

When Disaster Happens

A Policy Guide for Climate Resettlement



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Local Progress is the national network for progressive elected officials from cities and counties around the country. Hand-in-hand with community-based organizations and unions committed to advancing a social justice agenda, the elected officials and staff of Local Progress are facilitating genuine “inside/outside” strategy to reforming municipal policy and politics. Founded in 2012, Local Progress has built a powerful network of more than 800 local elected officials in 42 states who are committed to reclaiming the power that cities and counties have, and advancing our shared vision of shared economic prosperity, equal justice under law, livable and sustainable communities and good government that serves the public interest.



Local Progress is a project of the **Center for Popular Democracy** (CPD). CPD is a national network of 50 affiliated community organizations across 34 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C.

CPD works to create equity, opportunity and a dynamic democracy in partnership with high-impact base-building organizations, organizing alliances, and progressive unions. CPD strengthens our collective capacity to envision and win an innovative pro-worker, pro-immigrant, racial and economic justice agenda.

Introduction

In the year since Hurricane Maria, residents in Puerto Rico have fought to rebuild, despite a shamefully inadequate federal response. At the same time, tens of thousands have left the island, with a large majority arriving in one of six states: Florida, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. These new arrivals will reshape the cultural, economic, and political landscape of the cities and states where they live.

As they do so, they will need safe affordable housing, access to healthcare, education for their children, support in finding jobs, and other forms of assistance and support.

It is clear that the Trump White House and the Republican-led Congress have no interest in meeting these needs, making it even more crucial that cities and states step up.

This policy guide is the first to offer a detailed roadmap for how cities and states can address the immediate needs of their new Puerto Rican constituents. It is meant to serve as a constructive call to action for local and state governments.

The devastation of Hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey should also serve as a wake-up call to state and local officials across the country. While it is the residents of coastal and island communities who are on the front line of climate change, all communities will ultimately be affected as the global economy is rocked by disasters and millions of migrants move within and between countries in search of safety. Globally, the World Bank estimates that as many as 143 million people will be displaced by climate change in the next 30 years. It is the responsibility of every jurisdiction to have a plan in place to meet that challenge.



How Cities and States Can Meet Immediate Needs of New Puerto Rican Arrivals

The thousands of migrants arriving from Puerto Rico have seen their communities destroyed and friends and neighbors devastated. Many have struggled to obtain the assistance they need from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agencies responsible for supporting them. Others, after living in hotels for months, have had their housing aid cut with nowhere to go.¹ After the stress and trauma experienced by residents of Puerto Rico and their loved ones, the greatest service that state and local officials can provide is the stability needed to recover and plan for the future. The policies outlined in this section are intended to provide this basic necessity through housing and food assistance, medical and behavioral healthcare, the building of community connections, and the structure and sense of normalcy provided by returning to school or regular employment.

Helping New Arrivals from Day One

The sooner new migrants can be connected to support services, the sooner they can begin to recover and rebuild their lives. Several cities across the country already have a system for providing new arrivals with immediate assistance through partnership with Travelers Aid International, a nonprofit that has been assisting travelers in need for over a century.² At New York City's John F. Kennedy International Airport, Travelers Aid-run Welcome Centers provide new arrivals with a range of services including social service referrals.³

For those localities that already have a Travelers Aid affiliate at their local airport, state and local agencies should provide the resources necessary to ensure the availability of Spanish-speaking staff or volunteers as well as:

- emergency meal vouchers;
- offers of medical care and counseling;
- transportation to service centers; and
- English and Spanish language packets listing available services.

Localities without an existing Travelers Aid affiliate should reach out to the organization in order to establish one both at the local airport and bus and train stations that see large numbers of new arrivals.





Establishing Multi-Agency Resource Centers

In order to make the process of identifying and applying for needed services as simple as possible, multi-agency resource centers, or MARCs, should be established in libraries, community centers, houses of worship, and any other available and centrally located community spaces.

Several of the states with a large number of Puerto Rican migrants have already set up similar centers. In Florida, Governor Rick Scott established three MARCs at ports of entry to receive migrants from Puerto Rico. At each site there were representatives from FEMA as well as a range of relevant state agencies, the American Red Cross, and Catholic Charities. Services included assistance with FEMA applications, crisis counseling, food and water resources, and spiritual care.⁴

In addition to these services, MARCs should assist with applications to all programs for which applicants may be eligible, including Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), housing assistance, the Lifeline Program⁵ to provide access to a cell phone or internet service, school enrollment for children, voter registration and education, and application for a municipal ID.

