

The Storm Report

An After-Action Analysis of a
Collaborative Community Response to
Winter Storm Uri

September, 2022 DRAFT

Acknowledgements

Please refer to “the Humans Behind the Effort” for a more complete picture of those who contributed. Still, several contributing groups and people stand out as important to acknowledge. First, none of this would have been possible without the existence of the CRT multi-racial collaborative space. Members of CRT have been meeting twice weekly since March of 2020, and the lessons learned in that space have developed how the organization moves and the lived experiences we draw on for our work. Whether they participated in this initiative or not, these voices are echoed here. Members of the Austin Area Urban League first brought the issue of the impact of the freeze on unhoused community members to the CRT collaborative call. They remained active as a key strategic partner, primary funding source, and recovery coordination entity, with leadership and strategic contribution from Yasmine Smith. No less important was the efforts of Austin Mutual Aid (AMA). CRT’s collaborative efforts coincided with, and would have been nonexistent without AMA, which activated simultaneously, and whose volunteers represented many of the drivers dispatched through CRT. AMA directly provided funding for many of the hotels, and CRT provided a good portion of the rest. Coordination with AMA also made it possible for CRT to coordinate hot food service to all hotels during the freeze, as well as working with Austin Public Health to provide COVID testing on site (through then Texas Appleseed’s Chris Harris.) We Can Now also stood out as a significant and fearless driver pool. And Whitley Delgado’s shared lived experience guided the focus of our initial activities.

While CRT’s collaborative space was facilitated by CRT co-founders Rubén Cantú and Janis Bookout, leadership arose quickly to cover various areas of work. Many of these individuals were also instrumental in the development and review of this document. While the majority of this document was written by Janis Bookout, its content and insights are informed by everyone listed below, along with the members who regularly have participated in CRT since March, 2020.

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Finally, there are also many, many groups operating outside of the CRT collaborative space that did incredible work to support the communities they serve. While we do not have insight into who all of these groups are and what they did, their efforts should be underscored as vital to the success of community response.

Disclaimer

The group of authors and reviewers that have drafted this document have done our best to capture accurately the activities surrounding the collaborative community effort that took place within CRT’s virtual and physical collaborative spaces. This is not intended to be a comprehensive picture of all community activity. Even with groups that joined the collaboration, there were thousands of activities CRT itself had no visibility into. So this is an incomplete picture that merely points to the gaps in disaster response, and the opportunities to better support community groups while improving outcomes and building a better network of local resources. CRT does not see itself as an umbrella for all community collaboration, and does not want to be seen that way, as it would only serve to forward the tokenization of some groups at the expense of others. There are plenty of organizations and groups that do not participate with CRT that should never be excluded from recovery funds and disaster resources, given the unique populations they serve and the trusted relationships they have with their constituencies. If you see any inaccuracies, or feel your work should be included in this document, please let us know by completing this form.

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Executive Summary

Winter Storm Uri, Texas' February 2021 ice storm, revealed a lack of preparedness in Travis County. In the days leading up to and throughout the storm, Community Resilience Trust (CRT) became a pop-up virtual command center for collaborating groups and a community conduit to several city departments. The purpose of this report is to 1) tell the story of our collective work; 2) share key findings about observed systemic failure and inequities; 3) identify root causes for those failures; 4) make recommendations for future response and systemic change.

The CRT collective was formed on March 14, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The organization's original purpose was to collectively offset the inequities amplified by disasters. CRT's focus was providing a community-driven, holistic and strategic approach to the pandemic in the short term, and advancing systemic change and community resilience in the long term. After less than a year in operation, by February CRT's collective approach had already had an enormous impact on citywide communications, equity in COVID testing, vaccine distribution, and a safe and just return to school.

CRT's theory of change puts community-led systemic change at the center of disaster response. As previous disasters have shown many times over, institutions are not built with the flexibility, rapid response communications structures, and equitable plans sufficient to adequately respond to community needs during disasters. Given the pre existing inequities in marginalized and systemically oppressed communities (such as lack of access to transportation, food, and digital communications, along with poor physical infrastructure, and inequitable land development), not only do vulnerable communities usually bear the brunt of the disaster itself but they are also left out of response services through processes that fail to recognize or account for existing barriers to access. This, in concert with the increasing impacts of climate change, results in the persistent and reliable failure of the institutional response to increasingly severe disasters. It is in this gap that much-needed long-term systemic change can occur.

Keys to systemic change are located in the expertise and relationships among community leaders, groups, and organizations. During disasters, community organizations and groups reliably rise to the challenge of filling the gap between community need and institutional response. Most often, however, this is done in silos, with organizations addressing the immediate needs of their direct constituencies. Without funding or institutional support, most groups do their best with very little. While news reports often laud the heroism of such organizations, in reality, many of these groups deplete their own resources in helping their neighbors and are left making up the difference with no significant support. While there is a model for including the community in disaster response through the VOAD system (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters), to date the vast majority of community groups and organizers serving East Austin have not been included in that system, and are also typically underfunded to begin with.

These dynamics create a situation that not only fails to prioritize historically marginalized communities, despite the fact that preexisting inequities put them at significantly disproportionate levels of harm. These communities include communities of color, the unhoused, differently-abled, the elderly, those lacking digital access and transportation access, mobile home communities, institutionalized communities such as nursing homes and prisons, the undocumented and non-citizens, non-English

speakers, low income communities, and people living in multi-family dwellings where landlords are not responsive or worse.

In communities of color and low-income communities, disasters tend to add harm on top of harm, bringing some communities to the breaking point, while others may recover quickly. The communities of Austin are no exception. During Storm Uri, in wealthier West Austin communities, fewer pipes broke, repairs happened more quickly, and people were closer to the city's water distribution centers.

Recent studies have shown that Natural disasters widen the racial wealth gap.

According to one study¹ of 3,500 families, in areas with at least \$10 billion in damages, white households gained an average of \$126,000 in wealth following disaster recovery efforts, while Black, Latino and Asian families saw a decrease in wealth of \$10,000 to \$29,000. As explained by Ayana Byrd in Colorlines: "The study pinpointed several reasons behind this wealth inequality. One is that Whites tend to live in areas that have higher levels of reinvestment via infrastructure projects after natural disasters. Second, areas that receive more financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have a greater increase in wealth inequality."²

On top of this, FEMA buyouts are also creating inequities. Often priced too low, buyouts can leave people without the ability to relocate nearby, disrupting community ties and in some cases, work opportunities.³ Quoting an excellent summary article from the New York Times, "Buyouts can leave people worse off, especially lower-income families who may not have enough money to purchase a home in a safer location. Buyouts can also hurt a community by hollowing it out, making it less attractive while also shrinking the tax base."⁴

The severity of weather-related disasters, as well as their inequitable impacts, will get worse, not better. According to Hayhoe's 2014 report on the future of climate change in Central Texas, extreme storms will become [increasingly prevalent](#).

But what does this look like in Central Texas, and what does this mean for our disaster management?

Both FEMA and CDC have provided recent guidance on how to operationalize equity during disasters. But if we are to incorporate this guidance, our plans need an equity overhaul led by a wide spectrum of community representatives.

This is why Community Resilience Trust exists, and it is why we mobilized on February 13, opening a collaborative space for many organizations and city staff to work together to serve these communities--housing and feeding hundreds of unhoused residents, delivering thousands of gallons of water and thousands of hot meals. This document serves not only to document our work, but to fully explore the opportunity for improvement in our community response to disasters.

¹ <https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/460222>

² <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/study-after-natural-disasters-whites-accumulate-wealth-while-people-color-lose-it>

³ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2378023120905439>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/07/climate/FEMA-race-climate.html>

An evaluation of city and county emergency response plans and our mitigation plans shows that our plans take an aggregated and generic approach to emergency response, in most cases referencing only the elderly and children when referring to vulnerable populations. This report does not focus on the job performed by various city or county departments. Instead, this report focuses on deeper issues related to the design of the system itself. Our disaster management and mitigation plans fail to address the disparities impacting people in different geographic and socioeconomic situations and how those disparities impact people during disasters.

Winter Storm Uri: Timeline at a Glance

- November 5 - ERCOT meteorologist warns Market Participants winter likely to bring [record lows](#).
- February 3 - ERCOT meteorologist warns Market Participants of the coldest weather of the year.
- February 8 - At the ERCOT board meeting, ERCOT director spends [less than a minute](#) talking about the issue. ERCOT Board Member and General Manager of Austin Energy later shares her [frustration](#) that the director did not do more to prepare.
- February 11 - The National Weather Service indicates a growing cold weather system and issues a [warning that includes Williamson County](#). The City of Austin announces closing Monday for President's Day. Austin Energy posts a notice that [outages](#) might occur during the storm. ERCOT releases a [statement](#) predicting record electricity usage. Members of Austin Area Urban League attend a CRT meeting and express concern about the unhoused community in the coming storm.
- February 12 - County delays opening until noon due to weather. The National Weather Service mentions the possibility of [record lows in Texas](#). CRT has an internal emergency meeting and decides to act.
- February 13 - (Low of 28) The National Weather Service issues a [winter storm warning](#) for Travis County. CRT hosts a public emergency meeting & opens its virtual collaborative space. ([See Appendix 1](#))
- February 14 - (Low of 14) Judge Andy Brown declares a disaster and addresses price gouging. CRT begins working on dispatch & hotel booking coordination of unhoused neighbors in collaborative effort with several groups.
- Feb 15 - (Low of 10) CRT continues supporting unhoused neighbors, and begins hot meal delivery twice a day. Statewide blackouts begin in the very early morning, Feb 15. In Austin, they are not rolling in most locations, but stay off. We would later find out that at 1:55 AM, Texas was [4 minutes and 37 seconds](#) away from a total system failure.
- Feb 16 - (Low of 6) CRT continues supporting unhoused neighbors. At 4 PM, Samsung and other semiconductor companies (Austin Energy's biggest energy users) are ordered to shut down to help prevent a statewide outage.
- February 17 - (Low of 23) At 10:30 AM, hearing that a boil water notice was imminent, CRT arranges a call with EOC manager Juan Ortiz connecting him to WaterMonster, a company that could fill tanks and deploy large water dispensers. CRT urges EOC to act now to fill tanks before water mains break or boil water notices are

issued. City of Austin issues a boil water notice due to a power outage at the power plant. It is later discovered that a backup generator switch was overlooked. Restaurant Depot management drives through ice to open its doors to CRT and Scotty Love's team for a purchase of food, making hot meal delivery possible throughout the week. At 8:30 PM, the boil water notice was issued. [EOC activates alert system.](#)

- February 18 - (Low of 0) The City of Austin releases its first Severe Weather update. Sponsored by the Austin Area Urban League (AAUL), CRT publishes the Austin Cold website. CRT and AAUL begin responding to calls for help through Austin Cold.
- February 19 - (Low of 20) The Millennium Youth Complex is opened by MPT Harper-Madison as a water and food distribution center. The first emergency water delivery [arrives in Austin](#), with a promise to be available at distribution sites "[ASAP.](#)" ([Appendix 1](#)). Austin Public Health works with collaborative participant Chris Harris to coordinate COVID testing for the 300 known unhoused community members being sheltered in hotels by participating groups.
- February 20 - (Low of 22. Last day of freezing temperatures.) CRT calls the EOC at 9PM asking why water has not been delivered to Austin's Colony. They have been 6 days without water, and are located in a grocery desert.
- February 21 - Water is delivered to Austin's Colony. Mayor Pro Tem Harper Madison, along with Council Members Fuentes, Casar and Renteria send a [letter](#) to City Manager Spencer Cronk ([Appendix 3](#)) demanding action on a city-wide coordination of water and food distribution. The letter starts like this: "*On both Friday, Feb 19 and Saturday, Feb 20, our offices contacted you via phone and email urging that the City establish a significant food distribution for Austinites in need because of this disaster.*" By the end of the day, 10 distribution centers are set up throughout town, one in each district. None are east of 183.
- February 22 - The Millennium Youth Complex is opened as a water and food distribution center.
- February 23 - CRT team members open a second distribution center on North Lamar, serving the Rundberg area. Boil water notice is lifted for all customers, but many have broken lines.

Historical, Systemic and Environmental Context

During disasters, institutions historically fail to meet the needs of the public. Public request channels are often flooded with calls and the coordination of efforts among departments is slow-moving. We saw this with the failure of [evacuation plans](#) during Hurricane Katrina, with the failure of Houston's [911 system](#) during Hurricane Harvey, and with the lack of access to water in some communities after Hurricane Michael. Not only do communities of color and low income communities typically experience [harsher impacts from disasters](#)^{5 6}, they also tend to receive [less recovery support from FEMA](#) and the

⁵ https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/dtac/srb-low-ses_2.pdf

⁶ <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102320/how-economic-crises-and-sudden-disasters-increase-racial-disparities-in-homeownership.pdf>

Small Business Association, and be more targeted for predatory loans following disasters. Most recently, the impacts of COVID-19 have also shown [similar disparities](#), revealing the confluence of multiple impacts of systemic racism that made health and financial outcomes worse for communities of color⁷. Winter Storm Uri was no exception, and this report will highlight some of these disparities here in Travis County.

It's important to put this analysis in the context of climate change, which will intensify Central Texas weather events in years to come. In a 2018 webinar, world-renowned climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe [reported](#) that Texas has experienced more costly climate disasters than any other state. What Hayhoe calls "global weirding" is perhaps the only appropriate term for the unexpected severity of Storm Uri. According to Hayhoe's 2014 report on the future of climate change in Central Texas, extreme storms will become [increasingly prevalent](#). What does this mean for disaster management in Central Texas? The question can only begin to be answered through equitable, collaborative and inclusive engagement and empowerment of community groups.

Both FEMA and CDC have provided guidance on how to operationalize equity in disaster mitigation and response. In September, 2020, FEMA published a [7-page guidance document](#) called, "Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity."⁸ The document highlights the importance of prioritizing the needs of vulnerable populations in hazard mitigation planning and lists 12 population categories that should be prioritized. Most of these populations are not even mentioned in the hazard mitigation plans for Travis County and the City of Austin. In the [2015 publication](#) "Planning for an Emergency: Strategies for Identifying and Engaging At Risk Groups,"⁹ the CDC suggests taking both an individual and population-based approach to identification and outreach, relying heavily on local organizations, direct-service groups and groups serving specific populations for partnership in planning and outreach.

Going beyond both of these strategies, CRT applied a place-based (or area-based) approach to operationalizing equity during disasters that addresses the unique challenges faced by specific communities in specific local geographic areas.^{10 11} With limited resources and capacities, Community Resilience Trust (CRT) offered a venue for collaboration among place-based organizations through all phases of disaster response. CRT's focus was threefold: 1) identify and support communities disproportionately impacted by Storm Uri; 2) foster communication among organizations and local emergency management entities for the purpose of reducing duplication of efforts and prioritizing areas of highest need; 3) create a communication feedback loop of ongoing and adaptive strategies.

⁷ <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/>

⁸ Federal Emergency Management Agency. Guide to Expanding Mitigation MAKING THE CONNECTION TO EQUITY. February 21, 2021.

⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Planning for an Emergency: Strategies for Identifying and Engaging At-Risk Groups. A guidance document for Emergency Managers: First edition. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2015.

