

(http://www.nola.com/)

1
comment

Inspector General finds unnecessary spending at Commission for the Deaf



State Inspector General Stephen Street has released a report detailing wasteful spending by the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf. (Photo by Ben Myers, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)



(<http://connect.nola.com/user/kevinlitten/index.html>) By [Kevin Litten, NOLA.com](http://www.nola.com) | [The Times-Picayune](http://www.nola.com) (<http://connect.nola.com/user/kevinlitten/posts.html>)
[Email the author](mailto:kevinlitten@nola.com) | [Follow on Twitter \(https://twitter.com/kevinlitten\)](https://twitter.com/kevinlitten)

on June 02, 2015 at 2:00 PM, updated June 02, 2015 at 2:02 PM

http://ads.nola.com/RealMedia/ads/click_lx.ads/www.nola.com/politics/2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html
Inspector General Stephen Street on Tuesday (June 2) released a report detailing what it said was unnecessary spending on contractors and equipment by the Commission for the Deaf.

The investigation was launched in 2012 after the Inspector General was informed of complaints about spending by the commission. Much of the investigation centered on the use of contractors paid for using a five-cent tax on telephone lines paid by consumers funds the Commission for the Deaf.

The report comes two years after a confrontation between Gov. Bobby Jindal and the commission over a proposal to raise that tax by two cents, as [detailed in this column by John Maginnis](#).



http://www.nola.com/opinions/index.ssf/2013/05/gov_jindal_wont_hear_of_tax_increase commission argued the increase was needed because of a decrease in land lines as people switched to cell phones, [The Associated Press reported](#).
http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/06/bobby_jindal_deaf_communicatio.html

As Maginnis noted, a disease known as Usher syndrome helps make Louisiana the top state for having deaf and blind residents because the disease disproportionately affects residents of Acadian descent.

Sponsored by:



(http://ads.nola.com/RealMedia/ads/click_lx.ads/www.nola.com/politics/2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html/694979904)

1 Tip for a tiny belly :
Cut down a bit of your belly everyday by following this 1 weird old tip

Tip 

breaking news/live events
Latest live event and breaking news, weather, sports and entertainment updates as they happen.
Enter your e-mail address OPTIONAL Enter Zip
Sign up today!
 Check here if you do not want to receive additional email offers and information.
[See our privacy policy \(/privacypolicy/\)](#)

[Print](#)

([http://blog.nola.com/politics/print.html?](http://blog.nola.com/politics/print.html?entry=2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html)

[entry=2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html](http://blog.nola.com/politics/print.html?entry=2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html))

[Email](#)

(mailto:kevinlitten@nola.com)

video of the day

(http://ads.nola.com/RealMedia/ads/click_lx.ads/www.nola.com/politics/2015/06/inspector_general_wasteful_spe.html)

subject=inspector%20general%20finds%20unnecessary%20spending%20at%20com

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

Most Read



Tax holiday OK for guns, not so for storm and school supplies says Senate committee

The Inspector General detailed several ways the Commission for the Deaf's Executive Director, Naomi DeDual, authorized unnecessary spending on services.

Among the findings:

- The Commission for the Deaf spent almost \$440,000 to distribute free telephone equipment to deaf and hard-of-hearing people in the state using private contractors, even though the Inspector General found that five other states distribute those devices without using contractors. If the commission ceased using private contractors, more money could have been spent on the deaf and hard of hearing for other services. The spending was in addition to nearly \$517,000 in equipment spending.
- Although the Commission for the Deaf allows for spending on sign language interpreters in emergency situations, 61 percent of the times that money was spent on interpreters was for non-emergency use. To authorize the payments, DeDual classified the spending as "other situations."
- Contractors were paid \$186,655 — or about \$150 per patient — to schedule exams and verify income to determine whether deaf or hard of hearing residents were eligible for hearing aids. That expense was "avoidable," the Inspector General found, and meant less money was spent on the actual hearing aids for residents in need of them.
- DeDual authorized nearly \$6,000 in public funds to repay debts for customers of the Deaf Services Center, even though the commission had no obligation to repay that debt.

The biggest piece of the spending was on the contractors that provide equipment to the deaf and hard of hearing. The Inspector General looked into how other states distribute such equipment and found that vendors either mailed equipment directly to people, states provided people with vouchers, or the program was administered by state employees.

According to the Inspector General, DeDual told investigators that the commission used contractors because state law prohibited the use of vouchers or direct mail services.

