



Christie Administration Announces \$100 Million Home Elevation Program To Protect Homeowners From Future Flood And Storm Damage

Eligible Homeowners Encouraged to Apply for Reimbursement Grants Up to \$30,000

For Immediate Release

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Brick, NJ – Demonstrating his commitment to protect New Jersey residents from future storms, Governor Chris Christie today joined Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Richard E. Constable, III and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Martin in Brick to launch a \$100 million home elevation program in the nine counties hardest hit by Superstorm Sandy.

Under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Elevation Program, eligible applicants can receive reimbursement of up to \$30,000 for elevations on existing single-family homes. Beginning today, eligible homeowners can apply for elevation grant assistance at www.renewjerseystronger.org or by calling 1-855-SANDYHM (1-855-726-3946). People can also apply in person at one of the Housing Recovery Centers open in each of the nine most-impacted counties.

“This program is a critical component of my Administration’s efforts to protect lives and property by making flood-prone areas of the state stronger and more resilient,” said Governor Christie. “Elevation will literally raise these houses out of harm’s way of potential flooding, and is an important step in preventing and mitigating damage from future storms.”

The HMGP Elevation Program is a reimbursement grant program designed to help homeowners with the elevation of their primary single-family residences to meet the requirements of the flood insurance risk maps in flood-prone communities. The program is limited to the Sandy-impacted communities of Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union. There are no income requirements for the program and FEMA registration is not required in order to apply.

Homes targeted for buyout under the state’s HMGP acquisition program are not eligible to participate. Additionally, federal regulations restrict homeowners who have already begun elevation work from applying.

“Because of New Jersey’s high proportion of coastline, rivers, and streams, our state has a higher propensity for flooding. As we all know, Superstorm Sandy powerfully demonstrated this fact nine months ago,” said DCA Commissioner Constable. “We are pleased to offer this assistance program because it’s proven that home elevation not only significantly reduces the risk of property damage in the event of major flooding, it also provides a significant reduction in flood insurance premiums.”

“This elevation program is an important component of New Jersey’s long-term rebuilding phase because it gives homeowners an important financial tool to rebuild to much better elevation standards,” said DEP Commissioner Martin.

The HMGP Elevation Program is part of the 'reNew Jersey Stronger' housing initiative that was launched in May 2013 with two grant opportunities: the Homeowner Resettlement Program, which is designed to encourage eligible Sandy-impacted homeowners to resettle in their homes, and the Homeowner Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation and Mitigation (RREM) Program, which is aimed at helping affected homeowners repair, elevate or rebuild their residences.

An application can be made to both RREM and the HMGP Elevation Program, but homeowners may receive a grant award from only one of the programs. If a person has an application with RREM, which offers up to \$150,000 grants, and the HMGP Elevation Program offers funding, applicants will be notified and will need to decide to accept or reject the funding program offered to them at that time.

The HMGP Elevation Program application period opens today and closes on September 15, 2013. Whether homeowners apply online, over the phone, or in person at a Housing Recovery Center at any point during the application period won't affect their status or the likelihood that their application will be selected for an award.

Because the HMGP Elevation Program is designed to mitigate against future flooding events, applications will be prioritized by flooding risk and then by level of Sandy-related damage. For example, a house that needs to be elevated 8 feet or higher and sustained damage greater than \$8,000 will have a higher priority designation than a house that needs to be elevated 5 feet or less and sustained less than \$8,000 in damage.

If the number of applications received exceeds the available funding, then an electronic random ordering of prioritized applications will be used to select applicants to move forward in the review process. It is estimated that 2,700 eligible homeowners will receive reimbursements. Homeowners can use any elevation contractor registered in New Jersey that is qualified to do the work. Once all necessary documents are received and the home elevation is completed, the homeowner will be reimbursed for all eligible expenses.

The program was developed by the DCA, DEP and Governor's Office of Recovery and Rebuilding in partnership with the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and FEMA. It is being funded through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is focused on reducing the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and enabling mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

For more information on the HMGP Elevation Program, including details about the application process, determination of eligibility, and award calculation, visit www.renewjerseystronger.org.

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