



**BAYREN**

Lessons Learned:

**BayREN Resilient  
Libraries Network**

# Contents

**Executive Summary** 1

Technical Assistance: 2

Funding Recommendations: 2

Lessons Learned: 2

**Lessons Learned: BayREN Resilient Libraries Network** 5

Introduction 5

Stakeholder Engagement and BayREN Business Plan 5

Resilient Libraries Network Pilot Design 6

Key Partners and Roles 8

Lessons Learned 11

Conclusion 19

**Appendix** 20

Appendix A 20

Appendix B 20



Local Governments Empowering Our Communities

# Executive Summary

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.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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.
- 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





East Palo Alto Library 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 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.<sup>2</sup>

## 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.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see Appendix A to review the Critical Needs Worksheet.

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 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.



Local Governments Empowering Our Communities

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.



Oakland Branch Library

# Lessons Learned: BayREN Resilient Libraries Network

## Introduction

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. For the past decade, BayREN's programs have offered rebates, direct funding, and technical assistance to help renters, property and business owners, realtors, and local governments improve buildings' energy efficiency and reduce their carbon footprint, while also helping to build the green workforce. Critically, BayREN's programs also help to advance the state's goals of doubling energy efficiency in existing buildings by 2030 and reducing emissions from existing buildings by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

This report highlights lessons learned from the BayREN Resilient Libraries Network, an innovative pilot initiative launched in 2022 in response to stakeholder input from Bay Area local

<sup>3</sup> BayREN engaged Collective Strategies Consulting to design, manage and evaluate lessons learned from the Resilient Libraries Network pilot.

governments exploring the need to establish 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.<sup>3</sup> BayREN leveraged its role as a Regional Energy Network to provide energy efficiency and energy resilience assessment support for Bay Area jurisdictions exploring whether specific library sites could be developed into CRCs. BayREN partnered with the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) to ensure that these energy upgrade recommendations could be coupled with tailored funding and financing guidance for participants for both energy upgrades and specific CRC programming needs. 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 these recommendations reflect the needs and priorities of the communities that each CRC will serve.

## Stakeholder Engagement and BayREN Business Plan

In late 2021, at the direction of the CPUC, BayREN engaged stakeholders



including local government energy and sustainability staff, CCA staff, realtors, low-income energy efficiency program providers and representatives from community-based organizations advancing health, environmental and economic equity and building workforce efforts in the Bay Area. Their input informed the development of a new Business Plan to guide the organization's programming and budget from 2024 - 2031. Through a series of approximately 15 meetings and listening sessions, BayREN gathered input on key barriers to implementing energy efficiency upgrades and advancing building decarbonization across building types and jurisdictions. These discussions also covered issues such as how to advance community health, equity and resilience through energy upgrades and focused on how BayREN could better work at the intersection of energy and these issues, while also leveraging other existing programs and supporting specific local goals.

During discussions with local government stakeholders, participants provided BayREN with information on their planning processes and goals related to CRCs and noted that it had been difficult to identify comprehensive funding for CRCs. They expressed interest in BayREN providing regional support for these local efforts. This input helped guide BayREN's decision to include CRCs in the energy roadmapping portion of its proposed new Integrated Energy Services program.



Story Time at Oakland Branch Library

## Resilient Libraries Network Pilot Design

### Pilot Goals and Benefits

Stakeholders shared that the use of public libraries as CRCs was being explored in multiple Bay Area communities and that many of these sites, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, had begun to function like CRCs by distributing food, resources, and supplies for communities in need. As a result, BayREN decided to focus on exploring how free engineering technical assistance and other support could improve energy use and help advance the development of CRCs at local libraries in the Bay Area.

BayREN launched the Resilient Libraries Network Pilot in late 2022. The pilot was funded through the existing BayREN Codes & Standards program's Municipal Zero Net Energy/Zero Net Carbon Technical Assistance project and focused on providing support for municipal buildings. The pilot results will help inform



the design of BayREN’s new Integrated Energy Services Program that will launch in 2024. The pilot provided the following benefits to participants:

#### Benefits of Participation:

- 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 your Community Resilience Center.
- Engineering technical assistance and recommendations to identify energy upgrades needed to improve your library building’s efficiency, resilience, and ability to provide cooling and clean air.
- Direct access to resilience funding and finance experts to identify relevant funding sources to support your Community Resilience Center and implement recommended energy upgrades.

