

Community Needs Assessment Summary Report

Prepared for the
GR Human Rights
Comission

Author: Stephanie Meittunen, LGSW, LADC

HOUSING
is a
HUMAN
RIGHT

OVERVIEW

This report summarizes findings from three major community needs assessments conducted in 2023–2024 in Northern Minnesota.

These assessments provide vital insights into the economic, social, and health disparities affecting residents in rural and semi-rural communities, with a particular focus on low-income and marginalized populations.

THEMES

Key issues that
emerged across
reports



Poverty and Economic Insecurity:

The reports show a significant portion of the population living below the financial threshold needed to meet basic needs.

Mental Health Needs:

Stress and untreated mental health conditions are widespread, particularly in KOOTASCA's report.

Equity Concerns:

Each report highlights racial disparities, with particular concern Native American communities.

Barriers to Healthcare and Resources:

Common barriers include complex systems, lack of trust, and resource navigation.

GICH COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Completed by: Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital

Method: Surveys, virtual community conversations, and advisory committees. Supplemented with demographic and health equity data.

Priority issues: navigating health resources, addressing structural racism, and building trust and healing.

- 30.2% of the population lives below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.
- Higher than average food insecurity and unemployment.
- Significant disparities faced by American Indian populations (3.4% of local population vs. 1.2% state average).

KOOTASCA COMMUNITY NEEDS

Conducted by: Kootasca Community Action

Method: 128 one-on-one interviews with low-income residents, staff surveys, agency data, and U.S. Census review.

Key findings:

- 32% of residents live 200% below the Federal Poverty Line.
- Native American and BIPOC households reported higher rates of bullying, discrimination, and barriers to housing.

Top Issues:

- stress (74%)
- mental health (68%)
- financial instability (65%)

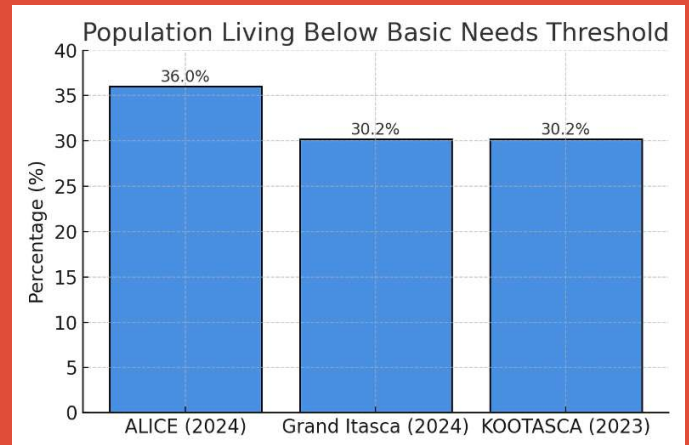
ALICE REPORT 2024

Conducted by: United for ALICE, United Way of Minnesota

Method: Utilized census data, labor statistics, and financial modeling to identify households living below the ALICE threshold (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).

Key Findings:

- 36% of Minnesota households live below the ALICE threshold.
- Rural counties show higher rates of financial hardship.
- Childcare, housing, and healthcare are the top financial burdens.



All reports indicate that a significant portion of our area residents are living below the financial threshold needed to meet basic needs.

SOURCES

- 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment: GICH
- KOOTASCA Community Needs Assessment
- ALICE in Minnesota: 2024 Report