

# **GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

## **PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**RECOVERY ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

**Agreed-Upon Procedures Report  
for the period July-December 2023  
Issued April 11, 2024**

**LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
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March 14, 2024

Independent Accountant's Report  
On the Application of Agreed-Upon Procedures

**MR. JACQUES THIBODEAUX, DIRECTOR**  
**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY**  
**AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

We have performed the procedures enumerated below on documentation submitted by sub-grantees and technical assistance contractors (Documentation) to the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) for reimbursement under the Public Assistance (PA) program for the semi-annual period ending December 31, 2023. GOHSEP management is responsible for the Documentation.

GOHSEP management has agreed to and acknowledged that the procedures performed are appropriate to meet the intended purpose of the engagement, which is to perform specified procedures on the Documentation. This report may not be suitable for any other purpose. The procedures performed may not address all the items of interest to a user of this report and may not meet the needs of all users of this report and, as such, users are responsible for determining whether the procedures performed are appropriate for their purposes.

**OVERALL RESULTS**

For the period July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, we performed procedures on the Documentation for 2,527 reimbursement requests totaling \$975,286,236. As a result of applying our procedures, we found exceptions, which exceeded \$500 per reimbursement request, totaling \$253,097,499 (25.95%) in 485 reimbursement requests. The following tables present the overall results by work type (Table 1) and finding type (Table 2).



<b>Table 1 Exceptions by Work Type</b>			
<b>Work Type</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences</b>	<b>Exception Amount</b>	<b>Exceptions as a Percent of Total Reimbursement Requests (\$975,286,236)</b>
Contract Work	337	\$228,761,630	23.46%
Force Account Equipment	26	3,304,405	0.34
Force Account Labor	41	5,947,389	0.61
Materials	73	13,230,981	1.35
Rented Equipment	8	1,853,094	0.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>\$253,097,499</b>	<b>25.95%</b>

<b>Table 2 Exceptions by Finding Type</b>			
<b>Finding Type</b>	<b>Number of Occurrences</b>	<b>Exception Amount</b>	<b>Exceptions as a Percent of Total Reimbursement Requests (\$975,286,236)</b>
Out-of-Scope	46	\$9,478,717	0.97%
Lack of Support	316	88,605,156	9.09
Procurement not Documented	110	148,372,391	15.21
Ineligible Costs	58	5,983,742	0.61
Errors	21	657,493	0.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>551*</b>	<b>\$253,097,499</b>	<b>25.95%</b>

\*The number of occurrences by finding type is greater than the number of occurrences by work type because each work type may contain multiple findings.

The procedures and associated findings are as follows:

**PROCEDURE 1:** For all reimbursement requests except those in the "Project Closeout" step of the process checklist in [louisianapa.com](http://louisianapa.com), we confirmed that the work reflected in the reimbursement request was within the scope approved for the project and that the requested amount did not exceed the cost estimate.

**FINDING 1:** We identified 46 reimbursement requests where \$9,478,717 (0.97%) of the work was not within the approved scope of work and/or the cost estimate was exceeded.

**PROCEDURE 2:** We confirmed that the requested amount was supported by invoices, receipts, lease agreements, contracts, labor policies, time records, equipment logs, inventory records, or other applicable documentation.

**FINDING 2:** We identified 316 reimbursement requests where \$88,605,156 (9.09%) of expenses were not supported by sufficient documentation.

**PROCEDURE 3:** We confirmed that contracts and purchases totaling more than \$30,000 per vendor per calendar year comply with applicable federal and state procurement requirements. However, for contracts and purchases where cost reasonableness is established through an after-the-fact cost analysis and the cost to be analyzed is less than \$250,000, we did not review the cost analysis.

**FINDING 3:** We identified 110 reimbursement requests where we could not confirm that applicable procurement guidelines had been followed for purchases totaling \$148,372,391 (15.21%).

**PROCEDURE 4:** We confirmed that the work reflected in the reimbursement request complied with applicable FEMA regulations and guidance.

**FINDING 4:** We identified 58 reimbursement requests where \$5,983,742 (0.61%) of expenses were not in compliance with applicable FEMA regulations and guidance.

**PROCEDURE 5:** We confirmed that the Cost Estimate Tool and the Expense Review Form did not contain duplicate, omitted, and/or miscategorized expenses.

**FINDING 5:** We identified 21 reimbursement requests where \$657,493 (0.07%) of expenses were duplicated, omitted, and/or miscategorized.

**PROCEDURE 6:** We accumulated total potential questioned costs and resolved amounts noted during our analysis of reimbursement requests.

**FINDING 6:** During our analysis of reimbursement requests totaling \$19,106,723,649 for the period April 1, 2008, through December 31, 2023, we identified potential questioned costs totaling \$2,162,574,975 (11.32%) of which a total of \$1,770,712,676 (81.88%) was resolved, including \$140,632,405 resolved this reporting period.

