

News Release

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One-on-one assistance coming to communities hard hit by September wildfires

(Salem, Ore.) -- The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) has been awarded a \$6.3 million grant by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a disaster case management program.

This disaster case management program provides funding and technical assistance to ensure holistic services to each impacted Oregonian. The program will offer a single point of contact to coordinate a variety of services to assist in addressing the unmet disaster-related needs of September 2020 wildfire survivors.

Disaster case managers work with survivors to identify their unique needs and help coordinate services with federal, state and local programs, including services provided through voluntary and charitable organizations and long-term recovery groups in local communities.

“Thousands of Oregonians’ lives remain disrupted from the devastating wildfires of September 2020. Case managers are essential to identify barriers faced by individuals. They can help connect survivors with services and resources to support them on the path to full recovery,” said ODHS Director Fariborz Pakseresht.

“In our work with survivors and local agencies, it is clear those survivors have struggled to find resources and information about available supports, including shelter, housing resources, food, and other basic necessities,” said Ed Flick, director of the ODHS emergency management unit.

“These services are unique to each individual,” Flick said. “Based on what we’ve seen with current survivors and from disasters in other states, disaster case managers can help people with document recovery and navigating the eligibility and appeals process for FEMA programs; finding interim and permanent housing along

with household supplies and furniture; and accessing counseling and job search support.”

Disaster case management will be open to all Oregon residents impacted by the wildfire disaster, regardless of whether they are registered with FEMA.

ODHS is seeking a not-for-profit provider to carry out the disaster case management program. A request for proposal will be published in March with selection of a vendor soon thereafter.

About ODHS's role: Oregon's emergency and recovery plans give ODHS responsibility to support impacted Oregonians during emergencies and recovery, in keeping with the agency's primary role to assist people in meeting their basic needs while moving toward independence. ODHS is responsible for supporting the sheltering, feeding, emergency assistance, and human services needs of people impacted by disasters. In this role, ODHS coordinates efforts among local and Tribal governments, and nongovernmental organizations.