

**TESTIMONY FOR THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RECOVERY
AND RESILIENCY REGARDING INTRO 562 AS IT RELATES TO THE CREATION
OF A COMMUNITY GROUPS AND HOUSES OF WORSHIP RECOVERY TASK
FORCE**

AS GIVEN BY

THE DIRECTOR OF THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

Tuesday, December 16, 2014

Introduction

Good morning Chairperson Treyger and members of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency. My name is Daniel Zarrilli and I am the Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. I am joined here today by Henry Jackson, Deputy Commissioner for Technology, and Christina Farrell, Deputy Commissioner for External Affairs, from NYC Emergency Management and John Grathwol, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget. It is a pleasure to appear before you once again. I have testified previously before this committee on climate risks, coastal protection and telecommunications resiliency, among other topics. Today, I'm here to discuss Intro 562, which seeks to form a task force to examine "recovery and rebuilding of not-for-profit corporations...and houses of worship," and the potential for collaboration in preparing for future disasters. The Administration supports this type of collaboration, and we look forward to further discussions with the Council regarding the best way to ensure an effective and efficient task force.

To start, I will provide the Committee with an overview of Sandy and the role that many local non-profits and houses of worship provided to their devastated communities. Next, I'll describe

the City's ongoing work in a number of areas, including housing recovery and emergency preparation, to partner with local community organizations, as we continue to recover from Sandy. Finally, I'll describe some of the actions that the City intends to take to collaborate with local community organizations as we advance the City's resiliency program and prepare for future risks.

What happened after Hurricane Sandy

We need no reminder of the devastation of Sandy, a storm that claimed the lives of 44 New Yorkers and caused \$19 billion in damages and lost economic activity. In the immediate aftermath, houses of worship and not-for-profit organizations served a critical role in the early response and recovery efforts. Many residents, faced with the largest natural disaster to strike New York City in its history, turned to their local organizations and houses of worship. In some of the neighborhoods hardest hit, we saw these organizations provide shelter resources, distribute food and other basic supplies, and provide social services. Faith-based and other organizations coordinated efforts to distribute supplies and resources to volunteers on the ground.

We saw this to be true across the City. In Red Hook, Red Hook Initiative provided a multitude of services that ranged from providing supplies, hot meals, and medical or legal support.

Volunteers served and delivered 2 meals a day for up to 1,000 people for 3 weeks, and at its peak, over 1,200 people were coming to Red Hook Initiative for support.

In Far Rockaway, the Community Church of the Nazarene served as a major distribution center

for food and goods in Queens, and was one of the most active distribution sites post-storm.

In Coney Island, the gymnasium of Our Lady of Solace Church was used as a major hub for volunteer goods and services.

In the Lower East Side, CAAAV, a grassroots organization that works with Asian immigrant and refugee populations, organized over 500 volunteers to distribute supplies to Lower East Side residents. After power was restored in their neighborhood, CAAAV deployed their volunteers to assist recovery efforts in Coney Island, Red Hook and the Rockaways.

And in Staten Island, the Jewish Community Center provided mental health services and coordinated volunteer work across the borough.

These are just a sample of the types of incredible and even heroic actions made by local community organizations all across the impacted areas – actions that the City applauds and encourages. After all, resiliency in the face of future disasters will come not just from top-down actions and investments, but from grassroots collaboration as well.

Continuing Partnerships

As the recovery from Sandy continues, the City of New York is working closely with several organizations to help the city's residents, communicate about disaster risk reduction, and provide other support services. The City, whether through my Office, the Office of Housing Recovery

Operations (HRO) or other agencies, will continue to rely on the local knowledge and relationships of community-based organizations to carry the recovery work forward.

In exploring these partnerships, many have asked about federal funding opportunities for non-profit entities and houses of worship. And while there are federal restrictions on the provision of public funds for religious purposes, FEMA, for one, has developed guidance that specifies the conditions under which federal funds can be directed to an organization that engages in both religious and non-religious activities.

HUD has also weighed in on this topic. In its issuance of Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds, HUD recognizes the value of community based organizations of all types and encourages grantees, such as the City, to engage and support such organizations to the extent permitted by law and HUD regulations. The regulations require that such support in the form of Disaster Recovery funds must be undertaken either by a subrecipient agreement or by contract, and in either case must have clearly defined activities which are eligible for Disaster Recovery funds and consistent with all cross-cutting federal regulations.

Continuing Partnerships

Despite these limitations, there is much that can be accomplished through partnerships with local community organizations. Let me describe a few such examples.

Office of Housing Recovery Operations

Since its inception, HRO, led by my colleague Amy Peterson, has worked—and continues to work—closely with non-profits and houses of worship to meet homeowner needs not otherwise

addressed by public funding. Such partnerships have helped meet the goals of Build it Back's overhaul, which includes targeted communication to homeowners and increased engagement with Sandy-impacted communities. They also help address the needs of homeowners who may not be eligible for Build it Back due to federal rules and restrictions. HRO's partnerships with non-profits and houses of worship can be broken out into two categories: construction/rehabilitation partnerships and counseling partnerships.

Construction/Rehabilitation Partnerships

HRO partners with non-profits to meet construction needs not addressed by public funds. For those applicants that are ineligible for Build it Back or those who need work that will not be covered by public dollars, there are several partners that step in. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) under its subsidiary, Neighborhood Revitalization New York City (NRNYC) is one such example. The NRNYC Mold Treatment Program, developed jointly by HRO and supported by the Mayor's Fund, provided mold treatment assistance to homeowners. By September of this year, the program reached its mold treatment target in 2,000 homes.

Additionally, the NRNYC Home Repair Program offers assistance to low-income homeowners who are ineligible or unregistered for Build it Back using a combination of general contractors and voluntary organizations that include: Habitat for Humanity NYC, Rebuilding Together, and Friends of Rockaway/St. Bernard Project. As of December 1, the Program had completed repairs in over 250 homes and is on track to complete all remaining work by March 2015.

Counseling Partnerships

HRO also partners with non-profits to connect applicants to disaster recovery counseling and services. Build it Back has partnered with the Center for New York City Neighborhoods

(CNYCN) on a counseling program that has served over 2,300 applicants to date. This counseling is a vital resource for homeowners who face financial, legal, or construction design problems. Other counseling partnerships include the New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) Unmet Needs Roundtable that help distressed homeowners with financial aid and referrals to community-based services, and the Sandy Neighborhood Design HelpDesk that provides applicants with architecture, insurance and mortgage consultations.

Mayor's Fund

There is also much that can be accomplished through private sector funding and partnerships. HRO and The Mayor's Fund have successfully leveraged private and flexible dollars to support recovery in the City. Since Hurricane Sandy, the Mayor's Fund has received over \$60 million from nearly 21,000 individuals and organizations to support emergency response needs and long-term restoration efforts. The Mayor's Fund has worked closely with City agencies, elected officials, and community partners to continue to identify the areas where private dollars have the greatest impact.

The recovery initiatives also included the Mayor's Fund working with philanthropic partners to launch a \$24 million bridge loan and grant program to assist nonprofits that suffered the most severe losses or operate in the most affected areas. The loan program, administered by the Fund for the City of New York, awarded 59 loans and 91 grants. Additionally, a public-private team, led by HPD, HDC and HRO in partnership with 16 of the city's leading philanthropic organizations and the Mayor's Fund to Advance NYC, raised over \$3.4 million in grants to support community-based organizations across the five boroughs in their efforts to reach vulnerable populations under the Hurricane Sandy Housing and Neighborhood Recovery Donors

Collaborative. These are just a few examples of the many ways these partnerships have supported organizations doing effective recovery work.

NYC Emergency Management Initiatives

Because non-profit organizations and houses of worship served an extremely valuable role in Sandy's aftermath and ongoing recovery work, the City strongly desires to continue its engagement with these critical groups to guide recovery and resiliency planning. NYC Emergency Management has several ongoing programs which partner with local organizations and preparedness initiatives. NYC Emergency Management's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program that has 54 teams citywide and more than 1,800 active, credentialed volunteers that play an important role in preparedness training. CERTs support their local communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies, and volunteers also work to educate their communities about emergency preparedness through OEM's Ready New York campaign.

In order to capture information on local spaces in emergency and non-emergency times, NYC Emergency Management has developed a community site survey. The survey was created in response to observations that in emergencies, people tend to feel more comfortable going to identified community spaces such as American Legion halls or nonprofit and faith-based facilities, instead of accessing government facilities. The survey is meant to identify potential sites that fit specific parameters and are located in communities that could support the City's emergency management operations or be used for community outreach events.

Through the Citizen Corps initiative, NYC Emergency Management works to build the capacity of community and faith-based organizations through trainings and presentations at community meetings. In 2014, NYC Emergency Management held a four-part training series in collaboration with the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island that focused on building resilience and response capacity at the local level.

Citizen Corps has engaged 4,000 community and faith-based groups through other events such as the Special Needs Symposium, which focuses on improving emergency planning for agencies that provide services for special needs clients, workshops on hurricane outreach and community disaster networks, as well as monthly training events that are specifically geared towards the non-profit and community-based sectors.

Since Hurricane Sandy, many local coalitions made up of nonprofit and faith-based organizations have started to develop emergency plans for their communities. Through Citizen Corps, NYC Emergency Management offers guidance and information to advise their planning and is currently developing other planning tools to assist in this effort.

Long-Term Resiliency

Finally, I'll spend a few minutes on long-term resiliency planning. During the formulation of the City's resiliency plan, *A Stronger, More Resilient New York*, the City convened broad working groups comprised of clergy, civic leaders, elected officials, and residents. These working groups helped to shape the City's path forward as we confront the challenges of climate change and long-term recovery from Hurricane Sandy. All across the City, we are advancing projects as part

of this resiliency program. As we do so, we remain committed to continue working with these organizations and others, to further strengthen communities through open and frequent communication.

For example, the City worked closely with HUD's Rebuild by Design competition, which included extensive community engagement, resulting in the award of three projects in the city: \$335 million for an integrated flood protection program in the Lower East Side, \$20 million for resiliency investments and planning in Hunts Point, and \$60 million for a living shoreline in Staten Island (being implemented by the state). As these projects move forward, ORR is committed to, and has already begun, meaningful community engagement as we work closely with all stakeholders, community boards, local non-profits and residents to implement these projects. Other impending projects, such as flood protection in Red Hook, dune construction in Breezy Point, and the rest of the resiliency program, will follow a similar model.

To conclude, partnerships between government and the not-for-profit sector serve a vital role in emergency preparations, disaster recovery and long-term resiliency planning. The City strongly encourages these existing partnerships to continue and new partnerships to be developed.

We very much wish to engage the Council, non -profits and houses of worship on continuing recovery efforts and on preparing our city for future climate events. I thank the Council for its focus on this important issue and look forward to continuing our collaboration with community-based organizations and houses of worship.

