

**TOOLKIT**

**TAKE!**

**ACTION!**

**FOR PUERTO RICO!**

# WHAT'S INSIDE THE TOOLKIT



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FOLLOW US ON:



**A**lmost a year ago, we could not have imagined the devastation and marginalization that our beloved Puerto Rico would endure. Hurricanes in the Caribbean are nothing new, but Hurricane Maria's ferocity—super-powered by the realities of climate change—exposed the vulnerability of an island with a decaying energy infrastructure, an unequal relationship with the United States, and a profound financial crisis.

**Take Action for Puerto Rico!** brings together people and organizations to encourage discussion, germinate ideas, and take action around four critical pillars for Puerto Rico's recovery: empowered community, health care equity, climate change preparedness, and economic redevelopment. So many of us want to help, and the goal of the Take Action for Puerto Rico! campaign is to productively channel our energy to achieve maximum impact for Puerto Ricans living on the island.

**Take Action for Puerto Rico!** kicks-off in the lead up to the one-year mark of Hurricane Maria on September 20th and continues through October 20th, coinciding largely with Hispanic Heritage Month. Our Take Action for Puerto Rico! Toolkit has the information and materials that you need to be an effective agent of change for Puerto Rico. Choose the areas that speak to you, about which you are the most passionate, and deliver the message that Puerto Rico deserves better:

- **Empowered Community:** Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, yet the aftermath of Hurricane Maria has exposed the disparate treatment of the island's denizens. Our Take Action for Puerto Rico! Toolkit provides all the information and materials you need to empower our community of advocates, organizations and leaders to take action on behalf of Puerto Rico.
- **Health Care Equity:** Puerto Rico receives far less funding for federal health care programs than other US jurisdictions. Specifically, the federal share for Medicaid is artificially capped at a much lower rate than states, and Puerto Rican Medicare patients are excluded from the low-income prescription drug subsidy for seniors.
- **Climate Change Preparedness:** The growing frequency and intensity of hurricanes are the result of climate change and islands are particularly susceptible to its effects. The Take Action for Puerto Rico! Toolkit provides useful background information on the intersectionality between the ever growing strength of hurricanes, climate change, and how to use reporters and like-minded groups to engage on Puerto Rico related issues.
- **Economic Redevelopment:** Puerto Rico is under historic financial distress, which has severely hampered the island's ability to restart its own economy. Our Media & Policy Toolkit provides more information on how to amplify your groups' message to reach wider audiences on this topic.

We are so grateful for your participation! Our **Take Action for Puerto Rico!** coalition partners are deeply invested in your efforts and success and are here to assist you with any request or information that you may have regarding your participation in this national campaign. For more information or questions regarding **Take Action for Puerto Rico!**, please contact: [info@takeaction4pr.org](mailto:info@takeaction4pr.org).

# Puerto Rico History 101

## Why is Understanding Puerto Rico's History Important?

The majority of people in the United States have only started thinking and learning about Puerto Rico as anything other than a vacation spot with beautiful beaches since Hurricane Maria struck the island one year ago. Puerto Rico has a rich and fraught history. Without understanding some historical context of the relationship with the U.S., it is hard to fully grasp the current situation.

We hope you enjoy learning about Puerto Rico, its history, and its people!

### Earliest Inhabitants

- The earliest inhabitants of modern-day Puerto Rico were ancestors of an [indigenous Caribbean people called Arawaks](#), who came from modern-day Venezuela. They settled in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and are known as "Taínos" (which means "noble" in the Arawak language). They named the island "[Boriken](#)" and the people became known as Boricuas (boh-REE-kuh-wahs).

### Spanish Colonization

- [Columbus arrived at Boriken in 1493](#), and "claimed" the island for Spain, beginning four hundred years of colonization which included slavery, disease, and death for many of the original Taíno population. To this day, Puerto Ricans' first language is Spanish and Catholicism remains the dominant religion.
- [Spain's efforts to exploit Puerto Rico's natural resources](#) and turn the island into a production center for crops like sugar and coffee resulted in the enslavement and depletion of its Taíno population, the adoption of a slave trade using people brought in from West Africa (present-day Gold Coast, Nigeria, and Dahomey), and the arrival of new infectious diseases such as smallpox.
- [In 1898, Puerto Rico finally became an autonomous](#) part of Spain with its first Puerto Rican Constitution.

### U.S. Takeover

- U.S. policymakers began expressing an interest in Puerto Rico at the end of the 18th century. In 1783, future U.S. President John Adams asserted that both Cuba and Puerto Rico were an 'integral part' of the U.S. trade in the Caribbean. His son, John Quincy Adams, later the 6th President of the U.S., stated in 1823 that the two islands were "[natural appendages to the North American continent](#)."
- [During the Spanish-American war in 1898](#), at almost the same moment in history that Puerto Rico achieved

its first autonomy after 400 years of European colonization, the U.S. bombed and invaded San Juan. In a bid to get Puerto Ricans to fight on the side of the U.S., a manifesto was issued promising to protect Puerto Ricans. Spain lost the war, and [Puerto Rico was "ceded" as a territory to the U.S. as part of the Treaty of Paris](#). In 1900, after less than two years of hard-won autonomous governance under Spain, the U.S. ignored the new, democratically-elected local parliament of Puerto Rico in favor of creating its own colonial system. Congress passed the [Foraker Act of 1900](#) to establish the legal framework for a civil government in "Porto Rico" [sic] under U.S. governance and taxation.

**“The Supreme Court argued that Puerto Rico and other territories “ceded” by the Spanish were full of “alien races” who couldn’t understand “Anglo-Saxon principles”**”

- During the U.S. continental expansion period, 31 territories applied for and were admitted as states. However, in 1901, [in a series of legal opinions \(“Insular Cases”\)](#), the Supreme Court argued that Puerto Rico and other territories “ceded” by the Spanish were full of “alien races” who couldn’t understand “Anglo-Saxon principles” and, therefore, the Constitution did not apply to them. Puerto Rico was established as an unincorporated territory with no path toward statehood, leaving Puerto Ricans in limbo with no clear legal status (or passports) for nearly 20 years.

## U.S. Citizenship

- In 1917, Congress passed the [Jones-Shafroth Act](#), which granted U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans thereby [allowing the U.S. to deploy them as troops during World War I](#). The federal government believed that white people weren't suited to fight in tropical climates because they didn't have immunity to the tropical diseases. Instead, the [U.S. conveniently sent so-called Puerto Rican "immunes"](#) to defend the Panama Canal.
- Although Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens allowing them to fight for U.S. interests, [citizenship did not give them the right to vote for president](#) or to elect voting senators or representatives to Congress if they lived in Puerto Rico. [In fact, it still doesn't.](#)

## Puerto Rican Participation in the U.S. Military

- Puerto Ricans fought for the American side in the [Revolutionary war](#), fighting among troops led by General Bernardo de Gálvez and capturing several cities from the British.
- During the Korean War, Puerto Ricans in the 65th Infantry Division, known as the Borinqueneers, obtained [at least 10 Distinguished Service Cross awards, 256 Silver Stars and 596 Bronze Stars](#).
- There are currently approximately 330,000 veterans and some 35,000 Puerto Ricans in active duty service both in Puerto Rico and on the mainland. The Puerto Rico Army/Air National Guard and the Reserve components represent another 10,000 Puerto Ricans in uniform. Altogether, at least 375,000 Puerto Ricans are veterans or are still wearing the uniform. That is without counting the several thousand serving in the national guard units of the 50 federated states of the Union.
- [Nine Puerto Ricans have been awarded the Medal of Honor](#), seven have been awarded the Navy Cross, and [eighteen have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross](#).

## Puerto Ricans and Unequal Treatment

- From 1898 to 1946, Puerto Rico was ruled by Governors that were appointed by the President, who were not Puerto Rican, and the laws passed by the Puerto Rican legislature could be vetoed by the U.S. President.
- In 1946, [President Truman appointed the first Puerto Rican Governor, Jesús T. Piñero](#). In 1948, Congress passed the [Election Governor Act](#) and the first democratically elected Governor, [Luis Muñoz Marín](#), assumed office in 1948.
- In 1952, [Puerto Rico officially became a "commonwealth" of the United States](#), and ratified its own Constitution, a status

which granted Puerto Ricans a degree of control over local affairs, but not full self-determination.

- Under the next period under the sovereignty of the United States, Puerto Rico's economy shifted, from agriculture to manufacturing. Investment by industries during the 60's and 70's transformed the economy of Puerto Rico in dramatic and positive ways. From being called the "Poorhouse of the Caribbean" in the 1940s when per capita income was only \$121, by the 1960s, income per capita had risen to more than \$3,000 per person per year.
- In 1976, Congress changed the tax code (Section 936), to attract mainland investors and corporations by allowing them to avoid paying federal taxes. This made investors very wealthy, but it also helped create higher paying jobs and an economic base for Puerto Rico. By 2006, [this tax credit was phased out by Congress](#), which led to the loss of more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs. Excessive borrowing by the Commonwealth to make up for the losses and continue paying for public services, caused, in part, the current economic recession and the snowballing financial/debt crisis.
- Unlike in the states, where federal matching assistance percentage (FMAP) is applied at the appropriate rate for each state based on poverty levels, in Puerto Rico it is applied until the capped Medicaid funds and the Affordable Care Act available funds are exhausted. In other words, the availability of these funds is unrelated to need as it is in the states - when the money is gone, it is gone. The local government must then either pick up the entire burden, or decrease access to health care. This leads to Puerto Rico paying for far more in Medicaid costs than the states. In the poorest state, [the federal government pays 75.65% of the costs](#); in Puerto Rico, [it pays for 55%](#).
- Although Puerto Ricans pay the same amount of federal payroll taxes as residents of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, low-income seniors living in Puerto Rico are not eligible to participate [in the Medicare subsidy for prescription drugs or eligible for long-term care provided to low-income seniors on the mainland](#).

### Puerto Rican Migration

- The first great migratory wave of Puerto Ricans to the mainland began in the mid-40's and lasted for more than a decade, during which [more than 600,000 Puerto Ricans moved to the mainland](#).
- Puerto Rico is currently in the midst of another migratory wave, with [500,000 leaving the island between 2006 and 2016](#), and [more than 135,000 leaving in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria](#).
- According to the Center for Population Studies, 210,000 Puerto Ricans lived in Orlando by 2014. In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, an additional [100,000 Puerto Ricans traveled there](#).

### Puerto Rican Debt - The Passage of PROMESA

- In 1996, Congress began a ten-year phase out of [Section 936](#) of the Internal Revenue Code, which awarded generous tax credits and federal tax exemptions to U.S. manufacturing companies that operated in Puerto Rico and the territories. An economic recession started in Puerto Rico in 2006, the year that the phase-out was complete resulting in the loss of more than 100,000 jobs. The economic loss reduced the Commonwealth's revenues to the point where [the government borrowed excessively to make up the difference](#) and to pay for basic services. A vicious cycle of borrowing to pay off old debt resulted in a total \$70 billion public debt and close to [\\$50 billion in unfunded pension liabilities](#).
- Another issue that aggravated the island's debt issues was predatory Wall Street lending. According to a [Frontline PBS report](#), Wall Street firms engaged in irresponsible lending practices and pushed the government to borrow unsustainably, which further increased the island's debt liabilities.
- [Puerto Rico does not have the same access to bankruptcy laws that U.S. states have](#). As Puerto Rico was approaching a financial cliff with the inability to service or restructure its debt, in 2016, Congress passed a bill known as [PROMESA](#), or the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act. This law created a Fiscal Oversight Management Board (FOMB), appointed by the United States President, with legal authority to exercise control over Puerto Rico's fiscal affairs, and restructure the island's \$70 billion debt.
- The undemocratic nature of the FOMB complicates the already thorny issues of Puerto Rico's colonial status under U.S. sovereignty.
- PROMESA is deeply [controversial](#) because while it [allows](#)

[Puerto Rico access to a court-supervised bankruptcy-like debt restructuring process](#), the law also curtails Puerto Rico's self-governance and internal democratic processes because Congress gave the FOMB final authority over budgets and fiscal decisions.

- The FOMB has practically absolute powers over Puerto Rico's budget - including the spending of all disaster funds. It can require the Puerto Rican government to [implement austerity measures](#) such as [severely cutting pensions](#), [closing public schools](#), insisting on a work requirement for food stamp recipients, eliminating and [undermining labor rights](#) and pay raises, even [against the wishes of the elected officials](#) of the island's Government.
- PROMESA also awarded the FOMB and the Governor the power to [reduce the federal minimum wage](#) in Puerto Rico to \$4.25 for workers who are younger than 26 years old. This has not come into effect yet.



