

# Investing in Resilient Communities

The Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), provides funding directly to states for preventive investments in natural disaster resilience, including hazard mitigation planning and projects that will reduce the risk of damage in the event of a natural disaster. Non-state entities apply for BRIC funding as subapplicants by submitting applications to their state hazard mitigation officers.

On October 10, 2023 the Local Infrastructure Hub hosted a webinar to discuss the best practices for building resilient infrastructure in the face of climate change and extreme weather events. We were joined by **Derrick Hiebert, Assistant Administrator for Hazard Mitigation at FEMA; Mayor Van R. Johnson of Savannah, GA; Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Forester Jenn Cairo of Portland, OR; Elaine Forbes, Executive Director for the Port of San Francisco, CA; and Cynthia McCoy, Federal Engagement Director, Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN).**

## Key Insights Shared During the Webinar

- **Building up equity by preventing flooding.** Savannah highlighted the increase they've experienced, where 70% of their severe weather events have occurred since just 2015 (in a city that is 290 years old) and the impact an improved water canal will have on their disadvantaged and minority communities.
- **Integrating BRIC into long-term strategy building.** In 2020, Portland developed a 3-year, multi-barrow climate emergency work plan that identified key actions to reduce decarbonization and improve resiliency goals. Within the plan, one of the top priorities is growing the urban tree canopy to reduce the impacts of heat islands, improve air quality, and mitigate flooding during extreme rainfall. Because of Portland's long term climate management planning, they were able to receive BRIC funding for a high-priority project.
- **Highlighting evidence on how nature-based solutions can be used to combat extreme heat.** As one of the first cities to receive BRIC funding for a nature-based project that will combat extreme heat, Portland identified how they made the case for their project using evidence-based recounts of prior successful projects. The Free Street Tree program (planting and watering trees during their establishment period along streets) and the Free Yard Tree giveaway (distributing free trees for Portland resident yards) are two successful projects that Portland used as framework for their BRIC application—they scaled up the project and showed that it was shovel ready.
- **Bolstering partnerships and engagement to use evidence.** San Francisco highlighted their engagement with residents seeking support for climate resilient infrastructure and their partnerships with the Senator, the Speaker, and the Army Corps of Engineers to run new flood studies and nature-based assessments to address future conditions using the best science.

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## Resources Shared During the Webinar and in Discussion

- [5 Winning Strategies for BRIC Grant Applications](#)
- [Flood Mitigation Funding Opportunities for State and Local Governments](#)
- Hoboken, New Jersey [ResilienCity Park Case Story](#)
- American Forests' [resources](#) on tree equity scores and tree planting resources
- Information about the [SF Seawall Project](#)

## Local Infrastructure Hub Bootcamp Materials

With a mix of webinars, practical tools, and templates, the Grant Application Bootcamp materials are designed to provide an overview of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) opportunity, guide you through the application process, and present actionable steps that can be taken to submit a strong application.

These materials were prepared as part of the Local Infrastructure Hub's Fall 2022 Grant Application bootcamps. They include presentations from BRIC Grant Bootcamp webinars with information on how to apply for federal funds and relevant tools and templates that can be applied to your grant application. The materials focus on how to build a community engagement plan, how to leverage community assets, how to effectively incorporate data into the grant application process, and how to construct a budget and a strong grant narrative.

- [BRIC Grant Summary](#)
- [BRIC Grant Application Bootcamp materials](#)
- **BRIC Targeted Assistance Bootcamp:** If you need help getting over the finish line with your BRIC or FMA application, reach out to Justin Edwards at [jedwards@nlc.org](mailto:jedwards@nlc.org) to participate in a Local Infrastructure Hub targeted assistance bootcamp