



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

December 22, 2014

TWENTY-SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT PUBLIC DEFENDER

An employee of the Public Defender's Office in the 22nd Judicial District has been fired for allegedly taking \$8,150 from the office's probation fees, according to an audit report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The audit was performed for the state auditor by the LaPorte accounting firm of Covington.

The report said that officials of the defender's office uncovered the theft last September while investigating "an unexpected decrease in probation revenue." During the investigation, the report said, the office "discovered that an employee in the Covington office had misappropriated an estimated \$8,150" of probation fees that were paid to the agency.

Revenues to fund the Public Defender's Office come from court costs or fines imposed by the courts within the district and from the state. Probation fees are imposed by courts as part of defendants' sentences. The report pointed out that "traditionally, collection of these fees is highly questionable."

The report recommended that the public defender "should review its internal control" over probation fees and take steps to strengthen those controls. The report has been referred to the district attorney's office.

The 22nd Judicial District encompasses St. Tammany and Washington parishes. Besides Covington, there are also offices in Slidell and Franklinton. The public defender provides legal representation to needy individuals in criminal cases.

For more information, contact:

Daryl G. Purpera, CPA, CFE
Legislative Auditor
225-339-3800

On Twitter: 22nd public defender employee allegedly stole more than \$8,000 in probation fees.