

INTRODUCTION

One year after Hurricane Katrina and the devastating levee breaches that followed in its wake, the Kaiser Family Foundation sent a team of 41 individuals to New Orleans to walk across a four-parish area – Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Bernard – and do nothing more nor less important than just ask that legendary city’s residents how they were faring. Armed with laptops, digital cameras and a letter signed by the Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, these interviewers were doing a household survey the old fashioned way – on foot. And in an area in which our survey estimated that as many as one in four didn’t have a land telephone line last fall, there was really no other way.

From September 12 to November 13, 2006, as the area’s numerically diminished but gutsy population marked one year of recovery, these interviewers spoke to 1,504 randomly selected adult residents all across the area, in places that were virtually devoid of life and in places where if you squinted your eyes you might easily imagine Katrina had never happened. They visited and documented the state of thousands of other homes in an attempt to quantify what was gone and what remains. They experienced the best and the worst of New Orleans. They were praised, teased, and welcomed; they saw guns brandished and found streets flooded by sudden, heavy showers.

The voices of the individuals who shared their experiences with rebuilding – joined together and presented as percentages in this report but representing individual voices nonetheless – drive the story below. The study is unique not only because the difficulty of conducting a scientific survey in this damaged city means there are few good soundings of the public’s views, but because it assesses residents’ quality of life across such a wide variety of areas, from their physical and mental health, to their jobs and marriages, to their hopes for New Orleans’ future. The goal of the project: providing a current baseline to inform the reconstruction effort, and keeping the facts about the challenges still present in New Orleans and the surrounding region before the nation.

The report begins by specifically assessing how far the area’s population was physically, emotionally and financially set back by the storm and the inadequate governmental response as a way of better understanding what it will take residents to recover their quality of life. Then, as residents and officials continue to rebuild social support systems, it details the current needs of the population across a variety of areas, from health to health care to employment. The final sections look at area residents’ own hopes for, and judgments of, the recovery process, as well as focusing in on the situation of African Americans in Orleans Parish.

Overall the survey strikingly quantifies the specific ways in which Hurricane Katrina, and the failure of government at all levels to respond to it more effectively, was personally devastating for a large share of the Greater New Orleans population. In many ways, the storm exacerbated the problems that were already being faced by residents, with the result being that a substantial group now face multiple life challenges while living in a still-hobbled city ill-equipped to respond to them. African Americans living in New Orleans proper stand out as particularly impacted, as well as feeling particularly aggrieved.

But there was an equally powerful finding in the survey: the majority of people in the New Orleans area are hopeful about the city’s future and most approve of the general direction of the rebuilding process. Only a relatively small number said they plan to leave.

Finally, one easy-to-overlook fact about the survey is that it can only measure what is happening to those who are still there – those who remained throughout, and those who returned. The experiences of the large group of New Orleanians who left the area and have not returned are not captured in this study.

Throughout, discussions of area residents, New Orleanians or those in Greater New Orleans refer to all residents of Orleans, Jefferson, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes. When residents of Orleans or Jefferson Parish are singled out (the pool of respondents in the two less-populated parishes being too small to analyze separately), it is noted as such. Future reports on this survey will focus more narrowly on specific aspects of the rebuilding process, in particular the health care needs and priorities of the population.

THE STORM: MEASURING PERSONAL IMPACT

When it hit the Gulf Coast, Hurricane Katrina stretched 450 miles wide. It dumped billions of gallons of water onto the New Orleans area. And, perhaps most tragically, it pushed a number of New Orleans' levees beyond their capacity, causing them to breach and allowing the swollen lake to drain dirty, swirling storm water into the bowl of the city. Estimates are that at one point, 80 percent of New Orleans was underwater.

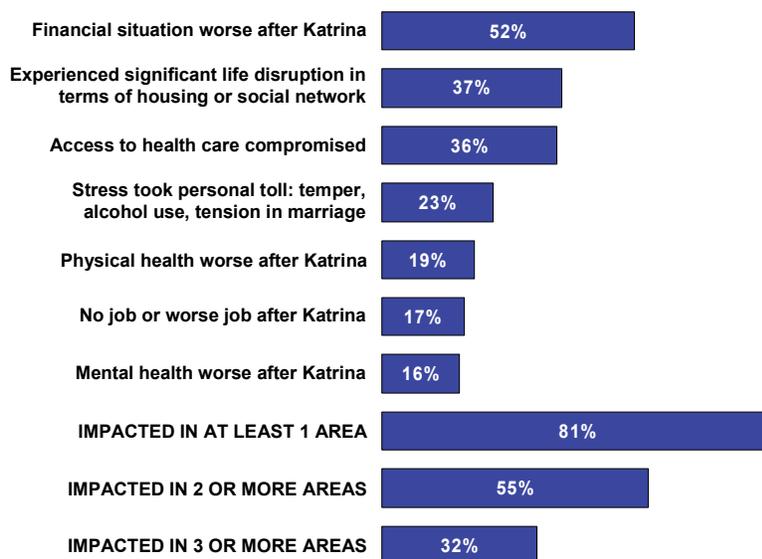
The numerical tally of personal disaster and dislocation is equally overwhelming: More than 780,000 people were displaced for some period of time; more than 200,000 homes were destroyed; and most soberingly, more than 1,500 people died.³

To add to the natural disaster, there was a disastrous official response. A bipartisan inquiry by the U.S. Senate concluded that the human suffering caused by Katrina "continued longer than it should have because of – and was in some cases exacerbated by – the failure of government at all levels to plan, prepare for and respond aggressively to the storm" and added that "these failures were not just conspicuous; they were pervasive."⁴

Just as brown floodwaters seeped and stretched into every physical nook available, the storm's personal impacts were felt across a wide spectrum of people's day to day lives. Though not every possible problem or challenge was measured, the survey did attempt to give a sense of this broad reach.

Impacts of Hurricane Katrina for Greater New Orleans Residents

Percent who reported having an impact in each of the following areas after Hurricane Katrina:



The result: the study suggests that the vast majority – roughly eight in ten – of those now living in Greater New Orleans saw their quality of life deteriorate in some way, with 55 percent reporting impacts in two or more of the seven important areas of well-being measured⁵. Most of these impacts are not transitory, not

³ R. Rudowitz, D. Rowland and A. Shartzler, "Health Care in New Orleans Before and After Hurricane Katrina," *Health Affairs* 25 (2006), w397 (published online 29 August 2006; 10.1377/hlthaff.25.w393-w406).

⁴ Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Hurricane Katrina: A Nation Still Unprepared*, Executive Summary, p.2, May 2006.

⁵ See "Appendix C: Creating aggregate impact and problem measures" for a description of the areas of impact measured and how they were created.

problems that evaporated as the city dried. Instead, they are problems still being faced every day in New Orleans. And they are problems layered onto a community that already faced considerable socio-economic challenges before Katrina’s winds neared the Gulf Coast.

Residents were most likely to be suffering financially, according to the survey, with half reporting their financial situation is worse in Katrina’s wake. Second most common was a severe disruption to personal life, such as having been forced out of their homes for some substantial period of time or having lost a loved one. Problems of this nature have affected nearly four in ten in the area.

The storm also reduced many residents’ access to health care. More than one in three have seen their access to care suffer in some way since the storm.

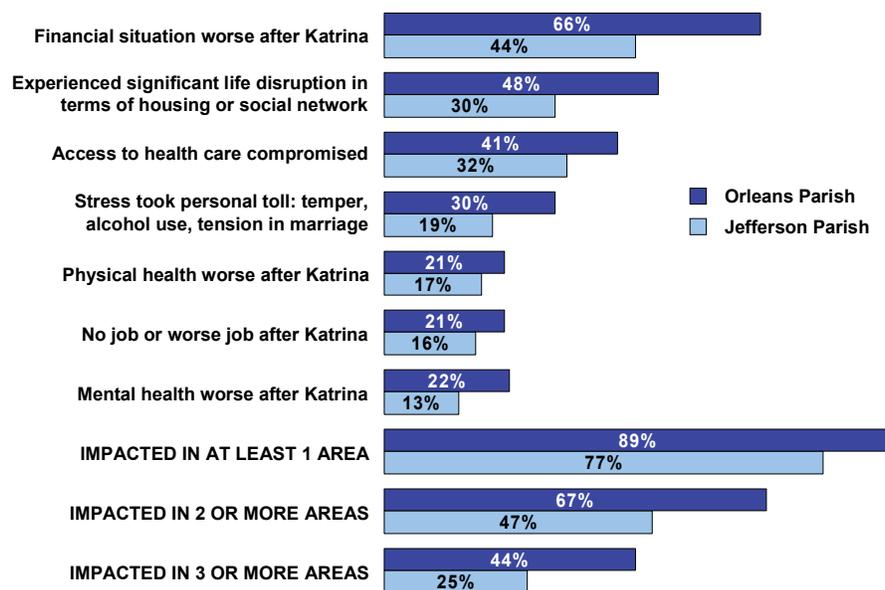
About one in four said storm-related stress has taken a toll on their relationships and behaviors. One in five said their physical health has declined, and nearly as many suffered in terms of employment. One in six reported some deterioration in their mental health since Katrina.

Each of these categories is more fully explored in the sections below. In some cases the incidence of singular problems was relatively small, though this was balanced by the problems themselves being quite serious. For example, one in ten said they had filed a storm-related claim and had it denied or delayed, resulting in a “major impact” to their household. In all cases, however, looking across the wide variety of ways that area residents are still living with Katrina’s results paints a portrait of considerable, lingering impact.

Before analyzing the individual areas of impact, it’s worth noting the marked differences across parishes. Though Katrina pummeled New Orleans and its environs with equal ferocity, and parts of Jefferson Parish did flood, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes suffered considerably more water damage. While there are not enough interviews in the two latter parishes to analyze individually, this differential impact is reflected in the fact that two-thirds of Orleans Parish residents were affected in at least two of the areas measured here, compared to about half of those in Jefferson Parish. In particular, compared to Jefferson residents, Orleans Parish residents stand out as being particularly hard hit both financially and in terms of sustaining some injury to the fabric of their personal and family lives.

Impacts in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes

Percent who reported having an impact in each of the following areas after Hurricane Katrina, by parish:



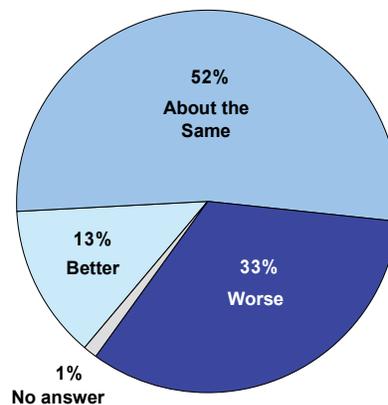
Financial situation worse after Katrina

The most common way that Katrina affected current New Orleans area residents was by hitting them in their wallets. Fully half the residents reported that their finances had suffered on one of the three measures below. Financial problems were particularly widespread in Orleans Parish, where two in three experienced at least one of the three problems measured, 22 percentage points higher than the total for Jefferson Parish. Overall, a third said their financial situation was worse than before Katrina. And this is in an area where nearly half of Orleans Parish residents and a third of Jefferson Parish residents could be classified as low income even before the storm hit.⁶

<i>Financial situation worse after Katrina</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Personal financial situation rated worse now than before	33%	40%	30%
Monthly housing costs increased a lot	33	50	26
Storm-related claim denied and had major impact	9	8	9
At least one of these problems	52	66	44
Two or more of these problems	20	30	16

Reported Changes in Financial Situation

Compared to before Hurricane Katrina, is your personal financial situation better, worse, or about the same today?



Those who were most likely to report being less well off than before the storm were those who can least afford it: the poor, the unemployed and those heavily reliant on social services. There was obviously already extensive poverty before the storm, but doubtless there were also people who were cast into serious financial distress by Katrina. It is likely that many of those people who reported taking a monetary hit were already struggling before Katrina crossed the Gulf of Mexico.

