FORM GEN. 160

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: October 30, 2026

TO: The Honorable Members of the Budget and Finance Committee and the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Malaika Billups,
General Manager Personnel Department

SUBJECT: COUNCIL FILE NO. 26-1330

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Budget and Finance Committee and the Public Safety Committee support the financial and staffing resources requested in this report.

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to the Motion Presented by Councilwoman Traci Park and seconded by Councilwoman Imelda Padilla for the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), with the assistance of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), Personnel Department and other departments as necessary, to report to Council prior to November 3, 2026, with initial recommendations regarding a Measure FD Implementation and LAFD Expansion Plan, including:

1. Prioritization of investments that measurably increase operational capacity, and reduce emergency response times, including expanding sworn and civilian staffing, replacing aging apparatus, repairing and modernizing existing stations, constructing new stations in areas where most needed, strengthening air operations and wildland firefighting capabilities, and improving technology and communications systems. The report should speak to investments that can begin within 30, 60, 90, and 180 days, in addition to establishing priorities, timelines, funding requirements, and responsible departments for major projects and initiatives.
2. Identification of procurement and hiring barriers and strategies to accelerate delivery; and identifying available federal, State, regional, and other funding that can leverage Measure FD revenues.
3. An operational and workforce plan establishing a baseline of LAFD staffing, deployable personnel, apparatus and ambulance availability, facilities, response times, EMS demand, wildfire resources, and other measures of operational capacity; identification of gaps through recent Standards of Coverage analysis; hiring, training, retention and deployment targets to increase the number of firefighters, paramedics, civilian employees, dispatch personnel, mechanics, inspectors, pilots, and other personnel needed to expand operational capacity.
4. A capital and emergency preparedness plan prioritizing fire station construction and modernization, apparatus and vehicle replacement, fleet maintenance, EMS resources, wildfire preparedness, air operations, communications and technology, and other critical infrastructure and equipment, incorporating applicable after-action recommendations, including those from the January 2025 Pacific Palisades Fire.

5. An accountability and reporting framework establishing measurable goals for staffing, response times, EMS and apparatus availability, capital project delivery, wildfire preparedness, and other operational outcomes; maintaining a separate accounting of Measure FD revenues and expenditures to ensure compliance with maintenance-of-effort requirements; creating a publicly accessible implementation dashboard; and requiring quarterly Council reporting and periodic audits of Measure FD revenues and expenditures,

The Personnel Department provides the following report for the Budget and Finance Committee and the Public Safety Committee. This report provides an overview of the Personnel Department's ability to support Fire Department efforts to expand sworn and civilian staffing (Item 1) and identify hiring barriers and strategies to accelerate delivery (Item 2).

DISCUSSION

The Personnel Department (Personnel) manages the recruitment and selection of entry and promotional-level public safety employees to ensure that City departments have a sufficient pool of qualified and diverse public safety candidates from which to select. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 budget, and as a result of the establishment of the LAPD Hiring Division within the Personnel Department, resources dedicated to the recruitment and selection of LAFD's Firefighters, the promotional ranks for Firefighters, and civilians that directly support the Firefighters (i.e., Wildland Hand Crew Technicians) were significantly reduced. Consequently, the Personnel Department maintains a capacity deficit, impacting its ability to fulfill the current Fire Department hiring needs prior to the implementation of Measure FD. Please refer to the Public Safety Division Organizational Chart and Background Investigations Division Organizational Chart included in this document for a visualization of recent staff reductions in the Public Safety Bureau.

Since FY 2025-26, the Personnel Department and the LAFD have engaged in ongoing discussions aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- Increase the overall number of Firefighters hired.
- Recruit Firefighters possessing Paramedics licenses.
- Tentatively have additional Drill Towers in three to four years
- Develop a plan to hire lateral Firefighters from other agencies.
- Develop a plan to reinstate or restore former Firefighters to the eligible list.

