



**APRIL - JUNE**

**Q2.2021  
REPORT**

**A NEW APPROACH TO  
COMMUNITY  
SAFETY  
AND WELLNESS**

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This report was developed with the support of the LEAD Proof of Concept Project



**NATIONAL SUPPORT BUREAU**

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Thank you for taking the time to learn about PAD's impact in the second quarter of 2021. In this report, you will find updates on how many community calls we responded to through our partnership with ATL311, how many people we successfully diverted from jail by providing an immediate alternative to law enforcement, and what kind of support we provided to the participants we work with each day.

As of the end of June, we completed our citywide expansion – meeting our goal of making community referrals and law enforcement diversions available to anyone in the City of Atlanta. Now, the real work begins: that of successfully integrating this new approach to community safety and wellness into every Atlanta community. In the months ahead, we will continue to refine our processes to respond to new opportunities, unexpected challenges, and increased demand.

There are several key ways that we use data to guide us in this learning process, which are highlighted in this report. First, we ask community. In addition to participating in community meetings, events, and conversations, we also conduct community surveys; see pages 18-21 for the results and key takeaways from our most recent community survey.

Second, we use system-level data. As mentioned on page 14, beginning in July 2021 we will analyze Atlanta Police Department arrest data on a monthly basis to identify arrest trends and advocate for the increased use of diversion.

As we apply what we learn, we also want to share these lessons with the broader community. There is not a more critical time to do so. During this time of heightened public debate about crime and criminal justice reform, many community members have asked us what we believe would increase public safety in Atlanta. So on pages 22-25, we share our recommendations – not as an intellectual exercise but as a call to action.

We hope you will join us in uplifting holistic, creative, and evidence-based solutions that advance safety for all.

With Gratitude,



**MOKI MACIAS**  
Executive Director





## OVERVIEW

The Policing Alternatives & Diversion Initiative (PAD) fosters a new approach to community safety and wellness by responding to community concerns and addressing people's needs with dignity, patience, and care.

## THE CHALLENGE

Our current systems fail to provide care and support for those who need it the most. Instead, local and state governments criminalize their survival activities and use police intervention as the primary response to social issues of substance use, mental health challenges, and homelessness.

## OUR MISSION

We work to reduce the arrest and incarceration of people experiencing extreme poverty, problematic substance use, and/or unmet mental health needs. We promote a new approach to community safety and wellness by reducing police involvement in quality of life concerns and by increasing the accessibility of supportive services in Atlanta and Fulton County.

## OUR VISION

We strive to improve the community so that it is safer, stronger, and more welcoming for everyone. We believe that all people should have what they need to thrive and that all people should be able to make the best choices for themselves. When harms do occur, they should be met with honest assessment as well as care and compassion for all parties to foster accountability and healing.

## OUR APPROACH



PAD provides a more effective response to community concerns by using a three-part approach rooted in dignity and care.

1

### RESPOND TO COMMUNITY CALLS FOR SERVICE

PAD 311 Community Referral Services is a partnership of PAD and the City of Atlanta. People can call ATL311, the City's non-emergency services line, to request support to address concerns related to mental health challenges, substance use, or extreme poverty. After receiving the referral, PAD sends a Harm Reduction team to meet the individual, talk with them about their needs, and provide ongoing support.

2

### PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE ALTERNATIVE TO ARREST

Through PAD's Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program (LEAD), police officers have the option to divert individuals away from arrest for concerns related to mental health challenges, substance use, or extreme poverty. Rather than relying on the criminal legal system, PAD connects with individuals, works with them to identify their needs and priorities, and provides ongoing case management to support their progress.

3

### DIRECT SERVICES & CARE NAVIGATION

PAD conducts an assessment with all referred individuals to help connect each person to resources and support. Those with more extensive needs are enrolled as participants in PAD's Care Navigation. We provide them with direct services including housing and food assistance as well as support in reducing the barriers they face.

# EXPANSION ACROSS ATLANTA

In June 2021, PAD successfully expanded community referral and diversion services citywide to provide immediate alternatives to arrest for individuals who cause concerns related to substance use, mental health, or extreme poverty.

## PAD 311 COMMUNITY REFERRAL SERVICES

City of Atlanta residents in all neighborhoods may now use the ATL311 non-emergency services line to request assistance for individuals with concerns related to mental health, substance use, or extreme poverty.

### MAKE A REFERRAL TO PAD

**311** **7am–7pm**  
**MONDAY–FRIDAY**

## LEAD DIVERSION SERVICES

Atlanta Police Department officers in all zones may now divert individuals to PAD instead of jail if the officer determines that the unlawful behavior is related to extreme poverty or an unmet behavioral health need.

**NOW AVAILABLE IN ALL NEIGHBORHOODS!**





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**REPORT**

# OUR IMPACT

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## PAD COMMUNITY 311 REFERRAL SERVICES

Available Monday–Friday,  
7am–7pm anywhere in Atlanta.

