

HURRICANE SANDY

Immigrant Outreach Initiative



FATIMA SHAMA
COMMISSIONER

The logo for the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, consisting of a green square with the text "MAYOR'S FUND TO ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY" in white, sans-serif font.

MAYOR'S FUND
TO ADVANCE
NEW YORK CITY

MEGAN SHEEKEY
PRESIDENT



JENNIFER JONES AUSTIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

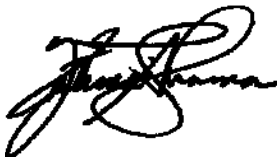
As we know, Hurricane Sandy directly impacted the lives of millions of New Yorkers and devastated many of our neighborhoods and communities. Immigrant New Yorkers faced a number of specific challenges and barriers to access that made them especially vulnerable in this disaster. Under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has worked to better understand the challenges faced by immigrants in our city and to connect immigrant communities and the organizations that serve them with additional information, resources and support to help them recover.

This report outlines MOIA's partnership with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies and numerous community based organizations and community leaders to respond to the needs of immigrant communities impacted by Hurricane Sandy. The report describes the strategies employed to reach immigrant households, highlights the specific challenges faced by immigrants in the aftermath of the storm and provides recommendations—based on data and feedback from front-line response teams—that are needed to make our city safer for immigrants and their families in the event of future disasters.

This effort would not have been possible without support from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and our partnership with the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the Shorefront YM-YWHA, the Council of Peoples Organization, Project Hospitality, El Centro del Inmigrante, Make the Road New York, the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families and numerous other organizations and community leaders who stepped in to respond.

A special thank you is owed to Eric Williams, who coordinated the Immigrant Outreach Initiative field operation, and the fifty Immigrant Outreach Workers who worked directly and tirelessly with families to help them along the road to recovery.

With best regards,



FATIMA SHAMA
COMMISSIONER, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR'S FUND TO ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY

In the aftermath of an unprecedented storm, we were reminded of the importance of establishing support networks that can combine resources to identify, assess, and address pressing needs. Through the generosity of our donors, the Mayor's Fund was able to partner with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies to bring together key community partners and deploy a team of fifty Immigrant Outreach Workers to assess the needs of immigrant community members in storm-impacted areas. This multi-pronged and multi-lingual strategy allowed City offices and our community organizations to provide affected residents, including immigrants and limited-English proficient New Yorkers, with increased opportunities to access disaster assistance. By merging the expertise and local perspective of our partners through this coordinated effort, we were also able to customize our approach for specific communities and adapt to changing recovery needs.

This partnership has set a precedent for service delivery and has strengthened the City's relationship with community-based organizations and responders in affected immigrant communities. We have also gained valuable insight into structuring disaster response efforts with greater inclusivity in preparation for any future emergencies.

I would like to thank the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, and the many individuals and groups that provided relief services in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and that continue to support our city's ongoing recovery.

Sincerely,



MEGAN SHEEKEY
PRESIDENT, MAYOR'S FUND TO ADVANCE NEW YORK CITY

MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES

Hurricane Sandy took a massive toll on the residents of New York City. Because of our commitment to promoting the well-being of the most vulnerable, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) collaborated with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City in a targeted response to reach out to immigrant New Yorkers affected by this tragedy.

FPWA understands the importance of strategic partnerships and values the skills of our network to help respond in times of need. We are especially grateful to the community partners that reached out to immigrants and their families to better assess the impacts of Hurricane Sandy and provide critical services. Their direct relationships with the individuals whom our response sought to assist made them ideal partners to help ensure that all New Yorkers could receive the resources necessary for putting their lives back together. We believe that the findings and the recommendations in this report will greatly aid all agencies and individuals dedicated to providing an ongoing response to immigrants adversely impacted by the hurricane and to preparing for future disasters.

Sincerely,



JENNIFER JONES AUSTIN
CEO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT WELFARE AGENCIES



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over a period of five months in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, bilingual and multilingual Immigrant Outreach Workers (IOWs) were deployed to storm-affected neighborhoods in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island, building the capacity of community based organizations to assess and respond to the needs of immigrant households affected by the storm. With support from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) deployed fifty IOWs who connected with more than 6,800 households and engaged approximately 16,800 New Yorkers affected by Sandy. FPWA-led outreach workers conducted surveys to better understand needs, informing households about the availability of disaster assistance services and identifying ongoing and emerging opportunities for additional support.

The goals of this report are to:

1. **Describe strategies** and tools used by Immigrant Outreach Workers to assess residents needs and connect them with disaster assistance services
2. **Identify challenges** faced by immigrant households in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy to shed light on gaps in access that must continue to be addressed
3. **Highlight recovery efforts** of Immigrant Outreach Workers, partner organizations, City agencies and others to assist immigrant New Yorkers impacted by Hurricane Sandy
4. **Make recommendations** that respond to the ongoing needs of immigrant New Yorkers and that will better prepare immigrant communities for future disasters and emergencies

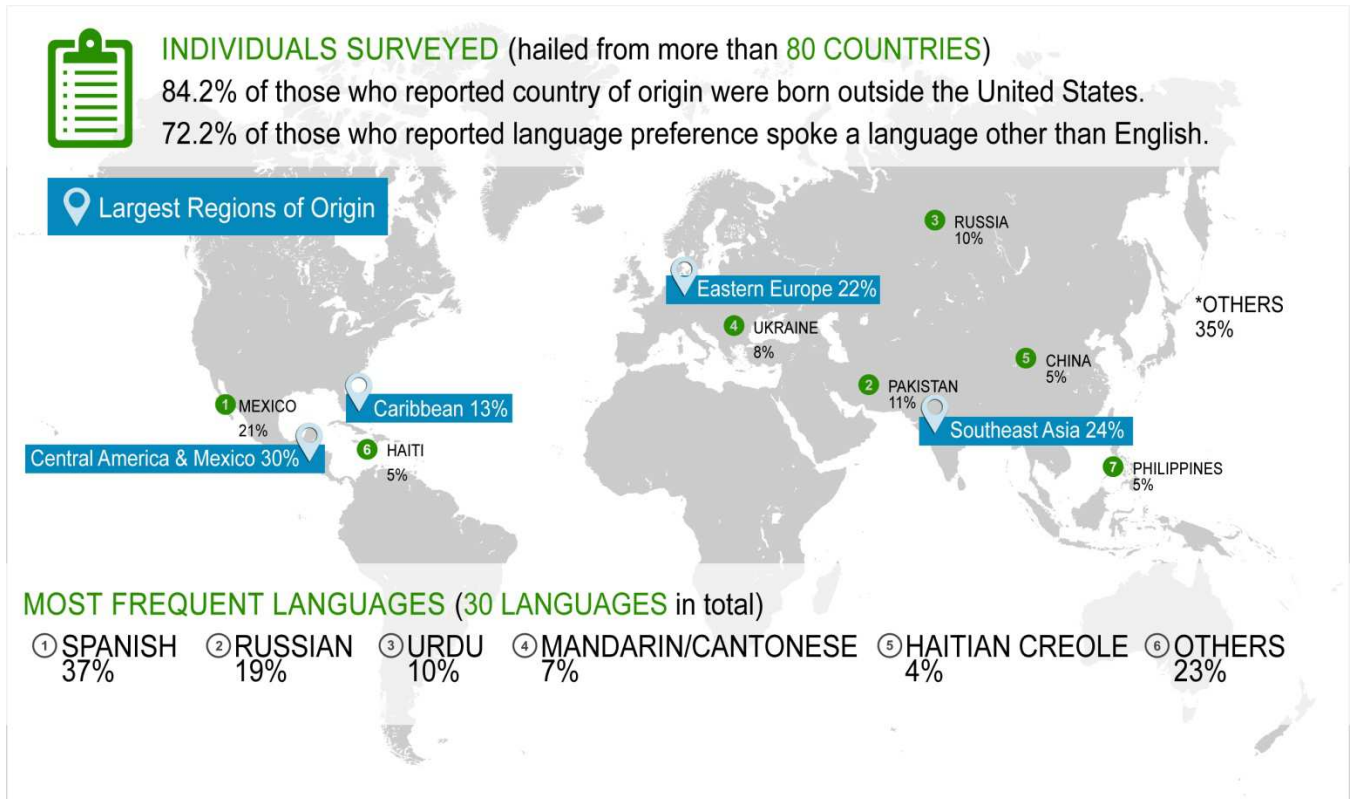


New York City Officials respond to questions at Hurricane Sandy: Supporting Immigrant Communities CBO Forum, December 7, 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

OUTCOMES

The initiative surveyed and assisted foreign born and limited English proficient New Yorkers representing a diverse set of nationalities and ethnicities.



Individuals surveyed hailed from more than 80 countries and spoke more than 30 different languages.

84.2 percent of those who reported country of origin were born outside the United States, with the greatest representation from Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine, China, Haiti and the Philippines.

