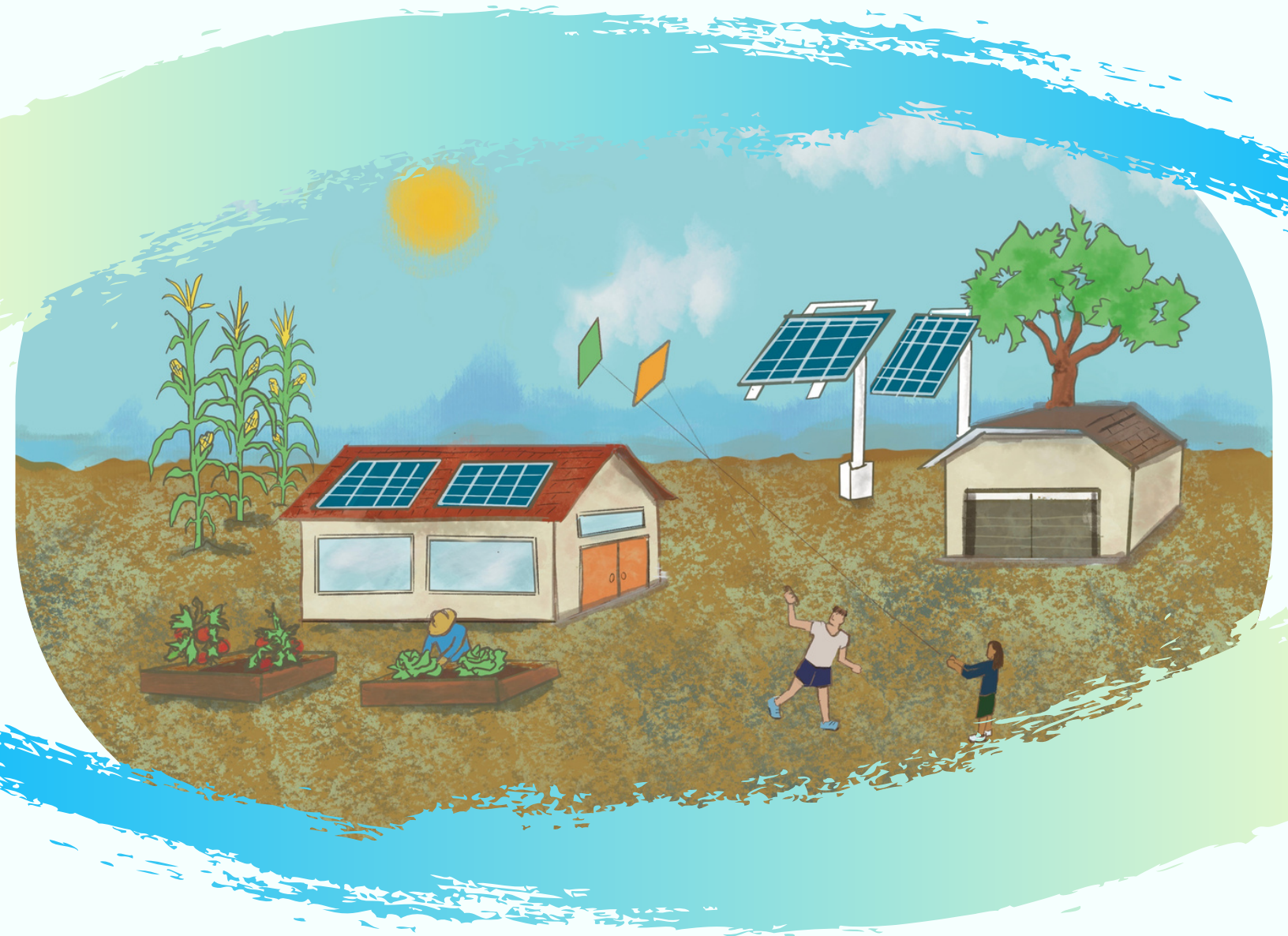


RESILIENCE HUBS IN OREGON

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GUIDEBOOK



Artwork by Blanca Gutierrez



**Rogue
Climate**
July 2022

WHO WE ARE

Rogue Climate is a grassroots organization with offices in Coos Bay and Phoenix, Oregon with a mission to empower Southern Oregon communities most impacted by climate change to win climate justice by organizing for clean energy, sustainable jobs, and a healthy environment. Rogue Climate works in both local efforts and statewide campaigns.

