



L O U I S I A N A

Family Recovery Corps

Broken Promises, Unmet Needs Leave Louisiana Vulnerable

**Presented by the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps
January 29, 2009**



Broken Promises, Unmet Needs Leave Louisiana Vulnerable

In the coming weeks the state of Louisiana will find itself in a precarious situation as it relates to the continued needs of its residents still recovering from the effects of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On March 1, 2009, the federal government will close its Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) currently being operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This program provides housing vouchers and temporary housing solutions to an unknown number of people (likely in the thousands) across the state.

Beginning in March, that federal assistance will no longer be available, potentially leaving thousands of residents homeless and seeking state services to fill the void created by the loss of federal resources.

While this issue is one that neither HUD nor FEMA necessarily see as having a major impact on the state, the fact is this has great potential to create an extreme strain on state government, especially the Department of Social Services.

Despite the numbers that FEMA and HUD report, there are a great number of individuals and families who are still not yet to the point of self-sufficiency. We know this because we have served these families and individuals through our case management, household furnishings, and home repair programs. And, in every instance in which we have executed one of our programs, the amount of resources that we can provide does not come close to meeting the vast need of the people.

Federal Funds Earmarked for Louisiana Never Made It

One major reason why the people of Louisiana have been so slow to recover from Katrina and Rita comes from an inability of the federal government and the state to agree to terms on the execution of FEMA's Disaster Case Management Pilot (DCMP) program. This program was to begin in May 2008 and was to provide the state with \$32 million for case management services.

The state provided its application to FEMA, which included the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps as a partner agency. Through the DCMP program, the state would provide comprehensive disaster case management services in order to meet the human services needs of families transitioning from temporary housing units into sustainable housing solutions. Included in the case management services were to be housing search and placement assistance, community resource linkages, direct financial assistance, and other supportive services such as mental and physical health assistance, pro-bono legal assistance, and transportation assistance. The program was vital in mid-2008 as FEMA shut down trailer parks and people were forced out.

Despite continued efforts by the state, it continued to face challenges in obtaining approval from FEMA to begin the program. Though the state of Mississippi won approval in July 2008, Louisiana went through the application process five different times. The delays caused by this process forced potential partner agencies to drop out and the looming deadline of February 28, 2009 (the scheduled close of the program) forced the state to finally abandon any real plans to initiate the



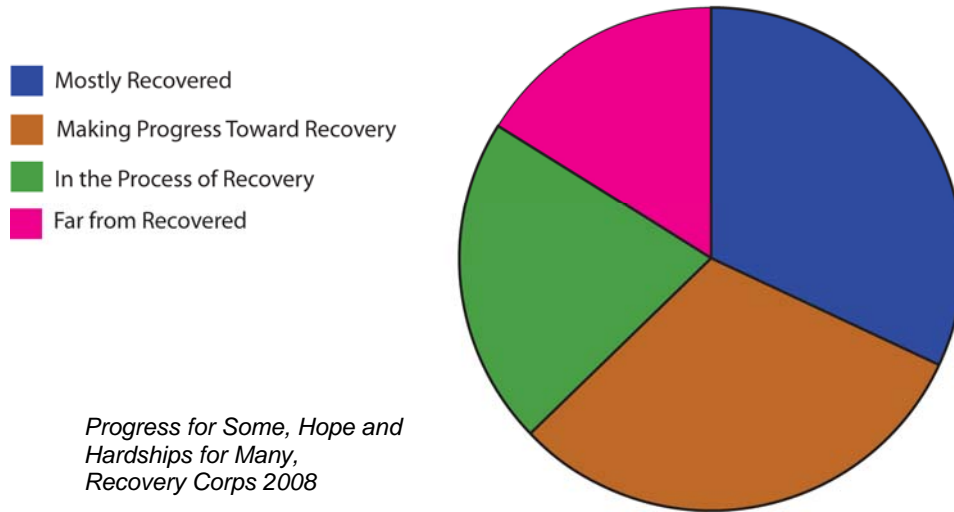


program in January 2009, as too little time remained to properly conduct what was supposed to be a nine-month program.