BayREN opened the pilot application to any Bay Area city or county eligible for BayREN services and required that each application include a city or county staff member to act as the Local Government Lead for their CRC site.<sup>4</sup> To be considered to participate in the pilot, applicants

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<sup>4</sup> BayREN serves all Bay Area cities and counties who are PG&E customers for electricity and/or gas generation. The City of Healdsburg and the City of Palo Alto have their own utilities that provide both electricity and gas generation and therefore were not eligible to participate in this pilot. Jurisdictions that purchase electricity through a CCA are eligible to participate.

had to demonstrate that:

- The proposed CRC library site did not have any known physical, ownership or operational barriers that would limit the implementation of recommended energy upgrades.
- The CRC would serve local communities that are most impacted by climate change and have the least resources to deal with these impacts.
- The Local Government Lead has actively engaged with relevant library staff and community stakeholders that understand and can represent the needs of the communities that the CRC will serve.

BayREN also asked each applicant to build a “CRC Team” of relevant stakeholders that the Local Government Lead could partner with to both develop community driven goals for their CRC and to implement energy upgrades and other activities to realize these goals.

Examples of stakeholders that could join the CRC Team include but are not limited to:

- **Community members, representatives and/or residents** that will co-develop the goals for the Community Resilience Center and provide guidance on local community needs.



- **Library staff at the library site** that can co-develop goals for the Community Resilience Center and provide guidance on community needs and existing library resources and priorities.
- **County Office of Emergency Services** staff that will co-develop goals for the Community Resilience Center and provide insight on how to coordinate this initiative with existing OES efforts.

BayREN sought applications from jurisdictions that will serve frontline communities and/or are in Equity Priority Communities or that can demonstrate that their library site will serve populations that align with some of the demographic factors that define frontline and Equity Priority Communities.<sup>5</sup> For example, a library site could be in an area that is not designated as an Equity Priority Community by MTC but that serves a population that is majority people of color and majority limited English proficiency. In the pilot application, applicants were asked to provide qualitative information on the Equity Priority Community and/or Frontline Community demographic characteristics for the communities that their library site serves. Quantitative information (e.g. concentrations of specific demographic factors) was not required but encouraged if Local Government Leads are able to access this data.

<sup>5</sup> Please see Appendix B to review the pilot application form.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.baaqmd.gov/about-air-quality/current-air-quality>

BayREN also asked applicants to outline the goals that their CRC Team had developed for their specific library site based on local needs by responding to the following questions:

1. What are the resilience related needs of the communities that your CRC will focus on addressing?
2. When will your CRC operate? (e.g. during extreme heat days, at times when air quality falls below moderate levels on the Air Quality Index etc.)<sup>6</sup>
3. What resources will your CRC provide in addition to the resources your library already provides? (e.g. access to air conditioning, access to filtered air, access to power to charge devices, access to educational materials on climate resilience etc.)

## Key Partners and Roles

Engineering Technical Assistance  
 BayREN engaged kW Engineering to provide engineering technical assistance for each of the participating CRC sites. Staff from kW conducted a site visit at each of the library sites and then developed a site assessment report outlining the building's status and the key energy efficiency and resilience upgrades that would be required for the site to meet its CRC goals. These site assessment reports 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 team at kW also provided suggested phasing of these energy upgrade recommendations based on specific criteria including:

- Length of the payback period once new equipment is installed.
- Cost of new equipment and installation and currently available rebates or incentives.
- Sequencing to maximize efficiency and minimize costs.
- Length of remaining useful life of existing equipment.

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 for their site to become, the needs they planned to meet, and how their current building features did or did not allow them to meet these needs.<sup>7</sup> The worksheet also included space for CRC Team to document associated programming, resources, and key partners that they need to engage to meet each critical need. BayREN also developed a list of the following key questions for each CRC Team to use to guide their discussions as they filled out these worksheets:

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<sup>7</sup> Please see Appendix A to review the Critical Needs Worksheet.

