



UNITED WAY
Greater Chattanooga

FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE GUIDE

Sponsored by



**TENNESSEE
VALLEY
AUTHORITY**



Dear Community Leader,

What would it look like if every family in our community was thriving?

As leaders, you have the power to bring this vision to life. Every family is unique, but one thing is clear: workplaces play an important role in supporting working families, and in turn the entire community.

Over the past few years, we've seen incredible momentum in building a more family-friendly Chattanooga.

- Partnered with over 40 companies, reaching nearly 24,000 employees, to implement family-friendly benefits.
- Trained 15 companies through the ALICE@Work program, impacting over 4,000 employees.
- Heard from dozens of employers making meaningful changes, such as introducing family leave, creative health benefits, extending sick leave to part-time staff, and training leaders on ALICE.

This momentum is made possible by you. Your support can help break cycles of financial hardship and build a brighter future for the next generation of leaders.

We know this might seem like a big task, but proven strategies exist to help create policies and benefits that support working families in a holistic way. It's not just about creating space for work-life balance—it's about meeting real needs to build a stronger, more connected community for all working families.

United Way of Greater Chattanooga and the Tennessee Valley Authority are committed to walking alongside you to improve the quality of life for everyone in our region. ***Right now, in Hamilton County alone, 10,961 households with children are growing up in financial hardship.*** The need is great and growing, but fostering a family-friendly workplace can transform lives.

Many local leaders are already leading the way, and together, we can create a future where working families have the support they need to thrive.

As we come together for the United for Working Families Summit, we invite you to imagine how your leadership can contribute to this growing movement. United is the way we build a more family-friendly Chattanooga.

United,



Lesley Searce,
CEO of
United Way of Greater Chattanooga



Will Trumm,
Chief Human Resources Officer,
Tennessee Valley Authority

Family-friendly is Business-friendly

Family-friendly workplaces don't just make life better for employees—they drive real results. They boost productivity, help attract and keep great talent, and build stronger, more loyal teams. At the same time, they support thriving families and kids, and contribute to a stronger economy and community, at large.

In fact, providing care to family members can have significant economic impacts on caregivers, **with 32% of caregivers across the country retiring early or quitting their jobs due to caregiving responsibilities.**¹

Work-Life balance is about more than time and money - it's about holistic, family-friendly support. Today's employees—and the ones you want to attract—are looking beyond salary to see if a company truly supports their personal and family needs.

Among employees planning to leave their employer in the next 12 months, 34% cite access to better benefits—including paid leave, flexibility, and overall well-being programs—as the main reason.²



75% of US mothers and 50% of US fathers say they've passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or quit to care for their children.³



1. [S&P Global & AARP. \(2024, May\). Working while caregiving: It's complicated.](#)

2. [Ernst & Young. \(2024, August\). 2024 Work Reimagined Survey.](#)

3. [Craighill, P., & Paquette, D. \(2015, August 6\). The surprising number of parents scaling back at work to care for kids. The Washington Post](#)

The 5 pillars of a Family-Friendly Workplace

A healthy workplace is about far more than a paycheck—it’s about supporting people’s lives. Family-friendly workplaces help employees thrive, not just survive—at work and at home and as part of a connected community.

Flexibility



Flexibility gives employees more control over their work schedules.

65% of U.S. workers ranked workplace flexibility—such as options for location and hours—as one of the top five most important non-salary compensation elements.¹

Social Connectedness



Social connectedness creates a sense of belonging, builds community, and strengthens relationships among employees.

Employees who report feeling lonely are five times more likely to miss work due to stress and twice as likely to miss work due to illness.²

Childcare & Family Assistance



Childcare and family support help employees balance work and caregiving with financial and practical assistance.

More than half of working parents say that child care is a top three reason to stay at their current job—just behind health care and PTO. For Gen Z parents, it’s the #1 factor in job loyalty.³

Wellness



Wellness programs boost employees’ physical, mental, and emotional health, leading to a more vibrant and productive workforce.

Approximately 70% of parents and caregivers experience adverse mental health symptoms, with 55.3% reporting symptoms of depression and anxiety.⁴

Economic Stability



Economic stability improves employees’ financial well-being, lowers stress, and boosts their overall sense of security and financial health.

