



DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING



CDBG-DR PROGRAM GUIDELINES

CITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

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CDBG-DR PROGRAM GUIDELINES
PUERTO RICO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
CITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM
VERSION CONTROL

VERSION NUMBER	DATE REVISED	DESCRIPTION OF REVISIONS
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2	January 12, 2021	Multiple edits around the document. All edits are marked in gray.
3	February 11, 2022	Multiple edits around the document. All edits are marked in gray.
4	March 09, 2023	Included sections on requirements to comply with regulations for floodplain management and wetland protection and reference to requirements for economic development projects. All edits are marked in gray.
5	September 20, 2024	Clarified Section 8.3.2 by including a list of required documents to demonstrate property ownership or site control. Updated the Program funding section to align with the most recent Action Plan Amendment. Integrated a Recapture section and made multiple edits throughout the document. All edits are marked in gray.

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1 Overview

1.1 Program Rationale and Objective

Hurricanes María and Irma (**the Hurricanes**) directly impacted all seventy-eight (78) municipalities in Puerto Rico. Towns and cities across the Island experienced damage and/or destruction to public and private housing as well as not-for-profit facilities. Depending on the community's location, downtown areas and key corridors were impacted by storm surge, flooding, standing water, wind, rain, or mudslides. Water intrusion into vacant and/or substandard facilities increased the potential for these buildings to pose greater public health and public safety problems for municipal officials. Communities also suffered a loss of power that, in some cases, lasted for months. The City Revitalization Program (**CRP Program** or **the Program**) will allow municipal governments and eligible entities to address community recovery at the local level while also addressing regional needs through projects identified through thoughtful planning processes.

The Program establishes funding for municipal governments and other eligible entities to enable a variety of critical recovery activities aimed at reinvigorating downtown areas, urban centers, and key community corridors, and address critical affordable housing shortages within or near urban and downtown centers. These activities will promote redevelopment, blight removal, development of affordable housing, private investment and re-greening or restoration of areas that lost natural resources as a result of the Hurricanes' passing. Before the recovery processes began, mayors and citizens expressed the desire to not only rebuild these areas, but also restore and enhance main streets and "plazas", provide accessible and affordable housing to complement economic growth and development, and downtown/business districts which are vital to the rebuilding of communities. This Program intends to build on those efforts and will rely on both prior planning efforts as well as forthcoming Puerto Rico Department of Housing (**PRDOH**)-funded planning processes to identify projects for the Program.

All seventy-eight (78) municipal governments have available to them the Municipal Recovery Planning Program (**MRP Program**). To participate in the planning processes, they have been allocated a recovery planning budget. Information on the MRP Program can be found in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/municipal-recovery-planning-program/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/recuperacion-municipal/> (Spanish). Municipalities funded through the MRP Program will partner with professional planning firms and undergo a collaborative process with community residents, businesses, neighboring municipalities, and central government agencies to identify actions and projects necessary for holistic local and regional recovery from Hurricanes Irma and María. Planning activities will produce critical frameworks to complement other programs highlighted in PRDOH's Action Plan by increasing communities' capacity to

forecast and determine needs for programming related to city revitalization, critical infrastructure, economic development, and workforce training.¹

For the Community Resilience Centers (**CRC**) initiative, PRDOH may directly select Subrecipients to plan and manage the implementation. Based on the need for CRCs identified during this planning phase, community-based development organizations (**CBDO**), non-profit organizations, or municipal entities may be selected as Subrecipients for the CRC set-aside.

Economic development projects, whose operational activities will generate revenue, will be required to validate their compliance based on the entity type and their legal structure according to applicable laws and regulations at the federal and local jurisdiction level. Income received from these projects must comply with the regulations of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (**HUD**) for managing program income. Permissible uses will be outlined in the CRP Affordable Housing and Economic Development Activities supplemental guides and applicable Subrecipient Agreements (**SRAs**).

Affordable Housing Projects within the CRP Program will maintain and increase the availability of affordable multifamily units; help address unmet housing needs in communities across Puerto Rico; consolidate investments in existing urban footprints; and offer affordable housing to target special populations and vulnerable, low- and moderate-income (**LMI**) populations throughout the island.

Additional information and requirements regarding Economic Development and Affordable Housing Projects are detailed in the corresponding Supplemental Guidance published in the CDBG-DR website.²

The Program also establishes the **RE-Green Puerto Rico** Initiative that provides municipal governments and their partners the ability to incorporate resilience measures by using CDBG-DR funds to address losses to Puerto Rico's natural resources and green landscape. The sustained winds, rainfall, and salt water that flooded the Island during the Hurricanes were particularly harmful to the Island's tree canopy and natural resources. The damaged trees and tree canopies in urban and rural areas resulted in loss of natural beauty, shade, and root structures. The root structures of trees assist with erosion control. With so many trees lost, the Island faces enhanced erosion conditions and is more susceptible to landslides. In the short, medium, and long term, loss of tree canopy also contributes to increased heat for residents due to the elimination of shade to downtown

¹ The Puerto Rico Disaster Recovery Action Plan for the Use of CDBG-DR Funds in Response to 2017 Hurricanes Irma and María can be found at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/action-plan/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/plan-de-accion/> (Spanish).

² Affordable Housing Supplemental Guidelines and Economic Development Supplemental Guidelines are available at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/city-revitalization/> (English) <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/revitalizacion-de-la-ciudad/> (Spanish).

corridors. It also allows more rainfall to flood streets and overwhelm the stormwater management infrastructure.

1.2 Having a Tie to the Hurricanes

HUD requires that any CDBG-DR funds used must have a tie to hurricanes. Because HUD determined every municipal government in Puerto Rico to be a most impacted and distressed area, the Program will make funding available to all communities on the Island to address recovery needs in downtown areas and key corridors. In accordance with Federal Register Vol. 83, No. 28 (February 9, 2018), 83 FR 5844, “[a]ll CDBG-DR funded activities must clearly address an impact of the disaster for which funding was allocated.” Through the application process, the CRP Program will ensure funded projects have a tie to the Hurricanes and the information is documented in each project file, in addition to other HUD-required reporting.

1.3 Recovery Objective for the Program

The CRP Program will fund projects that align with a larger strategy targeting downtown/business districts and key corridors to support and drive future public and private investment in these areas. Residents will benefit from increased opportunities of employment and economic growth, affordable housing options, greater access to goods and services, and additional recreational and wellness resources.

The Program has also been designed to align with the following recovery objectives outlined in Puerto Rico's Recovery Plan titled *Transformation and Innovation in the Wake of Devastation: An Economic and Disaster Recovery Plan*: Municipal Hotspots (CIT 19); Resilience/e-Construction Lab (CIT 32); Establishing a University-Based Center of Excellence for Disaster Preparedness and Recovery (CPCB 5); and Incentivize Resilient, Creative Design Solution for Addressing Hazards (CPCB 10).³

2 National Objective

All projects in the Program must meet one (1) of three (3) HUD national objectives in addition to meeting a HUD-eligible activity, as defined by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (**HCDA**), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 5305. Given that the Program will provide funding to a wide range of activities in downtown areas, urban areas, and key corridors across Puerto Rico, PRDOH anticipates that each national objective listed in the section below will be applicable.

2.1 HUD National Objectives

PRDOH will work with entities funded through the Program to determine the national objective for each project, according to 24 C.F.R. § 570.483. All CDBG-DR funded activities must meet at least one (1) of the three (3) National Objectives defined in the

³ *Transformation and Innovation in the Wake of Devastation: An Economic and Disaster Recovery Plan for Puerto Rico*, August 2018, <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/transformation-and-innovation-in-the-wake-of-devastation/>.

authorizing statute of the CDBG program:

1. Benefit to low- and moderate-income persons (**LMI**) (24 C.F.R. § 570.483 (b))
 - a. Area Benefit
 - b. Limited Clientele
 - c. Housing activities
 - d. Job Creation and/or Retention
2. Urgent Need (**UN**) activities (24 C.F.R. § 570.483 (d))
3. Aid in **the** prevention or elimination of Slums or Blight (**SB**) (24 C.F.R. § 570.483 (c))

In support of HUD's recovery objectives, the Government of Puerto Rico has specifically designed its hurricane recovery programs to help impacted residents and communities recuperate from the damage inflicted by the Hurricanes of 2017. PRDOH has set a goal to expend seventy percent (70%) of CRP Program funds on projects that result in a benefit to LMI individuals or that demonstrably serve LMI areas.

2.1.1 Further Information on the Use of Area Benefit

For projects carrying out activities under the LMI Area Benefit, PRDOH and the Subrecipient must ensure that the activity will benefit all persons in the service area. The area to be served must be primarily residential, and at least 51% of the population must be LMI. When determining the service area (or "area of benefit") for a particular activity, the Subrecipient and PRDOH should consider factors such as the nature of the activity and its location.

2.1.2 Further Information on Use of Urgent Need National Objective

It is likely that some projects funded through the Program will not meet HUD's requirement of benefiting LMI persons or communities. Projects that do not serve the LMI need will be evaluated for UN benefit when the activity does not otherwise eliminate slum and blight. In accordance with 83 FR 5844, the certification requirements for documentation of UN, located at 24 C.F.R. § 570.483(d), are waived. PRDOH will not issue or require Partners or Subrecipients to issue a formal certification statement to qualify an activity as meeting the UN national objective.

2.1.3 LMI Jobs/Economic Development

When applicable, Subrecipients or PRDOH will identify the LMI jobs benefit accomplishment by documenting, for each person employed, the name of the business, type of job, and the annual wages or salary of the job. By waiver, HUD will consider a person income-qualified if the annual wages or salary of the individual's job is at or under the HUD-established income limit for a one-person family.⁴ Economic development

⁴ At 83 FR 5844, HUD authorizes grantees to determine an individual is considered LMI if the annual wages or salary of the individual person are at, or under, the HUD-established income limit for a one-person family for the jurisdiction. These limits

activities must meet the LMI Job Creation/Retention (**LMJ**) national objective. See the Economic Development Supplemental Guide for more information.

3 Program Description

This Program falls under the PRDOH's Action Plan overall strategy for multi-sector initiatives which involves engaging and implementing innovative and transformative long-term recovery solutions for Puerto Rico. Municipalities lack the financial resources to rebuild or enhance main streets and plazas, eliminate blight, provide affordable housing options, develop economic growth opportunities, and improve other districts that are important to community revitalization activities. This Program provides CDBG-DR funding to municipal governments and other eligible entities, enabling them to conduct a variety of critical recovery activities aimed at reinvigorating downtown areas, urban areas, and key community corridors. The Program will focus investments, reduce sprawl, and create a symbiotic environment to nurture complementary investments from the private sector as well as leverage other federal and local grant funding opportunities.

The Program may provide funding for community plazas, green infrastructure installations along key corridors that are prone to street flooding, façade renewal initiatives in commercial corridors, and other activities to incentivize the growth of small businesses in the area.

The Program contains a set-aside of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) to prioritize strategic investments in sustainable growth nodes for the redevelopment of urban areas around the University of Puerto Rico (**UPR**), Río Piedras and Mayagüez campuses. These dynamic communities have high student resident populations and have been significantly damaged by the physical and economic impact of the Hurricanes. The investments from the CRP Program shall not take place within the campus boundaries of the University system but will aim to create an environment for economic regeneration around the University to enable students and employees of the UPR system to return to their place of study and work in safe and economically vibrant areas. This project will encourage a partnership between PRDOH, the municipal governments of San Juan and Mayagüez, and other eligible entities, to serve the residents and businesses within these communities that are close to these campuses.

This Program also establishes a Community Resilience Centers Set-aside (**CRC Set-aside**) of seventy-five million dollars (\$75,000,000) for the establishment or rehabilitation of existing community resilience centers. The multi-purpose nature of these facilities will be enhanced by locating them in areas where this need has been identified, preferably near downtown areas, urban areas, or key corridors, to the extent practical. This will

are determined annually. Puerto Rico income limits for CDBG-DR can be found here: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5334/cdbq-income-limits/>.

facilitate access and coordination to essential public services such as potable water, communications infrastructure and power, and enhance the centers' roles in resource distribution during and after a disaster.

3.1 Program Goals

PRDOH will work with municipal governments and non-governmental organizations (**NGOs**) to help shape the future vision of their communities.

The first goal of the Program is to restore infrastructure in downtown areas, urban areas, and key corridors that were impacted by the Hurricanes, and to make these facilities more resilient to future events, so that residents will want to return and make use of public urban areas and downtown districts.

The second goal of the Program is to use funds to revitalize, modernize, and create green business districts in ways that support and promote small business recovery and growth, while restoring or encouraging tourism. These projects strategically complement programs that are offered through the portfolio of CDBG-DR economic development and recovery. Through the CRP Program, municipal governments and eligible entities will be able to create public enhancements and façade improvements that will encourage the return of small businesses and tourism to key urban corridors.

The third Program goal is to create a known network of clearly identified and registered Community Resilience Centers across the Island to support communities before, during, and after disasters. Centers will provide critical preparation and recovery activities during adverse events and increase social resilience through year-round, day-to-day functions. They will increase resource distribution capacity across the Island during disaster emergencies and offer support for health and security service delivery.

These multi-purpose centers will serve not only as a community hub in preparation and response to disasters, but also facilitate other year-round activities for the community to engage in. The community gathering spaces will allow beneficiaries to receive educational materials and information on preparedness and disaster resilience initiatives. They will also serve to enhance social resilience within the community.

The fourth Program goal is to provide funding that can address the needs of lost or impacted natural resources in downtown areas, urbanized areas, and key corridors. A portion of the Program will focus on "re-greening" initiatives, the implementation of green infrastructure and other green activities. These initiatives may include investing in and using green infrastructure, green installations and standards, green energy and waste repurposing and reduction. PRDOH strongly encourages Subrecipients to utilize at least ten percent (10%) of their allocation or award of Program funds to promote widespread re-greening in communities across the Island, thereby supporting the RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative. The re-greening projects are expected to provide multiple benefits to communities and residents, both at the project location and in other areas of the Island,

by also promoting eco-tourism. In addition, the requirements to achieve the goal of using ten percent (10%) of the funds towards a re-greening goal may be achieved by addressing the natural infrastructure. This may include restoring or stabilizing natural stream beds, installing, or expanding riparian buffers with natural plantings, and using alternative and extended-life materials in the construction of infrastructure projects.

The final goal is to provide the critical infrastructure required to accommodate economic development in LMI communities. The CRP Program will consider projects to provide funding for the rehabilitation and/or new construction of new affordable rental or ownership housing opportunities, installation of publicly owned utility services, and infrastructure.⁵ This may include roads, sidewalks, public squares, recreational facilities, public water and sewer, stormwater management, and other eco-friendly site development work such as xeriscaping that will support committed affordable housing development.⁶

PRDOH will establish robust and open engagement with the public regarding project selection and will rely heavily on post-hurricane public planning processes to ensure that a cohesive recovery is achieved. Information accessibility will be provided through various means and methods depending on the location and nature of the selected projects including, but not limited to, public notices, public meetings, and information on PRDOH's CDBG-DR website, <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/welcome/index.html>.

3.2 Overview of Method of Distribution

Funding for the CRP Program will be made available to municipal governments that agree to participate in the Program and may choose to collaborate with community organizations and stakeholders, permitting the use of municipally allocated funding for the alliances by entering into additional SRAs. Allocations will be formula-based. PRDOH encourages municipalities to work with other eligible entities to identify and develop projects that serve strategic community recovery needs. Additionally, Subrecipients will be selected to plan and manage the implementation of the CRC initiative.

