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## Los Angeles County Fire Department



*"Providing leadership and direction to all members  
of the Los Angeles County Fire Department"*

### Association Of Chiefs

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#### AOC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESSION PLAN

For nearly 20 years, the AOC has discussed with the Fire Chief the premise of a "Professional Development Incentive" whereby managers may gain incentives for a variety of accomplishments in enhancing their professionalism within their service to the department.

Over the past four years, President Pena placed the "Professional Development Incentive" as a priority item for the Board to develop. Monthly in each of those four years, the item was placed on the agenda for discussion the Fire Chief. Several versions and iterations of the Incentive Plan were developed and evaluated by the AOC Board as well as the Fire Chief administrative staff.

In October 2007, the Fire Chief encouraged the AOC Board to provide a final version of their plan to his office for review and possible movement forward to the County's Chief Executive Officer for review and consideration.

As employee development is closely linked to the growth of a company, employee development of public service professionals can also be linked with the increase in effective and efficient service delivery of its fire service managers. Employee growth has direct and indirect benefits. More knowledgeable, skilled, and capable employees directly impact the Department's ability to satisfy customers, resolve problems and crises, and adapt to changing community needs and conditions. Paying for an employee's continuing professional education, similar to Los Angeles Sheriff's Department's Tuition Reimbursement Program for example, can assist a company or public service agency gain expertise in new technologies and markets, which can save the entity money in the long run.

In addition, most employees find learning new skills and taking on new challenges extremely rewarding. Satisfied employees have a more positive

attitude, work harder, and stay with a company or an organization longer than workers who aren't given opportunities to grow.

There are many ways to foster employee development. The Los Angeles County AOC in cooperation with the Fire Chief, have developed a comprehensive incentive plan that encourages employee professional growth as well as organizational succession. As detailed within the attached incentive plan, participants are encouraged to seek professional development in two specific areas: formal education and technical training.

A formal education in the form of an Associate, Bachelor or Master of Science/Arts degree is a vital foundation for the all fire service managers. Participation in and completion of a formal degree program will result in a more confident employee who feels valued, challenged, rewarded and more adept to engage with other government officials, emergency managers and members of the community. Further, by supporting an employees desire to educate themselves, an organization can expect to increase the knowledge base within the organization. In the long term this can make internal operations more efficient, reduce the need to outsource for expertise, and help the organization stay ahead of trends and initiatives in an ever dynamic profession.

Technical training is required in order to stay current and informed in today's firefighting environment. Innovations in incident management, best practices and safety improvements are necessary skills for all fire service managers. Employee development in the realm of improving a manager's technical skills is a key element in administrative and emergency fire service management. Further, employee development in emergency and incident management may mean the difference in saving lives and minimizing property losses.

Often, businesses or organizations indicate they cannot afford the cost of employee development. Their reasons fall mainly in two areas: they cannot afford employees the time away from the job for training or they cannot afford to bring in an outside professional trainer. While these two issues are serious concerns for many organizations, the attached incentive plan outlines a host of technical training options in which fire service managers may participate in the plan by seeking and completing training at their own cost. Each technical training option has a direct nexus toward enhancing the technical skills a fire service manager needs to succeed in their profession.

Public service organizations must cultivate and develop their "human assets" as never before. Instead of viewing employees as item numbers or commodities, organizations must invest in their "human capital" in innovative manners. By doing so, managers will be more skilled at forecasting and developing the capabilities of their organizations to perform new and critical missions as seeking higher levels of responsibility within the organization.

Los Angeles County Fire Department managers continue to improve their workforce and service excellence as well as their professional development as we work collectively toward understanding our Department's evolutionary direction. In doing so, we continue also to align our own growth and development with this direction in order to be prepared for challenges and opportunities as they arise. We are hopeful that the County of Los Angeles will work in a proactive manner with its stakeholder fire department managers toward acceptance of the Professional Development and Organizational Incentive Plan.

### **COST**

The estimated annual cost of the proposed plan ranges from \$369,477.18 to \$511,860.82 (variance due to salary range placement of each individual participant).

### **PLAN DETAILS**

Please contact your AOC Steward for plan details.