

# ROBIN HOOD

Re: Response to Request for Information Regarding Hurricane Sandy Relief

December 11, 2012

Mr. Jason R. Lilien  
Charities Bureau Chief  
State of New York of the Attorney General  
[sandyresponse@ag.ny.gov](mailto:sandyresponse@ag.ny.gov)

Dear Mr. Lilien:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding our response to Hurricane Sandy. We welcome the opportunity to tell you about our organization and how we are helping groups providing assistance to storm victims.

For almost 25 years, Robin Hood has focused on fighting poverty in New York City. Robin Hood is a public charity that finds and funds the most effective nonprofit organizations helping people in need. Since inception, Robin Hood has granted more than \$1.25 billion to help New Yorkers move out of poverty into productive, hopeful lives.

Within days of Hurricane Sandy ravaging the tri-state area, Robin Hood mounted a large-scale response to the destruction caused by the storm. Through the Robin Hood Relief Fund, Robin Hood is aiding our neighbors in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut whose lives have been shattered by Hurricane Sandy. Robin Hood immediately made grants to charities serving the hardest hit communities and also provided blankets, hot food, heaters, generators and more to residents in Red Hook, Coney Island, the Rockaways and all across the region. Now, six weeks out from the storm, thanks to our generous donors, Robin Hood has been able to provide over \$14.8 million in grants to more than 140 different groups working on the frontlines of the recovery in the tri-state area.

The Robin Hood Relief Fund is now moving into phase two of our recovery effort, addressing the longer-term needs created by the storm, including housing, job-training, benefits/financial/legal counseling, health and mental health care and more. The need is still great.

**1. What is the approximate dollar amount of donations and pledges that your organization has received to date in response to Hurricane Sandy?**

As of December 11, 2012, the Robin Hood Relief Fund has received \$15.7 million in donations and pledges from generous donors.

826 Broadway, 9th floor New York, New York, 10003 telephone 212 227-6601 fax 212 227-6698 [robinhood.org](http://robinhood.org)

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A silhouette of Robin Hood, a man in a hat and tunic, holding a bow and arrow, positioned between the words "ROBIN" and "HOOD" in the title.

In addition, the Robin Hood Relief Fund will be the beneficiary of the 12-12-12 Concert for Sandy Relief scheduled for December 12 at Madison Square Garden.

**2. Will these funds be used solely for Hurricane Sandy relief? If not, approximately what portion will be used for Hurricane Sandy relief and what other purposes will funds be used for?**

Yes, all funds donated to the Robin Hood Relief Fund in response to Hurricane Sandy will be used solely for Hurricane Sandy relief. Each contribution received for the Sandy Relief Fund is designated exclusively for that purpose and is treated as a restricted donation by Robin Hood's Finance Department in accordance with all IRS rules and regulations. The Relief Fund will remain open until every dollar donated is allocated for that specific purpose.

Because Robin Hood's board of directors generously underwrites all administrative and fundraising expenses, 100% of donations to the Relief Fund will go to organizations that directly improve the lives of those affected by the storm and its aftermath.

Robin Hood first created the Robin Hood Relief Fund in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The Robin Hood Relief Fund spent its entire \$65 million 9/11 Relief Fund income supporting those suffering because of the attacks. Now reactivated and informed about what works through its experience with 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, the Robin Hood Relief Fund will spend all Sandy donations effectively and exclusively on Sandy-related work.

**3. Approximately how much has your organization spent to date on Hurricane Sandy relief?**

As of December 11, 2012, Robin Hood's Relief Committee has approved grants and disbursements totaling more than \$14.8 million to more than 140 community organizations in the tri-state area hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy, which represents 94% of funds received to date.

