

**KATRINA: DEMOGRAPHICS OF A DISASTER**

September 9, 2005

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the Gulf Coast, tens of thousands of New Orleanians are being evacuated to cities across the country. Many host cities have dramatically different demographics and the levels of social services provided differ greatly.

Here is a look at race, poverty and federal food stamp data for the United States, New Orleans, and select cities receiving evacuees.

Population: poverty and race

Table 1 shows the racial composition and poverty rates of New Orleans and selected cities receiving large numbers of evacuees. The last three cities listed, included for comparison purposes, have roughly the same population as New Orleans.

TABLE 1

	Percent white	Percent black	Poverty rate	Percent whites in poverty	Percent blacks in poverty
United States	75.1	12.3	12.4	9.1	24.9
New Orleans	28.1	67.3	27.9	11.5	35.0
Atlanta	33.2	61.4	24.4	8.5	33.0
Baton Rouge	45.8	50.0	24.0	12.8	33.8
Dallas	50.8	25.9	17.8	12.1	24.1
Houston	49.3	25.3	19.2	13.7	44.0
Jackson (MS)	27.8	70.6	23.5	9.0	29.1
Little Rock	55.1	40.4	14.3	6.3	24.7
San Antonio	67.7	6.8	17.3	14.7	21.7
Shreveport	46.7	50.8	22.8	8.5	36.0
Cleveland	41.5	51.0	26.3	16.6	33.8
Las Vegas	69.9	10.3	11.9	9.3	23.7
Oklahoma City	68.4	15.4	16.0	11.0	29.9

Source: Figures compiled by the Urban Institute using 2000 U.S. Census data.

Poor families

Table 2 shows the composition of poor families (at or below the federal poverty level) in New Orleans and two Texas cities where tens of thousands of evacuees are now staying.

TABLE 2

	United States	New Orleans	Houston	San Antonio
Percent of poor families that are black	26.8	91.2	36.2	8.7
Percent of poor families with female heads and children under 18	44.4	65.1	38.3	44.8
Percent of poor 65 and older	9.7	8.0	6.1	7.8
Percent of families with income below poverty level that have a full-time worker	15.5	15.4	19.3	18.0
Percent of families with income below poverty level that have a part-time or full-time worker	53.9	51.9	58.6	57.5
Percent of families with Supplemental Security Income and/or public assistance income	7.2	14.3	7.1	8.9

Source: Figures compiled by the Urban Institute using data from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Food stamps

Table 3 shows three counties' participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food stamp program.

TABLE 3

	Population	Share receiving food stamps	Food stamp payouts
United States	281,421,906	7.2%	\$15,597,328,000
Orleans Parish, including New Orleans	484,674	20.8%	\$101,959,000
Harris County, including Houston	3,400,578	3.8%	\$133,069,000
Bexar County, including San Antonio	1,392,931	8.1%	\$106,936,000

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau; 1999 data from the USDA Economic Research Service.

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