

FEMA Funds for Flood Control Seek to Mitigate Future Risks

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The Central University of the Caribbean and the municipalities of Jayuya and Vega Alta received awards to improve their drainage systems

Guaynabo, PUERTO RICO - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) awarded nearly \$4.6 million for several projects that seek to address flooding problems in different parts of Puerto Rico in the event of future heavy rains.

The funds under the agency's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) will address drainage systems for some university facilities, as well as for some sectors in the municipalities of Jayuya and Vega Alta.

“This is an important mitigation allocation for funds that will strengthen the communities of Vega Alta and Jayuya against flooding and swollen rivers. It will also assist the operations of the Central University of the Caribbean (Universidad Central del Caribe) on the island to prevent future floods and avoid affecting the academic year for the students,” said the Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator, José G. Baquero.

The agency allocated nearly \$153,000 to the Central University of the Caribbean (UCC, in Spanish) for the first phase of a project that seeks to improve the drainage system of its Bayamón campus and reduce flooding risks. Currently, the system overflows and this has damaged the parking lot and several buildings. The UCC will receive over \$2.1 million from FEMA for all the improvement phases to the drainage system.

According to the dean of Institutional Development and Strategic Planning at UCC, Mildred Rivera Marrero, these repairs are crucial to guarantee the continuity of its academic operations. “Floods have generated losses in material resources and have interrupted our activities in the past. Improving our drainage system will not only protect our facilities but will also ensure a safe environment for long-term



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institutional growth.”

Meanwhile, the municipality of Jayuya received an allocation of over \$112,000 for the first phase of its project to improve the drainage system on Libertad Street, on the confluence of the Caonillas and Caricaboa rivers. The current infrastructure does not have enough capacity for the water that rises during heavy rainfall events, which has caused flooding of streets, residential and commercial properties in the area. The municipality will have \$750,000 available for all the phases in this initiative.

Furthermore, the municipality of Vega Alta has about \$157,000 for the first phase of improvements to the drainage system of the Machuchal Creek, located in the community that bears the same name. The limited water intake for the creek has caused flooding on about 30 properties in the community and has restricted access to public roads. The municipality will receive over \$1.7 million from FEMA for all construction phases of this project.

“The repairs for the Machuchal ward will improve the quality of life of its residents. With this project we are addressing the challenges faced by that communities with the floodings, and the solutions will benefit over 30 families. From property damage to health risks and operational obstacles to local businesses, these drainage and sewer system improvements are for the safety and the well-being of our citizens. We cannot allow more human and economic losses due to floods,” said the Finance Director of the municipality of Vega Alta, Ángel Figueroa Medina.

For his part, the executive director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency (COR3), Manuel A. Laboy Rivera, stressed that “the combination of mitigation and reconstruction funds form the resilient foundation that Puerto Rico needs. At COR3 we have supported municipalities, government agencies and nonprofit organizations, from the beginning of the process in the development of hazard mitigation proposals that are presented to FEMA for approval. These projects are necessary to safeguard life and property, which already have an initial allocation of funds to perform the required studies and designs, may request a disbursement of funds through the Working Capital Advance (WCA) pilot program. We will continue working as a team to make these works come to fruition.”



To date, FEMA has allocated \$370.9 million under HMGP for Hurricane María and the 2020 Earthquakes. This program allows government and nonprofit organizations to develop plans and rebuild in a manner that reduces or mitigates hazards to communities.

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 [@COR3pr](https://Twitter).

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF THE CARIBBEAN, BAYAMÓN, PUERTO RICO



BAYAMÓN, Puerto Rico (May 15, 2024) –The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated nearly \$153,000 to the Central University of the Caribbean (UCC, in Spanish) for the first phase of a project that seeks to improve the drainage system of its Bayamón campus and reduce flooding risks. Currently, the system overflows and this has damaged the parking lot and several buildings. The UCC will receive over \$2.1 million from FEMA for all the improvement phases to the drainage system. Photo FEMA/Eduardo Martínez



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