

Councilmembers,

I am the VP of the North Hollywood Northeast Neighborhood Council (NHNENC), but I am commenting as an individual. I am against this motion, unless there are significant amendments that I will recommend below.

I applaud the statements that highlight the “importance of neighborhood-level preparedness”, the existing free CERT program, and that Neighborhood Councils “are often a trusted source of information for residents during emergencies”.

My husband and I completed our CERT training in February 2025. In my role as the Chair of the NHNENC Beautification & Public Safety Committee, I have: sponsored the approved motion for our Neighborhood Council to support a North Hollywood CERT training in Sept/Oct 2025; continue to support the monthly Battalion 14 CERT meetings; invite CERT to have an outreach table at our events; and include announcements at meetings and on our social media platforms encouraging our community members to take CERT. However, I stop short of making this a requirement of anyone.

I think there are two misunderstandings in this motion.

- First is related to CERT itself, more information is available here: www.cert-la.com.
 - It is a 7 week commitment with a significant time commitment of 17.5 hours.
 - The individuals that complete this training are not part of the group that works with LAFD, those individuals are part of the CERT Call Out Team, which has more requirements including passing a live-scan background check, and getting sworn in as a Disaster Service Worker (DSW).
- Second is related to the purpose of the Neighborhood Councils per the charter.
 - The goal of the Neighborhood Councils is to promote public participation in City governance and decision-making to create a government more responsive to local needs.
 - Neighborhood Council Board Members are unpaid.
 - Neighborhood Council Board Members are not city staff or employees.

My recommendations for amendments are:

- Removing all references to having CERT training be a requirement. Instead focus on how Neighborhood Council Board Members can be encouraged, along with all Angelenos, to take the CERT training for their own benefit and as an example to their communities.
- Add in a request for an updated report from the LAFD CERT program on how the city can better support it. But please note that there is already a Board of Fire Commissioners report, dated December 17, 2024, in Council File 24-1600, that is related to operational challenges that included a funding request to support CERT, which relies heavily on v-hours.
(https://cityclerk.lacity.org/online/docs/2024/24-1600_rpt_bfc_12-17-24.pdf)

My recommendations for further amendments to consider are:

- Add in a request for the Emergency Management Department report back on the following:
 - How EMD can build a relationship with the LAFD CERT program
 - How EMD can support awareness of CERT and increase access to CERT training. Including including CERT on their website <https://emergency.lacity.gov/>

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- How EMD can build a relationship with DONE to encourage awareness of Ready Your LA (RYLAN) <https://ready.lacity.gov/>
- Funding needed to translate the City of Los Angeles Emergency Preparedness Guide.
- Funding needed to provide printed copies of the City of Los Angeles Emergency Preparedness Guide to every Neighborhood Council Board Member. Distributed through the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's NEAs.
- Look at how to provide specific support for the CERT program to include the following:
 - Funding for Overtime Variable Staffing Hours (V-Hours) for the LAFD Firefighters that are instructors in the CERT program
 - Funding for the purchase of more of the standard green response backpack filled with basic disaster-response gear, including a hard hat, safety vest, work gloves, goggles, a flashlight, basic first-aid supplies, and operational field manuals.
 - Funding for the purchase of printed LAFD Emergency Preparedness Guide and having it translated into the most common languages of Los Angeles City.
 - Request that Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (RAP) waive any fees related to the use of their facilities as hosting locations for CERT training and related meetings.

Thank you again for acknowledging the CERT program, which has been a free resource to Angelenos for decades. I recommend that any Councilmember that has not completed CERT do so, so that they can be an example to all Angelenos and especially to those in their council districts.

Best,

Jennifer Clark
Resident of North Hollywood and Council District 2

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Deputy: A. BENCOMO