

Humanitarian Action Plan

with 34 Recommendations
for Coordinated Emergency Planning
to Increase Immigrant Resilience

 hap.houstonimmigration.org



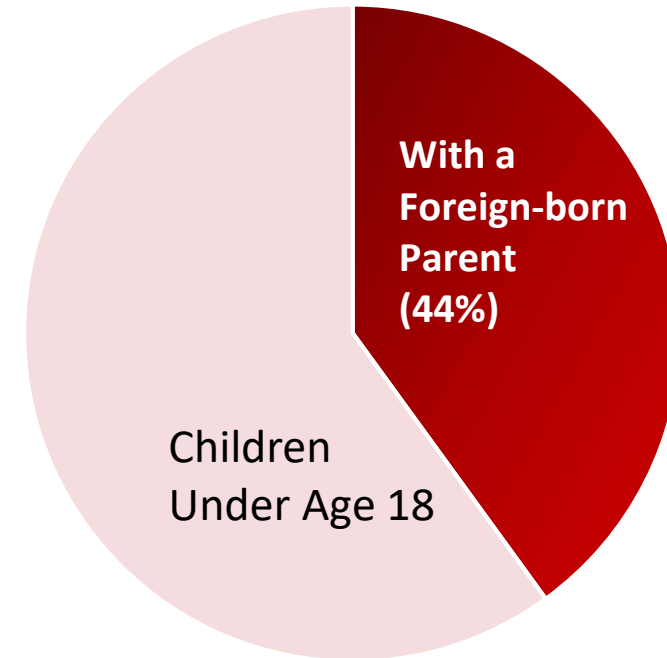
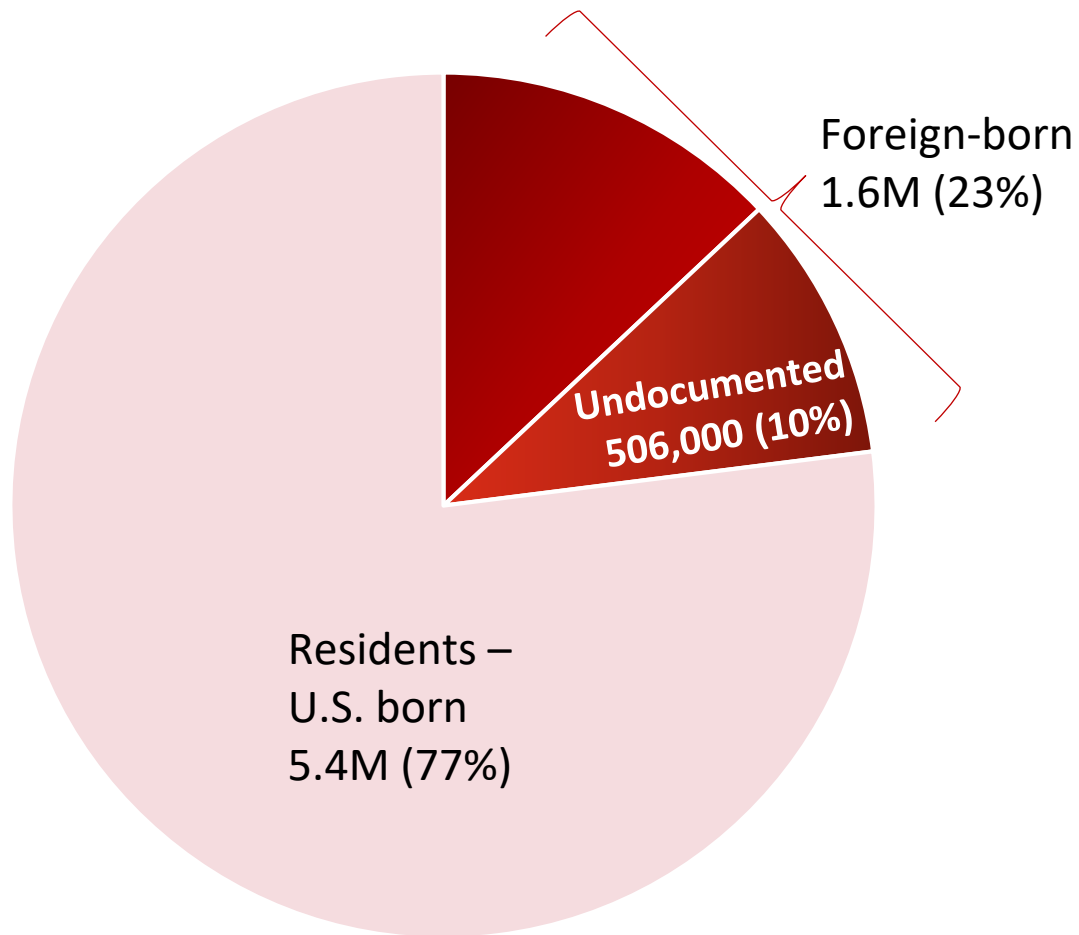
HOUSTON IMMIGRATION
LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

