SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS & STRATEGIC PLAN

The Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill:
Response, Resilience, & Recovery

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I. INTRODUCTION

In a “normal” disaster, defined as one falling under the purview of the National Response Framework (NRF), the relationship between non-profit agencies and local, state, and federal government is coordinated through the structures, roles and responsibilities stipulated in the NRF, which is the nation’s ‘all-hazards’ strategic and operational plan. Within the NRF, there is an official and very substantial role for non-profit organizations that are part of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) consortium\(^1\). The NVOAD consortium of non-profits brings together a wide variety of secular and faith-based non-profit organizations that respond to disasters and provide many forms of support for government operations. Under the NRF, these non-profits are integrated into local, state, and federal Emergency Operations Centers under the Incident Command System (ICS), have access to the latest information, and can be easily tapped when their services are needed. Thus, they work in concert with government partners. Here is a list of the NRF responsibilities of non-profit organizations in response to disasters:

- Mass care (sheltering, feeding, emergency first aid);
- Short- and long-term housing;
- Human services: counseling, processing benefits, identifying support for persons with special needs;
- Disaster case management services: a Stafford Act mandate;
- Volunteer and Donations Management.

While the relationships between the governmental and non-governmental sectors are not without tension, there is a clear sense amongst them that theirs is a partnership. There is a yin and yang nature to the relationship between these entities and the services that each make available to the public. Government funding for disaster relief and recovery purposes stipulates a set of accountability measures that are translated into complex and often prohibitive eligibility criteria that determine who can and cannot access assistance. While these eligibility criteria are intended to be non-discriminatory in theory, they often exclude the most vulnerable sectors of society from receiving assistance in practice. This is where non-profit organizations step in and tailor their programs to meet the needs of those that are marginalized, poor, vulnerable, and in one way or another excluded from receiving assistance through public programs. Thus, the partnership between government and the non-profit sector is vital to any well-rounded response and recovery effort. When gaps are found in government programs, non-profit organizations attempt to plug the holes.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Member organizations include: American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Church World Service, Habitat for Humanity International, Hands on Disaster Response, Mennonite Disaster Service, National Baptist Convention, Presbyterian Disaster Response, Society of St. Vincent DePaul, The Salvation Army, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Committee On Relief, United Way of America, World Vision. This is not a complete list.

\(^2\) For example: The Individual and Household Program (IHP) is FEMA’s main disaster assistance program. It provides Housing Assistance (home repair, home replacement, rental assistance, and direct housing), and Other Needs Assistance (household items, appliances, transportation, direct disaster-related medical and dental expenses, moving and storage costs, funeral expenses, etc.) with a cap of $26,500 per affected household. An extremely important program outside the scope of the IHP, but absolutely essential to
In the case of the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill, the NRF is not the dominant instrument for coordination. While the National Response Framework contains Emergency Support Function (ESF #10) for Oil and Hazardous Materials Response, the response to oil and hazardous materials incidents is carried out in accordance with the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan, 40 CFR Part 300 (commonly called the National Contingency Plan or NCP). The NCP does not function according to the same rules and authority structures as the natural and man-made disasters that fall under the National Response Framework. In fact, in the case of the NCP, local governments (which are the main emergency response actors under the NRF) have very minimal response roles and authority and non-profit organizations are accorded no role whatsoever.

Thus, non-profits have had no access to federal, state, or local government officials or private sector representatives working in Unified Command, Incident Command, or the various forward operating bases during this disaster. While their own networks certainly provide them some level of access to local officials – not being integrated into the operational structure and having no official role in the response places them at a disadvantage as they have organized their own relief efforts in a vacuum. They do not receive situational assessments and updates that are afforded partners to the response process and cannot easily update government partners on their own activities. They must act outside the official oil spill response process. This lack of access and integration has already gravely impacted the ability of non-profit organizations to assist in local response efforts, to access information, and to negotiate for desperately needed funds that will allow them to continue providing even minimal support to local populations.

The National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan is primarily focused on the safe removal of the hazardous substances in question and any ill effects to the health or welfare of the public or the environment. It does not address human and societal impacts such as loss of livelihood and the collapse of local industries / economies and the problems this generates, such as family violence, substance abuse, pathology and mental health issues, among others. These impacts are treated as collateral or ancillary damage with no designated authority in place to deal with them.

This Strategic Plan intends to identify the manner in which the exclusion of non-profit organizations from the NCP is allowing gaps in current programs intended to remediate the Deepwater Horizon disaster to persist. The goal is not to point out failures, but rather to propose solutions, bridge this divide, and bring government and non-profits together as natural allies on the front lines of community service provision.

understanding who is eligible for IHP assistance, is the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). This program is based on FEMA’s flood plain maps and requires those individuals living on a flood plain in the U.S. to take out a NFIP policy and make annual flood insurance payments. Anyone who does not comply with this requirement and lives on a known flood plain is not eligible for the disaster assistance provided under the FEMA IHP program. NFIP payments can be considerable and payments must be made annually in one lump sum, with no option to spread these payments out across all 12 months of the year. The crux of the problem surrounding the National Flood Insurance Program for low-income Americans is this sizeable one-time payment that many cannot afford. FEMA statistics on Katrina, Rita, and Wilma show that 62,849 damaged homes were located on a known floodplain and were without NFIP insurance. Amongst this group of individuals, one finds the working poor and many who lived below the poverty line. Non-profit organizations targeted this vulnerable group for their assistance programs, thus catching many people who would have otherwise slipped through the cracks that government eligibility criteria create.
In terms of the toll the Gulf Oil Spill is having on impacted communities, local non-profits already see that they are in for a long, exhausting, organizationally demanding process of identifying human and environmental impacts and rapidly and effectively responding to a set of ever-changing needs. Successful non-profit recovery activities are likely to be long-term, continuing for many years. Non-profits have the flexibility and agility to shift focus quickly in ways that monolithic government programs – burdened by bureaucratic processes – do not.

In Southeast and Southwest Louisiana, response and recovery operations and programs since Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma have been designed and implemented by both non-profit organizations and government entities. The non-profit sector experienced devastating funding shortfalls about 2.5 years into the post-Katrina disaster recovery process, which severely curtailed the ability of non-profit organizations to maintain desperately needed programming during the long-term recovery period. Important lessons have resulted from these recent shortcomings and the non-profit sector must now take steps to prevent the same pattern from re-emerging as they begin to design response and recovery programs for the Gulf Oil Spill disaster. There is considerable suspicion amongst Southern Louisiana’s seasoned non-profit and philanthropic sector disaster recovery veterans that a lack of political will to support non-profit efforts this time around will once again result in a lack of access to key actors and a lack of funds for the hard work that needs to be done. Non-profit disaster recovery operations have long been an unfunded mandate under the NRF and its predecessors and thus far into the Deepwater Horizon response, access to funding for non-profit programming has been extremely hard to come by and has been paltry at best. Public perception that BP is footing the bill for the remediation of all impacts has led to very few donations to oil spill relief funds and non-profit fundraising efforts have to large extent fallen on deaf ears.

This Strategic Plan maps a clear path from the present situation to where we need to be. It is a framework for articulating the purpose and role of the non-profit sector, as well as the outcomes these activities must achieve. The weaknesses and areas of risk that are analyzed in this document are addressed by specific strategies that, if adopted, could help the U.S. government, the region, and its people overcome those risks.
II. SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: THE OIL SPILL DISASTER IN PLAQUEMINES PARISH

With the BP Oil Spill, Southeast Louisiana faces another devastating traumatic event for local communities less than five years after Hurricane Katrina. Never in U.S. history has an area experienced such devastation as Katrina brought and then been hit by another exacerbating traumatic event in such short order. Within the communities that supported themselves through commercial fishing, recreational fishing, tourism, seafood packing, sales, gastronomy and other related work, there is a growing fear about livelihoods, subsistence, and the loss of a way of life. Due to Katrina, many people in seafood-related industries accumulated massive debt during their hurricane recovery period, as they took out loans to buy new boats, nets, equipment, and other business-related items, as well as to rebuild homes or finance replacement housing.

There are parallels between the Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon disaster response efforts developing now that portend troubles to come if aggressive action to counter these trends is not undertaken. As disaster response operations began to scale down in Southeast Louisiana post-Katrina and the transition to recovery began in earnest, it became clear that federal and state governmental resources would fall short of providing a safety net for citizens in devastated areas. Local governments had been decimated and their capacities to assist with recovery planning were minimal to none. In the face of this vacuum, non-profit organizations stepped up to the plate quickly to fill service gaps using volunteers, donations, and financial assistance sent from all across the nation.

As Gulf Oil Spill response operations ramp down, we are once again witnessing serious shortcomings in the outreach and assistance programs that were instituted by BP and federal and state governments. Transitions from response to recovery are always slow and when responsibilities are transferred from one organization to another (such as the claim process moving from BP to the Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF)), learning curves present unwanted hurdles to success. It is in this context that non-profits can fill service gaps and make transitions less painful within local communities.

Some non-profit organizations are already responding to the unmet needs the oil spill has generated in their communities, but the vast majority do not know what to do or how to respond, because they have been sidelined by a National Contingency Plan that designates no responsibilities or roles for the non-profit sector in either response or recovery. While there is a whole new group of environmentally-oriented non-profits and grassroots organizations that are seeking to gain a foothold in the local landscape, most of these are just beginning to forge plans that will help shape their longer-term efforts. Other non-profit organizations are throwing the wrong resources at problems they do not fully understand and are thus having little impact.

