Hurricane Fiona One Month Later: Joint Efforts and Community Engagement Pave the Way for Puerto Rico Recovery

Release Date: ?? 19, 2022

San Juan, Puerto Rico — During the first month of the Hurricane Fiona response, since the disaster declaration on Sept. 21, more than **$456 million** in FEMA disaster assistance has been provided to more than **600,000** Puerto Rico households to assist with disaster recovery efforts.

"We stand alongside the Government of Puerto Rico, local and other federal partners to continue a robust recovery effort," said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer Nancy Casper. "In addition to funding, FEMA mobilized more than **30** Disaster Recovery Centers, visited more than **13,600** homes, interacted with at least **18,000** survivors through its Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) crews and more than **100** DSA specialists are going door-to-door to help survivors apply for assistance in affected communities."

Meanwhile the governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro R. Pierluisi thanked the Biden Administration and FEMA for their support on Puerto Rico's road to recovery. He also reiterated that they will continue to work collaboratively to accelerate the reconstruction projects in Puerto Rico, including those related to Hurricane Fiona.

"Again, I thank President Biden for all his support since even before Hurricane Fiona came ashore, he approved the Emergency Declaration and later the Major Disaster Declaration that I requested on behalf of our people. Puerto Rico is part of the United States and the support of the federal government is vital to the socioeconomic development of all the American citizens that live on the Island," said Governor Pierluisi.

Federal Support in Puerto Rico

- FEMA is authorized to provide Individual Assistance, Public Assistance (categories A and B) and Hazard Mitigation in all **78** Puerto Rico municipalities. Under the Individual Assistance program, residents of Puerto Rico can apply for assistance to cover uninsured or
under-insured expenses that occurred as a result of the hurricane.

- FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Community Education Outreach teams are providing information on better ways to repair and rebuild damaged homes at Disaster Recovery Centers and have engaged with more than **17,111** individuals.

- More than **400** FEMA inspectors have conducted more than **63,600** home inspections for survivors who registered for federal disaster assistance.

- The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved more than $**3.6 million** in low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, business owners and renters.

- Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is available to eligible survivors. DUA is a part of the federal disaster assistance process but is administered by the Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources. Claims must be filed by **Nov. 30**, Visit www.trabajo.pr.gov for more information.

- Disaster Legal Services (DLS) is also available. Survivors can receive free legal assistance for certain disaster-related issues. This service is provided by the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association and Servicios Legales de Puerto Rico, in collaboration with FEMA. To learn about the available resources in your area, call the toll-free legal aid hotline **at 1-800-981-5342, Monday to Friday (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.).** This service is available until **Nov. 21**.

FEMA is hiring Puerto Rico residents to assist with Hurricane Fiona response and recovery efforts as temporary employees. Hiring local temporary staff increases employment opportunities for the residents of Puerto Rico. Over **50 percent** of local staff are Puerto Rico residents who have been supporting operations since the beginning.

Although the federal government cannot make you whole, it is part of the solution. Many entities are involved including local and state agencies, nonprofits, voluntary and faith-based organizations, and the private sector to assist in survivor recovery. Visit fema.gov/disaster/4671 to learn more about Puerto Rico's recovery after Hurricane Fiona.