

Summative
Evaluation
of the

Community
Revitalization
Fund



GREATER NEW ORLEANS
FOUNDATION

Summative Evaluation of the Community Revitalization Fund

Prepared for the Greater New Orleans Foundation

by Magnolia Research & Writing Group

*For additional information and interviews with
experts, grantees, and beneficiaries:*

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Funders

This report is a summative evaluation of the Community Revitalization Fund, an initiative of the Greater New Orleans Foundation in partnership with twenty-one national and local funders, listed below. The findings and conclusions of this report are based on analyses conducted by an independent consultant and do not necessarily represent the views and positions of the funders.

NATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

blue mood fund

The Capital Group Companies Charitable Foundation

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Chrysler Foundation

The Ford Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Kresge Foundation

Prudential Foundation

Rockefeller Foundation

Surdna Foundation

LOCAL FOUNDATIONS

Capital One

Ella West Freeman Foundation

Entergy

Goldring Family Foundation

Greater New Orleans Foundation

JP Morgan Chase

Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

Woldenberg Foundation

Patrick F. Taylor Foundation

Zemurray Foundation

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The Greater New Orleans Foundation’s call for proposals asked that the evaluator conduct a story-centered evaluation with a multimedia component. The author feels fortunate to have worked with talented and skilled individuals in producing the website and videos that accompany this written report. Lee Domingue at Southpaw Creative designed this report and worked with web developer Erin Allen to design and create the website, crfnola.org. Andrew Larimer and the staff at FatHappy Media produced the films featured on the website. The author is thankful for their patience, talent, and hard work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny Irons is the founding research consultant at Magnolia Research & Writing Group. She has a PhD in Sociology and over twenty years experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. She has published peer-reviewed articles, essays, book reviews, and a book, *Reconstituting Whiteness: The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission* (Vanderbilt University Press). She is currently the Director of Student Leadership and Engagement at the Newcomb College Institute at Tulane University.

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summative evaluation of the Greater New Orleans Foundation's (GNOF) Community Revitalization Fund (CR Fund), which was created as a five-year, \$25 million initiative in partnership with national and local foundations. The CR Fund sought to fund housing production, strengthen the affordable housing sector (including nonprofit organizational capacity), promote equitable and sustainable redevelopment, and increase GNOF's capacity as a leader in community revitalization.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a final assessment of the work of the CR Fund for donors, GNOF staff, grantees, beneficiaries, and the general public, as well as to inform GNOF's ongoing work in Advocacy and Economic Opportunity. The evaluation is based on data collected and analyzed by Dr. Jenny Irons of the Magnolia Research & Writing Group. The evaluator worked with GNOF and CR Fund stakeholders to generate five primary research questions aligned with the above areas. The analysis uses a mixed-methods approach to produce the most robust evaluation possible in the absence of data collected consistently across the life of the Fund.

Ultimately, the CR Fund raised \$23 million to invest in the areas noted above. In total, the CR Fund made 75 separate awards to 59 grantees over a period of seven years. Awards ranged from small operating grants to large program related investments, pricing guarantees, and grants. The maximum grant award was \$1 million, and the smallest was \$1,000. The median award was \$200,000.

MAIN FINDINGS

- **HOUSING PRODUCTION:** The CR Fund directly and indirectly supported the production of 9,378 housing units. Most grants were used to support organizational-level capacity-building (i.e. operating support, funds for staff) – providing indirect support for housing production – rather than bricks and mortar or land financing. Grantees said capacity-building grants enabled them to build more housing and serve more individuals. The individuals interviewed for this report who live in this housing are grateful for their homes.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING SECTOR:** All respondents agreed that the New Orleans affordable housing sector – while it still has its weaknesses – is much stronger than it was before Katrina. Evidence suggests that the CR Fund helped strengthen the sector by supporting grantees in: development of affordable housing; advocacy for policies to reduce barriers to homeowners’ access of Road Home and other governmental support; improvement in city capacity to identify and manage blighted and vacant properties; collection and analysis of data to inform housing policy and processes; and creation and dissemination of educational programs to build local expertise.
- **GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION:** Through the CR Fund, GNOF further developed existing relationships with national and local foundations and created new ones. Respondents said the CR Fund helped GNOF become more involved in identifying local community needs, develop a more efficient grant-making process, and build local organizational capacity.
- **EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS:** Many CR Fund grantees received support to improve equitability and sustainability in New Orleans neighborhoods. Some grantees are actively engaged in efforts to create mixed-income, sustainable developments that engage local residents, but they face tremendous hurdles of historically entrenched inequalities. Ironically, some of the grantees that have been more successful in developing mixed-income areas are now working to ensure their housing remains affordable.
- **LESSONS LEARNED:** Nearly all respondents described the CR Fund as successful. They said it supported the development of housing and the capacity of nonprofit organizations and city agencies working in the affordable housing arena – although some acknowledged that a few grantees have not performed as expected. Funders and GNOF staff said the funder collaborative approach was an effective way to respond to New Orleans’ post-disaster housing crisis. All grantees appreciated the flexibility and credibility provided by philanthropic funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for GNOF are based on the data collected and analyzed for this evaluation.

- **CLARITY:** GNOF should consider ways to clarify its strategic direction for local nonprofit organizations. While grantee respondents often mentioned the Foundation’s ongoing work in Organizational Effectiveness, they were often not aware of current initiatives in local economic development.
- **ADVOCACY:** Some respondents see GNOF as an advocate for community revitalization ef-

forts, broadly defined. Most, however, do not see GNOF as a leader in the ongoing discussion surrounding affordable housing. If GNOF wants to be seen as a leader in the ongoing advocacy regarding affordable housing, it should consider ways to more visibly engage.

- **GRANTMAKING:** Given the financial vulnerability of local nonprofit housing developers, GNOF might consider ways to invest in continued organizational capacity-building efforts for non-profit housing developers, in combination with its ongoing work in Organizational Effectiveness.
- **ISSUES:** Unsurprisingly, grantees want GNOF to focus on affordable housing. They want financial support for bricks and mortar and land purchase. If GNOF is unable to invest in these needs in the affordable housing sector, it might consider other ways to demonstrate continued investment in community revitalization.
- **DISASTER-RECOVERY:** Should another disaster befall New Orleans, GNOF should act immediately to harness the financial power of national, regional, and local foundations in a funder collaborative to identify and address the most pressing community need. Though a small minority of respondents speculated that the Fund might have been more effective with a more broadly defined purpose, the focus on housing and clearly defined objectives not only produced housing but also seemed to strengthen the affordable housing sector. The overall sector may not be perfect, but respondents said they see significant improvement – suggesting that the sector is in a better position to develop quality affordable housing for New Orleanians and to withstand any future exogenous shocks.



Introduction

In the spring of 2007, less than two years after the city of New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina and the floodwaters that poured into the city as levees crumbled, the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) created the Community Revitalization Fund (CR Fund) in partnership with national and local foundations to:

- strengthen the affordable housing sector
- fund housing production
- promote the redevelopment of New Orleans according to equitable and Smart Growth principles, and
- increase GNOF's capacity as a leader for rebuilding efforts.¹

The CR Fund was intended to be a five-year, \$25 million initiative that convened the resources and expertise of national and local foundations for philanthropic investments in housing and community development. Ultimately, the CR Fund raised \$23 million to invest in the four areas noted above, including organizational capacity-building. In total, the CR Fund made 75 separate awards to 59 grantees over a period of seven years. Awards ranged from small operating grants to large program related investments, pricing guarantees, and grants.

In June 2015, the Greater New Orleans Foundation contracted with the evaluator, Dr. Jenny Irons of Magnolia Research & Writing Group, to conduct a summative evaluation of the CR Fund. The call for proposals asked that the evaluator “[go] beyond traditional evaluation and [draw] upon the power of narrative to understand the complexities of the Fund’s work and its impact on the lives of New Orleanians, the local community development sector, the Greater New Orleans

Foundation, and the funder collaborative that supported the Fund.”² The evaluator and her team answered this call by producing a multi-media account of the CR Fund. Southpaw Creative developed a website, crfnola.org, which features documentary footage by FatHappy Media. While the website and accompanying footage go beyond traditional evaluation methods and focus on the narrative arc of the CR Fund, this written report provides a more comprehensive analysis of the degree to which the CR Fund objectives were met. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a final assessment of the work of the CR Fund for donors, GNOF staff, grantees, beneficiaries, and the general public. Additionally, GNOF seeks to apply lessons learned to all aspects of the Foundation’s work, especially ongoing work in Advocacy and Economic Opportunity.

A steering committee of CR Fund stakeholders — including GNOF staff and board members, and CR Fund funders and grantees — worked with the evaluator to develop five primary research questions and multiple secondary questions. The first four primary questions capture the four main objectives of the CR Fund, and the fifth primary question asks what lessons can be learned from the CR Fund to inform GNOF’s work going forward (See Appendix for full list of primary and secondary questions).

- How and to what extent did the CR Fund support housing production in New Orleans post-Katrina?
- How and to what extent did the CR Fund strengthen the affordable housing sector in New Orleans post-Katrina?
- How and to what extent did GNOF change as a result of the creation of the CR Fund and the activities supported through it?
- How and to what extent did the CR Fund support the development of mixed-use, mixed-race, and/or mixed-income neighborhoods?
- What lessons are learned from the CR Fund about post-disaster rebuilding and recovery?

The Findings section is organized around these five questions. The findings are based on data gathered for this evaluation and from secondary sources. While the methodological approach is reviewed in the following section, the reader is cautioned at the outset against drawing conclusions about causality in this evaluation. Qualitative and quantitative data are used to answer the question of how well the CR Fund met its objectives, but various methodological constraints prevented the evaluator from answering questions about direct impact.

Readers most interested in the findings of the evaluation might want to skip the next two sections — the first reviews the methodological approach in detail and the second describes the pre- and post-Katrina context of the Fund and provides an overview of the CR Fund’s development and structure. The Findings section is divided into five parts based on the five primary research questions; the reader will find profiles of families and individuals now living in housing developed by CR Fund grantees in this section. The conclusion briefly reviews the major findings and, based on these findings, provides recommendations for GNOF.



Methodological Approach

Summative evaluations are used to “assess a mature project’s success in reaching its stated goals” and are undertaken at a project’s completion.³ They “[collect] information about outcomes and related processes, strategies, and activities that have led to them.”⁴ Ideally, a summative evaluation is able to draw on baseline measures identified and collected from the outset of a program to analyze key outcomes over time and control for factors that may affect program impact.⁵ In the case of this evaluation, this approach was not possible. In situations where data are unable to determine causality and effects — in other words, program impact — evaluation should collect “multiple independent lines of evidence from different points of view... to help answer the questions that motivated the study.”⁶ Thus, this evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to answer the primary and secondary research questions.

Qualitative methods, used to generate robust and rich data, are an appropriate method to use in evaluation when a program — in this case, a grantmaking program — has been “in place for some time, in circumstances when control groups are not feasible, and resource constraints limit the kinds of data we gather.”⁷ Given that data were not collected throughout the life of the CR Fund for the execution of a summative evaluation, qualitative methods are appropriate to answer the evaluation questions. The qualitative methods for this evaluation include interviews, open-ended survey questions, and document review. These methods allowed the evaluator to piece together the story of the CR Fund from multiple perspectives.

Quantitative data gathered through approaches like randomized control trials and quasi-experimental design are the gold standard for evaluation research that seeks answers to questions about impact. Outcome evaluations should ideally be able to incorporate performance measures that have been tracked over time. Because data such as these are unavailable for this evaluation,

the evaluator relied upon quantitative data collected by GNOF from self-reports by grantees for a measure of housing production. To supplement this information, she created and distributed a survey to all CR Fund grantees for whom she could identify contact information. Finally, she collected secondary data compiled and analyzed by others — including CR Fund grantee Nonprofit Knowledge Works/The Data Center — to contextualize CR Fund work.

DATA COLLECTION

The primary qualitative data collection approach for the evaluation was in-depth interviews with current and former GNOF staff, representatives of grantee organizations, funders, affordable housing experts, and beneficiaries (families and individuals who live in housing developed by CR Fund grantees). Interviews are not meant to provide an exhaustive account of the Fund but rich insight into the story of the fund — especially how the Fund was created and managed by GNOF, experienced by grantees and funders, and “lived” by beneficiaries now in housing developed by grantees. In total, the evaluator and two research assistants interviewed six current and former GNOF staff members, 20 representatives of 16 grantee organizations, ten beneficiary individuals/families, three housing experts, and three national funder representatives and one local funder (see Appendix for list of individuals interviewed).⁸

Given constraints of time and access, the evaluator could not interview the full population of individuals who were involved with or served by the CR Fund. Many funder representatives have moved on to other work, some grantee organizations have closed and/or staff have left, and too many individuals are housed in units developed by CR Fund grantees to interview. Thus, the selection of the sample of interviewees was purposive, or selective, to identify those individuals best able to represent a diversity of experience and perception. Interviewees were identified in three ways. First, the evaluator held discussions with current GNOF staff members to identify current and former staff members with whom to talk. GNOF staff also helped the evaluator determine which grantees to contact in order to represent a diverse array of entities. The evaluator and GNOF staff selected grantees who received different amounts of funding, had varying levels of success in meeting proposed goals, and met the objectives of the Fund in various ways (i.e. housing production, capacity-building, knowledge production, etc.). GNOF staff also connected the evaluator to funders whose degree of involvement in the Fund would presumably enable them to comprehensively speak about their foundation’s experience and involvement with the Fund over time. Second, some individuals with whom the evaluator spoke — especially former staff — suggested other grantees or staff with whom to speak. Finally, the evaluator contacted grantee organizations to identify families or individuals currently living in housing who would be willing to participate in an interview.

In most cases, individuals were responsive to email or phone requests to participate in an interview. All current and former staff and funders contacted participated in an interview with the evaluator. Interviews with staff lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and were usually conducted in person (one was conducted over the phone). Funder interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and were conducted over the phone. For the most part, all grantees contacted also participated in interviews with either the evaluator or a research assistant. Interviews with grantees usually took place in person and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes. “Beneficiaries” — or individuals who live in housing developed by grantees — were more difficult to contact and schedule for interviews.

These interviews were conducted by the evaluator and two research assistants and usually lasted 60 to 90 minutes. Most interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The evaluator developed protocols for each group of interviewees (see Appendix for each protocol). Protocols contained general and follow-up questions and were meant to elicit in-depth answers from participants. If interviews were conducted in person, the interviewee also reviewed and signed a consent form with the interviewer.⁹

Qualitative data were also generated by open-ended questions in the grantee survey, which is discussed in detail below. These answers are meant to supplement data gathered through interviews.

Finally, the evaluator collected a range of documents from GNOF to create a database of grantee organizations and to construct the story of the CR Fund. Data from these documents contribute to the narrative of the analysis, but the evaluator also engaged in content analysis to categorize grantees and generate counts. This approach is described in more detail below.

Quantitative data for the evaluation come from grant memos and a questionnaire distributed to grantee representatives. The evaluator also used data collected by GNOF (discussed in the Findings section below) to describe CR Fund supported housing production and secondary data to contextualize housing and inequality in New Orleans. The evaluator collected grant memos from a GNOF staff member. She distributed surveys to all recipients of a CR Fund award via email (see Appendix for survey). In some cases, contact information was not available for a grant organization, usually because a program or organization has since closed. Effort was made to locate email addresses for all organizations or for individuals who might be able to answer questions about a defunct organization; in at least one case, an email was sent to multiple email addresses for the same person and bounced back each time. In total, 49 individuals were emailed and asked to complete the survey on behalf of an organization with which they currently or formerly worked. A couple of email recipients replied that they were unable to answer questions about the grant or were unaware of an award. In total, 25 respondents completed the survey (a response rate of 42% if all 59 grantee organizations are considered, but 51% if only the 49 emailed are considered).

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data were coded and analyzed by the evaluator.¹⁰ She read each transcript multiple times to identify dominant patterns in respondents' answers to the evaluation research questions. In the Findings section, direct quotations are used to illustrate ideas expressed by respondents and provide support for analytic points. The qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey questions represent the perceptions, beliefs, and opinions of the respondents; points of agreement and divergence are presented for analytic validity.¹¹ In some cases the quotations or summaries of respondents' answers represent respondents' recollections of specific organizational or historical details, but in other cases — like in assessments of the Fund, GNOF, the affordable housing sector, or nonprofits — they represent respondents' opinions.

Interviews are a means of qualitative exploration; they usually do not provide generalizable findings regarding an entire population. Thus, the findings that are presented in this report should be considered with caution. The opinions and perceptions that form the basis of the analysis provide insight into how the respondents interviewed for this evaluation answered the questions of this

evaluation. They are not exhaustive representations of everyone who was involved with the Fund, but they represent the overall arc of the CR Fund story.

The analysis of quantitative data uses descriptive statistics. First, the evaluator coded all available grant memos, as provided by GNOF, to create a grantee database. This database contains information on the amount and length of grant awards. These data were also coded to determine the intended purpose of each award over \$50,000.¹² Because most awards of \$50,000 or less were not presented in grants memos to the grants committee, the evaluator worked with a GNOF staff member to fill in and categorize these discretionary fund grants where possible. Categories included: 1) bricks and mortar (construction), 2) land purchase/financing, 3) capacity-building/human resources/operating costs, 4) knowledge production (i.e. data collection, report writing, etc.), and 5) assistance to individual homeowners (i.e. legal assistance, counseling). This coding captured the direct intent of the grant proposal as captured in the grant memo. For example, a grant applicant might request money to hire a project manager to oversee construction. This request would be categorized as “capacity-building,” not as “construction,” because funds were to be directly spent on hiring costs, not on building costs. While staff indirectly supported construction of housing units, this coding captured the proposed direct use of funds. Second, the evaluator provides simple descriptive statistics regarding summary answers to survey questions throughout the findings section where applicable.



Background

PRE-KATRINA: HOUSING AND INEQUALITY

The story of the Community Revitalization Fund must be contextualized not just in the contours of the disaster that befell New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, but also in the vulnerabilities — environmental, demographic, and infrastructural — that existed before the storm.

With half of its land mass at or below sea level, New Orleans and the surrounding metropolitan area has long been dependent on natural and man-made barriers to protect it from the surrounding waters. Most of the city’s wealthier, historic neighborhoods are above sea-level — including the French Quarter and the Central Business District — while most of the lower-income areas are at or below sea level.¹³ Given the deterioration of the coastal wetlands, sea level rise, and New Orleans’ elevation, the city has become increasingly vulnerable to flooding over time.¹⁴

Demographically, New Orleans was vulnerable to exogenous shock before the storm. Economic growth in New Orleans had lagged behind comparable cities since 1970. Likened to cities of similar size, New Orleans had a high overall poverty rate, low median household income, and low college attainment rate.¹⁵ The national homeownership rate in 2000 was 67%, but it was just 47% in New Orleans. Finally, New Orleans’ population registered at 452,000 in July 2005; as in most large American cities, that number had been on decline since 1960.¹⁶ However, unlike other metropolitan areas, racial segregation at the neighborhood level was on the rise, as was concentrated poverty.

When Katrina hit, New Orleans could be characterized as a “poor” city by United States standards, but the disparity between blacks and whites was stark. Though New Orleans’ home own-

ership rate was low compared to the national average, the rate was 56% among white households and 41% among black households. New Orleans neighborhoods with high degrees of concentrated poverty — where near or over half of residents lived below the poverty line — were nearly all majority black areas; majority white neighborhoods typically had lower poverty rates. An October 2005 report by the Brookings Institution observed that when Katrina hit New Orleans, “blacks and whites were living in quite literally different worlds.”¹⁷

On most measures, New Orleans fell below the national average and nearly all cities of comparable size in terms of poverty, homeownership, and racial inequality. However, within the city, predominantly black neighborhoods usually fell below predominantly white neighborhoods, reflecting the historical legacies of segregation and racism. In 2000, the median income for black households was almost half that of white households, and the black poverty rate was three times higher (35% to 11%).

