

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Inspections and Evaluations Division of the New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an inspection of the funding of the Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) in 2011. The inspection focused on financial support of the municipal and parish jail system (Jail) and included City budget allocations, City in-kind support, and ad valorem taxes.¹ Inspectors reviewed legal and financial documents relating to 2011 Jail and OPSO funding to develop a detailed budget picture of the fiscal operations of OPSO and to provide information regarding the City's and OPSO's respective responsibilities and authorities for the New Orleans Jail.

The City's 2011 annual operating budget included a single appropriation of \$22,594,000 to the Sheriff's Office; the budget only specified that \$19.4 million of that total was allocated for the Office of the Sheriff and \$3.2 million was allocated for medical expenses. The inspection of Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office funding revealed that:

- The City's 2011 annual operating budget document provided an incomplete account of the funds appropriated to OPSO: the City made a significantly higher investment in the Jail than its 2011 operating budget indicated, because the City provided additional funding to the Jail through budget allocations to other departments.
- OPSO aggregated both revenues and expenditures into categories that did not correspond to specific revenue sources or to Jail expenditures, which made it impossible to connect the City's Jail funding to Jail services and operations. As a result, inspectors were unable to determine whether City monies allocated to OPSO in 2011 appropriately funded only the facilities and services the City was obligated to fund as delineated by state statute and consent decree.

Inspectors also conducted a benchmark analysis of New Orleans's Jail and the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections, which operates a comparable jail serving the same correctional functions as New Orleans's Jail. The benchmark analysis revealed that in 2011 New Orleans's Jail appeared to be adequately funded when compared to the benchmark jail and that OPSO expenditures in total and in certain categories were significantly greater than those for the Louisville Metro Department of Corrections.

¹ In this report, "City" refers to City government and includes both the legislative and administrative branches. The term "Jail" refers to the system of facilities used to house and care for inmates for whom the City is financially responsible: municipal inmates, pre- and post-sentencing; as well as pre-sentencing DOC inmates. In contrast, inspectors use the term Orleans Parish Prison (OPP) to refer to all City and Parish corrections facilities and operations that house and care for *all* inmates, including DOC-sentenced and post-sentenced inmates from other parishes. The City is not financially responsible for the housing and care of these individuals. The term OPP historically referred to the "Old Parish Prison," a facility separate from the City's jail facility, the House of Detention. (Note: In 2011 post-sentencing inmates housed at OPP included federal prisoners; in 2012 the federal government removed all remaining federal prisoners from OPP.)

The OIG's examination of financial support for the Jail revealed a division of responsibility and authority between the City and the Sheriff's Office. For most of its history, the City ran the municipal jail and the Sheriff's Office ran the parish prison. However, beginning in the mid-1970s, OPSO began operating both the municipal Jail and the parish prison. This arrangement placed the financial responsibility for the Jail with the City and the administrative and operational authority over the Jail with the OPSO.

Separating financial responsibility for the Jail from the administrative authority needed to oversee the expenditure of Jail funds resulted in a problematic relationship between the OPSO and the City. Since neither the City nor the Sheriff's Office could be held wholly accountable for both the costs and the conditions of the Jail, neither public entity ensured the safety, security, and efficiency of the Jail.

Based on the report's findings, inspectors recommended that:

- The City should clearly identify all funding for the Jail, including appropriations and in-kind support, in its annual budget.
- The City should withhold funds for the Jail unless OPSO provides a detailed, line-item functional budget that connects City funds to Jail expenditures for which the City is responsible.
- The Jail should not provide long-term housing for State Department of Corrections inmates or prisoners from other parishes.²
- If the City and OPSO cannot agree on a rational, sufficiently detailed budget, the City should take steps to assume control of Jail operations.

² The Jail would continue to house certain DOC inmates for short periods, including any sentenced DOC inmates with open state charges in Orleans Criminal District Court, DOC probation and parole violators, and DOC inmates awaiting transfer to state facilities.