

4-2009

City-Assisted Evacuation Plan Participant Survey Report

John Kiefer

University of New Orleans, jkiefer@uno.edu

Pamela Jenkins

University of New Orleans, pjenkins@uno.edu

Shirley Laska

University of New Orleans, slaska@uno.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uno.edu/chart_pubs



Part of the [Public Administration Commons](#), and the [Public Policy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kiefer, John; Jenkins, Pamela; and Laska, Shirley, "City-Assisted Evacuation Plan Participant Survey Report" (2009). *CHART Publications*. Paper 2.
https://scholarworks.uno.edu/chart_pubs/2

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Hazards Assessment, Response and Technology (CHART) at ScholarWorks@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in CHART Publications by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uno.edu.

City-Assisted Evacuation Plan Participant Survey Report

Submitted to the
New Orleans Office of Emergency Preparedness

By

John J. Kiefer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Political Science
University of New Orleans

Pamela Jenkins, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology
University of New Orleans

Shirley Laska, Ph.D.
Professor of Sociology and Director
Center for Hazards Assessment, Response & Technology
University of New Orleans

April, 2009



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey of participants in the City Assisted Evacuation Program (CAEP) indicated a variety of perceptions about their evacuation experience during and after Hurricane Gustav. While the CAEP was generally regarded by most participants as successful, there are some aspects that were identified as needing improvement. Some of these can be improved by the city; some improvements are under the purview of the state or the federal government. Some can be fixed expeditiously; some will require a long-term commitment.

General findings:

- Almost three-quarters of the evacuees were satisfied with their experience and would use CAEP again.
- Almost 70% of participants rated their re-entry experience as good or better.
- None of those surveyed expressed any concern about how their pets were sheltered and cared for.
- Over half the participants rated transportation out of the city as "good" or better.
- The study findings indicate that citizens are listening to their government officials, cooperating, and contributing to the effectiveness of the evacuation effort. Evacuation preparedness has improved significantly since Hurricane Katrina.

Specific findings that suggest barriers to successful evacuation:

- Many evacuees reported lacking adequate finances to evacuate, even with the community's assisted evacuation process. Clearly, some citizens thought they had to pay for their transportation, lodging, and food as a participant of CAEP. This finding points to a need for the City to better communicate the array of services that it will provide to evacuees while under the care of their government.
- Others respondents reported that elderly family members who did not, would not, or could not evacuate served as a barrier to the respondent's own evacuation.
- Some citizens reported that they lacked confidence in the ability of their government to evacuate them from harm's way.
- The community groups and other public service organizations were under-utilized in registering citizens in the CAEP in the months before the hurricane struck.
- While overall there were positive evaluations of the ride out of the city, some evacuees reported negative experiences about the the bus ride out of the area – particularly from a lack of driver training and preparation.
- In addition, some respondents reported negative experiences in shelters. The latter emerged from an almost universally reported feeling that those staffing the shelters “did

not want them here.” Evacuees, particularly the elderly, reported feeling unsafe at shelters.

- Respondents expressed concerns about being returned to their homes when their neighborhoods lacked full return of utilities and public services. Improvement with the re-entry process is needed through better coordination with local officials to know the condition of neighborhoods: electricity, food, medical services, and local transportation, the latter that is required to get the evacuee from the re-entry drop-off point to their homes.

Post Gustav change:

- The challenging job of maintaining an accurate and up-to-date CAEP database of citizens needing evacuation assistance is critical to the success of the program. Since hurricane Gustav, the Regional Transit Authority has arranged to take over the maintenance of that database. The RTA's use of an automated system to contact and verify registrants is an important step to addressing what was a very personnel-intensive effort for the Office of Emergency Preparedness. This new capacity is a very good improvement in the program.
- **We recommend that the city and state work collaboratively toward continued improvement of the CAEP by involving city, state, federal, non-governmental, private sector and academic organizations.**

INTRODUCTION¹

When Hurricane Gustav threatened the City of New Orleans in August of 2008, the City implemented its City-assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP). The purpose of the City Assisted Evacuation Plan (CAEP) is to help citizens who want to evacuate during an emergency, but are unable to evacuate on their own. The CAEP is not intended to replace individuals' and families' capacity to prepare and implement their own evacuation. It is meant to be an evacuation strategy of last resort and only for those citizens who have no other means or, have physical limitations that prohibit self evacuation. Those who believe they need assistance are asked to call the City's 311 hotline and answer the phone survey. Citizens are then notified via postcard with further information about pick-up procedures and bus stop locations and their information is kept in a database for assistance during an evacuation.

The City's evacuation plan has been carefully developed since Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The revised CAEP was based on improvements and recommendations by a post-Katrina collaborative regional network of NGOs, private, and government agencies meeting periodically under the guidance of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness in the years between Katrina and Gustav.

In the days just prior to Gustav's landfall, the CAEP was implemented. Initial results indicated a marked improvement in the City's ability to mobilize resources and personnel to effectively assist in the evacuation of needy citizens. Yet the Mayor wanted to know what problems were experienced by the citizens of New Orleans using the CAEP during the evacuation. To that end, the Mayor requested the Director of the City's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness to evaluate the program. The Director asked UNO Professors Pam Jenkins and John Kiefer of UNO-CHART² for assistance in providing a sound, research-based approach to measure the success. As with any university research effort, Professors Jenkins and Kiefer were grateful to the perseverance, skills and assistance of their graduate research assistants, MPA student James Noe and sociology master's student Brian Morris.

¹ Funding sources for this work included UNO-CHART, Grantmakers in Aging, and the unpaid effort of 20 graduate students in the Fall, 2008 class "Profession of Public Administration," without whose assistance this research project would not have been possible.

² UNO-CHART is a university based, applied research center with focus on assisting coastal communities in reducing their risk to coastal storms and relevant environmental challenges.

METHODOLOGY

In October of 2008, the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness provided an electronic database to the UNO research team. The database contained contact information for over 18,000 registrants from 7,000 families who had signed up for city-assisted evacuation. From that database, the research team generated a random sample of over 700 names for the survey. Next, a survey, included as Appendix One, was designed by the research team, and reviewed by the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. Twenty volunteer graduate students, trained in survey administration, systematically contacted the registrants included in the sample over a period of two months (October and November of 2008). One hundred and fifty-six registrants reported either that they did not evacuate or declined to participate in the study. Three hundred and forty were registered for the CAEP, but used other means to evacuate. We did not interview those who did not evacuate; only those who evacuated. We did not gather detailed data from those who were registered for the CAEP but evacuated by other means, other than asking them how they evacuated and to what location. As a result, 364 surveys were successfully completed. The results were analyzed by the research team beginning in January, 2009. This yielded results with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5%.

FINDINGS

Those Who Did Not Evacuate

Those who were registered for CAEP and did not evacuate reported a variety of reasons for not evacuating. These included finances, elderly parents, illness and medical disability, and a lack of trust in the system. We must stress, however, that we did not have a sufficient data in our survey to make any conclusive assessments of reasons for not evacuating. This is an opportunity for subsequent research.

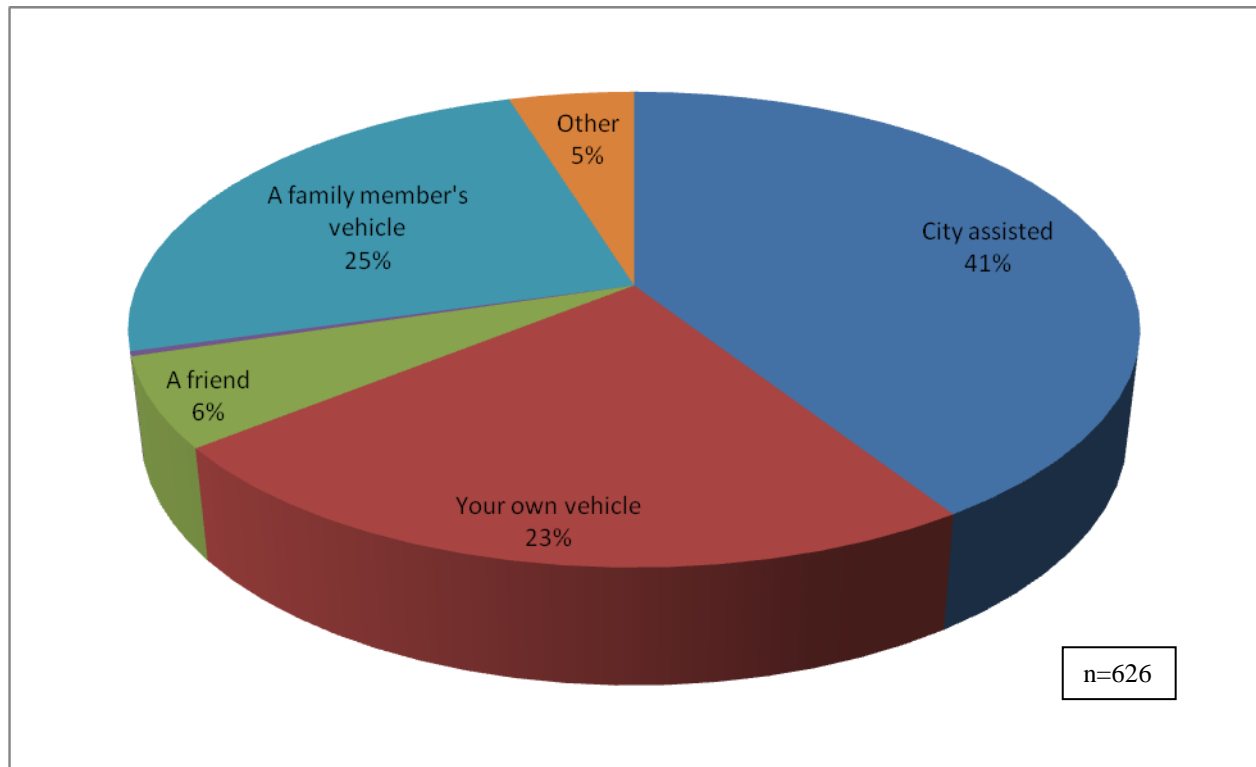
Those Who Evacuated

***** Family Relationships Were an Important Influence on an Evacuation Decision *****

The reasons the respondents gave for evacuation varied. For some, the memory of Katrina was the motivating factor. Connected to the memory of Katrina was their belief that it was a mandatory evacuation. What is clear from the survey is how connected the vulnerable population is to the actions of their families about staying or evacuating.

