



UNITED

it takes u & i



2023-24
ANNUAL REPORT



United Way
Emerald Coast

UNITED

it takes u & i

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year, I am so proud of the accomplishments we've achieved together at United Way Emerald Coast (UWEC). We know that real, lasting change requires people, businesses, and non-profits working together to develop solutions and make a positive impact. No single organization or individual can solve complex community problems alone. United, it takes u and i.

We maintained the highest level of accreditations from United Way Worldwide, Charity Navigator, Candid, and the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. These accolades are a testament to our transparency, accountability, and dedication to excellence. This year, we're proud to add one more distinction - the Service Enterprise Certification, which places UWEC in the top 10% nationwide for volunteer management and organizational performance. In 2023-24, we even witnessed a record-breaking contribution of volunteer time! From Day of Caring, Women United and ReadingPals to RSVP, Emerging Leaders, our committees and Board of Directors, the enthusiasm of our volunteers has been truly inspiring. We recognize that our achievements would not have been possible without these collective efforts.

In partnership with Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast, we installed two more Born Learning Trails, providing families with engaging, educational outdoor activities. Our collaboration with Florida Blue Foundation enabled us to lead numerous ALICE Simulations, advancing health equity and raising awareness about the challenges faced by hardworking families. We also continued our innovative partnership with DoorDash, delivering more than 4,000 snacks, hygiene items, mental health resources, and literacy supplies right to the doorsteps of those who needed them the most.

One of our most exciting ventures has been the launch of our podcast, Change Starts with U. Through this partnership with 1Shot Creations, we've shared powerful stories and highlighted amazing work being done by volunteers, partners, and staff. Please make sure you're following along on your favorite podcast platform!

Thanks to the generosity of more than 2,000 donors and nearly 200 corporate/workplace partnerships, we invested more than half a million dollars in local, vetted non-profits, supporting 32 of the most meaningful programs in Okaloosa and Walton counties. On top of that, we secured an additional \$400,000 in grant revenue to support our organization's programs. Overall, our efforts resulted in a \$2.3 MILLION impact, positively changing the lives of 82,467 individuals.

None of this would have been possible without our passionate staff. Their commitment, innovative thinking, and tireless efforts are the backbone of our success. Each team member brings unique skills and a sense of purpose to our work, making a real difference in the lives of those we serve. Our staff's dedication inspires me daily and I am incredibly grateful for their contributions.

This past year is one that we are truly proud of, and we hope this Annual Report continues to highlight the successes of our organization. Thank you for being a valued part of our journey.

We couldn't have done it without u.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Kelly Jasen
President & CEO
United Way 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**



2023-24 Executive Committee

Chair: Thomas Everidge
 Vice Chair and Treasurer: Matt Zasada
 Secretary: Kim Cox
 Impact Chair: Sheila Fitzgerald
 Immediate Past Chair: Jason Fulghum

Board of Directors

Alan Gieseaman - White-Wilson Medical Center (retired)
 Alexis Tibbetts - Walton County School District (retired)
 Bernard Johnson - Florida Power & Light Company
 Caroline Burriss - HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital
 Clint Aden - Hancock Whitney Bank
 Darra Flanagan - Step One Automotive Group
 Hong Potomski - Florida Blue
 Jason Fulghum - Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
 Jenni Brunson - Okaloosa Gas District
 Jessica Leavins - City of Crestview
 Kim Cox - United Fidelity Bank

Laurie Guzman - Bank of America
 Matt Zasada - Carr, Riggs & Ingram
 Pam Clarke - Cox Media
 Robin Shaw - CHELCO
 Sam Smith - Publix Super Markets
 Sheila Fitzgerald - Okaloosa County
 Steve Horton - Okaloosa County School District (retired)
 Susan Rimsa - Eglin Federal Credit Union
 Thomas Everidge - Publix Super Markets
 Tracy Johnson - Publix Super Markets

Our Staff



Kelly Jasen
President & CEO



Aubrey Robbie
Director of Impact



Marlee Tucker
Director of Development



Kendra Jeffries
Bookkeeper



Frances Childre
Executive Assistant



Briley Kennedy
Program Coordinator



Haley Davenport
RSVP Manager



Tammy Barrientos
Impact Coordinator



Vanessa Huizer
Development Manager



Mia Mortensen
Graphic Designer

ALICE LIVES HERE

* **ALICE**® (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) is our neighbor, family member, and friend. These low-wage workers earn too little to afford the basics yet too much for government support.

