



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

PREPARED // JANUARY 2025





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## AGENCY INTRODUCTION

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## GOVERNOR'S FIRE SERVICE POLICY COUNCIL

The Governor's Fire Service Policy Council was established to provide advice and guidance to the governor and the state fire marshal on issues of common interest, policies, and affairs that affect the fire protection and life safety of the people of Oregon. The council's membership is explicitly designed to include individuals and communities affected by agencies' decisions, with seats representing other public safety agencies, professional associations, local governments, related industries, and the public.

# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL MISSION AND VALUES

The **mission** of the Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal is to protect people, property, and the environment from fire and hazardous materials.

Our **vision** is a prepared, protected, and resilient Oregon.

Our values are central to our identity as a department. We are committed to them in our daily activities as public safety professionals.

- **Integrity**—We believe in being honest, fair, and doing the right thing in everything we do.
- **Dedication**—We are committed to performing our work the best we can to support our mission, customers, stakeholders, the public, and each other.
- **Leadership**—We are committed to being a leader in the Oregon fire service, leading our organization, and leading ourselves as individuals in our day-to-day work.
- **Partnerships**—We believe our success and the success of others depends on collaboration with our stakeholders.
- **Service to others**—We believe that serving others is a cornerstone of our mission and our day-to-day work and is all-inclusive.

## MESSAGE FROM THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

At the Oregon State Fire Marshal, we are committed to a data-driven, engaged, and collaborative approach to public safety, one that acknowledges the intersection of fire prevention, emergency response, and environmental justice. Fire risks and hazardous materials disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, making it essential to use evidence-based strategies to reduce harm and disparities while strengthening resilience.

Through rigorous data analysis, proactive engagement with communities, and close partnerships with environmental and emergency management agencies, we are working to ensure that all communities, regardless of socioeconomic status or geographic location, have access to fire-resilient homes and properties and equitable emergency response services. This report reflects our dedication to leveraging science, policy, and community voices to drive meaningful change.

Together, we can create a safer, more just future for all.

-State Fire Marshal Mariana Ruiz-Temple



## EQUITY STATEMENT

We are a team representing all Oregon communities at the Oregon State Fire Marshal. Our goal is to embrace diversity, practice inclusive excellence, and strive for equity, belonging, and environmental justice in all we do. Everyone is treated with respect and dignity regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, geographic location, gender, marital status, age, veteran status, or disability. This policy applies to all aspects of our fire safety and emergency response public service mandate. We include these principles in our employment practices including retention, promotion, and training.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal prioritizes strategies that enhance our work statewide. Our goals are not just aspirations but a roadmap for how we will engage and attract new team members who represent the cultural competency of Oregonians to ensure our agency truly reflects those we serve.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal is deeply committed to acknowledging and supporting our state's rich cultural diversity. Our agency will continue to work tirelessly to best serve Oregonians, the fire service, and our partners through intentional community engagement and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels valued.





## AGENCY INTRODUCTION

# BUDGET & REVENUE

The OSFM has historically received money for programs from dedicated, industry-specific sources including Community Right to Know facility reporting fees, fire insurance premium tax, and petroleum load fees. With the transition to a state agency, many new programs are funded by the general fund. Given the recency of this move, changes to the agency budget and revenue sources will occur in future biennia.

In the 2023-2025 biennium, the agency received \$93.2 million in general funds, \$70.7 million in other funds, and \$600,000 in federal funds. General funds are used to pay local agencies for their personnel and equipment used in response to community risk reduction projects, conflagrations, pre-positioning, and other large fire activity across the state. The OSFM has 157 positions across six divisions, a headquarters in Salem, and staff in many different programs living and working across Oregon.