Centers should also provide free metro passes for those cities with a mass transit system. Cities without a significant public transportation system may partner with community- and faith-based organizations to organize volunteer-run carpools for individuals seeking services, or commuting to work. Center hours should include evenings and weekends.

In order to facilitate the identification of available programs, city and state governments may develop a single application that collects all necessary information for determining eligibility of local, state, and federal programs as well as train staff and volunteers at other community sites in the use of programs like The Benefit Bank, a website that allows users to determine eligibility and file applications for services.⁶

Resources for Establishing a MARC Site

The American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, and The Salvation Army have created a planning tool for those seeking to develop a MARC site. The tool covers planning meetings, personnel, site selection, media relations and a host of other considerations necessary for the process.⁷

Developing Effective Referral Systems

Several state and local governments, including New York City,⁸ have attempted to implement a version of the “one stop shop” for determining eligibility for and applying to various social programs. However, many applicants have been referred to federal agencies in order to exhaust all other options before receiving access to local resources.⁹ While encouraging the use of federal resources can help cities reach a larger number of people with finite resources, the practical effect of this can be that people go without help, as the burden of navigating complicated, siloed bureaucracies forces them to give up.

Rather than blindly referring applicants to federal agencies, state and local agencies should develop a referral system which ensures all available resources can be effectively accessed by applicants. In Australia, Family Relationship Centres, designed to address the needs of families struggling with conflict and other issues, provide a comprehensive guide to referrals for staff. Centre guidelines advise¹⁰ that staff should begin with an attitude of respect and empathy for the communities they serve and a sensitivity to cultural needs. Before making a referral, staff should identify a client’s immediate needs and explain how the referral will meet those needs.

Agencies assisting migrants from Puerto Rico should only make facilitated or active referrals, meaning referrals in which the staff member assists the client in making any necessary appointments and identifying and gathering any necessary documentation. Staff should also identify potential barriers to other services, including language, cost, childcare needs, and transportation, and work with the client to find ways to overcome those barriers.

Finally, staff should follow up with clients after a referral to ensure that their needs were met.



Providing Access to Mental Health Services

Many migrants will need access to healthcare to treat and monitor injuries and chronic illnesses, as well as basic primary care. While these needs are relatively easy to identify by staff, friends, family members, and migrants themselves, the need for mental healthcare can be much harder to spot but is no less crucial. As one organizer observed in response to concerns about post traumatic stress disorder, “There’s no ‘post’ about it, it’s just trauma. People are living their trauma now.”¹¹

All those working with migrants, but especially healthcare providers, should receive training in identifying signs of Anxiety, Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and other illnesses that may be interfering with migrants’ quality of life. The National Alliance on Mental Illness provides a broad range of trainings and materials for providers, friends and family, and those living with mental illness to help identify and address mental health needs.¹²

This training must be complemented with mental health resources that are fully integrated into the various programs and systems serving migrants. Research has shown that simply making such resources readily available to providers through an integrated system increases the likelihood of referrals for treatment for both depression and PTSD.¹³ The SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions has collected a set of models for incorporating behavioral health care into primary care services.¹⁴



“She was told that she would get adequate support for her daughters. Instead, she was left guessing when she would be homeless.”

When Hurricane Maria hit the island, the front of Daiza Aponte Torres’ mother’s house was ripped away. The winds were roaring, and her daughters were terrified. After the storm, she had to wait in long lines for gas and food in order to care for her daughters and mother. She was forced to leave Puerto Rico for New York City in order to ensure her youngest daughter had access to the urgent medical care required to treat her chronic asthma. Her daughter had already suffered one near-fatal attack. The environmental conditions and hospital closures made it impossible to stay.

In New York, she was offered help, and told that she would get adequate support for her daughters. Instead, she was left guessing when she would be homeless and wasn’t given the government support she expected. Daiza fell into a depression because she was alone with her two daughters and didn’t have anyone for support.

She was approached by organizers at the Center for Popular Democracy and decided to take action, to fight for herself and others who were forced to migrate from Puerto Rico post Maria. She and hundreds of other Puerto Ricans joined CPD in Washington, DC, to raise awareness of the ongoing crisis in Puerto Rico and in the diaspora.