UWEC believes every working family should be able to save for emergencies, access quality healthcare, and achieve their potential. With your support, we're building a future where ALICE* moves from surviving to thriving. ALICE households earn above the federal poverty level, but below the real cost of living. ALICE includes our junior enlisted airmen struggling to adjust to a new community, seniors choosing between food and medication, and families finding it nearly impossible to keep up with rising prices. ALICE is our family members, our friends, and our neighbors.



of Okaloosa and Walton County households are ALICE. They live paycheck to paycheck, just one unexpected expense away from crisis.

ALICE is the reason UWEC works collaboratively to close the gap between what people are earning and the cost of living. We hope every family, in every ZIP code in Okaloosa and Walton counties, can thrive.



46% work full-time and 13% work part-time
39% are retired or not in the workforce
2% are unemployed

Household Survival Budget



The minimum cost to live in the current economy - a bare-bones budget for just the necessities. Above are the budgets for a single household and a family of 4 (with school-age children) in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

ALICE Stability Budget



This budget is even further out of reach. It includes higher costs for maintaining a financially stable household, incorporating 10% savings for emergencies, education, or home buying.

HOW WE SHOW UP FOR ALICE:

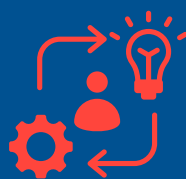
ALICE data allows us to target strategies and investments towards programs that will truly make a difference. Helping ALICE succeed is a complex challenge that no single organization can solve alone. As a convener, collaborator, and catalyst, UWEC is uniquely positioned to unite partners in creating a more equitable community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

UWEC follows a three-step process to create meaningful change: Align. Engage. Invest.



ALIGN

We align our goals with community needs, using data-driven insights to identify issues. This ensures our efforts are strategically focused and impactful.



ENGAGE

We engage our network of non-profit partners and community stakeholders, fostering collaboration and shared purpose. By leveraging resources, we maximize our impact.



INVEST

We invest in innovative solutions and sustainable programs that empower individuals and families, driving positive, long-term change in our community.

"After becoming a single mom..."

I faced numerous financial challenges, often earning just enough to disqualify me from assistance, leaving me in a difficult position. Childcare expenses are exorbitant, making it impossible for me to afford a quality program for my son. My son & daughter deserve the best start in life, and it broke my heart not to be able to provide that for them.

Learning about the possibility of help with childcare costs was a glimmer of hope in a challenging time. Through a partnership between United Way Emerald Coast and a grant offered to Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast, I was able to receive the crucial help we needed.

Now, my children are in a nurturing and high-quality environment. Knowing they are well cared for puts my mind at ease and allows me to focus on working hard to support our family. The impact of this support cannot be overstated; it has been a lifeline for us."

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALICE AT [UNITED-WAY.ORG/ALICE](https://www.united-way.org/alice)



2023-24 PARTNER AGENCIES



Friends of United Way Emerald Coast

Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida | Emerald Coast Life Center
 Gulf Coast Council, Boy Scouts of America | Homelessness & Housing Alliance
 Opportunity Place | Project Hope Recovery Center | S4P Synergy | SOW America

What A Year!



We launched our podcast, *Change Starts With U*, in partnership with 1Shot Creations



We hosted a Family Day in Walton County with our non-profit partners



We became Service Enterprise Certified by Volunteer Florida



We hosted our inaugural ALICE Summit with support from City of Crestview and Florida Blue



We participated in statewide advocacy to continue our support for ALICE households



Emerging Leaders held their inaugural Adult Field Day



We built another Born Learning Trail with help from Department of Health and Early Learning Coalition



We celebrated our amazing volunteers with our friends from United Fidelity Bank



With Step One Automotive Group, we launched microgrants for local non-profits

Our Impact



105,459

Meals provided throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties



99%

of clients served increased their disposable income



87%

of clients served improved their physical or dental health



\$396,219

Total federal tax refunds from MyFreeTaxes & VITA



\$481,528

Provided in prescription assistance



89%

of students served gained new knowledge or skills



\$978,290

Invested in 66 grants to local, vetted non-profit organizations & internal initiatives



3,465

Volunteers



13,869

Volunteer Hours

\$2,397,301
value to our community

PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES



United Way Emerald Coast WOMEN UNITED



Women United believes in the collective power of women and empowering each other to accomplish more together. By investing time, talents and treasures, they provide mental health resources, access and education to women and girls in Okaloosa and Walton counties.