¹⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/place-based-approaches-aid-investment-and-development-impact>

¹¹ <https://odihpn.org/magazine/ten-principles-area-based-approaches-urban-post-disaster-recovery/>

Key Systemic Failures During Storm Uri

Gaps in Disaster Management Amplified Systemic Inequities in Travis County

Public Warning & Institutional Preparedness

Travis County was simply not prepared for the severity of this storm, even after weather forecasts indicated it would be historic. This oversight was scripted. The Hazard Summary in Travis County's Emergency Management Plan lists winter storms as having an "occasional likelihood of occurrence" and "moderate impact on property and public health and safety." Based on climate predictions of the past, the plans themselves are absent of references to severe winter storms. As a result, roads were not sufficiently prepared and emergency vehicles were not properly equipped to handle the icy conditions.

The possibility of a severe storm met a societal response of denial and lack of awareness. A search of media messaging leading up to the storm underscores this. [This February 10th article](#) from CBS Austin is a good example of the lack of awareness about the storm's severity. It focuses on roads and the availability of firewood, but does not address the power grid nor the extremely low temperatures. The article also quotes Diann Hodges, TXDOT spokesperson, as sharing that Central Texas does not have snow plows, but does "have on-hand the materials we need to pretreat the roadways." The article also mentions that HEB was not experiencing a run on food supplies. KXAN [reported](#) on February 11 that energy customers are concerned about the possibility of blackouts. A February 12 [article](#) from Utility Dive, addressed the challenges to the grid, but does not discuss the possibility of total shutdown. Also on February 12, the Texas Tribune published an [article](#) raising concerns about the stability of the Texas power grid in the face of the storm. None of these articles fully addressed the severity of the storm and its likely impacts on people. By contrast, a [February 16th article](#) from the Austin American Statesman, tells a completely different story, with local, regional and state officials attributing the obvious delay in available resources to the scope of the situation throughout the state.

A look at the timeline shows that his lack of awareness, combined with poor planning documents and late warnings from the National Weather Service, created a condition for failure. During the few days leading up to the storm, the response to warnings were slow, and precious hours of preparation were lost. No significant early public warnings were issued, no roads were salted, no fresh water was stored, and no plans for decentralized distribution centers were made.

Centralized Shelters

Initially, Austin's only shelter was located downtown. Severely iced roads made this impossible to fully utilize during the worst part of the storm. Decentralized shelters were added later, but this initial oversight meant transportation for people in need of shelter involved long trips in high risk situations. Cap Metro initially offered services to transport individuals to shelter until road conditions made it unsafe. Additional warming centers were opened on February 15th due to negotiations among AISD's operations officer Matias Seguro and organizers with CRT. AISD's role throughout the storm was instrumental in meeting community needs where they were located.

Failing to Plan for Our Unhoused Neighbors

Beyond Cap Metro’s ambitious transportation plan, it appeared that there was no citywide or county plan for ensuring that people experiencing homelessness were able to get to shelter. CRT reached out to EMS to request support in our efforts to shelter our unhoused neighbors in hotels started Saturday, February 13th, after hearing from an unhoused community member that many of our unhoused neighbors would not go to shelters due to past traumatic experiences. On two separate calls on Monday, February 15, to 911 by CRT asking for transport to shelter for unhoused community members were initially declined. In the first case, the party was told that the individual could not wait for transport, but had to be walking toward shelter in order to be picked up by police or EMS. In the other case, an encampment had several individuals who requested transport. The 911 dispatcher asked if the people were in imminent danger, to which the party said yes, due to exposure. Upon the arrival of EMS, several were experiencing frostbite.

Lack of Key Equipment

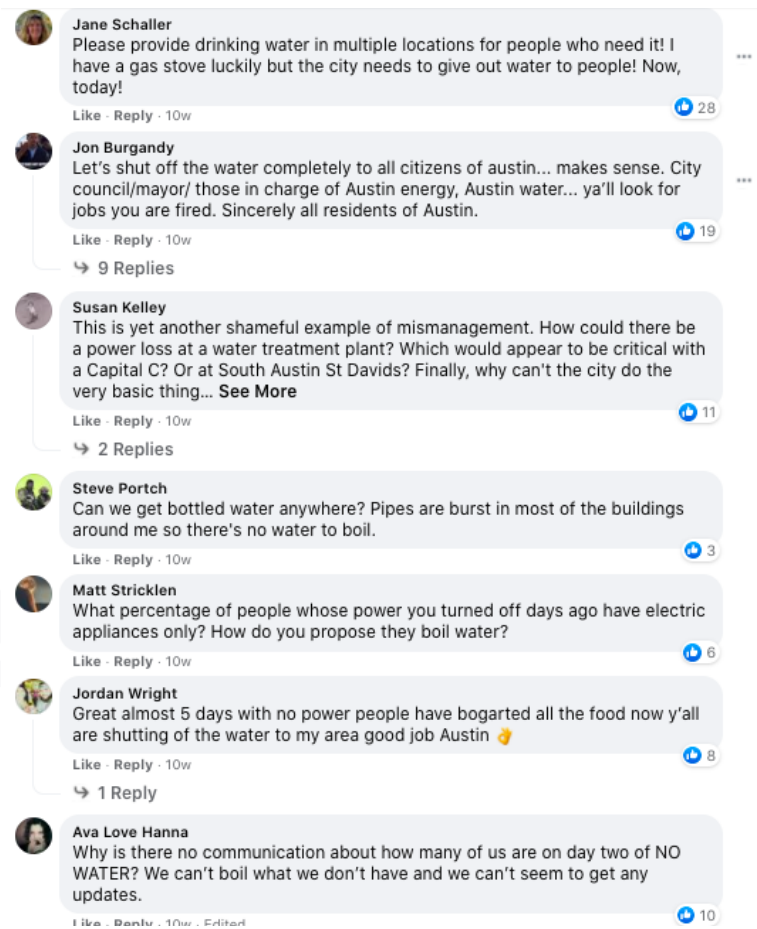
It appeared from conversations with EMS that they were concerned for the safety of driving. With [incidents of EMS vehicles getting stuck](#), several CRT members wondered whether EMS were properly equipped with snow tires. Informal conversations with EMS staff suggested that this was indeed the case.

Boil Water Notice Confuses Residents

At about 9 PM on February 17, COA issued this warning: “[Austin Water](#) has issued a city-wide boil water notice as a result of extreme weather conditions. Any water recovered from plumbing systems should be boiled before drinking or cooking...” Comments from the social media post above made it clear that citizens were extremely frustrated since power outages had begun and made it impossible for residents with electric stoves to boil water, and that the city provided no real solutions to the issues raised.

Delayed and Disproportionate Water & Food Distribution

On a February 17 call, members of CRT suggested that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) prepare for the possibility of a power outage at the water plant by storing water for ready distribution before it was too late to do so. At 11 am, CRT connected the EOC with the director of operations for Water Monster, a turnkey water distributor who would be able to provide 6

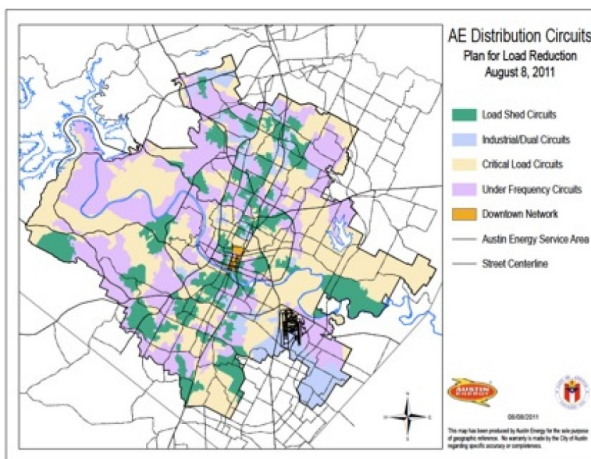


trucks worth of water if he could access clean water. Later that night, COA issued a boil water notice due to loss of power at the water treatment plant with no immediate contingency plan to provide water to Austin residents. Within two days, throughout the city, local breweries were beginning to boil and distribute water. However, the boiled water needed to cool. Some water trucks were picking up or distributing the water while it was hot, which created logistical issues. Members of CRT also heard of others delivering non-potable water to areas with no water access at all. With citywide efforts now moving with urgency, ensuring that everyone communicated clearly which deliveries were potable and which were not difficult.

On February 20, CRT had another call with EOC, who had asked for advice on priority locations for water distribution. CRT advised that some areas were desperate for water and in dire need of disaster relief aid, Austin's Colony being one. Like many other communities in the city, Austin's Colony had lost gas, power and water earlier that week. With gasoline shortages limiting transportation, and the nearest grocery 6-10 miles away, Austin's Colony had been hit particularly hard. It was not until February 20, 6 days after losing access to water, that water was finally delivered to Austin's Colony. This was the first of many deliveries. On February 21, COA announced that it would host 10 distribution sites, one per district. Unfortunately, two were placed close to each other, and none were placed East of 183.

Disproportionate Energy Distribution

Unlike most of Texas, Austin experienced continuous power outages in areas that were not deemed "critical infrastructure." Within 24 hours, people found out whether or not they were lucky enough for their home or apartment to be included in a "critical infrastructure" grid area.



KUT did an [explainer piece](#) about the logic, and Austin Energy published an example [map](#) from 2011 as well, but did not provide a current map, citing safety as a concern. According to the explainer, areas designated "industrial," "critical care" or "downtown network" are not subject to rolling blackouts. "Under frequency" areas are only turned off in extreme emergency situations. "Load shed circuits" are the first to experience outages in the case of scheduled blackouts.

The image on the left shows an example of load reduction priorities

from 2011. While these are not the current layouts designated by Austin Energy, the map provides an example of how the system works.

The disparities were not lost on Austinites. This photo, taken from the Fairmont, looks south onto Rainey Street, with many lights on. The photo from KVUE's Terri Gruca circulated through social media channels as an example of Austin's East/West racial divide, clearly showing power outages to the East of I-35.

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Setting aside whether this logic should be revisited, strategic communications could have gone a long way to address excess use of energy in areas left active. That said, in response to complaints, Downtown Austin Alliance [contacted building owners](#) to ask them to conserve. Under threat of statewide outages, Austin Energy did order its largest customer, Samsung, and other semiconductors shut down, but not until [February 16th](#). The rapid timeline resulted in Samsung being shut down for over a month, costing them [hundreds of millions of dollars](#). This is no comparison to the potential loss of life and cost to the State if they had not shut down, but many say it was avoidable, especially if ERCOT leadership had taken initial warnings seriously. What's more, strategic advanced communications could be spelled out in disaster plans, preventing loss of life and loss of revenue.

Given the pressure on the grid caused by these big tech giants, it stands to reason that they could play an important role in providing vital resources to the community during disasters. Perhaps, for example, in exchange for the privilege of keeping its chillers running, Samsung and others could significantly contribute to a fund designated for community groups serving East Austin during disasters.

The potential role tech companies could play should not be underestimated. According to the Statesman, a Tesla subsidiary is "[quietly working on](#)" an energy storage solution for the Texas grid. However, with the timeline unclear, it certainly won't be in time to address threats to the grid if a Texas heat wave puts pressure on a stressed ERCOT grid.

Community Organizations Filled The Gaps

Organizations Stepped Up and Responded

CRT efforts represented a collaboration among many organizations, but we know of many other organizations operating during this time as well, such as El Buen Samaritano, Black Women in Leadership, Go Austin Vamos Austin, Communities of Color United, Del Valle Coalition, Austin Justice Coalition, 10,000 Fearless, Austin Latino Coalition, and many more also working to get food and water to people throughout East Austin. Austin Area Urban League not only participated with CRT, but also managed their own initiatives, as well as sponsoring others. CRT can only report on our own efforts, but it must be made clear that many, many, many others were taking actions as well.

CRT's collaborative space included many organizations, individual leaders and a few city staffers over a 2 week period. This included roughly 70 volunteers self organizing into 6 departments, at least 10 of which worked full time for up to two weeks. CRT hosted two meetings a day at 8 AM and 3 PM, with many people staying until the wee hours of the morning. Meetings focused on report backs, calls for support and resources, brainstorming solutions, and looking ahead at issues on the horizon. For example, CRT prepared strategies for identifying and prioritizing communities with the greatest need by overlapping known data sets and responding to real-time communications from organizers on the ground.

Getting Started

On Friday, February 12th, 2 days before temperatures dropped, CRT held a special called meeting to address issues related to the unhoused. The decision was based on input from staff at the Austin Area

Urban League, who had shared on the February 11th morning call about their outreach to their unhoused neighbors. At the emergency meeting, CRT decided to mobilize emergency support for the unhoused. Saturday at 6:30 PM, CRT hosted a zoom meeting that included several organizations, staff from council offices, county offices, and several COA departments. Some of those staffers came back repeatedly to provide valuable information, connect the team to resources, and ask for support for city distribution and communications efforts.

The Effort was Born Out of a Recognition of Existing Conditions

Leading up to the storm, the COVID-19 Global pandemic was still raging in the United States with many residents still suffering from housing, food, and employment insecurity. This pandemic has put systemic racism and inequities on full display.

Several existing conditions contributed to the disproportionately large impact on communities in the Eastern Crescent.

1. Failing infrastructure of water and electric systems left some in East Austin far more vulnerable to failing pipes and prolonged outages.
2. Food insecurity already heightened in the pandemic was exacerbated by the storm. Austin is a metropolitan area surrounded by rural and annexed communities. These outlying areas have no grocery stores and no public transportation, so residents often travel 10+ miles to find supplies. With the supply chain rendered immovable by frozen roads, grocery stores were empty and those families willing to face dangerous driving conditions waited hours in lines in freezing temperatures to buy whatever was left. Dangerous road conditions and lack of public transportation, combined with the interruption of the food supply chain, left people in some areas facing starvation and dehydration while most of the rescue and relief efforts are focused on the inner city core.
3. The devastation of bar and restaurant closures due to COVID-19 has left many residents unemployed. These conditions, compounded with the cost of living in Austin, has many residents facing extreme financial instability or homelessness. With nowhere to go and minimal resources to address the challenges, residents suffered in their homes with no power and multiple days without water or food. Many were displaced to warm shelters to keep their families safe and came back to flooded apartments and absentee landlords.
4. Our unhoused community were left largely exposed to COVID-19 in efforts to transport and house them during these potentially deadly conditions. However, the services needed to maintain these placements—mental health, substance abuse recovery, and domestic violence support—are spread thin. Weather events can be particularly deadly for people experiencing homelessness.

In considering all of these groups, it quickly became clear that the people at most risk were those experiencing homelessness, so we started there. As the weather forecasts started rolling in and the community began to prepare for what was to come, no plans had been made to address shelter for the unhoused community. The community partners of this collaboration knew we would have to step in to fill the gap, and that the gap was way larger than any one organization could address. Phone calls and text messages resulted in a Saturday zoom call to discuss what could be done.

However, with so many passionate community servants in one room, the story did not stop at discussion. Saturday night’s collaborative call catalyzed what would become a nonstop three week initiative. By Sunday morning, there was an entire ecosystem of organizations working together to help find temporary housing for our unhoused neighbors. As other emergent needs arose, such as access to food and mental health support, the collective continued to work together, utilize our networks, and make things work to serve our unhoused neighbors. Then the unthinkable happened, in the midst of dangerous driving conditions due to a truly unprecedented winter emergency, the power outages and water shortages created collective suffering that quickly expanded our scope.

