



# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

## Seattle Office of Emergency Management

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## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The past few years have been proven to be especially challenging for the public sector. Mistrust in government, economic and social upheaval, and the expansion of technology for positive and negative outcomes are but a few. As a profession, Emergency Management has experienced the continuous expansion of both the depth and breadth of its scope. However, we are a profession known for finding creative solutions to complex problems and challenges and for knowing how to navigate through even the most difficult situations.



To illustrate that creativity and problem-solving acumen, I am happy to share with you the 2023 Annual Report for the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). This report describes the OEM Team's accomplishments and highlights how we were able to thrive, while helping Seattle's communities learn preparedness skills that contribute to building resilience.

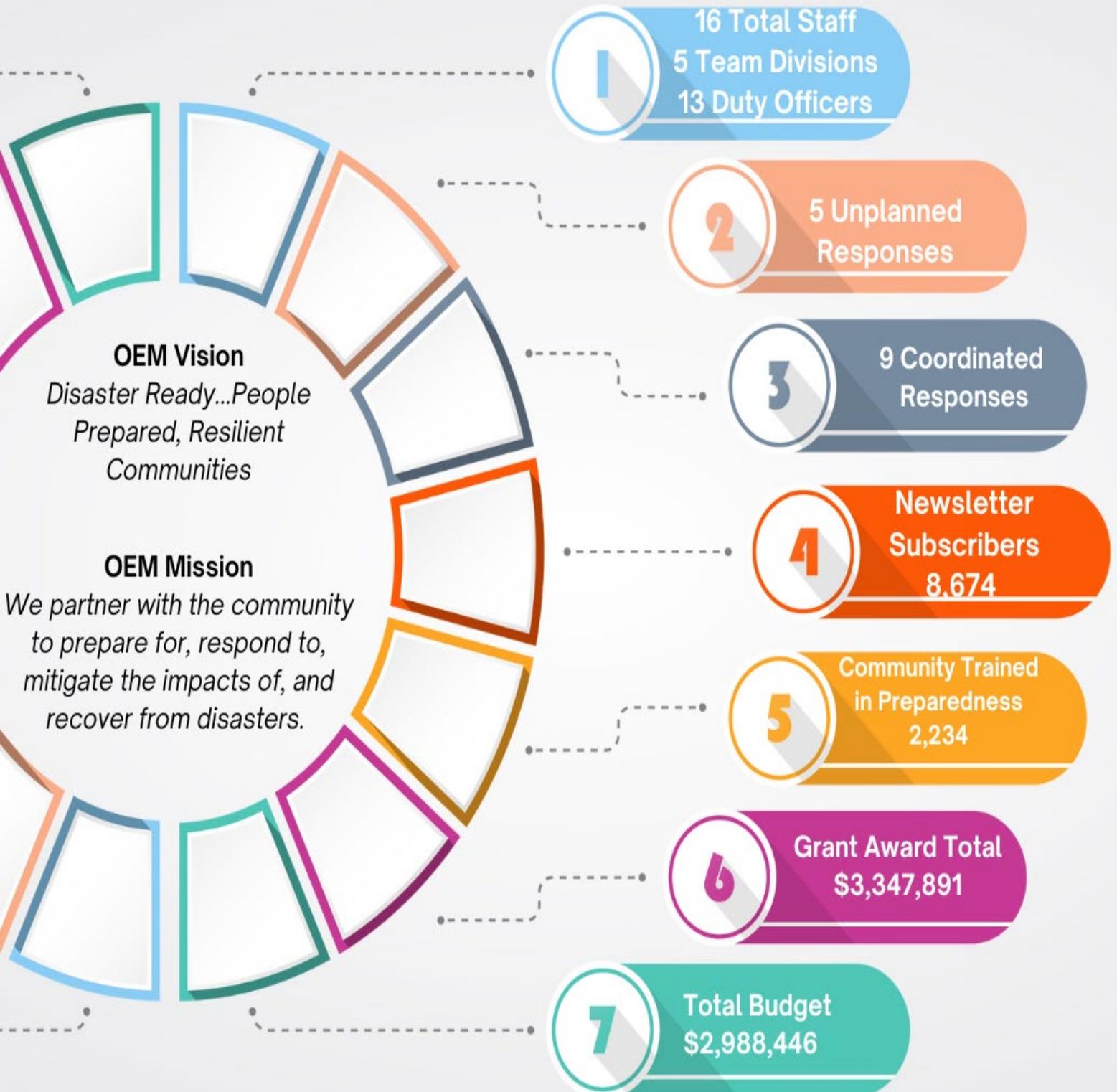
The OEM Team coordinated with members of the city's operational departments through a number of activations that helped the public safely deal with a number of incidents and stay safe. Our operational success relies on a foundation of comprehensive plans that we train and exercise on with internal and external partners. Our annual report is aligned with our Strategic Plan, so it will be easy to see how our work aligns with the goals we set and what we accomplished while doing so.

As the Director of Seattle's Office of Emergency Management, I am extremely proud of our dedicated team members who have worked tirelessly to support all who live, work, play and visit Seattle - before, during, and after emergencies. Whether it's extreme weather, gas explosions, or immigration crises, our commitment remains unwavering. You can view the full report [here](#).

