Report on Resiliency Hub Development

Report on Resiliency Hub Development in Ypsi

Thriving Communities Grant Pilot Program

Date: July 15, 2026



Cobb Oven at MESS House 2026

1. Executive Summary

It's tough to have a conversation about climate change that doesn't begin with The Bad—record-breaking heat waves, severe storms, and escalating disasters. These threats are real, and against a backdrop of existing inequity, climate change hits communities of color and low-income communities first and worst. But we have to continue to move the conversation forward. We need to talk about The Good.

The Good lies in innovative community-based solutions that go beyond simply rebuilding after a climate disaster strikes and focus on what neighborhoods need to thrive in the long run. This report synthesizes the activities, outcomes, and lessons learned from the Resiliency Hub pilot projects in Ypsilanti, Michigan funded by the Thriving Communities Grant through the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ). Resilience hubs are trusted, locally managed neighborhood centers that serve communities year-round and provide unique programs designed to fit the physical and social needs of neighborhoods. They serve as a piece of a larger climate resilient ecosystem that can address gaps in emergency management and strengthen community preparedness.

The pilot program, which included partners such as Influence Ypsi, MESS House/MANY, Willow Run Acres, Youth Arts Alliance, and Chidester Community Garden, demonstrated that the resiliency hub model is highly effective when it is community-driven and flexible. Social connectedness is a powerful indicator for overall well-being and a force for climate resilience; resilience hubs can help forge this connectedness which can improve local resilience in the face of increasing climate disasters. Key successes include the deployment of emergency resources like solar refrigeration, the establishment of community food production and composting systems, and the advancement of environmental justice (EJ) through grassroots advocacy and data-driven policy work.

The project proved that tangible climate action is most effective when it addresses immediate community needs—such as food security and extreme weather relief—while simultaneously building long-term capacity through education, coalition-building, and infrastructure development. The central recommendation is to formalize and expand this network, focusing on sustainable funding, a shared resource map, and deepening partnerships with the food service industry to scale a successful food rescue pilot.

Building resilience requires an upfront investment in spaces that promote a community's well-being before people have to evacuate or need resources. They

should be spaces where people want and choose to spend their time because they offer resources and programs informed by the community. Resilience is built before disaster, not born out of it.



Wet Meadow Project 2026

2. Introduction: Ypsilanti's Context and the Need for Resilience Hubs

Climate Change and Other Challenges Coming to Southeast Michigan

Climate change is exacerbating the frequency and severity of extreme weather events that disrupt lives and the functioning of society. In Southeast Michigan, rising temperatures with the potential for deadly heat waves during the summer present a growing threat. By the end of this century, summer temperatures in Michigan are predicted to be the same as present-day summer temperatures in Arkansas. Beyond warming, possible impacts include intense flooding, more extreme precipitation events,

and shortened seasons for recreational activities. The projected migration caused by climate change impacts may also necessitate increased housing development that, if poorly planned and built, could diminish natural buffers against these effects.

These environmental threats are compounded by several existing insecurities in Ypsilanti, including water unaffordability for low-income populations amid deteriorating infrastructure, food inaccessibility, a lack of reliable and affordable energy amid rising rates, lack of economic opportunity & job stagnation, and rising rental housing rates & insecurity. External shocks and stressors are particularly disruptive to historically marginalized populations that typically have reduced access to affordable electricity, resilient housing, accessible internet, and most government-provided services. [citation:Resilience_Framework]

Ypsilanti's Demographic Context

The need for proactive, community-centered solutions is clear. A 2023 needs assessment of Washtenaw County residents identified pressing issues such as the need for affordable housing (38%), transportation (23%), and economic opportunity (45%) as major challenges. However, it also highlighted the community's greatest assets: a robust network of nonprofits (21%), an engaged and concerned populace (21%), and a wealth of intellectual capital (18%). This combination of need and existing strength makes the model of a community-driven Resilience Hub not only viable but essential. [citation:Community_Needs_Assessment]

Ypsilanti's demographic profile underscores the urgency and importance of this work. The city comprises several census block groups, which are demographically similar areas containing between 600 and 3,000 people each. An analysis using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's EJSCREEN tool identified six block groups in Ypsilanti that were consistently within the highest clustered percentiles of exposure for environmental indicators, meaning these neighborhoods were the most vulnerable to local environmental hazards due to both socioeconomic and environmental factors. These areas, highlighted in Figure 1, were prioritized for the development of resilience hubs.

Local Policy Opportunities & Resident Feedback

A consistent theme emerging from both community canvassing and partner implementation is that local policies must evolve to reflect how residents actually live and organize. Residents and Resiliency Hub partners agree that ordinances should be

updated to align with on-the-ground behavior, reducing unnecessary friction and unlocking greater community resilience.

For example, during survey canvassing, multiple residents voiced concerns about Ypsilanti's chicken ordinance, which caps flocks at four per household. Residents pointed out that four chickens do not produce enough eggs for a typical family, leading many to keep six or eight birds in practice. Others noted that because hatcheries sell chicks in minimum orders of three, losing a single bird from a legal flock forces residents to choose between breaking the ordinance or forgoing replacement stock. The clear policy recommendation from the community is to raise the limit to six or eight chickens per household.

Stormwater management emerged as another local policy gap. One resident shared that he actively diverts significant stormwater from the sewer system and asked whether the city could offer rebates for residents who implement on-site diversion measures. He noted that such incentives would not only reward individual action but also help mitigate neighborhood flooding as neighborhoods experience more frequent and severe weather events.

Implementation barriers also surfaced through the experience of the MANY/MESS House eco-survival group. During their natural-materials build on S. Adams St., the group encountered city building code issues that complicated their plans. Additionally, a partner recalled that city ordinance language around community gardens and composting posed further challenges for the MESS House's work. These friction points highlight how existing codes—often designed for conventional construction and land use—can inadvertently stifle the very grassroots sustainability projects that resiliency hubs seek to foster.

Taken together, these anecdotes underscore a clear directive: for resiliency hubs to thrive in Ypsilanti, local policy must become more responsive, flexible, and reflective of the adaptive behaviors residents are already adopting.

Figure 1: Areas of Priority by Most Vulnerable Block Group in Ypsilanti



FIGURE 1: AREAS OF PRIORITY BY MOST VULNERABLE BLOCK GROUP IN YPSILANTI

What is a Community Resilience Hub?

A powerful example of building The Good are community resilience hubs. The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) defines resilience hubs as "community-serving facilities augmented to support residents, coordinate communication, distribute resources, and reduce carbon pollution while enhancing quality of life". USDN has identified five Foundational Areas that build community resilience from a holistic approach: Services and programs, Communications, Building and landscape, Power, and Facility operations.

Resilience hubs generally have five key components:

- Community desire and support: Ensuring community leaders and organizations are involved from the beginning is crucial; a resilience hub can only be effective if community members are actively involved and supportive [citation:Resilience_Framework].
- Physical infrastructure/trusted building: An existing well-used and trusted site is crucial, considering elements such as building condition, ability to provide cooling and heating, clean air, and ADA accessibility. Community members

identified trusted locations as critical—places where people would already go for information and resources [citation:Resilience_Framework].

- Resources to meet community needs during extreme events: Hubs should be equipped with food, refrigeration, basic medical supplies, and other emergency supplies.
- Energy systems: Most hubs should be able to respond to an outage of 72 hours, with sufficient renewable energy sources, backup generators, and battery storage.
- Community uses: Hubs should operate as community-centered spaces during non-emergencies—hosting educational events, access to health services, job trainings, and more.

Resilience hubs serve communities in three operating conditions: normal, disruption, and recovery. The distinction between community resilience hubs and emergency shelters is critical: they are not solely emergency shelters—they are also everyday community centers.



3. A Timeline of Resilience Hub Work in Ypsilanti and the Region

The Resiliency Hub work in Ypsilanti builds upon a rich foundation of community organizing, academic research, and municipal planning. Below is a timeline of key developments:

Year	Milestone	Description
2019	USDN Resilience Hub Guidance	The Urban Sustainability Directors Network publishes its "Guide to Developing Resilience Hubs," establishing the foundational framework for hub development across the country [citation:Resilience_Framework].
2020	Ann Arbor's First Resilience Hub	Ann Arbor celebrates the launch of the city's first solar-powered "resilience hub," demonstrating the model's viability in Washtenaw County. The hub featured solar energy and storage systems costing around $70,000 [citation:Resilience_Framework].
2020	Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission Engagement	The Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission begins actively exploring resilience hubs, working with University of Michigan students to develop a framework for implementation [citation:Resilience_Framework].

2020-2021	UM SEAS Framework Development	A University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS) team develops "A Framework for Implementing Resilience Hubs in Ypsilanti, Michigan." The report identifies six priority block groups, creates survey instruments and interview protocols, and identifies potential funding sources [citation:Resilience_Framework] .
2021	SEAS Project Transition	The initial SEAS project team transitions the work to the next group of graduate students, who begin data collection and implementation efforts toward establishing a physical resilience hub [citation:Resilience_Framework] .
2021	YCS Resiliency Center Established	Ypsilanti Community Schools establishes the YCS Resiliency Center, a program supporting students experiencing homelessness and housing instability. The center works to identify students and families in need and connect them with wraparound services, including transportation, food, and mental health support. *[Link: https://www.ycschools.us/for-parents/resiliency-center-and-homeless-youth-program-information/]*

2025	YCS Resiliency Center Expansion	The YCS Resiliency Center continues its work, helping students and families start the school year with essential support. The center coordinates with community partners to ensure students have access to resources like clothing, food, and school supplies. *[Link: https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2025-08-28/ycs-resiliency-center-helps-support-students-starting-their-year]*
2025	Resiliency Hub Pilot Launched	ICPJ, in partnership with MANY/MESS House, Influence Ypsi, Willow Run Acres, Youth Arts Alliance, and Chidester Community Garden, launches the Resiliency Hub pilot program funded by the Thriving Communities Grant.
2025-2026	MESS House Pilots	MESS House pilots a community solar fridge, providing 450 cold water bottles during a dangerous heat period. The hub also hosts community cobb oven construction and a Wet Meadow installation with the Huron River Watershed Council.
2025-2026	Influence Ypsi Scales Composting	Influence Ypsi expands curbside composting services using an electric trike and launches vermicomposting with new equipment.