# Puerto Rico Fast Facts!

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Founded in 1521, San Juan Puerto Rico is the oldest city under U.S. jurisdiction. (Source: [Welcome.topuertorico.org](http://Welcome.topuertorico.org))
- Puerto Rico is home to El Yunque, the only tropical rainforest that is part of the U.S. Forest Service. (Source: [US Department of Agriculture](http://US Department of Agriculture))
- Puerto Rico is about the size of the state of Connecticut, and has 272 miles of beautiful coastline, and 300 beaches. (Source: [USA Today](http://USA Today))

**“ The median income in Puerto Rico is \$20,078. That is less than half of the median income in the poorest U.S. state, Mississippi, which is \$41,754. ”**

- Puerto Ricans often use the word “boricua” [Bo-REE-ku-wah] as a self-description. The name comes from the indigenous Taíno word Boriken, which was the native population’s name for the island. (Source: [Welcome.toPuertoRico.org](http://Welcome.toPuertoRico.org))
- The Puerto Rico Trench is the deepest submarine depression in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is about 1,090 miles (1,750 km) long and 60 miles (100 km) wide. The deepest point in the Atlantic Ocean, the “Milwaukee Depth,” lies within the Puerto Rico Trench. (Source: [National Geographic](http://National Geographic))
- Puerto Rico has competed individually in the Olympics since 1948, and has won nine medals including a gold medal for tennis. (Source: [International Olympic Committee](http://International Olympic Committee))
- The median income in Puerto Rico is \$20,078. That is less than half of the median income in the poorest U.S. state, Mississippi, which is \$41,754 (Source: [USA Today](http://USA Today))
- The first Hispanic Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor, and the first Hispanic U.S. Surgeon General, Antonia Coello Novello, are both Puerto Rican. (Sources: [Washington Post](http://Washington Post), [Encyclopaedia Britanica](http://Encyclopaedia Britanica))

- Puerto Ricans have served in the U.S. military since 1899, and have been soldiers in every major American military engagement since then. As of 2010, the Veterans Affairs Department listed Puerto Rico’s veterans at 116,029 (Source: [Department of Defense](http://Department of Defense)).
- One of Puerto Rico’s most notable exports is its music, which is widely-acclaimed and played the world over. Salsa is the most recognized Puerto Rican musical genre.. However, Bomba and Plena (musical forms rooted in African and Taíno sounds and traditions) are considered by Puerto Ricans to be the most popular form of folk music on the island. Today, Reggaeton (a musical genre influenced by hip hop and Caribbean music) might be arguably the most popular dance music coming out of Puerto Rico.
- Acclaimed Puerto Rican performer Rita Moreno is the only Latina, and only one of four women out of a total of twelve artists, to be an EGOT winner after receiving all four major annual American entertainment awards: an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and a Tony. (Source: [Billboard](http://Billboard))
- There have been at least 8 Members of Congress of Puerto Rican descent and 20 [Resident Commissioners](http://Resident Commissioners) elected to Congress. Resident Commissioners are non-voting members of Congress. The first Puerto Rican elected to serve as a Member of Congress was Hernán Badillo, who represented New York from 1971 to 1977. (Source: [Library of Congress](http://Library of Congress))
- Picky Martin, Benicio del Toro, Marc Anthony, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and Jennifer Lopez are among the group of celebrities that are household names in the US.
- The island’s system of government is called a Commonwealth. It is a Republican form of government (3 branches) with the highest elected office being the Governor who is elected to a four year term. (Source: [Welcome.toPuertoRico.org](http://Welcome.toPuertoRico.org))
- Puerto Rico imports 80% percent of its food leading to higher prices and dependency on imports. (Source: [NPR](http://NPR))
- Puerto Rico has a rich culinary scene influenced by a variety of cultures. Mofongo (fried green plantains with garlic and pork cracklings) is widely considered to be Puerto Rico’s most popular dish -- a meal with strong roots in Western Africa, and Spanish and Taíno ingredients. (Source: [Washington Post](http://Washington Post))

### Puerto Rico and the United States - History and Inequities

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth. More than 3 million Puerto Ricans live on the island and almost twice as many, 5.3 million live on the U.S. mainland, making eligibility to vote in federal elections dependent on where a Puerto Rican happens to live. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Newsweek](#))
- Puerto Rico has its own tax system and revenues go to the Commonwealth and its municipalities. But Puerto Ricans also pay U.S. payroll taxes (Social Security, Medicare, etc.) on any income source they receive from the mainland, but do not receive the same level of federal benefits received by those living on the mainland. (Source: [Welcome.toPuertoRico.org](#))
- That 43.5% of the Puerto Rican Population lives under the federal poverty line, which is much higher than the U.S. national average of 12.7%. (Sources: [U.S. Census Bureau](#), [UC Davis/US Census Bureau](#))
- The median income in Puerto Rico is \$20,078. That is less than half of the median income in the poorest U.S. state, Mississippi, which is \$41,754. (Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#))
- Puerto Ricans are not eligible for the Child Tax Credit unless they have at least 3 children. (Source: [Center for the New Economy](#))
- The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), one of the most effective anti-poverty policies in recent history, does not apply in Puerto Rico. (Source: [The Brookings Institution](#))
- Puerto Rico receives far less help from the federal government for Medicaid costs than what our states receive. In the poorest state, the federal government pays 75.65% of the costs (Source: [Medicaid.gov](#)); in Puerto Rico, it pays 55%. (Source: [Medicaid.gov](#))
- Although Puerto Ricans pay the same amount of payroll taxes as residents of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, low-income seniors living in Puerto Rico are not eligible for the subsidy for prescription drugs that Medicare provides low-income seniors on the mainland. (Source: [CMS.gov](#))

### Puerto Rico and the Aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria

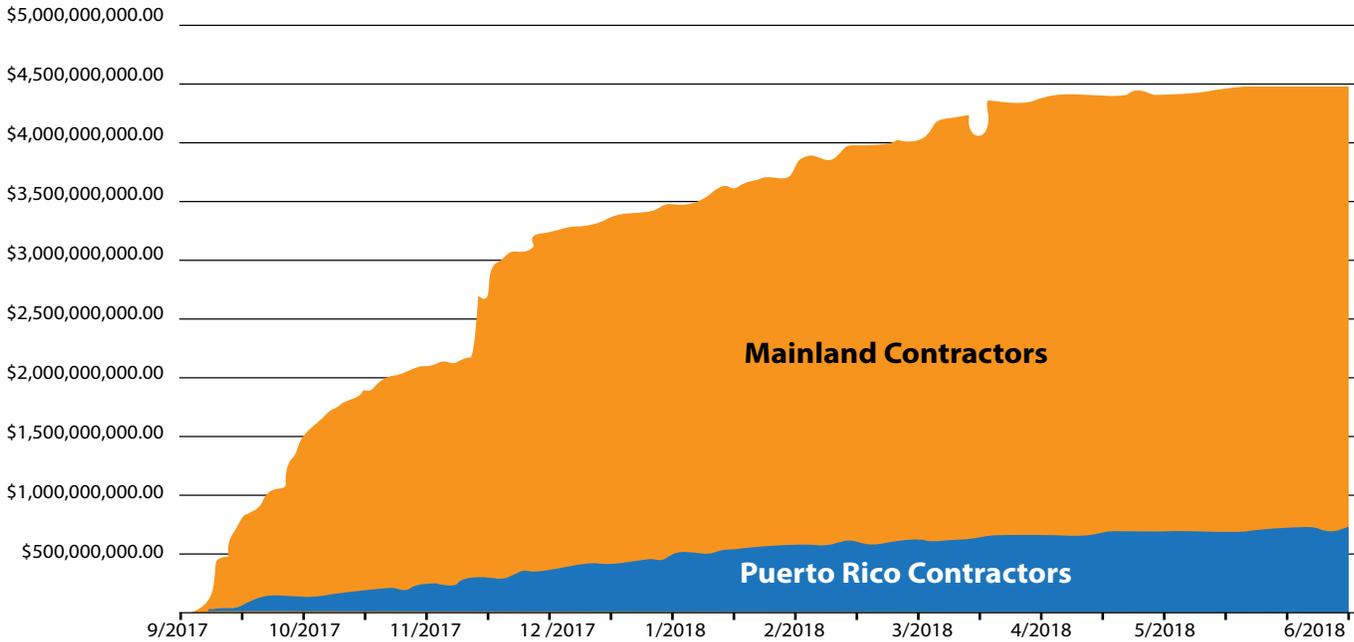
#### DID YOU KNOW?

- One month after Hurricane Maria, less than 20% of the electrical grid was restored, leaving more than 3 million people without power. 44% of Puerto Ricans still had no access to clean drinking water. (Source: [CNN](#))
- One month after the Hurricane Maria, about 1 million people still lacked access to running water. (Source: [TIME](#))
- Between 80% and 90% of houses were damaged by Hurricane Maria. (Source: [PBS](#))
- It took nearly two weeks for President Trump to visit the island. The five hours he spent there were marked by him [tossing paper towels](#), jump-shot style, into a crowd of residents as opposed to doing a substantive review of the damage or the needs of the island. In comparison, both [President Obama](#) and [President Bush](#) visited the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy and Hurricane Katrina just two days after they made land-fall. (Source: [TIME](#))
- A [devastating internal report by FEMA](#) featured in [The New York Times](#) underscores how unprepared the agency was for the hurricane response. For example, the report found that:
  - The agency's employees were not prepared to handle emergencies and needed thousands of workers more than those available.
  - FEMA lost track of most of the aid and of who needed it.
  - FEMA used a five-year-old earthquake and tsunami plan because they had not prepared for a hurricane.
  - FEMA warehouses were not stocked properly before the hurricane, and were not restocked after aid was given to U.S. Virgin islands after Hurricane Irma.
  - FEMA failed to fix logistical problems identified during emergency preparedness drills.
  - It took days for the first supplies to arrive via ship and when the aid did arrive, the agency had not set up a distribution network.
  - The satellite phones the agency sent for communications did not work properly.

- It took almost a year from the date of Hurricane Maria making landfall for the Puerto Rican government to investigate and release an updated number of fatalities. The original, “official” death count was 17. While there may never be a final number of the deaths caused by Hurricane Maria, officials have finally raised the count to nearly 3,000 people who perished as a result of Hurricane Maria. However, other studies estimate that number could be higher than 4,500. (Sources: [CNN](#), [CNN](#))
- The blackout Puerto Rico experienced after Hurricane Maria is the longest blackout in U.S. history.
- Puerto Rico is currently in the midst of another migratory wave, with 500,000 leaving the island between 2006 and 2016, and more than 135,000 leaving in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. (Sources: [Vox](#), [Center for Puerto Rican Studies](#))
- The percentage of houses that have informal land titles is estimated to be more than 50% of all housing, which are recognized in Puerto Rico civil law or Napoleonic law system similar to Louisiana’s legal system. (Source: [Puerto Rico Builders Association](#), [marketplace.org](#))
- 265 schools were closed in Puerto Rico this year, a decision that displaced about 60,000 students. Only 828 schools will open this August. (Sources: [Vox](#), [Puerto Rico Department of Education](#), [CNN](#))
- FEMA denied or did not answer more than 79% of the 335,748 aid applications submitted in Puerto Rico. (Source: [NBC](#))
- According to the [National Hurricane Center](#), Hurricane Maria was the third costliest hurricane to hit the United States. The Center estimated \$90 billion in damages at the time. (Source: [National Hurricane Center](#))
- Our federal government has spent roughly \$4.5 billion on contractors from the mainland, while it has only spent \$500 million on contractors in Puerto Rico. (Source: [Center for the New Economy](#). See graphic below.)

## Accumulated Post Hurricane María Federal Expenditures In Puerto Rico

By Type of Contractors



Source: CNE Analysis of Official US Government Data

# Why Puerto Rico's Fate Matters

## Fair Treatment for U.S. Citizens is Important for All U.S. Citizens

**P**uerto Rico is home to more than 3 million U.S. citizens who lack some of the basic rights and federal benefits of citizens living on the U.S. mainland. Equality is a fundamental American value. A lack of equality and equal representation can lead to poverty, systemic economic inequities, and generational disenfranchisement. As citizens of the United States, people on the island of Puerto Rico deserve the same treatment as citizens living in the U.S. mainland.

Below are a few of the many ways that Americans in Puerto Rico are impacted by unequal treatment and opportunities:

### Federal Benefits

- Americans living in Puerto Rico, pay the same level of Social Security and Medicare taxes yet receive fewer benefits. For example, Puerto Ricans do not qualify for Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI), a benefit that low-income mainland residents receive to help disabled adults and children with limited incomes. Low-income, elderly people on Medicare also do not qualify for prescription drug subsidies that they would receive if they lived on the mainland. Medicare also does not pay for long-term assisted living care for the elderly, leaving many low-income elderly people living in precarious situations.
- Americans living in Puerto Rico do not have equal access to federal benefits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, SNAP benefits for poor families with children, and Medicare payments for long-term care.
- Puerto Rico's federal healthcare funding is capped, and the federal matching rate (55%) is lower than what it would be if the island were treated as a state. This means that a lot of Americans who would qualify for healthcare if they lived in a U.S. state are not receiving the care that they need.
- is now at 9.1%, which is still much higher than the 3.9% national average in the continental U.S.
- It is also important to note that the labor force participation rate in Puerto Rico is currently close to 40%, while the U.S. national average is around 63%.
- The median household income in Puerto Rico is \$20,078, roughly one third of the U.S. median income of \$59,039.
- In 1996, Congress curtailed tax benefits for U.S. manufacturing companies that created 300,000 jobs in Puerto Rico. The phaseout of this program was a major driver of the economic and debt crisis Puerto Rico faces today. Making matters worse, in 2018, after Maria's devastation of the Puerto Rican economy, Congress passed a \$1.2 trillion [tax cut package](#) that applied new taxes on intangible assets for U.S. companies in Puerto Rico. This creates a perverse disadvantage, putting Puerto Rico at a competitive disadvantage with states and foreign countries.
- Even though Puerto Rico has fiscal autonomy, which means the island has its own tax system, Puerto Rico has not been "allowed" to sign economic treaties with other countries. Access to this tool has been repeatedly blocked by the federal government.
- During the debt crisis, the Federal Reserve and Treasury Departments refused to buy Puerto Rican debt or provide financial assistance. Since Puerto Rico does not have access to the International Monetary Fund and Congress refused to spend money to solve the problem, Puerto Rico was stuck in limbo without access to the tools to alleviate its debt burden. This lack of options prompted the passage of PROMESA by Congress (more below). Congress was willing to bailout Wall Street during the 2008 crash, but unwilling to help the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico in their hour of need.