CENTER FOR NYC NEIGHBORHOODS

Testimony by Matthew Hassett, Director of Policy and Communications at **FOR THE RECORD**
the Center for NYC Neighborhoods before the New York City Council

Regarding Int. No. 562, a Local Law in relation to the creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force

December 16, 2014

Good morning. My name is Matthew Hassett and I am the Director of Policy and Communications at the Center for NYC Neighborhoods. I would like to thank Council Members Treyger, Cabrera, Deutsch, Eugene, Gentile, Koslowitz, and Richards for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force. I would also like to thank all members of the New York City Council for your funding for our network, all of which goes towards supporting the direct foreclosure prevention services of our housing counselors and legal service providers.

About the Center for NYC Neighborhoods

At the Center for NYC Neighborhoods, our mission is to promote and protect affordable and sustainable homeownership in New York City. We believe that keeping homeownership affordable creates strong neighborhoods that allow for working and middle class New Yorkers to be a part of the economic opportunities that continue to open up as New York City continues to prosper. Through a network of community-based partner non-profits -- what we refer to as our "Network Partners" -- we provide homeowners with the essential support to prevent and overcome economic hardships of many kinds, and to make absolutely sure that they can afford to stay in their homes. Since 2008, our network of 36 community-based partners located throughout the five boroughs has assisted over 30,000 homeowners.

Intro 562: Creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force

We are pleased that the City Council is considering the creation of a task force to analyze the role community-based groups and houses of worship played in Sandy recovery. Following Hurricane Sandy, the Center's strong relationships with community groups allowed us to respond quickly and focus on both the short- and long-term needs of homeowners. Community groups and local houses of worship served as first responders to the crisis. Together, as a network of community-based organizations, we have assisted nearly 4,000 homeowners recovering from Sandy. Through housing counseling and legal services, we have helped with foreclosure prevention, filing and disputing insurance and FEMA claims, assistance with applications for repair funds, and other complex issues where a trusted professional's guidance was key to a successful recovery.

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In December 2012 – just six weeks after Hurricane Sandy hit New York City – we deployed the Neighborhood Recovery Fund, an emergency fund designed to assist with Sandy-related expenses that exceeded the assistance homeowners received from their insurance or FEMA. Through the program, we worked with community groups and faith-based organizations to provide grants of up to \$5,000 to over 250 families across the city.

Over the past year, we also partnered with LISC, Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., the Pratt Center for Community Development, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Housing Recovery Office, and local community-based organizations and houses of worship to host Sandy Neighborhood Design HelpDesks, where homeowners could easily access integrated assistance which included a team of architects, housing counselors, and flood insurance specialists offering advice on how to rebuild and make their homes more resilient. The local host groups not only opened their doors to host the events, but also assisted with outreach efforts to let community members know about the events.

Our housing counseling and legal assistance model was integrated into the Build It Back application process, where community-based counselors and legal services professionals have helped homeowners navigate complex financial and legal situations related to their applications. So far, over 2,300 applicants have worked with (or are currently working with) a counselor to resolve a range of issues, including: cancelled SBA loans, insurance issues, and mortgage distress and foreclosure. Our counselors have also directed homeowners to other resources outside of Build it Back and provided education about how increases in the cost of flood insurance may impact future affordability and what they can do now to mitigate rising costs.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Center also focused on a challenge that will threaten the affordability of homeownership in the City's coastline neighborhoods: rising flood insurance costs. This past September, we hosted an event, "*Equitable Resiliency in New York City: How rising flood insurance costs are threatening housing affordability in NYC's flood-prone neighborhoods*," to draw attention to this pressing issue. With over 180 people in attendance at the event, we released *Rising Tides, Rising Costs*, a report that reveals how rising flood insurance costs and increased flood risk threaten both the housing affordability and safety of over 400,000 New Yorkers who live in neighborhoods at high risk of flooding. We also launched FloodHelpNY.org, a website designed to provide information and guidance to homeowners about flood insurance and to help them find out more about their flood risk. Since then, we have begun outreach and trainings for various community based organizations and disaster recovery groups to use these resources to educate and equip homeowners for future disasters, and to preserve opportunities for working and middle class homeowners in the many historically affordable neighborhoods now at greater flood risk.

In addition to providing direct services to homeowners, we organize and lead borough-based collaborations among community-based organizations helping communities recover from Sandy. We provide additional trainings and individualized technical assistance as needed. We have successfully helped build new ties and stronger ties within our network through our

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mentoring program, borough-wide working groups, regular trainings, in-network referrals, and active communication through listservs.

Through our recovery work, we have found that local, community-based organizations and houses of worship were integral to the City's recovery from Sandy. Building on their own work and strong community ties, many organizations came together and formed long term recovery groups and coalitions, such as the Alliance for a Just Rebuilding, to develop far-reaching strategies to support recovery across New York City. Likewise, religious coalitions such as Faith in New York, a network of 54 congregations, launched campaigns advocating for the rehabilitation of damaged homes as well as the immediate support needed for those who did not receive any state or federal disaster aid.

In the two years following Hurricane Sandy, grassroots efforts laid a foundation for a strong network of community-based organizations and religious groups deeply invested in helping communities recovering from the storm. These groups have succeeded in serving their local communities while coordinating recovery efforts through their networks and coalitions. To prepare for future disasters, we believe that learning from the past can best inform the future. We encourage the City Council to create a task force that will examine the work of these organizations and formalize the role of community-based organizations to devise and facilitate recovery strategies. Tapping into these networks can open doors to different resources, including access to a network of houses of worship which could be a vital source of temporary housing following future disasters. The City should assess the impact these groups have made and their significant contributions to the collective recovery effort and explore how to provide them with more support and further integrate them into its preparedness framework.

On behalf of our Network Partners and the many other community-based organizations we work with, I would like to reiterate the role these community groups and faith-based organizations played in responding to the immediate needs of homeowners and helping them rebuild resiliently. Given the proper resources, they will be better equipped to respond to future natural disasters more swiftly. Therefore, we call on the NYC Council to pass Intro. 562 to create a task force comprised of experts to further examine past recovery efforts of not-for-profit corporations and houses of worship in order to be best prepared in the face of future natural disasters.

As always, we thank you for your attention to this critical issue and your ongoing support of New York City's homeowners and neighborhoods, especially as we learn from past disasters to prepare and protect our city for those of the future.



**Testimony Prepared by
Laurie Schoeman**

**for the Committee on Recovery & Resiliency
Hearing on Int 562:
A Local Law in relation to the creation of a Hurricane Sandy
Community groups and houses of worship recovery task force**

Tuesday, 12/19/2014

**on behalf of
Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.**

Good morning. Thank you Chair Treyger and members of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency for the opportunity to testify today in support of Intro 562, a bill that would create a much needed task force to formally analyze and support the role of non-profit and mission driven organizations in creating a more resilient New York City.

My name is Laurie Schoeman, and I lead the Sandy Recovery & Resiliency work for the New York office of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. At Enterprise, we bring opportunity to low- and moderate-income communities nationwide through safe, healthy affordable housing. Since 1987, we have created or preserved 44,000 affordable homes for 114,000 New Yorkers and invested \$2.9 billion in equity, grants, and loans to community development projects throughout the city. For ten years, we have also worked to bring the health, environmental, and economic benefits of green building to low-income communities through the Enterprise Green Communities Initiative.

Hurricane Sandy was a stark reminder that our homes and communities must be sustainable and resilient to the impact of our changing climate. In New York City, Sandy disproportionately impacted low-income renters living in multifamily buildings, a group that has the least means to prepare for and recover from disasters. This reiterated the need to invest in the community based organizations, or CBOs, that steward affordable housing and care for some of our city's most vulnerable residents if we want to be truly resilient.

After Superstorm Sandy hit, Enterprise responded quickly to deploy emergency funds to community based affordable housing organizations, many of whom dealt with damage to their own offices while continuing to care for residents' homes. With an eye toward the long-term recovery needs of the city's affordable housing stock, we created our Recovery & Rebuilding Program focusing on the physical resilience of multifamily buildings and the operational resilience of affordable housing owners.

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The cornerstone of our programmatic response is the *Learning Collaborative for Affordable Multifamily Housing Resilience*, a consortium of 12 leading housing organizations that represent a portfolio of 14,500 affordable units. We have provided them with funding, technical assistance and peer learning opportunities. Based on our learnings from the collaborative, we have developed a set of multifamily housing-specific emergency preparedness tools which we will be deploying throughout our national network next year, and about which I would be more than happy to provide you additional information.

The recovery and rebuilding program was built on a simple premise: community-based organizations are often the first responders in a time of crisis, and they are a critical resource for meeting the immediate and longer-term recovery needs of low-income families and for creating more resilient communities.

The program has three basic programmatic priorities—supporting the physical resilience of multifamily buildings, the organizational resilience of CBOs, and broader community-wide resilience. It is imperative that we support these groups so that they are prepared for the next disaster and so that they can help the communities they serve be prepared as well. This means that the organizations must be able to maintain business continuity through a disaster, get their buildings up and running as soon as possible, and ensure that their residents quickly re-stabilize.

To demonstrate my point, I could spend days recounting stories of organizations, like Services for the Underserved (SUS), that took valiant steps to rehouse their residents and stabilize their business lines. SUS provides housing, services and support for individuals with special needs. Immediately following Sandy, SUS was forced to evacuate more than 70 special needs residents from their building in the Far Rockaways and temporarily relocate them to the Bronx. Meanwhile, their staff worked round the clock to repair the building and get their residents back home. SUS just celebrated its homecoming—one year after Sandy descended on its building. All of the residents are now back and are thriving in the newly renovated and resilient Beach 85th Street residence.

It is because of stories like these and many more that we strongly support the proposed bill to create a task force to examine the impact Sandy had on these groups. Perhaps more importantly going forward, this task force can also help incorporate CBOs into the city's overall disaster preparedness efforts and support the good work they do in helping us prepare for and recover from disaster.

Thank you, again, for your time here today. I am happy to answer any questions here now and to follow up with any of you in more detail about our work in resilience and emergency preparedness.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL

**Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Recovery & Resiliency
Joseph Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Catholic Community Relations Council
December 16, 2014**

Good morning Chairman Treyger and members of the New York City Council Committee on Recovery and Resiliency. I am Joseph Rosenberg, Executive Director of the Catholic Community Relations Council (“CCRC”). CCRC was established by the Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn in 2008 to represent the Church throughout New York City on local legislative and policy matters. I am pleased to be here today to testify on Intro. 562.

CCRC welcomes this legislation creating a Hurricane Sandy Community Groups and Houses of Worship Recovery Task Force and wants to ensure that certain issues are included as this Task Force moves forward.

When Hurricane Sandy hit the New York City area, pastors, priests, rabbis and their congregations, longstanding sources of spiritual support and comfort to communities, provided food, shelter and relief to thousands of displaced and desperate residents of our City’s shorefront neighborhoods. These institutions were the first responders and in many instances provided the space and facilities to allow for subsequent federal, state and city relief efforts. Despite the catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Sandy, houses of worship, although having suffered tremendous damage, continued to open their doors to serve as food pantries and places of shelter for people who lost everything overnight.

