

Avaltroni, Robert

From: Callahan.Kathy@epamail.epa.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2003 10:03 AM
To: avaltronir@dep.nyc.gov
Subject: RE: FW: FEMA Temporary Housing Assistance

bob, i don't think my original message got to you. hope i have it right this time. still waiting to hear from walter on the list. kc

Kathleen C. Callahan
 212-637-3116
 212-637-3115 (fax)

----- Forwarded by Kathy Callahan/R2/USEPA/US on 02/20/2003 10:01 AM

"Melnick, Walter"
 <Walter.Melnick@fema.gov>

To: Kathy Callahan/R2/USEPA/US@EPA
 cc:
 Subject: RE: FW: FEMA Temporary Housing

Assistance

02/19/2003 05:58
 PM

Kathy - Sound. good. I am trying to retrieve those names now. My impression is there may be a few hundred still receiving our assistance but who knows how many are in the cleaning program. Will talk to you as soon as I get more info. Thanks Walter

-----Original Message-----

From: Callahan.Kathy@epamail.epa.gov
 [mailto:Callahan.Kathy@epamail.epa.gov]
 Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2003 5:56 PM
 To: Melnick, Walter
 Cc: 'avaltronir@dep.nyc.gov'
 Subject: Re: FW: FEMA Temporary Housing Assistance

walter, send us the list of people and their addresses and we can cross check against our registry. we can then determine what building related issues may exist and come up with an approach to expedite these folks. it may be that if "common space" or "HVAC" clean up is involved we can come up with a unique approach, if there aren't too many people involved. can you give me the list/idea of how many people are affected and we can see what we can do. i know you want to be able to address this on friday, so let's talk tomorrow and exchange info. kc

Kathleen C. Callahan
 212-637-3116
 212-637-3115 (fax)

"Melnick, Walter"

Callahan/R2/USEPA/US@EPA
<Walter.Melnick@fema.gov>
"alvatroni.r@dep.nyc.gov"

To: Kathy

cc:

<alvatroni.r@dep.nyc.gov>

02/19/2003 05:33

Subject: FW: FEMA

Temporary
Housing Assistance

PM

Kathy/Bob - this is an example of why our target dates are so important.

In this particular case is there any way we can address Ms. Vroman's apt immediately?

Is a name list available to us of all individuals requesting apt cleaning and whether whole bldg issues are involved? I can run my list of people receiving FEMA benefits to determine those that have requested cleaning. We could then clean their apts first if no other issues complicate the process.

What do you think? Walter

-----Original Message-----

From: Okezie, Nnennaya [mailto:Nnennaya.Okezie@mail.house.gov]
Sent: Friday, February 14, 2003 12:45 PM
To: 'Bryan Pojanowski'
Subject: FW: FEMA Temporary Housing Assistance

Dear Ms. Okezie:

FEMA Registration No. 910460785

Disaster Address: 355 South End Avenue, Apartment 6A, New York, New York 10280

Daytime Telephone Number: 212.723.3524/Cell Phone: 917.647.1561

Ellen Wallach of your office suggested today that I contact you regarding difficulties that I am having with FEMA. Ms. Wallach was of great assistance to me last Spring.

I have been displaced from my apartment in Battery Park City since September 11, 2001. My apartment is located at 355 South End Avenue, Apartment 6A, New York, New York 10280. I have been staying at the Tribeca Grand Hotel since October 2001. FEMA has paid for the hotel since November 2001. My apartment windows were open on September 11, and a tremendous amount of dust and debris entered the apartment. Due to serious medical problems, my physician advised me in the Fall of 2001 not to return to live in my apartment for several months. In March 2001, private testing revealed that my apartment is contaminated with asbestos.

In March 2001, immediately after receiving my asbestos test results, I sent the laboratory report to FEMA, along with a letter from my physician. FEMA initially denied my request for continued temporary housing assistance (they suggested that I could remove the asbestos myself by using a HEPA vacuum), but due to Congressman Nadler's intervention, as well as assistance from Senator Clinton's office, in early May 2002, I was advised that the temporary housing assistance would be continued, for at least a short period of time. Due to FEMA's initial refusal to continue assisting me, I had to pay the hotel in March and April 2002 out of my savings. I was reimbursed by FEMA in May 2002 for the bills I had paid out of pocket. I was advised by Senator Clinton's office in June 2002 that continued temporary housing assistance from FEMA would be dependent upon my progress in having the asbestos removed from my apartment.

