



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0698-2003, **Version:** *

Res. No. 698

Resolution calling upon the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to extend the deadline for the Mortgage and Rental Assistance (MRA) program at least until April 1, 2003.

By Council Members Gerson, DeBlasio, The Public Advocate (Ms. Gotbaum) and Council Members Quinn, Baez, Barron, Brewer, Clarke, Comrie, Felder, Gennaro, Jackson, Liu, Lopez, Nelson, Perkins, Recchia, Reed, Rivera, Sanders, Weprin and Yassky

Whereas, The terrorist attacks on New York City on September 11, 2001 (9/11) had devastating effects on the City and its residents; and

Whereas, Individuals and families continue to struggle to overcome obstacles related to this disaster; and

Whereas, The unemployment rate in New York City has increased dramatically since 9/11 from 6.1 percent in September 2001 to 8.2 percent in December 2002 and economic studies estimate that New York City lost approximately 100,000 jobs as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and

Whereas, Loss of employment puts New Yorkers at risk of losing their homes, as rents and mortgage payments are difficult for many to meet in the absence of steady income; and

Whereas, The FEMA MRA program was designed to provide critical grants to individuals who were unable to meet mortgage and rental payments as a result of the 9/11 disaster; and

Whereas, Many problems with the administration of this vital program, from high rates of rejection at first and poor levels of outreach, prevented many eligible New Yorkers from accessing MRA grants; and

Whereas, Many New York City residents were unaware of the guidelines surrounding MRA and many qualified individuals were unaware of their eligibility status for the MRA program; and

Whereas, FEMA set January 31, 2003 as the deadline to register for the MRA program and commenced an extensive outreach campaign in the weeks leading up to the deadline; and

Whereas, More than 4,000 individuals requested applications in the month of January, indicating that many individuals are just learning of the program and that there remains a demand and need for MRA assistance; and

Whereas, FEMA has only spent approximately 107 million of the 175 million dollars allocated to the MRA program; and

Whereas, Many New Yorkers continue to suffer from the effects of the 9/11 disaster and would qualify for the MRA program were it not for the expired deadline; and

Whereas, at a minimum, FEMA should broadly define extenuating circumstances that give individuals the opportunity to register for MRA assistance until April 1, 2003; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon FEMA to extend the deadline for the MRA program at least until April 1, 2003.