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Humanitarian Action Plan

Immigrant resilience is foundational to the Houston region's resilience.

Almost one quarter of 2017 residents were foreign-born.

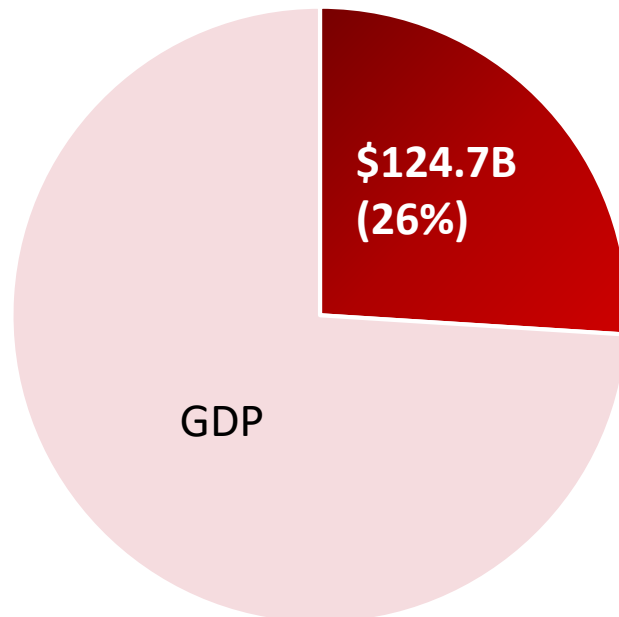


Almost half (44%) of 2016 children had at least one foreign-born parent.

Humanitarian Action Plan

Immigrant resilience is foundational to the Houston region's resilience.

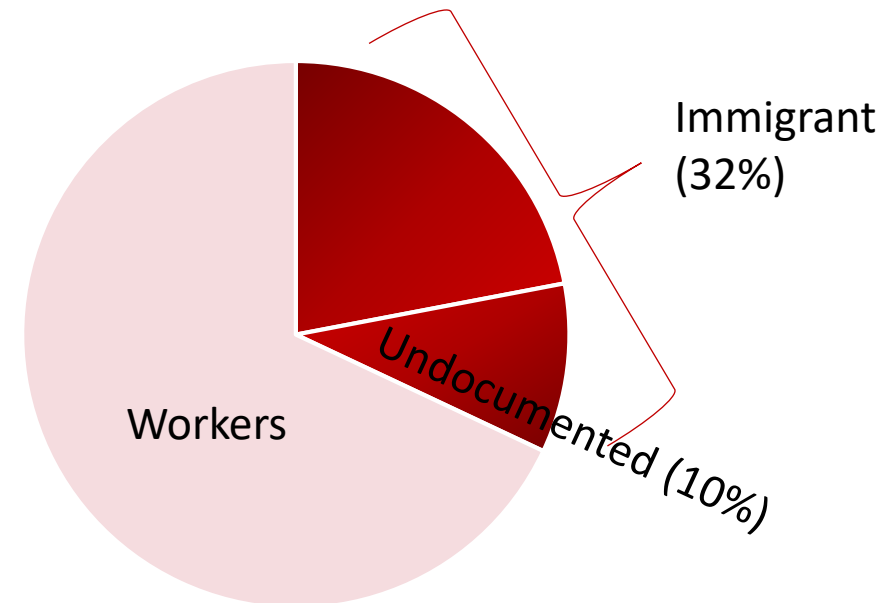
26% of GDP was contributed by foreign-born residents.



