

BROOKLYN

COMMUNITIES

SPEAK



BROOKLYN
RECOVERY FUND

**An Action Guide for Local
Decision-Makers Post Sandy**

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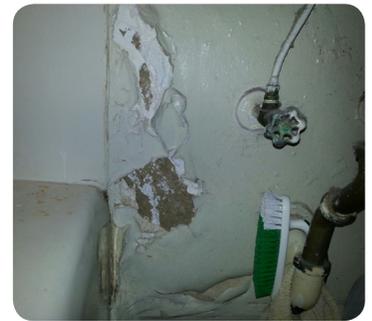
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“Brooklyn Communities Speak”

is intended to inform local decision-makers about the state of recovery and unmet need in Brooklyn resulting from Superstorm Sandy as of December 2013, while providing the basis for a new disaster planning and preparation paradigm city-wide.

This report is produced by the **Brooklyn Recovery Fund**, a partnership of the Brooklyn Community Foundation, the Brooklyn Borough President’s Office and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. The Fund was launched immediately after Superstorm Sandy to provide support to Brooklyn’s nonprofit organizations working with the communities and individuals most affected by the storm.



RECOVERY IN BROOKLYN

Over a year has passed since Superstorm Sandy hit our borough, causing significant destruction throughout our coastal communities. During this time, relief and recovery efforts came in a variety of forms — from the early days of volunteer coordination, to federally funded housing repair and rebuild programs, to disaster crisis counseling services, to the long-term recovery planning of local community members and stakeholders. These initiatives have played an important role in recovery thus far, and helped many of our communities begin to function once again. **But this is only the beginning.** While systems are back online and homes are mucked out, coastal communities continue to struggle. Home and business owners have spent down their life savings and built up debt. Many are barely making mortgage payments, and live in fear of foreclosure. Tenants face new and increasing landlord issues, including ongoing repair needs and rent hikes, and many have been forced to start over in unfamiliar neighborhoods. Storm drains remain clogged, temporary boilers create the random loss of heat, and mold persists in homes — threatening the health of our families. These needs require the utmost attention and commitment from local and city-wide decision-makers and government agencies, and beg the cooperation of all those involved to ensure that our communities recover to be better and stronger than ever before.

BACKGROUND

When Superstorm Sandy hit Brooklyn in October of 2012, it was the first time our communities experienced a natural disaster of such devastating impact. The borough's 65-mile coastline is home to more than 700,000 residents, making it the largest residential population in Sandy's path. Over the course of the storm, 11.4% of Brooklyn's land mass was flooded, and more than 115,000 homes and businesses were damaged.¹ In addition, Brooklyn had the highest number of residents exposed to storm surge (over 217,000) of all New York metro counties.² Our communities were under water, and the loss of power — lasting several weeks in some neighborhoods — created obstacles to reporting damages and accessing emergency resources. At this early stage, the Brooklyn Community Foundation, Office of the Brooklyn Borough President, and Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce partnered to create the **Brooklyn Recovery Fund**, and with the help of generous donors and founding contributors, immediately began to get funds on the ground.

The first funds deployed were Emergency Fast-Track grants of \$5,000 to \$10,000, providing short-term assistance to Brooklyn-based nonprofits and Brooklyn-serving nonprofits working in impacted communities. The Fund awarded over 40 of these grants to meet the communities' most immediate needs and jump-start relief efforts borough-wide. Next, the Fund supported nonprofits working on post-storm community development, housing, and mold removal/remediation in a round of Community Rebuilding Grants totaling \$1.37 million. These funds were used to support physical improvements to homes and buildings. Lastly, the third wave of grants — over \$1.5 million to date — served

to establish and strengthen and coordinate immediate and long-term recovery efforts among residents, small businesses, nonprofits, and other neighborhood groups. By building local capacity and supporting a community-led recovery, the Brooklyn Recovery Fund was able to engage impacted Brooklynites more fully, and ensure that resources reached those most in need.

The collaborative model is one that promotes local expertise, seeds community networks, and encourages local leaders to plan for long-term recovery in a way that makes sense for their communities. As a result, Red Hook Coalition, Coney Recovers, Empower Sheepshead Recovery Coalition, Gerritsen Beach Long Term Recovery Project, Canarsie Coalition, and Brighton Beach Housing Coalition have emerged as forces of ongoing recovery in Brooklyn's coastal communities.

One year after Sandy, the Brooklyn Recovery Fund held a forum for community leaders to advise local elected officials, city agencies, utility companies and other decision makers on the current state of recovery and the need for further response. Following are action-oriented recommendations that emerged from the forum, developed over the course of several months by local recovery collaboratives, whose membership includes local nonprofits, faith-based institutions, disaster case managers, service-providers, and community stakeholders. Their recommendations were shared in five key areas: Housing and Rebuilding, Health, Immigrant and Undocumented Communities, Businesses and Jobs, and Infrastructure.

¹ Furman Center for Real Estate and Policy, New York University (March, 2013).

² Enterprise Community Partners, "The Impacts of Hurricane Sandy on New York and Long Island." (2013).

USING THE GUIDE

1. IN THIS GUIDE YOU WILL FIND:

- A snapshot of recovery in five key areas
 - Housing & Rebuilding
 - Health
 - Businesses & Jobs
 - Immigrant & Undocumented Communities
 - Infrastructure
- A list of community recommendations in each area with applicable agencies for implementation
 - Unless otherwise specified, the organizations identified are New York City-based agencies
- Relevant data visuals (charts, graphs, tables)
- Developed examples and ideas for implementation

2. TO THE *LEFT* OF EACH RECOMMENDATION IS THE RECOMMENDING NEIGHBORHOOD(S):

-  Red Hook (RH)
-  Coney Island (CI)
-  Brighton Beach (BB)
-  Sheepshead Bay (SH)
-  Gerritsen Beach (GB)
-  Canarsie (CA)
-  Borough-Wide (BW)

3. **Summing it all up are broader recommendations and implementation strategies** with a focus on increased community partnership and engagement in disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

4. **LASTLY, IN THE APPENDIX:**

- More information on the local community collaboratives
- A list of community partners who contributed to this guide

HOUSING & REBUILDING

THE LOSS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING THREATENS OUR COMMUNITIES

SNAPSHOT

When Sandy hit Brooklyn, the surge reached 112,992 residential units, causing damage to single and multi-family homes, multi-unit renter-occupied buildings, and public housing developments.³ Now, in neighborhoods like Gerritsen Beach where upwards of 90% of homes were flooded, residents have simply run out of money. Some continue to live on the upper floors of their homes, while others battle persistent mold and debris. Similarly, in New York City Housing Authority buildings, unaddressed housing needs leave tenants exhausted and

vulnerable to sickness. Some continue to rely on emergency back-up boilers, and regularly experience the loss of heat and hot water. But repair needs are not the only issue. In Canarsie, where the rate of foreclosure ranks highest in New York City, the approximately 1,700 lis pendens filings at the time of the storm (gathering data from January 2011 on) doubled to nearly 3,500 by June 2013.⁴ Lis pendens is a public document filed by a lender to notify the borrower that mortgage payments have fallen behind, initiating the foreclosure process. Some

homeowners experienced a loss of income due to the denial of coverage for damaged basement rental apartments, contributing to displacement and foreclosure. And across the board, homeowners are dealing with unmanageable hikes in flood insurance rates — an unrealistic expense for many who have spent down their life savings on repairs. Thousands of Brooklynites still need to get back in their homes or have their homes repaired in order to get on with their lives in a safe and manageable way.

³ Furman Center for Real Estate and Policy, New York University (March, 2013).

