

“This is Big!”: Sewa International Gets Major Disaster Relief Grant



Houston, Texas (November 14, 2017): Sewa International has been awarded a \$397,590 grant by the Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF) in its second round of grants announced today. GHCF, which has raised more than \$80 million for the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund, had strict criteria in evaluating grant proposals, and a very quick seven-day grant announcement to grant submission on October 20, 2017.

The Sewa International team was led by Sewa Houston Chapter’s President Gitesh Desai, and included Achalesh Amar, and Vasudev Singh who were in turn supported by the grant writing team headed by Kavita Tewary. The grant writing team included Anuja Deshpande, Hasita Kartick, and Jaydeep Chaudhari, and was advised by Prof. Sree Sreenath, President, Sewa International.

“We are excited”, said Gitesh Desai as they got the email from GHFC late last week announcing the second round of grant awards. “Sewa International has broken through a barrier of sorts in receiving such a major grant for offering Disaster Case Management Services to Greater Houston Community that includes Houston and Harris county. We are proud of our work, but we are also anxious to start offering the services we have been tasked to deliver,” he said.

What the Sewa International Team, led by a project manager and assisted by 20 Case Workers, will do is to identify and assist 600 clients in assessing their “individual/family needs resulting from a specific disaster event, help them develop a recovery plan, and screen for duplication of benefits and provide them access to resources for their unmet needs”. The grant money that Sewa received today will have to be spent over the next four months. As per the grant guidelines, Sewa has to begin providing disaster case management services within 30 days or less of receiving funding.

“This is a kind of ‘get set, ready, go’ kind of challenge and opportunity for us”, said Kavita Tewary, Executive Director of Sewa Houston who spearheaded the grant writing “We want to spend this money wisely, correctly, and carefully, and do it all within the next four months so that Sewa International will emerge as a reliable, trustworthy organization that can seek other such grants for disaster relief work across the United States and around the world. We will make Sewa proud and we will, as a Hindu faith-based organization will make Indo-Americans proud. We indeed believe serving humanity is serving divinity.” she said.

For questions about the grant, please contact Kavita Tewary at educationhouston@sewausa.org or 713-303-4253