

Outdoor Search and Rescue Card Program Report



2025

Oregon.gov/OEM

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Program Overview

This report is submitted in accordance with [ORS 404.400](#)(4), which mandates a report to the standing or interim committees of the Legislative Assembly relating to emergency services, on or before December 31 of each year, that describes the administration and effectiveness of the Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue (ORSAR) card program when established through an agreement between the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association (OSSA). The purpose of the card program is to allow members of the public to make voluntary contributions to search and rescue (SAR) operations statewide by purchasing cards and making voluntary donations. The financial and programmatic information contained in these annual reports is based on documentation received by OEM from OSSA. As of the date of this report, OEM has not received financial reporting for calendar year 2025.

Background

Established under Oregon Laws 2021, Chapter 458 (House Bill 2593), the ORSAR program is designed to address the growing need for resources and funding for SAR operations, which exceed 1,000 missions annually across Oregon's 36 counties. With over 1,700 dedicated volunteers, SAR operations are critical to maintaining Oregon's reputation as a safe and accessible outdoor recreation destination.

The ORSAR card agreement, signed on July 1, 2022, provides supplemental funding for SAR operations through card purchases. Cards are available in individual and family options, with one-year or five-year denominations. Revenue from card sales is allocated to support SAR missions, equipment, and training, addressing the increasing financial demands of these essential services.

Annual Mission Statistics

5- year total: 5,195

10-year total: 11,006

TOTAL SAR/AFRCC Missions 2023-25

Search and Rescue (SAR) (actual):

2025: 1,111 ⁽¹⁾

2024: 1,103

2023: 986

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC):

2025: 82 ⁽¹⁾

2024: 61

2023: 41

- **96.2%** SAR missions ended with the subjects found alive
- **111** people reported missing were found deceased ⁽²⁾
- **79** people reported missing were never found

Definitions

Searches: Involve people overdue or known to be in distress in an unknown location.

Rescues: Result from people who need assistance in a known location.

(1) totals as of 12/31/25, numbers may change as final year-end reports are submitted.

(2) Does not include drowning (swimming) or body recovery from aircraft.

Program Development and Challenges

Since its inception, the ORSAR program has faced several challenges:

- **Marketing and Rollout:** OSSA established a committee of six sheriffs and, in June 2024, hired a professional marketing firm to advance the program. During 2025 the marketing team proposed a dedicated ORSAR website for 2026, expanded social media outreach, and increased exposure beyond the OSSA website to reach broader audiences. These adjustments can be made by OSSA in collaboration with Oregon Department of Emergency Management, which has access to a broad array of statewide media channels, with existing resources.
- **Sales Mechanism:** ORSAR cards are currently only available for purchase exclusively online, through the OSSA website. The program initially envisioned point-of-sale (POS) marketing through outdoor retail locations. However, retailer hesitancy has required OSSA to pivot to alternative sales channels. OSSA is exploring the use of QR codes and digital outreach, with a unique more accessible platform for community access.
- **Revenue Growth:** The ORSAR program continues to show flat year-over-year revenue growth. Planned enhanced marketing efforts, strategic partnerships, and collaboration with Oregon Department of Emergency Management are expected to support growth beginning in 2026.
- **Growing SAR Demand:** At the same time, search and rescue demand in Oregon continues to increase as outdoor recreation, hiking, and adventure tourism are more heavily promoted statewide. Increased trail use, backcountry exploration, and recreation-based searches underscore the importance of sustainable funding for SAR operations. The ORSAR program plays a critical role in helping counties meet this rising demand while supporting public safety and preparedness.

Future Initiatives

OSSA is actively exploring partnerships to increase the visibility and accessibility of the ORSAR card. These efforts align with the program's broader vision to market Oregon as a premier outdoor recreation destination while ensuring communities have the search and rescue capacity necessary to respond to emergencies effectively and safely.

Conclusion

The ORSAR program provides a supplemental funding mechanism to support search and rescue operations across Oregon. While early implementation challenges affected growth, recent steps to professionalize marketing, consolidate resources, and pursue innovative sales strategies indicate a positive path forward. As outdoor recreation participation continues to rise, the program's long-term success will depend on sustained marketing efforts, strong partnerships, and increased public awareness to ensure counties have the resources needed to respond to SAR incidents statewide.