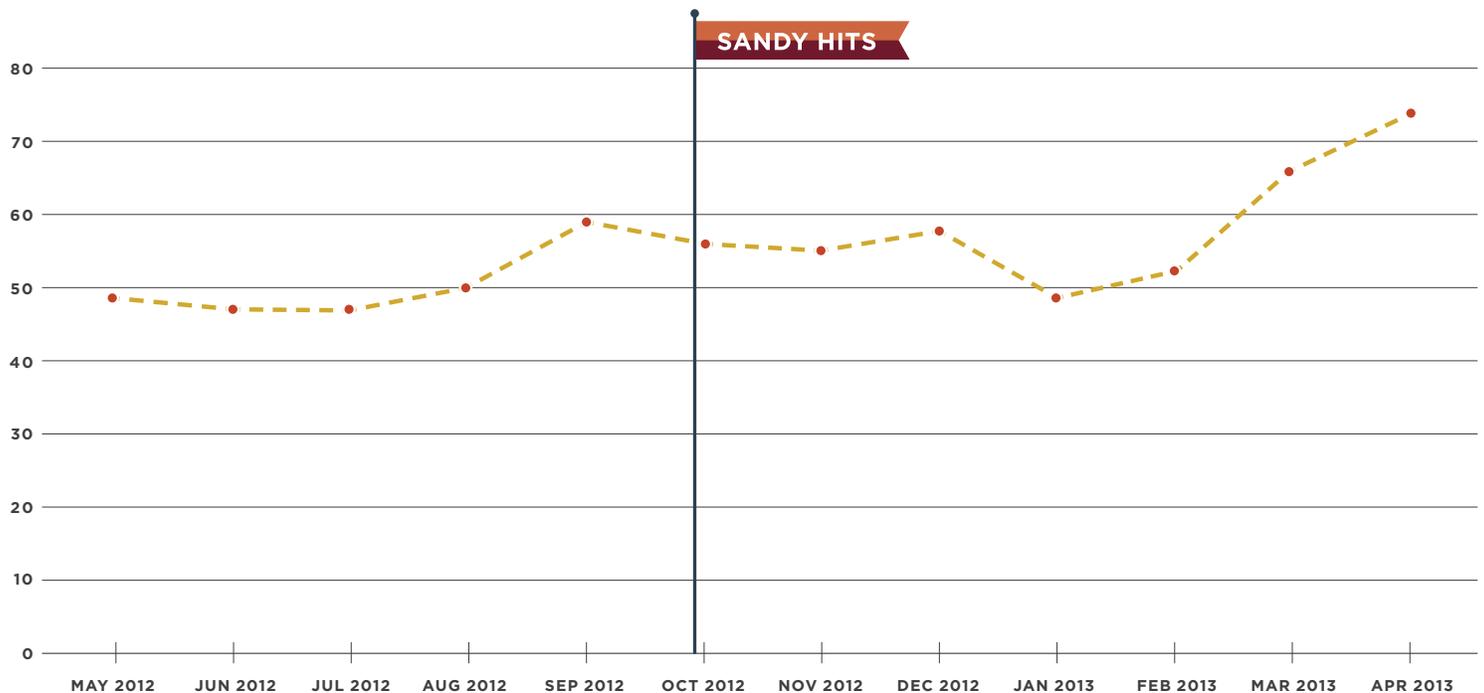
⁴ Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush (December, 2013).

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- RH** **CI** **Expedite the removal of debris** from abandoned residential buildings, as well as commercial and public spaces.
Department of Sanitation
- CI** **Create a program to deal with the issue of sinkholes** on homeowner property. Damage caused by sinkholes is not generally covered by insurance, nor have any of the city repair programs (Rapid Repairs, Build it Back) adequately addressed the issue.
NYC Recovery Office
- RH** **CI** **In New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) buildings, work with residents to move the recovery forward**, replace the temporary boilers causing inconsistent heating and air quality concerns, prioritize and address mold conditions (particularly in basement and lower-level units), and repair and reopen damaged community centers and playgrounds.
New York City Housing Authority, Department of Youth and Community Development
- RH** **CI** **Prioritize Sandy-impacted tenants** in need of apartment repairs by moving their cases to the top of the backlog list (rather than issuing ticket numbers as usual). This includes all cases of mold in Sandy-impacted housing developments.
New York City Housing Authority
- BW** **Create a mechanism** — such as a warranty — for residents receiving work done through Rapid Repairs and/or Build it Back to report unsatisfactory repairs, and address them. Improve communications, information sharing, and transparency around city use of federal funds. Promote repairs that support flood resiliency rather than identical reconstruction.
NYC Recovery Office
- BW** **Institute a program to assist those with mortgage payment issues resulting from a natural disaster**, through funding streams like Community Development Block Grants, rather than excusing interest for a period of time and then rolling it into the principal (therefore excusing nothing at all).
State Legislature, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- BW** **Lower property taxes** in proportion to the drop in property value after a disaster.
Department of Finance
- BW** **Create a pathway** for homeowners citywide to legalize basement apartments and bring them up to code without hikes in property taxes. This will open up resources for damaged basement units, bring displaced residents back to their communities, and secure rental income for homeowners at risk of foreclosure.
Department of Buildings, Department of City Planning, Department of Housing Preservation and Development
- RH** **Work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that zoning does not prevent residents from accessing resources.** In Red Hook, where many buildings are zoned for manufacturing and industrial use, landlords, renters, and retail owners faced significant challenges in securing recovery funds and assistance.
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of City Planning, NYC Recovery Office
- BW** **Explore and implement solutions to deal with the issue of abandoned properties, perhaps involving the New York State Land Bank Program.** Some homes, buildings, and commercial spaces have remained vacant since Sandy hit, and community members are frustrated by the negative backlash these empty spaces have on the value of neighboring properties and community safety.
NYC Recovery Office, Empire State Development Corporation

Lis Pendens Filings* in Brooklyn City Council District 46

FROM MAY 2012 THROUGH APRIL 2013 (SIX MONTHS BEFORE AND AFTER SANDY)



Data source: Property Shark. *Includes non-duplicate records with valid NYC Zip Code and excludes condos, coops and all non 1-4 family homes.

DATA

This chart, provided by the Center for New York City Neighborhoods, shows lis pendens filings for City Council District 46 (which includes Canarsie and Gerritsen Beach, among other neighborhoods) over the course of a year. Following Sandy, a 90-day

moratorium on foreclosure initiation for federally insured mortgages in disaster areas went into effect, with some New York State chartered banks and registered mortgage services participating. In addition, many servicers offered forbearances to impacted homeowners extending

beyond the typical 3-month period. Therefore, the steady increase of filings beginning in March 2013 is just one piece of the overall picture of at-risk homeowners in District 46.

Chhaya CDC's Accessory Dwelling Unit Code

In 2008, Chhaya Community Development Corporation, in partnership with the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, released a report to New York City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), calling for the development of an "Accessory Dwelling Unit" code to legalize many of the city's unregulated housing units (over 100,000 units at the time of publication). These units, located in the basements of single family homes, house many of the city's new immigrants and provide a critical source of income for homeowners. By allowing homeowners a pathway to legalize these units, the city would also ensure fire safety and health compliance within the units and more effectively plan for population growth through the accurate allocation of resources for public schools, sanitation, and other services in the area. Furthermore, a proposed property tax abatement would serve the dual purpose of incentivizing participation in the program, and folding the unit into the rent regulated housing stock.

When Sandy hit, the issue of tenant occupancy in illegal basement apartments took on new meaning. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), responsible for

verifying occupancy and awarding assistance for damaged units, was unable to provide assistance for illegal dwelling units, leaving many homeowners with unmanageable repair costs to flooded basement apartments. In addition to assuming the full cost of damage, owners are simultaneously dealing with the loss of rental income — a significant contribution to mortgage payments. Tenants who occupied these units, many of whom are undocumented members of their communities, have been displaced altogether. For tenants with U.S citizenship, proof of residency in the form of a lease, rent receipt, or letter from the landlord is required to receive federal assistance — a difficult task for some whose landlords fear punishment by the city for renting illegal dwelling units in the first place.

Now more than ever, our city needs to address this issue. Chhaya's proposal is just one example of a path toward achieving a stronger recovery for Brooklyn and residents city-wide. For more information on Chhaya's Basement Apartments Safe for Everyone (BASE) Campaign, visit basecampaign.wordpress.com.

