**FAQs**

**New York Rising Community Reconstruction Program**

***Q: What is the NY Rising Community Reconstruction program?***

**A:** The program was established to provide additional rebuilding and revitalization assistance to communities severely damaged by Hurricanes Sandy and Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. The NY Rising Community Reconstruction program enables communities to identify resilient and innovative reconstruction projects and other needed actions based on community-driven plans that consider current damage, future threats, and the community’s economic opportunities. Communities successfully completing a recovery plan will be eligible to receive funds to support the implementation of projects and activities identified in the plan. Each NY Rising Community has a Planning Committee that includes, among others, a representative from the County, Town or Village, elected legislative representatives, local residents, and leaders of other organizations and businesses in the community.

***Q: How can I get additional information about the program?***

***A:*** The NY Rising Storm Recovery website will continue to develop as more information becomes available. It can be found at <http://stormrecovery.ny.gov/community-reconstruction-program>.In addition, each geographic area has a Regional Lead assigned to work with the public to make the NY Rising Community Reconstruction program a success. You can send a message to your regional lead on the website by clicking on your region, then your community, then the “contact” button.

***Q: Is the funding outlined in the press release for planning, implementation or both?***

**A:** The State has allocated $25 million dollars to support the planning process. The funding outlined in the State’s July press release identifies a dollar figure for which the Community is eligible. These dollars will be used to implement the proposed plans and draw from the more than $500 million Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds expected to be made available through the federal supplemental appropriation the Governor worked with Congress to obtain earlier this year.  In addition, New York State will award at least $250 million of the State’s FEMA-funded Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to NY Rising Communities. The federal Community Reinvestment Act is also expected to spur more than $3 billion in private investment to finance the implementation of NY Rising Community plans.

***Q: Can you give me the specifics on what activities are eligible for CDBG-DR funds***?

**A:** The State will be providing planning committee members with training on what CDBG-DR funds can be used for. The good news is that this funding source is quite flexible, and can therefore cover a broad variety of projects.

***Q: Are the planning committee meetings open to the public*?**

**A:** Yes, all planning committee meetings will be open to the public and listed on the website. The public may attend and listen to the committee meetings to become more informed about the planning process. However, opportunities to speak at the currently scheduled meetings may be limited.

***Q: Are the plans produced by NY Rising Communities limited to state investments?***

**A:** No. We are strongly encouraging the Communities in our program to identify projects that go well beyond the implementation money available to them through CDBG-DR. There are significant sources of resilience funding available that Communities can and should tap into when the time to implement their projects comes. We will work closely with the Communities in our program to identify additional funding sources.

***Q: What are the roles of everyone working on the plans?***

**A:** The planning committee, under the leadership of the co-chairs, will develop the content of their Community’s plan. Consultants with significant community planning expertise have been hired by the State to help facilitate the entire planning process for each NY Rising Community. New York State planning experts will oversee the work of the consulting firms, and provide technical assistance to the NY Rising Communities during the planning process. They have expertise in natural resource planning, community visioning and economic development; developing implementation strategies; and key state regulations and policies. Regional Leads coordinate the efforts of all NY Rising Communities in their region, working closely with local elected officials and engaging the broader community.

***Q: Why do local elected officials have a non-voting status?***

**A:**We are using a similar model to that successfully employed in the Regional Economic Development Councils.  We are strongly encouraging planning committees to work on the basis of consensus. This model protects local elected officials from criticism for exerting political influence over the process, and provides community members with a forum free from political distraction. As the Governor has stressed, the program is fundamentally a community-driven initiative. A core element is the incorporation of community citizens at the grass-roots level. Local governments will play a vital role at each stage of the process regardless of voting status.

***Q: Will the participating communities be competing against non-participating communities for the other recovery funding available? Will they have any special consideration given to their applications?***

**A:**NY Rising Communities will have special consideration given to their applications to many NYS agencies. This includes both expedited review of proposed projects and additional “points” being provided to them. In some cases, NY Rising Communities will be competing with non-NY Rising Communities for funding.

***Q: What kind of projects will NY Rising Community Reconstruction plans identify for communities?***

**A:**The program is seeking to advance projects that increase a Community’s resilience to extreme weather, improve the future of the local economy, protect vulnerable populations, and contribute to regional efforts. Strategic, creative and locally-appropriate projects are strongly encouraged.

***Q: How were members of the Planning Committees selected?***

**A:**New York Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) program committees represent their storm-affected communities in a grassroots planning process. These independent and balanced committees were developed through direct engagement with community leaders, elected officials, and, most importantly, community members. NYRCR Regional Leads, who have extensive experience working in these Communities, also reached out to local non-profit organizations and business groups to help identify potential committee members. Issues of geography, diversity, and the necessity to ensure the participation of historically disengaged groups were strongly considered in determining committee composition. As the committees came together, NYRCR staff identified potential gaps in the voices represented and conducted additional outreach as necessary. The resulting committees are composed of dedicated and involved community members, many of them leaders in civic associations; business groups; and non-profits. While the NYRCR committees represent the diverse voices of their Communities, there will also be many significant opportunities for everyone in NYRCR Communities to participate in the planning process, and all committee meetings will be open to the public.

***Q: Are the Planning Committees formed?***

**A:** Yes. In most instances, all Planning Committees are formed. Some are in the final stages of formation.

***Q: What are the criteria by which each incentive prize will be judged?***

***A*:** The criteria will be made public this fall.