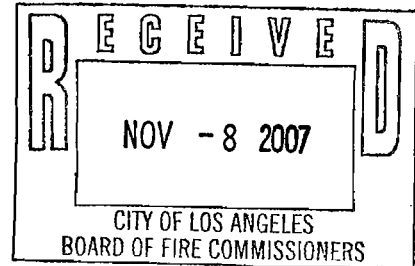


NOV 20 2007

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



DOUGLAS L. BARRY  
FIRE CHIEF



BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 07-125

November 8, 2007

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: Douglas L. Barry, Fire Chief *DB*

SUBJECT: HRDC FUNDING FOR EXPANSION OF HUMAN RELATIONS TRAINING SECTION

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 Withdrawn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

**Recommendations:** That the Board:

1. Approve the attached HRDC funding request for \$122,024 to expand the scope of Human Relations Training in order to effectively address the goals of the Audit Action Plan.

**Summary.**

The Human Relations Training Section performs the curriculum design, regularized delivery, and evaluation of human relations training for the Department's nearly 4,000 employees.

Board report prepared by David Yamahata, Assistant Chief, Chief of Staff Office.

Attachment

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



DOUGLAS L. BARRY  
FIRE CHIEF

November 6, 2007

TO: Human Relations Development Committee

FROM: Bureau of Training and Risk Management

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR HRDC FUNDS  
Human Relations Plan: *Human Relations Training*

## **Request**

\$122,924 to expand the scope of Human Relations Training in order to effectively address the goals of the Audit Action Plan.

## **Background and Discussion**

In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Fire Department and the Human Relations Commission to contract the services of a human relations curriculum designer and instructor. In 2006, the Fire Department approved the hiring of two part-time project assistants to assist in the curriculum design, regularized delivery, and evaluation of human relations training for the Department's nearly 4,000 employees. These employees have also performed training needs assessments, conducted site-specific follow-up training, and facilitated dialogue among department members around contentious issues.

Among the positive outcomes that have resulted from regularly delivered human relations training:

- A. Compliance with AB 1825, which mandates sexual harassment prevention training every two years for all supervisors;
- B. Introduction of human relations information that is new to most members in areas such as socialization, group dynamics, ethics, and emotional intelligence;
- C. Increased exposure has led to increased respect for external (non-LAFD) expertise and expectations;
- D. Improved awareness of the nexus between operational and behavioral standards;
- E. Increased attention to traditions that no longer serve the department and the demonstrated harm they have caused;
- F. Increased willingness of members to seek information and assistance from human relations training staff;
- G. The repeated message that human relations training is valued and that its delivery will be sustained over the long haul;

It can be said that there are three primary goals of human relations training:

1. To ensure department and member compliance with city, state, and federal training mandates;
2. To familiarize department employees with human relations skills that can be applied to improve relationships with supervisors, peers, and subordinates;
3. To effect the necessary behavioral changes to initiate significant and measurable progress toward the audit action goals.

Classroom instruction is best directed at Goal #1. Current staffing levels will ensure the continuity of training that has already been implemented.

The classroom setting is also ideal for raising awareness among those who are not regularly exposed to external influences and reinforcing appropriate attitudes and behaviors in members who are already oriented in that direction. Classroom instruction also serves to deliver important human relations information in a standardized format, reinforce critical concepts, and provide regular opportunities for member feedback. Therefore, classroom instruction can be effective at addressing Goal #2. However, teaching several companies with vastly different norms and attitudes frequently impedes candid discussion and forces instructors to "train to the middle".

It is the expansion of training beyond the classroom that will lead to Goal #3, which seeks pronounced and sustainable changes department-wide. To change any organizational structure or process or result requires a change in people<sup>1</sup>. A different setting and different approaches are necessary to effecting the more fundamental improvements that open the door to large-scale change.

This expansion of human relations training encompasses three innovative components:

- I. Site-specific behavioral observation and training;
- II. Individual and small group coaching,
- III. Work environment assessment.

Now that a majority of members have been exposed to human relations training on multiple occasions, the time has arrived when more distinctive instruction must be delivered in order to fulfill Goal #3.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Change -are we truly specialist change experts?" Suzanne Skiffington, PhD & Perry Zeus, Presented at the US International Coaching Federation (ICF) - International Conference.

