

Allocation for Storm Shutters to Support Services Provided in 6 Municipalities

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FEMA funds will go to municipal facilities, fine arts buildings and senior services homes

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico – For over 25 years, José Feliciano's work as director of the Ryder housing facilities has focused on a wide variety of services for the elderly and children with disabilities who live there, but for him, the most important thing they need is to be accompanied and listened to. But for him, the most important thing these people need is to be accompanied and listened to, "To feel part of a community: we all win with that," he said.

This is why common areas are very important for residents. When natural events happen, for example, neighbors gather in these rooms and spend time together. The installation of storm shutters in these areas offers greater safety for residents during a period of high winds. In this way, the community remains united at times when isolation should not be an option.

Storm shutters are the first line of defense and mitigation against a storm. In addition to providing protection for doors and windows, they reduce pressure on walls from high winds.

The lack of shutters in structures such as community centers or public service facilities represents a danger to the services they provide, in addition to limiting their availability during an emergency situation. This is why the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is working with the public and private sector to provide funding for this important mitigation measure.

Through the Hazard Mitigation Grants Program (HMGP), the agency recently contributed over \$877,000 for nine storm shutter projects in several towns. The facilities to benefit range from municipal facilities where services are provided to citizens to basketball courts where people can exercise.



“By preventing further damage in the event of a future disaster, participants will be able to benefit from continued service at these facilities, while managers can have relief from risk reduction and focus on the important services they provide,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator Jose G. Baquero.

Ryder Hospital Homes are part of the approved projects with nearly \$34,000 for the Ryder Village II facility and over \$14,500 for Ryder Assisted Care II. The facilities provide over 100 apartments for low-income individuals over 62 years of age and disabled minors who can live independently.

The Camuy City Hall is another structure that offers a diversity of services for its residents and visitors. In addition to the governmental services offered at city hall, the building also serves as the command center for coordination of emergency services. With a total of \$213,872 in funds, the municipality will be able to install the necessary storm shutters to mitigate the risks posed by a storm and continue services to the communities.

Likewise, the Municipality of Hormigueros has over \$129,500 in approved funds for the installation of storm shutters for the Julio Pérez Irizarry Center for Multiple Activities and Services for the Elderly where social, educational, recreational and nutritional services are provided to nearly 180 people to improve their quality of life.

In addition to the center, the Hormigueros Fine Arts building also has over \$64,000 for the installation of its storm shutters. The Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism, located in this building, organizes the municipality's cultural activities and provides workshops in visual arts, dance, history, literature, music and theater for community residents.

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.



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