

IMPACT OF HURRICANE HARVEY

IN 2017, HURRICANE HARVEY BROUGHT DAMAGING WINDS AND FLOODING TO SOUTHEAST TEXAS. THE RECOVERY IS STILL ONGOING.

The Hurricane Worsened the Affordable Housing Crisis

Prior to Hurricane Harvey, Houston was already experiencing a severe shortage of affordable, accessible rental homes available to the lowest income people. According to research from NLIHC, there were just [18 affordable homes](#) available for every 100 of the lowest income households in Houston. Without affordable options, 75% of all extremely low-income households in Houston paid more than 50% of their income on rent, leaving them with few resources to make ends meet - let alone to evacuate during a disaster or to sustain them during the recovery. Hurricane Harvey damaged more than 300,000 homes, including 25% of Houston's affordable housing stock. In Port Arthur and Beaumont, almost 80% of all housing was damaged, leaving few options for displaced, low-income families.

Lack of Access to FEMA Assistance Hurts Those with the Greatest Needs

Despite having the greatest needs, survivors with the lowest incomes face barriers to receiving FEMA assistance. More than 45% of households with annual incomes less than \$15,000 were [denied FEMA individual assistance after Hurricane Harvey](#), while less than 14% of households with annual incomes more than \$45,000 were denied. FEMA programs are designed to serve middle-class families, not those with the greatest needs.

Lack of Housing Assistance Leads to Homelessness

In past disasters, both Republican and Democratic administrations activated the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) to provide the lowest-income survivors with the rental assistance and wrap-around services they needed to get back on their feet. After Hurricane Harvey - and other recent disasters - FEMA refused to activate the program. Instead, FEMA relied on its Transition Shelter Assistance (TSA) motel program, which many low-income survivors cannot access due to financial barriers. Without DHAP, homelessness increased in Houston by [18 percent](#).

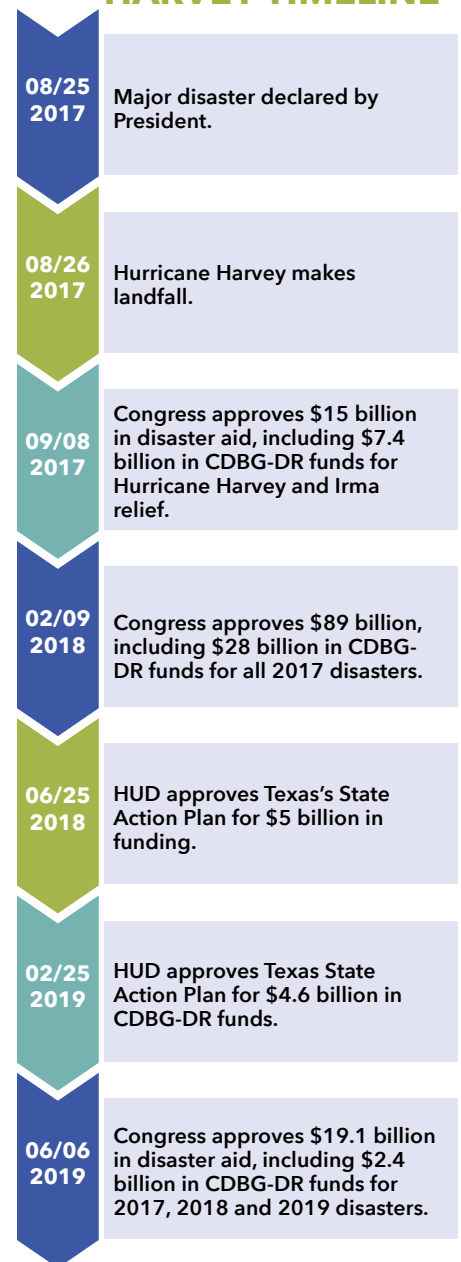
Long-Term Recovery Favors Whiter, Wealthy Communities

Houston is one of the nation's most economically and racially segregated regions. Historically Black and Latino neighborhoods in Houston have suffered from decades of disinvestment. As a result, low-income communities and communities of color lacked the basic infrastructure needed to protect residents from the impact of major disasters. For example, [nearly 90%](#) of Houston's open-ditch drainage systems are in low-income communities, exposing residents to health and safety risks during and after Hurricane Harvey. Despite the clear need, Texas's action plan for long-term recovery [diverts scarce resources away](#) from communities with the greatest needs in favor of higher-income, whiter communities. This unequal distribution continues to put the most vulnerable at risk.

Mitigation Funding Will Help Protect Communities, But is Slow to Arrive

Congress approved in February 2018 more than \$16 billion in Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery funds to address mitigation needs in Texas, Florida, and Puerto Rico. To date, HUD has still not provided these funds to disaster-impacted communities. Every day of delay puts lives at risk.

HURRICANE HARVEY TIMELINE



BY THE NUMBERS

- **107 people died in storm-related deaths**
- **306,993 homes damaged or destroyed by flooding and wind**
- **\$195 billion in damage**

For more information, contact Sarah Mickelson, NLIHC Senior Director of Public Policy, at smickelson@nlihc.org, or by calling 202-662-1530 ext. 228

DISASTER HOUSING RECOVERY COALITION, C/O NATIONAL LOW INCOME HOUSING COALITION
1000 Vermont Avenue, NW | Suite 500 | Washington, DC 20005 | 202-662-1530 | www.nlihc.org