

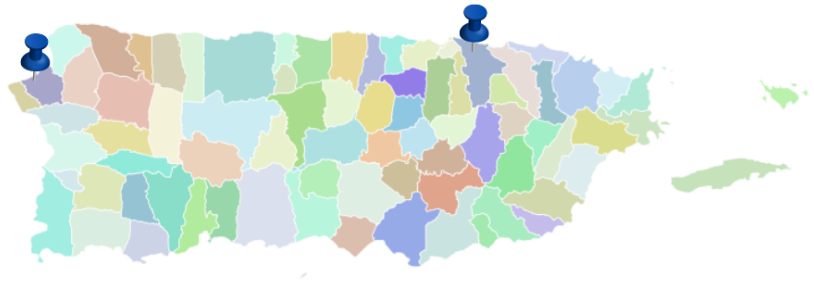
Volunteering in Puerto Rico through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Frequently Asked Questions

You can contact Michelle Muñiz, Disaster Recovery Coordinator (Puerto Rico), for additional questions regarding the PDA recovery process in Puerto Rico, partner organizations and more in depth conversations with those interested in volunteering or supporting the recovery work: PuertoRico.PDA@gmail.com. For more links visit: linktr.ee/puertoricopda

Where can we stay?

PDA has currently 2 Volunteer Host Sites in Puerto Rico. You can find information about facilities, requirements (can vary depending site) and contact information in each website:



Aguada (Northwest region): [Casita Ebenezer Website](#)

San Juan (Eastern region): [La Casona de Monteflores Website](#)

Layout information about rooms is included below. Please plan flights according to check-in and check-out times.

What will we be working on?

Group leader(s) will be connected with the volunteer coordinator as soon as the group skills are matched with a project with a work partner organization. The volunteer work focuses on rebuilding projects. Depending on the skills present in the group or pending projects, volunteer teams will be assigned to a house or to a particular project at the organization offices. Because projects are constantly changing (depending on the work of teams working before the groups arrives and/or weather), specifics tasks will be shared 1-3 days before the arrival of the group. Volunteers will not be asked to work on anything outside of their skill set or comfort, and should specify of any medical conditions prior their arrival. If any volunteer has any particular expertise, they could reach out to the work partner organization to let them know. However, PDA volunteers will not lead any projects.

Do I need to bring tools?

No. All our work partner organizations leading projects for PDA volunteers will provide safety equipment and tools.

How many volunteers can I bring? What are the minimum ages at our PDA host sites?

Group capacity depend on work partner organizations protocols (and not necessarily on bed count) and varies in our 2 host sites. The PDA volunteer host site in San Juan (La Casona de Monteflores) has a maximum capacity of 12, with 14 being the minimum age. PDA volunteer Host Site in Aguada (Casita Ebenezer) has a maximum capacity of 15, with 18 being the minimum age.

How many leaders should a group have?

2-3 leaders in a group is ideal, especially if the group is split. Even if there's only one vehicle, it is recommended to have more than 1 person allowed to drive.

Do I need to speak Spanish?

Speaking Spanish is not required to volunteer in Puerto Rico through PDA, and staff at host sites and work sites will be bilingual. However, it's important to be aware not everyone in Puerto Rico speaks or feels comfortable speaking English. Learning basic Spanish is always encouraged.

What educational / learning opportunities we have through PDA?

Learning about Puerto Rico and the issues that affect the communities is extremely important in the recovery process. Volunteer leaders will receive Pre-Trip Resources (with mandatory and optional readings) that could be discussed as a group or shared with volunteers for individual study. We have also prepared a daily devotional guide with reflection written by Puerto Ricans, that will provide a broader context to the volunteer experience, and could be read while serving in Puerto Rico.

What airport should we fly to?

The main airport in Puerto Rico is *Aeropuerto Internacional Luis Muñoz Marín* (SJU). There is also an airport in the northwest region (closer to the Aguada host site): *Aeropuerto Internacional Rafael Hernández* (BQN). Flight options and pricing may vary depending on your home airport.

What type of transportation is better? What rental car company should I use?

Most US rental companies are available in Puerto Rico. We do strongly recommend using smaller vehicles (SUV's or Minivans) over 15-passenger vans. Some streets are narrow and when groups are split in different projects, having only 1 vehicle could affect logistics. We also recommend having more than 1 person allowed to drive.

How much free time do groups have?

Groups are able to explore after work and during weekend days (worksites only work on weekdays around 8:30am-4pm depending on the daily tasks). Depending on work progress during the week, some groups could take an afternoon off after coordinating with the partner organization and making sure it will not affect the work progress. Groups could also consider alternate lodging options for additional days. We do require a minimum of 4 days of work during a week.

Are we in charge of cleaning the host site?

Although we don't ask volunteers to do a thorough cleaning (we have a team in charge of cleaning up between groups), we ask all volunteers to follow specific instructions before leaving to the airport. Especially during the Summer, we have groups coming in back-to-back with very limited time for cleaning.

Do we need to bring other donations? What about leaving clothing?

We don't handle any donations when groups come. However, if volunteers identify a need during their trip, they are free to work on logistics with a local contact. Some work partner organizations could help with that.

Can we drink tap water?

Yes, Tap water is perfectly safe and filtered

Volunteer PDA Host Sites rooms layouts

La Casona de Monteflores (San Juan)

First floor: 2 rooms with 1 bunk bed (bottom bed full size), 1 full bathroom, kitchen, living room

Second floor: 3 rooms with 2 bunk beds (twin size), 2 full bathrooms, shower room (2 showers and 1 toilet), kitchen, living room

Third floor: open terrace

Casita Ebenezer (Aguada)

3 rooms with 6 single beds, 2 full restrooms each, kitchen with dining hall and living room. Host site is located on first floor of the building.

Additional Information about Puerto Rico

Size and population

Puerto Rico is a little bit over 100 by 35 miles (160 by 56 km). The island population is around 3 million people.

Travel

Passports are not necessary for U.S. citizens. USDA baggage inspection is required for travelers going from Puerto Rico to the continental US.

Currency

The U.S. dollar is the official and only currency used in Puerto Rico.

Cellphone service

Main US cellphone companies have service in Puerto Rico. Please check with your carrier about coverage. Local area codes are 787 and 939.

Sales Tax

There's a 10.5% state tax, and 1% municipality tax for a total of 11.5% on every sale. Prepared foods have a lower tax of 7%.

Electricity

Power outlets are 110v, same used in the U.S.

Transportation

Rental car companies are available at the airport and adjacent areas. UBER is available in most areas in the metropolitan area, is not available outside of the San Juan/metro area. Lyft is not available in Puerto Rico. Public transportation (bus and train) and taxis are available in selected areas.

Driving

Gas is sold by liter, distance is measured in kilometers and speed is measured in miles per hour.