According to the 2024 United For ALICE report, only 39% of Tennessee households living at or below the ALICE Threshold (those in poverty or ALICE) had enough savings to cover three months of basic expenses in case of an emergency.⁵

1. [The Conference Board. \(2023, November 7\). Survey: US employees prioritize workplace flexibility.](#)
2. [Business Group on Health. \(2023, July 18\). Social connectedness: Building bonds in the workplace.](#)
3. [KinderCare. \(2024\). 2024 Parent Confidence Index.](#)
4. [Czeisler, M. É., Rohan, E. A., Melillo, S., Matjasko, J. L., DePadilla, L., Patel, C. G., ... & Rajaratnam, S. M. W. \(2021, June 18\). Mental health among parents of children aged <18 years and unpaid caregivers of adults during the COVID-19 pandemic – United States, December 2020 and February–March 2021. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.](#)
5. [United For ALICE. \(2025\). The cost of basics: Tennessee.](#)

ALICE Insights

Family-friendly workplaces uplift everyone, but for those below the ALICE threshold, they offer a lifeline—breaking cycles of hardship.

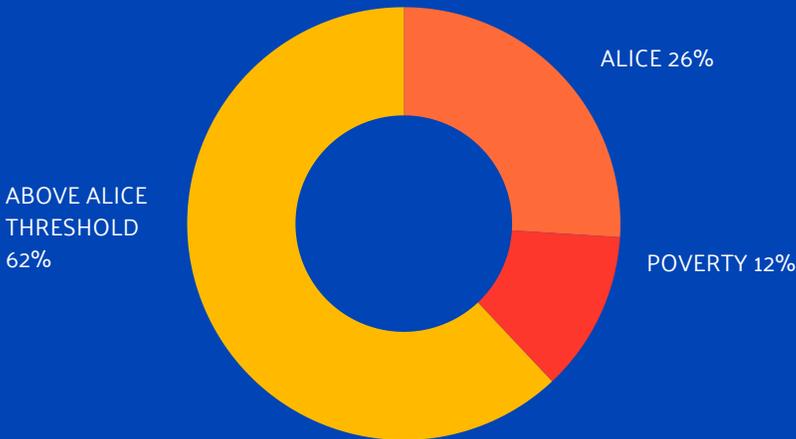
10,961 HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN ARE GROWING UP IN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP IN HAMILTON COUNTY. A 15% INCREASE IN ONE YEAR.



ALICE

Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed

HAMILTON COUNTY OVERVIEW



Total Hamilton County households: 157,992
Households below ALICE threshold: 60,976
Median household income: \$73,611
Labor force participation rate: 65%

WHEN ENOUGH ISN'T ENOUGH

32% of workers in TN's 20 most common jobs lived in households that couldn't afford basics. Occupations with the largest share of workers in households below the threshold included:

- Personal care aides (62%)
- Fast food and counter workers (48%)
- Cooks (47%)
- Janitors and building cleaners (46%)
- Waiters and waitresses (45%)

Local Insights:

unitedwaycha.org/alice

National Dashboards:

unitedforalice.org

Flexibility

Flexibility in the workplace allows employees to better balance their professional and personal lives, leading to increased job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being. It's important because it helps attract and retain talent, reduces stress, and fosters a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Flexible Work Hours

Employees adjust their start and end times within a certain range, giving them the freedom to accommodate personal obligations or preferences.

Telecommuting or Remote Work

Employees are given the option to work from a location outside the traditional office, often using technology to connect and collaborate with colleagues.

Compressed Workweek

Employees work their required hours in fewer days, allowing for longer weekends or extended time off during the week.

Phased Retirement

Employees gradually reduce their work hours or transition to part-time work as they approach retirement age.

Flexible Leave Policies

Providing options for unpaid leave, sabbaticals, or extended time off for personal reasons.

Parental and Caregiver Leave

Paid or unpaid time off for employees to care for newborns, adopted children, or sick family members.

Shift Flexibility

Rotating or alternating shifts to accommodate employees' preferences or personal commitments.



