



**HURRICANE SANDY
HOUSES OF WORSHIP
&
CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS
RECOVERY TASK FORCE**

APRIL 2017

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Executive Summary

In 2015, the Mayor released *OneNYC: The Plan for a Strong and Just City*, a strategic plan for how the City will be prepared for a rapidly growing population, rising inequality, aging infrastructure, and the impacts of a changing climate. As New York faces increased risks of climate change, ensuring that neighborhoods are prepared and safe is vital for the resiliency of the entire city.

Houses of worship, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations and other community-based organizations provide essential services to New Yorkers every day and are trusted messengers. After a disaster, these institutions are critical to response and recovery efforts and continue to play a major role in the long-term recovery of their communities for years after other efforts have ceased.

On March 3, 2015, Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 18, which called for the creation of a Hurricane Sandy Charitable Organizations and Houses of Worship Recovery Task Force to better understand the critical role these organizations played in Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. In partnership with the New York City Council, the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NYC ORR) and New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM) appointed fifteen leaders from houses of worship, non-profits, and faith-based organizations.

The task force was charged with conducting an analysis of the damages and losses sustained by community-based organizations and houses of worship, as well as identifying recovery resources, and making recommendations to improve coordination between local government and the non-profit and faith-based sectors in advance of future emergencies.

Over the course of a year and through deep engagement with City and Federal officials, the task force discussed examples of successful recovery efforts, identified areas where coordination can be improved, where organizations and community institutions can better participate in existing emergency planning and preparedness efforts, and reviewed outstanding long-term recovery needs. Some of the key findings of this work include:

Opportunities exist for improved coordination and communication among the public, non-profit and faith-based sectors. Inconsistency in communication and coordination enabled some of the challenges New Yorkers faced after Hurricane Sandy. Several of the recommendations presented by the task force identify ways that coordination and communication can be improved in advance of and during emergencies.

Organizations need more education and support navigating the recovery process. Many organizations experienced the same challenges that homeowners faced in submitting damage claims and requesting recovery aid, including lack of clarity on eligibility requirements and missing documents necessary for applications.

Affiliating with established networks facilitated the recovery process. Smaller houses of worship and non-profit organizations that were affiliated with a network tended to have quicker recoveries and were able to leverage available resources.

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Task Force Members

A tremendous amount of work was involved in the development of these recommendations and this report. The task force would like to thank its members for their time and effort throughout this process, the Capstone program at Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs for their extensive analysis in support of this report, as well as the various agencies and subject matter experts that offered their consultation and feedback on this work.

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Introduction

Climate change, and other 21st Century threats, are expected to increase New York City's vulnerability, as extreme weather is projected to become more frequent and intense in the coming decades. Building resilience at the local level is critical, and prepared community organizations with strong social capital can be powerful drivers of a successful recovery.

On March 3, 2015 Mayor de Blasio signed Local Law 18, which called for the creation of a Hurricane Sandy Charitable Organizations and Houses of Worship Recovery Task Force to better understand the critical role these organizations played in Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts. Based on the services, support, and community knowledge these groups provide on a daily basis, they often are able to mobilize quickly after a disaster to address the immediate needs of local residents.¹ However in the days and weeks after Hurricane Sandy, non-profit and faith-based organizations expanded their missions to provide assistance for impacted individuals and families, often stepping in to fill the service gaps typically provided by government relief, or in some cases, private funding.

After Hurricane Sandy, many groups organized volunteers to distribute supplies around neighborhoods on the Rockaway Peninsula and near Jamaica Bay.² Faith in New York and many other faith-based organizations used existing relationships with houses of worship and residents in the area to coordinate relief and rebuilding efforts.³ Over 200 New York City houses of worship of many different faith traditions, served as relief sites providing essential items such as food, toiletries and water. There were also established faith-based disaster human services organizations like New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), the Salvation Army, and the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation that provided emergency rent or cash assistance for individuals that did not qualify for certain types of aid.⁴ This work was ongoing, while thousands of residents in the Rockaways lived without heat and power for nearly six weeks after the Hurricane Sandy hit.⁵

In the Lower East Side, community-based organizations met hours after the storm to coordinate outreach and relief efforts despite impacts to communications, electricity, and transportation. The neighborhood's strong social infrastructure enabled groups such as CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE), Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), congregations, faith-based non-profits, and housing and tenant organizations to coordinate to canvas the neighborhood, distribute resources, and provide aid.⁶ AAFE provided loans up to \$30,000 to small businesses days after the disaster, \$400,000 in loans to homeowners in need of repairs, and assisted community members with applying for FEMA assistance, replacement food stamps, and disaster unemployment benefits.⁷

In Staten Island, Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation distributed over \$2,000,000 in gift cards to people in need around the city, and provided mold and building services to over 1,000 homes in Sandy affected areas.⁸

In Red Hook, Red Hook Initiative served as a community hub for relief and recovery efforts. The organization collected and distributed donations, checked on homebound residents, and employed a recently created wireless network that both government aid workers and residents used to coordinate relief efforts.⁹ In Sheepshead Bay, the Shorefront YM-YWHA was operating a few days after the storm, and served as a relief center for residents. Some National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) organizations that provided services were uninformed about the neighborhoods they were helping, and staff of local organizations were often asked by the American Red Cross or FEMA to explain the context of a community or provide street maps.¹⁰

Non-profits and faith-based organizations provided food, clothing, and other essential needs immediately after the storm. Their facilities were used as relief centers not only for impacted communities but for some relief agencies as well. The Episcopal Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew was used by Occupy Sandy as a food distribution center and good distributions warehouse supporting thousands of households. Church Saint Francis Del Salles (Roman Catholic) in Belle Harbor was one of the first relief centers in the neighborhood. In addition to supplying food and toiletries to people, the church also provided meeting rooms to FEMA.¹¹

Many organizations were able to help their communities despite a lack of formal emergency response training or formal relationships with disaster related organizations.¹² However, during the recovery process these organizations also struggled to navigate the recovery aid process, as capacity was limited to identify and apply for funding; both for their own repairs and for community residents.

In order to make neighborhoods and community institutions more resilient in the face of future disasters, the task force identified the following opportunities to support local organizations:

- Improve coordination among government, non-profit, and faith-based organizations.
- Provide government support for local capacity building to community organizations.
- Improve coordination among larger network organizations and smaller non-profits, congregations and other faith-based organizations.
- Increase coordination of financial resources for organizations both in advance of, and after a disaster.

