


**LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT**

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FIRE CHIEF

July 19, 2022

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 22-077

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Kristin M. Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: 2022 UPDATE ON LAFD GENDER EQUITY PLAN

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 Withdrawn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**

On August 16, 2016, the Los Angeles Fire Department (Department) presented to the Board of Fire Commissioners (Board), its first Gender Equity Action Plan, identified as Board Report # 16-078. The plan was a result of Mayor Garcetti's Executive Directive No. 11, entitled, "Gender Equity in City Operations," issued on August 26, 2015.

The initial plan contained information and recommendations as well as goals and objectives to resolve gender inequities and improve the status of women within the Department. It specifically focused on three areas, Recruitment, Work Environment, and Professional Development.

This current report will provide an update on the progress that has been made in the six years since the initial report and areas identified as necessary to ensure a safe, equitable, and inclusive work environment for women.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board:  
Receive and file this report.

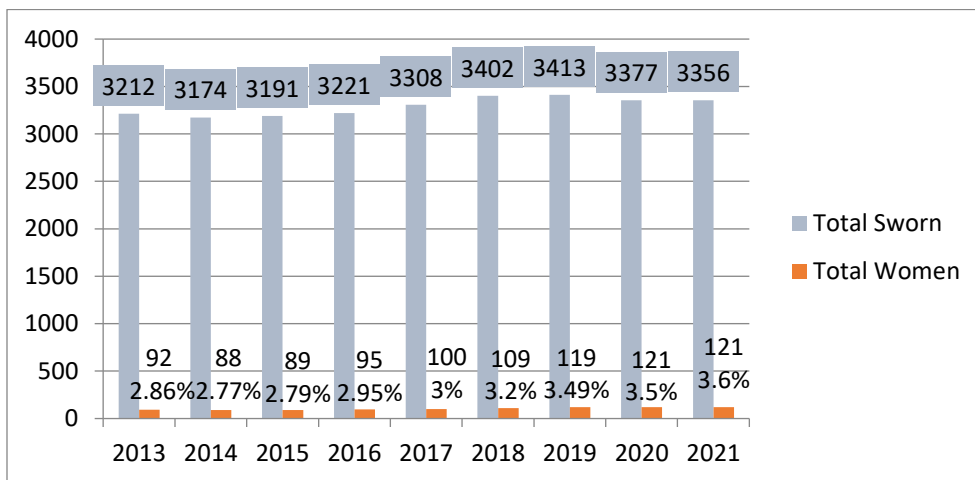
**DISCUSSION**

The initial 2016 report, focused on three main areas, Recruitment, Work Environment, and Professional Development. In reflecting on the previous five years, the Department focused on these same areas through a lens that observed what goals and action items had been achieved, were yet to be accomplished, and what additional goals and action items were needed to ensure the Department continues to move in a forward direction toward gender equity.

**Recruitment**

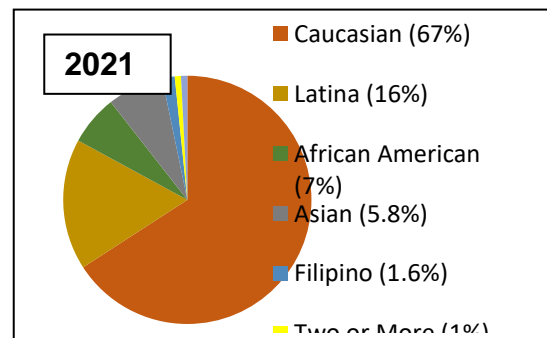
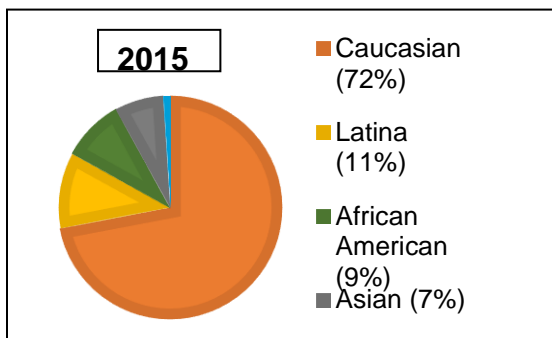
When Fire Chief Ralph Terrazas took office in August 2014, there were 88 female firefighters in the Department<sup>1</sup> With a total of 3,174 sworn personnel, this placed sworn women at 2.77% of the workforce. As of December 31, 2021, the Department has 3,356<sup>2</sup> sworn personnel and 121 sworn women, or 3.6%.

