



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

USDOT and White House Coordination on Puerto Rico and Territories Efforts

JANUARY 23, 2023



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White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs

Serves to engage State, local, and Tribal governments, in addition to elected officials across Puerto Rico and our island communities, to address the most pressing issues impacting our country and communities.

New Staff:

Gretchen Sierra-Zorita - Associate Director for Puerto Rico and Territories

Establishing a White House Working Group on Puerto Rico



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- ▶ In July 2022, the White House hosted the inaugural meeting of the White House Working Group on Puerto Rico, a cabinet-level task force chaired by the Domestic Policy Advisor, the National Economic Advisor, and the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.
- ▶ The task force reports directly to the President and is focused on providing Puerto Rico with the resources and technical assistance it needs to recover and prosper.
- ▶ Since the inaugural meeting, agencies have been consulting with stakeholders and devising strategies to support the island's economic development and recovery efforts, promote workforce and educational opportunities, and invest in greater transparency and governance efforts.



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USDOT White House Working Group on Puerto Rico

▶ Representation from:

- ▶ FHWA – Florida, Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands Division Administrator
- ▶ FHWA – Senior Advisor to the Administrator
- ▶ FTA – Deputy Administrator
- ▶ OST-B - Chief Financial Officer
- ▶ OGC - OST Special Counsel



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Collaboration with Puerto Rico Agencies:

- ▶ USDOT Deputy Secretary is leading the Department's efforts to build a more resilient relationship with our Puerto Rico government counterparts long-term.
- ▶ USDOT participation in Commerce Deputy Secretary's interagency trip to Puerto Rico.
- ▶ USDOT convening of Department counsel offices and Puerto Rico counsel counterparts following Hurricane Fiona.

Policy Deliverables for Puerto Rico Economic Dialogue



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- ▶ The Department of Transportation will strengthen technical assistance and increase DOT personnel and resources to enhance Puerto Rico's administrative capacity so that federal funds can efficiently move from allocation to obligation to expenditure.
- ▶ The Department of Transportation will pursue a strategic partnerships to help facilitate major infrastructure projects and innovative financing opportunities for a network of priority infrastructure improvements on the island.
- ▶ The Department of Transportation will pursue contracting options department-wide on language translation services so that stakeholders (project sponsors, grant recipients, agency officials, and others) are better supported in seeking DOT grant and formula funding program opportunities in a timely manner.



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Additional Coordination

- ▶ Bi-weekly Interagency Policy Committee meetings between the White House and USDOT to follow up on key deliverables and exchange of information on planned activities.
- ▶ Weekly meetings USDOT White House Working Group on Puerto Rico policy deliverables.
- ▶ Monthly meetings with FHWA staff to go over deliverables and planned activities for Puerto Rico and the Territories.



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Points of Contact for Puerto Rico and Territories

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