Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA)

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF OEM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2025 Annual Report

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Executive Summary

This is the third Annual Report for the *Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA)* since the inception and implementation of the statewide mutual aid program in January 2018. Although the *ORCAA Implementation Guide* states utilization of the ORCAA must be reported to OEM for inclusion in an Annual Report, this rarely happens, making it difficult to determine the effectiveness of the program without the feedback received in the Annual Use Survey.

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, with easy to utilize processes and implementation. The ORCAA Annual Use Survey provides important information related to needed program changes based upon recommendations from end users. Implementing the recommended changes identified in this report will provide for a more robust, user-friendly, and easy-to-utilize intrastate program for mutual aid within Oregon.

In summary, the ORCAA program has been available for use for the past six years, but there is still much to be done to educate the emergency services community on what it is and the benefits of utilizing it. Based on feedback received in the 2025 annual survey, in 2026, OEM will focus on increasing its education and outreach program related to intrastate mutual aid, as well as simplifying the ORCAA forms and processes for end users.

Justin Marquis
Response Section Manager
January 6, 2026

Background

Senate Bill 62 was passed in the 2017 legislative session and specifically amended elements of Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 402: *Emergency Mutual Assistance Agreements* related to intrastate mutual aid. In 2018, the *Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA)* was established under the direction and oversight of the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM).

On December 31, 2017, 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-Resources.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. This is the third annual report. Prior reports were published in 2019 and 2024, respectively.

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 are automatically participants 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.

To date, three Tribal Nations have opted into ORCAA:

- Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians

Participants (other than the state) may elect to withdraw from or not participate in the system, but only by adopting a resolution or ordinance that declares their intentions. Withdrawal becomes official upon receipt of a copy of the resolution or ordinance by the Director of OEM. To date, no governmental entity has opted out of ORCAA.

Survey Approach

The Qualtrics survey tool was used to ask a series of 16 questions throughout the month of November 2025. An invitation to complete the survey was sent to five (5) major email listservs, with a total of 1089 members:

- Tribal and City/County Emergency Managers: 242
- Oregon Emergency Response System Council: 194
- Search and Rescue Coordinators: 72
- Public Safety Answering Point Agencies: 145
- Chiefs of Police, Sheriffs and Fire Agencies: 438

Survey Respondents and Data Note

A total of 132 partners responded to the 2025 ORCAA Partner Use Survey, with a 12% return rate, an 8% increase over 2024. Not every respondent answered every question, so counts and percentages should be read as "out of those who answered that question," not out of all 132 respondents.

Data Overview

The survey received responses from a mix of partner types, with the largest shares coming from City Government and Special Districts, followed by County Government. State agencies, tribal governments, and "Other" organizations are represented in smaller numbers.

Which best describes the organization you are answering for today?

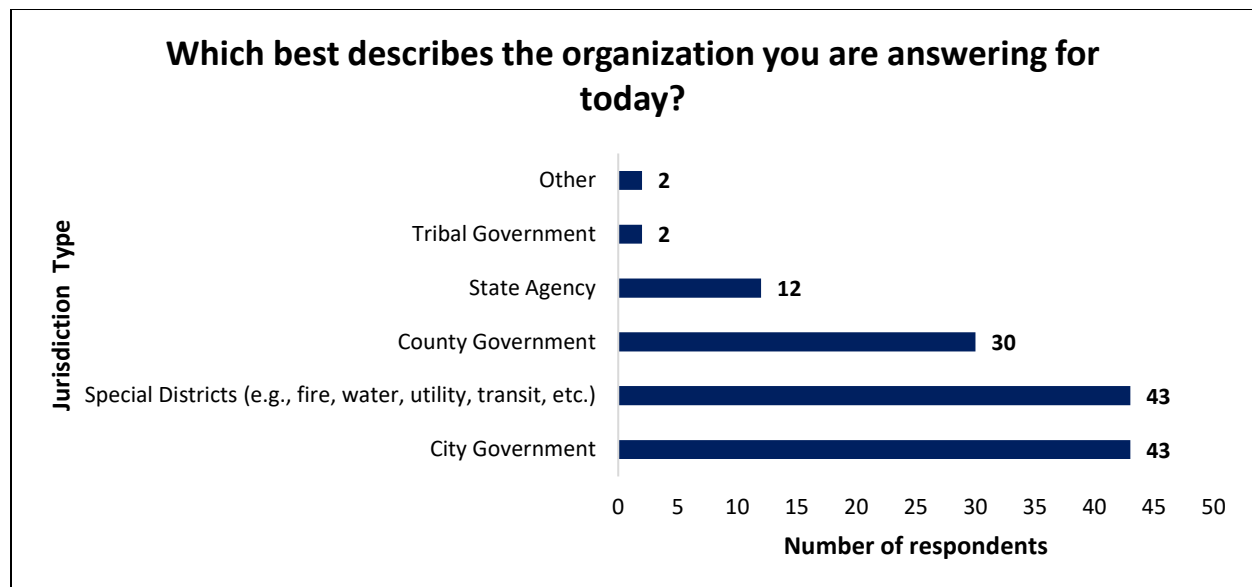| Jurisdiction Type	Number of respondents
Other	2
Tribal Government	2
State Agency	12
County Government	30
Special Districts (e.g., fire, water, utility, transit, etc.)	43
City Government	43

