

**It's Time**



**Mayoral Platform:**

**NOLA Prosperity and Cultural Preservation Plan**

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**Independent Mayoral Candidate for New Orleans 2025**

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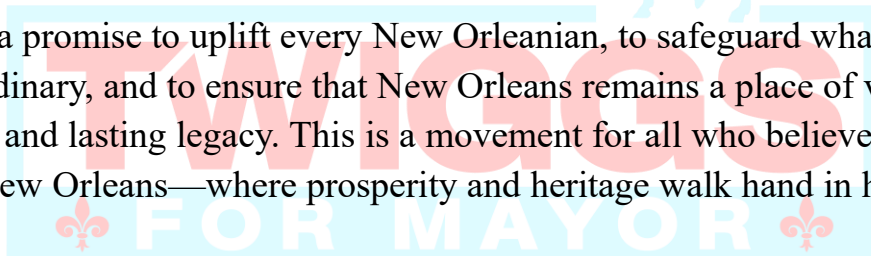
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**Abstract:**

Our campaign, *NOLA's Prosperity and Cultural Preservation Plan*, envisions a future where New Orleans thrives through bold leadership, economic innovation, and a deep respect for the city's rich cultural heritage. We are committed to building a more prosperous and inclusive New Orleans by creating jobs, raising wages, modernizing infrastructure, and embracing new technologies. Our focus on mental and medical health reform ensures that all residents have access to the care they need, while our commitment to transparency and accountability aims to restore trust in city governance.

At the heart of our vision lies a dedication to preserving New Orleans' unique cultural identity, with special attention to the diverse communities that created our city. By protecting sacred lands, historic buildings, and the diverse traditions that make New Orleans a beacon of culture, we strive to create a city where every story is honored and every community has the opportunity to thrive.

Our plan is a promise to uplift every New Orleanian, to safeguard what makes this city extraordinary, and to ensure that New Orleans remains a place of vibrant opportunity and lasting legacy. This is a movement for all who believe in a brighter future for New Orleans—where prosperity and heritage walk hand in hand.



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## **Section 1: Education Reform and Mayoral Takeover**

### **The Problem:**

The future of New Orleans is directly tied to the success of its education system, which faces significant challenges. Despite efforts following Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans' educational outcomes remain among the lowest in the nation.

Louisiana ranks 48th out of 50 states in overall educational performance, and New Orleans has struggled with standardized test performance. The city's average ACT scores lag behind the national average, with only 18% of students meeting college readiness benchmarks in math and science, compared to the national rate of 37%. Graduation rates in New Orleans, although improving, are still below the national average of 85%, hovering around 73%. Many schools in the city receive low performance ratings, with only 10% of students attending schools rated "A" or "B" by state accountability systems. Furthermore, the teacher shortage crisis exacerbates these issues, as New Orleans faces a 30% higher turnover rate than the national average, with 40% of teachers in their first three years, leading to a lack of experienced educators. Economic disparities further compound the problem, with schools in disadvantaged areas receiving 15% less funding per student, contributing to inequitable access to quality education. Additionally, nearly 60% of school facilities require significant repairs, and 35% of students lack access to adequate technology for digital learning. Addressing child hunger is also crucial, as more than 23% of children in the city are at risk of hunger, affecting their ability to focus and perform academically.

### **The Plan:**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will initiate a mayoral takeover

of the city's schools, implementing a cohesive strategy to address these deep-rooted challenges. A Chancellor of Education will be appointed to oversee all public schools, providing unified leadership and clear accountability. We will centralize funding and resource distribution to ensure that every school receives equitable support based on student needs and performance metrics. Engaging the community is key to this process; we will create advisory boards consisting of parents, teachers, and community leaders, ensuring transparency and local input. Performance-based evaluations will be implemented to identify struggling schools and replicate successful strategies citywide. A critical aspect of this plan includes increasing teacher salaries by at least 20% to attract and retain quality educators, alongside continuous professional development and support through strong union partnerships. New, inclusive curricula reflecting the rich history and diversity of New Orleans will be introduced, along with efforts to reduce student-to-teacher ratios for more personalized learning. After three years of stabilization, the electorate will decide whether to maintain the mayoral oversight or return control to a school board model.

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**The Economic Impact:**

This plan requires a proposed additional budget allocation of \$200 million, bringing the total education budget to \$450 million. This investment will transform the educational landscape of New Orleans, with \$100 million directed toward raising teacher salaries and enhancing professional development. This increase is crucial not only for retaining talented educators but also for attracting new, experienced teachers to the city, thereby stabilizing classrooms and improving student outcomes. Another \$50 million will be allocated for curriculum development and resources, ensuring that the education provided reflects both the

unique cultural heritage of New Orleans and modern, competitive academic standards. Infrastructure and technological upgrades will require \$30 million, aimed at repairing aging facilities and ensuring that all students have access to digital learning tools. Finally, \$20 million will support student services, including mental health resources and school meal programs to combat food insecurity. By partnering with organizations like Feeding Louisiana, we will ensure that no child goes hungry, directly improving their ability to learn and thrive.

Investing in education is an investment in the city's economic future. By increasing the quality of education, we equip our youth with the skills they need to succeed, ultimately reducing crime rates and dependency on social services. Additionally, an improved education system attracts businesses and families to New Orleans, bolstering the local economy and increasing property values. A robust education system is foundational to a thriving community, and through this plan, New Orleans will be positioned not only to catch up with but to surpass national education benchmarks, making the city a model for transformative education reform.

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**Additional Plans:**

**The Structure of the Mayoral Takeover**

**What the Mayoral Takeover Will Look Like:**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, the mayoral takeover of the city's schools will be a structured, transparent process aimed at achieving systemic reform while respecting community input and balancing existing governance. This approach will involve a three-phase plan, ensuring that New Orleans' schools receive the support they need while maintaining accountability and oversight throughout the transition.

**Phase 1: Transition and Integration (Year 1)**

During the first year, the transition process will focus on integrating the leadership of the education system under a unified vision. A Chancellor of Education, appointed by the Mayor, will assume oversight of all public schools in New Orleans. This role will centralize decision-making, ensuring consistent policies and standards across all schools, with a focus on equitable distribution of resources.

During this phase, current elected school board officials will transition into advisory roles, becoming part of a newly established advisory board. This board will be tasked with providing insights, feedback, and historical context to guide the Chancellor and the Mayor's office. Their knowledge and community ties will be leveraged to ensure that the transition is smooth and respects the voices of all stakeholders.

**Phase 2: Reform and Stabilization (Years 2-3)**

The second phase will focus on implementing targeted reforms and stabilizing the

education system. Key initiatives during this period include increasing teacher salaries by at least 20%, updating the curriculum, reducing student-to-teacher ratios, and improving school facilities. Data-driven evaluations will guide resource allocation, ensuring that schools in the most need receive additional support. The focus will be on providing extra resources, such as tutoring, mentorship programs, and specialized support for underperforming schools. During this period, the Chancellor will also work closely with community leaders and parents through regular town hall meetings, creating opportunities for direct feedback and ensuring transparency in decision-making.

### **Phase 3: Review and Electorate Decision (End of Year 3)**

At the end of the third year, the electorate will have a choice. They can either vote to continue with the Mayor's office overseeing the schools or return control to an elected school board. This decision ensures that the community has a voice in the long-term governance of their schools. If the majority vote supports returning to a school board model, elections for new board members will be held, informed by the progress made during the mayoral oversight. However, if the vote supports continued mayoral leadership, the existing structure will remain in place, with regular reviews to maintain accountability.

### **Addressing Unanswered Questions:**

#### **1. What Will Happen to the Current Elected School Board Members?**

Current school board members will not be removed outright. Instead, they will be transitioned into advisory roles on a board that provides essential feedback and historical context. Their expertise will be invaluable during the initial transition, helping to maintain continuity and community trust. This



collaborative approach ensures that the knowledge and community connections of these individuals are not lost but rather integrated into the reform process.

**2. How Will This Takeover Ensure Accountability?**

Transparency and community involvement are central to the takeover plan. By establishing advisory boards with parental, teacher, and community leader representation, we ensure local input remains a key part of decision-making. Additionally, regular public reports on school performance, financial allocations, and progress toward reform goals will be released, giving the community visibility into the impact of the changes being made.

**3. What Guarantees Are There for Improved Student Outcomes?**

The takeover plan is rooted in evidence-based practices that have worked in other cities facing similar challenges. For example, cities like New York and Chicago have seen improvements in school performance after mayoral takeovers, with better resource allocation and a stronger focus on equity. By raising teacher salaries, reducing class sizes, and investing in modernized curricula, we directly address the root causes of underperformance. Continuous evaluations and adjustments ensure that strategies remain effective and adapt to the needs of students.

**4. Why Is This Plan Better Than the Current System?**

The existing system has struggled to address the systemic challenges of underfunding, teacher turnover, and uneven resource allocation. The mayoral takeover introduces unified leadership, streamlines funding, and focuses resources where they are most needed. By consolidating leadership under the Mayor's office, we eliminate bureaucratic delays and ensure swift action to address critical issues like infrastructure, teacher support, and student

services. Ultimately, this plan empowers the Mayor to be directly accountable to voters for the success or failure of education reform, creating a clearer line of responsibility.

#### 5. **What Happens if the Plan Does Not Show Progress?**

Built into the plan is a three-year timeline for assessment, during which measurable outcomes will be tracked, including test scores, graduation rates, and teacher retention. If the plan does not achieve the anticipated progress, the community has the opportunity to vote for a return to a school board model. This ensures that if the mayoral approach does not deliver results, the community retains the right to change course. Additionally, during the implementation phase, adjustments will be made as needed based on feedback and data, ensuring that we remain adaptable in addressing unforeseen challenges.

The goal of the mayoral takeover is to create a more effective, transparent, and accountable education system that serves all of New Orleans' students, regardless of their background. By combining community involvement with a clear vision for progress, we can transform our schools into a model for success, giving every child in New Orleans the opportunity to thrive.

Further Support for the takeover:

Here are key points from the 2016 Stanford study (*Whose Choice? Student Experiences and Outcomes in the New Orleans School Marketplace*) on student experiences in New Orleans:

- **Youth Disconnection:** A new report by Measure of America, a project of the Social Science Research Council, found that over 26,000 people in the New

Orleans metropolitan area between the ages of 16 and 24 are considered "disconnected," meaning they are neither working nor enrolled in school.

- **Barriers to School Engagement:** Many students in New Orleans face barriers such as economic hardship, trauma, and lack of access to supportive services, which contribute to disengagement from school and increased dropout rates.
- **Impact of Disconnection:** Disconnected youth are at a higher risk of becoming involved in crime, substance abuse, and experiencing long-term unemployment. The lack of educational engagement is a critical factor in the perpetuation of poverty and economic instability.
- **Educational Gaps:** The report highlights significant gaps in the educational experiences of students, with disparities in access to quality education and support services between different neighborhoods in New Orleans.
- **Need for Early Intervention:** Early childhood education and programs that support school readiness are critical for reducing the rate of youth disconnection. Investing in these areas can help break the cycle of disengagement and set young people on a path to success.
- **Failure of Charter Schools:** The Stanford study examined the shortcomings of the charter school system in New Orleans, highlighting that despite initial hopes for improved educational outcomes, many charter schools have failed to meet the needs of all students. The study found persistent issues with unequal access, inconsistent quality, and a lack of support for the most vulnerable students, leading to a failure to deliver on the promises of the post-Katrina charter school experiment.

These points underscore the urgent need for comprehensive educational reform in New Orleans, including early intervention through programs like universal child care, to address the root causes of youth disconnection and promote long-term success for all students.



## Additional Plans (Cont.)

### Free School Lunches for All Children: A Holistic Approach to Childhood Nutrition

#### Overview:

Every child deserves access to nutritious meals, regardless of their background or the school they attend. My administration will ensure that **free school lunches** are provided to all students in **both private and public schools** throughout New Orleans. This initiative will be funded through a **tax on all items delivered by shipping entities** and bolstered by partnerships with local restaurants.

#### Funding Strategy

- **Delivery Tax:** We will introduce a small **tax on every item delivered by shipping entities** operating in New Orleans. This tax will be collected into a **School Nutrition Trust Fund** specifically designated for providing meals to school children. Based on shipping volumes, this could generate **\$10-15 million annually**, covering the cost of providing high-quality meals to students.
- **Adopt-a-School Program:** New Orleans is known for its **culinary excellence**. We will work with local restaurants to create an "**Adopt-a-School**" **initiative**, where eateries can contribute to providing nutritious and delicious meals to students. This approach leverages our strengths as a city and ensures that kids receive meals they enjoy while also meeting **nutritional standards**.

## Impact on Students and Families

- **Reducing Childhood Hunger:** More than **23% of children** in the greater New Orleans area are at risk of hunger. Providing free meals will ensure that no child has to go through the school day hungry, which has been proven to **improve academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being.**
- **Community Engagement:** By involving local businesses and creating a **city-wide initiative**, we foster a sense of community pride and responsibility in supporting our youth. Local chefs and restaurant owners will have the opportunity to contribute directly to the future of New Orleans by helping to nourish the next generation.



## **Section 2: Mental and Medical Health Reform**

### **The Problem:**

The mental and medical health landscape in New Orleans is marked by critical unmet needs and systemic challenges, which have a direct impact on the well-being of residents. Approximately 20% of New Orleans residents report unmet mental health needs—nearly double the national average of 11%. This gap in mental health services has resulted in a suicide rate that is 30% higher than the national average, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced support systems. Among adolescents, only 1 in 5 receives adequate mental health care, contributing to higher risks of academic failure and social challenges. The city's addiction crisis is further exacerbated by a rise in overdose deaths, with a 50% increase over the past five years. The proliferation of fentanyl has played a major role, with 95% of overdose deaths in 2023 linked to this deadly substance. Despite these pressing needs, New Orleans lacks sufficient addiction treatment capacity, offering only 10 beds per 100,000 residents—far below the recommended 30 beds per 100,000. Healthcare accessibility also remains a significant barrier for many in New Orleans. Around 25% of residents are uninsured, far higher than the national average of 8%. This disparity is even more pronounced in low-income neighborhoods, where residents are 50% more likely to experience challenges accessing healthcare, such as transportation and affordability issues. As a result, New Orleans ranks among the top cities for emergency room visits due to chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension, underscoring the lack of effective preventative care. The healthcare infrastructure in New Orleans is strained, with over 40% of facilities reporting critical staff shortages, including mental health professionals and primary care physicians. This shortage means residents often face an average wait time of three months to see a specialist, further delaying care

and exacerbating health outcomes. Chronic diseases are another major concern, with 14% of adults in New Orleans suffering from diabetes, 40% from high blood pressure, and an obesity rate of 35%. These factors contribute to a cycle of poor health outcomes that demands comprehensive intervention.

**The Plan:**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will prioritize the well-being of our community through a comprehensive reform that integrates mental and medical health services. This plan centers on the creation of a dedicated Mental Health Office within the New Orleans Health Department. This office will serve as a central hub for coordinating mental health initiatives, streamlining service delivery, and optimizing the use of resources. By leading policy development and fostering partnerships with local and state agencies, this office will elevate the standard of care across the city.

A major goal of this initiative is to expand mental health services by increasing the number of professionals in schools and community centers by 50%, ensuring children and families receive timely support. To address gaps in accessibility, mobile mental health units will be deployed to underserved areas, providing on-demand counseling and crisis intervention. Recognizing the unique challenges faced by adolescents, we will develop comprehensive support programs in schools, including peer mentoring and family counseling. Additionally, we will expand addiction treatment capacity by 100 beds, providing more opportunities for residents to access the care they need to overcome substance use disorders.

Integrating mental health services with police and human services is crucial for addressing mental health emergencies more effectively. We will establish



specialized Crisis Intervention Teams within the police department to prioritize de-escalation and connect individuals in crisis to appropriate support. This collaboration will ensure that those facing mental health challenges receive care rather than incarceration. Partnerships with social services will provide holistic support for individuals with complex needs, combining mental health care, housing assistance, and employment support.

The plan also emphasizes preventative care and community health initiatives, including screenings, vaccinations, and workshops focused on managing chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. By launching public health campaigns, we will reduce the stigma associated with mental health, encourage early intervention, and promote healthier lifestyles. Expanding access to telehealth services will ensure that residents can access care regardless of transportation barriers, while sliding scale clinics in low-income neighborhoods will provide affordable healthcare options. To bolster our healthcare workforce, we will introduce incentives and loan forgiveness programs to attract and retain critical staff, ensuring that New Orleans has the capacity to meet the needs of its residents.

### **The Economic Impact:**

The proposed reforms will require an additional budget allocation of \$150 million, bringing the total Health and Human Services budget to \$350 million. This investment is a critical step towards creating a healthier and more resilient New Orleans, with tangible benefits for residents and the city's economic future. Of the \$150 million, \$70 million will be dedicated to expanding mental health services, including increased staffing, mobile units, and school-based support. This investment will help address the mental health crisis by providing timely and accessible care, reducing the strain on emergency services and the criminal justice

system. Another \$30 million will support addiction treatment expansion and adolescent mental health programs, providing much-needed capacity to address the growing substance use crisis and support youth in need.

Integration with police and human services will receive \$20 million, focusing on building specialized Crisis Intervention Teams and fostering collaborative care approaches. This will not only improve outcomes for individuals in crisis but also reduce the burden on police resources, leading to long-term savings for the city. An additional \$30 million will support preventative care initiatives, including public health campaigns and chronic disease management programs. By promoting early intervention and healthier lifestyles, we will reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations, ultimately lowering healthcare costs over time.

Investing in the health of New Orleans' residents is an investment in the city's future prosperity. A healthier population is more productive, capable of contributing to the economy, and less reliant on emergency services. By addressing the root causes of health disparities and expanding access to care, we can reduce healthcare costs, improve quality of life, and build a more resilient community. The proposed reforms not only address immediate needs but lay the groundwork for a sustainable healthcare system that serves every resident of New Orleans, regardless of their background or income. This plan will make New Orleans a model for holistic, community-centered healthcare, ensuring that our city thrives for generations to come.

#### **Additional Plans:**

## **Transforming Mental Health Care in New Orleans: The Creation of a State-of-the-Art Behavioral Health Hospital**

New Orleans faces a profound and escalating mental health crisis. Untreated mental illness is driving up crime rates, exacerbating homelessness, straining families, and overwhelming healthcare systems. While the city has a rich history and vibrant culture, it lacks a comprehensive and accessible mental health infrastructure to serve its diverse population. The creation of a **state-of-the-art behavioral health hospital** will address these issues head-on, offering a full spectrum of care to children, adults, veterans, and individuals struggling with addiction. This hospital will be a cornerstone of mental health reform, making New Orleans a national leader in behavioral health care, research, and innovation.

### **Vision for the Behavioral Health Hospital**

This **multi-wing facility** will be designed to meet the needs of multiple populations, ensuring specialized care for adolescents, adults, veterans, and those battling addiction. The hospital will not only focus on treatment but also serve as a hub for mental health research, working closely with universities and private-sector partners to develop cutting-edge care models. By leveraging these partnerships, the hospital will set a new standard for mental health care in the United States, providing comprehensive services that address the unique challenges faced by different demographics.

### **Components of the Hospital:**

1. **Inpatient Adolescent Hospital Wing:** Focusing on early intervention and treatment for mental health disorders in adolescents.
2. **Addiction Rehab Wings:** Offering gender-specific rehab programs for men, women, and children.
3. **Adult Mental Health Hospital Unit:** Providing care for adults suffering from severe mental illnesses, with a focus on crisis stabilization and co-occurring disorders.
4. **Outpatient Behavioral Health Services:** Long-term outpatient care for men, women, and children, ensuring continuity of care after hospitalization.
5. **Veteran's Mental Health Wing:** Tailored services for veterans struggling with PTSD, depression, and substance abuse.
6. **Research Division Wing:** Partnering with local universities to drive innovation in mental health treatments and care models.
7. **At-Risk Youth Wing:** Specialized programs for at-risk youth, focusing on preventing criminal behavior and providing support for trauma and neglect.

By addressing the full spectrum of mental health needs, this hospital will not only serve the residents of New Orleans but also set an example for cities across the nation.

### **The Urgent Need for a Behavioral Health Hospital in New Orleans**

New Orleans is currently at the epicenter of a mental health crisis that affects every demographic. From adolescents to veterans, the need for mental health services is greater than ever before. Yet, the current infrastructure is insufficient, leaving many

residents without access to the care they need. Below is a breakdown of the pressing issues facing different populations in New Orleans and how this hospital will meet those needs.

### **Addressing the Mental Health Crisis Among Children and Adolescents**

Mental health challenges often begin in childhood or adolescence. However, without timely intervention, these issues can persist into adulthood, causing lifelong difficulties. According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, 1 in 5 children in the United States has a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder, but only about 20% of those children receive the specialized care they need. This gap is particularly significant in New Orleans, where poverty, trauma, and systemic inequities exacerbate mental health problems in young people.

- **Statistics Highlighting the Need:**
  - The **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)** reports that there are only 8,300 practicing child and adolescent psychiatrists in the U.S., which equates to roughly 1 psychiatrist for every 3,800 children with a mental health condition. Louisiana is one of the states with the fewest child psychiatrists per capita, meaning many children in New Orleans are left without adequate mental health care.
  - According to **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)**, half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and 75% by age 24. Early intervention can prevent the progression of these disorders, yet most children do not receive the treatment they need.

### **Impact of the Inpatient Adolescent Wing:**

The **Inpatient Adolescent Wing** of the hospital will provide specialized psychiatric care for youth between the ages of 12 and 17. This facility will focus on treating common adolescent mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and trauma. Programs will include individual therapy, family counseling, and crisis intervention services, all aimed at stabilizing young people during acute mental health episodes. By offering early intervention, the hospital can prevent the long-term consequences of untreated mental illness, helping adolescents stay in school, maintain relationships, and avoid involvement in the juvenile justice system.

### **Impact of the At-Risk Youth Wing:**

New Orleans has a high population of at-risk youth who are exposed to violence, neglect, and trauma at a young age. These factors significantly increase the likelihood of mental health disorders and criminal behavior later in life. The **At-Risk Youth Wing** will focus on providing early intervention and long-term support to these vulnerable children. By offering trauma-informed care, mentorship programs, and educational support, this wing will help break the cycle of poverty and criminalization, giving young people a chance to succeed despite their circumstances.

### **Tackling the Mental Health Crisis Among Adults**

New Orleans faces a mental health crisis among its adult population, driven in part by the city's high rates of poverty, substance abuse, and trauma. The **Kaiser Family Foundation** (KFF) reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 4 in 10 adults in the U.S. experienced symptoms of anxiety or depression. In Louisiana, the mental health crisis has been exacerbated by a lack of access to care,

with many adults facing long wait times or prohibitive costs for mental health treatment.

- **Statistics Highlighting the Need:**

- Louisiana ranks 42nd in the country in terms of mental health care access, according to **Mental Health America (MHA)**. An estimated 18% of adults in the state suffer from mental illness, including conditions like depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder. Many of these individuals do not receive adequate care due to cost or lack of availability.
- The **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** reports that 1 in 25 adults in the U.S. experiences a serious mental illness (SMI), such as schizophrenia or major depression. Without proper treatment, these individuals are at higher risk for unemployment, homelessness, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

**Impact of the Adult Mental Health Unit:**

The hospital's **Adult Mental Health Unit** will provide comprehensive psychiatric care for adults experiencing severe mental illnesses, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder. This unit will offer both short-term crisis stabilization and long-term treatment options, ensuring that individuals receive continuous care even after being discharged. The hospital will also specialize in treating **co-occurring disorders**, such as addiction and mental illness, which are prevalent in New Orleans. By addressing both mental health and addiction, the hospital will help reduce the burden on emergency rooms, shelters, and law enforcement, while improving long-term outcomes for individuals in recovery.

## Supporting Veterans with Mental Health Challenges

Veterans in New Orleans face unique mental health challenges, including high rates of **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, depression, and substance abuse. According to the **U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)**, veterans are at a higher risk for suicide than the general population, with an estimated 17 veterans dying by suicide every day in the United States. Many veterans in New Orleans struggle to access the specialized care they need, particularly those who are homeless or unemployed.

- **Statistics Highlighting the Need:**

- Approximately 50% of homeless veterans in the U.S. suffer from mental illness, according to the **National Coalition for Homeless Veterans**. Many of these veterans also have co-occurring substance use disorders, which complicates their treatment and increases their risk of homelessness.
- Veterans with PTSD are significantly more likely to develop additional mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, according to the **VA**. Without proper treatment, these conditions can lead to unemployment, homelessness, and a high risk of suicide.

### **Impact of the Veteran's Mental Health Wing:**

The **Veteran's Mental Health Wing** will be dedicated to providing specialized care for veterans suffering from PTSD, depression, and substance abuse. This wing will offer trauma-informed therapy, group counseling with fellow veterans, and addiction recovery programs tailored to the unique needs of military personnel. By offering these services in a safe and supportive environment, the hospital will help



veterans reintegrate into civilian life, secure employment, and reconnect with their families. The goal is to reduce veteran homelessness, improve mental health outcomes, and lower the suicide rate among veterans in New Orleans.

