

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



JAIME E. MOORE
FIRE CHIEF

December 4, 2025

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 26-001

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Jaime E. Moore, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT YOUTH RECRUITMENT AND
SELECTION UNITS

FINAL ACTION: Approved
 Denied

Approved w/Corrections
 Received & Filed

Withdrawn
 Other

SUMMARY

As part of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) July 1, 2025 reorganization, the Firefighter Recruitment Unit (Recruitment) and Firefighter Selection Unit (Selection) were moved from the Ombuds, Firefighter Selection and Recruitment Section in the Equity & Human Resources Bureau to the Workforce Effectiveness Section (WES) - Training and Support Bureau (TSB).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive and file this report.

DISCUSSION

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

Recruitment Unit

The Recruitment Unit is staffed by a Captain II, three Captain I's, a Senior Project Coordinator, and four 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 and leadership. Because recruiting and youth programs have so many nuanced scenarios, most of the unit's learning comes once a member is assigned.

Prior to the recent budget cuts, Recruitment worked with the City's Personnel Public Safety Section on recruitment goals for the LAFD. City Personnel's Public Safety Section (Personnel) provided all printed materials for, paid for, and provided giveaways for all recruitment events and managed social media advertising for the LAFD, whether online or with traditional media outlets. Personnel created the firefighter job bulletin in

coordination with the LAFD and maintained the joinlafd.org website, which is explicitly designed to give all potential candidates the information needed to navigate the LAFD hiring process.

The Recruitment Unit is also responsible for four Youth Programs, which are intended as a pathway from introductory level to the Cadet Program.

