



OREGON DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

State Exercise Program Annual Report FY2024

Executive Summary

In Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) Exercise Program strengthened statewide preparedness through the delivery and support of 13 exercises. Statewide there were 118 exercises tracked by OEM coming from state, local and Tribal governments in FY24.

The largest exercise in 2024 was IronOR 24, a major statewide functional exercise involving 122 public and private sector agencies, 17 State Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), with a total of nearly 700 participants. OEM also conducted quarterly ECC exercises, technical workshops, and two functional area summits to build capabilities and promote coordination across local, Tribal, state, and federal partners. Emergency management exercise reporting for both Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 401 requirements improved by more than 10 percent. This indicates both the success of and the ongoing need for exercise outreach and support.

Several key initiatives were launched or expanded this year. The Exercise Program received EMPG dollars to reduce exercise event participation barriers and released a revised Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP) Guide to provide support to organizations. OEM also improved its Emergency Management Exercise Reporting (EMER) process through an online platform and refined tools for data collection and analysis. A new prioritization matrix guided exercise assistance and contributed to a high success rate in FEMA's National Exercise Program (NEP), with four of five supported applications awarded. This is more NEP exercise support than previous years combined.

Looking ahead, OEM will focus on preparing for the 2026 state-level exercise, expanding internal drills and Continuity of Operations (COOP) exercises, developing a digital resource library, and formalizing an exercise cadre. These efforts will build statewide capability, improve accessibility to training and resources, and ensure a more resilient and coordinated emergency management system across Oregon.

Introduction

The OEM Exercise Program leads collaborative statewide efforts, inclusive of a wide range of partners and communities, to ensure the capability to get help in an emergency and to protect, mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies or disasters, regardless of cause. Exercises test plans, policies and procedures to ensure accuracy, realistic implementation, and identify gaps prior to an emergency. This is accomplished through discussing and/or implementing the plans in as realistic a scenario as possible.

Conducting exercises is a foundational responsibility of OEM. Outlined in ORS 401, annually, OEM must coordinate a minimum of one multidisciplinary, all-hazards emergency response exercise. The exercise must involve at least 10 percent of the public or private safety agencies in the state. The OEM Exercise Program strives for 100 percent annual participation in at least one OEM-hosted exercise by all organizations and partners identified within the Oregon Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) to support collective progress in building a resilient State of Oregon government. The CEMP combines several documents into a single plan outlining the four mission areas of emergency management, including: Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. It identifies all agencies and partner organizations with roles and responsibilities in those areas.

Background

OEM uses the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) to develop and conduct exercises, a national standard. HSEEP provides a set of fundamental principles for exercise programs, as well as a common approach to program management, design and development, conduct, evaluation, and improvement planning. Exercises are an important component of preparedness, by providing the whole community with the opportunity to shape planning, assess and validate capabilities and address areas for improvement.

HSEEP outlines a progressive exercise design approach, beginning with discussion-based events that prepare participants for more complex operations-based exercise events. This is a walk/run model of learning that allows for foundational skills that will be applied to later exercises as they increase in complexity and intensity. Discussion-based exercises are defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a type of training that can help familiarize people with or develop new plans, policies and procedures.

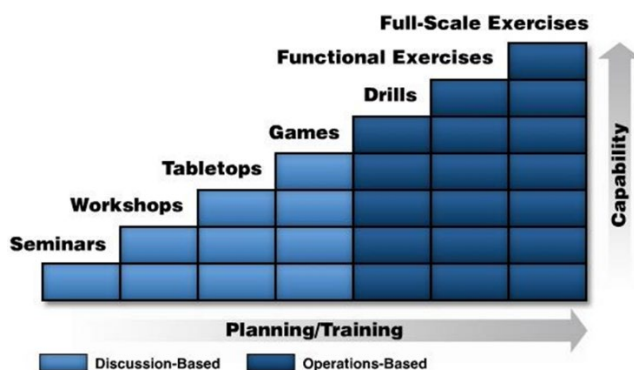


Image 1. HSEEP Progressive Model of Exercises

In alignment with the progressive approach, OEM conducts quarterly ECC exercises and State Level Exercises (SLE)s. Quarterly exercises are comparable to unit tests in school. These are focused exercises that help the state develop and improve the skills necessary for SLEs, or on specific capabilities to improve readiness and operations of the state ECC. State-level exercises are comparable to the final exam. These are large exercises that could span multiple days. These are opportunities to practice certain capabilities that have been deemed important to a more prepared and resilient Oregon in a no fault/collaborative environment. These bring together partners at the local, state and federal government, as well as key public/private sector partners, along with members of The Nine Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon. OEM strives to host a SLE bi-annually.

