

Christie administration announces Sandy relief programs

By **CHRISTIAN HETRICK**, Staff Writer | Posted: Thursday, February 26, 2015 2:12 pm

Gov. Chris Christie's administration announced two programs Thursday intended to help those affected by Hurricane Sandy.

The state Housing and Mortgage and Finance Agency board approved a Rental Assistance Program to help homeowners pay for temporary housing while their primary residences undergo repair or elevation, the Department of Community Affairs said in a statement. The program will begin accepting applications March 16.

Eligible homeowners are those in the state's Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation and Mitigation Program and LMI Homeowners Rebuilding Program who have signed a grant agreement but haven't completed the construction, rehabilitation or elevation of their homes. Those homeowners will be eligible for as much as \$825 per month for as long as three months, and can receive as many as three months of additional rental assistance, if necessary and if funds are still available.

The HMFA estimates the program can assist as many as 1,750 Sandy-affected homeowners. The program is funded with \$9.5 million in federal Social Services Block Grant money.

The Christie administration also announced an expansion of a Sandy Relief Home Access Program, which provides ramps with stair glides or vertical platform lifts for homeowners with disabilities whose homes had to be elevated. The program is run by the Department of Human Services.

Applicants must be residents of New Jersey, provide proof of loss or need as a result of damage to their primary residence from Hurricane Sandy, and present medical certification confirming the presence of a disability that requires a ramp.

The project is funded with \$2.89 million in federal Social Services Block Grant money. The DHS said 20 such ramps have been completed.

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