

HB 3170: Resilience Hubs & Networks

Extending funding through OREM for community resilience

Background:

HB 2990 (2023) became part of the Climate Package HB 3409 (2023), directing the Oregon Department of Human Services' Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) to provide grants, support, and technical assistance for resilience hubs and networks, now found in ORS 409.760. The program received a one-time allocation of \$10M.

OREM received seven hundred applications—indicating widespread need for the program—and 96 awards were made. The types of projects awarded include building repair, community outreach, communications equipment, emergency response equipment, vehicles, training, grant writing expertise, operational expenses, and staffing.

Purpose:

Devastating impacts of wildfire, heatwaves, ice storms, flooding, and drought across Oregon have taken a heavy toll in recent years. While once sufficient to focus on response, Oregonians now expect investments in preparing for our new normal. Natural disasters often result in the loss of basic services—water sanitation, electricity, internet, cell phone service, and even medical support. **Community resilience is needed to withstand the impacts of large and small disruptions.**

Resilience is the ability to cope with and recover from crisis, personally and economically; to become strong, healthy, and successful again after something bad happens. A **Resilience Hub** provides basic resources and equipment during a crisis—ranging from a physical structure to a supply site with resources, such as water, food, shelter, power/electricity sources, communication tools, and safety equipment.

Resilience Networks are groups of people and entities that help fill gaps between government agencies and vulnerable communities, including a range of nonprofit, faith-based, and for-profit organizations, traditional emergency partners, such as the Red Cross, and non-traditional partners, such as watershed councils.

The return on investment is substantial:

- **Saves lives** – better preparation, more accessible resources, and easier access to information reduces mortality resulting from major disasters.
- **Increases equity** – those traditionally underserved and in the more remote areas of our state have the least access to support services during a crisis.
- **Supports first responders** – resilient communities place fewer demands on emergency personnel, enabling first responders to focus on those with the greatest needs.
- **Reduces property impacts** – communities that are better prepared and able to respond to a major disruption can reduce damage and impacts to the local economy.
- **Demonstrates fiscal responsibility** – increased community coordination and leveraging non-state funding reduces crisis-related demands on state coffers.

Program Extension:

[HB 3170](#) will extend the program into the next biennium with \$10M to support a second round of grants. The bill also makes a few minor technical fixes, applying lessons learned to improve implementation and adjusting statute so that the awards can include projects that respond to ongoing climate issues.

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