Of greatest concern is the fact that the non-profit organizations that have been serving vulnerable populations in the area of impact for years now, those who understand the local population and its needs, are exhausted spiritually, operationally, and financially from the

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3 Catholic Charities – Archdiocese of New Orleans, Plaquemines Community Care Center, United Way of the Greater New Orleans Area, etc.
recovery work they have done since Katrina. Their human resources (energy, drive, and intention) are depleted. In addition, the administrative and operational coffers of local non-profit organizations serving the Louisiana and Mississippi Gulf Coasts have suffered enormously since the recession began and since Katrina, Rita, and Wilma recovery funding has dried up. These organizations have been reducing their workforces, programs and services for a number of years as a result.

This strategic plan hopes to provide some direction for non-profits looking to advocate and act on behalf of spill-impacted communities. The non-profits that want to be part of the recovery process must find solutions to real problems plaguing vulnerable residents in Gulf Coast communities.

CURRENT GAPS IN SERVICE

BP Claim Process

The BP Claim Process provided no services for illiterate claimants attempting to file paperwork and receive claim payments. As a result, many of these individuals have not received the claim amounts they would have otherwise been eligible to receive. Other problems with this process (speed, pithy monthly payments) have been noted by government, media, and local claimants. Many local fishermen cannot prove their income came from a small business, or documented only a small part of that income, meaning that they fear that remuneration for their losses will represent only a tiny portion of what were their actual earnings. It is hard to believe that in the United States, such a huge number of these individuals are functionally illiterate, but it is a fact. Illiteracy and not a careless disregard for the rules that other taxpayers follow prevented many of these individuals from filing tax returns and from proper profit and loss documentation for their small businesses. Amongst coastal Louisiana commercial fishermen, generations have left school as early as the third grade and very few earn a high school degree. The fishermen are well aware of the limitations this situation presents and worry about their ability to find work in other industries to help support their families. Their lack of a basic education presents a real barrier to success in other fields, as well as to success in procuring accurate compensation for their claims.

BP Vessel of Opportunity (VOO) Program

The BP Vessel of Opportunity (VOO) Program succumbed to a similar fate. Plagued with inefficiencies and delays, it started with the only eligibility criteria being boat ownership or experience as a deckhand. This resulted in large numbers of non-impacted, out-of-state VOO contractors being hired into the program. Local fishermen and elected officials from the Gulf Coast raised loud objections and program changes were slowly instituted. The Plaquemines Parish government instituted their own parallel VOO program through the oil spill contractor (DRC) they also hired to conduct clean-up operations. Yet, even with two programs, the numbers of those that were impacted and thus eligible to participate did not come close to matching up with the number of unemployed fishermen. Rotations were instituted to begin to address this problem, but this effort began right before VOO operations began to be scaled back and had a negligible impact on the ability of this program to spread the “opportunity” it promised equitably amongst those most in need. Functionally illiterate applicants had the same problem with this
program as with the BP Claim Process and were not properly enrolled in the program by contractors filling out and processing their paperwork, which prevented many from participating. Here again, illiteracy represents a major barrier to accessing the relief the program was intended to provide.

**Feinberg / GCCF Claim Process**

The Gulf Coast Claims Facility (GCCF) has taken over for the BP claim program. The GCCF program is being criticized from all corners as unresponsive to local, state, and federal government oversight and inquiries, as well as to the realities of the claimants they are supposed to serve. A primary example of early failures of this independent entity was the announcement that VOO payments would be subtracted from final claim awards. In recent weeks, this stipulation was revoked, which signaled a major victory for struggling local fishermen. The GCCF process is also repeating the failures of the BP Claim Process. It requires all new paperwork be filed for each claimant and also provides no assistance for illiterate claimants.

The Coordinator for the State of Louisiana’s Technical Assistance Network confirmed on October 8, 2010 that none of the 12 organizations contracted through the State Office of Community Development to help with the claims process has been specifically tasked with outreach and assistance with paperwork for illiterate claimants and there is a service gap when it comes to this group. Literacy Alliance, one of the state technical assistance contractors is re-writing the claims document instructions in simple language that is directed at those individuals that read at low levels. But for those who do not read at all, there are no services available.

A staggering number of the residents that are functionally illiterate and have low educational attainment are fishermen or individuals working in seafood-related industries. They now face serious paperwork hurdles if they want to file claims through the Feinberg $20 billion escrow account. BP also required a good deal of paperwork from those filing claims within their system or registering to take part in the Vessels of Opportunity program. Conversations with illiterate fishermen got to the heart of the issue. When asked if they had filed BP claims, almost all said yes. When asked if they think the paperwork was filled out correctly, many showed signs of extreme distress and talked about being moved through the process too quickly to understand it, and having no idea if their paperwork was complete and accurate.

**Commercial Fishermen and the Gulf Seafood Market**

Although the shrimp season has re-opened in certain areas off the coast of Louisiana, there has been a pervasive sentiment both locally and throughout the country that seafood from the Gulf is tainted. Fishing industry officials are worried about the consumer confidence that underlies a whole network of commercial and charter fishermen, seafood packers, processing plants, distributors, ice dealers, boat and fishing equipment vendors / maintenance specialists, etc. Shrimp and fish that local fishermen have caught have been hard to sell, with buyers scarce and prices very low. At the moment, no one knows whether there will be a market for Gulf seafood this year or next. In the face of this situation, those that have not yet worked for the VOO program and have not received much in terms of claim payments were looking to the shrimp season to get back on their feet and support their families through earnings from fishing. Thus, the fishermen, buyers and distributors, packers, and many more are now extremely

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4 Vietnamese fishermen have been provided legislatively-stipulated assistance. Unfortunately, literacy problems extend far beyond this community.
agitated about continued impacts on their livelihood. At the same time, many of local residents and local fishermen are themselves extremely worried about the toxicity of both Corexit and oil and their impacts upon the seafood that is the basis of their livelihood.

**Uncertainty and Lack of Trust in Official Pronouncements by Government and BP**

The most recent worry for those that are returning to commercial fishing is the unseen oil and dispersants in their waters, air, and food and the potential for a tainted catch that would end the shrimping season. There are also very real fears about the health and welfare of the fishermen who worked in the VOO program and were not given respirators for use and were exposed to toxic substances. Local residents also fear that the spraying of Corexit and tainted seafood could cause severe health impacts in the coming months and years. Early health effects have already been reported and these stories spread quickly and rampanty in fishing villages.

The U.S. government and BP have launched aggressive campaigns to combat misinformation and are providing the factual information they have available to a concerned public. Yet, these initiatives are widely perceived as unreliable propaganda campaigns on the Gulf Coast and the attempt to get “the message out” is cynically received as the spin of the day. Facts have changed often in this disaster and the media has had a hand in casting shifting stories as deceptions (think oil flow numbers). Beyond that, there were many early blunders with the local population, from trying to exclude local government partners from response operations to Tony Hayward-style disclaimers that environmental damage was likely to be negligible.

Common sense and local knowledge of “normal” conditions vs. what is currently being observed by local residents have conflicted with many of the early stories presented as facts and continue to present discrepancies in the view of the locally-impacted population. Government officials have experienced great frustrations while trying to communicate with Gulf Coast residents, but are often unaware of the reasons for the degree of local mistrust in official messaging.

The manner in which BP and the Federal government are setting up Town Hall Meetings all along the Gulf Coast hits a sensitive nerve on the Louisiana Gulf Coast as promises are made that BP is going to make people whole again, is going to be there for the long haul and clean up their mess, and will pay all legitimate claims. Representatives of government agencies appear at the same venues and share the truth as they know it, back that up with the science they have at the moment, try to bring more transparency to BP’s operations and calm jittery local communities and the American public. Unfortunately these reassurances hearken back to an unfulfilled promise made by President George W. Bush after Hurricane Katrina on September 15, 2005:

“To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: Throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes. We will stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives.”

For anyone reading this that is unaware of how the reality of long-term recovery from Katrina has unfolded over the last five years, suffice it to say this promise has not been fulfilled. The people left on the Gulf Coast doing ‘what it takes’ are its own residents and the rebuilding of
communities and lives is far from complete. As a result, these communities have developed a fierce sense of self-reliance and a do-it-yourself mentality. This spirit of self-reliance was born of the Katrina disaster and five years of broken promises and farcical government programs (both state and federal) that have been tragically ineffective since Katrina, Wilma, and Rita wreaked havoc on Southeast and Southwest Louisiana coastlines.

Further, the parishes in this region are home to proud, insular peoples who have long had an inherent mistrust of people who are not part of the local population, and this mistrust has been made infinitely worse by their experiences with outsiders post-disaster (both due to recent hurricanes and the oil spill). When someone comes into these communities and suggests their interpretation of recent events is the ‘truth’ or enthusiastically trumpets the wonders of coming recovery plans, they are sure to be met with icy glares, loud contempt, and well-warranted suspicion. In the case of the oil spill disaster, disparate groups have presented differing interpretations of the current reality and there has been little consensus on a grand narrative.

1. **BP** – is interested in portraying successful response and clean-up efforts, getting local populations back to work, keeping clean-up costs down, pulling out and ending the disaster status. As a corporation, they are emotionally invested in saving their brand and rescuing its reputation.

2. **Federal Government and Obama Administration** – is interested in portraying successful response and clean-up efforts, getting local populations back to work, and ending the disaster status. Having seen the legacy of Katrina for the Bush Administration, they are emotionally invested in oil spill not becoming another Katrina, managing clean-up efforts and the media message, and in projecting government effectiveness in this disaster. Upcoming national, state, and local elections are a factor in their response.

3. **State Governments** – are interested in highlighting failed response and clean-up efforts that are ruining state land and waters. They want to see an end to the disaster status, but also want long-term focus and funding to deal with devastating impacts, want to get local populations back to work and local economies functioning. They have emotional ties to the areas of impact and some state elections are a factor.