The Robin Hood Relief Fund is a committee of the Robin Hood Foundation Board of Directors, plus a former director, all of whom served on Robin Hood's 9/11 Relief Fund committee, plus the Chairman of the Board. The Robin Hood Relief Fund is chaired by Victoria Bjorklund, the founding partner and head of the Exempt Organizations practice at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, LLP. The Relief Fund committee meets weekly with Robin Hood Relief Fund staff to provide oversight, strategic direction, learn about unmet needs and site visits, and review and approve all grants.

Please see Exhibit A for a list of all organizations and grant amounts approved for disbursement thus far. The amounts and names of grantee organizations are also posted and regularly updated on Robin Hood's website [www.robinhood.org/rhsandy](http://www.robinhood.org/rhsandy). We have also attached as Exhibit B a recent article from The Chronicle of Philanthropy on Robin Hood's relief work.

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**4. What services has your organization provided to those affected by Hurricane Sandy? What populations or geographical areas are being served by your organization in response to Hurricane Sandy? What services does it expect to provide in the future?**

Robin Hood is a grant-making organization, which donates funds to direct-service providers. As such, the Robin Hood Relief Fund contributes to non-profit organizations serving people throughout the tri-state region in communities hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy.

Within days of the storm, despite being dislocated from its own offices because of Sandy, Robin Hood sent emergency funds to charities already well known to us. Overnight, these agencies, like Henry Street Settlement and the Food Bank for New York City, had become first-responders on the front lines of the devastation.

Robin Hood's support provided these and other organizations with the ability to offer direct cash assistance to the needy, to provide services, and to buy or provide emergency supplies such as blankets, hot food, heaters, generators, diapers and other baby products for residents in Red Hook, Coney Island, the Rockaways, Staten Island and other hard-hit areas.

At the same time, Robin Hood staff visited (and continues to visit) devastated communities that were outside Robin Hood's usual region (including Long Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut), to identify and evaluate organizations at the center of the relief efforts and to provide them with grants and other support.

Funding has also been spent on providing storm victims both immediate relief and longer-term aid including assistance with food, housing, job-training, medical and mental health care, and legal/financial/benefits counseling to help them navigate local, state, and national disaster programs and to help victims find alternative financial assistance programs if they do not qualify for FEMA support.

As the grants list shows, Robin Hood has approved grants to organizations serving Staten Island, Coney Island, the Rockaways, Gerritsen Beach, Red Hook, Long Island, the Jersey Shore and other affected communities in New Jersey, and parts of Connecticut. The Robin Hood Relief Fund will continue to fund organizations in the tri-state region serving those who are suffering because of Sandy.

**5. Has your organization provided funds to other organizations for Hurricane Sandy relief efforts? If so, what organizations received those funds and what is the approximate dollar amount provided to them? How does your organization determine the need for funding?**

Yes, Robin Hood Relief Fund has approved grants totaling more than \$14.8 million to over 140 organizations serving people in communities in the tri-state region that were hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy. Because Robin Hood is a poverty-fighting organization, our primary focus will be on the low-

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income communities devastated by the storm, including the uninsured, unemployed and those “newly poor” due to loss of property or employment due to the storm.

Robin Hood’s Relief Committee has been meeting weekly to provide oversight and review grant recommendations developed by Robin Hood staff, who have been working to identify, meet and evaluate the most effective and efficient charitable organizations in hardest-hit communities. A majority of both the Board members volunteering for the Relief Committee, as well as Robin Hood staff members who are involved with Robin Hood’s Sandy relief efforts, gained experience managing Robin Hood’s 9/11 Relief Fund; our experience with grant-making in connection with 9/11 is informing our Sandy-relief work. Robin Hood’s staff is trained to assess the needs of non-profit organizations as well as their ability to effectively and efficiently to deploy Robin Hood’s grant funds.

A list of Relief Fund grantees as of the date of this response is attached as Exhibit A. This list is updated on an ongoing basis and is also publicly available at [www.robinhood.org/rhsandy](http://www.robinhood.org/rhsandy).

