

ACORN

Katrina Survivors Association

The **ACORN Katrina Survivors Association** is the first nationwide organization of displaced New Orleans residents and other Katrina survivors. The Survivors Association unites members of our displaced communities in order to demand more effective relief efforts and a voice for survivors in the rebuilding process.

The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association uses public pressure, direct action, and dialogue with elected officials and public policy experts to win respect and a voice for survivors, the resources needed for families to survive, and a rebuilding plan that builds stronger communities for all.

The Platform of the ACORN Katrina Survivors Association

Right of return – The people of New Orleans will not be kept out by deliberate attempts to change the make-up of the city, or by neglect, which gives the richer and more powerful first access to choices and resources.

The means to take care of ourselves and our families – Survivors need help with housing, healthcare, income from unemployment, and assistance for those who've helped us.

Rebuilding the right way – Reconstruction should include affordable housing, living wage jobs, and good schools for our children.

Recovering together – The Hurricane should not be used as an excuse to cut health care and food assistance programs that help families across the country.

Accountability and honesty – An independent investigation is necessary so we can understand what went wrong and how to protect ourselves in the future.

ACORN Organizing and Direct Action

The Survivors Association will continue and expand the organizing that local ACORN chapters have accomplished since Katrina first hit, which has already resulted in some notable actions and victories.

- o On October 7th, the Houston ACORN Katrina Survivors Association confronted Houston FEMA Director about a lack of response to the needs of the survivors. After negotiations, ACORN members won a shuttle bus to their service center, translated materials, and extended benefits to Rita survivors.





- Louisiana ACORN members staged a caravan into the Lower 9th Ward on October 15th to claim their right to return and to placard hundreds of homes with signs stating "No Bulldozing!"
- A thousand people gathered on the steps of the Louisiana State Capitol for the October 28th Rally to Rebuild Louisiana, to demand job priority, training, and good wages for Louisiana's displaced working families.

ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans

- The Survivors Association sponsored the ACORN Community Forum on Rebuilding New Orleans, which convened in Baton Rouge, Louisiana on November 7th and 8th.
- The conference brought together low-income and minority residents of New Orleans and top urban planning, architecture, and development professionals from around the country.
- Forum participants took a bus tour of affected areas and held discussions on how to rebuild New Orleans to speak to the needs of all New Orleans' residents.
- More than 130 participants at the forum site were joined online by participants from all over the globe, who took part via webcast.

Katrina Survivors Continue to Fight to Return Home

- On November 22nd, 100 ACORN members marched to the Houston FEMA office to deliver a letter demanding that FEMA rescind its recently announced decision to stop paying bills for roughly 150,000 hurricane victims still in motel rooms come December 1st.
- Later that same afternoon, FEMA rescinded the unpopular policy and said that it would extend its hotel-housing program by a month in 10 states.
- Advancement Project obtained a favorable settlement on November 22nd in a lawsuit filed on behalf of ACORN and other groups in response to evictions that had been proceeding without notice to the tenants.
- The agreement requires FEMA to turn over to the courts in Orleans and Jefferson parishes the addresses of tenants facing evictions, and requires that hearings be scheduled no sooner than 45 days after notice is mailed to the evacuees.

The ACORN Katrina Survivors Association members are continuing the fight for the practical resources families need to return home: access to trailers on or near their property; water and electricity back all over New Orleans; federal dollars dedicated to rebuilding individual homes; assistance in Texas to find safe, quality rental housing; and assistance with furniture and transportation.

