

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series II

Funder Briefing: #1

Date: September 9, 2013

Topic: Review of Federal Task Force Recommendations with NJ Director Michael Passante

Speaker: Michael Passante, NJ State Director, The President's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force

HIGHLIGHTS

Announcements:

- CNJG is partnering with the [Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#) and [Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers](#) on a creation playbook of strategies that funders have used nationwide following disasters.
- Also partnering with the [Foundation Center](#) to produce a scan of how the funding community responded to Hurricane Sandy and which nonprofits were/are being supported. This information is highly useful for national funders who are interested in giving funds to continued recovery efforts.

Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force: Recommendations from Michael Passante

The Task Force prepared a comprehensive [regional rebuilding strategy](#) with 69 recommendations for how the Federal government can improve response to Sandy, which includes plans to:

- Better meet people's needs on the ground, cut red tape, create principles and guidelines for how the Federal government should invest taxpayer dollars
- Plan for holding agencies accountable at White House level for implementing those plans. Appropriate federal agencies are tied to recommendations with plans to implement them (FEMA, HUD, Army Corps, etc.).
- State has implemented first round of CDBG money so far.

Rebuilding Strategy Highlights - Areas of interest for Funders

The following are broad summations of areas for improvement and investment from the report:

- Infrastructure - ensure regionally coordinated, resilient approach to infrastructure (smarter, flexible electrical grid, protect liquid fuel supply chain, develop a resilient power strategy for communications, etc.).
- Hold a forum to coordinate large scale regional infrastructure projects - one that aims to established guidelines that all Federal agencies involved in infrastructure investment must adhere to, to ensure projects with Federal investments meet certain criteria. Investments might require that projects proposed are resilient to future storms, transparent for the public, and that take into consideration all alternatives including green infrastructure.
- Housing - providing safe affordable housing options and helping homeowners make emergency repairs more quickly, creating nationally consistent mortgage policies to prevent evictions, require smart recovery steps like elevating houses for all houses receiving federal money.
- Small business and revitalization of communities - make it easier for small business to access federal contracts for rebuilding, offer specialized skills training for low-income individuals or vulnerable populations in the industries most needed for Sandy recovery, create a one-stop shop online for info that

small businesses need for recovery, increasing SBA's unsecured disaster loan limits and expediting disbursement of those loans.

- Insurance - Streamline payouts. Research and further study how to balance affordability with insurance premiums.
- Promoting resilient rebuilding - based on current and future flood maps. [Rebuild by Design](#) competition to deliver innovative resilient rebuilding designs
- Building local government capacity for long term rebuilding and preparing for future disasters
- Creating local disaster recovery manager positions and supporting local resilient partnerships to coordinate regional planning. Working with [NJ Future](#), [Sustainable Jersey](#), the [Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation](#), [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), and others.

Recommendations of note for Funders:

- #15 - Mobilize the private sector and nonprofit community to develop innovative solutions that support and integrate whole community efforts for disaster relief. *Lead: OSTP and FEMA, in coordination with DOE, and other Federal Agencies*
- #32 - Help identify opportunities for State and local housing programs to leverage funds and create public-private partnerships. *Lead: HUD*
- #44 - Encourage HUD CDBG-DR grantees and private sources to fund additional CDFI outreach and support to small businesses in vulnerable communities. *Lead: Treasury, in coordination with HUD*
- #59 - Support New Jersey planning efforts, including pilots for NJ Local Resilience Partnerships, and encourage federal agencies the State, nonprofits, and funding organizations to provide both financial and technical support for the formation and operation of the Local Resilience Partnerships. *Leads: HUD and CPCB RSF (FDRC with FEMA as RSF coordinating agency), Sustainable Jersey, and New Jersey Future*
- #61 - Facilitate and expand opportunities for funding and nonprofit engagement in recovery, including opportunities for organizations that work with vulnerable populations. The Community Planning and Capacity Building Recovery Support Function (CPCB RSF) in NY and NJ 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. *Lead: CPCB RSFs (FDRCs with FEMA as RSF coordinating agency) and RSFLG*
- #68 - Continue functions of the Program Management Office (PMO) to track the progress of the [Sandy Supplemental funding and performance](#). *Lead: Sandy Recovery Tracking Team or [Recovery.gov](#)*

Next steps in implementation:

- The state has to agree to implement these recommendations. Some recommendations require no state or local involvement - just changes that fed govt has/is changing. However, if Task Force strategies are linked to a topic (like hazard mitigation), then those recommendations will be required moving forward.
- Are succession plans in place and will be a team remaining at HUD responsible for tracking the progress of the recommendations. Believe there will be a role for nonprofits for evaluation of existing programs or policies, as well.
- Task Force's work closes September 30th. FEMA's Lincroft office will be present through fall, but personnel will be decreasing and will be taken over by FEMA Region II office (based in NYC).

FOLLOW UP

- FEMA Region II office contacts will be circulated to group
- Michael checking on whether or not data being published is still on track for October and how granular - will it be any more detailed than state-level

ADDITIONAL INFO

- [NJ Sandy Federal Funds Tracker](#) - Office of the State Comptroller
- [Sandy Recovery Progress Home Page](#) - public access to data on the status of Sandy funds. Monthly reports are published three weeks after the close of each month.

Beginning on the first Monday after Hurricane Sandy struck New Jersey, The Council of New Jersey Grantmakers began hosting weekly conference calls for grantmakers in-state and nationwide, facilitated by CNJG President Nina Stack, to discuss their response to Sandy and strategies facing NJ as a result of the storm. Each conference call briefing offered expert guest speakers who represented government agencies (FEMA, HUD, HHS, etc.), national philanthropic leaders, expert psychologists with experience in PTSD, planners and community redevelopment leaders, and representatives from NJ's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, among others. The twenty-five audio files and written summaries are available at: <http://cnjg.org/hurricane-sandy>