Since January 1, 2014, a total of 123 women have been hired, of which 74 remain active<sup>3</sup>. Taking into consideration resignations, terminations, and retirements, this provides an overall increase of 33 women separations in the past seven years. When compared in percentages, the total number of Department members increased by 5.4%, and the number of women increased by 27%.



The graph to the left depicts a comparison between the total sworn personnel and sworn women since July of 2013.

In addition to gender, racial diversity provides differing perspectives and ideas that help the Department better understand the communities it serves and provides an opportunity for better approaches in all aspects of emergency service and human relations. The graph below reflects the breakdown of women by race in 2015 and in 2021.



<sup>1</sup> According to data obtained through the Human Capital Program as of December 31, 2021

<sup>2</sup> This figure includes 2 women currently in Drill Tower (DT) Class 22.1 and 3 women deferred due to injury

In 2016 the Department embarked on a very robust recruitment campaign that continues today. This program highlights members within the LAFD, including women and minorities and includes social media platforms along with advertisements in high-visibility locations such as City buses, and professional sporting event marquees.

These efforts have been successful in drawing in prospective women candidates. In comparing the number of women who applied for the position of firefighter, the Department found that there was a decrease of 8% in the total number of women in this most recent test cycle. The 2020 recruitment cycle resulted in 8.7% total women (901 out of 10,262) when compared to the 2018 recruitment cycle which had 9.47% total women (936 out of 9879). The most recent number remains considerably higher than the first documented 5.19% (522 out of 10,059) in 2014.

The previous gender equity plan contained four goals that proved to be successful overall. The following is the gist of each goal with at least one success along with one area where the department missed the mark. **Goal 1 - Maintain the current recruitment plan which promotes fairness and attracting and hiring well-qualified and diverse candidates** was successfully completed for the most part. The Recruitment Section was able to improve in outreach with the military and sent one member to Camp Pendleton to recruit women. However, the partnership with ESPN was discontinued due to budgetary constraints, also no job expos were held. **Goal 2 - Expand youth programs to allow for more youth participation with the intent to draw interest in the fire service from program participants.** The High School Magnet program continued, but the restrictions on gathering caused the suspension of Girls Camp and the Cadet Program. **Goal 3 - Develop effective methods to collect, monitor, manage and analyze all available data.** Almost all the goals associated with information technology were postponed due to higher priority projects that are critical to LAFD emergency response and continuity of service to the community and businesses. All the recruitment successes were possible because of **Goal 4 – Develop COVID-19 contingency plans in coordination with City COVID 19 guidelines and measures, to ensure recruitment efforts and youth programs continue to function effectively.**

Program	% of Girls in 2017/18	% of Girls in 2019	% of Girls in 2020	% of Girls in 2021
High School Magnet program	29%	31%	29%	30%
Youth F.I.R.E. Academy 5 programs combined	27%	27% <sup>1</sup>		
Cadet Program	12%	14%		

<sup>1</sup>Due to COVID19 IN 2020, all youth programs have been severely impacted. During this period, only our Magnet Program remained somewhat active. We had a total of 461 enrolled in the magnet program across 5 schools. 136 of the total were females.

<sup>2</sup> The percentage number, which remained the same, does not reflect the increase in class size and number of girls. In 2018 there were a total of 319 class participants (87 girls) and in 2019, there were a total of 430 class participants (116 girls)

RECRUITMENT GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS:

- **Goal 1:** Continue interview preparation virtually to allow for larger numbers to attend from all over the country.
  - Continue to improve tracking for youth programs in ERS. There were a few categories added over the last year that will assist in tracking.
  - Resume all in-person recruitment efforts as COVID restrictions permit.
  - We no longer have a partnership with ESPN due to budget cuts at Personnel. Get funding or find alternative.
  