72.2 percent of those who reported language preference spoke a language other than English. The most frequently-spoken languages were Spanish, Russian, Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese and Haitian Creole.

The initiative addressed linguistic and cultural barriers to accessing vital information and connected thousands of immigrant households to a multitude of disaster assistance services and resources.

CONNECTING IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS TO DISASTER ASSISTANCE RESOURCES



More than 6,800 Households Reached

6,871 households were surveyed, counseled on the availability of disaster assistance services and provided information and referrals for emergency cash assistance, nutrition assistance, disaster case management, legal services and other relevant programs and services.



More than 1,200 Households Notified

1,253 households were found to be eligible to apply for FEMA or appeal FEMA denials that had yet to take such action and were provided information and/or assistance with the process referred to the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) and other non-profit legal service providers for free legal assistance.



Week-Long Ethnic Media Advertisements

Multiple rounds of week-long advertisements were placed in major ethnic media publications, including El Diario (Spanish), Sing Tao Daily (Chinese), Russkaya Reklama (Russian), Haiti Liberti (Haitian Creole) and Pakistan News (Urdu) notifying residents of the right of certain non-citizens to access FEMA cash assistance and advising them to call 311 or visit NYC.gov for information about housing, mold, legal services and other resources.

The initiative employed residents from storm-affected neighborhoods to serve as outreach workers and also established strategic partnerships with trusted community institutions to support disaster relief efforts.

50 bilingual and multilingual Immigrant Outreach Workers (IOWs) were hired from storm-affected neighborhoods, many of whom were seeking employment and/or were personally affected by the storm.

Training and on-the-ground canvassing experience prepared IOWs to take on full-time positions in disaster case management and housing recovery at the end of the initiative.

Strategic partnerships were established with more than 50 non-profit and community based organizations, schools and faith institutions to reach and assist immigrant New Yorkers.

THE INITIATIVE EMPLOYED
RESIDENTS FROM
STORM-AFFECTED
NEIGHBORHOODS
TO SERVE AS
**OUTREACH
WORKERS**
AND ESTABLISHED
**STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIPS** WITH
TRUSTED COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS
TO SUPPORT DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS.

50 bilingual and multilingual
Immigrant Outreach Workers
were hired from storm-affected
neighborhoods, many of whom
were seeking employment
and / or personally
affected by the storm.

Strategic partnerships were established with numerous non-profit and community based organizations, congregations, and numerous faith and community leaders.

As a result of IOWs reporting hundreds of cases of housing concerns, including the need for landlord/tenant advocacy, mold remediation, FEMA appeals and other issues, the Mayor's Fund provided an additional \$350,000 to support the New York Legal Assistance Group to provide free legal assistance to impacted households.

Due to reports of lost or damaged furniture and other property, the Mayor's Fund was also able to purchase 335 mattress sets and frames for households, which were delivered directly by the supplier or distributed by partner organizations in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.

The Mayor's Fund also provided a \$46,000 grant to the Lawyers Alliance for New York to help support all community based organizations affected by Hurricane Sandy.

THE MAYOR'S FUND PROVIDED \$384,000 TO FPWA
TO SUPPORT THE IMMIGRANT OUTREACH INITIATIVE
IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKERS
IDENTIFIED EMERGING AND ONGOING
NEEDS IN ACCESS TO SERVICES

THE MAYOR'S FUND PROVIDED
\$ 350,000 TO SUPPORT
FREE LEGAL SERVICES
TO ADDRESS FEMA DENIALS
LACK OF INFORMATION
HOUSING ISSUES AND
LANDLORD/TENANT ISSUES



THE MAYOR'S FUND ALSO
PURCHASED MORE THAN
330 MATTRESSES
FOR RESIDENTS IN NEED

HIGHLIGHTS

LESSONS LEARNED

Need for human capital to have necessary capabilities to address linguistic and cultural barriers.

Linguistic Competence: IOWs spoke an average of three languages each and often cited this ability as one of the key ways they were able to communicate with affected households to better understand their needs.

Cultural Sensitivity: Many IOWs had previous experience working with immigrant communities or in international settings, or were immigrants themselves, and cited the importance of cultural sensitivity in their ability to establish rapport and trust with immigrant households.

Familiarity with Communities: Many IOWs came from neighborhoods or communities that were in some way impacted by the storm and their familiarity with communities and families helped them identify residents in need of assistance.

Need for multiple types of outreach and engagement to build relationships and establish trust.

Community Organizing Approach: Although initially conceived as a canvassing operation, the Immigrant Outreach Initiative quickly adopted a more community-centered approach to engaging families. IOWs worked independently within specific immigrant communities, identifying key community leaders, building trust with individuals on blocks and attending community events and church services to find families. This allowed outreach workers to solve their own challenges and track down leads in the field.

Affiliation with Local Organizations: IOWs were assigned to various community based organizations and were able to build upon each organization's established credibility in communities when reaching out to local residents. Some IOWs wore badges to demonstrate their affiliation.

Engagement in Comfortable Settings: IOWs met residents in their homes, at their houses of worship, at community based organizations, at restaurants and in other centers of community in order to provide information and resources in familiar and comfortable locations.

Multiple Types of Engagement: IOWs conducted direct surveys, made follow-up phone calls, held "office hours" and offered numerous flexible times and locations in which they could engage residents, often repeatedly, in order to understand their needs and connect them with services.

Need for tangible resources and assistance navigating government and non-profit services.

Basic Necessities and Supplies: Working with local churches and community based organizations, IOWs were in some cases able to provide supplies and other basic necessities to immediately assist residents they were interested in surveying. In many cases, IOWs were also able to connect households with furniture and other larger items by working with local organizations that received donations from community members, the Mayor’s Fund and other sources.

Awareness of Repeat Canvassing: Many residents expressed frustration at being contacted and surveyed multiple times by different organizations with little tangible help. Being able to offer direct assistance—either at the door or through follow-up meetings or phone calls—helped IOWs establish credibility with community members.

Direct Assistance with Applications: Many residents expressed uncertainty about their eligibility for benefits or had difficulty navigating various application processes. IOWs helped residents fill out applications for emergency cash assistance, FEMA and other services—in some cases helping residents access thousands of additional dollars in aid—which earned them respect and gratitude from community members who had not completed these applications due to lack of awareness, language barriers and/or fear of sharing personal information.



BACKGROUND

On October 29, 2012, Hurricane Sandy made landfall in New York, damaging thousands of homes and disrupting the lives of millions of New Yorkers. The City took numerous precautions prior to and throughout the storm, requiring mandatory evacuations from specified zones, issuing warning messages in multiple languages and preparing City employees for emergency response in the storm’s immediate aftermath. In the days that followed, thousands of City employees staffed emergency shelters and visited disaster sites, delivering hundreds of thousands of meals, water bottles, blankets, clothing and other supplies. Within the first week, the City opened Disaster Assistance Service Centers staffed by FEMA and the Human Resources Administration, followed shortly by the launch of NYC Restoration Centers in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island to help residents connect with the full range of federal, state and local disaster assistance services.

IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES FOR IMMIGRANT NEW YORKERS

Simultaneously, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs relayed vital information about disaster assistance services to key stakeholders serving immigrant communities and conducted a robust assessment of immigrant eligibility for federal, state and local disaster assistance to better understand potential gaps in access to aid. On December 7, MOIA co-hosted a Hurricane Sandy CBO Forum with the New York Immigration Coalition at Baruch College, bringing together front-line service providers and key City officials to identify challenges and opportunities for additional support and collaboration. As a result of the convening of community partners and through the participation of MOIA staff in the City’s recovery efforts, it became clear that many immigrant households, especially those that were mixed status or undocumented, were not accessing services for which they were eligible. Challenges to access included:

- **Lack of information.** Information about disaster assistance services did not consistently reach immigrant households, either because these households were disconnected or because the information was not linguistically and culturally appropriate.
- **Language access.** Information and services were not uniformly provided in the needed languages.
- **Distrust of government.** NYC Restoration Centers were staffed by local, state and federal officials, which caused apprehension and fear about providing personal information needed to receive assistance.
- **Concerns about immigration status.** Many individuals did not know if they were eligible for assistance based on immigration status or were fearful that if they applied for or received any form of government assistance, they would be labeled a “public charge,” which could affect their ability to access various immigration benefits.
- **Immigration status restrictions on federally-funded programs and services.** Undocumented and mixed status households experience barriers to accessing financial assistance from FEMA and other organizations due to immigration status restrictions on certain types of government assistance.

