

Community Needs Assessment Summary Report

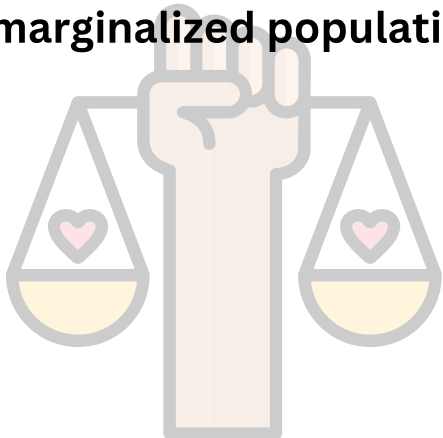
Prepared for the GR Human Rights Commission

Stephanie Meittunen, LGSW, LADC



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.



KOOTASCA COMMUNITY ACTION

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:

Top Issues:

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

32% of residents live below 200% FPL.

Native American and BIPOC households reported higher rates of bullying, discrimination, and barriers to housing.

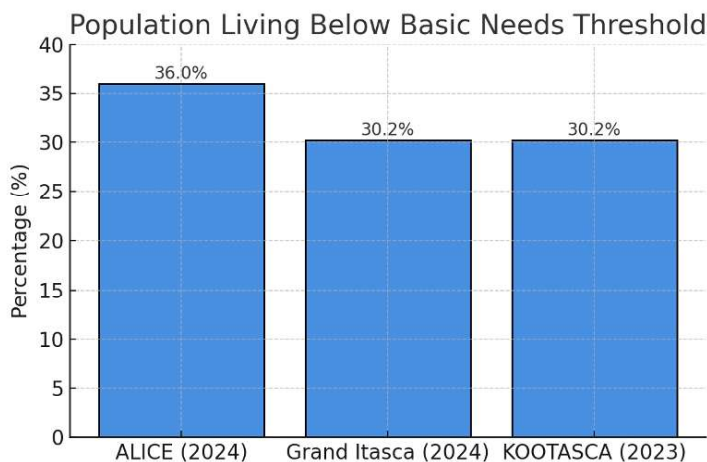
GRAND ITASCA COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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

Key Findings:

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).



[GRANDITASCA.ORG/COMMUNITY-HEALTH-NEEDS-ASSESSMENT](https://granditasca.org/community-health-needs-assessment)

[HTTPS://WWW.KOOTASCA.ORG/ABOUT/REPORTS/](https://www.kootasca.org/about/reports/)

[HTTPS://UWLAKES.ORG/ALICE/](https://uwlakes.org/alice/)

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.

SHARED THEMES

Poverty and Economic Insecurity: All three 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 for American Indian communities.

Barriers to Healthcare and

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