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Opportunity Clusters: Identifying pathways to good jobs in metro New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS – (*Thursday, August 13, 2015*) – On August 13th, in advance of the 10th anniversary of Katrina, The Data Center and the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program are releasing a new analysis of the New Orleans regional economy to help local leaders find ways to expand economic opportunity for all residents. Authored by Brookings scholars Richard Shearer, Amy Liu, Natalie Holmes and John Ng, the report focuses on local industry clusters that provide “good jobs” – jobs that have the potential to help workers without a four-year college degree earn enough to support themselves and their families and eventually move into the middle class.

Metro New Orleans’ growth in recent years has coincided with a sharp increase in the share of local workers who struggle to earn enough to support their families. This report finds that metro New Orleans offered 184,000 good jobs in 2014 that would put struggling workers on a path to stable jobs and higher wages.

Good jobs represented 33 percent of all the metro area’s jobs in 2014 in a range of occupational fields, including health care, production, maintenance and repair, and business operations. Notably a large portion of the region’s good jobs belong to traded industry clusters rather than local-serving clusters. These traded clusters, including manufacturing, transportation and distribution, and energy and petrochemicals, drive the metro New Orleans economy.

To build prosperity and expand opportunity to more New Orleans residents, local leaders should focus on growing more good jobs and connecting low- and middle-skilled workers to them. Findings from this report can help the New Orleans community, as it moves on from post-disaster recovery, overcome the challenge that many metropolitan areas face today: the need to build an economy that works for people.

The Data Center announces the release of ***Opportunity Clusters: Identifying pathways to good jobs in metro New Orleans***

The report is available online at: <http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2015/08/12-opportunity-jobs-new-orleans-shearer-liu-holmes-ng>

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[About The Data Center](#)

The Data Center became the local authority for tracking post-Katrina recovery with *The New Orleans Index*, developed in partnership with the Brookings Institution. The Data Center is the most trusted resource for data about greater New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana. Since 1997, The Data Center has been an objective partner in bringing reliable, thoroughly researched data to conversations about building a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region. To learn more, visit www.datacenterresearch.org.

[About the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution](#)

The Metropolitan Policy Program provides decision makers with cutting-edge research and policy ideas for improving the health and prosperity of cities and metropolitan areas. To learn more, visit: www.brookings.edu/metro.

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