Figure 1 Caption

Respondent organization type (Jurisdiction Type). Bar chart shows the distribution of survey respondents by organization type, including City Government (43), Special Districts (43), County Government (30), State Agency (12), Tribal Government (2), Other (2).

Quantitative Analysis and Results Summary

Familiarity with ORCAA (overall and by organization type): Familiarity with ORCAA is mixed across the partner network. City and county respondents include both familiar and unfamiliar participants. Special districts show a near split between familiar and unfamiliar. State agencies are mostly familiar, but not entirely. Tribal responses are limited in number but show familiarity.

ORCAA awareness is not consistent across partner types. Even when resources exist, partners who do not know ORCAA exists or do not recognize when it applies are unlikely to use it.
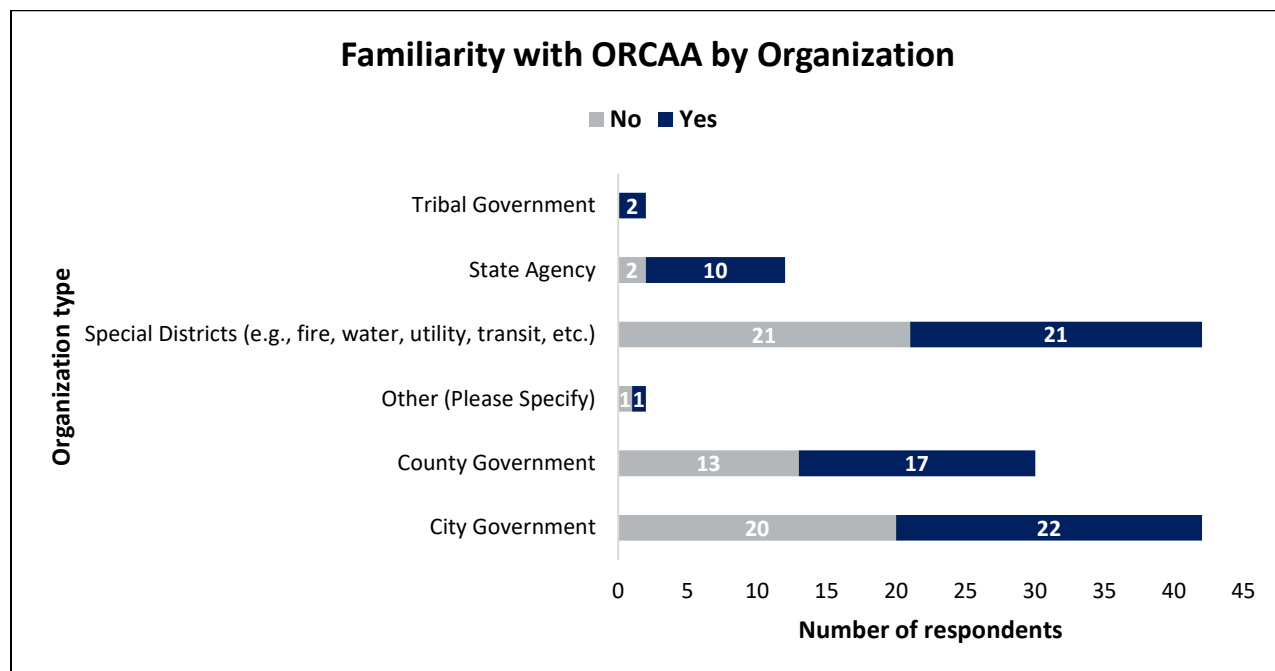

Figure 2 caption
Familiarity with ORCAA by organization type. Stacked horizontal bar chart showing the number of respondents in each organization type who report being familiar with ORCAA (Yes) or not familiar (No).

