda

## Congressional Priorities

- **DEFEND** the **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program through robust funding and permanent authorization
  - Senate – Support Taxpayer First Act (S3246) officially authorizes VITA
  - House – Support VITA funding at \$20M for FY2019 (Senate already supports)
- **SUPPORT** the ability of low-income families who rely on the **SNAP program** (formerly food stamps) to put food on the table to continue to have access to critical food assistance while also supporting the ability of these and other families to save for the future.
  - Senate – Support Rainy Day Savings Act (S3220) and the Strengthening Financial Security Through Short Term Savings Plans Acts (S3218). Reject the House Farm Bill
  - House – Support bipartisan approach the Senate took on the Farm Bill – ensures families continue to have access to SNAP
- **PROTECT** the **Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB)** against efforts to weaken or make it less independent
- **DEFEND:** Senate and House – Support the CFPB as an independent regulator

## Immigration & Other



- Support legislation that protects our state's most vulnerable residents and actively work toward defeating legislation that creates greater divisiveness and hardships such as:

- **SUPPORT HB 457** to extend state financial aid awards to qualified DACA & TPS students

- **OPPOSE** proposed anti-immigrant state legislation such as **HB 89/SB164** **HB 527/SB 168** which would prohibit all state and local agencies from passing or enforcing ordinances that would protect immigrants from detention and would repeal any existing sanctuary policies.

- **SUPPORT** Florida's Anti-Hate legislation to include gender, gender-identity, coverage for "association with" hate crimes, more expansive definition of disability and allow for prosecution of mixed-motive crimes (*See attached FAQ*)

## Congressional Priorities

- **SUPPORT** legal immigrants affected by the proposed "public charges" rule changes (*See separate policy paper*)