

National Preparedness Month: “Prepared, Not Scared”

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GUAYNABO, Puerto Rico – National Preparedness Month is observed every September to encourage residents to prepare for any type of emergency. This year, the focus is on financial preparedness, emergency planning, youth preparedness education and community preparedness.

Since 2004, this FEMA-sponsored campaign reminds everyone to prepare themselves, their families and their communities for any unexpected disasters and emergencies that may happen where they live, work and visit. Readiness capabilities were tested recently when Tropical Storm Dorian skimmed the northeast coast of the island.

“Part of our mission here is to make sure families are better prepared. How residents respond to disasters is crucial and being prepared is key for the long road to recovery ahead of us,” said James Russo, Acting Deputy Federal Disaster Coordinator in Puerto Rico.

Saving early for any unplanned disaster-related costs is an important first step to ensure effective preparedness capabilities. This includes creating an emergency fund both for your family and your business.

A solid emergency preparedness plan includes identifying your community-specific risks and finding solutions before disaster strikes. Making a plan with your family and putting it to practice is important, especially as we head into the peak of



the Atlantic hurricane season.

Building a culture of preparedness begins with the younger generation – children under the age of eighteen account for nearly a quarter of the entire U.S. population. Getting them involved in preparedness early can make a difference.

Disaster response is most effective when it is locally executed, state managed and federally supported. Preparedness is a whole-community effort. Collaborating with neighbors and community leaders now to address any lessons learned and establish a disaster contingency plan tailored to your community's needs may be of value in case of an emergency.

Being prepared not only reduces the stress of last-minute planning, but it may also lessen the time it takes to recover after a disaster and ensures our communities are prepared, not scared.

For more on National Preparedness Month, visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or www.fema.gov/disaster/4339/hurricane-preparedness.

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Disaster recovery assistance is available without regard to race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability, English proficiency or economic status. If you or someone you know has been discriminated against, call FEMA toll-free at 800-621-FEMA (3362) 711/VRS - Video Relay Service). Multilingual operators are available. (Press 2 for Spanish). TTY call 800-462-7585.

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