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CENTER FOR NYC NEIGHBORHOODS AND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STORM RECOVERY ANNOUNCE LAUNCH OF \$8 MILLION RESILIENCY PROGRAM IN SEVEN SANDY-AFFECTED NEW YORK CITY COMMUNITIES

NEW FLOODHELPNY.ORG SERVES AS PORTAL TO PROGRAM AND PLATFORM FOR FLOOD RESILIENCY FOR NYC FAMILIES

Innovative resiliency program for single- and multi-family property owners in Queens, Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan will provide free home audits, counseling and elevation certificates; FloodHelpNY.org, reenvisioned by global design firm IDEO, to serve as resiliency website for all at-risk New York City homeowners to assess and mitigate the potential impacts of future storms.

NEW YORK — The Center for NYC Neighborhoods and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery today announced the launch of a pioneering \$8 million resiliency program in New York City for low- and moderate-income homeowners, as well as multifamily building owners, to protect them against future storms and climate change. The program is accessible through FloodHelpNY.org, which was designed by global firm IDEO as a platform to engage all New York City residents in coastal communities on the issues surrounding flooding and flood insurance. The web tool includes a first-of-its-kind beta public flood insurance rate estimate calculator for the city.

As part of the program, engineers will do on-site resiliency assessments in seven Sandy-impacted NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) communities in New York City: Canarsie, Gravesend and Bensonhurst, Howard Beach, Lower Manhattan, Red Hook, Rockaway East, and the Southeast Brooklyn Waterfront. Participants will also receive free elevation certificates, which they can take to insurance brokers, valued at over \$1,800. The initiative, which is being spearheaded by the Center for NYC Neighborhoods (the Center), was funded as the Residential Technical Assistance Pilot Program (RTAPP) by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR).

“The Residential Technical Assistance Pilot Program will provide residents with the tools they need to better prepare for the impacts of future storms,” said **Lisa Bova-Hiatt, Executive Director of GOSR**. “When combined with our other NY Rising programs, RTAPP is another fantastic resource in ensuring stronger and more resilient communities.”

The program was conceived through the Governor's innovative NYRCR Program, with seven plans submitted by the participating communities after an extensive grassroots planning process. The program features on-site resiliency assessments and one-on-one counseling in residential retrofitting techniques, flood insurance, and long-term housing affordability. Counseling services will be provided by non-profit organizations — New York Legal Assistance Group, NHS of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn and Queens and IMPACCT Brooklyn — across the pilot communities.

"For coastal homeowners, navigating flood insurance and mitigation options can be dizzying and frustrating," said **Christie Peale, Executive Director of the Center for NYC Neighborhoods**. "We need true public-private partnerships to overcome these challenges, which is why we're so proud to work with the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery and our other partners to help homeowners with programs like RTAPP and FloodHelpNY.org. With these tools, we believe we will be better equipped to understand how we can all reduce flood risk and keep our homes and finances above water."

"The Residential Technical Assistance Pilot Program offers a great opportunity to educate at risk New York City neighborhood residents about flood hazards and potential improvements that can be made to improve the resiliency of their properties. I want to thank the Center for New York City Neighborhoods and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery for their efforts to keep New Yorkers safe and informed," said **New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) Commissioner Vicki Been**.

RTAPP is expected to provide approximately 1,600 assessments to low- and moderate-income homeowners in the 100-year or 500-year floodplains within the pilot communities over a two-year period. This service will outline key short-, medium-, and long-term measures that New Yorkers can pursue to increase the resiliency of their homes. Audits will be performed in partnership with engineering firms Dewberry and CB&I.

Additionally, the program will provide one-on-one counseling and homeowner assistance in an effort to guide participants through the audit-report process and to help them garner a better understanding of general resiliency measures, flood insurance, and financing.

The non-profit Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., will serve about 100 multifamily building owners and is accessible via floodhelpny.org/multifamily.

"Flooding, extreme temperatures, and power loss caused by climate disasters like Superstorm Sandy can severely damage multifamily buildings and harm the people who live there, which is why it's critical to make buildings more resilient before the next storm hits," said **Judi Kende, Vice President of Enterprise Community Partners, Inc.** "Low-income tenants are particularly at risk, and we urge building owners to take advantage of this incredibly valuable new resource."