4 Eligible Use of Funds

The Program is designed to provide flexibility in funding a wide range of activities that address the recovery and resiliency needs of downtown areas and key corridors across Puerto Rico. Municipalities and other eligible entities must submit applications for consideration by PRDOH to qualify. All projects must be located within a municipal

⁵ See *CRP Program Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidelines* for further guidance and eligibility requirements regarding Affordable Housing projects, available at available at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/city-revitalization/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/revitalizacion-de-la-ciudad/> (Spanish).

⁶ Xeriscaping refers to the practice of designing landscapes to reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation.

boundary and within a designated downtown area or a key growth corridor that is defined by the municipal government or identified by other eligible entities.

Examples of some types of eligible projects are shown below. Due to the wide range of activities that are anticipated for the Program, these examples highlight only a few types of activities that could be pursued with Program funds:

- Rehabilitation or reconstruction of eligible buildings;
- Public infrastructure extension and/or improvements;
- Committed affordable rental housing development and rehabilitation;
- Affordable housing ownership opportunities;
- Development of affordable housing units for special populations;
- Activities that support site development for the provision of safe, sanitary, and decent committed affordable housing opportunities that support workforce and economic development;
- Streetscape improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, parking;
- Façade improvements;
- As part of revitalization, where feasible, incorporating the protection and restoration of cultural and historic structures;
- Activities to eliminate architectural barriers for the disabled;
- Construction improvements to public spaces (plazas, town squares), cultural and art installations, and recreational areas and amenities;
- Actions that would clear and demolish unoccupied substandard structures that do not duplicate activities conducted under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**FEMA**) Private Property Debris Removal (**PPDR**);
- Funding eligible activities under the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (**EDA**) requiring match funding, as well as other similar matching opportunities;
- Implementing a wide range of "RE-Green" initiatives such as using green best practices in infrastructure projects and promoting a positive restorative and protective effect on the natural infrastructure;
- Improving the natural infrastructure;
- Undertakings that support community lifelines;
- Reforestation and natural resource recovery efforts that may be undertaken via non-profit entities such as *Para la Naturaleza*, in addition to waste re-purposing and reduction initiatives that use "green initiative strategies;"
- Activities that consider a holistic, multi-benefit approach to downtown areas, including co-location with transit-oriented development (**TOD**), transfer of development rights (**TDR**) to increase commercial core density thereby preserving open space, increasing the walkability and use of non-motorized transit (bike lanes), and other modes that improve commercial districts;
- Establishment, rehabilitation, or retrofitting of community resources centers;

- Activities involving strategic investments in growth nodes that lead to the redevelopment of urban areas that support the UPR Río Piedras and Mayagüez campuses; and
- Economic development projects, in which their operation activities will generate revenue and economic growth opportunities, will be evaluated to validate their compliance based on the entity type and their legal structure from the perspective of applicable laws and regulations at both the federal and local jurisdiction level. Income received from these projects may be subject to HUD requirements for managing program income.

4.1 Baseline Eligibility Requirements for all Projects

Projects directly implemented by an administrative agency or department of the Government of Puerto Rico will comply with the requirements set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200. The selected Subrecipient will be responsible for compliance with all applicable HUD CDBG-DR rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, Fair Housing, Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968⁷ (**Section 3**), as amended, Davis-Bacon Act⁸ and associated labor standards, federal environmental review, procurement compliant with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and Regulation No. 9506, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,⁹ the Americans with Disabilities Act (**ADA**),¹⁰ and property acquisition. PRDOH will provide technical assistance, grant and project management oversight, and monitoring of the project. Subrecipients will also be required to report on a monthly basis its project outcomes and be able to correctly request drawdowns through the invoicing process for reimbursement to its contracted vendors.

All projects, implemented by Subrecipients of the Program, must meet the following baseline requirements to receive CDBG-DR funding:

- Must have a tie to the Hurricanes. Project must be related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, or economic revitalization related to the covered disaster. The corresponding supporting information is required as a part of the application process.
- Meet a HUD National Objective, see the National Objective section.
- Have CDBG-DR eligible activity, see the Eligible Use of Funds section.
- All project expenditures must be completed before the SRA deadlines.
- Address an eligible unmet need after accounting for all duplication of benefits. See the Duplication of Benefits (DOB) section.

⁷ 12 U.S.C. § 1701u.

⁸ 40 U.S.C. §§ 3141- 3148.

⁹ 29 U.S.C. § 704.

¹⁰ 42 U.S.C. § 12111, *et seq.*

- Project is feasible and fiscally sustainable through future operations and maintenance by the Subrecipient or its representatives, and all other funding sources are firmly committed.
- The Subrecipient must have resources to ensure on-going maintenance and operation of the improvements; and
- If the project is partially funded with sources other than CDBG-DR, the Subrecipient must assure it also complies with all applicable eligibility requirements of such funding.

4.2 Use of Funds Overview

The Program will provide CDBG-DR funding awards in the form of a grant, making funding available to municipalities and other eligible entities to enable a variety of critical recovery activities. These activities will focus on investments to produce holistic economic development, provide affordable housing, reduce sprawl, and create a symbiotic environment to nurture complementary private sector investments. Revitalization projects will correlate to a larger strategy that targets downtown services, business districts, and key corridors within each community that is part of the MRP Program. Municipalities are encouraged to use the MRP Program as a tool to align the use of CRP Program funds to address needs identified as a result of the Hurricanes' impact and align investments that result in opportunities for future public-private investment in downtown areas. Overview of the UPR Neighborhood Revitalization Program

PRDOH's approved Action Plan, as amended, allocates one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) to prioritize and support the recovery redevelopment and revitalization of the distressed urban area surrounding the UPR campuses located in Río Piedras and Mayagüez. The communities residing in these areas, which in large part consist of the student body, have been significantly damaged by the physical and economic impact of the Hurricanes. Program funds may be used to support strategic investments in growth nodes around these campuses. Using CDBG-DR funds to address the revitalization and recovery of the areas will create an environment of economic regeneration around the campuses and enable current and future students at these institutions to return to their studies in safe and economically vibrant areas.

The funds to implement projects in the communities surrounding the Río Piedras Campus will be administered by the Municipality of San Juan, while the funds for projects neighboring the communities of the Mayagüez Campus will be administered by the Municipality of Mayagüez.

4.2.1 Requirements to Coordinate Projects with Stakeholders within UPR Neighborhood
PRDOH requires that the municipalities of San Juan and Mayagüez lead an effective and efficient coordination process with recognized stakeholders within the UPR's neighboring

communities. The municipalities of San Juan and Mayagüez shall consider projects for this funding if:

- a) Projects are in compliance with eligibility requirements included in this guide;
- b) Projects are located within UPR neighborhood communities;
- c) Municipalities provide the opportunity to UPR neighborhood stakeholders to present their needs and suggested solutions to address their needs; and
- d) UPR neighborhood communities are informed by the municipalities of projects before their submission to PRDOH for eligibility evaluation.

4.3 Overview of RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative

The RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative encourages the use of ten percent (10%) of allocated funding to each Subrecipient to implement green initiatives in project design. These include reforestation and planting trees to reestablish the flora and fauna lost as a result of the Hurricanes. In addition, the RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative will include investing in and using green infrastructure, green installations and standards, and green energy and waste re-purposing and reduction initiatives.

Funds from the Program may support greening of community spaces and public areas, creating and enhancing sports and athletic facilities and public gardens, and converting vacant and blighted areas into neighborhood open gathering places. Such spaces will be primarily natural or use green infrastructure as a key building element. The Program will be open to a wide range of entities that will work in coordination with the municipal government. Greening activities can be undertaken either by units of governments or via non-profit entities, such as “*Para la Naturaleza*”. Funds may also be used to mitigate stormwater run-off and future damage in projects that restore and improve the conveyance of water in the natural infrastructure system.

4.4 Program Funds Use for Match

HUD allows CDBG-DR funds to be used as a match for other federal programs when the HUD-funded project also has CDBG-DR eligible activities.¹¹ It is possible that some projects identified by Subrecipients of this Program could be used as a match for FEMA-funded projects. There are also other federally funded programs, specifically Economic Development Administration (**EDA**) grants where CDBG-DR funds may be used as the twenty percent (20%) match required on projects that meet both EDA and CDBG-DR program requirements. Applicants wishing to use funds from this Program as a match for FEMA or EDA funded projects must inform PRDOH that they intend to do so. PRDOH will work with Puerto Rico's Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction, and Resilience (**COR3**), the administrator of FEMA funds for the Island, to determine if the requested match project is FEMA-eligible and could be funded through the CDBG-DR Non-Federal

¹¹ 83 FR 5844, 5865.

Match Program, so as not to duplicate efforts and to maximize Program funding. FEMA-funded projects must be both FEMA and CDBG-DR eligible, and significant coordination between FEMA and HUD is required to receive match credit. Similarly, PRDOH will work with EDA to determine whether the use of both EDA and CDBG-DR funds is permissible and eligible under both programs.

4.4.1 FEMA Funded projects

Funding requests for projects that have received FEMA funds will have two (2) options:

- Option 1: Funding requests to cover cost gap, maintaining the same scope of work approved by FEMA.
- Option 2: Funding request to cover cost gap of different additional scope of work approved by FEMA.

4.5 Affordable Housing Development Initiative

Subrecipients may promote the creation of affordable housing as an opportunity to further advance economic development in key urban corridors. Strategic investment funds may be committed to address unmet needs related to housing. Projects will focus on urban and key economic corridors that contain blighted and underutilized housing that can be redeveloped into safe, sanitary, and decent committed affordable housing opportunities.

Subrecipients must demonstrate a minimum level of experience in:

- Managing properties and performing preventive maintenance;
- Fiscally and financially managing cash flow and expenditures; and
- Providing referrals and collaborating with other human and social services entities for the provision of wrap-around resident services.

For affordable ownership housing opportunities, a Subrecipient must demonstrate a minimum level of experience in:

- Their capacity to work with first-time homeowner counseling;
- Financial matters literacy and education;
- Working with eligible ownership applicants in securing conventional conforming loans; and
- Coordinating the underwriting and closing processes.

Subrecipients interested in requesting funds for affordable housing projects must refer to the Affordable Housing Supplemental Guide approved by PRDOH.¹²

¹² Affordable Housing Supplemental Guidelines are available at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/city-revitalization/> (English) <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/revitalizacion-de-la-ciudad/> (Spanish).

4.6 Economic Development Project Initiative

To be eligible to engage in economic development projects and activities under the CRP Program, Subrecipients and municipalities must select an eligible non-profit or for-profit entity with a minimum level of experience in developing, owning, and managing economic development projects. Selection of the eligible entity must be through an open and competitive process. Municipalities will not be allowed to develop, own, manage and administer an economic development project in its entirety.

Acceptable implementation structures include those listed below. However, PRDOH will consider alternatives on a case-by-case basis:

1. Projects owned by a public entity and operated by a private or public non-profit entity or a private for-profit entity;
2. Projects owned and operated by a public or private non-profit entity or private for-profit entity; and
3. Projects owned and operated by a community-based development organization.

Projects must meet a Public Benefit Standard set by PRDOH. Typically, economic development activities must meet the public benefit standards stipulated under 24 C.F.R. § 570.209(b) and 24 C.F.R. § 570.482(f) to ensure the amount of public benefit derived is commensurate with the amount of CDBG assistance being provided to the activity. However, notice 83 FR 5844 waived the public benefit standards at 24 C.F.R. § 570.482(f) and 24 C.F.R. § 570.209 (b) and (d) for activities that create or retain jobs or businesses.

Notwithstanding, in the interest of promoting the responsible expenditure of federal funds, all CRP Program economic development activities must create one or more permanent, full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs for every \$100,000 spent on the project.

During the application process, projects are evaluated to determine their eligibility for the CRP Program. There are projects that may have elements of a public facility as well as economic development. These projects require a *Use of Funding Analysis (UFA)* to determine the primary category of the project and all applicable requirements. Depending on the primary category of a project, the Subrecipient must comply with its respective guidelines. Therefore, if a project, through the UFA, is determined to be primarily a public facility project then it is only necessary for it to comply with the CRP Program Guidelines. On the other hand, if a project is determined to be an economic development project, then it must comply with the CRP Program Guidelines and Economic Development Activities Supplemental Guidelines.

The UFA consists of the following steps:

- I. Determine the different components of the project and classify each component with its respective category.

- II. Determine **the** estimated amount of funding that corresponds to each component of the project.
- III. Calculate the percentage of funding that will be used for each identified component, based on the total project cost.
- IV. Identify the project component that uses the majority of project funding. The component with the majority of funding will be the factor that determines the primary category of the project.

Municipalities with economic development projects must go through an underwriting process, as detailed in the Economic Development Activities Supplemental Guidelines approved by PRDOH. Municipalities will receive an Underwriting Package Checklist for their specific project with the details of the documentation required for the underwriting analysis. Municipalities will have an Underwriting Package submission period of **90 days**, after receiving the Project Checklist to present their Underwriting Package to the CRP **Program** for evaluation. Additional days may be granted by PRDOH on a case-by-case basis.

Subrecipients interested in requesting funds for economic development projects must refer to the Economic Development Activities Supplemental Guidelines.¹³

4.7 CDBG-DR Eligible Activities

This Program will allow municipalities and other eligible entities to implement integrated and innovative solutions to the problems faced by their communities. Eligible revitalization projects should correlate **with** a larger strategy targeting downtown service and business districts or key corridors and support and align with future public and private investments. The non-housing projects that will be most responsive to the Program are those that combine improved infrastructure, accessibility, and other leveraged economic activity as a result.¹⁴ The most responsive affordable housing projects will take into account the unmet need of affordable rental and ownership housing and the ability to redevelop blighted or underutilized housing.

All projects provided CDBG-DR funding need to meet a HUD eligible activity as defined by Section 105(a) of the HCDA, as amended. The eligible activities listed below have been included to allow and encourage Subrecipients to think broadly on how to use the Program to address community/economic development and revitalization through infrastructure improvements.

All projects in this Program will meet at least one (1) of the following eligible activities:

¹³ Economic Development Activities Supplemental Guidelines are available at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/city-revitalization/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/revitalizacion-de-la-ciudad/> (Spanish).

¹⁴ Projects must comply with accessibility requirements established in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701, *et seq.*

- Section 105(a)(1) – Acquisition of real property (including air rights, water rights, and other interests therein), (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(1));
- Section 105(a)(2) – Provision of assistance for public facilities and improvements, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(2));
- Section 105(a)(3) – Provision of assistance for code enforcement in deteriorated or deteriorating areas, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(3));
- Section 105(a)(4) – Provision of assistance for the clearance, demolition, removal, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of buildings and improvements, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(4));
- Section 105(a)(5) – Provision of assistance for the removal of material and architectural barriers, (42 U.S.C. § 5305 (a)(5));
- Section 105(a)(7) – Provision of assistance for the disposition of real property for public purposes, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(7));
- Section 105(a)(8) – Provision of assistance for public services, including but not limited to those concerned with employment, crime prevention, childcare, health, drug abuse, education, energy conservation, welfare or recreation needs, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(8));
- Section 105(a)(9) – Payment of non-federal share, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(9));
- Section 105(a)(11) – Provision of assistance with relocation, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(11));
- Section 105(a)(12) – Provision of assistance for planning implementation activities (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(12));
- Section 105(a)(14) – Provision of assistance including loans and grants for activities carried out through nonprofit development organizations (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(14));
- Section 105(a)(15) – Provision of assistance to eligible entities to carry out a neighborhood revitalization or community economic development or energy conservation projects, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(15));
- Section 105(a)(16) – Provision of assistance for activities necessary to the development of energy use strategies, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(16));
- Section 105(a)(17) – Provision of assistance to private, for-profit entities, when the assistance is appropriate to carry out an economic development project, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(17));
- Section 105(a)(18) – Provision of assistance for the rehabilitation or development of housing, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(18));¹⁵
- Section 105(a)(19) – Provision of technical assistance to public or nonprofit entities, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(19));

¹⁵ The CRP Program will provide funding for Affordable Housing projects to qualified and eligible entities, as per the Affordable Housing Supplemental Guide available at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/city-revitalization/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/revitalizacion-de-la-ciudad/> (Spanish).

