

Appendix L: DCRF Fact Sheet



Project Development through *Resilient Connecticut* and the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund (DCRF)

What is *Resilient Connecticut*?

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) initiated the *Resilient Connecticut* project in 2018. This project focused on communities impacted by Superstorm Sandy in New Haven and Fairfield Counties. Activities included risk assessments, community engagement, and project development for addressing flooding and extreme heat. Products include map viewers, policy recommendations, research, and identification of opportunity areas for focusing community resilience.

Resilient Connecticut Expansion

CIRCA has expanded *Resilient Connecticut* to the entire State. “*Resilient Connecticut 2.0*” includes a statewide expansion of the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (CCVI) followed by climate adaptation project development in the SCCOG, RiverCOG, and CRCOG planning regions. This planning effort will help generate projects for the “resilience project pipeline” as referenced in the Governor’s Executive Order 21-3.

What Kinds of Challenges Are Considered in *Resilient Connecticut*?

Climate change is believed to be affecting flood and extreme heat event frequency and intensity in the state. At least five severe rain events caused flooding between June and October 2021, from Tropical Storm Elsa to Tropical Depression Ida. These floods caused damage to infrastructure and communities. Meanwhile, extreme heat events were recorded in summer 2021 and 2022, and a severe flashy drought impacted the State in 2022.

The Benefits of Project Development through *Resilient Connecticut*

Project development is occurring within seven municipalities that participated in *Resilient Connecticut*: Ansonia, Branford, Danbury, Fairfield, New Haven, Norwalk, and Stratford. The outcomes of these projects will address unmet needs associated with flooding and extreme heat that, in some cases, have not been identified in previous plans. CIRCA’s consultants are working directly with the communities to develop solutions that are locally supported with the goal of securing grant funding for implementation. Municipal staff are involved, and CIRCA is responsible for managing consultant contracts and overseeing project development.



Photos courtesy of Chris Gasiorek of Mystic Seaport, @eweather13 [Westbrook], the Town of Manchester, and CIRCA [West Hartford]

The DEEP Climate Resilience Fund (DCRF)

The DCRF was launched in September 2022 and includes \$10 Million for planning and project concept design to help communities in the state plan and prepare for the effects of climate change. The fund will help communities execute planning and envision projects for community climate resilience that can be implemented and constructed with federal funds. At least 40% of the funding is prioritized for vulnerable communities, including environmental justice communities. The DCRF includes two funding tracks:

- Track 1 - Planning: Will provide funding for comprehensive climate resilience planning at either the regional, municipal, or neighborhood (hyper-local) level.
- Track 2 - Project Development: Will provide funding for municipalities and other related entities, to advance identified resilience projects to the concept stage and to be ready to apply for federal funding for implementation.

Which Project Development Pathway is Right for You?

While *Resilient Connecticut* and the DCRF can both be used for project development, and therefore for populating the State’s resilient project pipeline, several key differences will help municipalities determine which approach fits their community’s needs.

Resilient Connecticut

The primary benefit of CIRCA’s program is that it can help identify and explore climate-related challenges and potential solutions that do not clearly fit into the categories of “planning” or “project development.” For example, CIRCA’s work in the Fair Haven section of New Haven includes elements of planning as well as project development. This approach provides flexibility and allows for different outcomes related to flood resilience and managing extreme heat. This is akin to the hyper-local planning described in Track 1 of the DCRF, but it also incorporates the project development associated with Track 2 of the DCRF.

Another key benefit is that CIRCA’s staff can deploy field research and modeling as needed to support planning and project development.

Resilient Connecticut allows CIRCA to work with municipalities to develop scopes of work and then directly procure consultants, allowing municipal staff to focus on other grants that they may be managing. Contact CIRCA for more information about how to become involved.

DEEP Climate Resilience Fund

The DCRF places control of its Track 1 and Track 2 awards in the hands of the grantees. If municipal staff have the time and resources available to manage a grant directly, and have ideas for definitive scopes of work that fit Track 1 or Track 2, then the DCRF may be a better choice for identifying and exploring climate-related challenges and potential solutions.

Funding ranges and limits for the DCRF are presently more robust than the limits for *Resilient Connecticut* participation. Track 1 can provide up to \$250,000 for planning efforts and Track 2 can provide \$300,000 to \$700,000 for project development. In contrast, *Resilient Connecticut* aims to utilize about \$100,000 to \$300,000 for projects that combine planning and project development.

- To learn more about *Resilient Connecticut*, contact John Truscinski at john.truscinski@uconn.edu
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