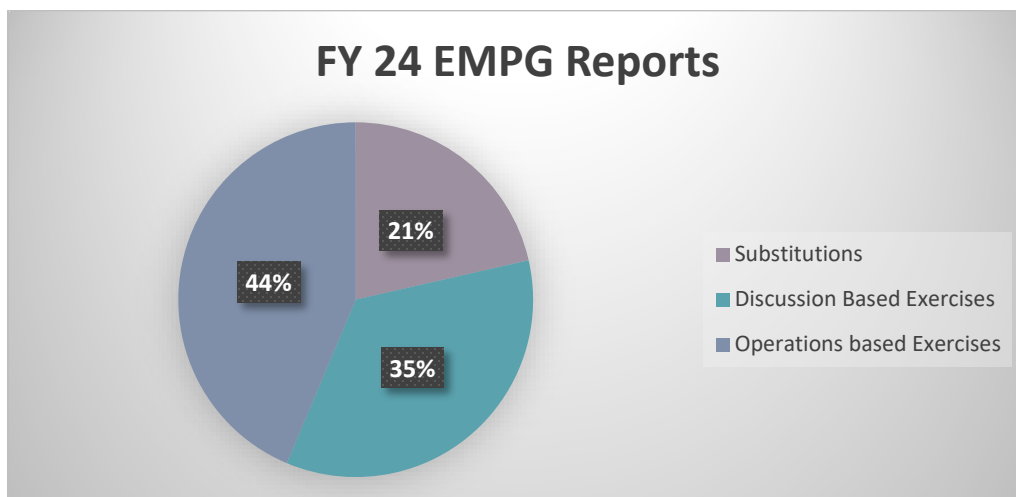
Government agencies at various levels are required to conduct exercises to maintain readiness and demonstrate ongoing commitment to disaster preparedness. These requirements typically apply to both grant recipients and agencies identified by relevant laws or policies, helping ensure continued capability to respond effectively in future emergencies.

Exercise Conduct

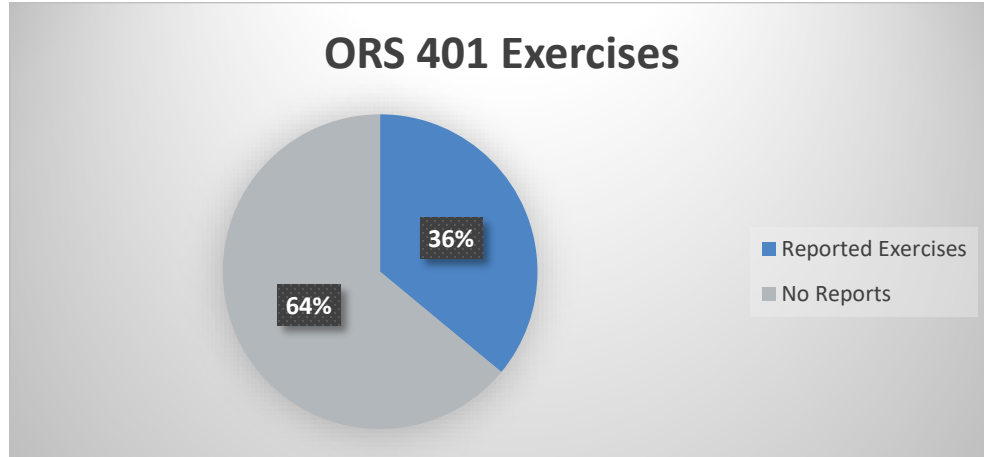
The OEM Exercise Program hosted or directly supported 13 exercise events in FY24—of these activities, 69 percent were discussion-based, underscoring OEM’s emphasis on foundational planning, coordination, and process validation across a range of emergency management functions.

