

This is historical material, "frozen in time." The web site is no longer updated and links to external web sites and some internal pages will not work.



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [March 2006](#)

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
March 8, 2006

Fact Sheet: Gulf Coast Update: Hurricane Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding Continues

Today, The President And Mrs. Bush Traveled To Louisiana And Mississippi To Assess Continuing Relief, Recovery, And Rebuilding Efforts - And To Reaffirm The Administration's Commitment To The Gulf Coast.

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina has required an unprecedented response by Federal, State, and local governments, as well as the private sector. Relief, recovery, and reconstruction efforts are ongoing - and will continue until this vital region is up and running again. The President discussed Federal, State, and local efforts to clear debris, strengthen the Gulf Coast's hurricane defenses, and meet long-term housing needs for evacuees.

- **Clearing Debris.** Roughly 80 percent of non-demolition debris, totaling more than 80 million cubic yards, has been removed. To ensure debris removal continues and the process of rebuilding can proceed, the Federal government is covering 100 percent of the cost of this cleanup through June 30, whether the task is performed by contractors hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or by local officials, and 90 percent of the cost thereafter.
- **Strengthening Hurricane Defenses.** In order for the Crescent City to rebuild, and for citizens and businesses to feel confident in returning, New Orleans needs a modern-day, reliable flood and storm protection system. President Bush and his Administration have proposed additional safety and security measures to restore all damaged levees and floodwalls. By June 1, the beginning of the next hurricane season, all 169 miles of damaged levees and floodwalls will have been restored to their design height. This will include correction of any identified design and construction flaws and will account for compaction and subsidence.
- **Restoring Gulf Coast School Libraries.** Mrs. Bush is leading the effort to refurbish Gulf Coast school libraries. Through the Laura Bush Foundation's Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative, grants are available for books for school libraries in the Gulf Coast region affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, or Wilma. For more information, please visit www.LauraBushFoundation.org.

The Region's Reconstruction And Economic Recovery Are Top Priorities For The Administration. More than 16,000 Federal personnel have been deployed to help State and local officials along the Gulf Coast recover. Some \$88 billion in Federal aid has been made available for relief, recovery, and rebuilding, with another \$20 billion requested to support ongoing recovery efforts of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Small Business Administration (SBA), and other Federal government agencies.

Much Progress Has Been Made In The Six Months Since Hurricane Katrina Made Landfall. President Bush continues to deliver on the Federal commitment to do what it takes to help residents of the Gulf Coast rebuild their lives. Below are tangible results Federal agencies have accomplished in helping the region on the road to a complete recovery and providing an opportunity for a stronger and better future.

Clearing Debris So Rebuilding Can Proceed

Clean-Up And Other Essential Services

- Roughly 80 percent of the debris caused by the storms has been cleared in Mississippi and 54 percent has been cleared in Louisiana. More than 80 million cubic yards of debris have been removed from the Coast - an amount equal to the debris removed from the September 11 attacks and Hurricane Andrew combined.
- To ensure debris removal continues and rebuilding proceeds, the Federal government is covering 100 percent of the cost of this cleanup through June 30, whether the task is performed by contractors hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or local officials, and 90 percent of the cost thereafter.
- To sustain progress, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has worked with State environmental officials to develop efficient protocols for handling hazardous debris like asbestos safely; and they have helped ensure that landfill facilities are operating in compliance with applicable requirements.
- The debris that remains is largely on private property, either in back and side yards or inside houses that need to be gutted or demolished. To remove this debris, the Federal government, local leaders, and the homeowners themselves will have to work together:
 - Hundreds of thousands of homeowners remain displaced, some hundreds or thousands of miles away. The Federal government is working with local officials to expand temporary housing closer to where the rebuilding must occur, and is providing financial assistance to homeowners to allow them to begin rebuilding. This is being done through FEMA and as part of recovery plans developed by the States.
 - As homeowners return and local plans coalesce, the painful but necessary work of demolition can begin in the most vulnerable neighborhoods.

