

Oregon Resource  
Cooperative Assistance  
Agreement (ORCAA)



2024 Annual Report

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## Executive Summary

This report is the first survey regarding the utilization of the Oregon Resources Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA) program and its use in 5 years. While the survey conducted received limited participation, responses were very insightful in providing useful recommendations for improvements to the ORCAA statewide mutual aid agreement and its processes.

While anecdotally Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) staff know the ORCAA has been utilized by emergency service partners over the years, there is little documented evidence to show it has been used and implemented, nor information on its effectiveness. Although the *ORCAA Implementation Guide* states utilization of the ORCAA must be reported to OEM for inclusion in an annual report, this rarely happens.

For a program to be effective and successful it must be known by the parties for whom it was created. The program information must be easy to find, and its processes are easy to utilize and implement. Once implemented, program changes made based upon recommendations identified in this report will provide for a more robust, user-friendly, and easy-to-utilize intrastate mutual aid program within Oregon.

## Background

Senate Bill 62 was passed in the 2017 legislative session and specifically amended elements of Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 402 related to intrastate mutual aid. The *Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA)* was established under the direction and oversight of the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM).

### **SECTION 1.**

*402.200. The Legislative Assembly finds that:*

*(1) In order to minimize the impact of an event that overwhelms the resources of the state government or a local or tribal government, one government entity should be able to make resources available to another government entity as quickly as possible.*

*(2) It is appropriate to establish an efficient and permissive intrastate mutual assistance agreement among government entities that will allow entities maximum flexibility to protect life and property within their jurisdictions.*

In the Fall of 2017, OEM Director Andrew Phelps identified and convened a working group of local and state agency partners to develop an implementation plan and other resources needed for the ORCAA to be successfully utilized by stakeholders. On 12/31/17 the OEM published the *Oregon Resources Cooperative Assistance Agreement Implementation Plan* outlining the membership and use of the ORCAA, as well as blank and sample completed resource request forms.

Information on the ORCAA may be found on the OEM web page under *Emergency Management Resources*: <https://www.oregon.gov/oem/emresources/Pages/Mutual-Aid-Agreements.aspx>

As outlined in the *ORCAA Implementation Plan*, the OEM will conduct an annual assessment with stakeholders on the utilization and effectiveness of the ORCAA. This annual assessment will help identify opportunities to improve the statewide intrastate mutual aid system.

In early 2019, OEM issued its first ORCAA use survey to county and tribal partners related to their use of ORCAA during 2018. The overall level of response to the survey was moderate, with 19/45 respondents submitting information. With the advent of COVID in 2020, no assessment was conducted in the intervening years until now. This report is the first informal review of the utilization of ORCAA and its processes in 5 years.

## ORCAA Membership

Pursuant to ORS 402.200, the state (as defined in ORS 174.111) and every local government (as defined in ORS 174.116) of the state is automatically a participant in the ORCAA. Participation in the system does not preclude member jurisdictions from entering into other agreements with

other political subdivisions or tribal governments to the extent provided by law. Participation does not supersede or affect any other agreement to which a political subdivision is a party or may become a party.

A tribal government (as defined in ORS 401.305) may become a participant upon adoption by the tribal government of a resolution declaring the tribe's desire to be a member jurisdiction and intent to comply with the provisions of ORS 402.200 and the guidelines and procedures adopted by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management. Participation becomes official upon receipt of a copy of the resolution by the Director of OEM.

Participants (other than the state) may elect to withdraw from or not participate in the system, but only by adopting a resolution or ordinance declaring those intentions. Withdrawal becomes official upon receipt of a copy of the resolution or ordinance by the Director of OEM.