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curry Mayer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# 2023 A YEAR IN REVIEW



# MILESTONES

## Hiring a New Deputy Director

On October 11, 2023, OEM welcomed a new Deputy Director. Andrew Stevens is a Certified Emergency Manager and U.S Marine Corps veteran. Before coming to Seattle, Andrew served as the Emergency Manager for Eastside Fire & Rescue (EF&R) where he oversaw EF&R's Emergency Management Division, including disaster cost recovery and grant management, EOC/ICS training and development, and EF&R's COVID-19 vaccination operations, which were awarded the 2021 King County Executive's Award for Community Resiliency. Andrew's experience includes State, Local, and non-profit emergency management, fire and rescue, volunteer management, and myriad response activities.



## New Staff in 2023

In 2023, Seattle OEM was fortunate to be able to hire new staff to bring the department to full capacity. Community Engagement was able to bring on two Strategic Advisors and Planning was able to bring on a part-time Strategic Advisor.



Meg Hamele  
Planning Coordinator



Weenta Stephanos  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator



Kenney Tran  
Community Engagement  
Coordinator

### **Big City Emergency Managers – Emerging Leaders Program**

Tey Thach, Operations Resilience Coordinator, was nominated to represent Seattle Office of Emergency Management as the Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM) Emerging Leader for the 2022-2023. BCEM is a peer organization for emergency managers from the biggest cities in the United States. It was formed to recognize the unique challenges large cities face during disasters. The program is sponsored by both ESRI and T-Mobile, working with emergency managers from big cities across the United States to build leadership skills and learn from leaders in the private and public sectors.

Emerging Leaders had the opportunity to travel to Bellevue-WA, Redlands-CA, and Philadelphia-PA, to present projects developed over the course of the year. Each Emerging Leaders group addressed the following topics over a series of 3 projects each:

- 1) What can Emergency Management departments do to address FEMA's Goal of instilling equity as a foundation in Emergency Management?
- 2) What can emergency management departments do to address FEMA's Goal to lead the whole community in climate Resilience?
- 3) Developing a Strategic Emergency Management Plan for a City



Caption: Tey Thach @ BCEM Graduation Ceremony in Philadelphia

## **Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant**

In 2022, the Seattle Office of Emergency Management was awarded a \$1.4 million Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Project (RCPGP). This pilot project is for Resilience Hub planning for 8 Puget Sound Counties. The pilot project's purpose is to develop community-led and informed tools, strategies and materials to support communities through Resilience Hubs.



The goal of the RCPGP for Resilience Hubs pilot project is to understand what communities throughout the Puget Sound want and need in a Resilience Hub. By creating a network of regional Resilience Hubs, this project aims to build capacity, identify existing resources, and develop community-driven strategies to mitigate risks, reduce impacts, and improve overall self-sustaining community resilience before, during and after a disaster.

# PARTNERSHIPS

Much, if not all, of the work completed in OEM is completed through a coordinated effort with partners, both internal and external; regional and local. The Office of Emergency Management has served on local, regional, statewide, and international platforms through our private and public partnerships and continues to remain an active voice in the region for safety, preparedness, and disaster response.

## *Seattle CityClub – Civic Cocktails*

In 2023, Director Mayer and Community Engagement Volunteer Ann Forrest were invited to speak at the Seattle City Club’s Civic Cocktails. Seattle CityClub is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization improving the civic health of the Puget Sound region by providing programs that bridge politics, sectors, and generations to inform and engage residents and community leaders. Every year, Seattle CityClub programs serve over 4,000 Puget Sound residents in-person, and an additional 26,000 residents through virtual content.

Director Mayer was invited to speak alongside Lucia Schmit, Director of the Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management, on the program, “In Case of Emergency: is our region prepared for natural disasters?” Seattle Emergency Communication Hub Co-Captain, and Community Engagement Volunteer, Ann Forrest was invited to speak on the importance of emergency preparedness from a community member’s perspective and on the work done by the Hub Network.



## Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Seattle was the host city for the 3rd Annual Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation's (APEC) ministerial meetings. During the span of the event, we had some of the participants visit the Seattle EOC to learn more about Seattle OEM and the EOC operations. The event took place from July 29-August 21, with more than 2,000 delegates representing the following economies: China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong-China, Australia, Peru, Chile and more. Seattle OEM coordinated virtually for the occasion.



Caption: Operations Program Manager Ken Neafcy with KCOEM Director Brendan McCluskey and OEM team members providing the close-out the APEC meeting



Caption: Photo of entire Emergency Operation Center during APEC

## Seattle Housing Authority

Since 2022, OEM has been partnering with Seattle Housing Authority to bring disaster preparedness and extreme heat safety education to residents of SHA housing. In 2023, OEM held three workshops in the Spring and Summer months SHA locations in locations housed by the most vulnerable: older adults, limited-English proficiency, and low-income families



Caption: Residents at Denny Terrace listening to SHA partners discuss solar power and storage followed by OEM providing a low-tech basic disaster preparedness discussion.

