

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series I

Funder Briefing: #15

Date: March 11, 2013

Topic: Update from the Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding & Universal Design

Speakers: **Terrence Brody**, Executive Director - Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding;
Eric Daleo - Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding;
Elaine Katz (moderator), Vice President of Grants & Special Initiatives - Kessler Foundation;
Harold Garwin, Esq., President & Executive Director - Community Health Law Project;
Thomas G. Dallessio, AICP/PP, Project Manager, Center for Resilient Design - NJ Institute of Technology (NJIT);
Richard Olson, Retired Professor, School of Architecture - NJ Institute of Technology (NJIT)

HIGHLIGHTS

Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding (GORR) – *Terrence Brody and Eric Daleo*

GORR's primary goals are:

- Assess impact and damages and develop initiatives and programs to address needs
- Working in partnerships with State departments like [DCA](#), [DEP](#), [EDA](#), etc.
- Build a joint field office and provide free of charge technical assistance
- Mobilize state employee teams to be working with municipalities
- Stabilize Cash flow situations in towns in partnership with local governmental services

Priorities:

- Get people back into their homes and renters back into apartments
 - Working with [HUD](#) to develop action plan for programs to help people - rehabilitate or rebuild homes, elevate homes
 - Working to help small and large rental properties get back into operation
- Help small businesses get back on their feet
 - EDA to develop grants and loan programs to provide capital for businesses to do repairs or buy more inventory, with the hope that businesses can expand using resources.

GORR will have a significant amount of funding that they'll have to find - so partnering with the funding community, like CNJG members will be key. Unmet needs that funders can help with:

- Low-income people with mold remediation needs
- Nonprofits that are ineligible for FEMA money whose facilities were destroyed or damaged

Universal Design Approach – *Elaine Katz, Kessler Foundation* (moderated the following briefing)

- Comprehensive best practices guidelines for how to design, build and manage public and commercial structures and spaces to be readily accessed by anyone regardless of age, size, ability or disability.
- Rebuilding in NJ requires meeting barrier-free subcodes, and should meet public accommodations requirements that are functional, attractive and cost effective options

[Community Health Law Project](#) – *Harold Garwin, Esq* -- legal and advocacy organization for services with physical & developmental disabilities, provides direct services to 5,000 individuals across the state and is also involved in larger scale issues, such as fair housing and barrier-free access.

Hurricane Sandy is providing opportunities to:

- Rebuild to ensure accessibility to shore, amusement and public accommodations
 - Build ATMs, kiosks along boardwalk designed so those in wheelchairs can also access
- Provide connections and information about barrier-free access requirements, and training of code enforcement & municipal officials - many municipalities are not aware of new requirements for beach access, boardwalks, access roads, etc.
- Expose people to universal design concepts
- Work with municipalities on plans and provide ADA training to help get towns up to date on requirements - Funders can help with this effort.
- Emergency facilities and shelters - people forget those are important first aspects of disaster relief - shelters, schools, etc. aren't necessarily up to code, or set up in accessible ways

[Center for Resilient Design - NJ Institute of Technology](#) – *Thomas Dallessio*

Priorities: applied research, experiential learning and civic engagement - provide federal and state representatives local leaders, businesses, and residents

- Develop resilient proto-typology - creating opportunities for students and faculty to design programs that could be utilized by state and local government. A book collecting the ideas/case studies from throughout the state will be available soon.
- Creating this new Center for Resilient Design to be a clearinghouse for information and contacts - one stop shop for organizations like the [League of Municipalities](#), DCA, State and FEMA
- Creating an alternative spring break program at NJIT which will send 500 volunteers registered to work in communities - cleanup, deconstruction, construction, survey work, etc., in conjunction with local organizations in each community. NJIT is doing this in tandem with 22 other universities and colleges.

Richard Olson (NJIT) - Environmental psychologist focused on how to make environments work better for people with physical, cognitive and mental disabilities. Accessibility and safety core focus of his work along with helping municipalities with plan review, site visits, training, etc.

- Oftentimes disability issues are seen as a separate group, but need to be integral when thinking about planning and designing healthy communities.
- Everyone ends up benefiting from all accommodations (ramps for beach access helps people schlep stuff).
- Funders can assist by encouraging collaboration beyond lawyers and disability partners, such as involving [DCA's Division of Codes and Standards](#), [Mental Health Association for NJ](#) and [Arcs](#) around the state.
- Healthy community organizations: already working with the [American Planning Association](#) design and planning charrettes and activities - how infrastructure is designed will help determine community health.

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>