

Over \$554 Million from FEMA Boosts Rehabilitation of Public Housing Facilities

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This is the fourth obligation under FEMA's Accelerated Award Strategy to streamline recovery after Hurricane María

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico –Approximately 275 public housing complexes representing over 4,600 facilities and structures that suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Maria will be rebuilt with an obligation approved today by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The federal share of more than \$554 million to the Puerto Rico Public Housing Administration (PRPHA) is in addition to another \$109 million in disaster funding for the PRPHA.

Aside from construction repairs, other activities like lead and asbestos remediation in buildings and basketball courts are addressed in the obligation.

“This obligation provides an unprecedented opportunity for some of our most vulnerable survivors and for underserved communities that may have been disproportionately affected by Hurricane María. Our goal is that these funds will help strengthen public housing infrastructure across the island so that thousands of families can recover more quickly from a future disaster ,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico José Baquero.

Due to the volume of inspections and the time required to finalize cost estimates, FEMA and the Puerto Rico Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency, known as COR3, agreed to use a sample of the damaged facilities to arrive at a fixed cost estimate, which in turn accelerates the obligation of funds.

“My Administration will ensure that we use this over \$500 million and all recovery funds efficiently and without delay. We want the more than 59,000 families living in the 323 public housing projects to have a better quality of life and to have a robust infrastructure and safe facilities that promote an integral development for the whole family. Through COR3's efforts, we will continue to work with FEMA so that we can move forward with reconstruction projects. As I have said, this is the



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Government of work and I will continue to take action where I have given my word,” said Governor Pedro R. Pierluisi.

Furthermore, the over 4,600 buildings to be covered by these funds represent the majority of the PRPHA facilities. The remaining 2,200 facilities will be processed separately with obligations for each location.

“I welcome this announcement, which means that our families in public housing will finally be able to see repairs to their homes and community facilities. It has been a long time coming for an allocation like this that impacts people so closely. It will now be important to process action plans quickly so that work can begin promptly. We have seen in other similar obligations such as power and water that the process can take time, so I encourage all parties to take these steps immediately,” said Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón.

For his part, the Secretary of the Puerto Rico Housing Department William Rodríguez Rodríguez said that this announcement exemplifies one of many efforts underway to address the recovery and planning needs of housing complexes throughout Puerto Rico to make them more resilient.

“As Secretary of the Department of Housing and as a former Public Housing Administrator, this obligation brings me great joy and satisfaction because it directly addresses the quality of life of residents. These funds will allow us, together with the staff of the Public Housing Administration, to outline strategies to streamline recovery and long-term planning efforts to build resilient housing for everyone,” said Rodríguez Rodríguez.

As part of the conditions of this project obligation, the PRPHA is required to provide FEMA and COR3 a work plan which details how the funds will be used. This plan must be submitted within 90 days of the project obligation and updated every 90 days thereafter.

“This significant obligation from FEMA will allow us to rebuild resilient, state-of-the-art infrastructure for the safety and security of the tenants of over 200 public housing units. Our team is committed to continuing to support the Public Housing Administration staff in all aspects of the development of these projects. I thank all our colleagues who worked hard to ensure that thousands of people will soon be able to enjoy housing and community facilities free of contaminants and resistant



to the impact of a new atmospheric phenomenon," said Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, Executive Director of COR3.

FEMA obligated over \$9.4 billion to the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, more than \$3.6 billion to the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority and about \$2 billion to the Puerto Rico Department of Education under its Accelerated Award Strategy, known as FAASt. To date, the total funding under FEMA's Public Assistance program is over \$26,500 billion for costs related to hurricanes Irma and María.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, please visit fema.gov/es/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow our social media pages at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr)