Strengthening The Gulf Coast's Hurricane Defenses

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is on track to restore 169 miles of damaged levees/floodwalls to authorized design levels by June 1, 2006 - before the start of the next hurricane season. The President is focusing on the safety and security of the citizens of the Gulf Coast and has committed to providing the resources necessary for them to return and rebuild. About fifty percent (169 of 350 miles) of the levees and floodwalls and 48 percent (34 of 71) of the pump stations were damaged by Hurricane Katrina. The Corps is working on the following levee improvements:

- Repairing and building the protection system to the authorized design heights (\$2.1 billion):
 - By June 1, 2006, the Corps is scheduled to restore 169 miles of damaged levees and floodwalls to their authorized design height and to install temporary closures on three drainage canals to protect from storm surge.
 - By September 2007, the Corps is scheduled to complete the repair of non-Federal levees, achieve authorized design height, and correct any identified design and construction flaws. Fifty-nine contracts have been awarded in the Greater New Orleans area, with the vast majority (91 percent) going to local or Louisiana firms; 27 contracts or 52 percent are to Hub Zone, small and disadvantaged/minority contractors.
- Additional proposed improvements pending before Congress (\$1.46 billion) include:
 - Permanent flood gates and pumping stations at the outfalls of 3 interior drainage canals (17th Avenue, Orleans Avenue, London Avenue).
 - Selective armoring of levees at most critical areas throughout the entire hurricane protection system.
 - Storm-proofing interior pumping stations.
 - Improved protection along the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) either through upgrades to floodgates or installation of closure structures.
 - Incorporation of non-Federal levees in Plaquemines Parish into the Federal system.

- Initiation of wetlands restoration projects to provide both hurricane protection and environmental restoration.

Rebuilding The Economy, Protecting Workers

Stimulating Business

- In May, Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding Donald Powell and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez will lead a delegation of business leaders to Louisiana and Mississippi on a "Gulf Coast Business Investment Mission" to highlight investment opportunities, including Federal GO Zone tax incentives, as part of an effort to promote economic growth and job creation in the region.
- The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) created the Hurricane Contracting Information Center (HCIC) to provide a central point of reference for businesses, including those that are minority- or women-owned, to register for and become aware of Federal contracting opportunities. The Center has received over 8,200 calls and over 216,000 web visits.
 - DOC's Minority Business Development Agency has conducted direct outreach to over 2,000 minority local businesses, assisted over 250 displaced minority firms, and counseled approximately 640 businesses on Gulf Coast procurement opportunities.
- DOC is helping the affected region carry out recovery activities in three broad areas: assisting businesses in rebuilding; providing technical assistance and capacity building; and assisting with the development of a long-term recovery strategy. DOC has organized conferences, business-counseling services, workshops, and information seminars to help retain and expand economic growth, as well as to assist adversely affected small and medium-sized businesses.
- USDA is making available \$1.2 billion in emergency assistance for farmers and ranchers.

Low Cost Loans For Businesses And Homeowners

- The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved \$5.8 billion in disaster loans to over 82,000 homeowners, renters, and businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Florida. Specifically, SBA has approved over \$4.3 billion in disaster loans to more than 66,300 homeowners and renters in the region and more than 15,800 business disaster loans for over \$1.4 billion.
- In addition, Congress passed and the President signed legislation granting an additional \$4.9 billion in disaster-lending authority to allow SBA to continue providing disaster loans to those affected by the hurricanes.
 - SBA disaster loans are intended primarily for long-term rebuilding and reconstruction of damaged homes and businesses.
 - SBA has conducted damage inspections on more than 277,000 properties and received over 1.2 million calls into its Customer Service Center.
 - SBA has processed over 98 percent of the applications for economic injury disaster loans. Over 265,000 loan applications have been processed; disbursements have been made on over 36 percent of the approved loans.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided approximately \$22 million in loans and grants to assist rural businesses.

Granting Businesses, Investors, And Other Taxpayers Relief

- The President signed into law the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone Act on December 21, 2005, to reinvigorate the Gulf Coast economy. The Act increases business expensing, accelerates bonus depreciation, provides expensing for demolition and cleanup expenses, and provides net operating loss carry-backs.