### TAKEAWAY

*U.S. Citizens living in Puerto Rico are denied essential federal benefits because of where they live.*

### Economic Barriers

- 43.5% of the population of Puerto Rico lives under the federal poverty line. The U.S. national average of 12.7% of the overall population under the poverty level. (Source: [UC Davis/US Census Bureau](#))
- As of June, 2018, Puerto Rico's official unemployment rate dipped below 10% for the first time in decades and

**TAKEAWAY**

*Puerto Rico's economy, and the U.S. citizens who live in Puerto Rico, face undue economic challenges because of unfair policies.*

**Fiscal Crisis & Congress**

- In 2016, the U.S. Congress passed a law called PROMESA that created a Fiscal Oversight Management Board (FOMB) whose seven members are appointed by the U.S. President (with the exception of one appointed by the Governor of Puerto Rico). The FOMB oversees and determines financial and budgetary policy in Puerto Rico, often over the wishes of Puerto Rico's elected Congress and Governor.
- The FOMB has the last word over fiscal, budgetary and other financial matters in Puerto Rico, and has imposed severe austerity measures resulting in ongoing cuts to education, pensions, and benefits.
- Puerto Rico's public corporations and cities are excluded from the same bankruptcy protections as states, such as Chapter 9. Puerto Rico did have access to Chapter 9 bankruptcy until 1984, when Congress mysteriously and without a clear legislative intent, removed this provision from applying to Puerto Rico. This means that the essential services Puerto Rico relies on cannot be protected against claims by creditors who may want to raise rates, provoke deep cuts, and otherwise threaten the basic services working Puerto Rican families rely upon.

**TAKEAWAY**

*When it comes to tax and other fiscal matters, Congress has treated Puerto Rico in an arbitrary and often unfair way and without any regard on the long-term consequences on the U.S. citizens who live on the island. These actions deprive Puerto Rico of the tools needed to climb out of the fiscal and economic crisis it has suffered since 2006.*

**Health Care**

- Unlike in the states, where federal matching assistance percentage (FMAP) is applied at the appropriate rate for each state based on poverty levels, in Puerto Rico it is applied until the Medicaid ceiling funds and the Affordable Care Act available funds are exhausted. This leads to Puerto Rico paying far more in Medicaid costs than the states. In the poorest state, the federal government pays 75.65% of the costs (Source: [Medicaid.gov](https://www.medicaid.gov)); in Puerto Rico, it pays for 55%. (Source: [Medicaid.gov](https://www.medicaid.gov))
- In addition, although Puerto Ricans pay the same amount of payroll taxes as residents of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, low-income seniors living in Puerto Rico do not participate in the subsidy for prescription drugs that Medicare provides seniors on the mainland. (Source: [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov))

**Environmental Issues**

- The U.S. citizens living on the Puerto Rican islands of Vieques and Culebra suffer from disproportionately higher rates of cancer and other diseases due to exposure to agent orange, depleted uranium and other contamination as a result of [U.S. Navy bombing](https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war) and training exercises on Vieques. The U.S. military has not met its full responsibility of paying for the clean-up and decontamination of the islands, and the U.S. military has claimed "sovereign immunity" to avoid answering for the health claims of the citizens of these islands.

**TAKEAWAY**

*No U.S. citizen living on U.S. soil should ever suffer the consequences of inexplicably high sickness and disease with limited abilities to pursue appropriate health care access.*

# Texas After Harvey

## vs.

# Puerto Rico After Maria

The millions of Americans who call Puerto Rico home have lived through the longest blackout in U.S. history and the longest blackout ever. Almost a year ago, in September 2017, two devastating Hurricanes hit the island of Puerto Rico in quick succession. Just weeks after Hurricane Irma left two-thirds of Puerto Rico without power, Category 4 Hurricane Maria arrived with 150 MPH winds and departed as the worst natural disaster in the island's history.

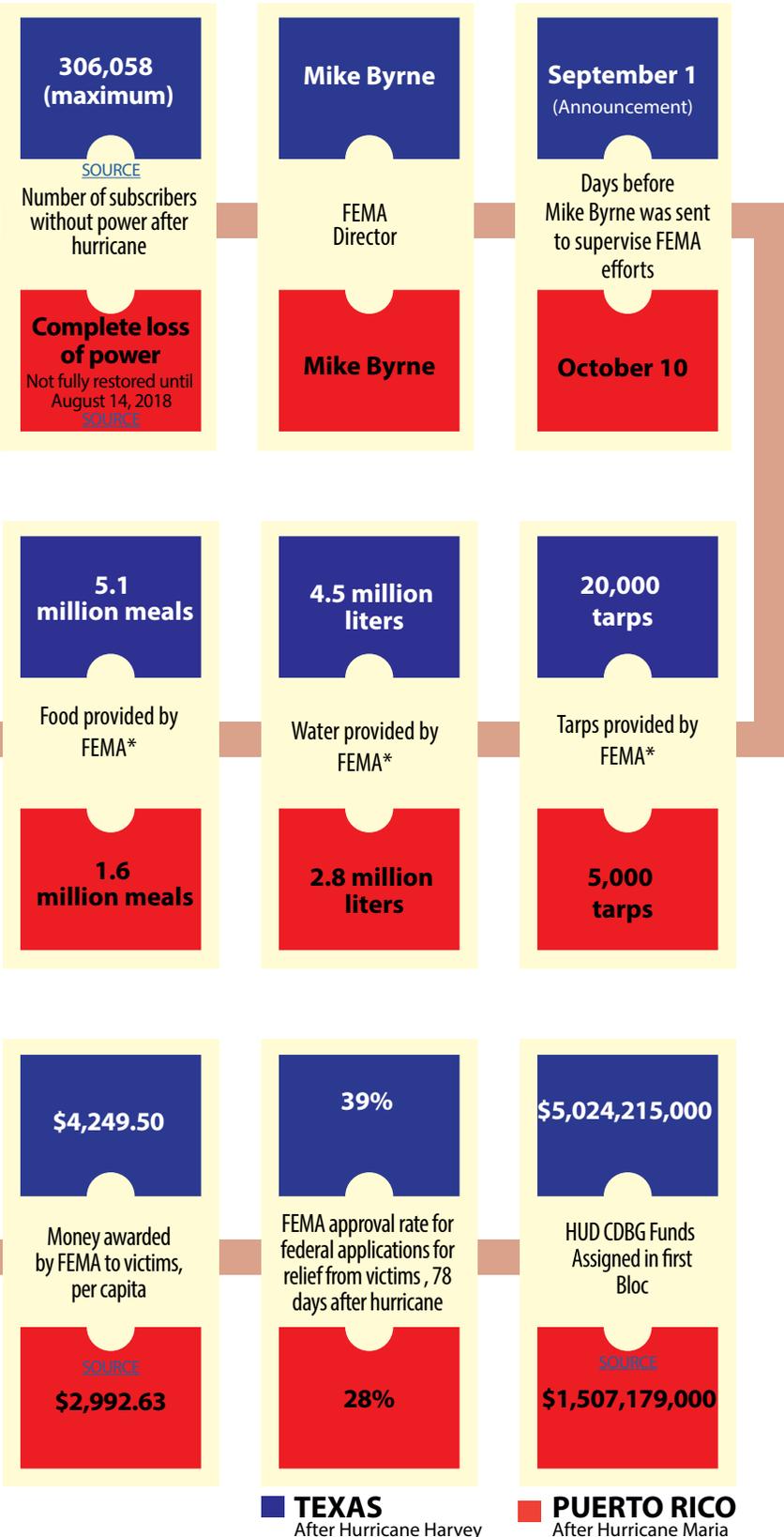
The U.S. government response was slow and underwhelming, especially when compared to the assistance offered after Hurricane Harvey, which ravaged Texas and the southeast. The numbers speak for themselves.

<sup>1</sup>The highly-publicized article "[Mortality in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria](#)," the result of a collaboration between the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and Carlos Albizu University in Puerto Rico, **suggests that the death toll could be higher than 4,500.**

**Note:** Except where noted, figures were obtained from the Politico article [How Trump favored Texas over Puerto Rico](#)



**ADDITIONAL FACTS**



- **\$20 billion** in HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been approved for Puerto Rico. Of these, \$1.5 billion have been allocated thus far. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **The Puerto Rican** government's estimate for the total damage caused by the Hurricane is \$125 billion. The Fiscal Oversight Board, which currently manages Puerto Rico's finances has given an estimate of \$80 billion and further estimates that Puerto Rico could receive a total of \$62,500,000,000 in relief funds. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **More than 135,000** Puerto Ricans relocated to the continental U.S. in the first six months after the Hurricane. ([Source](#))
- **Roughly 1,700** Puerto Ricans would have been evicted from the shelters provided by FEMA's Temporary Shelter Assistance (TSA) program when that aid was set to expire on June 30, 2018. A temporary restraining order extended the housing assistance period until August 30, 2018 but a judge later [ruled](#) that the final eviction date will be September 13, 2018. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **79% of applications** for FEMA aid under its Individuals and Households Program have been denied. Of 43,380 appeals submitted by July 13, 34,332 were denied and classified as ineligible, mainly because of applicants lacked the deeds to their properties. ([Source](#))
- **According to FEMA's** after-action report, the agency's contingencies took into account a much weaker storm than Maria, in which 73% of the population would lose power, instead of 100%, search and rescue efforts would take place across only 75% of the island, instead of 99%, and 56% of hospitals would be affected, rather than 92%. ([Source](#))

Additional Sources: Politico.com; El Nuevo Día; Far from Recovery: Puerto Rico Six Months after Hurricane María (Oxfam)  
 \* Nine days after hurricane  
 \*\*As of March 23, 2018



# We Are All Puerto Rico

## How Does Puerto Rico Fit Into Your Mission?

**W**hile most organizations are aware of the crisis in Puerto Rico, many may not be up-to-date on the current situation and needs on the island. Groups, like yours, are natural allies that can share information with your constituency and expand political support through your important and powerful networks.

The speed at which civil society groups were able to react and assist Puerto Rico, in some cases within days - and weeks ahead of FEMA and other government disaster response agencies - spell out the crucial role you have played and the difference you can still make in Puerto Rico's recovery.

Here are a few examples of how the current situation in Puerto Rico aligns with your organizational mission and interests, ideas about organizations that you can connect with, and how to explain why they should be interested in Puerto Rico's cause.

### Faith Based Organizations

- Faith-based institutions are often on the front lines serving populations in need of assistance. These organizations can and should use their moral authority to call on Members of Congress and others, to be responsive to the needs of Puerto Ricans in this time of tremendous hardship and tragedy. They can use their platforms to make sure the people of Puerto Rico are not forgotten, such as newsletters, sign on letters, sermons, etc.
- Catholic, Jewish, and Evangelical faith-based groups all responded immediately to the humanitarian crisis on the island. Examples include the Puerto Rico chapter of the Jewish Community Center (JCC), Caritas of Puerto Rico, a member of Catholic Charities, Centro Cristiano Discipulos de Cristo, and Salon de Asambleas de los Testigos de Jehova, among many others.
- Even if the need for emergency supplies has passed, the process of rebuilding remains a long-term proposition. Many faith-based institutions have Puerto Rican parishioners with leadership/membership on the mainland who care and are ready and willing to assist the Puerto Rican community on the island from their own parish.
- Organized labor has a special understanding that injustice towards one group/class of people is a threat to all people. Their experience in organization and deployment of resources is the perfect partnership to help Puerto Rico as it moves toward its recovery and economic growth.
- Organized labor groups are engaged in civic participation and organizing and can influence elected officials/decision makers by working in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico to support their efforts to rebuild and protect U.S. citizens living in Puerto Rico.
- Many labor organizations have Puerto Rican membership who are active within their leadership and many members acted as a lifeline right after Hurricane Maria. Besides providing basic emergency supplies, volunteers from SEIU, National Nurses United, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), among others, were key in life-saving relief efforts in Puerto Rico days after Maria. Many like AFT and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), have continued their commitment to assist in rebuilding and advocating for policy changes.
- The PROMESA bill, passed by Congress, set a dangerous precedent in Puerto Rico for undermining labor organizing and was opposed by many unions. It allows the Fiscal Oversight Management Board (FOMB) and the Governor of Puerto Rico to lower the minimum wage to \$4.25 an hour for workers younger than 26 years of age. It also empowers a "revitalization coordinator" to designate "critical infrastructure" projects that can be approved on a fast-track basis, and thus avoid compliance with several environmental, labor, and other regulations.

