

Implementing the Los Angeles Training Center Program at Camp Gonzales

In 2019, the Board of Supervisors recognized the sacrifice and dedication of the people who choose to fight our wildfires while incarcerated by passing a motion to examine what employment support could be provided to this population. The Board passed another motion to further this effort in 2020. The County of Los Angeles has relied on prison labor to fight our wildfires for too long, and the lack of meaningful career linkage after release from custody does nothing to prevent the cycle of incarceration. In response to this injustice, County stakeholders gathered to identify new career pathways, needed resources and services, and a plan to create a reentry job training program. As this work moves from planning to implementation, this motion is required to align the Board’s directives with the anticipated next steps. The creation of meaningful career pathways will advance the Board’s “Care First, Jails Last” priority by ensuring access to the services, education, income, and support necessary to succeed.

On August 6, 2019, the Board unanimously approved a motion from Supervisors Kuehl and Solis entitled “Exploring Reentry Employment Support for AB 109 Fire Camp

MOTION

SOLIS	_____
KUEHL	_____
HAHN	_____
BARGER	_____
MITCHELL	_____

Participants.” This motion directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to coordinate with stakeholders and report back about potential employment linkages for Fire Camp participants, facilities that could be used for a reentry job training program, and potential funding opportunities. That report back was submitted to the Board on March 13, 2020, right as the County was beginning to shut down from the pandemic.

To refocus the County on this fire camp project, the Board again unanimously passed another motion from Supervisors Kuehl and Solis, entitled “Implementing Reentry Support for AB 109 Fire Camp Participants” on September 29, 2020. This motion directed the development of robust career linkages, a reentry job training pilot proposal, an expungement process, and legislative advocacy.

The latest report to the Board was submitted on September 14, 2021. This update shared that County and State stakeholders, led by the Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative (ATI), created a Fire Camp Steering Committee to guide the development of the reentry job training program. This program, called the Los Angeles Training Center (LATC), will be piloted at Camp David Gonzales and serve up to 50 participants. This pilot site will focus on transition aged youth, aged 18-25 years old, who are justice and non-justice involved. Older State parolees and AB 109 probationers may be accepted into the program, if space and resources allow. The Steering Committee members continue to work in subcommittees on employment pathways, training curriculum, communications and outreach, recruitment, rehabilitation and other services, and infrastructure. The stakeholders continue to work towards opening the LATC to participants in 2022.

The report also details efforts to create employment linkages through the Fire

Department's Community, Outreach, Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion (CORDI) Unit; the Preparing Los Angeles for County Employment (PLACE) program; and the Worker Education and Resource Center (WERC). This includes linking Fire Camp participants to existing employment opportunities and creating new pathways, like the Career Development Intern program. Lastly, the report shares that the County successfully established the Assembly Bill 2147 expungement process to help with employment eligibility, and petitions have already been filed and granted by the Los Angeles Superior Court.

Since the last motion passed, new direction from the Board is required in response to significant changes. This motion aligns the Board's directives with the current state of the project and works to move the project forward. First, the motion must update project leadership. Judge Songhai Armstead was chosen to be the Executive Director of the Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative (ATI) in September 2020, and the ATI team has grown since then. ATI adopted this project, helping to coordinate the stakeholders and planning. Second, the Steering Committee developed the basic program outline, so now additional assistance is needed from the State, County Departments, and community stakeholders to move the project from plans to reality.

A new motion is also required in response to two environmental factors. First, the County is bracing for the next serious wildfire, but the County has fewer Fire Suppression Aids to support those efforts. Over the pandemic, the number of State Fire Camp crews dropped from 24 to 8 crews. This decrease was largely due to the impact of COVID-19 on the jails and State Prisons. The County has a responsibility to pay its

