



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON SANDY RECOVERY, NEW BUILD IT BACK GOALS

Following Mayor's Overhaul, Build it Back Sees Dramatic Progress with 727 Construction Starts and 878 Reimbursement Checks to Date – Compared to None Earlier this Year

Administration Commits to Hitting 1,000 Construction Starts, 1,500 Reimbursement Checks by December 31st; New Design and Construction Procurement Will Significantly Expand Capacity and Expedite Relief so that Every Homeowner is Served

NEW YORK—Today, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced significant progress on the City's Hurricane Sandy recovery as a result of the administration's overhaul, and set new Build it Back goals to further expedite progress by the end of the year.

The announcement was made outside the Broad Channel home of Jayme and John Galimi. The Galimis' home was destroyed by Sandy and they faced red tape and bureaucratic hurdles after registering for Build it Back last year. Following Mayor de Blasio's overhaul, the Galimis were finally able to move into construction, and their home is being fully rebuilt and elevated through the program. The Galimis and their five children are expected to return home by Christmas of this year.

To date, nearly half of the program's active applicants -- approximately 6,400 homeowners -- have been made an offer by Build it Back, compared to only 451 at the beginning of the year. Nearly 4,000 have accepted an offer from Build it Back, and over 1,500 have started design – both compared to zero at the beginning of the year.

There have been 727 construction starts and 878 reimbursement checks sent to date – also compared to zero at the beginning of the year.

Mayor de Blasio announced today that Build it Back is committing to hitting 1,000 construction starts and 1,500 reimbursement checks by December 31st. Additionally, the Mayor announced that the administration will be releasing a new Request for Proposals in the coming weeks to dramatically expand design and construction capacity. The administration is committed to expediting relief so that every homeowner is served.

“Nearly two years after Sandy, there's nothing more important than getting families home – and as a result of our overhaul, that's finally happening,” said **Mayor de Blasio**. “When we took office, Build it Back simply wasn't working. Now, families across the city have started construction or received reimbursement. We're committed to 1,000 construction starts and 1,500 reimbursement checks by December 31st, while dramatically

expanding our design and construction capacity. We know there's much work ahead, and Build it Back will continue to expedite relief until every homeowner is served.”

Since the beginning of the year, the de Blasio administration has made sweeping changes to Build it Back as part of the Mayor's overhaul, resulting in the significant progress the program is now seeing. These changes include:

- Expanding eligibility and eliminating priority levels so that every homeowner, regardless of income, can move forward.
- Taking over direct management of the Build it Back centers and the case management process, so that they're run by City employees rather than consultants. This includes assigning homeowners a single application coordinator, case manager, and financial or legal counselor to provide singular points of contact as they move through the application process. The administration has also improved the functionality of the centers by bringing in technical experts, counseling, and other representatives to create a one-stop-shop for homeowners.
- Streamlining the pre-construction process, including by creating greater flexibility for homeowners and expediting the most dire cases. The administration has also increased Build it Back and other dedicated staff; for example, the Department of Buildings has added 44 staff, including 21 inspectors, all dedicated to Build it Back.
- Providing direct financial relief to homeowners, including through property tax relief, DOB fee relief, and water bill relief, as well as expanded rental assistance for undocumented New Yorkers.
- Engaging local communities and non-profit organizations in the rebuilding process, including by partnering with non-profits that can serve ineligible applicants.
- Improving communication with homeowners, including by establishing a case management presence in community and elected officials' offices around the city and launching a web portal that allows homeowners to track their status in real time (including by submitting paperwork).
- Targeting outreach to seniors and those who require counseling on how to move forward in the construction process. For example, Build it Back is now allowing applicants in the early stages of foreclosure proceedings to remain active while being referred to the Center for New York City Neighborhoods for financial counseling; to date, there are over 350 applicants who can move forward now as a result of this new policy.
- Focusing on supporting a high-quality, local workforce and providing opportunities to New Yorkers from Sandy-impacted communities. Just last week, Mayor de Blasio announced both the Build it Back Local Hiring Initiative, which gives New Yorkers from Sandy-impacted communities first priority in registering for opportunities with the rebuilding effort, and the Rockaways Economic Advancement Initiative, which will connect residents with high-quality, full-time employment.

The Mayor also highlighted the City's multi-layered comprehensive resiliency plan, aimed at ensuring that coastal communities are safer and better prepared ahead of future extreme weather. The plan includes building-level resiliency measures (such as upgraded building codes, and home elevation and resilient materials used in Build it Back rebuilds), major short-term protections and infrastructure improvements already in place (including the millions of cubic yards of sand placed on city beaches and tens of thousands of linear feet of bulkhead repairs), and long-term protections getting underway around the five boroughs, as detailed in PlaNYC.

