

Keeping an eye on Hurricane Sandy recovery dollars Weekly News Round-up: February 28-March 7

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.

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We've updated our layout - scroll down for Advocacy News

Weekly news round-up

Disaster Relief

- Reports by the Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy and Enterprise Community Partners, an affordable housing developer, reveal that 56% of applications for FEMA aid are from renters rather than homeowners, and 61% make less than \$60,000 per year. [Crain's New York Business](#)
- The Office of the New York State Comptroller is keeping a list of approved state contracts for Sandy recovery work in an online database. [Gotham Gazette](#)
- Nassau, Suffolk and Rockland counties are expected to receive most of New York State's \$1.71 billion in CDBG funds. Notice of the release will be posted in the Federal Register and will provide an outline of the funds. [Newsday](#)
- Congress has not passed Hurricane Sandy tax relief legislation that allows the IRS to provide tax breaks for victims when filing their tax returns. New Jersey Congressman Bill Pascrell Jr. stated he expects legislation to be re-introduced this year. [WNYC](#)
- New York City budget director Mark Page testified before a City Council Preliminary Budget Hearing that federal budget cuts will reduce local spending on Sandy aid by \$500 million. [New York Daily News](#)
- Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) was strongly criticised by Rep. Peter King (R-NY) for holding fundraising events in New York after voting against Sandy aid legislation. [New York Daily News](#)
- A New York Times editorial takes issue with the House of Representatives passing legislation that would authorize FEMA to make direct grants to damaged Houses of Worship, regardless of whether they provide neutral community services. [The New York Times](#)
- The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs is investigating a fraudulent charity that collected over \$600,000 through a website, in addition to clothing and other items, that was never distributed to Sandy victims. [The Star-Ledger](#)
- New Jersey has received over \$1 billion in federal aid since Sandy, mainly from FEMA payments and SBA low-interest loans. [The Star-Ledger](#)
- Insurance payments are not covering all of the expenses that homeowners expected, and in some cases, banks are not releasing insurance claim payments. The non-profit Make the Road NY is working to help residents sort out the legal issues in the insurance and FEMA

payments. [The Wall Street Journal](#)

ALSO: Taking on debt through SBA loans is a last resort when insurance companies are denying payment for storm damage. Small businesses are struggling to obtain SBA loans, due to the extensive filing process it requires. [The New York World](#)

- In a profile of a family's dispute with their insurance company over coverage, New Jersey Governor Christie and New York Senator Schumer were critical of FEMA's handling of its flood insurance program. [The New York Times](#)
- Despite Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis's confusing comments that tuition assistance for immigrants would come at the expense of state-supported Sandy clean-up, the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce has come out in support of the DREAM act. [PRWeb](#)

Rebuilding Infrastructure

- Questions around the quality of the New York City water supply are being raised after Hurricane Sandy. [The New York World](#)
- The Downtown Alliance and the Real Estate Board of New York report most commercial offices and residential buildings south of Chambers Street have re-opened, though retail businesses are still struggling. [WNYC](#) and [Crain's New York Business](#)
- With reduced assessed home values on Long Island due to Sandy, school districts will need increased state aid to stabilize their budgets. [Newsday](#) [Op-Ed]
- The MTA received \$193 million in federal funds for reimbursements, repair of storm-damaged equipment and tunnels, and to restore A-train service in the Rockaways. [New York Daily News](#)
- In a panel discussion co-sponsored by Climate Nexus, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and Climate Central, scientists describe the effects rising sea levels will have on flooding in future storms. [NY1](#)
- Despite ongoing clean-up and rebuilding, Rockaways residents hold their St. Patrick's Day Parade. [The New York Times](#)

Housing

- Federal data reveals that SBA loans have been approved for 10,500 homes or businesses in flood prone areas in New York City and New Jersey. Advocates ranging from environmental groups to conservative government groups are urging caution in subsidizing coastal development. [WNYC](#) and [ProPublica](#)
- Uncertainty persists about the best practices for eradicating mold, as well as mold's true threats to public health. Also, New York City will need to train more certified professionals who can complete mold removal or remediation. [The New York Times](#)
- At a New York City Council oversight hearing before the Committee on Housing and Buildings, Brad Gair, the city's director of housing recovery, stated that the city may not require bought-out properties to remain open space. [WNYC](#)

- Despite it's location in a flood zone, the Bloomberg Administration broke ground at a massive Long Island City, Queens luxury development project. [Crain's New York Business](#)
- New York Senator Schumer called on banks to extend the mortgage payment forbearance period for Sandy victims to six months and to not require lump-sum payments at the end of the grace period. [Newsday](#)

Advocacy News

List your upcoming event here! Email elizabeth@goodjobsfirst.org

TONIGHT - Thursday, March 7: [Investing in Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery](#). 32BJ SEIU - 25 West 18th Street, 6:30-9:30 pm.

Friday, March 8: Understanding Sandy Aid, presentation by [Respond and Rebuild](#). Arverne by the Bay Community Center, 74-16 Beach Channel Drive NY 11692. 7-9 pm.

Monday, March 11: Rep Yvette Clarke hosts a meeting at Brooklyn Amity School with FEMA and IRS about Sandy recovery assistance.

Friday, March 15: Long Island Contractor's Association [Annual Federal and State Infrastructure Summit](#), Fox Hollow, 7725 Jericho Turnpike, Woodbury, NY 11797 * 516-921-1415. 8:30 - 10:30 am.

Thursday, April 4: Crain's [Rebuilding NY Conference](#). Sheraton New York Times Square, 811 Seventh Avenue, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm. Registration required.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York is posting upcoming application deadlines, recovery resources, events, and key agency contacts on their [Sandy Information Center](#) page.

New York State health and safety inspectors from the Department of Labor will provide inspections and assessments to businesses effected by Sandy to help firms reopen as soon as possible. Call 1-888-4-NYSDOL (1-888-469-7365) or visit their [website](#) for more information.

Several non-profit organizations have endorsed [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.

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.

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