

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: October 28, 2016

To: The Mayor
The City Council

From: Miguel A. Santana, City Administrative Officer *MA*

Subject: **RESOLUTION AUTHORITY – INNOVATION FUND LAFD SOBER UNIT**

On June 15, 2016, the City Council, with subsequent Mayor's concurrence, approved funding in the amount of \$169,521 from the Innovation Fund (IF) for the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) SOBER (SOBERing center Emergency Resource) Unit (C.F. No. 16-0371).

Through this 12-month pilot program, LAFD would staff a new SOBER Unit in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS). As approved, a Community Outreach Worker from the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) will be paired with an LAFD Firefighter/Paramedic (FF/PM) in an LAFD van to provide assistance to serial inebriates (patients who are transported multiple times to emergency rooms (ERs) for intoxication).

According to LAFD, these patients tie up scarce emergency resources due to acute alcohol intoxication or medical or traumatic complications. LAFD indicates that serial inebriates comprise a significant percentage of its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedic transports, sometimes occurring more than once per shift, to local ERs where they receive episodic care, potentially unnecessary testing, and are released back onto the streets. The SOBER Unit would work closely with a new, free standing Sobering Center, operated by DHS, scheduled to open on Skid Row in early 2017 to provide assistance to serial inebriates by helping individuals detox and find housing.

LAFD has now proposed an alternative approach to staffing the SOBER Unit. Instead of pairing the LAHSA Community Outreach Worker with a FF/PM, LAFD has proposed staffing the SOBER Unit with an EMS Nurse Practitioner. The IPC considered and approved this change at its July 2016 meeting.

The success of the SOBER Unit pilot will be measured by the number of patients that the SOBER Unit transports to the free-standing Sobering Center, which will equate to one less ambulance transport for each of these patients. It will also be measured by the projected reduction in the utilization of 9-1-1 for those individuals who are transported by the SOBER Unit in the ensuing months after their initial transport. Finally, LAFD reports that fewer ambulance transports will also result in a decrease in ambulance "wall time" at the already overcrowded hospital ERs.

The EMS Nurse Practitioner classification is pending establishment by the Personnel Department. Upon approval of the classification and allocation by the Civil Service Commission, the CAO will establish the salary, which is anticipated to be \$117,000. Since the SOBER Unit will require six months funding in 2016-17, the balance of IF monies will be transferred to the Innovation Fund and re-appropriated July 1, 2017 for services in 2017-18.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Authorize by resolution one position of EMS Nurse Practitioner, in the Fire Department, through June 30, 2017.
2. Transfer \$58,500 within Fund 100/38 from Account No. 001093, Salaries Overtime Constant Staffing to Account No. 001010, Salaries General.
3. Transfer \$130,521 from Account 001093, Salaries Overtime Constant Staffing to Innovation Fund 105/10 LAFD - SOBER Unit Account No. 10N931.
4. Instruct the City Clerk to place on the agenda for the first regular meeting on or after July 1, 2017, the following item:

Transfer \$111,021 from Innovation Fund No. 105/10, LAFD - SOBER Unit Account No. 10N931 to Fund No. 100/38 Fire Department Account No. 001010, entitled Salaries, General.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Approval of these recommendations will reallocate approved Innovation Fund monies between accounts and fiscal years for the Los Angeles Fire Department SOBER Unit. The LAFD is pursuing additional funding sources, including the City budget, to ensure sufficient funds are available on an ongoing basis should the pilot program prove to be successful.

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