

Humberto Mercader – Building Back Better

I want to say, one of the first things that we did when we came here, is understand the federal landscape and understand the relationship between our agency and our federal counterparts. We learned it was not very deep, especially at the at the career level, the staff level where the day-to-day happens.

So, one of the first trips that we did the first year was to DC, where we reached out to the Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation and inside the Department of Commerce, EDA and SBA—all the relevant offices and programs that were relevant to us as an economic development agency.

The first success story in that was that Puerto Rico was able to tap into a lot of programs and initiatives that we really didn't have the capacity for before.

One of the big examples is on the Build Back Better Regional Challenge that was launched by EDA. Certainly, the help that we got and the assistance that we got in the process of understanding the program, understanding the requirements of the program, and what would make a good application, that was certainly the result of us being proactive with the federal government. Which, I have to say, you know, it's essential to be successful in a lot of the efforts that you want to push forward as part of your strategic agenda.