

December 18, 2017

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Office of Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

To Governor Abbott:

On behalf of the vulnerable people who are still struggling after Hurricane Harvey, we, the undersigned 197 members of the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition, urge you to formally request robust federal housing resources and programs, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), as well as a special allocation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, national Housing Trust Fund, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, and New Markets Tax Credit as soon as possible.

History has shown us that DHAP is an effective and proven solution for individuals and families with the greatest needs – including low income seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and other at-risk populations – after devastating disasters. By providing temporary rental assistance and wrap-around case management, DHAP helps the lowest income families find permanent housing solutions, secure employment, and connect to public benefits as they rebuild their lives and get back on their feet.

Today, we need DHAP more than ever. After Hurricane Harvey, for example, extremely low income families are facing significant barriers to accessing FEMA's transitional shelter assistance. FEMA's transitional shelter program must be renewed every 14 days, creating great instability for those relying on it. Because it expires permanently six months after the initial disaster declaration, transitional shelter will create severe housing instability for many households. Moreover, hotels participating in FEMA's transitional shelter program often charge daily "resort" fees, require security deposits, and require that displaced households have credit cards – all of which are barriers for low income households that have already depleted any savings that they may have had and that are often unbanked or underbanked.

Without DHAP, displaced, low income families often have little choice but to move into uninhabitable or overcrowded homes, stay at shelters, or sleep in their cars or on the streets. According to the [Houston Chronicle](#), the [Texas Tribune](#), and other [local news sources](#), there are numerous accounts of individuals that were unable to access FEMA's transitional housing assistance who later experienced health issues after returning to mold-infested homes. Families with transitional housing vouchers have also been turned away from hotels and are living in unsanitary "tent cities" because they had no place to go.

Before HUD can stand up its DHAP program, however, FEMA must enter into an interagency agreement with HUD. While FEMA has the authority to do this without any further state action, the agency has been reticent to do so without a request from your office. **We urge you to request that FEMA enter into an interagency agreement with HUD immediately to allow HUD to stand up its DHAP program to serve eligible hurricane survivors in the state.**

Texas suffers from a severe shortage of affordable rental homes. Even before the storm, there were only 29 affordable and available homes for 100 families with extremely low incomes in Texas. Houston has even fewer affordable and available homes, with 18 homes for every 100

extremely low income households. The damaged caused by Hurricane Harvey means that there is even less supply and more demand.

For that reason, **we urge you to request other targeted federal housing and community development resources that can be used to rebuild our communities and ensure that the current affordable rental housing crisis across the state is not made worse.** This includes a special allocation of four specific housing programs: the National Housing Trust Fund, a new federal resource designed specifically to address the shortage of affordable rental housing for people with the greatest needs; Low Income Housing Tax Credits, along with broadly supported modifications to increase efficiency and expand the program's reach to the lowest income households; HOME Investment Partnerships program funding; and New Markets Tax Credits.

DHAP and these targeted resources are necessary to ensure that the housing recovery is complete, equitable, and speedy.

Sincerely,

Texas Organizations

Cambridge Development Group
Center for Public Policy Priorities
Community Hope Center
Easter Seal Houston
ECHOES
Family Restoration and Economic Empowerment
HAAM Ministries
House the Homeless, Inc.
Houston Center for Independent Living
Houston Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
Houston Coalition for the Homeless
Houston Local Initiatives Support Corp
I Am Pleased Development Center
Inclusive Communities
Invest in Texas
My Brother's Keeper Outreach Center
National Coalition for the Homeless (Portland)
New Hope Housing
Northwest Assistance Ministries
Organize Texas
San Antonio Local Initiatives Support Corp
Texas Appleseed
Texas Association of Community Development Corporations
Texas Homeless Network
Texas Housers
Texas Organizing Project
Texas Tenants' Union
True Casa Consulting

National Organizations

American Academy of Housing and Communities
American Baptist Home Mission Societies
Americans for Financial Reform
Ballad Spahr
Boston Capital
Catholic Charities USA
Center for American Progress
Center for Community Change
Center for Popular Democracy
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Leadership Council
Coalition on Human Needs
Corporation for Supportive Housing
Council on Affordable and Rural Housing
Davis and Harman
Du and Associates
Enterprise Community Partners
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America
Grounded Solutions Network
Habitat for Humanity International
Hawkins Delafield and Wood
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters - USA-JPIC
Housing Assistance Council
Housing Partnership Network
JPMorgan Chase
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
LOCUS
Low Income Investment Fund
Make Room
Money Management International
Mortgage Bankers Association
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Center for Healthy Housing
National Church Residences
National Coalition for Latinxs with Disabilities
National Coalition for the Homeless
National Community Development Association

