

# New Orleans: **Recover • Rebuild • Organize**

A Report on the ACORN Katrina **Recovery** and **Rebuilding** Campaign  
August 2005 - August 2006



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>I</b>
By Maude Hurd, ACORN National President	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
By Wade Rathke, ACORN Chief Organizer	
<b>SECTION 1</b>	<b>3</b>
THE EYE OF THE STORM - NEW ORLEANS ACORN ACORN Members Take Immediate Action After Katrina	
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>6</b>
ACORN BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE OF NEW ORLEANS The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association ACORN Katrina Survivors Travel to Washington, D.C.	
<b>SECTION 3</b>	<b>10</b>
ACORN WORKS TO PROTECT HOMEOWNERS AND NEIGHBORHOODS Taking On Unfair Lenders Preserving New Orleans Neighborhoods: The Right to Return The ACORN Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program	
<b>SECTION 4</b>	<b>15</b>
ACORN DEMANDS A VOICE IN THE FUTURE OF NEW ORLEANS Demanding an Inclusive City Planning Process Getting Out The Vote: Responding to the Challenges of the 2006 New Orleans Election	
<b>SECTION 5</b>	<b>19</b>
LOOKING FORWARD Housing - Jobs - Education - Healthcare	
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>22</b>

# PREFACE

By Maude Hurd



One year ago, the people of New Orleans were hit by a devastating storm, forced to flee by failing levees, and abandoned, before the shocked eyes of the world, by a government unable or unwilling to provide effective relief.

One year later, the determination of the people of New Orleans to return and rebuild their homes, lives and communities and the overwhelming support of the American people for a humane and just recovery has brought hard-won hope and progress to the city.

ACORN, the nation's largest community organization, never had a choice about whether to take on the fight to rebuild New Orleans. Deeply rooted in the city for 30 years and with a presence in all major cities where evacuees arrived, the organization had to find the time and resources to respond to the challenge. ACORN quickly began fostering communication among displaced residents, fighting for disaster assistance, preserving homes, developing a rebuilding plan and providing a national voice for Katrina survivors. The ACORN Katrina Recovery and Rebuilding Campaign has organized its many activities around one constant theme: We will return and rebuild our homes, our lives and our communities.

In the second year of New Orleans' recovery, ACORN will develop new initiatives to foster affordable housing and quality job placement and to advocate for education and access to healthcare. In this fight, as in all of ACORN's efforts, hope comes from the strength of ordinary people who stand united in the face of extraordinary challenges.

That's you and me, my friend.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Maude Hurd".

**Maude Hurd**

ACORN National President

## INTRODUCTION

by Wade Rathke, ACORN Chief Organizer

### ACORN: LOOKING DOWN TWIN PEAKS OF HOUSING AND JOBS



We've done a lot, but there's much more to be done.

Living in New Orleans one year after Katrina, we sometimes count small steps as long leaps. A neighborhood drugstore opens obviating a long drive across town, and we turn to each other, knowingly, and say, "Hey, we're coming back!" Street lights finally beam through the darkness from Elysian Fields to Lake Pontchartrain through Gentilly, and, we nod, and put the thumbs up, ignoring the fact that we can now see yet another neighborhood virtually left for dead by the city.

Friends visit and take the New Orleans equivalent of the "grand tour." They drive to the Lower 9th Ward to look at the levee break. They go through Gentilly and Lakeview to see the destruction that paid no mind to class, as another levee broke there. And then sometimes they arch back toward Uptown to see the devastation in the Carrollton-Hollygrove area, lurking in the shadow of the largely unaffected Uptown area. Then they turn to you and ask, "What has been done since the storm?" I find myself instinctively looking around when they say this and imagining the view from their eyes. Instead of trash in front of a home signaling another family has cleaned out from the flood

and announced their intention to return, I see a year later how much is undone, which makes it seem like nothing has been done at all.

Each view is right in an equally painful measure. A lot has been done by people and their organizations, such as ACORN. Yet, it seems as if almost nothing has been done by the government, especially at the city and state levels, both of which are just coming into the game. This has been a year in which there have been numerous "official" top down planning efforts based on the original Urban Land Institute recommendations. The "official" planning process has started and stopped so many times that people are beginning to view it as irrelevant. The city is being rebuilt block-by-block, house-by-house, by citizens banding together with their organizations to prove that they want to live in New Orleans and are coming back!

As ACORN and ACORN Housing begin to participate in the official rebuilding process, we know that we have already learned a million lessons. This report details some of them, starting with housing and jobs. If you have a job, then you will find a house and live somewhere or just about anywhere. If you don't have housing, then there is no way to find a job or

hold onto it. Both are chickens and both are eggs, but in this case they are the twin towers on which the city must now be rebuilt.

Looking down from these two twin peaks, one sees that for families there must be schools and for the elderly, there must be good health care. Both prevent either group from exercising the "right of return," for which ACORN has fought so valiantly following the storm. There are now five school systems in the city with questionable value. There are relatively few health care choices in the city, so the result is much the same.

But, I get ahead of myself. What follows is the story of the first year and the gigantic struggle to save and rebuild New Orleans and the right of its residents – those living here and those we organized as part of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association – to have a voice, and to insist in every way possible, whether through tears or screams, that New Orleans is their city. They must be heard, and they will return.

We have done a lot, and at the same time it seems like we have only just begun. Thank goodness we have had your help and support and know that you will be with us until the victory at the end.