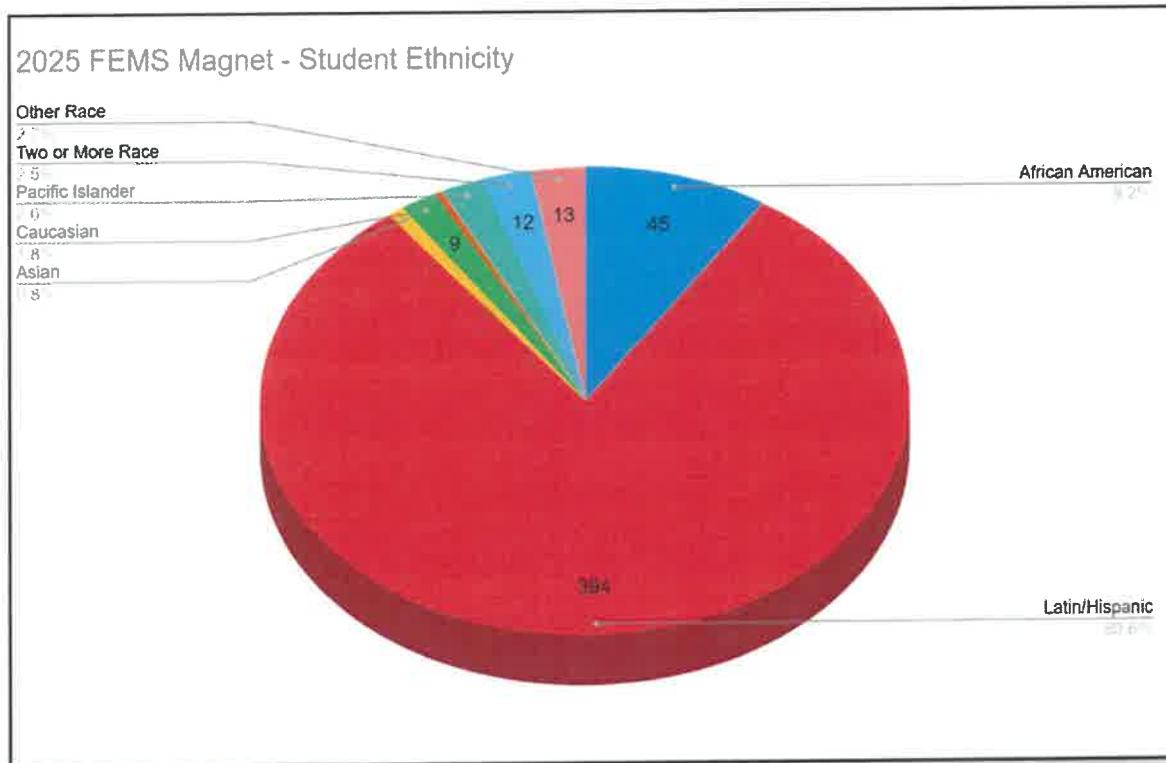
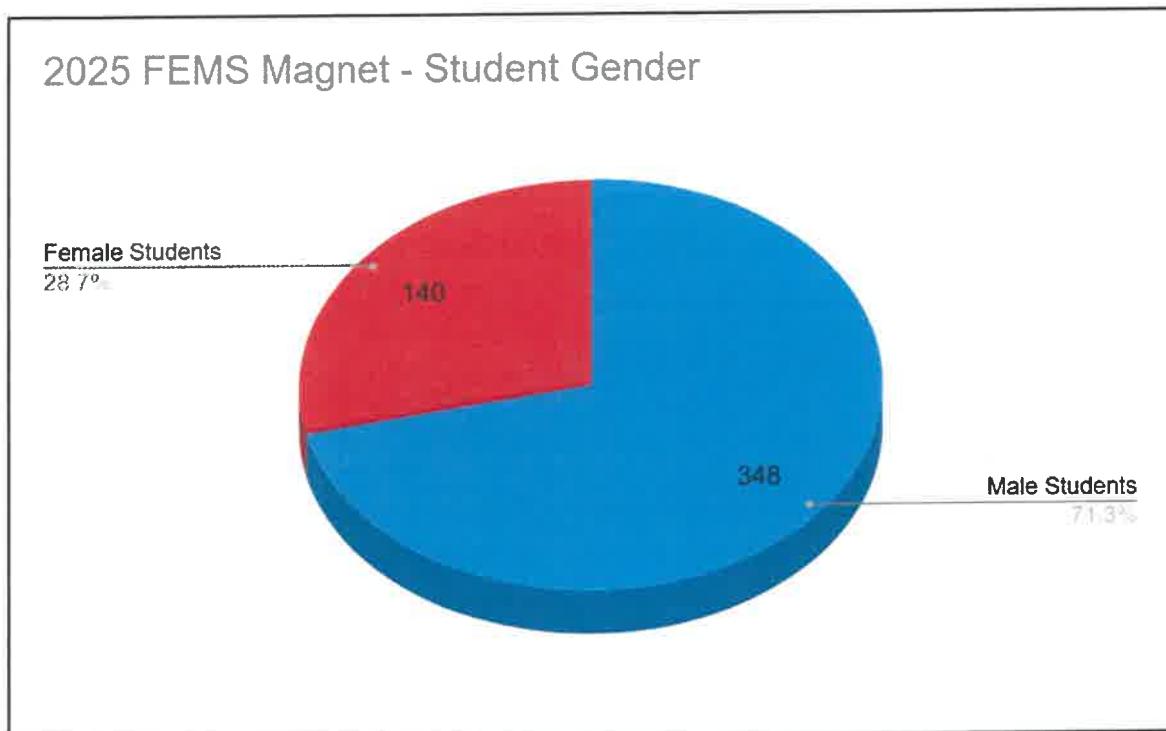
Camp S.P.A.R.K.: The LAFD Camp S.P.A.R.K. (Service, Professionalism, Attitude, Respect, and Knowledge) is an introductory fire camp for all youth ages 14-18. The camp's goal is to instill confidence, leadership, and courage in youth, primarily females, while providing awareness of a potential career in the fire service. The curriculum includes interactive training exercises with power tools, ladders, hose lines, extinguishers, physical fitness, team-building events, and basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. The Recruitment Unit continues to partner with the Mayor's Office, Council Districts, City Personnel, and the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation to host, fund, and support Camp S.P.A.R.K. An implementation plan and an ongoing budget have been developed for long-term sustainability. The Recruitment Unit is working with the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation for continued funding efforts.