Helping New Arrivals Find Stable Housing

Among the most immediate needs facing many migrants is stable, affordable housing. In addition to providing assistance for applications to housing programs, state and local governments should work with nonprofit affordable housing developers to develop and preserve affordable housing and rehabilitate vacant, dilapidated housing.

Both migrants and existing residents will also need to be protected from landlords who seek to take advantage of existing housing crises and increased demand by gouging and harassing tenants. This will require the implementation and enforcement of tenant protections and anti-discrimination laws to prevent price-gouging or discriminatory behavior by landlords.

A number of community based organizations currently work for the strengthening and enforcement of tenant protection laws. Through partnering with these organizations, officials can identify and address those strategies most often used by unscrupulous landlords and develop community-driven policy responses.

Once in housing, new residents may also need support to cover the costs of utilities, in addition to other forms of assistance. Applications for social services should include applications to programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program¹⁵ to provide needed assistance.



Case Study: Texas Organizing Project (TOP) Turns Abandoned Houston Residents into a Political Force

In 2008, Hurricane Ike destroyed 150,000 homes across southeast Texas. When the federal government released the Round 1 funding of \$87.2 million to rebuild after the storm, the vast majority of it went to apartment owners rather than low-income residents. As a result, hundreds of low-income homeowners found themselves living under the blue tarps the federal government provides as temporary cover for damaged homes years after the storm, joining those still under blue tarps from Hurricane Rita, which hit three years earlier.¹⁶

In response, the Texas Organizing Project (TOP) went door to door, recruiting homeowners to join the organization and push for change. TOP staff and members met with Houston's mayor, Annise Parker; organized a tour of affected communities for the city's Director of Housing and Community Development; filled a town hall meeting with 300 applicants who were still waiting for recovery funds three years after the storm; and kept up pressure on the city until finally winning \$150 million in funds for low-income communities of color.¹⁷

Based on the work around Hurricane Ike, TOP leaders set up a monthly meeting with the city's Director of Housing and Community Development. Therefore, when Hurricane Harvey hit, not only was TOP out in the streets organizing renters and homeowners living in moldy houses and apartments, but TOP leaders were also able to work directly with the city to ensure good public input into the city's plan to recover from Harvey. TOP organized six community meetings with a total turnout of over 550 people who will now be involved in all aspects of holding the city accountable during the recovery from Harvey.

TOP continues to use the power built and lessons learned from that initial fight to push for a range of community issues, from home repair to tenant rights to criminal justice reform.

Helping New Arrivals Access Education

Attending school and connecting with classmates can begin to create a sense of normalcy for children whose lives have been uprooted. However, that normalcy requires that students' needs are being met once they get to school.

Three key areas that local officials can focus on to assist migrant students are:

- **Addressing Trauma** - Children entering local schools will not only need access to counseling, but teachers and administrators trained to recognize signs that a child is in crisis. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network provides a variety of trainings for teachers and administrators to support children and families affected by trauma.¹⁸
- **Providing Supportive Classrooms** - Welcoming America is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing resources to localities with large numbers of recent migrants. They have developed a toolkit with activities that teachers can use to make their classrooms supportive spaces for young refugees.¹⁹ These activities can be adapted for any new students experiencing the anxiety of having been recently uprooted and having to learn in a new, unfamiliar setting.
- **Ensuring Language Access** - In order to support and advocate for their children, parents will need access to translators on school grounds and bilingual materials sent home. New York City's Regulation of the Chancellor number A-663 provides language that can be used to enforce language access requirements.²⁰

Helping New Arrivals Find Good Jobs

Just as the structure of regular school attendance can provide a sense of normalcy for children, employment—and the funds that come with it—can do the same for adults. For those whose professions would normally require licensing or permits, city and state officials should offer expedited, fee-waived licensing/permit applications.

In Florida, Governor Rick Scott authorized any state agency whose rules might “in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with” the aftermath of Hurricane Maria to suspend those rules. In response, Jonathan Zachem, Secretary of the Department of Business and Professional Regulation suspended all application and licensing fees for professional licenses.²¹

For those who are able and would like to work, cities should partner with local universities and unions to develop training programs and create clearinghouses for temporary or permanent jobs. Further, those who have relevant skill sets can be employed in the various initiatives and programs developed to support other migrants.

