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June 20, 2024

The Honorable Public Safety Committee
City of Los Angeles
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attn: City Clerk

Council File No. 24-0185

Honorable Members:

Discussion

On February 16th, 2024, the Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion directing the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD or Department) to provide a response detailing the number of women (sworn and civilian) currently serving in the Department, by classification. The report also directed the LAFD to report back on the overall efforts aimed to improve recruitment, retention and promotional opportunities for women in the Department. This report highlights the challenges and successes of the efforts made by the Department and it also includes recommendations on what current policies and procedures need to be updated in order to improve the current status of women serving in the LAFD.

The Status of Women (sworn and civilian) within the LAFD

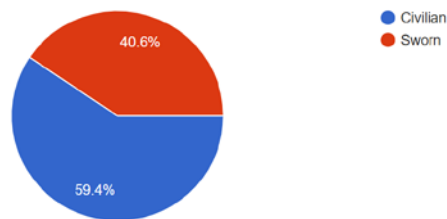
As of January 31, 2024, sworn and civilian, a total of 261 women make up 6.9% of the 3,765 LAFD Personnel. A total of 140 women make up 41% of the 335 civilian employees and a total of 121 women make up 3.5% of the 3,430 sworn employees. The following provides a breakdown of the current state of women in the LAFD and the methods the Department takes in order to impact promotional opportunities, retention efforts, and the recruitment of women.

GENDER	CIVILIAN
Male	194
Female	140
Other	1
Unknown	0
Total	335

GENDER	SWORN
Male	3308
Female	121
Other	1
Unknown	0
Total	3430

On April 23, 2024, an anonymous assessment went out to all civilian and sworn women that inquired about several topics including their current employment, their career outlook, and their future aspirations. This assessment received 26% participation, however, it still allowed for a significant amount of quantitative and qualitative feedback. The results will be embedded in the following report.

Are you a Civilian or Sworn member of the LAFD?
69 responses



Recruitment

Efforts have been made at increasing the number of women, both sworn and civilian, throughout the entire Department. Currently the LAFD collaborates with the City Personnel Department on its hiring process which focuses on hiring, retaining, and promoting all members regardless of gender or ethnicity.

The LAFD Firefighter Recruitment Section members have utilized various recruitment efforts to increase the number of sworn women personnel, including, but not limited to outreach to military locations, women's athletic college sports teams, and cultural events. Survey respondents suggested that honesty is crucial in preparing incoming candidates for the job so they know exactly what to expect when they are hired.

Retention

As the City's Personnel Department hiring process is not gender specific, there has not been efforts to specifically retain civilian women personnel within the LAFD. The LAFD's Training and Support Bureau provides training to all sworn members and offers promotional prep programs open to all members for each promotional exam being scheduled. Civilian survey respondents suggested implementing city-wide mentorship programs for civilians.

In the most recent years, a few sworn women have resigned due to pregnancy and family commitments, citing the inadequacy of the most updated light duty and pregnancy policy. The Pregnancy On-Duty- and Leave Guidelines, [Departmental Bulletin 23-13](#), cites *Family Medical Leave Act, California Family Rights Act, as well as Pregnancy Disability Leave*. All options require unpaid leave, utilizing their own accrued sick and vacation time off, or ultimately taking unpaid options which negatively affect their continuous service time to the City and their City's health and dental insurance coverage due to taking the unpaid leave option. The document also states that the Lactation Policy is, "In accordance with Federal and State laws, it is the City's policy to accommodate nursing employees' lactation needs by providing lactation time and an appropriate private location."

Currently, the most recent [Departmental Bulletin 24-3](#), titled, "Not Injured/Illness On Duty Light Duty Procedures," states the following: *The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) is committed to fostering a culture of health and safety for all of its members. Despite best efforts, unforeseen circumstances can result in an off duty injury. When a member is injured or suffers from an illness while off duty, the Department's paramount concern is for their care, recovery, rehabilitation and return to duty. The light duty program will enable a member, based upon their temporary restrictions, to continue using their valuable knowledge, skills and abilities. The light duty program offers an alternative to deterioration of basic skills and loss of self-confidence that may result from prolonged absences from work. Light duty details are temporary accommodations provided by the Department for temporarily partially disabled members who cannot perform the essential functions of their civil service classification. A light duty detail is an administrative position that is unauthorized and unfunded; is not to exceed a total duration of six months for any one NIOD injury or illness; and at which time the member is expected to return to full duty. Temporary light duty details are managed by the LAFD Medical Liaison Unit (MLU). Light duty assignments are based on Department needs and the member's work restrictions. It is at the Department's discretion when placing members into light duty details. The Fire Chief or their designee has the final decision regarding all temporary light duty details.*

Civilian survey respondents acknowledge that in the Fire Department, most women hold clerical positions only. Several respondents are requesting more training and an official mentorship program. Overall, in the career outlook, 35% were undecided if they would continue working for LAFD, 19% less than 5 years, 19% between 5-10 years, 11% 11-20 years, and only 16% more than 20 years.

