

The New York Recovery Network: E-Bulletin

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Mapping Our Way to Recovery: The Community Recovery Resource Mapping Tool

This primer explains how to use the online Community Recovery Resource Mapping Tool (CRRMT) to chart recovery status and resource information on a community map.

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High rises present challenges to city resilience efforts

Hurricane Sandy forced New Yorkers to deal with two converging problems: the high cost of real estate and increasing coastal and stormwater flooding.

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Architects and engineers volunteer expertise, help Sandy survivors

This profile on Architecture for Humanity highlights the work they are doing helping property owners impacted by Sandy with sustainable design options that make structures more resilient. Learn more about the organization and their plan for long-term reconstruction.

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Mapping Our Way to Recovery: The Community Recovery Resource Mapping Tool

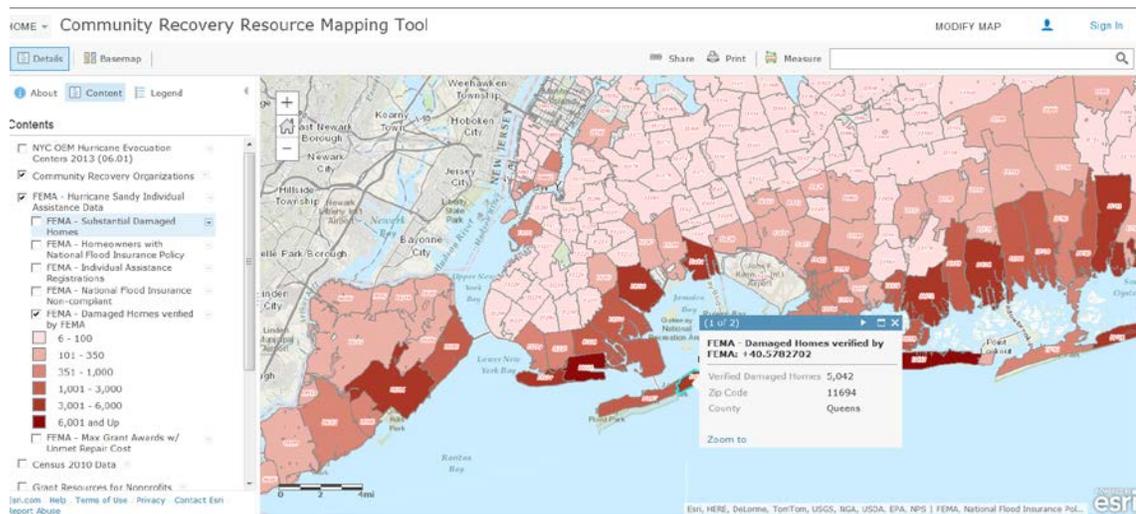
The online [Community Recovery Resource Mapping Tool](#) (CRRMT), using the Geographic Information System (GIS), allows users to chart recovery status and resource information on a community map.

The interactive GIS tool is designed to help professionals and volunteers actively engaged with Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts conduct unmet needs assessments. Determining where gaps exist helps community leaders effectively address them.

This primer explains how to perform analysis using the CRRMT.

Using CRRMT to assess Hurricane Sandy's impact at the community level – in this case, Far Rockaways