Anyone in Atlanta can now call ATL311 to request a response to individuals whose problematic or unlawful behavior may stem from unmet mental health needs, substance use, or extreme poverty. In turn, ATL311 immediately sends each referral to PAD, where our teams determine if the situation requires an immediate response (prompt engagement within 30 minutes) or an outreach response (scheduled engagement within 72 hours). PAD then dispatches a two-person Harm Reduction team to meet with the individual, offer immediate assistance, and connect them to resources. Individuals who need a higher level of care have the option to connect to one of our Care Navigators for ongoing case management and direct services.

## RESPONSE STATISTICS

216

Referral requests through  
ATL311 (excludes duplicate calls)

181

Callers referred  
someone else

35

Callers requested  
assistance for themselves

104

Referrals designated as  
immediate request

18mins

Average immediate  
response time

94%

Immediate requests responded  
to within 30 minutes

66

Referrals designated as an  
outreach request

6hrs

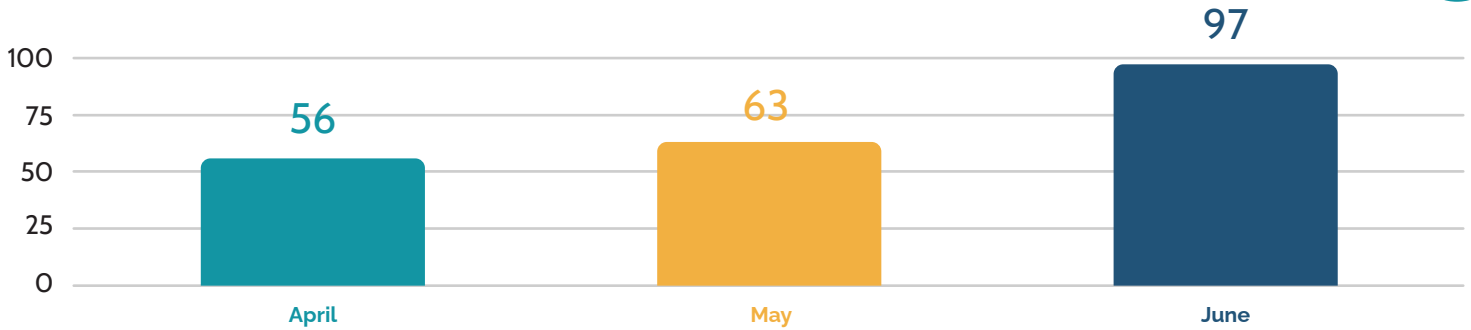
Average outreach  
response time

95%

Outreach requests responded  
to within 72 hours

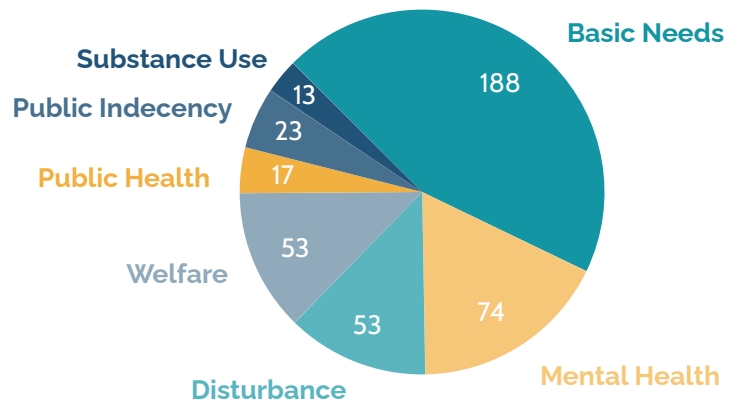


### 311 COMMUNITY REFERRAL REQUESTS BY MONTH



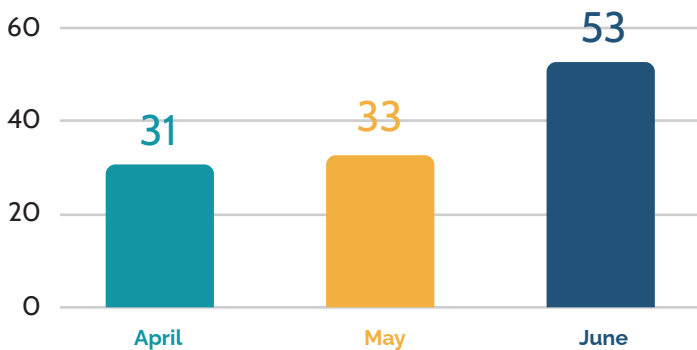
### CALLER CONCERNS

People who call 311 Community Referral Services can identify any number of reasons for referring an individual. In Q2, 62% of callers referred people for either basic needs or mental health concerns.

