

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



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REF: EXE-016-15

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
Room 395, City Hall  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Information Technology and General Services Committee

Subject: **NEXT GENERATION ITA STAFF/PROPOSED HIRING PROGRAMS**

Dear Councilmembers:

This report is submitted pursuant to FY 2014-15 Council budget hearing instruction, Council File 14-0600-S127, relative to providing a report to the Innovation Technology and General Services Committee regarding a Student Intern Program. The Information Technology Agency (ITA) has analyzed our anticipated workforce needs over the next five years based on anticipated staff attrition and technology demands and determined that a more aggressive and immediate approach is required to attract and develop job-ready employees who can become the next generation of ITA employees. Therefore, in lieu of developing a student intern program, the scope and recommendations of this report provide a comprehensive strategy for workforce planning to address the high level of attrition anticipated over the next 3-5 years. This will be accomplished through a two pronged strategy utilizing: 1) an entry level trainee classification that will be filled using an on campus interview recruitment process for new graduates; and, 2) an expanded use of hiring hall trainees with intent of bringing in successful candidates into regular civil service classifications.

## BACKGROUND

As a result of the recession and downsizing of the City's workforce, the ITA experienced a workforce reduction of 290 positions over the past 6 years *which represents a 40 percent reduction in workforce.*

The service demand from all departments continues to grow and the complexity of the technology and change is quickening, requiring a more agile workforce. Many of the ITA staff are single points of support with no back up to maintain critical environments after hours and when staff are on vacation.

ITA is currently faced with a significant staffing level and skill set shortage that puts at risk its ability to maintain City IT systems and help further modernize City business operations. This problem is exacerbated by the retirement eligibility of ITA's current workforce. Overall, 23 percent (100 out of 439 full-time employees) of ITA's workforce is currently eligible for normal, undiscounted retirement and an additional 18 percent of staff are eligible for early retirement. In several key IT classes, the normal retirements are of concern to ITA management. In the Programmer Analyst class, 17 employees out of a total of 77 Programmer Analyst or 22 percent are currently eligible for normal retirement; an additional 12 PAs or 16 percent are eligible for early retirement. In the Systems Programmer class, 8 of 70 employees or 11 percent are eligible for normal retirement while 12 more Systems Programmers or 17 percent are eligible for an early retirement. In one of our more difficult-to-fill classes, Data Base Architect, 22 percent or 2 out of 9 DBAs are eligible to retire.

Shortage of skilled staff is not limited to the IT classes. In the Communication Electrician (CE) series, the staff eligible to retire is staggering. Of the four classifications in the CE series, Communication Electrician, Sr. Communication Electrician, Communication Electrician Supervisor, and Sr. Communication Electrician Supervisor, 40 out of the 116 employees, 34 percent are eligible for normal, undiscounted retirement, including all three employees in the highest ranking class of Sr. CE Supervisor.

Because the challenges and the pool of eligible candidates are different for each classification, filling the IT classes and the CE classes requires two different strategies. Therefore, ITA is proposing two hiring avenues to minimize risks from the retiring workforce and the associated loss of knowledge. ITA is proposing ways to hire people to work in feeder positions for both IT and CE classes; this will allow quicker onboarding and training and developing these participants to become regular, full-time City employees.

Figure 1

<b>Employees Eligible for Normal Retirement</b>	<b>As of 6/30/15</b>	<b>As of 6/30/15</b>	<b>As of 6/30/17</b>	<b>As of 6/30/17</b>
ITA employees	106	24%	172	38%
Citywide Employees	4,414	21%	6,638	28%

Data from LACERS provided August, 2014.

### **NEXT GENERATION ITA STAFFING**

Traditional City hiring practices have not been timely and often have not yielded candidates with desired training and skills. Therefore, ITA is proposing two new avenues to address these critical staffing shortages.

1. Communication Electrician Hiring via Hiring Hall
2. Application Programmer Hiring via on campus University Recruitment

### **Communication Electrician Hiring via Hiring Hall**

ITA currently employs 23 workers in the Communication Electrician class through the Hiring Hall. Although these workers are on the City payroll, they are not City employees. They are employed at-will, typically in construction trades. The ITA uses hiring Hall workers to do CE work such as installing radios in public safety vehicles, installing alarms, and metal fabricating. The advantage to using Hiring Hall for the City is that the timeframe to bring in a candidate is faster as the Department is not reliant on the certification process. The hiring hall employees receive health and retirement benefits, or their equivalent in pay, through the union.