PRE-KATRINA, SELECT NEIGHBORHOODS AND CHARACTERISTICS¹⁸

NEIGHBORHOOD	TOTAL POPULATION	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	POVERTY RATE	OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	VACANT HOUSING UNITS
B.W. Cooper	4,339	98.4%	69.2%	3.9%	13.7%
Pontchartrain Park	2,630	96.7%	10.2%	92.1%	3.5%
Lower Ninth	14,008	98.3%	36.4%	59.0%	13.9%
Treme/Lafitte	8,853	92.4%	56.9%	21.8%	19.4%
Central City	19,072	87.0%	49.8%	16.3%	21.2%
Lakeview	9,875	0.7%	4.9%	69.5%	5.8%

Source: The Data Center, *Neighborhood Area Statistical Profiles, 2000*

Not only were the land and the people vulnerable before Katrina, but so was the local public and nonprofit infrastructure. A 2006 Urban Institute report reads, “long before the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina or the chaos of evacuation, New Orleans’ social infrastructure was failing.”¹⁹ One area in which that infrastructure was particularly weak was housing. The local affordable housing sector was not meeting the needs of its poorest residents, and the city government’s capacity for managing its vacant and blighted properties was weak.

Public housing stock was in poor condition, and the Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO) had been under federal receivership due to years of mismanagement since 2002.²⁰ HANO counted 8,421 public housing units before the storm and 9,560 vouchers. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) documented 47% of HANO units as vacant in 2005.²¹ New Orleans public housing had historically concentrated low-income residents in areas of high poverty, majority-black neighborhoods.²² Susan Popkin, Margery Turner, and Martha Burt at the Urban Institute write, “Decades of neglect and mismanagement had left these developments in severe distress.”²³ Some public housing sites were already under redevelopment with federal HOPE VI funds before Katrina hit, and city officials and HANO had already begun to discuss the redevelopment of the “Big Four” housing complexes where 60% of public housing residents lived.²⁴

Popkin and her colleagues also note that “like most cities across the country, New Orleans already had an affordable housing crisis before Katrina.” Housing cost burden — or the percentage of household income paid for housing costs — was already a problem, especially among the city’s poorest citizens. In 2000, 67% of extremely low-income households paid more than 30% of income on housing costs, and 56% very low-income paid more than 50% of income on housing costs.²⁵

In late 2004, a team of housing experts at the National Vacant Properties Campaign was hired by the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NONDC) and the City of New Orleans’ Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development to “help assess the existing systems and strategies in place to address vacant properties and blight, and to suggest opportunities for greater impact in a city with persistent problems with blight.”²⁶ In February 2005, the team presented its findings. The report identified the city’s confusing and complicated policies and programs as the major barriers to disposing of vacant and blighted properties — tallied at 27,000.²⁷ Ellen Lee, who then worked at the City’s Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development and is now Director of Housing Policy and Community Development for the city, said the report was to have been presented to Mayor Ray Nagin on September 5, 2005. Needless to say, that presentation was canceled.

THE IMPACT OF HURRICANE KATRINA: HOUSING AND INEQUALITY

Hurricane Katrina made landfall near the Mississippi-Louisiana border early on August 29, 2005. Though the storm was not at its strongest when it hit New Orleans, the levee system intended to protect the low-lying New Orleans metro area from flooding could not withstand the accompanying storm surge. Within three days, 80% of the city was under water. The flooding left at least 400,000 of the city’s residents displaced and damaged at least 134,000 — or 70% — of its occupied housing units.²⁸ The level of blighted and vacant properties that had been identified before the storm tripled at minimum. The city faced a housing crisis.

“It was just like devastation came through Katrina in the blink of an eye and wiped away everything here in one night.”

– Single mother of two whose Gentilly home was flooded; now a homeowner through Project Home Again

A February 2006 HUD report estimates housing unit damage to Orleans Parish at 76% for owner-occupied units and 67% for renter-occupied units.²⁹ These figures — including the estimate of 134,000 units damaged — refer only to units that were occupied before the storm and that served as an individual’s primary residence.

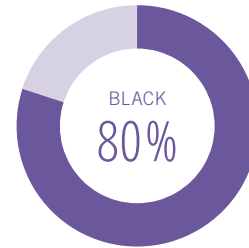
Because black New Orleanians were more likely to live in flooded areas, and because they were more likely than whites to live in poverty, they bore the disproportionate brunt of the impact. They were also less likely to return to the city over the next ten years. In 2007, Margery Austin Turner wrote that if New Orleans did not develop affordable housing, “the redevelopment of the Gulf Coast communities will be inequitable — because it will exclude lower-income residents, many of whom are black.”³⁰

In the six-month period following Katrina, competing plans emerged for how to rebuild the city. Researchers documented five competing citywide recovery plans in the two years post-Katrina.³¹ In early 2006, the head of the Louisiana Redevelopment Authority asked the Rockefeller Foundation — which had made immediate and large investments in local recovery — to help facilitate what had thus far been a contentious, fractured planning process to rebuild New Orleans.³² Rockefeller agreed and sent Carey Shea to New Orleans to guide the Unified New Orleans Plan (UNOP) process; Shea was housed at GNOF, and both GNOF and Rockefeller were intimately involved in developing the city-wide plan.

The UNOP process was city-wide and included representatives from Rockefeller, GNOF, the City of New Orleans, and five citizens from the five city council districts. The process incorporated voices of New Orleanians living in the city and dispersed across the United States.

Multiple community congresses were held to encourage and include citizen participation. The planning was driven by two principles: “the right of all residents to return to New Orleans and a commitment to rebuild in all parts of New Orleans.”³³ UNOP was completed in January 2007 and approved by the City Planning Commission in May. By June, the City Council had approved a “pared-down version of UNOP.”³⁴ Almost two years after Hurricane Katrina, the city finally had a master plan for redevelopment.

PERCENTAGE OF NEW ORLEANIANS LIVING IN FLOODED AREAS



THE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND

Carey Shea says that during the year and a half she worked on UNOP and then continued to make grants on Rockefeller’s behalf, she encouraged Ben Johnson, then the President and C.E.O. of GNOF, to create a recovery fund to shepherd investments from national foundations. She says she felt the community foundation was the right place to create such a fund, because she believed national foundations would trust the local foundation to make sound grant-making decisions. Working with Rockefeller, GNOF created the Community Revitalization Fund and hired Shea to run it.³⁵

In 2006, when GNOF began to solicit contributions for the CR Fund, it described the lack of affordable housing in New Orleans as “the primary obstacle to the city’s recovery.” Recognizing that the state was finally contributing to the production of affordable housing in the post-Katrina landscape through the disbursement of federal funds, GNOF sought to “influence government, residents and local builders... by promoting smart growth and equitable development principles.” It wanted to encourage the creation of mixed-income communities with access to public transportation.³⁶

The goal of the CR Fund was to raise \$25 million from national and local foundations for a five-year initiative. A 2006 proposal to the Kellogg Foundation notes that the “pool of funds” would address the “damage and depopulation wrought by Hurricane Katrina and the levee breaks” through “projects and programs that will enable people to return to New Orleans.” This initial proposal

emphasized the need to build capacity and produce housing and rooted the idea for the new fund in the UNOP process.³⁷

GNOF began to invite foundations at the national and local level to participate in the Fund. Foundations could invest for the five-year period at three different levels: \$500,000 per year for large national foundations; \$250,000 per year for moderate size foundations; and \$150,000 minimum per year for the local foundations. Shea says the Fund also required participation by the “principal grant maker in community development” from each foundation to ensure that “decision-makers [would be] in the room.”

Juliet Page joined GNOF in November 2006 and led the fundraising effort. On raising the money, Page said, “I would never call it easy, but I think we put together a very compelling plan.” She believes foundations contributed because the Fund was “well-staffed” and focused on a clear issue: housing. Page said, “even if your interest wasn’t housing, we could argue that housing needed to be your interest for a short time.”

A FUNDER COLLABORATIVE

Given her work with national foundations, Shea says she had seen “that funders like to work together.” She also recalls that while some national funders were working in New Orleans prior to Katrina, many others did not have established relationships in the city or knowledge of local nonprofits. Finally, Shea had participated in a successful funder collaborative in the past in another city. Taken together, these observations and experiences led her to push GNOF to create a funder collaborative. She said, “your voice has a little more ‘oomph’ behind it when a group of funders come together.” Ultimately, 22 national and local funders would join the initiative.

Jerry Maldonado, Senior Program Officer at The Ford Foundation, says his former director, George McCarthy, was intimately involved in the creation of the CR Fund. Ford had an established relationship with GNOF before Katrina and was eager to invest in the city’s recovery. The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, according to Senior Program Officer Brad Myers, “recognized the enormity of the disaster and decided that it needed to respond in an unprecedented way.” Hilton thus joined the CR Fund early as part of its “relief phase” response. Myers describes Hilton’s participation in the funder collaborative as “unprecedented because it was an open-ended fund.” In other words, when Hilton made its \$2.5 million commitment, it had no idea where the money would go. But, Myers says, this is now the foundation’s preferred model for philanthropic disaster response. And though other foundations were involved because of mission-driven commitments to housing or community development, Hilton was there “under the disaster recovery banner.” The Kresge Foundation did not have much experience working in New Orleans before Katrina, so from its perspective, according to Wendy Jackson, Deputy Director for Kresge’s Detroit program, the Fund was “an investment vehicle to meet pressing needs... but it was also a way for us to learn with other philanthropic colleagues about the city as a whole.”

Of the funder collaborative approach, Maldonado says Ford commonly participated in such initiatives and was a “strong proponent... because we felt it was really important to have a coordinated philanthropic response.” He calls the CR Fund “an important vehicle for aligning national and local dollars.” In his opinion, the Fund was “created around a logic of needing to rebuild at a scale that went beyond [Ford’s] institutional capacity and funding.” He affirms Shea’s contention

that national foundations would like to see their investments “driven by local knowledge.” Myers emphasizes the other side of the coin as well — that national funders with expertise in disaster recovery could help a community foundation that lacked disaster expertise to be a philanthropic leader. Myers says the funder collaborative approach also helped to hold the attention of funders, because, he said, “philanthropy can be fickle.” The collaborative gave national foundations “buy-in.”

“You can’t recover a city without rebuilding the housing.”

— Carey Shea, Former Program Director for Community Revitalization, Greater New Orleans Foundation

In the wake of the UNOP process, GNOF saw a clear need to rebuild housing. As Shea observes, “you can’t recover a city without rebuilding the housing.” Page notes, “it [the focus on housing] was a pretty obvious problem in the fall of 2006. It was the crisis at hand. Our key funders were housing people.” Maldonado of Ford describes the concern of the funders as “pretty basic: getting [people] back into physical dwellings, so the city could survive.” While the need to fund housing production was clear and urgent, the Fund also sought to improve the affordable housing sector as well. Liza Cowan, a Program Officer at GNOF from 2008 to 2010, describes the motivating question as: “How do we both build housing now — because the need is now and the need is urgent — so we’re investing in partners that can do that, but at the same time build infrastructure for the long term so that we have a stronger community development sector in the city?”

GRANTS PROCESS

As the cultivator of the Fund, Shea knew that she wanted to move money out of the door as quickly as possible given the urgent need for housing. In her mind, this meant the grants process needed to be streamlined and transparent. She says it was very important that the process be meritocratic, with no special lunch meetings involved to give certain organizations an advantage — or to slow down the process of getting funds out the door.

First, grant applicants submitted a letter of interest. If GNOF staff determined the proposal was in line with the Fund’s objectives, and if they saw the proposed project as viable, they then asked the applicant to submit a full proposal. Ellen Lee, who joined GNOF in 2008 as Senior Vice President of Programs and Director of the CR Fund, says, “we did our due diligence. We looked at the merit of their proposal, at financial statements, and any red flags in audits.” Isabel Barrios, who joined GNOF in 2009 as a Program Assistant and is now a Program Officer, says, “we [did] quite a bit of research when we [got] proposals.” In addition to engaging in close examination of grant proposals and the promise of grant applicants, GNOF staff also studied the housing sector more generally as well as best practices in the development of affordable housing.

One thing that strong candidates for CR Fund grants had — according to Shea — was paid staff. She says the CR Fund wanted to support organizations with a “reality-based plan” that were going to get the proposed work done. Page says GNOF staff were always “respectful of grantees,” and the CR Fund committee made the “maximum grant award whenever possible.” Cowan, recalls, “every grant was a conversation.” During the grant application process, these conversations meant GNOF

staff asked questions and reviewed the grantee organization and its proposed project. GNOF staff then prepared grant memos for the grants committee, the sub-committee of CR Fund foundation members that made award decisions.

Ford, Hilton, and Kresge were all active participants in the grants committee. Interviewees for this evaluation shared mixed responses on how grant decisions were made. Maldonado describes Ford's participation as "very active, very hands-on." Jackson says that Kresge and other foundations were making grants decisions at the grants committee meetings and that all funders participated equally, no matter their size or expertise about housing or New Orleans. She says the decision-making process felt "pretty egalitarian. No one funder dominated." She also says that while GNOF staff provided analysis, committee members made "the final call." Myers, however, says, "we weren't actually making funding decisions... we were under no illusions." Rather he said, GNOF staff were making them. He said this was a good thing, because "we didn't know New Orleans." Given the limited number of interviews with funders, a conclusion cannot be definitely drawn about how this decision-making process was experienced by all funders. GNOF staff say that while they made decisions about discretionary grants under \$50,000, decisions to award larger grants were made by the grants committee based on staff recommendations — both whether to make the award and for what amount.

In October 2008, GNOF contracted with an external evaluator to conduct a mid-term evaluation. For the most part, the evaluation, completed in 2009, affirmed that the CR Fund was making inroads in community revitalization through the grant-making process, particularly with capacity-building. Following the evaluation, GNOF modified the grant-making process. Staff began to produce memos for the grants committee to contextualize the state of affordable housing in New Orleans, enhanced grant application memos for the committee, and collected quantitative data from grantees on unit counts to generate a performance measure.



Findings

Carey Shea says that the driving approach of the Community Revitalization Fund was that to build affordable housing, “you really just need three things. You need land, you need money, and you need expertise.” These three components — land, money, and expertise — motivated the Fund’s overall approach, as Shea says, “to help build the community development infrastructure that was going to make housing development, housing rehabilitation, housing policy... make it all possible.” The goal was to raise \$25 million, which Shea recounts, “in a small city like this... you could get a fair way down the road.” The Fund would invest in organizations to help them acquire land for development, fund housing production, and obtain expertise to build their own capacity as well as the overall capacity of the local affordable housing sector.

Ultimately, GNOF raised \$23 million and distributed it through grant awards, program related investments, and pricing guarantees from 2007 to 2014. The maximum grant award was \$1 million; the smallest award was made for \$1,000. The median award size was \$200,000. Twenty awards were made with discretionary funds for \$50,000 or less; these awards typically did not go through the grants committee. The majority of the awards were distributed before in or before 2010.

CR Fund support was most frequently used for capacity-building — the various forms of operating support that expanded expertise.. Grant memos indicates that most awards were intended to support organizational capacity-building (49).³⁸ The second most common category was knowledge production (24) and then land purchase or financing (17). Grant memos indicate that only 7 awards were intended to directly fund bricks and mortar — or actual construction costs. Finally, only 2 awards were made for grantees that would directly apply the funding to helping individual homeowners.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND GRANTEES BY USE OF AWARD⁴⁰

BRICKS & MORTAR

Artspace	Global Green	McCaleb Educational Fund	St. Paul's
Catholic Charities/ Operation Helping Hands	Harmony	Providence	United Way
Gulf Coast Housing Partnership	Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church Disaster Response	Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation SEE the Movement	UNITY Urban Conservancy

FINANCING

ACORN	Enterprise Community Partners	Development Collaborative	NHP Foundation
Broadmoor Development Corporation	Efforts of Grace	Local Initiatives Support Coalition	Project Home Again Providence
Bayou District Foundation	Gulf Coast Housing Partnership	McCaleb Educational Fund	Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation
Crescent City Community Land Trust	Harmony/New Orleans Neighborhood	Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Improvement Association	UNITY

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, OPERATING SUPPORT

Affordable Housing Advocacy Coalition	Gulf Coast Housing Partnership	Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Improvement Association	Preservation Resource Center
Appleseed	Global Green	National Community Land Trust Network	Pro Bono Project
Artspace	Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance	Neighborhood Development Foundation	Project Homecoming Providence
Broadmoor Development Corporation	Harmony/NONDC	Northshore Housing Initiative	Qatar/Treme
Beacon of Hope	Jericho Road	Neighborhood Housing Services	Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation
Committee for a Better New Orleans	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law	New Orleans Redevelopment Authority	SEE the Movement
Crescent City Community Land Trust	Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church Disaster Response	Orleans Recovery Foundation	Southeast Louisiana Legal Service
Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence, University of Pennsylvania	Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation	Project Home Again	St. Paul's
Efforts of Grace	Louisiana Housing Alliance	Pontchartrain Park Community Development Corporation	Sustainable Communities United Way
Enterprise Corporation of the Delta	Local Initiatives Support Coalition/ Center for Community Progress		UNITY
Catholic Charities/ Operation Helping Hands			University of New Orleans PLUS Urban Conservancy

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Affordable Housing Advocacy Coalition	Greater New Orleans, Inc.	Make It Right	United Way
Central City Renaissance Alliance	Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance	Milano/New School	Pontchartrain Park Community Development Corporation
City of New Orleans	HRCN	National Community Land Trust Network	St. Bernard Project
City-Works	Jericho Road	New Orleans Redevelopment Authority	UNITY
Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence, University of Pennsylvania	Louisiana Housing Alliance	Nonprofit Knowledge Works/ Greater New Orleans Community Data Center	University of New Orleans PLUS
Global Green	Local Initiatives Support Coalition/ Center for Community Progress		Urban Institute

HOMEOWNER SERVICES

Catholic Charities/ Operation Helping Hands	Central City Renaissance Alliance	Global Green United Way
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Grantee survey respondents, asked to indicate all categories in which their organization's award was used, also reported that the CR Fund most frequently supported organizational capacity (14 awards/forms of support). Eleven awards were applied toward knowledge-production, and ten awards were used for bricks and mortar. Five awards supported land/property purchase, and four grants funded services for individual homeowners.

Taken together, these two approaches suggest that the predominant use of CR Fund support was capacity-building. Following that, grantees used their awards to engage in knowledge production through a range of efforts from education to data collection and analysis to report writing. Grantees also often used CR Fund support to purchase land or housing, or to purchase materials for construction of housing. The table on page 27 lists all grantees, categorized by how the awards were used. To capture the full range of CR Fund support, the table incorporates both the evaluator's categorization based on grant memos and grantee categorizations submitted in survey responses. The intent is to capture the direct use of funds — in other words, how the money was used. It is not meant to capture the indirect use of funds (i.e. a program manager supported bricks and mortar; hiring a staff member enabled homeowner services).³⁹ Note that a grantee could use an award in multiple categories and thus may be listed across multiple categories.

The discussion that follows is organized by the five primary evaluation research questions. Secondary questions are answered within each section. Stories of families who are now living in housing developed by CR Fund grantees are interspersed throughout the analysis.

