Emergency Management

Eagle Creek Fire offers lessons to improve County readiness for future disasters.

July 2018

Image from the Eagle Creek Fire. Photo source: Multnomah County Communications, Flickr

Multnomah County Auditor's Office
Steve March, Multnomah County Auditor

FINAL DRAFT

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Report Highlights

What We Found

The Multnomah County Office of Emergency Management's performance in the Eagle Creek Fire was generally well regarded by partners. As most emergency events and exercises do, the experience also revealed areas for improvement. We found that:

- To staff the Emergency Operations Center, the County drew on assistance from neighboring counties and cities, and some less experienced County staff. Increasing the number of County staff with training and experience, would improve preparedness for future large incidents.
- The Office did not ensure the federal reimbursement application included expenses from all involved departments. The application did include the largest expenses.

The County faces additional challenges in emergency management. We found that:

- The Office has set a three-year strategy, but lacks timelines or plans for implementation.
- Staffing challenges within the Office limit progress towards meeting its goals, including towards meeting nationally recognized accreditation standards.
- There is no central coordination for continuity of operations planning and some continuity of operations plans are outdated or incomplete.
- The Office is not using the Emergency Operations Center facility and lacks an alternative.

Why We Did This Audit

The Multnomah County Auditor included Emergency Management on the 2017-18 audit schedule. The Eagle Creek Fire provided a good opportunity to examine the Office's response to a large incident, and draw lessons for future improvements. While the Office is small, the County's Emergency Management program has far-reaching implications in protecting life, safety, and property; ensuring equity in disaster preparedness; and building resilience.

What We Recommend

- The Office should continue to build capacity for staffing the Emergency Operations Center. This can be accomplished by reporting on progress with identifying additional County staff, ensuring staff have adequate training, and establishing a tracking system.
- The Office should develop procedures to set expectations and clarify roles and responsibilities for expense reimbursement and continuity of operations planning.
- The Office should also take short-term steps to mitigate long-term challenges, including developing strategies to address turnover; improving short-term action planning; and developing Emergency Operations Center facility plans in line with intended usage.

Introduction

Emergency Management has a state-mandated coordination role

The Multnomah County Office of Emergency Management (Office) coordinates emergency preparedness activity in Multnomah County. Oregon law mandates that counties in the state *must* establish an emergency management agency, while cities *may* establish an emergency management agency. Within Multnomah County, the cities of Portland and Gresham have established emergency management agencies.

By County code, the Office plans and prepares for mitigation, response, and recovery coordination for emergencies and disasters that occur in the County. According to its strategic plan, the Office places a focus on equity as a core value, and strives to achieve equitable outcomes for communities at risk during emergencies. The Office's role includes:

- coordinating with the private and non-profit sectors, local government partners, and within County government itself
- operating a 24/7 call number to respond to emergencies
- issuing public alerts and notifications
- engaging in community outreach to foster disaster resilience
- developing plans and procedures
- providing training and conducting emergency-related exercises
- procuring equipment and supplies
- guiding continuity of operations planning for County departments

The Office is rebuilding credibility after challenges in the past

For many years, the County struggled to maintain credibility in the emergency management function. The Office had suffered from minimal staffing, high employee turnover, and a lack of leadership, with only brief periods of stability and sound leadership, since its inception in 2002. As a result, local government and even County partners did not rely on the Office in the past.

Since the hiring of the current director in 2015, the Office's credibility has increased, according to partners with whom we spoke. Many partners now value the Office's experience and leadership. The Office developed an equity lens that has been useful to partners, and the County has built its ability to provide shelter during emergencies. Concerns about employee turnover and staffing capacity remain, but the September 2017 Eagle Creek Fire response offered an indication of the Office's capability to respond to a significant emergency.

The Office managed the Emergency Operations Center during the Eagle Creek Fire, and performance was viewed positively

The Eagle Creek Fire started on Saturday, September 2, 2017, over Labor Day weekend in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The Office worked with partners over the long weekend to support an evacuation, starting on Monday, September 4. Fueled by east winds, the fire covered 20,000 acres by Tuesday, September 5, and threatened homes in the Gorge communities of Dodson, Warrendale, Larch Mountain, and Corbett.

