

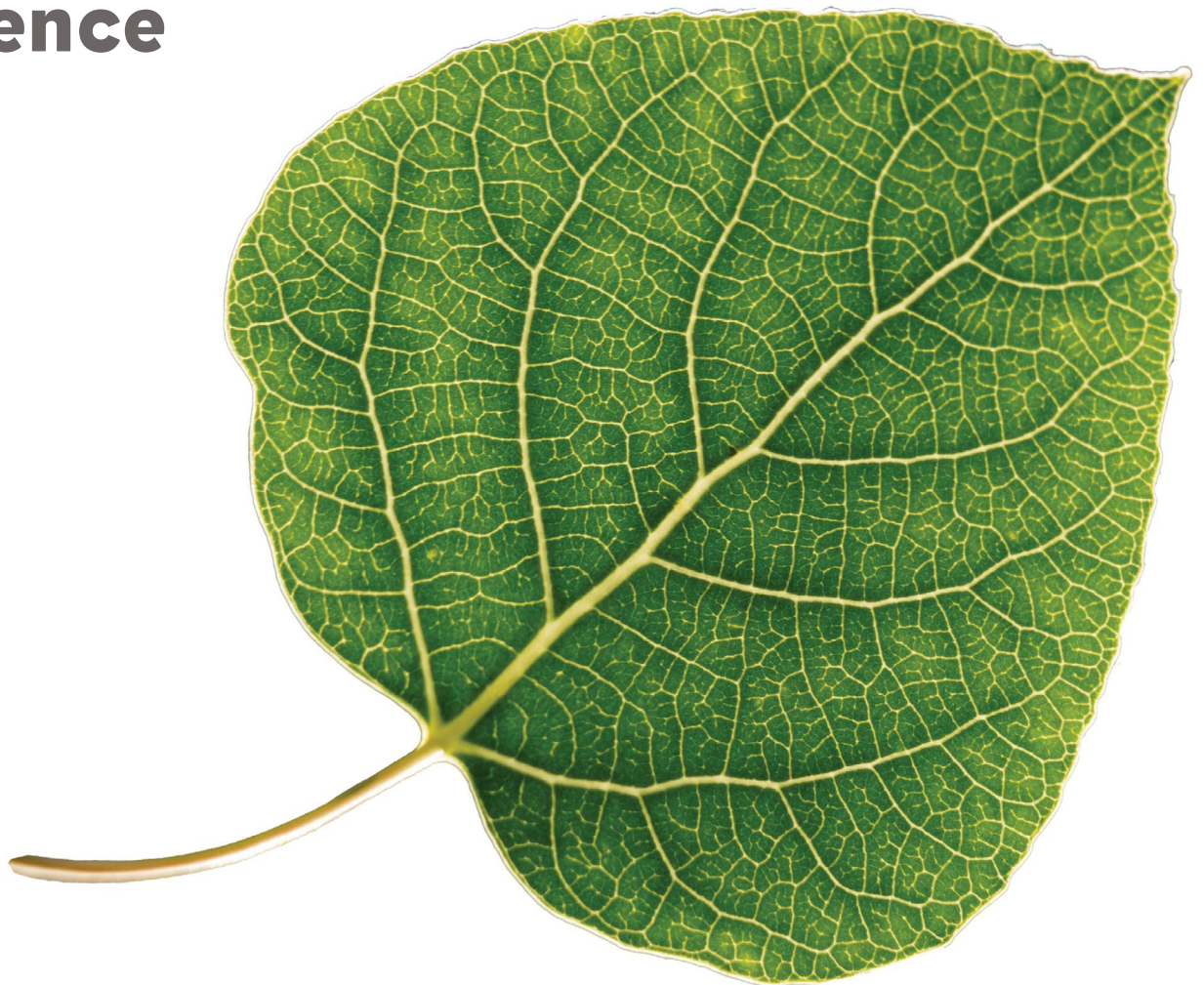
REIMAGINING RESILIENCY



CONSERVATION
LANDS
FOUNDATION

The Resiliency Audit

**A tool for organizations
seeking collective
resilience**



Forward from the Conservation Lands Foundation



Welcome to The Resiliency Audit! From all of us at Conservation Lands Foundation, we'd like to thank you for taking the first step in addressing organizational resilience and culture.

The goal of developing a Resiliency Audit for the Friends Grassroots Network is multi-faceted. At a base level, it is our desire to provide opportunities for individuals to establish responsible work-life balance practices and maintain their physical and emotional health. Without a healthy physical and emotional baseline, it is impossible to do the good work we do every day.

From an organizational and network perspective, we are aiming to prevent burnout in your respective organizations, which has profound impacts on the effectiveness of both individual organizations and our network as a whole. When we burnout, not only do we impact ourselves and our organizations, but the landscapes that rely on us for protection suffer, as well.

Finally, at a higher level, it is our belief that fully supported and respected employees will have the freedom and capacity to express their creativity and passion, resulting in a more vibrant, long-lasting, and powerful network.

It has been, and always will be, our belief that true power lies at the grassroots.

Community-based and driven organizations like yourselves who advocate for these landscapes make the future a cleaner, more protected, and climate resilient place. With help from this audit, you'll be able to fight the good fight for years to come.