The ITA proposes to expand the use of CEs provided through the union Hiring Hall as a method to more quickly bring in skilled workers to assist City employees in monitoring, maintaining and supporting the critical public safety communication and City network infrastructure under ITA's responsibility. The first resource for providing candidates to be hired through this method would be the Electrician's union as they maintain a roster of available labor.

In addition, the Department would be able to recruit and hire military veterans using the Hiring Hall. Since a number of the functions performed by ITA CEs are similar to the work integral to military operations, we anticipate that this could yield a pool of disciplined workers with experience in the latest radio and microwave communication technology. The Department will work with the Mayor's Office and Council to access local veterans organizations that may be able to communicate this opportunity to their members and supply the appropriate candidates.

As the goal of this program is to eventually transition these Hiring Hall CEs into regular civil service CE positions through the civil service exam process, ITA believes this on-the-job work experience would provide valuable preparation for those employees when they take the CE civil service examination.

In order to implement the hiring plan for Communication Electricians, the department is requesting funding for 10 full-time Hiring Hall CEs in the 2015-16 budget. The request is for funding in the amount of \$708,240 for ten full-time Communication Electricians to work 40 hours per week for 52 weeks at a hourly pay rate of \$34.05.

### **Application Programmer Hiring**

The Application Programmer (AP) classification is a full-time trainee classification in which employees can work up to the entire length of a temporary training period, which

is five years. During this time, they are expected to work for the City and receive training and experience sufficient to allow them to qualify for Civil Service exams for Programmer Analyst, Systems Programmer, or Systems Analyst, and to be able to promote into these classifications. Employment terminates if, after the training period they are unable to move into a more advanced classification.

In order to expeditiously recruit and hire qualified candidates, ITA is proposing to replicate the highly successful process used by the Bureaus of Engineering and Sanitation, as well as Department of Water and Power to create the eligible lists for various Engineering Associate positions via on campus university recruitment. These departments under Personnel Department's guidance work with local and in-state universities that provide qualified candidates with near-term graduation dates for on-campus interviews. The Departments staff trained and certified in the civil service interview process conduct these interviews on campus. Candidates are scored based on their interview and placed on the eligible list within days. Departments may hire from these lists subject to the normal City process. This program gives the Departments greater control over both the timing and quality of the eligible list. The Bureau of Engineering conducts on campus interviews in the Spring and Fall of each year.

To ensure the complete fairness and equal opportunity required in the Civil Service process, the universities' Career Services Centers will accept applicants and schedule interviews on a first-come, first-served basis. ITA would not play a role in scheduling candidates to be interviewed and would not be able to specifically choose low-income candidates for this program. However, to address the Council's concern about recruiting low-income candidates, we would work with the campus Career Services Centers and counselors to ensure that they publicize the opportunities widely to encourage all eligible students to apply.

Once on the eligible list, the best candidates would be hired as Application Programmers based on the alignment of their interest, background and aptitudes with the Department's needs. The Department will provide the training and mentorship to enable diligent, committed APs the opportunity to promote into regular civil service classifications, and ideally long-term careers within ITA.

In order to implement this program, the Department has requested position authority and nine months funding for 20 APs in the 2015-16 budget. The total request is for \$814,950 (20 APs X Step 1 salary of \$54,330 X .75 yr).

This Next Generation ITA Staff program proposes an efficient way for the Department to recruit from a pool of experienced, talented, and diverse students, veterans and skilled technology experts that will be trained specifically for the City environment. The ITA will proactively address the large demand for professionals to replace staff as they leave the department or retire. Further, this program will create opportunities for the residents of the City in the fields of information technology, engineering and sciences. Technical literacy, especially in modern technologies, is critical to improving efficiency, increasing

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savings and providing excellent services to the residents of the City. Outreach efforts through the ITA and Personnel Department to unions, local colleges, universities, trade schools, and Veteran Service centers will help recruit and develop qualified individuals to be trained by the City of Los Angeles and in turn the City of Los Angeles will meet the global challenges of information and communications technology and innovation.

Respectfully submitted,



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General Manager

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