

EMIGRATION

City to help displaced hurricane victims, families at new Manhattan center (AM New York)

By Lauren Cook

October 16, 2017

[AM New York](#)

A service center dedicated to helping people displaced by recent hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Texas and Florida will open later this week, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday.

The center, set to open Thursday, will offer access to city services and in-person support from a range of government offices, including social services, health and mental hygiene, education and senior services. Representatives from the American Red Cross, New York Disaster Interfaith Services, Animal Care and Control and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will also be on hand to help people affected by the recent hurricanes and their families.

“New York City will help those affected by recent hurricanes in any way we can. We’ve been sending donations and emergency responders to affected areas, and now we’re setting up a central location to help displaced people in our city receive essential services and assistance,” the mayor said in an emailed statement.

Services will be provided at the Julia De Burgos Latino Cultural Center, at 1680 Lexington Ave. in East Harlem. The center will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Anyone looking for assistance can set up an appointment ahead of time, beginning Wednesday, by visiting nyc.gov or calling 311.

The city has already begun to prepare for what it anticipates will be an influx of displaced people from hurricane-ravaged areas, particularly residents from Puerto Rico. New York has one of the largest Puerto Rican populations in the country, with over 1 million residents of Puerto Rican descent currently living in the state.

City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito said on Monday that the city must step up where “the federal government has come up short,” apparently referencing President Donald Trump’s response to Hurricane Maria.

“This is a humanitarian crisis the likes our city has ever experienced and we must do everything we can to help our fellow Puerto Ricans who have given so much to our city and to our country,” said Mark-Viverito, who visited the island in the aftermath of Maria.

Last week, Public Advocate Letitia James called on the de Blasio administration to do more to prepare for an influx of displaced people and proposed a range of initiatives that could help people in need.

De Blasio has said the city is preparing, but also warned that resources were already tight.

“I don’t want to encourage people to come here if they don’t have some family to turn to,” de Blasio said at unrelated news conference last Thursday. “We have to be really clear about this.”

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has also called on SUNY and CUNY schools to allow those affected by the hurricanes to pay in-state tuition rates to attend the school.

With Alison Fox and Laura Figueroa

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Puerto Rican students continue schooling in mainland U.S. (TribLIVE)

By [Jamie Martines](#) | Monday, Oct. 16, 2017

[TribLive/Trib Total Media](#) (Pennsylvania)

Dozens more students from Puerto Rico, will continue school in the mainland United States this week after Hurricane Maria shut down local schools.

Students have traveled as far as Connecticut, [Massachusetts](#) and Pennsylvania to live with family members and attend school. [NPR reports](#) that of Puerto Rico's 1,113 schools, only about 200 have reopened because of debris and a lack of electricity.

Julia Keleher, Puerto Rico's secretary of education, told NPR that students have lost between 35 and 40 instructional days because of the hurricane. This could have a significant impact on students' academic achievement.

As of Thursday, the Miami-Dade County school district had enrolled 251 Puerto Rican students. Orange County schools had enrolled nearly 300 students from Puerto Rico and 92 from the U.S. Virgin Islands, [EdWeek reports](#).

The [Orlando Sentinel reports](#) nearly 40 students have enrolled in Volusia County schools in Florida since Hurricane Maria hit.

Last week, some families traveled from Puerto Rico to Broward County aboard a Royal Caribbean International Cruise ship, where local school district officials greeted them upon arrival and shared information about enrolling school-age students, [Politico reports](#).

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WHITE HOUSE / CONGRESS / POLITICS

Rep. Nydia Velazquez: Puerto Rico 'Could Become Another Flint' (Daily Beast)

The New York congresswoman shared serious concerns with the lack of federal aid Puerto Rico has received.

[Hayley Jones](#)

10.16.17 2:34 PM ET

[Daily Beast](#)

Representative Nydia Velazquez (D-NY) is done with the [federal government's lackluster response](#) to the [devastation in Puerto Rico](#).

On CNN, Congresswoman Velazquez—who is also the first Puerto Rican woman elected to the House—expressed [great concern for the future of Puerto Rico](#).

After being [devastated by Hurricane Maria](#), Puerto Rico residents have resorted to drinking water from [Superfund sites](#). These are known hazardous-waste sites.

“This is one Superfund site we are aware of, but there are 14 Superfund sites in Puerto Rico,” Velazquez told host Kate Bolduan. “So, the extent of the damage, this could become another Flint where so many children, old people—regular people in Puerto Rico could get affected.”

She continued, “We’re talking about contaminants, toxins, material, oil that are in this water.”

“And I’m really very concerned for this to happen in America, it’s just heartbreaking,” Velazquez added.