In addition to facilitating or waiving licensing/permitting requirements as described above, cities can provide training for aspiring entrepreneurs in the relevant legal, accounting, marketing, and management basics needed to launch a small business.



“The low-wage tourism industry that dominates central Florida only made things worse.”

The day after Hurricane Maria, Krizia Lopez fled to a friend’s house where she felt safer. Even there, she and her friend struggled unsuccessfully to keep the water out. When she returned to her own home days later, nothing was the same. It was as if a bomb had hit her community.

There was a curfew enforced by the government, so she raced against the clock to get to her family. It took her over four hours to navigate roads covered in debris and trees that had been ripped from their roots. All communications were down on the Island. Krizia waited as long as she could to see if things would get better. For a while she couldn’t leave because all airports were closed. Finally in late October, faced with no work and no electricity, Krizia left Puerto Rico to head to Orlando, Florida.

Krizia quickly saw how difficult the move was for those fleeing the island like her. Florida already faced an affordable housing crisis, and the low-wage tourism industry that dominates central Florida only made things worse.

Her fluency in English and college degree made it easier for Krizia to find work than many others. After a month of searching, she was hired at a public school paying \$10 per hour.

Now Krizia works as an organizer with Organize Florida, advocating for others in the diaspora and fighting against climate change, which threatens to drive others from their homes in the years to come.

Successful Entry into the Labor Market: Lessons from Germany

Germany offers a well-developed model for integrating migrants into the labor market. In 2016, the country built on its extensive apprenticeship program with Perspectives for Young Refugees, a program providing regional vocational centers offering six month programs in vocational skills and language acquisition. The program works directly with businesses in order to provide placements.²²

To the extent the German program has been successful, a recent European Commission study identified the following factors as key:²³

- **Combining measures:** Rather than require participants to first gain language proficiency, then engage in skills assessment and training, the program engages in all of these efforts simultaneously. Participants take language classes during their placement as interns/apprentices and receive skills assessments and training on the job.
- **Engaging employers:** This model involves employers in the development, implementation and ongoing improvement of the program.
- **Providing counseling infrastructure:** The program provides a suite of counseling services to participants to guide them towards relevant training and licensing information to maximize their professional options.

Helping New Arrivals Cross Language Barriers

A number of community based organizations and public colleges provide ESL classes either for free or at heavily discounted rates. In New York City, CentroNYC is a completely volunteer-run organization that provides ESL and citizenship classes heavily subsidized by its Spanish courses.²⁴ Local agencies can partner with similar organizations to pursue grant funding in order to increase capacity to provide classes to recent migrants. State legislatures may also increase the amount of public dollars (whether state-generated or received through federal programs) that go to such organizations.

Helping New Arrivals Maintain Cultural Connections while Building Community

Maintaining a connection to cultural practices can be as important to health and well-being as meeting material needs. In partnership with community and faith-based organizations, libraries, community centers, and other relevant institutions, city and state governments should provide funding for the development and promotion of culturally relevant and community building events.

As an example of this, in Hartford, Connecticut local organizers celebrated Three Kings Day, providing children with presents and lettuce to serve as a stand-in for the grass clippings put under the bed to feed the camels of the three kings.²⁵ In San Antonio, organizers added to their annual Three Kings celebration an old tradition called the Promesa de Reyes, promising the Kings that the community will keep the celebration going if they will “bring back Puerto Rico to its normality.”²⁶



“In a category 5 storm, nowhere is safe”

Milagros Lozada is from Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, which is south-east of the Island where Hurricane Maria entered. No one in her community was prepared for a category 5 storm. She quickly tried to prepare by getting water and boarding up her home. She was in a concrete house, but in a category 5 storm, nowhere is safe. She thought that the wind would never calm—it felt like the storm was going on forever. After the hurricane, the first few days were crucial for everyone’s survival. The homes that were not concrete were no longer there.

She decided to leave because there was no electricity and no work.

After living in Puerto Rico for more than a decade, Milagros was forced to leave the Island and now lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, with her children.

She expects to go back to her beautiful country but until then has joined Make the Road Nevada to fight for the rights of the Puerto Ricans who were forced to migrate.