HOUSING PRODUCTION

Though most grant awards did not directly fund construction costs, one of the primary goals of the Fund — if not the most urgent — was to get as many New Orleanians as possible back into housing. Ellen Lee describes this motivation: “If the city is going to return, people have to be able to live here. And there was no housing.”

The oft-cited figure for the number of housing units damaged by Katrina and the flooding is 134,000.⁴¹ In addition, the New Orleans City Council voted in 2007 to demolish the city's four main public housing complexes. Though conversations regarding public housing redevelopment started before the storm, this decision meant the demolition of over 4500 public housing units.⁴² Though many homeowners received Road Home and insurance money and were able to rebuild after the storm, many other homeowners did not receive enough money after mortgages were paid off and/or received less than their property was worth due to Road Home's assessment process. Renters were at the mercy of landlords to rebuild — and landlords often did not receive adequate assistance to rebuild properties after the storm.⁴³

“If the city is going to return, people have to be able to live here. And there was no housing.”

— Ellen Lee, Former Senior Vice-President of Programs, GNOF

Grantee self-report data collected by GNOF attributes support toward the construction of 9,378 units to CR Fund support.⁴⁴ Units included multi-family rebuilds and new construction, owner-occupied rebuilds, and single-family construction.

While CR Fund awards did not typically go directly to support housing production by funding “bricks and mortar,” the strength in its dollars lay in the indirect support it provided through creative financing strategies and organizational capacity-building. As Carey Shea says, the power of philanthropy is that it can “make things happen that couldn’t happen otherwise.” In other words, philanthropy has the power to fund things banks will not — like money to pay for staff or software. Nearly all grantees interviewed for this evaluation emphasized this point. Critically for many organizations — especially non-profit developers — the flexibility of philanthropy gives them the ability to do things like hire staff who will run a construction project or pay the salary of someone with the expertise to manage the complicated financing of new home construction, especially affordable housing. While capacity-building is discussed below, some examples illustrate both the direct and indirect ways in which CR Fund dollars supported housing production.

Martha Kegel, Executive Director of UNITY-New Orleans, says her organization, which serves homeless individuals, “could not have accomplished what we accomplished without those funds.” UNITY was awarded a \$500,000 CR Fund grant in 2008 to support the development

“We could not have accomplished what we accomplished without those funds.”

— Martha Kegel, Executive Director, UNITY-New Orleans

of a mixed-income workforce and permanent supportive housing apartment building in Mid-City. UNITY used its funds for “bricks and mortar ... the actual physical redevelopment of [the Sacred Heart Apartment] building.” The award also paid the salary of the person who oversaw the development. Other organizations fueled housing revitalization by hiring staff. The Preservation Resource Center (PRC), awarded three separate grants totaling \$1,000,000, used CRF support to fund four programs aimed at preserving the architectural heritage of New Orleans. Jon Skvarka, Director of Rebuilding Together, a PRC program that rehabilitates homes for low-income individuals, says, “you pay for a salary of a construction manager, he will work on 25 to 30 projects a year. So right there, ... the CR Fund had a direct correlation to helping 25 to 30 families. Because without a construction manager, those projects aren’t going to get started or run well.”

Brad Powers, former Executive Director of Jericho Road Episcopal Housing Initiative, a neighborhood-based nonprofit housing developer that received two CRF grants totaling \$605,000, notes that building housing “is extraordinarily expensive.” Affordable housing developers not only have to pay the costs of construction, but they also generally sell their homes for less than the construction costs. In addition to facing the barrier of expense to the construction of affordable housing, the community development corporations (CDCs) doing the work of home development after Katrina also had to navigate the market crash of 2008. For some CR Fund grantees, this meant seeking help with creative financing to fill gaps while they worked with banks to build housing during an economically volatile time.

Michelle Whetten, Vice-President and Market Leader of Enterprise Community Partners — Gulf Coast, says the CR Fund “did a really creative thing for us... when the market fell apart in 2008.” Whetten recalls that the “bank appetite for tax credits shrunk almost to nothing.” The CR Fund provided Enterprise Community Partners — a national organization that supports the development of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income individuals — with a \$3 million dollar pricing guarantee in 2009 for the redevelopment of the Lafitte public housing complex. In

Whetten's words, this was "a piece of paper but kind of a written guarantee that if the price for those credits dropped, they would fill the gap." Though Enterprise did not need to use the funds, which were returned to the funding pool, Whetten credits the CR Fund guarantee with helping Enterprise "get the project closed and get construction underway." Wendell Pierce, who created Pontchartrain Park Community Development Corporation (PPCDC) to rebuild the historically black New Orleans neighborhood that had been decimated by the storm, says the PRI his organization received from the Fund "helped make other people [banks] comfortable" in granting loans for home construction. In 2009, PPCDC received a \$250,000 grant for operating support and a \$500,000 program related investment for credit enhancement.

The CR Fund also provided gap financing for other organizations. Ellen Lee saw this as one of the important roles of the Fund. She said, "We had the quandary: are you the first one in or are you the last one in, right? We were able to be a first and that gave confidence to other investors, and we

"We had the quandary: are you the first one in or are you the last one in, right? We were able to be a first and that gave confidence to other investors, and we were able to close the deal to make sure the project got going."

– Ellen Lee, Former Senior Vice-President of Programs, GNOF

were able to close the deal to make sure the project got going." Several grantees acknowledged that these confidence investments by GNOF signaled credibility to other funders — especially banks — and enabled them to proceed with developments.

Though some developers had a hard time getting families to purchase new homes — especially given the market crash and its after-effects — developers who built multi-family rental complexes quickly filled their units and often began to grow waiting lists. Kegel says of UNITY's

housing for the homeless: "Whenever we've opened buildings, they're fully occupied, just like that." The Terraces, a low-income senior housing development by Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation (RNDC), a two-time grantee of the CR Fund for a total of \$1,200,000, has a waiting list of around 300 individuals.

All of the non-profit developers interviewed for the evaluation emphasize the importance of building quality homes. Katherine Medina, Homeownership Services Manager at Harmony Neighborhood Development, says their approach is to build affordable homes "filled with quality, something that could be passed on from one generation to the next." Harmony, formerly known as the New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative (NONDC), received a 2009 CR Fund grant for \$1,000,000 to catalyze housing production in the redevelopment of C.J. Peete and the surrounding Central City neighborhood.

For the most part, CR Fund grantees were successful in meeting goals around housing production. Whether they met their goals by using support for bricks and mortar or for operating support, grantees usually achieved their target unit counts to build or rehab housing. Some grantees fell short of meeting their goals, however. One grantee in an under-resourced neighborhood that was hit especially hard by the storm faltered in producing promised housing units and in

housing families, although it had secured funding from multiple sources. Another grantee struggled when their external developer built homes that could not be sold at affordable prices. Several grantees that built single-family homes had a difficult time selling their homes quickly enough to recoup losses.

One developer was slowed by the recession and the fact that families that wanted to live in its neighborhood of focus could still not afford the affordable housing. Another developer was slow to find families willing to move into a neighborhood still riddled with blight, even though their homes were high-quality. Una Anderson, the Executive Director of Harmony Neighborhood Development, says, “I can’t tell you how many market rate buyers we’d have who would walk through the houses and say, ‘Can you build this somewhere else?’”

“We really build to market quality and subsidize the buyer to be able to buy that market-quality house.”

– Una Anderson, Executive Director, Harmony Neighborhood Development

Unfortunately, data are unavailable to quantify how many families returned to New Orleans, or at least acquired stable housing, due to the CR Fund. Qualitative data collected for this evaluation, however, provide a rich picture of what it means for New Orleanians to have found stable housing — either through home ownership, renovation, or a rental unit. Overall, the homeowners and renters interviewed for this evaluation are grateful for their housing, and grantees are proud to have connected individuals and families with stable, quality housing. This section focuses on what the data tell us about the pathways through which individuals and families came to own or rent housing developed by CR Fund grantees, what their housing means to them, and how CR Fund grantees helped individuals and families navigate an often murky, lengthy process to stable housing.

HOME-OWNERSHIP

Twenty-one CR Fund grantees built new single-family housing or rehabbed existing single-family housing.⁴⁶ According to GNOF data, 659 of these units were new construction and 1634 were rebuilds. The non-profit developers interviewed for this evaluation all require their homeowners to go through many financial and educational hurdles to purchase a home — often their first. Holly Heine, Director of Operations and Communications at Jericho Road, says that it can take two to three years from the initial expression of interest by a potential homeowner to the moment when they turn the key in their new house.⁴⁷ Potential homeowners have to submit initial credit reports and then undertake a series of financial assessments to determine whether they meet often narrow criteria for who can purchase an affordable home. Once they meet financial criteria, individuals have to attend homebuyer classes. At some point in this process, potential buyers are often allowed to select their home. Homeowners often described this moment in great detail — that they “just felt right” about a home or wanted a corner lot or could see their family having celebrations there for years to come.

Katherine Medina has guided many families through the home ownership process at Harmony. She says Harmony does outreach to potential buyers in any way that they can — through businesses, churches, and printed materials. One woman who currently works for the organization

“Owning a home is everything.”

– Jimmy Robb, homeowner through Jericho Road ⁴⁵

and is a Harmony homeowner herself met Medina at church. She says Medina made the home buying process “stress-free.” Medina says, “we refused to turn anybody away. We literally worked with people with very, very low credit scores... for three years that finally purchased a home.” Harmony offers these time-intensive services to anyone who lives in Central City interested in buying a home there. Not only do they usher families through paperwork and homebuyer classes, but they also serve as advocates with mortgage companies.

Keionne Jackson, a single mother with four children, purchased her first home through Harmony. Before the storm, she was living in the Calliope (B.W. Cooper) public housing development. She returned to New Orleans after over a year, and after living for a period on the West Bank she returned to Calliope. Representatives of the public housing complex called to ask if she wanted to return, because a section had reopened after citizens signed a petition to protest the complete closure of the complex. She returned there to live for three to four years, because it was less expensive. Eventually she began looking for other public housing where she could use her Section 8 voucher, but she had trouble finding a spot. Keionne got involved with a program started by the singer Chaka Khan.⁴⁸ The program targeted women who were dealing with post-Katrina stress and connected them to a local non-profit, the Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies. Through the group, Keionne participated in discussion groups and worked with a mentor. When she told her mentor that she wanted to buy a house, the mentor helped find someone at HANO to talk with, and that person connected her with Katherine Medina at Harmony. Worried about the time she was told it would take to buy a house, Keionne almost left the program. But with Katherine’s encouragement, she stuck with it. With a bank loan, a Soft Second mortgage with the city, and grants, Keionne bought her first home. Of her home, she said, “it is amazing. I love it.” She is happy to be Uptown, near her children’s schools, and her sister bought a home from Harmony and lives around the corner. Keionne has been in her house three years and works two jobs to make ends meet. To Keionne, being a homeowner means that her children will have an inheritance if something happens to her. It also means freedom; she said she does not have to worry about people stopping by to “come and inspect your house... whether you [sic] home or not,” as they did at Calliope/B.W. Cooper. She said, “I don’t have to worry about that, because I’m my [own] landlord.”

“I don’t have to worry about people telling me what I can do my house, because it’s my house.”

– Keionne Jackson, Homeowner through Harmony Neighborhood Development

All of the homeowners said they value their home and shared in detail what home-ownership means to them and to their family members. Some talked about the importance of being able to pass along wealth to their children. Many of the homeowners shared their appreciation for having their own space — both in terms of being free from landlords and in terms of

family members having their own rooms. Though some say they struggle financially to undertake needed repairs to their homes and even to pay their mortgage, they all recognize the importance of home-ownership. Several called it “life-changing.”

Two of the respondents who identified their home ownership as life-changing are profiled below. Each of their Gentilly homes was destroyed by the post-Katrina floods. Now, each is a homeowner thanks to Project Home Again, a non-profit housing development organization created in 2008 by a \$20 million dollar gift from the Len and Louise Riggio Foundation. After Carey Shea left GNOF and spent some time abroad, she returned to New Orleans to run the organization, which received a \$400,000 CR Fund grant in 2010 for operating support and land purchase. Project Home Again ultimately built 101 homes. Families who meet the organization's income and other qualifications swap their original lots — where their houses often stood before the storm — for a newly built, fully furnished home.⁴⁹

Project Home Again — Home Ownership: Tammie Warren and Samantha Brown

When Hurricane Katrina hit, Tammie Warren and her husband were living with their youngest son in their Gentilly home; an older son was already living on his own. Samantha Brown⁵⁰ lived in the same area with her husband and two small children under the age of 5. After their evacuations from New Orleans, each woman would become a single mother, and each would also find tremendous comfort and strength when they became homeowners through Project Home Again.

Tammie Warren fled New Orleans with her 12 year-old son and members of her extended family before Katrina hit; her husband was in Iraq for work. In her family, they had always heeded the warnings of her grandmother to watch the direction in which the storms were spinning: “we always left.” Tammie and her family drove to Houston, Texas, living in hotel rooms where she said she had to maintain her composure for her son. She said she told herself, “I’ve got to let this child see that I’m strong.” Her brother-in-law called her after the flooding to tell her, “all I see is the vent on the top of your house. Your whole home is submerged.” When the family came back to visit the home for the first time in December, “the water was still in the security lights.” Though she had stacked furniture and moved precious family mementos to the attic before she left, “nothing was salvageable.” Tammie said, “all of my children’s pictures, their teeth, their hair, everything from my deceased grandmother... it’s all the mementos that you will never get again.” Tammie described the discomfort she felt after the storm when she went from “having a paycheck every two weeks to being on public assistance... you feel like you’re being stripped of everything.”

Tammie lived with her son in an apartment outside of Beaumont, TX, while her husband went back and forth to Iraq for work. The family could not return to New Orleans, she said, because “there were no middle schools open in Louisiana that I wanted [my son] to go to.” In November 2006, the family watched a bulldozer demolish their Gentilly home. She said the hardest thing to watch was the removal of her son’s basketball goal. Once the demolition company was finished, nothing of their old home remained — not even the slab. Tammie and her husband put their Road Home money in the bank.

Tammie and her family moved back to New Orleans in 2008 when her son was accepted to Warren Easton High School, her alma mater. By December 2010, after moving back and forth from an apartment to her father’s home — for whom she cared after he had a stroke — Tammie and her husband were divorced. She was taken by surprise when her husband



TAMMIE WARREN'S HOME IN GENTILLY, BUILT BY PROJECT HOME AGAIN AND "SWAPPED" FOR THE LOT WHERE HER FORMER HOME STOOD BEFORE IT WAS DESTROYED BY KATRINA AND THE POST-STORM FLOODING.

TAMMIE WARREN IN HER HOME

said he wanted to live in Texas by himself. She was not expecting to be a single parent. Her ex-husband took half of the remaining Road Home money, and she went back to work.

In 2012, Tammie was watching television one day when she saw a commercial for a local non-profit that was rebuilding houses for Katrina survivors. The non-profit's office was in her building, but they told her

that because nothing remained of her home — not even the slab — they could not help her. But they told her about

“I got my house. I got my independence.”

— Tammie Warren, homeowner through Project Home Again

Project Home Again, and she called them. Within weeks, she

received notice that she qualified for Phase I of their home ownership program. Her ex-husband signed off rights to their old property, and she swapped it for her new home. From the first phone call, the Project Home Again process — through all the paperwork to the home ownership class — was a smooth one, according to Tammie.

On the day she took possession of the house, she asked her sister to join her. Tammie dressed for the occasion; she says, “you would have sworn I was going to meet Queen Elizabeth.” For her, the new home was “my independence.” She saved the pen she used in the mortgage company office to sign her papers; it is safe in her filing cabinet. When she and her sister walked into the house, “we literally screamed.” For the first time, she saw the furniture she had selected — Project Home Again provides their new homeowners with furniture — and was thrilled. She recalls that she didn't want to cook for a long time “because I didn't want to lose the new smell.”

Tammie's current full-time job is in government — marking a return to the sector where she was employed before Katrina — and she also has a part-time job in retail. One son is in the military, and the other lives in New Orleans with his family. Though there are some repairs that she needs to make in her home that she cannot afford, she is deeply appreciative of Project Home Again and of her very own home. She says without Project Home Again, she would still be in apartment: “I would not have been able to replenish what was taken on top of what I had to spend... I never would have been able to be on my own, not like this.”

Samantha Brown moved into her home through Project Home Again in 2012, after seven years of sharing a bedroom with her two young children in her mother's two-bedroom house.

Post-Katrina flooding left the home Samantha and her husband owned submerged in ten feet of water. Their first trip back, Samantha recalls, was “completely devastating.” She says, “when I saw my house for the first time, I could not speak, because of all my family members, mine was the worst... if you stood on the sidewalk, you could see straight through because one side was literally blown out.” She had saved for two years to buy the Gentilly house, but she was most upset about the loss of “memories of my kids, the pictures, the memory books, the little baby hairs and socks, things that I was planning on keeping forever.” To her children, she had to explain: “you just don't have a house anymore. You don't have your bedroom, you don't have your toys.”

For Samantha, the loss of her home was “a lot of weight to carry.” The devastation, however, was exacerbated by her relationship with her then-husband. She says, “he was abusive, and I did not want to take him with me to evacuate.” Though her husband left with the family and returned with her to her mother’s home — because he had nowhere else to go, she said — the relationship ended quickly. Samantha says that after he came in “very intoxicated” one night and “kicked my mom’s bedroom door in... it was just too much... I just felt that I didn’t need to be kind to him anymore.” They divorced, and Samantha became a single mother living and sleeping in one room with two small children.

Samantha had not wanted to return to New Orleans, but she did for her mother and grandfather. She tried to find work out West for a while but eventually gave up. She worked in New Orleans in disaster case management and learned a lot about the funding process of rebuilding. Denied adequate funds by the Road Home program, she appealed three times but eventually gave up. Her insurance money paid off the mortgage but did not allow her to rebuild. She says, “you just stop fighting after awhile with certain things.”

At some point, Samantha began receiving postcards from Project Home Again. She ignored the cards “for a few years,” because her experience in disaster case management and with the Road Home program made her suspicious of programs that seemed “unbelievable.” Finally, a friend convinced her to call the non-profit. From that point, the process was “very easy.”

*“You literally just turn the key.
You were home.”*

— Samantha Brown, homeowner through Project Home Again

Though Samantha says she may not have chosen to return to Gentilly, “I was living in one room with my kids for seven years, but did not have any privacy. I did not have

anything to myself, and they were older.” Getting the call to come and pick out her house, said Samantha, was “joyous... I was suffocating.” Describing the day she moved into her home, Samantha says, “You literally just turn the key. You were home.” That first night in her home, she recalls, “was the first night that I slept straight through since Katrina.” Samantha likes her quiet neighborhood and her home, although she has problems with her solar panels not functioning properly.

Describing what home ownership means to her, Samantha says, “The Project Home Again family has done great things, and I don’t know if they know how much they have done. I can only speak for myself personally from being a survivor of domestic violence and having two children, being stuck in a room at my mom’s house for seven years, and finally having my own home again. It was life changing, and for that I will always remember each and every one of them for what they did for me.”

RENTALS AND PUBLIC HOUSING

After the storm, Louisiana distributed the majority of its federal money to homeowners, rendering the recovery of rental properties a problem, especially given the number of small rental prop-

erties in New Orleans.⁵¹ Fifteen CR Fund grantees built multi-family complexes with rental units. According to GNOF data, 5,946 of these units were new construction and 1,103 were rebuilds.

