



Report Highlights

Jeanerette City Marshal

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Why We Conducted This Audit

In August 2021, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor (LLA) received a complaint alleging Marshal Fernest Martin sent Jeanerette City Marshal's Office (JCMO) deputies to work private security details in Texas in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, and that those deputies were paid both their regular salaries and for working the private security details for the same time period. LLA initiated this audit to determine the validity of the complaint.

What We Found

Marshal's Office Paid Deputy Marshals Their Regular Wages/Salaries While They Were Working Private Off-Duty Security Details

Records and statements obtained from third parties with knowledge of the JCMO show that Marshal Martin instructed employees to work private security details in Texas and Lake Charles, Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. From August 30, 2017 to September 26, 2017, the full-time employees who worked private security details were paid their regular wages/salaries, totaling \$10,925, without taking leave; used JCMO vehicles to travel to and from these details; and used JCMO fuel cards to purchase fuel totaling \$1,790. In addition, it appears that Marshal Martin previously loaned money to the private security company's representative, who offered to repay the loan with proceeds from the security details JCMO employees worked in Texas and Lake Charles, Louisiana. By allowing JCMO employees and resources to be used for private security details and entering into a transaction with the security company's representative, Marshal Martin may have violated state law.

Marshal Received Improper Compensation

From January 2012 through June 2021, JCMO improperly paid Marshal Martin \$119,639 in overtime and auto allowance payments. State law prohibits a city marshal from using his office's funds to fix or supplement his own salary. By using JCMO funds to supplement his salary, Marshal Martin may have violated state law.

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What We Found (Cont.)

Possible Dual Office Holding and Dual Employment

From August 7, 2017 to February 24, 2020, Marshal Martin simultaneously held positions as the elected Jeanerette City Marshal, the appointed police chief for the City of Jeanerette (City), and a full-time employee of the Iberia Parish School Board. State law prohibits an elected official from holding a full-time appointed position in a political subdivision. State law further prohibits a person holding a full-time appointed position in a political subdivision from holding other full-time employment in a political subdivision. Because Marshal Martin appears to have worked full-time as the appointed chief of police for the City, he may have violated state dual employment laws by simultaneously holding an elected office and full-time employment in a political subdivision.

Improper Christmas Bonuses

From December 2013 through November 2018, JCMO improperly paid Christmas bonuses totaling \$19,450 to employees, including \$4,400 to Marshal Martin. The payment of Christmas bonuses may have violated the Louisiana Constitution, which prohibits the donation of public funds, and state law.

Marshal Participated in Two Publicly-Funded Retirement Systems in Possible Violation of State Law

Since January 2009, Marshal Martin has participated in two publicly-funded retirement systems; the Teacher's Retirement System of Louisiana (TRSL) and the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana (MERS). The state laws that established MERS prohibit its members from participating in another publicly-funded retirement system. By participating in TRSL and MERS, Marshal Martin may have violated state law.