- **Goal 2:** Increase the number of members for cadres to support girls camp, Youth Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.), and cadets due to promotions, transfers, and retirements.
  - Remove stigma by endorsements from leadership.
  - Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion department wide.
  
- **Goal 3:** Develop effective methods to collect, monitor, manage and analyze all available data.
  - Improve the system to track participants across all programs and percentages that continue into the hiring process.
  - Continue improvement in the ability to track in ERS. The ability to enhance data collection and analysis is a Recruitment Section Priority
  - Develop a methodology to establish which recruitment method is most successful.
  
- **Goal 4:** Continue online recruitment efforts through social media. The magic of youth programs is the in-person mentorship between the firefighters and youth.
  - Continue to enhance data monitoring which is done by the Senior project coordinator.
  - Resume development and implementation of Target Solutions training on the “Hiring Process” to empower all members to act as representatives in the recruitment process.
  - Emphasize participation in youth programs that were suspended in March 2020 that were just resumed such as Cadet program and Fire Academies as they return from suspension.
  - Combat implicit bias for the women by explaining how the CPAT relates to job performance and academy success. Similarly, explanation of the psychiatric portion of the process since women declare more trauma than men.

### **Key Areas of Focus**

- Girls Camps and high school magnet programs, which teach young girls about the fire service and serve as a progressive pathway into the hiring process.
- Develop a “Hiring Process” training program to educate all members on the process. This will empower all members to be envoys of the recruitment process.

### **Challenges:**

- Budget and funding limitations that inhibit:
  - Staffing, and
  - Procurement of appropriate technology hardware and software
- Two-year time frame for hiring process contributes to the loss of diverse candidates.
- Industry biases create reluctance in accepting women as firefighters despite LAFD continued recruitment efforts and expressed desire to hire, retain and promote women.
- Development of methods to de-stigmatize member participation in Girls’ Camps and other gender-focused recruitment efforts.
- Recruitment of women can be hindered by the vaccination mandate and could affect future testing.
- 10 women will retire between now and the end of 2024 based on the Drop list. Without improving the number of women that get into the hiring process, the percentage of women will likely drop below 3%.
- Wooden ladders versus many other fire agencies with aluminum and fiberglass ladders also hiring add difficulty to recruitment.

### **Work Environment**

The second part of the gender equity plan addressed the need to create a positive work environment that fosters inclusion, equity, and respect for a diverse workforce. The objective is to remove barriers to equity and success whether perceived or real. The department utilizes tangible data such as comparisons from year to year, youth program statistics, quarterly reports, and recruitment statistics. The department also understands the importance of validating anecdotal information that was identified in 2019 by Los Angeles Women in the Fire Service (LAWFS). There was a focus group comprised of members of LAWFS who were hired in 2014 or later that participated in the survey. The LAWFS findings were that women felt less accepted, experienced biased treatment, were singled out, and unassured in the process to report pejorative comments and treatment. In somewhat of a contrast, the women in the Training Academy expressed that their experiences were positive, but also noted that successes and mistakes were more highlighted due to the lower number of women. LAFD women in civilian positions were not included in this focus group as it included members of LAWFS only.

As a result of the data collected by the LAWFS focus group, the department funded the private organization Deloitte to perform an assessment. The assessment confirmed much of the content of the LAWFS focus group. For example, the Deloitte audit confirmed and documented 13% of sworn women feel “My organization has a genuine interest in my health and well-being”<sup>4</sup>. The audit found that 56% of sworn females selected “Bullying/Harassment” and 54% of sworn females selected “Perceived Discrimination” as a source of conflict. The assessment included interviews that captured more definitive facts from focus groups to gain more insights from diverse sections of the participants. Women are quoted in the assessment as saying, “I have been sexually harassed”, and another member is quoted saying “I have two daughters in college, there is no way that I would ever let them consider working for the LAFD”. This independent assessment utilized statistical data and interviews to qualify and quantify previously anecdotal information into facts. This information gathered by Deloitte proved contrary to a positive, safe, equitable, and inclusive work environment.

The results of the assessment by Deloitte were published in the document titled LAFD Current State Organization and Training Assessment. It is important to recognize that the assessment has documented qualified and quantified information describing the work environment for women (not exclusive of other genders or races) as well as their sentiments.