Providing Support for Those Who Wish to Return

Not all those forced to leave the island intend to make the move permanent. Providing financial and other resources to organizations on the island will assist in the recovery effort and make it easier for those who wish to return to do so.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm several states sent relief workers, National Guard members, rescue teams, truck drivers, and a wide range of supplies to support relief efforts.²⁷

New York, one of two states with a Puerto Rican population of over one million people, launched a Tactical Assessment Team that included union members, state relief agency officials, and representatives from nonprofit organizations active in Puerto Rico to conduct a research trip to the island in order to develop a work plan for supporting the recovery. Once the plan is developed, the state has committed to transporting volunteers from public universities, union members, and others to Puerto Rico in order to implement it. Union members have committed to establishing workshops to train local residents who in turn can contribute to rebuilding efforts.²⁸ The first public university student volunteers were deployed in May 2018 followed by 500 in mid-June.²⁹

In addition to deploying state and local resources to support the island, state congressional delegations can advocate for a more robust response on the federal level. Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy of Connecticut, whose state saw a large influx of migrants since Hurricane Maria landed, pushed in Congress for increased and more quickly disbursed funding to support the recovery.³⁰ This kind of support is particularly vital since, despite the imposition of US federal law on residents of Puerto Rico, the island has no representation in Congress.

In addition to supporting recovery efforts on the island, state and local governments can help migrants who seek to return by providing assistance with obtaining FEMA funds to rebuild their homes, solar-powered generators and other supplies that will support living with the island’s weakened infrastructure, and assistance in the purchase of plane tickets.

How Better Intergovernmental Collaboration Between Cities and States Benefits New Puerto Rican Arrivals

The support needed will require the cooperation of a broad array of government agencies, nonprofits, faith-based groups, and other community members, working together quickly and reliably over the course of the next several years. Meeting that need will require a comprehensive organizational infrastructure that facilitates collaboration and information-sharing across all of these entities. Moreover, the development of a more efficient, effective system for the delivery of social services will yield benefits for all community members.

Facilitating Collaboration Between Agencies

In cities across the country, the provision of vital services is distributed across a number of different agencies and departments across different levels of government, each with its own leadership; protocols regarding the collection, storing, and sharing of data; contract procurement processes; and capacity for following up with clients. This system can be daunting for those trying to access the services they need, wastes resources that could be used to expand the reach of programs, and makes it difficult for agency directors to fully assess the effectiveness of various aspects of their work. It can be particularly harrowing for migrants who have just lost their homes, loved ones, and a sense of control over their lives.

Improving communication and coordination is indispensable both to better serve existing clients and to serve the large number of Puerto Rican migrants coming into the states. Several states, including Pennsylvania, New York, and Florida, all of which have received a large number of new residents from Puerto Rico, have existing systems for improving collaboration that can be used as models.³¹



Any interagency collaboration will require an infrastructure that includes the following:

- **Governance Structure** - In order for agencies to effectively work together, the leaders of each agency will need to have a process for identifying and addressing both conflicts and opportunities for collaboration. In New York City, this is facilitated through an Executive Steering Committee that includes the heads of participating social service departments and is advised by the Law Department and Mayor's Office of Contracts.³²
- **Data Sharing System** - The most important component of an integrated social safety net is an effective system for data sharing and analysis. Many agencies within the same geography and serving the same population collect different kinds of data, using different kinds of software, and different levels of security. Bridging the gaps between different data sets will require the development of a team of data intelligence experts and the development of trust and a spirit of cooperation between the team and the wide range of agencies it will work with.
- **Data Security** - The acceptable use, storage, and publication of data by the data team will vary from project to project and dataset to dataset. For this reason, data intelligence teams generally enter into a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each agency on each project.³³
- **Streamlined process for Contract Procurement** - In many cities, agencies contract with the same entities for similar functions but using independent procurement processes. In New York City, the Department of Health and Human Services developed an online procurement and fiscal management system to be used across all relevant agencies. The online system creates a common set of forms, terminology, and review process for contractors and creates a database of bids in order to standardize what the city pays for certain services.³⁴
- **Coordinated Applications** - There are a number of programs that require clients to submit the same set of documents and forms, forcing applicants to visit several different offices and complete several different forms, providing the same information each time. In order to make this process more efficient, New York City created a program called Worker Connect. Under the program, clients' information and documents are made accessible to caseworkers in various agencies, within the constraints required by applicable laws and ethical rules regarding client privacy.³⁵



Working with Community Organizations: The VOAD Model

The greatest experts on the resources and capacities of any community are those who live and work there every day. Community-based organizations, local businesses, faith-based organizations, and long-time residents can supplement government efforts through the contribution of goods and services, meeting space, and emotional support.