### **Combatting the Opioid Epidemic and Addiction Crisis**

Addiction is another major public health crisis facing New Orleans. The **Louisiana Department of Health** has reported a dramatic increase in opioid-related deaths, with fentanyl now contributing to a significant portion of overdose deaths in the state. The opioid crisis, combined with high rates of alcohol addiction, has devastated communities and placed a significant strain on public health resources.

- **Statistics Highlighting the Need:**
  - In 2020, Louisiana saw a **53% increase in opioid-related deaths**, according to the **CDC**. The state's overdose rate is higher than the national average, with fentanyl accounting for a growing number of fatalities.
  - The **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)** reports that nearly 15 million adults in the U.S. suffer from alcohol use disorder. Many of these individuals also suffer from mental health conditions, making treatment more complex and necessary.

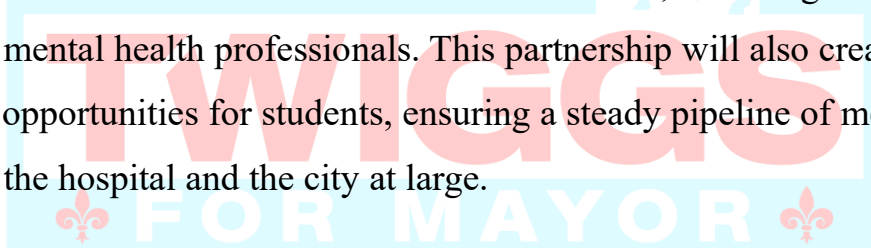
### **Impact of the Addiction Rehab Wings:**

The hospital will feature separate **Addiction Rehab Wings** for men, women, and children, ensuring that each group receives the care they need in a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed setting. These wings will provide a full spectrum of addiction recovery services, including detoxification, inpatient rehabilitation, and long-term

outpatient support. By offering comprehensive addiction treatment, the hospital will help individuals regain control of their lives, reduce the social costs of addiction, and lower the city's overdose rate.

### **Leveraging Private Sector and University Partnerships**

The success of this hospital will rely on a **public-private partnership** model, with funding and operational support from the private sector, universities, and the City of New Orleans. By collaborating with institutions like **University of New Orleans, Southern University of New Orleans, Louisiana State University, Loyola University, Tulane University** and **Xavier University**, the hospital will serve as a hub for mental health research and innovation, attracting federal grants and top-tier mental health professionals. This partnership will also create educational opportunities for students, ensuring a steady pipeline of mental health workers for the hospital and the city at large.



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### **Long-Term Social and Economic Benefits**

The creation of this hospital will have a **ripple effect** across multiple sectors, driving long-term improvements in public health, education, economic productivity, and social equity.

- **Decreased Homelessness:** Many individuals experiencing homelessness suffer from untreated mental health issues or addiction. By providing comprehensive care, the hospital will reduce homelessness, easing the strain on shelters and public services.

- **Reduction in Crime:** By addressing the root causes of crime—untreated mental illness and addiction—the hospital will help reduce crime rates in New Orleans, particularly among at-risk youth and adults with co-occurring disorders.
- **Economic Growth:** The hospital will create over **2,000 jobs**, boosting the local economy. Additionally, by improving the mental health of the workforce, the hospital will increase productivity and reduce absenteeism.
- **Building a Healthier Community:** Mental health care has a profound impact on families, neighborhoods, and communities. The hospital will help foster a healthier, more resilient community, improving quality of life for all residents.

### **Conclusion: A National Model for Mental Health Care**

The creation of this state-of-the-art behavioral health hospital will position New Orleans as a **national leader in mental health care**. By offering specialized services for children, adults, veterans, and individuals battling addiction, the hospital will address the city’s most pressing health challenges while driving innovation and research in the mental health field. This facility will not only improve the lives of thousands of New Orleans residents but also set a new standard for mental health care across the United States.

**Additional Plan:**

**Addressing Homelessness in New Orleans: A Comprehensive and Compassionate Plan**

Homelessness in New Orleans has reached a crisis level, impacting public health, safety, and community integrity. According to a **2023 report by Unity of Greater New Orleans**, over **1,200 individuals** experience homelessness on any given night, with local shelters only able to accommodate about 50% of those in need. Factors including **rising housing costs, post-pandemic economic struggles, substance abuse, and mental health challenges** have created a situation that the current city infrastructure cannot support effectively.

The recent sweep ordered by **Governor Jeff Landry** ahead of the Swift concert series has only highlighted these systemic failures, as temporary measures do not provide the stability and security unhoused people need. Furthermore, New Orleans' City Council and Mayor's Office have repeatedly failed to establish cohesive, long-term solutions, with political delays often preventing effective action. Our campaign is dedicated to creating a **comprehensive, dignified plan** to address homelessness, combining emergency support with long-term initiatives that treat homelessness as a public health and social crisis. This plan focuses on **four pillars**: Emergency Shelter, Supportive Housing, Health Services, and Economic Empowerment.

**The Problem: Key Statistics and Current State of Homelessness in New Orleans**

- **Lack of Shelter Capacity:** Unity of Greater New Orleans reports that the city's shelters fall short by approximately 600 beds each night. Many are

forced into unsafe encampments, where they're vulnerable to extreme weather, violence, and health issues.

- **Rise in Unhoused Population Post-Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in higher rates of eviction and job loss, with a 25% increase in homelessness across New Orleans since 2020. The city's inadequate response has left hundreds without access to stable housing, creating a cycle of insecurity that has been difficult to break.
- **Insufficient Mental Health and Addiction Services:** According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 33% of unhoused people have untreated mental health disorders, and 50% struggle with substance abuse. Without access to healthcare and recovery services, these individuals remain trapped in conditions that prevent stability and reintegration into society.
- **High Rental Costs:** Since the pandemic, rents in New Orleans have increased by 12%, with the median rent now at \$1,250, which is unaffordable for the city's low-income population. The availability of affordable housing units has decreased, leaving those who lose their jobs or face sudden financial hardship at serious risk of homelessness.

### **Our Solution: A Four-Pillar Approach to Ending Homelessness**

To address homelessness comprehensively, our plan targets both immediate needs and the root causes of homelessness through **Emergency Shelter, Supportive Housing, Comprehensive Health Services, and Economic Empowerment**. This is not just a temporary fix but a **transformative solution** designed to lift individuals out of homelessness and restore their dignity.

## 1. Emergency Shelter and Safe Spaces

Immediate shelter is critical to reducing homelessness. We propose creating an **expanded emergency shelter system** in partnership with local nonprofits and businesses to address capacity issues.

- **Increased Capacity:** By securing funding from federal housing grants and reallocating city resources, we will expand shelters with 700 additional beds, prioritizing the most vulnerable populations.
- **Safe Spaces:** Recognizing the need for secure environments, we will designate specific safe spaces for families, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with mental health issues. These spaces will include on-site medical and social services, addressing the unique needs of vulnerable groups.
- **Partnership with Faith and Community Organizations:** By leveraging community partnerships, we can create overflow systems, ensuring that no individual has to sleep unsheltered.

## 2. Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) has proven effective nationwide in reducing chronic homelessness by providing individuals with stable housing and support services. Our model, inspired by the **Housing First** approach, eliminates barriers like sobriety or employment requirements, offering stability first and addressing other needs afterward.

- **Housing First Model:** Under this approach, unhoused individuals are placed in permanent housing without preconditions. This model, successful in **Salt Lake City** and **Houston**, has significantly reduced homelessness by giving people a stable foundation.

- **Utilization of Federal Housing Vouchers:** New Orleans has left critical federal resources underutilized. Our administration will streamline the process to ensure that housing vouchers are accessed, efficiently distributed, and do not languish due to bureaucratic delays.
- **Public-Private Partnerships for Affordable Housing:** With incentives such as tax credits, we will encourage developers to build affordable housing units, using successful precedents from cities like **Denver**. These units will be tailored to low-income residents and linked to supportive services, filling a crucial gap in the housing market.

### 3. Comprehensive Health Services

Addressing mental health and addiction is essential in any homelessness solution, as untreated health issues frequently lead to chronic homelessness. New Orleans' current mental health infrastructure is overwhelmed, resulting in long wait times and limited access to support.

- **Behavioral Health Hospital:** We will establish a dedicated behavioral health hospital with separate wings for mental health services, addiction recovery, and outpatient care. This hospital will become a hub for mental health support, with professionals available to assist both within the facility and via outreach.
- **On-Site Services in Shelters:** Each emergency shelter will include healthcare and social services, allowing unhoused individuals access to primary care, psychiatric support, and addiction recovery. Studies from **New York City's integrated shelter health services** show improved outcomes when medical and social services are part of shelter programs.

- **Mobile Health Units:** For those who cannot or do not wish to enter shelters, mobile health units will provide essential healthcare services directly within communities, helping to address urgent health needs and offer follow-up support.

#### 4. Economic Empowerment and Job Training

Economic instability and job loss are primary drivers of homelessness. A comprehensive plan must include pathways to financial independence through vocational training and job placement.

- **Vocational Training and Job Placement:** We will work with local businesses, trade unions, and educational institutions to offer training programs in fields such as culinary arts, construction, and health services. Cities like **San Diego** have seen positive outcomes through job training programs specifically designed for the unhoused, reducing recidivism rates and providing long-term stability.
- **Employer Incentives:** Businesses that employ individuals who have transitioned from homelessness will receive tax credits and grants. Additionally, we will incentivize social enterprises that hire the formerly homeless, creating a self-sustaining system that promotes both economic empowerment and social responsibility.
- **Guaranteed Public Works Positions:** Those unable to find work in the private sector will be guaranteed positions in city public works programs, enhancing city services while offering stability and growth for those who need it most.



## Overcoming the Failures of Past Approaches

New Orleans has struggled with piecemeal and inconsistent approaches to homelessness. Recent high-profile actions, such as Governor Landry’s sweep of homeless encampments, reflect a preference for quick fixes over long-term solutions. These measures are not only ineffective but exacerbate the instability of already vulnerable populations. Our administration will remove the **political red tape** that has delayed access to federal and state resources and implement **strict accountability measures** to ensure that every dollar allocated reaches the intended community.

## Vision: A Compassionate New Orleans

Homelessness is not merely a logistical challenge—it is a moral and social issue that reflects the health of our society. As **James Baldwin** once noted, *“Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor.”* Solving homelessness is more than providing shelter; it is about restoring dignity, creating opportunity, and ensuring every resident can contribute to our community. By implementing this comprehensive plan, New Orleans will become a model for other cities, demonstrating that solutions grounded in compassion and efficiency can bring about real, lasting change.

Our administration is committed to doing better, to creating a **New Orleans that supports every resident**, and to making homelessness a **thing of the past**.

**Additional Plan:**

**Platform to Combat Obesity, Heart Disease, and Cancer in New Orleans**

New Orleans faces a major public health challenge, with high rates of **obesity**, **heart disease**, and **cancer** driven by dietary habits, smoking, and limited health education. Louisiana’s obesity rate stands at **39% among adults** and **over 23% among children**, while heart disease is the **leading cause of death**, and cancer rates are among the highest in the nation. These health concerns require a proactive, **education-based approach** that empowers residents without infringing on personal autonomy.

Our campaign is dedicated to promoting health through **medical education**—targeting early childhood, schools, and healthcare settings to foster informed choices and instill lifelong healthy habits.

**The Scope of the Problem**

- **High Obesity and Health Risks:** Rising obesity rates correlate with increased cases of diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. The CDC reports that Louisiana has one of the nation’s highest adult obesity rates, directly impacting quality of life and longevity.
- **Rising Housing and Financial Strain:** Many low-income families face high food insecurity, turning to affordable, high-calorie foods lacking nutritional value. According to the American Heart Association, poor diets increase cancer risk by up to **30%**.
- **Smoking and Alcohol Use as Compounding Factors:** According to the **American Cancer Society**, diets high in sugar and processed foods are

linked to higher cancer rates, with risks amplified by smoking and excessive drinking.

## **Key Initiatives for a Healthier New Orleans**

### **1. Expanding Medical Education in Healthcare Settings**

We will collaborate with healthcare providers to increase awareness of the **link between diet and chronic disease**, providing patients with resources to make healthier lifestyle choices.

- **Preventive Care Education:** Physicians, nurses, and dietitians will offer dietary guidance during check-ups, highlighting how processed foods, sugar, and high-fat diets can increase health risks.
- **Informational Materials:** Clinics and hospitals will provide materials covering “The Effects of Sugar and Cancer Risk,” “Diet and Mental Health,” and “Whole Foods for Wellness,” empowering patients with information.
- **Training for Health Professionals:** We will implement training for providers on communicating lifestyle impacts effectively to patients. Similar programs in **Philadelphia** and **San Francisco** have improved health literacy and patient outcomes.

### **2. School-Based Health Education**

To establish healthy habits from a young age, our educational programs will target children in **elementary, middle, and high school**.

- **Early Childhood Health Curriculum:** Schools will introduce age-appropriate lessons on healthy eating, the effects of sugary beverages, and the dangers of excessive salt and fat, reinforcing these lessons throughout students' education.

- **Nutrition and Cooking Classes:** Partnering with local chefs and nutritionists, we will provide healthy cooking demos and nutrition education that inspire students to choose nutrient-dense foods. **California’s school-based nutrition program** saw increased fruit and vegetable consumption by integrating similar initiatives.
- **Mental Health Integration:** Poor diets can impact mental health, contributing to stress and depression. School programs will explain how diet affects mental well-being, helping students recognize the connection between their eating habits and their emotional state.

### 3. Community Outreach and Public Health Campaigns

Education efforts will extend to the broader New Orleans community, increasing awareness of the risks linked to poor diet, smoking, and alcohol use.

- **Public Health Campaigns:** Through community ads, flyers, and workshops, we’ll share information on diet-related health risks and promote actionable changes. The American Heart Association notes that targeted campaigns can help reduce poor dietary habits.
- **Neighborhood Health Fairs:** Partnering with local organizations, we’ll host events offering free screenings, dietary consultations, and smoking cessation resources, prioritizing underserved communities.
- **Support Groups and Classes:** Community centers will provide classes on topics like heart-healthy cooking, managing sugar intake, and smoking cessation. Studies from **the CDC** indicate that community-based support improves health outcomes by offering ongoing guidance.

### 4. Leveraging Technology for Health Education

Technology provides an accessible and consistent way to educate residents on healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Mobile Health App:** A free app will provide personalized tips on nutrition, fitness, and health monitoring, as well as reminders for cancer screenings, local health resources, and articles on dietary impacts on health.
- **Digital and Social Media Campaigns:** Engaging content on social media will educate young adults and parents on healthy dietary choices, smoking risks, and alcohol's impact on health.

### Evidence-Based Policies and Programs

1. **Diet and Cancer:** Studies show links between processed foods, sugary drinks, and increased cancer risks, including WHO research classifying processed meats as carcinogenic. Our campaign will highlight this evidence, emphasizing a whole-food, low-sugar diet.
2. **Combined Risks of Smoking and Alcohol:** Combining poor diet with smoking or heavy drinking significantly increases health risks. According to the **American Cancer Society**, these factors worsen obesity-related diseases and cancer rates, underscoring the need for health education on multiple fronts.
3. **Successful Models in Other Cities:** Cities like **New York** and **Seattle** have introduced health-focused education campaigns, with initiatives like calorie labeling leading to reduced calorie consumption among residents. Research from **the CDC** shows that health literacy initiatives reduce chronic diseases, lower healthcare costs, and improve quality of life.

## Reducing Environmental Toxins in New Orleans

New Orleans faces serious health risks from environmental toxins like **lead, asbestos, mercury**, and industrial pollution. The city's aging infrastructure and proximity to heavy industry along the **Mississippi River** have led to elevated levels of toxins, disproportionately affecting low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Elevated lead levels in children, the presence of asbestos in older buildings, and mercury contamination from industrial emissions all contribute to a heightened risk of respiratory diseases, developmental delays, and cancers. Our platform aims to systematically reduce these risks through **education, policy reform, and targeted clean-up efforts.**

### The Scope of the Problem: Local Impact and Key Statistics

1. **Lead Exposure:** Nearly **20% of children** in some New Orleans neighborhoods have elevated lead levels, primarily from aging lead service lines and lead paint. According to the **CDC**, lead poisoning can lead to serious health issues, particularly in children, including developmental delays, learning disabilities, and lower IQ scores.
2. **Asbestos in Buildings:** Many older buildings in New Orleans still contain asbestos. When disturbed, such as during renovations, asbestos fibers can become airborne and inhaled, increasing the risk of lung diseases and cancers. Studies show that areas heavily impacted by hurricanes and flooding are at higher risk of asbestos exposure due to building damage.
3. **Mercury and Industrial Pollutants:** Industrial activity along the Mississippi River has left certain areas of New Orleans with unsafe mercury levels. **The World Health Organization** reports that mercury exposure,

particularly in developing children and pregnant women, can harm the nervous system, immune system, and digestive health.

## **Key Initiatives for Reducing Environmental Toxins in New Orleans**

### **1. Comprehensive Lead Reduction Program**

Our lead reduction strategy will focus on **replacing lead service lines** and increasing community access to lead testing:

- **Lead Pipe Replacement:** Following successful models from cities like **Flint** and **Chicago**, we'll implement a phased replacement of lead service lines, prioritizing high-risk zones such as schools, playgrounds, and older residential areas. This program will seek funding from federal grants and public-private partnerships to expedite replacement.
- **Community Testing and Education:** We'll provide free lead testing in homes built before 1986 and public spaces, prioritizing communities with elevated exposure risks. Educational outreach will help families understand their risks and provide them with tips to reduce exposure.
- **Partnerships with Schools:** Working with local schools, we'll provide regular lead testing and educational workshops for parents and children, empowering the next generation with knowledge of environmental safety and preventive practices.

### **2. Asbestos Reduction and Safe Removal Practices**

Asbestos management in New Orleans is crucial, especially given the city's aging infrastructure:

- **Comprehensive Inspections and Safe Remediation:** All public buildings, schools, and low-income housing units will undergo inspections for asbestos

presence, especially in areas where natural disasters have damaged structures. We'll subsidize safe asbestos removal for low-income households and provide resources for safe handling practices.

- **Training Programs for Contractors:** To prevent accidental asbestos exposure, we'll require contractors to undergo mandatory asbestos safety training. **California's** similar training programs have proven effective in reducing asbestos-related illnesses and ensuring safe renovation practices.

### 3. Mercury Reduction and Industrial Toxin Control

Given the proximity of industrial sites, our platform will implement strict monitoring and control measures for mercury and other pollutants:

- **Soil and Water Testing:** Partnering with **local universities** and environmental groups, we'll expand soil and water testing in neighborhoods closest to industrial sites, with a focus on testing for mercury and other heavy metals. We'll prioritize transparency, ensuring all data is accessible to the public.
- **Industrial Emission Reductions:** We'll require industries along the Mississippi River to reduce mercury emissions through pollution control technologies, providing tax incentives for cleaner technologies and imposing penalties for non-compliance. Programs similar to **Minnesota's mercury reduction** have proven that incentivizing cleaner practices can significantly reduce public exposure to harmful toxins.
- **Public Advisories on Fish Consumption:** Since fish is a primary source of mercury exposure, we'll distribute advisories on safe fish consumption for families, specifically in communities that rely on fishing for subsistence.



#### 4. Enhancing Air Quality and Reducing Industrial Pollution

Poor air quality due to industrial pollution and vehicle emissions has led to increased respiratory issues in New Orleans. We'll implement measures to improve air quality across the city:

- **Increased Air Quality Monitoring:** We'll establish additional air quality monitoring stations in neighborhoods near industrial sites, particularly in low-income communities. Real-time data will be available to the public, promoting transparency and accountability.
- **Green Buffers and Public Green Spaces:** Inspired by New York's **Green Zones initiative**, we'll introduce green spaces near industrial zones, which act as natural air filters and reduce pollution exposure for nearby communities. These green buffers can also serve as community recreation areas, promoting physical health.
- **Health Impact Assessments (HIAs):** For any new industrial developments, we'll require a Health Impact Assessment to measure potential effects on community health. HIAs allow us to identify risks before projects begin, ensuring proactive measures that balance industrial growth with public health.

### **Section 3: Crime and Anti-Corruption Reform**

#### **The Problem:**

New Orleans faces a significant challenge with crime and corruption, both of which undermine public safety and trust in government institutions. The city's violent crime rate is 3.5 times higher than the national average, with a notable rise in homicides and aggravated assaults over the past decade. Property crime rates are also alarming, with burglary and theft occurring at twice the national average. Gun violence has surged by 40% in the last five years, contributing to the city's elevated homicide rates. These statistics illustrate a community in urgent need of effective crime prevention and intervention strategies. However, addressing crime is further complicated by issues of police accountability and a lack of public trust. Only 40% of New Orleans residents express trust in the police force, compared to 60% nationwide. Reports of police misconduct have increased by 25% in recent years, often involving cases of excessive force and racial bias, which further erodes the community's confidence in law enforcement.

Corruption is another deeply rooted issue in New Orleans, ranking the city among the top for public corruption convictions per capita. Over 30% of residents believe that corruption is a major problem, negatively impacting their trust in local government and the delivery of essential services. Notable incidents, such as the mismanagement of funds following Hurricane Katrina, have left lasting scars on the city's reputation and functionality. The inability to recruit and retain essential personnel, such as police officers, firefighters, and EMS workers, further complicates the crisis. New Orleans has seen fire department ranks fall from over 800 to just above 500, leading to the closure of seven fire stations. Similarly, EMS worker shortages have resulted in a 40% annual turnover rate, reducing the city's ability to respond quickly to high-priority 911 calls. Addressing these staffing

shortages is vital for maintaining public safety and ensuring that residents receive timely emergency services. The unhoused crisis adds another layer of complexity, with a 15% increase in homelessness across New Orleans and Jefferson Parish since 2022, exacerbating public safety concerns and placing further strain on social services.

**The Plan:**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will implement a comprehensive Crime and Anti-Corruption Reform plan designed to address these critical issues, restore public trust, and create a safer, more equitable city. This plan begins with a focus on the District Attorney's office, which will receive an additional \$20 million for enhanced prosecution capabilities and streamlined case management. By implementing technology solutions, the DA's office will reduce case backlogs and prioritize prosecuting violent and repeat offenders, ensuring swift and effective justice. If necessary, I will propose transitioning the District Attorney's role from an elected to an appointed position, with a special committee responsible for oversight. After three years, this position will be returned to the electorate, allowing the public to determine if the change has resulted in more efficient and fair legal processes.

Increasing police salaries by 15% and improving benefits packages will help address the critical staffing shortages within the police department. This investment will make the department more competitive and attract high-quality officers, while enhanced benefits such as mental health support will contribute to officer well-being and retention. Additionally, \$50 million will be allocated to community policing initiatives, deploying officers directly into neighborhoods to build relationships with residents and focus on crime prevention. This approach

emphasizes de-escalation training, cultural competency, and community engagement, aiming to improve public trust and reduce the potential for conflict between officers and residents.

To enhance police accountability, I will establish an independent oversight committee with a \$20 million budget. This committee will be empowered to investigate complaints against officers, ensuring transparency in disciplinary actions and rebuilding community trust in law enforcement. Expanding the use of body cameras and other monitoring technology will further ensure accountability and provide critical evidence during investigations.

Addressing corruption is a cornerstone of this plan. I will launch targeted audits and investigations into past and current projects, including the Hard Rock Hotel collapse, the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB), and the allocation of Hurricane Katrina relief funds. This effort, supported by a \$40 million investment, aims to uncover misuse of public resources and ensure that future projects are managed with integrity. Expanding cold case divisions will also play a role in this initiative, helping to provide closure for victims' families and demonstrating a commitment to justice.

Crime prevention programs will receive a \$40 million boost, focusing on youth diversion initiatives and violence prevention workshops. By offering alternatives to incarceration, such as job training and mentorship, we can reduce juvenile crime and lower recidivism rates. Neighborhood safety councils will be established to bring together residents, law enforcement, and local organizations to address safety concerns collaboratively. Public awareness campaigns will educate residents on crime prevention strategies and available resources, empowering communities to take an active role in their own safety.

**The Economic Impact:**

This ambitious reform plan requires an additional \$150 million, raising the total public safety budget to \$550 million. The investment in the District Attorney's office, independent oversight, and enhanced police compensation will stabilize the justice system, ensuring that it operates with efficiency and fairness. By addressing backlogs and improving case management, we can reduce the time violent offenders spend in the community before prosecution, making New Orleans safer for residents and visitors alike. The increase in police salaries and community policing efforts will enhance recruitment and retention, creating a more stable and experienced force that is better equipped to address crime proactively.

The \$40 million dedicated to anti-corruption initiatives will help recover misallocated resources and improve the efficiency of city operations, ultimately leading to long-term savings. Transparent and fair management of public funds will attract new investment to New Orleans, creating economic growth opportunities and rebuilding trust in city governance. The \$40 million investment in youth diversion and violence prevention programs aims to reduce the social and economic costs associated with high incarceration rates and criminal activity, providing young people with opportunities to succeed rather than fall into cycles of crime.

