

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Office of Inspector General of the City of New Orleans (OIG) conducted an evaluation of New Orleans Police Department's (NOPD) force structure, focusing on the department's staffing and deployment to answer citizen-generated calls for service. The objectives of the evaluation were to describe and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization of personnel to carry out the department's mission "to provide professional police services to the public."<sup>1</sup>

Answering citizen-generated calls for service is a non-discretionary policing activity and the baseline for providing "professional police services to the public;" even the most serious crime often begins as a citizen-generated call for service. Evaluators employed a workload-based analysis<sup>2</sup> to assess the management of NOPD's citizen call-for-service delivery system and to identify opportunities for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of NOPD staffing and deployment in order to meet the call-for service demand.

The model called for an analysis of NOPD's citizen call-for-service workload and resulted in an estimation of the number of officers who needed to be assigned to answer calls for service depending on the portion of their time spent on calls. Built into the model was the opportunity for police managers to balance time spent on calls with a determination of how much of officers' time would be spent on discretionary policing activities, such as proactive and community policing, and administrative duties.

For instance, if police managers decided that 50 percent of officers' time should be spent answering calls for service, officers would spend the remaining 50 percent of their time on other policing responsibilities. If police managers wanted officers to devote 30 percent of their time to calls for service, officers would have the remaining 70 percent of their

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<sup>1</sup> New Orleans Police Department, *Policy Manual*, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Alexander Weiss, a recognized expert in the field of police staffing, was selected through a competitive procurement process to consult on this project. He conducted data collection and the workload-based analysis with the assistance of OIG evaluators.

time for other policing activities, and the department would need more officers devoting a portion of their time to answering calls.

Evaluators found that in May 2013 most platoons were not sufficiently staffed to meet the demand of citizen-generated calls for service at 50 or 40 percent time spent on calls for service. Of the approximately 1,000 Police Officers I–IV, 251 officers were assigned to platoons responsible for answering calls for service. Evaluators identified findings related to the scheduling, dispatch procedures, and categorization of calls for service:

- NOPD classified 37 percent of citizen calls for service in “complaint other” and “disturbance other” categories, making it difficult for supervisors to use the data to inform NOPD staffing and deployment needs.
- NOPD primarily used two priority codes for 98 percent of all citizen-generated calls for service, reducing the department’s ability to prioritize responses to the calls for service effectively and efficiently.
- Districts held calls for service—predominantly less urgent Code One calls, more than half of the total citizen-generated calls—in queue before and during shift changes. The practice resulted in long wait times for callers and a backlog of calls awaiting officers as they started their shifts.
- Arrival times were not recorded for 13 percent of citizens’ calls for service, and evaluators could not determine whether the 87 percent of calls for service with arrival times would be representative of the entire population of calls. Without arrival times, evaluators could not calculate reliable response times or on-scene times.

Evaluators then examined NOPD staffing and deployment to identify ways to meet the citizen call-for-service demand. Evaluators identified opportunities for (1) increasing the supply of officers available to answer calls for service using existing manpower resources, and (2) decreasing the number of calls that require an officer to respond through the use of alternatives employed by numerous cities across the country. Evaluators recommended:

- Assigning sworn officers only to those positions that require law enforcement training, expertise, or experience.
- Increasing supervisors' span of control; NOPD supervisors managed an average of 3.1 to 4.3 officers, well below the national average.
- Developing alternative methods for reporting minor traffic accidents and responding to burglar alarms, which together totaled 21 percent of all citizen-generated calls for service.

It is the task of police executives to decide how many officers will be assigned to answer calls for service and how much time those officers will spend answering calls for service apart from proactive and community policing, and other discretionary and administrative police activities. They must balance those decisions against other important demands on personnel resources.

However, when financial resources are limited, department managers must demonstrate that existing resources are maximized and convince city officials that their choices meet real needs, are driven by solid data, and are financially justified.

A draft of this report was provided to the CAO's Office and the New Orleans Police Department for review and comment prior to publication. The City's full response is appended to this report.

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