

UNITING PEOPLE



& Creating Possibilities

2025-26 Annual Report



UNITED WAY
Emerald Coast

DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

Every year, I'm reminded that the greatest strength of our community isn't found in any one organization. It's found in the people who choose to show up for one another. Because of you, families found hope, non-profits found support, volunteers found purpose, and our community grew stronger together.

This year, we continued to deepen our commitment to ALICE families. These are the hardworking households who earn too much to qualify for most assistance yet struggle to afford the basics. Through expanded partnerships, strategic investments, and the launch of our inaugural United for ALICE Dinner, we brought new voices, new supporters, and new momentum to this important work. Together, we're building greater awareness while creating meaningful opportunities for families to achieve lasting stability.

Our community also continued to demonstrate an incredible commitment to service. For the second consecutive year, we celebrated record-breaking volunteerism, with thousands of individuals giving their time and talents to strengthen our community. We launched Pop-Up Volunteer Opps, making it easier than ever for busy professionals, families, and first-time volunteers to give back through simple, one-hour services projects across Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Whether mentoring a child through ReadingPals, participating in Day of Caring, learning to serve on non-profit boards through ProjectLEAD, or lending a hand through countless other opportunities, our volunteers prove every day that generosity is one of the Emerald Coast's greatest strengths.

We also continued investing in the organizations that strengthen our community every day. More than 200 non-profit professionals gathered for our second annual United for Impact, a Non-Profit Conference, where they learned from national and local experts, built new partnerships, and gained practical tools to better serve our neighbors. When we strengthen non-profits, we strengthen our entire community. We're extremely proud to help build the capacity of those doing this important work.

Behind every success is collaboration. We're honored to work alongside hundreds of businesses, non-profits, foundations, schools, military partners, and community leaders who trust United Way Emerald Coast to convene, connect, and create solutions. Together, we're investing in programs that matter, strengthening the non-profit sector, and ensuring resources reach the people who need them most.

As you explore this report, I hope you're as inspired as I am by what we've accomplished **united**. Every number represents a life touched, a family supported, or a neighbor who now has greater hope for the future.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for continuing to invest your time, talents, and resources in our community. Because of you, United Way Emerald Coast is creating lasting change, and I truly believe our best days are still ahead.



With heartfelt gratitude,

Kelly Jasen
President & CEO
United Way Emerald Coast

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION*

*unaudited
July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$913,708
Cash - Restricted	\$78,214
Certificates of Deposit	\$125,962
Campaign Pledges Receivable, Net	\$406,316
Property & Equipment, Net	\$128,550

Total Assets	\$1,652,750
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Liabilities & Net Assets

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$7,327
Grants Payable	\$555,000
Other Current Liabilities	\$262,395

Total Liabilities	\$824,722
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Total Net Assets	\$828,028
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Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,652,750
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Our TEAM



Kelly Jasen
President & CEO



Deborah Lawson
Director of Development



Mia Mortensen
Marketing and Design Manager



Kayra Donahoo
Development Manager



Catrina Folse
Impact Coordinator



Briley Kennedy
Impact Coordinator



Valeria Rehl
Office Coordinator

2025-26

Executive Committee

Chair: Sheila Fitzgerald
Vice Chair: David Deitch
Treasurer: Susan Rimsa
Secretary: Dustin Cosson
At-Large Member: Chris Hiestand
At-Large Member: Jessica Leavins
At-Large Member: Lee Bolton
Immediate Past Chair: Matt Zasada

Board of Directors

Chris Hiestand - Okaloosa Gas District
Clint Aden - Community Bank
David Deitch - City of Niceville
Dustin Cosson - Walton County Sheriff's Office
Ed Burns - United Fidelity Bank
Emily Tash Pickens - Florida Department of Health
Erika Peterson - Okaloosa County School District
Hong Potomski - Florida Blue
Jason Davis - City of Fort Walton Beach
Jenna Sheffield - Northwest Florida State College
Joe Gordon - Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office

Board Members Emeritus

Alan Gieseman - White-Wilson Medical Center (retired)
Alexis Tibbetts - Walton County School District (retired)
Bernard Johnson - Florida Power & Light Company

Jessica Leavins - City of Crestview
Kim Cox - Origin Bank
Lee Bolton - Florida Power & Light Company
Liz Eulberg - HCA Florida Fort Walton - Destin Hospital
Matt Zasada - Carr, Riggs, and Ingram
Maureen Bierman - Step One Automotive Group
Melissa Garza - ECAR
Neko Stubblefield - Eglin Federal Credit Union
Nina Borthwick - Walton County School District
Robin Shaw - CHELCO
Sheila Fitzgerald - Okaloosa County
Susan Rimsa - Eglin Federal Credit Union
Thomas Everidge - Publix Super Markets
Tracy Johnson - Publix Super Markets

WE ARE MORE THAN A *fundraiser*



WE CONVENE

We bring together businesses, non-profits, government, military, schools, foundations, volunteers, and community leaders around our region's greatest challenges. By creating opportunities to listen, learn, and collaborate, we help turn individual efforts into collective impact.



