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March 14, 2025

Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Report Back to Council File 19-0183

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) Youth Programs are designed to provide opportunities for young people between the ages of 14 to 20 to learn about and become interested in a career in the fire service. These programs are part of the Firefighter Recruitment Unit's (FRS) commitment to youth success throughout the City of Los Angeles. The department's vision is to offer early education and orientation to young individuals, aiming to enlighten them about the various opportunities within the LAFD.

DISCUSSION

The LAFD is dedicated to its Youth Programs through a comprehensive plan emphasizing organizational structure and consistency. FRS has designed an innovative strategy that incorporates clear goals, learning objectives, and a standardized curriculum for each program within the Youth Programs. This approach ensures that these initiatives are engaging and informative and follow a consistent framework.

The LAFD Youth Programs are an integral part of a progressive pathway for those aspiring to become firefighters with the LAFD. These programs are designed to offer a range of experiences and educational opportunities to young people, inspiring their interest in the fire service in addition to preparing them for a potential career in this field.

The four main components of the LAFD Youth Programs are:

1. Camp S.P.A.R.K.
2. Firefighter/Emergency Medical Service (FEMS) Magnet High School Program
3. Youth Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.) Academy
4. Cadet Program

Camp S.P.A.R.K.:

The LAFD Camp S.P.A.R.K. (Service, Professionalism, Attitude, Respect, and Knowledge) is an introductory fire camp for all youth ages 14-18. The camp's goal is to instill confidence, leadership, and courage in youth, primarily females, while providing awareness of a potential career in the fire service. The curriculum includes interactive training exercises with power tools, ladders, hose lines, extinguishers, physical fitness, team-building events, and basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. FRS continues to partner with the Mayor's Office, Council Districts, City Personnel, and the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation to host, fund, and support Camp S.P.A.R.K. An implementation plan and an ongoing budget have been developed for long-term sustainability. FRS is working with the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation for continued funding efforts.

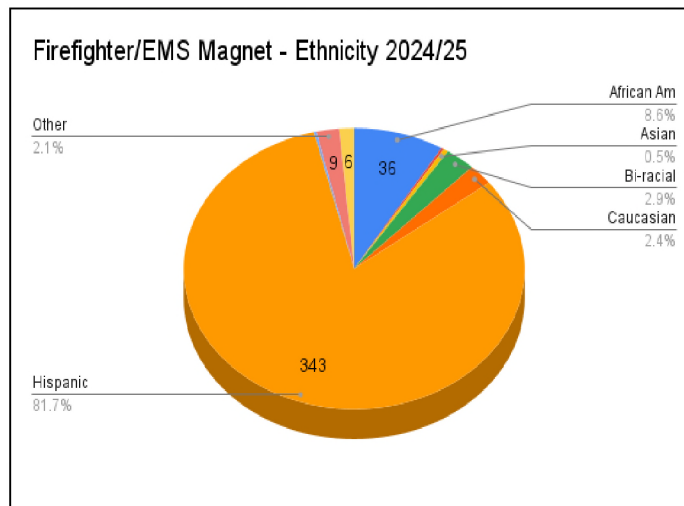
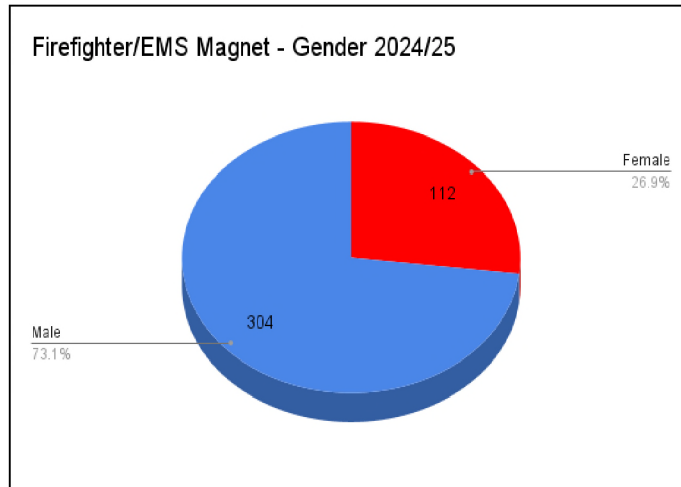
Firefighter/EMS Magnet High School Program (FEMS)