- The Act authorized an additional \$1 billion in New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation authority to be provided to Community Development Entities (CDEs) with a significant mission of recovery and redevelopment in the GO Zone.
- The Act creates additional tax-exempt private activity bond authority to help rebuild housing and infrastructure in the GO Zone. Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are provided the authority to issue a special class of private activity bonds, called GO Zone Bonds. Bond authority is approximately \$7.9 billion for Louisiana, \$4.8 billion for Mississippi, and \$2.1 billion for Alabama. Proceeds from these bonds can be used to pay for projects including acquisition, construction, and renovation of nonresidential real property, qualified low-income residential rental housing, single-family residential housing, and public utility property (e.g., gas, water, electric, and telecommunication lines) located in the GO Zone.
- The Act expands access to low-income housing in the GO Zone. Under current law, States receive allocations of low-income-housing tax credits based on population. This provision allows States to allocate additional housing credit amounts in years 2006 to 2008 in the GO Zone. This will provide additional credits of approximately \$70 million for Louisiana, \$37 million for Mississippi, and \$17 million for Alabama.

Developing The Workforce

- On March 6, the President signed S. 1777 extending Disaster Unemployment Benefits for nearly 400,000 individuals who lost their jobs as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.
- Over 37,000 Americans are enrolled in programs or services such as temporary jobs or vocational training through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)'s National Emergency Grants (NEG) program.
- DOL has awarded \$210 million in National Emergency grants across 11 states. These grants provide states with the resources to address the employment and training needs of over 60,000 individuals.
- Helping workers access high-growth jobs in the affected region, DOL awarded \$12 million in grants to train workers for jobs and careers in critical industries such as construction, energy, health care, transportation, and safety/security.
- DOL developed partnerships with the community college systems in Louisiana and Mississippi, helping the States establish and operate two construction career centers aimed at training local workers.
- Career counselors were deployed to One-Stop Career Centers near evacuee centers and localities with high concentrations of evacuees (\$15 million).
- DOL formed a partnership in Mississippi between One-Stop Career Centers and Manpower to encourage evacuees to return home to work. "Coming Home Portfolios" are created and include job training, services, and job opportunities. DOL deployed Disability Program Navigators to assist individuals with disabilities (\$5 million).
- Beginning in May, the Regional Workforce Training Program will work to train and deploy 20,000 new skilled workers from the affected region. The Workforce Training Group will include representatives from unions, contractors, the Business Roundtable, and others.

Rebuilding Lives And Communities

Providing Immediate Recovery And Relief

- Rescue and response needs:
 - 44 states and the District of Columbia received Presidential emergency declarations following Hurricane Katrina to house displaced victims of the storm. This total is the most declarations made for a single disaster in FEMA history.
 - The Coast Guard rescued 33,000 people - six times higher than the number of rescues in all of 2004.

- FEMA coordinated the rescue of more than 6,500 people and, for the first time, deployed all 28 of its Urban Search and Rescue teams for a single event.
 - The combined rescues performed by these two agencies total almost 40,000 - more than seven times the number of people rescued during the 2004 Florida hurricanes.
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) conducted response operations that resulted in 1,428 missions that included 672 law enforcement, 128 search and rescue, 78 recovery, 444 hurricane relief, and 97 other logistical support missions. CBP also provided food, water, and other supplies to thousands of people affected by the hurricanes and donated over \$20 million in seized goods and humanitarian aid.
- The Department of Defense (DoD) was instrumental in saving lives, restoring order, and beginning the long, challenging process of recovery; at the height of the DoD response, some 72,000 men and women in uniform assisted Federal, State, and local authorities in recovery efforts, and approximately 15,000 residents of the Gulf coast were rescued and 80,000 others evacuated.
 - DoD delivered critical emergency supplies - more than 30 million meals and some 10,000 truckloads of ice and water.
 - Military forces provided significant medical assistance, including 10,000 medical evacuations by ground and air, medical treatment of more than 5,000 patients, and provision of more than 3,000 beds in field hospitals, installations, and aboard U.S. Navy ships.
 - At the request of FEMA, DoD supplied 13 mortuary teams to support local authorities in the systematic search, recovery, and disposition of the deceased.
 - To assist in disease prevention, DoD aircraft flew mosquito abatement aerial spraying missions covering more than two million acres.
- Within the first six days of the response, the Federal government delivered more than 28 million pounds of ice, 20 million pounds of commodities (such as fruits, juices, vegetables, meats, and grains), 8.5 million ready-to-eat meals, and 4 million gallons of water.
 - Through USDA's various feeding programs and in partnership with many faith-based and community organizations, over 20 million pounds of food were delivered and served to displaced residents, including almost 2 million pounds of baby food.
 - Nearly 1.9 million households were signed up to receive close to \$900 million in USDA food stamps.
- Shelter and other immediate needs:
 - FEMA has committed \$6.9 billion to date to provide shelter and direct cash assistance to hurricane victims in the Gulf Coast, an amount more than double the combined total of Individuals and Households Assistance Program (IHP) dollars provided for six major U.S. natural disasters occurring since 1992.
 - More than 700,000 households have received apartment rental assistance under FEMA's IHP to pay for apartments. More than \$1.7 billion has been distributed in financial rental assistance as part of FEMA's comprehensive housing program.
 - FEMA paid more than \$560 million to provide hotel and motel rooms to tens of thousands of families affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita who were in need of short-term sheltering.

