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POLICYLINK ROLE AT THE HEART OF LOUISIANA REBUILDING PLANS

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Contacts: Glenda Johnson 212-629-9570 ext. 209 glenda@policylink.org
Katrin Sirje Kärk 212-629-9570 ext. 208 katrin@policylink.org

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PolicyLink in the News

- 'Fred Blackwell Speaks On Blacks Being Left Out of Urban Development,' The Loop 21
'HUD Awards Grant to Oakland to Create Better Community,' San Francisco Chronicle
'Innovative Policies Are Essential to Save Men Who Are at Risk,' The Sacramento Bee
'On Jobs and Safety Net, Lawmakers Must Focus on Hard-Hit Minorities,' CNN.com

PolicyLink Role at the Heart of Louisiana Rebuilding Plans

BRINGS EXPERTISE IN DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY, AND COMMUNICATIONS

Baton Rouge, LA- The first anniversary of the destruction ignited by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita will undoubtedly give rise to an exploration of the critical issues still facing the Gulf Coast region: affordable housing for homeowners, renters, and former public housing residents; the impact of race and class on revitalization efforts; and the need for regular, reliable, and consistent information for residents at home and those displaced throughout the nation.

In Louisiana, PolicyLink has been in the forefront of the evolving struggle to address these issues. Working with Louisiana-based advocacy organizations and state officials, as well as major national organizations, staff from PolicyLink has been helping to ensure that the needs of all of the state's residents-especially people of color and in low-income communities-have the same opportunities to restore in the state that many have called home for generations. Three PolicyLink staff has made significant contributions to plans for rebuilding Louisiana and all are available for interviews or to provide background information for stories about the state's plan.

- Angela Glover Blackwell is the founder and CEO of PolicyLink and a highly articulate and knowledgeable leader in advancing policy solutions to achieve economic and social equity in the United States. A lawyer by training, Blackwell founded the Oakland, California, Urban Strategies Council, and was a senior vice president at The Rockefeller Foundation. She co-chairs the task force on poverty for The Center for American Progress's Hope, Opportunity, and Mobility for Everyone (HOME): The National Initiative to End Poverty, and is the co-author of Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America. She was a collaborator with Tavis Smiley in the development of The Covenant with Black America and also wrote the chapter in that book on affordable housing. She is a highly sought after speaker who regularly addresses national audiences throughout the country and has appeared on NOW with Bill Moyers, ABC's Nightline, and several programs on National Public Radio. Her opinion pieces have appeared in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and The San Francisco Chronicle.

In her numerous trips to Louisiana over the past year, Blackwell had facilitated conversations among Louisiana Recovery Authority leaders, advocacy organizations such as ACORN, members of the state's Congressional Black Caucus, and numerous faith-based institutions. Her leadership, says a policy advisor in the office of Governor Kathleen Blanco, has made PolicyLink "a key advisor on legislative recommendations through multiple venues." Blackwell says PolicyLink is in Louisiana to help guarantee that as redevelopment proceeds, "equity is front and center and that the needs of people of color and in low-income community are not overlooked. Everyone who wants to should be able to return and everyone should have the opportunity to participate and prosper."

- Kalima Rose is PolicyLink associate director and leads the affordable housing and regional equity team. She manages local and statewide affordable housing initiatives for PolicyLink and applies her wealth of expertise in helping communities achieve policies that finance affordable housing; change land use policy to better support mixed-income housing development; and advance fair housing practices. Rose coordinates PolicyLink Louisiana recovery work, collaborating with state officials, community organizations, national institutions, and faith leaders to shape equitable rebuilding of New Orleans and Louisiana. She was instrumental in the development of three pieces of legislation to strengthen policies that regulate unfair rent increases, mandate

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three pieces of legislation to strengthen policies that regulate unfair rent increases, mandate inclusionary zoning statewide, and provide a consistent funding source for the state housing trust fund. She was also involved in helping to formulate the state's Road Home housing recovery plan. Her leadership was instrumental in mobilizing over 40 housing organizations to form the Louisiana Housing Alliance. "PolicyLink has always believed that where you live determines access to opportunity. Homeowners, renters, residents of public housing-everyone whose lives were turned upside down by Katrina are anxious to return home and should have the opportunity to do so. Creating affordable housing is the first step in helping them to do so.

- **Josh Kirschenbaum is PolicyLink associate director** Planning and Development, and has led community building and technology projects to the task of developing multisector alliances to implement strategic initiatives. The former director of special projects at the University of California, Berkeley Institute of Urban and Regional Development, where he managed a defense conversion research program and a community collaboration project that fostered partnerships between the university and the City of Oakland to strengthen and revitalize low-income neighborhoods, led the Louisiana team that created LouisianaRebuild.info-the web portal that has become "the first stop on the way home" for Louisiana residents trying to reestablish their lives in the state. For residents still living in Louisiana or in cities and town across America, the portal and its partner call center, 1-877-LARebuilds (1-877-527-3284) provide one-stop access to news from home, available services, updates on rebuilding, and a virtual Louisiana community. "Bridging the communications gap," a state official commented, "was one of the first request made by the Louisiana Recovery Authority."

Blackwell, Rose, and Kirschenbaum are available for interviews and bring a wealth of data and anecdotal on-the-ground reports about what rebuilding really means to Louisiana's people.

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