

Over \$122 Million Obligated to Help Rebuild the Island's Public Buildings

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – To date, FEMA has obligated over \$122 million to repair and rebuild public buildings represented in 215 projects. These funds will help municipal facilities, private nonprofits, hospitals, universities and other eligible entities recover successfully so they can better provide services to the communities they serve.

In the last 30 days, a total of 48 projects to repair buildings including structural components, electrical systems, inventory replacement and equipment were approved. This is the largest number of projects obligated under this category of Public Assistance in a single month so far.

“This will be a banner year for recovery efforts on the island. We have set the bar high and these obligations are proof of the extraordinary work that is taking place every day to help rebuild a more resilient Puerto Rico,” said Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Alex Amparo.

Meanwhile, the executive director of the Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resilience, or COR3, Ottmar Chavez, emphasized the importance of partnership in the recovery.

“The increase in the obligation of funds for recovery projects is due to the efforts and collaboration between the COR3 team and FEMA to move this process forward. Undoubtedly, there is still work to be done, as we face several emergencies, but the work has not stopped. COR3 maintains constant communication with sub-recipients so that they can carry out every action in compliance and funds can be disbursed when required. Each sector is handled with the same attention, because those who will benefit are the communities in each area of the island,” said Mr. Chávez.

Among the obligations is over \$1 million to repair the Municipal Commercial Center in Lajas, whose stores have been closed since the storm. One of the



hardest hit areas in the south, this obligation is an important step forward for the recovery of Lajas.

"The center is the economic engine of the town. It bolsters the local economy, generating income from rent for the municipality. One of the benefits of the commercial center is that the community can do all its shopping there, keeping business activity local," said the Mayor of Lajas, Marcos A. "Turin" Irizarry Pagán.

The municipality of Santa Isabel also recently had two obligations for a total of over \$23,000 to address repairs to its fire station, which is currently being used as a municipal office, as well as repairs to its municipal police headquarters.

"Puerto Rico continues to face great challenges such as the Coronavirus, the effects of the earthquakes and the damage caused by Hurricane Maria. In our municipality we continue to work tirelessly to face these challenges. The well-being and safety of our residents is the priority. The funding obligations for the reconstruction of the municipal police headquarters and the former fire station helps us to strengthen the work we do for the city. Our Federal Programs office remains active in meeting FEMA's requirements to obtain the funds we need to complete the rebuilding process," said the Mayor of Santa Isabel, Enrique Questell.

Besides municipal buildings, private nonprofits like the Hogares Teresa Toda in Loíza are also receiving federal disaster assistance. With an obligation of nearly \$64,000, the home for girls and others who have been victims of abuse and neglect will be able to repair its main building, chapel, educational building and dormitories.

Another private nonprofit receiving federal support is the Centro Margarita, Inc. in Cidra, which offers rehabilitation services to children with special needs. An obligation of roughly \$15,000 was approved for repairs to the center's accounting offices and rehabilitation rooms.

Through the Public Assistance Program, and in coordination with COR3, FEMA provides supplemental federal disaster grant assistance for the restoration of disaster-damaged, publicly owned facilities and the facilities of certain private nonprofits. The Public Assistance program also encourages protection of these damaged facilities from future events by providing assistance for hazard mitigation



measures.

FEMA and COR3 continue to work together to develop strategies that advance recovery projects. To date, nearly \$6.6 billion has been approved for Puerto Rico under FEMA's Public Assistance program.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery visit fema.gov/disaster/4339 and www.recovery.pr. You can also follow FEMA's and COR3's social networks on Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and Twitter [@COR3pr](https://twitter.com/COR3pr).

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