2026	ICPJ TCGM Milestones	ICPJ completes TCGM milestones including community engagement, pilot launches, resource map design, and skill-building workshops. A grant period extension through June 30, 2026, allows for completion of final milestones [citation:TCGM_Q4].
2026	Graham Sustainability Scholars Project	ICPJ partners with The University of Michigan Graham Sustainability Scholars Project to continue the work for Resiliency Hub Development in Ypsilanti



Influence Ypsi curbside compost program 2026

4. Pilot Project Overview: Lessons Learned from Partner Organizations

The pilot projects offered a diverse range of approaches to building resilience. By synthesizing the experiences of the TCG partners, we can identify key success factors and best practices for the future.

Key Partner Highlights

Influence Ypsi: Scaling Community Composting

Influence Ypsi significantly increased their capacity to process community compost, scaling their operation to include vermicomposting, making it more accessible to residents. The acquisition of an electric trike further reduced their carbon footprint and expanded their curbside composting service area.

This effort directly addresses resident concerns regarding access to local, affordable food, a key issue identified in the county's community health assessment. Furthermore, the expansion of Influence Ypsi's service area via e-trike speaks to the need for non-motorized, greener, and improved transportation options.

Key Lesson: Investment in appropriate, eco-friendly equipment can directly scale a community service, expanding its reach and impact. This aligns with the mobility-centered approach to resilience hubs, which emphasizes integrating clean mobility options such as electric bikes and carsharing as part of the hub's program design.

Partner Statement: *"The resiliency hub has helped us significantly increase our capacity to compost and process the compost for community use. We will soon be able to vermicompost which is a method of composting that can be more accessible for community members to participate in. Finally, the electric trike has given us another vehicle for composting that is eco-friendly which helps us to reduce our carbon footprint in facilitating curbside composting services. This has helped us greatly in expanding our services to other parts of Ypsilanti."*



Influence Ypsi e-trike 2026

MESS House/MANY: Crisis Response and Community Gathering

MESS House successfully piloted a community solar fridge, distributing approximately 450 cold water bottles during a dangerous heat period, directly addressing a life-threatening hazard in the community. They also leveraged the funding to support a major community engagement project—the installation of a Wet Meadow with the Huron River Watershed Council—and advanced the physical MESS House project with a community cobb oven.

The MESS House is a direct response to the community's need for a trusted, accessible space for social connection and emergency support. Research on resilience hubs in Ypsilanti found that residents value "trusted locations and spaces" for coordinating resource distribution and highlighted the need for psychological support systems during crises [citation:Resilience_Hub_Framework]. The MESS House, by providing a year-round gathering place with amenities like a community cobb oven and a solar

fridge, builds the "social connectedness" that is a powerful indicator for overall well-being and climate resilience.

Key Lesson: Resiliency Hubs are most effective when they serve dual purposes, acting as both an emergency response center (cooling station) and a year-round community gathering space for education and food production. The MESS House demonstrates the principle that hubs with clean, solar energy with battery backup can support residents during disruptions.

Partner Statement: *"Participating in the Resiliency Hub allowed the MANY/MESS to further our community climate crisis response projects that financial restrictions prevented us from doing otherwise. For example, we were able to pilot a community solar fridge, which provided ~450 cold water bottles to underserved members of the community during a dangerous heat period. We also were able to launch a collaborative project with the Huron River Watershed Council to install a Wet Meadow in Riverside Park, drawing in ~100 volunteers over the course of three work days. Finally, Resiliency Hub resources allowed us to make significant progress on developing the MESS House, an ongoing project to provide a third space to Southside Ypsi that includes a community garden and gathering space."*





Riverside Park Wet Meadow project 2026

Willow Run Acres: Vermiculture and Food Production

Willow Run Acres focused on expanding composting capacity and community gardening operations through vermiculture, conducting compost training. Emergency preparedness became a priority following recent severe storms in the area, creating an opportunity to engage the community on emergency planning.

Key Lesson: Vermicomposting and food production infrastructure can create accessible, scalable systems for community engagement and food security. This aligns with the principle that hubs should integrate multiple services, including food access, health, energy, and emergency communication, within a single accessible site.





Willow Run Acres 2026

Youth Arts Alliance and **Chidester Community Garden**

These partners underscore the importance of integrating youth development, local food production, and accessible green space into the resilience framework. Accessible community gardens and youth programs build food security, community cohesion, and intergenerational knowledge transfer, which are foundational to long-term community resilience.

Key Lesson: Resilience work must be intergenerational and culturally relevant to build lasting community capacity.



Wet Meadow Project 2026

5. Synthesized Lessons Learned

5.1 Flexibility is Essential

Grant-funded projects that allow for flexibility are better able to respond to emergent community needs. The ability to use funds for unexpected infrastructure needs (like the solar fridge at MESS House) or for community engagement events (like the Wet Meadow planting) maximizes the impact of the funding. Emergency preparedness became a priority following recent severe storms and tornados in the area, demonstrating how the hub model can adapt to emerging community concerns. This reflects the three operating modes of hubs—normal, disruption, and recovery—and the need for hubs to switch between modes to meet community needs.

5.2 Co-Design is a Cornerstone

Projects co-created with community members are more likely to be embraced, utilized, and sustained. The pilots confirm that community ownership is crucial for success. ICPJ's Resiliency Hub Network Organizer worked with partners to hold meetings and conducted deep canvassing door-to-door at senior residential homes and in neighborhoods to ensure community voice was centered in Resiliency Hub survey work. This aligns with research showing that genuine community participation in hub governance and design is a core functional principle of effective hub networks.

This deep engagement is crucial because it respects the local knowledge that exists in the community. As one Ypsilanti resident noted, *"I think people are resilient and most of the people are kind. So they would help their neighbor. So, between the tenacity and resilience and the caring about your neighbors, I think that encompasses most of what would be done"*. By co-designing hubs that leverage this neighborly spirit and trust, we are not imposing a solution but rather reinforcing and empowering community bonds that are already present.

5.3 Capacity Building is a Primary Output

The grants were not just for projects but for capacity. The ability to hire staff, invest in equipment (composters, solar fridges, e-trikes), and build infrastructure (cobb ovens, gardens) fundamentally strengthens the long-term operational capacity of these community anchors.

5.4 Integration of EJ Principles is Critical

The work is most impactful when it integrates environmental justice at the core. As highlighted by the work of the Caucus on Consumption, Waste, and the Climate Crisis (CWCC), a focus on food waste (methane reduction) and zero-waste advocacy addresses the disproportionate environmental burdens placed on frontline communities. Emerging discussions on clear-cutting trees in the community and the opportunity to explain impacts on stormwater and flooding from loss of trees, demonstrating how the hub work connects to broader environmental justice issues.

5.5 Transportation and Mobility Must Be Integrated

A critical finding from resilience hub research is that transportation is currently not integrated in hub placement, design, or planning. The pilots demonstrate the importance of considering how communities will access these spaces. Influence Ypsi's e-trike and the central location of MESS House are initial steps in addressing this gap. Research shows that walking is the preferred mode choice to reach a resilience hub for car-less individuals, and transit connections are essential for ensuring underserved groups can access hubs. Equitable physical and cultural access to hubs must be a throughline.



Wet Meadow Project 2026

6. Implementation Plan for a Regional Resilience Network

Based on the pilot results and best practices from the field, the following plan is recommended for scaling the Resiliency Hub network.

Phase 1: Formalize and Expand the Network (6-12 Months)

Establish a Governance Structure
Formalize a network governance structure that includes representatives from the pilot partners, the City of Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, and other key stakeholders.

Create a Centralized Resource Map
Develop an interactive, publicly accessible digital map of resources (see Section 8).

Secure Sustainable Funding
Develop a diversified funding strategy beyond the initial grant. As the City of Ann Arbor has demonstrated, continued commitment to resilience work is critical even when federal funding is terminated. Sustainability requires ongoing, sustained, and deep engagement.

Phase 2: Deepen Partnerships and Programming (12-24 Months)

Launch the "Food Rescue & Distribution" Initiative
Implement the plan to engage area restaurants and food distributors to rescue surplus food (see Section 7).

Integrate Climate, Health, and Social Services
Expand the model of the MESS House's solar fridge by ensuring hubs have backup power, cooling/warming centers, and access to health information. Research on resilience hubs emphasizes integrating multiple services, including food access, health, energy, and emergency communication.

Develop "Resilience Ambassador" Program
Activate community members to champion hub activities, conduct outreach to underserved populations, and help coordinate emergency responses. Creating a group of organized volunteers that provide transportation during emergencies is a key recommendation.

Phase 3: Long-Term Sustainability and Replication (24+ Months)

Develop Replication Guidance
Create a toolkit of best practices, lessons learned, and operational templates based on the pilot project experience to support new hubs in the region.

Advocate for Policy Changes
The CWCC's work on opposing landfill expansion and advocating for state-level EPR legislation is crucial for creating an enabling environment for these projects. Policy advocacy is a key part of sustainability.

Locally, there is also a clear opportunity for policy change in the City of Ypsilanti to better support resiliency hub work. Canvassing and partner feedback reveal that residents are already adapting to their needs—whether through backyard chicken-keeping, stormwater diversion, or alternative building and composting

practices—yet current ordinances often lag behind these behaviors. Updating municipal codes to reflect real-world practice would reduce barriers, encourage sustainable action, and strengthen community resilience at the neighborhood level.



Influence Ypsi 2026

7. Food Rescue and Waste Diversion: Engaging Area Restaurants and Food Distributors

Engaging with area restaurants and food distributors to explore food rescue is a critical next step. This initiative directly addresses the goals of the CWCC and models successful programs across the country. The challenge is significant: up to 40% of the food supply in the United States ends up in landfills, while millions face food insecurity.