<b>Work</b> <i>The relationship I have with the work I do, the norms, methods, and tools I use to get work done, and how my work strengthens me</i>	<b>People</b> <i>The relationship I have with the community I serve, the people I manage, report to, collaborate, partner, and engage with in my work community</i>	<b>Organization</b> <i>The relationship I have with the mission, purpose, culture, and leadership behaviors of the organization, and its policies, programs, and rewards</i>	<b>Well-Being</b> <i>The relationship I have with my personal life, rewards and well-being, goals, and world view</i>	<b>Learning &amp; Development</b> <i>The relationship I have with how well prepared I feel to advance and learn in my work</i>	<b>Technology</b> <i>The relationship I have with the technologies that connect me to my work, workforce, and workplace</i>  <i>not a focus area</i>
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The analysis was categorized into six primary pillars People, Organization, Work, Well-Being, Learning & Development, and Technology. Four of the six primary pillars that validated the previously anecdotal information about the LAFD work environment are documented (in part) as follows (Deloitte, 2021):

### **People**

- 56% of sworn females selected bullying harassment compared to 19% of sworn males and 26% of civilian females.
- 54% of sworn females selected perceived discrimination compared to 29% sworn males and 23 percent civilian females.

### **Organization**

- 10% favorable response to “senior leaders make an effort to improve employees’ work experiences” by sworn females.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to (2021) LAFD Current State Organization and Training Assessment for research data represented in percentages and quoted passages for all information where Deloitte is referenced.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to (2021) LAFD Current State Organization and Training Assessment for information

- Behavioral standards: Qualitative feedback suggests that there is a perception that alpha male-dominated mold exists if an employee identifies with that mold, they are more likely to feel comfortable.






### Well-Being

- 13% of sworn females responded favorably to “my organization has a genuine interest in my well-being” while civilian females responded with 56%.
- 38% of sworn females responded favorably to “I feel comfortable sharing my opinions at work” compared to sworn males at percent 50%.
- 9% respondents born after 1995 had a favorable response to LAFD being a “humanistic workplace”.

### Learning and Development

- Data from the focus groups and interviews indicated a desire for effective and mandatory soft skills training.
- Common feedback from sworn members suggests that training materials are outdated and focused on policies and procedures rather than everyday challenges and situations employees face.