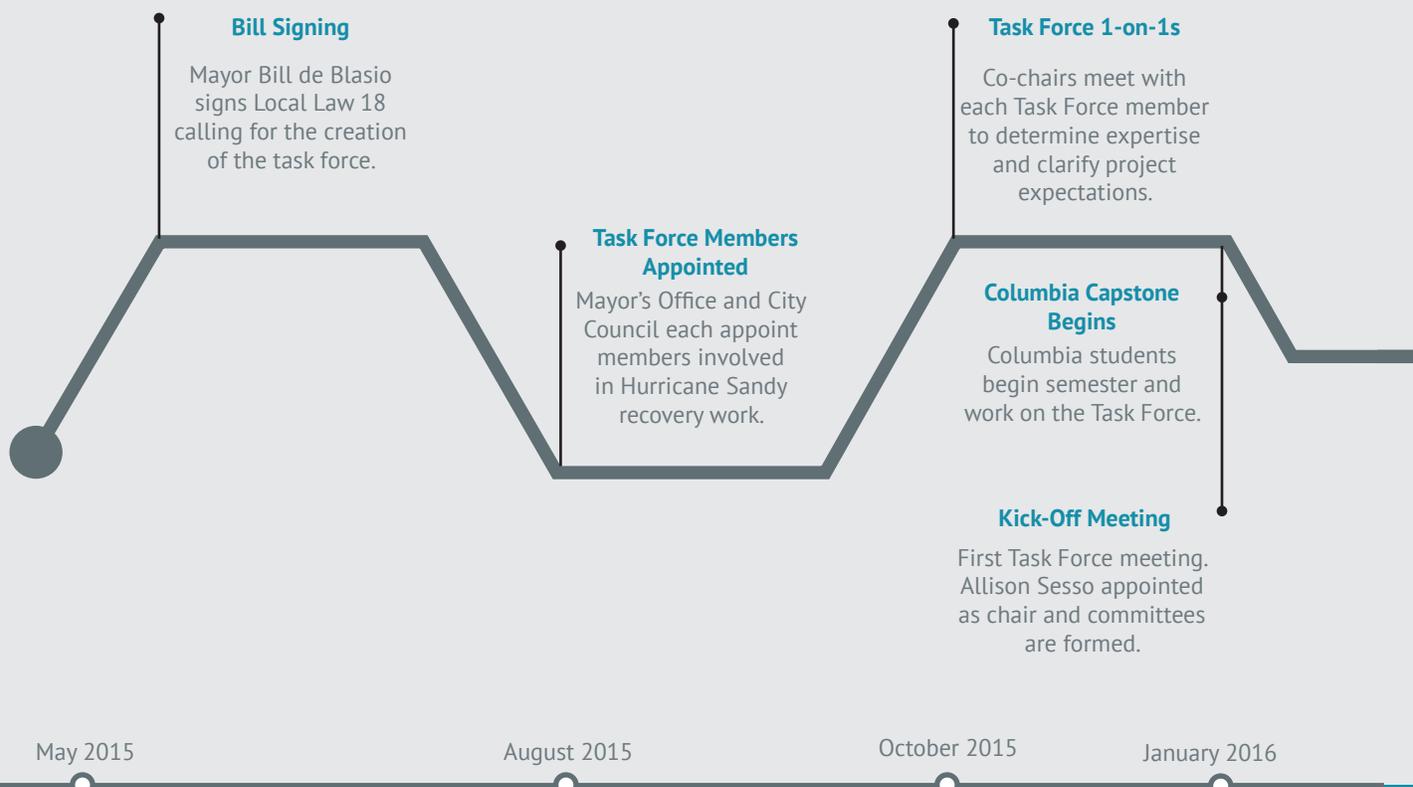
To arrive at these recommendations, it was necessary to gain insight and perspectives from stakeholders involved in previous disasters such as 9/11, who are continuing recovery and resiliency work and can identify community needs. While government interventions were identified to improve coordination with community organizations and to ensure more successful collaboration in the future, it is equally important for non-governmental organizations to coordinate amongst themselves and identify an appropriate structure for response, communication, and recovery. Disaster-focused non-profits and faith-based organizations need to engage with non-disaster focused organizations, and faith-based organizations need to connect with social service agencies. These connections need to be established before the next extreme weather or disaster event.

Developing the **Report**

Led by representatives from NYC ORR and NYCEM, the task force was comprised of eight Mayoral appointees and seven City Council appointees that represent non-profit networks, community, and faith-based organizations that have done recovery and resiliency work throughout the city.

Local Law 18 tasked the group with producing a report that specifically included the following:

1. A description of the role played by community organizations and houses of worship after Hurricane Sandy and the services they provided to the community;
2. An analysis of the damages and losses suffered by these organizations as a result of Hurricane Sandy, as well as their current status;
3. An analysis of possible sources for recovery and rebuilding aid (currently or formerly available), restrictions on such aid, and the extent to which that aid has been utilized;
4. Recommendations on how best to meet outstanding recovery and rebuilding needs of these organizations;
5. Recommendations on how the City could best leverage the efforts of these organizations in the aftermath of future natural disasters, steps that can be taken to facilitate such efforts, and ways the City can improve the resiliency of these entities.



In advance of the task force’s kick-off meeting in January 2016, the City held one-on-one meetings with each task force member to get a sense of their expertise, needs and expectations for the task force, and also to review the time line of the project. A task force chair was elected at the kick-off meeting, and members were each assigned to one of the four committees below based on the deliverables mandated in the Local Law:

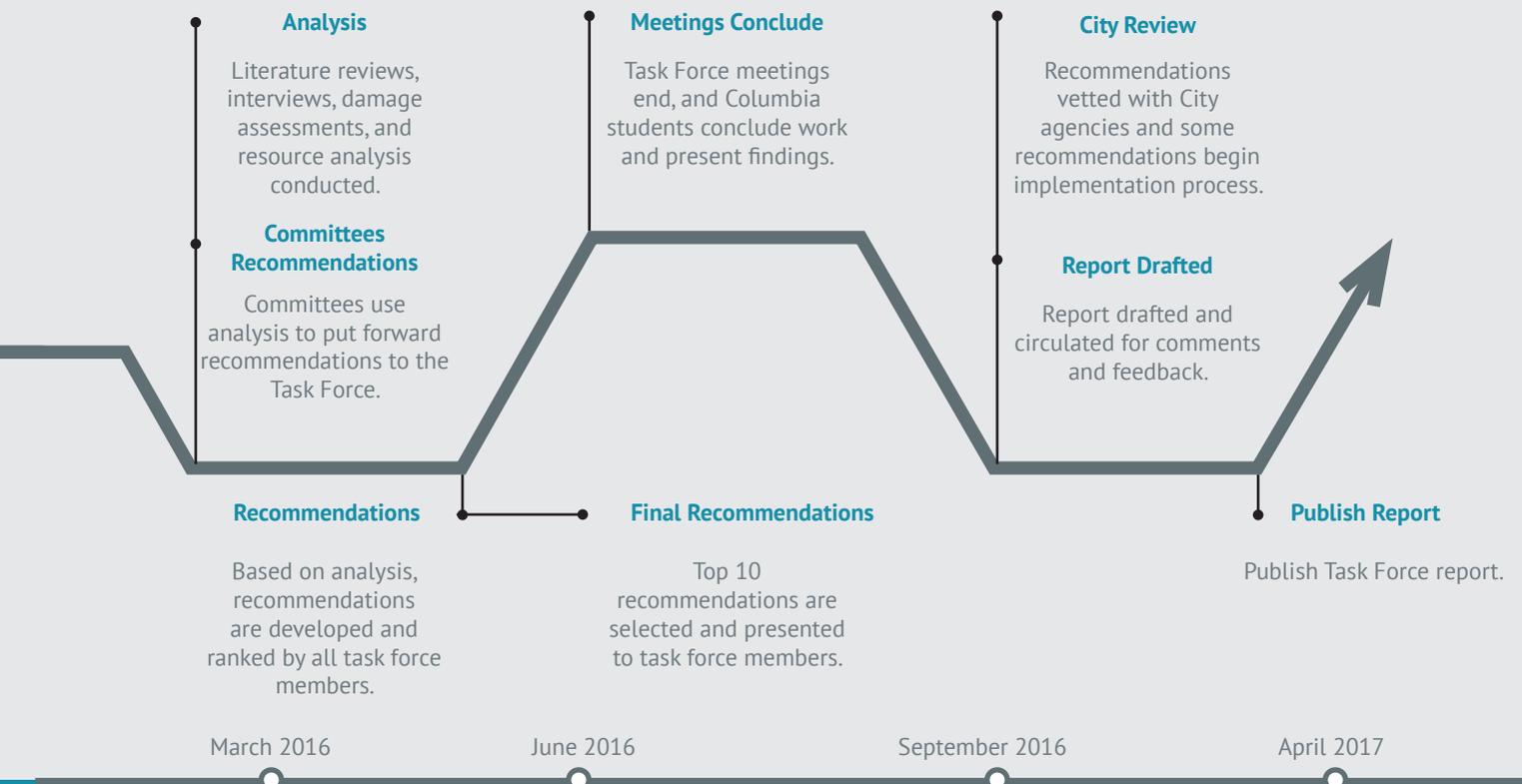
- Damage Assessment Committee
- Resource Assessment Committee
- Resource Coordination Committee
- Organizational Coordination Committee

The Damage Assessment and Resource Assessment Committees analyzed the impact of Hurricane Sandy on charitable organizations, while the Resource Coordination and Organizational Coordination Committees were tasked with providing actionable recommendations for supporting emergency preparedness, disaster recovery, and capacity

building. The full task force held monthly meetings, in addition to monthly committee meetings, over the course of six months.