Identifying and understanding these challenges led to the development of the Immigrant Outreach Worker Initiative, developed and coordinated by MOIA and FPWA, and supported by the Mayor’s Fund. The initiative was designed to bring information and assistance directly to immigrant households in key zip codes affected by Hurricane Sandy.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

On January 10, 2013, MOIA and the Mayor’s Fund announced a \$384,000 grant to the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies to support teams of Immigrant Outreach Workers (IOWs) to be deployed to impacted zip codes in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island that were home to an estimated 66,000 non-citizens. IOWs were bilingual and multilingual individuals employed directly from the communities they were hired to serve. IOWs were identified by and assigned to community based organizations working on the front lines of the recovery effort that had direct access to immigrant communities and intimate knowledge of the needs of residents in the affected areas. The effort was coordinated by FPWA, which was selected because of its outstanding record of support for New York City’s social service system and experience assisting more than 200 member social service agencies and faith-based groups throughout the City.

RESPONSE & RECOVERY SNAPSHOT

LEGEND

- Citywide | MOIA

October 29, 2012

- Hurricane Sandy makes landfall. City staff deployed to evacuation shelters, food and water distribution sites.

November 5 – November 9, 2012

- The City opens distribution centers citywide in coordination with FEMA and the national guard to provide free meals and supplies to impacted New Yorkers.
- Mayor Bloomberg encourages private donations to the Mayor's Fund to aid relief efforts.
- MOIA hosts conference calls with community based organizations and faith leaders to provide updates on federal, state and local response to Hurricane Sandy.

November 13, 2012

- The City launches NYC Restore, opening 7 NYC Restoration Centers in impacted neighborhoods across New York City with information and resources available in Spanish, Russian and Chinese, as well as telephonic interpretation in over 170 languages.

Mid-November 2012

- MOIA partners with FEMA to enlist nine CBOs and libraries to serve as FEMA mobile application sites for immigrant New Yorkers.

Mid-November 2012

- MOIA creates Guide to Disaster Assistance Services for Immigrant New Yorkers distributed to CBO partners and downloaded more than 400 times from MOIA's website.

Mid-November 2012

- MOIA secures \$1.2 million in emergency cash assistance from the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation for undocumented immigrant households impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

December 7, 2012

- MOIA, in partnership with the New York Immigration Coalition, hosts Hurricane Sandy: Supporting Immigrant Communities Forum, bringing together City officials and representatives from community based organizations to discuss needs and identify opportunities for support and collaboration.

December 10, 2012

- The Human Resources Administration announces implementation of Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, available to impacted New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. Applications available in English, Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Russian and Spanish.

January 10, 2013

- Based on recommendations from the December 7th Forum, the Mayor's Fund awards \$384,000 to FPWA to support the Immigrant Outreach Initiative in coordination with MOIA. 50 bilingual and multilingual Immigrant Outreach Workers are deployed to support community based organizations in impacted neighborhoods in South Brooklyn, Staten Island and the Rockaways.

Mid-January to Mid-May 2013

- Immigrant Outreach Workers assess needs of 6,871 households, meeting with approximately 16,800 residents to discuss disaster assistance resources, services and programs and making over 8,000 additional follow-up calls to ensure households received assistance or connected with new programs.

January 31, 2013

- The Mayor's Fund partners with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) to launch the City's free mold treatment program in coordination with the Mayor's Housing Recovery Office.
- In partnership with MOIA, the LISC hotline was able to schedule appointments in over 170 languages. Between April and May, Immigrant Outreach Workers made nearly 250 direct referrals to LISC on behalf of immigrant renters and homeowners impacted by mold.

January 31, 2013

- With support from the Mayor's Fund, the City launches Mold Awareness and General Safety Trainings. Between January and June, 63 courses were delivered, 1,467 people were trained and 3,230 kits were distributed in coordination with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit.
- In partnership with MOIA, all materials (including "how-to" remove mold manuals) were translated into multiple languages, and trainings were available in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Cantonese, Polish, and Russian.

February 2013

- MOIA partners with American Red Cross in the creation of the Move-In Assistance Program (MIAP) to make rental and repair assistance available to New Yorkers regardless of immigration status.

March 2013

- The City hosts five Sandy Housing Forums attended by more than 1,700 New Yorkers.
- The Mayor's Office of Housing Recovery Operations works with MOIA to provide interpretation at each event, including sign language, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. MOIA hosts additional recovery-themed Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Forums with community based organization partners.

April 2013

- The Mayor's Fund awards \$350,000 to the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) to provide free legal assistance on FEMA applications/appeals, landlord/tenant advocacy, and other housing issues.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Immigrant Outreach Initiative employed multiple outreach and engagement strategies to reach households in target zip codes, making use of bilingual and multilingual outreach workers, community based organizations, churches and other local institutions, thousands of in-person surveys and follow-up phone calls and use of ethnic media to disseminate information.

TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS

Using flood maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), along with population data and demographic information provided by the New York City Department of City Planning, MOIA identified 11 target zip codes in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island likely to capture a significant portion of foreign-born and/or non-citizen households impacted by Hurricane Sandy.

Borough	Region	Zip Codes	Non-Citizen Estimate	Top Languages Spoken by LEP Population
Staten Island	Midland, Port Richmond, South Beach	10306,10305	8,143	Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Korean, African languages
Brooklyn	Brighton Beach, Manhattan Beach, and Sheepshead Bay	11235	11,784	Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic/Urdu
	Coney Island	11224	4,556	Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Urdu
	Canarsie	11236	15,372	Haitian Creole, Spanish, Russian, French
	Gerritsen Beach, Gravesend	11223	12,392	Russian, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic
Queens	Far Rockaway	11691, 11692, 11693, 11694, 11695	13,813	Spanish, Russian, Haitian Creole, French
Total	All Regions	All Zip Codes	66,060	Overall: Spanish, Russian, Haitian Creole, Chinese

Based on available data, MOIA recommended a target goal of reaching at least 6,000 households, which would cover approximately 10 percent of the non-citizen population in the affected areas. MOIA and FPWA relied on this data, as well as feedback from community based partners, to ensure adequate coverage for specific populations and languages.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKERS

With support from the Mayor's Fund, FPWA hired a Project Coordinator to oversee the canvassing operation, including aspects of the recruitment, training, management and tracking of Immigrant Outreach Workers. Over the five month project period, 50 IOWs were hired, predominantly from storm-affected communities, to provide linguistically and culturally competent information and assistance to immigrant households. Many of the IOWs hired had been directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy themselves and were able to support their own communities by bringing direct knowledge and training on the storm's impact to their work.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER (IOW) BREAKDOWN

TOTAL NUMBER OF IOWs: 50



NUMBER OF IOWs PERSONALLY AFFECTED BY HURRICANE SANDY: APPROXIMATELY 1 IN 4



NUMBER IN SEARCH OF EMPLOYMENT PRIOR TO BEING HIRED AS IOWs: APPROX. 1 IN 3



EXAMPLES OF IOWs IN CURRENT ROLES:
DISASTER CASE MANAGER
DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATOR
SANDY HOUSING COORDINATOR

LANGUAGE BREAKDOWN OF IOWs

“ SPANISH: 28 | RUSSIAN: 8
HAITIAN CREOLE: 6 | FRENCH: 4 | URDU: 4
CHINESE (MANDARIN/CANTONESE): 3 | ARABIC: 3

OTHER LANGUAGES:
BENGALI TAGALOG POLISH FARSI DARI
GUJARATI PASHTO HINDI TWI ”



AVERAGE NUMBER OF LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY IOWs: 3

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY

“I wanted to contribute my language and organizing skills to something that could assist victims of the disaster. I have many years of organizing experience, I just finished the Peace Corps, and I speak Urdu, Hindi, and Spanish with fluency. Brighton Beach gave me the unique opportunity to contribute all my languages and skills in one setting. [After serving as an IOW] I am now working with the Brooklyn Small Business Development Center assisting small business owners in Coney Island, Brighton Beach, and Sheepshead Bay to apply for loans to get their businesses running and profitable again.” – **Maha Syed, IOW/Business Advisor, Brooklyn Small Business Development Center**

“We were able to get an up to date and accurate assessment of where people are at in terms of post Sandy life. We had a count of how people were affected by mold, job loss, loss of home and personal property, as well as how the community felt they were treated while seeking help.” – **Jessica Carmona, IOW/Housing Coordinator, Shorefront YM-YWHA**

“The reason I wanted to become an IOW so bad was because of the morning after the storm. I remember waking up at 6 in the morning... I walked down the block to check out what happened to our neighborhood... it was one of the most depressing sights I have seen... watching people come back to their homes, realizing their entire life and everything they worked for be destroyed... it was devastating and nearly a life changing experience. But seeing people help one and other was even better... so speaking with the Arab families who couldn’t speak English and the Hispanic families who couldn’t speak English... it comforted them. They trust you more when you speak their language.” – **Hanine Kandeel, IOW, Staten Island**

“I was able to perform this job because I knew the immigrant families that were affected by it.” – **Felix Quayson, IOW, Canarsie**



Immigrant Outreach Workers supported outreach efforts of the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families in Far Rockaway, Queens

TRAINING

IOWs participated in multiple rounds of trainings, which covered the procedural aspects of canvassing and provided a detailed overview of the federal, state and local disaster assistance services available to impacted residents, as well as additional resources and services offered by City agencies to all New Yorkers. IOWs were also trained to understand how different immigration statuses affect eligibility for various services, highlighting the fact that mixed status families and certain non-citizens are eligible to apply for financial assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and that basic services, such as the provision of food, water, clothing, crisis counseling, legal services, health care and other important disaster assistance services were available to all impacted New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. Additionally, IOWs were trained on relevant City policies, including Executive Orders 34 and 41, which mandate confidentiality with respect to immigration status and other personal information, and Executive Order 120, which ensures access to services regardless of proficiency in English. IOWs were also advised on strategies for promoting trust and confidentiality with immigrant households.