HEALTH

A CALL FOR PREPAREDNESS OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

SNAPSHOT

With natural disaster comes a range of public health concerns, from physical ailments to newfound mental and emotional needs. In the aftermath of Sandy, clinics and health professionals were unprepared to recognize and treat the many manifestations of mold exposure in residents. Some doctors with practices in the impacted neighborhoods were unable to continue taking patients due to damaged offices, leaving residents in need of care. As a result, mold-related illnesses remain a leading health concern in communities that were flooded, and particularly

in homes where vulnerable residents have yet to identify effects or seek treatment. In addition, the psychological impact of Sandy — both for survivors and first responders — was unprecedented. Many residents continually struggle to function day-to-day, coping simultaneously with the loss of possessions and stress of rebuilding without adequate resources. **And while some issues are unavoidable, others can be mitigated through careful preparation and planning.** For instance, in the weeks following the storm, many local pharmacies were unable to reopen, leaving

residents without their needed prescriptions. In Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay, this proved to be a particular threat to elderly and disabled populations whose access to alternative pharmacies and transportation was severely limited. Now, leaders in these communities are working with their pharmacists to connect with pharmacies located outside of the flood zone. The following page are some recommendations to help further the recovery and prepare for the future.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

BW

Establish a citywide protocol to educate the medical community immediately after a crisis. In doing so, disaster-related health issues are more likely to be properly diagnosed and resolved.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department for the Aging

RH

CI

GB

Incorporate the use of mobile clinics in citywide preparedness plans, and ensure that mobile units are assigned to every neighborhood (rather than Council District) impacted.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Federal Community Health Centers Initiative

BW

At the city level, prepare to disseminate flood-related medical information at any moment. If agency representatives, contractors, and communities are properly informed about best practices to avoid disaster-related illness, we are less likely to see the pervasive and recurring health impacts of mold in residents' homes.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Emergency Management

CA

In addition to enrollment services in recovery programs, ensure that enrollment services in public assistance programs are available in impacted communities, and that on-site specialists speak the languages of the community. In areas like Canarsie, where issues of food insecurity increased post-Sandy, the nearest enrollment office for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is in East New York.

NYC Recovery Team, Human Resources Administration, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Extend contracts for mental health and crisis counseling programs — such as Project Hope — for a minimum of two years post-disaster. Ongoing monetary demands for repairs and rebuilding, the loss of treasured belongings, and post-traumatic stress in our communities will take time to resolve and heal.

New York State Office of Mental Health, NYC Recovery Office, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

In the years following a disaster, regularly test the ambient air quality of impacted neighborhoods.

Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

SH

Create a mobile screening service using transportable devices (such as wristbands) to assess and alleviate the threat of long-term mold exposure, particularly among elderly people.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Establish a voluntary “patient census” of residents who, based on medical need, want to be contacted in their homes in the event of a disaster. Centralize this census with a designated city agency. Those populating the census might include people on life support, with disabilities, stringent medical needs, serious chronic conditions, and senior citizens.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Identify an individual or team of medical professionals trained in emergency disaster response to coordinate outreach to citizens on the aforementioned patient census, and others who may not have access to care during the storm. These coordinators would direct the effort and ensure that individuals are visited in their homes and connected to medical care.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTINUED

BW

Establish a reserve corps of medical professionals by borough neighborhood who, under the direction of the aforementioned coordinators, will activate as **“boots on the ground”** to perform in-home medical status checks and effect the medical response for citizens on the “patient census.” Reserve corps should encompass a broad scope of training, including doctors, physician assistants, nurses, medical students, and Emergency Management Services (EMS).

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Create geographically adaptable protocols for the medical reserve corps as a baseline for initiating and organizing a medical relief effort. A standard medical intake form, flow-chart/decision tree, and maps subdividing city regions for catchment by each team would provide direction during disaster circumstances.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Develop protocols in collaboration with community organizations to address medical needs specific to the disaster location. This would help facilitate a joint effort between the medical reserve corps and local citizens.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Purchase and safely store resources for use by medical reserve corps, such as radios, generator powered computer services, and cellular phone mobile signal stations. Other supplies should address the anticipated needs of those in the patient census, such as supplemental oxygen, insulin, and battery powered nebulizers.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

BW

Create a record-sharing network of doctors and pharmacies in high- and low-risk areas. This would allow patients to retrieve their prescriptions from neighboring locations in the case of an emergency.

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Clinical Diagnoses of Depression Before & After Superstorm Sandy

	BEFORE SANDY SEPT. 15-OCT. 28	AFTER SANDY NOV. 1-DEC. 15	CHANGE (IN PCT. PTS.)	CHANGE (IN %)
MOST AFFECTED ZIP CODES IN NJ, NY, AND CT	11.7%	14.6%	2.9	25%
REMAINING AREAS IN NJ, NY, AND CT	15.5%	18.2%	2.7	17%
OTHER 47 STATES	16.6%	17.1%	0.5	3%

SOURCE: GALLUP-HEALTHWAYS WELL-BEING INDEX

DATA

The table above shows the findings of daily interviews conducted between September 15th and December 15th, 2012. An initiative of the *Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index*, this analysis is based on 6,414 interviews with residents of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In areas most heavily impacted by Sandy, 1,713 interviews took

place before the storm, and 1,690 after the storm. In those zip codes most impacted, the poll found a 25% increase in diagnoses of depression in the six weeks that followed Superstorm Sandy, suggesting approximately 540,000 new diagnoses. For more information, visit www.gallup.com.

Healthy San Francisco

When Sandy hit, one of the largest health problems was the lack of access to medication for people with existing conditions. These were residents who — due to a range of factors including evacuation, flooding, and the closing of doctors offices in affected areas — were unable to access their prescription information, medical records, and insurance cards, and therefore could not obtain their needed medicine. Many struggled to contact their doctors, and some doctors could not retrieve the patient files needed to write prescriptions. In other cases, residents stuck in their homes were running out of prescription medications and unable to physically get to a pharmacy. This proved a particular threat to elderly and disabled community members living in high-rise towers. Furthermore, for patients in substance recovery, the barriers to accessing specialized medication such as methadone presented a frighteningly dangerous situation. The closure of clinics in flooded neighborhoods left volunteer doctors unsure of what and how to prescribe for these patients, and some patients were forced to endure the mental and physical realities of withdrawal. Without the proper network to support record-sharing among doctors and pharmacies, the suffering of our communities increased in the weeks and months following Sandy.

One group that brought volunteer doctors on the ground after Sandy was Physicians for a National Health Program — New York Metro Chapter (PNHP), a single issue organization advocating a universal, comprehensive single-payer national health program — improved Medicare for all — with more than 18,000 members across the United States. PNHP identifies the need for record sharing as a critical element in emergency preparedness, and understands state and federal government cooperation as crucial to the success of such an initiative. By creating a mechanism that requires doctors and pharmacies to share medical information — beginning in coastal, high-risk communities — patients and doctors are better protected in an emergency situation. While PNHP advocates this policy change in the context of a national health program, others have successfully implemented unified programs at the local level.

One example is *Healthy San Francisco*, a coordinated health care coverage program that began enrolling uninsured patients in 2007. The program transformed the traditional safety-net system — once a collection of public hospitals, private nonprofit hospitals, public and private clinics, and community health centers — into a comprehensive program that incorporates the features of managed care, specialty care and hospitalization, prepaid program fees, and customer service.⁵ Among the many components of this program is the use of information technology via a web-based system. This system provides a simple platform for doctors and patients alike to accomplish a variety of goals — from enrollment and eligibility of services, to the storing of insurance information and care records. In an emergency, such a system could be easily tapped for use in prescription filling, contacting vulnerable patients, listing functional care locations, and more. With the help of our local government officials, service providers, and the medical community, such a system could rapidly improve the preparedness of our most at-risk coastal communities.

⁵ Katz, M. & Brigham, T. “Transforming a Traditional Safety Net into a Coordinated Care System: Lessons from Healthy San Francisco.” *Health Affairs*, 30, no.2 (2011):237-245.

IMMIGRANT & UNDOCUMENTED COMMUNITIES

END THE DISCRIMINATORY ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

SNAPSHOT

In disaster recovery, immigrant and undocumented residents face a range of unique impediments. Language barriers, limited access to information, and exclusion from federally funded programs present ongoing challenges that threaten the livelihood of these communities. In addition, many undocumented residents fear that participation in non-governmental assistance programs may lead to greater housing complications and deportation, leaving some to remain in unsafe conditions or relocate. Prior to Sandy, a large portion of the new immigrant community resided in illegal basement apartments — an affordable housing option that also contributes significantly to

the income of homeowners. **In Canarsie, FEMA's inability to cover the cost of damages to illegal dwelling units led to the displacement of tenants and exacerbated foreclosures.** Furthermore, the displacement of undocumented and immigrant residents due to non-inclusive programs, culturally incompetent materials and outreach, and federal policy has severely impacted business corridors in Brooklyn. In Sheepshead Bay, where many businesses on the main corridors are immigrant-owned and operated, repairs were paid for largely out of pocket and rent payments remain an ongoing struggle. The inaccessibility of funds for immigrant and undocumented communities jeopardizes the economic vitality of entire neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS



Conduct preparedness planning that focuses specifically on undocumented residents, and work with the federal government to adjust program guidelines to meet the needs of our diverse communities. Until access to resources is ensured for all, many of our neighborhoods will struggle to recover.