Those who were registered for CAEP and did evacuate reported the following:

Figure 1. *Evacuation Methods*
Question: *How did you evacuate from the City?*

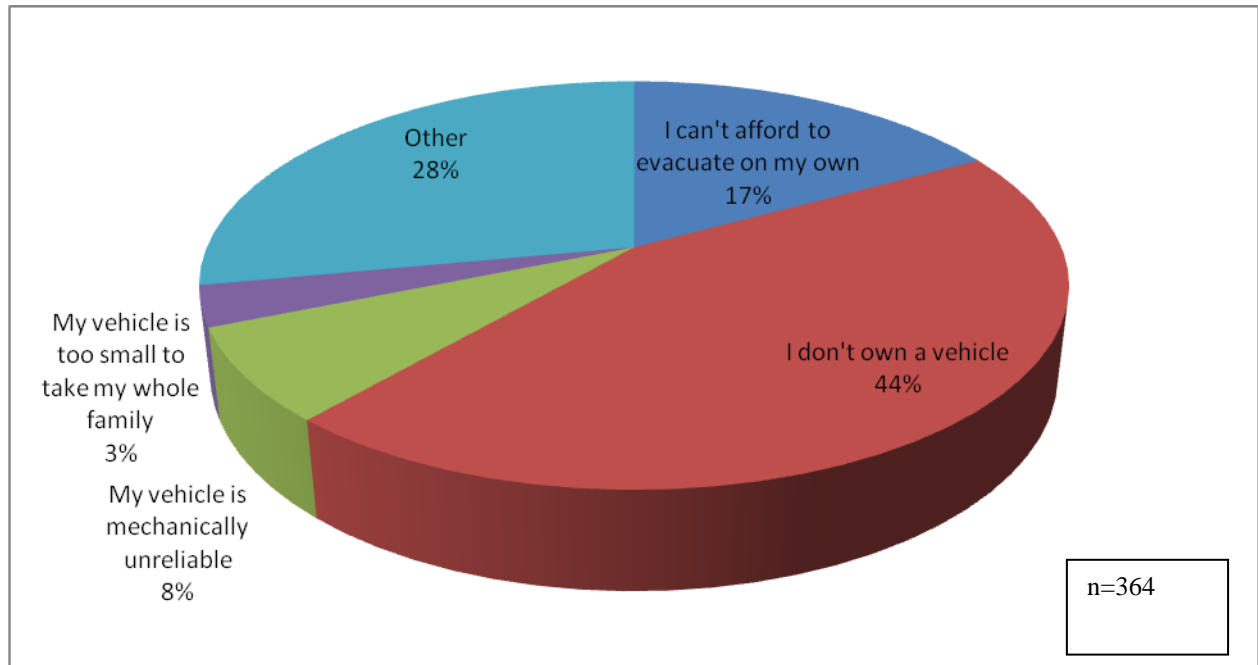


- Of those that evacuated and were registered for the CAEP, 41% used city-assisted evacuation
- Of those that evacuated and were registered for the CAEP, 59% did not actually use city-assisted evacuation
- For the most part, when respondents who were registered for the CAEP did not use the city evacuation, they used their networks of family and friends. They left with their daughters, brothers, grandsons, or neighbors. Primarily, residents left in vehicles, but a small number reported flying out of New Orleans.

Figure 2. Reasons for CAEP Registration

Question: *Why did you sign up for the city-assisted evacuation plan?*

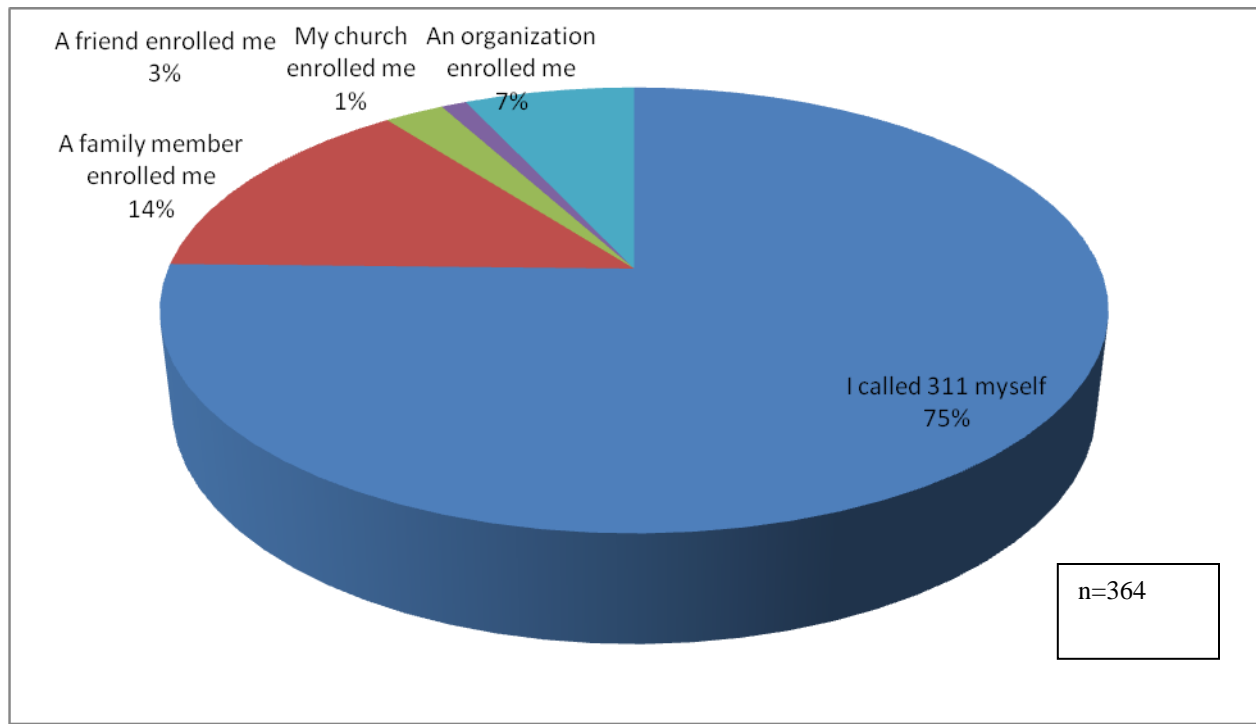
**** "Just in case...." ****



- Almost half the participants surveyed reported they did not own a vehicle.
- One quarter of the participants reported they either could not afford to evacuate on their own or that their vehicle was mechanically unreliable.
- The same themes of family and vulnerability emerge as the most salient issues for their registration to CAEP. People said that they registered “Just in case...” Others stated that their children registered for them, or they registered themselves and their ailing parent or grandmother. These reasons illustrate the legacy of Katrina and the capacity of the city to publicize its program.

Figure 3. Enrollment Methods

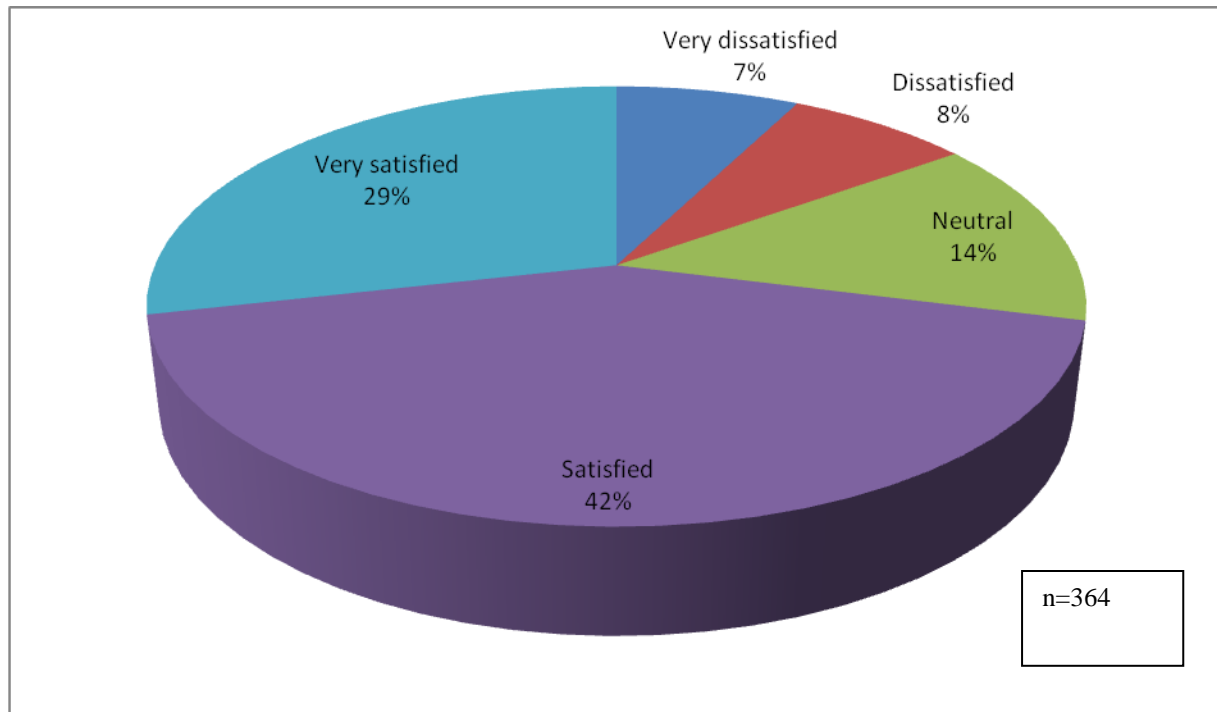
Question: *How did you get enrolled in the city-assisted evacuation program?*



- Three quarters of the participants enrolled in the CAEP by calling 311 themselves.
- A variety of organizations referred citizens to CAEP. These organizations included Volunteers of America, dialysis centers, Senior Citizen groups, HUD, VA Hospital ARC, and home health assistance. Referral by outside groups seems to be an important avenue that might be developed before the next Hurricane season to reach those who are in need of evacuation assistance.