### *I. Site-specific behavioral observation and training*

Previous visits to fire stations and other work locations have been loosely structured and performed only when human relations instructors are not needed in the classroom. It has become necessary to formalize these visits and recognize their value in reinforcing behaviors learned in the classroom.

Although human relations instructors have engaged informally in traditional human relations techniques<sup>2</sup>, structured on-site behavioral observation will produce baseline information on the interpersonal and environmental obstacles that impede the application of human relations skills.

On-site training will also enable human relations instructors to deliver information in a setting where it can immediately be applied and measured. Follow-up training and coaching within the confines of the work environment is a proven method of improving skills retention.<sup>3</sup>

### *II. Individual and small group coaching*

The private sector has long reaped the benefits of coaching.<sup>4</sup> Because of the focus on profit and revenue, executive coaching of senior management is the preferred choice of most businesses. The Fire Department's goals are vastly different and, therefore, different methods of coaching are required. The objectives of human relations coaching could be summarized in three areas:

1. Significant improvement in individual behaviors;
2. Improved relations among employees;
3. The development of change agents<sup>5</sup> throughout the organization to propel and sustain department-wide change initiatives driven by the Audit Action Plan.

Behavioral coaching on an individual basis is the preferred method for achieving results in Area 1. Members can be referred by the Professional Standards Division's new tracking

---

<sup>2</sup> "Human relations techniques such as interviews, social observation, group dynamics, and morale surveys are proposed to diagnose the problem and foster an atmosphere of cooperation in the workplace." Models of Management: Work, Authority, and a Comparative Perspective, Mauro F. Guillen, 1994. Page 289.

<sup>3</sup> Xerox Corporation carried out several studies on coaching. These studies demonstrated that in the absence of follow-up coaching to their training classes, 87% of the skills change brought about by the program was lost. However good your skills training in the classroom, unless it's followed up on the job, most of its effectiveness is lost without follow-up coaching.- As reported in *Business Wire*, July 30, 2001

<sup>4</sup> Recent studies show business coaching and executive coaching to be the most effective means for achieving sustainable growth, change and development in the individual, group and organization. "The 2001 HBR List: Breakthrough Ideas for Today's Business Agenda", *HBR Monthly*.

<sup>5</sup> "Change agents are leaders who cut across the organization and its units without regard to the traditional hierarchy. Directly or indirectly, they...act as role models to demonstrate new and better ways to work." "Building an Effective Change Agent Team", *The McKinsey Quarterly*, September 2007.

system, as a result of supervisor or peer observations, or based upon performance evaluations. Individuals can also self-select to be coached, but such an advanced level of self-awareness is likely to be induced by other indicators, including those named above.

Effectiveness coaching and behavioral coaching conducted with work teams on-site is the most appropriate approach for Area 2. The precise coaching prescription would result from information gained during site-specific behavioral observation and training.

To achieve success in Area 3, a carefully designed change agent program is essential to identifying, coaching, and supporting members who are already modeling the ideal behaviors sought in Areas 1 and 2.<sup>6</sup>

### *III. Work environment assessment*

Work environment assessment represents the evaluation component for expanded human relations training. It is automatically built in to the program design because baseline measurements and measures of effectiveness are established *prior* to engaging in the first two components.

Items that are measured within the work environment must be tied specifically to one or more of the following:

- skills taught during classroom training;
- behaviors and interactions noted during site-specific observations;
- behavioral changes targeted through individual coaching;
- interpersonal improvements sought during group coaching sessions;
- feedback from change agents.

### **Cost Analysis**

Funding is sought for January 1 to June 30, 2008. A cost breakdown appears below.

Item/Position	# requested	TOTAL
Human Relations Advocate	4	\$115,424
Survey Development software	1	\$500
Statistical Software package	1	\$1500
Professional Development	varies	\$4800
Books, resources	varies	\$1000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$122,924</b>

---

<sup>6</sup> "Organizations that overlook the importance of an appropriate change agent program risk paying a high cost." Ibid.

