



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – MITIGATION (CDBG-MIT) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Q1. What are the federal rules and regulations that Puerto Rico must follow in administering CDBG-MIT funds?

Q2. When will CDBG-MIT funding be available?

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Q12. Where did the public hearing events take place and how did citizens know where to attend? Where can I see them now?

Q13. Can letters of intent (LOIs) that were submitted for FEMA HMGP funding and were not selected, be resubmitted for CDBG-MIT?

Q14. Where can I see the results of the Citizen Survey and information on the other public participation events, such as roundtables?



Q1. What are the federal rules and regulations that Puerto Rico must follow in administering CDBG-MIT funds?

A1. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (**HUD**) rules for the CDBG-MIT Program are located in two (2) Federal Register notices for Puerto Rico:

- The main notice, Federal Register Notice Vol. 84 No. 169 (Friday, August 30, 2019), 84 FR 45838; and
- The Puerto Rico allocation notice, Federal Register Notice Vol. 85 No. 17 (January 27, 2020), 85 FR 4676.

Federal Register Vol. 84 No. 169, released on August 30, 2019, describes “grants requirements and procedures, including waivers and alternative requirements, applicable to CDBG-MIT funds only”. However, the notice did not include an allocation of CDBG-MIT funds for the Government of Puerto Rico. Federal Register Vol. 85 No. 17, released on January 27, 2020, allocated \$8.285 billion of CDBG-MIT funds to Puerto Rico, and clarifies alternative and additional requirements that pertain specifically to Puerto Rico.

On March 26, 2021, HUD sent a letter to the Puerto Rico Department of Housing (**PRDOH**) determining that several grant conditions identified in said Notice for Puerto Rico's CDBG-MIT grant do not allow the grantee to successfully mitigate the risks identified. HUD waived Section II.B of the Federal Register Notice and imposed conditions to better match the risks to CDBG-MIT funds and allow the grantee to work together to ensure all risks are adequately mitigated.

Q2. When will CDBG-MIT funding be available?

A2. The first step in accessing these mitigation funds was to develop and submit an Action Plan to HUD that includes a data-driven risk-based mitigation needs assessment, incorporates community input gathered through a robust outreach and engagement process, and describes how funding will be used to increase Puerto Rico's resilience through mitigation activities that lessen the impact of future hazards. The Action Plan was submitted to HUD on December 3, 2020. HUD sent two (2) partial approval letters on January 20, 2021 and February 1, 2021, approving the Planning, Infrastructure and Multi-Sector Programs, as well as the Administrative and State Planning budgets. A revised Action Plan was submitted to HUD within the forty-five (45)-day response period to achieve the Housing Program approval, which HUD approved, and provided Puerto Rico a grant agreement on April 19, 2021.

Q3. What opportunity did Puerto Rico agencies, municipalities, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the business community, federal agencies, and the general public have for input in creating CDBG-MIT programs and the CDBG-MIT Action Plan?

A3. PRDOH undertook a thorough Stakeholder Engagement process, committed to the consideration and incorporation of community input for this new type of grant funding created under HUD. Building on the relationships formed during hurricane recovery efforts under the



Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (**CDBG-DR**) Program, PRDOH identified key stakeholder groups encompassing 190+ entities for participation in the CDBG-MIT planning effort and encouraged others to join by registering through the CDBG-MIT website at <https://cdbg-dr.pr.gov/en/cdbg-mit/>, which is still open to the public.

Stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts included briefings, individual meetings, roundtable sessions, data gathering efforts through the proposed projects log, service provider survey and citizen survey, release of the multi-hazard risk assessment and critical lifeline dashboards, televised public hearings that were simultaneously broadcasted on social media and radio, and instructional videos, among others. A detailed report and analysis of results from the stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts conducted from May 2020 until the publishing of the Action Plan in December 2020 is captured in the Action Plan's [Appendix E – Stakeholder Engagement Report](#).

Q4. How did PRDOH address the need for community participation amidst the ongoing COVID-19 community safety concerns?