Figure 4. Satisfaction with CAEP

Question: *How satisfied are you with the CAEP?*



- Almost three-quarters of the participants were satisfied with the CAEP.
- Only 15% were dissatisfied with the CAEP.

Table 1. CAEP-evacuated Registrants' Evacuee Sites

Question: *Where did you evacuate to?*

There was a variety of places where people found refuge. Most were in Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi.

State	Location	Total	State	Location	Total
Alabama		32	Georgia		2
	Birmingham	16		Atlanta	1
	Mussel Shoals	1		Decatur	1
	Mobile	1	Texas		5
	“a military place”	1		Houston	1
	Unspecified	13		Dallas	1
Louisiana		40		Arlington	1
	Shreveport	23		Unspecified	2
	Alexandria	5	Kentucky		6
	Denham Springs	1		Louisville	5
	Baton Rouge	4		Unspecified	1
	Monroe	5	Mississippi		2
	Raceland	1		Meridian	1
	Bossier City	1		Unspecified	1
	Ruston	1	Virginia	Unspecified	4
Tennessee		17	South Carolina	Unspecified	3
	Memphis	5	Oklahoma		3
	Knoxville	2		Oklahoma City	1
	Jackson	2		Unspecified	2
	Unspecified	8	Unknown/Declined		62
Arkansas		14	Missing/Unreadable		174
	Fort Chaffee	1			
	Fort Smith	2			
	Unspecified	11			

n=364

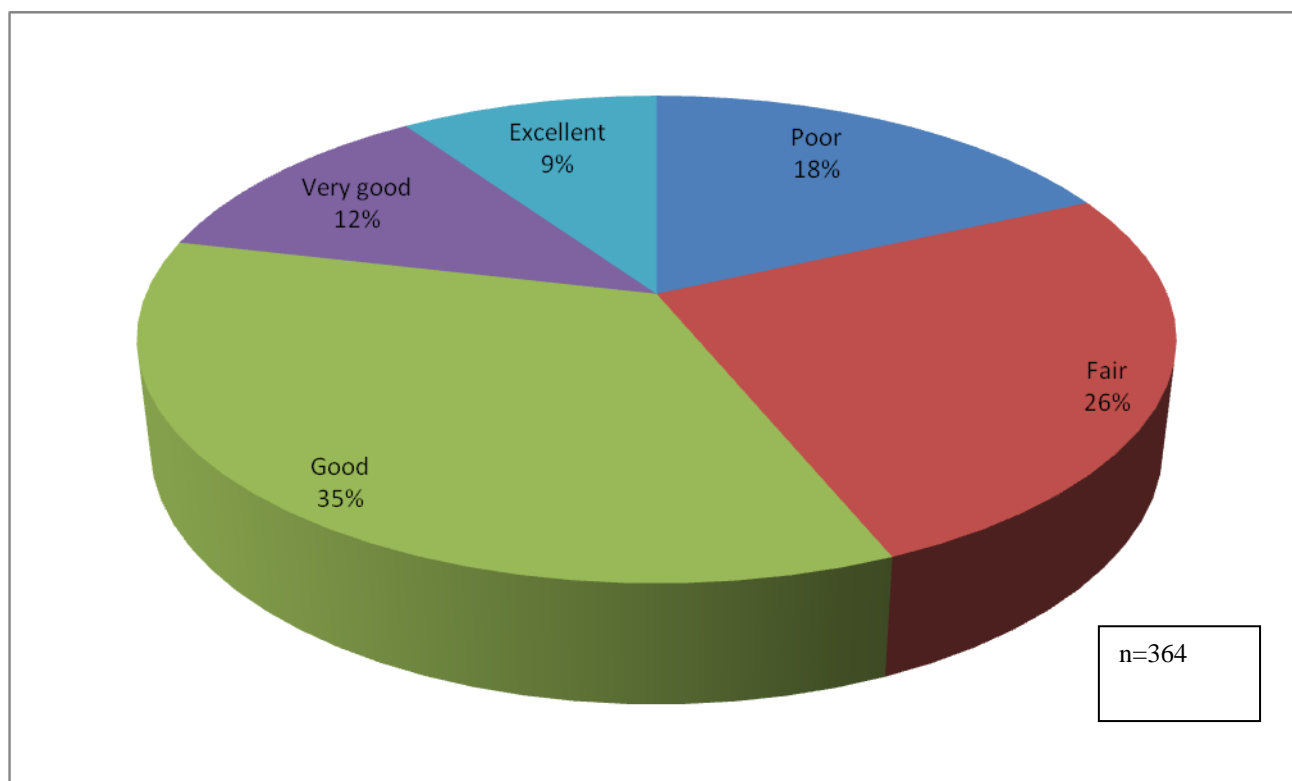
Table 2. Self-evacuated Registrants' Refuge Sites

State	Location	Total	State	Location	Total
Alabama		19	Georgia		35
	Birmingham	4		Alpharetta	1
	Mobile	1		Atlanta	23
	Montgomery	1		Douglasville	1
	Tuscaloosa	1		Jonesboro	1
	Huntsville	1		Albany	1
	Unspecified	11		Union City	1
Louisiana		41		Unspecified	7
	Shreveport	3	Texas		25
	Alexandria	8		Houston	9
	Baton Rouge	9		Dallas	5
	Hammond	1		San Antonio	5
	Mandeville	1		Arlington	1
	Pineville	1		Unspecified	5
	Patterson	1	Mississippi		17
	Gonzales	1		Fayette	1
	Monroe	3		Biloxi	1
	Franklinton	1		Hattiesburg	1
	Slidell	3		Hazlehurst	1
	Bossier City	1		Jackson	1
	Grand Prairie	1		Meridian	2
	Faraday	1		McComb	1
	Lafayette	3		Unspecified	9
	Sorrento	1	Florida		2
	Unspecified	2		Destin	1
Tennessee		12		Pensacola	1
	Memphis	7	North Carolina	Unspecified	6
	Jackson	2	California	Unspecified	3
	Pigeon Forge	1	Pennsylvania	Unspecified	3
	Nashville	1	Maryland	Unspecified	4
	Unspecified	1	Unknown/Declined		72
Arkansas		2	Missing/Unreadable		171
	Unspecified	2			

n=340

Figure 5. Residents' Rating of Transportation
 Question: *How would you rate the transportation out of the city?*

**** Like 18 hours to get there - bus driver went to sleep on the road - went into the ditch in Alexandria ****



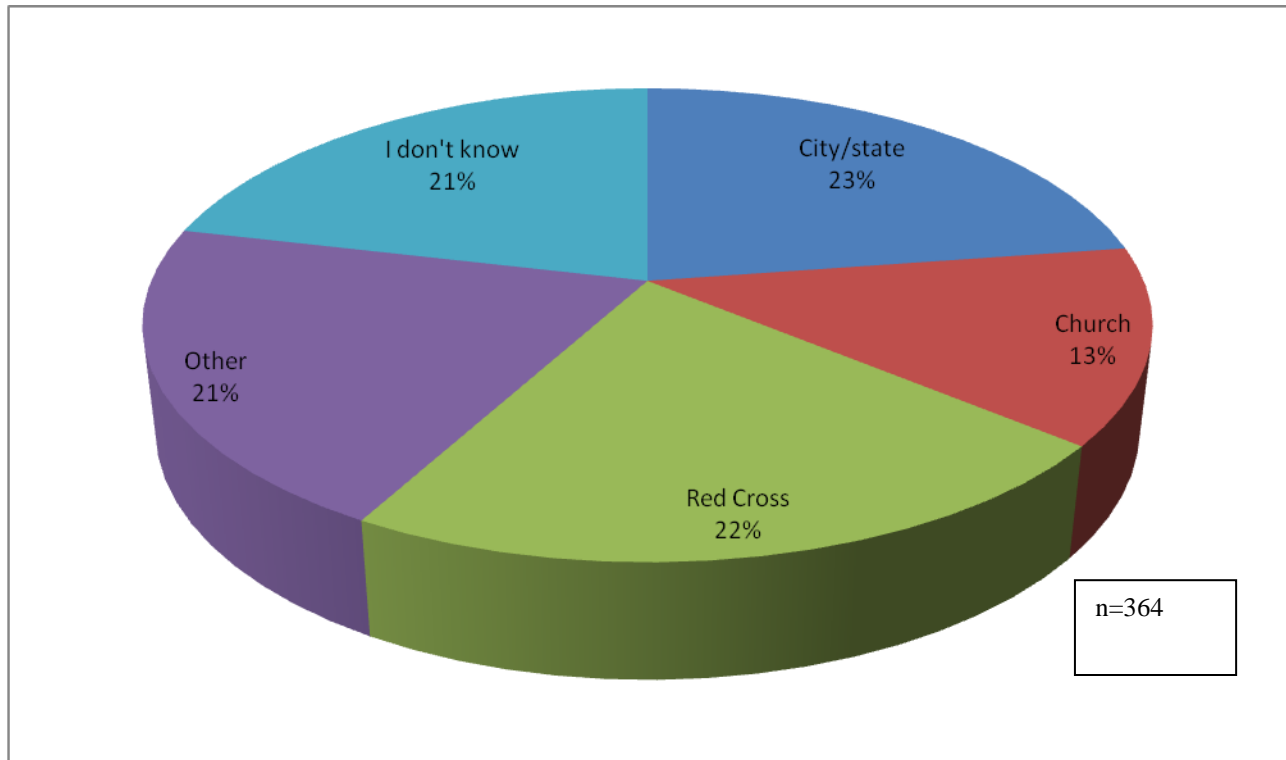
- Over half the participants rated the transportation out of the city as good or better.
- Less than one in five thought the transportation out of the city was poor.
- Overall, the transport from the city was met with stoicism and gratitude. Individuals ranked the system as “good” even if the buses were crowded or the train ride was too long.
- Several comments show the variety:
 - “They picked us up from our home and brought us to the train station. From there we went by ambulance to the airport and were taken by helicopter to LSU. All our needs were met so I was happy.”
 - “Wonderful ambulance took me to airport”
- The majority of the negative comments concerned the bus rides and, in particular, the bus drivers. These comments were so frequent, this topic needs further exploration.