workers a fair wage, which means decreasing our reliance on prison labor. Second, the Board must ensure that people who reenter our community are set up to successfully obtain meaningful employment with a living wage in accordance with the Board's "Care First, Jails Last" priorities. This reentry job training program is one way that the County can help to break the cycle of incarceration and promote safe and healthy communities.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the included actions—the development of a proposed pilot reentry program for future consideration by the Board; various activities by the Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative (ATI) to develop a proposal for proposed construction and renovations at former Camp David Gonzales site for the proposed Los Angeles Training Center (LATC) implementation and exploration of potential funding and contracting option; and directives to ATI and various County departments to explore and report back on issues related to the proposed LATC as well as other fire camp issues—are not considered projects under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they are activities that are excluded from the definition of a project by Section 20165 of the California Public Resources Code and section 15378(b)(4) and (5) of the State CEQA Guidelines. These actions are administrative activities of government and include potential funding mechanisms or other fiscal activities of government that do not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in potentially significant impacts on the environment and will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. Except as noted in directive #2 below, before implementation of any activities that would be considered a project under CEQA

and that are not subject to a CEQA exemption, any such non-exempt project must be submitted to the Board for approval, along with appropriate CEQA recommendations. Upon the Board's approval of the actions herein, CEO will file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21152 and will post the Notice of Exemption to the County's website in accordance with Section 21092.2.

2. With respect to any of the activities included in directive #7 below that are hereby delegated to the Director of an identified Department to implement, if any such activities would be considered a project under CEQA, direct the involved Director, in consultation with County Counsel, to make applicable exemption findings before such activities are implemented. If any of the delegated activities would be considered a project, and are not exempt from CEQA, the involved Director is directed to submit such proposed project to the Board for approval, along with appropriate CEQA recommendations, before implementing such proposed project.
3. Direct the Executive Director of ~~the Alternatives to Incarceration Initiative (ATI)~~ to work with relevant County, State, and community stakeholders, as appropriate, to develop ~~and implement~~ a proposed pilot reentry job training fire camp program called the Los Angeles Training Center (LATC) at Camp David Gonzales with priority for transition aged youth with local, state, and federal justice system and/or foster care system involvement, as appropriate, and report back to the Board of Supervisors every 60 days.
4. ~~Direct the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Internal Services~~

Department (ISD), ~~to create a plan for construction and renovations at Camp Gonzales and report back in 30 days with the following:~~

- ~~a. An expedited timeline for construction that includes multiple phases based on the urgency of each project;~~
 - ~~b. A list of construction projects with estimated costs that is delineated based on whether the project is necessary prior to opening the facility, may be necessary in the future, or is cosmetic;~~
 - ~~c. A list of renovations that may be necessary based on age, a determination about whether that renovation is actually necessary at this time, and a date for when the renovation should be reassessed;~~
 - ~~d. An analysis about whether there is an opportunity for participants to learn a marketable trade with robust career linkage to assist with the construction projects at Camp Gonzales; and~~
 - ~~e. Any additional information about construction needs at Camp Gonzales.~~
5. Direct ATI to report back in 30 days with develop a budget for the proposed LATC, including that includes a per person cost, one-time costs, and ongoing costs, ~~to identify~~ and that identifies available funding that has been secured from the County and external sources, ~~and to report back in 60 days.~~
 6. Direct ATI, in consultation with the Probation Department (Probation) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to develop a proposed plan to transfer ownership/responsibility of Camp David Gonzales from Probation to an appropriate entity and report back in 60 days.
 7. Delegate contracting authority to CEO, in consultation with County Counsel, to

execute contracts as necessary to further the development and proposed implementation of the LATC.

8. Direct ATI to coordinate the work of the following departments and to submit one ~~quarterly~~ report every 60 days to the Board of Supervisors that includes proposed plans, charts, implementation updates, and additional information from the following departments:

- a. The Fire Department is directed to report back with a detailed chart showing all possible fire-related jobs that LATC participants could be eligible for with County, State, Federal, and private fire agencies, including:
 - i. The job titles and descriptions;
 - ii. The eligibility criteria;
 - iii. Information about the certifications or trainings required with the length of time required to complete the certifications/trainings, who can provide the certifications/trainings, and what would be required for the Fire Department to provide the trainings; and
 - iv. Any other useful information to help ATI determine which trainings should be proposed for ~~provided to~~ LATC participants to ensure linkage to quality employment.
- b. The Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services or the Economic and Workforce Development Department, as applicable, in consultation with the Fire Department's Community Outreach, Recruitment, Diversity, and Inclusion Section (CORDI) and the

Department of Human Resources (DHR), is directed to assist ATI in identifying alternative non-fire-related career paths for LATC participants, including job titles and requirements, training needs, and plans to connect LATC participants with available jobs, including the Preparing Los Angeles for County Employment (PLACE) program, and report back with updates and data about outreach activities and job connections.

