



CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM

Date: August 31, 2023

To: Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395
Attention: Honorable Tim McOsker, Chair, Personnel, Audits, and Hiring Committee

From: Connie Llanos, Interim General Manager 
Department of Transportation

Dana Brown, General Manager 
Personnel Department

Subject: **CROSSING GUARD PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE AND EXPEDITED HIRING**

SUMMARY

As directed by [Council File \(CF\) 23-0304](#), this report provides a status update on the Los Angeles Department of Transportation's (LADOT) Crossing Guard Program including current hiring practices, potential methods to accelerate hiring, existing staffing levels, and feasibility of providing enhanced pedestrian safety around schools.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Los Angeles City Council RECEIVE and FILE this report.

BACKGROUND

On April 26, 2023, City Council (Council) instructed LADOT and the Personnel Department to report on the status of the Crossing Guard Program, including current hiring practices, potential methods to accelerate hiring, existing staffing levels, and feasibility of providing enhanced pedestrian safety around schools.

Traffic crashes are now the leading cause of death for people under 30 in Los Angeles County.¹ This is a public health crisis mirrored in trends across the country that disproportionately impacts low-income communities and people walking and biking. LADOT is focused on improving school safety and delivering safe infrastructure so that all Angelenos can get to their destinations safely, no matter how they choose to travel. Before public school starts on August 16th, LADOT will complete speed limit reductions at 50 schools, deliver quick-build projects at 10, and begin constructing speed humps at 50 schools identified as having some of the greatest safety needs.

LADOT also manages the City's Crossing Guard Program, a request-based program to deploy City-employed crossing guards to elementary schools across the City. LADOT receives crossing guard

¹ http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/docs/Six_Month_Mortality_Patterns_2019_to_2022.pdf

requests from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) and from private elementary schools.

Each year, the number of requested locations far exceeds the available funding for Crossing Guards. . LADOT started the 2023-2024 school year with 452 hired Crossing Guards - the biggest program in at least a decade - but requests continue to exceed the number of available guards.

The Personnel Department manages the overall hiring process for all LADOT employees, including Crossing Guards. Crossing Guards are part-time, exempt employees, represented by the California Teamsters, Local 911, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 34. The nature of this part-time, split shift work that is tied to specific locations has made it difficult to consistently hire additional Crossing Guards. The number of hired Crossing Guards also fell significantly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

To prioritize the high volume of requests with limited resources, LADOT's District Operations Bureau evaluates requests and prioritizes approved locations based on specified safety criteria, explained in more detail in the body of this report, on LADOT's website, and in the attached fact sheet. Locations that rank below the number of available guards are then further evaluated for any design or engineering treatments that can be implemented to improve safety. LADOT communicates the final outcome of its eligibility, prioritization, and engineering assessment to the requesting party, either OEHS or the private elementary school principal. LADOT Parking Enforcement and Traffic Control (PETC) deploys crossing guards to the highest ranked locations each day, subject to staffing availability.

DISCUSSION

LADOT worked with the Personnel Department to hire an additional 77 crossing guards over the last fiscal year, bringing the total number of crossing guards to 452. This is the highest number of crossing guards in the City of Los Angeles in at least a decade. However, the number of requested locations still exceeds the number of crossing guards LADOT can deploy this school year. LADOT and Personnel will continue to work together to hire more crossing guards, and hope to have 30 new crossing guards in place within the first 60 days of the 2023-24 school year.

LADOT meets regularly with LAUSD to update them on the planned crossing guard assignments, respond to constituent requests, and coordinate on other safety efforts, and also works closely with Personnel staff to prioritize and expedite crossing guard hiring processes to increase the number of hires within this classification. LADOT has been meeting regularly with Personnel and LAUSD this past year to focus on new and improved recruitment efforts for the Crossing Guard Program. LADOT continues to dialogue with LAUSD regularly on related issues as well.

Crossing Guard Hiring

LADOT is coordinating with Personnel to identify new processes and incentives that increase and expedite crossing guard hiring. LADOT's PETC staff successfully assumed responsibility for completing the interview process and reference checks. Applicants are able to apply at any local parking enforcement district office, and LADOT completes the interview and reference checks within 7-10 days. The candidate package is then forwarded to Personnel for further processing.

Following a complete interview and reference checks, Personnel is responsible for several steps to complete the hiring process. These steps include scheduling medical and Livescan fingerprinting

appointments, working through issues identified in those medicals and backgrounds, and processing new employee information. This process can often take anywhere from 30-75 days, depending on the circumstances presented.