Much of this financial distress is no doubt related to the housing market, which was unalterably changed when the storm and subsequent flooding destroyed tens of thousands of homes. The large majority of area residents (72 percent) reported that their monthly housing costs had gone up at least somewhat since the storm, and 33 percent said those costs had gone up “a lot.” This figure was significantly higher in Orleans Parish, which lost many more homes than Jefferson Parish. Residents of Algiers, the West Bank neighborhood that remained relatively dry, were particularly hard hit in this regard, as people sought housing there when other alternatives remained flooded. They were the most likely to say their own housing costs went up sharply (62 percent said they had increased “a lot”).

⁶ Rudowitz et. al., “Health Care in New Orleans”, w394.

Reported Increase in Housing Costs

Have your monthly housing costs increased or decreased since Hurricane Katrina, or are they about the same as before?



Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

Overall, 13 percent said they have been denied or unreasonably delayed payment on a Katrina-related insurance claim. Most of these – totaling 9 percent of area residents – said the claim denial or delay had a “major impact” on their household. The remainder said the insurance company’s actions had a “minor impact” or “no impact.”

No job or worse job after Katrina

The survey found that about one in six residents currently living in the New Orleans area have suffered some sort of setback on the employment front since Katrina. Looking at the employment impacts individually: 6 percent said they had a job before Katrina hit but were currently unemployed, and similar percentages said they had suffered in terms of lowered wages or lost benefits.

<i>No job or a worse job after Katrina</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Newly unemployed	6%	7%	5%
Benefits at job worse than before storm	6	7	6
Current job pays less than previous job	5	9	4
Job now doesn't pay enough to cover basic expenses, pre-storm job did	4	7	4
Job now doesn't offer health insurance, pre-storm job did	3	5	2
<i>At least one of these problems</i>	17	21	16
<i>Two or more of these problems</i>	5	7	4

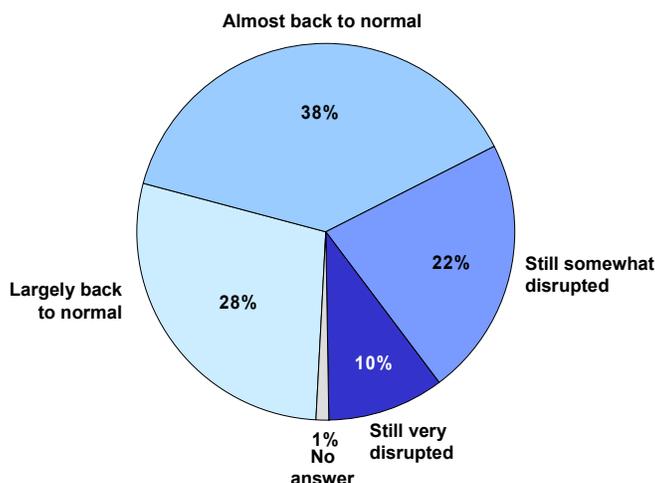
There is one upside to the employment story, however: the survey found that to the extent that workers reported a change in their salaries, they were more likely to say that their paychecks had increased since Katrina (17 percent of all residents) than to say their wages had gone down (5 percent). On the benefits front the numbers were more evenly balanced, with 6 percent of all respondents saying they were in jobs with better benefits now and the same percentage saying they were in jobs with worse benefits.

Experienced major life disruption in terms of housing or social network

Overall, a third of residents said their lives remain at least somewhat disrupted by the storm, a percentage which varies widely across neighborhoods and groups. African Americans in Orleans Parish stood out as particularly likely to have said life was not back to normal (59 percent), as were those living in heavily flooded areas of Orleans Parish⁷ (57 percent), and to a lesser extent, those living in households making less than \$30,000 annually (where 45 percent were still disrupted).

Recovering from Hurricane Katrina

Which of the following best describes your day to day life in terms of recovering from Hurricane Katrina?



But aggregating across a range of possible social impacts, even more area residents reported having had some *severe* disruption in the fabric of their personal lives because of Katrina, from being forced out of their homes for a long period of time to losing a loved one. Again, this phenomenon was much more prevalent in the harder hit parish of Orleans – where nearly half (48 percent) reported this degree of dislocation – than in neighboring Jefferson (30 percent). It rises to more than half (54 percent) if one looks only at the most heavily flooded areas of Orleans.

<i>Experienced major life disruption in terms of housing or social network</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Stayed away from home more than three months	17%	25%	11%
Close friend or family member died as result of Katrina	14	21	10
Owned home before, now renting or staying with friends	6	6	7
Living in new neighborhood, do not feel at home there	5	5	5
Had a local social network before storm, none left	4	7	3
Living in temporary housing	3	3	1
At least one of these problems	37	48	30
Two or more of these problems	9	15	5

Overall, 17 percent of area residents and 25 percent of those in Orleans Parish said they had to be away from their homes for at least three months after Katrina. One in seven (14 percent) said they had lost a close friend or family member during the storm or its aftermath, a number which rose to 21 percent among those living in Orleans Parish. Smaller percentages said they were no longer homeowners, were in a new neighborhood that did not feel welcoming, or reported that their pre-storm social support network had been demolished.

⁷ Throughout the report, “heavily flooded areas of Orleans Parish” refers to areas that had an average of 2 feet of flooding or more.

Access to health care compromised

Katrina and its aftermath decimated New Orleans’ health care system. One year after the storm, only three of nine acute care hospitals in Orleans Parish were operational, most with limited capacity. Estimates are that 4,500 doctors were dislocated from three New Orleans parishes by the storm. More than two thousand nursing home beds were lost.⁸ There is no more concrete symbol of the blow to New Orleans’ health care system than the shutdown of Charity Hospital. The nation’s second-oldest public hospital, Charity was the primary source of care for the city’s most needy residents before the storm.

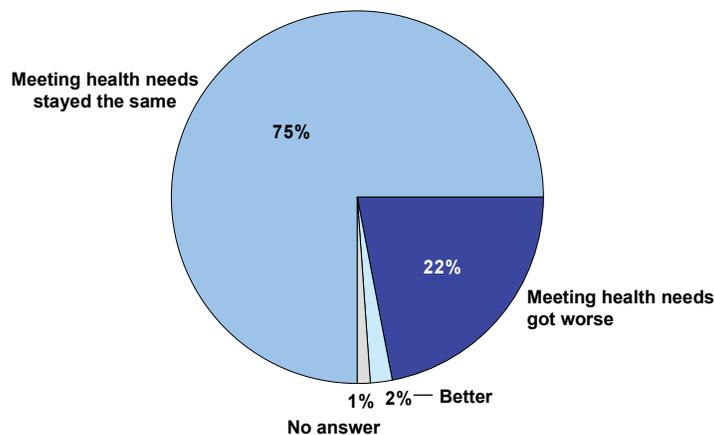
The survey found that more than a third of New Orleans area residents have seen their access to health care worsen since the storm, a proportion which rose to 41 percent in Orleans Parish overall and nearly half (47 percent) in the most heavily flooded areas.

<i>Access to health care compromised</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Meeting health needs rated lower now than before	22%	25%	18%
Harder to get to medical care now than before	18	21	16
Had regular doctor or nurse before storm, do not now	8	12	5
Had regular place to go for care before storm, do not now	5	6	5
Newly uninsured	4	5	4
At least one of these problems	36	41	32
Two or more of these problems	15	17	12

Asked to rate the way their health care needs were being met one year after Katrina compared to how well they were being served before the storm, one in five (22 percent) reported a deterioration. This was even higher among those who said they were in fair or poor mental or physical health (48 percent and 37 percent, respectively), the unemployed (39 percent), and the uninsured (35 percent).

Challenges in Meeting Health Needs

Overall, how well would you say your health needs are being met today?
And how about before Hurricane Katrina?



⁸ Rudowitz et. al., "Health Care in New Orleans," w399-400.

Nearly one in five (18 percent) reported that it was harder for them to travel to their place of health care after the storm. Those who relied on public transportation were more vulnerable in this regard: 29 percent of this group said it was harder for them to reach care since Katrina. One in twelve (8 percent) said that while they had a regular health care practitioner before the storm, they no longer have one; and one in twenty (5 percent) said that they had a regular place to go for medical care before the storm, such as a private doctor's office or clinic, but now had no place to go for care or relied on a hospital emergency room.

The area's uninsurance rate remains somewhat above the national average, at 20 percent of all adults and 25 percent of non-elderly adults.⁹ But in terms of impact a relatively small proportion of adults in the area reported being *newly* uninsured – 4 percent overall.

Physical health worse after Katrina

Overall, one in five (19 percent) reported a decline in physical health since Katrina, either rating their personal health status as worse than before the storm, or reporting that they had a new chronic health problem or one that has been exacerbated over the past year. As is true for the next category as well, this measure may include some people whose physical or mental health declined for reasons unrelated to the storm.

<i>Physical health worse after Katrina</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Personal health status rated lower now than before	12%	14%	10%
Have chronic condition or disability that is new or has gotten worse since storm	11	11	10
One of these problems	19	21	17
Both of these problems	3	4	3

Mental health worse after Katrina

Roughly one in six (16 percent) of those in the New Orleans area reported some type of deterioration in their mental health since Katrina. Overall, 15 percent rated their mental health as worse than before Katrina, and 4 percent said they had begun taking medication for a mental health condition since the storm. These conditions often affected people experiencing other life challenges: Among those most likely to report that their mental health has deteriorated were those who reported being in only fair or poor physical health (28 percent, compared to 13 percent of those in good physical health).

<i>Mental health worse after Katrina</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Mental health status rated lower now than before	15%	21%	12%
Taking medication for mental health issue (Rx is new since storm)	4	4	3
One of these problems	16	22	13
Both of these problems	2	3	2

Stress took personal toll: temper, alcohol use, tension in marriage

The storm tested more than people's physical and financial endurance – it tested the strength of their psyches. Put under enormous pressure on a variety of fronts, nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the area's residents reported some serious storm-related toll in terms of personal stress in their own lives or in their relationships, sometimes with serious consequences.

Close to two in ten (17 percent) New Orleans area residents said it is more difficult for them to control their temper since the storm, and about one in ten (9 percent) said they have increased their alcohol consumption as a result of Katrina.

⁹ Nationally, 21 percent of non-elderly adults are uninsured (Source: analysis of 2005 Current Population Survey).

Overall, 14 percent said that the storm and its aftermath had caused some level of stress in their “marriage or other serious relationship.” Those in Orleans Parish reported more marital problems – with nearly one in four (22 percent) saying this has been a problem since the storm. In some of these cases – included above as part of the measure of more serious stress-related impacts – the pressure took a nasty turn: 10 percent of those in Orleans Parish said that the new stress in their marriage had caused an incident where they or their partner “became so angry that one of you lost control and either yelled, broke things or tried to hurt each other.” Overall, 5 percent in Orleans Parish (and 3 percent in the area overall) said their marriage or relationship has ended as a result of that stress.

<i>Stress took personal toll: temper, alcohol use, tension in marriage</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Harder time controlling temper since Katrina	17%	23%	13%
Increased alcohol use due to Katrina	9	11	8
Katrina-related stress led to verbal or physical conflict in marriage or serious relationship	6	10	4
Katrina-related stress contributed to marriage or serious relationship ending	3	5	2
At least one of these problems	23	30	19
Two or more of these problems	8	13	6

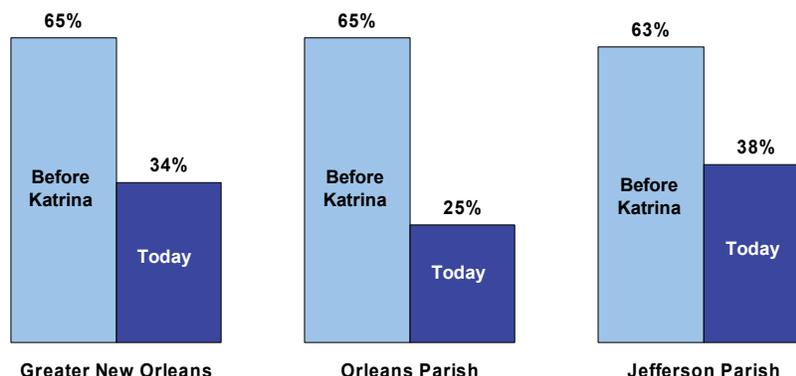
Quality of life ratings drop

These individual impacts, spread across the waterfront of life’s worries – from financial to health to jobs to personal stress – have resulted in a striking deflation in the way New Orleanians rate their overall quality of life. One year after the storm, a third of those in the New Orleans area said they were “very satisfied” with their quality of life, only half as many as said they were very content with their lives before the storm. This differs somewhat by parish, with those in Orleans even less likely to report being very satisfied at the time of the survey (25 percent compared with 38 percent for Jefferson).