- 6. Has your organization provided, or does it intend to provide, direct financial assistance to individuals, families or businesses for Hurricane Sandy relief? If so, what is the approximate dollar amount your organization has provided to date and approximately how much direct financial assistance does it expect to provide in the future? How does your organization determine the need for assistance?**

Approximately \$1.3 million of Robin Hood’s \$14.8 million funding to date has been given to organizations that are providing direct financial assistance to individuals and families affected by Hurricane Sandy.

Robin Hood requires these organizations to establish criteria to assess needs and to report to Robin Hood on how these funds were distributed. These are trusted organizations accustomed to providing cash assistance to clients, and Robin Hood has worked with a number of these groups over the past 24 years.

- 7. Does your organization have a plan in place for how to use any surplus funds not spent for Sandy relief? If so, please describe that plan.**


Robin Hood will use 100% of all funds raised for Sandy relief for the express purpose of funding programs that address the needs of Sandy victims. As experienced grant-makers, we are accustomed to restricting the use of funds to ensure that we stay true to the intent of the donor.

Robin Hood has a comprehensive system in place to ensure that all donations received are allocated according to the wishes and intent of the donor. All donations restricted to Sandy Relief are coded to a unique account in the donor management system and in the general ledger. Those two systems are

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reconciled every day to ensure changes are properly identified. Similarly, all grants made from those restricted funds are coded to both the grantee and to the Sandy relief effort. We inform the Relief Committee of the available amounts at each meeting and update our records of available funds after grants are approved. This process will be implemented in full until all relief funds are distributed. Likewise, Robin Hood will report back to the relief donors on the use of these relief donations until all funds are fully distributed.

Please let us know if there is any additional information we can provide to you.

Sincerely yours,  
  
Victoria B. Bjorklund  
Chair,  
Robin Hood Relief Fund

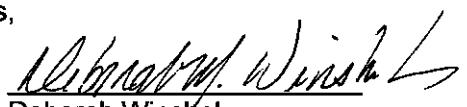
  
Deborah Winshel  
President and Chief  
Operating Officer,  
Robin Hood Foundation

Exhibit A: Relief Fund Grants

Exhibit B: Chronicle of Philanthropy Article

Exhibit A

List of Relief Fund Grants

Please see next page.

Robin Hood Sandy Relief Grants  
As of December 11, 2012

<b>Organization Name</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>
1199 SEIU Bill Michelson Home Care Education Fund	\$25,000
Accion	\$50,000
Affordable Housing Alliance	\$1,000,000
After Hours Project	\$25,000
Ali Forney Center	\$25,000
American Friends Services Committee	\$10,000
Andrew Glover Youth Program	\$25,000
Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture	\$25,000
Borough of Keansburg Trust	\$100,000
Bridge Fund	\$25,000
BronxWorks (formerly Citizens Advice Bureau)	\$25,000
Brooklyn Jubilee	\$80,000
Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation	\$25,000
Casa Freehold	\$55,000
Center for Court Innovation	\$25,000
Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO)	\$25,000
Center for Family Life	\$50,000
Center for Urban Community Services, Inc. (CUCS)	\$25,000
Center of United Methodist Aid to the Community (CUMAC)	\$50,000
Child Center of New York	\$25,000
Children's Health Fund	\$500,000
Children's Aid Society	\$25,000
Children's Storefront	\$25,000
Chinese American Planning Council, Inc.	\$25,000
Church of Grace and Peace	\$25,000
City Harvest	\$125,000
City Meals on Wheels	\$70,000
Coalition for Hispanic Family Services	\$25,000
Coalition for the Homeless	\$50,000
Common Ground	\$75,000
Community Access, Inc.	\$25,000
Community Food Bank of New Jersey	\$400,000
Community Services, Inc.	\$50,000
Community Solutions	\$50,000
Coney Recovers	\$25,000
Connecticut Food Bank	\$50,000
Covenant House of NJ	\$75,000
CUNY	\$300,000
Doe Fund	\$35,000
East Harlem Tutorial Program	\$25,000