Thus, the state of Louisiana lost out on receiving the \$32 million earmarked for case management services for its citizens. The state has since demanded that FEMA provide the funds anyway, but it appears that the agency will not do so.

Due to failure to fund, thousands of families and individuals in our state continued to languish and never received the proper assistance that they drastically needed in order to move toward self-sufficiency. Instead, their recovery process has been retarded and many still remain in need of some sort of assistance in order to function on a daily basis. With no other assistance available, those people will now turn to the state and its resources to assist in filling those needs.

**Hardship, Recovery and Service Needs
of Impacted Residents**



Many Face Great Risk of Homelessness Due to Closing Program

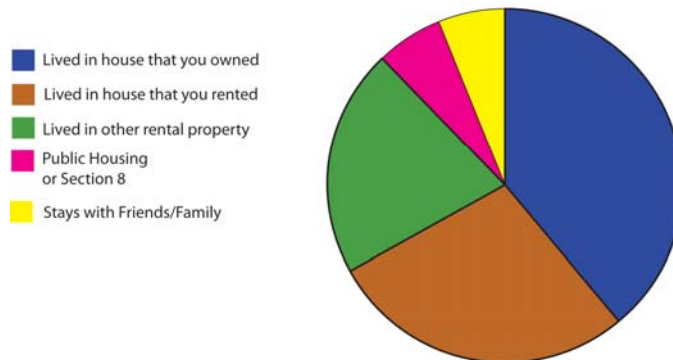
While the DCMP-Katrina program never materialized, FEMA and HUD did develop a program to help hurricane-affected families obtain affordable housing. The Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) provides rental subsidies to a specific group of eligible families and individuals affected by Katrina and Rita. When the program ends on March 1, 2009, these families and individuals will no longer receive DHAP vouchers, potentially forcing them to lose their homes and seek assistance elsewhere.



One area of great concern is that those who were initially eligible for the program were some of the state's most vulnerable populations. In order to be eligible, individuals and families must have been displaced public housing residents, Section 8 voucher holders, households receiving HUD assistance, or pre-disaster homeless individuals who were directly affected by Hurricane Katrina. Thus, these citizens were at great risk of homelessness prior to the storms, and the impact of the disasters has not likely allowed them to be able to improve their pre-storm situations. Again, this is another population that will turn to the state for aid as the federal resources dry up.

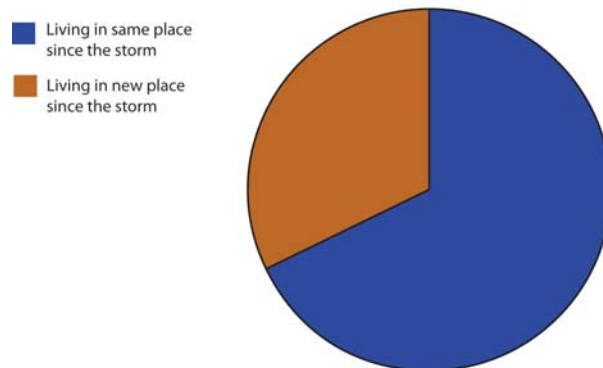
In our analysis of administrative data and focus group data, we found significant differences in the circumstances and needs of families who had moved into permanent housing (e.g., houses and apartments) and families who were still living in temporary housing (e.g., trailers and hotels). The former group, while still requiring assistance in some areas of their lives, was markedly further along in its recovery process than the latter group. For those who had secured permanent housing, the recovery process seemed to be well under way. For most of those still in temporary housing, the recovery process had not really begun. Many of these same people will be the very ones seeking state aid once they are cut off from the federal housing assistance programs.