Andres Esparza

ANDRES ESPARZA

Grassroots Engagement Director | Conservation Lands Foundation



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Letter from the Author



Resiliency is weird. A lot of people are talking about it, but do you know anyone that's actually succeeding at it? We don't. Not even us. Which is why we're reimagining resiliency—what it looks like, who it applies to, and who's responsible for it.

I started working for non-profits in 2010. Shortly after, I experienced burnout for the first time. During that period, I was working to promote renewable energy expansion. I loved the work. It felt so important. Not only was I combating climate change, but I was also engaging my community, protecting habitat, and creating a healthier future for people and the planet. But when the day would end, I felt completely depleted. I

had nothing left to take care of myself, let alone nurture my important relationships. I left that position after a couple years.

Even after becoming aware of burnout and its effects, and participating in literally dozens of resiliency trainings, it happened again while I was working for another nonprofit. I felt overwhelmed and like I was failing everyone around me. "What's wrong with me?" I kept asking myself. I was doing everything within my power that the resiliency trainings were recommending. I was meditating daily, taking breaks in between meetings, getting outside in nature, doing yoga, making lists, prioritizing my projects each morning, asking for help, delegating tasks when I could, trying to simplify my workload as much as possible. But by mid-COVID, I had to leave that position, too.

Then one day, I started wondering, "Maybe it's not me."

Maybe it's okay that I don't function well when I'm being pushed to do the work of 2 full-time positions and barely getting compensated enough to live in one of the most expensive areas in the county. Maybe it's actually normal that I feel burnt out and if I didn't, that's what would be weird.

When we support our whole selves, we decrease the occurrence of burnout and our organizations thrive.

And then I started thinking what a tragedy this all is. In my ten years working with environmental nonprofits, I couldn't name one person in that sphere that says they've got it down—like they've figured out the "work-life balance" thing. This might be hard to hear, but I believe burnout is the pandemic before the pandemic. It keeps us in "business as usual," the perpetual state of doing the same thing over and over because we don't have the capacity or creative energy to do things better.

We want to stop this cycle and push back. We envision a future where your health is just as important as your organization's metrics and deliverables. In fact, we believe the success of the latter depends solely on the former. The data speaks for itself. When we support our whole selves, we decrease the occurrence of burnout and our organizations thrive.

We are so excited that you are beginning your journey here with us. Now, let's get started.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hailey Hawkins'.

HAILEY HAWKINS

Founder | Sailing Hawks Consulting, LLC

An Introduction to Resiliency

The first step in our journey is to learn what resiliency is.

There are many different definitions. Most of them revolve around the ability to adapt to hardship. For these definitions, resilience is defined by struggle. For instance, the American Psychological Association defines resiliency as “the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.”¹ The Mayo Clinic defines resilience simply as “the ability to adapt to difficult situations.”² Psychology Today describes resilience as “the psychological quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before.”³

While these definitions are correct, they certainly don’t make resiliency sound very fun.

There will always be challenging situations to overcome. However, we believe difficulty does not define a person, nor should it define resilience. If one defines their level of resilience by how much difficulty they can withstand, eventually they will break—either by their own doing or the doing of those in power around them.

A Practice of Tuning In

Resiliency, instead, should be centered in accepting and supporting your whole self, just as you are, right now. **Thus, we define resilience as the practice of tuning into one’s own strengths, limitations, and capacities, and accurately communicating them, in order to stay within an optimal level of engagement and stress tolerance.** Resilience is not a trait you’re born with, it’s a skill that is practiced and learned.

This optimal level of stress tolerance is different for every person and can even change from day to day. Stress can be good. The proper amount of stress makes our muscles strong and releases endorphins that make us feel good. Stress can also make us more creative and help us overcome challenges with innovative solutions. But the important part is that most of the time, we are staying within our individual zones of stress tolerance.

Learning How to Adapt and Support Staff

Resiliency isn’t about staff learning how to cope with whatever their organization throws at them. **It’s about their organization learning how to adapt and support their staff in this changing world.** The way we’ve been operating doesn’t work anymore. The rising incidence of *burnout* is evidence to that. Luckily, we are here to help you figure out what will work for your unique organization.

The opposite of resilience, burnout, is characterized by a deep exhaustion that can permeate all aspects of our wellbeing, including our physical, emotional, and mental health. This state is brought on by persistent, long-term stress, and can cause a decrease in cognitive ability, affecting one’s decision-making skills, creativity, mental flexibility, and the comprehension of complex ideas.



An Introduction to Resiliency

In extreme cases, burnout can lead to newly developed anxiety and depressive disorders, an exacerbation of existing mental health issues, substance abuse, or even suicide.⁴

Burnout is at an all time high. A survey conducted by FlexJobs and Mental Health America indicates that 75% of workers have experienced burnout.⁵ An Indeed survey showed that 67% of respondents believe their burnout has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ Even the World Health Organization has recognized burnout.⁷

Costs and Causes of Burnout

For nonprofits specifically, the voluntary turn-over rate is almost 20%, which is higher than the labor market average of 12%.⁸ This indicates that nonprofits have been highly affected by the Great Resignation, which is set to continue. The financial cost when an employee resigns is substantial to already resource-limited nonprofits. Across industries, it costs about 150% of the annual salary of a mid-level employee to replace them and about 400% of the annual salary to replace a high-level employee.⁹ And this is only the financial cost. It does not account for the loss of institutional knowledge or the cultural impact. The Nonprofit Leadership Alliance has a [Cost of Employee Turnover Calculator](#) that can be used to determine a more accurate estimate for your organization. To ensure retention and long-term success, organizations must prioritize staff wellbeing and provide working environments that support the flourishing of employees.