Robin Hood Sandy Relief Grants  
As of December 11, 2012

East River Development Alliance (ERDA)	\$25,000
El Centro de Hospitalidad, Inc.	\$130,000
Family Service League	\$200,000
Fashion Delivers	\$25,000
Federation Employment and Guidance Service, Inc. (FEGS)	\$250,000
Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC/BWI Brooklyn Workforce Innovations)	\$50,000
First Presbyterian Church of Manasquan	\$50,000
Food Bank for New York City	\$125,000
Food Bank of South Jersey	\$25,000
FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties	\$215,000
FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties/Single Stop USA	\$450,000
Fortune Society	\$25,000
Friends of Firefighters	\$50,000
Fund for the City of New York (Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement)	\$10,000
Gary Klinsky Children's Center, Brooklyn Community Services	\$25,000
Gerritsen Beach Cares	\$25,000
Global DIRT (Disaster Immediate Response Team)	\$45,000
GO Project	\$25,000
Good Shepherd Services	\$25,000
Grand Street Settlement	\$50,000
Graybeards	\$75,000
Green City Force	\$25,000
HABCORE	\$165,000
Harlem Children's Zone	\$25,000
Harlem United	\$25,000
Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale	\$25,000
HELP/PSI, Inc. (formerly - Project Samaritan AIDS Service)	\$25,000
Henry Street Settlement	\$50,000
Hetrick-Martin Institute	\$25,000
Homes for All	\$130,000
Hometown Heroes	\$50,000
Hope Center	\$15,000
Hope for Highlands	\$200,000
Housing Works, Inc.	\$25,000
Interfaith Neighbors	\$50,000
Interfaith Nutritional Network (The INN)	\$50,000
Ironbound Community Corp.	\$50,000
Island Harvest	\$200,000
Jersey Cares	\$30,000
Jersey Shore Workcamps	\$20,000
Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA)	\$25,000



Robin Hood Sandy Relief Grants  
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Legal Aid Society (LAS)	\$25,000
Legal Services NYC (LSNY formerly - Legal Services for New York City)	\$70,000
Legal Services of New Jersey	\$550,000
Long Blue Line	\$30,000
Long Island Housing Partnership	\$200,000
Lunch Break	\$25,000
Lutheran Family Health Centers (Sunset Park Health Council)	\$175,000
Make the Road New York	\$250,000
Marks Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst Edith and Carl (Marks JCH)	\$50,000
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty (Met Council)	\$50,000
National Day Laborer Organizing Network (NDLON)	\$95,000
Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP)	\$25,000
Neighbors Together	\$25,000
New York City Non-Profit Recovery Loan Program	\$2,000,000
New York Foundling Hospital	\$50,000
New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)	\$500,000
Newark Now	\$50,000
Nontraditional Employment For Women (NEW)	\$25,000
NY Cares	\$100,000
Ocean City NJ Cleanup And Recovery Effort (OCNJ CARE)	\$50,000
Ocean Community Economic Action Now (O.C.E.A.N.)	\$340,000
Ocean County College Foundation	\$200,000
Ocean Mental Health Services	\$125,000
Part Of The Solution (POTS)	\$40,000
Phipps C.D.C.	\$25,000
Point Pleasant Presbyterian Church	\$25,000
Portlight Strategies	\$25,000
Project Hospitality	\$240,000
Project Renewal	\$25,000
Providence House	\$25,000
Public Health Solutions	\$150,000
Reaching Out Community Services	\$25,000
Red Hook Initiative	\$30,000
Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York (ROC)	\$50,000
Rockaway Relief Fund (Catholic Charities of San Diego)	\$100,000
Rutgers School of Social Work	\$400,000
Safe Horizon (formerly - Victims Services Association)	\$25,000
Sanctuary for Families	\$25,000
SCO Family of Services	\$50,000
Sea Bright Rising	\$100,000
Selfhelp Community Services	\$25,000