The Oregon Labor Day Fires of 2020 brought about the Almeda Fire, which wiped out a large portion of the low-income housing and small businesses in North Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, and South Medford. Many of the occupants of these homes were Latinx households who primarily spoke Spanish as well as the elderly and people living with disabilities. Rogue Climate alongside other community-based organizations and volunteers rallied together and organized emergency aid immediately after the fires through mutual aid centers and supply drop-offs. After this experience, Rogue Climate set out to investigate how this local area could not just survive, but rather thrive day to day as the impacts of climate change are here now.



Some of Rogue Climate Staff in June 2022 after a rafting trip on the Rogue River

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook intends to be an educational tool for learning about resilience hubs and beginning the process of planning for them. You can use this as a place to start your conversations and think about local resilience, or think about how your organization or business could support a resilience hub. This is a consolidated version of a longer piece of research Rogue Climate began conducting in the Fall of 2021.

Alone we know a little,
but together we know **A LOT**

Throughout this guide, there will be blue sections that prompt you to stop and reflect on your own experiences, and how you would participate in creating further resilience in your community.

RESILIENCE:

Of people – The power or ability to recover quickly from a setback, depression, illness, overwork or other adversity; buoyancy; elasticity.

HUB:

A center of activity or interest; a focal point.

A RESILIENCE HUB:

A place or group that has established relationships in the community, that utilizes their resources and/or physical infrastructure to create safe places dedicated to resilience, however the community sees fit.



WHAT IS A RESILIENCE HUB?

It can be a building or location that ideally has:

- ☐ Physical spaces to gather
- ☐ Local leadership
- ☐ Lots of foot traffic & community engagement
- ☐ Mental health services
- ☐ Help navigating community resources
- ☐ Ramps or other features to be accessible for elders or people with disabilities
- ☐ Child and family friendly spaces
- ☐ Radio, landline, or satellite communication abilities
- ☐ Information in various languages
- ☐ Green spaces
- ☐ Stockpile of supplies, such as water
- ☐ Friendly and familiar staff and/or volunteers
- ☐ First aid
- ☐ Food or food storage and preparation capacity
- ☐ Reliable internet & electricity
- ☐ Dynamic and portable services, especially in rural areas
- ☐ Accessible by various modes of transportation (public transportation, walking, biking)

Resilience projects are those that are rooted in the values of mutual aid – working together to build sustained networks between neighbors and communities. The purpose of an ideal and physical resilience hub is to uplift pre-existing leaders and resources within the community to strengthen parts of an ongoing and vast communal support system.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Rather, it is a project that is most successful when done communally, and creates an ongoing conversation about resilience and preparedness. There can be short term and long term goals, and success can be found in every step along the way.

There is no pre-set timeline, no normal team size, and no requirements to become a resilience hub.

A town or region-wide resilience framework attempts to create an established ecosystem of support for their communities, filled with various hubs that all work together to communicate and provide for the gaps that their communities experience. This may look different in urban versus rural communities, with rural communities often exploring mobile resilience services, like a trailer with solar & storage, or a food truck.

The opportunities for hubs are endless, and are all dependent on the needs and wants of the people it serves. For example one hub may be run by a service organization that already helps people navigate and enroll in programs, but they have installed a back-up battery, so people can come charge their phones even when there is a blackout. Another may have a community garden where they donate excess produce to the community for group meals.

The key is that they elevate localized values and skills and are able to enhance them for everyone's benefit.

EQUITY & LISTENING

Infrastructure investments are typically based on what will provide the greatest good and serve the most people, but this kind of utilitarian thinking and planning leaves crucial gaps and cannot create true community resilience.

Black, indigenous, people of color, people with disabilities, low income, and rural communities are often more susceptible to the challenges that climate change related chaos can cause.

There are many ways to get people involved in the planning of a resilience hub through conversations and gathering input.