- Over 16,400 HUD-assisted or homeless families are receiving up to 18 months of housing assistance through the Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHAP) and the Disaster Voucher Program (DVP), administered by HUD.
- Over 10,000 displaced residents were housed across the country, primarily near the hurricane region, by the USDA and HUD.
- More than \$17 billion has been paid to National Flood Insurance Program policyholders. Nearly 90 percent of all claims filed have been paid.
- More than 1.8 million housing inspections have been completed in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.
- FEMA has approved \$585 million in Community Disaster Loans for municipalities in Louisiana and Mississippi to help local authorities maintain essential services such as law enforcement, schools, and fire services

Meeting Longer-Term Housing Needs

- HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson recently announced the allocation of \$11.5 billion in disaster funding among five Gulf Coast states affected by Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. The emergency funding is provided through HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to specifically assist Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and Texas in their long-term recovery efforts. Reflecting the unique vulnerability of New Orleans and surrounding areas, the President has asked for another \$4.2 billion in CDBG funds to buy out or elevate homes in the most flood-prone areas and support other protective actions.
- HUD has placed a moratorium on foreclosures of FHA-insured homes until June 30, 2006. The extended foreclosure relief will provide mortgagees additional time to confirm mortgagors' intention and ability to repair the home, help them resume regular mortgage payments, and retain homeownership.
- HUD's Mortgage Assistance Initiative is assisting homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages who are unable to maintain their payment obligations due to hurricane-related property damage by advancing their mortgage payments for up to 12 months. This unprecedented mortgage relief is expected to help several thousand families remain homeowners while concentrating on repairing their homes, finding jobs, and putting their lives back together.
- HUD is issuing waivers to streamline existing grant programs so grantees can reprogram existing HUD funds for disaster relief. Houston, which received thousands of evacuees from New Orleans, was the first to ask for a waiver of CDBG's 15 percent cap on public services. This request was granted for the Gulf Coast states, providing communities more flexibility.
- HUD launched the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership (URAP) program to empower college and university students to help rebuild the impacted communities. In partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, HUD announced these two grant programs totaling \$5 million.
- To ensure access to discrimination-free affordable housing, HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity deployed staff to assist evacuees reporting housing discrimination.
- USDA is assisting rural families with funds to rebuild and repair their damaged homes. Approximately \$20 million is being made available for grants, \$210 million for direct loans, and \$1.3 billion for guaranteed loans.

