Program Year 2013-2017 Consolidated Plan
Strategic Plan

Introduction

The Strategic Plan introduces an analysis of current conditions within each community development topic. It then gives an analysis of specific needs within Harris County as they relate to each topic. The needs analysis is then followed by Harris County Community Services Department (HCCSD) goals and measurable objectives which will be used as a guide for accomplishments over the next five planning years. The Strategic Plan is organized according to the following community development topics:

- Housing
- Homelessness
- Non-Housing Community Development
    - Public Facilities
    - Public Services
    - Infrastructure
    - Economic Development, Education and Workforce Development
- Other Non-Housing Community Development
- Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Intergovernmental Coordination and Partnerships
- Monitoring Plan

Basis for Assigning Priorities

CSD funding priorities are determined by analyses of need in the county. Priorities are largely determined by the severity of unmet needs. For instance, affordable housing priorities that were considered a high need level, were based upon the large number of extremely low-income (less than 30% MFI) households, and combined with the considerable housing affordability deficit for those families.

Funds made available to CSD will be used to address the needs shown in the Continuum of Care Homelessness Gaps Analysis, Housing Needs, Non-Homeless, and Community Needs tables. Each identified area of need is prioritized relative to other needs within each category. Priorities for community needs were assigned according to research, survey results from local governments and citizen participation. A high priority indicates that CSD will expend HUD entitlement funds on that particular activity. A medium priority indicates that additional funds will be expended if available, and HUD entitlement funds may be spent.

Obstacles to Meeting Underserved Needs

In the attempt to meet the needs of Harris County's low-income population, many obstacles exist. Socio-economic issues such as:

- physical or mental health problems,
- lack of affordable child care,
- poor credit history,
- low educational attainment,
- lack of or under-employment, and
- lack of transportation to service locations or employment centers

These socio-economic issues may regularly put opportunities out of reach for disadvantaged persons. Many times, if an individual or family has more than one of these problems, these barriers can compound on each other, causing a seemingly impossible situation in which quality of life improvements are unlikely.

Lack of public awareness of available programs is a major obstacle to community development efforts. In an effort to increase public awareness, CSD makes information on community development services available to persons at community outreach meetings, Request for Proposals (RFP) meetings, and professional consultation workshops. In addition, all public notices, press releases, and invitation letters are complete with CSD contact information. Information on all community development opportunities is also given to all persons who enter the Harris County system through Harris County Housing Authority and Social Services Department. Public awareness is also addressed at the subrecipient level by individual CSD affiliated service providers.

Another major obstacle of many non-profit service providers is capacity building, or the ability to bring the organization to the point of being fully staffed and functional. This may be very difficult for organizations that begin with little or no resources, other than CSD funding. For this reason, organizations that wish to conduct programs or projects with HOME funds are required by HUD to have matching funds of greater than or equal to 25 percent of the amount granted by CSD. Similarly, organizations that are granted ESG funds must have matching funds of greater than or equal to 100 percent of the amount granted by CSD. In addition, CSD closely scrutinizes and tracks the subrecipient's stated match and leveraging sources and proposed budget. CSD also requires that its subrecipients have at least six months of operating capital available for the project undertaken with HUD funds.

Through our Three Track Program, CSD offers year-round technical assistance in community planning, strategic planning for non-profits, program development and management to assist non-profits obtain non-profit status, board development and non-profit management.

Personal issues of the disadvantaged often become obstacles to community development efforts, in addition to the logistical difficulties of service providers. After years of poverty and low quality of life, disadvantaged persons may tend to become apathetic and believe that their living or working situation will never change. These feelings may cause a lack of motivation and

willingness to seek out a better life, resulting in a major obstacle to serving the financially disadvantaged. When combined with substance abuse or a physical or mental disability, feelings of helplessness and lack of motivation may make the journey to self-sufficiency or the transition to permanent housing seem impossible.

Compliance with Federal, State and Local Regulations

Projects using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), or HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds will conform to HUD regulations and where applicable state and local codes. HCCSD and/or its subrecipients will maintain policies and procedures, operating guides/manuals, standards, and records as required by HUD. These documents include but are not limited to: Site and Neighborhood Standards, policies and procedures for affordability and recapture, citizenship policy, Multi-unit Housing Concentration Policy, property and building standards, direct homeownership and rehabilitation assistance operating manuals, eligibility guides, and grievance procedures (see Section 2 page 6).

Housing

Harris County has fared better than most U.S. counties in regards to successfully navigating the recent housing market crash and national recession of 2008. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Greater Houston area had the highest job growth rate among the country's twelve largest metropolitan areas. This combination of job growth and increasing population has contributed to the area's ability to address housing supply and demand fluctuations.

The housing market in Harris County continues to experience growth in the development and construction of single-family and multi-family housing units despite the national housing market collapse. However, the local market has not gone unaffected. Housing starts peaked in 2006 before experiencing sharp declines through 2010. In the Houston/Harris County region, the price of single-family homes remains below the national average.

Overview

- The most pressing housing need of low-income households is the availability of quality, affordable housing.
- In 2010, there were 85,484 overcrowded housing units in Harris County, 6.5 percent of the total housing stock.
- According to 2012 HCAD analysis of the condition of housing in the CSD service area, approximately 181,461 single-family housing units are in need of replacement or major rehabilitation.

Even though median home prices remain relatively low in Harris County, restrictive lending practices have disproportionately impacted persons with marginal credit. This situation is optimal for the apartment industry as more households will opt for renting over buying. However, when analyzing housing in terms of the availability of a variety of housing products to meet a diverse population, there are significant shortfalls. Large families, low–to moderate-income families, and disabled persons may encounter obstacles when searching for affordable housing units that meet their space, accessibility, and income needs.

Household Types in Need

<u>Low-income households</u>

Low-income households have increased over the last five-year period. According to the 2009 Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data from HUD, 32.8 percent of all households in the CSD service area are low- to moderate-income. Of all households with at least one housing need, 78.5 percent of those are low- to moderate-income. This represents 407,155 low-income households. Out of those 407,155 households, 81.8 percent have housing needs because of a housing cost burden greater than 30% of income, 16.0 percent because of overcrowding, and 2.1 percent because of a lack of plumbing infrastructure.

Renters/Owners

According to the 2009 CHAS data, renters constitute 45.9 percent of all low- to moderate-income households with at least one housing need and owners comprise 54.9 percent. Based on these totals, both renters and owners are in need of some form of housing assistance, such as rental assistance, housing rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable units. Renter and owner households in need of housing were determined based upon the estimated housing cost deficits and rehabilitation needs of those households. Households with housing needs are identified by high ("H"), medium ("M") and low ("L") need level in Table 5.1, Priority Housing Needs /Investment Plan Table.

Table 5.1 Priority Housing Needs/Investment Plan Table (Table 2A)

Household Type		Priority		Unmet Need
Renter	Small Related	0-30%	H	32,360
		31-50%	M	24,910
		51-80%	L	10,235
	Large Related	0-30%	H	12,025
		31-50%	H	6,370
		51-80%	M	1,357
	Elderly	0-30%	M	10,474
		31-50%	M	5,414
		51-80%	L	3,112
	All Other	0-30%	H	22,955
		31-50%	M	20,000
		51-80%	H	12,760
Owner	Small Related	0-30%	H	10,485
		31-50%	H	10,705
		51-80%	M	14,690
	Large Related	0-30%	H	5,085
		31-50%	H	5,805
		51-80%	M	5,140
	Elderly	0-30%	M	12,324
		31-50%	M	7,299
		51-80%	L	5,114
	All Other	0-30%	H	5,325
		31-50%	H	3,320
		51-80%	M	4,914
Non-Homeless Special Needs	Elderly	0-80%	H	7,016
	Frail Elderly	0-80%		
	Severe Mental Illness	0-80%		
	Physical Disability	0-80%	H	14,400
	Developmental Disability	0-80%		
	Alcohol/Drug Abuse	0-80%		
	HIV/AIDS	0-80%	H	1,500
	Victims of Domestic	0-80%		

**Number of units was determined using the 2009 Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS)*

Large Households

Large, related households of five or more persons face a number of housing challenges, most notably, finding an affordable residence large enough to accommodate all family members. According to the 2009 CHAS data, this household type accounts for 18.4 percent of all low- and moderate-income households in the CSD service area. Large related households earning less than 30 percent of the Median Family Income (MFI) face major housing affordability deficits, and based on estimated housing cost deficits, low- to moderate-income, large households are identified as having a high housing cost burden. There are 29,155 large, related households with housing needs because of a housing cost burden greater than 30 percent of income in Harris County. In particular, large households earning less than 30 percent of the MFI are faced with cost deficits of as much as $750 in meeting the fair housing market rent of housing units with three-or-more bedrooms.

Large households are threatened with housing-cost burdens due to the cost of existing housing and the lack of large, affordable rental housing units. According to HUD, the monthly fair market rent for three-bedroom units in the Harris County area was $1,241 in 2011. For very-low (0-30 percent MFI) and low- (31-50 percent MFI) income families of five or more persons, a rent at this rate creates a significant housing deficit, often leading to overcrowding and other housing problems.

Small Related Households

Small, related households of two to four persons are also in need of some form of housing assistance. According to the 2009 CHAS data, this household type accounts for 45.4 percent of all low- and moderate-income households in the CSD service area. Small related households earning less than 30 percent of the MFI face housing affordability deficits. There are 76,792 small related households with housing needs because of a housing cost burden greater than 30% of income.

Other Households

All other households, primarily single persons living alone, face a number of housing problems, most notably issues of substantial cost burden. There are 32,200 other households in the CSD service area with housing needs because of a housing cost burden greater than 30% of income. According to the CHAS data, other households make up 1.5 percent of households facing overcrowding issues.

Elderly Households

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 208,085 elderly (65 years and older) occupied housing units in Harris County (including CSD non-service area). According to CHAS data, low-income households containing at least one elderly person (age 62 or older) make up 21.9 percent of all low-income households in the CSD service area. Low- to moderate-income elderly households are more likely to be in need of some form of housing assistance, such as minor rehabilitation, rental assistance, or utility assistance. There are 24,851 other households in the CSD service area with housing needs because of a housing cost burden greater than 30% of income.

Public Housing Residents

Harris County has a number of programs and services that support affordable housing and its availability. There have been 167 Low Income Housing Tax Credit properties awarded between 2002 and 2011 by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, with approximately 39 percent of those located in the CSD service area. The Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), which provides affordable housing for more than 4,100 families. HCHA also administers the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) and provides 525 additional housing vouchers to homeless veterans. While these programs support many households in finding affordable housing, there is still a shortage of subsidized housing, especially for large families and persons with disabilities needing accessible units.

Persons with Disabilities

According to the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau profile for Harris County, there were over 360,000 non-institutionalized persons reporting a disability. As of 2010, the percentage of disabled persons who earned incomes below the poverty level was approximately 8 percent higher than the percentage of persons without a disability below the poverty level. The median earnings of persons between 16 years of age and older with a disability is $21,949, compared to $29,316 for persons without a disability. Lower earnings make finding affordable and accessible housing more difficult for those individuals with a disability.

Persons living with HIV/AIDS

The Texas Department of State Health Services estimates that nearly one third (32 percent) of all People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH) in Texas live in the Houston Eligible Metropolitan Area (EMA). According to the City of Houston Quarterly HIV/AIDS report, Texas ranks as one of the states reporting the highest number of cumulative HIV/AIDS cases among residents as of June 2012, with 28,659 AIDS cases and 20,699 HIV cases. Since 2004, the number of PLWH in the Houston EMA has increased by approximately five percent each year. According to the 2010 Texas Integrated Epidemiologic Profile for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Services Planning, nearly half (49 percent) of all persons living with HIV in the Houston EMA were Black males and females, followed by White males and females at 13 percent. Persons with HIV/AIDS generally have a more difficult time retaining employment due to discrimination and/or illness and risks of exposure to illness. These factors, combined with the high costs of health care, result in a greater likelihood for persons with HIV/AIDS to have low incomes and a greater need for affordable housing. Harris County places a high priority on housing projects servicing persons with HIV/AIDS through homeownership, new home construction, single-family home rehabilitation, and rental assistance programs. According to HUD's 2011 Continuum of Care Housing Inventory Report, Harris County helped fund a number of projects through the AIDS Foundation Houston, totaling almost 300 beds for persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Harris County CSD will seek projects that provide a variety of independent and assisted-living housing environments while placing a high priority on projects serving seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Housing Problems and Needs

Cost Burden/Extreme Cost Burden

Affordability is measured using two factors: income and price of housing. The Texas Housing Affordability Index (THAI) gives a general picture of how affordable housing is for a person of median income. The higher the THAI, the more affordable the area's housing is to a family earning MFI. According to the Real Estate Center, the Houston area's THAI has increased from 1.5 to 2.63 from 2006 to 2011, showing an increase in housing affordability. However, a housing affordability gap still exists, especially for those with higher housing costs (larger families, persons with disabilities) and low or fixed incomes. Affordability deficits are as high as $1,000 for households making less than 30 percent of the MFI. According to the 2009 CHAS data, there are an estimated 162,998 households with housing cost deficits or extreme housing cost burdens paying 30 percent or more of their income for rent or mortgage payments.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding is often a problem for large households (five or more persons), when the housing market fails to provide an adequate supply of housing units with three or more bedrooms. Analysis of Harris County housing development trends, particularly multi-family development, shows that the market is pumping out an abundant supply of one- and two bedroom housing units in response to estimated and projected increase of smaller households. However, the market's response to meet the needs of smaller households has created a void in meeting the needs of large households, thus enhancing the issue of overcrowding.

HUD defines overcrowding as the condition where there are more than 1.01 persons per room. In 2010, there were 85,484 overcrowded housing units in all of Harris County. Based on the 2010 ACS, only 4.7 percent of renter-occupied units have 4 or more bedrooms, while 22.9 percent of total occupied units have 4 or more bedrooms. These figures indicate that the majority of multi-family housing meets the needs of smaller households, but larger families are disproportionately impacted by the lack of affordable options in the Harris County housing market.

Substandard Housing

For low-income homeowners, housing needs are amplified when home maintenance problems or other housing-related expenses arise (i.e., septic tank leakage, high utility expenses, roof repairs, etc.). According to the 2009 CHAS data, 1,824 households in the CSD service area suffer from substandard housing (lacking complete plumbing or kitchen facilities). Based on the 2012 HCAD Housing Quality Survey, approximately 181,461 housing units (including single- and multi-family) are in need of at least minor rehabilitation, with 13.6 percent of these units located in low-income target areas.

Lead-Based Paint

Lead-based paint was banned in 1978 but continues to pose a threat to children in Harris County. In 2004, the City and County health departments tested 46,445 children, and identified 699, or 1.5 percent of children with elevated blood lead levels. In 2011, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) reported that of the 46,040 children who received their first test in Harris County (excluding the City of Houston) 116 where found to have blood lead levels that were equal to or exceeded 10 micrograms per deciliter of blood. The majority of confirmed cases

were children living in pre-1965 housing. Based on data from the 2011 ACS, Houston/Harris County still has over 700,000 pre-1979 housing units. Based on estimates derived from HUD and the 2010 Census data, approximately 20,300 houses in the Harris County service area are at-risk of containing lead-based paint.

Areas especially susceptible to the hazards of lead-based paint are located in the eastern portion of the service area. In this portion of the county, risk factors associated with the hazards of lead-based paint are found in the majority of the housing stock. The housing in this area is among the oldest in the county, housing values in the area are among the lowest in the service area, and much of the housing is renter-occupied. In addition to the age of housing as an indicator of risk, in 1996 the Houston Environmental Foresight Program estimated that a minimum 5 percent of the children in the 8 county region including Harris County may exceed the lead/blood action level. Concentrations in areas with older housing stock may be as high as 20 percent. Most recently, for the first time in 20 years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has lowered the level of concern for children from 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter to 5 micrograms per deciliter of blood. With this change, there will be more children in Harris County at risk for elevated levels of lead in their blood.

The prevalence of lead poisoning correlates along socioeconomic divisions. Those near or below the poverty line are more likely to live in older housing containing lead-based paint than are families in the middle or upper middle class. Also, children in lower socioeconomic levels are less likely to receive prompt and adequate medical care related to elevated lead levels.

Determining Need

Analysis of the characteristics of the housing market, including the previously mentioned housing problems, is the key to determining the types of housing needs in the Harris County service area. The most pressing housing need of low-income households is the availability of affordable housing. Other housing needs include housing with adequate space for large households and structurally sound and hazard free housing for all households. Meeting these needs comes through several forms of assistance, such as providing opportunities for homeownership; constructing new affordable housing units (multi-family and single family); rehabilitating affordable housing units; abating lead based paint hazards; and providing rent and utility assistance. Table 5.2 Housing Problems and Needed Forms of Assistance illustrates which forms of assistance addresses a particular housing problem. CSD follows the regulation in Title 42, chapter 8, Sec. 1436a. - Restriction on Use of Assisted Housing by Non-resident Aliens when determining need. This regulation prohibits the making of financial assistance available for the benefit of any alien unless that alien is a resident of the United States.

Table 5.2 Housing Problems and Needed Forms of Assistance

Housing Problem	Forms of Assistance					
	Homeowner-ship	New Construction	Major Rehab	Minor Rehab	Lead-based Paint Abatement	Rental Asst.
Cost Burden	√	√	√	√		√
Substandard Housing		√	√	√		√
Overcrowding	√	√				√
Lead Based Paint Hazard					√	

Disproportionate Greater Need

For the purposes of the Consolidated Plan, HUD has determined that differences of 10 or more percentage points represent a greater disproportionate need among household types or racial/ethnic groups. Analysis of 2010 ACS data regarding household composition indicates there is a correlation between race and income levels. In 2010, the per capita income of black households in Harris County was approximately 46 percent of the household income of whites, while Hispanic households earned 51 percent.

The Hispanic cohort represents 40.8 percent of the total Harris County population; however, they make up 44.4 percent of households with at least one housing problem. Out of all low- to moderate-income Hispanic households, 57.4 percent have at least one housing problem. There are 465,930 housing units in Harris County with a housing cost burden greater than 30 percent of income. Of those 465,930 households, 32.1 percent are white, 24.6 percent are black, and 37.2 percent are Hispanic.

Barriers to Affordable Housing

When compared to similar counties, housing in Harris County is relatively affordable. However, for a number of reasons, many low-income persons still cannot find quality, affordable housing to meet their needs. This is partly the result of market-driven economics in the Harris County area and national housing trends. For a number of years builders have utilized existing subdivided, improved land left vacant as a result of the economic bust of the 1980s. As a result, developers have been able to provide new homes at a lower rate, with some homes affordable for middle-income and even moderate-income households. As Harris County continues to grow, affordable land that is close to city centers (employment, amenities, and transportation) is becoming scarce.

In addition to the rising cost of land in Harris County, many low-income potential homebuyers lack the downpayment required to buy a house, thus presenting another barrier to obtaining affordable housing. In fact, the lack of downpayment funds has been cited as a major barrier for first-time homebuyers. The majority of homes that are affordable for very low- and low- income households are substandard or inappropriate for that particular household. The percentage of units with potential lead-based-paint contamination is extremely high in Harris County target

areas, and in 2012, approximately 20.3 percent of housing units in Harris County were classified as substandard.

For some households, an affordable housing unit may not be an appropriate unit. Most housing, regardless of affordability, is not appropriate for persons with disabilities. Depending upon the disabilities involved, rehabilitation of a home into a barrier-free environment can be relatively expensive. Even newly constructed housing often fails to address the needs of persons with disabilities. Many elderly persons, particularly the frail elderly, are faced with a similar dilemma. Large families are often forced into an overcrowded environment because smaller units are more affordable and much more readily available.

State policy impacts affordable housing in its regulation of water districts. The state allows three types of water districts: fresh water supply districts (FWSD), water control and improvement districts (WCID), and municipal utility districts (MUD). These districts provide financing for water and sewer improvements through bonds. Most of the water and sewer services for residential subdivisions in unincorporated Harris County are provided by water districts. Payment of fees assessed by the local FWSD, WCID or MUDs can significantly impact the housing cost burden of very low- and low-income families.

Harris County, like all Texas counties, has no regulatory powers over area land use. As a result, there are no zoning ordinances to control and plan housing development. Only certain permitting requirements are in effect in the unincorporated area of the county. In the absence of county land-use policies, most subdivisions have developed complex systems of deed restrictions, ranging from allowable land uses to required upkeep. While a home in a subdivision may initially be affordable, a homeowner's ability to maintain a home according to the specifications of the homeowners association (HOA) and local deed restrictions may keep very–low, low-, and moderate-income families from finding affordable housing. Yearly HOA dues can also pose a challenge and impact a home's affordability. Many subdivisions with homes that are affordable and available to very low- and low-income households have permitted local deed restrictions to lapse or become invalid, often as a result of the inability to meet the legal fees necessary to enforce the private restrictions.

Harris County has 34 incorporated cities, towns and villages and each have the legal authority to regulate land use within their boundaries. However, the extent to which land-use regulations are maintained and enforced varies considerably among those communities. Regulations requiring large residential lots, minimum building footprint, minimum landscaping footprint, extensive setbacks or other aesthetic requirements may increase housing costs beyond a range that is affordable for low- to moderate-income households.

Public policy issues impacting housing cost-burden include fees assessed by water and sewer service districts serving subdivisions in the unincorporated area. Additionally, each of the cooperative cities in the service area has various land-use regulations, which may impact the cost and/or availability of area housing. Finally, private sector deed restrictions and HOA dues utilized by a number of subdivisions may place an undue burden on very low- and low-income households. Strategies to be utilized by Harris County in overcoming the barriers identified above include the following:

Strategy One. To promote and support affordable housing opportunities throughout the Harris County service area, including downpayment assistance programs, new construction, minor home repair, and rehabilitation of affordable housing units for the purpose of increasing the availability of housing to the very-low and low-income persons.

Strategy Two. Promote the Housing Resource Center which is an information clearinghouse for those interested in the search of affordable housing initiatives in the Harris County service area.

Strategy Three. Promote the development of collaborations and partnerships of both non-profit and for-profit builders, developers, and other interested parties for the purpose of increasing the capacity for the development of affordable housing in the Harris County service area.

Strategy Four. Promote and assist in the development of applications for additional funds for the use in development of affordable housing in the Harris County service area, including Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and Homeownership Zones.

Strategy Five. Promote and provide technical assistance for the review and revision of land-use regulations in cooperative cities that may present an obstacle in the development of affordable housing.

Impediments for Fair Housing

The Harris County Fair Housing Plan contains the following:

Need to combat overt discrimination and lack of fair housing knowledge – Overt discrimination against protected classes, such as racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, families with children, persons with limited English proficiency, and the LGBT community inhibits housing choice and is associated with limited fair housing knowledge of residents, housing providers, financial and insurance providers, and local government entities.

Lack of quality affordable housing – Harris County has insufficient quality, affordable housing that meet the diverse needs of low- to moderate-income individuals, especially persons with disabilities and families with children.

Need to reduce areas of segregation and concentration – Limited housing choice has led to the segregation and concentration of poverty and minority populations.

Need to improve lack of quality community amenities – Limited access to transportation services, infrastructure, and public facilities limits housing choice and prevents communities from improving the overall quality of life and opportunity for residents.

Presence of governmental and community opposition towards affordable housing – Governmental and community opposition to affordable housing is often based on lack of information, misinformation, and unfounded suspicions that lead to highly desirable areas being completely shut off from affordable housing options thus limiting housing choice.

Barriers created by credit and financial institutions – Predatory lending, concentrated foreclosures, and overt discrimination in credit and financial practices severely limits housing choice, especially for minority populations.

Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Strategy

Effective September 15, 2000, all housing activities supported by funding administered by HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development must comply with lead-based paint regulations (Title X of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1992). The changes will affect housing rehabilitation activities, tenant-based rental assistance, and acquisition, leasing, support services and operations. The new regulation changes the acceptable work practices and expands the requirements to protect occupants and workers from lead-based paint hazards. In addition, it requires testing for lead, stabilization, control or abatement in the event that lead is found on the property. Certain programs will have the additional responsibility of on-going maintenance and record keeping. The impact of the regulations on existing programs will be in several areas such as budgeting, productivity, and staff training.

Harris County will continue to implement HUD's Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction strategy. This strategy includes incorporating the approved Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction regulations into all housing programs operated by CSD and those programs funded/operated by subrecipients. Subrecipient training will continue to include information regarding implementation, documentation and reporting on all housing activities that are affected by changes in regulations.

Other strategies for lead based paint hazard reduction include the continued support of the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services Department's Childhood Blood/Lead Screening/Abatement Program. Through these programs, Harris County will actively pursue the reduction of the number of lead based paint hazards in the Harris County service area.

Goals and Measurable Objectives

HOUSING GOAL: To create the opportunity for adequate, affordable, accessible housing for extremely low-, very low-, and low-income persons through eventual elimination of lead based paint hazards, encouragement of homeownership, minor home repair, rehabilitation of single-family and multi-family housing, provision of rental assistance, new construction, and development of partnerships.

Owners

Objective 1: Homeownership (13)
To provide 500 individuals and families with the opportunity for homeownership by February 28, 2018, thus improving quality of life and supplying decent housing. This objective will be accomplished through financial assistance to prospective homebuyers. Financial assistance includes, but is not limited to downpayment and closing cost assistance. Programs providing Downpayment and Closing Cost services should provide a minimum of $10,000 in

downpayment and closing costs per eligible program participant. Harris County places a high priority on projects serving seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 2: New Construction (12)
To provide financial assistance to aid in the construction of 50 affordable housing units within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate income owner occupied households. Harris County places a high priority on projects serving seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 3: Single-family Home Rehabilitation (14A)
To provide 100 low- and moderate-income homeowners with minor home repair assistance for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate-income households. Minor home repair assistance includes but is not limited to rehabilitation of septic systems and water wells. Harris County places a high priority on projects serving seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 4: Lead-Based Paint Abatement (14I)
To assist in the abatement of lead based paint hazards in 130 owner-occupied, single-family housing units by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of providing safe and decent housing for low- and moderate-income households.