The Need

Food waste and food insecurity should not coexist in the same world. As Colorado-based nonprofit We Don't Waste demonstrates, surplus food can be diverted from landfills and distributed to people who need it. In Denver, We Don't Waste has built a network of over 300 active food donors, recovering food from urban gardens to large-scale restaurants and distributors. Similarly, 412 Food Rescue in Pittsburgh has collected almost 50 million tons of food, distributing it to more than 2,600 nonprofit organizations.

Recommended Model: **A Collaborative Food Rescue Network**

The goal is to create a local network that connects food donors (restaurants, caterers, grocery stores, event venues) to community food distribution sites. The model would be a collaborative partnership between local non-profits (e.g., Detroit's Metro Food Rescue), the community hubs (Ypsi Food Rescue, LEAF Harm Reduction, We the People Opportunity Farm), and potential logistics providers.

How It Would Work:

1. Donor Onboarding: Partner with restaurants and grocers to arrange for the pickup of surplus, edible food. Establish clear safety protocols. As organizations like Second Helpings Atlanta emphasize, "we don't take any food that has been served... as long as the food hasn't been put out and no one has touched it, we are able to take whatever surplus is left over."
2. Logistics: Use technology (like a mobile app) to coordinate volunteers to collect food.
3. Processing and Distribution: The food would be taken to a LEAF Harm Reduction pantry where it can be inspected, sorted, and prepared for distribution to food pantries, community fridges, and meal programs.
4. Distribution: The food is then redistributed to community members via the existing infrastructure of the Resiliency Hubs and their partners.

"Hub and Spoke" Collaboration Model

A particularly effective approach is the "hub and spoke" model. As implemented by the Greater Chicago Food Depository, a partner pantry (the hub) collects food from local grocers for themselves and for other food pantries in the neighborhood (the spokes). The Food Depository provides hub partners with grants to purchase or retrofit a refrigerated vehicle and connects network pantry partners with nearby food retailers.

Since incorporating this model, the Food Depository has increased the amount of food rescued by 30 percent.

Key Actions for Implementation

1. Stakeholder Convening: Host a meeting with Metro Food Rescue, Ypsi Food Rescue, LEAF Harm Reduction, local restaurants, and grocers to discuss a pilot program.
2. Logistical Assessment: Determine the need for a vehicle, a distribution hub (to receive and repackage food), and volunteer training.
3. Start with a Pilot: Begin with a "proof of concept" by partnering with 3-5 willing partners and one of the hubs to demonstrate the feasibility and impact.
4. Policy Support: Support policy frameworks that require food recovery from large businesses. This local action can create a more robust and equitable food system.

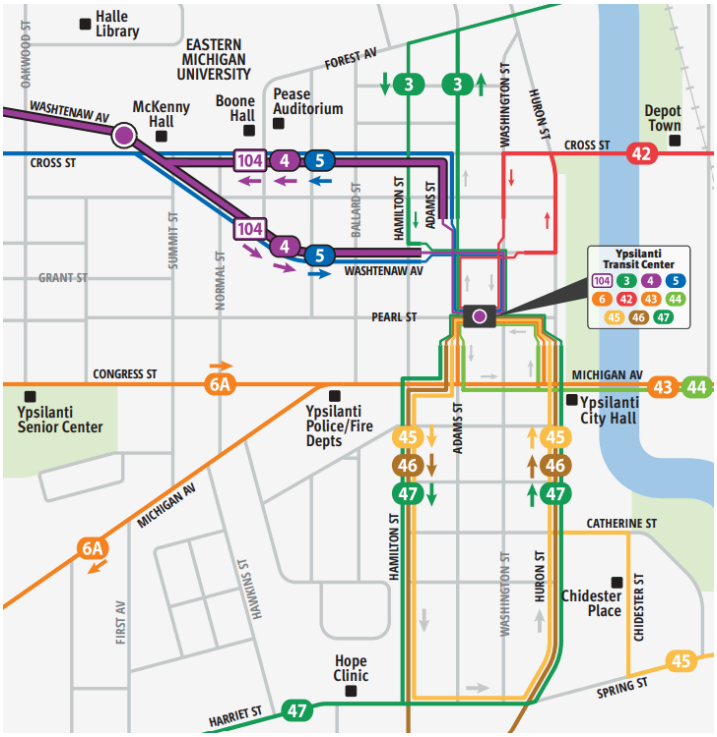


MESS House 2026

Good Places to Look to Continue This Work

For those interested in carrying this work forward, the following local groups and shared resources offer ongoing collaboration, information, and entry points for engagement:

- Environmental Justice & Resiliency Circle (EJ&R): A collaborative group of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice (ICPJ) that serves as a generative hub for connection, action, and shared vision on environmental justice and community resilience in Washtenaw County. The Circle actively supports the Resiliency Hub Network and provides a space where shared projects are born.
    - ICPJ homepage: icpj.org
    - Event calendar (to attend meetings): ICPJ Events Calendar
    - Running notes & meeting documentation: EJ&R Running Notes
    - Statement of scope, aims, and domains: EJ&R Scope & Aims
- Ypsi Food Rescue: An emerging area of interest for ICPJ that has not yet fully launched. This initiative aims to address food resilience and waste reduction in the community and is actively seeking additional help and new partners to move it forward. Interested individuals and organizations are encouraged to connect through ICPJ.
    - Ypsi Food Rescue Notes: View Notes



The Ride downtown Ypsilanti transit map

8. Resource Map

A Resource Map is a foundational tool for the success of a regional resilience network. It serves as a dynamic and accessible inventory of assets that support community resilience. It should be designed to be used by community members, first responders, and partner organizations.



Link to working draft: [Ypsilanti Resiliency Hub Resource Map]

Suggested Components of the Resource Map

1. Physical Infrastructure (The "Hubs")

- Locations of all community hubs (community centers, gardens, etc.)
- Amenities: Access to potable water, emergency power/charging stations, cooling/warming centers, kitchen facilities, Wi-Fi, and supplies (e.g., solar fridges, composting stations)

2. Community Resources

- Food: Food pantries, community gardens, community fridges, and locations participating in the food rescue program
- Health: Health clinics, mental health resources, and cooling/warming centers
- Social Services: Shelters, childcare facilities, and senior centers

3. Emergency Services

- Locations of fire stations, unarmed Community Response teams, and emergency shelters
- Evacuation routes and designated safe zones

4. Partner and Volunteer Networks

- Contact information for all partner organizations (mutual aid efforts, local government, etc.)
- A volunteer portal to manage sign-ups for different tasks (e.g., composting, food rescue, gardening, emergency response)

5. Environmental Justice Data

- Overlay layers showing environmental risk factors (flood zones, heat islands, air quality, landfill proximity) and demographic data (areas with high percentages of vulnerable populations)

6. Transportation and Mobility

- Public transit stops and routes within 0.5km of hubs
- Walking and biking infrastructure and accessibility features for people with disabilities



Riverside Wet Meadow Project 2026

9. Highlighting Related Environmental Justice Work

The Resiliency Hub work is deeply interwoven with broader Environmental Justice (EJ) efforts in the region. These initiatives provide the advocacy context and policy framework that make the pilot projects possible and necessary.

The Caucus on Consumption, Waste, and the Climate Crisis (CWCC) and the Washtenaw Zero Waste Coalition (WZWC)

These groups are central to the region's EJ advocacy. Their work on opposing a new landfill expansion in Washtenaw County addresses the disproportionate health and environmental burdens placed on frontline communities. The CWCC is a primary partner in creating a more just and sustainable food system.

The CWCC has been actively working on:

- Food waste and zero waste initiatives
- Supporting state-level EPR legislation and increased state tipping fees
- Opposing the new landfill expansion, noting that "Michigan already has too many landfills" and that "approving a new landfill locks Washtenaw County into a generational commitment to waste disposal"

A2P2 and the EJ AI Data Center Summit

The advocacy around data centers (highlighted by the EJ AI Data Center Summit) focuses on the immense energy and water consumption, and associated pollution, of these facilities. This work is a critical part of the regional EJ landscape, as it challenges the expansion of carbon-intensive infrastructure and its impacts on neighborhoods.

The A2P2 ballot initiative to create a public power utility and replace DTE is an Environmental Justice effort focused on dismantling a corporate monopoly that disproportionately burdens frontline communities with high costs, fossil fuel pollution, and unreliable power. This work is a critical part of the regional EJ landscape, as it seeks to return democratic control over a basic necessity to the people and reinvest profits into local renewable energy, confronting the systemic inequities embedded in our current energy system.

Congregational Green Groups (CGG)

Faith-based organizations are critical partners in the EJ movement. They provide a network for community engagement, education, and advocacy, as seen in their efforts to promote solar adoption and sustainability in houses of worship. The CWCC continues to support Congregational Green Groups, with upcoming meetings and collaborations with UM students working with the 2030 District's Houses of Worship group.

Addressing Systemic Inequities

The work of partners like the CWCC is rooted in the belief that resilience planning must prioritize those most vulnerable to both climate and systemic shocks. This sentiment is shared by community members who, in Ypsilanti, identified senior residents as a group that would most benefit from on-site resilience hubs: *"We do have a couple of senior complexes in our neighborhood, and on-site resilience hubs in these would be probably one of the most beneficial hubs in the area..."* [citation:Resilience_Hub_Framework].

The pilots demonstrate the importance of addressing systemic inequities through resilience work. Decades of racist transportation policies have resulted in communities of color facing far higher rates of pollution and with fewer access to the clean mobility options of wealthier communities. Resilience hubs can address these gaps by blending mobility, community resilience, emergency management, and climate mitigation resources. Ensuring equity and resilience are built into intersectional funding and climate solutions is crucial. The fight against new landfills, data center pollution, and for policies like EPR are all efforts to ensure that vulnerable populations are not further burdened, but instead, are centrally supported by the infrastructure of community resilience.


