

# **\$14.9 million granted by Texas GLO for historic disaster mitigation projects in Grimes County**

*Funds to improve drainage and wastewater infrastructure approved for Grimes County, Cities of Bédias and Iola*

AUSTIN - Today Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush and County Judge Joe Fauth announced the Texas General Land Office (GLO) approved more than \$14.9 million in flood mitigation projects to improve drainage and wastewater infrastructure in Grimes County and the cities of Bédias and Iola. These infrastructure projects will directly benefit residents in majority low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas that faced repetitive storm damage in 2015, 2016 and in 2017 with Hurricane Harvey.

“Texas continues to be one of the most flood-prone states with at least one major flooding event occurring each year since 2015,” said Commissioner Bush. “Many communities lack the access to funding sources necessary to upgrade wastewater systems and improve drainage. The funding we’re awarding today marks a time of historic change for Grimes County. The GLO is proud to play a part in addressing the tremendous need here, and all across the coastal region.”

“Throughout Grimes County, our greatest challenge during storms and heavy rains is that drainage and floodwater removal systems are either too small or even non-existent, which makes us extremely vulnerable to flooding,” said Grimes County Judge Joe Fauth. “This \$14.9 million in funding from the Texas GLO will lead to massive improvements in our flood resiliency, including a first-time central wastewater collection and treatment system for the city of Iola.”

In May 2020, Commissioner George P. Bush announced the [kick-off of the application process](#) for the first round of more than \$2.3 billion in Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to protect Texas communities hit by Hurricane Harvey and severe flooding in 2015 and 2016. During the first round, the GLO conducted three competitive application programs from the [CDBG-MIT Action Plan](#). Those programs include:

- 2015 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) \$31,426,781 to four grantees.
- 2016 Floods State Mitigation Competition – GLO [awarded](#) 21 grantees with \$135,462,438.
- Hurricane Harvey State Mitigation Competition Round 1 (\$1 billion of \$2,144,776,720 total).

Applications closed for the first round of funding October 28, 2020, and the GLO evaluated all 290 submitted applications in accordance with the HUD approved scoring criteria. Eligible applications with the highest scores were awarded funds. The second round of the competition will award the remaining \$1,144,776,720 in mitigation funding to Hurricane Harvey eligible entities.

HUD defines mitigation as activities that increase resilience to disasters and reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of loss of life, injury, damage to and loss of property, and suffering and hardship, by lessening the impact of future disasters. HUD requires that at least 50% of total funds must be used for activities benefiting low- to moderate-income (LMI) persons.

The State of Texas CDBG Mitigation Action Plan: Building Stronger for a Resilient Future outlines the use of funds, programs, eligible applicants, and eligibility criteria as required by HUD. The plan was sent to HUD on February 3, 2020, after an extraordinary public outreach effort including a 50-day public

comment period and eight regional public hearings, far-surpassing HUD requirements. HUD approved the plan March 31, 2020. For more information, please visit [recovery.texas.gov/mitigation](https://recovery.texas.gov/mitigation).

### **Grimes County Project Descriptions:**

*City of Bedias: Drainage and Flood Improvements Project - \$3,965,736*

LMI Percentage: 56.45%

During heavy or extended rain events, flooding occurs throughout the city. Existing driveway culverts and roadside ditches are either non-existent or insufficiently sized to convey drainage along the street right-of-way. The site of all project activities are the streets and adjacent right-of-way in those areas identified as most problematic and most impactful.

The project includes street and drainage activities throughout the city with the purpose of mitigating against damage and public safety threats posed by stormwater and flooding. Construction includes the following:

- 1) Grade ditches, replace driveway and roadway culverts, road subgrade stabilization, placement of base material, and placement of hot mix asphalt pavement
  - a. Main Street
  - b. Plum Street, West Street, and Gin Tank Street
  - c. East Street, West Street, and Magnolia Street
  - d. Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Access Road
- 2) Grade ditches, replace driveway and roadway culverts, cut drainage swale from Sycamore Street to WWTP property to provide drainage outfall and relieve standing water on northeast side the city, road subgrade stabilization, placement of base material, and placement of hot mix asphalt pavement
  - e. Sycamore Street
- 3) Road subgrade stabilization, placement of base material, and placement of hot mix asphalt pavement
  - f. Cedar Street/Madison Street

*City of Iola: Wastewater System Improvements Project - \$10,934,297*

LMI Percentage: 59.89%

The city of Iola, located in northwestern Grimes County, is vulnerable to hurricanes, tropical depressions, tropical storms, and the subsequent flooding that can be caused by excessive rainfall. The city has been negatively impacted by floods and storms in recent years.

The impact of excessive rain on the wastewater system is of particular concern for Iola as the city does not have adequate wastewater infrastructure nor a central wastewater system. Each residence disposes of wastewater on their own lot by way of an on-site sewage facility (OSSF). Many lots have inadequate area, inadequate/failing OSSF systems or no OSSF system at all (direct discharge).

The project will provide a first-time central wastewater collection and treatment system for the city which will eliminate the long-term risk to public health and negative environmental impact associated with the OSSF systems.

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