



# **Final Report on the Summer 2006 Survey of Central City**

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# Executive Summary

Increasing violence and slow development during the repopulation of Central City following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has directed public focus towards this historical neighborhood. Recovery Action Learning Laboratory (RALLY) was solicited to expand its pilot needs assessment. The pilot needs assessment was initiated for the Department of Justice's Weed and Seed Project in May and June of 2006. The assessment was extended on behalf of Baptist Community Ministries (BCM) in August of 2006, for the purpose of increasing the sample size of the household survey and developing a more sophisticated understanding of the area known as the Hoffman Triangle.

An equal probability cluster survey was implemented for this study. Central City was divided into 131 clusters of approximately equal size, and 33 clusters were randomly selected. Within selected clusters, every inhabited household was included. The sampling scheme, along with adjustments for survey non-response, allows the findings from this survey to be generalized to *the overall population of returned households in Central City*.

A population estimate of 9,582 people was calculated using the number of residences in Central City from the 2000 Census, the occupancy rate within clusters (stratified by response group and flood depth), and the average household size (stratified by response group). A total of 218 household surveys were conducted. Among the respondents surveyed, 84.9% were African American, 8.7% were Caucasian and 2.8% were Hispanic. Almost half of the households reported having a pre-Katrina monthly income of less than \$2,000, and a third of the responding households reported having a decline in income following the hurricanes. With 17% of the households reporting to have no one employed within their household, jobs and job training were seen as one priority for rebuilding by the responding households.

The repopulation of Central City has, for the most part, been by homeowners, and it appears that many tenants have not yet returned to the neighborhood. Pre-Katrina, over 80% of Central City residents were renters. Currently, only 58.4% of the households surveyed are tenants. Many of the tenants in Central City reported being ill-equipped for another hurricane. Nearly eighty percent (79.4%) of tenants reported that they did not have renters insurance and 82.6% stated that they did not have flood insurance.

Health and healthcare services are a great concern for many households in Central City. Over 50% of households surveyed, reported a disruption in health care resulting from Hurricane Katrina, and a quarter (25.4%) of the households indicated they no longer have health insurance following the hurricane. Over forty-percent of responding households indicate that their household has had difficulty accessing assistance programs and 36.1% report that opportunities for social support is a great problem since returning to New Orleans. This lack of services and insurance has resulted in an increase in the vulnerability of households surveyed in Central City, from which, 43.5% reported having at least one member that has a chronic illness or disability. Physical disabilities were most frequently cited as the type of illness or disability within the household, at 65.7%.

Another, possible vulnerable group within Central City are female-headed households. At least fifteen percent (14.7%) of the households surveyed can be classified as female-headed households. Half of these female-headed households reported a decrease in income following Katrina and 41.7% of these households stated a loss of health insurance post-Katrina. More than half of the households (58.3%) also reported having a disruption in their health care and over forty percent (41.7%) indicated problems fulfilling regular eating habits.

Central City has embraced many new residents following Hurricane Katrina. Over twenty-five percent of the households surveyed are new to the neighborhood. Of the new households, none appear to be homeowners. However, in some important respects, new households seemed to fair better than those households that lived in Central City prior to the storm. New households reported an increase in income post-Katrina and indicated they are less likely to be deficient in common household amenities. Long-time residents--defined as those households who lived in Central City prior to the storm--reported having more issues with health and health care as compared to the new households. Close to half (47.9%) of longtime households reported having a chronic illness or disability, whereas, only one third (34.0%) of new households reported having an ill or disabled member in their household. Almost thirty percent (29.1%) of longtime households reported lacking prescription drugs or medicines that they need, while only 17.3% of the new households reported this being a problem.

Many households expressed anxiety about the increase in crime in Central City, and overall, people are feeling less safe. Prior to Katrina, 83.1% of the responding households expressed feeling safe in their neighborhood out alone during the day and 68.5% felt safe alone at night. Following Katrina, only 60.7% felt safe during the day and mere 34.8% felt safe out alone in Central City during the night. Responding households indicated that crime prevention is a high priority for them when it comes to rebuilding their neighborhood. More than 66% of female-headed households reported that safety is a problem in Central City after Katrina, compared to 30.8% of male-only households and 59.6% of mixed-sex households. When respondents addressed the question of how to deal with the crime, the top responses were, educating the youth (88.5%), improving police techniques (87.2%), and increasing police presence (86.2%). Overwhelmingly (86.9%), responding households felt that a Safe Haven should be established in Central City.

The Hoffman Triangle was of special interest to many of the partners dedicated to rebuilding Central City. The demographic breakdown of this area differs slightly from the rest of Central City. Forty-one percent of the responding households in the Triangle are homeowners, as compared to 32.4% of households outside of the Triangle that own homes. Only 24.1% are considered primary tenants in the Triangle, whereas 49.7% of households outside of the Triangle are primary tenants. In Hoffman Triangle, a mere 16.7% of the responding households claimed to have an increase in income post-Katrina in contrast to outside of the Triangle, where more than a quarter of the households reported an increase.

Almost two-thirds (65.5%) of the responding households in the Triangle reported a disruption in health care and 51.7% reported losing a job. Outside the Triangle, 52.7% of households reported disruption in health care and 40.5% of the households complained of a job loss.

The main limitation to this study was the high non-response rate, constituted by both household refusals and unavailability to be surveyed. RALLY took several steps to minimize this non-response, including visiting the non-response residences multiple times and giving incentive cards for the completion of a survey. Despite these measures, only 26.4% of the sampled households responded to the survey. However, investigations into the non-responding households were carried out in order to facilitate proper weighing for analysis.