Although Hurricane Sandy struck New York over two years ago, the pain of loss of life and loss of shelter lingers. Rebuilding efforts proceed, but often, far too slowly. Not only were the homes of countless numbers of shorefront residents damaged or destroyed, over 120 Catholic churches throughout the five boroughs of our City were damaged, with most of them determined to be ineligible for receiving any Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) public assistance to help with rebuilding efforts.

We are pleased that three members of this eleven member task force will be clergy who specifically participated in Hurricane Sandy relief work. This acknowledges the role and importance that houses of worship played and continue to play during this ongoing crisis; a crisis perhaps faded by time in the minds of some, but an unending nightmare for so many residents of our city.

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The legislation specifies findings and recommendations that the task force should focus upon. It is helpful that the bill requires the task force to study possible sources of recovery and building aid available to houses of worship, but also the extent that financial aid was deprived to houses of worship solely because they did not fit into certain narrowly defined categories. One such example is FEMA's insistence that houses of worship, despite providing an essential role, especially when government relief was not immediately available, did not fit into their definition of providing "governmental services" and were therefore ineligible for federal financial rebuilding assistance.

We urge that the scope of the Task Force's mission include recommendations to promote the most effective means of collaboration and integration of the efforts of multiple groups in responding to disasters both immediately, and over a long term. Non profits and houses of worship, among others, are often negatively impacted in their ability to provide help to those affected by disasters when different departments and different levels of government – City, State and Federal- are inefficient in coordinating regulations, policies and procedures.

The Catholic Church in New York City through Catholic Charities, its parishes and religious and community organizations must be recognized for the successful history of providing, and the continuing mission to provide, a comprehensive array of social services, parish based ministerial services and volunteer response to all communities throughout our city and not just those devastated by Hurricane Sandy. It is therefore of paramount importance that the ability to continue to provide these absolutely essential services be preserved and not impeded or hindered by the recommendations or findings of this task force.

Thank you.

Testimony of the Legal Services NYC

Before the New York City Council
Committee on Recovery and Resiliency

Hearing on
Creation of a Hurricane Sandy Community Groups and Houses of Worship Recovery Task Force

December 16, 2014

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Margaret Becker. I am Director of Disaster Recovery at Legal Services NYC. Legal Services NYC has community-based offices in all five boroughs and dedicated disaster recovery staff in our Queens, Staten Island, and Brooklyn offices (Queens Legal Services, Staten Island Legal Services, and Brooklyn Legal Services).

Legal Services NYC (LSNYC) fights poverty and seeks justice for low-income New Yorkers. For more than 40 years, we have challenged systemic injustice and helped clients meet basic needs for housing, high-quality education, health care, family stability, and economic security. LSNYC is the largest civil legal services provider in the country, with deep roots in all of the communities we serve. Our neighborhood-based offices and outreach sites across all five boroughs help more than 60,000 New Yorkers annually.

In November 2012, our services expanded to include Hurricane Sandy recovery work, specifically legal assistance on FEMA benefits, insurance claims, Sandy-related mortgage problems, contractor fraud, tenant rights and benefits, access to Build It Back help, family law issues that have arisen, and other legal needs associated with New Yorkers' long, slow recovery. To date LSNYC has handled 6,115 Sandy recovery cases, with 1,123 of those cases still ongoing.

LSNYC would like to address the role of non-profit legal services in future recovery efforts, based on our experience responding to Hurricane Sandy.

The need for legal assistance emerged very quickly following Hurricane Sandy. Initially, the needs primarily concerned access to emergency benefits like emergency unemployment benefits, emergency food stamps, FEMA aid, and temporary housing. The need for legal assistance regarding insurance claims, denials and underpayments quickly followed, as did the need for legal assistance negotiating with landlords and, for homeowners, negotiating with mortgage companies. The mortgage

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issues concerned mortgage payment defaults and mortgagee withholding of insurance funds. Insurance underpayments and denials, mortgage problems, unrepaired storm damage in tenants' rental apartments, and problems accessing Build It Back help make up the majority of the legal needs of Sandy-affected tenants and homeowners. Adding to those problems is now the problem of FEMA recoupment of aid it gave to tenants and homeowners over two years ago. Sandy-wide, approximately 4,500 households are facing recoupment, based on alleged FEMA error. (These are not cases of fraud by the applicant: every case we have seen to date is a matter of FEMA determining that it gave the award in error.)

Hurricane Sandy has shown us that access to legal services is an essential component of disaster recovery. As the task force proposed in Int. No. 562 prepares its report, LSNYC makes the following recommendations on where, when and how legal help is provided.

Effective legal services should be integrated with other community-based help. Immediately following Hurricane Sandy, LSNYC attorneys, paralegals, and support staff set up walk-in clinics in evacuation shelters and the FEMA relief tents. While having legal staff at these government relief centers is critical, having legal staff and clinics at non-governmental community relief hubs is equally essential. No one's legal problems following a disaster are isolated from other needs—need for volunteer help to muck out a home, or need to food or temporary shelter. Legal services organizations need to integrate their work into the broader recovery work, to fully and effectively serve their clients. For example, in Staten Island, staff from Staten Island Legal Services established a regular clinic at an annex of St. Margaret Mary's Church in Midland Beach, which had become a central hub for recovery needs. Staff from LSNYC's Brooklyn and Queens offices similarly set up a regular presence at community-based, non-governmental hubs in those boroughs. Our long-established community ties allowed us to quickly learn where these local hubs were.

When those clinics occur is also an important factor to consider. To be effective, legal services must be available when those struggling to recovery are available: on weekends and evenings.

Where and when legal services are made available are two important factors in an effective legal response to disaster. How services are offered is also important. LSNYC staff and staff of other legal services organizations quickly joined the Long Term Recovery Groups in Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Queens. Having legal services as part of these recovery groups makes those groups more effective and complete, and it also makes the legal services themselves more effective. People struck by disaster have little spare time and little spare energy to deal with their myriad problems. These struggling people need to be able to approach one non-profit entity and know that they will then be connected as effortlessly as possible to all the other help they need.

LSNYC supports the Committee's proposal to establish a task force on the needs and role of non-profit organizations in disaster recovery. For further information, please contact

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**Testimony by The Legal Aid Society before the
New York City Council Committee on Recovery and Resiliency
concerning the creation of a taskforce for houses of worship
and nonprofit organizations (Int. No. 02-2014).
Tuesday, December 16, 2014**

INTRODUCTION

Greetings to Chairman Treyger and to the members of the Recovery and Resiliency Committee. I am Christine Nyamekye Appah, a staff attorney at the Queens Neighborhood Office of The Legal Aid Society. I, along with my co-workers, have developed significant experience in disaster relief service delivery through our work with residents who were affected by Superstorm Sandy. The Legal Aid Society is here to offer our support for this proposal to institute a specialized task force for houses of worship and nonprofit organizations that have been essential in the recovery process. We support the proposal's focus to enhance efficiency through detailed study of best practices and persistent issues. We appreciate the focus on advanced preparedness as it is integral to ensuring a safer and more efficient recovery process after a disaster.

The Legal Aid Society is the oldest and largest legal services provider for families and individuals with low incomes in the United States. Annually, the Society handles more than 300,000 cases and legal matters for low income New Yorkers with civil, criminal and juvenile rights issues, including some 48,000 individual civil matters benefiting nearly 120,000 New Yorkers as well as law reform cases which benefit two million low-income families and individuals in New York City.

Through a network of ten neighborhood and courthouse-based offices in all five boroughs and 23 city-wide and special projects, the Society's Civil Practice provides direct legal assistance to individuals with low incomes. In addition to individual assistance, The Legal Aid Society represents clients in law reform litigation, advocacy and neighborhood initiatives, and provides extensive back up support and technical assistance for community organizations.

The Response of The Legal Aid Society

In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, New Yorkers witnessed an outpouring of support and generosity. Unprecedented numbers of volunteers from all over the country and elsewhere came to our city to assist in the recovery efforts. Volunteers, especially those associated with houses of worship and nonprofits, convened to set up various types of disaster relief initiatives. Nonprofit law firms, such as The Legal Aid Society, set up legal clinics to assist victims.

The Legal Aid Society's response was swift and sustained in the immediate aftermath of the storm, and has evolved to meet the needs of victims in the weeks and months since. In the days after the storm, The Legal Aid Society developed a systematic approach to meeting the immediate needs of people in storm affected areas of Far Rockaway, Coney Island and Staten Island. Within weeks, our staff was operating at relief centers and delivering critical services. Our approach was driven by our deep and historic commitment to serve those in greatest need. We utilized our caring and experienced staff, and also our dedicated network of pro bono partners. We deployed our Mobile Justice Unit - a fully equipped mobile legal office - to temporary relief sites to deliver emergency assistance to help residents to apply for FEMA and other disaster-related benefits. Throughout this process, our goals were guided by the exigencies of the situation and the needs of our clients.

The Legal Aid Society relied on the generosity and insight of local community partners for various needs while we conducted our disaster relief; they provided us with "real-time" knowledge of how their constituencies were affected during the storms. They also provided us with physical location space and identified residents who were in need of our services.

As the joint relief efforts grew, City, state and federal personnel worked alongside various types of groups and businesses to promote stability in the region. Although there were various ways to help, and thousands of people that wanted to provide help, efficiency quickly became a key issue. Now, two years after the storm, we are aware that there are people who are still in need of various types of assistance. While the goals have shifted with the changing needs, time has allowed all participants an opportunity to reflect on the process of disaster relief delivery and to assess the situation as it stands today.

The Council is taking a very important step by proposing a task force to address the current and future needs of the organizations that supported the City's recovery and rebuilding efforts. The proposal seeks to address the need (1) to define the roles of the parties involved, (2) to make an official assessment of the damages suffered by the organizations that provided relief assistance, (3) to determine efficient resource allocation, (4) to make an assessment of the on-going needs throughout the current recovery period, (5) to encourage dialogue and best practices for advanced preparation. We view these as key steps to facilitate more efficient recovery work that leads to city-wide resiliency.

1. ROLE DESCRIPTION

The proposed task force plans to ask groups that are involved in the recovery effort to discuss the roles that they adopted during the time that they delivered relief services. This process would help the City to understand which areas and issues that have been of greatest concern. It would also help to expand our understanding of how these services were delivered and the means by which these organizations delivered these services. By describing these roles,

the City could help these organizations to better manage their resources and provide advice on how to produce more efficient processes for delivering their services.

While disaster relief services are situational and can vary based on the type of disaster, defining roles would help to streamline and standardize the disaster recovery process. The proposed task force would help to assess some of the key players and help to get an accounting of who is involved and what types of issues they are seeing to date.