- **Interviews:** These can be either one on one, or in a group.
- **Listening sessions:** These are events where a host has prepared questions and starts a conversation around specified areas of concern for local community members.
- **Surveys:** These can be done online or in person, with the option for respondents to remain anonymous.
 - Check out Rogue Climate's 2021 Community Resilience Survey on our website, at www.rogueclimate.org/resilience-hubs/.
- **Workshops:** These provide a hands-on opportunity for group collaboration and brainstorming.



Advice When Doing Community Outreach with an Equity Lens:

1. Make sure that the people who are most impacted are going to be included
2. Meet people where they're at, and make participating easy and accessible
3. Keep the process transparent and participatory, so everyone feels involved and not exploited for their time and/or emotional effort in conversations
4. In a group setting, create group agreements so everyone feels comfortable participating
5. Consider and acknowledge any relevant context or history that will be present within the conversation



WELLBEING IS A TYPE OF RESILIENCE

Keeping communities prepared, but not on edge, is a hard line to walk. Ultimately being resilient means feeling confident in our preparedness and care for one another. This will open up more freedom and possibilities in everyday life.

Beyond its usefulness during climate related disruptions, a resilience hub attempts to nourish the wellbeing of its community members by incorporating moments of shared joy, and even grief.

For example:

- A community garden can help ensure access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as connect people to nature and one another
- A playground can make families feel welcome and have fun
- A space to allow storytelling, and to learn from one another's journeys
- Free or low-cost mental health services to make self care accessible
- Places for communal learning and skills building

Where are some gathering places in your community that you associate with positive memories?

What kinds of celebrations, traditions, or gatherings are important to your city, town or region?

RELIABLE ENERGY = RESILIENCE

Energy Resilience:

The ability of energy systems to prepare for, withstand, and restore access to energy rapidly after unexpected disruptions.

Power shut offs and outages are dangerous for many reasons. These include, but are not limited to...

- Food or refrigerated medication spoiling
- Water purification systems turning off
- Increased potential for electrical shock from downed power lines
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Cell phone towers or other lines of communication being unavailable.

Diesel generators are often a common tool to help during power outages. However, solar panels and battery storage create a much more holistic solution to the challenges we're facing. Fossil fuels are associated with worse air quality and associated public health impacts, increased fire risk, and increased long term energy prices compared with renewable energy sources.

Increased resilience and renewable energy are undeniably interconnected.

Here are other types of equipment or structures that create energy resilience or efficiency:

1. Singular buildings with solar panels and battery storage
2. Weatherizing buildings or spaces to prevent air leakage and increase energy efficiency
3. Electric heating and cooling systems, such as ductless heat pumps
4. Distribution of back-up battery power for individual households or businesses
5. Generators that work off of solar, wind or water power (*Be aware of their specific limitations. For example, solar power doesn't work well in times of smoke*)

There are many examples of how to create energy resilience in hubs. The newest method is the creation of microgrids. These are locally operated and managed electricity systems that can keep lights on when the larger electrical grid has a blackout. Creating a microgrid involves utility and municipal conversations and involvement. Community members can help by advocating for more resilient energy systems where they live.



This diagram shows the different parts that could make up a microgrid. With every aspect being within the local community, the town has more control over their electricity and is less prone to dangerous power outages.

Where does reliable electricity matter to you the most? Why?

The average household spends 6% of their income on energy and electricity. How much do you spend?

Calculate it here: <https://bit.ly/energy-burden>

Oregon's Energy Sources (2020):

40.2% Natural Gas	8.4% Wind
19.1% Coal	6.9% Hydro
19.5% Nuclear	3.2% Solar



*Smoke in Southern Oregon, July 2021.
Picture from OPB.*

CLEAN AIR

ACCESS TO CLEAN AIR IS NOT GUARANTEED YEAR-ROUND FOR MANY REGIONS DUE TO WILDFIRES, INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION, AND/OR EXTREME HEAT.

Clean air quality is undeniably important for maintaining human health. The impacts of poor air quality are disproportionately felt by black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and low-income communities, particularly those afflicted with asthma, diabetes, or any immunodeficiencies -- all of which BIPOC communities are already proven to be at a higher risk for.

