

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: June 17, 2025

To: The Honorable Members of the Personnel, Audits and
Hiring Committee

From: Malaika Billups, General Manager ^{for}
Personnel Department



Subject: **COUNCIL FILE 24-1094 PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT'S REPORT
BACK REGARDING WORK EXPERIENCE IN LIEU OF EDUCATION
REQUIREMENTS / EXAMINATION QUALIFICATIONS / HIRING
PROCESS**

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council note and file this report.

BACKGROUND

The City Council motion introduced by Councilmembers Eunisses Hernandez and Tim McOsker and seconded by Councilmember Hugo Soto--Martínez on September 13, 2024 instructed the Personnel Department to report back with recommendations to allow for work experience to be considered in lieu of meeting education requirements for City job and examination qualifications, and provide a review by the Department of any job titles used in the last five years in which educational requirements and experience have been modified for the purposes of examination qualifications.

On May 9, 2025 the PAH Committee instructed the Personnel Department to report back on what local agencies are doing to replace educational requirements with experience based requirements, data on exam appeals, classifications in which educational requirements may be modified, Bridge to Jobs (BTJ) and Targeted Local Hire (TLH) retention and geography data.

DISCUSSION

Educational Requirements for Nearby Agencies

The Personnel Department reviewed how other local agencies address education requirements and whether they offer alternatives, such as experience-based substitution or structured hiring pathways, to reduce barriers to civil service employment. This

analysis focused on general entry-level professional classifications that typically require a college degree. Specifically, the Personnel Department evaluated job classes in other local agencies which are comparable to the City's Management Assistant and Accountant job classes. These two classifications were selected due to their critical role in the professional workforce and their relevance to current and future hiring needs.

The City of Los Angeles uses a well-developed system of career ladders and bridge classifications to allow internal candidates to access professional roles even if they do not hold a college degree. While the Management Assistant class itself requires a bachelor's degree, the City offers the Management Aide classification as a parallel, paraprofessional-level role. Employees with clerical or paraprofessional experience can be promoted into Management Aide and, after two years of service, become eligible to compete for positions such as *Management Analyst*, *Personnel Analyst*, or *Administrative Analyst* roles that are typically degree-requiring.

For the Accountant classification, the City currently requires a bachelor's degree with a specific number of accounting units and does not allow experience-based substitution. Given its recruitment difficulty, this classification is currently being reviewed for potential revisions to the requirements to allow individuals without a Bachelor's degree to qualify through other methods.

Los Angeles also remains the only jurisdiction reviewed with dedicated workforce programs, Targeted Local Hire (TLH) and Bridge to Jobs (BRIDGE), that remove both education and experience requirements for select entry-level positions. These programs offer structured on-the-job training and serve as transition points into permanent civil service careers.

Education and Experience Requirements Across Local Agencies

Local agencies including the County of Los Angeles, County of Riverside, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), City of San Diego, City of Compton, and City of Long Beach show varying levels of flexibility in education substitution. However, none maintain agency wide access to programs equivalent to TLH or BRIDGE. Below is a summary of entry-level requirements for Management Assistant- and Accountant-level classifications across these agencies.

Local Agency	Management Assistant-Level Job Class Requirements	Accountant-Level Job Class Requirements
City of Los Angeles	Management Assistant – Bachelor’s degree required. However, the City of LA provides Management Aide as a bridge for clerical employees to enter professional analyst roles.	Accountant – Bachelor’s degree with required accounting units. No substitution allowed.
LAUSD	Administrative Analyst – Bachelor’s degree required. Experience substitution on a year-for-year basis with no cap.	Accountant – Bachelor’s degree required; up to 2 years of experience can substitute year-for-year.
Los Angeles County	Management Assistant/Trainee – Bachelor’s degree required. No substitution allowed.	Accountant I – Associate’s degree required. No substitution allowed.
County of Riverside	Administrative Analyst – Bachelor’s degree OR 4 years of administrative experience (Year-for-year substitution).	Accountant I – Bachelor’s degree, CPA, or equivalent of 2 years of college coursework with 1 to 3 years of internal trainee experience.
County of Orange	No Management Assistant level class. OC classes are department and field specific. For reference, their IT Applications Developer job class requires a Bachelor's degree, but can be substituted with only 2 years of experience.	Accountant/Auditor I - Bachelor's degree or CPA/CIA license required. No substitution allowed.
City of Glendale	Administrative Associate - Bachelor's degree required. Substitution with an Associate's degree and 3 years of experience allowed.	Accountant - Bachelor's degree required. Substitution with experience for education allowed.