Addressing homelessness is not only a moral imperative but also an economic one. By expanding partnerships with nonprofits and increasing funding for housing initiatives, we can reduce the financial burden that homelessness places on emergency services, hospitals, and law enforcement. Investing in crime prevention and public safety initiatives will create a more attractive environment for businesses and tourists, bolstering the city's economy and providing more job opportunities for residents. A safer, more transparent New Orleans is key to

unlocking the city’s potential and ensuring that every resident can thrive. This plan will make our city a national model for effective, community-centered governance, laying the foundation for a prosperous future.



**Additional Plans:**

**A Comprehensive Path to Recruit and Retain Police Officers and First Responders**

**Background and Challenges:**

New Orleans has long struggled to recruit and retain police officers and other first responders, including firefighters and EMS personnel. The city's unique challenges, such as high crime rates, political instability, and a history of corruption within various departments, have contributed to a cycle of low morale and workforce shortages. Recent data highlights the extent of the crisis: New Orleans' police department has seen its ranks dwindle, while the fire department has shrunk from over 800 to just above 500, resulting in the closure of seven fire stations. EMS faces a critical turnover rate of 40%, leading to longer response times for emergencies. The inability to recruit and retain new officers is not just a staffing issue—it has become a public safety crisis that requires bold, innovative solutions.

**The Plan: Building a Pipeline for a New Generation of First Responders**

**1. Leadership Overhaul and Cultural Reset:**

- **Appoint a Respected Reform-Oriented Police Chief:** A critical first step is appointing a police chief who is respected within law enforcement circles and known for their integrity and community engagement. This leader must have a proven track record of reducing corruption and raising morale within departments. They will be tasked with rebuilding trust both within the department and with the public. Cities like Camden, New Jersey, have seen success with a similar

approach, achieving significant reductions in crime by focusing on community-oriented policing and reforming leadership.

- **Leadership Training for Mid-Level Supervisors:** Often, mid-level leadership (e.g., sergeants, lieutenants) directly impacts officer morale and job satisfaction. We will invest in leadership training programs that emphasize transparency, accountability, and support for officers, helping to create a culture that prioritizes professional development and ethical behavior.

## 2. **Competitive Compensation and Benefits Package:**

- **Increase Salaries by 15% and Introduce Retention Bonuses:** To attract new recruits and retain existing officers, we will increase police, firefighter, and EMS salaries by 15%. Additionally, retention bonuses will be provided to officers who remain with the department for five years, creating a financial incentive for long-term commitment. This approach mirrors successful initiatives in other cities, such as Dallas, which saw a surge in applications after implementing similar pay increases.
- **Enhanced Benefits Package:** Comprehensive benefits, including healthcare, retirement plans, and mental health support, will be crucial. We will introduce a Mental Wellness Program specifically for first responders, providing access to counseling and support groups. Addressing burnout and trauma is key to retaining experienced personnel and supporting new recruits.



### 3. Rebuilding Trust through Community Engagement:

- **Community Policing Academy for Recruits:** New recruits will participate in a Community Policing Academy, where they will engage directly with neighborhood leaders and residents. This will help build relationships from the outset and foster an understanding of the specific needs of New Orleans' communities. Involving recruits in service projects before their official duties can strengthen their ties to the neighborhoods they will serve.
- **Incentivized Residency Program:** We will introduce a residency program offering housing stipends to officers and first responders who choose to live in the city. Studies have shown that officers living in the communities they serve tend to develop stronger connections with residents, resulting in better community relations and reduced crime.

### 4. Recruitment and Outreach Strategy:

- **Targeted Recruitment Campaign:** A high-impact recruitment campaign will highlight the unique benefits of serving in New Orleans, using social media, local media outlets, and partnerships with local colleges and universities. This campaign will focus on the opportunities for career advancement, competitive salaries, and the city's rich culture. Special emphasis will be placed on reaching diverse communities to ensure a police force that reflects the demographics of New Orleans.
- **Establish a New Orleans Police Cadet Program:** Modeled after successful programs in cities like Los Angeles, the cadet program will allow high school graduates and college students to gain early

exposure to law enforcement careers. The program will provide part-time work opportunities within the department, mentorship from seasoned officers, and tuition assistance for those pursuing criminal justice degrees.

#### 5. Streamlining the Hiring Process:

- **Expedited Hiring for Certified Officers:** We will introduce an expedited hiring process for certified officers from other jurisdictions, offering relocation bonuses and support. This will allow us to quickly bolster the department with experienced personnel while the recruitment pipeline for new recruits grows. Cities like Seattle have successfully attracted out-of-state officers with similar relocation incentives.
- **Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers:** Simplifying the application and onboarding process for all first responder roles is crucial. We will review and streamline the hiring process to ensure that recruits move quickly through background checks, training, and certification, reducing the time from application to active duty.

#### 6. Training and Professional Development:

- **Investment in Advanced Training Facilities:** New Orleans will invest in state-of-the-art training facilities where police officers, firefighters, and EMS workers can receive comprehensive training in de-escalation, crisis intervention, and modern emergency response techniques. This facility will also offer ongoing education to ensure that all first responders stay updated on best practices.

- **Mentorship Program for New Recruits:** Establishing a mentorship program will pair new recruits with experienced officers who can provide guidance and support during the early years of their career. This will help new officers integrate into the department more smoothly and provide a support system that can prevent early burnout.

## 7. Addressing Corruption and Building Accountability:

- **Zero-Tolerance Policy for Corruption:** We will implement a zero-tolerance policy for corruption, with clear consequences for any officer or public official found engaging in misconduct. This policy will be enforced through the newly established independent oversight committee, which will ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated.
- **Regular Ethics Training:** Ethics training will be a cornerstone of the professional development program, reinforcing the importance of integrity, transparency, and accountability. Training will be mandatory for all officers and first responders, helping to shift the culture within the department.

## 8. Creating a Positive Workplace Culture:

- **Annual Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms:** To ensure that officers and first responders feel heard and valued, we will introduce annual surveys and anonymous feedback mechanisms. This will allow the administration to address issues of morale, leadership, and work conditions promptly, fostering a more positive work environment.
- **Celebrating Service and Milestones:** Recognizing the dedication of officers and first responders is key to improving morale. We will

introduce a quarterly awards program to celebrate exceptional service, as well as service recognition events for years of commitment. Public acknowledgment of their contributions helps to build pride and respect within the force.

### **Economic Impact:**

This recruitment and retention plan requires an additional investment of \$50 million in the first year, focusing on salary increases, enhanced training, and recruitment incentives. However, the return on investment will be significant. Increasing the number of officers and first responders will reduce crime rates, improve emergency response times, and boost the city's overall safety. A safer city is more attractive to businesses, tourists, and residents, which in turn leads to increased economic activity and a more robust tax base.

Addressing the long-standing issues of corruption, low morale, and poor leadership will have a compounding effect on recruitment efforts, allowing New Orleans to build a police force and first responder network that is trusted, respected, and effective. By investing in the people who protect our community, we are investing in a brighter, safer future for all New Orleanians.

### **Sources:**

1. Bureau of Justice Statistics: <https://www.bjs.gov/>
2. Camden's Community Policing Model: <https://nij.ojp.gov/>
3. Police Compensation Strategies:  
<https://www.nationalpublicsafetypartnership.org/>
4. Effects of Officer Residency on Crime Rates: <https://www.urban.org/>

5. Expedited Hiring Programs for Certified Officers:

<https://www.policeforum.org/>



## Additional Plan (Cont.)

### **Sex Worker Protections: Decriminalization and Empowerment**

#### **Overview:**

New Orleans has a rich cultural history and a tradition of celebrating diverse lifestyles. However, sex workers in the city often face discrimination, violence, and a lack of legal protections that leave them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. To address this, my administration will **decriminalize prostitution** and establish a **safe harbor database** for sex workers. This approach is designed to protect sex workers' rights, improve public health, and ensure that perpetrators of violence against them face justice.

#### **Decriminalization and Safe Harbor Database**

Decriminalization of sex work will involve removing criminal penalties associated with consensual adult sex work. Instead, we will create a **safe harbor database** where sex workers can voluntarily register. This database will:

- **Ensure Routine Health Checks:** All registered sex workers will undergo **STI testing** and **psychological welfare assessments** every six months. This will help maintain public health standards and ensure that workers receive the mental health support they need.
- **Offer Legal Protections:** Registered sex workers will be protected under city laws. If they are assaulted, injured, threatened, or killed, the perpetrator will be prosecuted to the **fullest extent of the law**, similar to protections for any other resident of New Orleans.

#### **Legal Precedents and Reasonableness**

Decriminalizing sex work is consistent with policies in cities like **Amsterdam** and **New Zealand**, where decriminalization has led to better health outcomes for

workers and reduced violence against them. Studies published by the **American Journal of Public Health** indicate that decriminalization reduces incidents of abuse and violence against sex workers by empowering them to seek help without fear of arrest. Additionally, this policy aligns with the **reasonableness test** often applied in U.S. courts, as it balances the interests of public health, individual rights, and community safety.

### **Empowering Sex Workers to Combat Violent Crime**

By creating a safer and more regulated environment, sex workers will be more empowered to **report instances of abuse and violence**, helping law enforcement identify and prosecute dangerous individuals. Studies by the **Urban Justice Center** in New York City found that sex workers are often among the first to identify human trafficking and other violent crimes, but their ability to report these incidents is hampered by criminalization. In New Orleans, we can change this dynamic by creating a safer environment for sex workers to come forward and collaborate with law enforcement.

### **Cultural Context**

New Orleans has long been known for its openness, from **Bourbon Street** to **Mardi Gras celebrations**. Decriminalizing sex work aligns with our city's values of inclusivity and acceptance. It also acknowledges the economic reality that many people engage in sex work as a means of survival. By decriminalizing and regulating the industry, we can offer sex workers a safer and more dignified way to earn a living, while also addressing public health concerns in a systematic manner.

**Additional Plan (Cont.)**

**Marijuana Reform Platform for New Orleans**

**Introduction**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will prioritize marijuana reform as a key element of reducing unnecessary arrests, promoting criminal justice equity, and enhancing the city's economic and healthcare systems. This reform aligns with federal, state, and local shifts in marijuana policy. It will allow New Orleans to leverage these policy changes, reduce unnecessary incarcerations, and open pathways for economic opportunities, while also addressing social justice and public health issues.

**Importance of Marijuana Reform**

**1. Criminal Justice and Reducing Unnecessary Arrests**

Marijuana prohibition has disproportionately impacted marginalized communities. National data shows that Black individuals are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white individuals, despite similar usage rates. In New Orleans, we see the same racial disparity, contributing to cycles of criminalization and poverty. By reforming marijuana laws, we can significantly reduce the number of unnecessary arrests for non-violent offenses.

Currently, Louisiana has made limited steps toward reform, with decriminalization of possession for up to 14 grams of marijuana being punishable by a fine. However, local data reveals that these fines still disproportionately affect low-income individuals. As mayor, I will advocate for further decriminalization policies that focus on rehabilitation and alternative measures, rather than fines or jail time. In cities like Portland and Seattle, similar reforms have resulted in dramatic drops



in marijuana-related arrests, allowing police resources to be reallocated towards more serious criminal offenses.

Moreover, adopting policies that include retroactive expungement for past marijuana-related offenses would restore justice for thousands of New Orleans residents. San Francisco and Chicago have pioneered successful automatic expungement programs for low-level marijuana convictions, which New Orleans could replicate.

## **2. Economic Opportunities and Job Creation**

Beyond criminal justice, marijuana reform presents an economic opportunity for New Orleans. Legal marijuana sales have proven to generate significant revenue for cities, which can be reinvested in public services. For example, Colorado generated over \$2 billion in tax revenue from legal marijuana since 2014, directing funds toward education, infrastructure, and mental health services.

By creating a regulated legal market for marijuana, New Orleans could harness a new source of tax revenue while also stimulating job creation in cultivation, processing, and retail sectors. Legalization would open pathways for entrepreneurs, particularly in disadvantaged communities, ensuring local ownership and community investment in the emerging cannabis industry.

We can also align marijuana reform with tourism—a critical part of New Orleans' economy. States like Nevada have seen significant growth in cannabis tourism, and New Orleans, with its vibrant culture and annual events, is well-positioned to attract visitors interested in cannabis experiences. Legalization could further boost local businesses and tourism revenues.

### 3. Public Health and Safety

A regulated marijuana market can improve public health and safety by ensuring consumers have access to safe, tested products. Currently, the black market exposes users to risks of contamination and dangerous additives. Regulating the market through dispensaries would ensure product safety and reduce illegal sales. As a city, we can partner with medical institutions to study the benefits of marijuana for treating chronic pain, anxiety, and PTSD—conditions prevalent in New Orleans, especially in underserved communities still recovering from the trauma of Hurricane Katrina.

Moreover, legal marijuana can serve as a safer alternative to opioids, contributing to harm reduction in the ongoing opioid crisis. Studies have shown that states with legal marijuana programs see a reduction in opioid prescriptions and related deaths. As mayor, I will ensure our policies reflect a commitment to public health, promoting marijuana as part of a comprehensive harm-reduction strategy.

#### **Leveraging Federal, State, and Local Policies**

New Orleans can maximize opportunities by aligning with evolving federal and state marijuana policies. While marijuana remains a Schedule I drug under federal law, recent actions such as President Biden’s pardon of federal marijuana possession charges mark a shift toward decriminalization at the national level. This shift creates room for cities to lead on reform, setting the stage for eventual federal changes.

At the state level, Louisiana's current medical marijuana program and recent steps to allow smokable forms demonstrate a growing acceptance of cannabis. However, the state still lags behind in fully realizing the economic and social benefits of legalization. As mayor, I will work to establish New Orleans as a progressive

leader by expanding medical marijuana access and advocating for recreational legalization.

Local government already has the power to push this issue forward. In 2021, New Orleans decriminalized marijuana possession, opting for fines rather than arrests. My administration will build on this momentum, advocating for legal retail sales, reduced fines, and the elimination of legal penalties for marijuana possession altogether.

### **Reducing Incarceration and Promoting Social Justice**

Reducing marijuana-related arrests directly addresses over-incarceration. According to the Vera Institute, the majority of marijuana arrests do not result in public safety improvements. Continuing to prosecute minor marijuana offenses drains city resources and burdens residents with criminal records that hinder future employment and housing opportunities.

By legalizing marijuana and retroactively expunging marijuana-related convictions, New Orleans can undo some of the harms caused by decades of aggressive drug policing. Furthermore, we can implement social equity programs that ensure communities disproportionately affected by the war on drugs are given priority in entering the legal cannabis industry, much like Los Angeles and other cities have done.

### **Conclusion**

Marijuana reform is not only a pathway to economic growth but also a moral imperative to correct the racial and social disparities caused by the war on drugs. As mayor, I will ensure that New Orleans is at the forefront of progressive marijuana policies that lower unnecessary arrests, create new economic

opportunities, and promote public health and safety. Through thoughtful policy reforms, New Orleans can build a fairer, more prosperous future.



**Additional Plan (Cont.)**

**Establishing the *New Orleans First Responders Trust (NOFRT)*: A Pathway to Sustainable Support**

**Overview:**

The *New Orleans First Responders Trust (NOFRT)* is designed as a public-private partnership that collects contributions from advertisers and marketing companies operating within the city. This initiative aims to create a sustainable funding source to supplement the salaries, benefits, and well-being of police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel. By leveraging the economic power of the city’s business community, the trust will provide a stable, long-term financial resource to support those who protect and serve New Orleans.

**Objectives of the NOFRT:**

1. **Enhance Compensation and Benefits:** Provide supplemental funds to improve the salaries and benefits of first responders, addressing recruitment and retention challenges.
2. **Support Mental Health and Wellness:** Allocate resources specifically for mental health services for first responders, recognizing the toll that high-stress environments take on their well-being.
3. **Improve Training and Professional Development:** Use part of the trust to fund advanced training programs, including leadership development, cultural competency, and crisis intervention skills.
4. **Create a Transparent and Accountable Funding Model:** Ensure that the trust is managed transparently, with clear guidelines for contributions, allocations, and periodic public reporting.

## **Step-by-Step Plan for Implementation:**

### **1. Establishing the Trust Structure:**

- **Legal Framework:**

To create the trust, the city will work with legal and financial experts to establish a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated solely to supporting first responders. This allows for tax-deductible contributions from businesses, making it more attractive for companies to participate.

- **Board of Directors:**

The trust will be governed by a board of directors comprising representatives from the city government, business community, first responder unions, and independent community leaders. This board will ensure fair and equitable use of funds, and maintain transparency in decision-making. Similar structures have been used in other cities for public-benefit funds, such as the New York City Police Foundation.

- **Initial Funding Commitment:**

The city will launch the trust with an initial commitment of \$5 million from its budget to demonstrate seriousness about supporting first responders. This initial seed funding will help cover administrative costs and set the foundation for contributions from private companies.

### **2. Securing Contributions from Advertisers and Marketing Companies:**

- **Voluntary Contribution Tiers:**

Establish voluntary contribution tiers (e.g., bronze, silver, gold, platinum), with each level offering different perks such as advertising credits, priority placements, and public acknowledgment. Companies can choose their level of involvement based on their financial capacity. For instance:

- *Bronze*: \$10,000 annually – Acknowledgment on the NOFRT website.
  - *Silver*: \$25,000 annually – Acknowledgment plus a spotlight in city newsletters and access to city-organized networking events.
  - *Gold*: \$50,000 annually – Priority advertising opportunities on city digital platforms (such as bus shelters, digital billboards).
  - *Platinum*: \$100,000+ annually – Opportunities for co-branded public safety campaigns with the city.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Incentives:**

The city will encourage businesses to participate by integrating their contributions into broader CSR strategies. The trust can provide reporting on how contributions directly support first responders, allowing companies to showcase their impact to consumers. Data shows that 70% of consumers are more likely to support companies that give back to their communities.
  - **Partnerships with Major Marketing Firms:**

Engage top advertising and marketing firms in New Orleans as ambassadors of the trust. Their involvement can lend credibility and encourage smaller businesses to follow suit. This approach has been successfully employed in other initiatives such as the LA Community Policing Partnership, which used business leaders as advocates.

### **3. Administering and Allocating the Trust Funds:**

- **Supplementing First Responder Salaries:**

A primary use of the trust will be to offer stipends or bonuses to first responders, particularly those who serve in high-crime areas or work critical

shifts like overnight and weekends. This helps address the immediate pay disparities that make New Orleans less competitive in recruiting officers .

- **Mental Health and Wellness Support:**

Allocate 20% of the trust’s annual budget for mental health services, including counseling, peer support programs, and workshops on managing stress and trauma. According to the International Association of Chiefs of Police, access to mental health services significantly improves retention and performance among officers.

- **Training and Development:**

Use part of the trust to subsidize advanced training programs, such as cultural competency, de-escalation techniques, and crisis intervention training. Enhanced training opportunities can improve job satisfaction and performance, making the role more attractive to potential recruits.

#### **4. Maintaining Transparency and Accountability:**

- **Annual Reporting and Public Accountability:**

The trust will produce an annual report detailing how funds were allocated, the impact of funded programs, and the outcomes related to recruitment and retention. This report will be made publicly available to maintain transparency and build trust with both contributors and the community.

- **Third-Party Audits:**

To ensure accountability, the trust’s financials will be audited annually by a third-party accounting firm. This approach aligns with best practices for nonprofit governance and ensures that funds are managed responsibly, reducing risks of mismanagement.



- **Advisory Council of First Responders:**

Create an advisory council made up of police officers, firefighters, and EMS personnel to provide feedback on how trust funds should be utilized. This ensures that those who benefit from the trust have a voice in how resources are allocated and that the funds address their most pressing needs.

## **5. Community Engagement and Awareness Campaigns:**

- **Public Launch Event and Fundraising Drive:**

Host a high-profile launch event featuring business leaders, city officials, and first responders. The event will be both a celebration and a fundraising opportunity, allowing businesses to pledge their support in a public forum. It can be livestreamed to maximize visibility and community engagement.

- **Highlighting Success Stories:**

Share success stories through local media, showing how the trust has positively impacted first responders and, by extension, the community. For example, testimonials from officers who received mental health support or additional training through the trust can be shared to build momentum and public support.

## **Economic Impact and Sustainability:**

- **Boost to Recruitment and Retention:**

By offering better compensation and support through the NOFRT, New Orleans can attract more candidates to fill critical roles in the police, fire, and EMS departments. A study by the Urban Institute showed that cities with similar targeted support programs saw a 20-30% increase in recruitment rates within three years.

- **Stabilizing Public Safety and Economic Growth:**

A well-funded and stable workforce of first responders contributes to a safer environment, which in turn attracts businesses, residents, and tourists.

Reduced crime rates and improved emergency response times make New Orleans a more appealing place to live and work, contributing to long-term economic stability.

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This plan presents a comprehensive path to establishing a sustainable trust for first responders, addressing the city's immediate needs while building a foundation for long-term success. With the support of the business community and a focus on transparency, the *New Orleans First Responders Trust* could become a model for cities nationwide.



## **Section 4: Job Creation and Infrastructure Investments**

### **The Problem:**

New Orleans faces a critical need for job creation and infrastructure improvements, both of which are essential for long-term economic stability and quality of life. The city's unemployment rate is 2% higher than the national average, with stark disparities in job opportunities between different neighborhoods. Job growth in New Orleans has lagged behind other cities, with an annual growth rate of only 1.2% compared to the national average of 1.8%. Poverty levels remain a significant challenge, with 23.8% of residents—about 88,700 people—living below the poverty line. This issue is particularly acute among women aged 25-64, who form the largest demographic in poverty. These economic challenges are compounded by the city's declining population, driven by a struggling housing market that Zillow ranks as the worst in the United States.

Infrastructure issues further exacerbate these economic struggles. Approximately 40% of the city's infrastructure is rated as poor or very poor, with critical deficiencies in roads, bridges, and public transportation systems. Flooding remains a perennial problem, causing millions in damages each year due to outdated and inadequate drainage systems. The city's electrical grid is similarly outdated, with frequent outages and high utility costs burdening residents—utility prices have soared to nearly \$500 monthly in late 2023. Additionally, New Orleans is overly reliant on fossil fuels, with less than 10% of its energy coming from renewable sources, making it one of the highest per capita emitters of greenhouse gases in the U.S. These infrastructure and energy challenges highlight the urgent need for modernization and sustainable investment.

## **The Plan:**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will implement a comprehensive strategy to create jobs and modernize infrastructure, ensuring economic growth and improved quality of life for all residents. This plan focuses on targeted investments in roads, bridges, energy systems, and transportation, while fostering partnerships to diversify the economy and provide sustainable job opportunities.

### **1. Modernizing Infrastructure and Utilities:**

- **Road and Bridge Repairs:** Allocate \$100 million to repair and modernize roads and bridges across the city. By employing fast-track contracts, we aim to complete 50% of street repairs within the first year, reducing vehicle damage and improving traffic safety. Improved infrastructure will lower insurance costs for residents and create approximately 10,000 jobs in construction, engineering, and project management. Cities like Atlanta and Houston have seen significant economic benefits from similar infrastructure investments, with job creation and reduced transportation costs driving regional growth.
- **Flood Mitigation Projects:** Invest in advanced drainage and flood prevention systems, using new technologies like permeable pavements and underground retention basins to mitigate flooding. This \$50 million investment will help protect residents from property damage and ensure economic stability in vulnerable neighborhoods, reducing annual losses from flood damage.
- **Merge Sewerage and Water Board with Public Works or Privatize the Sewerage and Water Board:** Integrating the Sewerage and Water

Board (S&WB) with the city's Public Works department will streamline operations and reduce administrative overhead. This merger will improve service delivery, accelerate infrastructure upgrades, and increase accountability through regular audits, making utility management more efficient. If necessary, privatization will be discussed with protections for the citizens.

## 2. **Creating Sustainable Energy Solutions:**

- **Acquiring Entergy New Orleans:** A key aspect of this plan is the city's acquisition of Entergy New Orleans. This \$100 million investment will allow New Orleans to control utility rates and transition more aggressively toward renewable energy sources like solar and hydropower. Municipal ownership will enable the city to prioritize affordability and ensure that rate increases are capped, directly benefiting residents. Similar models in cities like Los Angeles have proven successful in balancing public ownership with renewable energy goals.
- **Hydropower and Battery Bank Facilities:** Develop hydropower systems on the Mississippi River and establish battery bank facilities on underutilized city-owned lands, aiming to increase renewable energy output by 50%. This initiative will create 8,000 jobs in construction, maintenance, and energy management, while positioning New Orleans as a leader in energy in the Gulf Coast region.

## 3. **Developing a Statewide Hyper-Rail System:**

- **High-Speed Connectivity:** Invest \$50 million to initiate the development of a hyper-rail system capable of transporting passengers

anywhere in Louisiana within two hours. This rail system will enhance connectivity between New Orleans and other major cities, creating jobs in construction and transportation, and making the region more accessible for tourism and commerce. Projects like California's High-Speed Rail and the Virgin Hyperloop demonstrate the potential economic and environmental benefits of such systems .

- **Economic and Environmental Benefits:** By reducing travel times, the hyper-rail will decrease traffic congestion on major highways and cut carbon emissions, aligning with the city's broader sustainability goals. The construction and operation of the hyper-rail are expected to create up to 10,000 jobs.