Satisfaction With Quality of Life

In general, can you tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with your overall quality of life? And what about before Hurricane Katrina?

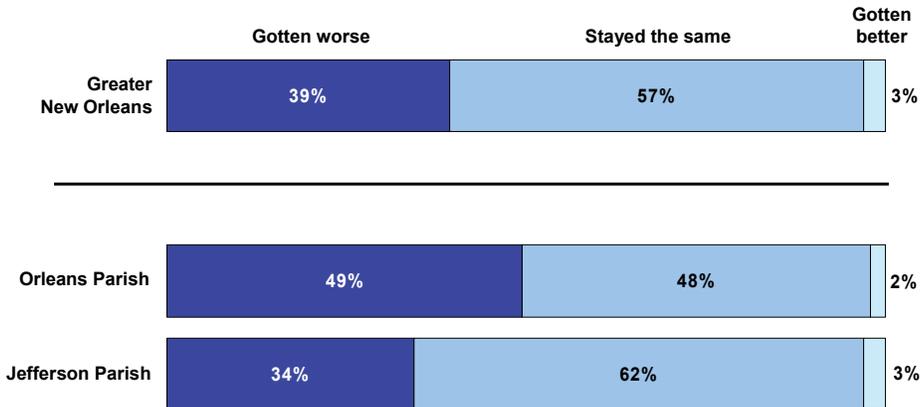
Percent “very satisfied” with overall quality of life:



Looking at the general deterioration in life satisfaction – anyone who downgraded their quality of life rating by a category, rather than comparing the percent “very satisfied” in each – the survey found that 39 percent said they were less satisfied now than before, while 57 percent reported the same level of satisfaction before and after.

Reported Change in Quality of Life

Percent whose satisfaction with their overall quality of life has ... since Hurricane Katrina:



Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

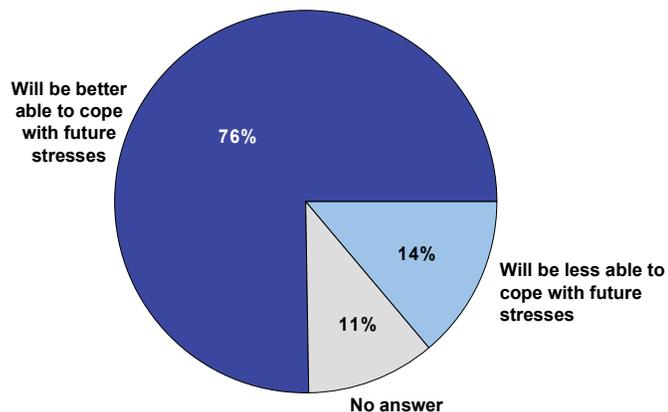
The silver lining: most feel experience made them stronger

There is one impact, however, that provides a sense of why this historic port city has been able to maintain its low-lying land and irreplaceable culture throughout the country’s history: a willingness to meet challenge with strength. The survey found that a majority of New Orleanians of all racial backgrounds and in all types of neighborhoods – hard hit and not – said they will be better able to cope with future stress because of their experiences with Katrina. Overall, three in four reported that the experience of the storm has made them stronger.

Residents maintained this strength by relying on personal relationships and their faith in God. Nine in ten said their friends and family were an integral factor in their ability to cope with the challenges posed by the storm and its aftermath, while three in four (77 percent) said that their faith or religious beliefs had played a vital role.

Ability to Cope in the Future

Which of these effects do you think your experiences with Hurricane Katrina will have on you over time?



Summary of Impacts

One year after the hurricane, Katrina's effects continued to loom large in the lives of Greater New Orleans residents. Half have seen their financial situation damaged in some way, nearly four in ten experienced a severe life disruption in terms of housing, losing a loved one or seeing their social network severely limited, and more than a third have seen their access to health care compromised in some way. In many of these areas, residents of the more heavily-flooded areas of Orleans Parish stand out as particularly impacted. As a result, quality of life ratings have dropped markedly.

Despite these setbacks, however, most area residents said they feel they will emerge from the experience stronger than before. That strength is much needed. In the next section, we turn from the specific ways the storm changed people's lives to look more broadly at the ongoing life challenges facing the population.

STATE OF THE POPULATION: A PORTRAIT OF CHALLENGES FACING CURRENT RESIDENTS

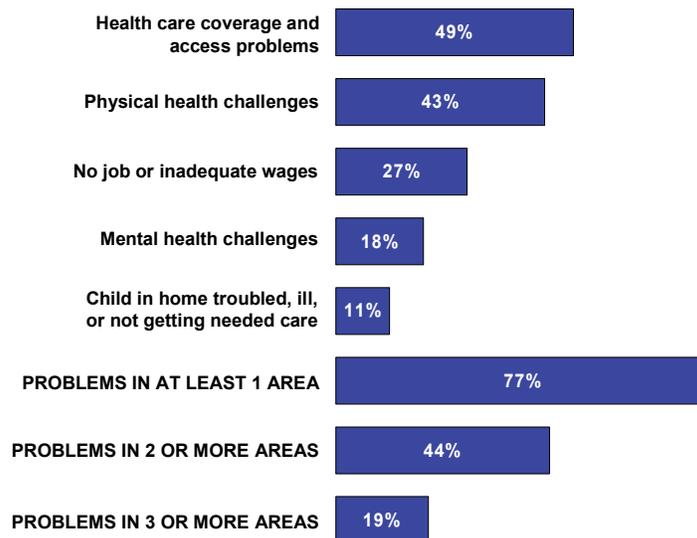
Broken levees, flattened neighborhoods, boarded up shopping centers: the task facing those in charge of physically rebuilding New Orleans was and is daunting. But the survey suggests that the challenges facing those in charge of rebuilding community services to meet the personal and social needs of its residents is no less massive. In this section, we turn to look at the overall needs of the area’s population in the fall of 2006, whether these were new needs or pre-existing ones.

That population is striking in its diversity. The survey found that 56 percent of adults in Greater New Orleans were white, 30 percent were African American and 10 percent were Hispanic, numbers that varied widely across parishes.¹⁰ Half (51 percent) were married, and one in three (35 percent) had at least one child under age 19 living in their household. Just over four in ten (43 percent) had a high school degree or less, while one in four (25 percent) had graduated from college. Two in three said they were homeowners, while 27 percent said they were renting. One in three (35 percent) were classified based on their reported income, their eligibility for public assistance, or lack of employment to be economically disadvantaged.

Again measuring across a variety of dimensions, this time regardless of whether the problem was a direct result of Hurricane Katrina, the survey found that fully three in four residents (77 percent) said that they or their children were facing a challenge in the areas of health, access to health care, or employment, and more than four in ten (44 percent) said they were facing a serious life problem in two or more of these critical areas.¹¹ Those living in Orleans Parish were more likely than those in Jefferson to be facing problems in two or more areas (52 percent compared with 41 percent).

Portrait of Problems Faced by Greater New Orleans Residents

Percent who reported having a problem in each of the following areas:

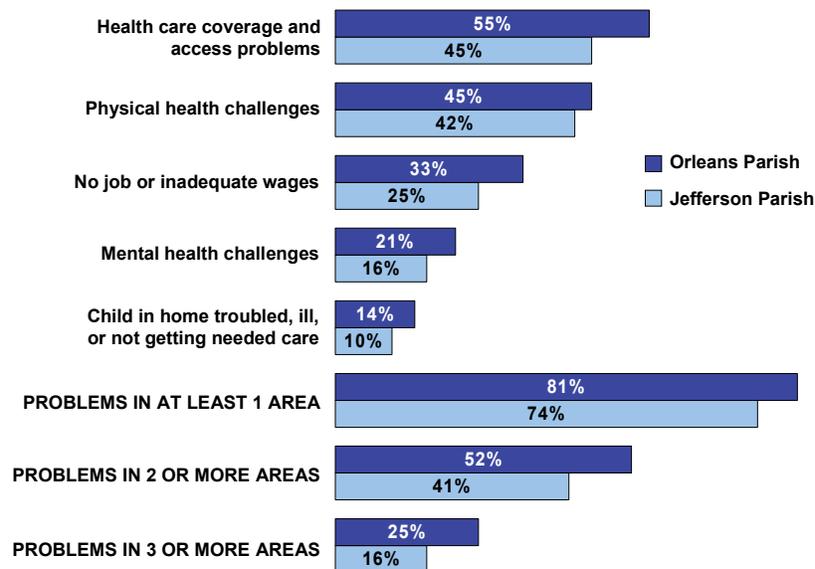


¹⁰ In this report, African Americans and whites are defined as non-Hispanic blacks and non-Hispanic whites. For more on racial breakdowns across parishes and other demographic information, see “Appendix A: New Orleans Area Demographics and Population Estimates”

¹¹ See “Appendix C: Creating aggregate impact and problem measures” for a description of the areas of problems measured and how they were created.

Portrait of Problems Faced in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes

Percent who reported having a problem in each of the following areas:



Many of these needs predate the storm. In the months before Katrina paid its deadly visit, roughly one in four Orleans Parish residents were living in poverty, and nearly half, along with a third in Jefferson Parish, could be classified as low income (with family incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level). Louisiana’s residents also stood out among the fifty states for their staggering health burdens, with high rates of chronic diseases, AIDS and infant mortality exacerbated by one of the nation’s highest uninsurance rates.¹²

As the previous section indicates, Katrina did much to make an already challenging situation that much more challenging. In this section, we turn from looking at the specific ways that Katrina made life in New Orleans harder to a look at the current status of a relatively high-needs population. In particular, the survey focuses on challenges in the area of health, health care and employment. There are obviously other areas of need, including safety and education, which are not catalogued here.

¹² Rudowitz et. al., “Health Care in New Orleans,” w394.

Physical health challenges

The survey suggests found that four in ten in greater New Orleans reported having a chronic illness or disability, or otherwise rated themselves as being in fair or poor health. Chronic conditions reported ranged from the serious to those that can be easily managed with proper access to regular health care. Topping the list of specific problems were hypertension (24 percent), diabetes (11 percent), asthma and other breathing problems (9 percent), and heart disease (8 percent). These represent a substantial need for health care services in the area. Again looking at the full population, 13 percent rated their own health as “fair” or “poor.”

<i>Physical health challenges</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Have any chronic condition or disability	41%	42%	40%
Health rated as “fair” or “poor”	13	14	12
One of these problems	43	45	42
Both of these problems	10	11	9

Mental health challenges

Some are also facing serious mental health challenges. Overall, 18 percent either reported being in poor mental health, said they had been diagnosed with a serious mental illness or were taking prescription medicine for emotional or behavioral problems, or scored as depressed or as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. This is a particular challenge given the extent to which the city’s capability to respond has been damaged. Estimates are that while the city’s hospitals had a total of 462 inpatient psychiatric beds before the storm, that number dwindled to 160 afterward. The number of outpatient clinics serving patients with serious mental health needs also declined.¹³

<i>Mental health challenges</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Mental health “fair” or “poor”	8%	10%	8%
Taking medication for mental health issue	8	8	8
Score as depressed ¹⁴	6	6	5
Score as PTSD ¹⁵	5	5	4
Diagnosed with serious mental illness	4	5	4
At least one of these problems	18	21	16
Two or more of these problems	7	8	7

Health care coverage and access problems

According to the survey, getting and affording quality health care is a widespread challenge for those living in New Orleans. Half of residents in the area (49 percent) said they were facing some problem getting the health care they need, and half of this group was facing more than one barrier to care.