Office of Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Human Resources Administration, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs



When it comes to needs assessments and resource dissemination, **omit questions about citizenship status** (e.g. qualified alien) across all outreach and canvassing efforts. Instead, build trust and credibility within our immigrant communities, and connect residents with the resources they need to recover.

NYC Recovery Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Office of Emergency Management



Expand the focus of government rebuild programs to include apartment buildings and mixed-use spaces, including those not owner-occupied. Our immigrant communities — the majority of which live in multi-family dwellings — need federal resources to support their housing recovery.

NYC Recovery Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National VOAD



For those organizing city-wide recovery initiatives, **survey the communities impacted and partner with local community members when doing outreach or disseminating material.** In addition to translating material into the appropriate languages, it is also important that the person delivering that information is a familiar face and trusted member of the community.

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, NYC Recovery Office, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Office of Emergency Management, Department of City Planning, Implementation of Executive Order 120 on Language Access



Increase the inclusivity of assistance programs across the board to include undocumented and immigrant residents.

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Department of Small Business Services, Department of City Planning, Human Resources Administration



Formally recognize the importance of day laborers — many of whom in NYC are undocumented workers — **in relief and reconstruction efforts by protecting their rights as workers during and after reconstruction through a variety of mechanisms**, including the allocation of funds for worker centers and protection from threats of deportation. A study on the role of day laborers in the aftermath of Sandy found that 91% of laborers interviewed reported their organization participating in storm cleanup and/or reconstruction efforts.⁶

Office of Emergency Management, Department of Small Business Services, NYC Recovery Office



Alter Build it Back's Temporary Disaster Assistance Program (TDAP), which provides housing vouchers for low-income renters impacted by Sandy, **to include undocumented immigrants.** The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 guarantees undocumented immigrants access to short-term, in-kind, non-cash, emergency disaster relief, leaving no reason for the exclusion of undocumented immigrants from this particular public assistance program.

NYC Recovery Office, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

⁶ Cordero-Guzman, H. et al. (2013). "Day Labor, Worker Centers & Disaster Relief Work in the Aftermath of Superstorm Sandy." New York: School of Public Affairs, Baruch College, City University of New York.

DATA

BOROUGH	REGION	ZIP CODES	NON-CITIZEN ESTIMATE	TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY LEP POPULATION
STATEN ISLAND	MIDLAND, PORT RICHMOND, SOUTH BEACH	10306, 10305	8,143	SPANISH, CHINESE, ITALIAN, KOREAN, AFRICAN LANGUAGES
BROOKLYN	BRIGHTON BEACH, MANHATTAN BEACH, AND SHEEPSHEAD BAY	11235	11,784	RUSSIAN, SPANISH, CHINESE, ARABIC/ URDU
	CONY ISLAND	11224	4,556	RUSSIAN, SPANISH, CHINESE, URDU
	CANARSIE	11236	15,372	HAITIAN CREOLE, SPANISH, RUSSIAN, FRENCH
	GERRITSEN BEACH, GRAVESEND	11223	12,392	RUSSIAN, SPANISH, CHINESE, ARABIC
QUEENS	FAR ROCKAWAY	11691, 11692, 11693, 11694, 11695	13,813	SPANISH, RUSSIAN, HAITIAN CREOLE, FRENCH
TOTAL	ALL	ALL	66,060	OVERALL: SPANISH, RUSSIAN, HAITIAN CREOLE, CHINESE

A December 2013 Immigrant Outreach Initiative report released by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Affairs in partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies highlighted the efforts of Immigrant Outreach Workers (IOWs) to build the capacity of community-based organizations by assisting with the response to immigrant households. Fifty IOWs were deployed through this initiative, connecting with and documenting the experiences of more than 16,800 New Yorkers affected by Superstorm Sandy. They found that surveyed individuals hailed from more than 80 countries, with 84.2% of those reporting country of origin born outside of the United States; 72.2% of those reporting a language preference spoke a non-English language. Based on this effort, the table above shows number estimates of non-citizens in a variety of Brooklyn neighborhoods, as well as the top languages spoken by limited-English proficient (LEP) residents.

Make the Road New York Pushes for the Inclusion of Undocumented Immigrants in NYC's Emergency Rental Assistance Program

In the year and months since Superstorm Sandy, the housing crisis in New York City has taken a turn for the worse. Many renters, particularly low-income tenants, displaced by the storm have struggled to find secure, affordable housing, and rents have skyrocketed in the affected areas. **Make the Road New York** (Make the Road, MRNY), a nonprofit group working to build power and achieve justice among Latino and working class communities through organizing, policy innovation, transformative education, and survival services, surveyed 450 renters living in Staten Island neighborhoods when Sandy hit. The survey found a median rent increase of \$200 since Sandy hit, amounting to a \$2,400 increase annually. The median income of these renters is \$19,670 annually, with 35% percent of those reporting being undocumented immigrants.⁷ This loss of affordable housing occurred across storm-impacted communities, and continues to pose a serious threat to low-income and immigrant renters.

In response to the storm, Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds were allocated to the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to create the Temporary Disaster Assistance Program (TDAP). This program helps low-income New Yorkers displaced by Superstorm Sandy by providing what the City describes as “short-term” emergency assistance in the form of housing vouchers.⁸

Unfortunately for some, the City's policy for administering this program excludes undocumented immigrants.⁹ However, as MRNY discovered upon further research, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) guarantees undocumented immigrants access to short-term, in-kind, non-cash, emergency disaster relief — parameters that fit perfectly within the City's TDAP.¹⁰ Since early 2013, MRNY's Legal Department has been discussing this interpretation with City officials and HUD, asking the agency to direct City officials in allowing undocumented immigrants access to this program, thus setting a precedent for the inclusion of undocumented immigrants in federally funded disaster relief programs nation-wide.

Now, nearly seven months after the creation of TDAP, the City has not implemented measures that would ensure undocumented immigrants are included in TDAP. As a result, many low-income tenants continue to search for secure, affordable housing, feeling the ongoing impact of Sandy daily. Therefore, in order for all New Yorkers to recover, it is crucial for local leaders to join Make the Road in asking HUD to direct HPD and the City of New York on this matter, and ultimately allow the use of CDBG-DR funds to provide emergency rental assistance to undocumented immigrants still displaced by Sandy.

⁷ Make the Road New York (January, 2014).

⁸ http://www.nyc.gov/html/recovery/downloads/pdf/nyc_cdbg-dr_action_plan_hud_submission.pdf

⁹ http://www.nyc.gov/html/cdbg/downloads/pdf/public_comments_section_from_cdbg_action_plan.pdf

¹⁰ 8 U.S.C. § 1611(b)

BUSINESSES & JOBS

ORGANIZED BUSINESS CORRIDORS HELP COMMUNITIES RECOVER

SNAPSHOT

Six months after the storm, 85% of Brooklyn businesses that applied for a loan had been denied Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance. In neighborhoods like Sheepshead Bay and Brighton Beach, where many local businesses are immigrant-owned, cash-heavy establishments, rejection by federal assistance programs was widespread. Many micro-businesses did not qualify for SBA loans — a requirement for much of the programs to follow — and were unable to identify viable funding sources. Furthermore, **a lack of infrastructure in Brooklyn's local business**

communities contributed to disparities in recovery. Organized corridors with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) or merchants associations were able to access information and resources more readily than those with weaker networks. And for some communities, the loss of businesses due to Sandy exacerbated pre-storm unemployment rates. In Coney Island, where 20% of the businesses on Mermaid Avenue remain closed, unemployed residents — both skilled and unskilled — are too often overlooked for rebuild and construction job opportunities.¹¹

¹¹ #ConeyRecovers, Brooklyn, New York. (October, 2013).

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

CA RH CI When hiring contractors for repair and rebuild jobs, **prioritize and perform aggressive outreach in the communities and housing developments where work sites exist.** Furthermore, incentivize contractors to hire workers from within the local community.

NYC Recovery Office, Department of Small Business Services, New York City Housing Authority

BW **Provide career training for local unemployed residents that address the needs of our communities post-disaster,** such as the Painter's Apprenticeship Programs sponsored by the New York City Council and administered through the New York City Housing Authority. Many are willing and capable of working toward recovery, but lack the appropriate training and certification for hiring.

NYC Recovery Office, Department of Small Business Services, New York City Housing Authority

BW **Modify disaster-related loan programs to cover business interruption, minimize the amount of paperwork required for loan application, and increase grant opportunities.** Our local businesses — particularly immigrant-run — fall short in producing much of the records and documentation needed to apply, and are therefore unable to complete applications and get the assistance they need to survive.

