

\$279 Million in Federal Funding Fuels New York Two Months After Hurricane Ida

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NEW YORK – When the remnants of Hurricane Ida struck the Northeast, New Yorkers were stunned by its ferocity. Floodwaters poured into a New York City subway station, turned streets into rivers and left sections of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway impassable.

The hurricane dumped 3 inches of rain an hour on parts of the city. As it hopscotched across southern New York and outlying counties north and east, Ida destroyed homes, businesses and crucial equipment.

New York's latest big storm made it clear that the city's aging sewers and stormwater infrastructure were no match for Ida's power. It also amplified growing concern over climate change and its effect on New Yorkers. News reports and social media posts revealed their fatigue over the magnitude and increasing frequency of destructive storms.

Nevertheless, state, federal and local officials quickly joined together to launch a robust recovery effort.

As of Nov. 8, FEMA and the U.S. Small Business Administration have approved \$279.9 million in federal assistance for New Yorkers who were affected by the storm. Disaster officials have made it a top priority to help the most underserved populations, people who recede into the shadows.

In the two months since Ida made landfall Sept. 1, community leaders have joined with nonprofit and voluntary agencies, New York City Emergency Management, New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services and the Federal Emergency Management Agency in an ambitious strategy to help New Yorkers. Their coordinated efforts have begun to repair damage to affected areas and provide survivors with housing, financial assistance for temporary rental



payments and unemployment benefits as well as food, healthcare, legal and mental health assistance.

New Yorkers were approved for more than \$142.1 million in FEMA disaster assistance including \$129 million in Housing Assistance and \$13.1 million under FEMA's Other Needs Assistance program.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, through the New York State Office for New Americans, established a \$27 million fund for undocumented individuals who do not qualify for FEMA Individual Assistance. Specialists at the Office for New Americans can communicate in more than 200 languages.

The Small Business Administration, whose disaster loans are the largest source of federal disaster recovery funds for homeowners, renters, businesses and certain nonprofits, approved \$137.7 million in home and business loans for Hurricane Ida survivors in the last two months.

Under the major disaster declaration President Biden approved Sept. 5, residents of the **Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk and Westchester** counties were eligible to apply for FEMA's Individuals and Households Program. It provides financial assistance and direct services to eligible homeowners and renters who have uninsured or underinsured necessary expenses and serious needs as a direct result of the storm.

The State of New York and FEMA are no strangers to the collaborative effort. Several storms and flooding events in the past few years have seriously diminished the state's ability to fund recovery efforts, according to Hochul's early request for a federal emergency declaration in advance of Ida's landfall. The result is a closer working relationship between the federal and state partners.

Immediately after the federal disaster was declared, FEMA brought the first of nearly 400 employees to New York to assist in the recovery effort. Additional staff would support remotely. In recent weeks, the federal agency has begun to supplement its staff by hiring New Yorkers for temporary work.

"FEMA remains committed to assisting the residents of southern New York as they clean up and repair the damage from Hurricane Ida," said Federal



Coordinating Officer Lai Sun Yee, who is leading the federal effort. “We continue to work with New York State, New York City and other local emergency managers to help the communities recover and address some of the unique challenges we face here.”

New York City is the largest metropolitan area in the country with some of the most diverse neighborhoods in the world. As part of FEMA’s commitment to ensure equity in the delivery of assistance to the most underserved survivors and communities in New York, the agency’s written translation services allowed messaging to be delivered in up to 25 languages including Arabic, Bengali, simplified Chinese, Gujarati, Kirundi, Swahili, Tagalog and Yiddish. FEMA’s telephone interpretation service communicates in 117 languages.

And FEMA addresses equity in other ways. All New York’s disaster survivors, including those with disabilities and access and functional needs, have equal access to information on and applying to federal disaster assistance programs. FEMA opened disaster recovery centers in affected counties, where residents can meet with FEMA staff and representatives of other federal and state agencies and receive information in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio and electronic versions. Mobile recovery centers have been visiting the communities and disaster survivor assistance teams have knocked on more than 87,000 doors in the affected neighborhoods, offering to help people apply and providing information on the programs.

As New Yorkers work to repair the damage from the intense rain and flooding of Hurricane Ida, preparing their homes and businesses for future disasters is also critical to the recovery. As a result, FEMA continues to educate residents in flood-prone areas about repairing their homes and better protecting themselves ahead of the next disaster. Hazard mitigation specialists are visiting home-improvement stores in the affected areas to share do-it-yourself construction tips and techniques for building hazard-resistant homes.

Even as recovery efforts progress with early attention focused on assisting individuals and families, on a parallel track FEMA’s Public Assistance program, the largest source of assistance for essential government agencies, public institutions and certain private nonprofits such as houses of worship, is beginning to take shape.



The federal disaster declaration designated the **Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan and Westchester counties** for Public Assistance.

The cost-sharing program provides grants to reimburse eligible applicants in the Public Assistance-designated counties for eligible costs for debris removal, emergency protective measures and permanent work to repair or replace disaster-damaged facilities. As of Nov. 8, some 197 applicants were eligible to submit projects that would restore damaged facilities to their pre-disaster design and function, including applicable and federally required codes and standards.

For the latest on New York's Hurricane Ida recovery efforts, visit fema.gov/disaster/4615. Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/femaregion2 and facebook.com/fema.