In the event Personnel is required to accelerate and increase hiring and promotions of LAFD's Firefighters and civilians that directly support the Firefighters (i.e., Wildland Hand Crew Technicians), it would be necessary to increase its staffing and funding in the sections that support these functions. Given that the average timeframe for hiring new personnel is approximately six to eight months, Personnel recommends that any benchmarks for increasing LAFD staffing levels be established at a minimum of six to eight months after the necessary hiring resources have been allocated to the Personnel Department. The Department is committed to continuing to refine existing examination processes to reduce the timeline between the job bulletin opening and the establishment of the eligible list, but will require appropriate supportive resources to make the desired impact. Should entry-level firefighter hiring expand to or beyond 200 recruits per Fiscal Year, the Personnel Department also anticipates an increased demand for leadership roles, thereby necessitating a greater frequency of promotional

examinations, as well as civilian supporting roles.

The Public Safety Division (PSD) manages the recruitment and civil service examinations of firefighters, the promotional ranks for firefighters, and civilians that directly support the firefighters. The Background Investigations Division (BID) is responsible for conducting timely and thorough background investigations for firefighters. To ensure the Department is prepared for this projected workload, it requires the following resources.

Public Safety Division

With respect to LAFD, Personnel's Public Safety Division (PSD) handles recruitment and all aspects of the civil service examinations for Firefighters, internal promotional ranks, and civilian classifications that provide direct operational support.

Firefighter Selection Unit

- One (1) Senior Personnel Analyst I to supervise the Firefighter exam analysts and LAFD sworn promotional exams.
- Two (2) Personnel Research Analyst Is to administer the Firefighter exam, fire promotion exams, restoration and reinstatement requests, as well as certification.
- One (1) Chief Clerk Personnel to manage the administrative support team dedicated for Firefighter and LAFD's public safety civil service examinations. The incumbent will assist primarily with all of the administrative responsibilities associated with the Firefighter exam, including scheduling and preparing materials for interviews, schedule medical appointments, prepare documents for reinstatement and restorations, and provide customer service for Firefighter candidates.
- $56,000* increase of as-needed funds:
    - $26,000 for one Clerk to provide customer service for the Firefighter candidates.
    - $30,000 of as-needed funds for Interview Specialists. Interview Specialists are necessary for Firefighter interviews. Hiring additional Interview Specialists would reduce the need for LAFD to provide additional Fire Captains to serve as interview raters and may help reduce sworn overtime expenditures.
    - * The cost of As-needed funds will increase if future examinations are conducted in-person, which will cause the need of Proctors and Senior Proctors.

Background Investigations Division

The Background Investigations Division (BID) is responsible for conducting timely and thorough background investigations for public safety positions. These investigations are an integral component to ensuring the community is served by highly qualified police, fire and public safety personnel.

To support the Fire Department's goal to hire 200 recruits each Fiscal Year, BID requires a structural and staffing expansion to manage the increased processing volume. Delivering 250 certified candidates (comprising the 200 recruits plus a 50 candidate operational buffer) necessitates investigating a substantially broader applicant pool to offset standard attrition throughout the hiring pipeline.

As academy seating grows, our investigative capacity must scale proportionally within the same timeframe. To ensure 200 drill tower seats are definitively filled, BID must complete approximately

600 to 700 background investigations each year.

Timing and Implementation

The background investigation process for each drill tower needs to begin approximately 4 to 5 months before the drill tower start date. Because we also need time to recruit, hire, and train the additional investigators and support staff, the positions need to be approved and begin well in advance of the first drill tower with increased cadets. Waiting until the increased workload is already here will put us in a position where we do not have enough staff to complete the investigations within the required timeframe.

Additionally, we will need to supplement permanent staffing with As-Needed employees. As-needed resources provide operational flexibility to respond to surges in candidate volume without requiring the establishment of additional permanent positions.

