



Mayor Sylvester Turner



LINA HIDALGO



United Way of Greater Houston

# *Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund*

## **Interim Impact – One Year Later**

February 15, 2022

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.

On February 19, 2021, President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for several Texas counties, including Harris County, that had been severely impacted by the winter storm. 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](#). The Department of State Health Services recently reported that [246 Texans lost their lives](#) due to the storm. In Harris County, more than nine out of every 10 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. Two out of every five Harris County respondents suffered water damage from pipes that burst because of the freeze.

## *About the Fund*

With a fundraising-focused advisory board led by David Lesar, CenterPoint Energy president and CEO, the Fund raised \$17.5 million in donations with the support of generous companies, foundations, and individuals.

The Grants Committee has disbursed all available funds through six rounds of funding to 58 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 remained 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](http://www.WinterStormReliefFund.org).

**GRANT AMOUNTS DISBURSED BY SERVICE AND ROUND**

SERVICE AREA	ROUND 1 (Feb 26)	ROUND 2 (March 11)	ROUND 3 (April 16)	ROUND 4 (May 12)	ROUND 5 (Aug 3)	ROUND 6 (Dec 15)	TOTAL DISBURSED
Emergency Financial Assistance	\$ 0	\$3,700,000	\$ 0	\$100,000	\$2,032,500	\$ 0	\$5,832,500
Home Repair	\$1,500,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,650,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,325,000	\$200,000	\$10,175,000
Systems Coordination	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$ 0	\$110,000	\$ 0	\$79,626	\$739,626
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,650,000</b>	<b>\$6,300,000</b>	<b>\$2,650,000</b>	<b>\$2,510,000</b>	<b>\$3,357,500</b>	<b>\$279,626</b>	<b>\$16,747,126</b>

**Round 1 Immediate Grants – February 26, 2021**

The Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund invested \$1,650,000 to launch relief efforts focused on home repair assistance and coordination to support in-home repairs in homes due to busted pipes, associated water damage and/or due to prolonged power loss. A centralized technology platform was established to support this collaborative work through a low-barrier, common portal for applications.

**Round 2 Grants – March 11, 2021**

In its second round of grants, the Fund deployed \$6,300,000, which includes \$3,700,000 for Emergency Financial Assistance Grants to 39 nonprofit partners, \$2,200,000 for Home Repair Grants to 10 partners, and \$400,000 in System Coordination Grants that will provide increased access to home repairs for vulnerable populations and ensure quality home repairs.

**Round 3 Grants – April 16, 2021**

In its third round of grants, the Fund deployed \$2,650,000 for nonprofit-managed home repair to support homeowners with urgent basic home repairs due to busted pipes, associated water damage, and/or due to prolonged power loss. The agencies receiving grants have demonstrated their ability to get work crews on the ground quickly to assess and repair home damage.

**Round 4 Grants – May 12, 2021**

In its fourth round of grants, the Fund deployed \$2,510,000 for continued nonprofit-managed home repair and other urgent basic home repairs, flexible emergency financial assistance, unmet needs, unmet construction needs fund administration, and evaluation of the Fund. The evaluation will further study the partnership and identify opportunities to continue to strengthen the model, home repair, emergency financial assistance, and system coordination to expedite future recovery efforts.

**Round 5 Grants – August 3, 2021**

In its fifth round of grants, the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund invested nearly \$3.4 million in nonprofits supporting the most vulnerable families and individuals with home repairs and flexible emergency financial assistance. A home repair reimbursement program aimed at helping families who earn 120 percent of the area median income or below with reimbursement for minor home repairs completed immediately following the winter storm, reimbursement for loans or depleted savings used for home repairs after the storm, and incomplete home repairs. A special focus of this grant round was on providing emergency financial assistance through BIPOC-led, grassroots organizations that have relationships in the communities they serve and are uniquely positioned to reach vulnerable families that are less connected to social services.

## Round 6 Grants – December 15, 2021

In its sixth round of grants, the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund invested \$200,000 in a nonprofit supporting elder adults with home repairs. In addition, \$79,626 was invested in a solar power battery distribution program to provide backup electrical support to individuals that need to maintain power for medically necessary equipment.

### 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 has provided emergency financial assistance of up to \$1,000 per household and home repairs to help families recover from busted water pipes and freeze damage to 27,093 individuals living in 8,393 households in the region.