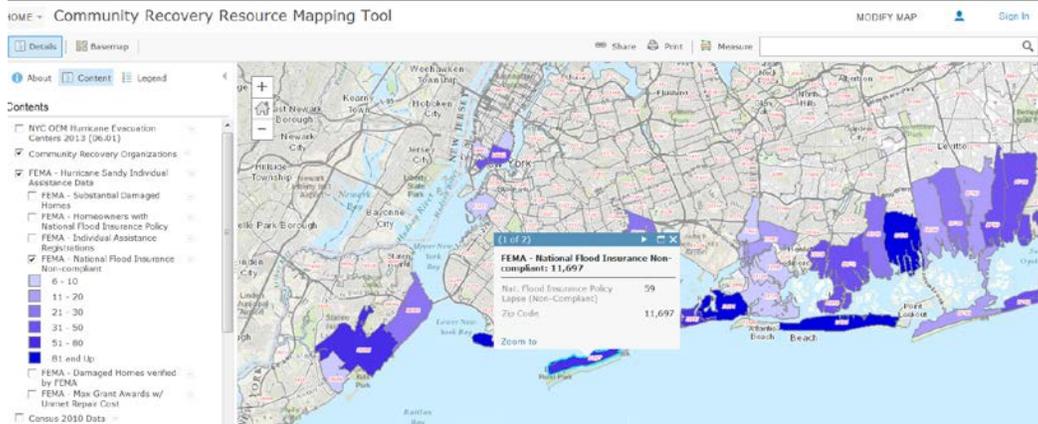
1. CRRMT is a valuable tool for any impacted community to assess Sandy's effect on housing stock. The **Damaged Homes layer** provides the number of homes that are registered and verified through FEMA's Individual and Household Program as being damaged by Sandy. To determine what areas have the highest needs for repair and reconstruction services, click on **FEMA – Hurricane Sandy Individual Assistance Data**. You will notice that **11694** (the ZIP code for Far Rockaway) indicates **5,042** damaged homes, ranking among the most impacted communities in New York.



2. **The National Flood Insurance Non-compliant** layer provides information on survivors who received FEMA Individual Assistance grants for recent disasters (Irene and Rita) but failed to maintain flood insurance on the property, rendering them ineligible for any

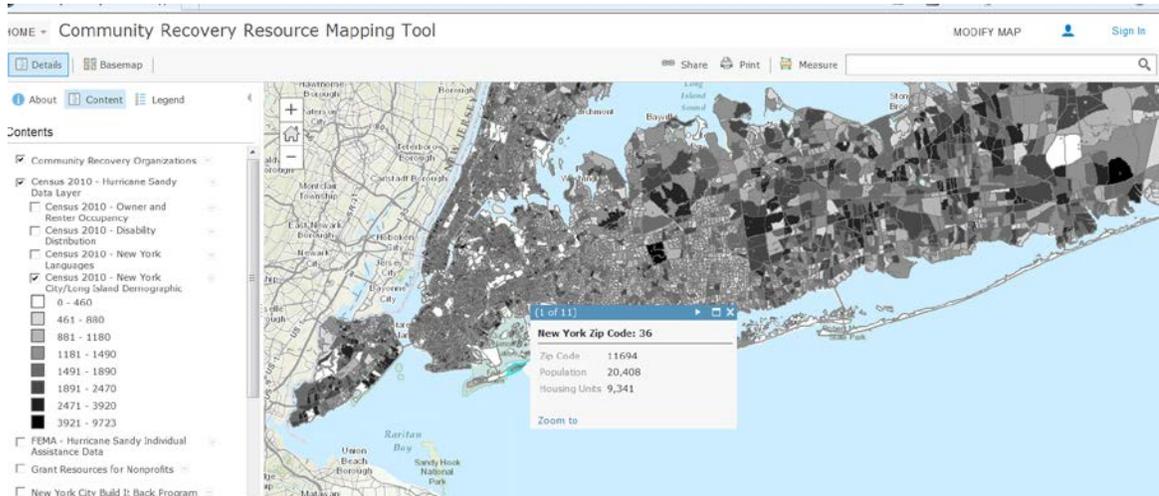
federal disaster assistance for Sandy. This group represents a population with an unmet need who may qualify for nongovernmental assistance.

To plot this information, first click on the **FEMA – Hurricane Sandy Individual Assistance Data** layer. A color coded map shows that for ZIP code **11697** in Far Rockaway, for example, there are **59** non-compliant households.