U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Emergency Management, Mayor's Recovery Business Acceleration Teams

SH **Prioritize and support coastal communities in establishing merchants associations, or in some cases Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).** When our business communities are organized and able to self-advocate, they are more resilient and have better access to resources.

Department of Small Business Services

SH **Set up local disaster business centers in the impacted communities, and partner with local leaders to ensure accessibility of services to non-English speaking residents and owners.** These centers should remain for the duration of recovery.

Department of Small Business Services, Office of Emergency Management

SH CA RH CI **To address the problem of decreased foot traffic post-disaster, provide funding for projects that publicize small business re-openings,** as well as opportunities for business owners to relocate within the district.

Department of Small Business Services, NYC Economic Development Corporation, NYC Recovery Office, Empire State Development Corporation

SH To support businesses struggling with loan payments and landlord issues, **encourage landlords to form and/or join Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and participate in the recovery of devastated corridors.**

Department of Small Business Services, NYC Recovery Office

RH To help struggling businesses with marketing needs and loan payments post-disaster, **set up a revolving loan fund locally.**

Department of Small Business Services, NYC Economic Development Corporation

RH **Provide comprehensive preparedness planning for the small business community,** particularly in relation to record-keeping and contacting vendors and employees in the case of an emergency.

Department of Small Business Services, Office of Emergency Management

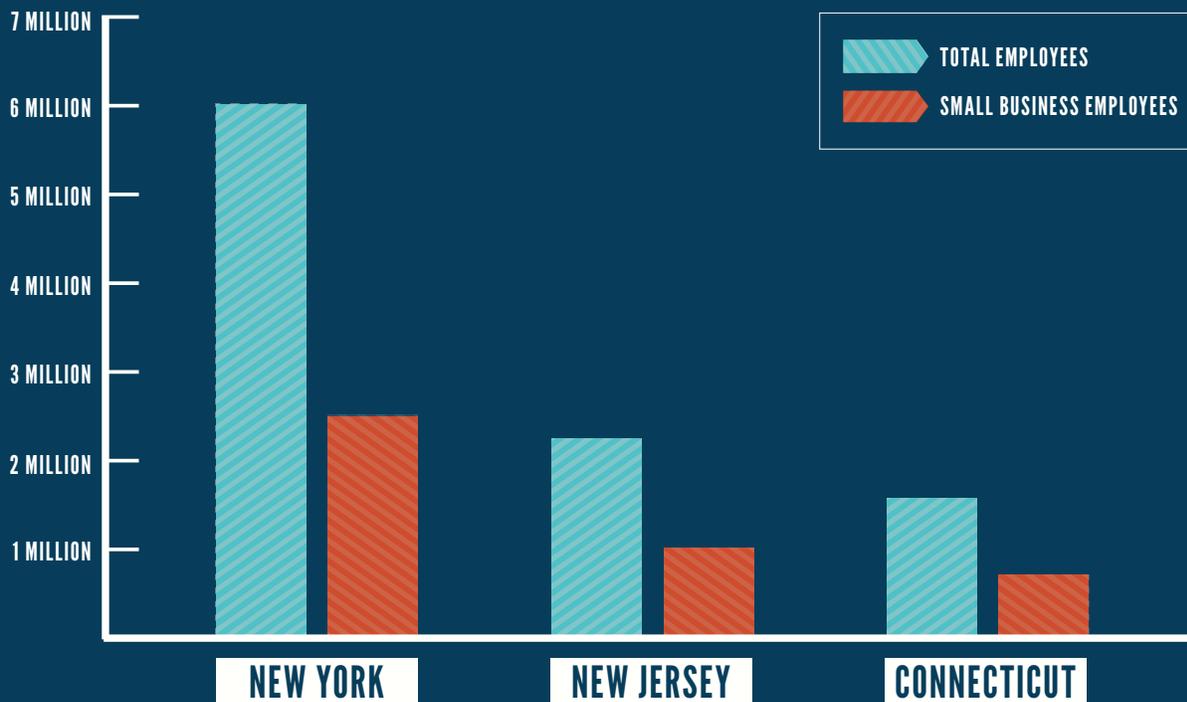
BW In addition to bringing in new business sectors, **ensure that recovery-related programs assist existing small businesses** — particularly those that are immigrant-owned.

New York City Economic Development Corporation, Department of Small Business Services, Mayor's Recovery Business Acceleration Teams

DATA

In a **Dun & Bradstreet** (D&B) Disaster Impact Report released in November 2012, researchers found that Superstorm Sandy would impact nearly 1 million businesses in New York State, approximately 500,000 of which are small businesses. The study used D&B's pre-existing database of over 200 million businesses to conduct this analysis, noting the concentration of small businesses in Sandy's path (72% of businesses in New York qualify as small businesses, with 10 or less employees). In addition, of the 9.3 million employees working in 19 counties impacted by Sandy, 5.7 million are located in New York. The charts below show the potential impact on businesses and jobs in the tri-state area.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON JOBS



POTENTIAL BUSINESS IMPACT BY STATE



The Alliance for a Just Rebuilding’s “Back Home, Back to Work” Initiative

When business corridors like Mermaid Avenue in Coney Island and Emmons Avenue in Sheepshead Bay were knocked out by Superstorm Sandy, many workers found themselves suddenly unemployed. In neighborhoods like Coney Island, where unemployment rates were among the highest in the city pre-storm, Sandy proved to be an unprecedented exacerbating factor. And though the storm created an overwhelming amount of repair work, efforts to tap into local unemployed networks were minimal.

Recognizing the potential for job creation and wealth of local resources in residents seeking employment, the Alliance for a Just Rebuilding — a citywide coalition of labor unions, worker centers, and community, faith-based, environmental and policy organizations united to address issues of justice and equity in the recovery and rebuilding post-Sandy — created and proposed a program called Back Home, Back to Work (BHBW). This

initiative was designed to address the widespread need for mold removal and remediation by tapping into networks of qualified contractors and union workers, and providing the skills, training, and protection to local unemployed residents. In doing so, the BHBW program would create hundreds of new jobs and help expedite the urgent work of removing mold from homes and businesses.

BHBW proposed a variety of programmatic functions to best address the issues at hand. First, BHBW would connect private and public entities with reliable, expert, and cost-effective contractors to determine which homes and businesses should be handled as part of the same project. Using a block-by-block system, BHBW contractors would see removal through to completion and provide comprehensive treatment in a given area. This would ensure that home and building owners did not have to pay for mold treatment more than once.

With a focus on local residents and hard-to-hire populations (long-term unemployed, formerly incarcerated, and public assistance recipients), BHBW’s intensive training would include modules on OSHA safety rights and regulations, respirator use, and mold remediation skills. Finally, workers would receive union membership for the length of the program, thus increasing their long-term employability.

Back Home, Back to Work was piloted at a small scale through a partnership between community organizations and Local 78 of the Laborers, the union in charge of mold remediation and other hazardous waste removal. BHBW trained community members, some of whom are now working side by side with union workers to remediate homes and businesses.

INFRASTRUCTURE

BROOKLYN'S INFRASTRUCTURE FAILED THE TEST OF SANDY

SNAPSHOT

Outdated and inadequate infrastructure in coastal Brooklyn contributed to a range of ongoing storm-related issues. In Gerritsen Beach, a faulty sewage system and above-ground power lines were among the most problematic infrastructural failures, and storm drains remain clogged across our coastal communities today.

Despite the efforts of workers to stop the flow of water from overwhelming the Coney Island Waterwaste Treatment Plant in Sheepshead Bay, the plant was eventually inundated and released 213 million gallons of raw sewage and Combined Sewer Overflow.¹² In Red Hook, residents were without power and heat for weeks, and communication was limited.