Robin Hood Sandy Relief Grants  
As of December 11, 2012

Single Stop USA	\$295,000
Single Stop USA	\$250,000
Southwest Brooklyn Industrial Development Corporation (SBIDC)	\$50,000
St. John's Bread & Life Program	\$40,000
St. Pauls United Methodist	\$35,000
Staten Island Mental Health Society	\$50,000
Sunnyside Community Service (SCS)	\$25,000
Sustainable South Bronx	\$15,000
Team Rubicon	\$30,000
The Door	\$50,000
The River Fund	\$25,000
Union Beach Disaster Relief Fund	\$100,000
United Way of Monmouth County	\$55,000
University Settlement Society	\$50,000
Urban Justice Center	\$25,000
Visiting Nurse Service	\$25,000
West Side Campaign Against Hunger	\$25,000
Where To Turn	\$25,000
Women in Need, Inc. (WIN)	\$25,000
Workers Justice Project	\$55,000
Yorkville Common Pantry (YCP)	\$40,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$14,470,000</b>
Purchases of specific goods such as blankets, baby products, refrigerators and supporting repairs for \$280,000	
\$112,000 so that 17000 more Thanksgiving meals could be served.	

Exhibit B

Chronicle of Philanthropy Article

Please see next page.

December 2, 2012

## In Sandy's Wake, Charities That Serve Region's Poor Face Harder Task



### *Robin Hood Foundation*

The Robin Hood Foundation provided volunteers and made grants to groups that responded to Superstorm Sandy.

*By Suzanne Perry*

New York City's nonprofits are planning to gather in January to discuss ways that government and philanthropy can bolster nonprofits so they can do more to help move city residents out of poverty. Thanks to Superstorm Sandy, that conversation has taken on new urgency.

The storm paralyzed the city, drove many low-income families from their homes, and added new demands on already stretched human-service nonprofits.

“Nonprofits have stepped up” to help the storm victims, says Allison Sesso, deputy executive director of the Human Services Council of New York City, a nonprofit association.

But many are worried about the potential hit to their finances: “I’ve talked to executives who are saying, ‘When I lift my head up and pay attention to my budget, my board’s going to bite my head off.’”

The Henry Street Settlement was one organization that received help from the Robin Hood Foundation.



*Rob Bennett*

The Henry Street Settlement was one organization that received help from the Robin Hood Foundation.

The Human Services Council is co-sponsoring the January conference, which was originally planned for November but was disrupted by Superstorm Sandy. The organizers quickly added a new panel discussion—on how to ensure nonprofits are well prepared to respond to disasters.

### **Years to Recover**

The nonprofit association is one of many philanthropic groups that are facing twin challenges in the wake of the violent storm that wracked the East Coast, especially New York and New Jersey, in late October. While giving priority to relief efforts, they are also trying to ensure that nonprofits have the resources to help vulnerable people, who tend to get hit especially hard by disasters, in the medium and long term.

“Unfortunately, sometimes we have short attention spans,” says Alan van Capelle, chief executive of Bend the Arc: a Jewish Partnership for Justice, which is raising money to help storm victims in Newark, N.J. “We’re committed to not have short attention spans when people suffer after such disasters.”

Bend the Arc, a social-justice organization, is among nonprofits and foundations that are dusting off one of the key lessons learned from the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, which devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005: that it takes years for poor communities to recover fully from disasters.

The charity raised nearly \$50,000 in immediate relief for Newark, a poor city that it feared would be neglected because the damage there wasn't as dramatic as in some New York neighborhoods, like Staten Island and Far Rockaway, in Queens.

But it also revived the Isaiah Fund, an interfaith loan project that was set up to help New Orleans recover from the Gulf Coast storms. It hopes to raise at least \$1-million for Newark, partly to help rebuild businesses that were hurt by the storm, Mr. van Capelle says.