In FY24, OEM received EMERs documenting a total of 105 exercises conducted by partners at the state and local level. The Exercise Program is confident this number represents only a portion of the exercise events occurring around Oregon in the public, private and non-profit sectors as many agencies and organizations are not required to report those events to OEM. Of those reported exercise, 76 percent were documented exercises, while the remaining were substitutions for real-world incidents or events. There were roughly equivalent amounts of discussion-based and operations-based exercises. These figures reflect a continued commitment to exercise participation and preparedness across jurisdictions.

Jurisdictions and Tribes that receive Emergency Management Performance Grant funds are required to conduct two exercises and participate in a third. Recipients report on exercises or real-world substitutions. In FY24 79 percent of EMPG reports reflected an exercise conducted.

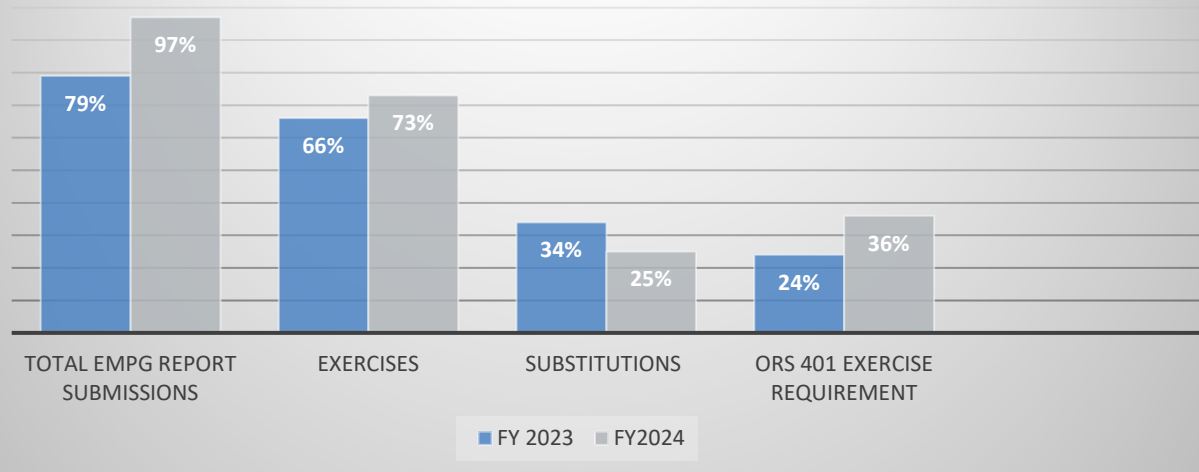


State agencies named in ORS 401.116 are required to report exercises to OEM. In FY24, 12 of 33 state agencies submitted EMERs, resulting in a 36 percent compliance rate. This is a 12 percent increase from FY23, where only 8 agencies (24 percent) submitted reports. While this improvement reflects progress in state agency engagement, the low compliance rate highlights a continued need for outreach and support to ensure participation and alignment with statutory requirements.



Local/Tribal EMPG Grant Requirement (x2/Year)		State Government ORS 401.116.3.a (x1/Year)	
FY23	FY24	FY23	FY24
76/96 (79 percent) Total Submissions	93/96 (97 percent) Total Submissions	8/33 (24 percent) Exercise	12/33 (36 percent) Exercise
50/76 (66 percent) Exercises	68/96 (73 percent) Exercises		
26/76 (34 percent) Substitutions	24/96 (25 percent) Substitutions		

Exercise Reports FY23 to FY24



OEM’s FY24 exercise schedule was diverse in scope and focus. The program delivered quarterly, skill driven workshops leading up to *IronOR 24*. Additionally, OEM convened or supported several technical summits and functional workshops—including the Community Lifelines Reporting Workshop, Oregon and Washington Fuel-Rail Summit, and an Oregon Aviation Response Summit—designed to enhance interagency coordination and readiness across Oregon’s emergency management landscape. The Exercise Program hosted the Alert and Warning Workshop with the Statewide Interoperability Coordinator and staff to facilitate development guidance and thresholds for state involvement in alert and warning processes, as well as a protocol for processing incident support resource requests from multiple jurisdictions. OEM also conducted a Recovery Plan workshop and directly supported three organizations in hosting their own exercise events: Grant County, City of Portland Water Bureau and the Western States Petroleum Alliance.

