## County Public Information Officer Cadre holds December kickoff meeting

When a multi-week emergency like the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire happens, Multnomah County needs a deep bench of staff to support the county's response. County staff interested in keeping the public informed during an emergency gathered for the first time in December 2019 to discuss how to build a team that can support the county in an emergency.

In June 2019, a Readiness Fair was held to introduce county staff to different support functions in the county's Emergency Operations Center, including public information. The goal was to increase the number of county staff who are trained and ready to respond in an emergency.

In December about 25 county staff from many departments gathered to discuss plans to strengthen the county's public information team. The gathering included veteran PIO's (public information officers) like County Communications Office manager Julie Sullivan-Springhetti as well as county staff with a wide range of skills. Those skills included bilingual communication, volunteer management, information technology, graphic design, HAM radio and more.

Julie Sullivan-Springhetti recalled her work leading a Joint Information Center (JIC) during the Eagle Creek Fire, which lasted several weeks and burned thousands of acres in the Columbia River Gorge. Having more county staff who are able to monitor social media, organize news briefings, and do community outreach would greatly help the county respond to a similar event in the future, she said.

The County's new PIO Cadre plans to train staff for working in a JIC in 2020 and continue to build the county's bench to respond to emergencies large and small. For more information on the PIO Cadre, please visit the pages below and fill out the online interest form:

**County Disaster Service Worker Info:** https://multco.us/em/multnomah-county-employee-disaster-service-worker-information

**PIO info:** https://multco.us/em/command-staff

**Online interest form:** https://multco.us/em/webform/disaster-service-worker-interest-form