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New United Way Study Finds 1 in 3 Households are Struggling to Make Ends Meet

Latino Households, Single Mothers, and Households with Young Children Face the Greatest Challenges in Meeting Basic Needs

REDDING, CA (June 8, 2023) – A United Way study released this week finds that nearly 33% of households in the North State counties of Butte, Shasta, Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, and Trinity struggle to make ends meet.

The Real Cost in California 2023 finds that Latino households struggle the most in the Northern Sacramento Valley, and single mothers and households with young children face ongoing challenges to make ends meet. The Northern California results are part of the comprehensive state research project commissioned by United Ways of California.

Differing from the federal poverty measure, the study's Real Cost Measure considers a comprehensive list of living expenses, including childcare, transportation, and healthcare, that more accurately depicts the actual cost of living in each community in the state.

"This report is important reading for all policymakers in the North State," said Larry Olmstead, President & CEO of United Way of Northern California. "We hope the findings from The Real Cost Measure will encourage policymakers to invest more in meeting the basic needs of Northern California residents."

The study counted 149,403 households in a grouping it described as Northern Sacramento Valley counties. Some 48,924 households, or 32.7%, fell under the Real Cost Measure threshold.

Other key findings include:

- **Housing Burden:** More than 51,923 households in the Northern Sacramento Valley spend at least 35% of their income on housing.
- **Working Households Struggle:** Of the 3.7 million households in California that struggle to make ends meet, 97% have at least one working adult.
- **Less Educational Attainment Yields More Hardship:** More than half of Northern Sacramento Valley residents without a high school diploma fall below the Real Cost

Measure (57%), compared to those with at least a high school diploma (42%), those with at least some college education (32%), and those with at least a bachelor's degree (21%).

- **Single Mothers:** 7 in 10 households led by single mothers in the Northern Sacramento Valley (70%) fall below the Real Cost Measure.
- **Latino Households Struggle the Most:** Nearly half of Latino households (49%) struggle to make ends meet in the Northern Sacramento Valley, compared to White households (29%).
- **More than Half of Households with Young Children Struggle:** 57% of households in Northern Sacramento Valley with children under the age of six fall below the Real Cost Measure, over ten thousand households.

“The Real Cost Measure study reinforces, with data, the struggle of single parents and families with children to provide the basic needs of life,” said Kalie Brisbon, Senior Director of Programs at United Way of Northern California. “United Way is passionately committed to fighting for those most in need through developing programs to address inequities represented in this study.”

More details are available at <https://www.unitedwaysca.org/realcost>.

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About United Way of Northern California:

United Way of Northern California (UWNC) was established in Redding in 1953 and serves nine counties: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, and Trinity. Its mission is to fight for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in our community and to be there for the community and its residents during times of crisis. UWNC is active in disaster relief and recovery, raises funds for non-profit agencies and operates human services helplines in Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama counties, accessed by dialing 211. For more information about United Way of Northern California, visit www.norcalunitedway.org.

The Real Cost Measure in California 2023:

Demographic findings from *The Real Cost Measure in California 2023* are calculated from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey, the latest available as of this release, and historical data is available from 2014 through 2019. The study's website provides data findings for each of California's 58 counties, down to the neighborhood level, interactive maps, and an interactive calculator that shows how much a household in any county needs to earn to make ends meet. To learn more, visit <https://www.unitedwaysca.org/realcost>.