

Remembering Sandy Five Years Later

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NEW YORK CITY – In the five years since Hurricane Sandy made landfall along the East Coast, the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has contributed more than \$25.5 billion to the recovery in New York and New Jersey.

Hurricane Sandy was the second-largest Atlantic storm on record, and affected the East Coast from Florida to Maine, as well as states as far inland as West Virginia, Ohio, and Indiana. The storm made landfall in southern New Jersey on Oct. 29, 2012, battering the densely populated New York and New Jersey region with heavy rains, strong winds, and record storm surges.

When the winds died and the waters calmed, residents were confronted with a level of destruction most had never before experienced. The storm’s effects were extensive, leaving more than four million customers without power and more than 340,000 homes and apartments severely damaged in New York and New Jersey.

A coordinated federal, state, tribal nation, and local response team worked around-the-clock to restore power, public transportation, critical infrastructure, and the services citizens depend upon. Emergency officials moved rapidly to conduct inspections to expedite the removal of the debris that littered the landscape, obstructing roads, rail lines and waterways, and threatening public safety. Within seven days, 17,000 federal responders were on the ground, including more than 5,000 FEMA employees – representing one of the largest personnel deployments in FEMA’s history. Federal partners including the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Housing and Urban Development, Small Business Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Defense worked with FEMA, New York State and New Jersey to assist Sandy survivors.

More than \$1.4 billion was disbursed to 179,016 individuals and households impacted by Sandy in New Jersey and New York. The majority, more than \$1.2 billion, of this was dedicated to housing assistance, including costs for temporary housing, repair or replacement of eligible damaged property, and other disaster-



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related expenses not covered by homeowner's or renter's insurance.

Through the Public Assistance Program FEMA has obligated nearly \$15.2 billion, for Hurricane Sandy-related debris removal, emergency protective measures and permanent restoration of public facilities and critical infrastructure in New York and New Jersey.

"Hurricane Sandy's historic impact on the region has shifted our recovery focus to building back safer and stronger," said FEMA's Region II Administrator Tom Von Essen. "The storms and events we have seen since Sandy further highlight the importance of preparing our citizens and critical infrastructure for the worst."

In January 2013, Congress passed the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act (SRIA) of 2013, which included legislative changes allowing FEMA—and the state, tribal, local and territorial governments it supports—greater flexibility in administering assistance programs, improving the Nation's ability to efficiently respond to and recover from disasters.

SRIA directs FEMA to streamline Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) activities, and to adopt measures to expedite implementation of the program. The legislation allows FEMA to provide up to 25 percent of the estimated costs for eligible hazard mitigation measures to a state or tribal nation grantee before eligible costs are incurred.

Recognizing that mitigation is an essential component to national preparedness and emergency management, FEMA's HMGP awarded more than \$1 billion for mitigation projects in Region II to proactively reduce the loss of life and property from future disasters.

No two disasters are alike. Since Hurricane Sandy, FEMA incorporated a number of Presidential directives, policies and Executive Orders into its day-to-day operations to help deliver federal disaster assistance to communities in an expedited manner, allowing recovery efforts to get underway sooner. Improved communication and coordination between interagency partners and stakeholders has provided for a smoother and more effective execution of programs. This shift includes a focus on long-term resiliency and sustainability, better positioning the nation to handle storms of such magnitude.



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FEMA's mission is to support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a nation we work together to build, sustain, and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards.

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