1. What does "activation" look like for your CRC site? What natural hazard events or other emergencies will trigger your site to be "activated" as a CRC?
2. How often (e.g. how many days per year) do you anticipate that your CRC will be activated?
3. Do you plan to serve the community as a CRC only during normal library hours or to expand hours during activation? How will expanded hours change your resource and staffing needs?
4. Do you currently have funding to support any of the new building features or resources you need for your CRC?
5. Have you factored in ADA accommodations for all critical needs (e.g. how many ADA beds/showers are needed at your site during activation)?
6. What partners will you work with to meet the critical needs of your community?
7. How do you plan to support residents year-round at your CRC site?

Resilience Funding Direct Assistance  
The stakeholders who informed the design of the pilot requested assistance not only with assessing and identifying effective energy upgrades for buildings but also, support to identify funding and financing resources to implement these



recommendations. In response, BayREN engaged the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) as a key partner in the pilot.<sup>8</sup> ASAP is a nonprofit professional network that supports and connects adaptation professionals to advance innovation in the field of practice. ASAP staff provided input on the design of the pilot application and provided training on best practices in equitable community engagement for potential applicants. Once pilot participants were selected, ASAP recruited their network members with expertise in resilience funding and financing to provide direct funding and financing assistance to pilot participants. Each participating CRC site was matched with ASAP member volunteers who identified priority grants and other funding opportunities based on the energy upgrade recommendations and goals of that CRC.

ASAP staff created a framework for the funding recommendations for each site that included:

- General principles for maximizing opportunities to access funding and finance.
- CRC programming options and ideas to align current library programming with climate resilience needs.
- Table of specific grant opportunities including eligibility requirements and recommendations for key partners to engage.
- Suggested initial next steps for CRC Teams to move forward on seeking funding for their CRC.

<sup>8</sup> <https://adaptationprofessionals.org/>

Each library site received a site assessment report outlining energy efficiency and energy resilience upgrade recommendations based on their CRC goals. They also received funding recommendations based on the upgrades outlined in their site assessment reports and their CRC programming goals.



The Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library

### Participating Sites

The BayREN Resilient Libraries Pilot provided free engineering technical assistance and direct funding and financing assistance to six participating Bay Area Library sites.

### The Oakland 81st Avenue

**Library Branch** is in an MTC designated Equity Priority Community and functions as both a public and a school library by providing valuable services to two local public schools and the larger community. This Library functioned as a key part of Oakland's COVID-19 pandemic response in 2020 and has distributed over 100,000 meals to individuals and families in need. Community outreach has revealed a need for flexible spaces that provi-

de services in times of minor disruptions as well as major emergencies – this site aims to meet that need.

**The West Oakland Library Branch** is in an MTC designated Equity Priority Community and has been identified as one of three municipal facilities that will make up the West Oakland Resilience Hub. The site requires a full rebuild to meet current energy resilience needs and aims specifically to help address a lack of emergency support spaces in the area by acting as an emergency respite center.

**The Fairfax Branch Library** serves a large senior population and already functions as a cooling and clean air center during extreme heat events and poor air quality days. This site plans to expand these services to provide relief on extreme cold days and to act as a communications hub providing access to timely and reliable information during these events as well as access to charging and wi-fi.

**The Novato Branch Library** serves three census tracts identified as California Climate Investment Priority Communities and partners with local organizations to serve a diverse community of families, Spanish speaking residents, and lower-income community members. This site aims to expand these services by providing a safe space and access to information ahead of and during wildfires, power outages, and extreme temperature events.

**The East Palo Alto Library Branch** already acts as a community hub for those most in need by serving meals and providing access to air conditioning, filtered air, wi-fi, and power to charge devices. This site hopes to expand services to address the needs of the East Palo Alto community and help prepare residents for flooding and earthquakes, both of which are prevalent risks for this location.

**The Biblioteca Latinoamericana Library** in San Jose is in an MTC designated Equity Priority Community and is already designated as a Disaster District Office for Council District 3 in San Jose. This site plans to upgrade the building to increase the library’s ability to function as a Community Resilience Center to meet community needs during extreme heat and poor air quality events.

## Lessons Learned

The following lessons and recommendations are highlighted to inform similar efforts in other regions as well as future technical assistance for CRCs that BayREN seeks to provide through its new Public Sector Integrated Energy Services program.