"Neither we nor the assistant director of the Louisiana Office of State Purchasing and Travel could find any such statute, rule or regulation," the Inspector General wrote. "Ms. DeDual was similarly unable to cite the law to which she referred."

The Inspector General recommended the commission stop relying on third-party contractors to perform the service so it can provide more equipment to people in need. It also outlined suggestions for new systems the commission should implement to document invoices and find ways to "more narrowly define allowable services which qualify to be provided with public funds."

In a letter to the Inspector General, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Interim Deputy Secretary Hugh Eley disagreed with most of the findings, writing that the commission had "consistently provided a high-level of service to Louisiana residents."

"While the department appreciates the recommendation to clarify language in the manual and improve some systems, we strongly believe the (commission) has operated effectively," Eley wrote.

DeDual referred questions about the report to a department spokeswoman who could not immediately be reached for comment.



FOR SALE
Lakeshore, LA

FOR SALE
New Orleans, LA



Yvonne Miestchovich
McCulla



BECCA OWEN

(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/06/louisiana_sales_ta_read_politics_article)



Bobby Jindal responds to his low presidential poll numbers on ABC's 'This Week'

(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/05/bobby_jindal_read_politics_article)



Uptown traffic to worsen as canal work suspends St. Charles streetcars

(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/06/uptown_traffic_to_read_politics_article)



Harrah's, bars due in court over New Orleans smoking ban lawsuit

(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/06/harrahs_bars_due_read_politics_article)



Is the West Village a cautionary tale for Magazine Street? New Yorker on 'high-rent blight'

(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/05/is_the_west_village_read_politics_article)

Active Discussions

1 **Tom Benson family feud: Live updates from Day 2 of competency trial**
(http://www.nola.com/business/index.ssf/2015/06/tom_benson_commented_politics_article)
(171 comments)

2 **Louisiana health insurers request rate hikes in 2016**
(http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2015/06/louisiana_health_commented_politics_article)
(44 comments)

3 **Will deals for Cam Jordan, Junior Galette become a Will Smith-Charles Grant redux?: Larry Holder**
(http://www.nola.com/saints/index.ssf/2015/06/cam_jordan_sa_commented_politics_article)
(59 comments)

4 **Are you an Alvin Gentry supporter or will you become one?**
(http://www.nola.com/pelicans/index.ssf/2015/06/are_you_a_a_commented_politics_article)
(54 comments)

5 **Chalmette man sentenced to 4 years in fatal Lower 9th Ward crash**
(http://www.nola.com/crime/index.ssf/2015/06/chalmette_mar_commented_politics_article)
(19 comments)

See more comments »
(<http://www.nola.com/interact/>)

Related Stories



[Louisiana school voucher program heads to US appeals court Monday](http://www.nola.com/education/index.s)

(<http://www.nola.com/education/index.s>)



[Who are the winners and the losers in the Louisiana state budget fight so far?](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/)

(<http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/>)

1 comment

Sign in

Post comment as...

[Newest](#) | [Oldest](#)



CRJ2 (<http://connect.nola.com/user/CRJ2/index.html>)

1 hour ago

This would be a more balanced report if the writer had quoted from the commission's responses as much as he quoted from the OIG's findings. The services provided are extremely unique and it is not always easy for the average layman to understand services to the deaf and hard of hearing. Many of the OIG's findings are subjective, and anyone interested in this situation needs to go to the report and read the commission's responses before forming a judgement. The OIG performs a valuable public service but in this case I feel that they have overstepped somewhat, making recommendations that are unrealistic considering the handicapped population that is being so well-served.

Like Reply

SHOULD AN 8 PACK OF BLADES REALLY COST \$32?

HARRY'S

WORTH THE SWITCH.

TRY HARRY'S

Get the skills you need to land the job you want.

FREE Online Courses

START LEARNING NOW



(https://optimized-by.rubiconproject.com/t/1032/13817/142646-15.3371632.3456358?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.edx.org%2F%3Futm_source%3Drubicon%26skills%26utm_campaign%3DedX)

Best of NOLA.com

(http://www.nola.com/festivals/index.of) Why leave N.O. this summer with these 12 festivals?...	(http://www.nola.com/saints/#incart.of) Latest news on Saints & summer training	(http://www.nola.com/movies/index.s.of) Summer Movie Preview 2015: 85 new movies to open ...
(http://www.nola.com/festivals/index.of)	(http://www.nola.com/saints/#incart.of)	(http://www.nola.com/movies/index.s.of)

EVERYTHING NEW ORLEANS
EVERYTHING BATON ROUGE

(<http://www.nola.com/>)

About Us

About NOLA.com (<http://www.nola.com/aboutus/>)

Contact Us (<http://www.nola.com/contactus/>)

About NOLA Media Group (<http://www.nolamediagroup.com/>)

Connect with the Newsroom (<http://www.nola.com/connect/>)

Community Rules (<http://www.nola.com/forums/index.of>)

Log In For Us (<http://www.nola.com/contactus/blogs/>)

Content Partners (<http://www.nola.com/affiliates/>)

Submit a Correction (<http://blog.nola.com/corrections/index.html>)

Advertise with us (<http://www.nolamediagroup.com/solutions/>)

The Times-Picayune

Subscribe (https://notpiservices.dticloud.com/cgi-bin/cmo_cmo.sh/custservice/web/addrfind.html)

TP electronic edition (<http://neworleansimespicayune.la.net/>)

eNewsletters (<http://www.nola.com/newsletters/>)

NOLA.com Sections

News (http://www.nola.com/news/)	Jobs (http://www.nola.com/jobs/)
Business (http://www.nola.com/business/)	Autos (http://autos.nola.com/)
Sports (http://www.nola.com/sports/)	Real Estate (http://realestate.nola.com/)
High School Sports (http://highschoolsports.nola.com/)	Rentals (http://realestate.nola.com/for-rent/)
Entertainment (http://www.nola.com/entertainment/)	Classifieds (http://classifieds.nola.com/)
Living (http://www.nola.com/living/)	Legal Deals (http://findsave.nola.com/)
Opinion (http://www.nola.com/opinion/)	Businesses (http://businessfinder.nola.com/LA-Map/)
Obituaries (http://obits.nola.com/NOLObituaries.asp)	

More on NOLA.com

MardiGras.com (<http://www.mardigras.com/>)

Post a free classified ad (<http://www.nola.com/placead/>)

Forums (<http://www.nola.com/forums/>)

Sell your car (<http://www.nola.com/placead/your-photos/>)

Your Photos (<http://photos.nola.com/placead/>)

Sell/Rent your home (<http://videos.nola.com/>)

Your Video (<http://realestate.nola.com/for-rent/>)

Apartment and Rentals (<http://www.nola.com/siteinfo/>)

Weather (<http://www.nola.com/siteinfo/>)

Map (<http://www.nola.com/siteinfo/>)

Post a job (<http://www.nola.com/jobs/>)

What's Hot! (<http://www.nola.com/live/>)

Your Regional News Pages

New Orleans	Northshore/St. Tammany
-------------	------------------------

Follow Us

Breaking news text alerts (<http://www.nola.com/text/>) | <http://www.nola.com/new-orleans/> | <http://www.nola.com/northshore/> | [Twitter \(http://www.twitter.com/nolanews\)](http://www.twitter.com/nolanews) |
Report a wet or missing paper (https://notiservices.dtic.gov/learn/cgi-bin/cmo_cmo.spl?user=niece/web/login.html) | [Facebook \(http://www.facebook.com/nolanews\)](https://www.facebook.com/nolanews)
Make a payment, manage your account (https://notiservices.beirland.com/cgi-bin/cmo_cmo.spl?user=niece/web/login.html) | [Google+](https://www.google.com/+nolanews/)
RSS (http://blog.nola.com/nola_river/atom.xml) | <https://plus.google.com/105883288752706320720>
Times-Picayune Store (<http://www.nola.com/tpstore>)
East Jefferson (<http://www.nola.com/river-parishes/>)
Baton Rouge (<http://www.nola.com/east-jefferson/>)
West Bank (<http://www.nola.com/baton-rouge/>)
West Bank (<http://www.nola.com/west-bank/>)

Mobile

Mobile Apps (<http://www.nola.com/mobile-device/index.ssf/applications>) | Mobile FAQ (<http://www.nola.com/mobile-device/index.ssf/faq>)

(<http://www.advancedigital.com/>)

Registration on or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement (<http://www.nola.com/useragreement/>) and Privacy Policy (<http://www.nola.com/privacypolicy/>)

© 2015 NOLA Media Group. All rights reserved (About Us (<http://www.nola.com/aboutus/>)).

The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of NOLA Media Group.

Community Rules (<http://www.nola.com/forums/index.ssf?rules.html>) **apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site.** Contact interactivity management. (<http://www.nola.com/contactus/interactivity.ssf>)

[▶ Ad Choices \(http://www.advance.net/advancedigitalUserAgreementPP/#opt_out\)](http://www.advance.net/advancedigitalUserAgreementPP/#opt_out)