



CITY OF HOUSTON

Office of the Mayor

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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Pamela H. Patenaude
Deputy Secretary
US Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Ms. Patenaude:

I am writing to request that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provide the Houston Housing and Community Development Department (HCDD) comprehensive technical assistance (TA) under the OneCPD/Community Compass Technical Assistance Program to assist Houston in addressing uniquely challenging circumstances resulting from Hurricane Harvey. No established model for recovery exists to address the scale of damage caused by Harvey and the repeated cycle of storms and flooding Houston has experienced over the last several years. The City requests comprehensive TA to design and implement a recovery and resiliency strategy that aligns and leverages available resources to address the unmet needs of its residents and strengthen its communities.

As you may know, Houston HCDD, with HUD CPD technical assistance, has successfully completed a multi-year effort to strengthen its capacity and come into compliance with the requirements of HUD programs. Although Houston HCDD once had numerous open monitoring findings, HCDD now has no open findings and has received two consecutive "clean reports" from HUD monitoring visits. A successful HUD TA engagement in 2012-2014 was an essential catalyst for this dramatic improvement in Houston's performance.

While I am confident that Houston HCDD can implement its annual block grant allocations, I recognize that Hurricane Harvey presents unprecedented challenges. Houston is experiencing significant changes in community needs, real estate market dynamics, and capital absorption capacity as a result of the storm. Houston HCDD also recognizes that the programs and systems that are in place to deploy annual block grant allocations must be redesigned and enhanced in preparation for a significant influx of disaster recovery funding.

Houston is committed to fair and equal access to quality housing for all Houstonians. Houston HCDD recognizes that the future deployment of disaster recovery funding represents an important opportunity to affirmatively further fair housing.

Managing a successful recovery from Harvey is an opportunity to tackle longstanding housing challenges and build a stronger, more resilient city that is prepared for the future. This effort will require designing comprehensive strategies in areas such as affordable housing and homelessness, while also meeting the requirements of multiple HUD programs. Houston HCDD will need an assessment of all current annual formula grant programs within the context of disaster recovery funding in order to deliver scaled, integrated, innovative and market relevant solutions that meet the scope of the city's needs after Harvey. Such an assessment will require program modifications at least within the Consolidated Plan programs, and likely across many of the city's HUD programs. The comprehensive package of technical assistance needed will require engaging strong HUD-approved TA providers who can work together across program areas and form an integrated team. Therefore, we request that you authorize consultants from multiple program areas and funding sources.

The City of Houston requests that HUD approve TA for the following specific purposes:

Increase Houston HCDD's capacity to meet the scale of the City's disaster response

- ***Market assessment*** – Provide Houston HCDD with data and analysis to understand changes in community needs, real estate market dynamics, and capital absorption capacity.
- ***Program design*** – Assist Houston HCDD to redesign existing programs in anticipation of a significant increase in funding and production, and design new programs to respond to evolving community needs and market opportunities.
- ***Systems and business process analysis*** – In anticipation of a significant increase in funding and program production, provide Houston HCDD with analysis of the implications for existing systems and business processes and recommendations for improvement and building organizational capacity.

Strategic Planning

- ***Coordination of Five Year Consolidated Plan and disaster recovery planning*** – Support Houston HCDD to align its strategies and programs across all existing HUD planning documents to leverage and complement the Department's disaster recovery plans.
- ***Strengthen public participation*** – Support Houston HCDD to develop coordinated public participation plans for all HUD funded programs and expand meaningful participation by the public.
- ***Fair housing and equitable neighborhood development considerations*** – Support the City of Houston, consistent with recent HUD guidance, to analyze opportunities to affirmatively further fair housing – including innovative place-based neighborhood development and mobility opportunities – and to prepare for the future development of an Assessment of Fair Housing.

Based on their success in working with HCDD and the State of Texas, Houston specifically requests that Enterprise Community Partners and National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB) provide this TA. These HUD-approved TA providers have visited Houston

together and are willing and uniquely positioned to assist the City. Both of these providers have been awarded "Departmental TA" and "Fair Housing TA" allocations.

Enterprise led the important TA engagement with Houston HCDD in 2012-2014, which substantively strengthened the department. Enterprise has also provided similar strategic planning TA to other disaster-affected communities, including the State of New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy, the State of Colorado after flooding in 2013, and the City of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

NALCAB is headquartered nearby in San Antonio and has a strong understanding of the regional market. HUD has assigned NALCAB to provide TA to numerous jurisdictions in Texas, including providing innovative TA to the City of San Antonio in 2014-2015. NALCAB's proximity may offer an opportunity for cost efficiency, and NALCAB also brings unique credibility to addressing fair housing matters, especially in markets with large minority populations.

It is critical that this TA be mobilized in advance of the deployment of disaster recovery funding. Given the urgency of the need, I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss this request on the phone with you and your team in the coming week. A member of my staff will follow up to set a time.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to grow the partnership between the City of Houston and HUD in order to ensure a successful recovery effort.

Respectfully submitted,



Sylvester Turner
Mayor
City of Houston