Summary of Action

Overall, CRT served 75 locations and 6,308 people, served 20,731 hot meals and 28,000 additional heater meals, 20,671 cases of water, an additional 9,961 gallons of water in mass, 10,000 diapers, and 75 bags of dog food. In addition to the two distribution locations, additional service areas supported included 30 high-needs schools, 4 HACA properties, 4 mobile home communities, and 20 apartment complexes. Below is a summary of our work during different phases of the storm.

The work, however, cannot just be summarized by the numbers of people served. Equally important (if not more so) was the quality of human-centered care given to these communities, families and individuals served. The individuals, teams and partner organizations working together in CR’s collaborative space went to extraordinary lengths to ensure that communities were served with dignity and respect for agency.

Each challenge was met with collaborative thinking and action. For example, when considering the distribution of heater meals provided to us by the Red Cross, it was clear that more was needed. These meals, though preferable to standard MRE’s, are a poor substitute for hot meals and fresh food supplies. However, early in the storm, fresh food was hard to come by due to issues related to hot water access, the accessibility of food in grocery stores, and transportation due to gasoline shortages.

As a solution, CRT’s North Lamar delivery and distribution center offered a combination of water, hot fresh meals and extra heater meals for backup. Interpreters were also available on site to connect non-english communities to other resources throughout the city.



Hotel placements for unhoused community members developed organically. CRT provided dispatch services to several organizations working to place people in hotels. Austin Mutual Aid (AMA) paid for and managed the reimbursements for hotels they purchased. CRT specifically supported the booking and follow-up support to all hotels booked by Survive2Thrive, who had a relationship with the hotels through the Hotel and Lodging Association. The role these hoteliers played in serving the community during this time should be fully acknowledged. With many facilities experiencing their own winter challenges, managers and staff came together to not only provide available rooms, but allow for regular food delivery as well.

CRT's follow-up support to our unhoused community members included providing hot meals to our unhoused neighbors twice daily, and providing hotel liaison volunteers and social work volunteers to act as supports for our unhoused neighbors. Much of this work was coordinated by Chris Harris of Homes Not Handcuffs and Devyn Harris (not related to Chris). Chris also coordinated COVID testing at the hotels through Austin Public Health.

A similar holistic approach was extended to volunteers, with regular well-being check-ins, acknowledgements and periodic encouragement to pause and decompress. Regular calls included human moments, trauma-informed interactions, prioritization of the lived experience and Global Majority perspectives, and private breakout rooms for smaller group conversations. Daniela Silva, core team lead and volunteer coordinator, shared, "The way in which space was held for one another was unlike any other professional space I've been in, and I think it was a contributing factor to people wanting to join and help us."

Every organization showed up with a mission and capabilities to contribute, while some picked up new skills to make sure that the efforts moved forward. Nakevia Miller wrote: "We have been meeting on a continuous zoom call for 7 days. There is so much mutual support and compassion in this collective space that we've created. Through laughs, tears, and dance breaks, we have become a family through this initiative and we are certain that life-long friendships have been forged through this endeavor. We are very proud of what we have accomplished this week and we hope to create more proactive collaborative disaster relief initiatives in the future."

Photos of the Crown Event Center Distribution



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	Feb 11-12	Feb 13-18	Feb 19 - 25	Feb 26 - March 1
	PREPARATION	RESCUE	RECOVERY - Part 1	RECOVERY - Part 2
	High of 47. Low of 32. Temperatures began to drop.	High of 32. Low of 0. Extreme lows began Sunday the 14th & continued.	Low of 20. High of 83. Temperatures varied.	Low of 49. High of 79.
What Happened	Roads are clear. No new infrastructure issues. Existing conditions in the Eastern Crescent area will make the storm outcomes disproportionately severe. Weather advisories are clear, and some meteorologists warn that we are not prepared. In general, the community and city move as though this is a normal storm. On February 12, a power failure at a North Austin wastewater treatment plant resulted in an overflow of 100K gallons of untreated water.	Freezing ice and snow storm combined with widespread power outages throughout the city starting as early as Sunday night. Power outages included planned outages according to proximity to "critical infrastructure." Photos of downtown showed the majority of office buildings were lit. Some infrastructure failures also caused additional, unintentional outages. COA issues boil water notice. Outages continued in many areas, leaving some communities with no way to boil water. Water main breakage, leaves some entire neighborhoods without water to boil.	As temperatures rose, water pipes on houses broke, leading to flooding and additional need for potable water. As roads began to clear, many communities were still left with no water due to local stores being emptied of supplies and gas shortages leading to transportation issues. Demand for deliveries of potable water increased. The boil water notice was finally lifted on February 23.	As roads cleared, Austin Water organized water and food distribution to areas identified as high-risk. EOC water distribution continued. Austin Needs Water ran water distribution out of the Palmer Event Center. Residents in multifamily dwellings throughout the city report problems with flooding and water access due to broken pipes. Property managers tell different stories, confusing relief operations. City attention shifts to repairs. Plumbers Without Borders begin assistance.
COA & County	Feb 11 - National Weather Service indicates a growing cold weather system. Feb 11 -- COA announces closure Monday for President's day.	Feb 14 - Judge Brown declares a disaster. Feb 16 - County declaration re: price gouging Feb 17 - COA Issues a boil water re: power outage at the water plant. Feb 18 - COA releases first Severe Weather update.	Feb 20 - County order suspending car washing. Feb 20 - County announces legal resources - price gouging. Feb 21 - COA establishes 10 water distribution sites None are east of 183. Feb 24 -COA storm repair website	March 4 - City of Austin approves \$10 million in utility bill relief to help those dealing with the winter storm.
CRT Activities	CRT Thursday morning call includes a share-out from AAUL about their efforts to connect to unhoused folks on Cameron Rd. Conversation ensues about the need to address the needs of the unhoused. An internal emergency planning meeting is planned for Friday morning. CRT mobilizes to understand greatest areas of community need and provide a collaborative rapid response plan to support unhoused communities. On Friday, CRT decided to start with an all-city zoom meeting Saturday. 15 organizations 12 hotels with over 125 rooms 300-400 housed in hotels 700 meals delivered daily 30-50 volunteers	CRT hosts an all-city zoom meeting of orgs, leaders and city and county staff. We hear from an unhoused community member, who shares that shelters and warming centers are not sufficient. A plan forms to assist local groups on the ground in finding hotels, paying for rooms and transporting people to them. From the 13th forward, the zoom room remains open from 8 AM until the wee hours of the morning. Breakout groups form, including hotel procurement, transport, dispatch & wellness. Food and water distribution is added soon after that. 10 HACA Properties 15 Additional properties 100 families COVID testing conducted at hotels Mayor Pro-Tem Maddison contacts CRT about Millennium Youth Complex (MYC) CRT negotiated additional shelters through AISD	EOC worked with CRT and HACA to identify areas in high need of water, and made its first water delivery to Austin's Colony on February 21. The community had been without water for 6 days. As the impacts of the storm grew, CRT expanded our scope of service operation to mitigate limited city/county resources. Activates 3 point plan with partners for Supply Drive Thru Distribution, Residential Distribution, and Wellness Checks 15 Additional properties Helped EOC identify priority properties (Clayton Lane, Harris, Oltorf Mobile, North Lamar, Woodland Oaks) Extended occupancy at hotels MYC Activated World Central Kitchen Crown Distro Center on on 2/23 - 9,603 - Hot Meals - 10,344 - MRE Meals - 41,160+ Bottles of Water - 60+ Locations Austin Cold is Launched	CRT integrates learnings to date with partner networks to meet the growing needs as organizations stand up their operations. CRT moves away from the role of tactical support and shifts to strategic advisory. Project summaries and reporting. CRT continued work from the North Lamar distribution center, providing hot meals and water to families. CRT extended support to Crown Event distribution - last food distro day 2/262414 tickets are served through Austin Cold - 2,500 - Hot Meals - 6,000 MRE Meals - 1,525 Bottles of Water

The Humans and Groups Behind The Effort

CRT efforts included a core group of collaborating organizations and volunteers, with many more groups and individuals donating and/or volunteering. In posting the list below, we are concerned at the idea of leaving anyone out. If your group participated in the collaborative effort and are not listed below, or want to be removed from this list for any reason, please let us know.

Community Resiliency Trust

Austin Area Urban League

Survive2Thrive Foundation

Mobile Loaves and Fishes

Maximizing Hope

DAWA

Earth Day Austin

Austin Mutual Aid

Community Advocacy & Healing

Homes Not Handcuffs

Brave Communities

Projecto Teatro

Participating CRT Partner Orgs:

Austin Area Urban League

Central Texas Allied Health Institute

Brave Communities

LULAC

Huston Tillotson University

Kitchens

Lighthouse Kitchen

Little Herds

World Central Kitchen

Collaborators & Supporters

(in alphabetical order)

10K fearless

Austin Hotel & Lodging Association

Aging is Cool

AISD

American YouthWorks

Antonelli'

Any Baby Can

Asian Pacific American Public Works,

Austin Texas Chapter

Atlassian

Apple

Assistant City Manager

Austin Front Steps

Austin Justice Coalition

Austin Public Health

Baylor Scott and White Hospital

Baylor Scott and White Foundation

Beck Reit and Sons Construction -

Financial Aid and Staffing assistance

with the Lighthouse Kitchen

Big Wheelbarrow

Black Women in Business

Cap Metro

Communities of Color United

Central Texas Allied Health Institute

Central Texas Foodbank

CM D9

Communities In Schools

Cook's Nook

Corporate Engagement Council

ECHO

Excellence & Advancement Foundation

FingerPulse Media, Inc.

Go Austin Vamos Austin

Gladiator Consulting

H-E-B

Hearts 2 Heal

HOPE Presbyterian

Indivisible Austin

Keep Families Giving Foundation

Kendra Scott

Lighter Loads

Lucian Morehead, Asterra Properties -

Warehouse Space

MEASURE

Memnosyne Institute

Millennium Youth Entertainment Center

Mosaic

NOVA Impact

One Pulse Media

Pttery's

Portfolio Resident Services

Resilience Office

Restaurant Depot

Russ Hartman

SAFE Alliance

Sister Christina - Church Networks

St. David's Foundation

St. Edward's University

Street Forum

Trimbuilt Construction - Fleet of Trucks

Texas Appleseed

Texas Children's Hospital

Texas Criminal Justice Coalition

Texas Firewalkers

Texas Grants Resource Center

Texas State University

The Austin Common

The Other Ones Foundation

The Sustainability Office

Trimbuilt Construction

Uber

UFCU

United Way Central Texas

United Nations SDSN Youth

University of Texas

UT MSSW Class of 2022

Various Commissioners

We Can Now

The Zoom Rooms

From February 11th through March 1st (19 days), the zoom rooms remained open from 8 AM to late into the evening and sometimes early morning. People self-organized into teams that met in breakout rooms to work together. On any given day, organizers would move in and out of rooms, coordinating what would become Austin's earliest and one of Austin's most robust mobilizations. Meetings at 8 AM, 3 PM and 8 PM allowed organizers to sync up, align on solutions, share vital information, prioritize, and sometimes decompress.

Engagement With the City

Inclusion of and coordination with city staff was necessary for effective operations, yet was also met with distrust from some community members, due to past experiences of harm. At one point, there was even confusion as to whether members of CRT were from the city. We made it clear that we were not, and that the space we were creating was a community-led space. City staff who participated did so on the community's terms. Our language remained very informal, and honest communication was the standard. Differing opinions were heard and respected. As a practice, the lived experience was prioritized and trusted over any other perspectives.

“Good City”

Over time, several city staff members stood out as being deeply involved in the community-led work happening in the collaborative space. These were people with whom conversations could be frank and unconstrained. These were folks who did everything they could to make resources available to the highest need and take direction from community members. These folks worked alongside us into the wee hours. At some point, organizers began to use the nickname “Good City” to describe these folks. This is important to underscore because it built trust and demonstrated a new model for communication between people in institutional roles and people outside of them - one based on a real human experience. This kind of communication is in stark contrast to what people mostly experience when they interact with institutions. The experience of not being heard when you are pointing to exactly what is not working is a maddening and perpetual breach of trust. The opposite is a great relief.

When addressing issues of inequity, especially during disasters, “doing your job” is perpetuating systemic inequities. Communities impacted by inequitable systems know exactly what is not working, but often don't have the energy or resources or influence to address them. People in privileged positions can't necessarily see what is not working, because they are not impacted by it. This limitation on their view also limits the set of actions that occur to them to take. For better systemic outcomes, it takes actively disrupting business-as-usual thinking to listen to and actually deal with the realities people are facing. It takes people actively being human in their institutional role. Folks earning the title, “Good City” did just that.

Some of these folks came (officially or unofficially) from areas such as the Equity Office, the Office of Sustainability, HACA, the Human Rights Commission, Cap Metro, AISD, the offices of Harper-Maddison, Casar, Fuentes, and Alter, and Austin Public Health. Executives at AISD and DVISD provided access to the robocall system for use in public announcements, as well as locations for warming centers and supply distribution. Cap Metro provided transportation solutions for as long as possible. While others joined periodically as well, these were the ones who stood out as demonstrating the spirit of public service.

It also is worth noting that in a cursory review of the names of the people nicknamed by the team as “good city,” every single one is listed on the Equity Office website as having completed anti-racist or equity training. There was great honor brought by these staff members to their work. All of these actions were done with no expectation of return support or acknowledgment. In that light, we will not be

promoting these staffers or public officials specifically as “heroic.” They were creating their job as they were doing it – doing it the way it was meant to be done, they know who they are, and we thank them for demonstrating what it looks like to be a true public servant.

“Volunteers”

As we moved into Monday and Tuesday, people were volunteering from a variety of locations and with a variety of different situations, including ice-cold houses, personal food, and water access challenges, broken water and gas pipes, and worsening body odor. Many of us worked 16-hour shifts for days on end, becoming more and more stupid, irritable, and bonded. Some of us asked for time off from work to continue for a second week. Others convinced employers to pay for them to volunteer with CRT instead of working.

Despite the good will and obvious volunteer spirit, at a certain point, we had to make it clear that this was something no one would ever call “volunteering.” No one would voluntarily give that much. It was compulsory - driven by our own compassion. When we realized this dynamic, we stopped the action and encouraged everyone to make clear choices about how much they could handle, and made it very clear from that point forward, every day, that everyone had done enough and should feel free to stop at any point. But the truth was, for many of us, we were too invested to let go. This is a reality of disaster response that often goes unacknowledged - the kind of experience that, for better or worse, changes you forever.

Several volunteers stood out. Here is more about some of them.

Nyeka

Nyeka was volunteering for We Can Now when she spent hours on end transporting our unhoused neighbors to hotel rooms. Nyeka would not stop. Despite a car wreck, yelling hotel managers and impossible road conditions, Nyeka personally transported countless numbers of people to safety.

Jeff and the Dispatch Team

Jeff ran the CRT dispatch system, working with boots-on-ground volunteers to assign transport to unhoused neighbors in need, and place people into hotels. He then moved into the dispatch of food and water to communities in need. His extraordinary work kept everyone moving purposefully and with an incredible commitment to delivering on what was promised.

Rae

Rae provided a backbone of organizational structure and strategy. Not only did Rae help bring sanity and direction to the initiative, she also captured key details and insights that made this report possible. Her story-keeping documented every aspect of our efforts, as well as provided real-time insight and oversight of our ever-changing strategic direction.

Chris and The Hotel Team

The hotel team made endless calls to convince frequently hesitant hotel managers to make rooms available, vetting the rooms for friendly policies to people and pets. Chris also worked with Austin Public Health to ensure that unhoused neighbors being sheltered in hotels were provided an opportunity to receive a COVID test.

