

OUTREACH PLAN

FOR

HCDD CDBG DR-2



Contents

Executive Summary3

Income Levels Affected4

Needs Assessment Target Areas5

The Planning Process6

Outreach Coordinator and Team7

Round 1 Applications.....9

Abandoned Properties9

Recordkeeping on Income and Targets.....9

Outreach Training..... 10

Marketing Materials 10

Executive Summary

This Outreach Plan (the Plan) provides a roadmap of how, where, and on whose behalf the City of Houston (the City) will spend Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Round Two program (the Program) funds. The Plan was developed with careful consideration of the City's commitments to ensuring Housing Choice, encouraging the creation of economically feasible, mixed income developments, and communities with diverse populations to the greatest extent possible pursuant to the best practices cited in the Planning Study (as described below) and the Program's guidelines, as amended, and working closely with state and local community advocacy groups.

The City is committed to ensuring Housing Choice in the implementation of the Program. To that end, the City conducted a comprehensive Needs Assessment to help direct the expenditure of Program funds. The Needs Assessment is attached to this document as Appendix A. The City will ensure access to the Homeowner Opportunity Program (HOP) for all applicants eligible for HOP as part of its commitment to providing Housing Choice.

The City is also committed to leveraging Program funds together with City incentives and other funding streams to encourage the creation of economically feasible, mixed income developments, and communities with diverse populations to the greatest extent possible pursuant to the best practices cited in the Planning Study (as described below) and the Program's guidelines, as amended. For Program purposes, these communities are referred to as Community Revitalization Areas (CRAs). To ensure Program funds are directed in conformity with this commitment, the City participated in an extensive planning process commissioned by GLO on the City's behalf. The purpose of the planning process was to synthesize national best practices and extensive economic and demographic analysis; careful consideration of existing City commitments and opportunities; and the results of the Needs Assessment to drive selection of CRAs and CRA Outreach Areas. The result of the planning process is the Planning Study. The Planning Study is attached to this document as Appendix B. CRA Outreach Areas are neighborhoods that, while not CRAs, are in need of single family homeowner assistance related to Hurricane Ike damage. CRAs and CRA Outreach Areas are described in Appendix C.

The City's commitment to working with state and local community advocacy groups and neighborhood organizations is a natural extension of the City's commitments related to ensuring Housing Choice and sparking comprehensive revitalization in CRAs and pursuing activity in CRA Outreach Areas. The City has diligently sought community input through both of these groups, and through direct community engagement in the development of both the Needs Assessment and the planning process.

The Plan provides a roadmap of how, where, and on whose behalf Program funds will be spent. The Plan was developed with careful consideration of the City's commitments to ensuring Housing Choice, encouraging the creation of economically feasible, mixed income developments, and communities with diverse populations to the greatest extent possible pursuant to the best practices cited in the Planning Study and the Program's guidelines, as amended, and being responsive to the needs of the community through activity in CRA Outreach Areas.

Income Levels Affected

Program guidelines require that funding subrecipients perform a Needs Assessment. One purpose of the Needs Assessment is to determine how program funding will be allocated to the intended service populations of very low (VLI), low (LI) and moderate (Mod) income residents. The overall distribution of program funding as determined by the Houston Needs Assessment is:

Percentage of Population by Income		
Income Levels	Total Population	Percentage
VLI (30% AMFI and below)	164,168	37%
LI (31% to 50% AMFI)	129,175	29%
Mod (51% to 80% AMFI)	148,463	34%

Based on the Houston Needs Assessment, the amount of funding anticipated to be allocated to each population income level for Round 2 is:

Population Bracket	Round 2 Bracket Anticipated
VLI (30% AMFI and below)	\$ 61,659,267
LI (31% to 50% AMFI)	\$ 37,566,328
Mod (51% to 80% AMFI)	\$ 52,989,970

In order to focus Houston’s program resources into creating revitalization areas that encourage the creation of economically feasible, mixed income developments, and communities with diverse populations to the greatest extent possible pursuant to the best practices cited in the Planning Study and the Program’s guidelines, as amended, GLO allowed Houston to engage in a Planning Study. The goal of the Planning Study was to provide best practices, market analysis, and community development strategies for encouraging the creation of economically feasible, mixed income developments, and communities with diverse populations to the greatest extent possible pursuant to the best practices cited in the Planning Study and the Program’s guidelines, as amended.

