



PANDEMIC RECOVERY REPORT



United Way
of Northeast Florida

SEPTEMBER 2020

Crisis in Northeast Florida: United Way is Always There

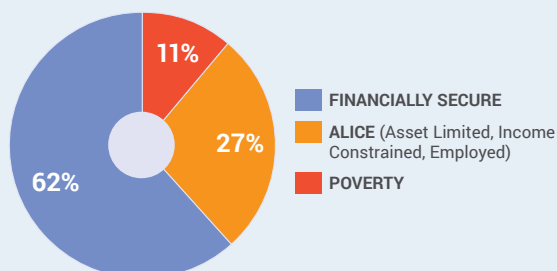
For over 95 years, United Way of Northeast Florida has been there to step up and step in whenever our community needs us. Alongside more than 200 local nonprofit partners, we serve hundreds of thousands of members of our community across six counties annually.

United Way has always been the nonprofit with the “big picture” view of Northeast Florida’s challenges and focused expertise making a difference on the ground. This steadfast commitment to the well-being of all who call Northeast Florida home never wavers — in normal times and especially during times of great fear, uncertainty and need as the COVID-19 pandemic. The following report outlines community needs and conditions before the pandemic and now as we begin our long road to recovery.

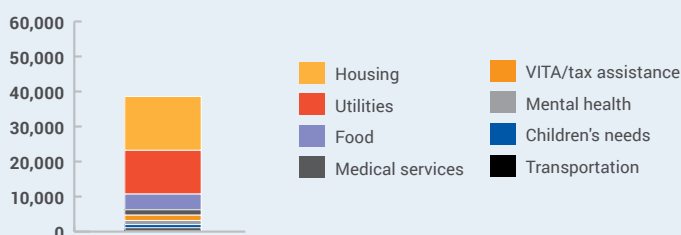
Before COVID-19

Pandemic or not, many in our community are in crisis every day. Nearly 40 percent of Northeast Florida households struggled to make ends meet before COVID-19. According to the latest statewide ALICE Report (2018 data), 11% of our population lived in poverty and 27% were one crisis away from poverty. These families often cannot afford food, rent and utilities, high-quality early education, child care, health care, reliable transportation and other needs essential for a successful life.

POVERTY RATES IN NORTHEAST FLORIDA¹



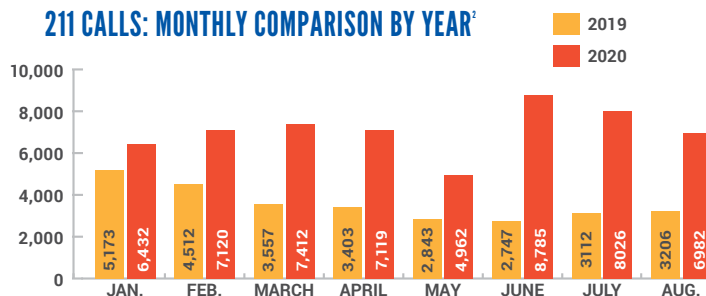
TOP NEEDS: JANUARY TO AUGUST 2019²



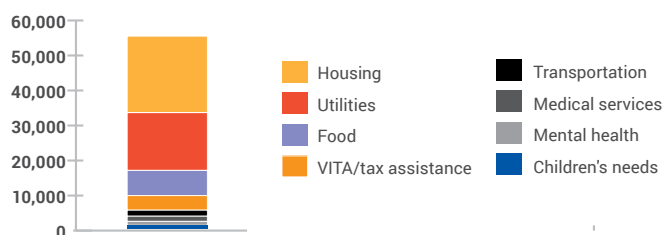
During COVID-19

Early March, Northeast Florida experienced a massive economic blow due to the onset of COVID-19. Businesses closed. Unemployment skyrocketed. Schools shifted to virtual. Child-care centers shuttered. Emergency rooms ballooned. Families were losing loved ones. United Way 211 referral helpline was flooded. Evictions and utility shut-offs loomed. This unprecedented crisis exacerbated incredible need already experienced by so many every day. In short, our community was reeling.

211 CALLS: MONTHLY COMPARISON BY YEAR²



TOP NEEDS: JANUARY TO AUGUST 2020²



¹Source: 2020 Florida ALICE Report. ²Source: United Way 211 statistics



RESPOND and RECOVER

We're all in this together.

Even in the midst of a global pandemic, United Way is doing what it's always done — addressing immediate needs and underlying social problems person by person, family by family, neighborhood by neighborhood to create a community where everyone can reach their full potential.

Respond

United Way is on the front lines of COVID-19, mobilizing people and organizations to provide critical services and vital information for those in need. Here's what we've accomplished:



Florida's First Coast Relief Fund

United Way once again joined forces as a lead partner in Florida's First Coast Relief Fund. As the relief fund's administrative arm, United Way helped raise money for COVID-19 relief, distributing \$5.36 million to 113 local nonprofits. This record-breaking effort included 390 corporations, foundations and individuals collectively giving more than \$5.54 million. This critical relief fund deploys resources to nonprofit organizations in Northeast Florida working to meet unmet critical needs of residents who are disproportionately impacted by disasters and crises.