Yasmine

Yazz was key to developing our daily strategy and a key liaison for the Austin Area Urban League team. Yazz ensured that the project was moving forward strategically, including all critical voices, and prioritizing clear communication and effective planning.

Scotty

Scotty was successful in convincing Restaurant Depot to sell food for his kitchen. Despite boil water notices and ice roads, Scotty prepares hot meals for all of the unhoused neighbors which were delivered twice daily.

Fatima

In partnership with council member Harper-Maddison's office, Fatima Mann helped coordinate distribution and volunteer management at the Millennium Youth Complex, the East Side's only major distribution center that early in the storm. She also prepared and personally delivered care packages to volunteers, providing oils and incense with a message of love, as well as providing a healing zoom room for volunteers in need of decompression. Fatima reported that this experience was a rare opportunity in which the resources she needed to provide culturally mindful, healing, and human-centered resources and supplies during disasters were readily at her fingertips. Fatima has worked on several disasters beginning with Hurricane Harvey, bringing equity and a human-centered approach to disaster response, this was a very welcome experience.

The Crown Center Team

Starting at the Millennium Youth Complex (MYC), Luis, Miriam and Hector quickly realized that their organizational strategies for delivering water and food to properties was out of sync with the drive-up distribution system at the MYC, and that additional resources were needed on the north side of town. They moved the operation to the Crown Center at North Lamar and continued from there for the next two weeks. Within days, they also had a walk-up site distributing a combination of water, hot meals and heater meals if requested. They continued this work while also coordinating deliveries to multiple properties and communities in need. Luis, Miriam and Hector also came to calls almost dancing with their love for people, enlivening everyone with the spirit in which they took on their work

Luis was in charge of case management and community investigations, with a focus on the immigrant community and spanish-speaking community. Additionally, Luis managed logistics related to food, water and diaper distribution.

Miriam was an amazing resource for food and water procurement, fresh produce. She also provided investigative work within the black and LGBTQ community to discover unmet needs, barriers to access, and opportunities for service.

Hector was the logistics mastermind that de-escalated and resolved numerous City of Austin mistakes and was crucial in large scale volunteer organizing from the Apple team.

Daniela, Emlyn, and Skye all participated in supporting the Crown Center Team, providing countless hours of coordination, ideas and logistical support.

Katie Crago

Katie worked tirelessly in partnership with CRT to prioritize the needs of HACA properties and identify other areas of greatest need, cross-referencing data from water outage and power outage reports, as well as anecdotal information from the community. As the city began to take a more active role, Katie worked with Austin Water and the EOC to prioritize water distribution.

Devyn

Devyn was CRT's primary liaison to Austin Mutual Aid, providing much needed coordinator and communication. She was a tireless advocate for serving the unhoused community in the best way possible, and for honoring the dignity of each individual.

Gloria

Like many of us, Gloria was both an extraordinary volunteer and a resident impacted by the storm. But Gloria's community, Austin's Colony, was hard hit and poorly supported during the storm. Gloria brought water to her community, even as she and her family were already struggling. Her story is featured in more detail later.

Nakevia and the Communications & Fundraising Team

Nakevia joined the team on Sunday at the request for graphic design services. Upon completing the "Love Thy Neighbor" and "Emergency Fund 4 the Unhoused" campaigns, she stayed and supported the group however she could, including hosting the calls, leading support to planning discussions, holding space for fellow team members, helping to draft talking points for press/donor conversations, website edits, design support for austincold.com, and supporting the fundraising team with thank you emails. Chelsea provided expertise in fundraising, and took on outreach and thank you's to all donors. Chelsea and her family also provided guidance and support for navigating the nuances of fundraising for a collaborative.

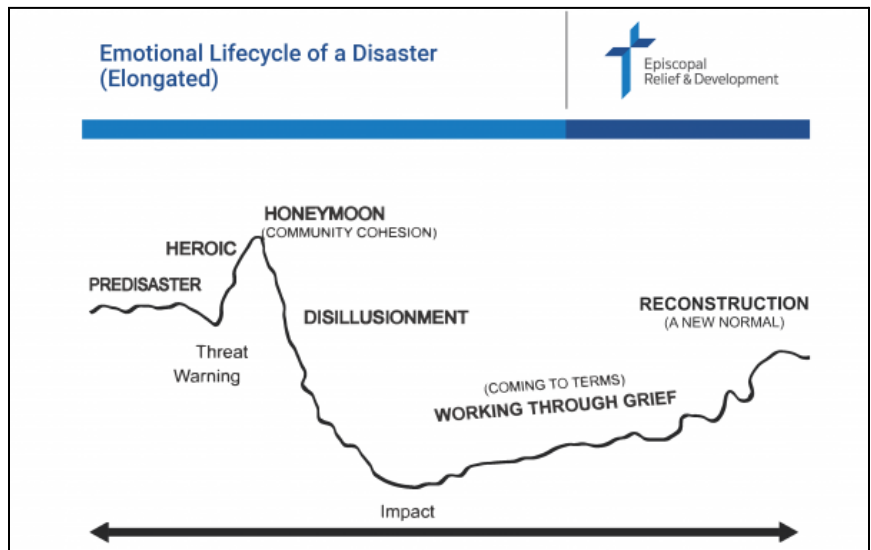
Ruben and Janis

Janis and Ruben, as co-founders of CRT, opened the collaborative space in response to AAUL's call to action. Co-founders of Community Resilience Trust, Ruben and Janis were fixtures of the CRT storm collaboration. They worked daily from 8 AM to midnight providing the space for coordination of efforts. It's hard for them to even remember what it was like because the real-time experience required the kind of focus so intense that memory storage becomes extraneous. Aside from instigating the initiative, Janis and Ruben each played unique roles as well. Janis, having worked collaboratively on previous disasters, worked with folks to continually look ahead to distinguish what was coming next so as to organize and prioritize needs, plan logistics to offset emergent issues, and advocate for the community-led allocation of much-needed resources. Knowing that centralized disaster response models exacerbate harm to vulnerable communities, Janis' attention remained on continually asking the question, "Who is being left out?" Ruben pulled in every resource, every relationship, every networking connection into the conversation of getting resources to people. Even when his own house was threatened by a nearby gas leak, Ruben was facilitating teams, bringing in much-needed resources, or bringing someone new to the table who could solve the next problem as it arose.

A Self-Organized Human Network

Going in, none of us anticipated the severity or scope of the disaster we were about to encounter, nor were we prepared for the enormous effort it would require. As situations emerged, the volunteers,

organizational leaders, and city staff who collaborated together found ourselves easily organizing into teams, using breakout sessions, private rooms, and messaging to make the most of our time, and slack to coordinate external teams as well. We mainly organized our efforts in an ever-growing google worksheet, with a tab for virtually everything, including team contacts, budgeting, water needs, dispatch, driver coordination, open gas stations, fundraising coordination, hotel onboarding, COVID testing, volunteer needs, shelter lists, nursing home and mobile home tracking, residential site needs, Cap Metro pick-up lists, encampment locations, roll-out timelines, media plans and data capture. Perhaps one of our favorite tabs was the “Big Ask” list, where our seemingly impossible goals were added and tracked. This list was a source of inspiration for all of us.



The Emotional Experience

This chart from Episcopal Relief & Development offers a view into the emotional life cycle of a disaster by phase. CRT discussed this chart at several phases so as to help us all understand the emotional cycles we might be experiencing.

Because CRT is an intentionally multi-racial space, many of the community organizers collaborating through CRT also have a lived experience of the personal trauma of racism and existing inequities. This made them uniquely equipped to understand the human experience of the population they were serving, and at the same time, vulnerable to uniquely personal exhaustion when barriers to equity were encountered.

Externally, communications were sometimes challenging. CRT and our partners were in action so early that we were already exhausted just as some organizations were just moving into high gear. This situation created some miscommunication and tension, which was not helped by Austin’s baseline funding disparities. In a climate where Global Majority-led organizations are forced to compete for a disproportionately small portion of the collective community investment, cooperation among organizations can be challenging. CRT’s commitment is to continue to build trust and (when appropriate) break silos, while continuing to shine a light on white supremacy culture as the root cause of these challenges.

Internally, the rollercoaster of emotions included emotional breakdowns, exhaustion, anger, determination, heroic euphoria, controversy and distrust, secondary trauma, interpersonal bonding and trust-building, and eventually, exhaustion and burnout. The group did our best to stay in communication through these phases, but the toll taken was real. There will never be any way to understand or account for the collective cost.

People Impacted

It's important to hear directly from those impacted by Uri. Here are some of the voices of those most impacted:

Gloria

Gloria Vera-Bedolla is a community organizer with deep roots and family in Del Valle. She is also a former Parent Support Specialist for AISD. Gloria's parents live in Del Valle across from an encampment and near many families who are unhoused, struggling and/or undocumented. In Gloria's parents' neighborhood, people were without water for almost 6 days. During the worst of the storm, Gloria transported one of her unhoused community members to shelter, as well as driving across town to check on her parents. When temperatures increased, Gloria spent her time and energy delivering water as soon as it was available. She worked tirelessly for days on this effort with support from several organizations. Gloria's experience was one of personal trauma while serving others. She was scared at times for her own life, the lives of her family, and the wellbeing of her community. She was angry at the city's lack of response. Gloria's community, Austin's Colony, was one of the hardest hit. "Our water never broke. It stopped coming into our homes. Along with propane.. That's why I told (the reporter from Vox) I feel like they are systematically going about thinning the herd--killing people out here. Because you turn off the water, turn off the propane, and leave us with what? Any water that we can get ahold of - no way to heat it that's usable." During the storm, she drove 13 miles across town at 5:30 in the morning to check on her parents in East Austin. She had fear for her parents and neighbors. My fear was for my neighbors that are undocumented. That's what drove me. My fear for my neighbors who are old and cannot fend for themselves. They were trapped in their homes." Gloria helped her family get a generator and space heater set up. Her parents sat in the dark for 5 days in their mobile home, which she says pisses her off, especially since they have underlying health conditions. Her mother had just had heart surgery. "I can only imagine the people that live in the apartment two blocks down." Driving back she got stuck until a couple of young guys helped people get unstuck, but she saw no EMS or other services on site or anywhere. She then drove 10 miles and hour and transported an unhoused individual to the warming shelter on Parmer lane. She says the whole experience was traumatizing. She also said she thinks more disasters are coming. "There's not enough of us worried about Global Warming."¹²

Gloria also mentioned that while Austin's Colony and Forest Bluff struggled, a nearby neighborhood, Kennedy Ridge Estates, really got screwed over. Those guys still have some undeveloped streets. Some of them are still dirt roads. And it's got a huge curve and a big dip. So I can only imagine how terrifying it must have been for them, trying to go anywhere. All these things - I have been thinking about how unprepared we were. Had it not been for me asking (CRT) for help and going directly to people that I know work for the city and asking how to get on the list, we might still be waiting... Why does it take an inequitable approach to get help?"

¹² Gloria's interview is located [here](#).

Whitley

At the time of Storm Uri, Whitley was living in an encampment in north central Austin. She has approved this statement and wishes for her story to be told. Whitley, newly unhoused since December of 2020, has a background working in vocational ministry programs. Whitley had already built relationships with members of the unhoused community when she was working in ministry programs. She has a good working relationship with the camp leader, and loves her camp community. On the street she has, however, experienced abuse and harassment from others outside of her camp. Whitley says that cars (maybe of them returning repeatedly) harass the members of her camp by honking up to 30 times a day and into the night. Sometimes they lay on the horn, and other times they honk in sequence. At the beginning of the storm, Whitley came to the collaborative working on storm response to share her direct experience and requests with over 40 community organizers and city staff on February 13th, the day before Whitley made one thing very clear: hotels were necessary to save lives. People would in many cases never go to a shelter, because they felt shelters were unsafe and often inhumane. If we wanted to get people out of the 10 degree weather, we had to offer hotels. This effort was provided in a partnership of organizations working through CRT, with food provided to the hotels funded by Austin Area Urban League. CRT paid Whitley for her consultation during the storm, and ensured that she was sheltered in a hotel throughout the storm as well.

Sareta Davis

As reported in the [Austin American Statesman](#):

“Sareta Davis, chair of the city’s Human Rights Commission, said the Community Resilience Trust gave her a lifeline when she was without power for close to five days and the temperature in her apartment dropped to 19 or 20 degrees.

‘I will very much be making every recommendation I can to the City Council, based on my experience in the community and with the trust, to try to help them see where they can do better, and what plans they can implement in the future to avoid this’ Davis said.”

Funding The Effort

After several discussions, CRT decided to conduct a fundraiser that would be redistributed among participating organizations as needed to cover the cost of hotels, food, supplies, and delivery services. CRT published its fundraising page on February 18th, featuring the #LovesActionATX campaign and participating organizations listed collectively and with links to their individual pages or fundraising efforts. These groups included: Austin Area Urban League, Survive2Thrive, Austin Mutual Aid, DAWA Fund, Mobile Loaves and Fishes, Maximizing Hope, Donovan Division and Gladiator Consulting.

CRT received funds from hundreds of individual donors, as well as several businesses and foundations. The full list can be seen in [Appendix 4](#). Chelsea Toler-Hoffman led this initiative in partnership with Nakevia Miller, additionally managing thank-you emails as well. The fundraising page promised to allocate any surplus funds to long-term housing solutions for the unhoused, which CRT has honored. CRT additionally received a grant from the Austin Area Urban League of \$50,000, which greatly

supported the cost of hot meals delivered to our unhoused neighbors staying in hotels during the storm and beyond.

In total, CRT raised \$123,219.75. 95% of the funds were spent on programmatic expenses or direct assistance. Below is a breakdown of expenses by category.

After 18 days of storm response, food and water distribution completed or turned over to other groups, and citywide efforts well underway, on March 1, CRT shut down its funding page and began promoting the efforts of other organizations who were still active at the time. The leadership team then donated time to city staff to address prioritizing unmet needs. The [landing page](#) for donations promised that any remaining funds would be used to support long-term solutions for the unhoused community. The remaining \$7,484 helped start the Unhoused Community Council, a project that was transitioned to its permanent home at Austin Area Urban League in December of 2021.

Category	Expense
hotels	49,370.00
hot meals	24,204.68
long-term unhoused support	17,000.00
logistics (dispatch, transport, distribution)	11,000.00
follow-up unhoused support	7,484.08
storm report (w/ translation)	2,000.00
direct cash assistance	2,000.00
unhoused consultant	1,000.00
volunteer management	1,500.00
website	1,500.00
admin	6,160.99

What is not accounted for here is the extraordinary amount of volunteer time given. The majority of volunteers worked hours a day for two full weeks. CRT is seeking data from volunteers to better understand the full scope of this cost, and will publish an update when that work is complete.

Challenges

There were many challenges to collaboration. Each organization had different missions, different policies, different theories of change and methodologies. Conflicts in approach were challenging to resolve, but the urgency of need helped establish a common goal and a basis for effective negotiation and resolution. Exhaustion was another challenge. The workload became overwhelming within hours, and real-time communication was mission-critical. This left little time for leadership to rest. In some cases, refusal to rest led to ineffective leadership and eventual breakdowns in communication. This was resolved through communication and the implementation of mandatory breaks. CRT has resolved to build in redundancies in the future to avoid this issue. Finally, a major challenge was the liquidity of funds. Few organizations serving nonwhite communities have budget line items for disaster response. With traditional funding channels flowing through “traditional” organizations, most of the collaborating organizations were left to work while at the same time raising funds.

