



Q: How do I know if my property is in the mandatory buyout program?

A: Property owners within the Buyout Areas will be provided an official General Information Notice informing them of inclusion in the program. If you have questions on your property's status, please email us at RebuildHarris@harriscountytexas.gov or call us at **832-927-4955**.

Q: How was my property identified and selected for the Mandatory Buyout Program?

A: Buyouts will occur in areas that are deep within the floodplain and have sustained damage from multiple flood events, with one occasion being Hurricane Harvey.

Q: What is the first step in the mandatory buyout program?

A: You will receive a letter requesting that you contact the case manager who has been assigned to you. We ask you to call us because we only have your address until we meet with you. You may contact your case manager to reschedule if the time given is not convenient for you.

Q: What will be done with my property?

A: Properties acquired through the program can only be used for green space, recreational or floodplain/wetlands management practices in the future.

Q: How will you value my property?

A: If you purchased before Harvey, we use pre-storm fair market value, verified by an independent appraiser. If you purchased after Harvey, we use the current fair market value. We encourage you to accompany the appraiser to point out any improvements you made to the property.

Q: Can I appeal if I do not agree with Harris County's offer for my home/property?

A: Yes.

Q: What happens if I don't want to sell my property?

A: This is a mandatory program. While the County would prefer to settle the matter amicably, if necessary, the County will initiate eminent domain proceedings to acquire your property through litigation.

Q: What if I owe taxes or have a mortgage or other lien on my property?

A: The balance of taxes owed and any mortgage/lien on the property will be subtracted from the total purchase price at closing and those debts will be paid off.

Q: If I am unable to prove ownership, how can you help me?

A: A title search will be done to show ownership. If there are title issues, the County will work with you to resolve them.

Q: Do I have to be a legal resident to participate in the buyout program?

A: No, not for the buyout program. The County will purchase your property whether or not you are lawfully present in the U.S. For the relocation program, however, you must be a U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant. If your household has mixed legal status, we will work with you to assign the relocation benefits to eligible members. Benefits will be pro-rated based on how many persons in the house are citizens or lawfully present. Talk to your case manager about your situation and let us help to find the right solution for your household.

Q: We do not live on the property and do not need to relocate. We already have another home. Can we use money from the sale of the buyout property toward the mortgage on our current home?

A: Yes. The funds will go directly to the owner at closing. If you do not need a replacement home, you may use those dollars in any manner you choose, including to pay toward your current mortgage.

Q: How can I find out more information on the program?

A: Visit our website at [HarrisRecovery.org](https://www.harrisrecovery.org) or contact us at 832-927-4955, RebuildHarris@harriscountytx.gov

Q: How much will I get for a replacement home?

A: The value of your replacement home payment will be determined by the home you are selling to the county. We will find three similar homes comparable to yours outside the floodplain to determine a replacement home value. For example, if you live in a three-bedroom, two-bath home on a half-acre lot, we'll look for three comparable three-bedroom, two-bath homes on half-acre lots. Based on their price, we'll determine how much we will give you to replace your home. Note, you are not required to buy any of the three comparable homes.

Q: Do I have to buy one of the three homes you find?

A: No. You choose the home you buy. We get the comparable homes only to determine what a replacement home comparable value to your buyout home will be.

Q: Do I have to stay in Harris County?

A: No, you can move anywhere you choose. However, the program can only pay for moving costs within 50 miles of the buyout property. Any additional mileage above 50 would be covered by you.

Q: What if my home is paid off and I don't want a mortgage, or I have a mortgage, but I don't want a higher one?

A: We understand that you may feel you cannot afford a home in a neighborhood outside the floodplain, and the program is designed with that in mind. The debt on your replacement home will be no greater than the debt on your buyout home. If you have no debt on your buyout home, you'll get a comparable replacement home with no debt.

Q: What if I want a bigger home than what I had before? Will you pay the difference?

A: You may apply your replacement home payment to any home you choose. If you select a larger home that costs more, you will need to pay the difference.

Q: What if I want a smaller home than what I had before? Do I get to keep the difference?

A: You may select a smaller home, however if you select a home that is less than your calculated replacement home assistance payment, you do not get the difference. That's why we encourage you to wait until you know how much the program will offer before you choose your replacement home. You could miss out on funds that you would otherwise be eligible to receive.

Q: How will my credit score affect additional funding needed to purchase a replacement home?

A: The County will work with you and connect you with other resources to assist with these kinds of issues.

Q: What else is covered in the relocation benefits?

A: The program will pay moving and related expenses for lawfully present members of the household. Based on eligibility, you might also receive down payment assistance. Plus, we will connect you with advisory services like realtors, lenders, legal aid and community services.

Q: Once I agree to sell my home to Harris County, how much time do I have to find a replacement home and close on both homes?

A: We anticipate making all offers by mid-December. At that point, you will know exactly what we are offering for your buyout area home and your replacement home. If you accept the offer, you will have a minimum of 90 days to move out and close on the buyout property. You then have up to 12 months from the offer date of your buyout home to close on a replacement home. If you choose to rent while looking for a replacement home, that will be at your own expense.

Q: Can I select my own realtor and/or lender, or will they be provided for me?

A: We encourage you to select your own, but should you need it, we can connect you with community resource groups that can provide referrals.

Q: What are the stipulations with the funds? How long must I stay in the home before I can sell?

A: There are no restrictions with Uniform Relocation Act (URA) benefits. After initial occupancy, you may sell the home at any time you choose. Some low- to moderate-income homebuyers may qualify for an additional incentive of down payment assistance, which does have occupancy restrictions. If you receive Down Payment Assistance funding, you must commit to staying in the home for two years.