IronOR 2024

In October 2024, the OEM Exercise Program hosted *IronOR 24*, a state-level exercise that engaged close to 700 individuals around the state. This four-day functional exercise tested statewide capabilities in response to a Cascadia Subduction Zone Earthquake event. Key focus areas were testing capabilities of the new State ECC facility and statewide partners gaining experience in expected roles and responsibilities. *IronOR 24* brought together statewide emergency response organizations/jurisdictions to collectively test plans, policies and procedures including the updated ECC Emergency Operations Plan Base Plan.

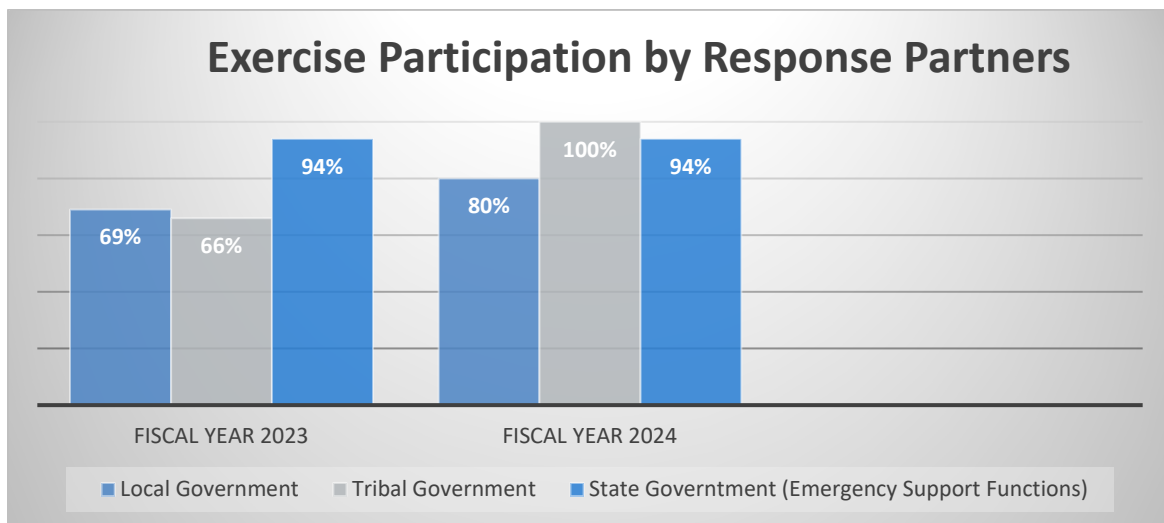
FY	Discussion-Based				Operations-Based		
	Seminar	Workshop	Tabletop	Games	Drills	Functional	Full-Scale
FY23	1	0	1	0	0	2	0
FY24	0	13	0	1	2	1	0

Exercise Participation

The OEM Exercise Program strives for 100 percent annual participation in at least one OEM-hosted exercise by all organizations and partners identified within the Oregon CEMP. In alignment with the volumes of the CEMP, OEM tracks exercise participation by response and recovery partners separately.

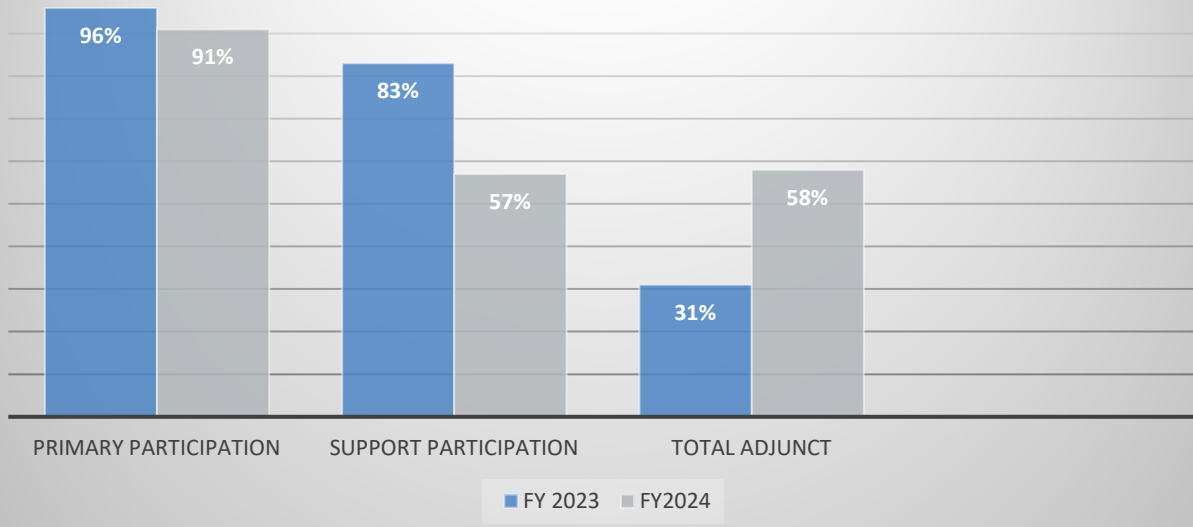
Exercise Participation by Response Partners

