

**PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES (Revised)**  
**PROGRAM: Post-Sandy Planning Assistance Grant for Municipalities and Counties**  
**LEAD AGENCY: Department of Community Affairs**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program (the “Program”) supports planning for community redevelopment in the municipalities and counties sustaining damage from Superstorm Sandy. Due to the damage caused by the storm, many New Jersey municipalities and counties face a myriad of recovery challenges. Among them is the need for planning support to develop community recovery plans that strategically address the issues that now confront them. In furtherance of its mission to provide local government officials with the tools needed to efficiently manage municipal operations, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has created a local planning assistance program that will supplement the ongoing efforts of storm-impacted local and county governments to rebuild and revitalize. This program is specifically designed to augment and not conflict with other planning programs that units of local government may be utilizing as a result of Superstorm Sandy.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The Program provides grants to municipalities and counties to hire American Institute of Certified Planners /New Jersey Board of Professional Planners (AICP/PP) licensed planners to address conditions created or exacerbated by the storm, identify approaches to rebuilding that will be more resistant to damage from future storm events, and encourage sustainable economic growth.

**PROGRAM ALLOCATION**

The Department was allocated \$13.7 million in Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds for this program. All awards made through the Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program will be subject to the CDBG-DR regulations and the New Jersey DCA CDBG-DR Action Plan, as approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The report and all deliverables must be completed within a 12-month contract term.

**GRANT PROGRAMS MAXIMUM AWARD AMOUNT**

Varies with type of assistance requested

Phase One Programs

Strategic Recovery Planning Report (SRPR)	\$30,000
Requests for Proposals to prepare the SRPR	\$5,000

Phase Two Programs

Requests for Proposals to prepare Phase Two Plans	\$5,000
Modify or develop Municipal Master Plan	\$50,000
Master Plan Reexamination Reports	\$50,000
Develop Master Plan Elements	\$50,000
Community Vulnerability Assessment	\$25,000
Community Resiliency Plans	\$50,000
Community Development, Redevelopment and	

Neighborhood Plans	\$50,000
Permit and Application Process Quality Improvement	\$25,000
Design Standards	\$50,000
Capital Improvement Plans	\$30,000
Urban and Suburban Environmental Design	\$50,000
Development of codes, ordinances, standards, and regulations	\$20,000
GIS Development	\$50,000
Market Value Analysis	\$50,000
Community Rating System (CRS) Certification	\$50,000
Debris Management Plan	\$25,000
Other	\$50,000

Applicants are permitted to request more than one type of planning assistance.

**GEOGRAPHIC ELIGIBILITY**

Funding will only be available to the counties of Atlantic, Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Union and units of local government within these nine counties.

**ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Counties and municipalities must have documented and sustained a ratable loss attributable to Super storm Sandy of at least 1% or \$1 million derived from the 2013 Certified Tax List for those properties that received a Disaster Relief code from the Department of Treasury, Division of Taxation. Applicants also must demonstrate how assistance through the use of these program funds will lead to greater community resilience. Broader eligibility criteria may be established to allow additional local governments to participate if a clear need exists.

**USE OF FUNDS**

Funds are intended to be used primarily to pay for professional planning services. Reasonable costs associated with specific planning activities, including the costs to collect or buy data, software, maps and studies may also be funded. Grant funds will NOT pay for staff salaries, travel, equipment, or meals. All funding requests for eligible activities must be accompanied by adequate supporting documentation as solely determined by LPS.

Grant applicants should secure other sources of funding or commit municipal or county funds to implement the plans created through this program.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

There is no submission deadline. These grants are not competitive. Grant applications will be accepted on a first come first served basis. However, because federal regulations require that all CDBG-DR funds must be expended in two years, grant agreements will be for a term of 12 months or less. Applications will be accepted beyond the first twelve months for a second round of activities or for first time applicants if funds allocated to the Program have not been exhausted.

## **PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

The Program will be administered by the DCA's Office of Local Planning Services (LPS), which maintains a staff of planners licensed by both the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and the New Jersey Board of Professional Planners (PP). LPS staff will review grant applications and assess the substance and cost of the requests. Applicants may be asked to present additional information or revise the scope of their application. Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis following the acceptance of an application for one or more eligible grant activities that adequately describes the need and purpose for the request. All funded projects must be overseen by an AICP/PP licensed planner. Applicants may also ask that LPS staff provide assistance, free of charge, once a grant application has been initiated.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

The program is designed to operate in two phases. The first phase enables communities to develop a *Strategic Recovery Planning Report (SRPR)*. Applicants must complete the report (described below) before being eligible to receive Phase Two planning assistance grants. Applicants who do not already possess a Strategic Recovery Planning Report (or a report of comparable content) should apply for a Phase One planning grant to create a SRPR (and/or for funding to prepare a Request for Proposal) before applying for other eligible grant activities.