- Section 105(a)(21) – Provision of assistance by Subrecipients under this Program to institutions of higher education, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(21)); and
- Section 105(a)(22) – Provision of assistance to public and private organizations to facilitate economic development, (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(22)).

4.8 Ineligible Activities

Unless permitted by a waiver, the following activities may not be assisted with CDBG-DR funds:

- Buildings or portions thereof used for the general conduct of government as defined in HCDA Section 102(a)(21) generally will not be eligible but will be considered by PRDOH and approved by HUD on a case-by-case basis;
- General government expenses, except as otherwise specifically authorized under 2 C.F.R. Part 200, expenses required to carry out the regular responsibilities of the unit of general local government are not eligible for assistance; and
- Political activities.

The following activities may not be assisted with CDBG-DR funds unless undertaken either as a public service under HCDA Section 105(a)(8), part of an activity providing economic development assistance to a for-profit business under HCDA Section 105(a)(17), or by an eligible nonprofit organization under HCDA Section 105(a)(15):

- Purchase of equipment
- Operating and maintenance expenses

4.9 Limitations on Assisting Privately-Owned Utilities

CDBG-DR funds under the CRP Program may not be used to assist a privately-owned utility for any purpose.¹⁶

4.10 Subrecipient Procurement Requirements

PRDOH, as a grantee of the CDBG-DR funds, requires procurement processes and policies of CDBG-DR programs be governed by the provisions of federal statute 2 C.F.R. § 200.317. It allows PRDOH to follow its procurement policies and procedures as established in 2 C.F.R. § 200.317 and, in turn, allows Subrecipients to be subject to the provisions of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318-200.327.¹⁷

PRDOH requires that all Subrecipients of this Program follow the provisions of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318-200.327 and maintain comprehensive records of all acquisition processes. All related records shall be available to PRDOH or state or federal required agencies to effectively carry out monitoring processes of procurement documents when required.

¹⁶ Although HUD recently granted Puerto Rico - through the Federal Register, Vol. 87, No. 236 (December 9, 2022), 87 FR 75644, a waiver allowing assistance to privately owned utilities, the CRP Program will not provide assistance for this purpose.

¹⁷ OA 21-27 - To enable all subrecipient entities of CDBG-DR funds to use the provisions of 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318-200.327 in their procurement processes in relation to CDBG-DR Programs.

Subrecipients will be required to prepare and submit to PRDOH a certification of compliance with all applicable procurement regulations. Purchase orders, contracts, and similar documentation resulting from procedures of procured goods or services shall be submitted to PRDOH before requesting reimbursement or payments of costs incurred to implement Program activities.

5 Funds Allocation and Distribution

PRDOH has allocated a total amount of one billion two hundred sixty-three million three hundred thirty-three thousand seven hundred and twenty dollars (\$1,263,333,720) to this Program, with a one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) maximum award, unless noted otherwise in the table next. PRDOH plans to distribute funding for the Program amongst the seventy-eight (78) municipalities of Puerto Rico. All Subrecipients will have a specified period of time, as established in the executed SRA and the applicable Supplemental Guide, to submit project concepts that meet program objectives to PRDOH. The approved Action Plan, as amended, includes a set-aside amount of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) for the UPR Neighborhood Revitalization at the Río Piedras and Mayagüez campuses.

5.1 Program Funding and Maximum Project Award

Description	Total Allocation	Maximum Award
Municipal Recovery	\$1,088,333,720.00	\$100,000,000.00
UPR Neighborhood Revitalization Program	\$100,000,000.00	\$50,000,000.00
Community Resilience Centers Set-Aside	\$75,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00

Total Program Allocation:¹⁸ \$1,263,333,720.00

PRDOH reserves the right to reallocate funding as a result of a Subrecipient non-performance determination, as established in the SRA. All project awards are subject to the availability of funds. PRDOH also reserves the right to reallocate funds from Subrecipient projects that are not progressing or stalled for any reason, if the submitted Subrecipient project cannot be completed in a timely manner to conform to the federal grant conditioned timeline of expiration.

5.2 Municipal Recovery Funding Distribution

PRDOH shall make use of federal disaster-related data in addition to demographic data to create specific allocations for each municipal government. Due to the need to tie

¹⁸ All funding required for overall program administration and management is included within the total program funding allocation at the proportionate corresponding rate.

projects to impacts from the Hurricanes, the allocations will rely on the most recent available data and may include, but shall not be limited to, the use of:

- FEMA Individual Assistance (IA) data;
- FEMA Public Assistance (PA) data;
- Other federal disaster recovery data that documents damages to public assets and NGO facilities located within a municipal boundary;
- Population (US Census Bureau);
- Puerto Rico Department of Labor data;
- Geographic Area data (US Geological Survey); and
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data.

These criteria will be given weighted percentages, as per the recovery priorities set forth by the CRP Program.

Each municipal allocation will be established with the assumption that the municipal government agrees to take part in the MRP Program and with the goal that each municipal government has the ability to enact at least two (2) CRP projects. Through the allocation process, PRDOH will also ensure that the most impacted municipal governments and larger municipalities receive funding that is proportional to disaster impacts and their pre-hurricane populations.

6 Program Eligibility

6.1 Overview of Eligible Entities

PRDOH plans to implement the Program by entering into SRAs with each of the seventy-eight (78) municipal governments across Puerto Rico, in addition to other eligible entities (as described below in the Eligible Entities section) which can meet the recovery objectives of the Program. PRDOH expects that every municipal government will participate in this Program.

Municipal governments are the primary source for communities to address their needs and the first responders before, during and after disaster events. The Program allows municipal governments to listen to stakeholders from their communities to address their unmet needs. To enhance coordination of projects occurring within municipal boundaries and to ensure that downtown areas and key corridors are restored and made more resilient, non-governmental entities are encouraged to communicate and work in partnership with a participating municipal government.

6.2 Eligible Entities

To be eligible to apply for funds under the Program, Applicants must be one (1) of the following types of entities:

- Unit of General Local Government (Municipal Governments);

- NGO (501(c)(3)) or Not for Profit Entities, for example:
 - Faith-Based or Community Based Organizations
 - Conservation or Natural Resource Organizations
 - Public Schools or Institutions of Higher Learning to provide public services to the community;
- Other community-based governmental entities, for example:
 - Public Housing Authorities and/or Public Health Facilities;
- Public Institutions of Higher Learning (Universities);
- Government entities designated to educate, assist, manage and/or operate facilities that provide services to citizens before, during and/or after disaster events will be eligible to request funds as a Subrecipient to implement CRC project(s);
- A regional consortium of any of the above.

6.2.1 Additional Eligibility Requirements

Subrecipients must comply with the following CDBG-DR eligibility-required criteria:

- CDBG-DR funds cannot be used for Operations & Maintenance (**O&M**) costs. Therefore, each Subrecipient must identify a source of funding for year-round O&M expenses for projects funded through this Program, including daily operations and funding strategies.
- As required by local law, each Subrecipient must use the professional services of an architect and/or engineer, licensed to practice in Puerto Rico, to prepare the design and development of construction documents of all projects, in accordance with PRDOH and HUD standards, as well as all applicable local building codes and regulations.

6.2.2 Municipal Government Partnerships

Units of General Local Government (**UGLG**) have two (2) options for entering into partnerships with other eligible entities: through an **SRA** or through a Contractor Agreement. The difference between these partnerships is:

- **Subrecipient Agreements** (from listed eligible entities): CDBG-DR funds are provided to carry out an eligible activity following all requirements from HUD's regulations, including applicable laws and regulations. There are three (3) main types of entities that may be a Subrecipient: government agencies, private non-profits, and private for-profits (the latter only in rare instances doing microenterprise assistance). A screening process is required to evaluate qualified entity capacity to carry out a CDBG-DR eligible activity. It is required to document that the entity receiving funds has the capacity and ability to perform the activity. The level of scrutiny needed shall correspond to the size and scope of the activity along with the required funding amount.

- **Contractor Agreements:** CDBG funds are paid as compensation for professional services in compliance with its scope, budget, timeline, and applicable laws and regulations. Non-profits can be contractors, though they must be selected via an open and competitive procurement process in compliance with HUD's regulations.

6.2.3 Non-Municipal Governments

When necessary and applicable, to ensure proper coordination of projects, entities that are not UGLGs will be required to work in partnership and have the support of the local governing body. Municipal governments must work in coordination with PRDOH in structuring direct legal relationships with non-municipal governments with particular consideration given to ownership, operation, and maintenance of the project.

6.3 PRDOH Direct Selection Entities

PRDOH may enter into a direct relationship with a Subrecipient other than a municipal government in situations where a project's successful implementation to address unmet needs requires such assistance.¹⁹

- If PRDOH determines that a particular project may be best implemented through a direct relationship with an eligible entity other than a municipal government, PRDOH will coordinate with the eligible entity, and with the corresponding UGLG, as necessary.
- In the unlikely event that a municipal government decides to decline participation in the Program, PRDOH reserves the right to define and work with a directly selected qualified Subrecipient within the municipal boundaries where the project is to be located. If necessary, PRDOH will post, in the CDBG-DR website, information that outlines which municipalities decided not to participate in the Program, and what additional steps PRDOH will take to inform non-governmental entities in these jurisdictions about opportunities to apply to the Program.
- Direct selection of Subrecipient may occur if the Government of Puerto Rico and PRDOH determine that a project meets the goals of this Program, but the Subrecipient does not have the fiscal or technical capacity for its implementation. However, PRDOH will work with the Subrecipient to determine an eligible entity who can help the Subrecipient implement the grant and achieve the CRP's Program objectives through an agreement.

¹⁹ Direct Selection criteria and process is outlined in the CDBG-DR/MIT Subrecipient Manual available in English and Spanish in the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/subrecipient-manual/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/manual-del-subrecipiente/>

7 Program Steps

The CRP Program process framework has been designed so that it is executed in an orderly and sequential manner, following steps that must be completed, and meeting all the requirements of the local, state, and federal regulations as applicable. The following steps summarize this general concept and the typical sequence in which they shall occur.

7.1 Step 1: Registration to the Program

After PRDOH has selected an entity to be a Subrecipient of funds, the entity shall register for the Program by submitting all necessary information for the preparation of a capacity assessment and an SRA. In this step, the potential Subrecipient shall certify and designate its Point of Contact (**POC**) as the official representative of the Subrecipient for matters related to the CRP Program. Through such designation, the POC is authorized to receive information, attend workshops, and submit documents required by the PRDOH.

7.2 Step 2: Subrecipient Capacity Assessment

The PRDOH CDBG-DR Monitoring Division completes a capacity assessment, in compliance with 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and exceptions at 24 C.F.R. § 570.502, to evaluate the potential Subrecipients' capacity and readiness to manage CDBG-DR funded programs. This assessment takes into account the entity's monitoring and audit history, current staffing capacity and experience, internal controls, systems, financial processes, past and current experience complying with CDBG-DR rules and regulations, and citizen engagement experience.

7.3 Step 3: Subrecipient Agreement Execution

The SRA establishes the applicable CDBG-DR award requirements, as well as state and local laws that the Subrecipient must meet. It includes provisions to reduce risk of noncompliance and to ensure that PRDOH meets its own responsibility to HUD for performance and financial reporting. The Subrecipient must submit a Municipal Resolution, Insurance Policy, Letter of Intent, and the Personnel and Budget Exhibits. After submitting all the required documents, the Subrecipient will sign the SRA with PRDOH and must then submit a Request for Authorization for each municipal employee that will perform activities related to the development of the Program in the municipality.

7.4 Step 4: Project Application

The Subrecipient identifies and submits the potential eligible projects, and all supporting documentation, to be performed through the CRP Program. If necessary, the Subrecipient may procure Project Manager services to help with the preparation and submission of the potential projects to the Program. The Program evaluates all documentation and information of the submitted projects to determine eligibility, as detailed in these Guidelines. Once a project has been deemed eligible, the Program

submits a notification of project eligibility to the Subrecipient in the form of a Justification Report.

7.5 Step 5: Duplication of Benefits Analysis

The Subrecipient must identify all sources of funding for each project that is deemed eligible for the Program and complete the Duplication of Benefits analysis, as detailed in the Duplication of Benefits section of these Guidelines.

7.6 Step 6: Project Development and Feasibility Study

For all projects that contain economic development and/or affordable housing activities, the Subrecipient must have prepared a plan considering feasibility and sustainability analysis. The Program may request the submission of documents and/or meetings to receive information related to planning efforts of the project. If necessary, the Subrecipient must procure professional services for the preparation of all required feasibility analyses and studies. After completing all feasibility studies, the Subrecipient must submit all documentation to the Program. The Subrecipient shall not continue project development procedures before demonstrating, with documented analyses and reports, that the project is feasible, sustainable, maintainable, and operable during the applicable period established by PRDOH.

7.7 Step 7: Professional Services Procurement

The Subrecipient determines the need for the acquisition of professional services to continue the process for the development of the eligible projects. The Subrecipient must perform the procurement processes in compliance with 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.318-200.327²⁰ for the acquisition of all services needed.

7.8 Step 8 - 9: Project Design and Environmental Review Documents

The Subrecipient must complete the preparation of the design documents and must obtain all the required endorsements for construction in compliance with applicable construction codes and related regulations. Also, the Subrecipient will initiate the Environmental Review consultation process with PRDOH. After consultation with PRDOH, Subrecipient must complete the Environmental Review compliance documentation. No construction work shall commence without having a Certification of Compliance with Environmental Review per 24 C.F.R. Part 58 and Authorization to use CDBG-DR funds.

7.9 Step 10: Project Construction Bid and Inspection Services

The Subrecipient must complete all the documentation for the acquisition of the construction and inspection services for each project to be completed. Before commencing the construction process, all required permits and endorsements, including design and environmental review documents, must be completed as per applicable

²⁰ Refer to OA 21-27, *supra*.

codes and regulations. If property acquisition is required to accomplish the project, the Subrecipient **must** complete the acquisition before commencing any construction work, **ensuring** compliance with applicable **local and federal** property acquisition regulations.²¹

7.10 Step 11: Project Construction

The Subrecipient is responsible for completing all the required steps for the construction process. The Subrecipient is responsible for the inspection and management of construction. Additionally, the Subrecipient shall validate that all construction processes comply with all CDBG-DR requirements, applicable regulations, and laws.²²

7.11 Step 12: Close-out

The subrecipient will prepare and submit all project Close-out documentation required by PRDOH.

