



Office of the Mayor

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Mayors Helping Mayors Rebuild Puerto Rico

Mayor Soglin joins mayors from U.S. mainland cities paired with mayors of Puerto Rican cities to share expertise and support in rebuilding the storm-ravaged island

It has been seven months since Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico. More than half a million people are still without power. Tens of thousands lack drinking water, and tens of thousands more are fleeing, seeking food and shelter in Florida, New York and elsewhere. Health care services have been hit hard, and the suicide rate is spiking.

The [Open Society Foundations](#) formed the Mayor Exchange, a new initiative to connect local leaders with experience in dealing with disaster recovery on the mainland with their counterparts in Puerto Rico working to rebuild. Through this unique partnership, mainland mayors will share ideas, expertise and lessons learned from their own recovery efforts, giving those officials on the front lines of the island's crisis a direct line for aid and consultation on the myriad humanitarian, fiscal and rebuilding challenges ahead.

Mayor Soglin and Deputy Mayor Gloria Reyes are traveling to Puerto Rico today to meet with officials of the Puerto Rican community of Toa Baja. They will return to Madison after their short visit to share information and specifics on the infrastructure and needed assistance with City staff. At a future date, officials of Toa Baja will in turn, visit Madison to meet with City staff who can assist with technical assistance on their rebuilding projects. Officials and staff from Madison will gain insights and awareness of the island's situation and build support here in Madison.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu made one of the first visits to Puerto Rico in February to partner with another community there. All told, roughly 40 Mayors and cities are part of the program to assist the struggling communities in our U.S. territory.