

NEWS RELEASE

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Homeless, Domestic Violence Survivors and Food Insecure Identified for Emerging Needs Grants by Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund

HOUSTON, TX (May 7, 2020) – In response to urgent, emerging community needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund announced a stopgap investment of \$764,600 in four Greater Houston nonprofit organizations to assist with issues affecting the most vulnerable in our community. The grants address three key areas of concern that have emerged since the initial round of grants were distributed in April: domestic violence survivors, food insecure households and the homeless population.

The following organizations received the emerging needs grant investments:

- **Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (\$500,000):** Grant will address the unmet needs of domestic violence victims by providing food, hygiene supplies, laundry, clothing, masks, hand sanitizer, diapers and formula, and children's supplies for residential domestic violence victims that have been placed in hotels through local domestic violence nonprofit partners. The grant will also provide assistance with food, transportation, technology, supplies, gas cards and gap rental assistance to nonresidential domestic violence victims.
- **Get Shift Done for Houston (\$150,000):** Grant to the Houston Food Bank for its initiative with partner Get Shift Done to provide \$15 an hour jobs to jobless workers in the local hospitality industry to replace lost volunteers and help get food to community food pantries for distribution to those in need.
- **Montgomery County Food Bank (\$79,600):** In response to a critical shortage of necessary food items, the grant will support the purchase of essential food staples of rice and beans to provide over 100,000 meals for families through 70 food pantries and mobile distribution sites in the Montgomery County region.
- **Healthcare for the Homeless (\$35,000):** Grant will expand COVID-19 efforts to test Houstonians who are unsheltered or residing in emergency shelters as part of ongoing efforts to mitigate the spread of the disease for those who remain highly vulnerable. Funding will be used toward the purchase of screening tests, personal protective equipment for staff and patients (face masks, gowns, gloves, etc.), pharmaceuticals and personnel.

These grants are intended to address urgent gaps in available community resources. With this latest investment, the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund has provided \$2.2 million in support through grants to trusted nonprofit partners in the four-county region. The fund task force is preparing a significantly larger round of investment from the fund, encompassing wider areas of need in the community, for release later this month.

As the pandemic evolves, the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund Task Force, made up of board members from both United Way of Greater Houston and Greater Houston Community Foundation, continues to assess emerging needs in determining where to focus fund investments for the greatest impact. The funds are invested with trusted nonprofit partners and grassroots charitable organizations who have proven systems and experience serving the most vulnerable in our community in times of disaster. The full grantee list can be found on the [Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund](#) website.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly changing situation and one that requires us to continuously monitor data and community input so we can respond swiftly and effectively,” said Anna M. Babin, senior advisor, United Way of Greater Houston. “While the pandemic has affected almost all of us, we know it’s the most vulnerable among us that face the greatest hardships and need our support right now and in the future.”

Leading local foundations, corporations and individuals have responded with contributions in cash and pledged gifts, growing the fund to \$13.3 million to date. Because the need is so great, fund organizers are appealing to everyone who can donate to join the effort, with more details available at www.GreaterHoustonRecovery.org. Fund partners have committed that 100 percent of donations will be spent on community needs.

“There is such intense need all across our community, and the collective response must continue to be focused and passionate,” said Stephen Maislin, president and CEO, Greater Houston Community Foundation. “Our community continues to be a source of pride in the manner in which people, companies and foundations are coming together to support those most in need. The flexibility to continue to address the most pressing needs is paramount, and I am proud of the passion behind our community’s early response.”

Those who need assistance are encouraged to call the 211 Texas/United Way HELPLINE, the community’s key 24/7 information source during times of disaster. United Way’s 211 provides callers with the most updated information on assistance with utilities, housing or rental assistance, crisis counseling, access to senior services, information on food pantries in the community and more. Assistance through 211 can also be accessed through the following methods in the event of long wait times due to periods of heavy call volume:

- Visit 211texas.org to search resources online or chat online with a specialist
- Email help@unitedwayhouston.org for assistance

To donate to the Greater Houston COVID-19 Recovery Fund, visit www.GreaterHoustonRecovery.org or text “WEHELP” to 41444.

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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.

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 to be 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.