

**Hurricane Relief and Rebuilding Meeting:
A Conversation to Bridge the Gap Between the National and Local Efforts
Meeting Summary
September 26, 2005**

On September 26, INDEPENDENT SECTOR and the Foundation for the Mid South convened leaders of local and national charitable organizations, government officials, and corporate executives to address the short and longer term needs and challenges to rebuilding the Gulf Region after Hurricane Katrina. The meeting was seen as a national conversation – between national agencies, nonprofits, and policy makers with leaders from the Katrina-affected areas – to build on a regional meeting held on September 15 of Mid South nonprofits, community leaders, intermediaries, and funders. This national meeting was intended to develop a common understanding of the issues that are being faced on the ground, to identify areas of unmet need, and to put forth opportunities for action by national nonprofits and advocacy organizations.

Local providers noted that suffering was immense and that, as well as physical relief, there was a need to attend to the psychological fallout from the storm and its aftermath. They emphasized that resources of nonprofits throughout the area were stretched thin and in most cases beyond capacity. They reported having difficulty working with FEMA and that the agency’s response had been inadequate. Relief efforts, they noted, could be strengthened by more effectively coordinating volunteers at the local level.

Attendees called for greater communication among those most involved: local and national charitable groups and state and federal agencies. It was felt by those working in the affected communities that the cross sector communication—dialogue between national and local charitable organizations, as well as, national organizations that have local affiliates was inadequate. These networks should be expanded to facilitate better organization and collaboration.

Better sharing of information would also benefit local residents and communities which would give them more control over the future in the reconstruction efforts. In addressing the relief efforts, it was urged that improved communications would be enhanced by activating the 211 telephone service, which would enable hurricane survivors to learn what assistance is available.

Those working on immediate needs urged funders, both in government and philanthropy, to set aside standard procedures to allow for a more streamlined and flexible process. Local staff has neither the time nor the resources to respond to numerous and complex applications from many different funding sources.

In discussing the rebuilding effort, local and national participants urged an approach that included creating a community that works for everyone; building a region that is better than it was before; and ensuring that all voices are heard in the rebuilding process.

Immediate Policy Priorities

Participants discussed immediate national policy concerns related to health care, cash assistance and housing, while recognizing that there were many other needs that also required attention. Many of Hurricane Katrina's victims have learned they are not able to receive health care because they do not fall into the Medicaid program's narrow eligibility requirements. Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Max Baucus (D-MT) have introduced legislation, S.1716, which would temporarily suspend Medicaid's eligibility categories for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Currently, however, the bill is stalled in Congress. Attendees agreed that support for this bill is vital.

States were initially reluctant to provide cash assistance because it was not clear that FEMA would offer reimbursement. Legislation to provide additional funding has subsequently been signed into law, and the discussion is now focusing on what kind of temporary cash assistance program is needed.

One of the most urgent problems identified by attendees was housing. They pointed out that there have not been sufficient efforts undertaken to identify the thousands of unused apartments that could be made available to those qualifying for Section 8 housing, and that victims have only limited access to trailers and temporary houses. Attendees expressed alarm about the use of trailers, even as a short term solution. Many trailer sites do not lend themselves to the creation of a "community" – access to school systems, public transportation, shopping facilities, health clinics and other. In addition, it was feared that duration of this "temporary" solution was likely to be far longer than currently planned.

Because Congress had begun to talk about "across the board cuts," the group worried that additional federal government funding to aid hurricane survivors would come at the expense of other programs that serve the poor. Attendees were urged to ensure that this did not happen.

Rebuilding

Attendees talked about the importance that the reconstruction effort not be hasty, but should take into consideration the unique character of each community before the hurricane. It is important to build on each community's strengths--, such as diversity, culture, and historic neighborhoods. Moreover it is vital to avoid the mistakes of the past, such as the isolation of poor people from opportunity; and ensuring that rebuilding will benefit all families and all sized businesses. Attendees emphasized that reconstruction efforts must not only center on those communities directly devastated by the hurricane, but also on those in other states that have accepted displaced persons. Resources to help survivors adjust to their new communities and ensure that these communities can meet the needs of their new members must be provided immediately and into the future. Others urged that resources benefit fairly both urban and rural areas.

The meeting included local, state and national government representatives. Each urged those interested in assisting with the rebuilding effort to move forward expeditiously with their efforts as decisions were being made daily regarding the direction that funds should be expended. In Mississippi the Governor has appointed Jim Barksdale, chairman of the Mississippi Commission on Recovery Rebuilding and Renewal, to develop a plan for rebuilding that will be presented to the governor by the end of the year. Mr. Barksdale will host a sharette with approximately 80

Hurricane Relief and Rebuilding Meeting con't

experts from around the country, from civil engineers and architects to sociologists, to consider longer term rebuilding efforts and access to insurance. The commission plans to issue a final report at the end of the year.

