

Preliminary Damage Assessment Report

Puerto Rico – Earthquakes FEMA-4473-DR

Declared January 16, 2020

On January 11, 2020, Governor Wanda Vázquez-Garced requested a major disaster declaration due to earthquakes beginning on December 28, 2019, and continuing. The Governor requested a declaration for Individual Assistance for six municipalities; Public Assistance, including direct federal assistance for six municipalities, and Hazard Mitigation for the entire commonwealth. Beginning on January 8, 2020, and continuing, joint federal, commonwealth, and local government Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) are being conducted in the requested areas and are summarized below. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the commonwealth and the affected local governments, and that Federal assistance is necessary.¹

On January 16, 2020, President Trump declared that a major disaster exists in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. This declaration made Individual Assistance requested by the Governor available to affected individuals and households in the municipalities of Guánica, Guayanilla, Peñuelas, Ponce, Utuado, and Yauco. This declaration also made debris removal and emergency protective measures (Categories A and B), including direct federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program requested by the Governor available to commonwealth and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for the municipalities of Guánica, Guayanilla, Peñuelas, Ponce, San Germán, and Yauco.²

Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster

Individual Assistance

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:³ 487
 - Destroyed - 77
 - Major Damage - 159
 - Minor Damage - 99
 - Affected - 152

- Percentage of insured residences:⁴ 1.0%
- Percentage of poverty households:⁵ 53.2%
- Population receiving other government assistance such as SSI and SNAP: 46.5%
- Percentage of ownership households:⁶ 92.0%

- Pre-Disaster Unemployment: 20.3%
- Age 65 and older: 18.8%
- Age 18 and under: 21.7%
- Disability: 17.5%
- IHP Cost to Capacity (ICC) Ratio: N/A
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: \$8,875,692

Public Assistance

- Primary Impact: Damage to buildings and equipment
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$32,264,833
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$8.66
- Statewide per capita impact indicator:⁸ \$1.53
- Countywide per capita impact: Guánica Municipality (\$692.54), Guayanilla Municipality (\$232.45), Peñuelas Municipality (\$89.69), Ponce Municipality (\$11.72), San Germán Municipality (\$13.40), and Yauco Municipality (\$218.60).
- Countywide per capita impact indicator:⁹ \$3.84

¹ The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor’s request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor’s request (44 CFR § 206.33).

² When a Governor’s request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA’s regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

³ Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

⁴ By law, Federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage. 42 U.S.C. § 5155 and 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(5).

⁵ Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁶ Ibid. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁷ Based on State population in the 2010 Census.

⁸ Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY20, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2019.

⁹ Countywide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY20, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2019.