



Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

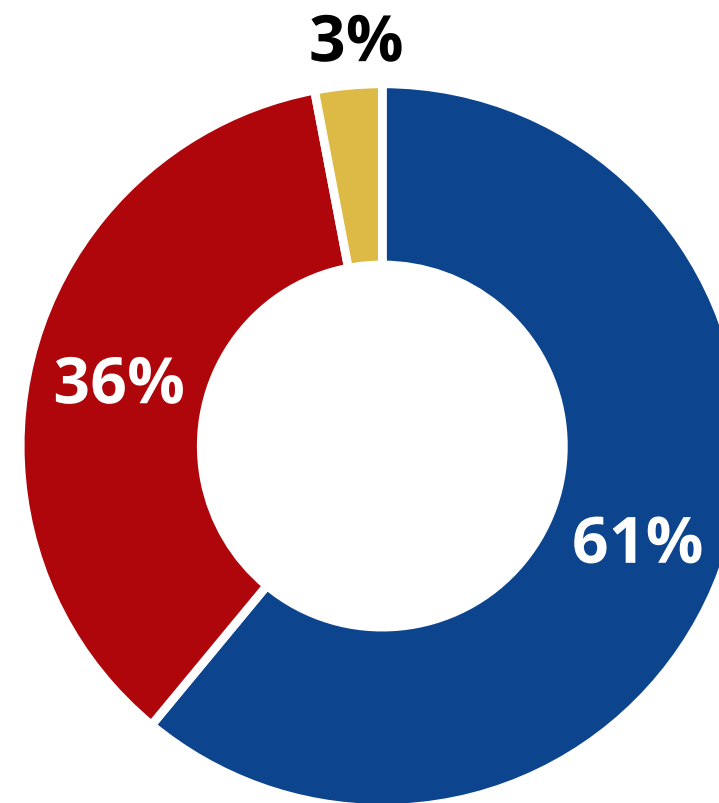
Mariana Ruiz-Temple
State Fire Marshal



Fire Agency Classification and Composition

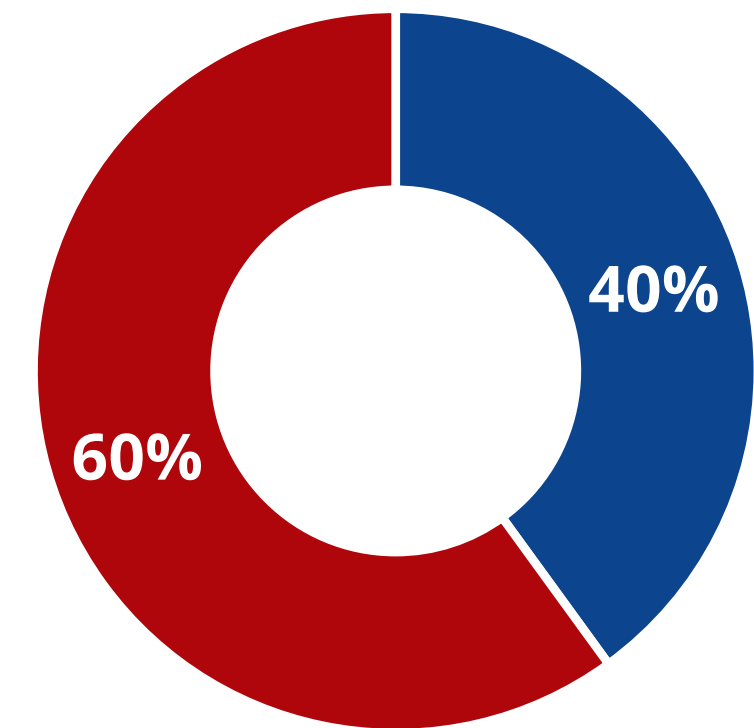
- 96% of the people in Oregon live within a fire department.

