

Two years after superstorm Sandy: Resilience in twelve neighborhoods

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The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research today released the results of a major new study and related reports on the recovery from Superstorm Sandy in 12 New York and New Jersey neighborhoods hard hit by the 2012 storm.

It is the second AP-NORC study that has focused on the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, with findings that emphasize the important role social factors play in a neighborhood's <u>resilience</u>: the ability of people and their social systems to survive, adapt and continue moving forward after a disaster. Funding for both studies was provided by the Rockefeller Foundation.

"The study had two central objectives," said Trevor Tompson, director of the AP-NORC Center. "First was to take a systematic and in-depth look at recovery in 12 very different neighborhoods two years after the storm. The second was to provide data and insight on the interplay of <u>social factors</u>, resilience, and long-term recovery to understand why some neighborhood areas are more resilient than others."

The central component of the study is a survey done by phone, on the web, and in-person completed with 1,009 residents of 12 neighborhoods in New York and New Jersey. The report includes analysis of the survey numbers and what the interviews, focus groups, and observations revealed in the form of stories about each of the 12 neighborhoods.



The Study Neighborhoods

- Neighborhood; County, State
- Babylon; Suffolk, NY
- Breezy Point-Belle Harbor-Rockaway Park; Queens, NY
- Gravesend; Kings, NY
- Hoboken; Hudson, NJ
- Islip; Suffolk, NY
- Jersey City; Hudson, NJ
- Long Beach; Nassau, NY
- Long Branch; Monmouth, NJ
- Lower East Side; New York, NY
- Monmouth Beach; Monmouth, NJ
- New Dorp-Midland Beach; Richmond, NY
- Point Pleasant-Point Pleasant Beach; Ocean, NJ

The results show that while economic development and infrastructure of a community contribute to recovery in the wake of a disaster, resilience often differs in neighborhoods with similar economic and structural resources. Critical factors shaping a neighborhood's resilience are social resources and connections such as trust, community bonds, and other elements that give a neighborhood its human qualities.

Key findings of the study include:

- While most neighborhoods are recovering, nearly 30 percent of residents report their neighborhood has recovered only halfway or less.
- Less than half of residents say that most people have gotten most or all of the help they need to recover and restore their lives after the storm.
- Neighbors are cited most often as helpful for the recovery, with 69 percent saying neighbors helped compared with 57 percent



for local government and 55 percent for the federal government and FEMA.

- People living in <u>neighborhoods</u> with more social connections and resources are more likely to say their neighborhood is well prepared to handle a disaster and more confident their neighborhood would recover quickly after a disaster.
- Social resources can help overcome economic barriers to resilience. The positive effects of social resources on resilience are relatively similar across socioeconomic groups.

"Building resilience during normal times means that when disaster strikes, everyone is better able to manage," said Dr. Judith Rodin, President of The Rockefeller Foundation and author of the forthcoming book, The Resilience Dividend. "AP-NORC's latest research is clear: when cities make plans for building resilience, social resilience matters. The strength of neighborhood ties matters. And most of all, trust matters."

Provided by University of Chicago

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