The Planning Study, through citing national best practices, recommends an alternative program funding income distribution that focuses a greater majority of funding into very low and low income households while encouraging Houston to provide additional incentives to attract market rate income residents to the revitalization areas. The alternative distribution is:

Program	VLI (30% AMFI and below)	LI (31% to 50% AMFI)	Mod (51% to 80% AMFI)
Rental Funding	15%	45%	40%
HHA Funding ¹	100%	0%	0%
HAP Funding ²	25%	60%	15%
Total Funding	36%	42%	22%

¹ HHA – Subsidized rental funding through Houston Housing Authority

² HAP – Homeowner Assistance Program (includes Single Family home repair and Homeowner Opportunity Program)

The Planning Study includes further breakdowns by program for each Income Target group that relies on the needs of the entities running the program and the need for long term viability. The Planning Study also suggests that the Income Target groups should remain flexible and be reviewed regularly to determine whether the chosen income mix is meeting the goals of the programs.

In accordance with the terms and conditions of (i) the Conciliation Agreement dated May 21, 2010, by and among the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service, Texas Appleseed, and the State of Texas by and through the Texas Department of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Texas Department of Rural Affairs and (ii) the Round 2 Housing Guidelines, the City of Houston altered some of the levels of funding provided for each Income Target Group by allocating an amount of funds to serve people earning more than 80% of AMFI after consultation with community advocates. The table bellows show the proposed level of funding provided for each Income Target Group.

	VLI (30% AMFI and below)	LI (31% to 50% AMFI)	Mod (51% to 80% AMFI)	Market Rate
Rental Funding	15%	25%	40%	20%
HHA Funding	100%	0%	0%	0%
HAP Funding	25%	50%	25%	0%
Total Funding	36%	30%	26%	8%

The City of Houston still accepts the Planning Study’s recommendation that the Income Target Groups should remain flexible and undergo regular review for compliance purposes.

In accordance with the Planning Study commissioned by GLO, Houston will target 25% of single family homeowner (HAP) funding towards very low income applicants; 50% of single family homeowner funding towards low income applicants; and 25% of single family homeowner funds towards moderate income applicants.

Needs Assessment Target Areas

The City’s Needs Assessment identified nine target areas (collectively, the Target Areas) by overlaying data related to concentrations of racial and ethnic minorities of 65% or greater, concentrations of poverty of 35% or greater, and FEMA High Risk areas augmented with demonstrated flood areas. The FEMA High Risk areas augmented with demonstrated flood areas are areas that experienced more than two calls for flooding to 3-1-1 services over the past five years and were visibly demonstrated to have experienced flooding by inspection teams less than two months after Hurricane Ike’s landfall. The Target Areas identified in the Needs Assessment include:

- ❖ Acres Home
- ❖ Denver Harbor/Port Houston
- ❖ Greater Fifth Ward
- ❖ Independence Heights
- ❖ Magnolia Park
- ❖ Northside Village

- ❖ Old Spanish Trail/South Union
- ❖ South Park
- ❖ Sunnyside

The Planning Process

The City's Planning Study team consisted of:

- ❖ HORNE, LLP
- ❖ SWA Group
- ❖ Enterprise Community Partners
- ❖ Perry Rose
- ❖ Community Development Strategies
- ❖ Roberta F. Burroughs & Associates

The planning team built on the City's prior efforts, such as the Needs Assessment. They reviewed national best practices relative to the revitalization of inner-city neighborhoods, interviewed stakeholders, analyzed economic and demographic data from Needs Assessment target areas, and reviewed housing development proposals submitted to the City.

CRA's and CRA Outreach Areas

At the conclusion of the planning process, the planning team produced the Planning Study (Appendix B), which outlines how the City can focus its Program funds within CRA's and CRA Outreach Areas identified below. CRA's were chosen by the City in consultation with state and local community advocacy groups such as the Texas Low Income Housing Information Service, Texas Appleseed, and the Texas Organizing Project. These are the areas in which the City will conduct the majority of its outreach program.

- ❖ Fifth Ward
- ❖ Northside Village
- ❖ Old Spanish Trail/Griggs/MLK

Furthermore, the City has identified CRA Outreach Areas, neighborhoods that, while not CRA's, are in need of single family homeowner assistance related to Hurricane Ike damage. These neighborhoods were identified in the public outreach process as outlined in the City's Needs Assessment (Appendix A).

