



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



I. Understanding community resilience and the CRS

What is community resilience?

Community resilience is the ability of a community to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through adaptation, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change. For additional information about the concept of community resilience, visit <http://www.resilientus.com/about-us/definition-of-community-resilience.html>.

Why do you include economic downturns as a possible threat? What does that have to do with resilience?

The list of threats includes any event that overwhelms a community's resources or threatens its existence. As recent events have made all too clear, the human consequences of the economic recession have been just as dire for those affected as those from any natural disaster. If the largest employer in town moves to another country or state or goes out of business, the community's very survival is at risk. Thus, communities have to consider economic risks as well as physical threats.

When a community is truly resilient, it should be able to avoid the cascading system failures to help minimize any disaster's disruption to everyday life and the local economy. A resilient community is not only prepared to help prevent or minimize the loss or damage to life, property and the environment, but also it has the ability to quickly return citizens to work, reopen businesses, and restore other essential services needed for a full and swift economic recovery.

What is the CRS?

The Community Resilience System (CRS) is an action-oriented, web-enabled process that helps communities to assess, measure, and improve their resilience to the variety for threats and disruptions of all kinds, and ultimately be rewarded for their efforts.

The CRS brings together people, process and technology to improve resilience in individual communities. The system includes not only a knowledge base to help inform communities on their resilience path but also a process guide that provides a systematic approach to moving from interest and analysis to visioning and action planning. It also provides a collaborative mechanism for other interested stakeholders to support community efforts.

How was the CRS developed?

The CRS was developed by the Community Resilience System Initiative (CRSI). The CRSI was a 15-month collaborative process charged with determining what American communities need in order to become more resilient to the variety of threats they face and recommending a concrete course of action that will support communities in their resilience-building efforts. CRSI involved more than 150 practitioners and researchers from diverse sectors and disciplines who worked in

groups to help inform the development of the Community Resilience System (CRS). Additional information about how CRSI and the formation of the CRS is available at:

http://www.resilientus.com/community_resilience_system_initiative.html.

How is resilience different from sustainability?

Resilience and sustainability are complementary concepts that primarily differ in terms of their time frame. Resilient communities positively adapt to relatively short-term crises. Sustainable communities maintain a long-term balance between consumption and resources. Thus, communities can be one or the other or both. However, achieving either is a “journey” that is best made with whole of community approaches.

How is the CRS different from traditional preparedness and long-term recovery planning?

The CRS differs from traditional preparedness efforts because it considers not only mitigation and response but also long-term recovery. The CRS differs from other long-term recovery efforts because it helps the community do as much of the planning as possible prior to the disaster. The CRS differs from both in that it considers economic and health threats as well as the natural and human-induced disasters in the more traditional types of planning.

What is a community service?

The CRS takes a “Whole Community” approach to achieving greater resilience, i.e., is set up to ensure as broad a representation as possible within a community. Thus, the CRS uses the concept of *community services* to help the community get the right people to the table. In the CRS, community services are the categories into which all of a community's essential functions and services are classified. Collectively, community services help define a community's capacity to function and meet the needs and expectations of its residents; assessing the community's capacity across the full spectrum of community services. These services, provided by healthy and vibrant communities to their residents, include but are not limited to the following: economic services (e.g., economy, financial resources, workforce); infrastructure-based services (e.g., public safety, energy, water, natural environment); and social services (public health, education, arts, entertainment, and recreation). The CRS identifies 18 community services.