### Organized Labor

- Organized labor has been key drivers and advocates for recovery in Puerto Rico. Besides being on the front lines of delivering supplies, rebuilding infrastructure they have been working with their Puerto Rican members on the mainland and in Puerto Rico to demand a just recovery.

## Environmental Groups

- The devastation of the hurricanes in Puerto Rico and severe climate elsewhere is impacting the natural environment and creating a whole new population of climate refugees within the United States and across the world.
- Hurricanes Irma and Maria caused severe damage to the 18 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico, impacting local drinking water and the surrounding environment.
- Puerto Rico faces some unique challenges when it comes to toxic hazards as a large portion of the waste on the island comes from its once-booming pharmaceutical industry.
- The danger of using natural disasters as excuses to waive federal laws such as [NEPA](#), one of the oldest environmental laws in existence and local environmental laws as a legitimate response to disaster rebuilding can have ripple effects throughout the country setting dangerous precedents, which must be fought. Allowing these laws to be waived is potentially dangerous to health, quality of life, and the environment.

**“The devastation of the Hurricanes in Puerto Rico and severe climate elsewhere is impacting the natural environment and creating a whole new population of climate refugees within the United States and across the world.”**

- Environmental groups should also be concerned about the fast-tracking mechanism mentioned above, allows the unelected Fiscal Board to designate certain infrastructure projects they deem “critical” to be able to avoid complying with certain environmental regulations. This sets a precedent that future boards could apply to cities, counties, and other jurisdictions across the continental US.

## Social Justice and Civil Rights Groups

- Social justice and civil rights groups care about the equitable treatment of marginalized groups. Due to Puerto Rico’s unique status with the United States, Puerto Ricans on the island are often treated as different, often arbitrarily, when prioritizing essential personnel and resources after disasters.

- Those who fight for justice and against second-class citizenship need to educate themselves about the inequities, now playing out in ongoing recovery efforts, in order to advocate on behalf of communities impacted by Maria, and ensure the same priority is given to all affected by disasters, no matter their skin tone, language, or economic status.

## African-American Groups

- Puerto Rican culture is strongly influenced by its Afro-Latino roots. In fact, [20 percent of Puerto Ricans](#) trace their roots back to Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Most of the rest of the population have African ancestry, often mixed with native Taíno and/or European heritage. Puerto Ricans come in all shapes, sizes, and colors.
- The second-class treatment of Puerto Ricans, and its disparate outcomes, is similar to that experienced by most communities of color in the U.S.
- [Arturo Alfonso Schomburg](#), who was Puerto Rican of African and German descent, was a writer, historian, activist, and cultural promoter. Schomburg was born in Puerto Rico in the late 19th Century and moved to New York City where he continued to advocate for Puerto Rican and Cuban independence. He also founded several organizations focused on fighting for the civil rights of African Americans. His collection of Afrocentric artifacts helped create the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

### Latino Groups

- Puerto Ricans are the second largest Latino group in our nation and have been engaged, at the forefront of fighting for the rights, well-being, and empowerment of Latinos and other all across our nation. In New York city, Puerto Ricans are seen as the pioneers who paved the way for other Latino groups to enjoy rights they would not be able to exercise were it not for the struggles the Puerto Rican community waged for decades. LatinoJustice PRLDEF, for example, started as a Puerto Rican-focused organization and is now among the most prominent national Latino legal defense funds fighting for immigrant rights, as well as the rights of Hurricane Maria evacuees and others.
- Efforts to divide DREAMers from Puerto Ricans in Congressional legislation that forced Members of Congress to choose between hurricane relief for Puerto Rico and other affected jurisdictions and avoiding the termination of DACA show how Latinos need to unite and not allow others to divide them. These efforts to divide us were rejected by the Puerto Rican members of Congress, and the overwhelming majority of Hispanic congressional members..

### Teacher's Groups

- Amid protests from parents, teachers and communities Puerto Rico has closed 265 schools since Hurricane Maria. Since Hurricane Maria an estimated 20,000 have left the island. Though this year, there were 318,000 students attending Puerto Rico's public schools.
- The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Asociacion de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR) have been active in recovery efforts since Hurricane Maria hit. Schools served as vital points for shelter, for distribution of supplies, and centers of recovery in the weeks after Hurricane Maria. AFT and AMPR, in partnership with Hispanic Federation and various non-profits, raised more than \$2 million to purchase water filters that were delivered to schools and communities in need of clean water.
- AMPR teachers were cleaning and repairing schools across Puerto Rico before even FEMA had landed in their cities. With supplies sent from mainland unions and charities, teachers were cleaning classrooms and getting lunchrooms ready to give kids sanctuary to recover and learn.
- AFT, AMPR and Hispanic Federation working hand-in-hand with other partners have been advocating for the needs of Puerto Rico's children in front of Congress even as the Trump administration has been pushing efforts to close and privatize schools.

### Additional Groups

- Many other kinds of organizations, such as LGBTQ groups, have shown support for Puerto Rico in the initial aftermath of the hurricanes and are proven allies of the island. There have also been countless efforts by individuals in Puerto Rican diaspora communities to organize and provide assistance and support.



## Tips for Reaching Out to Ally Groups

- Your first step is identifying what group and who within that group you need to reach out to. The more members/leaders in an organization you know, the better chance you have of gaining their support. Always start with reaching out to the “low hanging fruit” as it will be easiest and help you develop your pitch.

## Establish Trust

- Trust can be acquired or transferred. When you reach out to a group or organization, you will usually have better luck when you know someone within that group or know someone who knows someone in that group.
- Explain to your contact “the what and the why” you want to connect with the group and ask them how you should introduce yourself.

## Meeting with the Organization

- Create a meeting outline for yourself so you have notes going in and can cover all your points.
- Be prepared with facts on the current needs of Puerto Rico and status of the recovery effort (example: \_\_\_ homes are still in need of repairs).
- Explain why their organization/membership should be concerned with the crisis in Puerto Rico.
- Be sure to make a clear “ask” of the organization so they know how they can be of help. Also ask for their ideas on who else you can speak to in their organization or another that could be of help.
- Offer to provide them with talking points and any additional material they need.
- Make sure to collect contact information (email, phone numbers) of the people you meet with.

## Follow Up

- Send a thank you follow up email to the meeting leader and be sure to copy any additional attendees as well as the individual who assisted you in setting up the meeting.
- Your thank you email should also outline any follow up you discussed and time-frame for deliverables on your end and theirs.

- The larger the organization, the more important administrative staff are to ensuring successful outreach and engagement. You may want to reach out to the assistant of the organization’s leader to ensure proper follow up.
- Your “ask” of the organization needs to be clear, but should be fluid enough to not come across as imposing. The goal is to cultivate a coalition of allies that can support Puerto Rico and each organization may have a unique way of supporting this common goal.

## HERE ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF “ASKS” YOU CAN MAKE:

- Share information on how their membership can help via organizational newsletters or social media.
- Share literature/handouts at organizational meetings.
- Allow you to speak in front of their group to share information.
- Have their organization’s leadership reach out to their Members of Congress and ask them to assist Puerto Rico.
- When they do reach out to Members of Congress, suggest they include one or more of the “asks” we include in the policy section of this toolkit.
- Ask them to promote your event, to join in a Call-In Day, or to distribute a petition.
- Ask them to author or co-author an op-ed with you to demonstrate to the public that there is broad support for Puerto Rico.

# How Can I Get Involved in “Take Action for Puerto Rico!”?

**I**n la unión está la fuerza! Together we are strong and powerful! We invite you to join millions of people across the United States fighting for equality, justice and dignity for the people of Puerto Rico. With your help, we can build a stronger, sustainable and more resilient Puerto Rico.

- ◆ Take the first step by signing up on the website [www.takeaction4pr.org](http://www.takeaction4pr.org) to stay in touch and get the latest news
- ◆ Sign the Power4PuertoRico coalition’s petition [here](#)
- ◆ Host a Community Forum or Teach-In for Take Action for Puerto Rico! Sign up at [www.takeaction4pr.org](http://www.takeaction4pr.org)
- ◆ Party like you mean it! You don’t need to be Puerto Rican to love Salsa dancing...so plan your own Salsería (salsa dance party) to raise awareness about Puerto Rico and hand out fast facts about Puerto Rico to your guests and ask them to take action
- ◆ Organize and hold your own Press Conference to raise awareness about why making Puerto Rico vibrant again is important to you as a U.S. citizen living on the mainland
- ◆ Plan an Instagram campaign #MiGranitodeArenna to raise awareness about everyone’s ability to help. For example a graphic that says, “I Care about Puerto Rico!” and tag your member of congress
- ◆ Identify local Hispanic Heritage Month events and reach out to ensure Puerto Rico is included
- ◆ Plan a fundraiser to benefit a local community group in Puerto Rico doing great things to help rebuild Puerto Rico’s future. Click [here](#) for a list of organizations to consider
- ◆ Create a Puerto Rican-focused event for Hispanic Heritage Month in your community (i.e. festivals, dances, parades, concerts, etc) ... everyone loves a concerned individual who wants to make a difference
- ◆ Join a rally on September 20th and light a candle in honor of Puerto Rico, click [here](#) to find a rally near you
- ◆ Register your event on the “Take Action for Puerto Rico!” website [www.takeaction4pr.org](http://www.takeaction4pr.org)
- ◆ Are you musically inclined? Then pay your own Musical Protest Visit (MPV) to a local FEMA office or federal building or even a Trump property
- ◆ Do you like a challenge? Are you creative and social media savvy? Think of ideas that can go viral on social media
- ◆ Think of a (much less dangerous) “Kiki do you love me” challenge

**GET  
CREATIVE!**

### Share your idea!

Send an email to your members asking them to get involved and to sign the petition.

# Media Samples, Tips and How-Tos

## This document contains a wealth of resources including:

- Sample Media Advisory
- Sample Press Release
- Tips for Organizing a Press Conference
- Tips for Interactions with the Media
- Sample Social Media Posts and Suggested Hashtags
- Sample Op-ed and Letter to the Editor

## Why Do We Want the Media to Know What We are Doing?

Getting the news media to cover your event or do a story on the issue you are pushing will go a long way to attract attention to our shared cause. This will help reach larger audiences, which can translate into a larger base of support for what you are doing. Shaping public opinion is also important because it will help persuade policymakers that there is public support for the issues you are promoting.

Outreach to reporters is not difficult if you follow this simple guide on how to write and distribute media advisories, press releases, set-up a press conference, and much more.

## What is a Media Advisory?

A media advisory answers the “5 Ws” or Who, What, When, Where, and Why of an event and serves as an invitation for journalists to attend the event. This is sent to the media when you want to publicize an event and invite media-coverage (get “earned-media” as opposed to “paid media”). Think about what would make your event interesting to cover. (Sample below)

## What is a Press Release?

A press release is a document that provides newsworthy information directly to journalists. A press release is usually sent to members of the media right after the event happens and should include the key takeaways, quotes, and messaging of the event. Use your own voice but keep message clear. See Take Action for Puerto Rico! Talking Points [Here](#) (Sample below)

## Tips for Crafting a Press Release:

Always include:

1. Your organization/coalition logo.
2. The date the press release is distributed.
3. If you don't want the information to be reported yet write “Embargoed until” and the date.
4. Contact information for the media point person for the organization/event. (This person must be reachable and responsive to media calls.)
5. 1-2 quotes from speakers/attendees.
6. “###” at the ending of the press release to signal that the information is complete.

The headline is key. Most reporters have 30 seconds to scan a release. They want the news to jump out at them. Summarize your news into a headline. The headline can be up to four lines long, centered, in boldface and written all in capital letters, usually in a larger type size. The headline should capture the larger frame of the news, communicate a sense of drama and pull reporters into the story.

After the headline, the first paragraph – “The Lede” – is critical. This is the summary paragraph that communicates the most important components and frames the issue for maximum media impact. Do not try to explain everything in this paragraph.

**““ Outreach to reporters is not difficult if you follow this simple guide on how to write and distribute media advisories, press releases, set-up a press conference, and much more. ””**

Write the remainder of the press release in descending order of importance. In journalism, this is called the “inverted-pyramid” style of writing. The most important, base-laying news goes at the top, the less important details below.

Frame your news – By the end of the lead paragraph, establish its importance impact and your position. At the latest, your news should be framed by the end of the second paragraph.

## **MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE**

**(Insert organization's logo here)**

### **Local Organization Hosting One Year After Maria: Envisioning a Vibrant Puerto Rico Event to Highlight Current State of the island**

[Sacramento, CA] – On September 22, 2018, at 10:00 am, local organization Boricuas living in Northern California will host an event titled: One Year After Maria: Envisioning a Vibrant Puerto Rico. The event will focus on discussing the current state of Puerto Rico one year after Hurricane Maria, and how individuals and organizations on the mainland can help with the recovery of the island.