One of the key issues that we have observed is that while many people are involved in various stages of disaster relief, volume does not necessarily equate with progress. The response could be better managed if there were some standardization. This would reduce duplicative work and address problems faster. Also, members of the task force and attendees of their meetings could become more informed about how they should go about recruiting volunteers and seeking contributions and other types of assistance. This could be a great forum for discussions on best practices.

2. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

As many of the coastal areas that were hit by Superstorm Sandy were isolated by damaged transportation routes, communities in the most stricken areas sought assistance from within. Oftentimes, the organizations that are deeply involved in disaster relief service delivery are situated within the hardest hit areas.¹ They worked to provide critical resources even though they too were reeling from the effects of the disaster. In a study of faith based organizations and their response to a tornado in a small town, researcher Martin Smith found that “damage to [a] church building is also shown to be related to congregation response. Congregations suffering larger losses as a result of the tornado are more involved in long-term disaster responses.”² In New York, for example, visitors to disaster relief sites in the Rockaways could recall organizations serving hot food in darkened buildings because they lacked electricity and medical clinics serving clients with the help of gas generators. The ability and willingness of local groups to respond so quickly helped to provide very valuable resources before federal, city, and state agencies were able to act.

The taskforce could help organizations to make better records of damages suffered in future situations. It could focus on best practices and preparedness. By discussing some of the challenges that organizations have faced, it may help to protect them from significant financial or structural losses in the future.

3. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

One of the most productive elements of the proposal is its focus on analyzing resource allocation. How organizations are able to acquire and distribute their resources can have a strong correlation with their effectiveness. In the nongovernmental sector, where resources may be acquired through fundraising or grant-writing, additional resources for the disaster relief were difficult for many organizations to access in the aftermath of the storm. There is also the issue of ‘mission shift’ – when organizations whose charitable purpose changed or expanded to meet the

¹ Sharon Otterman, *For Congregation Leaders, Hurricane is Taking a Toll*, New York Times, (Nov. 12, 2012), <http://nytimes.com/2012/11/13/nyregion/regional-places-of-worship-seek-to-rebuild>.

² Martin H. Smith, *American Religious Organizations in Disaster: A Study of Congregational Response to Disaster*, *Mass Emergencies* 3 (1978) 133-142.

needs of their constituents that were affected by the storm. Another interesting development are the *ad hoc* partnerships that formed soon after the storm that have continued to this day. Accordingly, the task force could focus on issues of resource allocation and sharing among pre-existing coalitions and groups. They could conduct research on community cooperation and compliance with the resources that have been allocated. Researchers have analyzed this process and noted its importance:

“Links among volunteer organizations are critical to the coordination and effectiveness of the disaster relief system. Furthermore, the level of volunteerism in organizations, their rootedness in the local community, and their differing strategies for resource distribution during a disaster affect any relationship between distance and links. Increased understanding of barriers to the links and resource distribution may help organizations provide more effective disaster relief”.³

Guidance for Compliance

Coordinating the charitable sector’s response is also important to ensure that public generosity is properly recorded. In order to encourage public trust in this process, it is important that nonprofits and government leaders communicate regularly and in “real time” about charitable donations. Charities receiving donations in New York City must be aware of the regulatory requirements of fundraising and receiving. Connecticut State Attorney General George Jepsen discussed some of the compliance-based challenges to charitable responses to disasters, explaining that “[g]overnment can and should play a critical role in ensuring that charitable donations that follow disaster are collected, managed and dispersed in a balanced way.”⁴

At a conference held by The National State Attorneys General Program at Columbia Law School, Attorney General Jepsen noted the efforts of New York and the importance of recording charitable responses in enhancing accountability. He noted that “[f]ollowing Hurricane Sandy last year, New York Attorney General Eric Schniederman followed that successful precedent and sent a questionnaire to nearly 100 charities collecting donations for relief efforts. The response, posted on the Attorney General’s website and compiled into a report also available on the website, similarly informed the public of available gift funds and where those in need could seek assistance”.⁵ He concluded by stating that “[l]eadership and encouragement of collaboration is a valid and valuable role for state charities regulators and can effectively protect the public trust in charitable response to disasters”.⁶

An added benefit to the taskforce would be the opportunities for training on these important topics. This would help to inform organizations about the rules and regulations around

³ Michael J. Zakour and David F. Gillespie, *Effects of Organizational Type and Localism on Volunteerism and Resource Sharing During Disasters*, 27 Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly 1, at 50.

⁴ See Jepsen, George, *The Role of State Charities Regulators in Protecting Public Trust in Charitable Responses to Disaster*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7916/D8251G5S>, 2013 Charities Regulation and Oversight Project Policy Conference, Columbia Law School, 2013 at 2.

⁵ *Ibid.* at 3.

⁶ *Ibid.* at 5.

charitable activities and fundraising. In this way, the taskforce could help to encourage nonprofit compliance and fiscal responsibility.

4. ON-GOING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The proposal could be a great sounding board for the City's disaster relief related initiatives: participants could voice concerns over what is and is not working because they have direct access to people who are currently in need of the City's relief services. It would also help to facilitate more responsive communication between key stakeholders. Providing a regular forum would help to bridge the gap between faith based and community groups and the politicians who represent them. This contrasts the current approach where it seems that involved parties have to wait for a hearing or forum to be planned before an issue is discussed.

As noted in a recent article that discussed the importance of developing strategies for implementing resiliency planning, "[t]here should be a more detailed evaluation of the range of community resources – governmental and non-governmental – that will figure critically in implementation of any long-term disaster recovery efforts. Federal and state governments should have a pre-disaster 'picture' of local government capacity".⁷

5. ADVANCED PREPAREDNESS

Having systems together and in place well in advance of a disaster is essential.⁸ Many of the services that some organizations provided prior to the storm were not part of their essential roles and functions. Many of the organizations simply responded to constituent's needs as they were presented to them and simply expanded their capacity or sought assistance from their networks. Where there were no networks in place, many organizations sought out forums to participate in that would help to direct attention to the needs of their constituents. These efforts could be strengthened in advance of a disaster by a regular taskforce to address needs and capacities.

Advanced preparation may require informing potential pools of volunteers about the type of services that may be needed during different phases of recovery. In the legal services context, it has been noted that, "[i]n the triage state disaster victims need advice and counsel regarding evictions, FEMA applications, price-gouging, and document replacement. Later, insurance disputes, bankruptcy, foreclosures, their property and title concerns, and consumer fraud issues will become more relevant."⁹ Knowing what is needed can improve opportunities for advanced training and resource allocation within communities.

Community ties have been shown to foster more efficient preparation and response. "Communities with stronger social ties, vibrant civic life, and a habit of interconnectedness are

⁷ John Travis Marshall & Ryan Max Rowberry, *Urban Wreckage and Resiliency: Articulating a Practical Framework for Preserving, Reconstructing, and Building Cities*, 50 Idaho L. Rev. 49 (2014) at 57.

⁸ Ibid at 83. (advocating for the development and use of a "City Resilience Index" to "identify the coordinated, concrete and thus most cost-effective steps that cities can take-long before disasters strike or event if disaster or crisis never strikes – to neutralize critical community vulnerabilities and create more resilient cities.")

⁹ Karen Lash and Reilly Morse, *Mitigating Disaster: Lessons From Mississippi*, 77 Miss.L.J. 895, 909 (2008).

better able to adapt, respond, and recover from economic, social and environmental shocks like Superstorm Sandy.”¹⁰

The Association For Neighborhood and Housing Development, Inc., noted in their “Social Resiliency and Superstorm Sandy” study, that “[a] study of residents in impacted communities across the New York and New Jersey region conducted by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research indicated that neighborhoods lacking in social cohesion and trust are having a more difficult time recovering from Sandy.”¹¹ The study noted further that “Superstorm Sandy showed us that across the city, communities with stronger civic networks were able to jump into action to begin to respond to the catastrophe, while others with limited social ties have had a much more difficult and disorganized recovery.”¹²

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

The proposed task force should also create a standing digital communication forum that groups that are not on the taskforce can be invited to participate in. This would foster wider communication among groups that may be engaged in similar work. In the event of an emergency, these groups would have an efficient way of communicating on-line or receiving up-to-date information.

CONCLUSION

We hope that this taskforce promotes more open and responsive communication between the government officials and the community leaders that have fostered the recovery process in their neighborhoods and beyond. We believe that the proposal is well in line with the goal to create a more resilient city. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the proposed task force and to make use of its research to guide our future advocacy and outreach in this area. Thank you for convening this hearing on this important proposal.

Respectfully Submitted,
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¹⁰ Williams, Eric, *Social Resiliency and Superstorm Sandy, Lessons from New York City Community Organizations*, Association For Neighborhood and Housing Development, Inc., 2014

¹¹ Ibid. at 5.

¹² Ibid. at 8.



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**LISC NYC Submitted Testimony on Intro 562
Hearing of the New York City Council Committee on Recovery and Resiliency**

Submitted December 16, 2014

Thank you Chair Trayger, and Recovery and Resiliency Committee Members, for considering this testimony about Intro 562. My name is Helene Caloir, Policy Director of Local Initiatives Support Corporation's New York City Program. I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of LISC New York City.

LISC NYC enthusiastically supports Intro 562. Community-based and city-wide nonprofit organizations (CBOs) and religious institutions throughout New York City have provided an enormous amount of help to the communities recovering from Sandy and will continue to do so until these neighborhoods are restored and the lives of the people who live in them are rebuilt. With more than two years since the storm hit, it is a good time to take stock of the nonprofit and religious sector contributions through the proposed Task Force. There is so much the CBOs and the religious sector have brought to the recovery table. It's an opportunity to identify best practices and plan for how the work of the nonprofit and religious sectors can be more effectively integrated into the City's resiliency planning going forward. LISC NYC thanks you for proposing the establishment of this Task Force and its charge, as an opportunity to document the broad scope and depth of the work of these sectors and the ongoing contributions they can make if provided with necessary resources and seats at the resiliency planning table.

To give you a little background about us: LISC NYC's mission is to help resident-focused, community-based development organizations transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into healthy ones—good places to live, do business, work, and raise families. Over the last 34 years, LISC New York City has invested approximately \$2.3 billion in more than 75 New York City community development corporations and other local, nonprofit organizations. With our support, these organizations have developed over 34,600 affordable homes and more than 2.3 million sq. ft. of community and commercial space.

To give you a few examples of why establishment of the Task Force is so important, here is a brief description of the work LISC NYC and our community-based organizations have done on Sandy recovery:

- Emergency Relief Fund – Immediately following the destruction caused by Superstorm Sandy, LISC created the Emergency Relief Fund to enable community-based organizations in storm devastated neighborhoods throughout New York City to help residents get back on their feet. Through this fund LISC has dispersed nearly \$2 million to the following ten CBOs and nonprofits, which they have used to assist almost 10,000 residents get back on their feet:
 - Coney Island, Brooklyn: Astella Development Corporation

- Brighton Beach, Brooklyn: Brighton Neighborhood Association
- Red Hook/Gowanus, Brooklyn: Fifth Avenue Committee
- Canarsie, Brooklyn: Neighborhood Housing Services of East Flatbush
- Far Rockaway, Queens: Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation
- Staten Island: Northfield Community Local Development Corporation, Project Hospitality, and Zone A New York
- Multiple neighborhoods: AAFE Community Development Fund and MHANY Management Inc.