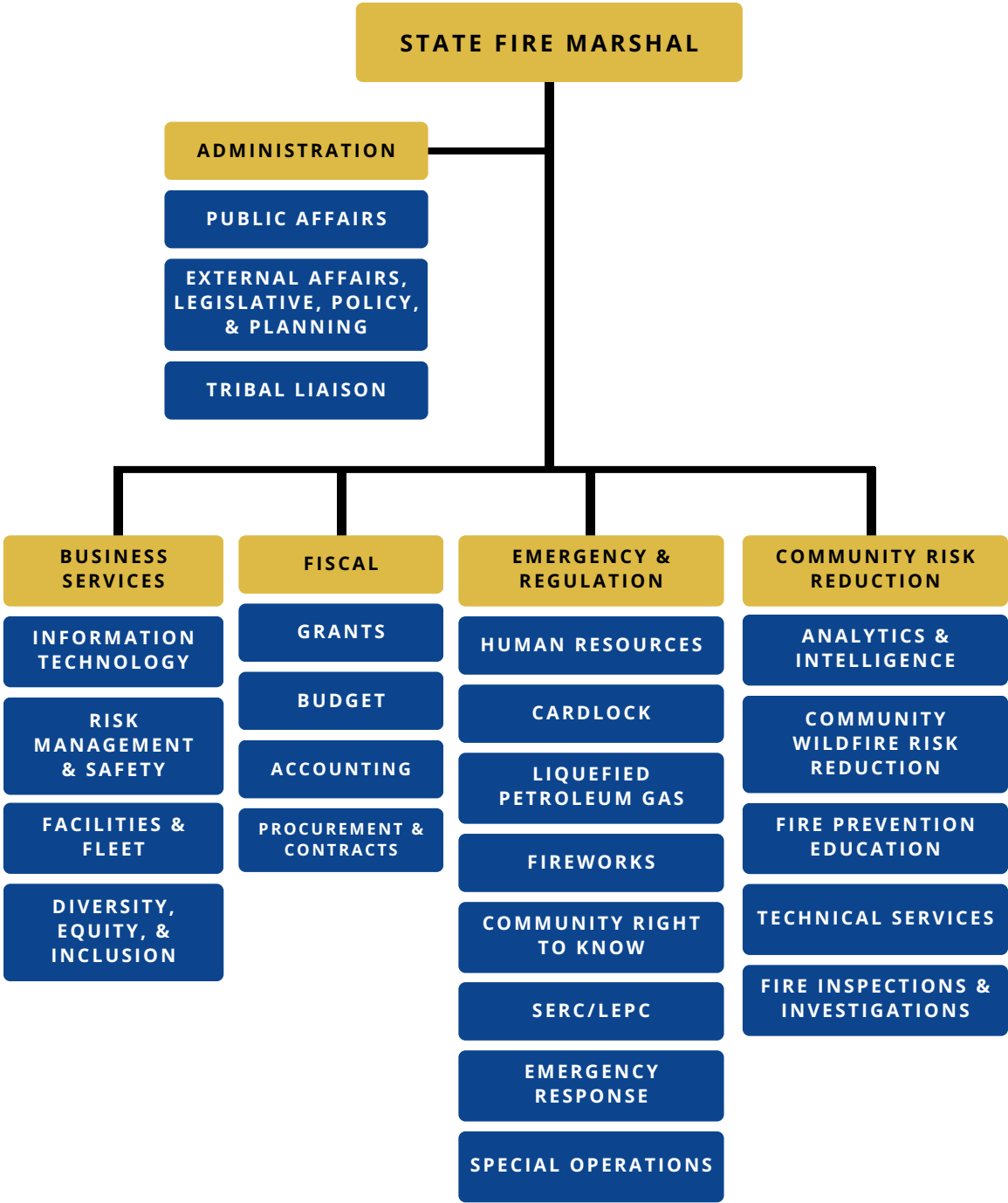




# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## AGENCY PROGRAMS

### AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE HIGHLIGHTS**

- Last year began with a winter storm that tested Oregon's fire service across the state. From Corvallis to the Columbia River Gorge, firefighters responded heroically to freezing conditions, logging hundreds of calls in a single day. Their dedication showed the tenacity and strength of Oregon's first responders. As summer approached, wildfire season brought unprecedented challenges. The record-breaking 2024 fire season saw 17 conflagrations and more than 1.9 million acres burned across the state. This surpassed 16 conflagrations in 2020. Across these, the OSFM mobilized nearly 90 task forces, coordinating efforts with local, state, and federal partners. Resources were boosted by the 2024 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant and the OSFM Engine Program, enabling local agencies to send more personnel and equipment than ever before.
- The agency produces a biannual Senate Bill 762 report that highlights our work. See past reports [here](#).
- In 2024, the OSFM updated the 5-Year Strategic Plan by adding a specific environmental justice objective in goal three: diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The OSFM Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Unit supported more than \$25 million in grant projects and provided wildfire education and training throughout the year.
- In June 2023, the OSFM launched a defensible space program, partnering with local fire agencies to provide free defensible space assessments to home and property owners to increase wildfire resilience across the state. The Oregon fire service, including the OSFM and local agencies, conducted 2,974 defensible space assessments in 2024, encouraging proactive measures to protect homes and communities.
- The OSFM hired a DEI manager in February 2024 and immediately began integrating them into the environmental justice council workflow.





# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATION PROCESS

#### **Does the agency have a defined process for incorporating environmental justice factors into agency operations and decision-making?**

Several OSFM programs were explicitly created to incorporate environmental justice principles into operations and decision making, and the agency has adapted more to include them. This list, while not exhaustive, represents major programs that demonstrate integral and varied approaches to environmental justice.

The [OSFM grants program](#) reflects our strong dedication to environmental justice and is designed to make a meaningful difference in communities that need it most. Using the social vulnerability score as a starting point in the evaluation process for awarding funds, the program ensures that grant funds are directed to vulnerable, historically underserved communities. This approach, coupled with fire risk mapping tools, enables the OSFM to support communities that might not otherwise be competitive because of limited organizational capacity.

The Fire and Life Safety Education Unit is deeply committed to a community risk reduction approach that makes a tangible difference. This approach empowers the Oregon fire service and its partners to use robust, data-driven strategies and educational resources, instilling confidence in our approach. We leverage partnerships to reduce loss of life, injury, and property, ensuring safety information is delivered to all people, including those needing alternative forms of educational materials. The unit is dedicated to establishing consistent diversity and inclusion strategies for all fire safety and community wildfire risk reduction program components. This commitment highlights our belief that every participant is integral to the process, providing a strong foundation for community safety.

The OSFM Regulatory Services Division consists of eight regulatory programs related to safety and hazardous materials. Key aspects of the programs include inspections, audits, licensing, knowledge testing, and preplanning for hazardous material incidents. These programs focus on providing customer service and equal enforcement through education first, ensuring the equitable protection of all Oregonians and the environment from fire and hazardous materials. A priority for Regulatory Services Division programs is including underserved or at-risk communities in dangerous material incident preplanning efforts, demonstrating our commitment to fairness and justice.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATION PROCESS

The OSFM Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Teams program ensures that Oregon has access to highly trained, specialized technicians to respond to hazardous materials incidents regardless of an individual fire agency's capacity to train and respond. This model ensures equal access to critical risk mitigation. Because our program provides statewide coverage, every community in Oregon has a hazmat team with statutory authority to respond and mitigate the threat to life associated with a hazardous materials incident. Along with hazmat teams in the valley and more populated areas of the state, the OSFM supports two coastal teams and two eastern Oregon teams to ensure a swift response.

The OSFM Defensible Space Program has continued to gain momentum. Deputy state fire marshals and trained fire service professionals continue to conduct defensible space assessments and completed more than 2,900 in 2024. OSFM deputies continue to prioritize education and assessments in areas identified as highly vulnerable to the impacts of wildfire. Assessments are offered on a one-on-one basis for individualized solutions for renters and homeowners. This program has a one-time incentive program that can provide financial assistance to Oregon communities, scaled for high fire risk, fire occurrence, and a high score on the social vulnerability index.





## How does your agency keep track of environmental justice issues that have been identified?

In late 2024, the OSFM grants program took a significant step toward better understanding and measuring the impacts on communities. The program hired a program evaluator to establish a comprehensive evaluation process using the social vulnerability index and other factors. This thorough evaluation will focus on assessing the environmental justice outcomes of our grants, particularly how our funding supports vulnerable communities disproportionately affected by wildfire risk and other environmental hazards.

The OSFM top fire causes program supports local fire agencies in implementing community risk reduction efforts through modeling, materials design, and development to better reduce residential fire loss due to cooking, heating, or electrical fires. The program is designed to support fire service efforts to prevent structure fires in the communities they serve by offering consistent educational messaging and risk reduction approaches, providing educational kits with practical presentation props, data resources to support community risk reduction assessments, and partnership platforms to assist in identifying high-risk demographics and outreach opportunities.

