



FACT SHEET

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Date: **September 12, 2006**

Report: **2005-118**

The California State Auditor released the following report today:

Emergency Preparedness
California's Administration of Federal Grants for Homeland Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness Is Hampered by Inefficiencies and Ambiguity

KEY FINDINGS

Our review of the State's administration of 10 federal grants for homeland security and bioterrorism preparedness revealed several concerns. Specifically:

Although the State has conducted exercises simulating various threats over the last few years, California's two major annual exercises—Golden Guardian and the Statewide Medical and Health Disaster exercises—have not exerted sufficient stress on medical and health systems to determine how well they can respond to emergencies.

The State has been slow in spending federal funds awarded to it since 2001 for homeland security. As of June 30, 2006, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Emergency Services) and the Governor's Office of Homeland Security (State Homeland Security) had spent only \$404 million (42 percent) of the \$954 million awarded to the State for homeland security.

Although Emergency Services has established a timetable for receiving and reviewing local emergency plans, the State has not kept up with its schedule and has failed to receive and review the plans of 35 of California's 58 counties, including several of the State's most populous counties. Additionally, Emergency Services is unaware of how recently it reviewed emergency plans for 15 of the 19 state agencies it considers critical to emergency response. Also, the California Department of Health Services (Health Services) has not finalized its plans for conducting on-site monitoring of cost reports prepared by subrecipients of federal funds.

The State's organizational structure for ensuring emergency preparedness is not streamlined or well defined. Continuing ambiguity surrounds the relationships between Emergency Services and State Homeland Security and among the numerous committees that advise the State in its administration of federal grants for homeland security and bioterrorism preparedness.

BACKGROUND

All disasters are, first and foremost, local disasters. When an event occurs it is in a city or county, and the local entity's fire department, law enforcement, and health care providers, in addition to others, are most likely the first to respond to the event's impacts. As such, entities at all levels of government are involved in emergency preparedness, which is defined by the federal government as the ability to plan, organize, equip, train, and exercise homeland security personnel to perform their assigned missions. The State of California Emergency Plan describes Emergency Services as the lead state agency for all phases of emergency management—preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. State Homeland Security serves as the lead state contact with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as well as the governor on matters relating to terrorism and state security and maintains the California Homeland Security Strategy. Health Services coordinates the State's overall public health preparedness and response efforts and maintains California's public health emergency plans, including the Public Health Emergency Response Plan and Procedures and other subject-specific supporting plans.

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