### Readiness

- The Resilient Libraries Network pilot was attractive to sites that were in



very different stages of development which made it difficult for BayREN to provide consistent guidance and support across sites. Some sites were already occasionally operating as CRCs and some were just beginning to explore whether that site might be a good location for a CRC.<sup>9</sup>

- Participating sites all wanted site assessments but planned to use them in very different ways. Some sites were planning to take the recommendations and begin implementing energy upgrades because they had already built partnerships and support to use the site as a CRC. Other sites planned to use the site assessment to begin building those partnerships and support. Another site intends to use the site assessment to guide additional community outreach to solidify CRC programming goals and critical needs.
- Some participants did not have a clear vision for their CRC when they started the process and did not know the steps they should be taking to advance CRC planning at their library sites. These participants found it difficult to engage potential partners who were not familiar with the concept of a CRC.

### Readiness Recommendation

Design future programs to require local governments to initially assess where they are in the CRC planning process and then match them with technical

<sup>9</sup> For example, the Biblioteca Latinoamericana in San Jose occasionally is activated as an overnight warming center and the Fairfax Library has used their community room as a space for residents to charge devices during power outages.

assistance and support based on their level of readiness. This could involve outlining example phases and steps of the CRC planning process and asking participants to identify what phase most closely resembles their current situation. Having this initial assessment would provide important insight on the planning work that has been done to date for each potential participant and would also help local governments understand what steps they should be taking to advance their CRC efforts.



City of Novato Library Branch

### Accessibility

- BayREN designed the pilot to be as accessible as possible for Bay Area local governments by not requiring any local match to participate and by limiting the amount of capacity that would be needed to engage in the year-long pilot. The application asked for a limited amount of information about the library sites and their previous community engagement work and detailed what additional data Local Government Leads would be required to provide throughout the

pilot.<sup>10</sup> The six participating sites varied greatly in terms of their ability to access building data, which in some cases required repeated follow up with Leads who struggled to get access to data and eventually to create proxies for 15-minute interval data that most sites were unable to obtain.

- The pilot application asked for a description and dates of any recent energy upgrades or renovations made in the last five years to the library building. All applicants were able to provide this information and it proved to be helpful when conducting site assessments. However, halfway through the pilot, some of the participating sites discovered that their library sites might undergo significant renovations in the near future (e.g. in the next ten years) and one of the sites found out that the library services might be moved to an entirely new site in the near future. BayREN was still able to complete site assessments for these sites but are less confident that the energy upgrade recommendations will be implemented given uncertainty about these additional plans.

### Accessibility Recommendation

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. To continue to make these services accessible for smaller, under-resourced jurisdictions, initial technical assistance could be provided to help staff navigate these data requests and provide guidance about which departments they need to engage to understand what, if any, future upgrades are planned for the site they intend to explore.

### Leveraging Participant Learning

- BayREN designed the pilot so that each Local Government Lead would become part of a “network” of local government staff working to advance CRCs in libraries across the Bay Area. BayREN held quarterly check-ins with Local Government Leads to facilitate peer learning and exchange and brought in guest speakers to highlight best practices in CRC development. BayREN also provided Local Government Leads with updates and information on available funding resources during the pilot.
- Local Government Leads noted that the idea of being a part of this network was attractive at the start of the pilot but many of them felt they had not taken full advantage of this access to their counterparts in other jurisdictions. This was primarily due to lack of capacity to engage



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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix B: Library Site Information in the pilot application

with each other beyond the quarterly check-ins but also due to most sites being in very early stages of planning their CRC.

- Each Local Government Lead felt that they learned quite a bit by participating in the pilot. One CRC Team member noted that it could be helpful for BayREN to provide future participants with access to “CRC Mentors” - local government staff who participated in this initial pilot or others who are working on developing CRCs - that participants could reach out to on an as needed basis for advice.

### **Leveraging Participant Learning Recommendation**

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.

### **Identifying CRC Goals**

- The pilot application required applicants to outline the goals that CRC Teams had developed for their CRC sites and asked them to describe resilience-related needs that the CRC

would focus on addressing, what resilience resources they would provide and what type of disaster would trigger the CRC to activate. All applicants answered these questions as best they could at the time; however, some of these answers changed as they engaged additional partners and explored various options for how their CRC could address community needs.

