

# GALVESTON HOUSING AUTHORITY

## Disaster Housing Assistance Program-Ike The Road to Restoration



- Hurricane Ike flooded 75% of Galveston, destroyed the majority of the public housing stock, and displaced thousands of people.
- The Galveston Housing Authority (GHA) immediately housed “first responders” and supportive programs, and became the official Disaster Recovery Center for the Island.
- Collaborative efforts between the Galveston Housing Authority, local and federal agencies were immediately established. The Island Community Center (ICC), which is owned by the GHA and centrally located in the city of Galveston, became the HUB of activity for all things related to Hurricane Ike and recovery.
- Under the leadership of the GHA, the Island Community Center became the largest FEMA Place of distribution (POD) for water, ice and Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), as well as the Salvation Army in its food distribution efforts.
- The Island Community Center was among the first to get electricity through the use of a generator provided by FEMA to facilitate the ICC’s role as a local POD.
- Comcast provided a special fiber optic cable that provided internet and local and long distance telephone service for the ICC, as well as two large flat screen T.V.’s, several computers and eight telephones.
- Through the generator and donations, GHA was able to provide a one stop communication center at the ICC, including computers, internet access, copiers, faxes, and telephones which was free to the general public to assist in accessing information, contacting relatives and completing forms for assistance.
- Concurrently, GHA set up satellite offices in College Station, the site of the evacuation, San Antonio, with assistance from San Antonio Housing Authority, and Texas City in order to continue business as usual until Galveston was habitable.

# Galveston Housing Authority

## Disaster Housing Assistance Program-Ike: The Road to Restoration

- Pre-existing contractors were hired immediately to join staff for the repair and despite the devastation to the four public housing family developments, within four weeks, 360 elderly residents were back in their homes at GHA's senior developments.
- After the storm and evacuation, GHA reimbursed all residents for their September rent and waived October's rent for those who were able to return to public housing units.
- GHA provided 60 days rent to those HCV landlords whose Section 8 tenants were displaced due to damage, to assist in the rehabilitation and ongoing operations while awaiting repairs.
- GHA staff members were in the Red Cross "tent city" of Galveston assisting GHA residents in registering with FEMA for temporary housing assistance.
- GHA contracted with local churches for outreach services to clients in need of temporary housing assistance.
- Acknowledging the urgent housing need that existed in Galveston, GHA immediately volunteered to take the challenge of operating the Disaster Housing Assistance Program. Within one month, the number of families assisted with housing by the GHA went from 962 to 6500.
- By operating the case management component of DHAP-Ike, jobs were provided to those who lost employment because of the hurricane and money was put back into Galveston's fragile economy.
- In addition to housing, GHA implemented interagency agreements and provided free office space and part-time paid positions to local social service agencies for the onsite provision of much needed social services to DHAP-Ike assisted families.
- The pinnacle of the recovery efforts was demonstrated in November of 2009. A National Disaster Housing Family Day was held in order to continue to bring public awareness to the enormity of the need for disaster housing, as well as the large number of families who remained displaced one year after the storm. Over 2000 people attended this fair.
- This entire effort utilized various inter-agency collaborations and became the "One Stop Shop" approach for housing, and any other unmet needs that residents were presented with-medical, social, emotional, nutritional, etc.
- As of July 2010, 1,500 families remain on the DHAP program in Galveston, Texas.

