
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Firm Offers Helping Hand to Sandy Victims

News & Events | Pro Bono

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Shakina, a young Brooklyn mother whose 3-year-old daughter was living with her aunt when superstorm Sandy struck, needed help replacing her daughter's furniture and clothing when she visited a Brooklyn community center on Nov. 20, 2012. Hughes Hubbard attorneys and the New York Legal Assistance Group ("NYLAG") were there offering disaster relief to storm victims. But Teresa Delany quickly realized Shakina faced an uphill battle getting assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA"), since a claim had already been filed for the aunt's house.

Undeterred, Delany rolled up her sleeves and called FEMA. About an hour later, after Delany and the FEMA rep had made substantial progress, Delany's cell coverage started to fade. Delany dashed out of the center as the FEMA rep repeatedly said "hello." Finally, the FEMA operator hung up, forcing Delany to start over again with another rep. Forty-five minutes later, Delany completed the application, allowing Shakina to breathe easy knowing that FEMA assistance was on the way. "It's a good result for a woman who otherwise would not have known how to proceed under unusual circumstances for the possessions that were lost," Delany said.

Delany isn't the only HHR attorney seeking good results for Sandy victims. After Sandy walloped the East Coast on Oct. 29, HHR attorneys have turned out in force to help victims rebuild their homes, their businesses and their lives.

In addition to NYLAG, HHR has teamed up with the Legal Aid Society, the City Bar Justice Center, Legal Services NYC, the City Bar Committee on Pro Bono and Legal Services and City Harvest to offer storm victims pro bono legal support in connection with FEMA claims relating to housing, personal property and lost wages, as well as assistance being offered through other government agencies. They have offered training sessions to attorneys and storm relief to residents in Brooklyn, the Rockaways, Staten Island and Long Island.

Sarah Cave and Vilia Hayes spearheaded an effort that started Nov. 19 to help Legal Aid staff a disaster relief hotline every Monday at its Harlem Community Law Office. Participating attorneys include: Alex Bogdan, Erin

DeCecchis, Teresa Delaney, Laura Fibiger, Anson Frelinghuysen, Ariel Lichterman, David McCallen, Sam McCoubrey, Nanda Srikantaiah, Jamie Steinfink, Gary Simon and Lucas Watkins.

Lichterman said while some callers have expressed frustration with their circumstances, many have been “surprisingly positive” and “extremely grateful” for the services that HHR and others have provided. “A lot of people were affected by this storm,” he said. “Luckily I wasn’t. So I just wanted to do my part to help out.”

Among the other attorneys who have volunteered to help are: Richard Bosch, Yohance Bowden, Jim Delaney, Walter Egbert, Ben Galynker, Justin Greenbaum, Danny Grossman, Jillian Kane, Steve Luger, Seth Schulman-Marcus, Gloria Nusbacher, Kate O’Donnell, Konstantine Paschalidis, Chuck Samuelson and Ed Troya.

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