

Provide Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse

CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND

Program Guidelines

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GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

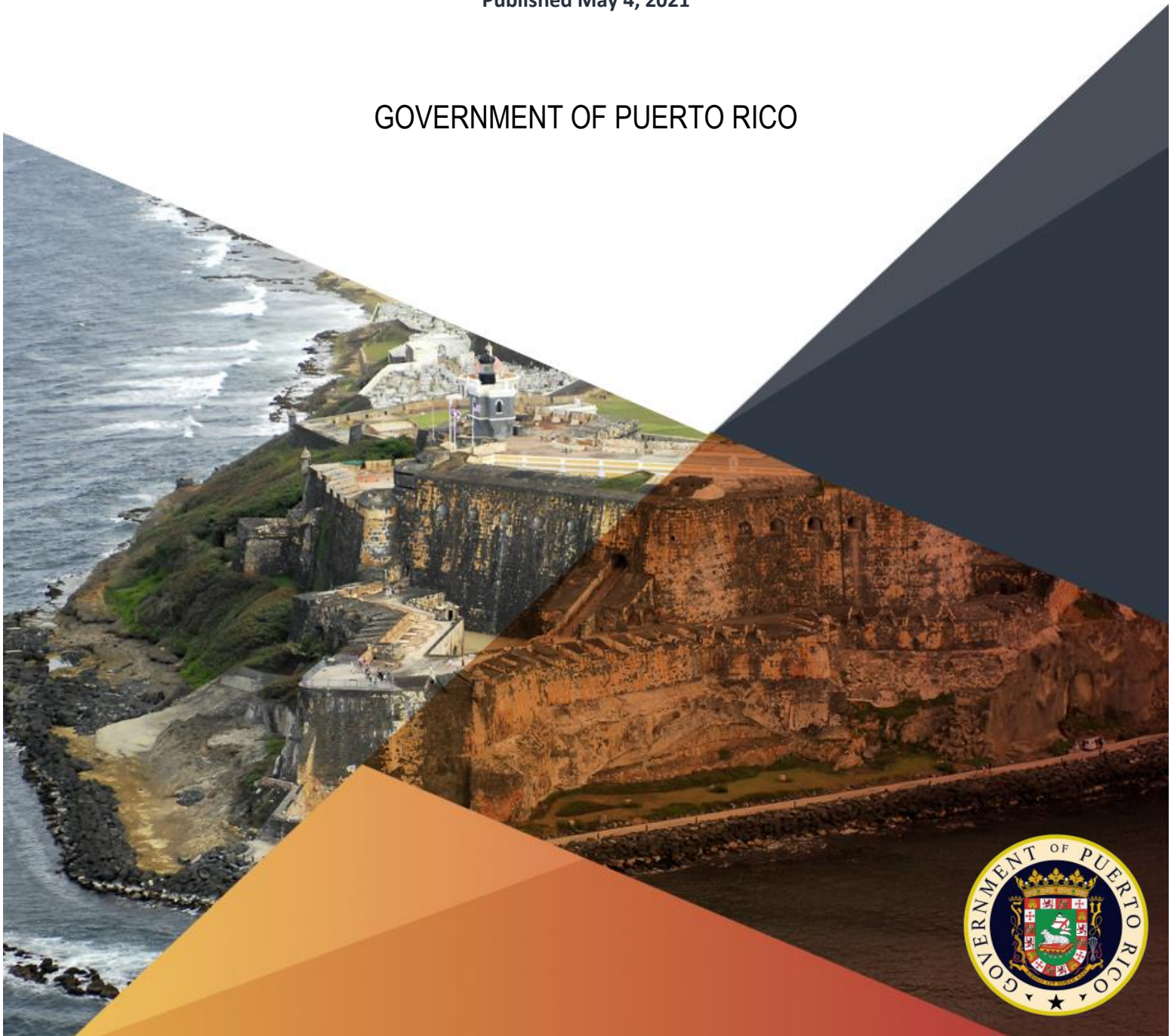


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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Program Overview

Background

In response to the sudden decline in economic output following the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, Congress signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), which provides \$150 billion in direct assistance for domestic governments, territories, and tribal areas to disburse in accordance with its provisions.

To ensure the expeditious processing of apportioned funds from the CARES Act, the Government of Puerto Rico established the Disbursement Oversight Committee, consisting of a representative of the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, a representative of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OGP), and a representative of the Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority (AAFAF).

Program Description

The National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) saw a 9% increase in total contacts received during the first two months of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to the same period a year prior¹. With shelter-in-place orders limiting survivors' ability to escape their abusers, many survivors found themselves in closer and more frequent proximity to their abusers.

On January 25, 2021, Governor Pedro R. Pierluisi executed Executive Order OE-2021-013 1) declaring a state of emergency in Puerto Rico due to the rise of reported domestic abuse cases and 2) creating the Comité PARE (PARE) tasked with advising the Governor with recommendations and measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the Executive Order. Further, on March 17, 2021, Governor Pierluisi instructed to take all necessary measures to allocate up to \$1 million in immediate CRF funds available to the Women's Advocate Office (OPM) and up to \$1 million in immediate CRF funds available to the Comité PARE (PARE), both of which support survivors of domestic violence and abuse. The purpose of these allocations is to provide necessary resources to cover necessary expenses related to COVID-19 and the related rise in domestic violence cases. As such, it is necessary to create this Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse (Program), with an initial allocation of \$2 million in immediate CRF funds.