Renters

Objective 5: New Construction (12)
To provide financial assistance to aid in the construction of 300 affordable multi-family housing units within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of supplying decent housing to low- and moderate–income renter households. Harris County places a high priority on projects serving seniors, the homeless, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS.

Objective 6: Acquisition and/or Rehabilitation, Multi-Unit Housing (01)
To provide financial assistance to aid in the acquisition and or rehabilitation of 50 multi-family, affordable housing units in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of supplying decent housing to low- and moderate –income renter households. Harris County places a high priority on projects serving seniors, the homeless, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS. (If acquiring and rehabilitating units use code 14G)

Objective 7: Rental Assistance (CDBG 05S and HOME 21F)
To provide tenant based rental assistance to 50 extremely low- and low-income Harris County families and individuals, by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of supplying decent housing for low- and moderate income renter households. Programs should partner with a local Housing Authority in providing assistance.

Objective 8: Lead Based Paint Abatement (14I)
To assist in the abatement of lead based paint hazards in 15 renter-occupied, single-family housing units by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of providing safe, decent housing for low- and moderate-income renter households.

Table 5.3 Summary of Affordable Housing Objectives According to Income

	Income			
	Total	Extremely-Low (0-30% MFI)	Very Low-(31-50% MFI)	Low- (51-80% MFI)
Owners				
Obj 1: Homeownership	500	100	250	450
Obj 2: New Construction	50	3	5	7
Obj 3: Major Rehabilitation, Single Unit	100	5	20	25
Obj 4: Lead Based Paint Abatement	130	20	100	30
Owners Subtotal	**780**	**128**	**375**	**512**
Renters				
Obj 5: New Construction	300	25	75	100
Obj 6: Acquisition and/or Rehabilitation of Multi-family Housing	50	20	20	60
Obj 8: Rental Assistance	50	35	10	5
Obj 9: Lead Based Paint Abatement	15	5	7	3
Renters Subtotal	**415**	**90**	**117**	**173**
Total	**1,195**	**218**	**492**	**685**

Table 5.4 Priority Housing Needs/Investment Plan Goals (Table 2A)

Priority Need	5-Yr. Goal Plan	Yr. 1 Goal Plan	Yr. 2 Goal Plan	Yr. 3 Goal Plan	Yr. 4 Goal Plan	Yr. 5 Goal Plan
Renters						
0 - 30 of MFI	90	18	18	18	18	18
31 - 50% of MFI	117	23	23	23	24	24
51 - 80% of MFI	173	35	35	35	34	34
Owners						
0 - 30 of MFI	128	25	25	26	26	26
31 - 50 of MFI	375	75	75	75	75	75
51 - 80% of MFI	512	104	102	102	102	102
Homeless*						
Individuals	1,000	200	200	200	200	200
Families						
Non-Homeless Special Needs						
Elderly	500	100	100	100	100	100
Frail Elderly						
Severe Mental Illness						
Physical Disability	100	20	20	20	20	20
Developmental Disability						
Alcohol/Drug Abuse						
HIV/AIDS	50	10	10	10	10	10
Victims of Domestic Violence						
Total	3,045	610	608	609	609	609
Total Section 215						
212 Renter						
215 Owner						

* Homeless individuals and families assisted with transitional and permanent housing

Table 5.5 Priority Housing Activities (Table 2A)

Priority Need	**5-Yr. Goal Plan/Act**	**Yr. 1 Goal Plan/Act**	**Yr. 2 Goal Plan/Act**	**Yr. 3 Goal Plan/Act**	**Yr. 4 Goal Plan/Act**	**Yr. 5 Goal** Plan/Act
CDBG						
Acquisition of existing rental units	100	20	20	20	20	20
Production of new rental units	200	40	40	40	40	40
Rehabilitation of existing rental units	15	3	3	3	3	3
Rental assistance	50	10	10	10	10	10
Acquisition of existing owner units						
Production of new owner units	15	3	3	3	3	3
Rehabilitation of existing owner units	100	20	20	20	20	20
Homeownership assistance	800	160	160	160	160	160
HOME						
Acquisition of existing rental units	100	20	20	20	20	20
Production of new rental units	200	40	40	40	40	40
Rehabilitation of existing rental units	15	3	3	3	3	3
Rental assistance						
Acquisition of existing owner units						
Production of new owner units	15	3	3	3	3	3
Rehabilitation of existing owner units	100	20	20	20	20	20
Homeownership assistance	800	160	160	160	160	160
HOPWA						
Rental assistance						
Short term rent/mortgage utility payments						
Facility based housing development						
Facility based housing operations						
Supportive services						
Other						

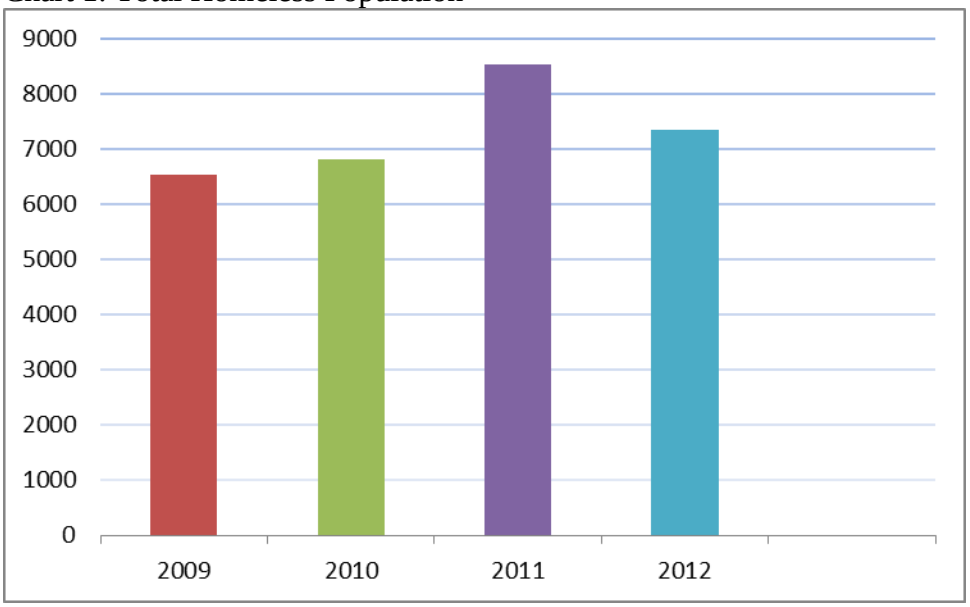
Homelessness

Harris County has one of the highest populations of homeless individuals in the nation. Even as the relative economic wellbeing of the area has been less affected by the national economic crisis than other comparable metropolitan regions, the number of homeless residents has remained relatively high over the past four years. In fact, for 2011 the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care had the sixth largest population of homeless individuals for reporting metropolitan Continuums of Care according to the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) submitted to Congress.

The Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County is the organization responsible for collecting and reporting this data to HUD annually through the Point in Time enumeration process. Data over the past four years shows moderate fluctuations in the total number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless in Harris County. Since 2011, the Coalition has adopted a methodology for conducting the count to attain more accurate information. This new methodology, recognized by HUD for its accuracy, allows the County to more confidently report on and compare the levels of homelessness among residents for the years 2011 and 2012 as a basis for addressing homelessness in the Consolidated Plan.

Based on the data collected during the enumeration, there are 7,356 homeless individuals living in Harris County, either on the street or in emergency and transitional shelters. This number does not include an additional approximately 1,400 inmates of the Harris County jail that indicate homelessness prior to entry or residents who would be homeless if not for rapid re-housing assistance. The chart below shows total numbers for both sheltered and unsheltered homeless in Harris County over the past four years. Sheltered homeless are those living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing while unsheltered homeless are living on the street or places not otherwise meant for human habitation, such as cars and abandoned buildings.

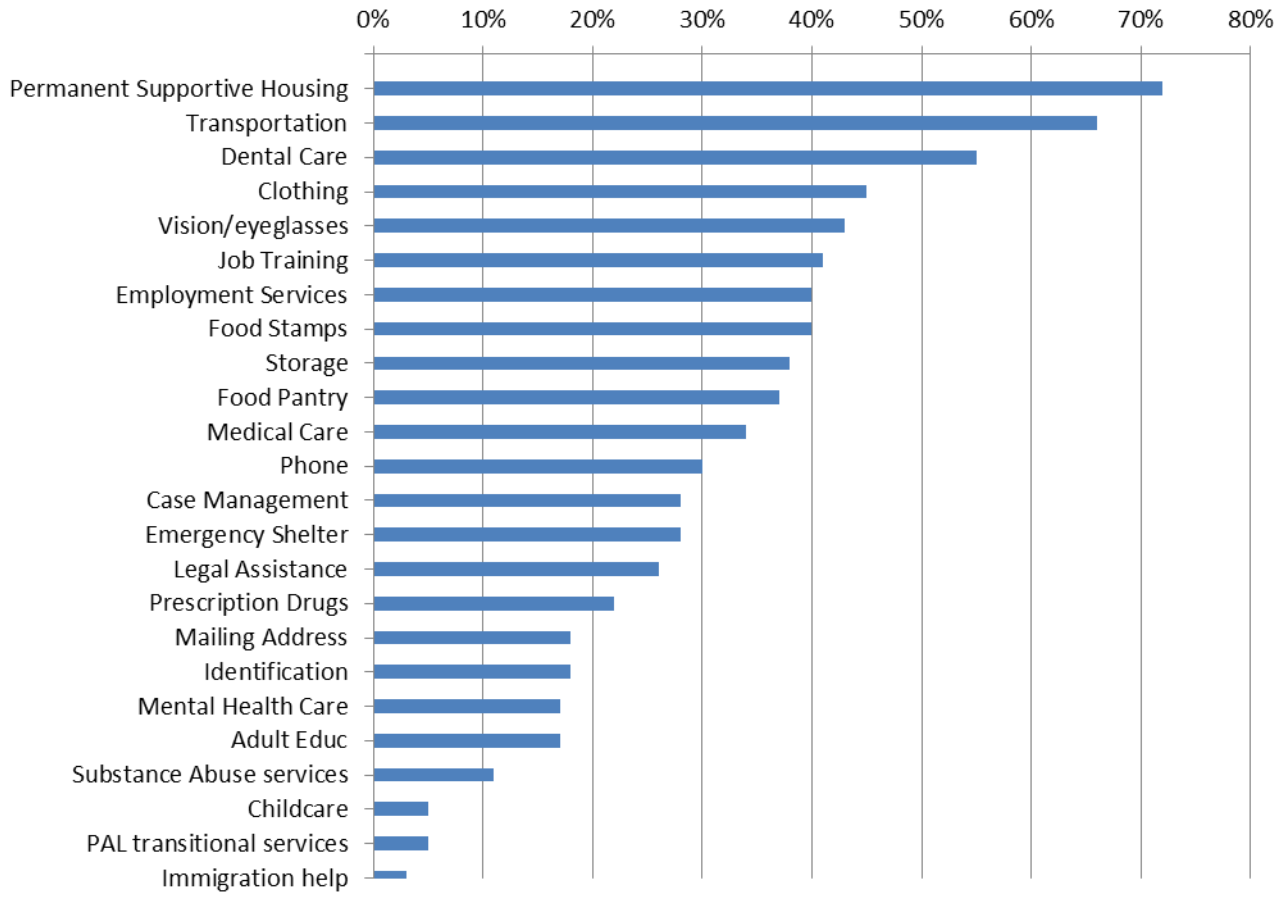
Chart 1: Total Homeless Population



The demographics of homeless in Harris County during the 2012 count are predominately male (69 percent) and black (70 percent). Of all homeless, 12 percent are Hispanic. While the vast majority of homeless are single, about ten percent of the homeless population is families, and about three percent are chronically homeless families.

The Coalition, service providers and research staff conduct the needs assessment among sheltered homeless individuals and ask a series of questions about their experience in homelessness and services received. The assessment also analyzes the frequency and cause of homelessness coupled with what consumers of homelessness services identify as their greatest unmet needs while seeking services. The chart below shows responses from the most recent needs assessment. Because the surveys changed and questions were asked in a different manner, an effective comparison of prior year responses is not possible. The top identified areas were the need for permanent supportive housing, transportation, and dental care.

Chart 2: Identified Homeless Needs



Harris County has a variety of housing options for homeless individuals ranging from Emergency Shelter to Permanent Supportive Housing. The table below identifies the types of targeted facilities for homeless individuals

Table 1: Targeted Facilities for Homeless Individuals

	Emergency Shelter Beds		Transitional Housing Beds	Permanent Supportive Housing Beds	
	Year Round	Overflow	Current	Current	Under Development
Households with Adults and Children	530	203	1311	1802	0
Households with only Adults	848	n/a	1981	1200	80
Chronically Homeless Households*	n/a	n/a	0	0	0
Veterans	363	n/a	182	160	0
Unaccompanied Youth	39	n/a	0	0	0

Source: 2011 Housing Inventory Chart

*Chronically homeless are accepted at most emergency and transitional housing programs, but none specifically target chronically homeless

There are dozens of homeless services providers in Harris County who provide housing, services or both. Service providers in the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care provide data on the homeless population through the Homeless Management Information System, managed by the Coalition for the Homeless. Agencies working with homeless and at risk of homeless residents provide data on length and frequency of homelessness, types of services provided and housing status in addition to basic demographic and income data. The agencies who participate in HMIS are listed below:

- A Caring Safe Place
- AIDS Foundation Houston
- Angel Outreach
- Bay Area Homeless Services
- Bread of Life
- Career and Recovery Resources
- Catholic Charities
- Change Happens!
- City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services
- Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County
- Corder Place Apartments
- Covenant House
- Cy-Fair Helping Hands
- David & Ivory Ministries
- DeGeorge at Union Station
- Fort Bend Family Promise
- Goodwill Industries of Houston
- Harmony House
- Harris County Community Services Department
- Harvest Life Foundation
- Houston Area Community Services
- Houston Housing Authority
- Houston Launch Pad
- Humble Area Assistance Ministries
- Jackson Hinds Gardens/The Housing Corporation
- LASU Community Development

- Memorial Assistance Ministries
- MHMRA of Harris County
- Mission of Yahweh
- Montrose Counseling Center
- Northline SRO
- Northwest Assistance Ministries
- Nothing Venture Certainly Nothing Gain
- Open Door Mission
- Palmer Episcopal Church
- Prevent Blindness Texas
- Santa Maria Hostel
- Sarah's House
- SEARCH Homeless Services
- Star of Hope
- Stop Turning Entering Prison
- Temenos Community Development Corporation
- The Beacon
- The Salvation Army
- The Stash Box
- The Women's Home
- Ultimate Changes
- US Veterans Initiative
- Volunteers of America
- Wellsprings Village
- Wesley Community Center
- Westside Homeless Partnership
- Wheeler Avenue 5 C's
- YMCA

There are several agencies which serve survivors of domestic violence and do not participate in HMIS but are active in the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care and receive funding to provide emergency, transitional and permanent housing. Those agencies include:

- Bay Area Turning Point
- Houston Area Women’s Center
- Fort Bend Women’s Center
- The Bridge Over Troubled Waters
- New Horizon Family Shelter

Data gathered through the HMIS and enumeration indicate the following estimates about housing needs and those likely to experience homelessness.

Table 2: Persons estimated to experience homelessness

Population	Experiencing homelessness on a given night		Experiencing homelessness each year	Becoming homeless each year	Exiting homelessness each year
	sheltered	unsheltered			
In households with adults and children	1,282	284	4,431	2,575	1,468
In households with only children	2	268	99	74	5
In households with only adults	2,059	3,272	17,705	7,478	1,640
Chronically homeless individuals	161		1,495	308	234
Chronically homeless families	17		16	6	10
Veterans	380	782	2,668	889	273
Unaccompanied Child	2	268	1,684	1,269	251
Persons with HIV	80	57	937	141	213

The gaps analysis compares the service needs of homeless individuals throughout the County with the available services among providers in Houston/Harris County. The gaps analysis also analyzes housing needs for homeless individuals and system capacity for providers. The table below describes the type of housing available compared to the homeless population in Harris County.

Table 3: Permanent Supportive Housing Gaps

	Number of Homeless Households in a year	Percent of Homeless Population	Percent that Needs Permanent Supportive Housing	Number of Permanent Supportive Housing Units Needed
Single Individuals	24,252	81%	31%	7,567
Single Adults	23,979	80%	31%	7,472
Chronically Homeless	1,969	7%	100%	1,969
Not Chronically Homeless	22,010	73%	25%	5,503
Unaccompanied Youth	273	1%	35%	96
Families with Children	5,856	19%	35%	2,050
Total	30,108	100%	32%	9,617

Source: Corporation for Supportive Housing

According to the analysis, Harris County needs to develop an additional 9,617 units of permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of its current homeless population.

Coalition for the Homeless and Harris County

In 1982, the leadership from Harris County and the City of Houston created The Houston/Harris County Coalition for the Homeless to address the unique needs of homeless individuals in Harris County. Incorporated in 1988, the Coalition now serves as the Continuum of Care lead agency for the Houston/Harris/Ft. Bend County Continuum of Care structure. Since its inception, Harris County has served in a leadership role guiding the policies and funding for homelessness priorities for the Continuum of Care.

In 2010, the Department of Housing and Urban Development identified the Houston region as a Priority Community. With this designation, the area and the Continuum of Care has received strategic technical assistance in developing its homelessness response and service system as well as the Continuum of Care (CoC) governance structure. Under the new structure, Harris County is a member of the CoC steering committee. As one of 17 members representing public and private interests, the steering committee uses recommendations from network and tasks groups to guide policy development for the CoC, including funding and project prioritization. This partnership includes:

- Harris County
- City of Houston
- Harris County Housing Authority
- Houston Housing Authority
- Fort Bend County
- City of Pasadena
- The Coalition for the Homeless
- Homeless service consumers (2)
- Homeless service providers (2)
- Interfaith representative
- Business Community representative
- At-large agency representative (4)

This structure allows for diverse stakeholders to participate in the decision making process for funding while providing a transparent leadership around homelessness funding and priorities for the region. This structure was also put in place to provide a more coordinated response to homelessness where all funding in the region is targeted toward strategic solutions working to end homelessness in the region.

The County and the Coalition have developed processes for consultation with funding decisions for Harris County annual funding process as well as the Continuum of Care funding process. The agencies also have developed a process for providing Certifications of Consistency for agencies seeking funding through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to ensure that State funds are aligned with local priorities.

As Harris County continues to develop its strategy for addressing funding priorities under the new Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, all work has been and continues to be done in coordination with the Coalition for the Homeless. Harris County, in coordination with the Coalition, the City of Houston and Fort Bend County has developed priorities for the community around Emergency Solutions, including standard for providing services for homeless individuals for day and emergency shelters, street outreach, homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing.

Street Outreach

Few providers in Harris County engage in street outreach compared to the number of homeless individuals living on the street in Harris County. Most is done by providers targeting specific populations, such as youth or veterans. The size of Harris County compounds the challenge of this under resourced activity. Street Outreach is often the point of entry for homeless individuals into the homelessness system for the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care. Some service providers have tablets and mobile devices that allow collection of demographic data of persons served directly into HMIS while providing services.

The street outreach that agencies currently provide is typically for immediate resources: food, clothing and blankets or referrals. Often these links are made to inform clients of or provide access to essential services or temporary shelter with the agency engaging in outreach. Occasionally, a street outreach worker can provide access to permanent housing for individuals living on the street.

These contacts are vital to developing relationships with typically harder to reach consumers, often with multiple barriers. As the homeless service system in Harris County and the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care becomes more coordinated and focuses on services in housing, the County hopes to increase Street Outreach activities. In addition, as the housing options and providers increase, the County will ensure that street outreach links homeless individuals living on the street or a place not meant for human habitation directly to a longer term housing solution. The table below identifies the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals by subpopulation. This table highlights the critical need for street outreach to connect with unsheltered homeless.

Table 4: Sheltered and Unsheltered Homeless by Subpopulation, 2011

Subpopulation	Sheltered	Unsheltered
Chronic Homeless	264	1527
Chronic Substance Abuse	500	1069
Persons with HIV/AIDS	1287	1502
Severely mentally ill	405	741
Veterans	175	71
Victims of DV	863	857
Youth	9	303

Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

Harris County has 565 emergency shelter beds within its shelter provider system receiving HUD McKinney-Vento funds. Emergency shelters in Harris County provide a critical link for homeless individuals to both mainstream resources and into longer term housing solutions. The length of stay for consumers is what determines an emergency shelter. Generally, emergency shelters are those that allow stays for 30 days or less. In some cases, especially for shelters that serve consumers fleeing domestic violence, clients may stay up to 60 days or more.

Emergency shelters in Harris County range in types of clientele from single men to women and children fleeing domestic violence. While HUD funded emergency shelters make up the majority

of shelter beds within Harris County, there are several agencies within the County that serve clients without federal funding.

The existence of shelters that are not receiving federal funding and participating in the Continuum of Care funding likely indicates gaps in data among shelters reporting on clients served. According to the Coalition for the Homeless, the make-up of shelter beds for the area is as follows:

Table 5: Emergency Shelter Beds

Type	Beds
Family	530
Individual	848

Source: 2011 Housing Inventory Chart, hudhre.info

Emergency shelters in Harris County make up about 13 percent of providers in the homelessness services system. While the shelters described above include only those that provide immediate evening respite from the street, shelters that make up the homelessness response system include both emergency night shelters and day shelters that provide emergency essential services to homeless individuals living on the streets or temporarily in shelters. Day shelters tend to serve hard-to-reach homeless persons who are on the street and have been unable or unwilling to participate in available housing or supportive services.

As reported in the gaps analysis, there are several populations that have an identified unmet need for emergency shelter. Specifically, unaccompanied youth under the age of 18 and adult couples without children are two populations that have few emergency housing options. Most emergency shelter for adults is for singles or families with children. The only option for unaccompanied minors in Harris County is Harris County Protective Services. There are a variety of reasons why youth do not access this service, not the least of which is the limited availability of beds, as noted in the chart above.

Table 6: Housing for Homeless Individuals

Type of Housing	Total units
Emergency shelter	1,002
Safe Haven	25
Transitional Housing	1,981
Permanent supportive housing	522

The Corporation for Supportive and National Alliance to End Homelessness have both cited that the percentage of transitional housing in the area to total available housing options is high compared to most communities. This is indicative of the types of housing investments that should be made for homeless individuals in Harris County as well as the types of housing available to currently homeless.

Transitional housing in the County is typically linked to programs which require participation in services for the 18 months to two years that housing is available. Homeless individuals who need temporary housing with intensive services are often successful in this model. The model of housing encourages participation in programs by homeless individuals to achieve stability and obtain life skills to maintain long term housing. In Harris County, service providers for survivors of domestic violence site this type of housing as creating the most successful outcomes for their clients.

The presence of transitional housing provides an option in housing and often recovery for thousands of homeless individuals and families. However, the large percentage of transitional compared to other housing options means that homeless who either need ongoing support (permanent supportive housing) or those that may benefit from a short subsidy and less intensive services (rapid re-housing) have fewer options. Harris County, in collaboration with the Coalition for the Homeless and other grantees within the Continuum, is working to best target resources and increase rapid re-housing for homeless individuals who may benefit from this intervention.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing

According to 2010 Census data, just over eight percent of households in Harris County are extremely low income, or below 30 percent of Area Median Income and qualify as at risk of homelessness. Another 18 percent are very low income, or have a household income of 30 – 50 percent of Area Median Income. The vast majority of those households are families with children, and more than half of those families are headed by a single parent. Reliance on a single income means the loss of a job or sudden illness can cause devastating effects for a low income family already experiencing a rent burden that exceeds 30 percent of income.

The size of Harris County and location of affordable housing to jobs and lack of transportation options poses another financial burden on low income families in the jurisdiction. In fact, when housing and transportations costs combined, the options for affordable housing are limited, according to the Houston Galveston Area Council. Finally, though Harris County has experienced less devastation from the economic recession than many other large metropolitan areas, Texas Workforce Commission indicates that unemployment rates in the area have continued to rise over the past five years. These factors are indicative of a large portion of Harris County residents who are precariously housed and could be at risk of homelessness because of the loss of income, onset of illness, change of familial status or another stressor.

Harris County received an unprecedented flux of assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to help address the needs homeless and at risk of homelessness residents of Harris County through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP). HPRP aligned federal resources with newly defined activities that allowed homelessness and housing service providers in Harris County to prevent very low income people from becoming homeless and find ways to quickly house individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness.

This funding allowed service providers within the County to focus more resources on not only providing emergency financial assistance to residents most at risk of homelessness, but also encouraged long term stabilization by prioritizing case management and other stabilization services for clients. HPRP also provided an avenue for providing assistance to individuals

experiencing homelessness who may not fit into the traditional model of achieving housing stability in Harris County through housing readiness.

As HPRP came to a close, workgroups comprised of a variety of members of the Continuum of Care and staffed by the Coalition for the Homeless met to develop recommendations for 1) What type of clients should be targeted for services, and 2) What program standards should be required of all providers. Focus groups of HPRP and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) providers identified successful practices and recommendations to improve program performance in the area. The Coalition provided research and data analysis as part of the *Capacity and Gaps in the Homeless Residential and Service System, Harris and Fort Bend Counties* to identify areas where people lived prior to becoming homeless and gaps and barriers in the service delivery system. A comparative analysis of the characteristics of literally homeless people and those served in year two of the HPRP homelessness prevention programs was conducted to identify common risk-factors among people who become homeless in order to better target homelessness prevention services. A focus group was held with members of the Coalition for the Homeless' Consumer Advisory Council, which is comprised of people who are currently or formerly homeless, to hear from their experience what services would be most helpful in either preventing experiences of homelessness or assisting people who are literally homeless through rapid re-housing.

