*Welcome to LLA Reports, a podcast produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s office. This podcast is intended to be an oral representation of the written report it highlights and is primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature.*

This is Misty Perry. I’m a senior auditor with LLA Performance Audit Services. This episode of LLA Reports focuses on our new report titled “Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East.”

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate certain policies and practices, and employee perspectives on the organizational culture at the authority.

We found that while the authority developed a grievance policy as required by Civil Service rules, it did not maintain all grievance documentation, track grievances, or ensure the policy clearly stated which issues would be addressed through the grievance process.

According to a survey we conducted of authority employees, 46 – or 30.7 percent – of 150 respondents indicated they felt the authority would not handle their grievance in accordance with policy, and 58 – or 38.7 percent – felt they would be retaliated against if they filed a grievance.

We also found that while the authority’s Employee Handbook contained an official Equal Employment Opportunity policy prohibiting discrimination, 42 – or 27.5 percent – of 153 survey respondents said they had experienced or witnessed some type of discrimination at the authority within the past year. The most common types of discrimination reported involved age, race or ethnicity, and sex.

In addition, we found the authority did not always comply with Civil Service rules in disciplinary actions issued during fiscal years 2018 through 2022.

Our survey results also indicated that most authority employees were passionate about the work they do, but the agency could improve the leadership of its board and executive management by providing additional training and ensuring executive management receives ongoing feedback on performance.

We found, too, that the authority should evaluate ways to decrease turnover, including reviewing the possibility of increasing pay for positions that are hard to fill or have high turnover. In addition, revising the Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to include clear criteria, such as examples of what is considered high performance, could help improve morale.

Since February 2019, the authority 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.

Additionally, we found that, as of May 2022, the authority had four unclassified positions that were not legally authorized and were not approved by the State Civil Service Commission, meaning they should be classified positions, according to the Louisiana Constitution.

This means the authority may not have followed certain requirements for these positions specified by Civil Service rules, including requirements related to hiring, disciplining, and compensating staff.

As a result of our audit, we developed 14 recommendations.

The recommendations included updating the authority’s grievance policy, tracking and maintaining documentation of all employee grievances, and evaluating ways to improve employee trust in the grievance process.

We also recommended that the authority develop ways to mitigate discriminatory behavior experienced by employees, ensure all disciplinary actions comply with Civil Service rules, and track the disciplinary actions it issues.

In addition, we recommended authority board members receive a timely orientation, all supervisors complete required or recommended supervisor training, and all employees receive ongoing feedback and a formal evaluation.

We recommended as well that the authority track the reasons why employees leave, identify ways to help decrease turnover, and revise its Employee Rewards and Recognition Program to clarify the types of work behavior that warrant an award.

Finally, we recommended that the authority evaluate its need for an internal audit function and either convert the four unapproved unclassified positions to classified service or seek approval for them to remain unclassified.

As part of its response, which is included in the report as Appendix A, the authority agreed with all 14 of our recommendations.

*We hope you found this podcast informative, and that you’ll follow future episodes of LLA Reports.*

*This podcast was created as part of the audit report just discussed and is intended primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature. Both the full report and the podcast can be found on the LLA’s website at* [*www.lla.la.gov*](http://www.lla.la.gov)*.*

*Thank you for listening.*