The Magnet High School program aims to partner with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) high schools to provide students with information about a career as a LAFD firefighter. Through early contact, the LAFD staff allows the students to explore the field of firefighting. This program acts as a pathway toward other LAFD youth programs. The Magnet program strengthens students' self-esteem, career skills, physical fitness, and character development through fire and EMS-related skills.

The FEMS Magnet High School Program was established in 2016. There are currently 420 students participating in this program, varying by year based on enrollment and graduation numbers. The following LAUSD high schools have Firefighter/EMS Magnet programs:

1. Phineas Banning High School (Banning) – Wilmington
2. Woodrow Wilson High School (Wilson) – El Sereno
3. Susan Miller Dorsey High School (Dorsey) – Baldwin Hills
4. James Monroe High School (Monroe) – North Hills

Firefighter/EMS Magnet 2024/25 - 420 participants



Youth Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.) Academy

The Fire Instruction Recruitment and Education (F.I.R.E.) Academy has grown to include four Youth F.I.R.E. Academies. Each Academy meets for eight consecutive Saturdays for six hours per day. Each Saturday involves physical fitness, team building, leadership and responsibility, along with practical hands-on training with the firefighter cadre. The Youth F.I.R.E. Academy consists of four phases:

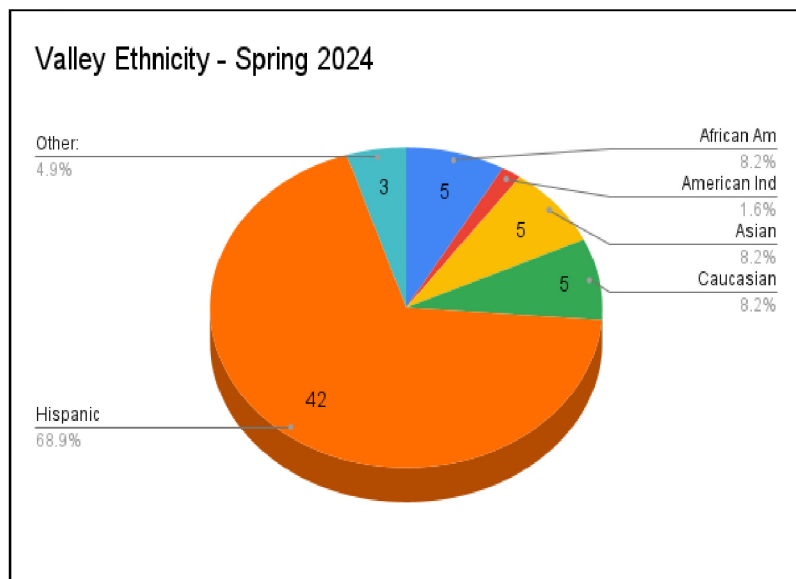
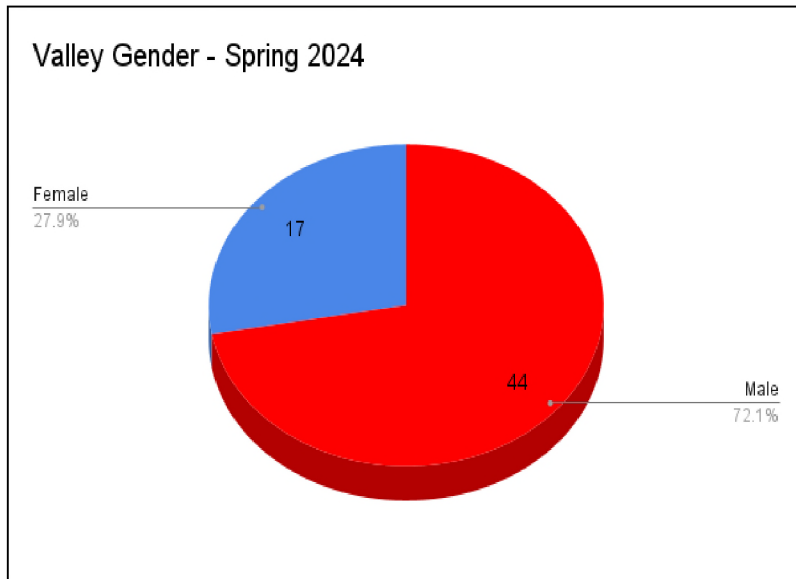
- Phase I – Basic engine company operation and equipment
- Phase II – Basic truck company operations, as well as familiarization with truck tools and equipment
- Phase III – EMS and disaster preparedness
- Phase IV – Leadership: interview preparation, resume writing, and guest speakers related to various career opportunities