8 Project Selection

Subrecipients are required to submit to PRDOH, project applications that comply with eligibility requirements identified in these Guidelines, including at least the following:

- Having a tie to the Hurricanes;
- Meet at least one (1) National Objective;
- Meet at least one (1) eligible activity; and
- Addresses unmet needs created or exacerbated by **the Hurricanes**.

PRDOH will evaluate each project's information and the supporting documentation submitted by the Subrecipient to validate its eligibility compliance before authorizing the expenditure of funds for the project. PRDOH may require Subrecipients to present additional information to validate the feasibility, sustainability, maintainability, and operability of the project.

8.1 Application Process

Applications submitted to PRDOH for funding will be evaluated only when the Subrecipient has complied with all of the following requirements:

²¹ In the case where property is being acquired and there are displaced persons as a result of the acquisition, Subrecipients must follow all applicable requirements pertaining to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (URA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 4601 *et seq.* See the CDBG-DR/MIT URA & ADP Guidelines for all of the requirements that must be complied with regarding URA processes and notifications, found at: <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/ura-adp-guidelines/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/guias-ura-adp/> (Spanish).

²²As required by Federal Register Vol. 83, No. 28 (February 9, 2018), 83 FR 5844, amended by Federal Register Vol. 84 No. 33 (February 19, 2019), 84 FR 4836, "[a]ll rehabilitation, reconstruction, and new construction should be designed to incorporate principles of sustainability, including water and energy efficiency, resilience, and mitigating the impact of future disasters..." Also see, Puerto Rico Recovery Disaster Action Plan, as amended, p. 18.

- Have a valid SRA with the corresponding budget and timeframe available to address project scope and funding requirements;
- Submitted all information and documentation to demonstrate eligibility compliance, and, if required, have the capacity to demonstrate feasibility, sustainability, maintainability, and operability of the project;
- Demonstrate legal ownership or site control of the land where the project will be developed. This includes property acquisition of the land or other proof of ownership or site control, such as evidence of legal authorization from the property owner (e.g., a Memorandum of Understanding or a Long-Term Lease Agreement), in compliance with local and federal regulations;
- Have identified operational and maintenance costs for the project and a source of funding to address these costs throughout its life; these costs cannot be covered by CDBG-DR funds; and
- Have identified all costs related to materials, furniture, and equipment necessary to carry out the operation of the project and a source of funding to cover these costs; these costs cannot be covered by CDBG-DR funds.

Throughout project selection and development, Subrecipients will be responsible for informing the public on projects' progress toward meeting recovery objectives under the CRP Program.

Subrecipients are strongly encouraged to identify and bring non-CDBG-DR funding to leverage the available Program funds.

Project concepts will be submitted to PRDOH via the application. The project concepts shall include descriptive details and information on project location, initial estimated project costs, implementation schedule, project beneficiaries, project feasibility, how the project addresses harm caused by the hurricanes or supports resiliency, and other factors that may be deemed applicable.

PRDOH will review the application and determine if projects are eligible. After receiving eligibility approval, the Subrecipients can proceed with the project development process.

Once PRDOH informs the Subrecipient that the project has been approved for funding, PRDOH will provide the necessary support, as needed, to implement the project.

8.2 Municipal Government Implementation and Non-Governmental Partners

PRDOH anticipates that the participating municipal governments submitting projects to the Program will want to implement these projects in coordination with Partners located in their jurisdictions. PRDOH will provide Program oversight and technical assistance. PRDOH can, and may at its discretion, provide enhanced oversight and/or implement

projects directly if it determines that the municipal government cannot implement the project. PRDOH may also, in coordination with the municipal government, determine that the local Partner should directly implement the project and enter into a contractual relationship with PRDOH.

In each case, PRDOH will pay close attention to engagement with Partners within jurisdictions and will strongly encourage collaboration within municipal boundaries. Due to the objectives of the Program, a strong interest in collaboration by NGOs is anticipated.

8.3 Application Requirements

The following sections outline the items that will be included as part of the Application Process for the Program.

8.3.1 Description of Intended Use of Funds

Subrecipients will describe the proposed use of CDBG-DR funding needed to complete the project. While PRDOH will not require final costs, Subrecipients will be required to provide an estimated cost for the proposed project.

8.3.2 Project Location and Ownership/Site Control Requirement

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program, and as part of the application process, all Subrecipients must confirm and provide assurance that the facility for which funding is sought is located within the municipal boundary in a designated downtown area or key growth area, and shall demonstrate that the project has been presented to and has the support of the participating municipal government. Plans for realistic site control for affordable housing undertakings must be identified, as well with whom final ownership of an assisted affordable housing project will rest. Acceptable proof of ownership or site control under the Program may include one (1) of these documents:

- Public Deed
- Long-term Lease Agreement (minimum of fifteen (15) years)²³
- Property Registry Certification
- Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**)
- Municipal Resolution
 - The contents of the Municipal Resolution must comply with the requirements established in Article 194 of Act No. 210-2015, 30 L.P.R.A. § 6302, applicable to the state, its agencies, public corporations, and municipalities for registering public domain assets for the first time in the Puerto Rico Property Registry. The CRP Program will offer a Municipal

²³ HUD CDP Notice 17-09: Management of Community Development Block Grant Assisted Real Property, <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/17-09cpdn.pdf>.

Resolution template to assist municipalities in documenting this requirement.

8.3.3 Agreeing to PRDOH Environmental Review

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program, Subrecipients are required to comply with the following:

- Utilize a qualified environmental professional to conduct the environmental review process for each approved project; and
- Adhere to the guidance provided by PRDOH.

8.3.4 Agreeing to Work with FEMA and COR3

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program, Subrecipients are required to comply with the following:

- Ensure an order of assistance and the avoidance of a "duplication of benefits";
- Agree to work with PRDOH and in coordination with COR3, and will work directly with FEMA, as needed, to determine if FEMA funding would be available for the project.

8.3.5 Agreeing to PRDOH Capacity Assessment

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program, and as part of the application process, the Subrecipient must confirm and provide assurance of its agreement to provide the necessary documentation and assist in the completion of the PRDOH capacity assessment of its organization. This assessment will provide PRDOH with the information needed in determining the organizational capacity to manage the CDBG-DR funds. In the case of committed affordable housing undertakings, Subrecipients must demonstrate the capacity to: 1) function as a rental housing/homeownership opportunity intake center; 2) maintain waiting lists; 3) appropriately select eligible beneficiaries with parity; 4) execute leases and sales contracts; 5) refer rental housing residents to social service providers for wrap-around human services; 6) perform ongoing compliance once units are placed into service; and 7) physically manage rental property.

8.3.6 Agreeing to PRDOH Technical Assistance

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program, and as part of the project selection process, the Subrecipient must confirm and provide assurance of its agreement to participate in all PRDOH technical assistance training to ensure compliance with all PRDOH and CDBG-DR requirements. Those organizations lacking capacity will be provided direct assistance by PRDOH in devising and implementing needed processes and procedures to comply with all CDBG-DR requirements in the implementation of the funded project.

8.3.7 Requested Use of Funds – RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative Program

The Program will provide CDBG-DR funding to implement CDBG-DR-eligible projects that will restore impacted natural resources or use green building concepts or materials. Green projects may be eligible if they are conducted within the downtown area and/or a key corridor. As part of the application process, Subrecipients must provide a narrative describing the potential uses of green infrastructure or green projects. The lack of a green project component in a proposed project will not negatively impact selection, but information is sought to help PRDOH determine how much of the Program's total funds are being directed toward the RE-Green Puerto Rico Initiative activity.

8.3.8 Defining Potential Revenue and Program Income

If required by PRDOH, Subrecipients must provide a narrative regarding all possible future revenue-producing activities and events following the completion of the project. In addition, Subrecipients must provide an estimate of annual future revenue to be generated, as well as offsets created by general facility use (maintenance, utilities, etc.) incurred by beneficiaries.

8.3.9 Leveraging Funds – Non-CDBG-DR Funding

Given the needs that exist within downtown areas, urban areas, and key corridors across Puerto Rico, Subrecipients will be required to provide a description of the source and amount of non-CDBG-DR funds committed to each project, if any. They should also detail the actions taken to assess if additional funding is available for the project. Responses demonstrating the allocation of non-CDBG-DR funds to complete the project will receive higher priority in the evaluation process to the related project.

8.3.10 Defining Long-Term Operation and Maintenance Plan

All projects for which CDBG-DR funding is being sought must have a long-term O&M plan that is determined by PRDOH to be viable as CDBG-DR funds cannot be used for operations and maintenance. Potential Subrecipients will be strongly advised of the inability/prohibition to allocate CDBG-DR funding for O&M purposes. As part of the application process, Subrecipients shall consider a plan, which does not involve CDBG-DR funds, to provide long-term O&M for the project, if funded. Subrecipients will be strongly encouraged to provide pro-forma and describe in detail how O&M will be provided.

8.3.11 Consideration of Green Initiatives

HUD and PRDOH encourage recipients of CDBG-DR funding, to the extent practicable, to use methods and materials that support green initiatives or show that green policies are part of their project. Through the application process, Subrecipients will be asked to describe what green initiatives will be built into the project. Projects that demonstrate and utilize green components and/or designs will have a scoring preference. Tools for green initiatives are available at the Environmental Protection Agency's website:

<https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure> <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/location-and-green-building>

PRDOH will work with eligible Subrecipients to identify opportunities for incorporating green practices into projects, on a case-by-case basis, and to the extent practicable.

8.3.12 Compliance with FEMA Elevation and Flood Proofing Standards

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program and as part of the application process, the Subrecipient must confirm and assure that it will comply with applicable elevation and floodproofing standards in effect for the location of the facility. See the Elevation Standards section for further details on elevation and floodproofing standards.

8.3.13 Requested Use of Funds – Retrofit vs New Construction (CRC Set-aside only)

The Program will provide CDBG-DR funding to either retrofit an existing facility or construct a new facility. Because CDBG-DR funding is limited, priority consideration will be given to retrofit projects. If FEMA funds are unavailable for new construction, proposed projects involving new construction will be considered, provided additional leveraged funds are incorporated. Subrecipients, for this set-aside, must provide a narrative detailing the proposed use of funds and clearly state if funding will be used to retrofit a facility or if funding is needed for a new facility.

8.3.14 Requested Use of Funds – Public Service Activities (CRC Set-aside only)

The Program will also provide CDBG-DR funding to implement CDBG-DR-eligible “public services” that address a PRDOH identified disaster-related impact. These services must be conducted within a community center facility. Subrecipients for this set-aside must provide a narrative describing the proposed public service and its target participants. The lack of a “public services” component in a proposed project will not negatively impact selection.

8.3.15 Defining Disaster Facility Usage (CRC Set-aside only)

Subrecipients for this set-aside must cite the services that will be provided during a formally federally declared disaster event. PRDOH understands the service needs of community centers will vary across the Island. Accordingly, PRDOH understands the different types of services that will be presented. However, PRDOH is cognizant of core services needed during pre- and post-disaster times. In addition to defining the type of project—retrofit or new construction, Subrecipients must cite the types of recovery services either provided or to be provided at the center. Disaster core services include, but are not limited to:

- Potable water (required);
- Communication system (required);
- Energy generation and back-up (required);

- Shower facilities;
- Cooking facilities; and
- Refrigeration (food and medical)

8.3.16 Defining Non-Disaster Facility Usage and Annual Revenue (CRC Set-aside only)

For centers that plan to offer non-disaster services or are currently providing non-disaster-related services, Subrecipients will be required to cite the current array of services being considered or provided, the source(s) of income to maintain the center, and the estimated annual revenue generated by the activity at the center to ensure that potential program income is identified and other compliance issues with FEMA do not occur. Potential activities an applicant might consider include, but are not limited to:

- Education and training;
- Community residents' meetings;
- Health and social services;
- Sports and recreational activities;
- Sleep space;
- Musical and artistic events;
- Vocational training; and
- Rent of spaces.

9 Project Closeout

Project Closeout is the process that occurs after a project in the Program is complete, performance needs and all related requirements have been met, and no work remains. Also, long-term interest, such as property use after acquisition or equipment purchased with grant funds, is maintained through required liens or restrictions, and are fully documented. Regarding affordable housing undertakings, for rental projects, Closeout occurs when the structure is placed in service and leased. In regard to ownership projects, Closeout occurs when the last unit is sold to an eligible beneficiary. PRDOH will determine if the project has been successfully completed. For projects comprised of both CDBG-DR and other funds, Project Closeout occurs when all funds are spent, not just the CDBG-DR funded portions. PRDOH will solely determine if all the requirements of the SRA or MOU have been completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement. After PRDOH makes this assessment, it can initiate Closeout at a time and frequency of its choosing.²⁴

9.1 Process for Closeout

As the Program goes forward and projects move from the application process into construction phases, more detailed project and Program closeout procedures will be

²⁴ For more information regarding the closeout process, refer to the CDBG-DR/MIT Closeout Policy available in English and Spanish at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/closeout-policy/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/politica-de-cierre/>.

developed. Those procedures will be updated, and pertinent information will be added to this section of the Guidelines. Project closeout will begin when:

- All activities under the project are eligible, were completed, and met a national objective as described in the current Action Plan and these Guidelines;
- A project is deemed complete upon final review and/or an inspection by PRDOH and, when applicable, the submission of proof that all appropriate code and permit approvals have been secured, including Certificates of Occupancy;
- All funds allocated to the project have been expended on necessary and reasonable costs, and any remaining funds are returned to the grant account;
- All project expenses (including non-CDBG-DR funds), except closeout costs, to be paid have been completed and payment requested;
- Any special conditions have been met;
- All reporting requirements were completed and submitted;
- Any other responsibilities detailed in the SRA have been fulfilled;
- PRDOH has reviewed closeout documents and resolved any outstanding issues; and
- All monitoring or audit findings have been cleared.

9.2 HUD Notification of Closeout

In addition to the steps listed above, the following items must be reviewed and updated in HUD's Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (**DRGR**) system:

- Total amount of funds drawn for the activity;
- Activity type;
- National objective; and
- Activity accomplishments.

A final Quarterly Progress Report (**QPR**) must also be submitted to confirm that all funds allocated to a particular activity or program have been expended and all metrics have been reported to reflect the project's status.

10 Use of CDBG-DR Funds as Match

As is allowed by HUD and codified in the HCDA, CDBG-DR funds may be used as a matching requirement, share, or contribution for any other federal program when used to carry out an eligible CDBG-DR activity. It may include disaster recovery projects funded by agencies such as the United States Departments of Transportation, Commerce, Energy, and Agriculture. This also includes programs or activities administered by FEMA or the United States Army Corps of Engineers (**USACE**). By law, (codified in the HCDA as a note to Section 105(a)), the amount of CDBG-DR funds that may be contributed to a USACE project is \$250,000 or less. The use of CDBG-DR funds for

any activity reimbursable by, or for which funds are also made available by FEMA or USACE is prohibited.²⁵

For projects that wish to be considered as match for other federally funded disaster recovery programs, Subrecipients to this Program will need to inform PRDOH, during the application process, that they wish for their projects to be considered as eligible for that agency's match program. These projects must be both CDBG-DR eligible and compliant with the other federal agency requirements.

11 Financial Management

11.1 Payment Requests by Non-PRDOH Entities

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.305, for entities other than PRDOH, payment is typically made on an "advance payment" method provided the payment request is limited to the minimum amounts needed and is timed to be in accordance with actual, immediate cash requirements. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as administratively feasible to the actual disbursements for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs. This means that project costs should be incurred and documented as required prior to the submission of a payment request. If the preceding requirements cannot be met, the reimbursement payment method will be utilized.