As noted by the Coalition for the Homeless, there are gaps in services and housing availability compared to the needs and population characteristics of Harris County homeless residents across the board. However, some populations of homeless within the County have incredibly limited options in terms of housing and programs, including youth, unmarried couples and families and Lebian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)individuals. LGBT youth are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Between 20 and 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBT, and 1 out of 4 teens who come out to their families are asked to leave home (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2006).

The mismatch between housing availability and housing needs as well as service availability and service need creates an opportunity for rapid re-housing for homeless individuals who may not fit into the traditional Harris County homeless system. The County is working with the Coalition for the Homeless, the City of Houston, Fort Bend County and the City of Pasadena to create a homeless system that better matches the needs of homeless individuals. This system includes more opportunities for rapid re-housing activities, especially to meet the needs of underserved groups or households who need immediate short to medium term assistance but may not need the additional services provided through a transitional housing program. Rapid Re-Housing will intensive case management to address the crisis of homelessness with a short to medium term subsidy to enable a homeless individual or family to achieve stability.

<u>Coordination among Providers</u>

In April 2011, members of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care convened in clinics facilitated by the National Alliance to End Homelessness to identify community-wide goals in order to prepare for implementation of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act. This unprecedented discussion among providers, consumers and funders identified community priorities including expanding rapid re-housing, targeting homelessness prevention and improve data collection and performance measurement

for the system. Based on these three priorities, Harris County, in coordination with service providers and other ESG grantees, began work to address these priorities ahead of release of updated regulations for Emergency Solutions and Continuum of Care grants.

Following these clinics and as a way to ensure better coordination as required by the HEARTH Act, Harris County subgrantees meet regularly to coordinate services, discuss needs and issues and increase access to mainstream services for clients. Harris County, the Coalition for the Homeless, the City of Houston and Ft. Bend County, are working collaboratively to ensure that funding is strategic and providers are coordinating their services :

- Harris County Community Services Department
- Fort Bend County Social Services
- Houston Area Women's Center
- Fort Bend Women's Center
- Covenant House Texas
- Bay Area Homeless Services
- Career and Recovery Resources
- Bay Area Turning Point
- SEARCH Homeless Services
- Catholic Charities
- Salvation Army
- Harmony House
- Memorial Assistance Ministries
- Humble Area Assistance Ministries

Besides coordinating services among and between providers, Harris County also works closely with the Coalition for the Homeless and mainstream and targeted homeless service providers to limit duplication of services and increase access to mainstream resources. The following table describes some of the available resources within the community:

Table 7: Availability of Services

Services	Available in the Community	Targeted to Homeless	Targeted to People with HIV
Homelessness Prevention Services			
Counseling/Advocacy	x	x	x
Legal Assistance	x	x	x
Mortgage Assistance	x		x
Rental Assistance	x	x	x
Utility Assistance	x	x	x
Street Outreach Services			
Law Enforcement	x	x	
Mobile Clinics	x	x	
Other Street Outreach	x	x	
Supportive Services			
Alcohol & Drug Abuse	x	x	x
Child Care	x	x	
Education	x	x	
Employment and Employment Training	x	x	
Healthcare	x	x	x
HIV/AIDS	x	x	x
Life Skills	x	x	x
Mental Health Counseling	x	x	x
Transportation	x	x	

Community Planning and Homeless Charrette

As a HUD priority community, the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care received technical assistance from HUD through the Corporation for Supportive Housing and Abt Associates. Harris County as a member of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care Steering Committee worked with the HUD technical assistance providers and other steering committee members and local providers to organize and market the Homeless charrette. This culminated with a two day charrette, where providers, consumers, funders, grantees and concerned citizens across the region met to engage in the community planning process that ended with actionable recommendations for providers and funders. Leading up to the charette community wide planning session identified six issue areas that would be included as part of the community conversation and planning:

1. Right-Sizing the Continuum of Care Housing Models
2. Coordinated Access to the System and Housing
3. Prevention and Diversion
4. Integrating Services and Housing
5. Performance and Accountability
6. Building Political Will and Advocacy

Local and national experts discussed each of the issue areas and shared ideas in a public forum. After the expert discussion, the community pariticipants who were sitting in the audience and listening to the expert conversation then had an opportunity to share their ideas and provide feedback based on the expert conversation. Following the community feedback, experts and facilitators from CSH met to discuss what they heard and make recommendations for the planning process. These recommendations are included in considerations of the Harris County homeless funding priorities.

Measurable Objectives

Objective One: Street Outreach
To provide essential services, housing resources and urgent care to 3,650 unsheltered homeless individuals and families living on the streets by February 28, 2017. Through its subrecipients, Harris County will provide direct services to meet the immediate needs of people living on the street to stabilize and engage them in services as a path toward accessing permanent housing. Street outreach services include engagement that provides immediate support and links to other support networks and may include addressing immediate needs (food, clothing, toiletries, etc); assessment and case management to understand client barriers and identify housing options; emergency physical and mental health services; and services for special populations including homeless youth, victim services and services for people living with HIV/AIDS.
Performance Measurement: Suitable Living Environment
Goal: 3,650 unsheltered people

Objective Two: Emergency and Transitional Housing
To maintain and expand operations and support renovations and rehabilitation of structures to provide shelter for 7,500 homeless persons within new and existing emergency and transitional shelters by February 28, 2017 for the purpose of providing decent housing and essential services for the homeless population. Essential services include, but are not limited to case management, child care, education services, employment assistance and job training, outpatient health services, legal services, life skills training, transportation, services for special populations, and substance abuse treatment as they relate to locating and maintaining more permanent housing.
Performance Measurement: Decent Housing
7,500 persons have access to a shelter for the purpose of providing decent affordable housing
Goal: 7,500 persons

Objective Three: Homelessness Prevention
To provide housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to prevent 1,000 households from experiencing homelessness by February 28, 2017. Harris County and its subrecipients will provide services to extremely low income individuals and families living in the County to maintain or identify alternative permanent rental housing and achieve housing stability. Housing relocation and stabilization can include, but is not limited to, financial assistance including moving related costs and utility assistance, housing search and placement and housing stability case management. Households may also receive up to 24 months of rental assistance for fair market rental housing.
Performance Measurement: Decent Housing
Goal: 1,000 households

Objective Four: Rapid Re-Housing
To provide housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to quickly move 1,000 households experiencing homelessness into stable, permanent housing by February 28, 2017. Harris County and its subrecipients will provide services to homeless individuals and families living in the County to maintain or identify alternative permanent rental housing and achieve housing stability. Housing relocation and stabilization can include, but is not limited to, financial assistance including moving related costs and utility assistance, housing search and placement and housing stability case management. Households may also receive up to 24 months of rental assistance for fair market rental housing.
Performance Measurement: Decent Housing
Goal: 1,000 households

Objective Five: Homeless Management Information System
To support the expansion and data quality of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care by providing technical assistance to 300 homeless assistance providers and collecting data on 8,000 homeless individuals served in the community. In coordination with the Coalition for the Homeless Houston/Harris County, Harris County will support the improvement of homeless data collection to improve community outcomes for homeless individuals.

Other Non-Housing Community Development Elements

The Other Non-Housing Community Development elements address needs that are not identified in the other areas in the Consolidated Plan. For the Harris County Consolidated Plan these areas include clearance and demolition, non-profit capacity building and planning.

Overview

- According to the 2009 U.S. Census, 52 percent of the housing structures were built before 1978 in the Harris County service area. A substantial percentage of these units are concentrated in the low-income target areas.
- According to the CDC Association of Greater Houston, there are approximately 60 registered community development corporations (CDC) in the greater Houston area.
- Improving the quality of life in extremely low- and low-income communities is vital to the success of service area stakeholders. Due to the projected growth of the service area, the lack of direction for growth management, and the need for coordinated efforts among public and private sectors, community planning is essential to sustain and improve these communities.

Clearance and Demolition

Harris County has addressed the need for nuisance abatement since 1989 through the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) Department. Largely in response to the public outcry of civic associations and other interested parties, the HCPHES began its program in effort to reduce the hazards of dilapidated, unsound structures and improve neighborhood integrity. The effort of nuisance abatement through clearance and demolition activities is an ongoing effort as structures continue to fall into disrepair and into a state of dilapidation.

According to the 2009 ACS, 52 percent of housing units in Harris County were built before 1978. The age of housing units also influences health through exposure to hazards such as lead. High levels of lead in the bloodstream can lead to learning disabilities, behavioral problems, seizures and death. The risk of lead poisoning is greater among individuals residing in homes built prior to 1978 before the use of lead-based paint was banned. Further, although lead based paint was banned, millions of housing units and buildings still contain lead-based paint or paint debris.

A substantial percentage of these units are concentrated in the low-income target areas. Many of these have been evaluated by the Harris County Appraisal District as being substandard and in need of demolishing.

Many structures within Harris County are in poor condition or are uninhabitable. These structures are safety and fire hazards to neighborhoods. Demolition and clearance of these types of structures is necessary to maintain a safe and sanitary community environment.

Vacant units suffer from a much higher rate of deterioration than occupied units as a result of a general lack of maintenance and vandalism. As a result, neighborhood quality

of life is reduced. In addition, approximately three percent of the Harris County service area housing stock is dilapidated and requires removal.

Non-Profit Capacity Building

Several problems exist in the community development delivery system in Harris County. The service area lacks much-needed nonprofit development organizations and community development groups. Such groups are crucial to determining area needs, acting as subrecipients and garnering support and feedback from the community. In addition, a shortage of funds in both the public and private sectors reduces the effectiveness of community development activities. Harris County staff will develop training guides and workshops to assist organization to build capacity, develop programs, and make change in their communities.

Housing Resource Center

The Harris County Housing Resource Center (HRC), a service of the Harris County Community Services Department, provides a vast array of housing and related information primarily targeted to families and individuals that are experiencing housing crises or are in need of affordable housing. HRC's mission is to aide the community in finding decent, safe, and affordable housing in a manner that promotes equal opportunity and fair housing. In accomplishing this goal, the HRC is committed to serving as a viable community resource that is accessible to everyone. They are committed to bridging the communication gap in housing information between the community and other supportive and social services organizations. Referrals that the HRC provides include Affordable Housing Assistance; Homeownership Assistance; Emergency Assistance; and Support Services.

Capacity Building

As part of the OneStar Foundation's efforts to increase partnerships between faith and community based organizations and local governments, the Renewing Our Communities Account (ROCA) Fund created a Local Government Capacity Building grant program. Harris County applied for and received a ROCA capacity building grant in the amount of $40,000 for the CHDO Partnership Project. Harris County received the award in October 2010 and the contract period is November 2010 through September 2011. Harris County is using these funds not only to provide capacity building services for Harris County staff and CHDOs, but also as an effort to evaluate and enhance its already successful Three Track Program to provide more capacity building services to area nonprofit organizations once the grant period is complete.

Planning

Unlike counties in other states such as California, Texas counties are not given the authority by the Texas Legislature to implement stringent land use regulations. The Planning and Development Section of the Harris County Community Services Department works in cooperation with other state, regional, and local planning entities

such as the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), General Land Office (GLO), Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and neighborhood organizations to implement plans for underprivileged areas of the county. The planning services that are provided by Harris County include neighborhood level planning and comprehensive planning for low-income communities.

Improving the quality of life in extremely low-, very low- and low-income communities is vital to the success of service area stakeholders. Due to the projected growth of the service area, the lack of direction for growth management and the need for coordinated efforts among public and private sectors, community planning is essential to sustain and improve these communities. Harris County CSD planning staff will seek to assist four communities with either a new community plan or an update of their current plan.

Goal and Measurable Objectives

OTHER INITIATIVES GOAL: To develop an expanded and enhanced delivery system by building capacity of non-profit organizations, developing a planning process to be utilized to comprehensively address the needs within the extremely low-, very low- and low-income areas, assisting in creation of additional community development organizations, constructing of a network of service providers to coordinate resources or other means by which community development and revitalization is bolstered.

Objective 1: Clearance and Demolition (04)
To eliminate 150 dilapidated and/or unsafe structures located in low and moderate-income areas in an effort to improve integrity of Harris County neighborhoods by February 28, 2018.

Objective 2: Nonprofit Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (19C)
To provide assistance to 5 non-profit organizations, including assistance to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) to build capacity to support revitalization activities in low and moderate-income communities. Assistance includes but is not limited to technical assistance, referral services, and providing research and information services.

Objective 3: Planning (20)
To support, encourage and facilitate countywide service planning and local community planning activities through the Harris County service area for the purpose of preparing for the future and ensuring stabilization and needed expansion of services and facilities through February 28, 2018. Local planning activities to provide neighborhood level plan for 5 low- and moderate-income target areas by developing and conducting a planning process, supporting research and analyses, and providing technical assistance. Four plans to be submitted to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development as Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies (NRS) by February 28, 2018.

Public Facilities

Public facilities serve as a resource for many of the social, financial, educational, and recreational opportunities available to extremely low-, low-, and moderate-income persons and communities. Often these sites serve as a gathering point for the community. It is estimated that over the next five years, Harris County will have applied approximately $40 million toward the growth, expansion, and improvement of public facilities, including community centers, parks, libraries and health facilities (Harris County Capital Improvements Plan, FY 2012-13; Harris County Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery Program).

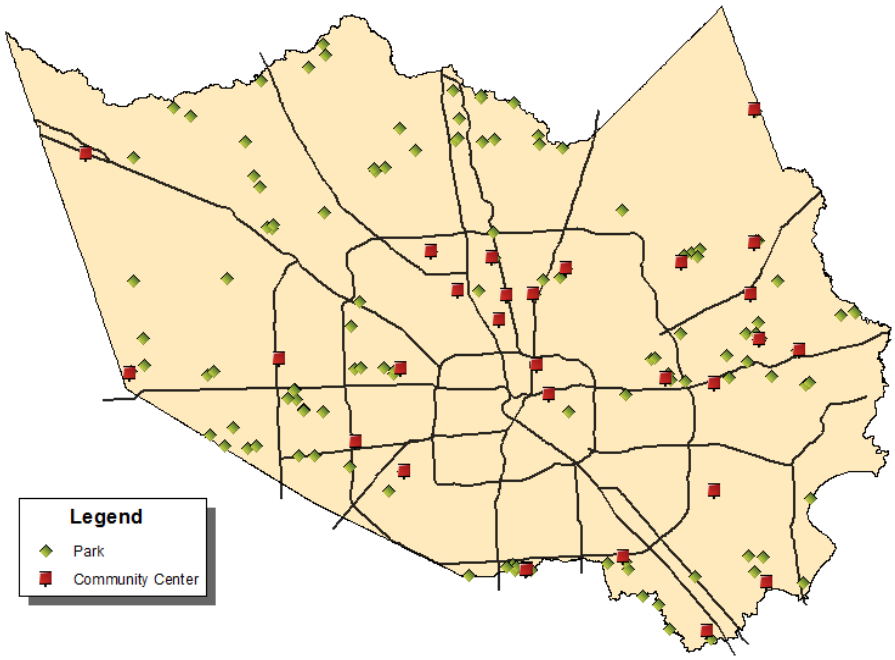
Overview

- Community and social service centers offer a number of general and specialty programs and resources for the communities in which they reside. These services can greatly improve the quality of life of area residents.
- Harris County residents living outside Beltway 8 system must travel inside the beltway to find primary and specialty care hospitals.
- In a paper and online survey conducted in the summer and fall of 2012, Harris County residents were surveyed as to the need for parks, recreation facilities and open spaces.

Community and Social Service Centers

Community and social service centers offer a number of general and specialty programs along with resources for the communities in which they reside. These services can greatly improve the quality of life of area residents. Community Centers with youth and senior programs serve these targeted groups with activities specifically created to enhance and improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of the individual. Services may include arts and crafts, fitness, education, cultural and social events.

Map 5.1 Harris County Parks and Community Centers



Source: Harris County Community Services Department

Community Centers

Many communities have outgrown the current capacity of their centers while others have become obsolete. The cost, however, of building and renovating these facilities is high, and many communities lack the resources for construction and rehabilitation. In addition, some community centers were impacted by Hurricane Ike and required repairs and improvements. Currently, Harris County is planning facility improvements to twelve (12) general use centers.

Table 5.15 Harris County Community Centers

Name of Center	Size of Center (sq ft)	Total Persons Served	# of Youth Served	# of Seniors Served
Precinct One				
Alexander Deussen	8,000			125
Barbara Jordan	2,950	500	200	
Cavalcade				
Challenger 7 Learning Center	7,600	3,000	2,400	50
Christia V. Adair	1,400	500		60
El Franco Lee				
Finnigan				
Hardy	12,000			350
Lincoln				
Tom Bass	10,980			1,000
Precinct Two				
Barrett Station / Riley	3,540 / 1,200	620	120	500
Bay Area	14,442			
Crosby				
East Harris	14,442			
J.D. Walker	21,675	950	150	800
Leon Grayson / Baldree	1,200 / 7,000	1,425		1,425
Martin L. Flukinger/ V. V. Ramsey	6,510	2,300	150	2,150
North East	9,000	1,100	750	350
Pep Mueller	1,967	1200	900 (YMCA)	100
San Jacinto / Highlands	4,000	280	30	250
Precinct Three				
Bayland				
Bear Creek				
Fonteno Senior				

Glazier Senior				
Hockley				
Mary Jo Peckham				
Tracy Gee				
Trini Mendenhall Sosa				
Spring Branch	11,938	5,156	150	4,406
Precinct Four				
B. F. Clark				
Doss	9,000	3,272	872	1,875
Mangum-Howell				
May	3,785	2,184		

Note: Youth indicates persons 0-18 years. Elderly indicates persons 65+ years.
Source: Survey of Facilities and Project, Harris County, 2000 and 2003; Harris County Precinct Data

Education and Library Facilities

According to the Houston Read Commission, 1 out of 3 Houstonians is functionally illiterate, meaning they cannot read or write a letter explaining a utility bill. The same group reports that nearly a quarter of Texas children live in homes where the head of household is not a high school graduate. Harris County residents, particularly low- to moderate-income persons, need facilities that provide basic education, vocational training, continued education classes, tutoring, and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. These facilities are critical to both parents and children as supported by a 2010 special report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation that stated the number one predictor of a child's early school success is the education level of their mother.

Harris County Public Library (HCPL) system provides programs for adults and children to learn to read and write. Harris County Library branches loan an average of eleven million books, films, and other electronic media per year. They offer hundreds of programs and services at 30 locations and online a month to area residents reaching over 5,000 persons. Services for adults include literacy and English as a Second Language, tax assistance, and continuing education programs. Children's services included bilingual and family story time, toddler and infant time, summer reading programs, tween mixers, arts and crafts, games and children's choice election. HCPL recently completed the expansion and renovation of three library branches using CDBG funds. Currently, no expansion or creation of branches is planned in the next five years.

Table 5.16 Harris County Library Branches and Circulation, FY 2011 - 2012

Branch Name	Circulation YTD	Branch Name	Circulation YTD
Administrative Offices	48,525	Katy	294,687
Aldine	352,643	Kingwood	616,189
Atascocita	416,327	La Porte	143,423
Baldwin Boettcher	294,605	Lincoln Park	87
Katherine Tyra-Bear Creek	580,391	Maud Marks	569,731
Crosby	88,078	North Channel	364,724
Cy-Fair	1,217,984	Northwest	603,451
Barbara Bush-Cypress Creek	1,263,468	Octavia Fields	349,464
Evelyn Meador	116,812	Parker Williams	282,234
Fairbanks	331,010	South Houston	61,613
Finnegan Park	88	Spring Branch	484,548
Freeman Memorial	1,006,588	Stratford	54,656
Galena Park	52,821	Texas Med Center	384
High Meadows	86,571	Tomball	646,405
Jacinto City	30,604	West University	329,850

Source: Harris County Public Library, 2012

Health Facilities

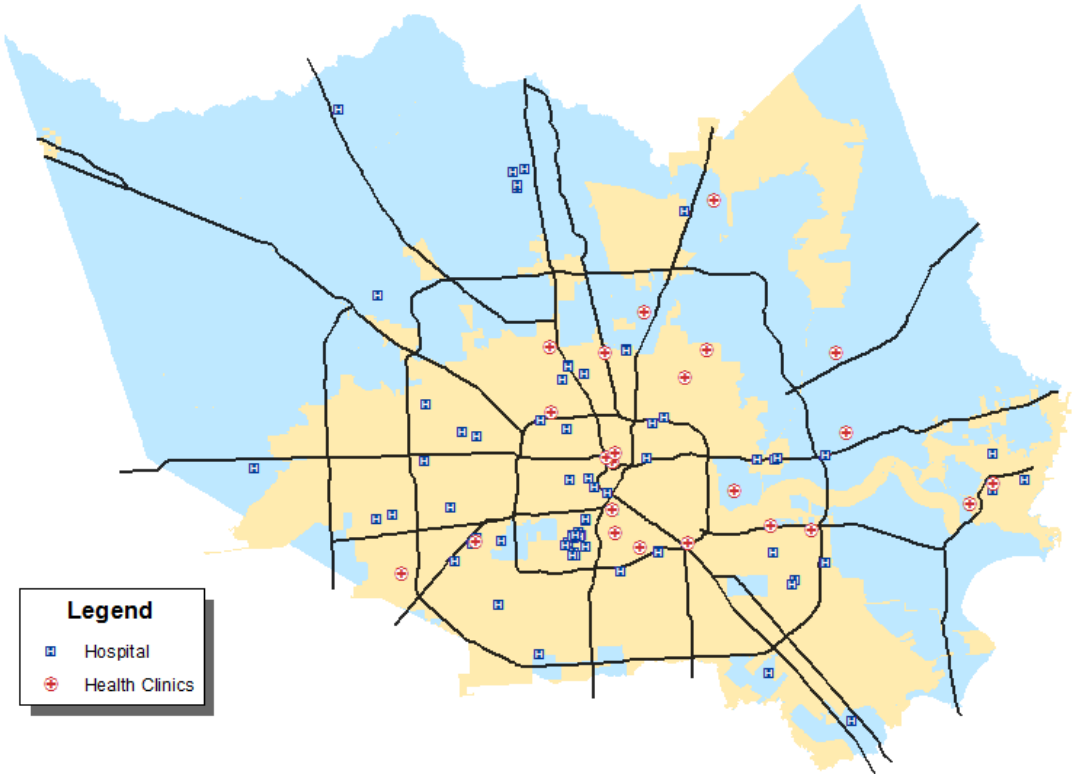
Harris County is a national hub of hospitals, medical research facilities, and clinics. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Harris County is home to 63 acute care hospitals (80 total per Texas Hospital Association) with 15,205 licensed beds and approximately 11,000-staffed beds. The county is also home to the Texas Medical Center, whose combined facilities and clinics account for over 6,000 beds. The major hospital systems in the region are Hermann-Memorial Healthcare System, Methodist Hospital, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, St. Joseph Medical Center and Texas Children's Hospital. The Harris County Psychiatric Center is a 203 bed acute care, public psychiatric facility, which delivers a comprehensive program of psychiatric and clinical social services. There are more than 6,100 inpatient admissions and 14,000 out-patient visits annually.

Harris Health System (HHS), formerly the Harris County Hospital District, is a public healthcare provider and one of the largest health care providers in the Texas Gulf Coast area. It has been recognized as one of America's best community-owned healthcare systems. The mission of HHS is to improve the community's health by delivering high-quality health care to Harris County residents with the promise of knowledgeable and highly trained staff, prompt service, sensitivity and a clean and safe environment. Within the system, there are three hospitals: Ben Taub General Hospital, one of three level 1 trauma facilities in the area, Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, and Quentin Mease Hospital. The hospitals provided the following services in FY 2012: 35,343 admissions, 6,643 births, 173,263emergency visits and 1,054,770 outpatient clinic visits. In addition to the main hospitals, the Thomas Street Clinic seeks to meet the medical and

psychological needs of HIV or AIDS patients. As seen in Map 5.2 Harris County Hospitals and Health Clinics, the majority of hospitals are centrally located within the Beltway 8 system. Residents outside the beltway must travel inside the beltway to find primary care hospitals. This may cause a burden to those residents who need immediate and more complex care.

Source: Harris County Hospital District; Texas Dept. of State Health Services

Map 5.2 Harris County Hospitals and Health Clinics



A network of 16 community health centers, one free-standing dental center, one dialysis center, seven school-based clinics and 15 homeless shelter clinics have been established to provide local-level health and dental care. These centers are located throughout Harris County. In addition to regular adult and pediatric services, the centers may provide podiatry, dental, x-ray, mammography, lab, nutrition, health education and social services. As seen in Map 5.2, Harris County Hospitals and Health Clinics are primarily located in the center of Harris County, inside Beltway 8 and within the City of Houston. Individuals in need of health care, living in the greater county area, may travel great distances to one of these facilities for safe and affordable health care.

In an effort to better meet the health care needs of the community, HHS, in conjunction with seven school districts, established seven school-based clinics in areas of the community with the greatest need. HHS's school-based clinics provide health care to children in neighborhoods with limited healthcare services, and enable early detection of illness and intervention, as well as help promote children's health issues.

Children and adolescents from birth to 21 years may receive regular physical exams, primary preventive care, Texas Health Steps screenings, sports physicals, developmental assessments, vision and hearing testing, immunizations, lead and anemia screening, health education, treatment of minor and acute illnesses, management of chronic health problems such as asthma, and coordination of referrals for specialized care.

