GREATER NEW ORLEANS
COMMUNITY DATA CENTER

NEWS RELEASE

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Facts for Features: Hurricane Katrina Impact

NEW ORLEANS – August 14, 2013 – As we approach the 8th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, people around the world will reflect on the immediate and devastating impact that the storm had on New Orleans and the entire Gulf Coast region.

Flooding. When the levees protecting New Orleans failed in August 2005, approximately 80 percent of the city was flooded. The business district and main tourist centers were relatively undamaged, but vast expanses of many New Orleans neighborhoods were inundated, making Katrina the largest residential disaster in U.S. history. The extent of damage varied greatly from one part of town to another. Some areas received one foot of flooding while others were submerged by more than 10 feet of water.

Deaths. Hurricane Katrina and the levee failures resulted in the deaths of at least 986 Louisiana residents. The major causes of death include: drowning (40%), injury and trauma (25%), and heart conditions (11%). Nearly half of all victims were over the age of 74.

Displaced residents. The storm displaced more than a million people in the Gulf Coast region. Many people returned home within days, but up to 600,000 households were still displaced a month later. At their peak, hurricane evacuee shelters housed 273,000 people and, later, FEMA trailers housed at least 114,000 households.

Population decrease. The population of New Orleans fell from 484,674 before Katrina (April 2000) to an estimated 230,172 after Katrina (July 2006) — a decrease of 254,502 people and a loss of over half of the city's population.[1] By July of 2012, the population was back up to 369,250 — 76% of what it was in 2000.

Housing damage. Katrina damaged more than a million housing units in the Gulf Coast region. About half of these damaged units were located in Louisiana. In New Orleans alone, 134,000 housing units — 70% of all occupied units — suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding.

Total damages. The total damages from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita were $150 billion — $135 billion from Katrina and $15 billion from Rita.[2]

Recovery funding. Of the $120.5 billion in federal spending, the majority — approximately $75 billion — went to emergency relief, not rebuilding. Philanthropic giving, while more than double the giving for either the 2004 South Asian Tsunami or 9/11, was only $6.5 billion. Meanwhile, private insurance claims covered less than $30 billion of the losses.

Be sure to cite the **Greater New Orleans Community Data Center:**
your source for the most up–to–date, reliable data.

For further analysis and recommendations see *The New Orleans Index at Eight* and for up–to–date recovery indicators see "Facts for Features: Katrina Recovery" at www.gnocdc.org.

About the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

The Greater New Orleans Community Data Center makes informed decisions possible. For the past 15 years, we have been both a trusted resource and an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region. The Data Center has played a critical role in assessing the strength of the New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana economy since the onset of the Great Recession. The Data Center is also recognized across the country for expertise in New Orleans demographics, disaster recovery indicators, and actionable data visualization.

Notes

1. Not all people that left the city within the year following Katrina were involuntarily displaced, nor were all people who moved to the city returning residents.

2. Damages include all financial losses directly attributable to Katrina (damage to buildings, infrastructure, vehicles, etc., irrespective of whether insured or not). This includes business interruption directly due to building damage, but does not include indirect financial detriments such as loss of earnings by down-stream suppliers, shortfall in GDP, nor non-economic losses. All figures are presented in 2005 dollars.

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