**The *FORWARD/ ADELANTE* Puerto Rico Fund**

**What is the *FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund?**

The *FORWARD/ ADELANTE* Puerto Rico Fund is a pool of philanthropic contributions from individuals, foundations and other private sources that support key non-profit institutions that are working to achieve a better Puerto Rico in the short, medium and long term. Initially, *FORWARD* Puerto Rico supported organizations that helped communities affected by the devastating hurricanes Irma and Maria. New priorities support recovery efforts by strengthening these organizations and ensuring their resilience and continued contribution to Puerto Rico.; promoting government transparency and accountability with particular emphasis on accounting and advising on the allocation of disaster recovery funds; and advancing public policies that create local jobs and decrease poverty and inequality. Our vision is to move *FORWARD* expeditiously, towards a better Puerto Rico.

**Who created the** **FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund?**

The *FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund was created by the Puerto Rico Funders Network (*La Red de Fundaciones de Puerto Rico)*. The Network is made up of longstanding and prestigious Puerto Rican foundations with extensive experience in strategic grantmaking and deep involvement in the local nonprofit sector.

The Fund was designed by *La Red*  in early 2017 as a long- term mechanism to foster philanthropic partnerships to address the economic and humanitarian crises confronting the island. A decade of economic decline and irresponsible government borrowing and overspending built up a $72 Billion public debt, plus an additional $53 Billion in pension commitments. The dire economic situation generated increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and migration. Hurricanes Maria and Irma hit the island in September 2017, with additional devastating consequences. Puerto Ricans had no water, electricity or communications for months. The response of state and federal governments was inadequate. Local nonprofits, businesses and individual and organized philanthropy were the ones who quickly responded. The FORWARD Puerto Rico was key to the philanthropic effort to provide emergency support for local nonprofit organizations that had taken the initiative to address their communities immediate needs. The Fund’s purpose is to assist Puerto Rico over the long term through its recovery, rebuilding and reinvention.

**Why was the** ***FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund created?**

With half of its population living under the U. S. poverty level, Puerto Rico confronts a dual challenge that especially affects the country’s most vulnerable populations. The most recent challenge has been the devastation created by the passage of hurricanes Maria and Irma. But these hurricanes hit at a time when the island was already facing a huge economic crisis. The storms left many homeless, with no sources of water, electricity, food, medicine or fuel. The economic crisis has increased joblessness, health problems and over 4,600 deaths, out migration, and decline of public services. Community-based non-profit organizations have been the first to respond to these crises by documenting impacts, advocating for the most vulnerable, creating innovative initiatives, mobilizing volunteers and addressing basic needs. As organizations deeply rooted in vulnerable communities, they pursue their equal treatment. Their proximity and knowledge of communities and their people enable local community organizations to quickly and efficiently provide necessary services, even in remote places.

**How does the** ***FORWARD* /ADELANTE Puerto Rico Fund operate?**

The *FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund collects philanthropic contributions from foundations in Puerto Rico and the United States, individuals and international organizations. All of these funds are distributed in Puerto Rico among non-profit organizations with proven track records and positive impact. The list of foundation partners and grantee organizations is on the webpage [www.redfundacionespr.org](http://www.redfundacionespr.org).

Recently, *La Red* undertook a consultative process that involved nonprofit groups, experts, allies, and contributors to the FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund to help define its strategic priorities as the island moved out of the emergency situation. *La Red* sought to identify key strategies to help put Puerto Rico on a clear path to recovery and transformation toward greater equity and prosperity.

The planning process helped *La Red* to articulate a long- term goal for the FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund and three priorities.

Goal: **Enable philanthropic cooperation and collaboration and community-led initiatives that advance an equitable and prosperous Puerto Rico.**

To advance this goal, the FORWARD Puerto Rico Fund supports efforts that help Puerto Ricans:

* Secure good jobs locally
* Decrease poverty
* Stem out-migration
* Promote public sector transparency and accountability
* Encourage collaborations between and among foundations, nonprofits, and others

The following three priorities, identified through this consultative process, will guide grantmaking through 2019.

Three Priorities:

• Promote social justice and transparency in the distribution of public resources (federal, state) with particular emphasis during 2018, on the recovery funds provided by the federal government (e.g., Federal Emergency Management Act, Community Development Block Grants).

• Facilitate data analysis, and informed public dialogue and debate on the actual and potential impacts of new policies, particularly for vulnerable populations.

•Advance the resilience and sustainability of the non-profit sector by enhancing leadership, building fiscal and programmatic health, augmenting collective influence and voice, and enabling collaborations among nonprofit organizations.

Workplan 2018-19

Priority 1:

* Assist residents in obtaining the required legal documents that enable them to receive funds for disaster recovery and rebuilding.

- Help residents acquire land titles.

- Identify needed policy changes to facilitate home ownership and rebuilding.

* Enable nonprofit organizations to understand requirements of federal programs that fund job creation and the repair and rebuilding of homes, and to access these funds.
* Help individuals and groups to understand the requirements and opportunities of disaster recovery funds including Community Development Block Grants.
* Support analysis and tracking of public dollars directed at job creation and recovery and rebuilding

- Make data on the deployment of recovery funds accessible to citizens.

Priority 2:

* Support data collection and analysis, research and publications on key policy issues such as education, energy, that are essential for recovery.

Priority 3:

* Develop and implement a substantive capacity building initiative to ensure a resilient and effective nonprofit sector.

The *FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund is managed by the Puerto Rico Funders Network, which is a non-profit organization. The Funders Network’s Board of Directors, composed of the leaders of the member foundations, ensures the effective distribution of funds raised.

*The Funders Network administers the Fund without charging administrative costs on contributions from individuals to maximize their contributions.*

The Funders Network documents its donations continually on Global Giving and its own webpage, and produces stories of benefited individuals and organizations. It also commissions independent evaluations of work supported.

**How can I donate to the *FORWARD* Puerto Rico Fund?**

The Puerto Rico Funders Network’s website ([www.redfundacionespr.org](http://www.redfundacionespr.org/)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/redfundacionespr/](http://www.facebook.com/redfundacionespr/)) accept online donations.