The custom website, designed by IDEO and developed by NYC-based web firm Def Method, will assist New York City homeowners who reside in the floodplain to estimate flood insurance costs via the beta flood insurance rate calculator, and to learn about the ways they can mitigate future risks and reduce their premiums. The website was designed based on the principles of human-centered design, with IDEO's team conducting extensive fieldwork and research into the needs of property owners in coastal communities, as well as key stakeholders in the public sector.

"Flood resiliency and flood insurance are incredibly complex issues that many homeowners find confusing and overwhelming. The design challenge was to simplify a vast landscape of data and information into an accessible tool that empowers people and gets them the help they need," says **Thom Huxtable, Senior Interaction Designer at IDEO** and project lead for the website design.

“We are proud to add Def Method's engineering acumen to the collective effort by designers, community leaders, state and city agencies, and private partners to bring the RTAPP program to residents in need across NYC,” said **Def Method CEO Joe Leo**.

In addition to the \$8 million being provided by GOSR, RTAPP will benefit from a \$750,000 citywide consumer education campaign launched by the City of New York’s Mayor’s Office of Recovery and Resiliency. The campaign uses a mix of targeted traditional and digital media to raise awareness of NYC’s growing flood risk across the five boroughs and to drive residents to FloodHelpNY.org. The campaign was designed by advertising and public relations firms Fenton Communications and 15 Degrees. Legal Services NYC also provided its expertise in the development of FloodHelpNY.org.

In selecting the Center for NYC Neighborhoods, GOSR sought responses from groups with the expertise and capacity to oversee program implementation and administration as required by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, which funds GOSR projects.

A Steering Committee, comprised of federal, State and local agencies such as HUD, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), GOSR, NYC Housing Recovery Office (HRO), NYC Department of City Planning (DCP) and NYC Department Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) respectively, contributed to the program design and will advise program partners as they move forward.

“The FloodHelpNY website is a great tool that assists NYC residents and property owners to know their flood risk, understand flood insurance requirements and options, and provides a wealth of information to help them make informed decisions about protecting their biggest investment — their home,” said **J. Andrew Martin, Chief (Acting), Risk Analysis Branch, FEMA Region II**.

"The Elevation Certificate that homeowners will receive through RTAPP is a very valuable document," said **Margaret Becker, Director of Disaster Recovery for Legal Services NYC**. "It can help many people reduce their flood insurance cost now, even without mitigation. To make decisions now about their future, homeowners need this kind of reliable, factual information. Sandy recovery is so full of uncertainty, and the more you know the better. "

NY RISING COMMUNITY RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Announced by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in April 2013, the NYRCR Program seeks to empower storm-impacted communities throughout the State, helping them to build back better and stronger than before. Altogether, more than 650 New Yorkers served on 66 NYRCR Committees, which have collectively proposed approximately 700 locally-oriented projects. Throughout the eight-month planning process, the program has held more than 650 Planning Committee meetings and more than 250 large scale Public Engagement Events. Funding for both planning and project implementation comes from HUD’s CDBG-DR Program.

Established in June 2013, GOSR coordinates Statewide recovery efforts for Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Through its NYRCR Program — as well as its NY Rising Housing Recovery, Small Business and Infrastructure programs — GOSR invests \$4.4 billion made available through HUD’s CDBG-DR Program to better prepare New York for future extreme weather events.

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About the Center for NYC Neighborhoods

The Center for NYC Neighborhoods promotes and protects affordable homeownership in New York so that middle- and working-class families are able to build strong, thriving communities. Established by public and private partners, the Center meets the diverse needs of homeowners throughout New York State by offering free, high quality housing services. Visit www.cnycn.org for more information.

About the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery

Establishing the Office of Storm Recovery, the Governor aimed to address communities’ most urgent needs, while also encouraging the identification of innovative and enduring solutions to strengthen the State’s infrastructure and critical systems. Operating under the umbrella of New York Rising, the Governor’s Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) utilizes approximately \$4.4 billion in flexible funding made available by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program to concentrate aid to four main areas. Paired with additional federal funding that has been awarded to other State agencies, the CDBG-DR program is enabling homeowners, small businesses and entire communities to build back even better than before. And in a State already known for its great resiliency and can-do spirit, the efforts are paving the way for a tremendous comeback – one that will reinvigorate New York and better prepare it for future extreme weather events that come its way. Visit stormrecovery.ny.gov for more information.