People with marginalized identities, including people of color, women, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ community members are more susceptible to burnout. Research shows that a culture of discrimination and microaggressions negatively affects mental health and, when combined with the causes of burnout above, compounds and leads to burnout more quickly.

Even the World Health Organization has recognized burnout.

Primary Causes of Burnout

Persistent sense of urgency within an organization

Workload that consistently exceeds one's capacity

Not being adequately compensated for one's work

Not being recognized for one's accomplishments

Lack of support and/or clarity from supervisors

Not feeling aligned with the organization's mission or purpose

Not having a sense of community within the organization

Lack of autonomy in one's position

Sense of unfairness between employees

For example, in the United States, employees of color earn less for the same work as white employees.¹⁰ On top of that, employees of color must compartmentalize and maintain their work performance despite rising levels of racially motivated crimes.¹¹ Racial trauma is worsened by the fact that many people of color do not have access to the mental health resources needed to combat this stress.¹² Burnout is a natural conclusion.

Furthermore, women of color are less likely to be recognized for their accomplishments at work, thus few are promoted to leadership positions,¹³ which lowers their earning potential even more. All of these factors can lead to an increased likelihood of burnout.

Concerning women generally, compared to 2021, women in 2022 are more likely to be looking for a new position, with burnout being the driving factor. And over half of women surveyed in this year's Deloitte survey, [Women at Work 2022: A Global Outlook](#), plan to leave their employer within two years.¹⁴

An Introduction to Resiliency

Another example of a marginalized group that is more susceptible to burnout is people with disabilities. These people often end up working harder to complete the same work, which can lead to a reduced sense of accomplishment and can negatively affect mental health.¹⁵ Furthermore, over 70% of people with a disability do not have any distinguishing features, meaning you would not know they have a disability just by looking at them.¹⁶ People with disabilities that are invisible, whether mental or physical, may choose not to disclose that disability for fear of stigma. This can become a heavy burden to bear and, again, lead to burnout more quickly.

Lastly, a study on medical students found that gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are more likely to experience burnout than their heterosexual counterparts. The leader of the study, Dr. Elizabeth A. Samuels, states, “Layering concerns about homophobia and discrimination on top of the general intensity of medical training can lead not just to burnout, but also to truly deleterious mental health effects.”¹⁷

These are just a few examples of how people with marginalized identities are more likely to experience burnout. **While all employees deserve a work environment in which they can thrive, it is especially important that we support our diverse employees to ensure a healthy organization and an equitable future.** See [Appendix A](#) for resources to support your diverse staff.

Role of Leadership

Burnout can happen to anyone within an organization's structure, but those in positions of power have the greatest impact on the resiliency of others. According to Training Resources for the Environmental Community, “50-70% of how employees perceive their organization's climate (which includes mood) is attributable to the actions and behaviors of their leader. A leader creates the environment that determines people's moods at the office and their mood, in turn, affects their productivity and level of engagement.”¹⁸ It's up to leadership to support their staff and, most importantly, serve as a model for resiliency.

Leadership must also create an atmosphere that makes it safe for staff to communicate their boundaries and subsequently respect them. Resiliency often involves saying “no,” even when it might feel uncomfortable. But if we can make it safe for our staff to do so, we are protecting them from chronic stress and burnout, and ensuring the resiliency of our organizations.

Your organization's leadership is responsible for addressing burnout in the workplace. It is their role to support their employees, create a positive work environment, provide clear expectations, and address any barriers negatively affecting their staff. However, supervisors are just as likely as their staff, in fact slightly more likely (26% of managers vs. 24% of individuals according to Gallup¹⁹), to experience burnout.

Burnout is avoidable. And, if you already feel burnout, you may be pleased to know it is also reversible. In the following sections, you will learn how to determine your organization's current level of resiliency and what you can do about it.

Definitions

Resiliency:

the practice of tuning into one's own strengths, limitations, and capacities, and accurately communicating them, in order to stay within an optimal level of engagement and stress tolerance at work.

Burnout:

the opposite of resiliency; is characterized by a deep exhaustion that can permeate all aspects of wellbeing, including physical, emotional, and mental health. This state is brought on by persistent, long-term stress and is often associated with one's job.

How to Use This Audit

Cultivating Resiliency at Your Organization

Now that you know what resiliency is, how can you make sure your organization cultivates it?

We designed this internal self-audit to be simple, easy, and maybe even a little fun. **Our goal is to check the vitals of your organization in order to help you identify opportunities for improvement and promote long-term organizational effectiveness.** We want to support you, while increasing the wellbeing and overall job satisfaction of everyone at your organization. Although we created this audit with nonprofit organizations in mind, we believe institutions of all shapes and sizes can benefit from this information.