The OSFM Community Right to Know Program plays a unique and crucial role in protecting Oregonians from the risks associated with hazardous substances. Created by the Oregon Community Right to Know and Protection Act (ORS 453.307 to ORS 453.520), this program requires Oregon employers that store reportable quantities of hazardous substances to submit an annual report to the OSFM's Community Right to Know program.





District and regional deputy state fire marshals conducted nearly 5,000 fire and life safety inspections in Oregon in 2024. These inspections focus on the vulnerable populations in assisted living facilities, daycare facilities, schools, adult foster homes, and occupancies where many people congregate like churches, theaters, halls, grandstands, hotels and motels, and prisons. These fire and life safety inspections are primarily conducted in Oregon's rural, small-, and medium-sized communities. These communities are along the coast and in eastern, central, and southern Oregon. One deputy focuses primarily on Oregon's prisons and inspected all these facilities this year. This is particularly relevant as Oregon's adults in custody are a vulnerable population.

Deputy state fire marshals conducted approximately 366 fire investigations 2024. Like fire inspections, fire investigations are primarily completed within rural, small, and medium-sized Oregon communities. These fire investigations are required by Oregon Revised Statutes. These investigations are mainly conducted to provide valuable information to the OSFM's Fire and Life Safety Education Division to show trends, common themes, and how fire impacts people. This information helps our fire service partners and multiple programs within the OSFM to develop and refine training, educational materials, and outreach programs.





## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS

### **How does your agency define environmental justice communities?**

The OSFM uses the definitions of environmental justice communities set out in ORS182.535 Section 10.4.

### **What tools does your agency use to identify and prioritize environmental justice communities? Does your agency measure the impacts of agency decisions on environmental justice in Oregon communities?**

The OSFM uses several tools in a broad span of programs to identify and prioritize environmental justice communities and measure the impacts of agency decisions on those communities. As an agency that most often plays a coordinating role, the OSFM focuses on tools that address collecting and framing program data. Another major focus for OSFM programs is providing data access to partners, environmental justice communities, and the public. The examples below describe OSFM programs and the tools they use to identify, prioritize, and measure environmental justice impacts.

The OSFM Fire Prevention Education Unit has a program for local fire service agencies across the state that gives them free smoke alarms to install in homes in their communities. The program also provides smoke alarms to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The OSFM collaborates with local agencies to engage targeted communities, offering educational tools and resources to promote fire safety and wildfire awareness.

The fundamental goal of the fire and fall prevention program is to engage and empower older adult populations that live independently to be proactive in reducing the risk of fires and falls at home. The program champions education and works with partners to influence, support, and advocate for the life safety of Oregonians.

The smoking material and home oxygen fire prevention program champions education and pursues work with partners to influence, support, and advocate for proactive risk reduction strategies to improve the life safety of Oregonians at greater risk of a home fire-related event.

When responding to tribal lands, the OSFM incident management teams engage in unified command with tribal government representatives. In this situation, teams work closely to prioritize everyone's needs and establish mutually agreed-upon objectives.

While OSFM incident management teams respond directly to active incidents, the OSFM regional mobilization coordinators work with the fire service and partners across the state to ensure response standards are uniform year-round. These coordinators work to provide rural, remote, coastal, limited infrastructure, and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes with opportunities to increase the capacity, viability, and effectiveness of the emergency response. They are responsible for sharing statewide grant opportunity information and encouraging and organizing partnerships with surrounding jurisdictions. They work to build relationships and trust in these communities to ensure that needs and issues are understood and communicated on a broader level to help formulate solutions.

OSFM staff developed and led the Oregon Fire Service Health & Safety Collaborative, a group of committed people from around the state that coordinate resources and support firefighters and local fire agencies with prioritizing health and safety. Their goal is to improve the lives of firefighters and strengthen the collective capacity to respond to emergencies. The fire service has historically experienced health inequities.

