

TESTIMONY FROM NYCHA CHAIRMAN JOHN RHEA
EMERGENCY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DURING AND AFTER THE STORM:
NYCHA EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE
CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HOUSING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2013 – 1PM

Chairwoman Rosie Mendez, members of the Public Housing Committee, and other distinguished members of the City Council, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the New York City Housing Authority's Hurricane Emergency Procedure and its implementation before, during, and after Superstorm Sandy. I am John Rhea, Chairman of the New York City Housing Authority, and with me at the dais today are Cecil House, General Manager, Carlos Laboy-Diaz, Executive Vice President for Operations, and Natalie Rivers, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer.

As an agency serving over 600,000 New Yorkers – and an employer of roughly 12,000 – we at the New York City Housing Authority take our responsibility to prepare residents and staff for emergencies very seriously.

Accordingly, we have had a Hurricane Emergency Procedure in place since 1964 and have updated it, as needed, since then. Like much of our most important work, the procedure has changed with time, adapting to new realities, accounting for the incredibly diverse and rapidly changing communities

Irene. From that work we learned many lessons and recognized that a 21st century NYCHA would need to revamp and rethink our approach, given the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in the Northeast.

So we began an internal review of the procedure, led by our Department of Procedures Development and Administration, or DPDA. DPDA is responsible for working with administering departments to develop and maintain NYCHA's standard operating procedures, including the numerous procedures that govern specific kinds of emergencies. They're the crucial link between the research and best practices that we collect from our partners across the country and the NYCHA employees that spring to action during times of crisis.

DPDA's review resulted in the rapid formation of a cross-departmental committee tasked with revising the Hurricane Procedure. This committee, led by Natalie Rivers and DPDA, was comprised of representatives from the Departments of Capital Projects, Security, Communications, Property Management, Technical Services, Emergency Services, Research and Management Analysis, State and City Legislative Affairs, Community Programs & Development,

procedure, eventually arriving at a working draft. In every case, the changes improved our capacity to respond efficiently to future hurricanes, both by providing enhanced customer service to residents and acting swiftly to secure affected buildings.

To cite some examples, the updated procedure called for NYCHA to form pre- and post-storm inspection teams to ensure the safety of residents and the soundness of our buildings; establish several non-Zone-A sites for staff to stay overnight during the storm in order to more quickly respond the next day; and develop pre-approved communications templates for flyers in multiple languages to alert residents of evacuations and other efforts.

The working draft was tested in several ways. A team of Central Office staff – led by the Departments of Emergency Services, Security, and Operations – conducted a “tabletop” exercise based on the procedure. This exercise – which also included Director-level staff from the Departments of Human Resources, Family Services, Finance, Capital Projects, and Information Technology – laid out the circumstances of a fictional hurricane, requiring team members to collaboratively problem-solve and identify areas

As a result of this comprehensive process, a newly updated and approved Hurricane Emergency Procedure was in place before Superstorm Sandy reached our shores. When we confirmed with OEM that Sandy was headed toward New York and was likely to impact many public housing residents, I and the General Manager convened a conference call informing Executive Vice Presidents and other appropriate staff that the procedure had been activated. We immediately began to implement the procedure, beginning by opening our Emergency Operations Center and establishing a presence at OEM, where I was personally engaged in daily briefings with Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayors, and my fellow agency heads.

NYCHA employees in the field and at headquarters continued to successfully implement the procedure throughout the storm and during the days that followed. However, as with any plan, we did have to adjust in real-time to the enormity of the challenges we faced, including the loss of power to our headquarters offices in Lower Manhattan and the shutdown of most means of public transportation.

To give just one example of our ability to make thoughtful and effective adjustments, the procedure calls for NYCHA to

provide safe, secure, and affordable housing, while also facilitating access to resources that will ensure that residents receive continued services before, during, and after emergencies.

To this end, the General Manager's office is compiling a list of lessons learned and preliminary recommendations based on feedback from employees at all levels. In addition, we have already begun the process of reaching out to important stakeholders – including residents, local elected officials, and thought leaders in the private and non-profit sectors – to enhance and solidify these recommendations. We look forward to working with the City Council during that process, and to completing a newly updated procedure well before this year's hurricane season.

