



TURNING THE TIDE:



HOW OUR NEXT MAYOR SHOULD TACKLE SANDY REBUILDING

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR A JUST REBUILDING

The Alliance for a Just Rebuilding brings together labor unions and community, faith-based, environmental and policy organizations to address immediate relief and long-term rebuilding issues in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Alliance for a Just Rebuilding members are committed to a just, equitable and sustainable recovery and rebuilding process that makes infrastructure and regulation more equitable, prioritizes transparency and community inclusion, creates new economic opportunity for all New Yorkers—particularly low-income communities and communities of color—and includes a commitment to long-term climate sustainability and the elimination of environmental disparities across communities.

PLATFORM ENDORSERS

- 350.org
- ALIGN
- CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities
- Center for Popular Democracy
- Center for Social Inclusion
- Centro del Inmigrante
- Coalition for the Homeless
- Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center
- Community Voices Heard
- Consortium for Worker Education
- Faith in New York
- Families United for Racial & Economic Equality (FUREE)
- Good Jobs New York
- Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition
- Hunger Action Network of NY State
- The Legal Aid Society
- LiUNA Local 10
- LiUNA Local 78
- Long Island Civic Engagement Table
- Long Island Jobs with Justice
- Mutual Housing Association of NY
- National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)
- National Domestic Workers Alliance
- NEDAP
- New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH)
- New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE)
- New York Communities for Change
- New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness
- New York State Nurses Association
- Occupy Sandy
- Participatory Budgeting Project
- Physicians for a National Health Program-NY Metro
- Pratt Center for Community Development
- Red Hook Initiative
- Respond & Rebuild
- RWDSU
- SEIU 32BJ
- Solidarity NYC
- TWU Local 100
- VOCAL-NY
- Workers Justice Project

INTRODUCTION: SANDY REVEALED DEEP INEQUITIES. OUR NEXT MAYOR'S LEGACY WILL BE SHAPED BY TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION OR NEGLECT OF THOSE INEQUITIES.

There are certain life-altering events that sear themselves into our individual and collective memories. Everyone remembers where they were on October 29th, 2012, the day Hurricane Sandy barreled into the coast of New York and New Jersey. Sandy disrupted the lives of 8.1 million people and cost the region an estimated \$79 billion worth of damage. The storm struck widely, but its impact was uneven: in the aftermath, communities of the poorest homeowners and renters, areas also with the fewest resources in food, transportation and health care, were left without a foothold from which to recover.

Today, ten months later, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers continue to struggle to recover from the storm. Many of them are facing particularly complex and brutal barriers to recovery precisely because they were suffering from poverty and inequality long before Sandy made landfall. With damage ranging from total destruction of homes and businesses to power outages and disruptions to public transportation, the impacts continue to be hard felt—particularly among low-income residents and working class community members, and disproportionately by people of color.

Poor New Yorkers, immigrants, public housing residents, and low-income workers were already struggling with higher levels of unemployment and under-employment, exploitation on the job, lack of housing, crumbling infrastructure, depressed wages and lack of family-sustaining jobs, and inadequate access to transportation and safety nets. These growing inequities have made tens of thousands of New Yorkers more vulnerable to disaster and less able to recover from its impacts. For example, with 20 percent of Rockaway Peninsula's population living below poverty level, families there were already struggling with unemployment, under employment and lack of housing before Sandy struck. The storm exacerbated the situation for these community members, who now face further economic setbacks and feel even further "left behind."

At a time of rising poverty and inequality, the stakes for the future of New York City's most vulnerable communities—and our next mayor—couldn't be higher.

\$1.7 billion in federal aid dollars have started flowing to New York City (with billions more on the way), and the Bloomberg administration has constructed a blueprint for rebuilding that will redefine the physical infrastructure of our city for a generation. Bloomberg's blueprint promises to make the City of New York more resilient to future disasters. But "**resiliency**" must apply not only to physical infrastructure, but also to economic and social infrastructure that can strengthen struggling communities and

ready them for future crises. And “**recovery**” measures should not replicate the circumstances that made so many New Yorkers so vulnerable in the first place.

