

CONTACT

Mary Benton
Mary.Benton@houstontx.gov
832-393-0830

Rafael Lemaitre
Rafael.Lemaitre@cjo.hctx.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\$1.65 Million in Emergency Grants Invested by Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund in Area Nonprofits Serving Most Vulnerable

Pledged donations to disaster fund reach \$7.1 million in first week

HOUSTON, TEXAS (March 1, 2021) - As Houstonians begin to assess and address the costly damage caused by the recent extreme winter weather, the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund is investing \$1.65 million in emergency grants to support vulnerable families and individuals in critical need of home repairs due to busted pipes, water damage and prolonged power loss during the recent freezing temperatures. Given the urgency for assistance, the fund's grants committee quickly approved this initial round of grants, less than a week after the fund was launched, to help the most vulnerable in our community who are traditionally underserved with emergency repairs.

This \$1.65 million in emergency grants represents funds already received from the \$7.1 million in donations pledged to date by generous Houston companies and individuals. Along with the lead donation of \$1 million by CenterPoint Energy, major gifts have been made by Hess Corporation (\$1 million); Astros Foundation (\$500,000); Houston Texans and Janice McNair (\$500,000); Reliant - an NRG Company (\$500,000); Shell Oil Company (\$500,000); the Weekley Family (\$500,000); and Aramco Americas (\$400,000).

"The Houston area has faced one challenge after another. We cannot control the weather, but we can control our response to it. I am grateful for the quick response from philanthropic organizations and business leaders who have generously contributed to the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund. The Fund is a strong foundation for Houston families that need assistance to recover from a historic weather event. Together, we are working to address unmet needs, and together, we will move forward," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

"What makes our region a special place is how we care for our neighbors – whether it's bringing over buckets of water, or sharing generously of whatever time and resources we may have," said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. "Our community mobilizing more than \$6 million in just one week for this relief fund is a manifestation of this spirit where we lift up those who need help, without delay and without complication."

From this initial grant round, \$1.5 million is being invested in the Disaster Home Repair Collaborative, which is facilitated by Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation as the fiscal agent and includes the following home repair partners: Avenue, Fifth Ward CRC, Houston Habitat for Humanity, Rebuilding Together Houston and Tejano Center for Community Concerns. Each organization has served Houston and Harris County for over 20 years and has the collective capacity, proven track record and strength to respond to the crisis.

The balance of the emergency grant round, \$150,000, is allocated to Connective, a disaster recovery and preparedness system for the Texas Gulf Coast Region to establish a common application portal to facilitate low-barrier access to home repair services.

Home repair funds will be evenly allocated between disproportionately impacted communities in the City of Houston and unincorporated Harris County to assist vulnerable households with urgent basic home repairs.

Those impacted by the storm and needing help can text **HoustonFreeze to 898211, or for Spanish, text HoustonAyuda to 898211** (TXT211 on iPhone). Individuals will be texted back with eligibility and application guidelines.

In addition, the fund is encouraging all families who were impacted by 2021 Winter Storm to complete a nonprofit-led **Community Needs Assessment** to communicate their needs at www.connectivesurvey.org.

Launched by Mayor Sylvester Turner and Judge Lina Hidalgo, the fund's purpose is to support nonprofits providing relief and recovery efforts for individuals, families and communities impacted by the 2021 Severe Winter Storm Emergency in Harris County and the City of Houston. Along with disaster home repairs, the fund will support temporary housing and other basic needs relief. The fund is dedicated to filling the gaps that may not be met by other local and federal efforts. There will be a concerted effort to complement FEMA federal assistance, and impacted families are encouraged to apply to FEMA now at <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>.

The Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF) and United Way of Greater Houston (UWGH) are jointly overseeing and administering the grant distribution process with the help of a grants committee, who will develop and execute a grant making strategy and approve grants to nonprofit partners. The grants committee is co-chaired by Tony Chase, ChaseSource, LP and GHCF board member, and Donna Sims Wilson, Kah Capital Management and UWGH board member. Other grants committee members include Laura Jaramillo, Wells Fargo and GHCF board member; Y. Ping Sun, Rice University and UWGH board member; and staff and philanthropic professionals including Renee Wizig-Barrios, Mary Vazquez, Diana Zarzuelo and Angel Harris.

A fund advisory board is leading fundraising efforts to support the grants committee in distributing funding to nonprofit partners with a laser-like focus on home repair and related relief and recovery efforts. Dave Lesar, CenterPoint Energy, is serving as chair of the advisory board whose eight members include: Ric Campo, Camden Property

Trust; Jim Crane, Houston Astros; Bill Jackson, Harris County Precinct 4; Jason Johnson, MetroNational; Scott McClelland, H-E-B; Cal McNair, Houston Texans; Jacob Monty, Monty & Ramirez LLP; and Gretchen Watkins, Shell Oil Company.

The Foundation and United Way are now accepting donations online at www.WinterStormReliefFund.org.

The Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston will share information about all grants publicly on the fund's website, www.WinterStormReliefFund.org, and through other communications for complete transparency about the expenditure of funds.

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About Greater Houston Community Foundation

Greater Houston Community Foundation, one of Houston's largest grant makers and leaders in philanthropic impact, has served the greater Houston community for 25 years. The organization supports high profile community and donor initiatives with the most comprehensive philanthropic resources, expertise, and innovative platforms. Greater Houston Community Foundation is widely considered the go-to partner for high-profile philanthropic partnerships in the Greater Houston area, including major disaster relief initiatives, such as the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund as well as Bush-Clinton Katrina Fund. Greater Houston Community Foundation leads collaborations that support the wellbeing and vitality of Houston, including Understanding Houston, in partnership with Rice Kinder Institute. The Foundation provides individuals, families, corporations, foundations, and advisors with the ability to expand their philanthropic impact. For more information, please visit, www.ghcf.org.

About United Way of Greater Houston

For nearly 100 years, United Way of Greater Houston has brought together diverse partners and approaches to address the complex challenges holding people back. We are a driving force for good that connects our neighbors with opportunities to thrive. We help our neighbors achieve financial stability. We provide services that support the physical and behavioral health of families and youth along with educational services that expand their skills and horizons. We provide a safety net that catches the most vulnerable. We manage every donation with care to make the greatest impact across the four-county region of Fort Bend, Harris, Montgomery, and Waller counties. We connect neighbors with help 24/7 through our 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE. For more information, please visit, www.unitedwayhouston.org.