4. **Local Governments** – are interested in highlighting failed response and clean-up efforts that are ruining local land, livelihoods, revenue streams, natural resources, environments, and waters (high sense of urgency and ownership). They absolutely do not want the disaster status to end and want a long-term focus on devastating local impacts. They want to get local populations back to work and local economies functioning – with the caveat that they do not want to act prematurely and are fearful of a backlash and total collapse of fragile local industries if seafood is found to be unsafe. They have huge emotional ties to areas of impact and local elections are a huge factor in how responses are being handled.

5. **Local Fishermen and Impacted Residents** - are interested in highlighting failed response and clean-up efforts that are ruining local land, livelihoods, and waters (high sense of urgency and ownership). They do not want the disaster status to end and want a long-term focus on devastating local impacts, while at the same time wanting badly to get back to work. They harbor deep fears about the safety of their product and their personal health and welfare. These individuals have huge emotional ties to the areas of impact.

6. **Seafood Industry Business Owners** - dock owners, distributors, etc. – are interested in portraying successful response and clean-up efforts and in the survival / profitability of
their businesses. They want to get local populations back to work and end the disaster status. They have very emotional ties to areas of impact, but as capitalism predicts, their self-interest is directly tied to their profit margins.

7. **American Public** – is interested in reliable information about response and clean-up efforts that protect their health and safety and tell them whether Gulf Coast seafood and vacation areas are safe. They have no emotional ties to areas of impact.

In reference to all these groupings, it is essential to understand that perception is reality. The unfortunate fact is that each of these groups has a different perception about the success or failure of oil spill clean-up efforts and the overall impact of the Deepwater Horizon disaster on the American Gulf Coast. Consensus seems a long way off at the moment, but the main point is that these differing perceptions result in conflict and mistrust amongst these groups which in turn dismantle a sense of community and local social cohesion.

After a hurricane, people in impacted areas come together with enormous compassion and shared grief and throw their weight behind rebuilding a sense of community by supporting each other. The result is a collective sense of unity and a “one for all and all for one” mentality. Researchers refer to this coming together to re-establish community ties as the generation of social capital. While there may be a lack of material resources, there are incredible resources generated by generosity of spirit, as local people comfort and assist each other through common hardships.

The impact of oil spills on other communities has demonstrated that these disasters have the opposite effect, and the unraveling of community in impacted areas is already being witnessed. Conflict is erupting between the different interest groups. In a man-made disaster, parties to response efforts and impacted communities seek a perpetrator who has acted irresponsibly, as the label “Responsible Party” suggests. Over time the tendency to place blame on external entities turns inward and community members begin to point fingers at one another. An example of this locally are the commonplace accusations by fishermen that the VOO program has failed to hire enough local fishermen, due not to inefficiencies on the part of BP and the DRC, but instead due to the cronyism of parish officials. Another example that has become very shrill of late are the heated arguments between those who believe that government testing of seafood is neither sufficient nor trustworthy and those who see any suggestion of this sort as an attack on the viability and quick resurgence of the local seafood industry and who fear its imminent collapse if such fears continue to be voiced. These arguments have become extremely volatile locally and are occurring between dock owners that buy the catch of local fishermen and sell it to packing factories and distributors, and local commercial fishermen and representatives of commercial fishing associations. The contentious nature of this debate has led to a rupture between these parties, who once were friends and now are filing suits for damages against one another and threatening one another with physical violence. Across the Louisiana Gulf Coast, community members are turning on each other and a there is now a level of conflict that is tearing the social fabric of these communities apart. Social impact analyses of the Exxon Valdez oil spill suggest that this experience is eerily similar to what happened in Alaskan communities in the wake of their oil spill disaster. So now mistrust is beginning to extend throughout the local community pitting neighbor against neighbor.
“These emotional impacts are incredibly severe, serious, persistent, and take a toll on individuals, families and communities. Communities lose their social capital. By that I mean sense of trust in others, including family members, people’s sense of agency to participate in the community, and the notion of self-empowerment, that you are in control of what is going on. And this loss of social capital results in a lot of self isolation, anger, hostility, clinical depression, symptoms of PTSD and the ultimate social pathology, suicide.” Dr. Steven Picou, Transcript from the June 14, 2010 Alaska VOAD Tele-Symposium

**Oil-Spill-Impacted Households Unrecovered from Katrina**

The level of trauma that members of Southeast Louisiana’s coastal communities are experiencing due to the impact of the Gulf Oil Spill is worrisome in many respects. First, it is true that five years post-Katrina, many members of our community are still in various stages of recovery from that disaster. Some have yet to rebuild or cannot finance a permanent dwelling, others have done so completely or partially. Beyond that, there were 118 households in Plaquemines Parish still living in FEMA trailers at the end of July 2010. Many of these households contain fishermen now out of work that have been notified that FEMA will be retrieving these trailer units. They stand on the precipice of homelessness. Within the communities that supported themselves through commercial fishing, recreational fishing, tourism, seafood packing, sales, gastronomy and other related work, there is a growing fear about livelihoods, subsistence, and the loss of a way of life. Due to Katrina, many people in seafood-related industries accumulated massive debt during their hurricane recovery period, as they took out loans to rebuild their homes, buy new boats, nets, equipment, and other business-related items. Many are now reneging on mortgage payments and boat notes. Other individuals unemployed as a result of the oil spill are having real trouble feeding their families as they wait for the possibility of participating in the VOO program or a claim check. In response to those in need of help in this situation, there are none of the disaster assistance programs that are put in place if a Stafford Act Declaration is made. That means that there are:

- No disaster food stamps,
- No disaster unemployment benefits,
- No disaster mental health services,
- No disaster case management services, and
- No FEMA individual assistance program.

Commercial fishermen, seafood packers, boat mechanics, and many other members of the region’s most vulnerable populations were not back on stable footing post-Katrina and many who were just starting to see a light at the end of the recovery tunnel have once again lost their footing. In the worst case, there are households that were not even on the road to recovery yet. Either way you look at it, this new disaster has dealt a staggering blow to the financial, spiritual and emotional well-being of many local residents.

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5 According to Unity for the Homeless, 16,000 Orleans Parish residents are living in abandoned, hurricane-damaged properties with no hope of recovery. While hard numbers are impossible to come by for all the parishes, local non-profits involved in rebuilding efforts throughout Southeast Louisiana report that a large number of extremely poor, elderly, disabled, mentally ill, disenfranchised, or educationally-challenged individuals and families have yet to access real assistance and have fallen through the cracks in a bureaucratic machinery that has refused to accurately count the dispossessed.
Mental Health Impacts and Superficial Responses

Pain, grief, and fear about the nature of an uncertain future are very evident within impacted populations and will function as a major barrier to recovery and resilience if they go unaddressed. The trauma in these communities is complex and cumulative, due to the two catastrophic disasters that occurred in such a short period of time. Many people now doubly impacted have lingering mental health impacts from Katrina, such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety. These conditions have been exacerbated by the uncertainty and stress surrounding the oil spill and the region faces an unprecedented and frightening mental health crisis.

There has been much said about the need for a mental health care response in recent months, but there has been little commentary about what form it should take, what is effective in this context, and recent lessons from Hurricane Katrina. BP responded to calls for assistance and granted $52 million to address this issue along the Gulf Coast, with $15 million going to the State of Louisiana.6 The state has decided to spend the entire amount within six months time and to regenerate state-sponsored mental health programs used with Katrina victims (Louisiana Spirit), and to provide crisis care and short-term mental health interventions to Gulf Coast residents in need. Responses of this sort are not the solution to deeper-seated mental health problems present within the community. The type of superficial mental health services they have to offer (deep breathing and relaxation techniques, yoga, stress management advice, a one-time conversation face-toface or telephone conversation with a volunteer, social worker, crisis counselor, etc.) and non-specialized counseling services (no PTSD or trauma certifications, no specialty therapies, no in-depth, long-term care programs or treatment opportunities with a therapist that accompanies the client through a longer-term healing process) are not the answer to the most serious mental health problems now facing this area.

Instead, it is necessary to extend the array of depth psychology mental health services available to impacted populations and to implement comprehensive trauma recovery models with long-term components. The “band aid” models that many organizations in the community are perpetuating are sure to fall short for the most severe cases. Trauma in this type of context can have many expressions, but many are harmful to both the traumatized individual and to their family, spouse, or friends.

Post-oil spill, there has been a dramatic rise in incidents of domestic violence within families. In Plaquemines Parish in the first quarter of 2010, there were 32 reported incidents of domestic violence, while in the second quarter of the year (since the oil spill began) the number more than doubled to 68 reported incidents. Experience within local practitioner communities and recorded in disaster mental health research predict that substance abuse, child abuse, financial worries, depression, suicide, and other negative impacts can be expected to manifest in increased numbers within impacted communities. As breadwinners within local families lose their jobs, worry about the length of temporary work with BP while performing oil spill clean-up tasks, and wonder whether they will be able to continue to live in this area; children and adults in families throughout the area will be impacted by the stresses within their family units. If non-profits intend to respond to these issues at all, they should approach the task with necessary seriousness and long-term vision.

6 http://www.bp.com/genericarticle.do?categoryId=2012968&contentId=7064459
John Doe\textsuperscript{7} is a loving father and a full-time commercial fisherman/shrimper from Boothville/Venice, Louisiana. Boothville lies along the jagged coastline where the Gulf of Mexico meets the Mississippi Delta and is a once sleepy fishing village. Since the BP Deep Horizon Gulf Oil Spill, this town, directly adjacent to Venice, has been the focus of a frantic national effort to do battle with the black gold now sweeping into the Delta marshlands with each tide and dealing a death knell to a bountiful natural environment and a way of life.

Mr. Doe is incredibly charismatic, he manages to exude all the toughness and bravado of a self-reliant Gulf fisherman, and at the same time, he is willing to display a level of vulnerability that draws you right into his story and into his life. No matter whether you encounter the gentle father or the raw, wounded fisherman, his frankness about his situation is compelling.