Most common among these: one in four overall, and one in three in Orleans Parish, said that their usual source of care when facing an illness or injury was a hospital emergency room, or that they had no usual source of care. One out of every five adults (20 percent) reported that they themselves did not have health insurance, and 30 percent said there was at least one adult or child in their household who was not insured. Among adults ages 18 to 64, the non-elderly population, the reported uninsurance rate rose to 25 percent.

¹³ Rudowitz et. al., “Health Care in New Orleans,” w401.

¹⁴ Summary measure created using validated scale. See “Appendix E: Survey Topline” for full question wording and details. Reference: “The Patient Health Questionnaire-2: Validity of a Two-Item Depression Screener”, by Kroenke, et al., in *Medical Care*, Vol. 41, 2003.

¹⁵ Summary measure created using validated scale. See “Appendix E: Survey Topline” for full question wording and details. Reference: “The Primary Care PTSD screen (PC-PTSD): Development and Operating Characteristics”, by Prins, et al., in *Primary Care Psychiatry*, Vol. 9, 2003.

Smaller but still important percentages said it was physically difficult for them to reach their normal place of care (12 percent), or described the way their health needs were being met as “not too well” or “not at all well” (10 percent). Not surprisingly, those who said they rely on public transportation to get around the city were much more likely to have problems reaching needed care: 42 percent said it was at least somewhat difficult for them to travel to their care provider.

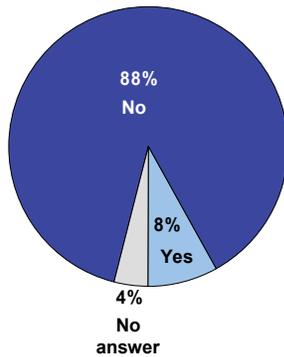
<i>Health care coverage and access problems</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Usual place of care is ER/No usual place of care	27%	34%	23%
Uninsured	20	26	18
Difficult to get to usual place of care	12	15	10
Health needs not being well met	10	11	10
Skipped or postponed care past 6 months	8	9	6
Skipped doses or took less than prescribed Rx in last 6 months	6	6	6
Problems paying medical bills in last 6 months had major financial impact	4	5	4
At least one of these problems	49	55	45
Two or more of these problems	24	30	20

The challenges facing the city when it comes to health care were widely acknowledged in the survey. Nearly nine in ten residents said there were not enough hospitals, clinics and medical facilities to take care of people in New Orleans, and the same large number expressed concerns about low-income residents’ access to health care services.

Agreement About Lack of Health Care Providers, Services

Do you think there are enough of the following to take care of the people living in the greater New Orleans area, or not?

Hospitals, clinics and medical facilities currently operating



Health care services currently available for uninsured and low-income people



Child in home troubled, ill, or not getting needed care

Some of the most striking and painful visuals that emerged from the flooded city in late August 2005 were the images of New Orleans' children: being floated down what was once a concrete sidewalk inside a plastic cooler; huddling together without father or mother on a broken highway overpass; waiting in line for food or transportation. Like many of their parents, the children of New Orleans continue to present the city with a long list of health issues.

Survey respondents were asked to respond not only about their own health and health care experiences and needs but about those of the children living in their households. Overall, 35 percent of area residents reported that at least one child under the age of 19 lived in their homes.

Among this population, a third (32 percent) reported that there was a child in the home with a serious health need or behavioral problem, or potential problem getting access to health care. This translates into one in ten residents overall reporting that there was a child in their home having some sort of major health or health care problem.

Roughly one in six (17 percent) of those with children living in their homes said that at least one child had a chronic condition or disability. The most commonly reported conditions included asthma or other breathing problems (9 percent of adults with a child at home said at least one child had this problem) and serious emotional or behavioral problems (5 percent).

<i>Child in home troubled, ill, or not getting needed care (among those with children in household)</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Child in home with chronic condition or disability	17%	21%	16%
Any child didn't get needed health care in last 6 months	9	17	6
Uninsured child in home	8	11	7
Children's health needs not being met well	6	5	6
Child shows signs of behavioral problems ¹⁶	4	1	5
At least one of these problems	32	42	28
Two or more of these problems	10	11	11

If there is a bright side to the figures about health problems and barriers for children, it is that they are lower than those for adults. Overall, 74 percent said the health needs of the children in their home were being "very well" met, compared to 42 percent of adults who said this about their own needs. Four in ten (43 percent) of those with children under age 19 at home said at least one of the children had insurance through Medicaid or LaCHIP (the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program). Still, nearly one in ten said that a child in the home had had to postpone needed care in the past six months, roughly similar to what adults reported for themselves.

¹⁶ This item was only asked of parents, and is based on a series of questions asked about a particular child in the household (the child with the most recent birthday). Other items in this aggregate measure were asked of all respondents who had a child in their homes, whether or not they were the child's parent, and were asked about ALL children in the household rather than about a particular child. For these reasons, the share of adults living with a child who shows signs of behavioral problems according to this measure may be an underestimate.

No job or inadequate wages

One in three Orleans Parish residents, and one in four in Jefferson Parish, reported a serious issue concerning their job or lack of a job. Overall, 13 percent said they worked in a job that did not pay enough to cover their basic expenses. One in ten said they were unemployed, and another 6 percent said they were on disability and could not work.

<i>No job or inadequate wages</i>	Greater New Orleans	Orleans Parish	Jefferson Parish
Job doesn't pay enough to cover basic expenses	13%	16%	12%
Unemployed	10	12	8
On disability and can't work	6	6	6
<i>Any of these problems</i>	27	33	25

Other challenges

Four in ten residents told interviewers that they did not have reliable access to the Internet. And a notable one in four (24 percent) reported that they did not have a land line phone, including 31 percent in Orleans. One in seven (14 percent) didn't own a car, and overall, 10 percent said they relied on public transportation.

Summary of Challenges

The New Orleans area, then, remains a place where a considerable proportion of the population is dealing with some sort of chronic illness or disability and, at the same time, fully half the population faces some sort of barrier to getting regular, quality health care. The area's children are not immune to these challenges. A minority of residents are also struggling to get or maintain a solid foothold in the labor force.

All these problems, to one extent or another, were exacerbated by a storm that the survey suggests left few residents untouched, beginning most commonly with their financial security and reaching into the fabric of many people's day-to-day family life.

In the next section, residents speak out about the ongoing recovery process that is attempting to meet these needs.

PRIORITIES, PROGRESS AND WORRIES: NEW ORLEANS AREA RESIDENTS RATE THE REBUILDING PROCESS

Anyone who has been to post-Katrina New Orleans and gone beyond the perimeter of the French Quarter can tell you that the city, while having made considerable progress since the waters began to recede in the fall of 2005, has much left to do. As city, state and federal officials join with residents, private enterprise and community groups to bring New Orleans back to its pre-Katrina state, we asked the area’s population to evaluate this recovery and rebuilding process. The results provide a report card of sorts on the public’s priorities and whether they see progress across them.

Overall, the study found a population both optimistic and worried, one that is underwhelmed but not discontented with the progress being made in most areas, and in general feels the rebuilding effort is going in the right direction.

The group that comes in for perhaps the harshest criticism: political leaders in Washington. The most credit is given to those who have gotten basic services such as water and electricity back online, the area where New Orleanians see the most progress.

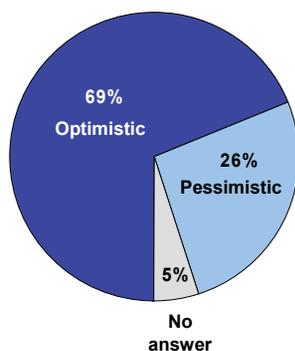
Optimism and consensus

Any discussion of the way that residents of the greater New Orleans area view the rebuilding process needs to begin with a note of hope: Despite the problems, and despite the widespread personal challenges facing the area’s residents, optimism is widespread in New Orleans.

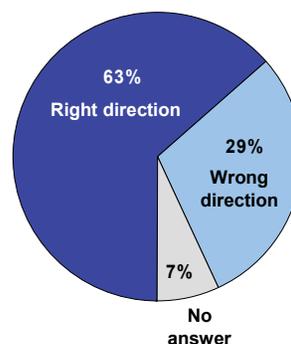
Seven in ten residents overall (69 percent) said they were optimistic about the future of New Orleans – including equally large proportions in more heavily impacted Orleans Parish as in Jefferson. Just as importantly, a majority (63 percent) said the rebuilding efforts were going in the right direction, including 67 percent in Jefferson Parish, 58 percent in Orleans Parish, and even 62 percent living in the most heavily flooded parts of that parish. This leaves three in ten who felt the rebuilding effort is going in the wrong direction.

Optimism Pervasive

Considering everything, are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the greater New Orleans area?



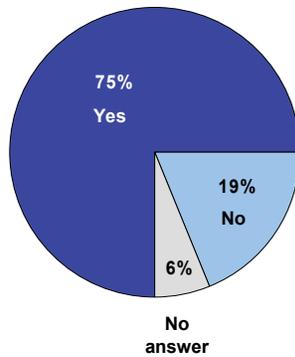
Would you say that in general the recovery and rebuilding effort in the greater New Orleans area is going in the right direction or in the wrong direction?



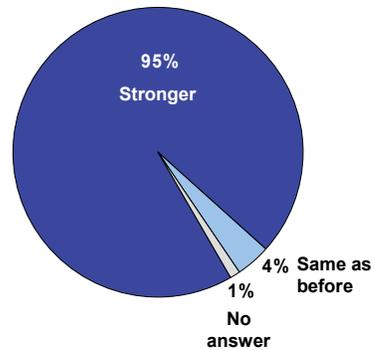
There is also a general consensus on the broadest questions facing a city that must determine how it will meet future storms. First, most residents believe that the low-lying areas of the city should be rebuilt. Fully three in four residents (75 percent) want to reclaim those sub-sea-level areas destroyed by the storm. An even larger majority (95 percent) want to see the levees rebuilt to a level that could withstand a category 5 hurricane, rather than replacing them with category 3 level protection the city had before the storm, a proposition that would require large amounts of new federal spending.

Agreement About Rebuilding and Repairing

Do you think low-lying areas destroyed by the flood should be rebuilt, or not?



Do you think the levees should be rebuilt as they were before Katrina – to withstand a category 3 hurricane – or should they be rebuilt stronger to withstand a category 5 hurricane, even if that will cost substantially more?

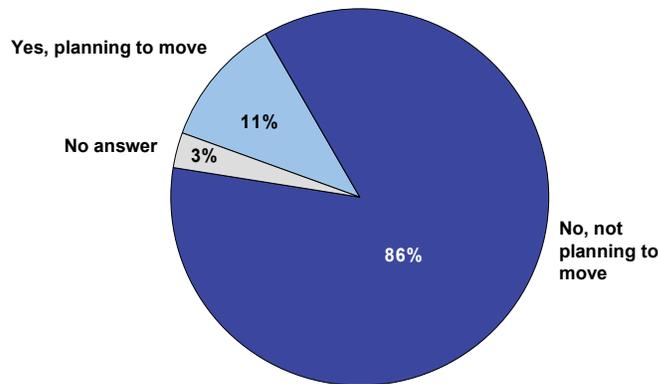


Large majority say they will stay

Asked whether they were “currently planning to move or seriously considering moving away from the greater New Orleans area,” the large majority – 86 percent – answered no. But there were some for whom hope lies elsewhere. One in ten (11 percent) of those who now live in the area said they were either planning to move or at least seriously thinking about doing so. This was higher among younger people (20 percent of those ages 18 to 29 said they may move). However, about one in five (18 percent) people in this age group moved to the area after Katrina and so have fewer roots there, compared to just two percent of those ages 30 and older.

Most Planning to Stay, But Some May Still Leave

Are you currently planning to move or seriously considering moving away from the greater New Orleans area, or not?

