

FEMA Strengthens Community Safety by Repairing Municipal Police Stations

Release Date: ??? 18, 2024

GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico ? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) continues to support Puerto Rico's recovery by allocating funds to three municipal police stations in Vega Baja, Cataño and Gurabo to strengthen their infrastructure due to damage following Hurricane María.

“Municipal police stations provide multiple services to the community throughout the year. The safety that the police provide is key to enjoy various events during this festive season, whether they are downtown or within our family spaces,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José G. Baquero.

One of the facilities that received FEMA funds and has already completed its repairs is the Vega Baja headquarters located on Betances Street. Among the services offered to the public are preventive patrols, community orientation, security during activities, as well as assistance to the state police and attention to all types of complaints.

For the Vega Baja municipal police commissioner, Israel Ramos Pabón, “the service we provide to citizens is the greatest satisfaction we can have”. He said that what he enjoys most about his work is “sharing with extraordinary men and women who are willing to give their lives to serve our people.”

The municipality of Vega Baja received over \$251,000 for repairs to the police station. Acoustic panels, lighting and air conditioners were replaced on the building; and the painting of interiors and exteriors was carried out. The funds included over \$50,100 for mitigation measures to anchor the air conditioners to the roof and waterproof the exterior walls to prevent similar damage in the future.

Three 2006 patrol cars were also replaced with new 2023 vehicles. The new SUV patrol cars are equipped for daily police work with radios, light bars and signage. As rapid response vehicles, the new models are more stable and reliable when driving.



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Likewise, the municipality of Cataño received over \$405,000 for work on the municipal police station on Las Nereidas Avenue. This building has a reception area, gym, administrative offices and cells. Part of the work in progress includes painting and replacing door access systems and locks, as well as replacing televisions and antennas.

The police station receives about 35 people weekly and offers services such as complaints, security at activities, funeral escorts, roadside assistance and educational talks at schools.

According to Cataño's municipal police commissioner, Eliezer Vargas, the police station is part of the community and provides safety and protection to citizens all year round. Vargas stressed that it is important to preserve the municipal police station because "the police stations are like a house: they must be preserved to provide excellent services."

The allocation for this project includes \$13,000 for hazard mitigation works to strengthen the structure against strong winds and to protect the windows from the impact of debris.

Meanwhile, FEMA allocated nearly \$46,000 to the municipality of Gurabo for their repairs in progress to the public safety building, which houses the Municipal Emergency Management Office and its municipal headquarters. Here, the weather station, lighting, data servers, communication console and camera system were replaced.

The funds include over \$10,000 for mitigation measures such as protecting electrical equipment from voltage fluctuations, improving drainage, and reinforcing doors and windows to protect them from any other natural events.

FEMA has approved over \$34.5 billion for nearly 11,100 projects to address Puerto Rico's recovery following Hurricane María.

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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