

# Louisiana Opportunity Compact

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## *Principals & Regional Policy Recommendations*

The Urban League of Greater New Orleans has developed *The Louisiana Opportunity Compact* with the goal of drawing upon the strength of ULGNO's 73 year history to reassert the organization as a proactive and effective agent in the development of public policy. This document serves as a vehicle through which to assert specific principles and policy recommendations as the foundation for a plan of action to address the challenges faced by those in urban communities throughout the country. As such, this document is also intended to elicit serious responses city and state legislators, the private sector, the public and other community-based organizations with the ultimate objective of putting in place a comprehensive plan for advancing the promise of America's cities. By generating new ideas, initiating productive partnerships and fostering collaboration, *The Louisiana Opportunity Compact* seeks to expand access to the incentives and rewards that act as the driving force behind what makes this country great – personal responsibility, initiative and hard work.

There are five cornerstones to The Louisiana Compact.

1. **Education & Youth Empowerment**  
Ensures the education of all children by providing access to early childhood literacy, after-care programs and college scholarships.
2. **Workforce Development & Economic Inclusion**  
Invests in the financial literacy and employability of adults through job training, homeownership and entrepreneurship.
3. **Health & Quality of Life Empowerment**  
Champions equal access to health care services and quality healthcare training and providers.
4. **Criminal Justice & Juvenile Justice Reform**  
Supports equity in the criminal justice system, advocates for alternative to incarceration for juvenile offenders and adequate care for the mentally disabled in the criminal justice system.
5. **Civil Rights & Racial Justice**  
Guarantees equal participation in all facets of American society through proactive public policies and community based programs.

## **The Opportunity to Thrive – Education & Youth Empowerment**

### **Policy Recommendations for Access to a Quality K-12 Education & Youth Empowerment:**

- Urges the State Department of Education and the Board of Elementary & Secondary Education to provide a clear road map for RSD-OPSB turnover and governance structure of all New Orleans schools.
- Urge the Governor to support the La. Statewide Education Facilities Authority within the Department of Education to provide funding, coordination, assistance, and oversight for the repair, renovation, and construction of public school facilities.
- In K-12 education, urge state government to create another funding source for facilities maintenance, central administration and utilities and not rely on the Minimum Foundation Program that is used for instructional expenses.
- Ensure the state follows federal DBE participation laws and includes local participation of contractors for school construction. OPSB benefits from the \$1.8 billion FEMA settlement to construct new schools in New Orleans.
- Re-invest in a new Adult Learning Center in New Orleans is crucial to improved literacy, job training and placement.
- Restore and expand youth summer job opportunities to take more kids off the streets during the summer.
- Urge state and local governments to invest more in early childhood “Head Start” programs.

## **The Opportunity to Earn – Workforce Development & Economic Inclusion**

### **Policy Recommendations for Jobs and Economic Inclusion:**

- Increase and enforce DBE/local participation on state and local level projects such as Methodist Hospital of New Orleans East and New Veterans Affairs/LSU Teaching Hospital
- Increase selection and participation of minority community based organizations on state and local Workforce Investment Boards/Councils. Currently the board does not have representation from Orleans Parish and lack support from organizations reflective of the greater New Orleans community.
- Invest in a Green Jobs Workforce Training Program and create “Green Development Zones” with the purpose of utilizing energy efficient products and reducing energy costs.

- Urge the newly created Gulf Restoration Task Force address issues such as coastal restoration, tourism/food safety marketing campaign, and health-care needs surrounding the spill and invest resources for minorities into the parishes still affected heavily by oil spill through cooperative endeavor agreements with state and federal grants

## **The Opportunity to Live – Health and Quality of Life**

### **Policy Recommendations for Health and Quality of Life Empowerment:**

- Increase access to medical care by re-opening Methodist Hospital of New Orleans East and selecting an operator with a proven record of providing quality healthcare services.
- Recruit and train a physician and healthcare workforce from within the state of Louisiana for the new Veterans Affairs/LSU Teaching Hospital—70% percent of the medical residents trained here, stay here and relocation incentives need to be offered to attract more into the state.

## **The Opportunity for Justice – Criminal Justice & Juvenile Justice Reform**

### **Policy Recommendations Criminal Justice and Juvenile Reform:**

- Fund the State Office of Juvenile Justice to provide for programming, prevention programs for day treatment, case management in an effort to curve recidivism.
- Incorporate alternative to incarceration measures by instituting a “Pre-Trial Diversionary” Program at New Orleans Criminal District Court to evaluate the risk and nature of the crime of the defendant for potential release
- Urge State and local officials to devise a plan to establish a mental health ward in an new or existing hospital to control and adequate provide care to mentally incompetent defendants.
- Urge New Orleans law enforcement officials to instruct their officers to follow laws recently enacted on the state level and Orleans Parish allowing for summons’s to be issued for minor municipal offenses.

## **The Opportunity for Equality – Civil Rights & Racial Justice**

### **Policy Recommendations for Civil Rights and Racial Justice:**

- Urge the Louisiana Legislature to pass a fair and equitable 2011 Redistricting plan pursuant to the Constitution of Louisiana and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- Request the City of New Orleans to develop and implement racial sensitivity training in all agencies of city government not just the New Orleans Police Department.

- Urge the State of Louisiana to provide adequate funding sources for the Louisiana Civil Rights Museum Project.
- Urge the State of Louisiana to adopt transparent policies relative to the process of purging inactive voters by the Secretary of State's Office.