

THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

2023 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Tracking Federal Funding Impact in Puerto Rico

U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), The Puerto Rico Office of Management and Budget (PR OMB), and PolicyLink

THE CHALLENGE – Design solutions that help individuals and communities to understand spending and impact of federal funds in Puerto Rico.

EXECUTIVE CHAMPION –

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THE PROBLEM – Complex funding processes and lack of data accessibility and transparency have reduced Puerto Rican residents' ability to understand and participate in critical funding decisions that directly impact their communities. While the U.S. has developed portals to improve transparency in spending, the information is often insufficient, and collected, managed, analyzed and disclosed using a variety of processes, formats, tools, and standards. The fragmentation of information at the state and municipal levels exacerbates this challenge, with over a 100 different decentralized and disconnected portals and databases. Ultimately, the data disclosed does not allow for impact tracking and is not conducive to the development of insights and statistics that are relevant to key grassroots stakeholders and beneficiaries in Puerto Rico. Limited transparency across governments also inhibits learning, tracking, and monitoring, and limits the government's ability to oversee progress, avoid duplication and gaps, and identify opportunities for improvement and increasing impact. This is particularly important in the context of Puerto Rico, which in the last decade, has endured severe and consistent economic decline, coupled with rising poverty levels and relatively high income inequality rates that places it among the most unequal areas in the world; all while facing the effects of climate change.

THE OPPORTUNITY – Greater visibility and understanding of how federal funding is allocated and utilized at the state and local levels can significantly enhance community engagement and empower residents to actively participate in identifying and addressing critical needs and underserved populations. Increased transparency helps identify communities in need and prioritize their unique requirements. Additionally, transparency in funding allocation enables residents to actively engage in the design and implementation of projects aimed at meeting community needs. It allows community members to gain the information they need to collaborate with officials to suggest innovative solutions and contribute valuable insights, making the decision-making process more inclusive and reflective of local realities. This involvement ensures that public resources are utilized efficiently and equitably, addressing the most pressing issues in a targeted manner, and bridging gaps in service delivery.

Furthermore, increased transparency also helps to identify cost-effective methods to assess the impact of public spending. By tracking and evaluating the outcomes of funded projects, officials

can identify successful initiatives and those requiring adjustments in a timely manner. This iterative approach ensures that resources are deployed effectively, addressing any shortcomings promptly, and maximizing their impact for the most vulnerable communities. As such, it fosters greater accountability, with a clear understanding of where funds are allocated, how they are utilized, and what they achieved.

TARGET END USERS – Beneficiaries of federal funding allocations in Puerto Rico, especially highly vulnerable and marginalized communities, and Puerto Rico residents interested in understanding the impact of federal spending in local communities.

RELATED DATA SETS

- ↳ [USA Spending](#)
- ↳ [Data.Gov](#)
- ↳ [Central Office for Recovery, Reconstruction and Resiliency \(COR3\) Transparency Portal](#) (including emergency, recovery and reconstruction information on spending, bids and contracts)
- ↳ [PR Department of Housing CDBG \(Community Development Block Grant\) Portal](#) (incl. information on CDBG spending, bidding, contracting, and impact) - [PR Contracting Registry - PR Bid Registry \(Subastas.gov\)](#)
- ↳ [Energy – Autoridad de Energia Electrica \(AEE\)/PREPA \(Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority\) Bids](#)
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 - ↳ [AEE/PREPA Contracts](#)
 - ↳ [USA Spending](#)
 - ↳ [Data.Gov](#)
 - ↳ [COR3 Data](#) on emergency, recovery and reconstruction information on spending, bids and contracts
 - ↳ [CDBG Portal](#) on CDBG spending, bidding, contracting, and impact
 - ↳ [PR Contracting Registry](#)
 - ↳ [Autoridad de Energia Electrica Oportunidades/PREPA Bids](#)
 - ↳ [Autoridad de Energia Electrica Oportunidades /PREPA Contracts](#)

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