



OVERVIEW:

Hurricane María

On September 20, 2017, life changed for millions of people living in Puerto Rico (PR). That's when Hurricane María, packing winds in excess of 155 miles per hour, slammed into the island. The Category 4 storm left millions homeless, destroyed the island's power grid, and killed thousands. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has been walking alongside leaders on the island since before the hurricane. This article provides information about PDA's response in PR since Hurricane María.

"We saw that PDA is not just a name. We came here and we can see that the work is real."

-Volunteer working in Puerto Rico

Initial Response and Church Damage Recovery Grants

PDA has funded different projects to help churches and community organizations affected by Hurricane María.

- Two emergency grants each to all three Presbyteries and the Synod were sent to help the communities affected by the hurricane.
- Immediate church damage grants to all 3 presbyteries to help with initial repairs of churches affected by the hurricane.
- Church damage grants in the amount requested by the three presbyteries where approved by PDA to help with the repairs of churches affected by the hurricane. – 55 congregations

The Presbyterian Church USA's presence in PR consists of:

- 1 Synod (Boriquén)
- 3 Presbyteries (San Juan, Noroeste and Suroeste)
- 74 Congregations
- Approximately 6,000 members
- 1 Camp/Retreat Center (El Guacio)
- 4 Volunteer Host Sites

WAYS TO HELP:

pcusa.org/give-maria

To give by phone, call 800-872-3283

or by check to

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

P.O. Box 643700

Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

memo: "DR000194-PR"

VOLUNTEER

Contact our PDA Call Center

pda.callcenter@pcusa.org

or call: (866) 732-6121.





Volunteer Host Sites and Long-Term Recovery

Through our 4 host sites and partners, PDA has received volunteers almost every week since December 2017.

- Grants to all 3 presbyteries to hire Presbytery Disaster Recovery Coordinators.
- Hired 3 additional staff (one full time and two part time) to manage the hurricane response for the hurricane season of 2017, which includes Puerto Rico.
- Partnering with Long Term Recovery Groups through the Puerto Rico Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
- Partnering with and connecting mainland churches and mid-councils with response and recovery efforts in Puerto Rico.
- Providing volunteer opportunities for interested groups during the long-term recovery.
- Grants for hiring Host Site Coordinators at all PDA Host Sites.



Emotional and Spiritual Care

PDA has been providing several Emotional and Spiritual Care (ESC) trainings to church leaders, partner organizations and FEMA employees.

- Since the hurricane, PDA has provided two faith leader resilience events and a compassion fatigue training to people involved in community outreach.
- In collaboration with the 3 presbyteries, PDA provided a children's resilience overnight retreat at El Guacio.
- In coordination with the 3 presbyteries, PDA provided a faith leader and family retreat in Mayagüez.
- In coordination with Centro de Voluntariado and Juntos Somos Más Fuertes, provided an ESC training to different organizations, including PR VOAD, FEMA and Disaster Case Managements representatives.



Special Projects and Other Grants

Special Project Grants are awarded through the mid councils to an established long-term recovery group for the purpose of funding their project. These grants can also be used for other recovery, preparation and mitigation needs, including volunteer hosting. These funds have been used in many projects from the Presbyterian congregations and organizations working on the island. The funds have also helped families that evacuated to the mainland.

- Through the endorsement of the Presbytery of San Juan, PDA approved and sent a grant to the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico for campus reconstruction efforts.
- PDA is partnering with the Presbyterian Hunger Program and the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People for mitigation and development in the Caño Martín Peña communities.
- Special Project Grant for rehabilitation of Camp El Guacio Community Service Center of the Synod
- Grant for repair projects by the Synod Emergency Committee in Vieques (Island Municipality of Puerto Rico)
- Special Project for community engagement and support to Hurricane María survivors

- Grant for repair projects by the Synod Emergency Committee for the Fisherman Cooperative in Guayanés, Yabucoa
- Special Project Grant for Montaña PC's Community Kitchen in Aguadilla- This project will allow an expansion of the services provided by the Community Kitchen to be able to serve meals on the weekends to the elderly community affected by the Hurricane
- Grant to cover 1-yr salary to hire a Project Manager for the Puerto Rico Evangelical Seminary
- Additional Grant for Repair projects by the Synod Emergency Committee in Vieques (Island Municipality of Puerto Rico)
- Grant for a Community Mental Health Project for people emotionally affected by the hurricane
- Grant for Solar Energy Project with Solar Under The Sun - Pilot Project and Solar School
- Special Project Grant for Country Club PC for "God Provides" - Community Resource project
- Grant through the San Juan Presbytery to the Fideicomiso Caño Martín Peña for roof repair projects
- Grants to 3 presbyteries in the mainland to help support evacuees from Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands due to Hurricane María



Co-Moderator's Visit

One year after Hurricane María, a delegation from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) visited the island. The group included Co-Moderators Rev. Cindy Kohlmann and Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, PDA Director Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, PDA Associate for National Disaster Response Rev. Jim Kirk, and Associate for Disaster Response and Refugee Ministry Rev. Edwin González-Castillo. During the visit the Mayor of the town of Isabela issued a proclamation to the delegation in recognition of the work PDA has done in the island.



"The people need spiritual and emotional healing and the church has been an important part of rebuilding. We are thankful for the Presbyterian Church [(U.S.A.)] who has helped us in an amazing, structured, and organized way."

-Carlos O. Delgado Altieri
Mayor of Isabela, PR

Quick Figures

more than
\$2.1 million
disbursed

more than
40 grants
approved

4
volunteer
host sites

1,200
volunteers
have
served

45
volunteer
groups

300
days of
volunteer
work

70,000
hours of
volunteer
work

70
churches
helped



CONTINUING SUPPORT

- PDA provided the funds to establish a new volunteer host site in Aguada
- Peacemaking Travel Study in November with PDA's presence and support
- Tools to develop Resilience Training to partner organizations and FEMA
- Continue partnering with Solar Under the Sun for a Solar School in Camp El Guacio
- New partnership with Long Term Recovery Groups through the Puerto Rico VOAD
- Continue to partner with and connecting mainland churches and mid-councils to response and recovery efforts in Puerto Rico
- Continue developing projects and partnerships in Vieques (Island Municipality).
- KP4 Radio Communication
- Continue supporting middle governing bodies in the island in mitigation and Long Term Recovery projects