In FY24, OEM increased participation in exercises from local and Tribal governments. Participation by local governments increased by 11 percent with room for continued engagement. Tribal engagement increased 34 percent to 100 percent participation by the Nine Federally Recognized Tribes.



FY	Local Government	Tribal Government	State Government
FY23	25 of 36 (69 percent)	6 of 9 (66 percent)	17 of 18 ESFs (94 percent)
FY24	29 of 36 (80 percent)	9 of 9 (100 percent)	17 of 18 ESFs (94 percent)

Emergency Support Function Breakdown

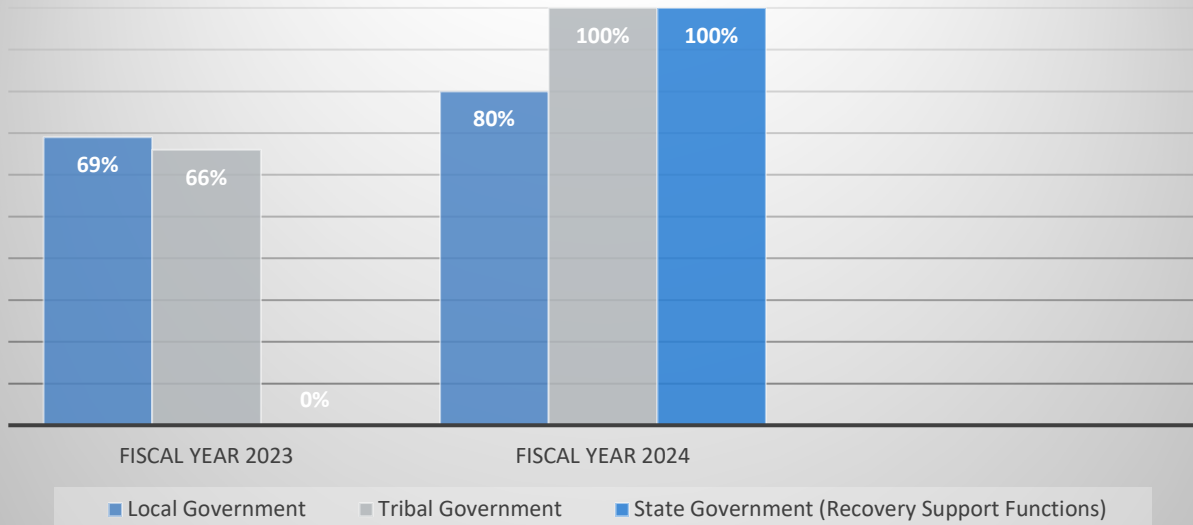


ESF Category	Participation – FY23	Participation – FY24
Primary Participation	22/23 (96 percent)	21/23 (91 percent)
Support Participation	115/138 (83 percent)	78/138 (57 percent)
Total Adjunct	8/26 (31 percent)	15/26 (58 percent)

Exercise Participation by Recovery Partners

In FY24, there was a significant increase in participation in exercises by recovery partners with Tribal and state government partners both achieving 100 percent. This increase is the result of a recovery plan focused exercise in FY24. There was not a similar exercise conducted in FY23.

