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**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER FATIMA SHAMA
ANNOUNCES CREATION OF OUTREACH WORKER TEAMS TO ASSESS
RECOVERY NEEDS IN STORM-IMPACTED IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City will support neighborhood-based efforts to assess on-going needs of immigrant households and connect them with disaster assistance services

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama today announced the creation of non-profit outreach teams to assess recovery needs of immigrant New Yorkers impacted by Hurricane Sandy in advance of the January 28th deadline to apply for federal disaster assistance. With support from the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will work with the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies to train and deploy teams of outreach workers from community-based organizations working in the hardest-hit areas of the City to survey immigrant households about their needs, connect them with services for which they are eligible, and provide information on the City's plans for long-term disaster case management in these communities. Additionally, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is working with the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation to provide financial assistance to immigrant New Yorkers affected by Hurricane Sandy who have yet to receive aid from other sources, through referrals by select community-based partners.

"Our City is committed to ensuring that our immigrant communities are able to access the services they need to recover from the devastating effects of Hurricane Sandy," said Commissioner Shama. "Deploying teams of outreach workers to the hardest-hit communities will help us connect immigrant households with disaster-related services and understand what the greatest needs will be as the City moves into long-term recovery and disaster case management."

"As the City continues to respond to the needs of New Yorkers following Hurricane Sandy, this program will help direct crucial resources to our immigrant community members," said Megan Sheekey, President of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. "We are grateful to our partners in this effort who are helping to ensure that all impacted residents receive the support they need to recover."

"Many immigrant households in the City's most devastated communities continue to struggle in the weeks following Superstorm Sandy because they are unaware or apprehensive about taking advantage of the relief and recovery assistance available to them," said Jennifer Jones Austin, Executive Director and CEO at the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies. "The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies is pleased to partner with the City to reach these

(more)

families and help them secure the services and supports that will help them get back on their feet.”

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs has worked with community-based organizations, clergy, and other community leaders serving immigrant residents to provide guidance on the services available for New Yorkers, updates on the City’s response and solicit feedback about challenges faced by immigrant communities affected by Hurricane Sandy. Many immigrant communities have reported difficulty accessing available services, due in part to a lack of information as well as to immigration status restrictions on some of these services. While services offered by the City generally are open to all New York City residents affected by the storm, assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is largely restricted to U.S. citizens and lawfully-residing non-citizens. Individuals who live with their U.S. citizen children or another qualifying individual can also apply for FEMA assistance.

In order to ensure that all those eligible to apply for assistance from FEMA prior to the approaching January 28th deadline, teams of outreach workers will begin canvassing storm-affected areas next week to identify eligible families who have yet to register and help them apply. Outreach workers will be bilingual in the languages spoken in these communities, and they will be knowledgeable about the full spectrum of disaster assistance services available, including food and nutrition assistance, counseling, medical and health-related services and legal assistance services.

The outreach worker teams will be managed by community-based organizations working on the ground in storm-affected areas in Brooklyn, Queens and Staten Island. Teams will operate in these communities for eight weeks and are expected to reach as many as 6,000 immigrant households. The following organizations were selected to assist with this effort: COPO and the Shorefront YM-YWHA in Brooklyn; the Committee for Hispanic Children and Families and the Queens Congregations United for Action in Queens; El Centro del Inmigrante and Project Hospitality in Staten Island.

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA) will be charged with coordinating the initiative and will provide guidance and technical assistance to the community-based organizations overseeing the day-to-day canvassing operations in the target communities. Funding for the effort is provided by the Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City.



The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City is supporting immediate aid needs as well as long-term restoration efforts in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Working with New York City Agencies, Community Recovery Directors, Restoration Centers, and community leaders, 100 percent of donations to hurricane relief are being directed to recovery efforts and organizations. In the first stage of recovery the Mayor’s Fund helped support approximately 330,000 hot meals and purchased and distributed hundreds of thousands of urgently needed supplies including body warmers, warm clothing, baby supplies and groceries. The Mayor’s Fund is now supporting longer-term initiatives, including nonprofit and small business loans and grants, homeowner assistance, neighborhood revitalization, and park restoration.

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies was founded in 1922 and serves as one of New York City’s premier social service support organizations, assisting more than 200 member

agencies and churches throughout the five boroughs. In response to Hurricane Sandy, FPWA has compiled a registry of disaster assistance resources and collected Hurricane Relief Funds to support member agencies meet their clients' needs.

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Contact: Evelyn Erskine (212) 788-2958

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