



hispanicfederation

OPERATION  
**BLESSING**  
INTERNATIONAL



# OPERATION AGUA

## OVERVIEW

The massive damage caused by Hurricane Maria and the lack of electricity and clean water on the island of Puerto Rico continues to threaten the health, safety and lives of millions of American citizens. This is a humanitarian crisis the likes of which we have never seen in our country.

AFT President Randi Weingarten just returned from several days in Puerto Rico where she witnessed the devastation and the tremendous need firsthand. In most areas, it still looks like the hurricane occurred three days ago, not more than three weeks ago. People are without power and clean water; they are resorting to collecting water in streams, from runoff or collecting rainwater in cups. None of these sources are safe.

AFT nurses just spent two weeks in Puerto Rico setting up clinics across the island and raised the alarm on not just the dehydration that people are experiencing but the danger of water born illnesses caused by the lack of clean drinking water.

When President Weingarten asked Mayor Cruz what she needed she said, “continue to speak out about the crisis in Puerto Rico and help get clean water to more people.”

So, that is exactly what we intend to do via [Operation Agua](#).

This partnership is uniquely qualified to provide a reliable source of clean, safe drinking water to many Puerto Ricans through a regionalized and community-based infrastructure:

- The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals with 1.7 million members working in education, state and local government, hospitals and institutions of higher education. Through the AFT’s leadership, we also have the support of the mainland labor community and have actively reached out to other unions to support us in sea and land-based transportation services. The AFT has a track record of responding to numerous disasters affecting our members including Superstorm Sandy and Hurricane Harvey with on the ground and tangible support; and has a 501c3 already in place to collect and distribute disaster relief funds.
- The AFT’s local affiliate the **Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR)** which represents 40,000 active and retired educators, has a network of 78 offices across the island, access to an army of volunteers and knowledgeable staff who have the local relationships, know-how and connections to move this program forward successfully.

- **Hispanic Federation** is a leading Latino non-profit and has been at the forefront of efforts in Puerto Rico with 100% of donations going directly to relief and recovery.
- **Operation Blessing** is currently in place in San Juan, Puerto Rico using proven water filtration and purification systems.
- **American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees** which represents 1.6 million nurses, corrections officers, sanitation workers and other public service workers across the country, including Puerto Rico. In addition to supporting Operation Agua, AFSCME's Fallen Heroes Fund has collected and donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to victims of natural disasters, most recently including Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria.

Since Hurricane Maria, the universal response from AFT's local affiliate, AMPR, citizens, journalists, non-profits, and local officials is that FEMA and the federal government are failing to provide the resources, infrastructure, or distribution efforts to provide relief and get electricity and clean water to the Puerto Rican people.

For this reason, we have come together to address the lack of reliable, clean drinking water to help alleviate further human suffering, hopefully prevent further loss of life and prevent an massive outbreak of waterborne diseases.

[Operation Agua](#) is not a handout, but a hand-up for our fellow Americans suffering and dying in Puerto Rico.

We invite others to join us in this effort to marshal our combined resources to support [Operation Agua](#). Please read our proposal below and opportunities for partners and sponsors to work with us.

## **OUR PROPOSAL: CLEAN WATER ON LARGE AND SMALL SCALE**

The AFT, Hispanic Federation and Operation Blessing will bring small scale home-based and large scale community-based water filtration and purification devices that are proven to work directly to the Puerto Rican people.

**Goal:** To purchase and distribute **100,000 individual water filtration systems for households** directly to Puerto Rican families in need and **50 large capacity clean water devices** to a network of non-profit organizations, including unions, schools and other community based groups to provide stable and reliable sources of clean, safe drinking water.

**Timeline:** Begin transporting water filtration systems later in October 2017 and make consistent deliveries and distribution to many towns and villages to be completed by the end of the calendar year. With sufficient funding the project can continue into 2018.

### **WATER TREATMENT PROGRAM**

The non-profit **Operation Blessing** has operations at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum and is assisting the mayor of San Juan on water filtration efforts. Operation Blessing, through their

work across the world, has developed relationships with the makers of water filtration and disinfectant products for personal and large-scale use.

Based on the situation in Puerto Rico, we propose a two-pronged effort:

- 1) The purchase and installation of large capacity water desalination/purification systems in central locations throughout Puerto Rico; and
- 2) The purchase and distribution of single family-sized water desalination/purification systems.