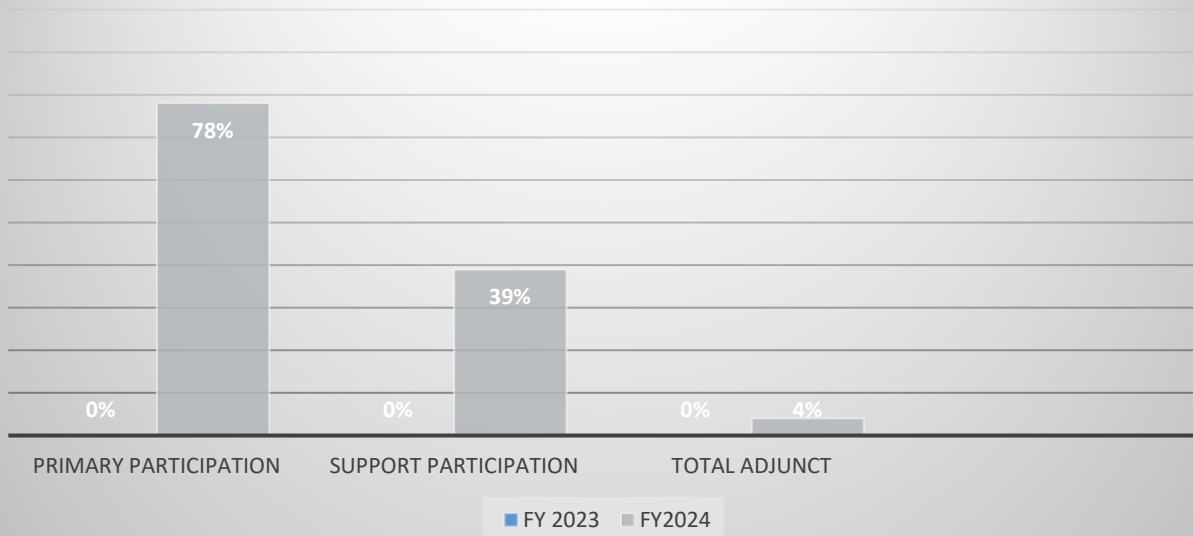
Exercise Participation by Recovery Partners



FY	Local Government	Tribal Government	State Government
FY23	25 of 36 (69 percent)	6 of 9 (66 percent)	0 of 7 RSFs (0 percent)*
FY24	29 of 36 (80 percent)	9 of 9 (100 percent)	7 of 7 RSFs (100 percent)

*A recovery exercise was not conducted during FY23

Recovery Support Function Breakdown

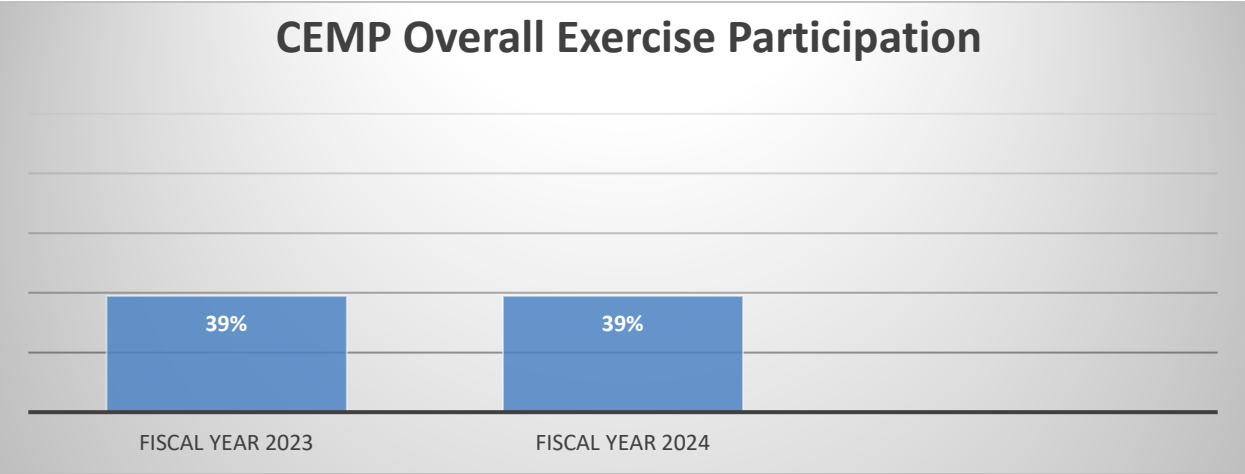


RSF Category	Participation – FY23	Participation – FY24
Primary Participation	0/18 (0 percent)*	15/18 (78 percent)
Support Participation	0/74 (0 percent)*	31/79 (39 percent)