Willow Run Acres 2025

10. Key Findings from Community Survey

Resident Perspectives

Survey responses from 41 residents reveal strong interest in resiliency hubs, particularly for services related to food access, extreme weather relief (cooling/warming centers), and emergency communication. These priorities align closely with the pilot projects already underway, validating the program's direction.

Residents identified several barriers to participation, including lack of awareness, transportation challenges, and scheduling conflicts. Trust emerged as a subtle but important factor—some residents expressed hesitation about government or institutional programs, while others voiced appreciation for the community-centered approach. The most frequently offered skills for sharing included gardening, cooking, first aid, and teaching, indicating a willingness to contribute to mutual aid networks.

Open-ended feedback highlighted both enthusiasm and skepticism. One respondent raised a substantive concern about whether a resiliency hub should be a city priority given existing social services and limited municipal resources. This respondent called for a clear plan for funding, operations, staffing, and measurable outcomes. A technical note also emerged: residents encountered issues with write-in functionality for "other" survey options, suggesting room for improved survey design.

Business and Restaurant Owner Perspectives

Among five business respondents, interest in sustainability programs was moderate. Food waste composting and food rescue generated the most engagement, though interest was mixed. Businesses identified lack of space, operational logistics, and cost as primary barriers. Preferred collection methods included curbside pickup and flexible scheduling. One respondent expressed openness to contributing pro bono services, suggesting a potential avenue for deeper business engagement.

Partner Organization Perspectives

Eight partner organizations expressed strong commitment to the resiliency hub model. Their top areas of interest included food distribution, community education, emergency preparedness, composting, and youth engagement. However, partners consistently

cited limited staff capacity, lack of funding, and uncertainty about roles as significant barriers. The most common request was for more information and clearer expectations.

Partners also offered concrete contributions: one organization proposed integrating voter registration and civic engagement into hub programming, while another expressed interest in connecting with a master composter. These offers highlight opportunities for expanding hub services beyond climate resilience into broader community support.

Overarching Themes

Three cross-cutting themes emerged from the survey. First, there is a clear appetite for hubs that address food security and extreme weather, with residents and partners alike prioritizing these services. Second, practical barriers—transportation, awareness, capacity, funding—must be addressed through intentional design and support. Third, transparent planning and accountability are essential to building trust, particularly among residents who question whether hubs should take precedence over core municipal services.

Taken together, the survey results affirm the value of the resiliency hub pilot while underscoring the need for clear communication, strong partnerships, and a well-articulated plan for long-term sustainability.

11. Conclusion

The Resiliency Hub pilot projects have successfully demonstrated a powerful, community-centered model for climate action. By synthesizing the on-the-ground success of Influence Ypsi, MESS House, and its partners with the robust advocacy of groups like the CWCC and EJ&R Circle, the region is building a comprehensive and effective response to the climate crisis.

As the pressing need for hubs grows in light of increasing climate emergencies, these places will play a key role in people weathering these events. There is an incredible opportunity for local, deeply rooted nonprofits to come together to develop, co-own, and operate these spaces with strong community governance and voice that can support community self-determination. As community members themselves have articulated, the resilience of Ypsilanti lies in its people: *"I think people are resilient and most of the people are kind. So they would help their neighbor"*. The hub model is designed to empower and amplify that inherent strength.

The key to the future lies in formalizing the network, scaling successful programs like food rescue, and ensuring that environmental justice remains at the heart of all efforts. Investing in social infrastructure and building trust with communities must be embedded in climate solutions. Programs that scale community climate solutions, clean energy, mobility, and disaster preparedness, as well as invest in the social fabric and well-being of a community, are the roadmap to a more resilient future.

The work to enhance resilience and decarbonize communities in a just and equitable manner requires ongoing, sustained, and deep engagement. This project provides a piece of the key infrastructure needed to advance the goal of a just transition to community-wide resilience, but the work must continue indefinitely.



Willow Run Acres 2025

Appendix/Survey Graphs

Appendix

Resilience Hub and Related Efforts in Washtenaw County

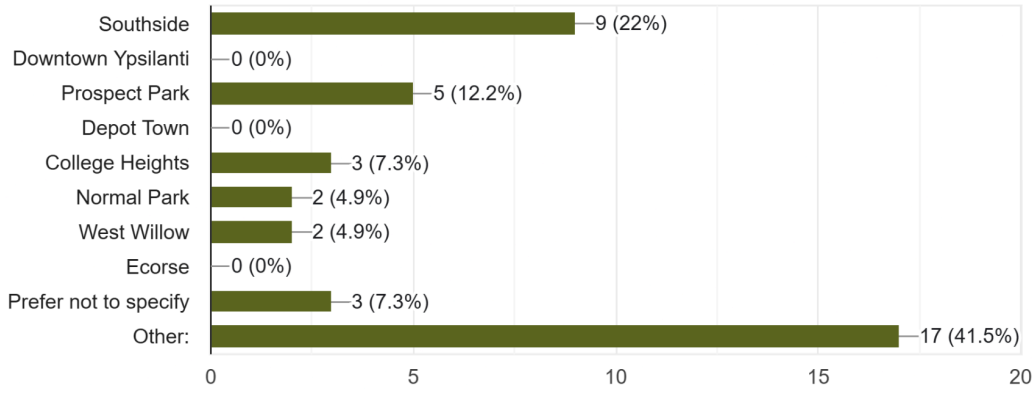
The work in Ypsilanti is part of a broader regional ecosystem of resilience-building efforts:

Organization	Focus Area	Link
City of Ann Arbor - A²ZERO	Carbon neutrality and resilience	https://www.a2gov.org/departments/sustainability/Pages/default.aspx
Ypsilanti Sustainability Commission	Local resilience planning and implementation	
YCS Resiliency Center	Student and family support, homelessness prevention	https://www.ycschools.us/for-parents/resiliency-center-and-homeless-youth-program-information/
UM SEAS Resilience Hub Framework	Foundational research and implementation guidance	https://seas.umich.edu/news/implementing-resilience-hubs-ypsilanti-michigan
UM Urban Lab	Community-engaged research and sustainability	https://urbanlab.umich.edu/location/ypsilanti-michigan-usa/
Concentrate Media - Resiliency Center	Journalism coverage of resilience efforts	https://concentratemedia.com/resiliencycenter0578/
WEMU News - YCS Resiliency Center	Local news coverage of student resilience work	https://www.wemu.org/wemu-news/2025-08-28/ycs-resiliency-center-helps-support-students-starting-their-year

Resiliency Hub Survey Results

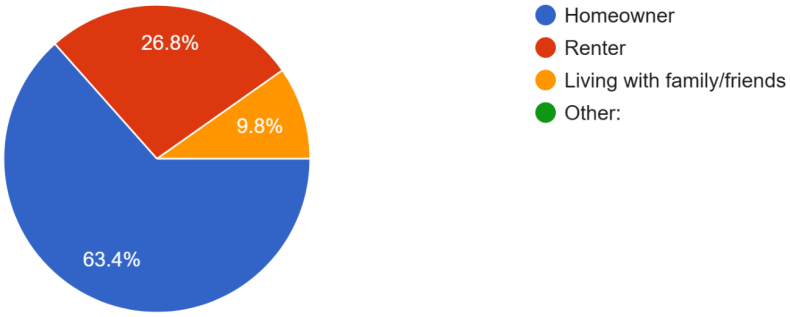
Section 1: About You (Optional) Neighborhood/Area:

41 responses



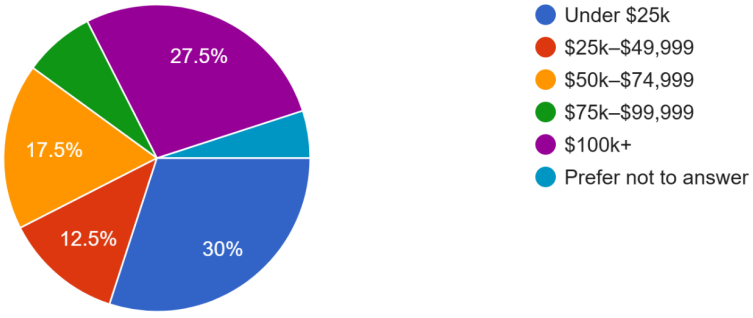
Housing:

41 responses



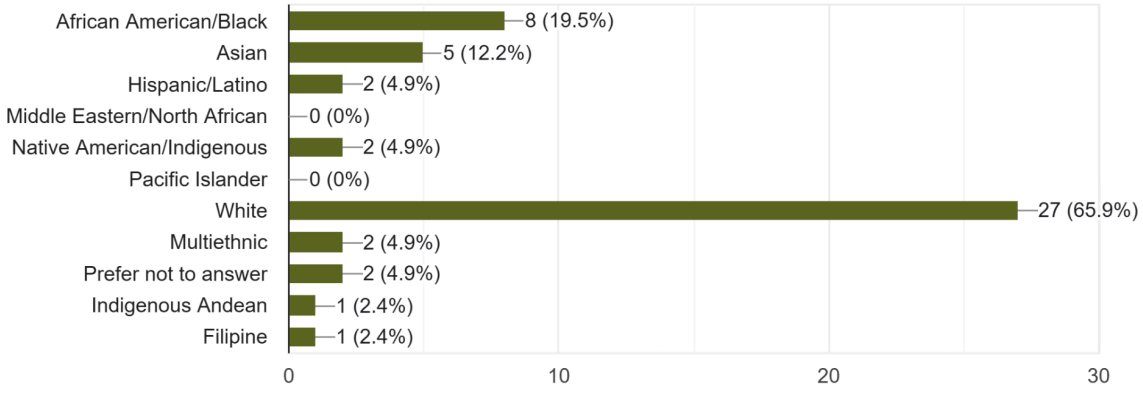
Household income:

40 responses



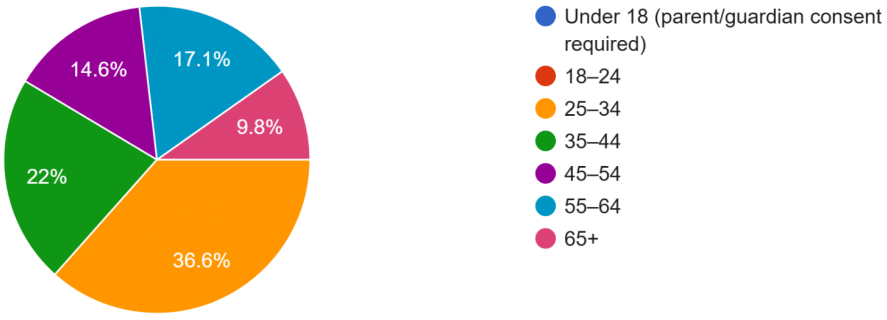
Race/Ethnicity (select all that apply):

41 responses



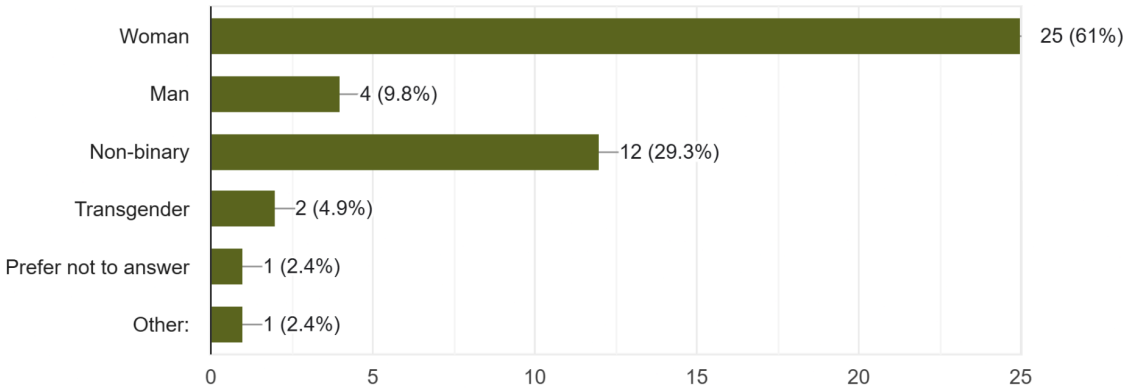
Age:

41 responses



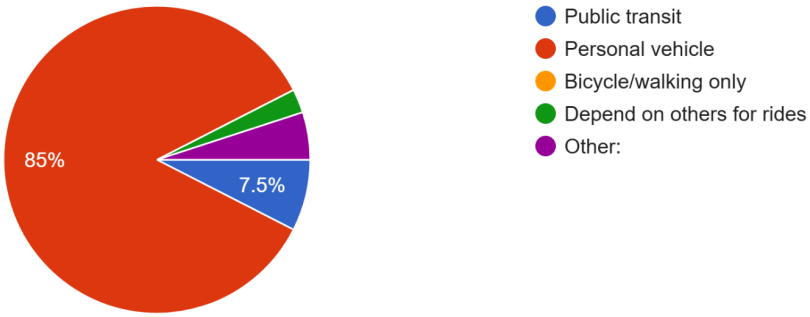
Gender:

41 responses



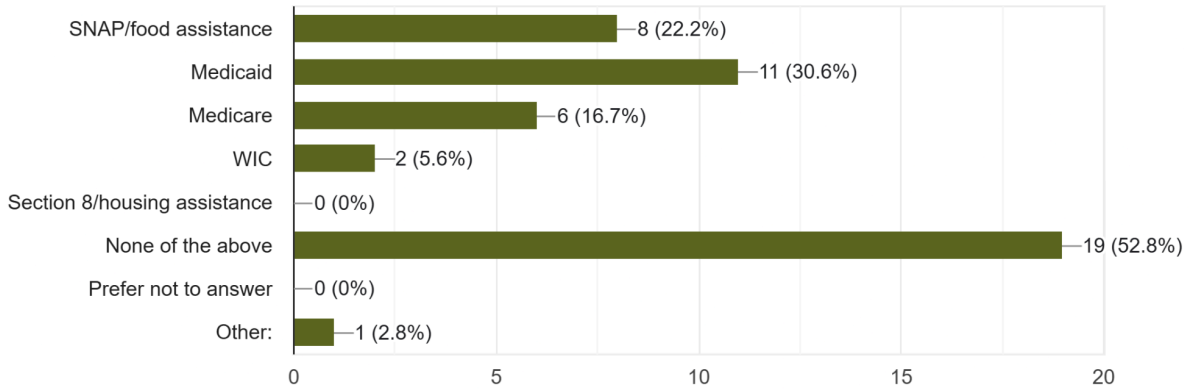
Primary transportation:

40 responses



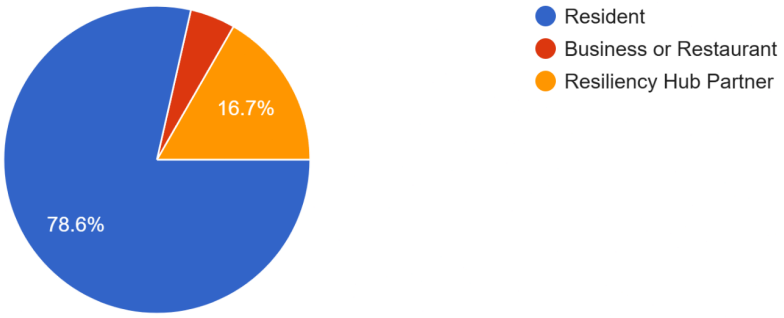
Benefits received:

36 responses



Are you taking this survey as a...

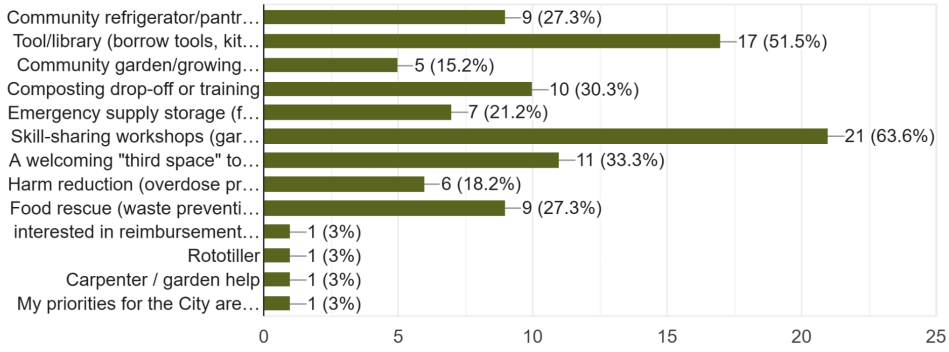
42 responses



Resident Questions

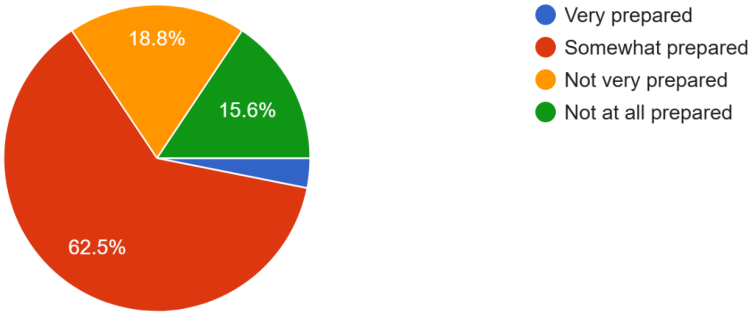
Select your top 3 resources that would be most valuable to you:

33 responses



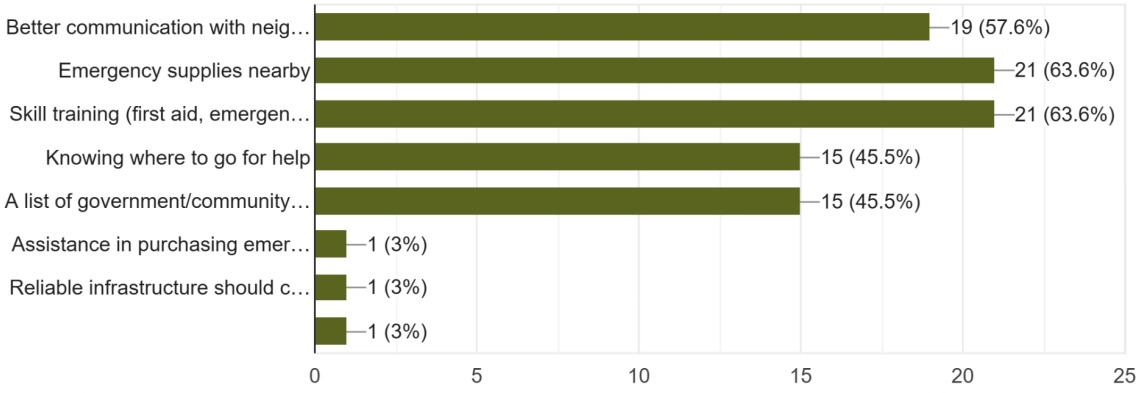
How prepared do you feel for emergencies (power outages, extreme weather, etc.)?

