



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEES:
INDIAN AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEES:
COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

September 8, 2026

The Honorable Keren L. Riquelme
Executive Director
Office for Socioeconomic and Community Development (ODSEC)
1208 Avenue Roosevelt
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00920

Dear Ms. Riquelme:

I write to express my serious concerns regarding the administration of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program in Puerto Rico, particularly with respect to the timely disbursement and stewardship of federal funds administered by the Office for Socioeconomic and Community Development (ODSEC).

The Community Services Block Grant program funds states, commonwealths, and territories to implement community-based services that reduce poverty and revitalize low-income communities. By partnering with eligible entities across the United States, CSBG funding empowers individuals and families in rural and urban areas alike to achieve lasting self-sufficiency.¹ Program funds support a range of eligible activities, helping individuals and families find and retain meaningful employment, attain an adequate education, make better use of available income, and obtain adequate housing.² According to the most recent data, CSBG funding served 24,786 low-income Puerto Ricans in FFY23, across 17,162 families. In FFY23, CSBG-funded services in Puerto Rico produced over 2,300 employment outcomes, including obtaining and maintaining a job and increasing income; over 2,000 education outcomes, including improved literacy and obtaining additional education or diplomas; and over 800 income and asset outcomes, including opening savings accounts and improving financial well-being.³

Documents reviewed by my office indicate that at least one of the four eligible entities receiving CSBG funding in Puerto Rico has experienced significant delays in receiving its initial disbursement for FY 2025-2026. As the Lead Agency responsible for administering and

¹ "CSBG Report to Congress FY2022." *Community Services Block Grant Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 2022*. 2022. https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocs/RPT_CSBG_Congressional_FY2022.pdf.

² Dalaker, Joseph. "Community Services Block Grants (CSBG): Background and Funding." *Congressional Research Service*, RL32872, September 12, 2025. https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/RL/PDF/RL32872/RL32872.107.pdf.

³ National Association for State Community Services Programs. "FFY 2023 State CSBG Factsheet: Puerto Rico." 2023. <https://nascsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/FFY23-State-Factsheet-Puerto-Rico-1.pdf>.

distributing over \$29,000,000 in federal CSBG funding in Puerto Rico, ODSEC has an obligation to ensure that eligible entities receive their disbursements without unnecessary delay.

ODSEC's Federal Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Community Services Block Grant State Plan identifies the timely distribution of CSBG funds as a strategic objective and commits to making funds available to eligible entities within 30 calendar days after receipt of the federal award. The State Plan further provides that ODSEC monitors disbursement metrics and is implementing administrative and fiscal improvements intended to strengthen grant administration and support continuity in the delivery of services.⁴

However, during the August 13, 2026, public hearing before the Puerto Rico House of Representatives, ODSEC attributed delays in the availability and distribution of CSBG funds to the timing of federal Notices of Award issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Community Services (OCS).

Thousands of Puerto Ricans depend on the CSBG program being administered responsibly and with transparency and are entitled to a full accounting of how ODSEC is stewarding these federal dollars. ODSEC must provide complete and detailed answers to each of the following:

1. Describe ODSEC's process for administering and distributing CSBG funds, including the internal controls and procedures used to ensure the timely distribution of funds to eligible entities.
2. For Fiscal Years 2025, 2026, and, if available, 2027, provide a timeline identifying the receipt of each federal CSBG award; the execution of grant agreements; disbursement of funds to each eligible entity; and any significant delays in the execution of grant agreements or distribution of funds, including the reasons for those delays.
3. Produce copies of all policies, procedures, guidance, manuals, memoranda, or directives governing the administration and distribution of CSBG funds, including any administrative requirements applicable to eligible entities.
4. Describe the performance measures, disbursement metrics, internal controls, and administrative improvements ODSEC uses to evaluate and strengthen its administration of the CSBG program, including implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
5. Describe the policies and procedures ODSEC uses to ensure the uniform administration of the CSBG program among all eligible entities, including with respect to grant administration, contract execution, fund distribution, monitoring, technical assistance, and fiscal oversight.
6. Describe the request from OCS regarding Puerto Rico's CSBG distribution formula, including the basis and scope of the request and any actions ODSEC has taken or plans to take in response. Provide copies of all correspondence, guidance, directives, or other documentation received from OCS related to this request.

⁴ Puerto Rico Socioeconomic and Community Development Office, *Community Services Block Grant State Plan, Federal Fiscal Years 2025–2026* (San Juan, PR: Puerto Rico Socioeconomic and Community Development Office, 2025), 14.

I request that ODSEC provide a complete written response to the questions outlined above no later than September 26, 2026.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Pablo J. Hernández". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pablo" and last name "Hernández" clearly distinguishable.

Pablo José Hernández
Member of Congress