- ❖ Acres Homes
- ❖ Independence Heights
- ❖ Sunnyside
- ❖ Fifth Ward
- ❖ Northside Village
- ❖ Old Spanish Trail/Griggs/MLK

Funds Retained for Expenditure in Target Areas Not Designated CRAs

The City will retain 30% of HAP funds for use in Target Areas identified in the Needs Assessment that were not designated CRAs in the Planning process. This source of funds will be used to address outstanding storm damage needs within Houston that may not fall within the boundaries of the CRAs. Priority may be given to those CRA Outreach Area(s) that receive either no funding or insubstantial funding from the CDBG DR-2 Rental Program.

Outreach Coordinator and Team

The Outreach program (including but not limited to door to door outreach activities, outreach data management, reporting, community meetings, targeted mailings, telephone contacts, etc.) will be coordinated by HORNE, LLP in conjunction with City personnel. The specific responsibilities are provided in Appendix D.

Community Outreach Methodology

The Outreach program will be community based, capitalizing on the City's passion for community engagement; the results of the Planning process; and near-exhaustive damage data collected shortly after Hurricane Ike.

Community Outreach Meetings

The City will work with community organizations to publicize, organize, and then host Community Outreach Meetings in each of the CRAs and CRA Outreach Areas. The purpose of the meetings will be to share with homeowners in the CRAs and CRA Outreach Areas the opportunities afforded by the Program. To initiate this community engagement process, the City will send an informational mailer (see Appendix E) to the residents of each CRA and CRA outreach area identified on the master list of disaster-affected homes in each target area created with the immediate post-storm damage data collected by LJA Engineering (the "Storm Damage Master List"). Invitational mailers will be limited to 200 per meeting in order to keep the meetings as informative as possible for the participants and to avoid any capacity issues during intake processing. The purpose of the mailer will be to inform the recipient of the time and location of the community meeting to be held in their area, as well as to describe the purpose of the meeting and the function of the program in broad terms.

At each meeting, Program personnel will explain the Program and the eligibility requirements of the Program. Each meeting attendee will then have the opportunity to work with Program personnel to fill out an online outreach form at the time of the meeting. Meetings will last as long as it takes for each attendee who wants to, to fill out an outreach form.

At the conclusion of each Community Outreach Meeting, outreach forms will be evaluated for basic program eligibility based on (1) whether or not the potential applicant is the owner of the property at issue; (2) the applicant's income as stated on the outreach form; and (3) whether or not the property at issue is the potential applicant's primary residence. This determination will be based solely on what is self-reported by each potential applicant on the outreach form. Outreach forms will then be compared to the Storm Damage Master List. Outreach forms from properties that are in one of the CRAs or CRA Outreach Areas will be directed to a Program Counselor who will call the applicant to schedule a Personal Consultation. Outreach forms from properties that are not in one of the CRAs or CRA Outreach Areas will be placed on hold pending the results of the targeted outreach activities in the primary, secondary and tertiary outreach areas, and a letter explaining the status of the application will be sent to the applicant. Outreach forms that do not meet basic program criteria will also be

placed on hold pending results of the targeted outreach activities, and a letter explaining the status of the application will be sent to the applicant. Outreach forms will only reach inactive status after the number of applications for the program has reached saturation. The Schedule of Community Outreach Meetings, which includes data regarding the number of completed outreach forms from each meeting, is at Appendix F.

Properties for which damage was verified according to the Storm Damage Master List, but for which an outreach form was not obtained at a community outreach meeting, will be sent a follow up mail out (Appendix G). The mail out provides a contact phone number for the City's DR2 call center. The call center will work with potential applicants to complete an outreach form over the phone. Once an applicant has completed an outreach form over the phone, the outreach form will be processed via the same means and priority criteria as those that are obtained from community outreach meetings.

Door-to-Door Outreach as Needed

Determination of Need

At the conclusion of all Community Outreach Meetings, Program personnel will examine the data from the meetings to determine whether the meetings have yielded sufficient potential applicants to meet the Program's goals. The City estimates that approximately 400 homeowners will be assisted with the available funds. From observation of dropout rates in other, similar programs, the City has determined that to reach 400 eligible applicants, it will need to perform personal consultations with approximately 800 potential applicants. If the outreach meetings have not yielded sufficient potential applicants to be able to perform 800 personal consultations, the City will determine whether door-to-door outreach would be helpful in reaching more potential applicants.