John’s personal story is emblematic of the human impact the Gulf Oil Spill. He lost his work -- fishing, shrimping, and crabbing -- when State and Federal authorities closed down fishing areas off the Louisiana coast in early May. Losing the ability to exercise his livelihood has caused his situation to go from bad to worse and has compounded a number of other problems that he faces. Mr. Doe was not one of the lucky fishermen in the parish to have gotten work with BP as captain of a Vessel of Opportunity early. Thus, as time progressed, both his funds and his luck have dwindled and his situation became urgent.

\textsuperscript{7} Name has been changed to protect the anonymity of the fisherman in question.
This gentle man lost everything he owned during Hurricane Katrina – two trailer homes that were his living quarters, four boats, a vehicle, and a huge assortment of fishing equipment. When he was able to return to the place where his home once stood, he found the Army Corps of Engineers had removed all his remaining personal belongings (nets, crab traps, building materials, etc.) and was excavating the topsoil on the land that he owns, which they were using for levee restoration projects - not realizing they were on private property. Mr. Doe has not been able to re-establish permanent housing since-Katrina. His dream, of course, is anything even slightly resembling a home for himself and his three boys. Many hardships have hindered him from being able to afford permanent housing, but one of the greatest barriers has been illiteracy.

“Since most of these fishermen and seafood industry workers have no transferable work skills (having fished their entire life), the risk of persistent and pervasive unemployment is high. Limited English and literacy skills put out of reach most job preparation, training and placement services.” Representatives Mike Honda (D-CA) and Anh “Joseph” Cao (R-LA). Minority Families Hit Especially Hard by Oil Spill. In: Roll Call; Aug. 9, 2010.

Mr. Doe cannot read or write. When applying for claims and the VOO program, he had trouble finding his commercial fishing license, which he could not identify, as the difference between the residential and commercial is to be found in nothing but the wording. Commercial fishing licenses are the single-most important piece of identification that Gulf Coast fishermen must have to prove fishing is their livelihood and qualify for different types of available assistance. Having presented it over and over again at venues set up by BP that would allow him to register for the Vessel of Opportunity program or file a claim, he concluded that it was either with BP or in the hands of one of his five deckhands that had needed to borrow it to prove that they also qualified as impacted by this disaster. BP and other agencies stipulate they will accept proof of employment for deckhands in the form of a letters from a captain of the boat they had worked on. Since John could not write this letter, he loaned his deckhands his commercial license and accompanied them to the various claim and VOO offices so they would qualify for programs they needed to access. Not being able to identify the commercial license brought the first of many tears of total desperation during my short visit. Once the first tears came, many followed, and it was easy to see the fact that Mr. Doe’s ability to cope was like a thin thread that Katrina had worn down and the hardships and uncertainties of the oil spill had caused to snap.

Access to recovery assistance requires a great deal of documentation, which is confusing and causes great worry for Gulf Coast fishermen that do not read. For John, it meant missing a lot of assistance post-Katrina and now he is once again dismayed by the mountains of paperwork needed to file a GCCF claim, as he was by the paperwork necessary to sign up for the Vessel of Opportunity program, BP claim process, and access social services. He did not have homeowner’s or boat/property insurance prior or post-Katrina for the same reason. He pays for everything in cash, tries not to accumulate debt, and if you have to read or write to get something done, he often accepts that it is out of his reach.

John did file a claim with BP, but when asked if he thought the paperwork was filled out correctly, he said he had no way of knowing and that worries him greatly. In such situations, he feels he has little control over outcomes which depend on someone else’s precision and accuracy. Upon inquiry, it was revealed that his claim was incomplete and the paperwork did not
meet requirements for payment. He will not get any more payments until he submits copies of vendor sales receipts (trip tickets) for ‘08, ’09, and ’10 through the present day. John never received a call to inform him of these problems with his paperwork. A BP employee in the Hammond, Louisiana main BP claims processing office provided the missing information and verified that no help was available for illiterate claimants at BP Claims Offices. While adjusters had been told they could choose to provide this assistance to illiterate claimants on a voluntary basis, there was no mandate to do so and no special services to meet the needs of this sizeable group had been established. As a result, most people in this situation asked the adjuster they worked with to help them out, but there was no guarantee that this would happen or that it would be done with care. In terms of follow up, the Venice Office Adjuster assigned to John’s file had no contact telephone number and only provided service in person. The dock owner that Mr. Doe sold his seafood to last year eventually provided copies of John’s commercial fishing license and a print-out of his ’09 trip tickets, which he had on file. Unfortunately, he just went into business last year and the ’08 trip tickets will have to be gathered from a number of different businesses that have bought his shrimp in the past.

John received two payments of $5,000 each from BP for May and June, and one in July for $1,000. Putting this into perspective, he often had catches that brought in between $1,000 and $6,000 in a day. From this amount, deckhands, gas, boat notes, bills, maintenance, equipment, and other costs had to be paid, but it is easy to see that the amount that has been paid out through the claims process doesn’t even begin to approximate a sum that would cover the average fisherman’s monthly bills. Diesel costs alone for the average outing total $500 - $700. According to John and many of the other fishermen not currently employed by BP, the problems they are encountering with claims payments and the ability to participate in the VOO program are causing financial catastrophes for these families.

Post-Katrina, Mr. Doe returned to Boothville and lived in a tent, bathing in a creek for eight months, as there was no other place to live for those that came back. He received a small FEMA trailer at the end of this period, which he placed on his property. When he finally received a $26,500 payment from the Louisiana Recovery Authority in 2009, he used it for a down-payment on a new shrimp boat, in order to be able to practice the trade that supports his family.
Today, John still lives in his tiny FEMA trailer near the Yellow Cotton Marina. He and his ex-wife share custody of his three sons and they are with him Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays now. His ex-wife is re-married to a fisherman who is also out of work and their situation is also tenuous. There were about 118 FEMA trailers left in the parish at the end of July 2010, and they are all slated for removal soon. FEMA is engaged in an aggressive effort to retrieve and remove the final trailers still in use in the parish, evicting the families or individuals residing in these most humble abodes. John has received notification from FEMA that his trailer will also be reclaimed soon, and the knowledge that he is out of work, has used all the savings that were intended for a home during the time he has been out of work, and the fact that he now does not even have the resources to rent something for himself and the boys has left him feeling helpless and hopeless. In John’s case, losing the FEMA trailer means homelessness, as well joblessness. He ruminates on this very real possibility, has trouble sleeping, will tell you he is often thinks of suicide often, and feels he has failed his children.

While Mr. Doe refers to the FEMA trailer as home, he realizes also that it is a wholly insufficient domicile for his family, and that the four men’s belongings make it impassable and difficult to maneuver in, as there is little or no storage space inside the unit, which makes their few belongings accumulate in wholly unmanageable ways. The trailer does not comfortably sleep or house four, but when they are all there, they somehow make do.
At the end of July, many fishing areas were re-opened for commercial fishing. The five deckhands that John usually worked with were at this time working for BP, but John needed to go out and try to earn some money. He hired a young man as a deckhand who had no experience, with the result that the young man made a serious error using the winch that caused the entire electrical system on his boat to catch fire and burn out completely – a mistake that meant about $10,000 in damage to his boat. The man has faced the trials of Job. Without a functional shrimp boat with which to earn a living, he became despondent and the future seemed even more precarious. He used the last of his finances to buy the wire needed to do the electrical work and then was blessed when his fishermen friends gathered around to re-wire his boat. He took out many IOU’s for materials to get this done, but his buddies donated their labor. He now has a large amount of debt to work off due to this accident.

Although the shrimping season opened August 23, 2010, there was no shrimping to be done until around September 20, 2010, because there were almost no local docks buying product, as there was no demand from the factories that normally process and sell Gulf Coast seafood. This reality was like another slap in the face, as the need to make a living was paramount for John, but the opportunity was for some time not present and even now remains extremely uncertain. On Monday, August 23, 2010, John had $200 left to his name. He used the last of what he had to buy two new school uniforms for each of his two school age boys. The next day, he awoke to a flat tire on his car and was forced to spend the entire day trying to find a replacement, as none of the three shops a friend drove him to were open.

All these things have impacted John’s personal sense of well-being and he is having trouble coping with these hardships. Pain, grief, and fear about the nature of an uncertain future are very evident in his expressions of dismay about his personal situation. The trauma he is experiencing is complex and cumulative, due to the two catastrophic disasters that have impacted his life in such a short period of time. John’s is the pain of a father who has been out of work for many months and whose financial situation no longer allows him to support the children he so loves. When you ask John what would improve his situation, he always answers, “to know my children are going to be alright”. When he talks about the impact of the oil spill on his life, his
greatest fear is not being able to support his children, provide for their needs, and ensure their well-being. When he says he would do anything for his boys, you see in his eyes that he means it. And you also know his predicament has reached a point where there is nothing more he can do for them. He is quite literally between a rock and a hard place.

To listen to the series of tragic and fateful events that have led him to the precarious place where he now stands is a heavy task. Your heart drops into your shoes, and it stays there. It feels like there is no way out; the wheels of the bureaucratic machinery that BP, government, Feinberg and non-profit organizations have put in place seem like they are perfectly aligned to run him over. His prospects seem incredibly bleak.

The issue of timeliness in service provision is tantamount in this story, as in many others. If non-profit organizations and government are too late in their responses, the damage will be irreversible. Local residents experienced this after Katrina, as they sat and watched the clock tick as nothing happened and their sense of urgency mounted. The “tick-tock, tick-tock” tempo in their ears once again sounds like a time bomb and swift responses are needed that have for years eluded these most vulnerable populations. John’s situation gives us a very clear roadmap of the problems facing a specific group of the region’s fishermen, as well as a set of potential solutions that would improve their situations dramatically.