11.2 More Detail on CDBG-DR Project Costs

HUD requires that, for all projects, as costs become more defined, and prior to construction, cost estimates be reviewed and confirmed to be reasonable. For Subrecipients who are provided CDBG-DR funds through this Program, PRDOH will work with the Subrecipient throughout the life of the grant to ensure that items like HUD cost principles are fully understood and complied with.

11.3 Reasonable Cost Guidance

PRDOH must ensure that CDBG-DR funds will be used solely for necessary and reasonable costs expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, and economic revitalization related to the covered disaster. A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. PRDOH may choose to determine standard reasonable costs for the reimbursement of specific costs under this Program and will deny costs that are determined to not conform to the cost reasonableness requirements.

²⁵ 83 FR 5844, 5865

11.4 Construction Cost Reasonableness

Federal Register Notice 83 FR 40314 requires PRDOH to ensure “that construction costs are reasonable and consistent with market costs at the time and place of construction.” Cost reasonableness is described as the price a prudent businessperson would pay for an item or service under competitive market conditions, given a reasonable knowledge of the marketplace. The method and degree of analysis may vary depending upon the circumstances surrounding a particular project (e.g., project type, risk, costs), but the description must address controls for public facilities and infrastructure improvements projects in addition to economic revitalization projects (involving, construction, rehabilitation, or reconstruction) and housing projects involving eight (8) or more units (whether new construction, rehabilitation, or reconstruction). HUD may issue guidance to PRDOH and may require PRDOH to verify cost reasonableness from an independent and qualified third-party architect, civil engineer, or construction manager.

To establish the cost reasonableness of the goods and services under the CDBG-DR Program, PRDOH may perform one (1) or more of the following analyses:

- *Comparison of Proposed Costs Received as Part of a Solicitation Process:* For the CDBG-DR Program, PRDOH or its Subrecipients will acquire all goods and services through procurement processes such as micro-purchases, small purchases, sealed bidding, and competitive proposals, among others. Adequate price competition establishes cost reasonableness. This will be the most common technique used to establish cost reasonableness, as the procurement processes normally attract two (2) or more offers in an independent competition for an award, which establishes current market values.
- *Comparison of Proposed Prices with Prior Solicitation Processes:* During the life cycle of the CDBG-DR grant, PRDOH or its Subrecipients may procure certain goods or services in multiple instances. Also, PRDOH/Subrecipients may procure goods or services for which, under other projects not necessarily related to CDBG-DR, similarities exist. A comparison of the prices obtained through prior solicitation processes may be used to establish cost reasonableness. Depending on the timing of the prices being compared, adjustments for inflation may be required to compare data in a fair manner.
- *Comparison of Proposed Prices and Historical Contracts:* PRDOH has extensive historical contract data for previous projects performed. This data may be used by a Subrecipient or PRDOH when procuring goods or services that are similar in nature to those performed in the past to establish cost reasonableness. Depending on the timing of the prices being compared, adjustments for inflation may be required to compare data in a fair manner.

- *Comparison of Proposed Prices with Independent Cost Estimates:* For the CDBG-DR Program, PRDOH or its Subrecipients will acquire all goods and services through procurement processes such as micro-purchases, small purchases, sealed bidding, and competitive proposals, among others. Some of these acquisition methods require that the User Area requesting the services provide an independent cost estimate of the goods or services to be procured. Comparison of these independent cost estimates with proposed prices may be used to establish cost reasonableness.
- *Comparison of Proposed Prices with Prices Obtained through Market Research:* When a good or service has an established market price, whether locally or in another jurisdiction, the verification of an equal or lower price may be used to establish cost reasonableness. Also, when the market value of a specific good or service is not found, a comparison with a substantially similar good or service may also be performed to establish cost reasonableness.

12 Green Building Standards and FEMA Elevation Requirements

HUD requires that all projects using CDBG-DR funds comply with FEMA elevation standards and that, to the extent possible, green building components be incorporated into the project. Through these actions, projects funded using CDBG-DR funds are generally presumed to be more resilient and will have been rebuilt or built in a more environmentally sustainable manner.²⁶ Given that this Program desires to make communities, downtown areas and key corridors more resilient, projects funded through this Program will be required to meet FEMA elevation requirements and show how HUD Green Building Standards will be used in the project or what green concepts were considered for the project. As Subrecipients and projects are selected for the Program, PRDOH will work with Subrecipients and awardees of the Program to address these two (2) compliances requirements. Below is more information on these two (2) components.

12.1 Green Initiatives

HUD encourages grantees to implement green building policies to the extent practicable and possible. Tools for green initiatives are available at EPA website:

<https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure>

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/location-and-green-building>

PRDOH will work with eligible entities and Subrecipients to identify opportunities for incorporating green infrastructure practices into projects, on a case-by-case basis, and to the extent practicable.

²⁶ 83 FR 5844.

12.2 Elevation Standards

Projects must comply with applicable elevation standards. These standards include elevation requirements and floodproofing requirements. Nonresidential structures must be elevated to the standards described in this paragraph or floodproofed in accordance with FEMA floodproofing standards at 44 C.F.R. § 60.3(c)(3)(ii) or successor standard, up to at least two feet (2') above the 100-year (or one percent (1%) annual chance) floodplain.

As per 24 C.F.R. § 55.2(b)(5), all Critical Actions within the 500-year (or 0.2 percent annual chance) floodplain must be elevated or floodproofed (in accordance with the FEMA standards) to the higher of the 500-year floodplain elevation or three feet (3') above the 100-year floodplain elevation. If the 500-year floodplain is unavailable, and the Critical Action is in the 100-year floodplain, then the structure must be elevated or floodproofed at least three feet (3') above the 100-year floodplain elevation. Critical Actions are defined as an "activity for which even a slight chance of flooding would be too great because such flooding might result in loss of life, injury to persons or damage to property", (24 C.F.R. § 55.2(b)(3)(i)), and may include hospitals, nursing homes, police stations, fire stations, and principal utility lines.

Applicable local and tribal codes and standards for floodplain management that exceed these requirements, including elevation, setbacks, and cumulative substantial damage requirements, must be followed.

13 Labor Standards

Federal labor standards apply to all projects receiving match funding through the Program. The CDBG authorizing statute requires that laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on construction work financed in whole or in part with CDBG funds be paid not less than locally prevailing wages, as determined by the United States Department of Labor (**DOL**) under the Davis-Bacon Act, as amended, and HCDA at 42 U.S.C. § 5310. These provisions ensure that when disaster recovery work is financed with CDBG-DR assistance, construction workers are paid the appropriate wage rate prevailing in the locality where the work is performed, furthering economic recovery. The Program team will coordinate with the PRDOH Federal Compliance and Subrecipient Management (FCSM) Team to ensure all contracts are reviewed for compliance.

Consistent with HUD CPD Notice 15-07: Guidance for Charging Pre-Application Costs of Homeowners, Businesses, and Other Qualifying Entities to CDBG Disaster Recovery

Grants,²⁷ PRDOH has established the following date thresholds for applicability with federal labor standards for work that began prior to the execution of the Grant Agreement between PRDOH and HUD:²⁸

- If construction was completed prior to September 20, 2018, or if the construction contract had been officially accepted by the Entity as substantially complete by September 20, 2018, Davis-Bacon provisions do not apply. Regarding construction projects, PRDOH has defined the completion date as the date the project was officially accepted as substantially complete. The Entity must provide proof of the substantial completion date.
- If construction was ongoing as of September 20, 2018, Davis-Bacon provisions apply. Contract specifications must include the applicable Davis-Bacon wage determination in effect as of September 20, 2018. The Entity has the option to include the wage determination in effect as of September 20, 2018, retroactive to the start of construction work. Both parties to the construction contract (e.g., the Entity and the construction contractor) must agree to amend the contract specifications.
- If construction has not started as of September 20, 2018, Davis-Bacon provisions and all other HUD CDBG-DR requirements apply. Advertisements for bids, bid solicitations, and contracts must incorporate Davis-Bacon labor standards and wage determinations and CDBG-DR compliance provisions for construction contracts.

More information regarding Davis-Bacon requirements and provisions can be found on the CDBG-DR website, at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/davis-bacon/db-policy-guide/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/davis-bacon/politica-de-davis-bacon/> (Spanish).

14 Section 3 Requirement

All Subrecipients who receive CDBG-DR funding are required to comply with all CDBG-DR requirements, including those enumerated in 24 C.F.R. Part 75. HUD regulation at 24 C.F.R. § 75.1 is commonly referred to as the Section 3 requirement. The Section 3 requirement seeks to ensure that employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible and consistent with existing federal and local laws and regulations, be directed to low- and

²⁷ HUD Notice CPD-15-07: Guidance for Charging Pre-Application Costs of Homeowners, Businesses, and Other Qualifying Entities to CDBG Disaster Recovery Grants is available at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4777/notice-cpd-1507-guidance-for-charging-preapplication-costs-to-cdbg-disaster-recovery-grants/>.

²⁸ As of the publication of these Program Guidelines, the application of this date threshold as it relates to construction contracts is pending approval from HUD. If HUD provides guidance that differs from the information contained herein, this program guideline document will be amended as needed.

very low-income persons, so that they can take part in recovery activities in proximity to work location. Through the program notification process and through technical assistance workshops and monitoring protocols, PRDOH will communicate and work with Subrecipients to ensure that each project adheres to Section 3 regulations.

The Section 3 Policy and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

15 Minority Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Requirement

All Subrecipients who receive CDBG-DR funding are required to comply with all CDBG-DR requirements including those enumerated in 2 C.F.R. § 200.321. Known as the Minority Women Owned Business Enterprise (**MWBE**) goals, these goals are an important part of HUD CDBG-DR programs, and they are a common area of review by HUD.

MWBE compliance in Puerto Rico is ensured by requiring, as applicable, Subrecipients, program partners, and contractors to make best efforts to achieve an overall MWBE participation goal of twenty percent (20%) of the entire contract value; consisting of ten percent (10%) for MBE and ten percent (10%) for WBE. If, after making good faith efforts, a Subrecipient is unable to meet MWBE goals, Subrecipients may submit a request for a MWBE Waiver for their overall goal. The request must set forth the reasons for the inability to meet any or all of the participation requirements together with an explanation of the good faith efforts undertaken.

2 C.F.R. § 200.321 requires the non-federal entity to take necessary steps to ensure that all recipients, Subrecipients, contractors, subcontractors, and/or developers funded in whole or in part with CDBG-DR financial assistance ensure that, when possible, contracts and other economic opportunities are directed to small and minority firms, women-owned business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms.

Through the program notification process and by means of document collection, technical assistance, and monitoring protocols, PRDOH will analyze data and communicate with Subrecipients to ensure that every project adheres to MWBE regulations, when applicable.

The MWBE Policy and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

16 Civil Rights and Non-Discrimination

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as part of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.* It prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or

national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Pursuant to Section 109 of the HCDA, no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any CDBG-DR program or activity. Section 109 also directs that the prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of age under the Age Discrimination Act²⁹ and the prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall apply to programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance under Title I programs.

As a program receiving federal CDBG-DR funding, the CRP Program shall be implemented in a manner that does not deny any individuals the opportunity to participate in, access, or benefit from the Program on a discriminatory basis of any federally or locally designated protected classes. Funded activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that avoids disproportionate negative impacts on protected classes of people and vulnerable communities, as well as create opportunities to address economic inequities facing communities. PRDOH has adopted several policies to which it, its Subrecipients, and all contractors must adhere in the design and implementation of the Program and funded projects.

All CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

16.1 Fair Housing & Equal Opportunity Policy (FHEO Policy)

The Fair Housing Act, 42 U.S.C. § 3601 *et seq.*, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing, and in other housing-related activities on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, familial status,³⁰ national origin, or disabilities. The Act requires HUD and its grantees to administer **their** programs in a manner that affirmatively furthers fair housing. In compliance with the aforementioned Act, as well as other applicable laws,³¹ the Program implementation will be conducted avoiding discrimination and/or

²⁹ The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 621 *et seq.*, prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in federally assisted and funded programs or activities, except in limited circumstances.

³⁰ Exceptions exist for housing covered under the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995, 42 U.S.C. § 3607(b).

³¹ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000(d) *et seq.*; Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended (Fair Housing Act), 42 U.S.C. § 3601 *et seq.*; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 701 *et seq.*; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*; Section 109 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (HCDA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 5309; Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 (HOPA), Pub. L. 104-76; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 6101 *et seq.*; CDBG-DR Program Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity for All Programs July 29, 2020 (V.1) Page 20 / 40; Executive Order No. 11063 (1962), Federal Register, Vol. 27, No. 228 (November 24, 1962), 27 FR 11527; General HUD Program Requirements: Equal Access to HUD-assisted or Insured Housing, 24 C.F.R. § 5.106; Act No. 131 of May 13, 1943, 1 L.P.R.A. § 13, known as the "Puerto Rico Civil Rights Act" – Discrimination in Public Places, Businesses, Transportation, and Housing; Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico 1952, 1 L.P.R.A. Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; Act No. 238-2004, as amended, 1 L.P.R.A. § 512(a), known as the "Bill of Rights of Persons with Disabilities"; Act. No. 44 of July 2, 1985, as amended, 1 L.P.R.A. § 501 *et seq.*, known as the "Act to Prohibit Discrimination Against People with Physical, Mental, or Sensory Impairments"; and Act No. 22-2013, 29 L.P.R.A. § 156 *et seq.*, known as "Act to Prohibit Discrimination for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity".

discriminatory practices to the extent that no person be excluded from participation in, denied program benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving CDBG-DR funds on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, familial status, sexual orientation (in employment and in HUD-funded or insured housing programs) or marital status (in HUD-funded or insured housing programs). Additionally, the Program will ensure that all activities are conducted in a manner that will affirmatively further fair housing.

The CDBG-DR FHEO Policy establishes requirements and provides guidance for ensuring that CDBG-DR programs do not discriminate against protected classes of people. Included in this policy is a summary of all civil rights-related and anti-discrimination laws which must be complied with, strategies and requirements for the affirmative marketing of programs to potential participants, the handling of discrimination complaints, equal opportunity employment requirements, communication requirements, recordkeeping requirements, and other information critical for ensuring compliant design and implementation of the Program.

The FHEO Policy and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/>.

16.2 Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits discrimination based on disability in federally assisted Programs. This section provides that qualified individuals should not be excluded from participation solely by reason of their disability, denied program benefits, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funding assistance.

All entities receiving an award from the Program are required to comply with Section 504 and ADA requirements in the construction or improvement of infrastructure, buildings, and housing. All facilities that are constructed or modified using CDBG-DR funds, the provision of public services, as well as employment practices, must comply with Section 504 and ADA to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

16.3 Reasonable Accommodation Policy

Federally funded programs are required under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, to make reasonable accommodations and modifications for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of Section 504 is to avoid discrimination and ensure these individuals have an equal opportunity to access and enjoy the benefits of the Program. Reasonable accommodation requests (changes to a rule, policy, practice, or service) and reasonable modifications (structural changes to a building or dwelling)

most commonly arise in housing programs; however, Section 504 applies to all federally funded programs and activities, which include non-housing projects.

