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Groups help create disaster plans for Latino residents

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With hurricane season in motion, several organizations are reaching out to the local Latino population. One Economy is an international nonprofit with an office in New Orleans to help people with emergency-preparedness plans.

Along with the Allstate Foundation, One Economy has created online tools and provides trained volunteers known as Community Fellows to help residents create and implement plans for a natural disaster. Volunteers work in at-risk neighborhoods, collaborating with other local nonprofit organizations. They implement strategies outlined by Beehive, an online multimedia resource maintained by One Economy to help members of communities nationwide find answers to questions that impact quality of life.

At a recent meeting of the Latino Forum, a network that strengthens the voice of Latinos in Louisiana under the auspices of Catholic Charities, representatives of One Economy distributed emergency-action kits that are available in English and Spanish.

Spanish speakers are needed to help with outreach to the Latino community. For information, contact Editha Amacker at 504.708.2706, visit www.thebeehive.org/beprepared on the Web or send a message to CommunityFellowsInfo@one-economy.com.

Another presentation at the Latino Forum was made by Bill Norris of Operation Hope. The organization, born 16 years ago in Los Angeles, established an office in New Orleans after Katrina to counsel small businesses and help them develop business plans.

Operation Hope developed a booklet along with FEMA titled "Emergency Financial First Aid Kit." A bilingual person is available in the office to assist Latino businesses. For information, contact bill.norris@operationhope.org.