



Mayor Sylvester Turner



LINA HIDALGO



GREATER
HOUSTON
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



United Way of Greater Houston

Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund

Interim Impact Report

July 2021

Recognizing the dire hardships created by the extreme winter weather in February 2021, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo established the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund (HHC-WSRF) to help our region’s most vulnerable neighbors during a critical time of need. To support these efforts, Mayor Turner and County Judge Hidalgo enlisted Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF) and United Way of Greater Houston (UWGH), organizations which have long track records in disaster response and recovery, to oversee and administer the grant distribution process.

“Houstonians are strong and resilient, but many were already facing hardships with the COVID-19 pandemic before the historic winter freeze. People now need help recovering from the damage to their homes and other personal property, and this relief fund will provide that assistance.”

-Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner

“Here in Harris County, when we get knocked down, we get back up, dust ourselves off and get to work right away to help our neighbors. I’m pleased to partner with Mayor Turner, the Greater Houston Community Foundation and the United Way to provide another source of support for our community. Our region has endured multiple, concurrent disasters – from Harvey to Imelda to COVID, and now a winter weather disaster. So many families were already experiencing hardship before this disaster blindsided us. This fund will lean on groups with deep experience providing recovery support to help as many people as we can.”

-Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

Nearly 4.5 million homes and businesses were without power due to the winter storm, resulting in an estimated \$295 billion in damage across Texas, according to a University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs [study on Winter Storm Uri](#). More than nine out of every 10 Harris County residents lost power, with an average outage of 49 hours. Almost two-thirds of Harris County residents lost running water for an average of 56 hours. Finally, two out of every five Harris County respondents suffered water damage from pipes that burst because of the freeze. On February 19, 2021, President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for several Texas counties, including Harris County.

About the Fund

With a fundraising-focused advisory board led by David Lesar, CenterPoint Energy president and CEO, the Fund raised \$17 million in donations with the support of generous companies, foundations, and individuals. **As of July 1, \$13.1 million has been distributed.**

As of July 1, the Grants Committee has approved four rounds of funding to 50 unique nonprofit partners providing critical financial resources and recovery services to vulnerable families impacted by the winter storm throughout the City of Houston and Harris County. Round 1 funds were quickly disbursed within four days of the Fund’s establishment, the fastest pace yet for funds out to the community by either GHCF or UWGH. This sense of urgency remains a top principle guiding the Fund and Grants Committee. Below is a summarized listing of grantees that can be found on the Winter Storm Fund website, www.WinterStormReliefFund.org.

GRANT AMOUNTS DISBURSED BY SERVICE AND ROUND

SERVICE AREA	ROUND 1 (February 26)	ROUND 2 (March 11)	ROUND 3 (April 16)	ROUND 4 (May 12)	ROUND 5*	TOTAL AUTHORIZED THROUGH ROUND 4	TOTAL PROJECTED DISBURSEMENT
Emergency Financial Assistance	\$ -	\$3,700,000	\$ -	\$100,000	\$2,000,000	\$3,800,000	\$5,800,000
Home Repair	\$1,500,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,040,000	\$8,650,000	\$9,690,000
Systems Coordination	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$ -	\$85,000	\$ -	\$635,000	\$635,000
Total	\$1,650,000	\$6,300,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,485,000	\$3,040,000	\$13,085,000	\$16,125,000

**Pending approval.*

Impact to Date

The following information includes data on the number of individuals and households served by the HHC-WSRF by type of service and demographic characteristics. Data were provided by grantee organizations that collected information from clients to the best of their ability. Additional reports will be released for subsequent grant rounds as the data becomes available.

TOTAL SERVED

Through its nonprofit partners, the HHC-WSRF served more than 10,863 individuals living in 3,939 households through emergency financial assistance of up to \$1,000 per household and home repairs to help families recover from busted water pipes and freeze damage.

	INDIVIDUALS	HOUSEHOLDS
Emergency Financial Assistance	9,145	3,356
Home Repair	1,718	583
Total	10,863	3,939

TOTAL UNDUPLICATED SERVED

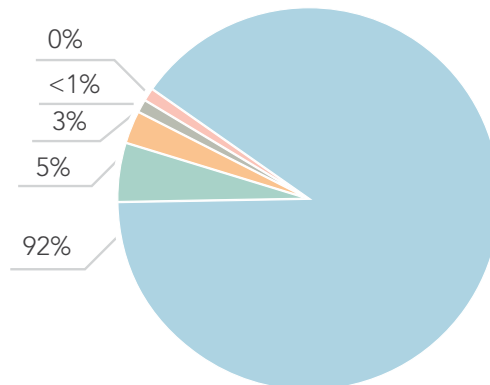


Emergency Financial Assistance

INCOME LEVEL

% of Area Median Income

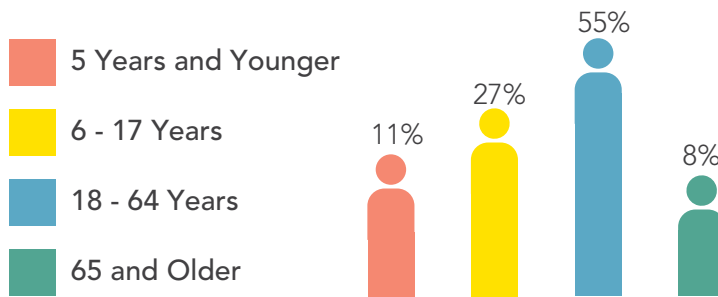
- 60% AMI Or Lower
- 61 - 80% AMI
- 81 - 100% AMI
- 101 - 120% AMI
- Above 120% AMI