Once applicants have completed the *Strategic Recovery Planning Report* and it has been accepted by LPS, grantees may apply for additional program funds from the Phase Two categories listed below to address specific planning project needs. Note that any proposed Phase Two activity must be a recommended planning activity in the SRPR.

In Phase Two, applicants can combine requests for multiple eligible grant activities, and local government entities may file joint applications when planning grant activities are regional in nature. The Phase Two activities that may be funded with Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grants include but are not limited to the activities listed below. Eligible applicants may apply for projects other than those listed if the project activities satisfy the purposes of the program and the applicant has an approved Strategic Recovery Planning Report. (Educational/research institutions are exempt from the requirement to complete a SRPR.)

### **Phase One –Request to prepare Request for Proposal and/or Strategic Recovery Planning Report**

#### ***Preparation of Request for Proposal***

Purpose: To prepare Request for Proposals (RFP) for soliciting professional firms to undertake development of strategic recovery planning report. This activity should be combined with the strategic activity request. However, in order to save time and resources, applicants are advised that they may request free assistance from LPS professional planners or utilize the sample RFP document that is available for download on the Department's website.

***Strategic Recovery Planning Report (SRPR)***

Purpose: To engage professional planners to evaluate the impacts of the disaster on relevant community features. The evaluation should focus on planning goals, strategies, and priorities leading to actions that are most urgently needed for public safety and economic recovery. The SRPR should serve as a guide for actions taken henceforth not only to recover from the effects of Superstorm Sandy but also to reduce vulnerabilities to future disasters.

- a. The report will evaluate the impacts on affected community features and address the conditions created or exacerbated by the storm.
- b. The report will articulate the planning goals, strategies, and priority actions that are most urgently needed to improve public safety, increase resistance to damage from future storms, and stimulate economic recovery.
- c. The report will contain detailed descriptions of each of the projects proposed; a statement of need that demonstrates how each project relates to the impacts of Superstorm Sandy; why the project is important to the economic and environmental health of the community; the major tasks associated with each project; the estimated cost of implementation; identification of potential or actual funding source to pay for project implementation; and estimated implementation dates.

***Phase Two – Additional Planning Grant Programs and Support Requests***

Following completion of the Strategic Recovery Planning Report and acceptance by LPS of the document, applicants may submit applications to receive funding for one or more of the following Phase Two planning projects to begin implementation of their Strategic Recovery Plan:

***Preparation of Requests for Proposals***

Purpose: To prepare Request for Proposals (RFP) for soliciting professional firms to undertake planning activities funded by the Post Sandy Planning Grant. This activity should be combined with another activity request. Applicants may request free assistance from LPS professional planners as well or utilize the sample RFP document that is available for download on the Department’s website.

***Municipal Master Plan and/or Plan Element Development***

Purpose: To modify or replace existing Master Plans or Master Plan Elements to address Post Sandy issues or establish Post Sandy goals, objectives, strategies and policies.

***Master Plan Reexamination Reports***

Purpose: To modify or replace existing Reexamination reports to address Post Sandy issues or establish Post Sandy strategies and policies. In furtherance of this goal, an Applicant preparing a Reexamination Report must prepare a Community Vulnerability Assessment, described below. This Assessment should be adopted as an appendix to the Municipal Master Plan.

***Community Vulnerability Assessment (CVA)***

Purpose: To identify and address hazards, exposure, and vulnerability factors affecting municipal assets as a result of flood and weather events; to inform long-range land use planning and public investment strategies. This assessment must include: 1) Mapping of flood hazards and land-based conditions that may attenuate or exacerbate the impact of flood hazards; 2) Assessment of whether key community assets are constructed and located in a manner that reduces and/or mitigates flood and weather related exposure; 3) Qualitative and quantitative assessment of community assets on the parcel level, to inform long-term planning and local ratable exposure. If an applicant chooses to request funding for the preparation of a CVA, the applicant is also required to prepare a Municipal Master Plan Reexamination Report.

***Community Resiliency Plans***

Purpose: To modify or replace community resiliency plans to address Post Sandy issues or establish Post Sandy strategies and policies.