Making New York stronger and more resilient for all, and especially for the most vulnerable, is the single most important challenge facing our next mayor. The post-Sandy rebuilding presents an unprecedented opportunity: capturing it will help resolve decades of growing inequality; missing it will cement those inequalities for decades more to come.

This platform briefly lays out some concrete and realistic steps that Bloomberg’s successor can employ at this moment to redress and reduce the inequities that faced our city long before Hurricane Sandy.

OVERVIEW:

A JUST AND EQUITABLE PLATFORM FOR BLOOMBERG’S SUCCESSOR

In a matter of months we will have a new mayoral administration charged with leading our city through a full recovery. This is the first report to lay out exactly what is at stake for our next mayor, and to present a just and equitable rebuilding platform for their administration to implement.

The report reflects the input of dozens of grassroots groups working on short-term and long-term rebuilding efforts in the communities hit hardest by Sandy. It focuses on four areas of rebuilding:

- **Good jobs**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Sustainable Energy**
- **Community Engagement**

At issue is how every Sandy rebuilding dollar that comes into the City – totaling many billions – can prioritize equity, opportunity, and justice; and why major new policies and investments in good jobs, affordable housing, sustainable energy, and community engagement should ensure that all New Yorkers can live and work in strong, resilient communities that can withstand future storms and disasters.

The organizations involved in researching and developing this report urge all of the mayoral candidates to embrace the findings and recommendations offered below.

THE STAKES: ENSURING THAT BILLIONS OF DOLLARS STRENGTHEN VULNERABLE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

In the coming years, New York City's share of approximately \$51 billion in federal Sandy funds, along with billions more in leveraged investment and donations, will dramatically shape our city for decades to come. Our next mayor has an unprecedented opportunity to steer these funds toward programs, policies, and economic development projects that will strengthen and make more resilient the lives of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable among us.

TURNING THE TIDE: A FOUR-POINT AGENDA FOR A JUST & EQUITABLE REBUILDING IN POST-SANDY NYC -GOOD JOBS, AFFORDABLE HOUSING, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. OUR NEXT MAYOR SHOULD ENSURE THAT SANDY RECOVERY AND REBUILDING DOLLARS CREATE THOUSANDS OF GOOD LOCAL JOBS.

Sandy revealed economic and infrastructure inequities that have grown as economic development, land use, and planning are increasingly influenced by private developers and the real estate industry. The \$20 billion in Sandy funds anticipated in the City's "Special Initiative for Resiliency and Rebuilding", and any other Sandy funds, should turn this tide: a key goal of rebuilding should be seizing the chance to create thousands of good local jobs with family-sustaining wages; create apprenticeship and job training opportunities for New Yorkers, including young people who suffer the highest rates of unemployment; and directly connect community members to jobs. Under the next mayoral administration, the requirement for the use of all public funds in development projects should be that they redress and reduce inequities in our city's economy and infrastructure.

Equitable development that creates good jobs and measurable economic opportunities must be a top policy priority of the city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC), Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and other agencies. City agencies charged with investing Sandy funds should be required to document their projects' compliance with basic standards like wages and housing affordability on an ongoing basis, as well as their adherence to community hiring requirements (i.e. describing from what communities and constituencies they have hired workers, and how they have connected community members to available jobs), and they must withdraw

public funds from projects that violate those basic rules. Because there is such a high rate of violations of workers' health and safety and other rights in the construction industry, the City should make sure that standards are set so that contractors do not engage in exploitation with Sandy funds, and sanction those who do not comply. Other city investments in infrastructure, like sewers, parks and transit, should be held to equity standards that ensure that upgrades reach the lowest-income and most storm-vulnerable communities first.

