

Keeping an eye on Hurricane Sandy recovery dollars

Weekly News Round-up: December 13-20

With a high volume of media coverage in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, Good Jobs New York is keeping the spotlight on how government money is proposed to be spent in the rebuilding process. For more information on transparency and opportunities for community involvement, follow us on Twitter @GoodJobsNewYork #EyeOnSandyMoney. Also, let us know how we can adjust this alert to make it better.

The logo for Good Jobs New York, featuring the words "GOOD JOBS" in a large, bold, sans-serif font above "NEW YORK" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font, all contained within a dark green square.

Advocacy News

Several non-profit organizations have signed on to [Post-Sandy Rebuilding Principles: Building a sustainable region and economy, creating jobs for all](#). We encourage you to sign on, too. Contact bettina@goodjobsfirst.org for more information.

Also: A new report from [Make the Road NY](#) analyzes the unique challenges facing New York's immigrant community in the aftermath of Sandy. Language and immigrant status eligibility are barriers to relief or aid for many.

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Disaster Relief

- As the Senate debates the proposed \$60.4 billion disaster aid bill, Senate Republicans have countered with a drastically smaller emergency spending plan for the region. [The New York Times](#) and [The Journal News](#)

Also: Conservative groups criticize the emergency relief bill currently under debate in the Senate for including too many extraneous items. [TheHill.com](#)

- Three governors of Sandy-devastated states along with 125 CEOs from New York-based corporations sent a strong message to Congress urging action on the disaster aid bill. U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan opens the possibility that rebuilding may not be advisable in all communities. [New York Daily News](#)

Also: A copy of the letter can be found at the New York Daily News [Daily Politics Blog](#)

- Unlike the Senate version of Hurricane Sandy relief legislation, the House version includes Sandy Recovery Bonds; other legislation in the Senate does not include bond-related provisions. Senators Schumer and Menendez introduced a separate bill proposing the creation of Sandy bonds. [The Bond Buyer](#) (subscription required)

Also: The House's proposed Hurricane Sandy Tax Relief Act includes private-activity bond allocations for states affected by Sandy. CDFA See statements from Reps. [Pascrell, Jr \(D-NJ\)](#) and [Rangel \(D-NY\)](#)

- Mental health counselors in the hardest-hit areas are receiving numerous distress calls from those impacted by the storm. An \$8.2 million FEMA grant is supporting organizations that are sending counselors into those community. Associated Press

via [Times-Union](#)

- The emergency food stamp benefit program for storm victims is criticized as being too far removed from the communities it is designed to serve. [New York Daily News](#)

Rebuilding Infrastructure

- A billion dollars from the NYC teacher's pension fund is expected to be invested in infrastructure and rebuilding projects including bridges, tunnels, and housing complexes. [Gotham Gazette](#)
- Utility companies will be issuing credits to their customers for lost electric or gas service incurred after Sandy. Associated Press via [Times Herald-Record](#)
- Over \$114 million will be granted to NYU Langone, which was severely damaged by the storm, and will make it possible to re-open more quickly. Also in this aid installment is \$40 million is dedicated to Long Island debris removal. Associated Press via [Crain's New York Business](#)
- Parts of Long Island that were contaminated due to the storm have renewed interest in the state's Brownfield Cleanup Program, which is set to expire in 2015. [Times-Union](#)

Jobs

- Union members and representatives from the construction industry met with State and Federal officials to demand large clean-up contracts go to local firms and pay prevailing wages. [Newsday](#)

Housing

- Over \$1 billion in cash assistance has been distributed by FEMA so far; the City estimates the Rapid Repairs program will cost \$500 million and will be reimbursed by FEMA for 75% of the cost [The New York Times](#)
- Many Staten Island neighborhoods destroyed in the hurricane are waiting for the City's new Rapid Repairs program that will allow them to safely return to their homes. Some are making the repairs themselves in the interim. [WNYC](#)

We'd love to hear from you!

Check out our resources on Hurricane Sandy money at our [website](#). Or follow us on Twitter: @GoodJobsNewYork #EyeOnSandyMoney. Please forward your suggestions on how we can make this round-up more useful to you in your work.

Contact Information

Good Jobs New York
11 Park Place, #701
New York, New York 10007
212-721-7996

