



## PRESS RELEASE

### CHECK CASHERS JOIN THE HISPANIC FEDERATION IN HURRICANE RECOVERY RELIEF INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF PUERTO RICO

**November 8, 2017 – The Financial Service Centers of New York (FSCNY)**, the trade organization that represents the check cashing industry in the State of New York, today announced a partnership with the **Hispanic Federation** to benefit the **"Unidos" Disaster Relief & Recovery Program**, created to meet hurricane-related needs and recovery in Puerto Rico.

From now through November 30, 2017, over 300 participating check cashing stores (also known as financial service centers) across the state will serve as cash donation points for the ongoing initiative that has already raised over \$20 million, for immediate relief of the humanitarian crisis plus short and long-terms initiatives for the sustainable rebuilding of the U.S. territory.

“The situation is still dire in Puerto Rico. Seven weeks after Hurricane Maria, power and clean water are still tenuous, there is limited access to medical help, leaving an unbearable number of our people grasping for the most basic needs.” said **José Calderón**, president of the Hispanic Federation. “This is a humanitarian crisis unlike any we've seen on the island, and we will continue to do everything we can to help families and communities throughout Puerto Rico recover and heal. We are grateful to FSCNY and its participating members for this important effort to support our Puerto Rico relief efforts.”

Launched merely hours after Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico on September 20th, Unidos brought into Puerto Rico some of the first humanitarian flights carrying life-saving supplies. Since then, the program has provided life-saving and stabilizing relief to dozens of communities, municipalities, families and organizations, primarily in areas difficult to reach by responders following the storm.

The program has received thousands of donations from working New Yorkers, businesses and charities, and has also attracted the support and attention of luminaries including "Hamilton: An American Musical" creator **Lin-Manuel Miranda**, who wrote a benefit song that reached the number one spot for digital sales in 17 countries. The song titled "Almost Like Praying" features 22 artists including **Rita Moreno, Jennifer Lopez, Marc Anthony, Ruben Blades** and **Juan Luis Guerra**, and led to the creation of two "Making Of" benefit television specials on **NBC** and **Telemundo** network affiliates across the nation.

"New Yorkers' response to the Hispanic Federation's Unidos Program has been outstanding", said **Andrew Siegel**, President of FSCNY. "We are proud to join in this effort to help raise awareness that the crisis is not yet over, and much help is still needed as Puerto Rico remains without the most basic services and infrastructure, and starts its road to recovery".

**Jason Carballo**, Chief Operating Officer at **Castle Financial Service** and Chairperson of FSCNY's Government Committee, informed that the Association's initiative seeks to ensure that people who want to support the Unidos Program but haven't been able - due to lack of access to a credit or debit card, or checking account - can donate in cash through an accessible and trusted community partner. Besides forwarding all donations directly to the Hispanic Federation, participating check cashers have pledged cash donations of their own.

"FSCNY-member check cashers employ hundreds of Hispanics, of Puerto Rican descent, so this initiative is very personal and important for us", Carballo said. "With this partnership we are helping expand the choices for New Yorkers of all income brackets and neighborhoods to make a donation, while we ourselves make a financial contribution beyond facilitating our infrastructure and staffing, as local collection points and associates".

All proceeds donated to the Unidos Program go 100% to meet the needs of disaster relief and recovery initiatives in Puerto Rico.

For more information about the Hispanic Federation's Unidos Disaster Relief & Recovery Program, visit [www.hispanicfederation.org/unidos](http://www.hispanicfederation.org/unidos).

#### **About FSCNY** (Financial Service Centers of New York):

The Financial Service Centers of New York is the industry's leading voice on legislative, regulatory, and business issues and the leading advocate for the rights of consumers to access basic financial services in New York. The New York check cashing industry consists of approximately 520 check cashing locations, which employ nearly 4,000 New York residents. Nearly 80% of employees are African American and Latino. The industry is composed largely of small businesses that are located in the working class neighborhoods that have been abandoned or never served by banks. The industry

cashes nearly 20 million checks annually with a face value of nearly \$11 billion. New York's check cashing fee cap of 2.03% is among the lowest in the nation. For more information about FSCNY, visit [www.fscny.org](http://www.fscny.org).

**About The Hispanic Federation:**

The mission of the Hispanic Federation is to empower and advance the Hispanic community. The Hispanic Federation provides grants and services to a broad network of Latino non-profit agencies serving the most vulnerable members of the Hispanic community and advocates nationally with respect to the vital issues of education, health, immigration, economic empowerment, civic engagement and the environment. For more information, please visit [www.hispanicfederation.org](http://www.hispanicfederation.org).

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