Several grantee organizations sought out residents who lived in rental complexes or public housing complexes before the storm to encourage them to return to their new developments. Victor Smeltz, Executive Director of the Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation (RNDC), a subsidiary of Volunteers of America (VOA), says they tracked down residents who have lived in former VOA complexes in New Orleans East and Gentilly that had been destroyed by the storm and flooding. Smeltz says, “we called our initiative early on the Coming Back Home Initiative, and it was so nice to get folks to actually come back home.” One of these developments is The Terraces on Tulane — a 200-unit complex for low-income seniors that was built to replace a VOA-owned complex that had been in New Orleans East pre-Katrina. Edith Reaves, a 93-year old great-grandmother, lives alone in a one-bedroom apartment there. Asked why she came to live in The Terraces after a few post-storm years in Florida and one year in a complex on St. Charles, she credits the postcards she got from VOA. Residents of Faubourg Lafitte — the renamed and redeveloped Lafitte public housing complex — interviewed for this evaluation also said they were contacted multiple times after the storm and asked if they would return to the new development, built to replace the Lafitte Housing Project, one of the former “big four” housing developments in New Orleans. Both said, “yes.”

Given the destruction of rental units during Katrina and the flooding, the weak financial support for landlords afterwards, the demolition of public housing, and the quickly escalating costs of rental stock, the risk of homelessness increased for individuals with little to no income. UNITY, a New Orleans non-profit that coordinates efforts across the city to end homelessness, was strong before Katrina. Martha Kegel, UNITY's Executive Director, says, “after Katrina, we had such an explosion in homelessness ... we really changed the way we did things.” At UNITY, the guiding approach was to protect the city's poorest, most vulnerable citizens; Kegel says, “we're not going

“We're not going to allow poor people to be shut out of this city. It's their city, too.”

— Martha Kegel, Executive Director, UNITY-New Orleans

to allow poor people to be shut out of this city. It's their city, too.” Within a month of Katrina, the nonprofit organization had initiated a Permanent Supportive Housing initiative. Using federal Community Development Block Grant (CBDG) funds, tax credit incentives for developers, and donations, UNITY began to build housing with supportive services for the chronically homeless and for those bordering on homelessness. Much of CR Fund support went to build one of two new buildings — the Sacred Heart Apartments. To get individuals into stable housing, UNITY engages in intense outreach, and outreach workers often go out at night. Kegel says outreach workers identify the most vulnerable individuals to recruit for housing, or the “people that our assessment shows ... if we don't house this person now, this person is very likely to die.” Sometimes, however, it takes years to convince an individual to move from the streets to stable housing. Kegel says UNITY was in contact with Lionel Foster for “something like 15 years” before he said “yes” to housing.

Lionel Foster says he was “born and raised in New Orleans.” When Katrina hit, he had been homeless for years. Lionel evacuated and spent time in places like South Carolina and Ohio before finding himself back home in New Orleans. Lionel says that he had been “in touch with UNITY for

almost like 10 years,” so that when he came back, “it was pretty easy for them to find me.” After two years, he moved into a one-bedroom apartment at Sacred Heart. He says, “it’s really nice. Most people in the building wasn’t used to sleeping in the beds. Some of them had to get used to it.” Sacred Heart Apartments - which has 109 units — provides an array of supportive services for its residents. Half of the housing is reserved for chronically homeless individuals, while the other half is intended for residents who need very low-cost housing. A caseworker, who sat in on Lionel’s interview, described some of the services, including a support group where the discussion can get “lively.” Asked about the group, Lionel says, “you’re talking about a lively time. It’s dope... it’s really supportive... positive.” Now that he’s a resident at Sacred Heart, he says his caseworkers there “do everything. Help you get food stamps, help you get Social Security, help you get disability.”

Senior citizens — especially those living in low-income and/or subsidized housing — were also hit hard by the housing crisis. Edith Reaves was living in an apartment complex owned by the Volunteers of America (VOA) in New Orleans East with her husband (they eventually divorced and he is deceased) when Katrina hit. They joined her son and his family in a hotel room across from the

“[Moving to the Terraces] meant that I could be independent and live alone, because, of course, all my children suggested that I come to live with them. I said, ‘Thanks, but no thanks.’”

– Edith Reaves, resident at the Terraces, a development of RNDC

Superdome to ride out “the worst part.” When the family was able to leave the city, they went to Michigan to stay with a grandson. Eventually, Mrs. Reaves went to stay alone with a grandson in Florida, and she was there for two years. At some point, Mrs. Reaves began to receive letters from VOA. The Terraces, VOA wrote to her, would be ready in two years: “And in exactly two years it was ready.” Though Mrs. Reaves thought Florida was a nice place to live, she wanted to move back to New Orleans and told people she would return, “Because that’s home, and I want to go back home.” She had her choice of apartments, and the building, she says, “was beautiful.” She was especially appreciative of the art that was on the walls of the hallways and lobby. Edith Reaves turned 93 in September of 2015 and is proud to be able to do almost everything on her own. She takes senior citizen transportation to the grocery store, to the doctor, and to get her hair styled. For Mrs. Reaves, her apartment means independence. She says moving into The Terraces “meant that I could be independent and live alone, because, of course, all my children suggested that I come to live with them. I said, ‘Thanks, but no thanks.’”

Victor Smeltz says that RNDC wanted to build “projects that would allow us to do developments of scale” and return as many of VOA’s former residents to New Orleans as possible. According to Smeltz, VOA located “at least a hundred” residents who had lived in its senior citizen property in New Orleans East — Mrs. Reaves’ residence — and that about 45 of them moved into The Terraces. Gulf Coast Housing Partnership (GCHP) is another nonprofit developer created after Katrina and recognized for its success in building housing to scale. GCHP received two grants from the CR Fund totaling \$2,250,000 for the purchase of land and for operating support. Led by Kathy Laborde, GCHP completed The Muses in 2010. A LEED-certified building in Central City, The

Muses has 263 apartments for mixed-income families. Laborde says that after the storm, GCHP “set out to produce affordable housing.”

Gulf Coast Housing Partnership — The Muses: Rose and August Bourgeois

The renovation of Rose and August Bourgeois’ Broadmoor home was almost complete when Katrina hit. They had planned to move back in on September 30, 2005, and Rose was going to retire. August would continue working, though, because they had a new mortgage with the renovation.

The entire family stayed through the hurricane’s impact. But as they were clearing the streets of debris immediately after the storm, they received a phone call from a relative that water was coming. Rose recalls, “we were outside talking, the water was actually flowing over our feet.” While the family loaded into one car and left for Lafayette, August decided to stay. As the waters rose over the course of the day to meet his porch, August took a pillow, a blanket, and pack of Ritz crackers and headed to a nearby church with a neighbor. During the night, he watched from the safety of the church as his garage door “completely disappeared.” At 3 am that morning, he awoke to go to the restroom and stepped in water — on the second floor of the church. He and others who had taken shelter there went to the roof, where they stayed for three days. The group was evacuated to the Galleria in Metairie. A Vietnam veteran, August described the experience as a “horrible” one that evoked flashbacks to being in war. He says, “it was complete chaos.” He was particularly disturbed to hear an NBC reporter call him and others who were waiting to be evacuated “refugees.”

When August was finally able to reach Rose to let her know he was in Houston, she told the family to “pack up,” because they were going to get August. Unable to access their bank accounts, the family lived on their credit cards. On October 1, Rose reported to her job, now relocated to Baton Rouge. For a month and a half, Rose and August lived with one of Rose’s co-workers; while they appreciated the generosity of the co-worker, it was not a comfortable situation. Rose says, “we always had our own space, so... it was a little hard to get used to.” August returned to his job with the United States Post Office in New Orleans and commuted back and forth from Baton Rouge; he was working seven days a week, because not enough staff had returned.

Asked to describe what it was like to see their home for the first time after Katrina, Rose says “the devastation was unbelievable. It looked like one of those horror movies, you know, when you go in, you had whole communities, there was nothing.” And the house... [the water] sat for three weeks.” Their son’s house in the Ninth Ward was “gone.”

The insurance and Road Home money they received after the flood went to their mortgage company and paid the mortgage in full. To rebuild their home, Rose and August received a check for \$6,000. Needless to say, that amount was not adequate. They lived in Baton Rouge for three years, although August secured a nice but small condominium in New Orleans for which he paid reasonable rent and in which he lived for much of the week. But when August injured his back in November 2009 – an injury that would require multiple surgeries – Rose decided to retire and move back.

BUILDING THE MUSES
DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL CITY



COMPLETED MUSES DEVELOPMENT



Rose had been living with her daughter and two grandchildren in Baton Rouge. When they decided to move back to New Orleans to be with August, they needed a larger apartment. This search brought them to The Muses. August, who had grown up in Central City, had noticed The Muses on drives to visit his sister. As described in the analysis above, The Muses was built by GCHP, which serves the Gulf Coast region and “pursues commercial and residential developments with transformative potential.”⁵²

In September 2010, the family moved into a four-bedroom apartment at The Muses. August and Rose live there now with their two grandchildren; their daughter was transferred to Washington, D.C., and comes to New Orleans when she is able. August and Rose described their move to The Muses as easy, and they were excited about the location — especially the building’s proximity to Mardi Gras routes and bus stops. Rose says, “the overall neighborhood was perfect for us, because... everything we needed” is accessible. August even spoke at the grand opening of The Muses. They appreciate the low cost of utilities and feel safe. But as Rose says, “it was not our intention to be here this long.” They always wanted to return to their home, but they were thinking about putting it on the market when, in August 2015, it was announced that additional Road Home funds would be released to help families who had started repairs on their homes but lacked money to finish them.⁵³ Overall, Rose and August said they have been happy with The Muses, although they wish all other residents were as invested in maintaining the space as they are. August says, “when we moved into this space, it was like a five-star hotel... because Rose and I are homeowners, we treat this like our home. Everybody doesn’t do that.”

When Katrina hit, HANO closed all of its public housing developments in New Orleans and by 2006, most had not reopened. HUD announced that it would demolish approximately 5,000 units in its “Big Four” public housing complexes — C.J. Peete, B.W. Cooper, St. Bernard, and Lafitte — in 2006. The plan was to rebuild each development as mixed-income complexes with fewer units. Residents of these complexes were given vouchers to find housing elsewhere.⁵⁴ Ten years after the storm, 1,829 apartments had been rebuilt on the sites of the former Big Four public housing complexes, although 4,000 units were promised. Less than half of the new units are available at public-housing-level rents.⁵⁵ The process of rebuilding affordable housing was stalled by a 2009 State Bond Commission moratorium on the construction of subsidized affordable housing in New Orleans after a report by the Bureau of Governmental Research concluded that the city “may be in danger of having too much affordable housing.”⁵⁶ At the time, Laura Tuggle of Southeastern Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) called the finding “totally surreal.” She cited HANO’s staggering waitlist for Section 8 housing and the demand among low-income New Orleanians for affordable housing.⁵⁷

Though public housing has not reached pre-Katrina capacity, three CR Fund grantees — NONDC (now Harmony Development Corporation), Bayou District Foundation (BDF), and Providence Community Housing — have worked with partners in the redevelopment of three of the four Big Four complexes — C.J. Peete,⁵⁸ St. Bernard, and Lafitte, respectively. NONDC/Harmony partnered with McCormack Baron, a private developer, to develop homes for purchase as part of the “off-site development” of the former C.J. Peete. The development area now includes 460 units of mixed-income rental housing and 55 off-site homes for purchase. To rebuild the St. Bernard complex, BDF partnered with Columbia Residential to build Columbia Parc. BDF received a \$500,000

grant from the CR Fund in 2008 to capitalize a revolving fund used to purchase blighted lots and vacant homes in the area surrounding the St. Bernard redevelopment site. When Columbia Parc opened in 2013, the development had 685 of 1,325 planned mixed-income units (including 300 homeowner properties), an early learning center, and a football field.⁵⁹ Finally, Providence Community Housing — which received a two-year, \$1,000,000 CR Fund grant in 2008 to cover the direct and indirect costs of clearing title for 120 adjudicated properties in the development area — partnered with Enterprise Community Partners and L+M Development Partners to rebuild the former Lafitte housing complex. The mixed-income community was the only one of the former Big Four complexes to promise one-for-one replacement of all 900 subsidized apartments on both the former and expanded site.⁶⁰

Two of the respondents (briefly discussed above) interviewed for this evaluation own homes developed by Harmony, and two live in Faubourg-Lafitte as public housing tenants. Though the two Faubourg-Lafitte tenants are grateful to be in their apartments and are active members of their tenants' association, they also say that the community is not what it used to be. They acknowledge that crime happened in the previous incarnation of the public housing, but they say people are no longer as connected to one another as they used to be. One respondent attributes this in part to the new rules implemented by Faubourg-Lafitte management.

Providence Community Housing — Faubourg Lafitte: Dianne Alfred and Travis LeBlanc

Dianne, a single mother of two, was living in the Lafitte Housing Development in New Orleans' Sixth Ward when Katrina hit. At the time, her children were six and one. Sixteen members of Dianne's family — including her grandmother and a quadriplegic uncle — were at her apartment when the storm rolled in, because she had a porch. Because of their health problems, the grandmother, uncle, and a cousin left for the Superdome before the floodwaters inundated Lafitte. Dianne cooked for her family and neighbors as they sat out the storm and then watched the waters rise.

The only person in the apartment who could swim was the father of Dianne's baby girl, and so when it came time to flee, he helped each person, one by one, get to the elevated interstate near Lafitte. Her son begged Dianne to keep him from drowning as they walked him across the water in a toy boat. That night, the family slept on the bridge. Dianne says her kids gave her "strength to keep pushing and pushing and pushing." Finally, the family was able to get into the Superdome. Of that experience, Dianne recalls, "that was a Nightmare on Elm Street and then some." Dianne described stifling heat, terrible smells, and people dying, passing out, and committing acts of violence. Along with her children and mother, Dianne was eventually put on a bus to Houston. They arrived "just in the nick of time to save my baby." Her little girl was dehydrated, and she was immediately hooked up to IVs; her son had diarrhea. The family was in the Reliant Center for two days before they were moved to hotel rooms in North Dallas, where they lived for three months. Until Dianne and her children returned to New Orleans in 2010, they moved around from Houston to Dallas to Baton Rouge. Dianne says at times, she was homeless, dependent on the good will of friends or family to let her and her children stay with them. Finally, Dianne found a house she could rent in New Orleans with her section 8 housing voucher. But when that fell through, Dianne



NEW HOMES IN FAUBOURG-LAFITTE,
DEVELOPED BY PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY
HOUSING, ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY
PARTNERS, L&M DEVELOPMENT, AND THE
HOUSING AUTHORITY OF NEW ORLEANS

DIANNE ALFRED ON THE PORCH OF
HER FAUBOURG-LAFITTE APARTMENT

relinquished her voucher to move into a three-bedroom apartment at Faubourg-Lafitte. She recalls: "I moved in here with nothing." Dianne has gradually acquired furniture for most rooms of her house, although at the time of her interview, her 11-year old daughter slept on a box springs padded with blankets. Because of severe arthritis in her knees and spine, Dianne cannot work. She says, "I'm in pain everyday. I don't show it. I get up and try to do what I can... I do what I have to do. That's the sacrifice I make every day to make sure my children don't go hungry." She also said, "it's just been hard, but I'm still blessed."

Dianne feels like the Faubourg-Lafitte complex is "more bad now than it's good." While she is thankful for her apartment, she worries that families don't look out for one another's children like they used to, and she is concerned that there is little for older children to do. Though "there was shootings going on" before Katrina, she was "tight" with her neighbors. She is working with the Tenants Association to get the management company to install a basketball court for the older children. And although Dianne says she does not smoke, drink, or allow traffic through her house, she finds the rules at the complex "stressful." One of the rules of the complex is that no more than four people can sit on a porch at one time. Dianne asks, "how can you learn to know your neighbor if we got to be inside?" She also lamented the fact that the complex has only one security guard.

Dianne and Travis LeBlanc knew each other at Lafitte before Katrina. Like Dianne, Travis and her daughter and extended family stayed through the storm and had to evacuate Lafitte by walking through floodwaters to get to the Superdome via Interstate-10. After two days, she and her daughter were transported via bus to the Dallas County Jail, where they stayed until they were able to get a hotel room. Her daughter, who was older, stayed in Houston when Travis returned to New Orleans to work at the Superdome. Eventually, after living with a friend and in another apartment with family members, Travis moved into the Faubourg-Lafitte complex. Because she had lived in Lafitte before the storm, she received phone calls asking whether she was interested in returning. She said "yes." She also said, "we was working on the building of these places, helping them with the architect and the building process. We were in-the-know. So that's how we were able to get back here in Lafitte, and I love it." She was glad to be able to choose a unit close to her aunt's, where her brother — who lives with her- "could be familiar with the people around here."

Comparing the new complex to the old, she says, "Even though... new people living in the area, it's still good." She says, "I'm the center of everything... Everybody comes right here." Travis also serves on the Tenants' Association, as her aunt did before her.

As noted above, nonprofit developers that connect low- and moderate-income families to home-ownership offer a range of services and support to walk them through the often time- and labor-intensive process of buying a home. CR Fund grantees sometimes provide these services in-house or partner with other organizations — often other CR Fund grantees like Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and Neighborhood Development Foundation (NDF) to provide housing counseling and case management. The Lower Ninth Ward Neighborhood Empowerment Network Association (NENA), a CR Fund grantee, provided case management before it transitioned into housing production. Charlotte Jackson, NENA's Deputy Director, says the organization was founded in 2006 as a "grassroots effort" to help families in the Lower Ninth Ward through case management.

NENA received two CR Fund grants totaling \$950,000 to hire case managers to provide housing case management and to bolster financing for homeowners. Jackson credits CR Fund support with helping NENA serve “372 families with housing counseling and case management.”

Grantee organizations, like the Broadmoor Development Corporation (BDC), quickly saw that legal barriers would complicate the process of helping families access federal funds for rebuilding. BDC, the development arm of the Broadmoor Improvement Association, was created after the storm as a neighborhood-based initiative to help its residents rebuild. It received three CR Fund grants totaling \$600,000 to hire staff and pay general operating costs. Santiago Burgos, Executive Director of BDC, recalls one Broadmoor homeowner who lacked paperwork to demonstrate that she owned her home when Katrina hit, because her employer had taken out a mortgage on her behalf because she could not get financing. Burgos says, “she worked for years for that doctor, paid off the note, but the doctor didn’t transfer the title until 2007 to her, so she didn’t have any way to demonstrate that that was her house.” Eventually, BDC staff secured financing for the homeowner and renovated her home so that she could return.

In 2011, the CR Fund made a two-year collaborative grant of \$592,000 to four partner organizations to address legal barriers like the one illustrated in Burgos’ example. Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS) acted as the fiscal agent for its three partner organizations: Louisiana Appleseed, the Pro Bono Project, and the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL). These organizations worked together to address one of the most significant barriers to home rebuilding after Katrina: title clearing. Christy Kane, Executive Director of Appleseed, says title clearing was a significant problem for reasons of culture, cost, and time: “Our culture [in New Orleans] is just that people just don’t use the legal system to pass property... [and] it had become too expensive and time-consuming to clear title or to open a succession.” She notes that some property values were so low that it would have cost more in attorney fees for a property succession than the property was worth. Paul Tuttle, Director of the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic at SLLS, says that SLLS used its portion of the grant money to help families navigate these barriers. He says SLLS attorneys worked on title clearing successions and liens, but they also went to blight hearings and filed interdictions so that families could retain or legally renovate their home. Tuttle also notes that the CR Fund money “actually let us... pay filing fees for clients who absolutely could not afford to do it.” Kane says that Appleseed used its grant support to engage in advocacy and education work to try to change local and state policies regarding title clearing. She says that working with community partners, Appleseed helped save 283 homes.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Individuals interviewed for this evaluation who work in New Orleans’ affordable housing sector nearly all agreed that the sector was not prepared to handle the housing crisis delivered to the city by Katrina and the subsequent flooding. Looking back on the state of the affordable housing sector before the storm, Carey Shea says, “there wasn’t this sort of machine that could produce affordable housing.”

