

August 31, 2016

To: Board Of Fire Commissioners

From: Andrew Glazier, Vice-President, Board of Fire Commissioners
Rebecca Ninburg, Commissioner, Board of Fire Commissioners

Subject: Review and Redesign of Los Angeles Fire Department Youth Programs
BFC 16-104

SUMMARY

A review and, in some cases, a redesign of the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Youth Programs structures is necessary to ensure they are meeting their full potential and the goals established in this report. In addition, current staffing and resources are inadequate to support the programs and should be augmented.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Report and the following Recommendations:

- A) The LAFD should undertake a comprehensive review and redesign (where necessary) of all youth programs to ensure consistency with the intentions of this report, to be completed by June 30, 2017 with implementation in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year.
- B) In order to more fully realize the potential of current and future LAFD youth programs, the Board Of Fire Commissioners (BOFC) establishes that the goals for all LAFD youth programs, including (but not limited to) the Cadet Program, Magnet programs, Youth Fire Academy, and Crew 3 are:
 - 1. To invest in and develop the youth of the communities served by the LAFD by providing positive role models, career skills, physical fitness, and character development in a safe and caring environment;
 - 2. To provide service to our communities
 - 3. To support Community Resiliency and Disaster Preparedness;
 - 4. To introduce the youth of Los Angeles to the Fire and Emergency Medical Services and offer a career pathway into the Fire and/or Emergency Medical Services.
- C) A formal recruitment plan and materials shall be developed for each youth program. The goals for recruitment and priority for outreach and participation within the LAFD youth programs will be (to the extent allowable by law):

2. At least 30% of participants will be female
 3. Participants will otherwise reflect the overall diversity of the City of Los Angeles
- D) Written, consistent and standardized curricula, learning objectives, assessments, testing materials, service expectations, training for staff, and any other critical aspects shall be established for each youth program with the goal of ensuring equal parts exposure to professional skills, character development, community service and Fire- and EMS-specific skills.
- E) For relevant programs, specific and permanent locations shall be designated within the LAFD service area for programming, with support from area Bureau commands and appropriate staffing plans to ensure consistent available staffing for ongoing, functional programming.
- F) In order for there to be ongoing, consistent leadership and organization of youth programs, the LAFD Chief should secure funding for a civilian coordinator of all youth programs at a minimum level of senior special projects coordinator, reporting to an individual with Battalion Chief rank or above within the Training Bureau, and whose sole and primary function will be to oversee the development, support and coordination of all LAFD Youth programs as an equal partner with the existing sworn staff assigned full-time to youth programs, and with appropriate support from designated staff in both Training and the Emergency Operations Bureaus. This coordinator shall have a background and experience in education, youth development, or other related fields.
- G) Within 12 months, the LAFD should provide a feasibility analysis of a "Train to Hire" program in compliance with the Mayor's Executive Directive 15 in collaboration with our labor partners, the City Attorney, and the Department of Personnel, that provides an expedited pathway for eligible cadets into the LAFD, with a goal for implementation during Fiscal Year 2018-2019.
- H) The Chief should provide a work plan in 30 days for implementation of the recommendations in this report and develop budget requirements to be included in the budget for Fiscal Year 17-18. Reports should be provided to the BOFC as to the progress toward meeting the recommendations contained in this report every 60 days until implementation of all recommendations is complete.
- I) A subcommittee of 2 members of the BOFC should be established to meet monthly with relevant staff to support implementation of the recommendations in this report. After implementation of all recommendations in this report, department staff should present at least semi-annually on the department's ongoing success in meeting the goals of this report.

DISCUSSION

The LAFD has long operated a patchwork of youth programs including the Cadet program, Youth Fire Academies, Crew 3 and school-based programming such as the Fire/EMS magnets. All of these programs have tremendous potential to support important long-term LAFD goals including the development of sustainable, diverse pipeline of recruits and support for youth in the communities of Los Angeles. However, these programs are not currently provided with the consistent and long-term coordination, resources, leadership, and supervision to ensure their success and quality. Rather, they depend on the good will and passion of a small number of committed volunteers working with limited, and often, insufficient resources.

Consequently, there is wide variation in the quality, reputation and effectiveness of programming and participation numbers. Further, when members who volunteer to support programs are transferred or promoted, they may lose the capacity to provide the same level of support and subsequently, individual programs may be degraded. Finally, there is no clear and intentional connection between the various programs, and no clearly defined pathway that ultimately can lead to a career with the Los Angeles Fire Department. A well-functioning youth program set should provide multiple entry points, such as our youth fire academies and our high school magnet program, that feed into a continuing experience through our cadet program and end with a pathway into a career with the LAFD (or other Fire or EMS services) for those who remain interested and committed.