### **World Affairs Council Visits the EOC**

Seattle OEM, in collaboration with The World Affairs council, organized an exchange of ideas and information session between Seattle OEM, the Seattle Police Department, the FBI and delegates from European countries, focused on security and crime prevention. The delegates represented Bulgaria,



Germany, Serbia Macedonia, and the Czech Republic. Delegates were interested in learning about how Seattle local government deals with countering violent extremism and racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism.

Caption: OEM staff pictured with World Affairs Council delegates from Europe.

### **Seattle Community Roots Housing Bremer Apartments Seismic Retrofit Project Close-Out**

OEM partnered with Office of Housing and Community Roots Housing (formerly Capitol Hill Housing) on a grant application to fund the seismic retrofit to the Bremer Apartments, an affordable housing property located in the Belltown neighborhood. The City was awarded a FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant in May of 2020 totaling just over \$5 million for the project. This was the first time OEM has applied for a grant on behalf of a community partner. The Bremer, built in 1925, has a construction type similar to unreinforced masonry buildings (URMs), known to perform poorly in earthquakes. This seismic retrofit project was completed in 2023 and now protects the residents in this 49-unit building as well as preserves affordable housing in downtown Seattle.

***FEMA produced a Mitigation Spotlight video to highlight this successful project:***

<https://m.facebook.com/OEMSeattle/videos/bremer-apartments-earthquake-retrofit-fema-mitigation-spotlight/271485385140436/>



Caption: Bremer Apt under construction.

## King County Annual Winter Seminar

Planning Manager Kate Hutton participated in a speakers panel on the December 2022 Ice Storm at the 2023 King County Winter Weather Seminar. The panel explored preparation for winter weather, response to the ice storm, impacts on the community, and lessons learned. She was joined on the panel by representatives from the National Weather Service, the Washington State Department of Transportation, King County Metro, the King County Department of Local Services, and the King County Office of Emergency Management.



# FINANCIALS



## *OEM Budget Overview*

OEM's total General Fund budget in 2023: \$2,988,446. Grants managed in 2023: 11 grants, totaling \$3,347,891. Of that, seven grants were new grant projects totaling \$3,258,731. These new grant awards provided external grant support of \$2,027,274 for OEM-managed work, and \$1,222,969 for projects executed by other City Departments and non-profit partners, including Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle City Light, and Historic Seattle. An additional \$209,950 FEMA hazard mitigation project was awarded in late 2023 and accepted by Council in 2024 for Seattle City Light Cedar River Watershed Defensible Space Mitigation Planning.

## *Project Highlights*

- Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant (RCPG) for Puget Sound Resilience Hubs planning, as well as a complementary project made possible through a \$100,000 grant from the City of Tacoma.
- Hiawatha Community Center Seismic Retrofit Mitigation Project. (Seattle Parks and Recreation).
- Seattle City Light Transmission Tower Landslide Mitigation Project.
- Good Shepherd Center South Annex Seismic Retrofit Mitigation Project.

### FEMA funding for Covid-19 - \$40million

When the COVID-19 pandemic started early in 2020, FEMA re-oriented its traditional natural hazards recovery program, the Public Assistance Program, to the public health crisis. OEM, as the Applicant Agent for all FEMA funding, coordinated the process on behalf of the City of Seattle.

While the reimbursement process continues, the last of the city projects was approved in 2023. To date, the city has received more than \$26 million to reimburse work done by six City departments in areas such as purchasing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), COVID testing, feeding, sheltering, hygiene centers, and safe operation of facilities. An additional \$14 million for COVID vaccinating the public by standing up clinics and mobile units came in through a contract with our partners at Public Health Seattle King County.

### Other FEMA Disaster Declarations

In 2023, OEM managed two active open natural disaster declarations on behalf of City departments. A 2020 storm in King County (FEMA DR 4539) resulted in a total of \$636,252 in approved response and repair costs. A 2021 storm in Whatcom County (FEMA DR 4635) affecting City Lights Skagit Hydroelectric Project has \$355,641 in approved costs to date, with an additional estimated \$16.5 million in the approval process.

### FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Awards

2023 brought four new hazard mitigation grants into the OEM portfolio. The projects are Parks & Recreation Hiawatha Community Center Seismic Retrofit Project, City Light Transmission Tower Landslide Retrofit, Historic Seattle Good Shepherd Center South Annex Seismic Retrofit, and City Light Cedar River Watershed Wildfire Defensible Space project. (See Hazard Mitigation section for project detail.) These grants total \$1,507,041 in new funding, with the potential for an additional \$2,567,214 if expected Phase 2 awards are made.

# OPERATIONAL READINESS

Seattle OEM's Operations Division ensures that the City of Seattle is ready to respond to major incidents or events impacting our community. The most important duties are keeping the Emergency Operations Center and staff ready for activation and maintaining situational awareness for the city-wide emergency response community.

## *Activation, Coordination, and Support*

2023 was a busy year for Seattle OEM Operations. From recurring events such as Pride Parade to new events like the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Emergency Operations Center saw significant activity, both virtually and in person. Besides managing the EOC space itself, OEM managed fourteen coordination efforts throughout the year that warranted AlertSeattle messaging.