HHS school-based clinics provide healthcare services for tens of thousands of pediatric patients. These types of community-based clinics are in high demand for low- to moderate-income communities, particularly in the more rural areas of Harris County. The school-based clinic and community health clinics are needed and should be expanded into other low- to moderate-income communities, whose need for assisted health care is great.

Table 5.17 List of Harris Health System Community Health Centers and School Clinics

Harris Health System Community Health Centers and School Clinics	
A.C. Taylor Health Clinic	Pediatric & Adolescent Health Center – Bear Creek
Acres Home Health Center	Pediatric & Adolescent Health Center – Cypress
Aldine Health Center	Pediatric & Adolescent Health Center – Pasadena
Baytown Health Center	Patrick Henry Health Clinic
Casa de Amigos Health Center	People's Health Center
Deepwater Health Clinic	Robert Carrasco Health Clinic
E.A. Squatty Lyons Health Center	Settegast Health Clinic
El Franco Lee Health Center	Sheldon Health Clinic
Goose Creek Health Clinic	Southside Health Clinic
Gulfgate Health Center	Strawberry Health Center
Martin Luther King Jr. Health Center	Thomas Street Health Center
Northwest Health Center	

Source: Harris Health System (2012)

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) provides public health preparedness and a variety of personal health services including family planning, maternity and child health, nutrition, WIC and immunizations in the Harris County service area. HCPHES has four county clinics that provide health care services. The clinics are Antoine, Baytown, Humble, and Southeast Health Clinics. Some of the programs available include dental health, disease control and epidemiology, STD/HIV screening, social services and occupational therapy.

Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open areas provide green space and add to the physical attractiveness of a community while serving as a social and recreational resource. Services provided at parks include various sport fields, bike/walking trails, playground areas, educational programs, pavilions and picnic areas. Parks are classified into one of six categories:

Table 5.18 Harris County Park Classification Matrix

Category of Park	Service Area	Size	Population Served
Mini-parks	¼ mile radius	0-5 acres	500-2500
Neighborhood parks	½ mile radius	5-25 acres	2,000-10,000
Community parks	2 mile radius	25-150 acres	10,000-50,000
Regional parks	10 mile radius	150+ acres	Urban area
Greenway parks	N/A	Varying in size	N/A
Special Use parks-generally single purpose facilities	N/A	Dependent on use	N/A

Source: Harris County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, 2001

Harris County residents were provided with an online and paper Consolidated Plan Survey during the Summer and Fall of 2012 and questioned about the need for and location of parks, recreation facilities and open spaces. The results of the survey found:

- Majority of residents would like a small neighborhood park within 1 mile of their home
- Majority of residents would like a large, regional park within 5 miles of their home
- Majority of residents indicated a need for specialty parks (dog, splash pad, etc.) in their neighborhood
- Over 50% of respondents indicated that recreational opportunities and open space/trails was an important or very important factor in choosing housing

Five park improvements or construction projects are planned for the next five years and include the addition of green space and recreational areas.

Table 5.19 Harris County Public Parks

Name of Park	Number of Acres	Total persons served
Precinct One		
Alexander Deussen Park	309	150,000
Barbara Jordan Park	6	40,000
Boyce-Dorian Park		
Challenger 7 Memorial Park	326	50,000
Christia V. Adair Park	60	60,000
Dixie Farm Road Park	40	10,000
Dow II Park	6	25,000
Dwight D. Eisenhower Park	682	
El Franco Lee Park	361	70,000
Finnigan Park	19	
Frankie Carter Randolph Park	93	60,000
Hutcheson Park	3.5	20,000

Name of Park	Number of Acres	Total persons served
Kirkwood South Park	3.5	15,500
Lincoln Park	19	
Mickey Leland Memorial Park	0.42	
Oxnard Park	14	10,000
Quebedeaux Park	2	
Sagemeadow Park	3	15,000
Sheldon Sports Complex Park	15	40,000
Schiveley R/C Flying Field		
Tom Bass Regional Park	368	100,000
Precinct Two		
Allison R. Peirce Jr. Wetlands - Nature Sanctuary	5.79	
Armand Bayou Nature Center	2,234	
Bay Area Hike and Bike Trail	5.2 miles	
Bay Area Park	64.3	10,000
Baytown Park - Senior Sports Complex	6.27	3,000
Baytown Soccer Complex	154.77	
Bretshire Park	6.5	
Buffalo Bend Nature Park	10	
Carpenters Bayou Hike and Bike Trail	1.6 miles	
Cedar Bayou Park	170.15	1,000
Cedar Grove Park	0.6	500
Channelview Sports Complex	31.3	30,000
Channelwood Park	6.4	2,000
Clear Lake Park	59	7,000
Cloverleaf Park	1	600
Crosby Park	46	60,000
Crosby Sports Complex	13	50,000
Crowley, W. E. "Bill" Park	30	20,000
Dad's Club Sports Complex	34.5	9,000
David G. Burnet Park	6.3	6,000
Dow #1 Park	9	10,000
Edna Mae Washington Park	28.99	8,000
Gene Green Beltway 8 Park	230.05	
Gerber Park	2	5,000
Halls Bayou Hike and Bike Trail	2.3	2,000
Highlands Park	12.8	7,000
Highlands Sports Complex	15.8	8,000
I-10	15 miles	
James Bute Park	1.5	700
James Driver Park	29.27	6,000

Name of Park	Number of Acres	Total persons served
Jim and JoAnn Fonteno Family Park	37.4	
John R. Harris Park	8	
Juan Seguin Park	4.9	
Kipper Mease Sports Complex	297.7	20,000
Mary Withers Park	6	
Meadowbrook Park	13	3,000
Michael Moncrief Park	3.4	600
Native Coastal Prairie Preserve	24	
North Shore Park	46.4	7,500
Northshore Rotary Park	2.8	
Northshore Rotary Pavilion		
Pep Mueller Park	13	35,000
Pinewood Village Park	2.86	
Riley Chambers Park	35.4	9,500
Rio Villa Nature Trail	215.3	10,000
River Terrace Park	13.9	3,000
Seabrook Sports Complex	8.2	10,000
Stratford Park	4.8	6,000
Sylvan Beach Park	31.4	25,000
Precinct Three		
Alief-Amity Park	11	5,000
Archbishop Joseph A. Fiorenza Park	12.5	
Arthur Storey Park	175	
Bayland Park	69.83	7,500
Bear Creek Pioneers Park	2,168	50,000
Beeler Memorial Pocket Park	1	
Beverly Kaufman Dog Park	232	
Bonham Family Nature Park	1.16	
Brays Bayou Hike and Bike Trail	5.3 miles	
Bud Hadfield Park	54.52	
Carol Tree Pocket Park	1.5	750
Congressman Bill Archer Park and Skate Park	17	
Cypress Top Historic Park	2.64	
Danny Jackson Family Dog Park	2.76	
Eagle Ranch West Pocket Park	4.38	
East Shadowlake Pocket Park	4.94	
Flag Tree Pocket Park	1.5	
Four Seasons Park	32	8,000
Fry Road Park	5.3	
Gary and Bonnie Trietsch Park	6	
George Bush Park	7,800	
Glenmore Forest Park	1.18	

Name of Park	Number of Acres	Total persons served
Hickory Shadows Park	0.78	
Hockley Recreational Complex	18.5	4,500
Housman Pocket Park	1	
Katy Park	100	5,000
Katy Tree Farm Park	2.47	
Kleb Woods Nature Preserve and Park	133.5	
Marrs-Satsuma Pocket Park	2.57	
Mary Jo Peckham Park	32	10,000
Mason Creek Park & North Hike and Bike Trail	76.5	
Mayde Creek Hike and Bike Trail	1.34 miles	
McClendon Park	22.8	
Mike Driscoll Park	46	
Millie Bush Dog Park	8.68	
Molly Pryor Memorial Orchard	3	
Monsignor Bill Pickard Park	8.4	
Moritz Pech Family Park	1	
New Kentucky Park	3.98	1,000
Nob Hill Park	13	
Nottingham Park	22.5	
Paul D. Rushing Park	232	
Ray Miller Park	15	
Regency Green Pocket Park	4.54	
Saums Pocket Park	0.3	
Sergeant J.R. Hatch Park and Skate Park	1.8	
Stein Family Park	4	
Susan C. Kellner Pocket Park	1.56	
Telge Park	111	4,000
Terry Hershey Park	500	150,000
Thomas A. Glazier Pocket Park	5.07	
Zube Park	140	6,000
Precinct Four		
Bane Park	18.2	40,000
Bauer Pocket Park	0.65	
Bayer Park	36.25	40,000
Burroughs Park	320	75,000
Collins Park	55	
Pundt Park	380	
Stahl Preserve	146	
Spring Creek Greenway	10 miles	75,000
Ellen and Bill Carter Park		

Name of Park	Number of Acres	Total persons served
Cypress Creek Greenway	0.5 miles	
Cypresswood Golf Club	852	30,000
Doss Park	33	60,000
Dyess Park	113	65,000
Fritsche Park	91	70,000
Gessner Pocket Park	1	
Independence Park	5	25,000
Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center	300+	85,000
Klein Park	7	30,000
Lindsay/Lyons Park & Sports Complex	136	100,000
Little Cypress Creek Preserve	58	
Matthews Park	6	35,000
Matzke Park	19.4	
May Park	69	55,000
Mercer Arboretum & Botanic Gardens	300	95,000
Meyer Park	180	100,000
Pitner Pocket Park	1.29	
Southwell Park	5	25,000
Spring Branch Pocket Park	1	
Spring Creek Park	114	
Turkey Creek Park		
Harris County Flood Control District: Carter Trail		

Source: Harris County Community Services Department, 2012 and Harris County Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space, 2003

Communities receive great social and economic impact from public facilities, such as parks, community centers, and libraries. Public meetings identified a need for expanded and improved facilities. Harris County should seek to improve the condition of existing public facilities and add to the inventory by creating new facilities. Of particular need are facilities that improve the socio-economic status and quality of life of Harris County residents.

Goals and Measurable Objectives

PUBLIC FACILITIES GOAL: To provide, improve and maintain community facilities, which contribute to the quality of life for extremely low-, very low-, low-income persons living in the Harris County service area, particularly in target areas with special emphasis on the needs of youth, senior citizens and disabled persons.

Objective 1: Neighborhood or Social Service Facilities (03E)

Provide improvements and/or construction of 5 neighborhood or social service facilities benefiting 2,000 low- and moderate-income areas by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 20,000 residents of low- and moderate-income communities by promoting the availability of public facilities to the meet unmet neighborhood needs. Neighborhood facilities include but are not limited to community centers, multi-purpose centers, and arts and crafts facilities. Social Service Facilities are structures, which provide space for the purpose of providing a needed service to low- and moderate-income persons such as group homes, libraries, and healthcare faculties.

Objective 2: Senior Centers (03A)
Provide improvements to 3 senior center facilities located throughout the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 1,500 elderly individuals by promoting the availability of facilities to serve unmet needs. Senior centers are facilities that exclusively provide space for services to persons aged 65 years and older.

Objective 3: Youth Centers (03D)
Provide improvements to 2 youth centers located in the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 1,000 youth by promoting the availability of facilities to serve unmet needs. Youth centers are facilities that primarily provide space for services to persons aged 18 years and younger.

Objective 4: Parks (03F)
Provide improvements to and/or construction of 5 parks/recreational facilities benefiting low- and moderate-income areas by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of improving the quality of life of 2,500 residents of low- and moderate-income communities by promoting the availability of green space and playground areas to serve recreational and leisure needs.

Infrastructure

All residents and businesses in Harris County should have access to adequate utilities and transportation systems. On the whole, the county's existing infrastructure is aging and while governing entities should continue to expand infrastructure with growing areas, they must also maintain the old systems. Many of these older systems are located in the northern, eastern, and southeastern portion of the county. These areas are primarily served by municipal utility districts (MUDs), Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCIDs), and individual homeowner septic systems.

Overview

- Some of the least-solvent municipal utility districts are located in the less- developed north and northeast parts of the county, such as the Aldine, McNair and Barrett Station target areas, and have been placed under edict by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality.
- Almost half of the stream segments in the Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC) Clean Rivers Program study area have showed elevated levels of bacteria.
- The Harris County Flood Control District encompasses approximately 1,800 square miles, 22 major watersheds, and 3,000 miles of watercourses.

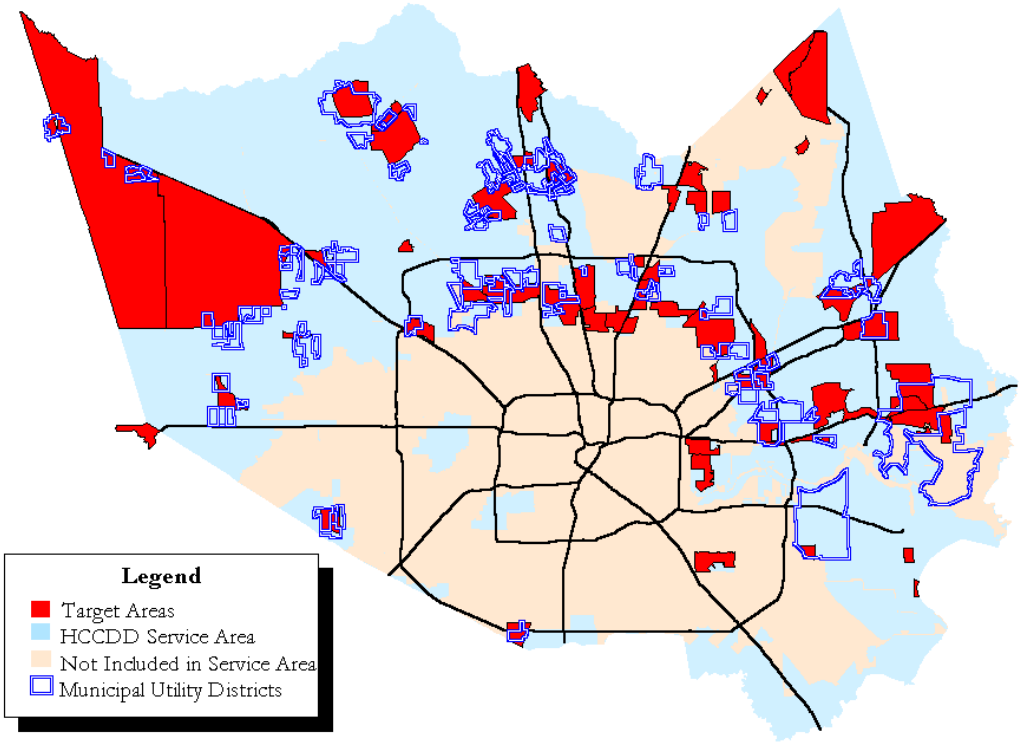
Sewage Systems

Ensuring that municipal utility districts (MUDs) adequately supply water and wastewater service in the unincorporated areas provides a significant challenge for Harris County. Utility districts are taxing entities authorized under Texas State law to make it easier to begin or expand subdivisions in unincorporated areas of Harris County. These entities are initiated by developers and are authorized by the state. Virtually all suburban areas developed in Harris County since the 1970s have relied on MUDs to raise money for the operation of existing wells and transmission/distribution lines, water treatment plants, wastewater facilities and streets.

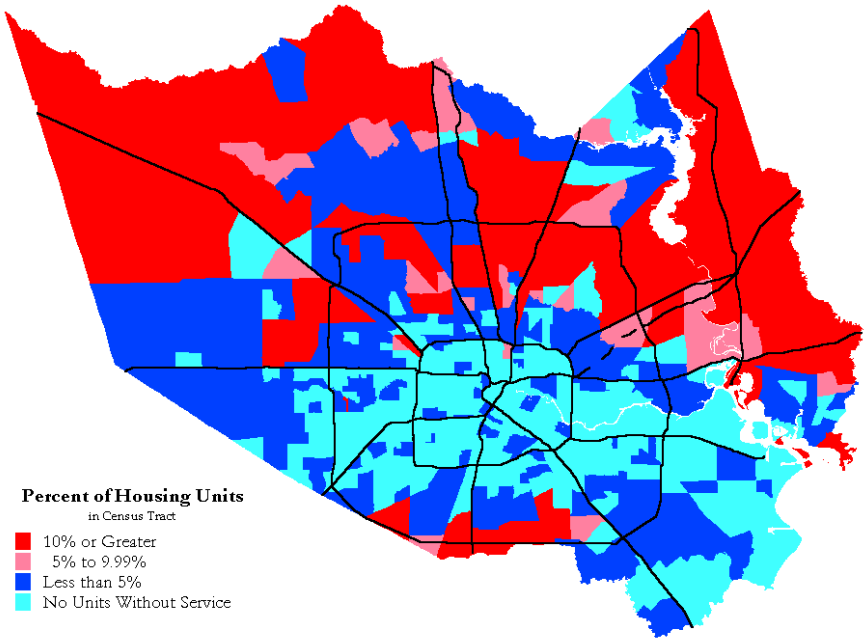
Like cities, MUDs borrow money by issuing bonds, and these earnings are tax-exempt. The district's accumulated debt can fall wholly on current residents. This would make their homes harder to sell in the future and can set off a trend of falling property values and rising taxes. Some of the least-solvent districts are located in the less- developed north and northeast parts of the county. The systems in these areas, such as the Aldine, McNair and Barrett Station target areas, have been placed under edict by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality because of storm water infiltration, sewage backing into residents' yards and homes, and poor water quality. Target areas such as Linus and Cloverleaf have areas where no sewer lines exist and septic systems were not adequately installed.

Many areas in unincorporated Harris County are not included in a MUD, and have no access to water or sewer service. As seen in Map 5.3, there was a substantial portion of housing units within the service area without public sewer service. Homes not connected to a sewer system generally depend on septic systems and landfills for disposal of solid wastes.

Map 5-2: Harris County Target Areas (Including Municipal Utility Districts)



Map 5-3: Units without Public Sewer Service, 2000



According to 2010 Census, there are an estimated 49,000 septic sewer systems in Harris County, predominately in unincorporated areas. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that between 10 and 20 percent of all on-site septic systems (or 4,900 to 9,800 households) do not adequately treat sewage and more than half of the systems are over 30 years old. In certain areas, as many as 40 percent of systems may be failing, malfunctioning or inadequately designed (H-GAC publication *Gulf Coast Region Water Quality Management Plan: On-Site Sewer Facilities*, 2005). Many of these failing systems are occupied by low-income households. Improperly installed and maintained, inadequately sized, and/or malfunctioning systems affect the county's water quality because septic effluent can contaminate both ground and surface water with bacteria, nitrates and other harmful components. Consideration should be given to programs that educate residents to proper maintenance of the septic system and assist low-income residents to repair failing, inadequately sized, and/or malfunctioning systems.

Harris County Precinct Two has sought to investigate areas of no water and sewer services. Unincorporated Harris County Precinct 2 has several neighborhoods that are without public water and/or wastewater services. Other municipalities and utility districts have been reluctant to annex these neighborhoods because of their respective challenges, including overflowing septic systems, polluted water wells, and the resultant diminishing property values. In the *Harris County Precinct 2 Unincorporated Area Revitalization Program Comprehensive Water and Wastewater Engineering Study*, the precinct identifies unincorporated areas within the precinct that are in need of service or revitalization to improve the environmental, public health, and economic well-being and provides recommended actions to provide service.

The study identified 22 un-served areas and prioritized 7 of those as "high priority communities." All of the high priority communities currently rely on privately-owned septic systems and demonstrate a high level of need for wastewater improvements. These communities included:

- Grace Timbers, Highland Shores, Lloyd Clara, Mobile Homes Parkland, and Orchard Crossing
- Highland Mobile Estates and Highland Ridge
- Beamont Place
- Hampton Oaks and Reservoir Acres
- Mary Eleanor
- Westfield Estates and Woodsdale
- Lakeview Heights

Federal and state legislation have also affected the provision of services of solid waste, water supply, wastewater and storm drainage in Harris County. The federal government influences Harris County's storm water management efforts through these regulations and programs. The Federal Clean Water Act administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has the most direct impact. Originally the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) established by the Clean Water Act sought to eliminate pollution from point sources (i.e., municipal and industrial wastewater

discharges). In 1987, amendments to the act expanded the scope of the act to address water pollution due to nonpoint sources (i.e., storm water run-off.)

The NPDES has far-reaching implications for storm water management. As a condition for receiving storm water discharge permits, local governments must submit plans to the EPA detailing initiatives for minimizing water pollution due to run-off. These plans must contain provisions for assessing the impacts of new development on water quality, reduction of litter discharged into area waterways, disposal of solid and hazardous waste, and educating the public. Implementing NPDES may significantly affect local development regulations, municipal waste management, and other local government activities.

Fresh Water Supply

Harris County's northern and western sections have historically relied on groundwater and have had limited access to surface water. However, Houston plans to expand its surface-water distribution network in the city's northern areas, which will make this area more attractive for future development. A 1989 water master plan outlined a conceptual surface-water transmission system that would serve all of Harris County.

Water Availability
In the fall of 2010, Harris County and the entire H-GAC region suffered from one of the worst droughts on record (H-GAC Report *Where's the Water*, 2011). Rain deficiencies from this drought lasted into 2012. Most of the county was under restricted water use sometime during the drought. Lake Houston, Lake Conroe, and Lake Livingston, which provide the majority of water to the area, dropped to an average of 73 percent capacity by fall 2011. County residents incurred significant losses, as water line broke as soils dried out. Local cities, MUDs, and WCIDs diverted already stretched resources to repair waterline breaks numbering 2-4 times the normal rates. For homeowners with individual wells and waterlines the burden has fallen them to fund repairs and for low-income homeowners this burden was devastating. Water conservation education and building practices should be explored to assist residents in future droughts. Water conservation practices and upgrades to systems should also be considered by water providers.

Water Quality
Almost half of the stream segments in the Houston Galveston Area Council (HGAC) Clean Rivers Program study area have shown elevated levels of bacteria (HGAC report *Bacteria in Our Bayous*, 2011). HGAC's Clean Rivers Program encompasses four major basins: the San Jacinto River Basin, the Trinity-San Jacinto Coastal Basin, the San Jacinto-Brazos Coastal Basin, and the San Bernard River Basin within the Brazos-Colorado Coastal Basin. While the region's bayous are generally safe for canoeing or boating, they pose significant health risks if large amounts of water are ingested or received in an open wound. High toxicity levels are also present in the Houston Ship Channel and the smaller side bays that it feeds. Additionally, nutrient enrichment, which leads to algal blooms and negative impacts on aquatic flora and fauna, is a concern in several area waterways.

The drought, although unwelcome, did have a beneficial effect on bacteria levels (H-GAC Report *Where's the Water*, 2012). Elevated bacteria levels reported over the last seven year period exhibited lower average levels. Nonpoint sources, those not associated with a wastewater treatment plant, appear to be the biggest contributor to the presence of bacteria. Some of these sources include failing or improperly maintained septic systems and storm water runoff containing animal and pet waste. Sewage from failing sewer infrastructure often leaks into storm drains during dry weather, allowing wastewater to make its way to bayous, creeks, and lakes without treatment of any kind. There is also potential for wastewater collection system failure or overflow at the plant. Additionally, discharges from a pipe or wastewater treatment plant can never be ruled out and must continue to be monitored. Consideration should be given to programs that improve failing septic systems and wastewater treatment plants, especially those serving low-income households and neighborhoods.

Toxic substances, such as Dioxin, found along the Houston Ship Channel have resulted in a Texas Department of Health advisory on fish/crab consumption in the industrialized area, including smaller side bays that receive water from the Ship Channel (H-GAC publication *DIOXIN for Dinner*). Dioxin is the term used to refer to a group of toxic chemicals and can cause a variety of harmful health effects including cancer, birth defects, diabetes, learning and developmental delays, and immune system abnormalities. The source of dioxin is unclear, but is not thought to come from point sources, since those discharges have not shown any dioxin in water quality samples. While ongoing investigation has not detected dioxin in the water column, fish and crab tissue show high levels of the contaminant. There has also been some detection of dioxin after rain events in tributaries that flow to the Ship Channel. The dioxin found may be in part remnant from sources no longer active or may result from atmospheric deposition and runoff associated with that deposition. Several low-income neighborhoods are located near the Ship Channel. The Ship Channel is also a significant employment center for the region. In addition to efforts to decrease dioxin levels, consideration should be given to health education and nutrition and treatment services, particularly in low-income areas.

Subsidence

In the Greater Houston Galveston region, land subsidence is the sinking of the land surface caused by the withdrawal of groundwater from aquifers. In 1975 state officials called for extensive changes in the water-supply system that dramatically limited groundwater use by Houston and Harris County. As a result, the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District was created. The District monitored 7,351 permitted wells in 2011. It has issued regulations requiring that no more than 20 percent of Harris County's water supply come from groundwater by 2020. With heavy groundwater extraction, water levels drop and pumps must be lowered. This has significant effect on the environment for more energy is expended to pull the water out. Also concentrating water extraction in certain areas reduces nature's ability to replenish groundwater sources. Well water also has been contaminated in some areas by naturally occurring gases and manmade chemical storage.

The area's past dependence on groundwater has resulted in subsidence in much of the Houston-Galveston region. Between 1906 and 1987, southeast Houston suffered the most severe subsidence, losing as much as nine feet of elevation. The subsidence district is divided into seven areas that must meet specific targets of groundwater withdrawal. Areas One, Two and Three -- consisting mainly of Galveston County, eastern Harris County and the City of Houston -- have, for the most part, converted to surface water.

MUDs must be monitored to ensure compliance with the Harris-Galveston Coastal Subsidence District. Harris County also needs to seriously assess the ability of MUDs to comply with federal and state environmental regulations, and to determine if the creation of additional MUDs in the unincorporated areas is an effective method of dealing with a regional water utilization program.

