

## Announcement

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### Announcements

### HHS in the News

## Crisis Counseling Program for Those Affected by Hurricane Harvey Ends Oct. 31

Texans impacted by Hurricane Harvey can still get free help for trauma they might be experiencing because of the disaster.

The HHS-administered Texans Recovering Together crisis counseling program runs through Oct. 31. It provides free, confidential counseling to people experiencing stress or trauma because of the effects of Hurricane Harvey.

The program, which is funded by approximately \$13.9 million in grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is coordinated out of seven education service centers and mental health facilities in 31 disaster-affected counties. Counseling outreach workers from these service centers meet people at their homes, churches, schools and community events.

The grant allowed hiring a total of 175 outreach workers. They received extensive training in Mental Health First Aid, stress management and suicide prevention, to mention a few, said Veronica Martinez, program manager for Texans Recovering Together.

"They are there to lend an ear to Harvey survivors," Martinez said. "The outreach workers have been creative in their approach and exceeded expectations in canvassing impacted communities. The whole idea is to empower survivors with psycho education and coping skills. The result can be to reduce the need for more costly clinical care, so it's available to those who need it most."

The program grant's population-to-service estimate for primary services — face-to-face encounters in individual and group settings — was 43,258 people. But because of the creative approach and diligence of outreach workers, 193,443 people, or 447 percent of the estimate, were served as of early October, Martinez said.

"Harvey forced us to reach people in different ways. This was a whole new area for the education service centers, but along with the more veteran local mental health authorities, they rose to the challenge," Martinez said. "This program is going to leave a legacy of resiliency in impacted communities and serve as a model for future disaster response."

To learn more, visit the [Disaster Assistance](#) page.



Trenice Mims, crisis counseling program team lead for the disaster response team at the Gulf Coast Center, oversees promotional materials for Texans Recovering Together at the yearly Houston/Galveston Extreme Weather Ready Expo on June 2.

### How to Get Help

- **Education Service Center, Region 2** — Serves Aransas, Bee, Kleberg, Nueces and San Patricio counties; 361-561-8400
- **Education Service Center, Region 3** — Serves Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Goliad, Jackson, Karnes, Lavaca, Matagorda, Refugio, Victoria and Wharton counties; 361-573-0731
- **Education Service Center, Region 4** — Serves Chambers, Fort Bend and Waller counties; 713-744-6365 and 713-462-7708
- **Education Service Center, Region 5** — Serves Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, Orange and Tyler counties; 409-951-1771 and 709-951-1700
- **Gulf Coast Center** — Serves Brazoria and Galveston counties; 866-729-3848 and 409-944-4436
- **Harris Center** — Serves Harris County; 844-279-6036
- **Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare** — Serves Liberty, Montgomery and Walker counties; 800-659-6994 and 936-521-6143