

# HURRICANE SANDY REBUILDING STRATEGY

*Progress Update — Community Planning and Capacity Building*



Spring 2014



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# BACKGROUND

On August 19, 2013, the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force released its [Rebuilding Strategy](#) for the Sandy impacted region. The Rebuilding Strategy included a long-term plan for rebuilding that guides Sandy Supplemental spending to drive regional coordination and make communities more resilient to future disasters. The Rebuilding Strategy also aligns federal, state and local policies to achieve seven goals that are important to the long-term rebuilding of the region in the most economically efficient, ecologically robust and innovative ways possible. These goals are:

- Promoting Resilient Rebuilding through Innovative Ideas and a Thorough Understanding of Current and Future Risk
- Ensuring a Regionally Coordinated, Resilient Approach to Infrastructure Investment
- Restoring and Strengthening Homes and Providing Families with Safe, Affordable Housing Options
- Supporting Small Businesses and Revitalizing Local Economies
- Addressing Insurance Challenges, Understanding, and Affordability
- Building State and Local Capacity to Plan for and Implement Long-Term Recovery and Rebuilding
- Improving Data Sharing Between Federal, State, and Local Officials

The Rebuilding Strategy identified 69 specific recommendations across these broad goals as well as specific member agencies<sup>1</sup> to lead the implementation of each of them. Since the publication of the Rebuilding Strategy, these agencies have continued to work closely together to move the recommendations forward and deliver on their commitments to the region and the President.

**This report includes an update on the implementation of one of the Rebuilding Strategy goals. This report is one section of a larger report that includes each of the seven Rebuilding Strategy goals and the internal efforts to improve data sharing and accountability through the Sandy Program Management Office (PMO);** recommendations are grouped according to these goals. This shorter report includes background information from the original Rebuilding Strategy, identifies the relevant leading agencies<sup>1</sup>, and includes brief updates on highlighted areas of progress made since the publication of the Rebuilding Strategy through the spring of 2014. Additional Rebuilding Strategy goal reports and a report on the PMO can be downloaded individually or can all be downloaded in the full report. A full list of the Rebuilding Strategy recommendations is included in the full report as an appendix to the report. To learn more about the Task Force or the Sandy Supplemental, to read the original Rebuilding Strategy, or to see the status of the Sandy Supplemental funding, please visit the following websites:

- Executive Order 13632, establishing the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/DCPD-201200936/pdf/DCPD-201200936.pdf>

<sup>1</sup> While the Rebuilding Strategy identified specific agencies (such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development) to lead implementation, in some cases these leads have changed, or more specific subcomponents of or offices within an agency (such as the Office of Community Planning and Development) have been identified. Further, for some recommendations, the Rebuilding Strategy also identified contributing or supporting agencies. This progress report reflects the latest lead agencies only, and does not include contributing agencies, which in some cases have played a significant role to support implementation.

- Disaster Relief Appropriations Act, 2013, or “Sandy Supplemental,” which provided \$50 billion in disaster relief funding to Federal agencies: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ2/pdf/PLAW-113publ2.pdf>
- The Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Strategy, published by the Task Force on August 19, 2013: <http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=HSRebuildingStrategy.pdf>
- Recovery.gov Hurricane Sandy maps, for the latest status of Sandy Supplemental funds by state: <http://www.recovery.gov/Sandy/whereisthemoneygoing/maps/Pages/HudPmo.aspx>

# REBUILDING STRATEGY GOAL: BUILDING STATE AND LOCAL CAPACITY TO PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND REBUILDING

The scope and scale of Hurricane Sandy challenged the uneven capacities of state and local governments, which also faced differences in needs and readiness for disaster recovery. Many of the municipalities that experienced severe river flooding and the coastal towns along the New Jersey Shore and on Long Island are without full time planners, city managers, grants managers, engineers, and architects, and do not have the in-house capabilities to lead comprehensive, long-term recovery planning efforts on their own.

Planning for recovery from a catastrophic event like Sandy is a massive challenge for even the best prepared communities and it should not be postponed until the immediate response is complete. Recovery planning and decision-making take place under severe time constraints and deal with the rebuilding of multiple systems simultaneously. This effort involves stakeholders who have been traumatized and triggers funding sources not normally available. Successful recovery under such difficult circumstances depends on two critical factors: planning and capacity building.