WE CONNECT

We connect people with the resources they need to thrive. Whether it's a family finding help through 211, a volunteer discovering a cause they're passionate about, a nonprofit receiving funding and training, or a donor investing in lasting change, we believe the right connections create stronger communities.



WE CREATE SOLUTIONS

No single organization can solve our community's toughest challenges alone. That's why we work alongside hundreds of partners to develop innovative, sustainable solutions that improve lives across Okaloosa and Walton counties—from supporting ALICE families and veterans to strengthening non-profits, expanding volunteerism, and investing in the next generation.

Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more resilient Emerald Coast.

Our Vision, Mission, & Values

Vision: To build a United community where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

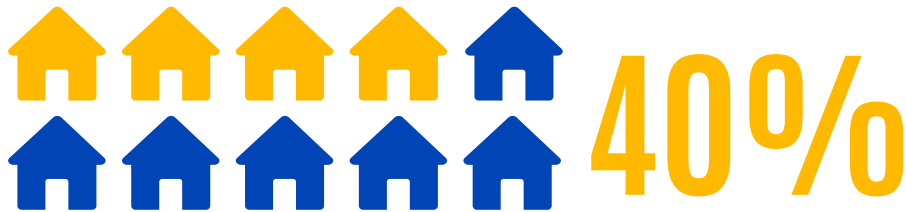
Mission: Unite people with resources to improve the quality of life in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

Mission-Driven **Adaptable** **Respect** **Stewardship** **Collaboration**

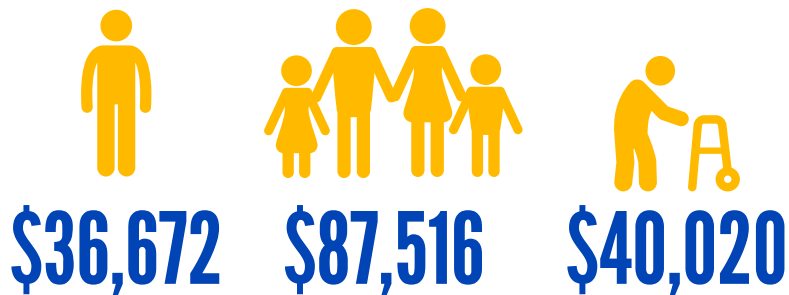
Meet ALICE.

ALICE® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) represents the hardworking people who keep our community running. They're teachers, childcare workers, healthcare aides, retail associates, hospitality employees, first responders, and countless others who work hard every day but still struggle to afford the basics - housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, and other everyday essentials.

They are our coworkers, neighbors, friends, and family. That's why United Way Emerald Coast convenes partners, connects resources, and creates solutions that help ALICE families move from surviving to thriving.



Today, 40% of households in Okaloosa and Walton counties are ALICE. These families often earn too much to qualify for assistance, but not enough to achieve financial stability.



Everyday expenses add up quickly. The ALICE Household Survival Budget reflects the true cost of living in our community, showing what it takes for different household types to cover only the essentials. It illustrates why so many hardworking families struggle to make ends meet despite being employed.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ALICE
SCAN THE QR CODE**

or visit www.united-way.org/alice







DISCOVER OUR membership groups

NEXTGEN UNITED

Young professionals dedicated to leadership, service, and community involvement who invest an unrestricted annual household gift of \$120+ or 10 hours of service.

- Celebrated our 5th Annual 40 Under 40 Awards, recognizing the Emerald Coast's emerging leaders.
- Hosted 3 Sip & Serve events, connecting young professionals with local leaders for networking and professional development.
- Packed hundreds of snack kits and community resources, supporting local non-profits and families in need.
- Hosted our 2nd Annual Adult Field Day, bringing nearly 100 young professionals together for connection, fun, and friendly competition.
- Hosted the 2nd BOOzy Book Fair, bringing young professionals together for a fun evening of books, char-BOO-terie, and community.



WOMEN UNITED

A powerful group of women dedicated to improving mental health of women and girls through hands-on service and an unrestricted annual household gift of \$500+.

