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Christie Administration Announces Federal Supplemental Social Services Block Grant To Assist Superstorm Sandy Victims

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Funds Will Reinforce Social Services Programs and Continue to Assist New Jerseyans' Personal Recovery Efforts

Trenton, NJ – The Christie Administration today announced that it received authorization to spend \$209 million of a supplemental social services block grant (SSBG) from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families on services provided to victims of Superstorm Sandy. The funding is allocated to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and shared with the Departments of Health (DOH) and Children and Families (DCF) for eligible expenditures.

"The physical rebuilding of structures and the removal of debris are just one part of New Jersey's efforts to recover from Superstorm Sandy," said Governor Chris Christie. "Another stage of that recovery is the healing process, which many of our impacted residents have been undergoing over the last eight months through social services programs available to them. New Jersey will use these grant funds to reinforce our social services infrastructure so that we can continue to support Sandy survivors' ongoing personal recovery efforts."

The Disaster Relief Appropriations Act provided about \$500 million to five states for expenses related to recovery and rebuilding. New Jersey received almost half of the total allotment. SSBG funds are designed to address necessary expenses resulting from Superstorm Sandy, including social, health, and behavioral health services, as well as the repair, renovation and rebuilding of health care, child care and other social services facilities.

DHS will focus its portion of the award on providing statewide clinical behavioral health services, child care vouchers to families whose services were disrupted, repair to child care provider centers damaged by Superstorm Sandy and housing location assistance to residents displaced and in search of alternate rental options.

"The SSBG supplemental funding is critical to preserving the social services safety net in the areas most impacted by Superstorm Sandy," said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "In the months and years to come, these services will be essential to rebuilding and restoring residents' very basic needs in storm recovery."

DCF will focus on preventing instances of child abuse exacerbated by Sandy; prevention of domestic violence and exploitation exacerbated by Sandy; and building resiliency and supporting recovery such as expanding access to mental health services for children.

"DCF's long-term recovery plan is a comprehensive approach that will not only support and strengthen families and address the needs of children in the aftermath of the storm, but will also have a cascading effect on many other aspects of our state's recovery," said DCF Commissioner Allison Blake. "Safe children and strong families are the backbone of a strong New Jersey."

"The Department of Health will use this funding to help New Jersey residents prevent and mitigate post-storm environmental health issues," said Health Commissioner Mary E. O'Dowd. "Working with our health care and public health partners, the Department will educate the public and conduct surveillance of West Nile Virus and health hazards in homes such as mold and lead."

Services funded by the SSBG supplemental will complement other recovery efforts underway through the Community Development Block Grant Action Plan.

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Transcript From August 22, 2012 Higher Education Reorganization Bill Signing:

Governor Christie: Thank you all. It's great to be here at Rutgers to sign the legislation right here in New Brunswick that brings a whole new era to higher education in our state. It makes what I believe will be a much stronger Rutgers going forward, a stronger Rutgers in competing for the best students not only here in New Jersey but around the country, a stronger Rutgers that will be competing for federal grant dollars with other institutions across the country, a stronger Rutgers in terms of the economic engine that it will be for everyone across the state as we struggle to try and get more and more people back to work and create more opportunity in our state. And I look at what Rutgers is going to be now, with the medical schools in Newark and New Brunswick, with the expansion of opportunity in Camden, with the nursing school, the dental school, all the things that make a top flight state university a top flight state university. And Rutgers doesn't have to make excuses anymore. Oh we don't have a medical school because of this, we don't have a dental school because of that, and trying to justify why we don't have things that other major state universities have. Now we do. And I think that's something that's going to be a great selling point. Rutgers represents opportunity and equality for everybody in this state and now it's going to have an opportunity to become even bigger and stronger and more persuasive in terms of the influence it will have on the state's business community, the state's science community and ultimately on the lifestyle that we all live in this state

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