Harris County lacks an infrastructure network to address pressing issues such as water supply or waste disposal. This crucial concern brings to light several future water concerns such as lack of available water sources, predicting water needs of Harris County communities, and the status of wastewater systems. Another related concern is the effects of development on the capacity of storm drainage and coordination of local storm water management plans and policies.

Collecting, treating, storing and distributing surface water is expensive. Until recently, most areas of Harris County could draw on plentiful groundwater supplies from the Chicot and Evangeline aquifers that, when combined, form one of the largest freshwater supplies in the nation. Under Texas law developers can draw on this source by establishing private MUDs to provide water and wastewater services without waiting for local governments to do so. In the past, the state freely approved permits for MUDs. According to the most recent count, approximately 480 MUDs currently operate in Harris County. Of these MUDs, 35 percent are in the City of Houston, and the remainder is located primarily in Houston's extraterritorial jurisdiction.

One obstacle in meeting subsidence is the $300 to $700 million-estimated cost of the project, particularly to low-income neighborhoods. When well users do express opinions on the issue, it is frequently that surface water is inferior to groundwater and that they do not want to rely on city water supplies. As Houston owns $1.1 billion worth of surface-water rights -- including 70 percent of the water in Lake Livingston on the Trinity River, 66 percent of Lake Conroe on the San Jacinto River, and all the water in Lake Houston -- it is virtually certain that unincorporated Harris County will buy surface water from the city.

Flood Control

The Harris County Flood Control District is responsible for the construction and maintenance of projects that reduce flooding in the county. It designs flood control improvements, carries out capital improvement projects, maintains drainage facilities, approves subdivision drainage plans, and provides flood- watch and flood-alert programs. The district encompasses approximately 2,500 square miles, 22 major watersheds, and 3,000 miles of watercourses.

The current bayou and drainage systems, however, are not adequate in many areas to deal with a heavy rain event. Many areas in Harris County flood after short events leaving many homes under inches of water. With heavy residential and commercial development, drainage systems with greater capacity are needed.

Tropical Storm Allison, the first named system in the 2001 Atlantic hurricane season, battered the southeast Texas coast and Harris County with heavy rains and flooding during the week of June 5-9, 2001. The storm's leisurely crawl produced sweeping bands of showers that slowly moved up the Gulf Freeway. Rain gauges overflowed across the region, with many parts of Harris County recording rainfall amounts in the double digits. Heaviest hit was a spot along Greens Bayou in northeast Harris County, which reported 36 inches of rainfall.

Damage estimates by Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector Paul Bettencourt and chief appraiser Jim Robinson were that the county suffered at least $100 million worth of damage to homes, properties, businesses and their contents. The Southwestern Insurance Information Institute estimated that damage from wind-driven rain, such as broken windows and punctured roofs, amounted to $110 million alone. FEMA has reported a much higher figure, $5 billion in damage from the storm and floods to homes, automobiles, properties, and businesses, making this the most expensive Tropical Storm in U.S. history.

On September 13, 2008 Hurricane Ike made landfall near Galveston Bay and was the third costliest storms in recent years with a project cost of 3.58 billion in damage. The storm surge from the Hurricane was 12-15 feet submerging all of the county's coastal

communities. Harris County experienced two separate rainfall events with Hurricane Ike. The first event was during landfall on September 13th and resulted in 6-10 inches of rainfall. The secondary event was early the next day and resulted in 3-8 inches of rainfall across the northwest part of the county. Over 1,300 homes flooded from the rainfall. Over 2 million CenterPoint customers were without power with 75 percent of power restored by day 10 after the storm. Over 200 shelters were established to house over 180,000 residents, many low-income households. As homeless shelters were damaged or lost power, emergency shelters were established to intake these vulnerable populations.

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Allison, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Harris County Flood Control District launched a multi-year, joint initiative: the Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project (TSARP). TSARP was an unprecedented effort to produce a new Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM or floodplain map) for Harris County and its 22 watersheds. Events such as Tropical Storm Allison and the 2008 Hurricane Ike are unique, however flooding from heavy rainfall is common, particularly in low-income areas such as Lindale Farms, Aldine, Cloverleaf, and McNair/Linus. Improvements of drainage systems are needed to reduce area flooding during normal rain events and reduce flood hazards during natural disasters.

Transportation and Roadway

In addition to the development of water, wastewater and drainage systems, Harris County must also consider streets and sidewalks, traffic and transportation, and environmental issues in order to effectively and efficiently meet future development. Plans for streets and sidewalks must detail miles of streets and roads maintained as well as the percentages of commercial and residential use. The county's Public Infrastructure Department is responsible for all phases of engineering and construction for county facilities including roadways and traffic signals. Within each precinct, road crews work to maintain and improve the county's existing road network.

The region's continued economic vitality and quality of life is intrinsically linked to the performance of its transportation system. The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, developed by the Houston-Galveston Area Council and their partners, proposes to enhance mobility by providing an efficient, affordable, safe, and environmentally responsible transportation system for both people and goods. The regional transportation system must keep pace with population and employment growth. This is a challenging imperative for a region that covers 7,705 square miles in eight counties with widely dispersed employment centers.

After a brief period of decreasing congestion in the early 1990s, travel time delays have steadily increased in the Houston-Galveston region. "Rush hour" now lasts for seven hours daily for the region's commuters. According to a recent study by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), the annual delay per traveler due to congestion was 56 hours in 2005, an increase of 24 hours over the last ten years. The Houston region wasted 42 gallons per traveler annually sitting in traffic. The annual cost of congestion in the

region is $2.225 million, the 2nd highest congestion costs in Texas and the 9th highest cost out of 14 "very large" urban areas (areas over 3 million) studied.

For over half a million residents of Harris County communities who reside outside of the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) service area, public transportation options are very limited. A lack of an efficient coordinated transportation system, which connects outlying areas of Harris County, particularly the Eastern sections of Harris County, to employment centers, has placed a high burden on low- to moderate-income commuters due to high commuting times and high gas prices. Without a public transportation system, residents of these outlying communities must use their own vehicles and more of their income to travel to and from work.

In 2006, Harris County and the county's Community Services Department undertook the development of the *Harris County Comprehensive Transit Strategy*. The plan identifies area of transit needs, provides mobility options to underserved portion of the county and outside the METRO service area, enhances existing transportation services, and creates a strategy for implementation and funding. Of particular interest is the relatively high percentage of households with automobiles, particularly in low-income areas not serviced by transit providers like METRO such as Barrett Station, Crosby, South Houston, Tomball, Cloverleaf, Galena Park, and Jacinto City. The Transit Plan makes a compeling argument for the need for additional transit services, particularly to low-income and disabled populations. The actions taken from this plan as well as the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan for the past five years have included park n rides, demand response transit routes serving low income and disabled persons, and a circulator route connecting low-income populations to employment centers and health/social service providers.

Assessment of Needs

According to surveys and public meetings attended by citizens, local leaders and local organizations, the most pressing needs for infrastructure are in the areas of water/wasterwater resources and treatment. In some cases, the purchased water is untreated. Therefore, when purchasing surface water, treatment of the water resource is also a relevant cost, suggesting that water treatment facilities will become a greater need in the future.

With so many areas in unincorporated areas of Harris County that lack basic neighborhood infrastructure such as water and sewer systems, rehabilitation of septic and water well systems is often needed in order to provide essential housing needs and to avoid environmental problems.

The most significant result of subsidence is an increased amount of drainage problems, causing widespread flooding. Because of this irreversible condition, drainage improvements are needed in many areas of the county to solve flooding problems. This flooding has also caused deterioration of local roadways.

Goal and Measurable Objectives

INFRASTRUCTURE GOAL: To ensure quality infrastructure in low- to moderate-income communities, including improvement and provision of adequate streets, sidewalks, water systems, wastewater systems, and storm drainage sufficient to eliminate severe flooding problems.

Objective 1: Street Improvements-Construct and improve 15 miles of roadways benefiting low-income areas of the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018 for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 10,000 low- to moderate-income persons.

Objective 2: Water/Sewer Improvements-Provide improvements to 90,000 linear feet of water/sewer lines and 4 water/sewer facilities benefiting low-income areas within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018, for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 20,000 low- to moderate-income persons. Improvements may include, but are not limited to sewage treatment facilities, rehabilitation of manholes, rehabilitation of water storage tanks, and construction and maintenance of lift and pump stations.

Objective 3: Sidewalks/Pathways-Construct and improve 3 miles of sidewalks/pathways benefiting low-income areas within the Harris County service area by February 28, 2018, for the purpose of improving the living environment and improving the quality of life for 5,000 low- to moderate-income persons.

Objective 4: Flood drain improvements-Construct and improve 1,000 feet of flood drains and controls benefiting low-income areas of the Harris County service area by February 28, 2012 for the purpose of improving the living environment and quality of life of 5,000 low- to moderate-income persons.

Public Services

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population of Harris County is 4,092,459, the third largest county in the United States. Houston is the county seat, the largest city in Texas and the fourth largest city in the nation. Other cities include Pasadena, Baytown and numerous smaller cities. Harris County is home to a wealth of educational institutions, health care facilities, and companies that serve and employ area residents. Unfortunately, beneath the layer of prosperity lies poverty for some Harris County families. In 2010, 15.4 percent or 151,790 Harris County families were below the poverty line compared to 12.1 percent in 1999. Several factors have contributed to this increase: Hurricane Katrina evacuees, impacts of Hurricane Ike and the Great Recession of 2008.

Harris County recognizes the broad spectrum of its resident's needs. Low-income residents face barriers in their everyday lives not encountered by those with higher incomes. In addressing this problem, Harris County shall utilize its general services to address any unique needs not covered in other areas of the Consolidated Plan. Harris County seeks to provide general public services to low-income persons to increase the quality of life and general well-being for individuals and families throughout the Harris County service area. General Services may include, but are not limited to, food and clothing distribution, housing counseling, and neighborhood clean-up.

Special Needs Populations, Non-Homeless

Seniors

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 8.1 percent of Harris County residents are age sixty-five (65) or older. According to an American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) report entitled: "Back to Which Future: The U.S. Aging Crisis Revisited," by Sophie M. Korczyk, Ph.D. (December, 2002), more people are living longer after age 65 than in the past. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that the population over the age 65 will grow significantly between 2002 and 2030 due to longer life-spans and the aging "baby-boomer" generation. According to the Harris County Area Agency on Aging Area Plan for 2008-2012, it is projected that by 2030, one out of every six persons (16.8%) will be at least 65 years old.

Table 5.20 Special Needs (Non-Homeless) Populations

SPECIAL NEEDS SUBPOPULATIONS	Priority Need Level High, Medium, Low, No Such Need	Multi-Year Goals
Elderly	H	3,000
Frail Elderly		
Severe Mental Illness		
Developmentally Disabled		

Physically Disabled	H	450
Persons w/ Alcohol/Other Drug Addictions		
Persons w/HIV/AIDS	H	200
Victims of Domestic Violence		
Other		
TOTAL		3,650

Source: Harris County CSD 2013-2017 Consolidated Plan Goals

According to the 2012 Current Population Survey (CPS), an estimated 11.2 percent of elder Texans 65 and over had incomes at or below the poverty level, giving Texas the seventh highest poverty rate among 65 and older citizens. In 2011, Harris County had 12.2 percent of its elder residents fall below the poverty level. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 10.3 percent of the Texas population and 8.2 percent of the Harris County population was 65 years or older. Out of the ten largest counties in the U.S, Harris County has the lowest percentage of persons 65 years and older. According to the Health and Human Services System Strategic Plan 2011–15, between 2011 and 2040, the following growth rates are projected in the population of persons age 65 or older:
Anglos will increase 91 percent, African Americans will increase 236 percent, Hispanics will increase 422 percent, and all other groups (combined) will increase 1,144 percent.

Grandparents are increasingly being requested to raise grandchildren. According to the 2011 ACS, in Texas, 42.8 percent of grandparents living with grandchildren are responsible for those grandchildren, with 37.6 percent responsible in Harris County.

Many seniors residing in Harris County face a multitude of challenges, such as accessing affordable housing, supportive services, transportation, educational and employment services. Harris County will support elderly populations by funding much needed social service programs that address food and clothing, housing, transportation, and healthcare assistance.

Housing
Meeting the housing needs of elderly persons is a factor in analyzing housing availability. The growing elderly population has increased the demand for housing that meets the requirements of this particular population segment. In recent years, the housing market has responded to this demand through the development of senior-only single-family and multi-family housing projects. However, many of these developments are not within affordability ranges for low-income senior citizens.

During retirement, housing for elderly citizens becomes much less affordable because the cost of housing continues to rise and incomes tend to remain fixed or decrease. According to the latest 2010 ACS data, the median income for householders whose age

range is 45 to 64 is $61,813. Income then drops dramatically for householders whose age is 65 and over, to a median income of $36,949. Income continues to decline as age increases, meaning a greater percentage of household income goes towards housing costs once persons in the county reach 65+ years.

Supportive Services

Many older Texans require supportive services to maintain their independence and to age-in-place. The Harris County Area Agency on Aging (HCAAA) reports that long-term care and supportive services are very costly. According to the HCAAA Area Plan 2011-2013, the average costs of nursing facility care in the county is over $5,000 per month. Unfortunately, many low-income seniors are unable to afford basic supportive services, such as in-home personal assistance. Government assistance tends to be very limited in this area, as basic services such as cleaning, shopping, and laundry simply are not covered by Medicare. Even when some supportive services may be provided for, seniors may still be hampered by long waiting lists to gain access. In addressing the needs of its senior citizens, Harris County has solicited the input of its seniors in formulating the Consolidated Plan. Harris County also encourages entities with a kindred purpose related to senior issues, to collaborate on issues and projects which benefit the senior community.

Transportation

According to the HCAAA Area Plan 2011-2013, "transportation options for older adults will enhance their independent mobility and overall quality of life. Transportation continues to be one of the top five (5) service priorities in the service delivery network." The HCAAA Needs Assessment Process also revealed that assisted transportation was the number two priority for support services and survey data of county seniors in the Spring of 2009, revealed that transportation was one of the top five (5) respondent's priorities. A separate survey by Care for Elders conducted from September 2009 to March 2010, found that the number one (1) priority of respondents was improving current transportation programs and transportation was one of the top three areas needing expansion.

Harris County has a limited public transportation system for such a large area and many seniors depend on their personal vehicles or assistance from family and friends to reach their destinations. Harris County Transit offers a limited system of fixed bus routes in areas not served by METRO and operates the RIDES program for curb-to-curb public transportation when transit is unavailable. Seniors also have the option of utilizing a free shared ride taxi program for medical transportation and curb-to-curb para-transit service for eligible residents in Harris County.

Harris County supports the following HCAAA objectives regarding senior transportation:

- Ensure transportation services for Adult Day Care Services are available so dependent individuals who need supervision can avoid institutionalization
- Expand Care Coordination services with governmental entities and community based organizations

- Provide locally based system of transportation by transporting seniors from one location to another upon request and does not include any other activity
- Enhance client service delivery options by identifying fiscal strategies for implementing a voucher program for transportation in underserved areas

Educational, Job Training, and Employment Services
Seniors are increasingly being forced back into the workforce in order to maintain basic necessities of life. The high cost of prescription drugs, home utilities, car and home insurance, food, etc., are some of the factors driving this trend. The fiscal impact many seniors suffered to their retirement and potential income from the Great Recession of 2008 is another. A third factor is that economic and social issues are forcing more children to be raised by their grandparents. As seniors seek to re-enter the work force, many find that they lack the requisite skills necessary to compete in an advanced economy. Even lower paying jobs such as store clerks, restaurant workers, etc., require some level of computer skills. As such, many seniors need additional job-specific training and/or education to keep abreast of technological changes, compete in the future labor market, and/or make career transitions.

Harris County supports the following recommendations from the Texas Department on Aging Office of Aging and Policy Information Policy Paper: Workforce and Older Texans:

- Educate employers on the benefits of hiring, training and retaining older workers
- Provide special training to adult education providers on how to address the unique learning styles of older adults
- Develop and fund special statewide job training and employment services for older workers
- Offer job-specific training and lifelong learning opportunities for older adults through the formal education system at low or no cost
- Educate older Texans about public college courses available for free or at reduced rates, the federal educational tax credit program and adult and community education programs available for free

Persons with Disabilities
According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 ACS, there are 356,445 persons residing in Harris County with at least one disability or 8.7 percent of the population. Of those with a disability, 0.6 percent were under 5 years, 9.5 percent were 5 to 17 years, 55.9 percent were 18-64 years and 34 percent were 65 years and older. The most prevalent disability type for Harris County residents under 18 years of age were cognitive difficulties while the most prevalent for those 18 and over was ambulatory difficulties followed by independent living difficulties.

Harris County supports the following goals for each primary issue area from the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities:

- Access – To enhance full participation through increased access

- Communication – To promoted access to accessible communication and improve public awareness for the need for accessible communications
- Education – To promote full inclusion opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of the educational process
- Emergency Management – To promote preparation efforts of Texans with disabilities and provide technical assistance on issues related to various disability issues in disasters
- Health – To promote access to health resources for people with disabilities
- Housing – To increase availability of integrated housing options for people with disabilities
- Recreation – To increase inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of recreational opportunities in Texas
- Transportation – To promote the availability of accessible transportation for people with disabilities
- Veterans – To promote a full array of services and opportunities for veterans with disabilities
- Workforce – To support employment of people with disabilities

These goals align with Harris County's Objective 5: Services to Persons with Disabilities of improving the well-bring of at least 450 disabled adults in the next five years.

Persons living with HIV/AIDS

According to the AIDS Foundation Houston, over 27,560 individuals are known to be living with HIV/AIDS in Houston/Harris County. Unfortunately, HIV infections continue to occur, though individuals with HIV/AIDS are living longer and receiving earlier and better forms of treatment.

According to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), TB/HIV/STD Epidemiology and Surveillance Branch's Texas HIV Surveillance 2010 Annual Report, 1,234 HIV Infection Diagnoses, a rate of 30.1 cases per 100,000, were documented in Harris County. Data from 2003 to 2010 indicates that the total number of HIV infection cases reported in Harris County has stayed within a range of 1,100 to 1,250 each year. In 2010, there were 821 AIDS diagnoses, a rate of 20.0 per 100,000 in the county. The cumulative HIV diagnoses in Harris County through December 31, 2010, were 36,793. For 2010 the county ranked first in the state with the highest number of cases for HIV infection, AIDS cases and People Living with HIV.

There continue to be drastic differences in the demographics of those infected, particularly by sex, race and age group. The rate of male infections state-wide was 25.9 per 100,000 for 2010 while the female rate was only 7.4. African Americans also have an infection rate much higher than Whites or Hispanics. From 2003 to 2010 the state-wide rate for African Americans has remained above 60 per 100,000 and was 60.8 in 2010 compared to 13.5 for Hispanics and 9.1 for Whites. In 2003, the age group with the highest state-wide rate of HIV infection diagnoses was the 35-39 range at 52.1. Since then that group has fallen to 27.2 in 2010 and ages 20-24 have the highest rate at 38.0.

The rate for the 20-24 age group has increase every year between 2003 and 2010. The overall infection rate for the entire State of Texas in 2010 was 16.7 per 100,000.

Harris County supports and incorporates DSHS HIV/STD Program's Seven Initiatives for Strategic Planning:

1. Increase the proportion of people with HIV/STD disease who know they are infected
2. Improve the quality of community plans for HIV/STD prevention and services
3. Increase the collection and application of outcome monitoring information for HIV/STD prevention and clinical services
4. Build capacity among minority communities (especially the African American community) to mount an effective response to HIV/STD
5. Increase prevention services for HIV/STD positives in clinical and non-clinical systems
6. Improve systems to prevent and appropriately manage the perinatal transmission of HIV/STD
7. Increase the capacity of providers to adapt and implement evidence-based HIV/STD interventions

Youth Services

According to the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimate 1,147,835 or 28 percent of Harris County residents are under 18 years of age. According to the newly formed Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) that was created on December 1, 2011, composed of the former Texas Youth Commission and Texas Juvenile Probation Commission that were abolished, Harris County had the highest number of youth offender commitments in the state. From 2004 to 2009, commitments peaked at 630 in 2006 and began declining to 201 in 2009.

Harris County seeks to prevent youth from falling into delinquent lifestyles. The American Youth Policy Forum report entitled *Less Hype, More Help: Reducing Juvenile Crime, What Works—And What Doesn't*, finds that two characteristic traits of youth who fall into delinquent lifestyles are lack of attachment to caring adults and lack of involvement in school and other positive pro-social activities in their communities such as an after-school program, a job, church, or community service. Unfortunately, "disconnected" youth are found to comprise the majority of the delinquent population.

While local juvenile justice and community development agencies often lack a collaborative framework with which to assist youth, Harris County has been pro-active in forming such partnerships. The county has sought to strengthen partnerships with residents, community-based organizations, and partner agencies.

Domestic Relations: The Office of Domestic Relations provides services to establish and enforce court orders from the Harris County Family District Courts for the support of and/or visitation rights to a child. The office also provides information to assist parties in

understanding and complying with court orders pertaining to child support and rights of visitation.

Juvenile Probation: The Juvenile Probation Department provides support and assistance to the district courts for juvenile offenders who come within authority of the Family Code. Responsibilities include screening of all juveniles referred to the department, provision for court-mandated services and placements, and operation of institutions and programs for youths in custody.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP): Program is administered through the Harris County Juvenile Board. The program is mandated by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code and provides education for certain expelled from one of 22 local school districts and adjudicated youth based on standards of academic accountability and performance as approved by the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. During 2004-2005, 1,320 students were enrolled and average length of enrollment was 70 school days.

Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults (HCPS): Responsibilities of this program include accepting all child abuse and neglect referrals, working with families toward the goal of resolving family problems and preventing the removal of children from the home, placing a child in appropriate substitute care or adoption when necessary, providing casework services to status offenders and children in need of supervision, and providing children in agency custody with adequate medical care. The Guardianship Program is also a division of Children/Adult Protective Services (HCPS). The Guardianship Program appropriately manages the affairs of an adult person, who is incapacitated, and to promote and protect the well-being of the person.

Other community based programs offered in Harris County include AldineYouth Program, Precinct One Discovery Camp, the Katy Hockley Boot Camp, the Northeast Adolescent Program, and the East Harris County Youth Program.

Harris County supports and incorporates into its Consolidated Plan the following recommendations made in the American Youth Policy Forum report regarding reducing juvenile crime:

- Provide research-proven treatment and services for young children with behavioral problems and their families.
- Deliver community-based, family –focused treatment for delinquent youth who pose no risk to the community.
- Coordinate services among agencies- juvenile justice, education, mental health and child welfare- that share responsibility for troubled youth.
- Recruit local volunteers and engage community-based organizations to work directly with high-risk and delinquent youth.
- Develop alternative programs like drug courts, teen courts, family group conferencing, and victim offender mediation to hold young offenders accountable while connecting them to positive resources in the community.

- Support intensive early childhood intervention programs to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers in high-risk families.
- Mobilize the community to plan and implement comprehensive youth crime prevention strategies that involve families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Child Care

Child care is an important support service for parents who work, attend school or participate in job training. The Children's Defense Fund CDF) included Texas in its August, 2002 report entitled "One-third of a Nation's Future: Children in the South." The report indicates that limited childcare funding holds back many low-income working families. Many low-income families have a particular need for assistance to pay for childcare; however, they are the least likely to receive it.

CDF's January 2012, Children in Texas Fact Sheet notes that the average annual cost of child care for a four-year-old in a center is $6,600, up from $5,613 in 2005. Utilizing these statistics, it can be inferred that many low-income families in Harris County are unable to afford higher quality, licensed childcare as over 180,000 households earn no more than $19,800 a year. According to the 2011 American Community Survey, 20.0 percent of Harris County residents were below the poverty level compared to 18.7 percent in 2010 and 16.4 percent in 2006.

The Texas Workforce Commission concluded in its annual Evaluation of Effectiveness of Subsidized Child Care Program (January 2011) that "subsidized child care is a support service that allows parents to become and remain employed, thereby contributing to the Texas economy." The program is an "effective work support service that enables parents to participate in the workforce on in work-related activities" and allows approximately 84 percent of non-TANF parents receiving child care to experience an average quarterly wage gain of 11 to 15 percent.

As of August 2011, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services reported 1,521 licensed childcare facilities, 169 licensed child care homes and 1,552 residential facilities in Harris County. The total child care center capacity was 171,231 and residential capacity was 5,743 children.

In addressing the issue of child care in its jurisdiction, Harris County seeks to:

- Ensure safe and healthy care for infants and toddlers: Harris County will assist in promoting policies and regulations regarding health and safe childcare.
- Improve the supply of quality infant and toddler care: Harris County seeks to encourage the development of additional affordable childcare resources through funding and collaborating with public and private childcare agencies which share its kindred purpose.
- Support families with very young children: Harris County recognizes the needs that low-income families with very young children experience in regards to childcare, and seeks to support programs which serve their needs.

Abused and Neglected Children

According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) 2011 Annual Report, there were 27,565 child abuse/neglect reports assigned for investigation in Harris County and 233 CPS workers responsible for intake or investigation. As a result of the reports and investigations, 4,988 al1eged victims were provided services, 5,493 children were confirmed victims of child abuse/neglect, and 1,842 children were removed from homes. There were 38 child abuse/neglect related fatalities in Harris County for FY 2011, the highest number in Texas. Victims of serious physical abuse or neglect are investigated through a central unit known as the Child Protection Point of Entry, located at the Harris County Youth Services Center, which coordinates investigations, assessments, safety services, treatment and prosecution.