	INDIVIDUALS	HOUSEHOLDS
Emergency Financial Assistance	23,411	7,141
Home Repair	3,682	1,252

*Note: Some individuals and households received both Emergency Financial Assistance and Home Repair services.*

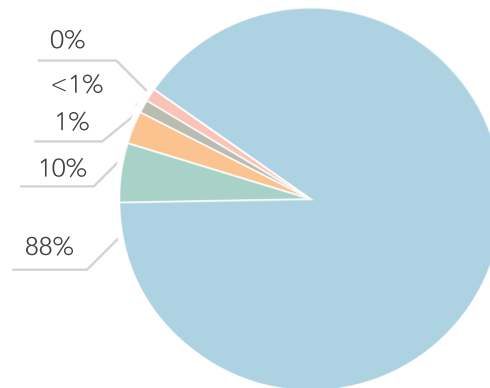
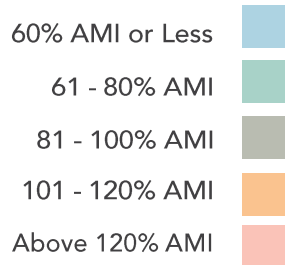
## TOTAL SERVED



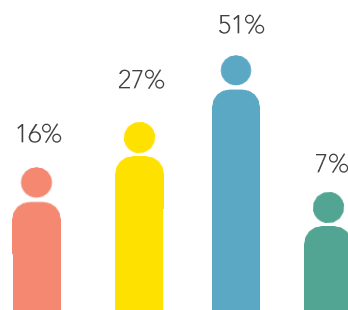
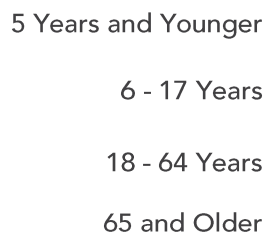
# Emergency Financial Assistance