This report first describes the comprehensive data analysis of damages that faith-based and non-profit organizations sustained after Hurricane Sandy and the type of recovery aid available after the storm. Then, this report presents the task force’s recommendations: a summary of significant and feasible strategies that can be implemented to improve the resiliency of neighborhoods by supporting the key community institutions that serve them.

These recommendations fall into three major resiliency opportunities for improved coordination between government and non-government entities, government support for capacity building of faith- and community-based organizations, formalizing a structure among faith- and community-based organizations, and coordination of resources both in advance of, and after a disaster.



Analysis



Since Hurricane Sandy, many reports with rigorous analysis, lessons learned, and recommendations have been published. Therefore, to inform this report and frame task force meeting discussions, 47 publications on Hurricane Sandy, disaster recovery, and the role of non-profits were reviewed and more than 200 findings and recommendations from these reports were inventoried and categorized.

Damage assessment data was provided by the New York State Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), City Council, First Church of God in the Rockaways, NYCEM, New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, and the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Brooklyn and Queens.

Data was supplemented by a survey sent to all organizations deemed ineligible for FEMA Public Assistance funding and to organizations and congregations recommended by local non-profits, task force members and New York City Council Member Mark Treyger's office.

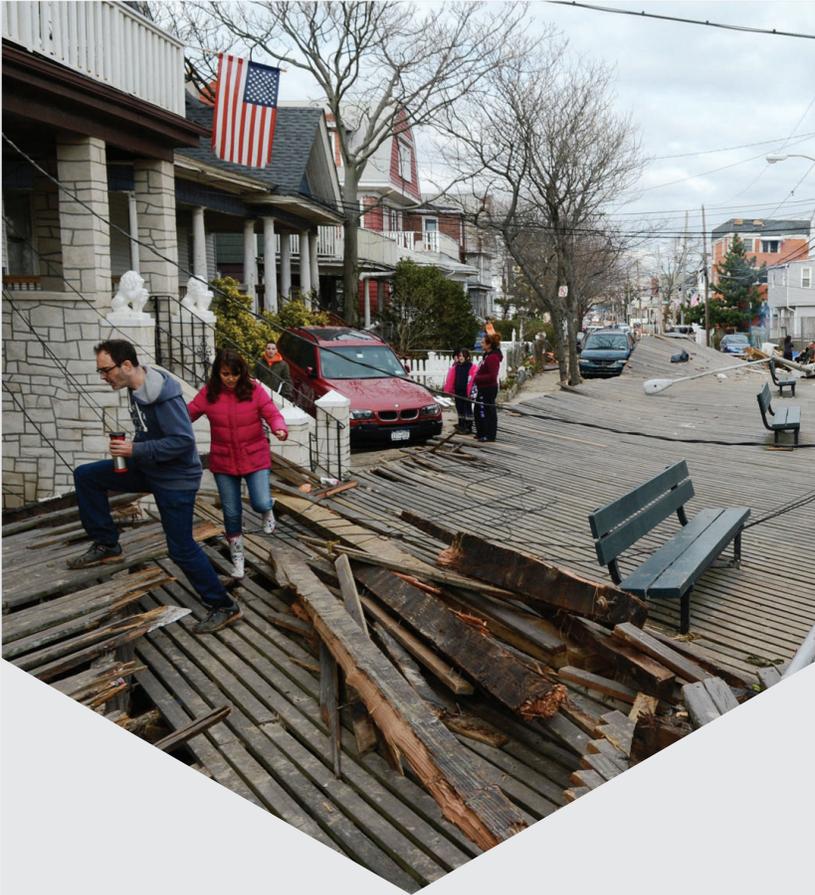
Finally, interviews were also conducted with task force members, philanthropic entities, and government agencies. A team of graduate students from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs assisted in the collection and analysis of all the data that informed the development of this report.

Damage Assessments

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program covers the cost of emergency response, debris removal and the repair of damaged public facilities to state and local governments and eligible non-profit organizations. The PA dataset provided by DHSES provided the most comprehensive list of organizations that sustained damages during Hurricane Sandy.

FEMA damage categories included: debris removal, emergency protection measures, and permanent work.¹³ Non-profits that applied ranged from schools, museums, senior centers, and hospitals. To supplement this dataset, this information was compared with RPA data collected by NYCEM that tracked local applicants and application deliverables.

After Hurricane Sandy, approximately \$1.3 billion in federal funding was obligated to cover damage costs.¹⁴ Of the approximately 590 non-profit organizations that submitted requests for Public Assistance in New York City, 43 percent were deemed eligible, 28 percent were deemed ineligible and 29 percent of non-profit applicants withdrew their applications.



The analysis conducted by Columbia University graduate students revealed that the paperwork required as part of the FEMA Public Assistance application was challenging for many applicants. Many organizations did not have the required documents when applying for aid. Of the total applicants, 81 percent met the application deadline, but many applications were missing required documents such as their bylaws and articles of incorporation.¹⁵

However, even completed applications may be denied if the organization does not qualify as an essential or critical service provider. As a result, dozens of organizations filed complete applications, but were still deemed ineligible for PA funding.

When these organizations were contacted by the Columbia students to inquire why they were ineligible, none could recall the reasons why their application was denied. Because many of these documents can be prepared in advance, it is beneficial for organizations to complete these forms in advance of the next emergency and ensure that there are both hard and digital copies available for submission.



43%

43% of nonprofit organizations that submitted requests for Public Assistance were deemed eligible.



\$4.4B

After Hurricane Sandy, New York State received \$4.4 billion in CDBG-DR funds.



\$8.8B

As of September 2016, approximately \$12.7 billion was obligated to New York State for recovery, of which \$8.8 billion was obligated to New York City.



\$2.5B

The United States Small Business Association provides low-interest, long-term loans after federally declared disasters. As of 2016, more than \$2.5 billion in loans were dispersed.

In addition to the FEMA data, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and Queens provided damage assessment data on 189 houses of worship that sustained damage as a result of Hurricane Sandy, reporting over \$22 million in damages, with over half of the damages occurring at houses of worship in Queens.

The median damage cost for those houses of worship that were evaluated was under \$35,000, with maximum damages being reported as high as \$2.7 million. Additional information on other houses of worship was provided by task force members, surveys and other local organizations.

To supplement these datasets, surveys were sent out to 155 non-profits with 501c3 status, applicants deemed ineligible for FEMA Public Assistance and to 50 congregations and community organizations identified by local non-profits and elected officials. The response rate was just under 10 percent, but anecdotal evidence found that those organizations with outstanding recovery needs still had unrepaired electrical systems, roofs, or basements.

Data on non-structural losses such as food distribution, donations, and other non-structural recovery expenses was more difficult to obtain as that information is not typically recorded or collected in any of the standard damage assessment forms used by faith-based and community organizations.¹⁶

Resource Analysis

For community and faith-based organizations, the process to receive aid after a disaster is complex. Many funds were made available in immediate response to Hurricane Sandy from government and philanthropic sources but navigating the eligibility requirements and paperwork is often overwhelming even for well-resourced organizations. Assistance became available at different points in time as funding (grant and loans), as well as donations. For example, Target Corporation offered physical resources and donations to organizations that were affected by the storm or that were assisting communities with the recovery effort. The following section describes a selection of recovery funds that were made available after Hurricane Sandy and their interaction with non-profit and faith-based organizations.

