

21WS Public Hearing Script: Thursday, November 16, 2023 (6:00 p.m.)

Slide 1 – “Introductory Slide”

Slide stays up 15 minutes prior to starting meeting

Kalyn: Good evening and thank you for attending the Texas General Land Office’s public hearing today, November 16, 2023, for the state’s 2021 Winter Storms action plan for \$43.632 million dollars in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds.

This public hearing is intended to seek input on the state’s proposed Action Plan for funds allocated to the state from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for recovery from the 2021 Winter Storms disaster.

Slide 2 – “2021 Winter Storms Action Plan Public Hearing” (this stays up while people join)

Kalyn: This public hearing has live audio translation available. In order to hear a live translation of this hearing’s audio in a different language, please click the “Translations” button at the bottom of the screen and select the appropriate audio channel.

Please note that, in accordance with our public notice, only language translations already requested in advance are available.

Slide 3 – “2021 Winter Storms Action Plan Public Hearing” (this stays up while people join)

Kalyn: Before we begin, there are a few housekeeping items to address. We are using the Zoom videoconference platform today for this virtual hearing. You will notice that you are listed as a participant in the meeting.

All participants have been muted to reduce background noise and video has been turned off to increase bandwidth for the presentation portion of this meeting.

Starting after my call to order, Heather Lagrone, the Senior Deputy Director for the Community Development and Revitalization division of the GLO, will give a presentation on the proposed Action Plan for this disaster. When she concludes, we will transition to public comment from our attendees.

If you wish to provide public comment during today's public hearing, please complete the form provided at the SurveyMonkey link in the slide. The public hearing will end at 8 o'clock PM or fifteen minutes after the last public comment is received, whichever comes first. The link can also be found in the chat box of this event, as well as online at recovery.texas.gov/public-notices.

Additionally, you can scan the top QR code with your phone camera to access the form. The bottom QR code will take you to the GLO's Public Notice page where the Action Plan is posted. Each commenter has up to three minutes to provide their comment. If you have completed the SurveyMonkey form, we will call your name at the appropriate time and unmute you to provide public comment. You may also turn on your video at this time. If you need technical assistance, please call (512) 475-5133.

Please be aware that this hearing is being recorded and will be made available publicly. Anyone choosing to speak is consenting to audio and/or video publication of their comments. Comments will be responded to with the submission of this action plan to HUD. If you do not wish to comment at this hearing, we will also be accepting written comments that are submitted to our email account, cdr@recovery.texas.gov. Written comments will need to be submitted by 5pm Central time on December 6.

Now I would like to introduce Senior Deputy Director for the Community Development and Revitalization, Heather Lagrone.

Slide 4 – “Public Comments”

Heather: Good evening, everybody. You’ll see on your screen some of those very same housekeeping items that Kalyn just went through with you. When we get to the public comment period of this hearing, we ask that you keep your comments as brief and succinct as possible.

Again, if you would like to speak during the public hearing, we’re asking that you sign up via the SurveyMonkey link that is on your screen as well as in the chat. If you do not wish to publicly speak, you still have the opportunity for written comment through 5pm on December 6.

Slide 5 – “Public Hearing Agenda”

Heather: Our agenda for tonight includes a summary of the CDBG-DR allocation Texas received for recovery from the 2021 Winter Storms, an overview of the proposed state Action Plan for the use of these funds, and a period for public comments.

The GLO has designed different programs to help Texas recover from the impacts of the 2021 Winter Storms. Before we get into the public comment portion, we will give a summary of the allocation Texas received from HUD as well as an overview of these programs.

Slide 6 – “2021 Winter Storms CDBG-DR Allocation Overview”

Heather: As many of you likely well remember, Texas endured the most prolonged freeze in our history in February of 2021. The event was designated a Presidentially declared disaster on February 19, 2021. All 254 counties in Texas ended up being declared eligible for either FEMA Individual Assistance, FEMA Public Assistance, or both.

In May of 2022, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development allocated \$26,387,000 in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery funds to Texas to address the unmet need remaining from the 2021 Winter Storms. HUD later allocated an additional \$17,245,000 in CDBG-DR funds to Texas in January of 2023, bringing the total to \$43,632,000.

Slide 7 – “2021 Winter Storms CDBG-DR Allocation Overview”

Heather: CDBG-DR funds are allocated in order to address the remaining unmet need after all other forms of assistance have been exhausted. Eighty percent of these funds must be spent in the areas HUD deems most impacted and distressed, which, in this case, are the counties of Dallas, Harris, and Tarrant. The remaining twenty percent of funds will be spent in the Secondary Most Impacted and Distressed (Secondary MID) areas, which includes the rest of the 251 Texas counties.

