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December 20, 2005

HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
Oakland California

Re: Status Report on Katrina Evacuees and City of Oakland Assistance Efforts

President De La Fuente and Members of the City Council:

This report has been scheduled to update the City Council on actions that the staff has taken to implement the Council's direction regarding relief efforts for evacuees of the Hurricane Katrina disaster who are living in Oakland.

Housing Assistance

On October 18, 2005 the City Council approved \$250,000 to provide temporary rental assistance to approximately 10 families that have relocated to Oakland due to Hurricane Katrina. The program is in cooperation with the Oakland Housing Authority. A Memorandum of Understanding has been negotiated with the Oakland Housing Authority and, pending the OHA Board's approval on December 16, will be implemented the following day. The proposed MOU includes a waiver of OHA's administrative fees, as its contribution to this relief program.

Rent Adjustment Ordinance

On October 4, 2005, the Oakland City Council adopted a temporary exception to the Rent Adjustment Ordinance to permit landlords to help persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina by renting units at substantially below market rents. The amendment to the Rent Adjustment Ordinance and tenant notice form are posted on the City's web page and have been sent to the various landlord groups for utilization. To date, the City has not received any notice from landlords who have offered below market rent to Katrina evacuees. To expand the outreach, the City is sending information to all landlords regarding the exceptions to the Rent Ordinance allowed for Katrina victims.

Shopping Vouchers funded by Community Action Agency

The Oakland Community Action Agency, in conjunction with Alameda County Department of Social Services, Catholic Charities of Oakland, and Sears, provided immediate support to assist 100 Hurricane Katrina Evacuees with \$100 shopping

vouchers. In addition, staff assisted the GAP and Mayor Jerry Brown in coordinating a special event for more than 600 Hurricane Katrina kids, between the ages of 0-18, to participate in "Old Navy's Field Trip 4 Fun!" event that occurred on Monday, November 21 and Tuesday, November 22, 2005 at the Old Navy located at 5626 Bay Street in Emeryville. The event provided essential clothing and a fun shopping spree for families.

County-Wide Hurricane Katrina Working Group

City representatives from Office of Emergency Services, Department of Human Services and Community and Economic Development Agency attend regular county-wide meetings with representatives from Alameda County, City of Berkeley and State's Office of Emergency Services to address the short and long term needs of the Hurricane Katrina Evacuees, especially those who are still living in local hotels and motels. The collaborative continues to work with the State Department of Emergency Services to remain informed and receive assistance in developing a county-wide model to collectively address the needs of the evacuees. The collaborative is also exploring hosting a one stop, multi-service resource fair similar to the one recently held in San Jose, as well as other program options as appropriate.

Key Issues and Impacts

As of late November, the Red Cross had registered approximately 691 Hurricane Katrina households in Alameda County. It is estimated that 411 of these households, with an average of 3 per household, are located within Oakland. This equates to an estimated 1,233 individuals currently residing within the city. Approximately 147 households are still living in local hotels and motels.

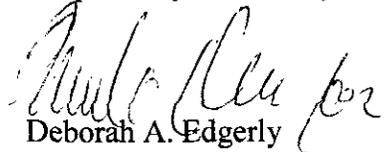
In November, FEMA announced a deadline of December 15, 2005, after which evacuees' expenses for hotel and motel lodging would no longer be covered. FEMA is requiring evacuees to transition from its hotel and motel FEMA program (403) to its long-term housing program (408). Nationwide, cities and counties have protested this unrealistic deadline and have urged FEMA to extend it; FEMA has allowed states to request an extension until January 7, 2006.

Requests to FEMA

- 1) On November 29, 2005, the City submitted an application to receive reimbursement from FEMA for expenses incurred for assisting displaced Hurricane Katrina evacuees. Expenses include the \$250,000 in HOME funds provided for rental assistance; and \$10,000 in staff expenses in coordinating relief activities with other agencies.
- 2) On December 5, 2005, the City made a formal request to the State Office of Emergency Services to request that FEMA extend the "403" program until January 7, 2006. The letter (attached) makes a request to extend the deadline further, to February 15, and urges FEMA to provide case management and outreach as evacuees transition from the "403" to the "408" program. The State OES office plans to submit its application to FEMA by December 9, 2005.

The City is committed to assisting the hurricane evacuees to the extent allowed within our jurisdiction and resources, and to working with county, state and federal agencies to ensure that the evacuees' needs are met.

Respectfully submitted,


Deborah A. Edgerly
City Administrator