



Bloomberg approves plan for \$1.77 billion in Hurricane Sandy recovery to help complete home repairs and assist businesses

May 28, 2013 - Front Section

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development secretary Shaun Donovan and senator Charles Schumer announced the Federal approval of the city's plan for \$1.77 billion in Hurricane Sandy recovery initiatives. The city submitted its Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Action Plan last month, which outlined its proposal to spend the initial Federal aid allocation on programs for housing recovery, business recovery, infrastructure and resiliency. With this approval, the Federal funds can be released, allowing the city to launch its initiatives and extend relief to more New Yorkers in need - particularly home owners and small businesses with extensive damages and expenses. The mayor, secretary Donovan and senator Schumer made the announcement in the Blue Room at city Hall and were joined by deputy mayor for operations Cas Holloway, deputy mayor for economic development Robert Steel, director of housing recovery operations Brad Gair, senior advisor to the mayor and director of mayor's special initiative for rebuilding & resiliency Seth Pinsky, New York city department of small business services commissioner Rob Walsh, department of housing preservation and development commissioner Mathew Wambua, congress members Nydia Velazquez and Gregory Meeks, city council member Donovan Richards, and Brooklyn borough president Marty Markowitz.

"The city took immediate action in the days following the storm - distributing millions of meals, repairing more than 20,000 homes and making tens of millions of dollars available for impacted businesses - and these Federal dollars will help us continue our recovery work to get home and business owners back on their feet," said Bloomberg. "With the Federal approval now in place, we're going to see that this relief money starts flowing to home and business owners as soon as possible. I want to thank secretary Donovan for his leadership and our Congressional Delegation - especially senators Schumer and Gillibrand - for their advocacy to secure this funding."

"This plan is truly a neighborhood-based approach to disaster recovery," said Donovan. "We've worked closely with Bloomberg, senators Schumer and Gillibrand, and the New York Congressional Delegation throughout this process to help families get back in their homes, jumpstart local economies and make communities more resilient."

"Now that this plan is approved, desperately needed dollars can start flowing to the homeowners and business owners who lost so much," said Schumer. "It is a turning point in our recovery from the storm, but our work won't be done until houses are totally rebuilt, businesses are reopen, and roads, bridges, schools and other infrastructure has been repaired, stronger than it was before."

"This is an important day in the recovery process for families and small businesses who were devastated by Hurricane Sandy," U.S. senator Kirsten Gillibrand said. "These critical federal funds will help families get back on their feet and help hard hit communities rebuild stronger and smarter."

We will keep working together to secure every federal resource we need for a full recovery."

The city's recovery programs fall into four categories: housing recovery, business recovery, infrastructure and resiliency.

Housing Recovery - \$648 Million

The housing relief programs funded through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Relief program include:

\$306 million for reconstruction of one- and two- family homes;

\$225 million for repair and reconstruction projects in multi-family buildings;

\$108 million for resiliency improvements to public housing; and

\$9 million for up to 24 months of rental assistance for families displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

The application process for the housing recovery programs will launch at the beginning of next month, and homeowners will be able to register for grant, loan and rental assistance by calling 311 or visiting www.nyc.gov. Once the registrations are processed, homeowners will be assigned a housing recovery specialist who will work directly on their application. In preparation for their application, homeowners are advised to collect the documents they will need as part of the aid application process, including: photo identification; proof of income; proof of residency; and any insurance claims or settlements for Sandy-damaged structures. With the exception of the money going towards public housing, the New York City Housing Recovery Office and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development will manage these funds. More information on the requirements is available on www.nyc.gov.

Business Recovery - \$293 Million

The business relief programs funded through the City's Federal aid plan include:

\$72 million for business loans and grants;

\$90 million for investments in business resiliency;

\$90 million for "Game-Changer Investment Competition" to reward innovative ideas for spurring economic development in hard hit areas; and

\$41 million for a competition to develop resilient technologies.

The application process for the business loan and grant program will open on Monday, May 20th. Business owners can find out more information about the application and other requirements by calling 311 or visiting www.nyc.gov. The City's Department of Small Business Services will oversee the loan and grant program. Business owners will work directly with an account manager at the NYC Business Solutions Center to apply for loans of up to \$150,000 and matching grants of up to \$60,000.

Infrastructure and Resiliency Programs

The city will extend \$360 million to repair city infrastructure damaged by the storm, and for city services set up in the response and recovery work. The City has set aside \$294 million for resiliency investments to be detailed in a report issued by the Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency later this month. Finally, per Federal requirements, \$177 million has been allocated for planning and administration of the city's recovery programs.

"HUD's approval of our comprehensive Action Plan enables us to take the next critical step toward recovery - launching the programs for home rebuilding and business assistance that will rejuvenate the neighborhoods Sandy hit hardest," said Deputy Mayor Holloway. "We'll also take the first steps toward making the City more resilient to the impacts that we know climate change will bring."

"With this Federal approval, the city can apply critical resources to the housing and business

programs that will help our communities continue to recovery," said Deputy Mayor Steel. "Mayor Bloomberg has developed a thorough plan that will provide aid quickly to those who need it, and we are grateful to our Federal partners who worked to secure and expedite this funding."

"We created these programs with the understanding that recovery is personal - that every individual affected by this storm has endured unique hardships and faces unique challenges," said Gair, Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery Operations. "In order for us to have a successful recovery we must be persistent, creative and compassionate in our methods."

"Post-Sandy, HPD has been working endless hours to restore services, keep people in their homes and rehouse the displaced. Throughout it all, New Yorkers have proved themselves again and again to be remarkably strong and resilient," said HPD Commissioner Wambua. "I thank our federal partners for their leadership in response to New Yorkers' need in the face of this disaster. We know that recovery takes time and patience. We look forward to getting these resources out into the communities where they are badly needed."

"The approval of this action plan will allow us to add substantial scale to the critical business and community assistance programs that the Bloomberg Administration launched and has been administering since Hurricane Sandy hit," said Pinsky, Senior Advisor to the Mayor and Director of Mayor's Special Initiative for Rebuilding & Resiliency. "We appreciate the ongoing collaboration of our partners at all levels of government, including, of course, our federal partners, and look forward to continuing to work with them on both our recovery efforts and the very important task of making New York a model of resiliency for decades to come."

"Just days following Hurricane Sandy, the City's low interest Emergency Loan program was up and running to help small businesses get back on their feet," said Commissioner Walsh. "Six months later, it has been incredible to witness the resiliency of NYC's small businesses. While many have opened their doors again, some are still struggling, and thanks to the work of our Federal partners, these additional funds will provide a big boost."