Bolduan goes on to ask Velazquez about her response to one of President Trump’s tweets saying federal first responders cannot stay in Puerto Rico forever.

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OPINION

Hurricane Victims Don't Have the 'Complexion for Protection' (Common Dreams)

A full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.

By [Lois Marie Gibbs](#)

Monday, Oct. 16, 2017

[Common Dreams](#)

Millions of Puerto Ricans are still without water, food, electricity and shelter, four weeks after Hurricane Maria destroyed the island. [With waterborne illnesses on the rise, a full-blown humanitarian crisis is on the horizon.](#)

“Raw sewage continues to be released into waterways and is expected to continue until repairs can be made and power is restored,” EPA warns in a memo.

Eighty-four percent of Puerto Rico is without electricity, and sixty percent of water treatment plants are out of service.

“Water contaminated with livestock waste, human sewage, chemicals, and other contaminants can lead to illness when used for drinking, bathing, and other hygiene activities,” says **FEMA**.

To make matters worse, Puerto Rico is home to 21 Superfund sites – the nation’s most deadly depositories of toxic chemicals. The island also has a five-story-high coal ash dump in Guayama that was hit by the storm.

[Floodwaters have already mixed deadly toxins from these sites into nearby waterways](#), which residents are forced to use to bathe and drink. In a desperate attempt to save their own lives, [some Puerto Ricans are drinking highly contaminated water](#) from wells that were once sealed to avoid exposure to deadly toxins.

Families who have lost everything now must contend with the possibility that their groundwater is tainted with poison.

The Complexion for Protection

On the same day **FEMA** issued its warning, President Trump took to Twitter to complain, “We cannot keep **FEMA**, the Military & the First Responders... in P.R. forever!”

First, Mr. President, a reality check. The devastation caused by major storms takes years, not weeks, to repair. **FEMA** is still at work in New Orleans, twelve years after Hurricane Katrina, and in New Jersey and New York five years after Hurricane Sandy. EPA cleanup of contaminated sites takes even longer.

Second, a political check. [Puerto Ricans are American citizens, and have been for more than a century.](#) They serve in our Armed Forces and pay taxes, even if they weren’t allowed to vote for you – or any candidate – for President, and have no representation in Congress.

As Puerto Rico’s Governor, [Roberto Roselló, wrote in his response to Trump’s Twitter tantrum](#), “The U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico are requesting the support that any of our fellow citizens would receive across our Nation.”

This is discrimination, plain and simple. When President Trump visited San Juan, he threw paper towels at a crowd of suffering people and scolded them for busting his budget. They weren’t amused by his theatrics.

They, like the Houston residents who live near waterways fouled by toxins from the San Jacinto Superfund site, are people of color – apparently not the right complexion for protection.

Dismissing the Victims

Dismissing victims is not unusual for this administration and for the EPA. The agency’s new chief, Scott Pruitt, spends his time on the road meeting privately with corporate CEOs responsible for

these toxic waste sites. He then takes their wish-lists back to Washington so he can draft new ways to roll back the environmental protections they loathe.

But local community leaders, with few exceptions, have not been given the opportunity to talk with Pruitt.

Congress passed legislation in 1986 directing EPA to pursue permanent remedies or cleanups that conform to stringent standards. Although permanent cleanups cost more at the front end, they save money over the long term, as evident by the disruption of buried waste from storms like Harvey, Irma, Katrina and Sandy.

So, why won't the EPA enforce the permanent cleanup of these sites to avoid future cleanup costs as well as protect the community?

Because the people who live around most Superfund sites are poor and of color and are considered not worth the investment.

This is even more the case in Puerto Rico, since lawmakers in D.C. feel no accountability to the island's citizens, who are separated from the mainland and denied the right to vote.

The EPA Told Me So

How do I know this? An EPA regional representative recently told me they were not going to spend millions to clean up a site when the surrounding houses are worth \$60,000. It doesn't make cost-effective sense, he said; we'll just try to contain the waste.

Yet these houses are people's homes; inside are human beings raising their families, having backyard picnics and celebrating birthdays. The homes are their American Dream. How dare these government officials devalue their neighborhoods because they are not wealthy!

These families pay taxes, contribute to society and deserve every protection available from our government, regardless of their wealth, language or the color of their skin.

I fear that families that have already lost so much in this summer's severe hurricanes will suffer even more in coming months because of the color of their skin and the level of their income.

And as they try to clean up the mud and debris and rebuild their lives, families must also worry about how much chemical residue is in the mud they and their children have been exposed to.

They Don't Care, So We Must

There is no question in my mind that the Trump Administration does not care for victims, whether in Houston, Miami or San Juan. So we have to take responsibility to compel the administration to act and hold them accountable.

