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Report Blasts Feds For Slow Pace Of Recovery

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NEW ORLEANS -- A new report charges that the pace of recovery in Louisiana and Mississippi continues to drag because federal disaster aid programs now in place were not designed to handle the catastrophic damage left behind by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The latest installment of the "GulfGov Reports" looks at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance funding and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant program.

The report said the slow disbursement of FEMA public assistance grants and HUD block grant awards has proved "frustrating to local governments at best and debilitating to their recovery efforts at worst."

In addition to the "sluggishness" of federal aid distribution, the report contends that the amount of federal aid provided to Louisiana and Mississippi is not proportional to the amount of damage each state suffered.

The report says Louisiana suffered 67 percent of the major and severe housing damage and received 62 percent of the block grant funding. Meanwhile, Mississippi suffered 20 percent of the major and severe housing damage and received 33 percent of the block grant funding.

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana and the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government compiled the report.

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