## **Conclusion**

A six-month pilot program of expanded human relations training should produce conclusive data to inform the HRDC of the validity of this new direction. Within this six-month period, Human Relations instructors will be expected to provide verbal reports at each month's HRDC meeting beginning in February 2008.

Detailed written reports will be provided quarterly in March and June 2008.

Input for course corrections will be accepted during the April 2008 meeting in response to the first quarterly report.

After six months of expanded staffing levels and the programs that will result, many of the indications listed in the "short-term" column of the accompanying document, *Anticipated outcomes of a well-developed, department-wide Human Relations Program* will be in evidence. These improvements will be meticulously tracked with the assistance of statistical and survey development software that will more nearly gauge improvements in 'real time.'

Cultural changes within an organization are difficult especially in established organizations. LAFD must continue working towards motivating human relations change and an environment of inclusiveness.<sup>7</sup> And organizations cannot change unless individuals change.<sup>8</sup> An expansion of Human Relations Training is inevitable in order to fully realize changes on the part of the individual that will lead to significant changes in the work environment.

---

<sup>7</sup> Los Angeles City Controller, "Review of the Los Angeles Fire Department Management Practices", January 26, 2006, P. 55

<sup>8</sup> "Organizations cannot change unless individuals change. It is in people's heads that real change occurs, if organizations are to be transformed." Organizational Development in the Public Sector, David G. Carnevale, 2003. Page 39.

## Anticipated outcomes of a well-developed, department-wide Human Relations Program

October 2007

Category	Short-term (1-2 years)	How measured	Mid-term (2-4 yrs)	Long-term (4-6 yrs)
<b>Employees</b>	Improved communication skills among Department members	<p><i>-Reported improvements in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Interactions between traditionally-oriented employees &amp; employees from underrepresented groups;</i></li> <li><i>How decisions &amp; policies are critiqued.</i> <p><i>-Documented decrease in # of formal investigations and resulting disciplinary action due to an increase in proactive approaches to the early resolution of conflict.</i></p> </li></ul>	Increased #s of employees engaging in critical thinking, the basis of constructive and collaborative discussion and strategic decision-making.	Vastly improved behavior (especially with regard to how people treat one another) and performance (particularly when applied to traditionally reviled duties & assignments).
<b>Professional Development</b>	Members who actively seek out and are rewarded with opportunities to increase self-awareness & self-management, enrich inter-personal skills, and be exposed to non-traditional perspectives.	<p><i>-Increased enrollment in leadership &amp; personal mastery programs on a voluntary basis;</i></p> <p><i>-Employee surveys show:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Increased respect for knowledge in areas that they previously considered irrelevant to the fire service;</i></li> <li><i>Employees associate exemplary leadership more closely with ethics and people skills than with rank and time on the job.</i></li> </ul>	An increased appetite for life-long learning paired with a new appreciation for thorough leadership preparation that begins in the recruit academy.	Well-rounded, multi-faceted employees whose self-images extend beyond their specific titles or assignments and into their identification with public service and the City of Los Angeles.
<b>The Work Environment</b>	Unprecedented, self-initiated acts that demonstrate a willingness to be accountable, culpable, and remorseful for unprofessional behavior.	<p><i>-Employee surveys indicate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>They feel valued regardless of title, position, assignment;</i></li> <li><i>They feel trusted to make the right decisions;</i></li> <li><i>They clearly understand what is expected of them and how to adhere to these expectations.</i></li> </ul>	A growing commitment to uphold oneself and one's immediate peers to ethical and professional standards in the workplace.	A professional work environment in which employees self-monitor their work habits and their treatment of others, while unhesitatingly guiding others to do the same.
<b>The Organization</b>	Increased openness to outsiders and the display of previously undervalued competencies required to relate to others and to serve the public in a modern setting.	<p><i>Interviews with potential candidates indicate that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>LAFD is recognized widely as a highly desirable place to work because of the value it places on all its employees;</i></li> <li><i>Self-correcting, values-driven individuals who esteem both professional conduct and professional service delivery are eager to work here.</i></li> </ul>	Training facilities, fire stations, and other work sites that are open to the public and that regularly benefit from the community's input and knowledge.	Continuous and sustainable improvements to departmental culture, without sacrificing the positive features that contribute to the Fire Department's already outstanding reputation.