



HUD sends La. \$234M for flooding

Last Modified: Saturday, January 23, 2016 10:47 AM

By [Cain Burdeau / Associated Press](#)

NEW ORLEANS — In a nod to the threat Louisiana faces from flooding, the federal government is sending \$233.8 million in grants to Louisiana to relocate a coastal American-Indian village, prevent damage from hurricanes and make a suburban slice of New Orleans better at handling stormwaters.

The funds are part of a \$1 billion package the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced Thursday to make the nation more resilient in the face of disasters.

HUD is spending \$48.3 million to help Isle de Jean Charles rebuild its village behind levees in Terrebonne Parish. The village has repeatedly suffered devastating flooding from hurricanes.

"It's going to get us out of harm's way," said Albert Naquin, the chief of the Isle de Jean Charles Band of the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw tribe.

He said the village wants to build a new community inside the levee system. Naquin has led efforts for years to move the village. Altogether, he said, the tribe would like to build new homes for 104 households comprising between 400 and 450 people. He said the tribe has lost scores of homes over the years and that tribal members now live in about 25 structures on the marsh island.

While the HUD funding is not enough to do all the work to relocate, he said it was enough to do "quite a bit."

He said the villagers would keep any structures they currently have on the strip of land where Isle de Jean Charles sits. But he said building a new community would help the tribe stay together and retain its culture.

Besides flooding from hurricanes, Isle de Jean Charles is threatened by the disappearance of the marsh and forest that once surrounded it. There are many reasons for the land loss, including the building of levees and oil drilling.

HUD also is giving New Orleans \$141.2 million to help make a large area known as Gentilly better capable of handling stormwater. On Friday, Hayne Rainey, a city spokesman, said the city would provide details about what it plans to do with the money next week.

But in its application for the funds, the city has designated Gentilly as the city's first-ever "resilience district" — a model of how the levee-protected city can build retention ponds, water gardens and expand canals to re-introduce water into the depleted soils under New Orleans. Much of the city, including Gentilly, has been built atop drained cypress swamps and this has created many problems, chief among them subsidence.

HUD said the funds would help turn Gentilly "into a national model for retrofitting post-war suburban neighborhoods into resilient, safe and equitable communities of opportunity."

The rest of the money is going into a state program to help residents along the coast avoid flooding. Ideas range from raising structures to avoid flooding, moving people to higher ground and abandoning risky spots along the coast.

[Print Page](#) [Email to a Friend](#) [Comments \(0\)](#)

Comments made about this article - 0 Total

Comment on this article

Title:

Comments:

Your Name: (required - shown on comment approval)



Enter text seen above:

Submit Comments

Copyright © 2016 American Press
Privacy Policies: [American Press](#)