Any person with disability-related needs may submit a reasonable accommodation request or modification to PRDOH, its Subrecipients, or contractors involved in the implementation of CDBG-DR programs. PRDOH has established the Reasonable Accommodation Policy to guide individuals on how to submit a non-employment related request, and instruct PRDOH employees, Subrecipients, and contractors on how to receive and evaluate reasonable accommodation and modification requests. Any employment-related, reasonable accommodation request should be directed to the individual's employer.

PRDOH and its Subrecipients will ensure that program participants are made aware of their right to request reasonable accommodations, and that every effort is made to meet the disability-related needs of requesting individuals to the maximum extent feasible, so far as providing the requested accommodations or modifications is considered reasonable.

The Reasonable Accommodation Policy and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

16.4 Language Access Plan

PRDOH, its Subrecipients, and contractors are responsible for complying with the PRDOH Language Access Plan (**LAP**). The purpose of the LAP is to ensure meaningful access to federally assisted programs and activities for persons, who as a result of national origin, are limited in their Spanish or English proficiency, while providing opportunity for broader community outreach and citizen participation in the Program. The LAP provides concrete action steps that shall be followed by PRDOH, Subrecipients, and contractors to ensure that appropriate language services and translated vital documents are made available to potential and actual Program participants, as well as in outreach activities and the provision of funded services, in accordance with the LAP.

The CDBG-DR Language Access Plan and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

17 Uniform Relocation Act

As a federally funded program, and in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (**URA**), 42

U.S.C. § 4601 *et seq.*, and the government wide implementing regulations found at 49 C.F.R. Part 24, all CDBG-DR programs are subject to URA regulations.

Projects funded under the Program which include acquisition, repair, or reconstruction activities that result in displacement must comply with all applicable URA regulations for notifying and providing the proper assistance, if applicable, to property owners, businesses, and tenants who may be subject to displacement. Persons and entities qualifying as “displaced persons”, as well as those who must temporarily relocate, as a result of Program-funded activities, may be eligible for relocation assistance benefits which must be accounted for in project budgets. As a condition of receiving CDBG-DR assistance, Subrecipients agree to fully comply with all applicable provisions of the URA.

The Uniform Relocation Assistance Guide & Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan (**URA & ADP Guide**) and all CDBG-DR general policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

18 Program Monitoring Requirements

As a result of receiving CDBG-DR funds from HUD, PRDOH is required to monitor projects and entities that receive Program funds. Therefore, any project funded through this Program and any Applicant that is provided funds has the potential to be monitored and/or reviewed by HUD and/or PRDOH. When projects are selected and Subrecipients execute agreements with PRDOH for this Program, additional information on monitoring requirements will be provided. This section provides a broad description of the monitoring requirements of this Program.

PRDOH must ensure compliance with HUD regulations, which include but are not limited to: record keeping, administrative and financial management, environmental compliance, citizen participation, conflict of interest, procurement, labor standards, Section 3, Fair Housing, Title VI, Section 504, duplication of benefits, property management and property acquisition and relocation. PRDOH is required to monitor all programs and projects for conformance with the goals, objectives, and policy set forth in the Action Plan and its Amendments.

Program monitoring serves to identify risks, deficiencies, and remedies related to programs, projects, and Subrecipients. The objectives of the program monitoring include:

- Determine if activities are being carried out as described in the Action Plan and Action Plan Amendments for the CDBG-DR Program and assistance;
- Determine if activities are being carried out in a timely manner;

- Determine if costs charged to the Program and projects are eligible under applicable laws and CDBG regulations and if are reasonable in light of the services or products delivered;
- Determine if activities are being conducted with adequate control over the Program and financial performance, and in a way that minimizes opportunities for waste, mismanagement, fraud, and abuse;
- If Subrecipients are utilized, determine if the activities are being carried out in conformance with the SRA;
- Assist in resolving compliance problems through discussion, negotiation, technical assistance, and training;
- Provide adequate follow-up measures to ensure that performance and compliance deficiencies are corrected and not repeated;
- Comply with the monitoring requirements of 24 C.F.R. § 570.501(b) and 2 C.F.R. § 200.329, if applicable;
- Determine if any conflict of interest exist in the operation of the CDBG-DR program per 24 C.F.R. § 570.611; and
- Ensure that required records are maintained to demonstrate compliance with applicable regulations.

19 Program Income

PRDOH understands and expects that, for some projects funded through this Program, revenue or program income will be generated. As a result, as part of the application process, Subrecipients will be asked to describe potential revenue-generating activities. PRDOH will work with funded eligible entities in this Program to identify and address issues relating to program income; below is more detail on program income.

For purposes of the CDBG-DR allocation under Public Law 115-56, "program income" is defined as gross income generated from the use of CDBG-DR funds and received by PRDOH or a Subrecipient of PRDOH, except as provided in 83 FR 5844. When income is generated by an activity that is only partially assisted with CDBG-DR funds, the income shall be prorated to reflect the percentage of CDBG-DR funds used (e.g., a single loan supported by CDBG-DR funds and other funds; a single parcel of land purchased with CDBG-DR funds and other funds).

Program income includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Proceeds from the disposition by sale or long-term lease of real property purchased or improved with CDBG-DR funds.
- Proceeds from the disposition of equipment purchased with CDBG-DR funds.
- Gross income from the use or rental of real or personal property acquired by PRDOH, local government, or Subrecipient thereof with CDBG-DR funds, minus the costs incidental to the generation of the income (i.e., net income).

- Net income from the use or rental of real property owned by PRDOH, local government, or Subrecipient thereof, that was constructed or improved with CDBG-DR funds.
- Payments of principal and interest on loans made using CDBG-DR funds.
- Proceeds from the sale of loans made with CDBG-DR funds.
- Proceeds from the sale of obligations secured by loans made with CDBG-DR funds.
- Interest earned on program income pending disposition of the income, including interest earned on funds held in a revolving fund account.
- Funds collected through special assessments made against nonresidential properties and properties owned and occupied by households not low-and moderate-income, where the special assessments are used to recover all or part of the CDBG-DR portion of a public improvement.
- Gross income paid to PRDOH, local government, or a Subrecipient thereof, from the ownership interest in a for-profit entity in which the income is in return for the provision of CDBG-DR assistance.

Program income does not include the following:

- The total amount of funds that is less than thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000), received in a single year and retained by PRDOH, local government, or a Subrecipient thereof.
- Amounts generated by activities eligible under section 105(a)(15) of the HCDA and carried out by an entity under the authority of section 105(a)(15) of the HCDA.

Program income received (and retained, if applicable) before or after closeout of the grant that generated the program income, and used to continue disaster recovery activities, is treated as additional CDBG-DR funds subject to the requirements of these Guidelines and must be used in accordance with the Action Plan. To the maximum extent feasible, program income shall be used or distributed before additional withdrawals from the U.S. Treasury are made, except as provided in the applicable HUD Notice.

While revolving funds are not foreseen for this Program, PRDOH, as the CDBG-DR grantee and local governments may establish revolving funds to carry out specific, identified activities. A revolving fund, for this purpose, is a separate fund (with a set of accounts that are independent of other program accounts) established to carry out specific activities. These activities generate payments used to support similar activities going forward. These payments to the revolving fund are program income and must be substantially disbursed from the revolving fund before additional grant funds are drawn from the U.S. Treasury for payments that could be funded from the revolving fund. Such program income is not required to be disbursed for non-revolving fund activities.

PRDOH may also establish a revolving fund to distribute funds to local governments to carry out specific, identified activities. The same requirements, outlined above, apply to this type of revolving loan fund. Note that no revolving fund established per these Guidelines shall be directly funded or capitalized with CDBG-DR grant funds, pursuant to 24 C.F.R. § 570.489(f)(3).

For more information about Program Income, refer to the Program Income Policy available at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/program-income-policy/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/politica-de-ingresos-del-programa/> (Spanish).

20 Environmental Review

Every project undertaken with federal funds, and all activities associated with such project, are subject to the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (**NEPA**), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*, as well as to the HUD's environmental review regulations at 24 C.F.R. Part 58 on Environmental Review Procedures for Entities Assuming HUD Environmental Responsibilities. The primary purpose of this Act is to protect and enhance the quality of our natural environment. 24 C.F.R. § 58.22 prohibits the commitment or spending of federal or non-federal funds on any activity that could have an adverse environmental impact or limit the choice of reasonable alternatives prior to completion of an environmental review. Environmental clearance must be obtained for each project prior to the commitment of federal or non-federal funds.

The primary objectives of the environmental review are to identify specific environmental factors that may be encountered at potential project sites, and to develop procedures to ensure compliance with regulations pertaining to these factors. The environmental review process is designed to produce program-specific environmental reviews procedures in a program that can vary greatly in terms of scope of work.

Environmental reviews must be completed for CDBG-DR projects before any funds, either HUD or other sources (including private), are committed to or spent on the project. In other words, there must be no choice-limiting actions. Choice Limiting Action (24 C.F.R. § 58.22(a)) are activities performed before your environmental review is complete that limits your choice on future activities on the project. Some examples include land acquisition, demolition, any construction activities (including site preparation), leasing, and entering into a contract for work on the project. Actions that do NOT limit future choices or have an impact on the environment before the environmental review is complete include planning and studies (including environmental), administration and management activities, option agreements, contracts conditioned on approval of the environmental review, engineering and design costs, and technical assistance and training.

Additionally, 24 C.F.R. § 58.32 indicates that all activities related on a geographical or functional basis be aggregated and evaluated as a single project. This also **requires** a complete description of the activities that constitute a project. This should include equipment, furnishings, construction, land acquisition, renovations, and any other relevant activities, as required.

If, at any time, the scope of the work changes from that presented in the **ERR**, a re-evaluation of the environmental review based upon that change is required. If the Responsible Entity determines that the change does not impact the environmental review, the determination is documented, and the project continues. If the change is determined to potentially impact the environmental review, project activities must cease until the re-evaluation is performed. The determination from this re-evaluation can be:

- The Environmental Review is still valid, and the work can progress;
- The Environmental Review requires modification, and the work can continue after the modifications are made; or
- The Environmental Review is no longer valid, and work must continue to be stopped until a new scope/environmental review is prepared for the work.

PRDOH will provide assistance for the Environmental Review for all projects in the Program. To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under the Program and as part of the application process, the entity will agree to conduct the Environmental Review and, in all cases, adhere to the guidance provided by the PRDOH environmental review team.

Laws and regulations that contain environmental provisions with which the Program must be in compliance include, but are not limited to:

- Protection of Historic Properties, 36 C.F.R. Part 800;
- Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands, 24 C.F.R. Part 55, (Executive Order No. 11988 and Executive Order No. 11990);
- Sections 307 (c) and (d) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (**CZMA**), as amended, 16 U.S.C. § 1456;
- Sole Source Aquifers, 40 C.F.R. Part 149;
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, 50 C.F.R. Part 402;
- Section 7 (b)(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (**WSRA**), as amended, 16 U.S.C. § 1278 - Restrictions on Water Resources Projects;
- Air quality provisions as found in Sections 176 (c) and (d) of the Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 7506, and in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, 40 C.F.R. Parts 6, 51, and 93;
- Farmland Protection Policy Act (**FPPA**), 7 U.S.C. § 4201 *et seq.*, implementing regulations 7 C.F.R. Part 658, of the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981, as amended;

- Environmental Criteria and Standards, 24 C.F.R. §§ 51.1 – 51.305:
 - Noise Abatement and Control, 24 C.F.R. §§ 51.100 - 51.106;
 - Siting of HUD-Assisted Projects Near Hazardous Operations Handling Conventional Fuels or Chemicals of an Explosive or Flammable Nature, 24 C.F.R. §§ 51.200 - 51.208;
 - Siting of HUD Assisted Projects in Runway Clear Zones at Civil Airports and Clear Zones and Accident Potential Zones at Military Airfields, 24 C.F.R. §§ 51.300 - 51.305;
- Toxic/Hazardous Materials, 24 C.F.R. § 58.5(i)(2)(i);
- Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (Executive Order No. 12898 of February 11, 1994).

20.1 Environmental Level of Review

To conduct the appropriate level of environmental review, the Program will need to determine the environmental classification of the project. The term “project” may be defined as an activity or group of activities geographically, functionally, or integrally related, regardless of funding source, to be undertaken by the Program, in whole or in part, to accomplish a specific objective. The four (4) major environmental classifications for projects and their descriptions are as follows.

20.1.1 Exempt Activities

These are activities which, by their nature, are highly unlikely to have any direct impact on the environment. Accordingly, these activities are not subject to most of the procedural requirements of environmental review. If a project is determined to be exempt, the Program must document in writing that the project is exempt and meets the conditions for exemption spelled in 24 C.F.R. § 58.34. In addition to making the written determination of exemption, the Program must also determine whether any of the requirements of 24 C.F.R. § 58.6 are applicable; if so, the Program must address as appropriate.

20.1.2 Categorically Excluded Activities

These are activities for which no Environmental Impact Statement (**EIS**) or Environmental Assessment (**EA**) and finding of no significant impact under NEPA is required. These activities are divided into those that are and those that are not subject to related laws and authorities at 24 C.F.R. § 58.5.

Examples of categorically excluded activities not subject to related laws and authorities under 24 C.F.R. § 58.5 include: tenant-based rental assistance, supportive services, operating costs, economic development activities, activities to assist homebuyers to purchase existing dwelling units or units under construction, and affordable housing predevelopment costs with no physical impact. To complete environmental requirements for categorically excluded activities not subject to 24 C.F.R. § 58.5, the

Program must make a finding of categorical exclusion and include such finding in the **EER**. When these kinds of activities are undertaken, a public notice or a request for release of funds **are not required**. In any case, environmental compliance is required for the items listed in 24 C.F.R. § 58.6.

Examples of categorically excluded activities subject to related laws and authorities under 24 C.F.R. § 58.5 include: acquisition, repair, improvement, reconstruction, or repair of public facilities; special projects directed toward the removal of material and architectural barriers; and repair of buildings and improvements for residential units and non-residential buildings. The **ERR** for these activities must contain a written determination of the finding of a categorical excluded activity subject to 24 C.F.R. §58.5, including a description of the project, a citation of the applicable subsection of 24 C.F.R. § 58.35(a), and written documentation as to whether there were any circumstances which required compliance with 24 C.F.R. § 58.5 and § 58.6.

The documentation must support its determinations related to compliance including correspondence with applicable agencies having jurisdiction. Upon completion, there should be one (1) of three (3) environmental findings: (1) the project converts to Exempt (i.e. 24 C.F.R. § 58.34(a) (12)); (2) the project invokes compliance with one or more of the laws and/or authorities and, therefore, requires public notification and approval from HUD; or (3) the unusual circumstances of the project result in a significant environmental impact and, therefore, compliance with NEPA is required. If upon completion it is determined that compliance is required for one or more of the federal laws and authorities listed in 24 C.F.R. § 58.5, then a public notification known as Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds **(NOI/RROF)** must be posted. After a **seven (7) day** comment period, a Request for Release of Funds **(RROF)** and Environmental Certification must be prepared. The Environmental Certification certifies the compliance with all environmental review requirements.

20.1.3 Activities Requiring an Environmental Assessment

These are activities which are neither exempt nor categorically excluded and, therefore, will require an **EA** documenting compliance with NEPA, HUD, and with the environmental requirements of other applicable federal laws. Once the Environmental Review has been completed and any comments addressed appropriately, the project may be found to not constitute an action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an **EIS**; or the project constitutes an action that significantly affects the quality of the human environment and, therefore, requires the preparation of an **EIS**.