Good Jobs - Actionable Priorities for the Next Mayor

• Make the NYC Economic Development Corporation a development agency that serves New Yorkers' economic interests:

1. Create a Task Force, led by grassroots organizations working on Sandy recovery and rebuilding in the hardest-hit communities, working in partnership with top-level Mayoral representatives. Empower the Task Force to delineate a blueprint for reform that the Mayor commits to implement through the next leader of EDC.
2. Require that every new contract and development deal funded with Sandy rebuilding dollars meet existing prevailing wage and living wage requirements including prevailing wage requirements already in place by federal law and living wage requirements established by the New York City Council in 2012.
3. Set standards for construction that reflect legal and industry standards for decent wages and workers' safety, ensure the provision of health and safety training and equipment to workers, and provide for the monitoring of these standards. Since a great deal of post-Sandy work will be non-prevailing wage work in reconstructing small buildings – and since abuses in that sector are widespread – Mayoral leadership is particularly critical to making Sandy jobs good jobs.

Our new mayor must require the City's main agency for economic development to prioritize the creation of good jobs for local New Yorkers and become a force for accountable, transparent development in the service of vulnerable communities.

• Set community hiring and "good jobs" standards to ensure that jobs created by the recovery effort benefit low-income and Sandy-affected New Yorkers :

1. Require that contractors provide training and state-approved apprenticeships for all Sandy recovery work in New York City, not limited to CDBG-funded projects, to ensure that community members can get jobs even if they aren't already skilled.
2. Using executive authority to apply community-hire standards to all "Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery" (CDBG-DR) funds. These standards should exceed federal "Section 3" guidelines so that 30% of all wages for publicly-funded Sandy jobs are paid to workers drawn from low-income communities (rather than 30% of new hires, which has resulted mainly in low-wage temporary jobs.) Specify that exemptions cannot be granted unless contractors show that they have collaborated with community-based training centers, worker centers and other available resources to identify and train community members as workers.

3. The City has indicated that it plans seek out contracting firms from Sandy-affected communities, and Minority and Women-Owned Businesses in particular; the next mayor should support and expand on this positive step by requiring agencies to take concrete action to connect community members with jobs, including collaborations with local workforce and day laborer organizations to identify local contractors and community hires; and direct notification methods, developed in collaboration with community advocates in the past, like listing work opportunities on NYCHA rent bills.

● **Let the sun shine on Sandy contracts:**

1. Require EDC and all city agencies receiving Sandy funds to maintain online records that are updated at least quarterly, reporting – for all supported projects – what has been built, the source of funding, the number of jobs promised and created, who has gotten the jobs (i.e. from what communities and constituencies), whether an apprenticeship program has been used, what wage and job standards applied to that work, and verification that standards have been met.
2. Establish a public comment process and set contracting standards for projects and deals involving more than \$1 million in public funds, along with mechanisms to enforce those standards and exclude contractors who don't meet them.
3. Establish a public comment process for regulations in recovery and resiliency programs, to ensure that contracting rules (and program rules more broadly) are accountable to communities, and include wage and worker safety standards.
4. Institute mandatory clawbacks – recapture and cancellation of subsidies – where requirements have not been met, and require developers to self-certify compliance at least on an annual basis.



● **Make sure Sandy rebuilding doesn't leave the poorest neighborhoods behind:**

1. Advocate for NY State legislation that sets standards for the equitable distribution of infrastructure investments in the city, and requiring the City to evaluate and report annually on comparative NYC, NY State and federal investments in sewers, parks, transportation, and public resources by neighborhood or zip code.
2. Prioritize sewer upgrades to isolated and Sandy-impacted neighborhoods. AJR's upcoming report on unmet needs highlights sewer infrastructure in low-income areas as a critical roadblock for rebuilding.
3. Accelerate the planning and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit to impacted communities and other vulnerable communities, and upgrade service on the Q52/Q53 including service to both the East and West ends of the Rockaway Peninsula. Expanded transit is critical so that the most vulnerable residents can achieve greater mobility and evacuate more quickly in the future.

2. OUR NEXT MAYOR SHOULD RESTORE LOST AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND CREATE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR DISPLACED RESIDENTS TO PRESERVE COMMUNITY TIES.