Cancer, cardiovascular disease, post-traumatic stress, and incident-related injury pose a significant threat to firefighters and first responders. Regular exposure to carcinogens and physically rigorous, mentally challenging, and operationally hazardous environments during emergency operations necessitate a comprehensive effort to manage these hazards. Fire service members can reduce these risks by implementing preventive measures and adopting healthy lifestyle practices. The collaborative offers an extensive collection of resources tailored to the needs of Oregon firefighters and first responders to minimize these risks, ensuring they can continue their critical work of protecting our communities while protecting their health.



The healthcare surveyors in the OSFM Fire and Life Safety Services Division also focus on Oregon's vulnerable population. As required by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, they conducted approximately 180 fire and life safety surveys in 2024 in Oregon's skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, and end-stage renal dialysis centers. These fire and life safety surveys are conducted across Oregon, and the types of facilities surveyed enormously benefit environmental justice communities.

# OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND MEANINGFUL INVOLVEMENT**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY CONSIDERATIONS**

*ORS 182.550 Section 2: Increase public participation of individuals and communities affected by agencies' decisions.*

The OSFM is a public safety agency. While not every aspect of our work involves the environment, we are committed to considering environmental justice where appropriate in public safety and emergency response. Across OSFM's many programs, the agency has adopted and instituted environmental justice principles. These include collaborative governance, transparency, interagency cooperation, and public engagement.

The OSFM has a robust ecosystem for engagement with the public, tribal, fire service partners, and environmental justice communities across Oregon. The OSFM has dedicated subject matter experts and a public affairs team to develop and deliver large-scale public engagement campaigns for Wildfire Awareness Month in May and Fire Prevention Month in October. The programs, detailed below, show examples of the types of public participation the agency engages in globally.

During wildfire responses, OSFM incident management teams work with local communities to recognize the need for public meetings, often holding them at multiple times and locations to reach as many people as possible. In addition to increased response capacity and efficiency through state mobilization, incident management team members are diverse, drawn from agencies of all sizes and compositions across the state. Those members provide insights to the teams and gain skills and knowledge through their responses. In turn, members bring this knowledge and experience back to their local communities, providing a valuable exchange.

The Fire and Life Safety Education Division and other OSFM staff participated in the Oregon State Fair for 11 days to share wildfire and fire prevention safety messages. Approximately 16,600 fair attendees visited the Natural Resource areas, where we provided various educational and outreach materials.



The Oregon Ag Festival is a two-day event that supports fire and life safety messaging including home fire escape planning, the importance of smoke alarms, and cooking education for youth and families. It is in collaboration with the Oregon fire service and partnering agencies. The largest attendance was 25,000 people.

The OSFM Engine Program increases response capacity across Oregon and protects Oregonians and visitors regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, income, or other identities. Additional firefighting apparatus help better prepare communities to respond to life-safety incidents. These fire engines are featured at community-based affirming activities such as parades and food drives. Driven by insights from a comprehensive 2021 gap analysis survey, our program, in collaboration with Oregon fire defense boards, ensures a meticulous and inclusive approach to enhancing fire response. A diverse committee of fire agencies helped develop the program to provide a well-rounded perspective. Seventy-six local fire agencies were awarded apparatus through this program with the intent to boost capacity locally, regionally, and statewide.



The OSFM Regulatory Services Division includes implementing the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), which created a provision for states to establish state emergency response commissions. These groups increase the public's knowledge of and access to facilities' chemical information and provide an organizational structure for government and communities to work with facilities to improve chemical release preparedness to help protect the public, the environment, and emergency responders.

Oregon Administrative Rule 837-095 established the State Emergency Response Commission executive committee and identified the state fire marshal as the SERC. The State Emergency Response Commission executive committee was established to provide input and recommendations to the OSFM on activities related to EPCRA.

The State Emergency Response Commission executive committee meets approximately three times a year. Membership demonstrates the interagency collaborative nature of the discipline and is comprised of representation from the following agencies and stakeholder groups:

- Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal
- Department of Emergency Management
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Oregon State Police
- Office of the Oregon Governor
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Local Emergency Management
- Oregon Emergency Management Association
- Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC)
- Industry
- Oregon Fire Chiefs Association
- Regional Hazardous Material Response Teams
- Oregon Sheriffs Association
- Tribes
- Association of Oregon Counties

The OSFM coordinates the Oregon Life Safety Team, a collaboration of fire service agencies, associations, and state, federal, nonprofit, and private organizations. The group meets quarterly to implement fire prevention and safety education statewide.