National Consumer Law Center
 National Fair Housing Alliance
 National Health Care for the Homeless Council
 National Housing & Rehabilitation Association
 National Housing Law Project
 National Housing Resource Center
 National Housing Trust
 National Law Center for Homelessness and Poverty
 National League of Cities
 National Leased Housing Association
 National Low Income Housing Coalition
 National Network to End Domestic Violence
 National Resource Defense Council
 National Stabilization Trust
 National Urban League
 Natural Resources Defense Council
 NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
 Nixon Peabody
 Oxfam America
 Pathstone Corporation
 PolicyLink
 Poverty and Race Research Action Council
 Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc.
 Prosperity Now
 Right to the City
 Shriver Center
 Smart Growth America
 Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
 Technical Assistance Collaborative
 The Arc of the United States
 The Schiff Group
 The Workers Center
 UnidosUS
 United Way
 Voices for Civil Justice
 Volunteers of America, Inc.

Other State and Local Organizations

Fair Housing Center of Northern Alabama	Alabama
Fort Smith Community Development Department	Arkansas
California Rural Legal Aid	California
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California	California
Fair Housing Council of the San Fernando Valley	California

Fair Housing of Northern California	California
Greater Napa Valley Fair Housing Center	California
Housing California	California
Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board	California
Napa Fair Housing	California
Project Sentinel	California
PYATOK Architects	California
Rural Communities Housing Development Corporation	California
Western Center on Law and Poverty	California
Connecticut Housing Coalition	Connecticut
Adopt-A-Family of the Palm Beaches, Inc.	Florida
Affordable Homeownership Foundation, Inc.	Florida
Arcadia DeSoto Habitat for Humanity	Florida
Bay Area Legal Services	Florida
Big Bend Continuum of Care	Florida
Brevard Neighborhood Development Coalition	Florida
Catalyst Miami	Florida
Catholic Charities of Central Florida	Florida
Charlotte County Government	Florida
City of Deltona	Florida
City of Fort Myers	Florida
City of Pompano Beach	Florida
Community Hope Center	Florida
Councilwoman Teresa Watkins Brown, City of Fort Myers	Florida
De Hostos Senior Center, Inc.	Florida
disAbility Solutions	Florida
Fair Housing Center of the Greater Palm Beaches	Florida
Family Matters of Flagler	Florida
First Community Christian Pentecostal Church of God	Florida
Florida Alliance of Community Development Corporations	Florida
Florida Housing Coalition	Florida
Florida Legal Services	Florida
Florida Supportive Housing Coalition	Florida
Habitat for Humanity Florida	Florida
Habitat for Humanity of Lee and Hendry Counties	Florida
Housing Foundation of America, Inc.	Florida
Housing Leadership Council	Florida
Invictus Development	Florida
Jacksonville Local Initiatives Support Corp	Florida
Marion County Homeless Council	Florida
Meridian Behavioral Healthcare	Florida
Metro North Community Development Corporation	Florida
Miami Homes For All	Florida

Missio Dei Community	Florida
Mission House, Inc.	Florida
National Foundation for Debt Management	Florida
New Florida Majority	Florida
Organize Florida	Florida
Pinellas Homeless Leadership Board	Florida
Refuge Ministries of Tampa Bay/International	Florida
Solar and Energy Loan Fund (SELF)	Florida
Soukup Strategic Solutions	Florida
St. Francis House	Florida
St. Johns Housing Partnership, Inc.	Florida
Tarpon Springs Housing Authority	Florida
The Community Justice Project	Florida
The Hendricks Company	Florida
The Wright Foundation	Florida
Trailblazers Unlimited, Inc.	Florida
United Way of Broward County	Florida
United Way of Florida	Florida
Winter Haven Housing Authority	Florida
Youth and Family Alternatives, Inc.	Florida
Money Management International	Georgia
Fair Share Housing	New Jersey
Monarch Housing	New Jersey
Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity	New Jersey
Arbor Housing and Development	New York
Care for the Homeless	New York
Center for NYC Neighborhoods	New York
Community League of The Heights, Inc.	New York
Fordham Bedford Housing Corporation	New York
Morningside Housing Multicultural Tenant Organization	New York
New York City Housing Development Corporation	New York
New York Housing Conference	New York
Rebuilding Together NYC	New York
Rensselaer Housing Authority	New York
Tenants & Neighbors	New York
Allentown Housing Authority	Pennsylvania
Coalición de Coaliciones Pro Personas sin Hogar de PR, Inc.	Puerto Rico
MAVI-NEADA	Puerto Rico
The Fifteenth Avenue Baptist Community Development Corporation	Tennessee
US Virgin Islands Housing Authority	USVI
Family Promise	Utah
Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition	Vermont
Greenfield Institute	Washington

Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development

Wisconsin

CC: Congressional Delegation