- Like 18 hours to get there; bus driver went to sleep on the road; went into the ditch in Alexandria; had to get a wrecker to pull us out; took like 4 hours just to do that; looked like the drivers were too tired when left from O’Keefe plaza – 334 Union Station. Going to greyhound station we was forced to go; police told my wife and I if you didn’t go you would go to jail; lost a lot of my stuff and FEMA refused to help.
- There was bumper to bumper traffic. We almost ran out of gas but were able to pull over. My sister has diabetes and lost her sight and it was hard on our legs to sit in the car all that time. We should have taken the bus out, but I like having my own stuff.
- No food, military food; uncomfortable; sitting in dining area for 15 or 16 hours in a dining room chair, very mad while it was happening but very thankful once he got home and realized that people were trying to help him.

NOTE: Transportation out of the city is a State of Louisiana DOTD responsibility.

Figure 6. Shelter Types

Question: *Do you happen to know what type of shelter you were in?*



Overall, what was your shelter experience like?

**** Most of those sheltered reported a negative experience ****

Of those who commented on the shelter, 72 had negative comments, 54 had positive comments. Several had comments that could not be categorized. For the most part, the negative comments were very negative, while many of the positive comments were “It’s okay, it wasn’t a hotel, but okay.” The negative comments were about the facilities, the supplies, but more often, the way that people were treated, “They acted like they didn’t want us here.”

What would you suggest to improve the shelter experience?

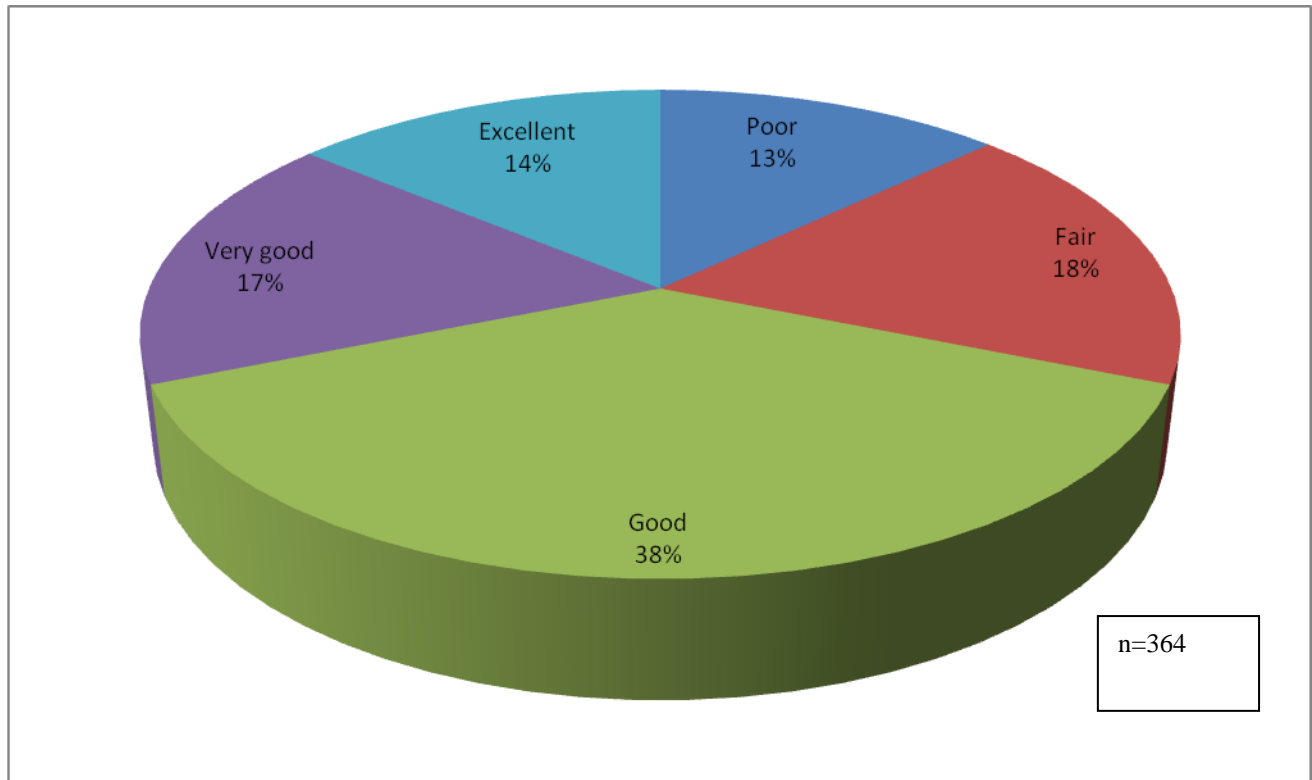
All the factors mentioned by the evacuees appear doable: safety, security, better staff, better food, beds that elderly can actually get up and down from, possibly of some segregated facilities for elderly and families. In several shelters, it was clear to the evacuees that they were not wanted. Again, several of the comments inferred a connection between their shelter experience and a reluctance to evacuate again:

- I don’t have to go through it again; I’m staying home next time and I will never go back again

Figure 7. Satisfaction with Re-entry

Question: *How would you rate your re-entry experience?*

**** “The bus driver was very helpful. The people were considerate and humble.” ****



- Almost 70% of participants rated their re-entry experience as good or better.
- For the most part, the comments were good, saying that they were grateful to get home and people treated them well on bus, plane, or train.
- This comment is an example of the positive comments: “The bus driver was very helpful. The people were considerate and humble and it was a togetherness.”
- The negative comments were more varied. Some thought that they were brought back to the city too soon and others thought they were brought back too late. Those that thought they were brought back too early did not have electricity or food.

Question: *What would you do to improve the re-entry experience?*

**** “The lights in the city needed to come on sooner.” ****

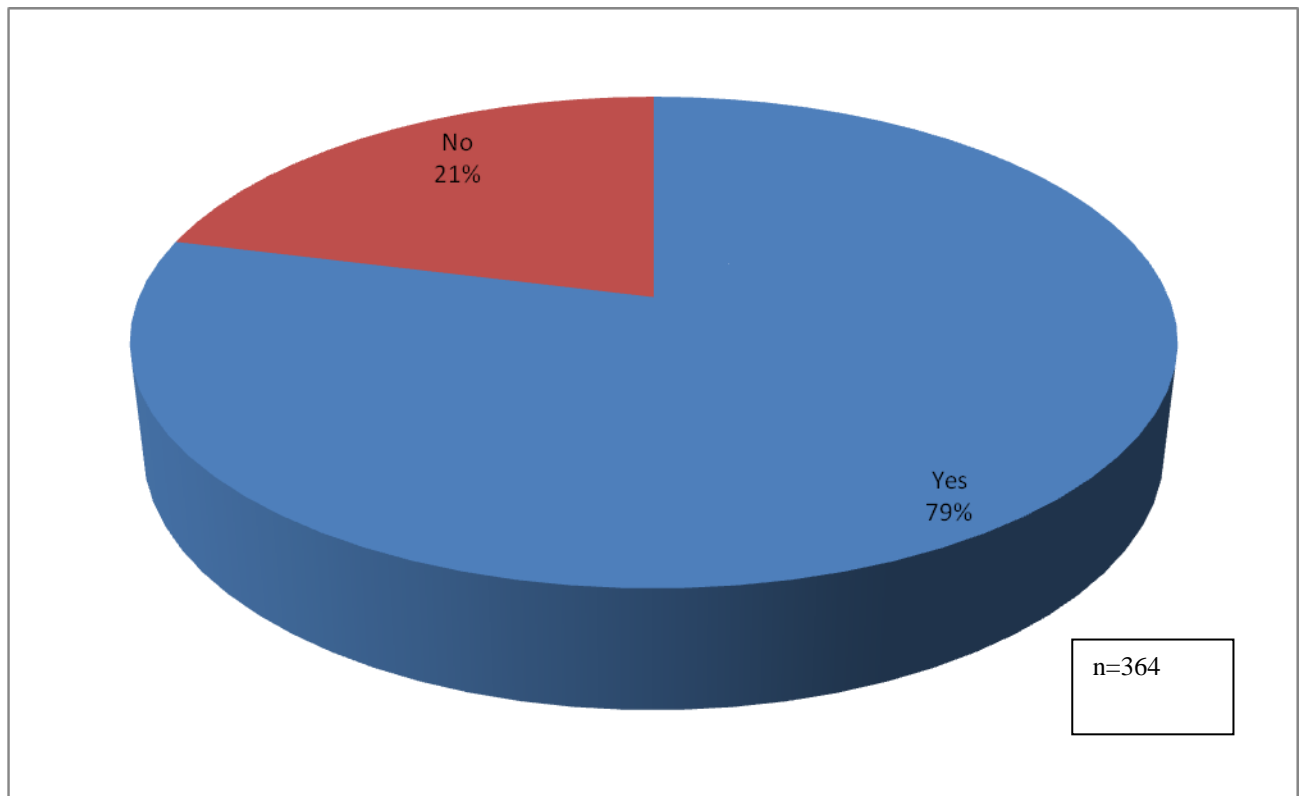
For the most part, the respondents did not have many suggestions. They stated that the lights in the city needed to come on sooner and they needed to get home faster. Other comments included the feeling that the process should be more organized.