Training attendance where ORCAA was discussed: Most respondents report that they have not attended a training session on mutual aid where ORCAA was discussed.

Low training exposure likely contributes to uneven familiarity and uncertainty about how ORCAA works. Training is also one of the few scalable ways to align partners with consistent expectations for the request lifecycle, required documentation, and closeout.
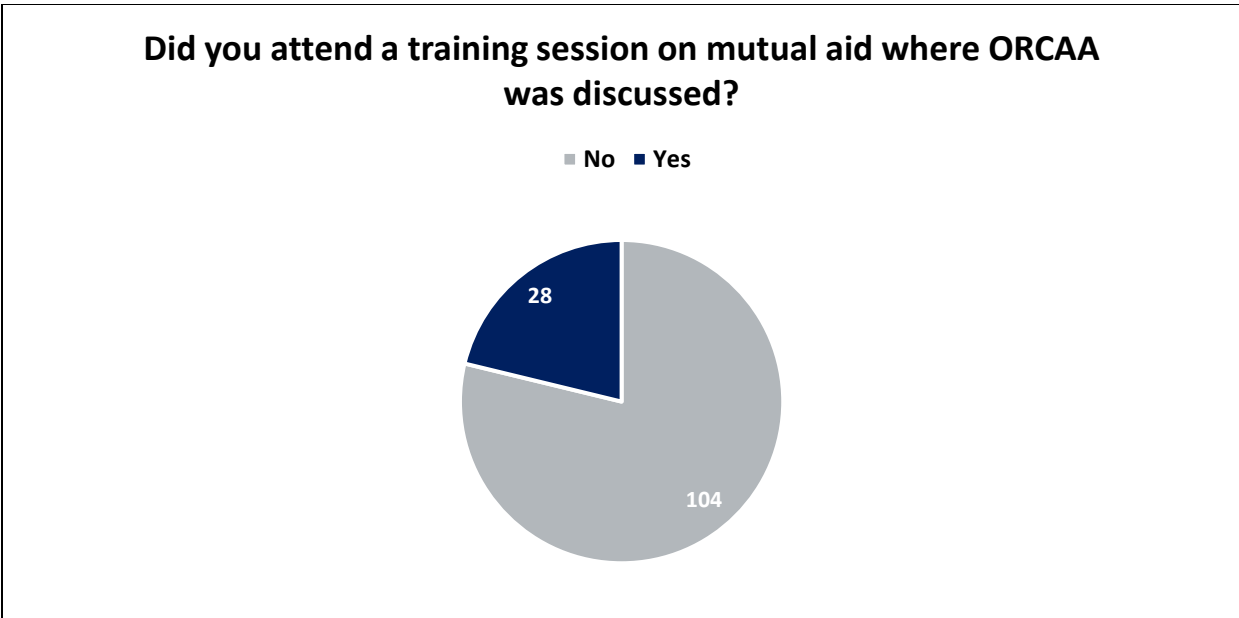
Did you attend a training session on mutual aid where ORCAA was discussed?

■ No ■ Yes

Figure 3 caption

Training attendance where ORCAA was discussed. Pie chart showing whether respondents attended a mutual aid training session where ORCAA was discussed (Yes or No). Most respondents reported they have not attended this type of training.

Website visit and perceived information accessibility: Respondents who visited the new OEM webpage are more likely to report that ORCAA information is accessible. Respondents who did not visit the webpage are more likely to report that information is not accessible.