Foreign-born households also:

- held \$38.2B in spending power
- contributed \$3.5B in state and local taxes.

32% of workers were immigrants, and 10% were undocumented.



More than half of construction workers were foreign-born.

Humanitarian Action Plan

Immigrants are disproportionately impacted by disasters.

- More likely to report income or job loss due to Harvey (64% vs 39% U.S. born).
- Undocumented day laborers reported not feeling safe asking for help from government (64%).
- Those living in poverty suffer economic, social, and cultural losses after disasters. More-privileged residents recover more quickly and may even benefit financially.
- The more FEMA aid an area receives, the more wealth inequality grows.

Humanitarian Action Plan

Why is HILSC involved in emergency planning?

Immediate Harvey response:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Immigration attorney volunteers to local shelters
- 833-HOU-IMMI live on Univision – 1,393 calls in two days
- Disaster relief eligibility (Penn State Dickinson Law)

Humanitarian Action Plan

Why is HILSC involved in emergency planning?

Longer-term Harvey response:

- Harvey assistance for immigrants (\$200,000)
- Disaster Recovery Legal Corps Immigration Fellows (\$575,872)
- State Bar of Texas' Disaster Relief Legal Manual
- Humanitarian Action Plan
- Social services advocacy
- Cultural competency training
- Immigrant Accessibility Index
- ICE template
- NeedHOU.org

Humanitarian Action Plan

Coordinated emergency plan to increase immigrant resilience

- 34 recommendations; 10 HILSC commitments
- Informed by best practices, gaps and barriers from Harvey.
- Based on interviews, focus groups and meetings with over 80 people:
 - 40 immigrant-serving organizations
 - Undocumented immigrant clients
 - 11 systems-level agencies.
- Workshop with 30 participants – the first time disaster and immigration experts worked together.



Humanitarian Action Plan

Opportunity themes for increased resilience

1

Inclusive communication

Accurate, timely and actionable information in accessible language.

2

Accessible resources

Preparedness, response and recovery assistance – particularly private funds.

3

Culturally competent approaches

Strategically design policies, services and materials to meet needs.

