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Christie Administration Rolls Out Plan For Second Round Of Federal Sandy Recovery Funds

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Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)

Details How State Will Utilize \$1.46 Billion, Opens Public Comment Period

Trenton, NJ - The Christie Administration today unveiled a proposed amendment to the New Jersey Disaster Recovery Action Plan detailing how the state will spend \$1.46 billion in federal Sandy recovery funds. The state will continue rebuilding Sandy-damaged homes and rental housing, supporting hardest hit and financially strained communities, while also financing infrastructure resiliency projects throughout New Jersey to protect the state from future storms. This is the second round of federal Community Disaster Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds allocated to New Jersey by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Administration also opened a 30-day period for the public to comment on the state's proposed plan, which will run through March 5, 2014. The plan was developed in consultation with residents, elected officials, long-term recovery groups and other stakeholders in New Jersey, and will also incorporate feedback received during the public comment period.

"We've made a lot of progress in the 15 months since Sandy, and it's been a coordinated effort by my Administration, the Obama Administration, local governments and other recovery partners," said Governor Christie. "Nevertheless, there is still much to be done and substantial needs remain. These additional disaster relief funds will allow the state to expand the recovery initiatives and programs to assist Sandy-impacted residents, businesses and communities, and I am grateful to the Obama Administration for their ongoing support. My mission remains to ensure that everyone who was impacted by Sandy gets their lives back to normal, and I won't rest until that mission is complete."

Housing for those who lost their homes was the priority of the initial \$1.83 billion of CDBG Disaster Recovery funds awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) last April. Because the state's housing needs remain substantial, the Christie Administration is proposing to spend a majority of the second round of CDBG Disaster Recovery funds to support homeowners and renters. Consistent with HUD requirements, the state will continue to prioritize funding in the nine counties most impacted counties as determined by HUD (Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Union) and to assist low-to-moderate-income families and communities.

Furthermore, recognizing that Sandy's storm surge and flooding highlighted vulnerabilities in the state's transportation, energy, and water infrastructure systems, the plan proposes a \$535 million investment in infrastructure. The proposed investment would include funding to create an energy bank to fund resiliency projects as well as a multi-faceted flood hazard risk reduction program. Additionally, funds would be made available to satisfy non-federal cost-share obligations (also known as match), including obligations for infrastructure-related recovery and resiliency projects.

"While we are thankful for the additional \$1.46 billion in CDBG Disaster Recovery funding, we know that far more work and resources are required to address the critical needs of those affected by Sandy. We will continue to work with all of our partners to deliver this aid quickly, transparently, and with a focus on durability for future disasters," said New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Richard E. Constable III, whose department administers the distribution of CDBG Disaster Recovery funds for the state. "For this reason, we have sought input from residents, stakeholders and elected officials and look forward to hearing what the public has to say about the proposed plan."

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For the second allocation, the state is proposing to spend \$735 million on housing assistance programs, of which \$450 million is projected to assist low-to-moderate-income families. The second proposed plan calls for:

\$390 million for the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation & Mitigation (RREM) Program, which is the state's largest Sandy housing recovery initiative. The funding would be added to the \$710 million provided in the initial allocation. To date, more than 5,100 Sandy-impacted homeowners have been preliminarily awarded a RREM grant. The additional funding would enable approximately 3,000 eligible homeowners to move off of the program's waitlist and begin the grant process.

\$200 million for the Fund for Restoration of Multi-Family Housing to help develop affordable multi-family rental housing. The funding would be added to the \$179 million allocated to the program in the first round. To date, funding has been committed to 36 affordable housing projects to create nearly 2,500 housing units for low- to moderate-income residents.

\$100 million for the New Jersey Blue Acres Buyout Program to purchase flood-prone homes that will move people out of harm's way and create natural systems to absorb flood waters from future storms. To date, more than 270 buyout offers have been made to Sandy-impacted homeowners.

