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# *Resilience Hubs Initiative*

## *2021 Overview*

**The Resilience Hubs Initiative 2021 Overview is a living document that encapsulates the work of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), the NorCal Resilience Network (NCRN) and the Resilience Hubs Leadership Training advisory team.**

### *Table of Contents*

#### *PART 1: How-To Guide*

Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	About the Collaborators
Page 4	Resilience Hubs: definition, components and case studies
Page 7	Resilience Spaces: definition and case studies
Page 8	Resilience Neighborhoods: definition and case studies
Page 10	Step by Step: Creating a Resilience Hub
Page 11	Recommendations for Resilience Hubs

#### *PART II: Recommended Next Steps*

Page 16	Recommendations for Spaces and Neighborhoods
Page 17	Moving Forward: Our Vision



*Resilience Hubs Initiative  
Definitions and Recommendations*

# *Introduction*

**In this increasingly chaotic world of never-ending disasters,  
we must be “ready for anything”.**

**Resilience hubs are some of the most promising and equitable approaches to  
scaling up local resilience.**

The Resilience Hubs Initiative was created by the NorCal Resilience Network in response to the urgent need to build resilience in our homes and communities in light of the IPCC Code Red for humanity report, worsening climate crisis, and growing social inequality. Using the framework of the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, the Initiative supports neighborhood centers and neighborhoods in transforming to become model sites for community resilience. The Resilience Hubs Initiative is centered in equity, and supports a trauma-informed response, rooted in three pillars:

- **Community programs**
- **Ecologically-based climate solutions**
- **Disaster preparedness and response**



*Resilience hubs provide an opportunity to effectively work at the nexus of community resilience, emergency management, climate change mitigation, and social and racial equity while also providing opportunities for communities to become more self-determining, socially connected, and successful before, during, and after disruptions. Resilience Hubs shift the power to neighborhoods and residents, while prioritizing the leadership of Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities who are affected first and worst by climate disruption due to ongoing legacies of marginalization, racism, and disinvestment*

*Kristin Baja, Urban Sustainability Directors Network*



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# Collaborators

## About the NorCal Resilience Network

The purpose of the NorCal Resilience Network is to catalyze a Just Transition to an equitable and regenerative region by supporting and activating community-based and ecological solutions in Northern California. Our regional network increases capacity for grassroots projects and programs, helps to build out model sites for permaculture and resilience; and builds solidarity across divides of race, class, sector and region with organizations, businesses and neighborhood leaders committed to growing thriving, resilient communities through collaboration and collective impact.

## About the Resilience Hubs Initiative

The Resilience Hubs Initiative, a program of the NorCal Resilience Network, is creating a network of homes, schools, community gardens and neighborhood centers that are model sites for resilience and “ready for anything” - better prepared for natural disasters, climate impacts and other stressors in our community. The Resilience Hubs Leadership Training Program was an 8-month pilot program that supported sites around Northern California to become resilience hubs, spaces and blocks, through monthly zoom sessions and skill shares.

## About the Urban Sustainability Directors Network

**Urban Sustainability Directors Network** is a network of local government professionals across the United States and Canada sharing best practices that can create a healthier environment, economic prosperity, and increased social equity. USDN staff Kristin Baja pioneered the concept and developed the framework for resilience hubs. The USDN provided major funding to support the resilience hubs leadership training.

## Acknowledgements and Thank You's

This document was primarily written and compiled by NorCal Resilience staff Susan Silber, with major support from Resilience Hubs training consultants, Aryeh Shell and Bethsaida Ruiz. Thank you to the Resilience Hubs Advisory Team for supporting the development of this document: Ayano Jeffers-Fabro, Colin Miller (*Environmental Justice Solutions*), Shayna Hirshfield-Gold (*Climate Coordinator, City of Oakland*), and Hoi-Fei Mok (*Climate Action Coordinator, City of San Leandro*). Thank you to Keneda Gibson and Sheridan Noelani Enomoto for your leadership in the training program. Anita de Asis (“Needa Bee”) contributed to the writing of the unhoused encampment case study.

The NorCal Resilience Network wishes to thank the Asian Pacific Environmental Network, California Environmental Justice Alliance, Climate Resolve and other environmental justice organizations for leading statewide advocacy efforts that resulted in a \$100 million investment in the California state budget. We also want to lift up the countless environmental justice organizers who are on the frontlines working tirelessly for a Just Transition.