Thank you again – I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.



Testimony by The Legal Aid Society

Before the New York City Council Committee on Public Housing Emergency Planning and Management During and After the Storm: NYCHA Emergency Planning and Response February 13, 2013

Introduction

The Legal Aid Society, the nation's oldest and largest not-for-profit legal services organization, is an integral part of our City's emergency response efforts. It is more than a law firm for clients who cannot afford to pay for counsel. The Legal Aid Society is an indispensable component of the legal, social and economic fabric of New York City – passionately advocating for low-income individuals and families across a variety of civil, criminal and juvenile rights matters, while also fighting for legal reform. The Legal Aid Society has performed this role in City, State and federal courts since 1876. It does so by capitalizing on the diverse expertise, experience, and capabilities of 1,000 of the brightest legal minds. These 1,000 Legal Aid Society lawyers work with nearly 700 social workers, investigators, paralegals and support and administrative staff. Through a network of borough, neighborhood, and courthouse offices in 25 locations in New York City, the Society provides comprehensive legal services in all five boroughs of New York City for clients who cannot afford to pay for private counsel. The Society's legal program operates three major practices — Civil, Criminal and Juvenile Rights — and receives volunteer help from law firms, corporate law departments and expert consultants that is coordinated by the Society's Pro Bono program. With its annual caseload of more than 300,000 legal matters, The Legal Aid Society takes on more cases for more clients than any other

legal services organization in the United States. And it brings a depth and breadth of perspective that is unmatched in the legal profession.

Our Civil Practice has offices in every borough of the City, and worked on more than 43,000 individual legal matters last year winning over 90 percent of the cases that go to court or an administrative hearing. An additional two million low-income children and adults benefit from the Civil Practice's pending class action litigation. The Civil Practice works to improve the lives of needy New Yorkers by helping vulnerable families and individuals on issues ranging from health care, housing, homelessness prevention, employment law, education, foreclosure prevention, consumer law, community economic development, public assistance, immigration, family law and domestic violence and disability-related issues.

The Society is counsel on numerous class-action cases concerning the rights of public housing residents and Section 8 tenants and is a member of the New York City Alliance to Preserve Public Housing, a local collaboration of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) resident leaders, advocates and concerned elected officials.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify before the City Council's Public Housing Committee concerning NYCHA's preparations for and response to Hurricane Sandy. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Chair Rosie Mendez and her commitment to public housing and Section 8 residents.

The Legal Aid Society- Summary of Efforts as Legal Services "First Responder"

Beginning in the immediate aftermath of the storm, staff members of the Society have been providing comprehensive disaster relief legal assistance at disaster centers, community-based organizations, through the Society's Mobile Justice Unit and at the shelters for homeless and displaced New Yorkers.

The Legal Aid Society has targeted disaster relief services in the most affected communities in Far Rockaway, Coney Island, Red Hook, Staten Island as well as in parts of Lower Manhattan. New Yorkers in need of disaster relief legal assistance can also call The Legal Aid Society's toll-free disaster relief helpline at (888) 663-6880. Beginning immediately after the storm receded, Society staff members have been assisting affected New Yorkers with

FEMA and Disaster Unemployment Insurance claims; replacing medications and access to health care; obtaining Food Stamps and public assistance; public housing, Section 8 matters; landlord-tenant; homeowner/foreclosure help; assistance with loans and other small business matters; school transfers and transportation issues; and family law and immigration matters.