32 responses



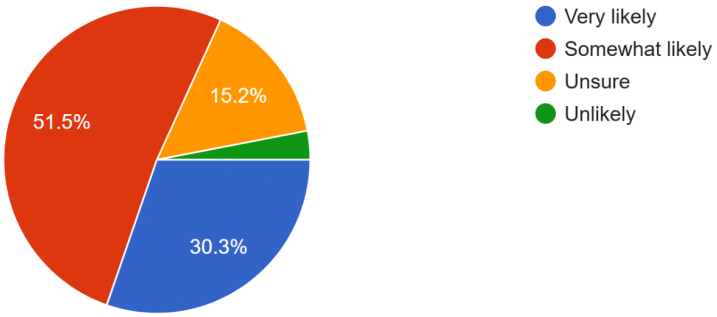
What would help you feel more prepared? (Select all that apply)

33 responses



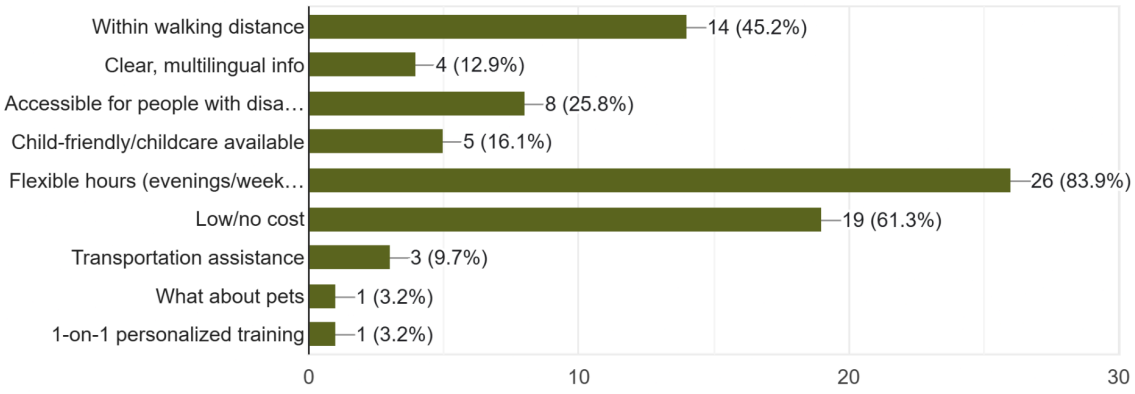
How likely would you be to use a neighborhood resiliency hub?

33 responses



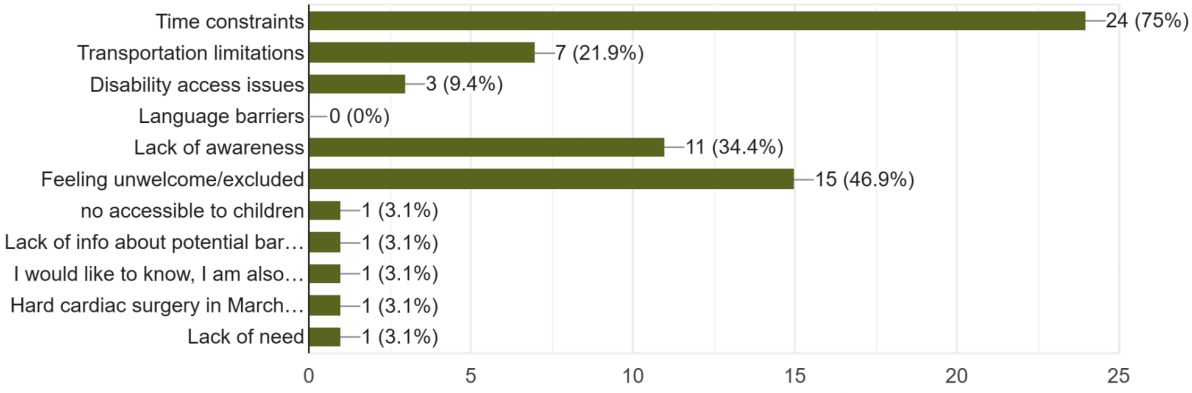
What would make it EASIER for you to participate? (Select all that apply)

31 responses



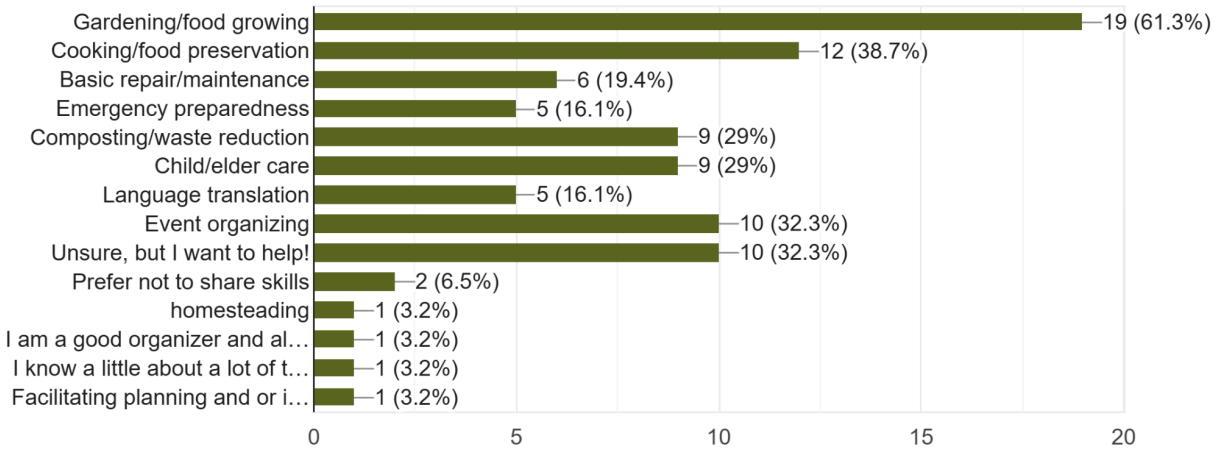
What might PREVENT you from participating? (Select all that apply)

32 responses



What skills would you be willing to share with neighbors? (Select any)

31 responses



Would you like to add any feedback or questions? 6 responses

interested in reimbursement program through city or water utility for residences that divert/absorb water away from storm drainage system

Yes, please, would like to know more about this. I live in Pittsfield, Ypsi address, and Ann Arbor Schools, not sure i am in the area

Appreciate you digging into this!

I appreciate the effort to gather community input. However, I don't believe a resiliency hub is among the City's highest priorities at this time. Ypsilanti already has numerous nonprofit, county, and community organizations providing food assistance, emergency resources, and social services. Given the City's limited financial resources, I believe we should focus first on core municipal responsibilities: maintaining roads and sidewalks, improving infrastructure, consistent code enforcement, supporting economic development and business retention, maintaining parks and public spaces, and coordinating with DTE and other agencies to improve resilience during outages. Before pursuing new programs or facilities, I would want to see a clear plan for funding, ongoing operations, maintenance, staffing, and measurable outcomes.

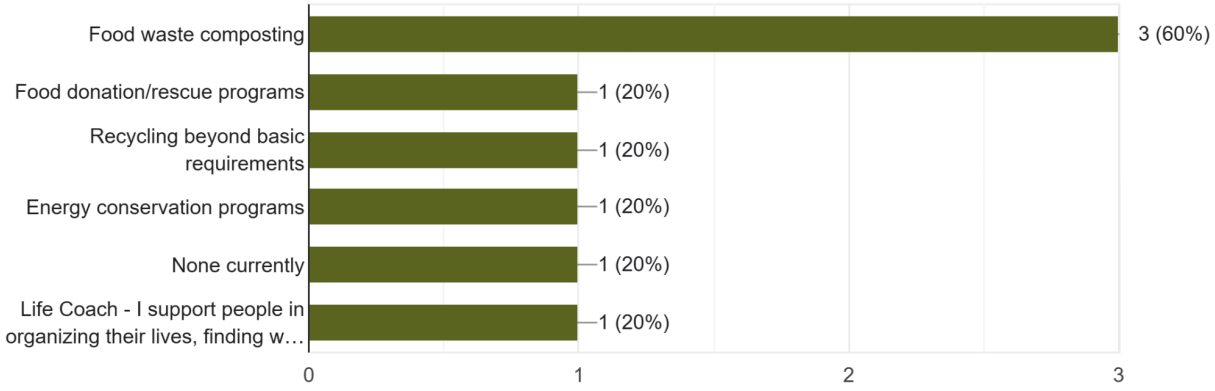
Thank you!!!!!!

I live by Appleridge Park. I am not sure what neighborhood that is. Heads-up: in the first page, the "other" option for some of the questions doesn't allow you to write-in your "other" option.

Business/Restaurant Owner Questions

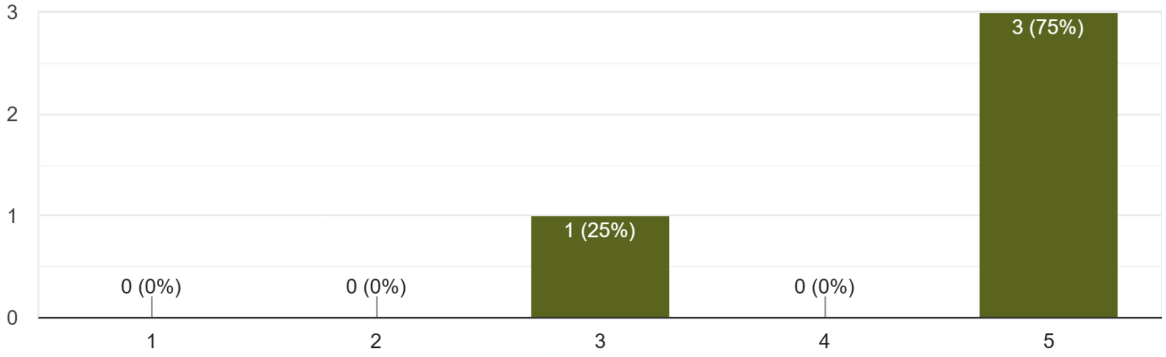
Which of these sustainability practices does your business currently engage in? (Select all that apply)

5 responses



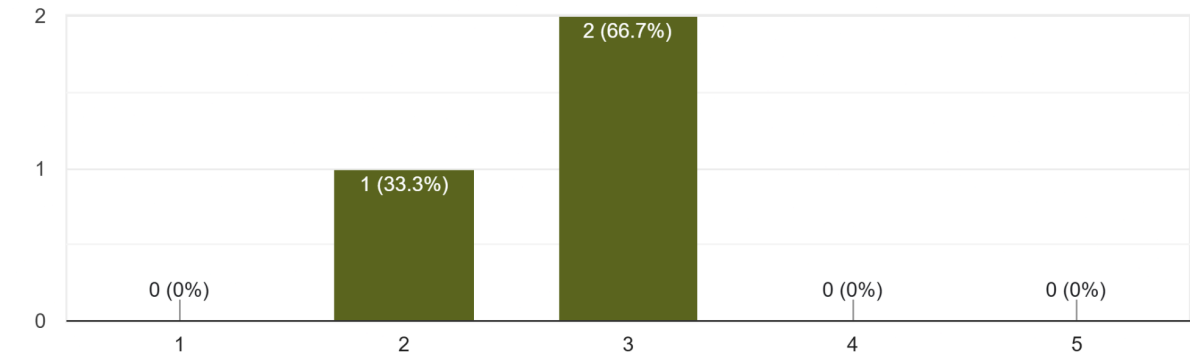
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Food waste composting/diversion partnership