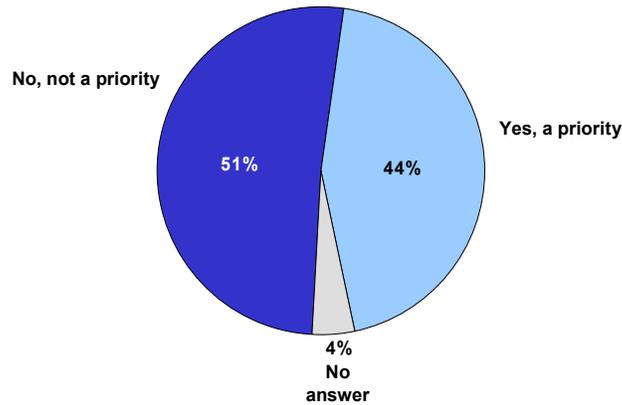


Many feel Washington doesn't care

The survey found a widespread feeling among the area's residents that Washington has forgotten them. Overall, half of residents (51 percent) said they did not think that rebuilding New Orleans was a priority for Congress and the president, while just over four in ten (44 percent) said they did feel their needs were a priority.

Mixed Views on Whether Washington Cares

Do you think the rebuilding of New Orleans is a priority for Congress and the president, or is it not a priority?



Neither did residents report an overwhelming level of confidence in the federal government’s ability to respond to future storms. Only 9 percent said they thought federal officials were “very prepared” to deal with the next big hurricane, compared to 53 percent who said they themselves were very prepared. Another 49 percent said the federal government was somewhat prepared, while 37 percent did not think the government was ready. State officials fared only marginally better when it comes to the public’s view of their preparedness: 8 percent said state officials were very prepared, 56 percent somewhat prepared and 32 percent not very or not at all prepared.

Preparedness for Future Hurricanes?

Overall, how prepared do you think each of the following are to deal with hurricanes in the future?



Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

Priorities: Storm preparation and eradicating crime, followed by health care

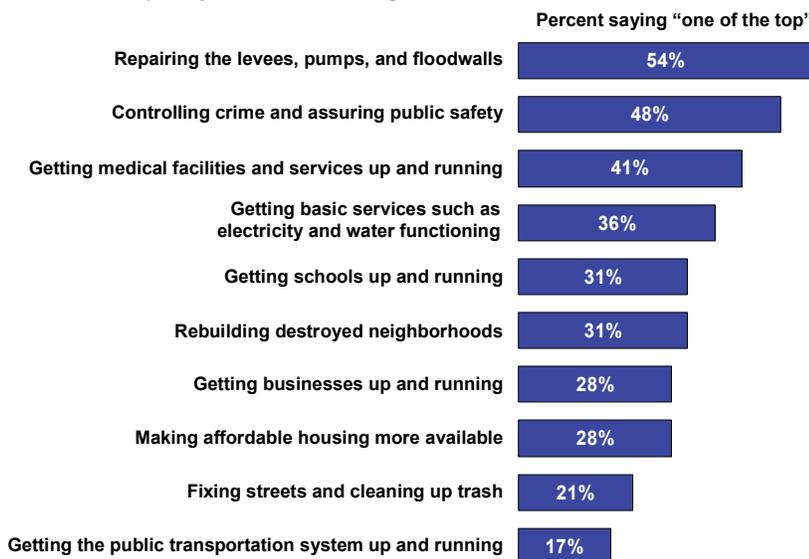
Not surprisingly given their recent experience, the need to prepare for the next storm tops the list of the public’s priorities for the recovery effort. This is followed by a large proportion who put crime control at the top of their list, followed by a desire to see more medical facilities and services provided.

More than half of residents (54 percent) said that “repairing the levees, pumps, and floodwalls” should be one of the top priorities for the rebuilding effort. Nearly as many (48 percent) said they want to see a focus on controlling crime and assuring public safety, a persistent issue since the storm.

After the obvious priorities of storm preparation and public safety, health care needs were next on the list, with 41 percent saying “getting medical facilities and services up and running” should be a major focus of the recovery effort. As noted earlier, overwhelming majorities of New Orleanians (88 percent) said that there are not enough hospitals, clinics and medical facilities to serve the population.

Levee Repair and Crime Top Priorities List

Thinking about the rebuilding and recovery efforts in the greater New Orleans area, please tell me how much of a priority each of the following should be:



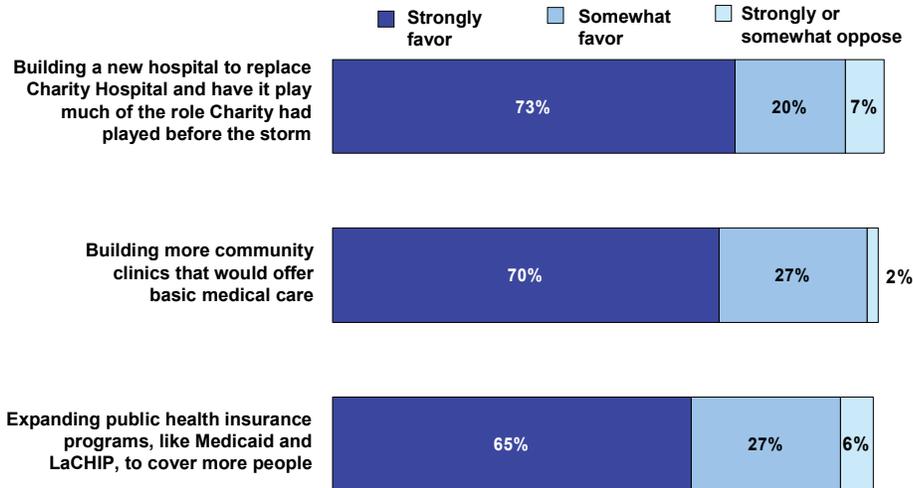
Health care priorities: appetite for solutions

When it comes to the important question of what, specifically, should be done to fix what area residents see as a problem with inadequate health care, respondents seemed eager to embrace a variety of possible solutions that would provide more health care and better access.

Fully nine in ten said they would favor each of three proposals tested in the survey: building a new hospital to replace Charity; building more community clinics to offer basic medical care; and expanding public health insurance programs like Medicaid and LaCHIP to cover more people. In each case, not only did a wide majority favor the plan, but at least two in three said they “strongly favored” the proposal. These responses were consistent across both Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

Desire to Expand Health Access

Please tell me whether you would strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the following options for making health care more available for uninsured and low-income people in the greater New Orleans area:

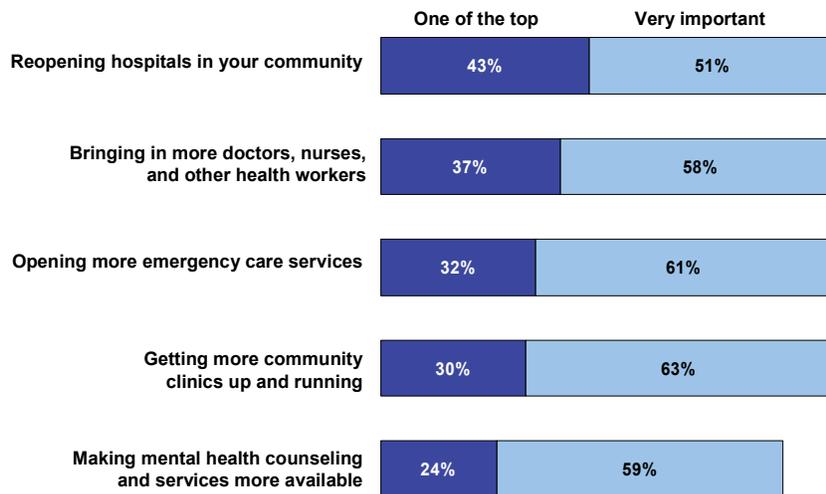


Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

Pushed to prioritize possible ways to rebuild New Orleans’ health care system, the majority of respondents described a number of proposals as “very important” but did not coalesce around one option as topping their list. To the extent that they did distinguish between options, reopening community hospitals came out on top, with 43 percent saying this was one of the major priorities, followed by bringing in more medical professionals (37 percent). Overall, the differences between the shares of residents who named each as a top priority were relatively small.

Hospitals and Providers Top Health Priorities

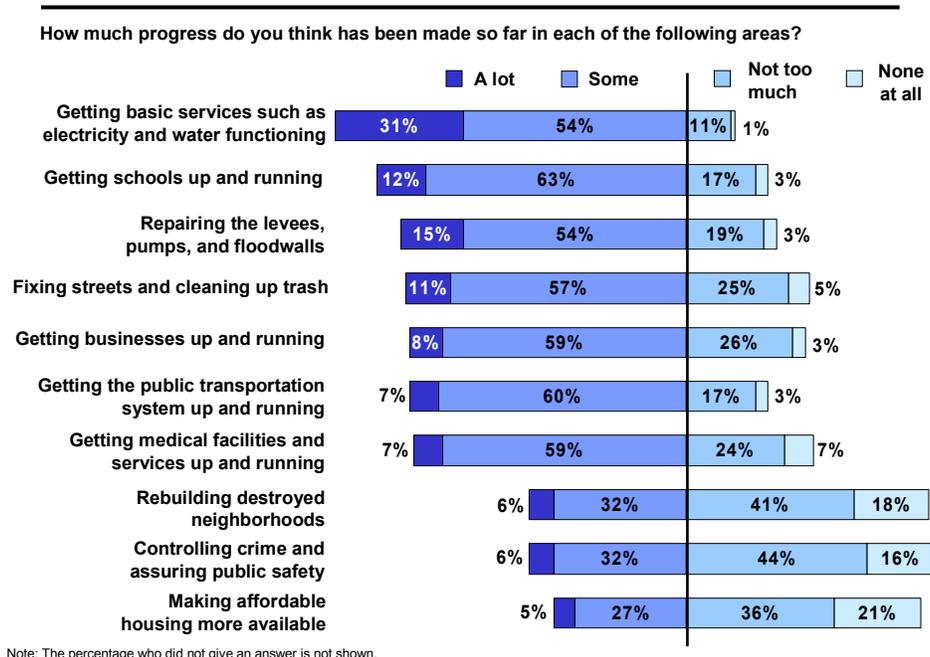
In terms of health issues, please tell me whether you think each of the following should be one of the top priorities for rebuilding New Orleans’ health care system, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important:



Residents see progress in many areas; exceptions are crime, housing, and rebuilding destroyed neighborhoods

In general, the majority of residents saw at least *some* progress being made on seven of the ten recovery efforts measured in the survey. In no case, however, did more than three in ten say they thought “a lot” of progress had been made. Importantly, of the public’s top three priorities, residents saw at least some progress being made on two (repairing the flood protection system and getting medical services up and running), while most said they did not see progress on the third (controlling crime).

Some Progress Seen



At the top of the public’s priority list were repairing the flood protection system, fighting crime and strengthening the health care system. Residents’ judgments about how the city is doing attacking these three problems were quite different. In terms of repairing levees pumps and floodwalls, 69 percent of residents said they saw at least “some progress” being made. Roughly the same percentage (66 percent) said they saw at least some progress in getting medical facilities and services up in running. (In both cases, however, relatively small numbers saw a lot of progress, 15 percent and 7 percent respectively.)

When it comes to crime, however, most of those living in the greater New Orleans area said they did *not* see progress taking place. Six in ten (60 percent) said there was either “not too much progress” or “none at all” taking place in the fight to improve public safety.

The highest ratings for progress were in the category of “getting basic services such as electricity and water functioning”, with 31 percent saying there has been a lot of progress, and 85 percent saying there has been at least some progress.

Along with crime, two other areas were judged as disappointments on the progress front. Most said there had not been progress in rebuilding destroyed neighborhoods (59 percent) or in making affordable housing more available (57 percent).

In general, residents of Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish rated progress similarly, though there were some cases – notably progress on schools and general cleanup – where the former were significantly more critical in their views. In the case of schools, one in three Orleans Parish residents said they saw little or no progress, twice as many as in Jefferson Parish. In terms of “fixing streets and cleaning up trash”, 39 percent in Orleans were disappointed with progress, compared with 23 percent in Jefferson.