40% of parents nationwide say they've left a job because it lacked flexibility¹



Chattanooga

Volkswagen's "bridge-to-work" program, allows employees returning from maternity leave to work reduced shifts of 20 hours per week for up to six weeks. This program provides returning mothers with the flexibility to balance their professional responsibilities while adjusting to new family dynamics.

Additionally, Volkswagen has streamlined the process for pregnant and postpartum workers to request accommodations, such as maternity wear for uniforms, closer parking, and access to a "mothers' room," by implementing a mobile platform that simplifies these requests.

¹ [Craighill, P., & Paquette, D. \(2015, August 6\). The surprising number of parents scaling back at work to care for kids. The Washington Post.](#)

Social Connectedness

Social connectedness in the workplace is the sense of belonging and meaningful relationships employees build with one another. It fosters trust, collaboration, and a supportive environment where people feel seen, valued, and included.

Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Employee-led groups based on shared identities, interests, or backgrounds.

Team-building Activities

Organizing events, volunteer projects, workshops, or retreats to foster collaboration and relationship-building.

Open Communication Channels

Providing platforms for transparent communication where employees can share ideas, concerns, and feedback.

Recognition Programs

Establishing systems to acknowledge employees' contributions, achievements, and milestones, fostering a culture of positivity.

Workplace Social Events

Hosting relaxed events, gatherings, or celebrations to encourage employee interaction and relationship-building.

Inclusive Workspaces

Designing environments that promote collaboration and interaction, with features like communal areas and open layouts.

Employee Surveys and Feedback

Regularly gathering input on social interactions and connectedness to drive improvements.



In 2024, 13% of U.S. workers felt lonely at work—making them 7x more likely to face anxiety or depression, hurting performance, satisfaction, and retention.¹



CMC Cares is an internal initiative by Card-Monroe Corporation (CMC) aimed at fostering a culture of compassion and support within the company. It encompasses various programs and resources designed to help employees care for one another and their community. A key component is the Caring Team, a 100% employee-led group responsible for deciding how funds are used to assist employees, their families, and the community. This initiative reflects CMC's commitment to its core values of love, dignity, and respect, ensuring that employees feel valued and supported in both their professional and personal lives.

¹ [Craighill, P., & Paquette, D. \(2015, August 6\). The surprising number of parents scaling back at work to care for kids. The Washington Post.](#)

Childcare & Family Assistance

Childcare and family assistance for working parents involves providing structured support systems and resources to help balance professional responsibilities with family needs. This includes access to affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and family leave policies that promote a healthy work-life balance.

Subsidized or Discounted Childcare

Employers may offer financial assistance for childcare through on-site facilities, partnerships, or subsidies/discounts for qualified services.

Paid Parental Leave

Paid time off for new parents to care for a newborn or newly adopted child.

Dependent Care FSAs

Accounts that let employees set aside pre-tax funds for eligible childcare or dependent care expenses.

Emergency Backup Care

Temporary childcare services for unexpected situations, such as when regular care is unavailable.

Parenting Support Programs

Temporary childcare services for unexpected situations, such as when regular care is unavailable.

Adoption Assistance

Resources like workshops, webinars, and counseling to help employees navigate parenting challenges.

Breastfeeding Support

Providing lactation rooms and flexible breaks to support breastfeeding mothers.

Elder Care Assistance

Resources and support for employees caring for aging or elderly family members.

Infant center-based care is more than 2024 instate tuition in all but one of Tennessee's four-year public universities.¹



“At the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, we are always excited to celebrate when staff welcomes a new addition to their families. Updating our parental leave policy demonstrates our deep commitment to ensuring our staff feels supported while also helping us attract and retain talented, compassionate team members. Hardworking families are the economic backbone of our region and our food bank. We were eager to implement this change and applaud the work of United for Working Families for leading these efforts.”

-Melissa Blevins, President and CEO

¹ [College Tuition Compare. \(2024\). 2024 Tuition Comparison Between Tennessee Public 4-Year Colleges](#)

Wellness

Wellness for working parents involves creating a balanced lifestyle that supports physical, mental, and emotional health through practices such as regular exercise, healthy eating, stress management, and adequate rest.