The comments referring to their re-entry experience that contribute to their reluctance to participate in future evacuations are:

- “Came back that night and had to go to the hospital and not too many people there. I almost died had to give me blood transfusion; should have stayed in Pensacola; Tulane didn’t have many people that Thursday night.”
- “Horrible. They had no buses for special needs. It was a bad experience; I am glad to be alive.”

Figure 8. Travel and Family

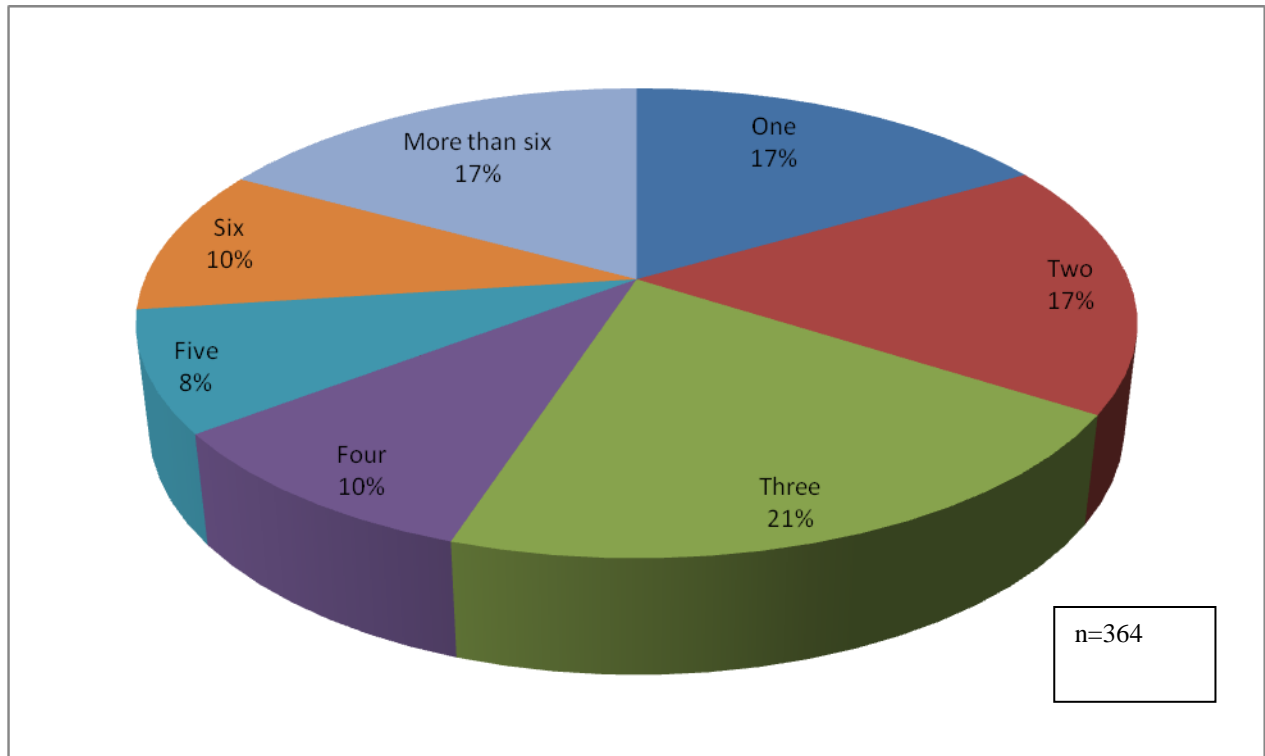
Question: *Did you travel with family members?*



- Almost 80% of those using CAEP traveled with family members.

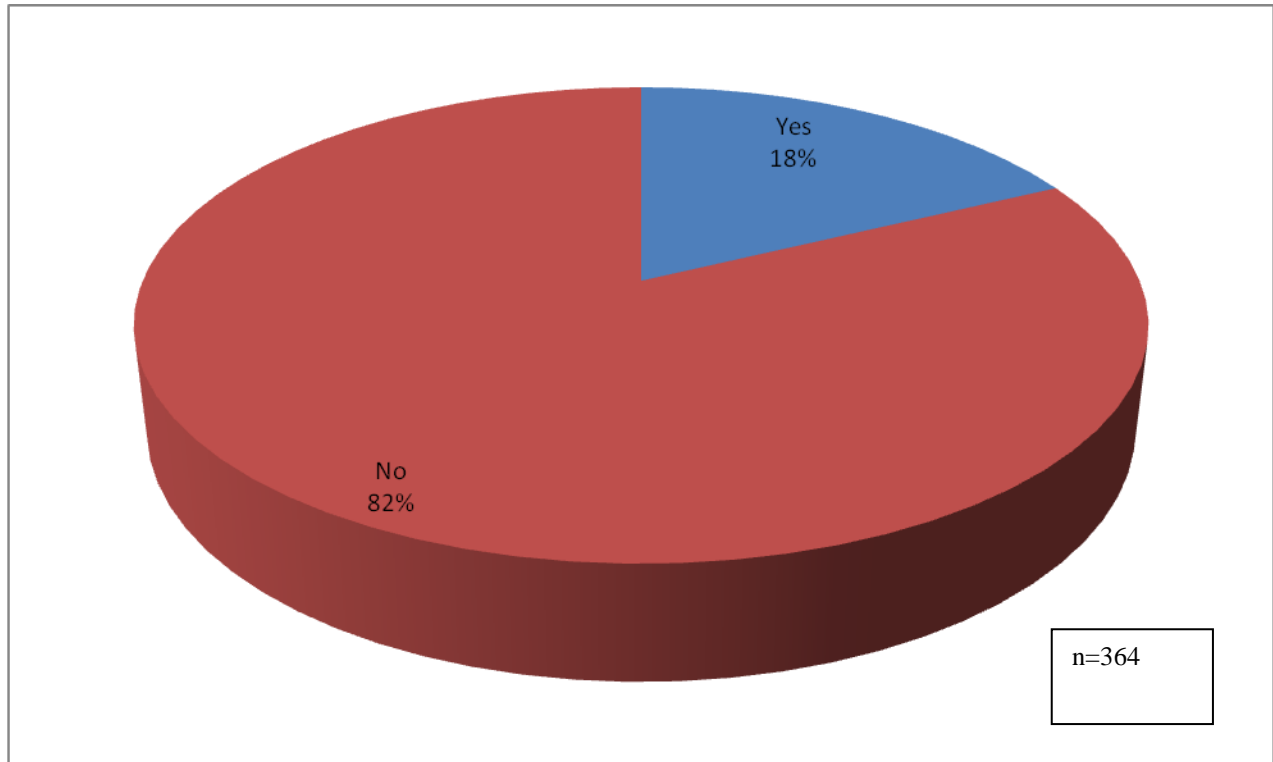
Figure 9. Number of People Traveling Together

Question: *How many other members of your household traveled with you?*



- Most households traveled with three people.

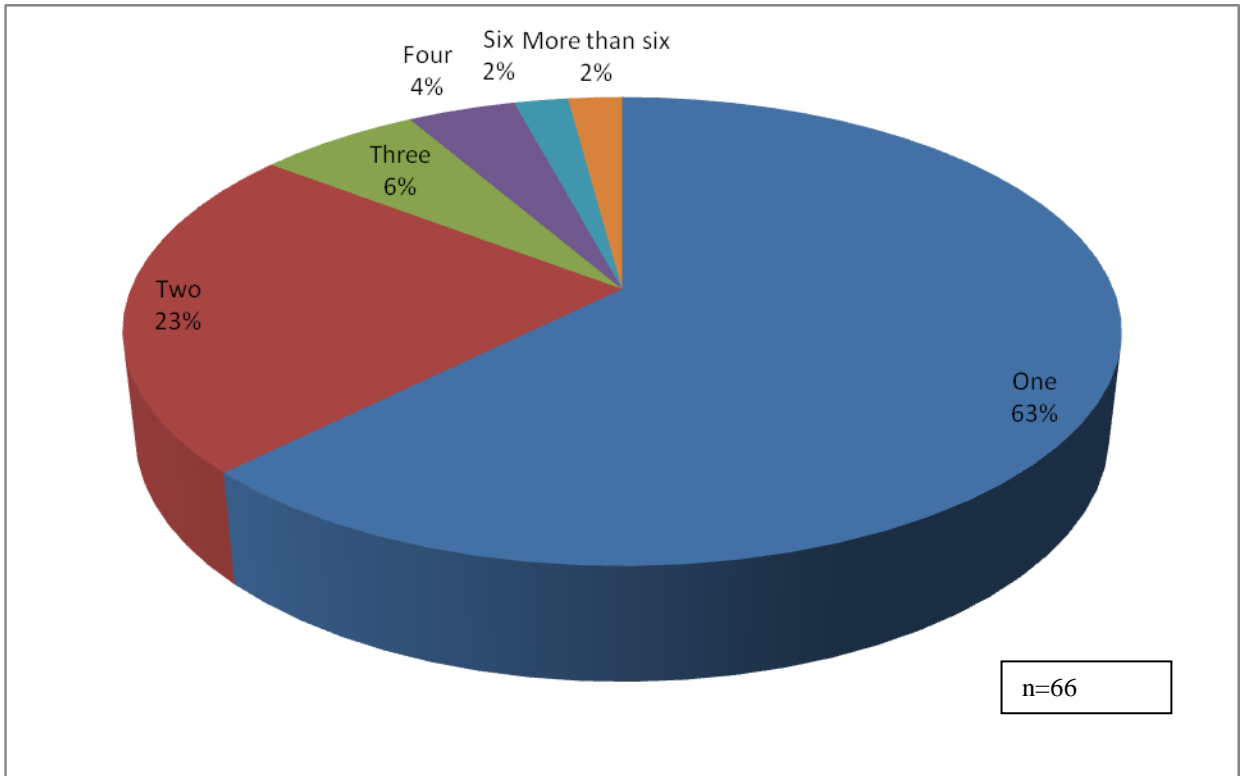
Figure 10. Travel with Pets
Question: *Did you travel with pets?*



- Less than one in five of those who used the CAEP traveled with pets.
- More than adequate provision was made for the pets, a very excellent accomplishment given the problems faced with pet evacuation during Hurricane Katrina.
- It should be noted that there were far fewer evacuees using CAEP and traveling with pets than estimated by the Louisiana SPCA. We suggest that there is a need for more assessment of the numbers of CAEP participants that will travel with pets in future evacuations.