The East Los Angeles College (ELAC) Academy, which ran for two weeks this summer, is designed for college-age students. It is intended for older students who have just graduated high school and have aged out of LAFD youth programs. Students earn three college credits in Fire Technology and receive hands-on training and physical fitness to

prepare them for the firefighter hiring process. The F.I.R.E. Academy provides an introduction to firefighting as a career and life skills.

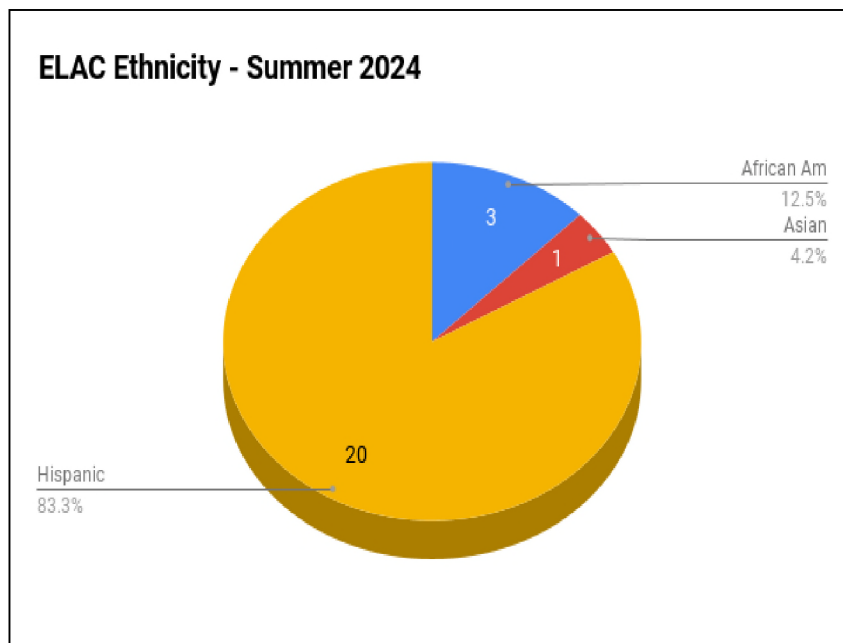
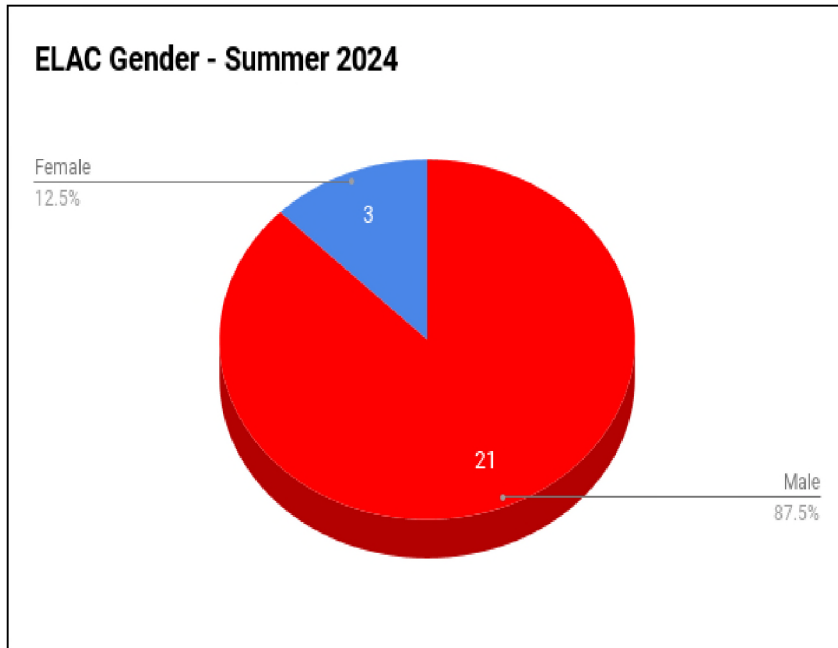
Valley YFA - 61 participants (Phases I and II)