Healthcare Coverage

Access to medical, dental, and vision insurance to support employees' health and care needs.

Mental Health Support

Providing counseling, EAPs, and mental health initiatives to support employees' well-being.

Wellness and Fitness Programs

Offering fitness, yoga, meditation, and weight management activities to promote healthy lifestyles.

Work-Life Balance

Offering flexible work hours, remote options, paid time off, and parental leave to help employees balance work and personal commitments.

Paid Time Off

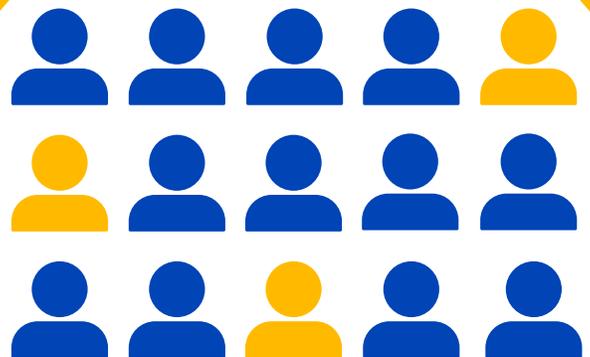
Providing employees with paid leave for vacation, personal days, or illness to support rest and recovery.

Preventive Care Services

Promoting check-ups, vaccinations, and screenings to catch health issues early.



Southern Champion Tray (SCT) offers comprehensive onsite counseling services as part of its commitment to holistic employee well-being. These services include confidential counseling sessions available to both team members and their families, facilitated by professional counselors and pastoral staff who visit the workplace. This initiative is designed to support emotional wellness and foster a caring, supportive work environment.



Nearly 1 in 5 American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year ¹

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). Mental health: Get the facts.

Economic Stability

Economic stability for working parents involves having consistent and sufficient financial resources to meet their family’s needs, including stable employment, fair wages, and access to benefits such as healthcare and retirement plans.

Competitive Compensation

Providing salaries and wages that align with industry standards and reflect employees’ skills and contributions.

Retirement Plans

Providing savings options like 401(k) or pension plans to help employees secure their financial future.

Financial Education and Counseling

Offering resources, workshops, and counseling to help employees manage budgeting, saving, investing, debt, and retirement planning.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

Providing confidential support for personal and financial challenges, including counseling, legal, and financial planning services.

Student Loan Assistance

Offering resources and support to help employees manage and repay student loans.

Emergency Funds or Financial Hardship Support

Offering financial assistance or short-term loans to employees experiencing unexpected financial challenges.

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursing employees for a portion of their tuition to support further education or skill development.

ALICE families work hard but earn too little to get by. They live on a Survival or Stability budget—Stability means a path forward. Our goal? Help them not just survive, but thrive.

ALICE SURVIVAL VS STABILITY BUDGET HAMILTON COUNTY, TN

HOUSEHOLD	HOURLY Survival	HOURLY Stability	MONTHLY Survival	MONTHLY Stability	ANNUAL Survival	ANNUAL Stability
ONE ADULT	\$16.93	\$26.98	\$2,822	\$4,496	\$33,864	\$53,952
TWO ADULTS	\$23.99	\$38.33	\$3,998	\$6,388	\$47,976	\$76,656
2 ADULTS, 2 CHILDREN	\$36.94	\$58.75	\$6,157	\$9,792	\$73,884	\$117,504
2 ADULTS, 2 IN CHILDCARE	\$41.97	\$65.75	\$6,995	\$10,959	\$83,940	\$131,508



Helpful Resources

Flexibility

Hapigig is a web-based shift management platform that helps companies meet customer demand while reducing cost per unit, absenteeism, and turnover. Locally used by Kenco, it enables flexible shift-swapping to keep operations running smoothly.

Learn more at: shift-swap.com/

Social Connectedness

United Way of Greater Chattanooga's volunteer center can customize an on-site volunteer experience for your staff, creating a more connected workforce both to the community and their workplace.

Learn more at unitedwaycha.org/volunteer

Childcare & Family Assistance

The Chambliss Center is piloting a new model for child care called the "Micro Center" network. This model places small, on-site childcare centers at workplaces to provide affordable, high-quality care. Chambliss provides the childcare coordination, while local corporations host the facility on-site.