**Who:** Boricuas Living in Northern California

**What:** One Year After Maria: Envisioning a Vibrant Puerto Rico

**When:** 10:00 AM – Saturday, September 22, 2018

**Where:** Sacramento Community Center  
100 Main St.  
Sacramento, CA 94203

## **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** First Name, Last Name

September 24, 2018

**Phone:** xxx-xxx-xxxx

**Email:** your email@email.org

For Immediate Release

### **Local Organization Participates in National Event to Discuss the Recovery of Puerto Rico One Year After Hurricane Maria**

[Sacramento, CA] – The Sacramento-based organization Boricuas of Northern California hosted an event yesterday, September 23, 2018, to encourage discussion around the current state of Puerto Rico one year after Hurricane Maria and the actions that individuals living in the Continental U.S. can take in order to help the island recover.

The event was held at (insert address) and is part of a larger national effort called Take Action for Puerto Rico! that is being organized by an impressive national coalition of civil rights, social justice, labor and faith-based organizations. Speakers included the founder of Boricuas of Northern California, Jonathan Negrón, as well as local community leaders and a former resident of the island who moved to Sacramento after Hurricane Maria.

“One year after Maria, Puerto Rico still needs resources and help if the island is to become vibrant once more,” said the founder of Boricuas of Northern California Jonathan Negrón. “Events like these are meant to start a discussion about how we can organize individuals and organizations here in the continental U.S. to pressure the federal government into taking the steps needed to help Puerto Rico fully recover.”

On September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria - a Category 5 Hurricane - devastated the island of Puerto Rico causing thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in damage. The event’s main objective was to shine a light on the current situation on the island while showing individuals how to be the main drivers of these efforts and organizations how to take action in order to help the Puerto Rico recover.

“I’m glad our organization partnered with Boricuas of Northern California for this event. I didn’t know how I could help. I thought I really couldn’t do much except send supplies, but this event really informed me of all the things we can do from here no matter how far away we are,” stated the President of local organization YYY.

Paola Rivera, a Maria evacuee that moved to Sacramento, underscored the need for help by saying that, “There is still a lot of work to be done on the island. My family members still lose electrical power every week and some houses - like mine that was completely destroyed - are still laying in ruins. To make matters worse, basic services are being cut and doctors are leaving.”

For more information on the Take Action for Puerto Rico! campaign, please go to [www.takeaction4pr.org](http://www.takeaction4pr.org)

### TIPS FOR ORGANIZING A PRESS CONFERENCE

- **Determine the purpose of the press conference:** What do you want to speak about? Why is it important for others to hear what you are saying?
- **Determine your Audience:** Knowing who your target audience is - who needs to hear your message the most - will determine a lot of other aspects of the event like who gets invited to speak, the location of the event, and other aspects.
- **Date, Time, and Location:** Make sure that when you pick a date and time there are no other big events scheduled that might bump out the coverage of your event from the news. Try to schedule press conferences in the morning, and avoid scheduling anything in the afternoon and evening when reporters are on a deadline.
- **Speakers:** Try to have between 3-4 speakers at the event. The first speaker should act as host, provide key messaging, and introduce the other speakers. Typical speakers might include an Executive Director or another key staff member, a board member, a public official, celebrities, or a local politician. One of the speakers should be an "expert".
- **Keep the event short!** Anything longer than 45 minutes will make everyone lose interest.
- **Practice:** Hold a dress rehearsal with the speakers and make sure you provide them with talking points that they can use for answering questions from the media. Also, practice some of the answers to questions that members of the media might ask speakers.

### TIPS FOR INTERACTIONS WITH THE MEDIA

- **Be Prepared:** Make sure that you practice the talking points that have been crafted for the event. Ask yourself: What do we want to communicate? SEE Take Action for Puerto Rico! Talking Points [HERE](#)
- **Keep It Simple:** Try to talk in short complete sentences that can be used for sound bites and quotes. If there are multiple people being interviewed, members of the media will want to include short quotes to feature everyone.
- **Stay Alert:** Remember that everything you say in front of journalists or members of the media can and will be used for their reporting. Avoid making any comments that you might regret being made public.
- **Ask for Contact Information:** Always ask for a name, media outlet, and an email or phone number you can use to contact the reporter/journalist. It's always good to know which media outlets covered the event and that you have the contact information needed to reach out in case you need to clarify something.
- **What and Why:** Make sure to mention what happened, but most importantly, why it happened. The what can always be reported by the journalists but the why should always be communicated by the newsmaker.
- **News hook:** Always strive to highlight why the story you are pitching is relevant to the reporter's audience. Also, try to tie it to other current events making headlines and emphasize why your story is different than others. Reporters are always looking for different angles and "scoops" that other media outlets have not yet picked up on.
- **Listen:** Always take time to listen to what the journalist is saying or asking. Sometimes we start answering questions in our head before the question has been asked.
- **Speak Slowly and Clearly:** Take your time answering. Remember that the media is there talking to you and that there is no need to rush the answers.

# Don't Forget Social Media!

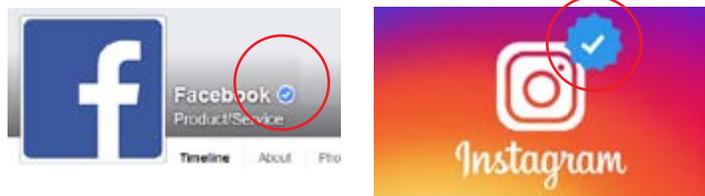
## Contacting Your Elected Officials on Social Media

**S**ocial media is an incredibly useful tool for drawing the attention of your Senators and Members of Congress. Just like us, they monitor their social media posts regularly to stay updated on what's happening around the world, and at home.

September 20, 2018 marks one year since Hurricane Maria's landfall in Puerto Rico. Help raise awareness about Puerto Rico's ongoing recovery needs by posting on social media and using the hashtag #1YearAfterMaria. Together, we will unite our voices to make sure that the people of Puerto Rico are not forgotten!

Here are a few things to remember when interacting with your Member of Congress on social media:

- Make sure the account is verified: all major social media companies (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) verify official accounts by placing a blue checkmark next to the account names of public individuals. If you don't see a blue checkmark, the account might be fake!



- Use your real name/account. Members of Congress cannot be responsive to individuals whom they cannot identify as real people.
- Mention that you are a constituent! Make sure you include that you live in the Congressional District or State of your Member of Congress.

- Use our hashtag #TakeAction4PR We want Congress to know that we are part of a broader movement to hold them accountable for their actions on Puerto Rico. A hashtag helps to identify us as part of the same team.

### Sample Social Media Posts:

Here are a few examples of language that you can use in your social media posts:

#### Twitter:

Climate change is making extreme weather events more severe and deadly. @EPA must protect the health & safety of all American families incl. vulnerable communities & communities of color hit first and worst by the impacts of climate change. #takeaction4pr [takeaction4pr.org](https://takeaction4pr.org)

\$125B is needed to rebuild #PuertoRico. To date, Congress has allocated less than \$30B. This is shameful! Join the campaign to take action for Puerto Rico! Text TakeAction4PR to 21333. #takeaction4pr #1YearAfterMaria [takeaction4pr.org](https://takeaction4pr.org)

One way the fed. gov't can help #PuertoRico? Create a "Marshall-Plan" for the island. The Take Action for Puerto Rico! campaign aims to do just that. Join us! Text TakeAction4PR to 21333 to tell Congress the island needs a real plan for rebuilding! #1YearAfterMaria #takeaction4pr

@[MOC handle] #1YearAfterMaria and #PuertoRico is still sorely in need of assistance. What are you doing to help the 3 million U.S. citizens who are still reeling from the devastation of Hurricane Maria? #takeaction4pr

READ: 20x more people died as a result of #HurricaneMaria than originally reported. Experts predict that future extreme weather events will be even WORSE due to climate change. #DefendClimate <https://nyti.ms/2vt5RVa> #takeaction4pr

READ: @NOAA climate scientist says climate change makes extreme weather and severe hurricanes "substantially more likely." #DefendClimate <https://bit.ly/2PyHaPB> #TakeActionforPR

### Facebook/Instagram:

One the one-year anniversary Hurricane Maria's devastating landfall in Puerto Rico, there is still so much work to be done. The Take Action for Puerto Rico! campaign is working to ensure our elected leaders don't forget about the work required on the long road ahead for Puerto Rico to recover and rebuild. Text TakeAction4PR to 21333 to find out how you can help!

Hurricane Maria was the worst natural disaster in the island's history and killed almost 3,000 people. It altered the lives of the more than 3 million U.S. citizens who live in Puerto Rico. One year later, there is much work to be done. We're working with grassroots advocates, faith-based leaders, labor unions, community-based organizations, public officials, and educator to encourage and elevate discussion about how we can help Puerto Rico rebuild. Text TakeAction4PR to 21333 to reach your Members of Congress and tell them to Take Action for Puerto Rico!

We are asking that U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico receive the same kind of treatment as those citizens who live on the mainland and have endured natural disasters. Our message: Congress should allocate sufficient funds to help rebuild the island, as they have done and are doing for Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and other devastated areas. Join the campaign to rebuild Puerto Rico at [takeaction4pr.org](http://takeaction4pr.org) and get valuable resources for how you can help!

[tag your MOC]It has been an entire year since Hurricane Maria made landfall and Puerto Rico is still sorely in need of assistance to rebuild. What are you doing to help the 3 million U.S. citizens who are still reeling from the storm's devastation? Take Action for Puerto Rico!

\$125 billion is needed to rebuild Puerto Rico. To date, Congress has allocated less than \$30 billion. This is shameful! Text action-4pr to 21333 today to tell Congress it's time to rebuild the island. [takeaction4pr.org](http://takeaction4pr.org)

### Main campaign hashtags:

#TakeAction4PR  
#1YearAfterMaria

### Secondary campaign hashtags:

#BoricuasRemember  
#TrumpsKatrina  
#Power4PuertoRico  
#EnergizePR

**\*MODEL OP-ED\***

**WE ARE ALL PUERTO RICANS**

By Leyla Chávez

**O**n September 20, 2017, almost one year to the day, a Category 5 hurricane destroyed the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The disaster that followed – due to both natural and man-made causes – is a lesson for all Americans, not just the U.S. citizens of the island of Puerto Rico.

Hurricane María, which was preceded by another Category 4 storm, Irma only two weeks prior, caused the longest blackout in U.S. history, left more than 3 million people in the dark for months – some for almost the entire year – and displaced over 135,000 Puerto Rican evacuees who moved to the states due to the inhuman conditions on the ground. The death toll is calculated at anywhere between 3,000 and over 4,500 and its effects are still being felt by the destruction left behind.

Hurricane María has been appropriately dubbed “Trump’s Katrina” because of the President’s disparaging comments about Puerto Ricans who supposedly wanted “everything done for them” and who allegedly were “throwing our budget a little out of whack.” This administration’s failure to respond quickly, adequately, and with the necessary resources to aid the millions whose lives were upended, was not only his personal failure, but it left a stain on our nation. This hurricane was not only a wake-up call on how ill-prepared our nation’s emergency response system is to devastating natural disasters. It was also a helpful reminder that Puerto Rico is an integral part of our nation’s fabric and that the U.S. citizens that live there, most of whom are Latino and speak Spanish as their first language, need to be treated fairly by our government.

How do we advocate and tackle the myriad of problems facing Puerto Rico? First, we must educate ourselves as to the complex and vexing challenges resulting from the often-unfair treatment of Puerto Rico by our federal government. That is why the organization I lead, Chicanos de South Bronx en Acción, is joining the Take Action for Puerto Rico! campaign.

What does Puerto Rico need our government to do? We must treat the disaster wrought by Maria’s wrath the same way we would treat any disaster, with a Marshall Plan. The hurricane left warzone-like conditions on the island. Entire communities were disconnected from the electrical grid, telecommunications networks, and access to food and water. If one considers the fact that the island’s government is bankrupt and faces extreme budget cuts and austerity programs, the only solution is to implement a comprehensive Marshall Plan. This plan would: rebuild Puerto Rico by investing in infrastructure, provide robust community participation and oversight, forgive Puerto Rico’s \$70 billion debt, restart economic growth, provide federal health care funding equity, and ensure that the federal disaster funding goes to communities in need, not Wall Street hedge funds.

The task to rebuild Puerto Rico to a better place than it was before Hurricane Maria will not be easy. It is up to all of us to help right the wrongs that our federal government has inflicted upon the people of Puerto Rico. Together we can be the best advocates not only for Puerto Ricans, but for our own communities so that the man-made disaster caused by our government’s neglectful response never happens again.

The author is the executive director of Chicanos de South Bronx en Acción, a non for profit civic engagement group that works to advance the civil rights and economic well being of Mexican Americans and other Latinos in the South Bronx.