Sandy's Impact on NYCHA Public Housing Residents and Section 8 Tenants

- NYCHA shut down all elevators in public housing developments throughout Zone A and ordered evacuation of all residents in those buildings as of 7 p.m. on October 28, 2012.
- Immediately after Sandy hit on October 29, 2012, 79,000 NYCHA residents were left without electricity and elevator service and 77,000 had no heat or hot water.
- It was not until November 14, 2012, that NYCHA announced that it had restored services to 100% of its buildings.
- Nevertheless, in the most heavily impacted areas of Red Hook, Coney Island and the Rockaways, most residents have been experiencing problems with intermittent power, heat and hot water and elevator service because temporary generators and boilers are unable to power full usage by buildings.
- Sandy caused damage to many NYCHA apartments – some residents report problems with leaks in their apartments post Sandy, mold or mildew, problems with plastering and damp walls.
- In the most heavily impacted areas, Sandy caused damage to many private apartments leased by Section 8 tenants, forcing those tenants to evacuate their apartments and rendering their homes uninhabitable.
- Thousands of NYCHA residents were forced to spend money on flash lights, batteries, bottled water, prepared food, space heaters and emergency supplies in order to survive during this time.

The Legal Aid Society's Immediate Response to Help NYCHA Residents and Section 8 Tenants In Need

- By Friday November 2, 2012, Society staff assisted public housing residents with FEMA and emergency food stamps applications and other legal needs at the Red Hook Initiative,

a community-based organization close to the six public housing developments in Red Hook which were devastated by Hurricane Sandy.

- On Saturday and Sunday, November 3rd and 4th, 2012, Legal Aid used its Mobile Justice Unit to go to Coney Island and assisted public housing residents with FEMA and emergency food stamp applications and other legal needs.
- Since these early days, we have continued to provide disaster relief legal assistance to families and individuals in the most impacted communities. In addition to community outreach, Legal Aid Society attorneys have advocated at NYCHA on behalf of individuals who have Sandy related issues, such as securing Section 8 emergency transfer vouchers, obtaining transfers from public housing apartments damaged by the storm and obtaining urgent repairs to apartments.
- In addition to outreach to individual public housing residents and Section 8 tenants, the Society has held evening clinics in Coney Island and Red Hook for impacted NYCHA residents and two resource and information clinics in Lower Manhattan requested by local elected officials and community leaders.
- During the first three weeks after Sandy hit, The Legal Aid Society met twice with the General Manager of NYCHA and other NYCHA staff members and brought key issues and concerns to NYCHA's attention that we had observed during and learned from our disaster relief outreach efforts in impacted communities, including: the need for a publicly announced plan concerning the status of administrative hearings and eviction proceedings; the need for a moratorium on eviction proceedings through January, 2013; the need for an expedited procedure for obtaining emergency Section 8 transfers for Section 8 tenants displaced by Sandy; the need for a waiver of rent for the month of November in light of the lack of services for residents; and the need for a plan for repairing conditions in NYCHA apartments caused by Sandy.

Problems with NYCHA's Response to the Storm

Lack of Communication, Accountability and Coordination

Hurricane Sandy overwhelmed the natural and man-made barriers that protect New York City and have served city residents so well throughout the City's history. In the days and weeks

that followed, public and private agencies and individuals struggled to restore basic services to many thousands of New Yorkers affected by the storm. NYCHA could not stop Sandy, but it could have stopped its residents from being unduly panicked by Sandy by effectively distributing information that it had in its possession about the restoration of essential services.

After Sandy hit the City, thousands of NYCHA residents were without power for many weeks and were unable to access information using telephones or cellular phones, televisions, radios and computers. Wait times to speak with a NYCHA representative on NYCHA's CCC line were exceedingly long and residents reported not being able to get through. While NYCHA posted information on its website with updates on the restoration of electricity and heat and hot water and information concerning Section 8 emergency transfers, thousands of residents and displaced Section 8 tenants were unable to access this information given the lack of power in their homes. We met with hundreds of NYCHA residents during our relief efforts who repeatedly told us that this lack of communication from NYCHA about efforts to restore services, the timing of clean-up operations and other disaster relief efforts caused stress, confusion and anguish.

Moreover, the limited updates that were being released by NYCHA on its website provided little information addressing the actual needs of residents and did nothing to calm the ever-growing fears of residents trapped in dark, cold apartments. The days immediately after the storm hit were a time when people needed accurate, reliable and timely information. In the days and weeks after Sandy hit, residents, Section 8 tenants, elected officials and advocates were desperate for *real* information from different units within NYCHA about a variety of NYCHA's operations and this was strikingly absent. Instead, the communications issued by NYCHA units focused on the positive things that NYCHA accomplished once results had been achieved.

