



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-1000

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

FEB 11 2019

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2105

Dear Senator Warren:

On behalf of Secretary Benjamin S. Carson, Sr. and Director Mick Mulvaney, thank you for your letter of January 21, 2019, regarding the status of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) efforts to assist Puerto Rico's long-term recovery from Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Secretary Carson and the entire Department remain committed to working with Puerto Rico to meaningfully aid its long-term recovery, primarily through the largest allocation of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding in the history of the program. The following information is from HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD).

While the recent lapse in appropriations did impact the pace of the Department's work, HUD continues to assist Puerto Rico with its recovery efforts. First, HUD has provided the Puerto Rico Department of Housing (Vivienda) with access to virtually all of the initial tranche of \$1.507 billion in CDBG-DR funding.¹ Please note that HUD was not able to make these funds available within the Department's Disaster Recovery Grant Reporting (DRGR) system until necessary banking information from Vivienda was linked to the grant funds. The Department received the final piece of banking information from Vivienda on January 10, 2019, and linked the banking information to the \$1.507 billion CDBG-DR grant as of January 16, 2019. Vivienda made its first draw of funds on February 8, 2019.

As most HUD staff returned to work on January 28, 2019, and CPD resumed full operations, additional steps were taken to advance Vivienda's CDBG-DR recovery efforts. These steps included:

- Approving minor modifications in Vivienda's CDBG-DR plan as established in DRGR;
- Accepting Vivienda's recent staffing actions as fulfilling grant conditions that were a predicate to accessing the full \$1.5 billion;
- Extending on-going technical assistance efforts for additional time periods; and
- Providing responses on a range of policy issues.

Furthermore, while review of pending CDBG-DR action plans was determined not to be an excepted activity during the appropriations lapse, HUD is now moving forward on consideration of those plans and amendments (including Vivienda's amendment for \$8.2 billion). Following the timely publication of a *Federal Register* notice in the next several days, the Department intends to review and render decisions on the pending amendments to plans from Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin

¹ Vivienda may currently access \$1.462 billion in funding. Vivienda does not have access to \$45 million, because the proposed "mortgage catch-up" activity requires a further statutory waiver.

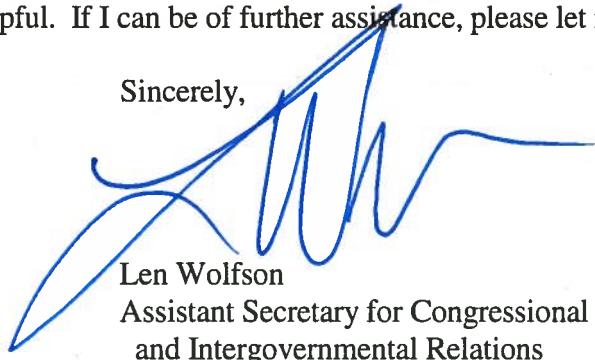
Islands, Florida, California, Georgia, and Missouri. The list below indicates the amounts associated with the plans and amendments.

Grantee	CDBG-DR Amount in Pending Plan or Amendment
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico	\$8,220,783,000
US Virgin Islands	\$779,217,000
State of Florida	\$157,676,000
State of California	\$124,155,000
State of Georgia	\$37,943,000
State of Missouri	\$58,535,000

With respect to your questions regarding nutrition assistance, this is an issue under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). We would advise you to reach out to USDA for additional information.

I hope this information is helpful. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Len Wolfson
Assistant Secretary for Congressional
and Intergovernmental Relations