

Deaf Community Outreach

Release Date: January 12, 2020

STATEMENT:

FEMA is fully committed to providing preparedness, response and recovery information in formats accessible to the whole community and takes its responsibility to meet the needs of the deaf community very seriously.

In order to support the governor's press conference Saturday, the agency expedited deployment of an ASL interpreter Friday night. FEMA is also deploying a Spanish-speaking interpreter who is en route to the island and is securing additional contract support from local interpreters to support the Commonwealth and ensure information from the Governor and other officials is fully accessible to all disaster survivors.

FEMA has actively engaged with the deaf community in Puerto Rico since Hurricanes Irma and Maria and continues that outreach. Some examples of the outreach include:

- Deployed a Certified Deaf Interpreter to the Joint Recovery Office to assist and build relationships with the deaf community.
- Contracted with local sign language interpreters who have completed over 500 assignments to share recovery information.
- Conducted more than 30 workshops throughout the island, including interpreter training as well as communication and outreach training for local emergency managers, government officials, public information officers and community members.
- Provided training to emergency management personnel on how to request interpreter services and how to use Video Remote Interpreting services as an additional resource in all disaster recovery centers.
- Created videos and held workshops incorporating LSPL sign language to share information on available preparedness and recovery resources with the local deaf community.

FEMA remains committed to serving all disasters survivor populations as part of its mission to help people before, during and after disasters.



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