Throughout the entire post-Sandy process of restoring building operations there was no accountability or transparency regarding NYCHA's organization of efforts and who was in charge of each area of operations on a development and City-wide basis. Indeed, in many cases, it seemed no one was in charge.

In sum, the lack of preparation, coordination and communication on the part of NYCHA resulted in an increasingly chaotic and desperate situation for the most vulnerable of NYCHA's residents and Section 8 tenants in the days and weeks after Sandy hit.

Recommendations:

1) NYCHA needs to work on a comprehensive evacuation and emergency preparedness and response plan and distribute it widely (in a number of different languages) to residents and advocates City-wide in different formats that are accessible to all.

2) Before, during and after any emergency that results in a loss of power, cellular phone service or other essential building services that make it difficult for residents to access information, NYCHA should print flyers containing updates on building services and operations and distribute them both under apartment doors and in building entryways.

3) NYCHA needs to designate one space in each development that can be used as a central “command station” after emergency situations occur to distribute information, address residents’ questions, concerns and needs, and host community meetings. There should be one NYCHA staff member identified in each development who is designated as a point-person and charged with communicating updated information from NYCHA to residents throughout the day concerning emergency relief efforts, restoration of services and other operations as necessary.

4) NYCHA needs to designate a point person for each unit within its public housing and Section 8 departments who is responsible after an emergency occurs for developing and executing NYCHA’s response to the particular emergency, coordinating work with other units within NYCHA and distributing information to residents and the public concerning the unit’s work - and who can ultimately be held accountable for actions.

5) If phone service is uninterrupted, NYCHA should also set up a toll-free information line after an emergency so that residents and Section 8 tenants can access information relevant to the situation. The information on the line should be updated regularly throughout the day as necessary.

NYCHA Residents and Section 8 Tenants with Special Needs

Earlier in 2012, NYCHA publicly confirmed that 30 percent of its households are headed by seniors. NYCHA also recently announced that it has a list of 3,500 residents city-wide who have self-identified as disabled. NYCHA staff at each of its developments who interact on a daily basis with residents of each building have *personal* knowledge of which residents within their development have special needs – persons with disabilities, homebound persons and elderly residents – even though these residents may not have self-identified as disabled or be included on

NYCHA's list. NYCHA also knew how many households in its developments throughout Zone A had evacuated before Sandy hit the City on October 29, 2012. Armed with this information, NYCHA's response to its most vulnerable residents who remained and were trapped in their cold, dark apartments after Sandy hit can only be described as grossly negligent.

NYCHA claims that its staff went door-to-door throughout developments in Zone A both before and after Sandy hit to address the specific needs of the residents whose names appeared on their list of 3,500. The reality is very different from NYCHA's portrayal of events. The Legal Aid Society was in these communities two days after Sandy hit and for weeks afterwards and we have been unable to find *one* resident who received a single visit from a member of NYCHA's staff in the days and even weeks after Sandy hit. Instead, we found many homebound tenants who had been trapped in their apartments, unable to navigate dark stairwells from upper floors and in desperate need of medical assistance, and who had no contact with the outside world until volunteers from community-based organizations doing disaster relief outreach knocked on their doors and got them the help they so badly needed in the days after the storm hit. We also now know that even though NYCHA failed to send members of its staff to check in on its most vulnerable residents, they were able to serve eviction papers on several residents in developments in Coney Island.

Recommendations:

- 1) NYCHA needs to create and regularly update a comprehensive list for each of its developments of those apartments with household members who have special needs – those with disabilities, the elderly and the home-bound.
- 2) The information in those lists should inform NYCHA's planning process as it develops future emergency preparedness and response plans and can then be used by those involved in disaster relief efforts to ensure that the needs of NYCHA's most vulnerable residents are addressed.
- 3) There needs to be greater coordination, both before and after emergencies occur, between NYCHA and other City agencies in order to insure that the needs of the most vulnerable NYCHA residents are addressed.
- 4) Each development should be equipped with a number of small emergency generators that can power a refrigerator or medical devices that require power so that those residents with

equipment such as ventilators and medicine that needs to be refrigerated such as insulin can survive until they access more permanent solutions to the problem.

