

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****February 15, 2022**

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**SUBJECT: FEMALE FIRE RECRUITMENT, FITNESS REQUIREMENTS AND HIRING DATA**

The Fire Department's goal is to attract and hire qualified fire trainee candidates who represent the cultural, social, and gender diversity that exists in our community. Recruiting qualified candidates is a continuous process to seek out applicants who possess the essential knowledge, skills, physical and academic abilities to become successful firefighters. Although all firefighters are expected to recruit potential fire trainees, the primary responsibility for hiring and recruiting is assigned to the Hiring and Recruiting Section. The section is managed by the Hiring Administrator/Captain, who receives logistical and administrative support from the Professional Standards Lieutenant and the Community Risk Reduction Battalion Chief on an as-needed basis. The section is supervised by the Assistant Chief over the Executive Services

Attracting qualified applicants is a collaborative effort between the Fire Department and various community groups and organizations. These groups are comprised of churches & faith-based organizations, local high schools and colleges, specialty organizations, and military personnel. Fostering relationships helps to support our diversity recruiting goals. As the population of Fort Worth continues to grow, so does its diversity. However, the number of people taking the department's entrance exam is not consistent with the city's demographic profile. Of those who took the 2021 entrance exam, 22.2% were Latino, 17.9% were Black, and 7.3% were female. However, city's current demographics indicate the population is 37.9% white, 36.4% Hispanic, 18.5% Black, and 51.4% female. Fire department staffing is also disproportionate to the city's demographics with males representing 96.8% of our firefighters, 77.8% of our firefighters are white, 11% Latino, 8.4% Black, and 3.2 % are female. Despite an increase in the number of firefighters hired from targeted groups, female firefighters remain underrepresented.

According to 2020 Department of Labor statistics, women comprise roughly 4% of career firefighters in the United States. This percentage is significantly less than the approximately 14% of women working in law enforcement and the military, occupations that have similar physical requirement. This indicates that hiring qualified female candidates continues to be a national problem for the fire service and is one of our most complex human resource challenges. The Task Force on Race and Culture addressed the overall lack of female representation in the city's workforce in 2017. The report recommended all city departments demonstrate progress in increasing gender diversity through targeted hiring, recruitment, and professional development activities.

We remain proactive in our attempts to diversify and become a more inclusive department. Our recruiting strategies have increased targeted social media to specific groups and we have used technology to simplify the application process for all applicants. Mentorship opportunities and study groups were made available for eligible candidates during the hiring process. In addition, the Camp HEAT (Heart, Energy, Attitude, and Teamwork) program was established in 2019 as a female recruiting initiative. Camp HEAT is a one-day fire and emergency medical program designed for girls aged 14-19. A total of 12 young women completed the training and skills presented in our pilot program. The camp was facilitated by Battalion Chief Sherry Hauch and skills assistance was provided by incumbent female firefighters and Community Risk Reduction

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staff. The Camp HEAT program was inspired by International Association of Women in Fire and Emergency Services' programs that teach young women about leadership and goal-setting while also introducing them to careers in fire and emergency services. With all of our efforts, we have experienced a modest increase in the number of female fire trainees hired for the recruit academy (as noted in the data below).

We also actively engage in removing barriers that are detrimental to hiring and retaining female firefighters. To help us achieve our diversity and inclusion goals, the hiring and recruiting section temporarily assigns female firefighters to assist during all stages of the hiring process. Assignments include attending high school and college career fairs and community events, serving as civil service entrance exam monitors, participating on hiring interview panels, mentoring female candidates on physical ability test requirements, and serving as instructors and recruit team leaders during our 28-week recruit academy.

Assigning female team leaders allows training academy staff can teach and demonstrate how using better body mechanics can help female recruits of all sizes perform fireground tasks in a safer and more effective manner. The department has also began modifying older fire stations to accommodate the needs of female firefighters, and we are currently procuring structural firefighting gear and uniforms that are specifically designed for women. Despite our progress, the most important aspect of successfully recruiting all underrepresented groups is for department leadership to continue advocating for diverse and inclusive work environments that encourage the acceptance and participation of female firefighters in all levels of the organization.

**Fire Department Entry Fitness Tests****Entry Aerobic Capacity Run (ACR):**

Fire Trainee applicants are required to complete an aerobic capacity run in a time of 13 minutes and 57 seconds. The run is a pass/fail only.

**Entry Physical Ability Test**

Candidates who successfully complete the ACR in the allotted time are scheduled for the Physical Ability Test, which consist of Stair Climb, Equipment Carry, Ladder Raise and Extension Hose Drag, Ceiling Breach, Roof Breach/Forcible Entry, Rescue and Confined Space Search. The PAT is a pass/fail only, with the maximum allowable time of 8 minutes and 45 seconds. Anything over this time is a failed exam and the candidate will be disqualified. Practice sessions are offered over a one-month period and candidates are allowed to attend as sessions as they desire. Candidates are allowed 2 attempts to pass the test. **The 2nd attempt pass rate for all candidates has been 100% the last 3 years.**

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Female Fire Trainee Candidate Hiring Data

**2017-2018**

**Total number of female candidates who took the entrance exam: 69 of 1208 total**

**Female candidates passing the entrance exam: 38 of 787 total passing scores**

**Total number of female candidates processed for hiring: 28**

**Total number of females hired by the department: 9**

No Shows/Withdrawals 9

Did not pass interview 3

Eliminated during Backgrounds 2

Failed Aerobic Capacity Run 5

Fallout rate during hiring process: 67.85%

**2019-2020**

**Total number of female candidates who took the entrance exam: 84 of 1313 total**

**Female candidates passing the entrance exam: 72 of 934 total passing scores**

**Total number of female candidates processed for hiring: 53**

**Total number of females hired by the department: 10**

No Shows/Withdrawals 15

Did not pass interview 6

Eliminated during Backgrounds 5

Failed Aerobic Capacity Run 16

Declined Job Offer 1

Resignation/Termination while in Training 1

Fallout rate during hiring process: 83.01%

**2020-2021**

**Total number of female candidates who took the entrance exam: 124 of 1690 total**

**Female candidates passing the entrance exam: 102 of 1310 total passing scores**

**Total number of female candidates processed for hiring: 79**

**Total number of females hired by the department: 11**

**\*4 female candidates will be hired for Class 92 if March 2022, class is approved**

No Shows/Withdrawals 20

Did not pass interview 7

Eliminated during Backgrounds 9

Failed Aerobic Capacity Run 28

Resignations/Terminations while in Training 3

Fallout rate during hiring process: 84.81%

Additional questions should be directed to Fire Chief Jim Davis at [jim.davis@fortworthtexas.gov](mailto:jim.davis@fortworthtexas.gov)

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**

**ISSUED BY THE CITY MANAGER**

**FORT WORTH, TEXAS**