Though Multnomah County did not have a role in fighting the fire, the County notified residents of evacuations, operated checkpoints on closed roads, provided public information, and offered shelter and other support to those affected by the fire. The Sheriff's Office, the Department of Community Services' Transportation and Animal Services divisions, the Department of County Human Services, and the County Communications Office played significant roles.

Image from the Eagle Creek Fire response Photo source: Multnomah County Communications, Flickr

The Office activated an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Troutdale Police Community Center on September 5. The EOC staff provided logistics, resource, and planning support for Multnomah County's various response roles. Staff from the Office (eight positions) filled some EOC roles, including EOC Manager. However, as is typical in emergency management, it also drew on County staff and others to fill over 40 shifts a day in the EOC and Joint Information Center, which coordinates public information. Employees from throughout County government, from partner agencies, and volunteers, staffed the EOC and Joint Information Center; community meetings; a re-entry center; and an evacuation shelter, set up by the Red Cross in cooperation with Multnomah County.

The EOC activation lasted through September 18. Overall, we heard positive feedback with regard to how the Office performed its coordination responsibilities. Many who participated in the EOC were impressed with the Office's leadership, effort, and proactive approach.

Eagle Creek was a large incident, but the County faces more threatening hazards

In terms of size and duration, Eagle Creek was the largest County EOC activation in recent years. The incident also occurred outside of any city limits; consequently, the County led the activation response. In this sense, the incident provided a good test of the County's capabilities.

However, Multnomah County faces threats and hazards (such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanic activity, terrorism, or other wildfires) with the potential to be much more devastating and demanding of County resources. The Eagle Creek Fire occurred in a less populated area of the County and moved slowly enough to allow door-to-door notification of evacuations. It also did not require much resource management, such as ordering equipment, managing donations, and other tasks, which are often a challenge in emergencies. A faster or more widespread incident, a resource intensive incident, or one occurring in a more densely populated area, could be more demanding on County resources.

Perceived shaking and damage potential of a 9.0 earthquake ranges from strong to severe for most of Multnomah County.
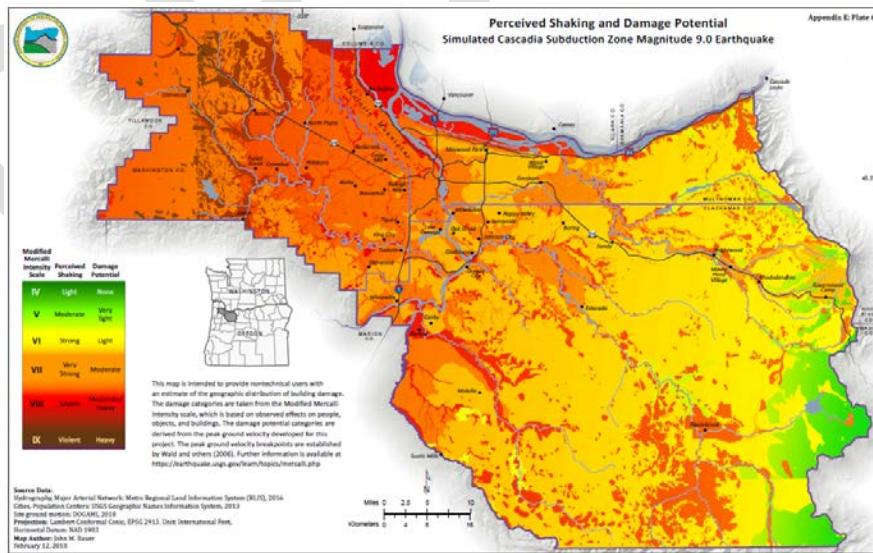
Source: Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

Studies indicate a 10% to 14% chance northern Oregon will face a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake of magnitude 9.0 or greater in the next 50 years. The Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries recently released a report indicating that, in Multnomah County alone, a

9.0 magnitude earthquake along the Cascadia fault would cause injuries and deaths of between 2,800 - 16,700 people, and between $13 - $21 billion in building repair costs.