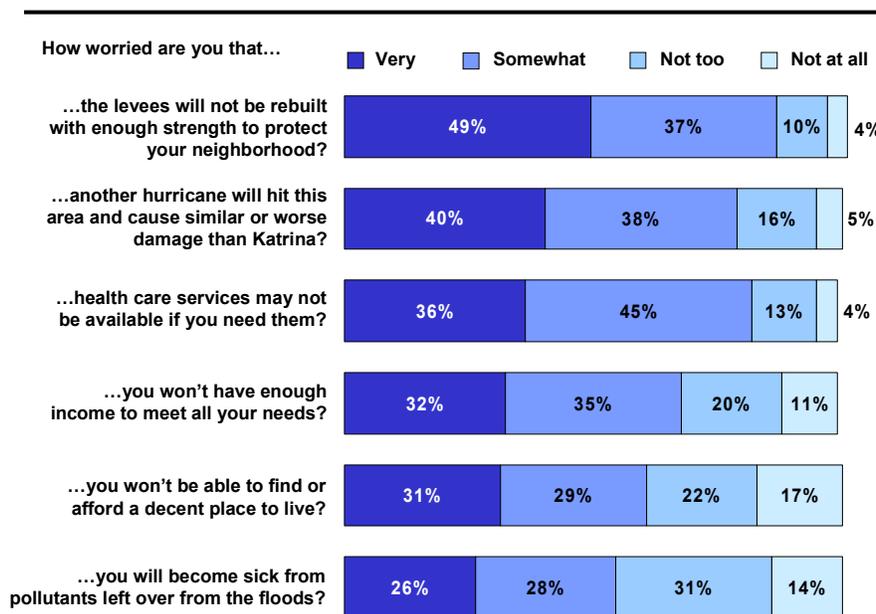
Worries, like priorities, focus on the next storm

One residue of the storm surge is physical, the brown line ringing many houses that marks the high point of the flooding. But another is emotional: the residue of worry that clings to most people who have chosen to stay in the area.

The survey found that half were “very worried” that the levees won’t be rebuilt with enough strength to protect their neighborhood, and 86 percent were at least somewhat worried. Overall, 78 percent were at least somewhat worried that another storm that equals or exceeds Katrina’s strength will hit New Orleans, including 40 percent who were very worried.

In a population which expresses broad discontent with the extent of health care services currently available, a majority was also worried that care might not be available when they need it (81 percent at least somewhat worried, 36 percent very worried).

Levees, Hurricanes Top Worry List



Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

Summary of Priorities, Progress, and Worries

Overall, then, Greater New Orleans residents had both good things and bad to say about the recovery process. On the one hand they were optimistic about the future and sanguine about the general direction of rebuilding and the progress they have seen in many specific areas. On the other hand, many felt Washington had forsaken them, and most said that when it comes to one of their top priorities—crime control—not enough was happening. Large majorities remained worried about the next big storm, and relatively few expressed a great deal of confidence that either federal or state officials were fully prepared to deal with such a challenge.

A SPECIAL FOCUS ON RACE IN ORLEANS PARISH

When the rain began to fall in New Orleans that fateful late August day, it fell indiscriminately. But it fell on a city that – like many of America’s urban areas – politically, socially and to some extent even geographically was often divided by race.

Before August 29, 2005, New Orleans was already a city where there was a substantial racial difference on several key quality of life measures. African Americans, who made up two-thirds of all Orleans Parish residents, were substantially more likely to be low income. According to the 2000 Census, fully a third of African Americans (34 percent) in Orleans Parish (which constitutes the City of New Orleans itself) were living below the poverty level, compared to 11 percent of whites and 22 percent of Hispanics. The median family income for African Americans was \$25,064, compared to \$62,312 for whites. There were also large disparities in health status for minorities, with the African American population more likely to suffer from heart disease, diabetes and asthma.¹⁷

These differences were thrust into the national spotlight by the extensive media coverage of the city’s plight in the days and weeks following Katrina, and the cameras that followed the storm’s evacuees as they slowly spread across first the South and then the nation. Three days after the storm, NBC Evening News reporter Bob Faw told the network’s audience the storm was “a catastrophe shedding light on class, on race and misery,” and that “disasters do not treat everyone alike,” adding that in the case of New Orleans, at least, “surviving is easier for whites, who have, than for blacks, who don’t.”

Analysis followed: “At Risk Before the Storm Struck; Prior Health Disparities Due to Race, Poverty Multiply Death, Disease,” said the headline on the front of the *Washington Post*’s health section on Sept. 13. As did combustible racial politics: “Amid Criticism of Federal Efforts, Charges of Racism are Lodged,” the *New York Times*’ John M. Broder wrote in a Sept. 5 story detailing the angry charges being lodged against the Bush administration by African American religious and political leaders in Houston and across the country.

This survey, conducted a year after the storm, suggests that many of these initial impressions have proven true. African Americans, particularly those living in Orleans Parish proper, stand out as a population more heavily burdened with problems when it comes to employment, financial security and health care access. And these disparities were exacerbated by the arrival of Hurricane Katrina. They also stand out as a group with real reservations about whether the rebuilding process is treating them fairly.¹⁸

Population by race: One year later

As of last fall, the survey suggests that African Americans remained a majority of the adult population in Orleans Parish, though a narrower one than in the last decennial census. Slightly more than half (53 percent) of adults in Orleans Parish were black, 39 percent were non-Hispanic whites, and 5 percent were Hispanic.

The African American share of the population in Jefferson Parish was substantially smaller, as it was before the storm, representing 19 percent of adults. Whites made up 62 percent of adults in Jefferson and Hispanics 13 percent.

¹⁷ Rudowitz et. al., “Health Care in New Orleans,” w394.

¹⁸ In this report, African Americans and whites are defined as non-Hispanic blacks and non-Hispanic whites. The survey also included Hispanic respondents, though there were not enough to break out separately by parish, as well as other minority respondents. Respondents from all racial and ethnic groups are included in the total percentages reported.

Race and the Storm

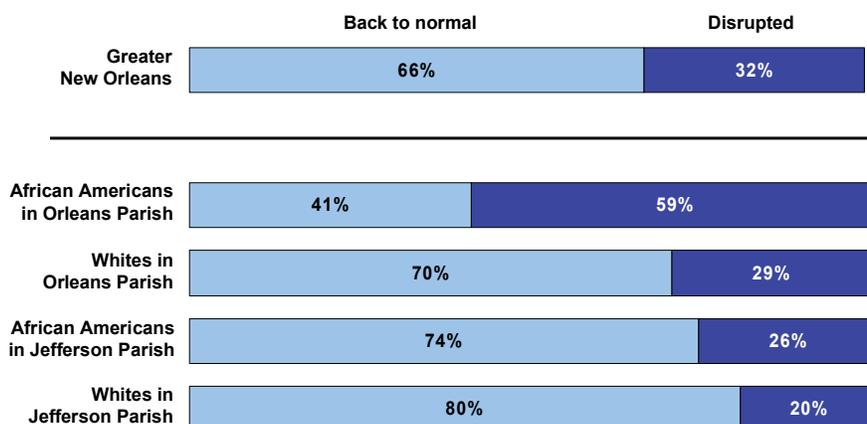
Because much of the damage to the city was caused by individual levees being breached as opposed to the initial wind and rain damage, and because different neighborhoods had different elevations, the storm’s effects were distinctly uneven across geography. This unevenness had a racial cast.

Overall, Orleans Parish – the heart of original New Orleans and an area that was and is more heavily populated by African Americans – was more affected than Jefferson Parish. But even *within* Orleans Parish, there remain racial differences in impact.

These are nowhere more dramatic than in self-reports of continued disruption: while the large majority of whites in Orleans (70 percent) said that their lives were “largely” or “almost” back to normal, most African Americans living in Orleans Parish (59 percent) said that their lives were still “very” or “somewhat” disrupted.

Recovering from Hurricane Katrina

Which of the following best describes your day to day life in terms of recovering from Hurricane Katrina – would you say that it is largely back to normal, almost back to normal, still somewhat disrupted, or still very disrupted?



Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

African Americans in Orleans Parish were also disproportionately likely to be living in neighborhoods that were heavily hit by flooding, the very neighborhoods which have the greatest needs in terms of rebuilding. Overall, roughly six in ten African Americans (58 percent) in Orleans Parish were living in areas that had an average of 2 feet or more of flooding, compared to 34 percent of whites.

The next section details some of the particular ways in which African Americans in Orleans Parish stand out as an affected population. Because that parish was more heavily damaged by the storm, and because African Americans living there stand out as a particularly hard-hit group, the analysis of racial differences going forward is limited to differences in Orleans Parish rather than across the whole area.

Measuring the storm’s impact

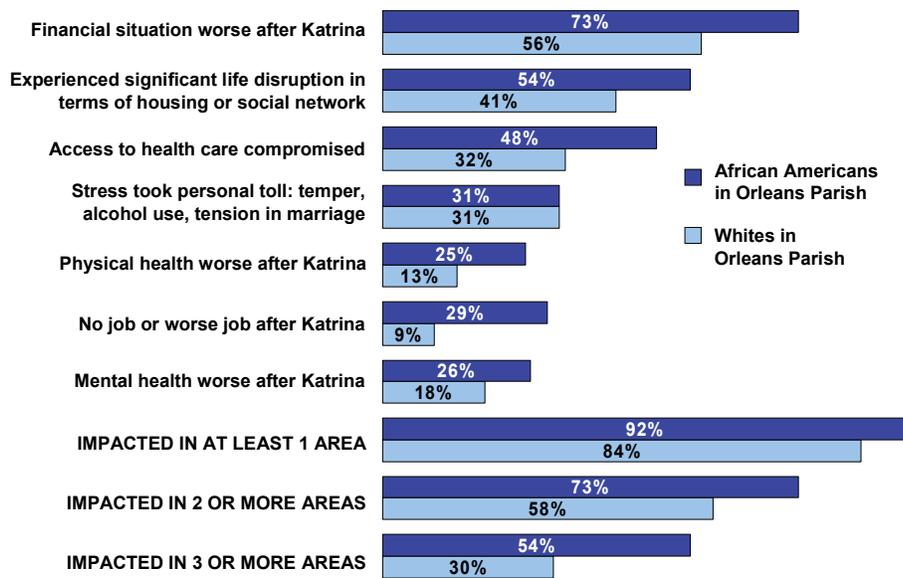
As the chart below suggests, it was nearly impossible to live in Orleans Parish and not see a difference in one’s quality of life after Katrina. Nine in ten residents, including 84 percent of whites and 92 percent of African Americans, said they felt the storm’s wrath in some area of their life.

But the data also suggest that today’s African American residents were somewhat more likely to be hit across a variety of fronts: 73 percent of African American residents said they were affected in two or more areas, compared to 58 percent of whites. This racial gap grows to 24 percentage points when you look at the group who experienced problems in at least three of these areas.

Racial differences in impact were fairly consistent across areas, with one exception: there was no difference in the proportion of whites and African Americans in the parish who reported that stress had impacted either their marriage or serious relationship, their temper, or their use of alcohol.

Orleans Parish: Impacts for African Americans and Whites

Percent who reported having an impact in each of the following areas after Hurricane Katrina:



Financial situation worse after Katrina

There was a large racial gap in impact in the area of finances: African Americans living in Orleans Parish were more likely to report having suffered financially in the wake of Katrina. Nearly three in four (73 percent) reported that their finances had worsened in some way, compared to 56 percent of whites in the parish. They were nearly twice as likely as whites to report having two of the three financial impacts measured.

In particular, nearly half of African Americans (47 percent) described their own personal financial situation as worse now than before August 2005, compared to a third of whites (32 percent) in the parish. They were also more likely than whites to say that their monthly housing costs have gone up “a lot”, this despite the fact that they were more likely to be living in damaged parts of the city.

<i>Financial situation worse after Katrina</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Personal financial situation rated worse now than before	32%	47%
Monthly housing costs increased a lot	42	56
Storm-related claim denied and had major impact	5	11
<i>At least one of these problems</i>	56	73
<i>Two or more of these problems</i>	21	38

No job or a worse job after Katrina

African Americans were also three times as likely as whites – 29 percent compared to 9 percent – to have experienced some employment challenge since the storm. In particular, 11 percent of African Americans in the city said they had a job before Katrina but were now unemployed, compared with 2 percent of whites.

