

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

November 6, 2024

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 24-113

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *KC* Kristin M. Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION UNITS

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

As part of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) July 1, 2024, reorganization, the Firefighter Recruitment Unit (Recruitment) and Firefighter Selection Unit (Selection) were moved under the Ombuds Section in the Equity and Human Resources Bureau from the Training and Support Bureau (TSB). The purpose of the move was to align all human resource processes from onboarding through retirement into one Bureau.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board receive and file.

DISCUSSION

The Recruitment and Selection Units are overseen by the Battalion Chief in charge of the Ombuds Section. All members assigned to both Units are considered to be on a Special Duty administrative assignment.

Recruitment Unit

Recruitment is staffed by a Captain, a Senior Project Coordinator, and Firefighters. Special duty members are assigned based on an interview that assesses their time management skills, conflict resolution abilities, formal education, training classes, and understanding of diversity. Because recruiting and youth programs have so many nuances, most of the unit's learning comes once a member is assigned. The Senior Project Coordinator is the only civilian position.

Recruitment is responsible for Youth Programs (Youth Academies, Camp S.P.A.R.K., and Cadets), the Fire/EMS Magnet High Schools, recruitment events, joinlafd.org social

media platforms, and LAFD preparatory programs. The Captain oversees the Unit and works with City Personnel's Public Safety Section on recruitment goals for the LAFD.

City Personnel's Public Safety Section provides all print materials for recruitment events, pays for recruitment events, provides giveaways at recruitment events, and manages social media advertising for the LAFD, whether online or with traditional media outlets. They create the firefighter job bulletin in coordination with the LAFD and maintain the joinlafd.org website, which is explicitly designed to give all potential candidates the information needed to navigate the LAFD hiring process. In addition, they are responsible for opening and closing applications, pulling names for interviews, notifying candidates of their status in the hiring process, and scheduling background checks and medical evaluations. The Recruitment Unit has monthly meetings with City Personnel to coordinate upcoming recruitment events, provide necessary giveaway items, and discuss the hiring process status. Every three weeks, there is a more significant firefighter hiring meeting to ensure that City Personnel and the LAFD are in alignment. This is a very positive collaborative effort between the two departments.

The firefighter's job in Recruitment primarily involves working at the Fire/EMS Magnet High Schools and the Los Angeles Valley College fire program. Per our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the firefighters are involved in the Physical Education (PE) classes, providing mentorship and using firefighting equipment during the class as a way of showing the students the physical nature of our job. They also go into the classroom to contextualize the fire classes taught by LAUSD staff. Additional duties for the firefighters include attending recruitment events, answering the phones and emails in the office, assisting with weekly candidate physical abilities test (CPAT) at the Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center (FHMTTC), and apparatus and equipment maintenance for the Unit.

Selection Unit

The Selection Unit is staffed by a Captain II. Special duty members are assigned based on an interview that assesses their time management skills, conflict resolution abilities, formal education, training classes, and understanding of diversity.

The Selection Unit Captain II works with City Personnel Public Safety Section to help candidates complete the hiring process. The Selection Unit is responsible for entrance interviews, pre-employment background interviews, fitness testing, and reviewing completed background packets (referred to as Red Books), and taking those packets to the Fire Chief for her review to make job offers for employment.

City Personnel background investigators do the background investigations of all firefighter candidates. The Firefighter classification is considered a safety-sensitive position and receives a more detailed background investigation than a civilian. The background process can take months based on how fast a candidate turns in information and references respond to the investigators, which is the longest part of the hiring process. Background investigators gather and review each candidate's paperwork, verify employment and driver's licenses, review fingerprint checks, interview

candidates in person, and go into the field to talk to references as needed. Each investigator works on multiple candidates at a time, and it takes approximately 50-60 hours or more to complete one background packet from start to finish.