Federal Funding

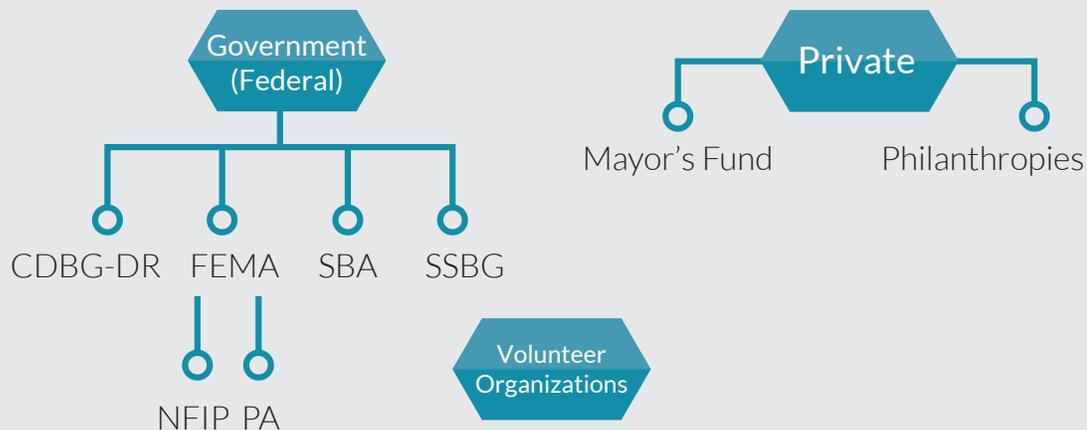
Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR)

The Community Development Block Grants Disaster Recovery Program (CDBG-DR) is a federal funding program distributed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provides grants to government entities after a federally-declared disaster.¹⁷

After Hurricane Sandy, New York State received \$4.4 billion in CDBG-DR funds.¹⁸ Separately, the City of New York received approximately \$4.2 billion directly from HUD.¹⁹ Both the State and the City describe how and where this funding is allocated through HUD approved action plans. Action plans are updated via a robust amendment process, which includes public hearings for substantial modifications. After HUD approval, Action Plans and amendments are made publicly available on the HUD's website.²⁰

CDBG-DR funding was used by the State and City to fund housing programs such as Build it Back and the New York Rising Housing Recovery Program. Additionally, CDBG-DR funding started the rebuilding of many Sandy-impacted neighborhoods through the rebuilding of key community infrastructure such as the East Side Coastal Resiliency project and completing emergency floodgate repairs at Oakwood Beach in Staten Island and the Rockaway Boardwalk.

In addition, programs like the State's NY Rising Community Reconstruction program worked with 15 communities in New York to develop community plans that identify priorities for rebuilding and resiliency in the neighborhood.²¹ One of the initiatives coming out of this program was a Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) program. A COAD is grassroots network of local organizations that prepare their membership to assist during disaster response efforts. In June of this year, the state awarded the Staten Island Non-for-Profit Association \$280,000 to lead this initiative in Staten Island.²²



According to HUD guidance, faith-based organizations are eligible for HUD programs or funding provided that the funding is not used to “support or engage in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization), or in any other manner prohibited by law.”²³ The HUD grantee sets policy on eligibility, and the State has determined that it reserves the right to assist eligible projects as identified.²⁴ Religious non-profits providing secular services are members of the COAD as well as some of the New York Rising Communities. Most of the CDBG-DR programs ceased operations by mid-2016.

Hurricane Sandy Social Service Block Grants Supplemental Funding Program (Sandy SSBG)

Hurricane Sandy SSBG supplemental funding supports recovery needs related to social services, health, and mental health services; as well as the repair and rebuilding of these social service facilities for the state.²⁵

The State of New York distributed \$235,000,000 in Federal Hurricane Sandy SSBG funding.²⁶ For state and non-profit agencies providing recovery services in New York State, this was the largest and longest lasting potential source of contract or grant funding - followed by the American Red Cross and Robin Hood Foundation.

New York State was still awarding Sandy SSBG funding into 2016 with all funded programs sun setting by June 2017.

One of the last Sandy SSBG grant awards was made by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services for \$1,700,000 to New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS), and designated for distribution through NYDIS' New York City Sandy Unmet Needs Roundtable. The funds were to be awarded through June 2017 to impacted vulnerable households with outstanding recovery debts compromising their sustainable recovery. NYDIS has administered Unmet Needs Roundtables in New York City since 9/11 – awarding over \$20,000,000 to thousands of under-resourced survivor and victim's families households through applications made on their behalf by disaster case managers. Historically, the majority of applications come from disaster case managers at faith-based social service providers.

Small Business Administration (SBA) Loans

The United States SBA provides low-interest, long-term loans up to \$2 million to businesses and private non-profits (including houses of worship) after a federally declared disaster for structural damages and economic losses. As of 2016, more than \$2.5 billion in loans were dispersed.²⁷ Last December, SBA reopened its loan program for those affected by Hurricane Sandy and extended the deadline for physical damage and economic injury to December 1, 2016.²⁸

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA is a federal agency within the Department of Homeland Security that also provides assistance after disasters. The programs most pertinent to non-profit and faith-based organizations are FEMA's Public Assistance Grant Program (PA), and the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Public Assistance (PA)

FEMA's PA Grant Program provides disaster assistance to state, local, and tribal governments, and certain non-profit organizations after a federally-declared disaster.²⁹ These grants are designated for emergency power restoration, emergency public transportation, debris removal, hazard mitigation, and repairs to or replacement of public facilities such as roads, bridges, utilities, buildings, schools, recreational areas and private non-profit organizations that provide essential governmental services. As of September 2016, approximated \$12.7 billion was obligated to New York State for recovery, of which \$8.8 billion was obligated to New York City.³⁰

To apply for funding, public and private non-profits submit a request for public assistance. PNPs are divided into "critical" and "non-critical" facilities.³¹ Critical facilities include utilities, fire departments, and educational institutions. Once an applicant is determined to be a critical facility, it's immediately eligible for all categories of emergency work listed above. Non-critical facilities include community centers, senior citizen centers, and performing art facilities. These non-critical facilities must first apply for a SBA loan before applying for FEMA assistance.³² A PNP can apply for PA funding only after being denied an SBA loan or to supplement an SBA loan that does not fully cover eligible damages.³³

Multi-purpose facilities that have a combination of eligible and ineligible uses (e.g., a space that is both a religious space and a senior center) qualify if more than 50 percent of activities are for eligible uses.³⁴ However, operational costs are ineligible for reimbursement.³⁵ This process has multiple steps, and understanding eligibility requires effort on the part of many organizations. After the hurricane, many did not have the capacity to navigate this application process to seek out PA reimbursement.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is managed by FEMA and sells insurance to property owners to protect against flood losses. Non-profits and houses of worship can purchase commercial coverage for building and the contents inside, or just the contents.³⁶ NFIP also creates Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) to illustrate flood risk, and properties with mortgages that are located in high risk areas on the maps are required to purchase flood insurance.³⁷ When Hurricane Sandy hit, the flood maps had not been updated since 1983. Many residents impacted did not have flood insurance or did not know that they were at risk for flooding.³⁸

Flood insurance rates are determined by whether or not a building is in a high-risk area, if there is a basement, as well as other factors. In 2013, updated Preliminary FIRMs were released to reflect updated risk, and a series of NFIP reforms began to ensure the program could be financially sustainable. These reforms resulted in a number of rate increases for insurance holders in high-risk areas. There were low take up rates for NFIP by houses of worship or faith-based non-profits.³⁹ As the frequency of natural disasters is expected to increase due to climate change, disaster funding is not guaranteed. Having flood insurance is one of several ways to support the resiliency of organizations.

Private Funding

Federal recovery aid was available through numerous programs, some administered by the State and City, and some directly by the federal government. Another major source of funding to faith-based and non-profit organizations in the recovery effort was through philanthropic giving and individual donations. Based on the analysis of the resources available in advance of and after the storm, it is recommended that organizations with outstanding needs seek out private funding. Survey respondents that sought out recovery aid indicated that they applied to a combination of government and private funding opportunities. Many respondents reported cash donations of \$10,000 or more from community members. An understanding of the landscape of private funding can help community organizations prepare in advance of the next event.

