



Central Texans work to help Puerto Rico

METRO-STATE

By Perla Arellano - ¡Ahora Sí!



RAMON ESPINOSA

People affected by Hurricane Maria collect water in the mountains in Naranjito, Puerto Rico, Wednesday. The relief effort from Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico has so far been concentrated largely in San Juan, and many outside the capital say they've received little or no help. AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa

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A day after Hurricane Maria landed in Puerto Rico, Georgetown resident Coral



Talavera, went into action. Together with her sister, she created the organization, [Helping Puerto Rico](#), to gather food for victims.

“The problem people in Puerto Rico have is not whether we are able to get out, because there is nowhere to go,” Talavera said. The priority is to bring resources to people residing in the west of the territory, she said, where authorities fear the [Guajataca Dam could collapse](#).

Talavera is just one of several Central Texans working to support Puerto Rico. The effort also includes businesses that are offering their premises as collection centers. Austin’s [Puerto Rican Cultural Center](#) has designated a Taino cultural workshop Saturday to collect emergency supplies.

“Our island has been devastated by a major hurricane,” the center’s director, Ana María Tekina-eirú Maynard, told ¡Ahora Sí!. “They have no light or water. Our people are starving. They are going to need help for a very long time. Of course we are going to be there to serve.”

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Tekina-eirú Maynard said the center is collaborating with Puerto Rican organizations in San Antonio and Florida.

Hurricane Maria was the strongest hurricane ever to hit Puerto Rico, which has 3.5 million residents, in more than 80 years, leaving at least 16 dead on the island and more than 49 dead in the Caribbean overall, according to the Associated Press.

When the hurricane hit Puerto Rico Sept. 20, it destroyed homes, flooded streets and highways, and left those on the island unable to communicate with those abroad, a situation that could last for months.

For Talavera, the work will not finish once the first load of provisions is sent. She said she wants to continue sending aid to the island for the next several months.

“Our immediate goals include sending all supplies between the first and second week of October using our partners’ private planes — shipments that our sponsors helped us with — and collaborations with private companies that have already been identified,” she said.

[READ: Family reunites after Hurricane Maria strands loved ones in Puerto Rico](#)

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About the Author

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