Firefighter entrance interviews are conducted virtually with a Captain and a civilian from City Personnel. The Selection Unit has a trained cadre of Captains who conduct the interviews, which is the sole way a candidate moves forward in the hiring process. After the interviews, successful candidates are invited to the pre-employment background and baseline fitness assessment at our FHMTTC. Again, a trained cadre of Captains reviews the background paperwork submitted by all candidates to ensure it is complete, and they also ask for their Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT) certifications. The baseline fitness assessment has two parts: functional movement screening, which tests flexibility and mobility, and the baseline fitness test, which consists of four exercise movements, and the BEEP test (cardiovascular fitness test). The scores are reviewed with the candidates afterward to show them where they excelled and where they could improve before the drill tower.

Recruitment Events

The Recruitment Unit works with City Personnel to find events around the City to attend. Events are vetted for cost and the potential number of participants to enhance the return on investment. Recruitment reaches out to local fire academies, EMTs, and paramedic schools, and attends job fairs in different areas of the City. Recruitment looks for free events as much as possible due to a limited budget for paid events, which can run into thousands of dollars for two days. Recruitment uses City Personnel to print handout materials and also employs QR codes that candidates can scan to access the joinlafd.org website. Candidates can then take more time to review all the hiring information.

Recruitment continually seeks ways to reach diverse candidates through local events they find, events provided to them by City Personnel, or by members of the community reaching out to the fire department. The firefighters in the field are some of our best recruiters because they are out in the communities we serve. Additionally, Recruitment employs a trained cadre of diverse members to recruit at targeted events so community members can see themselves in those members. All members who work recruitment events receive a review of where the LAFD is in the hiring process, the print materials to review, and training on the joinlafd.org website, which has answers to additional candidate questions, as well as the email for Recruitment to ask very specific questions, usually related to backgrounds or military service.

With the rise of social media and generational differences, there is more engagement with potential candidates via social media than in-person events, generating a better return on investment. Social media is a free way for Recruitment to provide information about being a firefighter and what the process entails. The Recruitment Unit operates on three social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) under the "joinlafd" name. These platforms allow for real-time engagement with candidates to answer questions and provide links to the joinlafd.org website, all with just a few clicks.

The joinlafd.org website has all the information about the hiring process, as well as links to EMT, CPAT, Crew 3, and all the forms a candidate will be required to fill out during the background process.

In addition to the in-person events and social media posts conducted by Recruitment, City Personnel works on its own recruiting campaigns, which are Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and pays for targeted ads via social media. The paid targeted ads are directed toward our underrepresented groups in the local geographic area. The paid PSAs and targeted ads come from the budget allocated to City Personnel for fire recruitment.

Board Report prepared by Kristine Larson, Deputy Chief, Equity and Human Resources Bureau.

Attachment

FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS

Step 1: Minimum Requirements

- Be at least 18 years of age at the time of application. (No max age limit)
- Graduation from a U.S. high school or equivalent, G.E.D. or equivalent from a U.S. institution, or a California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) certificate is required
- Achievement of a passing score on the Firefighter Candidate Assessment (FCA) is required in order to be considered in the next phase of the selection process. If you have taken and passed the FCA you do not need to retake the FCA, but you will be required to complete a new City application. Information on how to register to take the FCA is available at: <https://tara.vitapowered.com/LAFD/FCA> and at joinLAFD.org
- Valid California Driver's License is required at the time of appointment.
- The Firefighter job qualification, with additional information, is posted at <https://bit.ly/lafdqualify>.

