

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

0220-01463-0163

Date: April 7, 2026

To: The Mayor  
The City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, City Administrative Officer



Subject: **INNOVATION FUND RECOMMENDATION – MEDICAL RECORDS REQUESTS TRACKING SYSTEM**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council, subject to the approval of the Mayor:

1. Establish and appropriate a new appropriation account entitled Los Angeles Fire Department – Medical Records Requests Tracking System in the amount of \$78,000 within the Innovation Fund No. 105/10 from the available cash balance of the Innovation Fund.
2. Transfer \$78,000 from the Innovation Fund No. 105/10, Los Angeles Fire Department – Medical Records Requests Tracking System to Fund No. 100/38 as follows:

<u>Fund/Dept.</u>	<u>Acct No.</u>	<u>Account Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
100/38	003040	Contractual Services	\$78,000

3. Instruct Los Angeles Fire Department to:
  - a. Separately track all encumbrances and expenditures of Innovation Fund monies so that unspent funds can be returned to the Innovation Fund at the end of the fiscal year;
  - b. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission with an accounting of the funds, the lessons learned, and any obstacles faced;
  - c. Report to the Innovation and Performance Commission if, after the receipt of funds, the scope of the funded item differs from the scope approved for funding by the Mayor and the City Council; and,
  - d. As appropriate, include acknowledgment of the Innovation and Performance Commission on public materials, such as press releases or websites that reference the Medical Records Requests Tracking System project.
4. Authorize the City Administrative Officer to make technical corrections as necessary to those transactions included in this report to implement Mayor and Council intentions.

## **SUMMARY**

The City Administrative Officer herewith transmits the recommendation of the Innovation and Performance Commission (IPC) to approve funding in the amount of \$78,000 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) – Medical Records Request Tracking System pilot project. This funding will allow LAFD to modernize its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Records Unit by replacing outdated, manual systems with a secure, public-facing digital portal. The new system aims to streamline the processing of over 10,000 annual requests for Protected Health Information (PHI), improving operational efficiency, accelerating turnaround times, and ensuring strict compliance with health privacy regulations.

## **ANALYSIS OF PROPOSAL**

This report presents the idea as submitted by the LAFD and approved by the IPC along with the necessary recommendations to implement the idea as presented. If the scope of the Innovation Fund item changes after LAFD receives funding, LAFD must return to the IPC to present the revised scope to the IPC to determine whether alternative recommendations are required.

The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Records Unit (Unit) serves a vital role in the City's delivery of emergency medical services by managing the secure release of highly confidential patient medical records. Each year, the Unit processes more than 10,000 requests for Protected Health Information (PHI), ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the California Confidentiality of Medical Information Act (CMIA). As demand for timely access to records continues to grow, the Unit faces increasing pressure to maintain compliance, efficiency, and service quality.

The Unit's ability to meet these demands is constrained by an outdated records system developed over a decade ago, for which source code is no longer available. This limits the Department's ability to resolve technical issues and adapt to evolving operational needs. Additionally, the current system lacks modern encryption, increasing vulnerability to cybersecurity threats. At the same time, stricter regulatory requirements governing electronic PHI, rising request volumes, mandated processing timelines, and staffing limitations due to budget constraints further compound operational challenges.

Unlike major healthcare providers that utilize comprehensive digital patient portals, LAFD and most peer fire departments across California and the nation continue to rely on manual, paper-based, or static PDF processes submitted via mail, fax, email, or in person. While some agencies employ third-party systems for limited purposes, such as EMS billing or access to electronic patient care reports, these solutions do not provide a centralized, end-to-end platform capable of managing the full range of records requests from patients, attorneys, law enforcement, and regulatory entities.

In response, LAFD is seeking funding for the Medical Records Request Tracking System (MRRTS) pilot, a strategic effort to modernize and enhance the Unit's operations. The project centers on the development of a secure, public-facing digital portal that would allow requestors to submit requests, upload documentation, remit applicable fees through an integrated City

payment system, communicate directly with the Department, and receive responsive records, including medical documents and 9-1-1 audio files, within a HIPAA-compliant environment. By consolidating all request-related information, documentation, and communications into a single system, MRRTS establishes a more streamlined, transparent, and user-centered process.

Beyond improving external access, MRRTS will strengthen internal coordination and workflow by enabling real-time task assignment and communication across key stakeholders, including the EMS Bureau, Metropolitan Fire Communications, Accounting, Risk Management, and the City Attorney's Office. This integrated approach supports greater efficiency in records retrieval, review, production, and distribution, while also enhancing accountability and consistency across the process.

Implementation of MRRTS is expected to yield significant operational efficiencies. Automation will reduce staff time currently devoted, approximately 10 to 30 minutes per request, to manual intake and data entry, decrease reliance on public counter services for accepting requests and subpoenas, and accelerate turnaround times for record delivery. These improvements will also reduce the volume of follow-up inquiries and complaints, allowing the Unit to operate more effectively within existing staffing levels while improving overall service delivery.

The system also advances compliance and risk mitigation by ensuring that all records are transmitted through a secure, encrypted platform, significantly reducing the likelihood of unauthorized disclosures or HIPAA violations. Enhanced efficiency in processing requests may also support increased revenue collection from civil subpoena fees, while minimizing potential legal and financial liabilities associated with data breaches.

Success of the MRRTS pilot will be measured through built-in performance metrics, including reductions in processing time, staff workload, and customer complaints, as well as improvements in overall productivity and service outcomes. By aligning technological innovation with operational needs, MRRTS positions the LAFD to enhance public access, strengthen data security, and deliver more efficient, transparent, and accountable medical records management services.

The IPC recommends \$78,000 for the LAFD - Medical Records Requests Tracking System pilot. These funds will provide LAFD a one-year investment for development and maintenance of the project's module. LAFD anticipates the application development services to cost \$48,000 and the ongoing maintenance, operations, and SaaS to cost \$30,000. The IPC has requested a progress update within four-months of the receipt of funds.

## **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Approval of these recommendations will allocate \$78,000 of the remaining \$596,728.96 Innovation Fund 2025-26 available balance. The \$78,000 will be transferred to the LAFD to begin implementation of the pilot project that has been approved by the Innovation and Performance Commission. In some cases, departments will incur ongoing costs.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT**

The recommendations of this report are in compliance with the City's Financial Policies as Innovation Fund monies are being utilized for an eligible project which will improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of City service through innovation, productivity, and performance measurement.

*MWS:BLS: 17260001h*