

Why We Conducted This Review

This report provides the results of our analysis of staffing at the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD) and how NOPD staffing levels may affect response times to 911 calls. We also reviewed NOPD efforts to recruit and retain officers and conducted a survey to evaluate employees' satisfaction with the job and identify areas that could be improved. We conducted this review in response to legislative interest and recent reports related to NOPD staffing concerns, including the New Orleans Office of Inspector General's August 2023 report on NOPD staffing, recruitment, and retention.

What We Found

We found the following:

- **While the number of NOPD civilian employees increased during calendar years 2019 through 2023, the number of commissioned officers decreased.** NOPD police districts lost 26.6% of their staff between calendar years 2019 and 2023. Insufficient staffing could also affect NOPD's ability to comply with the Federal Consent Decree established in 2012 and respond timely to incidents.
- **Although reported incidents assigned to NOPD have generally decreased since 2021, median response times have increased.** In addition, increases in the percentage of incidents with certain response categories, such as "no unit available" and "gone on arrival" may indicate an insufficient number of officers. During calendar years 2021 through 2023, 80,924 (7.9%) of the 1,025,220 reported incidents did not include an arrival time. For incidents with arrival times, the median response time for all years ranged from approximately 9 minutes in District 8 [French Quarter, Central Business District (CBD), and Marigny] to 17 minutes in District 7 (New Orleans East) for emergency incidents, 37 minutes in District 2 (Uptown and Audubon) to 167 minutes in District 7 for non-emergency incidents, and 15 minutes in District 8 to 58 minutes in District 7 for incidents that had a change in priority.

Median Response Time by District for Emergency GOA, NUA, and Deprioritized Incidents with Arrival Times (in minutes) Calendar Years 2021 through 2023				
District	2021	2022	2023	Overall Median
District 1: Mid-City and Tremé	8.4	10.7	12.8	10.2
District 2: Uptown and Audubon	9.3	10.7	10.9	10.1
District 3: Gentilly, Lakeview, and West End	11.1	13.2	15.4	12.7
District 4: Algiers	10.7	12.1	13.5	12.0
District 5: The Ninth Ward, Bywater, and Marigny	12.2	13.0	15.4	13.1
District 6: The Garden District, Irish Channel, and Central City	9.6	11.0	10.8	10.4
District 7: New Orleans East	20.1	21.7	21.0	20.7
District 8: The French Quarter, CBD, and Marigny	9.3	10.3	11.0	10.2

Source: Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using data from OPCD's CAD system.

Staffing, Response Times, and Job Satisfaction

New Orleans Police Department

What We Found (Cont.)

- During calendar years 2019 through 2023, NOPD had a total of 776 separation actions. The most common reasons for separation were resignation and retirement.

- According to our job satisfaction survey, respondents indicated pay, morale, and fairness in promotions and discipline impact their job satisfaction the most.

“Promotions are based on who you know.

Discipline is based on who you are.”

Source: May 2024 LLA survey of NOPD employees

However, survey results show respondents

are generally satisfied with their relationships with colleagues and support from supervisors. The exhibit below summarizes employee response to various job satisfaction questions.

Job Satisfaction/Employee Morale Responses 315 Responses			
Question	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
I am satisfied with my current base salary.	15.6%	16.8%	67.6%
My salary adequately reflects the responsibilities associated with my role.	14.6%	12.4%	73.0%
The federal Consent Decree makes it more difficult for me to perform my job.	47.3%	34.9%	17.8%
Current morale is high at the NOPD.	8.9%	23.8%	67.3%
Recently, morale has improved at the NOPD.	30.2%	31.7%	38.1%
Discipline is carried out fairly for all ranks in the NOPD.	12.1%	24.4%	63.5%

Source: May 2024 LLA survey of NOPD employees

- Survey results also indicate respondents are concerned that limited equipment and resources prevent them from providing services. Other barriers that affect respondents’ ability to do their jobs include staffing shortages and a lack of training.
- According to our survey, respondents indicated concerns with the assignment of secondary employment opportunities. On average, 765 (57.9%) NOPD employees participated in at least one secondary employment opportunity each year during calendar years 2019 through 2023.
- Responses to exit interviews administered by the NOPD generally mirrored the results from our job satisfaction survey. However, the NOPD should ensure it is analyzing exit interview data to strengthen retention efforts.
- As the number of NOPD officers declined between calendar years 2019 and 2023, the NOPD and the New Orleans Civil Service have taken additional measures to address recruitment and retention of officers. To facilitate a more streamlined recruitment process, the NOPD and Civil Service have implemented several changes to the application process. To address concerns over lower salaries as a barrier to entry, the City developed new compensation plans and new bonus schedules for recruits, lateral hires, and current officers.

View the full report, including management’s response, at www.la.gov.