## Survey Approach

A series of nine (9) questions were asked via the Qualtrics survey tool. The survey was posted for 30 days, from mid-May to mid-June 2024. The survey addressed five (5) key areas, reflected in this report:

- Awareness and Accessibility
- Usage
- Areas for Improvement
- Alternative Agreements
- Recommended Future Actions

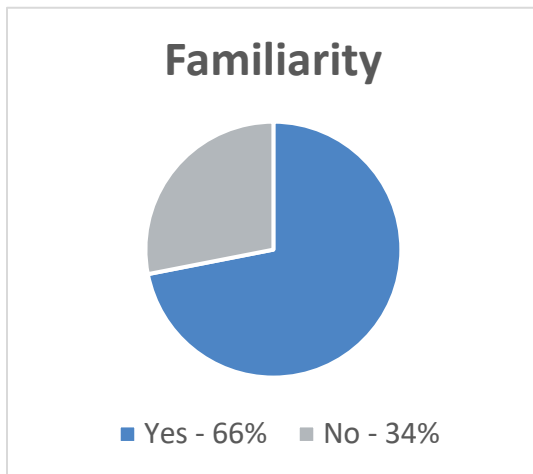
An invitation to complete the survey was sent to five (5) major email listservs, with a total of 894 members:

- Tribal and City/County Emergency Managers: 297
- Oregon Emergency Response System Council: 236
- Search and Rescue Coordinators: 83
- Public Safety Answering Point Agencies: 152
- Chiefs of Police, Sheriff's and Fire Agencies: 126

There was a disappointing rate of return, with only 38 respondents, for a 0.04% return rate. The respondents self-reported these levels of government:

## Awareness and Accessibility

### Are you familiar with the Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA)?



*“Need a refresher about how to get ORCAA information.”*

*“I have only heard bits and pieces of what this is about, but I would like to know more.”*

### Do you feel information regarding the ORCAA is easily accessible?

#### Accessibility



**If yes, what has been most beneficial for accessing the information?**

*“Easy to find on the OEM website. Forms seem straightforward and easy to use.”*

**If not, what specifically makes the information difficult to access?**

*“Was difficult to find on the OEM website. Would be helpful to have a “Mutual Aid” link rather than burying mutual aid under the “Emergency Management Resource” tab. Is not intuitive.”*

*“Unaware the program existed. A public messaging campaign about it would be helpful.”*

*“Unfamiliar with the OpsCenter platform, or how to access ORCAA there.”*

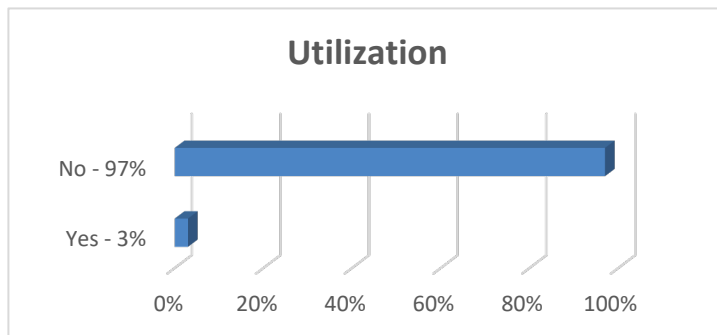
*“Googling “ORCAA” comes up with many options and this agreement is not one of them.”*

*“Hard to find, not a program that is commonly shared out. Example deployment “contract” is fairly basic and could be updated to be a bit more robust.”*

*“I am an emergency manager, and I have never heard of ORCAA and I am a year into the position.”*

## Usage

### Did you use the ORCAA in 2023?



**If yes, please describe your experience using the ORCAA.**

*“Informally yes. Emergency Management staff went to support neighbor counties directly.”*

### If not, is there a specific reason related to ORCAA that prevented you from using it?

*“I find it difficult to decide when I should make a request through ORCAA versus the Omnibus Agreement versus an OpsCenter request, The difficulty with ORCAA is there isn’t a clearinghouse. So I would make an OpsCenter request and hope OEM would do the legwork to find resources who may respond under the ORCAA agreement.”*

Most respondents indicated there was no need to utilize mutual aid during the year.

### Did you utilize ORCAA anytime during 2019-2023?

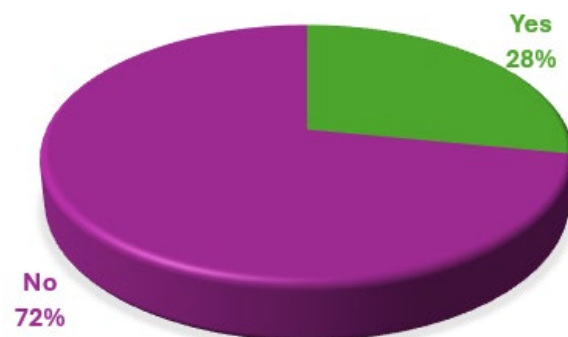
Most respondents indicated there was no need to utilize mutual aid during this time period.