- Drill Tower 81 - Panorama City
- March 9th to April 27th, 2024



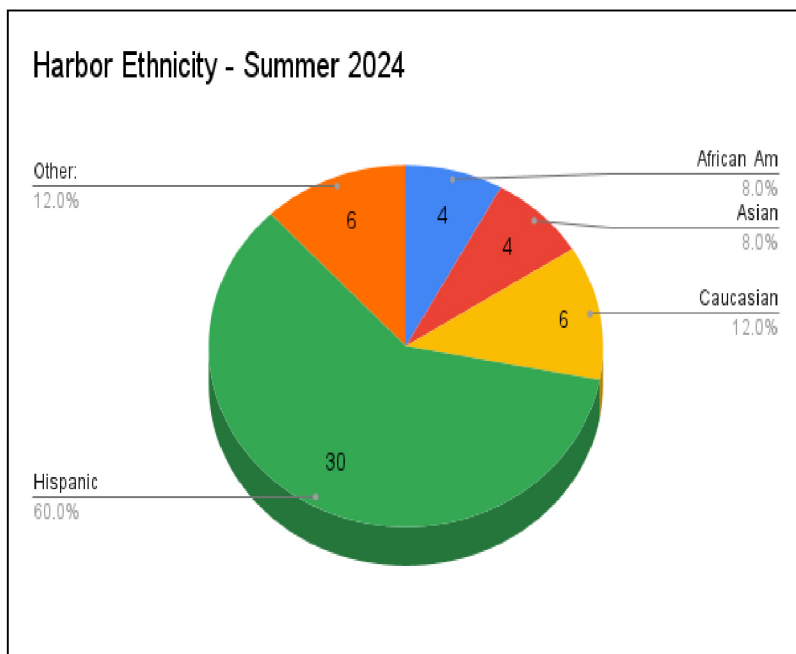
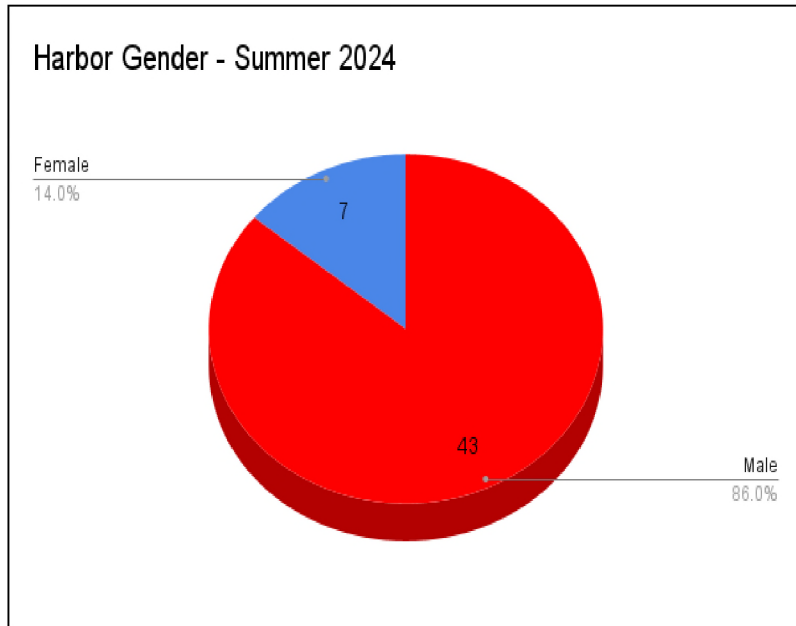
East Los Angeles College YFA - 24 participants

- Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center - Central Los Angeles
- June 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 2024

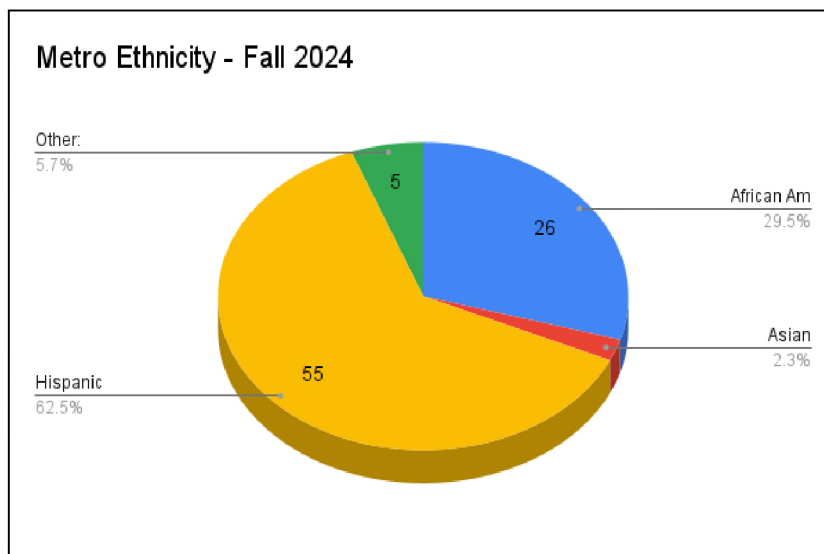
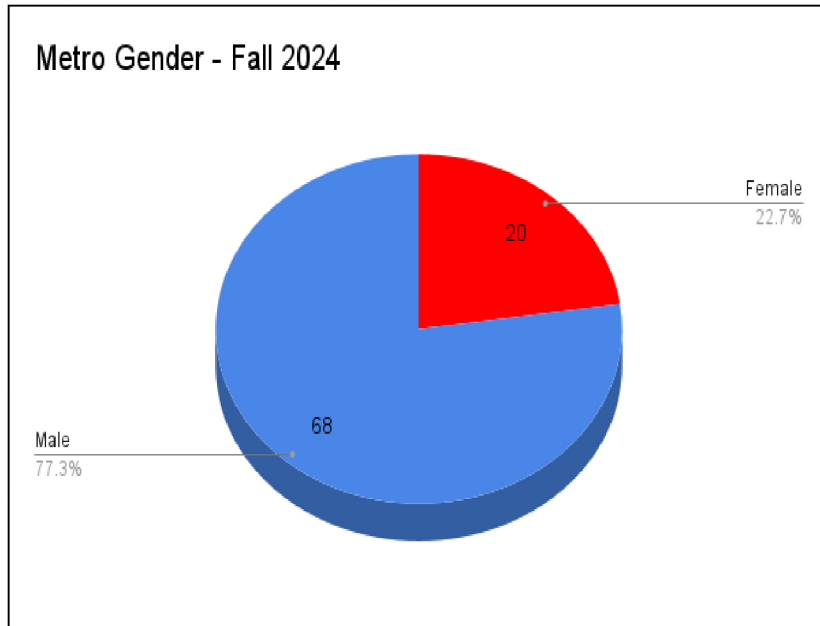