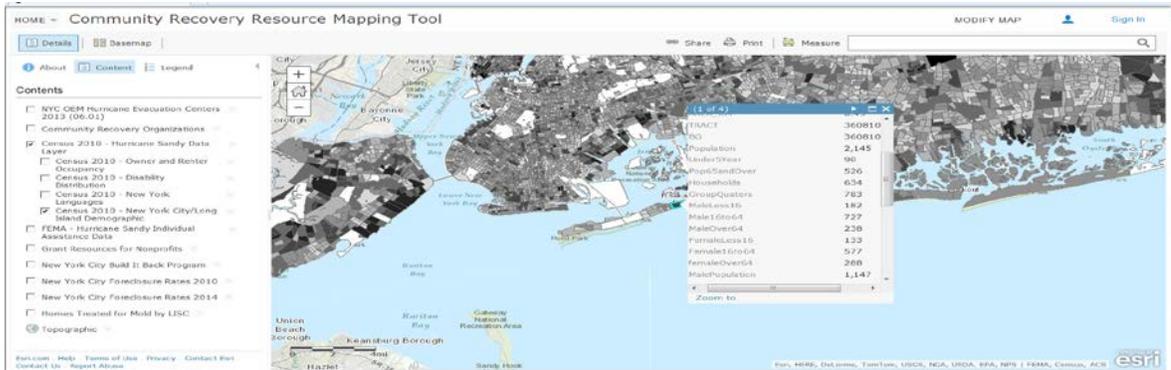
3. **The Census 2010 – New York City /Long Island Population and Income** layer provides community demographics on population, age, sex, housing types, occupancy and disability types. For example, when the sublayer is checked it shows ZIP code 11694 in Far Rockaway has **9,341** housing units.

Considering **5,042** in the same ZIP code are FEMA-verified damaged homes, it can be inferred that about **54 percent** of the housing units located in ZIP code 11694 were damaged by Sandy.

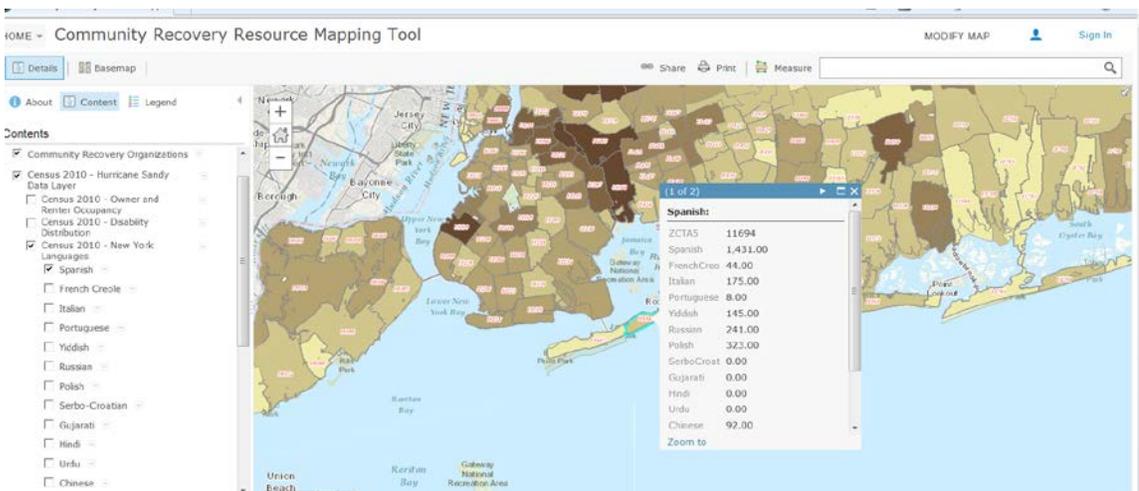


4. The **Census 2010 – New York City /Long Island Population and Income** sublayer (under the **Census 2010** layer) can alternate between ZIP code and Census track (by

unchecking the **Community Recovery Organization** layer above the **Census 2010 Data** layer) to display demographic information such as household composition, race and household median income. For example, of the **2,145** total population of **Census track 360811093800** located in ZIP code **11694**, **526** residents are 65 and older, which represents about **25** percent of the population. With a median household income of **\$22,121** and **160** of the **462** total households (about 35 percent) with income below the poverty level, there may be potential unmet needs among seniors in this community. The next step would be to conduct a survey within the target area.

