

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE



Date: April 23, 2018

To: The Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair  
City Council Budget and Finance Committee  
Attention: Richard Williams, Legislative Assistant  
Office of the City Clerk

From: Aram Sahakian, General Manager  
Emergency Management Department

Subject: **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT COMMENTS ON THE  
MAYOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018-19**

The Emergency Management Department (EMD) coordinates emergency preparedness, planning, response, recovery and mitigation efforts for the City of Los Angeles. The department supports the Mayor's goal of ensuring that the City of Los Angeles is the safest large city in the country by working with City agencies and our partners in government and the private sector to coordinate disaster planning, training, exercises and management of the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The December 2017 Creek and Skirball fires and the March 2018 adverse weather event which resulted in evacuations and debris/mudflow occurrences, validate that City government must remain prepared for disasters; both predictable and little to no-notice events. These incidents were a reminder of the need to further develop a more robust disaster readiness strategy. EMD not only takes into consideration impacts from local disasters, but identifies gaps and areas for improvement from recent events such as the hurricanes in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, brush fires in Northern and Southern California, earthquakes in Mexico and Iran, acts of terrorism in Nevada, and the numerous active shooter incidents across the nation. Each of these events provides dramatic evidence of the impact catastrophic events can have on government and communities.

Our budget packages for the Fiscal Year 2018-19 include requests which we have deemed extremely critical to the continued success of the Department and for sustaining a baseline level of readiness for planned events and disaster situations in the City.

EMD proposes three priority areas for consideration by the Budget and Finance Committee:

1. Additional Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) positions for our community preparedness and engagement program
2. Continuation of the Department's internship program
3. Increase in overtime funding allocation

## **Additional Emergency Management Coordinator Positions**

EMD's Community Preparedness and Engagement Division ensures disaster readiness of all Angelenos and communities. EMD presently assigns one (1) EMC I position to each of the City's four (4) Disaster Management Bureaus (DMB) - Central, South, West and Valley. This aligns with the geographic bureaus used by both the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD). This program ensures that our public education and outreach efforts are coordinated with LAPD and LAFD to provide a seamless structure and unified approach to the delivery of the City's community preparedness programs. This is accomplished by:

- (1) Engaging Angelenos through strategic partnerships with community organizations and leaders; and
- (2) Leveraging all available resources within the City family and new public-private sector partnerships in order to continue growth.

The Mayor's Proposed Budget includes the addition of one Emergency Management Coordinator position for the Community Preparedness and Engagement Division. However, to increase effectiveness and sustainment of this responsibility, EMD requests position authority and recurring funding for three (3) additional EMC I's to support the development, implementation and sustainment of citywide community preparedness outreach and neighborhood emergency plans and exercises using the City's new neighborhood preparedness initiative, Ready Your LA Neighborhood (RYLAN). Establishment of neighborhood based emergency plans is a core element of EMD's community emergency management program. Through the use of previously approved Homeland Security grant funding, the RYLAN program is scheduled for official roll-out in May 2018. This program provides an opportunity for every neighborhood in Los Angeles to dialogue, organize and plan how neighbors will help neighbors immediately following a major disaster.

With a population of four million in the City of Los Angeles, EMD requires more than the four (4) current staff assigned to community outreach to identify, train and sustain the RYLAN program. Having additional staff assigned to each DMB allows EMD to double efforts across the City to ensure a higher percentage of our neighborhoods are prepared.

In addition to community outreach as a primary job function, additional EMC I's will provide EMD with more staffing for the following functions: 1) Partnerships with other City departments with outreach efforts; 2) EOC and Unified Command Post (UCP), or Incident Command Post (ICP) activation staffing and responsibilities; 3) EMD Duty team coverage for day-to-day operations; 4) Emergency Operations Plan review and revision responsibilities; and 5) Emergency Operations Training and Exercise planning and deliveries.

## **Continuation of EMD Internship Program**

The EMD Internship Program has benefited the City and the Department since December 2008. Over sixty (60) interns have passed through the program, with the majority going on to careers in public service and emergency management throughout Southern California and

the Country. This program provides EMD with undergraduate and graduate students to supplement existing programs and projects critical to City preparedness.