Door-to-Door Outreach Methodology

Creating a list of potential homeowners to visit is a filtering process. As the CRAs define project areas, they also create a grouping opportunity for door-to-door outreach addresses. GIS allows the selection of all homeowners within a defined area to be identified for potential door-to-door outreach. The incorporation of GIS into the Outreach program allows residents to be identified as their homes are located inside the defined CRAs and Target Areas. As Hurricane Ike passed through the Houston area in September of 2008, a 2008 parcel data set was acquired from Harris County Appraisal District (HCAD). This parcel dataset contains the addresses and property owners at time of the event. This information is critical in guiding the Outreach efforts, and has been incorporated into the City's Needs Assessment and Planning Study in addition to the Outreach effort.

Outreach Form

An outreach form (Appendix H) will be used to collect information from all potential applicants to initiate the intake process. The purpose of the community outreach meeting method of outreach is to gather data to assure that sufficient outreach has been conducted to satisfy the requirements of the project guidelines. Outreach is not used to determine eligibility. The questions asked during outreach meet the program requirements as follows:

- Ownership and occupancy questions are present to ensure that the City is in conversation with potential applicants who are authorized to participate in relation to a given property. Without these questions, the fall-out rate would likely increase.
- Estimated income and household size questions are present to ensure that the City can initiate intake for the percentages of very low, low, and moderate income households as required by the income allocations included in this document.
- Questions related to elderly and disabled information are present to ensure that the City is appropriately prioritizing its contact list to serve elderly and disabled participants first as required by program guidelines.

It is important to note that the Outreach team is simply gathering this information and submitting to the City regardless of the responses. Eligibility determination will be made once the applicant has attended a face-to-face consultation with a City eligibility counselor, completed an application, and submitted required documentation for the City to process.

Round 1 Applications

In Round 1, the City processed applications on a first come, first serve basis. The City received more applications for its Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Round One program (Round 1) than it was able to serve. Applicants who were not served were put on a waiting list in the hopes of being contacted when the CDBG-DR Round 2 Program started. The City was able to serve 242 applicants with Round 1 funds and have an estimated 1,500 persons on the waiting list for Round 2.

Through GIS mapping, the City will review the balance of the Round 1 waiting list to determine whether any applicants not yet served are located in the Target Areas. Round 1 waiting list members located within Target Areas may be transferred to the Program, and evaluated with applications gathered through the community outreach meeting campaign. Other Round 1 waiting list members may be served through alternative City programs.

Abandoned Properties

The City's Outreach program will include a reasonable effort to address empty lots and abandoned structures. The Program will keep a log noting the targeted properties from which informational mailers are returned as undeliverable. That log will provide the City with a list of potentially abandoned properties. The City will attempt to identify the owners of empty lots and abandoned structures and determine whether the lots are empty or structures were abandoned due to damage to structures from Hurricane Ike. Program intake and eligibility staff will contact the owners of such properties to determine whether they are eligible for the Program. If such owners seem to be eligible for the Program, their applications will be processed with applications gathered through the Community Outreach Meeting campaign.

Recordkeeping on Income and Targets

LJA will provide the City a summary of outreach activities on a daily basis throughout the Outreach program. The City will analyze that data and provide guidance to LJA on conducting the balance of the Outreach program.

The City will track the income of all Program applicants to ensure that the Program meets the goals of the Conciliation Agreement and the Needs Assessment to provide services only to those applicants with incomes under 80% of Area Median Family Income (AMFI).

Outreach Training

On behalf of HCDD, Horne will provide outreach training to Community Outreach teams. The training will include:

1. Purpose and objectives of Round 2
2. Program options
3. Eligibility Criteria for the Program
4. Targeted outreach
5. How targeted areas were identified
6. Timeline for targeted outreach

Outreach training will include the methodology for determining the targeted areas and the approximate number of outreach forms sought from each area.

Horne, on behalf of HCDD, will also provide scripts, role play scenarios and demonstrate a hands-on approach for using all outreach materials and equipment. The outreach teams will be provided samples of correctly completed forms.

Appendix I provides samples of the outreach training material.

Marketing Materials

HCDD has developed marketing materials to be used in conducting Community Outreach Meetings. The materials explain the Program, including the HOP program; the program's focus on CRAs; and provide information about how the Program will impact the neighborhood. Appendix J provides samples of marketing material.

Intake

HCDD will review information from the outreach forms collected from the outreach team for completeness. HCDD will contact and schedule a face-to-face consultation with potential applicants to reach the goal of 400 completed, eligible applications.