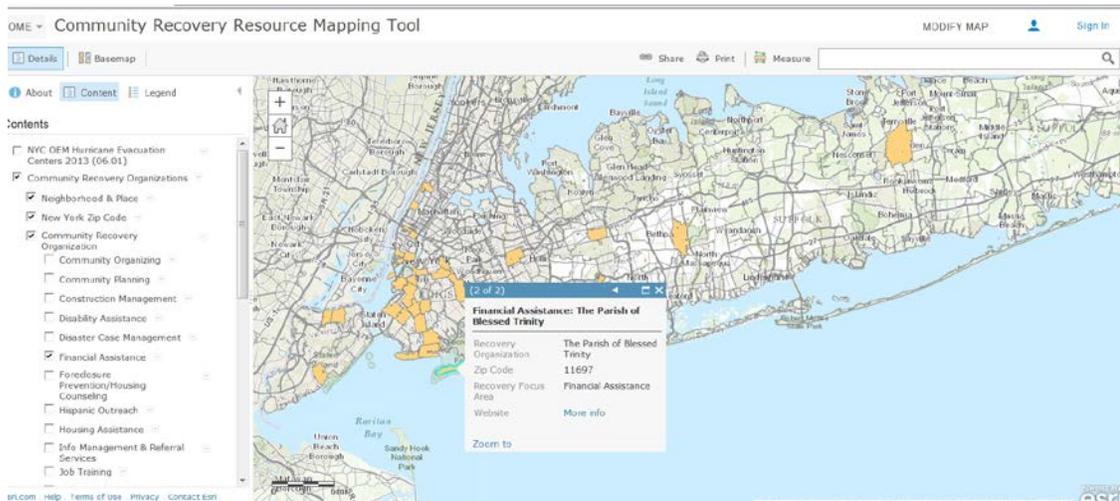


- When the **Census 2010 – New York Languages** (a sublayer of **Census 2010**) is checked, it displays the concentration of languages in that ZIP code. A high concentration of languages other than English may indicate there are populations with limited English proficiency. Translating recovery information into the predominant language of the community demonstrates cultural sensitivity. For example, when the **Census 2010 – New York Languages, Community Recovery Organization** and **Census 2010 – New York Languages** sublayers are simultaneously checked, and the polygon delineating ZIP code 11694 (Far Rockaway) is clicked, a pop-up displays information including a Spanish language population of **1,431** out of a total population of **20,408** (previously shown).