4 responses



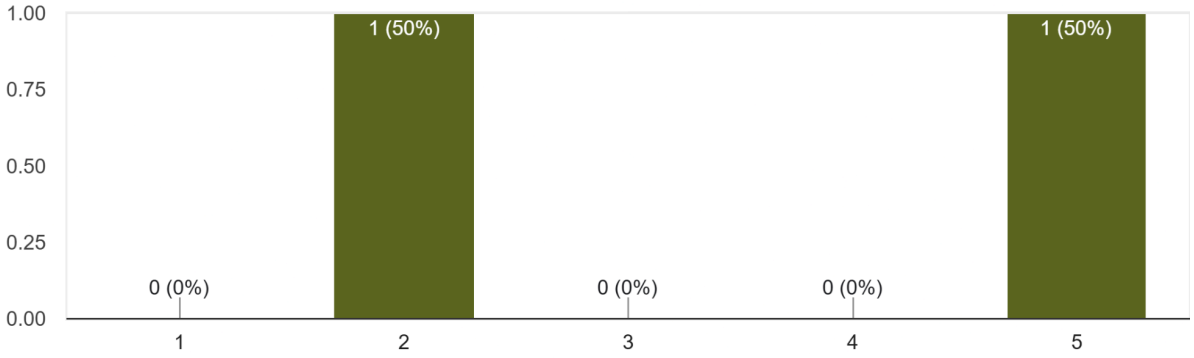
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Hosting a community resource (fridge, pantry, harm reduction supplies)

3 responses



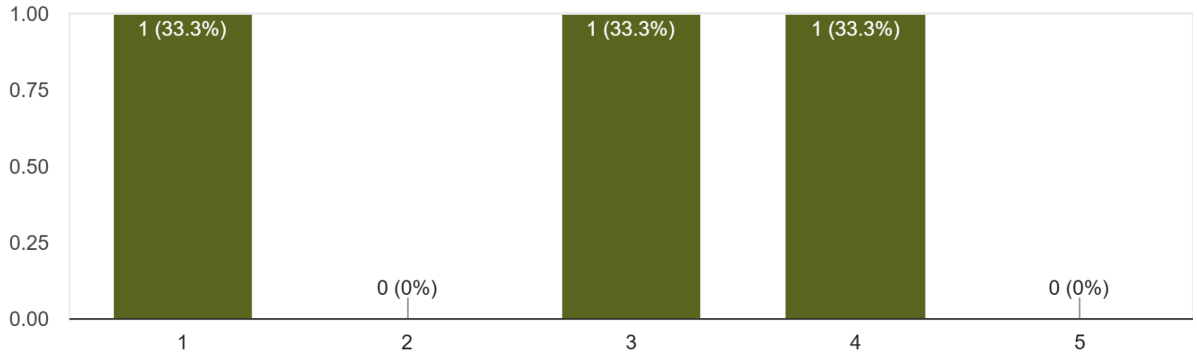
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Participating in a "food rescue" program for surplus food.

2 responses



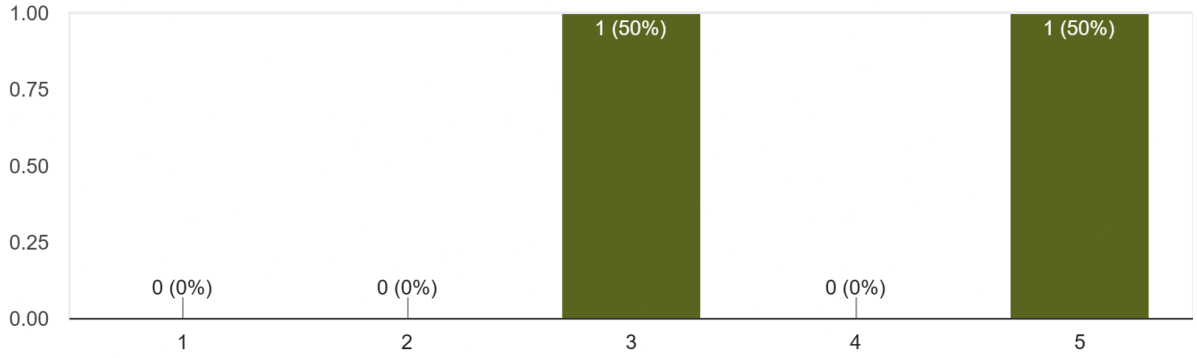
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Offering space for community meet...-sharing (fridge, pantry, harm reduction supplies)

3 responses



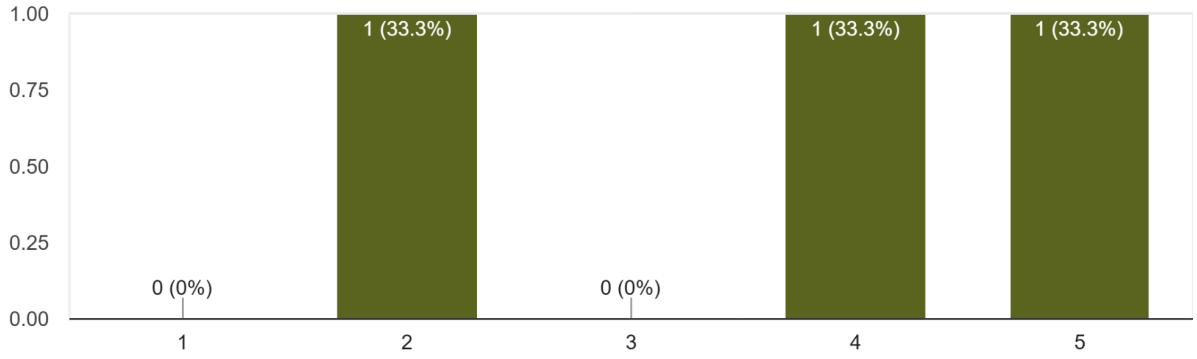
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Tool/library sharing for employees and community

2 responses



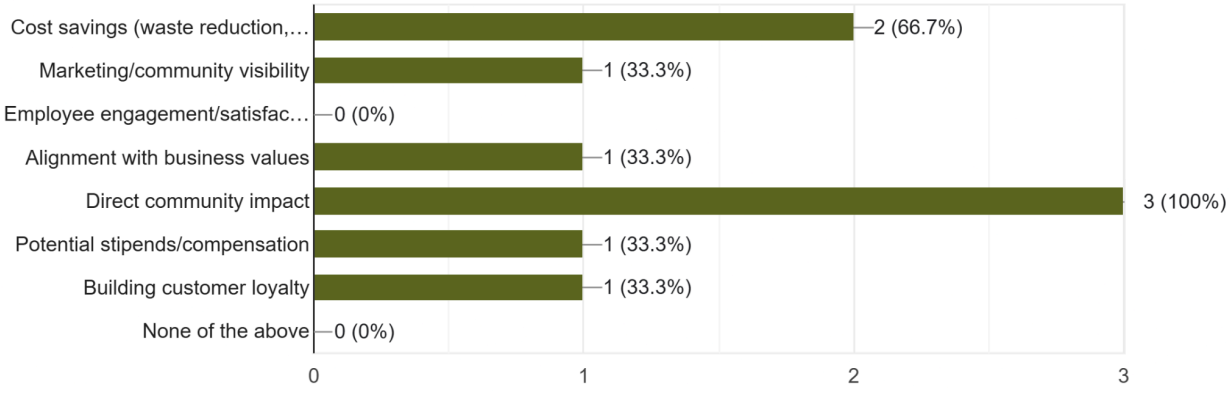
How interested would your business be in the following program? (1: Not Interested / 3: Neutral / 5: Very Interested) Being a resiliency hub partner or leader

3 responses



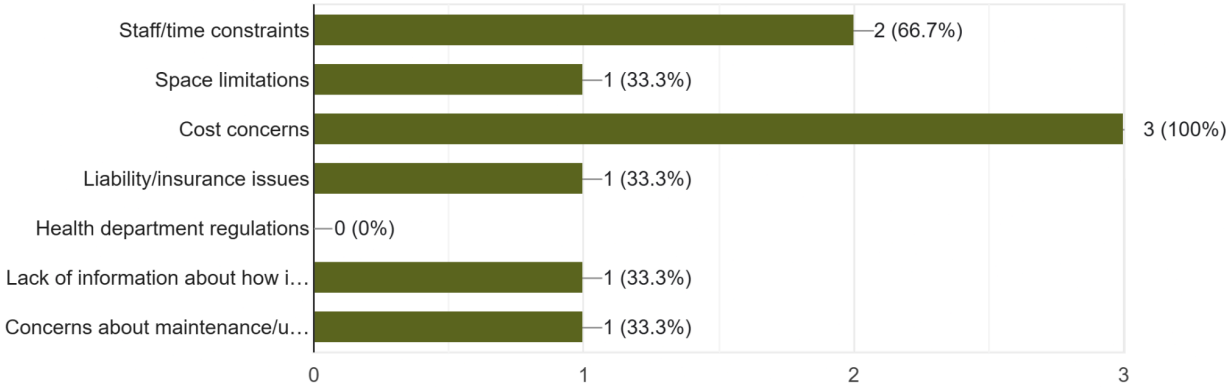
What potential benefits would motivate your business to participate? (Select all that apply)

