

Million-Dollar Allocation from FEMA to the Department of Correction to Repair its Facilities

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The funds will also benefit training and work programs for inmates

San Juan, Puerto Rico – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded nearly \$24.5 million for permanent repairs to the facilities of the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DCR) due to damage caused by Hurricane María.

The funds will address damage to correctional institutions, as well as structures where inmates receive rehabilitation services.

“As the agency responsible for providing custody and rehabilitation to the correctional population, the Department needs facilities that allow its staff to provide quality services. The agency’s funding seeks to support the standards of the correctional system, while preserving the health and safety of inmates, employees and visitors,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José Baquero.

The Guayama Correctional Complex, which guards about 1,200 inmates, is one of the DCR’s main projects. The facilities have over \$11.3 million for roof treatment to prevent leaks, acrylic domes to protect equipment against wind pressure, replacement of the air conditioners and solar panels, and surge protectors for the electric gates, among other work. Repairs will consider mitigation measures for future atmospheric events.

According to DCR Secretary Ana I. Escobar Pabón, the damage to these structures after Hurricane María affected educational, medical, recreational, religious and socio-penal services. Escobar Pabón reported that, now that these funds have been allocated, the DCR will begin the development of its projects together with the Puerto Rico Infrastructure Financing Authority (AFI, in Spanish)



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and the Puerto Rico General Services Administration (GSA).

“FEMA’s funds allow us to provide continuity to the services and programs offered by the DCR to the confined population and employees. Meanwhile, these funds help us to immediately address the consequences of an atmospheric event in a correctional system and thus comply with the standards regulated by law,” said the secretary.

Another award for the Department is for the Arecibo Correctional Institution in the Florida neighborhood, which has over 200 inmates. Following an allocation of nearly \$2.4 million, most of the work will focus on repairs with mitigation measures: they will reinforce the fences and waterproof the roof — to mitigate the impact of flying debris and prevent leaks from heavy rains — and install voltage surge protectors for electrical equipment.

Repairs to the Training and Labor Program Facilities

The DCR secretary explained that occupational workshops are the most welcoming programs for inmates, as they provide them with self-sufficiency and allow them to reintegrate into the community once they have served their sentence.

Along with this need, FEMA also awarded funds to the DCR for the Training and Work Program building in Bayamón. The program offers training and business development, with an emphasis on cooperative, self-management and employment organizations. Workshops include woodworking, upholstery, sewing, car washing, and solid waste collection, among other services.

The agency’s figure of about \$250,000 will cover repairs to the woodworking and welding areas. Part of the work will mitigate damage to the structure by anchoring the exhaust fans and sealing the roof to protect it from impacts due to flying debris.

For his part, the executive director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, said, “I am confident that these important projects that will give resiliency to the infrastructure of the Department of Correction and Rehabilitation at the island level, will soon begin their implementation. As I recently expressed to the DCR secretary, our



commitment at COR3 is to continue working together with her team, joining efforts to advance these and other reconstruction projects.”

To date, FEMA has awarded over \$31 billion for nearly 10,800 Public Assistance projects directed towards the reconstruction of a more resilient Puerto Rico.

For more information about Puerto Rico’s recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4339, fema.gov/disaster/4473 and recovery.pr. Follow us on our social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter @COR3pr.



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