Living Situation for Impacted Residents
Displaced Residents' Pre-Storm Housing



Progress for Some, Hope and Hardships for Many, Recovery Corps 2008

Living Situation for Impacted Residents
Post-Storm



Progress for Some, Hope and Hardships for Many, Recovery Corps 2008





**Housing Type and Status among Recent Recovery Corps Clients
 Pre-Storm v. Post-Storm**

	<u>Pre-Storm</u> (%)	<u>Post-Storm</u> (%)
Type of Housing		
Permanent		
Single Family Dwelling	55 %	43 %
Apartment	36 %	29 %
Temporary		
Mobile Home/Trailer	3 %	24 %
Other	5 %	5 %
Housing Status		
Own	23 %	15 %
Rent	70 %	53 %
Live with Family/Friends	6 %	12 %
Homeless/Transient Shelter	0 %	5 %
Other	1 %	14 %
Type of Housing Subsidy		
None	83 %	64 %
HUD/Public Housing	4 %	2 %
HUD/Section 8	12 %	11 %
FEMA	1 %	22 %
Other	0 %	1 %

Note: The data include the clients from the cases which were newly opened during the October 2006-February 2007 period (n=2,201). The number of observations used in calculations vary by item due to missing values

Source: BPA staff calculations based on the ServicePoint Database.

Louisiana’s Unmet Needs¹

While the storms of 2005 took an immeasurable human toll on the state, the hurricanes caused incalculable physical damage. Across Louisiana, a total of 204,737 homes suffered severe damage. In the New Orleans metropolitan area, where the greatest amount of physical destruction occurred, the number of homes destroyed reached 181,937. Over 50,000 of those units were affordable rental units, home to many of our most vulnerable residents.

Though much progress has been made in restoring valuable infrastructure and rebuilding communities, tremendous needs remain as our most vulnerable families make the difficult transition from temporary housing units into permanent, sustainable solutions.

The State has provided assistance to many of our residents in need. As this support disappears, stark realities of continued devastation remain. Because 16,446 families are currently in

¹ Much of the data in this section was provided by FEMA, while the content comes from the state of Louisiana’s application to FEMA to operate the Disaster Case Management Pilot and was prepared by the LRA.



transition from temporary into permanent units through the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP), and another 29,479 households prepare to begin the same process (according to the state's DCMP application to FEMA which was resubmitted in December 2008), it is critical to assess and address the comprehensive needs that remain.

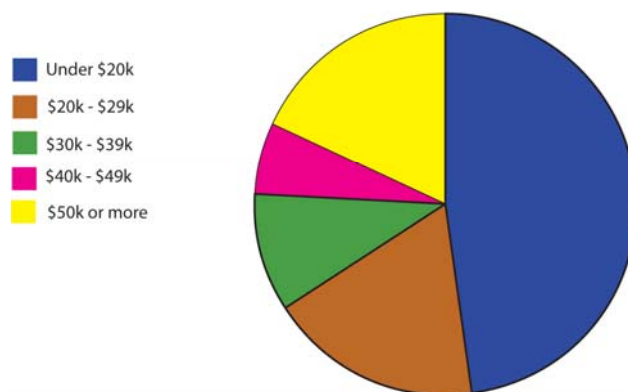
Although the public and private sector continue to aggressively work to restore affordable rental units, many complicating factors have slowed the process. In addition to restoring the property destroyed by the storms, the state has seen an increase in the demand for affordable units, at the same time that market conditions have changed unfavorably for such redevelopment. Statewide, according to state and FEMA data, rents have raised an average of 30% since the storms – and as high as 45% in some locations, including the New Orleans area. This increase reflects both the growth in demand and the rise in costs, as labor and insurance premiums continue to increase and the worsening national economic forecast deters investors.

With the families served by the support of HUD's DHAP subsidies and those who were targeted for FEMA's case management left without resources or alternatives, a dramatic rise in the potential risk of homelessness will occur for these nearly 40,000 households.

As the homeless population has already doubled since the storm, the state cannot risk further growth in this population. Homeless shelters have already reached capacity, particularly in the Greater New Orleans area, and non-profit organizations race to address these needs, while simultaneously struggling to bring long-term solutions to the issue.