The Mayor's Fund

The Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, a non-profit organization run by the City of New York, facilitates public-private collaborations that meet the needs of the city's most underserved communities. In response to Hurricane Sandy, the Mayor's Fund established a fund to enable individuals, corporate partners and foundations – both locally and globally – to support New York City residents impacted by the storm. The Mayor's Fund began its relief efforts by working with City agencies, philanthropic partners, corporations, community groups and local leaders to identify public-private partnership projects in Sandy-impacted areas to distribute private contributions received by the Fund. Emergency response projects included funding public-private partnerships to provide more than 300,000 meals, bus transportation for evacuees and volunteers, and debris removal.⁴⁰ To address long-term recovery needs, the Mayor's Fund partnered with private funders and City agencies to form the NYC Housing and Neighborhood Recovery Donors Collaborative (see call out), to direct funds to community organizations serving vulnerable populations in impacted areas.

The Mayor's Fund was able to raise approximately \$60 million from more than 20,500 donors and awarded more than 90 grants to organizations – including supporting the launch of a 'bridge loan' program to assist non-profits that suffered severe losses. The program was administered by the Fund for the City of New York and awarded over \$13 million in loans and grants to non-profits located in and/or providing services in Sandy-impacted areas.⁴¹ The loan program provided interest-free loans to organizations that had applied for other assistance such as FEMA or SBA with the expectation that FEMA will, at some point, be making an award. Loan amounts were determined by the amount of tangible losses. Grants were provided to organizations that were denied or ineligible for FEMA funding.⁴²

Philanthropic Organizations

Almost a quarter of foundations and institutional donors, and 51 percent of corporate donors directed funding to the American Red Cross and its local affiliates.⁴³ The largest share of philanthropic giving after Hurricane Sandy was from corporations and large public foundations totaling in more than \$104.7 million for the city and Long Island.⁴⁴ The American Red Cross, The Mayor's Fund, Local Initiatives Support Corporation New York City (LISC) and the United Way were the leading recipients of donations. These funds were utilized by some organizations to provide direct services, whereas LISC and the Mayor's Fund directed funds to other organizations to support relief efforts. More than three quarters of the private funding that went to New York City came from locally-based donors including Staten Island Foundation, Brooklyn Community Foundation, Robin Hood Foundation, NY Community Trust, North Start Fund and UJA-Federation.⁴⁵ After the storm, many funders reached out to their grantees to see if they needed help, highlighting the importance of organizations building relationships with philanthropic organizations before disasters.⁴⁶

Volunteer Organizations

Non-profits, congregations and emergency grass roots networks that play a role in disaster response are commonly referred to under the National Response Framework as voluntary organizations. Those entities who respond at a national level coordinate under the umbrella of National VOAD. States and cities like New York may have a local VOAD made up of local community and faith-based organizations who respond to crisis and work many years into long-term disaster recovery. Their efforts may include feeding and recovery support and volunteer housing and rebuild.

The 2015 Hurricane Sandy Voluntary Rebuild Environment: NYC Long Term Recovery Assessment conducted by the Volunteer Group Housing Program (VGHP) of New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) reported on the following contributions of the voluntary rebuilding sector: 1,230 housing recovery projects reported by rebuild organizations for 2014, an estimated 101,700 volunteers engaged in housing recovery projects in 2014, with 5,935 housed by volunteer group housing sites in houses of worship, \$155.4 million in rebuild support, including \$93.4 million in assistance awards or services.⁴⁷



Successful Philanthropic Coordination: NYC Housing and Neighborhood Recovery Donors Collaborative

After Hurricane Sandy, a consortium of 16 foundations and financial institutions convened to provide more than \$2.6 million in private funding to support the recovery and future of neighborhoods affected by Hurricane Sandy. The Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the Housing Development Corporation, the Housing Recovery Office and the Mayor's Fund worked with funders to assist medium- to long-term planning and rebuilding efforts. Giving was prioritized around three major objectives: accelerating the recovery for low-income populations, supporting best practices in climate resiliency, and building social capital for vulnerable populations. To achieve these goals, funds were directed to organizations that had a presence in the Sandy-impacted communities, could provide immediate services, and could assist in increasing preparedness for future disasters.⁴⁸

Opportunities for Improving Preparedness and Resiliency



Improve coordination among government, non-profit and faith-based organizations.



Provide government support for local capacity building for community organizations.



Improve coordination between larger network organizations and smaller non-profits and faith-based organizations.



Increase coordination of financial resources for organizations both in advance of, and after a disaster.

The recommendations outlined in this report identify strategies for improving preparedness and coordination across multiple sectors before, during and after an emergency and are a result of an extensive analysis and review process informed by data analysis, subject matter experts, and numerous discussions among task force members.

Recommendations were evaluated against a set of pre-identified criteria, and discussed at length in group meetings as well as individually with each task force member. During the evaluation, task force members were explicit about who is expected to implement each recommendation, additional stakeholders that should be involved in the process, and what type of funding (if any) was necessary to implement each strategy.

Task Force members then ranked their recommendations using these criteria, and the top ranked recommendations were discussed at the final task force meetings. Additional representatives from NYCEM, NYC ORR, and New York City Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) were also consulted regarding the proposed recommendations, feasibility and next steps.

Opportunity 1

Improve Coordination among Government, Non-profit and Faith-based Groups

In a review of many stakeholder reports on New York City's post-Sandy recovery, improved coordination between the government and non-profit organizations was a prevalent theme among the recommendations.⁴⁹ Hurricane Sandy, with its widespread damage and need for localized response, highlighted many gaps that exist in the ability for citywide operations to coordinate and integrate with local efforts.

Several of the organizations that provided relief and recovery services were not connected to the City's emergency response efforts or communication channels but were able to respond effectively. In Chinatown, CAAAV used social media, email, and text to coordinate donations and dispatch volunteers.⁵⁰ In Red Hook, Red Hook Initiative hosted an urgent care clinic in coordination with Occupy Sandy and medical volunteers.⁵¹ Some organizations identified various agencies as having a coordinating role in the recovery effort and were confused about who the correct point of contact was for information, or to relay needs.⁵²

While it depends on the emergency type and location, the City needs to improve its mechanisms to communicate and coordinate with local partners and, for cohesion and efficiency, it is important that the City partner extensively with non-profit umbrella organizations that can effectively serve as intermediaries and conveners.

Since Hurricane Sandy, the City has made a number of improvements in its ability to strengthen the resources and structures that support communication, education, and coordination with the non-profit and faith-based sectors.

Communications and notification systems such as Notify NYC, the Advance Warning System (AWS), and the Citizen Corps Communications Network are mechanisms that have been greatly expanded in the last several years to relay important emergency updates and information about available resources. AWS saw a 48 percent increase in the number of subscribers since 2014.

There has also been an increase in education initiatives that focus on organizational and community readiness, and that offer free trainings and tools including learning materials geared towards Limited-English Proficient New Yorkers.⁵³ Finally, coordinative structures such as NYC VOAD and NYCEM operational task forces have also enhanced their ability to take in emergent organizations or groups to participate in planning for future emergencies.

Over the course of several months as the task force identified various government agencies, non-profit organizations, and philanthropic institutions that offer tools, training, and other preparedness and recovery resources, it became clear that there was a lack of awareness of these and other existing resources. Improved coordination of these numerous efforts would lead to more effective promotion and increased awareness and use of existing tools.

Strategy: Support and strengthen existing structures (including NYCEM Human Services and External Affairs community outreach efforts) to enhance readiness, response, and recovery efforts among faith-based and non-profit organizations.

Currently various programs exist to educate, engage, and coordinate with non-profits and faith-based organizations through NYCEM's External Affairs division and Human Services unit. However, Hurricane Sandy demonstrated that the potential for non-profits, faith-based organizations, and houses of worship to respond to disasters is great and NYCEM, along with the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR), should expand its own staffing and resources to support the growing efforts of the faith and human services sectors. Increasing the number of staff dedicated to engage non-profits and faith-based organizations will help build their sustainable capacity, which has been developed since 9/11 through Hurricane Sandy, and support the growing number of organizations who are adding emergency response and recovery work to their missions. This includes providing funding, training and resources.

