

Disaster Responders in Puerto Rico

Web seminar - 2020 Emory University/NIEHS Workshop:
Protecting Infectious Disease Responders During COVID-19 Outbreak
March 17, 2020

Rafael A. Caballero, MSEM
Director, Institute for Environmental Education (INEDA)
Atlantic OSHA Training Center – Puerto Rico
NJ/NY Hazardous Materials Worker Training Center



About Puerto Rico

- Territory of the U.S. since 1898
- Population: 3.2 million
- Citizenship: USA



About



- Aprox. 34,000 students
 - 11 campuses in Puerto Rico
- 70 years of history
- Facilities in Texas, Florida and Washington D.C. area

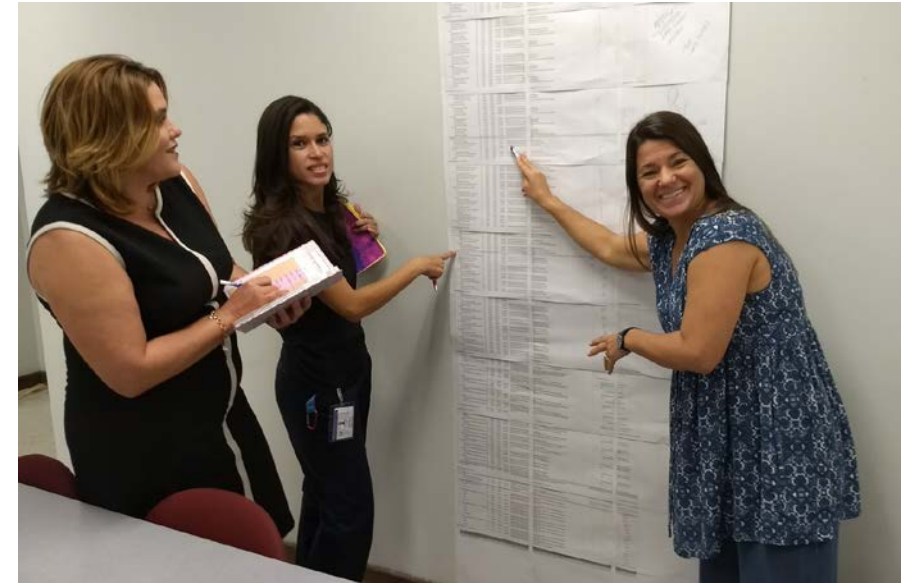
About INEDA-AOTC

- Born in 1990 as an environmental education center of the UMET (Universidad Metropolitana)
 - today known as Universidad Ana G. Méndez – UAGM
- NIEHS grantee since 2000 - with Rutgers University
- 2003 – School of Asbestos (authorized by the PR-DNER)
- 2003 – became part of the Atlantic OSHA Training Center consortium
 - Only OTIEC in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean
 - Only OTIEC with 100% courses in Spanish
- 2004 – received the EPA Environmental Quality Award
 - Environmental, health and safety education through a radio program
 - On The Air for 11 years
- Since March 2019 – weekly participation on 96.9 FM radio morning show educating about environmental, health and safety issues
 - “Ambiente Seguro, Entorno Saludable” (“Safe Environment, Healthy Surroundings”)



Who are the responders?

- Municipal
- State
- Federal
- NGOs and churches
- Volunteers
- **Training needed for all**
- Collaborations are key



Trainings

- Several funded by NIEHS (HWWT – Hazardous Waste Worker Training Program)
- HAZWOPER 40-hr and 8-hr Refresher
 - (Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response)
- HAZMAT
 - Awareness
 - Operations
- RCRA – Hazardous waste handling
- DOT – Hazardous material transportation



HDPT Program

(“Hazmat Disaster Preparedness Training”)

- **Objective** (until 2019-2020):
 - Train new instructors for Disaster Site Workers
 - **Government employees** (Municipal, state and federal), **NGOs and industry**
 - 155 hours of training
 - 2020-2025 – projecting expansion to greater and more diverse type of workers
- **Funded by NIEHS**



UNIVERSIDAD
ANA G. MÉNDEZ
UAGM



Trainings

- Several funded by NIEHS (IDRT)
- Ebola, infectious disease and personal protection equipment
- Mold remediation
 - Workers and supervisors
- Leptospirosis and other hazards in disasters
- Resiliency for disaster responders
- Asbestos inspectors



Mold remediation seminar for mayors, government officials and managers

(April 2019)



Impact of INEDA-AOTC UAGM

- 1,494 workers and community leaders 2018-19
 - Trainings
 - Occupational health and safety
 - Hazardous waste/materials
 - Infectious diseases (Ebola, Leptospirosis)
 - Resiliency for disaster site workers
 - Mold
 - Public outreach activities
 - Weekly radio participation



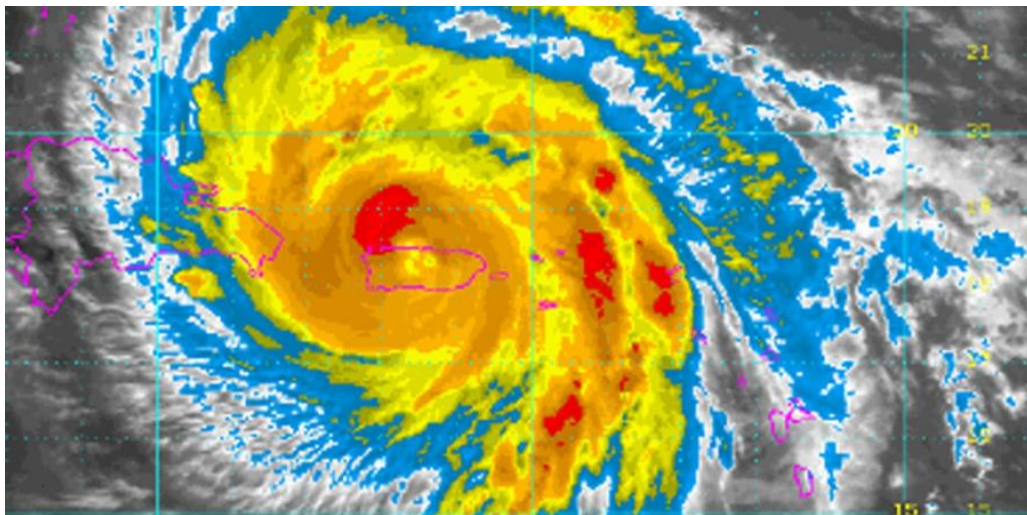
PR Recovery Stakeholders meetings

- After Hurricanes Irma and María
- Multisector initiative
 - Federal agencies
 - PR Government
 - Private sector
 - Academia
 - Community leaders
 - Volunteers

One of the main needs identified is **training** for all sectors



Disaster challenges



Colaborations and educational campaigns



Who are the people INEDA impacts?

- **Workers**

- **Government** (federal, state, municipal)
- **Industry**
 - Manufacturing
 - Services
 - Commerce

- **Communities**

- **Families**



¡Gracias!

rcaballero4@uagm.edu