Advocacy

Michelle Braun, United Way of Northeast Florida's president and CEO, joined other leaders across the country to advocate nationally for the U.S. government to provide adequate stimulus funding so charities doing life-saving work can keep their doors open as resources dwindle. As a result, nonprofits were included in the CARES Act legislation, ensuring their work can continue serving people in need.



United Way 211

As the pandemic unfolded, United Way 211's contact center — which serves nine counties — received nearly double the calls year over year seeking referrals to community services, including food and financial assistance. To ensure call lines were not interrupted despite working remotely, our 211 team quickly transitioned to taking calls, using headsets and accessing our resources database from their homes. Moreover, United Way 211 received special funding to operate food deliveries through Door Dash and coordinated with emergency financial assistance providers to collaboratively address priority cases. There is no other network in the country that has a similar pulse on what our neighbors and community need in this time of crisis and uncertainty. Moreover, United Way 211 works closely with public health and emergency management officials and nonprofit partners across Northeast Florida to provide up-to-date information to the public and connect people in need to services still available and open.

Respond (continued)



United Way RealSense

When RealSense sites closed in March due to COVID-19, it didn't stop the work of United Way's financial stability experts to change lives. The team immediately went to work finding ways to promote the online tax-filing resource, MyFreeTaxes.com. Also during this three-month closure, RealSense was busy redesigning its operational model to prepare for reopening. The team sourced various personal protective equipment. They designed a new drop-off system, which involved filers securely dropping off their tax documents and then picking them up once their return was prepared. RealSense re-opened for the four weeks prior to July 15, the new 2020 tax-filing deadline. Despite the challenges and closures, RealSense volunteers managed to assist 17,189 families with their tax returns this year, putting over \$23 million back into the pockets of these hardworking families. These families not only received the refunds they deserve but also each saved hundreds of dollars, now even more important during this financial fallout of COVID-19.



Full Service Schools

Upon closure of public schools, Full Service Schools mental-health counselors completed extensive training to become tele-health certified and provided counseling services via HIPPA-compliant virtual platforms. Now that schools are open, mental health counseling is available virtually and on campuses to ensure continuity of care for students and families in need of therapeutic services. Access to counseling services are especially critical during these stressful and difficult times.



School Supplies

United Way, in partnership with First Coast News, raised more than \$30,000 for Stuff the Bus, an annual school supply drive each summer that collects tens of thousands of school supplies for teachers and students in need. This year's all-virtual drive, a major operational shift, became United Way's largest online fundraiser to date. In this difficult time, the change in format allowed United Way to still help teachers and students have a successful school year.



Corporate Partnerships

One of the roles United Way has always played with many corporate partners in Northeast Florida is helping companies and their employees make a difference in times of great crisis. Dozens of local corporations stepped up to support United Way's COVID-19 response and ensured United Way's work continued uninterrupted thanks to outstanding corporate leadership paired with United Way community experts.



Virtual Volunteering

Despite in-person limitations, United Way recognizes volunteers are a vital force for business continuity for so many nonprofits in Northeast Florida. United Way's volunteer team re-evaluated its database of volunteer projects, working with nonprofit partners to restructure volunteer opportunities as safe in-person projects or virtual/remote projects that can be completed at home. This ensured the invaluable pipeline of volunteer assistance remained open as much as possible despite the reduction of in-person opportunities.





Recover

As United Way begins to move from immediate pandemic response to sustainable, long-term COVID-19 recovery, the organization knows it must use data to drive decisions and initiative development to best address the ongoing challenges caused by the pandemic. Future bodies of work include:

- With high unemployment and eviction moratoriums set to phase out in the coming months, United Way — in collaboration with emergency financial assistance providers, the City of Jacksonville and our judicial system — is developing solutions to help local residents avoid homelessness.
- To help with re-employment, United Way is working on partnerships that develop and support job training and other workforce development initiatives.
- To help families recover from the financial fallout of COVID-19, United Way continues to deepen its financial stability work, including launching a financial navigator program to help families regain financial stability in the wake of COVID-19 and plan for future.
- As United Way dives into demographic data, the organization will determine what factors significantly marginalize our most vulnerable communities and build strategic, long-term solutions to overcome racial inequity.

United Way has responded to Northeast Florida's most pressing problems for 95 years.

**Together, we will overcome this pandemic by reimagining and rebuilding
a stronger Northeast Florida for us all.**

The work must continue. Want to learn more about how you can help?

Email mail@uwnefl.org or visit unitedwaynefl.org.

BECAUSE CHANGE DOESN'T HAPPEN ALONE.

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