## Lead Agencies

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)      Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

## Progress Update

The FEMA-led Community Planning and Capacity Building Recovery Support Function (CPCB RSF) supported both New York and New Jersey in coordinating assistance from over 15 federal agencies to assist states and communities in organizing, planning and building recovery management capability across the affected area. FEMA and the CPCB RSF also drew on the support of a wide range of professional and community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-profits including: the American Planning Association in New York and New Jersey, Sustainable Long Island, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Research and Development and Office of Sustainable Communities, the National Renewable Laboratory, the New Jersey League of Municipalities, Sustainable Jersey, and New Jersey Future, among a host of organizations, to offer recovery planning training, consultation, and other forms of technical assistance to local community leaders across the declared counties.

Further, federal agencies have partnered with other state agencies as well as, CBOs and educational institutions to convene symposiums, forums, and roundtable discussions to better inform local communities and the general public on disaster preparedness and long-term community disaster recovery. One example of a best practice partnership between local government and an academic institution is the HHS-funded Extramural Hurricane Sandy Recovery Research program. Principal investigators from Columbia University

and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene collaborated to leverage existing guidelines and research on vulnerable populations affected by Hurricane Sandy in order to further augment the [department's health guidelines](#) to address catastrophic flooding. CPCB RSF and its partners in New Jersey also worked with academic institutions to match academic programs with community needs. Participating institutions, such as Stockton, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rowan and Rutgers Universities have worked together to provide qualified students for a variety of recovery activities such as "Alternative Spring Break" community recovery support, developing marketing and tourism plans, and grant writing assistance.

In New York, the CPCB RSF and its partners assisted the State in launching the [New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program](#) by developing 11 guidance and recovery planning related documents and providing 104 "fact packs" containing Geographic Information System data and community conditions information for communities affected by Hurricanes Sandy, Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The partnership between CPCB RSF, the Housing Recovery Support Function, and numerous non-governmental organizations created an interactive [Resource Mapping Tool](#) that links damaged New York communities to available information resources. State and local entities are already utilizing this decision-making tool to identify resource gaps. More than 150 Federal, State and county level recovery practitioners participated in community planning and capacity building training events organized through the Smart Growth Initiative (a working group comprised of representatives from EPA, FEMA, Metropolitan Transportation Authority – New York (MTA), and Nassau and Suffolk County) to build capacity for engaging community stakeholders in recovery planning. In New Jersey, CPCB RSF and partners held a Recovery Resource Summit where more than 100 representatives from federal, state, local, NGO, and philanthropic organizations had an opportunity to network with partners and identify potential resources. Also in New Jersey, CPCB RSF and its partners assisted Cumberland County to develop and implement a recovery planning process that resulted not only in a recovery strategy but additionally created a Local Resilience Partnership, as adjacent communities came together to build a more resilient future.

Early conversations between CPCB RSF and the philanthropic community resulted in the placement of recovery managers supporting six communities. Local disaster recovery management capacity has been increased throughout the affected area by providing training and funding for Local Disaster Recovery Managers (LDRMs). HUD encouraged the use of [Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery \(CDBG-DR\)](#) grants to support the establishment of LDRMs in their Notice of Funding Availability in the [Federal Register](#). LDRM job descriptions and information have been made available to local communities through interagency, state and non-profit partners. As a result, local disaster recovery staff have already been placed to support several New Jersey communities.

### *What this means for communities*

Local leaders are getting **more information, training, and new resources** to help them **plan for and manage disaster recovery in their communities.**

## For More Information

- New York State Rising Program: <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/community-reconstruction-program>.
- Wall Street Journal article on FEMA symposia with Education and other institutions to improve resilience and local partnerships: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304886904579475371378>

