

**FED & MAIN**

Creating an Economy That Works for All

Our July focus: Researching growth in Community Development Financial Institutions.



**CLIMATE:** With about \$12.4 billion in federal money committed to improving the resilience of Puerto Rico's grid, advocates are pushing for a decentralized electricity system powered largely by solar energy, [WBUR](#) reported.

Some solar microgrids are already powering communities. For example, in the small town of Adjuntas, 14 businesses and two apartment buildings along the central square run on solar power by day with battery storage to keep the lights on at night.

The batteries are built to withstand extreme weather, says Cynthia Arellano, project manager for the Honnold Foundation, a nonprofit that helped Adjuntas build its microgrid. "These guys are built for all conditions," Arellano says. "Rain, shine. They're built for Puerto Rico hurricane conditions."



**Actions:** The Connecticut Green Bank will offer higher maximum loans to homeowners for improvements such as geothermal heat pumps and solar systems with battery storage, [Solar Power World](#) reported. The bank increased the maximum for loans to \$50,000, up from \$40,000, the outlet noted. In the last ten years, more than 7,000 Connecticut families have used loans from the bank to pay for energy-saving upgrades to their homes.



**HEALTH:** The number of people in Puerto Rico required by courts to undergo mental health treatment or involuntary commitment has climbed over the last two years, with more than 5,000 cases filed annually, [News is my Business](#) reported.

The Legal Aid Society of Puerto Rico recently launched a program to provide legal representation and educational resources to people facing such court orders. The program, which will have support staff covering all of Puerto Rico, is the first legal assistance program under the Island's [Mental Health Code](#), [News is my Business](#) reported.



**Actions:** New Jersey lawmakers introduced a bill that would provide \$23.2 million to create a state agency to improve maternal outcomes and decrease racial disparities, [NJ Spotlight News](#) reported.

A New Jersey Department of Health analysis of 125 deaths involving pregnant women from 2016 to 2018, the most recent data available, found that 90 percent of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, [NJ Spotlight News](#) reported. The analysis also showed that Black women were 6.6 times more likely to die when compared to white women, while Hispanic women were 3.5 times more likely to die when compared to white women.



**HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL WELL BEING:** The Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced \$11 million in grants to provide legal assistance for veterans facing eviction, child support cases, and other legal problems, [The Hill](#) reported.

The aid is important because veterans' involvement with the justice system "is strongly and directly correlated with homelessness," said Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough.

New York Fed researchers recently found that veterans earn roughly 12 percent less than comparable nonveterans. The research, published in [Liberty Street Economics](#), also found veterans are 4 percentage points more likely to be out of the labor force.



**Actions:** States have greater flexibility to use Medicaid funds to pay for housing costs such as rent and temporary housing, thanks to new guidance from The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, [Shelterforce](#) reported. A New York state program that provided rental subsidies and wraparound housing supports to Medicaid members who were homeless or living in institutional settings lowered their days in inpatient care by 40 percent, emergency department visits by 26 percent, and inpatient psychiatric admissions by 27 percent, the outlet noted.

The New York Fed's Community Development unit works with community leaders to understand community needs and with capital providers to foster economic opportunities. We are searching for ideas that can tear down barriers to economic mobility for low- and moderate-income people; our focus is on the economic drivers of health, household financial well-being, and climate-related risks. Our goal is to elevate those ideas and connect them with funding. To see our [past newsletters](#), [events calendar](#), and learn more, visit our [website](#).

**Stay Connected:**

[@NewYorkFed](#) | [@NYFedResearch](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#)

Download our [Economic Research Tracker](#) to your iPhone® or iPad®

[Unsubscribe](#) | Got this from a friend? [Subscribe](#).