

El Dorado 1 of 13 counties to not go after state IHSS grants

By Kathryn Reed



Forty-five of the 58 counties in California are sharing millions of dollars in state grants to combat fraud in In-Home Supportive Services programs. El Dorado County is not one of them.

This is because the county did not apply for grant, not because the county doesn't have fraud.

“(Fraud) is definitely out there. But we have to look at the cost and benefits of combating it. On the face of it you want to say fraud is completely unacceptable. But if it costs more to root out the fraud than the fraud itself, it is a better scenario to not spend that money and to spend it on other priorities,” explained Mike Applegarth, senior administrative analyst for El Dorado County.

The other part of the equation is that each county had to come up with matching dollars if they were to be awarded money from the state.

The anti-fraud effort is expected save the state's general fund \$130 million in the 2009-10 budget. The \$26.5 million grant program is divvied up by \$10 million coming from the state's general fund, \$12.2 million in federal matching funds and \$4.3 million in county matching funds.

Most county Human Services Departments do not have much discretionary money because most of the dollars they receive from the state and feds are allocated to specific areas.

Senior nutrition and elder protection programs are a couple of the areas where El Dorado County said it has leeway with spending.

“We looked at the amount we would likely receive as a result of the application and compared it to the amount we would have to contribute as a match and it didn’t seem to pencil out for us,” Applegarth said.

The amount of fraud in the county was not going to generate a large grant payout from the state, Applegarth added.

The District Attorney’s Office does have someone who investigates these types of fraud cases. Applegarth didn’t have a figure for how much fraud may be going on in El Dorado County.

Nearby counties receiving grants include: Amador \$20,046; Placer \$230,229; and Nevada \$67,226.

Los Angeles County receive the largest sum – \$9,460,104.