*Resilience Hubs Initiative  
Definitions and Recommendations*

# Resilience Hubs: Definitions

**USDN Definition:** Resilience Hubs are community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce pollution while enhancing quality of life year-round. Hubs can meet myriad physical and social goals by utilizing a trusted physical space such as a community center, recreation facility, or multi-family housing building as well as the surrounding infrastructure such as a vacant lot, community park, or local business. Resilience Hubs are focused on shifting power to the community and are intended to provide services and programming to communities year-round as well as in times of disasters or emergencies.

## WHAT IS A RESILIENCE HUB?



*Graphic Design: Maryland Resilience Hubs Program*



## *Resilience Hubs Initiative* *Definitions and Recommendations*

# Components

How does a resilience hub ideally run and function? The USDN lists the following components as integral to a **full-service resilience hub**. Please note that the case studies listed do not necessarily have all of these components because they are still in various stages of being developed as full-service hubs.



**Resilience Services and Programming:** Services and relationships that build relationships, promote community preparedness, and improve residents' health and well-being. *Examples include garden work days, disaster preparedness workshops and rain water catchment skill shares.*



**Resilient Communications:** Building relationships and respect, communications within and outside the service area during disruption. *Examples include ham radios, newsletters, listservs and door-to-door strategies for reaching community members during disasters.*



**Resilient Buildings and Landscape:** Strengthening the resilience of the facility to ensure that it meets operational goals in all conditions, including earthquakes, as demonstrations for climate solutions. *Examples include earthquake retrofits, energy efficiency upgrades, greywater and rainwater catchment systems and community gardens*



**Resilient Power Systems:** Ensuring unintentional power to the facility during a hazard while also improving the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of operations in all three resilience modes. *Examples include solar with battery backup or generators*



**Resilience Operations:** ensuring personnel and processes are in place to operate the site year-round and also continue operation during disruption and recovery. Distribute of food and other emergency materials. *Examples include distribution of food or disaster preparedness materials, coordination of mutual aid networks etc.*



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# Resilience Hubs Case Studies

## Case Study: Oakland Peace Center



The Oakland Peace Center offers various organizational partners a variety of services including therapy, meditation, youth workshops, and immigration services. They are home to a variety of community-based organizations and host a variety of resilience-based events. Their infrastructure includes a community garden, energy and water conservation features, and emergency supplies. They have served as a food distribution center and hope to install solar with battery back-up for power shut offs.

## Case Study: the RYSE Center (Richmond, CA)



RYSE is a youth center born out of the organizing efforts of Richmond and West County young people who were determined to create safe spaces for themselves and their peers. The center hosts a variety of resilience-based programming and is installing solar with battery backup, in partnership with the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN). As a completely youth-led and youth-designed project, the RYSE Center is a model for supporting youth-centered resilience hubs elsewhere.

## Case Study: West Oakland Resiliency Hub



This project, which has been spearheaded by the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project, seeks to adapt existing West Oakland community spaces at 18th and Adeline Streets into the **West Oakland Resiliency Hub**. Existing buildings and outdoor spaces to be incorporated into the program include: the West Oakland Senior Center, West Oakland Branch of the Oakland Public Library, and the DeFremery Recreation Center and Park – all of which are owned and operated by the City of Oakland. This hub would offer regular programming to increase neighborhood resilience every day and provide vital community services during both sudden disasters and ongoing environmental crises, including food distribution, solar plus storage and serving as a temporary emergency shelter.



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# Resilience Spaces

**USDN Definition:** Resilient Spaces can include neighborhood and community spaces that are intended to enhance community resilience on a smaller scale and are often, but not always, connected to a full-service Resilience Hub. These can include schools, community gardens and community-managed open spaces, and can support community events, community-supported green infrastructure, tool-banks, or other similar infrastructure and programming that are intended to **enhance** community resilience, while integrating the pillars of community, sustainability and disaster preparedness. These can also be virtual spaces to gather, and to exchange information at a neighborhood level.

## Case Study: The Dream Youth Clinic's Garden of Dreams (Oakland, CA)



Dr. Aisha Mays and her team of young volunteers began the Garden of Dreams as a way to remedy the effects of COVID-19 by providing a healthy environment to relax, remain active, and reflect. Two years after the first visioning session, the garden now offers a variety of fruits and vegetables that are often unaffordable for many young people. The Garden of Dreams is located next to the Dream Youth Clinic and close to the Oakland Peace Center, so could complement their service as resilience hubs.