I have been talking to John for months now, touching base with him every couple of days to get updates on his situation. On Wednesday, August 18, 2010, Catholic Charities provided him his first assistance by paying $200 on his cell phone bill and giving him a $100 food voucher and a counseling session with a mental health professional. Another organization, the Committee for Plaquemines Recovery, financed additional school uniforms for his children shortly thereafter. Finally, Architecture for Humanity has stepped forward to assist Mr. Doe and other like him by designing a home for his family and a set of plans that can be used to help many others in similar predicaments. Unfortunately, the funding to finance the building of his home is still non-existent. These are all tiny steps in the right direction, and each has given Mr. Doe hope, but ultimately these services are not able to even make a drop in the bucket that represents his current predicament. And Mr. Doe is one of the lucky people on the coast that has found a set of groups willing to work on his behalf with whatever meager resources they have. There are so many others that continue to fend for themselves.
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS: NON-PROFIT RESPONSE TO SOCIAL IMPACTS

The Mabus Plan, formally called “America’s Gulf Coast: A Long-Term Recovery Plan after the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill” covers five topic areas its authors identified as important for the recovery of the environment, way of life, livelihoods and people in Gulf Coast communities. The importance of an independently funded, nongovernmental recovery effort is one of these, and a full chapter of the report is dedicated to this topic. In some ways, this is a great win for the non-profit sector. Their value as an engine of long-term recovery has been recognized. The fact that their work is essentially an unfunded mandate has not. The report does detail the difficulty these non-profits are having fundraising to carry out their disaster recovery mandate, but the onus remains on the non-profit sector to perform activities the U.S. government identifies as essential for a successful recovery, as well as to fundraise and raise public awareness to meet these needs.

“One of the biggest challenges facing some nonprofits in the Gulf is a lack of monetary donations; adequate resources are not available to cover assistance costs. Unlike other recent natural disasters in the U.S. and abroad, nonprofit and philanthropic leaders are reporting that the oil spill did not generate an outpouring of donations from the American public… Leaders stated that while some nonprofits were receiving enough donations to support assistance efforts, others were not receiving enough to meet demand.”

After Katrina, it became clear over time that the multiple tasks of raising public awareness, scrambling to fundraise, and actually executing and managing onerous recovery projects is just too much to ask of the sector. The constant dance to fundraise to survive has destabilized and weakened these organizations. If the government sees the need for the services the non-profit sector provides, they may have to take responsibility for procuring the funding from BP or accept that these tasks may simply not be executed. The Mabus Plan states that nonprofits, community and faith-based organizations, voluntary organizations, and other charities on the Gulf Coast and specifically in the Greater New Orleans area have experienced a 30% drop in revenue in the two year period (mid-2008 to now) since the onset of the recession. Recognition of the role of non-profits must go hand-in-hand with funding that is dedicated to support their programs and operational costs.

The programs proposed herein are meant to work in conjunction with programs and services being offered by a set of allied non-profits working in the region. Collaboration and adequate funding would allow a consortium of non-profit organizations to address unmet needs and offer a holistic set of services to eligible clients by working together.

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8 Independently-funded means that non-profits have to seek dollars from philanthropy and the private sector, because government funding will not be provided for their services. Yet there has been little funding available from these sources. This harkens back to Katrina. If the non-profit sector is going to have continually larger roles accorded them in disaster recovery, and be asked to fill in programmatic gaps in the face of government disaster recovery failures, the financial means to carry out the work is going to have to accompany the mandate. The current system simply is not sustainable for the non-profit sector.
Recovery Paperwork Assistance Program Addressing Literacy Problems

As documented above, assistance and services for illiterate claimants attempting to file paperwork for their BP claim process, VOO program participation, or the new Feinberg/GCCF claim process has not been available to the vulnerable populations most in need. This service vacuum needs to be addressed with a program specifically tailored to this special needs group. A Recovery Paperwork Assistance Program would help illiterate commercial fishermen and others in related industries that have been impacted by this man-made disaster file complete and accurate claims, and fill out any other paperwork that might be needed with no omissions. It would also provide assistance following-up on paperwork once it has been submitted. The Feinberg process is insisting on tax documentation, and so the program would seek out a set of tax accountants as volunteers and have them help train a group of specialized staff to file back taxes on behalf of these individuals. Another option would be to try to work together with the IRS. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) has no nearby walk-in center, but a special assistance center could be set-up. Recovery Paperwork Assistance Program staff will also be tasked to work as an advocate for clients and touch base regularly with the agencies / organizations processing paperwork in order to ensure that nothing is missing and these clients will receive their due as they move through this process and try to work within the confines of the claims and other program requirements.

1. **BP Claim Process** – this claim process has ended.
2. **Feinberg / GCCF Claim Process** – The $20 billion BP fund will be administered in two stages. People, businesses or other groups that have been adversely affected by the spill can apply to GCCF between Aug. 23 and Nov. 23, 2010 to see if they are eligible for emergency payments. After Nov. 23, only final settlement claims will be accepted, and the cutoff date for sending those is Aug. 23, 2013, according to program documentation. The new Emergency Claim and Final Claim program demands an entirely new set of paperwork be submitted in order to receive payments. Each impacted individual will have to decide whether to submit claims to the permanent program or to press suit. This program will provide comprehensive assistance to a functionally illiterate clientele with this paperwork, its completion and filing. In addition, legal assistance will be provided to clients needing advice on their long-term claim decision-making process.
3. **BP Vessel of Opportunity (VOO) Program** – this program has been ramped down, and may not run much longer, but as long as it is available, we will advocate for clients and assess the completeness of the paperwork they submitted to take part in this program.

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9 There are many services available for Vietnamese fishermen and small business owners and Coastal Communities, one of the state’s technical assistance contractors is currently concentrating their claims assistance services on this population. These include translation services and assistance filling out and filing paperwork for the non-English literate amongst this population. These services are not available to other citizens and residents and this preferential treatment has caused widespread resentment towards the Vietnamese population.
Sustainable Recovery Program for Vulnerable Populations with Cumulative Disaster Impacts

The goal of the holistic disaster recovery services that are part of this program is to deal with the entire scope of problems affecting oil spill-impacted clients that are presenting barriers to their recovery and resilience. While most human and social service needs result from the loss of jobs and income that are a direct result of oil spill, the degree of suffering has been compounded by the fact that many of the individuals that have been impacted are still unrecovered from Katrina or are severely overburdened from a financial viewpoint due to debts they have incurred in order to recover. Most of the impacted fishermen in Plaquemines and St. Bernard Parish lost everything they owned to Katrina. Those that have been unable to establish permanent housing need help immediately.

Architecture for Humanity

This program has two separate parts. The first would provide assistance rebuilding or repairing housing. Architecture for Humanity New Orleans has agreed to design a replicable model home for this program and to function as the design and build team for an initial home project for the commercial fisherman featured in this Strategic Plan (John Doe). In conjunction with a disaster mitigation volunteer consultant, Dennis Quan of James Lee Witt Associates, the team will incorporate the highest standard coastal mitigation practices and will use hurricane-hardening techniques that will produce a model home able to resist a category 5 storm. The model will also incorporate important green design considerations to ensure low energy costs for prospective home owners, such that the sustainability of the investment for low-income vulnerable populations is ensured. Architecture for Humanity will manage the holistic design process, needs assessment and site analysis, construction, green building practices, the implementation of disaster mitigation standards, as well as a post-occupancy analysis. For a sample view of Architecture for Humanity’s work on the Gulf Coast post-Katrina, please see their Biloxi Model Homes. [http://architectureforhumanity.org/projects/biloxi_model_homes](http://architectureforhumanity.org/projects/biloxi_model_homes)

The Committee for Plaquemines Recovery

The Committee for Plaquemines Recovery (CPR) is the Long-Term Recovery Organization (LTRO) for Plaquemines Parish. Founded in December 20, 2005 in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, CPR was an innovative, non-profit-generated response to resource scarcity and the enormity of recovery needs, which were exacerbated by a lack of federal, state, and local government funding for disaster recovery efforts. Long-Term Recovery Organizations represent the pre-eminent non-profit disaster recovery model in use in the United States and are promoted and replicated throughout the country after disasters by the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) non-profit consortium and FEMA. CPR will work together with Catholic Charities and other local non-profit organizations to identify and assist households suffering from cumulative disaster impacts and get them re-established in permanent housing. After the Architecture for Humanity model is designed, they will use these architectural plans and mitigation techniques and replicate these homes for other impacted households.
CPR has a successful legacy of rebuilding lives and homes in Plaquemines Parish. Post-Katrina, CPR focused on the following services:

- New Construction (home was demolished or washed away)
- Rebuild (home requires major rebuilding work, but structure still standing)
- Repair (portion of home in need of repair)
- Unmet Recovery Needs (furnishings, appliances, utility bills & rental deposits, rent, etc.)
- Mobile or Manufactured Home (most often assistance with a down payment)

Total amount of funding awarded in Plaquemines Parish: $3,716,743.34
Number of households that received funding: 165
Total Number of Volunteer Hours spent on housing reconstruction work: 127,505
At $20.25 per hour, the value of volunteer labor to CPR clients was: $2,581,976.25
Total Dollar Value of Recovery Assistance provided to CPR Clients: $6,298,719.59

CPR sees it as urgent to get oil spill-impacted families out of FEMA trailers and temporary and instable housing situations that are the legacy of Katrina. The oil spill has greatly exacerbated the situation of many families that have been unable to re-establish permanent housing, as these FEMA trailers are temporary solutions and will be removed from the parish in the near future. Some of the families and individuals still residing in these temporary housing solutions have lost their incomes and burned through their savings during extended periods of unemployment, uncertainty, and Gulf seafood and tourism market jitters. We are far from seeing the end of this situation and although we see an aggressive national campaign to re-establish the livelihoods that once sustained the people living in the lower portions of our parish, it is also clear that many are still out of work or are underemployed and the market is far from stabilized. Nonetheless, the FEMA trailers are still slated for removal and individuals that had been saving towards more permanent housing solutions now have little or nothing with which to realize their goals. CPR will provide assistance with housing needs to include unmet needs from Hurricane Katrina if a Katrina-related housing issue has now become critical due to oil spill-related unemployment or under-employment.

