



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Florida's First Coast Relief Fund Re-Activates for COVID-19 Response

*Fund will provide resources to nonprofits for urgent COVID-19 needs*

**Jacksonville, Fla. (March 16, 2020)** – Every day, more than half a million people in Northeast Florida – almost 40 percent of our region's population – struggle to afford basic necessities. The COVID-19 pandemic is dramatically amplifying these existing needs and creating unprecedented demands on nonprofits.

To help our neighbors most affected by COVID-19 disruption, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida, United Way of Northeast Florida and United Way of St. Johns County are re-activating Florida's First Coast Relief Fund. The fund will assist organizations helping those in Northeast Florida affected by this public health crisis. As with past relief efforts, the fund will be overseen by a grants committee and administered by United Way of Northeast Florida.

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund was created in 2016 to help nonprofit organizations serve individuals and families in need during a community crisis. The Relief Fund for COVID-19 will provide much-needed resources to struggling families by supporting local organizations who deliver essential human services to residents disproportionately burdened by this public health crisis.

Fund partners urge you to join this coalition of community partners who are ready to rapidly deploy resources to community-based organizations on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak in Northeast Florida.

"As we've seen with recent hurricanes, unprecedented community challenges like COVID-19 can and will have devastating long-term effects on struggling families," said Michelle Braun, president and CEO of United Way of Northeast Florida. "We are coordinating closely with local nonprofits, community partners, and local and state government officials to identify immediate priorities."

Nonprofits are lean organizations that funnel a vast majority of resources into providing direct service. Many of their fundraising activities are suspended and employees impacted. Many are not equipped with the technology to help them work remotely. Many also lack operating funds or reserves needed to respond to heightened demand for services and lower revenue.

Critical needs are rapidly emerging, and they will continue to evolve. The Relief Fund will provide flexible resources to nonprofits in our region responding to urgent needs resulting from COVID-19 disruption. The initial focus areas will likely include:

- Provision of emergency food and supplies and other needs of people disproportionately impacted by this disruption
- Financial relief and child-care support for those impacted by work and school closures
- Technology support for nonprofits to enable remote work and continued delivery of services

"Nonprofits are experiencing a disruption in fundraising and decreased volunteer support due to COVID-19, which reduces their ability to serve those who need help the most," said Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. "It is critical organizations serving the most vulnerable populations have the resources they need to continue operating at the highest levels."

"We know many generous groups and individuals will want to assist with this response," said Nina Waters, president of The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "Their generosity through this collaborative fund will allow us to focus on the needs of an entire region. As we experienced with hurricanes in recent years, we know this united strategy will enable us to move quickly and efficiently in addressing community needs."

Florida's First Coast Relief Fund dollars for COVID-19 will stay local. They will be granted to organizations providing direct services to individuals impacted by COVID-19 in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. The fund will provide resources to meet needs not met by government programs.

"Challenges caused by COVID-19 in the coming weeks have the potential to devastate many First Coast families," said Melissa Nelson, executive director of United Way of St. Johns County. "Through this collaboration, we are able to approach COVID-19 relief regionally – and we will all be impacted. United Way of St. Johns County is once again proud to be a partner of Florida's First Coast Relief Fund."

"We are pleased to join again with Northeast Florida's strongest nonprofit funders in responding, this time, to individuals and families affected by COVID-19," said Alan Margolies, executive director of the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida. "We are committed to supporting our community every day but, in times of crisis, it's more important than ever to come together."

###

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

Online: [unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response](https://unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response)

By mobile phone: Text COVID19RELIEF to 40403

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 forms will be available online at [unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response](https://unitedwaynefl.org/COVID19response) and each of the partner websites.

## **GET HELP NOW**

United Way's 211 hotline continues to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, and officials and community organizations are working throughout Northeast Florida to ensure crucial needs are met. Community members in need of assistance are encouraged to dial 2-1-1, where a team of information specialists are available 24/7. You can also dial 904-632-0600 to access a United Way 211 call center specialist. A COVID-19 information directory is available at [unitedwaynefl.org/covid19resources](https://unitedwaynefl.org/covid19resources).

###

### **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 56th year, the Foundation has assets of \$482 million and has made approximately \$550 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 inclusive growth for the people, organizations and communities that were important to Jessie Ball duPont. We engage in strategic placemaking for the most inclusive growth we can support in the communities specified in Mrs. duPont's will. We believe that nonprofit and public assets can support inclusive access, benefiting all members of a community and helping to strategically break down structural barriers to opportunity. Learn more at [www.dupontfund.org](http://www.dupontfund.org).

### **Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida**

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).

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

Founded in 1924, United Way of Northeast Florida has earned a reputation as a respected and efficient philanthropic organization. United Way envisions a community of opportunity where everyone has hope and can reach their full potential. Because change doesn't happen alone, United Way's mission is to solve Northeast Florida's toughest challenges by connecting people, resources and ideas. The nonprofit organization focuses on five causes: comprehensive basic needs, high-quality education, good health and well-being, financial security and social innovation. 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, donors and community partners. To learn more, visit [unitedwaynefl.org](http://unitedwaynefl.org), or follow @unitedwaynefl on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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

Serving both Putnam and St. Johns County, United Way of St. Johns is the only organization that brings together agencies, businesses, organizations, faith-based groups, government and individuals to focus on the community problems that matter most. Partners share the vision and have the energy, passion, expertise and resources to get the work done. For over 60 years, United Way-SJC has improved lives and built a strong, healthy community by strategically investing in quality programs, building partnerships, advocating for better policies, engaging the community and leveraging resources. Success is measured not by dollars raised, but by lives improved and changed. Visit [www.unitedway-sjc.org](http://www.unitedway-sjc.org) for more information.

###

### **MEDIA CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

Sarah Henderson  
Director of Marketing/Communications  
904-300-8366  
sarahh@uwnefl.org  
[www.unitedwaynefl.org](http://www.unitedwaynefl.org)

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

Susan Datz Edelman, VP  
Strategic Communications  
904-356-4483  
sedelman@jaxcf.org  
[www.jaxcf.org](http://www.jaxcf.org)

**Jessie Ball duPont Fund**

Melanie Cost  
Communications  
610-453-4153  
mcost@dupontfund.org  
[www.dupontfund.org](http://www.dupontfund.org)

**Jewish Federation of Jacksonville**

Alan Margolies  
Executive Director  
904-448-5000  
alanm@jewishjacksonville.org  
[www.jewishjacksonville.org](http://www.jewishjacksonville.org)

**United Way of St. Johns County**

Melissa Nelson  
Executive Director  
904-910-6442  
904-829-9721  
Melissa.Nelson@UnitedWay-SJC.org  
[www.unitedway-sjc.org](http://www.unitedway-sjc.org)

###