South Park  
Flooding  
12/27/22

2-Alarm Apt  
Fire  
2/11/23

Tyree Nichols  
Rallies  
1/27/23

Arcona Apts  
Explosion  
4/19/23

Lake City  
Way NE  
3/3/23

Pride Parade  
6/25/23

May Day  
5/1/23

Torchlight  
Parade & APEC  
7/29/23

MLB All-Star  
Game  
7/10/23

VP Harris  
Visit  
8/15/23

Boeing Field  
Hazmat  
8/9/23

Heat  
Wave  
8/14/23

Aurora  
Bldg. Fire  
8/20/23

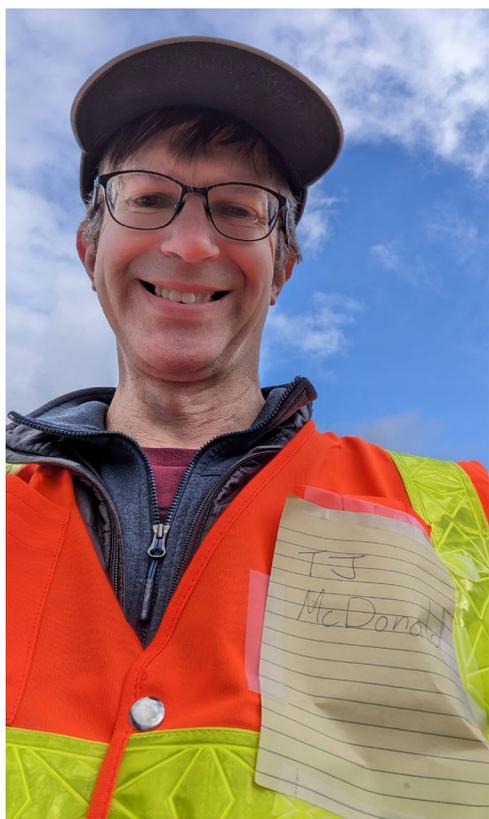
Wet  
Weather  
12/4/23

## RESPONSE SPOTLIGHT: SOUTH PARK FLOODING/KING TIDES

On December 27, 2022, the Duwamish River overtopped its banks flooding the South Park neighborhood. The event was caused by a combination of annual winter King Tides (large tidal exchanges producing extreme high tides), runoff from rain, melting snow, ice from previous winter storm events earlier in December, and an extreme low-pressure



weather system that added 18 inches of water level to the Duwamish. There were 25 homes and multiple businesses impacted with the majority of the response taking place around a core group of homes between South Chicago Street and South Kenyon Street. Situated in between the Highland Park neighborhood and the Duwamish River, the South Park Neighborhood is located in the south-central area of Seattle. South Park has a long history of environmental pollution and degradation. It is the location for the Lower Duwamish Waterway Superfund Site and has high levels of air and noise pollution. It also faces an increasing threat of displacement as rising housing costs threaten to push established residents out of the community.



Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) had staff on site to respond to drainage backups which were common in the neighborhood until a pump station came online in 2023. SPU responded quickly and effectively but the incident's magnitude required a multi-agency response. Several community-based organizations responded in parallel. On December 28, OEM convened necessary departments and facilitated daily coordination calls with the group in coordination with the Mayor's Office. In early January, OEM increased its involvement by providing two staff persons to facilitate on-site response and recovery operations. The flooding was a blow to many vulnerable people living in the neighborhood. It underscored the vulnerability of Seattle's frontline communities. This response changed how SPU, OEM, and other agencies respond to flooding incidents with many improvements made following an after-action report.

## RESPONSE SPOTLIGHT: MLB ALL-STAR ACTIVATION

Seattle, Washington hosted the 93<sup>rd</sup> MLB All Star game. To ensure smooth response in the event of significant mishap, the Seattle EOC activated out of precaution for this historic event. The MLB All Star game is really a weeklong celebration encompassing many events: the High School All-American Game, the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Swingman Classic, the MLB Draft, the All-Star Celebrity Softball Game, and T-Mobile Home Run Derby. These events took place at Lumen Field and T-Mobile Park. Events started on Friday, July 7 and ended on Tuesday, July 11, culminating with the All-Star Game.

In preparation, OEM, in close coordination with the Mayor's Office, lead City of Seattle in planning for many months prior to the game, culminating in a tabletop exercise with internal and external partners at T-Mobile Field. Planning partners included the Seattle Sports Commission, the Seattle Mariners, and Lumen Field staff.

City Seattle OEM activated the Emergency Operations Center for two days for the Home Run Derby on July 10 and the All-Star Game on July 11, with departmental representatives from the Mayor's Office, Seattle Fire Department, National Weather Service, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), Sound Transit, Seattle Human Services Department, Seattle Department of Transportation and more.

The MLB All-Star Game was a successful event, with more than 40,000 people attending, both activation days went smoothly. It was a great activation to exercise Seattle EOC's procedures.



