



# PUERTO RICO

## 2024 Healthy Housing Fact Sheet

Hazardous conditions found in unsafe housing can lead to lead poisoning, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, cancer, and unintentional injuries or death, resulting in poor school attendance and performance for children, missed workdays for parents, and the loss of loved ones for all. These hazards and their health impacts disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities, making the need for healthy housing a significant environmental and racial justice issue. Recent events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, along with the associated increase in both incidence and severity of extreme weather events, have urgently underscored and amplified our need for safer, healthier, affordable, and more resilient housing and drawn much-needed attention to the expanding scope of related programs and policies. Increased time spent at home and ongoing challenges to healthy housing service delivery due to these events and others have affected health negatively and displayed—in sharp contrast—the longstanding crisis of inequitable access to quality housing and healthcare.



In Puerto Rico, 26% of children live in households with a high housing cost burden, and **55% of children live in poverty** (2021).



In Puerto Rico, **54% of the housing stock was built prior to 1978** and may contain lead-based paint.



**Puerto Rico does not require blood lead data reporting.** Blood lead prevalence (5 µg/dL) for children under six years is **estimated at over 3%**. In Puerto Rico, **blood lead screening has increased from 5%** of children under six years in 2019 and 2021 **to 11%** in 2022.



Over **11% of adults** and **10% of children have current asthma** in Puerto Rico (2021).



Puerto Rico recorded **almost 28,000 emergency room visits due to asthma** in 2021. The **region of Cagay experienced the highest percentage** of these claims.



Over **97% of the population** in Puerto Rico is served by water systems violating the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule.



FEMA reported a total of **357,492 homes damaged by Hurricane Maria** as of May 11, 2018. About **23% of Puerto Rico's housing stock was affected**.



**Fall-related injuries increased from 25.6% to 46.2% of older adults admittances for injury** at one Puerto Rico hospital from 2000 to 2019.

### CRITICAL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR HEALTHY HOUSING

A broad array of programs across the federal government support healthy housing activities and related efforts including increasing affordable housing, improving health outcomes, providing supportive services to families, improving energy efficiency, and identifying and addressing environmental hazards. Critical programs and services supporting crucial health and housing services in states and localities are outlined below; increasing appropriations allows new states to access funding and currently funded states to expand their programs.

#### Has PR received funding since 2021?

##### CDC's:

- ✓ **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**
- ✓ **National Asthma Control Program**
- x **Environmental Health Tracking Network**

##### HUD's:

- ✓ **Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes**

##### EPA's:

- ✓ **Lead Categorical Grants**
- x **State Indoor Radon Grants**
- ✓ **Environmental Justice Grants**

##### DOE's:

- ✓ **Weatherization Assistance Program**

For more information on these programs and their impacts, as well as many others available to support healthy housing efforts, refer to [NCHH's Agency Fact Sheets](#).

May 2024. For **references**, additional **state-specific** healthy homes information, and to learn how you can **engage your members of Congress** on these vital issues...

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