

**New Jersey Department of Community Affairs**

Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

Superstorm Sandy Action Plan Amendment Number 56

Pursuant to Public Law 113-2 and Federal Register Notices FR-5696-N-01, FR-5696-N-06, and FR-5696-N-11

Please take notice that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is soliciting public comments on Superstorm Sandy Action Plan Amendment Number 56, which makes Action Plan clarifications on the interchangeability of CDBG-DR funds between Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Ida programs to overlapping counties; updates the unmet need section to include Atlantic City; and updates the Blue Acres program maximum assistance award.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allows grantees that have received CDBG-DR funding for a prior disaster to use that funding for disasters that occur in the future as long as the previous funding is only used within counties that overlap both disasters. This process is referred to as the interchangeability of funds by HUD. DCA now understands from HUD guidance that in addition to the overlapping counties that HUD has identified as most impacted and distressed (MID) by a disaster, DCA can also include the counties that the State of New Jersey has identified as most impacted and distressed by a disaster. Under this guidance, Amendment 56 expands the geographic eligibility for all Superstorm Sandy programs supporting Hurricane Ida recovery to include the following counties: Bergen, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Union, and Warren.

In Amendment 56, DCA is updating the infrastructure unmet needs assessment in the Superstorm Sandy Action Plan to include additional locations in Atlantic City because more detailed information has become available since the initial unmet needs assessment was written.

Also, Amendment 56 would raise the maximum assistance award in the Blue Acres Program to \$706,748. Through the Blue Acres Program, homeowners whose homes are storm-damaged or vulnerable to flooding have the option to sell their property to the State of New Jersey for use as natural flood storage, parks, and community open space. Over the last year of implementation of the Blue Acres Program for homeowners affected by Hurricane Ida, it became clear

that the maximum award established in 2022 in the Action Plan was too low based on current market rates of housing. The increased award cap being proposed includes both the purchase of the buyout property and the incentive award needed to acquire replacement housing. Although this is a significant increase in the maximum award, it is necessary to allow property buyout work to occur in the northern New Jersey counties impacted by Ida flooding where property prices are higher than average.

The Blue Acres Program will continue to prioritize low- to moderate-income (LMI) households regardless of the adjustment to the maximum award. Additionally, determining the award amount is not arbitrary and will reflect the actual market rate of the area and be variable depending on the real estate appraisal of the property, the housing incentive, and the county.

As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, this proposed substantial amendment must be made available for public comment over a period of 30 calendar days.

Commenters are able to submit comments to this proposed amendment (i) via email to [DRMConstituentServices@dca.nj.gov](mailto:DRMConstituentServices@dca.nj.gov) (Subject: Action Plan Amendment 56); or (ii) via U.S. mail to the attention of Lisa Ryan, Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation, NJ Department of Community Affairs, 101 South Broad Street, P.O. Box 823, Trenton, NJ 08625-0823. All comments are given the same amount of consideration regardless of the method of submission.

The public comment period for Superstorm Sandy Action Plan Amendment 56 will be open from 9:00 am on February 28, 2024, to 5:00 pm on March 28, 2024. All comments must be received on or before the deadline to be considered.

Superstorm Sandy Action Plan Amendment Number 56 is available in English and Spanish at <https://www.nj.gov/dca/ddrm/> and can be requested by email at [DRMConstituentServices@dca.nj.gov](mailto:DRMConstituentServices@dca.nj.gov) (Subject: Action Plan Amendment 56) or by contacting the Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation Constituent Services at (609) 913-4824. To obtain a copy in a language other than English or Spanish, please contact Sylvia Johnston, the language access plan (LAP) coordinator, at (609) 913-4247 or [Sylvia.Johnston@dca.nj.gov](mailto:Sylvia.Johnston@dca.nj.gov). For hearing-impaired users, text telephone service is available at (TTY/TDD) 1-800-852-7899.