## SECTION I

### THE EYE OF THE STORM - NEW ORLEANS ACORN

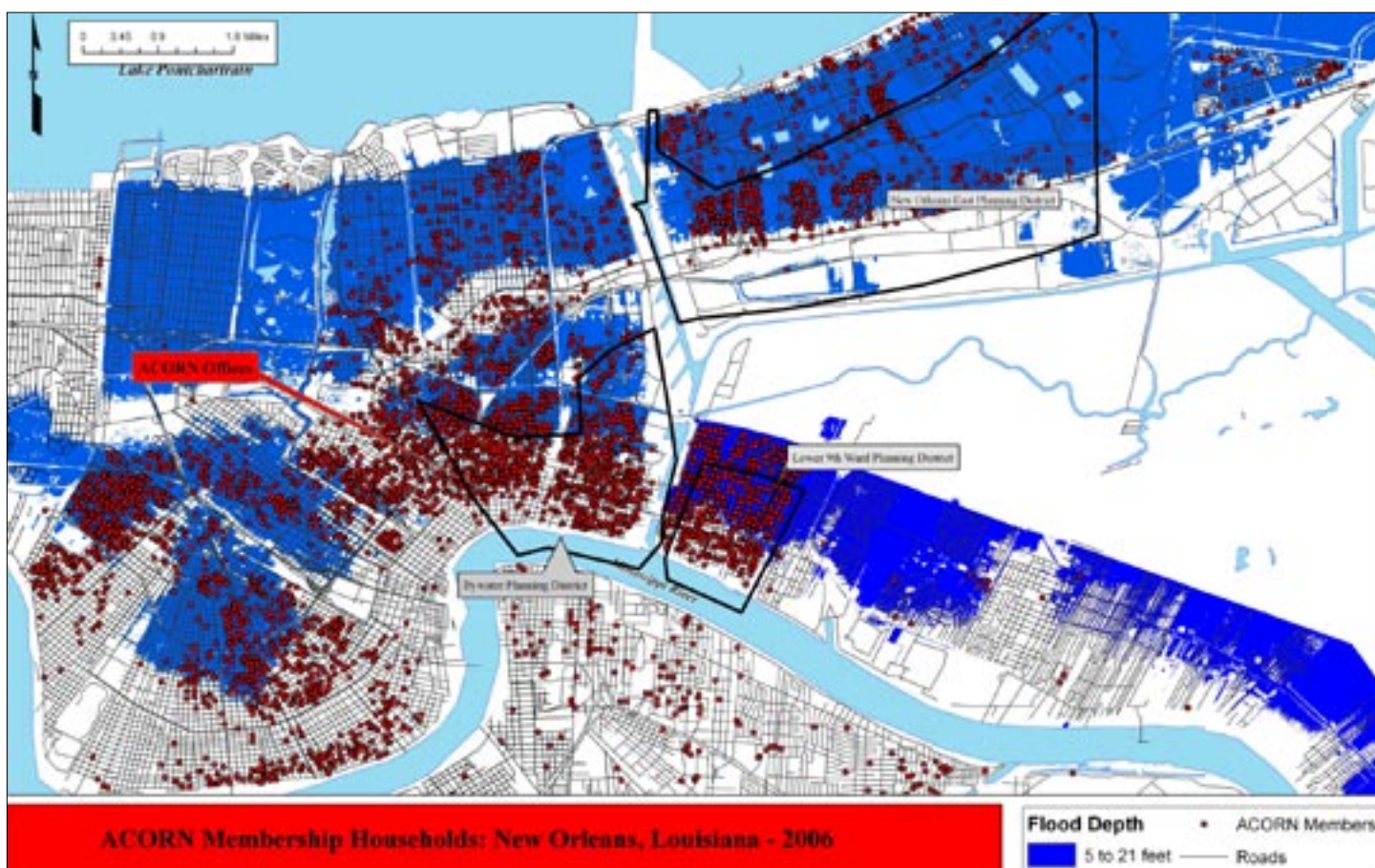
In August 2005, there were more than 9,000 ACORN member families in New Orleans, making ACORN the largest grassroots membership organization in the city. ACORN's national headquarters is located at 1024 Elysian Fields Avenue in New Orleans. It houses staff for Louisiana ACORN, New Orleans ACORN and national operations. It has been a part of the community for more than 30 years.

In the months following the storm, displaced ACORN staff from New Orleans

regrouped in ACORN's Baton Rouge offices and temporary office space in Houston. While workers repaired the New Orleans office, organizers worked out of Baton Rouge for more than four months to ensure a voice for members in the future of New Orleans. By November, ACORN had replaced the roof, treated for mold and repaired the floors. By January, the full staff was back in New Orleans. Today, more ACORN staff work out of New Orleans than ever before. ACORN is committed to the rebuilding

of New Orleans and the rights of our members to return to the city they love. ACORN's success in rebuilding its presence after the storm anchored the hopes of returning members of the community.

The map below shows the distribution of ACORN members before the storm. Most lived in the shaded areas on the map, which suffered serious flooding. One year after Katrina, 7,500 ACORN families still have not returned to New Orleans.



## ACORN Members Take Immediate Action after Katrina

### ***A letter from ACORN President Maude Hurd***

*August 31, 2005*

Dear friends,

As President of ACORN, I want to extend our sympathies to everyone impacted by Hurricane Katrina, and ask that all of our members and friends keep them in their thoughts and prayers.

I am proud to report that members of the ACORN family are already pulling together to help. Houston ACORN members are preparing to host fleeing ACORN members in their homes and volunteering to help other evacuees. ACORN Housing will help fleeing homeowners contact their mortgage lenders and arrange temporary forbearance on mortgage payments until insurance claims are sorted out. A message board on our website will help members and staff reconnect.

Finally, let me say, very personally, to our ACORN members, staff and other residents of New Orleans: I cannot find the words to express the level of grief and concern that we feel for you and the loss you are undergoing. We pray for your safety, and hope for the best possible recovery.

Sincerely,



Maude Hurd, ACORN National Pres.  
Boston, MA



People are the heart of any community as ACORN members are the heart of ACORN. The Katrina floodwaters forced deep, close-knit communities out of their New Orleans neighborhoods, dispersing ACORN members throughout the country, with few possessions and fractured networks of loved ones and friends.

New Orleans ACORN staff started contacting members almost immediately after the

storm. Days after Katrina made landfall, New Orleans ACORN Head Organizer Steve Bradberry reached hundreds of New Orleans ACORN members through cell phone text-messages, directing them to call their nearest ACORN office for assistance. ACORN operates in more than 100 cities nationwide. A message board on the ACORN Website and a toll-free Hurricane Hotline helped reconnect members and other families.

ACORN members and

organizers visited disaster shelters in Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Little Rock, Ark. and Baton Rouge to seek out arriving New Orleans members, listen to their concerns and provide them with emergency assistance – medical care, food, and clothing. ACORN members around the country offered to house displaced ACORN families and others in their homes. Supporters from around the country reached out with donations and offers of help.





**After a three-day journey from Flint, Mich., the ACORN Mobile Action Center arrived in Houston, Texas on Sunday, Sept. 11. The van made stops at ACORN offices in several cities on its way to Houston, collecting relief supplies and donations for the ACORN Hurricane Recovery and Rebuilding Fund.**

As they witnessed the deadly results of government inaction in the week after the storm, ACORN members organized events around the country to demand rescue and relief for stranded families. ACORN activated its email network and organized mass call-ins to Congress and the White House. On Sept. 2nd, ACORN members in many cities around the country went to their local Congressional offices to demand that the federal government respond faster to the emergency.

- In California, members held a press conference with

Congresswoman Barbara Lee's Chief of Staff to demand help for people in New Orleans.

- In Orlando, Fla. members visited U.S. Sen. Mel Martinez's office to demand aid for Katrina survivors.

- In Baltimore, Md. members, along with the press, visited the offices of U.S. Rep. Benjamin Cardin and U.S. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger to find out what they were doing to help the survivors.

In September and October, ACORN held Katrina Town Hall Meetings,

and other events in more than three dozen cities to discuss how the federal government's misplaced priorities, which undercut vital services and public works budgets, contributed to the evacuation crisis during Katrina. ACORN members held press conferences and other events to demand a better response to Katrina and that their local areas develop better evacuation plans in such places as Little Rock, Ark., Oakland, Calif., Washington, D.C., Wilmington, Del. and other smaller cities in Louisiana.