Harbor YFA - 50 participants (Phases I and II)

- Fire Station 40 - San Pedro
- July 27th to September 14th, 2024



- **Metro YFA - 88 participants (Phases I, II, III, IV)**
 - Frank Hotchkin Memorial Training Center - Central Los Angeles
 - September 28th to November 16th, 2024



Fire Cadet Program:

The Fire Cadet Program is the top tier of Youth Programs. The Fire Cadet Program is an exciting opportunity for youth ages 16 to 20 to gain valuable experience in firefighting. This program introduces the cadet to first-hand experiences of the job of a firefighter,

including the ability to work side-by-side with actual LAFD Firefighters. After an orientation, cadets must complete a physical agility test, turn in required paperwork (including current grades), and participate in an oral interview. Once completed, the cadets are assigned to their Cadet Post, where they must work through their task book to become "Ride-Along" certified. Task books consist of reading assignments and manipulative tasks over four levels of skill development.

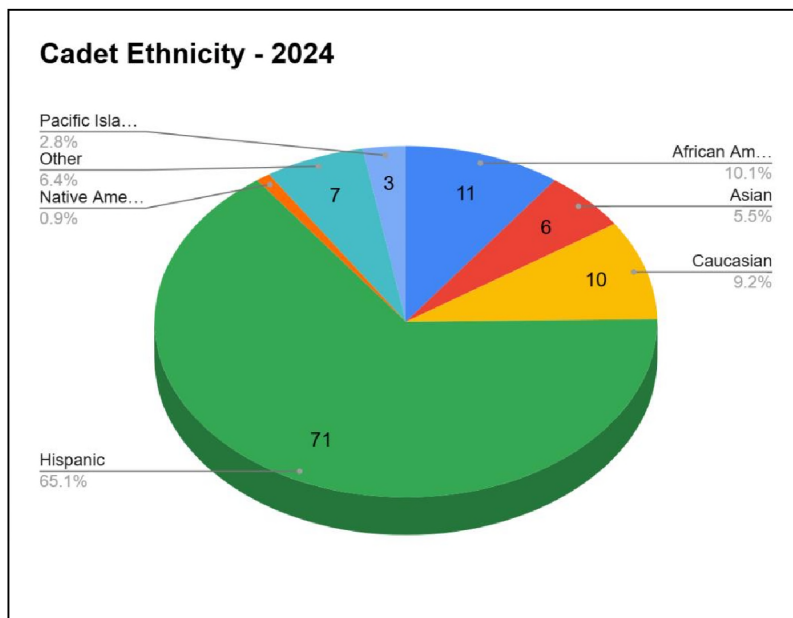
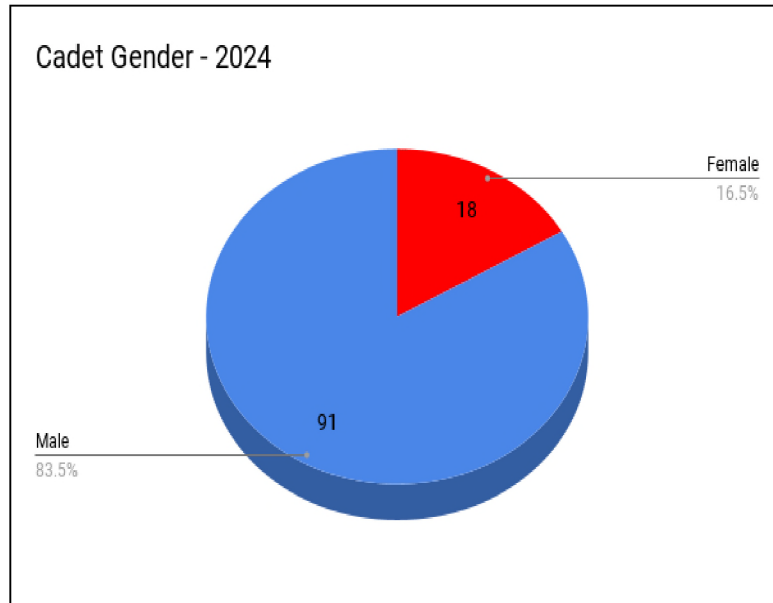
Once certified, cadets will respond to actual emergencies alongside firefighters and paramedics but are prohibited from entering fires or other hazardous environments for safety reasons. Cadets assist with routine tasks at the fire station, including community relations, fire prevention, training, and maintenance of equipment and the station. Becoming a cadet is an excellent way to develop essential skills and gain experience that will be beneficial in nearly every field or endeavor. The LAFD currently operates eight Cadet Posts, each with an assigned advisor who is a sworn member of the LAFD.