Sandy wrecked homes and displaced thousands of New Yorkers from their neighborhoods, decreasing the supply of affordable housing and deepening a crisis that had already pushed many residents into precarious and overcrowded housing arrangements. Although the City has made good progress in assessing physical damage to housing, it still has not conducted a full on-the-ground assessment of unmet disaster housing needs, particularly for vulnerable populations like undocumented immigrants and occupants of irregular units. Initial estimates indicate that tens of thousands of units have been damaged or destroyed, and community planners estimate that the number may actually be twice as high when unregistered and informal rental units are counted. Many of those units – both irregular and otherwise – cannot be restored. To date, no mayoral candidate has said how or when those much-needed affordable housing units will be replaced.

Our next mayor must commit to building at least 100,000 affordable units that are within the means of people living in storm-vulnerable communities, including tens of thousands in neighborhoods where Sandy overwhelmingly displaced Very Low Income families.

Our next mayor must also create housing rebuilding programs that account for the varied needs of both owners and renters (including immigrants), and put



in place requirements to ensure that housing in Sandy-impacted stays affordable and accessible. That means overcoming major blockages that have kept recovery dollars from making their way into communities; and holding landlords accountable for rent-gouging while better supporting them to make repairs to housing stock.

Without these actions, tens of thousands of affordable housing units in Sandy neighborhoods — potentially double the number officially counted by FEMA — will be permanently lost, and land will be redeveloped according to developers' interests rather than the needs of displaced residents. Without a specific plan to maintain affordability and accessibility, tens of thousands of households will be forced to compete for affordable housing that's not available, and not in the community where they work, worship, and go to school.

Our next mayor must also make repairs to NYCHA housing as a critical resource for low-income communities weathering future storms, and prioritize Sandy funding to repair housing where pre-existing issues like mold and leaks were worsened by the storm.

Affordable Housing - Actionable Priorities for the Next Mayor

- **Measure the true level of need for Sandy housing aid.**

1. Perform an assessment of unmet housing needs, including an on-the-ground data-gathering effort in Sandy's neighborhoods, in partnership with community-based organizations that have deep connections in those communities.
2. Request elevated federal funding to match the true number of units lost or impacted.
3. Establish repair programs that work for the realities of owners, renters and immigrants.

- **Make sure rebuilt housing stays affordable to the people who lived there.**

The City can and should require landlords who use public dollars to rebuild their homes to maintain affordability at pre-storm levels – in contrast to the price gouging that now plagues Sandy-affected neighborhoods. Publicly-funded recovery must not be used to price out Sandy victims from their communities. In dialogue with advocates, City officials have indicated that they share these goals; the next mayor must support them with strong policy and collaborative problem-solving with community groups.

- **Build new affordable housing in Sandy-affected neighborhoods.**

New housing must be affordable to very low income New Yorkers who are most vulnerable to displacement.

1. Mandate a minimum percentage of housing units affordable to households below 30% Area Median Income (AMI) in the rebuild.
2. Establish Community Land Trusts using land acquired through Sandy buyouts, and dedicate land to affordable storm-resistant housing that lets residents stay in their communities.

- **Repair and Invest in NYCHA Housing for the Long Term.**

Apply for and use CDBG funds to remediate NYCHA mold, including pre-Sandy mold, and invest in other more long-standing capital repair needs to support the permanence of NYCHA as affordable housing critical to resiliency during climate change.

3. OUR NEXT MAYOR SHOULD INVEST IN CLEAN, SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT VALUES COMMUNITIES AND IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

Energy infrastructure plays a critical role both in strengthening the ability of New York to weather future storms and mitigating the effects of climate change. Currently, about \$3 billion for energy investment is controlled by state authorities and more than \$300 million in resources have been identified in the City's Action Plan for CDBG-DR funds. Funds controlled by state authorities carry no economic impact standards, no community hiring requirements, no real requirement for community input, and no plan to invest in more reliable, climate-resilient power (nor efficiency measures that help communities use less power) for Sandy-affected areas or vulnerable low-income neighborhoods.



Our next mayor must ensure that all these funds generate good jobs, focus the state's massive sustainable energy investments on low-income and storm-vulnerable neighborhoods, and seed non-profit, community-supporting local power generation projects that will free communities from excessive private utility costs.

