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Dear fellow funders,

Amplify Fund has always valued hiring Program Consultants who are deeply connected to our places, since our consultants interact most with our place-based grantees. This connection provides a level of proximity and understanding between funder and grantee that would be difficult to achieve otherwise. In 2025, we hired Roberto José Thomas Ramírez as the Puerto Rico Program Consultant. Roberto has a long history of organizing in Puerto Rico, and, up until this year, he led the Iniciativa de Ecodesarrollo de Bahía de Jobos (IDEBAJO), an Amplify Fund grantee. Below, in his own words, Roberto describes his experience growing up in Puerto Rico and what he sees as urgent needs for the archipelago.

**Leticia Peguero**

*she/her*

**Interim Senior Director, Amplify Fund**  
**[leticia@nfg.org](mailto:leticia@nfg.org)**



Growing up, I was raised by a single mother who was forced to rely on social assistance programs like Section 8 housing, which I lived in for the majority of my childhood. The Puerto Rico Public Housing Administration (PRPHA) regularly conducted inspections and required fixes to electrical, plumbing, and other structural problems to hold landlords accountable to decent housing conditions. Unfortunately, rather than address the issues, landlords exited the Section 8 program, forcing my family to move 11 times. This disrupted my ability to build community and have consistent education.

While my mother, my brother, and I were eventually able to secure jobs that took us out of Section 8 housing, we all still rent and are at the whims of landlords.

My personal account of displacement mirrors the systematic displacement Puerto Ricans have been experiencing. In 2012, Acts 20 and 22 were passed creating avenues for high net worth “business providers” to become residents of Puerto Rico, and for those new residents to get tax exemptions on income. These laws attracted thousands of people and accelerated gentrification. In 2017, when Hurricane Maria devastated the island, and in 2020 when the coronavirus caused many companies to shift to remote work, even more high net worth individuals took advantage of the laws. The influx of these affluent new settlers have increased home prices and displaced residents. Puerto Ricans are experiencing double and triple displacement because of these compounding scenarios, and diaspora Puerto Ricans are experiencing it again in U.S. cities that have skyrocketing housing costs like Miami and New York City.

We are living in a political environment where everything feels precarious, so many local organizations are turning to purchasing land and buildings for some sense of stability and community, all while continuing to organize and provide services to their communities. In my new role at Amplify Fund, I am excited to be facilitating the purchase of these buildings by providing general operating grants that can be used however our grantees wish. I encourage you, fellow funders, to also provide funding that puts land and buildings in the hands of the community, for the sake of their stability and sustainability.

**Roberto José Thomas Ramírez**

*he/him*

**Puerto Rico Consultant, Amplify Fund**



# Grantee stories about land and buildings in Puerto Rico

LA COLECTIVA FEMINISTA EN CONSTRUCCION acquired a three-story building on Robles Street to ensure its permanence, and to support community development in an area threatened by speculation. The space will be home to an art and studio space, meeting rooms, living quarters for members that need housing or international guests, and other organizational purposes. But, the building first needs updates to its plumbing, electricity, and physical infrastructure.

EL PUENTE PUERTO RICO purchased a two-story building on Robles Street in Río Piedras to deepen its presence in the community, protect it from displacement, and offer community activities. It will also be used for research and environmental action in line with its organizational focus. Donations will help support renovations of the building.

FIDEICOMISO DE TIERRAS COMUNITARIAS PARA LA AGRICULTURA SOSTENIBLE (FiTiCAS) is an agricultural land trust designed to acquire and protect farmland, especially for young agro ecological farmers. Their first land was acquired in 2023, but they hope to purchase more. Donations towards purchasing land will strengthen food sovereignty in Puerto Rico.

URBE APIE is trying to purchase a three-story building to provide accessible housing and accommodate its cultural activities. The goal of purchasing the building is to defend the area from abandonment and gentrification by reclaiming and self-managing housing, culture, and economic activity.

INICIATIVA DE ECODESARROLLO DE BAHÍA DE JOBOS (IDEBAJO) acquired a house in the historic zone of Aguirre, Salinas, to get ahead of speculation and promote economic alternatives that support community organizing and power-building. In partnership with the Instituto para la Investigación y Acción en Agroecología (IALA), IDEBAJO is also in the process of acquiring a farm for community-based agricultural development. The organizations need more funding to purchase the farm.

TALLER SALUD is running a fundraising campaign to expand and improve one of its three buildings in Lofza to increase its capacity for work and services. This expansion will strengthen Taller Salud's health and violence prevention programs and continue its legacy of over 40 years serving racialized and marginalized communities in the area.



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