Commissioner Shama greets and trains Immigrant Outreach Workers on January 15, 2013
at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY

“The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies and the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families provided me all the tools to work in the field to feel confident with the community of Far Rockaway.” – **Jackeline Ruiz, IOW, Far Rockaway**

“Although I was familiar with the Canarsie area, the training was effective in that it provided us detailed information about the area and its community population. It also pinpointed the specific zones to canvass. It gave us strategies and tools for properly conducting outreach in the community, as well as a wealth of resource referrals to help our target population.” – **Jean Charles, IOW, Canarsie**

TOOLS

IOWs were outfitted with Google Chromebooks, donated by Google and the Global Disaster Immediate Response Team (Global DIRT), as well as Verizon mi-fi devices, donated by Verizon, to assist with the process of conducting and tracking surveys of households. Additionally, IOWs made use of a Global DIRT survey application, enabling them to identify households in flood zones, describe their needs in-depth and provide real-time updates to the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, MOIA and the Mayor’s Fund about emerging and ongoing needs for impacted households. In addition to central coordination and support from FPWA, IOWs were provided support, guidance and physical space to work by community based organizations working in partnership with FPWA.

ENGAGEMENT WITH RESIDENTS

IOWs were recruited from affected neighborhoods because of their knowledge of the target communities and their ability to communicate effectively in the target languages. Many IOWs supplemented their personal knowledge of impacted community members by asking residents to help them identify additional immigrant households in need of assistance. IOWs also developed partnerships with local community partners, leaders and faith based institutions, which allowed them to meet with residents in safe, familiar settings to better understand their needs and advise them on the resources and services available. After meeting with individuals in-person, IOWs made thousands of follow-up phone calls to ensure that residents needs were being met and to connect them with additional supports when ongoing needs were identified.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY

“I really liked that the target communities were the immigrant communities especially those undocumented. I think it was very helpful to provide/connect them with the available resources to recover after Hurricane Sandy.” – **Susan Soriano, IOW, Far Rockaway**

“As an IOW, I was able to reach out to local immigrant residents in Canarsie who were affected by the storm and had difficulty to recover. Some of them, by virtue of their status in the US, others because of lack of assimilation, still others because of language limitations, were either left out or poorly served by



the response system in the aftermath of Sandy. I was able to empathize with them, comprehensively assess their needs within the program’s guidelines, and refer them to services and agencies that can address their needs. As part of a team working toward the same goals, I had an opportunity to work collaboratively with my co-workers. I shared best practices with them. Together, we developed strategies to comprehensively canvass our assigned neighborhood and to effectively reach out to the community.” – **Jean Charles, IOW, Canarsie**

“I helped a man that I met at Beraca. He has Temporary Protected Status and he was afraid to seek help because of his immigration status. I explained everything to him and I went through every single process with him step by step.” – **Woodline Gedeone, IOW, Canarsie**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Developing strategic partnerships with front line community based organizations serving immigrant residents was key to identifying households and connecting them with local organizations that could help them navigate services and advocate on their behalf. MOIA and FPWA selected six lead partner organizations: the Shorefront YM-YWHA and the Council of Peoples Organization in Brooklyn; Project Hospitality, Make the Road New York and El Centro del Inmigrante in Staten Island; and the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, serving Far Rockaway, Queens. Each organization assisted with the recruitment and coordination of Immigrant Outreach Workers and helped identify households to participate in the survey process. In order to reach additional community members and identify local disaster assistance resources, IOWs developed partnerships with more than 50 additional organizations, including schools, faith institutions and elected officials.



COUNCIL OF PEOPLES ORGANIZATION



SOUTHERN BROOKLYN

Brooklyn contained over half of the total outreach staff and the largest proportion of the immigrant families FPWA set out to reach. FPWA established strong operations in Coney Island, Brighton Beach and Canarsie and expanded into neighboring areas. Shorefront Y and COPO served as the primary partners overseeing IOW outreach to residents. In Canarsie, FPWA set up a team of seven IOWs who worked deep into the community to build relationships with churches, schools, libraries and other organizations in the neighborhood.

Surveys

Goal: 3,500 Collected: 3,889

Top Languages Spoken by LEP Population:

Spanish: 30%	Russian: 24%
Urdu: 18%	Chinese: 11%
Haitian Creole: 8%	Tagalog: 3%
Others: 6%	

Regional Staffing: 22 staff

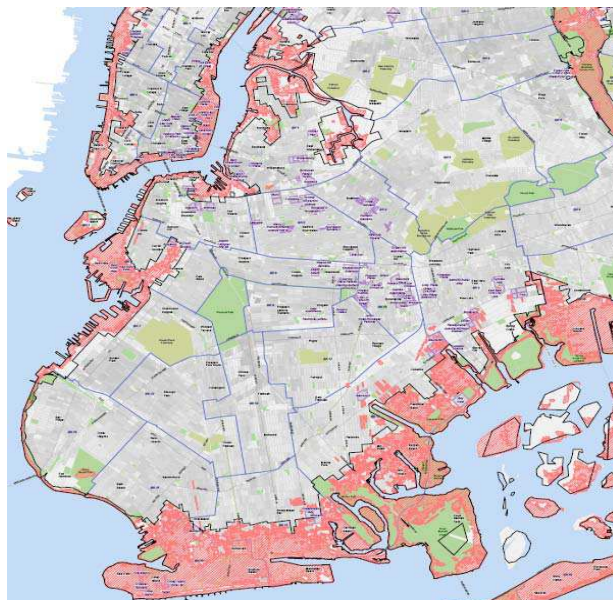
Spanish: 6	Haitian Creole: 6
Russian: 5	Arabic/Urdu/Bengali: 3
Chinese: 2	Tagalog: 1

Lead Organizations (2):

Shorefront YM-YHWA
Council of Peoples Organization

Partner Organizations/Entities (25):

Altagracia Church
American Red Cross
Asian Americans for Equality
Asian Community United Society
Beraca Baptist Church
Book Club of Canarsie
State Assemblyman Alec Brook-Krasny
Brooklyn Chinese American Association
Brooklyn District Leader Ari Kagan
Brooklyn Public Library
Canarsie Community Reformed Church
Canarsie Disaster Relief Committee
Canarsie Holiness Tabernacle



Source: NYC Office of Emergency Management
Inundation Areas – Brooklyn

Coalition for Canarsie
Guardian Angel Church
Holy Family Church of Canarsie
Iglesia Cristiana Metropolitana
Life of Hope Center
Mexican Consulate
New Church International
Our Lady of Solace
Project HOPE
Radio Pa Nou
Seaview Community Center
Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation

“Aligning with known local organizations, either by hiring staff from those groups or working with them as partner organizations, allowed outreach workers to build trust more quickly. We were able to identify community leaders who could serve as advocates for our program and understood the value of communicating information about the variety of government services, programs, and requirements.” –

Eric Williams, Project Coordinator, FPWA

“IOW’s enabled us to help constituencies that we couldn’t communicate with because of language barriers. After communication was established we were better able to assess needs and distribute heaters, blankets, food and water.” – **David Cohen, Sandy Recovery Coordinator, Shorefront Y**

STATEN ISLAND

Make the Road, El Centro and Project Hospitality made up the core team of organizations and staff on the ground surveying the immigrant communities in Staten Island and were active in a variety of aspects of Staten Island's recovery process. IOWs helped build capacity in the region with ethnic groups, including Spanish, Russian, Polish, Urdu and Arabic speakers.