Eagle Creek revealed areas to strengthen for future incidents

While we heard positive feedback about the Office's leadership during the Eagle Creek Fire, we also learned about challenges instructive for the future. Some partners were particularly concerned about the County's capacity to staff the EOC. Additionally, the Office should have provided more oversight of the process for reimbursement. Improvements in these areas will increase the County's preparedness for emergency management in the future, particularly considering the hazards faced in the region.

The Office should continue to grow staffing capacity for the Emergency Operations Center

To be ready for the next large emergency or disaster, the Office should continue to build EOC staffing capacity. During Eagle Creek, the Office relied on assistance from neighboring counties and cities. Inexperienced County staff filled some roles. At the same time, experienced County staff worked long shifts, without relief. Other types of incidents could be more challenging to ensure adequate staffing. For example, in a widespread incident, other jurisdictions would have to staff their own EOCs and may not be able to provide help to Multnomah County.

County staff and partners working in the Eagle Creek EOC. Photo source: Multnomah County Communications, Flickr

The Office should identify additional staff and ensure adequate training

The Office should recruit and train more County staff for EOC roles. Additional trained and experienced people are needed to continue to build capacity, as well as keep up with attrition as staff leave the County or retire. Eagle Creek illustrated the need for additional internal capacity, to be ready for future large incidents.

According to the sign-in roster, just under half of Eagle Creek EOC participants were County employees. Around 25 participants were from the City of Portland alone. Staff from cities, neighboring counties, and Metro filled shifts for key leadership positions, including Deputy EOC Manager, Operations Chief, and Logistics Chief. Drawing on external partners has positive aspects. It provides learning experiences for all involved and indicates good relationships with partners. However, interviews revealed that some stakeholders, both inside and outside the County, were concerned that this situation also indicated a lack of adequately prepared County staff.

County staff did play a significant role in staffing the EOC. Around 80 County staff participated in the EOC and Joint Information Center, including filling shifts for leadership positions. County staff also worked many shifts. According to the roster, County staff worked nearly 60% of all shifts. At least 16 County staff worked seven or more shifts in a 12-day period, with some shifts lasting over 12 hours or into the middle of the night.

While some County staff who worked in the Eagle Creek EOC were well prepared, others lacked experience. We conducted a survey of County employees who participated in the Eagle Creek EOC, not including the Office's staff. Many survey respondents reported having completed training and exercises prior to Eagle Creek (as shown below). Less than half of respondents had participated in any Office-led exercise or activation within the previous year and a half (2016 or 2017) and less than half of respondents reported feeling well prepared on their first day in the Eagle Creek EOC.

Many Eagle Creek EOC County staff had prior training or experience, but not all
Percent of survey respondents reporting completion

Training completed prior to Eagle Creek	
Baseline FEMA training	72%
Advanced FEMA training	67%
Participation in a County exercise or activation	
Participated at any time prior to Eagle Creek	63%
Participated within previous year and a half	42%

Source: Multnomah County Auditor's Office survey, out of 43 responses (59% response rate). Notes: Requirements vary by position. Baseline FEMA training is required for all positions. Staff from the Office were not included in the survey.

It is worth noting, that involving some less experienced staff in an activation can provide valuable learning experiences for them and help build overall capacity for the future. Some survey respondents reported completing additional training or exercises after Eagle Creek.

The Office has a responsibility to identify staff and ensure that they have adequate training and exercise or activation experience for their anticipated roles. County code implies that the Office has authority in the area of staffing, stating that the Office will "create and train" teams responsible for coordination in the EOC and "designate and train individuals" to perform functions "that may be needed in a large scale event." Ensuring adequate training is also part of federal grant requirements. In practice, Office leaders reported relying on department directors and managers to provide names of staff and permission for their participation.