Victims of sexual abuse in Harris County are referred to the Children's Assessment Center (CAC) for investigation. At the Center, CPS staff, law enforcement, medical professionals and specialized interviewers and therapists provide clinical services and work together with professionals from 45 partner agencies on-site to provide high quality comprehensive assessments and services to children and their families. According to the Center, more than 20% of children are sexually abused before the age of 8. In 2009, the CAC conducted nearly 4,000 recorded forensic interviews to determine victimization.

The following programs are operated through Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults (HCPS):

- *The Children's Crisis Care Center (4Cs)* – A community collaboration focused on meeting the unique needs of each physically abused and neglected child entering CPS custody
- *HCPS Medical/Dental Clinic* – Located in the Youth Services Center, it is available to all child clients of DFPS and HCPS and operated with the University of Texas Medical School; also does adult drug screens of adult clients connect to children being served
- *Be a Resource for CPS Kids (BEAR)* – Offers help and hope for abused and neglected children and the caseworkers who protect them by providing goods and services to children under care of CPS in Harris County
- *Region 6 Training Institute (TI)* – Consisting of both HCPS and DFPS employees, the Training Institute provides a variety of training courses and staff development opportunities for all levels of HCPS and DFPS staff
- *Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)* – Helps to make the transition to adulthood successful for you in foster care through money, job, education and interpersonal skills training
- *The Houston Alumni and Youth Center (HAY)* – Provides a one-stop transition center for foster youth and former foster youth still in need of employment, education or support
- *Harris County Youth Services Center (YSC)* – "Hub" of support services for children and youth needing help and assist in improving coordination of services

- *Community Youth Services (CYS)* – A crisis intervention and case management program that offers free, voluntary assistance to at-risk children and youth and their families as well as support services to runaway/homeless youth
- *Kinder Emergency Shelter (KES)* – Emergency residential facility that provides short-term services to youth, ages 12-17 that are in need or shelter and care due to abuse, neglect, or severe family conflict
- *TRIAD Prevention Program* – A consortium of three county agencies (Protective Service for Children and Adults, Juvenile Probation and MHMRA) working together to coordinate their resources to serve at-risk youth through county-wide prevention and early intervention services
- *Systems of Hope (SOH)* – Funded by Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration, TRIAD and the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health to develop a county-wide system of care to assist children and youth from age 6 to 15 with severe emotional disturbance and their families
- *The Harris County Guardianship Program (HCGP)* – Provides guardianship services to adults who are determined by one of Harris County's four Probate Courts to be incapacitated
- *Representative Payee Program (RPP)* – Administered by the guardianship program, RPP is a case management program designed to assist eligible low-income Harris County adults who are elderly, physically or mentally disabled with financial management so they can remain living independently

Harris County seeks to provide services to 3,000 abused and neglected children by July 31, 2018 for the purpose of enabling a secure and stable environment thus increasing quality of life. Services include but are not limited to advocacy, counseling, childcare, and protection.

Health Services

County Health Characteristics

Births

Table 5.21 Harris County Births, 2009

	Number Births (by County of Residence)	County	State
Total Live Births	72,328		401,599
Adolescent Mothers (<18)	3,108	4.3%	4.7%
Unmarried Mothers	32,035	44.3%	42.6%
Low Birth Weight	6,409	8.8%	8.4%

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services

The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) reports that in 2008, 54% of Harris County women received prenatal care during the first trimester, which is down from 55.4% in 2007. Infant mortality is one of the most important indicators of community health, according to TDSHS. In 2010 there were 431 infant deaths, down from 473 in 2009, in Harris County, a rate of 6.3 deaths per 1,000 births. The 2010 infant

mortality rate among African-Americans in Harris County was 11.4 deaths per 1,000 births, compared with a rate of 5.5 deaths per 1,000 births among whites and 5.1 deaths per 1,000 births among Hispanic populations.

According to TDSHS, birth weight under 5.5 lbs is considered low birth weight (LBW), and under 3.5 lbs is considered very low birth weight (VLBW). Low birth weight is a significant determining factor in infant deaths, and can lead to developmental disorders such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation and vision and hearing loss. Commonly attributed to maternal behavioral factors such as nutrition, low birth weight can be prevented if risks are identified during pregnancy. TDSHS data report that 6,303 Harris County infants born in 2008 were LBW, 8.8% of all births for the same period (Refer to Table 5-18). This rate is slightly higher to that of infants born in Texas at 8.4% of all births.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the American Academy of Family Physicians recommend a schedule of vaccines that all children should receive by a certain age. According to the CDC's 2011 National Immunization Survey (NIS), an estimated 75.3 percent of Houston/Harris County children were appropriately immunized at age two with the all four series of vaccines. These numbers are up from the 63 percent in 2001 but have holding around 75% in recent years. It is imperative that the fourth dose of diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT) be given to boost immunity, as the protection provided by the third dose decreases after about six months. The last dose and other series given at that period seem to be the hardest for providers and parents to achieve. Failure to do this brings down immunization rates considerably. Failure to address gaps in the series and to vaccinate at an early age endangers children, as they are vulnerable to outbreaks. Several examples have occurred across the nation of children at an early age being sickened by older children who were not immunized of whose parents let their immunizations lapse.

Communicable Diseases

Table 5.22 Reported Cases of Communicable Disease, 2007 and 2011

Diseases	2007			2011		
	Rate per 100,000			Rate per 100,000		
	Cases	County	State	Cases	County	State
Tuberculosis	394	10.1	6.3	318	7.6	5.8
Sexually Transmitted Diseases						
Syphilis (Total)	1,817	46.7	23.3	1,576	37.7	23.7
Gonorrhea	6,374	163.8	132.9	5,735	137.3	117.8
Chlamydia	13,469	346.1	354.7	21,500	514.8	473
HIV	17,224	442.6	-	19,733 (2010)	481.8 (2010)	-
Chickenpox	1,052	27.0	42.1	270	6.5	9.9

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, Texas 2011 STD Surveillance Report

Comparing 2007 and 2011, the rate of reported communicable diseases, discussed in the table above, has generally been higher for the County than the State. This is most likely due to the high population density of urban Harris County. Between 2007 and 2011, the numbers of reported gonorrhea cases have declined, but Chlamydia cases have been on the rise. Gonorrheal conjunctivitis was once a prominent cause of blindness in newborns, the infection being transmitted from an infected birth canal in the mother. Chlamydia is a major cause of nongonococcal urethritis in men and pelvic inflammatory disease or ectopic pregnancy in women. Men make up the majority of those infected with Chlamydia. The number of reported cases of HIV/AIDS cases continues to rise and HIV prevalence has remained especially high among the Black population with rate 58.8 per 100,000 new HIV diagnoses in 2011.

Deaths

According to Harris County Public Health & Environmental Services 2009 Annual Report, a total of 17,814 Harris County residents died in 2009 (Refer to Table 5-20). The leading cause of death was diseases of the heart which accounted for 4,823 of those deaths, while the second most common cause of death was malignant neoplasm's (cancer), which accounted for 4,633 deaths. Strokes, accidents, and chronic lower respiratory diseases, ranked third, fourth, and fifth, respectively. Together, these five leading causes of death represented more than half of all deaths in Harris County in 2006. Harris County experienced a slightly higher rate of death than the state in 2006. This was also true by category, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and homicide rates were each reported at rates higher in the county than the state.

Table 5.23: Leading Causes of Mortality, Harris County, 2006

Leading Causes of Mortality, Harris County, 2006		
Cause of Death	Total Deaths	Age-Adjusted Mortality Rate
All Causes	17,814	685.4
Heart Disease	4,823	199.4
Cancer	4,633	175.9
Stroke	1,251	54.1
Accidents	1,338	41.1
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	753	32.6
Alzheimer's Disease	499	24.1
Diabetes	621	23.4
Septicemia	456	18.6
Kidney Disease	436	17.9
Influenza and Pneumonia	378	16.5
Homicide	441	10.9
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	308	9.6
Suicide	322	8.9
HIV/AIDS	287	7.6

Source: Texas Department of State Health Services, Center for Health Statistics, 2009

Transportation

Harris County continues to experience significant growth as indicated by the increase in population from 2000 to 2010. However, with growth comes additional strain on an already burdened transportation system. Though Harris County does have a public transportation system, primarily in the form of Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) and Harris County Transit buses, many people who are unable to afford a vehicle find mobility within the County extremely difficult. According to the 2006 Harris County Comprehensive Transit Strategy Report, many low-income residents of Harris County must utilize public transportation for daily mobility. Among individuals with lower incomes, transportation options often diminish. Personal vehicles may not be available at all, available only for one of two potential wage earners, or may be unreliable. Individuals may get to work or other destinations through carpools or from rides with friends. Other individuals without a reliable personal automobile in an area lacking public transit will be challenged to get to work due to the limited mobility options and relatively large expanse of the county. Public transit can provide access to jobs, medical services, schools, social services, shopping, and many other activities while serving as a practical option for such individuals.

According to the report, there are several large communities in Harris County earning incomes of less than $30,000 per year. Households with this level of income are more likely to use public transit (although their ability to pay for fares may be limited), since

affording the upkeep of more than one personal vehicle is difficult. Income levels do not preclude a household from possessing considerable financial assets, especially if there is a large presence of elderly/retired individuals that may already own their home outright, but have a fixed retirement income and limited mobility options. In addition, several fairly large communities outside of METRO's service area in Harris County have relatively high percentages of household without automobiles. These communities include Galena Park, 8.25 percent, Pasadena, 7.75 percent, and Baytown, 6.5 percent.

Some of the conclusions made by the report regarding the area's transportation system include:

- An average household in the region has 2.67 persons, 1.29 employed persons, 1.7 persons with a drivers license, 1.8 vehicles available, an annual income of $48,000 and generates over 9 trips per day.
- Households within the region generate over 14 million trips per day during the week, resulting in over 88 million vehicle miles of travel each day. This represents about 83 percent of the daily vehicle miles of travel that occurs within the region.
- The mobility provided by the transportation system has improved. Non-work trips have increased in terms of average trip length but average speeds have improved by nearly 9 percent.
- The number of commercial vehicles operating in the region on a daily basis is 150,000. These vehicles generate 972,000 vehicle trips and 10.7 million vehicle miles of travel each day. More than half of the commercial vehicle trips were for delivery purposes, but 17 percent of the vehicle trips were reported as carrying no cargo.
- There are 237,000 vehicles that enter or leave the region each day, nearly 16 percent of these are commercial vehicles. The vehicle miles of travel within the region produced by vehicles that begin or end their trip outside the region is 8.7 million.
- Nearly 232,000 daily trips are made on public transportation systems during the week. Transit users come from households that are much larger in size (3.6 persons) than the region as a whole. Their annual household income is half that of the region's average and they have on average less than one vehicle available to the household for travel.
- Home based work trips account for 55 percent of transit trips; however, represent only 19 percent of all travel.

After the completion of the 2006 Harris County Comprehensive Transit Strategy Report, Harris County Commissioners Court authorized HCCSD to be the Administrator of all non-infrastructure Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) transit funds. The Office of Transit Sercives (Harris County Transit) was created to become an additional FTA recipient of FTA Section 5307 funds and provide alternatives for residents of the county who do not have any transit service. Projects since implemented by Harris County Transit include:

- Partnership with the City of Baytown and METRO to launch a Park and Ride program from Baytown to downtown Houston
- Fixed bus route service within the City of Baytown
- Fixed bus route service within the cities of La Porte and Pasadena
- RIDES program for curb-to-curb public transportation when transit is unavailable
- Free shared ride taxi program for medical transportation
- Curb-to-curb para-transit service for eligible residents

In its report entitled "Goals for Tomorrow: A Comprehensive Planning Framework for the Houston-Galveston Area Council," H-GAC found that population growth in the area will require major transportation investments to maintain an acceptable level of mobility for residents and provide for efficient goods movement. H-GAC's regional forecasting also expects the region to add an additional 3.5 million people by 2040. As part of the development of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD), draft goals to address the region's transportation challenges were included. Harris County supports and incorporates into its Consolidated Plan these RPSD goals directly related to transportation and several others for the areas transportation system:

- Our region's residents live in safe, healthy communities with transportation options, including walking, biking, transit and driving
- Our region coordinates infrastructure, housing and transportation investments, creating areas of opportunity and enhancing existing neighborhoods
- Our region's residents have access to job opportunities that support a good quality of life and financial stability
- Our region's transportation and infrastructure promotes effective goods movement and is well-connected to other global destinations
- An environmentally responsible transportation system
- Active citizen outreach and participation
- A cost effective and affordable transportation system

Goal and Measurable Objectives

PUBLIC SERVICES GOAL: To provide direct social services that improve the quality of life of extremely low, low and moderate income persons, including accessibility to information and educational opportunities from preschool to adult education, provision of a safe and comfortable educational environment, provision of general welfare services including food and clothing, accessibility to quality health care for seniors and youth, development of educational programs and youth enrichment programs, promotion of programs benefiting abused and neglected children, support of indigent bereavement services, and accessibility to social, medical and employment services.

Objective 1: General Services – To provide general public services to 5,000 low and moderate persons to increase quality of life and general well-being for individuals and

families throughout the HCCSD service area. Services include but are not limited to food and clothing distribution, housing counseling, and neighborhood clean-up.

Objective 2: Senior Services (Special Needs Population) – To provide senior services to 8,000 elderly and frail elderly persons to enable them to increase or maintain quality of life and promote physical, mental, and social well-being. Senior services include but are not limited to food and clothing distribution, housing counseling, transportation services, enrichment classes, exercise and recreation programs, healthcare/medication assistance, emergency dental care and services for Alzheimer's disease patients and their families.

Objective 3: Youth Services/Child Care – To provide youth services/child care for 12,000 low- and moderate-income persons, 5-19 years of age, for the purpose of enriching, protecting, and improving quality of life by February 28, 2018. Youth services include but are not limited to counseling, after-school programs, sports and recreational programs, education and tutoring programs, life skills building, self-esteem building, drug and alcohol education, youth retreats, mentor programs, summer youth programs, and job and career counseling.

Objective 4: Health Services – To provide health prevention, services, and outreach to 8,000 low and moderate income persons to increase the mental, physical, and social well-being of the individual and family by February 28, 2018. Health prevention, services, and outreach include but are not limited to immunization, health clinic service, mobile care, vision care, dental care, nutrition counseling, tele-medicine, after hours care, physical rehabilitation, and health education and awareness.

Objective 5: Services to Persons with Disabilities (Special Needs Population) – To provide services to 450 disabled adults to enable them to increase or maintain their quality of life and promote physical, mental, and social well-being. Services to the disabled include but are not limited to counseling, housing placement, food and clothing distribution, transportation services, enrichment classes, exercise and recreation programs, job training and placement and independent living skills training.

Objective 6: Transportation Services – To promote transportation services to 3,000 low and moderate-income persons by February 28, 2018 to increase mobility to access essential service, facilities, jobs and employment centers thus improving the quality of life.

Objective 7: Services for Persons with HIV/AIDS (Special Needs Population) – To provide services to 200 persons with HIV/AIDS and their families to increase or maintain their quality of life and promote physical, mental, and social well-being by February 28, 2018. Services to persons with HIV/AIDS include but are not limited to counseling, education, housing placement, referral and outreach, health services, transportation services, food and clothing distribution, independent living skills training, job training and placement and awareness.

Objective 8: Abused and Neglected Children – To provide services to 3,000 abused and neglected children by July 31, 2018 for the purpose of enabling a secure and stable

environment thus increasing quality of life. Services include but are not limited to advocacy, counseling, childcare, and protection.

Objective 9: Crime Awareness and Juvenile Justice – To assist and provide 1,000 low- and moderate income youth and their families with crime awareness, prevention and juvenile justice programs by February 28, 2018. Services in this objective include, but are not limited to juvenile justice, delinquency and gang prevention services, crime awareness activities, in areas at particular high risk of crime to hinder potential criminal activity and increase safety awareness thus improving the quality of life. Crime awareness, prevention, and juvenile justice programs includes, but is not limited to police storefronts, safety and self-defense workshops, crime watch programs, equipment, and security guards.

Public Safety

Public Safety refers to the welfare and protection of the general public and involves the prevention of and protection from events that could endanger safety, such as crimes, fires, and disasters. Prevention and protection are provided through law enforcement, emergency management, arson investigation, and many other services.

Law Enforcement and Crime

According to the FBI's national crime statistics, 10.1 million crimes were committed in the United States in 2010. The 2010 Texas Crime Analysis reported a total of 1,065,271 offenses in Texas during 2010, with an additional 5,517 reported arson cases. This is a 4.0 percent decrease from 2009 in crime volume and a 6.0 percent decrease in crime rate (crimes per 100,000 people). Violent crime such as murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault decreased by 7.0 percent from 2009 and property crimes decreased 4.3 percent.

In Harris County, 2010 crime rates show a decrease in major crime types when compared to 2009 (see Table 5.18). Violent crimes involve the element of personal confrontation and are considered to be more serious than property crimes. According to the FBI, 358 people were murdered in the Harris County area in 2010, making the murder rate 8.75 murders per 100,000 people. This is the lowest murder rate in the county in over five years. In 2010, 75 percent of murder victims were male and 25 percent were female.

Property crime involves the taking of money or property and does not involve violence or threat of violence against a victim, such as motor vehicle theft and burglary and larceny. There has been a steady decline in motor vehicle thefts over the last five years in Harris County. In 2010, the motor vehicle theft rate was 469.3 per 100,000 people, compared to 714.3 in 2005.

Table 5.18 Crime Rates (per 100,000 people) in Harris County, 2005-2010

Crime	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Murder	11.0	11.9	10.7	9.6	9.8	8.8
Rape	36.8	35.9	31.0	31.6	30.9	26.5
Aggravated Assault	462.3	460.7	435.9	477.2	469.5	426.1
Robbery	359.7	367.1	348.8	334.4	364.0	315.2
Vehicle Theft	714.3	741.0	691.8	556.7	534.1	469.3
Burglary and Larceny	4088.4	4015.7	4052.2	3820.6	4260.8	4169.8

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation 2010, www.policymap.org 2010

Hate crimes are crimes that manifest evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or disability. In 2010, Harris County had the third most hate crimes of any county in Texas, with 18 reported offenses. With over 33,000 reported incidents in 2010, Harris County had the highest number of family violence incidents in Texas.

From 2009 to 2010 aggregate crime statistics decreased in every major crime related category. The Harris County Pretrial Services Department compiles information on only those people who are charged by Harris County with a felony or class A or B misdemeanor offense. Table 5.19 shows the Pretrial Services breakdown for offenses in 2010. Drug-related offenses make up the largest single offense percent within both felonies and misdemeanors, followed by assault and burglary offenses.

Table 5.19 Charge Categories and Percent of Total for Crimes in Harris County

Misdemeanor	Number	%	Felony	Number	%
Assault	5,757	10.5	Murder/Mansl/Homicide	200	0.6
DWI	9,115	16.7	Assault/Att or Sol Murder/Injury Offense	6,055	17.9
Theft/Burglary Offense	9,476	17.3	Sexual Assault Adult	154	0.5
Trespass	4,958	9.1	Sex Offense Child (Sex Aslt, Indec, Incest)	570	1.7
Evading Arrest	1,402	2.6	Robbery	1,918	5.7
Resist Arrest	645	1.2	Other Personal Offense	582	1.7
Weapon Offense	1,051	1.9	Burglary Building/Other	2.287	6.8
Drug Offense	10,155	18.6%	Theft Offenses	3,112	9.2
Criminal Mischief	1,376	2.5	UUMV	699	2.1
Sex Offense	1,818	3.3	Other Property Offense	1.941	5.7
DWLS/Other Traffic	5,396	9.9	Drug Sale/Manufacture	2,182	6.5
Failure to ID to PO	1,497	2.7	Drug Possession	8,028	23.8
Other	2,005	3.7	DWI	1,415	4.2
			Evading Arrest	1,275	3.8
			Other	3,366	10.0
Total	**54,651**	**100%**	**Total**	**33,784**	**100%**

Source: Harris County Annual Report Study for Pretrial Services, 2010

Fire and Emergency Services

A total of 54 fire departments operate in Harris County, with 42 providing fire protection to the unincorporated areas of the county. There are 31 Emergency Service Districts with taxing authority that provide emergency services to a specific area within Harris County.

Through effective partnerships with local fire departments, mutual aid organizations, and government agencies the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office delivered the following results in 2009: investigated 782 fires and filed over 135 criminal charges; performed 9,266 fire and life safety inspections; issued over 781 fire marshal's orders, fire code violation notices, and citations; responded to 233 hazardous materials emergencies; conducted 136 training classes; and completed 139 public outreach activities. In 2009, fire departments reported 22,080 incidents in the unincorporated areas of Harris County.

Economic Development

The population of Texas and Harris County has increased rapidly, exceeding the national growth rate in every decade since Texas became a state. The trends suggest that the effects of a diversifying, growing, and aging population will have a clear implication for the Texas economy in the coming decades. These trends signal a greater need for effective public education, job training initiatives, and small business and micro-enterprise development, particularly within current minority groups. In the absence of these socioeconomic resource changes, estimates show reduced levels of education, reduced incomes, increased levels of poverty, and related increased rates of reliance on a variety of state services.

Overview

- Three factors have shaped the local economy: U.S. Economy, energy prices and the strength of the dollar.
- In 2012, Harris County's unemployment rate of 7.5% was 0.3% lower than the national average.
- The Harris County labor force continues to experience robust growth, about 1.93% per year. Through the Great Recession it increased by 16.7% from 1.8 million in September 2002 to 2.1 million in September 2012.
- NASA, the Texas Medical Center, Major universities and the largest energy and petrochemical companies make Houston/Harris County a focal point of U.S. research and development activities.

The Harris County Economy

The immense physical size and large population of Harris County makes economic development planning a formidable task. Historically, cotton, rice and then oil have been the lifeblood of the local economy. Oil once accounted for 90 percent of Harris County's economic base. The oil bust of the 1980's made it clear that we must promote economic diversity in the county to ensure the economic well-being of Harris County citizens. Continuing growth of the service sector- jobs in business management, accounting, janitorial service and the like- appeared to provide a solution. Today, the energy-dependent sector remains strong, especially in earnings, but makes up only 30 percent of the local economy. Rapid growth around NASA's Johnson Manned Space Center and the Texas Medical Center has been tied to a network of professionals in engineering, computer science and technical administration.

Three factors have shaped the local economy: the U.S. economy, energy prices and the strength of the dollar. Even during the "Great Recession" of 2008-09, all three factors progressed consistently in the Harris County/Houston region's favor and the local economy's workforce and employment opportunities grew steadily.

Local Economy

In many regards, the economy of Harris County mirrors that of the country overall. The percentage of Harris County workers employed in any particular industry does not differ by more than 3 percent from national averages. Harris County enjoys a relatively diverse economy, with no single industry accounting for more than a quarter of employment (table 5.26). In an effort to insulate the city from future economic downturns, however, more diversification of the economy may be necessary. Harris County has a

disproportionate amount of natural resources and construction workers. As warned the 2008-2012 Consolidated Plan, slumps in energy commodities and especially the housing market proved difficult for Harris County in the period from 2009-11.

Table 5.26 Employment by Industry – Harris County 2010 (Average)

Industry	Number of Jobs*	Percent of Jobs
Industry Goods Producing	**321.8**	**15.1**
Mining (Crude/Natural Gas/Support Activities)	30.6	1.5
Construction	131.3	6.4
Manufacturing	147.3	7.2
Services Producing	**1,432.3**	**70.7**
Transportation and Warehousing	92.9	4.5
Utilities	12.6	0.6
Information	36.3	1.8
Retail Trade	180.9	8.8
Wholesale Trade	109.6	5.4
Finance and Insurance	75.5	3.7
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	38.2	1.9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	150.2	7.3
Management of Companies and Enterprises	84.9	4.2
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	152.6	7.5
Educational Services	36.5	1.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	219.9	10.8
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	23.0	1.1
Hotel and Food Services	154.1	7.5
Other Services	77.6	3.8
Government	290.3	14.2
TOTAL	**2,044.4**	**100.0**

Source: 2010 County Business Patterns, U. S. Census Bureau; Texas Workforce Commission Estimates, 2011
*Note: * Number in thousands of employees*

Houston/Harris County MSA annual average non-farm payroll employment reached 2,549,500 in March 2012, a one-year increase of 3.2 percent. Houston MSA unemployment in March 2012 averaged 7 percent, 1.1 percent lower than the national average at the time.

An extensive transportation network links Harris County to regional, national and global markets and economies. The Houston Ship Channel allows deep-water vessels to travel inland from Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico to within miles of the Houston, Jacinto City, and Galena Park central business districts. The Port of Houston is a 25-mile-long complex of diversified public and private facilities located just a few hours sailing time from the Gulf of Mexico. The Port is the third largest port in United States and the eighth largest in the world. More ships (6,698) called on Houston in 2010 than on any

other U.S. seaport. Harris County is a prime American distribution location and center for international trade and commerce.

Corporate Economy

Houston/Harris County, moved from fourth in the last consolidated plan to third among U.S. metro areas in number of corporate headquarters for *Fortune 500* companies (table 5.27). Four 2012 *Fortune 100* are headquartered in Harris County. Of the world's 100 largest non-U.S. based corporations, 66 have non-retail operations in Houston/Harris County. *County Business Patterns* shows that Houston/Harris County in 2010 had consolidated to 91,528 businesses established with payroll, down 14.6 percent from the number counted in 2000. The largest business by revenue in 2012 was oil major ConocoPhillips, but the largest employer was a non-profit hospital corporation, Memorial Hermann Healthcare with 19,500 employees, followed by the airline United Continental Holdings and world-leading University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, each with 17,000 employees. The number-one Fortune 500 Company in 2012 was ExxonMobil. Though still headquartered in Irving, Texas near Dallas, it announced a move to consolidate all 15,000 Houston area employees with the Fairfield, Virginia's 2,100 former Mobil employees to a new green-built campus being constructed on forested land in far northern Harris County for 2014. Exxon-Mobil announced third quarter earnings that brought profits to $76.1 billion thus far from January 2011.

