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## Keeping an eye on Hurricane Sandy recovery dollars Weekly News Round-up: January 24 - 31

*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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### Advocacy News

List your upcoming event here! Email [elizabeth@goodjobsfirst.org](mailto:elizabeth@goodjobsfirst.org)

February 8, "Rebuilding the Public Realm after Sandy" featuring NYCEDC President, Seth Pinsky who is leading the administration's Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency (SIRR). This lecture is part of the Democracy, Equity and the Public Realm lecture series hosted by Pratt and moderated by Ron Shiffman, Pratt Institute, and Eddie Bautista, Environmental Justice Alliance. RSVP 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. *FEMA has extended deadlines for programs in New York. Applicants for federal disaster assistance have until February 27 to apply, and for those participating in the Temporary Sheltering Assistance Program the deadline is February 10.*

The New York City Council and New York State Assembly will hold hearings over the next several weeks to evaluate emergency response and disaster planning efforts.

This week's upcoming hearings include:

2/5: 1 pm. City Council Hearing Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm: Shelter Management (Committee on Mental Health, Developmental Disability, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse, Disability Services, Committee on Aging and General Welfare Committee)

2/14: 10:00 am City Council Hearing Oversight on Emergency Planning During and After Storm: MTA's Response and Long-Term Impact on the City's Public Transportation System (Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm: Shelter Management)

These hearings are subject to change, check the online calendars for details.

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.

Doctors of the World-USA is calling for volunteers, and is most in need of primary care doctors, psychiatrists and nurse practitioners. The organization also needs volunteers to assess the affected area and help dispatch medical professionals.

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](mailto:bettina@goodjobsfirst.org) for more information.

## Weekly news round-up

### Disaster Relief

- The long-awaited \$51 billion Sandy relief package passed the Senate 62-36 and was signed by the President. The measure includes provisions for \$10 billion to rebuild public infrastructure, \$5.3 billion to FEMA disaster relief, and \$16 billion in Community Development Block Grants. [Reuters](#)

*ALSO: [The New York Times](#) summarizes why it took so long to pass the Disaster Relief Act. The emergency aid bill passed in the Senate, after defeating an amendment that would have required spending cuts to pay for the recovery.*

*ALSO: One major difference between the final version of the disaster bill and the version that passed the Senate in December is that money can only be allocated to states impacted in the Northeast. [The Hill](#)*

- In last week's budget address, Governor Cuomo gave specifics on how he proposes to allocate \$30 billion in federal money coming to New York; he also provided more details on "Community Reconstruction Zones" which will be rebuilt using federal Community Development Block Grants. A locality will be placed in a zone by the threshold of damage it has sustained from storms Sandy, Irene, and Lee. [WNYC](#)
- The New York City Rapid Repairs program received mixed reviews from those who used the program. Nearly 12,000 homes have received utility repairs or equipment such as water heaters or boilers. [NBC News](#)
- A mutual fund that invested in redevelopment projects in the Gulf Coast post-hurricane Katrina and in the wake of the BP oil disaster in 2010 has announced it will dedicate a mutual fund worth at least \$100 million to Hurricane Sandy disaster recovery and redevelopment projects in the region. [Private Wealth](#)
- New York City Council Speaker Quinn announced plans for a proposal that would require stiffer sentences for crimes committed in the wake of a disaster that "exploit a state of emergency". [AP via The Wall Street Journal](#)

### Rebuilding Infrastructure

- FEMA's new maps indicate more areas are prone to flooding doubling the current number of structures considered most vulnerable. The maps are expected to help inform owners of damaged homes whether to raise their homes to be more flood resistant. Insurance premiums are expected to change dramatically with the new maps. The City's current maps haven't been updated since the 1980's. [The New York Times](#)

*ALSO: FEMA's Advisory Base Flood Elevations map is [posted online](#). The map covers parts of Brooklyn, Staten island, Queens and sections of Westchester. Maps for other areas are expected in summer, 2013.*

*ALSO: The revised FEMA maps may require homeowners in the new flood zones with federally backed mortgages to buy flood insurance; flood insurance premiums will likely rise as a result. For many property owners, new building codes may require buildings to be constructed 3-6 feet higher than current requirements. [AP via WNYC](#)*

*ALSO: In Staten Island some financing may be available to help homeowners rebuild to the new base flood elevation. [SI Live](#)*

- Engineers are considering how to restore natural barriers surrounding Jamaica Bay as an effective measure to protect 300,000 residents and businesses in the area from another storm. Some experts believe a metal hurricane barrier is the best option. [WNYC](#)
- The second in a two part series of interviews with Klaus Jacobs, a renowned climate change expert and advisor to the city and state on climate change adaptation. [The Gotham Gazette](#)
- Last Saturday's Sandy Regional Assembly was attended by a broad coalition of community groups, union leaders, and advocates. The meeting's goal was to present rebuilding priorities as outlined by the city's most vulnerable communities. [NY1](#)
- Small localities along the New Jersey coast may see a drastic decline in property tax revenue. A January estimate predicts that a dozen New Jersey municipalities could lose at least 10% of their tax base due to the impacts of the storm. [The New York Times](#)
- Crain's New York interviews Chris Ward, the former executive director of the Port Authority and current head of the Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance. He discusses post-Sandy infrastructure needs and finances. [Crain's New York Business](#)
- Some of the lessons learned from the City's response to Sandy reflect that government institutions that are efficient on a daily basis also performed the best in the midst of Sandy. The MTA and the Queens Library scored high marks for their effective response to the post-Sandy disaster; the Long Island Power Authority and the New York City Housing Authority were among the worst. [City Journal](#)

## Housing

- In post-Sandy Coney Island, the persistent problems residents must deal with include mold, erratic heat in public housing, and piled up garbage. [City Limits/The Brooklyn Bureau](#)
- The Associated Press offers an accounting of the damages sustained, including loss of life and property and the displacement of over 3,500 families throughout the region. [AP via The Wall Street Journal](#)
- While Governor Cuomo went on [record](#) for encouraging homeowners on the coast to consider a government buy-out, other regional leaders like Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Christie are emphatic about rebuilding. [The Atlantic Cities](#)
- At the City Council oversight hearing on emergency planning and management of the City's health care facilities during and after the storm, administration officials defended their reasons for not initially evacuating nursing homes and hospitals in zone A. [New York Daily News](#)
- Seventeen families are suing LIPA for failing to cut power to Breezy Point prior to the hurricane. The litigating families' homes were destroyed by fire after the storm surge impacted live electrical wires. AP via [Crain's New York Business](#)

## Jobs

- The New York State Restaurant Association is claiming the State of New York misled them when they signed up workers for disaster unemployment benefits. The group claims they were led to believe their laid-off employees could be enrolled in federal disaster unemployment relief. Instead, some businesses may be taxed by New York State for each employee who signed up for benefits. [Crain's Insider](#)
- The Building Trades Employers Association estimates 20,000 temporary construction jobs have been created post-Sandy; economists are studying the long-term effects of whether Sandy rebuilding will act as an economic stimulus. Some argue that it will stimulate the economy only if contractors hire local workers. [WNYC](#)
- Sandy damaged 10% of New Jersey's housing stock, but the construction industry needs a skilled local workforce to meet the needs of rebuilding. Many formerly unemployed construction workers have left the field for other careers. [Asbury Park Press](#)
- An editorial in the New Jersey Star-Ledger interviews Cornell William Brooks, president and CEO of the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice in how to ensure that federal money will go to create New Jersey jobs, and increase diversity in the workforce. [The Star-Ledger](#)

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### **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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