These include the review and revision of the following plans:

1. Forty-two (42) Department Emergency Plans and Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)
2. Forty-five (45) Hazard-specific and functional Annexes
3. City Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and related projects
4. Fifteen (15) Council Office Emergency Plans and COOP Plans
5. Standard Operating Procedures for people with disabilities, access and functional needs

Interns typically assist in completion of 10% to 20% of the total workload under the direction of full-time EMD staff. Past projects also included developing and managing the implementation of the City's Disaster Service Worker Program, researching critical supply chain sectors in the region (food, fuel, pharmaceutical, transportation, water, and medical goods), supporting activations of the EOC, development of training and exercise programs, and staffing community preparedness, and outreach events.

The Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 provides funding for two (2) part-time intern positions (approximately \$40,000). Based on the success of the program and the amount of work performed, EMD is asking for an increase of \$110,000 for a total funding of \$150,000. This will allow us to hire a total of seven (7) Interns.

### **Increase in Overtime Funding Allocation**

EMD requests an increase in its overtime budget allocation of \$28,000 for Fiscal Year 2018-19 to have adequate funding to fulfill our mission of ensuring a safe and well prepared city. Based on a three-year trend, a budget of \$60,000 is needed to cover mid-year shortfalls, so we are requesting an additional \$32,000. EMD provides leadership and coordination of Citywide emergency preparedness, response and recovery operations with multiple City departments and outside agencies. This includes activation of the City's EOC as well as incident or event specific UCPs and ICPs. EMD provides liaison services to ensure effective inter-agency service coordination. EOC and UCP/ICP activations often occur after hours or extend beyond the normal staff working hours and require overtime compensation.

Additionally, EMD is the City's primary agency responsible for providing direct assistance to communities in the development of community emergency preparedness plans. Overtime funds are needed to ensure EMD staff is available to attend public outreach and community events, including RYLAN program meetings and workshops, which aim to help communities throughout the City prepare for and respond to emergencies. Almost all of these events take place in the evenings and on weekends which requires staff overtime compensation. These outreach events consist of staffing emergency fairs and events, public safety events, health fairs, City Council Office events, Neighborhood Council events, private business events, non-profit events, school events, faith based events, and many others that EMD is asked to participate.

EMD staff are also requested to formally speak/present on emergency preparedness to numerous community groups including homeowner associations, senior centers, DAFN

groups, private schools, Neighborhood Council boards, City Council Office requests, Community Police Advisory Boards, Mayor's Office groups, businesses, faith based groups, non-profit groups, and many others. While some of these occur during normal working hours, many are during the evening and on weekends.

The amount of overtime funding in the Mayor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 will limit the department's effectiveness and staff presence during EOC and the UCP/ICP activations. Staff are increasingly called upon to handle Citywide coordination of response and recovery efforts. Also, the day-to-day requests to staff community preparedness and engagement events throughout the City will be significantly limited in each of the Council Districts.

## **Conclusion**

EMD is one of the City's primary public safety agencies and has the responsibility for Citywide preparedness, response, and recovery coordination. This role is critical to all City agencies and the community. EMD supports its primary function through direct alignment with the Mayor's public safety priorities. However, our budget allocation should reflect the importance of EMD's position and responsibility in the City. EMD remains focused on core tasks, critical emergency response functions, and the optimization of grant funding. There is no greater responsibility for the City of Los Angeles than to protect its residents and ensure that the City is ready to respond to and recover from a natural or man-made emergency or disaster.

EMD manages the City's response and recovery during large-scale emergencies, crises, disasters, or significant events. Additionally, the Department works with numerous municipalities, state and federal agencies, and the private sector and is involved in numerous outreach, education, and community preparedness activities on a year-round basis.

We appreciate your continued support of EMD's mission to promote a culture of readiness in the City of Los Angeles. If you have questions about this request please contact me personally or EMD Assistant General Manager, Rob Freeman at 213-484-4800.