The Theme of This Narrative?

As we look back at all of this—the experience, the accomplishment, the challenges—many of us have shared mixed feelings. On the one hand, most of us felt that, as a network of community organizations with direct relationships to community members most impacted, the scope of our leadership made sense. We are proud of what we demonstrated. On the other hand, many of the gaps we were filling were institutional ones. This knowledge left us questioning why the prioritization of our most vulnerable communities was so lacking? Did people not do their jobs? Did they not follow the plan? Or did the plan itself fall short? While one could spend time pointing fingers at specific failures of duty, a far greater problem is the state of the plans themselves.

County and City Plans Are Antiquated and Lacking Equity

Where We Are and Are Not Addressing Here

Certainly, there is much to analyze and evaluate about the management from various departments. However, without a full working knowledge of city departments, nor a direct view into their operations during the storm, it would be difficult to assess departmental failings or successes. These are generally covered in the city and county's after action reports. These and several other reports are important to reference and include here for additional reading. Links to reports and presentations from city and county departments can be found [here](#).

[Central Texas 2-1-1 Calls During Storm Uri](#)

This May, 2021 report analyzes incoming 2-1-1 calls and compares them to previous data. 2-1-1 calls increased by 40% during storm Uri, and the top needs were housing and shelter, followed closely by food and disaster services. Call volumes were heavier from East Austin zip codes, with the top five zip codes being 7753, 78721, 78702, 78758 and 78724 (in that order). The report also points to a likely causal link to a higher prevalence of failing infrastructure in East Austin.

[Report from the Winter Storm Review Task Force](#)

Published July 30, 2021, this report addresses the city's lack of planning, and includes recommendations related to communications, transparency of information, community trust, failures of the grid, essential supplies, lack of accountability, infrastructure breakdowns, access to shelter, the role of community groups, and the need for mental health services. The report includes an excerpt from a draft of this report.

[After-Action Report & Improvement Plan Technical Report](#)

October 27, 2021. The report also states that community action resulted in: over 1,000 residents provided shelter; more than 1 million gallons of water distributed, and 170 meals distributed. The report underscores the importance of community groups, stating "the actions of community groups proved essential," and recommends the revision of disaster plans to incorporate these groups. The report also recommends improving plans to address vulnerability and codifying the Equity Office's involvement in planning and EOC operations. Regarding staffing, the report emphasizes the importance of training. The report acknowledges the cascading impacts of multiple types of infrastructure failure and recommends a revision of planning assumptions. The report shows that mass care was lacking, and recommends a more comprehensive and scalable plan, including food, water and shelter distribution. Communication is also addressed.

[City Auditor's Report](#)

This November, 2021 report leads with "The City was Unprepared to Respond to Winter Storm Uri. The report's findings address: 1) the failure to consider the risks posed by a severe winter storm; 2) failure to implement past recommendations; 3) historical failure to prioritize disaster response and community resilience; 4) poor communication that left residents without critical information; 5) insufficient disaster planning and preparedness, including staffing and supplies; 6) the lack of focus on vulnerable communities, including the unhoused community. These findings and recommendations are consistent with this report.

[Austin Energy Winter Storm Uri After Action Report](#)

November 4, 2021. Austin Energy's after action report identifies the need for improvement in market design, community communications, vegetation management, smart grid technologies, increased coordination with industrial companies (regarding load shed), the need for a method to reduce power use downtown, and increased coordination with city departments.

[Austin Water Winter Storm Uri After Action Report and Additional Materials](#)

Published November 3, 2021, this report includes recommendations to: 1) adjust and enhance winter weather preparedness messaging; 2) increase use of My ATX portal notifications; 3) conduct targeted outreach to multi-family properties; and enhance guidance and training for use of public notification systems.

[Road to Recovery: Austin Area Urban League's Storm Uri Report](#)

This report covers a variety of topics relevant to the community. The report addresses the "what happened" and the "what should have happened" regarding infrastructure, electricity, and water. It goes on to address the implications for public health, and makes clear recommendations for action. It also includes an overview of community response, including involvement with and beyond CRT's collaborative space. Some of the material in this report was collaboratively written for both reports, and can be found in both reports.

CRT's main interest is discovering inequity at its access point and shifting systems that cause harm and/or perpetuate and exacerbate systemic racism and other inequities. But we can only operationalize equity when we uncover the structures and practices that keep them in place. This includes policies, practices, training offered, protocols, budgets, accountability structures, and most certainly, plans. This section focuses on the plans that govern our emergency response and will illuminate the wide and harmful gap between the institutional emergency response and the community emergency response.

After evaluating the city and county's disaster response plans, we came to one conclusion: ultimately, there **is no clear plan** for an inclusive, equitable disaster response.

Understanding Austin/Travis County's Overlapping Plans

In accordance with state law, Austin and Travis County's response to disaster is guided by four plans which overlap and are largely implemented through interlocal operations. These four documents are:

- Travis County's [Emergency Management Basic Plan](#),
- Travis County's [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#),
- The City of Austin [Emergency Operations Basic Plan](#), and
- The City of Austin [Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).

Further guidance is given by the [Annexes](#) and standard operating procedures (SOPs) within the departments responsible. Templates for the Annexes can be found on the Texas Department of Emergency Management Website.

City and County Plans Do Not Reflect Recent Federal Guidance on Equity

Reviewing these four documents from an equity lens illuminates a clear lack of inclusion of the Eastern Crescent in emergency plans. FEMA and CDC have provided recent guidance on how to operationalize equity in disaster mitigation and response. CDC's 2015 publication, "[Planning for an Emergency: Strategies for Identifying and Engaging At Risk Groups](#),"¹³ suggests taking both an individual and population-based approach to identification and outreach, relying heavily on local organizations, direct-service groups and groups serving specific populations for partnership in planning and outreach. FEMA's September 2020 "[Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity](#),"¹⁴ lists 12 population categories that should be prioritized.

In contrast to the guidance offered by FEMA and CDC on addressing vulnerable communities during disaster response, none of our four plans make significant mention of strategies to address at-risk populations, nor do they include any of the community-led organizations in the Eastern Crescent, including those that participated with CRT. The few organizations that are mentioned are historically white led and religious—a factor we will explore further in this document. Most of the populations listed by FEMA in their 2020 guide are not mentioned once in the hazard mitigation plans for Travis County and the City of Austin.

To fully evaluate the scope of this gap, for each of the four plans, we counted the number of mentions of each of the twelve priority populations suggested by FEMA, as well as several other populations known to be at risk in Travis County. A detailed chart can be found below in [Appendix 5](#) (it's worth reviewing visually), but here is a summary of what we found:

- None of the three documents made any mention of people experiencing low socioeconomic status, people of color, LGBTQ, service workers, migrant laborers, undocumented communities, renters, or people identifying as Black or Hispanic/Latinx.
- People with limited cognitive or physical abilities were referenced three times in the Austin Plan and once in the mitigation plan.
- The Austin Basic Plan did make one mention of tribal and first nation communities and one mention of limited English speaking communities.
- Mention of institutionalized communities was limited to schools, hospitals, nursing homes and military institutions, but left out jails and prisons.
- People experiencing homelessness were only mentioned in the context of extreme heat.
- Mobile home communities were mentioned in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, but only in the context of tornados.
- Unincorporated communities were mentioned, in the context of heat vulnerability, fuel reduction and flood mitigation, but not in the context of being in food, health and transportation deserts or having poor to no infrastructure.
- The elderly and infants were mentioned several times in reference to vulnerable populations.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Planning for an Emergency: Strategies for Identifying and Engaging At-Risk Groups. A guidance document for Emergency Managers: First edition. Atlanta (GA): CDC; 2015.

¹⁴ Federal Emergency Management Agency. Guide to Expanding Mitigation MAKING THE CONNECTION TO EQUITY. February 21, 2021.

- Mention of “vulnerable communities” was made 70 times in the Hazard Mitigation document. However, the mentions referred to numbers of elderly and low-income in broad areas, and in general terms such as structural, geographic and climate vulnerability, rather than in the context of populations and pre-existing vulnerabilities. When populations are mentioned, it is with no specificity of impact. Very few actions are mentioned to address anything related to vulnerable populations.
- In the Populations and Demographics section of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan, demographics listed include income and elderly, but show no disaggregation by race. (See [Appendix 6](#))

Also notable in the Hazard Mitigation Plan was the inclusion of specific cities within Travis County, combined with the apparent exclusion of others. 17 municipalities participated in the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Missing from the list were Barton Creek, Wells Branch, Manchaca, Hudson Bend, Hornby Bend, Windermere, and Garfield. Austin was also missing but is covered separately with its own mitigation plan.

It Matters Who is Included in Developing the Plans

The process by which our two mitigation plans were written was not inclusive. As background, both Travis County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan and the Austin Hazard Mitigation plan were written (or at least updated) by [H2O Partners](#). Located off Bee Cave Road near the One World Theatre, H2O Partners is a West Austin-based consulting firm specializing in flood insurance, hazard mitigation, response and recovery, and training. Their website reads: “We have created mitigation plans for more than 950 jurisdictions, and we were the first to create a multi-jurisdictional plan update approved by the State of Texas” and boast a 100% success rate for FEMA approval. They also play a role in helping municipalities and counties navigate the FEMA system to gain access to funds. Despite obvious expertise in many areas of disaster response, searches through their website, LinkedIn, and Facebook presence shows a clear lack of relationships with the communities of East Austin and a lack of participation in conversations related to equity. In other words, there is a well-known formula for these plans. While this institutional knowledge has real value, it also has real limitations.

On the surface, the planning of these documents appeared to include community input. As stated in the document:

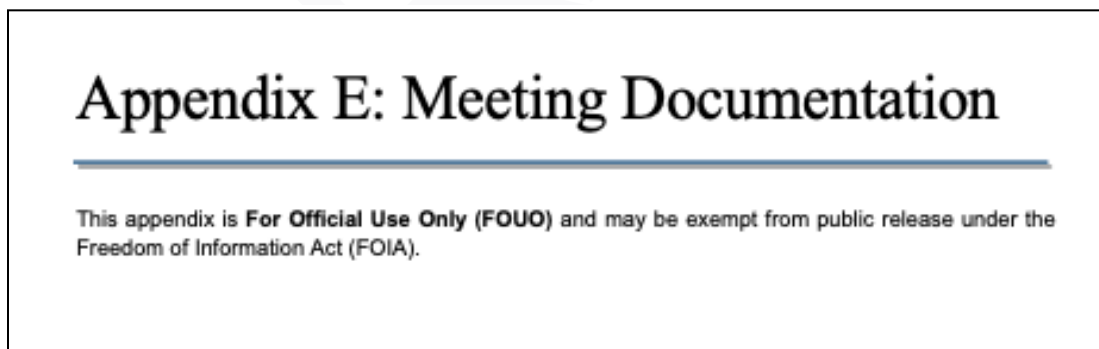
“The public was involved in the development of Travis County’s 2017 Plan Update at different stages prior to official Plan Update approval and adoption. Public input was sought using three methods: (1) open public meetings; (2) survey instruments; and (3) making the draft Plan Update available for public review at Travis County’s website.” - page 24

However, deeper investigation reveals that the planning process described in the Travis County mitigation plan was not inclusive nor equitable. The Executive Planning Team, the Advisory Planning Team, and the Stakeholder Working Group (all instrumental to developing the plan) were entirely (white) institutional, with no representation from the community at large, vulnerable communities, or communities of color.

The Executive Planning Team for the Travis County mitigation plan included representatives from a limited set of geographic areas. Despite the fact that Travis County is composed of 42 municipal entities and extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJs), only 6 were included on the Executive Planning Committee: Travis County, Lakeway, Manor, Pflugerville, Sunset Valley, and Village of the Hills. This disproportionate representation was reflected in the content and focus of the material. For example, the section entitled “Mitigation Actions” includes specific sections for these same municipalities, with no other municipalities having their own section. Also of the 42 cities, villages, unincorporated areas, and census-designated places in Travis County, only 17 were mentioned in the report. Austin, Pflugerville, Sunset Valley, Village of the Hills, Manor, and Lakeway were each mentioned over 100 times. By contrast, Dove Springs was mentioned 0 times, Onion Creek was mentioned 10 times, and others even less. (See [Appendix 7](#))

Public input was also not equitable. Analysis of the Travis County Mitigation Plan shows clearly that the public input process was not inclusive. There were 9 public meetings between January and April of 2017 in Lakeway, Pflugerville, Manor, Sunset Valley, and Del Valle. The meeting in Del Valle was located at Elroy Library, with only 5 people in attendance. Total attendance at all these meetings was very low at only 47 people and disproportionately represented West Travis County (12 from Sunset Valley, 15 from Lakeway, 6 from Pflugerville, 9 from Manor, and the 5 from Del Valle.)

The City of Austin hazard mitigation plan is very similar in nature. Like the county, the Executive Planning team was institutional and did not include community representation. The document indicates there was a stakeholder process, but does not share who the stakeholders were. Public input involved 5 meetings between March 10 and July 16 of 2015. Two were at Pleasant Hill Branch Library in West Austin, two were at Spicewood Springs Branch Library, two at Howson Branch Library, and one at Carver Branch Library. Interestingly, the COA hazard mitigation plan does not show meeting attendance. Instead, it has this statement:



Again, like Travis County, this lack of inclusion was reflected in the content of the COA mitigation plan. For example, the only mention of the Black or Hispanic population was in the following context regarding the community profile, in a section entitled “Ethnicity” on page 33:

The City of Austin is transforming into an urban place that hosts various racial groups including Caucasian, Hispanic, African American, and Asian. The Hispanic share of the City of Austin’s total population decreased from 35.9 percent in 2008 to 34 percent in 2013, and the Asian share

of the total population increased from almost 5.5 percent in 2008 to 6.1 percent in 2013.

The City of Austin has become a Majority-Minority city, meaning no ethnic or demographic group exists as a majority of the City of Austin's population. The City of Austin's Caucasian share of total population has dropped below 50 percent, and is predicted to remain below 50 percent for the foreseeable future due to the growth of other ethnic groups outpacing the growth of Caucasian households.

These two paragraphs alone indicate a need for an equity audit of the entire document. While a full explanation of how these statements are problematic could fill several pages, but to highlight just a few:

- First, to say that Austin is “transforming into an urban place that hosts various racial groups...” mischaracterizes Austin’s history and its growth. Austin’s history has included diverse populations since its origins, with gentrification and displacement making it less so over time.
- The first paragraph does not mention the Black community, nor address the impact of displacement over the last 20 years.
- The term “majority-minority city” (language well established as both [divisive and misleading](#)) points to an us/them perspective that belies the viewpoint of the author and presumed audience as Caucasian, let alone the questionable relevance of the topic itself.

To serve Austin during a disaster is to serve its most vulnerable, which absolutely requires prioritizing their needs and the disproportionately higher harm they are exposed to before, during and after any disaster. This short excerpt exemplifies a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity and an active (if unintentional) perpetuation of systemic racism.