Current staffing capacity is short of the Office's goals. The Office aims to have 250 County staff trained and ready to work in the EOC, with a shorter-term goal of 150 by 2018. The Office currently maintains a contact list of 127 County staff and roughly 80 County staff served in the Eagle Creek EOC. Due to the lack of a tracking system, it is not clear how many people on the contact list have adequate qualifications and training. That also does not account for different qualifications for different positions. Even without a tracking system, the Office is aware that some positions currently have few people ready to fill them.

To meet staffing objectives, the Office needs to establish a system to track staff qualifications and training

The Office cannot ensure adequate preparation, or identify and target training gaps, without better tracking systems. The Office does not currently keep track of County EOC staff qualifications and training or document which position(s) individuals are anticipated to fill. Without a tracking system, Office staff do not know how many trained staff the County has ready, for which roles, except informally.

The lack of a tracking system also affects how staff are assigned shifts and roles during an emergency.

> The Office's responsibility to maintain training records is in:
> - Emergency Operations Plan
> - Accreditation standards
>
> A regional intergovernmental agreement, for sharing staff in certain circumstances, also requires an EOC staff roster.

During Eagle Creek, the EOC planning section, responsible for assigning shifts, had no way to verify self-reported qualifications; except through personal knowledge, based on relationships. A better tracking system could improve the notification process, ensure staff have adequate training for their anticipated positions, and help identify and target training and staffing gaps.

The Office needs to extend oversight of the expense tracking and reimbursement process

In emergencies that qualify, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides financial assistance to state and local governments, for some emergency-related expenses. In the case of Eagle Creek, the County sought financial assistance through FEMA's Fire Management Assistance Grant Program. This grant program reimburses state and local governments 75 cents on the dollar for eligible expenses.

After the fire, the Office had responsibility for submitting the grant application – with accompanying documentation – for reimbursement, but first had to gather the documentation from department finance teams. On behalf of the Office, the Department of County Assets Finance Manager notified department finance teams of the documentation requirements for reimbursement, and shared an expense tracking tool.

In January of 2018, the Office submitted the reimbursement request to FEMA through the State of Oregon. At that time, four County departments had submitted documentation to the Office for reimbursement. Those four departments incurred the vast majority of the County's fire-related expenses. The reimbursement request put the County in a position to recoup over half of the Eagle Creek expenses.

Based on the original application, the County would recover over half of the expenses it incurred, but left some money on the table

Department/Division	Total expenses coded	Amount calculated as eligible	Likely recovery (eligible x $.75)
Sheriff's Office	$217,003	*$267,691	$200,768
Department of Community Services	$198,477	$165,613	$124,209
Department of County Assets	$80,268	$22,107	$16,580
Non-Departmental (includes the Office of Emergency Management)	$61,738	$33,344	$25,008
Other departments (5)	$47,018	Not calculated	$0
Total	$604,503	$488,755	$366,567

*Sheriff's Office analysis, which includes volunteer labor
Sources: Auditor analysis of Multnomah County SAP, Enterprise Financial System, and grant application

At the time of the application, five departments that coded expenses to the fire did not seek reimbursement. Among those, the Health Department and the Department of County Human Services were both significantly involved in sending support to the EOC, or the evacuation

shelter. The Health Department coded almost $37,000 to the fire response, according to SAP, the County's financial system of record, but did not submit for reimbursement at the time of the original application. The Department of County Human Services coded only $91 to the fire in SAP, but given what we were told about the Department's level of involvement during the event, both at the Emergency Operations Center and the evacuation shelter, this appears to be a sizeable under-accounting. It appears that Department employees did not code time to the fire on their timesheets, and neither Department management nor the Office recognized the oversight.

Actual emergencies are not only significant events to manage, but also learning opportunities that will inform the management of future events. For the departments that did not submit requests for reimbursement, forgoing the analysis and request for reimbursement was a missed opportunity to exercise processes, make improvements, and potentially recover money spent on the fire.