Caption: EOC representatives at the Seattle EOC MLB Activation

## TRAINING AND EXERCISE

### *EOC Training Series*

In 2023, OEM trained over 100 Emergency Operations Center responders. Several times each year, OEM offers a multi-part EOC training series, along with additional section specific training for the EOC Logistics Section and the Joint Information Center. For 2023, OEM partnered with Mayor's Office to pilot a new Joint Information Center (JIC) training for City Public Information Officers (PIOs) who respond to the JIC during EOC Activations. In 2024, OEM and the Mayor's Office will use feedback from that training to build upon the existing training framework and offer additional position specific training for City and partner agency PIOs. OEM will also continue to partner with Finance and Administrative Services to continue offering its Logistics Section Training and will work with Seattle Human Services Department to revive the Health and Human Services (HHS) Branch Training for future HHS branch responders to the EOC. These EOC trainings are vital for keeping skills and knowledge sharp for when the EOC is activated for planned events and emergencies here in Seattle.



Caption: Students participate in an EOC Fundamentals training activity.

## Significant Tabletop Exercises

The City of Seattle uses emergency exercises as one of its critical tools for keeping emergency responders ready to respond to hazards and incidents. To prepare emergency partners and responders for the MLB All-Star Game held in Seattle over the summer, Seattle OEM facilitated two



tabletop exercises for Seattle, county, private, State, and federal emergency responders to walk through the plans and strategies that could be put into place to respond to various threats and hazards related to significant public sporting events. These tabletop exercises were attended by over 100 responders and contributed to the overall planning and security of the MLB All-Star Game and the thousands of visitors who came to Seattle to attend the event.

A significant flooding event in Seattle's South Park Neighborhood revealed gaps in Seattle's response to the flooding and its associated recovery. After conducting an after-action review, several improvements were suggested to how the city prepares for and organizes its response to flooding events in the city. To test and validate these new plans, Seattle OEM hosted a tabletop exercise for City and county emergency responders to review these new plans and practice responding to a similar flooding scenario in South Park. These updated plans were then put into practice for potential coastal flooding events during November and December 2023.



### **After-Action Reports**

A critical component of any emergency response is the after-action review process. This after-action review process looks back over how an emergency response was conducted, and identifies areas of success, and opportunities to adjust and refine future responses to ensure the safety of Seattle's many communities. Seattle OEM produces an after-action report (AAR) after each activation of the EOC and for other novel emergency responses. Two significant AARs produced by OEM in 2023 were the AAR for the flooding response in Seattle's South Park Neighborhood in December 2022 and January 2023, and for the MLB All-Star Game hosted by Seattle in July. These AARs, once produced by OEM, are then reviewed and approved by the Disaster Management Committee and the City of Seattle's Emergency Executive Board. Any improvements identified by an AAR are then tracked to completion by Seattle OEM.

# PLANNING



## **Seattle Hazard Explore (SHE)**

On June 15, the Office of Emergency Management released a completely new version of the popular [Seattle Hazard Explorer](#). It covers five of Seattle's major hazards to help the public understand risks to our community. The hazards covered are earthquakes, extreme heat, floods, landslides, and wildfires. It combines hazard information and maps with key demographic and infrastructure data to enable users to explore how hazards affect sensitive people and resources.

The new app features new datasets including newly designated FEMA 100-year flood zones, liquefaction, tsunami inundation, heat islanding, racial and social equity, population density, and critical facilities. Of special interest are six earthquake scenarios showing building damage along with an analysis showing how different kinds of earthquakes affect poorer and minority communities disproportionately. The new work was made possible by students from the University of Washington's [Geographic Information Systems certificate program](#) who developed the bulk of the application. The Office Emergency Management thanks Katya Kelly and Ryan Rainwater for their excellent work! You can find the Seattle Explorer at <https://maps.seattle.gov/hazardexplorer>.

# HAZARD MITIGATION

OEM works with City departments and external partners to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants. Four new awards were made to the City in 2023:

## *Parks & Recreation Hiawatha Community Center Seismic Retrofit Project*



Caption: Hiawatha Community Center

The seismic retrofit of Hiawatha Community Center will correct structural weaknesses in the building and add steel to strengthen the unreinforced masonry walls in the gym. Pinning back the bricks above the main entrance will reduce the risk of falling debris along exit pathways. This work will protect the public and staff using the building and increase the likelihood that the facility can be used as a resource in an emergency. Hiawatha is the largest community center in central West Seattle, a neighborhood that could be isolated if the West Seattle freeway connecting it to the rest of the city should go down in an earthquake. It is also a historic building. Built in 1911 and located in an Olmsted-designed Park, it is the oldest community center west of the Mississippi.

### ***City Light Transmission Tower Landslide Retrofit***

The purpose of this project in Snohomish County is to retrofit six high voltage transmission towers, and the power lines they support, to minimize damage and possible cascading collapse due to landslides. The devastating 2014 Oso landslide highlighted the vulnerability of these transmission towers, which are located close to what became the debris field. These transmission lines bring power from three hydroelectric dams on the Skagit River to the Seattle area. All the utility's customers will benefit from this hazard mitigation work. This grant covers Phase One design work, to be followed by funding for project implementation.

### ***Historic Seattle Good Shepherd Center South Annex Seismic Retrofit***

Built in 1906 as a Catholic School in the Wallingford neighborhood, the Good Shepherd Center is now owned by the preservation organization, Historic Seattle. Today the Center hosts a K-5 school as well as several non-profit tenants. OEM is partnering with Historic Seattle on a grant to fund the seismic retrofit of the South Annex, one of three buildings in the Center campus. It is an Unreinforced Masonry (URM) building, a construction type known to be vulnerable to damage and collapse in a major earthquake.