# Talking Points

**A**nyone can refer to these talking points when preparing for a meeting or a call with elected officials, when drafting your own op-ed or press release, or when speaking to the media. On the one-year mark of Hurricane Maria's devastating landfall in Puerto Rico, there is still so much work to be done. We need your help to advance our shared vision for a stronger, and more equitable and resilient Puerto Rico.

- Almost a year ago, we could not have imagined the devastation and marginalization that Puerto Rico would endure. Hurricanes in the Caribbean are nothing new, but Maria's ferocity—super-powered by the realities of climate change—exposed the vulnerability of an island with a decaying energy infrastructure, an unequal relationship with the United States, and a profound financial crisis.
  - Take Action for Puerto Rico! is composed of grassroots advocates, faith-based leaders, labor unions, community-based organizations, public officials, and educators—and our goal is to encourage and elevate discussion, germinate ideas, and take action around four critical pillars for Puerto Rico's recovery: empowered citizenship, health care equity, climate change preparedness, and economic redevelopment.
  - Take Action for Puerto Rico! kicks-off in the lead up to the one-year mark of Hurricane Maria on September 20th and continues through October 20th, coinciding largely with Hispanic Heritage Month.
  - Government officials [estimate](#) that \$125 billion is needed in order to rebuild the island's basic infrastructure and kickstart the economy. To date, Congress has allocated less than \$30 billion for recovery and rebuilding - far short of what is needed.
  - We are asking that the U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico be treated no differently than U.S. citizens who live on the mainland and have suffered through natural disasters. Our message is simple: Congress should allocate sufficient funds to help rebuild the island, as they have done and are doing for Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and other devastated areas.
  - Its essential that our federal government create a "Marshall Plan" for Puerto Rico that provides it the immediate and long-term resources it needs to revitalize its infrastructure, economy, health care system and other key areas.
- Other ways Congress can aid in the economic recovery of the island include:

**“ Without additional action at the federal level, it could take as long as a generation, or more, for Puerto Rico to rebuild its infrastructure and its economy. ”**

- Hurricane Maria was the worst natural disaster in the island's history, killing approximately 3,000 people and resulting in the longest blackout in American history.
- Puerto Rico has not received its fair share of funding from our federal government to rebuild its infrastructure, economy, and other vital sectors.
- Ensure that disaster funding cannot be used to pay off any part of Puerto Rico's debt and demand debt relief from Puerto Rico's creditors.
- Expand the Child Tax Credit and extend the Earned Income Tax Credit to all eligible families in Puerto Rico.
- Treat Puerto Rico equally in Medicaid, Medicare, and other federal health programs. Puerto Rico's Medicaid program, in particular, receives far less federal funding than states. That artificial [cap](#) was temporarily raised under Obamacare and will soon expire, which would leave close to 1 million Puerto Ricans without health insurance.
- Amend the tax code to ensure that Puerto Rico is treated fairly. The new federal tax reform law imposes new taxes on American companies operating on the island. Congress needs to make it easier for U.S. companies to invest and help Puerto Rico grow, instead of making it harder.
- Without additional action at the federal level, it could take as long as a generation, or more, for Puerto Rico to rebuild its infrastructure and its economy and recover from this devastation.



# 10 Ways You Can Take Action

## Join Us if You Think that U.S. Citizens in Puerto Rico Deserve Our Help!

Congress will be in session for less than 21 days before midterm elections take place in November. We need your help to ensure that every day counts and that your member of Congress understands that Puerto Rico is part of the greater American family, that these U.S. citizens need our help, and that we are not afraid to get involved and hold them accountable.

- 1. Organize a Congressional Call-in Day.** with your friends and neighbors to let them know their constituents care about Puerto Rico.
  1. Calls to congressional offices are usually short and sweet, so you have to be prepared with your topline message.
  2. Although calls are usually short, if you want more background READ Puerto Rico talking points and Puerto Rico policy asks here.
- 2. Town Halls.** Attend your Member of Congress' Town Hall and ask questions about their role in Puerto Rico's recovery efforts or organize your own!
  1. Check [here](#) to see if your member is attending a Town Hall.
  2. Make the most of your time and the biggest impact for your efforts with this Guide to Town Halls ([Indivisible](#)).
- 3. Petition.** Sign and distribute the "Take Action for Puerto Rico! Petition" to Congress. [www.takeaction4pr.org](http://www.takeaction4pr.org)
- 4. In-District Meetings.** Call your Member of Congress/Senator's local district office to request a meeting to come in and talk about Puerto Rico. Let them know that their constituents care about Puerto Rico. Click [here](#) to find your Member of Congress' local district office. Click [here](#) to find the nearest state office of your Senators. Refer to the talking points [LINK] in this toolkit to guide your conversation with your congressional office. Ask your member to submit an "[Extension of Remarks](#)" regarding his or her support for Puerto Rico (an "Extension of Remarks" means your Member of Congress will make a statement for the Congressional Record about your cause or organization.)
- 5. Proclamations.** Secure a proclamation from your state or local elected official(s). Be sure to send out a press release about it!
- 6. Tweet-a-Thon or [Twitter Town Hall](#).** If you like to tweet, then do your own Congressional Tweet-a-thon on Sept 20th, the 20th of each month, or any day to let Congress know that people have not forgotten about Puerto Rico! (See sample social media [here](#) and download graphics [here](#). Keep checking back for updated messaging.)
- 7. Congressional Call-In Day.** Organize a Congressional Call-In Day on Sept 20th, the 20th of each month, or any day. Call 888-724-8791 to remind your elected officials that you care about Puerto Rico.
- 8. Op-ed or Letter to the Editor.** Write an op-ed or Letter to the Editor for your local paper or website. See [here](#) for samples.
- 9. Stay Informed.** TEXT "TakeAction4PR" to 21333 to stay updated about ways you can help Puerto Rico.
- 10. Support a Non-Profit Organization in Puerto Rico.**

There are many organizations doing extraordinary work supporting communities on the island since before Hurricane Maria. To learn more, please, go to: [www.takeaction-4pr.org](http://www.takeaction-4pr.org)

## PHONE SCRIPT FOR CONGRESSIONAL CALL IN DAY

**CALL** your Member of [Congress](#) and [Senators](#), and ask to speak to the staffer in charge of Puerto Rico or emergency preparedness. When you call, it's very important that you say that you are a constituent and that you take down the name, email and title of the person you spoke with. You will stay in touch with this person and this will be your point of contact as you develop your relationship with this office.

**SAY:** Hello, my name is XXXX, and I live in your District/State. I am calling on behalf of the more than XX Puerto Ricans\* who live here and who have U.S. citizen relatives and friends living on the Island. Can you tell me what steps your office has taken to help rebuild and secure a vibrant Puerto Rico?

- \* [Use this link to get the number of Puerto Ricans who live in your state or congressional district.](#) **NOTE:** This database uses pre-Maria population levels from 2016 Census information. Anywhere from 135,000-300,000 Puerto Ricans moved to the continental U.S. after Maria so there are likely more Puerto Ricans living there now.

# Policy Asks: How the Federal Government and Congress Can and Must Help Puerto Rico

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**O**n September 20, 2017, Hurricane Maria - a Category 5 hurricane - hit the island of Puerto Rico causing thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in damage. 1.1 million people lost electricity in the longest blackout in U.S. history. For weeks and months on end, communities lacked communication and safe drinking water, creating a situation that devastated the economy, resulting in thousands of deaths, and left many people homeless, jobless, without access to life-saving medical care, or a roof over their heads. [The latest official death toll](#) brings the number of deaths to 2,975, far more people than Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which caused 1,833 fatalities. (Some estimates put the number of deaths attributable to Maria over [4,500](#), although we may never know for sure the number of deaths that resulted.)

Our federal government has a moral and legal responsibility to help the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico recover just as it would help any other American citizens. The only way Puerto Rico can truly recover is through the creation of a "Marshall Plan" for the island that provides the kind of resources needed to rebuild, revitalize, and revive Puerto Rico's infrastructure and economy for long-term stability and resiliency; a plan that centers community-based rebuilding at its core.

## WHAT CONGRESS MUST DO

### 1. Rebuilding and Economic Recovery

Puerto Rico's basic infrastructure was destroyed and the crisis devastated the economy. Government officials estimate that a minimum of **\$125 billion** is needed in order to rebuild the island's basic infrastructure and kickstart the economy. That is why Puerto Rico needs a "[Marshall Plan](#)" that will address Puerto Rico's complex challenges in a comprehensive way, including through debt relief, economic tools, and infrastructure investment.

The money Congress has approved for Puerto Rico is a start (\$28 billion to date with no current plans to allocate more), but falls far short of what is needed for the island to rebuild and recover.

The federal government needs to ensure adequate investment to build a more resilient electrical grid in Puerto Rico that can use the abundant natural resources of wind and solar power on this tropical island, instead of relying so heavily on diesel, other fossil fuels, and centralized generation. Congress awarded FEMA the power to do this by amending the Stafford Act. We need FEMA to work with HUD and the relevant agencies in the island to actually exercise this authority when spending funding to rebuild the grid.

Other actions that Congress can take in order to aid in the economic recovery of the island include:

- Debt relief: pass legislation that allows Puerto Rico to discharge its debt and ensure that disaster funding will be used to rebuild and not diverted to pay off any part of the debt.
- Implement measures to lower child poverty in Puerto Rico such as expanding the [Child Tax Credit](#) and enabling low-income households to claim the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#). CTC and EITC are refundable tax credits, meaning that they are not limited by the amount of an individual's tax liability. Under the CTC and EITC, individuals [can receive refund checks](#) from the IRS even if they do not owe any federal income taxes. Puerto Ricans should not be any different.
- Treat Puerto Rico equally in Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health programs. Medicaid in Puerto Rico is [capped](#) (meaning, unlike a state, it receives a fixed amount of money for Medicaid services regardless of need). Although the amount was temporarily raised under Obamacare, if a permanent fix is not made, next year Puerto Rico's federal Medicaid funding will go down from \$1.3 billion a year to just over \$400 million. This could leave close to 1 million Puerto Ricans without health insurance.
- Provide incentives for American companies to invest in Puerto Rico and facilitate the contracting of local businesses by federal agencies.
- [Amend the tax code](#) to provide for policies that help attract jobs and investment to grow the economy in Puerto Rico so that the island is less dependent on federal aid and can better compete with low cost foreign jurisdictions for new investment and manufacturing jobs.

### 2. Effective Help from FEMA

FEMA has been criticized for being unprepared for Hurricane Maria, underestimating the extent of the disaster, and mismanaging federal resources. (FEMA subsequently issued its own [report](#) admitting to many of these things.) The federal agency has also denied over 60% of individual claims for assistance out of the 1.2 million claims filed with them - with most of those denials happening due to a [lack of property titles](#). After months of negotiating with advocates, on July 30, 2018, FEMA [agreed](#) to allow claimants that did not have sufficient proof of ownership to provide signed declarations as proof of ownership, but FEMA has taken no steps to notify previously denied applicants of their right to appeal using

this new form, nor have they provided training to their staff in FEMA Help Centers, so people are reporting that their forms continue to be rejected. Concerns that stem from FEMA being either unable or unwilling to communicate to claimants about what documents are needed to process their claims remain unsolved.

After dragging their feet implementing the Temporary Shelter Assistance (TSA) program to provide housing assistance to displaced families in the immediate aftermath of Maria, FEMA has tried repeatedly to [terminate the program](#) which would leave families displaced on the mainland homeless. For nearly a year, thousands of families have [lived miserably in hotel rooms](#) as FEMA has [refused to activate](#) its longer-term housing assistance program, DHAP, or [Disaster Housing Assistance Program](#). FEMA's attempts to terminate emergency housing assistance were temporarily prevented by a [court order](#) but a judge later [ruled](#) that the final eviction date will be September 13, 2018.

**“The reconstruction of the island must be conducted with transparency, the proper community oversight, and participation to ensure that the real needs of Puerto Ricans are met.”**

### 3. Support for Maria Evacuees

Hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans moved off the island as a direct result of the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Maria. Most of moved to the continental U.S. and have not been able to move back to the island because their homes did not have electricity for months, their jobs were lost, they did not have access to lifesaving medical care on the island, or their requests for assistance from FEMA to rebuild or repair their homes to make them habitable had been denied or insufficiently awarded.

Besides activating the DHAP program mentioned above, Congress and the federal government can provide resources to individuals - as well as local and state governments - for job training, education, healthcare, housing, and other services to evacuees.

A majority of the evacuees listed the lack of availability of medical services in the island as one of the main factors for moving out of Puerto Rico. By granting reciprocity in Medicaid, individuals will be able to access mental and health care programs in the states they are residing.

### 4. Ensuring Oversight, Transparency, and Community Engagement in Rebuilding

Hurricane recovery funding should only be used to help the individuals and communities affected by the storms. Federal relief dollars should not under any circumstance go to pay Puerto Rico's creditors, to cronies tied to politicians, or for any other purpose that is not rebuilding Puerto Rico. The reconstruction of the island must be conducted with transparency, the proper community oversight, and participation to ensure that the real needs of Puerto Ricans are met. Making Puerto Rico stronger than it was before, both in terms of rebuilding its infrastructure and economic outlook, should be done in an independent manner free of political influence and special interest deal-making. There are several models Puerto Rico could emulate, such as the independent Lower Manhattan Development Corporation after 9/11 or similar entities created to establish medium to long-term projects that focus on rebuilding, resiliency, and recovery.