When it came to the capacity of the city, for-profit, or non-profit developers to address the vast needs, Shea says they all fell short. “Capacity on the ground,” Shea notes, “was minimal.” Michelle Whetten of Enterprise Community Partners, who moved to New Orleans right after the storm,

says few non-profit developers were producing “high-quality well-designed energy-efficient affordable housing.” At the time, she also observed “very little coordination between the city and the state, as far as funding priorities and what neighborhoods they would like to see resources put into.” Finally, she notes, “there wasn’t a lot of philanthropy here.” She described a “disjointed system with no infrastructure tying it all together.”

In a 2006 proposal to invite the Kellogg Foundation to participate in the CR Fund, GNOF described the state of the local affordable housing sector pre-Katrina: “Unlike other cities with a population of over 400,000, New Orleans had few strong community development corporations, no national housing intermediary, few philanthropic organizations, limited government involvement in housing development, and a dearth of community development experts.”⁶¹ Shea says that at the time, if someone had made an organizational chart of the local community development infrastructure, it would have had “lots of empty boxes.”

According to Shea, it was by building the capacity of local organizations that the CR Fund most effectively got people back into housing. Former and current GNOF staff and grantee representatives alike see the most effective use of the Fund’s resources as building the capacity of local organizations. Ellen Lee observes, “it helped a lot of nonprofit organizations ramp up their operations.” As noted in figures cited at the beginning of the Findings section, this is the area in which the Fund most heavily invested.

“We knew that there was a tough road ahead and that it was going to be really hard for a lot of these nonprofits to remain sustainable.”

– Isabel Barrios, Program Officer, GNOF

From the beginning, GNOF staff strategized about how to sustain organizations once the disaster relief money dried up. Barrios recalls, “We knew that there was a tough road ahead and that it was going to be really hard for a lot of these nonprofits to remain sustainable.” A year after the Fund was created, the Great Recession of 2008 “hit when many of New Orleans’ non-

profits were still getting back on their feet.”⁶² Given this context, GNOF staff provided technical assistance to grantees and classes that were meant to bolster nonprofits’ abilities to fundraise and advocate. According to the survey administered to CR Fund grantees, over 52% of grantees say GNOF provided or connected their organization with technical expertise or other organizational effectiveness tools; the same percentage report that GNOF connected them to other partners. Sixty percent attended meetings that GNOF held for grantees at least once. Nearly all grantees say CR Fund support was critical for the operation of their organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL-LEVEL CAPACITY-BUILDING

Describing the value of philanthropy to disaster recovery, Carey Shea notes that grant dollars are best used “for the things that you can’t get money for anywhere else.” For many of the CR Fund grantees, those things included operating support, staff salaries, and other organizational needs related to capacity.

One of the most common ways in which CR Fund grantees used money for capacity-building was to hire staff. Una Anderson, Executive Director at Harmony, says “having the money for staff was critical.” She reports that Harmony is now at a place where they “really are starting to operate in a way that’s much more sustainable.” Andreanecia Morris, Chair of the Board of Governors of the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA), says that having the funds to hire a full-time staff person for GNOHA was “the best thing ever.” Created in 2007 as a loose collaborative of non-profit developers, GNOHA received a \$50,000 CR Fund grant in 2014 and is now a member organization that seeks to strengthen affordable housing opportunities through advocacy and education.

Several grantees used funds to hire project managers to oversee construction. Jon Skvarka says CR Fund money helped Rebuilding Together pay for construction managers. Overall, he says, “without that funding right after the storm, we wouldn’t have been able to grow as we did, and then we wouldn’t have been able to take as many projects as well. So ... it was critical for us to have the CR Fund.” Christy Kane of Applesseed says their grant support was used to hire someone to oversee volunteer attorneys, a job to which she and her program director were devoting too much time. Laura Tuggle at

SLLS also notes that funding was important for “[expanding] our internal capacity ... and service to the community.” She and her co-worker, Paul Tuttle, say that because homeowners’ succession cases could be very complex, they were not “something that you could hand off to a volunteer.” The CR Fund

“Everybody wants to give you money just for the project or direct hard costs, but not the people that you need to run the project and run the program.”

– Nicole Barnes, Executive Director, Jericho Road

grant enabled them to expand their staff to take on these complex cases that would require too many hours for one volunteer to manage. Nicole Barnes, Executive Director at Jericho Road, summarizes the value of CR Fund support for staff as follows: “Everybody wants to give you money just for the project or direct hard costs, but not the people that you need to run the project and run the program.”

Grantees often said CR Fund support was critical to organizational growth. Paul Tuttle of SLLS says the grant money — used to support capacity-building — enabled SLLS to do work they were not doing before. Charlotte Jackson of NENA says, “it was essential to keeping [NENA] afloat, because the organization was started with zero dollars.” Smeltz of RNDC says that while his organization had the financial support of VOA, it “struggled on the operating side” in its first few years. He credits both the development and the operating support from the CR Fund with helping RNDC grow successfully. Both NENA and RNDC say the CR Fund support served as leverage for other entities like banks and foundations to invest in them and help them grow. Martha Kegel at UNITY says, “to have GNOF as the seed money made a big difference, so that other foundations would be able to see that GNOF believed.” Wendell Pierce says that GNOF support gave PPCDC money to get things done and provided “credibility with other groups to get things done.”

When organizations no longer had capacity-supporting grants from the CR Fund or elsewhere, they often struggled. City Councilmember LaToya Cantrell, who was Executive Director of the

Broadmoor Improvement Association at the time of Katrina, says that by 2010, her organization — which included BDC — was facing a “reinvestment void.” She says that while the CR Fund responded by giving BDC more money, “it was with more constraints... and not at the level the organization really needed.” Santiago Burgos, a former Executive Director of BDC, says, “the BDC is no longer an entity the way it was. It is a program.”

Broadmoor Development Corporation — owner-occupied rebuild: Irma Williams

Irma Williams, 62, has lived in New Orleans her entire life. She bought a home in 1996 in Broadmoor; the home was under 11 feet of water after the levees failed and the city flooded. Neither she nor her mother — who lived down the street — evacuated before Katrina. When Irma went to check on her mother after the storm, they got caught in the flood and were stranded for five days. “We had to evacuate out of the top of our roof,” she recalls, “we were rescued with the army helicopter.” They were transported to a bridge, where they stayed for two nights before being taken to a shelter in Corpus Christi, Texas. An uncle from Houston picked them up and housed them for two weeks until Irma’s employer called her to Shreveport to work. After bouncing from hotel rooms to corporate apartments there for five months, Irma was given the choice to move to Irving, Texas, with her employer or return to New Orleans. She says, “we chose to come back home.” When they drove into New Orleans, Irma says, “it was like we were going to a ghost town. Oh, it was horrible. Everything was brown and just dead, you know... we looked around in horror.” The two women came back because they love New Orleans. Irma and her mother lived on the third floor of her mother’s house while the two downstairs floors were rehabbed. When Irma got a FEMA trailer, she parked it in her mom’s driveway.

“I’d just like to say I’m glad to be back... everything is beautiful.”

– Irma Williams, home rehabbed by Broadmoor Development Corporation

When Irma received Road Home money, she hired a contractor to repair her house, but she ultimately had to “call a lawyer to get him off my property” when he did not complete the work in a timely manner. Her money ran out while a second contractor was working on the house, and she called Broadmoor Development Corporation

(BDC). She met with someone from BDC, calling her “an angel.” They sat on Irma’s front steps and the woman told her, “I’m going to see if I can get you some help.” Finally, after several months, Irma’s house was ready in March of 2011. She says, “the work they did was just phenomenal.” She praised her central air conditioning, solar panels, and insulation. She credited BDC and Rebuilding Together, another local non-profit developer, with helping her return home; she is especially thankful for the income she now receives from her upstairs tenant. She says, “I’d just like to say I’m glad to be back... everything is beautiful.”

HOUSE REHABBED BY BROADMOOR
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, LOCATED
ON SOUTH TONTI STREET



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: EMILY WOLFF, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF BROADMOOR IMPROVEMENT
ASSOCIATION; HOMEOWNER ALVIN LABOSTRIE;
DUNCAN CHENEY, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR,
PROJECT HOMECOMING



Some grantees used CR Fund support to build their organizational capacity for knowledge production — something that in turn contributed to the development of the larger affordable housing sector. Dr. Marla Nelson, Associate Professor of Urban Studies and Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) Program Coordinator, led UNO in its capacity as a local partner in a grant to Milano The New School for Management and Urban Policy. The program was started with an initial grant of just over \$165,000, and UNO received a subsequent grant of \$175,000 to sustain it. The initial CR Fund grant was used to develop a Community Development Finance Curriculum at UNO, including a stipend for a community development practitioner to co-teach in a community development finance practicum with Dr. Nelson. The CR Fund also supported a collaboration between the Urban Institute, a Washington, D.C., based think-tank, and the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center/Nonprofit Knowledge Works (GNOCDC/KPNW) to collect and analyze housing data for post-Katrina reports. After the initial grant to the Urban Institute and The Data Center, GNOCDC/NPKW would receive three smaller grants totaling just over \$100,000. The Data Center Executive Director Allison Plyer says the initial collaboration with the Urban Institute was the organization’s first experience with “action oriented research.” After the storm, the organization’s website was getting “pummeled,” according to Plyer, by individuals seeking basic information about the city. The Data Center’s partnership with the Urban Institute both expanded the organization’s capacity for action-oriented research and contributed to the expansion of knowledge about the local housing sector (see below).

Overall, grantee representatives to the grantee survey reported that their organizations are stronger than before the storm. While six survey respondents admitted their organizations are struggling financially or financially vulnerable, most reported stronger organizational capacity than before Katrina. Some grants were made for temporary initiatives, and some grants or other forms of financial support were provided to organizations that folded, but for the most part, CR Fund grantees are still in the business of producing housing or supporting the affordable housing sector.

SECTOR-LEVEL CAPACITY-BUILDING

All respondents asked about the state of the affordable housing sector at the time of Katrina assessed it as weak, but they also acknowledged that while challenges remain, it has improved. Comparing the affordable housing sector today to what it was when Katrina hit, Michelle Whetten of Enterprise Community Partners says “it’s night and day.” Nicole Heyman, Center for Community Progress, says it has changed “significantly.” Una Anderson at Harmony says, “I think we’re at a different place than we were when the CR Fund started. And that’s good and bad and I would say the good of it was fueled partly by CR Fund money... it really takes a refocusing of funding now to figure out how we preserve affordable housing.” By building capacity at the organizational level and distributing that support across organizations throughout the city, GNOF arguably built sector-level capacity — or the ability of organizations to produce affordable housing. But other grants were more intentionally targeted at building sector-level capacity in a variety of ways. Some grants directly funded the capacity of city government agencies to manage affordable housing and/or vacant, blighted properties. Other grants to non-profit organizations led to programs or agency changes that then transferred to improvements to the overall capacity of the sector or the city. Finally, some grants in the area of knowledge production bolstered the expertise of those managing organizations across the sector. GNOF also directly invested in organizational capacity

across the sector by providing technical assistance and capacity building to CR Fund grantees through its own Organizational Effectiveness program and through partnerships with organizations like the Non-profit Finance Fund.

“The grant was everything. We could never have been able to bring the expertise in... the City would never have even known their inventory.”

– Nicole Heyman, Vice President and Director of Louisiana Initiatives, Center for Community Progress

The city of New Orleans or its agencies were direct recipients of multiple grants. In 2008, the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NORA), received a \$258,000 CR Fund grant to hire an IT consultant to create a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database and integrate it with the city databases. This work was to expand the city’s capacity to manage and dispose of blighted properties (see discussion of NVPC below). That same year, the CR Fund made another grant to a foundation established by the City of New Orleans to pay for three new positions in city government for housing experts.

Grants to non-governmental agencies also provided direct support for improvements to the city’s capacity. One of the first grant recipients of CR Fund money was the National Vacant Properties Campaign (NVPC), a program of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Smart Growth America. A 2007 grant of \$500,000 funded the opening of a NVPC office in New Orleans “and provide advice and technical assistance to government and nonprofits dealing with the issue of vacant and blighted property.”⁶³ Prior to this grant award, Carey Shea met with representatives from NVPC, NORA, the Office of Recovery Management, the Office of the Mayor, City Council, and the city’s Law Department, to determine whether the city agencies would be receptive to NVPC’s expertise and assistance. The grants committee memo notes that all agencies, save ORM, were willing to work with NVPC to develop an improved system for the management of the city’s vast number of vacant and blighted properties. Nicole Heyman, brought in to run NVPC in 2008 says, “the grant was everything. We could never have been able to bring the expertise in... the City would never have even known their inventory.”

Other grantees also used their awards to bolster the city’s capacity. Michelle Whetten said Enterprise worked with NORA and the city to strategize how to use Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) money, and they provided advice to the city about the use of Road Home funds. They also used CR Fund support in their work with the state of Louisiana on a fund that was created as part of the Road Home program. Asked to list no more than three entities with which they most frequently collaborated during the post-Katrina rebuilding process, 11 respondents named the City of New Orleans, and six additional respondents mentioned NORA.

In 2014, a CR Fund grant helped expand the capacity of a coalition of local non-profit developers, the Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance (GNOHA). GNOF had been involved in meetings of GNOHA “almost from the beginning,” according to Andreanecia Morris, the Director. Morris describes GNOHA’s beginning as “a loose coalition of nonprofits” that came together over lunch to brainstorm ways they could share resources and information. Morris says that GNOF eventually approached GNOHA about funding their advocacy and policy work. She says CR Fund money was

used to hire someone to direct GNOHA's policy work, and it was also applied toward the coalition's HousingNOLA work (see below). Other respondents for this evaluation cited GNOHA as currently doing important, innovative work in the city. It is an initiative that has brought together nonprofit developers to collaborate on affordable housing production, policy, and advocacy.

Some grantees worked with other non-profits in the city to bolster their capacity. Enterprise helped housing non-profits engage in capacity-building that would in turn help them successfully build homes. Whetten said, "every single non-profit that develops housing that we have worked with received a grant from the CR Fund and not all of them were successful, but I think very few of them would have been successful if they hadn't had that money." Whetten said that because the grants were so flexible, "it had a huge impact on those non-profits." In 2009, the Gulf Rebuilding Initiative of LISC received a grant to assess the capacity of five New Orleans CDCs working with NORA in order to help them meet their housing production deadlines.

One of the initial objectives of the CR Fund was to ensure that the local affordable housing sector has "access to best practices and policies and rich professional resources."⁶⁴ In keeping with this objective, the CR Fund awarded several grants in the area of knowledge-production. These awards were intended to build the knowledge and expertise of those working in the sector. An early grant was made to the Urban Institute to bring in a series of experts to speak about housing and disaster recovery. As mentioned before, a series of grants was also made to GNOCDC/NPKW to collaborate with the Urban Institute. Allison Plyer, Executive Director of The Data Center,⁶⁵ says the grant enabled the organization to collect and analyze data that no one was gathering post-Katrina — data that were important for recovery in multiple arenas, including housing. Plyer says, "housing is an example where there's lots of decisions being made and people definitely want data and there's nobody else doing it." Liza Cowan recalls, "it's interesting to think that data just wasn't available until they started rolling it out... That's something we were able to do at the CR Fund that recognized a need in the community and then found the partner that could meet that need."

In 2009, a \$90,000 grant made to the Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence (CUREx) at the University of Pennsylvania provided funding to extend a program brought to New Orleans by the Rockefeller Foundation. The initial program supported 25 CUREx Fellows from around the country in the completion of specialized courses in real estate development and a Certificate in Urban Redevelopment from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design. The goal of the program was to place these Fellows in local New Orleans public sector and nonprofit organizations to bolster the capacity of the affordable housing sector (23 of 25 stayed in New Orleans initially). The second iteration of this program — the CUREx Scholars — selected 25 New Orleans redevelopment professionals to participate in the same program.⁶⁶

Asked whether the Fund had an impact on the local affordable housing sector, Shea said, "I think to some extent, yes." She believes that NORA has become a "robust organization" in large part because of CR Fund grants to NORA and the National Vacant Properties Program/Center for Community Progress. She says while some CDCs may be "limping along... all of them produced housing."

Respondents attributed some changes in sector-level policies or practices to CR Fund-supported organizations or activities. Cowan says that NOVPI "helped shape the conversation during the Nagin administration, and then were set up to inform the Landrieu administration." Heyman, who directed NOVPI, says that the organization was "in some regard, [GNOF's] avenue to influence policy, and I think a lot of what we did was make sure that affordable housing was part of

the conversation.” Cowan also pointed out that Ellen Lee was co-chair of Mayor Landrieu’s Blight Task Force and that Cowan helped write the Housing Task Force report when Landrieu came into office. She says, “we were also in a position to influence conversations at that point in time.” Michelle Whetten said that the CR Fund grant helped Enterprise Community Partners work with the city and the Louisiana Housing Corporation — the state housing finance agency — to “design programs better so that they’re more effective.” Finally, as noted earlier, CR Fund grantee Appleseed effectively advocated for changes in title clearing policies and practices.

Whetten and other grantees credited GNOHA, a CR Fund grantee, with spearheading some important policy changes. Andrenecia Morris describes a number of successful policy changes advocated for by GNOHA in its “mission... to rebuild the city.” She says the “first big task” GNOHA took on was the Finance Authority’s Soft Second Program. GNOHA advocated for the right of low-income families to have access to soft second mortgages, and they also advocated for the right of families to pair soft seconds with Section 8 vouchers. They successfully convinced the city of New Orleans to let its employees apply for soft second mortgages. GNOHA used CR Fund money to support its Road Home Liaison Group, which helps homeowners get back into their houses. Finally, the collaborative also combined CR Fund support with other donations to hire a data analyst and a technical writer to prepare HousingNOLA’s Ten Year Plan. This plan — released in December 2015 — reviews the current state of affordable housing in New Orleans and lays out an action process for the equitable, sustainable provision of “homes for all New Orleanians.”⁶⁷

NEIGHBORHOODS AND EQUITABILITY

By any measure, the CR Fund objective related to the sustainable and equitable development of New Orleans’ neighborhoods was ambitious. The overarching goal of this objective was to “promote the redevelopment of New Orleans according to equitable and Smart Growth principles.” GNOF wanted “to make grants promoting development that creates mixed-use, mixed-income, and mixed-race neighborhoods, each anchored by community facilities, schools, health-care facilities, pedestrian-friendly streets, and dynamic public open spaces.”⁶⁸ All of the CR Fund grantees that engage in housing production value the same or similar goals, and most of them were able to rebuild or renovate single-family and multi-family housing with equitable and sustainable intentions. But given the entrenched racial and class inequality in New Orleans — along with the pre- and post-Katrina crime levels — progress in this arena is difficult to ascertain. While some applauded New Orleans’ recovery as equitable and sustainable during the tenth commemoration events, others argued that on some measures, the city has not improved or is worse off than before.⁶⁹

NUMBER OF CR FUND GRANTEES BY NEIGHBORHOOD⁷⁰

NEIGHBORHOOD	CR GRANTEES
Broadmoor	2
Central City	8
Gentilly	5
Lower Garden District	1
Lower Ninth Ward	3
Mid-City (includes St. Bernard)	4
New Orleans East	2
Ponchartrain Park	2
Tulane/Gravier	1
Treme/Lafitte	4

REVITALIZATION ACROSS THE CITY AND WITHIN NEIGHBORHOODS

Most CR Fund grantees did work that was relevant city-wide — either through capacity-building, knowledge production, policy work, or housing production. Some organizations did work in specific neighborhoods; the neighborhood most prominently served by the CR Fund was Central City.