The webpage is helpful once partners reach it, but discoverability and awareness remain key barriers. The limiting factor may be getting partners to the correct page, not necessarily the quality of the content once they arrive.
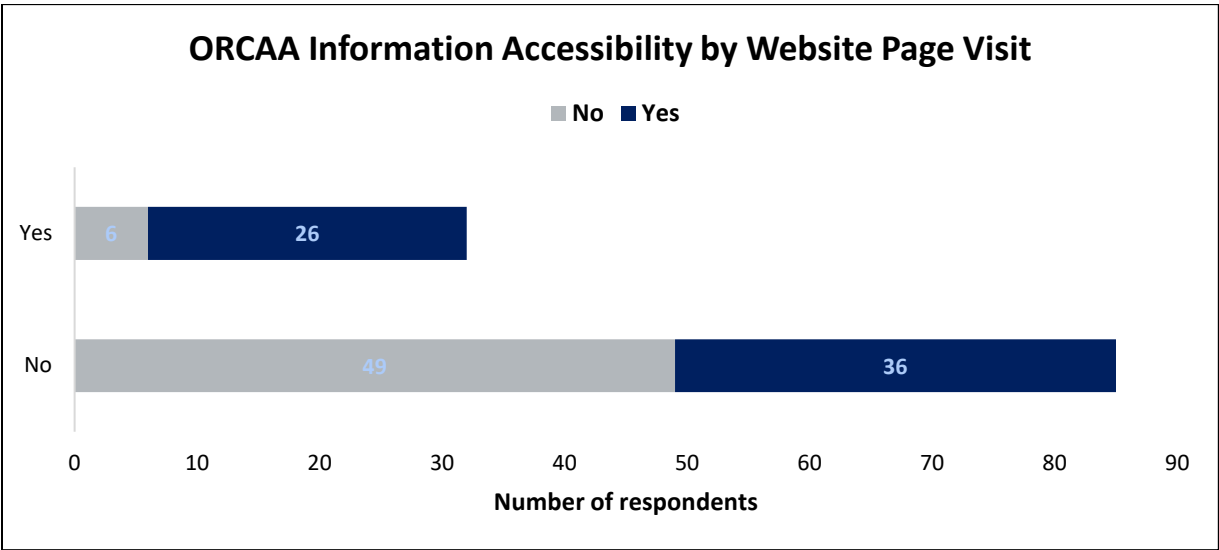
ORCAA Information Accessibility by Website Page Visit

■ No ■ Yes

Number of respondents

ORCAA use in 2025, overall and by organization type: Reported ORCAA use in 2025 is relatively limited. Most respondents across organization types selected "No use." Where ORCAA use is reported, it appears most commonly among city and county respondents and some special districts. Use is captured across categories such as requested assistance, fulfilled assistance, or both requested and fulfilled.

ORCAA may be functioning as a secondary option rather than a primary tool. Limited use could also be driven by partners defaulting to existing local agreements, uncertainty about ORCAA's purpose, or a lack of training and process clarity.
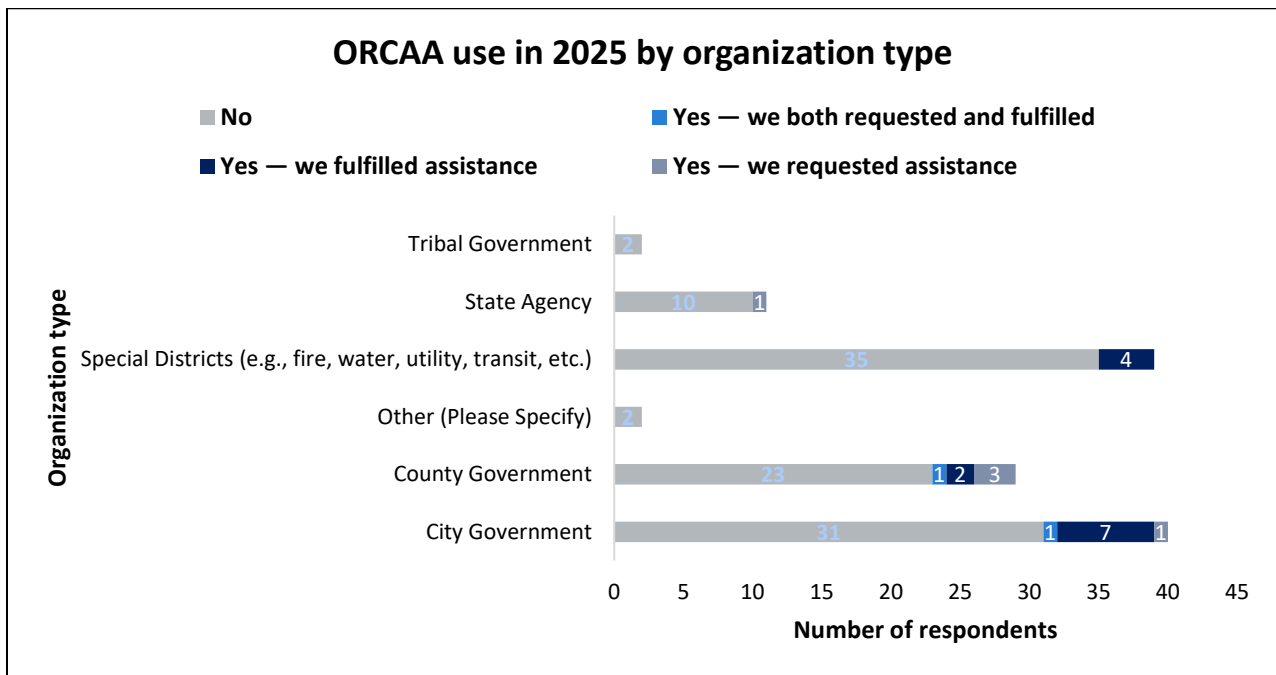