#### 4. **Job Training and Apprenticeship Programs:**

- **Industry Partnerships:** Collaborate with local industries, trade unions, and educational institutions to create job training and apprenticeship programs focused on high-demand sectors like technology, healthcare, and renewable energy. These programs will train over 4,000 individuals annually, ensuring that residents have the skills needed to fill new job openings .
- **Youth Employment Initiatives:** Launch youth employment initiatives aimed at reducing the youth unemployment rate by 20% over five years. These programs will include summer internships, mentorships, and job placements, providing young people with pathways to stable employment.

#### 5. **Fostering Small Business Growth:**

- **Grants and Incentives:** Establish a \$15 million fund for grants and tax incentives to support small businesses and startups, particularly those in underserved communities. Prioritizing local entrepreneurs can help revitalize economically depressed areas and foster job creation .
- **Business Incubators:** Develop business incubators and innovation hubs to support entrepreneurs and foster a culture of innovation. These hubs will provide access to mentorship, coworking spaces, and investment opportunities, making New Orleans an attractive destination for new businesses and talent.

## 6. Improving Public Transportation:

- **Transit System Upgrades:** Invest \$10 million to modernize the city’s public transportation system, expanding service coverage and improving reliability. The goal is to increase ridership by 30%, reducing reliance on personal vehicles and improving access to job opportunities.
- **Sustainable Transit Solutions:** Transition the city’s bus fleet to electric vehicles, reducing emissions and improving air quality. This aligns with successful efforts in cities like Seattle, which have seen both environmental and economic benefits from investing in green transit .

## 7. Enhancing Green Infrastructure Projects:

- **Urban Green Spaces:** Allocate funds to develop urban green spaces and parks, creating healthier, more attractive neighborhoods. Research shows that green spaces improve residents’ mental well-being and can drive economic growth by making cities more livable .



- **Community-Led Initiatives:** Support community-led green infrastructure projects, such as urban gardens and rainwater harvesting systems, empowering residents to take an active role in improving their environment.

## 8. Implementing AI Protections:

- **AI Governance and Regulation:** Establish a framework for AI governance that ensures ethical use of AI technologies in the city, including transparency, accountability, and privacy safeguards. This will protect against job displacement while integrating AI into workforce development programs, preparing residents for the digital economy.

## 9. Moving Away from a Tourism-Dependent Economy:

- **Diversifying the Economy:** Shift New Orleans' focus from tourism to sectors like energy, technology, and healthcare. Investments in these fields will create high-paying jobs, reduce economic disparities, and build a more resilient economy that is less vulnerable to tourism fluctuations.
- **Healthcare Expansion:** Make New Orleans a regional leader in medical services by expanding healthcare and mental health facilities. This investment will create jobs and attract healthcare professionals, contributing to the city's economic growth.

### **Economic Impact:**

The proposed reforms will require an additional \$350 million in investments, raising the total budget to \$500 million. However, these investments are expected to create approximately 41,000 new jobs, reduce poverty levels, and generate a 3%

annual increase in the city’s GDP. The infrastructure projects will revitalize the city’s core, making it more attractive for residents and businesses, while sustainable energy initiatives will provide long-term cost savings and environmental benefits. By diversifying the local economy, New Orleans can move beyond its dependence on tourism, ensuring stable, long-term economic growth.

Investing in infrastructure and job creation is the foundation of a brighter future for New Orleans. By modernizing our city and offering new opportunities, we can build a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable community for all residents.

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**Additional Plan:**

**Raising Wages for Restaurant Workers and Sub-Minimum Wage Jobs**

**The Problem:**

New Orleans' economy is supported by a large number of restaurant workers and other employees in sub-minimum wage jobs, many of whom earn as little as \$2.13 per hour, the federal tipped minimum wage. These workers depend heavily on tips to reach even the base minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a rate that has not increased in over a decade. Unlike many other states, Louisiana does not have a state-specific minimum wage law, meaning that the federal minimum wage is the standard. This leaves many low-wage workers vulnerable to the effects of inflation and rising living costs. With approximately 17% of New Orleans residents living below the poverty line, the current wage structure contributes significantly to economic inequality, particularly among restaurant workers and other service industry employees. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that raising the minimum wage could lift over 20,000 people out of poverty in New Orleans, offering a pathway to greater economic stability for many families.

**The Plan: Raising Wages for Economic Security and Fairness**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will work to ensure that restaurant workers and other sub-minimum wage employees earn a wage that aligns with the cost of living. The plan focuses on raising the wages of tipped workers to at least \$7.25 per hour, allowing tips to function as additional income rather than a primary source of earnings. By restructuring the wage model, we can reduce economic disparities, stimulate local spending, and ensure that all workers earn a stable, livable wage.

**1. Increasing Economic Security for Vulnerable Workers:**

Raising wages to meet the state minimum of \$7.25 per hour will provide restaurant workers and other low-wage employees with a more predictable and stable income. This adjustment ensures that workers are not entirely reliant on tips, which can fluctuate significantly due to factors beyond their control, such as seasonal tourism trends and economic downturns. Higher wages also reduce the need for public assistance programs, as workers can better afford basic necessities like housing, food, and transportation. Studies from the Economic Policy Institute show that workers who receive fair wages experience greater financial resilience, allowing them to manage unexpected expenses and invest in their futures.

**2. Reducing Poverty and Promoting Economic Mobility:**

Increasing the wages of low-income workers directly addresses poverty in New Orleans, which disproportionately affects women, especially those aged 25-64. A higher base wage can lift families out of poverty, reducing their reliance on social services and contributing to the overall well-being of the community. With a more stable income, workers gain the opportunity to pursue education and career advancement, creating a pathway to better-paying jobs and long-term economic mobility. By empowering these workers, we can break the cycle of generational poverty that has plagued parts of New Orleans for years.

**3. Stimulating Local Economic Growth Through Higher Wages:**

Raising wages for low-income workers has a direct positive impact on the local economy. Workers who earn more are able to spend more, leading to increased demand for goods and services in New Orleans. This boost in consumer spending benefits local businesses, as higher foot traffic and sales

contribute to growth and job creation. Economic research consistently shows that wage increases among low-income earners result in a stronger local economy, as these workers are more likely to spend their earnings on local services and products. This plan not only benefits workers but also fosters a more vibrant, resilient business community.

**4. Promoting Health and Well-being Through Wage Increases:**

Economic stability is closely linked to health outcomes, and raising wages can have a significant impact on the well-being of workers and their families. Higher wages enable workers to afford healthcare, nutritious food, and safe housing, contributing to better physical and mental health. Reduced financial stress also translates to improved mental health and overall quality of life. As workers gain greater access to healthcare services, the burden on emergency services and public health programs is reduced, leading to long-term savings for the city. By investing in the well-being of low-wage workers, New Orleans can create a healthier, more stable community.

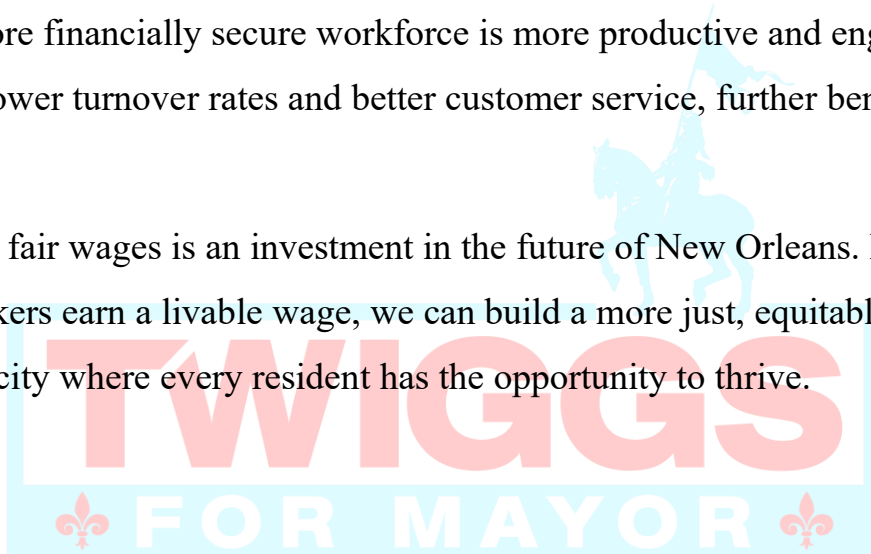
**5. Reframing the Role of Tips in Compensation:**

Transitioning to a wage structure where tips serve as bonuses rather than a primary source of income provides workers with a more consistent and reliable paycheck. This shift reduces the financial uncertainty that many tipped workers face, particularly during periods of low customer traffic. By raising the base pay, customers are no longer effectively subsidizing workers' wages through tips, creating a fairer compensation model. Tips can continue to reward exceptional service, but workers will have the security of a guaranteed wage. This approach has been successfully implemented in other cities, leading to a more equitable restaurant industry and greater employee satisfaction.

### **Economic Impact and Community Benefits:**

Raising wages for sub-minimum wage workers will require businesses to adjust their labor costs, but the broader economic benefits outweigh these initial challenges. As workers gain increased purchasing power, local businesses will see higher demand, which can lead to expansion and job growth. Additionally, reducing reliance on public assistance programs through higher wages can result in significant savings for the city and state, freeing up resources for other critical needs. A more financially secure workforce is more productive and engaged, leading to lower turnover rates and better customer service, further benefiting businesses.

Investing in fair wages is an investment in the future of New Orleans. By ensuring that all workers earn a livable wage, we can build a more just, equitable, and prosperous city where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.



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**Additional Plan (Cont.)**

**Blockchain Adoption and Bitcoin Initiatives**

**The Problem:**

New Orleans faces significant challenges with financial inclusion and transparency, which limits economic growth and civic engagement. Approximately 20% of New Orleans residents are unbanked, meaning they lack access to essential financial services such as checking and savings accounts. This is compounded by an additional 25% who are underbanked, relying on high-cost alternative financial services like payday loans and check-cashing services. These options often come with exorbitant fees, trapping residents in a cycle of financial instability. Small businesses in New Orleans are similarly disadvantaged, with only 30% having access to traditional loans and credit lines, which constrains their ability to grow and invest in the local economy. Addressing these financial barriers is critical for creating a more equitable economic landscape and fostering opportunities for growth.

The city also struggles with transparency in budgetary processes, which contributes to a lack of trust in local governance. Research by Deloitte shows that 55% of public sector organizations believe blockchain technology can significantly enhance transparency and accountability. Cities like Dubai and Estonia have successfully implemented blockchain solutions to improve governmental efficiency and reduce corruption. By adopting blockchain technology, New Orleans has the opportunity to position itself as a leader in financial transparency, building public trust and fostering greater civic engagement. Additionally, Bitcoin presents a unique investment opportunity for cities like New Orleans, offering a hedge against inflation and market volatility. With an average annual growth rate of around 200% over the past decade, Bitcoin has emerged as a valuable asset for



diversification, as demonstrated by cities like Miami that are exploring similar initiatives.

### **The Plan: Embracing Blockchain and Bitcoin for a Resilient Future**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will prioritize the adoption of blockchain technology and the strategic investment in Bitcoin as part of a broader plan to modernize the city's financial infrastructure. This plan will improve transparency, engage residents in the budget process, and offer innovative solutions for financial inclusion. By embracing these emerging technologies, New Orleans can become a hub for innovation and a model for other cities.

#### **1. Implementing a Blockchain-Based City Budget:**

- **Transparency and Accessibility:** Develop a blockchain platform to host the entire New Orleans city budget, making all budgetary allocations and expenditures available for public view in real-time. This initiative ensures that residents have direct access to see how their tax dollars are being spent, promoting transparency and accountability. Blockchain technology's decentralized nature makes it tamper-proof, significantly reducing the risk of mismanagement or corruption. The success of similar initiatives in cities like Dubai has demonstrated how blockchain can transform public sector transparency.
- **Citizen Engagement:** By allowing residents to flag irregularities and provide feedback on budget allocations, the blockchain platform will create a new level of civic engagement. This feature will empower New Orleans taxpayers to become active participants in the city's

financial oversight, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and trust in the local government.

- **Security Measures:** To protect the blockchain from potential hacking or data manipulation, AI algorithms will be integrated to monitor for anomalies, ensuring that data remains secure and accurate. This will make New Orleans a leader in using cutting-edge technology to safeguard public data, setting a precedent for other cities.

## 2. Establishing a Bitcoin Reserve for Long-Term Stability:

- **Annual Investment Strategy:** Allocate \$25-50 million annually to build a Bitcoin reserve, leveraging the potential appreciation of digital assets to enhance the city's financial stability. This strategic investment aims to create a diversified asset base that can serve as a hedge against inflation and economic downturns, providing New Orleans with a financial cushion during times of volatility. For instance, if Bitcoin's price continues to appreciate as it has historically, a modest investment could potentially grow into a significant financial asset for the city over the next decade.
- **City-Led Bitcoin Credit Union:** Explore the creation of a New Orleans City-led Bitcoin Credit Union, offering residents an opportunity to access and utilize Bitcoin for transactions, savings, and investments. This credit union would focus on providing services to those who are currently unbanked or underbanked, offering an alternative to high-cost financial services and reducing reliance on predatory lending practices. By restricting membership to New

Orleans residents, the credit union ensures that benefits remain within the local economy, supporting economic inclusion.

### 3. **Fostering Economic Opportunities through Education and Innovation:**

- **Blockchain Education and Training Programs:** Partner with local universities and technical schools to develop educational programs that train residents in blockchain and cryptocurrency technologies. This initiative will create a skilled workforce, making New Orleans an attractive destination for tech companies and startups. By investing in human capital, the city can ensure that residents have access to high-paying jobs in emerging industries, contributing to long-term economic growth.
- **Blockchain and Cryptocurrency Innovation Hub:** Establish a physical and digital innovation hub to attract blockchain startups and entrepreneurs to New Orleans. This hub will offer coworking spaces, access to venture capital, and opportunities for collaboration with local industry leaders. Similar hubs in cities like Austin, Texas, have successfully fostered innovation ecosystems, creating new businesses and jobs that drive local economic development.

#### **Economic Impact and Long-Term Benefits:**

The initial investment in blockchain implementation and Bitcoin reserve is projected to be \$75 million, with \$50 million allocated for developing the blockchain platform and \$25 million for the first year of Bitcoin investment. By leveraging these funds, New Orleans can unlock significant economic opportunities. A blockchain-based city budget will improve transparency, attracting businesses that value a stable and transparent operating environment. This, in turn,

can boost the city's tax revenue and create an environment that is conducive to investment and growth.

The Bitcoin reserve offers a potential pathway to long-term fiscal stability. If Bitcoin's price appreciates to \$500,000 over the next decade, a reserve of 2,000 Bitcoins could be valued at \$1 billion, providing a substantial financial asset for New Orleans. This would create opportunities to fund infrastructure projects, social programs, and other critical needs without raising taxes on residents. Moreover, the city-led Bitcoin Credit Union could serve as a model for financial inclusion, providing accessible banking services to residents who have historically been left out of the traditional financial system. By offering these services locally, New Orleans can keep financial resources within the community, promoting local spending and economic growth.

Investing in blockchain technology and Bitcoin not only positions New Orleans as a leader in financial innovation but also creates a more resilient and inclusive economy. By adopting these technologies, we can ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all residents, building a stronger, more prosperous New Orleans.

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## Additional Plan (Cont.)

### **Artificial Intelligence & Automation Protections and Tax Incentives**

#### **Executive Summary:**

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation continue to reshape industries, New Orleans must ensure that technological advancement does not come at the cost of human employment. This plan aims to balance innovation with job preservation by offering targeted tax incentives to businesses that prioritize human workers over automated processes. Additionally, a framework for AI governance will ensure the ethical use of AI in both the public and private sectors, promoting transparency and protecting residents from potential negative impacts.

#### **The Problem:**

AI and automation have transformed many industries, boosting efficiency and reducing costs. However, this shift has led to concerns about job displacement and economic inequality. Studies have shown that automation could potentially replace up to 30% of jobs globally by 2030, disproportionately affecting low-income workers in industries like manufacturing, retail, and hospitality. In New Orleans, where economic disparities are already a significant challenge, the unchecked adoption of AI could exacerbate unemployment and widen the gap between high-tech industries and traditional sectors. To address these challenges, the city must create policies that protect human jobs while encouraging responsible AI use.

#### **The Plan: Balancing AI Innovation with Job Preservation**

##### **1. Tax Incentives for Businesses Retaining Human Workers:**

- **Job Retention Tax Credit:** Introduce a *Job Retention Tax Credit* for businesses that maintain a workforce with minimal use of automation or AI. Companies that keep 90% or more of their positions staffed by

human workers can receive a tax credit of up to 5% of their payroll expenses. This incentive encourages businesses to invest in their workforce and retain jobs that might otherwise be replaced by machines. Similar models have been implemented in states like Ohio and Michigan, where tax credits have successfully incentivized companies to maintain or increase their employment levels.

- **Automation Transition Support:** For businesses that must adopt automation due to operational needs, the city will offer a *Transition Support Grant*. This grant provides financial support to companies that retain displaced workers by training them for new roles within the company, such as managing or maintaining automated systems. By covering up to 50% of retraining costs, the city ensures that workers can adapt to technological changes without losing their livelihoods.
- **Bonus Tax Reduction for Small Businesses:** Small businesses (with fewer than 50 employees) that refrain from automating customer-facing roles, such as retail clerks, service staff, or receptionists, can receive an additional 3% tax reduction on their annual business taxes. This encourages small businesses, which often operate on tight margins, to prioritize human interaction and customer service over automation.

## 2. Ethical AI Governance Framework:

- **Transparency Requirements for AI Use:** Implement a city-wide policy that requires companies using AI for decision-making processes (e.g., hiring, lending, and customer service) to disclose how these systems function and ensure that their algorithms do not

perpetuate biases. This aligns with best practices from cities like New York, which have introduced similar transparency measures to protect against discriminatory AI practices .

- **AI Impact Assessments:** Require companies deploying AI systems that could affect more than 100 jobs to conduct an *AI Impact Assessment* before implementation. This assessment will evaluate the potential socio-economic impacts, including job displacement risks, and recommend strategies to mitigate negative effects. The assessment process will be streamlined to avoid bureaucratic delays while ensuring that businesses carefully consider the human impact of automation.
- **Public Sector AI Regulation:** Establish an AI Ethics Committee within the city government to oversee the use of AI in public services. This committee will ensure that AI technologies used in law enforcement, traffic management, and public administration respect residents' privacy and civil rights, providing transparency about how AI is applied in government operations.

### 3. Promoting Human-Centered Innovation:

- **AI-Free Business Certification Program:** Launch an *AI-Free Business Certification* for businesses that commit to maintaining human-staffed operations without adopting automated systems. Certified businesses will receive promotional benefits, such as highlighted listings on city-supported websites and digital platforms, encouraging consumers to support businesses that prioritize human jobs. This program is modeled after similar initiatives that highlight



environmentally sustainable practices, helping consumers make informed choices that align with their values.

- **Tech Innovation Hubs with Human-Centric Focus:** Create innovation hubs that focus on developing new technologies that complement, rather than replace, human labor. By encouraging startups and tech companies to develop solutions that enhance human productivity without eliminating jobs, New Orleans can position itself as a leader in creating a balanced, people-centered tech ecosystem.

### **Economic Impact:**

The proposed protections and incentives are designed to promote responsible AI adoption while ensuring that businesses have the resources to maintain a strong human workforce. The *Job Retention Tax Credit* and *Transition Support Grant* are expected to cost \$10 million annually, but they will be offset by maintaining employment levels and reducing the demand for public assistance programs. As businesses benefit from lower taxes and consumers are encouraged to support AI-free operations, the local economy will see increased spending and a stronger sense of community support.

By fostering an environment where AI is used ethically and transparently, New Orleans can attract tech companies that value responsible innovation, creating new high-paying jobs and investment opportunities. Additionally, training programs and support for displaced workers ensure that the workforce remains adaptable, ready to thrive in an evolving job market. These measures will help New Orleans navigate the challenges of technological change, ensuring that economic progress benefits all residents.

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2. Ohio Department of Job and Family Services: Job Retention Tax Credit - <https://jfs.ohio.gov/>
3. New York City AI Bias Regulations: <https://www1.nyc.gov/>
4. National Employment Law Project: Impact of Automation on Low-Income Workers - <https://www.nelp.org/>



**Additional Plan (Cont.)**

**Public Works and AI/Automation: A Safety Net for Displaced Workers**

**Overview:**

As advancements in **artificial intelligence (AI)** and **automation** reshape the workforce, many traditional jobs in **construction, plumbing, and other trades** are at risk. While we cannot entirely prevent this technological shift, we can ensure that the people of New Orleans have a safety net. My administration will guarantee **public works positions** for every individual who loses their job due to AI or automation, strengthening the city’s workforce while providing stability for affected workers.

**Job Reallocation Strategy**

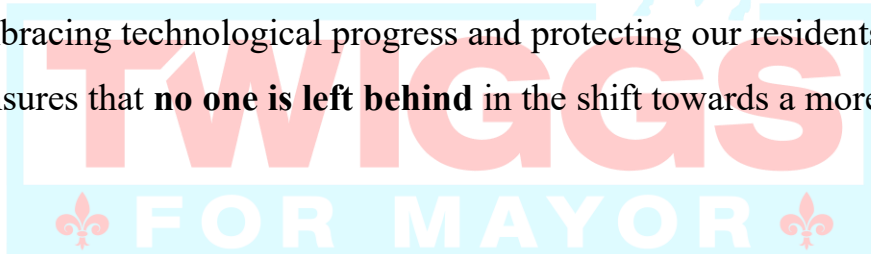
- **Public Works Opportunities:** Displaced workers will be offered **guaranteed employment** in the Public Works department. This will include roles in **infrastructure development, city maintenance, beautification projects, and disaster preparedness**. By expanding our workforce, we can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, turning potential job loss into an opportunity for the city.
- **Upskilling and Training Programs:** We will partner with local unions and trade schools to provide **retraining programs** for workers transitioning into new roles within Public Works. This will ensure that workers are prepared for their new positions and can continue to develop their skills.

**Incentivizing Businesses and Taxation Policies**

- **Incentives to Retain Human Workers:** Businesses that choose to keep human workers instead of automating will receive **tax breaks** and other incentives, encouraging them to prioritize local employment.
- **Automation Tax:** Companies that opt to replace human labor with automated systems will be required to pay a **tax on autonomous production**. The revenue from this tax will be directed to a **Public Works Trust**, which will be used to fund salaries and training for displaced workers, ensuring that our workforce remains robust and adaptive.

### **Balancing Progress with Protection**

While technology and AI bring efficiencies, they should not come at the cost of **human livelihoods**. By implementing these policies, we can strike a balance between embracing technological progress and protecting our residents. This approach ensures that **no one is left behind** in the shift towards a more automated economy.



**It's Time**

## **Section 5: City Council**

### **Restoring Power to the Mayor's Office: A Critical Shift for New Orleans**

#### **Background: The Power Shift in New Orleans Governance**

Over the past decade, the balance of power in New Orleans has shifted significantly from the Mayor's office to the City Council. This shift has led to a governance structure where the City Council exercises substantial control over city contracts, infrastructure projects, and policy direction, often at the expense of cohesive leadership from the Mayor's office. The fragmentation of power has hindered the city's ability to address critical issues like infrastructure failures, crime reduction, and economic development effectively. A return to a stronger executive role for the Mayor is essential for the unified, decisive leadership that New Orleans desperately needs.

The roles of key City Council members, such as Helena Moreno and Oliver Thomas, have come under scrutiny for their handling of power and decision-making. Both have held influential positions, but their actions have often been criticized for contributing to political gridlock and a lack of accountability in city governance. Numerous historical news articles and reports have highlighted how the City Council's approach has not only diluted the Mayor's power but also stalled progress on major issues affecting New Orleans.

#### **The Need for a Restoration of Executive Power**

When I am elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will work to restore the power of the Mayor's office to ensure that the city can act swiftly and effectively in response to challenges. A strong Mayor's office is not about consolidating authority for personal gain; it is about providing a single point of accountability

and leadership that can unify the city's efforts. In recent years, the City Council has taken over key areas of decision-making, such as contract approvals and budget allocations, which traditionally fell under the Mayor's purview. This power shift has resulted in slow-moving projects, inconsistent policy implementation, and a lack of coordination between the executive and legislative branches of city government.

### **Critique of Current City Council Leadership: Moreno and Thomas' Record**

Helena Moreno, a prominent member of the City Council, has been at the forefront of many of these changes. While Moreno has positioned herself as a progressive leader, her tenure has been marked by criticism over her handling of city contracts and oversight. A 2022 report from *The Times-Picayune* highlighted how the Council's micromanagement of contracts contributed to delays in critical infrastructure projects, such as the long-overdue repairs to the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB). Instead of facilitating solutions, Moreno's actions have often created bureaucratic bottlenecks that hinder progress.

Similarly, Oliver Thomas, with his significant influence on council matters, has faced criticism for failing to push for meaningful reforms. Thomas has focused on gaining leverage over budgetary matters, often using his position to challenge decisions made by the Mayor's office without offering viable alternatives. A 2023 *NOLA.com* article outlined the struggles between the City Council and the Mayor's office, attributing many delays in project funding and implementation to disagreements fueled by Council members like Thomas. This dynamic has led to public frustration over the city's inability to address persistent issues like crime, deteriorating infrastructure, and economic stagnation.