Humanitarian Action Plan

Orientation of the HAP

Disaster phase

- *Preparedness*
- *Response*
- *Recovery*

Implementation level

- *Federal/State*
- *County/City*
- *Nonprofit*

Implementation approach

- *Policy*
- *Program/Operations*
- *Funding*

Opportunity themes for increased immigrant resilience

- *Inclusive communication*
- *Accessible resources*
- *Cultural competency*



Humanitarian Action Plan

Orientation of the HAP

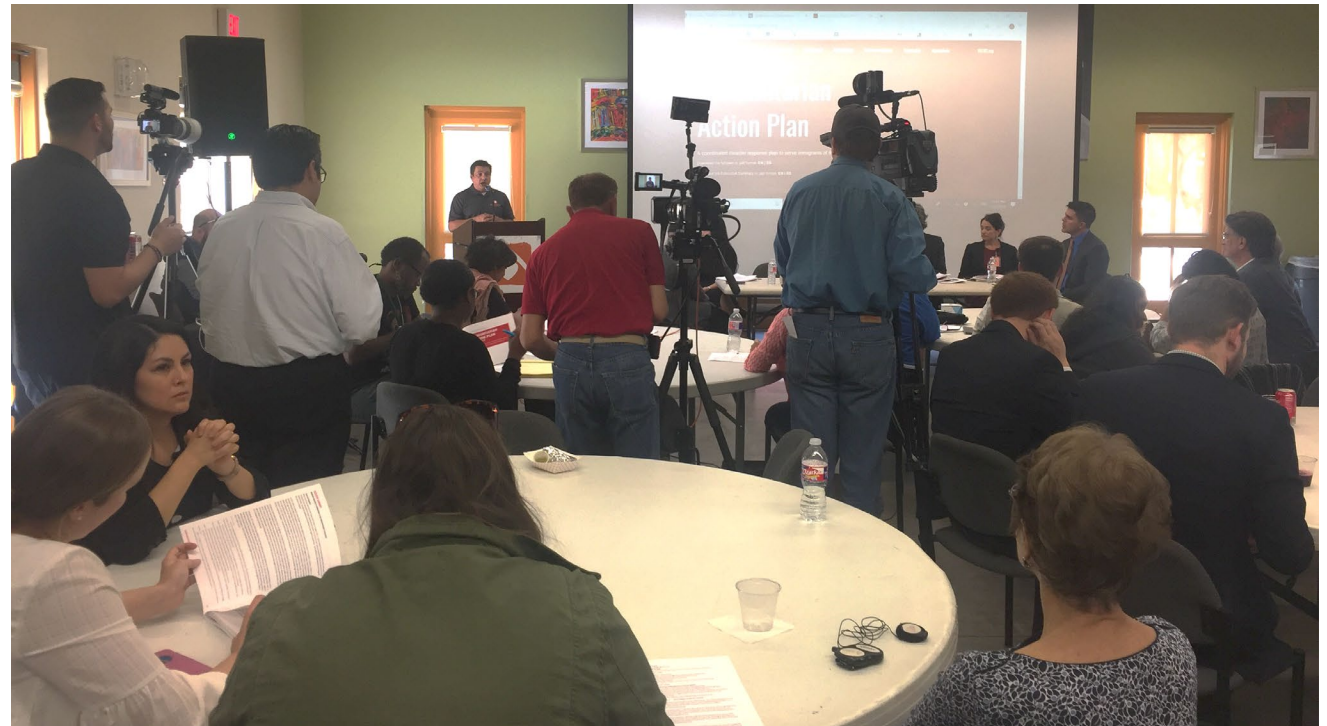
Recommendations Overview
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	Disaster Phase			Level			Approach			Opportunity		
	Preparedness	Response	Recovery	Federal/State	County/City	Nonprofit	Policy	Program/Operations	Funding	Inclusive communications	Accessible resources	Cultural competence
1) Federal Enforcement		●		●			●				●	
2) FEMA Applications	●	●	●	●				●			●	
3) Complete Data	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	
4) Informed Decisions	●				●	●	●		●		●	
5) Organizational Barriers	●				●	●	●				●	
6) Chemical Response Plan		●			●	●	●					●
7) Safe, Affordable Housing	●		●		●	●	●		●		●	
8) Labor Protections	●		●		●	●	●				●	
9) Immigrants with Disabilities		●			●	●	●				●	
10) Preparedness Literacy	●				●			●			●	
11) COOP Training	●				●			●			●	

Humanitarian Action Plan

Prerequisites to immigrant resilience

1. Ensure that the data informing policy and funding decisions includes immigrants:
Migration Policy Institute
Center for Migration Studies.
2. Inform policy and funding decisions with immigrants' experience.
3. Consult with immigrant-serving organizations and constituents in emergency planning.





Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

1) Federal Enforcement

Suspend interior immigration enforcement within 200 miles of disaster zones, including operations at Customs and Border Patrol check points, to ensure that people can move safely for evacuation and re-entry, to access resources, and to reach recovery job sites.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

DISASTER PHASE

Response

LEVEL

Federal/State

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Accessible resources



Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

2) FEMA Applications

Provide clear communication on the FEMA disaster assistance application process, including how to efficiently work through the process, where to access assistance, and organizational training, to increase recovery assistance to eligible disaster victims.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response Recovery	Federal/State	Program/Operations	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



3) Complete Data

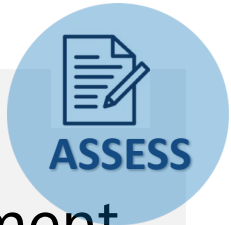
Develop data to accurately understand the impact of a disaster on vulnerable populations, including immigrants, and coordinate public and private recovery resources to ensure private resources reach those who are not eligible for FEMA and other assistance.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Texas General Land Office, city and county government agencies, academic institutions, and funders

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response Recovery	Federal/State County/City Nonprofit	<i>Policy</i> Funding	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

