

Inspector General says city employees illegally accepted hundreds of free Jazz Fest tickets

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NEW ORLEANS – Hundreds of free tickets to Jazz Fest were handed out to city employees in 2017 in direct violation of city ordinances, according to a new report by New Orleans Inspector General Derry Harper.

Between 284 and 424 general admission tickets were provided to city department heads and managers in 2017.

With the price of a general admission ticket running \$65 in advance and \$80 at the gate, that's between \$18,000 over \$27,000 in free tickets at the \$65 rate, and between \$22,000 and almost \$34,000 at the \$80 rate.



Music fans stream in on the first day of Jazz Fest 2017

City employees accepted the tickets knowing that they were barred from doing so, according to Harper's report, and many admitted to not even using the tickets during the festival.

Some employees said they did use the tickets for official city use, according to the report, but other tickets were for personal use.

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The illegal donations flowed both ways, though.

The Parks and Parkways Department gave Jazz Fest three gazebos for free and without signing paperwork that would have insulated the city against insurance claims, according to the report.

The Office of the Inspector General recommends the City of New Orleans immediately discontinue the practices of accepting free admission tickets and loaning city property to Jazz Fest, and establish a formal process for admission for city employees instead of a "goodwill" system.

Read the Inspector General's full report [here](#).

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