After we notified the Office that some departments with expenses coded to the fire did not submit for reimbursement, the Office worked with the Health Department to append the application to the state. Consequently, the Health Department will be likely to recover about $6,000. Perhaps more importantly, having worked through the tracking tool, the Department will be better prepared for the next emergency.

County faces additional challenges for emergency readiness

The County faces additional challenges for emergency readiness, including staffing challenges within the Office and suboptimal facilities. Continuing to build the County's emergency management program over the long-term makes sense, particularly given the region's hazards and the demands of accreditation standards. However, the County's emergency management program encompasses more than just the Office of Emergency Management. The Office relies on other County departments to build a robust program. In the near term, the Office can take additional steps to mitigate challenges, including addressing turnover and improving action planning.

The Office's priority setting could be more actionable and transparent

To set an office vision and direction, the Office completed a strategic plan for 2017-2020, developed with input from cities, nonprofits, and County partners. The plan is ambitious and comprehensive, including many of the topics in this audit and more. The Office also uses Emergency Management Accreditation Program standards to guide strategic planning and considers the strategic plan as a step toward accreditation. While more comprehensive than basic state requirements, these nationally recognized standards provide baseline performance criteria for emergency management programs, regardless of size.

However, the strategic plan does not include timelines or an action plan for how the Office will accomplish or prioritize objectives and monitor progress. The Office does have another, more detailed plan for operations, which includes fields for assigning responsibility and due dates, but those fields are

> The strategic plan does not include timelines or an action plan.

mostly blank. The director reported that timelines for accomplishing objectives would be dependent on staffing levels. The strategic plan itself includes objectives to develop additional implementation plans and strategies, but it appears this has not yet happened. The Office has also not shared the strategic plan publically.

Additionally, some other jurisdictions' emergency management offices publish annual reports outlining their yearly accomplishments or have advisory committees to help set priorities. Having one or more advisory committee is an accreditation standard. The Office has started a coordinating committee within the County, but does not have an advisory committee, and has not published annual reports.

Office staffing challenges limit its ability to accomplish goals

Staffing challenges within the Office limit how much the team can accomplish toward its goals, including towards meeting accreditation standards. Given staffing limitations, the Office has had to make tradeoffs.

The Office is small, with eight full-time positions, and it has experienced high turnover and long vacancies. In the last three years, seven people have left voluntarily. Over half of the current staff members have worked in the Office less than a year and no one has worked there more than four years. Prior to February 2018, the training and exercise coordinator position was vacant for ten months. Stakeholders reported that Office staff time is at a premium and Office staff reported that they have more work than they can possibly do. The cause of turnover and vacancies is not clear, but HR partners attribute challenges with recruitment to the lack of a local candidate pool and uncompetitive pay.

The demands on this relatively small office are substantial. The Office is responsible not only for operations when emergencies occur, but for completing plans in anticipation of such events. Plans form the basis for operations when emergencies occur, incorporate data about known hazards, and clarify roles and responsibilities. The development of plans also builds relationships among partners, and helps different emergency management players take ownership of their roles.
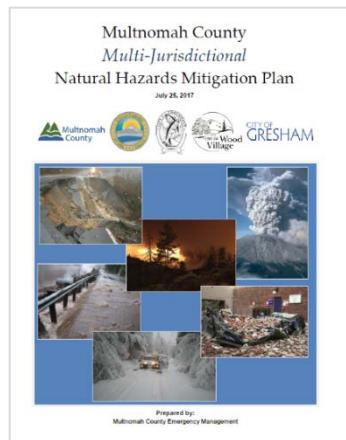
The Office has made progress in completing plans since the change in leadership in 2015. The Office has completed the two state-required plans, required by Oregon law and administrative rules. Several others are projected to be completed in 2018. But there are many additional plans the Office could develop to be more prepared and to meet accreditation standards (See Appendix: Plan Status). Moreover, delay in getting plans completed can have a bottleneck effect in the Office. Without plans in place, the Office cannot operationalize, test, and refine the plans through exercises and actual events.