Repairing And Strengthening Infrastructure

Restoring Transportation

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)'s funding of emergency repairs has restored basic transportation services

- Fifty percent of Louisiana's highways and 100 percent of Mississippi highways have been repaired. Projects include:
 - Temporary repairs completed to I-10 bridges at Slidell and Pascagoula.
 - Restoration of US90 eastbound between Biloxi and Bay St. Louis; westbound restoration is underway.
- Long-term repairs have also been initiated. Projects include:
 - Replacement of US90 bridges at Bay St. Louis and between Biloxi and Ocean Springs expected to be completed in late 2007.
 - The I-10 bridge replacement at Slidell is expected to be completed in 2009.
- A significant portion of Louisiana and Mississippi's transit services are operational, with 26 bus routes and two streetcar routes restored in New Orleans. Emergency services have been established to provide mobility for displaced persons sheltered in Baton Rouge, Gulfport/Biloxi, and Pearl, Stone, and George Counties in Mississippi.
- Most ports are back to full or nearly full operation, according to a survey by the Association of Port Authorities:
 - The Port of New Orleans recently announced that it had reached 100 percent of its pre-Katrina activity, with 70 percent of the Port's facilities operational and 85 percent of the workforce returned. The Port of New Orleans is again welcoming cruise ships to dock offshore and their passengers to come ashore to tour the city.
 - The worst-hit port, Gulfport, has 50 percent of pre-Katrina ship calls.

Restoring Power, Gas, Oil, And Water

Daily gas production in the Gulf of Mexico has been restored to 85 percent and daily oil production has been restored to 76 percent of pre-Katrina levels.

- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) calmed petroleum markets/gas prices and helped restore power after the storm by:
 - Releasing crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
 - Helping restore power to hundreds of thousands of Texans by issuing two emergency orders to permit ERCOT power companies to provide service into the Entergy service territory.
 - Conducting a detailed technical meeting with Entergy and several other utilities to discuss incorporating new technologies into electricity system reconstruction efforts in the Southeast, particularly New Orleans.
 - Enabling the Collins, Mississippi, Tank Farm to be re-energized, thus allowing total resumption of operations by the Colonial Pipeline.
 - Providing the Geographical Information Service coordinates to FEMA so that supplies could be delivered to Entergy workers restoring power in Louisiana.
 - Coordinating delivery of fuel to Alabama company manufacturing utility poles, which were critical in the restoration process.
 - Facilitating an agreement among power companies and the Corps of Engineers to restore power to the Lake Livingston (TX) Pumping Station, which restored water to Houston and to local refineries.

- The Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security helped maintain power, gas, and oil distribution by:
 - Permitting foreign-flagged ships to deliver petroleum products to areas badly in need.
 - Helping to find and install generators, and providing regulatory waivers, to keep pipelines operating so that people throughout the region and in the East had gasoline.
 - Ensuring emergency supplies were delivered to stricken areas by granting waivers capping trucker hours.
- The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) is monitoring energy production in the Gulf of Mexico and repairing stream gauges to restore flood warning throughout the region.
 - DOI's Minerals Management Service has taken a number of actions to restore energy production from the Outer Continental Shelf. These measures include expediting review of requests for temporary barging of oil or flaring of small amounts of natural gas; expediting the approval process for pipeline repairs; and waiving cost-recovery fees through January 2007.
- USDA is working to address long-term utility needs in the rural Gulf Coast by:
 - Repairing water and waste facilities (\$45 million).
 - Working closely with FEMA and State agencies on repairing water and waste utility damage.
 - Providing technical assistance for critical emergency response assistance to water and waste facilities.
 - Providing funding to extend out electric co-operatives principal loan repayments for five years.

Providing Social Services, Health Care, And Education

Social Services

- To respond to the human services and mental health needs of individuals affected by the hurricane, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded \$550 million in Social Service Block Grants. The funding may also be used to provide health care to hurricane-affected individuals lacking health insurance or adequate access to care and to help health care safety net providers restore and resume their operations. Funding was provided in varying amounts to all 50 States, with the majority going to Louisiana (40 percent), Mississippi (23 percent), Texas (16 percent), and Florida (10 percent).

Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF)

- HHS's Administration for Children and Families TANF program is helping over 30,000 families by providing short term, non-recurrent cash benefits to families who traveled to another State from the disaster-designated States. States also received additional funding for the TANF program to provide assistance and work opportunities to needy families (\$69 million for loan forgiveness and \$25 million in contingency funds for State Welfare Programs).

