Project Profile
St. Croix Theater Renovation Resiliency Hub

Resilience Hubs offer an intersectional solution for our interdependent society. On a daily basis, Hubs cultivate networks of social resilience, peer learning, and employment. In times of crisis, Hubs provide disaster relief and safety for individuals and families.

While emergency services are essential to many Resilience Hubs, at their core they are community-driven spaces, emergent from residents' needs and desires. Their co-benefits can include building food sovereignty through community gardens, climate mitigation through renewable energy production, behavior change through educational offerings, material reuse via used goods swaps, and much more.

Resilience Hubs can foster neighborhood leadership and community power by shifting from government-led solutions to citizen-managed networks and mutual aid.

- **Resilience Hubs reframe climate action as a human-centered activity** based on community needs, respectful relationships, and local self-determination.
- **By co-developing Resilience Hubs with residents,** community members can design a safe space resourced with the equipment and services that match their unique needs.[1]

[1] https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/usdn_resiliencehubs_2018.pdf

Case Study

St. Croix's Alexander Theater Renovation Resiliency Hub

PROJECT LEAD: St. Croix Foundation + the Clinton Foundation

CAPITAL TYPE: Federal Grant

FUNDER: FEMA's BRIC Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

AMOUNT: USD $12.5 million

SCOPE: Retrofitting a theater into a Resilience Hub and performance space

FEMA, the federal disaster recovery agency, granted the St. Croix Foundation $12.5 million to rehabilitate the historic Alexander theater in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, as a community disaster shelter, performance space, and job training center. The renovated theater, located in downtown Christiansted, will be able to accommodate over 300 residents during emergencies.[2]

St. Croix's Resiliency Hub project was developed in response to a major natural disaster. In 2017, the U.S. Virgin Islands suffered two Category 5 Hurricanes (Irma and Maria). Residents still have unmet needs and are seeking housing assistance. In order to support the rebuilding process in St. Croix, as well as to support the island's resilience to future storms, a coalition of nonprofits, foundations, and federal partners united behind the innovative theater project.

The Alexander Theater renovation is unique in that it blends economic development, hazard mitigation, and community-driven arts and culture programming. As a key element of the city's downtown revitalization strategy, the theater will act as a state-of-the-art performing arts center and conference space. During emergencies, it will serve as a community disaster shelter with a viable safe house,[3] as well as a disaster supply distribution site for recovery partners.[4]