Promotional Opportunities

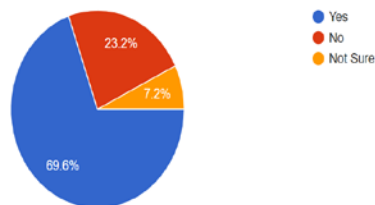
There have not been specific efforts to encourage civilian women to promote as this is left to the individual to do so if they desire. Promotions for civilians are based on a City-wide hiring list and which is not LAFD specific, which often means women have the ability to leave the fire department if a promoted position is only available in a different City Department. To note, career aspirations for civilian personnel may be hindered by hiring freezes and budget cuts. Sworn women have opportunities to test for promotion every two years when a promotional notice is announced, as long as they have the required seniority for the position. Survey respondents expressed the challenge of balancing family commitments with career advancement.

Within the next 5 years, 42% of the respondents stated they plan to seek a promotion, 34.8% were unsure and 23% said they do not plan to promote. When asked why respondents would *not* want to promote, 36% said they have work-life balance concerns, 32% said they are satisfied with their current position, 17% said they have perceived and/or experienced barriers to promoting, 9% said they are planning to become pregnant, and 7% said they lack support and mentorship.

Eligibility and Plans for Promoting

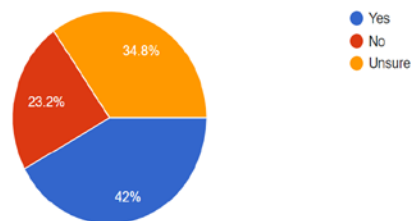
Are you currently eligible for a promotion? (Sworn: must have at least 3 or 4 years of seniority to be eligible. Civilian: refer to your position's MOU requirements)

69 responses



Do you plan to seek a promotion within the next 5 years?

69 responses

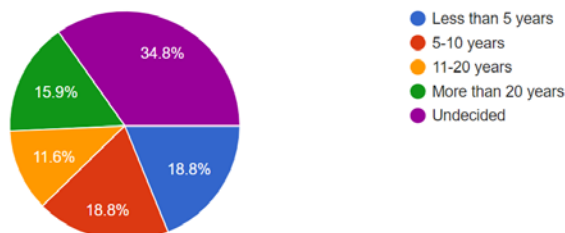


Overall, the majority of the Civilians who participated in the assessment shared their concerns about not being able to promote due to not having an available position to promote to within the LAFD and expressed the importance of an available mentorship program to assist with the promotional steps.

Career Outlook:

How long do you plan to continue working for the Los Angeles Fire Department?

69 responses



Conclusion

Women make up less than 7% of the LAFD that includes civilians and sworn members. A current assessment of the recruitment, retention, and promotion rates was necessary to be able to make appropriate changes and recommendations. The 26% of those who participated were able to provide valuable feedback which aided in the creations of the recommendations in this report. There is a critical need to update the pregnancy policy for sworn personnel and enhance inclusive training for civilians within the LAFD. Implementing these changes will foster a more supportive and equitable environment for all employees, improving recruitment, retention, and promotional opportunities for women in the Department.

Recommendations

The Los Angeles Fire Department recommends the following:

- The City explore the feasibility of allocating funding to assist in improving recruitment efforts through web based platforms like social media.
- The City explores allocating funding to assist the LAFD with fee waivers for written testing to become a firefighter.
- The City evaluates the feasibility of sworn women to the Ordinance No. 187186 (File No. 15-1033, Effective 10/18/21) allowing 6 weeks of paid maternity leave.
- The City evaluate policies associated with pregnancy leave and return to work post-partum for sworn women.

Sincerely,

Jaime Moore

Jaime E. Moore, Deputy Chief
Equity and Human Resources Bureau