NYCHA Needs to Address Ongoing Sandy Related Issues

During the storm and in the immediate aftermath, there was an urgent need for relief efforts to be focused on stabilizing households, restoring essential services, and accessing support systems. Two months after the storm has passed, there exist a number of Sandy related issues that pose a serious threat to the health and safety of NYCHA residents and staff and Section 8 tenants displaced by Sandy. These issues include, but are not limited to: dangerous conditions in apartments such as mold and leaks, intermittent building services such as heat, hot water and elevators, the need to locate new apartments for those Section 8 residents displaced by Sandy. NYCHA must immediately turn its attention to addressing these issues.

Recommendations:

- 1) NYCHA needs to create a comprehensive plan for how it is going to fix conditions in buildings and apartments that were caused or are exacerbated by the impact of Sandy. The plan needs to be made publicly available and NYCHA should inform residents about the expected timeline for the completion of repairs.
- 2) NYCHA needs to ensure that all mold remediation work is well planned so that the health of residents and workers is not put at risk.
- 3) NYCHA's Leased Housing Department needs to ensure that it will continue to expedite the processing of all Sandy emergency Section 8 transfer vouchers: This includes ensuring that it expedites the "linking" process, when a displaced Section 8 residents locates a new apartment, so that displaced tenants can move quickly back into homes.
- 4) NYCHA needs to clarify and issue its policy concerning temporary transfers for those NYCHA residents who need to be relocated to another apartment while repair work is completed in their apartment. This policy needs to include guarantees that each relocated household shall have the right to return to their apartment once work is expeditiously completed.

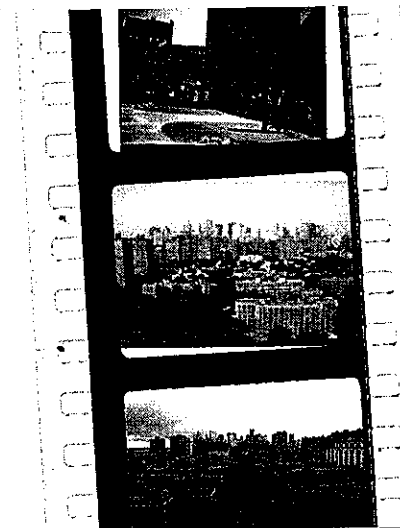
Conclusion

We look forward to continued discussions with NYCHA on ways that we can together address the need for a comprehensive disaster relief response that will address the needs of all its impacted residents and Section 8 tenants and especially the most vulnerable.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Public Housing.

Respectfully Submitted:

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A petition to HUD and Congress to implement an oversight committee on the Emergency Operating Plan of NYCHA.

Did they follow their own policies and procedures based on their Operating Plan. If the Plan was out dated it should have been amended based on Irene, in addition research should have been conducted in order to provided a concise detailed emergency operating plan delineating responsibility to specific personnel. This would ensure everyone would be on the same page as oppose to everyone verbally providing different sets of guidelines. There was no excuse on behalf of the numerous bungles of NYCHA.

Since NYCHA feels they answer to no one but the mayor and has a dismissive demeanor towards our elected official and especially toward our residents, which is unacceptable maybe they will answer to congress - who provides and lobbies funding resources for NYCHA.

Additionally this request to the board members - NYCHA should remain to listen to the testimony of the residents who they work for, the residents who pay taxes, who vote. They should remain in the audience as oppose to walking out in a cowardly fashion as to not face their accuser's.

Despite its disaster relief protocols, NYCHA failed to establish a logical chain of command for communicating and disseminating information. There was no single point of contact and there was very little direct communication to the (residents) about disaster relief efforts. NYCHA needs to establish a specific chain of command in their plan for developing, executing, and disseminating information related to disaster response and relief protocols. Which is why OEM is the Command center for all city agencies not Long Island City NYCHA must designate a point person to coordinate disaster relief efforts and provide direct information regarding relevant protocols to residents at the property level. In addition their newly created Quality Assurance Department should go out into the field and strongly encourage, recruit and train residents and staff to assist in disaster relief efforts. CERT Training / CPR / First Aid.

