

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

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BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 19-149

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *RMT* Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LAFD MEDIATION COMMUNITY MEDIATION PARTNERSHIP

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 Withdrawn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 directed by the Board of Fire Commissioners, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) is providing an update on the Community Mediation Partnership Pilot Program (CMP).

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:  
Review and file.

## DISCUSSION

In the summer of 2019, the LAFD embarked on a one year pilot program of the CMP to serve as an alternative for addressing and resolving citizen complaints stemming from service complaints and/or misunderstandings of medical protocols by LAFD members during a service call.

Under the CMP Pilot Program, the following complaints may be considered for mediation:

- Service call complaints
- EMS protocol-related complaints
- Discourtesy complaints
- Other low acuity citizen complaints against LAFD member(s)

Currently the pilot is on-going.

Partnership with Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Dispute Resolution Program  
The LAFD partnered with the Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, Dispute Resolution Program (DRP) to assist in the implementation of the CMP. Senior mediators are utilized to mediate Department citizen complaint cases.

The United Firefighters of Los Angeles City Local 112 (UFLAC) and the Office of the Independent Assessor (OIA) are in support of the CMP Pilot Program and have provided invaluable input on the CMP development efforts.

#### CMP's Progress – Pilot Period

On July 25, 2019, the LAFD provided its first agency orientation (training) to the DRP senior mediators selected to serve as mediators for referred cases. In or around this same period, three (3) cases were identified appropriate for mediation and invitations were extended to the disputing parties. Of these three cases, parties to one case agreed to participate in the CMP. In this complaint, the citizen alleged that the two members were rude towards her when they arrived at her house for a 911 call.

The respective mediation took place on September 30, 2019 at a neutral location and served to address the citizen's complaint of unprofessional conduct from LAFD members during the service call.

Parties to the two (2) other cases opted not to participate in the CMP due to the citizen complainants' unwillingness to participate as well as unfamiliarity with the program from the LAFD members.

#### Lessons Learned

One of the goals of the pilot mediation program is to identify successes and challenges that will shape the foundation for the LAFD's development of the CMP program.

Some of the lessons learned included:

##### Successes:

- PSD command staff provided training to its investigators on how to identify potential CMP cases.
- PSD developed an internal formal referral process to effectively, uniformly and efficiently vet potential CMP cases.
- Two PSD investigators assist PSD command staff in communicating to the involved parties of potential CMP cases and explain the process and determine the parties' interest in participating in the process.
- PSD has established a follow-up protocol with the CMP mediators after a mediation session has concluded to learn if it was success.
  - The mediation that was completed on September 30, 2019, was well received by both members who opted to mediate their dispute.

- The citizen was pleased with the opportunity to discuss the issue with the involved members as well as the outcome of the mediation.
- The Mediators were able to bring the dispute to a positive conclusion.

Challenges:

- The unfamiliarity with the program influenced declinations to mediate two cases of the three cases.

**Pending CMP cases**

Currently three (3) cases are being reviewed for suitability for the CMP. One (1) of the cases is in final stages of preparation and is expected to be scheduled for mediation in January 2020. The remaining two (2) cases are still under review.

**Community Mediation Partnership Program Development**

As additional mediations take place, the lessons learned, input from all participants and mediators, identification of all applicable policies and procedures, and the collection of other pertinent information will assist in the establishment of an official Community Mediation Partnership program.

**CONCLUSION**

The LAFD is confident that the development of the CMP Pilot Program will foster positive relationships with the community as well as provide more transparency. Additionally, the CMP and other similar programs that engage the community to resolve issues are of great value. By the summer of 2020, the Department intends to conduct a thorough assessment of CMP to determine if the pilot period should be extended and efforts to move forward with the establishment of an official CMP program should be undertaken.

Board report prepared by Amir R. Caspian, Battalion Chief, Professional Standards Division.