# How You Can Help Puerto Rico:

**S**ome of the most pressing issues for Hurricane Maria evacuees can be fixed by passing legislation in Congress. As individuals and as organizations we have the power to help the thousands of Puerto Ricans who had to flee the devastation on the island and are now living in the states. You can also help the millions of people living on the island and are working hard to rebuild the Island for economic recovery.

## Things You Can Do to Help:

- Call or write to your Representative in Congress and tell them to support H.R. 5474 to provide disaster housing assistance to the families that are still living in temporary housing.
- Call or write to your two Senators and ask them to support a Marshall Plan for Puerto Rico that provides the appropriate funds the island needs to rebuild its infrastructure and economy.
- Demand that federal agencies be required to contract with small businesses in Puerto Rico whenever possible.

**“ Without additional action at the federal level, it could take as long as a generation, or more, for Puerto Rico to rebuild its infrastructure and its economy. It’s in our power to pressure our Members of Congress into making sensible policy decisions that can help improve the lives of millions of people.”**

- Create a petition to demand that FEMA and other federal agencies be investigated and held accountable for the mismanagement of U.S. taxpayer money that delayed the arrival and distribution of much-needed resources and aid.
- Schedule meetings in the district office of your Representative and Senator and talk to them about the ways that they can take action to help Puerto Rico.
- Call on Congress to hold oversight hearings into how the federal government determined what resources were needed for the rebuild and recovery of the island, and inquire whether there was sufficient and meaningful community engagement to determine if the solutions being presented

and the contracts being awarded are actually beneficial for affected communities.

## Conclusion

Puerto Rico and its more than 3 million U.S. citizens face an incredibly difficult road to recovery. In addition to its \$70+ billion in debt, and crumbling infrastructure, the island and its people are now suffering from health and humanitarian crises in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria.

Without additional action at the federal level, it could take as long as a generation, or more, for Puerto Rico to rebuild its infrastructure and its economy. It’s in our power to pressure our Members of Congress into making sensible policy decisions that can help improve the lives of millions of people.

# Legislation That We Need Your Member of Congress to Support

## **Housing Victims of Major Disaster Act** **(H.R. 5474 & S. 2996)**

This bill - introduced by Rep. Espaillat in the House and Sen. Warren in the Senate - would direct FEMA to reach an agreement with the Department of Federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing assistance to the families that were affected by Hurricane Maria (just as was done after Hurricane Katrina and Superstorm Sandy).

## **Disaster Housing Assistance Act** **(H.R. 6169 & S. 2880)**

Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL-9) filed [legislation requiring FEMA](#) to enter into an agreement with HUD to activate the Disaster Housing Assistance Program (DHAP) to continue providing housing assistance to thousands of families still displaced after last year's hurricanes - including thousands of Puerto Rican families forced to flee the island in the wake of Hurricane Maria.

## **Puerto Rico Small Business Contracting Assistance Act of 2018 (H.R. 5178)**

Rep. Nydia Velazquez introduced this bill to provide incentives and tax credits to businesses and individuals that contract businesses located in Puerto Rico. Companies and firms will have up to four years to hire Puerto Rico-based companies and obtain those benefits.

## **National Commission of the Federal Response to Natural Disasters in Puerto Rico Act of 2018 (H.R. 6103)**

This bill, introduced by Representatives Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY) and Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) along with Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), would establish an independent, national commission to investigate the federal government's response in Puerto Rico to both Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. The commission - similar to the one created to investigate September 11 - would fully investigate the federal government's response to the disaster, examine if there was any mismanagement of federal resources, review the contracting process, and seek to get accurate figures on the deaths caused by the hurricanes and the government response to them.

## **FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R. 4)**

H.R. 4 - introduced by Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) - would help Puerto Rico by 1) evaluating the economic impact of establishing an air

carrier hub in the island, and 2) starting an audit of the contracts that FEMA awarded for tarps and plastic sheets used in the hurricane recovery efforts. The audit would be conducted by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security.

The bill also focuses on improving transparency by directing FEMA to make public any contract they award in excess of \$1 million, and making sure that FEMA, HUD, and the SBA develop and implement a plan to streamline the collection and reporting the federal assistance awarded by those agencies.

## **U.S. Territorial Relief Act of 2018 (S. 3262)**

The U.S. Territorial Relief Act of 2018 was introduced by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA). The bill provides an avenue to comprehensive debt relief for Puerto Rico and other hurricane-ravaged U.S. territories so they have a chance to get back on their feet by creating a legislative vehicle that would allow for cancellation of most of Puerto Rico's \$73 billion debt (much of it held by vulture funds) - a measure deemed necessary by many in order for Puerto Rico to truly recover. The bill would require the Puerto Rico legislature to begin the process and the Governor would need to agree. Puerto Rico currently qualifies for all benchmarks laid out in the bill.

## **The ELEVATE Act (H.R. 3609)**

Rep. Murphy (D-FL) - along with [six other co-sponsors](#) - introduced the "ELEVATE Act" to allow states to count students who relocated from Puerto Rico in their English Learner Program for federal funding purposes. This change would provide additional funding that will be used to hire bilingual teachers and meet the needs of the thousands of Puerto Rican students that recently moved to the states.

## **The Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (S. 3041)**

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 was introduced by Sen. Johnson (R-WI), Sen. McCaskill (D-MO), and Sen. Kennedy (R-LA) and would amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The amendments would apply to major disaster areas and emergencies declared by the President on or after August 1, 2017. (The reforms included on the bill would work to improve post-disaster data transparency and allow states to administer temporary housing assistance programs although this provision does not have support from low-income housing advocates. This bill could be improved with the removal of these provisions.)

## **The Disaster Displacement Act (S. 2066)**

This bill was introduced by Sen. Nelson (D-FL), Sen. Harris (D-CA), and Sen. Gillibrand (D-NY). The Disaster Displacement Act orders states to provide medical assistance to the survivors of Hurricane Maria as a condition of participating in the Medicaid program - with the federal government matching 100% of those expenses for 24 months. It would also direct HUD and USDA to provide additional housing resources, like Section 8 vouchers, to the survivors of the hurricane who need it.

## **To Amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to Provide Temporary Relief... (H.R. 4619)**

This bill - introduced by Rep. Curbelo (R-FL) and Resident Commissioner Jenniffer Gonzalez (R-PR) - would lower healthcare premiums in Puerto Rico by providing temporary relief to insurance companies by exempting them of paying the Health Insurance Tax (HIT). It is estimated that the HIT tax increased [healthcare premiums in the island by 2%](#), and that this exemption will save insurance companies over \$200 million.

## **Puerto Rico and Virgin islands Equitable Rebuild Act of 2017 (S. 2165) (H.R.4782)**

This is the Marshall Plan for Puerto Rico and the Virgin islands. The bill authored by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) would provide the resources needed for a comprehensive recovery effort on the island. The federal government would rebuild and improve the Veteran Affairs facilities in Puerto Rico, treat Puerto Rico as a state for Medicaid and Medicare funding purposes, and develop renewable energy infrastructure and environmental clean-up. Other important aspects of the bill are developing the economy by building infrastructure and improving the island's educational system by investing in it at all levels.

A bill introduced by Rep. Plaskett (D-VI) - the delegate of the Virgin islands - would also accomplish the same aims ([H.R.4782](#)).

## **Reforming Disaster Recovery Act (H.R. 4557)**

Introduced in the House by Rep. Ann Wagner (R-MO), the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act bill would allow the Secretary of HUD to authorize assistance to states and local government through the Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program and establish much-needed guidance and standards on how disaster funds are distributed and accounted for. It will ensure that taxpayer-funded disaster relief dollars are spent efficiently to help those most in need. Most importantly, this legislation will help us ensure disaster funds are getting to those who need them most, when they need it.

The bill would eliminate the need for Congress to authorize the CDBG-DR program following each disaster by permanently authorizing it, set uniform standards and best practices for the funds that are appropriated for future disasters, and create im-

portant safeguards like ensuring that at least 70% of the funds go to low and middle income families and prioritizing aid for households that cannot afford disaster recovery loans.

## **Puerto Rico Medicare Part B Equality Act of 2017 (H.R. 2531)**

Unlike people residing in the United States, the residents of Puerto Rico are not automatically enrolled in Part B of Medicare. The Puerto Rico Medicare Part B Equality Act of 2017 would amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to automatically enroll people living on the island. The bill was introduced by Rep. Jenniffer Gonzalez (R-PR), and is co-sponsored by Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL) and Rep. Thomas MacArthur (R-NJ).

## **Supplemental Security Income Equality Act (H.R. 3226)**

This bill - introduced by Rep. Jenniffer Gonzalez (R-PR) - would amend existing laws to extend the Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) program to the residents of all U.S. territories. Even though people living in Puerto Rico pay Social Security taxes they do not have access to the SSI program. This program provides additional financial assistance to low-income people that are blind, disabled, or aged.

## **Earned Income Tax Credit Equity for Puerto Act of 2017 (H.R. 2530)**

The Earned Income Tax Credit is not available for the residents of Puerto Rico. The Earned Income Tax Credit Equity for Puerto Rico Act would amend the Internal Revenue Code to extend the credit to people living in the island. The bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) and Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL), would help thousands of low-income workers in Puerto Rico.

## SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

# PROCLAMATION REGARDING PUERTO RICO A YEAR AFTER HURRICANE MARIA

**Whereas**, Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States and Puerto Ricans are birthright U.S. citizens,

**Whereas**, on September 6, 2017, Hurricane Irma landed on Puerto Rico and provoked more than \$1 billion in damages,

**Whereas**, on September 20, 2017, a Category 5 storm, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico destroying the island from coast to coast and completely destroying the operational capacities of its energy grid, leaving the entire island blacked out for weeks, entire communities were cut off from telecommunications, clean water, life-saving medical care, medicine, and other basic services,

**Whereas**, as a result of Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico experienced the longest blackout in the history of the United States and the 2nd longest blackout ever,

**Whereas**, an independent investigation revealed that the death toll caused by Hurricane Maria was different from the official account and was found to be closer to 3,000 souls lost making Maria the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history,

**Whereas**, new estimates for rebuilding Puerto Rico begin at \$127 billion,

**Whereas**, the Government of Puerto Rico's hurricane damage assessment report calculates the damages caused by the storm to be more than \$135 billion,

**Whereas**, Hurricane Maria aggravated the outflow of Puerto Ricans moving to the 50 states, causing the exodus of more than 125,000 Puerto Ricans in the months after the storm,

**Whereas**, Puerto Rico's population decreased by more than 400,000 in the previous 10 years due to the acute fiscal and economic crisis suffered by the island,

**Whereas**, in 2018, Congress passed a tax reform law that imposed additional taxes on US companies operating in Puerto Rico, further eroding Puerto Rico's ability to attract investment and create jobs, and potentially worsening the economic crisis,

**Whereas**, Puerto Rico continues to struggle to rebuild one year after the storm and the 3.2 million U.S. citizens living there still need federal recovery and reconstruction assistance,

Now, therefore, I (NAME), (TITLE) TOWN of \_\_\_\_\_

Do hereby proclaim as September 20, 2018 and each and every September 20th, shall be known as **We Are Puerto Rico Day** and the day shall serve as a 24-hour observance and call for our federal government to provide Puerto Rico the appropriate resources it needs to rebuild its infrastructure, economy and other key sectors, and it shall mark a day in which part of the conversation recalls the importance of Puerto Rico in our country's history.

# Take Action for Puerto Rico!

## FURTHER READING

### Life After Maria

[5 Puerto Rican Fashion Designers On Life After Hurricane María](#) (Refinery 29, June 20, 2018)

[In Puerto Rico, A Family's Fight To Rebuild Their Lives After Hurricane Maria](#) (Refinery 29, July 19, 2018)

[My Maria story: six Puerto Ricans on surviving after the hurricane](#) (The Guardian, August 9, 2018)

[Puerto Rico Spent 11 Months Turning the Power Back On. They Finally Got to Her.](#) (The New York Times, August 14, 2018)

### The Local Response

[Slow Recovery in Puerto Rico](#) (Smithsonian Magazine)

### The Federal Response

[Perceptions in America: Puerto Rico & Disaster Relief Response](#) (Ipsos, October 10, 2017)

[GAO: Limited Puerto Rico data hinders economic analysis](#) (Caribbean Business, June 29, 2018)

[Dems push FEMA on housing help for displaced Puerto Ricans](#) (The Hill, August 2, 2018)

[FEMA admits shortcomings in 2017 hurricane response in Puerto Rico](#) (USA Today, July 12, 2018)

### The Economy

[FEMA Begins Scaling Back Financial Assistance In Puerto Rico](#) (NPR, August 17, 2018)

[Puerto Rico reports lowest unemployment in 50 years](#) (The Hill, August 17, 2018)

[P.R. economists recommend 5 measures at the federal level to spur growth](#) (News is My Business, July 27, 2018)

[The perfect storm: building a crypto-utopia in Puerto Rico](#) (The Guardian, August 9, 2018)

### Energy and the Environment

[Six Months After Hurricane Maria, Puerto Rico's Environmental Restoration Accelerates Thanks to Volunteers, Conservation Groups](#) (Associated Press, via Weather.com, March 9, 2018)

[Planning for the Unimaginable: Puerto Rico and Strategies for Climate-Change Adaptation](#) (Metropolitics, May 1, 2018).