NYCHA did not properly follow its own guidelines for notifying (residents) and local advocates about how to prepare for the impending hurricane. if possible they need to provide materials to residents informing them of preparation and evacuation protocols in advance of a natural disaster. This information must be available on demand, provided directly to (residents) —if possible—prior to a disaster, and available in multiple languages. PHAs must inform (residents) of their rights and responsibilities in case of a natural disaster, including those related to: evictions, basic human needs assistance, utility and building restoration, relocation, and supportive services.

One of NYCHA's largest failings during its disaster response outreach was its lack of information regarding special needs residents in its developments affected. NYCHA should have an updated backed-up list of all public housing households which specifically identifies (residents) with special needs such as the elderly, disabled, those with physical or mobility impairments, or medical conditions (as self identified by (residents)) which may require additional assistance following a disaster.

Despite short notifications of the mandatory evacuation order from the New York City government, not all (residents) left their homes. NYCHA and local emergency response personnel failed to implement the authority's evacuation protocols properly, which left (residents) —particularly those with special needs—without the resources or the support they needed to evacuate. Several (residents) refused to leave their homes, due to the fear they could not return or would be robbed. NYCHA should have establish protocols and supportive services to evacuate (residents) and have staff available to transport them to a safe location in the case of a natural disaster.

NYCHA has relocated a small number of families that were living in "uninhabitable" units following the hurricane. However, NYCHA's disaster relief plans only provide resources and guidance for short-term temporary locations. The plan does not provide guidance for long-term relocations, which have resulted in some households living in hotels with no access to kitchens and limited budgets for food. NYCHA has failed to follow the protocol in relocating these residents in a timely manner. NYCHA has implemented a freeze on all transfers and new leasee's - to accommodate the families requiring immediate housing due to Sandy - however NYCHA has yet to rent or established a system to identify and expedite renting these vacant apartments to those families in need. These apartments remain empty.

NYCHA required (residents) to make rent payments on units that were uninhabitable or lacked utilities for extended periods of time. The rent abatements were not announced until almost two months following the hurricane. These abatements were not given to (residents) until January 2013, about three months after the hurricane hit. The rent abatements to affected public housing developments should have immediately followed after disaster. Note: Many residents qualified for SAPO if they were already on the Food Stamp Program, however many families who were not on food stamps received no compensation for the loss of food. This should have been factored with the abatement to those families who did not qualify for any assistance in the loss of food.

NYCHA prioritized its assessment of the properties over ensuring that (residents) had access to basic human needs and supportive services following Hurricane Sandy. As a result, disaster relief and supportive services to (residents) was delayed by several days and, in some cases, weeks. This was particularly devastating to the disabled and elderly populations in public housing who could not obtain necessary medical assistance. NYCHA should adopt protocols that allow the authority, to the greatest extent possible, to partner or contract with other government entities, local police, community-based organizations, resident associations, health care professionals, visiting nurse service, Army Corp of Engineers and other volunteers to provide basic human needs and supportive services to its residents, and must also give particular attention to assisting special needs residents such as the disabled, the elderly, the physically or mobility-impaired, and those with life-support equipment in their response.

While NYCHA was quick to assess the hurricane's damage to public housing buildings, over the summer all equipment and inventory was removed from every development - where is inventory is no one know which is why it failed to effectively coordinate its contractors and equipment in a timely manner. This led to weeks long delays of utility restoration to many public housing buildings. Furthermore, the contractors sent to address mold removal were poorly trained and provided only superficial removal. The mold returned to several public housing units after the treatments. This section requires a proper protocol on vetted, approved, and qualified professional contractors and execute service contracts as soon as an impending natural disaster is announced. Staff or trained contractors must be deployed within 24 hours to each public housing building to evaluate the damage to the property and determine necessary repairs and rehabilitation. NYCHA shall prioritize and immediately restore any critical utilities (electric, gas, water, HVAC, sewage, and elevator) eliminate any exigent health and safety hazards (including mold and mildew) as soon as possible. NYCHA shall monitor and address any utility or health and safety issues as deemed necessary. The agency shall determine necessary repairs and rehabilitation are for long-term recovery and future disaster mitigation.