Figure 5 caption
ORCAA use in 2025 by organization type. Stacked horizontal bar chart showing ORCAA use categories (No use; requested assistance; fulfilled assistance; both requested and fulfilled), broken out by organization type.

First tool partners reach for when short on people or equipment:
A strong majority of respondents selected Local or Regional Memorandums of Understanding as their first option. Other options, including OpsCenter requests, EMAC, ORCAA, and Omnibus, are selected far less frequently. "Other" is also selected by a notable subset.

Partners default to local or regional tools first. ORCAA is not currently the first-choice mechanism for most partners when they need help. This does not mean ORCAA is not useful, but it indicates it may not be top of mind or may not feel simple enough to use quickly.
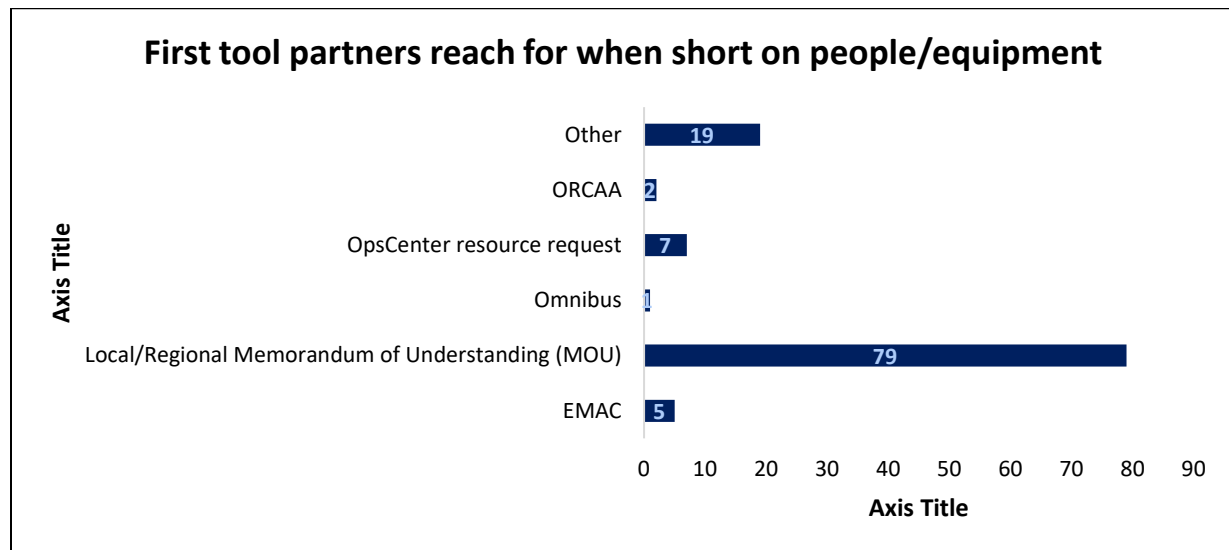
First tool partners reach for when short on people/equipment

Category	Value
Other	19
ORCAA	2
OpsCenter resource request	7
Omnibus	1
Local/Regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	79
EMAC	5

Figure 6 caption

First tool partners reach for when short on people or equipment. Horizontal bar chart shows which mechanism partners reach for first, with Local or Regional MOUs selected most frequently, followed by Other, OpsCenter requests, EMAC, ORCAA, and Omnibus.

When partners consider an ORCAA request complete: Responses vary across multiple definitions. "Not sure" is the most common response. Other common definitions include when records are filed or closed in the agency system, when payment is made or received if reimbursable, when the mission is finished with demobilization confirmed, and when final documentation is submitted and acknowledged.

