



# 5 winning strategies for developing strong Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) applications

Top recommendations from the Local Infrastructure Hub, a national program to ensure all cities and towns can access funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

## #1 Focus on equity.

Equity will be at the core of competitive [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#) applications. Like with many Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs, FEMA is focused on leveraging BRIC to achieve its [Justice40 goal](#), which aims to ensure that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments flow to communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

Your city's or town's first step must be to familiarize yourself with the Justice 40 [criteria](#) and the BRIC [technical](#) and [qualitative](#) criteria – and center equity right from the start.

## #2 Take advantage of FEMA's technical assistance – and leverage state and outside resources.

The first round of BRIC program funding showed what many disaster survivors already knew: Higher capacity communities were more likely to receive funding. As a result, FEMA is increasing the amount of [direct technical assistance](#) it will provide and streamlining the request process. This assistance can provide holistic planning help at the earliest stages and throughout the grant lifecycle. FEMA will also provide underserved communities with assistance in developing benefit-cost analyses.

Additionally, your city or town should coordinate early and often with state agency leaders. States and territories are officially the primary BRIC grant applicants. It's their role to guide communities in accessing funding, so it's key to work with them from the beginning.

## #3 Develop “nature-based” solutions for climate resilience.

Strong BRIC proposals will leverage nature-based solutions to achieve a project's goals. [Nature-based solutions](#) are “sustainable planning, design, environmental management and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience,” according to FEMA. These solutions offer significant and diverse benefits – and often at a lower cost than more traditional infrastructure.

Before you start the application process, read FEMA's [nature-based solutions guidance](#) – then develop appropriate and unique solutions to ensure your proposal is competitive.

## #4 Data is critical. But it has to be local data.

Large-scale databases like the [National Risk Index](#) aren't enough for local planning. Consider partnering with local experts – such as universities, extension services, science groups, and residents with lived experience of local changes – to truly understand how projects will impact the people, communities, built environment, and priorities in your city or town. [State](#) and [FEMA regional offices](#) can also help you identify local data on past flood damages, repeatedly flooded homes, and other information. For example, some states host their own data dashboards and other helpful resources, so make sure to build relationships with them.

Local data is key to strong BRIC applications – and you can't only get that from a national database.

## #5 Engage the community!

Community engagement should be based on a [commitment to long-term relationship building](#) – starting from identifying and supporting community priorities through the planning, project ideation and implementation phases. Effective community engagement allows you to better understand historic injustices, uplift the people who will be most affected by a proposal – or those who have been most burdened by inequities – and offer impacted communities the opportunity to play a key role in a project's design, implementation, and outcome.

**Application deadlines vary by state. Find your state's deadlines [here](#).**