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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Additional \$2.5 Million in Grants Invested by Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund to Support Home Repairs and Emergency Financial Assistance**

*More than \$13.1 million invested to date to support those recovering from winter storm*

**HOUSTON, TEXAS (May 27, 2021)** – The Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund is investing an additional \$2.5 million in area nonprofits serving the most vulnerable families and individuals impacted by February’s winter storm. This latest round of grants provides funds for home repairs, complex unmet needs assistance and emergency financial assistance. To date, \$17 million in donations has been pledged to the fund by generous companies, foundations and individuals and more than \$13.1 million has been distributed through a network of Houston area nonprofits for relief efforts. A final round of grants will be distributed in June.

“The ongoing investment of relief funds significantly impacts the lives of many individuals and families in our community. As people continue recovering from the winter storm, they are not alone as they repair homes damaged by broken pipes and water,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “I thank the donors, nonprofit partners, Greater Houston Community Foundation, and United Way of Greater Houston. By working together, they have implemented a smooth process to address the unmet needs of people who suffered greatly during the storm.”

“With hurricane season just days away, countless households are still saddled with plumbing problems, crumbled sheetrock, and ruined carpet because of a freeze that happened more than three months ago,” said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. “I am grateful to our partners who stepped up to help our neighbors fortify their homes at a time when they are most in need.”

In this round of grants, \$2.3 million is being invested in 11 nonprofit partners to support homeowners with urgent basic home repairs due to busted pipes, associated water damage and prolonged power loss. In a previous grant round, funds were allocated for a Construction Unmet Needs Fund to provide additional resources that can be accessed by nonprofit home repair partners to complete repairs on severely damaged homes that require more resources than what is currently available. In this round, local nonprofit Avenue receives a systems grant to administer the Construction Unmet Needs Fund.

In addition, a systems grant is provided to Memorial Assistance Ministries to administer a Complex Unmet Needs Fund, which was also funded in a previous grant round. This fund serves low-income renters and homeowners who have been impacted by the winter storm and have unmet needs that go beyond the resources available from nonprofit partners who are supporting recovery. For eligible families, the fund will provide support for expenses such as homeowners insurance deductibles, furniture loss, basic household needs and relocation costs for renters who must move due to winter storm damage. Visit [www.mamhouston.org/freeze](http://www.mamhouston.org/freeze) for eligibility requirements and how to apply. Assistance is also available by calling 713-574-7533 (English) or 713-574-7536 (Spanish) or emailing [Freezehelp@mamhouston.org](mailto:Freezehelp@mamhouston.org). Due to anticipated high call volume, applicants should expect a response period of up to 72 hours when leaving a voicemail.

An additional grant of \$100,000 will be used by ICNA Disaster Relief to provide flexible emergency financial assistance.

To date, more than 5,000 individuals have received financial assistance and more than 300 homes have been repaired through grants from the storm fund, including the home of Angela and Craig Villegas, who experienced prolonged power loss that led to busted pipes and extensive damage to their home. “Our home flooded during Hurricane Harvey and we were only able to move back in a year ago, so to have to go through this again has been extremely difficult, both emotionally and financially,” said Angela Villegas. “We’re so grateful to The Restoration Team for making these repairs, thanks to a grant from the relief fund, so we can get back home with our family.”

Those who were impacted by the storm and reside in the City of Houston or Harris County are asked to take the following steps to be connected with available resources:

### **Home Repair Assistance**

- Complete the Connective Home Repair Application, <https://www.connectivetx.org/winterstorm/home-repair>
- For assistance completing the Connective Home Repair Application, call The Alliance at 346-396-6903 for guidance in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and, if needed, can refer to interpreters for other languages.

### **Financial Assistance**

- For help accessing financial assistance, call The Alliance at 346-396-6903 for guidance in English, Spanish and Vietnamese and, if needed, can refer callers to interpreters for other languages.
- The 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE is also available to connect those in need with a nonprofit partner providing assistance in your area.

Launched by Mayor Sylvester Turner and Judge Lina Hidalgo, the Winter Storm Relief 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 supports temporary housing and other basic needs relief and is dedicated to

filling the gaps that may not be met by other local and federal efforts. Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston jointly oversee and administer the grant distribution process with the help of a grants committee. GHCF and UWGH continue to share information about all grants publicly on the fund's website, [www.WinterStormReliefFund.org](http://www.WinterStormReliefFund.org), and through other communications for complete transparency about the expenditure of funds.

**The Foundation and United Way are now accepting donations online at [www.WinterStormReliefFund.org](http://www.WinterStormReliefFund.org).**

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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](http://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](http://www.unitedwayhouston.org).