City of Long Beach	Assistant Administrative Analyst – Bachelor’s degree required; year-for-year substitution with Administrative Aide experience.	Accountant – Bachelor’s degree in Accounting or 21 units in Accounting and CPA license required. No substitution allowed.
City of San Diego	Management Trainee – Bachelor’s degree OR 4 years of experience OR a combination of education and experience on a year-for-year basis.	Accountant – Bachelor’s degree and 1 year of experience required. No substitution allowed.
City of Compton	Administrative Assistant – Associate’s degree + 3 years of experience required. Substitution of equivalent combination of education and experience allowed.	Accountant – Bachelor’s degree in Accounting and 2 years of experience required. No substitution allowed.
City of Inglewood	Management Assistant - Associate’s degree and 3 years of experience; OR 2 years as a Staff Assistant with the City of Inglewood.	Accountant - Bachelor’s degree and 2 years of experience required. No substitution allowed.

Comparison of Management Assistant level classes

The City of Los Angeles requires a bachelor’s degree for the *Management Assistant* classification, which serves as the City’s standard entry-level professional role in administrative and analytical work. However, what distinguishes the City of Los Angeles from its peers is the existence of a dedicated bridge classification, Management Aide, which allows clerical and paraprofessional City employees to qualify for professional analyst positions through internal experience. After two years, employees in the Management Aide class are eligible to compete for *Management Analyst* and similar roles, effectively providing a pathway into professional positions without requiring a four-year degree at the outset.

By contrast, seven of the ten agencies reviewed allow for direct substitution of work experience for a degree in their equivalent administrative classifications. Most commonly, agencies offer year-for-year substitution, accept an associate’s degree plus additional experience, or have flexible qualification structures that permit a combination of education and experience. For example:

- The City of San Diego and the County of Riverside allows either a bachelor's degree, four years of relevant experience, or a combination of both education and experience.
- The City of Glendale allows substitution of an associate's degree and three years of experience for a bachelor's degree.

Only one agency, the County of Los Angeles, requires a bachelor's degree outright with no substitution or does not offer an equivalent classification.

Thus, while other local agencies incorporate flexibility within the job's minimum qualifications, the City of Los Angeles uses a formal internal pipeline, Management Aide, to achieve a similar outcome, ensuring promotional access for employees without degrees.

Comparison of Accountant level classes

In the case of Accountant, the City of Los Angeles requires a bachelor's degree with specific accounting coursework, and does not permit any substitution of experience for education at this time, although the Personnel Department is currently reviewing potential revisions to the requirements to allow individuals without a Bachelor's degree to qualify through other methods. The current requirement of a Bachelor's degree mirrors the majority of peer jurisdictions. Across the ten agencies reviewed, eight require a degree with no substitution allowed, reinforcing the profession's strong reliance on formal academic preparation. Some jurisdictions, such as the County of Riverside, offer alternate qualifying paths through CPA certification or progression from an internal trainee class, but still require some college education coursework.

Only two agencies, LAUSD and City of Glendale, offer limited substitution:

- LAUSD allows up to two years of experience to substitute for education on a year-for-year basis.
- The City of Glendale explicitly allows substitution of experience for the educational requirement.

Comparison Summary

In comparison to other local agencies, the City of Los Angeles demonstrates a more proactive and intentional approach in creating opportunities for individuals without a college degree to access professional career paths in civil service.

In bridging the divide between non-degree required and degree required jobs, the City of Los Angeles distinguishes itself by offering a structured, internally focused advancement pathway through the *Management Aide* classification. Rather than relying solely on substitution language in class specifications, the City has developed this bridge classification specifically to help clerical and paraprofessional employees gain the necessary on-the-job training and professional development to successfully transition into higher-level analyst roles. After gaining two years of qualifying experience, Management Aides become eligible to compete for positions such as *Management Analyst*, *Personnel Analyst*, and *Administrative Analyst*—all of which are typically degree-requiring roles in other jurisdictions. This structure not only expands access but ensures that candidates receive the foundational skills and exposure needed to succeed in a professional context.

In the case of technical roles such as Accountant, the City currently aligns with most peer jurisdictions in maintaining a traditional educational standard—a bachelor's degree with required accounting units and no substitution for experience. However, the Personnel Department is taking proactive steps to reassess these standards. In recognition of persistent recruitment challenges and the presence of skilled employees who may lack formal academic credentials, the Department is actively exploring alternative qualification strategies. This includes reviewing the *Accountant* class minimum requirements and working toward developing a structured pathway for individuals without a bachelor's degree. Similar to the Management Aide model, this effort is expected to include targeted training, mentorship, and work experience that will prepare candidates for successful careers in the Accountant series.