In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, community and faith-based organizations as well as self-organized groups like Occupy Sandy provided vital support for communities affected by the storm.³⁶ However, many of these groups were operating without support or information from city and state agencies. Improved communication and coordination between those on the ground with established networks in affected communities and the agencies seeking to serve those communities can greatly enhance the effectiveness of both.



Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) provide a model for facilitating improved communication. These coalitions of organizations with expertise in supporting disaster relief and recovery provide a vital convening space for the coordination of efforts before, during and after a disaster.

Similarly, the creation of coalitions of organizations that support applications for housing, food, and other forms of assistance and provide direct services, such as counseling, ESL classes, and cultural programs, can provide a valuable supplement to governmental efforts. These coalitions can also serve as portals for individuals and local businesses interested in volunteering or otherwise contributing to support migrants.

The creation of a VOAD can be overseen by a Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL). FEMA employs VALs to connect government agencies with volunteer organizations and community and faith-based organizations before, during, and after a natural disaster. VALs also coordinate representatives from each of these entities along with those from local schools, businesses, foundations, and others to form Long Term Recovery Groups tasked with coordinating support of individuals on the ground.³⁷

Vetting Community Partners

Not every community organization or private business has the capacity or the network required to serve as an effective partner. In order to ensure that resources and outreach go to the right organizations, agencies will need to establish a vetting process. At a minimum, a partner organization should:

- be physically located in the community, preferably with facilities that allow for meetings and the distribution of goods, services, and information;
- have an existing network of community members or other organizations that they regularly serve and/or communicate with; and
- have staff with the cultural and linguistic competency necessary to communicate with members of the affected community.

Building Community Support

No agency director or elected official has a greater understanding of the needs of her constituents than the constituents themselves. Any policies implemented by officials should be designed in consultation with affected communities and include ongoing opportunities for feedback and improvement.

The principles of participatory methods used by Public Health researchers can provide helpful guidance for policymakers. A recent study of the Los Angeles County Community Disaster Resilience initiative found that the application of such methods increased the efficacy of efforts to improve resilience and preparedness for disasters.³⁸ As the study explained, “participatory methods prioritize learning from local communities, seeking out a diversity of opinions, modifying goals as participants recognize their needs, focusing on community strengths, and sharing decision-making power.”³⁹

There are a number of ways to engage community members according to these principles. The Los Angeles study divided various types of engagement into four categories:⁴⁰

- **Fairs** - Defined as independent community events attracting large numbers of residents and creating an opportunity for raising awareness of policies and programs.
- **Events** - Defined as meetings organized by policymakers or other coalition members in order to spread information. These meetings generally reached fewer people but provided more in depth information to those who participated.
- **Outreach** - Defined as targeted engagement of particular subpopulations (eg, seniors, students).
- **Trainings** - Events focused on training community members or a cohort of trainers to disseminate needed skills throughout the community.

Some specific examples of the form these categories can take can also be drawn from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Public Participation Guide,⁴¹ designed to assist government agencies in working with their communities to develop policy.

Any planned events must, at a minimum, be well advertised, accessible to people who are disabled, held during hours suitable for the work schedules of the targeted participants, and provide interpretive sources and childcare.⁴²

Outreach as defined above can include:

- **Community Advisory Groups** where groups of representatives from various parts of the community are provided resources to discuss and share needs and concerns.⁴³
- **Focus groups** where small numbers of participants discuss their needs and concerns, guided by a professional moderator.⁴⁴

All activities should provide an opportunity for feedback on the helpfulness and accessibility of the information provided and recommendations for improvement.



Identifying Funding Sources, Cutting Costs

While some of the policies outlined above can be implemented at low cost or will pay for themselves through increased efficiency, many will require significant additional funding. In addition to seeking out foundation and other private sources of funding, state and local lawmakers may:

- issue municipal bonds to cover capital expenditures, such as investment in school or healthcare facilities or information technology hardware;
- coordinate with intercity organizations to cover the costs of public employee trainings; and
- build relationships across interagency coalitions in different cities to develop best practices and identify additional areas for cost sharing/saving through scale.⁴⁵

Demanding Federal Action

There is much city and state governments can do to support their new residents—and there is much more that the federal government can do. Federal action is both necessary and a moral imperative since it is in large part due to the failure of FEMA and other agencies to effectively respond to Hurricane Maria that so many Puerto Rican residents have felt the need to leave their homes.

