

Puerto Rico college students get \$79K in Fiona Relief Fund grants [1]

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The call was open until Nov. 1, 2022, and college students in Puerto Rico who were affected by the passage of Hurricane Fiona had the opportunity to apply for help from the Fiona Student

Relief Fund to receive individual grants of \$500. (Credit: José R. M

A total of 158 college students received individual grants of \$500 from a group of organizations headed by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust and donors from the Fiona Science Student Relief Fund created for those affected by the storm in September 2022.

A total of \$79,000 were allocated through the effort that also includes the Caribbean Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Puerto Rico Chapter of the American Chemical Society, the Society for the Advancement of Chicano/Hispanic and Native Americans in Science, and Ciencia Puerto Rico.

“Our students are the future of research and innovation. Identifying needs and working to strengthen the scientific community is a necessary challenge to build a sustainable and resilient economy,” said Science Trust CEO Lucy Crespo.

“At the Trust we’re extremely committed to the well-being of Puerto Rico’s economy and its citizens, so we will continue to seek alliances and build initiatives that invest in that vision of a better island,” she said.

The call was open until Nov. 1, 2022, and college students in Puerto Rico who were affected by the passage of Hurricane Fiona had the opportunity to apply for help from the Fiona Student Relief Fund to receive individual grants of \$500.

During the call, 232 applications were received from students. The funds distributed went to STEM graduate and undergraduate students.

“It was an arduous and complicated process, as we received many applications, confirming that there is a lot of need among our students. For this initiative we have important alliances with other entities and scientific organizations committed to the future of science and research,” said Andreica Maldonado, director of the Research Grants program, the Science Trust’s Research Grants program.

“We fundraised and had media support to amplify the message and make the fund accessible to students. We will continue to develop initiatives to continue raising capital for our young people,” she said.

Meanwhile, an unidentified undergraduate student from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico in Ponce, said “the funds helped me greatly with college and other expenses. I was able to cover the rest of what was due from this past semester, cover expenses when traveling from town to town, and cover part of the university expenses for the coming semester. Eternally grateful.”

With the money received from the Fiona Science Student Relief Fund, students could cover situations such as family emergencies, food insecurity and interruptions in their education and/or basic water and electricity services, among others related to the atmospheric phenomenon.

Some students shared that in addition to basic food and clothing costs, they were able to cover gas expenses, utilities, and even graduate school applications.

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