The three sections that follow, the “Audit Worksheets,” “Scoring Yourself,” and “Recommendations” sections, have been written with your organization’s leadership as the audience. **To complete these upcoming sections requires access to detailed information that may not be readily available to most staff members, so be diligent when deciding who that person will be. Maybe it is your executive director, a member of the board of trustees, human resources staff, an operations manager, or another member of the leadership team.** If you are not one of the staff we just listed, but are still interested in reading these sections and nerding out with us, by all means, please proceed! This audit is 100% transparent, and if you have the capacity, we’d love you to dive in with us, as well.

After you have read the “Introduction to Resiliency” chapter, you will now move on to the Audit Worksheets, which will give you a baseline of where you, your staff, and your organization currently stand in your resiliency journey. After you have scored your worksheets in the “Scoring Yourself” section, you will move on to the “Recommendations” chapter, where you will be instructed on how to develop a short and long-term resiliency plan for your organization. You will also be given dozens of resiliency recommendations that you can use to personalize your unique plan. Lastly, we have provided additional resources in the appendix to help you continue your resiliency journey.

Unlike other resiliency resources, in this Audit, we focus on cultural, organization-wide solutions rather than putting the responsibility of resilience on individual staff members. Although we each have the personal responsibility of taking care of ourselves physically (e.g. getting enough sleep, exercising, eating well, etc.) and emotionally (e.g. learning how to identify, regulate, and communicate our emotions), we believe that no amount of breathing exercises, yoga, or walks in the park can fix an organizational culture of burnout. We believe that starts with the organization’s leadership and their ability to model resilient policies and actions.

If you’re ready to make your organization more effective, innovative happiest employees possible, please continue reading.

Our goal is to check the vitals of your organization in order to help you identify opportunities for improvement and promote long-term organizational effectiveness.



How to Conduct The Staff Assessment

This worksheet focuses on individual staff resilience and is to be filled out by each employee within your organization. This worksheet will take 15 minutes or less to complete. It is important to note that for this assessment to be accurate, employees must answer the questions truthfully. To help staff feel safe to do so, have your employees fill out this assessment anonymously. Instruct staff to not include their name or any distinguishing information on their worksheets.

For your convenience, this assessment is available as a [Google Form](#). Google Forms are easy to use and will compile the results for you automatically, which saves valuable time. To utilize this tool, please carefully follow the instructions below.

Using the Staff Assessment Google Form

Step 1

Go to the [Staff Resiliency Assessment Form](#).

Step 2

In the top-right corner, click More (the three vertical dots) > Make a copy.

Step 3

Name your copy.

Step 4

Make sure to change the file location to YOUR Google Drive. Click the folder and specify the new location. Click OK.

Step 5

Share the form with each staff member by clicking the "Send" button in the top-right corner. You can share the form via email or by copying and pasting the link.



While we recommend using the Google Form, we have included a PDF of this document in the appendix if you would prefer to have your staff fill out the assessment via PDF or by hand. If you prefer this route, we recommend asking a staff member, not the executive director, to collect the handouts **anonymously** and use this [Google Spreadsheet](#) to score the assessments. This spreadsheet is quite advanced and will require a person that is well versed in Spreadsheets or Excel to operate. To use the spreadsheet, go to File > Make a Copy or Download. If you are not an advanced user of Spreadsheets or Excel, we recommend using the [Google Form](#).

Staff Resiliency Assessment

FOR STAFF

Please answer the questions below truthfully and to the best of your knowledge. This form will take 15 minutes or less to complete. If you're not quite sure which answer to choose, remember "first choice, best choice." This means go with your gut and pick the first answer that pops into your head. **Please indicate if the following statements are true "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," "Rarely," or "Never."**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I feel connected to my organization's mission and vision.					
I have the power to create positive change in my position.					
I believe my organization uses effective strategies and tactics.					
I feel engaged during staff meetings.					
I feel I can be honest about my mental health with my supervisor.					
I can talk openly about burnout with my supervisor and colleagues.					
I am treated with empathy and respect by my supervisor and the leadership team.					
I feel that my colleagues and I are treated fairly.					
I feel a sense of community with my colleagues.					
At the end of the day, I can go home and relax without thinking about work.					
At the end of the day, I still have the energy to engage with tasks outside of work.					
Workplace stress does not affect my mental health.					
I know what is expected of me at work.					
My supervisor provides clear expectations.					
I trust leadership to communicate important information to staff.					
My organization values and practices transparency.					
I know my boundaries are respected.					
I am allowed to ask for help.					
My workload and my capacity match.					
The pace of work within the organization is sustainable for me.					
I have enough time during the workday to finish my work and meet my deadlines.					
At work, I am able to stay focused.					
At work, I am able to think clearly and comprehend complex ideas.					
I am excited to go to work in the morning.					
I am passionate about the work that I do.					
I feel happy at work.					
I do not get overwhelmed at work.					
My stress levels at work feel tolerable.					
My compensation accurately reflects my experience and the work I put in.					
I feel secure in my position.					

Do external circumstances (such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, or the current political climate) affect your feelings toward work? If so, briefly explain.

Have there been any big shifts within the organization lately? If so, briefly explain.

Has your level of productivity at work changed recently? If so, briefly explain.

This worksheet was designed to be filled out by the executive director, human resources staff, a member of the leadership team, or a member of the board of trustees—whomever has access to the relevant information. The purpose of this worksheet is to analyze the quantitative markers for resiliency within the organization, including paid time off, work hours, compensation, and other benefits. Answer the questions below as thoroughly as possible. **Once you have completed each question, use the information in the Scoring Yourself section to assess the result.**

Paid Time Off (PTO)

1. In total, how many employee vacation days have been taken compared to the number of vacation days offered?
-
-
-
2. In total, how many employee sick/wellness days have been taken compared to the number of sick/wellness days offered?
-
-
-

Work Hours

3. What is the average number of hours worked by staff weekly? If staff are salaried, how often do staff members exceed 40 hours per week?
-
-
-

Compensation

4. Is your employee compensation competitive compared to other industry nonprofits and does it reflect the cost of living in their location(s)? To find the answers to this question, some market research may be needed. Pay attention to what salaries similar organizations are offering. Take advantage of salary calculator tools at [Glassdoor](#) and [Salary.com](#). Research the [cost of living](#) where your employees are located.
-
-
-
5. Do employees receive merit-based raises at least yearly? If so, what range of percentage raises were given in the last 3 years? If not, why?
-
-
-
6. Do employees receive annual cost of living salary increases? If so, what percentage increases were given in the last 3 years? If not, why?
-
-
-

Other Benefits

7. What other employee benefits do you offer? Circle all that apply.

<i>Wellness day</i>	<i>Nature days</i>
<i>Health benefits Mental health benefits</i>	<i>Dental insurance</i>
<i>Vision insurance</i>	<i>Retirement account with matching contributions</i>
<i>Retirement account without matching contributions</i>	<i>Life insurance</i>
<i>Disability insurance</i>	<i>Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) or Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)</i>
<i>Paid medical leave</i>	<i>Unpaid medical leave</i>
<i>Gym or health club membership</i>	<i>Sabbatical program</i>
<i>Allowances for work-from-home equipment</i>	<i>Professional development allowances and mentoring</i>
<i>Reduce work week / 32-hour work week</i>	<i>Salary bonuses</i>

Scoring

the Staff Resiliency Assessment

Once each member of your staff has anonymously completed the assessment, it is time to compile the results. Take a look at the answers. If you used the [Google Form](#), open the form and click the Responses tab in the top-center, then use the scoring method below.

If you used the PDF from the appendix or if you printed the PDF and filled the worksheet out by hand, you can use this [Google Spreadsheet](#) to score your answers. However, be advised that this Spreadsheet is quite advanced and will require a person that is well versed in Spreadsheets or Excel to operate. Go to File > Make a Copy or Download to use the spreadsheet. If you are not an advanced user of Spreadsheets or Excel, we recommend using the [Google Form](#).

So, how did we get these scoring metrics? We used the 5:1 ratio. Our brains are hardwired to have negative stimuli affect us more than positive stimuli, so, according to expert psychologists, we need 5 positive interactions to counteract each negative interaction. When we turn the 5:1 ratio into a percentage, we get 83.33% positive stimuli to 16.66% negative stimuli. To make it easy (because we love making things easier), we rounded down to make it an even 80%, which explains why about 80% satisfaction is good enough to keep your employees happy and healthy. Visit [Appendix B](#) to learn more about the scoring metric for this worksheet.

The short answer questions are more qualitative and are not included in our scoring metrics; however, they give you the opportunity to better understand your staff and what could be affecting them. For example, our world is moving and changing faster than ever. External circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, or the current political climate, could be having a negative impact on your staff, especially those with marginalized identities, as we discussed in the Introduction to Resiliency. Big internal shifts can also have a negative impact on staff if proper precautions are not taken in advance. Lastly, decreases in productivity levels are an indicator of burnout. Review the information below. Are there any patterns or similarities among the staff answers to these questions? These answers could provide revelations about your staff or spark ideas for additional ways you can support them.

Take some time with your staff's results now. Get a sense of where you and your organization are. **And remember, resiliency is about accepting and supporting your whole self, and your whole organization, just as you, and they, are right now.**

Scoring

24 questions +

If “Always” and “Often” are selected by your staff 80% of the time or more (24 questions or more), then congratulations! You’re doing a great job creating an environment that promotes resilience on your team. We’d love to hear how you did it!

15-24 questions

If “Always” and “Often” are selected by your staff less than 80% but more than 50% of the time (between 15 and 24 questions), then you are still doing a good job, although proceed with caution and consider which resiliency strategies listed in the last chapter you will implement in your short and long-term resiliency plan.

15 questions or less

If “Always” and “Often” are selected by your staff 50% or less of the time (15 or less questions), it’s time to take a look at how your organization operates. Luckily, you’ve already taken the first step by conducting this Resiliency Audit. We suggest creating and implementing a short and long-term resiliency strategy to support your staff and strengthen your organization.

Scoring

the Internal Organization Resiliency Assessment

Once you have completed the Internal Organization Resiliency Assessment, please review the information below. Each number corresponds to the question number on the worksheet. Use this information to evaluate your answers and to serve as a guide in the next chapter.