<i>No job or a worse job after Katrina</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Newly unemployed	2%	11%
Benefits at job worse than before storm	3	10
Current job pays less than previous job	4	12
Job now doesn't pay enough to cover basic expenses, pre-storm job did	3	10
Job now doesn't offer health insurance, pre-storm job did	2	7
<i>At least one of these problems</i>	9	29
<i>Two or more of these problems</i>	3	10

Experienced major life disruption in terms of housing or social network

Across a wide variety of serious blows to personal life – from having been displaced from one's home for a considerable period of time to having suffered the death of a loved one, African Americans in Orleans were more likely than their white neighbors to have experienced problems. Overall, more than half (54 percent) had experienced at least one of the six problems measured in this domain, compared to 41 percent of whites in Orleans Parish. African Americans were three times as likely as whites to have experienced two or more problems.

The most dramatic difference in this area: African Americans were nearly twice as likely as whites to say they lost a family member or close friend as a result of Katrina (28 percent versus 15 percent of whites).

<i>Experienced major life disruption in terms of housing or social network</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Stayed away from home more than three months	20%	29%
Close friend or family member died as result of Katrina	15	28
Owned home before, now renting or staying with friends	9	4
Living in new neighborhood, do not feel at home there	3	6
Had a local social network before storm, none left	4	10
Living in temporary housing	1	4
<i>At least one of these problems</i>	41	54
<i>Two or more of these problems</i>	8	22

Access to health care compromised

African Americans in Orleans Parish were more likely than whites to say that their access to health care worsened after the storm: 48 percent said so, compared to 32 percent of whites. This exacerbated an already yawning racial gap in access to care. Most notably, twice as many African American residents said it is now more difficult for them to get to the place they go for care, and three times as many said they had lost their regular doctor or nurse.

<i>Access to health care compromised</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Meeting health needs rated lower now than before	22%	29%
Harder to get to medical care now than before	13	26
Had regular doctor or nurse before storm, do not now	5	17
Had regular place to go for care before storm, do not now	3	9
Newly uninsured	2	7
At least one of these problems	32	48
Two or more of these problems	9	23

Physical, mental health worse after Katrina

There were differences in physical and mental health impacts across racial groups in Orleans Parish, with African Americans somewhat more likely than whites to report a deterioration in health status.

It is worth noting, however, that there were no major racial differences in Orleans Parish in the number of people who reported stress-related impacts of the storm, including having a harder time controlling their temper since the storm, becoming more reliant on alcohol, or experiencing more stress in their marital relationships. Rates were roughly similar across both groups.

<i>Physical health worse after Katrina</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Personal health status rated lower now than before	8%	19%
Have chronic condition or disability that is new or has gotten worse since storm	9	12
One of these problems	13	25
Both of these problems	3	5

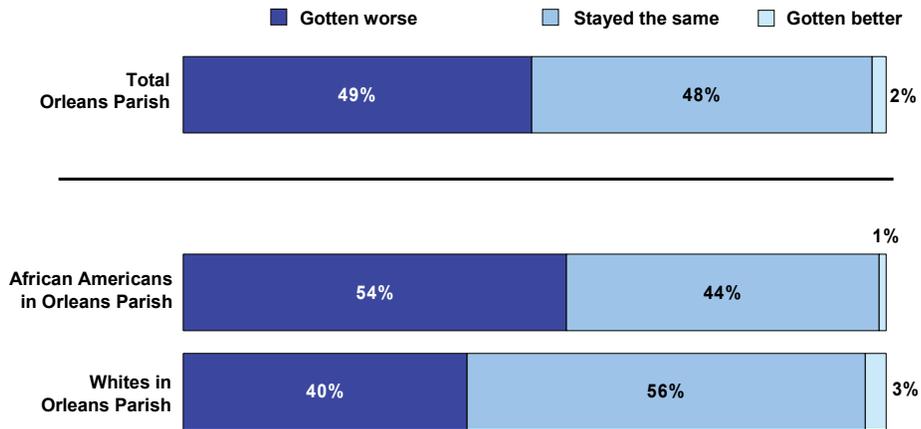
<i>Mental health worse after Katrina</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Mental health status rated lower now than before	17%	25%
Taking medication for mental health issue (Rx is new since storm)	5	3
One of these problems	18	26
Both of these problems	4	2

Impact: the big picture

Looking across these various domains, then, it is not surprising to find that most African Americans in Orleans Parish rated their current quality of life as lower than before the storm (54 percent did so), while most whites in the parish said their quality of life had not changed (56 percent).

Orleans Parish: Reported Change in Quality of Life

Percent whose satisfaction with their overall quality of life has ... since Hurricane Katrina:



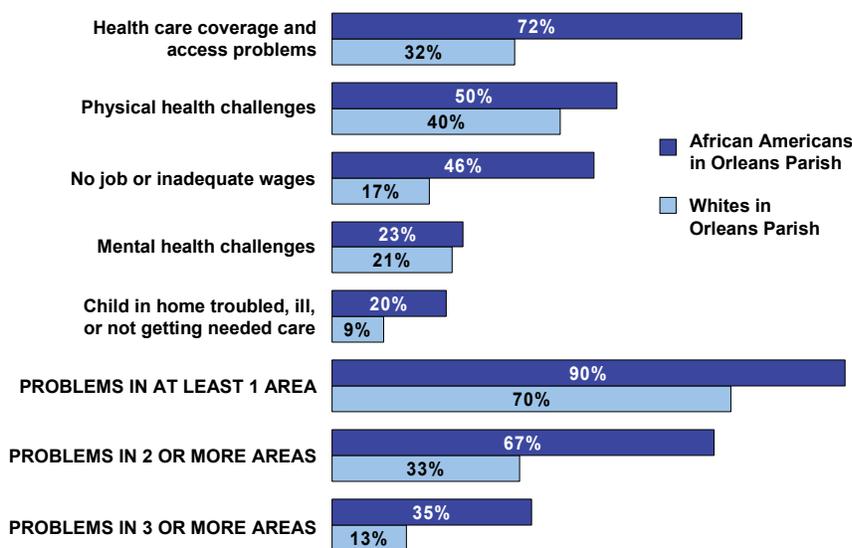
Note: The percentage who did not give an answer is not shown.

Challenges facing African Americans in Orleans Parish

The survey suggests the post-Katrina social landscape is one in which African Americans and whites living in Orleans Parish, as was true before the storm, face vastly different life challenges, particularly in the areas of access to health care and employment. Looking across these domains for vulnerabilities, and including physical and mental health challenges, African Americans stand out as twice as likely as whites to have problems in at least two areas (67 percent did, compared to 33 percent of whites). In general, the racial gaps in terms of problems experienced were appreciably larger than the racial gaps in hurricane impact measured above.

Orleans Parish: Portrait of Problems Faced by African Americans and Whites

Percent who reported a problem in each of the following areas:



Health care coverage and access problems

Some of the starkest differences are in the area of access to health care. Nearly three in four African Americans (72 percent) in Orleans Parish had at least one important barrier to care, did not get appropriate care, or were having problems affording treatment, compared to 32 percent of whites in the parish.

The biggest inequities were in where people go to be treated. About half of African Americans (47 percent) said they either went to the ER for care or didn't have any regular place to go when they are ill. This compares to only 15 percent of whites who were in the same situation. This is no doubt driven and exacerbated by different rates of uninsurance, with a third of African American adults in the parish saying they didn't have health insurance, compared to 12 percent of whites. African Americans were also significantly more likely to say it was difficult for them to get to their place of care (26 percent expressed concern compared to 5 percent of whites).

<i>Health care coverage and access problems</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Usual place of care is ER/No usual place of care	15%	47%
Uninsured	12	33
Difficult to get to usual place of care	5	26
Health needs not being well met	6	15
Skipped or postponed care past 6 months	9	11
Skipped doses or took less than prescribed Rx in last 6 months	4	8
Problems paying medical bills in last 6 months had major financial impact	3	7
At least one of these problems	32	72
Two or more of these problems	13	43

Physical and mental health challenges

The survey did not find particularly large differences in the overall proportion reporting physical health problems across the two racial groups in Orleans Parish. African Americans were somewhat more likely to report having some chronic health problem or being in fair or poor health (50 percent versus 40 percent). There were no real differences in the rates of reported mental health problems.

There were, however, differences in reported rates of two particular conditions. One in three African Americans (34 percent) said they had been diagnosed with hypertension or high blood pressure, compared to one in five whites (20 percent). African Americans were also more likely to report having diabetes (17 percent versus 7 percent).

<i>Physical health challenges</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Have any chronic condition or disability	39%	44%
Health rated as "fair" or "poor"	10	19
One of these problems	40	50
Both of these problems	9	14

<i>Mental health challenges</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Mental health "fair" or "poor"	7%	14%
Taking medication for mental health issue	10	8
Score as depressed	5	7
Score as PTSD	5	7
Ever diagnosed with serious mental illness	4	6
At least one of these problems	21	23
Two or more of these problems	7	9

Child in home troubled, ill, or not getting needed care

African Americans were more likely to report that there was a child in their household who experienced some health-care-related problem – either an illness, a behavioral problem, a lack of care or a barrier to care. Overall, one in five African American residents in Orleans Parish (20 percent) said there was a child in the home with this type of problem, twice as many as white residents (9 percent).

<i>Child in home troubled, ill, or not getting needed care (based on all adults)</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Child in home with chronic condition or disability	5%	9%
Any child didn't get needed health care in last 6 months	2	9
Uninsured child in home	2	6
Children's health needs not being met well	<1	3
Child shows signs of behavioral problems	1	<1
At least one of these problems	9	20
Two or more of these problems	1	6

No job or inadequate wages

The employment situation also differs dramatically by race. Nearly half of African Americans (46 percent) were either unemployed or employed in jobs that don't pay enough to make ends meet, circumstances that affected a considerably lower 17 percent of whites.

<i>No job or inadequate wages</i>	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
Job doesn't pay enough to cover basic expenses	8%	20%
Unemployed	5	16
On disability and can't work	3	9
<i>Any of these problems</i>	17	46

Other challenges

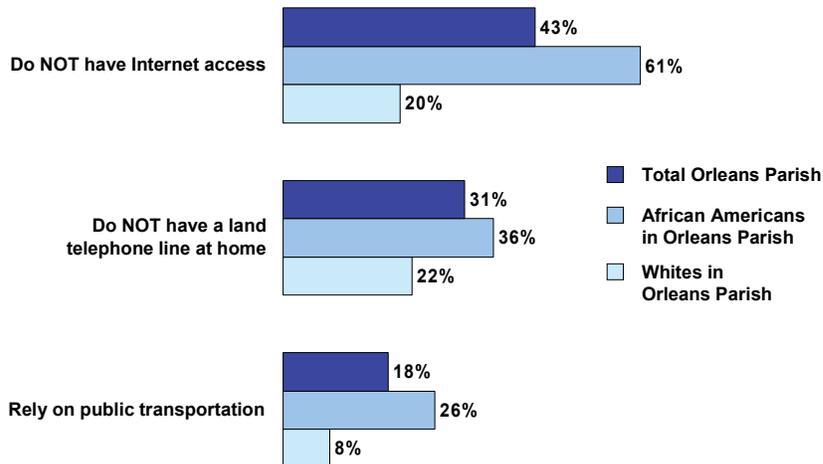
A vast digital divide exists by race in New Orleans. Six in ten African Americans in Orleans Parish reported that they did not have access to the Internet, compared to 20 percent of whites. (Internet access is not much higher among African Americans in Jefferson Parish or among Latinos in the area.)

There were also significant differences in the proportion of people who did not have a land line telephone. Just over a third (36 percent) of African Americans in Orleans Parish said they did not have a landline, compared to 22 percent of whites.

Finally, African Americans in the parish were more likely to rely on the public transportation system – 26 percent said they did, compared to 8 percent of whites.

