

Holyoke Hurricane Maria Response Study

A Community Meeting at Enlace de Familias, Holyoke, MA

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Overview of Project

- This project is funded by the Massachusetts Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVPP);
- The main goal/objective of this project is to see what lessons can be discerned from the experiences of the city of Holyoke's addressing the migration of Puerto Ricans displaced by a climate event (i.e. hurricane Maria);
- Our project tries to capture the opinions and experiences of individuals displaced by the storms in Puerto Rico; their relatives and/or friends who provided them with a place to stay in Holyoke; civic institutions and persons involved in civic support; the municipal governmental institutions and their response as well as that of others who worked with the city to respond to the influx of Puerto Ricans to the city of Holyoke;
- We plan to collect all our data by the second week of July and begin the process of analysis right away. Although we received an extension to complete the project by September 30, our goal is to have a report ready by August.
- As we have previously noted, this is a collaborative project between CENTRO, Hunter College, CUNY, El Instituto, UConn, the City of Holyoke, and you.

Overview of this Presentation

- Discussion of how we are collecting information
 - Individual Surveys
 - Focus Groups
 - Organizational Analysis/In-Depth-Interviews
 - Community Meetings
 - Website
- Feedback from participants

What We Want to Learn and From Whom

- We are trying to learn what the experiences of people displaced by the hurricane were before it struck Puerto Rico (how they prepared in anticipation of the storm); what they experienced in the immediate aftermath of the storm (how they coped with conditions in their households and communities, and the resources available to them or lack thereof, and the governmental response); and what they experienced once they arrived in Holyoke/Hampden county.

What We Want to Learn and From Whom

- We are also trying to learn how residents of Holyoke responded to the crisis caused by the storm in Puerto Rico; first, by how they organized in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane striking the island; second, in how some residents responded to the arrival of friends and/or relatives that they hosted in their homes; and the resources available to them or lack thereof to cope with these events.

What We Want to Learn and From Whom

- The emphasis on resources available to these two distinct segments then leads us to engage the civic and social service sectors in Holyoke to understand how it was these sectors, represented by you who are here today as well as other we may need to reach out to, address their needs; what demands their needs placed on the organizational-civic capacity in/of Holyoke; and how the gaps evident in the provision of these resource may be addressed in the future.

What We Want to Learn and From Whom

- Concurrently with the analysis of these experiences, we will learn and analyze what the response from the municipal government to the increased demands for services was, and how the response can teach us in anticipation of future climate driven events that result in the displacement of people near and far.

Data Collection

- We asked the city to provide us with any available public data that can help us discern how the impact of the arrival of Puerto Ricans and the city's response to their sudden arrival;
- We have received: school enrollment data, some data on shelters; some electoral registration data; some data on needs;
- The city has also asked us to analyze the state intake forms (around 3,000) used to document the needs of Puerto Ricans who arrived or sought support from the city of Holyoke;

Individual Surveys

- We will conduct 100 in-person surveys of displaced Puerto Ricans; hosts/city residents who aided displaced Puerto Ricans; and others familiar with the situation.
 - In person respondents will receive a \$20 cash incentive. Surveys take generally about 25 minutes to answer; but with respondents with a more involved experience, the surveys may take an additional 15 minutes. We plan to have interviewers available Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00am-3:00pm until the second week of July;
- We will also have an online version of the survey available for anyone to take;
- We need your HELP? Do you have suggestions of places where we can send our interviewers? Any preferable times and days?

Focus Groups

6 focus groups

- 2 groups with displaced persons segmented along gender, to capture among other things gendered experiences;
- 2 groups with host persons, also segmented along gender lines;
- 2 groups with the civic sector of Holyoke, segmented among the organized/institutionalized social service sector, and a civic sector not necessarily involved in the provision of social services, but nevertheless engaged in the response to the post-hurricane crisis in Puerto Rico and the arrival of displaced persons in Holyoke.

Organizational Analysis

- We plan to conduct 15 in-depth-interviews of government officials, members of state, county and local agencies, and selected civic leaders who were part of a local organizational response to the crisis;
- We are working with Nestor Rios, an organizational specialist, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the local organizational response to the crisis.

Community Meetings

- We were asked to conduct up to 6 community meetings. This is our second meeting and we will conduct more meetings between now and the fall;
- Our plan is to use these forums to both share information about our research and to create a forum where we can learn more from the community.

Website

- We are building a website with information for the public housed in the El Instituto, UConn website in the “Outreach” section;
- All materials, documents, links to surveys, etc. will be publicly available through this site;
- If you would like other materials, just ask us and we will place these on our website.

Comments, Questions, Feedback

- Questionnaire?
- Recruitment sites?
- Feedback?