LISC's capacity-building funding enabled these CBOs and nonprofits to hire multilingual outreach workers, housing rehab specialists and construction specialists to conduct critical on-the-ground outreach to vulnerable families and individuals. They connected residents to case management services, mold treatment and home repair services, and Build It Back enrollment among other services. The Emergency Relief Fund was funded by the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, JPB Foundation, Freddie Mac, Union Bank, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

- The Sandy Neighborhood Design HelpDesk, - a LISC funded initiative (via support from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City) assisted homeowners gain access to critical information on how to rebuild in a more resilient manner. LISC, Enterprise, the Pratt Center for Community Development, the Center for New York City Neighborhoods and an array of community-based organizations collaborated with New York City's Office of Housing Recovery Operations and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development on a series of HelpDesks to provide free one-on-one consultation to homeowners on building code, zoning, design and resiliency-related issues for buildings in Sandy affected neighborhoods, including Far Rockaway in Queens, Brighton Beach, Coney Island, and Canarsie in Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Services included flood insurance information and financial counseling to homeowners who will be required by law to purchase flood insurance once new national floodplain maps are issued by FEMA, as well as to those homeowners already in flood zones whose premiums are set to rise.
- Mold Treatment Program - In February 2013, LISC NYC established an affiliate, Neighborhood Revitalization NYC (NRNYC), to administer a \$15 million Mold Treatment Program to treat mold, remove wet building materials, and perform "muck-outs" in homes affected by Superstorm Sandy in Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and the Bronx. This initiative was paid for with philanthropic funds from the American Red Cross, the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, and the Robin Hood Foundation. All of the treatment work was conducted by highly trained environmental consultants and contractors. Homeowners were referred to the program by a variety of community non-profit organizations. The Program was offered at no cost to qualified homeowners. From February 2013 to August 2014, the NRNYC Mold Treatment Program successfully completed mold treatment in more than 2,000 homes.
- Home Repair Program - In October 2013, LISC NYC, through NRNYC, created the Home Repair Program to help low-income homeowners rebuild their homes. The program provides up to \$80,000 in repairs and is offered at no cost to qualified homeowners. This program is being paid for with \$19.2 million in philanthropic funds from the American Red Cross, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and Robin Hood. Repairs are being performed by highly trained construction managers, general contractors, and volunteer organizations active in disasters (VOADs) including:

Friends of Rockaway/St. Bernard Project, Habitat for Humanity New York City, and Rebuilding Together. The Program is currently the main alternative for homeowners who aren't eligible for Build it Back. Many of the people helped are vulnerable populations including frail elderly, people with major health challenges or other disabilities and families with small children. Many of the homeowners were referred to the program by disaster case managers from the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, and other non-profit organizations. The Program is on track to rebuild 500 homes by March 31, 2015.

- Build It Back – Multifamily Repair Program – LISC NYC, with three other nonprofit organizations, is providing building repairs to owners of multi-family buildings whose buildings, and to condo and coop owners whose apartments, were damaged in the storm. To date, the LISC NYC Multifamily Repair Program, with a budget of \$15 million, has funded the repairs, and in some cases resiliency measures, on 23 properties and has approximately 90 more in the pipeline. Some of these loans and grants enable building construction to proceed, some are to commence repairs to individual condos and coops and some are to provide reimbursement to owners who have repaired their properties themselves. This multifamily housing work is funded by the City's Build It Back Program.

When the Task Force is established and takes testimony, LISC NYC and each of the nonprofits mentioned here will have the opportunity to provide in-depth information about the scope and nature of their work in Sandy recovery and lessons learned about building community resiliency and preparing for future disasters. Here are a few lessons that LISC and our CBO partners have learned from the Sandy work we have done together about the characteristics of resilient neighborhoods and how they aid disaster preparedness:

- A resilient neighborhood is prepared to stay connected with its residents even when its normal systems are down. This is where our community-based partners are critically important in the recovery process. They know their communities; where the people are and what they need. They are physically in the communities and can be at the door even when outside access is cut off because of blocked streets, flooded public transportation, etc.
- Community connectedness is vital to resident safety – and even saves lives – in a disaster.
- A community-based response system ready to be activated with designated community-based organizations and religious institutions taking the lead to coordinate is needed to ensure even delivery of resources and to avoid duplication and waste.
- In the same way we can't neglect entire neighborhoods in normal times and miraculously expect them to be fully functioning and resilient when disaster strikes, we can't expect our community-based organizations to spring into action in a disaster when they are surviving on a shoestring during normal times.

There is so much more we and our partners would like to share with the City about Sandy recovery. The passage of Intro. 562 and the establishment of the Task Force will provide a necessary and highly visible forum to inform the City about the important work of the nonprofit community and religious organizations in Sandy recovery and the contribution these sectors can make to prepare for future disasters.

December 16, 2014

Contact: Helene Caloir, Policy Director, LISC NYC 212-455-9584

December 16, 2014

Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton - Manhattan Beach, Inc
3300 Coney Island Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11235

FOR THE RECORD

Testimony Submission

To the New York City Council Committee of Recovery and Resiliency:

The Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton Beach strongly supports the creation of a Super Storm Sandy recovery task force for non profit community groups and houses of worship.

Non-profit community groups and houses of worship were at the front lines of Sandy recovery. Organizationally, houses of worships and non-profit community groups, understood and continue to serve the most pressing needs of their membership. Many groups were able to respond with clothing, food, and water within hours or days after the storm.

Many of these organizations suffered great losses and damages post Sandy. Even with those challenges they remained resilient in providing emergency support to their constituencies. Moreover, the nature of these organizations allows for flexibility during emergency response and a detailed understanding of the nature of that response.

The resource, knowledge, and technical understanding for recovery is entrenched in non profit community groups and houses of worship that served Sandy affected communities and continue to provide needed support. The proposed task force will also assist in future planning and utilization of core community groups for response to future emergency needs.

The Shorefront YM-YWHA strongly supports the creation of a task force to advise the Mayor and New York City Council around the rebuilding and resiliency of non-profit organizations and houses of worship in Sandy affected communities.

David Cohen, Resiliency and Recovery Specialist (dcohen@shorefronty.org)

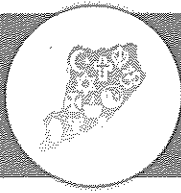
Susan Fox, Executive Director (foxs@shorefronty.org)

Shorefront YM-YWHA of Brighton-Manhattan Beach, Inc.

718-646-1444

cc: City Council Member Mark Treyger, Chair, Committee on Recovery and Resiliency





Testimony of the
Staten Island Interfaith and Community Long Term Recovery Organization
Before the New York City Council
Committee on Recovery and Resiliency

Int. No. 562 - In relation to the creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force.

December 16, 2014

The Staten Island Interfaith and Community Long Term Recovery Organization (LTRO) submits this testimony in support of **Int. No. 562**, *a Local Law in relation to the creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force*. The proposed recovery taskforce elegantly aligns with the existing models of Long Term Recovery (LTR) groups across New York City, including the Staten Island LTRO.

The Staten Island LTRO is a coalition of community, faith-based, and national organizations dedicated to effective, long-term disaster recovery and preparedness on Staten Island. We formed in response to Super Storm Sandy to provide coordination and support to 90+ recovery organizations, mobilized in service-specific committees.

LTRO member organizations were on the ground fast and continue to help provide for homeowners in nearly every facet of their recovery and in almost every affected neighborhood on Staten Island. The combined efforts of our member organizations have provided immediate and long-term aid for nearly two years for thousands of Sandy-impacted Staten Islander. The LTRO remains a primary resource for collaboration among these community recovery entities.

Recovery coalitions known as Long Term Recovery (LTR) Organizations and Groups were established in every borough of New York City, following the advice and assistance of FEMA and the nationally implemented model proposed by the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NVOAD).

LTR Organizations and Groups offer the following strengths to the studies and recommendations targeted in the taskforce to be established by Int. No. 562:

1. Sustainable community and faith-based leadership
2. Knowledge of past and present unmet Sandy-related needs
3. Mapping of and direct communication with diverse recovery services and resources
4. Credibility on the ground in affected neighborhoods
5. Collaborative, creative solutions and partnerships after two years of coalition building

Initial recommendations for the sections outlined in Int. No. 562, as recorded on November 13, 2014 by Council Members Treyger, Cabrera, Deutsch, Eugene, Gentile, Koslowitz and Richards:

Selection of Public Members for the Taskforce (Section 1b, i-ii)

The Staten Island LTRO strongly recommends that the Mayor and Speaker of the Council provide **equal representation to the five boroughs in the selection of the ten public members** referenced in Section 1b. We also recommend the serious consideration of **LTR and VOAD leadership as candidates for election as public members and/or as sources of consultation in selecting clergy and non-profit leadership for public membership.**

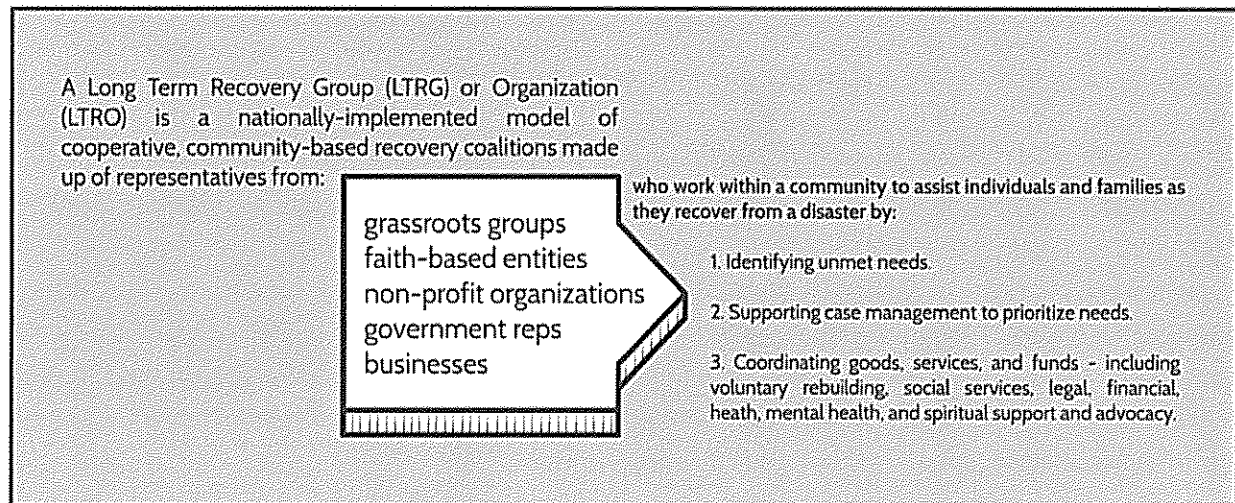
For example, the Staten Island LTRO contains several members of clergy who not only participate in but *provide significant leadership* for Sandy relief. LTRO clergy and lay leadership alike additionally showcase the criteria of “expansive experience in both not-for-profit corporations and Hurricane Sandy relief work” outlined in Section 1b.