4) Informed Decisions



Inform policy and funding decisions with: 1) **existing studies** which document immigrants' experience in Harvey response and recovery and 2) immigrant-serving organizations' **expertise**, in order to fill gaps and address unintentional barriers to emergency and recovery services for immigrants.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county government agencies, and funders

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness

LEVEL

County/City
Nonprofit

APPROACH

Policy
Funding

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



5) Organizational Barriers

Assess organizational policies and practices to identify and remedy unintentional barriers to immigrant access to secure services. Such actions include strengthening inclusivity statements and similar policies as well as all ensuring all staff and volunteers practice inclusion.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: All public and private emergency service providers

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Immigrant Accessibility Index

A practical self-assessment for non-profits & funders

Purpose

Agency self assessment of accessibility of services to all immigrants, regardless of legal status.

Key definition

Organizational and systemic accessibility includes:

- policies and practices are aligned
- trauma-informed, culturally welcoming, physically and linguistically accessible, and equity-building.

PTR Framework

Preferences, personal values and ethos

Traditions, organizational values and ethos

Requirements, of legal, binding, funding, etc.

If a policy or practice is P or T and it's a barrier, change it!

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



6) Chemical Response Plan

Develop and implement a regional chemical response plan, guided by recommendations from the **Environmental Integrity Project's August 2018 and Harris County Gap Analysis** reports to ensure minimal damage to ship channel industries and affected residents, the workforce and first responders in their proximity and throughout the region.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county government agencies, in consultation with local environmental justice advocates

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Cultural competence

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

7) Safe, Affordable Housing

Protect low-income homeowners and renters and the neighborhoods they live in by 1) **increasing affordable housing supply**, 2) **improving and enforcing building safety codes**, and 3) **expanding and/or clarifying eligibility for disaster recovery applications**.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county government agencies, including housing departments

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

8) Labor Protections

Partner with local worker centers to ensure the health and safety of second responders who are cleaning and rebuilding our region, and reduce violations of employment laws.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county government agencies, in consultation with local worker centers and unions, and funders

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Recovery

LEVEL

County/City
Nonprofit

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

9) Immigrants with Disabilities

Ensure the response and recovery needs of immigrants with disabilities are met, guided by **Living Hope Wheelchair Association's report**, Pre-existing Conditions in a Time of Disasters: Challenges and Opportunities Advancing an Equitable Recovery for Vulnerable Populations.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county government agencies, and emergency response and recovery providers

DISASTER PHASE

Response

LEVEL

County/City
Nonprofit

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

10) Preparedness Literacy

Develop disaster preparedness information in the top six languages spoken in the Houston area, at a **sixth- grade reading level** in order to increase access to information and improve the security of all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county offices of emergency management

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Programs/Operations

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

11) Continuations of Operations Plan (COOP) Training

Provide Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) training to immigrant-serving organizations to ensure these expert, trusted agencies have an emergency management plan in place and are therefore available for response and recovery.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: City of Houston Offices of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Program/Operations

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



12) Information Dissemination

Coordinate with immigrant advocates on immigrant-specific disaster information and disseminate **to local media** to increase access to accurate, timely, and actionable information.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, City of Houston Office of Emergency Management, City of Houston Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, and Texas Organizing Project

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

13) Immigrant-Specific Information

Provide the HILSC FAQ to first responders and frontline volunteers, shelters, and relief centers to increase access to accurate, timely, and actionable information and assistance for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Federal Emergency Management Agency, Texas General Land Office, city and county offices of emergency management, the American Red Cross, and emergency shelter managers

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness	County/City	Policy	Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

14) Automatic Emergency Notification

Develop an automatic registration system for emergency notifications (e.g., through the Harris Health Financial Assistance Program, Houston Public Library, 211 Helpline, and/or others), to increase access to accurate information for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, City of Houston Office of Emergency Management, and potentially Harris Health, Houston Public Library, United Way, and/or other organizations