***Community Development, Redevelopment and Neighborhood Plans***

Purpose: To prepare, modify or replace plans for local neighborhoods or specific areas within the municipality to address deficiencies created or exacerbated by Super Storm Sandy. These plans can include but not necessarily be limited to: Redevelopment or Rehabilitation Plans, Economic Development Plans and Strategies, Historic District Plans and Open Space/Recreation Plans. These planning efforts should address the storm and identify approaches and actions that can be utilized to mitigate future storm events and strengthen long term community resiliency.

***Permit and Application Process Quality Improvement***

Purpose: To analyze local land use approval procedures and recommend new administrative procedures and ordinances to increase resilience to future storm events; to streamline processes with the use of technology that would automate tracking of permits and applications as they advance through the system in order to better manage the increased demand for Planning Board and Zoning Board actions as a result of storm-related events. The grant award can be used to purchase software to automate the system.

***Design Standards***

Purpose: To prepare community design standards specific to flood hazard areas that will foster communities of place and set standards for flood resiliency at the street level for public, residential, commercial and mixed use buildings; to provide useful graphical representations of proposed standards along with supporting narrative, which will be adopted as an amendment to the existing Municipal Zoning and Land Development Ordinance.

***Capital Improvement Plans***

Purpose: To prepare 5-year Capital Improvement Plans that will focus municipal capital investment on public facilities, fleets and equipment to build community resiliency in plants and equipment (i.e. scheduling and funding items such as elevation of generators above flood hazard elevations, contingency plans for storing and moving rolling stock and emergency equipment acquisition plans).

***Urban and Suburban Environmental Design***

Purpose: To prepare municipal hazard mitigation plans that complement county hazard mitigation plans. This funding may also be used to prepare other customized environmental plans addressing storm impact and building community resiliency.

***Development of codes, ordinances, standards and regulations***

Purpose: To develop codes, ordinances, standards and regulations that will implement community plans for resiliency and flood/storm surge mitigation or assist in redeveloping storm damaged areas or attracting new development to support the tourism industry or local economy.

***GIS Development***

Purpose: To develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) that will increase the community's ability to better prepare for, respond to and recover from flooding, weather and environmental related exposure. The components of the GIS system should include but not be limited to: public facilities and public works infrastructure, land-use information (parcel level), identification of repetitive loss properties and floodplain management-related data layers and applications. The grant award can be used to purchase software to develop the system.

***Market Value Analysis***

Purpose: To define and characterize areas of plausible and desirable redevelopment opportunities and land uses in storm-damaged blocks and neighborhoods. The results of the market analysis will inform development opportunities by identifying properties, preferred uses and helping define scale for these uses, based upon reasonable absorption rates and market conditions. It is intended that this analysis will be used to attract new local investment and further business retention and/or expansion strategies to strengthen and support the local economy.

***Community Rating System (CRS) Certification Support***

Purpose: Either to initiate a CRS application to begin to achieve compliance or to achieve a higher CRS classification. This is intended both to incentivize municipalities to enter the Community Rating System and to assist municipalities already engaged in the CRS application process and/or those who have been certified, to submit a modification for a better CRS classification level.

***Debris Management Plan***

Purpose: To create a plan that would identify emergency staging facilities and designated Temporary Debris Management Areas (TDMA) sites to handle storm related debris. Components of the plan should include identifying and prioritizing TDMA sites, establishing collection strategies, and developing debris reduction methods. Potential TDMA sites should consider: sizing of TDMA, location of TDMA, cost of TDMA location, access to the TDMA, local conditions of the TDMA site and any improvements necessary to handle larger volume emergent events.

## PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS

In order to effectively manage and provide oversight to its disaster recovery programs, the State of New Jersey developed the Sandy Integrated Recovery Operations and Management System (SIROMS). SIROMS provides a shared technology infrastructure, and technical and fiscal operations support to implement the programs identified in the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Action Plan for New Jersey. Municipalities and counties that intend to apply for post-Sandy planning assistance grants (PSPAG) must submit an online application through SIROMS. The online application can be accessed directly at [www.SIROMS.com](http://www.SIROMS.com) or through the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Sandy Recovery website at <http://www.nj.gov/dca/services/lps/pspag.html>. Only eligible municipalities and counties will be given access to SIROMS.

### Applicants should follow these steps in order to submit an application:

1. If applying for the first time, the responsible official must request a username and password to access the system. This will permit electronic application submissions for Phase One or Phase Two grants and grants for Institutional Support for Resilience Planning, monthly progress reports and invoices electronically. In addition, the system will allow DCA to transfer funds electronically to the municipality, county or research institution for payment of invoices.

