

# Reaffirming Our Commitment to Science, Equity, and Inclusion <sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>[2]</sup>





## Message from the Executive Director of CienciaPR in Response to Recent Executive Orders and Actions by the U.S. Government

To our beloved CienciaPR community:

Science plays a fundamental role in our well-being and quality of life. Innovation and research drive economic growth and generate solutions to social and environmental problems, among many others. Science education fosters critical thinking and creativity, and careers in these fields help break cycles of poverty and open doors to a wide range of job and leadership opportunities.

At Ciencia Puerto Rico, **we know that science has the power to transform lives.** That is why participation in science—and equitable access to its benefits—is not a privilege but **a fundamental right, essential to ensuring a more just and prosperous future for everyone.**

The actions of the United States government and cuts to federal programs over the past 100 days have directly affected the communities we serve both within and outside Puerto Rico—from school and university students to educators, STEM professionals, and many other sectors. Many federal programs that are key to education, science, health, the environment, and related areas have been drastically eliminated or reduced. This not only means the loss of crucial services but also the loss of training opportunities and the development of more professionals in those fields. One example is the abrupt termination of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) [3] “Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement” programs, which at the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico alone represents the loss of over \$7.1 million and the loss of support for 18 undergraduate and 25 graduate science students. **These actions pose a serious threat to science, education, equity, and inclusion**—values that define our purpose.

In light of this, at CienciaPR, **we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to our communities.** We remain firm in our mission to democratize science and transform science education. Through our programs and initiatives, we will continue to create opportunities for our members to put science in service of Puerto Rican society and ensure broader access to pathways for economic and social mobility.

Today, more than ever, **it is imperative that the CienciaPR community and its allies stay united and work together** to increase our impact and ensure that education and science are not privileges for a few, but fundamental tools for everyone.

With this in mind, **I encourage you to stay informed and proactive.** Through CienciaPR, we will continue to keep our audience informed about the effects and opportunities in light of new developments within the scientific and educational ecosystem. I recommend tuning in to the “**Jueves de Ciencia Boricua**” segments with the director of our Public Engagement with Science Unit, **Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer:**

[How to Advocate for Science? \(Spanish\)](#) [4]

[Federal Government Seeks to Dismantle NOAA \(Spanish\)](#) [5]

[The Future of Science at UPRRP is at Risk \(Spanish\)](#) [6]

There are many actions we can take to defend science, inclusion, and equity. To our members and allies living in the United States, we urge you to contact your congressional representatives and share your concerns and views on these issues. In Puerto Rico, **we must get involved and demand serious and direct discussions** from our leaders at both the state [7] and federal [8] levels. Here are some resources on how to communicate effectively with members of Congress and legislators:

[How to Build and Maintain Relationships with Members of Congress \(English\)](#) [9]

How to Get a Meeting with Your Policy Maker? (English) [10]

Finally, I invite you to **continue supporting organizations like CienciaPR**, which work tirelessly to build a society in which every person uses science to think critically, solve problems, and become an agent of change in their community. Visit our website and join this vision. [11] Today, more than ever, **your support is essential.**

With commitment and hope,

Greetchen Díaz Muñoz, PhD

Executive Director, Ciencia Puerto Rico

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