



Investing in Puerto Rico



Under Secretary Vilsack's leadership and the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is making historic investments so that all Americans have the opportunity and tools to build a good life in the communities they love. USDA has set four cross-cutting strategic priorities to guide our investments in farmers and ranchers, small businesses and families.



Creating More, Better, and New Market Opportunities

To create new income opportunities for producers and a fair, resilient, diversified, secure agricultural sector, which is essential to rural prosperity and the U.S. economy.

USDA is investing in opportunities for farmers to process, aggregate, and distribute their products to provide more options for both producers and consumers, and to make the food system more resilient and less reliant on limited options. Puerto Rico has received **\$8 million** through the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program, over **\$18 million** through the Local Food Purchase Agreement Program, and over **\$4 million** through the Resilient Food System Infrastructure Program to support these efforts.



Advancing Equity, Opportunity, and Rural Prosperity

To ensure that Americans who need USDA's services most receive them.

Puerto Rico has received nearly **\$1.3 billion** in Rural Development funding since 2021. This includes investments in housing, broadband and telecom infrastructure, community facilities, rural businesses and related infrastructure, as well as water and environmental programs. This funding will fuel long-term rural economic development and opportunities in rural Puerto Rico.

\$164.7 million in USDA investment for farmers in financial distress has helped **1,413** Puerto Ricans stay on their land and overcome challenges beyond their control, like COVID-19, natural disasters, and global supply chain impacts.

Food and Agriculture

USDA works each day to strengthen Puerto Rico agriculture.

Puerto Rico is home to **8,230** farms across nearly **488 thousand** acres. All told, sales of farm products contribute more than **\$485 million** to Puerto Rico's economy, according to the 2018 Puerto Rico Census of Agriculture.



Addressing Climate Change via Climate-Smart Agriculture, Forestry, and Clean Energy

So America's farms, forests, natural landscapes, and communities can withstand pressures of a changing climate.

Four Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities projects in Puerto Rico will expand markets for America's climate-smart commodities, leverage the greenhouse gas benefits of climate-smart commodity production, and provide direct, meaningful benefits to agriculture, including for producers in Puerto Rico and nationwide. Over **\$117.4 million** in federal funding and **\$17.6 million** in non-federal matching funds support this work in Puerto Rico.



Tackling Food and Nutrition Insecurity

To give all Americans consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods.

Over **162,000** school children in Puerto Rico receive healthy lunch at school, while more than **88,000** mothers and children get critical nutrition for a strong start through WIC. More than **\$53 million** in Summer EBT grocery benefits reach **330,221** children who each receive **\$177** during the summer months. USDA's historic update of the Thrifty Food Plan helped stretch NAP benefits. Nearly **\$240 million** in monthly NAP benefits support almost **1.3 million** Puerto Ricans, on average, in putting food on the table and drive revenue for grocery stores, food workers, and farmers. USDA continues to support a successful transition from NAP to SNAP once Congress opens up this pathway.





Key Investments & Impact

USDA Rural Partners Network (RPN)

- Puerto Rico is one of only 11 target areas under RPN, which recognizes the immediate need to serve and support rural communities in improving access to resources to create economic opportunities, improve infrastructure and community development. To achieve this goal, RPN created three community networks in Puerto Rico to serve the needs and priorities of rural communities.
 - The Southwest Community Network covers the municipalities of Mayagüez, Maricao, and Guánica.
 - The Central Mountain Community Network includes the municipalities of Utuado, Jayuya, Ciales, Orocovis, Villalba, Ponce, Adjuntas, Barranquitas, and Coamo.
 - The East Coast Community Network covers the municipalities of Fajardo, Ceiba, Naguabo, and El Yunque National Forest.
- In May 2024, USDA announced the availability of \$1 million grant for the Puerto Rico Rural Partners Network Rural Community Development Initiative. This grant provides financial and technical assistance to Intermediaries to build capacity of recipients located within the RPN Community Networks.
- RPN in Puerto Rico helps connect community-based organizations to donations. For example, philanthropic organization Empowered by Light donated solar systems to Comunidad La Mina (Naguabo) and Comunidad Arenas (Guanica).
- RPN partnered with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to bring resources and assistance to the Municipality of Guánica. Through HUD's Distressed Cities and Persistent Poverty Technical Assistance (DCTA) program, the Municipality is receiving support in planning, financing, implementation strategies, and community development.

Rural Housing Programs

- USDA's Rural Housing Service (RHS) has invested over \$114.5 million through its Single Family Housing (SFH) Programs in Puerto Rico, helping 965 rural families stay in their homes, complete home repairs, or become homeowners. Additionally now a family of four with an income of \$39, 550 can apply to USDA's SFH Direct Loan Program, SFH Home Repair Program, and SFH Rural Disaster Home Repair Grant Program.

Farm Labor Stabilization and Protection (FLSP) Pilot Program

- The new FLSP Program awarded \$800,000 to Puerto Rican agricultural employers. The grant funding will strengthen the resiliency of our food supply chain by addressing labor challenges and instability in agriculture, promoting a safe and healthy work environment with stronger protections for workers, and expanding lawful pathways for labor migration.

Inflation Reduction Act Funding

- In Fiscal Year 2023, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided \$19.2 million to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In addition to helping producers enroll in conservation programs, NRCS provided technical assistance to producers interested in better understanding the implementation of conservation practices. Funding for these efforts came from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and the Farm Bill.
- USDA's Forest Service invested \$9.5 million in three Urban and Community Forestry Program awards in Puerto Rico funded by the Inflation Reduction Act. This includes \$7 million that was awarded to Caribbean Regenerative Community Development, Inc. to plant trees in urban areas of Puerto Rico to mitigate flooding and extreme heat, support the development of community advisory boards to oversee project activities, and launch a Career Training Center to facilitate workforce development.
- President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act provided \$2.5 million to Puerto Rico for technical assistance and forest management planning for small, disadvantaged forest landowners, including funding for the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources to analyze emerging forest markets.

Key USDA Puerto Rico Resources

- **Federal Resources for PR** - rural.gov/help-for-rural-communities/resources
- **USDA Rural Development (RD)** - rd.usda.gov/pr
 - **RD Programs Available for PR** - rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/pr?page=1
 - **Rural Partners Network (RPN)** - rural.gov/community-networks/pr
- **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** - fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Puerto-Rico/index
 - **FSA Programs for PR** - fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Puerto-Rico/programs/index
- **Food and Nutrition Service** - fns.usda.gov/snap-directory-entry/puerto-rico
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** - pr.nrcs.usda.gov
- **Agricultural Marketing Service** - ams.usda.gov
- **USDA Caribbean Climate Hub** - climatehubs.usda.gov/hubs/caribbean