

Over \$600 Million from FEMA for Earthquake Recovery

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The agency expects to approve all funding for this disaster by the end of this year

GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico –Public housing facilities, police operations centers, childcare centers and libraries are some of the municipal buildings that will be repaired with a multimillion-dollar allocation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). According to the federal agency, of the \$640 million, \$309 million is for 488 permanent construction projects that include other structures damaged by the earthquakes.

“With these funds, the municipalities have the opportunity to renovate the affected spaces to once again offer services for their communities. The recovery supports a better quality of life for the residents of these municipalities and the reconstruction is directed to that end,” said the FEMA Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator José G. Baquero.

The funds for municipalities in the south, center and west of the Island include seven public housing complexes in Guánica and Ponce. The Administrator of the Public Housing Administration (PRPHA), Alejandro Salgado Colón, explained that over 2,300 people will have better and safer homes after the repairs are completed with the approved funds.

“After the earthquakes that shook mostly the southern region of the Island, we have looked for ways to continue addressing the damage that risked the homes of the affected families. Truthfully, this obligation of funds represents one more step towards disaster recovery. There is still a long road ahead, but we’re sure that, with the collaboration of the federal agencies, we will accomplish a complete reconstruction for the benefit of our residents,” said Salgado Colón.

One of the facilities affected was the Montalva Community Center in Guánica. The work to be completed with the obligation of more than \$779,000 includes demolishing the center, where workshops and other social and community



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development activities will be held after reconstruction.

The Mayor of the Municipality, Ismael Rodríguez Ramos, explained that “the Montalva Community Center has been a multiuse center that has served the community with social events that make an impact. With this allocation we’ll rebuild a facility that serves all generations of people from Guánica; the younger ones with workshops that encourage development, as well as our elderly, by being a place of gathering and welcome that serves them in different ways.”

The repairs also consider public and community service spaces, as is the case of some centers that serve the more than 22,000 residents of Lajas. Funds were earmarked for the city hall and the center where the municipal police station and the Municipal Emergency Management Office are located. In addition, repairs will be completed at the Multi-Service Center for the Elderly, which has an enrollment of over 90 people and provides meals and activities for those who are bedridden.

For his part, the Executive Director for the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), Eng. Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, said, “in COR3, we continue working as a team alongside the subrecipients in favor of the development of these reconstruction projects that will provide resiliency to the aqueducts infrastructure and other structures that house families. This significant obligation of federal funds will give peace of mind to the communities and the opportunity to begin to rebuild their living spaces. To date, COR3 has disbursed \$258 million to address matters related to this disaster that affected us two years ago and we are committed to continue being facilitators in this difficult task.”

For more information about Puerto Rico’s recovery from the earthquakes, visit fema.gov/disaster/4773 and recuperacion.pr. Follow us on social media at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr y Twitter @COR3pr.