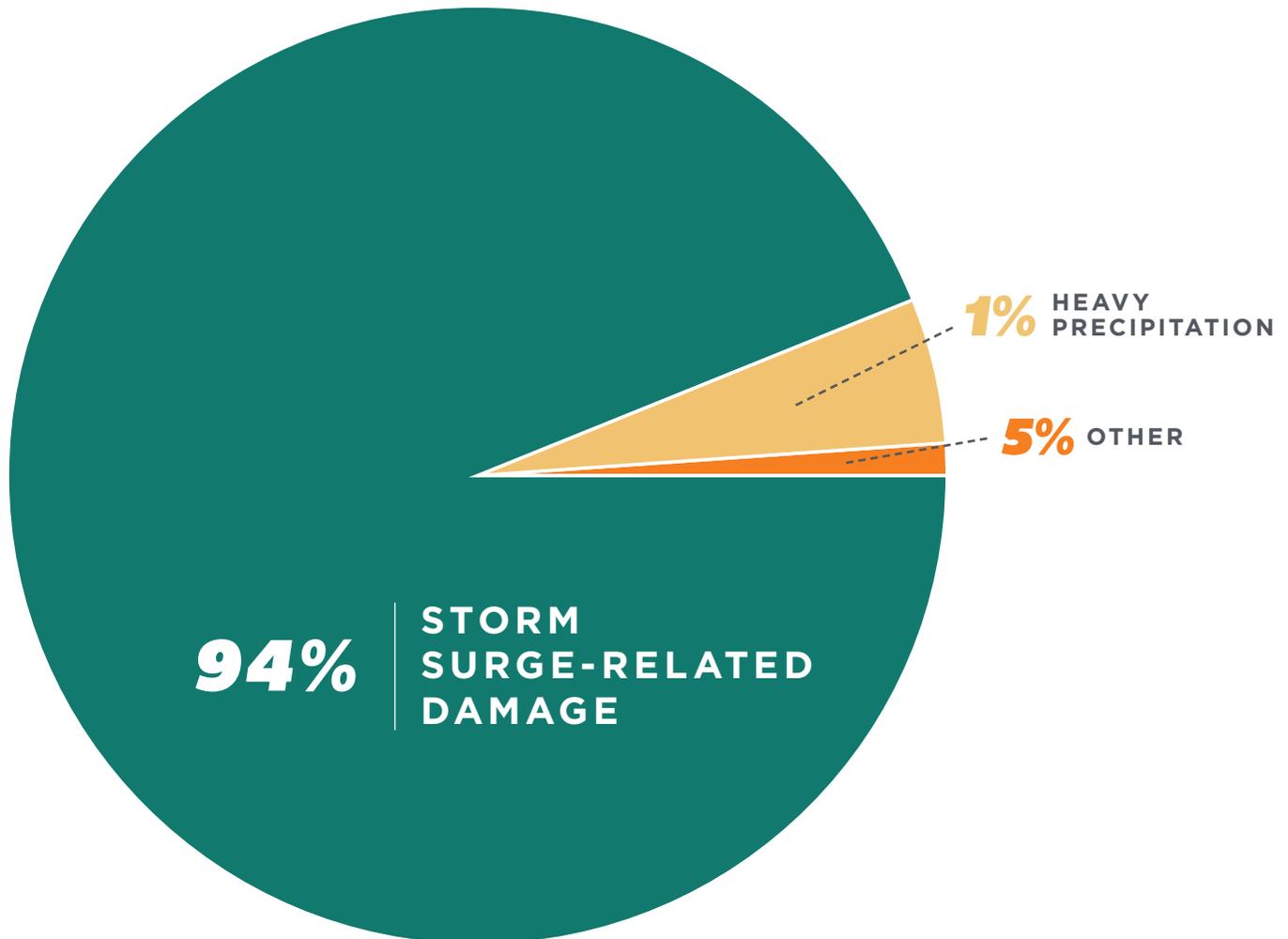
This posed a serious threat to more vulnerable community members, such as elderly and disabled residents living in high-rise towers. Transportation also proved to be a leading issue in Brooklyn, with seven East River subway tunnels flooded during the storm. **Coastal Brooklyn needs major updates and investments in resilient infrastructure.**

¹² Kenward, A. et al. (2013). "Sewage Overflows from Superstorm Sandy." New Jersey: Climate Central.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- RH GB** **To prevent sewage from backing up in homes when a storm hits, seal off properties individually by placing a simple valve on the traps of each dwelling.** This would temporarily discontinue use of waste-lines, but prevent a slew of infrastructure and health problems caused by waste overflow.
Department of Environmental Protection
- CI** **Address the issue of clogged storm drains and backed up sewer lines** by dredging waste lines of sand, which continues to clog drains today.
Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Design and Construction
- SH** **Update water-waste treatment plants** to be storm-resilient and functional throughout extreme weather.
Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Design and Construction
- RH GB** **Work with utility providers to develop micro grids in storm-impacted communities,** therefore allowing sections of the neighborhood to restore power more quickly following a heavy storm. In Gerritsen Beach, because the power lines were traced back to every single dwelling unit before powering back on, the outage lasted for weeks.
Office of Emergency Management, NYC Recovery Office
- BB** **As part of the Build it Back program, replace electrical meters damaged by salt water during the storm.** Many to date are still not replaced or repaired to proper functioning.
NYC Recovery Office
- BW** For changes in infrastructure to happen in the least disruptive and most efficient way possible, **agencies at the federal, state, and local level must establish a clear system of communication that includes the impacted communities, such as a coordinating task force.** Having the community voice at every table throughout the process is the only way to ensure that resiliency needs are fully met.
Office of Emergency Management, NYC Recovery Office
- CA** **Increase the number of local buses operating in affected neighborhoods post-storm, and ensure that buses are running their full routes.** For coastal communities, ferry service should be enhanced. This way, residents can access resources and travel outside of their communities when subway lines are down.
Metropolitan Transportation Authority/New York City Transit, Department of Transportation
- CI RH** **Move boilers out of basements and lower level floors in developments located in flood zones, and reposition them in elevated spaces.** Simply sealing boilers will not prevent water damage, as the buildings are old and water seeps in from various places.
New York City Housing Authority
- RH** **Create a publicly reviewable process for the annual inspection and repair of sea front storm gates.**
Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- RH** **Work with utility providers to identify local sources of alternative energy to access in a power outage.** One potential source for some coastal communities is wind power.
Office of Emergency Management, Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability
- RH CA** **Address rotting trees,** particularly those in close proximity to housing developments. For example, there are many dying sycamore trees surrounding the Red Hook Houses and in affected parts of the Canarsie neighborhood. If a storm were to hit, these trees would be the cause of much housing damage.
Department of Parks and Recreation

STORM SURGE CAUSED 94% OF SEWAGE OVERFLOWS FROM SANDY



DATA

In April 2013, **Climate Central** released a report on sewage overflow caused by Superstorm Sandy, analyzing the amount of wastewater overflow, percentage of overflow treated, and leading causes of the spills. Using data from a variety of state agencies, municipal governments, plant operators, and the Environmental Protection Agency, the report found that an estimated 10.9 billion gallons of wastewater overflowed as a result of Sandy, with 47% of spill volume occurring in New York. In addition, and as the pie chart above shows, the leading cause of overflow was Sandy's tremendous and unprecedented storm surge, responsible for 94% of sewage spill volume. In New York City alone, 1.6 billion gallons of overflow came from the city's 14 treatment plants.

Urban Green Council Proposes the Prioritization of Electrical Equipment

Less than eight months after Sandy, the NYC Building Resiliency Task Force of the **Urban Green Council** — New York's U.S. Green Building Council (USBGC) chapter, whose mission is to advance the sustainability of urban buildings through education, advocacy, and research — released 33 recommendations to protect buildings in the face of extreme weather.¹³ In a matter of weeks, 18 of these proposals were heard at the City Council, and nearly half have been implemented to date. Covering everything from backup fire safety communication to installing wind-resistant windows in homes, these proposals represent the multitude of infrastructural issues we face in New York City.

One proposal that speaks to the recommendations of our communities in coastal Brooklyn calls for the prioritization of electrical equipment to run on backup power. This would allow buildings to remain habitable during long periods of blackout, while providing a more reliable alternative to generators used solely during emergency situations. The proposal offers a suggested prioritization order of electrical equipment for backup power use, beginning with illuminated exit signs, fire alarms, corridor and stairwell lighting, security equipment and fuel pump systems. Following are sewage and water pumps, parking egress (lifts and lighting), and convenience power for building occupants. Lastly, the final tiers include heating systems such as control panels, boilers, and fans, and habitability equipment like refrigerators and telecommunications rooms.

For types of backup power, the Council suggests cogeneration, solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, and central battery systems integrated with either cogeneration or PV systems. As opposed to emergency generators, these options would allow a large portion of the prioritized electrical equipment to withstand extended blackouts, thus allowing the buildings to remain habitable during this time. In areas like Red Hook, where more than 8,000 people living in NYCHA high-rise towers were without power for weeks, the city's implementation of a proposal such as this could significantly improve the response and relief efforts of future disasters.

¹³ Urban Green Council, NYC Building Resiliency Task Force. "Sandy: One Year Later." (October, 2013)

COMMUNITY AT THE TABLE

AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY



“We need to incorporate communication and cooperation as a strategy into every disaster response, and work compassionately together as we build the world that our children will inherit. I know that when I lay my head down at the end of this road I want to leave a better world behind.”

