



LEARNING INSTITUTE FOR FLIGHT TECHNOLOGY (LIFT) MOU

COUNCILMEMBER ROBILLARD, WARD 3

City Council

January 27, 2026

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BACKGROUND

- Southern California has a rich aviation legacy, with Riverside Airport serving as a hub for training and general aviation.
- Local aviation programs include flight schools, CBU's Boeing 727 lab, and FAA STEM initiatives.
- Nationwide workforce gaps:
 - **Air Traffic Controllers:** FAA reports projected need for 8,900 new controllers by 2028
 - **Aviation Technicians & Mechanics:** FAA reports projected shortage of 10-20% by 2028
 - **Pilots:** Tens of thousands retiring over next decade; projected shortage of ~24,000 by 2026.
- Workforce gaps impact operational efficiency, safety, and regional economic growth.



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OBJECTIVE

- Establish a collaborative framework between City and educational institutions.
- Explore opportunities to align education with aviation and aerospace workforce needs.
- Facilitate dialogue, planning, and evaluation for the Learning Institute for Flight Technology (LIFT) Initiative through 2027.
- Support career awareness, skill development, and workforce readiness in aviation and related fields.
- Future phases will include industry partners to strengthen workforce alignment and program opportunities.



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OVERVIEW

- **Partners:** Riverside USD, Riverside City College, CBU, UCR
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Workforce development & economic opportunity
 - Integration of advanced aviation technology
 - Economic & community alignment
 - Educational alignment & knowledge sharing
- **Non-binding collaboration:** MOUs enable information-sharing and exploratory planning, without committing to funding or operations at this stage.
- **Next steps:** Engage industry partners as we refine program goals and pathways.



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KEY BENEFITS

- Addresses national workforce shortages in pilots, controllers, and technicians.
- Builds early awareness and career pipelines for students in aviation and aerospace.
- Supports regional workforce readiness and long-term economic growth.
- Strengthens collaboration between City, schools, and higher education institutions.
- Informs future programs and workforce strategies aligned with FAA priorities and industry needs.
- Sets the foundation for industry partnerships, connecting education to real-world opportunities.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Riverside and Riverside Unified School District, Riverside City College, California Baptist University, and University of California, Riverside, to explore partnership opportunities to establish the Learning Institute for Flight Technology (LIFT) through June 30, 2027; and
- Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute the Memorandum of Understanding with the Riverside Unified School District, Alvord Unified School District, Riverside City College, California Baptist University, and University of California, Riverside, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

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