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RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE

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**Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo Establish
Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund**

(HOUSTON, TEXAS, February 22, 2021) - Recognizing the dire hardships created by the extreme winter weather, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo have established the Houston Harris County Winter Storm Relief Fund to help our region's most vulnerable neighbors during this critical time of need. The Fund will focus on relief and recovery efforts across the City of Houston and Harris County.

"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," said Mayor Turner. "I am grateful to the CenterPoint Energy Foundation and others for stepping up with their incredibly generous donations. We are blessed to have good corporate citizens at this critical time, and I encourage others to support the fund to help our neighbors recover."

The distributions and grants will be made in support of The Fund's charitable purposes: to provide relief efforts and recovery and to support aid to the individuals, families and communities affected by the impact of the 2021 Severe Winter Storm Emergency in Harris County and the City of Houston. Because of the immense need in and around Houston, the fund will focus on meeting unmet needs of families who need additional help to recover, supporting nonprofits who can help with plumbing and home repairs, 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.

"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," said Judge Hidalgo. "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, so if you're in a position to donate, please do."

A fund advisory board will be established to lead fundraising efforts and oversee the grant making process. Dave Lesar, President & CEO of CenterPoint Energy, will serve as Chair of the advisory board, which will consist of eight members; Ric Campo, Camden Property Trust; Jim Crane, Houston Astros; Bill Jackson, Harris County Precinct 4; Jason Johnson, MetroNational; Scott McClelland, HEB; Cal McNair, Houston Texans; Jacob Monty, Monty & Ramirez LLP; and Gretchen Watkins, Shell Oil Company. The Advisory Board's charge is to get money to charitable groups and entities with a laser-like focus on home repair and related relief and recovery efforts.

The Greater Houston Community Foundation and United Way of Greater Houston have played a critical role in disaster response and recovery collectively for more than 30 years. Both organizations will jointly oversee and administer the grant distribution process with the help of a grants committee, which will include local philanthropic professionals. The Foundation and United Way are now accepting donations online at www.WinterStormReliefFund.org.

"The severe weather has impacted every corner of our community and the needs are immediate and significant. I am honored to partner with Mayor Turner, Judge Hidalgo, civic and community leaders and contributors to answer the call to support our neighbors in need," said Lesar. "For CenterPoint Energy's part, Houston and surrounding communities have been our homes for more than 150 years. We are proud to support our neighbors and communities in the aftermath of this unprecedented weather event."

Those impacted by the storm and needing help now can text **HoustonFreeze to 898211, or for Spanish, text HoustonAyuda to 898211** (TXT211 on iPhone). When assistance is available, individuals will be contacted regarding eligibility requirements and information on how to apply. There will be a concerted effort to complement FEMA federal assistance, and we encourage impacted families to apply to FEMA now at <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/>.

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.

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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.