



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lessons Learned:

Resilient Libraries Pilot Program

The Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN), is a regional collaboration between the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties working together to promote resource efficiency at the regional level, focusing on energy, water and greenhouse gas reduction. This report highlights lessons learned from the BayREN Resilient Libraries Network, an innovative pilot initiative launched by BayREN in 2022 in response to stakeholder input from Bay Area local governments looking for assistance with establishing Community Resilience Centers (CRCs) to deliver resources before, during and/or after natural hazard related events and provide ongoing resilience programming in their local communities.¹

BayREN leveraged its role as a Regional Energy Network to provide energy efficiency and energy resilience assessment support for Bay Area jurisdictions exploring whether specif-

ic library sites could be developed into CRCs. Because energy resilience is just one component of CRC planning, the pilot was designed to provide participants with a starting point to build on through additional community engagement and partnership building to ensure that CRC goals reflect the needs and priorities of the communities that each CRC will serve.

Key benefits of participating in the pilot included:

- Access to a network of Bay Area libraries working to improve community resilience based on local needs.
- Community engagement and facilitation support to develop community-driven goals for each CRC.
- Engineering technical assistance and recommendations to identify energy upgrades needed to improve each library building's efficiency, resilience, and ability to provide cooling and clean air.

¹ BayREN engaged Collective Strategies Consulting to design, manage and evaluate lessons learned from the Resilient Libraries Network pilot.

- Direct access to resilience funding experts to identify relevant funding sources to support CRC programming goals at each site and implement recommended energy upgrades.

The following Bay Area library branches applied and were selected to participate in the BayREN Resilient Libraries Network Pilot:

- City of Oakland 81st Avenue Library Branch
- City of Oakland West Oakland Library Branch
- City of Fairfax Library Branch
- City of East Palo Alto Library Branch
- City of Novato Library Branch
- City of San Jose Biblioteca Latinoamericana Branch

Technical Assistance:

BayREN engaged kW Engineering to provide engineering technical assistance for each of the participating CRC sites. Staff from kW developed site assessment reports that provided each participating library site with an overview of their building’s energy performance and specific recommendations each site could take to improve their building’s energy efficiency, energy resilience and ability to provide clean air and cooling and heating during times of activation. The site assessment reports were tailored to each CRC Team’s unique goals for their CRC as well as their “critical needs” to meet those goals. Each site was asked to fill out a Critical Needs Worksheet detailing what level of CRC they planned

² Please see Appendix A to review the Critical Needs Worksheet.

for their site to become, the critical needs they planned to meet, and how their current building features did or did not allow them to meet these needs. ²

Funding Recommendations:

BayREN partnered with the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) to ensure that energy upgrade recommendations for each site could be coupled with tailored funding and financing guidance for participants for both energy upgrades and specific CRC programming needs. ASAP staff also provided input on the design of the pilot application and provided an initial training on best practices in equitable community engagement for potential applicants.

Lessons Learned:

To assess lessons learned from the BayREN Resilient Libraries Network, Collective Strategies Consulting interviewed BayREN’s technical assistance team as well as each Local Government Lead and some other CRC Team members at all six participating sites. The following recommendations reflect input from those discussions and provide guidance to inform future BayREN technical assistance offerings focused on supporting the development of CRCs in the Bay Area region.



- 1. Readiness:** Design future programs to require local governments to initially assess where they are in the CRC planning process and then match them with technical assistance and support based on their level of readiness.
- 2. Accessibility:** Design future programs to require participants to provide all necessary building energy data prior to committing to provide technical assistance. Participants should also be required to investigate whether their sites have any significant renovations planned in the next ten years.
- 3. Leverage Participant Learning:** BayREN should leverage the experiences and knowledge of Local Government Leads and CRC team members who participated in the Resilient Libraries Network as appropriate when developing future activities related to CRCs. This could be done through surveys, conversations, or other means and shared out through newsletters or directly to future program participants.
- 4. CRC Goals:** Future efforts should collect information on the CRC level and needs as part of the application and screening process. This would allow r BayREN to prioritize sites for technical assistance.
- 5. Local Government Lead:** BayREN should continue to require that participating jurisdictions name a Local Government Lead but strongly encourage participants to ensure that this position is focused on advancing community resilience efforts full time or at least half time to ensure that they have the necessary capacity and background to advance this long-term planning effort.
- 6. Community Engagement and Commitment:** Participants should be encouraged to not only provide a summary of previous community engagement efforts that informed CRC goals but also to develop an ongoing community engagement plan.
- 7. Engagement with Offices of Emergency Services:** BayREN could consider collaborating with County Offices of Emergency Services (OES) at a regional level and/or CalOES staff to bring in the knowledge and experience of these agencies.
- 8. Funding Guidance:** All Local Government Leads reported that it would be helpful for BayREN to continue to provide some type of funding guidance to complement energy engineering technical assistance for specific CRC sites. They noted that it would be more helpful to provide general guidance, relevant for all Bay Area CRC sites, and then offer access to additional technical assistance when sites are able to pursue that funding given how quickly the landscape of available funding evolves.



Storytime at Oakland Branch Library

As a network of Bay Area local governments partnering to promote resource efficiency at the regional level, BayREN is well positioned to provide support and guidance on integrating energy resilience into local climate action planning. The Resilient Libraries Network pilot provided BayREN with a unique opportunity to explore how engineering technical assistance could be tailored to support Bay Area cities and counties' work to advance CRCs. The pilot also provided a model for how BayREN can partner with organizations like ASAP to provide non-energy focused support that is critical to advancing local energy resilience goals.

BayREN applauds the efforts of the six participating jurisdictions to expand and evolve their ability to provide critical community resilience resources and support to the communities that need it most. Their leadership will enable BayREN to support many more Bay Area jurisdictions in advancing critical community resilience resources.

Read the full report: <https://www.bayren.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/Lessons%20Learned%20-%20Resilient%20Libraries%20Pilot%20.pdf>