Next Steps

Attendees identified several steps that can be taken immediately.

- Participants should support enactment of S.1716, which provides short term expansion of Medicaid eligibility for hurricane survivors;
- Members of the charitable community were encouraged to pool resources, form focused coalitions, and bundle services in a coordinated way;
- Conversations to help determine funding opportunities for organizations in the Mid South and formulate policy platforms are enormously valuable but must happen expeditiously;
- Policy priorities should be identified and shared with the sector immediately so organizations can mobilize; and
- In areas where local policy infrastructure is under developed, universities and other resources should be called upon to jumpstart a local policy agenda.

Presenters during the Meeting:

- Diana Aviv, President and CEO, INDEPENDENT SECTOR;
- Jim Barksdale, Chairman, Mississippi Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal;
- Mark DeCoursey, Sr. Director of Strategic Partnerships, American Red Cross;
- David Eisner, Executive Director, Corporation for National and Community Service;
- Melissa Flournoy, President and CEO, Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations;
- Robert Greenstein, Executive Director, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities;
- Alberto Ibarguen, President, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation;
- Gregory Ben Johnson, President and CEO, Greater New Orleans Community Foundation;
- Josh Kirschenbaum, Senior Associate, PolicyLink;
- Mitchell Landrieu, Lieutenant Governor, Louisiana;
- Amy Liu, Deputy Director and Co-Founder, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution;
- Mark McCrary, Executive Director, Mississippi Center for Nonprofits;
- Marsha Meeks Kelly, Executive Director, Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service;
- Sharon Parrott, Director of Welfare Reform and Income Support Division, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities;
- George Penick, President, Foundation for the Mid South; and
- James Towey, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director, White House Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives.



**Hurricane Katrina Relief and Rebuilding Strategy Meeting
September 26, 2005**

The After School Alliance	Jennifer Rinehart	Associate Director	jrinehart@afterschoolalliance.org
American Red Cross	Mark DeCoursey	Sr. Director, Strategic Partnerships	DeCourseyM@usa.redcross.org
America's Second Harvest	Julie Paradis	Senior Washington Counsel	jparadis@secondharvest.org
The Annie E. Casey Foundation	John Monahan	Senior Fellow	jmonahan@aecf.org
Brookings Institution	Amy Liu	Dep. Dir, Center of Urban & Metropolitan Policy	aliu@brookings.edu
Catholic Charities USA	Stuart Pope	Sr. VP, Programs & Services	spope@catholiccharitiesusa.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	Robert Greenstein	Executive Director	greenstein@cbpp.org
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities	Sharon Parrott	Dir, Welfare Reform & Income Support Policy	parrott@cbpp.org
City Year, Inc.	AnnMaura Connolly	Sr. VP, Pub Policy & Special Initiatives	aconnolly@cityyear.org
Corp for National & Community Svc	David Eisner	CEO	deisner@cns.gov
Corp for National & Community Svc	Mike McKay	Director, Corporate Relations	mmckay@cns.gov
Council on Foundations	Luis Moldonado	Dir, Government Relations & Public Policy	maldl@cof.org
Dept of Ed, Comm. & Faith-Based Init	Richard Boucher	Deputy Dir	Richard.Boucher@ed.gov
Fannie Mae Foundation	Larry Ottinger	Mgr, Policy & Leadership Development	lottinger@fanniemaefoundation.org
Fannie Mae Foundation	Stacey Stewart	President & CEO	sstewart@fanniemaefoundation.org