Travis County’s Disaster Response Hierarchy Does Not Include Representation from Communities Most Impacted

In addressing community engagement during disasters, it’s vital to understand the relationship between the county/city and the VOAD network. VOAD (standing for Volunteer Organizations Operating in Disasters) is referenced in Travis County’s Disaster Management Plan in the following way:

“Travis County has an extensive VOAD network consisting of numerous NGOs who are vetted with the County to assist the community during times of disasters. The following are some of many with whom Travis County coordinates disaster relief services with:”

The document goes on to list these vetted organizations as Central Texas Chapter of the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Austin Disaster Relief Network, and RACES. Here we will address each one, including their state and county approved role, community relationships, and activities during Storm Uri.

Red Cross Serving Central and South Texas. The Red Cross, a Christian organization, is active in Central Texas as part of a branch that serves Central and South Texas. Travis County’s plan designates them as providing first aid, shelter management, and feeding at fixed locations and mobile services. The regional Facebook page, [Red Cross CSTR](#), warned of dangerous

conditions, and on February 12 posted shelter information, apparently managing the central shelter at Parmer. Red Cross' involvement in food distribution began February 19, when they brought heater meals (MRE's) for distribution at the Millennium Youth Complex by CRT.

The Salvation Army. The Salvation Army, a Christian organization, is tasked with providing mass and mobile feeding, shelter management, and donation collection and distribution. The Salvation Army was apparently active at two downtown shelters and posted a shelter notification on [February 11](#) as well.

Austin Disaster Relief Network (ADRN) is a large network of hundreds of Christian churches. They are designated for such activities as organizing shelters, distributing goods, emotional care teams, clean-up crews, and sponsorship of families. According to the county plan, ADRN "Provides Emergency Assistance to include temporary shelter within a network of Churches, warehousing and distribution of goods, emotional/spiritual care teams, emergency call center, clean-up teams, volunteer management, long-term care such as sponsoring families through financial, food, clothing, and transportation support." What further distinguishes ADRN is their response to 2-1-1 calls during some disasters. This is a role contracted by United Way Central Texas, which is known as the county's "Area Information Center" (AIC). [Texas Administrative Code applying to use of abbreviated dialing codes](#) defines this as "an entity that serves as regional coordinator for health and human services information for a specified geographical area or region." The role must provide 24-hour continuous operation, and is designated by the Health and Human Services department. ADRN's current lack of representation for communities of color is visible on its website. The community partners listed do not include any grassroots or social justice organizations, many of whom actively served the community during Storm Uri. Additionally, as of April 30, ADRN's listed media partners do not include known media outlets serving the Black and Latinx communities, such as Univision and KAZI. (See [Appendix 8](#)) Locally, the director of ADRN also directs Central Texas VOAD. ADRN activated on February 14 during the storm, supporting thousands of residents.

RACES stands for the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services which provides radio support for emergency operations. Austin's RACES [local leadership](#) shows no [social media](#) or news of their involvement during Storm Uri, with the exception of activities mentioned in some [meeting notes](#). [TCares](#) is the active body, but their activities lack transparency. There is, however, significant guidance for RACES on the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) website, including SOPs. (See [Appendix 9](#), [10](#))

CRT's activities during Storm Uri included many organizations beyond this network that were active during Storm Uri and have had no relationship with vetted groups like ADRN until Storm Uri. We should consider it problematic that three of the four organizations mentioned in the plan are Christian-based, and the boards and leadership of at least three of the four organizations are predominantly white. While the groups' efforts demonstrate significant capacity and longstanding trusted relationships with government entities, their relationships with East Austin may be significantly lacking.

Fortunately, there is great interest on the part of ADRN, VOAD and in particular, United Way in bridging these gaps equitably. United Way has been taking great ground through their recent equity-focused vaccine collaborative, and will soon be launching Model Community, a program designed by the community to offer a better system of service provision. Robert Viduri, director of ADRN, expressed

interest in building relationships with these organizations and bringing more diversity of representation to both VOAD and ADRN.

Texas Disaster Plan Templates Do Not Operationalize Equity

It's also important to understand that this structure stems from state policy regarding the Emergency Management Council (See [Appendix 11](#)), which is then reflected locally in every city. The council includes 36 state agencies, several universities, and a select few organizations. The select universities include: University of Houston System, University of North Texas System and the University of Texas System. The organizations listed are The American Red Cross, Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and The Salvation Army. Again, representation is a combination of institutional entities and Christian organizations.

The Travis County Emergency Operations Plan references several Annex documents (see a list in [Appendix 12](#)) meant to describe operations in more detail. While I was unable to find these ancillary documents on the Travis County website, I was able to find their templates on the [TDEM website](#). Several of these templates also raised questions.

Annex T: Donation Management. In this document is a description of the Donations Steering Group, consisting of "...local government officials, community leaders and designated members of the community-based volunteer organization (CBOs) and the volunteer agencies (VOLAGs) who would have an interest in setting policy for and being a part of the donations management program if conditions warrant that it be operated by the government." It goes on to list as examples of CBOs to include "faith based organizations, local ministerial alliances, and clubs and organizations having a charitable mission as part of their activities." The list of CBOs mostly includes historically white organizations, such as Scouts, Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Shriners, Masons, Knights of Columbus. Additionally, the list of VOLAGs has a strong religious and Christian focus. ([Appendix 13](#))

Annex B: Communications. The development of this plan is assigned to the Police Chief and County Sheriff. This document includes a list of communication strategies and their use by specific facilities. Their communications list includes Cable TV, Phone, TLETS, RACES, Radio, Rad to HF, Cell Phones, Satellite Phones, Local computer network, Internet or email. While these SOPs are helpful, what is missing from the document are other potential communications easements, such as school robo-call systems, mass text messaging, and networked communications through organizations. ([Appendix 14](#))

Annex I: Public Information. The City/County PIO is accountable for developing this plan to ensure that relevant information is collected and distributed. The template from TDEM does address "special populations." These include ensuring that tools are used to include the visually impaired, hearing impaired and non-English speakers. It does not, however, give guidance on cultural sensitivity, addressing the digital divide, or providing situationally relevant information based on existing socio-economic vulnerabilities such as food deserts, health access deserts and transportation access. ([Appendix 15](#))

While we can speculate about the outcomes produced by this system, what would make a real difference is to conduct an equity assessment of the Travis County EOC standard operating procedures in more specificity. However, several key outcomes point to the need for change.

A Deeper Dive into The City of Austin Basic Plan

The City of Austin Emergency Operations Basic Plan identifies a “Community Services Group” on page 61, whose purpose is to: “provide for the food, potable water, clothing, shelter, animal welfare, disaster mental health, and other basic necessities of persons impacted by a disaster.” The group is to be staffed by:

- Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Austin Police Victim Services Unit
- City of Austin Human Resources Department
- City of Austin Transportation Department
- City of Austin Animal Services

In multiple meetings offered by the EOC consultant early in the recovery phase, CRT members observed some of these departments participating in the planning and strategy process, which at some point shifted toward after-action analysis. It was also unclear when these departments were activated. It appeared from their reports during meetings that some departments were functionally shut down due to the weather. The Parks Department, for example, noted in one meeting that their participation began on February 20th, when they started conducting well checks. However, their role during the weather would have been vital, were they actively available at the time. By contrast, the community groups activating with CRT started on February 13th and continued for three weeks.

The document goes on to identify the following additional “critical non-governmental organizations that routinely staff the Community Services Group:

- Central Texas Chapter of the ARC
- Capital Metro
- Austin Independent School District
- Salvation Army

The specific responsibilities of care and shelter operations are:

- Determine the number of evacuees with functional needs, such as medically-fragile persons, people with disabilities, elderly persons, non-English speaking persons, and unaccompanied minors. To the extent possible, coordinate with the ARC to provide services to support the special needs of disaster victims.
- Provide and coordinate the use of transportation equipment for evacuations or other emergency situations where mass transportation is needed.
- Coordinate the delivery of all disaster mental health assistance required by victims and responders.

- Coordinate all activities related to animals in disasters.
- Inventory the operational status of all facilities listed as shelters, including the following information:
 - Structural soundness
 - Utility services
 - Adequate sanitation facilities, including showers;
 - Capacity for cooking, serving and dining areas and equipment
 - Shelter capacity

What stands out here in the brief analysis of this one section in this 160-page document is the lack of inclusion necessary to fully implement these objectives. Not only did the City of Austin fail to fulfill these responsibilities, the decision-making bodies and processes that led to the planning for such responsibilities did not include the Eastern Crescent to begin with. From a community perspective, the impacts of such oversights are obvious and extreme, but a full equity audit would be needed to call out what is missing.

The Missing Model

When disasters hit, community organizations, flexible and responsive, often rise to the occasion to fill in the gaps. In the case of marginalized communities, these organizations are vital. However, many of these same organizations have members and leaders who are concurrently experiencing the trauma of systemic racism, while dealing with funding challenges and operating in silos.

Community organizations also play an important role when it comes to safeguarding clients from “service offerings” that exacerbate their trauma. The deep relationships formed with the constituents they serve allow organizations to play a vital role in advising the allocation of resources and prioritization of need. But they can only play this role if they have been supported in getting the funding and resources they need to care for the community. Too often, lacking these resources, organizations must reach out to local or federal agencies, only to have those agencies take over in ways that exacerbate trauma and cause real harm.

Organizations can benefit when acting in coordinated collaboration while sharing information and resources and avoiding the duplication of efforts. Shared funding models, while potentially challenging, can provide co-marketing opportunities that bring larger dollars to everyone’s efforts.

This brings us to a missing model -- a venue for collaborative action that is truly community-led. In the absence of this community-led coordination, traditional and vetted models such as those offered by Austin Disaster Relief Network and the VOAD system (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters) remain the institutional go-to for disaster response. While these entities should remain central to disaster response, they lack internal diversity and relationships with diverse grassroots organizations.

In addressing the missing model, it is also vital to collectively address issues related to digital access and access to transportation, food, and medical facilities. East Austin has historic challenges in this regard, but the way these challenges play out is unique to each area. For example, 78742 is bound by Hwy 183, Hwy 71, and the Colorado River. There is no walkability to any services, no medical access, and no voting location. 78719 is located over 10 miles from downtown. The zip code includes 3 churches, a few taco trucks, industrial warehouses, the airport, a nightclub, an outdoor market, a

landfill, and about 1,000 residents. 78721 includes the highest population of Black Austinites, who make up 45% of this geographic region outlined by MLK, Airport Blvd, and 183. This area is also home to Ortega Elementary, Greater Mt. Zion, and the Sahara Lounge. Communication challenges need to be customized according to the unique needs of the hyper-local community. Each local entity represents a potential community hub and, potentially, communication partner.

In reviewing community outcomes from Storm Uri, it becomes clear that Travis County lacks a model for successfully integrating community-led disaster response into its Emergency Operation Plan. Consider including the following:

AUDIT DISASTER RESPONSE & RECOVERY PLANS

- Conduct a community-driven review and revision of disaster plans (both basic plans and hazard mitigation plans), with local experts in equity, the lived experience of East Austin communities, and Austin's climate future.
- Comprehensive equity audit of the County Disaster Plan according to FEMA and CDC's guidance on vulnerable populations.
- Mitigation strategies that address systemic inequities and baseline community resilience.

DEVELOP EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR INCLUDING COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Build a pre-approved fund for organizations to use during disasters.
- Intentionally support a diverse set of community organizations to fully represent vulnerable communities in disaster management planning and implementation. (Such as inclusion in the Emergency Management Council, the VOAD calls, and the Donation Management team.)
- Employ trusted community leaders to develop community resilience hubs that provide resources year round and serve as shelters and distribution centers during disasters.
- Develop a shared and pre-approved funding pool for organizations operating in disasters.
- Evaluate and address the inclusivity of VOAD, and consider ways to include historically excluded organizations in ways that allow them to participate on their own terms.

BUILD A NEW, ANTI-RACIST AND PREDICTIVE, FLEXIBLE MODEL

- Develop models that use disaster phasing to predict and strategize for inequities likely to be amplified by disasters, such as poor infrastructure, food deserts and barriers to communication.
- Develop a community-wide communications plan that includes alternative modes led by trusted community organizations and utilizes more equitable communication channels, such as AISD robo-calls and mass texting.
- Operationalize collaborative spaces (virtual and physical) that are community-led.

USE INTERSECTIONAL AND PLACE-BASED APPROACHES TO LEAVING NO-ONE OUT

- Create a protocol for addressing large buildings like Samsung and downtown to address excess energy use by large buildings that are included in the "critical infrastructure" grid system.

- Conduct comprehensive mapping to overlay community assets, service areas, resource hub locations and existing vulnerabilities.
- Develop a shared service model in which residents' needs are met holistically and with a human-centered approach.
- Develop a shared data model to support shared service and to identify and address unmet needs.

DRAFT

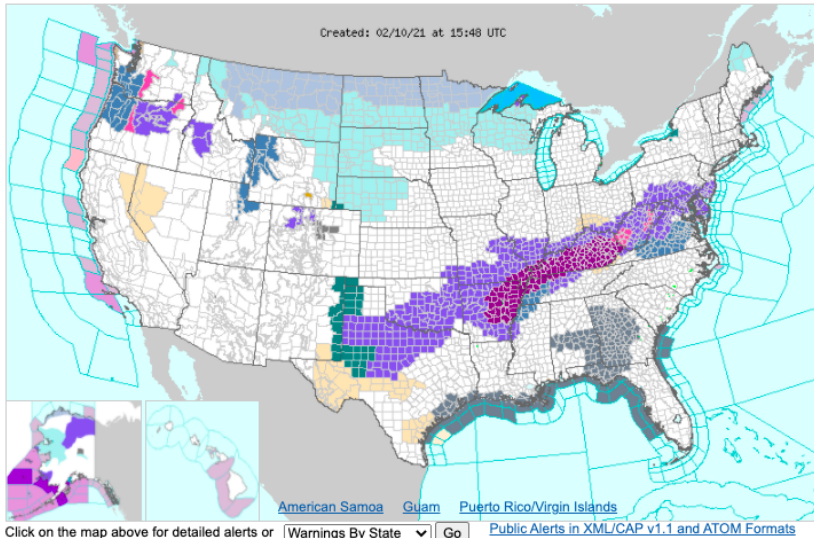
APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Weather Advisories

[Return to Paragraph](#) or [Return to Table of Contents](#)

 **Frigid Temperatures, Dangerous Wind Chills, Ice Storm and Heavy Snow Across The U.S.**
The weather theme for much of the U.S. the rest of this week and weekend will be bitterly cold temperatures and dangerous wind chills, especially in the Central third of the U.S. This extensive arctic air mass will contribute to a few winter events. Ice and snow are likely from the southern Plains to Mid-Atlantic, Wednesday through Friday, and a winter storm will also impact the West late week. [Read More >](#)

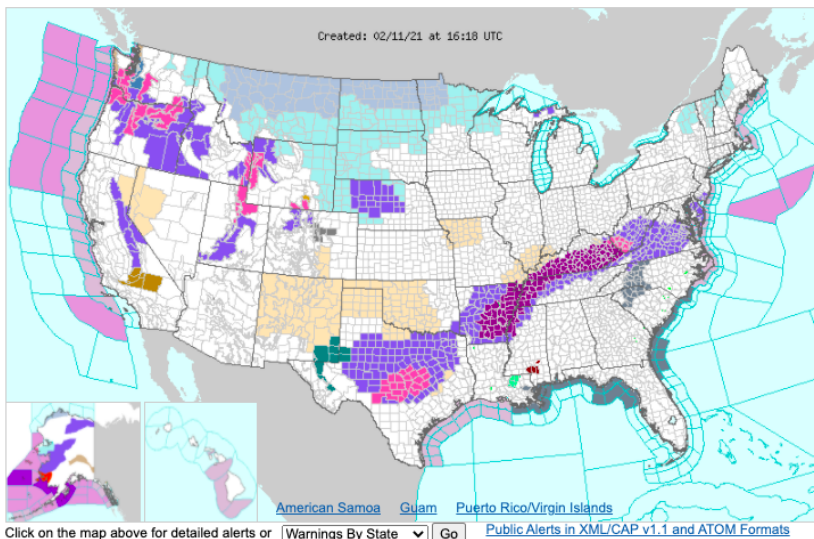
[ACTIVE ALERTS](#) [FORECAST MAPS](#) [RADAR](#) [RIVERS, LAKES, RAINFALL](#) [AIR QUALITY](#) [SATELLITE](#) [PAST WEATHER](#)



 **Winter Temperatures and Weather For Much Of The U.S.**
Arctic air with frigid temperatures and dangerous wind chills continue to blanket the Central third of the U.S., while beginning to expand into the Northwest. Two large winter storms are taking shape with an ice storm from Arkansas to Kentucky and snow for the Mid-Atlantic through early Friday, while a potent storm moves into the West for heavy snow and wintry precipitation in the Northwest. [Read More >](#)

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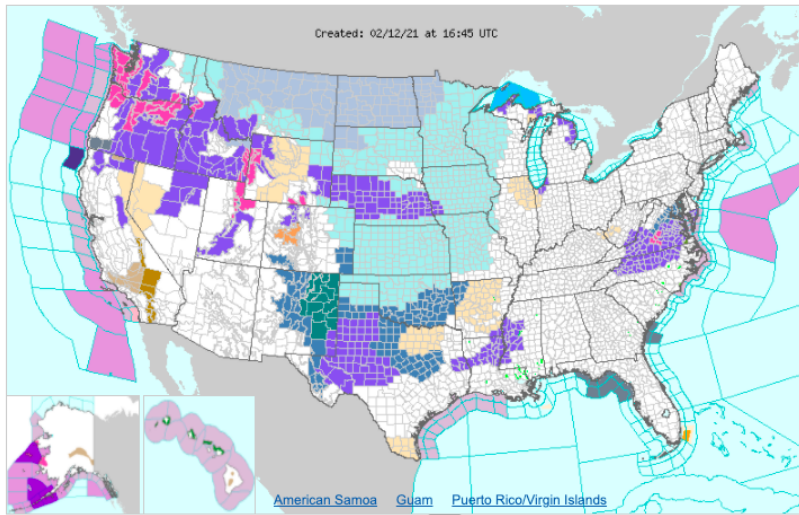


Frigid Temperatures and Winter Weather Impacts Continue into the Weekend

A cold arctic air mass draped across much of the country will continue to aid the development of wintry precipitation from coast to coast. Heavy snow and ice will be possible in the Pacific NW while snow and freezing rain will impact portions of the Plains, the South, and the Mid-Atlantic. Record low temperatures are possible through the weekend. [Read More >](#)

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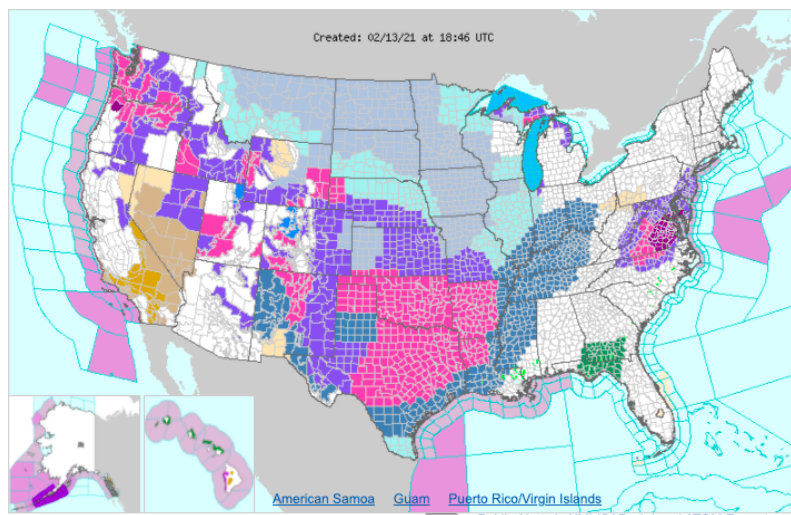
Click on the map above for detailed alerts or [Public Alerts in XML/CAP v1.1 and ATOM Formats](#)



Major Winter Storms to Blanket the West and Plains in Heavy Snow and Ice; Icy Weather in the Mid-Atlantic

Heavy snow is falling across the mountains and lowlands of Washington and Oregon today with significant icing in northwest Oregon. Significant icing will also occur over Virginia and southern Maryland into Sunday. A major winter storm is expected to develop over the Southern U.S. Sunday lifting into the Northeast through Tuesday with a large area of snow, sleet, and freezing rain expected. [Read More >](#)

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Appendix 2: Water and Food Distribution Starts May 19

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 **Natasha Harper-Madison** @NatashaD1atx · Feb 19

Emergency food, water, and other essential resources are being distributed at four sites today.

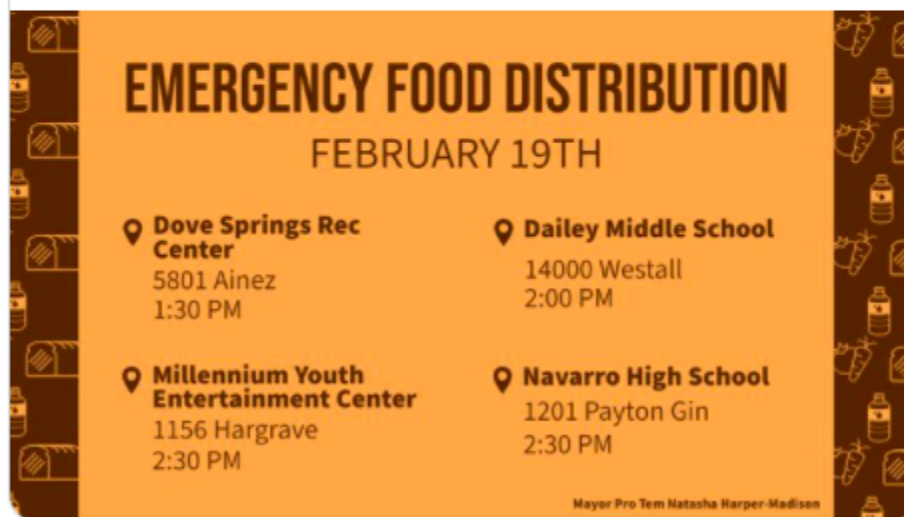
Expect high demand/traffic.

1:30pm: Dove Springs Rec Ctr, 5801 Ainez

2:00pm: Dailey Middle, 14000 Westall

2:30pm: Navarro ECHS, 1201 Payton Gin

2:30pm: Millennium, 1156 Hargrave

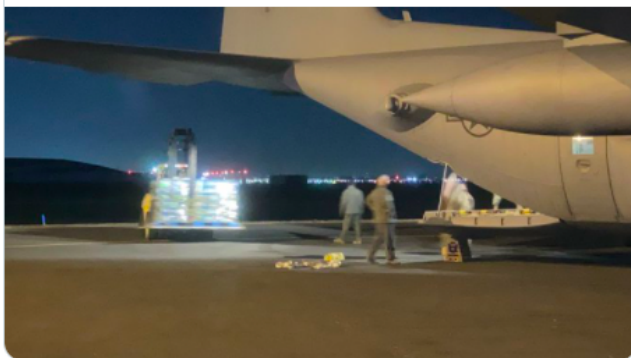


Natasha Harper-Madison @NatashaD1atx · Feb 19

Touchdown.

 **Andy Brown** @TravisCoJudge · Feb 19

It's not enough but it's a good start- the first of the water finally arrived tonight in Travis County from @TDEM @fema @RepLloydDoggett



1



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Appendix 3: Letter to City Manager from 4 Council Members

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City Manager Cronk:

On both Friday, Feb. 19, and Saturday, Feb. 20, our offices contacted you via phone and email urging that the City establish a significant food distribution operation for Austinites in need because of this disaster. We need your office to coordinate with all relevant agencies, including the state and federal government, to provide significant quantities of food to our communities right now.

Food insecurity was a serious issue before this disaster due to the pandemic, and is now far worse because of the crisis. Many have been without power for several days and have had their food spoil, while also losing a week's worth of wages with rent due in seven days. On top of that, the food banks and Austin ISD schools were closed all last week due to the weather. We have heard from many constituents who are desperately asking for food and water today. We expect a major increase in the amount of food insecure households in the coming week due to this disaster.

We have not yet received confirmation from you that we will have such a food distribution operation at the scale that is necessary, and the issue is urgent. Our constituents are asking us when and where food will be made available for them. At the food pick-up sites that have been provided so far, demand has far exceeded supply. Cars have had to be turned away due to insufficient supply.

While we are inspired by actions Austinites are taking on their own to keep people fed, and by the non-profit and City supported efforts, we do not believe current operations will be sufficient in size or scale to address the increased demand for food in Austin because of this disaster. We are asking your office to communicate to our constituents and the public that our City is aware of the need and is taking immediate action to meet that need.

Signed,

Mayor Pro Tem
Natasha Harper Madison, D1

Council Member
Vanessa Fuentes, D2

Council Member
Sabino "Pio" Renteria, D3

Council Member
Gregorio "Greg" Casar, D4

Appendix 4: CRT Donor List

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[INSERT DONOR LIST]

Appendix 5: Mention Count of Vulnerability

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Disproportionately Impacted Populations from FEMA's "Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity"	# of Times Mentioned in Austin Basic Plan	# of Times Mentioned in COA Hazard Mitigation Plan	# of Times Mentioned in Travis County "Emergency Management Basic Plan"	# of Times Mentioned in Travis County Hazard Mitigation Plan
low socioeconomic status	No mention.	4	No mention.	No mention.
People of color	No mention.	No Mention.	No mention.	No mention.
Tribal and first nation communities	1 mention, in the context of the joint field office.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
women	No mention.	1	No mention.	No Mention.
LGBTQ	No mention.	1 (in context of AIDS)	No mention.	No Mention.
People experiencing homelessness	1 mention, in the context of heat exposure	1 in context of a flood fatality	No mention.	Only mentioned in the context of extreme heat: "Travis County, in coordination with the City of Austin, developed standard operations to monitor extreme heat conditions and coordinate outreach efforts to at-risk populations during extreme heat events. The phased approach includes monitoring conditions, utilizing media and local organizations to inform vulnerable populations, and providing direct relief to those at risk when necessary including but not limited to: cooling stations, water distribution, and increased capacity for homeless shelters."
Limited English proficiency	1 mention	1 in community profile section.	No mention.	No mention.
Service workers	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
Migrant laborers	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.

Populations with limited cognitive or physical abilities	3 mentions	"Disability" mentioned 11 times, but only in the context of risk and not in the context of people with disabilities.	No mention.	One mention in the context of evacuation. (See below)
Renters (or "multifamily")	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.
Institutionalized communities (prisons / nursing homes / schools)	No mention except one mention of schools.	32 mentions of schools. None of nursing homes or prisons.	In reference to evacuation on page 22: "Assist in evacuation planning for individuals with functional and access needs and institutional facilities (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions)."	In reference to facilities of concern: "According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (2013), there are 23 acute care and psychiatric hospitals in the planning area. According to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services there are 31 nursing homes in the planning area (2017). (Mentioned schools, hospitals, nursing homes, military institutions -- not prisons)

Additional disproportionately Impacted Populations not mentioned in FEMA's "Guide to Expanding Mitigation: Making the Connection to Equity"	# of Times Mentioned in Austin Basic Plan		# of Times Mentioned in Travis County "Emergency Management Basic Plan"	# of Times Mentioned in Travis County Hazard Mitigation Plan
Undocumented	No mention.	No mention.	No mention.	No Mention.
Black	No mention.	1 mention in community profile.	No mention.	No Mention.
Hispanic/Latinx	No mention.	2 mentions in community profile.	No mention.	No Mention.
Unincorporated areas	No mention.	2 mentions. One addresses the impact of wildfire.	No mention.	Mentioned 24 times. Mostly in the context of geography. And: "The unincorporated areas of the County and the jurisdictions of Lakeway, Manor, Pflugerville, Sunset Valley, and Village of the Hills typically experience extended heat Waves. - Page 165 And in reference to the above, Evaluate the feasibility of structural elevations as flood mitigation throughout unincorporated Travis County. Other contexts include fuel reduction and flood mitigation in unincorporated

				areas.
Mobile home communities	No mention.	2 mentions regarding tornadoes and heat exposure.	No mention.	Mentioned 8 times in reference to tornadic winds only.
Elderly	2 mentions.	11 mentions	No mention.	Mentioned 13 times.
Infants	No mention.	3 mentions	No mention.	Mentioned 3 times.
Children	1 mention	22 mentions.	No mention.	1 mention
“vulnerable”	3 Mentions	40 mentions. However, only 8 are in the context of vulnerable populations. The rest address infrastructure, geographic areas or buildings.	1 mention.	70 times. However, the mentions referred to numbers of elderly and low-income in broad areas, and in general terms such as structural, geographic and climate vulnerability, rather than in the context of populations and pre-existing vulnerabilities. When populations are mentioned, it is with no specificity of impact. Very few actions are mentioned to address anything related to vulnerable populations.

