# RALPH M. TERRAZAS

March 26, 2015

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS FILE NO. 15-030

TO:

**Board of Fire Commissioners** 

FROM:

Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT:

FIREFIGHTER CANDIDATE MENTORSHIP AND PREPARATION

INFORMATION NOTICE

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	FINAL ACTION:	Approved	Approved w/Corrections	Withdrawn
l		Denied	Received & Filed	Other

#### **SUMMARY**

Attached for the Board of Fire Commissioners' review is the Training and Support Bureau's Firefighter Candidate Mentorship and Preparation Information Notice. The Information Notice was prepared as recommended in the report entitled *Review of the Recruitment, Selection and Hiring Process for Training Academy Class 13-1, Section VII. Summary of Recommendations, item 4*, prepared by Independent Assessor Sue Stengel.

This Information Notice addresses the final recommendation of the Independent Assessor's report which states "The Department should develop a Notice or Bulletin specifying the proper methods and venues for mentoring firefighter candidates and potential candidates, reminding Department personnel of the laws, rules and regulations which govern the unbiased selection and hiring process, and the appropriate preparation programs which can be facilitated by Department personnel." In completing and posting the attached Firefighter Candidate Mentorship and Preparation Information Notice, all recommendations of the Independent Assessors report will be complete.

The Information Notice has been a collaborative effort including the Office of the Independent Assessor, Risk Management, Los Angeles City Attorney's Office, and the Training and Support Bureau.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That the Board: Receive and file.

Board report prepared by Richard F. Rideout, Deputy Chief, Training and Support Bureau.

Attachment

### FIREFIGHTER CANDIDATE MENTORSHIP AND PREPARATION INFORMATION

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD or Department) is engaged in the selection process for hiring entrance-level firefighters. The demands of the modern fire service can be especially daunting for firefighter candidates due to its physical, educational, and emotional demands. Those who have succeeded in this profession most likely had assistance from a role model or mentor. The Department encourages its tenured members to continue our long tradition of providing guidance for aspiring firefighters; however, such assistance must be provided in an unbiased manner. Many of our LAFD members have family, friends, and/or mentoring relationships with candidates and, consequently, have a personal interest in their success. In light of such interests, it is critical that the Department maintain a fair and impartial selection process for all. The following information is provided to help Department members ensure unbiased conduct when participating in mentorship activities:

## **Governing Laws and City Rules**

California Proposition 209 prohibits the state and its political subdivisions (including the LAFD) from "discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting."

Furthermore, the Board of Civil Service Commissioners discourages organized coaching by departments for the purpose of assisting a specific candidate group based on any of the aforementioned characteristics. Such coaching or training is looked upon with disfavor inasmuch as it may confer, or be perceived to confer, an unfair advantage to certain groups of potential candidates over others.

# Stakeholder Groups

There are many stakeholder groups with an interest in the selection and hiring process, including the Women in the Fire Service, Los Bomberos, Stentorians, Chief Officers Association, United Firefighters of Los Angeles City, and Department members. Stakeholders are an excellent resource and can be involved in supporting, mentoring, and volunteering their time to assist firefighter candidates in the selection process. However, mentoring activities that occur on duty or in an official capacity must be directly aligned with the LAFD's recruitment goals of fairness, equity, and diversity.

### **Department Mentorship Programs**

The Department offers formal mentorship programs for all firefighter candidates that are in the Firefighter Selection Process. Members, and those they are mentoring, are encouraged to review the most pertinent and up-to-date information regarding the Firefighter Selection Process (including the interview process, written test preparation, and physical fitness programs) at <a href="http://joinlafd.org">http://joinlafd.org</a>.