Attendance from Katrina Relief Meeting con't

Foundation for the Mid South	George Penick	President	gpenick@fndmidsouth.org
Greater New Orleans Foundation	Ben Johnson	President & CEO	benj@gnof.org
Habitat for Humanity International	Tom Jones	VP, Washington Office	tjones@habitat.org
Independent Sector	Diana Aviv	President & CEO	diana@independentsector.org
Independent Sector	Jeanne Ellinport	Special Initiatives Director	jeannee@independentsector.org
Independent Sector	Gloria Kemp Engelke	Asst Dir, Pub Policy Community Outreach	gloria@independentsector.org
Independent Sector	Pat Read	Sr. VP, Pub Policy & Govt. Relations	patr@independentsector.org
Independent Sector	Sarah Tomeo	Legislative & Policy Associate	saraht@independentsector.org
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Ann Pumphrey	Program Associate	apomphr@rwjf.org
John S. & James L. Knight Foundation	Alberto Ibarguen	President & CEO	ibarguen@knightfdn.org
LA Assoc. of Nonprofit Organizations	Melissa Flournoy	President & CEO	melissa@lano.org
LA Commission on Re-birth	Carol Asher	Consultant	carolgasher@hotmail.com
Lutheran Services in America	Jill Schumann	President & CEO	jschumann@lutheranservices.org
McCormick Tribune Foundation	John Sirek	Director, Citizenship Program	jsirek@tribune.com
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	Benita Melton	Program Officer	bmelton@mott.org
MS Center for Nonprofits	Mark McCrary	Executive Director	mark@msnonprofits.org
MS Commission for Volunteer Svc	Marsha Meeks Kelly	Senior Director, Strategic Partnerships	marsha@mcvs.org
MS Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding & Renewal	Jim Barksdale	Chairman	jim@barksdale.ms
Nat'l Coalition/Black Civic Participation	Melanie Campbell	Executive Director & CEO	melaniec@ncbcp.org
Nat'l Coalition/Black Civic Participation	Kevin Parker	Chief Operating Officer	kparker@ncbcp.org

Attendance from Katrina Relief Meeting con't

National Council of La Raza	Lisa Navarrete	VP, Office of Public Information	lnavarrete@nclr.org
National Human Services Assembly	Irv Katz	President & CEO	irv@nassembly.org
National Urban League Suzanne	Bergeron	Legislative Affairs Manager	sbergeron@nul.org
Northeast LA Community Dev Corp	Moses Williams	President & CEO	neladeltacdc@aol.com
NY Disaster Counseling Coalition	Janet Bachant	Board Chair & Interim Executive Dir	nydcc@nydcc.org
NY Disaster Counseling Coalition	Dorothy Kurlander	Dir, Administration & Comm. Affairs	dorothy@nydcc.org
Office of Faith-Based Initiatives	Jim Towey	Director	Catherine_A._Ryun@who.eop.gov
OXFAM America	Ashley Tsongas	Policy Advisor	atsongas@oxfamamerica.org
Policy Link	Josh Kirschenbaum	Senior Associate	jfk@policylink.org
Rockefeller Brothers Fund	Jessica Bailey/Scanlan	Special Asst to the President	jscanlan@rbf.org
Rockefeller Foundation	Susan Ochs	Chief of Staff	sochs@rockfound.org
Ruach, Inc.	Willie Gable, Jr.	CEO	revgable@earthlink.net
Rural Local Initiatives Support Corp	Jeff Mosley	Program Director	jmosley@liscnet.org
Rural Local Initiatives Support Corp	Sandra Rosenblith	Sr. Vice President	srosenblith@liscnet.org
Salvation Army	Larry Bosh	National Chief Secretary	Larry_Bosh@USN.SalvationArmy.org
Seedco	Neil Kleiman	VP, Policy, Research & Communications	nkleiman@seedco.org
Southeastern Council of Foundations	Martin Lehfeltd	President	martin@secf.org
Surdna Foundation	Dara Major	Director, Planning & Strategic Initiatives	dmajor@surdna.org
State of Louisiana	Mitchell Landrieu	Lieutenant Governor	sordoyne@crt.state.la.us
Twenty First Century Foundation	Carlottia Scott	Board Member	cscott1028@cox.net

Attendance from Katrina Relief Meeting con't

United Jewish Communities	Robyn Judelsohn	Director, Planning Networks & Partnerships	robyn.judelsohn@ujc.org
United Way of America	Paul Thornell	Vice President, Public Policy	paul.thornell@uwa.unitedway.org
Urban Strategies	Sandra Moore	President	sandram@mba-mbms.com
USDA - CSREES	Sally Maggard	Econ & Community Syst. Nat'l Program Leader	smaggard@csrees.usda.gov
U.S. House of Representatives	James Koski	Deputy Chief of Staff/Blumenauer	james.koski@mail.house.gov
U.S. House of Representatives	Wendell Primus	Health & Budget Advisor/Pelosi	wendell.primus@mail.house.gov
Verizon Foundation	Heather Cave	Director, Employee Volunteerism	heather.m.cave@verizon.com
YMCA of the USA	Audrey Haynes	Director, Public Policy	audrey.haynes@ymca.net
YMCA of the USA	Mike Mason	Director, Federal Relations	michael.mason@ymca.net