I note that I lost my job on November 30, 2001, due to the closing of the company I worked for. In addition to concerns about the contamination in my apartment, I sought the continuation of temporary housing assistance because it would have been impossible for me to find a new apartment without a job, and I would not have been able to afford a new apartment without a job. I worked diligently throughout last year at an outplacement office provided by my prior employer, trying to find a new job. I began a new job three weeks ago, in January 2003.

I registered for the EPA's WTC Asbestos Cleaning Program on June 13, 2002, immediately after the registration period began. Since June 2002, I have spoken every ten days to two weeks with Ben Barry, the EPA's Community Liaison Officer for the WTC Asbestos Cleaning Program, to try to find out when my apartment would be cleaned. Beginning in June 2002, I was told that cleaning would begin in July, and that I would likely be back in my home in July and August. In September 2002, I was told that the EPA needed to spend time examining the ductwork and ventilation systems in my building before any apartments were cleaned. I was told that if dust and debris was found in the ductwork, that the ductwork would have to be cleaned before any apartments were cleaned. I continued calling and speaking to Mr. Barry from September through November 2002. In late November, Mr. Barry advised me that visible dust and debris from the World Trade Center had indeed been found in the ductwork and ventilation systems in my building, and that it would likely be some months before my apartment would be cleaned. He advised me that the ductwork had to be cleaned first, to prevent apartments from being recontaminated from the ductwork. In December and January, Mr. Barry told me at various times to contact him again in a few weeks, as he would have more information at that time. Mr. Barry advised me yesterday that the EPA will begin cleaning the ductwork and ventilation systems in my building and in my complex generally within a few days, and that apartments will be cleaned thereafter. Again, however, Mr. Barry did not commit to any date or month in which my apartment might be cleaned. He told me that it is very difficult to estimate when the cleaning of my apartment will take place.

Since May 2002, FEMA has generally been prompt in continuing the temporary housing assistance which permitted me to have a place to live while (a) my apartment is inhabitable due to asbestos contamination from the WTC, and (b) while I was unemployed and looking for a new job. I have applied for recertification every two months by faxing a letter and my receipts from the hotel, showing that I have paid the hotel the exact amount of money disbursed to me by FEMA for the prior two months; it has generally, each time, taken only a few weeks for FEMA to reach a decision, and approve my request for recertification.

On January 3, 2003, I faxed a letter to FEMA, along with receipts from the Tribeca Grand Hotel from November and December 2002. On January 21, 2003, I spoke to a FEMA representative, who told me that my request for

recertification had been approved. At the end of January, when I had not received a letter or a check from FEMA, I again called FEMA, and this time, was told that my application had not been approved, and that it was, instead, being reviewed again by another supervisor. I was told that FEMA is carefully reviewing all applications for temporary housing assistance. Since the end of January, I have called FEMA seven times, to try to determine the status of my application. I was told today by a FEMA representative that it appears that my application is on "hold," as a supervisor is trying to determine why they have continued to pay for my temporary housing assistance, and whether they will continue to do so. I was told that this is not due to any error on my part.

Due to FEMA's delay, I had to pay the January hotel bill out of my savings. I have not yet received an approval from FEMA for January and February, and I am concerned that I will have to pay the February bill out of my savings, and run the risk that I will not be reimbursed. I am extremely concerned about the status of my application. Due to the contamination in my apartment from the WTC, it is inhabitable and I have not been able to live there since September 11. In addition, due to the loss of my job in November 2001, I was not able to move to a new home during 2002. I have just started a new job, and although I now have the flexibility to be able to move, as the EPA is now, FINALLY about to begin the process of cleaning common areas and apartments in my building, I would like to have the opportunity to be able to return to live in my home. As my circumstances have not changed, I do not understand FEMA's delay.

I will be most appreciative if you would contact me to discuss this issue, and if you would please contact the FEMA officials with whom you have a working relationship on my behalf.

Thank you very much!!

Regards,

Ann Marie Vroman
212.723.3524
917.647.1561