In addition, there remain numerous categories of evacuees who have fallen through the post-storm safety net. These households include those in transition from FEMA temporary housing units into permanent solutions who are not eligible for additional federal housing assistance. More specifically, the state will need to meet housing and human needs of those returning from out of state, those in need of support services (childcare, transportation, training) in order to maintain employment, and those in need of physical or mental health support. These categories fall outside of the population identified for support through the FEMA and HUD programs, but these individuals will continue to rely on state and local case management services in the coming years.

Annual Income for Impacted Residents



*Progress for Some, Hope and
Hardships for Many,
Recovery Corps 2008*



Accounting for the unmet needs of Katrina and Rita survivors in Louisiana can be extremely difficult. This, in large part, comes from the fact that FEMA and HUD failed to track or even count those deemed to be ineligible and, when numbers were tracked and reported by federal agencies, they were largely misleading and unreliable.

Whether it is the state of Louisiana, which we know has had difficulties in accessing FEMA information, or non-profits such as the Recovery Corps, FEMA has constantly refused to turn over documents and information in a timely manner. The Recovery Corps has experienced this numerous times, including when the agency was applying for the FEMA-funded DCMP-Katrina program. The Recovery Corps was forced to file a Freedom of Information request before being handed over any FEMA documents. Currently, the Department of Health and Human Services and Administration of Children and Family are executing FEMA's case management pilot for Gustav and Ike and they have to do their own outreach for program clients for the pilot funded by FEMA, as FEMA will not release information pertaining to who it has on its rolls or where they are located.

Contrasting the need purported by FEMA, the DHHS/ACF pilot has spent the past four months preparing to implement the DHHS/ACF case management pilot along with conducting outreach for citizens affected by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike. The goal of the DHHS/ACF pilot is to test a particular model of case management, not to serve disaster victims as a rule. Therefore the pilot has been funded to offer case management services up to 10,000 individuals, or approximately 3,333 households.

Current outreach efforts to date have identified 2,398 households, of which 64% reside in four southeastern Louisiana parishes, namely Baton Rouge (36%), Orleans (10%), Jefferson (8%), and Terrebonne (8%). The demographics of this population consist of 22% elderly, 60% middle-aged adults between 30 and 59 years old, female (76%), African American (74%) who rent (54%) a single family home (53%) or apartment or mobile home (41%). Moreover, 80% of this self-identified population earns less than \$20,000 year. Of the nearly 2,400 households identified, 35% indicate they have a disability.

The unmet needs of this population indicate that 52% need assistance with housing, 39% need food or nutrition assistance, 33% need furniture or appliances and 29% need clothing.

We've Done It Before

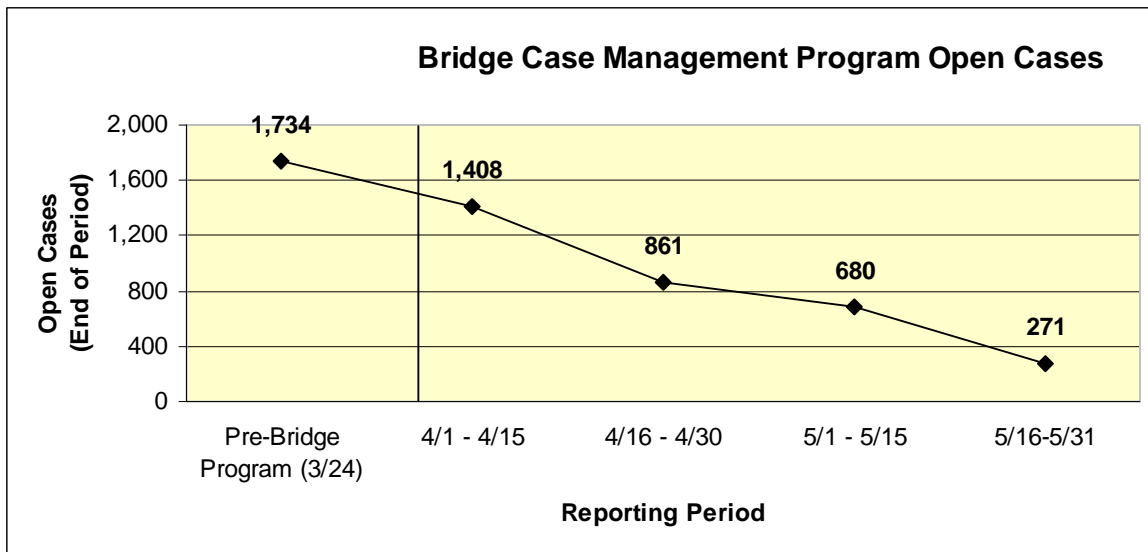
Taking over the loose ends from shuttered federal recovery programs is nothing new for the Recovery Corps. The Recovery Corps was selected by the state of Louisiana to manage the Bridge Case Management Program, also referred to as the Cora Brown Case Management Program. The Recovery Corps worked diligently to ensure a successful implementation of the program, based on guidelines previously established by FEMA. The purpose of the program was to enable former Katrina Aid Today (KAT) case management agencies to continue providing case management services to clients who had not yet had their disaster-related needs met. Six agencies in Louisiana agreed to participate in the program.





