

# FCTC THE ADVANTAGE



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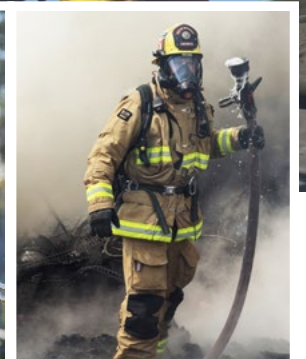
## 6 YEARS AND COUNTING

*Riverside FD partners with FCTC*

**IN 2016, THE RIVERSIDE FIRE**

Department became one of the first fire agencies to utilize FCTC’s Statewide Eligibility List (SEL). Since partnering with FCTC, the Riverside FD has hired over 80 recruits. “Knowing FCTC was a product of Cal-JAC made it an easy decision to give it a try. We have met with great success since partnering with FCTC. The quality, diversity, and retention of recruits we have hired has been outstanding,” commented Riverside Division Chief Steve White.

Labor was also on board. “Local 1067 has been in support of our department utilizing FCTC since its inception. Not only do we benefit from the pre-employment testing aspect but also for their ability to reach thousands of candidates through their database, website, and social media. Their in-house studio, Firestar Studios, and print shop, Firefighters Print and Design, create professional video content and high-end graphics. This, coupled with the impressive outreach effort and effective messaging of their Communications and Recruitment Departments, is something every fire department in



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*Steve White, Riverside Division Chief*

California should be grateful for,” said Local 1067 President Tim Strack.

When it comes to hiring, the importance of the Human Relations Department cannot be understated. The amount of work involved preparing for and implementing recruitment periods is tremendous. Senior Human Resources Analyst Adriana Simon has worked for Riverside FD for nearly seven years and has worked with FCTC

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for every recruitment cycle since 2016. “I couldn’t be more pleased with the responsiveness of the staff and the ease of the process. Having FCTC administer the physical ability test, written exam and then verify every applicant’s eligibility is a tremendous help. Matching our applicant list with the SEL and providing us with candidate information is a huge time saver. I’ve been very impressed with how prepared the firefighter applicants from FCTC’s SEL are. It truly is a pleasure to work with FCTC staff,” said Adriana.

A successful working relationship going back many years is extremely

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**Adriana Simon**, *Senior Human Resources Analyst*

valuable. Riverside FD and FCTC’s partnership has proven fruitful time and time again. “FCTC appreciates the open communication and support of Riverside FD personnel

and are happy we are serving their department in a way that is positive for them as well as their recruits,” commented FCTC Program Director Mitch De Anda.



## CAL-JAC EMT AND PARAMEDIC PRE-APPRENTICESHIP ACADEMIES FILLING A NEED

The Cal-JAC Pre-Apprenticeship Academies were developed with funds from the State of California to provide a pathway into the fire service for underrepresented communities and to help fill a gap for fire departments in dire need of personnel. The program is entirely free and prepares individuals physically, mentally, and academically to be successful as a Firefighter EMT or Paramedic.

- EMT or Paramedic Course
- Introduction to Paramilitary Culture
- Mentorship
- Study Sessions
- Hands-On Learning
- Physical Fitness Training
- Interviewing Skills Training
- FCTC Written Test Preparation and Exam
- CPAT Orientation, Practice and Test



Cal-JAC has held three Pre-Apprenticeship EMT Academies since 2018 and is hosting its first Pre-Apprenticeship Paramedic Academy in Sacramento starting January of 2023. Cal-JAC’s grant will cover two more EMT and Paramedic Academies in 2023 and 2024. “These Pre-Apprenticeship Academies are connecting individuals who would not otherwise have an avenue to pursue a career in the fire service and, through a supportive but rigorous 6-month program, ensure they meet the standards necessary to excel in the fire service,” said Cal-JAC Executive Director Yvonne de la Peña.

# CHANGES IN RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES DON'T NEED TO BE DIFFICULT

**HIRING CHALLENGES** have been felt across all industries, including the fire service. Hiring qualified EMT's and Paramedics has become difficult in recent years. As many fire agencies struggle to hire qualified candidates and create access for underrepresented groups, hiring agencies are finding it is imperative to make internal and external changes.

"New challenges can be reframed as new opportunities to try innovative approaches and critically examine the way traditional hiring practices have been approached," said Cal-JAC Recruitment Director, Jeanette Plascencia. When considering making meaningful changes you may find yourself with more questions than answers. For instance, how does a person go about making changes in an organization? Can one person make meaningful changes? Whose responsibility is it to make changes? Does the organization need a consultant to help drive change? Will change cost money? Will people support change? All these questions inevitably make creating change seem like a daunting task, but Cal-JAC and FCTC believe it is not only possible but that getting started does not need to be difficult. Every environment is different, and therefore changes will need to be specific to that department's needs and goals.