The second part of this program is designed to provide for other basic needs of those impacted by the oil spill. Those experiencing difficulties paying mortgages or rent, utilities, boat repairs could receive funding assistance with these items. Those in need of assistance with groceries and basic food items would be able to receive gift cards to local grocery stores or food boxes from the local food bank. Most importantly, those with needs not listed here that are present, will be able to receive assistance from a discretionary pot of funds meant to assist with anything from childcare needs or infant care items to car maintenance and transportation assistance. There is no funding for these items at this point in time and resources for basic needs have dried up. The need has not. This final piece will be adaptable to the needs as they occur, such that assistance can be provided without the program being re-designed. Programmatic flexibility is part of the approach to holistic and sustainable recovery.

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10 40 Rebuilds/New Construction projects, 92 Mobile or Manufactured Home projects, 21 Repair projects, 12 Unmet Recovery Needs projects.

11 The value of volunteer hours for 2008 was calculated by Independent Sector [http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html](http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html)
Catholic Charities

Clients will receive long-term disaster case management services provided by Catholic Charities in order to assess their human services needs. Until recently, Catholic Charities oil spill response model included a set of desperately needed services provided in conjunction with other agencies during the oil spill response phase:

- Five outreach sites (St. Bernard Catholic Church in St. Bernard, St. Thomas in Point-a-la-Hache, St. Patrick in Port Sulphur, Mary Queen of Vietnam in NO East, St. Anthony in Lafitte)
- $100 food vouchers in limited quantities
- Up to $200 per month towards unpaid utility / other bills
- Baby products and childcare at outreach sites
- Crisis counseling

Services provided by Partner Agencies and made available at Catholic Charities outreach sites included:

1. The Louisiana Dept. of Social Services has been providing assistance signing up for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food stamps
2. The Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (LA/SPCA) has worked to prevent families relinquishing their pets by providing free veterinary care, pet food, neutering, etc.
3. Second Harvest Food Bank has provided emergency food boxes as funding has allowed and in limited quantities
4. The SBA provided on-site assistance with their loan process
5. BP provided claim-related information to clients

In the last few weeks, Catholic Charities has shifted their model to the provision of long-term disaster case management services that allow them to assess the full scope of client needs and fundraise to provide a wider array of services intended to better meet needs. Resources have become scarce as difficulties raising funds for their emergency assistance program has continued to present a barrier to service provision. Catholic Charities has continued to serve impacted communities, but their oil spill emergency assistance programs were running a $450,000 deficit at the end of September 2010, despite an aggressive local fundraising campaign. These funding shortfalls have caused them to scale back emergency assistance service provision to a bare minimum. The Mabus Plan commented on the problems this lack of resources creates for desperately needed non-profit programs. “From a health and human service standpoint, nonprofit organizations have been providing emergency services to those individuals who have fundamental needs for food, clothing and shelter. For example, Catholic Charities, with financial support from BP, has opened five emergency relief centers where fishers and their families can go for food and housing assistance, counseling, and case management services. So far, the centers have served more than 5,000 people.” It continues later in a commentary directed at the fact that funding was not sufficient to meet demand and was not supplemented when it ran out. “Some of the recovery activities currently underway were begun with initial funding support
from BP and/or the federal government; however, none of these can be fully implemented as described without additional funding.”

In the meantime, Catholic Charities has received funding from the State of Louisiana to strengthen and expand their crisis counseling and mental health care provision services and work with the rest of the local non-profit community to create a response model. The program they are establishing is called Spirit of Hope. They have also signed on with the state as one of twelve technical assistance providers helping impacted populations (those that do not qualify as owning a small business, such as seafood factory workers and deckhands) fill out GCCF claim forms. The services Catholic Charities have continued to provide have clearly demarcated them as a non-profit leader during the oil spill response period. However, their resources have dwindled for basic needs and there are no other providers to fill this gap.12

**Addressing Uncertainty & Mistrust: Monthly Community Forum**

Real questions exist in this community about the impacts of the Gulf Oil Spill and the dispersants used to combat it. The federal government has tried to provide answers to many of these questions, but there is a strong local sentiment amongst commercial fishermen and others in the Gulf seafood industry that any information provided by the government or BP is not to be trusted. Many people that have been impacted locally are convinced that there are unseen dangers that threaten their livelihood and health. While many of the local fishermen may not be scientists, they do have a unique understanding of what comprises “normal” in the environment in which they have been working over the course of their lives, and when their common sense perception of changes are not reflected in official analyses of impacts, they are necessarily suspicious. This dissonance between those crafting the message and those receiving it has resulted in questions, rumors, conspiracy theories and a very destabilizing degree of uncertainty exist with regards to the safety of human health, the environment, and Gulf seafood.

Combating this problem may be most easily achieved by providing different voices and venues for information. Establishing an alternative to contentious Town Hall Meetings is essential. A monthly forum hosting respected independent scientists, experts on oil spill impacts, and speakers that can promote community-building would provide a format that could begin to alleviate these tensions. Speakers would be asked to engage in dialogue with community members to discuss their concerns, attempt to answer their questions, and share how current tensions are a normal result of a very destabilizing situation.

The forums will invite speakers to address the nature of current uncertainties and the lack of trust in answers offered by the government and BP on specific topics of interest to the community. The agenda of these meetings will be to provide what information independent scientists and experts have available at the current time. While there are no definitive answers

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12 On October 8, 2010, Marguerite Redwine, Executive Director of ViaLink 211, confirmed that there are no longer any organizations currently providing basic needs services to households suffering from oil spill-related financial problems. ViaLink 211 is the regional non-profit organization that compiles the only comprehensive, up-to-date listing of health and human services in the impacted areas and which is also compiling an oil spill resource database in order to providing oil spill-related information through its hotline.
about what the future will hold, the ability to discuss the situation openly without political
agendas has been embraced by community members.

People that can address the types of questions most prevalent in the community that
understand both the science behind what is currently known and the emotions driving a belief
that all official answers are untrustworthy, should be brought in to answer people’s questions as
honestly as they can. The fact that people in this community have no confidence in government
has a lot to do with their Katrina experience. Local fears that there has not been an honest
presentation of facts have been supported by revelations such as the early estimates of the oil
flow that were radically underestimated. Community members mention this fact as a reason why
they cannot place faith in the information being provided by BP and the government. Public
forums where scientists and experts that local people do trust can help local stakeholders
evaluate the barrage of conflicting information coming their way. The establishment of such a
forum would address the destabilizing nature of uncertainty and the lack of trust in the sources of
information that have been made available and provide a helpful alternative.

Mental Health Impacts: Short-Term vs. Long-Term Responses

A plethora of mental health care programs have sprouted up in response to the distress
the oil spill incident has caused. Most of these represent short-term crisis mental health
interventions, such as deep breathing / relaxation techniques, stress management tools, and/or a
one-time crisis counseling session with a volunteer, social worker, counselor, etc. These crisis
intervention (CISD-style) techniques are effective in many instances, but they are not the answer
to the more serious and deep-seated mental health problems now facing this area. Mental health
responses that would build a long-term local capacity to respond to community needs are
desperately needed and feature training resulting in PTSD or trauma certifications for local
mental health care professionals, specialty therapies, and in-depth, long-term treatment programs
with a therapist that accompanies the client through a longer-term healing process. Thus, this
component of the Strategic Plan proposes establishing a mental health care capacity-building
program that would establish a comprehensive PTSD and trauma-oriented, long-term treatment
model that would make depth psychology therapies available locally.

The first capacity-building program would extend the array of mental health services
available in Plaquemines Parish by providing training in an innovative post-disaster art / play
therapy technique that would target local school children. Workshops and materials for Sand
Tray Therapy training would be provided in all seven parish schools with select staff members
(clinical social workers, school nurses, Special Ed teachers) and the mental health professionals
at the Plaquemines Parish Community Care Center (PCCC). Celebration Hope Center would the
implement this program, as trauma work with school-age children and sand tray therapy are one
of the organization’s specialties.

The second capacity-building proposal would also prominently feature the expertise of
the Celebration Hope Center (CHC) and work to extend the array of depth psychology mental
health services available in Plaquemines Parish through the Plaquemines Community Care
Center. It would provide the clinical personnel at both facilities training in a five part,
comprehensive trauma / PTSD treatment model that will ensure that their services are exactly tailored to meet current community needs. This Train the Trainer Program would greatly increase the local capacity of mental health professionals to provide the type of complex trauma treatment services that are currently needed to address the mental health crisis that is unfolding in the areas that have been impacted by the Gulf Oil Spill. The staff of the Plaquemines Community Care Center (PCCC) and the CHC would receive training in comprehensive trauma treatment techniques and cutting-edge therapeutic methods currently not available in their mental health facilities, in order to expand their treatment models and enhance local capacities to respond to the problems they currently face.

