

Keeping an eye on Hurricane Sandy recovery dollars

Weekly News Round-up: January 3 - January 10

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

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.

[Sandy Regional Environmental Justice Assembly Saturday](#) [pdf], January 26th 12:30-6:00. A gathering intended for the most impacted communities hit by Sandy is being organized by environmental justice organizations and allies to discuss the impacts and aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

This week, [labor and community organizations](#) rallied at New York City Hall to raise awareness on the need for equity in the rebuilding process. Media coverage of the rally can be found in [The Village Voice](#), [The Epoch Times](#), and [The Labor Press](#).

The NYC Independent Budget Office prepared [a bar chart](#) displaying the \$154 million in reported overtime pay by city agency since Hurricane Sandy.

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.

Weekly news round-up

Disaster Relief

- Last Friday, the House of Representatives passed a \$9.7 billion Sandy relief bill, 354-67. [The New York Times](#) and [The Hill](#)

ALSO: Most House Republicans who voted against the bill rely heavily on campaign contributions made by New York and New Jersey residents. Rep Peter King (R-NY) encouraged constituents to withhold contributions to dissenting republicans. [OpenSecrets.org](#)

ALSO: The bill saves the National Flood Insurance Program. AP via [Times Union](#)

ALSO: Bond provisions are not included in the \$9.7 billion Sandy aid package. [Bond Buyer](#) [subscription required]

- Though House Republicans had enough votes to support the \$9.7 billion Sandy relief bill, the second bill for \$51 billion, is five votes short. [New York Daily News](#)

ALSO: Representative Steve Palazzo (R-Mississippi) reversed his position on the bill, after touring storm-damaged areas and sensing severe media backlash. [New York Daily News](#)

- Jarrett Murphy of "City Limits" and Nick Powell of "City & State" discuss the federal Hurricane Sandy relief bills, and where the money is expected to go. [Thirteen Metrofocus](#)
- FEMA does not offer grants to houses of worship, though non-profit organizations such as museums, libraries and religiously-affiliated hospitals and schools do qualify. An amendment to the relief legislation may put houses of worship on the list of qualified organizations before Congress. However, some are concerned that federal grants to religious institutions blur the lines between church and state. [The New York Times](#)
- Financial services firm Cantor Fitzgerald has pledged to "adopt" 19 schools damaged by Hurricane Sandy and provide cash donations to each family in the school. [The Wall Street Journal](#)
- NY1 provides a partial list of organizations providing aid, and co-ordinating donations and volunteer services. [NY1](#)

Rebuilding Infrastructure

- In his [State of the State address](#), Governor Cuomo provided specific rebuilding proposals to "harden" infrastructure against future storms, and outlined policy initiatives such as establishing an emergency response corps and abolishing the Long Island Power Authority. He also proposed a buy-out plan for homeowners who want to leave flood-prone areas, and called for updating building codes to make them more flood-resistant. [WNYC](#), [Gotham Gazette](#), and [The New York Times](#).

ALSO: Earlier this week, the commissions created by the governor after the storm presented preliminary recommendations on disaster preparedness and rebuilding. Coverage of the commissions' findings is in [The New York Times here](#) and [here](#) and [Crain's New York Business](#)

- Flooding at the World Trade Center site is causing renewed protests from victims' families who disagree with a plan to store thousands of unidentified remains seven stories below ground, in flood zone A. [New York Observer](#)
- FEMA's Public Assistance Program has approved several grants totaling \$14 million to repair infrastructure damaged by the storm. [Asbury Park Press](#)

Housing

- The FEMA program that is housing an estimated 2,200 families in city hotels is set to expire on January 12. [New York Daily News](#)
- Six disaster recovery centers operated by FEMA provided storm victims access to bathrooms and shower facilities. The recent closure of all but one is reportedly causing hardship for those cleaning out storm-damaged houses. [DNAinfo](#)
- A large section of the flood-prone community of Fox Beach in Staten Island is seeking a government buy-out of the entire neighborhood and to return the land to open space. Considering the administration's waterfront development policies, it's unclear if the Bloomberg administration would petition the state for grant money for this purpose. [Capital](#)

New York

- For the immigrant groups hardest hit by the Hurricane, many have not applied for FEMA relief, fearing deportation. [S I Live](#)

Jobs

- Though estimates show over 13,000 businesses were damaged citywide, only 224 applications for assistance have been approved by City's Department of Small Business Services. The federal Small Business Administration has approved just 164 applications for low-interest loans. [WNYC](#)

ALSO see GJNY's [Hurricane Sandy Recovery Dollars - How to Make Them Count](#)

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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