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OIG ANNOUNCES INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND PERMITS PROCESS

The **New Orleans Office of Inspector General (OIG)** today announces a new initiative to ensure effective operations of the City's Department of Safety and Permits (DSP).

This OIG initiative will foster effective DSP practices and develop methods to improve efficiency, boost accountability, and lessen the potential for corruption at this essential City agency.

Over the course of the past decade, the OIG and partnering agencies have investigated numerous instances of fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement within DSP. These investigations have led to 19 arrests, indictments, and resignations of DSP employees. These continuing patterns indicate the agency is facing systemic internal failures. Though the DSP has made significant improvements through additional hiring, faster permit processes, and an outside consultant evaluation, the OIG must ensure successful operations of this critical City agency.

This new initiative will identify and mitigate these issues by assigning OIG personnel to DSP offices. Assignment of OIG personnel will allow for real-time review and assessment of DSP processes for permitting and inspection. This unprecedented move is being enacted to improve public trust following multiple OIG investigations into improper actions by DSP employees.

The assigned OIG staff will review DSP policies, procedures, and internal controls with a focus on identifying and mitigating gaps and weaknesses to ensure effective operations at DSP. The team conducting the initiative also includes staff with the Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors (LSLBC) and DSP employees with extensive knowledge of the agency's processes.

The objective is for DSP and the Office of Business and External Services (OBES) to update and revise DSP protocol and policies to better enhance customer service and accountability department-wide, and for staff to receive training that incorporates the OIG's recommendations for improved efficiency and accountability.

This initiative represents a proactive approach to the OIG’s mission to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse by identifying systemic issues and mitigating root causes of corruption.

Anyone who has witnessed or experienced corruption within the Department of Safety and Permits is asked to call the OIG hotline at (504) 681-3247 or email hotline@nolaoig.gov. Tips can be anonymous.

Inspector General Ed Michel stated:

“The Department of Safety and Permits is responsible for ensuring safety standards are met for all construction and use of buildings and properties in New Orleans. The work of DSP is essential to maintaining a safe and functional City. Unfortunately, the issues in DSP appear to be systemic. As such, we must expand our focus beyond improper behavior by individual employees and take a more proactive approach to identifying and mitigating risk within DSP procedures.”

LSLBC Executive Director Brad Hassert stated:

“The importance of the permit offices and their employees cannot be overstated when it comes to preventing fraud and enhancing public safety. Their role in screening permit applications, issuing permits, and conducting inspections is paramount to the safety of the community and for effective and efficient administration of good government. The LSLBC and OIG recognized the issues that were coming from the Department of Safety and Permits and began to collaborate with one another several years ago. This has grown into a strong and effective partnership which has allowed our two agencies to combine our resources and expertise to address the systemic problems within DSP over the years. The previous joint investigations by our agencies have shown what these two offices are capable of and are an example of things to come.”

Department of Safety and Permits Director Tammie Jackson stated:

“The Department of Safety and Permits is moving in the right direction with ongoing work toward improvement. The DSP has made strides in streamlining permit processes and STR enforcement, hiring new staff, and providing customer service. DSP has also hired an outside consultant to help improve efficiency. We welcome this partnership with the OIG to monitor our progress in real time.”

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For more on the mission and work of the **New Orleans OIG**, or to report fraud, waste, or abuse, visit nolaoig.gov. For the latest on the OIG’s fight against corruption, follow us on [X](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

Find out more about the **Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors** at lslbc.louisiana.gov.