DISASTER PHASE

Response

LEVEL

County/City
Nonprofit

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



15) Non-English Media Plan

Ensure Ready Harris and Ready Houston have an outreach plan targeting non-English media, informed by immigrant advocates, to increase access to timely, accurate, and actionable information for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Harris County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, City of Houston Office of Emergency Management, and City of Houston Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Response
Recovery

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Inclusive communications



Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

16) Verify Immigrant-Specific Information

Identify, verify, and disseminate emergency information specific to immigrants via HILSC FAQ, Immigrant Rights Hotline (833-HOU-IMMI), and the NeedHOU website; and provide to Emergency Operations Centers and ONIAC to distribute to shelters and relief centers to increase immigrant access to accurate, timely, and actionable information.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC members and partners

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response Recovery	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

17) Emergency Notification via Schools

Partner with school districts to communicate emergency information via their robocall and text messaging systems to increase access to accurate information for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county offices of emergency management and school districts

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



18) Immigrant Community Liaison

Serve as the point of contact for local **Emergency Operation Centers** for immigrant-related issues and ensure that emergency communications are linguistically and culturally appropriate to increase access to accurate, timely, and actionable information for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county offices of emergency management

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Response
Recovery

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Inclusive communications

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

19) Language Access for First Responders

Coordinate the availability of multilingual volunteers and language access technology for first responders and client-facing providers at shelters and supply centers to increase access to assistance for non-English speaking people.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county offices of emergency management

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Response

LEVEL

County/City

APPROACH

Policy

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



20) Cultural Safety Training

Implement staff and volunteer cultural safety and mental health/self-care workshops to improve access to safe, secure response and recovery resources for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross and other organizations and agencies that provide emergency services, and HILSC

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Recovery	Federal/State County/City Nonprofit	Policy Program/Operations	Cultural competence



Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

21) Immigrant Accessibility Index

Employ HILSC's Immigrant Accessibility Index, an organizational self-assessment tool to identify opportunities to reduce barriers and increase immigrant access to services.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: city and county agencies, and emergency response and recovery providers

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response Recovery	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

22) Safe Emergency Shelters

Ensure ~~the Department of Homeland Security, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement,~~ are not present at emergency shelters, supply centers, food pantries, and other relief centers where disaster victims receive services to ensure immigrants feel safe accessing these resources.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Managing organizations of emergency shelters, supply centers, food pantries, and other emergency relief centers

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

23) Non-Discrimination Policies

Post summaries of non-discrimination policies, inclusivity statements, or similar policies in at least Spanish and English along with translations available in the additional top five languages spoken in Houston outside of emergency shelters, supply centers, food pantries, and other relief centers to increase access to safe, secure response and recovery resources for all.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Managing organizations of emergency shelters, supply centers, food pantries, and other emergency relief centers

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response	County/City Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



24) Disaster Case Management

Coordinate funding streams and disaster case management (DCM) organization grantees to: 1- provide trauma- informed, **cultural effectiveness training** and mental health/**self care training** and support to case managers 2- include **grassroots organizations** in DCM funding systems, and 3- train case managers to identify legal issues after a disaster and **create a referral process to legal service providers** to increase efficiency and successfully close more cases.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC, United Way, and other case management funders

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response Recovery	Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources Cultural competence

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

25) Legal Services

Invest in increasing the capacity of civil and immigration legal services, and support coordination with disaster case managers to ensure that legal needs are met, and case management is more efficient.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Funders



DISASTER PHASE

Response
Recovery

LEVEL

County/City
Nonprofit

APPROACH

Funding

THEME

Accessible resources

Legal Services

Making people whole by linking civil & immigration legal services



Disaster Recovery Legal Corps

- 21 civil legal aid attorneys in 2-year fellowships coordinated by EJW
- 4 of these are immigration attorneys, providing consultations, brief services, full representation
 - *Removal (deportation) proceedings, family petitions, DACA, TPS, asylum, u-visa, VAWA, t-visa, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), employment authorization*

Impact of Immigration Fellows (May 2018 through March 2019)

- 305 individuals received legal assistance
- 100 cases closed
- 1% US citizens; 24% legal permanent residents; 66% undocumented; 12% other status

Learn more: www.houstonimmigration.org/projects/drlc/

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

26) Mental Health

Identify and provide funding to organizations working with immigrants for social work staff and/or systems to **support client mental health and wellness** through individual or group support.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Funders