The results of these power struggles are clear: stalled projects, unaddressed community needs, and a city that lacks unified leadership. The overreach by the

City Council has left New Orleans without a clear direction, as different branches of government vie for control instead of working together.

## **Restoring the Mayor's Authority for Effective Governance**

### **1. Reclaiming Contract Oversight:**

As Mayor, I will push for a return of contract oversight to the Mayor's office, streamlining the process for approving and managing city contracts. The current system, dominated by the City Council, has resulted in inefficiencies and delays that have hurt local businesses and slowed the delivery of critical services. By centralizing contract management within the Mayor's office, we can ensure that projects move forward without unnecessary political interference, allowing the city to respond more effectively to infrastructure needs and community concerns. This approach mirrors successful governance models in other cities, where strong mayoral control has led to faster project completion and improved service delivery.

### **2. Overhauling the Contracting Process:**

A complete overhaul of how contracts are awarded in New Orleans is long overdue. The current system, influenced heavily by the City Council, has been criticized for a lack of transparency and favoritism. Historical reports, such as a 2019 investigation by *The Advocate*, have highlighted cases where contracts were delayed or awarded based on political considerations rather than merit. As Mayor, I will implement a transparent bidding process, with public disclosures and independent reviews to ensure that contracts are awarded based on competence and value to the city, not political connections. This overhaul will restore public confidence in how the city manages its resources and ensure that taxpayers' money is used effectively.

**3. Focusing on Accountability and Efficiency:**

Restoring the Mayor’s power includes reestablishing accountability measures that allow for direct oversight of city departments and projects. This shift will ensure that the Mayor’s office can hold department heads accountable for delays, cost overruns, and failures in service delivery. By taking back control of key areas like the S&WB and public works projects, the Mayor’s office can create a clear chain of command, making it easier to address problems as they arise and provide timely solutions to residents. This approach will also facilitate coordination with state and federal agencies, ensuring that New Orleans can leverage external resources more effectively.

**4. Addressing Failures in City Council Leadership:**

The failures of the City Council, particularly those of Helena Moreno and Oliver Thomas, highlight the need for a strong Mayor to provide decisive leadership. While both have spoken about transparency and reform, their actions have often led to more political conflict than tangible progress. A return to a strong Mayor’s office will refocus the city’s leadership on getting results rather than engaging in endless debates. It is time for a shift from a council-centric model that prioritizes power dynamics to a governance model that prioritizes the needs of New Orleans residents.

**Economic and Community Benefits of a Strong Mayor’s Office:**

Restoring power to the Mayor’s office is not just a matter of political structure—it is a pathway to a more effective and efficient city government. By reclaiming oversight of contracts and streamlining processes, the city can save millions of dollars annually through reduced project delays and lower administrative costs. Faster project completion means better roads, improved water services, and timely



responses to residents' needs. Moreover, a unified leadership structure allows New Orleans to present a cohesive vision to investors, state partners, and federal agencies, making it easier to secure funding for major initiatives like flood mitigation and economic development.

A strong Mayor's office, backed by clear accountability, will attract businesses that value stability and efficiency, creating jobs and fostering economic growth. Most importantly, this shift will restore faith in city leadership, showing residents that their government is working for them, not bogged down by internal conflicts.

By restoring the proper balance of power between the Mayor's office and the City Council, we can ensure that New Orleans has the leadership it needs to face the challenges of the future. It is time for a change, and as Mayor, I will be committed to making that change a reality.

### **The Need for a Strong Mayor's Office and Collaborative Governance**

New Orleans requires a balance between strong executive leadership and a collaborative, harmonious relationship with the City Council to address its most pressing challenges. The current political dynamics have created a divide between the Mayor's office and the City Council, leading to inefficiencies, delays in critical projects, and missed opportunities for growth and reform. Strengthening the Mayor's office while fostering a more collaborative relationship with the City Council will enable New Orleans to achieve more unified governance, ensuring that both branches work together for the city's benefit.

A stronger Mayor's office is essential for providing clear direction, accountability, and streamlined decision-making. Yet, this needs to be balanced with a City Council that feels valued, heard, and engaged in shaping policies that impact their

constituents. By creating a governance structure that respects both roles, New Orleans can avoid the political infighting that has historically hindered progress.

## **The Plan: Empowering the Mayor's Office and Enhancing Council Collaboration**

### **1. Clear Division of Responsibilities and Authority:**

- **Reestablishing Executive Powers:** One of the key priorities is to reestablish clear executive authority over certain aspects of city governance, such as contract approvals, budgetary allocations, and department oversight. The Mayor's office should have the authority to make decisions in these areas to ensure a unified strategy and timely execution of city projects. This will prevent unnecessary delays caused by multiple layers of approval. As seen in cities like Houston and Atlanta, where strong executive powers enable swift response to infrastructure needs, a clearly defined executive role can lead to more effective governance .
- **Legislative Role of the City Council:** While the Mayor should have the power to execute and implement city policies, the City Council's role should focus on crafting legislation, approving budgets, and providing oversight. A clearer division of labor between these roles will help reduce overlap, confusion, and competition between branches. This approach also aligns with successful governance models in cities like Boston, where the City Council focuses on legislative initiatives while the Mayor drives execution .

### **2. Enhanced Communication Channels and Regular Collaboration:**

- **Monthly Joint Strategy Sessions:** To ensure that the Mayor’s office and the City Council are aligned on key priorities, the Mayor will host monthly joint strategy sessions with all council members. These sessions will focus on reviewing progress on city projects, discussing upcoming legislative needs, and aligning on strategic goals for the city. These meetings will also serve as an opportunity for the Council to voice concerns directly to the Mayor’s team and work collaboratively to find solutions. Such a practice mirrors successful models in cities like Seattle, where regular communication has improved cooperation between the executive and legislative branches.
- **Open-Door Policy for Council Members:** To create a more inclusive environment, the Mayor’s office will adopt an open-door policy for council members, encouraging them to bring forward the concerns of their districts. This policy ensures that the Council feels heard and respected, fostering a sense of partnership. The goal is to create a political culture where disagreements are handled through dialogue rather than through public confrontations.

### 3. Establishing a Joint Task Force for Key Initiatives:

- **Task Force for Major Projects:** For significant city projects, such as infrastructure investments, crime reduction programs, or economic development initiatives, the Mayor’s office will establish joint task forces that include representatives from both the Mayor’s team and the City Council. These task forces will ensure that both branches are involved in planning and execution, allowing the Council to have input while ensuring that the Mayor’s office retains authority over implementation. This model allows for shared accountability and has

been effective in cities like Denver, where joint task forces have accelerated project timelines and improved project outcomes .

- **Cross-Branch Committees:** Creating cross-branch committees for recurring issues like budget adjustments, contract renewals, and departmental reviews will help streamline processes and ensure that both the Mayor’s office and the Council are on the same page. These committees will make recommendations that the Mayor can implement, thus speeding up the decision-making process.

#### 4. **Transparency and Accountability in Decision-Making:**

- **Public Reporting of Joint Decisions:** To build trust with the public, the Mayor’s office will publish quarterly reports on the outcomes of joint strategy sessions and task force progress. This transparency allows residents to see how the Mayor’s office and the City Council are working together, fostering a culture of accountability. Public reporting helps reduce the potential for political posturing, as all decisions and discussions are documented and available for public review .
- **Establishing a Performance Review System:** Implement a performance review system for city projects that evaluates the effectiveness of both the Mayor’s office and the City Council’s contributions to city governance. This system will track project timelines, budget adherence, and community impact, allowing both branches to identify areas for improvement and celebrate shared successes.

## 5. Overhauling the Contracting Process for Fairness and Efficiency:

- **Simplifying Contract Approvals:** Currently, the contract approval process in New Orleans is often bogged down by City Council intervention, which has led to delays in crucial projects like road repairs and water infrastructure improvements. By streamlining the process, the Mayor's office will handle preliminary contract approvals based on set criteria, with the City Council providing a final review only for contracts above a specified threshold, such as \$5 million. This system balances oversight with efficiency, ensuring that large contracts receive proper scrutiny while smaller projects move forward without delays.
- **Creating a Public Contracting Portal:** Develop a public online portal where all city contracts are posted, including information on bidding processes, selection criteria, and awarded contractors. This portal will be accessible to both the public and the City Council, ensuring transparency and reducing the opportunity for mismanagement. A similar model in cities like Austin, Texas, has successfully increased public trust in the contracting process.

## 6. Empowering the City Council through Collaborative Policy

### Development:

- **Participatory Budgeting:** Implement a participatory budgeting process where both the Mayor's office and the City Council collaborate directly with residents to determine budget priorities for key areas like public safety, education, and infrastructure. This process empowers council members to engage with their constituents

while ensuring that the Mayor’s office can align the final budget with the city’s strategic goals .

- **Joint Legislative-Executive Task Force for Economic**

**Development:** Establish a special task force focused on attracting new businesses and supporting local entrepreneurship. This task force would include council members, the Mayor’s economic advisors, and leaders from the local business community, working together to streamline regulations, offer incentives, and identify new opportunities for growth.

**The Benefits of a Stronger, More Collaborative City Government:**

By empowering the Mayor’s office with clearer authority and fostering a collaborative relationship with the City Council, New Orleans can achieve a more efficient, transparent, and effective government. A streamlined contracting process will ensure that critical infrastructure projects are completed on time, while joint task forces and regular strategy sessions will create a shared vision for the city’s future. This approach also reduces political infighting, allowing the focus to remain on delivering results for residents.

A stronger Mayor’s office does not mean sidelining the City Council—it means creating a governance structure where both branches can excel in their roles and work together for the common good. This balanced approach will allow New Orleans to address long-standing challenges like crime, economic disparity, and infrastructure decay with unity and determination.

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## **Section 6: Other City Policies**

### **Addressing the Abuse of Short-Term Rentals in New Orleans**

#### **The Problem: Unchecked Short-Term Rentals and Their Impact**

Short-term rentals (STRs) have proliferated throughout New Orleans in recent years, providing visitors with flexible accommodation options and homeowners with opportunities to earn extra income. However, the rapid growth of STRs has come with significant downsides, particularly as properties once available for long-term residents have been converted into quasi-hotels, reducing housing availability and contributing to rising rent costs. A 2022 study by *The Times-Picayune* highlighted how entire neighborhoods, particularly in areas like the French Quarter and Marigny, have seen homes converted into short-term rental properties, creating "ghost blocks" where few permanent residents remain.

This trend has contributed to a housing affordability crisis in New Orleans, where the demand for long-term rentals far outstrips supply, driving up prices and displacing residents. Additionally, many STR owners are out-of-state investors who have little connection to the local community, profiting from New Orleans' cultural appeal without reinvesting in the city. This disconnect has led to concerns about neighborhood stability, noise complaints, and a diminished sense of community. These problems have been exacerbated by a lack of effective regulation and enforcement, allowing some property owners to skirt the rules and operate illegally, further straining local resources.

#### **The Plan: Regulating and Reining in Abuses of Short-Term Rentals**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will implement a comprehensive approach to address the abuses of the short-term rental market, balancing the economic benefits of STRs with the need to preserve affordable



housing and maintain neighborhood integrity. This plan will include tighter regulations, enhanced enforcement mechanisms, and a focus on protecting New Orleans' unique character.

**1. Establishing Stronger Regulation and Enforcement:**

- **Limiting STR Licenses per Individual or Entity:** Restrict the number of short-term rental licenses that any single individual or entity can hold to no more than two properties. This regulation is designed to prevent the dominance of out-of-state investors who often purchase multiple properties and convert them into STRs. A similar approach has been effective in cities like San Francisco, where limits on STR licenses have helped curb speculative buying and stabilized local rental markets.
- **Creating a Local Preference for Licensing:** Prioritize STR licenses for New Orleans residents who occupy their properties for a significant portion of the year. This ensures that the benefits of short-term rental income primarily support local homeowners rather than absentee landlords. By requiring that at least one of the licensed properties be the owner's primary residence, the city can foster a balance between welcoming visitors and maintaining community roots.
- **Enhanced Penalties for Illegal Operations:** Implement stricter fines and penalties for property owners who operate STRs without the necessary permits or who violate occupancy limits. These penalties will include significant monetary fines and the potential revocation of STR licenses. This approach has been used successfully in cities like

Barcelona, where increased enforcement has reduced illegal STR activity by nearly 30%.

## 2. Improving the Enforcement Infrastructure:

- **Dedicated STR Compliance Task Force:** Establish a city-wide STR Compliance Task Force responsible for monitoring and enforcing STR regulations. This task force will work with local neighborhood associations and use data from booking platforms like Airbnb and Vrbo to identify unlicensed rentals and ensure compliance with city rules. By utilizing technology and community input, the task force can operate efficiently and address violations quickly.
- **STR Registration and Tax Compliance Portal:** Create an online registration and tax compliance portal for STR operators, making it easier to obtain the necessary permits and pay applicable taxes. The portal will also provide resources on the rules and regulations governing STRs in New Orleans, ensuring that property owners are fully informed about their responsibilities. This transparency will help reduce accidental violations and ensure that STR operators contribute their fair share to the city's tax base.

## 3. Redirecting STR Revenue to Address Housing Challenges:

- **Affordable Housing Fund:** Allocate a portion of the revenue generated from STR permits and fines to an *Affordable Housing Fund*. This fund will support the development of new affordable housing units, assist in the rehabilitation of blighted properties, and provide rental assistance to low-income residents. By reinvesting STR-related revenue into affordable housing, New Orleans can address the housing

shortage while ensuring that tourism dollars benefit the broader community.

- **Neighborhood Stabilization Grants:** Use STR tax revenues to establish a grant program aimed at preserving the character of neighborhoods most affected by STRs. These grants will support initiatives like the creation of community centers, the maintenance of public spaces, and cultural preservation projects, helping to keep the unique spirit of New Orleans alive even as neighborhoods experience demographic changes.

#### 4. **Balancing Tourism and Community Needs:**

- **Promoting Responsible Tourism:** Work with tourism boards and travel platforms to promote responsible tourism that respects the character and needs of New Orleans' neighborhoods. This includes encouraging visitors to book STRs that are legally licensed and located outside of already oversaturated tourist areas, helping to spread the economic benefits of tourism across the city. A similar approach in cities like Amsterdam has successfully redirected visitor traffic to less crowded neighborhoods, balancing tourism with residents' quality of life.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate New Orleans residents about the city's STR policies and the importance of reporting illegal activity. By involving residents in the regulatory process, the city can create a sense of shared responsibility for preserving the integrity of New Orleans' neighborhoods.

### **Economic and Community Benefits:**

This plan aims to create a balanced STR market that supports local homeowners while reducing the negative impacts of investor-driven property conversions.

Limiting STR licenses and prioritizing local owners will help stabilize the rental market, making more properties available for long-term tenants and alleviating upward pressure on rents. Enhanced enforcement will ensure that those who operate within the rules are not undercut by illegal operators, creating a fairer market for all.

Reinvesting STR revenues into affordable housing initiatives will directly address the displacement concerns caused by STR proliferation. By leveraging these funds, New Orleans can build new housing units and support low-income residents, ensuring that those who call the city home are not priced out by rising housing costs. Additionally, focusing on responsible tourism will maintain the city's reputation as a welcoming destination while ensuring that residents' needs come first.

With a thoughtful approach to short-term rentals, New Orleans can strike a balance between embracing innovation and preserving the city's culture and communities. This plan will ensure that STRs remain a part of the economic landscape without sacrificing the stability and affordability that New Orleans residents deserve.

### **Sources:**

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## Cultural Protection Initiatives for a Diverse New Orleans

### Executive Summary:

New Orleans is a city rich in cultural diversity, history, and traditions, with influences from Indigenous American, African, French, Spanish, and Caribbean communities shaping its unique identity. As the city continues to grow and evolve, it is crucial to protect and preserve this cultural heritage for future generations. A comprehensive approach to cultural protection must prioritize the recognition and safeguarding of Indigenous American history, the protection of culturally significant lands and buildings, and the promotion of inclusivity and diversity in all aspects of city life. By implementing robust protections, New Orleans can ensure that its heritage remains a living part of the community, celebrated and respected by all who call the city home.

### The Problem: Cultural Erosion and Loss of Heritage

The rapid pace of urban development in New Orleans, combined with economic pressures, has put many culturally significant sites and traditions at risk.

Indigenous American communities, in particular, have faced challenges in preserving their cultural heritage, with limited protections for sacred lands, historical markers, and traditional practices. The displacement of these communities over centuries, coupled with a lack of formal recognition and support, has led to the loss of important cultural knowledge and landmarks. Additionally, many historic buildings and sites that hold significance for diverse communities—including African American, Creole, Vietnamese, and Latinx populations—are at risk of being overshadowed by new developments or neglected due to insufficient resources for preservation.

As a city known for its rich cultural mosaic, New Orleans has a responsibility to ensure that its diverse heritage is protected and celebrated. This means not only

safeguarding physical sites but also preserving the intangible cultural practices, languages, and traditions that make New Orleans a unique and vibrant city.

Without intentional efforts, the pressures of gentrification, commercialization, and development could further erode the cultural foundations that define New Orleans' identity.

### **The Plan: A Comprehensive Approach to Cultural Protection**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will implement a multi-faceted strategy to protect the cultural heritage of all communities, with a special emphasis on recognizing and preserving Indigenous American history and contributions.

This plan focuses on protecting land and buildings of cultural significance, supporting community-led initiatives, and fostering an inclusive environment where all cultures are celebrated and respected.

#### **1. Protecting Sacred Lands and Spaces:**

- **Recognition of Indigenous Lands:** Formally recognize and protect areas of historical and cultural significance to Indigenous American communities within New Orleans, including sacred sites, burial grounds, and traditional gathering places. This initiative will involve collaborating with Indigenous leaders to identify these spaces and ensure that they receive the protection they deserve. Establishing protective ordinances, similar to those in cities like Seattle and Minneapolis, can prevent development on these lands and ensure they are preserved for cultural practices and education.
- **Land Trusts and Conservation Easements:** Establish a *Cultural Land Trust* that allows Indigenous American and other cultural communities to hold land in perpetuity for cultural and educational

purposes. By working with local land conservation organizations, we can create conservation easements that protect these spaces from development while providing opportunities for cultural gatherings and community events. This approach has been successful in other regions where cultural land trusts have preserved historical sites and provided communities with spaces to reconnect with their heritage.

- **Support for Urban Green Spaces with Cultural Significance:** Integrate cultural narratives into the creation and preservation of urban green spaces, such as parks and community gardens, ensuring that they reflect the heritage of the neighborhoods they serve. This can include installing educational signage, hosting cultural events, and planting native plant species important to Indigenous practices.

## 2. **Preserving Culturally Significant Buildings and Historic Sites:**

- **Cultural Heritage Grants for Building Preservation:** Create a *Cultural Heritage Preservation Fund* to provide grants to communities and non-profits for the restoration and preservation of buildings that hold cultural significance. Priority will be given to projects that celebrate the contributions of Indigenous, African American, and immigrant communities to the fabric of New Orleans. This initiative ensures that historically important structures, such as churches, community centers, and homes of cultural leaders, are preserved for future generations.
- **Historic Designation for Cultural Landmarks:** Work with local heritage organizations to identify and designate buildings and sites of cultural importance as historic landmarks. This designation will



protect them from demolition or inappropriate alterations. Cities like New York have successfully used historic landmark designations to preserve buildings that reflect the heritage of marginalized communities, ensuring that their stories remain a visible part of the cityscape.

- **Inclusive Zoning and Development Policies:** Update zoning regulations to include considerations for cultural preservation, requiring developers to conduct cultural impact assessments before proceeding with projects in historically significant areas. This will ensure that new developments are sensitive to the cultural character of neighborhoods, preventing displacement and the erasure of cultural landmarks.

### 3. Supporting Cultural Traditions and Practices:

- **Cultural Education Programs in Schools:** Integrate Indigenous American history and the diverse cultural heritage of New Orleans into school curricula, ensuring that students learn about the contributions of various communities to the city's history. By partnering with local cultural leaders and educators, we can develop programs that teach traditional practices, languages, and storytelling, ensuring that these traditions continue to thrive among younger generations.
- **Cultural Festivals and Events Fund:** Establish a *Cultural Festivals and Events Fund* to support community-led events that celebrate the cultural diversity of New Orleans. This fund will prioritize events organized by Indigenous, African American, Vietnamese, Latinx, and

other cultural groups, ensuring that all communities have the opportunity to share their heritage. By offering grants and logistical support, the city can help these events grow and reach wider audiences, strengthening the cultural bonds within New Orleans.

- **City-Supported Oral History Projects:** Launch a *New Orleans Cultural Memory Initiative* to document and preserve the stories of elders and cultural leaders from diverse backgrounds. These oral history projects will capture the lived experiences and traditions of Indigenous, African American, and immigrant communities, creating a digital archive that can be accessed by schools, researchers, and the public. Cities like Los Angeles have implemented similar initiatives to preserve the narratives of their diverse populations, creating a lasting legacy for future generations.

#### 4. **Promoting Economic Opportunities for Cultural Preservation:**

- **Support for Culturally Significant Small Businesses:** Provide targeted grants and tax incentives for small businesses that are integral to the cultural fabric of New Orleans, such as traditional craftspeople, cultural tour guides, and artists. These businesses play a key role in preserving and sharing cultural traditions and should be supported as vital contributors to the local economy. This approach aligns with models like those in New Mexico, where cultural preservation is integrated into economic development plans to support Native American artisans.
- **Community Land Banks for Cultural Use:** Establish community land banks that focus on acquiring and maintaining properties for

cultural and educational use. These land banks can support initiatives like community centers, cultural museums, and artist residencies that celebrate and preserve the diverse heritage of New Orleans. The goal is to ensure that spaces for cultural expression are not lost to market forces and remain accessible to all.

### **Economic and Community Impact:**

Investing in cultural protection initiatives is an investment in the soul of New Orleans. By safeguarding culturally significant lands, buildings, and traditions, we can create a city that respects its history while providing opportunities for future generations to connect with their heritage. Protecting sacred lands and providing spaces for cultural expression fosters a sense of belonging and pride among Indigenous communities and other historically marginalized groups. This, in turn, strengthens the social fabric of New Orleans, reducing tensions and promoting unity.

Preserving culturally significant buildings and supporting community events also attracts tourism that is respectful and sustainable, providing economic benefits without erasing the city's character. Visitors drawn to New Orleans for its rich history and vibrant culture contribute to local businesses, support artisans, and help fund preservation efforts. By creating a balanced approach that respects the past while looking toward the future, we can build a city where diversity is celebrated, and every community has the opportunity to thrive.

These initiatives will ensure that New Orleans remains a place where culture is not just remembered, but lived—where every resident feels connected to the city's story, and where that story continues to grow in new and meaningful ways.

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## **Addressing Overburdened Departments: A Path to Efficiency and Impact**

### **The Problem: Understaffed and Overburdened Departments**

In New Orleans, many city departments face the challenge of being severely understaffed, leaving dedicated individuals to manage significant responsibilities without adequate support. A striking example is Rachel Kimbel, the sole employee in the Environmental Health and Compliance Office. Tasked with enforcing environmental regulations and ensuring compliance across both Orleans and Jefferson Parish, Rachel is expected to address a broad range of issues with minimal resources. This structure severely limits her ability to conduct thorough fieldwork and respond to the environmental health challenges that New Orleans faces.

This issue is not isolated to the Environmental Health and Compliance Office; numerous other departments in New Orleans face similar constraints. Whether it's tackling homelessness, ensuring public safety, or maintaining infrastructure, too often, a single individual or a small team is expected to carry out duties that would typically require a more robust staff. This not only puts an immense burden on these workers but also means that critical services are delivered inefficiently, leading to delays and missed opportunities to address pressing issues.

### **The Plan: Streamlining Operations for Better Service Delivery**

When I'm elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will prioritize the consolidation and restructuring of these overburdened departments. By pooling resources, eliminating redundancy, and creating a more efficient support structure, we can ensure that city employees like Rachel Kimbel have the time, tools, and team support needed to make a real difference. The goal is to provide comprehensive services while reducing the strain on individual workers, allowing them to focus on impactful actions rather than administrative struggles.

## 1. Consolidating Related Departments for Efficiency:

- **Merging Environmental Services and Health Compliance:**  
Combine the Environmental Health and Compliance Office with related departments focused on public health and environmental services. This consolidation would allow Rachel Kimbel and her counterparts to have access to additional fieldworkers, data analysts, and administrative support, enabling a more coordinated approach to environmental health challenges. This model has been effective in other cities, such as Portland, Oregon, where merging environmental and public health efforts has led to improved service delivery and better use of resources.
- **Centralized Support for Small Departments:** Create a centralized support office that can provide administrative, legal, and technical assistance to small, specialized departments. This would free up fieldworkers and compliance officers to spend more time in the field, conducting inspections, engaging with the community, and addressing violations directly. By sharing resources across departments, the city can reduce overhead costs while increasing the effectiveness of frontline services.

## 2. Increasing Fieldwork Capacity for Key Roles:

- **Expanding the Environmental Health Team:** Allocate additional resources to hire more fieldworkers within the Environmental Health and Compliance Office, providing a team to support Rachel Kimbel's efforts. By adding just four more field officers, the city could significantly increase its capacity to conduct environmental

inspections, enforce compliance, and address community concerns. This investment would improve the city's ability to respond to environmental health challenges, from illegal dumping to water contamination issues, ensuring a cleaner and safer New Orleans.

