

## Joint Transportation Committee—Aviation Search and Rescue Study

### Aviation Search & Rescue Review of State Data Summary

*Note to readers: This data was collected through a combination of telephone interviews and email correspondence directly with the states. Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia provided responses with varying levels of specificity. It should be noted that this is raw data from the states themselves, meaning there is potential for misunderstanding or misinformation. However, this gives us a general idea of how aviation search and rescue (SAR) is conducted across the country.*

#### Observations:

1. All states are different. Topography, resources at the local, state, regional and federal level, and volume of aviation activity all affect how SAR is conducted in each state. There is no one-size-fits-all. As expected, the number of incidents of actual downed aircraft roughly correlated with the number of general aviation aircraft registered in the state.

2. Of the thirty-two states that responded to our survey, twenty-four (75%) have their state Emergency Management Division responsible for aviation SAR. State law enforcement agencies were the next most common, followed by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Because nineteen states did not provide responses, this data is supplemented with information from the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC). Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia have agreements with the AFRCC. Of these, twenty-nine (60%) listed their state Emergency Management Division as responsible.

3. Our neighbor states (Oregon, California, Idaho, Montana, and Nevada) have either their state DOT or state Emergency Management Division responsible for aviation SAR. Colorado, which we often use as a comparison state, has the Civil Air Patrol (CAP).

4. Lead agency resources range from none (no aircraft) to numerous (as in the case of Colorado, with CAP as lead).

5. Most states do not have a dedicated funding source or designated budget for aviation SAR. Rather, this is just another expense from their general fund or elsewhere.

6. Number of staff dedicated to aviation SAR varied widely (from none to fifty), reflecting the individualized approach each state takes to aviation SAR. The larger staff numbers were reported when aviation SAR is considered one task within a larger agency, rather than being a dedicated task for one person, as it is in some states.

7. Most states rely heavily on volunteer resources, CAP being the main source for those volunteers. Twenty-eight of the thirty-two states reported they relied on volunteers.