



GulfGov Reports



Study of the Recovery, Role, and Capacity of States and Localities Damaged by the 2005 Hurricanes



Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

State and especially local jurisdictions were hit hard by the Katrina and Rita hurricanes that battered much of the Gulf Coast in August and September of 2005. Recovery from the nation's most costly natural disaster requires Herculean efforts from governments and institutions at every level.

Systematic, independent, and sustained research in the affected areas is the best way to monitor and assess the responses to this disaster. *GulfGov Reports* will explain and evaluate how state and local institutions respond to these hurricanes and provide valuable lessons and insights for dealing with future homeland disasters in the diverse, dynamic context of American federalism.

Our goal is to provide a trusted, high-integrity knowledge base essential for understanding what is being done (or not done) to improve and restore the living conditions of the people affected by these disasters. Over the next three years, *GulfGov Reports* will examine and issue regular reports on the role and activities of governments (federal, state, and local), nonprofit organizations, businesses, and civic leaders.

Study Team

The collaborative *GulfGov Reports* project will be carried out by field researchers at research centers including the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government of the State University of New York, the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, the John C. Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University, and Jackson State University. An advisory committee is chaired by William F. Winter, former Governor of Mississippi. Start-up funding for the project is being provided by the Ford Foundation. The operational base for this research is at the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana in Baton Rouge, LA.

Study Approach

GulfGov Reports will study 34 jurisdictions (state and local governments and school districts) in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The sample includes both areas that experienced the highest levels of hurricane damage and those that were swamped with evacuees. (See attachment.)

Field researchers, working with local experts, will consider what happens to *communities* — their changed demographic and economic conditions — and how effective governments, businesses, and secular and faith-based nonprofit organizations are in meeting community needs. They will blend field and statistical data to interpret what happens in and to the sample jurisdictions and communities and generalize across the region, focusing on such questions as:

- ❖ What is the status of the recovery and clean-up processes?
- ❖ How has the demographic character of the community and region changed?
- ❖ How have the local economy and labor market changed?
- ❖ What has happened to government revenue from property taxes, sales taxes, and other taxes and fees and to the amounts of federal aid and state aid, and how aid has been used?
- ❖ What has been the effect on public borrowing, debt, and bond ratings?
- ❖ What has happened to public employment and critical public services, including police and fire protection, schools, housing, and public health and hospitals?
- ❖ What has been the role of the business community and nonprofit organizations?
- ❖ Has the role of citizen participation changed?
- ❖ Have there been important effects on the structure and operations of government?
- ❖ How have the political tone and professionalism of the sample governments been affected?

- ❖ Findings will put into context — and to bring to life — conditions, developments, and activities that drive home the challenges to be faced and the progress (or lack of progress) that occurs.

Communicating Findings

The most important part of the project will be communicating findings to the public, the media, and to governments. Updates will be widely disseminated to regional and national audiences. The study team will sponsor events, present testimony, and participate in conferences. We will not engage in lobbying or advocacy.

GulfGov Reports will maintain an active, accessible website on which reports will be chronicled and permanently maintained in a user-friendly format. A listserv will be developed to allow prompt receipt of study reports and findings by leaders in government, major organizations, and the media. Hard copies also will be distributed.

- ❖ *1st Report* — The 1st report will present baseline information and analysis before and one year after the Katrina and Rita hurricanes.
- ❖ *Update Reports* — Four semiannual reports will be issued, building on the baseline analysis to describe changes, the extent or lack of progress, and notable developments and events.
- ❖ *Bulletins* — Shorter two- and three-page reports will be used to highlight major findings, developments, events, and challenges.
- ❖ *Special Reports* — Special reports will be released on topics such as low- and moderate-income housing, children's services, schools, health care, economic development, the role of community organizations, local fiscal and borrowing capability, and infrastructure.
- ❖ *Final Report* — The final product will be both a summary report and a book-length treatment of major lessons and findings that will include the implications of this research for the nation on planning for, and responding to, disasters and the roles of the federal, state, and local governments.

Sites

	<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Damage Level</i>	<i>Population (July 1, 2004)</i>	<i>Katrina/Rita</i>
LOUISIANA				
State of Louisiana	State		4,515,770	Katrina/Rita
Cameron Parish	Parish	High	9,681	Rita
East Baton Rouge	City/Parish	Low	412,633	Katrina/Rita
Jefferson Parish	Parish	High	453,590	Katrina/Rita
Kenner (Jefferson Parish)	City	High	70,252	Katrina/Rita
Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish)	City	Middle	70,819	Rita
New Orleans	City/Parish	High	462,269	Katrina/Rita
St. Bernard Parish	Parish	High	65,554	Katrina/Rita
St. Tammany Parish	Parish	Middle	213,553	Katrina
Louisiana School Districts				
Baton Rouge SD	School District			
Cameron Parish SD	School District			
Jefferson Parish SD	School District			
Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish SD)	School District			
New Orleans SD	School District			
St. Bernard Parish SD	School District			
St. Tammany Parish SD	School District			
MISSISSIPPI				
State of Mississippi	State		2,902,966	Katrina
Biloxi (Harrison County)	City	High	50,115	Katrina
Gulfport (Harrison County)	City	High	71,851	Katrina
Hancock County (Waveland and Bay St. Louis)	County	High	45,933	Katrina
Hattiesburg (Forrest County)	City	High	46,442	Katrina
Jackson (Hinds County)	City	Low/None	179,298	Katrina
Laurel (Jones County)	City	High	18,186	Katrina
Pascagoula (Jackson County)	City	High	25,873	Katrina
Mississippi School Districts				
Bay St. Louis-Waveland SD	School District			
Biloxi SD	School District			
Gulfport SD	School District			
Hattiesburg SD	School District			
Jackson SD	School District			
Laurel SD	School District			
Pascagoula SD	School District			
ALABAMA				
Bayou La Batre (Mobile County)	City	High	2,313	Katrina
Gulf Shores (Baldwin County)	City	Middle	5,044	Katrina
Mobile (Mobile County)	City	Middle	198,915	Katrina

Source: Damage level assessments by the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana.