

Presentation to the House Wildfire Recovery Committee | February 21, 2022

ODHS Mass Care 2022 Budget Request

Fariborz Pakseresht, Director, ODHS

Ed Flick, Director, ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency
Management

ODHS Equity North Star



The Oregon Department of Human Services inclusively leads with race and intersectionality in order to address the roots of systemic oppression that impact all protected classes.



We are dedicated to making services, supports, and well-being accessible to all.



We are committed to partnering with communities to develop and deliver policies and programs that are equitable and improve community conditions.



We and communities will know our services and supports are working when all who live in Oregon can achieve well-being, regardless of identity or place.

Agencywide focus

Three priority areas:

**Strengthening our
foundations**

**Responding to
emergencies and
disasters**

**Creating the future
of human services
in Oregon**

ODHS commitment to survivors



Emergency response and resilience: ODHS's role

Oregon's **Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan*** identifies ODHS as the Primary Agency responsible for:

- Mass care
- Emergency shelter
- Food
- Water
- Disaster social services



*See CEMP Volume III, Emergency Support Functions 6 and 11; and Volume IV, State Recovery Function 4

Ongoing response and recovery efforts



**Community
assistance**



**Emergent
issues
response**



**COVID-19
response**



**Natural
disaster
response**

Turning point: The 2020 wildfires



In September 2020, ODHS emergency management staff consisted of just **three Salem-based positions**, two of which were half-time.

As the fires took hold, **ODHS emergently built the Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM)** through job rotations, intergovernmental agreements, reassignments, and volunteers.

ODHS wildfire response

More than
4,300 survivors
sheltered*

1,432 cases
currently receiving
disaster case
management*

More than **1.5
million meals**
delivered*

819 survivors
transitioned to
long-term housing**

79 hotels provided
shelter under
ODHS contracts

Wraparound
services through **8
community-based
organizations**

**As of February 7, 2022*

*** Between May 10, 2021 and February 9, 2022*

Supporting recovery through partnerships



Bennie and his four children are Siletz Tribal members and survivors of the Echo Mountain Complex Fire.

Evacuated to an ODHS shelter facility after fire destroyed their home, this single-parent family was able to get back to school and work thanks to combined supports from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Lincoln County School District, Community Service Consortium, and Disaster Case Management.

Community assistance: Building responsive services



Tribal engagement enabling rapid and effective response

The new Tribal Emergency Coordinator position has facilitated our regular and ongoing consultation with Tribes.

When a Tribe lost communications in February 2022, ODHS was able to quickly deploy a satellite communications system to restore internet service and allow the reopening of local social services offices.

COVID-19 response: Supporting public health efforts



Joint response with Oregon Health Authority

ODHS partnered with a vendor to provide **meals and food boxes** at vaccination sites all around the state.

ODHS established joint incident management team with OHA.

Natural disaster response: Coordinating emergency response



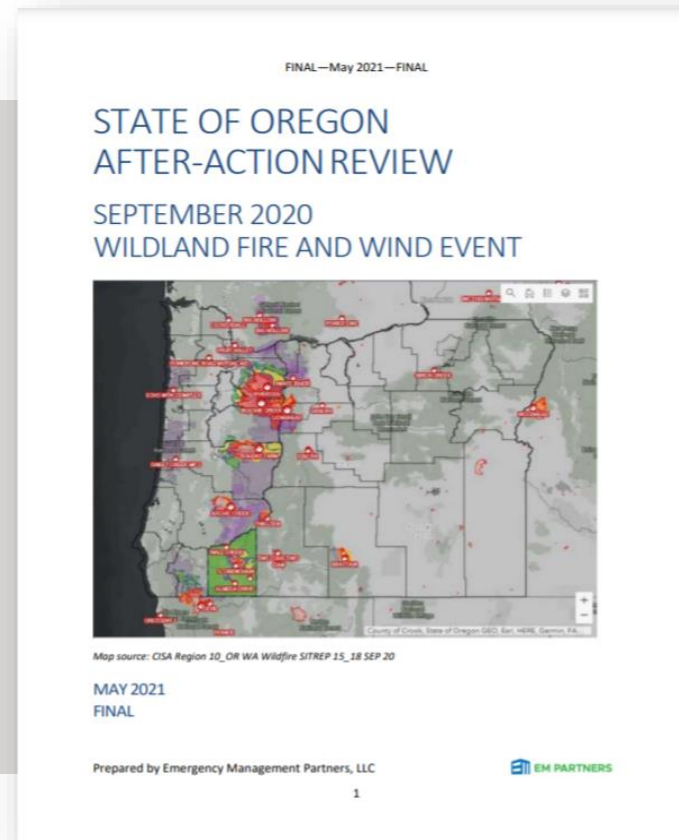
Drought Response in Klamath County

ODHS regional staff worked with Office of Emergency Management to support Klamath County in providing water where wells went dry due to a drought emergency.

