

HB 4044 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management and Veterans

Action Date: 02/12/26

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference.
(Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 7-0-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Boice, Evans, Grayber, Lewis, Skarlatos, Tran, Watanabe

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/5, 2/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) within the Department of Human Services (DHS). It amends a provision related to the Oregon Disaster Response Fund and establishes the Oregon Public Assistance Grant Program and the Oregon Individual Assistance Program.

Detailed Summary:

- For the establishment of **OREM** at DHS, the measure:
 - Allows the DHS director to appoint a director at OREM and describes their duties
 - Describes the responsibilities and functions of OREM, and requires coordination with the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) and other entities
 - Allows DHS to request OREM support the continuity of DHS programs if there is a disruption
 - Allows OREM to enter into agreements and procurements before, during, and after a disruption, and allows for the adoption of rules
- Adds “human services” to the definition of emergency services in Oregon Revised Statutes 401.025
- Amends current statute to require that interest earned by the Oregon Disaster Response Fund be credited to the fund
- For the establishment of the **Oregon Public Assistance Grant Program** at OEM, the measure:
 - Allows grant-making to pay for work performed before, after, or during an emergency
 - Describes how the governor may activate and inactivate the program
 - When activated, allows for grant-making to counties and Tribes, describes the process for cities to apply, and describes the application process
 - Allows for rulemaking and provides definitions
 - Establishes the Oregon Public Assistance Grant Program Account in the State Treasury, with the account consisting of money appropriated, allocated, deposited, or transferred by the legislature
 - Continually appropriates money in the account to OEM, and requires OEM to ensure that not more than 10 percent of the money in the account is used to pay costs for the coordination and distribution of the account
- For the establishment of the **Oregon Individual Assistance Program** at DHS, the measure:
 - Allows grant-making to address critical emergency-related needs of qualified individuals
 - Describes how OEM may recommend the program for activation and how the governor may activate and inactivate the program
 - When active, allows for providing assistance to counties and Tribes, describes the process for cities to apply, and describes the application process
 - Describes the services the program may fund
 - Allows for rulemaking for DHS, in consultation with OEM
 - Provides definitions

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- Establishes the Oregon Individual Assistance Program Account in the State Treasury, with the account consisting of money appropriated, allocated, deposited, or transferred by the legislature
- Continually appropriates money into the account to OEM, allows OEM to make funding available in the account to DHS to carry out the program, and requires unexpended funds be redeposited in the account
- Appropriates \$500,000 to OEM to carry out provisions in the program
- Requires DHS and OEM to establish a data-sharing agreement and protocols relating to both accounts

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of the measure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment removes the word “grant” from provisions related to the Oregon Individual Assistance Grant Program and establishes it as the Oregon Individual Assistance Program. It clarifies that “qualified” individuals may receive assistance through the program. The amendment appropriates \$500,000 to OEM to implement the provisions in Section 7 of the measure.

BACKGROUND:

According to DHS, OREM was established during the 2020 wildfires to address mass care, emergency evacuation, and other critical needs in Oregon’s impacted communities. The new office was staffed largely with non-budgeted positions to ensure timely responses.