




RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

March 22, 2021

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 21-038

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT (LAFD) RECRUIT TRAINING
ACADEMY OVERVIEW

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 Withdrawn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 LAFD Board of Fire Commissioners (Commission), the Fire Department is providing an update relative to information specific to the diversity and retention rates within the Recruit Training Academy (Academy). A report was requested that reflects the data from the time Recruit Firefighters enter the Academy through the end of probation.

Utilizing the data parameters and timelines as requested by the Commission, the Fire Department organized, assessed, and analyzed the information along with the outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:

Receive and file this report.

DISCUSSION

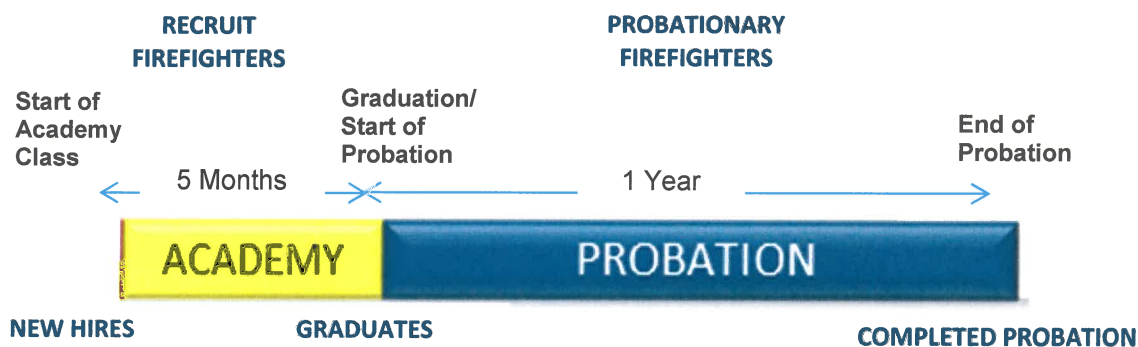
In accordance with the Commission's request and the 2020 LAFD Recruit Training Academy Overview Report, ethnic/gender composition and retention rates from the start of the Academy through the end of probation were measured and analyzed.

The data timelines are being presented in three specific areas as requested and are defined to ensure consistency and uniform application throughout the report. Additionally, the data fields are being presented for future Academy Classes to ensure the expectation is clear relative to data maturation timelines for future reports.

The data parameters include the following:

- **New Hires** – The number of brand-new Recruit Firefighters (Recruits) for an Academy.
- **Graduates** – Refers to Recruits who successfully completed the Academy curriculum.
- **Completed Probation** – Refers to Probationary Firefighters (PFF) who have successfully completed 365 days of their probationary field internship.

The timeline to obtain a full data set from one Academy Class, which includes all three of the aforementioned categories as requested by the Commission, is approximately one year and five months for the data to mature. Note that beginning Fiscal Year 2018-19, the duration of the Academy was extended from 20 weeks to 22 weeks, which will still be referred to as five months in this report. The subsequent field probationary period required for Recruit Firefighters to successfully complete the Academy remains at one full year, or 365 days. The following chart demonstrates the timeline as it relates to the defined terminology and the stages of a newly hired Firefighter.



This report has been divided into four sections. Three segments provide context and a baseline for the success of the current process and are defined as follows:

- **End Status of Academy Classes (End Status)** – Includes all data fields; New Hires, Graduates, and Completed Probation.
- **Ongoing Recruit Status of Academy Classes on Probation (Ongoing Status)** - Includes two data fields. New Hires and Graduates. These Classes have not Completed Probation.
- **Current Recruit Academy Class Status (Current Class Status)** - Includes one data field. The New Hires are currently assigned to the Academy.

The fourth portion of the report provides an **Overall Analysis** of the new information including an appraisal and examination of the 2020/2021 Action Plan Goals from the 2019 Academy Report.

1. END STATUS OF ACADEMY CLASSES

This section assesses Academy Class statistics which contains mature data from the time the Recruits entered the Academy through the end of probation. The corresponding Start, Graduation, and Probationary End dates for each Academy Class are included below. Three additional Academy Classes (highlighted light blue below) have completed the probationary period since the 2019 Academy Report.

	Academy Class	Academy Start Date	Graduation Date	Probation End Date	Fiscal Year
1	2018-1	07/23/2018	12/20/2018	12/23/2019	FY 18/19
2	2018-2	01/07/2019	06/06/2019	06/09/2020	FY 18/19
3	2018-3	06/24/2019	11/21/2019	11/24/2020	FY 18/19
4	2019-1	12/09/2019	04/09/2020	04/12/2021	FY 19/20
5	2019-2	05/26/2020	10/22/2020	10/25/2021	FY 19/20
6	2020-1	12/21/2020	05/20/2021	05/23/2022	FY 20/21

The following tables and charts list the number of New Hires, Graduates, and Probationary members that Completed Probation, and corresponding retention rates for each stage assessed by gender, ethnicity, and as a whole.

End Status Recruit Classes 2020					
Academy Class	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates	Probationary Retention	Completed Probation
2018-1	62	82%	51	98%	50
2018-2	62	81%	57	96%	55
2018-3	67	76%	51	96%	49
Total	191	83%	159	97%	154
Average Retention in the Academy – 83%					
Average Retention during Probation – 97%					

1.1 Gender – End Status of Academy Classes

End Status Recruit Classes 2019: Three Classes from 2018-1 to 2018-3

Gender	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates	Probationary Retention	Completed Probation
Female	27	63%	17	88%	15
Male	164	86%	142	98%	139
Total	191	83%	159	97%	154

1.2 Ethnicity – End Status of Academy Classes

End Status Academy Classes 2019, 3 Classes from 2018-1 to 2018-3

Ethnicity	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates	Probationary Retention	Completed Probation
African American	29	96%	28	96%	27
Asian	17	82%	14	100%	14
Caucasian	77	84%	65	97%	63
Filipino	3	100%	3	100%	3
Hispanic	63	75%	47	96%	45
Native American	2	100%	2	100%	2
Total	191	83%	159	97%	154

Analysis – End Status of Academy Classes

The End Status Report includes all data fields as requested by the Commission which allow for the tracking of Recruits from entry into the Academy through the end of probation.

The aggregate retention rate for women that graduated from the Training Academy is 63% which is a 4% net increase since the previous reporting period. Probationary retention rate has remained high at an average of 97%. Additionally, the Academy retention rate from the last three reporting periods have averaged 84%. This stable trend is attributed to continued front-end recruitment phase, increased education during the selection process, and ensuring the physical requirements to be successful in the Academy are well known by candidates.

In analyzing ethnic representation, the diversity of Recruits who graduated and completed probation do not deviate largely from the composition of Recruits who were initially hired. The general consistency in ethnic representation from the point of entry into the training process through the end of Probation reflects well on new hire diversity.

Of the 191 Graduates who advanced to probation, 5 PFF's (2.8%) did not complete the probationary period for all 3 Classes. .

During this reporting period none of the probationary separations were due to performance issues. The reasons a PFF does not complete probation vary and are listed in this section. The probationary retention rate is 97% for the current reporting period. The Department considers this measure to be favorable and indicates that the Academy continues to execute the Recruit training mission at a very high level of proficiency.

As can be ascertained by the table below 5 PFF's did not complete probation. One separation was due to misconduct and the others due to outlier personal issues.

End Status – Probationary Separations Recruit Classes 2018				
	Probationary Firefighters	Recruit Class	Resign/ Terminated	Reason
1	Male Hispanic	2018-1	Resigned	In lieu of (Misconduct)
2	Female Caucasian	2018-2	Resigned	Personal Reasons (Be a pilot in Australia)
3	Male Caucasian	2018-2	Resigned	Personal Reasons (Returned to Dallas FD)
4	Male Hispanic	2018-3	Resigned	Personal Reasons (Be a Lineman)
5	Female African American	2018-3	Resigned	Personal Reasons

2. ONGOING STATUS OF ACADEMY CLASSES ON PROBATION

This section discusses Academy Classes for which two of the three data fields, New Hires and Graduates, are available. Two (2) total Classes have graduated since the time of the 2019 Academy Report. There are currently two Classes which have graduated and are still progressing through the probationary period. The full data set for these Academy Classes will not be available until each class reaches the Probation End Dates identified below:

No. of Classes	Academy Class	Academy Start Date	Graduation Date	Probation End Date	Fiscal Year
1	2019-1	12/09/2019	04/09/2020	04/12/2021	FY 19/20
2	2019-2	05/26/2020	10/22/2020	10/25/2021	FY 19/20

The following tables and charts provide the number of Hires, Graduates, and corresponding retention rates for each of the two Academy Classes broken down by gender and ethnicity at graduation. Gender and Ethnicity retention rates are also included for the same two data fields which provide a more refined pathway to analysis and comparison.