Surveys

Goal: 1,100 Collected: 1,346

Top Languages Spoken by LEP Population:

Spanish: 46% Russian: 39%
Arabic: 6% Polish: 3%
Others: 6%

Regional Staffing: 14 Staff

Spanish: 8 Arabic/Urdu/Gujarati: 4
Russian/Polish: 3 Chinese: 1

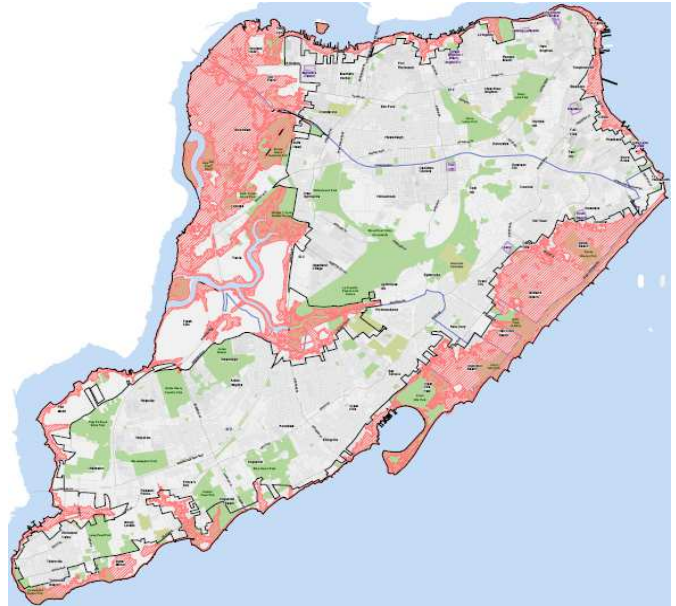
Lead Organizations (3):

El Centro del Inmigrante
Make the Road New York
Project Hospitality

Partner Organizations/Entities (16):

Albanian American Center
American Red Cross
Guyan Rescue
Hermanos Unidos en Cristo Church
Islamic Circle of North America
Occupy Sandy
Salvation Army
Sandy Claus

Siller Foundation
Smiles Around Us Academy
Staten Island Alliance
Staten Island Community Center
Staten Island Long Term Recovery Organization
Staten Island Unity Hub
Steps 2 Success
Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation



Source: NYC Office of Emergency Management
Inundation Areas – Staten Island

“IOWs supported Make the Road’s work in a number of ways. They identified families who needed to apply for FEMA or complete a FEMA appeal and referred these families to our legal department for assistance in applying; they identified individuals who were eligible for Disaster Unemployment Assistance but had not yet applied and referred them to our legal department for assistance applying; they made referrals to our legal department for a variety of other legal issues, including tenant/landlord issues such as refusal to return security deposits, refusals to make repairs including mold remediation, or assistance recouping funds after a landlord forced tenants to pay for repairs; they screened over 100 applications for Tzu-Chi cash assistance and other private cash assistance; and they connected immigrant families with furniture and small appliances donated by the Mayor’s Fund as well as private individuals and organizations.” – **Melissa McCrumb, Sandy Response Coordinator, Make the Road New York**

FAR ROCKAWAY, QUEENS

The Committee for Hispanic Children and Families worked diligently to contact families, set up neighborhood visits and reach out to community organizations within the Spanish-speaking neighborhoods, and FPWA supplemented this outreach by identifying community members who could liaise with Polish and Haitian Creole speakers. Faith in New York (formerly Queens Congregations United for Action) also stepped in to help coordinate additional work with congregations in the Rockaways. IOWs also worked to connect with other organizations that help on a local basis, including the Needs Assessment group in the Rockaways Long Term Recovery Group and Occupy Sandy.

Surveys

Goal: 1,400

Collected: 1,636

Top Languages Spoken by LEP Population:

Spanish – 92%

Russian – 4%

Others – 4%

Regional Staffing: 16 staff

Spanish: 12

Russian/Polish: 1

African languages: 1

Arabic/Urdu: 1

Lead Organization:

Committee for Hispanic Children and Families

Partner Organizations/Entities (8):

American Red Cross

Cavalry Chapel at the Cross

Community Church – The Nazarene

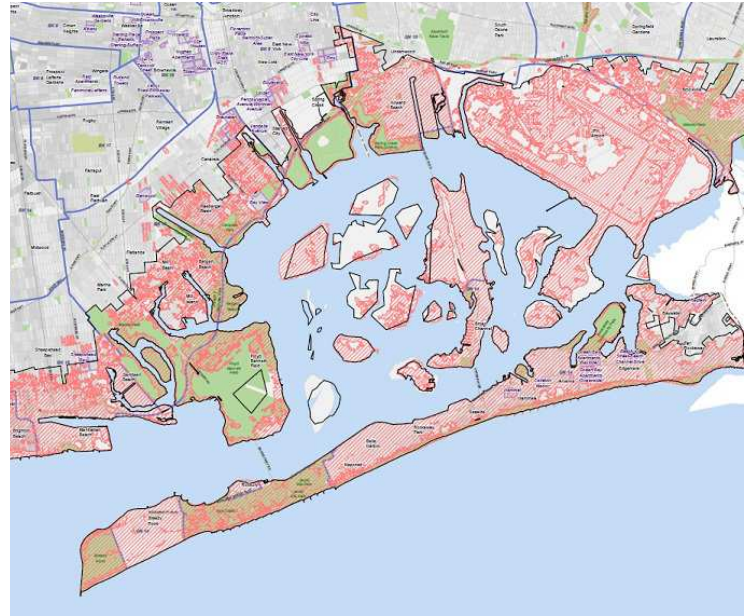
Faith in New York (Formerly Queens Congregations United for Action)

Head Start

PS 104Q

Sorrentino Recreation Center

Tzu Chi Buddhist Foundation



Source: NYC Office of Emergency Management
Inundation Areas – Queens

“All of our outreach workers were fluent in Spanish and English which helped create trust in the targeted immigrant communities.” – **Vanessa Ramos, Senior Director for Policy, Committee for Hispanic Children and Families**

ENGAGEMENT METHODS

IOWs employed a variety of strategies to identify and successfully engage residents and build relationships with community organizations. In many cases, partnerships formed between FPWA, MOIA and non-profit service providers throughout the initiative allowed IOWs to do direct intake on behalf of various programs.

Building neighborhood contacts. In several areas, FPWA had direct access to families who had come into partner organizations requesting help. These initial contacts were instrumental in expanding access to immigrant residents in need of assistance. In many cases, residents served as guides for IOWs in their neighborhoods, making introductions to additional households and advising on the areas and homes in greatest need.

Canvassing identified neighborhoods. Cross-referencing flood maps with available demographic data about languages spoken, IOWs were able to conduct door-to-door canvassing efforts in certain neighborhoods to identify additional households in need of assistance, often with support from volunteer groups.

Attending community and church events. IOWs set up numerous events in partnership with community leaders, organizations, churches and other community centers to facilitate relationships with residents in safe and familiar settings. These events were especially effective when connected to church services or with organizations providing tangible resources and services to families in need.

Holding office hours. In addition to proactively seeking out residents, IOWs also held “Office Hours” for two to three hours each week at local organizations, churches and restaurants to receive immigrant families in need of help. IOWs were able to publicize consistent dates, times and locations where they were available for families who they would not otherwise be able to reach over the phone or at the door.

Making follow-up calls. IOWs made thousands of follow up phone calls to households that they had previously surveyed to ensure that they were connected to available services, find out about ongoing needs and refer residents directly to new programs (e.g., Neighborhood Revitalization NYC for free mold treatment) that officially launched after canvassing began.

“When I followed up with some of the clients, they expressed gratitude for having this program help them and they felt remembered and important.” – **Yuliya Sidorenko, IOW, Far Rockaway**

ETHNIC MEDIA

Multiple rounds of week-long advertisements were placed in major ethnic media publications, including El Diario (Spanish), Sing Tao Daily (Chinese), Russkaya Reklama (Russian), Haiti Liberti (Haitian Creole) and Pakistan News (Urdu) notifying residents of the right of certain non-citizens to access FEMA cash assistance and advising them to call 311 or visit NYC.gov for information about housing, mold, legal services and other resources. In total, these publications have a readership of more than 200,000 individuals in the New York City metropolitan area.

FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES

HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the course of approximately five months, IOWs collected 6,871 household surveys, exceeding the goal of 6,000 surveys and providing a clear picture of the ongoing needs of immigrant residents in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. Surveys were collected primarily in Southern Brooklyn, the Rockaways and Staten Island with the help of IOWs and numerous community partners.

Geography and Type of Housing

- The majority of households surveyed were located in Southern Brooklyn (3,889), with many also in the Rockaways (1,636) and on Staten Island (1,346)
- The majority (2,792) were residing in 1 & 2 family buildings, with many also in multi-family elevator buildings (700) and multi-family walk-up buildings (293)

Demographics

- The vast majority (84.2 percent) of those who reported country of origin were born outside the United States, with the greatest representation coming from Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine, China, Haiti and the Philippines
- Nearly three quarters (72.2 percent) of those who reported language preference spoke a language other than English, with the most frequent languages being Spanish, Russian, Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese and Haitian Creole
- 2,590 households were home to minor children
- 898 households were home to multiple families
- The average number of individuals per household was 4, with as many as 16 individuals living in one household

REPORTED CHALLENGES

The primary goals of the Immigrant Outreach Worker Initiative were to identify challenges faced by immigrant households in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy and provide information and assistance to help them through the recovery process.

