



NEWS RELEASE

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**Westbeth Artists Housing, NYC Housing Preservation and Development and
Community Preservation Corporation Break Ground on \$40 Million Multifamily
Build it Back Resiliency Project**

*Build it Back Funding to Support Critically-Needed Renovations to Westbeth Artists Housing in
Response to Damage Caused by Hurricane Sandy*

NEW YORK – Flood resiliency in New York City took a big step forward today as a \$40-million resiliency project broke ground in Manhattan’s West Village.

Westbeth Artists Housing, the Greenwich Village “home to the arts,” and the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), and the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) announced the start of construction on a massive project to repair damage from Hurricane Sandy and to fortify Westbeth for future natural disasters.

Westbeth provides artists affordable live and work space at its historic site at the former Bell Laboratories campus in the West Village, on the corner of Bethune and West Streets. The campus contains 384 affordable homes as well as large and small commercial spaces rented to artists of all disciplines, including the Martha Graham Dance Company and the New School University’s graduate theater department.

Hurricane Sandy, the worst natural disaster in New York City’s history, ravaged Westbeth in 2012, along with much of the rest of New York City and coastal New Jersey. Seawater poured into Westbeth’s basement, flooding the block-square building with nine feet of water. The storm knocked out the property’s electrical equipment, boilers, electronics, pumps, and elevators. While Westbeth has made

major strides in recovering from the storm, it still needs significant improvements to withstand the inevitable floods and power outages of the future.

The Build it Back project will make those critically needed improvements to Westbeth, including:

- Raising boilers above flood level to ensure it does not lose heat and hot water in a flood;
- Upgrading cellar windows and critical doorways to prevent water from entering the cellar;
- Installing a new emergency generator to run boilers, water pumps, elevators and stairwell lighting during emergencies;
- Installing submersible domestic water pumps that will ensure water gets to all floors for drinking and toilets;
- Installing new submersible sump pumps to aid in removing any water that might seep into the basement;
- Preserving the historic preservation status, while repairing the structural integrity of the complex's inner courtyard and rebuilding it to make it wheelchair-accessible; and
- Removing lead paint and asbestos from most of the basement and outside surfaces as a preliminary step in the construction process

“Westbeth remains committed to providing affordable homes and workspace for artists, and we are grateful to the New York City Build it Back program and HPD for providing financing for these necessary renovations,” said Patricia Jones, chair of the Westbeth Corp. board of directors. “Because the funds are provided by the federal and city governments, residents' rents will be unaffected, enabling us to create a stronger, more sustainable and resilient Westbeth while maintaining affordability for artists.”

Funding for the project comes from federal Community Development Block Grant -Disaster Recovery funds, administered by the HPD Multifamily Storm Recovery and Resiliency Program. HPD oversees the expenditures of those funds, as well as the construction monitoring, to ensure the project progresses as planned and meets both the relevant federal guidelines and city requirements.

“HPD's Multifamily Storm Recovery Program shows that the City is not just committed to rebuilding, but also creating a more resilient infrastructure that will leave residents feeling secure in their homes,” said Housing and Preservation Development Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer. “HPD is proud to have

provided this critical assistance and will continue to work alongside city residents to strengthen our communities.”

Following Sandy, HPD designated CPC to administer a portion of the city’s disaster recovery funding under the Build it Back Multifamily Program. The funding was used to make critical repairs to restore what was lost, as well as to implement resiliency features that will better allow the properties to withstand the fallout of future storms. CPC administered a total of \$33 million in disaster recovery funding to 106 multifamily buildings across all five boroughs. In addition, CPC provided critical support to Westbeth during the application process, as well as coordinating engineers, architects and construction professionals, and helping Westbeth assemble the necessary documentation to push this complex recovery project across the funding finishing line.

“The impact of Sandy upended the lives of thousands of people and forever changed how we think about storm recovery and resilience. It also proved again, that New Yorkers pull together to help those most in need during our darkest times. Working on the Build it Back portfolio was an opportunity to lend our unique expertise to our longtime partners in government, and also to bring relief to owners in need, to rebuild communities and return a sense of stability to the people who live there. As we continue our efforts here in New York, our thoughts go out to those people impacted by Hurricanes Harvey and Irma who are embarking on their recovery and rebuilding process,” said CPC’s President and CEO Rafael E. Cestero.

About Westbeth Corp.

Westbeth, founded in 1968, provides affordable work-live space for artists and affordable space for nonprofit arts groups in New York City at its historic site at the former Bell Laboratories campus in the Far West Village. One of the world’s first examples of large-scale adaptive re-use of an industrial building, Westbeth is one of the largest artist’s housing facilities in the world. It is also the home of the Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance, The New School for Drama graduate program, an art gallery, and numerous large and small spaces rented to painters, sculptors, musicians and other artists. Their website is www.westbetharts.org.

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)

The New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is the nation’s largest municipal housing preservation and development agency. Its mission is to promote quality housing and diverse, thriving neighborhoods for New Yorkers through loan and development programs for new affordable housing, preservation of the affordability of the existing housing stock, enforcement of housing quality standards, and educational programs for tenants and building owners. HPD is tasked with fulfilling Mayor de Blasio’s Housing New York: A Five-Borough Ten-Year Plan to create and preserve 200,000 affordable units for New Yorkers at the very lowest incomes to those in the middle class. For more information visit www.nyc.gov/hpd and for regular updates on HPD news and services, connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @NYCHousing.

About the Community Preservation Corporation (CPC)

Established in 1974, CPC is a nonprofit affordable housing and community revitalization finance company that believes housing is central to transforming underserved neighborhoods into thriving and vibrant communities. To date the company has leveraged approximately \$9.7 billion in private and public investment to finance more than 170,660 units of housing. CPC's work with its partners has helped revitalize countless neighborhoods and provided quality housing for families, senior citizens, and individuals with disabilities. Visit CPC at communityp.com, and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).