## Case Study: Hoover Elementary School Garden



Urban farmer Wanda Stewart turned this empty plot of land on the schoolyard into a garden oasis, thanks to the help of community members and organizations. The garden boasts a chicken coop, rainwater catchment, and a huge variety of edible plants and trees. The garden also serves as a food distribution center for the neighborhood and gathering place for many garden work days.



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# *Resilient Neighborhoods:*

## *Blocks, Intentional Communities, and Unhoused Encampments*

**NorCal Resilience definition:** A resilient block consists of neighbors working together to build resilience through disaster preparedness, climate solutions, and community organizing (i.e. community events, projects, block parties, mutual aid, etc.). Resilient neighbors ideally would be connected to a full-service Resilience Hub, working in coordination to support emergency preparedness services and year-round community programming. Resilient neighbors do not traditionally serve the wider community outside the neighborhood during times of emergency, but can fulfill other important local functions such as creating mutual aid systems or checking on neighbors during an earthquake, fire, heatwave, flood or other disaster.

### **Case Study: Canticle Farm (Oakland, CA)**



Canticle Farm is an intentional community experimenting at the intersection of faith-based and earth-based activism. The common area supports an array of conservation features, from solar with battery backup and rainwater catchment to a restored creek and large garden. Their community work includes restorative justice work, neighborhood food distribution and a community kitchen.

### **Case Study: La Colina Circle (El Sobrante)**



La Colina Community Circle is a model resilience block situated in the hills of El Sobrante, California. The neighborhood itself contains a multitude of gardens that grow a variety of fruits and vegetables. Their food forest, Rising Spring, contains three 208-gallon tanks, a single 10,000 gallon tank, an in-house water filtration system, water-efficient appliances, a laundry to landscape greywater system, and various drought-resistant landscaping.



## *Resilience Hubs Initiative*

### *Definitions and Recommendations*

#### **Case Study: Village In Oakland (aka The Village)**



Since 2016, The serVillage in Oakland has been one of the leading direct service providers and advocacy organizations led by and serving Oakland's unhoused residents. The Village's most well known intervention is the creation of Tiny Home Villages that provide emergency transitional tiny home structures for unhoused folks. Each tiny house has solar power and grey water systems. Additional infrastructures on site include medical clinics, communal kitchens, free stores, communal gardens, bathroom

facilities (solar showers & bathhouses, porta potties & compostable toilets, handwashing stations), bicycle powered washing machines, solar power/charging stations, dog runs, meditation areas. Services and programs on site are available to any and all who need them (not just the residents of The Village) and include free hot meal distribution, free grocery & clean drinking water, provisions distribution, safe spaces to relax and get away from the craziness of life on the streets, education and arts programs, support with social services/benefits/navigation thru government systems, legal support, recreational activities, and town hall meetings. Our largest tiny home village housed 100 residents and served 1,000 residents (housed and unhoused) in the neighborhood per week with direct services and support. Our smallest village housed 13 residents and serviced 300 residents (mostly housed) in the neighborhood per week with direct services and support. Tho we created this model of emergency transitional shelter and resource/provision distribution to address and support the needs of the political, economic and racial refugees of Oakland's current housing disaster, this model can easily be used in the case of any other emergency that leaves people without the basic needs of food, shelter, water, clothing, safety and stability. This model of mutual aid and crisis response is grounded in outreach methods, and therefore can also easily be used to pass out disaster preparedness supplies or disseminate information before the emergency hits.



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# *Step by Step:*

## *Creating a Resilience Hub*

The following recommended steps are a compilation from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network's recommendations and the NorCal Resilience Network. They are intended for sites that have already been selected as resilience hubs, spaces and blocks. Most, but not all, of the recommendations can also be used if developing spaces or blocks. You can find USDN's documents on the resources section of their website: [resilience-hub.org](http://resilience-hub.org).

### **1) Establish a site team.**

- Get to know each other.
- Work democratically to choose roles, establish meeting times, & create protocols, including for conflict resolution and decision-making.
- Start to build partnerships with community members, organizations & local government agencies.