ODHS provided water storage tanks and coordinated the delivery of water through public-private partnerships.

Critical gaps persist

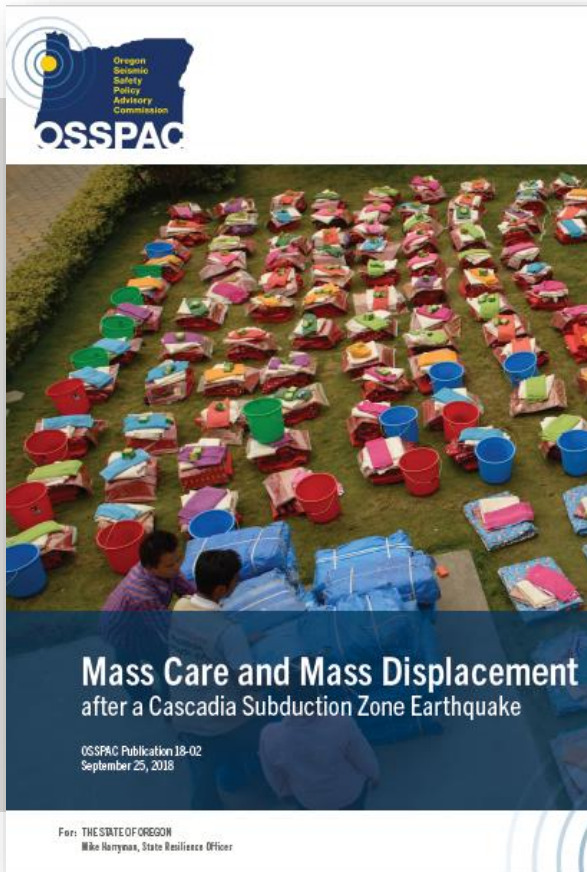
*DHS staff dedicated to the mass care mission need a **structured, funded, ongoing training and exercise program** for operations in declared emergencies. **Relationship building with partners** should be a noted priority (page 50*).*



*Staffing gaps at DHS, including a vacancy in the state Mass Care Lead role, created a **gap in disaster response-related institutional knowledge**, and challenges connecting with mass care operational partners with subject matter expertise (page 10*).*

*State of Oregon After-Action Review
September 2020 Wildland Fire and Wind Event

Unprepared for Cascadia events



*Oregon is currently **not prepared to provide mass care and mass displacement services** for its residents and visitors following a Cascadia earthquake and tsunami (page iv*).*

Recommendation: *Provide transparent and consistent funding mechanisms for all mass care and mass displacement coordination and resilience planning. State agencies with mass care roles need to have stable funding for specific programs to ensure their emergency and recovery functions are adequately executed (page 9*) .*

*Mass Care and Mass Displacement After a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake, OSSPAC, 2018

The price of unpreparedness



Increased hardship and delayed recovery

The standard route for securing federal disaster case management services takes months. That meant 2020 fire survivors had to wait in shelter for **long periods before receiving the supports** they needed to begin recovering.

Lack of staff and an online-only communication system meant that **survivors waited for months** in hotel rooms before they could interact with ODHS or service partners.

The price of unpreparedness



Limited capacity to meet survivors' basic needs

At the local and Tribal level, more than 30 percent of post-2020 wildfire survey* respondents evaluated **food and water distribution** as “poor.”

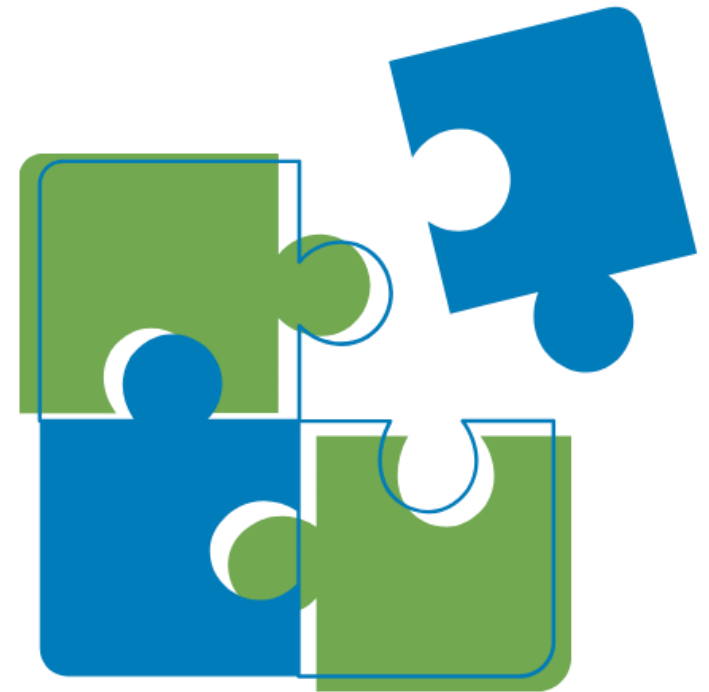
More than half evaluated **evacuation site security** as “poor.”

