



Christie Administration Announces Stronger NJ Neighborhood And Community Revitalization Program To Launch September 4th

\$75 Million Program Will Offer Financial Assistance to Sandy-Affected Small Businesses and Strengthen Local Communities

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Contact: Michael Drewniak
Colin Reed
609-777-2600

Trenton, NJ – In support of Governor Christie's commitment to helping storm-impacted small businesses and communities recover, the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA) today at a Board meeting approved the creation of the Stronger NJ Neighborhood and Community Revitalization (NCR) Program. The \$75 million program will offer financial assistance to support 1) development and public improvement projects; 2) main street revitalization; and, 3) Community Development Financial Institutions providing loans to small businesses.

"As New Jersey continues to rebuild and recover, it is critical that we remain focused on strengthening our local communities and restoring economic vitality throughout the state," said EDA Chief Executive Officer Michele A. Brown. "The Stronger NJ Neighborhood and Community Revitalization Program will help lead to neighborhood stability, increased local tax revenues, new employment opportunities and the attraction of additional investment to our region."

Following the approval of New Jersey's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery Action Plan, Governor Christie called on the EDA to administer \$460 million of the state's CDBG Disaster Recovery allocation to assist businesses and communities. The \$75 million Stronger NJ NCR Program will support projects located throughout the state, with a focus on the nine most impacted counties of Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, and Union, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The \$260 million Stronger NJ Business Grant and \$100 million Stronger NJ Business Loan programs were previously introduced and remain active.

Through the NCR Program, \$62.5 million will be allocated to help advance development and public improvement projects with grants and/or loans, up to a maximum of \$10 million per project. Projects must fall under at least one of the following four categories:

1. **Catalytic Projects**, which must be located in commercial or industrial areas. These projects must include planned physical improvements that have commercial or mixed uses, including retail, office, hospitality, community, and industrial; projects with a housing component can only receive funding for the commercial component. Projects can involve construction or rehabilitation of commercial and mixed-use buildings, parking, and supporting infrastructure (i.e. utilities, streetscape, drainage, etc.).

2. **Transformative Neighborhood Projects**, which must have the same characteristics of catalytic projects, but be located within residential areas.
3. **Innovation Projects**, which also must have the same attributes of catalytic projects, but may be of a smaller scale and involve multi-tenant technology business development. This could include the creation of specialized laboratory or research and development space to be used by a technology business. Projects may be stand-alone or distinct parts of a larger development.
4. **Recreational, Cultural and Park Land Amenities**, which must be planned physical improvements that have recreational or cultural uses within commercial, residential or existing/planned park areas. These projects can involve construction or improvement of parks, recreational structures, boardwalks and esplanades, cultural and community facilities, and supporting infrastructure (i.e. utilities, streetscape, signage and drainage).

Applicants must be for-profit developers; municipalities and county governments undertaking publically owned or to be publically owned projects; state or municipal redevelopment agencies; or, other eligible economic development non-profits. Funds may be used for construction and/or rehabilitation, property acquisition and assembly, demolition and clearance, environmental investigation and remediation, pre-development costs, mitigation measures, and infrastructure.

To be eligible for funding, projects in the nine most impacted counties must either have been damaged by the storm or demonstrate that they will contribute to the revitalization of an area that sustained damage. Projects located outside the nine counties must have sustained damage themselves. Projects must show a clear ability to utilize the entire amount of awarded funding by December 31, 2014. In accordance with federal requirements, projects must also meet at least one of four defined national objectives: urgent need; low and moderate income employment creation; low and moderate income area benefit; and/or slum and blight reduction. A gap in project funding must exist, and funds provided under the program cannot duplicate benefits related to recovery provided by other governmental and insurance sources.

The EDA will utilize \$10 million to support main street revitalization projects in order to advance the recovery of economic activity in the commercial corridors of storm-impacted communities. The program will offer financial assistance to support improvements such as streetscapes, lighting sidewalks, façade, code-related and other physical upgrades to commercial areas.

In addition, the NCR Program will allocate a total of \$2.5 million to provide existing CDFIs with up to a \$500,000 grant to fund small business loans in the nine most impacted counties.

For more information on the Stronger NJ Business programs and to sign up for updates on the Stronger NJ NCR Program, visit <http://application.njeda.com/strongernjbusiness> or call EDA's Sandy hotline at 1-855-SANDY-BZ (1-855-726-3929).

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