- JAMESON WELLS, GERRITSEN BEACH LONG TERM RECOVERY PROJECT

The following are broad reflections with ten recommendations that draw on the collective wisdom and experience of residents, community organizations, elected officials and others in our Sandy-impacted communities. They speak to the importance of re-thinking our city’s approach to “business as usual” for emergency management and disaster recovery. Community should be placed at the center of planning, response, and recovery, not on the periphery. Of the many critical lessons learned by our city’s residents and neighborhoods over the past 15 months, the need for stronger, more genuine partnerships between community and government is perhaps the most resounding.

What We Know

- ✓ **Local coalitions are critical agents in long-term recovery and resiliency.** Communities with a strong social infrastructure recovered more swiftly and successfully than communities with few or no established networks. Local recovery collaboratives — such as those supported by the Brooklyn Recovery Fund — comprised of community organizations, faith-based groups, social service providers, local businesses, and long-time residents are enhancing existing networks, while forming new stakeholder partnerships in more fragmented and vulnerable communities. By working in collaboration with one another, coalition members are able to increase neighborhood resiliency and strengthen the social fabric of their communities.
- ✓ **Borough- and community-wide institutions can play a key role as intermediaries between government, relief agencies, and community groups.** When a disaster hits, agencies specializing in relief and recovery are not always best positioned to navigate our communities in the most inclusive and effective way possible. Larger nonprofits can act as a liaison between impacted communities and disaster and government agencies in a variety of ways. These include facilitating cross-sector partnerships and convenings for enhanced collaboration on programs and strategies, promoting access to relevant information, and assisting local coalitions in building the capacity needed to manage a variety of recovery resources.
- ✓ **It is crucial that communities are at the table when planning and coordinating preparedness, response, and long-term recovery efforts.** There is no substitute for community members with long-standing knowledge of a neighborhood. Therefore, when it comes to preparedness planning and the coordination of various phases in disaster recovery, these community partners must be involved at every stage. Their knowledge of people and place-based history is invaluable when it comes to adequately preparing for disaster, informing response strategy, and ensuring that plans and information reach the people in the community. Furthermore, as major resources and long-term projects enter communities post-disaster, these players have the unique ability to advise and trouble-shoot throughout the process, and help sustain investments and engagement over time.
- ✓ **The economic and residential aspects of a community are intertwined.** Sandy recovery thus far has had a strong focus on providing resources for homeowners, building owners, and tenants impacted by the storm and rightly so. Unfortunately, the small business community received less focus and attention, resulting in inadequate resources so desperately needed to fully recover. Many impacted business owners also live in their communities, and play a major role in sustaining the economic vitality and property value of a neighborhood. With dilapidated business corridors, critical retail amenities are lost, and housing stock is destined to decrease in value, making it more difficult for housing to be preserved. For these reasons, government and relief agencies must begin to view our communities holistically in order for Brooklyn neighborhoods to truly recover.
- ✓ **Superstorm Sandy led to the rethinking of everyday vulnerabilities.** This disaster and ongoing recovery continues to shed light on the social and physical infrastructure weakness that existed pre-Sandy, providing a unique opportunity to rebuild in a better, more sustainable way. In doing so, the importance of investing in sustainable systems and forward-thinking design is clear, and can happen through thoughtful and inclusive resiliency planning. Issues such as food access, barriers to electronic information sharing, and faulty backup power call for rebuilding our communities in a way that can truly weather the storm.

What We Recommend

1. **CREATE A MORE ROBUST AND RESOURCED CBO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE REGISTRY.** The Office of Emergency Management in partnership with Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Mayor's Office should create a voluntary registry of community-based organizations (CBOs) trained in disaster response protocol. In registering and completing the necessary training, these CBOs are directly connected to government response mechanisms, such as alerts and communications, and can receive funding immediately when a disaster happens to provide the necessary resources for that organization to play a response and recovery role. In return, CBOs are responsible for ensuring the preparedness of their constituencies, and keeping the community informed throughout the duration of a disaster and recovery. To initiate enrollment, the Office of Emergency Management would work with the Mayor's Office and the City Council to develop an effective outreach campaign.
2. **FACILITATE INFORMATION SHARING ACROSS IMPACTED COMMUNITIES.** With a multitude of assistance programs emerging and changing over the course of long-term recovery, a New York City Recovery Team would facilitate monthly convenings of city agencies, local CBOs and recovery coalitions to ensure that all information is correctly relayed, and that community stakeholders are engaged in the process of informing their neighbors. All groups enrolled in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Registry (above) would be included in these convenings, as well as other individuals and collectives that emerge out of a disaster.

3. **ESTABLISH CLEAR CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION.** Expand and improve the current process and protocol for communication between and amongst agencies and communities during a disaster. Create a real-time and useable online “dashboard” for the city where needs, updates, data and resources can be posted, consistent with the model of the Los Angeles Community Stakeholder Network.¹⁴ It should not be up to individual communities to scramble for information, resources, and help.
4. **ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRANTS.** To ensure that resources created by City, State, and Federal agencies and larger disaster nonprofits actually match the needs of communities in recovery, bring community residents, organizations, and stakeholders to the table for planning, especially as grants and relief programs are being developed. Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding is — by definition — one of the most flexible pots of federal money because it is intended for use based on the needs of a community at a particular time. Therefore, it is crucial that communities are allowed ample opportunities to participate in the determined use of these funds, comment on the initial proposal of usage, and understand how exactly funds are spent locally. One way to achieve a just allocation process is by forming a disaster audit bureau to engage the public, monitor fund use, and adjust spending patterns as needed throughout recovery.
5. **CREATE TRANSPARENCY IN THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.** To promote trust in government agencies responding to disaster and respect the mounting challenges facing our communities, government entities responsible for allocating funds locally should create a truly transparent system, where the use of federal funds is specified down to the dollar, and the information is readily accessible to local communities.
6. **UTILIZE NYC COMMUNITY BOARDS.** The Office of Emergency Management should collaborate with each Community Board city-wide to establish a clear and relevant role for Community Boards in the case of a disaster. Community Boards (CBs) as organized entities can play a greater role than the one they played during Superstorm Sandy for both response and recovery. With a disaster liaison appointed to each CB’s Public Safety or First Response Committee, the Office of Emergency Management and other government agencies could better determine and respond to the needs of an impacted community.
7. **SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN BOROUGH “COADs”.** A COAD — Community Organizations Active in Disaster — is a FEMA recognized model for coordinating and facilitating local disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Open to all community organizations and residents in a given geographic area, the COAD model can effectively build on the strong recovery coalitions that have emerged in our impacted boroughs. Having strong COADs would enhance the coordination and facilitation of disaster recovery, provide “one stop shopping” for FEMA, OEM and other agencies for communication and information sharing, and empower our communities by giving them a strong voice and representation.
8. **CREATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LIAISON POSITIONS AT EACH BOROUGH HALL.** We learned that no matter how wide-ranging, response and recovery to disaster is also quite local. To further enhance coordination and information sharing and to promote effective disaster recovery, a dedicated emergency management (EM) Liaison for each borough is essential. The EM Liaison would have responsibility for resourcing and assisting the COAD in each borough, working closely with city and other government agencies on response and recovery and enable borough-wide connecting of communities.
9. **STAFF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT LIAISONS.** Government agencies involved in disaster recovery should create an emergency management liaison staff position, charged with coordinating cross sector and with community liaisons. This person is in charge of ensuring that all community liaisons are equipped with accurate and current information on everything from land-use and zoning, to infrastructure design projects, to community meetings. In addition, these liaisons would work closely with community stakeholders to receive information from community meetings and report back to their respective agencies and fellow liaisons on local planning perspectives.

“ [Community Based Organizations] are holders of the wisdom and experience of New Yorkers who are not traditionally at decision-making tables, and all policymakers, philanthropists and agency leaders risk repeating the same mistakes of Katrina, Irene, and Sandy if they ignore that fact.”

- LISA COWAN IN FROM THE EDGE OF DISASTER

¹⁴ Community Stakeholder Network, Los Angeles, California. (May, 2013).