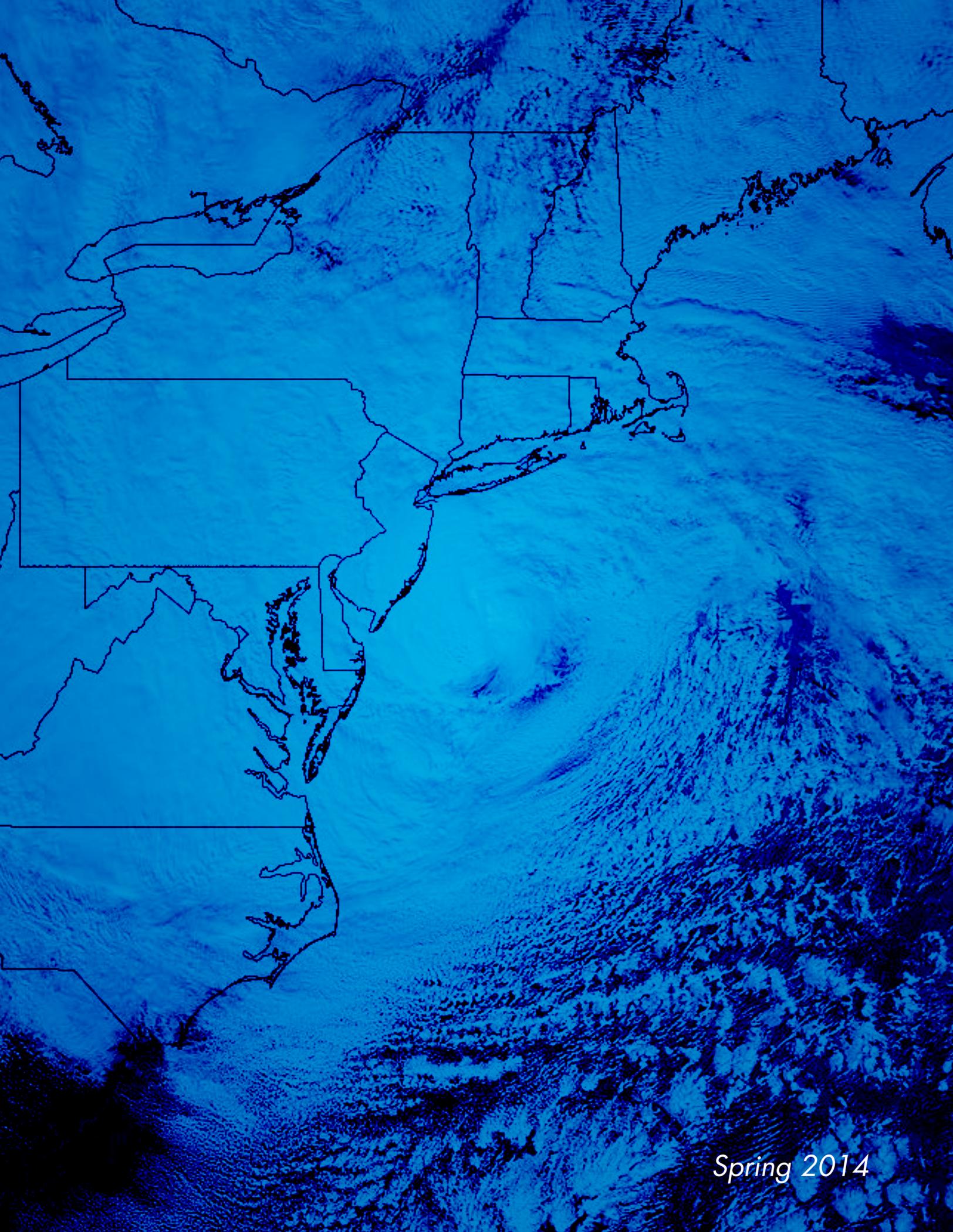
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- CDBG-DR Second Allocation Federal Register Notice provides eligibility for funding Local Disaster Recovery Managers on page 69110 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-11-18/pdf/2013-27506.pdf>
- Resource Mapping Tool: <http://fema.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=c8e880eb4e7f4996ac26947884205da0>
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/environmental/moldrpt1.shtml>

# COMMUNITY PLANNING AND CAPACITY BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HURRICANE SANDY REBUILDING STRATEGY

## *Community Planning and Capacity Building: Building State and Local Capacity to Plan for and Implement Long-Term Recovery and Rebuilding*

1. Work with States and local jurisdictions to consider funding strategies and raise awareness about the need to fill LDRM positions. (*LDRM: Local Disaster Recovery Manager*).
2. Support the New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program.
3. Support New Jersey planning efforts, including pilots for New Jersey Local Resilience Partnerships, and encourage Federal agencies, the State of New Jersey, non-profits, and philanthropic organizations to provide both financial and technical support for the formation and operation of the Local Resilience Partnerships.
4. Package the variety of existing Federal resources and tools related to disaster recovery and create new ones specific to community planning and capacity building in order to establish a coordinated suite of assistance that enhances and streamlines access to the recovery expertise needed by impacted communities.
5. Facilitate and expand opportunities for philanthropic and non-profit engagement in recovery, including opportunities for organizations that work with vulnerable populations. The CPCB RSFs in New York and New Jersey should actively support funder collaboratives that provide grants to nonprofits working in coordination with government. This should include encouragement of sub-grants to NGOs that would assist in accomplishing the Federal outreach requirements, including those specific to vulnerable populations to ensure they are included in the recovery planning process.



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