- **Enhanced Training and Cross-Department Collaboration:** Develop training programs that enable employees from related departments to collaborate on compliance and health issues, sharing expertise and workload. For example, workers in public works and environmental services could be cross-trained to assist with compliance checks during their regular duties, creating a more adaptable and responsive workforce.

### 3. **Creating a Performance-Based Funding Model:**

- **Performance Audits for Small Departments:** Conduct regular performance audits of departments like the Environmental Health and Compliance Office to identify resource gaps and assess the impact of their work. By linking additional funding and support to measurable performance outcomes—such as the number of inspections completed or compliance issues resolved—the city can ensure that resources are directed where they are most needed.
- **Funding Incentives for Improved Efficiency:** Introduce a funding incentive program that rewards departments for finding innovative ways to improve service delivery without additional staffing. Departments that successfully streamline their operations or collaborate with other city services will receive priority access to training programs, technology upgrades, and other resources. This

approach encourages a culture of efficiency and problem-solving while ensuring that departments have the support they need to succeed.

#### 4. **Community Engagement and Transparency in Service Delivery:**

- **Public Reporting on Departmental Workload and Impact:** Create an online platform where residents can view the work of small departments like the Environmental Health and Compliance Office, including data on inspections, community reports, and response times. This transparency allows the public to understand the challenges these departments face and provides an avenue for direct feedback and community support. It also ensures that the city remains accountable for how resources are allocated and used .
- **Engaging Local Universities and Nonprofits:** Partner with local universities, such as Tulane and the University of New Orleans, to create internship and volunteer programs that provide additional support to understaffed departments. By involving students and community volunteers in data collection, outreach, and basic inspections, the city can expand its capacity while offering valuable real-world experience to participants.

#### **Economic and Community Impact:**

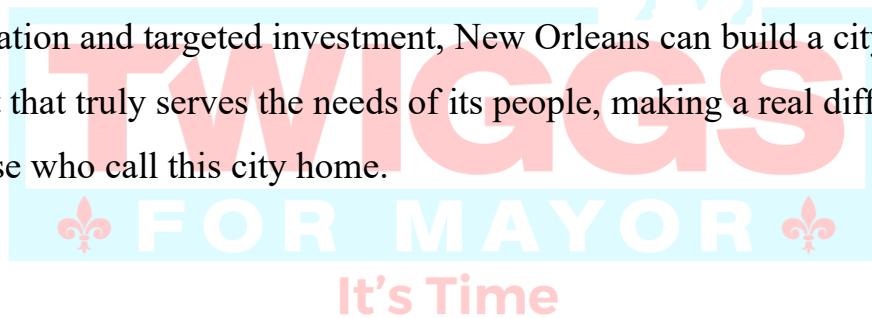
Consolidating and restructuring New Orleans' overburdened departments will not only improve service delivery but also result in significant cost savings. By merging overlapping functions and creating centralized support structures, the city could save millions in administrative expenses each year. These savings can then



be reinvested in critical areas such as public health, environmental protection, and housing support, directly benefiting residents.

Furthermore, improving the effectiveness of departments like the Environmental Health and Compliance Office will have a direct impact on the quality of life in New Orleans. A more robust and coordinated approach to environmental compliance means cleaner neighborhoods, safer drinking water, and better-managed waste—issues that are critical to public health and well-being. By empowering the individuals who work on the frontlines, we can ensure that every resident enjoys a healthier, more vibrant city.

Streamlining city government is not just about cutting costs; it's about ensuring that our limited resources are used in the most effective way possible. By focusing on consolidation and targeted investment, New Orleans can build a city government that truly serves the needs of its people, making a real difference in the lives of those who call this city home.



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## **Budget Reallocation and Accountability: A Commitment to Fiscal Responsibility**

### **The Foundation of Our Plan: Budget Reallocation Over Budget Increases**

When I am elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, the guiding principle behind *NOLA's Prosperity and Cultural Preservation Plan* will be a focus on re-allocating existing resources, rather than increasing the overall city budget. By carefully assessing and re-prioritizing how funds are currently used, we can make significant improvements to critical areas such as infrastructure, mental health services, public safety, and cultural preservation without burdening taxpayers with new expenses. This approach emphasizes fiscal responsibility and ensures that we can achieve our goals while keeping the city's financial health intact.

### **The Importance of Budget Reallocation**

New Orleans, like many cities, faces the challenge of managing finite resources while addressing growing needs. A budget reallocation approach recognizes that there are inefficiencies within the existing spending framework—wasteful departments, redundant programs, and underutilized resources that could be redirected toward more impactful initiatives. For example, consolidating departments and streamlining operations will free up millions of dollars, which can then be reallocated toward high-priority areas like infrastructure repairs and public health services.

By focusing on reallocating funds, our plan ensures that we can invest in critical projects without expanding the overall budget. This is especially important given the economic challenges that New Orleans faces, including high poverty rates and the need for job creation. Our administration's commitment to fiscal responsibility means that we will prioritize spending in ways that directly benefit residents, rather than resorting to blanket budget increases.

### **A Balanced Budget: Our Commitment to Accountability**

Keeping the budget balanced is a top priority for our administration. This means that any new initiative we propose will be matched by identifying areas where savings can be found or where funds can be redirected. For example, the savings generated by merging redundant departments or negotiating better contracts through centralized procurement can be used to fund initiatives like expanding mental health services or investing in renewable energy projects.

This commitment to a balanced budget is not just a financial strategy—it is a promise to the people of New Orleans that their tax dollars will be spent wisely. It reflects our belief that the city’s growth and progress should not come at the cost of long-term fiscal stability. By managing the city’s resources carefully, we can ensure that New Orleans remains resilient and prepared for future challenges.

### **Implementing a Stop Measure for Fiscal Accountability**

To reinforce this commitment to fiscal responsibility, we propose a stop measure designed to hold the City Council accountable for responsible budget management. This measure would prohibit the disbursement of salaries to City Council members if they fail to complete their fiduciary duties and maintain a balanced budget. Specifically, if the City Council were to pass a budget that results in a deficit or fails to prioritize essential services, their salaries would be withheld until they take corrective action. This policy is designed to ensure that elected officials remain focused on their duty to the residents of New Orleans and do not neglect their responsibility to maintain the city’s financial stability.

### **Why the Mayor’s Office Is Excluded from This Stop Measure**

Currently, the City Council holds the authority over the budget and the allocation of funds in New Orleans. Given this responsibility, it is appropriate for the stop measure to apply to the City Council, as they have the power to approve or reject

spending proposals and to make adjustments to ensure fiscal balance. The Mayor's office, while playing a crucial role in proposing and implementing the budget, does not hold the same legislative control over budget approvals. Therefore, it is logical for the measure to focus on the body that has direct oversight of the city's finances.

Excluding the Mayor's office from this measure ensures that the executive branch can continue to focus on the day-to-day management of city operations and the execution of strategic initiatives, even in times of financial strain. The Mayor's role is to work collaboratively with the City Council to find solutions, make tough decisions, and ensure that the city's priorities are met. By holding the City Council accountable for their fiduciary duties, this measure creates a system where both branches of government are incentivized to work together toward a balanced and responsible budget.

### **Precedents for Accountability in Government Budgeting**

While the specific idea of withholding salaries from City Council members for failing to fulfill fiduciary duties is novel, there are precedents for similar accountability measures:

#### **1. California's Budget Accountability Act (Proposition 25):**

- In 2010, California passed Proposition 25, which included a clause stating that if the state legislature failed to pass a balanced budget by the constitutional deadline, legislators would forfeit their salaries until a budget was passed. This law aimed to hold state legislators accountable for delays in passing a budget and ensured that there were direct consequences for failing to meet fiscal deadlines.
- **Relevance to New Orleans:** Similar to Proposition 25, the proposed stop measure in New Orleans would create a financial incentive for

City Council members to prioritize their fiscal responsibilities, directly linking their pay to the timely and balanced approval of the budget.

## 2. **Municipal Financial Emergency Laws:**

- In several states, laws allow for the appointment of a financial emergency manager or the withholding of certain privileges from municipal councils if they fail to manage city finances responsibly. For example, in Michigan, the state can appoint an emergency manager to oversee a city's finances if it is determined that the city is failing to meet its financial obligations.
- **Relevance to New Orleans:** While not exactly the same, this precedent shows how higher levels of government can intervene when local councils fail to manage budgets responsibly. The proposed measure in New Orleans would focus on local accountability by incentivizing the City Council to act responsibly before state intervention is necessary.

## 3. **Performance-Based Incentives for Government Officials:**

- Some cities and states have introduced performance-based incentives for government officials, linking compensation to meeting performance benchmarks. Although typically positive incentives rather than punitive, these models reflect the concept of tying compensation to job performance.
- **Relevance to New Orleans:** The stop measure flips the logic of performance-based incentives by applying a financial penalty if City

Council members fail to meet their primary fiduciary duties, such as maintaining a balanced budget.

### **Economic and Community Benefits of Accountability**

Implementing this stop measure would establish a new standard for accountability in New Orleans' government, ensuring that those in positions of power are directly accountable to the people they serve. It would encourage transparency and deliberation in budget decisions, making sure that the city's resources are directed toward initiatives that truly benefit the community. This approach also gives residents confidence that their elected officials are committed to making decisions that prioritize fiscal health, rather than passing budgets that may serve political interests but harm the city's financial stability.

By focusing on reallocation rather than increasing the budget and implementing measures to ensure accountability, our administration will provide New Orleans with a clear path toward sustainable growth and progress. We will do whatever it takes to keep the budget balanced, ensuring that New Orleans is prepared for the future while remaining true to the needs of its residents.

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## **Reforming the Bid System in New Orleans: Embracing Private-Public Partnerships for Greater Efficiency and Accountability**

### **Introduction: The Flaws of the Traditional Bid System**

For decades, New Orleans has relied on a traditional public bid system to award contracts for city projects and services. While the bid system is intended to ensure fairness and competition, in practice, it has often led to inefficiencies, delays, and allegations of favoritism and corruption. Historically, the bid system in New Orleans has been plagued by issues that have undermined the city's ability to deliver quality public services and infrastructure projects. The time has come to rethink this outdated approach and embrace a model that can bring accountability, transparency, and efficiency: Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs).

### **Historical Issues with the Bid System in New Orleans**

#### **1. Favoritism and Corruption:**

- The bid system in New Orleans has often been criticized for fostering favoritism and backdoor deals. Numerous investigations over the years have exposed instances where contracts were awarded not based on merit or cost-effectiveness but on political connections. This has led to inflated project costs and subpar outcomes, eroding public trust.
- A *New Orleans Advocate* report highlighted the allegations of bid rigging and favoritism that have marred many city contracts, showing how insiders have often secured lucrative deals while more qualified or cost-effective bidders were overlooked.

#### **2. Inefficiencies and Delays:**

- The rigid nature of the bid system has resulted in bureaucratic delays that slow down critical projects. For example, infrastructure repairs and public works projects often take months or even years to approve, as the bidding process moves through multiple layers of red tape.
- According to a study by the *National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP)*, cities that rely solely on traditional bid systems often experience a lag in project timelines, leading to increased costs and public dissatisfaction. The study notes that streamlined decision-making and flexibility are crucial for meeting public needs efficiently.

### 3. Lack of Accountability:

- The traditional bid process often lacks mechanisms for ongoing oversight once a contract is awarded. Contractors may not face sufficient scrutiny regarding their performance, which can result in poorly executed projects or unfulfilled contractual obligations. This problem has been particularly evident in areas like road construction and public housing projects in New Orleans, where substandard work has often gone unchecked until it is too late.
- A report by *ProPublica* highlighted the challenges of holding contractors accountable under the bid system, emphasizing the need for more adaptive approaches that allow for greater oversight and performance-based incentives.

### **The Solution: Embracing Private-Public Partnerships (PPPs)**

Private-Public Partnerships offer a more flexible and accountable approach to delivering public projects. By partnering with private entities, New Orleans can



leverage private sector expertise, funding, and efficiency, while ensuring that public interests remain protected.

### 1. What Are Private-Public Partnerships?

- PPPs involve collaboration between the city government and private sector companies to finance, build, and operate public projects. This model allows for shared responsibility and risk, with private entities often providing upfront investment and expertise, while the public sector ensures that the projects align with community needs.
- Unlike the traditional bid system, PPPs often include performance-based contracts, which tie payments and rewards to the successful completion and maintenance of projects. This creates a direct incentive for private partners to deliver quality work on time and within budget.

### 2. Precedents of Successful PPPs:

- **Infrastructure Renewal in Indiana:** Indiana's transition from a traditional bid system to a PPP model for its major highway projects serves as a valuable precedent. The state partnered with private firms to upgrade and maintain its highway infrastructure, resulting in faster completion times and lower costs. A report from the *Reason Foundation* highlights how Indiana's use of PPPs reduced the state's long-term liabilities while improving road quality.
- **Wastewater Management in Milwaukee:** Milwaukee's decision to engage in a PPP for its wastewater management system led to significant improvements in efficiency and environmental compliance. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported that after moving to a PPP

model, the city saved millions of dollars in operational costs while improving service quality and meeting regulatory requirements.

- **Canada's Hospital and Public Transit Projects:** Across Canada, PPPs have been used to develop hospitals, public transit systems, and social infrastructure. The *Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships* reports that these projects have been completed faster and more cost-effectively than those procured through traditional bid systems, demonstrating the potential for PPPs to transform public services.

### 3. The Benefits of PPPs for New Orleans:

- **Increased Accountability:** With PPPs, contracts can be structured to include performance metrics and regular audits, ensuring that private partners are held accountable for their work. This would prevent the kind of negligence that has plagued past projects under the bid system.
- **Efficiency and Speed:** By allowing private partners to manage project timelines and budgets, New Orleans can expedite essential infrastructure improvements, such as road repairs, flood management systems, and public housing development. This flexibility is crucial for a city that frequently faces urgent infrastructure needs due to natural disasters.
- **Cost Savings:** Although PPPs involve profit for private partners, they can ultimately save the city money by reducing delays and preventing cost overruns. A study by *Deloitte* found that PPPs often result in long-term cost savings for municipalities, as private partners have the expertise and financial incentives to manage resources effectively.

### **Case for Change: Why the Bid System Needs to Go**

The continued reliance on the traditional bid system in New Orleans has cost the city in terms of time, money, and public trust. The shift to PPPs is not about abandoning oversight but rather about enhancing it through modern contracting methods that focus on results and accountability. By moving to a PPP model, New Orleans can create a more dynamic relationship between the public and private sectors, focusing on mutual benefits and shared success.

### **Conclusion: A New Era of Accountability and Efficiency**

The transition from the outdated bid system to a model based on Private-Public Partnerships represents a pivotal opportunity for New Orleans. It allows us to address the inefficiencies and corruption of the past while building a future where projects are completed on time, within budget, and to the benefit of all residents. This shift will require thoughtful planning and collaboration, but the benefits—enhanced accountability, increased speed and efficiency, and better use of taxpayer dollars—are clear. With PPPs, New Orleans can move forward with a smarter, more effective approach to governance, creating a city that works better for everyone.

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5. **Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships:** Examples of successful PPP projects in Canada.
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## **Contingency Plan: Privatization of the Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB)**

### **Background: Addressing the Challenges of the S&WB**

The Sewerage and Water Board (S&WB) of New Orleans has faced longstanding issues, including inefficient service delivery, outdated infrastructure, and financial mismanagement. While the initial plan is to merge the S&WB with the city's Public Works Department to streamline operations and improve service delivery, we recognize that this approach may encounter resistance or may not be sufficient to address the deeper structural challenges within the S&WB. As a contingency, we have developed a plan for the potential sale and privatization of the S&WB to ensure that New Orleans residents receive reliable, high-quality water and sewage services.

### **The Privatization Plan: Ensuring Fairness and Accountability**

If it becomes necessary to pursue privatization, the transfer of S&WB services to a private company will be carefully managed to prioritize the interests of New Orleans residents. The following conditions will be central to any privatization agreement, ensuring that the city and its residents remain protected and benefit from the transition:

#### **1. Royalty Payments to the City of New Orleans:**

- **City Compensation Through Royalties:** The private company taking over the S&WB will be required to pay royalties to the city of New Orleans. These royalties will be a percentage of the company's revenue generated from providing water and sewage services, ensuring that the city continues to benefit financially from the utility's operation. This revenue will be reinvested into public infrastructure

projects, social services, and other essential city functions, ensuring that the transition benefits all residents.

- **Guaranteed Minimum Payments:** To ensure financial stability, the contract will include guaranteed minimum payments to the city, regardless of fluctuations in revenue. This provides a stable financial base for New Orleans and ensures that the city can continue to invest in critical services.

## 2. Resident Protections Through Anti-Predatory Practices:

- **Anti-Predatory Rate Agreements:** The private operator will be required to adhere to strict anti-predatory rate agreements, which will prevent excessive price increases for water and sewage services. These agreements will cap annual rate increases, ensuring that residents do not face sudden or unreasonable hikes in their bills. Additionally, a pricing oversight committee will be established to review and approve any proposed changes to rates, ensuring transparency and protecting the interests of the community.
- **Affordability Programs for Low-Income Residents:** As part of the privatization agreement, the private company must implement programs that offer discounted rates or subsidies for low-income residents. This ensures that essential services remain accessible to all, regardless of income level. The company will be required to contribute a portion of its revenues to a community fund, managed in partnership with local non-profits, to support these affordability initiatives.

## 3. Local Workforce Requirements:

- **Hiring Local Workers:** To support job creation and economic growth within New Orleans, the private operator will be required to

hire at least 60% of its workforce from within the city. This provision ensures that the economic benefits of the privatization extend to local residents, providing employment opportunities and reducing the risk of external entities bringing in out-of-town labor at the expense of the local workforce.

- **Commitment to Workforce Development:** The private company must invest in training and workforce development programs in partnership with local educational institutions, such as Delgado Community College and the University of New Orleans. These programs will ensure that local workers are equipped with the skills needed to operate modernized water and sewage systems, creating a pipeline of skilled talent within the city.

4. **Third-Party Audits and Transparency Measures:**

- **Annual Independent Audits:** To ensure transparency and accountability, the private operator will be subject to annual independent audits conducted by a third-party auditor chosen jointly by the city and the private company. These audits will focus on financial performance, service quality, compliance with anti-predatory practices, and adherence to local hiring requirements. The results of these audits will be publicly available, providing transparency to residents and city officials alike.
- **Quarterly Performance Reviews:** The contract will include quarterly performance reviews conducted by a joint oversight committee composed of city representatives, community leaders, and company officials. This committee will evaluate key performance metrics, such as service reliability, response times to customer issues, and progress on infrastructure improvements. If the company fails to meet

performance standards, penalties will be imposed, and corrective actions will be required.

**5. Reinvestment in Infrastructure:**

- **Mandated Capital Investments:** As part of the agreement, the private company must commit to a specified level of investment in upgrading New Orleans' water and sewage infrastructure. This will include improvements to aging pipes, pumps, and treatment facilities, as well as implementing modern water management technologies. These upgrades will ensure that New Orleans residents receive high-quality services and that the city is better prepared for future challenges, such as flooding and climate change.
- **Public Reporting on Infrastructure Improvements:** The company will be required to publicly report on the progress of infrastructure investments, including timelines and completion rates for key projects. This ensures that residents remain informed about the improvements being made to their water and sewage systems and that the company remains accountable for its commitments.

**Balancing Privatization with Public Accountability**

The privatization plan is designed to ensure that while a private entity may take over the management of the Sewerage and Water Board, the interests of New Orleans residents remain the top priority. By implementing robust conditions, including royalty payments, anti-predatory measures, local hiring requirements, and strict oversight, we aim to create a partnership that benefits both the city and its people.

**Economic and Community Impact**

The privatization plan, if necessary, could result in significant financial benefits for



New Orleans through royalty payments and reduced operational costs. The guaranteed revenue from royalties can be reinvested in critical community needs such as affordable housing, education, and public safety. Additionally, the requirement to hire local workers ensures that job opportunities created through the privatization benefit New Orleans residents directly, helping to alleviate unemployment and support the local economy.

Moreover, the focus on anti-predatory practices and affordability programs ensures that New Orleans' most vulnerable residents are not left behind. By mandating discounted rates for low-income households, the city can ensure that access to clean water remains a fundamental right for all, even as services are modernized.

### **Safeguarding New Orleans' Future**

Privatizing a public utility is a significant decision, and our administration is committed to ensuring that it is pursued only if absolutely necessary and in a manner that protects New Orleans' interests. This plan provides a roadmap for a fair and accountable transition, ensuring that the people of New Orleans are the true beneficiaries of any changes to the management of their water and sewage systems. With strong oversight, clear protections, and a commitment to local economic growth, we can ensure that New Orleans' future remains secure, prosperous, and just.

## **Universal Child Care Program: Building a Strong Foundation for New Orleans' Future**

### **Executive Summary: Investing in Early Childhood Development**

Universal childcare is critical for the future success of New Orleans, providing safe, nurturing, and educational environments for our youngest residents while offering much-needed support to working families, particularly minority single mothers. By integrating childcare programs into our *Neighborhood School Revitalization Plan*, we can create community-centered spaces that foster early learning, play, and growth. This initiative not only addresses childcare needs but also strengthens neighborhood schools, creating a culture that values education from an early age. With strategic funding from both local and state sources, we can make this vision a reality and ensure that no child or family is left behind.

### **The Need: Supporting Single Mothers and Addressing Youth Disengagement**

New Orleans faces a pressing need for affordable, accessible childcare, especially among minority single mothers. Many of these mothers struggle to find reliable child care, leading to missed work, reduced productivity, and in some cases, job loss. This lack of support creates a cycle where financial stability remains out of reach, perpetuating economic disparities across generations. By providing universal childcare, we can alleviate this burden, allowing mothers to pursue their careers and contribute to the local economy while knowing their children are safe and cared for.

In addition, addressing the childcare gap is crucial for tackling youth disengagement and crime. A 2016 study by Stanford University highlighted that 26,000 young people in New Orleans were not in school, underscoring a major challenge for our city's future. By teaching the importance of education early

through structured childcare programs, we can lay the groundwork for lifelong learning and reduce the risk of youth becoming disconnected from school later on. This early intervention can be a turning point in reducing future crime rates, building a generation that values education and community.

### **The Plan: Universal Child Care Through Neighborhood Schools**

When I am elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will prioritize the creation of universal childcare programs through the revitalization of our neighborhood schools. This plan will transform underutilized spaces in schools into vibrant childcare centers, providing early education and care to children from birth to pre-K. The program will focus on creating environments that are safe, playful, and conducive to growth, helping young children develop the social, emotional, and cognitive skills they need to thrive.

#### **1. Integrating Child Care Centers into Revitalized Neighborhood Schools:**

- **Safe and Nurturing Environments:** Each childcare center will be designed to offer a safe and welcoming space for children, with age-appropriate play areas, quiet reading corners, and outdoor play spaces. Trained caregivers and early childhood educators will lead activities that promote learning through play, fostering curiosity and creativity in young minds.
- **Community-Centered Approach:** By placing childcare centers within neighborhood schools, we create a sense of continuity and community for children as they transition from early learning to formal schooling. Parents will have a single, familiar location for their child's care and education, building trust and fostering deeper community connections. The centers will also host workshops for

parents, offering support in areas such as parenting skills, early literacy, and community resources.

- **Focus on Early Literacy and School Readiness:** The curriculum will emphasize foundational skills like early literacy, numeracy, and social interaction, preparing children for a smooth transition to kindergarten. The goal is to instill a love for learning from a young age, setting the stage for future success in school and beyond.

## 2. Supporting Working Families and Single Mothers:

- **Affordable and Accessible Care:** Our childcare program will be designed to meet the needs of working families, especially single mothers. Fees will be based on a sliding scale, ensuring that no family is turned away due to financial constraints. For families below a certain income threshold, childcare services will be free, removing barriers that currently prevent many mothers from participating fully in the workforce.
- **Extended Hours to Accommodate Work Schedules:** To support working parents, childcare centers will offer extended hours, accommodating early-morning drop-offs and late pick-ups. This flexibility ensures that parents can pursue their careers without the stress of arranging alternative care options outside of traditional business hours.
- **Job Training and Career Advancement Programs:** Partnering with local businesses and community colleges, we will offer career training and job placement services for parents, helping them access better-paying jobs and advance in their careers. This holistic approach supports not just the children but their entire families, creating a path toward economic stability.

### 3. **Long-Term Benefits: Reducing Youth Crime and Building a Culture of Education**

- **Early Education as a Crime Prevention Strategy:** Research has shown that high-quality early education can significantly reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. By engaging children early and fostering a positive relationship with education, we can prevent many of the challenges that lead young people to drop out of school and become involved in crime. Our program will serve as a proactive measure, creating a brighter future for New Orleans' youth and reducing the strain on our criminal justice system.
- **Strengthening Community Bonds:** By revitalizing neighborhood schools and creating childcare hubs, we will strengthen the social fabric of communities. Schools will become centers of activity and engagement, bringing together families, educators, and local leaders. This sense of community is crucial for creating safe, supportive environments where children can grow and thrive.