As a result of the combined efforts of the City's Personnel Department and LADOT, successful new hires to the Crossing Guard Program have increased from 46 hired guards in FY 21/22 to 77 hired guards in FY 22/23. This represents a year-to-year increase of 67% in the hiring of new crossing guards. Personnel and LADOT are committed to prioritizing and expediting Crossing Guard hiring, and aim to streamline it to a four-week process depending on the nature of the necessary medical and background checks.

Backgrounds and Medical Clearance

Criminal background checks are critical for positions that work directly with children. The Personnel Department administers Live Scans (fingerprinting) for all City hiring. Fingerprint images must be transmitted to the Department of Justice (DOJ) within 24 hours. The average turnaround time between receiving results from the DOJ, and notifying hiring departments is 48-72 hours. However, the DOJ has up to 30 days to complete background checks, which can be delayed due to poor fingerprint quality, or the existence of any criminal information in the applicant's record.

All City positions require a medical examination as part of the pre-employment process. The medical examination is administered by the Personnel Department Medical Services Division. The medical examination can be cleared on the same day of the appointment if there are no outstanding items for follow up. The medical examination includes a hearing test, blood pressure, vision test, EKG if over 45, urinalysis and a drug test. The drug test and urinalysis are performed on site and results are immediately available. The results of crossing guard medicals may be deferred for medical reasons, which is usually candidate driven. Examples of the reasons for a deferral may include the need for glasses or a hearing aid. Medical Services may also request the candidate's medical records to assess the need for work restrictions as it relates to the essential functions of the job.

A medical deferral is very specific to the individual and usually involves the candidate obtaining their medical records or to be seen by their primary doctor. This portion is very candidate driven, so it is not possible to guarantee that this process can be expedited by way of the Medical Services Division. The faster the candidate can resolve the issue on their end, the quicker Medical Services can clear them.

Hiring Initiatives

The City is intentional about creating alternative pathways that allow under-served and under-represented communities to gain access to rewarding City careers. The City currently achieves this goal of creating alternative pathways into entry-level unskilled and semi-skilled jobs through the Targeted Local Hire (TLH) and Bridge to Jobs (BRIDGE) Program. Employees hired through the TLH and BRIDGE Program have an initial on-the-job training (OJT) period, followed by a probationary period. Once the OJT and probationary period are successfully completed, the employee is transitioned to full-time regular civil service employment in accordance with City Charter Section 1014.

The Personnel Department analyzed the minimum requirements of the Crossing Guard classification to determine if this position fits the parameters of the TLH and/or BRIDGE Program framework. Crossing Guard is an exempt and part-time classification; therefore, Crossing Guard cannot be added as a direct pathway under the TLH or BRIDGE Program because both programs are designed to connect individuals

to full-time civil service careers. Nevertheless, Personnel recommends connecting the Crossing Guard classification to the TLH and BRIDGE candidate pools from a recruitment perspective to enhance recruiting and hiring.

Occasionally, the Personnel Department receives requests from community partners to distribute job advertisements and information about job fairs to the TLH and BRIDGE Program candidate pool. A recruitment strategy of advertising the Crossing Guard job opportunity to the TLH and BRIDGE candidate pool will benefit the Crossing Guard Program. Personnel will send an email broadcast for the Crossing Guard Program to the TLH and BRIDGE candidate pool on a monthly basis. Individuals in the TLH and BRIDGE candidate pool will have the option to respond to the advertisement and complete the job Interest Form. LADOT will have access to the Interest Forms submitted and may proceed with their departmental selection process on an expedited basis.

Additionally, the TLH Program partners with 40 community-based organizations (CBOs) and WorkSource Centers (WSCs) to perform special outreach efforts to recruit, hire, and train individuals from under-served and under-employed communities. Personnel Department staff will share the Crossing Guard job opportunity with the CBOs and WSCs so this advertisement can also be distributed to their prospective applicants.

Referral Incentive

The Personnel Department, in coordination with LADOT, could utilize a cash incentive referral program to recruit and hire crossing guards. The incentive program would offer a one-time referral payment awarding 50% (set value) at appointment and 50% (set value) at completion of an established number of hours worked, or a one-time referral payment (set value) awarding 100% at completion of 1000 hours worked in the Crossing Guard assignment.

Referrals will be submitted digitally via Google form by the referring individual. Google forms will allow for easy, anytime anywhere filing by referral / referrer, automatically inputs all data into a shared spreadsheet, and automatically timestamps each filing.