Health Care Delivery And Hospitals

- To provide health care for those in need, \$2 billion was provided to States for care through the Medicaid program (Hurricane Katrina Waivers). States receiving Medicaid waivers include Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming.
- Within a week of Hurricane Katrina forcing the closure of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center in New Orleans, mobile-health-care clinics from across the VA system were deployed to the

surrounding communities of Hammond, LaPlace, and Slidell, Louisiana.

- By December 2005, a floor of the VA nursing home adjacent to the New Orleans Medical Center was opened as a primary care clinic. Another floor is slated to open with limited specialty care in late March. The mobile clinics in the three surrounding communities are being replaced with permanent community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs).
- Over 11,000 non-veterans received humanitarian care in VA clinics as a result of the quick deployment of CBOCs.
- From October 2005 to January 2006, new and existing outpatient clinics in New Orleans, LaPlace, Hammond, Slidell, and other locations in the New Orleans area treated approximately two-thirds of the number of veteran patients treated during the same period the prior fiscal year - exceeding expectations.
- The VA is accelerating construction at the Biloxi campus to move all clinical and administrative functions from Gulfport to Biloxi. They are also considering establishing a temporary modular clinic on the Gulfport Campus to meet space needs.
- The VA has entered into an agreement with Louisiana State University to explore opportunities for constructing a shared medical center in New Orleans.

Education

Child Development and School Readiness (Head Start)

- The Head Start program, which provides comprehensive child development and school-readiness programs for low-income children from birth to age 5, as well as pregnant women and their families, received \$90 million to cover the costs of replacing or repairing facilities that were damaged or destroyed by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita and that are not covered by insurance or FEMA. The funds also covered the costs of serving approximately 4,800 evacuee children from January 1, 2006, to the end of each grantee's current school year (i.e., late May or early June).

K-12

Progress has been made on the 1,100 schools (public and private) that were closed following the storms, which left 372,000 students initially unable to attend school.

- In Mississippi, 93 percent of schools have fully or partially reopened.
- In Louisiana, 79 percent of schools have reopened.
 - In New Orleans, all 183 public and private schools were initially closed after the hurricanes.
 - Now, 17 public schools (including 14 that now operate as charter schools) have reopened. About 14 percent of the pre-Katrina enrollment, or 8,303 students, are now attending public schools in the city.
 - In the private sector, 37 of 54 schools operated by the Archdiocese of New Orleans have now reopened in the city and its environs.
 - Total public and private enrollment in the city equals about 30 percent of the pre-hurricane level.
- The U.S. Department of Education succeeded in obtaining a \$1.6 billion special appropriation from Congress to meet hurricane-related needs, including \$750 million to help public and private schools along the Gulf Coast reopen, and \$645 million to reimburse public and private schools that enrolled students displaced by Katrina and Rita.
 - Approximately \$500 million was delivered this month under the Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations (Restart Aid) Program to help reopen and restart damaged schools in the states most affected by the storms. This is on top of the \$253 million in aid delivered to the region in January.

- Approximately \$5 million was delivered this month under the Assistance for Homeless Youths (Homeless Aid) Program to help state education agencies address the needs of students displaced by the storms.
- The first installment of \$120 million was delivered this month under the Temporary Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students (Impact Aid) Program to assist local education agencies in 49 states and the District of Columbia in paying for the cost of educating displaced Gulf Coast students who were enrolled in public and non-public schools.
- The Department of Education provided more than \$20 million through a special charter school grant to Louisiana to assist in opening or reopening charter schools in order to serve children affected by the hurricanes. This has helped public schools in New Orleans expedite their reopening process by reopening as charter schools.
- The Department of Education launched a website, Hurricane Help for Schools (www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov), to serve as a nationwide clearinghouse resource for schools to post their needs so Americans can help meet them. To date, more than 650 matches between needs and contributions have been made through the site.

Higher Education

Postsecondary institutions on the Gulf Coast are also recovering:

- 24 of 30 institutions of higher education in Louisiana have now reopened.
 - This figure includes 10 of the 15 that were closed in New Orleans.
 - Two-thirds of postsecondary students in New Orleans have returned to class.
- Both of Mississippi's closed postsecondary institutions have reopened.
- Postsecondary institutions in Mississippi and Louisiana received \$200 million from the Department of Education to help reopen and to compensate colleges that took in displaced students. In addition, the Department is distributing over \$18 million of unused Federal campus-based student aid funds to severely affected colleges.
- HUD is providing over \$5 million to 16 universities through an innovative new program that draws on the expertise of these centers for higher learning to help rebuild Gulf Coast communities. The funding is provided through HUD's new Universities Rebuilding America Partnership (URAP) initiative.