Figure 11. Number of Pets Evacuated

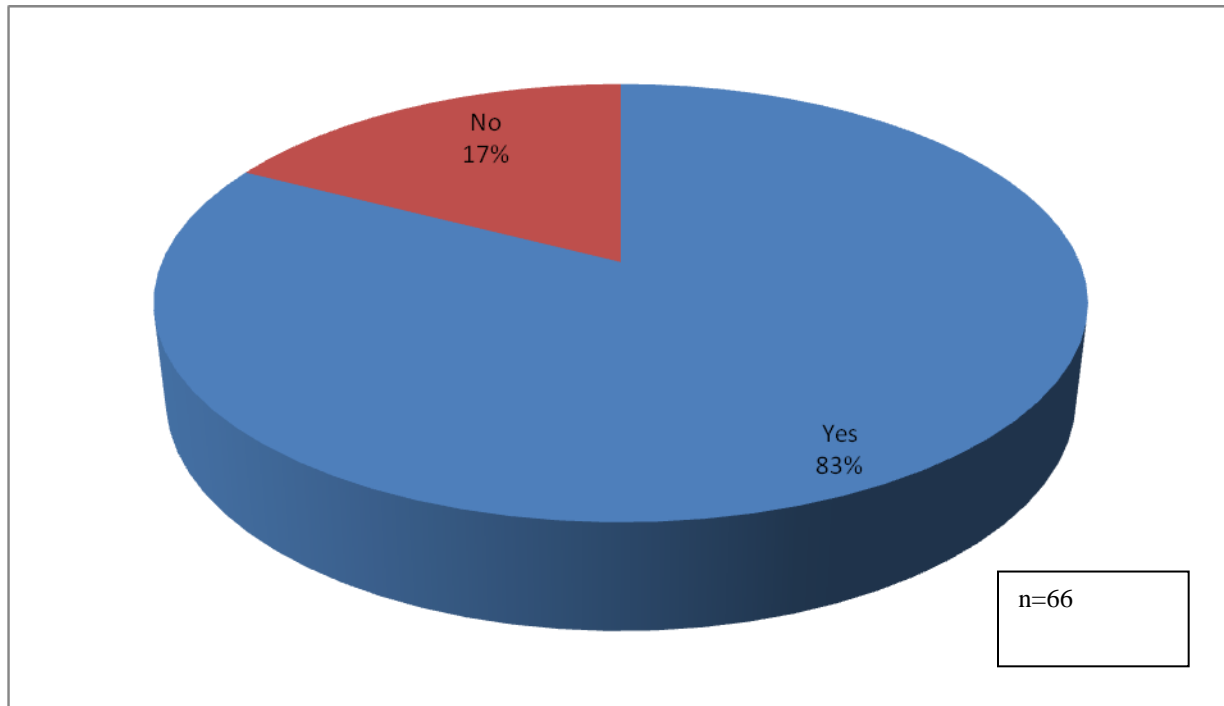
Question: *For those who traveled with pets, when asked “How many pets traveled with you?”*



- For those who traveled with pets, most traveled with only one pet.

Figure 12. Pet Carrier

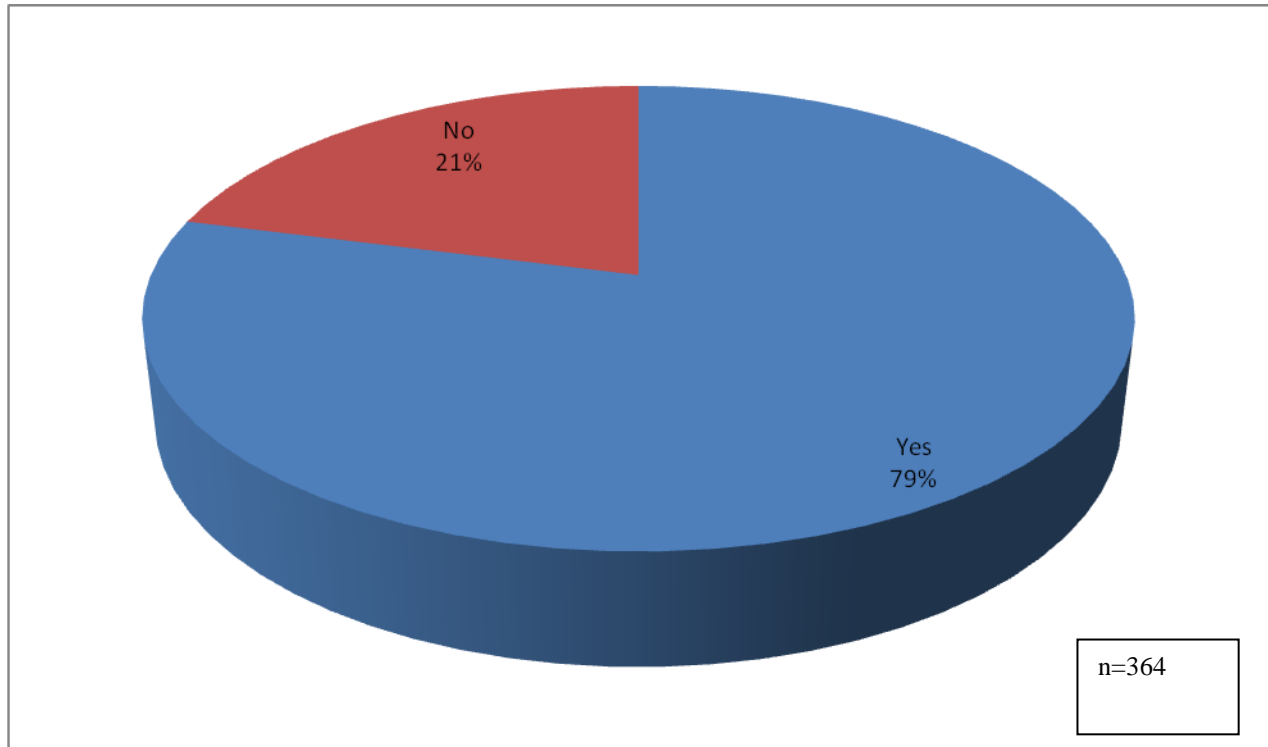
Question: *For those who traveled with pets, when asked
“Do you have a pet carrier for each of your pets?”*



- Over 80% of those who traveled with pets had a pet carrier for each pet.
- However, less than 25% of those traveling with pets brought carriers with them. In most cases, carriers were provided at intake by the Louisiana SPCA. None of those surveyed expressed concern about how their pets were sheltered and cared for. This suggests that CAEP participants have confidence in the ability of the City and LASPCA to care for their pets during an evacuation and, given the concern about pet evacuation during Hurricane Katrina indicates an important barrier to evacuation of pet owners has been diminished.

Figure 13. Use of CAEP in the Future

Question: *Would you use the city assisted evacuation program again?*



- Over three-quarters of those who used CAEP said they would use it again.

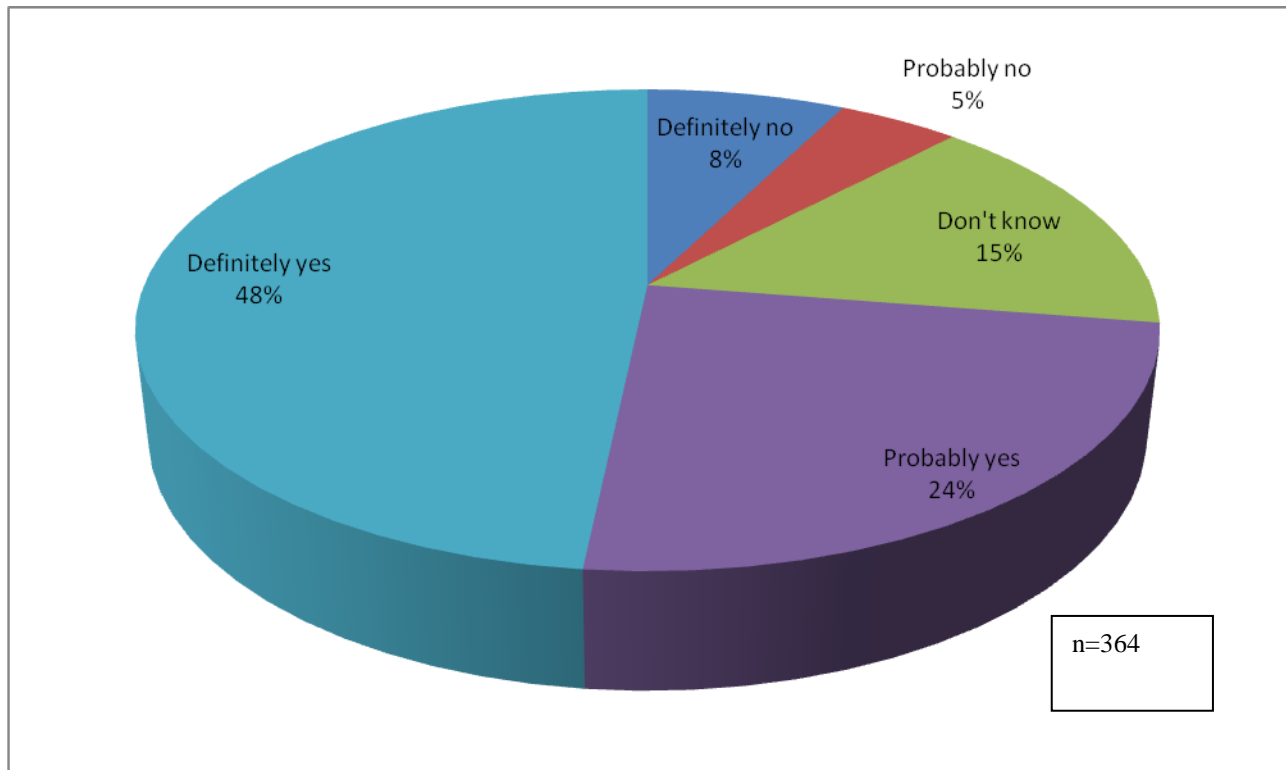
What would you do to improve the CAEP?