The LTRO offers to submit names and/or engage in further discussion around potential choices for public members of this taskforce.

Description of the Roles and Services of Recovery Non-Profits and Houses of Worship, Individually and in Coordination (Section 1e, i)

LTR Organizations and Groups would be a vital resource in crafting an overarching “description of the role played by not-for-profit corporations and houses of worship in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and the services provided by them to the community, both individually and in coordination,” as outlined in Section 1e, i.

The Staten Island LTRO has followed the model outlined in the *National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Long-Term Recovery Manual*, in coordinating on the local level to meet “the serious and basic life needs which are not otherwise resourced.”



The combined efforts of Staten Island LTRO member volunteer rebuild organizations have led to over 3000 muckouts, with repair projects in more than 300 homes, the distribution of more than one million dollars in donations of rebuild materials and household items, and the mobilization of thousands of volunteers. Member agency disaster case management programs have helped distribute over two million dollars in support for clients with unmet needs through the NYDIS Unmet Needs Roundtable, assisting nearly 400 households. Member organizations offering legal services, financial counseling, health and mental health support, and other social services are regularly referred to these disaster case management and voluntary rebuilding organizations through LTRO committees, networking, and resource guides.

The experience in facilitating community recovery in several service areas puts the Staten Island LTRO, and LTRGs in other boroughs, in an ideal position for crafting the narrative and evolution of community recovery since Sandy in New York City.

The diversity of services, faith traditions, cultural and political representation, and organizational structures represented in a Long Term Recovery group can be found in the attached “Addendum I: Staten Island LTRO Leadership and Membership.”

Damages/Loss Suffered and Rebuild/Restoration for Recovery Non-Profits and Houses of Worship (Section 1e, ii)

The leadership and membership of the Staten Island LTRO are comprised of several clergy whose houses of worship were affected by Hurricane Sandy (including St. Margaret Mary’s Church and Church at the Gateway, among others) and have formed affiliations with affected synagogues identified through partnerships with the Jewish Community Center of Staten Island. **The Staten Island LTRO could help facilitate the identification of and support for these affected entities.**

An excellent citywide resource for the Section 1e, ii goal of the taskforce would be to **increase communication and partnership with New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)**, a leader in providing support for houses of worship in NYC that suffered damage from Sandy.

Past and Present Sources of Aid to Recovery Non-Profits and Houses of Worship (Section 1e, iii)

In the wake of 9/11 many national faith-based groups formed an umbrella organization, New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), to administer an Unmet Needs Roundtable. NYDIS has worked on meeting the needs of survivors of 9/11, Katrina, Irene, and Sandy. LTRG representatives and a diversity of donors hear each case and allocate resources to meet needs. Disaster Case Managers have successfully presented the cases of over 16,000 households to the roundtable to the tune of some \$6.8M (as of September 30, 2014). The roundtable has covered medical expenses; housing, food, and clothing needs; home repair and rebuild assistance; and referrals to housing, legal, and other counseling services.

The Unmet Needs Roundtable continues to provide a strong, sustainable vehicle for support of individuals in need of assistance. However, direct support of LTR Groups and their member organizations has dwindled significantly. Despite their strong local presence and service, these leaders in the grassroots recovery efforts have not been fully supported as a partner and viable resource in governmental recovery efforts. After pouring countless hours of labor and millions of dollars of materials into Sandy-impacted homes and communities, volunteer rebuild organizations have now exhausted their resources even as needs remain. For example, Staten Island's voluntary rebuild support has nearly halved since September and we face the end of Disaster Case Management contracts in 2015.

While resources and organizational support dwindles, the unmet needs recorded by member recovery organizations are becoming more complicated and require additional advocacy, coordination, and support.

The LTRO echoes the significance of this taskforce with urgency, especially after our needs assessment of over 5000 Sandy-impacted residents on Staten Island from April to July 2014, which found 709 households calling for assistance with a Super Storm Sandy related need. 363 households had a need caused or exacerbated by confusion with the Build it Back program, 557 had a need relating to disaster case management, 451 homes requested rebuild assistance, and 232 families were in need of financial services. (See Addendum II: LTRO Needs Assessment of Sandy Impacted Residents.)

Recommendations on Meeting Existing Needs of Recovery Non-Profits and Houses of Worship (Section 1e, iv)

The Staten Island LTRO continues to work collaboratively and creatively to meet increasingly complex Sandy-related needs with decreasing resources and attention. One approach to meeting these needs is through greater partnership with Long Term Recovery groups throughout New York City—expanding outreach, advocacy, and communications around remaining needs through combined projects, committees, and regular contact with community coalition leaders in other boroughs. **We are committed to increasing collaboration between the boroughs in order to advocate for survivors with unmet needs that may require more citywide partnership and a stronger voice.**

The following recommendations that would benefit from greater inter-borough support are taken from a press release generated by the Brooklyn Long-Term Recovery Group, Queens Recovery Coalition, and Staten Island LTRO on October 28, 2014 for the Two Year Anniversary of Hurricane Sandy:

Secure temporary housing assistance for displaced residents. There is an urgent need for assistance to (1) those who have been displaced since Sandy and are running out of financial resources for their rentals, (2) those who are facing another winter living in unsafe conditions, and (3) those who will be displaced by upcoming phases in their rebuild/elevation or higher

rent/flood insurance. Many homeowners have not recovered financially from Sandy and simply lack any resources to cover the cost of temporary housing and/or are having trouble finding affordable short-term housing. We aim to collectively brainstorm community-based solutions and advocate to the city's Build it Back program.

Advocate renters who fell through the cracks of citywide Sandy recovery services. The gap between aid to homeowners and renters reveals negligence in meeting the needs of some of the more vulnerable populations of NYC. Very few renters have received assistance from Build it Back. As of March 2014, coupons had been issued to only 232 households, and only 83 of those households had managed to find apartments before the coupon's expiration. LTRGs aim to continue to expand their support of renters, while also advocating for the reopening of the Temporary Disaster Assistance Program (TDAP) under the authority of the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Increase support and capacity for community disaster case management (DCM), voluntary rebuild organizations, and local recovery non-profits and businesses. LTRGs represent a diversity of local public, private, and volunteer service providers who aim for better coordination with national, state, and citywide recovery efforts. Support of these groups by their communities and wider efforts is crucial for sustainable, community recovery.

Expand education on Flood Insurance premium increases to residents of affected neighborhoods and recovery service providers. With FEMA's new Flood Insurance Rate Maps released in 2016, residents and service providers will require an aggressive and accurate campaign around increases in their insurance rates and financial management. Bringing citywide campaigns to the borough-wide and community level can be expedited by partnership with Long Term Recovery groups.

Coordinate a unified canvassing of remaining need with citywide support. Community service providers are at the front lines of recovery and can see on-the-ground trends in need, but in order for a more efficient and coordinated response, we need a unified canvassing of remaining need. Partnership between national, city, and community networks could help make that a reality and insure that fewer struggling New Yorkers continue to fall through the cracks of the flood after the flood of services. Canvassing and phone banking efforts led by LTR groups have already been spearheaded in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, and Staten Island.

Recommendations on Utilizing Recovery Non-Profits, Houses of Worship in the Aftermath of Future Natural Disasters (Section 1e, v)

A commitment to community resiliency derives from a long-term recovery model that envisions preparedness efforts through direct connection and commitment to community members, especially those who are most vulnerable: our seniors, people with disabilities, and immigrants, especially those with language barriers. The Staten Island LTRO has further mapped out where vulnerable residents live in a 30-block radius of Midland Beach and we are training block captains to check on vulnerable neighbors and to mobilize resources for

individuals in need. Examples of our other long term disaster preparedness efforts include: the securing of a location through the New Dorp Moravian Church to store disaster preparedness necessities and from which volunteers can be mobilized in the event of a disaster; participation of three of our Board of Directors in the New York Rising Committee to develop resiliency measures for Staten Island; hosting tabletop exercises; and creating a plan and communication tree for LTRO members in the event of a future disaster.

These are all key steps towards greater resiliency and preparedness, but the **most sustainable step to resiliency in New York City would be for significant change in recovery policy to occur now which precipitates better future communication and coordination between federal, state, city, and community recovery efforts.** Without sincerely committed discussion around where communications and coordination broke down, without earnest open ears to those who have seen the trials and successes of community recovery, without fair representation among the boroughs and diverse levels of representation, a policy of resiliency will not be possible.

We offer our knowledge, resources, and partnership to the development of this taskforce because we perceive that the Mayor and City Council have the opportunity to lead in the policy changes that would produce more resilient models of support for protecting this city and the homes and lives of its still vulnerable residents, who we work with daily.

Attached Materials Referenced

“Staten Island LTRO Leadership and Membership”

“LTRO Needs Assessment of Sandy Impacted Residents, April – July 2014”

For further information, please contact:

Alana Tornello

Coordinator, Staten Island Long Term Recovery Organization

718.702.7455

alana.tornello@sisandyhelp.org

ADDENDUM I: STATEN ISLAND LTRO LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

LTRO COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Disaster Case Management

Lourdes Ferrer, Catholic Charities

Disaster Preparedness

Steven Clohessy, HPD/Port Richmond CERT

Finance, Mission, and Structure

Robert Dennis, St. Margaret Mary's Church

Health, Mental Health, and Spiritual Care

Patricia Kane, New York State Nurses Association

Individual Assistance

Rev. Karen Jackson, Project Hospitality

Rebuilding Committee

Ross Decker, Yellow Boots

Thomas McDonough, Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation

Derek Tabacco, Guyon Rescue

Policy, Advocacy, Legal, & Immigration Services

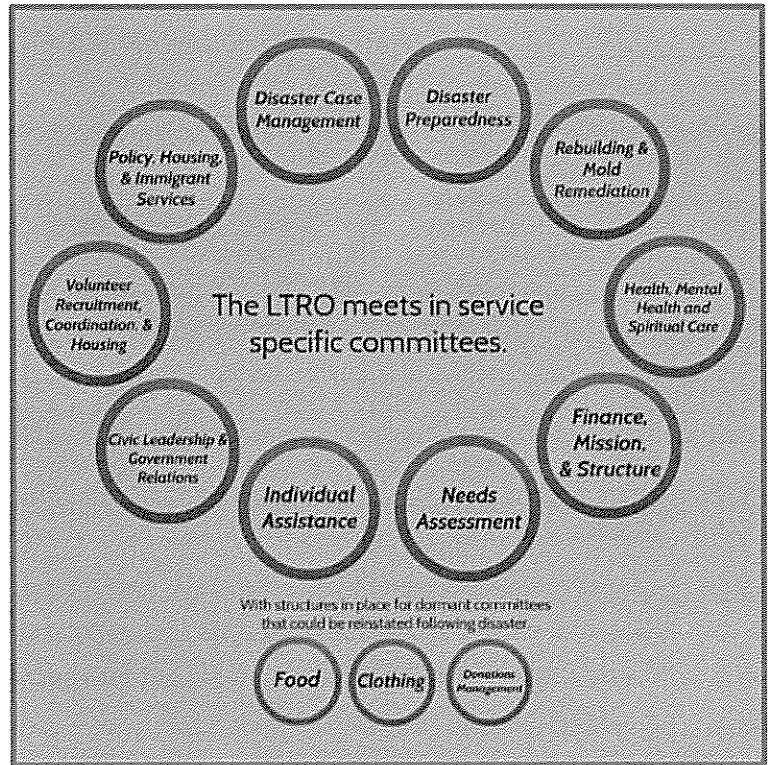
Margaret Becker, Legal Services NYC

Alana Tornello, SI LTRO

Volunteer Recruitment, Coordination, & Housing

Tami DiConstanzo, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

Peter Cavadini, New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS)