The Fire and Life Safety Division leads the Oregon Fire Code adoption process every three years. The OSFM Technical Service Unit staff work with Oregon's fire service volunteers, building officials, private industry representatives, healthcare representatives, and the public, who review the more than 650-page International Fire Code and make recommendations to form the Oregon Fire Code. The diverse volunteers from across Oregon spend countless hours reviewing and discussing each chapter line by line. The recommendations go to the Oregon Fire Code Advisory Board for final review and make their approved recommendations to the state fire marshal.

The Fire and Life Safety Services Division provide statewide training to help the Oregon fire service succeed. These trainings educate Oregon fire chiefs, fire marshals, and fire inspectors on specific fire and life safety topics to help them make positive changes in their communities. The healthcare surveyors also provide fire and life safety training about facility requirements, and they survey at several different conferences. Facility administrators and maintenance staff attend these trainings, and they have proven beneficial for these types of facilities located across the state. The audience that most benefits are the least-resourced organizations and those in the most remote areas, leading to significant gains for environmental justice communities.

## OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCESSES

**Does your agency have a public engagement process for promoting community participation in agency decision-making processes? What criteria triggers public participation?**

OSFM staff lead the way in robust education and outreach campaigns, town hall meetings, media relations tours, meetings with fire chiefs across Oregon, presentations to counties/cities, and community partners. They also focus on saturating the state with information, tools, and knowledge for all program areas.

**Describe the current level and quality of public participation? Does your agency follow up with participants after decisions are made?**

The Community Right to Know program tracks and maintains reported hazardous substance information and then provides that information to emergency planners, first responders, health professionals, and the public to protect Oregonians, their property, and the environment from the risks associated with these substances. Facility hazardous substance storage information is available 24 hours a day through the online portal, CHS Manager. This law also requires emergency responders to report to the OSFM incidents involving the release, or threatened release, of hazardous materials.

Community Right to Know publishes these hazardous material incidents in an online searchable database, giving the public access to the information 24 hours a day. The program provides training and outreach to numerous communities and organizations, including rural and remote communities, economically disadvantaged communities, other vulnerable populations, and environmental justice communities.

The Community Right to Know Program administered by the OSFM Regulatory Services Division, in conjunction with local emergency planning committees, connects local organizations and the public directly to local fire service agencies and facilities handling hazardous substances. The direct connections this program builds help each community to develop plans and materials for its needs. These connections include working with school districts, local governments, media outlets, and community-based organizations to share information and improve response. The OSFM supports 18 local emergency planning committees across the state and is working with more communities to build or expand their programs.



## OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL **MAPPING TOOL INVOLVEMENT**

*ORS 182.550 Section 5: USE the environmental justice mapping tool developed under section 12 of this 2022 Act.*

### **How is your agency participating in the development of the environmental justice mapping tool?**

OSFM staff responded to the survey distributed by the Environmental Justice Commission staff liaison and Department of Administrative Services Geospatial Enterprise Office coordinator. The OSFM has several data sources publicly accessible, but that may also be valuable as decision support data for the environmental justice mapping tool under development.





## OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL **CLOSING SUMMARY**

The Oregon State Fire Marshal values environmental justice central to the agency's work. Collaborative governance, transparency, and interagency cooperation are paramount in protecting people, property, and the environment from fire and hazardous materials.

Programs across the OSFM are built from the ground up around a dedication to providing equal access to information, response resources, and protection strategies statewide. This report summarizes data-driven insights into delivering mitigation, prevention, and education resources where and how they are most needed, especially for environmental justice communities. Staff constantly refine those methods and recognize room for growth.

As identified in our Five-Year Strategic Plan, the OSFM will apply environmental justice principles and insights to our day-to-day tasks and embrace the concepts throughout our work. The OSFM looks forward to improving our commitment to environmental justice by working with Environmental Justice Council members and partner agencies throughout 2025.





This report was prepared by:

**OREGON DEPARMENT OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

[www.oregon.gov/osfm](http://www.oregon.gov/osfm)