Expanded efforts should prioritize strengthening coordination structures among city agencies engaged in preparedness planning and recovery, including all of the health and human service agencies like DFTA, DOHMH, HRA, ACS, and between local government and the non-profit and faith-based sectors. Additional priorities include, convening federations that represent groups that serve vulnerable populations, engaging more organizations that do not include disaster response in their mission, working to connect NYC VOAD and National VOAD to locally-based organizations, and continuing to support and promote the resilience efforts that are already happening in the city.

In order to integrate these expanded efforts into the larger city system, executive level officials at NYCEM and ORR should be identified to engage deeply in and oversee this work and address the challenges described in this report. During emergency response and recovery operations, these staff should confirm that there is a mechanism that allows coordinated faith-based and non-profit networks to communicate needs to the City's Emergency Operations Center and relevant agencies.

Building upon existing strategies such as the Community Recovery Directors and the Volunteer Management Taskforce would allow for local efforts to connect to the citywide emergency management structure. Leaders from NYCEM and ORR should also continually convene leaders from the non-profit and faith sectors as well as representatives from health and human services agencies during non-disaster periods to engage in joint planning and training so all will be prepared to act in concert in the event of disasters.

Strategy: Identify and train field support staff such as Community Recovery Directors in advance of a disaster to better coordinate local recovery efforts with citywide emergency response operations.

After Sandy, there was difficulty identifying the appropriate government leads at key City agencies to coordinate response and recovery work on the ground.⁵⁴ As a result, Community Recovery Directors (CRDs) were appointed by the Mayor to serve as points of contact for commodity distribution and coordination with local organizations in each borough. While these positions provided a point of contact for the City to deploy resources and improve two-way communication in affected communities, the CRDs were not pre-identified or trained and were deployed two weeks into the recovery effort.

To support the immediate coordination between communities and the City in recovery efforts, the Mayor's Office should appoint and train CRDs in advance of a disaster on their roles in disaster response; including conducting needs assessments and communicating with faith-based, non-profit, human service and other responding organizations. Trainings should also include incorporating cultural and religious competency in the decision-making process to facilitate equitable access to and distribution of resources after an event.

Strategy: Develop guidelines and policies for coordination of disaster home rebuilding programs and develop a mechanism to identify and deploy potential contractors after a housing-related disaster.

After Hurricane Sandy, the delay in launching the NYC Rapid Repairs program, and later Build-it-Back, led volunteer rebuilding organizations such as Mennonite Disaster Services and Habitat for Humanity to fill -the gap in providing rebuild services to homeowners that could not make their own repairs. Volunteer rebuilding services addressed everything from debris clean up to major repairs.

While volunteer rebuilding services are vital in recovery efforts, they are limited in the types of repairs they can provide without being licensed.⁵⁵ Volunteer rebuilding organizations such as Yellow Boots and New York Cares carried out more than 18,000 housing recovery projects.⁵⁶ Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation recruited over 15,000 volunteers for rebuilding efforts. However, the time lines for volunteer rebuilding efforts and the City's rebuilding efforts were not aligned.

Once the City's rebuilding programs were up and running, many non-profit rebuilding organizations were winding down and running low on funding; signaling a missed opportunity for coordination to accelerate rebuilding efforts and debrief on best practices.

There were several examples of good coordination around the temporary housing effort that could be a model for future coordinated rebuilding efforts. After Sandy, the Mayor's Fund in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery Operations, American Red Cross, Builder Trades Employers Association, Robin Hood Foundation, worked with NYDIS to manage a one-year successful temporary housing pilot program for homeowners who needed to vacate their homes for Build It Back elevation or rebuild. That pilot was used to design the current Temporary Housing Program to manage short-term rentals for the final 1600 families awaiting rebuild.

While improved coordination between the City and non-profit rebuilding efforts are needed, to avoid delays in rebuilding after future disasters, the City should streamline the process for construction contracts and set up a system where licensed contractors can register to accelerate the deployment of construction contractors after an event.

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Opportunity 2

Provide Government Support for Local Capacity Building to Organizations

New York Rising Community Center Program

As part of the New York State Governor's Office of Storm Recovery (GOSR) NY Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Program, 124 impacted communities throughout the state, including 15 impacted communities in the city, were identified to participate in an eight-month bottom-up resiliency planning process. Projects identified in the resulting NYRCR plans are in the process of being implemented, including a program to support community gathering spaces. A priority identified across communities was the need to strengthen community-based organizations that were often on the front lines of recovery.

GOSR is currently creating a network of resilient community facilities in storm-impacted communities where community-based organizations can provide expanded recovery and social services. With CDBG-DR funds, the State will retrofit selected community centers to support the facility's ability to function post disaster. These centers will collaborate to create a comprehensive network of expanded and ongoing community-focused services to respond to existing longer-term recovery needs in the event of another disaster. These services will include response and recovery workshops, case management services, education programs, health services, and other social services.⁵⁷

As mentioned earlier in this report, during the first days after an emergency, community institutions play a critical role in addressing needs using local assets such as community centers and existing networks. In New York City, many of the organizations that took on this role after Hurricane Sandy, such as city-wide providers like the Catholic Charities', NYDIS, the Salvation Army and local providers such as Project Hospitality or the Shorefront YM-YWHA, had knowledge of local resources and connections within and outside of the community that could be leveraged to secure resources and disseminate information.

Local government can support these types of organizations in preparing for disasters and fostering these connections ahead of future events. To do so, the City should continue to invest in providing training and provide tools such as the NYC Community Emergency Planning Toolkit and printed Ready New York materials in 13 languages.



Strategy: Include community planning and prioritize asset mapping to support readiness, response and recovery operations at the local level.

It is well documented that after Hurricane Sandy, communities with strong social ties were able to better leverage their connections to coordinate relief efforts compared to areas with less social cohesion.⁵⁸ An example of this is Project Hospitality in Staten Island which provides services to homeless populations and often collaborates with a network of other service providers such as food pantries and shelters. After the hurricane, Project Hospitality was able to quickly and effectively connect people and services based on prior relationships.⁵⁹

The ability to identify and map these types of services and other community assets in advance can help local stakeholders assess needs and source, mobilize, and distribute resources to affected residents in a disaster response. While the asset mapping process should not be too prescriptive since community maps will vary, local government should assist by providing a structure for community groups to use, as well as hands on training. Groups can use existing online maps as a starting point to identify community assets and identify gaps in neighborhood services, and other data relevant to their network or community. The City could also leverage community asset maps to identify local resources during a disaster.

Community Space Survey

The Share Your Space Survey identifies non-government spaces in communities that could potentially support the City's emergency operations or be used for community outreach events. This initiative assists the efforts of NYCEM in preparing and coordinating emergencies on the community level.



Strategy: Support preparedness efforts through capacity-building trainings and emergency planning support.

Through outreach and training, local government should support initiatives that build capacity of non-profits and faith-based organizations to prepare for and respond to emergencies such as continuity of operations planning and City-sponsored readiness campaigns such as “Know Your Zone” and “Ready New York.” Non-profits and houses of worship that operate at a local level are often responsible for critical services that serve the most vulnerable within a community. COOP planning prepares organizations and staff to be able to deliver mission-critical services in their communities throughout emergencies of all kinds.

As one example, after Hurricane Sandy, the Jewish Association Serving the Aging (JASA), a housing and service provider to low-income seniors in southern Brooklyn, Queens and Long Island, integrated emergency preparedness into all levels of operation. This included holding 30 emergency preparedness trainings for residents and volunteers, moving their communication system to a cloud server, making building infrastructure improvements, and hosting trainings twice a year.⁶⁰

City government should continue to lead and sponsor these efforts to ready organizations to function following disaster and to equip them to help those they serve to prepare. Non-profit intermediaries should play an essential role in co-organizing these activities with the City.