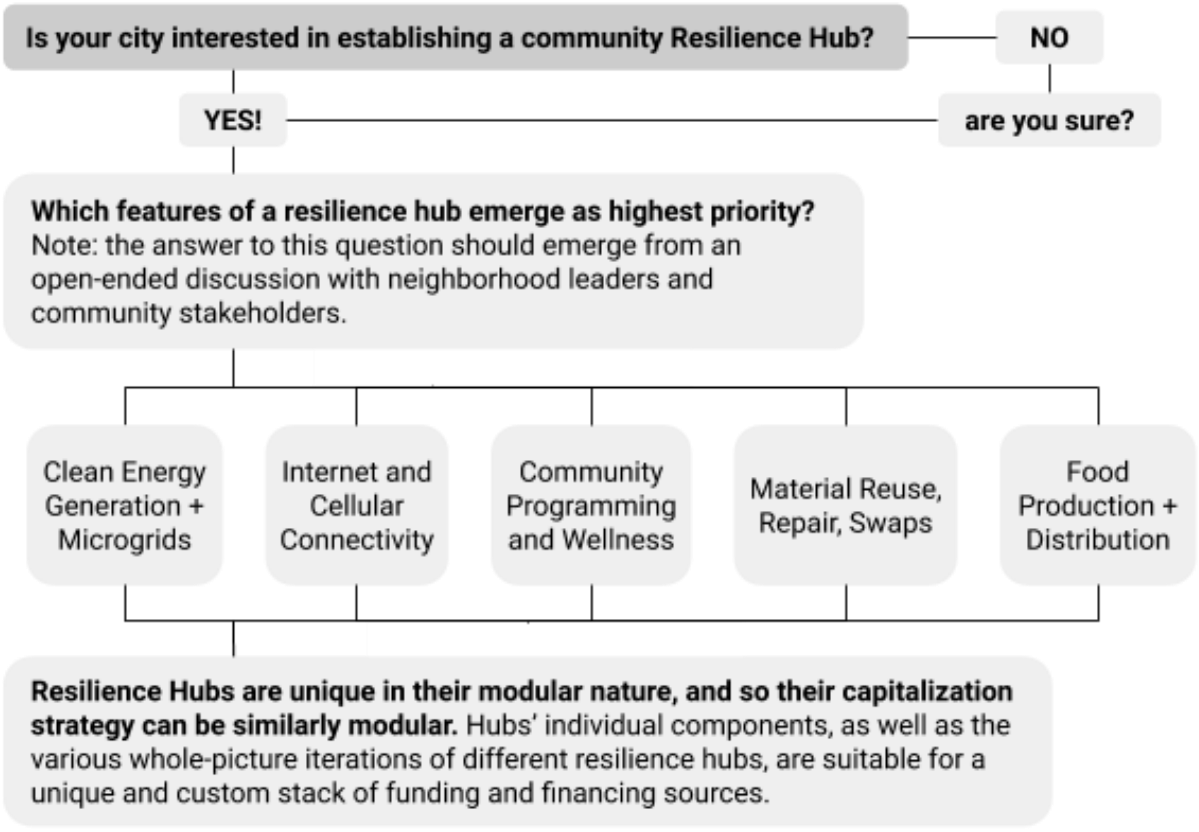
The majority of the funding for the project was secured through FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program, which aims to "shift the federal focus away from reactive disaster spending and toward research-supported, proactive investment in community resilience."[5] BRIC intends to fund projects with blended funding mechanisms resulting from a mix of private and public sources. Additionally, the program aims to support solutions that generate multiple co-benefits in addition to natural disaster risk reduction.

The Alexander Theater renovation is a prime example of how FEMA's hazard mitigation grant funding can advance intersectional resilience projects. While FEMA's funding was critical to the theater's ability to serve as a "community lifeline"—defined as a something that "enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security,"[6] this grant also enabled the St. Croix foundation to open a space for community-led theater and performance. This multidisciplinary approach engages local residents in a holistic manner—building trust and ultimately enabling the theater to play a more central and effective role amid emergencies.

In 2020, the BRIC program has $500 million of total grant funding available.
Learn more about FEMA's grant program and upcoming deadlines here.

[2] https://www.clintonfoundation.org/clinton-global-initiative/commitment/healing-humanities-rebuilding-resiliency-mind
[3] https://stcroixsource.com/2020/02/13/new-alexander-theater-to-revitalize-christiansteds-sunday-market-square/
[4] http://www.stxfoundation.org/st-croix-foundation-continues-to-foster-recovery-and-resiliency-three-years-after-hurricanes-irma-and-maria/
[5] https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/building-resilient-infrastructure-communities
[6] https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/lifelines

Taking Action
Guide to Resilience Hubs



Interested in a well-rounded Resilience Hub? Foundations and government entities are increasingly interested in funding intersectional solutions with multiple co-benefits. As such, grants can be a great option for communities looking for a single funding source to cover the entire project.

Most concerned with off-grid energy? If your community values having a safe space during heat waves, flooding, and other climate disasters, installing a renewable energy microgrid is essential. Your local utility may already have incentives for such projects, and/or may partner with the community and city on a Resilience Hub microgrid. [see PG&E example]

Have a strong community partner? Local institutions such as libraries, schools, hospitals, universities, and recreation centers have a shared goal of keeping their communities safe. Many are willing partners in investing in more resilient structures, additional programming, and increased preparedness with food, refrigeration and first aid.