### **2) Coordinate an initial site and neighborhood assessment.**

- Learn and apply mapping tools to identify community assets, resources, hazards and vulnerabilities

### **3) Coordinate community visioning sessions, surveys & audits.**

- Evaluate the recommended five components of resilience hubs: power, operations, communication, programming, and buildings & landscape.
- Do specific analyses to determine the phases and funding for implementing more complex infrastructure, such as solar with battery backup or earthquake retrofits.

### **4) Set long-term and short-term goals with community members.**

- Create a budget for long-term and short-term project goals.
- Identify funding needs based on your goals.
- Prioritize the goals in order of importance and capacity.

### **5) Implement your first projects, based on the priorities, available funding, and people power.**

### **6) Maintain the five components through regular communications and programming, consistent feedback and check-ins with community members.**



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

# Recommendations for Resilience Hubs

Please note that this is a recommended list. No site will have all of these features! As noted below, features will often be different for spaces (sites without buildings) and for neighborhoods.

**BUILDINGS & LANDSCAPE**  
**Strengthening the resilience of the facility to ensure that it meets operational goals in all conditions.**

## Community Features

- Indoor and/or shaded outdoor space for the community to gather
- Extra bicycles
- Space for pets
- ADA accessible and fragrance free

## Green Building & Landscaping

- Low-waste structures and practices: composting & recycling systems and signage
- Energy efficiency features, including:
  - Light fixtures, adjustable & programmable thermostat, double-pane windows, Energy Star equipment, insulation, air sealing
- No on-site gas use (i.e. all-electric building)
- At least one electric vehicle charging station for the community to use
- Water-efficient appliances (clothes washer)
- Low-VOC paints
- Building is LEED-certified, including construction from low-toxic materials

## Infrastructure

- Air Conditioning and heating; able to serve as a cooling center for the immediate community during extreme heat days
- Adequate ventilation and air filtration systems for refuge during smoke days
- Limited shelter capacity
- Refrigeration for food and medicines during disasters
- Showers
- Community bathrooms
- Zero waste system, including composting and recycling
- Secure bike parking



## *Resilience Hubs Initiative*

### *Definitions and Recommendations*

- Outdoor lighting
- Retrofit for earthquake safety

#### **Water**

- Drought tolerant landscaping
- Rainwater catchment or other water storage system
- Water conservation systems: greywater, drip irrigation, faucet aerators or other water conservation infrastructure
- Low-flow toilets
- Composting toilets

#### **Food**

- Community garden with produce that can be shared with immediate community members, or partnership with a nearby community garden
  - greenhouse
  - garden tools
  - community composting
- Herb/medicinal garden
- Community kitchen
- Chicken coop
- Food forest

### **COMMUNITY OPERATIONS & PLANNING**

**Ensuring personnel, supplies and processes are in place to operate the facility in all three modes.**

#### **Emergency Preparedness**

- Site/community members trained in CERT and/or First Aid
- Regular meetings to discuss disaster preparedness
- Evacuation Plan
- Emergency supplies and resources for 72 hours after a disaster:
  - Sufficient food and water
  - Extra emergency supplies for community members: N95 masks, air filters, fans, air purifiers, tents, emergency go-bags
- Map of vulnerable neighbors, who will need help during sudden disasters

#### **Community Engagement & Site Assessments**

- Community visioning meetings
- Site assessment to determine both long-term goals and short-term needs



## *Resilience Hubs Initiative*

### *Definitions and Recommendations*

- Neighborhood asset mapping for assets and vulnerabilities
  - Printed map at the site that describes the resilience-based neighborhood assets
- Community asset mapping & surveys, to assess the skills and needs of the immediate community members

#### **Site Team**

- Site Team with at least 4-5 members who meet on a regular basis
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- System to manage projects and communicate with each other
- Translation and/or interpretation services when needed for community members
- Shared agreements about decision-making
- Fundraising team and plan
- Conflict resolution protocols and practices, including nonviolent communication practices
- Restorative justice programs and/or protocols detailing alternatives to calling the police
- Staff on site: Resiliency Coordinator who organizes regular events

#### **RESILIENT POWER**

**Ensuring reliable backup power to the facility during a hazard while also improving the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of operations in all three operating modes.**

- Solar or other onsite/community-owned renewable energy
- Backup power through a generator or battery
- Low-tech resilient power: solar lanterns, rocket stoves & flashlights

#### **PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES:**

**Offering additional services and programs that build relationships, promote community preparedness, and improve residents' health and well-being**