## WORK ENVIRONMENT GOALS AND ACTION ITEMS

 <h2 style="text-align: center;">Recommendations Summary</h2>			
 <b>Leadership Development</b>	 <b>Talent Management</b>	 <b>Systemic Equity &amp; Inclusion</b>	 <b>Operational Processes &amp; Systems</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Revise leadership competency model:</b> Revisit competency model for leadership to emphasize soft skills such as inclusive behavior, how to manage conflict, and how to foster positive team dynamics</li> <li><b>2. Civilian Leadership Development programs:</b> Through partnering with city of LA, design leadership development programs for civilian population</li> <li><b>3. Expand 1:1 mentorship and job shadow opportunities:</b> Institute post-probationary mentorship program for leader-to-leader development and member-to-member development</li> <li><b>4. Launch cohort-based continuous learning model:</b> Design a cohort-based continuous learning post academy and probationary period</li> <li><b>5. Design and launch program for emerging leaders:</b> Leverage external leadership programs / content to launch new curriculum for emerging leaders that is targeted at building leadership capabilities in earlier career</li> <li><b>6. Diversify delivery methods that offer asynchronous learning opportunities:</b> Evaluate delivery of curriculum with a goal to enhance learning by utilizing various methods (e.g., webinars, classroom, interactive online courses)</li> <li><b>7. Establish new guidelines around leadership development:</b> Create protocols around utilization of Leadership Academy and making it a mandatory step for promotions</li> <li><b>8. Launch communication plan for Leadership Development Programs:</b> Create and execute communication plan for promotion of leadership academy to LAFD sworn members</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Define a clear process for performance management utilizing 360-degree feedback:</b> Design a new performance management process that is data driven, consistent in measurement, and meaningfully differentiates performance between employees at LAFD</li> <li><b>2. Improve career management and mobility:</b> Create career paths and learning modules for various roles and levels that contain objective and measurable knowledge, skills, and abilities with clear differentiating behaviors at each level</li> <li><b>3. Evaluate administrative rotational programs:</b> Assess current process around sworn members rotational programs to drive more cohesion and efficiency across sworn and civilian population</li> <li><b>4. Create high-potential program:</b> Design a structured program to identify and develop employees who have potential for being future leaders of LAFD</li> <li><b>5. Establish succession planning:</b> Proactively manage talent pipeline for critical roles through establishing a succession plan that creates, modifies, and calibrates talent for critical roles and assigns readiness of each successor</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Nominate DEI change champions:</b> Identify a senior leader at the appropriate level of the organization to start the journey of pursuing equity</li> <li><b>2. Define and establish a DEI vision:</b> Work with leadership in defining the vision, mission, and values for equity and belonging at LAFD and socialize with stakeholders</li> <li><b>3. Bring in different voices:</b> Build mechanisms in the organization to bring vital voices to the table that drive strategic decisions towards equity, inclusion, and belonging across LAFD (example: DEI Committee)</li> <li><b>4. Assess current state maturity of DEI:</b> Gather qualitative and quantitative data to identify gaps, levers, and potential points of bias in the organization that influence LAFD's ability to achieve equity</li> <li><b>5. Define desired state of DEI maturity:</b> Design and facilitate a workshop with key stakeholders to discuss current state assessment findings, identify the desired level of maturity for DEI across the organization DEI pillars, and share leading practices to develop specific solutions and recommendations on how to bridge the gap</li> <li><b>6. Prioritize measurable short-term and long-term initiatives to achieve desired state of equity and inclusion:</b> Identify top strategies to support recommendations (example: Inclusive Leadership Training) that will tactically strengthen DEI at LAFD and create a more inclusive culture</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Evaluate Operating Model:</b> Define capabilities and determine target market maturity of each; clarify service delivery model and accountabilities of each to increase efficiency in operating model and how work is done at LAFD to improve talent experience</li> <li><b>2. Centralize HR operations and establish a bureau to manage identified activities:</b> Centralize talent-related functions and programs to create standards and consistency within the organization</li> <li><b>3. Reassess accountabilities and decision rights:</b> Simplify and strengthen approval layers for core administrative processes to reduce bottlenecks and enable decision rights at the right level of the organization</li> <li><b>4. Establish engagement and communication platforms and metrics:</b> Create strategic communication and engagement methods, and establish a platform for analysis to improve employee morale, engagement, and consistently evaluate impact of trainings</li> <li><b>5. Improve workforce planning platform and processes:</b> Establish a system for workforce planning to address immediate staffing issues, and proactively plan for future staffing needs to avoid burn out for employees</li> </ol>

**Goal –** Continue to develop measures to create positive work environments, Department-wide, that foster inclusion, equity, and respect for a diverse workforce. The assessment by Deloitte identified 24 initiatives that are recommendations to improve the work environment. The following are the goals and action items from the