**"New challenges can be reframed as new opportunities to try innovative approaches and critically examine the way traditional hiring practices have been approached."**

**Jeanette Plascencia**  
Cal-JAC Recruitment Director

## IDENTIFY AND BUILD METRICS FOR THE COMMUNITY YOU ARE SEEKING TO ENGAGE

By identifying a specific community, you are better able to make changes that are impactful to that community. For example, by identifying Asian women as a community you want to engage, you can research, connect with organizations working with Asian women and most importantly, seek the advice of Asian women to create tailored changes to your recruitment efforts.

There will never be a perfect time, sufficient resources, or support

to make meaningful changes so why not start now? As you begin or continue your journey to develop an inclusive recruitment process, know that you can count on Cal-JAC and FCTC. At Cal-JAC, we support fire agencies by providing resources, events, and workshops centered on best practices that are pragmatic and evidence-based.

## FOCUS ON YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

While it is true that transformational change can start from the top down, change can begin from any place in the organization. You can make slight changes in areas you do have control over, knowing that structural changes don't always start as structural changes. For example, if you are helping to drive social media content, make sure the images you post are culturally relevant and appropriate to the communities you hope to engage.

## START SMALL AND KEEP IT SIMPLE

At times it may feel as if to make any real Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) impact, you must

develop a 20, 40, or even 60-page strategic plan that will make all the necessary changes. Feel free to get started on a strategic plan but do not wait on the plan to implement easier changes. Waiting for a strategic plan may make even the most enthusiastic person lose interest or feel overwhelmed about the process. Remember that minor changes help build momentum for larger changes. For example, you don't need a strategic plan to add "preferred name" to your application or include the opportunity for a person to share their gender pronouns.



Cal-JAC Recruitment Director Jeanette Plascencia has an extensive background in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategy, as well as recruitment and retention of individuals from underrepresented communities. She is passionate about supporting individuals and organizations to transform into a more fair and inclusive society for all. She uses an intersectional-identity framework and approaches her work with a sense of humility. Jeanette can be reached at [jlascencia@cpf.org](mailto:jlascencia@cpf.org).



# FIREFIGHTER CAREER EXPOS ARE BACK!

October was an exciting month for Cal-JAC and FCTC, as it marked the return of our first Firefighter Career Expos since the start of the pandemic. The highly anticipated expos held in October at FCTC South El Monte and FCTC Livermore, are our most popular recruitment events and drew well over 20 fire agencies who were able to engage with over 300 individuals interested in the fire service. Family members were welcome to attend and left the event with a better understanding of the road ahead for their future firefighter.

In addition to engaging with fire agencies on a personal level, attendees were able to learn what a day in the life of a firefighter looks like, get hands-on experience with CPAT's eight (8) physical ability events, receive advice from CPAT proctors on how they can improve, and enjoy a barbeque lunch hosted by Los Angeles County Firefighters Local 1014 and Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters, Local 1974.

## DIGITAL OUTREACH

To increase outreach efforts, we launched a social media campaign targeting the audience that follows and interacts with Becoming a Firefighter's profiles across multiple platforms. This allowed us to get more targeted information to a group of people that are interested in pursuing a career in the fire service. Participating departments also shared our posts on their channels to help spread the word. In addition to regular posts, targeted ads on social media also extended the reach of the events to a wider audience.

Along with digital outreach, email blasts with information and registration links were sent to firefighter candidates in the FCTC database, who were encouraged to forward the email to interested peers.

## LIVESTREAM IMPACT

A new feature of the 2022 Expo was the ability of our production company, Firestar Studios, to livestream



the events on the Becoming a Firefighter YouTube channel. Firestar has been documenting career expos since their inception and now, by launching a companion livestream during expos, candidates who were unable to attend could still gain valuable insight from departments, learn about the CPAT course, and get tips from proctors.

Livestreaming expos is not a replacement for the in-person experience. Rather, this platform helps break down barriers for persons unable to attend by providing valuable information, including interviews with fire department recruiters, candidates, and Cal-JAC recruitment personnel. For participating departments, the livestream served



**“Livestreaming these events is a crucial step in creating more access to the fire service.”**

**Yvonne de la Peña**  
*Cal-JAC Executive Director*

a dual purpose of introducing their department to new candidates and discussing upcoming recruitment opportunities. Meanwhile, candidates interviewed during the livestream shared peer-to-peer advice and passed along wisdom from recruiters at the event.