#### **Resilience-based education programming, could include:**

- Job training/job seeking resources
- Child care
- After school programming
- Fix-it clinics
- Immigrant & refugee services (including legal aid)
- Reentry support services



## *Resilience Hubs Initiative*

### *Definitions and Recommendations*

- Food growing/preserving
- Native edible and medicinal plants of the region
- Energy & water conservation
- Racial, social & disability justice workshops
- Anti-displacement advocacy and education

#### **Food**

- Systems for donating and sharing excess garden produce with community members
- Food distribution program for neighbors and community members
- Regular community events and skill shares about food growing
- Understanding the potential climate impacts and hazards of your bioregion, with an equity lens to disproportionately impacted communities

#### **Relationships and Social Cohesion**

- Relationships with local Indigenous tribes; understanding the history and current struggles of the local Indigenous tribes
  - Programs or support to give land back to local Indigenous tribes
- Support for Black, Indigenous and People of Color leadership
- Support for youth voices and leadership
- Providing labor, time, money to support any current demands for reparations, repatriation and self-determination for folks most impacted by the climate crisis
- Regular relationship-building with local community organizations, to collaborate on a regular basis
- Regular community events to build trust and community
  - Block parties or other social gatherings
  - Garden or other resilience-building work days
  - Skill shares
- Language interpretation
- Local hiring practices

#### **Trauma and Mental Health**

- Support acupuncture, massage and meditation classes both in non-emergency times and during disasters
- Understand the sources and impacts of trauma responses in the body
- Host regular climate grief workshops
- Deepen our capacity for presence, connection and action under pressure
- Learn, share and strengthen individual and collective somatic resilience practices
- Provide mental health & trauma resources for community members



*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**Ensuring the ability to communicate within and outside the service area year-around, especially during disruptions and throughout recovery**

**Emergency Preparedness**

- Ham radios on site, with site team trained on usage
- Disaster evacuation plan, including a community meeting place and plan for quickly leaving the community
- Community members signed up for emergency alerts and other disaster communications systems (such as Nixle and Zone Haven)
- Community bulletin board

**Mutual aid systems**

- Mutual Aid system, to provide support, safety and care to immediate community members
- Registered with recovers.org to set up city-wide mutual aid system
- Analog communication systems:
  - Neighborhood bulletin board
  - Phone tree, printed out

**Digital Communications**

- System for communicating with community members about resilience hubs activities, such as a listserv or newsletter

**Communications with Local Governmental Agencies**

- Set up meetings with government staff to introduce your site and resilience plan, and needed support.
- Set up communications plans and an agreement with city or county government to disseminate information about disasters and climate change during disasters and on a regular basis.



# *Recommendations for Resilience Spaces & Neighborhoods*

Resilience can be everywhere and anywhere! The following list includes examples of ways that organizers could transform a variety of sites into resilience spaces and neighborhoods.

## **Neighborhoods**

- Community caches of neighborhood supplies
- Affordable housing for lower-income residents
- Reduced rent for activists & organizers
- Phone trees and listservs to communicate about disaster response and resilience planning
- Neighborhood activities: block parties, crop swaps, potlucks and more

## **Community Gardens and Farms**

- Relationships with food banks and gleaners for produce donations
- Disaster preparedness and other resilience-based workshops
- Promotion of the space for community events

## **Businesses**

- Disaster preparedness workshops & presentation
- “Adopt” a nearby resilience hub or space and support the site with volunteers and financial resources