Email the request to LPS Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program Administrator at [Carmen.Valentin@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Carmen.Valentin@dca.nj.gov) or Planner at [Nicholas.Nassiff@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Nassiff@dca.nj.gov). Provide name, title, email address, phone number, name of municipality and county. A username and password will be sent to the responsible official by the SIROMS Helpdesk after it is confirmed that the applicant is eligible for the grants. Instructions on how to navigate the SIROMS site will be attached to the email.

If the application is accepted, and the responsible official chooses to delegate the responsibility of managing the SIROMS grant, the responsible official must send an email to Carmen Valentin or Nicholas Nassiff, PP/AICP stating that he/she is delegating the role and provide LPS with the delegate's name, title, email, and phone number.

2. Log on to [www.SIROMS.com](http://www.SIROMS.com) and follow the instructions for completing the application. Upload the initial required materials below:

- a. A certified resolution adopted by the Governing Body or Board of Chosen Freeholders approving the grant application, agreeing to comply with all CDBG-DR regulations, Post Sandy Planning Assistance guidelines, and accepting that the proposed use of CDBG-DR funds are not reimbursable by FEMA, SBA or other federal agencies.
- b. A statement of need that demonstrates how the proposed project relates to the impacts of Superstorm Sandy and why the proposed project is important to the economic and environmental health of the community or region.
- c. A proposed scope of work with a detailed breakdown of tasks, activities and hourly rates, amount requested and a timeline for completing the planning project.

LPS will review and evaluate the proposed project, scope and associated cost to ensure that the proposed costs are within reason for activities that are proposed. If approved, and upon request by the applicant, LPS will issue an award letter stating the maximum amount that the applicant is eligible for.

- d. The most recent Audit Statement per revised OMB Circular A-133. See section on Audits and Inspections.
  - e. Complete and sign the Duplication of Benefits Affidavit
  - f. Sign the Debarment and Suspension Certification after the procurement documentation has been uploaded
3. The applicant procures professional services necessary to carry out the award employing one of the two options described in Appendix A below, as required by HUD CDBG-DR regulations.
  4. The applicant submits the procurement documentation through SIROMS.
  5. Once the procurement documentation has been approved, a subrecipient agreement will be executed between the Department of Community Affairs and the applicant, now referred to as the “Subrecipient.” The Subrecipient will be notified that the consultant can proceed with the planning project. The grant scope, monitoring and product quality will be managed by LPS. All grant activities must be completed within 12 months of the execution of the agreement.
  6. After the work has commenced, the Subrecipient (or its designee) must submit monthly progress reports to LPS. LPS will provide the Subrecipient with a format for the submission of monthly reports and requests for reimbursement for costs of consultant services following execution of the subrecipient agreement. LPS will monitor progress toward the completion of the scope of work within the timeline and budget agreed to by the consultant and the grantee.
  7. The Subrecipient municipalities and counties must submit final draft products, i.e. the SRPR or equivalent report (Phase One) or Phase Two plans, to LPS for review and comment before submitting to the governing body for adoption.

The Strategic Recovery Planning Report will, at a minimum:

- Examine the adequacy of local land use regulations, capital improvements, hazard mitigation, redevelopment, and emergency management plans.
- Identify the community’s vulnerabilities caused by the storm and recommend approaches to rebuilding that will be more sustainable

For Phase One subrecipients: Once the Strategic Recovery Planning Report has been approved by LPS, the Subrecipient will be permitted to apply for Phase Two grant program funds to develop more specialized plans, based on needs articulated in the SRPR.



## **REPORTING**

The Subrecipient must submit monthly progress reports by the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month following the report period. Failure to submit monthly reports and/or other documents as required by the agreement in a timely manner may result in a suspension of the grant and the reimbursement of all grant moneys provided through this program.

## **RECORDKEEPING**

The Subrecipient is required to maintain electronic and hard copies of all documents related to the Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grants Program.

## **AUDITS and INSPECTIONS**

The Department of Community Affairs requires that all local government units receiving CDBG-DR funds and expending more than \$500,000 (\$750,000 effective January 1, 2015) in Federal grant and/or State awards in a given fiscal year have an audit conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 U.S.C. 7501-7507) and revised OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

The Department of Community Affairs, the State Comptroller, HUD, Office of Inspector General, HUD monitors, and auditors contracted by any of them, have the option of auditing all records and accounts of Subrecipient and/or its Consultants that relate to this project at any time during normal business hours, as often as deemed necessary, to audit, examine, and make excerpts or transcripts of all relevant data upon providing the Subrecipient or Consultant, as appropriate, with reasonable advance notice.

