



LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR  
DARYL G. PURPERA, CPA, CFE

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## LOUISIANA DISTRICT PUBLIC DEFENDERS

A total of 17 of the state's 42 district public defender offices spent more money than they received in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013, 12 fewer than the 29 that reported deficits the previous year, according to a report released Monday by Legislative Auditor Daryl Purpera.

The annual report did not include data from two of the public defender districts: the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Public Defender in East Baton Rouge Parish, which had not submitted its report despite an extension; and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District defender, who submitted the report, but the accuracy of the data has not been verified.

The largest deficit reported was \$215,696 in the 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District defender's office in Jefferson Parish. The smallest deficit was \$3,683 in the 5<sup>th</sup> District that covers Franklin, Richland and West Carroll parishes.

The state auditor's report said that Orleans Parish received the largest amount of money for its office, just under \$7 million, and ended the 2013 fiscal year with \$482,544 left. The smallest revenue source was \$71,047, received by the 39<sup>th</sup> District in Red River Parish.

The combined revenue of the reporting districts was \$44.9 million.

For the 2013 fiscal year, Orleans Parish reported the highest expenditures, \$6.51 million, while the smallest expenditure total was reported in the Cameron Parish-based 38<sup>th</sup> District, \$95,014, approximately \$6,000 more than it received.

The combined expenditures of the district public defenders totaled \$43.9 million.

"To preserve the state's public defender system" in 2013, the report said, the Louisiana Public Defender Board, the agency that oversees the local district offices, reduced, and in some cases, eliminated state funding to local public defender districts that had positive fund balances. "This allowed state funding to be directed to those districts with the greatest financial need," the report said.

The report advised the state board to continue monitoring the fiscal operations and financial positions of all public defender districts, including confirming that deficit-spending is taking place in some areas, and requiring those deficit districts to submit written corrective action plans to the state board. The report also recommended that the state board provide guidance to public defenders to ensure that deficit-spending is eliminated.



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In the 2013 fiscal year, the statewide board distributed a total of \$17.5 million of its \$33.1 million in state funds to the district offices to help finance legal representation for indigents charged in criminal cases.

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**On Twitter:** Fewer public defenders report deficits in FY 2013.