Restoring The Gulf Coast Environment

- The EPA is overseeing the cleanup of a one-million-gallon oil spill, which impacted over 1,800 homes. EPA has also collected over 2.4 million hazardous waste containers, over 300,000 electronic goods, and assisted in recycling over 310,000 large appliances.
- EPA tracked operational status of water/wastewater systems, provided technical assistance for emergency repairs and system assessments for FEMA funding, and supplied mobile labs for testing water samples. Over 4,000 drinking water systems serving 15 million people were affected. All but 88 of these systems have returned to safe operations.
- The agency has also analyzed and communicated the results for over 1,800 environmental samples of floodwater and sediment, over 5,200 environmental air samples and seven proposed temporary housing sites identified by FEMA.
- Working closely with the State of Louisiana, EPA has six monitors that it rotates between 15 monitoring sites throughout the state.

Reconstituting The Justice System And Prosecuting Fraud

- The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force was created to coordinate law enforcement at the Federal, State, and local levels with other entities involved in the relief and reconstruction effort. The Task Force includes the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Criminal Division, United States Attorneys' Offices, the Federal Bureau of

Investigation (FBI), the Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Trade Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Inspectors General, and various representatives of State and local law enforcement. There have been over 201 cases resulting from the Taskforce's activities charging 241 defendants in 24 judicial districts.

- To date, ICE Federal Protective Service (FPS) Law Enforcement Officers have conducted approximately 80 criminal investigations, made over 120 arrests and responded to thousands of calls for service. These cases include verbal threats, brandishing of weapons, possession of firearms and narcotics, theft of government property, and fraud.
- FPS officers have provided more than 124,000 Patrol hours in support of recovery efforts in Louisiana. Six months after the hurricane, FPS still provides security and law enforcement support to approximately 74 facilities with more than 300 contract guards and 65 posts throughout Louisiana. FPS has 76 Officers, Inspectors, Dispatchers, and Special Agents deployed to Mississippi and Louisiana.
- DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance issued 33 supplemental Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (BJA) to state and local agencies in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi to support immediate law enforcement needs resulting from Hurricane Katrina. DOJ also took additional steps to ensure that grantee access to funds was not disrupted by issuing 6-month, no-cost extensions for all grants in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.
- The FBI obtained the authority to provide States access to the FBI's criminal history database for the purpose of conducting background checks on any volunteer, relief worker, or evacuee associated with Hurricane Katrina who would have access to children.
- DOJ helped the Louisiana Department of Corrections move approximately 4,000 inmates from New Orleans.

People Everywhere Have Made An Unprecedented Commitment To The Gulf Coast

In his Address to the Nation from New Orleans' Jackson Square on September 15, 2005, the President called on all Americans to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

- Private individuals, faith-based and community groups, and businesses met the challenge and have contributed more than \$3 billion in support of faith-based and community organizations and disaster relief agencies.
- USA Freedom Corps created a nationwide information clearinghouse allowing individuals, businesses, groups, and families to connect with volunteer opportunities to help families in the Gulf Coast.
 - There are currently more than 2 million volunteer opportunities listed on the site - with approximately 20,000 in Louisiana, 16,000 in Mississippi, and over 24,000 in Alabama.
 - The Katrina Resource Center was set up by USA Freedom Corps and the Corporation for National and Community Service. More than 350 groups, representing over 14,000 volunteers, who contacted the Center were either matched with potential relief projects or provided additional information and referrals.
 - Americans interested in helping with Gulf Coast recovery or seeking a volunteer opportunity should visit www.volunteer.gov.
- The American Red Cross recently announced financial donations and pledges would cover the \$2.116 billion estimated cost for its response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. The generous financial support from around the world allowed more than 225,000 Red Cross disaster relief workers-95 percent of them volunteers-to ensure that survivors had a safe place to stay, food and comfort, and the means to provide essential items for themselves and their families. Survivors received counseling, basic health care and family-connecting services. This was accomplished on an unprecedented scale. The Red Cross provided:
 - More than 3.4 million overnight stays in nearly 1,200 Red Cross shelters.
 - More than 34 million meals and 30 million snacks.
 - Emergency financial assistance to more than 1.4 million families-more than 4 million people.

