

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series II

Funder Briefing: #2

Date: September 16, 2013

Topic: Update on Statewide Progress of Long Term Recovery

Speakers: **Cathy McCann**, President - NJVOAD;

Janet Sharma, Chair - Bergen LTRG;

Meghan Wren, Chair - Cumberland LTRG;

Elizabeth Murno, Chair - Monmouth LTRG

HIGHLIGHTS

Announcements: Oct 2nd - CNJG Affinity group Funders for Strong and Thriving Communities will meet and discuss resiliency initiatives

NJVOAD – *Cathy McCann*

17 Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) have formed or are forming - only two are community or city specific - Ironbound Community Corporation & Atlantic City, all the rest are County-wide.

- NJVOAD is hosting regular calls to support the work of the LTRGs:
 - Case manager call every Tuesday morning
 - Volunteer call every other Wednesday
 - Construction call every other Thursday
 - Emotional/Spiritual Care call every Friday
 - NJ VOAD Member call every Friday
- October NJVOAD will host a face to face meeting for training and self-care
- FEMA is drawing down its presence: Had 18 FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VAL)- now just one VAL
- Mental health reps have been working tirelessly, so we need to support them.
- NJVOAD is in a holding pattern waiting for state programs to come on board and to see which homeowners are eligible for support. Also, getting accurate elevation requirements is holding up rebuilding efforts.

Bergen LTRG – *Janet Sharma*

- Bergen Cty started after Hurricane Floyd; communication services mostly, until Sandy hit
- 12,000 homes applied for FEMA (4,000 of which are in Moonachie & Little Ferry)
- \$1.7M grant money received so far
- \$800K is allocated - vast majority is assistance to clients
- Gradually got grants, were able to hire a project manager; now we have staff of 7 - 1 project manager, 4 case managers, 1 volunteer coordinator, VISTA office administrator. The Bergen LTRG is housed in a church in Moonachie, open all day every day, 629 assessed cases of which 350 cases assigned to case managers, engaged 3000 volunteers (34,000 volunteer hours)
- Held information fairs - tables for service organizations who could help if more money became available
- Bergen LTRG insulated underside of 173 mobile homes; issue with access to Federal aid because land is owned by the trailer park and homes are owned by individuals. Trying to get state-level entities' attention.

- Bad flooding and wastewater issues - not like the destruction on the shores - but most Bergen residents didn't qualify for federal funds

Cumberland LTRG – *Meghan Wren*

- No VOAD existed prior to the storm, but learned creating an LTRG was essential for receiving private funds
- [World Renew](#) did an assessment - Cumberland County was determined not to be one of the top nine counties eligible for Federal funds, but Bayshore communities were devastated.
 - \$1.3M worth of damage from assessment done by World Renew - which only got to 34 people out of the 727 - the financial shortfall is enormous because our residents can't apply for REM grants.
 - Only 727 people applied for FEMA assistance because we have lower density, but the impact was enormous. Approximately 270 of 300 residencies in Downs Township were damaged and 30 were lost entirely.
 - Poorest county in the state, less than 1% of the ratables of the county, but communities sometimes had 10% of the ratables affected
 - Bright spot: because residents aren't eligible, they don't have to wait to move, handle mold remediation, etc.
- Literacy in our county is a big stumbling block and need more time and guidance
- Family Success Center of Commercial Township has helped with advocacy for the families - this could be done throughout the state with Family success Centers. Named the Advocacy Committee and call families "families" and not "clients" - they are not case managers but can take on families
- One community is speaking with the Blue Acres program and may be bought out entirely
- [Hope and Healing](#) assistance isn't available because not a designated community
- Anniversary event planned with a dinner and first recovery fair

Monmouth LTRG – *Elizabeth Murno*

- 34,000 registrants who applied for FEMA over 300 of which received maximum grants; Monmouth & Ocean County received 80% of the damage in NJ
- Camp Evans - Took over former Military campus that allows for offices, volunteer housing, warehouse storage space in middle of Monmouth county. Spaces require renovation to be up to working order - volunteer housing targeted to be built out and ready to house volunteers by November 2013
- NJ State contract for case managers with Catholic Charities only funded 40 case managers for entire state - NY received funding for 200 case managers. FEMA's formula for calculating case managers had about 80 initially calculated, so State has gone back to Federal government to request expanding the total case managers to the larger number
- We've been reaching out to partners to recruit them to provide disaster case management services, and we're providing trainings, how to interview clients and get conversations started
- Recruit national rebuilding partners to come to Monmouth County
- Work around we're exploring: For communities that need to elevate, we may be able to help them to rebuild with *volunteer* assistance, and therefore it may be possible that families who are currently waitlisted for assistance can rebuild their homes now and will deal with elevation later without jeopardizing their eligibility for assistance.

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>