Caption: OEM Director Curry Mayer and Deputy Director Andrew Stevens, with other OEM staff and staff from the Good Shepherd pose for a photo in front of the Good Shepherd Center.



### *Cedar River Watershed Wildfire Defensible Space*

The goal of the project was to mitigate wildfire hazard around our City Light Cedar Falls Watershed infrastructure in response to the growing fire risk. This will be achieved by reducing hazardous fire fuels adjacent to penstocks (pipes that carry water) and powerhouse and creating long-term fuels management plan to mitigate wildfire hazards. The Phase One grant award will cover planning and permitting; a Phase Two award to follow will cover project implementation. This is the first wildfire mitigation grant approved for FEMA funding on the West side of the Cascades.

Caption: Penstock running through the Cedar River Watershed

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## *Preparedness Education*

OEM is charged with providing education on the hazards we face in Seattle while empowering those who live and work here with the skills they'll need to be better prepared for disaster. The basic disaster preparedness training provided by OEM provides community members with insight into the hazards we face, as identified in the Seattle Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis (SHIVA). The Community Engagement Program provides basic disaster preparedness, workplace preparedness including business continuity concepts, neighborhood preparedness through our Seattle Neighborhoods Actively Prepare (SNAP), and Emergency Planning for Child Care Providers. In addition to conceptual and informative education, OEM Community Engagement also provides home retrofit education and hands-on skills training that covers fire extinguisher use, purifying water, utility control, and building an emergency toilet.

## *Disaster Skills Workshop in Action*

In February 2023, the Community Engagement team partnered with the Rainier Beach Hub Co-Captain, Brandy Rinck, and supported by Public Health Seattle-King County AmeriCorps Rowyn Henning to deliver a hands-on skills workshop at the Rainier Beach Community Center. This program rotates attendees through multiple stations of safety skills. Skills taught include how to purify water, build an emergency toilet, utility management, and fire extinguisher use.



Caption: AmeriCorps Rowyn Henning demonstrates how to purify water



Caption: Rainier Beach Hub Co-Captain Brandy Rinck demonstrates how to build an emergency toilet

## Amazon Employee Engagement

Seattle OEM was invited to support the Amazon Emergency Preparedness and Safety Ambassador program, providing emergency preparedness and safety education on an international platform. The event consisted of two parts. The first part was a tabling event where OEM Community Engagement, partnering with the Seattle Hub Network, provided information and resources to Amazon employees on disaster preparedness and emergency alerting. The second afforded OEM the opportunity to speak on an international platform to Amazon employees around the world.



Caption: Community Engagement Manager discusses disaster preparedness to Amazon employees worldwide.



Caption: MPH Student Kathy Edison, performing her practicum with OEM, and Seattle Hub Network Co-Lead Ann Forrest are discussing preparedness and hub capabilities with Amazon employees.



Caption: Community Engagement Coordinators Weenta Stephanos and Kenney Tran provide preparedness information to Amazon employees.

## Seattle Bleeding Control Program – Stop the Bleed

Stop The Bleed is a training program that educates the community about bleeding control. Our workshops are taught by instructors who have a medical background or experience and have gone through our screening and training processes. Most of OEM STB instructors



are nurses and EMT's who volunteer in their free time.

Teaching the community about bleeding control and the proper steps to take to limit blood loss and possibly save a life. Currently these training workshops are offered qualifying to nonprofits (501 (c)(3)) that host public events, but we are looking to expand for the public to be trained in bleeding control as well.



Caption: Instructor teaching hands on portion of Stop The Bleed training. Held at Mary's Place, November 2023.

## Regional Bleeding Control: Seattle Public Schools

Since its inception, the Stop the Bleed program for Seattle OEM has been funded by the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. Through this funding Seattle was able to offer bleeding control classes to the public. In 2023, this grant program took STB regional, allowing for the lifesaving education happening in Seattle to expand into the other UASI regions: King County, Snohomish County, Pierce County, and City of Bellevue.

As the first step in this regionalization effort, Seattle OEM partnered with Seattle Public Schools (SPS) to bring bleeding control awareness and skill training to school safety and health personnel. In addition to training every nurse and security staff person, every high school and middle school in the Seattle Public Schools received one to four bleeding control kits depending on the size of school.



Caption: Photo of John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence, SPS Administration Building



Caption: Community Engagement Manager Sophia Lopez and STB Coordinator Weenta Stephanos handing off bleeding control kits to the Seattle Public Schools.

### Youth Emergency Preparedness (YEP)

OEM's Youth Emergency Preparedness (YEP) Program was initiated in 2022 with a pilot Summer Youth Disaster Camp. Aimed at teaching youth about the various hazards faced in Seattle, YEP is designed to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to respond to emergencies. Focusing on educating youth and their families on how to prepare for these hazards while emphasizing the importance of family preparedness are the core values of YEP.

This program provides practical information on disaster preparedness and response strategies. YEP will enhance awareness of potential hazards and promote safety measures while engaging children and youth in interactive and age-appropriate learning activities. Our goal is to educate but also have fun while doing it!