Most of the criticisms were about the organization, especially the pick-up stops. Several citizens mentioned that they should be able to know where they are going. Again, we include those comments that reflect how the process influenced what people would do next time.

- “Nothing because it was horrible, a waste of my time to try to fix it.”
- “Set it up ahead of time. Plan it out. Everybody is not fortunate enough to plan their own evacuation. They need a plan. I see the news everyday and it’s not getting any better. 311 made you feel they did have a plan. I knew I had to get to Greyhound bus station and ok I’m going to a shelter; thousands and thousands of people in that shelter – can you imagine? Beds close together and I got my son here; 3 sex offenders in shelter; they register you in computer; your child could be laying next to a sex offender; people were scared; people fighting over a cup of coffee...”

Figure 14. Future Evacuation Plans

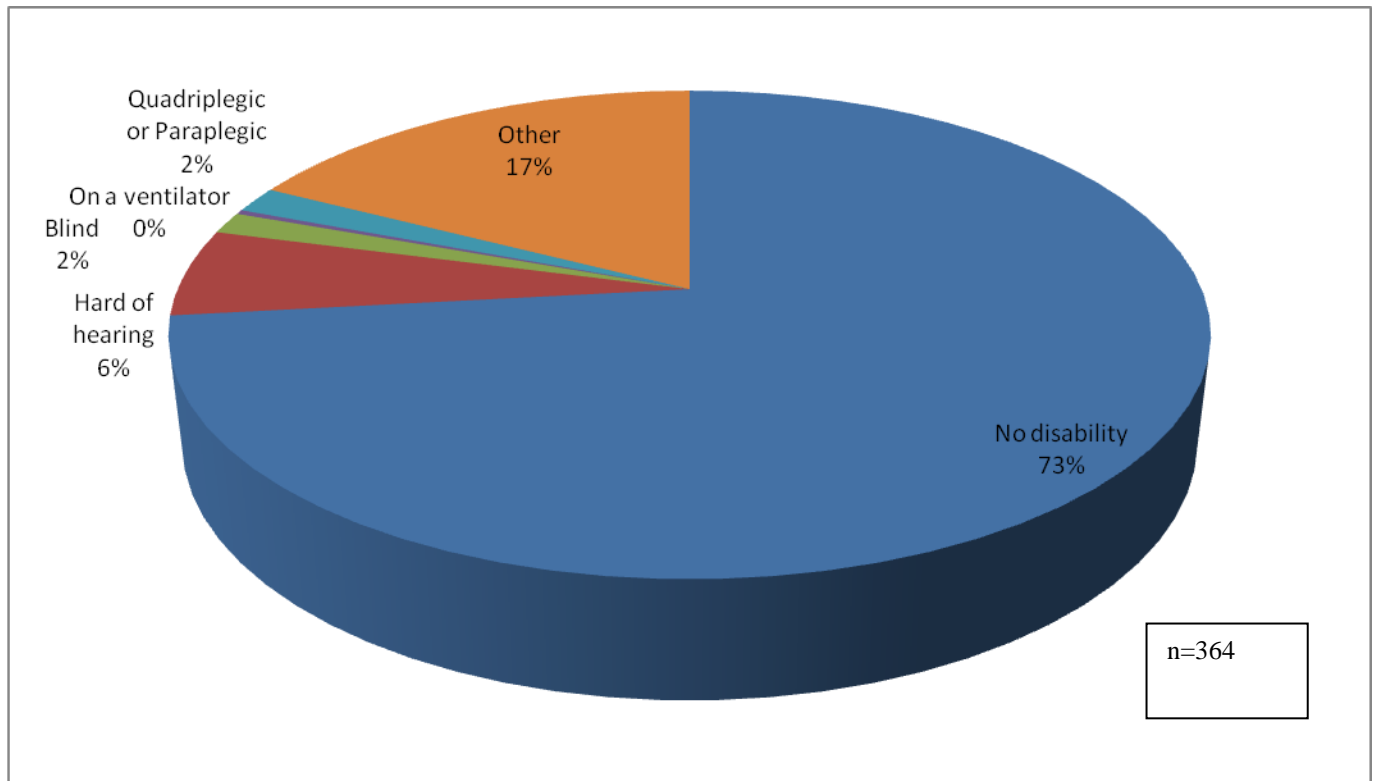
Question: *Given your experience, will you evacuate for the next storm?*



- Almost three-quarters of the participants in the CAEP reported that, given their experience, they would evacuate again.
- Of the nearly one-quarter of the citizens who said they wouldn't leave, the responses can be divided into three categories: 1) financial issues that will stop people from evacuating again; 2) those whose experience in Gustav discouraged them from considering evacuating in the future; and 3) those who expressed a kind of fatalism about the storm season.
- The three categories identified above present significant challenges to ensuring a complete evacuation. They will be difficult to overcome and call for innovative solutions. With regard to the third category, we suggest that efforts be made to urge congregational outreach to convince vulnerable citizens that they should use the CAEP. The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness should continue to provide CAEP information to the faith community each year.

Figure 15. Medical Conditions

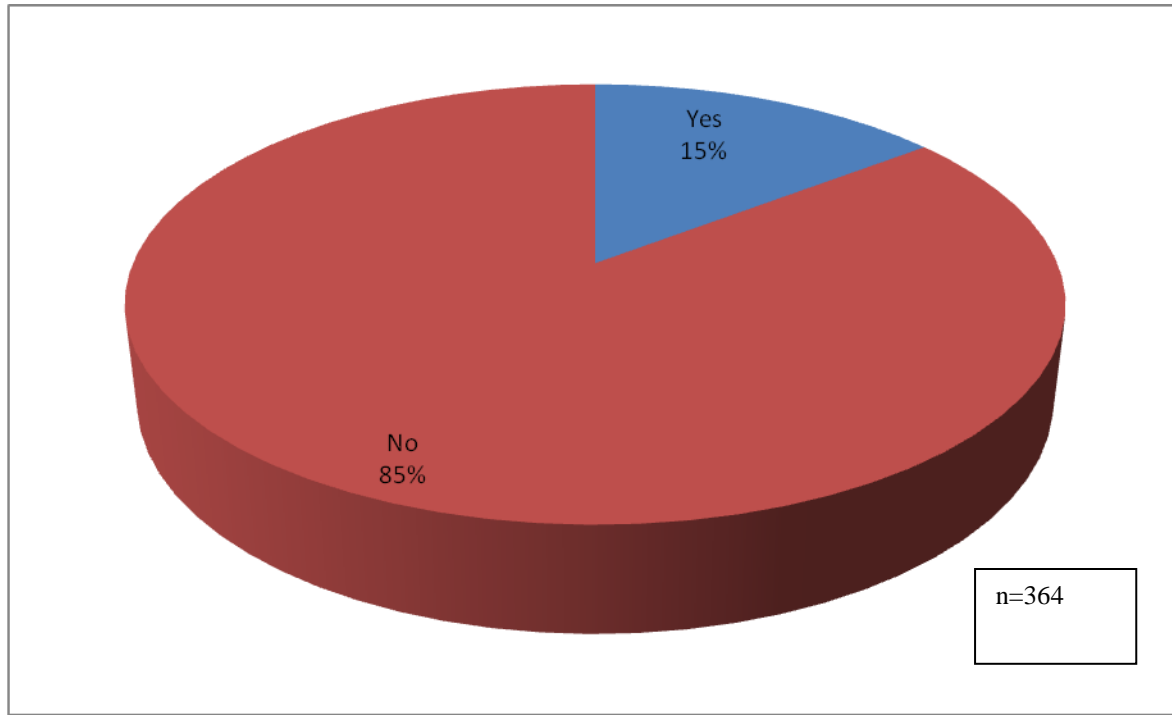
Question: *Do you have any of the following conditions?*



- Almost three-quarters of those participating in the CAEP had no disability
- More than one-quarter of those participating in the CAEP had a major disability.

