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More Sandy-Battered Homeowners To Come Off The Waiting List For Federal Funds

Additional funds affect the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation and Mitigation programs and the Homeowners Resettlement grants

Posted by Patricia A. Miller (Editor), January 14, 2014 at 12:58 PM

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by Patricia A. Miller

President Obama has freed up more federal funding to be released to two Superstorm Sandy housing recovery programs, according to a statement released by Gov. Chris Christie's office today.

An Additional \$110,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds will go to roughly 1,000 Sandy-impacted homeowners who applied for the Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation and Mitigation (RREM) program.

Residents approved for the grant can use the money for repairs or rebuilding.

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"The 1,000 homeowners who are moving off the RREM waitlist will receive a letter shortly notifying them that they've been preliminarily approved for a RREM grant and advising them of next steps," according to the press release.

That still leaves roughly 7,000 homeowners on the RREM waiting list.

Those on the waiting list will be advised of where they are on the waiting list "...so they can decide the best course of action for their own recovery effort, Christie said in the statement.

The RREM program provides grants of up to \$150,000 to help eligible homeowners impacted by Sandy repair or rebuild their homes.

The additional funds will also be made available to more than 1,200 homeowners who applied for the Homeowner Resettlement program, a \$10,000 grant to be used for recovery efforts.

"Helping Sandy-impacted families get back in their homes is the top priority of my Administration," Christie said in the statement. "Receiving approval of our request to dedicate additional funds to help thousands of New Jersey residents get the needed resources to resettle in their neighborhoods and rebuild their homes is critical to this mission."

The amendment also adds \$35 million to the Homeowner Resettlement Program, provides \$10,000 grants to eligible residents who pledge to remain in their Sandy-impacted homes for a period of three years.

That means any homeowner who applied for the resettlement funds will receive them, according to the governor's office.

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The application period for resettlement funds closed on Aug. 1, 2012. So far, more than 16,600 homeowners have received checks, the press release states.

All homeowners on the resettlement waiting list will receive letters stating they have been approved for the grant and setting up appointments for them to close on the grant.

Patch is trying to determine if the announcement released today was the topic of Christie's abruptly cancelled press conference in Stafford Township last week.

Berkeley Township Council President James J. Byrnes said after last night's council meeting that he and a number of other officials had made the trip to the Stafford Volunteer Fire Company building in Manahawkin to see the governor.

A member of the governor's staff had already made an announcement asking that the audience turn their cell phones off. A few minutes later, the visit was off.

That was the day the "Bridgewater" story broke.

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anonymous January 14, 2014 at 01:37 PM

A step in the right direction. 7,000 more to go. We will press them until everyone goes home. anonymous

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Mike Mazzucca January 14, 2014 at 01:49 PM

Don't believe it until there is physically cash in your account. Similar tune, played before but still looking for the money. I wish every time they said a letter was going out I got \$1. I wouldn't need to be asking anymore.

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Catherine January 14, 2014 at 05:35 PM

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These things take time. Be grateful that you don't live in New Orleans or the surrounding, ghost town parishes. I'd rather deal with a year of misery than just about nine years of zero hope.

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Mike Mazzucca January 14, 2014 at 06:03 PM

Catherine if this were the first time this happened I could deal with the wait. When you're told to do things, do them and then promised results then I would expect those results. 15 months of being displaced and financially struggling because of Fed/state red tape is unacceptable. The businesses at seaside didn't wait this long on both the storm and fire. Officials have it all wrong, it's that simple.

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anonymous January 14, 2014 at 06:31 PM

Very valid point mike. When they put tourism above everyday people having a home to go back to they truly failed us. I hope they get their priorities in order. I could not imagine what some people are going through and hope the red tape is lifted soon. This is starting to really upset me as I hear more everyday from everyday people who are starting to lose hope. anonymous

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Mike Mazzucca January 15, 2014 at 08:52 AM

Anonymous, I think with Chris Christie in a pinch, he may consider working harder to win back support. One way would be to fight harder to get the monies in the hands of those who need it like sandy victims. He would instantly get a surge of re-support. Part of me hates that idea because he would exploit it for his own gain, however in the end it would help the people which on the other hand is a much more important issue at the moment

than lane closures. I always go back to what is our Mayor doing to be vocal to keep up the pressure? Seems very little. I am not sure what he could do, but it seems more than what he is doing now couldn't hurt. He too could spend more time worrying about the residents rather than how to build an untimely unnecessary community center.

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