



RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

October 4, 2021

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 21-093

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *For*
14 Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT (LAFD) FIREFIGHTER
RECRUITMENT SECTION STATUS UPDATE (COVID-19)

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 Withdrawn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

The Firefighter Recruitment Section (FRS) is providing a status update relative to the 2020 open application process. Due to COVID-19 unexpectedly shutting all in-person activities for the remainder of the year, FRS staff was temporarily reassigned to the COVID-19 testing site and later vaccination sites throughout the city.

The remaining recruitment events scheduled were transitioned to an online virtual platform. Captain Kimberly Rudloff and the Personnel Department searched for viable events, but very few events occurred as the rest of the country went into lockdown. Despite the shutdown, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) had a record number of applications for firefighter (10,262 applicants).

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board:
Receive and file this report

FISCAL IMPACT

Unknown at this time.

DISCUSSION

The open application period for the 2020 hiring process was extended by four months due to COVID-19 in order to allow candidates the opportunity to file applications and take the written exam.

CHALLENGES

All youth programs such as High School Magnets, Youth Academies, Girls Camp and the Cadet Program were cancelled with an unknown return date. FRS has lost over one

year of youth programs due to COVID-19, and it has hindered any progress made for mentorship and further enrichment of progressive pathway into the Fire Department. The High School Magnets went into distance learning for the remainder of the academic year.

COVID-19 has also impeded other programs that were traditionally held in-person. The Applicant Orientation Program (AOP) and Mock Interview Training were in-person programs that have refrained due to COVID-19 restrictions. Other methods to deliver these programs to candidates were conducted.

SUCCESSSES

The FRS conducted one in-person recruitment seminar at the Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center (FHMTTC) in 2020 just prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. The event was well attended and promoted the open application period. During the open filing period, FRS conducted online question and answer (Q&A) sessions and publicized numerous social media posts about the open application period taking place.

Once the hiring process started with candidates being selected for interviews, the FRS arranged for an interview prep online session so candidates may prepare for their upcoming interview. The online interview prep program was held on the Google Meet platform in order to get candidates acclimated with the platform prior to their interview. Evolving the interview prep program onto an online platform has been successful as it allows for more candidates to attend per session.

The only program allowed to return in-person with enhanced safety precautions is the Candidate Physical Abilities Test (CPAT) training. This vital program has continued assisting candidates who have never taken the exam or need to recertify.

2022 HIRING PROCESS

In anticipation of the 2022 hiring process, FRS is updating the joinlafd.org website to ensure all information is accurate and up-to-date with current hiring practices. It will include updated content and remove outdated information in order for candidates to have a better understanding of the hiring process. As the website is collectively managed by the Personnel Department, delays have incurred in updating the aforementioned information.

In addition, FRS is preparing for an online Q&A session to answer frequently asked questions (FAQ) in advance of the open filing period. There is also a plan underway for an orientation video that will follow the online Q&A session led by FRS staff.

The current state of COVID-19 with the Delta variant surging does not allow for in-person recruitment events. FRS attended one event since COVID-19 restrictions were lifted (Hot Import Nights) and will continue to find more events, however nothing significant is available at the moment. Many college recruitment events that were in-

person have transitioned on to a virtual platform, nevertheless FRS is anticipating to resume the events in spring 2022.

A search is in progress for a venue to conduct an in-person recruitment seminar in early 2022, which would allow a large number of participants to attend. Challenges have incurred in finding a suitable venue that is not too costly and is within the budget restraints that the Personnel Department has in place due to COVID-19. In-person events allow for more detailed information to be presented to potential candidates as well as allowing the candidates the opportunity to ask questions that are more specific to themselves.

Jointly, FRS and the Personnel Department is planning various social media “blasts” through its joinlafd and paid ads on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts. There is a strong social media following through joinlafd which allows for positive engagement with candidates through these platforms. It has become a very effective way of reaching the next generation of candidates who are heavy social media users.

CONCLUSION

The FRS is always looking for new and creative ways to engage with potential firefighter candidates. We are severely challenged with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic impacting our ability to do in-person events and relying on virtual events at the moment. As the date approaches towards the opening filing period (spring 2022), FRS remains optimistic that in-person recruiting will resume soon.

Board Report prepared by Kristine Larson, Battalion Chief, Firefighter Recruitment Section.