Note: AMI is a commonly used economic measure that depends on household size and accounts for a region's cost of living. For example, AMI for a family of four in the Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2021 was \$78,800. Unknown data is excluded from analysis. Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Emergency Financial Assistance Continued

AGE



Note: Unknown data is excluded from analysis. Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Client Story

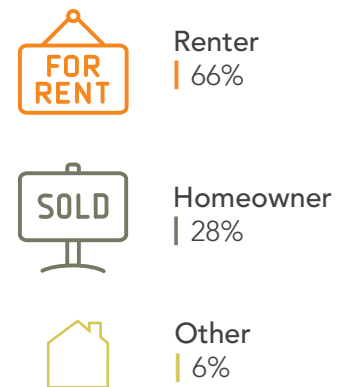
When the winter storm struck, Mr. Edwards, a cancer patient receiving weekly chemotherapy, was hit hard, going without power and water for several days and sustaining significant damage to his home. He had decided to forgo homeowners insurance for the first time in 15 years and was now facing burst pipes, a water-damaged roof, and a severely damaged garage. With no other options, he began to use his limited savings to do the repairs himself with the assistance of his family, but money was tight and he needed help. Through the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund, Mr. Edwards received direct financial assistance, enabling him to continue his home repairs and start on the path of financial recovery.

RACE/ETHNICITY



Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Unknown data excluded from analysis.

LIVING SITUATION



Note: Unknown data is excluded from analysis.

POPULATIONS SERVED

Research has shown that some groups are disproportionately impacted by disasters. At the same time, these groups are the least likely to have access to and receive assistance to recover. That's why the HHC-WSRF Grants Committee prioritized assistance dollars to the most vulnerable groups.

VULNERABLE POPULATIONS



Note: Clients could select more than one characteristic (or none), consequently, figures will not sum to 100.
*denotes data by household only

Home Repair

In partnership with Connective and 13 home repair partners, hundreds of homes belonging to low-income families have been restored throughout the City of Houston and Harris County. The data reflect the demographics of households served for completed home repair projects only (not those in process).

Connective, a systems support grantee, built and operated an online home repair application that connects eligible applicants to fund grantees providing home repair services.



Client Story

The Haynes Family experienced water damage to their dining room, living room, and washroom from pipes that burst because of the winter storm. Food was lost, clothing was damaged, and floors and furniture needed to be replaced. The family had renters insurance but not flood insurance. Due to the high cost of contractors, the family did the repair work themselves. The HHC-WSRF funding helped the family pay for home repair supplies, tool rentals, and to restock their food.

Home Repair Continued



583
COMPLETED
HOME REPAIRS

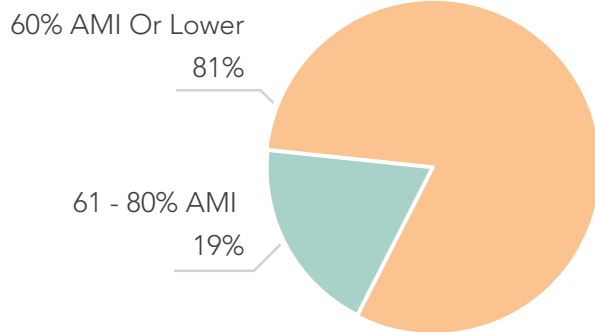


401
HOME REPAIRS
IN PROGRESS



TIER 1: \$3,800
TIER 2: \$2,300
AVERAGE HOME
REPAIR COST

INCOME LEVEL



Note: Area Median Income (AMI) is a commonly used economic measure that depends on household size and accounts for a region's cost of living. For example, AMI for a family of four in the Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2021 was \$78,800.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

One	30%
Two	20%
Three	18%
Four	14%
Five or More	18%

HOUSING TYPE

Single Family Households	94%
Mobile Homes, Townhomes, Duplex/Fourplex, or Condos	6%

ABILITY TO AFFORD INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE

Cannot Afford	85%
Can Afford	15%

“Working with United Way of Greater Houston and the Greater Houston Community Foundation in response to the winter storm allowed us one of the quickest responses to a major disaster that The Restoration Team has participated in. As an emerging organization in disaster recovery, knowing that these organizations had our backs allowed us to continue to help people recover from the storm using a grant from the HHC-WSRF. With this support, The Restoration Team will double our impact in 2021!”

-Trevor Barnett, Director, The Restoration Team

Home Repair Continued

In partnership with Connective and home repair nonprofit partners, clear standards were set for Tier 1 home repairs provided to all households and Tier 2 home repairs provided to the most vulnerable families served.

TIER 1 HOME REPAIR STANDARDS:

- Muck and gut/removal of damaged interior building materials
- Proper preventative dry-out and water extraction of leak affected area
- Plumbing repairs
 - Achieve running water w/no leaks
 - Replace essential fixtures (kitchen sink, toilet, shower/tub, hot water heater) if necessary
 - Interior water service only
 - Insulation of new pipes

TIER 2 HOME REPAIR STANDARDS:

- Repair/replacement of damaged interior building materials (drywall, insulation, flooring)
- Cabinet/countertop replacement (if damaged beyond repair)
- Plumbing fixture replacement (if applicable beyond Tier 1 repairs)
- Any additional pipe insulation
- Health and safety repairs to prevent further damages and/or mold growth (as defined by ensuring the envelope of the home is sealed, repair known electrical hazards, and interior temperature controls)

“The Winter Storm was hard on many families but was especially hard on low-income families. Thanks to the rapid response of the Fund, we were able to connect needy families with home repair organizations in record time. The Fund’s support of a coordinated, human-centered response focused on the strengths of each organization which meant that more families got help more quickly than in any other previous local disaster response.”

-Elena White, Executive Director, Connective