#### **Funding the Universal Child Care Program**

Implementing a universal childcare program requires strategic investment, but it is a crucial investment in the future of New Orleans. Our plan will be funded through a combination of local and state sources, ensuring that the program is both sustainable and widely accessible.

#### 1. **Leveraging State Funds for Early Childhood Education:**

- **Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund:** We will apply for grants through the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund, which provides matching funds to local governments that invest in early learning programs. By demonstrating our commitment to expanding

childcare through our neighborhood school plan, New Orleans can secure additional state funding to support our program.

- **State Legislative Support:** Work with state legislators to advocate for increased funding for early childhood education, emphasizing the economic benefits of helping more parents return to the workforce. Highlighting the long-term savings associated with reduced crime rates and improved educational outcomes can build a strong case for additional state investment.

## 2. Reallocation of Local Budget Funds:

- **Redirecting Funds from Inefficient Programs:** As part of our commitment to budget reallocation, we will identify and redirect funds from underperforming or redundant programs into our childcare initiative. For example, consolidating administrative functions across city departments could free up millions of dollars, allowing us to invest directly in childcare services.
- **Partnerships with Local Businesses and Philanthropists:** Create a public-private partnership model that encourages local businesses to invest in the childcare program, particularly those businesses that will benefit from a more stable workforce. Philanthropic support from foundations dedicated to child welfare and education will also be sought to support the startup costs of new childcare centers.

## 3. Potential Revenue from the City's Bitcoin Credit Union Initiative:

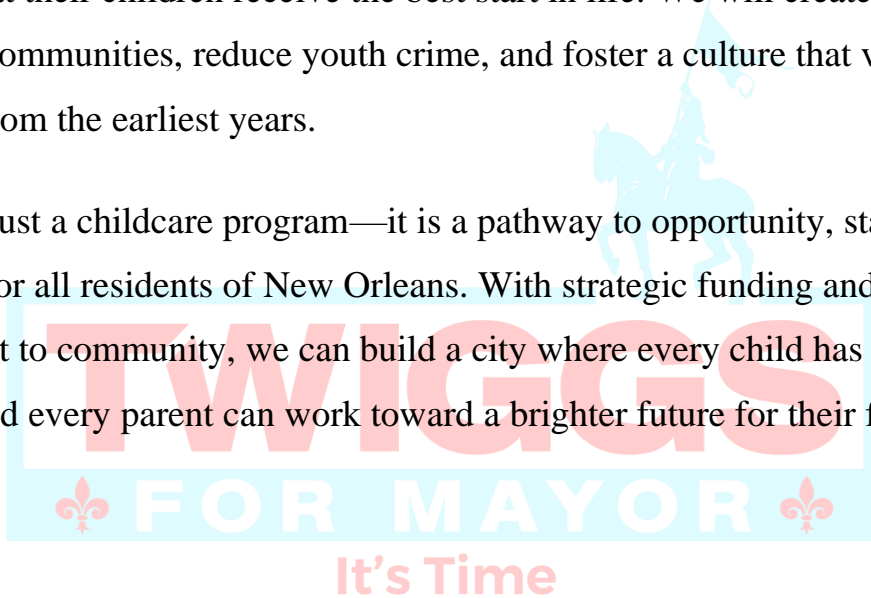
- As discussed in our plan for blockchain adoption, 3% of Bitcoin transactions processed through the city-led Bitcoin Credit Union will be directed into an account dedicated to educational programs, including universal childcare. This innovative funding source provides

a way to leverage digital assets for tangible benefits in our community.

**The Impact: A Brighter Future for New Orleans**

By providing universal childcare through our revitalized neighborhood schools, we are making a profound investment in New Orleans’ future. We will alleviate the burden on single mothers, allowing them to participate fully in the workforce while ensuring that their children receive the best start in life. We will create safer, more connected communities, reduce youth crime, and foster a culture that values education from the earliest years.

This is not just a childcare program—it is a pathway to opportunity, stability, and prosperity for all residents of New Orleans. With strategic funding and a commitment to community, we can build a city where every child has the chance to thrive, and every parent can work toward a brighter future for their family.



## **Building a Norwegian-Style Flood Wall System: Safeguarding New Orleans**

### **The Urgency: Coastal Erosion and the Threat to New Orleans**

New Orleans faces a dire environmental crisis. Coastal erosion and land subsidence are rapidly reshaping the geography of southern Louisiana, with experts warning that New Orleans could become a coastal city—or even disappear beneath the water—within our lifetime. A study by the *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)* has shown that Louisiana loses approximately a football field of land every hour due to coastal erosion. This relentless loss of wetlands, which serve as natural buffers against storm surges, puts New Orleans and surrounding parishes at greater risk of devastating floods and hurricanes.

### **The Plan: A Norwegian-Style Flood Wall System for New Orleans**

Drawing inspiration from Norway's flood management systems and the Dutch Oosterscheldekering barrier, New Orleans can implement a comprehensive flood wall system to safeguard its future. These approaches combine advanced engineering, environmental integration, and community-focused design. By adapting these principles to New Orleans' unique geography, we can build a system that not only protects the city but also serves as a model for coastal resilience in the United States.

#### **1. Advanced Engineering and Adaptation:**

- **Storm Surge Barriers:** Inspired by Norway and the Netherlands' Oosterscheldekering barrier, this system would include storm surge barriers that can be raised during extreme weather events to block surges and prevent flooding. For New Orleans, similar barriers could be placed along the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, where storm surge risks are highest. The Oosterscheldekering, a part of the



Delta Works project, is designed to be flexible—opening and closing as needed to manage water levels—making it a relevant model for New Orleans.

- **High-Strength Seawalls and Dikes:** Constructing high-strength seawalls and dikes along vulnerable areas of the coast and along the edges of Lake Pontchartrain would add an additional layer of protection. These structures would be built using the latest materials and engineering techniques, designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and extreme weather events. Norway’s seawalls and the engineering excellence of the Oosterscheldekering offer proven models for managing harsh water conditions.
- **Integration with Wetland Restoration:** Unlike traditional concrete barriers, Norway’s and the Netherlands’ flood systems often integrate with natural landscapes, such as restoring coastal wetlands to absorb storm surges. New Orleans can adopt a similar strategy, combining flood walls with large-scale wetland restoration projects. Restoring the natural buffer of wetlands can reduce wave energy before it reaches man-made barriers, decreasing maintenance costs and improving the overall resilience of the system.

## 2. **Buying Time Against Coastal Erosion and Rising Seas:**

- **Mitigating Immediate Threats:** The construction of a Norwegian-style flood wall system, paired with principles from the Oosterscheldekering, would give New Orleans crucial time to address the longer-term challenges of coastal erosion and sea-level rise. While no structure can permanently halt these forces, a well-designed flood

wall system can significantly delay the encroachment of water into the city, giving policymakers and scientists the opportunity to develop more permanent solutions.

- **Protection for Surrounding Parishes:** The benefits of this system would extend beyond the city limits of New Orleans. Neighboring parishes, such as Jefferson, St. Bernard, and Plaquemines, which also face significant flood risks, would gain enhanced protection from the implementation of a regional flood wall system. This cooperative approach ensures that efforts to safeguard New Orleans also contribute to the security and stability of the entire region.

### 3. Economic Impact: A Strategic Investment in New Orleans' Future

- **Job Creation and Economic Stimulus:** The construction of a Norwegian-style flood wall system, modeled after successful barriers like the Oosterscheldekering, represents a substantial infrastructure investment, estimated at \$2-3 billion, depending on the scale and scope of the project. This investment would directly create thousands of jobs in construction, engineering, and environmental restoration, providing a major boost to the local economy.
- **Long-Term Savings on Disaster Relief:** Investing in flood mitigation can save billions of dollars in disaster relief and recovery costs over time. After Hurricane Katrina, the federal government spent over \$120 billion on recovery efforts, much of it focused on New Orleans. By investing proactively in advanced flood protection, we can avoid the devastating costs of future disasters.

- **Securing Property Values and Insurance Stability:** A robust flood wall system would improve investor confidence in the city’s long-term viability, stabilizing property markets and encouraging new investments. Additionally, reducing the frequency and severity of flood events would help stabilize insurance costs, making it more affordable for residents to protect their homes and businesses.

#### 4. Leveraging Federal and State Support:

- **Federal Support Through FEMA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** Securing funding for such a large-scale project will require collaboration with federal agencies. We will pursue grants and technical assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, both of which have a vested interest in strengthening flood protection infrastructure in high-risk areas like New Orleans.
- **State Partnerships and Legislative Advocacy:** Work closely with the Louisiana state legislature to secure matching funds and support for the flood wall project. The *Louisiana Coastal Master Plan* already recognizes the urgency of addressing coastal erosion and provides a framework for state involvement in large-scale flood mitigation. By aligning our flood wall initiative with this plan, we can maximize state support and ensure that the project complements existing coastal restoration efforts.

#### **Precedent and Success Stories: Learning from Norway and the Dutch**

- **Norwegian Model in Action:** Norway’s flood walls and barriers have successfully protected cities like Bergen from North Sea storms and rising

tides. These systems are designed to adapt to changing sea levels, offering a model for New Orleans as it faces the challenges of a shifting climate.

- **The Netherlands: Oosterscheldekering and Delta Works Project:** The Oosterscheldekering, a part of the Delta Works project, is a prime example of successful flood management. This series of dams, sluices, and movable barriers protects the Dutch coastline, allowing water flow control during storms while preserving tidal ecosystems. Its design showcases how flood protection can be balanced with environmental considerations.
- **New Orleans' Own History:** After Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built a new system of levees and floodgates. While these improvements have made the city more resilient, experts agree that further investment is needed to address ongoing coastal erosion and rising sea levels. A Norwegian-style flood wall system, combined with principles from the Oosterscheldekering, would build upon these earlier efforts, creating a more comprehensive defense.

### **The Cost of Inaction: Protecting Our Home Now**

Coastal erosion is not a distant threat; it is a reality that is reshaping the landscape of Louisiana today. Without decisive action, New Orleans faces the very real possibility of becoming a coastal city—or worse, being submerged entirely—within a matter of decades. We cannot afford to wait. A Norwegian-style flood wall system, combined with lessons from the Oosterscheldekering, offers a strategic way to buy time, protect lives and property, and secure the future of our beloved city.

By making this investment, we are not just building walls—we are building hope, security, and a legacy for generations to come. Together, we can ensure that New

Orleans remains a thriving, vibrant city that is ready to face the challenges of a changing world, standing strong against the encroaching sea.

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## **Enhancing Support for Domestic Abuse Victims and Survivors: Building a Safer New Orleans**

### **The Urgency: Addressing Domestic Violence in New Orleans**

Domestic violence is a pervasive issue that not only endangers the immediate victims but also has far-reaching impacts on families and communities. Studies have consistently shown that exposure to violence in the home has a direct link to increased aggression and behavioral issues in children. According to the *American Psychological Association (APA)*, children who witness domestic violence are more likely to develop anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems, and they are at a higher risk of perpetuating violence themselves in the future. The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* also notes that children exposed to violence at home are more likely to experience violence in their own relationships and display aggressive behaviors at school and in the community. This cycle of violence creates a ripple effect that extends beyond individual families, contributing to broader societal issues such as crime and community instability.

### **New Orleans' High Rates of Domestic Violence**

New Orleans has among the highest rates of domestic violence per capita in the United States. A report by the *Violence Policy Center* found that Louisiana consistently ranks among the top states for domestic violence homicides, with New Orleans being a significant contributor to this statistic. Additionally, local law enforcement and advocacy groups have highlighted that domestic violence calls are among the most common emergency calls received by the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD). This troubling reality underscores the need for comprehensive support systems that can break the cycle of violence and provide safety and healing for survivors.

## **The Plan: A Collaborative Approach to Supporting Survivors**

To effectively address domestic violence, we propose a comprehensive support system that brings together law enforcement, mental health services, and community organizations. This integrated approach is designed to provide immediate safety, long-term healing, and a pathway to stability for survivors of domestic abuse.

### **1. Creating Safe and Supportive Spaces:**

- **Enhanced Crisis Intervention Teams:** When I am elected Mayor of New Orleans in 2025, I will work to expand crisis intervention teams within the NOPD, specifically trained to handle domestic violence situations with sensitivity and care. These teams will include mental health professionals and victim advocates who can provide on-site emotional support and connect survivors with immediate shelter options. The goal is to ensure that survivors are not just removed from danger but are also given access to the resources they need to start their journey toward recovery.
- **Dedicated Domestic Violence Shelters:** We will increase the availability of shelters dedicated to survivors of domestic violence, ensuring that no one is turned away due to a lack of space. These shelters will offer temporary housing, legal assistance, and connections to mental health services. Collaborating with local non-profits like the *New Orleans Family Justice Center*, we aim to create safe environments where survivors can rebuild their lives.

### **2. Breaking the Cycle of Violence Through Mental Health Support:**

- **Trauma-Informed Counseling Services:** We will ensure that every survivor of domestic abuse has access to trauma-informed counseling services, either through community clinics or in partnership with local universities like Tulane and the University of New Orleans. Counseling services will be available for survivors and their children, addressing the psychological impacts of trauma and helping to prevent the long-term consequences of exposure to violence.
- **School-Based Mental Health Programs:** Recognizing the impact of domestic violence on children, we will expand school-based mental health programs that provide counseling and support for students who have witnessed or experienced domestic violence. By offering these services in schools, we can reach children early, helping them process their trauma in healthy ways and preventing the cycle of violence from continuing into their adult lives.

### 3. **Strengthening Legal Protections and Law Enforcement Response:**

- **Protective Orders and Legal Aid Expansion:** Survivors of domestic violence often face barriers in obtaining protective orders and navigating the legal system. We will expand access to free legal aid services, ensuring that survivors have the support they need to secure restraining orders and navigate custody or divorce proceedings. By simplifying the process and offering legal guidance, we can ensure that survivors feel empowered to take legal action against their abusers.
- **Mandatory Domestic Violence Training for Police Officers:** All NOPD officers will undergo mandatory training on recognizing signs



of domestic violence, understanding trauma responses, and responding effectively to domestic violence calls. This training will include cultural competency elements, ensuring that officers can respond appropriately to survivors from diverse backgrounds.

#### 4. **Building Community Support Networks:**

- **Support Groups and Peer Counseling:** Establish community-based support groups where survivors can connect with others who have shared similar experiences. These peer counseling networks can provide a sense of solidarity and understanding that is vital for long-term healing. Partnering with local community centers, we will create safe spaces for survivors to share their stories and build a support system.
- **Awareness Campaigns and Education:** Launch public awareness campaigns that challenge the stigma around domestic violence and educate the community about available resources. By increasing awareness, we can encourage more survivors to seek help and empower bystanders to intervene safely. These campaigns will focus on the message that domestic violence is a community issue, and we all have a role in supporting those affected.

#### **The Economic and Community Benefits of Enhanced Support**

Investing in comprehensive support for domestic abuse survivors is not just a moral imperative—it has significant economic and social benefits for New Orleans. Studies have shown that the economic costs of domestic violence are substantial, including lost productivity, healthcare expenses, and legal costs. According to a report by the *Institute for Women's Policy Research*, the total

economic cost of intimate partner violence in the United States exceeds \$8.3 billion annually. By providing effective intervention and support, we can reduce these costs, helping survivors regain their stability and become active participants in the local economy.

Moreover, reducing the prevalence of domestic violence has broader benefits for community safety. Children who grow up in stable, supportive environments are less likely to engage in criminal behavior as they grow older. A 2018 study in the *Journal of Family Psychology* found that early intervention with children exposed to domestic violence can reduce their risk of developing aggressive behaviors, making them less likely to engage in violence later in life. By breaking the cycle of violence, we create a safer community for everyone.

### **Conclusion: Building a Safer Future Together**

New Orleans deserves a comprehensive approach to domestic violence that prioritizes the safety, healing, and empowerment of survivors. By working together—police, mental health providers, community organizations, and the city government—we can create a support system that truly meets the needs of those affected by domestic violence. Through collaboration, compassion, and accountability, we can break the cycle of violence, build a safer city, and offer a brighter future for all of New Orleans’ residents.

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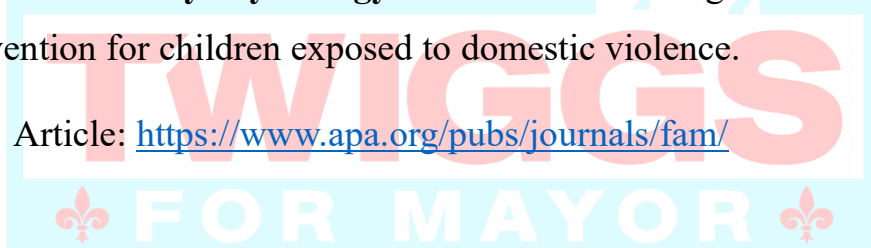
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It's Time

## **Truth in Politics Initiative: Ensuring Integrity in Public Service**

### **Executive Summary: Restoring Trust Through Accountability**

The "Truth in Politics" initiative is designed to uphold the integrity and accountability of elected officials in New Orleans. This initiative will mandate the immediate removal of any elected official who is found to have deliberately lied in their official capacity during legal proceedings. This includes testimonies in courtrooms, statements before special committees, and any legally binding proceedings. By implementing this policy, we aim to restore public trust and ensure that those in positions of power are held to the highest standards of honesty and transparency.

### **Defining Deliberate Falsehoods**

For an elected official to be removed under this initiative, the false statement must meet specific criteria:

1. **Context of the Statement:** The falsehood must occur during a legally binding proceeding, such as a courtroom testimony, statements before a legislative or special investigative committee, or during any sworn deposition. Public statements or campaign rhetoric, while subject to public scrutiny, are not covered under this provision.
2. **Intent to Deceive:** The statement must be proven to be intentionally misleading or false, with evidence that the official knowingly provided incorrect information. Honest mistakes or misstatements made in good faith would not fall under this policy.
3. **Impact on Public Duty:** The false statement must pertain directly to the official's duties or the administration of public policy. This ensures that the

focus remains on holding officials accountable for actions that affect their governance and responsibilities.

### **Precedent and Rationale for Immediate Removal**

While this initiative introduces a stricter standard of accountability, it is grounded in the principle that public officials must be honest stewards of their office. There are precedents for holding elected officials accountable for lying under oath, but the lack of consistent consequences has eroded public trust:

1. **Perjury and Legal Consequences:** In many jurisdictions, perjury—lying under oath—is considered a criminal offense. However, these cases often take years to litigate, during which the official remains in office, potentially influencing policy and public perception. The "Truth in Politics" initiative goes further by ensuring that the consequence of proven dishonesty is swift and direct: immediate removal from office.
  - *Example:* Former President Bill Clinton faced impeachment proceedings for perjury in the late 1990s. While he was impeached by the House, he remained in office after the Senate acquitted him, illustrating how political processes can sometimes supersede accountability measures.
  
2. **Public Officials Facing Legal Consequences:** In recent years, cases like former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Attorney General Jeff Sessions have faced accusations of lying under oath during Congressional hearings. Despite evidence suggesting that their statements were misleading or untruthful, they faced limited consequences. Such instances have fueled public cynicism and highlighted the need for more stringent accountability measures.

- *Example:* Jeff Sessions faced scrutiny during his confirmation hearings for statements about communications with Russian officials. Although many saw these statements as misleading, he did not face any immediate removal or significant legal consequences, leading to calls for greater accountability in such situations.

3. **State-Level Precedents for Accountability:** Some states have taken steps to introduce accountability measures for elected officials. For example, California's Proposition 25 holds state legislators accountable by withholding their pay if a balanced budget is not passed on time. While not directly related to lying under oath, this precedent shows that voters support measures that directly tie an official's actions to their continued ability to serve.

- *Relevance to New Orleans:* The "Truth in Politics" initiative similarly ties accountability directly to an official's actions, ensuring that dishonesty in legal matters results in immediate and clear consequences.

### **The Plan: How the Truth in Politics Initiative Will Work**

#### **1. Immediate Investigation Process:**

- If an allegation of lying under oath or in a legally binding proceeding arises, an independent ethics board will be convened within 30 days to review the evidence. This board will include representatives from the judiciary, legal experts, and community leaders, ensuring a fair and impartial review.

- The board will have the power to subpoena witnesses and evidence to determine whether the official's statement meets the criteria for deliberate falsehood.

## **2. Removal Procedures:**

- If the board finds clear and convincing evidence that the elected official deliberately lied, the official will be immediately suspended from their position, pending a final confirmation of the board's findings by a vote of the City Council.
- Upon confirmation, the official will be permanently removed from office, and a special election or appointment process will be initiated to fill the vacancy.

## **3. Transparency and Public Accountability:**

- All findings and decisions of the ethics board will be made publicly available, ensuring transparency in the process. This openness will help restore public trust in government processes by demonstrating that elected officials are not above the law.

### **Why This Matters for New Orleans**

New Orleans has faced numerous challenges with political accountability, and the public's faith in their leaders has been tested time and again. The "Truth in Politics" initiative is about more than just enforcing honesty; it is about ensuring that those in power cannot use their position to mislead the people they serve. By holding officials to a higher standard, we can foster a culture of transparency that empowers residents and makes government truly accountable.

This initiative also addresses a critical gap in current accountability mechanisms: the time it takes for legal processes to unfold. With immediate consequences for dishonesty, we can prevent situations where an official remains in power despite having violated the public's trust. It sends a clear message that integrity is non-negotiable for those entrusted with leading New Orleans.

### **Economic and Social Benefits of Increased Accountability**

1. **Restoring Public Trust:** By ensuring that dishonest officials cannot remain in power, we will restore faith in local government, encouraging greater civic engagement and cooperation between residents and their elected leaders.
2. **Attracting Ethical Investment:** Businesses and investors are more likely to engage with cities where government integrity is a priority. The "Truth in Politics" initiative can help position New Orleans as a leader in ethical governance, attracting investment and fostering a positive business environment.
3. **Strengthening Community Relations:** A government that holds itself accountable sets a standard for all residents, fostering a culture where honesty and transparency are valued. This can contribute to stronger relationships between the city's leaders and its people, improving collaboration on critical issues like crime reduction, economic development, and education.

### **Conclusion: A Commitment to Truth and Integrity**

The "Truth in Politics" initiative is a promise to the people of New Orleans that their leaders will be held accountable for their words and actions. By setting a high standard for integrity, we can build a government that truly serves its residents.



New Orleans deserves leaders who tell the truth—not just when it’s easy, but especially when it matters most. This initiative is a crucial step in ensuring that our city’s future is built on a foundation of honesty, transparency, and trust.

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## **Whistleblower Protections: Safeguarding Integrity and Transparency**

### **Introduction: Protecting Those Who Speak Out**

In New Orleans, we must ensure that individuals who come forward to expose misconduct, corruption, or other illegal activities are protected from retaliation. Whether they are residents, business owners, or city employees, whistleblowers play a crucial role in maintaining transparency and accountability in government and business practices. Our plan includes comprehensive protections for whistleblowers and the creation of a special committee dedicated to investigating retaliation claims, ensuring a fair and unbiased review process.

### **The Need for Whistleblower Protections**

Whistleblowers are often the first line of defense against corruption, fraud, and unethical behavior. However, many fear the repercussions of speaking out, including job loss, harassment, or damage to their reputation. A *Harvard Business Review* study found that fear of retaliation is one of the primary reasons employees choose not to report misconduct. Without adequate protections, potential whistleblowers may remain silent, allowing harmful practices to continue unchecked .

### **Historical Challenges with Whistleblower Protections in New Orleans**

#### **1. Retaliation Against City Employees:**

- In New Orleans, there have been several instances where city employees faced retaliation after exposing issues like misuse of public funds or safety violations. The lack of a formal mechanism for reporting and investigating such retaliation has left many employees vulnerable.

- A *New Orleans Times-Picayune* report highlighted cases where whistleblowers were demoted, terminated, or faced hostile work environments after raising concerns about city operations. These cases emphasize the need for stronger safeguards to protect those who act in the public interest.

## 2. Lack of Independent Oversight:

- Currently, the investigation of whistleblower claims often falls under the same agencies that may be implicated in the reported misconduct, creating a potential conflict of interest. This lack of independent oversight has led to distrust in the system and discourages individuals from reporting issues.
- The *Government Accountability Project* highlights the importance of independent oversight to ensure that investigations into retaliation claims are conducted impartially and thoroughly .

### **The Plan: Comprehensive Whistleblower Protections**

Our plan introduces robust protections for whistleblowers, ensuring that they have the support and security they need to report wrongdoing without fear of retribution.

#### 1. Creation of a Special Investigative Committee:

- **Independent Structure:** The committee will operate independently of other city departments to avoid conflicts of interest. It will include representatives from the legal community, ethics experts, and members of the public, ensuring a balanced and unbiased review process.

- **Investigation Process:** When a whistleblower submits a claim of retaliation, the committee will conduct a thorough investigation, including interviews, evidence gathering, and reviewing the actions taken against the whistleblower. The process will prioritize transparency, and all findings will be made available to the public while protecting the identity of the whistleblower.
- **Power to Recommend Remediation:** The committee will have the authority to recommend remedies for retaliation, including reinstatement of lost positions, compensation for lost wages, and other corrective actions to restore the whistleblower's standing.