Fire Agencies by Type



■ District ■ Department ■ Private

Firefighters by Classification



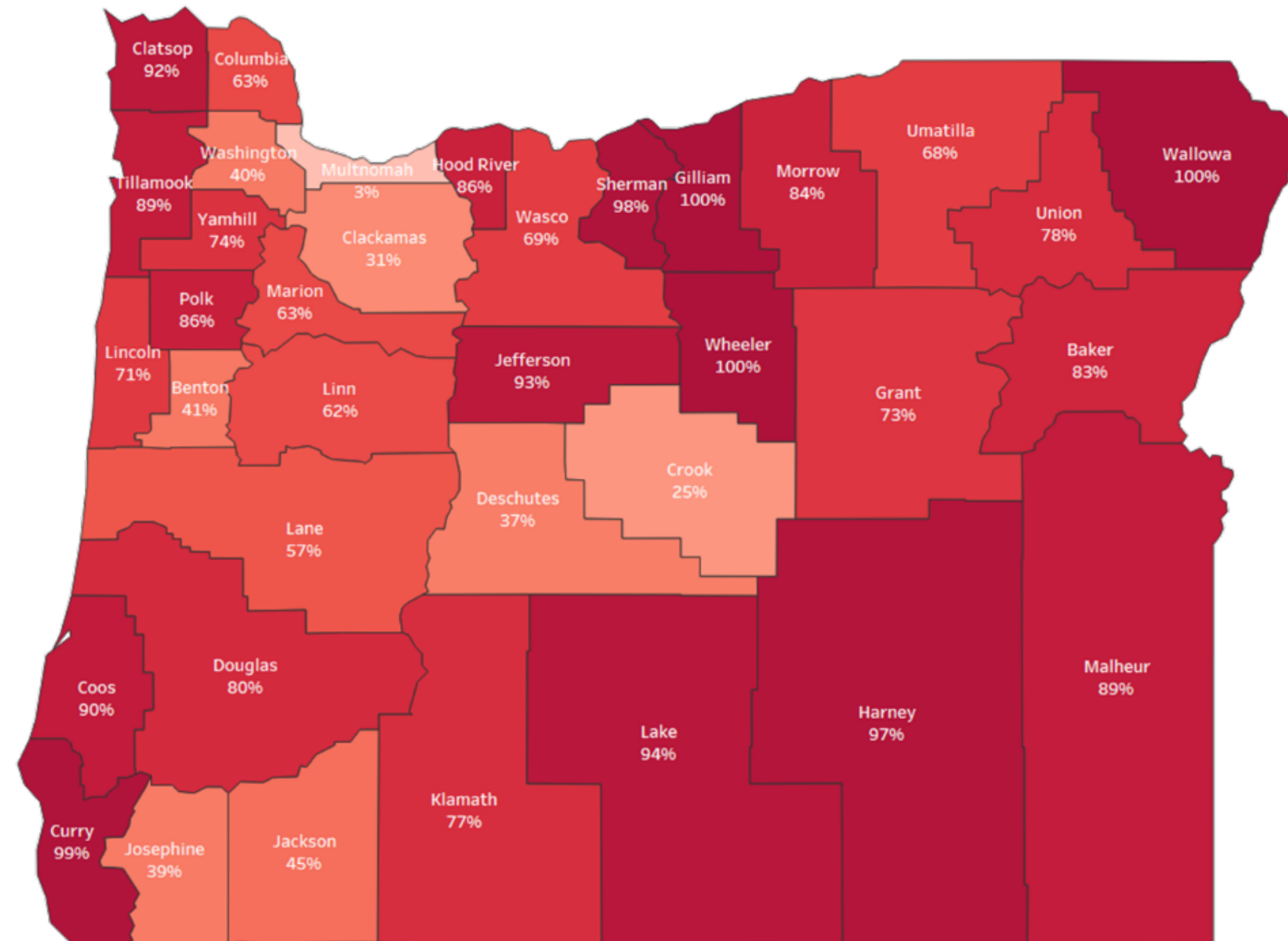
■ Career ■ Volunteer



Oregon Fire Service by the Numbers

OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Percentage of Volunteer Firefighting Personnel by County





Historical vs. Current Fire Service

- Fire Service in the Past:
 - Strong volunteer recruitment to meet community need
 - Generational and Social
 - Fire response was the primary focus



Photo credit: Firerescue1.com



Historical vs. Current Fire Service

- Fire Service of today:
 - Reduction in volunteer recruitment
 - Demand for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has significantly increased, changing the focus of response, fires are increasing.
- Training emphasis has shifted to beyond technical skills:
 - Technical proficiency in response and EMS.
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Cultural competence
 - Personnel adaptability and resilience



Today's Fire Service

In 2021, nationally...

1,353,500 fires

3,800 deaths

In 2022, in Oregon...