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Margaret Becker	Legal Services NYC
Thomas Cunsolo	Staten Island Alliance
Robert Dennis	St. Margaret Mary's Church
Dr. Victor Dolan	Old Town Road Civic Association
Farid Kader	Yellow Boots
Thomas McDonough	Stephen Siller Foundation
David Sorkin	Jewish Community Center
Derek Tabacco	Guyon Rescue
Rev. Terry Troia	Project Hospitality

STAFF

Alana Tornello	LTRO Coordinator
Nicholas Livigni	LTRO Inventory Control Manager

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

**Voting Members*

1. African Refuge
2. African Services Committee*
3. All Hands Volunteers
4. American Red Cross*
5. Beacon of Hope*
6. Brooklyn Cyclones
7. Building Bridges
8. Calvary Presbyterian
9. Castleton Hill Moravian Church
10. Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of NY*
11. Cedar Grove Community Hub
12. Christ Church
13. Christian Pentecostal Church
14. Church at the Gateway*
15. Church of St. Andrew's Soup in the Hood
16. Center for Independence of the Disabled NY*
17. Communities United for Respect and Trust
18. Community Health Action of Staten Island*
19. Davidson Radio
20. Effective Trauma Therapy
21. El Centro del Immigrante*
22. Feeding Family
23. Friends of Firefighters*
24. Guyon Rescue*
25. Habitat for Humanity
26. Hope Coalition America*
27. HOPE Worldwide*
28. Jewish Board of Family and Children Services
29. Knights of Columbus
30. Lighthouse Church
31. Lutheran Family Health Center
32. Lutheran Social Services NY*
33. Make the Road NY*
34. Meels on Wheels of Staten Island*
35. Mennonite Disaster Service
36. Metropolitan NY Synod-ELCA
37. Midland Avenue Neighborhood Relief*
38. Midland Beach Civic
39. New Dorp Beach Civic
40. New Hope Community Church
41. New York State Nurses Association*
42. NHS of SI Inc
43. NIA Community Services Network
44. Northfield Community LDC*
45. NYC Comptroller*
46. Occupy Sandy*
47. Ocean Breeze Civic Association
48. Old Town Civic*
49. Olivet Presbyterian Church of SI*
50. Olympia Association
51. Port Richmond CERT*
52. Port Richmond Immigrant Association
53. Port Richmond Improvement Association
54. Presbyterian Church of Chatham Township
55. Project Hospitality*
56. Public Resources Inc
57. Richmond Senior Services*
58. RSVP Serve*
59. Salvation Army*
60. Sarapis Foundation*
61. South Beach Civic
62. South Shore Sandy Alliance
63. St Margaret Mary RC Church*
64. STAR America
65. Staten Island Alliance*
66. Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
67. Staten Island Clergy Leadership*
68. Staten Island Council of Churches
69. Staten Island Episcopal Recovery Team/Episcopal Diocese of NYC*
70. Staten Island Evangelical Association
71. Staten Island Giving Circle
72. Staten Island Help
73. Staten Island Hunger Task Force
74. Staten Island Jewish Community Center*
75. Staten Island Legal Services*
76. Staten Island Liberian Community Association
77. Staten Island Mental Health Society*
78. Staten Island Tool Library
79. Staten Island University Hospital*
80. Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation*
81. Travis Civic Association
82. Unitarian Church of SI
83. Urban Outreach
84. Visiting Nurse Service of NY*
85. Wagner Cares*
86. Where to Turn
87. World Cares Center*
88. World Hindu Council
89. Yellow Boots*
90. Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce of America
91. Zone A



NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANDY IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND

Phone Banking Period: 4/11/14 – 7/31/14

Staten Island Interfaith & Community Long Term Recovery Organization

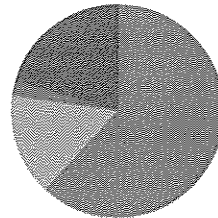
WHAT DO SANDY-IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND STILL NEED?

35% of Sandy-impacted residents reached from April to July 2014 had needs remaining from the storm.

Nearly 2 years after Sandy, 709 households told us that they need...

BUILD IT BACK (BiB) ASSISTANCE

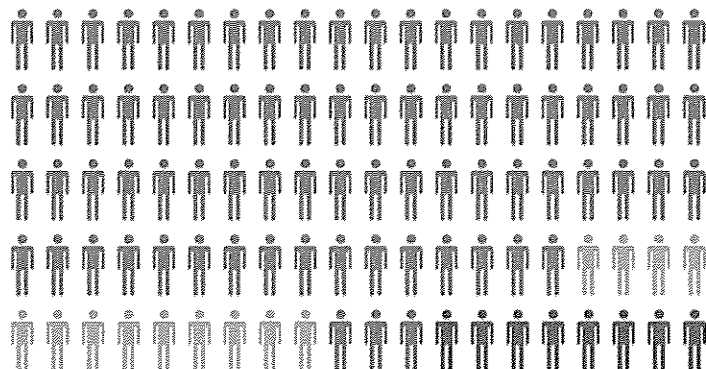
363 clients in need



- 279 BiB clients expressed concern, confusion, or dissatisfaction (62%)
- 70 BiB clients had no comment (16%)
- 9 BiB clients expressed satisfaction (2%)
- 84 Clients were not registered for BiB (19%)
- 9 Clients would register if BiB was reopened (2%)

DISASTER CASE MANAGEMENT (DCM)

557 clients in need



- 477 were referred to a DCM agency for follow up
- 85 accurately identified their DCM
- 17 wrongly identified their DCM
- 45 did not remember or were unsure whether they had a DCM
- 11 requested a new DCM

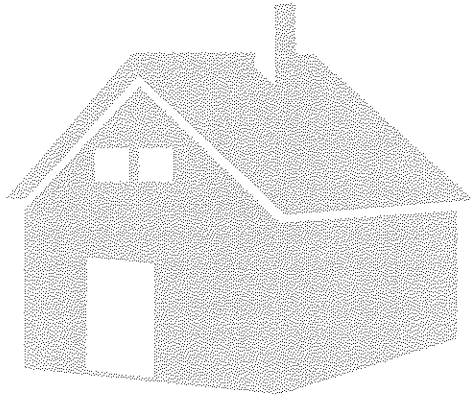


NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANDY IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND

Phone Banking Period: 4/11/14 – 7/31/14

Staten Island Interfaith & Community Long Term Recovery Organization

REBUILD ASSISTANCE 451 homes in need



121 claimed priority needs including:

- nonfunctioning bathroom or kitchen
- foundation issue
- leaks & flooding
- electric & plumbing
- need affecting vulnerable residents (disabled, veterans, older adults, children)

260 claimed secondary needs including:

- basement & garage
- doors & windows
- landscaping & outdoor work
- painting, tiling, & finishing

70 claimed a need but hesitated to share details (waiting for Build it Back, Buyout, DCM consultations, etc).

OTHER NEEDS

232 with Financial Service Needs
33%

58 with Legal Service Needs
8%

45 are Waiting on a Buyout
6%

30 Requested Temporary Housing
4%

157 Requested Furniture/Household Goods
22%

78 Mentions of Mental Health Needs
11%



NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANDY IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND

Phone Banking Period: 4/11/14 – 7/31/14

Staten Island Interfaith & Community Long Term Recovery Organization

PURPOSE

To call Sandy impacted residents on Staten Island in order to (1) assess continued needs and (2) make referrals for volunteer rebuild services and disaster case management directly to clients and on their behalf to LTRO members.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Volunteers were taught how to answer questions about/make referrals for rebuild needs, disaster case managers (DCM), Build it Back (BiB), and the goals of the Staten Island Long Term Recovery Organization (SI LTRO) and Needs Assessment project. Secure temporary cell phones were provided and waivers were signed to protect client confidentiality.

PHONE BANKING SESSIONS AND PARTNERS

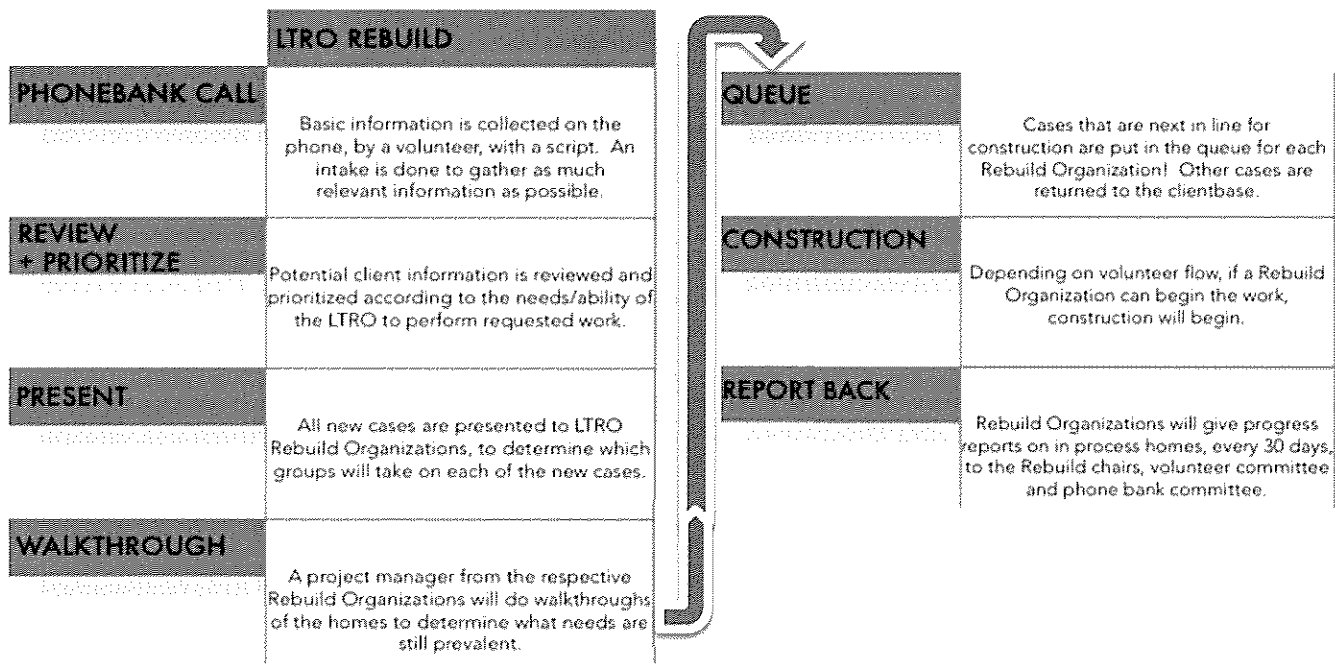
Calls were made and data entered directly into an online form (or on paper scripts later submitted for entry) at weekly and weekend 3 to 5 hour sessions hosted from 4/11/14 to 7/31/14 at spaces provided by the following organizations: All Hands Volunteers, Project Hospitality, Richmond Senior Services' Sandy Resource Center, RSVP/SERVE, Staten Island Alliance, St. John's University, and the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. Volunteers were provided for these sessions by the host organizations, with additional volunteer and worker support from NY Cares, World Cares Center, Hope Worldwide, and the Student Youth Employment Program.