## SECTION 2

### ACORN BUILDS FOR THE FUTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

*Following Katrina Town Hall Meetings, ACORN members created the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association. With more than 5,500 member families and chapters in 10 cities across the country, the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association serves as the national voice of displaced people, fighting for fair treatment in their host cities, and the right to return and rebuild their communities.*



**Members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association rally with Los Angeles ACORN members for emergency housing assistance.**

### THE ACORN KATRINA SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION

In cities with large numbers of people displaced from New Orleans, ACORN immediately started talking to survivors at shelters, motels and apartment complexes. Survivors overwhelmingly wanted a voice in the rebuilding of their city. They wanted to start by improving their current treatment as displaced residents.

At a Town Hall meeting in Houston on Sept. 9 – less than

two weeks after the storm, hundreds of evacuees gathered in a church where they shared testimonies about the horrors they had experienced and the uncertainty of their current situations. The group voted unanimously to begin organizing fellow survivors and presented their difficulties securing temporary housing to Texas Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Houston Mayor Bill White. Both officials

pledged to work with ACORN to address the needs of Katrina survivors. After the meeting, Mayor White announced major local initiatives to address the issues raised by ACORN members. Houston, which hosts the majority of displaced New Orleanians, began offering assistance to families sheltering survivors, and Mayor White stopped the evictions of survivors from local hotels.

**At a Houston Town Hall meeting, Texas ACORN President Toni McElroy welcomed Katrina survivors to the community, saying, “We’re here tonight to get information to survivors, hold elected officials accountable, and to help rebuild the New Orleans community. There is strength in numbers. You have a strong organization to depend on and that you can participate in so your voice can be heard.”**





In 10 cities around the country, meetings of displaced Louisiana ACORN members, ACORN community leaders and evacuees from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast have led to the formation of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association. While organizing to address urgent local problems, the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association met by phone and drafted a united platform, which they announced to the national press via teleconference, and brought to elected officials in Washington D.C. and around the country.

The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association has used direct action, public pressure and regular negotiations with FEMA throughout the first year after Katrina to ensure that FEMA continued to provide disaster housing assistance to displaced survivors.

- On Sept. 19, ACORN members from New Orleans and Dallas held a press conference at the Dallas Mayor's office to demand that Dallas take advantage of FEMA partnerships to provide more stable housing for Katrina survivors.

- On Nov. 22, in Houston, San Antonio and Dallas, more than 100 Katrina Survivors marched alongside U.S. Representatives Al Green and Sheila Jackson Lee and AFL-CIO Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson to stop FEMA from evicting an estimated 50,000 survivors from their temporary shelters in motel and hotel rooms across Texas. Later that afternoon, FEMA extended its hotel housing program in 10 states.

- On Jan. 12, ACORN Katrina Survivors in Houston attended a press conference with Mayor Bill White, calling on FEMA to pay for a full year of housing.

- On Feb. 13, Los Angeles ACORN held a rally to publicize the evictions of Katrina survivors from local hotels. After the rally, ACORN helped secure a number of emergency housing extensions from FEMA. ACORN members also worked with the Mayor's office to direct \$300,000,

## ACORN Katrina Survivors Association

The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association is the first nationwide organization of displaced New Orleans residents and other Katrina survivors. We use public pressure, direct action, and dialogue with elected officials and public policy experts to win respect and a voice for survivors, the resources needed for families to survive and a rebuilding plan that builds stronger communities for all.

### We are calling for:

- A commitment to our right to return;
- The resources to rebuild our homes, our neighborhoods and our city;
- Levees and a larger flood protection system that will keep us safe;
- A rebuilding plan that focuses on the low-and-moderate income majority of New Orleans, including help rebuilding affordable housing;
- Accountability and fair treatment from agencies charged with emergency response, such as FEMA and the Small Business Administration;
- Temporary housing, like trailers, close to home, so we can move back;
- Repair and reopening of public housing and the reopening of Charity Hospital.

which ACORN discovered had been allocated to help Katrina survivors, toward housing programs in Los Angeles.

- On March 1, members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association in San Antonio, Texas held a press conference to demand that FEMA extend its hotel assistance program. After the press conference, ACORN members and organizers worked with FEMA representatives to negotiate an extension.

- On May 16, nearly 100 ACORN Katrina Survivors attended a meeting with FEMA representatives in Houston to negotiate housing and utility relief.

## The Houston Chronicle, Evacuees in Hotels are Granted More Time

November 23, 2005

*"I'm elated," said evacuee Dorothy Stukes, a leader of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association, after FEMA announced the deadline extension. The Houston branch of ACORN, or Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, is a community reform group. 'It's just a relief. I'm glad they heard the voice of the people. Now we can have a nice Thanksgiving, without worrying about whether we're going to be put out of our homes,' Stukes said."*

## ACORN KATRINA SURVIVORS TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



**ACORN Rally for Return and Rebuilding, Washington, D.C., February 8th - 9th**

- Tanya Harris, an ACORN member from New Orleans, was in Washington D.C. lobbying for an elevated response to Hurricane Katrina, when Hurricane Rita hit. (Tanya Harris is now the Head Organizer for New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward.)

- Harris met with dozens of members of Congress, including House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, and Louisiana Senators Mary Landrieu and David Vitter, on obstacles to returning home and the need for rebuilding resources.

- Harris spoke at the Congressional Black Caucus' Annual Legislative Conference on the need to include all voices in the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast.

- On October 24-25th, a delegation of ACORN Katrina Survivors from several cities traveled to Washington, D.C. ACORN members from Washington, D.C. and Maryland joined them to rally outside of FEMA's offices, winning a meeting with FEMA officials to discuss survivors' issues

on the spot and follow-up meetings in others cities around the country.

- The ACORN delegation held a press conference with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid to denounce a Republican attempt to use Katrina relief as a pretext to cut \$35 to \$50 billion from community programs, in order to fund special-interest tax breaks.

- ACORN's Katrina Survivors delegation and Senators Edward Kennedy, Byron Dorgan and Tom Harkin, announced the introduction of Kennedy's **Rebuild with Respect Act**. ACORN helped write the bill. It proposed hiring local residents for reconstruction projects, the restoration of affirmative action, health and safety protections, and Davis-Bacon wage rules, which President Bush had removed in Katrina disaster areas. Around the same time as the D.C. rally, 1000 people gathered on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol for the **Rally to Rebuild Louisiana** to

fight to restore Davis-Bacon. On the day of the D.C. Rally, Bush restored the Davis-Bacon rules, requiring federal contractors to pay at least the local prevailing wage.

- On Feb. 8, more than 400 members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association traveled by bus to Washington, D.C. to rally for more federal rebuilding assistance for Louisiana in **The Rally for Return and Rebuilding**.

ACORN Katrina Survivors marched through Washington, D.C. to the Capitol and picketed the White House, carrying pictures of their flood-damaged homes. The group rallied for additional federal rebuilding assistance alongside Democratic leaders, including Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Senator Hillary Clinton, Senator Mary Landrieu, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and many others. They fanned out in groups and lobbied scores of members of Congress on their platform for return and rebuilding.



**ACORN Rally for Return and Rebuilding, Washington, D.C., February 8th - 9th** Photo by Thomas Dooley

Members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association also testified before a panel of U.S. Representatives on the need for rebuilding funds and the difficulties Katrina Survivors face working their way through federal disaster assistance programs. A smaller group of ACORN Katrina Survivors members met with R. David Paulison, acting director of FEMA, to share concerns over the implementation of FEMA's disaster housing programs.

The Rally for Return and Rebuilding renewed the spirits of Katrina survivors and brought the lasting devastation of the storm back into the national spotlight during a time when the phrase "Katrina fatigue" began appearing in the media. On Feb. 9, ACORN's march appeared on the front page of *The Washington Post* and received extensive print and broadcast coverage around the country.

One week after ***The Rally for Return and Rebuilding***, President Bush requested that Congress appropriate an additional \$4.2 billion to repair flood-damaged homes in Louisiana. On the following day, he requested another \$19.8 billion to repair flood and hurricane protection systems along the Gulf Coast.



**Members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association rally outside FEMA's Washington, D.C. office, demanding meetings with FEMA in Baton Rouge, Houston and Dallas.**

*The Washington Post*

## **Hurricane Victims Demand More Help**

*Federal Government Not Doing Enough to Aid Rebuilding, Survivors Say*

Thursday, February 9, 2006

"The group marched up Independence Avenue, chanting 'Where is the money?' and singing 'This little neighborhood of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,' parting the lunchtime crowd of Capitol Hill staffers. One man in a trench coat stepped aside and asked another, 'Who are these people?' When a woman told him, 'We're from New Orleans, sir,' the man nodded his head and quietly began to clap for the procession."



## **ACORN Partners with the Clinton Foundation to Provide Tax Benefits to Katrina Survivors**

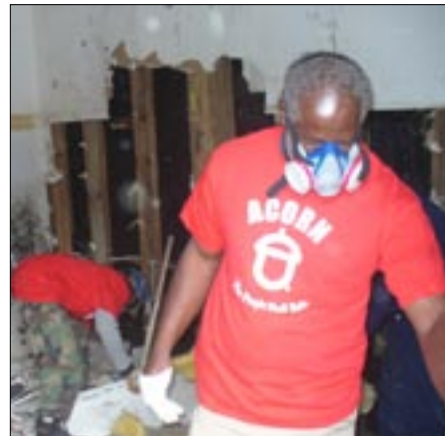
**On Feb. 3, ACORN announced a partnership with the William J. Clinton Foundation to conduct special outreach on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) targeting Katrina survivors in 10 cities: Birmingham, Ala.; Little Rock, Ark.; Atlanta, Ga.; Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, and New Orleans, Louisiana; Jackson, Miss.; Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio, Texas. The ACORN Katrina Benefits Access Program provides on-the-spot tax preparation and helps direct displaced residents to much-needed federal and state benefits programs for Katrina survivors.**



## SECTION 3

### ACORN WORKS TO PROTECT HOMEOWNERS AND NEIGHBORHOODS

*ACORN Katrina Survivors, displaced throughout the country, are concerned that elected officials will abandon efforts to restore New Orleans' most devastated neighborhoods. ACORN members who are homeowners want to keep their homes and move back to their neighborhoods as soon as possible. Since Katrina, ACORN has worked to preserve homeownership and the right to return to all of New Orleans' neighborhoods*



### TAKING ON UNFAIR LENDERS



**ACORN Housing counselors in Houston assist homeowners at a Katrina survivors information fair.**

Starting the week after Katrina, housing counselors from ACORN Housing, ACORN's sister organization, traveled to disaster shelters to connect with members and identify homeowner concerns. ACORN Housing's counselors found that tens of thousands of displaced homeowners, mainly low-income African-Americans, were not receiving the highly publicized mortgage relief that most lenders offered after the hurricane. This was especially true among the disproportionate number of African-Americans holding subprime loans. Many of the subprime lenders offered mortgage relief for only one month, while major lenders offered mortgage relief for 90 days or longer.

On Sept. 22, ACORN released a report, "Another Crisis in the Making! How the Subprime Mortgage Industry is Sandbagging Katrina-affected Homeowners," revealing these discrepancies. The report generated national

attention, including a mention in *The Wall Street Journal*. Soon after, ACORN and ACORN Housing, along with the AFL-CIO and consumer groups, worked with prime and subprime lenders and trade associations on increased protections for Katrina homeowners as well as foreclosure prevention.

ACORN Housing's counseling sessions also revealed that certain lenders charged significant prepayment penalties to homeowners who used insurance proceeds to pay off their home loans. Ocwen Loan Servicing, a major mortgage lender, backed down from its policy of charging pre-payment penalties to homeowners in hurricane-affected areas after ACORN and ACORN Housing publicized this practice. Ocwen also agreed to refund the prepayment penalties already collected.

ACORN Housing's counselors continue to advise Katrina-affected homeowners on payment agreements and foreclosures. Since the storm, ACORN Housing counselors have worked with 14 lenders to remove hurricane-affected homeowners from the New Orleans foreclosure lists, which decreased community anxiety about a surge of foreclosures. Counselors have also worked with

lenders to design and implement best practices for hurricane-related lending, including post-disaster loan deferments and waivers on pre-payment penalties.

ACORN Housing's counselors also provide assistance in determining relief payments offered by the Louisiana Recovery Authority's Road Home Program. Counselors help homeowners determine the value of

their home, provide advice in putting together documentation, calculate basic grant and mitigation funds available and determine possible gap financing.

Since Katrina, ACORN Housing has directly counseled more than 2,000 homeowners affected by the storm.

## **PRESERVING NEW ORLEANS NEIGHBORHOODS: The Right to Return**

ACORN members have fought to preserve their homes and neighborhoods during the year following Katrina. These battles started just weeks after the storm devastated the Gulf Coast region, also during a time when New Orleans city officials prohibited Lower 9th Ward residents from entering their neighborhoods. Early reports from the Nagin administration estimated that the city would have to bulldoze 50,000 homes.

- On Sept. 28, more than 75 displaced New Orleans residents who had relocated to Baton Rouge returned to New Orleans to meet with Councilwoman Cynthia Willard-Lewis and discuss the right to return home to the Lower 9th Ward.

- On Oct. 12, Mayor Nagin announced that residents from certain parts of the Lower 9th Ward would be allowed to enter their neighborhoods to "look and leave." On Oct. 15, a caravan of ACORN members entered the Lower 9th Ward to post "No Bulldozing" signs on their homes asserting their rights to return.

- On Nov. 22, ACORN members, along with legal and community partners, obtained a favorable settlement in a lawsuit that challenged the evictions of displaced tenants without mailed notices.

Despite the initial efforts of ACORN members, toward the end of December, the Nagin administration began to bulldoze 2,500 of the most severely damaged

homes without contacting homeowners. Many homeowners from the most devastated areas were unable to return to New Orleans and by tearing down their homes without warning, the city did not provide these residents with an opportunity to protest further destruction to their property. ACORN worked with legal and community partners to file suit against the city for its failure to notify homeowners of the demolitions. On Dec. 28, ACORN members won a temporary restraining order to delay the bulldozing. Two weeks later, members won a settlement that required the city to notify homeowners of demolition and provide them with the opportunity to appeal.



**An ACORN member hangs a "No Bulldozing" sign to protect homes in the Lower 9th Ward.**

## The ACORN Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program



ACORN clean-out crews remove material from a damaged home in the Lower 9th Ward.

*“It’s still a shock. All I can think of is it’s not my home...Thank God ACORN is going to gut it out. We’re going to come back and fix it up, and it’s going to be our home again.”*

- Dorian Theodore, ACORN member

In Dec. 2005, ACORN launched the **ACORN Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program**. ACORN Home Clean-Out crews work to prevent the further deterioration of homes in neighborhoods that government agencies and other groups have made little effort to restore. ACORN Home Clean-out crews clean-out debris, gut the interior of homes, eradicate mold and provide roof repair. This makes it easier for homeowners to rebuild their homes once they receive the necessary permits and funds. Without ACORN’s clean-out services, damage to many of these homes

would have festered beyond repair.

As of August 1, ACORN had cleaned and gutted 1,450 homes.

- Today, there are more than 1,000 homes on the waiting list.

- More than 5,000 volunteers have helped with this project.

During the first few months of the ACORN Home Clean-out Demonstration Program, the same professionals that repaired the ACORN headquarters began working with ACORN to clean and gut homes free of charge. At the Program’s peak, ACORN gutted 100 homes per week.

As demand for gutting services grew,

ACORN took on more volunteer labor to reduce costs. ACORN spends an average of \$2,500 to gut one home. Today between 60 and 100 volunteers help clean and gut every week.

Cleaning and gutting homes has served as a statement of residents’ intent to return and rebuild their neighborhoods. It is now a legal requirement for homeowners to clean-out and gut their homes in order to protect their property. On April 6, the City Council passed an ordinance that gave residents until the one-year anniversary of Katrina to clean and gut their homes or be at risk of losing them.



ACORN members protested the City Council's gutting ordinance, which increases the difficulties of displaced New Orleanians who are still waiting on the launch of Louisiana's housing assistance program to determine where and how to rebuild. On April 29, New Orleans ACORN members held a meeting to discuss the ordinance. The five City Council members

present agreed to support ACORN's recommended amendments. On May 25, the City Council passed a revised ordinance that exempts elderly citizens and residents in the Lower 9th Ward from the deadline.

Under the slogan, "Memorials, not Demolitions," ACORN members are drafting further amendments to the ordinance, demanding that the

city notify displaced residents of the gutting deadline by certified mail and distribute information on free gutting services. ACORN has launched its own information campaign on the gutting deadline, placing flyers in businesses along the Gulf Coast, including more than 60 Winn-Dixie grocery stores and Starbucks coffee shops statewide.



**Louisiana ACORN President Beulah Labostrie speaks at the April 29 meeting on the gutting ordinance.**



**Gail Tucker saves family photos while an ACORN clean-out crew cleans and guts her Gentilly home.**

**On April 12th, ACORN clean-out crews cleaned and gutted the home of Gail Tucker - the 1000th home preserved through ACORN's Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program.**

**Ms. Tucker, who is living in Baton Rouge with her son, said she is overwhelmed by the volunteer support. "I'm extremely grateful for the effort ACORN has made. This is such a great help. I could not have had my house cleaned without the help of ACORN."**

# Let's Take it Back!

## Saturday Clean-ups in the Lower 9th Ward

Since May 13, groups of up to 75 ACORN members have spent Saturdays working to clean up the streets, medians and public facilities of the Lower 9th Ward. Community interest in the cleanups has grown, and volunteers from all over the city are participating. Sheriff Marlin Gusman, along with the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Department, supports the initiative, and deputies and inmates often volunteer alongside ACORN members.

Invited guest Mayor Nagin attended the first cleanup event held the weekend before the mayoral election. Members demanded that the Mayor help restore water services throughout the Lower 9th Ward. The next week the city restored water service to all of the Lower 9th Ward. However, the fight for safe drinking water certification in much of the Lower 9th Ward continues today.

"The cleanups are not just about making the area look better, but they are about getting Lower 9 residents who have been away for so long reconnected to their community. The cleanups also provide evidence that residents care about the Lower 9 and that once again, ACORN members have had to take the initiative to get things done in the Lower 9."

- Tanya Harris, ACORN organizer for the Lower 9th Ward and a fourth generation Lower 9th Ward resident



## SECTION 4

### ACORN DEMANDS A VOICE IN THE FUTURE OF NEW ORLEANS

ACORN members are fighting to make sure that future plans for New Orleans include the voice of displaced low- and moderate-income residents, through collaborative planning, voter participation and organizing.



### Demanding an Inclusive City Planning Process: New Orleans ACORN members speak out for a unified voice in redevelopment.

**Social Composition of Damaged versus Undamaged Areas of New Orleans:**

	Percent African-American	Percent Below the Poverty Line
Areas of New Orleans with Moderate to Severe Damage	75%	30%
Areas of New Orleans with Limited to No Damage	46%	25%

Source: *The Impact of Katrina: Race and Class in Storm-Damaged Neighborhoods*, Professor John R. Logan, Brown University, 2006

In New Orleans, damage from Katrina disproportionately affected low-income residents and African Americans.

The initial government planning efforts appeared to shut out the displaced, primarily African-American residents. A member of the Mayor's rebuilding commission, Jimmy Reiss, spoke out loud what many ACORN members feared: "Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically, and politically."<sup>1</sup> To counter an exclusive rebuilding process, ACORN members and organizers began their own

grassroots, collaborative city planning process.

In November, ACORN brought together 150 ACORN Katrina Survivors, city planning experts, architects and affordable housing specialists for the ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans. For two days, ACORN Katrina Survivors met in Baton Rouge with national planning and policy experts to lay the groundwork for a just and inclusive rebuilding plan.

The week after the Forum, the Urban Land Institute (ULI), working for the Mayor's Bring New Orleans Back Commission, released "A Rebuilding Strategy,

"The Mayor and his Commission are proposing to shut us out. It's like they think they can rebuild New Orleans without the people of New Orleans."

- Katie Neason, leader of ACORN Katrina Survivors Association

"...if the future city were limited to the population previously living in zones undamaged by Katrina it would risk losing about 50% of its white residents but more than 80% of its black population. This is why the continuing question about the hurricane is this: whose city will be rebuilt?"

- excerpt from *The Impact of Katrina: Race and Class in Storm-Damaged Neighborhoods*, Professor John R. Logan, Brown University, 2006

New Orleans, LA." The ULI report recommends a three-stage redevelopment process, and its key recommendation is to rebuild first in "Priority Areas," or areas with the least hurricane damage. According to the ULI report, the most heavily damaged areas of New Orleans would receive rebuilding assistance last.