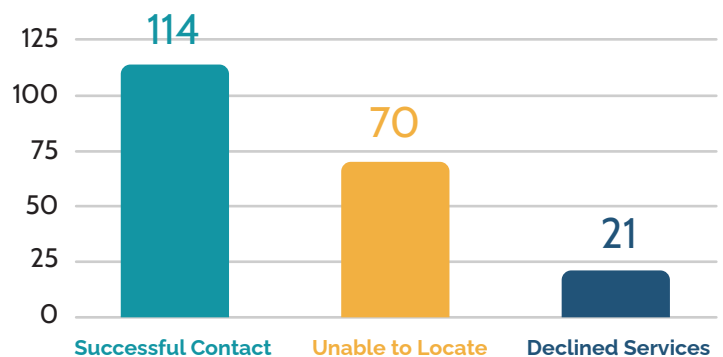


\*Callers can identify multiple concerns

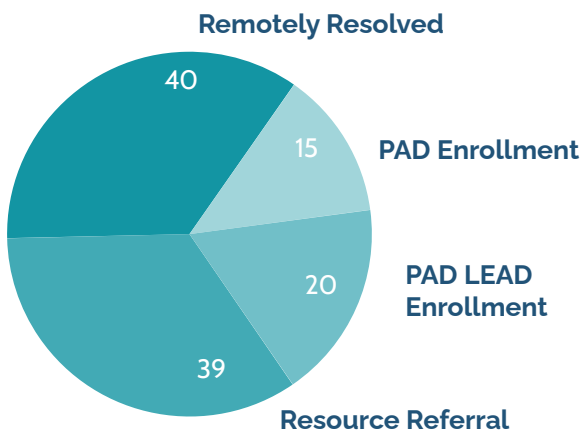
### 117 INDIVIDUALS ENGAGED BY HARM REDUCTION TEAM



### RESPONSE OUTCOMES



### PAD SERVICE ENGAGEMENT



#### RESOURCE REFERRAL

PAD addressed the individual's immediate needs and referred them to other resources

#### PAD ENROLLMENT

PAD addressed the individual's immediate needs and enrolled them in 30-day case management

#### PAD LEAD ENROLLMENT (for individuals with open cases in Atlanta/Fulton County)

PAD addressed the individual's immediate needs, enrolled them in case management, and provided ongoing support in navigating legal barriers

#### REMOTELY RESOLVED

PAD provided support to the individual and referred them to other resources over the phone (usually for self-referrals)

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What happens after I call ATL311 to make a 311 Community Referral?

**1** After determining that a call is appropriate for referral, ATL311 will inform PAD. A two-person PAD Harm Reduction team will then travel to the area to reach out to the referred individual.



**2** If the individual agrees to work with PAD, the Harm Reduction team will conduct an intake interview in the field to begin identifying immediate needs.



**3** PAD will then offer ongoing case management for identified individuals and also provide referrals and transportation to other service providers when appropriate.



### How quickly will PAD respond to a 311 Community Referral?

Our top priority is keeping people from being arrested. Consequently, we prioritize calls with likelihood of police involvement.

WITHIN

**30 mins**

If the individual appears to be in a situation that could escalate to police involvement if not addressed (e.g. disturbances, mental health concerns, public indecency, or substance use).

WITHIN

**72 hrs**

If the individual is frequently in the same area and appears to be in need of resources, shelter, or support.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What does it mean for your services to be “consent-based”?



PAD’s Harm Reduction teams never engage with or transport an individual who does not agree to our involvement.

Our teams are not a branch of law enforcement, are not responsible for enforcing the law, and do not detain any individual or attempt to compel them to take specific actions.



### What kind of training and qualifications do individuals responding to 311 Community Referrals have?



Our Harm Reduction team has substantial experience in behavioral healthcare and street outreach.

Team members are trained in de-escalation, CPR First Aid, mental health first aid, motivational interviewing, harm reduction, suicide risk assessment, substance use assessment, and other necessary skills.



### Why doesn't PAD 311 Community Referral Services operate 24/7?



PAD operates during the same hours that the ATL311 call center answers calls, which is an important part of our model.

Building this new system of response and care requires extensive collaboration with public partners to develop the necessary service infrastructure and capacity.



# FEEDBACK FROM 311 CALLERS



This morning we arrived at work and a woman was asleep in our parking lot. I told our showroom manager to call 311 because my friend had JUST posted about you in her IG stories last night!! Great work you are doing. THANK YOU!!!



Just feeling good that such services exist. So many out there need help.



I initially spoke with 311 dispatcher Tim, who connected me with PAD leader Chyna. I was highly impressed with the service [and] the dignity given during intake to engagement with community members. I am grateful and hopeful for the success of PAD.



