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United Way 9/11 fund set to give $75M

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The September 11th Fund will distribute
$75 million by the end of the year to those who lost loved ones, jobs or homes in the terror attacks, the charity announced yesterday.

Families of those killed or injured will get checks for $10,000 each. People who lost jobs or homes will get $2,500. The payouts will leave the fund with 59 percent of the nearly $350 million it has raised — the largest sum collected by any terror victims' charity, except the Red Cross'.

The fund is waiting to see how much money the families of victims or those injured will get from the government's Victim Compensation Fund before deciding how to spend the rest of the money.

The new checks will be in addition to other emergency aid the fund has already distributed.

Officials of the fund — run by the United Way of New York City and New York Community Trust — announced the new aid at a press conference with Attorney Gen. Eliot Spitzer and actor George Clooney.

Clooney, one of the stars who appeared on a "Tribute to Heroes" telethon in September that raised $101 million for the fund, has defended the charity against critics who complain it has doled out money too slowly and not helped families enough.

Clooney said he was "proud" of the fund's performance.

Meanwhile, relatives of some of those lost in the World Trade Center attacks testified at a state Senate hearing in New York that they've been treated like second-class citizens by charities.

In heart-wrenching testimony, widow Meryl Mayo, whose husband was a deputy fire safety director at the trade center, testified she was told she was ineligible for aid by several charities.

"This disgusts me intensely," said the Morganville, N.J., mother, who said she lost almost all of her family's income when her husband Robert perished.

"I have called [various charities] repeatedly," she said. "I have pleaded ... to no avail. This is not right."

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