Adjunct Participation	0/54 (0 percent)*	2/54 (4 percent)
-----------------------	-------------------	------------------

CEMP Overall Exercise Participation

The CEMP includes a wide array of partner organizations in addition to governmental organizations. Exercises and the CEMP are developed with the whole community in mind. While 94 percent of the ESFs and 100 percent of RSFs were represented in exercises, not all organizations with an identified role in those functions participated. The percentage of organizations participating was consistent from FY23 to FY24. Although there was a high level of participation in IO24, many of the participating organizations are not listed in the CEMP. This indicates a need for targeted outreach and engagement with CEMP organizations.



FY	CEMP
FY23	32 of 83 (39 percent)
FY24	32 of 83 (39 percent)

Program Improvements

National Exercise Program Support in Oregon

FEMA’s National Exercise Program (NEP) offers no-cost technical assistance to SLTT jurisdictions for exercise planning, design, conduct, and evaluation. In FY24, the OEM Exercise Program provided direct support to five organizations in the development and submission of NEP applications for exercises in FY25. As a result, four applications were selected for award: the Oregon Department of Energy (supporting a large regional exercise), Tillamook County, Clackamas County, and Douglas County. This is more NEP supported exercises in Oregon than previous years combined.

Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP)

The OEM Exercise Program launched a revised Exercise Technical Assistance Program (ExTAP) to enhance support for jurisdictions working to meet exercise requirements. The program focused on providing year-round technical assistance and improving communication around

available resources and opportunities. ExTAP is designed to build local capacity and ensure partners have the guidance needed to plan, conduct, and report exercises effectively.

Exercise Reimbursement Program

OEM piloted a reimbursement initiative using EMPG funds to support local and Tribal partners in planning and executing exercise-related activities. The program was designed to reduce participation barriers by reimbursing eligible expenses such as travel for exercise-related training, exercise hosting costs, contractor support, and staffing of partner exercises. As of the close of the fiscal year, **80 percent of available funds were allocated**, demonstrating strong partner interest and successful implementation of the pilot process. Lessons learned from this effort will inform decisions on the continuation and potential expansion of the program in future grant years.

Looking to the Future

As OEM looks ahead to FY25–26, the Exercise Program has identified a clear set of goals to guide the next phase of statewide preparedness, coordination and internal capability-building. These goals include:

State-level Exercise 2026 Preparation

OEM will launch a full-scale planning process for the 2026 state-level exercise (SLE), ensuring alignment with HSEEP standards and engaging core participants in coordinated planning activities by July 1, 2026.

Emergency Management Exercise Reporting (EMER) Program

The OEM Exercise Program, in collaboration with the OEM Regional Coordinator Program and Tribal Liaison, will support improved implementation of emergency management and response plans statewide by achieving a 10 percent reduction in actual occurrence substitutions submitted through the EMER program by the end of the fiscal year. This goal will be pursued by amplifying the availability of exercise resources, templates, and technical assistance to county and Tribal governments, encouraging planned, discussion and operations-based exercises that strengthen preparedness.

ECC Readiness through Internal Exercises

OEM is developing a consistent training and exercise program to maintain readiness of the State Emergency Coordination Center aligned with the Oregon State Qualification System. OEM will implement a consistent, agency-specific exercise program aimed at validating essential functions. This includes the launch of no-notice drills and section-specific exercises.

Strengthening Integrated Preparedness Planning (IPP)

OEM will enhance the IPP process by providing targeted technical assistance for Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshops, modernizing data collection and engagement tools, and improving accessibility for local, Tribal and state agency partners.

Exercise Cadre Development

The Exercise Program will formalize and support an OEM exercise cadre, providing regular engagement, training and development opportunities to ensure a pool of qualified and prepared exercise support personnel statewide.