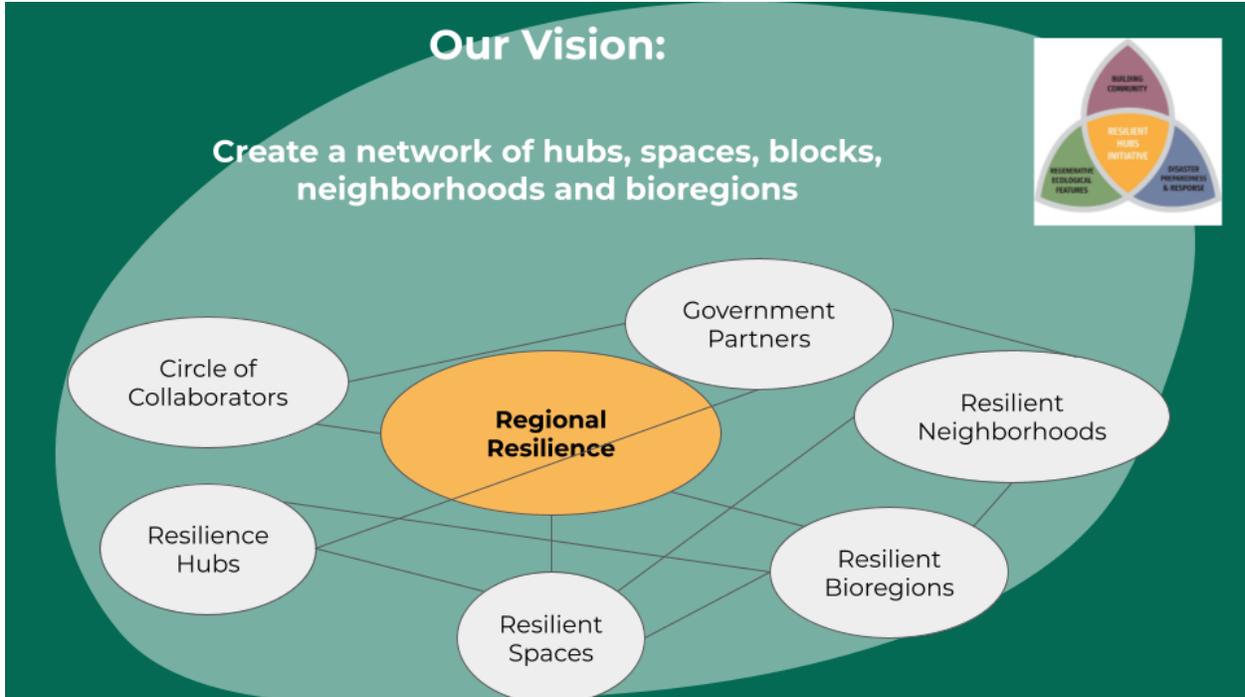
## **Intentional Communities: co-housing and eco-villages**

- Regular Open Houses, inviting community members to tour the space
- Relationships with nearby resilience hubs and spaces
- Reduced rent for activists & organizers



*Resilience Hubs Initiative  
Definitions and Recommendations*

# Moving Forward



Imagine a Resilience Hub in every neighborhood. Community gardens support disaster preparedness classes. Every community member has access to safe, affordable and dignified housing. Schools serve as learning labs for climate solutions and students learn about vulnerabilities, assets and resources in their local area.

*What would it take to manifest this vision?*





*Resilience Hubs Initiative*  
*Definitions and Recommendations*

*Our recommendations include:*

**Fund opportunities for sites to share resources, tools and support with each other**

- ❖ Support best online platforms to promote resource sharing, best practices and stories
- ❖ Encourage sites to build trust and relationships between each other by attend each other events or visiting each other's sites

**Fund and organize different types of training sessions**

- ❖ **Training Sessions by the specific type of site:** recreation centers, youth centers, senior centers, libraries, unhoused encampments, community gardens, schools, libraries, apartment complexes, co-housing/intentional communities, neighborhoods
- ❖ **Training sessions by bioregion:** Get different types of sites together in a specific city, county or bioregion, and organize a workshop to coordinate asset mapping, needs and offers.
- ❖ **Training Sessions for specific organizations:** Bigger chapter-based organizations could create their own customized training sessions for hubs, spaces and blocks
- ❖ **Introductory presentations about resilience hubs, spaces and blocks**

**Create accessible and justice-oriented funding streams to plan and implement resilience planning and projects**

- ❖ Create an intermediary fund that pools both private and public dollars, and redistributes the funds to resilience hubs, spaces and blocks equitably and easily.
- ❖ Prioritize funding for resilience sites led by and within Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities.

**Build deeper relationships between governmental agencies and community-based organizations.**

- ❖ Host regular office hours.
- ❖ Host training sessions for governmental agencies that include best practices in working with community groups.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for building trust and relationships through community events and workshops.

**Support both bioregional and regional collaboratives (such as the NorCal Resilience Network)**

- ❖ Map out organizations doing community resilience work, as well as existing resilience hubs, spaces and blocks.
- ❖ Organize regional convenings to strengthen relationships, skills and collaboration opportunities.
- ❖ Create cross-sector working groups, such as renewable energy ,food justice, conflict resolution and anti-oppression.