

HOUSTON HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Recovery from natural disasters slower in some areas and some populations

ISSUE 14
August 2019

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey affected 13 million people from Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky. It caused damage to 204,000 homes, of which 75% were outside the 100-year flood plain. Experts predict hurricanes will continue to increase in intensity.

According to the Health of Houston Survey 2018, 30% of the people who evacuated during Harvey had not returned to their own homes at nine months after the storm. Frequent natural disasters resulting in large-scale flooding has affected homes and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Physical and psychological damage (such as stress, anxiety and depression), loss of housing, loss of income, loss of transportation and loss of family routine and stability are some of the ways people are affected after a natural disaster resulting in flooding.



Research shows that people of color, low income families and certain geographic areas are the slowest to recover from an extreme weather event such as Harvey. Results from the Health of Houston 2018 survey bear this out (Figure 1).

Like other urban areas, housing shortage has been a critical need in Houston for many decades. Housing remains the most critical unmet need in those affected by Harvey. According to the Health of Houston Survey 2018, **1 in 10 people** with damage were still in temporary housing, **300 families** living in FEMA trailers and many living in unsafe housing.

Figure 1: Percent people reporting that "life is still very disrupted" by Poverty Level

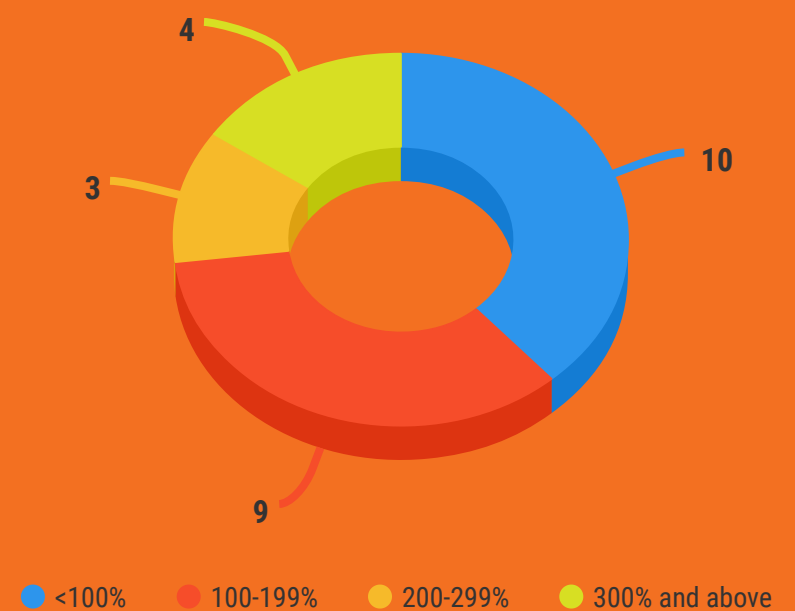


Figure 1 Source: <https://sph.uth.edu/research/centers/ihp/health-of-houston-survey-2010/>