Academy Class	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates
2019-1 (3 rd Assignment)	58	84%	49
2019-2 (1 st Assignment)	56	89%	50
Total	114	87%	99

2.1 Gender – Ongoing Academy Status

Graduated Classes: 2019-1 to 2019-2

Gender	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates
Female	17	59%	10
Male	97	92%	89
Total	114	87%	99

Class 2019-1 to 2019-2 New Hires



Class 2019-1 to 2019-2 Graduates

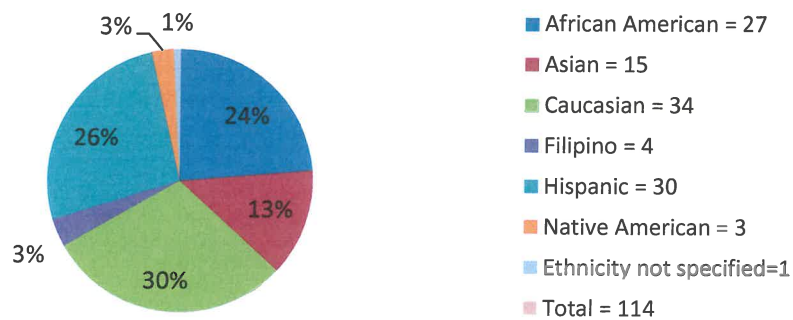


2.2 Ethnicity – Ongoing Academy Status

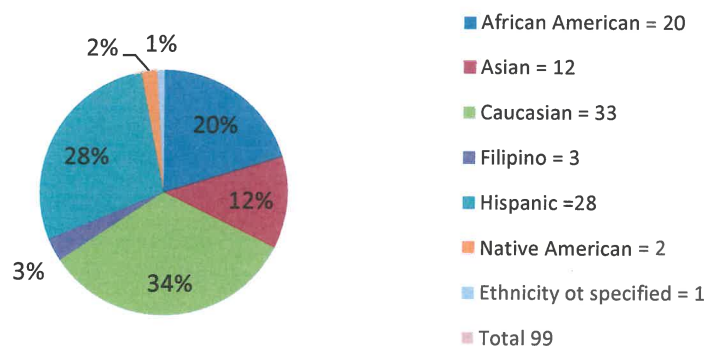
Graduated Classes: 2019-1 to 2019-2

Ethnicity	New Hires	Academy Retention	Graduates
African American	27	74%	20
Asian	15	80%	12
Caucasian	34	97%	33
Filipino	4	75%	3
Hispanic	30	93%	28
Native American	3	67%	2
Ethnicity not specified	1	100%	1
Total	114	87%	99

Class 2019-1 to 2019-2 Ethnicity - New Hires



Class 2019-1 to 2019-2 Ethnicity - Graduates



Analysis – Ongoing Status

The Ongoing Status section focuses on two of the three data fields; New Hires and Graduates.

The remaining two Classes, 2019-1 and 2019-2, are set to complete probation within the next 8 months. A total of 99 Recruits graduated from these Classes and moved on to the field internship.

The following information reflects an assessment of the statistics/data outcomes for the two Recruit Classes (2019-1 to 2019-2) identified in this section of the report:

- Female representation equaled 10% of total Graduates. By comparison in the 2018 report female representation was 11%; 2017 report of 7%.
- Female representation totaled 18% of New Hires.
- Out of the 6 female Recruits who did not graduate, a total of four are still eligible for graduation. Four are currently in the Training Academy Class.
- Similar to the data analyzed in the End Status Reporting section, the ethnic composition of Hires and Graduates remains relatively consistent through graduation which reflects well on the diversity among Recruits in the Academy.

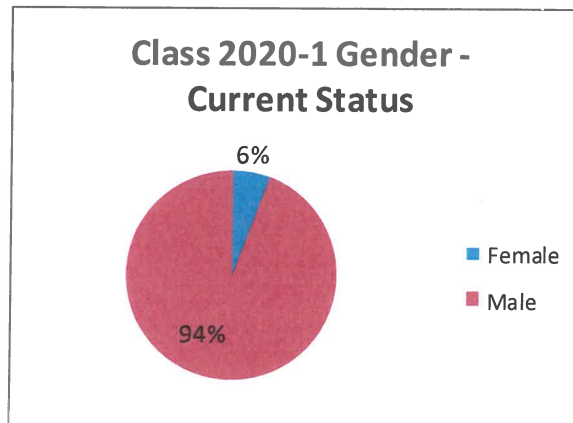
3. CURRENT ACADEMY CLASSES

There is currently one Academy Class in session, Class 2020-1. The data for this Class is scheduled to fully mature in May 2022. Graduation is scheduled for May 20, 2021 and retention statistics will be reported in the next Academy Overview Report.

Academy Class	Academy Start Date	Graduation Date	Probation End Date	Fiscal Year
2020-1	12/21/20	5/20/2021	05/21/22	FY 20/21

3.1 Gender – Current Status

Gender	New Hires
Female	2
Male	33
Total	35



3.2 Ethnicity – Current Status

Ethnicity	New Hires	Percentage
African American	5	15%
Asian	6	18%
Caucasian	11	33%
Hispanic	11	32%
Filipino	1	1%
Ethnicity not listed	1	1%
Total	35	100%

Analysis – Current Status

This section provides a snapshot of one Recruit Class currently in session. The Class is progressing well and is in alignment with the incremental improvements demonstrated by the data presented in this report. Note that this class size has been reduced due to pandemic budget shortfalls.

