

For Immediate Release  
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**Fritz Institute-Harris Interactive Katrina Survey Reveals Inadequate Immediate Relief Provided to Those Most Vulnerable**  
Recommends Focus on Community Preparedness as 2006 Hurricane Season Approaches

**SAN FRANCISCO** - Findings released today from a survey of people affected by Hurricane Katrina reveal that government agencies, non-profit organizations and families were not well-prepared with evacuation plans and services essential to relief and recovery for a disaster of this magnitude. Sixty percent of respondents did not receive outside assistance in the first 48 hours and 26% of those who did not evacuate had to wait at least one week. Those who were more likely to say that they had to wait at least one week included non-evacuees with disabilities (43%), those with household incomes of less than \$35,000 (33%) and those who did not evacuate because of limited means (30%), calling attention to the lack of preparedness in serving the most vulnerable in communities.

The survey also uncovered that the reasons just over four-in-ten (42%) stayed behind were more complex than what has been reported. About three-in-ten (28%) of those remaining behind did so because of a lack of resources, including having nowhere else to go (71%), not having a car (37%) and not being able to leave their homes without assistance (36%). Nearly one-third (32%) of non-evacuees made the affirmative choice to stay behind for other reasons. Greatest factors cited among those who chose to stay behind included not wanting to leave their homes (82%) or loved ones – pets (44%) or relatives (18%).

"These findings demonstrate an urgency for local institutions to prepare evacuation and relief plans for those most vulnerable such as the elderly, sick, and poor, and those with disabilities in their communities who do not have the means to help themselves," said Anisya Thomas, Ph.D., managing director of Fritz Institute.

In addition, among all surveyed, only about one-in-ten (13%) of those affected by Katrina reported receiving assistance locating loved ones in the first month after the hurricane. Likewise, only 6% received counseling help and 2% received job placement help.

Most of those respondents who received assistance felt positive towards it. Of those who received relief in the form of food and water, the majority reported this relief was on time (81%), adequate (88%) and delivered in a caring manner (91%). Four-in-ten of those affected by Katrina (44%) named the American Red Cross as the one agency providing the best overall relief, while 14% stated they needed the most improvement.

Fritz Institute commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct the survey, which is the first to assess the rescue and relief experiences of both evacuees and non-evacuees across the entire Gulf Coast region. The survey represents a summary of findings from research conducted among 1,089 adults affected by Hurricane Katrina who were living in Louisiana, Alabama or Mississippi before the storm hit and focused on relief provided during the first 48 hours and 30 days after the hurricane. Online, telephone and in-person methodologies were used to interview respondents who were now spread across 25 states.

"We partnered with Fritz Institute on this important survey because their knowledge of humanitarian aid operations enables them to understand the implications of the findings," stated Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of *The Harris Poll* of Harris Interactive. "It was a challenge to collect the data necessary to reflect the broad spectrum of people affected by Katrina. It is our hope that the findings will help the relief community and other interested parties take action to address the challenges of rescue, relief and recovery that were uncovered."

The survey also found that after Hurricane Katrina hit, it was non-governmental organizations (32%), the local police (30%), and religious and church groups (26%) that provided the most immediate assistance (in the first 48 hours).

"Preparation must be improved on a more local level than previously understood," said Thomas. "New models of collaboration and cooperation must be created to ensure that communities prone to natural disasters are adequately prepared for the inevitable and that national government and relief organizations work toward preparedness plans with an understanding that local governments and community organizations are the first responders."

**Methodology**

This Fritz Institute Hurricane Katrina survey was conducted online, by telephone and in person by Harris Interactive among a total of 1,089 adults affected by Hurricane Katrina. A total of 685 interviews were conducted online, 297 interviews were conducted by telephone and 107 interviews were conducted in person. Interviews were conducted between November 3-14, 2005 and January 13-26, 2006.

Figures for the online results only were weighted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for online respondents' propensity to be online.

All surveys are subject to several sources of error. These include: sampling error (because only a sample of a population is interviewed); measurement error due to question wording and/or question order, deliberately or unintentionally inaccurate responses, non-response (including refusals), interviewer effects (when live interviewers are used) and weighting.

With one exception (sampling error) the magnitude of the errors that result cannot be estimated. There is, therefore, no way to calculate a finite "margin of error" for any survey and the use of these words should be avoided.

**About Fritz Institute**

Fritz Institute addresses complex operational challenges in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people around the world by collaborating with the private and academic sectors to mobilize expertise, technology and resources. For additional information, visit [www.fritzinstitute.org](http://www.fritzinstitute.org).

The Fritz Institute-Harris Interactive survey report, *Hurricane Katrina: Perceptions of the Affected*, is available at [www.fritzinstitute.org](http://www.fritzinstitute.org).

**About Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive Inc. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), based in Rochester, New York, is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest and the fastest-growing market research firm in the world, most widely known for *The Harris Poll* and for its pioneering leadership in the online market research industry. Long recognized by its clients for delivering insights that enable confident business decisions, the Company blends the science of innovative research with the art of strategic consulting to deliver knowledge that leads to measurable and enduring value.

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