

Public Housing Projects that Address Water Filtration Aim to Ensure Safer Homes

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The homes of around 730 families will be repaired with FEMA funds

Guaynabo, Puerto Rico –Gloricela Santiago Martínez spent the night of Hurricane María working in a shelter. After being away from her apartment in the Brisas del Mar public housing complex in Salinas for almost four days, she returned to find her home flooded. Despite not living on a first floor, the hurricane's rains came through her windows and walls. She spent about five hours bailing out water and rescuing what has been her home for nearly 30 years.

Even with the challenges that she and the other residents of Brisas del Mar have faced, Santiago Martínez describes her community as perseverant and involved. The community leader and President of the Residents' Board expressed that it was the neighbors themselves who cleared the access areas and who organized a community kitchen to feed the community in the absence of electricity.

Water filtration has been part of the structural problems in the apartments of Brisas del Mar residents, particularly after the hurricane. Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) allocated \$13.7 million to this and three other public housing complexes to repair their structures in order to help provide a safe and sanitary home for around 730 families.

The administrator of the Public Housing Administration (PHA), Alejandro Salgado Colón, explained that in general terms the work includes the removal and replacement of the waterproofing system, repair of surfaces and painting, replacement of exterior lighting and wall repairs, among other work.

“The quality of life of our residents has always been a priority. With this new multimillion-dollar allocation from FEMA, we will continue to address the waterproofing of roofs and the repair of some recreational areas that are so



necessary for a healthy lifestyle in our public housing complexes, among other important work. We thank the federal agency for this effort and hope to continue collaborating for the benefit of our people,” said the administrator.

Another of the complexes that will benefit from the funds is the Rafael López Nussa public housing complex in the municipality of Ponce. According to Saraí Bernard, President of the Residents' Board, the repairs to the roof of the public housing complex will help prevent people from losing their belongings or putting their safety at risk. In addition, repairs to the basketball court roof will allow for the coordination of sports and recreational activities for the residents.

The Rafael López Nussa public housing complex was and still is home to several local talents: among them, judo athlete Kimberly Carrión and actress Maddy Rivera, who has worked in a variety of plays and soap operas, alongside artists such as Alba Roversi, Marisa Rodríguez, Juan Soler and Braulio Castillo.

According to Maddy Rivera, the restoration of recreational facilities at the public housing complex contributes to the cultural and artistic development of children, youth and adults living in Rafael López Nussa, as it provides a space to develop their talents.

“It is very important to advance projects that have an artistic and cultural value, as the arts are ageless and provide fun and entertainment to focus talents in achieving an essential goal. The repairs to the current recreational space will maximize its potential for residents to participate in workshops that will add to their growth as individuals through the arts,” she said.

To date, FEMA has allocated funds for 132 projects totaling \$330 million for the PHA. These funds are in addition to the funds allocated through FEMA's Accelerated Award Strategy (FAASt), which totals another \$554 million.

For more information on Puerto Rico's recovery from Hurricane María, please visit fema.gov/es/disaster/4339 and recuperacion.pr. Follow our social media pages at Facebook.com/FEMAPuertoRico, Facebook.com/COR3pr and [Twitter @COR3pr](https://Twitter.com/COR3pr).