[What Happened in the Dark: Puerto Rico's Year of Fighting for Power](#) (Wired, August 23, 2018)

[Puerto Rico power company plan chock-full of fossil fuels](#) (Caribbean Business, August 23, 2018)

### Health and Education

[If A School Becomes A Shelter In Puerto Rico, Where Do Students Learn?](#) (NPR, December 11, 2017)

[How is health care in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria? No one knows.](#) (Washington Post, April 18, 2018)

[Listless And Lonely In Puerto Rico, Some Older Storm Survivors Consider Suicide](#) (All Things Considered, NPR, May 7, 2018)

[Harvard study estimates thousands died in Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Maria](#) (Washington Post, May 29, 2018)

[Primary healthcare centers in Puerto Rico prepare for next emergency](#) (Caribbean Business, May 31, 2018)

[What Hurricane Maria's Death Toll Reveals about Health Care in Puerto Rico](#) (Harvard Business Review, June 7, 2018)

### Puerto Rico's Debt, PROMESA, and The Fiscal Oversight Board (FOMB)

[PR's Fiscal Control Board: Parallel government full of lawyers, consultants](#) (News is My Business, August 2, 2018)

[Puerto Rico power rates could impact viability of water utility's fiscal plan](#) (Caribbean Business, August 2, 2018)

[PREPA's Debt 2.0 Restructuring](#) (Center for a New Economy, August 16, 2018)

[Puerto Rico FOMB - Final Investigative Report on Debt](#) (Kobre & Kim, August 20, 2018)

[Commentary: Who really owes Puerto Rico's bondholders—and how much?](#) (The Bond Buyer, August 23, 2018)

### The Diaspora: Puerto Ricans on the U.S. Mainland

[How Puerto Ricans fit into an increasingly anti-immigrant U.S.](#) (The Washington Post, January 19, 2018)

[Survey of Puerto Ricans in Florida finds many plan to stay, language barrier a top challenge](#) (Orlando Sentinel, July 6, 2018)

[Florida lawsuit seeks Spanish translation of ballots, alleges voting rights violations affecting Puerto Ricans](#) (The Washington Post, August 17, 2018)

['Exodus' from Puerto Rico: A visual guide](#) (CNN.com, February 21, 2018)

[Where Puerto Rico's Residents Migrated Since Maria - CityLab](#) (CityLab, May 11, 2018)

### Miscellaneous

[Puerto Rico population in 2050: 2 million, fiscal board demographer says](#) (Caribbean Business, August 20, 2018)

# List of Groups with Websites for Donation

## AGRICULTURE

Centro Microempresas y Tecnologías Agrícolas Sustentables (Yauco) <https://www.cmtasyauco.com/>

El Departamento de La Comida (multiple municipalities) <https://www.facebook.com/departamentodelacomida/>  
<https://www.fondoderesilienciapuertorico.org/donate/>

Siembra Tres Vidas  
<https://www.siembratresvidas.com/>

## HOUSING

Proyecto Enlace (San Juan)  
<http://cano3punto7.org/nuevo/index.html>  
<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/from-tarps-to-roofs-hurricane-maria-puerto-rico/>

Plenitud PR (Las Marias)  
<http://plenitudpreng.weebly.com/>  
<http://plenitudpreng.weebly.com/giving.html>

Puerto Rico Neighborhood Housing Services (San Juan) <https://www.facebook.com/puertoriconhs/>

La Maraña (Comerio, Carolina, and Humacao)  
<http://www.lamarana.org/>  
<http://www.lamarana.org/la-mara%C3%B1a--dona.html>

SOL es V.I.D.A. (Toa Baja)  
<http://solesvida.org/>  
<http://solesvida.org/colabora/>

Ayuda Legal Puerto Rico (Island-Wide)  
<https://ayudalegalpr.org/ayudaparadesastres>

Fundacion Fondo para Acceso a la Justicia (Island Wide)  
<https://fundacionfondoaccesoalajusticia.org/>  
<https://fundacionfondoaccesoalajusticia.org/fondo-legal-de-emergencia-huracan-maria/>

Red de Albergues, Instituciones y Centros para Menores  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Red-De-Albergues-Instituciones-y-Centros-para-Menores-De-Puerto-Rico/623554841184380>

## Jobs and Economic Development

Accion Social De Puerto Rico, Inc. (ASPRI), (Island Wide)  
<https://www.facebook.com/praccion/>

Programa de Educación Comunal de Entrega y Servicio - PE-CES, Inc. (Humacao) <https://www.pecesinc.org/>  
<https://www.pecesinc.org/ayuda>

Instituto de Ciencias para la Conservación de Puerto Rico – InCiCo (Island-wide)  
<https://www.facebook.com/incicopuertorico/>

Incubadora Microempresas Bieke, Inc (Vieques)  
<https://www.facebook.com/IncubadoraBieke/>  
 donate via fb – they are updating the link

Proyecto Matria (Orocovis)  
<https://www.proyectomatria.org/>  
<https://www.proyectomatria.org/donaciones>

Connecting Paths (Morovis and Adjuntas) <http://www.connectingpaths.org/espanol/1quienes/origenes.html>  
<http://www.connectingpaths.org/espanol/4conecta/apoya.html>

Grupo Guayacan (Island-wide)  
<https://guayacan.org/>  
<https://guayacan.org/give/>

Centros Sor Isolina Ferre (San Juan and Ponce)  
<http://www.csifpr.org/>  
<http://www.csifpr.org/donaciones/>

Asociación Recreativa y Educativa Comunal del Barrio Mariana – ARECMA/Proyecto Apoyo Mutuo Mariana (Humacao)  
<http://arecma.wixsite.com/arecma>  
[www.apoyomutuomariana.com/contribute/](http://www.apoyomutuomariana.com/contribute/)

## EDUCATION

Aspira of Puerto Rico (Loiza and Carolina)  
<http://www.aspirapr.org/>  
<http://www.aspirapr.org/ayudnos/donar/>

Crearte (Yabucoa and San Juan)  
<http://createpr.weebly.com/iquestquieacutenes-somos.html>

Instituto Nueva Escuela (Island Wide)  
<http://en-inepr.weebly.com/>  
<http://en-inepr.weebly.com/donate.html>

Salon Literario Libroamerica  
<http://salonliterariolibroamerica.com/>

Boys and Girls Club of Puerto Rico (Island-Wide)  
<http://bgcpr.org/>  
<http://bgcpr.org/invierte/>

## ART

Beta Local (San Juan)  
<http://betalocal.org/>

Dulce Santurce (San Juan)  
<http://www.dulcesanturce.com/>

Y No Habia Luz  
<http://ynohabialuz.com/>

Agua, Sol y Sereno  
<https://www.facebook.com/Agua-Sol-y-Sereno-409224669182689/>

Fundación Música y Pais  
<https://www.musicaypais.org/>

Andanza  
<http://www.andanzapr.com/>

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo  
<http://mac-pr.org/>

## HEALTH

Centro MAM, Carolina  
<http://mujeresayudandomadres.com/>

Taller Salud (Loiza)  
<https://www.tallersalud.com/>

Renewable Energy & Communications  
 Resilient Power PR (Multiple Municipalities)  
<https://resilientpowerpr.org/>  
<https://resilientpowerpr.org/donate/>

Coastal Marine Resource Center – Solar Libre (Island wide)  
<http://coastalmarine.org/>  
<http://coastalmarine.org/donate/>

Casa Pueblo (Adjuntas)  
<http://casapueblo.org/>  
<http://casapueblo.org/index.php/calendario/>

Solar Saves Lives Coalition (Island-wide)  
<https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/solar-saves-lives/>  
<https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/donate/>

## ENVIRONMENT

Conservación ConCiencia (Island Wide)  
<https://www.conservacionconciencia.org/>  
<https://www.conservacionconciencia.org/donate>

Para La Naturaleza (Multiple Municipalities)  
<http://www.paralanaturaleza.org/en/>  
<https://reservaciones.paralanaturaleza.org/donate.jsf?lang=en>

Protectores de Cuencas (Island Wide)  
<https://www.protectoresdecuencas.org/>

Sociedad Ambiente Marino (Culebra)  
<http://sampr.org/en/>

Caras con Causa (Cataño and Guaynabo)  
<http://www.caraspr.org/>  
<http://www.caraspr.org/donate/>

Foundation for a Better Puerto Rico (Culebra)  
<https://betterpuertorico.org/>  
<https://www.paypal.com/donate/?token=jN1AxPrUvVYB-1mrCJINgX1X3roRq8cY3WZO4B6-dLXDo9FGabYqqZvFm-36jkVszMhqIzx0&country.x=US&locale.x=US>

Fideicomiso de Conservación e Historia de Vieques (Vieques)  
<http://www.vcht.org/>  
<http://www.vcht.org/donate>



# TAKE ACTION! FOR PUERTO RICO!

## Coalition Partners\*

100 Hispanic Women  
 Abrazo Boricua Coalition  
 Afro Latin Jazz Alliance  
 Aid for AIDS  
 Alianza Americas  
 American Federation Teachers  
 American GI Forum  
 Americas for Conversation + Arts  
 Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services  
 ARTE  
 Asian American Federation  
 Asian American Business Development Center  
 Asian Americans Advancing Justice/Asian Law Caucus  
 ASPIRA National  
 ASPIRA of New York, Inc.

Bienestar Human Services  
 Boundless Theatre Company  
 Bridgeport Caribe Youth League  
 Calpulli Mexican Dance Company  
 Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network  
 Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education  
 Catholic Network. US  
 Center for Latino Progress CPRF  
 Center for Puerto Rican Studies  
 Centro Civico de Amsterdam  
 Chemical Abuse Services Agency, Inc.  
 Churches United for Fair Housing  
 Circulo de la Hispanidad  
 Clarita's House Outreach Ministry, Inc.  
 Coalicion de Lideres Latinos  
 Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles

Consumer Credit Counseling Service/Florida Consumer  
 Committee for Hispanic Children and Families  
 Community Association of Progressive Dominicans  
 Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute  
 COPAY, Inc.  
 District Council 37  
 Dominican Women's Development Center  
 Dominicanos USA  
 Dominico-American Society of Queens  
 EarthJustice  
 El Puente  
 Exodus Transitional Community, Inc.  
 Faith in Florida  
 Farmworker Justice  
 Fifth Avenue Committee

Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials  
 Haitian Women of Miami (FAMN, Inc.)  
 Hispanic Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut  
 Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury  
 Hispanic Counseling Center  
 Hispanic Federation  
 Hispanic Health Council  
 Hispanic Health Initiatives, Inc.  
 Hispanics in Philanthropy  
 Hispanos Unidos de Buffalo  
 I Challenge Myself  
 Ibero-American Action League  
 Iniciativa Accion Puertorriqueña  
 Institute for Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly  
 Justice Shall be For All  
 La Casa de Don Pedro  
 Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
 Latino Commission on AIDS  
 Latino Community Foundation  
 Latino Community Fund Georgia  
 Latino Community Fund Washington State  
 Latino Community Services, Inc.  
 LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
 Latino U College Access  
 Loisaida, Inc.  
 Make the Road New York  
 Mercy Center  
 Mi Familia Vota  
 Ministerio En Jehová Serán Provistos  
 Mision Boricua  
 Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs  
 National Day Laborer Organizing Network  
 National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators  
 National Hispanic Medical Association  
 National Immigration Law Center  
 National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health  
 National Latina/o Psychological Association  
 National Low Income Housing Coalition  
 National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture

National Puerto Rican Agenda  
 National Puerto Rico Day Parade  
 New Haven for Puerto Rico  
 New York Council on Adoptable Children  
 New York Urban League  
 Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance  
 Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights  
 Operation Exodus Inner City  
 Organize Florida  
 Oxfam America  
 People's Theatre Project  
 Pregones Theater PRTT  
 Presente.org  
 Puerto Rico Action Initiative  
 R.A.I.N. Total Care, Inc.  
 Refugees International  
 Repertorio Español  
 San Juan Center Inc.  
 Ser Familia, Inc.  
 Southside United HDFC – Los Sures  
 Spanish Community of Wallingford  
 Spanish Speaking Elderly Council  
 St. Ann's Corner of Harm Reduction  
 St. Simon of Stock and St. Joseph Church  
 Tantai Teatro  
 Teatro Circulo  
 Thalia Spanish Theatre Inc.  
 Transdiaspora Network  
 Union of Concerned Scientists  
 Unites States Hispanic Leadership Institute  
 United We Dream  
 Violence Intervention Program  
 Vision Urbana, Inc.  
 VOCES Latinas  
 Zone 126

\*List in formation



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[info@takeaction4pr.org](mailto:info@takeaction4pr.org)