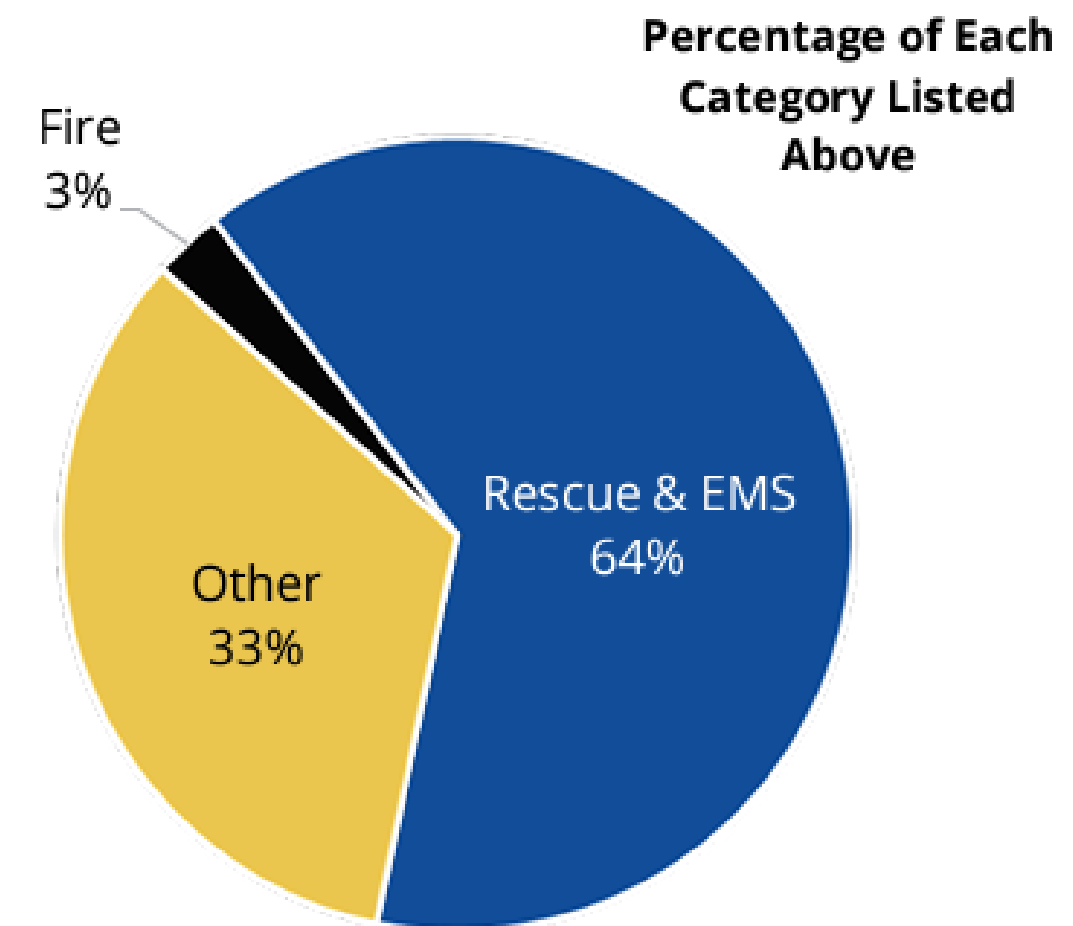
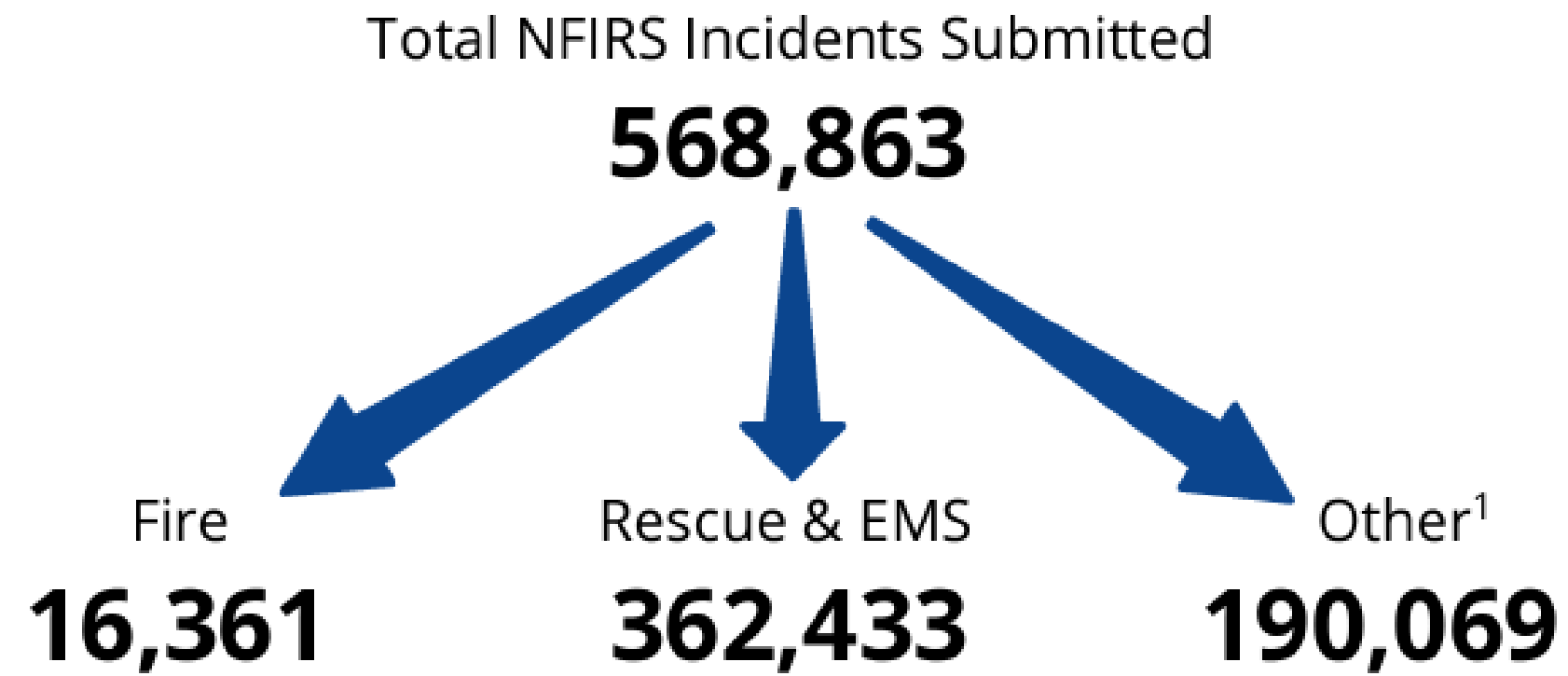
16,361 fires