Firefighter/EMS Magnet High School Program (FEMS): The Magnet High School program aims to partner with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high schools to provide students with information about a career as a LAFD firefighter. Through early contact, the LAFD staff allows the students to explore the field of firefighting. This program acts as a pathway toward other LAFD youth programs. The Magnet program strengthens students' self-esteem, career skills, physical fitness, and character development through fire and EMS-related skills. The FEMS Magnet High School Program was established in 2016. The current 2025/2026 program has 489 participants. Participation varies each year based on enrollment and graduation numbers.

The following LAUSD high schools have Firefighter/EMS Magnet programs:

1. Phineas Banning High School (Banning) - Wilmington
2. Woodrow Wilson High School (Wilson) - El Sereno
3. Susan Miller Dorsey High School (Dorsey) - Baldwin Hills
4. James Monroe High School (Monroe) - North Hills

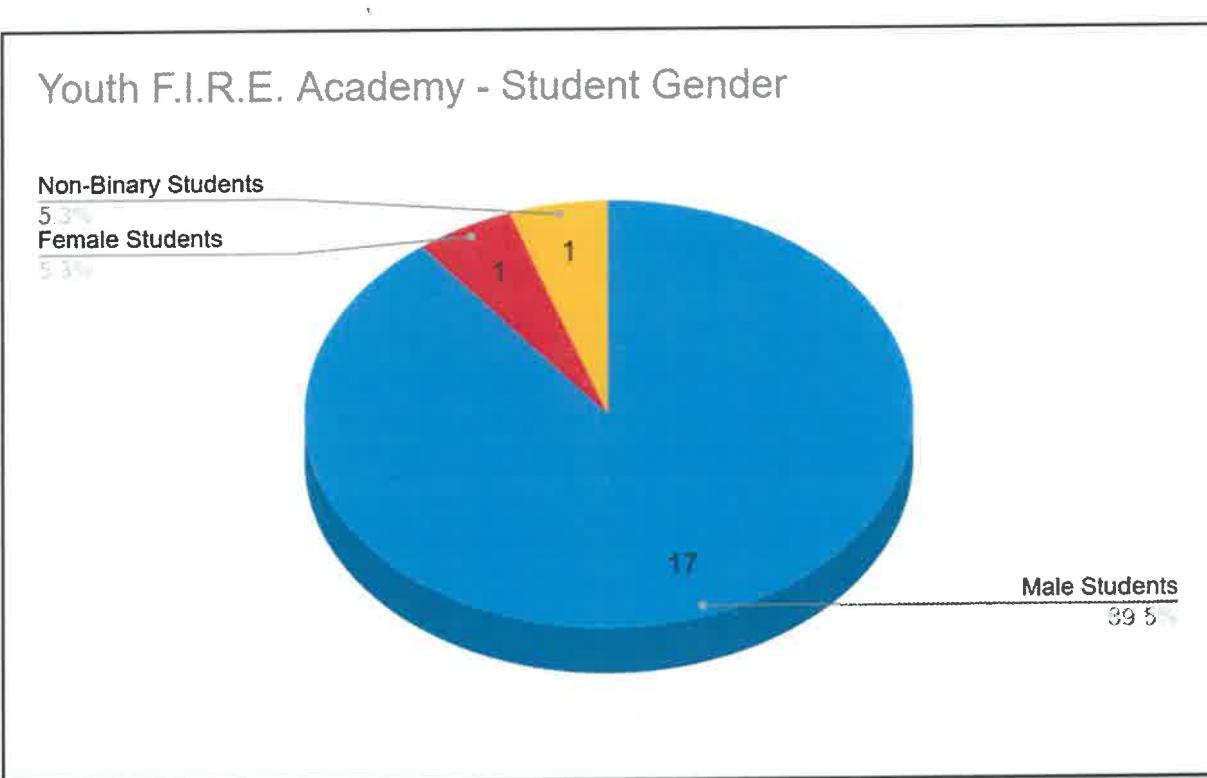
Firefighter/EMS Magnet Programs, Fiscal Year 2025/26 – total of 489 participants. The charts below illustrate demographic information:



Youth Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.) Academy: The Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.) Academy has grown to include four Youth F.I.R.E. Academies. Each Academy meets for eight consecutive Saturdays for six hours per day. Each Saturday involves physical fitness, team building, leadership and responsibility, along with practical hands-on training with the firefighter cadre. The Youth F.I.R.E. Academy consists of four phases:

- Phase I - Basic engine company operation and equipment
- Phase II - Basic truck company operations, as well as familiarization with truck tools and equipment
- Phase III - EMS and disaster preparedness
- Phase IV - Leadership: interview preparation, resume writing, and guest speakers related to various career opportunities

The East Los Angeles College (ELAC) Academy, which ran for two weeks this summer, is designed for college-age students. It is intended for older students who have just graduated from high school and have aged out of LAFD youth programs. Students earn three college credits in Fire Technology and receive hands-on training and physical fitness to prepare them for the firefighter hiring process. Nineteen students (17 male, one female, one non-binary) participated in the program over the summer. These F.I.R.E. Academies introduce individuals to firefighting as a career and life skills. These programs are currently on hold due to staffing shortages and resource availability.



Fire Cadet Program: The Fire Cadet Program is the top tier of Youth Programs. The Fire Cadet Program is an exciting opportunity for youth ages 16 to 20 to gain valuable experience in firefighting. This program introduces the cadet to first-hand experiences of the job of a firefighter, including the ability to work side-by-side with actual LAFD Firefighters. After an orientation, cadets must complete a physical agility test, turn in required paperwork (including current grades), and participate in an oral interview. Once completed, the cadets are assigned to their Cadet Post, where they must work through their task book to become "Ride-Along" certified. Task books consist of reading assignments and manipulative tasks over four levels of skill development.

Once certified, cadets will respond to actual emergencies alongside firefighters and paramedics, but are prohibited from entering fires or other hazardous environments for safety reasons. Cadets assist with routine tasks at the fire station, including community relations, fire prevention, training, and maintenance of equipment and the station. Becoming a cadet is an excellent way to develop essential skills and gain experience that will be beneficial in nearly every field or endeavor. The LAFD currently operates ten Cadet Posts, each with an assigned advisor who is a sworn member of the LAFD.