We have to force the government to protect people living near Superfund sites by permanently cleaning them up, and to give Puerto Rico's people the equal treatment they deserve.

Lois Marie Gibbs is a former resident of the Love Canal community and founder of the [Center for Health, Environment and Justice](#), a project of People's Action.

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Hurricanes Present Economic Opportunity For Trump (Forbes)

Oct 16, 2017 @ 12:58 PM 79

Guest post written by Michael Stumo

Stumo is CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America.

[Forbes](#)

Three hurricanes have hit land in the U.S. in the past month, wreaking havoc on the power, transit and communications systems that keep our communities running and our citizens safe. Rebuilding Texas and Florida infrastructure could be a silver lining, putting Americans to work on construction sites and in factories.

But without Trump administration action, many of those jobs will be created in other countries. Foreign trade cheating has weakened many competitive U.S. industries. A new Department of

Commerce report revealed that the U.S. trade deficit in July grew once again. The trade deficit with China increased by 3% to \$33.6 billion, the latest in eleven straight months of increases. Hurricane Harvey's devastation could push the trade deficit even higher if we rebuild using foreign, rather than USA-made goods.

President Trump has a chance to make a difference. On the campaign trail, a pro-American trade agenda galvanized the president's base. Tens of thousands of non-traditional voters were inspired to speak with their ballot. But the White House has delayed assertive action at a time when our country needs jobs to rebuild after these storms. As the CEO of the Coalition for a Prosperous America, I believe this is precisely the type of risk we try to hedge against by having an "America First" philosophy. Without empowering our own citizens with free and fair economic opportunities, we cannot act as a role model for the rest of the world.

Last April, President Trump announced investigations into imports of steel and aluminum under a trade law known as "Section 232." The results of this investigation would provide an opportunity to fight foreign subsidies with tariffs. Over the past decade, the American steel and aluminum industries have been decimated because the governments of Russia, South Korea, Vietnam, Turkey, China, Brazil and others have subsidized the dumping of products in the U.S.

Thousands of Americans lost their jobs. Since 2000, the U.S. steel industry has lost almost 48,000 jobs, including 14,000 in the last 18 months. The U.S. aluminum industry has lost 3,500 jobs in the past 18 months alone.

Some of President Trump's advisers are doing him and the country a disservice by delaying action. Since calling for the investigation, the White House has postponed the investigation's findings with no clear end in sight. Without follow-through, it's unclear when and how our manufacturing sectors will recover—if ever.

The production of steel and aluminum is critical to our nation's infrastructure and defense needs, especially at a time where we need to rebuild roads, bridges, and buildings destroyed by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Half a million vehicles were severely damaged or destroyed in Hurricane Harvey alone—which is expected to increase demand for steel. According to the Steel Institute's most recent data, U.S. steel mills are operating at just over 70% of capacity. We are just beginning to understand the extent of the economic disruption in the wake of the storms. Sudden, unexpected disasters like these highlight the risk of over dependence on imports. If the steel trade is rebalanced, this could be an opportunity to get these mills back to capacity and get Americans back to work in good paying jobs.

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SOCIAL LISTENING

Hurricane Maria DR-4339-PR – Social Listening Report

Monday, October 16, 2017 1300

Compiled by: Virginia Case, Bree-Constance Huffin, and Savannah Brehmer

Summary: People continue to use social media to locate loved ones, learn about utility restoration – many doubt validity of media and public official reports. In **FEMA**-related conversation, the public is pleased with information about supplies being distributed and help available, but they are not sure what the \$500 they've received is for, and there is criticism for the types of food some have received from **FEMA**. People are especially interested in the USNS Comfort – they're happy about the newborn delivered yesterday, and want to know how to obtain medical services. Efforts are underway to get students back to school and the reactions are mixed. Coast Guard and National Guard recovery efforts are especially appreciated.

Public Perception

FEMA Conversation:

- Individuals who have applied for assistance are [asking questions](#) on what the next steps are, and how they are able to get in contact with officials for a status update on their application.
- Heavy discussion surrounds [a picture](#) of the food FEMA is passing out to survivors continues to circulate and generate conversation.
 - The survivor states (10/13) FEMA is only giving out candy and snacks in their food boxes.
 - There are conflicting comments because some agree that this is what FEMA is really giving out and other survivors are stating they received MREs and canned foods.
 - The Digital Engagement Team is working on content to show what food FEMA is distributing.
- Many are trying to figure out the specifics of the \$500 Critical Needs Assistance money survivors could get from FEMA.
 - The conversation surrounds someone trying to [explain](#) the details of receiving the money based of an interview he had with a FEMA employee.