A resilience hub could help bring access to indoor clean air and protection outdoors to neighborhoods affected by smoke or air pollution through the following ways:

- Having an industrial smoke filtration device in a resilience hub
- Distributing residential sized smoke filtration devices
- Having access to free N95 masks
- In the long term, communities can work to pass local governance that creates codes around weatherization, which can protect indoor air quality

The effects of climate change can create additional dangers and complications for those who are the most vulnerable due to age, health, occupation, or other reason.

Wildfires in Oregon are an increasing cause of bad air quality. Know your area's wildfire risk using this tool: <https://bit.ly/OR-wildfire-risk>

Keep track of the smoke in your area using this live tool from the Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ): <https://bit.ly/OR-air-quality>

For reflection:

How can you ensure clean air for those who need it the most?
What does this look like?

WORKING TOGETHER ACROSS PARTNERSHIPS

To achieve the baseline, optional, and ideal planning goals for a resilience hub and network, it most likely will include collaboration across decision-making groups. This can look like collaboration, support and investments from local and state governments as well as other institutions or companies such as utility companies. The challenge becomes finding common ground to optimize achievement of shared goals and enable streamlined collaboration.

Intersecting values of safety, affordability, public health, and energy reliability are often a good place to start.



Local organizers working together to hang a mural in Phoenix titled -- "**Phoenix Rising**", done by artist Benjamin Swatez (not pictured).

The mural was painted on the side of a van that belonged to Rogue Climate, but burned in the Alameda fire.

Local Government: (city council, school boards, county commission, mayors). Municipalities can be helpful for gathering input and information when creating a resilience hub, and their collaboration can be crucial in the building stage, and to coordinate with emergency managers in times of disruptions.

Statewide Government: (statewide departments, state legislators). Legislation can be leveraged to open up more opportunities for community resilience. For example:

- In 2021, the Oregon State government passed the community-led Healthy Homes Bill. This law will help to improve the quality of housing for low income people and families. Having a drafty house creates increased risk from exposure to wildfire smoke and other air pollution, heat related illnesses, and more expensive energy bills.
- In California, there is a specific fund to invest in resilience hub projects.

Companies or Other Private Partnerships: (utility companies, libraries, philanthropy, and more).

It's important to note that often utility companies have access to energy related equipment, and have to be consulted if any part of the electricity will be connected to their grid.

Resilience requires flexibility – on an individual level, on a government level, even in financial and investment decisions. Legislation and policy work cannot solve every problem or predict every scenario that communities will face, so it's important to acknowledge and understand that all of this is a work in progress.

VIBRANT HAWAI‘I

An abundant reservoir of human, social, natural, and financial capital that we contribute to and draw upon.

HUBS IN ACTION

RESILIENCE HUBS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARE ALREADY AT WORK IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

Vibrant Hawai‘i is an organization that originally began as an informal resource and information sharing network throughout the island of Hawai‘i, and have since begun to expand their network to include physical locations. Now they have a location for a resilience hub in every district on the Big Island of Hawai‘i.

They began this work by meeting with over 30 community leaders and engaging with the existing social networks to understand the gaps that existed and what services or resources were missing or overlooked. They led listening sessions with community members all over the island, and then began to form a council to form their strategic direction. Instead of having communities come to the organization and fit into a pre-designed template, they are prepared with a spectrum of resources and options that can help spark local imagination to decide where they wish to direct their capacity.

When communities join this resource-sharing network, they get access to Vibrant Hawai‘i’s community partners and can get connected to technical assistance with the help of staff members. They collaborate with legislators and elected representatives when necessary, but focus on their mission at hand – to put power back in the hands of their community members.

By allowing individuals and communities to engage and learn with each other in a community, staff members of Vibrant Hawai‘i are able to step back as much as possible and remain focused on the big picture. The approach of Vibrant Hawai‘i is centered on asset based community development, and is sure to ask communities first and foremost what assets, skills, resources, or spaces they can contribute, and the conversations around investing in resilience never center around fixing a problem.

The long term goal of Vibrant Hawai‘i is for every resilience hub in their network to be economically sound and self-sustaining, and they do this through workforce development and enrichment.