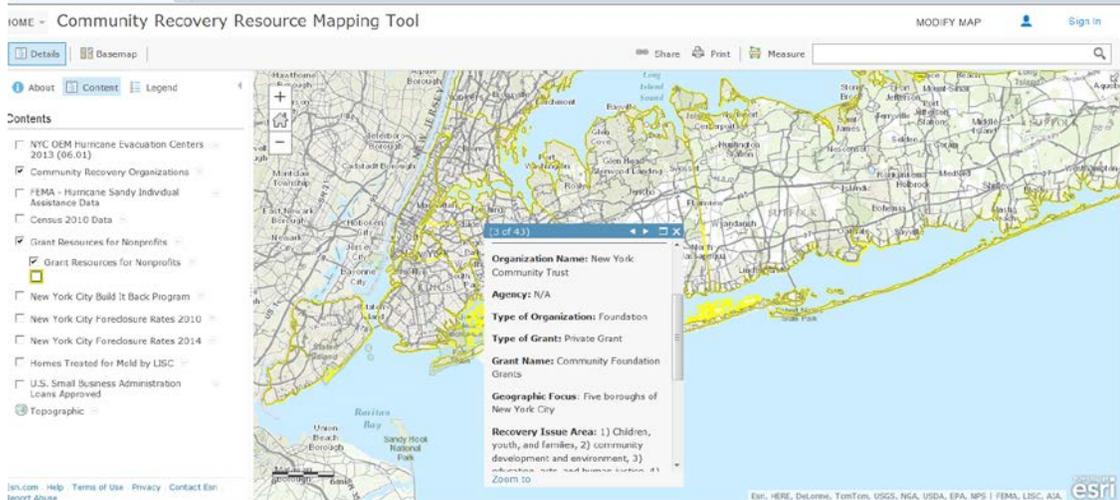


Using CRRMT to locate resources that may be helpful for addressing unmet needs

1. **The Community Recovery Organization** layer provides focus area information on organizations that are embedded within impacted communities. These organizations provide services including Financial Assistance, Housing Assistance and Disaster Case Management. For example, when the **Grant Resources for Nonprofits** layer is checked (and all the adjoining sublayers including **Community Recovery Organization** are checked), additional related sublayers will appear that list recovery service areas covered by the organizations embedded in the target community.



2. **The Grant Resources for Nonprofits** layer provides grant information for eligible communities. When the **Grant Resources for Nonprofits** layer is checked and you click anywhere on the yellow line bordering Far Rockaway, a pop-up will display a listing of potential grant opportunities to mitigate the highlighted unmet needs.



CRRMT is responsive to your needs

Developed by the federal recovery coordination team in collaboration with FEMA's GIS team at the Sandy Recovery Office, CRRMT **contains more than 2,000 data points in 100 ZIP code areas** throughout the counties of New York, Bronx, Kings, Queens, Richmond, Nassau and Suffolk. With feedback provided by more than **2,700 users to date**, the tool is upgraded regularly to reflect current data and informational resources depending on user needs.

1. Click here for a link to the tool: [Community Recovery Resource Mapping Tool](#)
2. For a User Guide, Fact Sheet and technical assistance, email nyrecoverymappingtool@fema.dhs.gov

High rises present challenges to city resilience efforts

Protecting New York City's multi-family homes against another hurricane won't be easy or cheap, according to a recent report released by The Furman Center.

"The Price of Resilience: Can Multi-family Housing Afford to Adapt?" takes an in-depth look at the city's aging high-rise housing stock. It outlines costly solutions that would satisfy insurer requirements and make the structures more resilient against natural disasters.

The Challenge

Hurricane Sandy forced New Yorkers to deal with two converging problems: the high cost of real estate and increasing coastal and stormwater flooding. This makes preparing aging buildings more expensive, with few options to pay for it.

Floodwaters entered the basements and first floors of many high-rise buildings during the storm, rendering power, heating and elevator systems inoperable. This meant that tenants living above the first floor had to go elsewhere – even though the apartments were not directly impacted by water.

Given that 1,500 affordable apartment buildings are in the 100-year flood zone, displacement after a storm could be a significant issue. Of the multi-family buildings in these flood zones, more than 90,000 apartment units are public, subsidized or rent stabilized. Adding to the challenges the city faces, more multi-family properties are expected to be added when final flood maps are unveiled in 2016.

Despite the many steps being taken by the city to build resilience against storms, it is the responsibility of individual property owners to protect their buildings. Existing city ordinances and federal regulations can be fairly expensive to implement. Changes to flood insurance may well increase costs further.

The Study

As part of their research, the authors of "The Price of Resilience" held a workshop where designers, engineers and other experts explored cost-effective strategies to build resilience. An analysis by the workshop is the basis for the report's findings.

Researchers use three properties that sustained damage from Hurricane Sandy as case studies. The report provides an overview of different options that would prevent basements and first floors from flooding along with a cost analysis.

A Costly Catch-22

Any way you look at it, retrofitting existing aging buildings located in the 100-year flood plain is expensive. Those costs can't be passed along to tenants because much of the rent collected in the city is regulated, and in some cases subsidized by one of four types of programs: HUD-financed or insured, HUD Project-Based Rental Assistance, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit or the Mitchell-Lama Rental program.

