

Hurricane Sandy Recovery Resources in New Jersey

Prepared by Volunteer Lawyers for Justice

The following is a list of resources to help New Jerseyans in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. We'll be updating this list as we learn about new benefits and services available for the recovery, so make sure to check back regularly at www.vljnj.org.

GLOBAL RESOURCES

Immediate Disaster Assistance:

If you need disaster assistance immediately, contact FEMA at **1-800-621-3362**. You can start the disaster assistance application process by either (1) registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov (2) through a web-enabled mobile device or smartphone by visiting <http://m.fema.gov/> and following the link to “apply online for federal assistance” or (3) by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

FEMA: FEMA has released a statement listing the type of federal aid available for New Jerseyans. The full list of federal aid available is at the following link:

<http://www.fema.gov/news-release/federal-aid-programs-state-new-jersey-disaster-recovery-2>

Google Crisis Map: For a listing of open gas stations, shelters, disaster centers, stores, etc. visit <http://google.org/crisismap/2012-sandy>

Shelter: To find a shelter in your area, go here: <http://www.redcross.org/find-help/shelter>

Internal Revenue Services (IRS): The IRS has issued a series of news releases on tax relief for Hurricane Sandy victims in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. See <http://readynj.posterous.com/>. The IRS provides tax counseling and assistance to taxpayers whose property has been damaged or lost in a federally declared disaster area. Taxpayers also have the option to deduct non-reimbursed casualty losses that occurred in a federally declared disaster area in the year the disaster occurred or file an amended return and deduct the loss in the year immediately preceding the year the disaster occurred. For more information visit: <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/4418>

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reminds customers affected by Hurricane Sandy of certain U.S. immigration benefits or relief that may be available to them. For more information on how eligible individuals may request or apply for temporary relief measures and more go to <http://www.uscis.gov>.

National Disaster Legal Aid: <http://www.disasterlegalaid.org/>. This website includes information on disaster-related legal services.

New Jersey Resources

Volunteering:

-Lawyers: NJSBA - The ABA's Disaster Legal Services program is working with the NJSBA to set up a hotline to field calls from people needing post-hurricane pro bono assistance. The NJSBA will then refer clients to pro bono attorneys. If you are interested in volunteering, please complete the attached forms. Email them to Rita Seborowski - rseborowski@njsba.com, or fax to 732-249-2815. The hotline will only be activated if there are enough volunteers to assist those in need. Email Ms. Seborowski with any questions about the program.

- General Volunteerism: If you are interested in volunteering to help victims of the hurricane, call the state's volunteer emergency response hotline at 1-800-JERSEY-7 (1-800-537-7397). This hotline was established earlier this year to enhance the state's emergency responsiveness by harnessing New Jerseyans' strong spirit of service. If storm conditions preclude the hotline from being answered by live operators, volunteers may call one of two backup hotline numbers: 609-775-5236 or 908-303-0471. Volunteers may also send an email to rowena.madden@sos.state.nj.us.

Insurance Claims: The following link provides guidance as to filing insurance claims after the storm. <http://nj.gov/governor/news/news/552012/approved/201210311.html>. If you have any questions about the coverage in your policy, or if you need help with a problem regarding your claim following a disaster at your home, contact the Department at 1-800-446-7467 or www.dobi.nj.gov

Replacement Food Purchased with Food Stamps. If you've purchased food with food stamps that has spoiled due to flooding/power outage go to your local Women, Infant and Children (WIC) clinic. Most of the 35 sites are open. Check here to see which clinics are open at this time: http://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/wic/documents/office_status.pdf

Unemployment Assistance (DUA): If you are unemployed because of the disaster that began on Oct. 28, you should FIRST file for unemployment insurance benefits through the Internet by going to www.njuifile.net. The Internet processes claims faster. However, if needed, people may also file a claim by telephone by contacting the state Department of Labor's Re-employment Call Centers at: North Jersey (201) 601-4100, Central Jersey (732) 761-2020, South Jersey (856) 507-2340. A 30-day deadline ending Monday, Dec. 3, 2012 is in effect for filing DUA claims resulting from Hurricane Sandy.

Business Recovery Assistance: For Information on New Jersey's Business Assistance Services call the Business Action Center at 1-866-534-7789.

Pets: If you or someone you know has been separated from their pet or had to leave their pets behind when evacuating their homes due to the storm, the phone number to call is 1-855-407-4787 (1-855-407-HSUS).

Price Gouging: If you have noticed that the price of goods has gone up as a result of the storm, call to report it at (862) 209-0130 or (973) 220-3474.

Helpline for emotional distress: If you or someone you know is feeling grief-stricken by the challenges Hurricane Sandy has presented you, visit www.griefspeaks.com to find a New Jersey counselor who can help you deal with loss.

Waiver of Bank Fees: The following banks have agreed to waive late fees, overdraft fees, etc. due to the Hurricane. Each bank offers a slightly different deal, so make sure to call your bank to find out what fees they are waiving and until when. The list of banks that are waiving fees are: Citibank, Capital One, Chase, Wells Fargo and TD Bank.

Voting: Governor Chris Christie's office has made it easier to vote early or to make sure your polling station is open. For more information, log on to www.state.nj.us/governor/news