Indicating inconsistent expectations for closeout steps and documentation. Inconsistent definitions of completion can lead to delayed closeout, incomplete documentation, confusion between parties, and inconsistent tracking of ORCAA activity.
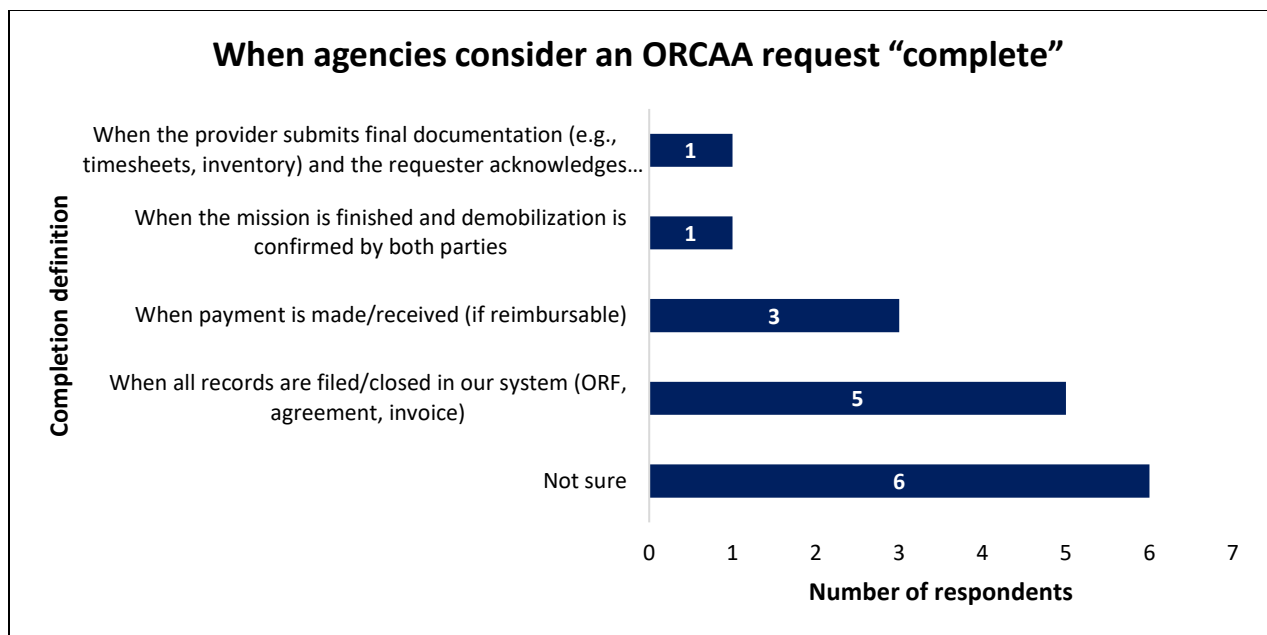
When agencies consider an ORCAA request "complete"

Figure 7 caption

When agencies consider an ORCAA request complete. Horizontal bar chart showing how respondents define completion, with "Not sure" as the most common response and other definitions spread across closeout milestones.

Themes of Open-Ended Responses

ORCAA Awareness is uneven.
A noticeable portion of respondents said that they were not aware of ORCAA, had not used it, or did not know what it was. Several comments were essentially "unknown," "not sure," or "undetermined, have not used." ORCAA is still not landing as common knowledge across the partner network, especially outside core emergency management circles.

Training and simple ORCAA process guidance.
Across the questions, the most consistent ask was training and clearer "how to use it" guidance. Respondents suggested webinars, in-person sessions, an ORCAA flow chart, and practical examples such as a statewide tabletop or a real-world example of what worked and what did not.

Findability and navigation are two different problems.
Many comments describe the site as easy to use once you are on the correct page, with clearly labeled reports, working links, and useful templates. At the same time, multiple respondents described difficulty initially finding the page, including ORCAA not being obvious from high-traffic pages. This reads less like a content problem and more like a discovery problem.

Standardized and repeatable tools
Several comments pointed toward practical process support, such as prefilled templates for

repeat requests, fillable forms or a structured intake form, checklists for both requesting and responding agencies, and clearer documentation on roles and steps.

