

APPENDIX B: PROFILE OF HOUSING DEVASTATION

Beyond the survey results, details gathered during the fieldwork that were necessary to estimate the population currently residing in each area also help to paint a picture of the level of physical devastation that still exists in the New Orleans area more than a year after Hurricane Katrina. Specifically, fieldworkers observed and recorded the physical condition of all housing units in the geographic areas selected for the sample.

Overall, the interviewing team observed nearly 17,000 housing units (including more than 11,000 in Orleans Parish, more than 4,500 in Jefferson, and several hundred in St. Bernard and Plaquemines), and recorded the devastation status of more than 14,500.

| | Total units visited or observed | Total units for which destruction status was recorded |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Total (4 parishes) ²¹ | 16,901 | 14,530 |
| Orleans Parish | 11,332 | 9,848 |
| Jefferson Parish | 4,518 | 3,679 |
| St. Bernard Parish | 811 | 773 |
| Plaquemines Parish | 240 | 230 |

Destruction/Damage Status

When recording housing devastation, fieldworkers assigned each housing unit to one of three categories: completely destroyed, seriously damaged, or not seriously damaged. Fieldworkers were trained to assess the damage level in a consistent manner, with the following examples constituting each of the damage categories:

- Completely destroyed = “apparent utter destruction.” Examples include a house where all that remained is a stairway or a pile of wood, or a house where the roof was torn off and all that stood were bare walls.
- Seriously damaged = “apparent but not catastrophic damage.” Examples include a house with shattered windows, a roof that was seriously damaged but still remaining, serious apparent water damage and/or doors off the hinges.
- Not seriously damaged would include any housing unit not fitting in the categories above. For the purpose of this analysis, households that were apparently livable (i.e. people were actually residing in the main household, and not in a trailer on the property) were considered to be not seriously damaged.

In Orleans Parish, among the 11,332 households observed or visited, 652 (6%) were completely destroyed, and another 3,033 (27%) were seriously damaged, for a total of about one-third of all households in Orleans Parish being clearly in an unlivable condition. More than half (6,163, or 54%) were not seriously damaged, and in the remaining 13% of households we were unable to determine destruction status.

By contrast, in Jefferson Parish, among 4,518 households observed or visited, more than three-quarters (77%) were not seriously damaged, and just 4% were completely destroyed or seriously damaged.

²¹ *A note about combining these estimates:* These data provide an illustration of the level of housing devastation observed during the fieldwork, and paint a reliable picture of each parish. However, the fieldwork observations from the different parishes cannot be simply combined to paint a picture of housing devastation for the total four-parish area, because households in Orleans were oversampled relative to other parishes in order to be able to describe in greater detail what was happening there by individual neighborhoods (see “Appendix D: Survey Methodology” for more details on sampling). Survey results elsewhere in this report have been weighted to reflect differences in sampling probabilities, but the descriptive data shown in this section are unweighted.

St. Bernard is a much less populated parish, and one in which we therefore observed fewer households (811 in total), but the description of damage in that parish is striking. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of homes observed by fieldworkers in St. Bernard were either completely destroyed or seriously damaged, and just a third (32%) were not seriously damaged. In Plaquemines, the least populated of the four parishes, fieldworkers observed 240 housing units, and found just under one in five (19%) to be destroyed or damaged, and more than three-quarters (77%) to be not seriously damaged.

| | Orleans Parish | | Jefferson Parish | | St. Bernard Parish | | Plaquemines Parish | |
|--|----------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Completely destroyed | 652 | 6% | 44 | 1% | 202 | 25% | 15 | 6% |
| Seriously damaged | 3,033 | 27% | 145 | 3% | 311 | 38% | 31 | 13% |
| Not seriously damaged | 6,163 | 54% | 3,490 | 77% | 260 | 32% | 184 | 77% |
| Never found person, but didn't appear to be vacant | 711 | 6% | 494 | 11% | 12 | 1% | 10 | 4% |
| No access to housing unit | 773 | 7% | 345 | 8% | 26 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Total households observed or visited | 11,332 | 100% | 4,518 | 100% | 811 | 100% | 240 | 100% |

It's important to note that the share of households that were "not seriously damaged" is likely to be an overestimate. Except in cases where an interview was obtained, fieldworkers did not have access to the interior of a house to determine its condition, and so made an assessment from the outside only. Therefore, housing units counted as "not seriously damaged" likely include many homes that have been temporarily or permanently abandoned, and which may not be livable on the inside. In fact, in Orleans Parish, fieldworkers attempted interviews at 3,046 households that appeared livable, and of these, nearly half (48%) were determined to be vacant (windows boarded up, a "For Sale" sign on the property, or other clear signs that no one was living there). The vacancy rate was much lower in Jefferson Parish (fieldworkers attempted interviews at 1,436 households that appeared livable, and 8% were determined to be vacant), but rates were also high in St. Bernard (79 out of 97 apparently livable households were vacant) and Plaquemines (23 out of 54 households).

Looking within Orleans Parish, rates of housing destruction and serious damage also varied widely by neighborhood. In the Lower 9th Ward, for example, 65% of the 317 households observed by fieldworkers were completely destroyed, and another 32% were seriously damaged, for a total of 97% destroyed or damaged and just 2% apparently livable. Lakeview (82%), Gentilly (66%), and New Orleans East (65%) also had rates of destruction and serious damage above fifty percent. By contrast, fieldworkers recorded relatively low rates of destruction and serious damage in areas like Audubon (2%) and Algiers (9%).

| | Total Units | Completely destroyed | Seriously damaged | Not seriously damaged | Undetermined | No access |
|--|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Orleans Parish total | 11,332 | 6% | 27% | 54% | 6% | 7% |
| <i>Neighborhoods (ranked by % not seriously damaged)</i> | | | | | | |
| Lower 9 th Ward | 317 | 65% | 32% | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Lakeview | 508 | 5% | 77% | 17% | 1% | 0% |
| Gentilly | 775 | <1% | 66% | 30% | 3% | <1% |
| New Orleans East | 1,336 | 13% | 52% | 32% | 2% | 1% |
| French Quarter | 346 | 0% | 8% | 47% | 10% | 35% |
| Mid-City | 811 | 9% | 30% | 48% | 6% | 7% |
| Garden District | 1,715 | 8% | 14% | 53% | 10% | 15% |
| Uptown | 1,813 | 1% | 21% | 61% | 9% | 8% |
| English Turn | 129 | 0% | 19% | 71% | 9% | 2% |
| Marigny | 1,032 | 1% | 16% | 72% | 5% | 5% |
| 7 th Ward | 509 | 1% | 19% | 73% | 6% | 0% |
| Algiers | 1,598 | 1% | 8% | 78% | 6% | 7% |
| Audubon | 375 | 1% | 1% | 81% | 13% | 6% |
| BW Cooper | 68 | 0% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% |