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MAYOR BLOOMBERG DETAILS HOUSING, HEALTH, SMALL BUSINESS AND OTHER RECOVERY AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today detailed the assistance available from multiple city agencies to help New Yorkers get back on their feet in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Resources, outlined below, include on-going shelter, emergency loans, mental health support and small business support.

“Every day we’re working to help more people get their lives back to normal,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “New York City has a full array of services – from temporary financial assistance to food stamp replacement to information for small businesses – to help our residents get back on their feet as quickly and as seamlessly as possible.”

“Hurricane Sandy has disrupted lives and destroyed homes in a way that no one could imagine,” said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda I. Gibbs. “We are committed to doing everything we can to help New Yorkers put their lives back together.”

“Recovery from this devastating storm has only just begun,” said Commissioner for the Human Resources Administration Robert Doar. “In the coming days and weeks, we will do everything in our power to help New Yorkers through this difficult time. HRA staff, along with their fellow City employees and colleagues in the state and federal government, will be working together to help those who need assistance most.”

Disaster Assistance Service Centers – Economic and Insurance Assistance

The Human Resources Administration has set up sites with information and referrals for those applying for emergency social and economic assistance. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is co-located at these centers and is providing application points for home owners, home renters and those that have lost their businesses through federal small business administration. Additional sites will be added.

Locations currently include:

- Mount Loretto - 6581 Hylan Blvd, Staten Island
- New Dorp High School - Corner of Mill Road and New Dorp Lane, Staten Island
- Coney Island - MCU Parking Lot, 1904 Surf Avenue, Brooklyn

(more)

- Rockaway - Walbaums Parking Lot, 112-15 Beach Channel Drive, Queens
- Breezy Point - Fort Tilden Park (closest end to Breezy Point) – Beach Channel Blvd, Queens
- Edgewater Firehouse Parking Lot, 1 Adeo Place between 9th Avenue and Edge Street, Bronx

Later this week the city and FEMA will be setting up indoor comprehensive centers. These resiliency centers will provide cross-agency full-service support.

Housing Resources

Ongoing Shelter Services

The Department of Homeless Services is currently operating 15 hurricane shelter facilities throughout the five boroughs with a range of services and support to assist those displaced due to the storm.

A list of the 15 shelter locations can be found at nyc.gov.

Temporary Financial Assistance, Including Relocation Expenses, Rent and Broker's Fees

The Human Resources Administration (HRA) will be offering benefits both for Human Resources clients and those not normally served by the agency. Those who are not current HRA clients and wish to apply for temporary assistance, may – if eligible – receive authorization for relocation expenses, such as a first month's rent, a security deposit voucher equivalent to one month's rent as allowed by state regulations, a broker's fee equivalent to 50 percent of one month's rent, a furniture allowance or storage expenses.

People not currently in receipt of cash assistance but who are otherwise eligible for cash assistance) and who cannot cook due to, for example, a loss of power or temporary evacuation may request a restaurant allowance as an immediate needs grant at a local Job Center.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov.

Emergency Loans

The Emergency Loan for 1-4 Unit Owner Occupants provides homeowners with loans and grants to repair water mains, boilers, sewer lines, sidewalk violations, roof, plumbing, electrical problems and other conditions dangerous to health and safety. The maximum loan amount is \$10,000, with low interest rates and a maximum term of five years.

The Emergency loans for 5-20 unit Residential and Mixed-Use buildings is an emergency loan for small property owners, corporations, non-for profit owners, investor, corporations and owner occupants of five-20 units building in the five boroughs of New York City. Mixed-use buildings qualify as long as the loan is used to repair residential units or systems that affect the residential units. The maximum loan amount is \$25,000, which is available in increments of \$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000 and \$25,000. The funds can be used to: replace building wide

systems; eliminate code violations; upgrade vacant apartments; eliminate dangerous health and safety conditions and other essential repairs.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov or via Neighborhood Housing Services of New York at www.nhsnyc.org or (212) 519-2500.

Mold in Homes

After a flood, it is critical to clean and dry affected items and areas as quickly as possible to prevent mold growth by opening windows to let in fresh air; using fans to help dry out homes and reduce odors (note: do not run any electrical equipment or appliances near standing water); using a dehumidifier to help dry out enclosed spaces; bringing in professionals to clean and restore homes or apartments if there is extensive flood damage.

Learn more about how to clean mold and health effects related to mold at www.nyc.gov

Housing Inspections

Housing Preservation and Development's Housing Code inspectors stand equipped to respond to requests for Housing Maintenance Code inspections received via 311 and to continue Emergency Repair Program activity. Housing Preservation and Development inspectors will respond to complaints generated by tenants or owners of multi-family properties and non-owner occupied single-family homes.

If tenants have concerns regarding maintenance conditions in their buildings Housing Preservation and Development requests they first speak with their landlord or building manager before calling 311 to see if the issues are being addressed.

Building owners should notify all tenants about any delays experienced, keeping them informed of the progress of repairs, and provide them with any appropriate intermediary solutions. If heat is affected, please take any steps recommended by plumbers, contractors, or other professionals to keep pipes from freezing which could cause additional damage to property and further delay the restoration of services.

State and local law also require owners of buildings containing rent controlled or rent stabilized apartments to register those apartments with the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, annually.