Here are three water purification and filtration options – two of which are for large scale water purification and one is for individual household use

## **CLEAN WATER DEVICES/SYSTEMS -- LARGE CAPACITY SYSTEMS**

### **Option 1- SANILEC 6 Portable Sodium Hypochlorite Generator**

- This method creates a chlorine solution that can then be added to disinfect water making it drinkable. The solution can also be used as a surface cleaner.
- A single bottle cap disinfected 5 gallons of water.
- How it works: Fifteens pounds of salt is added to a plastic or fiberglass bin filled with water. The device, which requires electricity or a generator, is placed in the water and runs for 8 hours to create a disinfectant solution. 50 gallons of this solution cleans 150,000 gallons of water.
- The bins of solution can be transported to areas where 5-gallon bins of water can be cleaned with a single bottle cap of the solution and distributed to people. The solution and the treated water last two weeks.
- Operation Blessing is currently using this water purification device in Puerto Rico with proven successful results.
- **Cost: \$5,000/each for supplies and shipping plus ongoing costs for power.**



### **Option 2- Parker Hannifin Reverse Osmosis Systems**

- This method uses reverse osmosis to filtrate the water. These are complex devices that require technical experience to operate.
- Operation Blessing recommends the first option as a lower cost solution that can still clean large amounts of water and is very user friendly.
- **Cost: \$10,000-\$25,000/each plus shipping and the ongoing costs for power.**

For the large capacity systems, our first targets for locations are places that have the manpower, storage space and reliable electric power to use these systems. These locations also have the ability to distribute the clean water to families and households nearby.

### Locations

- 5 Regional offices of the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (San Juan, Ponce, Mayagüez, Caguas, Arecibo)
- Public Schools (that have passed inspection)
- Churches
- Boys and Girls Clubs (TBD)
- State and municipal government offices

### **Option 3 – Water Mission Erosion Chlorinator**

This device is suitable for buildings that have plumbing and some water pressure and uses chlorine tablets to purify water. It requires periodic water tests. The low upfront cost makes it affordable and convenient.

Cost: \$1,000 which includes cost of device plus 50 pounds of chlorine tablets.

### **INDIVIDUAL SYSTEMS - KOHLER Clarity Water Filtration**

This method is for personal and home use and requires no electrical power. The device can hold 23 liters and filters up to two liters per hour. The device can produce 5,000 liters of water before a new filter is needed.

Cost: \$30/each when shipping is included.

- 40 Foot shipping container can hold 2,400 (40 per pallet)
- Currently spending \$5,000 to transport to U.S. seaport and then to Puerto Rico by boat.



[Operation Agua](#) will distribute the water filtration devices across Puerto Rico directly to families and households that do not have access to clean drinking water.

Once again, these locations have the manpower, storage and have communication networks in place to reach families and households in need.

- Regional offices and 78 local union halls of AMPR
- Boys and Girls Clubs (TBD)
- Schools that have passed inspection

**PROPOSED BUDGET** -- This is a preliminary budget to accomplish [Operation Agua](#).

<b>50 to 250 SANILEC Large capacity water system AND/OR Water Mission Erosion Chlorinator</b>	<b>\$1,000 to 5000/each</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>
<b>20 to 50 Parker Hannafin Reverse Osmosis</b>	<b>\$10,000-\$25,000/each</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>
<b>100,000 Kohler individual water devices</b>	<b>\$30/each</b>	<b>\$3,000,000</b>
<b>On-site coordinator in Puerto Rico</b>	<b>May need 1-2 to coordinate on the ground operations</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>
<b>Supplies – Salt for SANILEC 6 water device</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Ground transportation in Puerto Rico</b>		<b>\$20,000</b>
<b>Printing of directions, flyers for distribution events</b>		<b>\$3,000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$3,813,000</b>

**TRANSPORTATION**

As many news outlets have reported, transportation has been an obstacle in Puerto Rican relief efforts. We have already secured the support of the Seafarers Union, as well as shipping companies that the union works with to secure mainland trucking and sea-based shipping services to transport items to Puerto Rico.

We are working with the Puerto Rico based trucking partners to secure transportation in Puerto Rico. This is an area where we welcome support and ideas.

**OUTREACH, FUNDRAISING & PARTNERS**

The Hispanic Federation, Operation Blessing, AFSCME and the AFT all have extensive networks active on social media and in their communities that we will be reaching out to support [Operation Agua](#).

For instance, the AFT has 1.7 million members and President Weingarten has nearly 76,000 followers on Twitter.

We just launched a website to collect donations online at [www.OperationAgua.com](http://www.OperationAgua.com). All the funds will go through the AFT’s Disaster Relief Fund, a designated 501(C)3.

We invite organizations and individuals to join forces with us on [Operation Agua](#). Please contact Marcus Mrowka or Tish Olshefski at the AFT at 202-879-4400 or by email at [mmrowka@aft.org](mailto:mmrowka@aft.org) or [tolshefs@aft.org](mailto:tolshefs@aft.org) or [202-255-6607](tel:202-255-6607) mobile if you would like additional information or would like to be a part of [Operation Agua](#).