



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

The Launch of Project UPLIFT to Serve Staten Island and Brooklyn Residents

ANDREW J. LANZA October 26, 2017

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"The Project UPLIFT pilot project is giving new hope to those in flood-prone areas who otherwise would not be eligible for assistance in elevating their homes. The genesis of this plan began on Staten Island, during local community meetings of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program. During Project UPLIFT's initial application phase my office served as a meeting place and application hub for applicants. I look forward to continuing my work with Governor Cuomo and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery as this project moves forward." Senator Lanza

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the launch of Project UPLIFT, a \$9.3 million home elevation program for eligible low to moderate income New York City homeowners in Staten Island and Brooklyn. Created by the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, Project UPLIFT addresses the unmet needs of owners whose homes are vulnerable to flooding but who don't qualify for other existing funding programs. The program is being rolled out in a pilot phase for 28 homes in select Hurricane Sandy-damaged neighborhoods in Brooklyn and on Staten Island's East and South Shores. To qualify for participation, homes must be in the 100-year floodplain and be ineligible for assistance through other home elevation programs.

"With extreme weather becoming the new normal, it is critical that we invest in hardening our infrastructure and protecting our communities from whatever Mother Nature throws our way," Governor Cuomo said. "With the launch of Project UPLIFT, we partner with community leaders to design programs to help ensure that we are building back better, stronger and more resilient than ever before."

Project UPLIFT was developed by GOSR with input from local residents through the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program to protect life and property of low and moderate income residents, while stabilizing their flood insurance premiums.

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, GOSR Executive Director said, "When Governor Cuomo created GOSR, he did so with the intent that it would deliver assistance directly to homeowners and communities, enabling them to build back better, stronger and more resiliently than before. And that is what we are doing with Project UPLIFT - assisting deserving, eligible homeowners like Mr. Lynch, while closing a gap in services for low- to moderate-income households in need. Elevation protects life and property and makes shorefront living tenable in certain communities. More than that, it can stabilize the cost of flood insurance premiums. Today, we are pleased to have shovels in the ground to begin this important effort."

Project UPLIFT, whose first phase is fully subscribed, is being managed by SBP, a national nonprofit construction management organization that specializes in housing reconstruction that is both affordable and accessible. Selected through a competitive process, SBP has extensive experience working in New Orleans following the devastating impacts of Hurricane Katrina.

SBP Co-Founder and CEO, Zack Rosenberg said, "Project UPLIFT is an important example of the value that nonprofits can bring to disaster recovery and resilience when they work well and creatively with government partners such as Governor Cuomo's Office of Storm Recovery. By providing home elevation contractors a steady stream of qualified clients, we can negotiate a lower price per elevation, drive down the overall market rate, save taxpayer dollars, and make impacted communities more resilient in the process. It's a win for everyone."

Senator Andrew Lanza said, "The Project UPLIFT pilot project is giving new hope to those in flood-prone areas who otherwise would not be eligible for assistance in elevating their homes. The genesis of this plan began on Staten Island, during local community meetings of the NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program. During Project UPLIFT's initial application phase my office served as a meeting place and application hub for applicants. I look forward to continuing my work with Governor Cuomo and the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery as this project moves forward."

Senator Martin J. Golden said, "I want to thank Governor Cuomo and the State's office of Storm Recovery for the implementation Project Uplift. Today's kickoff in Gerritsen Beach included the home elevation for Joseph Lynch, a 69-year-old veteran whose house was severely damaged during Superstorm Sandy. Moving forward, Project UPLIFT plans to elevate an additional 28 homes in Gerritsen Beach, Sheepshead Bay and Staten Island. These home elevations will help homeowners recover and provide them with a sense of security."

Assemblymember Jaime R. Williams said, "The minutes, hours, days and months may have elapsed since Super storm Sandy struck, but the individuals whom were made victims of this ferocious storm will never forget its devastation. Recently returning from a relief mission in Puerto Rico clearly illustrates how real storm damage is and how its devastation is boundless. The Governor's program of Project UPLIFT is a wonderful endeavor that will help prevent homes in low lying areas that have not been raised to achieve a level of height that can and will protect our homes and allow residents to have peace of should a storm strike again."

Homeowners are assessed for program eligibility based on requirements set forth by GOSR, SBP and the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. Eligible clients are low- to moderate-income homeowners whose primary residence was impacted by Superstorm Sandy and sits within the 100-year floodplain on Staten Island or in Gerritsen Beach or Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn. Potential participants were also assessed with respect to storm recovery benefits they may have already received and for household make-up to prioritize veterans, seniors, persons with disabilities, and families with small children. The proposed home elevation must be approved for design feasibility and cost reasonableness; homes selected for this phase range in type from single-family and semi-attached homes to weatherized bungalows.