Paid Time Off (PTO)

1. Staff need time off to prevent burnout, but most workers don't take enough.¹ In organizations that show a low level of resilience, staff are often apprehensive to use their vacation days. This could be because staff are actively discouraged to do so by leadership or their workloads are so heavy that they feel they cannot afford to spend time away for fear of getting behind (or getting even further behind). If your staff aren't taking advantage of their vacation days, consider why that may be and work to support your employees to do so.
2. Conversely, in organizations that show a low level of resilience, staff often take more sick days in order to cope with their symptoms of burnout.² If your staff are taking a high number of sick days, consider why that may be and, using the recommendations in the final chapter, work to rectify the situation.

Work Hours

3. The 40-hour work week, which was established in 1940 when single-income households were the norm, has a growing number of critics as neurological evidence is mounting that the human brain can only sustain deep focus for 3 - 4.5 hours per day, depending on the person.^{3,4} Studies have found that people who work more than 40 hours per week are less healthy, make more mistakes, and are less productive than those that don't.⁵ If your staff are consistently working more than 40 hours per week, it's time to ask why. Do they have too much on their plate? Are leaders in the organization modeling working late nights? If your employees are consistently working more than 40 hours per week, they are more susceptible to burnout.

Compensation

4. Nonprofits are notoriously underfunded. Many of us know this when we start pursuing a career of service, but our passion drives us to want to make the world a better place. However, work stress and burnout are compounded when employees go home and then struggle to afford basic necessities, especially with inflation being at the highest rate in 40 years.⁶ According to the Pew Research Center, low pay was the top reason employees left their jobs in 2021.⁷ Ensuring employees are paid their worth is a non-negotiable when it comes to resilient organizations.
5. Merit-based raises increase retention, productivity, and serve as strong motivators for achievement.
6. If you are not giving an annual cost of living salary increase that reflects the percent of inflation, you are giving a pay cut.

Other Benefits

7. Employee benefits help employees feel appreciated and rewarded for their work. They also help your employees and their families stay happy and healthy. Having a strong benefits package keeps your organization competitive when recruiting new employees and helps retain existing employees. 78% of employees say they are more likely to stay in a role if they like their benefits.⁸ The more you have circled, the better.



Recommendations for Increased Staff Resiliency

Congratulations on making it to the final step in this resiliency audit! So far, you have learned all about resiliency, burnout, and how important it is for leaders to support their staff in order to create innovative, effective, and enduring organizations. You have also identified where your organization is in your individual resiliency journey.

Much of this final chapter will be focused on solutions that can only be implemented by the leadership of your organization. One important question to ask is—who has the power to implement the necessary changes? We are writing this chapter with that person in mind.

Remember, in this audit, we focus on cultural, organization-wide solutions to correct burnout within an organization. Individual stress-management practices, like breathing exercises and taking frequent breaks, are very important, but we believe resiliency requires sustained cultural changes at all levels of an organization. And it starts with leadership. As we've mentioned, leadership must model resiliency or it won't work. **Leaders set the tone.**

Using Your Results

Using the results of your resiliency assessments, we recommend creating a short and a long-term resiliency plan. In the short-term resiliency plan, you will identify practices that you can implement immediately or within the next 3 months. These practices are the “low-hanging fruit” of resiliency. Examples include implementing a flexible schedule, regularly acknowledging staff for their accomplishments, or reducing interruptions by experimenting with a “no-email Friday” or a “no-Slack Friday.”

Your long-term resiliency plan includes the practices that will take 3 months or more to implement. Perhaps you will need to fundraise to implement them or they may require an internal restructuring. Examples include creating a sabbatical program, increasing salaries so they are competitive and market-based, or reexamining your programs to ensure your goals are within the capacity of your staff.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

When the below recommendations are applied fairly to everyone within an organization, they help promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. People of privilege can often create these structures of resilience for themselves because they have more wealth and/or more access to resources. But as we've already discussed, people of color, women, people with disabilities, and LGBT+ community members are burning out at alarming rates. To promote equity and fairness, we are formalizing these structures to ensure people who have not traditionally had access to them will in the future. We need equitable solutions to combat the burnout epidemic. When solutions are implemented equitably, they naturally address the needs of all people.

Resiliency Practice Recommendations

Below you will find a thorough list of resiliency practice recommendations. The list is categorized by topic and indicates if they will likely take more or less than 3 months to implement (i.e. if they are a short or long term resiliency solution). As you'll see, there aren't short-term solutions for every category. All of the recommendations below that require funding have been put in the long-term (greater than 3 months) section, because we understand that fundraising takes time. In the meantime, we suggest focusing on implementing culture solutions, which are free of charge. Review the list below and then proceed to the [resiliency planning document templates](#). To use the template, go to File > Make a Copy or Download.

