



Office of Emergency Services CEO Report February 2026

About OES

The Mendocino County Office of Emergency Services (OES) serves as the primary local coordination agency for emergencies and disasters affecting residents, public infrastructure, and government operations within the Mendocino County Operational Area (OA). This area includes the county, its cities, towns, special districts, and operates in cooperation with tribal partners. OES works to ensure that the county is prepared to respond efficiently and effectively to all hazards, from wildfires and earthquakes to winter storms and floods.

2025 Overview

In 2025, OES focused on strengthening operational readiness, expanding partnerships, and enhancing community preparedness. Staff participated in extensive trainings and exercises to increase familiarity with emergency procedures and ensure a coordinated response across the Operational Area. Regional coordination meetings allowed OES to reinforce communication and planning with county partners, while public outreach initiatives reached residents with preparedness information, including Spanish-speaking communities. OES also activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during a tsunami event and monitored wildfire and winter weather incidents, ensuring that resources were in place to respond to evolving situations.

Training and Exercises

OES conducted or participated in over 25 trainings and exercises throughout the year, covering a wide range of topics. Staff completed courses in the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), Emergency Operations Center (EOC) roles, emergency proclamations, alert and warning systems, social media in disaster management, and home hardening and building safety evaluations. Multi-hazard exercises addressed fire, earthquake, radiological, and winter storm scenarios, providing hands-on experience for EOC, Call Center, and HAM Radio teams.

Highlights from the year included participation in the statewide CalDART exercise to ensure critical air transport capabilities, the BEACON 25 exercise for resilient regional communications, and a Public Health Radiation Tabletop simulating a plane crash with radiological material. OES also hosted an EOC Wildfire Training Exercise during a Red Flag Warning, conducted Finance Section training for disaster cost recovery, and participated in the Potter Valley Project Phone Drill to practice rapid-response procedures for dam emergencies.



Operational Area Meetings

Operational Area coordination is a cornerstone of emergency preparedness. In 2025, OES hosted and participated in numerous meetings to ensure county and regional partners were aligned and ready to respond to any event.

Key meetings included the annual Pre-Fire Season Coordination Meeting and the Pre-Season Winter Weather Coordination Meeting. Staff also regularly engaged in Fire Chiefs' meetings, the Cal OES Mutual Aid Advisory Committee, the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) network, and the Redwood Tsunami Working Group.

Highlights of other Operational Area Meetings include:

- North Counties Fire Coordination Meeting
- Regional Disaster Summit – Listos
- Brooktrails Fuels Reduction and Brooktrails Secondary Access Road Planning Meetings
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR) Flood Meeting/ Sonoma County Preseason Flood Coordination meeting and tabletop exercise
- Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Planning Workshops (4 cities plus 3 district partners)
- Cal OES Directors Summit with county Operational Area Emergency Managers
- Mitigation Summit – Seismic Webinar
- Wildfire Planning for California Communities Meeting
- Ukiah Valley Fire Authority Strategic Planning Meeting
- Cal Heat Score Information Webinar
- Fourth National Access and Functional Needs Symposium
- Wildfire Readiness in the Age of AI



Public Outreach Events

The OES continued to increase community preparedness throughout 2025 through strategic outreach and public engagement. The OES hosted informational booths at several key local events including the Mendocino County Fair and Apple Show, Pumpkinfest and the GO Comptche Preparedness meeting. Staff also attended the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council Wildfire Insurance Forum and the Community Foundation Disaster Readiness Meetings. These outreach efforts were supported by a robust social media campaign and an educational segment on Mendo Latino Radio which ensures preparedness information reaches Spanish speaking residents throughout the county.



Emergency Events

The OES activated the Emergency Operations Center once in 2025 in response to the Kamchatka Tsunami Event caused by an 8.8 earthquake off Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. In Mendocino County, tsunami inundation from the event was between 1.5 and 3 feet.

OES staff closely monitored wildfire activity, including three notable events: the Pond, Medicine and Sawyer Fires which combined for a total of almost 300 acres resulting in multiple evacuation orders and road closures.

OES staff tracked multiple Winter Weather events leading to multiple Operational Area Coordination Calls to strengthen regional preparedness and ensure local agencies had the resources needed to manage these events. OES staff delivered sand and sandbags to requesting agencies to help mitigate the risks from flooding.

Miscellaneous

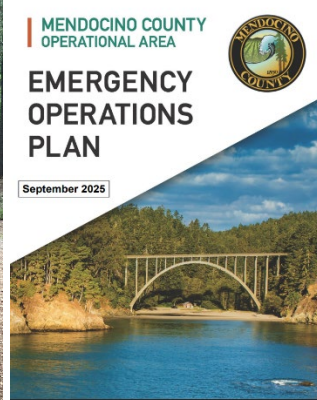
OES staff were granted access to the Alert California Wildfire Camera Control System. OES staff now receive notification when AI cameras detect smoke. This access allows staff to remotely control the cameras to verify fire activity, significantly enhancing early detection and situational awareness capabilities.

CalFire released their updated maps for the Fire Hazard Severity Zones. This new update includes land in the local responsibility area. Local Agencies were required to adopt the Fire Hazard Severity Zones by ordinance. OES staff put out a survey seeking public comment which was submitted to CalFire for review. The Fire Hazard Severity Zones maps were approved by the County of Mendocino Board of Supervisors on May 6, 2025.

Planning

OES has remained dedicated to strengthening county preparedness through the development of emergency plan frameworks. Notably, the Board of Supervisors approved both the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and the Emergency Operations Plan in 2025. Current planning efforts are focused on updating the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and creating Flood Response and Continuity of Operations Plans.

Staff have also contributed to regional planning efforts. Staff have reviewed and contributed feedback for the state Mass Evacuation Guidance and the Critical Incident Base Plan. Locally, staff have completed plan reviews of the Camp Mendocino Emergency Operations Plan and various dam response plans.



Grants Management

OES administers two critical FEMA-funded grant programs, the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG), that serve as key mechanisms for advancing the County's strategic goal of a prepared and resilient county.

In a typical year, these two programs provide approximately \$300,000 in combined funding, with roughly \$150,000–\$168,000 allocated through HSGP and \$140,000 through EMPG. OES typically has multiple open grant years at any given time, ensuring continuous support and enhancement of the County's readiness.

In 2025, HSGP funds were prioritized to close capability gaps and strengthen countywide readiness. Funding focused on enhancing specialized response capacity through SWAT training and equipment upgrades, improving emergency communications interoperability among fire and law enforcement partners, and sustaining the County's alert and warning system to ensure timely and accurate public information during emergencies.

EMPG funding provides long-term operational stability for emergency management by supporting up to 50 percent of eligible OES staff salaries through a required local match. This investment ensures continuity of core emergency management functions, including planning, training, exercises, coordination, and operational readiness, while maximizing federal funding and reducing reliance on local general funds. Together, these grant programs enable sustained preparedness, scalable response, and long-term resilience for Mendocino County's communities.