Orleans Parish: Other Reported Communication & Transportation Challenges

Percent of each group who reported the following:



A feeling of being left behind in rebuilding process

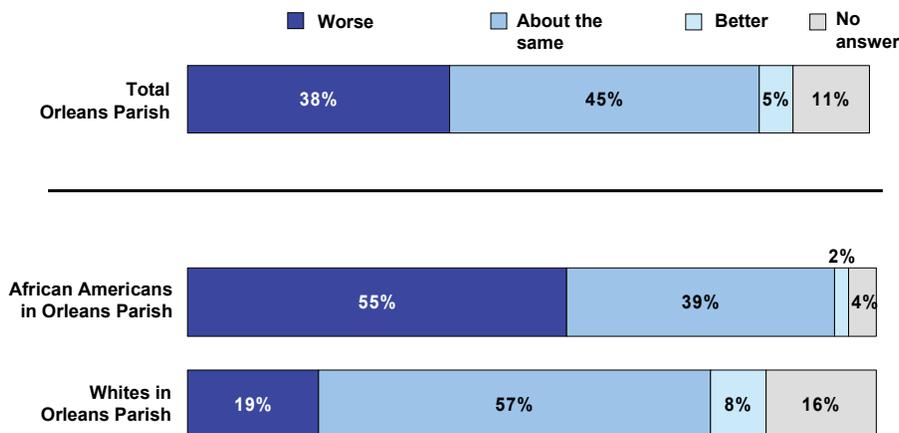
Aside from recording differential impacts and painting a portrait of health care and employment needs that differ widely across racial groups, the survey also recorded some important differences of opinion on the rebuilding process itself. Perhaps the most striking of these involves divergent views on whether the recovery is treating African Americans and whites equally.

According to the survey, most African Americans in Orleans Parish (55 percent) felt that African Americans in the greater New Orleans area were being given worse “treatment and opportunities in the rebuilding process” than whites.¹⁹ Most whites viewed treatment as equal, with 8 percent saying that African Americans were actually getting better treatment.

There is evidence that African American residents’ sense of racial bias in the storm response has existed since the rescue and recovery effort first began. A *Washington Post*/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health survey of Hurricane Katrina evacuees living in the Houston shelters a week and half after the storm (93 percent of whom were black) found that 68 percent of the evacuees believed that “the federal government would have responded more quickly to rescue people trapped by floodwaters if more of them had been wealthier and white rather than poorer and black.”²⁰

Orleans Parish: African Americans More Likely to Believe Rebuilding Process Stacked Against Them

Do you feel that African Americans in the greater New Orleans area are being given better, worse, or about the same treatment and opportunities in the rebuilding process as whites?



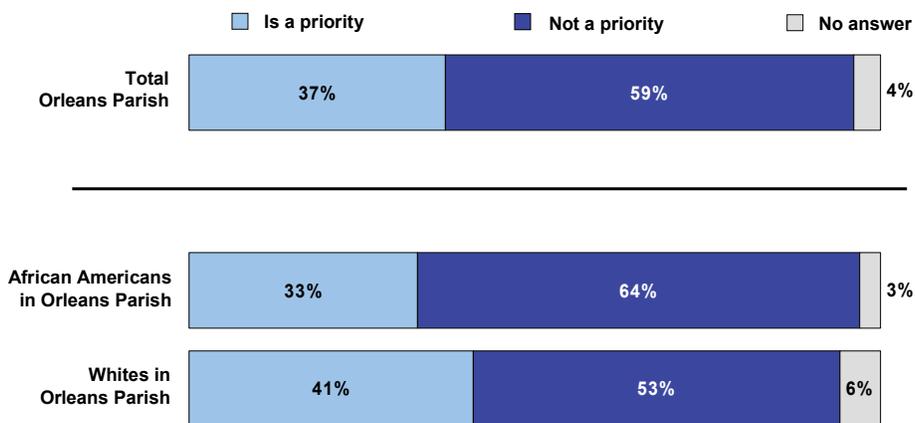
¹⁹ African Americans living in Jefferson Parish were much less likely to agree with this sentiment: 36 percent did, while 55 percent saw no racial difference in treatment.

²⁰ *The Washington Post*/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Survey of Hurricane Katrina Evacuees*, conducted Sept. 10 –12, 2005 among 680 randomly selected adult evacuees residing in Houston shelters. See Kaiser Family Foundation publication #7401.

African Americans in Orleans Parish were also more likely than their white neighbors to say that the rebuilding of New Orleans did not seem to be a priority for Congress and the president.

Orleans Parish: Most Said Washington Doesn't Care

Do you think the rebuilding of New Orleans is a priority for Congress and the president, or is it not a priority?

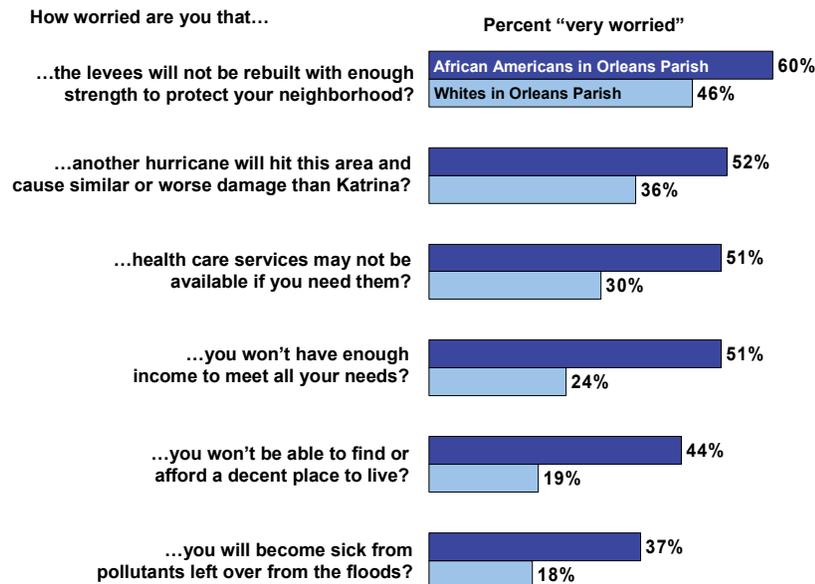


Though majorities in all racial groups agreed that the low-lying areas of the city destroyed by flooding should be rebuilt, African Americans were even more unanimous than whites. Roughly nine in ten African Americans living in Orleans Parish (87 percent) said they supported the rebuilding, compared to roughly two in three of their white counterparts.

And more worries

Given the marked difference in needs between whites and African Americans in Orleans Parish, and the differing views of the fairness of the recovery process, it is not surprising that African Americans expressed a consistently higher level of worry about a variety of possible problems. The survey found African Americans in Orleans Parish were at least twenty percentage points more likely to be very concerned that health care services may not be available when they need them, that they might not have enough money to make ends meet, and that they won't be able to afford decent housing.

Orleans Parish: African Americans More Likely to Express Worry

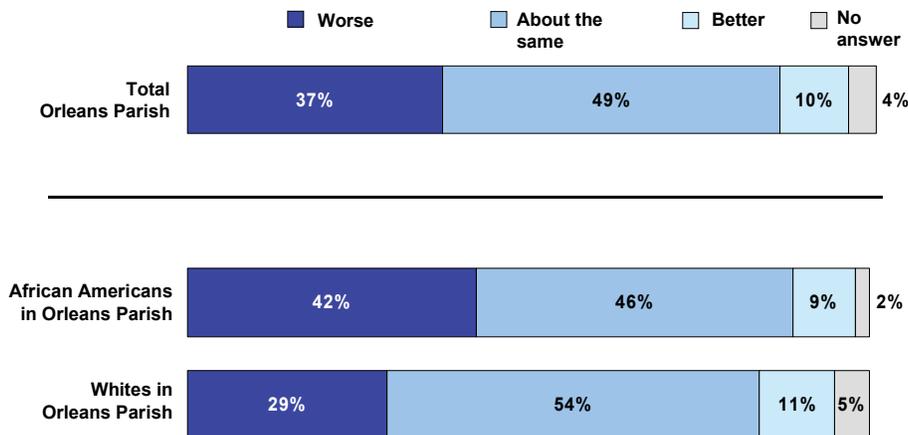


Divided views on the state of race relations

African Americans in Orleans Parish were also more divided than other groups in their views of whether race relations have changed for the worse since the storm. Just over four in ten (42 percent) said race relations have deteriorated, while roughly the same proportion (46 percent) saw no real difference and 9 percent said they have gotten better. A narrow majority of whites said that things have basically stayed the same, with roughly three in ten saying racial tensions have gotten worse.

Orleans Parish: Some Reported Deterioration in Race Relations

Do you think race relations today in the greater New Orleans area are better, worse or about the same as they were before Hurricane Katrina?



Higher priority placed on rebuilding destroyed neighborhoods

As is true across the greater New Orleans area, African Americans in Orleans Parish put levee repair at the top of their priority list for rebuilding, and ranked crime control not far behind. But distinguishing them from their white neighbors in the parish, they ranked “rebuilding destroyed neighborhoods” in second place, just ahead of crime.

Overall, 47 percent of African Americans in Orleans said that bringing back the parts of the city that have been abandoned should be “one of the top priorities” of the recovery effort, compared to 26 percent of whites. A similar gap appeared on the subject of “making affordable housing more available”: 43 percent of African Americans in Orleans said this should be a top priority, compared to 23 percent of whites.

	Whites in Orleans Parish	African Americans in Orleans Parish
<i>Percent saying each of the following should be “one of the top priorities” for rebuilding efforts</i>		
Repairing the levees, pumps, and floodwalls	54%	55%
Rebuilding destroyed neighborhoods	26	47
Controlling crime and assuring public safety	54	46
Getting medical facilities and services up and running	42	44
Making affordable housing more available	23	43
Getting basic services such as electricity and water functioning	33	41
Getting schools up and running	30	39
Getting businesses up and running	32	35
Fixing streets and cleaning up trash	20	33
Getting the public transportation system up and running	13	28

Most African Americans in Orleans Parish saw at least some progress made in rebuilding the levees, though they were less likely than whites to say so (55 percent compared to 73 percent). But majorities did not see much happening when it came to their other top priorities: seven in ten (71 percent) said they haven’t seen much progress when it comes to crime control (compared to 59 percent of whites), and just as many said they did not see progress in rebuilding the destroyed areas of the city (70 percent, compared to 58 percent of whites).

Summary of differences by race in Orleans Parish

Overall, then, African Americans in Orleans Parish were somewhat more likely than their white counterparts to have reported setbacks since the storm, and substantially more likely to have reported any sort of ongoing life challenge. These gaps were particularly large in the areas of employment challenges and barriers to health care, leading to a significantly greater degree of worry surrounding these issues.

Most also said their lives were still substantially disrupted by Katrina, while most whites in the city said their lives were basically back to normal.

Finally, a majority of African Americans in the parish said they believed the recovery process was stacked against them. In contrast, most whites thought the two racial groups were being treated about the same in the recovery process.

CONCLUSION

This first Kaiser survey of the New Orleans area is a baseline, an initial step in understanding the impact of Katrina, the needs of the area's changed population, and the challenges residents of the Greater New Orleans area are facing. The Foundation plans to follow up with two more surveys, to be fielded at roughly 18-month intervals. The intention is to provide residents and the recovery effort with a window into the changing shape and the changing needs of the area's population, and to help keep the facts about the challenges still present in the city and the surrounding region before the nation. It will also give people in the Greater New Orleans area a series of opportunities to weigh in with their views of the recovery process.

The current survey offers several important insights as the city and its surrounding areas push past Katrina into the next phase of their history. First, it is impossible to overstate the ways in which the storm and its aftermath affected current residents, with most saying that their quality of life is worse now in at least one important way. In this arena, the survey highlights not only the impact of the hurricane, but the need for the area, the region and the country to strengthen their capacity to respond to catastrophic events so that response failures do not exacerbate the already devastating results of natural or man-made disasters.

Second, the survey points to the immense, immediate needs of the area's population, particularly African Americans living in the city and particularly in the area of access to quality health care. As city and regional planners look to the best ways to provide for long-term success in the area of service delivery, it is worth highlighting the fact that many needs are pressing in the nearer term as well.

The results also offer a measure of progress and a spur to intensify recovery efforts. Most area residents are not only optimistic about their city's future but think the recovery efforts are, in general, going in the right direction. In many specific areas, the majority said they see at least some forward motion. At the same time, however, most said they see little progress on some key issues.

The Foundation is committed to revisiting these and any new issues that arise in New Orleans in the next phase of our in-depth, post-Katrina survey project.