Exam Appeal Data

All applicants applying for Civil Service examinations must meet the requirements stated on the job bulletin. Requirements can include experience, education, or any combination of both. If a substitution clause is indicated, then the applicant can apply and qualify under such clause. However, the Personnel Department does not negotiate requirements with applicants. Appeals, if submitted by applicants, can be approved if the applicants provide clarifying information that clearly indicates that they meet the requirements, as stated on the job bulletin. For example, if applicants are not initially approved because it is not clear if they performed the required duties, the employment dates do not indicate they have enough experience, or the education information is not clear, applicants may submit an appeal to further clarify their work and/or education experience and standing.

The Personnel Department receives approximately 85,000 applications a year for civil service examinations. On average, approximately 2% of all applicants submit an appeal when their application is not approved. Approximately 64% of appeals are approved; most of the appeals that are approved are based on the applicant providing clarifying information and including required documents that were not initially included. A small percentage of appeals are approved in which the application was initially not approved

due to error by Personnel Department staff. The Personnel Department does not track appeals granted and if the applicant was placed on the eligible list or was ultimately hired.

In summary, the Personnel Department does review all appeals submitted, however, only applicants that can demonstrate that they meet the requirements, as stated on the job bulletin, will have their appeals approved.

Classes in which Artificial Barriers are Removed

The Personnel Department is currently reviewing the requirements of the Accountant classification, which is part of the City's civil service exam system. Under the existing requirements, candidates must have graduated from an accredited four-year college or university and at least 24 semester or 36 quarter units in accounting.

Recognizing that these requirements may create barriers for otherwise qualified individuals, the Personnel Department is reviewing potential revisions to the requirements. One such potential revision would be to revise the minimum qualifications for this classification and administer a regular (open to all) Civil Service Commission (CSC) examination to allow candidates without a Bachelor's degree, but who possess an Associate's degree or certificate in Accounting or an Accounting related field with experience as an Accounting Aide (Accounting Assistant), to compete. As part of this review process, the Personnel Department is considering reactivating the civil service classification of Accounting Aide and changing the classification title to Accounting Assistant.

Once the classification has been reactivated and the title changed, another potential concept under review involves designating the Accounting Aide or Accounting Assistant as a temporary training classification under CSC Rule 5.30, which could allow individuals to serve in an Assistant role for up to six years while gaining on-the-job training and the experience needed to qualify for the Accountant classification. Candidates could potentially apply for the civil service Accountant exam once they meet the revised minimum requirements. As part of this pathway, proposed bulletin revisions for the Accountant class explore the possibility of requiring relevant work experience in lieu of a degree, with departments potentially offering additional training to help close any skill gaps.

In a related effort to expand access and remove barriers, the apprenticeship programs for Helicopter Mechanic and Equipment Mechanic have introduced changes that replace the traditional work experience requirement with structured on-the-job training. While candidates must still meet the required educational qualifications, this change creates a pathway for individuals who may not have prior work experience but demonstrate the qualifications and readiness to develop their skills through structured training. Notably, the Helicopter Mechanic apprenticeship program is still in the development phase, but its inclusion reflects a broader departmental commitment to revising current requirements and removing barriers to civil service employment.

The Personnel Department will continue to work closely with departments and labor partners to explore these and other options for removing artificial barriers and expanding access to City employment. This includes reviewing current requirements, reactivating or developing new classifications, and considering alternative pathways into civil service positions.

TLH and BTJ Retention and Geographic Data

Since the inception of the TLH Program on February 2, 2017 through May 9, 2025, a total of 2,267 individuals have been hired into one of the 12 classifications that are included in the program. Of the 2,267 hires, approximately 92.4% (2,095 of 2,267) of TLH Program hires have either successfully completed the program, have been promoted out of the program through the civil service examination process, or are currently on track to gain civil service status upon successful completion of the program. Of the 2,267, approximately 7.6% (172 of 2,267) of TLH Program hires have been terminated, which is higher than the termination rate of 2.5% (19 out of 775) among non-TLH employees hired into the same classifications during the same reporting period (see Attachment A for a detailed breakdown by classification). Please note that the higher termination rate for TLH hires is likely due to the large number of hires (2,267) in the TLH classifications versus the number of non-TLH hires (775) in these classifications.