Learn more at:

More than \$800,000 in direct emergency assistance provided every year through United Way's 211 helpline.

Wellness

TextCare by One-to-One Health offers 24/7 access to board-certified medical providers via text, ensuring responses within five minutes without the need for an app or bots. This service assists with general care, pediatric wellbeing, chronic condition management, lab orders, and prescription refills, aiming to reduce medical costs and improve productivity for employees and employers alike.

Learn more: onetoonehealth.com/textcare

Economic Stability

Chattanooga Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) offers a free program to help employers support their employees' financial well-being through Money School (financial education), 1-on-1 financial coaching, and emergency loans of up to \$1,000 repaid via payroll deduction. These services are free for both employers and employees and aim to boost financial stability.

Learn more at: cneinc.org/

The Chattanooga Future Fund helps make college and career training more accessible. Starting January 2025, every kindergartener and middle schooler in Hamilton County Schools will receive \$100 in a savings account for future education expenses. Businesses can partner by contributing to student accounts—supporting entire schools, grade levels, or even employees' children—helping build a stronger future for all.

Learn more at: chattanoogafuturefund.org/

Visit

ihelpchattanooga.org

our volunteer projects platform to stay connected to the latest volunteer opportunities available from our nonprofit partners.

**1,000+ VIEWS PER MONTH
OPERATES YEAR-ROUND**

A Connected Community



Get Connected. Get Help.™

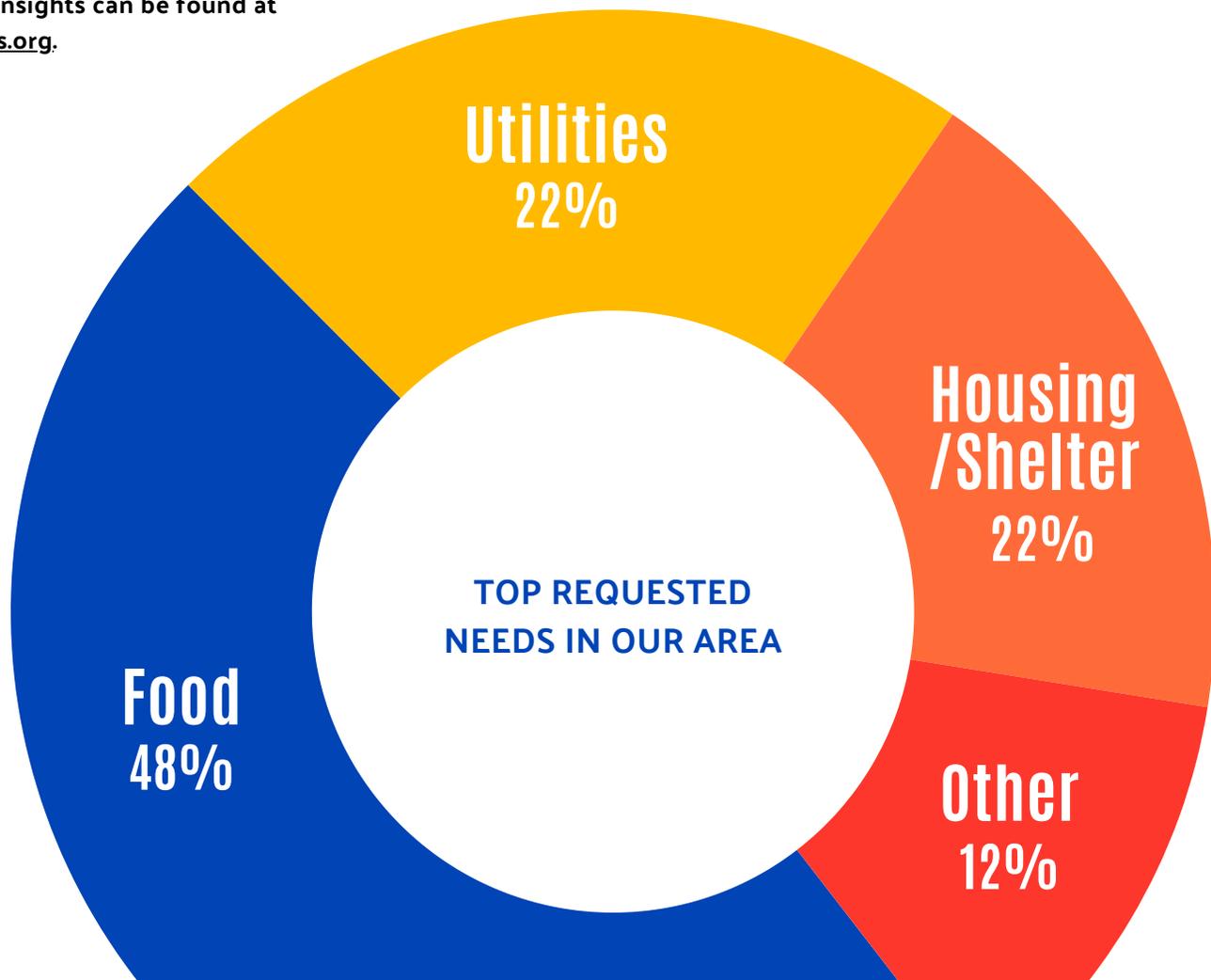
Building a more connected community involves many things, but it starts with ensuring that all of our neighbors have access to what they need.