Table 5.27 Houston Metro Area Fortune 500 Employers – 2012

Company/Rank/Revenue	Revenues ($ billions)	Company/Rank	Revenues ($ billions)
ConocoPhillips (#4, $237.2 billion) *	237.272	Enbridge Energy Partners (#282, $9.1 billion)	9.109
Enterprise Products Partners (#62, $44.3 billion) *	44.313	CenterPoint Energy (#305, $8.4 billion)	8.450
Sysco (#69, $39.3 billion) *	39.323	Kinder Morgan (#311, $8.3 billion)	8.264
Plains All American Pipeline (#87, $34.2 billion) *	34.275	Targa Resources (#361, $7 billion)	6.994
Halliburton (#118, $24.8 billion)	24.829	Cameron International (#362, $7 billion)	6.959
Baker Hughes (#141, $19.8 billion)	19.831	Calpine (#364, $6.8 billion)	6.800
Apache (#154, $16.9 billion)	16.888	Group 1 Automotive (#405, $6.1 billion)	6.079
Marathon Oil (#173, $15.3 billion)	15.282	Spectra Energy (#438, $5.6 billion)	5.602

National Oil Well Varco (#184, 14.7 billion)	14.658	FMC Technologies (#475, $5.1 billion)	5.099
Anadarko Petroleum (#192, $14 billion)	13.967	CVR Energy (#477, $5 billion)	5.029
Waste Management (#203, 13.4 billion)	13.378	El Paso (#488, $4.9 billion)	4.860
EOG Resources (#263, $10.1 billion)	10.126	MRC Global (#493, $4.8 billion)	4.832
KBR (#280, $9.3 billion)	9.261	* Fortune 100 in Harris County	
Source: *Fortune*, May 2012			

Local Industry

The Houston/Harris County region has generous supplies of minerals, timber, industrial soil, seawater, and fresh water. Oil and gas provide hydrocarbons for refineries and petrochemical plants. Much of the nation's sulfur is produced along the Texas Gulf Coast. According to the Perryman Group, manufacturing in 2011 accounted for 13.8 percent of the Houston/Harris County Gross Area Product. Non-durable goods represented 61 percent of the manufacturing total.

Oil and Gas

Houston/Harris County is the leading domestic and international center for practically every segment of the oil and gas industry – exploration, production, transmission, marketing, service, supply, offshore drilling and technology. In January 2012, the Houston/Harris County MSA held 27.3 percent of the nation's jobs in oil and gas extraction (51,000 of 186,700) and 10.8 percent of jobs in support activities for mining (39,700 of 368,300). Thirty-nine of the nation's 137 publicly traded oil gas exploration and production firms, including 11 of the 25 largest as ranked by 2010 total assets, are headquartered in Houston. Ten more among the top 25 have subsidiaries, major divisions or other significant operations here (GHP's Houston Facts, 2012).

Residential Construction

The sales housing market in the Harris County submarket is soft, with a current estimated vacancy rate of 2.0 percent, down slightly from 2.3 percent as reported in the 2010 Census. Despite the slight improvement in the vacancy rate, the inventory of unsold homes remains high. The number of months of unsold inventory averaged 7.6 months during the 12 months ending September 2011, up from 7.0 months during the previous 12 months. Home sales have slowed significantly during the past 4 years due to a combination of stricter lending requirements and a sluggish local economy. According to the Real Estate Center at Texas A&M, the number of new and existing homes sold declined by 3 percent to 57,850 homes during the 12 months ending September 2011. The average sales price of a new or existing home increased by nearly 3 percent to $211,300 during the most recent 12 months, following an increase of approximately 4 percent during the previous 12 months.

Home sales prices declined briefly in 2009 by less than 3 percent but have since fully recovered.

Ports and Trade

The Port of Houston ranked first in the U.S. by foreign tonnage in 2011. At least 1,500 Houston region firms are active in developing export markets for energy products and services worldwide and in offshore activities in the Gulf of Mexico. Foreign shipments, typically two thirds of the total in 2011 comprised 70.2 percent of all shipments from Houston area ports. Total value of these exports was 119.4 billion dollars in 2011, as recorded by the Houston/Galveston Customs District, making Houston rank third in total port value; sixth in imports, but second in exports. Airports also enhanced the 2011 Houston area economy with IAH (George H. W. Bush Intercontinental Airport) ranked 7th in the nation for passenger volume, and 6th for total airport takeoffs and landings.

Banking and International Finance

Ten of the nation's 30 largest publicly traded banks, including the six largest, operated full-service branches or offered commercial financial services in the Houston MSA. According to County Business Patterns, Harris County in 2010 had 6,536 financial establishments with a total annual payroll of $ 6.36 billion and 75,531 employees, down 19 percent since 2005. However, the Houston area led the Southwest in international finance with 21 foreign banks from eleven different nations.

Aerospace

Despite the end of the 135 flight, 30-year Space Shuttle manned space flight program in aerospace technology, Houston remains a worldwide leader. Aircraft, spacecraft and parts ranked as Houston's fifteenth largest traded commodity, growing from $1.5 billion in 2010 to $1.7 billion in 2011. NASA remained active in 100 buildings on 1,620 acres at Johnson Space Center (JSC) training astronauts, researching problems of long term space flight, controlling the International Space Station, and testing for spaceflight the more advanced space telescope that will soon replace the Hubble. In 2012, the JSC employed 14,000 local workers and spent $3.6 billion in Texas. Even as private companies began to exploit various aspects of space travel and tourism, NASA continues to spur research and education in space commercialization, propulsion, microgravity, biotechnology and nanotechnology.

Air Quality

Under the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency established National Ambient Air Quality Standards for six major air pollutants. The Houston area met all national ambient standards in 2009 and 2010, but existing data suggests that will not comply with the 85 ppb 8-hour average ground-level ozone standard. The EPA is now moving toward implementing a stronger 75 ppb standard for ozone pollution. Parts of the Houston MSA exceeded the 75 ppb standard on 55 days in 2011.

Education

Space science, biotech and nanotechnology are prominent in Houston Universities, as are research and development activities related to leading Harris County industries such as physical and life sciences, engineering, biotechnology, arts, energy and natural resources,

and nanomaterial. The University of Houston is a Tier One research university with premier interdisciplinary research centers in superconductivity, advanced materials research and in collaboratively tying basic research results to industrial research and development applications. Rice University is widely recognized for effectively commercializing new technologies and partnering with the corporate sector for research and training. Since 2000, the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship has helped launch over 250 business startups that have raised a total of more than one half billion dollars in early-stage capital. Rice University houses interdisciplinary institutes for Nano scale science and technology, information technology, biosciences and bioengineering, quantum physics, space science, urban research and public policy.

Economic Development Programs

Harris County is facing the reality that employers are more mobile than ever before. As the business climate changes both in the United States and throughout the world, HCCSD is working to ensure that Harris County residents can achieve a good quality of life.

- Business Climate and Entrepreneurship. Harris County promotes business friendly regulations, supports research and development by strengthening ties between researchers and the private sector. Harris County encourages a globally competitive community by supporting entrepreneurial and small business development through incubators, access to capital, and incentives, and promotes integrated clusters of "knowledge-based" industries that capitalize on the region's assets.

- Workforce and Education. Harris County attracts a diverse workforce for the region's industry cluster, and retains young professional workers that will form the foundation of future economic and population growth. Harris County will develop an educational system that prepares students to become the workforce for the future, and has strong linkages to the region's public schools, community colleges, and universities.

- Sites and Infrastructure. Harris County maintains and upgrades transportation infrastructure, and ensures adequate utility capacity for future economic development along with strong telecommunications infrastructure. Harris County also proactively markets supply of "ready to build" sites, and promotes use of transit and pedestrian/bike options.

- Quality of Life. Harris County ensures an attainable cost of living for residents and its workforce, and has adequate and diverse housing options. Retail, recreational and natural assets are provided and promoted throughout the County. Harris County promotes a strong sense of community pride; while providing an abundance of arts and cultural opportunities for its residents.

- Economic Development and Marketing. Harris County is led by a strong, regionally focused economic development authority that develops effective tools to retain existing companies, and encourages economic development from within the community. This builds collaborative support for sustainable economic growth and develops a strong brand image that differentiates this region from its competitors.

Goal and Measurable Objectives

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL: To encourage economic revitalization efforts, stimulate economic opportunities in low and moderate income communities throughout the Harris County service area and create jobs for low- and moderate-income persons, by providing assistance to for-profit businesses, encouraging microenterprise development and providing technical assistance to existing and new businesses.

Objective 1: Direct Financial Assistance to For-Profits
To provide direct financial assistance to for-profit businesses by February 28, 2018, for the purpose of creating/retaining 20 jobs with at least 51 percent reserved for low and moderate income persons thus expanding economic opportunity and improving the quality of life for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Objective 2: Technical Assistance
To assist 3 businesses in expanding, maintaining, and improving operations by providing financial and/or technical assistance for the purpose of retaining and creating jobs particularly jobs for low- and moderate-income persons thus expanding the economic opportunity and improving the quality of life for unemployed and underemployed individuals. Technical assistance includes, but is not limited to marketing, referrals, workshops, small business training and counseling, and competitive business planning.

Workforce Development

According to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in September 2012 the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) fell to 6.8 percent for the State of Texas, down from 7.1 percent (August 2012). This was a significant reduction from last year's September rate of 7.8 percent. The Texas unemployment rate is also significantly lower than the September 2012 national rate of 7.8 percent. Nonagricultural employment in Texas grew by 262,700 jobs between September 2011 and September 2012. "We saw encouraging signs in our state's labor market in September (2012) and a decrease in the unemployment rate last month," said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar. "Texas continues to add jobs and we now have a record number of people employed in our state."

According to the TWC, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) fell to 6.3 percent for the Houston MSA in September 2012, down from August 2012's 7.0 percent, and down significantly from 8.2 percent in September 2011. Houston MSA employment grew by 122,200 jobs between September 2011 and September 2012, accounting for 46.5 percent of all Texas job growth during the same time. Based on the 2011 ACS, the labor force participation rate in the region was 68.5 percent for the total population 16 years of age and older, with females 16 years and older having a participation rate of 59.8 percent.

The 2010 ACS indicates that a large number of residents in the county (78.3 percent) drive their own vehicle to work, an increase of 317,988 commuters since 2000. A fair number of workers, 12.0 percent, continue to use carpooling as their primary transportation, but the percentage of workers that use public transportation has decreased by 6,868 workers since 2000 (4.1 percent to 2.9 percent of total commuters).

Produced by the TWC, the Harris County Narrative Profile reports that the county has slightly outpaced the state growth rate of employment in all industries from September 2011 to September 2012 (2.6 vs. 2.3 percent). Over this same time period, the county has significantly outpaced state growth rates in the construction sector (2.4 vs. 0.7 percent) and the manufacturing sector (6.3 vs. 3.8 percent).

According to industry projections outlined by the TWC in *Gulf Coast Workforce Development 2008-2018*, the region's total employment is projected to increase from 2,910,920 to 3,475,140 between 2008 and 2018. A partial list of industries projected for significant growth by the Texas Workforce Commission's Labor Market Information (LMI) Department includes professional services, education and health services, and construction services. Some of the occupational groups slated for larger net growth in the region include elementary and secondary schools, full-service restaurants, limited service restaurants, home health care services, and oil and gas extraction. Educational services are expected to account for 17.4 percent of all new regional jobs from 2008-2018, with health care services and accommodation and food services accounting for 16.2 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively.

The Texas Workforce Commission projects that professional and technical occupations will continue to grow and will account for a larger portion of all jobs in the state. The

number of workers available, along with their education, skills and training, highly influences what types of business will locate in an area. To achieve greater economic diversity and maintain prominence in domestic and international petrochemicals, engineering, health care, and space/bio/nanotech sectors, Harris County must continue to cultivate and attract professionals in these industries and subsequent occupations.

According to Texas Industry Profiles, regional industries, namely oil and gas, had rebounded from the recession by 2012 and are continuing to build and grow. Also on the horizon are anticipated benefits from the expansions of the Panama Canal which will bring larger ships into the Houston Ship Channel, increasing Houston shipping by about 15 percent. Listed below are the top manufacturers for Harris County.

Table 1 Top 11 Manufacturers in Harris County

BP America Inc	Fmc Technologies Inc
Bredero Shaw	Lyondell Basell Industries
Broadcom Corp	Marathon Oil Corp
Corporate Brand Foods America	Shell Oil Co
Fmc Material Handling System	Smith International Inc
Fmc Measurement Solutions	

Source: *Harris County Narrative Profile*, Texas Workforce Commission

The Texas Workforce Commission also forecast that jobs in the health care industry will grow significantly over the next few years, followed with growth in the accommodation, food, and professional services industries. Increases in these industry sectors will mean job growth in low-skill, low-pay and high-skill, high-pay employment. Harris County has a large service sector, much of which is supported by health services employment at large hospitals, medical schools and medical research centers.

The Texas Data Center identifies several challenges and opportunities regarding workforce development for the region. The challenges include developing a highly skilled workforce for the area, providing sufficient labor market information for employers and residents, assisting the working poor and welfare recipients to gain adequate skills to compete successfully in the work force, and integrating child care and transportation into the workforce development system.

In meeting those challenges, Harris County supports and incorporates into its Consolidated Plan the following implementation tools regarding workforce development:

- Providing direct financial assistance to for-profit businesses for the purpose of creating/retaining jobs reserved for low and moderate income persons;
- Assisting businesses in expanding, maintaining, and improving operations by providing financial and/or technical assistance;
- Promoting adult education and job-training programs; and

- Integrating childcare and public transportation program coordination with job training.

Other Non-Housing Community Development Elements

The Other Non-Housing Community Development elements address needs that are not identified in the other areas in the Consolidated Plan. For the Harris County Consolidated Plan these areas include clearance and demolition, non-profit capacity building and planning.

Overview

- According to the 2009 U.S. Census, 52 percent of the housing structures were built before 1978 in the Harris County service area. A substantial percentage of these units are concentrated in the low-income target areas.
- According to the CDC Association of Greater Houston, there are approximately 60 registered community development corporations (CDC) in the greater Houston area.
- Improving the quality of life in extremely low- and low-income communities is vital to the success of service area stakeholders. Due to the projected growth of the service area, the lack of direction for growth management, and the need for coordinated efforts among public and private sectors, community planning is essential to sustain and improve these communities.

Clearance and Demolition

Harris County has addressed the need for nuisance abatement since 1989 through the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) Department. Largely in response to the public outcry of civic associations and other interested parties, the HCPHES began its program in effort to reduce the hazards of dilapidated, unsound structures and improve neighborhood integrity. The effort of nuisance abatement through clearance and demolition activities is an ongoing effort as structures continue to fall into disrepair and into a state of dilapidation.

According to the 2009 ACS, 52 percent of housing units in Harris County were built before 1978. The age of housing units also influences health through exposure to hazards such as lead. High levels of lead in the bloodstream can lead to learning disabilities, behavioral problems, seizures and death. The risk of lead poisoning is greater among individuals residing in homes built prior to 1978 before the use of lead-based paint was banned. Further, although lead based paint was banned, millions of housing units and buildings still contain lead-based paint or paint debris.

A substantial percentage of these units are concentrated in the low-income target areas. Many of these have been evaluated by the Harris County Appraisal District as being substandard and in need of demolishing.

Many structures within Harris County are in poor condition or are uninhabitable. These structures are safety and fire hazards to neighborhoods. Demolition and clearance of these types of structures is necessary to maintain a safe and sanitary community environment.

Vacant units suffer from a much higher rate of deterioration than occupied units as a result of a general lack of maintenance and vandalism. As a result, neighborhood quality of life is reduced. In addition, approximately three percent of the Harris County service area housing stock is dilapidated and requires removal.

Non-Profit Capacity Building

Several problems exist in the community development delivery system in Harris County. The service area lacks much-needed nonprofit development organizations and community development groups. Such groups are crucial to determining area needs, acting as subrecipients and garnering support and feedback from the community. In addition, a shortage of funds in both the public and private sectors reduces the effectiveness of community development activities. Harris County staff will develop training guides and workshops to assist organization to build capacity, develop programs, and make change in their communities.

Housing Resource Center
The Harris County Housing Resource Center (HRC), a service of the Harris County Community Services Department, provides a vast array of housing and related information primarily targeted to families and individuals that are experiencing housing crises or are in need of affordable housing. HRC's mission is to aide the community in finding decent, safe, and affordable housing in a manner that promotes equal opportunity and fair housing. In accomplishing this goal, the HRC is committed to serving as a viable community resource that is accessible to everyone. They are committed to bridging the communication gap in housing information between the community and other supportive and social services organizations. Referrals that the HRC provides include Affordable Housing Assistance; Homeownership Assistance; Emergency Assistance; and Support Services.

Capacity Building
As part of the OneStar Foundation's efforts to increase partnerships between faith and community based organizations and local governments, the Renewing Our Communities Account (ROCA) Fund created a Local Government Capacity Building grant program. Harris County applied for and received a ROCA capacity building grant in the amount of $40,000 for the CHDO Partnership Project. Harris County received the award in October 2010 and the contract period is November 2010 through September 2011. Harris County is using these funds not only to provide capacity building services for Harris County staff and CHDOs, but also as an effort to evaluate and enhance its already successful Three Track Program to provide more capacity building services to area nonprofit organizations once the grant period is complete.

Planning

Unlike counties in other states such as California, Texas counties are not given the authority by the Texas Legislature to implement stringent land use regulations. The

Planning and Development Section of the Harris County Community Services Department works in cooperation with other state, regional, and local planning entities such as the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), General Land Office (GLO), Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) and neighborhood organizations to implement plans for underprivileged areas of the county. The planning services that are provided by Harris County include neighborhood level planning and comprehensive planning for low-income communities.

Improving the quality of life in extremely low-, very low- and low-income communities is vital to the success of service area stakeholders. Due to the projected growth of the service area, the lack of direction for growth management and the need for coordinated efforts among public and private sectors, community planning is essential to sustain and improve these communities. Harris County CSD planning staff will seek to assist four communities with either a new community plan or an update of their current plan.

Goal and Measurable Objectives

OTHER INITIATIVES GOAL: To develop an expanded and enhanced delivery system by building capacity of non-profit organizations, developing a planning process to be utilized to comprehensively address the needs within the extremely low-, very low- and low-income areas, assisting in creation of additional community development organizations, constructing of a network of service providers to coordinate resources or other means by which community development and revitalization is bolstered.

Objective 1: Clearance and Demolition (04)
To eliminate 150 dilapidated and/or unsafe structures located in low and moderate-income areas in an effort to improve integrity of Harris County neighborhoods by February 28, 2018.

Objective 2: Nonprofit Capacity Building and Technical Assistance (19C)
To provide assistance to 5 non-profit organizations, including assistance to Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) to build capacity to support revitalization activities in low and moderate-income communities. Assistance includes but is not limited to technical assistance, referral services, and providing research and information services.

Objective 3: Planning (20)
To support, encourage and facilitate countywide service planning and local community planning activities through the Harris County service area for the purpose of preparing for the future and ensuring stabilization and needed expansion of services and facilities through February 28, 2018. Local planning activities to provide neighborhood level plan for 5 low- and moderate-income target areas by developing and conducting a planning process, supporting research and analyses, and providing technical assistance. Four plans to be submitted to the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development as Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies (NRS) by February 28, 2018.

Anti-Poverty Strategy

In Harris County, a number of factors impact a household's poverty status, such as housing cost, employment opportunities, and educational attainment. The goals and objectives in the Harris County strategic plan describe the roles that the county will play in efforts to move people out of poverty and to revitalize geographic areas of the community with high poverty levels by focusing resources on low-income populations, coordinating development with supportive services, enabling low-income persons to accumulate assets through homeownership and housing assistance, providing access for people in poverty to employment opportunities; and empowering low-income residents to provide leadership and solve problems in their neighborhoods.

According to the 2011 ACS, 19.6 percent of individuals in Harris County fell below the poverty level. Poverty rates in Harris County also differed by age and household type. Nearly one-third of children under 18 years living in Harris County were in poverty in 2010 (27.5 percent). Persons age 65 and over had one of the lowest poverty rates in Harris County (11.6 percent). The poverty rate for female-headed households in Harris County (34.6 percent) was more than double that of all families living in the county (16.2 percent), and almost 1 out of every 2 female-headed households with children in Harris County were living below the poverty line (43.2 percent). When analyzing female individuals, the poverty rate increases to 46.9 percent. High child poverty percentages may be attributed to lower earnings for female head of household families, declining value and availability of public assistance, and the lack of affordable housing.

Harris County Affordable Housing Programs

By providing support through housing programs such as rental assistance, downpayment assistance, housing choice vouchers and other programs, Harris County aims to alleviate high levels of poverty among low-income populations by lessening the housing cost burden and increasing housing choice. Below are some of the major affordable housing programs in the county. For a more detailed record, refer to the Housing Market Analysis section of the Consolidated Plan.

HCHA Housing Choice Voucher (HCV)

The Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA) administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), which provides affordable housing for more than 4,100 families and through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program (HUD-VASH) they provide 525 additional housing vouchers to homeless veterans.

Home Repair

Many low-income households live in units that are at risk of loss because they cannot meet the basic costs of maintaining and operating standard housing. Low-income households are more likely to live in structurally inadequate housing and even when accounting for income differences, renters are more apt to reside in structurally inadequate units compared to homeowners. The Harris County Home Repair Program

provides grants to low-income and elderly households for up to $10,000 for minor home repairs or up to $40,000 for septic system and/or water well repairs.

Downpayment Assistance Program (DAP)
To assist low to moderate income households to improve their housing choice Harris County CSD has created a downpayment and closing cost program. The Harris County Downpayment Program (DAP) provides financial assistance to eligible first time homebuyers for down payment and closing costs assistance in the purchase of new and pre-owned homes (built within the last 10 years) anywhere in the CSD service area.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP)
The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) stabilizes communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment through the purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed and abandoned homes and residential properties. Since 2008 NSP has acquired 112 single-family, vacant, foreclosed homes of which 20 were acquired in 2011. The program sold 20 homes during 2011 to eligible NSP homebuyers of which 5 were acquired in 2009, 10 were acquired during 2010, and the remaining 5 were acquired in 2011.

Additional Housing Programs
The CSD department created the Housing Resource Center (HRC) to be the first stop for housing resources and assistance programs in Harris County. In partnership with other government agencies, as well as non-profit and community organizations, the HRC has built a network concerned with finding and maintaining safe, comfortable, and secure housing for Harris County residents.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program is a federal subsidy used to finance the development of affordable rental housing for low-income households, and used to increase the supply of affordable housing in Harris County. In total, approximately 39 percent of the LIHTC properties are located in the Harris County service area. According to the Harris County Housing Authority, the HCHA is aggressively building and operating innovative tax-credit housing developments by working with the region's best private-sector partners. These properties, many of which specialize in housing for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, are full service developments on par with even the nicest private sector properties.

The Harris County Housing Authority's (HCHA) Homeownership Program provides mortgage assistance to low-income households for the acquisition of newly constructed single-family properties, as well as homeowner training, credit counseling and other educational information.

Harris County provides housing and essential services for homeless persons and families to improve their overall quality of life and assist in moving them to self-sufficiency through housing counseling, housing placement, and case management. The county also provides households with financial assistance, housing relocation and stabilization services, and data collection and evaluation.

Employment and Education

Changes in employment and education are telling characteristics in how an economy is diversifying to meet the labor force needs of its community. These indicators also show the capacity of a population to earn more income and thus overcome conditions such as poverty and homelessness. In the next two years the Texas State Data Center forecasts that the Houston Metro Area will gain over 160,000 jobs, with that trend likely to continue as population and the economy continue to grow. The Greater Houston Partnership Employment Forecast forecasts that from 2010 to 2035, Houston will lead the state in population growth and account for almost one-fourth of Texas' job growth, adding 1.43 million jobs.

An increasingly sophisticated labor market requires a skilled workforce, and educational attainment is an important indicator of potential economic growth. The Texas Workforce Commission projects that professional and technical occupations will continue to grow as well as jobs in the health care industry and in the accommodation, food, and professional services industries. Increases in these industry sectors will mean job growth in low-skill, low-pay and high-skill, high-pay employment. Harris County has a large service sector, much of which is supported by health services employment at large hospitals, medical schools and medical research centers.

Educational attainment is an important determinant of the earning potential of individuals. Communities with higher concentrations of educated workers tend to exhibit higher levels of income and are better able contribute to the socio-economic well-being for all residents. Further, a population with highly skilled, specialized employees is a critical factor influencing opportunities for attracting and creating new business development in Harris County while also achieving greater economic diversification.

According to 2010 ACS, in Harris County, people 25 years and older with an associate degree increased 61.8 percent from 2000-2010. 27 percent of Harris County residents had a bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment in 2000 with an increase to 28 percent in 2010. The number of persons who obtained a high school diploma increased from 21.6 percent of those aged 25 and over in 2000 to 23.7 percent in 2010. Persons with some college or higher education increased from 45 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2010. Such healthy growth in higher education reflects well both on local institutions and on the educational attainment of immigrants who chose to relocate to Harris County.