The Furman Center's report estimated the cost of relocating building systems to the roof of a four-story building to be \$435,000. It would cost \$450,000 to dry floodproof a basement in the same building. Dry floodproofing, where the structure is made watertight below the level that needs protection, wouldn't meet flood insurance regulations for residential buildings located in a 100-year floodplain.

Owners of subsidized housing may have problems financing retrofits because the rents along with subsidy income they collect are often just enough to cover operating costs. Regulations prevent them from raising rents to cover the cost of retrofits. Owners will likely need assistance through additional government subsidies or they will be forced to sell to parties that can afford retrofits.

The Regulatory Hurdle

FEMA estimates 75 percent of damage claims come from properties located within the 100-year floodplain. The study pointed out that owners of properties within the 100-year floodplain are required to buy flood insurance if they have a mortgage that is federally backed or issued by a federally regulated lender. All multi-family properties located within the 100-year floodplain that receive an affordable housing subsidy or FEMA assistance are required to have flood insurance.

New York City's floodplain maps are nearly 30 years old. The update process began in 2009 and new preliminary maps are now available. However, revisions are not expected to be finalized until 2016. The preliminary maps indicate some 30,000 additional properties in New York City will be added to the 100-year floodplain and may be required to have flood insurance.

Possible Fixes

Housing in densely populated urban areas along the coasts face different challenges than communities with single-family, detached housing that have more often sustained the effects of natural disasters. Climatologists have warned that coastal areas like New York City will experience more frequent and severe weather events due to sea level rise and climate change.

While there are no easy fixes, the workshop and subsequent analysis produced several measures policy makers may consider.

Some suggestions:

- The city can urge regulators to create criteria for multi-family buildings and offer insurance premium rate reductions for partial mitigation measures that substantially reduce risk.
- The city can expand some of the zoning requirements for buildings in the 100-year floodplain to other areas at risk of flooding so that zoning does not prevent building owners from investing in resiliency measures.
- The city can revisit its housing rehabilitation subsidy programs to ensure resiliency measures are fundable through those programs.
- Owners of multi-family buildings in 100-year and 500-year floodplains can be required to have long-term capital plans for emergency and resiliency planning.

The full report can be downloaded from [The Furman Center website](#).

Architects and engineers volunteer expertise, help Sandy survivors

When disaster strikes, property owners often find the aftermath daunting.

Hurricane Sandy left many reeling. They had to rebuild knowing their homes are vulnerable to extreme weather and that storms like Sandy have been appearing more frequently along the east coast. They are not alone.

Architecture for Humanity, a nonprofit with 59 chapters across the globe, helps property owners with sustainable design options that make structures more resilient.

How they help

Founded in 1999, the organization relies on volunteer architects, engineers and other construction experts to provide planning and project management services including construction management and post-occupancy analysis.

They follow a five-point plan for long-term reconstruction:

1. Enable local chapters to provide technical support to existing recovery agencies.
2. Provide design and construction assistance to nonprofits and community-based organizations in communities to repair civic structures and public spaces.
3. Provide technical assistance to property owners with a focus on small businesses and rental properties in low-income communities.
4. Provide community design, planning and architectural support to local agencies to rebuild and develop model mitigation strategies.
5. Build back green. Provide assistance to replace outdated building systems with more sustainable energy efficient solutions.

Before floodwaters from Sandy began to recede, Architecture for Humanity volunteers were assessing damage. Soon after, volunteers set up Sandy Design Help Desks in Brooklyn and Queens to field questions from single and multi-family homeowners and small business owners.

Recently, design volunteers held a clinic in Seaside Heights, N.J. to provide technical assistance consultations. They reviewed blueprints and photos, created design options and shared building code and zoning information.

The 117 members of the New York chapter are currently developing plans to open Resilience through Education and Design Centers for Long Island, Staten Island and Brooklyn survivors.