If it is determined that the action does not significantly affect the quality of the environment, then the Program will post a public notice called a Combined/Concurrent Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact **(FONSI)** and NOI/RROF. The NOI/RROF

Environmental Certification must be submitted to HUD no sooner than **fifteen (15) days** after publishing the combined/concurrent notice (NOI/RROF) and FONSI and HUD will hold the Release of Funds for a **fifteen (15) day** period to allow for public comment on the RROF. If no comments are received during this time, HUD will send a signed Authorization to Use Grant Funds and the project may proceed.

20.1.4 Activities Requiring an Environmental Impact Statement

These are activities that require a detailed written statement by Section 102(2)(C) of NEPA for a proposed major Federal Action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. These statements are normally used for major housing (2,500 units or more) or infrastructure projects.

20.2 Requirements to comply with Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands Regulation

All projects using CRP funds shall comply with the Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands regulations, contained in Executive Order 11988³² and at 24 C.F.R. Part 55, to avoid impacts to floodplains and to avoid direct and indirect support of floodplain development, to the extent practicable. FEMA designates floodplains as geographic zones subject to varying levels of flood risk. These are divided into two (2) major areas: Special Flood Hazard Areas and Non-Special Flood Hazard Areas. Each of these areas are divided into the following groups:

20.2.1 Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA)

- **100-Year Floodplains (or one percent (1%) Annual Chance Floodplains):** areas near lakes, rivers, streams, or other bodies of water with at least a 1% chance of flood occurrence in any given year. HUD projects that will be completely or partially located inside a 100-Year Floodplain must complete the 8-Step Decision-making Process (24 C.F.R. § 55.20) to determine whether there are practicable alternatives to locating the project in the floodplain unless an exception in 24 C.F.R. § 55.12-14 applies.
- **Floodway:** comprises the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. This is the segment of the floodplain that will generally carry flow of flood waters during a flood and is typically the area of greatest risk to structures in the floodplain. HUD financial assistance is prohibited in floodways unless an exception in 24 C.F.R. §

³² This Executive Order directs federal agencies to: (1) assert leadership in reducing flood losses and losses to environmental values served by floodplains; (2) avoid actions located in or adversely affecting floodplains unless there is no practicable alternative; (3) take action to mitigate losses if avoidance is not practicable; and (4) establishes a process for flood hazard evaluation based upon the 100-year base flood standard of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It also directed Federal agencies to issue implementing procedures; provided a consultation mechanism for developing the implementing procedures; and provided oversight mechanisms.

55.12 applies or the project is functionally dependent use (e.g., dams, marinas, and port facilities) or a floodplain function restoration activity.

- o **Coastal High Hazard Areas:** areas along the coasts subject to inundation by the 1% annual chance flood event with additional hazards associated with storm or tidal induced waves. Because of the increased risks associated with V Zones, 24 C.F.R. Part 55 prohibits critical actions and new construction in these areas unless an exception in 24 C.F.R. § 55.12 applies or the project is a functionally dependent use, and otherwise requires the action to be designed for location in a Coastal High Hazard Area.

20.2.2 Non-Special Flood Hazard Areas

- o **500-Year Floodplains:** areas with at least a .2% chance of flood occurrence in any given year. HUD requires critical actions (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, police stations, fire stations, and roadways providing sole egress from flood-prone areas) to comply with 24 C.F.R. Part 55 when they are located in the 500-year floodplain.

CRP Subrecipients shall refer to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) to determine whether the project is in or near a floodplain. In most areas, FIRMs are available online through the FEMA Map Service Center. Additionally, CRP Subrecipients must use FEMA’s Advisory Base Flood Elevations (ABFE) or preliminary FIRMs and studies whenever available. CRP Subrecipients are responsible for using the latest of these sources unless the ABFE or preliminary FIRM allow a lower Base Flood Elevation (BFE) than the current FIRM and Flood Insurance Study (FIS).

For projects in areas not mapped by FEMA, Subrecipients must use the best available information to determine floodplain information. Sources which merit investigation include the files and/or studies of other federal agencies, such as the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Soil Conservation Service, or the U. S. Geological Survey, amongst others.

Depending on project location, 24 C.F.R. Part 55 requires the implementation of a procedure known as the “8-Step Process”. All CRP projects must follow this procedure unless the activities included as part of the project comply with 24 C.F.R. § 55.12-14. The following table summarizes the requirements to comply with the full 8-Step Process or a modified procedure. Also, it is relevant to note that CRP Projects may be ineligible to receive federal funds if their location falls within certain designated zones, which is also established in the table below.

Area Type	Risk Type	Floodplain Designated Zone in FIRM or ABFE	CRP Project Requirements
	100-Year Floodplains	A1-30, AE, A, AH, AO, AR, or A99	An 8-Step Process is required unless it is inapplicable per 24 C.F.R. § 55.13 or the

Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHA)	Floodway	Zone AE hatched	5-Step Process is applicable per 24 C.F.R. § 55.14.
	Coastal High Hazard Areas	Zone V1-30, VE, or V	Unless the project has a functionally dependent use or floodplain function restoration activity, or a 24 C.F.R. § 55.12 exception applies, the CRP project is ineligible and federal assistance may not be used. If it is a functionally dependent use or restoration activity, the 8-Step Process is required.
Non-Special Flood Hazard Area	500-Year Floodplains	Zone B or a shaded Zone X	Federal assistance may not be used at projects located within these zones if the project is a critical action. For all other actions, financial assistance is prohibited unless the activity is an existing structure, an improvement of an existing structure or reconstruction following a disaster in accordance with 24 C.F.R. § 55.8(a)(3)(i). Refer to 24 C.F.R. § 55.8(a)(3)(i) and (ii) for construction requirements for projects permitted in coastal high hazard areas. An 8-Step Process must be performed unless an exception applies.
			An 8-Step Process is required for critical actions unless it is inapplicable per 24 C.F.R. § 55.13 or the 5-Step Process is applicable per 24 C.F.R. § 55.14.

As part of the compliance for CRP projects, Subrecipients must include all the documentation used to prepare the 8-Step Process as part of the Environmental Review Record (**ERR**). The ERR must include one of the following:

- Documentation supporting the determination that an exception at 24 C.F.R. § 55.12 applies.
- A FEMA map showing the project is not located in a SFHA.
- A FEMA map showing the project is located in a SFHA and reference to an applicable section of 24 C.F.R. § 55.13 demonstrating that the 8-Step Process is not required.
- A FEMA map showing the project is located in a SFHA, documentation that the 5-Step Process was completed, and reference to the applicable section of 24 C.F.R. § 55.14.

- A FEMA map showing the project is located in a SFHA along with documentation of the 8-Step Process and required notices.

21 Duplication of Benefits (DOB)

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (**Stafford Act**), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 *et seq.*, prohibits any person, business concern, or other entity from receiving federal funds for any part of such loss as to which he/she has received financial assistance under any other program, from private insurance, charitable assistance, or any other source. As such, PRDOH must consider disaster recovery aid received by program applicants from any other federal, state, local or other source and determine if any assistance is duplicative. Any funding assistance provided for a specific project, determined to be duplicative, must be deducted from the funding assignment to that project prior to awarding assistance. PRDOH will require certification from each Subrecipient that assures it does not have funds set aside for the project in any capital improvement plan (or similar document showing planned use of funds).

The duplication of benefits (**DOB**) guidance included in Federal Register Vol. 84, No. 119 (June 20, 2019), 84 FR 28836, updates the **DOB** guidance issued in Federal Register Vol. 76, No. 221 (November 16, 2011), 76 FR 71060 for CDBG-DR grants received in response to disasters declared between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2021.

To be eligible to receive CDBG-DR funds under CRP Program and as part of the Application Process, all Subrecipients must confirm and provide assurance that efforts will be made to avoid a “duplication of benefits.” PRDOH understands and expects that for some projects funded through CRP Program, other federal forms of funding may be possible, and that for each project, to a reasonable and possible extent, PRDOH will work with funded entities to determine and address issues surrounding DOB. As part of the Application process, PRDOH will work with COR3, FEMA, SBA, USACE, and other entities to address DOB issues, to the extent reasonable.³³

In the context of CRP Program, a DOB analysis must consider total assistance, which includes all sources of financial assistance available to the Subrecipient to pay a portion of the proposed public facilities improvements and/or proposed CDBG-DR-eligible public services to be provided. For example, an existing community **center** owned by a

³³ The 2019 DOB notice updates the treatment of declined loans. A grantee shall not take into consideration or reduce the amount of assistance provided to an applicant, where such applicant applied for and was approved, but declined assistance from the Small Business Administration (SBA), related to disasters that occurred from 2014 to 2017. The 2019 DOB notice also includes requirements applicable only to CDBG-MIT funds. FEMA, as per recent amendments to the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA), Pub. L. 115-254, advises that a loan is not a duplication of other forms of financial assistance, provided that all federal assistance is used toward a loss suffered due to major disaster or emergency. The DRRA provisions, which applied to disasters that occurred from 2016 to 2021, expired on October 5, 2023. Therefore, the determining factor for applying the DRRA amendment is the date the agreement for loan assistance is awarded (signed by all the required parties, made and entered, and final). Subsidized loans awarded after the amendment sunset date are to be included in the DOB evaluation.

municipal government may need to be rehabilitated. In this instance, total assistance, for a DOB analysis, would not only include any other federal assistance available to rehabilitate the facility, but it must also include any local funds that are available for this activity. The Subrecipient will also be required to document if local funds were previously designated or planned for the activity but are no longer available.

The basis for calculating CDBG-DR assistance and the purposes for which the Subrecipient can use the CDBG-DR assistance should be identified so that a DOB can be prevented.

Subrecipients will be required to provide support documentation, including award letters, decline letters and other documentation supporting the amount, sources and uses of funding received/declined to assist in the completion of the project that was provided in the recovery from the covered disaster. PRDOH may contact other entities and agencies directly to confirm the information submitted by a Subrecipient.

The basic framework for a DOB calculation for a CRP Program funded project is:

- Identify Subrecipient's Total Need;
- Identify Total Assistance Available (insurance, FEMA, SBA, etc.);
- Identify the "Amount of Exclude as Non-Duplicative" (amounts used for a different purpose, or same purpose, different allowable use);
- Identify Total DOB Amount (Total Assistance minus Non-Duplicative exclusions);
- Calculate Maximum Award (Total Need minus Total DOB amount);
- Program Cap (if applicable); and
- Final Award (Program = Final Award if Maximum Award is equal to or greater than the Program Cap).

For more information about DOB, refer to the Duplication of Benefits Policy available at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/duplication-of-benefits-policy/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/politica-sobre-la-duplicacion-de-beneficios/>.

21.1 Order of Assistance

PRDOH understands and expects that for some projects funded through this Program, other federal forms of funding may be possible and that for each project, PRDOH will need to work with funded entities to address issues surrounding order of assistance that may arise. As part of the application process and through the life of the grant, Applicants will be required to allow PRDOH to work with COR3, FEMA, and other entities to address these issues. More detail on the order of assistance issue is discussed below.

CDBG-DR funds may not be used for activities reimbursable by or for which funds are made available by FEMA or the USACE. PRDOH must verify whether FEMA or USACE funds are available for a funded activity (i.e., the application period is open) or the costs are

reimbursable by FEMA or USACE (i.e., the Subrecipient will receive FEMA or USACE assistance to reimburse the costs of the activity) before awarding CDBG-DR assistance for costs of carrying out the same project. If FEMA or USACE are accepting applications for the activity, PRDOH must seek assistance from those sources before the Subrecipient may receive CDBG-DR assistance. If costs for the activity are reimbursed by FEMA or USACE, PRDOH cannot provide CDBG-DR assistance for those costs. In the event that FEMA or USACE assistance is awarded after the CDBG-DR funding is used to pay the same costs, it is PRDOH's responsibility to recapture CDBG-DR assistance that duplicates assistance from FEMA or USACE.

In the case of affordable rental housing, CDBG-DR funds will more than likely be used in combination with other grants and loans from federal, state, local, and private sources. CDBG-DR funds may take the last position in the order of repayment or forgiveness, as will be noted at the time of settlement in all documents to allow the project to move forward and be placed in service.

21.2 Agreement to Repay

The Stafford Act requires PRDOH to ensure that Partners, Subrecipients, or Applicants agree to repay all duplicative assistance to PRDOH. To address any potential DOB, each Partner, Subrecipient, or Applicant must also enter into an agreement with PRDOH to repay any assistance later received for the same purpose for which the CDBG-DR funds were provided. This agreement can be in the form of a subrogation agreement and must be signed by every Partner, Subrecipient, or Applicant before PRDOH disburses any CDBG-DR assistance.

22 Recapture

Instances may arise where a Subrecipient must return all or part of the awarded funds to the Program. The Program is responsible for recapturing duplicative funds, funds awarded to Subrecipients who become non-compliant, and funds identified as potential overpayments. All Subrecipient files will be reviewed and reconciled for accuracy to ensure compliance with Program requirements and federal guidelines.

Once it has been determined that a Subrecipient must return funds to the CDBG-DR grant, they must repay the funds in a timely manner. All repayments shall be made in full as one lump sum.

For more information about the PRDOH CDBG-DR/MIT Recapture Policy, see <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/download/recapture-of-funds-policy/> (English) and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/download/politica-de-recaptura-de-fondos/> (Spanish).

23 Program-based Reconsideration and/or Administrative Review

Subrecipients of the Program may contest any determinations or denials based on Program policy. However, a Subrecipient may not challenge a federal statutory requirement. Subrecipients have the right to request a Program-based Reconsideration or an Administrative Review directly with PRDOH, as stated below. If the Subrecipient fails to contest a determination within the time allotted, the inaction will be deemed an acceptance of the determination.

23.1 Program-based Reconsideration Request

Subrecipients who wish to contest a Program determination may file a Program-based Reconsideration Request directly with the Program by submitting a written request via electronic or postal mail within **twenty (20) calendar days** from the date a copy of the notice was filed in the record of the agency. Provided that, if the date on which the copy of the notice is filed in the records of the agency differs from the **postal or electronic** mailing date of said notice, the **twenty (20) calendar day-term** shall be calculated from the **postal or electronic** mailing date. Notices distributed via electronic communication shall be considered valid. In the event a notification is sent via postal and electronic mail, the notification date will be the one sent beforehand. Program notices will include the electronic and postal information where these will be received, as these may vary.

Subrecipients who file a Program-based Reconsideration Request are encouraged to provide individual facts or circumstances, as well as supporting documents to justify their petition. In the Reconsideration Request process, the Program will only review facts and information already included in a Subrecipient's file, unless the Subrecipient submits new documentation. The Program has the discretion to accept or reject new documentation based upon its relevance to the Program-based Reconsideration Request.

The Program will review and address the Reconsideration Request within **fifteen (15) calendar days** of its receipt. Subrecipients will be notified of the reconsideration determination via a Reconsideration Request Approved or a Reconsideration Request Denied notification.

