



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## Post-Sandy Update, Nov. 5

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We will continue to circulate these Post-Sandy Updates with the most relevant information available until there is nothing new to report. The updates below contain information on school re-openings and relocations, mass transportation updates, information for those who are still without heat, volunteer opportunities, and donation needs.

Many schools are reopening, Con Ed has restored electrical power in Manhattan, but some buildings remain unpowered due to on-site equipment damage, and many Manhattanites are still without heat. Life is nowhere near back to normal – but eventually we'll get there.

Crises test us as a government, as individuals and as neighbors. The commitment and response to helping others has been resounding. But we must also recognize we have a very long checklist of improvements that need to be made in emergency preparedness, so this doesn't happen again.

It will take months for some residential and commercial buildings to be fully functional, and some communities need to be completely rebuilt. Please have patience with your government and with each other as things continue to go wrong, and remember tens of thousands of people in our City have lost their homes for an extended time to come.

**NYC Public Schools**

The vast majority of NYC public schools are reopening today and will be on operating normal schedule. However, students from some schools across the City will be temporarily relocated because their school buildings experienced significant flood damage, still have no power, or are still operating as emergency shelter sites. Students attending schools that will be temporarily relocated will not return to school until Wednesday, November 7th.

While all of the schools in my Senate district are opening on Monday, November 5 a few School District 2 schools are unable to open. A full list of the schools that are being relocated, details on where impacted students are to report on Wednesday, and information on transportation for impacted students and staff is available on the Department of Education's website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Home/InOurSchoolsToday/2012-2013/cancellations.htm>.

### **Update on Power Restoration**

Con Edison restored power to all of Manhattan over the weekend. However many residents, primarily in the Lower East Side and along the East River, are still living without electricity because the storm flooded their buildings' basements or damaged electrical equipment. Power will not be restored to these residents until repairs are made by building owners.

Additionally, some Manhattan residents dependent on steam still do not have heat or hot water because the steam plant which serves their area is not yet operational. As temperatures continue to drop, this is a significant concern and efforts are being made to bring in emergency generators and heaters. The City has opened daytime warming centers for residents living in impacted buildings. A full list of these centers is available at [http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/warming\\_ctr.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/warming_ctr.html). Additionally, residents living without heat are welcome at the City's emergency storm shelters. The City is running buses

to take people to shelters if they need a place to stay warm overnight. The bus pickups are listed here: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/overnight\\_shelter.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/overnight_shelter.html).

Residents still without power should report this to Con Edison via its website at [www.coned.com](http://www.coned.com) or by calling 1-800-752-6633. Updates on the status of power restoration efforts throughout the region are available at: [http://apps.coned.com/stormcenter\\_external/default.html](http://apps.coned.com/stormcenter_external/default.html).

### **Transit Update**

The MTA has made substantial progress restoring subway, bus, and suburban rail service throughout the City and the region. A few subway lines are still not running, or are operating on only portions of their normal routes, due to flooded tunnels and/or signal problems. See the MTA's website [www.mta.info](http://www.mta.info) for the latest information.

A map of the subways in operation is available at [http://alert.mta.info/sites/default/files/pdf/hurricane\\_recovery\\_map\\_bw\\_Nov4\\_pm.pdf](http://alert.mta.info/sites/default/files/pdf/hurricane_recovery_map_bw_Nov4_pm.pdf)

### **57<sup>th</sup> Street Update**

The process to secure the tower crane has been completed, and all residents may return to their homes. However, some residents had their gas and steam cut, and may have limited service for a few days.

### **Sanitation**

The Department of Sanitation is collecting garbage. However, they are not currently collecting recycling. In addition from their normal pickups they are also removing thousands of tons of debris left by the storm.

## **Parks**

While the majority of parks were opened over the weekend, a few remain closed for safety reasons. Details are available at [www.nyc.gov/parks](http://www.nyc.gov/parks).

## **Hospitals**

Bellevue Hospital and NYU Medical Center will remain closed until further notice. Families of patients can call 311 or 212-423-7272 to find out status of patients who were transferred.

## **Volunteering**

Another enormous thank-you to everyone who reached out to my office about volunteering. Your work has made a huge difference in the lives of New Yorkers during this extremely difficult time.

There are many government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and elected officials' offices that are seeking volunteers for other relief work around the City. Please see my website [www.lizkrueger.com](http://www.lizkrueger.com) or <http://www.nycservice.org/> for the latest details on where volunteers and donations are needed.

## **Blood Donations Still Needed**

Blood supplies were critically affected by the storm, as the same outages that affect our region also affect many donation sites. The New York Blood Center's Upper East Side location at 310 East 67th Street is open and operating, and if you can, please consider donating blood. Blood donations can be scheduled by calling [1-800-933-2566](tel:1-800-933-2566) or visiting <http://www.nybloodcenter.org>.

## **Emergency Storm Shelters**

New York City is continuing to operate shelters throughout the city until evacuees can

return to their homes or find short-term housing. Residents of all ages and their pets are welcome.

The full list of shelters is available at:

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/hurricane\\_shelters.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/hurricane_shelters.html).