NYCHA should also implement during emergency situations support staff from non-affected developments which shall include staff in the Borough Offices, and the main offices in 90 church street, 250 Broadway and Long Island City, by utilizing a rotational shift pattern in 12 hour increments, as oppose to keeping the same staff around the clock within the same locations. (The locations where staff can provide support are able to maintain the function of the office if open, on a minimal basic staff). All other essential agencies and staff are immediately re-directed to assist in affected areas during emergencies.

Despite the fact NYCHA had days to prepare for the hurricane, it failed to properly match its existing equipment reserves with the correct buildings and did not order any back-up equipment in anticipation of floods and utility outages. NYCHA developments should develop a concise inventory listing detailing the condition and location of emergency supplies and equipment. On a quarterly basis staff would be required to check if these items are in working order or expired. If so, they would need to replace them. The housing authorities would also be required to enter into standby contracts for critical equipment such as pumps, boilers, and generators in order to facilitate the speedy restoration of necessary utilities.

NYCHA should disseminate information immediately after a disaster to include information regarding the different Federal, State, and local grants and loans for disaster relief and how to apply for those resources in their plan. The plans must also include information regarding its insurance plan, as it relates to natural disasters, and how to file a claim.

NYCHA's current disaster relief plan does not provide any tools for its staff to ensure its disaster relief plan is properly implemented. This section requires NYCHA to develop step-by-step checklists for the implementation their disaster relief plan(s) for relevant staff members, with an emphasis on disaster relief at the property level. Copies of the relevant disaster relief plan(s) and protocols must also be available on-site at each public housing project for reference.

NYCHA should implement a policy to hold annual emergency and disaster relief workshops for staff, at least three emergency and disaster relief training and education workshops for (residents) and local advocates, and annual evacuation and emergency drills at public housing buildings.

Currently, HUD provides oversight of the implementation of a Public Housing disaster relief protocols. A request to HUD's Inspector General to evaluate NYCHA's implementation of its disaster response and relief plan and, if necessary, make recommendations for improving the plan within 180 days following a natural disaster.

Require NYCHA to seek input from local resident organizations and advocacy groups as they develop and implement their disaster relief plan(s).

Appropriations of funding for the Public Housing Operations Fund to develop and implement a disaster relief plan should have a committee to include advocacy groups, elected officials and resident leaders. Input from all is critical and key in establishing a clear and concise Emergency operating plan, in addition to being part of the dissemination of allocated funding to the areas where the needs are most. This should not be held solely by the Board.

During emergencies - HUD should implement within the guideline usage of the T.P.A. funds and allow Resident Associations to purchase flashlights/lanterns/batteries and other necessary equipment for the residents should an outage occur during a natural disaster. (this would assist residents mobility throughout their apartment and stairwells to ensure safety as oppose to utilizing candles which is a fire safety hazard). In addition to allow for the purchase of food for the developments affected, as in previous testimony it was the number 1 concern and complaint - no food or drinking water.

Also; the training of CPR / First Aid - due to the power outage home phones were inoperable and cell phone towers were also affected, many cell phones had lapse communication at times none. CPR training can save someone's life when contacting emergency is unobtainable.

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in favor in opposition

Date: 2/13/2013

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Nancy Ortiz

Address: 320 Madison St

I represent: Vladick Houses

Address: 356 Madison St

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in favor in opposition

Date: 2/13/13

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Judith Goldner

Address: The Legal Aid Society

I represent: 199 Waver St NYC

Address: _____

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Name: CECIL HOUSE

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Name: Carlos Leboy-Diaz (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

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Name: Natalie Rivers (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

Address: _____

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Name: Natalie Rivers (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

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Name: Carl House

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Name: Carlos Lopez

Address: _____

I represent: NYCHA

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Kirby Desmarais

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I represent: RED HOOK VOLUNTEERS

Address: 360 Van Brunt St

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: JOHN RINE

Address: _____

I represent: NACU

Address: _____

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