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OIG FOUND IMPROVEMENTS TO CITY'S TRAFFIC CAMERA PROGRAM, BUT ISSUES REMAIN WITH OVERPAYMENTS, SPEEDY REVIEW TIMES

The New Orleans Office of Inspector General released a follow-up report today finding the City strengthened the management of its Traffic Camera Safety Program (TCSP), but did not ensure those improvements were effective or sustainable. As a result, significant problems persisted, including insufficient time spent reviewing alleged traffic violations and the accrual of more than \$770,000 in overpayments owed to motorists.

This evaluation included a review of all camera citations for the year 2024, as well as changes made to City policies and procedures since the OIG's original report on the Traffic Camera program. The purpose of this follow-up was to determine whether the City implemented the corrective actions to which it agreed in January 2020.

The City initiated its Traffic Camera Safety Program in 2007, with the stated purpose of reducing traffic violations and enhancing road safety. The program used cameras to identify potential traffic violations, for which vehicle owners were assessed a fine. Management of the program is both informal and complex, spanning several City departments and a private contractor.

In its original 2020 report, the OIG issued six recommendations for strengthening the City's management of the traffic camera program. In the new report, OIG evaluators found the City fully implemented two recommendations and partially implemented the other four, resulting in notable improvements. However, several changes were only implemented recently, and management processes remained informal, leading to continued weaknesses.

The OIG found the following:

- The City changed the program's management structure and improved coordination among City agencies, monitoring and evaluation, data analysis, and contractor oversight. However, the new structure did not ensure that improvements to monitoring and oversight would continue over the long term.
- The City largely complied with the recommendation to obtain school calendars and reduce the issuance of invalid school zone tickets.

- The NOPD revised its policies to ensure that almost all citations were issued within legally mandated timeframes and improved the overall timeliness of citations issued.
- The NOPD updated its policies and procedures for review of citations to improve quality control. However, officer review times for individual citations remained concerningly fast. Sixty-eight percent of citations were reviewed within 10 seconds, with 23 percent reviewed within three seconds.
- The City reduced the number of suspended citations, but staff and hearing officers still sometimes failed to enter dispositions properly, and 19 percent of hearings had no disposition recorded.
- Following the original OIG report, which found more than \$730,000 in overpayments, the City initiated a one-time process to issue refunds for overpayments and surrender unclaimed property to the State Treasurer in accordance with state law. Through this process, the City reimbursed outstanding payments, including the \$730,000 in overpayments found in the OIG's original report, as well as additional overpayments that had accrued as of 2021. However, the OIG's follow-up evaluation conducted in 2025 found the City's process for issuing refunds was not ongoing. As of this follow-up evaluation, the City had accumulated an additional \$770,000 in overpayments liable for refunds.

Moving forward, the OIG recommends that the City build upon previous improvements and work to ensure effective, sustainable management of the Traffic Camera Safety Program.

Inspector General Ed Michel stated:

“The Traffic Camera Safety Program has the potential to improve public safety on New Orleans streets, especially for local students. New Orleans residents and visitors need and deserve safer streets. However, to achieve this stated purpose, the City must ensure the program is run effectively and in compliance with all relevant laws and policies. Moving forward, the City should continue to strengthen efforts and build a sustainable infrastructure that will allow for ongoing improvements to the program.”

In addition to today's report, the OIG released a brief with highlights. To review the report and highlights, visit [NolaOIG.gov](https://nolaoig.gov).

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