We were engaged by GOHSEP management to perform this agreed-upon procedures engagement and conducted our engagement in accordance with Generally Accepted *Government Auditing Standards* and attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We were not engaged to, and did not conduct, an examination or review engagement, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion or conclusion, respectively, on the Documentation submitted by sub-grantees and technical assistance contractors to GOHSEP for reimbursement under the PA program. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion or conclusion. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

We are required to be independent of GOHSEP and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements related to our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of GOHSEP management, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than this specified party. By provision of state law, this report is a public document and has been distributed to the appropriate public officials.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA  
Legislative Auditor

MJW/ch

PA (JULY-DECEMBER 2023)



## BACKGROUND

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The Federal Emergency Management Agency Public Assistance (PA) Grant Program provides assistance to state and local governments and certain private nonprofit entities to respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies declared by the President of the United States. Specifically, the PA program provides assistance for debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of infrastructure. The federal share of these expenses typically cannot be less than 75% of eligible costs.

The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) is responsible for coordinating the state's efforts throughout the emergency management cycle to prepare for, prevent where possible, respond to, help recover from, and mitigate against to lessen the effects of man-made or natural disasters in Louisiana. GOHSEP is the grantee for the PA funds and has been designated as the state agency responsible for program administration.

Sub-grantees submit reimbursement requests and supporting documentation to GOHSEP for payment through the PA program. Our engagement with GOHSEP requires the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's (LLA) document review team to confirm the documentation submitted by sub-grantees and technical assistance contractors.

GOHSEP's documentation review process begins when sub-grantees and technical assistance contractors submit reimbursement requests and supporting documentation. The GOHSEP disaster recovery specialists review the requests and gather any additional documentation deemed necessary to fully support them. The disaster recovery specialists document the results of the reviews on expense review forms and then submit the forms and all supporting documentation (reimbursement requests) to the team leads. After the team leads review the reimbursement request and all supporting documentation, they submit them to the LLA document review team to be reviewed under our agreed-upon procedures engagement.

The LLA document review team performs procedures on the documentation submitted by sub-grantees and technical assistance contractors under the PA program. Unsupported costs exceeding \$500 are considered exceptions and are reported.

The LLA document review team communicates the results of their review to GOHSEP management via Findings of Review. When exceptions are noted, GOHSEP management decides whether to correct the exceptions or fund the requests. If GOHSEP management decides to correct the exceptions, the disaster recovery specialists gather additional documentation. Then, LLA's document review team performs the same agreed upon procedures on the additional documentation. This process allows GOHSEP the opportunity to correct exceptions prior to final payment, thus eliminating questioned costs.



## **MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSE**

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**Governor's Office of Homeland Security  
And Emergency Preparedness  
State of Louisiana**

JEFF LANDRY  
GOVERNOR



JACQUES THIBODEAUX  
DIRECTOR

April 4, 2024

Mr. Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA  
Legislative Auditor  
Office of Legislative Auditor  
1600 North Third Street  
Post Office Box 94397  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9397

RE: Draft Public Assistance - Agreed Upon Procedures Engagement  
Public Assistance Program – July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023

Dear Mr. Waguespack:

We have received the draft report compiled by the Legislative Auditor's Recovery Assistance Division reviewing the State's Public Assistance (PA) program for the second half of 2023 (July through December 2023). We have reviewed your report, and concur with the exceptions identified in the report.

We would like to note that we share these reports with our management group to assist in identifying training opportunities for our staff. Training and education are top priorities for GOHSEP, and these reports are instrumental in assisting us in ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders are receiving proper guidance.

It is important to note that GOHSEP has the mechanisms in place to address most of the questioned costs found within your report. Out of scope work can be addressed by requesting a FEMA scope alignment and upon obligation resubmitting the invoices in question. Costs submitted which do not have all support documentation are addressed with the applicant to receive any missing documents. Procurement and contract issues are also regularly addressed and corrected by working with the applicant to ensure all contract clauses are included, better document their procurement process and by analyzing the costs incurred to ensure those costs are reasonable.

Ms. Browning to Mr. Waguespack  
PA LLA Response-July 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023  
April 4, 2024  
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We would also like to note that our review process necessitates that any exceptions identified within your report are required to be addressed before project closeout. GOHSEP has made considerable progress in addressing all historical questioned costs, with 82% of all previously questioned costs being resolved life to date and \$140 million resolved during this same reporting period. We have realized a high success rate using the information your staff provides to remedy any outstanding issues.

Your reports continue to assist us in the improvement of our processes and provide important feedback which will assist us in achieving our 100% accuracy goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lynne Browning', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lynne Browning  
Assistant Director - Public Assistance