



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Northeast Florida's Largest Funders Renew Relief Fund** *Now Accepting Contributions to Aid Those Affected by Hurricane Irma*

**Jacksonville, Fla. (Sept. 8, 2017)** – Northeast Florida's largest funders once again are prepared to manage Florida's First Coast Relief Fund to assist organizations helping those in Northeast Florida affected by Hurricane Irma.

United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville and the Jessie Ball duPont Fund joined together in 2016 to establish the Relief Fund to help those impacted by Hurricane Matthew.

The Relief Fund is now accepting contributions to support local organizations helping meet Hurricane Irma-related needs and long-term recovery efforts. In addition, nonprofit agencies who are central to response and recovery efforts can immediately apply for funding online.

"It's unfortunate we are facing what could be another devastating storm affecting our community," said Michelle Braun, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida. "By promoting the fund in advance of the hurricane, we want the community to know that there is an efficient and proven way to coordinate donations to support response and recovery efforts."

In 2016, donors contributed more than \$652,000 to the Relief Fund in response to Hurricane Matthew. Sixteen local organizations providing relief services received grants totaling nearly \$500,000, leaving a balance in the Relief Fund of more than \$150,000 for future relief efforts. Those dollars are immediately available to help with response to Hurricane Irma, Braun said.

"This collaboration of partners is a great example of the important role of the philanthropic and nonprofit sector in our community, which is the backbone of so many critical services," said Sherry Magill, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund.

"If major damage occurs from Irma, we know many generous groups and individuals will want to assist in repairing and rebuilding our community," said Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "This effort allows us to focus on the disaster needs of the entire region. As we experienced last fall, we know this united strategy will allow us to move as swiftly as possible and achieve better results."

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund will make grants only to organizations helping individuals impacted by natural disasters in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. The fund will provide resources to meet needs not met by government programs.

All distributions from the Relief Fund will be overseen by a committee comprised of representatives of United Way of Northeast Florida, United Way of St. Johns County, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville.

Once again, 100 percent of all gifts will go to relief effort. Any unspent funds will remain in the fund to maintain a permanent disaster relief fund for Northeast Florida.

"After the devastating impact from Hurricane Matthew last year, many families are still struggling to recover," said Melissa Nelson, president and CEO of United Way of St. Johns County. "Through this collaboration, we are able to meet critical needs and allocate the funds to where they are most needed."

"We are pleased to join again with Northeast Florida's strongest nonprofit funders in responding, this time, to Irma," said Alan Margolies, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville. "We are committed to supporting our community every day but, in times of potential crisis, it's more important than ever to come together."

## **HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST RELIEF FUND**

Online: [unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund](http://unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund)

Text: STORM to 50503

By check: Pay to the order of United Way of Northeast Florida and mail to P.O. Box 41428, Jacksonville, FL 32203-1428

\*\* Be sure to note "Florida's First Coast Relief Fund" on the check.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING**

Only nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

Application is now available online: [unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund](http://unitedwaynefl.org/relieffund) and on each partner website.

## **HOW TO ACCESS EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

A comprehensive list of emergency resources is available here: [unitedwaynefl.org/emergency](http://unitedwaynefl.org/emergency)

United Way's 2-1-1 is a free information and referral hotline available 24 hours, seven days a week to connect callers to emergency resources, including disaster-relief efforts.

## **About United Way of Northeast Florida**

With a rich 93-year history, United Way of Northeast Florida has earned a reputation as a respected and efficient philanthropic organization. We envision a community of opportunity where everyone has hope and can reach their full potential. Our mission is to solve our community's toughest challenges by connecting people, resources and ideas. United Way's long tradition of addressing the human service needs in Duval, Baker, Clay, Nassau and Northern St. Johns counties is made possible through the commitment of thousands of volunteers, contributors and community partners. Learn more at [unitedwaynefl.org](http://unitedwaynefl.org).

## **About United Way of St. Johns County**

United Way-SJC fights for the health, education of financial stability of every person in St. Johns County. For 60 years, this has been done by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources to focus on community problems that matter most. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. [www.unitedway-sjc.org](http://www.unitedway-sjc.org)

## **About The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida**

The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Florida's oldest and largest community foundation, works to stimulate philanthropy to build a better community. The Foundation helps donors invest their philanthropic gifts wisely, helps nonprofits serve the region effectively, and helps people come together to make the community a better place. Now in its 53<sup>rd</sup> year, the Foundation has assets of \$343 million and has made nearly \$410 million in grants since 1964. For more information:

[www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org).

## **About the Jessie Ball duPont Fund**

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund works to expand access and create opportunity by investing in people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont. The Fund has assets of \$285 million and has awarded more than \$371 million in grants since 1977.

**About the Jewish Federation of Jacksonville**

The Jewish Federation of Jacksonville is a fundraising organization supporting the members of our community and providing for health, education and welfare, and ensuring the dignity of life. For more information, visit [jewishjacksonville.org](http://jewishjacksonville.org).

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