Anti-Poverty Strategies

Many Harris County residents are currently living at or below the state poverty level, with many of these people being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless because of insufficient income. There is a great need among these individuals to expand their opportunities for education and employment, and thus improve their quality of living. The consolidated plan's comprehensive collection of goals, programs, and policies will work to reduce the number of poverty-level families, develop affordable housing, and coordinate with other programs and services to increase opportunities. The anti-poverty strategies address goals in the housing, economic development, and coordination sectors:

- To prevent low- to moderate-income persons and families from falling into poverty and to assist low- to moderate-income persons in exiting poverty. This will be achieved by increasing economic opportunities within the CSD service area and improving the quality of life for unemployed and underemployed individuals. Harris County CSD will provide direct financial assistance to for-profit businesses for the purpose of creating/retaining jobs reserved for low and moderate income persons. CSD will assist businesses in expanding, maintaining, and improving operations by providing financial and/or technical assistance for the purpose of retaining and creating jobs, particularly jobs for low- and moderate-income persons.
- To provide programs and services offered by the CSD, HCHA, Public Health Department, Community Assistance and local organizations to persons in need, placing high priority on projects serving seniors, the disabled, and persons with HIV/AIDS. This will be achieved by increasing the number of affordable housing units, increasing the number of Section 8 vouchers, expanding public health initiatives to underserved areas, and offering affordable general and social services. Harris County CSD will provide low- and moderate-income individuals and families with the opportunity for homeownership, minor home repair assistance, construction aid for affordable multi-family housing units, and tenant-based rental assistance to families and individuals.
- To provide essential services, housing resources and urgent care to homeless families and individuals and those at-risk of becoming homeless. Through its subrecipients, Harris County will provide street outreach, emergency and transitional housing, homeless prevention, and rapid re-housing services. These services include engagement that provides immediate support and links to other support networks, emergency physical and mental health services and services for special populations, Through emergency and transitional housing CSD will maintain and expand operations and support renovations and rehabilitation of structures to provide shelter for homeless persons within new and existing shelters for the purpose of providing decent housing and essential services for the homeless population. Through homeless prevention, CSD will provide housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to prevent households from experiencing homelessness. Through rapid re-housing, CSD will provide housing relocation and stabilization services and rental assistance to quickly move households experiencing homelessness into stable, permanent housing.
- To develop and maintain partnerships with Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) and Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) in order to build capacity to support revitalization activities in low and moderate-income communities. Assistance includes but is not limited to technical assistance, referral services, and providing research and information services. To support, encourage and facilitate countywide service planning and local community planning activities through the Harris County service area for the purpose of preparing for the future and ensuring stabilization and needed expansion of services and facilities. Through community plans, neighborhoods can begin to implement strategies that can improve the local socio-economic environment.

Intergovernmental Coordination and Partnerships

The Consolidated Plan requires that Harris County describe the means of cooperation and coordination among units of federal, state, and local government in the implementation of the Consolidated Plan. Harris County consulted with adjacent units of general local government, including government agencies with planning responsibilities, particularly for problems and solutions that go beyond a single jurisdiction, such as transportation, housing, workforce development, and economic development.

Harris County encourages partnerships that integrate housing, transportation, water infrastructure, and land use planning along with the implementation of strategies that provide more transportation choices, promote affordable housing, enhance economic competitiveness, support existing communities, coordinate policies and leverage investment, and value communities and neighborhoods.

Harris County Institutional Structure

The Harris County Community Services Department (CSD) provides planning, development, monitoring, and financial services for Harris County's HUD entitlement funds. Each of CSD's sections performs separate functions in the community development process. The coordination among sections requires the cooperation of and the communication among groups by working as a community development team. Harris County's institutional structure aims to ensure broad community input throughout the development and implementation of the Consolidated Plan, build public/private partnerships to implement the Plan and related projects, and monitor and evaluate the goals, strategies and program outcomes.

Furthermore, as Harris County is a jurisdiction that received an Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) from HUD, CSD must consult with the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, the local Continuum of Care, in determining how to allocate its ESG grant for eligible activities. This is done by developing the performance standards for and evaluating the outcomes of projects and activities assisted by ESG funds and by developing funding, policies, and procedures for the operation and administration of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Moving forward, these performance standards, which are currently being developed by CSD and other partners from the Continuum of Care, will establish minimum requirements regarding standards for providing ESG assistance, establish a centralized or coordinated assessment system, identify the process for making sub-awards and require a description of how the jurisdiction intends to make its allocation available to private nonprofit organizations. The research and development of the performance standards will also address the plan for reaching out and consulting with homeless or formerly homeless individuals when establishing policies and making decisions.

CSD has formed a partnership with the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department (PID). This partnership enhances CSD's project evaluation and monitoring by utilizing PID's greater level of engineering expertise. From the onset, potential public facilities

and infrastructure projects from CSD's Request for Proposals process are evaluated and then monitored by CSD and PID staff for proper planning/design and construction management.

For housing strategies, CSD – during the development of the Consolidated Plan – will consult with the local Public Housing Authority (PHA), non-profit housing providers, and for-profit housing developers, particularly those who serve low-income households in Harris County's service areas. The jurisdictions shall make an effort to provide information to the PHA about Consolidated Plan activities related to its developments and surrounding communities so that the PHA can make this information available at the annual public hearing required for the PHA Plan.

Partnerships

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (PHES)

The presence of lead-based paint is one the most critical environmental hazards found in today's housing, both at the national and local levels. The foremost source of lead in the environments of young children is house paint applied prior to 1978, when lead-based paint was banned from consumer use. In an effort to provide a streamlined system to address this issue, CSD has partnered with PHES to provide education, testing and remediation services through the Lead Hazard Control Program. Services for lead-based paint hazard control include: public education and outreach, screening and identification of lead-based paint hazards, lead inspection and specifications for abatement by a lead-based paint testing service, hiring of a certified contractor, relocation of the family, and clearance by the inspector.

In addition to the Lead Hazard Control Program, PHES facilitates the Harris County Nuisance Abatement Program in conjunction with CSD. The program promotes the health and safety of Harris County citizens by preventing, identifying, and eliminating public nuisances such as blighted housing units that negatively impact neighborhood opportunity, health and safety.

Harris County Housing Authority (HCHA)

The Harris County Housing Authority is an independent agency whose primary purpose is to provide housing assistance to low-income residents of Harris County through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), the Homeownership "Independence" Program, the Homeless Housing Program, and the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP). The Authority is a public non-profit. Harris County Commissioners Court confirms the appointment of five board members that oversee HCHA's operations. The Authority will comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations in regard to procurement procedures, financial management, planning and building.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)

The Section 8 HCVP assists low-income families to secure decent, safe, and sanitary housing (of their choosing) through voucher programs. Each family pays a portion (30

percent) of its income for rent and the program pays the remainder of the contract amount.

Homeownership "Independence" Program
According to the HCHA, the Independence Program is designed to expand homeownership opportunities for HCHA's HCVP participants. The Independence Program is designed to help current Section 8 participants buy their own home through downpayment and monthly mortgage payment assistance.

Affordable Housing Development Program
The HCHA is aggressively building and operating innovative tax-credit housing developments by working with the region's best private-sector partners. These properties, many of which specialize in housing for senior citizens, are full service developments on par with even the highest quality private sector properties.

Homeless Housing Program
The HCHA works with its non-profit partners to develop and operate single residency occupancy programs that serve the Houston/Harris County region's homeless population. HCHA has created the first long-term homeless Housing First model in Texas, with it administering a 10 year rental-assistance contract. The program focuses on providing the homeless with long-term residency solutions and then treating the root causes of their homelessness.

Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP)
The DHAP provides rental assistance and case management to families who were displaced by disasters events. The DHAP is the result of an interagency agreement between HUD and FEMA, and it is designed to move families currently receiving rental-assistance toward self-sufficiency.

Harris County Public Library System (HCPL)
Capital Improvements
Harris County CSD and HCPL have worked hand in hand for several years to improve educational opportunities in low income target areas by rehabilitating older library branches and building new facilities. Projects have included coordinating with local community colleges, such as Lone Star College and Lee College.

Healthcare Service Needs for the Homeless
CSD also facilitated and coordinated a Medical Focus Group to help identify medical services for the homeless population in Houston/Harris County. This focus group created strategies for the next ten years to address healthcare needs for homeless persons, particularly the chronically homeless. The agencies that participated included:

- Harris County Mental Health Mental Retardation (MHMRA)
- Harris Health System (formerly Harris County Hospital District) (HHS)
- Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES)
- City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS)
- Houston Veterans Administration Hospital

- Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston
- Coalition for the Homeless
- United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast
- Montrose Counseling Center
- Baylor College of Medicine
- University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB)

Continuum of Care Collaborative and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County

In addressing its homeless problem, Harris County is proud to be a member of the Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care Collaborative since 1992. The goal of the Collaborative is to not only reduce chronic homelessness, but also decreases episodic and transitional homelessness to the greatest extent possible. The Continuum of Care creates a pathway enabling homeless individuals and/or families to access emergency shelter; move into transitional housing; receive supportive services; and find permanent supportive housing or live independently in market housing.

As of March 2006, the Collaborative had secured nearly $100 million for Houston/Harris County to address the needs of homeless individuals. The Coalition is a partner and the organizing agency for the Continuum of Care and HMIS. The Continuum of Care plan requires participation of a broad cross section of community representatives, data collection and analysis of homeless needs, and collaborative, consensus-based decision-making around local priorities. Through this system, Harris County is able to coordinate housing assistance and services for homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) and persons who were recently homeless but now live in permanent housing. As described by the Coalition for the Homeless, the basic components of the Continuum of Care are:

- A system of outreach, engagement, and assessment for determining the needs and conditions of individuals or families who are homeless and the necessary support to identify, prioritize, and respond to persons who are chronically homeless.
- Emergency shelters with appropriate supportive services to help ensure that homeless individuals and families receive adequate emergency shelter and referral to necessary service providers or housing search counselors.
- Rapid re-housing to help persons with lower barriers who are homeless successfully move to, and stay in, conventional housing units.
- Transitional housing with appropriate supportive services to help homeless individuals and families who need more assistance to prepare to make the transition to permanent housing and independent living.
- Permanent housing, or permanent supportive housing, to help meet the long-term needs of homeless individuals and families.
- Prevention strategies, which play an integral role in a community's plan to eliminate homelessness by effectively intervening for persons at risk of

homelessness or those being discharged from public systems – e.g., corrections, foster care, mental health, and other institutions – so they do not enter the homeless system.

In order to fulfill these broad-reaching goals, Harris County must participate and coordinate an extensive network of public, private, non-profit, philanthropic, and faith-based partnerships (as described throughout this section).

Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) and numerous Homeownership Lending Organizations

Harris County operates a program that assists eligible homebuyers with downpayment assistance, called the Downpayment Assistance Program (DAP). DAP partners with the Greater Houston Builders Association and numerous Homeownership Lending Organizations to market and educate future homebuyers on the DAP program and the responsibilities of homeowners.

Economic Development Organizations

Harris County supports the activities of several Economic Development Organizations, such as the Greater Houston Partnership, the Economic Alliance, and BayArea Houston Association. These organizations are involved in the marketing and recruitment of businesses to the county.

Housing Resource Center

The Housing Resource Center (HRC) is the first stop for housing resources and assistance programs in Harris County. In partnership with other government agencies, as well as non-profit and community organizations, the Housing Resource Center has built a network concerned with finding and maintaining safe, comfortable, and secure housing for Harris County residents.

HRC provides a vast array of housing and related information primarily targeted to families and individuals that are experiencing housing crises or are in need of affordable housing. HRCs mission is to aid the community in finding decent, safe, and affordable housing in a manner that promotes equal opportunity and fair housing. Services that the HRC provides include Affordable Housing Assistance; Homeownership Assistance; Emergency Assistance; and Support Services.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is a regional organization that fosters collaboration between local governments in order to address issues and cooperate in solving regional problems. Harris County is one of thirteen counties in the H-GAC service region and CSD participates in many planning initiatives as well as numerous technical advisory and work groups. In 2010, Harris County joined with other jurisdictions, non-profits, and H-GAC to form a consortium that applied to a notice of funding availability sponsored by U.S. HUD (as the lead agency), U.S. DOT, and EPA for planning projects to promote sustainability within the region. The consortium was selected and awarded $3.75 million. In 2011, the committee entered into the public

engagement phase of the grant. This outreach effort has conducted approximately 40 community meetings and surveyed over 2,700 citizens throughout the targeted area. The grant has also produced multiple work groups that include CSD staff as major participants and collaborate with local governments, non-profits, and educational institutions to address regional issues.

Coordination

The Consolidated Plan process is an example of the County's commitment to coordinate efforts involving the Continuum of Care, public and assisted housing providers, private and governmental health, mental health, and service agencies. Coordination between the County and the private sector will continue to be pursued and enhanced where possible through increased formal dialogue between private financial institutions, developers, social service providers, and County staff.

In an effort to enhance its institutional structure, Harris County is a member of, and/or supports, many local organizations in order to ensure necessary programs and services are available to those in need. Coordination of multiple departments, agencies, and services is a difficult task and one that the County is striving to improve. Along with an increased focus on citizen participation, the County is focusing on bolstering the system that serves those most in need, including the extremely low-, low-, moderate-, middle-income households; and the homeless, especially the chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth, and persons who were recently homeless but now live in permanent housing.

Through continued relationships with PID, HCHA, and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, as well as many other local and regional agencies and organizations, CSD will solidify and expand its housing assistance coordination efforts.

Cooperation with County and City Governments

The CSD works closely with the Harris County Commissioners Court in providing support to the four precincts in Harris County. During the Request for Proposals (RFP) process, proposals from each of the precincts are submitted for funding. Selection of projects is competitive and proposals are evaluated in a fair and equitable manner.

In addition to the target areas, 14 incorporated cities have signed cooperative agreements to be included in the Harris County service area. These cities are eligible to receive funding through CSD for programs within their communities. Representatives from Harris County precincts and cooperative cities are invited to participate in professional consultation forums during the annual planning process.

Cooperation with External Organizations

Subrecipients enter the community development process by attending an applicants' conference where they receive technical assistance from CSD staff on the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Interested organizations may then submit a proposal for funding. If the applicant is selected to be a subrecipient, CSD staff works with the organization throughout the program year to assure that the program's objectives are met.

Subrecipients are applicants who are selected by CSD and approved by the Harris County Commissioners Court to receive CDBG, HOME or ESG funds. Subrecipients are typically non-profit organizations, such as Community Development Corporations (CDC) or service providers. There are many opportunities for subrecipients to fully understand the RFP process and participate in capacity training.

Adjacent Community Development Jurisdictions
Consultation with adjacent community development jurisdictions, such as the City of Houston and Fort Bend County, occurs during the annual planning process through professional and governmental consultation forums. It is important that community development activities are coordinated among jurisdictions so programs and services are not overlapping or absent from any specific population or geographic location. In addition, certifications for consistency ensure that the planning objectives of one jurisdiction do not come into conflict with those of another.

Outside Agencies
During the planning process, CSD staff often works closely with outside agencies, including the Harris County Appraisal District and the Harris County Flood Control District, in order to obtain information relevant to reports or plans.

CSD communicates with various providers of community development services (including assisted housing providers, affordable housing developers, homeless service providers, health and mental health service providers, MUDs, economic development related agencies, social service providers, public facilities, and educational and job training institutions). CSD is often asked to provide information on the Request for Proposals (RFP) process and community development programs. CSD works with councils such as the Coalition for the Homeless to address the needs of the homeless population in Harris County. The coalition's aim is to coordinate and improve services for homeless people by preventing homelessness and aiding individuals in permanently exiting homelessness.

Regional Government
The regional governmental entity for the region containing Harris County is the Houston Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Harris County consults with H-GAC during its planning process and receives comments and information regarding community development elements, such as infrastructure and transportation, as well as demographic information and growth forecasts.

Federal and State Government
Federal and State government representatives are invited to participate in the annual planning process. CSD staff often participates in local and state forums and workshops on various community development topics. Staff members also serve on several committees and advisory groups.

Strengths and Gaps

The institutional structure through which homelessness and affordable housing issues are addressed in Harris County is stronger today than it has been in the past. There is a greater awareness by the private sector of the need for affordable housing and there are more outreach efforts by both the County and the private sector. These efforts aim to find better ways to coordinate actions and resources to address the deficits in homelessness prevention, assessment and access to affordable housing.

Harris County's institutional structure strengths include an extensive network of strong, diverse community partnerships with public, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations. These partnerships allow the County to participate and coordinate efforts that address specific affordable housing and homeless needs. As mentioned previously, CSD has already established partnerships with a number of public and private agencies. In order to bolster project evaluation, CSD has partnered with the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County and the local Continuum of Care to participate in the project review process. Also, CSD has an on-going relationship with the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) concerning the coordination of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) awards.

Moving forward, CSD would like to build upon the existing partnerships with organizations such as TDHCA, as well as create new partnerships with public, private, non-profit, philanthropic, and non-profit organizations. With respect to specific gaps, CSD will continue trying to research and develop linking services between institutional discharge cases (persons being discharged from jail, mental institutions, military institutions, etc, and likely to be released into homelessness) and community essential services. CSD would like to improve the coordination between homeless supportive services and housing services. Also, CSD is determined to continue improving the housing standards guidebook by consulting with developers and housing providers.

Due to the diversity of projects and community needs in the County, CSD would like to increase overall communication efforts amongst all partner organizations and focus on pinpointing specific, coordination-related outcomes, such as assigning and diversifying project leads, identifying sources of additional funding, and establishing interrelated and synthesized goals.

In order to address these concerns, CSD will focus on increasing overall research, planning, coordination, and implementation efforts involving partner organizations. CSD will do the following:

- Increase dialogue with private sector and non-profit interests
- Continue community planning support in target cities and neighborhoods
- Continue technical assistance and capacity building support for non-profit housing developers and community groups
- Increase efforts to strengthen the partnerships between the County, participating cities, the State (and state agencies), and HUD.

Within each of these efforts, CSD will focus on, not just increasing one-on-one communication, but integrating information throughout the institutional coordination network. These efforts will also allow CSD to take a more proactive approach to addressing issues and shaping policies.

Monitoring Plan

As grantee of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) entitlement funds: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG); and competitive funds, Shelter Plus Care (SPC) Program , Harris County is responsible for determining the adequacy of performance for subrecipient[1] agreements and for taking appropriate action when performance problems arise. The primary purpose of Harris County's monitoring program is to ensure that subrecipients of entitlement and competitive funds carry out their activities in accordance with the respective regulations and individual applications for funding and all relevant agreements, while also ensuring that funded projects and programs continue to follow the direction of the Consolidated Plan and any other relevant comprehensive plans. Harris County, through its Community Services Department(CSD), is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of grant and subgrant support activities which includes subrecipient oversight and monitoring activities.

Specific areas of subrecipient operations that will be reviewed by CSD staff include financial performance, project timeliness, record-keeping procedures and compliance with federal regulations and applicable program guidelines. Staff members will continually assess subrecipient activity to determine organizational ability to carry out approved projects. Where potential problem areas are found, staff will assist subrecipients by providing technical assistance and training.

Program Objectives

Program objectives and performance measures are established in each subrecipient agreement allocated funding in the Annual Action Plan and consistent with HUD's Continuum of Care Program Competition. Harris County will strategically conduct monitoring reviews of program objectives and performance measures to ensure that they are carried out in a timely manner and in accordance with the county's five-year strategy. Furthermore, regular on-site and desk monitoring ensures that information submitted to Harris County, as related to program objectives, is correct and complete.

As a part of the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, subrecipients will submit a statement of work for each proposed activity. Following the approval of funding, this statement of work will be reviewed and incorporated into a written agreement between the county and the subrecipient. At minimum, the statement of work will provide:

- A description of the work to be accomplished;
- A schedule for completion of the work; and
- A line-item budget for the proposed activity

[1] Subrecipients of competitive funds are referred to as project sponsors.

As a part of the Continuum of Care Program Competition, project sponsors[2] submit an application for SPC funding. HUD selects Continuum applications for funding. Upon completion of required submissions to HUD (e.g. Grant Agreements), a written agreement between the county and the project sponsor is executed. The agreements detail the provision of rental assistance to persons who are homeless and disabled ; the provision of supportive services to homeless and disabled persons; use of current Fair Market Rents; and tracking of Program Objectives to include obtaining and remaining in permanent housing, increased skills and income, and greater self-determination.

The agreements and statements of work will be written in sufficient detail to allow CSD staff to monitor performance.

Reporting and Tracking Systems

All subrecipients of CDBG and ESG must submit written reports and forms to CEDD on a scheduled basis. These reports and forms include but are not limited to the following:

- *Project Status Report:* This report tracks the number of units delivered per month and cumulatively. When not on target with the contract goal or amount of award expended for the percent of contract time elapsed in the program year, subrecipients must provide an explanation for the shortfall.
- *Client Data Report*: Submitted monthly, this report lists all new and duplicate clients served during the reporting month, as well as the number of units of service per client and other requested demographic information.
- *Tally Sheet:* Submitted monthly, this report provides a cumulative summary of the number of new persons served by the program during the program year..
- *Employee Data Report*: Submitted monthly, this report details employees working on the project.
- *HMIS Clients Served with Details and Client Demographics Totals Reports*
- *Mid-Year Report:* Subrecipients submit a narrative summary of the project's activities, goals and evaluation of the effectiveness of the program through the first half of the program year.
- *Annual Performance Report:* Submitted annually, subrecipients submit a narrative summary of the program's activities, goals and evaluation of the effectiveness of the program for the entire program year.

Monthly and mid-year reports are to be submitted in accordance with subrecipient agreements. The annual performance report is due within one month after the end of the contract period. Staff conducts desk reviews of the information submitted on a monthly basis and notifies the subrecipient of any discrepancies. Staff also performs an annual evaluation to give guidance for future program direction.

All sponsor agencies of SPC funds must submit written reports and forms to CSD on a scheduled basis. These reports and forms include but are not limited to the following:

[2] Project Sponsors are subrecipients of competitive funds.

- *Project Status Report:* This report summarizes the number of participants receiving rental assistance per month, includes a checklist of reports submitted , and an area for sponsor agency staff to sign, certifying that all participant data is current in the Homeless Management Information System as required by HUD.
- *Household Characteristics Summary)*: Submitted monthly, this report provides the total number of housing units broken down by bedroom size and type of disability per participant.
- *Household Characteristics Report):* Submitted monthly, this report provides information per participant on the amount of the lease, utility allowance, resident rent portion, and rental subsidy amount requested to be paid with SPC funds. (Submitted by Housing Agent).
- *Employee Data Report*: Submitted monthly, this report details the employees working on the project.
- *Monthly Persons Served Report:* Submitted monthly, this report tracks all persons served in the program, to include entry date, previous living situation, income at entry, services provided, and other data required by HUD for the Annual Progress Report.
- *Annual Progress Report :* Submitted annually, this report is generated from HMIS data and summarizes the number of persons served during the operating year, provides demographic information on persons entering the program, more specific information on persons exiting the program, amount of match as required by either SPC , and a brief narrative from the sponsor agency to provide explanations to items in the report if necessary. .

Monthly and quarterly reports are to be submitted in accordance with sponsor agency agreements. The annual progress report is due to CSD no later than 30 days after the end of the operating year; CSD then submits the report to HUD no later than 90 days after the end of the operating year. Staff conducts desk reviews of the information submitted on a monthly basis and notifies the agency of any discrepancies.

Subrecipients of Affordable Housing multifamily projects must submit written reports and forms to CSD on a scheduled basis. These reports and forms include but are not limited to the following:

- *Rental Housing Project Initial Lease-Up Compliance Report*: Submitted monthly until initial property lease-up is met.
- *Rental Housing Project Compliance Report:* Submitted quarterly after confirmation of lease-up.

Monitoring Schedule

CSD currently monitors its subrecipient organizations on a scheduled basis. For construction-related projects, weekly updates are received from the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department and from the respective project and construction management representatives of the funded entities. These updates detail project costs, milestone

accomplishment and significant events. Data from these updates will be used to determine subrecipient success in meeting program objectives as related to the Consolidated Plan.

For housing-related projects, Harris County conducts monitoring for down-payment assistance projects on a case-by-case basis. Eligibility file reviews and housing quality standards inspections are conducted prior to closing for each unit of assistance provided. For housing rehabilitation and repair activities, inspections of subrecipient work performance will be conducted on a scheduled basis prior to the reimbursement of grant funds to that subrecipient.

For all other projects, Harris County conducts monthly desk reviews and scheduled on-site monitoring visits as dictated by risk analysis or program regulations.

On-Site Monitoring

Scheduled site visits are conducted by CSD staff to monitor program progress. The purpose of Harris County's on-site monitoring program is to determine if a subrecipient is carrying out its program activities as described in the RFP and the written agreement. On-site monitoring is also used to ensure that required records are maintained to demonstrate subrecipient compliance with applicable regulations.

The frequency of on-site monitoring is determined as a result of risk analysis conducted by CSD staff or program regulations. Through risk analysis, priorities are established and resources allocated. Subrecipients that represent the greatest vulnerability to fraud, waste and mismanagement are monitored within the resources available. Risk factors evaluated include:

- size of the subaward administered by a subrecipient;
- complexity of the subaward requirements;
- subrecipients who are new to the entitlement program;
- subrecipients with turnover in key staff positions;
- subrecipients with previous compliance or performance problems;
- subrecipients carrying out high-risk activities such as economic development or homelessness prevention;
- new activities the subrecipient is undertaking,
- monitoring findings and/or concerns from past reviews
- other criteria, which may indicate at-risk subrecipients

Upon conclusion of on-site monitoring visits, subrecipient agencies are notified in writing of any findings and given a date by which all findings are to be addressed. Corrective actions that must be taken by subrecipients are specified. Concerns are also addressed in the monitoring letter to subrecipients. Recommendations for improvement are made.

Harris County CSD staff also conduct financial monitoring reviews. Agencies are required to certify that funds are being used in accordance with their contract with Harris

County. Harris County will continue to use these guidelines for subrecipient monitoring activities and will incorporate any additional requirements as recommended by HUD as needed. Specific monitoring procedures are outlined in a separate document entitled "Harris County's Subrecipient Monitoring Plan" and made available upon request.