We currently have only 8 Cadet Posts due to promotions, transfers, and retirements, but we are actively seeking new Post Advisors at different fire stations around the City. Recently, we opened Post 11, which is now overseen by a former Cadet who became an LAFD firefighter.

- Post 2 – Boyle Heights
- Post 27 – Hollywood
- Post 11 – Westlake/MacArthur Park
- Post 64 – South Los Angeles
- Post 81 – Panorama City
- Post 85 – Harbor City
- Post 94 – Crenshaw District/ Baldwin Hills
- Post 106 – West Hills

Our 2024 recruitment for new Post Advisors consisted of Portal notices, visits to the fire stations, and reaching out to previous cadets who are now LAFD members.

Cadet Program 2024 - 109 Active Cadets



FRS has recently revamped the expectations and requirements for the Cadet Program to ensure we are focusing on the commitment and readiness of our cadets to perform firefighter duties. The intention of this program is to prepare cadets who are serious about a career as a firefighter, including having a driver's license and emergency medical technician training, as well as being physically fit.

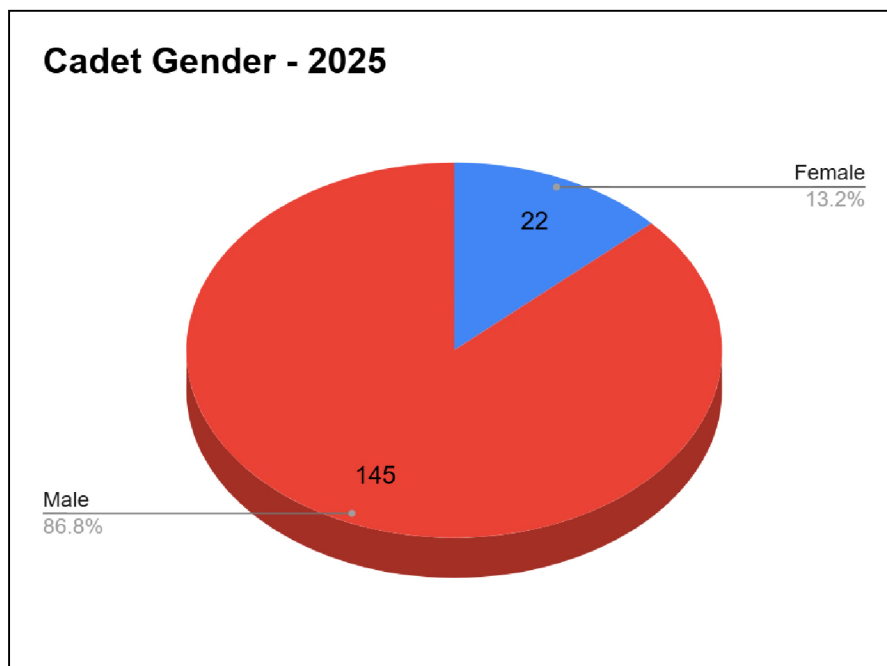
The 2025 Cadet Acceptance Process included the following:

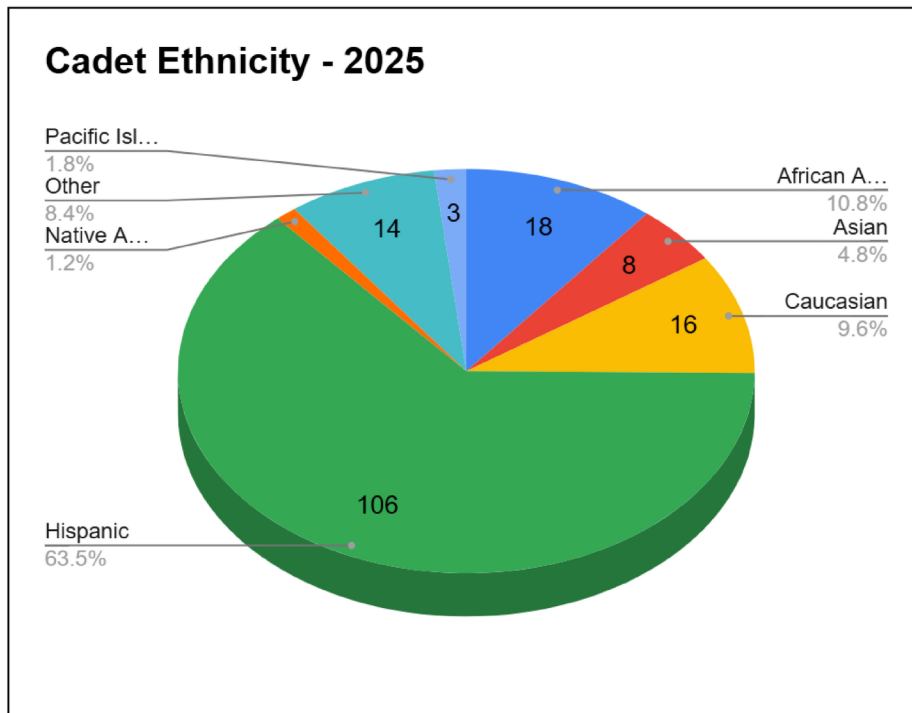
- 11/25/2024: New Cadet/Parent Virtual Orientation – to answer any questions, explanation of expectations of being a Cadet and requirements needed.

- 12/7/2024: In-Person New Cadet Orientation – applications turned in, Liability Waivers collected, Baseline Fitness test conducted, and Youth Protection Training given for those 18 years and older
- 1/2/2025 – 1/13/2025: Interviews conducted. Candidates must have submitted Medical Forms completely filled out and signed by a Medical Provider before being assigned to a post.
- 1/17/2025: Deadline for submission of Report Cards and Letters of Recommendation.
- 1/23/2025: Email sent to those not accepted into the program.
- 1/29/2025: Email with Post Assignments sent to new Cadets.

For the 2025 Cadet Program, 85 candidates attended the orientation, out of which a total of 58 (54 males and 4 females) were accepted into the program and assigned to Cadet Posts.

Cadet Program 2025 - 167 Active Cadets





CONCLUSION

FRS continues its efforts to standardize and improve all LAFD Youth Programs to ensure consistency and the highest level of opportunity for the City of Los Angeles's youth. All youth can participate in introductory camps and orientations or more focused firefighting instruction and training. All LAFD Youth Programs provide opportunities for youth to develop leadership and life skills, gain self-confidence, serve and engage with their communities, and potentially obtain a career as a Los Angeles City Firefighter.

Board Report prepared by Arturo Tarango, Battalion Chief, Firefighter Recruitment Section.

Kristine Larson

Kristine Larson, Deputy Chief
Equity and Human Resources Bureau