- Celebrated the 4th annual Brunch & Bubbly, generating more than \$10,000 for ALICE households and mental wellbeing initiatives
- Held 2 EmpowHER Workshops and a Galentine's Day Workshop, supporting the resiliency and mental health of nearly 100 young women
- Held 2 Courageous Conversations, giving more than 50 women the opportunity to connect in a safe space to learn and grow with one another
- Updated and built two new Crisis Kits with our local School Districts, impacting hundreds of youth during challenging times
- Gathered together for Jingle Belles, fostering connection, philanthropy, and holiday cheer.
- Built more than 200 mental health kits which were distributed at community events



RETIRE UNITED

Adults aged 55+ staying involved with volunteerism. Because giving back doesn't have an age limit.

- Built more than 3,500 snack and mental health kits, supporting local students, families, and community events.
- Hosted an Annual Snowbird Social, bringing seasonal and local retirees together for fellowship while building snack packs for students.
- Participated in monthly Senior Talk Thursdays, providing education, resources, and meaningful conversations for those 55+.
- Supported ReadingPals, helping 150+ young students build confidence and strengthen early literacy skills through weekly time together.
- Contributed 1,132 volunteer hours, making a lasting impact across Okaloosa and Walton counties.



LEADERS UNITED

A group of donors who support high-impact programs in our community by investing an unrestricted annual household gift of \$850+.

- Successfully relaunched this year, bringing together community leaders dedicated to creating lasting local impact.
- Hosted the inaugural United for ALICE Dinner, raising more than \$60,000 to support local ALICE households.
- Served as ambassadors for United Way Emerald Coast through presentations and community outreach, increasing awareness of our mission and impact.



EXPLORE OUR PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES



Graduated 35 community leaders from ProjectLEAD Class 3, preparing future non-profit board members through six workshops on governance, strategic planning, finances, and board responsibilities.



Served more than 2,500 active-duty service members, veterans, first responders, and families through Mission United's resources, partnerships, and community events.



Engaged dozens of corporate and community groups through hands-on kit-building projects that directly supported local nonprofits and families.



In partnership with the Early Learning Coalition, of the Emerald Coast, refreshed several of our nine Born Learning Trails, inspiring learning through play while building early literacy and school readiness skills.



Generated more than 1,300 participant hours of learning through ALICE Simulations, helping community leaders better understand the realities facing ALICE households.



In partnership with The Children's Movement of Florida, ReadingPals connected volunteer mentors with 150+ VPK and preschool students to build early literacy skills, and a love of reading.



Celebrated National Volunteer Week with more than 1,220 hours of service through Days of Caring and our Volunteer Celebration, connecting volunteers with local nonprofits, and turning compassion into action.



Engaged more than 50 Community Investment volunteers to read, evaluate, and recommend grant funding that supports our community's greatest needs.



Launched monthly Pop-Up Volunteer Opportunities, making it easier than ever for community members to give back through flexible, one-time, one-hour service projects.



Hosted our second annual Non-Profit Conference, bringing together more than 200 attendees and a dozen expert speakers to strengthen our local non-profit community.



Continued sharing local stories of impact and inspiration through our podcast, highlighting the people and partnerships strengthening our community.



Partnered with the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber as the Non-Profit Committee Chairs to provide monthly professional development and networking opportunities for local non-profits.

THE POWER OF

It doesn't take a lot to create a ripple effect. When you give, serve, or speak up, even in small ways, you're powering real change in our community.



\$5 ONE TIME

Creates 1 mental health kit filled with tools for wellbeing



\$5 ONCE A MONTH

Provides 3 nights of safe, emergency shelter



\$5 TWICE A MONTH

Delivers 24 meals to homebound neighbors



5 HOURS OF SERVICE

Brings comfort, support, relief, and readiness to our community



5 ACTS OF ADVOCACY

Amplify the message that inspires partnerships and action



SMALL
BUT MIGHTY.
THAT'S THE
POWER OF 5.



To give scan the QR code above or visit united-way.org/donate

We don't just build **credit**,
**we build
community.**



Where Members Matter Most

eglinfcu.org | Insured by NCUA

Need assistance?
Help starts here.



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Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
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@UWEMERALDCOAST
united-way.org/stay-touch



The Internal Revenue Service recognizes United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC) as a Section 501(c)(3) organization. Our Federal Tax ID Number is 59-0972293. CH696 A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free 1-800-435-7352 or visiting FloridaConsumerHelp.com. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State of Florida. No goods or services were provided in consideration of this gift. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed under U.S. law.