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## Superstorm Sandy battered the poor hardest, studies show

12:00am EST

March 6 (Reuters) - Superstorm Sandy punished low-income people in New York and New Jersey, especially renters who are now at risk of being unable to find new homes, according to a pair of studies released on Wednesday said.

Forty-three percent of the 518,000 households in New York and New Jersey asking for federal aid after Superstorm Sandy reported annual incomes of less than \$30,000, according to the study from the affordable housing financing firm Enterprise Community Partners.

Of those making claims to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as of mid-February, 68 percent of renters and 24 percent of homeowners were low-income, the Enterprise study said.

Low-income renters were vulnerable to being left without affordable housing, according to another study from the Furman Center at New York University.

Sandy crashed ashore with a record sea surge on Oct. 29, damaging or destroying hundreds of thousands of homes and commercial buildings, mostly in low-lying coastal areas of New York and New Jersey.

U.S. lawmakers approved a \$50 billion federal aid package aimed at helping homeowners, businesses, states and cities. A full picture of the economic damage is still unfolding.

Floodwaters from the storm damaged 402 public housing buildings with more than 35,000 units in New York City, the Furman Center study found. That amounts to "more public housing units than the entire stock of any other public housing authority in the country" except Puerto Rico, it said.

The split of FEMA claims between New York and New Jersey residents was roughly equal. The number of homeowners with uninsured damage was 60 percent higher in New York, the Enterprise study said.

About a fifth of all FEMA claims were filed by households making more than \$90,000 a year, Enterprise found.

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