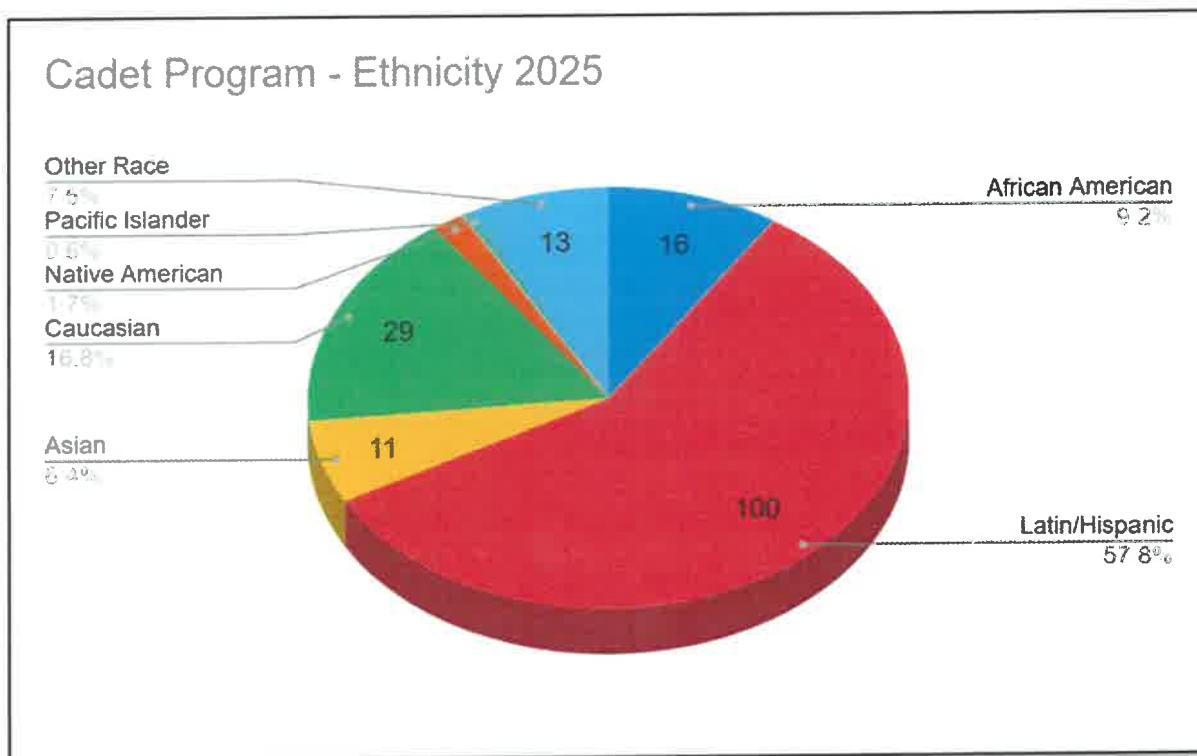
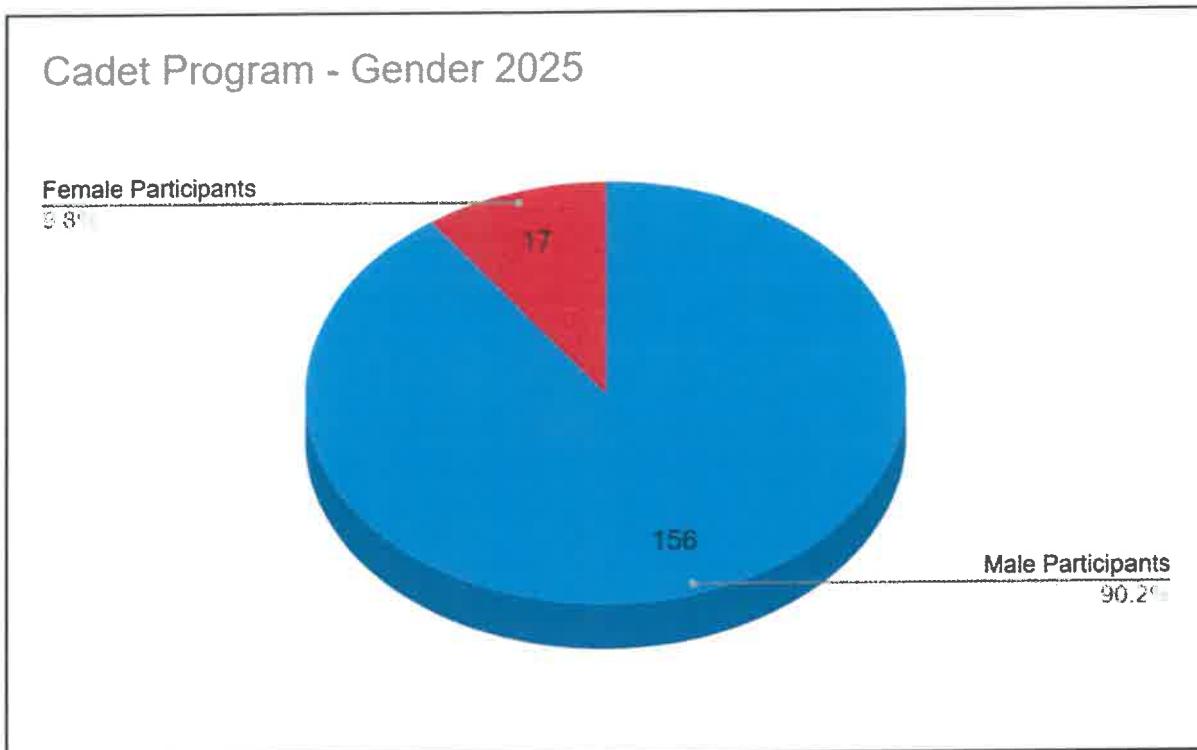
We currently have 10 Cadet Posts strategically located throughout the city. As this program continues to develop and grow, we anticipate adding new Cadet Posts throughout the city to meet the demand.