**If yes, please describe your experience using the ORCAA.**

*“Used ORCAA to lend a piece of equipment to a jurisdiction.”*

*“Lane County mutual aid response for Labor Day fires.”*

### UTILIZATION 2019-2023

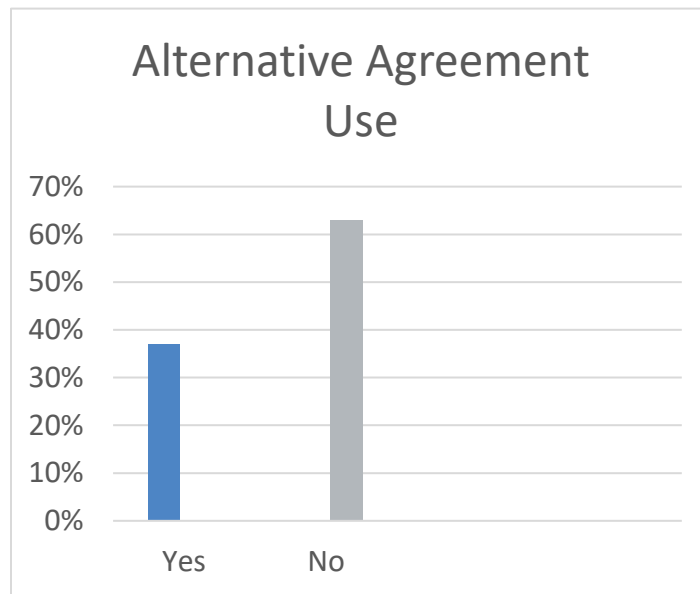


*“For a lending agreement with a neighbor county to use their morgue trailer until ours could arrive.”*

*“Used ORCAA forms and procedures to share resources with a county in southern Oregon.”*

*“COVID, fires, Umatilla floods”*

## Alternative Agreements



**Did you use any other preexisting MOUs or other agreements in 2023? If so, please explain the type and use.**

- *MOUs with private entities*
- *IGAs with local agencies*
- *Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)*
- *Omnibus Agreement*
- *ORWARN*
- *OSFM Conflagration*

*“Informal mutual aid with neighboring jurisdictions for emergency management and law enforcement (formal mutual aid with staffing of extra emergency managers isn’t well standardized).”*

*We created a “deployment” contract for individual and team resources. We have used it to provide classroom instruction to other agencies.”*

*“GEMS (Gorge Emergency Managers) have an unofficial agreement that is used often. ORCAA doesn’t apply here as GEMS cross state boundaries.”*



## Areas for Improvement

### What areas, if any, could be improved with the ORCAA to increase its efficiency?

*“Streamlined request and response forms, which then fill complete agreement, will make for a more efficient ordering and request process.”*

*“Model it after the OSFM Mobilization Plan. Have a standard rate chart and/or expectations for rates.”*

*“It works really well for “stuff” not as well for “staffing” and that’s probably fine, people just need to understand how/when to best use as a request/response tool.”*

*“Draft MOU templates and some model “packages” to help as a possible resource list (e.g. EOC Team, Emergency Management Staff, etc.).”*

### What areas, if any, could be improved with the ORCAA to increase its use?

*“More information out to PSAP managers on a regular basis.”*

*“Education to non-emergency management staff and agencies (DAS, agency procurement department, agency finance departments, etc.)”*

Education and familiarization program for city and county emergency managers as well as leadership and elected officials on the ORCAA:

- What it is
- Resources available
- How to use it
- When to use it
- How to ask for help
- Where to access documents

*“An opportunity to request initial 24-hour reimbursement IF a declaration is declared and reimbursement is established. I’ve seen it several times when an event was eligible for reimbursement, but small units could not get reimbursed for their first 24 hours.”*