CLIENT FOLLOW UP

Data was sorted by need and forwarded weekly to the chairs of the following SI LTRO Committees: "Rebuilding and Mold Remediation," "Disaster Case Management," "Volunteer Coordination, Recruitment, and Housing," and "Policy, Advocacy, and Legal Services."

Committee Chairs are expected to justly distribute client needs among participating organizations and groups. Clients matched with an LTRO affiliate should expect to be reached by a representative of that supporting entity within two weeks of their initial phone banking assessment.

Clients with rebuild specific needs should expect an assessment on site two weeks after a representative of an LTRO affiliate group has followed up with them by phone (see timeline below for rebuild-specific follow up steps).





NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANDY IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND

Phone Banking Period: 4/11/14 – 7/31/14

Staten Island Interfaith & Community Long Term Recovery Organization

DATA SUMMARY

35% of Sandy-impacted residents who answered the survey claimed remaining Sandy needs. (709 households of 2,008 reached.)

Those 2,008 clients reached made up 39% of calls (5,128 total).
47% of total calls (2,389 clients) were referred to DCM and rebuild services via voicemail.¹

Of the 709 clients with remaining Sandy needs:

64% (451 clients) expressed a need for rebuild assistance and/or requested a voluntary rebuild organization to assess the damage in their home.

Of 451 clients designated as having rebuild needs:

- 121 claimed priority rebuild needs, including: nonfunctioning bathroom/kitchen; framing, insulation, & sheetrock; foundation issues; leaks & flooding; demolition; electric, plumbing, & heat; cleanup & gutting.
- 260 claimed second priority rebuild needs, including: basement & garage; doors & windows; stairs; landscaping & outdoor work; powerwash; painting, tiling, & finishing.
- 70 claimed that they had a rebuild need but hesitated to share details, requested to speak directly with a rebuild group, or were waiting on Build it Back/Buyout/DCM consultations.

LTRO Followup: Cases were referred to Rebuild Committee Chairs to distribute among five rebuild groups.

- 90 cases were given to each organization, separated into "1st priority need," "2nd priority need," and "Followup required for more info."
- 118 cases were followed up for further assessment by a rebuild organization.
- The remaining cases were referred to the Volunteer Recruitment, Coordination, and Housing Committee to distribute smaller rebuild needs to tertiary recovery organizations.

78% (557 clients) expressed a Disaster Case Management (DCM) need.

Of the 557 designated as having DCM needs:

- 477 claimed to not have a DCM.
- 17 misidentified their DCM as Build it Back, FEMA, or a rebuild organization.²
- 45 did not remember the name of their DCM/agency, were unsure if they had a DCM, or did not select to provide more details on the DCM agency.
- 11 expressed dissatisfaction with/requested a new DCM.

LTRO Followup: Cases were referred to DCM Committee Chairs for distribution among member agencies through the DCM hotline.

- 237 clients were assigned a DCM.
- 19 were already actively working with a DCM.
- 82 clients declined DCM services, 5 cases were already closed.
- 30 received information or referrals.
- 2 were ineligible.

The remaining 181 clients who could not be reached by DCM agencies attempting follow-up received voicemails containing information on how to reach a DCM agency or are still pending contact.

¹ 711 clients could not be reached because: phone was busy, out of service, or wrong number (333); client hung up (67); client requested a call back (311, of which 40 requested call back because a translator was required).

² Of 160 residents who had a DCM - 85 accurately identified their agency and contacts.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF SANDY IMPACTED RESIDENTS ON STATEN ISLAND

Phone Banking Period: 4/11/14 – 7/31/14

Staten Island Interfaith & Community Long Term Recovery Organization

51% (363 clients) expressed a Build it Back (BiB) need.

Of the 363 designated as having BiB Needs:

- 279 registered BiB clients expressed issues exacerbated or caused by lack of communication, delay, inconsistent programmatic information, or unmet promises in their interaction with the Build it Back Program. Clients frequently indicated lack of an assessment visits for months since registration or a prolonged wait on reimbursement notification.
- 84 did not register for BiB.
- 9 identified that they would apply for BiB if registration reopened (3 waited for Buyout, 2 were unaware of the program, 3 would register if conditions changed, 1 had assumed better FEMA coverage).

LTRO Followup: Cases were referred to the LTRO Policy, Advocacy, and Legal Services Committee.

- The data (with anonymous client information) was also sent to representatives from Build it Back, NYC City Hall, and the Comptroller's office (as they carry out their audit of BiB).

Other Needs

- 232 clients requested financial services
- 157 clients requested furniture or household goods
- 58 clients required legal services
- 38 clients identified themselves as renters with Sandy needs
- 45 clients inquired about more information/claimed that they were waiting on Buyouts
- 30 client requested temporary housing while their homes are rebuilt
- 20 clients requested or appeared to require mental health services (among 78 mentions of psychological/emotional strain)

**COMMITTEE ON
SMALL BUSINESS**

RANKING DEMOCRAT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
CONTRACTING AND WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, ENERGY AND TRADE

**COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA



**CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC
AMERICAN CAUCUS**
BOARD MEMBER

CHAIR
TASK FORCE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CONGRESSIONAL KIDS SAFETY CAUCUS
CO-CHAIR

<http://www.meng.house.gov>
www.facebook.com/repgracemeng
Twitter: @repgracemeng

Grace Meng

Congress of the United States

Sixth District, New York

December 16, 2014

Re: Creation of a Hurricane Sandy community groups and houses of worship recovery task force.

Dear Members of the Committee on Recovery and Resiliency:

Thank you for asking me to testify on the creation of a task force to address the damage and recovery from Hurricane Sandy on community groups and houses of worship. This is an important issue that I have worked to address in the U.S. Congress.

Hurricane Sandy struck New York City on October 29, 2012. Although it was a difficult time for many Americans in the path of the storm, the entirety of their tragedies wouldn't be realized for months to come. As the storm's destruction was being assessed, it became clear that cleanup and rebuilding efforts would take years. Worse than the pain of waiting, for some, was the realization that no federal aid would ever be available. While some non-profits are eligible for federal dollars, houses of worship are unfortunately not.

Houses of worship are crucial institutions within our communities. They serve as community centers, and during times of natural disaster they help feed, comfort and shelter thousands of victims. I believe that houses of worship should be able to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance grants on the exact same terms as other private non-profit facilities.

I worked with Representatives Peter King from Long Island and Chris Smith from New Jersey to pass legislation that would allow houses of worship to apply for these currently unavailable grants. The bill, the Federal Disaster Assistance Nonprofit Fairness Act passed the House of Representatives on February 13, 2013 overwhelmingly 354 to 72. Unfortunately, the Senate did not take action this Congress, and we were unable to have the bill signed into law.

I was disappointed that we were not able to change the law this Congress. I will continue advocating for equitable access to disaster relief, which is why I am happy to support the proposal in front of the committee to create a task force that will examine how charitable organizations and houses of worship were affected by Hurricane Sandy, and how we can better address their resiliency and recovery. A task force is the perfect forum to study the effects of changes in our law and obstacles we face in aiding these organizations in their recovery.

I appreciate Councilwoman Treyger for holding this hearing. I urge the full New York City Council to approve the task force and look forward to reviewing its findings.

Sincerely,

Member of Congress

118-35 QUEENS BLVD, SUITE 1610
FOREST HILLS, NY 11375
(718) 445-7861
(718) 445-7868 Fax

1317 LONGWORTH
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2601
(202) 225-1589 Fax

32-26 UNION STREET, SUITE 18
FLUSHING, NY 11354
(718) 445-7860
(718) 445-7868 Fax

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROD CURTIS

Address: 24015 41st Ave, Bayside, NY 11364

I represent: NAAC

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ROD HULLA

Address: 1748 STUART ST, BROOKLYN, NY

I represent: CONEY ISLAND GOSPEL ASSEMBLY

Address: 2828 NEPTUNE AVE, BROOKLYN NY 11224

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Helene Caloix

Address: _____

I represent: Local Initiatives Support Corp.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Omar Bourne

Address: _____

I represent: OPM

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 562 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joseph Rosenberg

Address: _____

I represent: Catholic Community Relations Council

Address: 80 Maiden Lane

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 562 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12/16/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: ALANA TORNELLO

Address: 174 PERRY AVENUE, ST NY 10314

I represent: STATEN ISLAND LONG TERM RECOVERY ORG.

Address: 100 PARK AVE SI NY 10302

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Henry Tupper (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Emergency Mgt.

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 502 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 12-16-14

Name: Margaret Becker (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 40 North St., Suite 606, NY NY

I represent: Legal Services NYC

Address: same

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Jane Swome (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 Withers St

I represent: Enterprise Community Center

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAN ZARRILLI

Address: City Hall

I represent: _____

Address: _____

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christina Jarney

Address: _____

I represent: NYC Emergency Mgmt

Address: 105 Cadman Plaza E, Bklyn

▶ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◀

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: Dec 16, 2014

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RABBI - Brikmar

Address: 3844 Lyme Ave

I represent: KNESES ISRAEL TORAH FAX, CHABAD OF
SEA, GATE & COHEN ISLAND

Address: 3801 NAUTILUS AVE - 3842 Lyme - 3803
NAUTILUS

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: John Grawwol / NYC OMB

Address: 255 Greenwich St

I represent: NYC - OMB

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 592 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Christine Appach, Esq

Address: 120-46 Queens Blvd., Kew Gardens NY

I represent: The Legal Aid Society of NY 11415

Address: 120-46 Queens Blvd, Kew Gardens NY 11422

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms