The Office of Inspector General of the City of New Orleans (OIG) conducted a review of funding for the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). The purpose of this review was to provide policy makers and the public with a complete picture of NOPD spending and performance. Evaluators identified NOPD revenue sources and calculated the total amount of money spent on the NOPD per year from 2008 to 2013. On average, with the inclusion of capital expenses and indirect costs, total NOPD expenditures were 27 percent higher than NOPD's line item in the City's operating budget.

The OIG's examination of NOPD funding issues takes place during a major NOPD recruitment drive and in the context of a policy decision to hire several hundred additional officers. The City's stated goal is to increase NOPD's force strength to 1,600 officers, an increase of 45 percent over December 2014 staffing levels. NOPD is the largest City department and accounted for approximately one quarter of city general fund spending from 2008 through 2013. Increasing NOPD's force size to 1,600 would cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars in additional policing costs. This significant policy decision raises an important question: is there evidence that the increase in police spending due to hiring hundreds of additional officers would result in better public safety outcomes?

General fund spending for the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) varied measurably between 2008 and 2013. In 2008 and 2009 the NOPD spent an average of $147 million, including millions of dollars in federal funds related to Hurricane Katrina. In 2010, as the City transitioned to a new mayor and police chief, and federal hurricane recovery funding diminished, the City reduced its overall budget by 7 percent, and NOPD spending dropped by 12 percent to $130 million. NOPD spending remained at the 2010 level in 2011 and then increased to $135 million in 2012. In 2013 police-related spending increased to $140 million with the inclusion of costs related to consent decree requirements intended to bring NOPD into compliance with constitutional policing practices.

From 2009 to 2010 the City cut spending on police by 12 percent when one-time federal disaster funding used to pay police overtime costs ran out. The cuts to NOPD personnel overtime were concentrated in the Field Operations Bureau and the Management Services Division. In contrast, deployment in the Investigations

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and Support Bureau remained steady. Evaluators also found that the number of supervising officers remained steady as the number of officers declined from 2002 on, decreasing the number of officers assigned to each supervisor. In addition, there was also a steep drop in the number of civilian employees in the NOPD between 2005 and 2007, and officers took on some tasks that had previously been staffed by civilians. Overall, however, the number of police officers rose from 2008 to 2010 before gradually falling back to approximately the 2008 level in 2013.

An analysis of the effect the marked reduction in funding had on the NOPD's performance could help policy makers make informed decisions about allocating scarce financial resources. However, the City provided little information that indicated a possible relationship between spending less money on police overtime and outcomes related to policing from 2008 through 2013.

Evaluators could not gauge the effects of changes in spending because so little information was captured about police performance, how public dollars were spent on specific programs and activities, and the relationship of spending to public safety outcomes. The City did not provide consistent information in the materials it prepared for the Council prior to budget adoption and the performance measures contained in ResultsNOLA included little evidence that the strategies police employed worked and, if so, why.[1]

Police work is multi-dimensional and no single performance measure will provide a reliable picture of police performance. Evaluators attempted to use the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) comprehensive model to measure NOPD performance but found NOPD data to be unreliable. Evaluators recommend that the City adopt a more comprehensive police performance model and clearly link research-based strategies and policies proven to be effective to agreed-upon public safety outcomes. Finally, evaluators echo the recommendations in several reports that suggest that NOPD improve its data quality.

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[1] According to the City's website "ResultsNOLA reports include critical performance measures, or Key Performance indicators, of every department, and track progress towards Citywide goals. Tracking these measures provides important information for management decision-making and demonstrates accountability for delivering services to citizens." Accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.nola.gov/performance-and-accountability/initiatives-and-reports/resultsnola/.

This evaluation includes two findings and recommendations:

- The City's budget books and ResultsNOLA reports did not provide the Council or the public with details about performance that could lead to informed decision-making about budgeting. The City should adopt a more complete police performance measurement model and evidence-based policy, which will provide decision-makers with information they need to allocate appropriate resources to the NOPD.

- NOPD data were unreliable and could not be used to evaluate performance. The OIG recommends that the NOPD institute better controls on data collection and management.

The recommendations presented in this report are intended to assist the Council, Mayor, and NOPD Superintendent with creating a budget and managing police resources to ensure the best outcomes for the lowest cost. It is critical that decision-makers be able to determine whether evidence-based strategies were employed effectively to improve specific public safety goals and outcomes. That information can then be used to understand how funding and deployment decisions affect police services.

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