“Livestreaming these events is a crucial step in creating more access to the fire service. There are many

reasons why someone may not be able to attend a career expo and by livestreaming the event, we are hoping to not only share this valuable information but also let people know that Cal-JAC and fire agencies want to support them on their path,” commented Cal-JAC Executive Director, Yvonne de la Peña.

Given the success of the livestream in accomplishing its mission as a com-

plement to the in-person event it is currently being released in segments on [youtube.com/@BecomingaFF](https://www.youtube.com/@BecomingaFF).

### SUMMER 2023 EXPOS

The next Career Expos will be this Spring at FCTC Livermore and FCTC San Diego County, our brand-new site. Don't miss this opportunity to highlight your department and meet with hundreds of candidates seeking a job in the fire service.



## FIRESTAR STUDIOS

**FIRESTAR STUDIOS, IN CONCERT WITH CAL-JAC'S RECRUITMENT DEPARTMENT**, developed new methods for recruitment outreach when the pandemic hit, which led to Firestar providing in-studio and remote livestream services to Cal-JAC starting in 2020. What began as a quick fix to keep candidates and departments connected during the pandemic, has transformed into a completely new line of services from Firestar Studios.

What started with Cal-JAC's flagship livestream event, "Recruitment in the Spotlight," that provided departments an opportunity to promote themselves and answer questions from candidates, has quickly grown into a full package of new services. Firestar Studios can provide livestreaming and studio services for departments regardless of size and budget.

Firestar Studios will continue investing in livestreaming, with the opening of its state-of-the-art studio space located at Cal-JAC headquarters. This multi-camera studio space is scheduled to be completed in early 2023 with all the tools, tech, and expertise to help departments reach their recruitment goals.

Contact Firestar Studios for a complimentary media coaching session and studio tour at Cal-JAC headquarters in Sacramento.  
[FirestarStudios.net](https://www.firestarstudios.net)



# USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO FIND YOUR NEXT RECRUIT

*FCTC's social media presence continues to grow*

**FCTC AND OUR COMMUNICATIONS TEAM**, in collaboration with our video studio, Firestar Studios, utilize innovative strategies to provide candidates with information and inspiration at all stages of their journey to the fire service, under the handle @BecomingAFF. These include tips, resources, hiring announcements, and live online video content across multiple platforms for candidates to interact with firefighters and departments across the state.

FCTC encourages hiring agencies, candidates, mentors, family, and friends to share and repost our content to their social media outlets, where they can further promote opportunities into the fire service to interested candidates.

Departments recruiting from the Statewide Eligibility List (SEL) get custom, eye-catching graphics made by Firefighters Print and Design. High-performing hiring graphics reached over 10,000 accounts on Facebook and were shared hundreds of times across Instagram and Facebook. The "Now Hiring" link on @BecomingAFF's Instagram page has been clicked over 5,000 times!

Your next recruit might already have their eye on our content. Follow us today @BecomingAFF on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and at youtube.com/@BecomingAFF, and help spread the word by sharing our content.

High-performing hiring graphics reached over 10,000 accounts on Facebook and were shared hundreds of times across Instagram and Facebook.



## OPENING IN 2023 FCTC SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Cal-JAC and FCTC are pleased to announce the opening of our brand-new, San Diego County facility in mid-2023. Located in Carlsbad, this site will be multifunctional and, in addition to hosting regular CPAT and FCTC Written Test events, will offer meeting space for our fire agencies and local unions. Ultimately,

we hope for this facility to become a hub for firefighter pre-employment testing and recruitment in the region. "This has been a long time coming and we are thrilled to have another permanent site in Southern California that will allow us to better support our departments and locals," said Cal-JAC Executive Director Yvonne de la Peña.

"FCTC San Diego County will offer a permanent solution to the need for CPAT and FCTC Written Testing in the San Diego region. We are very grateful to Miramar College for allowing us to hold CPAT events at their Academy site for the last six years and for their support of our decision to obtain a permanent site," added FCTC Program Director Mitch De Anda.



Firefighter/Paramedic Hannah Barnett-Powell has found a career and a home with Gilroy FD.



# FROM RESERVE TO FIREFIGHTER/PARAMEDIC

*Hannah Barnett-Powell finds a home with Gilroy Fire Department*

**H**annah Barnett-Powell wasn't sure where she would end up when she started out as a Fire Explorer in her hometown, but her positive experience led her to become an EMT and eventually a paramedic. "I had kept ties with the fire department I had volunteered with over the years, and I couldn't bear to give that part of my life up, so I decided to set my sights on a career as a firefighter," said Hannah.