BID currently operates with six full-time and one part-time Background Investigators. Based on standard monthly targets, four background investigation files per full-time investigator and two per part-time investigator, the team has a maximum capacity of 312 background investigations annually. However, as background investigations are required for other public safety positions, staff must split their caseloads, which further reduces the capacity available for firefighter candidates. This distribution fluctuates based on the specific needs of other hiring departments, typically impacting the Division's overall workload two to three times per year and further reducing the capacity available to complete background investigations for firefighter candidates.

Positions Requested

Based on the current projections, we are requesting an increase of 13 positions:

- One (1) Background Investigator II lead to assign and coordinate investigative work assignments, oversee the quality of staff work, and communicate with LAFD about candidates in the process.
- Eight (8) Background Investigator Is to conduct field investigations and compile objective reports regarding background investigation findings.
- One (1) Senior Personnel Analyst I to supervise professional and administrative support staff.
- One (1) Personnel Analyst to review completed background investigations.
- Two (2) Administrative Clerks responsible for fingerprinting candidates that received conditional job offers from LAFD and preparing necessary correspondence.
- $289,000 in As-Needed Funding as workload demands fluctuate across recruitment cycles:
  - $185,000 for 5 Background Investigators
  - $104,000 for 4 Clerks

Authorizing these allocations will ensure the Background Investigations Division can scale operations appropriately and prevent processing bottlenecks from delaying the Fire Department's critical hiring objectives.

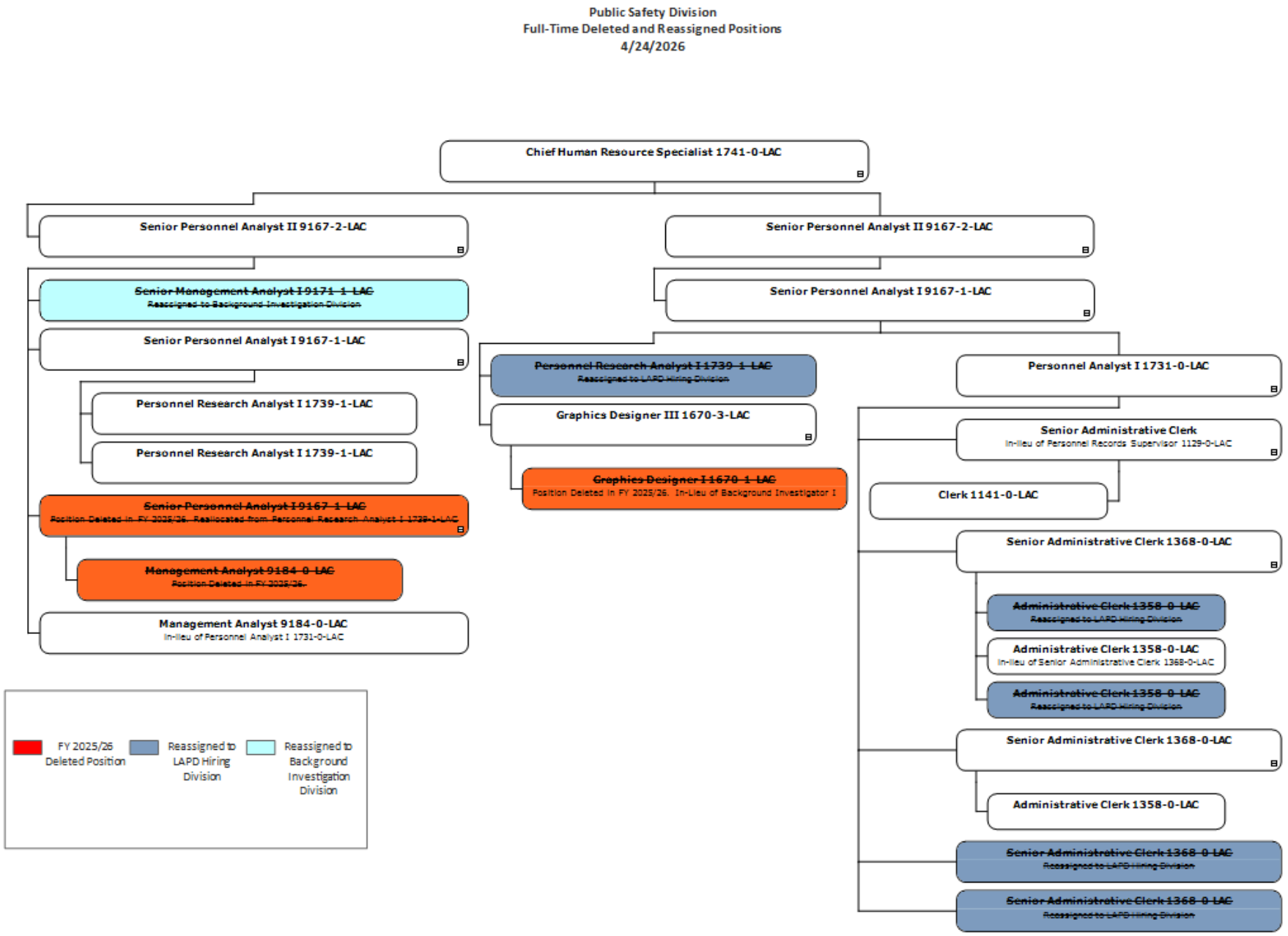
The as-needed funding is necessary, as coupled with permanent positions to avoid cascading operational disruptions, including:

- The staffing deficit will cause bottlenecks and delay critical LAFD hiring objectives.
- Without the requested As-Needed funding, BID will lack the operational flexibility necessary to maintain continuous candidate processing during routine staff absences, such as holidays and scheduled employee time off.
- LAFD may not be able to fill Drill Towers.

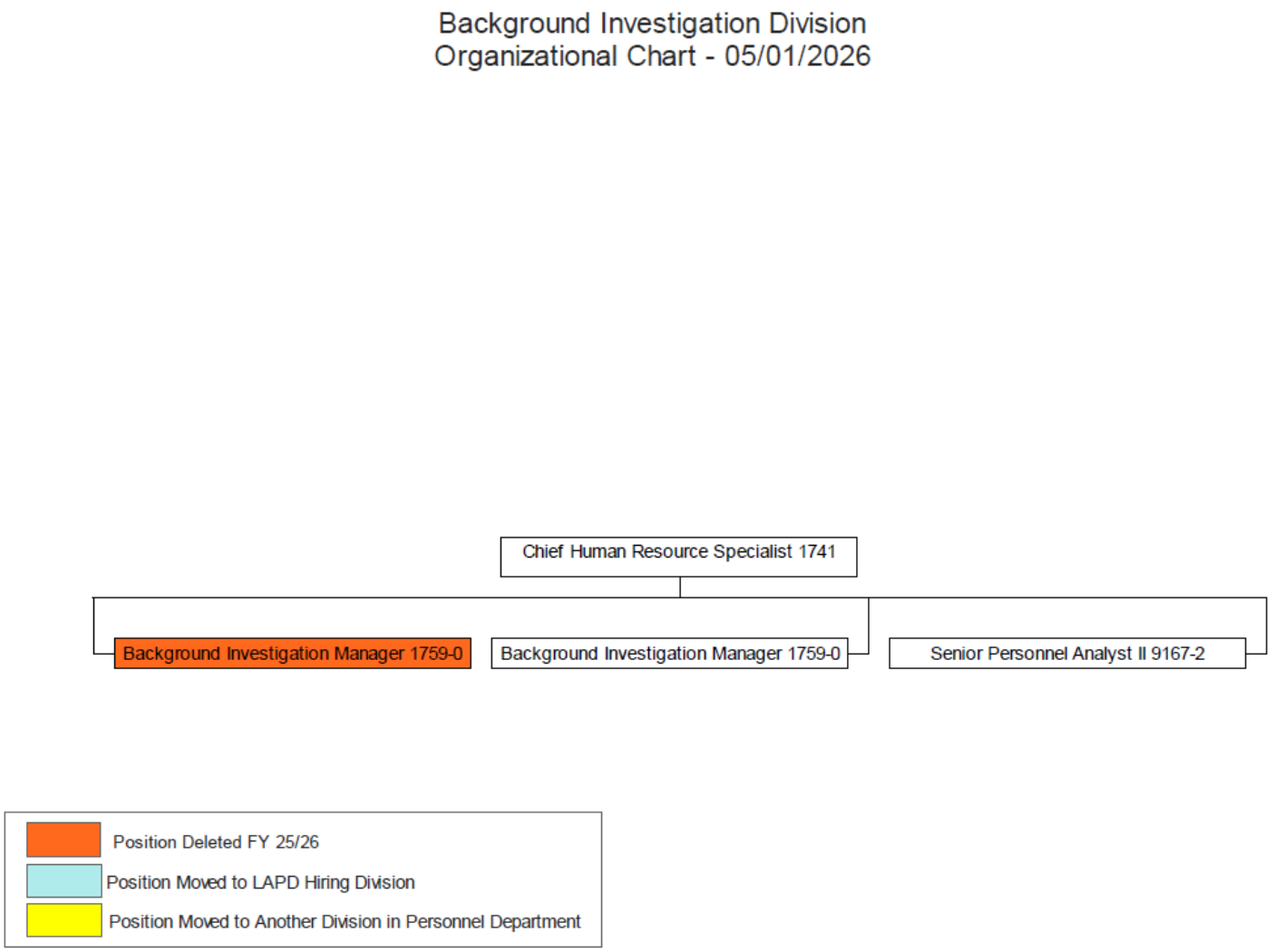
Conclusion

To meet greater hiring goals, the department's resources must increase along with them. Providing the necessary staffing and funding ensures we can smoothly process