Opportunity 3

Improve Coordination among Larger Network Organizations and Smaller Non-Profits – Including Faith-based and Secular Organizations

To support the resiliency of New York City's community-based organizations, a structure for communication and collaboration among non-governmental organizations is necessary. With over 35,000 faith-based and secular non-profits and approximately 5,000 houses of worship in the City of New York, it is not practical to recommend that all organizations identify a single non-governmental point of contact to serve as coordinator in an emergency.⁶¹

After Sandy, it became clear that just as there is an opportunity for improved coordination among government, faith-based and community-based organizations, there is a need for developing a clearer recovery structure among non-governmental organizations so that larger organizations can more easily disseminate information to smaller groups, and so that local needs can be voiced, understood, and addressed in the City's Emergency Operation Center (EOC).

For example, NYDIS maintains a membership of more than 61 faith communities with jurisdiction over 2,350 congregations and dozens of faith-based non-profits with whom they communicated frequently by email, mailings, texts and direct calling after Sandy. Faith in New York uses a grassroots approach to community organizing, where issues are identified by member congregations and then amplified.⁶² Faith in New York, maintains a membership of over 70 congregations with whom they communicated about outstanding needs, particularly in immigrant and undocumented communities.

As previously mentioned, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) is a national member-based, not-for-profit organization that brings organizations together to learn from each other and collaborate before, during and after a disaster. Although supported by New York State VOAD, NYC VOAD is made up of more than 30 members. It is currently co-chaired by staff from Center for New York City Neighborhoods and the Salvation Army. NYC VOAD serves as conduit for information and resource sharing among organizations throughout the disaster cycle and historically provides a forum for New York City's recovery coordination through a variety of recent disasters including 9/11, the 2003 blackout, tornados that hit parts of the city in 2007 and the Haiti earthquake in 2010. NYC VOAD provides support and coordination through multiple subcommittees that focus on topics such as donations management, food access, animal care, emotional and spiritual care, housing, and volunteer management.

In New York City, NYC VOAD is represented in the City's EOC as the point of contact for disaster relief and recovery groups during times of emergencies. However, in the case of Hurricane Sandy, many of the groups providing relief services had not previously identified as a disaster relief or recovery organization and were not integrated with the existing local disaster response systems of national or local VOAD. As a result, faith-based organizations and non-profits developed their own relief strategies without clear guidance.⁶³ In order to ensure that they are part of these communications and coordinating systems during emergencies, faith-based and non-profit organizations should also become members of networks like NYC VOAD or one of its member organizations.



Four years after Sandy, non-profits, congregations and faith-based organizations recognize that disaster response and recovery may again become part of their mission, especially given climate change. In a recent survey of over 200 human service organizations, more than a third of organizations reported the being prepared to distribute goods and provide ongoing communications to end users in an emergency.⁶⁴ More than half of the organizations surveyed had emergency plans, and 87 percent of these plans have been updated in the last two years.⁶⁵ However, many of these organizations are still not coordinating with each other. Only 25 percent of organizations surveyed mentioned working with houses of worship, and even less intended to do so in the future. Less than 10 percent of respondents have collaborated with disaster organizations, and approximately 13 percent plan to do so in the future.⁶⁶

There are numerous recovery efforts across the city such as the long-term recovery groups but these sectors are missing opportunities for collaboration that can enhance their resiliency and eliminate duplication of work. Federations and umbrella organizations with existing networks are ideal conduits of information around emergency preparedness, resource opportunities, and disaster recovery. The following strategies propose a structure for non-governmental organizations to increase capacity throughout the year, streamline the recovery process through improved communication, and leverage the resources and existing networks of federations and umbrella organizations.

Strategy: Strengthen coordination between larger networks and umbrella organizations and smaller non-profit and faith-based groups.

Smaller organizations, houses of worship, and smaller scale faith-based entities often do not have the resources to comprehensively engage in emergency preparedness and recovery planning. Approximately a third of human service organizations with operating budgets of less than \$500,000 have emergency plans, compared to 60 percent of larger organizations having emergency plans.⁶⁷ The groups and congregations that have still not recovered or had to shut down after Hurricane Sandy were often not part of a larger network where they could be connected to critical information about recovery resources.

Smaller organizations should affiliate with larger networks within their sector to be better integrated into emergency communications, response and recovery plans. Umbrella organizations should create a structure to communicate and coordinate with their membership so that grassroots organizations and smaller congregations can elevate and amplify issues impacting their communities.

Federations and umbrella organizations should ensure that the affiliation process is clear, efficient, and provides a range of membership options (e.g., signing up for a mailing list versus becoming a formal member of a network), and should also conduct targeted outreach to maximize and diversify participation (e.g., outreach to organizations that provide services to vulnerable New Yorkers, or to those whose structure would facilitate dissemination of information). Beyond the affiliation process, larger federations or umbrella organizations should support the preparedness of member organizations through the dissemination of existing emergency communications and preparedness materials.

Strategy: Umbrella organizations should support their member's preparedness planning efforts.

After Hurricane Sandy, many non-profit and faith-based organizations described breakdowns in communication and communities being isolated and disconnected from recovery efforts as a result. Larger organizations that have existing communication systems or can dedicate resources to emergency communications can be powerful conduits for advance warning and important notifications.

These organizations may choose to invest in emergency risk communications systems to communicate with their networks, such as NYDIS' HOWAlert (House of Worship Alert text and voice messaging system) and educate their congregations, staff and member organizations on existing official emergency communication tools such as Notify NYC, the Advance Warning System, and the Citizen Corps Communication Network.

Federations and larger organizations can also use their communications capacity to educate their networks on other preparedness resources. This includes information on HSC, NYDIS, and VOAD member trainings and resources as well as disseminating NYCEM's Ready New York preparedness materials and publicizing the Ready New York mobile app. Ready New York materials are available in multiple languages and can be shipped in bulk by request, and the mobile app is connected to Notify NYC and has information on evacuation procedures and guidance of when to shelter in place.

Strategy: Organizations should provide training and resources for their membership to develop and test Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP).

The City and non-profit networks should also identify and facilitate access to funding to support affiliate congregations and smaller organizations to engage in needed preparedness planning. Developing continuity of operations plans helps organizations be more resilient and able to perform mission-critical tasks after an emergency or disaster.

Trainings are needed to create and test COOP plans and, as part of a larger effort to support smaller organizations and congregations, bolster their preparedness efforts. The City and non-profit leaders should arrange for tools and training and provide guidance on their implementation.

Furthermore, given the challenges faced by organizations navigating recovery resources and aid, trainings should include information on FEMA's public assistance process and eligibility requirements. Many community and faith-based organizations were unaware of available resources, lacked guidance on how to apply for funding, and misunderstood what types of damages and services were eligible for reimbursement.⁶⁸

Opportunity 4

Increase Coordination of Financial Resources for Organizations Before and After Disasters

Three major challenges complicate disaster recovery funding that can be improved with increased coordination among government, houses of worship, faith-based and non-profit organizations. These are: the timing of funding being deployed, the lack of clarity around applicant eligibility for government assistance, and the lack of funding for long-term recovery and emergency preparedness efforts. As the frequency and intensity of severe weather related to climate change are expected to increase, coordination around disaster funding is imperative, particularly as federal assistance is not guaranteed.⁶⁹

After disasters, the dispersal of federal funds can take months. Congress approved the nearly \$50 billion in federal aid for Hurricane Sandy relief three months after the disaster.⁷⁰ This time line does not align with community recovery needs so many organizations provided relief services in their communities without the guarantee of reimbursement, creating instability for the organization that has the potential to undermine their ability to continue services in the community.

While significant resources were deployed in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, maintaining funding for longer term recovery has been challenging. To address these challenges, the task force put forward a set of strategies to improve organizations' access to funding at the local, state, and federal level.

Strategy: Convene funding entities to coordinate on relief and recovery funding needs.

