

## Christie Administration Announces \$57 Million Sandy Housing And Rental Assistance Program

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### ***New Working Families Living Expenses Voucher Program Provides Up To \$15,000 For Certain Housing Costs***

**Trenton, NJ** – Governor Christie 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 still recovering financially from Superstorm Sandy by helping to offset living expenses. The funding will be distributed through county Boards of Social Services as well as other designated agencies in the form of direct payments to billing agencies or vouchers to select vendors for eligible Sandy-impacted residents.

"We've come a long way over the last year helping rebuild and recover from Sandy, but we also know that there are still folks out there who need help," said Governor Christie. "People are financially strained from the impact of Superstorm Sandy and this program is designed to give those who need it a helping hand and some much needed breathing room by offsetting living expenses."

The new program provides temporary relief to households by offering support to fund costs related to: 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 ensuring that affected households can obtain certain essential items for their primary residence. The funding is being made available through a federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) to the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS).

"As the one year anniversary of Superstorm Sandy approaches, many families working to recover and rebuild remain saddled with expenses that have continued to escalate," said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "This funding will provide much needed relief to help get residents back home and manage financial challenges."

The program is expected to help homeowners who have been paying rent for temporary housing as well as a mortgage on their damaged property, possibly putting them in arrears and at risk for foreclosure. There are also resources for homeowners and renters who need to replace essential household items that were not covered by their insurance or other available assistance programs. Residents who have returned to their rebuilt home but lack essential items such as a refrigerator or bed may also be eligible for assistance under this program. In addition, Sandy-impacted 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.

The Working Families Living Expenses Voucher Program provides up to six months of housing and related assistance and is capped at \$15,000 in direct payments or vouchers per household. It is available for eligible individuals or families experiencing financial distress directly related to housing needs as a result of Superstorm Sandy.

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 FSC established during the Christie Administration, bringing the total number of FSCs statewide to 51.

"Family Success Centers have been a vital community resource for New Jersey's most vulnerable children and

families,” said Governor Christie. “Now, through the establishment of additional and expanded FSCs, even more individuals – including those who may never have used social services – will have access to the programs, resources and support offered by their local FSC.”

New Jersey Department of Children and Families Commissioner Allison Blake, whose department funds the FSCs, expanded on Governor Christie’s comments, adding, “FSCs are community-based, family-centered neighborhood gathering places where community residents can go for family support, information, referrals and access to services at no cost. FSCs are a ‘one-stop’ site that provides wrap-around resources and support for families before they find themselves in crisis.”

Some of the free services provided by FSCs include: supportive counseling for parents raising children; classes and support groups for families, single parents and teens; parent-child activities; and a variety of workshops on topics such as stress reduction, financial literacy, leadership/empowerment, education, employment, domestic violence, nutritional awareness, healthcare resources, and financial assistance.

Families and individuals interested in applying for The Working Families Living Expenses Voucher can go to [www.nj211.org](http://www.nj211.org) <<http://www.nj211.org/>> or call 211 to find out where to apply within each county.

A Provider List [[pdf 200kB](#)]

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