



American  
Red Cross

# Hurricane Fiona One Year Report

September | 2023

One year after Hurricane Fiona impacted Puerto Rico, the American Red Cross initiated its Long-Term Recovery Program. The efforts are focused on older adults through disaster preparedness activities, health management, and psychological and emotional support, among others. In addition, we will strengthen facilities that are of great support to the community in times of emergencies. The Hurricane Fiona Long-Term Recovery Program will last approximately one year.

## Help for Older Adults

The American Red Cross provided a grant to the Puerto Rican Diabetes Association to impact older adults in eight municipalities that were severely affected by Hurricane Fiona. The \$75,000 grant will provide an educational program related to the management of diabetes and their medications, as well as nutrition in times of emergencies.

The Association will also train workers of senior centers that care for the health and well-being of older adults. The municipalities to be impacted at the moment are: Salinas, Ponce, Yabucoa, Toa Baja, Arecibo, Hormigueros, Vieques and Culebra.

## A Focus on Health

The American Red Cross and the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus will assist older adults in managing their health and disease prevention before, during and after disasters. At the moment, the towns to be impacted through this initiative are: Salinas, Ponce, Yabucoa, Toa Baja, Arecibo, Hormigueros and Ceiba.

## Solar Power in Toa Baja and Salinas

In order to strengthen the structure used by the Asociación de Comunidades Unidas Tomando Acción Solidaria (ACUTAS), the American Red Cross will provide the financial investment for the installation of a solar energy system. ACUTAS, located in Toa Baja, has a food bank and offers a safe place for the storage of medicine and breast milk. They also have a greenhouse where products such as “hierba buena”, basil and oregano are produced. They also provide tutoring and workshops for children, youth and adults, in sewing, handicrafts, and architectural design, among others.

Furthermore, to support the operation of shelters after an emergency or disaster, the American Red Cross provided funds for the installation of solar panels and batteries at the Carlos Colón Burgos School in Salinas. This equipment will power areas such as classrooms, bathrooms and the cafeteria. This school, located in a non-flood zone, received hundreds of people after Hurricane Fiona.



From left to right: Lee Vanessa Feliciano, Regional Executive of the American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter and Brenda Padilla, Executive Director of the Puerto Rican Diabetes Association, during the signing of the agreement on September 19, 2023.

“The elderly are among the most affected and vulnerable populations during disasters; even more so when they are in need to cover their medications and keep their health condition stable. That is why we decided to work with the Puerto Rican Diabetes Association in a program focused on the response and management of their diabetes condition.”

- Lee Vanessa Feliciano, Regional Executive  
American Red Cross Puerto Rico Chapter



## Help Provided in the Response

- More than **722,000** meals and snacks served with partners.
- Over **4,500** damage assessments completed.
- Over **104,000** personal hygiene and basic items were distributed, such as cases of water and blankets, among others.
- More than **400** Red Cross volunteers and personnel mobilized.
- More than **1,000** families whose homes suffered major damage or destroyed received financial assistance.
- **34** families who suffered a family loss due to the disaster received financial assistance for funeral expenses.

## More Help After the Emergency



In December 2022, three months after Hurricane Fiona, the Red Cross launched the Bridge Assistance Program to provide additional financial assistance. The Bridge Program provided \$1,200 to families previously helped by the organization during the emergency. This assistance allowed families to have support for their unmet needs after the emergency in order to bridge the gap between immediate assistance and long-term recovery.

"It was very important because at that very moment, the help came in handy because we were not here yet, it was not livable, it was all dirty," said Bárbara González, Toa Baja resident, recipient of the financial assistance in the emergency and Bridge Program.



The American Red Cross has raised more than \$7.9 million to help people affected by Hurricane Fiona. There has been \$5.5 million spent in support of this disaster, with an additional \$2.4 million to be programmed for the long term recovery efforts.