<u>ORCAA is not the default mutual aid tool</u>
Survey results show partners default to local and regional MOUs first. Several open-ended comments reinforce that ORCAA is viewed as something you use when needed, not something practiced routinely.

Key Findings

Key finding 1: Awareness is not consistent across partner types. Familiarity is split or mixed in the largest respondent groups. Open-ended responses reinforce that many partners still do not know what ORCAA is, have not used it, or are unsure when it applies.

Key finding 2: Training exposure appears low. Most respondents have not attended a training where ORCAA was discussed. The added questions repeatedly call for webinars, in-person training, an ORCAA flow chart, and exercise and/or scenario-based examples.

Key finding 3: The webpage supports accessibility, but only if partners reach it. Respondents who visited the new OEM page are more likely to say ORCAA information is accessible. Improving discoverability could drive traffic to the correct page and create higher results.

Key finding 4: ORCAA is rarely the first-choice tool during shortages. Partners overwhelmingly rely on local and regional MOUs first. ORCAA appears to be used less often and is not top-of-mind as the primary mechanism.

Key finding 5: ORCAA use in 2025 is limited and not evenly distributed. Most respondents selected "No use," and use is concentrated mostly among cities, counties, and a smaller set of special districts.

Key finding 6: Partners do not share a consistent definition of ORCAA closeout. "Not sure" is the most common response for the definition of complete. That uncertainty is seen again in the open-ended feedback as a desire for checklists, templates, and clearer step-by-step guidance.

Recommended Next Steps

Recommendation 1: Lead with a short "ORCAA Basics"
Create a one-page overview that answers: what ORCAA is, when to use it, who can request it, what information is needed, and who signs. Pair it with a simple lifecycle diagram from request to closeout. Multiple respondents are still at "what is it?" and "when do I use it?"

Recommendation 2: Increase training touchpoints using multiple formats
Offer at least three options:

1. A short webinar (recorded) for baseline awareness
2. An in-person session tied to an existing partner meeting or conference track
3. A scenario-based tabletop exercise or quick case study on ORCAA showing what worked and what did not

Recommendation 3: Improve findability on the OEM website and through search
Make ORCAA visible from high-traffic OEM pages and improve external search results so "ORCAA Oregon" consistently lands on the correct OEM resource page.

Recommendation 4: Publish repeatable tools that reduce back and forth during requests
Develop and publish:
- A checklist for requesting agencies and a checklist for responding agencies
- Standard templates, including optional prefilled templates for repeat request types
- Fillable forms or a structured intake option that captures the minimum required information consistently

Recommendation 5: Clarify ORCAA vs. MOUs and other mechanisms in plain language
Create a short decision aid to help partners choose between Local or Regional MOUs, ORCAA, OpsCenter, EMAC, and Omnibus.

Recommendation 6: Standardize closeout expectations and define "complete"
Publish a shared closeout definition and minimum closeout steps, supported by a short closeout checklist and a documentation guide.

Conclusion

Survey responses suggest that ORCAA is recognized by many partners but not consistently understood or used as a first option when agencies are short on personnel or equipment. Partners most often rely on local or regional agreements, and several comments point to the same barriers: limited awareness, uncertainty about when ORCAA applies, and a need for clearer, easier-to-find guidance and training.

The recommendations and follow-up actions in this report focus on closing those gaps by improving visibility, simplifying how partners access and use ORCAA resources, and reinforcing shared understanding through practical training and job aids.

Acronyms

EMAC   Emergency Management Assistance Compact
MOU   Memorandum of Understanding
OEM   Oregon Department of Emergency Management
ORCAA   Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement
ORS   Oregon Revised Statute

Definitions

EMAC: A state-to-state mutual aid agreement ratified by Congress and signed into law by all US states and territories. It allows for the sharing of resources during a gubernatorial declared state emergency. EMAC is administered by OEM and ratified in ORS 402.
              Weblink: https://emacweb.org

Omnibus: A mutual aid agreement signed by 21 county emergency management agencies, it allows for the sharing of county resources between the signatories only, there are no city members. The agreement is hosted on the Marion County Emergency Management webpage.
              Weblink: https://www.co.marion.or.us/pw/emergencymanagement/omnibus

OpsCenter: The state's crisis management software for managing emergencies. It is utilized by county, tribal and state agencies to request resource assistance from the state. It may also be utilized for submitting and processing ORCAA resource requests.
              Weblink: https://oregonem.com