*2020 After Incident Review: 31

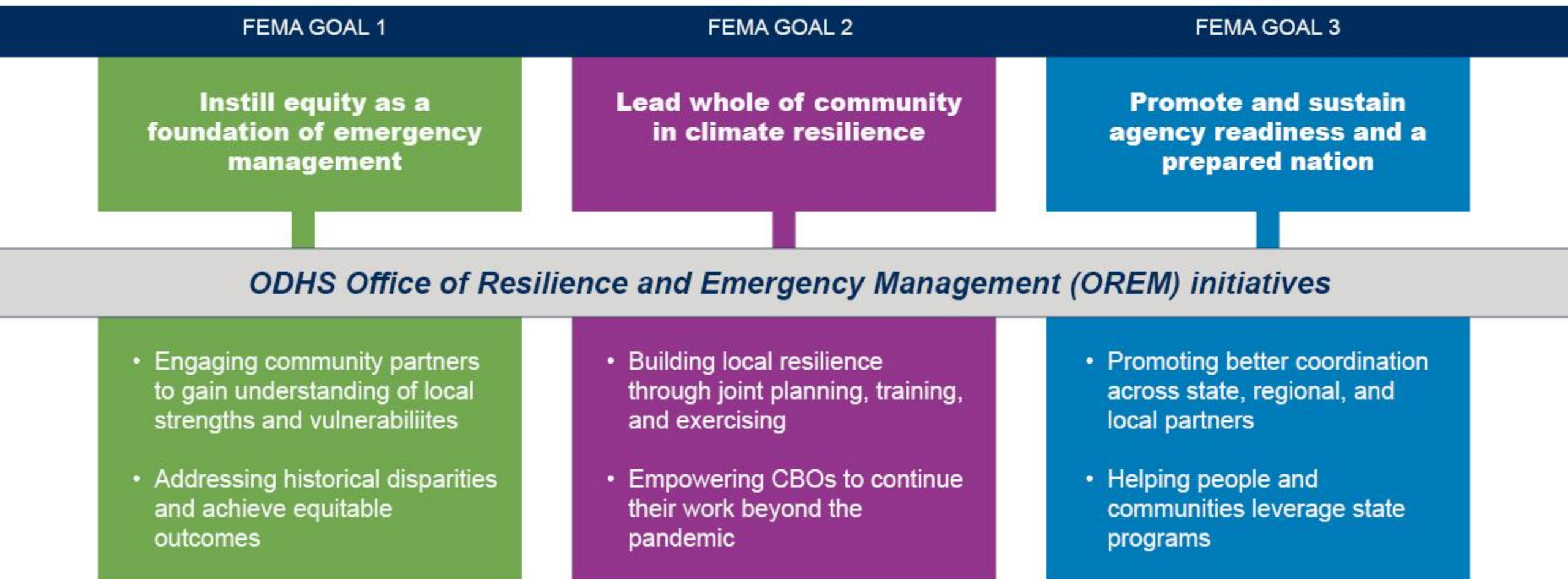
The work ahead

The state's after-action reviews (AARs) from 2020 and 2021 identify four focal areas for **filling Oregon's mass care preparedness gaps**:

1. ODHS ownership of mass care function
2. Resolving overreliance on non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
3. Collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs)
4. Transition from mass care to disaster housing



A FEMA-aligned strategy



Ownership of mass care



Establishing expert staff

Regional staff empower ODHS to build stronger relationships with communities and better support local jurisdictions in building mass care capacity.

Central staff provide incident management capacity to sustain long-term response and recovery efforts.

Resolving overreliance on NGOs



Multiple efforts underway:

- Emergency evacuation point planning
- Mass care response teams
- Micro-housing transition

Sustaining CBO collaboration



Investing in local capacity

Santiam Service Integration provided assistance to 2020 fire survivors, but the organization's resources were limited.

ODHS support ensured that they could continue their critical work and expand their services.

Transition from mass care to disaster housing



Investing in shelter

ODHS is focused on making long-term shelter solutions available after the pandemic, when federal support for non-congregate sheltering may run out.

Building a prepared Oregon

To move this work forward, ODHS is requesting a \$38.2 million investment that will:

- Permanently **staff the mass care mission.**
- Enable effective emergency coordination through **training and exercising.**
- Provide facilities, equipment, and supplies to enable **faster statewide deployment** of mass care resources.
- Build communities' capacity to empower **effective local response** across the state.





Q&A