- When it became clear that participants could benefit from a tool to help facilitate conversations with potential partners and other staff to identify the specific needs that each CRC site wanted to meet, BayREN developed the “critical needs” worksheet to align evolving CRC goals with specific building upgrade recommendations. This worksheet also helped BayREN understand whether each library site intended to become a Level 1, 2 or 3 CRC.<sup>11</sup> Levels build on one another, meaning, Level 3 CRCs provide everything that Level 1 and Level 2 CRCs provide in addition to overnight shelter and associated resources (see table below). BayREN also asked participants to estimate how many days per year their CRC would be activated during specific emergencies. These estimates informed the calculations of estimated capacity for solar PV and battery storage for each site.

<sup>11</sup> BayREN looked to resilience hub definitions developed by Communities Responding to Extreme Weather (CREW) to outline “levels” of CRCs to help facilitate planning conversations. CREW defines these levels as 1) Engagement center, 2) Relief station and 3) Emergency shelter. For more information please visit: [https://www.climatecrew.org/resilience\\_hubs](https://www.climatecrew.org/resilience_hubs).



## Community Resilience Center (CRC) Types

CRC Type	Resilience Services	Provided Year-Round	Provided During Activation
Level 1	Provides resilience education and resources	x	x
Level 2	Provides day-time shelter/ safe space/ cooling/ heating/clean air		x
Level 3	Provides over-night shelter and associated resources (e.g. showers)		x

### CRC Goals Recommendation

Future efforts should collect information on the CRC level and critical needs as part of the application and screening process. This would allow BayREN to prioritize sites for technical assistance. For the many jurisdictions who are not yet able to answer all of the questions on the critical needs worksheet, BayREN could consider providing, or partnering with another organization to provide, training on what key questions they will need to be able answer, what partnerships they may want to build in order to be able to fully identify their critical needs and desired CRC level.

### Local Government Lead

- BayREN required that applicants name a Local Government Lead to be the primary point of contact throughout the project. This Lead could be a city or county government staff person, and BayREN recommended that this person be someone “who can connect BayREN with necessary energy use information about the library site to complete the site assessment.” In the pilot, we found that Local Government Leads had very different levels of success in engaging library staff and other key partners to obtain building information depending upon their position in their jurisdictions and existing relationships with key stakeholders in other city or county departments.
- Based on input from stakeholders, BayREN opened the pilot to both cities and counties given that efforts to advance CRCs can come from multiple departments and jurisdictions. BayREN designed the pilot so that the Local Government Lead could be any city or county staff member and encouraged each applicant to build a CRC Team of relevant stakeholders to support that Lead. Some Leads were sustainability or energy staff, and some were library and/or facilities staff. The size, diversity, and level of engagement of CRC Teams varied



Local Governments Empowering Our Communities

greatly as well. Only one participating site had a staff member that was dedicated to advancing local resilience efforts full time.

- Each of the participating sites had unique assets and challenges to build on and overcome to advance their CRC goals. For example, one library site was in a larger building that provides multiple government services. Another site required a full rebuild, so technical assistance was based on the plans for that new building. BayREN adjusted the technical assistance provided to each site based on these unique needs.

### **Local Government Lead Recommendation**

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. This Lead should be able to secure necessary energy data about the potential CRC site but they should also understand what, if any, renovations and capital improvements are planned for that site in the next ten years. This likely means that they need to be able to engage with Capital Planning Departments, Library Departments and Facilities Departments to ensure they are aware of future renovation plans for specific sites. Additionally, the Lead should have deep knowledge

of input gathered through community engagement efforts to inform the goals of the CRC and should be involved in ongoing engagement to stay informed of evolving needs.

### **Community Engagement and Commitment**

- BayREN offered a small amount of honorarium funding to any applicant who wanted to use it to compensate community stakeholders who provided input on the pilot application and CRC goals. This funding was available starting in June 2022, when the application opened, through the end of September 2022, when the application period closed. BayREN also offered access to community engagement facilitation support from staff at the Bay Area Climate Adaptation Network (BayCAN) if applicants were BayCAN members. No applicants requested honorarium funding or took advantage of facilitation support during the open application period.
- Designing and launching a CRC is a long-term project that requires ongoing engagement and input gathering to ensure that the CRC's goals align with the priorities of the communities it is meant to serve. Participating sites were required to detail their previous community engagement efforts and explain how that input was integrated into their CRC goals. Participants were not asked to detail their ongoing community engagement plans but were encouraged throughout the pilot to continue to develop a process

to continue to gather input from the communities they were planning to serve through their CRC. This meant that the depth of community engagement efforts varied greatly across sites and therefore some sites were more confident in the relevance of their CRC goals and programming needs than others.