- c. DHR ~~The Department of Human Resources~~ is directed to develop a proposed plan to identify and notify the LATC participants about open employment exams they could qualify for and, as part of the LATC Program, conduct trainings for participants on the County job application process.
- d. The Public Defender and Alternative Public Defender, with County Counsel and the District Attorney, are directed to report back on the implementation of AB 2147 in the County, including:
 - i. An estimate of the number of people eligible for expungement,
 - ii. The number of petitions filed and the status (granted, denied, or pending) of those petitions,
 - iii. Reasons why the petitions aren't granted,
 - iv. Recommendation or status updates from stakeholders about how we can link individuals with expunged records to employment opportunities,
 - v. A description of the current expungement process with estimated timelines, and

- vi. The status of the creation of the California Judicial Council's forms and procedures for AB 2147 petitions and how the Judicial Council's plans could impact our existing process.
- f. ~~The Probation Department~~ is directed to identify and provide appropriate staff support ~~re-assign two Deputy Probation Officers~~ to assist with the ~~screening, recruitment, and supervision of~~ Probation-involved LATC participants at the site.
- g. The Los Angeles County Office ~~Department~~ of Education is requested to develop a plan with an attached funding stream to assist proposed LATC participants with credit and school record recovery and a plan to provide LATC participants with access to classes for high school diplomas, General Education Development certificates, the Rising Scholars Network, and other college-level education opportunities.
- h. The Department of Public Social Services is directed to develop a plan to connect proposed LATC participants with available services, including healthcare, and provide implementation updates.
- i. ~~ATI, in consultation with DPW and ISD,~~ The Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Internal Services Department (ISD), in consultation with CEO, are directed to submit status updates about previously approved construction projects and renovations at Camp David Gonzales, including the extent to which they ~~that~~ are completed, in-progress, or not completed; the amount of money spent on construction projects; and the budget required for in-progress and proposed ~~not completed~~ projects delineated

by their necessity.

- j. The CEO-Legislative Affairs & Intergovernmental Relations (CEO-LAIR), in coordination with ATI, is directed to pursue a County-sponsored budget request for State funding in Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) for the proposed LATC, a joint partnership with the State to support firefighting training and employment opportunities to individuals facing barriers to employment, particularly for those previously incarcerated. Additionally, direct CEO-LAIR to continue to advocate for funding from the State to ensure that the Fire Department has adequate funding to maintain existing fire suppression and response activities on State Responsibility Areas and to carry out other existing functions of the County's Fire Camp Program.
9. We further move that the Board of Supervisors:
 - a. Direct ATI, in consultation with all impacted departments, to develop a proposed comprehensive site renovation and management plan and report back in writing within 45 days. The plan should include all proposed site improvements needed to implement LATC, as detailed below, and account for the long-term proprietorship, maintenance, and operation of LATC at Camp David Gonzales.
 - b. Direct DPW and ISD, in consultation with CEO Asset Management, to create a plan for proposed construction and renovations at Camp David Gonzales and report back in 30 days with the following:

- i. An expedited timeline for construction and renovations that includes multiple phases based on the urgency of each improvement;
- ii. A list of potential construction and renovations with estimated costs that is delineated based on whether the improvement is necessary prior to opening the facility, may be necessary in the future, or is cosmetic;
- iii. A list of proposed renovations that may be necessary based on age, a determination about whether that renovation is actually necessary at this time, and a date for when the renovation should be reassessed;
- iv. An analysis about whether there is an opportunity for LATC participants to learn a marketable trade with robust career linkage to assist with proposed construction and renovation projects at Camp David Gonzales; and
- v. Any additional information about potential improvements needed at Camp David Gonzales for the proposed LATC.