

Permanent Home Construction for a Survivor in Guaynabo

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – Like most Puerto Ricans, Domingo Morales didn't sleep the night Hurricane María made landfall last September. María's trail of destruction left unrecognizable neighborhoods and destroyed dwellings all over the island.

Toppled trees and debris blocked the entrance to Morales' home of 30 years in the hills of Guaynabo. The ceiling was damaged as well as most of the walls. All his belongings were damaged or blown away by the winds.

Morales registered for disaster assistance from FEMA, and thanks to the agency's Permanent Housing Construction program was handed the keys to a fully repaired home 90 days after work began.

"Esto es un éxito," which loosely translates to "it's great," is how Morales, a Vietnam veteran, described his home repair process.

The Permanent Housing Construction program is offered in insular areas outside the continental United States where alternative housing resources are unavailable or scarce, where repairs are neither feasible nor cost-effective. FEMA pays for and manages construction. Applicants are approved on a case-by-case basis.



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FEMA inspectors assessed the damage to Morales' home and he was determined eligible for the program. The work was led by a FEMA contractor, and once completed, Morales was handed the keys.

"I am satisfied with the process from start to finish," he said. "The team working on my house always communicated and included me in the decisions."

PHC program manager Katie Rae said some projects are repairs, others are reconstruction.

"FEMA, through a contractor, makes all necessary repairs to make the house safe and habitable, and deliver a ready-to-move home," Rae said.

Morales received a new full bathroom, kitchen cabinets, refrigerator and range, and closets in all three bedrooms.

For more information on FEMA housing assistance in Puerto Rico, go online to www.fema.gov/es/disaster/4339 for Spanish or www.fema.gov/disaster/4339

for English.

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/images/166768>

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