POST-STORM, SELECT NEIGHBORHOODS AND CHARACTERISTICS (2010) , CHANGE SINCE 2000

NEIGHBORHOOD	TOTAL POPULATION	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	POVERTY RATE	OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	VACANT HOUSING UNITS
B.W. Cooper	-3,533	-7.6%	+1.9%	+3.3%	+9.3%
Pontchartrain Park	-1,148	+0.5%	+18.4%	-12.4%	+20.9%
Lower Ninth	-11,166	-2.8%	-3.4%	+7.4%	+34.1%
Treme/Lafitte	-4,698	-17.9%	-12.6%	+12.5%	+17.6%
Central City	-7,815	-14.6%	-5.9%	+6.8%	+18.3%
Lakeview	-3,481	+2.7%	+1.7%	-0.7%	+15.6%

Compared to other parts of New Orleans, Central City did not receive extensive flood damage; some parts of the area did not flood at all. Gentilly, the Lower Ninth Ward, Pontchartrain Park, and Mid-City all sustained significant flood damage. Flooding in Tulane/Gravier and Treme/Lafitte was uneven — steep in some parts, light in others. The Lower Garden District did not flood. The CR Fund did not invest in every New Orleans neighborhood. One staff member notes that the CR Fund did not invest in every neighborhood that flooded, but this was usually because a neighborhood lacked a strong CDC.

To get an overall sense of how neighborhoods look after the storm, revisit the table from the background section, updated with 2010 data.

In every neighborhood, the population shrank — in three of them, by more than half (by 2010, B.W. Cooper and the Lower Ninth populations were at 20% of their 2000 levels). Though all of the majority-black neighborhoods remain majority-black neighborhoods, the population of black residents declined in all but two (it rose slightly in Pontchartrain Park and Lakeview). The poverty rate rose in half of the neighborhoods and fell in the other half. In each neighborhood except for Pontchartrain Park and Lakeview, the percentage of housing units occupied by owners increased, although the decline was substantial in Ponchartrain Park and minimal in Lakeview. Notably, the percentage of vacant housing units rose in each neighborhood. The story told by this table is a mixed one, in that home ownership rates rose in most areas — but poverty rates rose in half. Though the racial diversity of the neighborhoods increased at least a little, the cause of this is unclear — it could be due to the inability of poor blacks to return combined with the greater ability of wealthier whites to afford newly built homes.

Focusing on a few of these areas and the work of CR Fund grantees engenders a more in-depth understanding of how they are trying to accomplish more equitable neighborhoods.

When the Bring New Orleans Back Commission — the city’s first planning effort — marked the Broadmoor neighborhood with a green dot in January 2006, slating it as one of the proposed areas to be “returned” to green space, the Broadmoor Improvement Association (BIA) fought back. Led by Latoya Cantrell, BIA held a rally and began to work on a community-led redevelopment plan.⁷¹ Cantrell acknowledges that the neighborhood “suffered from the systemic problems of poverty” before Hurricane Katrina, but she also says the area was a “microcosm” of the city in terms of its demographics.⁷² She says it was the strength of the extant BIA and the leadership of the community that enabled the area to organize. The BIA created a development arm — the Broadmoor Development Corporation (BDC) — and raised money “for housing initiatives, renovation, and new construction,” according to Cantrell. Santiago Burgos, hired as BDC’s Executive Director in 2010, says of BIA, “it was a very successful effort with an ability to set up private-public partnerships that I find almost unparalleled to anything.” Burgos attributes the ability of Broadmoor to organize and rebuild to Cantrell’s leadership but also to the fact that the neighborhood “had been a mixed-income, racially mixed neighborhood for so many years.” Burgos says funding shortages contributed to the closure of BDC and the incorporation of development into BIA. He also says “vast need” still exists among impoverished Broadmoor residents to rebuild, even though the area was more successful than most in seeing its residents return. Broadmoor is one of a few neighborhoods that retained its racial diversity post-Katrina. Defying citywide patterns, household income levels increased and poverty declined.⁷³

Individuals interviewed for this evaluation observe a marked change in Central City. While they acknowledge that rising home prices and rents in part of the area may be driving out poor residents, they say the neighborhood is more diverse and safer than it was before the storm. CR Fund grantees working in the neighborhood have been very intentional about trying to create mixed-income communities. Brad Powers, former Executive Director of Jericho Road, says Central City was an example of “classic urban decay... of 50, 60, 70 years of disinvestment [and] racism.” When Jericho Road decided to work in Central City, Powers says it “didn’t want to just paint buildings and make it look pretty. We wanted to try to fundamentally change what was happening.” He says they wanted to build wealth. On the other side of Central City, NONDC/Harmony set out to do the same thing, although they also developed mixed-income rental housing. Katherine Medina says that Harmony “wanted to make sure that [housing] was not just transformative in the physical environment but that it transformed people’s lives.” Una Anderson at Harmony acknowledges that the success of Harmony and other developers in Central City “has been a double edged sword... our next battle is to preserve affordable housing.” Medina says most of their homebuyers have covenants on the properties that will keep them affordable. Jon Skvarka of Rebuilding Together says, “by virtue of working to keep long-time homeowners in their neighborhoods,” they help maintain diversity, because they try to ensure that people are not pushed out.

A couple of developers say they encountered NIMBYism as they planned affordable housing developments after Katrina. Smeltz (RNDC) says, “we wanted to build within existing neighborhoods and communities where we could be part of a larger effort going on. So very early, we chose sites... proximate to good transportation, basic services.” At times, such as in the Lower Garden District, this approach put RNDC in conflict with local people resistant to affordable housing in their neighborhood. In this particular case, neighbors revolted and the city’s planning commission “shot down” RNDC’s initial plans, says Smeltz. In response, RNDC scaled back its residential development on Tchoupitoulas. Smeltz says he has encountered less of the “not-in-my-backyard”

attitude over time as RNDC builds credibility. Kathy Laborde says GCHP has encountered NIMBYism with multiple of its New Orleans affordable housing developments. Pushing back against NIMBY efforts, especially those that come from the city, is a “tremendous strain” on their resources, says Laborde.

Finally, low-income housing has undergone significant changes in its composition since before Katrina. The reduction in units and the push toward mixed-income development has its critics, but others say the changes are good. Charles Cutno,⁷⁴ Director of Real Estate at Harmony, grew up in Central City. He appreciates the changes he sees and the mixed-income rental housing that replaced C.J. Peete. Columbia Parc, the redevelopment of the St. Bernard housing projects, has been showcased for national housing experts for its mixed-use, mixed-income site.⁷⁵

GREEN-BUILDING

Nearly all of the housing developers supported by the CR Fund engage in and advocate for green-building practices. The norm is sustainable, LEED-certified construction. All three of the public housing complexes redeveloped with CR Fund support tout energy efficient appliances and other amenities. The CR Fund supported not only developers that use energy-efficient approaches, but it also supported other nonprofits, like Global Green, that provide technical assistance to nonprofits and homeowners to encourage effective green-building.

CR Fund grantees that engaged in housing production provide various examples of how they approach green-building. Enterprise Community Partners emphasizes green building to its partners and helps “developers incorporate cost-effective green-building techniques,” according to Michelle Whetten. Una Anderson of Harmony says that some approaches can “cost a whole lot more but don’t bring a whole lot more benefit to the homeowner ... so we stuck with things like solar panels, and all of the low-flow toilets and green insulation.” Harmony’s Medina says that this approach has paid off for homeowners, whose utility costs are low. Skvarka says Rebuilding Together is “a big proponent of energy efficiency.” He says that while this can mean the installation of solar panels and tankless water heaters, it can also involve less expensive approaches, especially in a rehab situation. He says, “you can cut utility bills, and we show our homeowners how to do this by sealing in air, glazing windows, fixing siding ... it’s real simple things.” He acknowledges that a lot of the homeowners he works with will not be able to repair expensive solar panels on their own — much less afford to pay someone else to repair them — so they try to find cost-effective ways to reduce utility bills. He says, “for us it’s all about sustainability.”

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

GNOF’s objective regarding citizen engagement was stated as follows: “The Fund will support efforts for New Orleanians who became ‘citizen planners’ during post-Katrina planning processes to ascend into leadership roles and become effective stewards of the implementation process.” While LaToya Cantrell has risen from her position as Director of the BIA to city councilmember, it is difficult to find evidence of ways in which grantee organizations have facilitated the original intent of this objective. While the qualitative evidence does not suggest that CR Fund grantees were consistently invested in or successful at including community members in redevelopment

and growth, some organizations did try to engage citizens and incorporate the voices of local people into their work.

Isabel Barrios, GNOF staff member, says that Jericho Road “built a neighborhood. They didn’t just develop housing. They have done such extensive neighbor organizing and home buyer organizing.” Barrios observed that Jericho Road is one grantee that found a way to “[help] people see each other as neighbors and to increase the feeling of community that you want to have in a neighborhood so that people are looking out for each other.” Holly Heine says that where neighborhood associations did not exist in the parts of Central City where they work, Jericho helped create them. Brad Powers, Jericho’s founding Executive Director, says “we wanted to signal to the neighborhood that we were not buying property to then later exploit.” He says Jericho’s approach was “to build these physical structures that are homes, but we’re also going to put resources... into organizing people where those houses are.”

Another organization working in Central City — Harmony — has also been responsive to the needs of people in its community. Katherine Medina says that as they began to hear local residents complain that their houses “weren’t built for the community ... we created a program where we would actually go on the ground to work with residents of the neighborhood and help them with their financial stability to the point where they have the ability to buy. And as a result many of our homes are occupied by Central City residents.” Further, Harmony has begun to engage in strategies to grow local economic development along the LaSalle corridor and to respond to community members’ desire to build financial knowledge and wealth. Now, the organization’s program includes not only housing production but also “community empowerment and wealth building.”⁷⁶

Jon Skvarka says that Rebuilding Together brings together neighborhood leaders in a steering committee to guide organizational policies. He says, “I think that’s how we create that civic discourse and make sure people, at least the leaders of Rebuilding Together, are all at the table, all volunteer leaders are talking about where we want to head with the city.” He also adds, “We only work in neighborhoods that we’re asked in... We don’t want to work on a neighborhood that doesn’t want us for services.”

“I think that’s how we create that civic discourse and make sure people, at least the leaders of Rebuilding Together, are all at the table, all volunteer leaders are talking about where we want to head with the city.”

— Jon Skvarka, Executive Director, Rebuilding Together

Finally, Cantrell and Burgos say citizen involvement was crucial for the work of BIA and BDC in rebuilding Broadmoor. Cantrell says that when the city was not moving fast enough to respond to community needs — even proposing to get rid of the area entirely — what mattered were “the local resources... the people.” She says “there was no bucket of cash we could tap... We were told our school wasn’t going to be back, our library, forget about it. And the community said, ‘No.’ We began to organize.”

THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION

This section addresses the questions of what the CR Fund meant for GNOF both internally and externally. Overall, most respondents see GNOF as having taken on a significant role during the recovery from Katrina, and many say the CR Fund changed the Foundation in significant ways. While a few respondents call GNOF a leader during the city's recovery from Katrina, others are hesitant to use that word, although they recognize the Foundation as a player or convener. In terms of assessing GNOF now, respondents offer mixed opinions. Some see GNOF as having moved into an important position in the community revitalization field, while others are critical of its direction.

Martha Kegel, Executive Director at UNITY, says, "GNOF has changed dramatically since the storm... before the storm they were much more low-key... now they have a real strategy." Others echoed this sense that in its response to Katrina, GNOF developed a more strategic approach to serving the city of New Orleans. Shea attributes this development to GNOF's approach to management of the CR Fund and its grantees. She says that because GNOF "got out there and went and

"GNOF has changed dramatically since the storm... before the storm they were much more low-key... now they have a real strategy."

– Martha Kegel, Executive Director, UNITY-New Orleans

looked in the neighborhoods and then made grants," it got to know the community needs better.

Others say the Fund and GNOF's overall response to the storm raised the Foundation's profile and enhanced — even developed — its relationships with national foundations. Juliet Page recalls, "It was an under-resourced foundation. It became higher profile because housing was

such a big deal post-storm." Barrios says the CR Fund taught GNOF "a lot about working with funders." Joann Ricci, Vice-President of Organizational Effectiveness at GNOF, says that since Katrina, "we became much more visible, [with a] much more diverse staff."

Some respondents discussed the ways in which the CR Fund changed GNOF's grant-making process — or at least the perception of it. Carey Shea believes that before Katrina, people thought you got a grant from GNOF by convincing the director you deserved one over lunch. Shea believes that the "clear and transparent and predictable" process of the CR Fund "did a lot ... in changing the reputation of the Foundation." She also says the CR Fund "really bumped up GNOF's ability to make grants," because it demonstrated — with a small number of staff — that it could administer a large grants program.

Most grantees interviewed for this evaluation shared positive assessments of the CR Fund grants process. Whetten says that although GNOF asked a lot of question during the application process, the award was "super flexible... it's the best kind of money that you want." Una Anderson, Executive Director of Harmony, says that her organization applied twice before it was awarded a grant: "once we got funded there was a lot of flexibility but getting funded was difficult." Victor Smeltz, Executive Director of RNDC, describes the process as efficient.

All grantees were appreciative of the financial support they received from GNOF. As noted

throughout this evaluation, many grantees called the funding “critical” for their organization. Some grantees, however, shared criticisms. A few respondents said the money was good, but it was not enough. One director of a successful development CDC said GNOF should have invested more money in the larger development organizations. She says, “to this day I don’t think GNOF gets it, with all due respect. You have to invest in your racehorses.” Another grantee was disappointed that his CDC received a PRI instead of a grant, which he said would have enabled his organization to have more flexibility. He recalls, “We didn’t receive a grant. We received a PRI. The Foundation should be up front about it.” Others, however, believe GNOF should provide PRIs to housing developers, because banks are often reluctant to do so.

Most of the grantees interviewed for this evaluation said GNOF played an important role during the city’s recovery, especially in the early years post-Katrina. Brad Powers, former Executive Director of Jericho Road, says, “If anyone at GNOF ever told me something, it was going to happen... that might seem like a low bar, but in that time, that was exceptional... no one else was even coming close to the sort of dependability of GNOF in those first years.” Charlotte Jackson, NENA, says “I think they were there when they were needed.”

The findings regarding whether GNOF positioned itself as a leader in community revitalization are mixed. Some — like Victor Smeltz at RNDC — see GNOF as a leader. He says, “it was a going force and it continues to be... as a private, philanthropic effort [during Katrina], it was at the top of the crowd.” Councilmember Cantrell says, “of course they’ve been a leader... They were respected, and they were deemed credible.”

“It was a going force and it continues to be... as a private, philanthropic effort [during Katrina], it was at the top of the crowd.”

— Victor Smeltz, Executive Director, Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation

Juliet Page, though she offered some criticisms of the Foundation, says, “I think that the Fund had enormously positive benefits in that GNOF saw that it could be a powerful convener. It changed when its participation in UNOP started and grew from there.” At least one grantee echoed this perception. Christy Kane of Appleseed says, “I think GNOF is pretty good about bringing people together.” She reports that meetings organized by GNOF when Appleseed was a CR Fund grantee “helped further our relationships with [other] organizations, because [when] a funder brings people together, people are going to show up.”

A small number of respondents shared critiques of GNOF’s work in community revitalization, both post-storm and currently. One developer describes GNOF as a “benevolent funder... Parochial, almost patronizing.” Another respondent says GNOF should focus more on raising money and getting out into the community rather than on the work of “thought leadership.” Finally, a former GNOF staff person says, “I would not say they’re a leader in the housing and community development space.”

Most respondents, however, offered favorable assessments of GNOF’s work in the city now and going forward. Many praised the Foundation’s Organizational Effectiveness (OE) program, which was created during the life of the CR Fund. Joann Ricci came to GNOF to create and manage this

program, and one of its early challenges was to help local nonprofits with financial management and best practices. Ricci recalls working with some CR Fund grantees to help them plan for how to sustain themselves for the long-term. OE and other GNOF staff also tried to connect CR Fund grantees to one another so that they might share resources or find strategic ways to partner. Kegel says that this work is very useful. She says, “I see GNOF as really helping organizations to strengthen themselves.”

Several grantees said they wish GNOF would use its money and voice to continue to advocate for and grow local non-profits. Whetten says GNOF played a “huge, huge role” during recovery and now some organizations don’t have a “source of funding to replace that GNOF money.” One grantee said that GNOF is back to doing what it did before the storm — “ballet.” Others had very different perceptions of GNOF’s work. Laura Tuggle at SLLS says, “lately they’ve been doing several advocacy sessions where they’re trying to get folks in the community focused on more systemic change... It seems like they’re listening to their community more... and trying to bring the funders along.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, respondents describe the CR Fund as a success — even those who offered critiques of GNOF or the Fund. Carey Shea, who was integral to the Fund’s creation, says, “I think the Fund was great. I think it was really important. It brought a lot of national funders into GNOF... it helped deliver millions of dollars to the city that might not have been delivered.” Juliet Page, who raised the majority of the Fund’s capital, says, “I think it was successful. There’s a bunch of housing that got built. Beyond housing, they revitalized NORA and recaptured the city’s interest.”

“I think the Fund was great. I think it was really important. It brought a lot of national funders into GNOF... it helped deliver millions of dollars to the city that might not have been delivered.”

– Carey Shea, Former Program Director for Community Revitalization, Greater New Orleans Foundation

Jerry Maldonado of the Ford Foundation says that “overall, I’d have to say that the Fund was really a success. We ended up building a certain number of units of housing that I don’t think would have been built without the investment... We built some major capacity.”

From the grantee perspective, Smeltz says that while the financial support from the Fund was “critical... there’s a more subjective benefit and role for philanthropy in that it’s the shot in the arm. It’s

the encouragement... it’s almost like having a cheering section.” Kegel agrees. She says, “to have GNOF as the seed money made a big difference, so those other foundations would be able to see that GNOF believed in [our project] when people would have thought it was a pipe dream.”

While the majority of grantees report their organizations are strong now and respondents see the affordable housing sector as improved, some felt the CR Fund might have done a better job of building the capacity of local non-profits to further strengthen the overall affordable housing sector.

Maldonado said that the Fund might have done a better job of building the capacity of local community development corporations, as some had “withered on the vine.” He says that while the Fund built “some strong organizations,” it did not “build an ecosystem of support for them.” He also says that because the Fund focused on physical rebuilding, it “did not invest

enough in housing advocacy capacity of organizations.” Had the Fund done more of the latter, he believes, it might have built a “more robust ecosystem” that could generate more policy and system changes. Ellen Lee agrees. She says the CR Fund might have used more effective tools in helping organizations build capacity. She says loans instead of grants might have required grantees to figure out how to manage debt, better preparing them to “manage real estate development projects when the land of milk and honey was over.”