Appendix 6: Demographics of Vulnerable Populations

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Table 3-3. Population Distribution by Jurisdiction

JURISDICTION	TOTAL 2010 POPULATION	PERCENTAGE	ESTIMATED VULNERABLE OR SENSITIVE POPULATIONS	
			Elderly (Over 65)	Below Poverty Level
Lakeway	11,391	1.11%	2,039	480
Manor	5,037	0.49%	262	1,396
Pflugerville	46,936	4.58%	2,816	4,315
Sunset Valley	749	0.07%	85	12
Village of the Hills	2,472	0.24%	502	29
Austin ⁷	790,390	77.17%	55,327	156,161

Appendix 7: Mentions of Areas in Travis County Hazard Mitigation Plan

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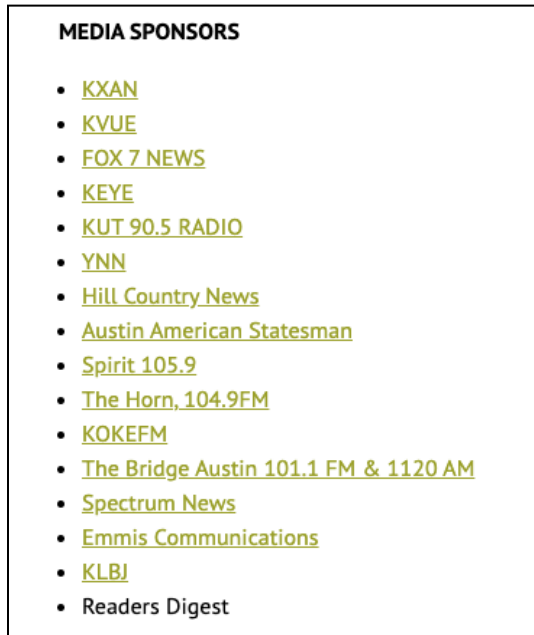
Jurisdiction Type	Area Name	Represented on Executive Planning Team?	# of Mentions in Planning Content
Cities (multiple counties)	Pflugerville (small part in Williamson County)	yes	150
Cities	Sunset Valley	yes	145
Cities (multiple counties)	Austin (county seat) (small parts in Hays and Williamson counties)		145
Villages	The Hills	yes	115
Cities	Lakeway	yes	105
Cities	Manor	yes	97
Census Designated Places	Onion Creek (former)	no	10
Census Designated Places	Barton Creek	no	3
Cities (multiple counties)	Round Rock (mostly in Williamson County)	no	3
Cities	West Lake Hills	no	2
Cities (multiple counties)	Mustang Ridge (small parts in Caldwell and Bastrop counties)	no	2
Census Designated Places	Anderson Mill (former)	no	1
Census Designated Places	Manchaca	no	1
Cities	Bee Cave	no	1
Cities	Lago Vista	no	1
Unincorporated Communities	Bluff Springs	no	1
Unincorporated Communities	Del Valle	no	1
Census Designated Places	Garfield	no	0
Census Designated Places	Hornsby Bend	no	0
Census Designated Places	Hudson Bend	no	0

Census Designated Places	Jollyville (former)	no	0
Census Designated Places	Lost Creek	no	0
Census Designated Places	Shady Hollow	no	0
Census Designated Places	Wells Branch	no	0
Census Designated Places	Windemere (former)	no	0
Cities	Creedmoor	no	0
Cities	Jonestown	no	0
Cities	Rollingwood	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	Cele	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	Elroy	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	Littig	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	Lund	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	McNeil	no	0
Unincorporated Communities	New Sweden	no	0
Villages	Briarcliff	no	0
Villages	Point Venture	no	0
Villages	San Leanna	no	0
Villages	Volente	no	0
Villages	Webberville	no	0
Cities (multiple counties)	Cedar Park (mostly in Williamson County)	no	0
Cities (multiple counties)	Elgin (mostly in Bastrop County)	no	0
Cities (multiple counties)	Leander (mostly in Williamson County)	no	0

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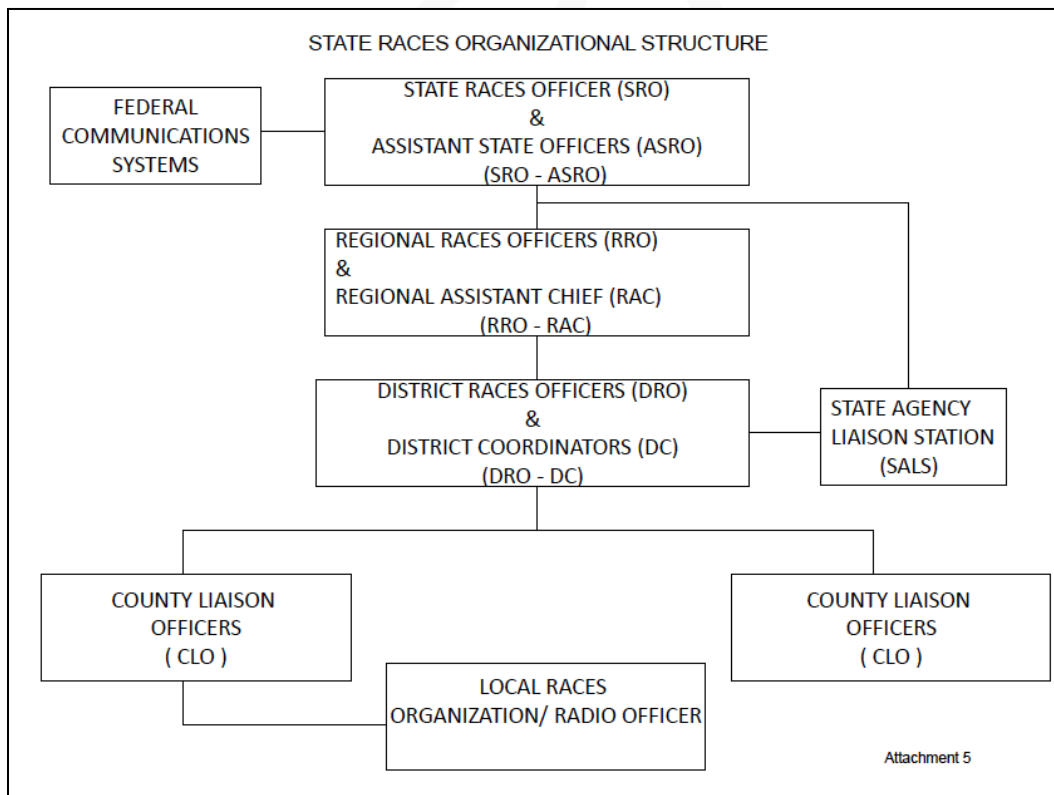
Appendix 8: ADRN Media Partners

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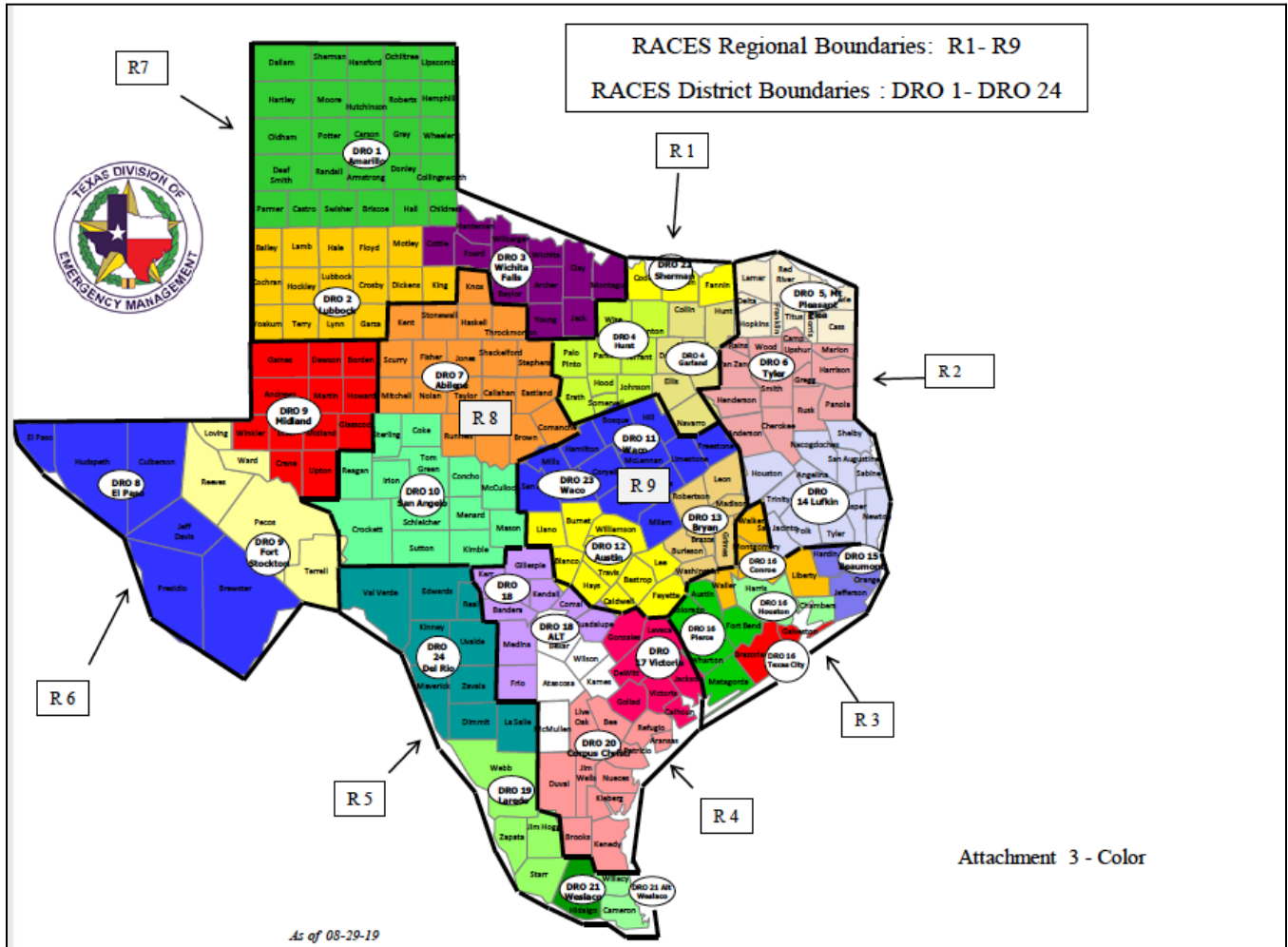
Appendix 9: State RACES Organizational Structure

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Appendix 10: State RACES Boundaries

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Emergency Management Council

(Source: TDEM Draft RACES SOP Attachment 6 Emergency Management Council 05-14-2020)

Appendix 11: Emergency Management Council

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Emergency Management Council	
No.	Agency Name
1	American Red Cross
2	Public Utility Commission of Texas
3	Railroad Commission of Texas *
4	State Comptroller of Public Accounts
5	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service *
6	Texas A&M University System
7	Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service
8	Texas A&M Forest Service *
9	Texas Animal Health Commission *
10	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality *
11	Texas Commission on Fire Protection
12	Texas Department of Agriculture *
13	Texas Department of Criminal Justice
14	Texas Department of Family Protective Services
15	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
16	Texas Department of Information Resources
17	Texas Department of Insurance
18	Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
19	Texas Department of Motor Vehicles
20	Texas Department of Public Safety *
21	Texas Department of State Health Services *
22	Texas Department of Transportation
23	Texas Division of Emergency Management
24	Texas Education Agency
25	Texas Facilities Commission
26	Texas General Land Office *
27	Texas Health and Human Services Commission
28	Texas Military Department
29	Texas Office of the Attorney General
30	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department *
31	Texas State Auditor's Office
32	Texas State University System
33	Texas Tech University System
34	Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
35	Texas Workforce Commission
36	The Salvation Army
37	University of Houston System
38	University of North Texas System
39	University of Texas System
	Note: The American Red Cross and the Salvation Army are not state agencies.

The state Emergency Management Council, which is composed of 36 state agencies, the American Red Cross (ARC), Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), and the Salvation Army (TSA), is established by state law to advise and assist the Governor in all matters relating to disaster mitigation, emergency preparedness, disaster response, and recovery.

Attachment 6

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oR3v8fxNUigzoBT0l62p6qLj3p55h1ng0nThXGWiRW0/edit#bookmark=id.e4pzhq43es9n>

Appendix 12: Travis County Emergency Operations Plan - Annex Assignments

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ATTACHMENT 5 ANNEX ASSIGNMENTS	
ANNEX	ASSIGNED TO:
Annex A: Warning	Police Chief/County Sheriff
Annex B: Communications	Police Chief/County Sheriff
Annex C: Shelter & Mass Care	American Red Cross/EMC
Annex D: Radiological Protection	Fire Chief/Fire Marshal/HAZMAT Coordinator
Annex E: Evacuation	Police Chief/County Sheriff
Annex F: Firefighting	Fire Chief/Fire Marshal
Annex G: Law Enforcement	Police Chief/County Sheriff
Annex H: Health and Medical Services	Austin/Travis County Health Dept. & EMS
Annex I: Public Information	City/County PIO
Annex J: Recovery	Risk Manager/Finance Director/EMC
Annex K: Public Works & Engineering	Public Works Director
Annex L: Utilities	Public Utilities Director
Annex M: Resource Management	EMC
Annex N: Direction & Control	EMC
Annex O: Human Services	Human Services Director
Annex P: Hazard Mitigation	EMC
Annex Q: Hazardous Materials & Oil Spill Response	Fire Chief/Fire Marshal/HAZMAT Coordinator
Annex R: Search & Rescue	Fire Chief/Fire Marshal/Rescue Officer
Annex S: Transportation	City/County or ISD Transportation Director
Annex T: Donations Management	Asst. EMC/VOAD Representative
Annex U: Legal	City/County Attorney
Annex V: Terrorist Incident Response	Police Chief/County Sheriff

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oR3v8fxNUigzoBT0l62p6qLj3p55h1ng0nThXGWIRW0/edit#bookmark=id.e4pzhq43es9n>

Appendix 13: State Template -- Donation Steering Group (Annex T)

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DONATIONS STEERING GROUP
<p>The Donations Steering Group should consist of local government officials, community leaders, and designated members of the community-based (volunteer) organizations (CBOs) and the voluntary agencies (VOLAGs) who would have an interest in setting policy for and being a part of the donations management program if conditions warrant that it be operated by the [County/City] government.</p> <p>The following are typical organizations, donations management personnel, and other officials that should be represented on the Donations Steering Group:</p> <p>Donations Coordinator – Directs donations management operations Volunteer Coordinator – Obtains/manages volunteers who donate time and services</p> <p>Representatives from community-based (volunteer) organizations (CBOs) such as: Local volunteer center Faith-based organizations Local ministerial alliance Clubs and organizations having a charitable mission as a part of their activities (e.g., Jaycees, Scouts, Lions Clubs, fraternities, sororities, Kiwanis, Shriners, Masons, Knights of Columbus, Telephone Pioneers, etc.)</p> <p>Representatives from local chapters of national voluntary agencies (VOLAGs) such as: American Red Cross (ARC)</p>
<hr/>
<p>The Salvation Army (TSA) Texas Baptist Men (TBM) Adventist Community Services (ACS) Area Food Banks (i.e., America's Second Harvest) Humane Society Church World Service (CWS) United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Radio Emergency Associated Communications Teams (REACT) Catholic Charities St. Vincent de Paul Society</p> <p>Public Works Director – Assists in receiving, storing, sorting, transporting, and distributing donated resources</p> <p>Donations Financial Officer – Records, handles, and disburses monetary donations</p> <p>Law Enforcement Representative – Coordinates security for government-supplied resources, donated goods, the Resource Staging Area, the Phone Bank, the Volunteer Center, Distribution Points, etc.</p> <p>Public Health Officer – Certifies specialized medical volunteers and the use or disposition of donated foods and medical supplies</p> <p>Public Information Officer – Works with the media on donations announcements/pleas</p>

Appendix 14: State Template -- Communications (Annex B)

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FACILITY	COMMUNICATIONS									
	Cable TV Or Satellite	Phone/Fax	TLETS	RACES	Radio VHF/UHF	Radio HF	Cell Phones	Satellite Phones	Local Computer Network	Internet E-mail
Airport		X					X			X
Department of Public Safety	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Engineering		X			X		X		X	X
EOC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
External Customers (Citizens, Private Industry)		X		X	X	X	X			X
Fire Department & Mobile Units		X			X		X	X	X	X
Hospital		X			X					X
Municipal Utilities		X			X				X	X
National Weather Service	X	X	X							X
Police Department & Mobile Units	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Private Utilities		X			X		X	X		X
Public Works		X			X		X		X	X
Red Cross		X			X		X			X
Shelters		X			X					
Sheriff's Office	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X

Appendix 15: State Template -- Public Information (Annex I)

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<p>C. Providing Emergency Information to Special Populations</p> <p>Special populations will be provided information on emergency situations and appropriate instructions by the following methods:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visually-impaired: EAS messages and news advisories on radio, NOAA Weather Radio, or by door-to-door notification 2. Hearing-impaired: Captioned EAS messages and news advisories on television, print media 3. Non-English Speakers: [Interpreters/radio, TV, or cable language newscasts/door-to-door/other] 	

Appendix 16: Travis County Org Chart

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