



West Street Recovery Hub Houses 2-pager

Updated June 2024

What is a hub house?

Residents of Houston understand the danger of extreme weather, including flooding, heatwaves, chemical fires, and winter storms. Despite the risk, our state and local governments have failed to respond in ways that mitigate or even acknowledge this danger. The people of Houston must take on the work of helping communities ready ourselves for the inevitable.

West Street Recovery and the *Northeast Action Collective* have established six community "hub houses" in Northeast Houston and one in Southeast Houston that can be emergency resource, evacuation, and distribution centers during disasters or power outages. The goal of the hub house system is to meet a critical gap in the sparse official city / government run shelters and emergency protocols in Houston. Each hub house is led by a block captain (a resident and usually community leader) who has volunteered their time and their home. Block captains will bring neighbors into the hub and lead the communications and rapid response during disaster. Each hub house is typically responsible for around 12-15 households that are within a mile of the hub. WSR and the NAC are training block captains and equipping each house with emergency power and supplies.

What services and resources are available at an NAC hub house?

<i>Emergency Supplies</i>	<i>Alternative Power Sources</i>	<i>Evacuation Center</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and water - Basic medical supplies and first aid - Toiletries - Lantern and flashlights - Waterproof storage - <u>Home repair and mucking</u>: Crowbars, tarps, work gloves - <u>Rescue and Evacuation</u>: Life jackets, inflatable kayak, rope 	<p>Dual fuel generator (4.5 kw) capable of running a window AC or heating unit, medical equipment, refrigerator, and microwave</p> <p>Solar panels and batteries (1kwh)* capable of charging phones and tech, lighting, running emergency medical equipment, or powering a mini-fridge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Cooling center</u> during extreme heat: AC units and fans - <u>Warming center</u> during extreme cold: space heaters and emergency blankets - Electronics charging - Cooking equipment

	<p>* Batteries are portable enough to be distributed to individual neighbor's houses</p>	
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A hub is an information and communication network

A hub network facilitates neighbors meeting and being able to help each other. Resources, skills, and needs can be shared both within the hub and between the broader West Street Recovery and NAC distribution networks.

Within a hub, the “hub captain” is responsible for reaching out to neighbors, bringing them into the network and creating a roster of particular needs, vulnerabilities, and skills for each house. Making sure everyone’s contact information is shared means that neighbors can check in on each other and ask for help much more quickly during disasters. The most vulnerable people can be taken care of first.

Block captains will also be able to share information and resources from outside of the hub, serving as “distribution centers”:

- Real-time weather alerts and a realistic assessment of risk (which the city and official sources often don’t provide)
- Resources such as water, supplies, cash aid that are often distributed by the city, county, churches, and larger nonprofits.
- Assistance with aid applications and appeals, and home insurance

How can my neighborhood start our own hub houses?

The most important part of neighborhood resiliency is knowing and communicating with your neighbors ahead of time, before the disaster strikes. It is important to identify risks, consider the materials you will need to respond in your particular context, and build a set of systems that you know you can implement. Key things to consider are:

- What disasters are likely in my community?
- What risks are unique to my area that may amplify the dangers of a disaster? (ie industrial sites that would leak chemicals into floodwater)
- What existing networks or institutions with resources can I try to get support from?
- What assets does my community already possess?
- Who else can I, or we, bring into the hub?

If you want to learn more about starting your own hub, email us at alice@weststreetrecovery.org