Disbursement of Program funds will be subject to the strictest standards to ensure compliance with federal regulations and best practices. Therefore, each request for disbursement will be duly documented and subject to control and audit.

Points of Contact

The Program will be supervised by the Disbursement Oversight Committee and administered by OGP.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible Applicants must meet all the following criteria:

- Be an organization that provides resources to survivors of domestic abuse;

¹ <https://www.thehotline.org/wp-content/uploads/media/2020/09/The-Hotline-COVID-19-60-Day-Report.pdf>

- Be a public-sector agency registered to submit requests for funds through the OGP's processing portal: <http://ogp.pr.gov/Pages/Procesamiento-de-Planteamientos.aspx>;
- Have incurred or planned necessary expenditures related to the COVID-19 emergency and maintain documentation that reliably demonstrates the expenses;
- Commit to abiding by the terms and conditions of the Program, including requests for documentation and auditing requests;
- Agree to return the funds, if it is determined that they did not comply with any of the Program eligibility requirements or if the funds were not spent on eligible expenses by December 31, 2021; and
- Agree that while receipt of other funds for COVID-19 related assistance does not preclude an Applicant from receiving funds under the Program, expenses are only eligible that 1) have not been covered or reimbursed and 2) will not be covered in the future, by other state, federal, or private programs.

Other CRF Programs

In addition to the Program detailed above, the Governor allocated funds for additional programs to address both government needs (mainly associated with attending to the public health emergency and continuing government operations) and those of the private sector, which has been severely affected by interruption of operations. Please visit <http://www.aafaf.pr.gov/covid-19-resource-center/> for additional information about these programs.

Allowable Expenditures

Allowable expenses under this award include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of rapid testing and personal protective equipment;
- Temporary emergency housing and related basic personal expenses to accommodate individuals requiring quarantine;
- Minor renovations or construction works in public buildings to promote social distancing;
- Expenses necessarily incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and necessary to respond to the rise in domestic violence case caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Expenses that were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
- Expenses incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 31, 2021.

For further guidance please refer to the Guidance published by the U.S. Treasury at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/CRF-Guidance-Federal-Register_2021-00827.pdf.

Ineligible Expenditures

Ineligible expenses will be determined by OGP, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and other regulatory bodies, and under this award include, but are not limited to:

- Necessary expenses that have been covered or reimbursed, or that will be covered in the future, by other state, federal, or programs that the Applicant may have, including funds received through the CARES Act’s Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund;
- Expenses arising from an improper procurement process, as well as those that are deemed unreasonable or fraudulent;
and
- Other expenses that are determined to be unnecessary for continued operations in the COVID-19 environment.

For further guidance please refer to the Guidance published by the U.S. Treasury at https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/CRF-Guidance-Federal-Register_2021-00827.pdf.

Process Overview

The following is intended to outline the process by which funds from the CRF will be distributed to Applicants of the Program.

After May 4, 2021	Request period opens and requests must be filed by PP system with signed certification
Funds Expended	Request period closes
After May 4 – Funds Expended	Requests reviewed and approved by the Program
December 31, 2021	Deadline for Award Funds to be used by Recipient
January 31, 2022	Recipient submits Funds Report and Expenses Evidence to AAFAF
February 1 – April 30, 2022	Program audits Use of Funds for compliance, to the Federal Program and AAFAF guidelines, and pursues recovery of funds if applicable
May 1, 2022	Program closes

Requests

Requests will be submitted electronically along with a signed certification using the Request processing portal (<http://ogp.pr.gov/Pages/Procesamiento-de-Planteamientos.aspx>) administered by the Puerto Rico OGP. Applicants should submit requests under the PP Form-CRF Fund Request. Upon submission, Applicants will receive a confirmation via electronic mail. More information on forms, documents, and eligibility can be found on the web at <http://www.aafaf.pr.gov/covid-19-resource-center/>.

The Program will open for Requests after May 4, 2021 and will remain open until Funds are expended. All submissions will be accepted based on the time of submission and evaluated in accordance with criteria set forth by the Program.

Evaluation

Request decisions will be evaluated for completeness and eligibility, and final determinations will be made by a representative of OGP. Each Request will be evaluated, and Program funds allocated using a standard of necessity.

Funding award decisions will be supervised by the Disbursement Oversight Committee (Committee).

Award and Funding

Applicants will be notified via electronic mail of funding decisions. Subsequent funding opportunities (including expansion of eligible institutions and use of funds) will be determined based on availability of funds remaining after completion of initial awards.

Compliance

Recipients that receive Program funds will be required to submit weekly spending reports and a comprehensive final financial reconciliation report before January 31, 2022 detailing the use of Program funds. Recipients may additionally be required, upon request, to show proof of payment and submit other required documentation.

Any recipient of Program funds will be required to retain evidence of eligible expenses for a period of ten (10) years. Furthermore, by accepting CRF funds the recipient is required to certify proper and legal use of the funds and agrees to cooperate in any audit proceedings requested by The Government of Puerto Rico or other governing entity responsible for the compliant use of funds.