Housing and Property Damage

Affordable housing remains the largest and most frequently-cited challenge for immigrant households. Residents of impacted communities in Southern Brooklyn, Staten Island and the Rockaways face particular challenges with damage to a significant portion of their housing stock. Thousands of households in these areas sustained flood or structural damage or were otherwise displaced by Hurricane Sandy, which has reduced the already limited number of affordable units. In some cases as tenants leave, are evicted or have not returned to rental units damaged by Hurricane Sandy, landlords have fixed them up and may now be renting them at significantly higher rates. Many tenants remain in compromised housing because their landlords refuse or are unable to afford to make necessary repairs. In combination with the reported loss of employment and income for many of these households, finding sustainable housing remains a top concern.

- Approximately 1 in 3 households reported structural and/or flood damage to their homes
- More than 1,000 households were either temporarily or permanently displaced
- Hundreds of households lost or sustained damage to mattresses (335), other furniture items (520) or important documents (461)
- Approximately 1 in 10 households reported cases of mold
- According to an informal survey conducted by Make the Road in Staten Island, renters have experienced an average increase of \$300 per month in rent, post-Sandy.

Access to FEMA Cash Assistance

Financial assistance available to homeowners and renters through FEMA is not available to undocumented households. Mixed status households—those headed by an undocumented individual but with children or other household members who are U.S. citizens or have “qualified alien” status—are eligible, but many did not know they could apply or were afraid to apply due to fear of revealing their immigration status to the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees both Immigration and Customs Enforcement and FEMA. Additionally, survey data and reports from community based partners revealed that many immigrant households were home to multiple families living in the same unit. In the majority of these cases, households that sustained damage were initially denied by FEMA altogether or only one of the families in the unit received aid because the applications were interpreted as duplicative. Lastly, many households that were initially denied by FEMA were not aware of the appeals process or needed assistance with the process.

- Of the nearly 1,600 renter households that reported some combination of structural or flood damage, fewer than 500 households qualified for and received federal aid
- More than 1,200 households were identified as potentially eligible to apply for FEMA or appeal FEMA denials that had not done so at the time of the survey
- Of the approximately 750 multi-family households that reported some combination of flood or structural damage, fewer than 40 percent qualified for and received federal aid for either family
- Only 1 in 9 households denied by FEMA had appealed the decision at the time of the survey

Loss of Income/Employment

Hundreds of households were impacted financially and economically by Hurricane Sandy. Even if they missed as little as a week or two of work, many are still behind on paying for rent or basic necessities. Many people have lost their jobs, incurred additional expenses, or have not been able to find work in their areas as a result of the hurricane. Additionally, many unbanked households reported losing cash savings that were stored in the home as a result of flood and other damage. In combination with the lack of federal cash assistance, this loss of income and/or employment has severely impacted families’ abilities to find and afford sustainable housing.

- Nearly 1,000 households reported losing income (either through loss of employment or loss of business) or cash savings (due to flood damage)

- Approximately 200 households were home to individuals who were unemployed prior to Hurricane Sandy
- Nearly 100 households were home to small business owners whose businesses were impacted

Health, Nutrition and Ongoing Case Management Needs

Hundreds of immigrant households reported losing food or needing other forms of nutrition assistance following Hurricane Sandy. Loss of income, savings and/or employment also made it difficult for already cash-strapped households to continue paying for basic necessities, such as medication or medical treatment, in addition to continuing to pay rent. Many undocumented households expressed frustration when seeking medical care, not realizing that the City’s public hospital system, the Health and Hospitals Corporation, provides health care to uninsured and undocumented New Yorkers.

- 290 reported needing food or nutrition assistance
- 242 households reported needs for medical treatment
- 181 households reporting a need for crisis counseling
- Nearly 350 households expressed an interest in connecting with ongoing disaster case management

RESPONSE

After identifying families’ most pressing needs, IOWs were able to advise them on the appropriate disaster assistance services, in many cases providing direct assistance with applications, accompanying residents to appointments, conducting direct intake on behalf of various programs, and making referrals to relevant organizations. The response fell primarily into the following 5 categories.

1) Multilingual Outreach and Engagement to Inform Residents of Existing Services

Understanding that thousands of impacted families needed linguistically and culturally appropriate guidance in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, and that concerns about immigration status might prevent families from seeking help, the City of New York, the Mayor’s Fund, MOIA and FPWA worked in coordination to provide information and assistance to immigrant households in familiar languages and locations.

Outcomes:

- The Mayor’s Fund supported FPWA to coordinate the recruitment, hiring, training and deployment of 50 Immigrant Outreach Workers, who spoke an average of three languages each and a total of nearly 20 different languages, to survey and assist residents in impacted communities in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island.
- Immigrant Outreach Workers engaged more than 6,800 households and approximately 16,800 New Yorkers, surveying them about their needs, providing information about relevant disaster assistance services, and helping individuals directly connect with resources and organizations to support their recovery.

- IOWs made over 8,300 follow up phone calls to households that they had previously surveyed to ensure that they were connected to available services, find out about ongoing needs and refer residents directly to new programs that officially launched after canvassing began.
- With guidance from MOIA, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies placed multiple rounds of week-long advertisements in major ethnic media publications, including El Diario (Spanish), Sing Tao Daily (Chinese), Russkaya Reklama (Russian), Haiti Liberti (Haitian Creole) and Pakistan News (Urdu) notifying residents of the right of certain non-citizens to access FEMA cash assistance and advising them to call 311 or visit NYC.gov for information about housing, mold, legal services and other resources.
- Through the City's Volunteer Language Bank and NYCertified City employees, more than 100 Sandy Recovery-related documents were translated into at least the top three languages spoken by limited English proficient New Yorkers (Spanish, Russian, Simplified Chinese).
- In partnership with MOIA, all materials for the New York City Mold Awareness and Safe Practices Trainings (including "how-to" remove mold manuals) were translated into multiple languages, and trainings were available in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Cantonese, Polish, and Russian.
- The City hosted five Sandy Housing Forums attended by more than 1,700 New Yorkers. Interpretation was available at each event, including sign language, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. MOIA hosted additional recovery-themed Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Forums with community based organization partners.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY:

"We were able to reach a lot of people who had no idea that there were outreach workers with resources available. Helping with FEMA appeals and legal appointments sometimes resulted in additional funds. Being able to refer people to the relevant programs and even just letting them know that they haven't been forgotten and there are people working on their behalf, I believe, helped." –

Susana Torres, IOW, Far Rockaway

"I was able to assist individuals who had a language barrier and were unable to access benefits because of their immigration status. As a bilingual employee, I was capable to assist them and make the services available for them." – **Denia Mota, IOW/Disaster Case Manager, Far Rockaway/South Brooklyn**

"There was a woman who was left completely homeless and with no documents after Hurricane Sandy. We cooperated with various City agencies to obtain financial assistance for her and provide her with necessary support to re-process her documents." – **Irina Dolgopyat, IOW, South Brooklyn**

2) FEMA Application Assistance, Legal Referrals, and Other Housing-Related Assistance

Complicated FEMA cases and housing issues were some of the most frequently-cited concerns from immigrant residents and organizations serving impacted communities. In response, the Mayor's Fund, MOIA and FPWA partnered with FEMA, the American Red Cross, the New York Legal Assistance Group, and community based organizations to provide direct assistance to impacted households.

Outcomes:

- MOIA partnered with FEMA and enlisted nine community based organizations and libraries to serve as mobile FEMA application sites for immigrant New Yorkers.
- IOWs identified 1,253 households potentially eligible to apply for FEMA or appeal a FEMA denial who had yet to take such action, informing them about the process, helping them complete or resubmit applications, and connecting them with legal assistance where necessary, resulting thousands of additional dollars in aid for some residents.
- The Mayor's Fund supported the New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) to provide free legal assistance to households with FEMA appeals, insurance claims, landlord/tenant advocacy and other housing issues.
- In conjunction with the New York Legal Assistance Group, MOIA and FPWA established a referral portal that enabled NYLAG to receive and follow up with families identified through outreach and connect them with volunteer lawyers who could work with them in the appropriate language.
- IOWs directly connected more than 350 households with free legal assistance from the New York Legal Assistance Group, Make the Road New York and other non-profit legal service providers to assist with FEMA applications, appeals and other housing-related issues. Lead partner organizations have ongoing relationships with NYLAG to make referrals, host "Know Your Rights" educational events, and conduct additional on-site outreach.
- FPWA coordinated with American Red Cross representatives to organize site visits and schedule intake appointments to get families into the Red Cross Move-In Assistance Program, which provides funds to help families with financial assistance to move to a new apartment and help with getting replacement furniture that was damaged in the hurricane. IOWs identified nearly 300 households potentially eligible for assistance from the American Red Cross.
- Multiple community partners, including the Shorefront YM-YWHA and the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, hired Immigrant Outreach Workers to serve full-time as Housing and Disaster Recovery Coordinators to assist with relocation for Hurricane survivors who have exhausted all other resources and still need help finding sustainable housing situations.
- IOWs helped more than 50 households register for the HPD Housing Portal to help them find affordable housing for Hurricane survivors across New York City

