

# FEMA Approves Multi-million Dollar Allocation for Sports and Cultural Facilities

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**Guaynabo, Puerto Rico** – “We missed being able to come to support our team here, to have fun, enjoy and suffer with the *Leones*.” said Rivera. This is how Roberto Ortiz, a fan of the *Leones* of Ponce, described the feelings of thousands of fans of the National Superior Basketball (BSN) league, whose season began with a \$33.3 million allocation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Ten municipal coliseums located in the municipalities of Arecibo, Bayamón, Carolina, Fajardo, Guayama, Guaynabo, Humacao, Mayagüez, Ponce and San Juan have FEMA funds assigned to repair their facilities.

“Sports are an instrument of social development and family integration that groups people of all ages and conditions, which translates to a better quality of life. We have assigned funds for thousands of projects that promote this type of activity, like parks, community centers and different stadiums,” said the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico, José G. Baquero.

An allocation of close to \$1.7 million was approved for the Juan “Pachín” Vicens Auditorium in Ponce for a complete renovation of the building. According to the mayor of the municipality, Luis Irizarry Pabón, repairs began prior to the BSN season, but the most complex ones will be carried out once the season ends.

“What we did now was update it to be ready. Once the season ends, we will change the lighting, as well as the structural part. That is what we want, and that people can see that the city is being rebuilt,” the mayor said.

The allocation also has a positive effect on the professional players who represent a fan base that will enjoy better facilities in these coliseums. This was expressed by Carlos Rivera, captain of the *Leones* of Ponce, who said that the renovation and opening of the coliseum will help the team's performance. “We have a group of young players that for the first time will experience what it is to feel the house of Pachín. That euphoria of the fans is definitely our sixth man on the court,” said



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Rivera.

Likewise, the Rubén Rodríguez Coliseum in Bayamón, official home to the *Vaqueros* of Bayamón, was awarded close to **\$1.1 million** for improvements to infrastructure and electronic equipment that will elevate the quality of the events that are held there.

“For our organization it is beyond important that the facilities are in optimal condition. The Rubén Rodríguez Coliseum gives us an opportunity to put on a spectacular show for the enjoyment of all our fans,” said Melvin Román, Vice President of the *Vaqueros* basketball team.

A facility adjacent to the Rubén Rodríguez Coliseum that will also be repaired features a system of solar energy panels and batteries installed over a roofed parking lot that has 165 parking spaces, known as “Solar Zone.” Close to \$593,000 was approved for repairs to the solar panels, electrical systems and lights.

The total obligations for coliseums include nearly \$9.5 million for the Guillermo Angulo Coliseum, Carolina; nearly \$7.1 million for the Roberto Clemente Coliseum, San Juan; over \$5.7 million for the Petaca Iguina Coliseum, Arecibo; over \$2.1 million for the Roque Nido Stella Coliseum, Guayama; over \$1.7 million for the Sports Palace, Mayagüez; about \$1.6 million for the Mario "Quijote" Morales Coliseum, Guaynabo; nearly \$600,000 for the Tomás Dones Coliseum, Fajardo; and nearly \$299,000 for the Humacao Arena Coliseum.

Engineer Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, Executive Director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction, and Resiliency of Puerto Rico, said that his office remains steadfast in its commitment to this sector and will continue to facilitate the development of these types of repairs. “Our responsibility is to ensure we provide the necessary resources so that athletes can continue their preparation in the best facilities that we can offer,” added Laboy Rivera.

To access more information on the recovery of Puerto Rico from Hurricane María, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4339](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4339) and [recuperacion.pr](https://www.recuperacion.pr). Follow us on social media at [Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico](https://www.facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico), [Facebook.com/COR3pr](https://www.facebook.com/COR3pr) and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://twitter.com/COR3pr).





**PONCE, Puerto Rico** (July 18, 2021) – FEMA approved close to \$1.7 million for the Juan “Pachín” Vicens Auditorium in Ponce for a complete renovation of the building. Repairs include everything from flooring to security gates, to interior lighting and signage. Also, over \$53,000 was obligated to mitigate future damage to the roofs, doors and windows in order to make the structure more resilient to storms. Photo FEMA/Eduardo Martínez





**MAYAGÜEZ, Puerto Rico** (Aug. 15, 2021) – FEMA allocated over \$1.7 million for the Sports Palace at Mayagüez. Ten municipal coliseums in Puerto Rico will regain their previous splendor thanks to an allocation of over \$33.3 million by FEMA. Photo FEMA/ Eliezer Hernández

