

## Keeping an eye on Hurricane Sandy recovery dollars Weekly News Round-up: March 14-21

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.



### Action Item

#### New York and New Jersey Communities respond to Action Plans for CDBG funds

Last week, New York and New Jersey published their respective Action Plans for the first round of federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). This triggered a 7-day public comment period. Among the comments were community groups' reaction to the short comment period, calls for better analysis of housing needs in New Jersey, and demands for more funding for mold remediation in New York. Groups from both states urged transparency and public participation.

**New York State** Action Plan is on the [New York State Homes and Community Renewal \(HCR\) website](#).

- [Alliance for a Just Rebuilding Comments on NYS CDBG Action Plan](#)
- [Large Coalitions Win Input on NY State Sandy Recovery Spending Advocacy Groups Call on Bloomberg to Follow Cuomo's Lead](#)

**New Jersey** Action Plan is on the [New Jersey Department of Community Affairs website](#).

- [Over Seventy Groups Sign Letter Urging State of New Jersey to Improve Sandy Action Plan Fair Share Housing](#)

#### Disaster Relief

- In Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, 40% of businesses remain closed and many in this predominantly immigrant business community feel that the neighborhood has been overlooked and denied loans from the U.S. Small Business Administrations. [City Limits](#)
- The New York City Council approved the South Street Seaport redevelopment plan, but made a concession on behalf of current tenants--many of whom were damaged by Sandy, and some remain closed--that the developer delay construction so tenants have the summer season to recover their economic losses from the storm. [Crain's New York Business](#)

*ALSO: Business owners who suffered losses after Sandy are raising their concerns about proposed redevelopment at Pier 17, that could cause further losses during the summer season. [WNYC](#)*

- Payments from insurance companies to homeowners filing damage claims have finally been released. Governor Cuomo announced that a process for expediting additional payments has been put in place. [AP via Newsday](#)

*ALSO: New York State officials released a list of ten banks that are withholding \$41 million in*

*payments made by insurance companies for storm damages. [New York Daily News](#)*

- 170 Long Island businesses have received over \$3.4 million in sales tax exemptions on building materials and equipment. [Newsday](#)

## Rebuilding Infrastructure

- Seven Long Island officials have been appointed to an advisory group of the federal Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force to facilitate community input in the rebuilding effort. [Newsday](#)
- Industry giant Hess Corp. is lobbying against a Cuomo proposal that would provide cash grants to storm-vulnerable gas stations to subsidize the installation of generators in advance of future power outages. Hess, which outfits its stations with generators, was one of the few gas stations that remained open after Sandy. [New York Daily News](#)
- The city's Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resilience (SIRR) presented flood prevention strategies and other disaster preparedness policies in lower Manhattan at the last of the community forums aimed at soliciting input on a post-Sandy report for Mayor Bloomberg. [Crain's New York Business](#)
- A NYS Ready Commission investigation of the disaster response revealed that deficiencies in coordinating leadership and communications resulted in a weeks-long gasoline shortage in New York City after the storm. Cuomo defends the state's disaster preparedness. [The Wall Street Journal](#)
- New York City Housing Recovery Operations hosted an event for homeowners in Staten Island to provide residents with key information on rebuilding, mold removal, and government funding. [Staten Island Advance](#)
- Greg David urges the Bloomberg Administration to wait for the Army Corps of Engineers to complete its study of coastline protection before rushing into rebuilding, as happened in the delayed rebuilding of the World Trade Center. [Crain's New York Business](#)
- Expanded FEMA flood maps show that New Jersey residential buildings in the flood zone will increase by 15 percent. [AP via Courier-Post](#)
- The director of MoMA's PS1 spearheaded volunteer activity following Sandy, and is now seeking to exhibit ideas for confronting climate change in a geodesic dome in the Rockaways. [Crain's New York Business](#)

## Housing

- The New York Department of City Planning will permit developers to build 700 new rental apartments along the Gowanus canal - a superfund site in a flood zone - but must redesign the plan to accommodate future flooding. [The New York Post](#)
- Public health officials are increasingly seeing the effects of mold as rising temperatures cause it to proliferate in flood damaged homes. Some government officials see mold clean-

up as a high priority for federal assistance. [Newsday](#)

- The Daily News profiles three families who have rebuilt since the storm and are back in their homes. [New York Daily News](#)
- Some Long Island homeowners are selling damaged properties 'as is', unable to wait for government programs to fund repairs or buy-outs. State officials claim proposed policies will prevent relief funds from going to developers who buy damaged properties for resale. [Newsday](#)
- Governor Cuomo [announced](#) an extension of the Temporary Sheltering Assistance program. The new check-out date for program participants is April 14, 2013.
- In a federal trial brought by Disability Rights Advocates, testimony by city officials revealed that there is no special disaster planning for evacuating people with disabilities in a disaster. [WNYC](#)

## Jobs

- The New Jersey Department of Labor intends to hire unemployed New Jersey residents to do clean-up and debris-removal in New Jersey State parks, thanks to a \$15.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. [The Star-Ledger](#)

## Advocacy News

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

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Saturday, March 23, 4 pm: [Rebuilding Brooklyn After Sandy](#). Laurel Blatchford, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Brad Gair, Mayor Bloomberg's appointee as Housing Recovery Chief, discuss post-Sandy recovery plans for New York City. The Brooklyn Public Library Main Branch, Dweck Center.

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

National Grid customers can visit [www.nationalgridus.com](http://www.nationalgridus.com) to get information about the National Grid Emergency Economic and Community Development program for business customers impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

The New York City Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency (SIRR) has concluded its "facilitated conversations" on post-Sandy rebuilding projects for neighborhoods throughout the city. This [one-page document](#) lists past meeting dates and locations.

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 Jersey's [NJ Sandy Transparency](#) provides public access to all New Jersey contracts for the allocation and expenditure of federal disaster relief funds, including contract vendor information.

New York State Partial Action Plan for first round of federal funds: [New York State Homes and](#)

[Community Renewal \(HCR\) website.](#)

New Jersey Partial Action Plan for the first round of federal funds: [New Jersey Department of Community Affairs website](#)

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

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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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