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Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund Grows to \$15 Million to Assist the Most Vulnerable Affected by Winter Freeze

HOUSTON, TEXAS (April 1, 2021) – Responding to the urgent needs created by February’s winter storm, area corporations, foundations and individuals have contributed \$15 million to the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund to support vulnerable neighbors recovering from the winter storm. Among recent gifts are donations from Quanta Services, Inc. (\$1,000,000); the Wood Foundation (\$400,000); The JPB Foundation (\$300,000); bp America (\$250,000); LyondellBasell (\$250,000); Sempra Energy Foundation (\$200,000); The Embassy of the State of Qatar in the U.S. (\$150,000); Bank of America Foundation (\$100,000); Camden Builders, Inc. (\$100,000); Stacy & Jason Johnson: Metro National (\$100,000); and the Hewlett Packard Enterprise Foundation.

To date, the fund has distributed \$7.95 million in grants to area nonprofits supporting those recovering from the winter storm through emergency financial assistance, home repairs and unmet needs assistance. Given the urgent need for assistance, fund organizers are appealing to those who can donate to do so by April 15, 2021 in order to quickly get the remaining funds to those in need. Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston are accepting donations online at www.WinterStormReliefFund.org.

“Once again, our city has shown they are committed to supporting the most vulnerable families and individuals in the aftermath of a disaster,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “The continued support of the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund allows Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston to expeditiously get resources into the hands of those in need so they can work towards getting back on their feet.”

“The February freeze dealt a major setback to many families that were already struggling to maintain their households during what was already one of the most challenging years we’ve seen in our lifetimes,” said Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo. “I am grateful to those who have given so generously to help our neighbors recover, and I encourage those who are in a position to help to pitch in what they can. To our struggling families: Know that help is on the way and you are not alone. In Harris County, we always pull together to lift those in need.”

Those who were impacted by the storm, reside in the City of Houston or Harris County and have an income of less than 80 percent of the area median income are encouraged 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 those that do not have access to technology to fill out the survey, please contact The Alliance at (346) 396-6903, who will assist residents with the application process. For those applying for home repair assistance, clients must demonstrate that a member of their household owns the home or is on a clear path to owning the home.

Financial Assistance

- The fund has made investments to several nonprofit partners to provide financial assistance to those impacted. Contact the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE to be connected with a nonprofit partner providing assistance in your area.

“If you need assistance repairing your home and have not filled out an application, we encourage you to call The Alliance to be connected with a home repair grantee,” said Donna Sims Wilson, chief operating officer of Kah Capital Management and co-chair of the fund’s grants committee. “The needs in our community are great, and while the fund will not cover all the needs, we will continue to work quickly to deploy resources to trusted nonprofits to help as many families and individuals in need with the funds available.”

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 before the April 20, 2021 deadline 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. GHCF and UWGH 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.