

Sandy Living Expenses Voucher Program Delivers Relief To New Jersey's Working Families

Christie Administration Announces Assistance Program For Homeowners And Renters

The Christie Administration today announced a new \$57 million Sandy Housing and Rental Assistance Program, "The Working Families Living Expenses Voucher Program." The program will provide housing stability for individuals and families impacted by Superstorm Sandy and ensure that affected households have items essential for health and safety when they return to their home.

This voucher program provides temporary relief by offering support to working families who are financially strained due to the costs associated with recovery from Superstorm Sandy.

- Maintaining temporary housing while their primary residence is repaired/rebuilt;
- Maintaining a primary residence for the household to return to when repairs and reconstruction are completed; and
- Homeowners and renters who are under or unemployed due to the storm and in need of additional help to stabilize their finances may also benefit.

Funding for this program is being distributed to all of New Jersey's 21 counties for qualifying Sandy-impacted families and individuals through a federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) to the state Department of Human Services (DHS).

Funds will be distributed through the county Boards of Social Services or other agencies in the form of direct payments to billing agencies or vouchers to select vendors for eligible residents. Capped at \$15,000 in direct payments or vouchers per household, the program provides up to six months of housing and related assistance.

Allowable expenses include:

- Retroactive and Current rent/mortgage payments
- Retroactive and Current utility payments
- Beds and Cribs
- Bed Linens and Towels
- Dressers
- Dining furniture
- Washing machines and dryers
- Refrigerators
- Couches
- Dinnerware
- Lighting
- Stoves
- Microwaves
- Air Conditioners
- Pots and Pans
- Hot Water heaters

In order to prevent fraud and maintain the integrity of the program, residents may be asked to bring any of the following items for review:

- FEMA/DCA Registration
- Mortgage statement/lease agreement
- State issued driver's license
- Utility bills
- Bank Account statement

- Income Tax Return
- Birth certificate/Voter ID/Legal Permanent Resident Card
- Guardianship papers, if applicable

People interested in applying for the program can visit www.NJ211.org or call 211 to find out where to apply.

To further help children and families impacted by Superstorm Sandy, Governor Christie also announced the official opening of the new Meadowlands Family Success Center (FSC) in Little Ferry. This marks the 14th new Family Success Center established during the Christie Administration, bringing the total number of FSCs statewide to 51.

Some of the free services provided by Family Success Centers include:

- Supportive counseling for parents raising children;
- Classes and support groups for families, single parents and teens;
- Parent-child activities; and
- Workshops on topics such as stress reduction, financial literacy, leadership/empowerment, education, employment, domestic violence, nutritional awareness, healthcare resources, and financial assistance.

The fiscal year 2014 budget reaffirms Governor Christie's commitment to our Family Success Centers with \$9.7 million in state funds along with \$2.5 million in annual federal funds. The State has also allocated \$2 million in federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds to 10 FSCs in Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Cumberland, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union counties to provide expanded hours and programs to those families impacted by Sandy.

To learn more about the Family Success Centers located throughout New Jersey, visit www.nj.gov/dcf and click the "Families" tab on the home page.