

BUILDING A BETTER NEW ORLEANS: HOPE NEEDS HELP; NEW REPORT SHOWS

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BUILDING A BETTER NEW ORLEANS: HOPE NEEDS HELP

New report shows that, despite some successes, Katrina's most vulnerable victims still need help

Two years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans is coming back - but not for everyone.

Though nonprofits and community groups have helped some poor and vulnerable residents succeed, many of the city's entrenched racial and economic inequalities are coming back in full force, according to a new report by PolicyLink, a national public policy organization.

The report, "**Building a Better New Orleans: Hope Needs Help**," highlights the tremendous strides made by some of the city's most vulnerable people and showcases the folks who helped make that progress possible. But the report also calls on the federal government, the private sector, and the public to do more to get New Orleans the help it needs to create a truly vibrant and equitable city.

"The people of New Orleans have spent two years doing all they can to reclaim their city," said Angela Glover Blackwell, founder and CEO of PolicyLink. "But the scale of the disaster is so immense that a true recovery is not possible without the resources, expertise, and leadership of the federal government."

In the vital arenas of housing, jobs, and schools, there are some visible signs of recovery:

- The city's population has returned to nearly two-thirds of its pre-Katrina size. The city's labor force has reached 78 percent of pre-storm size.
- More than 60,000 residential building permits have been issued.
- Twenty-five new public charter schools have opened in New Orleans, and an additional 11 are expected to open this fall.

But the recovery has not reached everyone.

- Little has been done to assist low-income renters. Government subsidies will only help rebuild about 25 percent of the city's stock of affordable rental housing.
- African-American evacuees were nearly five times more likely to be unemployed than white evacuees in 2006.
- Only 40 percent of students have returned to New Orleans public schools, with 76 percent of those students in free or reduced-cost lunch programs.
- More than 40,000 New Orleans families remain displaced outside of Louisiana.

New Orleanians need safe, affordable homes to live in, good schools to educate their children, and well-paying jobs to support their families. The city is teeming with hope and inspiration. But hope needs help.



[PolicyLink in the News](#)

"Fred Blackwell Speaks On Blacks Being Left Out of Urban Development," The Loop 21

"HUD Awards Grant to Oakland to Create Better Community," San Francisco Chronicle

"Innovative Policies Are Essential to Save Men Who Are at Risk," The Sacramento Bee

"On Jobs and Safety Net, Lawmakers Must Focus on Hard-Hit Minorities," CNN.com

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The full report is available at www.policylink.org/HopeNeedsHelp

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PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works. For nearly two years, PolicyLink has worked with national, state, and local partners to apply equitable development principles to the Louisiana rebuilding process.

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