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UNITED WAY APPROVES DISASTER RELIEF FUNDING FOR IRMA IMPACT

GAINESVILLE, Fla (Sept. 20, 2017) – United Way of North Central Florida yesterday activated its Emergency Disaster Relief Fund to provide immediate assistance to local residents impacted by Hurricane Irma.

The agency's Board of Directors approved the release of up to \$20,000 in funding to agencies who currently provide emergency assistance and whose organizations have responded to people in the region who experienced damage to property, losses of household items including clothing, food as well as other unanticipated expenses due to the storm. United Way will also immediately begin raising money for the fund to meet the long-term recovery needs many in the community still face in rebuilding and repairing after the storm.

"Overall our region fared better than many other parts of Florida, but we have certainly had challenges to deal with," said UWNCF Board of Directors Chairman Nick Banks. "We have people on fixed incomes in our community who lost all their food because they were without power for days. We've had people with trees toppled on their cars and homes. We've seen devastating flooding."

"For those in our community living with limited assets, dealing with any one of these hardships can be difficult," Banks said.

Releasing the additional funding right now to help people recover from Irma is one of the ways United Way helps communities rebound after disaster strikes, Banks said, but continuing to solicit donations to help others whose recovery may only become apparent in the coming weeks is also part of United Way's mission to help make communities whole. This is the third time in the agency's recent history that emergency fund has been activated, he added. Previous efforts include supporting local agencies during the 2008 financial crisis, and establishing the I-75 Victims Memorial Fund, which provided relief to survivors of a multi-car pile-up in 2012 on the interstate that killed 11 people.

For more information about United Way's Emergency Disaster Fund, visit www.unitedwayncfl.org/irmagnv. Donations can be made directly from the site. To request assistance, call our 24-hour emergency helpline by dialing 2-1-1 or by texting your zip code to 898-211 (txt211). All calls are confidential and free.

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United Way of North Central Florida has been a staple in the community since 1957. We serve a six-county area that includes Alachua, Bradford, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and Union counties. Since our inception, we have raised nearly \$100 million for the community. Since 2011, we have been consistently rated 4 out of 4 stars by Charity Navigator for accountability and transparency.

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