Recommendations for Increased Staff Resiliency

CATEGORY	TERM	RECOMMENDATIONS	EXPLANATION, IF APPLICABLE
Employee Benefits	Long-term	As part of your benefits package, make sure to provide: ■ Ample vacation and sick/wellness days ■ Health benefits that include liberal behavior health benefits Also provide one or more of the following: ■ Nature Rx days ■ Professional development allowances and mentoring ■ Gym or health club membership ■ Sabbatical program ■ Allowances for work-from-home and/or ergonomic equipment	Nature Rx days are optional paid time off that employees can use to get outside to support their mental health and take advantage of the healing nature of, well, nature.
Salary	Long-term	■ Ensure salaries are competitive and market-based. Ideally the salaries you offer should be considered a “thriving wage.” ■ Give yearly merit-based salary increases ■ Give yearly accurate cost of living increases ■ Provide salary bonuses when possible ■ Implement a salary transparency policy	The “minimum wage” is the lowest amount that an employer can legally pay their employees. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. There is no city in the United States where the federal minimum wage is considered enough to live.¹ A “living wage” is defined as the minimum amount an individual must be paid to meet their basic needs, like food and shelter, but not much else. MIT created a living wage calculator that can be used to determine the living wage by location. That can be found here. But we are aiming for a “thriving wage.” While still an emerging concept, the thriving wage can be thought of as the amount needed to not only live, but flourish, in a given area. This includes the amount of money needed to take part in travel, hobbies, and the other things that make life exciting and worthwhile. Every human should be paid a thriving wage no matter their job function. Unfortunately, there is not a “thriving wage calculator.” We hope there will be in the future, but in the meantime, here is a helpful article from a company that implemented their own thriving wage.
Collective Culture these are recommendations that are implemented on an organization-wide basis	Short-term	■ Ensure employees have the ability to take frequent breaks ■ Allow for flexible schedules to accommodate a variety of needs ■ Celebrate successes publicly ■ Provide opportunities for staff connection and community building during work hours ■ Reduce interruptions ■ If you have staff that come into an office, make sure to create an environment conducive to stress reduction and productivity. This can be accomplished by reducing unnecessary noise, using natural light, and incorporating natural elements, like plants, in offices.	A flexible schedule usually refers to allowing employees to choose their daily start and end times, within reason. This helps accommodate people with children that need to be picked up from school or folks with disabilities that have frequent doctors appointments. There are endless benefits to a flexible schedule. Giving your employees the trust needed to take care of their work and their personal lives is huge when it comes to long-term resilience. Trust and safety are the foundational elements of resilient teams. To build this, teams must spend time getting to know each other. By providing opportunities to do so during work hours, you are investing in the longevity of your teams. With instant messenger platforms like Slack and constant emails being the norm, interruptions are common in the workplace. However, a University of California study found that it can take 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption.² This is a huge time suck and a stressor that can be easily avoided by creating policies aimed at reducing interruptions. Some policy ideas include only allowing instant messaging during certain times of day or experimenting with a “no-email Friday” or a “no-Slack Friday.” Learning what works best for your staff and enforcing it will be key.
	Long-term	■ Designate a “resiliency leader,” or a resiliency working group, that individual staff members can check in with on a weekly or monthly basis regarding their resiliency levels. Leadership can check in with that person or group and work with them to keep tabs on the resiliency “temperature” of the organization and implement changes as needed. The resiliency leader or working group must be compensated for additional responsibilities or have something taken off their plate to offset the additional work. ■ Pilot a reduced work week	A reduced work week is when employees work 80% of their normal hours, but keep 100% of their salary. Employees typically work Monday through Thursday and then enjoy a three-day weekend. This may sound like a farce to some employers, but hear us out. Companies that have piloted a reduced work week have seen an increase in productivity and employee wellbeing, promoting even more companies to give it a shot. A recent pilot of 70 companies in the UK has shown very promising results. According to Bloomberg, “Nearly all of the participating UK organizations (86%) said they’ll likely keep four-day schedules after the pilots finish in November [2022]. Almost half, 49%, said that productivity had improved, while 46% said it has remained stable.”³ And 4 Day Week Global, the organization that is running the UK pilot, says that 78% of employees are happier and less stressed with a reduced work week. Employee retention and a competitive edge when hiring are also advantages of utilizing a reduced work week.
Leadership culture these are recommendations that are implemented and utilized by leadership	Short-term	■ Never question when an employee needs time off. ■ Ensure an employee’s capacity and their workload correspond as closely as possible. ■ Provide realistic and clear expectations. ■ Ensure frequent communication and transparency. ■ Take neuroscience seriously. ■ Keep employees informed of internal change. ■ Ensure performance expectations and metrics are within an employee’s control. ■ Ensure autonomy within staff positions. ■ Trust employee expertise and don’t micromanage. ■ Make sure employees have the resources they need and the decision-making power to achieve their goals. ■ Provide regular opportunities for staff to give their supervisors feedback, perhaps during staff reviews. ■ Check in on staff stress levels. If staff are overextended, prioritize and take things off their plate. ■ Never ask your staff to “do more with less.” ■ Provide special accommodations to employees with disabilities, including mental health disabilities. ■ Practice empathy and active listening. ■ Make sure the values of your organization are reflected internally.	Remember that your staff are people, not robots. Brains need time to reset after a stressful meeting or an unfavorable outcome. They also need about 23 minutes to get back on task after an interruption, as we’ve already seen. Our brains also need downtime throughout the day. High-order thinking, which includes concept creation, big picture thinking, problem solving, and brainstorming, takes more energy and can’t be sustained indefinitely. Our brains need breaks to operate optimally. Active listening is a term coined by Carl Rogers and Richard Farson which means to listen to understand, not to respond. Many times when we are in a conversation, especially a heated one, we’re already developing a response in our heads while the other person is still speaking. While active listening, we challenge ourselves not to do that, and instead, tap into our empathy and seek to understand the other persons point of view. Accommodations for staff with disabilities may include flexible work schedules, extended work deadlines, or a smaller scope of work. If your mission is to promote the health and longevity of your local ecosystem, make sure you are doing the same for your staff.
	Long-term	■ Provide emotional intelligence training to supervisors within the organization.	Daniel Goleman, who coined the term emotional intelligence, has an emotional intelligence course, but do some research and find a training that would fit best for your staff.