Since the inception of the BTJ Program on February 14, 2020 through May 9, 2025, a total of 445 individuals have been hired into one of the 11 classifications that are included in the program. Of the 445 hires, approximately 93.5% (416 out of 445) have either successfully completed the program, have promoted out of the program through the civil service examination process or are currently on track to gain civil service status upon successful completion. Of the 445, approximately 6.5% (29 out of 445) of BTJ hires have been terminated, which is higher than the termination rate of 4.9% (9 out of 184) among non-BTJ employees hired into the same classifications during the same reporting period (see Attachment B for a detailed breakdown by classification). Please note that the higher termination rate for BTJ hires is likely due to the large number of hires (445) in the BTJ classifications versus the number of non-BTJ hires (184) in these classifications.

In order to outreach and recruit individuals from all geographic areas of the City, the TLH and BTJ programs partner with all City of Los Angeles WorkSource Centers who act as “Application Sites” and 34 community-based organizations and educational institutions who act as of “Referral Agencies” as of May 9, 2025. Nonetheless, it should be noted that neither the TLH nor BTJ programs have a residency requirement; therefore, individuals may apply even if they reside *outside* of the City of Los Angeles. Attachment C and Attachment D show a breakdown of applications, referrals to City departments for hiring consideration and hires through the programs by City of Los Angeles Council District based on the zip code reported by individuals on their program application.

A full listing of program partners, including WorkSource Centers and Referral Agencies can be found at lalocalhire.lacity.gov. An interactive Heat Map can also be found at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19Yxj8qSwbSnluaOWMdFf9EhphGrmvuoyLv-x35q1yLM/edit?tab=t.0>.

Selection - Current Efforts to Bring Candidates into City Jobs

The Selection Division has implemented efforts to recruit and bring candidates into City jobs. Specifically, staff from the Selection Division have participated in the SoCal Trades Tour, which connects Southern California high school students with career opportunities in skilled trades. The purpose of this program is to provide high school students with information related to entry level trade positions and future career opportunities at the City. Interested students are provided with specific information and resources regarding the education, work experience, and/or certifications that may be required to qualify for entry level trade positions.

In 2024 and 2025, the Selection Division has represented the City at several SoCal Trade Tour events including Upland High School, Northview High School (Covina), the Hacienda La Puente School District, Claremont High School, Basset High School (La Puente), and Covina High School.

By attending these events, students are empowered to explore viable career pathways at the City and provided with the necessary resources in order to pursue these opportunities.

Conclusion

Through existing programs such as TLH and Bridge to Jobs and ongoing reforms, the City is positioning itself as a leader in public sector workforce development—balancing professional standards with equitable access and career mobility. While some peer jurisdictions offer flexibility in minimum qualifications, the City of Los Angeles goes a step further by investing in structured, intentional pipelines that prepare individuals for long-term success in City employment.

Attachment:

ATTACHMENT A

TARGETED LOCAL HIRE PROGRAM ("TLH")
TERMINATIONS (02-02-17 TO 05-09-25)

CLASSIFICATION	TLH HIRES			NON-TLH HIRES*		
	No. of Hires	No. of Terminations	Termination Rate	No. of Hires	No. of Terminations	Termination Rate
Administrative Clerk (1358)	1,157	73	6.3%	390	4	1.0%
Animal Care Technician (4310)	104	15	14.4%	2	2	100.0%
Animal License Canvasser (4330)	8	-	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Custodian (3156)	251	39	15.5%	105	7	6.7%
Delivery Driver I (1121-1)	4	-	0.0%	13	0	0.0%
Garage Attendant (3531)	27	4	14.8%	62	3	4.8%
Gardener Caretaker (3141)	361	21	5.8%	72	1	1.4%
Maintenance Laborer (3112)	290	19	6.6%	46	1	2.2%
Mechanical Helper (3771)	-	-	0.0%	6	1	16.7%
Street Services Worker I (4150-1)	28	-	0.0%	10	0	0.0%
Tree Surgeon Assistant (3151)	25	-	0.0%	42	0	0.0%
Warehouse and Toolroom Worker I (1832-1)	12	1	8.3%	27	0	0.0%
Grand Total	2,267	172	7.6%	775	19	2.5%

*Data Source: Workday Report extracted on 05-09-25 with the following termination reasons: Abandoned Position, Discharge for Cause, Probationary Termination (no reversion).