“Significant progress has been made in the Build it Back program to date, and we are committed, with this new set of goals, to continue our forward momentum,” said **Bill Goldstein, Senior Advisor to the Mayor for Recovery, Resiliency, and Infrastructure**. “We also recognize that there is much work still to do, and we will be expanding our capacity to meet that challenge.”

“What has made Build it Back work since the Mayor's overhaul is increased flexibility for homeowners, increased communication with homeowners, and an increased presence by our staff in Sandy-impacted communities,” said **Amy Peterson, Director of the Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery**. “As we look ahead

to the end of the year – to 1,500 reimbursement checks and 1,000 total construction starts – we are dedicated to continuing to expand our capacity and adjust to applicant needs, so that we can target and assist all those in need of relief.”

“A successful recovery from Hurricane Sandy includes investments to make the city's coastal communities safer and better prepared for future climate change impacts,” said **Daniel Zarrilli, Director of the Mayor's Office of Recovery and Resiliency**. “That’s why the City is expediting a multi-layered set of initiatives to strengthen coastal defenses, upgrade buildings, protect infrastructure, and make neighborhoods safer and more vibrant. Here today, we see the positive impact of improving our building codes, resulting in homes built to higher standards based on the latest flood hazard information. The risks from climate change are growing and, by acting now, we can reduce future risk and continue to build a stronger, more resilient New York.”

“HPD, in partnership with the Mayor’s Office of Housing Recovery Operation continues to work hard to assist New Yorkers whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy,” said **HPD Commissioner Vicki Been**. “We are thrilled to see the progress on the Galimi home, and we are proud of the work that has been done across Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island in rebuilding single family homes destroyed in the storm and on repairing multifamily buildings.”

“It’s great to see significant progress being made on Sandy recovery efforts for thousands of homeowners as a result of Mayor de Blasio’s overhaul of the ‘Build it Back’ program,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**.

“I am glad to see that additional residents affected by superstorm Sandy are receiving reimbursement for work they moved forward on after the storm and more housing is being rebuilt,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “I look forward to working closely with the Mayor in order to get every resident back into their homes.”

“As we approach the second anniversary of Sandy, many families are still not home and struggling to put their lives back together. While recovery is long overdue, thanks to Amy Peterson and other recent changes, the Build It Back program has begun to make progress in our Sandy recovery,” said **Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder**. “There is much more work ahead, but I am encouraged by the commitment and hope that Sandy recovery will remain a top priority until every family is safe and secure back in their own homes.”

“As the second anniversary of Superstorm Sandy approaches, it is critical that we continue to ensure resources are reaching homeowners that are still rebuilding their lives,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards**. “I applaud the de Blasio administration for their continued progress in rebuilding Sandy-affected communities and look forward to continuing to work together to reach these goals.”

“We have finally started to see measurable progress on the ground for impacted families under this administration, with effective oversight from Council, to keep the recovery moving forward. I appreciate the Mayor’s continued commitment to benchmarks on the way to meeting our goal of helping every storm victim. We must continue to find ways to build capacity to speed up the process up on behalf of the thousands still in need of help. I am pleased that issues residents have raised during our hearings are being addressed and I ask the Mayor’s Office to maintain the sense of urgency felt by those still waiting to return home or receive a reimbursement check two years later,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger**.

“The Broad Channel Civic Association appreciates the efforts that have been made by Amy Peterson and her Build it Back staff to help the Galimi family rebuild their destroyed house and to return to a home that will withstand any future Sandy type storms,” said **Dan Mundy, President of the Broad Channel Civic Association**. “We have been working with her team and our local elected officials to identify issues that have been impediments within the application and design process. As a result, Amy and her team have developed and implemented series of protocols and agreements to address the major problems that residents have encountered

including Wetland Delineations, zoning non-compliance, and first floor enclosure construction techniques. The program continues to improve and we look forward to working with the Amy, the Mayor's staff, and our elected officials to achieve the shared goals of helping as many storm victims as possible through reimbursements, elevations and rebuilds.”

“We are proud to join Mayor Bill de Blasio today in Broad Channel to announce the City’s new rebuilding and reimbursement goals for Superstorm Sandy impacted residents. Friends of Rockaway, a nonprofit construction contractor, is thrilled to partner with Build it Back and the City of New York in the Choose Your Own Contractor program. This strong partnership and collaboration between the government and local community organizations will ensure these goals are met, and that hardworking families find clear, prompt, and efficient paths to recovery,” said **Hunter Johansson, Friends of Rockaway.**

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