



## **Florida's First Coast Relief Fund Delivers More Than \$5 Million to Support North Florida Residents Affected by COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Response highlights community generosity and ongoing support needs*

**November 18, 2020** - Jacksonville, Florida - Florida's First Coast Relief Fund awarded \$5.4 million to 112 North Florida nonprofit agencies since the Relief Fund reopened in March to support residents disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Relief Fund is a collaboration between 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.

"The generosity of our community has been overwhelming since the start of the pandemic," said Nina Waters, President, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. "From individual donors to foundations, corporations and the City of Jacksonville, this effort to support our neighbors who are most in need has been a truly collaborative local response."

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 dramatically amplified these existing needs and created unprecedented demands on nonprofits. More than 408,477 individuals and 88,441 households received support from the Relief Fund. In certain cases, some individuals or households received multiple services. Support for mortgage and rent payments, food assistance and utilities payments made up more than 50 percent of the grants dollars awarded by the Relief Fund.

"Each week, as we reviewed dozens of the latest applications from nonprofit agencies, we were able to get a real-time view into the specific needs of our community, and respond accordingly," said Rosi Melendez, Vice President of Community Impact and Strategic Investments, United Way of Northeast Florida. "Our case management partners shared that they saw many families unable to make ends meet as a result of COVID-19, including struggling to afford adequate food, lacking the financial security to pay utility bills and facing homelessness."

The majority of these individuals and households (60 percent) were located in Duval County, and Relief Fund grants also supported nonprofits and residents in Baker (1.2 percent), Clay (3.4 percent), Nassau (5.2 percent), Putnam (11.7 percent) and St. Johns (18.5 percent) counties.

"The Relief Fund grants management team used a thoughtful, strategic approach that involved making grants to organizations with case management ability to ensure grant dollars were



administered and tracked effectively and those dollars reached families in the most need,” said Kathleen Shaw, Vice President, Programs, The Community Foundation For Northeast Florida. “The incredibly fast timeline from the onset of the pandemic, to the Relief Fund being reactivated, to donations flowing in, to grant dollars being administered and to families receiving assistance is a powerful testament to the generosity of our community, the lessons learned during previous crises and the resilience of our nonprofit sector.”

“This is community-driven philanthropy at its best,” said Mari Kuraishi, President, Jessie Ball duPont Fund. “Our community answered the call and stepped up to its responsibility to support our most vulnerable neighbors, and the strength of our Jacksonville nonprofit network allowed those neighbors to quickly receive the relief they needed.”

Designed to respond to immediate emergency needs, the Relief Fund has now closed and is no longer accepting donations as our community moves toward longer-term recovery solutions. The Relief Fund remains ready to reactivate in response to future emergencies.

“While the Relief Fund has served its purpose in responding to immediate needs in our community, the continued economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic means donations remain critical for our neighbors to continue to recover,” said Michelle Braun, President and CEO, United Way of Northeast Florida. “The pandemic has fundamentally altered the trajectory of the lives of our most vulnerable families, who will be feeling the effects of this disruption for years to come—and who need our continued support.”

Many partners in Florida’s First Coast Relief Fund have specific charitable opportunities to help address long-term needs caused by COVID-19. Contact [The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida](#), [the Jewish Federation and Foundation for Northeast Florida](#), [United Way of Northeast Florida](#) and [United Way of St. Johns County](#) for more information on how you can support Northeast Florida’s road to recovery.

The final impact report, including all Relief Fund grant recipients, is available [here](#). A complete list of Relief Fund donors can be found [here](#).

### **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 \$483 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 is a private foundation that works to expand access to opportunity and create inclusive growth for the people, organizations and communities that Jessie Ball duPont knew and loved. We envision a world in which every member of those communities

feels they belong, and is engaged in shaping the future of their community. Our work focuses on increasing equitable access to opportunities and resources for members of society who have historically been excluded, and placemaking to build stronger communities where all voices are heard and valued. Learn more at [www.dupontfund.org](http://www.dupontfund.org).

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

The Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida 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 [www.jewishjacksonville.org](http://www.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 comprehensive basic needs, high-quality education, good health and well-being and financial security. 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 [www.unitedwaynefl.org](http://www.unitedwaynefl.org), or follow United Way of Northeast Florida on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn 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.

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