Philanthropic and corporate entities that are able to operate with fewer administrative hurdles, were able to quickly fund organizations providing relief and recovery services after Sandy and tended to fund larger, better known recovery entities such as the Red Cross and the United Way. Many funders reached out to their existing grantees to survey their needs or published requests for proposals to get resources to organizations as quickly as possible. However, the benefit of efficiency was at the cost of coordinated giving. With the funding cycles that occur after a disaster, there is a tendency for interest to wane after the immediate impact of a disaster subsides and as new emergencies arise. According to a 2013 report from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy and the Foundation Center, 42 percent of giving after disasters was directed towards response and relief efforts, only four percent for preparedness and nine percent for resilience, risk reduction and mitigation.⁷¹

After Sandy, funders such as the NYC Housing Donor's Collaborative, NYDIS' NYC Unmet Needs Roundtable, and New York Women's Foundation were able to leverage disaster funds to address long-term recovery needs by targeted giving to organizations that serve vulnerable communities. Both immediate and long-term needs were met by funding organizations that address the chronic needs of vulnerable communities exacerbated by the storm.

Similarly, in the period following the immediate recovery, the New York City Mayor's Fund participated in convening foundations and other partners to discuss future funding needs for organizations during other potential disasters. This group met with some frequency up until a year after Hurricane Sandy, and then interest in scheduling this type of funding became less of a priority for funders as other needs emerged.

Private funding entities should be convened regularly by relevant stakeholders such as the Mayor's Fund and/or Philanthropy NY to coordinate on preparedness, relief and recovery funding needs citywide. This convening will provide an opportunity for funders to share lessons learned and best practices and result in greater coordination of giving after an emergency.



Strategy: Advocate for more access to recovery funds for houses of worship and faith-based organizations.

After Hurricane Sandy, houses of worship became temporary shelters and food pantries even though they suffered damage as well. Mount Sinai United Christian Church in Staten Island was without water and power for a week, but still provided temporary shelter to nearby residents. In New York City, many houses of worship that assisted in community response and recovery later faced challenges when seeking reimbursement via federal recovery funds as they were deemed ineligible for reimbursement.

Accordingly, the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act—federal legislation that allows for the dispersal of funds after a disaster—should be amended so that houses of worship are eligible for disaster relief and emergency assistance. Houses of worship that provide key non-sectarian human services in their communities (e.g., those that are the only available food pantry service or child care center in the area), should be eligible for disaster relief for the non-religious social services provided. The City of New York should actively lobby for this change.

Strategy: Increase access to City contracting opportunities for faith-based and non-profit federations and social service providers and allow for flexible use of existing contracts.

Many non-profits and congregations were not aware of the City's emergency contracting process or how having a contract could potentially mean reimbursement for some of the recovery services provided.

Since Hurricane Sandy, the Health and Human Services (HHS) Accelerator – an online platform, was designed to streamline the City's contracting process and provides access to targeted requests for proposals and grant opportunities. Potential vendors can participate in webinars and on-site trainings, and can also access the pre-qualification checklist and application on the HHS Accelerator website. In addition, organizations that can provide services after an emergency should register with the [Payee Information Portal \(PIP\)](#) or [Government Services Administration](#) to apply for City contracts in advance of a disaster.

Also, it is critical that non-profit organizations are enabled to re-purpose existing contracts with the City to contend with disasters. For example, it may be impossible to operate a child care center following a disaster, but the space can be re-purposed into a recovery center for local families, which could prove enormously helpful. Similarly, a senior center may become unavailable in the wake of a disaster, but staff could be re-deployed to visit seniors in their homes. Such strategies were employed with favorable effect following Sandy, but extensive planning between the City and non-profit sector should occur prior to future disasters so the reworking of service approaches can occur rapidly and non-profit leaders can operate with confidence about complying with contracts and being reimbursed.



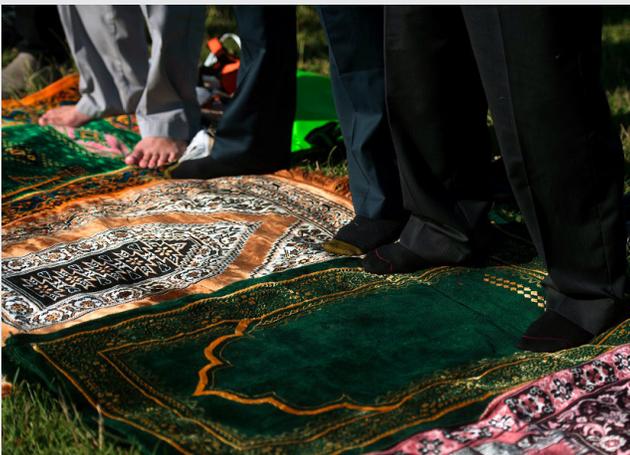
Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) Master Contract

One of the ways the City prepares for future events is through Master Contracts. In 2014, Garner Environmental Services was awarded for a contract by means of an intergovernmental procurement, using a federal GSA contract. The contract's purpose is to assist in the response and recovery operations. The contract covers goods necessary in an emergency, such as power generators, pumps and hoses, air conditioners, forklifts, fuel tanks, portable toilets, and shower stations. In addition, the contract covers services such as transportation, project support personnel, turnkey base camps, and kitchen and laundry services. Having contracts such as these in place allow the City to prepare for unanticipated events.

Strategy: Advocate for more access to recovery funds for houses of worship and faith-based organizations.

After Hurricane Sandy, houses of worship offered services even though they suffered damage as well. Mount Sinai United Christian Church in Staten Island was without water and power for a week, but still provided temporary shelter to nearby residents. In New York City, many houses of worship that assisted in community response and recovery later faced challenges when seeking reimbursement via federal recovery funds as they were deemed ineligible for reimbursement.

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Conclusion

Over the course of six months the Task Force put forward a set of strategies for improved coordination across all sectors. Building community resiliency to climate change, extreme weather events and any other disaster goes well beyond government intervention. These recommendations were designed for collective action as community-based organizations, houses of worship, faith-based organizations and non-profits prepare and align themselves with existing resources, activities and channels that can help them be more prepared and recover faster from emergencies.

Beyond City government agencies and local organizations working together to make sure that communities are prepared, coordination is also needed at the federal, state and local level. The Mayor's Office and City agencies will play a major role in future preparedness and recovery efforts.

Both Federal and State Government have a key role to play in regards to outreach in order for non-profits to have a better understanding of the recovery aid process and insurance needs. The recovery aid reimbursement process needs to be significantly streamlined and eligibility requirements need to be made clearer. Additionally, FEMA needs to have a better understanding of the landscape of non-profits and faith-based organizations that serve on the front lines of disaster response to better coordinate on recovery work.

While time intensive, umbrella organizations focused on disaster recovery are encouraged to collaborate and share information across sectors, specifically with networks that are not explicitly tied to disaster recovery. There is also a pressing need to sustain funding and support for umbrella organizations to ensure their ability to maintain connections to congregations and local organizations, such as long-term recovery groups and Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COADs) in communities.



This report represents the latest step in strengthening resilience in New York City and acknowledges and builds on the many efforts that have already taken place. Many of the individuals involved in this process have committed to continuing the work that was begun by this task force. The Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency and New York Emergency Management will continue to convene relevant stakeholders representing the non-profit and faith-based organizations, philanthropies, and government in the design and implementation of these strategies.

Appendix

New York City Emergency Management Preparedness Resources

KNOW YOUR ZONE

Evacuation zones are designated based on risks associated with hurricanes, tropical storms and nor'easters. nyc.gov/knowyourzone

NOTIFY NYC

The City's official source of information about emergencies and services. Receive updates through email, phone, text, twitter, or fax. nyc.gov/notifnyc

AWS

Organizations that serve people with disabilities or others with access and functional needs can register for the Advance Warning System for emergency information. advancewarningsystemnyc.org

NYC CITIZEN CORPS

A community readiness program for non-profit and locally based organizations. Build your capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies by joining nyc.gov/citizen corps

CERT

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) members assist their communities before first responders are available after a disaster and help prepare their communities. nyc.gov/cert

PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS

A program that helps organizations prepare employees, services, and facilities for disasters. Partners gain access to events and webinars and other preparedness resources. nyc.gov/partnersinpreparedness

READY NEW YORK

The campaign encourages New Yorkers to be ready for all emergencies. Anyone can complete a readiness workbook, request an event or guide (in 13 languages) to educate their community about preparedness. nyc.gov/readyny

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