## **REQUESTS FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

The Subrecipient must submit the Request for Reimbursement Form along with supporting documentation consisting of the consultant invoice, timesheets and receipts for eligible costs, in order to be reimbursed for costs incurred by the Subrecipient associated with the project. A maximum of four requests for reimbursement are allowed for each 12-month grant agreement period.

## **MANDATORY TRAINING**

A local government or other entity meeting these criteria and intending to apply is required to attend a mandatory training to learn about the application process and conditions of award. Notify Carmen Valentin or Nicholas Nassiff at the Office of Local Planning Services to make arrangements.

## **Appendix A – Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program Procurement Guidelines**

Applicants must employ one of the following two options to procure the professional services necessary to carry grant activities, pursuant to HUD CDBG-DR regulations:

### **Option 1**

If the Subrecipient local government currently has a planning professional under contract that is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (A.I.C.P.) and licensed by the New Jersey Board of Professional Planners (P.P.), this planning professional may be used to carry out the scope of the Post Sandy Planning Assistance Grant Program provided that **all** of the following specific conditions have been met and provided to DCA’s Office of Local Planning Services (LPS) for review and acceptance in advance of work being performed:

1. The contract for professional services must have been executed within the past 24 months;
2. The procurement demonstrates that the professional planner possesses A.I.C.P./P.P. credentials;
3. The scope of services for the original procurement must include services that are similar to or encompassing of those proposed to be paid for with CDBG-DR funds;
4. Price was an evaluative factor in the procurement method;
5. The municipality must submit the following documentation for LPS review:
  - a. Original procurement notice (Request for Proposals or Request for Qualifications) with date and method of publication shown;
  - b. A copy of the Request for Proposals or Qualifications; and
  - c. A description of the selection process used.
  - d. A copy of the selected respondent’s proposal, which includes:
    - i. Task driven Scope of Work with clearly defined deliverable(s) and timeframes for delivery;
    - ii. Cost proposal by Task;
    - iii. Financial Management Plan(a table indicating the Professional Hourly Billing Rate for each Professional working on the project, along with their hours by task).

A final determination of compliance with HUD and state procurement requirements rests solely with the staff of LPS.

### **Option 2**

If the Subrecipient local government does not have a planning professional already under contract as described in Option 1, procurement of said professional will follow 24 CFR Part 85.36(d)(1) for contracts under \$100,000 in value or will follow 24 CFR Part 85.36(d)(3) for contracts exceeding \$100,000 in value. Procurement will be by **competitive proposals**. The following requirements apply:

**Contracts under \$100,000 (Small purchase procedures (24 CFR Part 85.36(d)(1)):**

1. Price or rate quotations shall be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources (typically three);
2. Subrecipients will have a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting awardees; and
3. Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price, expertise of the Subrecipient and other factors considered.
4. The municipality must submit the following documentation for LPS review:
  - a. Original procurement notice (Request for Proposals or Request for Qualifications) with date and method of publication shown;
  - b. A copy of the Request for Proposals or Qualifications; and
  - c. A description of the selection process used.
  - d. A copy of the selected respondent's proposal, which includes:
    - i. Task driven Scope of Work with clearly defined deliverable(s) and timeframes for delivery;
    - ii. Cost proposal by Task;
    - iii. Financial Management Plan(a table indicating the Professional Hourly Billing Rate for each Professional working on the project, along with their hours by task).

**Contracts over \$100,000 (Procurement by competitive proposals ((24 CFR Part 85.36(d)(3)):**

1. Requests for proposals will be publicized and shall identify all evaluation factors and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to the maximum extent practical;
2. Proposals will be solicited from an adequate (typically three) number of qualified sources;
3. Subrecipients will have a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting awardees; and
4. Awards will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price, expertise of the Subrecipient and other factors considered.
5. The municipality must submit the following documentation for LPS review:
  - a. Original procurement notice (Request for Proposals or Request for Qualifications) with date and method of publication shown;
  - b. A copy of the Request for Proposals or Qualifications; and
  - c. A description of the selection process used.
  - d. A copy of the selected respondent's proposal, which includes:
    - i. Task driven Scope of Work with clearly defined deliverable(s) and timeframes for delivery;
    - ii. Cost proposal by Task;
    - iii. Financial Management Plan (a table indicating the Professional Hourly Billing Rate for each Professional working on the project, along with their hours by task).