A4. Public Safety was a priority concern for PRDOH, its employees, and the citizens we serve. Given the ongoing situation with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (**COVID-19**), PRDOH embraced the most vigorous use of technology for stakeholder meetings and the dissemination of public information. PRDOH utilized the CDBG-MIT webpage at <https://cdbg-dr.pr.gov/en/cdbg-mit/>, electronic mail communication, and social media to share information about participatory planning opportunities and program information. PRDOH also leveraged, to the extent feasible, other traditional media outlets such as radio, newspapers, and television, to raise public awareness around opportunities to participate in engagement activities, including the citizen survey and public hearing events. PRDOH engaged NGOs and Municipalities to leverage the public relations in order to achieve participation and outreach.

Acknowledging the safe practice of social distancing, PRDOH offered web-based communication solutions throughout the planning and publication process, and relied on web-based platforms, emails, call center and text messaging that allowed for formal input during the public hearings. Requests for alternative forms of engagement were submitted for PRDOH's consideration by emailing CDBG-MIT@vivienda.pr.gov.

Q6. How will current and planned CDBG-DR programs coordinate with CDBG-MIT programs?

A6. PRDOH evaluated high-impact opportunities for strategic mitigation funding and considered the potential for CDBG-MIT programs, to not only enhance CDBG-DR funded programs, but also mitigate the impacts of future hazards. Each program description contained in the CDBG-MIT Action Plan includes a section titled "ALIGNMENT WITH CDBG-DR PROGRAMS" that relates the CDBG-MIT Program to the CDBG-DR Program.



Q5. How will CDBG-MIT dollars be spent? What will the programs be? What entities and what activities will be eligible?

A5. The table below shows the CDBG-MIT Action Plan approved budget as per HUD's last final approval on April 19, 2021. For more detail on budget, set-asides, subprograms, and eligible entities and activities please refer to the latest version of the CDBG-MIT Action Plan, which can be found in: <https://cdbg-dr.pr.gov/en/download/cdbg-mit-action-plan-effective-on-april-19th-2021/>. The detail on the eligible entities and activities can be found within each of the Program's descriptions.

PROGRAM	BUDGET	PERCENT OF BUDGET (%)
PLANNING	\$150,000,000.00	1.81%
INFRASTRUCTURE	\$4,566,451,166.00	55.12%
MULTI-SECTOR	\$1,128,816,696.00	13.62%
HOUSING	\$2,000,896,086.00	24.15%
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$414,264,200.00	5.00%
STATE PLANNING	\$24,855,852.00	0.30%
TOTAL	\$8,285,284,000.00	100%

Q7. How will mitigation projects be evaluated and chosen?

A7. The Federal Register Notice Vol. 84 No. 169 requires that all mitigation projects undergo a rigorous evaluation, using several lenses. The specific criteria for mitigation projects are described in the CDBG-MIT Action Plan, in each program's description. The criteria will be further defined in Program Guidelines and any procurements or Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) announcements that are produced.

Q8. What is a Covered Project?

A8. HUD defines a Covered Project as "an infrastructure project having a total project cost of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) or more, with at least fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) of CDBG funds (regardless of source (e.g., CDBG-DR, CDBG-MIT, or CDBG))."¹ Covered Projects must be published in the CDBG-MIT Action Plan or subsequent amendments, and will be subject to additional requirements including but not limited to:

- Demonstrating consistency with the risk-based mitigation needs assessment;
- Meeting additional national objective criteria specific to Covered Projects;
- Demonstrating long-term efficacy and sustainability, including operations and maintenance; and
- Providing a demonstration of benefits through an acceptable benefit-cost analysis.

¹ This HUD guidance on CDBG-MIT funds is found at Federal Register Vol. 84, No. 169 (August 30, 2019), 84 FR 45838. Special grant condition for Covered Projects in Puerto Rico was found at Federal Register Vol. 85 No. 17 (January 27, 2020), 85 FR 4679, but later waived by HUD on March 2021.



More information regarding Covered Projects will be provided as CDBG-MIT Program implementation progresses.

Q9. Can CDBG-MIT funds be used to restore, enhance, and mitigate disasters for the electrical power system?

A9. Currently, Puerto Rico is prohibited from using CDBG-MIT funds for this purpose until HUD publishes the Federal Register Notice governing the use of the estimated one billion ninety-three million dollars (\$1,930,000,000) in funds allocated for enhancements of the power grid. PRDOH is seeking further clarification from HUD on whether this prohibition extends to localized improvements to electrical power systems by addressing household and community scale vulnerability.