Seventy percent of these funds must be used to benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Additionally, \$5,691,000 of the funds must be used for activities that mitigate the impacts of future winter storms. These activities do not require a "tie-back" to the 2021 Winter Storms.

After the public comment period ends on December 6th the Texas General Land Office will submit the 2021 Winter Storms Action Plan to HUD for approval mid-December with substantive responses to public comments. HUD's review and approval period may take up to 60 days, with potential for a 45 day deficiency period where the state can respond to any revisions required by HUD. Once approved the programs go into effect six to eight months after HUD's approval.

Slide 8 – “2021 Winter Storms CDBG-DR Allocation Overview”

Heather: Here is the budget for the 2021 Winter Storms allocations. You'll see a breakdown of our programs by MID designation and LMI amounts.

Slide 9 – “2021 Winter Storms Action Plan Overview”

Heather: Now we want to give a brief overview of the programs within this action plan. This first one is the 2021 Winter Storms HUD MID Counties Program. This program allocated \$10,153,000 for each of the three HUD MID counties, Dallas County, Harris County and Tarrant. This program allows each county to apply for local projects to address their unmet needs from the 2021 winter storm disaster.

The eligible activities include, but are not limited to, the rehabilitation or construction of affordable multifamily rental housing, infrastructure repair and improvement, and public facility repair. Included in each allocation is a mitigation set-aside amount of \$1,897,000 that counties must use for activities that will mitigate the impacts of future winter storms. These activities do not require a tie-back to the 2021 Winter Storms.

Slide 10 – “2021 Winter Storms Action Plan Overview”

Heather: The other program is the 2021 Winter Storms Fire Facilities and Protective Measures Program. This program provides funding for the repair and strengthening of fire protection facilities in the remaining 251 counties in Texas.

The eligible applicants are: Incorporated cities and counties in the Secondary Most Impacted and Distress (MID) areas. An applicant (incorporated city or county) may apply on behalf of another entity or entities (e.g., third party service provider, emergency service district, etc.), however the GLO will require an interlocal agreement outlining the responsibilities between the applicant and the partnering entity or entities. Awards under this program have a maximum amount of \$1,000,000 and a minimum amount of \$500,000.

Slide 11 - “2021 Winter Storms Action Plan Overview”

Heather: Eligible activities include reconstruction or improvement of fire protection facilities, purchase of emergency power generators, and purchase of fire protection equipment.

Applications will be selected based on the following criteria and reviewed for eligibility:

- Does the project meet the low-and moderate-income (LMI) HUD National Objective?
- What is the applicant’s total damage per capita?
- What is the cost per person benefitting?
- What is the applicant’s Social Vulnerability Index (SoVI)?
- Is the applicant leveraging funds from other sources?
- Tie Breaker: Higher poverty rate.

Slide 12 – “Public Comment Portion” (this stays up the whole Public Comment portion)

Heather: At this point in time, we would like to move towards our verbal comments from the entities and individuals who have submitted their names. Again, we will have a three-minute limit for each of you. We ask that you state your name and affiliation, if applicable.

If you do not wish to speak, you may submit written comments by 5pm on December 6 either via email at cdr@recovery.texas.gov or by mail at P.O. Box 12873, Austin, Texas, 78711. You may also fax them to 512-475-5150.

Alex G: This begins the public comments portion of our meeting. If you have completed the SurveyMonkey form, we will call your name and unmute you to provide public comment. Once we call on you, you will receive a notice to unmute. To speak, you must click on that invitation to unmute. You may also turn on your camera at this time.

As a reminder, each commenter has up to three minutes to provide their comment. Those requiring interpretations have up to six minutes. If you need technical assistance, please call (512) 475-5133. The hearing will conclude at eight o'clock or 15 minutes after all those wishing to speak have given their public comment. The first public commenter is ...

Public Comment Period

Slide 14 – “Written Comments”

Alex G: That concludes all the speakers who have signed up via the SurveyMonkey link. If you have not already made a comment and wish to do so, you may indicate that by raising your hand using the “raise hand” feature in the Zoom toolbar.

If you are on a computer this will be on the bottom of your screen in the “reactions” icon. If you click on that icon, you will have the option to raise your hand. If you are on a phone, you may raise your hand by pressing *9.

This will notify us, and we will send you an invitation to unmute. In order to be unmuted, you must accept that invitation to unmute.

Alex G: Looks like no one raised their hand. As a reminder, any public comments submitted to the GLO by 5pm on December 6 will be considered. Thank you and have a good evening.

Slide 15 – “Thank You”