In addition to calling Housing Preservation and Development to report code violations, tenants in rent-regulated apartments who have problems with their building owners may contact New York State's Division of Homes and Community Renewal and file complaints on their forms. After obtaining evidence from owners and tenants the Division of Homes and Community Renewal can issue written orders that can lower rents for lack of services or overcharges, direct the terms of a lease renewal or fine an owner if found guilty of harassment.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov, (718) 739-6400 or via Neighborhood Housing Services of New York at www.nhsnyc.org or (212) 519-2500.

Boiler Repair or Replacement

Many New Yorkers may find their boilers affected by Hurricane Sandy. No permit is required for this repair work to go forward. However, to repair a boiler or burner, a qualified contractor must be hired to perform the work. If replacing a boiler or burner entirely, a licensed contractor must obtain a Department of Buildings' permit.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov.

Health Services

Health Insurance and Medicaid

Any New York resident who lacks health insurance and, due to financial losses or other circumstances as a result of the storm, and believes they may be eligible for public health insurance can go online to ACCESS NYC to see if they may be eligible.

HRA is working with New York State to ensure that Medicaid recipients' coverage will not be adversely impacted by disruptions of Hurricane Sandy and the Medicaid program is taking steps to give affected consumers additional time to respond to Medicaid renewals and other requests for information. As of Friday, November 2nd, all Medicaid community offices are open, except for Coney Island, Bellevue, and Chinatown.

HRA is also working with New York State to ensure Home Care recipients' services and Medicaid coverage will not be adversely impacted by disruptions caused by Hurricane Sandy. The Home Care program is taking steps to give affected consumers additional time to respond to Home Care renewals and other requests for information. All CASA offices in the community are open and can assist clients in applying for services, including New York State's Managed Long Term Care programs.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov or via Medicaid at the Medicaid Helpline at 1-888-692-6116 or any Medicaid office in New York City.

Mental Health Support and Medication

1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638), the Health Department's free, confidential help line for New York City residents, is available to New Yorkers 24 hours per day/7 days per week. The hotline's staff of trained mental health professionals provide support and help callers find mental health and substance abuse services (Spanish: 1-877-298-3373; Korean and Chinese: 1-877-990-8585; Hearing Impaired: 1-212-982-5284.).

For those who may have lost access to prescription medication, go to your regular doctor or an HHC facility or community health center. Medical staff in shelters who are licensed to prescribe may prescribe medications for people who are in the shelters (within the scope of their license) and under the indemnification of New York City as New York City employees.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov

New Yorkers with AIDS and HIV

New Yorkers with AIDS and clinically symptomatic HIV illness who are not currently HASA clients can get assistance at any of the City's HASA centers except for Waverly and Coney Island.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov or the HASA service line at 1-212-971-0626.

Food Stamps and Cash Assistance

Food Stamps

Beginning the week of November 5, 2012, those currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (commonly known as food stamps) benefits may receive automatic partial replacement benefits for spoiled food due to power outages and floods. Clients need to have been food stamp clients as of October 31 to qualify, and will receive 50% percent of the household's current monthly allotment. Recipients do not need to travel to apply for automatic replacement benefits. They will be placed onto client EBT cards automatically.

Households affected by the storm may also be eligible for non-automatic replacement benefits, to replace food purchased with food stamp benefits. The application can be downloaded and faxed, mailed or dropped off at an HRA office. For more information, call 311.

Effective immediately, food stamp benefits can be used to purchase hot and prepared foods at already approved retailers that accept EBT cards throughout New York City. Hot and prepared foods purchases are not usually permitted under the United States Department of Agriculture guidelines, however, a federal waiver was given to allow this in order to help recipients in storm-affected areas with no ability to refrigerate or cook. The waiver will be in effect through November 30.

Impacted zip codes and additional information is available at nyc.gov

Cash Assistance

New Yorkers who receive temporary cash assistance or are eligible for cash assistance, and must move into temporary shelter as a result of storm damage, may request assistance with storage fees on a monthly basis, if not provided by federal or other disaster authorities. Additionally, families and individuals who have lost or damaged clothing or damaged equipment such as furnaces and boilers may request assistance to help replace these items, if not provided by federal or other disaster authorities.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services can be called if a physically and/or mentally impaired adult 18 years of age or older is in need of services and has no one to assist them. Referrals or arrangements for services and support can be made Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM at (212) 630-1853. Adult Protective Services is also referring clients to the relief food distribution sites in Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn.

Small Business Support Services

For businesses that need to undertake rebuilding, an emergency sales tax letter from New York City Industrial Development Authority will be available allowing businesses to avoid payment of New York City and New York State sales taxes on materials purchased for rebuilding. The Industrial Development Authority will also waive all fees and, while following State law, looking to streamline its normal procedure. This program is expected to offer economic benefits to reconstruction projects costing \$500,000 or more.

For any business that is temporarily displaced from its space, short-term "swing" office space is available in all five boroughs. The Economic Development Corporation has identified private commercial space that will be offered at no rent to businesses displaced by Hurricane Sandy. In addition, temporary space is available at no rent at Brooklyn Army Terminal and the Sunshine Bronx business incubator.

For any business in need of other emergency assistance, the SBS Business Outreach Team and Emergency Response Unit's Large Scale Response Team will be deployed to help impacted small businesses. This team is currently on-call for any storm-related business inquiries and is closely coordinating with the NYC Office of Emergency Management.

Additional information is available at nyc.gov

-30-

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