ATTACHMENT B

BRIDGE TO JOBS PROGRAM ("BTJ")
TERMINATIONS (02-14-20 TO 05-09-25)

CLASSIFICATION	BTJ HIRES			NON-BTJ HIRES*		
	No. of Hires	No. of Terminations	Termination Rate	No. of Hires	No. of Terminations	Termination Rate
Accounting Clerk (1223)	117	5	4.3%	68	3	4.4%
Cement Finisher Worker (3351)	6	0	0.0%	16	0	0.0%
Communications Information Representative I (1461-1)	80	10	12.5%	35	1	2.9%
Customer Service Specialist (1229-1)	10	2	20.0%	0	0	0.0%
Electrical Craft Helper (3799)	85	6	7.1%	7	1	14.3%
Field Engineering Aide (7228)	11	1	9.1%	5	0	0.0%
Inspector Trainee (4212) (compared to Assistant Inspector, 4208)	48	1	2.1%	9	2	22.2%
Investigator Trainee (0608) (compared to Special Investigator, 0602)	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0.0%
Maintenance and Construction Helper (3115)	11	0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%
Security Officer (3181)	52	2	3.9%	37	2	5.4%
Traffic Painter and Sign Poster (3421-1)	25	2	8.0%	0	0	0.0%
Grand Total	445	29	6.5%	184	9	4.9%

*Data Source: Workday Report extracted on 05-09-25 with the following termination reasons: Abandoned Position, Discharge for Cause, Probationary Termination (no reversion).

ATTACHMENT C

TARGETED LOCAL HIRE PROGRAM SUMMARY BY COUNCIL DISTRICT (02-02-17 TO 05-12-25)

Notes:

1. Data based on zip code as indicated on candidate's original applications.
2. Zip code by Council District is based on data compiled by the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst as of March 2022. Multiple Council Districts may exist in one zip code; for the numbers reported above, the entirety of the zip code is reported and may appear under multiple Council Districts.
3. Individual applicants may receive multiple referrals; therefore, the number of referrals may be greater than the number of applicants.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS	APPLICANTS	REFERRALS	HIRED
CD 1 - EUNISSES HERNANDEZ	2,424	6,009	280
CD 2 - ADRIN NAZARIAN	838	1,713	93
CD 3 - BOB BLUMENFIELD	786	1,398	70
CD 4 - NITHYA RAMAN	1,277	2,921	145
CD 5 - KATY YAROSLAVSKY	1,060	2,512	102
CD 6 - IMELDA PADILLA	1,707	3,223	185
CD 7 - MONICA RODRIGUEZ	1,824	3,535	218
CD 8 - MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON	4,124	9,963	409
CD 9 - CURREN D. PRICE JR.	2,612	6,151	274
CD 10 - HEATHER HUTT	1,753	4,301	172
CD 11 - TRACI PARK	801	1,664	77
CD 12 - JOHN LEE	1,021	2,020	112
CD 13 - HUGO SOTO-MARTINEZ	1,889	4,792	219
CD 14 - YSABEL J JURADO	2,510	6,165	317
CD 15 - TIM MCOSKAR	2,549	5,866	270

ATTACHMENT D

BRIDGE TO JOBS PROGRAM
SUMMARY BY COUNCIL DISTRICT (02-14-20 TO 05-12-25)

Notes:

1. Data based on zip code as indicated on candidate's original applications.
2. Zip code by Council District is based on data compiled by the Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst as of March 2022. Multiple Council Districts may exist in one zip code; for the numbers reported above, the entirety of the zip code is reported and may appear under multiple Council Districts.
3. Individual applicants may receive multiple referrals; therefore, the number of referrals may be greater than the number of applicants.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS	APPLICANTS	REFERRALS	HIRED
CD 1 - Eunisses Hernandez	939	1,120	72
CD 2 - Adrin Nazarian	163	187	9
CD 3 - Bob Blumenfield	195	177	9
CD 4 - Nithya Raman	389	400	20
CD 5 - Katy Yaroslavsky	395	441	17
CD 6 - Imelda Padilla	394	428	25
CD 7 - Monica Rodriguez	459	581	37
CD 8 - Marqueece Harris-Dawson	1,117	1,424	67
CD 9 - Curren D. Price Jr.	754	915	48
CD 10 - Heather Hutt	599	765	37
CD 11 - Traci Park	243	285	9
CD 12 - John Lee	277	373	18
CD 13 - Hugo Soto-Martinez	699	794	44
CD 14 - Ysabel J Jurado	942	1,072	84
CD 15 - Tim McOskar	826	1,030	63