## Recommended Future Actions

### Do you have any other suggestions related to the ORCAA for our consideration?

*“More visibility and promotion – educational roadshow.”*

*“Make this part of Emergency Management 101 when a new EM starts – whatever is being worked on currently for new emergency managers.”*

*“Embed a digital copy of it into future resource request platform, for both requests and responses, in addition to scanning paper option.”*

*“For OEM to become the official clearinghouse for ORCAA requests.”*

*“It would be useful to have a simple guide for when to use ORCAA versus the Omnibus Agreement. Alternatively, for someone to do a gap analysis to figure out why the Omnibus and ORCAA both exist, then merge the Omnibus into ORCAA.”*

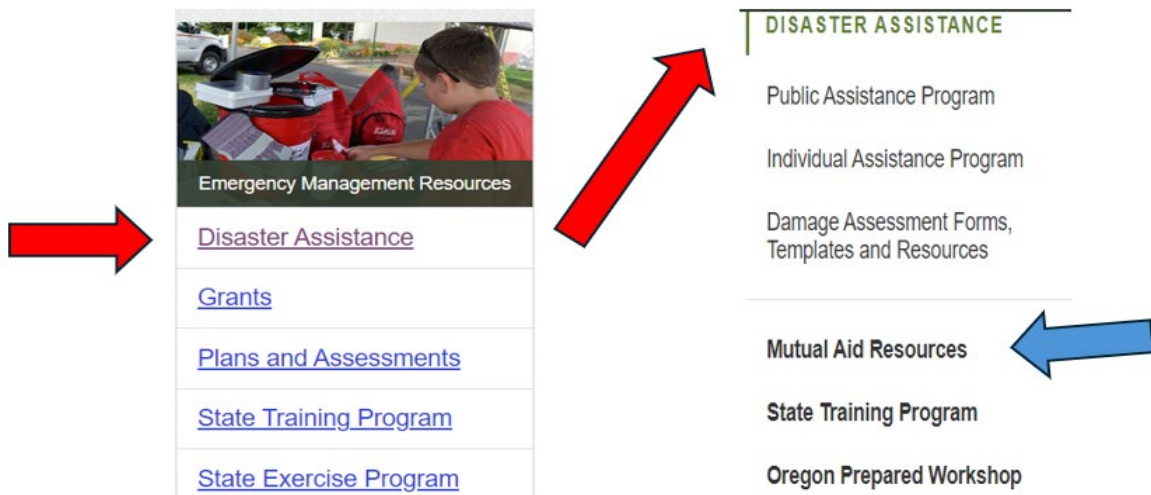
*“I recommend working with ODF and the NWCC which manages resources from 3 states for wildland and all-hazard incidents at the federal level. Reference the NW Mobilization Guide (chapters, 10, 20, 40, and 80) as reference materials to help guide OEM in updating this product.”*

*“I think ORCAA has a lot of potential to be leveraged to help coordinate resources for emergency management staff and EOC personnel.”*

*“This is not intuitive and is difficult to find as Mutual Aid is not listed as a potential search option under the Emergency Management Resources tab. A listing for Mutual Aid should be included to make this information more accessible.”*

## OEM Recommended Follow-Up Actions

- Request an update to the OEM webpage to include a specific *Mutual Aid Resources* tab on the main *Emergency Management Resources* drop-down menu selection. This is currently where the Mutual Aid tab, where the ORCAA is posted, may be found:



- Develop an outreach campaign to educate the emergency services community regarding the ORCAA and other related mutual aid agreements.
- Develop an Appendix (or similar) on mutual aid agreements for inclusion in the OEM document *Emergency Declarations and Guidelines for Elected and Appointed Officials*
- Create a multi-discipline, multi-governmental level working group (potentially a task force under an existing group such as the Emergency Management Advisory Group) to:
  - Review and update the *ORCAA Implementation Guide*.
  - Review and update the current *ORCAA Resource Request and Offer* form and process.
  - Develop sample completed templates for equipment and staff.

## Acronyms

EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact (interstate mutual aid)
GEMS	Gorge Emergency Managers
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OEM	Oregon Department of Emergency Management
ORCAA	Oregon Resource Cooperative Assistance Agreement
ORS	Oregon Revised Statute
OSFM	Oregon Department of State Fire Marshal

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