3 responses



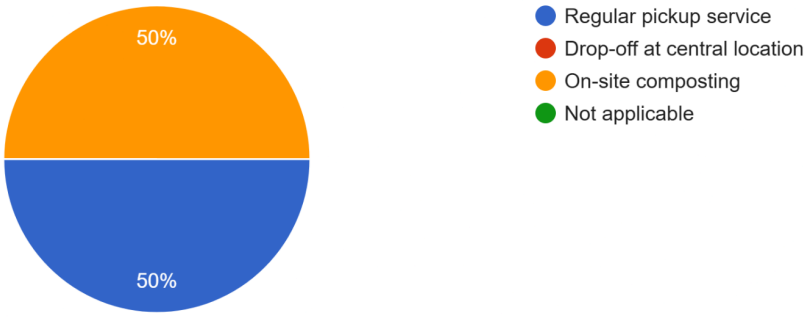
What would be the MAIN barriers to your business participating? (Select all that apply)

3 responses



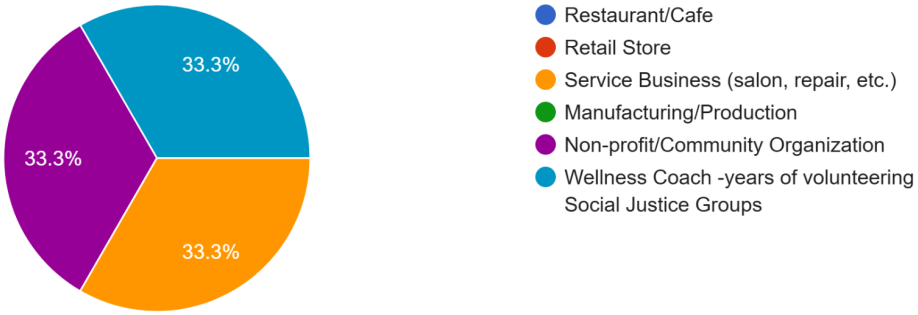
If participating in a food waste composting program, what would be your preferred collection method?

2 responses



Business type:

3 responses



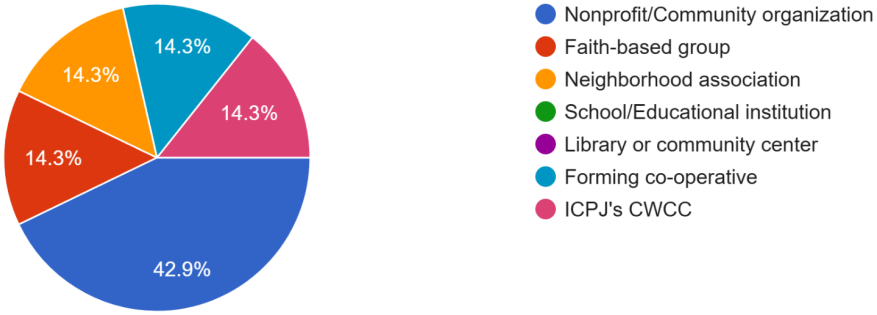
Would you like to add any feedback or questions?1 response

I want to know more about it and what I could contribute to. I already have pro bono clients.

Resiliency Hub Partner Questions

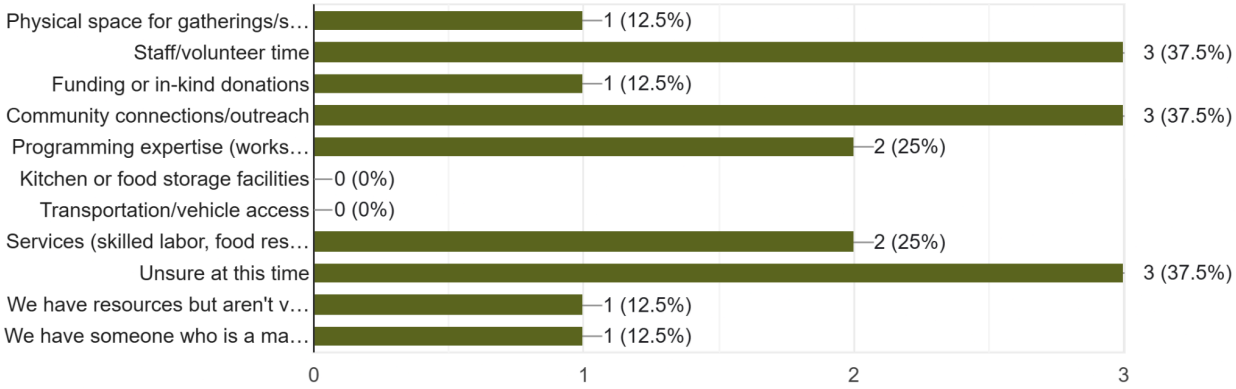
What type of organization do you represent?

7 responses



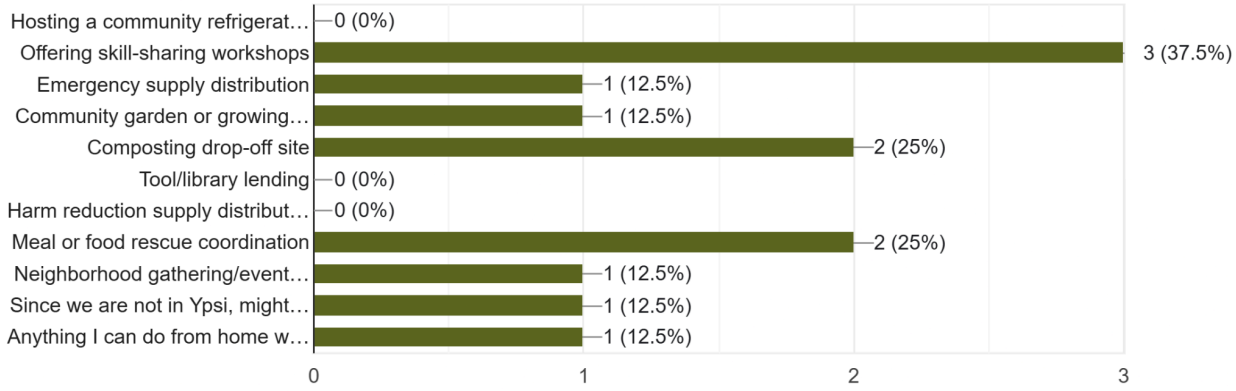
What resources could your organization offer as a resiliency hub? (Select all that apply)

8 responses



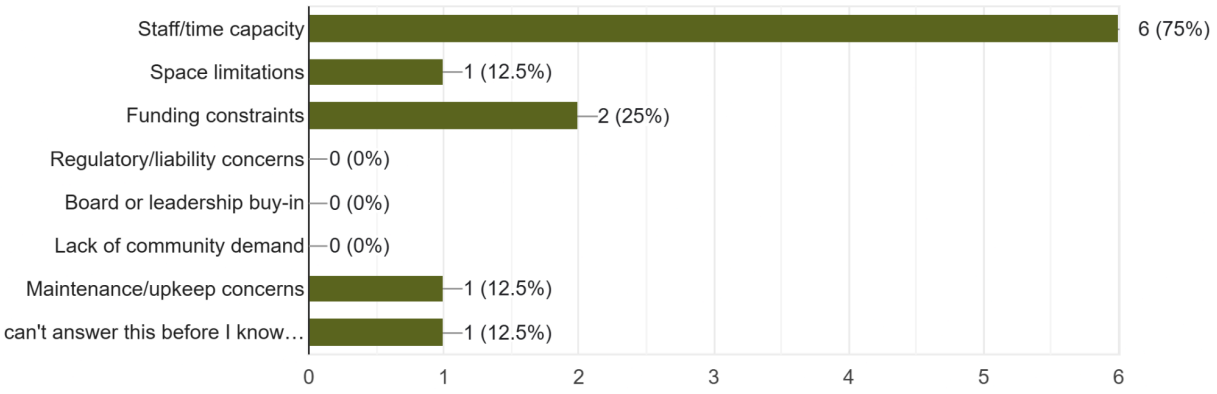
Which resiliency hub activities are you most interested in supporting? (Select top 3)

8 responses



What barriers might prevent your organization from participating? (Select all that apply)

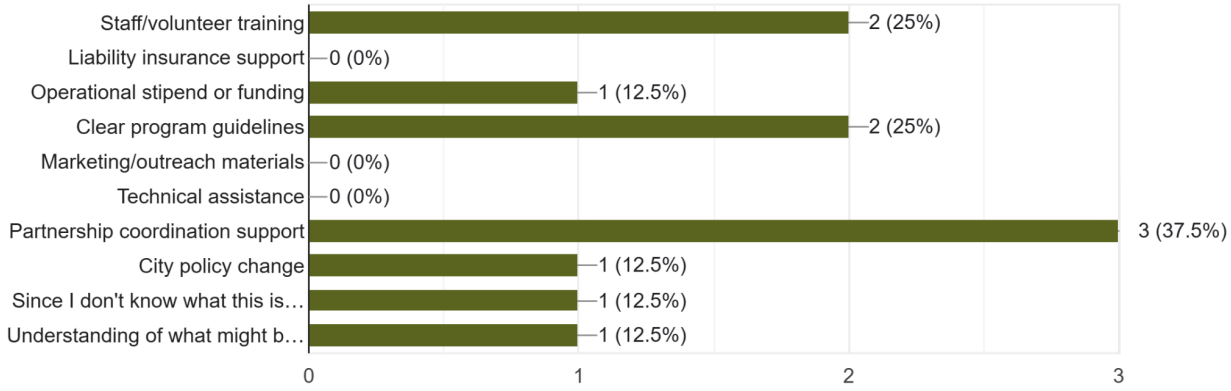
8 responses



Would you like to add any feedback or questions?3 response

What would your organization need to participate effectively? (Select all that apply)

8 responses



s

I need to know more before I really can ansver

We could provide voting information to participants, helping with registration, address changes, sample ballots, where and when to vote, along with general volunteer support. Thank you for the opportunity to partner in this important project.

Let's stay in touch. I'll check out the master composter's possible availability.