### **Community Engagement and Commitment Recommendation**

Participants should be more strongly 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 to ensure continued relevance of CRC goals and programming. Because some sites may use the site assessment reports to facilitate conversations with the communities they want to serve, these plans can be flexible in terms of timing but should ideally include processes to engage, specific focus areas and staffing plans.

### **Engagement with Offices of Emergency Services**

- When designing the pilot application, BayREN considered requiring each applicant to engage their County Office of Emergency Services (OES) to ensure that they were coordinating with OES. However, based on input from stakeholders, BayREN decided not to require coordination with OES given that some jurisdictions clearly needed technical assistance to first explore whether a specific library site might be a good site for a CRC prior to coordinating with OES. Additionally, given that some of the Local Government Leads were city staff and others were county staff, coordination with OES would have been more challenging for some sites.
- Filling out the critical needs worksheet required participants to estimate the number of days that their CRC site would be activated to operate as a CRC during emergencies. Each participating jurisdiction approached this task based on their own internal processes. For those library sites that were already occasionally functioning as a CRC and had a history of activation to build on, this process was less challenging than for those who were considering when a new CRC site would be activated.



Local Governments Empowering Our Communities

## Engagement with Offices of Emergency Services Recommendation

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. This could help local governments to inform regional discussions about the need for potential CRC sites in various jurisdictions. This type of coordination could also help ensure that new CRC sites would be evaluated in the context of existing local emergency services and might even result in a more consistent process or framework for estimating the number of days each CRC site would be activated during specific emergencies.

## Funding Guidance

- Based on feedback from stakeholders who informed the design of the pilot, BayREN incorporated funding guidance into the pilot offerings to provide support for CRC Teams seeking funding to implement both energy upgrade recommendations and desired CRC programming. BayREN partnered with ASAP to provide CRC Teams with access to ASAP members with experience identifying and securing funding for resilience projects. ASAP staff recruited member volunteers from their nationwide network to provide this support and guidance.
- BayREN also provided pilot participants with information on specific funding opportunities from the State of California's Strategic Growth



## Fairfax Librarians

Council (SGC) relevant to CRCs early in the pilot as these opportunities became available. Although participating CRC sites were not ready to apply for these opportunities at the start of the pilot, Local Government Leads noted that this guidance was helpful because it raised their awareness about specific state agencies and programs that have invested in supporting CRCs and may continue to do so in the future. BayREN also gathered input from pilot participants about their ability to meet the criteria outlined in SGC's draft funding guidelines and provided comments to SGC that informed the final Community Resilience Centers program grant guidelines.

- ASAP staff worked with the volunteers to design the agendas and goals for meetings with each CRC Team to discuss their funding needs as well as their capacity to pursue different funding opportunities. Lo-

cal Government Leads were asked to invite anyone on their CRC team who might be involved in securing funding for the CRC site and/or who might have input on the types of programming that CRC should provide. Given that many sites were still in the process of having conversations about specific programming and staff needs for their CRCs, some CRC Teams felt that these meetings would have been more useful at a later stage in their planning process.

- ASAP volunteers created a matrix outlining relevant upcoming resilience related funding opportunities which was provided to CRC sites as general guidance. Some sites also received a more tailored funding recommendation report with more specific recommendations for each site.

### **Funding Guidance Recommendation**

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.

## **Conclusion**

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.



# Appendix

## Appendix A

Access an example of the Critical Needs worksheet: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18sLg2pm-SlzqmW0uczZMG4kghgMoshjxNgg-47G5U3TsQ/edit#gid=665250136>

## Appendix B

View the application for the Resilient Libraries Network: [https://www.bayren.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/BayAreaRLNApplication\\_Final.pdf](https://www.bayren.org/sites/default/files/documents/2024/BayAreaRLNApplication_Final.pdf)