Caption: Community Engagement Coordinator Weenta Stephanos displaying the YEP t-shirts for Youth Disaster Camps which happen during Spring Break and Summer.

### Community Safety Ambassadors

The Community Safety Ambassadors (CSA) Program provides emergency preparedness and safety skills training to Seattle and surrounding communities that are disproportionately impacted by emergencies. They specialize in

being both subject matter experts as well as trusted community members as part of Limited English Proficiency communities, being able to bridge communities that historically have a distrust or have been systemically excluded from governmental services.



Community Safety Ambassadors (CSAs) have experienced a shift in 2023 as many events returned back to being held in person community members began to request the presence of CSAs at these community events. This was a shift from the previous few years of virtual gatherings and training. The CSAs have continued to adapt, utilizing hybrid modalities to continue preparedness outreach and training, translating material for asynchronous usage as well as gathering feedback from community members to see what gaps in preparedness exist. The CSA program continues to grow and expand, inspiring growth in other counties and regions around Puget Sound. In 2023, a plan for regionalization to King County, Snohomish County, and Pierce County was put in place and will be enacted over the following years as the CSA Program becomes replicated across Western Washington. Currently there are 15 Ambassadors that span 11 languages and in 2023, provided and attended up to 165 engagement activities and projects.



**Caption:** A group of students are paying attention to a CSA teaching in West Seattle about basic emergency preparedness.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## *AlertSeattle: Emergency Alerts and Notifications*

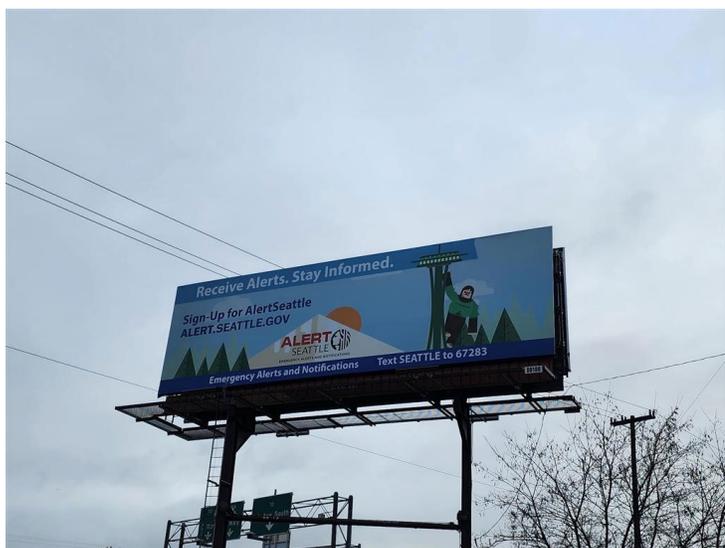
AlertSeattle is the City of Seattle's official emergency alert and notification system. This system is used to send alerts to the public and internally to city employees during emergencies. In addition to emergency alerts, it also provides customizable community notifications. These include notifications about severe weather, safety, health, utility disruptions, major traffic incidents, and any other significant threat to the community.

AlertSeattle helps fill a safety gap within the City's dispatch centers. During large-scale emergencies, the 911 center can be quickly overwhelmed with a high volume of 911 calls received from the public. A majority of the 911 calls received during emergencies are not about life-threatening situations, but rather contain requests for information about what is going on during a crisis or emergency. By sending alerts directly to the public on their preferred devices, the City can keep the public informed and at the same time reduce the number of 911 calls from residents not in immediate need of emergency services.

## *Outreach Campaign*

In December 2023, OEM coordinated with multiple marketing channels to run an outreach campaign aimed at raising awareness of AlertSeattle, why it's needed, and how to register. The Community Engagement team coordinated the campaign with the Mayor's Office. The billboard campaign

resulted in 472,554 weekly impressions over a 4-week period, placed on a major arterial leading toward downtown Seattle, Lumen Field, and T-Mobile Park.



# ALERT SEATTLE

EMERGENCY ALERTS AND NOTIFICATIONS

**INCREASED ALERT SEATTLE  
PUBLIC OPT-IN BY 3,545**

## Seattle Auxiliary Communication Services (ACS)

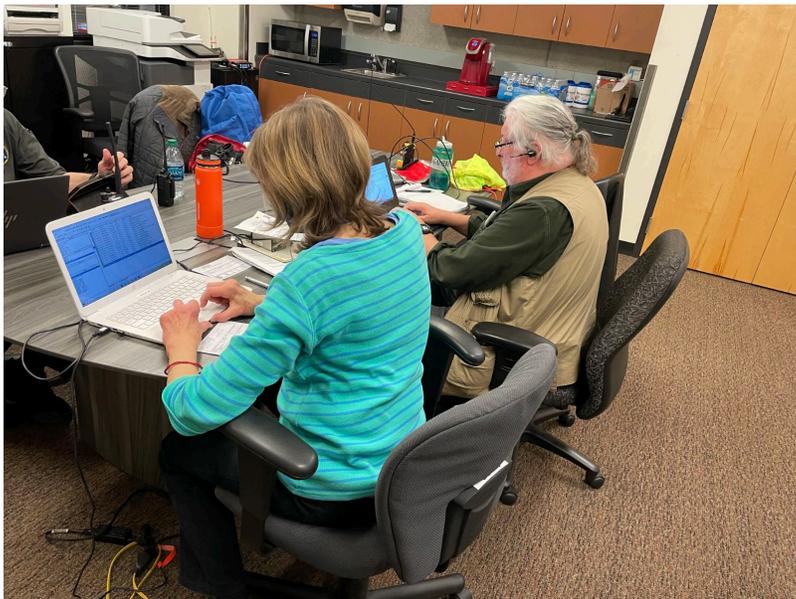
2023 was a strong year for Seattle Auxiliary Communications Service. The roughly 150-member organization made meaningful progress on several of its key goals, including member recruitment, infrastructure upgrades, City partnerships, and service to the Office of Emergency Management. New members were added expanding the neighborhood representation and citywide coverage for