candidates and keep drill towers fully seated. Ultimately, to achieve larger recruitment targets, we recommend that the City fully resource the infrastructure required to deliver those results.

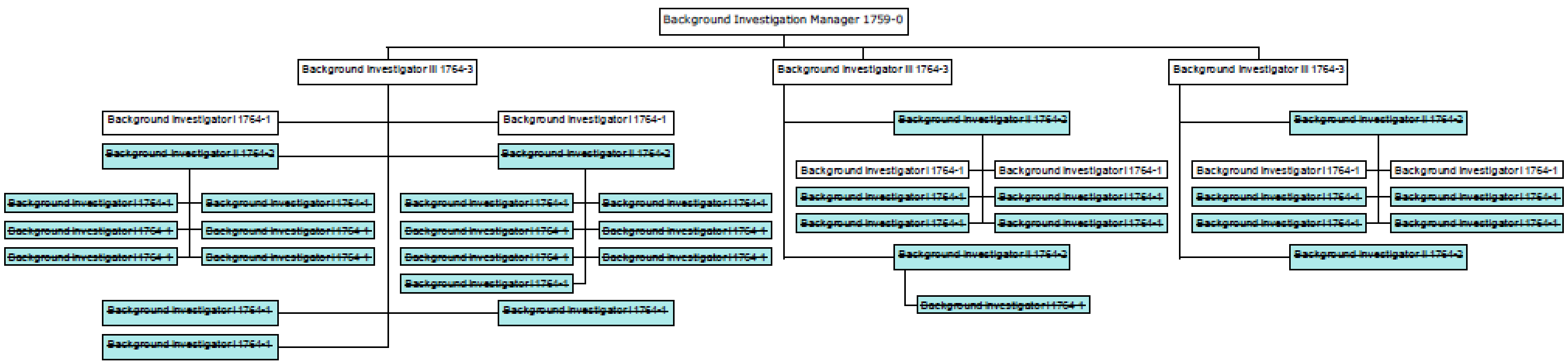
Public Safety Division Organizational Chart



Background Investigations Division Organizational Chart



Background Investigation Division
Investigation Services Section
Organizational Chart - 05/01/2026



Position Deleted FY 25/26
Position Moved to LAPD Hiring Division
Position Moved to Another Division in Personnel Department