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY

“Our outreach workers have assisted dozens of households with FEMA appeals and translation of FEMA documents. Some of the appeal assistance has resulted in thousands of dollars in added FEMA funds.” – **David Cohen, Sandy Recovery Coordinator, Shorefront Y**

“There was a client that had been denied by FEMA because her landlord falsely applied under her address. I appealed to FEMA and got her approved for \$11,000. One client and her family of 5 got poisoned by fumes when the landlord turned on the boiler without fixing it. They incurred approx \$1,100 per member. I helped get charges dismissed by the hospital.” – **Maria Rivera, IOW/Disaster Case Manager, Shorefront Y**

“Jeanne is a 76 year old resident of Brooklyn who was referred to NYLAG’s Storm Response Unit by FPWA. During Sandy, her car was parked in an underground garage, which was inundated. The car was totaled. Jeanne depended on her car because she was too frail to run errands and carry groceries. Jeanne had only limited insurance, which would not replace the car. On her limited income, she could not afford a new car or a loan. She filed a FEMA claim, but was initially denied. With advocacy from the Storm Response attorney, FEMA reversed its decision on the car and sent Jeanne \$10,000.” – **New York Legal Assistance Group**

“There was a family I met when I was canvassing around Brighton Beach. As I went in I saw they had no beds... absolutely nothing. I asked the mother if she had tried to apply to FEMA. She said she was scared of FEMA and didn't have a Social Security number. I asked her if her son had one, and she said yes. I told her she could apply to FEMA and she said she didn't know if they were going to help her because she was an immigrant. I told her what FEMA did and how she could apply with her son's number and she cried. She said no one had told her that, she did not know what to do anymore, she needed help and didn't know who to reach or who to look for. I helped her with her FEMA application and I referred her to the Tzu Chi Foundation. She got help from FEMA and was able to buy furniture, clothing, and most important, beds. In the office we had some blankets donated and I took two of them to her house, she was really grateful, her house being fixed, now with beds and furniture, now looked great. She gave me thanks and we are still in contact, she calls me sometimes to check in and tells me how she is doing.” – **Susan Torres, IOW, South Brooklyn**

“There was one woman who had just lost her husband. Sandy came right after she had newly renovated her house. Her English wasn't great so we communicated in Mandarin. I knocked on her door right after she had gotten home and she was very frustrated because she had spent the day taking public transportation to Coney Island where she'd heard there were free legal services. This turned out not to be true, at least not that day. I helped her to arrange her paperwork, took her to the NYLAG lawyers at the Y, and interpreted for their meeting. They helped her arrange a FEMA appeal.” – **Rosa Tu, IOW/Housing Coordinator, Shorefront Y**

“I was able to witness first-hand how a lot of people were able to find new apartments and obtain help to rebuild their damaged habitats. We had one man who lived in the basement and was home at the time of Hurricane Sandy. He literally was swimming out from his basement window during that fatal night. The story was extremely chilling. We helped him to find a new apartment and move in.” – **Irina Dolgopyat, IOW, South Brooklyn**

3) Partnership with Neighborhood Revitalization NYC and NYC Mold Awareness and General Safety Trainings

With support from the Mayor's Fund, the City and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) launched Neighborhood Revitalization NYC and the NYC Mold Awareness and General Safety Trainings to assist homeowners and renters dealing with mold issues after the hurricane. MOIA and FPWA partnered with LISC to ensure telephonic interpretation in over 170 languages and to conduct direct intake into the free mold treatment program for immigrant households. MOIA also helped coordinate translation and interpretation for NYC Mold Awareness and General Safety Trainings and identified community based organizations serving immigrant communities to host trainings and help distribute mold kits.

Outcomes:

- MOIA connected the King Call Center, used by LISC to schedule appointments, with interpretation service provider Language Line, enabling Neighborhood Revitalization NYC to conduct intake and schedule appointments in more than 170 different languages.
- In partnership with LISC, Immigrant Outreach Workers were able to do intake for immigrant homeowners directly over the phone and submit those applications to Neighborhood Revitalization NYC. For renters, IOWs were able to collect their contact information and their landlord's contact information so that LISC could follow up with the landlord to get approval. Immigrant Outreach Workers referred nearly 250 renters for the LISC mold treatment program, as well as many homeowners.
- Between January and June, 63 courses were delivered, 1,467 people were trained, and 3,230 kits were distributed citywide through the NYC Mold Awareness and General Safety Training program. In partnership with MOIA, all materials (including "how-to" remove mold manuals) were translated into multiple languages, and trainings were available in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Cantonese, Polish, and Russian. Trainings were held in partnership with multiple CBO partners, including the Council of Peoples Organization, Project Hospitality and El Centro del Inmigrante.
- To support renters whose landlords may be uncooperative and choose not to enroll in Neighborhood Revitalization NYC, the Mayor's Fund supported NYLAG to provide legal services related to tenant advocacy in cooperation with community based organizations who have identified tenants with these needs. Immigrant Outreach Workers referred more than 350 households to NYLAG and other legal service providers.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY:

"I worked with a household composed of a mother, father, and two children both under the age of three. There was a mold problem in their home for several weeks and it was only getting worse. I contacted the mold removal services. When the mold removal service individuals came they told the family that the bleach did not help remove the mold. When the mold removal service did remove the mold the family was excited... the mother was so grateful that she assisted me in reaching out to at least 5 new families who were in need of assistance." – **Roberto Celestin, IOW, Canarsie**

"One of my clients had mold from the ceiling growing all the way to the ground. She was an elderly woman with medical issues. We got someone to go out and look at her house for the mold and they're going to get rid of it. She called me today to thank me for my help. I have become very close with this elderly woman. I actually visit her once a week now, just to check in with her and help her out with anything that she may need." – **Hanine Kandeel, IOW, Staten Island**

4) Tzu Chi Foundation Emergency Cash Assistance

MOIA worked with the Tzu Chi Foundation to secure \$1.2 million in cash assistance for undocumented households affected by Hurricane Sandy. The Foundation provides grants of up to \$600 to undocumented families that have not been able to receive support through other means. The Tzu Chi Foundation also established a Sandy Home Visitation program to provide recurring cash assistance over the course of 3-6 months. IOWs identified families who fit the qualifications for both of these programs and conducted initial intake with staff in the field.

Outcomes:

- MOIA partnered with the Tzu Chi Foundation to secure \$1.2 million in cash assistance for undocumented households affected by Hurricane Sandy in the form of \$300 and \$600 cash grants.
- IOWs and partner organizations connected more than 800 households with cash assistance from the Tzu Chi Foundation.
- As a result of the need demonstrated, Tzu Chi enhanced its service to provide ongoing, monthly cash assistance to undocumented households that were severely impacted through the Sandy Home Visitation Program. Tzu Chi has accepted more than 100 cases for this program through IOW and partner organization referrals and the assistance is ongoing.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY:

“Our IOW's screened over 100 applications for Tzu-Chi cash assistance and other private cash assistance. Through these two programs our IOW's connected immigrant families with over \$60,000 in cash assistance.” – **Melissa McCrumb, Sandy Response Coordinator, Make the Road New York**

“There is one case in particular that really caught my attention. There was a young lady living with her mother who was diagnosed with cancer. Her basement apartment was flooded and she did not receive enough from FEMA to make all the necessary repairs. I was able to connect them with the Tzu Chi Foundation so they could receive an emergency cash assistance grant. They were so happy when they received the grant.” – **Edgar Perez, IOW, South Brooklyn**

5) Furniture, Basic Necessities and Referrals for Ongoing Case Management

Hundreds of families lost or sustained damage to their beds, household furniture and other items as a result of the storm. IOWs identified families in need of various items and worked with local organizations to secure furniture for families in need. The Mayor's Fund provided more than \$2 million to support the distribution of hot meals, relief supplies, clothing, furniture and other items, which were available for all New Yorkers in need, regardless of immigration status, including 335 mattresses distributed by community partners to families that had been sleeping on wet or damaged beds after the storm. IOWs also referred many households for ongoing Disaster Case Management to assist households with more complex and long-term recovery needs outside the scope of the short-term Immigrant Outreach Initiative.

Outcomes:

- IOWs identified more than 300 households in need of mattresses and more than 500 households in need of other furniture items and worked with the Mayor's Fund and other organizations to help secure these items.

- The Mayor's Fund purchased 335 mattresses, which were distributed by Shorefront YM-YWHA, COPO, Make the Road, Project Hospitality, El Centro and Committee for Hispanic Children and Families to immigrant households in need.
- IOWs also assisted organizations with the distribution of basic supplies. For example, IOWs assigned to the Shorefront Y distributed winter clothing, blankets, heaters, cleaning supplies, toiletries, food and water to over 750 households.
- Through follow up calls, IOWs referred 130 households to local food pantries and helped 78 households apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- IOWs referred more than 400 households to Catholic Charities-funded organizations for Disaster Case Management.