With a goal in place, Hannah was up for the challenge and was intrigued by the endless learning opportunities that firefighters are given. Her experience, physical strength, endurance, and her cognitive skill set easily transitioned to her successfully passing the CPAT and the FCTC Written Exam, and

**"I've experienced many unique challenges, especially as a female, but one of the reasons I enjoy working for Gilroy Fire is the incredibly supportive environment."**

**Hannah Barnett-Powell**  
*Gilroy Firefighter/Paramedic*

being placed on the FCTC Statewide Eligibility List (SEL).

"FCTC made looking for job openings a simple process to see who was hiring and what the requirements were," said Hannah. She began applying to various departments, but it was the Gilroy

Fire Department that stood out. "I liked the volume and types of calls, as well as the exceptional reputation of the fire department personnel," commented Hannah.

She ultimately was hired by the Gilroy Fire Department in 2019 from FCTC's SEL. "When I inter-

viewed Hannah, I knew right away she had the heart and all the qualities we look for in our firefighters. Hannah is an excellent firefighter/paramedic and has become an integral part of our department. We're lucky to have her," said Gilroy Fire Chief Jim Wyatt. "Hannah has a service heart for EMS, and the work ethic necessary for this profession. She has been an amazing asset to our organization," added Gilroy Local 2805 President Sean Hayes II.

When Hannah was asked what struggles she faced while becoming a firefighter, she explained, "I've experienced many unique challenges, especially as a female, but one of the reasons I enjoy working for Gilroy Fire is the incredibly supportive environment. I've never regretted my choice. This is home."

# FCTC THE ADVANTAGE

## INTERESTED IN UTILIZING FCTC?

Contact FCTC Program Director **Mitch De Anda**  
madeanda@cpf.org • (916) 648-1717

## FCTC SITES

**San Diego County**, Opening 2023  
6114 Innovation Way  
Carlsbad, CA 92009

**Livermore**  
526 Commerce Way  
Livermore, CA 94551

**Sacramento**  
2560 River Plaza Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95833

**South El Monte**  
10316 E. Rush Street  
South El Monte, CA 91733

## HEADQUARTERS

1780 Creekside Oaks Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
(877) 648-2728 • [fctc@cpf.org](mailto:fctc@cpf.org)

## QUICK LINKS

FCTC Website [fctconline.org](http://fctconline.org)  
Cal-JAC Website [caljac.org](http://caljac.org)

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Becoming a FF YouTube Channel [youtube.com/@BecomingaFF](https://www.youtube.com/@BecomingaFF)

Facebook [facebook.com/BecomingaFF](https://www.facebook.com/BecomingaFF)

Instagram [instagram.com/BecomingaFF](https://www.instagram.com/BecomingaFF)

Twitter [twitter.com/BecomingaFF](https://twitter.com/BecomingaFF)

TikTok [tiktok.com/@becomingaff](https://www.tiktok.com/@becomingaff)

# FCTC FINANCIAL AID AWARDS

*Helping to eliminate obstacles on  
the road to becoming a firefighter*

**EVERY PERSON SHOULD** have an equal opportunity to pursue a career in the fire service, regardless of financial circumstances. For over two decades, the California Fire Foundation (CFF) has been providing financial assistance to candidates taking their first steps towards serving their communities as firefighters.

“The Financial Aid Award offsets the costs of entry-level requirements, allowing candidates to focus on what really matters: their education and preparation. FCTC has been focusing on increasing the visibility of the award to expand testing access to the candidates who need it most,” commented FCTC Program Director Mitch De Anda.

One such recipient commented on the impact the program has had on his pursuit of becoming a firefighter. “During high school, I considered sports as an outlet to escape reality and focus on me. The late-night practices or long trips to play games gave me a place to go after school and kept me off the streets. Throughout this time, I was fortunate to have a lot of support from teachers, coaches, administrators, and even custodians. That is one key example of why I first got into the fire service; it would give me the same opportunity to help others just like so many helped me. As a kid I always looked up to and admired firefighters. I never knew this could be a career, much less my career. I know now what I want to be and that is a full-time firefighter. This Financial Aid Award is helping me get one step closer to my goal,” he adds.

FCTC Program Director Mitch De Anda continued, “Through more robust social media marketing, we have seen a 10% increase in program usage. We look forward to our continued work with the California Fire Foundation to provide this opportunity to our candidates for many years to come.”



For more information  
about the FCTC Financial Aid  
Award Program, please click  
the QR code below.



## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CPAT PROCTOR?

Proctoring for FCTC is a great way to continue giving back to your community by helping the firefighters of tomorrow make their way through the pre-employment process. Enjoying the camaraderie with your fellow proctors and admin staff, you can make a difference in the lives of candidates who are just starting down the path of this rewarding career. Interested? Please email FCTC at [fctc@cpf.org](mailto:fctc@cpf.org).