\$25 million for the Sandy Special Needs Housing Fund to help develop permanent supportive affordable housing for special needs populations. The funding would be added to the \$25 million provided the program in the first allocation. To date, funding has been committed to 11 projects to create affordable housing opportunities for more than 150 residents with special needs.

\$20 million for the Neighborhood Enhancement Program to help stabilize storm-damaged neighborhoods that were previously struggling under the burden of abandoned, foreclosed and vacant properties. To date, nearly \$26 million in Neighborhood Enhancement Program funding has been committed to 33 projects to create 170 housing units for low- to moderate-income residents.

Additionally, the proposed plan would commit \$535 million to the following infrastructure programs:

\$210 million for the New Jersey Energy Resilience Bank to fund projects that would ensure a highly reliable power supply to critical public facilities such as water and wastewater treatment plants, hospitals, shelters, emergency response centers and transit networks in the event the larger electrical grid fails.

\$100 million for the Flood Hazard Risk Reduction and Resiliency Measures Program to fund projects that would help protect areas at high risk of storm surge or flooding through such measures as flood walls, pump stations, wetlands restoration, permeable pavement, rain gardens and bio-retention basins.

\$225 million to help government entities meet federal funding match obligations for a variety of recovery and resiliency projects such as repairing or constructing roads, bridges, levees, public buildings, water and sewer treatment plants, power generation and distribution facilities, sand dunes, beaches, telecommunication systems, and recreational facilities.

Finally, the state is proposing to continue to support existing economic development and local government support programs that are vital to local recovery efforts:

\$90 million for the Essential Services Grant Program to assist Sandy-impacted local government entities that are experiencing budget distress in maintaining essential services such as trash removal and police and fire protection while their communities are rebuilt. The funding would be added to the \$60 million provided in the initial allocation. To date, more than \$44.5 million in funding has been awarded to 11 Sandy-impacted local governmental entities.

\$10 million for the Unsafe Structures Demolition Program to demolish unsafe Sandy-impacted structures, remove debris, and perform any additional activities related to demolitions. The funding would be added to the \$15 million provided in the first round.

\$10 million for planning initiatives, including funding for the Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program to help Sandy-impacted local governments plan their rebuilding efforts to promote resilience and encourage economic growth. The funding would be added to the \$5 million provided the program in the initial allocation. To date, more than \$1.8 million in planning grants have been awarded to 35 local governments.

\$5 million for a marketing campaign to encourage tourism in Sandy-impacted areas.

\$5 million for the Code Enforcement and Zoning Program to help code enforcement and zoning offices in Sandy-impacted municipalities respond to the influx of rebuilding applications. The funding would be added to the \$6 million provided in the initial allocation.

CDBG Disaster Recovery funds are intended to support local rebuilding efforts after private insurance, FEMA, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), or other available sources of funds have been applied. HUD also requires that 50% of the funding focus on low-to-moderate-income households. In New Jersey, HUD further mandates that 80% of the CDBG Disaster Recovery dollars be spent in the nine most storm-impacted and distressed communities, which include Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Union counties.

The Christie Administration opened a 30-day period through March 5, 2014 for the public to comment on the amendment to the Action Plan. The proposed plan may be obtained in English and Spanish at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/sandyrecovery/action/> on the DCA's website. Written comments to the proposed plan can be submitted by email to sandy.publiccomment@dca.state.nj.us or can be provided by mail to the attention of Gabrielle Gallagher, NJ Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, Post Office Box 800, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0800. All comments must be submitted by 5 p.m. on March 5, 2014.

The state plans to hold three public hearings to solicit public comment on the proposed plan. The dates, times and locations of the public hearings are:

February 11, 2014; Stockton University (Atlantic County); 101 Vera King Farris Drive, Galloway, NJ 08205; Performing Arts Center; 4-7 pm

February 12, 2014; New Jersey Institute of Technology (Essex County); 150 Bleeker Street, Newark, NJ 07102; Campus Center; 5:30-8:30 pm

February 13, 2014; Brookdale Community College (Monmouth County); Robert J. Collins Arena; 765 Newman Springs Road, Lincroft, NJ 07738; 4-7 pm

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