One current GNOF staff member who has worked closely with the Fund said that while many organizations met or surpassed their proposed goals, others fell short. In some cases, she said, organizations did not meet their goals because their leadership lacked experience in management or in housing development. One grantee’s perspective was that “a lot” of the organizations that received support from the Fund “aren’t in existence today.” She believes that the rush to get money on the street meant that the plan to invest was not driven by the goal of sustainability. She says, “the big lesson learned is, yes... pick something visible and get it done, but be really strategic because those are one-time dollars.” She, along with a couple of others, argues that investments would have been more beneficial for the long-term growth of New Orleans if they had been placed primarily with larger, more successful developers. Another respondent attributes the gap in success to staff expertise.

There is no evidence to suggest that the original intent, structure, and funding decisions of the CR Fund changed over time. Though slight modifications were made to the grants committee process after the interim evaluation — primarily in the format of grant memos — no significant changes took place.

“To have GNOF as the seed money made a big difference, so those other foundations would be able to see that GNOF believed in [our project] when people would have thought it was a pipe dream.”

– Martha Kegel, Executive Director, UNITY-New Orleans

FUNDER COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT

Those who commented on the value of the funder collaborative approach for disaster recovery agreed that it is a valuable one. Brad Myers of the Hilton Foundation calls the CR Fund a “model. [GNOF] should get out there and evangelize.” He said the Fund brought national funders together to work “pretty well... for a long period of time.” He believes this approach is a useful one to “focus disaster recovery dollars... because of the connection to the community.” He also noted that having national foundations come in to work with local foundations and staff was useful, because the local people had themselves been devastated and sometimes needed the “different lens” of outsiders to “mitigate” against the influence that personal experience with trauma might

have on decision-making. Shea concurs that a locally-based funder collaborative is a useful way to respond to disaster: “the minute disaster strikes, create the fund. The minute... It’s an organizing mechanism, a stewardship opportunity.” Allison Plyer says local involvement is critical: “you cannot do disaster recovery from afar. You can’t. You have to have people with local knowledge.”

The funders who participated in interviews for the evaluation enjoyed their experience overall. Maldonado said that the overall process of the funder collaborative was “really powerful at first.” He applauded the leadership of Ellen Lee, who he said was “well-versed in the housing space [and]... helped navigate choppy waters with the city.” He called the Fund a “useful space for coordinating investments,” noting the “good mix of foundations.”

Wendy Jackson describes the focus on housing as “a very effective way, coming out of a crisis, to bring funders together and really focus on a productive agenda.” Maldonado agrees that the focus on housing was successful, but he also says that the focus on housing “created missed opportunities” to address “other pieces” of the devastation. He said a more holistic approach might have been better, and it might have more effectively engaged funders whose interest waned.

“[The focus on housing was] a very effective way, coming out of a crisis, to bring funders together and really focus on a productive agenda.”

– Wendy Jackson, Deputy Director for the Detroit program, Kresge Foundation

All three national funders interviewed for this evaluation noted a drop in funder engagement over time. Maldonado felt that the drop in funder engagement could be attributed in part to the inevitable change in priorities, but he also felt that there was “not enough of a critical self-evaluation of whether or not that hypothesis [of the original theory of change] remained the same.” He said such a reflection might have led to a “course correc-

tion” in the Fund; he felt this might have happened with a “more rigorous mid-term evaluation.” His sense was that other funders were “frustrated” toward the end by the absence of such a process, but he also said that the Fund was “one of the more successful ones” in which Ford has been involved. He attributed this to the Fund’s clarity of goals, its focus, and the role GNOF played in keeping “the table together.” Myers attributed the drop in funder participation to the fact that for some foundations, housing was “not their thing.” Myers said Hilton really likes being a part of funder collaboratives. He said the CR Fund “worked great, because the staff did all the work.” Jackson agreed, noting that in some funder collaboratives, the funders themselves have to do all of the organizational work. She felt that the “urgency of recovery” kept funders “really focused for an extended period of time,” but she wondered whether staff changes and decreased communication from GNOF contributed to the drop in funder participation.

All of the funders say the GNOF staff, on the whole, were wonderful. Jackson described GNOF staff support to the Fund as very effective. She appreciated their work in “extensive due diligence” on grant applicants. She also says the “leadership provided by GNOF just to organize it was definitely part of the secret sauce.” All funders also enjoyed coming to New Orleans for meetings and going out on site visits. Myers said they could “see real people doing real things.” He notes that

GNOF “really made those visits count. It was programming to get you to understand how the city works.” Jackson says that participating in meetings in person engendered a different level of engagement than did participating via phone — something that became more common in the Fund’s latter years.

In Jackson’s mind, the main lesson to take away is that a fund like this should always “know the exit strategy.” She felt that an exit strategy — “how we’re going to exit, how do we know when to exit, what does that look like” — was never articulated by GNOF. She said, “we just all scattered, and then that was it.” A few others interviewed for this evaluation offered a similar assessment — that the Fund just trickled away without closure.

GNOF GOING FORWARD

While respondents generally praised GNOF’s involvement in the post-Katrina recovery, many say that they are not clear on GNOF’s current direction. Some respondents do not see GNOF as currently being involved in affordable housing specifically or community revitalization more generally. When asked about GNOF’s current role in community revitalization, a former GNOF staff member who worked closely with the Fund said, “I don’t see it.”

When asked what they would like to see GNOF focus on going forward, most respondents — grantees, former staff members, funders, beneficiaries, and local housing experts — say affordable housing. Respondents often cited data on the housing cost burden to illustrate the need for involvement in this issue.

Some respondents emphasized a need for funding for bricks and mortar. The HousingNOLA plan identifies a demand for 33,000 new or rehabbed units for New Orleans over the next ten years.⁷⁷ Michelle Whetten says, “I think it would be great if GNOF continued to have a

“We’re not done yet. We have neighborhoods that are blighted... I would like to see us be able to clean up these neighborhoods.”

— Latoya Cantrell, Former President, Broadmoor Improvement Association

focus on affordable housing ... They’re providing money for different kinds of services and other programs ... but not really for housing production and I think that’s a real gap that exists here.” Charlotte Jackson at NENA agrees and says, “I would like to see them stay engaged in... affordable housing, because I think it’s more critical than before.” Nicole Heyman says she would like to see GNOF produce “some type of financial product to fund more affordable housing.” Carey Shea, too, would like to see GNOF become involved in affordable housing again. She said, “it would be great if GNOF had a \$1 million PRI fund that could serve all affordable housing efforts.” Councilmember Cantrell says she would like to see GNOF be a stronger advocate for affordable housing. She adds, “We’re not done yet. We have neighborhoods that are blighted... I would like to see us be able to clean up these neighborhoods.”

Some added that GNOF should invest not just in building affordable housing but also in developing the economic strength of New Orleanians so that they can afford housing. Ellen Lee says, “we

could help raise the incomes of families.” Maldonado says whether GNOF would add “institutional voice” to the issue of housing affordability was a “question mark.” He hopes GNOF focuses on connection between “economic insecurity and the built environment.”

Others would like to see GNOF continue to help organizations build capacity. Una Anderson suggests GNOF continue to “help organizations become increasingly sustainable.” She describes ways in which GNOF could both fund nonprofits and facilitate coordination among them to “help organizations really become nonprofit small businesses.” Shea also believes that GNOF can also direct its attention and funds to building the capacity of non-profits. She said that if you look at the list of successful nonprofit affordable housing developers, they “have a fairly high level, experienced housing development person on staff.” Others that relied on consultants or volunteers or had directors who were stretched too thin, she said, “didn’t produce a lot of houses, had a whole bunch of trouble, and are either out of business or just limping along today.”

Though the CR Fund has sunset and GNOF does not have a similar program for affordable housing grants, GNOF staff remain engaged in issues related to community revitalization and affordable housing.

GNOF continues to invest in community revitalization through its Economic Opportunity Initiative and New Orleans Works (NOW). The Economic Opportunity Initiative was created as a next step for the Community Revitalization Fund, following GNOF’s release of the Assets and Opportunity (A & O) Profile for New Orleans (http://cfed.org/assets/pdfs/ao_profile_new_orleans.pdf). The A & O Profile, released in 2012, found that 71% of New Orleans residents had subprime credit scores and that 37% of households lived in asset poverty, meaning that these households did not have enough savings to survive for three months should they lose a main source of income or face a catastrophic illness or natural disaster. In response to these findings, GNOF’s Economic Opportunity Initiative includes an Asset Building Community of Practice that is working to increase the capacity, services, and financial stability of nonprofit organizations that try to help families build and retain assets. NOW is an employer-led workforce development program with guaranteed employment for participants upon graduation that offers low-skilled adults (entry-level as well as incumbents) the opportunity for career advancement.

GNOF supports organizational capacity building through the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) program. The Foundation’s OE initiative helps nonprofit leaders and their boards to work more effectively, collaboratively, and successfully on behalf of their clients and missions. To help increase the capacity of nonprofit leaders, GNOF offers Organizational Effectiveness programming that teaches individuals how to lead effective nonprofit organizations. Focusing on crucial topics like fundraising, board governance, marketing and communications, and advocacy, GNOF offers workshops, tailored training sessions, and intensive training for executive directors and board members to increase the capacity of New Orleans’ nonprofit sector to provide vital services to low-wealth families and individuals.

Finally, GNOF continues to invest in affordable housing advocacy through the Advocacy Forum. The Advocacy Forum was created to increase the strength of people and organizations working to create a political environment that promotes equity and access to opportunity. Some of the most significant barriers to equity in Louisiana are policy barriers. Organizations participating in the Forum learn from one another and from national experts.



Conclusions

Land, money, and expertise: In the wake of disaster, the CR Fund provided support to non-profit developers and city entities to help them acquire and manage land for redevelopment; shepherded the financial investments of philanthropic foundations using local knowledge; and invested in the expertise and capacity-building of the affordable housing sector in New Orleans. The CR Fund did not completely change the unequal and flood-ravaged landscape of the city, but the flexibility of its dollars enabled grantees to do things they might have been unable to do otherwise in their efforts to rebuild. Finally, the financial support of the CR Fund directly and indirectly contributed to the development of housing where families now live. For some of them – especially those who own their homes – the housing has been experienced as life-changing.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- **HOUSING PRODUCTION:** The CR Fund directly and indirectly supported the production of 9,378 housing units, including multi-family rentals and individually owned new construction and rebuilds. Four grantees were involved in the redevelopment of three of the four former public housing complexes. The CR Fund provided grants for bricks and mortar and land purchase, but it also offered other forms of financing – like program related investments and pricing guarantees – that often served as crucial financial bridges in development deals, especially during the Recession. Evidence suggests that the strongest avenue for investment – given the \$23 million raised versus the price tag for housing recovery in the city as a whole – was in organizational capacity-building. CR Fund grants enabled established, growing, and new nonprofits to hire staff, buy software, and support operations. This kind of capacity-building meant that non-profits could produce more housing or serve more individuals, more effectively.

- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING SECTOR:** All respondents agreed that the New Orleans affordable housing sector – while it still has its weaknesses – is much stronger than it was before Katrina. Though positive changes in the sector are not solely attributable to the CR Fund, qualitative data offer evidence that the CR Fund helped strengthen the affordable housing sector by supporting grantees in: development of affordable housing; advocacy for policies to reduce barriers to homeowners’ access of Road Home and other governmental support; improvement in city capacity to identify and manage blighted and vacant properties; collection and analysis of data to inform housing policy and processes; and the creation and dissemination of educational programs to build local expertise. Finally, by financially supporting the organizational capacity of nonprofits and government entities that work in the area of affordable housing, the Fund contributed to the strength of the overall sector by helping strengthen many of the organizations that compose the sector.
- **GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION:** The CR Fund was new territory for GNOF. It further developed existing relationships with national and local foundations and created new ones. Though data do not allow for the conclusion that the growth of GNOF or changes there are directly attributable to the CR Fund, respondents affirmed that GNOF has grown and is more engaged in the local nonprofit community than it was before Katrina. Most grantees said the organization is involved in discussions regarding nonprofit development and community revitalization, although most did not identify the Foundation as a current leader in the area – especially regarding affordable housing. The CR Fund’s transparent, two-step grant-making process became the norm for GNOF grant-making programs.
- **EQUITABLE NEIGHBORHOODS:** The CR Fund supported housing production in multiple New Orleans neighborhoods. Some grantees are actively engaged in efforts to create mixed-income, sustainable developments that engage local residents, but they face tremendous hurdles of historically entrenched inequalities. Ironically, some of the grantees that have been more successful in developing mixed-income areas are now working to ensure their housing remains affordable. Nearly all of the grantees engaged in housing production build housing that is energy-efficient, although what this means varies by developer and development. Grantees who build homes are all focused on creating home ownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income families who could otherwise not afford to purchase one; they are committed to building wealth among these families and lowering their housing cost burden.
- **LESSONS LEARNED:** Nearly all respondents described the CR Fund as successful. They said it supported the development of housing and the capacity of nonprofit organizations and city agencies working in the affordable housing arena – although some acknowledged that a few grantees have not performed as expected. Funders and GNOF staff said the funder collaborative approach was an effective way to harness expertise and financial support from national and local foundations. Further, the two-step grant-making process served to get money on the ground efficiently and productively, although some grantees said the application process took longer than expected. All grantees, however, appreciated the flexibility of philanthropic funding, as well as the credibility it provided to other funding sources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for GNOF are based on the data collected and analyzed for this evaluation.

- **CLARITY:** Given that most grantee respondents are currently unaware of GNOF's ongoing work – perhaps because it does not pertain directly to affordable housing – GNOF should consider ways to clarify its strategic direction for local nonprofit organizations. While grantee respondents often mentioned the Foundation's ongoing work in Organizational Effectiveness, they were often not aware of current initiatives in local economic development.
- **ADVOCACY:** Some respondents see GNOF as an advocate for community revitalization efforts, broadly defined. Most, however, do not see GNOF as a leader in the ongoing discussion surrounding affordable housing. While GNOF is involved in this discussion – either through financial support or by staff participation in meetings – this involvement does not seem to be widely regarded among the grantees that participated in this evaluation as strong advocacy or leadership. If GNOF wants to be seen as a leader in the ongoing advocacy regarding affordable housing, it should consider ways to more visibly engage.
- **GRANTMAKING:** Almost all respondents described the grantmaking process as efficient and flexible. While some said it took multiple attempts to actually receive a grant, this may be attributable to the due diligence efforts of GNOF staff. GNOF should continue – to the extent that it is possible – to provide flexible funding to grantees. Grantees appreciate financial support for capacity-building and other operational processes – in fact, many grantees said this kind of support was critical. Given the financial vulnerability of local nonprofit housing developers, GNOF might consider ways to invest in continued organizational capacity-building efforts, in combination with its ongoing work in Organizational Effectiveness.
- **ISSUES:** Unsurprisingly, grantees want GNOF to focus on affordable housing. They want financial support for bricks and mortar and land purchase. If GNOF is unable to invest in these needs in the affordable housing sector, it might consider other ways to demonstrate continued investment in community revitalization.
- **DISASTER-RECOVERY:** Should another disaster befall New Orleans, GNOF should act immediately to harness the financial power of national, regional, and local foundations in a funder collaborative to identify and address the most pressing community need. Given the positive feedback regarding the funder collaborative approach across all constituencies, the Foundation should use the CR Fund as a model to swiftly build the same funding structure to support the city's recovery. Though a small minority of respondents speculated that the Fund might have been more effective with a more broadly defined purpose, the focus on housing and clearly defined objectives not only produced housing but also seemed to strengthen the affordable housing sector. The overall sector may not be perfect, but respondents said they see significant improvement – suggesting that the sector is in a better position to develop quality affordable housing for New Orleanians and to withstand any future exogenous shocks.

Appendices

EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How and to what extent did the CR Fund support housing production in New Orleans post-Katrina?

- How and to what extent did the CR Fund help families return to or obtain a rehabbed or new home?
- How did the CR Fund help families navigate the affordable housing system?
- How were the lives of beneficiary families affected by the CR Fund?

How and to what extent did the CR Fund strengthen the affordable housing sector in New Orleans post-Katrina?

- How did the CR Fund help reduce barriers to returning to or obtaining affordable housing?
- What changes occurred in affordable housing policies and/or practices as a result of CR Fund grant-making or related activities?
- How have grantee organizations changed — or not — as a result of CR Fund support?

How and to what extent did GNOF change as a result of the creation of the CR Fund and the activities supported through it?

- How and to what extent did the CR Fund facilitate community revitalization?
- What lessons can be learned from the CR Fund about how GNOF might improve its capacity and leadership as a funder in the city of New Orleans?

How and to what extent did the CR Fund support the development of mixed-use, mixed-race, and/or mixed-income neighborhoods?

- How did the CR Fund support community revitalization across the city of New Orleans and within particular neighborhoods?
- How and to what extent did the CR Fund support green building practices?
- How and to what extent did grantees engage citizens and incorporate citizens' voices in their work?

What lessons are learned from the CR Fund about post-disaster rebuilding and recovery?

- How did the original intent, structure, and funding decisions of the CR Fund shift over time — if at all?
- How did national and local funders experience their participation in the funder collaborative?
- How might the funder collaborative strategy inform other disaster recovery efforts?
- Given what we know about the CR Fund, what work is important to undertake going forward?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHAC: Affordable Housing Advocacy Coalition

BDC: Broadmoor Development Corporation

BDF: Bayou District Foundation

BIA: Broadmoor Improvement Association

CBNO: Committee for a Better New Orleans

CCCLT: Crescent City Community Land Trust

CC/OHH: Catholic Charities/Operation Helping Hands

CCP: Center for Community Progress

CUREX: Center for Urban Redevelopment Excellence, University of Pennsylvania

ECD: Enterprise Corporation of the Delta

ECP: Enterprise Community Partners

GCHP: Gulf Coast Housing Partnership

GNO, Inc.: Greater New Orleans, Inc.

GNOCDC: Greater New Orleans Community Data Center

GNOF: Greater New Orleans Foundation

GNOFHAC: Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center

GNOHA: Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance

LCCRUL: Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

LCDR: Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church Disaster Response, INC.

LDRF: Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation

LHA: Louisiana Housing Alliance

LISC: Local Initiatives Support Coalition

MEF: McCaleb Educational Fund

NENA - Lower 9th Ward Neighborhood Improvement Association

NCLTN: National Community Land Trust Network

NDF: Neighborhood Development Foundation

NHI: Northshore Housing Initiative

NHS: Neighborhood Housing Services

NHP: NHP Foundation

NONDC: New Orleans Neighborhood Development Collaborative

NORA: New Orleans Redevelopment Authority

NOVPI: New Orleans Vacant Properties Initiative

NPKW: Nonprofit Knowledge Works

NVPC: National Vacant Properties Campaign

ORF: Orleans Recovery Foundation

PCH: Providence Community Housing

PHA: Project Home Again

PPCDC: Pontchartrain Park Community Development Corporation

PRC: Preservation Resource Center

RNDC: Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation

SLLS: Southeast Louisiana Legal Service

UNO PLUS: University of New Orleans PLUS

VOA: Volunteers of America

CRF EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

GNOF STAFF — CURRENT AND FORMER

- Isabel Barrios
- Liza Cowan
- Ellen Lee
- Juliet Page
- Joann Ricci
- Carey Shea

GRANTEES

- Appleseed — Christy Kane
- Broadmoor Development Corporation — Santiago Burgos
- Broadmoor Development Corporation — Latoya Cantrell
- Center for Community Progress/NOVPI — Nicole Heyman
- Enterprise Community Partners — Michelle Whetten
- Gulf Coast Housing Project — Kathy Laborde
- Harmony - Una Anderson and Katherine Medina
- Jericho Road — Nicole Barnes
- NENA — Charlotte Jackson
- Pontchartrain Park — Wendell Pierce
- Pontchartrain Park — Sheila Greenup
- Providence/GNOHA — Andeanecia Morris
- Rebuilding Together/Preservation Resource Council — Jon Skvarka
- Renaissance Neighborhood Development Corporation — Victor Smeltz
- Southeast Louisiana Legal Services — Laura Tuggle and Paul Tuttle
- Nonprofit Knowledge Works/The Data Center — Allison Plyer
- UNITY — Martha Kegel
- UNO/Milano School — Marla Nelson

BENEFICIARIES

- Rose and August Bourgeois — Residents, The Muses (Gulf Coast Housing Project)
- Lionel Foster — Resident, Sacred Heart Apartments (Unity)
- Edith Reaves — Resident, The Terraces (RNDC)
- Tammie Warren — Homeowner (Project Home Again)
- “Samantha Brown” — Homeowner (Project Home Again)
- Irma Williams — Homeowner (Broadmoor Development Corporation)
- Keionne Jackson - Homeowner (Harmony Community Development)
- Alecia Evans, Homeowner (Harmony Community Development)
- Dianne Alfred — Resident, Faubourg-Lafitte (Providence and Enterprise Community Partners)
- Travis LeBlanc — Resident, Faubourg-Lafitte (Providence and Enterprise Community Partners)

LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXPERTS

- Ellen Lee — City of New Orleans, Director of Housing and Community Development
- LaToya Cantrell — City of New Orleans, City Council
- Monica Gerhart — Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center

FUNDERS

- Hilton Foundation— Brad Meyers
- Ford Foundation — Jerry Maldonado
- Kresge Foundation — Wendy Jackson

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND EVALUATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL— GNOF STAFF (CURRENT AND FORMER)

Please begin by telling me about the work you do/did with GNOF (i.e. position, etc.).