Figure 16. Caregivers

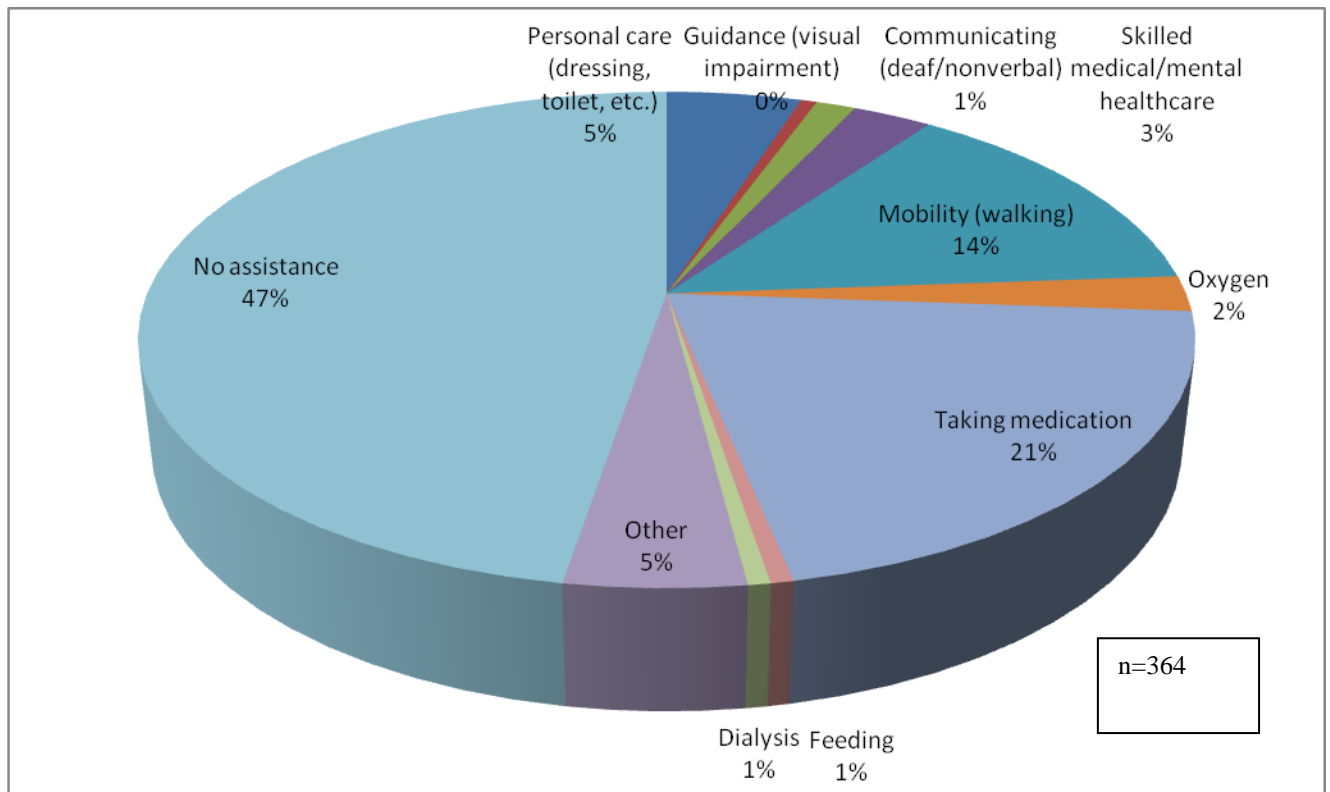
Question: *Do you need a caregiver who would be with you during the evacuation?*



- Eighty-five percent of those who used CAEP did not need a caregiver with them during the evacuation.

Figure 17. Need for Caregivers

Question: *What type of assistance do you require on a daily basis?*



- The most common type of medical assistance needed by CAEP participants is taking medication and mobility assistance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No plan and implementation for evacuating New Orleans or any urban area will be perfect. In the more than three years since Hurricane Katrina, the City adopted a process of continued improvement in evacuation planning. However, the survey indicated that there are still needs that must be addressed to ensure a more complete evacuation of the city's most vulnerable citizens.

Finances

Some surveyed reported that a lack of finances served as a barrier to evacuation. While on its surface this may seem to point to a need to better educate evacuees that there are no costs for CAEP evacuation – i.e. transportation, meals, and shelter are provided by the government – in reality, some of those surveyed reported that this was not the case. Most notably, several reported that there was no food at one shelter, and they had to “go to McDonalds.” Working collaboratively with the state (who is charged with the responsibility for sheltering) may achieve an evacuation for the most vulnerable that will not require resources that they do not have.

Other Family Members

Throughout this survey, the strength of family ties in this community emerged. For example, some people reported that elderly family members would not evacuate and were not registered for the CAEP. For those who participated in the CAEP, many stated that family relationships were critical to their decision to evacuate. Here we would suggest that some provision of registering “family units” be considered. We suggest that evacuation be promoted as a ‘family’ event.

Lack of Trust in the System

While lack of trust remains a barrier to evacuation, New Orleans is not unique among American cities in this distrust. Trust in government requires the involvement of all the city's agencies, not just the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. Street-level bureaucrats within the police department, social services and other agencies often set the tone for the climate in the community. We would suggest immediate implementation of proactive, two-way communication between citizens and government agencies to achieve a safe environment with regard to disasters. One particularly effective model is Project SAFE. In Oakland, California, a local partnership of government, businesses and private citizens forged a partnership to reduce the costs and consequences of disasters. The purpose of Project SAFE (Safety And Future Empowerment) is to ensure that public safety continues to be a top priority, and ensures that businesses and the community will be safer and less prone to damage or losses from major emergencies. As a pilot community for Project SAFE, Oakland received seed monies, support and resources from FEMA to encourage loss reduction community activities. This would involve

initiatives where agencies could demonstrate their responsiveness to citizen concerns and needs through appropriate and timely action taken by the city in response to those concerns and needs. Certainly, this survey was a step in that direction. Many of those surveyed were both surprised and pleased that their city was concerned about how they fared during the evacuation. (see <http://www.oaklandnet.com/oakweb/fire/safe/project.html> for information on Project SAFE in Oakland.)

One way to contribute to building trust is to widely publish the results of this citizen survey, and follow it with periodic updates as to how the city is improving the planning and implementation of the CAEP.

Enrollment in CAEP

While it was beyond the scope of this survey, press reports indicated that there were long delays in registering for CAEP in the days and hours before Hurricane Gustav made landfall. Telephone lines were overwhelmed. Yet the program had been in effect for several years prior to Gustav. Data showed that only 7% registered for CAEP through external organizations. We think there may be an opportunity for the city to work with organizations such as Volunteers of America, dialysis centers, senior citizens groups, AARP, hospitals, pharmacies and others well in advance of hurricane season to identify and register vulnerable citizens. We recommend an emphasis by the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness on partnership with NGOs in order to identify and register their stakeholders. We also recommend that local physicians and pharmacists be included in the effort to identify and register their patients and customers who may qualify for CAEP. The latter effort may be expeditiously started by means of a sheet of instructions provided to physicians and pharmacists that outlines enrollment procedures and qualifications.

A large number of citizens registered for CAEP, but did not use it during Hurricane Gustav (59%). This high number of registrants who did not use CAEP evacuation reflects the uncertainty of individuals' plans. Some individuals registered with CAEP 'just in case' other plans for their evacuation fell through. While this may prove to make planning for the city more difficult, it is significant that citizens thought through their plans enough to register with the City. Balancing encouragement to register for those who need assistance with encouragement to make alternative plans when they are feasible is a challenge that the City faces. Closer partnership with the community and the stakeholder NGOs by the City can help build citizen confidence that they have made the correct evacuation decision. To the extent that the City helps citizens create their own evacuation plans, the numbers who register for CAEP will be more accurate.

Maintaining the currency and accuracy of the CAEP database has always been a manpower intensive challenge for the city. The local Red Cross chapter had been doing call-back verification, but this year the Regional Transit Authority is taking over that task and will use an automated system to contact and verify registrants. The use of this automated system is an important step for ensuring a viable database. The same process has been tested and proven operationally effective by the Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Transportation Out of the City

While slightly over half of the participants rated transportation out of the city as good or better, about one-fifth felt the transportation was poor. The majority of the negative comments concerned the bus rides. We suggest that the most significant improvements can be made in driver training and fuel replenishment planning. We recommend implementation of programs to educate and train drivers about the complexities and uncertainties that are the hallmark of evacuations. We further recommend that a program be initiated to educate citizens about what to expect when participating in CAEP.

Sheltering

Shelter experiences were mostly negative. We would recommend that those staffing shelters undergo more specific training that includes the physical and cultural needs of evacuees. Participant comments indicated that many felt that they were negatively stereotyped by shelter personnel. Many residents, particularly the elderly and those with small children, felt unsafe. While some shelters made special provisions for segregating older evacuees, most did not. We would recommend that planning for the elderly be specifically addressed and commensurate familiarity with their special needs by those staffing shelters become common practice. Bedding, particularly for the elderly, was widely reported as inadequate. We recommend that the State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness conduct a more detailed study of the sheltering experiences of CAEP participants.

Re-entry

Many CAEP participants reported that significant hardships were experienced during re-entry. But although there were problems with re-entry in some neighborhoods, almost 70% of evacuees rated their re-entry experience as good or better. For those that gave negative comments, most included being brought back “too soon,” or “too late.” For those reporting “too soon,” the major complaint was lack of electricity and availability of food in their neighborhoods. Some reported a lack of medical services in their neighborhood.

We recommend that better planning for the condition of a neighborhood be done prior to returning evacuees. Participants may be given an opportunity to decide when to return home. Therefore, as was done in Gustav, it is likely that temporary shelters will need to be established in the city for the returning CAEP participants.

Satisfaction with CAEP

Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the participants were satisfied with CAEP and reported that they would use CAEP again. If people understand that CAEP works, the evacuation of the city will be far more effective in the future.

Other Findings

Three other findings are of note. First, most of those who used the CAEP did not have a disability. Second, less than one in five evacuees traveled with pets. Third, and perhaps most important, is that citizens listened and cooperated with the city, resulting in an effective evacuation of the city when a dangerous storm threatened.

By any standard, the City of New Orleans' evacuation preparedness has improved significantly since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Much of this has been due to the headway made in inter- and intra-governmental cooperation since Katrina. The planning process, under the leadership of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, has made noteworthy efforts toward ensuring an inclusive evacuation of the city. Citizens are now more inclined to listen to and understand the importance and urgency of evacuation orders and credit must be given to our citizens for making the right decisions during times of stress and uncertainty.