External demands further draw on staff time. Actual emergencies are unexpected and can pull the Office staff and leadership away at any time. Office staff also coordinate and provide guidance to County departments. They are involved in regional preparedness efforts through the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization. They build relationships with cities and non-profit and private sector partners, as well as engage in community outreach. Office staff have to respond to requests from these groups, in addition to any activities they initiate.

The Office also relies on other County departments to participate in emergency management and departments have varying levels of capacity for this function. For instance, departments engage in continuity of operations and emergency support function planning, track and compile financial information for reimbursement, and provide staff for response and EOC roles. Less capacity within departments puts more demands on the Office.

The Office has stopped coordinating continuity of operations planning

Continuity of operations planning currently lacks central coordination, as the Office has stopped working on it in favor of other planning activities, like the mass shelter plan. Continuity of operations planning is the practice of ensuring that an organization's essential functions can continue under any circumstances, including following a disaster. For Multnomah County, essential functions include things like operating and inspecting bridges, providing abuse and protective services, operating detention facilities, and providing primary health care.

Several years ago, the Office introduced an online tool for continuity of operations planning and initiated a coordinated planning effort across County departments. However, as priorities in the Office shifted, coordinated planning has stalled. Without central coordination, no one is checking whether department plans conflict with each other, helping facilitate discussions about prioritizing scarce resources, or providing oversight to ensure plans are up to date, useful, and periodically exercised. The Office's future involvement will likely increase, as

funding for an additional position focused on continuity of operations planning was included in the fiscal year 2019 budget.

Currently, department and division plans have varying levels of completeness. Of the plans that are contained in the online tool, many are out of date and incomplete. For instance, some plans contain names of people who no longer work at the County. Around a third of plans do not list any alternate facilities, designating a place for employees to perform essential work if their regular building is unavailable. While management reported divisions have been performing continuity exercises, we saw little documentation of this and none documented in the on-line tool in the last three years. Many of the people we interviewed also said that the online tool is cumbersome and not useful.

The federal government advises all local governments to have continuity programs and accreditation standards require a continuity of operations plan. While departments and divisions create their own plans, County code states that the Office will "guide each county department" in continuity planning. Clearly, the Office has a role, but this language leaves room for interpretation as to the extent of the Office's responsibility and authority.

The Office is not using the current Emergency Operations Center facility, and lacks an alternate plan

The Office considers the current EOC facility inadequate and rarely uses it. However, the Office continues to maintain it as an option for the time being. Ultimately, the Office is waiting for the County to build a new facility, but a timeline for that has not been established. In the interim, the Office appears to be stuck in between alternatives: not committed to the current EOC, but without plans or procedures to be a fully mobile operation.

The EOC facility is the base center for emergency response coordination and decision-making in the event of an emergency. It is a critical piece of infrastructure for an emergency management program, and is a requirement of state law and for funding and accreditation. The Office should have access to a modern EOC facility that can support sustained operational functionality in virtually all emergencies, and can be activated quickly.

The Office maintains a fully equipped EOC facility in a closed dorm of a juvenile detention center in Northeast Portland. It is set up with rows of computers and mounted television screens, among other equipment. However, the space is viewed as too small, laid out poorly, and difficult to access due to the need to enter through controlled-access doors that require operation by a corrections deputy. In recent years, the facility has been used only a handful of times for exercises and not at all for actual incidents. Based on comments from the Office staff, there is little intention of using this established space for an EOC in the future, either.

As an alternative to the current EOC, the Office raised the possibility of moving to a mobile EOC model. This scenario would involve having computers and infrastructure such as radio and internet communications ready to deploy. While the Office may have the capacity to run a mobile EOC (this effectively happened at Eagle Creek), the plans, procedures, and locations for that model are not formalized, and not a part of routine training and exercises.