Caption: ACS volunteers install a temporary communications antenna.

emergency communications. ACS installed new equipment in several locations to enable better coverage for the Winlink communications network. Winlink is email over radio and will form a key part of our ability to efficiently transmit messages around the city in the event of a loss of commercial internet and cellular services. A number of updates to communication capabilities are attributed to ACS including upgrades to power systems and radios for voice communications at several of our sites and the repair of faulty antenna equipment in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

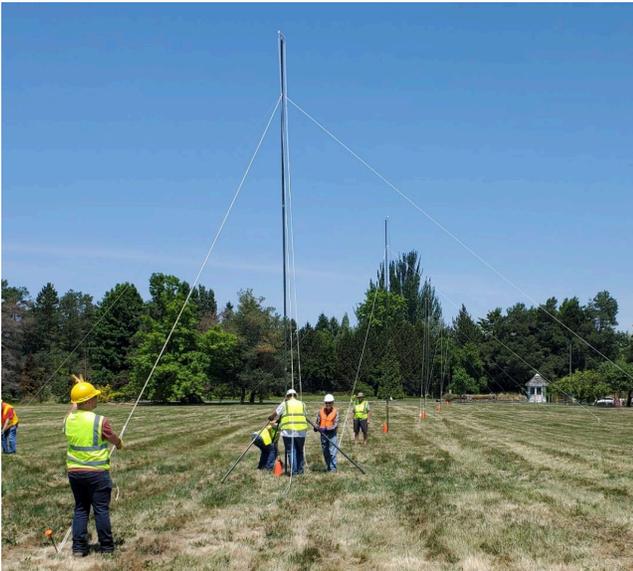
In 2023, ACS was active across the spectrum of events. They were able to join Seattle Fire Department's (SFD) Windshield Survey exercise, helping pass simulated damage assessments via voice and data from locations in the field to the Resource Management Center (RMC) at Fire Station



Caption: ACS members at the Seattle Fire Department Resource Management Center

10. This capability can be deployed on short notice if SFD's radio systems are compromised or overwhelmed. In addition to the exercise itself, ACS instantiated an on-demand data link between the EOC and the RMC for use in drills or emergencies. In addition to the SFD Windshield Survey exercise, ACS conducted public radio and personal preparedness demonstrations at the annual ARRL Field Day exercise at South Seattle College.

They erected temporary HF (shortwave) as well as VHF and UHF antennas and several radio operating positions, all independent of grid power. From these stations ACS made contact with hundreds of other Field Day stations around North America.



Caption: Seattle ACS and partners at the annual Field Day event

The following are a few other highlights from ACS in 2023:

- Conducted training sessions at 10 monthly meetings at North Seattle College
- Conducted several drills in which we passed simulated emergency messages by voice and data. One of these drills was done in partnership with Seattle Emergency Hubs.
- Kicked off a program to outfit the Workforce Rallying Points with VHF/UHF voice and data radios, as well as microwave data radios, for emergency communications following a major disaster or emergency. This program will be carried out throughout 2024.
- Assisted OEM for the MLB All-Star Game and Pride Parade activations
- Assisted OEM for a test of geo-fencing of WEA alert messaging
- Assisted OEM with preparations for installation of a Starlink system at the EOC (the system has been installed in 2024 but preparation began in 2023).



Left Caption: ACS volunteers at a joint exercise with Seattle Emergency Hubs



Right Caption: Seattle ACS equipment at Fire Station 18

# 2023: YOUR OEM TEAM

## **OEM Leadership**

Curry Mayer, Director

Andrew Stevens, Deputy Director

## **Administrative**

Laura Fleury, Executive Assistant

Chris Carmen, Administrative Specialist II

## **Finance**

John Zuber, Finance Coordinator

## **Hazard Mitigation**

Erika Lund, Recovery and Mitigation Coordinator

## **Operations**

Kenneth Neafcy, Operations Manager

Tey Thach, Operations Resilience Coordinator

Jordan Bright, Training & Exercise Coordinator

## **Planning**

Kate Hutton, Planning Manager

TJ McDonald, Planning Coordinator

Meg Hamele, Planning Coordinator

## **Community Engagement**

Sophia Lopez, Community Engagement Manager

Kenney Tran, Community Engagement Coordinator

Weenta Stephanos, Community Engagement Coordinator

## **Special Projects**

Consuelo Crow, Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant Manager