According to the Board Report (BFC 21-010) “LAFD Gender Equity Plan,” dated December 31, 2020, the female population of the LAFD comprises 3.5% of uniform members. By comparison, the current Recruit Class represents 6% of New Hires.

4. OVERALL ANALYSIS

The Academy is one of sixteen Accredited Local Academies (ALA) as established by the Office of State Fire Marshal in California. The ALA status allows the Department to certify its newest members as Firefighter I's which is in educational and training alignment with the State of California along with national organizations; International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) and Pro-Board Fire Service Professional Qualifications System (Pro Board). To date, the Department has certified over 1,250 members as Firefighter I. This

achievement is in alignment with the LAFD Strategic Plan, Goal 5, Strategy 4; Align Drill Tower Academy with State Firefighter I Certification. The accomplishment also provides a pathway to achieving Strategic Plan Benchmark Strategy 4; Align LAFD training programs with California State Firefighter Certification tracks, which will help provide pathways for higher education and professional development.

The Academy is currently comprised of 22 weeks of academic and manipulative instruction. The program is divided in two parts which include Basic Instruction and Advanced Practical Application Training. The Basic Instruction (week 1-13) teaches the Recruits the basic skills of personal protective equipment, ladders, hose lays, tools and equipment, and emergency medical skills.

The Practical Training (week 14-22) mirrors field activities in scope and intensity to challenge the Recruits' thought process in combining the single layer activities learned in the Basic Instruction portion and utilizing these skills under simulated fire ground conditions. During the Advanced Training there is also a demonstration of strength and stamina which is necessary for Recruits to perform at a basic Firefighter level in the field. The last two weeks of the Academy focuses on the comprehensive examinations for State Certification.

ENHANCEMENTS

In an effort to continue to be proactive and to increase recruit retention rates, the RSS has made significant enhancements to our training program. The Candidate Assistance Program (CAP) continues to be a valuable tool to provide regular opportunities for candidates to gain exposure to the rigors of firefighting and exposure to tools and equipment used in the craft. Last reporting period, a third CAP location was opened at Drill Tower 40 in San Pedro. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the entire CAP program was temporarily cancelled. Prior to the start of class 2019-2, since the CAP program had been canceled and knowing the value of the program, the CAP staff was able to offer CAP sessions via Zoom for a few weeks prior to the start of the class thus improving opportunities for Recruit Firefighter success rates.

Covid-19 has had a tremendous impact on the Training Academy. During this reporting period, Class 2019-1 graduated early in an effort to relieve staffing shortages. This "early" graduation was accomplished by having the staff and recruits work a six-day work week for over a month. Class 2019-2 was conducted during the peak of the pandemic. Covid-19 procedures were implemented and followed to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. The procedures included but were not limited to, twice daily temperature checks, weekly Covid-19 testing, twice daily housework routine with surface decontamination and offering remote learning for isolated recruits. Class 2019-2 graduated with only one Covid-19 case. Class 2020-1 began December 21, 2020. This start date coincided with a Covid-19 spike. As cases began to rise with the staff and recruits, the decision was made to use technology (Google Classroom) for lectures and the entire class went into isolation for a work week. This tactical pause stopped the spread of the virus and both staff and recruits were able to return just as the vaccine was being offered to frontline workers. In future classes, vaccines will be offered to the recruit prior to the start of class.

In an effort to retain recruit firefighters, RSS and Injury Prevention Unit (IPU) continue to cooperate on injury prevention. The IPU is available to Recruit Firefighters on their day off to gain professional assistance to prevent injury, enhance nutrition, and receive a personalized strength and flexibility exercise program.

Finally, during the last reporting period, a Probationary Firefighter Mentorship Program was proposed as a pilot program by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). Data shows that this program is of significant value to the graduating recruits as they transition to their field assignments. This program has a negligible financial footprint and has been permanently adopted by the QAU.

CONCLUSION

The LAFD is recognized for innovative excellence and continues to be a world-renowned leader development institution.

It is the Department's objective to ensure that the Training Academy continues to evolve and adapt to changes in the generational, educational and real-world environment.

Preparation and knowledge of what it takes to be a Firefighter is key for the success of a candidate in any demographic. As such, the Department strives to provide adequate, accessible, and equitable teaching and educational curriculum such as the CAP program, State Firefighter I and II and beginner FMS for Firefighter candidates.

All Department staff of the Training and Support Bureau share a profound sense of why the team exists and are invested in accomplishing its mission and goals.

Board report prepared by RSS staff under the direction of Battalion Chief Steven A. Skelly.