

FEMA Assigns Over \$10 Million for Elderly Homes

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – With the purpose of contributing to the well-being and health of the elderly, FEMA allocated over \$10 million for 31 permanent repair projects for senior centers around the island.

The funds will serve 24 facilities under the administration of the municipalities that are dedicated to the care of this population and another 7 that belong to private non-profit entities. According to the U.S. Census, there were about 680,000 people aged 65 and older living in Puerto Rico in 2019.

“Older adults represent one of the most vulnerable populations during an emergency. It is imperative to take their needs into account during this historic recovery process,” said the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, José Baquero Tirado.

For her part, the designated Secretary of the Department of the Family, Dr. Carmen Ana González Magaz, said she is extremely grateful to FEMA and the nonprofit organizations that have always lent a hand to continue working for the welfare of the elderly. “However, we will continue to evaluate the improvement processes in these long-term care centers to continue ensuring the quality of life of this population,” she added.

An obligation of \$500,000 is earmarked for the Celia T. Mondríguez Senior Center in Las Piedras to repair the damage caused by Hurricane María. Founded more than 30 years ago, this center has 18 employees, among them nursing and social work professionals, who serve some 110 people.

According to Marieli Ruiz Lozada, the Center's Director, the work carried out there is incalculable for the municipality of Las Piedras, as it goes beyond a nutrition service. “We touch the life of that old man who is often lonely. In addition, it is a free service and we do not measure the economic side at all when offering the service,” she said.



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For the mayor of Las Piedras, Miguel “Micky” López Rivera, the municipality's priority is to remodel the facilities so that they are suitable for the residents and provide them with a better quality of life. “Definitely, this will help us to provide them with their accommodations, based on the work that will be done and that they need so much,” added the municipal chief executive.

Another entity with a funding obligation is the Ryder Housing for the Elderly in Humacao, which consists of a building with 96 apartments for 130 residents from different municipalities. The allocation for this center, aimed at low-income populations over the age of 62, is around \$4 million. Of these funds, the majority covers improvements to prevent future damage, such as the installation of electrical surge protectors, repairs to fences and anchors for power poles.

“Thanks to FEMA's support, from the very beginning we could feel that there was hope and that soon our senior citizens would once again have a safe roof over their heads. Today we are on our feet and, although we still have a long way to go, we hope that the mitigation activities will help us be better prepared and stronger to face any new natural event,” said Jose R. Feliciano, Executive Director of Ryder Hospital.

Similarly, about \$1.3 million was obligated to the San Rafael Geriatric Center in Arecibo, a hospice administered by a volunteer board of directors and the *Hijas de la Caridad* nuns. The assignment includes \$156,000 that will help ensure a safer building by sealing the exteriors, especially the roof. In addition, the Center received a \$20,000 grant channeled through FEMA's philanthropic branch, which will go toward other repairs.

“The funds earmarked for various senior centers on the island allow us to give greater attention to a sector of our society that requires it so much, particularly during this pandemic. These spaces provide care, as well as attention and companionship to their residents, and the federal obligation will contribute to a better quality of life for each of them,” said COR3 Executive Director Manuel Laboy Rivera.

Learn more about the impact of the Celia T. Mondríguez Senior Center in Las Piedras [here](#).



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



HUMACAO, Puerto Rico (January 20, 2021) – FEMA allocated nearly \$4 million to the Ryder Housing for the Elderly in Humacao. Of these funds, the majority covers improvements to prevent future damage, such as the installation of electrical surge protectors, repairs to fences and anchors for power poles.