Photo from a press release after the conclusion of the Vibrant Hawai‘i Resilience Hubs 2.0 initiative, in which there were 20 hubs participating

MAINTENANCE OF THE HUB:

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

USDN MODES OF RESILIENCE:

Everyday (non-disruption)	All infrastructure and services are available No major disruptions are present Primary focus is on community services, programming and relationship building
Disruption	Disruptions to normal everyday function for any duration. Disruptions can include natural disasters, health-disasters (pandemic) and human-influenced disruptions Disruption can vary from minutes to months or years.
(Short Term)	Related to shocks or events that hit relatively quick
(Long Term)	Related to disruptions that last long and impact "everyday mode", such as global pandemic or war
Recovery	Process of returning to everyday mode The aftermath of the disruption during which the community works to restore normal or better conditions Can last days to years

Active involvement in the maintenance of a hub is important, but even more important is a two-way service where participants feel and experience the fruits of their labor. An asset based support system with open membership creates endless opportunities for participation and collaboration within a community. The types of community assets can be broken up into workable pieces:

1. **Financial resources**
2. **Capital assets**
3. **Skills**
4. **Land ownership**
5. **Social relationships**
6. **Emotional care**
7. **A trained, or trainable, workforce**

For a resilience hub to operate, personnel and processes must be in place for the hub to function year-round as well as during disruption and recovery. This includes:

- **Site leadership**
- **Assigned task management**
- **Funding, or a plan for eventual economic independence**
- **Opportunities for community service**



RECOVERY THAT BUILDS RESILIENCE: JACKSON COUNTY, OR



Rogue Climate's interest in resilience hubs came out of observations of strengths and gaps that came to light during the response after the Almeda Fire in 2020, and the experiences during the ongoing recovery efforts in Jackson County as a whole.

The aspects laid out in the guidebook are some of the most important considerations that Rogue Climate and other community organizations are leading with during the recovery efforts.

Following the fire, there were mutual aid sites in Phoenix and Talent that were created in order to provide resources and guidance, and also a place to gather and connect with peers. There were often toiletries, clothing, and hot meals provided. **Creating resilience hubs in Jackson County would be a way to make these kinds of emotional, social, and physical support systems a permanent part of living in the Rogue Valley.**

The disproportionate effects of the Almeda fire on low income and communities of color highlighted the inequitable landscape that existed in the Rogue Valley. For example, with the large Latinx population in the Rogue Valley, ensuring access to bilingual resources became increasingly important. Furthermore, one of the biggest areas of concern post fire is building affordable and sustainable housing. **Manufactured homes comprised of approximately 1 in 3 of the structures that were either lost or damaged during the Almeda fire.**

In order to start thinking about resilience hubs, Rogue Climate conducted a community resilience survey in the fall of 2021. The purpose of this was to get initial perspectives of safety and resilience within the community, gauge interest in resilience-hubs-type spaces, get recommendations on locations, and discover what types of resources would be the most helpful. There are a lot of great resources in the Rogue Valley, and creating resilience hubs would be a way to connect them together and coordinate community efforts.

Check out Rogue Climate's 2021 Community Resilience Survey at www.rogueclimate.org/resilience-hubs/

"Our community needs a central place for resilience that probably does not currently exist... Somewhere that people hang out to learn and connect as well as support during an emergency."

– A survey respondent from Jackson County

When the Talent/Phoenix mutual aid sites closed in the summer of 2021, Rogue Action Center, Rogue Climate, Rogue Food Unites and other partners teamed up to host pop-up resource fairs every two weeks. The locations of the pop-ups alternated between FEMA parks throughout the county and Talent Town Hall. These resource fairs for fire survivors in need were facilitated with the purchase of an industrial sized truck that could store diapers, food, clothing, toiletries, and more.



And a year later, these pop-up events have blossomed into full resource fairs with Disaster Case Managers present, the local library system giving out free books, free food from local food trucks, music and kid friendly activities, tents filled with local organizations providing various resources, and a palpable joy felt in the atmosphere.

The shift towards being more celebratory and incorporating joy into these pop-up events was a deliberate one, and demonstrates how joy and hardship can and do coexist in disaster affected areas.