The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association and allies disagreed with the ULI over whether government has a responsibility to provide safe, livable neighborhoods with working infrastructure, city services, and schools or whether the neighborhoods must first demonstrate viability. ACORN believes that the city has the primary responsibility to provide basic infrastructure to allow residents to move forward. The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association worked with

many of the scholars who attended the Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans to release a detailed critique of the ULI report.

In December, more than 100 ACORN members attended meetings with the Urban Land Institute in cities where many Katrina Survivors were living, including Houston, Baton Rouge, Dallas, Fort Worth, Texas and Memphis, Tenn. Displaced residents voiced their opposition to the proposed redevelopment plan and demanded a greater role in creating

future plans.

The Mayor's Bring New Orleans Back Commission decided to support a slightly different version of the ULI's tiered redevelopment plan. The commission proposed to direct resources first to "Immediate Opportunity Areas" that received little or no flood damage. Neighborhoods that were not "Immediate Opportunity Areas" had from January to May to prove their viability during an official city planning process.

## Key Points from the ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans

1. It cannot be said often enough: residents need a voice and a vote in the rebuilding process.
2. Residents have deep roots and connections in their communities. They want to return to the places they lived and the people they lived with as soon as it's both safe and possible to do.
3. Clean-up and rebuilding must begin as soon as possible. The longer it takes for people to return, the more difficult it becomes.
4. Residents are angry and worried about the barriers that inhibit return, including the possibility of bulldozed property, lack of clear information about property access, health issues, and unclear infrastructure repair and rebuilding plans. They are angry about how little has been done to stop further damage, or help people return.
5. Until existing homes are ready for occupation, residents want temporary places to live as close to home as possible, including trailers on their properties or in other usable places in the city.
6. Residents need clear, detailed information about the real risks and health hazards present in their communities and how to protect themselves in the short and long term.
7. The levees can be rebuilt to better protect the city; residents need to know that there is a commitment to creating category-5 level protections. Environmental hazards, water management and engineering issues must be addressed, not used as excuses to abandon low- and moderate-income communities.
8. The job of rebuilding in low-income neighborhoods is too large for residents to do alone. A series of publicly managed and financed programs, beginning with immediate clean-up and securing homes, followed by federal funding for gap financing and rebuilding loans, needs to be created and implemented immediately.
9. Low- and moderate-income renters need protection from skyrocketing rent.
10. Residents want to rebuild a better New Orleans, including living wage jobs, and schools that successfully prepare students for good jobs and active citizenship. The hospitality industry cannot be the only economic base; other strengths must be built upon.
11. There will be rebuilding work in New Orleans for years to come. Residents need short and long term training in order to be the 'first source' for filling these jobs.



**Tracy Flores, an ACORN member from New Orleans, presents to the ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans in Baton Rouge, Nov. 7-8, 2005.**

**Access video archives of the forum in its entirety at <http://www.acorn.org/rebuilding>.**

### Conference sponsors included:

The College of Art and Design at LSU, the Association of Community Design, the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, the Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment, School of Architecture at Pratt Institute, the Planners Network and numerous New Orleans and Louisiana elected officials.

Thanks to the donors to the ACORN Hurricane Recovery and Rebuilding Fund, including the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Tides Foundation and World Savings for their support of this event.



**On March 26, 250 residents of the Lower 9th Ward participated in a community planning meeting co-sponsored by the Cornell University Department of City and Regional Planning, the Louisiana State University School of Architecture and State Representative Charmaine Marchand. During the day-long planning event, residents registered their intent to return, met directly with planners and elected officials about community needs and formed committees to continue work on rebuilding.**

ACORN members decided to move forward with their own neighborhood plans, refusing to wait on the Commission's planning process, which never got off the ground. ACORN's city planning efforts have focused on areas where a large percentage of ACORN members live – the Lower 9th Ward and New Orleans East.

ACORN members and staff have collaborated with city planning partners from Cornell University, the Pratt Institute, Louisiana State University and ACORN Housing to solicit community input on rebuilding. During regular neighborhood "Action Team" meetings, large community forums and meetings with displaced New Orleanians, ACORN members and staff are building a vision of New Orleans' most devastated neighborhoods. As residents have voiced their opinions on housing, employment

opportunities, community safety, healthcare and education, ACORN has helped its members create detailed plans for their neighborhoods.

In August 2006, ACORN released details of member recommendations and ACORN's planning principles in *Rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina: ACORN Planning Principles*.

ACORN member recommendations include:

- Allowing pre-Katrina residents first priority in purchasing redeveloped property in their neighborhoods.
- Restoring and establishing after-school programs, making sure these programs address Katrina-related mental health needs.
- Creating community policing systems and encouraging police officers to live in the neighborhoods they patrol.
- Keeping public transportation routes flexible

enough to service neighborhoods as they repopulate.

- Establishing small, neighborhood health clinics that are connected to the Charity Hospital system.

On July 21st, the Greater New Orleans Foundation announced that an independent panel of nationally recognized experts chose ACORN Housing to be one of 16 "official" New Orleans planning teams, recognizing ACORN Housing's experience working closely with the community and ACORN's outreach to displaced residents.

The official planning teams will work with residents to produce neighborhood plans. Once the Mayor and City Council approve these plans, they will become a part of the Unified New Orleans Plan, which will help direct resources during the rebuilding process and serve as the city's long-term vision.

**To order a free copy of *Rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina: ACORN Planning Principles*, email [communications2@acorn.org](mailto:communications2@acorn.org) or call (504) 943-0044, ext. 174.**

## GETTING OUT THE VOTE: RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE 2006 NEW ORLEANS ELECTION

The City of New Orleans held its Primary and General Elections for Mayor and City Council on April 22 and May 20, respectively, nearly three months later than originally scheduled. Hurricane Katrina destroyed more than half of the city's polling places, and with more than half of the city's population displaced, sporadic mail service created uneasiness around the absentee voting process.

Although ACORN went to court to fight for out-of-state satellite voting centers in cities with a large number of displaced voters, the state did not meet this demand. Instead, the Louisiana Legislature created several new voting laws related to absentee voting and set up satellite voting centers in 10 Louisiana parishes outside of New Orleans.

ACORN members and organizers in Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas worked together to coordinate a "Get Out The Vote" effort and ensure that as many New Orleanians as possible had an opportunity to make their vote count.

- ACORN staff worked with the Secretary of State's office to clarify the new voting laws.

- Displaced ACORN members visited ACORN offices around the country for assistance with the absentee voting procedures.

- Members of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association went into their communities to make sure New Orleanians knew how to participate in the elections.

- ACORN members and organizers held voter rallies, knocked on doors, worked phone banks and distributed voter information.

- ACORN provided buses to satellite voting centers and to polling stations in New Orleans for 800 displaced New Orleanians.