- When and how did you come to work for GNOF? What was your first position at GNOF?
- How have this position and/or responsibilities changed along the way, if at all?

How did you come to be involved with the Community Revitalization Fund?

- Can you describe your role with the Fund and whether and how that changed over time?

Can you tell me the story of the Fund's beginning?

- What role did national foundations play in the Fund's beginning, especially Rockefeller? What about local foundations?
- What role did GNOF staff and board members play? What role did YOU play?
- How did you all decide what route the Fund would take, in terms of its structure, objectives, and grant-making?
- Tell me about why this was structured as a funder collaborative.

In your mind, what was the primary purpose of the Fund?

- How did GNOF come to focus on the issue of housing?
- This may seem like a question with an obvious answer, but why was the rebuilding/renovation of housing important (especially affordable housing) in the city's recovery?

How did the Fund fit into the broader effort of recovery post-Katrina?

- What is your sense of how the efforts of GNOF were perceived by others involved in recovery? (i.e. city officials, CDCs, etc.)

Tell me about how the Fund worked initially.

- Who ran it on a daily basis?
- How did you reach out and identify potential grantees?
- How did you award grants? (process)
- What is your opinion about how well this process worked?

Can you describe any noteworthy challenges encountered during the Fund's development?

- What was the response from GNOF?

In your opinion, what made a grantee a good candidate for this Fund?

- Before we dive into specific questions, I wonder if you could tell me which 1 or 2 grantees really excelled, in your opinion
- What about 1 or 2 grantees that did not meet your expectations?

Can you describe how the Fund supported housing production?

- What did the Fund get right in this capacity? In other words, in what ways did the Fund do a good job of in supporting housing production?
- Can you share some examples of grantees that did a great job in this respect?
- What about grantees that did not fulfill expectations?
- Can you talk about any ways you think the Fund might have improved its efforts in this capacity?

How did the Fund — in its work in general or through its grantees — help families navigate the affordable housing system?

- Which grantees did a good job in this respect?

Can you tell me about how the Fund supported the development of the local affordable housing sector? (capacity, knowledge, etc)

- What did the Fund get right here/do well?
- Examples of grantees that did a great job in this respect?
- What about grantees that did not fulfill expectations?
- What might the Fund have done differently to further improve its efforts in this respect?

Relatedly, can you tell me about the Fund's efforts - at a system level - to reduce barriers to the access of affordable housing in New Orleans?

- What seemed to work? (reduction of barriers? Any new policies or practices?)
- What might have been better?
- What remains to be done?

How did the Fund support the development of more equitable neighborhoods? (i.e. mixed income, mixed race)

- What worked well here? Can you give me specific examples?
- What might have been better? Again, it would be nice to hear some specific examples.
- Did any grantees do a particularly good job with this? Why?
- And were there any grantees that did not achieve their goals? Why do you think that was the case?

Can you talk a bit about how the Fund supported green-building practices?

- What worked well?
- What might have gone better?

Can you tell me about how any funded organizations tried to incorporate citizens in their efforts?

- Which ones were successful, and why do you think that was?
- Which ones had challenges in this area?

How did the Fund typically engage with grantees?

Can you describe any examples of how funded organizations might have changed due to support from the CR Fund?

- Why do you think some of these organizations were not successful in their efforts? Why did some close?

Could you tell me about whether — and how — the CR Fund changed over time? (let the respondent identify ways it changed — or didn't ... could be in structure, in process, in grant-making, in focus, etc.)

What about GNOF? Any sense of how GNOF changed over the course of the Fund's life? How much of this can be attributed to the CR Fund, in your opinion?

- What were GNOF's main areas of focus before Katrina?
- After Katrina?
- How would you describe GNOF's role today in community revitalization?

What is your assessment of how the "funder collaborative" approach worked?

I'd like to hear your final assessment of the Fund — what worked well, what might have been better, etc?

- Or: What did the Fund get right? What might it have done better?
- If you could go back and do anything differently with the Fund, what would you do?

If you were creating guidelines for how similarly positioned organizations in other cities might respond to disasters, what would you tell them?

What is your assessment of affordable housing in New Orleans right now? (i.e. availability, funding, sector capacity, etc.)

- What do you think are the 1-2 most important things that need to be done in this sector?

In your opinion, what should GNOF focus on going forward?

- What about in terms of community revitalization in New Orleans? How might GNOF's re-

sources best be used?

Are there any questions you thought I would ask but did not?

- What else should I know that we haven't talked about today — about the Fund itself, about GNOF, about the role of funders, about grantees, about the affordable housing sector?

Can you suggest some key individuals I might talk with who would have insight on the Fund and/or the affordable housing sector, especially grantees and leaders in the community? What about any families who benefited? Funder representatives?

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND EVALUATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL — CRF FUNDERS

Please begin by telling me how [INSERT FOUNDATION] came to be involved in the Community Revitalization Fund.

- Were you already working in New Orleans prior to Katrina?
- What were you doing post-Katrina, before this Fund?

Can you tell me how your foundation felt/approached being part of a funder collaborative?

- Was this atypical for your foundation?
- Why do you think the CRF was structured as a funder collaborative?

In your mind, what was the primary purpose of the Fund?

Tell me about how funders were involved in the CRF, especially at the beginning.

What is your opinion about how well this process worked?

Can you describe any noteworthy challenges encountered during the Fund's development?

Any sense of whether and how the CRF changed over time? What about funder involvement (why did it change?)?

What is your assessment of how the “funder collaborative” approach worked?

- How did [INSERT FOUNDATION] feel about its participation in the collaborative?

I'd like to hear your final assessment of the Fund — what worked well, what might have been better, etc?

- Or: What did the Fund get right? What might it have done better?
- If you could go back and do anything differently with the Fund, what would you do?

What lessons do you think GNOF should take away from the CRF about the role of a community foundation — especially in dealing with a disaster?

If you were creating guidelines for how similarly positioned organizations in other cities might respond to disasters, what would you tell them?

Anything else I should know that we haven't covered?

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND EVALUATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL — GRANTEES

Note to Interviewer:

To the best of your ability, please ensure that the questions below are answered as comprehensively as possible. You may rephrase questions in wording that you feel is most appropriate, as long as the intent of the question is retained. You may also address questions “out of order;” in other words, try to direct the flow of the conversation as naturally as possible. And, by all means, if a question doesn't make sense for a particular respondent, you don't have to ask it. If a respondent answers other questions in response to one question, please don't ask the already-answered questions. Prompts and follow-up questions (indicated by transparent bullets) are suggested ways to tease out a full and comprehensive answer — they are often questions you may not need to ask. And remember that if a respondent says something interesting or unexpected but doesn't really explain their comment (i.e. suggestive of some interesting conflict or unexpected barrier or reward), probe: ask things like “can you tell me more about X?” or “what do you mean by X?”. Finally, if there is a question you think needs to be asked, ask it! For the most parts, notes to you are in italics and should not be read to the interviewee.

Introductory Comments:

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. As you know, I'm talking with you about GNOF's Community Revitalization Fund. Before we begin, I want to review a consent and information form with you [REVIEW FORM].

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background and contextual questions:

- Please begin by telling me about [Insert Name of Organization]. (i.e. What does the organization do? When was it formed?)
- How did you come to work for [Insert Name of Organization] and what is your role here?
- Has your role changed over time? If so, how?
- [IF RELEVANT: Why did you leave the organization? What are you doing now?]

- Can you tell me about how your organization was working to respond to the impact of Katrina and the levee failures in the immediate aftermath (first year or two after the flood)?
- What was your organization's approach to rebuilding housing/housing recovery?
- This may seem like a question with an obvious answer, but why was the rebuilding/renovation of housing important (especially affordable housing)?
- Can you describe specifically what the affordable housing sector was like at that time? (i.e. the organizations, offices, and policies related to helping people find affordable housing)
- What about now?

CR Fund and grant process questions:

- What did you know about GNOF before Katrina? What about in the immediate aftermath?
- How did you learn about the Community Revitalization Fund?
- How did your organization come to apply for a grant?
- In your opinion, what was that process like?

Grant-funded work:

- Please tell me about how your organization used your grant award. [NOTE: the transparent bullets below map onto CR Fund objectives. They may not be applicable in each circumstance.]
- How did you help families return to or obtain housing?
- Can you walk me through how your organization helps a typical family obtain housing?
- How did you build your capacity or citywide capacity?
- How did you try to create mixed-income, mixed-race, mixed-use neighborhoods?
- Engage in green-building?
- Engage citizens in your recovery efforts?
- How well did your organization meet its proposed goals in using the grant funds? Why was this the case (i.e. why either success or failure or some combination of the two)?
- Did you seek funding from other sources for this work?
- Were you successful in getting it?
- How much of a role did the CR Fund grant play in your work?
- How did you communicate with GNOF while you were a grant recipient? (i.e. anything beyond regular required reports?)
- In what ways did GNOF work with you during your time as a grantee? (try to get specific examples)
- Can you describe any ways in which GNOF connected you to other organizations or people?

(try to get specific examples)

- Can you tell me about anything unexpected you encountered as you used the grant? (i.e. obstacles, context, etc.)
- What did you do?
- Did GNOF staff or other grantees help you deal with any barriers at all? If so, how?
- How did the receipt of a CR Fund award affect your organization?

Overall assessment of organization's work and affordable housing sector

Can you tell me about any ways in which the CR Fund or GNOF affected the local affordable housing sector?

Reduction in barriers?

Changes in policies or practices?

Please tell me about the one or two things that most helped your organization achieve its goals related to housing and community revitalization post-Katrina?

In your opinion, what organizations or entities are leaders in the ongoing community revitalization process? (i.e. doing innovative work, serving as community-wide advocate, etc.)

In the affordable housing sector?

[IF INVOLVED WITH GNOHA — Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance]: Can you tell me about your involvement with GNOHA?

What does this alliance do? What kinds of conversations do you all have? What might help support your work?

What is your sense of the role that GNOF played in community revitalization immediately after Katrina (in the five to ten year recovery period)?

What is your sense of GNOF's role in New Orleans currently? (in other words, what role do you see GNOF playing in housing and community revitalization today?)

What role can — or should — philanthropy play in recovery from disaster?

What kind of work do you think GNOF should focus on going forward?

Is there anything else you think I should know about the CR Fund or the local affordable housing sector post-Katrina? Anything you want to add?

[CHECK IN ON THIS — AS A REMINDER THAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN THIS] We are especially interested in talking with families who benefited from the Fund. Can you recommend any families we might speak with?

Thank you so much for your time.

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND EVALUATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL — BENEFICIARIES

Note to interviewer:

To the best of your ability, please ensure that the questions below are answered as comprehensively as possible. You may rephrase questions in wording that you feel is most appropriate, as long as the intent of the question is retained. You may also address questions “out of order;” in other words, try to direct the flow of the conversation as naturally as possible. And, by all means, if a question doesn’t make sense for a particular respondent, you don’t have to ask it. If a respondent answers other questions in response to one question, please don’t ask the already-answered questions. Prompts and follow-up questions (indicated by transparent bullets) are suggested ways to tease out a full and comprehensive answer — they are often questions you may not need to ask. And remember that if a respondent says something interesting or unexpected but doesn’t really explain their comment (i.e. suggestive of some interesting conflict or unexpected barrier or reward), probe: ask things like “can you tell me more about X?” or “what do you mean by X?”. Finally, if there is a question you think needs to be asked, ask it! For the most part, notes to you are in italics and should not be read to the interviewee.

Introductory Comments

Thank you so much for meeting with me today. Before we begin, I want to review a consent and information form with you [REVIEW FORM].

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Introductory questions and background

- Could you start by telling me about yourself and your family? (Make sure they talk about who they live with; if they live alone, about where their closest family members live.)
- Basic info to get: How many folks in household? Ages? Are adults employed/in school? Are kids in school?
- Could you tell me about where you were living — and who you were living with — when Katrina hit New Orleans?
- When did you go? Where did you go? What did you do there?
- Did you want to return to New Orleans? Did you want to return to your same house or apartment? Why or why not?
- Try to get them to talk about their housing and neighborhood — what they liked and/or didn’t like about it.

Returning to New Orleans:

- When was the first time you came back to New Orleans — even if just to visit? What was that experience like?
- In total, how long were you away from New Orleans?
- How much attention did you pay to the plans to rebuild the city?
- How did you feel about those plans?
- Were you involved at all in citizen response to those plans?
- When you decided to return to New Orleans to live, what was that process like?
- What did you worry about?
- What were you excited about?
- What barriers did you encounter?
- What kinds of things helped you in that effort of returning?
- How long did it take you to get back into housing — your own stable housing — when you decided to return?

Housing and Neighborhood:

- Can you walk me through how you ended up in the house/apartment you are in now?
- Really get them to elaborate on all the steps — how did they learn about the organization, services, and/or housing? How did they get connected? How did they get financing? How did they feel about the organization that helped them?)
- Was it important to you to try and live near people you had lived near before the storm?
- If not: why?
- If so: did they try to do things so this would happen? Why or why not? What did they do that worked? Did they try anything that didn't work?
- Tell me about the day you moved in. (get date — at least year)
- What did that feel like?
- Initial impressions of the place?
- Initial impressions of neighbors?
- Initial impressions of neighborhood?
- What did this housing mean to you at the time?
- Have those feelings been fulfilled/met?
- What do you think about the house/apartment and neighborhood now?

- Can you tell me what your life/your family circumstances have been like since moving in? (specifically try to get at what this housing has meant — good things? Bad things? Etc)
- Can you tell me about this neighborhood?
- Do you feel comfortable here? Why or why not?
- What kinds of things do you feel like you have good access to? (groceries, jobs, schools, parks, etc)
- What kinds of things do you wish you had better access to?
- I'm interested in whether and how your housing compares to what you had before Katrina. Can you talk about that?
- Please get respondents to compare (pre-Katrina v. now) Owning v. renting Quality of housing- Neighborhood Whether they live near close friends and family

Grantee and GNOF:

- How did you — and do you — feel about [Insert relevant organization's name] efforts to help individuals get housing?
- What did they get right?
- What could they have done better?
- Do you know much about the Greater New Orleans Foundation?
- What do you know about it?
- What is your sense of their role in this city?
- What do you see as the greatest housing needs in New Orleans?
- Anything else you want to share with me today about your housing, about the city, about recovery from Katrina and the levees breaking?

GRANTEE SURVEY

COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

You are being asked to complete the following brief questionnaire because an organization with whom you work now or with whom you worked in the past received a grant from the Community Revitalization Fund of the Greater New Orleans Foundation between 2007 and 2014. This evaluation is examining how well the Fund met its objectives, and the input of grantees is very important. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and return to Jenny Irons at irons.jenny@gmail.com. Thank you for your participation.

1. Name of grantee:
2. Name of respondent and position at grantee organization:
3. CR Fund support was used to fund (check all that apply):
4. Bricks and mortar (actual building supplies)
 - Land/property purchase (including gap financing)
 - Staff/human resources (i.e. salaries, benefits, etc.)
 - Knowledge production (i.e. reports, data collection, education, etc.)
 - Services for individual homeowners (i.e. counseling, legal services, etc.)
 - Other: [PLEASE LIST]
5. Grantee's interaction with GNOF (check all that apply):
 - GNOF gave grantee money.
 - Grantee filed interim and final reports with GNOF.
 - GNOF connected grantee to other partners.
 - GNOF helped us navigate barriers.
 - GNOF held grantee meetings that grantee attended at least once.
 - GNOF provided or connected grantee with technical expertise or other organizational effectiveness tools
 - Other: [PLEASE LIST]
6. Please list the 2 to 3 entities (i.e. city, non-profit, for-profit, etc) with which your organization worked most often in the rebuilding process post-Katrina.
7. In your words, please describe what the CRF grant meant for your organization.
8. If this organization no longer exists, please briefly explain why.
9. If possible, please note how many housing units (apartments, houses, etc) your organization developed between 2007 and 2015 (or, if you are able to determine, with CR Fund support):
10. If possible, please note how many families or individuals your organization served (i.e. by helping them find housing, by providing counseling, by providing legal services, etc) between 2007 and 2015 (or, if you are able to determine, with CR Fund support):

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. If you have any questions, please email Jenny Irons at irons.jenny@gmail.com.

If you have any file photos of your renovations, rebuildings, families/individuals served, or other work or staff that you would be willing to share (and to have made publicly available) in the evaluation of the Community Revitalization Fund, please email to irons.jenny@gmail.com.

End Notes

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7. McDavid, James C. and Laura R. Hawthorn. 2005. "Key Concepts and Issues in Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement." Pp 3-40 in *Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement: An Introduction to Practice*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA. Quotation from page 11.
8. In most cases, those interviewed for the website documentary were also interviewed for the evaluation. However, three participants in film interviews (one grantee representative and two married homeowners) were not interviewed for the evaluation and thus are not included in these tallies. Some individuals count in multiple categories: one former staff member became a grantee, and one former staff member and one former grantee also count as "experts" as they now work in city government on affordable housing issues.
9. Interviews conducted over the phone were not recorded and transcribed.
10. While having multiple coders to code data is ideal, the processes of data collection and analysis are often conducted by one person. For more information, see: Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M, & Namey, E.E. 2012. *Applied thematic analysis*. Sage Publications: Los Angeles, CA; Lichtman, Marilyn. 2013. *Qualitative Research in Education*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
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32. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/our-work/initiatives/new-orleans/>, Retrieved December 17, 2015
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34. *Ibid*, p. 39.
35. Interview with Carey Shea.
36. GNOF proposal to the Kellogg Foundation, internal document.
37. GNOF proposal to the Kellogg Foundation, internal document.
38. More than one category could apply for each award/form of support.
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staff salaries). It is difficult to know whether the self-report is an under- or over-count. When data were collected by GNOF, some grantees counted units planned (some of which were never built) and other counted only units built (and they went on to build more).

45. Mr. Robb and his wife Tamika Sullivan were interviewed for the documentary portion of this process; they did not participate in an in-depth interview for this written report.
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