IMMIGRANT OUTREACH WORKER TESTIMONY:

"I met a woman from Egypt whose 21 year old son drowned. This family lost everything. Their home was flooded and they had to evacuate and move to a hotel. The family has 5 other kids besides the one they lost during Sandy. The mother had very limited English. Her husband who owns a small business could not work. I helped them get a full set of furniture, sofa, love seat and dining table from another family who donated all most all of their home items for survivors of Sandy. The happiness and joy of that family was priceless." – **Zarlasht Golam, IOW, Staten Island**

"I assisted a woman whose husband lost his car in Sandy, which was his means of money. She and one of her children were on disability. I was able to get her a case worker, connect her to a housing organization that paid for moving assistance, and get mattresses for the family." – **Taskeen Vaid, IOW, Staten Island**

"I helped a man follow up and renew SNAP (food stamps). We submitted forms and documents in application/renewal for public assistance through his youngest son (the only US citizen and documented in his family) with a government case worker at the Social Security office in Coney Island. He was also given free one-way metrocards to be used for his interview appointment." – **Gary Labao, IOW, South Brooklyn**

"I was able to provide assistance to individuals who felt that they were at a huge loss due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy. Some people needed basic needs to survive (e.g., food) and this program allowed these people to access resources. Some people's environment was disrupted due to Hurricane Sandy, where many agencies closed due to the storm. This program helped them get access to community organizing agencies to help them set up programs for young children and older adults. Some are used to having a certain lifestyle and a certain level of comfort in their home, but Hurricane Sandy damaged their floors, furniture, and electronic devices -- this program allowed these individuals to restore their home environment." – **Yuliya Sidorenko, IOW, FPWA**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations should be considered to better prepare and support a citywide response in the event of future disasters.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

1. Create an Immigrant Emergency Response and Recovery Task Force to Develop an Action-Oriented Outreach Plan for Future Disasters

To better support a coordinated citywide interagency and community-engaged response to a disaster, MOIA will lead an effort to create an Immigrant Emergency Response and Recovery Task Force. The Task Force will include staff from key City agencies with engagement and input from key community-based organizations. The development of an action-oriented outreach plan will aim to be implemented in the event of a future emergency or disaster. The plan should include but not be limited to:

- a) An information dissemination pipeline process highlighting key emergency response protocol for neighborhood and community-based partners, including evacuation zones and procedures, shelter sites, City, State and Federal disaster assistance resources, and other key topics.
- b) A process to maintain the Guide to Disaster Assistance Service for Immigrant New Yorkers created by MOIA after Hurricane Sandy. The document should be updated and translated into key languages and maintained electronically for quick distribution. The guide should describe and include immigrant eligibility for City, State and Federal services, the City's Confidentiality Policy (Executive Orders 34/41), the City's Language Access Policy (Executive Order 120), rights to translation and interpretation services and explain public charge.
- c) A plain language poster describing Executive Orders 34/41 protections and Executive Order 120 translated and available for quick distribution to agency and community-based partners during a disaster to ensure protections and minimize fear and misunderstanding from community members to come forward when in need of assistance.
- d) The appropriate protocol to deploy NYCertified City Employees to Emergency Shelters and Disaster Sites quickly. With more than 1,000 bilingual and multilingual City employees trained to provide high-quality translation and interpretation assistance, this audience could be a tremendous resource deployed to sites based on language needs.
- e) A strategy to provide or encourage the creation of multilingual badges for outreach workers, Community Emergency Response Team members and other city or designated leaders highlighting roles (e.g., volunteer or interpreter) and language.

2. Increase NYC Office of Emergency Management Community Emergency Response Recruitment and Trainings with Vulnerable Populations in Multiple Languages.

The NYC Office of Emergency Management and MOIA should work to recruit and train through the 10-week Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training a new audience of multilingual CERT volunteers to help educate and prepare communities for future disasters and help respond in emergencies. CERT training is an intensive 10-week training program that raises awareness about emergencies and disasters and provides basic response skills needed for fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations and traffic control. After graduating from the 10-week program, CERT members support their communities by assisting with emergency education and response. NYC CERT volunteers are trained to support the efforts of NYC's first responders. During non-emergency

situations, NYC CERTs educate their communities about emergency preparedness by working with the Ready New York program and building community disaster networks.

3. Host Neighborhood Disaster Preparedness Forums with Vulnerable Populations in Multiple Languages

Similar to CERT trainings, disaster preparedness trainings and/or forums should be held for community members living in evacuation zones in multiple languages. Forums would inform and better prepare large numbers of immigrant and limited English proficient New Yorkers for future disasters by providing basic information about emergency preparedness and identifying community leaders, community organizations and City agencies that may be involved in disaster response.

4. Create an Emergency Response and Recovery Fellowship Program with Community- and Faith-Based Organizations

Immigrant Outreach Workers were extremely capable and effective in meeting with and assessing the needs of immigrant households in their communities. One challenge during the rollout of the Immigrant Outreach Initiative was quickly finding enough individuals to fill the IOW roles. Working with community- and faith-based organizations to identify, train and designate key individuals to fill these roles in the event of future emergencies will save time and provide an immediate network of capable individuals for community organizations and City agencies to engage.

5. Create a Youth Internship Program Focused on Disaster Preparedness

Immigrant youth often serve informally as linguistic and cultural brokers, and in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, numerous organizations relied on young people to use their language skills to communicate between trainers or first responders and limited English proficient New Yorkers. Similar to the Summer Youth Employment Program run by the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, an effort should be made to explore the possibility of creating specific positions for youth in disaster preparedness and response, with a specific focus on immigrant communities and other vulnerable populations.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1. Language Access

To ensure limited English proficient New Yorkers receive appropriate information and services, several City agencies, namely the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Office of Operations, the NYC Office of Emergency Management, the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit and the City's Human Resource Administration, should coordinate a key outline for Agency Heads on ensuring effective and inclusive provision of disaster assistance services. Specifically, such an outline should include the prioritization of bilingual and multilingual City employees (either NYCertified, selectively certified through DCAS, or otherwise deemed qualified by the Agency) in staff placement at crisis/disaster assistance locations in order to boost the City's multilingual capacity at first contact.

2. Information Dissemination

Many City agencies that directly interact with New Yorkers use a number of information dissemination tools and networks to communicate regularly with the public. The Mayor's Office and OEM should ensure that City agencies receive regular and key updates to disseminate to large audiences through existing information dissemination tools and networks to ensure timely access to information for all New Yorkers, especially impacted communities. MOIA will ensure that messages delivered to its constituency respond to the multilingual needs of limited English proficient New Yorkers.

3. Community-Based Support

Community-based partners were critical to the City's response to Hurricane Sandy. However, many were impacted directly by the Hurricane while still serving their clients and helping the City serve New Yorkers. The Mayor's Fund, through the support of its funders, was able to provide support to help many impacted community organizations. This support was critical and allowed organizations to hire additional staff and serve in key roles in response to the disaster. The City and philanthropy must recognize the role of community-based providers and provide financial support to help enhance their ability to serve as response and recovery partners.

HURRICANE SANDY RECOVERY

1. Respond to Housing Challenges for Those that Did Not Receive or Do Not Qualify for Federal Aid


Lack of affordable housing options coupled with loss of income/employment and restrictions on access to federal aid means many immigrant families remain in unsustainable housing situations. Of approximately 1,600 renters surveyed who reported some combination of flood or structural damage to their homes, fewer than 500 qualified for and received federal aid. A rental subsidy voucher program, for example, coupled with financial counseling and a possible savings matching program to ensure livable, affordable housing for individuals who were unable to access FEMA or other federal cash assistance could provide an innovative and sustainable solution for many.

2. Explore Additional Housing Options in Severely-Impacted Communities

According to reports from Immigrant Outreach Workers and community based organizations, many families impacted by Hurricane Sandy were—or still are—living in unsustainable housing, including illegally-converted sub-unit apartments. Additionally, nearly 1,000 of the households surveyed were home to multiple families, resulting in overcrowding and creating challenges in accessing FEMA assistance. Responding to the shortage of affordable housing by considering new housing opportunities, such as the possible creation of above-ground Accessory Dwelling Units or the legalization of sub-units, should be explored in severely-impacted communities as a strategy for increasing the availability of safe, affordable units.


3. Build Financial Counseling Capability in Organizations Serving Immigrant Communities

Hundreds of households reported lost income, savings or other financial hardship as a result of Hurricane Sandy. A report from the NYC Office of Financial Empowerment shows that many immigrants, particularly those who are undocumented, remain unbanked. In some cases, unbanked households lost cash savings stored in basements as a result of flooding. Through strategic investments, training and technical assistance, building the capacity of organizations serving immigrant communities to provide high-quality financial counseling and education could help address the lack of access to mainstream financial services and help immigrant New Yorkers improve their financial security in the United States.





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