



# CITY OF HOUSTON

**Sylvester Turner**

Mayor

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November 30, 2017

Alex Amparo, Assistant Administrator, Recovery Directorate  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Federal Center Plaza  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Amparo:

We are requesting that FEMA establish Alternative Procedures for Volunteer Hours whereby subgrantees like the City of Houston (City) can apply eligible volunteer hours as a local cost share offset for permanent work for categories C through G of FEMA Public Assistance (PA) funds.

The PA Program provides federal funding for eligible expenses by units of government responding to and recovering from disasters. As part of this program under Hurricane Harvey (DR-4332-TX) the federal participation level for reimbursing expenses is 90% leaving 10% as a “local cost share” for the City. Under the current system, there are several methods by which local governments can reduce or eliminate the local cost share component including submitting volunteer hours to offset the cost of “emergency work” for activities such as debris removal and emergency protective measures under Category A and B. To date, the City has leveraged that program by submitting volunteer hours associated with activities such as the sheltering operation held at the George R. Brown Convention Center (GRB) of over 500,000 hours applied against the local cost share for emergency work.

We request that FEMA work with the City to develop a process for the City to receive credit for volunteer hours toward the local match for Categories C through G of the PA program. As our recovery efforts ramp up, we are developing a citywide Harvey Volunteer program which will be of unprecedented scale. These volunteer efforts will be primarily focused on community work, housing, greenway/flood-mitigation and other activities appropriately matched with skills available. The City is utilizing a GoogleDoc based program available online at [www.ReportYourHours.org](http://www.ReportYourHours.org). This has proven to be an effective system for capturing the significant number of volunteer hours. We recognize the importance of due diligence and validation of qualified volunteer hours and would like to work closely with you on assuring the integrity and accuracy of the process.

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We believe the FEMA and the City have a mutual goal of incorporating (and emphasizing) the dramatic impact volunteerism can have in all phases of the recovery. Together we can make this a national model for incorporating volunteers into disaster recovery that can be replicated around the nation and abroad.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Odum', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Marvin Odum  
Chief Recovery Officer