Closing Statement

Congratulations on completing this Resiliency Audit! Your commitment to the health and wellbeing of your staff, your organization, and by extension, the planet, is so admirable. Please take a moment to share your experience with us by completing this simple [feedback form](#). We look forward to continuously improving this audit with your help. Thank you for being a part of this process!

Now, here comes what may be the hard part: implementing your resiliency plans. Changing the world isn't easy, and it'll be impossible unless we change how we do business first. We're so excited for you to begin this journey and we are here to help you along the way.

In addition to having the [Conservation Lands Foundation](#) as a cardinal resource, I am also available to ease your passage along the way. Where you are going, only a few brave organizations have gone before. You are a trailblazer! And your unique situation calls for unique and novel solutions. I would be honored to advise you on your resiliency journey. [Sailing Hawks Consulting](#), based in Durango, CO, is here for you. Please reach out at your earliest convenience.

Remember, resiliency is a collective responsibility. Resiliency can only be achieved in community and with the full commitment from the leaders at your organization. Bring your values to the forefront, trust your gut, and move forward knowing you are changing the world for the better.



**Resiliency is
a collective
responsibility.**

Appendix

Appendix A

Mental health resources for diverse communities:

[LatinxTherapy.com](#) is a national directory for latinx therapists in private practice. Their mission is to “destigmatize mental health in the Latinx community.”

[Black Emotional and Mental Health \(BEAM\)](#) “is a national training, movement building, and grant making institution that is dedicated to the healing, wellness, and liberation of Black and marginalized communities.” They offer black peer support and additional resources to support black healing.

[Melanin & Mental Health](#) connects “individuals with culturally competent clinicians committed to serving the mental health needs of Black & Latinx/Hispanic communities.”

[Asian Mental Health Project](#) “aims to educate and empower Asian communities in seeking mental healthcare.

[South Asian Mental Health Initiative and Network](#), SAMHIN, “is a non-profit that addresses the mental health needs of the South Asian community in the U.S.” The South Asian in

[WeRNative](#) is a “comprehensive health resource for Native youth, by Native youth, providing content and stories about the topics that matter most to them. We strive to promote holistic health and positive growth in our local communities and nation at large.”

Outdoor community resources:

[Outdoor Afro](#)

[Natives Outdoors](#)

[Outdoor Asian](#)

[Latino Outdoors](#)

[Brown Girls Climb](#)

[Unlikely Hikers](#)

[Native Women’s Wilderness](#)

[Indigenous Women Hike](#)

[Pride Outside](#)

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) resources for organizations:

[White Awake](#): “an online platform and nonprofit organization focused on political education for people who are classified as ‘white’.”

[Indigenous Ally Toolkit](#): A toolkit for working with indigenous peoples.

[The Avarna Group Resources](#): The Avarna Group creates pathways, provides resources, and innovates strategies that support the outdoor and environmental sector in their evolution toward diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (collectively, DEIJ).

Training Resources for the Environmental Community DEI toolkits:

[Toolkit 1: Foundations](#)

[Toolkit 2: Getting Started](#)

[Toolkit 3: Internal Culture, Practices, and Policies](#)

[Toolkit 4: Partnerships and Community Engagement](#)

[Toolkit 5: Equitable Fund Development and Donor Outreach](#)

[Toolkit 6: Accountability](#)

[Toolkit 7: Considerations in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

Appendix B

5:1 Ratio additional information:

Our brains are hardwired to have negative stimuli affect us more than positive stimuli. It's called the Negativity Bias.¹ Throughout human evolution, this has generally been a helpful thing. It has kept us alive, helped us avoid creatures that would have us for dinner, and kept our communities intact by encouraging us to be more cooperative. However, like many aspects in our brains, the negativity bias remains despite our environmental threats being substantially reduced in this modern age.

Because negative stimuli stays with us longer, we need more positive stimuli to counteract it. That's just how our brains work. Drs. John and Julie Gottman, world-renowned relationship psychologists with over five decades of research and scientific backing, came up with a ratio, a "magic ratio," in fact. Within relationships, they discovered that for every negative interaction, there must be 5 positive interactions to balance it out.² This ratio doesn't exclusively apply to romantic relationships. Extensive research has discovered that this ratio applies to all types of relationships, including work relationships.³

By applying the 5:1 ratio to the Staff Resiliency Assessment, we are able to discern the likelihood of your staff being able to thrive within their optimal levels of engagement and stress tolerance at work. When we turn the 5:1 ratio into a percentage, we get 83.33% positive stimuli to 16.66% negative stimuli. To make it easy (because we love making things easier), we rounded down to make it an even 80% and to give our organizations a little grace. Hence, we want our staff to be within their individual zones of stress tolerance at least 80% of the time. Things don't have to be perfect, they just need to be about 80%.

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