A cash incentive program for the Crossing Guard Program would require funding, staffing, and an incentive management system to track milestones and expenditures. A budget would be established to allocate cash for reward payouts. A limited number of referrals will be accepted depending on the allocated budget. Once the initial funds have been exhausted and we see that more than anticipated referrals are received, a request for more funding would be initiated from LADOT.

A designated team or analyst would also need to be assigned to manage the incentive program (tracking, follow up efforts, and payment distribution). Personnel Analysts or departmental liaisons could be assigned to oversee the implementation of the program, and an incentive management software system could be purchased or developed to administer the program. The system would track referrals, record milestones such as appointment date and hours worked, probationary completion date, and cash rewards earned. A designated Payroll representative would have access to the shared system in order to track and confirm payout.

Personnel staff will work with LADOT to develop the logistics of the program, such as the operational process which includes eligible participants, participants who are exempt, general guidelines, marketing and branding of the program, and to identify resources needed.

The proposed cash incentive referral program for LADOT is modeled from an active incentive program facilitated through the Personnel Department. This program is called the Police Officer Recruitment Incentive Program (PORIP). PORIP offers a \$2000 incentive for successful Police Officer referrals. Referrals are submitted by employees and confirmed by the candidate sometime before appointment. The budget allocated for this program is funded through the Personnel Department.

A designated personnel analyst is assigned to oversee this program. The analyst tracks the eligibility through Workday and CRM and provides that information to the Controller who handles processing of the payment.

Important to note, this is not a Citywide incentive program and only applies to LAPD. This program has been successful, thus far.

Crossing Guard assignments

The number of requested locations far exceeds the number of projected and/or hired crossing guards. In order to prioritize locations that are assigned guards, LADOT assesses site characteristics that inform the level of risk that a Crossing Guard can most readily mitigate. The criteria used in this methodology includes the number of children crossing, the speed limit, the number of lanes people need to cross, and the presence of a stop sign or traffic signal. This approach focuses on the factors most associated with the risk children and school communities face when crossing the street, rather than crashes, since site conditions change over time.

LADOT is currently reviewing its strategy for assigning crossing guards, including revisiting the role that crash history at a site should play in assessing the current crossing risks. The Department will present this review in a future comprehensive report to the City Council.

Feasibility of various technologies / increased law enforcement / Utilizing more speed humps

LADOT currently employs the latest technologies to implement and manage transportation assets around schools. These include features to supplement uncontrolled crosswalks, such as beacons (sometimes referred to as “flashing lights”), and signal timing technology such as Leading Pedestrian Intervals. LADOT is working to expand the use of these technologies Citywide including around schools.

LADOT will continue to work with law enforcement, including the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) School Police to find strategic ways to help enforce moving violations within their respective jurisdictions. LADOT included state legislative efforts to pilot speed safety cameras in its legislative program for the 2023-2024 legislative session, approved by Council and the Mayor. Speed safety camera systems detect speeding vehicles and capture license plate photos to issue citations to drivers that violate a set speed threshold. The City of Los Angeles and LAUSD are supporting Assembly Bill (AB) 645 from Assembly members Laura Friedman, Miguel Santiago, and Phil Ting, which would authorize the City of Los Angeles to pilot speed safety cameras at certain locations, including in school zones. Citations issued through this program would be civil penalties that start at \$50 for going 11-15 miles over the posted speed limit, and do not put any marks on a drivers’ license or increase insurance rates. AB 645 would also require the City to produce an impact report prior to implementation, engage communities to identify and determine final locations at schools, speed racing locations, and on the high-injury network (HIN). The program is designed to be cost recoverable, and any additional revenue must be reinvested into safe street infrastructure.

City Council recently authorized LADOT to construct speed humps this fiscal year at the Top 50 Safe Routes to School locations, using \$2 million of new funding and new staff. This fiscal year, LADOT will also install speed tables at schools with uncontrolled crosswalks on arterial streets (with posted speeds up to 35 mph), regardless of whether or not they are located at a Top 50 school. To streamline and accelerate school speed hump and speed table construction, LADOT will not require schools to apply for speed humps/tables or collect petition signatures for these safety measures. LADOT expects to install speed humps at approximately 100 street segments starting in August 2023, with each street segment having between two to four speed humps. Speed tables on arterial streets cost about twice as much as speed humps and thus may affect the overall number of street segments built per year. To prioritize schools for future fiscal years, the Department will provide an updated methodology and prioritized list of schools to City Council for approval.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact related to this report.

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