

Summary: Post-Sandy Funder Briefing--Series I

Funder Briefing: #5

Date: December 3, 2012

Topic: Federal Health & Social Services Recovery Support Function

Speaker: **Byron Mason**, Health & Social Services Recovery Support Function Field Coordinator - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

HIGHLIGHTS

Announcements

- FEMA deadline for individuals to apply for assistance has been extended to December 30th. 230,000 New Jerseyans have registered for support (after Hurricane Irene there were only 90,000 cases registered)
- Individuals are going to experience a major shortfall in available funds to rebuild their homes or businesses and there is concern that we could see hundreds of thousands of New Jerseyans slip into a cycle of poverty.

Federal Health & Social Services Recovery Support Function

Byron Mason has been deployed on disaster recovery operations in the Gulf Coast region, during the Oklahoma tornadoes, Iowa floods, in Louisiana after Hurricane Gustav, in Texas after Hurricane Ike, and ran the incident management assistance teams in NY & Maine after Hurricane Irene.

The work of the Federal Health & Social Services Recovery Support Function (HSS Support Function) is to identify the disaster's impacts and the State's needs in order to start matching those needs with the agencies/partners involved in the recovery support function that can address those needs.

Partners include: Corporation of National & Community Services, Dept. of Education, FEMA, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of the Interior, Dept. Justice, Dept. of Labor, Environmental Protection Agency, Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of the Treasury, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, VOAD, Red Cross, Dept. of Agriculture, and the Small Business Administration. There is also coordination with the Office of Emergency Management. Some local partners and nonprofits are also being folded into the process.

Scope and Priorities:

The HSS Support Function has a broad scope that includes mental health, public health, environmental health, impacts to schools and the services that children receive in an educational environment (child care, nutritional support, mental & behavioral health services, etc.), among other areas.

Access to service is of greatest concern. Certain social service agencies will see an influx of clients that they have not budgeted for as people are temporarily housed in different places. Alternately, the service providers in the hardest hit communities (and providers that might be offline for a while with their own recovery efforts) will need to ensure that displaced individuals will be able to return to their communities so that providers will have enough of a client base to reopen in the affected communities.

Public Health update:

NJ Dept. of Health is currently trying to get health providers to document costs, lost revenue, etc. as a result of Sandy. Some of those providers can apply for assistance in two ways.

- FEMA [Public Assistance program](#)
- [Small Business Administration](#) - loans for physical damage & economic injury loans

After filing insurance claims the first stop is FEMA Public Assistance. Under [The Stafford Act](#) - non-public entities and claims for lost revenue are not eligible for public assistance grants. In NJ, many providers are not public entities, and so are not eligible - this is a gap that FEMA is aware of and working to address.

Social Services update:

NJ has a robust disaster response [Crisis Counseling Program](#) (CCP), under federal disaster/terrorism grants, that has roughly 500 trained people psychological first aid, and help with referrals for mental health & substance abuse issues, but CCP is not funded to provide services itself.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [NJ Council for the Humanities](#) is offering small grants to humanities organizations for lost program revenue, canceled or rescheduled fundraisers, keeping doors open for community members, etc. This will also be shared on the Listserv.

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>