The five separate therapeutic techniques are:

1. A 9-step Trauma Resolution Model which provides long-term care and weekly counseling sessions with a mental health professional
2. Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Training, an evidence-based model for treating PTSD
3. Grief Therapy Groups and Complicated Grief Workshop, a 12 week group therapy process that deals with grief
4. Seeking Safety, an evidence-based, 12 week program that teaches coping, grounding, and disassociation for substance abuse and PTSD
5. An Experiential Play Unit, a research-based, child-directed play protocol that allows children who are survivors of stressful and traumatic events to achieve better coping abilities.
V. Appendix A – Stakeholders Interviewed

*There are a number of interviewees that asked to remain anonymous and are not named

**Fishermen, etc.**
John Doe, Commercial Fisherman
Mike Neal, Commercial Fisherman
Mr. Duplessis, Commercial Fisherman
Clint Guidry, President, Louisiana Shrimp Association
Acy Cooper, President, Louisiana Shrimp Association
C.J. Troxler, Louisiana Shrimp Association
Byron Encalade, President, Louisiana Oysters Association and South Plaquemines United Fisheries Cooperative

**Academics and Subject Matter Experts**
Alan Vaughn, LSU Ag Center Research & Extension, County Agent, Plaquemines/St. Bernard
Dr. Pamela Jenkins, Sociology Professor, University of New Orleans, CHART, Disaster Domestic Violence
Dr. Liesel Ritchie, Asst. Director for Research – Natural Hazards Center, University of Colorado at Boulder, Exxon Valez Oil Spill Community Impact
Dr. Christopher M. Reddy, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Associate Scientist w/ Tenure, Marine Chemistry & Geochemistry

**BP and BP Contractors**
Brandon Myer, DRC Emergency Services, Project Manager
Ray Smith, Vessels of Opportunity Program, Venice, LA. ICS
Rick Rybaczik, BP, Public Information Officer, Venice, LA. ICS
Lee Abbott, BP Housing Camp, Manager of Facility

**Federal Government Representatives**
Lt. Commander Sean Brady, United States Coast Guard, Executive Officer, Venice, LA. ICS
Jonathan Lally, United States Coast Guard, Public Affairs Staff, Venice, LA. ICS
Steven Sweeney, EPA Office of the General Counsel
Angele Kimball-Rogers, FEMA, Voluntary Agency Liaison

**Local Business Owners and Managers**
Chris Leopold, Delta Land Partners LLC, CEO
Dean Blanchard, Seafood, Inc.
Owen Langridge, Captain and CEO, Big “O” Charters
Matt O’Brien, Owner, Tiger Pass Seafood
Perry Triche, United Bulk Terminal, Manager – Regulatory Affairs, Risk Management and Training

Local and State Government

Benny Puckett, Plaquemines Parish Government, Grant Administrator
P.J. Hahn, Plaquemines Parish Government, Director of Coastal Zone Management
Albertine Kimball, Plaquemines Parish Government, Local Coastal Program Manager – East Bank
Michelle Tassin, Plaquemines Parish Govt, Director, Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness
Dave Dysart, St. Bernard Parish Govt, Director, Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness
Kris Vanorfdel, Louisiana Recovery Authority
Maggie Shipman, Louisiana Recovery Authority, Oil Spill Claims Technical Assistance Network

Non-Profit Organizations

Martin Gutierrez, Catholic Charities, Executive Director – Neighborhood and Community Centers
Tom Costanza, Catholic Charities – Executive Director, Office of Justice and Peace
Shirley Lachmann, Catholic Charities, Program Manager for Gulf Oil Spill Response
Sara Galliano, Catholic Charities, Case Manager for Gulf Oil Spill Response
Bonnie Duplessis, Catholic Charities, Case Manager for Gulf Oil Spill Response
Larry Carbo, Catholic Charities, Crisis Counselor
Steve Bledsoe, Committee for Plaquemines Recovery, Board Member
Benny Puckett, Committee for Plaquemines Recovery, President of the Board
Mike Wilson, Mennonite Disaster Services, Rebuild Director
Steven Zimmer, United Way of the Greater New Orleans Area, Vice President of Community Development
Gary Huettmann, United Way of Northwest Louisiana, Gulf Oil Spill Response/Long-Term Recovery
Perry Triche, Plaquemines Community Foundation, Board Chair
Mary Luevano, Global Green USA, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Camille Lopez, Global Green USA, Program Manager for Gulf Oil Spill Response
Mandy Carter, Plaquemines Community Care Center, Acting Executive Director
Lisa Becnel, Plaquemines Community Care Center, Grant Management
John Trumbaturi, Plaquemines Community Care Center/Plaquemines Parish School District, Clinical Social Worker
Sharon Stanley, Plaquemines Community Care Center, Therapist/Clinician
Betty Riley, Pilgrim Rest Community Development Agency, Executive Director
William Autmon, Pilgrim Rest Community Development Agency, Asst. Director
Rocky Kistner, Natural Resources Defense Council, Press Secretary and Gulf Oil Spill Response
Tony Fernandez, Executive Director and Founder, Santa on the Bayou
Michelle Louviere, Celebration Hope Center, Clinical Director
Freddie Landry, Celebration Hope Center, Executive Director
Dustin Ridener, Seedco Financial, Office Manager Plaquemines Parish
Marco Cocito-Monoc, Greater New Orleans Foundation, Director – Regional Initiatives
Kindra Arneson, Coastal Heritage Society of Louisiana
Marguerite Redwine, ViaLink 211, Executive Director
VI. Appendix B - Institutional Capability of The George Washington University Institute for Crisis, Disaster, and Risk Management

The GW Institute for Crisis, Disaster and Risk Management was chartered in 1994 as an interdisciplinary center for research, education, and training. The Institute integrates the existing diverse expertise and research related to crisis, disaster, and risk management at GW and is unique in its interdisciplinary focus and structure. The objective of the GW ICDRM is to improve the disaster, emergency, and crisis management plans, actions, and decisions of government, corporate, and not for profit organizations by transforming theory to practice. The Institute creates knowledge through its research activities and disseminates this knowledge through training and graduate education programs offered through the GW Department of Engineering Management and Systems Engineering.

The Institute’s domain of interest includes natural and technological disasters, terrorism preparedness and consequence management, transportation safety and security, disaster response and recovery, and political, social, and organizational crises. The Institute’s organizational focus is also broad, including U.S. and international public and not for profit organizations and private sector businesses. The Institute has established formal partnering agreements with the Washington D.C. Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bogazici University (Istanbul, Turkey), and Karlsruhe University (Germany).

The GW Institute for Crisis, Disaster, and Risk Management has conducted disaster related research for the American Red Cross, The Greater New Orleans Disaster Recovery Partnership, The Committee for Plaquemines Recovery, the Crescent Alliance Recovery Effort, The St. Bernard Recovery Committee, the Jefferson Disaster Recovery Committee, the National Science Foundation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, The Veterans Health Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, several state governments, and the Washington, DC and Arlington, Virginia local governments. Institute faculty have performed NSF funded After Action analyses of the Exxon Valdez response, the federal response to Hurricane Andrew, the response to the 1999 Turkey earthquakes, the response to the September 11, 2001 attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. Disaster recovery-related projects have included a Post-Katrina organizational resilience and capability building project funded by the American Red Cross, and a systems analysis of the recovery operations utilized by the Long-Term Recovery Committees of Southeast Louisiana. Institute faculty have been part of the international response to earthquakes in Iran, Turkey, and the Philippines, the 2005 earthquake/tsunami in Indonesia, as well as domestic incidents such as Hurricanes Gustav and Ike and now the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill. The research programs of the Institute have included modeling the impacts of and relief requirements generated by catastrophic earthquakes, developing the functional requirements for response to mass casualty disasters, conducting risk assessments for major maritime transportation systems and ports, the development of information technology for disaster management, the investigation of best practices for contingency planning in the public and private sectors, and conducting after action research and report development for natural and human induced disasters.
Professor John Harrald, Ph.D., Associate Professor Joseph Barbera, M.D., and Assistant Professor Gregory Shaw are the Institute Co Directors. Laura Olson is Research Scientist working in the areas of resilience and recovery. Sergio de Cosmo, Chris Salmon, and Sebnem Sener are doctoral students in crisis, emergency and risk management and are ICDRM graduate research associates.

**The Author of the Strategic Plan**

Laura Olson is a Research Scientist at The George Washington University’s Institute for Crisis, Disaster, and Risk Management (ICDRM) and a Doctoral Candidate in Public Administration at The George Washington University School of Business. Since Hurricane Katrina she has worked closely with a large consortium of non-profit organizations engaged in disaster recovery operations conducting performance evaluations and recording best practices and lessons learned from this sector. Her research focuses on fostering the development of community-based solutions to recovery and reconstruction dilemmas, organizational resilience and learning in post-disaster contexts, the performance of disaster recovery programs, and the root causes of human vulnerability to extreme events. Her areas of expertise include vulnerability analysis, patterns of differential aid distribution, emergency management, and the mobilization of response and recovery efforts. Her field work in Southeast Louisiana has generated an extendable resilience-building model for non-profit organizations capable of creating complex, systemic change and innovation, promoting community development, and maximizing the knowledge and skills of organizational members through a participatory process. [http://www.gwu.edu/~icdrm/People/olson.htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~icdrm/People/olson.htm)
VII. Appendix C - STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY

With two epic disasters that have followed each other in short order – first Katrina and now the Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill – practitioners and academics who have worked on disaster response and recovery in Southeast Louisiana stand recently tested, with many lessons under their belts. This Strategic Plan in based on Lessons Learned from the very recent past. Lessons Learned are really nothing more than reflections on ‘what to avoid’ when designing and implementing disaster response and recovery programs. Thus, the goal of this plan is to help employ this hard won wisdom and avoid the foibles and snares that were stumbled on in the past.

Objectives

1. To produce a comprehensive image of the current, albeit ever-changing situation facing vulnerable populations on the Gulf Coast with regards to the oil spill.

2. To identify major gaps in service provision to these vulnerable populations and accurately identify unmet needs through a social impact assessment process.

3. To design a strategy for future non-profit response and recovery efforts, rapid service delivery to impacted groups, and fundraising based on recent Lessons Learned.