A newly built EOC facility is a possibility, but likely many years away. In the meantime, the indecision about the EOC results in less preparedness for the next emergency event. It is not clear where the Office will activate, the procedures are not determined, and the employees and volunteers that will make up the EOC staff are missing the opportunity to become familiar with the EOC environment, including setup and deployment of equipment, that they will most likely use.
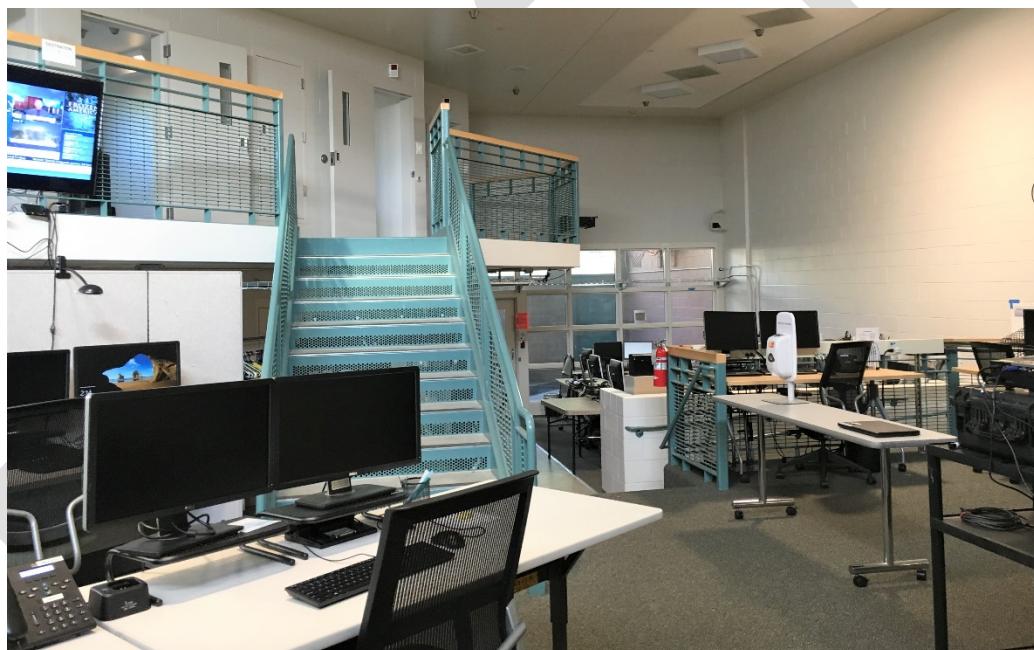
The current EOC facility, in a closed dorm of a juvenile detention center, has an awkward layout.
Photo source: Auditor's Office

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Office of Emergency Management:

To build EOC staffing capacity, the Office should:
1. Develop a tracking system and maintain an updated EOC staff roster, including qualifications and anticipated position(s).
2. Ensure that all identified EOC staff have access to and have participated in appropriate training and exercises for their anticipated position(s), incorporating emerging regional guidelines.
3. Set annual targets for recruiting and training additional staff and report annually on progress.

To improve finance tracking and reimbursement, the Office should:
4. Clearly communicate a written procedure and applicable tools Countywide, for documenting and tracking emergency-related costs. This could take the form of a County administrative procedure.
5. Ensure, through a formalized process, that all likely emergency-related costs, across the County, are captured, tracked, and submitted for reimbursement.

To address challenges associated with limited office staff capacity, the Office should:
6. Work with HR partners to monitor turnover rates and develop strategies to reduce time to hire and future turnover. Strategies could include reclassifying positions.
7. Set realistic short-term action plans, including timelines, and report on progress annually. Involve stakeholders in priority setting, potentially including an advisory committee.

To improve continuity of operations planning, the Office should:
8. Work with the Chair's Office to develop a policy or procedure that directs departments to complete, maintain, and exercise continuity of operations plans; clarifies roles and responsibilities; and specifies expectations, including frequency of updates. This could take the form of a County administrative procedure.

To align EOC facility designations with intended use, the Office should:
9. Develop plans for EOC facilities that the Office will actually use, both in the short- and long-term. This could include improving capability for a mobile EOC, by developing and exercising mobile procedures; identifying other available County space; or committing to using the current facility.

