



## Governor's Office of Storm Recovery

# Governor's Office of Storm Recovery Launches Solar Power and Battery Backup Power Program to Protect Flood-Prone New York City Neighborhoods from Power Failures

### ***Phase One Invests More than \$980,000 to Install Solar Panels and Battery Storage at Volunteer Ambulance Corps and Nonprofit Service Providers in Brooklyn and the Bronx***

April 22, 2019 – In recognition of Earth Day, the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery today announced the launch of the Solar Power and Battery Backup Power Program, a three-part effort to help flood-prone neighborhoods across New York City withstand future extreme weather events. Phase One invests more than \$980,400 to equip four community facilities in Brooklyn and the Bronx with upgrades designed to ensure continuous access to power and maintain essential services in the event of an electrical grid failure. GOSR is carrying out the project in partnership with New York City-based organization Solar One.

"As part of our efforts to strengthen New York's energy infrastructure and improve storm resiliency, we are investing in solar power and energy storage at key sites in flood-prone areas around the city," said **Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, who made today's announcement.** "With extreme weather events becoming more frequent, we have to be prepared and ensure our first responders and essential facilities are prepared for power outages. These upgrades are part of our continued efforts to rebuild and address the needs of storm-damaged communities.

**Emily Thompson, Acting General Counsel and Chief External Affairs Officer for the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, said,** "The Solar Power and Battery Backup Power Program embodies the overwhelming desire of NY Rising Community Reconstruction Planning Committees to apply lessons learned from recent storms and, in the process, to cultivate more sustainable communities that will benefit generations of New Yorkers to come."

Phase One includes:

- **\$159,801 for upgrades to Birch Family Services residential facility in Canarsie, Brooklyn,** a group home for individuals with disabilities which provides 24-hour supervised residential care. Birch Family Services provides education, habilitation and residential services to people with autism and other developmental disabilities as well

as assistance to families raising children with developmental disabilities. The organization operates residential facilities in Brooklyn and Queens and serves individuals from school age through adulthood.

- **\$265,331 for the Flatlands Volunteer Ambulance Corps in Brooklyn**, which provides rescue and emergency services to Southeast Brooklyn and serves as a Hospital auxiliary. During Superstorm Sandy, the Flatlands Volunteer Ambulance Corps lost power for five days and was significantly challenged to maintain normal operations.
- **\$245,327 for the Throggs Neck Volunteer Ambulance Corps in the Bronx**, which provides pre-hospital emergency care to multiple neighborhoods within the East Bronx. During Superstorm Sandy, the ambulance corps lost power and operated through the night with battery-powered radios, candles and flashlights. A critical part of its procedure, the opening of the facility's garage door, had to be performed manually and took approximately 10-15 minutes each time.
- **\$310,012 for The Villa Maria Academy in the Bronx**, a 131-year old non-profit, independent elementary school located in the Country Club area of the East Bronx Waterfront NYRCR planning area. During Superstorm Sandy, Villa Maria Academy and its campus lost power for a week and was unable to hold classes or serve as a community space to assist students and area families experiencing power loss.

Installation at the Phase One sites is anticipated to begin Fall 2019. Phase Two of the Solar Power and Backup Battery Power Project will outfit four Brooklyn Public Library sites with solar panels and battery backup. Phase Three will retrofit several more community facilities across southern Brooklyn.

The project announced today was developed and funded through GOSR's New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program, established by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The participatory planning and implementation process empowers residents in the recovery and resiliency process and speaks to the specific needs and assets of their communities.

Altogether, more than 650 New Yorkers served on 66 NYRCR planning committees across the state and collectively proposed hundreds of regionally-inspired projects. During the bottom-up planning process, the committees held 650 planning meetings and 250 large-scale public engagement events focused on the goal of building more sustainable communities, reinforcing infrastructure, mitigating the risks of loss and damage associated with future disasters, and spurring revitalization.

GOSR is now working with several municipal, county and non-profit entities to implement the selected projects.

**Angelica Ramdhari, Director of Resilient Solar, Solar One, said, “We all too often take electricity for granted and don't appreciate the tremendous role it plays in our lives. When Superstorm Sandy devastated the traditional power supply of New York City, the hundreds of solar installations in the City could not be utilized because they did not have the ability to store energy. We are excited to provide reliable backup power to underserved, low-lying communities through solar power coupled with energy storage systems.”**

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