- Former Presidents Bush and Clinton have led a private fundraising effort that has already received pledges of more than \$100 million to aid the Gulf Coast's recovery.
- The U.S. State Department received \$126 million in cash donations for Katrina relief and recovery from foreign governments, international organizations, and private sources in the weeks and months following Katrina's landfall.
 - The State Department transferred \$66 million to FEMA in early October to finance a case management program to assess the needs of 100,000 households affected by Katrina.
 - The State Department is finalizing arrangements to transfer the balance of international donations - \$60.4 million - to the U.S. Department of Education to implement reconstruction programs for schools and universities in the areas damaged by Katrina, including:
 - Restoring K-12 schools and libraries.
 - Funding for higher education institutions, particularly Historically Black Colleges and Universities.
 - Plans for the State Department to transfer these funds to the Department of Education imminently, with the expectation that the Department will have the funds to the schools as rapidly as possible.
- The Corporation for National and Community Service, working in cooperation with the Red Cross, FEMA, and State and local authorities, has helped more than 13,000 national service volunteers contribute to the hurricane relief and recovery effort across the country. Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and special volunteer program volunteers have established and operated shelters, provided meals and social services to evacuees, assisted with communications, coordinated the warehousing and distribution of donated goods, answered phones, cleared debris, provided information on housing and other resources, organized childrens' activities, raised funds, and managed tens of thousands of additional community volunteers, among other activities.
- For the first time in its history, the Peace Corps worked within the borders of the United States and served as Applicant Services Specialists in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. In their assignments, volunteers performed a variety of tasks, including processing applications for assistance at Disaster Recovery Centers, providing information on FEMA benefits, tracking the status of applications, providing referrals, and providing mitigation information. In some instances, volunteers served as Individual Assistance Team Leaders. Others served as trainers, teaching hundreds of new FEMA employees and volunteers. In December, when New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward reopened, Crisis Corps Volunteers were instrumental in ensuring that the Disaster Recovery Center was operational and open to serve the needs of the returning residents.

Learning The Lessons Of Hurricane Katrina

The Administration Released Its Review Of The Federal Response To Hurricane Katrina. The President's charge to evaluate the Federal government's response to the storm resulted in the report and recommendations released by the Administration, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*. The product of an extensive review, led by the President's Homeland Security Advisor Fran Townsend, the Report identifies deficiencies in the Federal government's response and lays the groundwork for transforming how the Nation - including every level of government, the private sector, communities, and individuals - pursues a real and lasting vision of emergency preparedness and response.

The Lessons Learned Report Assesses The Federal Response, Identifies Lessons Learned, And Recommends Appropriate Corrective Actions. The Report identifies the systemic problems in Federal emergency preparedness and response revealed by Hurricane Katrina - and the best solutions to address them. The *Lessons Learned* report includes:

- 17 lessons the Executive Branch has learned after reviewing and analyzing the response to Katrina;
- 125 specific recommendations to the President, which have been reviewed by relevant Federal departments and agencies, and will now enter an implementation process; and
- 11 critical actions to be completed before June 1, 2006 - the first day of the next hurricane season.

Hurricane Katrina And Its Aftermath Provide Us With The Imperative To Design And Build A Unified System. The Lessons Learned Report confirms the imperative of integrating and synchronizing the Nation's homeland security policies, strategies, and plans across Federal, State, and local governments, as well as the private sector, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, communities, and individuals. To achieve this, the Report identifies three immediate priorities:

- First, we must implement a comprehensive National Prepare
- Second, we must create a Culture of Preparedness that emphasizes that the entire Nation shares common goals and responsibilities for homeland security; and
- Third, we must implement corrective actions to ensure we do not repeat the problems encountered during Hurricane Katrina.