



Texas Health and Human Services

# \$11.1 Million Grant Expands Harvey Crisis Counseling

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Charles Smith, Executive Commissioner

Contact:

Kelli Weldon, 512-424-6951

AUSTIN – The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has received an \$11.1 million Federal Emergency Management Agency grant for the Texans Recovering Together program, which provides free, confidential crisis counseling and referral services for survivors of Hurricane Harvey.

"Hurricane Harvey survivors may need to talk to someone who understands their situation and can help them work through trauma, uncertainty, stress and other common responses to a disaster," said Sonja Gaines, Associate Commissioner for HHSC Intellectual and Developmental Disability and Behavioral Health Services. "This grant will help more Texans get the help and local crisis counseling services they need."

The \$11.1 million FEMA Regular Services Program grant expands Harvey-related counseling services beyond the 18 Texas counties funded by a FEMA Immediate Services Program grant previously received by HHSC. The new grant will continue those existing services and is making the services available in 13 more counties.

Services provided as part of the RSP grant will now be available in a total of 31 counties. The services have been added in Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Matagorda, Newton, Orange, Tyler, Waller and Wharton counties. The grant also continues services to Aransas, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, DeWitt, Galveston, Goliad, Harris, Jackson, Kleberg, Lavaca, Liberty, Montgomery, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Walker and Victoria counties.

Through Texans Recovering Together, local providers are visiting homes and community settings to offer counseling, information, resources and stress education to help Harvey survivors cope with disaster-related trauma. In addition to empowering affected families and individuals to move forward, the grant aims to enable mental health resiliency among those who were left displaced, jobless, homeless, impoverished or faced with stress and other common responses to trauma.

The FEMA RSP grant was awarded to Texas through the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

# FACT SHEET

**WHAT'S HAPPENING?** The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is working with trained local providers and outreach workers under the Texans Recovering Together program and a \$11.1 million FEMA grant to provide Hurricane Harvey survivors free crisis counseling services.

**WHERE?** Counseling services are currently provided in the following 31 Texas counties: Aransas, Bee, Brazoria, Calhoun, Chambers, Colorado, DeWitt, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Karnes, Kleberg, Lavaca, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Patricio, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller and Wharton counties.

**WHAT KIND OF SERVICES?** Counseling services may include helping people learn and practice stress management and coping mechanisms, and connecting survivors to disaster-relief resources. Many Texans affected by Hurricane Harvey are accessing these free services, offered in home and community settings rather than in an office. Harvey crisis counselors have logged 53,900+ survivor encounters, exceeding the estimated number by more than 52 percent.

## STATISTICS

- 70 percent of all adults experience a traumatic event in their lifetime.
- 25 percent of all children will experience trauma before age 18.
- A total of 895,411 Texans had registered for other FEMA assistance as of Jan. 24, 2018.

**SIGNS** People experience events like Hurricane Harvey differently and may show signs of stress and other expected physical and emotional responses in different ways. Re-adjusting to new circumstances and beginning to rebuild lives after a disaster is a phase that may not set in until up to one year after the disaster, and can last three years.

- What to look for in adults: Eating or sleeping too much or too little, pulling away from people and things, having low or no energy, feeling helpless or hopeless, excessive drinking, smoking, or drug use (including prescription medications), worrying, feeling guilty without knowing why, thinking of hurting yourself or others, difficulty readjusting to home or work life.
- What to look for in teenagers and children: Withdrawing from playgroups and friends, competing for attention, being unwilling to leave home, being less interested in schoolwork, becoming more aggressive, more conflicts with peers or parents, or difficulty concentrating.

**HOW TO HELP:** Connect survivors to resources and people who can help. Encourage them to get help, listen to them, remind them they aren't alone, and reinforce their positive stress management and coping skills.

**HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SERVICES:** Harvey survivors can learn how to access local, free crisis counseling services and find other disaster behavioral health resources at [hhs.texas.gov/disaster-assistance](https://hhs.texas.gov/disaster-assistance). Residents in the 31 counties currently served through the program can dial 2-1-1 to be routed to a local provider.

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