## 2. Protections for Whistleblowers:

- **Legal Safeguards:** We will enact local ordinances that provide comprehensive legal protections for whistleblowers, including protection from termination, demotion, harassment, or any other form of retaliation. These protections will align with federal laws like the *Whistleblower Protection Act* but extend further to ensure that city-level employees and contractors are covered.
- **Confidential Reporting Mechanism:** A secure, anonymous reporting system will be established to allow individuals to report misconduct without revealing their identity. This system will be managed by a third-party organization to ensure confidentiality and prevent unauthorized access.

## 3. Support Services for Whistleblowers:

- **Legal Assistance:** Whistleblowers will have access to free legal support through partnerships with local law firms and non-profit

organizations specializing in employment law and whistleblower protection.

- **Counseling and Mental Health Support:** Recognizing the emotional toll that whistleblowing can take, our plan includes free access to counseling services for individuals who experience stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges related to their decision to come forward.

## **Precedents and Successful Models for Whistleblower Protections**

### **1. The Federal Whistleblower Protection Act:**

- At the federal level, the *Whistleblower Protection Act* provides a model for protecting public employees who disclose evidence of waste, fraud, or abuse. This act ensures that employees can seek redress through the *U.S. Office of Special Counsel* if they experience retaliation.
- Our plan aims to adapt the principles of this federal protection to the local context, ensuring that city employees, contractors, and even private sector workers who report misconduct related to city operations are similarly protected.

### **2. New York City Department of Investigation (DOI):**

- The *New York City DOI* is an example of how an independent agency can successfully investigate claims of corruption and retaliation. It has the power to issue subpoenas, conduct interviews, and make referrals for disciplinary action. This model demonstrates the effectiveness of

having an independent body that is not influenced by political considerations or departmental loyalties .

### **Economic and Social Benefits of Protecting Whistleblowers**

1. **Enhanced Accountability and Trust:** By protecting those who come forward, we build a culture of transparency and accountability in government. This trust is essential for attracting businesses, encouraging civic engagement, and ensuring that the city government serves its residents with integrity.
2. **Preventing Financial Losses:** Whistleblowers are often the first to uncover fraudulent activities that cost taxpayers millions of dollars. According to the *Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE)*, organizations with strong whistleblower programs detect fraud faster and reduce financial losses by up to 50%. Implementing these protections can save the city significant resources in the long run .
3. **Improving Workplace Culture:** Protecting whistleblowers sends a message that the city values ethical behavior and accountability. This can improve overall workplace morale and attract high-quality talent to city positions, knowing that integrity is upheld.

### **Conclusion: A Safer Path for Those Who Speak Out**

The protection of whistleblowers is fundamental to creating a transparent and accountable government. By establishing clear safeguards, creating an independent investigative committee, and providing support to those who come forward, we can ensure that New Orleans is a city where the truth is not only valued but protected. This plan ensures that no resident, business owner, or city employee has to fear

speaking out against wrongdoing, knowing that the city stands behind them in their pursuit of justice.

## Sources

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## **Community Walks Initiative: Bridging the Gap Between Government and Residents**

### **Introduction: Building a More Responsive Government**

In New Orleans, a closer connection between city government and the communities it serves is essential to addressing local concerns and fostering trust. We propose a new standard for city officials—including the mayor, city council members, and various government employees—to conduct monthly community walks. This initiative aims to monitor neighborhood conditions, address residents' concerns in real-time, and create a more transparent and accountable government. By physically walking through neighborhoods, city leaders can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges residents face and ensure that their voices are heard.

### **The Need for Direct Engagement**

#### **1. Restoring Trust in Local Government:**

- Many New Orleans residents feel disconnected from their government, often perceiving city officials as distant or out of touch with their daily struggles. According to a survey by *Pew Research Center*, 57% of Americans believe that elected officials do not care about the issues that matter to them. Regular community walks can directly address this disconnect by fostering face-to-face interactions between residents and their representatives.
- Direct engagement through community walks ensures that officials are not only aware of issues but are seen actively working to address them. This transparency builds trust and makes city governance more accessible and responsive.



## 2. Addressing Problems in Real-Time:

- Many community issues, such as potholes, trash accumulation, or streetlight outages, can go unnoticed or unreported for extended periods. A study by *The Brookings Institution* emphasizes the importance of responsive city governance in improving urban quality of life, noting that real-time problem-solving can significantly enhance residents' satisfaction with local services.
- By walking through neighborhoods monthly, city officials can identify and prioritize these issues on the spot, ensuring that they are addressed promptly and effectively. This proactive approach reduces bureaucratic delays and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement in city services.

### The Plan: Monthly Community Walks by City Officials

#### 1. Structure of the Initiative:

- **Monthly Walks:** Every month, the mayor, city council members, and various department heads will walk designated routes in neighborhoods across New Orleans. Each month, different areas will be prioritized to ensure that all parts of the city are regularly covered.
- **Collaborative Approach:** These walks will include not only elected officials but also representatives from key departments such as public works, sanitation, and safety. This allows for a diverse set of perspectives and expertise to address community concerns in real-time.

#### 2. Community Engagement During Walks:

- **Open Dialogue with Residents:** As officials walk through neighborhoods, they will be available for impromptu conversations with residents, listening to their concerns, ideas, and feedback. This approach aligns with the principles of participatory governance, which the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* identifies as crucial for sustainable urban development.
  - **Problem Identification and Reporting:** During these walks, officials will use digital tools to log issues they encounter, such as infrastructure needs or safety concerns, and upload them directly to the city's public works and maintenance systems. This data-driven approach ensures that issues identified during the walks are tracked and resolved efficiently.
3. **Transparency and Accountability:**
- **Monthly Reports to the Public:** After each walk, a report summarizing the identified issues, planned actions, and progress will be made publicly available on the city's website. This transparency ensures that residents are informed about how their concerns are being addressed and allows for community input on prioritizing projects.
  - **Resident Feedback Mechanism:** A feedback portal will allow residents to share their thoughts on the effectiveness of the walks and suggest areas for future focus. This feedback loop ensures that the initiative remains responsive to community needs and adapts over time.

## Precedents and Success Stories

### 1. New York City's Community Walks:

- New York City's “Neighborhood Policing” initiative involves officers walking their beats to build relationships with residents and address concerns directly. This program has been credited with improving trust between the police and community members, as highlighted in a report by *The New York Times*. Similar programs in other cities have demonstrated that face-to-face interactions between officials and residents can foster collaboration and reduce tensions.

## 2. Participatory Budgeting in Chicago:

- Chicago’s participatory budgeting process, where residents engage directly with city officials to decide on neighborhood projects, offers valuable lessons. A study by the *Participatory Budgeting Project* found that direct involvement in decision-making improved resident satisfaction with local government services and led to more equitable resource allocation.

### Economic and Social Benefits

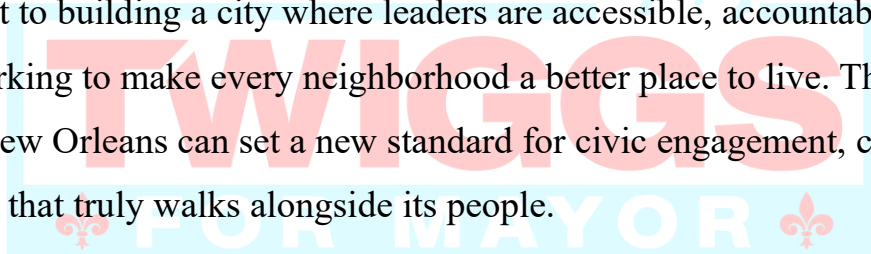
#### It's Time

1. **Improving Service Delivery:** By addressing small problems before they become major issues, this initiative can reduce the overall costs of city maintenance and emergency responses. A proactive approach to city maintenance is more cost-effective in the long run, as noted by the *National League of Cities*.
2. **Strengthening Community Ties:** Regular engagement with city officials can strengthen community bonds, making neighborhoods feel more connected and resilient. It fosters a sense of shared responsibility and pride in maintaining clean, safe, and welcoming spaces.

3. **Building Civic Trust and Participation:** Transparency in city operations encourages greater civic participation, which is essential for a thriving democracy. When residents see their concerns being addressed, they are more likely to engage in other forms of civic life, such as attending community meetings or participating in local projects.

### **Conclusion: A New Standard for Civic Engagement**

The monthly community walks initiative aims to transform the relationship between New Orleans' government and its residents. By taking a hands-on approach to governance, city officials can ensure that every neighborhood feels heard and supported. This program is about more than just walking the streets; it's about walking the walk—showing up, listening, and taking action. It's a commitment to building a city where leaders are accessible, accountable, and actively working to make every neighborhood a better place to live. Through this initiative, New Orleans can set a new standard for civic engagement, creating a government that truly walks alongside its people.



It's Time

### **Sources**

1. **Pew Research Center:** Survey on public perceptions of elected officials.
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3. **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):** Principles of participatory governance in urban development.

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4. **The New York Times:** Coverage of New York City's Neighborhood Policing initiative.
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## Expanding Trade Programs in New Orleans Schools: A Pathway to Economic Growth and Social Stability

### Overview:

As New Orleans moves toward a more inclusive and robust educational system, integrating **trade programs** into our **neighborhood schools** is a critical step. These programs will provide students with hands-on skills in fields like **culinary arts, mechanics, welding, carpentry, plumbing, and electrical work**. By offering a broader array of vocational training, we can address the **skills gap**, provide opportunities for **at-risk youth**, and strengthen the city's workforce, creating long-term economic benefits for the entire community.

### Benefits of Trade Programs: A Strategic Investment in the Workforce

#### 1. Economic Impact and Job Creation:

- **Meeting Industry Demand:** The demand for skilled tradespeople has grown significantly, with the **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** projecting strong growth in fields like **plumbing (14%), electrical work (8%), and carpentry (6%)** through the next decade. By offering trade programs in high schools, New Orleans can ensure that students graduate with skills that are **in-demand** both locally and nationally.
- **Local Economic Growth:** Integrating these programs will allow the city to retain a **skilled labor force** instead of importing workers from outside regions. Local businesses, especially in **construction, hospitality, and automotive industries**, will benefit from having a pool of **work-ready graduates**. The **New Orleans Chamber of**

**Commerce** estimates that increasing the availability of skilled labor could boost the local economy by **\$50 million annually** through higher productivity and lower operational costs for businesses.

- **Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** Trade programs can also inspire **entrepreneurship** among students, enabling them to start their own businesses in fields like **construction, catering, or auto repair**. This can be especially impactful in **economically disadvantaged areas**, creating jobs and fostering economic self-sufficiency.

## 2. Saving At-Risk Youth: A Pathway Away from Crime:

- **Alternative Pathways to Success:** Many **at-risk youth** struggle in traditional academic settings but excel in hands-on learning environments. By offering trade programs, we can provide these students with a sense of purpose and direction, reducing the likelihood of **school dropouts** and **juvenile crime**. Research from the **Urban Institute** shows that vocational training programs can **reduce dropout rates by up to 40%**, especially among students who face economic hardship.
- **Reducing Juvenile Crime:** A study published by **Youth.gov** found that youth with access to vocational training are **50% less likely** to engage in criminal activities than their peers without access to such programs. By giving these students practical skills and a direct path to employment, we can significantly reduce the **school-to-prison pipeline** that has affected many communities in New Orleans.
- **Creating Mentorship Opportunities:** Trade programs often involve apprenticeships and partnerships with local businesses. These

partnerships provide **mentorship opportunities** for young people, connecting them with positive role models and helping them build networks that can lead to **stable employment** after graduation.

### 3. Fortifying New Orleans' Workforce and Infrastructure:

- **Preparing for Future Infrastructure Projects:** As New Orleans invests in **infrastructure upgrades** like flood mitigation systems, road repairs, and public building renovations, having a local workforce trained in **welding, carpentry, and electrical work** will be crucial. These skills will directly contribute to the **city's resilience efforts** and ensure that jobs stay within the community, reducing project costs.
- **Addressing the Skilled Trades Gap:** According to a report by **Associated General Contractors of America (AGC)**, **80% of contractors** in the U.S. struggle to find skilled workers. By training our students in trades, New Orleans can fill this gap locally, ensuring that **public and private sector projects** can be completed efficiently.
- **Retention of Young Talent:** Offering trade programs directly in high schools helps keep young talent in the city. Instead of graduating and leaving for other states with better opportunities, students can find **immediate employment** in their field of study within New Orleans, helping to **revitalize local neighborhoods** through improved income stability.

## Building a Trade-Centric Education System: Key Components



## 1. Integration with Existing Curriculum:

- **Blending Academics and Vocational Training:** Our plan includes **incorporating trade programs into the standard high school curriculum**, allowing students to choose trade electives alongside traditional subjects like math and science. For example, a student interested in **culinary arts** might take courses in **business math, food safety, and nutrition**, while also spending time in a **commercial kitchen lab**.
- **Partnerships with Local Trade Schools:** By partnering with institutions like **Delgado Community College**, high school students can earn **dual credits** that count toward both their high school diploma and a certification in their chosen trade. This reduces the time and cost needed to enter the workforce, making **skilled labor accessible** for all students, regardless of economic background.

## 2. Funding and Sustainability:

- **Leveraging Federal and State Grants:** Programs like the **Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act** provide federal funding to support trade programs. By applying for these grants, we can secure **\$10-15 million annually** to expand trade programs in high schools across New Orleans.
- **Private Sector Partnerships:** Engaging **local businesses** in the planning and execution of trade programs will ensure that training aligns with **market needs**. Businesses can contribute to **program funding**, offer **apprenticeships**, and even donate equipment, which

can save the city up to **\$5 million annually** in startup costs for vocational training facilities.

### 3. Creating Career Pathways in Key Sectors:

- **Culinary Arts:** New Orleans' **hospitality industry** is one of the city's largest employers. By offering culinary training in high schools, we can ensure that restaurants and hotels have a steady stream of skilled chefs and kitchen staff, preserving the city's **culinary heritage** while reducing turnover rates in these roles.
- **Automotive Mechanics and Welding:** As electric vehicles (EVs) become more prevalent, mechanics with specialized knowledge will be in demand. Training programs in **EV maintenance** and **traditional automotive repair** will prepare students for a changing market, while **welding programs** can support industries like **shipbuilding** and **infrastructure repair**.
- **Carpentry and Construction:** With the city's focus on **rebuilding neighborhoods** and addressing housing shortages, having a local workforce skilled in **carpentry** and **construction** is crucial. Programs in these fields will enable students to earn **certifications** that qualify them for **higher-wage jobs** immediately upon graduation.

## Long-term Economic and Social Impact

### 1. Economic Benefits:

- According to the **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**, students who participate in **career and technical education (CTE)**

**programs** are **20% more likely** to be employed within one year of graduation compared to their peers in traditional academic programs.

- **Higher Earning Potential:** The **average salary** for trade professions like **electricians and plumbers** ranges from **\$45,000 to \$60,000 annually**, significantly higher than the **minimum wage jobs** that many high school graduates currently rely on. This increased earning potential contributes to **higher disposable incomes**, which can fuel **local businesses** and **tax revenues** for the city.

## 2. Reducing Unemployment and Crime Rates:

- By offering trade programs, we provide a direct pathway from **high school to employment**, reducing the **youth unemployment rate** in New Orleans, which is currently higher than the national average. Lower unemployment rates among youth correlate strongly with **decreased crime rates**, contributing to a **safer community** overall.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Poverty:** Access to trade programs helps break the **cycle of generational poverty** by giving students skills that can translate directly into **well-paying jobs**. This also reduces the burden on **social services**, as more families gain financial stability.

## 3. Building a Resilient and Self-Sufficient Workforce:

- **Preparedness for Natural Disasters:** With trade skills like **electrical work and carpentry**, New Orleans residents will be better equipped to **recover from hurricanes** and other natural disasters. This self-sufficiency can reduce recovery time and costs after a disaster, leading to faster economic recovery.

- **Creating a Culture of Innovation and Pride:** Investing in trade programs fosters a culture where **skilled labor is valued** and respected. This can create **community pride** in industries that have long been the backbone of New Orleans, from **shipbuilding to restaurant work**.

### **Conclusion: Empowering the Next Generation of New Orleans**

Expanding trade programs in our **neighborhood schools** is not just about providing an alternative to traditional academics; it is about creating a pathway to **economic empowerment, community resilience, and a brighter future** for the entire city. By investing in these programs, we will ensure that New Orleans becomes a hub for **skilled labor**, a city where every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and succeed.

This approach will help **bridge the gap** between education and employment, offering a **better future** for our youth and a **more prosperous city** for all residents. With the right vision, New Orleans can become a **national model** for how cities can leverage vocational training to transform their workforce and their future.

## **Initiative: Strengthening Civics Education in New Orleans Public Schools**

### **Overview:**

In order to build a thriving, engaged, and informed community, it is crucial that the residents of New Orleans understand the fundamental principles of governance, their rights as citizens, and the mechanisms that make democracy work. Our initiative aims to **revitalize and strengthen civics education** in the city's public schools, ensuring that students graduate with a deep understanding of local, state, and federal government structures, and the critical role they play as citizens in a democracy.

### **Why Civics Education Matters**

Today, many students can recall the intricacies of their favorite sports team or the stats of popular players, but far fewer understand the mechanisms of their own government or how local laws impact their daily lives. This knowledge gap hinders civic engagement and weakens the ability of citizens to **hold their leaders accountable**. A strong foundation in civics empowers individuals to participate in the democratic process, make informed decisions, and demand accountability from those in power.

For example, when citizens vote in a presidential election, they are not directly selecting the president but instead are voting for **electors** in the **Electoral College** who represent that candidate. A survey by the **Annenberg Public Policy Center** found that **only 39% of Americans** could correctly name the three branches of government, highlighting the lack of basic civic knowledge among the general public. This fundamental aspect of our democracy is often misunderstood, leading to disillusionment with the voting process and a lack of participation.

### **Building a Curriculum Around Key Principles**

## 1. Understanding the Right to Vote:

- Using resources such as [Democracy Docket's analysis of voting rights](#), our curriculum will explain the **constitutional underpinnings** of the right to vote and how this right has evolved through amendments like the **15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments**. A report by the **Brennan Center for Justice** emphasizes that understanding these amendments is crucial to recognizing how **voter suppression tactics** have historically been used and how they can be addressed through civic action.
- This knowledge extends beyond federal elections. Understanding how **local laws**—such as those affecting school boards, city councils, and mayoral positions—are shaped by voter participation helps students recognize their power in **shaping their communities**. **Pew Research Center** found that nearly **60% of Americans** believe that **local elections** have a more direct impact on their lives than national ones, yet voter turnout for these elections is significantly lower.

## 2. Civic Participation and Local Governance:

- The curriculum will include **interactive modules** on local governance structures, such as **how a city council operates**, the role of the **mayor**, and **how local ordinances are created**. A study by the **Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)** found that **students who participated in hands-on civics activities** were more likely to vote and engage in community activities as adults.

- An understanding of **local governance** can bridge the gap between residents and their leaders, ensuring that community concerns are directly addressed. This knowledge can empower students and their families to advocate for their needs, from better infrastructure to more equitable school funding.

### 3. **Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens:**

- Building on the foundation of constitutional rights, this component will focus on the **responsibilities** that accompany those rights. For example, while the **First Amendment** guarantees freedom of speech, students will learn about the importance of **civil discourse** and the impact of their words and actions in a **digital age**. According to the **American Academy of Arts & Sciences**, promoting a better understanding of rights and responsibilities is critical to **reducing polarization** and fostering **constructive political dialogue**.
- **Case studies** of landmark Supreme Court decisions, such as **Brown v. Board of Education** and **Tinker v. Des Moines**, will be used to show how **individual actions can change national policies**, emphasizing the power of informed and active citizenship.

## **Economic and Social Impact of Enhanced Civics Education**

### 1. **Strengthening the Workforce:**

- Civics education goes beyond the voting booth. It teaches **critical thinking, public speaking, and collaboration skills** that are highly valuable in the workforce. **The Brookings Institution** notes that

students who receive civics education are better prepared for **careers in public service, education, and law**, contributing to a **more engaged and productive workforce**.

- By **equipping students with a strong foundation in civic knowledge**, New Orleans can create a generation of workers who are **engaged in community development, advocate for fair business practices**, and understand the **importance of social responsibility**. This will ultimately contribute to a **more stable and prosperous local economy**.

## 2. Reducing Crime and Empowering At-Risk Youth:

- Civic education can serve as a **preventative tool against juvenile delinquency**. Research from the **Civic Mission of Schools** shows that students who are engaged in **community service and civic learning** are **50% less likely** to drop out of school and more likely to **engage positively in their communities**.
- Offering **community-based civics projects** allows students, particularly those in at-risk neighborhoods, to see firsthand how they can impact change in their communities. This empowerment can **reduce the allure of criminal activities** by offering a sense of purpose and direction.

## 3. Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Governance:

- When citizens understand the **checks and balances** built into the **Constitution** and local charters, they are better positioned to **demand transparency** from elected officials. A more informed electorate is



more likely to participate in **town hall meetings, community boards, and elections**, holding leaders accountable for their actions.

- Civic education can help combat **corruption** by making the **inner workings of government accessible** to all residents, not just those with a background in law or politics. This democratization of knowledge is critical for building a **more equitable New Orleans**, where every resident has the tools to **advocate for themselves and their neighbors**.

### Implementing the Initiative: Steps Forward

1. **Curriculum Development:** Collaborate with local universities and civics organizations to develop a **comprehensive civics curriculum** that includes **interactive learning** and **real-world applications**. Ensure that **teacher training programs** equip educators with the skills and resources needed to teach these complex topics.
2. **Community Partnerships:** Partner with **local government offices, law firms, and non-profits** to provide **guest lectures, field trips, and internships** that give students a firsthand look at **government in action**.
3. **Evaluation and Feedback:** Establish **annual assessments** to measure students' understanding of civics and track the **program's impact on community engagement**. Adjust the curriculum as needed based on feedback from students, educators, and community leaders.

## **Conclusion: A More Informed, Engaged New Orleans**

By strengthening civics education in our public schools, we will cultivate a generation of **informed voters, community leaders, and engaged citizens.**

Understanding the **rights and responsibilities** outlined in the **Constitution** and local governance systems is essential to **building a more transparent, equitable, and prosperous New Orleans.** This initiative is about more than just passing a class; it's about ensuring that every resident knows how to **navigate the system, advocate for change, and participate in democracy**—creating a brighter future for our city.



## **Conclusion**

### **Building a Brighter Future with the NOLA's Prosperity and Cultural Preservation Plan**

New Orleans stands at a crossroads, facing significant challenges and opportunities for transformation. Through the *NOLA's Prosperity and Cultural Preservation Plan*, we are charting a bold path forward—one that combines innovative solutions, community-centered policies, and a deep respect for our city's rich cultural heritage. This platform is not just a roadmap; it is a commitment to the people of New Orleans, promising a future where prosperity, safety, and well-being are accessible to every resident.

Our comprehensive approach to *Education Reform* addresses the systemic inequalities that have held our youth back for far too long. By revitalizing neighborhood schools, offering universal childcare, and emphasizing early intervention, we are not only building better schools—we are building better futures. Our vision extends beyond classrooms, recognizing that supporting children means supporting families and communities as a whole.

Through our focus on *Mental and Medical Health Reform*, we are tackling one of the most urgent issues facing our city. The creation of a Behavioral Health Insurance Co-Op and enhanced partnerships between police, mental health professionals, and social services will ensure that no one in New Orleans is left without the care they need. This plan recognizes that mental health is a fundamental part of a thriving community, and that by addressing these needs, we can create a healthier, more resilient city.

Addressing *Crime and Anti-Corruption* head-on, we are committed to a safer, more transparent New Orleans. Our plan emphasizes accountability at every level of government, ensuring that officials who deceive or abuse the public's trust are held accountable through initiatives like "Truth in Politics." By investing in community policing, enhanced training, and victim support, we aim to rebuild trust between residents and law enforcement, creating a safer city for all.

Our approach to *Job Creation and Infrastructure Investments* will create economic opportunities for all New Orleanians, from revitalizing critical infrastructure to fostering growth in new industries like renewable energy and technology. This plan is about more than just creating jobs—it's about ensuring that every resident has a chance to participate in and benefit from the city's economic growth. Through targeted investments in our workforce and smart management of AI technologies, we will ensure that technological advancement serves as a bridge to prosperity, not a barrier.

Each part of this platform is rooted in a commitment to fiscal responsibility, with a focus on budget re-allocation rather than budget increases. We recognize that real change does not come from spending more, but from spending smarter. Our administration will prioritize keeping the budget balanced, implementing stop measures to ensure accountability, and avoiding the mistakes of the past.

Ultimately, this plan is about honoring the spirit of New Orleans—a city that has always been defined by its resilience, creativity, and commitment to community. We are not content to merely preserve what we have; we aim to build a future where every neighborhood thrives, where cultural heritage is protected, and where every resident, regardless of background or circumstance, can find opportunity and hope.

New Orleans is ready for a new chapter, and together, we can write it. With bold leadership, a vision for progress, and the collective power of our people, we can build a city that not only withstands the challenges of today but embraces the promise of tomorrow. This is our time to make history, to create a New Orleans that works for everyone. Let's get to work.

Infinite Blessings and Warmest Regards,



Richard "Ricky" Twiggs Jr.