The Recovery Corps ensured that a recovery plan was developed for all clients with open cases during the bridge program and that strategies were developed that utilized any available resources to meet clients' remaining needs and bring them to a point of program closure.

The Recovery Corps managed 1,734 cases from March 2008 to May 2008, closing 1,463 successfully by accessing and advocating for resources for client recovery through our six local partner agencies. There were 271 cases that remained open at the end of the program and were reported to FEMA in May 2008.



*Recovery Brief,
 Berkeley Policy Associates,
 2007*

Our Case Management Model

The Recovery Corps treats case management very differently than FEMA and HUD. Our view of case management is not limited to simply supplying housing for clients. Instead, our case management model is one that promotes client self-sufficiency and reciprocal accountabilities.

The Recovery Corps has developed a proprietary case management model called the Recovery Corps Model for Recovery Planning. It is a comprehensive case management model that is superior to many in existence today. The overall philosophy of the model is one of client self-sufficiency. One of the few fully-vetted models assessed by a reputable academic group (Berkeley Policy Associates), the Recovery Corps model is built on that vetted version and now uses lessons learned from previous case management experiences and features a number of unique elements, including an outcome-based approach, *Efforts to Outcomes* software designed to account for specific data, direct assessment and assistance, and specific workforce requirements.



Additionally, the Recovery Corps model also includes real-time benchmarks to ensure accountability by the client and the agency and calls for the alignment of state resources to directly assist the client.

The Recovery Corps model addresses basic needs, but also includes mental health and emotional well-being, household re-establishment and management, and employment.

Our holistic approach:

- Emphasizes developing and supporting household self-sufficiency;
- Considers all aspects of the household's situations;
- Conducts comprehensive needs and strength assessments;
- Combines direct assistance in the form of home repairs and household re-establishment benefits with case management services;
- Develops a meaningful recovery plan to address those needs; and
- Remains mindful of the household's strengths and aligns those with outside resources available to support the recovery process

As noted, our case management model combines traditional human services with direly-needed direct assistance. Direct assistance is critical to the full recovery of the people of Louisiana. Direct services provide a vital and immediate link for those households that need limited support to bridge support gaps. Those gaps include basic needs such as security deposits, utility deposits, and move-in expenses. As the state struggles to meet these additional needs, the risk to households in transition grows.

The households that today simply need direct assistance to pay back utility bills or rent deposits for new housing face the very real potential of becoming homeless if these needs are not met.

The ongoing human service needs that all of the state's storm survivors will face simply cannot be measured. But without doubt, these critical supports cannot be adequately provided to households, in such a way that promotes truly sustainable and independent living, if they are on the street or focusing all of their attention and efforts on maintaining inadequate housing situations for their families. The health and welfare of populations in need of longer term case management (such as people with disabilities, seniors, and children) will surely be jeopardized by the termination of the DHAP program, as well as the failure of the DCMP program to launch.

