

## **JFNA'S HURRICANE HARVEY EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

### ***Mobilizing experienced senior professionals and harnessing an extensive network of relief providers***

Hurricane Harvey — one of the most devastating hurricanes on record in U.S. history — delivered its worst blows to Houston's Jewish community. In the immediate aftermath the humanitarian response from near and far has been awe-inspiring, but it will take years for this community to fully recover. An estimated 2,000 Jewish homes were flooded and 7 major institutional facilities across the community sustained serious, and in some cases catastrophic damage. The rehabilitation costs for the Jewish community alone are estimated to exceed \$30 million.

JFNA's ability to mobilize and engage experienced senior professionals, several with experience from Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, and to leverage Federations' extensive network of local and international partners has been critical. Working together, The Jewish Federations of North America and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston have already raised \$14M.

### **JFNA was Ready Before the Hurricane Hit**

Once the threats to Texas became apparent, JFNA reached out to every Federation and Network community in the path of the hurricane to help them prepare. JFNA also:

- Established lines of communication
- Set up a mailbox to streamline gift entry, acknowledgments and reporting
- Created two web-based donation pages—for local and global use

During the hurricane JFNA monitored the impact on the affected communities.

### **JFNA Fortified Houston Leadership with Experienced Staff**

Within 24 hours of the end of the hurricane JFNA sent senior professional teams<sup>1</sup> to Houston to augment and support local staff and leadership. They helped streamline decision-making and ensured finance and other administrative processes were in place. This was particularly crucial as five of the Federation's own staff experienced flooding in their own homes; only one has been able to return to work as yet.

The JFNA teams assisted with the following:

- Mapping the extent of the damage and identified the most urgent needs
- Providing professional leadership and support for national and local lay and professional emergency committees; supporting the work of Houston's lay and professional leadership as they mobilized their community
- Assisting Houston's leadership in engaging local agencies and synagogues to resume and strengthen their operations
- Supporting development and coordination of volunteer efforts
- Responding to the specific needs of the Beaumont/Port Arthur and Galveston communities

## **JFNA Mobilized Quickly to Raise and Disperse Funds**

For displaced and affected families who urgently needed cash grants and loans for temporary housing, food, and cleaning supplies and other other financial hardships, JFNA was there.

- 1) Galvanized the national Federation system to raise emergency funds; arranged for cash to be available immediately (\$500K transferred 9/1/17). Between the JFNA Emergency Committee and Houston Flood Committee more than \$2M has already been deployed.
- 2) Helped with grant writing and outreach to national foundations (securing \$2.725M to Houston Federation and JFNA)
- 3) Liaised to support the Government of Israel contribution (\$1M)

## **JFNA Established the Infrastructure for Ongoing Administrative Support**

To ensure an efficient humanitarian response as well as streamlined administrative functions for as long as they are needed, JFNA convened aid workers and established IT and finance protocols.

- Convened JVOAD (Jewish Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters)—engaging, mobilizing and coordinating responses from national partners; such as Jewish Human Services Association, Jewish Community Centers Association, and Prizmah
- Assisted the Federation to put additional staffing in place to manage the long-term response to the hurricane
- Built a tracking system to monitor funding between local and national sources
- Engaged Blackbaud on a recalibration of the Federation and JFS conversion to Financial Edge
- Created marketing messaging and collateral (written material, video, etc...)

## **In for the Long Haul**

JFNA continues to work on a daily basis to assist the Federation in assessing needs, to develop strategies and implementation plans, to raise funds and to network to access resources for the community. The recovery for Houston will be a 2-3 year process, and JFNA will be there with the community at every step.

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<sup>i</sup> TEAM ONE: William Daroff, Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Director of the Washington Office, JFNA; Rabbi Deborah Joselow, Chief Program Officer, UJA Federation of New York; Becky Sobelman-Stern, Executive Vice President, Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, Aug. 31 – Sept. 4)

TEAM TWO: Mark Gurvis, Executive Vice President, JFNA; Elise Slobodin, Director of Strategy and Operations, Caring Commission, UJA Federation of New York; Cheryl Blawusch, Manager, CRM Support, JFNA; and Rachel Levy and Lexie Tuchman, Regional Directors for the Network of Independent Communities, JFNA (Sept. 4 - 8)

TEAM THREE: Joy Goldstein, Associate Vice President for Research and Planning, JFNA; Andi Milens, Director of Engagement and Leadership Development, Jewish Federation of Kansas City (Sept. 10-15)