Step 2: Online City Application

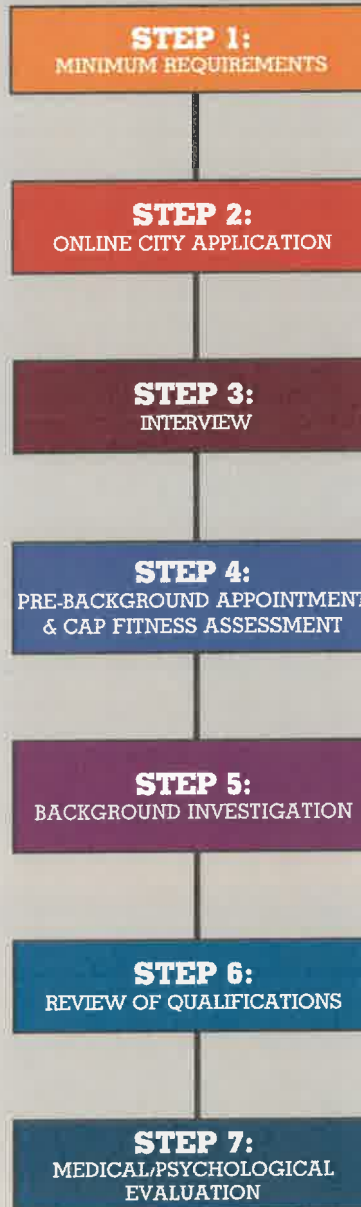
Applications will be accepted online beginning May 2, 2023. **CPAT AND EMT ARE NOT REQUIRED TO FILL OUT A CITY APPLICATION.** The Firefighter job bulletin, with additional information is posted at <https://bit.ly/firefighterapp2023>
FCA REMINDER: Registration for PSI's FCA will also begin on **May 2, 2023.** Information on how to register to take the FCA is available at: <https://tara.vitapowered.com/LAFD/FCA>

Step 3: Interview

The Interview is a behavior-based review of a candidate's personal history. It is designed to evaluate initiative in learning, practical orientation, role adaptability, service orientation, oral communication skills, job motivation, teamwork, and respect for diversity. The minimum passing score is 70. This score will determine a candidate's rank on the eligible list, which is valid for **one year** from the date of the interview. This is an extremely competitive examination and only those candidates with the highest scores will continue in the selection process.

Step 4: Pre-Background Appointment & CAP Fitness Assessment

Based on a candidate's ranking on the eligible list and the hiring needs of the Fire Department, candidates with the highest scores will be selected for a pre-background appointment. Candidates will also be required to complete the Candidate Advancement Program (CAP) Baseline Fitness Assessment. The CAP Baseline Fitness Assessment results are advisory. Candidates will also be required to maintain



For more information go to **JOINLAFD.ORG** or call (213) 893-9899

Step 4: Pre-Background Appointment & CAP Fitness Assessment (cont.)

and complete the CAP Baseline Fitness Assessment Logbook at the conclusion of the field investigation. **Provide proof of a current passing score on the Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT) and valid EMT certificate during the pre-background appointment and at the time of certification for hiring consideration.** Afterwards, those candidates selected to move forward in the process will receive a conditional job offer (CJO) from the Fire Department and be required to schedule their fingerprint appointment and complete an additional background questionnaire form within 7 days. Please be aware that any additional background information that may be received throughout the remainder of the selection process, and during training and probationary periods could result in this conditional offer of employment being withdrawn or in termination if you have already been hired.

Step 5: Background Investigation

The Background Investigation will consist of a field investigation and a records check. Candidates who possess a **valid EMT certification, CPAT, and are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or received an exemption** will then be considered for a field investigation. Candidates are evaluated on interpersonal skills, including sensitivity, and respect for others; decision-making and judgment; maturity and discipline; honesty, integrity, and personal ethics; setting and achieving goals.

Step 6: Review of Qualifications

This review may include the evaluation of the candidate's training, experience, personal qualifications, and findings of the background investigation as they prepared the candidate for the job of Firefighter. Based on the hiring needs, those candidates who are free of felony convictions and possess the strongest qualifications and good moral character as determined by a thorough background investigation be scheduled for the remaining steps.

Step 7: Medical and Psychological Evaluation

A Medical Examination is conducted by a City physician to evaluate the candidate's medical fitness (vision, hearing, cardiovascular, respiratory, etc.) to perform the full range of Firefighter duties, with no conditions which would affect the candidate's ability to safely perform those duties. A Psychological Evaluation (including written tests, and possibly an interview by a City Psychologist) is conducted to evaluate the candidate's psychological fitness to safely perform the full range of Firefighter duties.