Sustainable Energy- Actionable Priorities for the Next Mayor

- **Fix NYCHA's flooded energy systems with greener, cheaper, more resilient power.** Implement a post-Sandy recovery plan to upgrade NYCHA buildings to Combined Heat & Power (cogeneration) – which can cut energy costs by 30-50% – and work with HUD to redirect savings to fund NYCHA repairs.
- **Use CDBG and other state funds to support green, low-cost, non-profit power generation with community ownership in storm-affected neighborhoods.** New York City housing developments like Penn South and Co-op City have long shown that community-owned cogeneration works to power housing, schools, and businesses while lowering costs – now it's time to add public support to help communities move toward cogeneration.
- **Champion racial and economic fairness in state-level energy policy.** Advocate for legislation to reform the NYS Public Service Commission (PSC) so that it serves communities, not utilities.
 1. Require the PSC to account for equitable economic impacts in allocating billions in energy infrastructure dollars, including jobs, training and uneven energy cost burdens on low- and moderate-income communities; and meet state contracting standards for Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) while supporting contractors to meet good job standards.
 2. Create a “climate justice fund” for investment in low-income communities vulnerable to climate events.

4. OUR NEXT MAYOR SHOULD INCLUDE AND ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN SANDY RECOVERY – AND IN PLANNING NYC'S FUTURE.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, it was some of the most marginalized of New York's residents, including youth, day laborers, and low income community leaders, who served as critical first responders and community resources. The Sandy rebuilding period has further demonstrated that community-based organizations based in local impacted neighborhoods play a critical role in the service provision infrastructure of New York.

On the other hand, the city has been challenged in reaching Sandy-affected residents with recovery programs, especially vulnerable residents like renters, low-income families, and immigrants who fall through the cracks of conventional outreach. With this in mind, the next mayor must invest in building relationships and the real potential for coordination with local groups of all kinds. Community based organizations with deep roots in neighborhoods can help identify weaknesses in disaster preparedness, contribute to developing rebuilding plans that adequately address local needs and that win the real support of local residents.

To take advantage of these resources, the next mayor must make a real commitment to community-driven development that invests public resources in the public interest. Transparency must become the hallmark of Sandy spending. Community-led recovery ideas (whether in land use planning or development) should be fully incorporated into the City's decision-making. Community networks, both long-standing groups and those that have formed in the wake of Sandy, must be included in official disaster preparedness, in city planning, and eligibility criteria for recovery funding to communities to implement locally-developed priorities. The City should turn to participatory budgeting to bring some funding directly Bold leadership for recovery must embrace alternative economic models -- like worker-owned co-ops that are starting to form in Sandy-impacted areas -- and incorporate them in the investments and narrative of rebuilding.



Community Engagement- Actionable Priorities for the Next Mayor

- **Pass Sandy “Follow the Money” legislation.** Pass Intro 1040-2013, also known as the Sandy jobs tracking bill, to ensure greater transparency in recovery spending and the creation of good jobs in neighborhoods. The “Follow the Money” bill would expand on existing federal reporting requirements for Sandy recovery funds. Under the City Council bill, contractors would report back to the City on the number and quality of jobs they create, and from what communities or constituencies they have made their community hires; and the City would publish that data along with other information about the size and allocation of contractors. The bill would require timely reporting so that the public can meaningfully “follow the money” as Sandy recovery rolls out in their own communities.
- **Make sure communities can meaningfully participate in planning.**
 1. Redirect Sandy funds to community planning and community-driven recovery work, including Community Land Trusts, and away from “ideas competitions” and similar frameworks that disadvantage local planners and tend to create competition rather than cooperation among community groups.
 2. Invest planning resources and decision-making power in low-in communities that are in harm's way and could be devastated by the next storm, including technical assistance for communities to develop proposals for CDBG-DR recovery and resiliency projects.

- **Work with each community’s local “first responders” to build resiliency.**
 1. Engage the community networks and volunteer bases that supported neighborhoods during Sandy so that they are core partners in recovery planning, and are part of the City’s emergency preparedness strategy.
 2. Create an official emergency response network that supports local groups as active responders; establish the network by engaging community groups’ feedback on emergency strategies; and hold periodic tests of emergency information sharing, etc.

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