

EMERGENCY GRANT FUNDS NOW AVAILABLE TO CREATE TEMPORARY JOBS TO ASSIST WITH AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE IRENE

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. announced on Monday, November 28th that the Essex County Department of Economic Development, Training and Employment is making grant money available to public and non-profit agencies to create temporary jobs to assist with clean up from Hurricane Irene or to help with humanitarian assistance for victims. The communities where the funds will targeted include Fairfield, Caldwell, Bloomfield, Orange and Irvington. The Essex County DEDTE received a \$142,000 grant from the Federal Hurricane Irene National Emergency Grant that was allocated through the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

"Hurricane Irene was one of the most devastating natural disasters to hit Essex County in our lifetime. The destruction can be seen throughout our neighborhoods, in our parks and in our business community and cannot be easily reversed," DiVincenzo said. "This emergency grant will create temporary jobs to help with cleanup and relief work. We are pleased that during these difficult economic times we are able to use these grant funds to people back to work and have them engaged on projects that will help stabilize our neighborhoods," he pointed out.

"Before, during and after Hurricane Irene, the Governor mobilized resources and deployed rapid response teams to address the needs of counties and municipalities," NJ Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Harold J. Wirths said. "One of our priorities is to get people back to work and through

Grant will Subsidize Temporary Employment for Cleanup, Repair and Relief Work

this collaborative effort we are making this possible. Throughout the State, we are investing \$2 million into this program and will create a total of 300 jobs," he noted.

"Many of our towns are still dealing with the cleanup from the hurricane and the early fall snow," Essex County Department of Economic Development, Training and Employment Director Anibal Ramos said. "This program will create employment and help municipal leaders deal with ongoing needs in their communities," he added.

The grant can be utilized to provide temporary employment for individuals working on projects for the cleanup, demolition, repair, renovation and reconstruction of damaged public structures, facilities and lands. Temporary jobs may also be created for those working on projects that provide food, clothing, shelter and other humanitarian assistance for disaster victims. Because of ongoing needs associated with the hurricane, the following five municipalities, and the number of jobs being created in each municipality, are receiving funding from the grant: Fairfield (3), Caldwell (2), Bloomfield (3), Orange (3) and Irvington (3). Individuals hired through the grant will start their jobs in early December.

"It is a pleasure to be part of a program where we

can give back to the community," Bloomfield Mayor Ray McCarthy said. "This is all about creating jobs and getting people back to work. It is good that the people who were affected the most and had their lives turned upside down are getting some relief," he added.

"There is no doubt that Orange and other areas of the County were hit hard. Any support we can receive will make a difference," Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins said. "All of us working together – the partnership between the Federal, State, County and local governments to provide this program – is the only way we will survive," he added.

Individuals eligible to participate in the National Emergency Grant Disaster projects must meet one of the following criteria:

- Workers who have been temporarily or permanently dislocated as a result of the natural disaster.
- Eligible dislocated workers are unemployed and are not receiving unemployment compensation or other types of income support.
- Eligible individuals are "long-termed unemployed," meaning they have been unemployed for 13 of the last 26 weeks (the weeks do not have to be consecutive) and are not otherwise eligible in the first two categories.

Temporary jobs created under this grant can be in the public sector or private non-profit agencies. Individuals receiving assistance cannot be employed for more than six (6) months or 1,040 hours. Participants must be paid the higher of Federal, State or local minimum wage or the comparable rates of pay for individuals employed in similar occupations. The maximum amount that can be earned by a participant is \$12,000.

The grant must be used by February 29, 2012. Public or private non-profit agencies that are interested in applying for the grant can call Coordinator Jacquelyne Johnson at 973-395-8415.

From left: Anthony Ferrera, Director of Workforce Development Workforce Portfolio and Contract Management with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development; NJ Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Harold J. Wirths, Fairfield Township Manager Joseph Catenaro, Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., Orange Mayor Eldridge Hawkins and Bloomfield Mayor Ray McCarthy, and (in back) Paul Brubaker, Aide to Congressman Bill Pascrell, and Essex County Director of Economic Development, Training and Employment Anibal Ramos. (Photo by Glen Frieson)