Objectives, Scope, & Methodology

The objectives of this audit were to:
- Assess Emergency Management's role in the Eagle Creek Fire Response
- Identify areas to improve County emergency response capability in future incidents

To accomplish these objectives we:
- Studied applicable laws, grant requirements, intergovernmental agreements, guidance, and standards.
- Analyzed budgets and other financial information.
- Interviewed the Office managers and staff, as well as County staff from other departments involved with emergency management.
- Interviewed external partners, including emergency managers from the Cities of Portland and Gresham, State of Oregon, and neighboring counties.
- Conducted a survey of County staff who participated in the Eagle Creek Emergency Operations Center and Joint Information Center (EOC/JIC). The survey had a 59% response rate.
- Analyzed the sign-in roster for the Eagle Creek EOC/JIC. Note that this roster did not capture anyone who failed to sign in and may have inadvertently captured some visitors. We excluded likely visitors from analysis.
- Researched emergency management literature, regional reports, and audit reports.
- Examined after action reports, emergency management plans and procedures, and Office strategic plans.
- Reviewed EMPG grant submissions from 2014 through 2017.
- Toured the Multnomah County EOC facility and the City of Portland ECC facility.
- Attended a tabletop exercise and several meetings with internal and external partners.
- Assessed continuity of operations plans in the online system.
- Observed demos of the Everbridge (notification and alert) and WebEOC (incident information management) systems.
- Reviewed Office staffing from 2010 to present.

For this audit, we analyzed FY17 financial data from SAP, the County's enterprise resource planning system. Based on the annual review of SAP datasets by the County's external auditor, our office has determined that the data were sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this report.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings, and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Staff

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Appendix: Plan Status

Plans are critical components of the Office's preparedness mission. The Office has made progress in completing plans since the change in leadership in 2015. The Office has completed the two plans required by the state: both the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, a multi-jurisdictional plan, and the Emergency Operations Plan, were completed or updated in 2017. There are many additional plans the Office could develop to be more prepared, and it expects to complete several in 2018.

The Office has completed the state-required plans, and several more are in progress

Plan	Status	Last update	Required by state	In standards or guidance from:
Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan	Current, FEMA approved	2017	X	FEMA, State, EMAP
Human-caused and Technology-caused Hazards Risk Assessment Annex	Current	2017		
Basic Emergency Operations Plan	Current, but overdue for promulgation	2017	X	FEMA, State, EMAP
Emergency Support Functions Annexes 1 -18	16 complete, 2 in progress	2017		FEMA lists many possible annexes
Debris Removal Annex	Current	2016		
Damage Assessment Annex	In progress			
Mass Shelter Annex	In progress			
Reunification Annex	Planned			
Incident-specific Annexes: such as earthquake, flood, or terrorism	None			
Continuity of Government Plan	None			FEMA, EMAP
Continuity of Operations Plan	Partial	2014		FEMA, EMAP
Recovery Plan	Waiting for regional framework			FEMA, EMAP
Community Wildfire Protection Plan	Overdue for an update	2011		US Forest Service, State Forestry

Source: Auditor's Office Analysis

The Office is waiting on refinements to emergency support function annexes to the Emergency Operations Plan before promulgating it, or officially putting the plan into effect. The plan has not been promulgated for 8 years, exceeding grant requirements. The Office expects to complete additional plans, including the Damage Assessment and Mass Shelter plans, in 2018.

The County Emergency Operations Plan is a suite of plans containing a Basic Emergency Operations Plan and various annexes. FEMA recommends incorporating annexes, such as incident-specific annexes that get into details about specific hazards. However, FEMA does not mandate specific annexes and leaves them to the discretion of the program. FEMA lists many possible annexes, and still states that its list is not complete. The County Emergency Operations Plan currently lacks any incident-specific annexes. Additionally, the Office relies on assistance from other County departments to lead on emergency support function annexes that align with departments' missions and functions.