During the data collection process, interviews were conducted with commercial and charter fishermen; small and medium-sized business owners (such as seafood processors, distributors, and buyers); academics and subject matter experts; BP and BP contractors; federal government representatives; local government officials and employees; and a wide array of actors within local non-profit organizations. This qualitative data formed the basis for the social impact assessment process and was collected using an interpretivist methodological strategy, which demands that the researcher listen to and analyze the respective interpretations of different parties to current response and recovery efforts. The interpretive framework looks for the creation of consensus around an interpretation of the events that unfold. This is achieved through conversation, interaction, verbal analysis and comparison of individual interpretations of social phenomena.

Constraints and Limitations

The nature of an extreme event is ever-changing. Thus, what constitutes a relevant programmatic response on Monday might no longer be meeting local needs on Friday. This is meant to be a dynamic plan, flexible and constantly adapting to changing inputs from the external environment. The constraints and limitations on the research conducted to produce this analysis included difficulties accessing stakeholders, certain information, and the need to produce the report very quickly.
VIII. Appendix D - CONTEXT: SOCIAL PROFILE OF PLAQUEMINES PARISH, LA.

There are issues of fundamental importance when trying to understand local reactions to the Gulf Oil Spill and Deepwater Horizon Response (DHR). A perspective that integrates the cumulative nature of events in the recent past and their impact on the local landscape and social context is vital to garnering such an understanding. This portion of the Strategic Plan presents an overview of:

1. The Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Plaquemines Parish
2. A Profile of Plaquemines Parish since Katrina & Prior to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill
3. A Social Impact Analysis of the Gulf Oil Spill and What We Can Expect in the Future

Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Plaquemines Parish

Plaquemines Parish was one of the first places that Katrina struck as it made landfall along the Gulf Coast. The resulting damage devastated this parish and its many small communities. Half of the parish’s 26,757 residents were impacted by catastrophic flooding, and wind damage also took a heavy toll. In the lower portions of Plaquemines, where the eye of Katrina made landfall, storm surges breached roofs and tossed homes, businesses, and boats to new locations. Hurricane force winds ripped out trees and took off roofs; and levee failures left whole communities under water. While some structures in the parish could be repaired, a large proportion were completely destroyed, especially in the lower parts of the parish. Very many of the residents of Plaquemines Parish required new homes.

The homeownership rate in Plaquemines Parish was 78.9 % prior to Katrina. Parish demographic make-up pre-Katrina was 70 % Caucasian, 23 % African American, 2 % Native American, and 2 % Hispanic. The median household income was $38,173 (for 2.89 people) with 18 % of Plaquemine’s population living below the poverty line. Of all Plaquemines Parish households, 15 % were headed by a single female with dependents, 10 % of the population was senior citizens, and, of those living below the poverty line, 21 % were children and 18 % were senior citizens.  

Profile of Plaquemines Parish since Katrina

Geography, Topology, and Natural Environment
Land area: 845 sq. mi., Water area: 1584.0 sq. mi.

“Plaquemines Parish provides the perfect balance between urban and rural lifestyles. Urban communities like Belle Chasse, in the northern part of the parish, are considered part of the Metropolitan New Orleans area, and the long middle reaches of the parish consist primarily of agricultural lands dotted with small communities. Further south, saltwater marshes and estuaries form the rich delta of the Mississippi River. The parish’s lower reaches provide a

13 2000 Census data.
rural, country like atmosphere. Plaquemines Parish is Louisiana's southernmost parish, providing direct access to the Gulf of Mexico. It is an ecological wonder with many waterways and fishing and hunting opportunities. It is truly a Sportsman's Paradise with some of the best commercial and recreational fishing areas in the world. Many charter fishing operations are located from Port Sulphur south to Venice. The mighty Mississippi River divides the parish from north to south. Ferry transportation from the East to Westbank is provided in Belle Chasse and at Pointe-a-La-Hache. The parish creates a corridor surrounding the river as it flows to the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the developed areas are along each side of the more than 70 miles of the Mississippi River that flows through the parish. Southwest Pass, at the end of the river, provides access to commerce and trade traveling the Mississippi. The seafood industry is one of the leading sources of income for Plaquemines. It is also the operational center for the offshore oil and gas industry. Citrus production is the pride of Plaquemines."

http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our_offices/parishes/Plaquemines/Features/About/

**Population and Demographics**
2009 Total Population - 20,942 (68% urban, 32% rural)
Percent change in population from August 29, 2005 to July 1, 2009 -24.7%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2009 27.2%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2009 11.0%
White persons, percent, 2009 71.7%
Black persons, percent, 2009 21.2%
American Indian, 2009 2.5%
American Indian persons, percent, 2009 3.0%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2009 4.1%
Language other than English spoken at home 8.0%
Average household size 2.94
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22075.html

**Income Levels and Land/Homeownership and Household Statistics**
2009 Owner Occupied Housing 7,294
2009 Renter Occupied Housing 2,070
2009 Total Households 9,364
2009 Median Family Income $49,947
2009 Median Household Income $44,100
https://edis.commerce.state.nc.us/docs/countyProfile/LA/22075.pdf

**U.S. Census American Community Survey 2006-2008**
Total housing units 8,701
Occupied housing units 6,807 88%
Owner-occupied housing units 4,635 67.1%
Renter-occupied housing units 2,172 32.9%
Vacant housing units 1,894 12.0%
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22075.html

**Building Permits**
2005 74
2006 102
2007 153
2008 91
Poverty and Social Services
Persons living below the poverty level in percent, 2008 15.1%
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22075.html

In Plaquemines Parish, Human and Social Services are provided for low-income elderly and disabled residents through the Plaquemines Parish Community Action Agency. Service provision includes USDA Commodities, Energy Assistance, Emergency Food & Shelter Programs, Utility, Rent & Mortgage Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Fire Victims, Public Transportation, and Emergency Food Boxes. There are no other Human or Social Service programs that are administered by local government. Instead, non-profit organizations fill these gaps, if they are filled at all. This presents a quandary for local government as they lack the infrastructure and capacity to respond to the current crisis being experienced by a significant portion of their population without external assistance. For non-profit organizations, whose infrastructure is also lacking and over-burdened, and whose operations have for the past five years also been seriously underfunded, the weight and significance of their role in providing for a community that has been in crisis for five years now is exhausting and clearly is not about to end any time soon. Whether they will find the people and resources to provide relief in the face of the Gulf Oil Spill is questionable at this time.

Literacy and High School Non-Completion Rates

Literacy levels in Louisiana are among the lowest in the country. The 1980 Census ranked Louisiana 50th out of the 50 states, with 16% of adults (1 in every 6) unable to read or write and almost half of all adults failing to complete high school. The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy in Plaquemines Parish purports that 15% of parish residents age 16 or older lack Basic Prose Literacy Skills (BPLS), which means these individuals are functionally illiterate. This group represents 3,141 of the parish’s estimated 20,942 residents. The 2000 self-reported Census data for the parish states that another 13.3% of local residents quit school before the 9th grade and 18.7% dropped out between the 9th and 12th grades and received no diploma. This represents approximately 6,000 or 28% of the parish’s estimated 20,942 residents. Overall individuals with low educational achievement make up 44% of the parish population. While there are no specific statistics on literacy by industry in the parish, it is clear that a huge number of the residents that are functionally illiterate and have low educational attainment are fishermen or individuals working in seafood-related industries.

Employment /Unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year to Date</th>
<th>2009 Annual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010Q1 Employment</td>
<td>8,039</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010Q1 Unemployment</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010Q1 Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://edis.commerce.state.nc.us/docs/countyProfile/LA/22075.pdf

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14 http://www.plaqueminesparish.com/departments.php#departments_30
15 http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22075.html
16 http://www.literacygno.org/literacy-statistics.html
Domestic Violence Rates

In Plaquemines Parish in the first quarter of 2010, there were 32 reported incidents of domestic violence, while in the second quarter of the year (since the oil spill began) the number more than doubled to 68 reported incidents. The third quarter resulted in 45 incidents, a reduction the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Coordinator in the Plaquemines Parish District Attorney’s Office attributed to increases in claims payments. She expects a dramatic increase in incidents when clean-up work and claims payments for local fishermen cease.\(^\text{17}\)

Healthcare

In 2009, Louisiana ranked 47th in the United Health Foundation’s State Health Rankings 2009, which was up from its 2008 ranking as 49th in the nation. Problem areas in the state include premature death, infant mortality, cancer deaths, infectious disease, obesity, and racial disparities related to access to health care and health care outcomes.\(^\text{18}\) 18.5% of the state’s population was not covered by health care insurance in 2006. While the national average for HMO enrollment in the United States was 23.8% of the population, in Louisiana it was only 7.1%. Louisiana also ranked lowest in the U.S. in terms of access to primary care practitioners in 2007.\(^\text{19}\)

The State of Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Office of Public Health, operates 77 parish health units (PHUs), which offer basic services, such as immunizations, maternal and infant health services, STD testing and treatment. None of these are located in rural areas. The DHH Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health records 108 Rural Health Clinics (RHC) in the state, which are located in non-urban areas, Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), or Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs). These facilities are spartanly staffed and offer routine diagnostic services and dispense prescription drugs. Of the 6 rural parishes directly impacted by the oil spill and with parish boundaries along the Gulf Coast, Lafourche Parish has three Rural Health Clinics and the other parishes have none.\(^\text{20}\) Of 49 small rural hospitals in the state, the same holds true. The only one located in a parish directly bordering the Gulf Coast is found in Lafourche Parish. On the Louisiana Gulf Coast, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Orleans, and St. Mary Parishes are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) for primary, dental, and mental health care; Terrebone and Lafourche are HPSAs for primary and mental health care; and the southern (rural, coastal) two thirds of Jefferson Parish ranks as a HPSA for primary, dental, and mental health care.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{17}\) Mary Tesvich, Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Coordinator, Plaquemines Parish District Attorney’s Office, Statistics from October 2, 2010.
\(^{20}\) Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, 10/27/2008.
\(^{21}\) DHH / Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health, April 3, 2008.