Q10. How can I join the Citizens Advisory Committee?

A10. Currently, PRDOH has in place a group of citizen and NGO participants known as the “Comité Asesor” that functions as a Citizens Advisory Committee. The mission of the “Comité Asesor” is to collaborate in outreach efforts, assistance and participation of citizens to identify real and pressing needs as well as the mechanisms to address them.

The “Comité Asesor” has been set up to exceed CDBG-MIT requirements according to the Federal Register Notice Vol. 85 No. 17 (January 27, 2020), 85 FR 4676. Said Notice requires a committee to meet in an open forum not less than twice annually in order to provide increased transparency in the implementation of CDBG-MIT funds, to solicit and respond to public comment and input regarding the grantee's mitigation activities and to serve as an on-going public forum to continuously inform the grantee's CDBG-MIT projects and programs.

More information on the Citizens Advisory Committee can be found at: <https://cdbg-dr.pr.gov/en/citizen-participation/>.

Q11. How can I learn more about what activities and practices are eligible?

A11. The CDBG-MIT Action Plan program descriptions contain the eligible activities and entities for each program, which can be found at: <https://cdbg-dr.pr.gov/en/cdbg-mit/>.

As the CDBG-MIT Program represents a new funding type for HUD, PRDOH is recruiting volunteer speakers from the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors with varied backgrounds to promote mitigation knowledge-sharing. This speaker series is called **Mitigation by Scale: Preventing Loss through Mitigation** and is a series of web-based informational videos, presentations, and papers that will be made available to the public through the CDBG-MIT webpage.

PRDOH is launching this informational series to bring public awareness to mitigation best practices that can be adopted at the municipal, regional, or Island-wide level. This series is expected to kick-off during the second quarter of 2021 and shall continue into the implementation of CDBG-MIT programs. Information shared through this educational series shall complement the eligible activities published in the Action Plan as part of the programs approved by HUD and detailed in the release of program guidelines.



Q12. Where did the public hearing events take place and how did citizens know where to attend? Where can I see them now?

A12. Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, in early 2020 HUD provided guidance regarding alternative allowable measures related to public hearing requirements. In accordance with that guidance, and in lieu of the ability to conduct in-person events, PRDOH used public television, social media platforms, and radio to broadcast the public hearings. Public hearings were announced at www.cdbg-dr.pr.gov at least **fifteen (15) calendar days** prior to the date of the hearing. The announcement included the date, time, and options to tune in to the hearings. The public hearings were announced through the website, social media, electronic mailings, public notices, press releases, interviews, among other outreach efforts.

Public hearings allowed citizens, governmental entities, nonprofit and community organizations, faith-based organizations, and other interested parties to receive information on CDBG-MIT activities and provide input on CDBG-MIT programs and activities. Citizens and all other stakeholders had the option of submitting comments during the public hearings through one of the following: CDBG-MIT website, call center (1-833-234-CDBG or 1-833 234-2324, (TTY: 787-522-5950)), text messages or through the CDBG-MIT email.

The CDBG-MIT webpage contains access to the recordings of the five (5) public hearings that were held between September and October 2020, as well as reports of the public comments and corresponding PRDOH responses. [Click here to access the CDBG-MIT Public Hearings information.](#)

Q13. Can letters of intent (LOIs) that were submitted for FEMA HMGP funding and were not selected, be resubmitted for CDBG-MIT?

A13. Yes, a project that was not selected for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (**HMGP**) could potentially be considered under CDBG-MIT, if it meets the eligibility requirements of programs established in the CDBG-MIT Action Plan.

Q14. Where can I see the results of the Citizen Survey and information on the other public participation events, such as roundtables?

A.14 PRDOH developed a comprehensive report as an appendix to the Action Plan that contains the description of all stakeholder engagement and outreach activities undertaken as part of the CDBG-MIT Action Plan development process.

Roundtable information, as well as the results and analysis of the Citizen Survey can be found here: [Appendix E Stakeholder Engagement Report.](#)

UPDATED 04/30/2021.

ADDITIONAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO PRDOH SHALL BE ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT ON AN ONGOING BASIS.