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## Report Highlights

# Oversight of Trusty Programs

### Department of Public Safety and Corrections

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## Why We Conducted This Audit

We conducted this audit to evaluate the Department of Public Safety and Corrections' (DPSC) oversight of trusty programs at state correctional institutions (Department of Corrections - DOC) and the Louisiana State Police (LSP) Barracks. Trusties are offenders classified as minimum security who are assigned to one of three levels, with Level 1 being the least restrictive and Level 3 being the most. Trusties are given privileges that are not available to the general prison population and provided with a job assignment, depending on their trusty status level.

## What We Found

We found that DOC needs to improve its oversight of trusty programs by ensuring that all correctional facilities comply with regulations. We identified the following issues:

- DOC needs to ensure that all correctional facilities comply with its trusty regulations. While some correctional institutions complied with DOC policy for certain trusty levels, none of them fully complied with all requirements. As a result, some trusties were not eligible. Specifically:
  - Because the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola's trusty policy did not contain eligibility requirements, we found that a total of 1,547 (91%) trusties at Angola were not eligible, according to DOC regulations. Using Angola's new policy that was revised during the audit, we re-analyzed the same list of Angola's trusties using only Level 3 eligibility requirements and found that a total of 400 (24%) out of 1,705 trusties were not eligible. However, all 400 of them were considered by DOC to be eligible due to having an undocumented, implicit waiver for a sex offense or time served less than 10 years.
  - The three other institutions we reviewed [Dixon Correctional Institute (DCI), Elayn Hunt Correctional Center, and Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women] had 47 (5%) trusties who were not eligible. Of the 868 eligible trusties, 100 trusties were considered by DOC to be eligible due to having an undocumented, implicit waiver for a sex offense or time served less than 10 years.
  - DCI's policies allow trusties who are assigned to work in state buildings in Baton Rouge to have less stringent requirements regarding crimes of violence. We found that 14 of 151 (9%) Level 1 trusties at DCI assigned to Baton Rouge state buildings were not eligible. If all 151 of the Baton Rouge trusties had to comply with the same requirements as other Level 1 trusties, 49 (33%) would not be eligible because they had crimes of violence such as aggravated battery, manslaughter, and aggravated assault with a firearm.

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## *Department of Public Safety and Corrections*

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### What We Found (Cont.)

- DOC needs to collect centralized and electronic information on trusties, including when and why their trusty status is downgraded or removed due to rule violations. This would help DOC monitor the eligibility of trusties at correctional institutions. We reviewed 318 violations committed by 309 trusties and found that not all trusties had their trusty status reduced or removed due to these violations, including major rule violations. Specifically, we identified 19 trusties (6%) who had the same status level after committing violations ranging from general prohibited behavior and defiance to aggravated sex offense and intoxication.

We also found that LSP needs to establish departmental specific regulations for LSP Barracks trusties, including what eligibility requirements can be waived.

- Staff at the LSP Barracks used their internal inmate screening process for trusties, which differs from LSP's departmental policy. We found that eight of 142 (6%) LSP Barracks trusties were not eligible based on these internal requirements. According to LSP Barracks staff, they waived the drug offense convictions requirement for these offenders because they met other eligibility requirements. However, LSP Barracks' internal screening process does not allow for granting any waivers.