ACORN ultimately reached more than 8,000 voters before the Primary Election and 10,000 voters before the General Election. Voter turnout for the elections was higher than expected, particularly for devastated neighborhoods. With less than half of New Orleans' population back in the city, voter turnout was down by only one-fifth.<sup>2</sup>

*The New York Times*

### **Craving a Voice, New Orleanians Take to the Road to Cast Ballots for Mayor**

April 11, 2006

"I would have spent the night in the parking lot if I had had to," said Debra Campbell, who got up at 4:30 a.m. to be on one of the two buses from Houston. "We just need help. We need help getting our homes together." Ms. Campbell, a former resident of the city's Seventh Ward, had never lived outside New Orleans. "Please believe us, we're suffering," she said."

"ACORN is organizing events to keep the public eye on voting in the hopes that the news will reach displaced voters and encourage them to vote and to get help if they need it for voting."

- Joe Sherman, New Orleans ACORN leader.



**During the mayoral runoff, ACORN co-sponsored a debate between Mayor Ray Nagin and Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu. Displaced ACORN members traveled from Houston, San Antonio and Dallas to New Orleans to attend the debate and vote. Prior to the debate, the moderator read a list of ACORN members' concerns, including affordable housing, educational infrastructure and the potential for eminent domain.**



## SECTION 5

### LOOKING FORWARD: HOUSING - JOBS - EDUCATION - HEALTHCARE

*New Orleans homeowners are expected to begin receiving housing assistance grants from the Louisiana Recovery Authority's "The Road Home" housing program in September 2006. At this turning point in the city's recovery, New Orleans ACORN will redouble and broaden its efforts to ensure that residents can return home to a city with adequate opportunities for affordable housing, employment, healthcare and quality education.*



## HOUSING

**Katrina damaged  
134,564 housing units  
in New Orleans or 72  
percent of all occupied  
housing units.**

**FEMA classified 105,323  
units as having "Major/  
Severe Damage."<sup>3</sup>**



Housing is the foundation of New Orleans' long-term recovery, yet Louisiana's housing assistance program, "The Road Home," has not begun. The Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) has been designing The Road Home housing program since October 2005, and ACORN has submitted lengthy comments on changes to the plan that would better serve low- and moderate-income residents. In April, ACORN members testified on improvements to the plan before the Legislative Black Caucus. ACORN's efforts helped to produce a final housing plan with more opportunities for affordable housing, more specifics on making loans affordable and more generous assistance to thousands of low- and moderate-income families who rent out a portion of their own home.

When The Road Home program begins, homeowners will receive up to \$150,000 to repair, rebuild, or relocate, providing the first opportunity for hundreds of thousands of New Orleanians to return home.

Hurricane Katrina damaged an estimated 79 percent of affordable housing units in the New Orleans metro area.<sup>4</sup> Since the storm, rents have increased dramatically by 25 to 100 percent. The city's average sales price for an undamaged home has increased by 26 percent.<sup>5</sup> ACORN and ACORN Housing are taking steps to address the shortage in affordable housing:

- In Phase II of the ACORN Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program, ACORN will work with partners, including other nonprofit developers, to rehabilitate the homes that ACORN has preserved.

- The city of New Orleans awarded ACORN Housing 150 adjudicated single-family properties it applied for in the Lower 9th Ward and New Orleans East. ACORN Housing will reconstruct these properties as affordable housing for low- and moderate-income homebuyers.

- ACORN Housing has partnered with architects from Louisiana State University, Pratt Institute and Cornell University to

develop demonstration projects that will rebuild clusters of houses in the Lower 9th Ward and New Orleans East. These demonstration projects will initially develop modest numbers of homes, creating a model that can be replicated on 1,000 or more homes.

- ACORN Housing is partnering

with architects and designers to create a Design Book with affordable housing plans that reflect New Orleans' historic architectural style.

- ACORN Housing is working with Louisiana State University to run a Mobile Repair Van that will train female heads of household in the Lower 9th Ward in home repair and

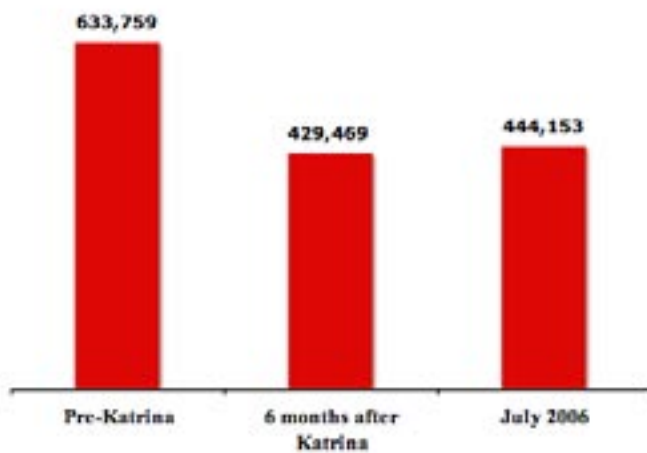
basic construction skills.

- ACORN Housing is expanding its counseling center in New Orleans to assist returning residents through the maze of government assistance, lending, insurance and construction issues that come with rebuilding.

Currently, the unemployment rate

## JOBS

Labor Force - New Orleans Metro Area



**Source:** Special Edition of the Katrina Index: A One-Year Review of Key Indicators of Recovery in Post Storm New Orleans; Amy Liu, Matt Fellowes and Mia Mabanta; The Brookings Institution; August 2006

*Between August 2005 and July 2006, the labor force in the New Orleans metro area decreased by 230,000. In the last six months, the labor force has stagnated, showing few signs of recovery.*



**A work training instructor advises Houston residents at the New Orleans Worker Resource Center.**

of displaced New Orleanians is 23 percent.<sup>6</sup> As New Orleans' housing stock rebounds, many displaced residents will return to New Orleans to find a transformed job market. ACORN and its partners in organized labor are working to open opportunities for residents to return to living wage jobs:

- In July, ACORN, in partnership with the SEIU, opened the New Orleans Worker Resource Center. The center is training returning residents in construction and healthcare and will match returning residents with local employment opportunities.

- ACORN and the

SEIU provide buses to New Orleans from cities with a large number of displaced residents, such as Baton Rouge and Houston, so that residents currently living in those cities can explore job opportunities at home.

- To prevent downward pressure on wages as members of the workforce return to New Orleans, ACORN members will strengthen their efforts to increase the state minimum wage and to establish a local living wage ordinance in New Orleans, forcing firms with city contracts to pay a fair wage.

After Katrina,

## EDUCATION

Damage by Katrina closed 85 percent of New Orleans' public schools.<sup>7</sup>

Six months after the storm, New Orleans' public schools served only 9,298 students, down from 64,270 before the storm.<sup>8</sup>

For the start of the 2006-2007 school year, only one-third of New Orleans' public schools have reopened.<sup>9</sup>

government officials made marked changes to New Orleans' public education system. In November, the Louisiana Legislature voted to have the State Board of Education take over 107 of the system's 128 public schools.<sup>10</sup> Since the storm, the U.S. Department of Education has provided the state with \$45 million to create charter schools.<sup>11</sup> The Orleans Parish School District is now the largest

experiment in charter schools in the nation.

