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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Numbers for Homeless Point-In-Time Count in North Central Florida  
conducted January 22-23, 2019***

GAINESVILLE, FL (April. 9, 2019) — The 2019 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count identified that across the five-county North Central Florida region, during a 24-hour time period, 804 individuals and families were homeless. This Count is based on the Federal homeless definition of those who reported staying in places not meant for human habitation, or were in emergency shelter or a transitional housing program. The PIT does not count persons or families that are doubled-up and/or living with family and friends.

The Homeless PIT Count is conducted annually by the local Continuum of Care (CoC), the North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry (Alliance). A CoC is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit organizations, and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families, while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

This year, more than 50 volunteers counted 302 sheltered and 502 unsheltered homeless individuals, making the total 804 homeless individuals. In the 2018 PIT, there were 323 sheltered and 433 unsheltered, a total of 756 homeless. The 2019 Count is about six percent higher than that of 2018, however, every year the Alliance members work to improve the process used to conduct the PIT, which may have contributed to the increased count. Alliance members continue to fill gaps and support the overall downward trend in the total number of homeless individuals, which is down by 36 percent since 2014.

“Collaboration is key when providing wrap-around services to the homeless community,” said Mona Gil de Gibaja, UWNCFE President & CEO. “As the Lead Agency for the Alliance, United Way encourages our partners to work together to ensure that no homeless individual or family falls through the cracks.”

Last year, United Way of North Central Florida (UWNCFE) became the Lead Agency for the Alliance. Agencies funded through the Alliance include the Alachua Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, Another Way, Catholic Charities, Family Promise, Lee Conlee House, Peaceful Paths and St. Francis House. The Alliance includes Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Putnam counties. The goal of the Alliance is to make homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. With the help of a dedicated team, a system is in place to coordinate housing assistance to homeless residents.

“The local Continuum of Care is continuing to hone their system of locating individuals during the Point-In-Time count and effectively utilizing data to inform their efforts,” said Michael Blessing, Alliance Board Chair. “The fluctuations of numbers over the past couple of years do not compare to the overall decrease in the population of persons experiencing homelessness that the data has shown over the past several years.”

“United Way and the Alliance share four counties, so it’s imperative that we all work together to help these individuals with a variety needs,” said Scott Thomas, United Way Board Chair. “We hope that with this year’s Point-In-Time Count we’ll be able to see how United Way’s partnership with the Alliance can make the greatest impact on the community.”

For more information, please contact Mona Gil de Gibaja at mgildegibaja@unitedwayncfl.org. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit [www.ncfalliance.org](http://www.ncfalliance.org).

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