23 deaths

The fire statistic alone doesn't tell the whole story in Oregon.



INCIDENT TOTALS BY CATEGORY



A group of Oregon Fire Service personnel in various uniforms, including traditional Scottish kilts, are marching in a parade. They are saluting with their right hands. The background shows a building with large windows and other people in the crowd.

Issues Facing the Oregon Fire Service



Recruitment and Retention

- Reimagining the traditional shift structure
- Current structure is 24 hours on, 48 hours off for many agencies
- Overtime requests vs. mandatory callbacks



Work-Life Balance

- Shift schedules can have both difficulties and positives for the workforce.
- Today's FF wants to work and then focus on family and personal life
- Volunteer fire agencies struggle to recruit and retain members





Decline in Volunteerism



- Decline in volunteerism has significant implications for communities.
- Key factors contributing to the reduction in volunteers:
 - Training Requirements
 - Expanded Duties- Shift Coverage
 - Aging Volunteer Base



Homeless Crisis

- The homeless crisis is creating new challenges and risks for firefighters.
- Increased fire incidents in encampments
- From 2020 – 2023, Oregon had an average of approximately 400 tent fires each year
- Crisis response is mainly the fire service





Stressors to Oregon's Fire Service

- Firefighters face a unique set of stressors
 - Weight of Responsibility
 - Trauma Exposure
 - Physical Demands
 - Exposures and health



Oregon Answers the need to address Behavioral Health

- Formed to consider:
 - Assessing the problem from an individual and system perspective
 - Determine existing capabilities and programs
 - Measure the success or impact of existing programs
 - Develop recommendations
- A Firefighter Behavioral Health survey was conducted over several weeks; there were 175 survey responses
- Subgroups are focused on key areas within the Behavioral Health arena:
 - Existing program structure
 - culturally competent training
 - Identifying holistic, collaborative resources
- The group comprises firefighters, clinicians, peer support professionals, chaplaincy, and risk managers



Behavioral Health Subcommittee

The subcommittee recommended:

- The Oregon State Fire Marshal establish an Oregon Fire Service Health and Safety Collaborative.
- The collaborative will provide support to improve all aspects of firefighter health, safety, and well-being.
- The State of Oregon provide dedicated funding and resources
- OSFM and DPSST develop and distribute related training curriculum and support services to the collaborative

Changes to the Oregon Fire Service

- In the past decade, the Oregon fire service has experienced challenges forcing change:
 - Increased Wildfire Incidents
 - Decreased Capacity
 - Homeless crisis
 - Behavioral Health and Fitness



Thank you.

