



## Report Highlights

# Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East

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## Why We Conducted This Audit

In November 2021, we received a legislative request to conduct a performance audit of the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East (SLFP AE). Based on this request, we conducted an audit to evaluate certain policies and practices, and employee perspectives on the organizational culture at SLFP AE.

## What We Found

Overall, we found the following:

- **While SLFP AE has developed a grievance policy as required by Civil Service rules, it did not maintain all grievance documentation, track grievances, or ensure that the policy clearly states which issues are addressed through the grievance process, all of which are recommended by the Department of State Civil Service (DSCS).** According to our April 2022 survey of SLFP AE employees, 46 (30.7%) of 150 respondents indicated that they felt that SLFP AE would not handle their grievance in accordance with policy, and 58 (38.7%) felt that they would be retaliated against if they filed a grievance.
- **While SLFP AE's Employee Handbook contains an official Equal Employment Opportunity policy prohibiting discrimination, our survey found that 42 (27.5%) of 153 survey respondents stated that they experienced or witnessed some type of discrimination at SLFP AE within the last year.** The most common types of discrimination reported at SLFP AE involved age (18 or 19.4%), race or ethnicity (17 or 18.3%), or sex (12 or 12.9%).
- **SLFP AE did not always comply with Civil Service rules in all disciplinary actions issued during fiscal years 2018 through 2022.** In one instance, SLFP AE terminated an employee for sexual harassment, racially-based conduct, and leaving a firearm unsecured. However, the employee appealed, and during its preliminary review DSCS stated that SLFP AE did not provide the employee with a reasonable chance to respond to the discipline or describe the conduct in enough detail in the disciplinary letters. On advice of its counsel, SLFP AE settled the appeal by changing the termination to a resignation and paying the employee approximately \$38,000 in back pay.

**SLFP AE's mission** is to ensure the physical and operational integrity of the regional flood risk management system in southeastern Louisiana as a defense against floods and storm surge from hurricanes.

Source: <https://www.floodauthority.org/>

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# Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority - East

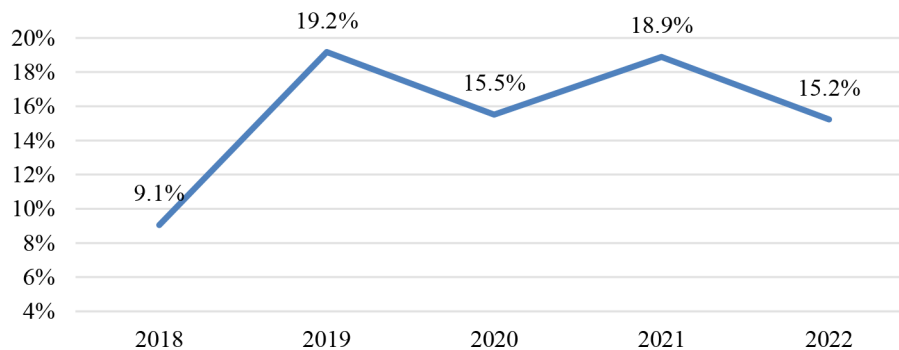
## What We Found (Cont.)

- Survey results indicate that most employees at SLFPAE are passionate about the work they do, but SLFPAE could improve the leadership of the Board and executive management by providing additional training and ensuring executive management receives ongoing feedback on performance. As of June 2022, eight (53.3%) of the 15 employees in executive management did not complete all of the DSCS supervision training courses that are required for classified employees and recommended for unclassified employees.
- SLFPAE should evaluate ways to decrease turnover, including reviewing the potential for increasing pay through DSCS in positions that are hard to fill or have high turnover. In addition, revising the Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to include clear criteria, including examples of what is considered high performance, could help improve morale by making employees feel more appreciated. The exhibit below shows SLFPAE's turnover by fiscal year for the last five fiscal years.

“It seems the recognition program is done by popularity or manager favorites. Instead of rewarding employees for becoming the most popular or the managers' favorites, reward them for doing a great job. Make the managers responsible for showing the good work or extra mile done by the employee.”

Source: April 2022 LLA Survey of SLFPAE Employees

**SLFPAE Employee Turnover  
Fiscal Years 2018 through 2022**



Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using SLFPAE employee data.

- Since February 2019, SLFPAE has not had an internal audit function. As a result, it is missing an opportunity to help agency leadership monitor the issues discussed in this report including grievances, discipline, discrimination, and organizational culture.
- As of May 2022, SLFPAE has four positions that are not legally authorized as unclassified and have not been approved by the State Civil Service Commission and, therefore, should be classified positions according to the Louisiana Constitution. As a result, SLFPAE may have not followed certain requirements for these positions, including hiring, disciplining, and compensating staff in accordance with Civil Service rules.