That's why 211 is central to our mission at United Way. Our 211 helpline connects neighbors to critical resources like food, rent and utility assistance, employment opportunities, health services, and more.

Real-time local insights can be found at uwcha.211counts.org.



More than 45,000
211 requests across phone calls,
texts, and emails answered every
year by United Way's 211 staff



Give. Advocate. Volunteer.

Give

Giving is a two-way street. We create opportunities for people to give what they can, and we invest those dollars directly back into the community—through our 211 Helpline, which connects neighbors to resources and provides direct financial assistance, and by supporting local nonprofits so they can serve even more neighbors.

Advocate

We support changemakers like you in using your voice to stand up for what you believe in. Use your voice and actions to create positive changes in your workplace and community.

Volunteer

We inspire a community that shows up. Because when neighbors care for neighbors, we build a more vibrant and connected community. Last year alone, 1,545 volunteer spots were filled, saving organizations over \$200,000. From our annual Day of Caring to Gratefull Chattanooga and the Emerging Leaders network, we make it easy to give back and build a stronger community—together. Volunteerism also:

- **Creates more positive work attitudes**
- **Connects teams**
- **Promotes health and well-being**
- **Improves corporate reputation and social commitment**
- **Creates leadership opportunities**
- **Retains employees**



Join us in building a community where all children have the opportunity to thrive and working families break the cycle of financial hardship.



Where do I start?

Using this resource is a great first step! Starting small can spark real change, and we're here to help you build policies and practices that support your team and strengthen your workplace.

Evaluate your current policies.

- Take the assessment at bestplace4workingparents.com
- Conduct surveys or focus groups: Gather insights from employees about their needs, challenges, and suggestions for family-friendly policies.

Join a United Way education program.

- Join an upcoming cohort for ALICE@Work by visiting unitedwaycha.org/aliceatwork.
- Join a free insight session open to anyone who wants to learn more about a specific topic like flexibility, childcare, and more. Sign up at unitedwaycha.org/workingfamilies.

Commit to ongoing policy development and communications.

- Invite others from your organization into the conversation to creatively meet the needs of your employees and continue to refine and re-evaluate.

Reach out to United Way to discuss best practices and ongoing policy practices

- Join our newsletter by scanning the QR code below



ALICE @ WORK

This cohort program equips people leaders with the tools and data they need to better support employees facing financial hardship, known as ALICE—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed.

PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Customized employee data-analysis to understand your ALICE population.
- Tools, resources, and support to develop an individualized action plan.
- A growing library of case studies and best practices.
- 12 SHRM professional development credits.

Visit unitedwaycha.org/aliceatwork



UNITED IS THE WAY.

unitedwaycha.org/workingfamilies
[@unitedwaycha](https://twitter.com/unitedwaycha)