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME LEVEL

### % of Area Median Income



## AGE



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

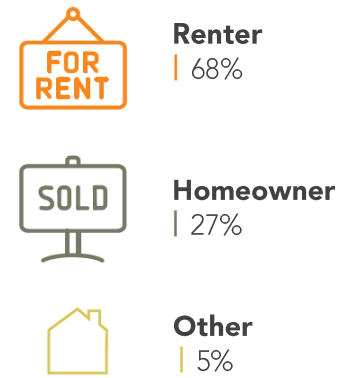
## Client Story

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



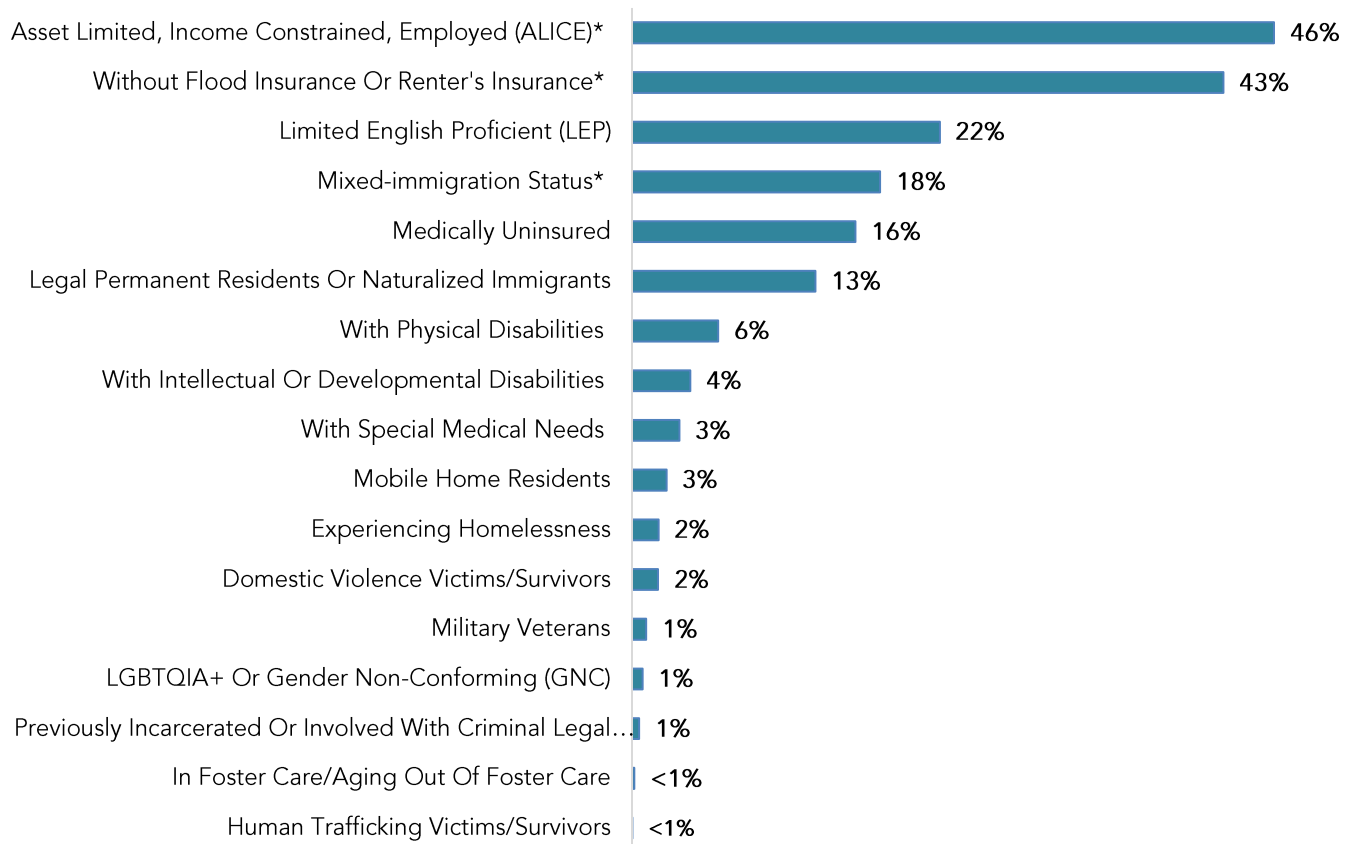
## LIVING SITUATION



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

## VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

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.



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 15 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.

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

When the winter storm struck, the Escatel family was hit hard. Their home sustained significant damage in addition to developing mold from busted pipes. Mr. Escatel learned about the Fund and applied for assistance with the numerous home repairs. Unfortunately, he soon fell sick, and by the end of the month, he had passed, leaving his wife and three young children in an incredibly difficult situation. Thankfully, the application he had filled out before he passed was approved and the Escatel home received the repairs it needed. Because of the Fund, Mr. Escatel's wife and children are able to safely live in their family home.



**1,252**  
COMPLETED  
HOME REPAIRS

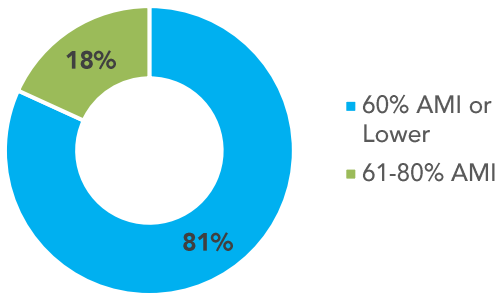


**25**  
HOME REPAIRS  
IN PROGRESS

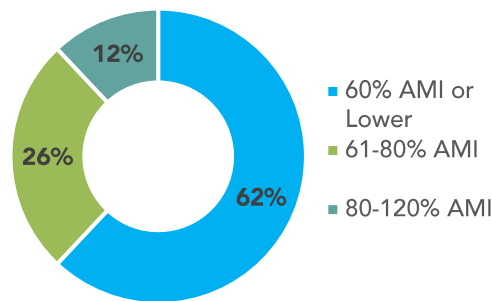


**TIER 1: \$4,200**  
**TIER 2: \$4,000**  
AVERAGE HOME  
REPAIR COST

### INCOME LEVEL Completed Home Repairs



### Reimbursement Cases



152 families received reimbursement or repair assistance

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. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

### HOUSEHOLD SIZE

One	30%
Two	23%
Three	16%
Four	13%
Five or More	18%

### HOUSING TYPE

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

### ABILITY TO AFFORD INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE

47% of homeowners have insurance, 83% cannot afford the deductible