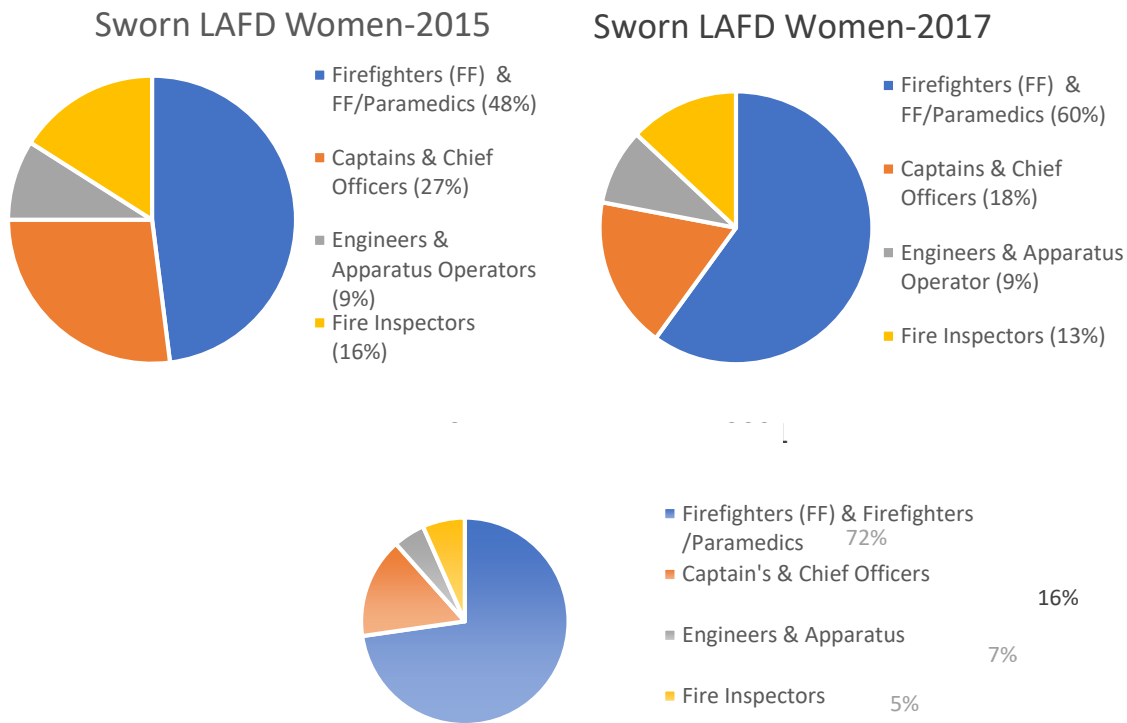
assessment will improve inclusion and are Gender Equity Plan:

Leadership Development	Recommendations 1, 6, & 7
Talent Management	Recommendations 1,3, & 4
Systemic Equity and Inclusion	Recommendations 1-6
Operational Process and Systems	Recommendations 2, 4, & 5

**Professional Development**

The third part of the gender equity plan discusses professional development and provides key areas where implemented action items may improve the status of women.

In 2015, the plan highlighted that there was a total of 92 female firefighters, 52% of which held promotional positions. Currently, there are 121 sworn women within the Department, 26.4% of which hold promotional positions. As noted in the following charts, which document the percentage of women by rank in 2015, 2017, and 2021, the percentage of women in promotional positions is on the decline.



The Gender Equity Plan of 2016 contained the following two main goals for professional development:

1. Develop and implement a professional development program with the incentives to improve performance and provide opportunities for employee advancement, and
2. Strengthen training and education opportunities for LAFD members.



The department has accomplished Professional Development Goal 1 with the implementation of the first phase of the recommendations from LAFD: Organization and Training Assessment. Significant progress has been made with Goal 2 prior to the implementation of the LAFD Current State Organization and Training Assessment, which includes:

- Maintenance of the LAFD Training Institute. A program and website that provides career guidance, access to education and training.
- Strengthen opportunities for LAFD members
  - Utilize Los Angeles County Agency Regional Training Group
  - All training opportunities sanctioned by ISTS published on the LAFD portal
  - Ensure equitable opportunity to attend training classes.
- Tracking
  - All ISTS classes are rostered and input through Target Solutions.
  - Target Solutions entries utilized for gender for data collection.
- Mentorship- ISTS plan to improve promotional succession planning through
  - Battalion Chief mentor program established and implemented
  - Developing mentor program for other promotional positions

CONS/GOALS etc.:

Recruitment:

Based on the current Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) entries, the Department will lose nine women by the end of 2022 and an additional 10 by the end of 2024. Should the Department desire to continue its target of obtaining 5% women, it would have to hire and retain at least 45 additional women by the end of 2022 and 55 women by the end of 2024.

## **CONCLUSION**

As identified in the Gender Equity Plan, the department's goal is to create and uphold an inclusive work environment that promotes fairness and fosters the equal participation of women in all positions. The LAFD is committed to increasing the number of women in leadership positions and to recognize the incredible value these women provide to the department and the City of Los Angeles.

The LAFD department, with the support of the Mayor's Office and Executive Directive No. 11, will continue to strive toward creating greater gender parity.

Board report prepared by Battalion Chief Justin G. Moore, Executive Officer, Administrative Operations Bureau.