Filing a Program-based Reconsideration Request does not substitute, negate, or preclude any legal right that a Subrecipient has to challenge a determination made by the Program. Therefore, Subrecipients who believe the initial determination of the Program to be erroneous, may submit, at their discretion, either a Program-based Reconsideration Request or a petition for review of the decision made by the Program by filing an Administrative Review Request at PRDOH in accordance with Regulation

Number 4953, of August 19, 1993, which regulates the Formal Adjudication Process for PRDOH and its Adjunct Agencies (**Regulation 4953**).³⁴

23.2 Administrative Review Request

If a Subrecipient disagrees with a Program determination, or with the Reconsideration Request Denial determination, said party may file directly to PRDOH an Administrative Review Request in accordance with the aforementioned Regulation 4953. The Subrecipient must submit such request, in writing, within **twenty (20) calendar days** from the date a copy of the Program determination or a Reconsideration Request Denial determination notice was filed in the record of the agency. Provided, that if the date on which the copy of the notice is filed in the records of the agency differs from the **postal or electronic** mailing date, the **twenty (20) calendar day-term** shall be calculated from the **postal or electronic** mailing date. Notices distributed via electronic communication shall be considered valid. In the event a notification is sent via postal and electronic mail, the notification date will be the one sent beforehand. Submit the request via email to: LegalCDBG@vivienda.pr.gov; via postal mail to: CDBG-DR Legal Division, P.O. Box 21365, San Juan, PR 00928-1365; or in person at PRDOH's Headquarters at: CDBG-DR Legal Division, 606 Barbosa Avenue, Juan C. Cordero Dávila Building, Río Piedras, P.R. 00918.

If the Subrecipient disagrees with any **final** written determination on an Administrative Review Request notified by PRDOH after completing the administrative adjudicative procedure, said party may file a Judicial Review petition before the Court of Appeals of Puerto Rico within **thirty (30) calendar days** after a copy of the notice has been filed. See Act No. 201-2003, as amended, known as the Judiciary Act of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of 2003, 4 LPRA § 24 *et seq.*, and Section 4.2 of Act 38-2017, as amended, known as the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act of the Government of Puerto Rico, 3 LPRA § 9672.

24 General Provisions

24.1 Program Guidelines Scope

This document sets forth the policy governing the Program. These Program Guidelines are intended to aid and provide program activity guidance in Program implementation and closeout and should not be construed as exhaustive instructions. All Program activities must comply with the policies hereby stated. In addition, all program staff must adhere to established program procedures and all federal and state laws and regulations in effect, as applicable, in the execution of program activities.

However, PRDOH reserves the faculty to authorize, in its sole discretion, the granting of Program benefits to any Subrecipient, only when exceptional circumstances, not

³⁴ For more details, you can access Regulation 4953 (in Spanish) at: <https://www.vivienda.pr.gov/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/4953-Reglamenta-los-procedimientos-de-adiudicacion-formal..pdf>.

contemplated in these guidelines, justify it. Such faculty will be exercised on a case-by-case basis in compliance with local, state, and federal requirements. PRDOH is in no way obligated to grant the Program benefits in said cases.

24.2 Program Guidelines Amendments

PRDOH reserves the right to modify the policies established in these Guidelines if the Program Guidelines, as written, do not reflect the intended policy or cause procedures to be impracticable, among any other circumstances. If an amended version of these Guidelines is approved, the amended version fully supersedes all previous versions and should be used as the basis for evaluating all situations encountered in the implementation and/or continuance of the Program from the date of its issuance, that is, the date that appears on the cover of these Guidelines. Each version of the Program Guidelines will contain a detailed version control log that outlines any substantive amendment, inclusions and/or changes.

24.3 Disaster Impacted Areas

As described in the initial Action Plan, and its amendments, the Government of Puerto Rico will use CDBG-DR funds solely for necessary expenses related to disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of housing, infrastructure, and economic revitalization in the impacted and distressed areas in Puerto Rico as identified in disaster declaration numbers DR-4336 and 4339, while also complying with National Objectives. Through the Federal Register Vol. 83, No. 157 (August 14, 2018), 83 FR 40314, HUD identified that, for Puerto Rico, all components of the Island are considered “most impacted and distressed” areas. Therefore, these Guidelines apply to all 78 municipalities of Puerto Rico.

24.4 Extension of Deadlines

The Program could extend deadlines on a case-by-case basis. The Program may decline to extend a deadline if such extension will jeopardize the Program's completion schedule or the schedule of an individual construction project. The aforementioned strictly applies to program deadlines or established program terms. Under no circumstance(s) does the faculty to extend deadlines apply to the established terms of time in these Guidelines or any applicable federal or state law or regulation, or to the terms of times established in these Guidelines to request a Program-based Reconsideration, administrative review and/or judicial review.

24.5 Established Periods of Time

Unless otherwise specified, all established periods of time addressed in this, and all CDBG-DR Program Guidelines will be considered calendar days. On this matter, PRDOH, as grantee, will follow Rule 68.1 of the Rules of Civil Procedure of Puerto Rico, 32 LPRA Ap. V, R. 68.1.

24.6 Written Notifications

All determinations made by the Program will be notified in writing. If a Subrecipient believes that any determination was made without being written, the Subrecipient may request that such decision be made in writing and duly substantiated.

24.7 Conflict of Interest

As stated in the Federal Register Vol. 83, No. 28 (February 9, 2018), 83 FR 5844, federal regulations require that State grantees, in the direct Grant administration and means of carrying out eligible activities, be responsible with program administrative requirements, including those established in 24 C.F.R. § 570.489(h) related to conflicts of interest.

Several federal and state conflict of interest laws can govern CDBG-DR assisted activities. Therefore, PRDOH has enacted the Conflict of Interest and Standards of Conduct Policy (**COI Policy**) in conformity with the following applicable federal and state regulations:

1. HUD conflict of interest regulations, 24 C.F.R. § 570.611;
2. The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, 2 C.F.R. Part 200 at § 200.112 and § 200.318(c)(1);
3. Puerto Rico Department of Housing Organic Act, Act 97 of June 10, 1972, as amended, 3 LPRA § 441 *et seq.*;
4. The Anti-Corruption Code for the New Puerto Rico, Act 2-2018, as amended; 3 LPRA § 1881 *et seq.*; and
5. The Puerto Rico Government Ethics Act of 2011, Act 1-2012, as amended; 3 LPRA § 1854 *et seq.*

The COI Policy outlines PRDOH's responsibility, in its role as grantee, to identify, evaluate, disclose and manage apparent, potential or actual conflicts of interest related to CDBG-DR-funded projects, activities and/or operations. Said Policy is intended to serve as guidance for the identification of apparent, potential or actual conflicts of interest in all CDBG-DR-assisted activities and/or operations. In accordance with 24 C.F.R. § 570.489, the COI Policy also includes standards of conduct governing employees engaged in the award or administration of contracts.

As defined in the COI Policy, a conflict of interest is a situation in which any person who is a public servant, employee, agent, consultant, officer, or elected official or appointed official of the PRDOH, or of any designated public agencies, or of Subrecipients that are receiving funds under the CDBG-DR Program may obtain a financial or personal interest or benefit that is or could be reasonably incompatible with the public interest, either for themselves, or with those whom they have business, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties indicated herein, or a member of their family unit during their tenure or for **two (2) years** after.

Such conflicts of interests will not be tolerated by PRDOH. PRDOH, Program officials, their employees, agents and/or designees are subject to state ethic laws and regulations, including, but not limited to the Puerto Rico of Government Ethics Act of 2011, Act 1-2012, as amended, in regard to their conduct in the administration, granting of awards and program activities.

According to the aforementioned Act, no public servant shall intervene, either directly or indirectly, in any matter in which they have a conflict of interests that may result in their benefit. No public servant shall intervene, directly or indirectly, in any matter in which any member of their family unit, relative, partner or housemate has a conflict of interest that may result in benefit for any of the abovementioned. In the case that any of the abovementioned relationships have ended during the **two (2) years** preceding the appointment of the public servant, they shall not intervene, either directly or indirectly, in any matter related to them until **two (2) years** have elapsed after their appointment. This prohibition shall remain in effect insofar as the beneficial ties with the public servant exist. Once the beneficial ties end, the public servant shall not intervene, either directly or indirectly, in such matter until **two (2) years** have elapsed.

The above conflict of interest statement does not necessarily preclude PRDOH Program officials, their employees, agents, and/or designees from receiving assistance from the Program. On a case-by-case basis, PRDOH Program officials, their employees, agents, and/or designees may still be eligible to apply and to receive assistance from the Program if the Applicant meets all Program eligibility criteria as stated in these Guidelines. PRDOH Program officials, their employees, agents, and/or designees should disclose their relationship with PRDOH at the time of their application.

The COI Policy and all CDBG-DR Program policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policias/general-policias/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

24.8 Citizen Participation

Throughout the duration of the grant, all citizen comments on PRDOH's published Action Plan, any substantial amendments to the Action Plan, performance reports and/or other issues related to the general administration of CDBG-DR funds, including all programs funded by this grant, are welcomed.

The Program encourages the Subrecipients to use, at least, two (2) Information Outreach methods, one (1) of which should be the publication in a general circulation newspaper on the Island. Other methods of Information Outreach that may be used are included in the CDBG-DR/MIT Citizen Participation Plan.

Citizens comments must be submitted **seven (7) business days** after the outreach publishing date. Additionally, a term for timely response to citizen comments must be

established. This term must not be longer than **fifteen (15) business days**, if possible. The instructions for the comments period may vary according to the method of outreach used.

Citizen comments may be submitted through any of the following means:

- **Via phone:** 1-833-234-CDBG or 1-833-234-2324 (TTY: 787-522-5950)
Attention hours Monday through Friday from 8:00 am-5:00 pm
- **Via email at:** infoCDBG@vivienda.pr.gov
- **Online at:** <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/contact-us/contact/> (English)
<https://recuperacion.pr.gov/contactanos/contacto/> (Spanish)
- **In writing at:** Puerto Rico CDBG-DR/MIT Program
P.O. Box 21365
San Juan, PR 00928-1365

The Citizen Participation Plan and all CDBG-DR Program policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

For more information on how to contact PRDOH, please refer to <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/welcome/index.html>.

24.9 Citizen Complaints

As part of addressing Puerto Rico's long-term recovery needs, citizen complaints on any issues related to the general administration of CDBG-DR funds are welcome throughout the duration of the grant. It is PRDOH's responsibility, as grantee, to ensure that all complaints are dealt with promptly and consistently, and, at a minimum, to provide a timely, substantive written response to every **written** complaint within **fifteen (15) calendar days**, where practicable. See 24 C.F.R. §91.115 (h) and 24 C.F.R. § 570.486(a)(7).

Citizens who wish to submit formal complaints related to CDBG-DR funded activities may do so through any of the following means:

- **Via email at:** LegalCDBG@vivienda.pr.gov
- **Online at:** <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/contact-us/complaints/>
<https://recuperacion.pr.gov/contactanos/quejas/>
- **In writing at:** Puerto Rico CDBG-DR/MIT Program
Attn: CDBG-DR/MIT Legal Division-Complaints
P.O. Box 21365

San Juan, PR 00928-1365

Although formal complaints are required to be submitted in writing, complaints may also be received verbally and by other means necessary, as applicable, when PRDOH determines that the citizen's particular circumstances do not allow the complainant to submit a written complaint. However, in these instances, PRDOH shall convert these complaints into written form. These alternate methods include, but are not limited to:

- Via telephone: * 1-833-234-CDBG or 1-833-234-2324 (TTY: 787-522-5950)
- In-person at: * PRDOH Headquarters Office or Program-Specific Intake Centers

*Attention hours: Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The Citizen Complaints Policy and all CDBG-DR Program policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

24.10 Anti-Fraud, Waste, Abuse or Mismanagement

PRDOH, as grantee, is committed to the responsible management of CDBG-DR funds by being a good advocate of the resources while maintaining a comprehensive policy for preventing, detecting, reporting and rectifying fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement.

Pursuant to 83 FR 40314, PRDOH implements adequate measures to detect and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement in all programs administered with CDBG-DR funds as well as encourages any individual who is aware or suspects any kind of conduct or activity that may be considered an act of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, regarding the CDBG-DR Program, to report such acts to the CDBG-DR Internal Audit Office, directly to the Office of Inspector General (**OIG**) at HUD, or any local or federal law enforcement agency.

The Anti-Fraud, Waste, Abuse, or Mismanagement Policy (**AFWAM Policy**) is established to prevent, detect and report any acts, or suspected acts, of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement of CDBG-DR funds. This Policy applies to any allegations or irregularities, either known or suspected, that could be considered acts of fraud, waste, abuse, or mismanagement, involving any citizen, previous, current or potential applicant, beneficiary, consultant, contractor, employee, partner, provider, Subrecipient, supplier, and/or vendor under the CDGB-DR Program.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, OR MISMANAGEMENT TO PRDOH CDBG-DR/MIT

CDBG-DR/MIT Hotline	787-274-2135 (English/Spanish/TTY)
Postal Mail	Puerto Rico Department of Housing CDBG-DR/MIT Internal Audit Office P.O. BOX 21355 San Juan, PR 00928-1355
Email	hotlineCDBG@vivienda.pr.gov
Online	Filling out the AFWAM Submission Form available in English and Spanish at https://recuperacion.pr.gov/app/cdbgdrpublic/Fraud?culture=en-US or https://recuperacion.pr.gov/app/cdbgdrpublic/Fraud
In person	Request a meeting with the Deputy Audit Director of the CDBG-DR/MIT Internal Audit Office located at PRDOH's Headquarters at 606 Barbosa Avenue, Building Juan C. Cordero Dávila, Río Piedras, PR 00918.

REPORT FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE, OR MISMANAGEMENT DIRECTLY TO HUD OIG	
HUD OIG Hotline	1-800-347-3735 (Toll-Free) 787-766-5868 (Spanish)
Postal Mail	HUD Office of Inspector General (OIG) Hotline 451 7th Street SW Washington, D.C. 20410
Email	HOTLINE@hudoig.gov
Internet	https://www.hudoig.gov/hotline

The AFWAM Policy and all CDBG-DR Program policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

24.11 Related Laws and Regulations

These Guidelines refer as to how the provisions of certain laws apply to the Program. However, other related laws may exist which are not included in these Guidelines. This does not negate or preclude the Program from applying the provisions of those laws, nor a Subrecipient from receiving services, when applicable. Moreover, PRDOH can enact, or may have enacted, regulations that address how the laws mentioned in these Guidelines are managed. If there are any discrepancies between these Guidelines and the laws and/or regulations mentioned in them, then the latter will prevail over the Guidelines. If at any time the laws and/or the applicable regulations mentioned in these Guidelines are amended, the new provisions will apply to the Program without the need to amend these Guidelines.

24.12 Cross-Cutting Guidelines

Some federal and local requirements apply to all programs funded by CDBG-DR. These Cross-Cutting Guidelines cover topics such as: financial management, environmental review, labor standards, acquisition, relocation, civil rights, and fair housing, among others. The requirements described in the above referenced Cross-Cutting Guidelines, apply to all programs described in PRDOH's CDBG-DR Initial Action Plan and its amendments.

The Cross-Cutting Guidelines and all CDBG-DR Program policies are available in English and Spanish on the PRDOH website at <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/en/resources/policies/general-policies/> and <https://recuperacion.pr.gov/recursos/politicas/politicas-generales/>.

25 Program Oversight

Nothing contained within these Guidelines is intended to limit the role of PRDOH, HUD, and/or corresponding authorities from exercising oversight and monitoring activities of the Program.

26 Severability Clause

If any provision of these Guidelines, or the application thereof to any person, partnership, corporation, or circumstance, is deemed invalid, illegal, or incapable of being enforced to any extent by a competent court, the remainder of these Guidelines and the application of such provisions, will not be affected. All valid applications of these Guidelines shall be severed from any applications deemed invalid, leaving the valid applications in full force.

END OF GUIDELINES.