In partnership with the local school districts, they've hosted 3 free EmpowHER mental health workshops, with 85% of attendees reporting positive impacts on their self-worth, confidence, and mental health. New this year, they deployed 6 crisis kits to school counselors, ensuring they are prepared to respond quickly to students' social-emotional needs in the event of an emergency.

[LEARN MORE AT UNITED-WAY.ORG/WOMENUNITED](https://www.united-way.org/womenunited) OR SCAN THE QR CODE



UNITED WAY EMERALD COAST EMERGING LEADERS



Emerging Leaders engages young professionals through philanthropy, networking, and leadership development. This year, they hosted their third annual 40 Under 40 Awards, recognizing forty of the most outstanding young professionals in Okaloosa and Walton counties, with more than 168 attendees! Professional development opportunities were also offered throughout the year, such as Lunch with a Leader featuring Don David with Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and Caroline Burris, COO of HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital, Trivia Nights at 3rd Planet Brewing, and the first-ever Adult Field Day!

[LEARN MORE AT UNITED-WAY.ORG/EMERGING-LEADERS](https://www.united-way.org/emerging-leaders) OR SCAN THE QR CODE

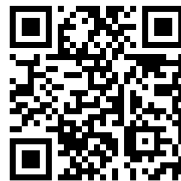
Dedicated to making a difference



Project LEAD (Leadership Effectiveness and Diversity) builds stronger non-profits by creating a pipeline of diverse board candidates. This program offers six workshops on important topics like strategic planning, finances, and governance responsibilities. Graduates from our inaugural class are now better prepared to serve as key volunteers at non-profits and public sector organizations in Okaloosa or Walton counties.



Launched in November 2023, Mission United exists to provide information and support to service members, veterans, and their families when they need it most. We offer a comprehensive and collaborative approach, including outreach, information, and events. By building relationships with First Sergeants, we're able to stay connected and provide the support our military community deserves. We proudly serve those who serve.



The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) supports volunteers aged 55 and better. It is made available by a federal grant from AmeriCorps Seniors. RSVP offers volunteer opportunities tailored to skills, experience, and lifestyle, matching them with community needs. Additionally, RSVP hosts lunch and learn sessions and other social gatherings.



ReadingPals is an early literacy initiative focused on supporting children in preschool through 3rd grade. UWEC is proud to host this program in partnership with The Children's Movement of Florida. Our program matches trained volunteers with 1-2 children to work on early literacy skills and social-emotional development during school hours or after-school care.



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



eglinfcu.org
Insured by NCUA



introducing our

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

CELEBRATING OUR MOST GENEROUS PARTNERS

Publix



Florida Blue &
Florida Blue Foundation



CHELCO &
CHELCO Foundation



SHOUT OUT TO OUR

Community Collaborators



1Shot Creations
1st SOW at Hurlburt Field
3rd Planet Brewing
A2Z Specialty Advertising
ACE50 Media
Air Force Enlisted Village
Alaska Air
Aldi
All In Credit Union
AnchorsGordon
AT&T
Bahia Vista Associates
Bank of America
BankPlus
Beach Weekend Management
Beachworx
Beard Equipment Company
Ben Whitehurst Photography
Best Gurl, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida
Bit-Wizards
Blacksuit FM Photography
Blue Chair Bay Rum
Blue Ocean Custom Signs
BMO Financial Group
Boeing Company
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast
Bridgeway Center
Cadence Bank
Capital City Bank
Carr, Riggs & Ingram
Caterpillar
Caterpillar2Butterfly
Catholic Charities of Northwest Florida
CCB Community Bank
Centene
Center for Independent Living
CHELCO
Chemours
Children in Crisis
City of Crestview
City of Destin
City of Fort Walton Beach
City of Niceville
Civetta Solutions
Coldwell Banker
COLSA