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About the Brooklyn Recovery Fund Community Collaboratives

CANARSIE COALITION

The Canarsie Coalition, whose mission is to develop a recovery plan and facilitate recovery activities specific to Canarsie, while simultaneously meeting the immediate needs of community residents, was established to provide collective voice for community organizations and residents impacted by Superstorm Sandy. Coalition members represent a variety of expertise relevant to local recovery and resiliency, including housing (Neighborhood Housing Services; Bridge Street Development Corp.), community development (Pratt Area Community Council), disaster case management (Catholic Charities Project Hope), youth empowerment (Informed Voices; Millennium), special needs and elderly support (My Time Inc.), and local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Previously, the Brooklyn Community Foundation awarded \$200,000 to Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush for the Canarsie Emergency Repairs Assistance Program, which provides 50 grants and forgivable loans (up to 10k for homeowners, and 25k for qualified building owners) for emergency repairs, mold removal/remediation, utilities equipment, and sheet rock installation. Among the many achievements of the Canarsie Coalition to date are: a permanent Coalition office and full-time construction project manager; large-scale community needs assessment to determine post-storm housing and open space needs; “Canarsie Day” where 20+ service agencies reached over 300 residents; over \$100,000 in grants to 21 homeowners; the development of a strong merchants association. A rebuild program is also underway in Canarsie, with 15 homes assessed for reconstruction, 45 homes in cue, construction work completed in 4 homes, and 3 homes currently under construction.

RED HOOK COALITION

The Red Hook Coalition (RHC) is comprised of various community-based organizations and social service centers, with expertise ranging from disaster case management, to industrial development, to racial and economic justice. The RHC mission is to create an inspiring and practical vision for the entire Red Hook community that defines a clear path toward the community’s wellness and vitality, while facilitating a process to address long-term challenges and impending disasters. Committed to the fulfillment of this mission are partners in sustainable development and youth leadership (Added Value), youth empowerment (Red Hook Initiative), youth development and disaster case management (Good Shepherd Services), recovery and volunteer management (Red Hook Volunteers), business recovery and revitalization (ReStore Red Hook), and local job creation (Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation). Previously, RHC received a community-wide collaborative grant from the Brooklyn Community Foundation to allocate micro-grants to small businesses, meet immediate social service and food needs, and hire a coalition coordinator to build internal capacity and identify local employment opportunities. Among the many achievements of the Red Hook Coalition and BRF-funded projects to date are: a Red Hook Summit, which brought community members together to inform the vision for long-term community recovery; \$80,000 to 60 small businesses; \$25,000 to support the work of Red Hook Volunteers in coordinating thousands of volunteers, who have provided mold remediation and rebuilding help in over 150 homes; repairs and mold remediation in 31 affordable housing units for 106 residents.

#CONEYRECOVERS

#ConeyRecovers is a collaborative initiative of several organizations working together to further the recovery of Coney Island in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, and build resiliency in the neighborhood. The initiative was founded by Alliance for Coney Island, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote “the People’s Playground” and improve the quality of life for the Coney Island community. Since the storm, #ConeyRecovers has played a vital role in the recovery of Coney Island, addressing both short-term and long-term needs through organizing volunteers, distributing supplies, serving as a central information resource, supporting local community-based organizations, and advocating for community needs. Partner organizations include Amethyst Women’s Project, Astella Development, Coney Island Community Council, Coney Island Generation Gap, Coney Island Hospital, C.I. Youth Alive, The HeartShare Surfside Gardens Cornerstone Program, Iglesia Pentecostal De Jesucristo “Cristo Viene”, Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, New Church International, and Project Hope. Among the many achievements of #ConeyRecovers to date are: a full-time coordinator, hotline, website, and coalition headquarters; Coney Corps, an employment initiative to provide job training and placement resources; \$100,000 in emergency cash assistance to over 60 individuals; \$50,000 in micro grants to businesses on Mermaid Avenue; \$150,000 in re-grants to neighborhood nonprofits and religious institutions. The #ConeyRecovers Steering Committee is also in the process of finalizing awardees of a re-grant to faith-based institutions to restore programming.

Community Collaboratives

EMPOWER SHEEPSHEAD RECOVERY COALITION

Empower Sheepshead Recovery Coalition (ESRC) formed in response to Superstorm Sandy, and is committed to guiding the local community through recovery to meet desired outcomes. Their overarching mission is to bridge-build between macro and micro organizations, transition resources into local community pockets, involve the business community in long-term recovery, and enhance the preparedness of residents through advocacy, training, and education. Coalition members represent various civic, ethnic, and religious organizations, and lead partners include Kings Bay YM YWHA, Turkish Cultural Center, Chinese-American Community (TBD), Community Board 15, Jewish Community Relations Council, and Sheepshead Bites (local media blog). Previously, the Brooklyn Community Foundation awarded \$100,000 to the Kings Bay YM YWCA to oversee a neighborhood-wide needs assessment in English, Turkish, Russian, and Chinese, and conduct outreach to local small businesses to inform and support the rebuilding pipeline. Among the many achievements of ESRC are: the first post-storm housing assessment to gather data and determine unmet needs; a coordinator to develop an inclusive recovery plan to serve needs of a multi-ethnic community; 10 homeowner loans totaling \$210,000 and 40 loans to small businesses; counseling for 55 homeowners and 80 small businesses; a new community communications network via local blog Sheepshead Bites. ESRC has also identified community representatives to bridge gaps and facilitate information-sharing between different ethnic groups, and is working closely with Project Hope to continue providing crisis counseling services at the Coalition headquarters.

GERRITSEN BEACH LONG TERM RECOVERY PROJECT

The Gerritsen Beach Long Term Recovery Project (GBLTRP) is a coalition of seven locally-focused charity organizations, focused on recovery and rebuilding in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy. Lead organizations embody a range of expertise, including environmental cleanliness and social safety (Gerritsen Beach Cares), post-tragedy healing and physical reconstruction (HEART 9/11), foundational support for mold remediation and rebuild (Stephen Siller Tunnels to Towers Foundation), and mental health/disaster case management (Visiting Nurse Service; Project Hope). Previously, Gerritsen Beach Cares (fiscal conduit) received \$200,000 from the Brooklyn Community Foundation to target 100 homes for mold removal and remediation in Gerritsen Beach, and rebuild the organization's operational recovery headquarters. Among the many achievements of GBLTRP and BRF-funded projects to date are: a new permanent coalition storefront and full-time recovery manager; the creation of a needs assessment database tracking 883 households; the rebuilding of nearly 200 homes and construction materials for additional 130; mold remediation for 216 homes. In addition, HEART 9/11 is now rolling out its Mental First Aid Training, and continues to see clients for counseling on a weekly basis.

BRIGHTON BEACH HOUSING COALITION

The Brighton Beach Housing Coalition, established to aid recovery along all housing-related issues in Brighton Beach, formed in the summer of 2013. The coalition is comprised of local nonprofits, community-based organizations, and community leaders dedicated to resolving the housing crisis exacerbated by Superstorm Sandy. The Brooklyn Recovery Fund recently funded this collaborative to support the early stages of coalition-building and ongoing recovery activities in the community. The coalition expects to include more than 50 organizations, meeting at least two times per month to develop a strong local voice in the affordable and sustainable housing arena.

ABOUT THE BROOKLYN RECOVERY FUND

The Brooklyn Recovery Fund is a joint effort between the Brooklyn Community Foundation, the Office of the Brooklyn Borough President, and the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce to create a pooled fund to provide support to Brooklyn's nonprofit organizations working with the communities and individuals most affected by Superstorm Sandy. The Fund has deployed nearly \$3.5 million in donations, with support from a broad spectrum of donors including founding contributions from the Barclays Center, Brooklyn Nets, and Forest City Ratner Companies as well as the American Red Cross, other corporations and foundations, and hundreds of individual contributions. For more information, visit www.brooklynrecoveryfund.org.

Thank you!

The Alliance for Coney Island
The Alliance for a Just Rebuilding
The American Red Cross
Brighton Beach Housing Coalition
Brooklyn Community Board 15
Canarsie Coalition
The Center for New York City Neighborhoods
Chhaya CDC
#ConeyRecovers
Council Member Carlos Menchaca
Former Deputy Borough President Sandra Chapman
Empower Sheepshead Recovery Coalition
The Furman Center, NYU
Gerritsen Beach Long Term Recovery Project
Good Jobs New York
Good Shepherd Services
Lisa Cowan, Red Hook Initiative Board Member
Lutheran Social Services
Matthew Kraushar
Make the Road New York
Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush
Noel Kepler
Physicians for a National Health Program-NY Metro Chapter
PortSide New York
Red Hook Coalition

This report was drafted by Brianna McKinney, Project Specialist and Gillian Kaye, Project Director, from the Brooklyn Recovery Fund.