### **Temporary Aid Groups**

The American Red Cross got the most publicity and the most money for its immediate response to Hurricane Sandy. (It has raised \$168-million for the effort so far.)

But the storm turned dozens of other nonprofits into temporary relief organizations—often under trying circumstances. In a survey conducted by the Human Services Council, 382 nonprofits in New York City reported that they were providing services to storm victims. About 74 percent of them said Sandy disrupted their services, and 66 percent said they were forced to close down temporarily because of power outages or other problems.

Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens is a case in point. Three of its sites suffered serious damage—a senior center in Far Rockaway, a day-care center in Coney Island, and a center for developmentally disabled people in Sheepshead Bay, in Brooklyn.

Robert Siebel, the charity's leader, says some staff members worked two or three straight shifts in the early days to provide the group's usual services, like Meals on Wheels, while also helping to evacuate clients.

Meanwhile, he estimates his group lost \$250,000 because it had to suspend mental-health services that get reimbursed by programs like Medicaid and managed-care health plans.

He hasn't had much time to think about what that will mean for his group's bottom line. "You kind of go into something like this just doing what you have to do and hoping the money comes," he says. "And it usually does."

Caaav: Organizing Asian Communities, a nonprofit that advocates for low-income Asian immigrants and refugees, also sprang into action after the storm, offering food, water, and information to hard-hit neighborhoods—armed with hundreds of volunteers. But it's not by nature a disaster organization, and its executive director, Helena Wong, says its top goal is to ensure that any rebuilding projects take into account the needs of low-income people, who already have problems finding affordable housing.

It will draw on its experience advocating on their behalf when the city was drawing up plans to redevelop lower Manhattan after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

### **Nonprofit Veterans**

Nonprofits that felt Sandy's wrath are fortunate in one respect: They are located in an area with strong philanthropic institutions, some of which are offering both immediate and longer-term help.

In New Jersey, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation awarded \$500,000 to help the state's nonprofits provide food, shelter, and other relief services. It pledged \$4.5-million more to help the state rebuild and provide social services, including mental-health programs.

The Robin Hood Foundation, an organization started by a hedge-fund manager and others to provide poverty-fighting grants in New York City, reactivated a relief fund it set up in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

It has raised \$15.5-million to provide both emergency grants to nonprofits that are responding to the storm (\$8.2-million so far to more than 90 groups like Food Bank for New York City and Henry Street Settlement) and future aid to the city's most vulnerable residents.

The original September 11 fund raised more than \$65-million—and more than 11 years later, it is still paying for mental-health and other services for September 11 victims and their families.

"After 9/11, we were running like a sprint," says Emary Aronson, the relief fund's managing director. "We didn't know it was going to be a marathon."

### **Long-Term Relief**

The Nonprofit Finance Fund, a financial institution with a New York office, has set up a low-interest loan fund to help storm-damaged social-service nonprofits repair their facilities, replace property or equipment, or cover revenue losses.

But philanthropic help is also coming from other parts of the country. The Foundation Center, which is keeping a tally, says foundations and corporations across the nation have awarded more than \$240-million in cash and product donations to help Sandy's victims.

Some nonprofit leaders say once the dust settles, philanthropic and government leaders must work together to improve life for low-income people so they are better prepared for disasters, especially since many scientists expect climate change to intensify the impact of future storms.

Sheena Wright, president of United Way of New York City—which is leading United Way's fundraising efforts for the entire storm-affected region—says that even before Sandy, almost a third of New York state residents who qualified for food stamps were not getting them. Such help can be critical when disasters throw people out of work, she says.

The Center for Disaster Philanthropy, a new organization that aims to improve disaster-response coordination, will work to keep the pressure on, says Regine Webster, its vice president. "The message we're very much sending is private philanthropy needs to pay attention to this disaster beyond the six-month relief stage."