

OPERATORS AT NEW CALL CENTER READY TO GIVE INFORMATION TO LOUISIANA

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Operators At New Call Center Ready to Give Information to Louisiana Residents Displaced By Katrina and Rita

1-877-LA-Rebuilds (1-877-527-3284) Operators Connect Callers to Information to Rebuild Homes, Lives, and Communities

Baton Rouge, LA-Louisiana residents seeking to restore lives upset by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita can now call 1-877-LA-Rebuilds (1-877-527-3284). This toll free number, like the LouisianaRebuilds.info web portal (<http://www.louisianarebuilds.info/>), connects Louisiana residents displaced by hurricanes and floods to reliable information about rebuilding efforts and available resources. The addition of the call center gives residents two ways to access this vital information: online and offline.

Call center operators are available 24 hours a day and can respond in several languages, including English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and several Chinese dialects. They can answer questions about services, resources, and support networks that are necessary for rebuilding lives, homes, communities, and the state. Callers can feel confident that a live operator will answer their questions with the most current and reliable information. When necessary, callers are immediately transferred to operators at other centers-such as Louisiana's Road Home Housing Registry-for the most accurate information.

"One of our biggest challenges has been to get accurate information to displaced residents about assistance that is available to them, as well as about efforts to rebuild their communities. We're grateful to all of our partners who have committed so much of themselves and their organizations' resources to develop a more user-friendly way to serve individuals who can't or won't seek information online. This is one more tool to help us reach out to Louisiana people and to welcome them home," stated Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Board Chair Norman C. Francis.

Like the web portal, LouisianaRebuilds.info, the LA-Rebuilds call center connects callers to up-to-date information about:

- Individual neighborhood, parish, and statewide rebuilding efforts; affordable housing, transportation, schools, and health care;
- Help for business owners and entrepreneurs;
- Pending legislation, policy issues, and voting; and
- Community resources and funding opportunities for nonprofits.

"LouisianaRebuilds.info has been a most valuable asset to displaced Louisiana residents," says Tierra Montgomery of Joy Corporation, a community-based organization that provides the only community technology center in the Baton Rouge area. "With the launch of the call center," she continues, "residents who don't have Internet access or who prefer to speak to someone on the phone can still make use of the information available at LouisianaRebuilds.info."

The call center is operated by CALLS PLUS, a Louisiana company formerly based in New Orleans (where it was known as New Orleans Teleport). The center's owner, Barbara Lamott, a New Orleans resident who lived through the wrath of Katrina and the resulting floods, moved her business to Lafayette, LA because many of her employees were homeless and had to flee New Orleans. By setting up in Lafayette, Lamott was able to provide work for the CALLS PLUS operators who are now in a position to provide needed support to other Louisiana residents. "I am very happy that my company is involved in this effort," says Lamott. "The operators and I are eager to talk to as many Louisiana residents as we can to help them reach the resources we all need to get on with our lives."

The web portal and the call center are the result of a public-private collaboration of national and local organizations, local government, and generous funders working together to support efforts by Louisiana residents to restore their lives in Louisiana. The 15 partners in the collaboration include such local and national organizations as the New Orleans Communications Network Making Connections New Orleans



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"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

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national organizations as the New Orleans Communications Recovery Planning Commission, New Orleans, Louisiana Recovery Authority, Louisiana Family Recovery Corps, Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation, Joy Corporation, Living Cities, PolicyLink, and One Economy Corporation. They are committed to ensuring that displaced Louisiana residents have access to reliable information-the first stop on the way home.

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Joy Corporation is a non-profit 501(c)3 community based organization that works to economically empower individuals and families within Baton Rouge and surrounding areas by providing educational, training, and rehabilitation programs designed to meet the holistic needs of the local community. www.joycorp.org

The Louisiana Recovery Authority is the planning and coordinating body that was created in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita by Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco to plan for the recovery and rebuilding of Louisiana. <http://www.lra.louisiana.gov/>

The Louisiana Family Recovery Corps coordinates and mobilizes a network of providers, organizations, and government agencies to deliver comprehensive humanitarian services to displaced Louisianans within the state of Louisiana. <http://www.recoverycorps.org/>

Living Cities is a public-private collaborative of major financial institutions, national foundations and a federal government agency that has invested over \$370 million in urban neighborhoods in 23 cities throughout the county.

PolicyLink is a national research and action organization that works in partnership with other organizations to advance policies to achieve economic and social equity. <http://www.policylink.org>

One Economy Corporation is a national nonprofit organization that uses technology to connect low-income people to information and tools that help them improve their lives. <http://www.one-economy.com>

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