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Response
Recovery

LEVEL

Nonprofit

APPROACH

Funding

THEME

Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations



27) Legal Aid at Shelters

Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Lone Star Legal Aid, Houston Volunteer Lawyers, and HILSC to coordinate immigration and civil legal aid at major shelters and in response to case manager referrals to ensure availability of accurate, timely, and actionable information and improve access to resources.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Texas State Bar, Lone Star Legal Aid, Houston Volunteer Lawyers and HILSC

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness Response	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Accessible resources Inclusive communication

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

28) Legal Issue Summaries

Be a source of relevant and timely legal issue summaries to increase accurate, timely, and actionable information for immigrant legal service providers.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC members and partners

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Inclusive communication

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

29) Potential Litigation

Identify potential litigation needs, informed by HILSC partners, to increase access to FEMA and other response and recovery assistance and improve outcomes for low-income immigrants.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC members and partners

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Recovery	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

30) Representation to Media

Represent and connect organizations providing immigrant legal services with local and national media to increase the accurate and timely dissemination of actionable information.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC members and partners

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Response Recovery	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Inclusive communication

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

31) Representation in Planning

Represent immigrant interests at emergency planning and funding meetings to inform processes with best practices to serve immigrants to ensure accessible resources.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC members and partners

DISASTER PHASE

Preparedness
Response
Recovery

LEVEL

Nonprofit

APPROACH

Policy
Funding

THEME

Accessible resources



Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

32) Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) Development

Create a Continuation of Operations Plan (COOP) to ensure that expert, trusted agencies have an emergency management plan in place and are therefore available for response and recovery.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Immigrant-serving organizations

DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness	Nonprofit	Policy	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

33) Cash Assistance

Raise funds for financial assistance to immigrants whose needs were created or worsened by a disaster, and disperse those funds to vetted organizations serving immigrants regardless of status.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: Funders

DISASTER PHASE

Response

LEVEL

Nonprofit

APPROACH

Funding

THEME

Accessible resources

Harvey Assistance for Immigrants Fund

Impact Overview

- \$200,000 in grants given to 7 organizations that:
 - Had waitlists of immigrant clients in need of direct assistance;
 - Could ensure that support would be distributed to clients who do not have access to government forms of disaster relief or chose not to apply for government programs; and
 - Are deeply rooted in the immigrant communities and that already have trust and relationships with families still trying to recover.
- 325 people assisted with:
 - Home repairs, living expenses, worker compensation for lost wages, emergency/crisis assistance, legal fees (including immigration), staff mental health trainings and self care; transportation; child care; medical expenses

Learn more: www.houstonimmigration.org/about-us/hilsc-grant-making/





Humanitarian Action Plan Recommendations

34) Emergency Preparedness

Provide emergency preparedness training and kits to immigrants in order to increase knowledge and preparedness of immigrants, enable a more efficient recovery, and build resilience.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTERS: HILSC and our members and partners



DISASTER PHASE	LEVEL	APPROACH	THEME
Preparedness	Nonprofit	Program/Operations	Accessible resources

Humanitarian Action Plan

What you can do

1. Incorporate these recommendations into your agency's strategic plan.
2. Implement the Immigrant Accessibility Index self-assessment to identify barriers to serving vulnerable populations. Make sure agency practice follows policy.
3. Implement cultural competency training in your offices.
4. Reach out to HILSC! We are ready to partner with you to serve immigrants.

Humanitarian Action Plan

HILSC Resources

1. FAQ for Immigrant Survivors (originally for Harvey, now for Imelda)
2. Immigrant Accessibility Index
3. Emergency preparedness workshop for immigrants
4. Cultural competency training
5. Free/ low-cost immigration legal services (houstonimmigration.org)
6. Immigrant Rights Hotline, 1-833-HOU-IMMI (468-4664)
Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm

Humanitarian Action Plan

 hap.houstonimmigration.org

 houstonimmigration.org/disaster

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HOUSTON IMMIGRATION
LEGAL SERVICES COLLABORATIVE

 houstonimmigration.org