The Cadet Post locations include (numerical designation corresponds with the fire station):

- Post 2 – Boyle Heights
- Post 11 – Westlake/MacArthur Park
- Post 27 – Hollywood
- Post 64 –South Los Angeles
- Post 77 – Sunland/Tujunga
- Post 81 – Panorama City
- Post 85 – Harbor Gateway
- Post 94 – Crenshaw District/Baldwin Hills
- Post 106 – West Hills
- FHMTC Post – Echo Park/Lincoln Heights

The Cadet Program currently has 173 cadets (156 Males/17 Females), 73 of whom are new cadets from the most recent processing.

2025 Cadet Program Demographics



The most recent Cadet Acceptance Process included the following:

- **07/08/2025** - New Cadet Parent Virtual Orientation - to answer any questions, explanation of expectations of being a Cadet and requirements needed
- **07/19/2025** - In-person New Cadet Orientation, where applications were turned in, Liability Waivers were collected, and the Baseline Fitness test was conducted
- **07/28/2025** - Deadline for report cards and letters of recommendation to be submitted
- **07/29/25 - 08/08/2025** - Interviews were conducted. Medical forms must be signed off by a medical provider and completely filled out before being assigned to a post
- **09/09/25 and 09/10/25** - New Cadet Orientation for the 73 new cadets who were accepted into the program

The Recruitment Unit has recently revamped the expectations and requirements for the Cadet Program to ensure we are focusing on the commitment and readiness of our cadets to perform firefighter duties. Cadets are also now required to "recertify" every year to continue in the program. The goal of the program is to develop and strengthen the physical and mental disciplines needed for a career as a firefighter and to develop character traits at an early age to make them eligible and certifiable candidates for the LAFD.

Recruitment Events

Events are vetted for cost and the potential number of viable candidates. The Recruitment Unit reaches out to the local fire academies, EMT and paramedic schools, and attends job fairs in different areas of the City. The Recruitment Unit seeks free events as much as possible due to the lack of budget.

The Recruitment Unit continually seeks ways to reach diverse candidates through local events they find or by members of the community reaching out to the fire department. The Unit 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 LAFD is in the hiring process and are exposed to the latest changes on the joinlafd.org website, which has answers to additional candidate questions as well as the emails 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 the Recruitment Unit 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.

The joinlafd.org website has all the information about the hiring process, as well as links to information regarding Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT), Crew 3, and all forms a candidate will be required to fill out during

the background process.

Recruitment is currently in the process of creatively working on recruiting campaigns, Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and targeted ads that were previously done and paid for by Personnel for fire recruitment.

Selection Unit

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

The Selection Unit Captain II works with the 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 his 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 how quickly 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, and review fingerprint checks, interview candidates in person, and go into the field to talk to references needed. Each investigator works on multiple candidates at a time, taking 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 FHMTC. Again, a trained cadre of Captains reviews the background paperwork submitted by all candidates to ensure it is complete, also asking for their EMT and 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 pull ups, pushups, burpees, squats, and the BEEP test (cardiovascular fitness test). The scores are reviewed with the candidates afterward to show them where they excelled and where improvement is needed before the drill tower.

Board Report prepared by Ben Culp, Battalion Chief Workforce Effectiveness Section.