Public Sentiment:

- People are grateful for the military's help toward Puerto Rico's recovery.
 - Both the content from the National Guard and local media is well-received. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#))
 - Some are [reacting positively](#) to photos of soldiers passing out water.
- Most are [grateful for their help](#) toward Puerto Rico's recovery. ([example 2](#))
- There are [mixed reviews](#) after Florida Senator Bill Nelson's press conference yesterday.
 - Mostly comments were supportive of the senator and his plans for recovery.
 - Most survivors are ready to see change in their community after the storm.
- The help and visits from local government officials giving back to survivors is receiving a lot of attention through different social media channels.
 - The Governor of Puerto Rico, Ricardo Rosselló, visited the emergency Stop & Go of Roosevelt Avenue to check on staff and equipment for disaster assistance registration with FEMA and passed out food to survivors. ([example 1](#) [example 2](#) [example 3](#))
 - The Mayor of San Juan, Carmen Yulin Cruz, [visited and talked with survivors](#).
- The USNS Comfort is of great interest to the public. The baby born there yesterday is especially welcome news. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#)) Many want to know how to get on the ship, and share phone numbers and a graphic with how to get there. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#)) The Digital Engagement Team is working on a graphic to explain how services on the USNS Comfort can be accessed.
- In a comment posted to David Begnaud's update yesterday on the response, [there's a petition to investigate local corruption at AEE and PREPA](#), though in response others say this has been an issue since before the storm.
- Heavy discussion surrounds [a picture](#) of the food FEMA is passing out to survivors.
- Many people are sharing their gratitude for the celebrities who are raising/donating money to Puerto Rico to assist in the recovery efforts. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#))

- A small amount of individuals are asking how they are able to get their identification cards to travel or what solutions are available for those who want to go to the mainland but have [lost their ID cards](#).
- Individuals who are continuing to look for loved ones in the affected area are being told a resource that has been successful is the CrowdSource Rescue Group. One person has shared a [screenshot of the texts](#) that they received after CrowdSource was able to locate their loved one, and another shares how people are able to get in touch with group and [the information needed](#) for them to be effective.
- News is welcome from the Ponce mayor that [goods are arriving at the port](#) and hot meals are being served.
- Many individuals from outside the affected areas are continuing to share their [frustration](#) about the Federal Government's response to Puerto Rico in [comparison](#) to the [response](#) in Florida and Texas.
-

Operations

Private Sector:

- There's a phone number to call [to request Loads of Love from Tide](#) come to the Island.
- Reports of the maximum individuals should pay for gas continue to circulate. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#))

School:

- Classes are set to resume at the University of Puerto Rico, possibly as soon as in the next week. ([example 1](#), [example 2](#)) Some are skeptical at the news as water and electricity may still not be there.

Communication:

- There have been reports from loved ones outside of the affected area that communications are [coming back on](#) in Aguadilla.
- An individual is sharing information on how survivors may be able to [acquire satellite phones](#) in order to communicate with their families while cell service remains scarce.

Critical Infrastructure/Public Works:

- As of 0700 ET yesterday Whitefish Energy is performing many critical infrastructural updates throughout Puerto Rico.
 - Rebuilding buildings, bridges, power, etc. ([example 1](#) , [example 2](#) , [example 3](#))
 - Those inside and outside the impacted area are glad to see progress happening in Puerto Rico.

Energy:

- As of 1100 ET, 15 October, Power Source and Whitefish was contracted to help bring power and restore the city. ([example 1](#) , [example 2](#))

Life Safety

- Family members are continuing their search for loved ones who have been missing since the Hurricane.
 - San Juan- [Example](#), [Example 2](#)
 - Cayey- [Example](#)
 - Toa Baja- [Example](#)
 - Cain- [Example](#)

- Boqueron- [Example](#)
- Ponce: A person's relative was at the Damas hospital, and they are not able to get more information about him. - [Example](#)

Public Safety:

- As of 1300 EST 10/15: San Juan has been slow to [remove debris](#) from the affected areas, and individuals are expressing their anger towards the mayor for the delay.
- As of 1300 EST 10/15: El Vocero is on the [second phase](#) of debris removal but people are unaware of when the first phase took place.
- As of 2100 EST 10/15: A facility in Isabela that was caring for sick children and adults was [lacking the necessary essentials](#) to keep them alive such as fuel, and air conditioning. As a result, the patients were able to be transferred to a proper medical facility where they were able to receive life-saving care.
- While La Fortaleza de Puerto Rico reports that [water is potable in Tao Alto and Naranjito](#), people are reporting they still don't have access, and others are [skeptical of the report](#).

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Sender:	Hunter, Andrea </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=035A9C5A96014146924E7835ED1A8E3A-HUNTER, AND>
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Sent Date:	2017/10/16 18:50:23
Delivered Date:	2017/10/16 18:50:47