Community Bank
Compass Bank
Conexion Media Group
Cox
Cracker Barrel
Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce
Crosspoint Church
Cumulus Broadcasting
Delta Airlines
Department of Health - Okaloosa
Department of Health - Walton
Destin Chamber of Commerce
Destin Water Users
Dillard's
Doolittle Institute
Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast
Eglin Federal Credit Union
Elder Services of Okaloosa County
Emerald Coast Association of Realtors
Emerald Coast Children's Advocacy Center
Emerald Coast Harley-Davidson
Emerald Coast Science Center
Emerald Coast Vibe
Empower
Enterprise
ExxonMobil
FedEx Corporation
Fish Window Cleaning
Florida Blue
Florida Power & Light
Fluor
Forever Warriors
Forget Me Knot Event Planning & Rentals
General Electric
Goodwill Gulf Coast
Governance Gal
Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce
GSC Systems
Gysea Soul Investments
Hancock Whitney Bank
HCA Florida Fort Walton-Destin Hospital
Healing Hoofsteps
Hensel Phelps
Hilton Garden Inn
Hilton Sandestin Golf Resort & Spa
Horizons of Okaloosa County
IBM

JCPenney
Joint Chiropractic
JoJo's Coffee
JVC Broadcasting
Kelley's Beach Liquors and Wine Merchants
Kimberly-Clark
LEADERSHIP TEN
Legacy Cabinets
Legal Services of North Florida
Lewis Bear Company
Life Enrichment Senior Center
Life Media
Lilly
LiveOak Fiber
Liza Jackson Preparatory
Lockheed Martin
Marshalls
Microsoft
Micro Systems
MidSouth Bank
Nationwide
Navy Federal Credit Union
Nemours
New Hope Health and Wellness
Newman-Dailey Resort Properties
NextHome Cornerstone Realty
Niceville Valparaiso Chamber of Commerce
Northwest Florida State College
Off the Walls Murals
Okaloosa County
Okaloosa County Department of Corrections
Okaloosa County School District
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office
Okaloosa County Teacher's Federal Credit Union
Okaloosa Gas
O'Reilly Auto Parts
Origin Bank
Our Greenhouse Florals
Parker Gene Creative
Paychex
PNC Bank
Publix Super Markets
Pure Collective Salon
Raymond James
Realty One
Regions Bank
Reliance Test & Technology

Renasant Bank
Robertson Ryan
Rocky Bayou Christian School
Rowland Publishing
Savvy Leigh Photography
SBDC by UWF
Shalimar Family Dentistry
Shell Oil Company Foundation
SimpleHR
SmartBank
Southland Utility Services
State Attorney's Office
Step One Automotive Group
Sundance Rental Management
Synovus
Tap the Coast
Target
The Board Chef
The First Bank
The Henderson
The Place on Beal
Thompson Foundation
TierOne Media
TJ Maxx
Tom Thumb - Cumberland Farms
Trust
Trustmark
T-Shirt Factory
Turner Industries Group
United Fidelity Bank
United Methodist Children's Home
United Parcel Service
United Way Emerald Coast
University of West Florida
USAA
Veterans Lending Group
VIP Magazine
Walmart
Walton Area Chamber of Commerce
Walton County School District
Warren Averett
WEAR TV
Wells Fargo Bank
Westonwood Ranch
White-Wilson Medical Center



Lasting impact takes both U & I. Together, united, we can continue making a difference along the Emerald Coast. Connect with us to see how you can get involved.

GET INVOLVED - GIVE BACK - TAKE ACTION

2-1-1

Northwest Florida

211 IS HERE TO HELP

A free, anonymous, confidential, multilingual information and referral service that connects callers to information regarding health and human services available in Northwest Florida. Call 211 to get connected to local resources for food, housing, employment, health care, counseling, and more.

Dial 211 or toll free 855-420-8689, for free and available 24/7
Text your zip code to 898211 8am to 5pm M-F
Visit <https://211nwfl.communityos.org/>

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