City and state officials should join with their congressional delegations to demand increased funding under the following federal programs:

- Housing assistance, public housing, and community development
- Medicaid funding
- SNAP funding
- Behavioral health funding
- Funds for job training and support for displaced workers
- Infrastructure spending

Serving All Constituents

While the recommendations detailed above are intended to meet the specific needs of Puerto Rican migrants fleeing the devastation of Hurricane Maria, they are rooted in principles that should guide all of public policy. All constituents are entitled to:

- the dignity of stable housing, gainful employment, and access to education for their children;
- meaningful opportunities to shape and critique programs affecting their communities;
- respect and support for their cultural and social needs; and
- a social safety net that is efficient, responsive, and respectful.

By implementing policies that honor these principles, localities can meet the needs of Puerto Rican migrants in a moment of crisis, better serve the needs of long-time residents, and serve as models for communities facing similar crises as climate change continues to displace populations around the world.



Appendix: Resource List

On Arrival

- Sample Resource Packet, NYC Office of Immigrant Affairs: http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/immigrants/downloads/pdf/english_immigration%20guide.pdf
- Lifeline Program: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/lifeline-program-low-income-consumers>
- The Benefit Bank: <https://www.thebenefitbank.org/>

MARC Planning Tool

- Multi-Agency Resource Center Planning Resource: <https://www.preparecenter.org/sites/default/files/multiagencyresourcecenterplanningresourcejobtool.pdf>

Effective Referrals

- Referral Guidelines for Family Relationship Centres and the Family Relationship Advice Line: <https://www.ag.gov.au/FamiliesAndMarriage/Families/FamilyRelationshipServices/Documents/Referral%20Guidelines.pdf>

Mental Health Resources

- In addition to the CIHS list of models of healthcare integration cited in this document, SAMHSA offers a rubric to help providers understand where their system currently falls on the integration scale and the benefits of increased integration: https://www.integration.samhsa.gov/integrated-care-models/CIHS_Framework_Final_charts.pdf

Housing

Examples of community-based organizations focused on tenant protection and advocacy in affected states:

- Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment: <https://www.acceaction.org/>
- Organize Florida: <https://orgfl.org/>
- Texas Organizing Project: <https://organizetexas.org/>
- One PA: <http://onepa.org/>
- Legal Services Corporation: <https://www.lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid>

Education

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Website: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/training>
- New York City Department of Education, Regulation of the Chancellor, Number A-663 Translations: <https://www.schools.nyc.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/a-663-english>

Employment

- Full text of State of Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation, Emergency Order Re: Suspension of Application and Licensing Fees, Filed October 6, 2017: <https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/dbpr10617.pdf>

Maintaining Culture and Community

State-based Puerto Rican cultural and artistic groups/organizations:

- Revolucion Latina: <http://revolucionlatina.org/>
- Puerto Rican Cultural Center (Chicago): <http://www.prcc-chgo.org/>
- Puerto Rican Institute for the Development of the Arts (New York): http://www.prida.org/about_us/
- Puerto Rican Institute for the Arts and Advocacy (operating in Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts): <https://www.priaa-ri.org/>
- Puerto Rico Arts Diaspora of Orlando (Florida): <https://www.ladiasporapr.com/>

Data Sharing

- Memorandum of Understanding: https://docs.google.com/file/d/1LUz-h9yZ7eCN6w_7BneyKzuYXxiwfBaJ/view?usp=sharing
- Sample Public Principles for Data Sharing: <https://www.aisp.upenn.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Governance.pdf>

Coordinating Community Organizations

- FEMA Manual: The Role of Voluntary Organizations in Emergency Management: https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is288a/is-0288a_download.pdf
- Job Description, Volunteer Agency Liaison: https://docs.google.com/file/d/1rvl1JBILJ2F52e_0J1tgllrz8HILYkJ/view?usp=sharing
- US Environmental Protection Agency Public Participation Guide: <https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/public-participation-guide>

Identifying Federal Funding

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- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grants:
 - Mental Health Awareness Training: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-18-009>
 - Treatment for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness, Serious Emotional Disturbance or Co-Occurring Disorders Experiencing Homelessness: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-18-014>
 - Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment: <https://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/ti-18-007>
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