*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 Chris Magee. I’m the data analytics manager for LLA’s Performance Audit Services.

This episode of LLA Reports focuses on our new report titled “Improper Payments in the Unemployment Insurance Program – Ineligible Recipients Based on State Employment.”

We evaluated the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Unemployment Insurance program and federally-funded COVID-19 pandemic-related unemployment assistance programs to determine if apparently ineligible employees of the State of Louisiana were paid benefits.

Overall, we found that, from February 2, 2020, through July 24, 2021, the Louisiana Workforce Commission – or LWC – made approximately $6.1 million dollars in State and Federal unemployment benefit payments to 1,054 state employees who do not appear to have been eligible.

While some of these employees may have been victims of identity theft, others appear to have received unemployment benefit payments for which they were ineligible.

As part of our evaluation, we conducted two analyses.

First, we analyzed unemployment benefit payments and employee wages reported quarterly to LWC by state agencies whose payroll data is not contained in LaGov, which is the state’s electronic administrative system.

Second, we analyzed unemployment benefit payments and state employee bi-weekly payroll data obtained from LaGov.

We found that LWC paid approximately $2.9 million dollars in unemployment benefits to 566 state employees from March 2020 through March 2021. Based on the wages reported to LWC by their employers, these employees do not appear to have been eligible.

In a previous report on ineligible unemployment benefit recipients, we had found that $2.1 million dollars – or 72.4 percent – of the $2.9 million dollars was paid to 371 of those 566 employees.

We also found that LWC made approximately $3.1 million dollars in unemployment benefit payments to 488 state employees from March 2020 through July 2021 who do not appear to have been eligible based on their bi-weekly state payroll.

In a previous report on ineligible unemployment benefit recipients, we found that $1.8 million dollars – or 58 percent – of the $3.1 million dollars was paid to 235 of those 488 employees.

We further analyzed 200 of these 488 employees and found that 163, or 81.6 percent, of them had or attempted to have their unemployment benefits deposited into a bank account in which they had previously used or currently use to receive their state payroll. This may indicate that the state employee was aware that they were paid unemployment benefits.

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

We recommended that LWC consider obtaining and analyzing LaGov employment data to identify state employees who may not qualify for unemployment benefits.

LWC agreed with this recommendation and said it has already begun obtaining and analyzing the data and has referred 18 public employees for prosecution.

In addition, we recommended that LWC consider obtaining lookup access to LaGov Human Resource records, and that the agency continue to investigate state employees who appear to earn more in wages than the amount allowed and recoup dollars as appropriate.

LWC also agreed with both of these 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.*