

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS



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NO JUSTICE FOR CITY IN COURTS

The New Orleans Office of Inspector General released a report on its Assessment of New Orleans' System of City Courts. New Orleans maintained a fragmented system of 4 separate courts unlike the unified courts found in all other Louisiana cities and parishes. Baton Rouge's single court of 5 judges managed a caseload slightly higher than did New Orleans' 12 judges. Caseload factors developed by the Judicial Council also confirmed that New Orleans has twice the number of judges needed. Consolidating Municipal and Traffic Courts would save \$2.5 million annually and also avoid the substantial losses resulting from chronic mismanagement.

Concern with observations from the assessment led to a Performance Review of the Traffic Court. It found the traffic court misdirected about \$1.3 million of City and other agencies' funds into the Judicial Expense Fund and withheld another \$500,000 by declaring it "excess." The Review cited 23 other findings of mismanagement including the purchase of disability income insurance for the judges contrary to state law. City Attorneys lacked records of case dispositions, and court staff and judges improperly dismissed charges without the prosecutors' authority.

Inspector General Ed Quatrevaux said, "This court system is wasting the City's money. The City can save millions of dollars each year, every year." Quatrevaux said that the traffic court judges conducted less than a trial a month and "the Court should be consolidated into an integrated system."

The report is attached and can also be viewed and downloaded from the OIG website at <http://www.nolaoig.org>.

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