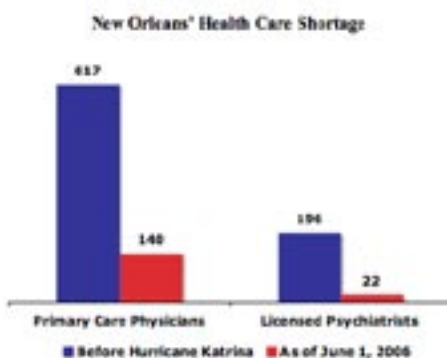
In June, Louisiana ACORN established its **Educational Oversight Program**. The program will work to provide all New Orleans residents, including those not currently living in the city, with a voice in the design and governance of their school districts.

- As students return to New Orleans, ACORN's oversight

program will monitor how the new educational system serves students from different economic backgrounds to ensure that the New Orleans' school system does not become an exclusive, two-tiered system.

- The **ACORN Educational Resource Center** will help parents choose between all of the educational alternatives. Only half of New

## HEALTHCARE



**Source:** American Medical Association Croasdale, Myrle. "New Orleans now a physician shortage area," *AMNews*, June 5, 2006.

Orleans' major hospitals are in operation.<sup>12</sup> New Orleans' major public hospital that served the uninsured and underinsured, Charity Hospital, is closed. Currently, there is no plan to reopen it. Until state and federal health care officials redesign New Orleans' healthcare

system, many residents who require medical attention, particularly elderly residents, cannot return to their neighborhoods.

- New Orleans ACORN has entered into negotiations with the city of New Orleans' Health Department to develop a Federally Qualified Health

Center for the Lower 9th Ward that would provide care to the uninsured and Medicaid recipients.

- ACORN members will continue to pressure state and federal officials to provide resources to re-establish New Orleans healthcare infrastructure.



## CONCLUSION

One year after Katrina, most of the work of rebuilding New Orleans remains ahead; so does the answer to the looming question: “Whose city will be rebuilt?”

In the past year ACORN has demonstrated the desire of the people of New Orleans to return and rebuild their city. Progress has been made on a variety of levels: from organizing the ACORN Katrina Survivor Association to gaining additional federal and state funding; from halting government seizures to bringing the Diaspora to

vote; from gutting homes and cleaning neighborhoods to designing our own rebuilding plans; from helping homeowners gain government aid to stopping unfair lending practices; from offering job training and placement in construction to monitoring education and health care systems.

Recently, ACORN won a greater voice for residents in the rebuilding process, with its partner ACORN Housing, now serving as one of the city’s official neighborhood planning teams.

ACORN will continue its fight in the months and years to come as the city faces greater challenges of providing housing, jobs, education and healthcare for returning residents.

The best way to rebuild the city is to listen to its people – both near and far. Together, we will continue to raise our voices to say, we will rebuild our city – for all of us.



ACORN, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, is the nation’s largest community organization of low- and moderate-income families, with 220,000 member families organized into 850 neighborhood chapters in more than 100 cities across the country. Since 1970, ACORN has taken action and won victories on issues of concern to our members. ACORN’s priorities include: better housing for first time homebuyers and tenants, living wages for low-wage workers, more investment in our communities from banks and governments, and better public schools. ACORN achieves these goals by building community organizations that have the power to win changes -- through direct action, negotiation, legislation, and voter participation.

In 1986, ACORN Housing originated from neighborhood-based campaigns conducted by ACORN. ACORN Housing is a national, non-profit organization that provides housing counseling and education services to low- and moderate-income families. Since its inception, ACORN Housing has grown to 40 offices in as many cities. The offices provide mortgage counseling to more individuals than any other group in the country. ACORN Housing is also the national leader in assisting victims of predatory lending by providing refinancing at improved terms, through loan modification and by conducting outreach that teaches how to identify and avoid predatory loans. ACORN Housing has helped more than 50,000 low- and moderate-income families realize their dream of buying a home.

# HOW CAN I HELP?

## **Donate: Adopt a Home in ACORN's Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program**

Visit **[www.acorn.org/donate](http://www.acorn.org/donate)** to donate, Adopt a Home, make an in-kind donation, or send a tax-deductible check to:

### **ACORN Institute - Hurricane Recovery and Rebuilding Fund**

1024 Elysian Fields Avenue

New Orleans, LA 70117

## **Volunteer with ACORN's Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program**

For information on the volunteer program visit:

**[www.acorn.org/volunteer](http://www.acorn.org/volunteer)** or e-mail **[rebuild@acorn.org](mailto:rebuild@acorn.org)**.

## **Learn More about ACORN's Katrina Recovery and Rebuilding Campaign**

**To order free copies of the material listed below, e-mail [communications2@acorn.org](mailto:communications2@acorn.org) or call (504) 943-0044, ext. 174.**

- Visit [www.acorn.org/katrina](http://www.acorn.org/katrina)
- A free DVD of our short movie about ACORN's Home Clean-Out Demonstration Program
- A free DVD of the ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans
- *Rebuilding after Hurricane Katrina: ACORN Planning Principles*, July 2006
- Additional copies of *Recover Rebuild Organize: A Report on the ACORN Katrina Recovery and Rebuilding Campaign*, August 2005 - August 2006

**Get Involved!** Contact your federal elected officials via the ACORN Legislative Action Hotline at **(800) 643-9557** and tell them to make the rebuilding of New Orleans and the right to return a high priority.

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> Cooper, Christopher. "Old-Line Families Escape Worst of Flood and Plot the Future." The Wall Street Journal, September 8, 2005.
- <sup>2</sup> Donze, Frank and Gordon Russell. "Nagin vs. Landrieu." The Times-Picayune, April 23, 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. "Current Housing Unit Damage Estimates," April 7, 2006 (revised).
- <sup>4</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition. "Hurricane Katrina's Impact on Low Income Housing Units," September 22, 2005.
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas, Greg. "Undamaged Homes are Fetching Record Prices." The Times-Picayune, July 9, 2006.
- <sup>6</sup> Liu, Amy, Matt Fellowes and Mia Mabanta. "Special Edition of the Katrina Index: A One-Year Review of Key Indicators of Recovery in Post-Storm New Orleans," The Brookings Institution, August 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> Russell, Gordon. "Six Months Later; Recovery Gaining Focus," The Times-Picayune, February 26, 2006.
- <sup>9</sup> See footnote 6.
- <sup>10</sup> Ritea, Steve. "Bell's About to Ring," The Times-Picayune, July 3, 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of Education Press Release. "Louisiana Awarded \$23.9 Million No Child Left Behind Grant to Help Create More Charter Schools," available at <http://www.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2006/06/06122006a.html>, June 12, 2006.
- <sup>12</sup> See footnote 6.