

Nearly half of U.S. families can't afford basics

By Tami Luhby, CNN Money

The economy may be chugging along, but many Americans are still struggling to afford a basic middle class life.

Nearly 51 million households don't earn enough to afford a monthly budget that includes housing, food, child care, health care, transportation and a cell phone, according to a study released this month by the United Way ALICE Project.

That's 43 percent of households in the United States.

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