Rogue Climate has been an advocate of moving away from an energy system reliant on fossil fuels since its founding in 2013. Renewable energy in the form of solar and wind has proven to be the most beneficial energy systems to local communities in terms of long term economic benefits and ecological preservation. Any resilience hubs should attempt to make their energy systems off of the utility grid by incorporating solar energy and battery storage. This will allow them to serve communities during an outage or disruption, and also save money on electricity.



With the increased presence of smoke in the Rogue Valley in the past decade, many local organizations are increasingly concerned about air quality during the summer months. Many spent the spring building up a cache of air filtration units that they could loan out, or have been planning to use different public spaces as clean air shelters. Especially in typical low income housing options, indoor air quality is something that is hard to maintain and regulate. With many BIPOC and low income communities already proven to be more vulnerable to respiratory illnesses, attention to equitable access to clean air is very important for overall community health.



Ultimately, Jackson County is still far off from returning to even what was once considered “normal” before the fire, but there has been a deliberate effort to use the rebuild as an opportunity to increase equity in the region and create a new normal.

Many resilience hub models around the country deliberately invest in workforce development that can help maintain and run the hubs, while building up the local economy. Hubs could provide various sorts of training, certifications, or educational opportunities. **Resilience hubs create opportunities to work together to identify the challenges the community faces, and then find solutions together.**



CREATING YOUR HUB: PART 1

Community assets are things, places, values, tools, and even people that improve the quality of community life. Ideally, a resilience hub starts by building on strengths that are already there, and then gradually expanding to fill gaps that arise.

First, take a few moments to consider what are some assets to your community as a whole.

What do people value? What is innately valuable or unique about the area? What feels within your grasp or control?

A good place to start can be choosing a few relevant categories. For example,

- *Physical and natural resources; skills and knowledge; capital; personal networks; social relationships ... etc.*

Now think just about yourself, group or organization.

What makes you unique? What do you bring to the table? What do you have the power to influence? How can you label and categorize your strengths? What or who helps you function or be successful on a day to day basis? How many people could you realistically provide services for?

CREATING YOUR HUB: PART 2

While it's great to think about all of the possibilities and areas to explore, it's also important to think about capacity and what is sustainable for an organization or group to take on. By planning for gradual steps with a greater end goal in mind, you can ensure progress without burnout.

Dreaming big is always encouraged, but a dream with a plan will someday become a reality.

The table below attempts to guide you towards making those decisions about the short and long term, the reasonable and maybe unrealistic.

<p>Baseline:</p> <p>What are some elements that you think would transform a location into a ‘resilience hub’?</p>	<p><i>ex: accessibility for people with disabilities, air filtration ...</i></p>
<p>Optional:</p> <p>What new elements would a site need in order to better meet community needs all the time, and not just in an emergency scenario?</p>	<p><i>ex: bilingual resources, support from a local foodbank, job training ...</i></p>
<p>Ideal:</p> <p>If there was no limit to the financial, community, and resource support, what would this location have?</p>	<p><i>ex: solar panels and battery storage, community garden, ability to shelter people...</i></p>

The process will be gradual, and a resilience hub is not intended to be a resource for, or solve, every problem that arises. A network of locations all leveraging their own strengths towards a shared common goal is what will make communities most resilient towards the impacts of climate change and other disruptions.

Alone a hub can accomplish a little, but within a network, it can accomplish a lot.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE

All of Rogue Climate's work does not intend to make us experts – rather, it attempts to open and help guide conversations within communities and people, and illustrate the importance of grassroots community building efforts.

Rogue Climate has been honored to learn from the wisdom of individuals and groups who are already well developed on their journeys towards greater resilience. We look forward to a future that embraces even more of these efforts throughout Oregon.

This project would not have been possible without the support of Rogue Climate staff and our partners, collaborators, and leaders at:

- Rogue Action Center
- The City of Talent
- Vibrant Hawai'i
- Together New Orleans
- Rebuild Paradise
- Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) AmeriCorps Program
- The University of Oregon, Institute for Policy Research and Engagement (IPRE)
- Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN)
- Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA)
- Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)



Rogue Climate, Rogue Action Center, & SO Health-E Staff outside of the Fire Relief Center, a mutual aid site in Phoenix OR following the Almeda fire.