*In Manhattan, the storm shelter located at John Jay College (445 West 59th Street) is operating as a special medical shelter with medical personnel and equipment.*

### **Food, Water & Blanket Distribution Sites**

New York City currently has 12 distribution sites set up in the hardest-hit areas of the city. Food, water, blankets, baby formula, diapers, batteries, and other supplies are available at all sites. No one who shows up for food and water will be turned away. The details of these sites, including the exact locations and hours of operation, can be found here:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/foodandwater.html>

### **Disaster Assistance Resources**

New York State has established an **Emergency Assistance Hotline**: 1-855-NYS-SANDY (1-855-697-7263).

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** (FEMA) has released a statement listing the type of federal aid available for New Yorkers. The full list of federal aid is available at <http://www.fema.gov/news-release/federal-aid-programs-state-new-york-disaster-recovery-2>. You can start the disaster assistance application process by either registering online at <http://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

The **Small Business Administration** has comprehensive disaster recovery services, available in

some cases for business owners and non-owners alike. Renters and homeowners, a group that includes most sole proprietors, can borrow up to \$40,000 for repairs and to replace things like appliances, furniture, automobiles, and clothing. People who own homes can apply for as much as \$200,000 for repairs to their primary residences. Business owners, whether private or not-for-profit, whose organizations are damaged in a designated disaster area, can apply for loans up to \$2 million for real property, machinery and other equipment, fixtures, and leasehold improvements. The loans can be used for both uninsured and underinsured damages. You can also apply for a disaster loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration at <http://www.sba.gov/content/applying-disaster-loan> or in person at any Disaster Recovery Center. Call 800-659-2955 or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov) to find your nearest location.

The New York City **Department of Small Business Services** and the **New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC)** are coordinating a set of services to assist small businesses in recovering from Hurricane Sandy. Details are available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/nycbiz/html/home/home.shtml>.

The EDC is also working to connect impacted businesses with those offering free goods and services. Information is available at: <http://www.nycedc.com/backtobusiness>.

### **Disaster Unemployment Assistance**

Federal disaster unemployment assistance is now available to all New Yorkers who lost their jobs as a result of Hurricane Sandy. Anyone unemployed due to Hurricane Sandy is immediately eligible and can submit a claim to the New York State Department of Labor. The criterion for collecting disaster assistance is broader than for collecting regular unemployment benefits. Please visit <http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/11022012-federal-disaster-unemployment-assistance> for details.

To apply for unemployment benefits or disaster unemployment assistance, residents can call the NYS Department of Labor's Telephone Claims Center at 888-209-8124, or 877-358-5306 if they live out of state. Applicants should answer the questions to indicate they lost their job due to Hurricane Sandy. In order to receive benefits you must apply by December 3, 2012.

### **Additional Benefits for Food Stamp Recipients**

New York State has received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to replace food lost by recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, commonly known as "food stamps", in areas hardest hit by the storm. Food stamp recipients will automatically be issued a 50 percent bonus of their monthly benefits to replace food lost starting this week. Recipients in these areas also will be able to purchase hot and prepared foods with their benefits.

The City of New York helped identify 77 eligible zip codes for the State's waiver request. Beginning this week, recipients of SNAP benefits in those 77 zip codes and in Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan and Westchester counties, will automatically have 50 percent of their October monthly SNAP benefit amount deposited in their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) accounts. A complete list of zip codes in New York City that are included can be found at [www.otda.ny.gov/news/SNAP-replacements.pdf](http://www.otda.ny.gov/news/SNAP-replacements.pdf). Additional zip codes in New York City that experienced extended power loss may be added as more details about the number of households affected becomes available.

Other current SNAP recipient households that have lost food purchased with SNAP benefits due to Hurricane Sandy are also entitled to replacement benefits. The loss must be reported by Wednesday, November 28, 2012, and the household must return a signed and completed form, found at [www.otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/2291.pdf](http://www.otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/2291.pdf), by close of business on Monday, December 10, 2012. The form is also available at local department of social services

offices. To find your local department of social services, visit [www.otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp](http://www.otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp), or call 800-342-3009.

### **Legal Assistance for Residents Impacted by the Storm**

The New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) has launched a new Storm Relief Effort to help New York City residents. They are placing their staff at disaster relief centers, community-based organizations, and hospitals. Their attorneys and volunteers will be onsite to provide legal advice to victims dealing with issues including FEMA claims, housing disputes, consumer matters and emergency public benefits. Those seeking immediate assistance with legal issues can call their new hotline at 212-584-3365 or email at [StormHelp@nylag.org](mailto:StormHelp@nylag.org). For more info you can also visit: [nylag.org/stormhelp](http://nylag.org/stormhelp).

*NYLAG is looking for attorneys to help them secure the legal rights of the storm victims. To volunteer to provide pro bono legal assistance, please email [volunteer@nylag.org](mailto:volunteer@nylag.org).*

The website [www.disasterlegalaid.org](http://www.disasterlegalaid.org) which is a collaboration of the American Bar Association, the Legal Services Corporation, and the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, has a comprehensive list of the legal and financial benefits available to residents impacted by the storm.