PAD 311 gives me some hope for the future of Atlanta.



Really excited to know about this program! Happy to have an alternative to calling the cops.



# PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE ALTERNATIVE TO ARREST

## LEAD LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTED DIVERSION

Available Monday–Friday,  
7am–7pm anywhere in Atlanta.

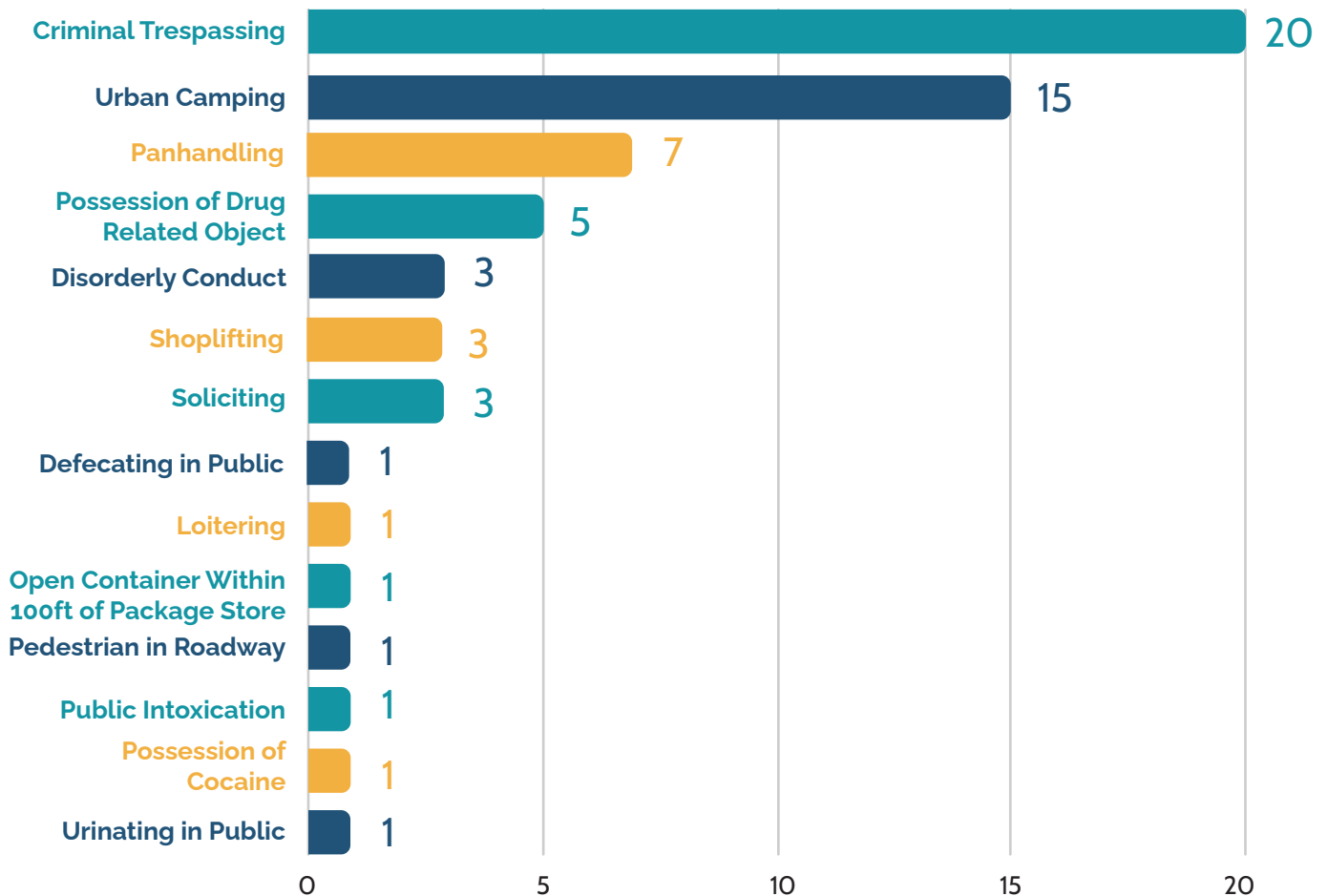
Through the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, PAD provides an immediate alternative to arrest for individuals detained by Atlanta Police Department (APD), Georgia Tech, and MARTA police officers for law violations likely related to mental health, substance use, and extreme poverty. If the individual consents to diversion, the officer calls PAD’s Harm Reduction team instead of making an arrest; PAD staff then come to the scene to address the individual’s immediate basic needs. No police report is made. Afterwards, PAD’s Care Navigation team initiates case management, provides direct services, and establishes supportive connections for the individual.

**88** TOTAL DIVERSIONS

**63** POLICE DIVERSIONS      **25** PUBLIC OFFICE DIVERSIONS\*

\*In addition to the City of Atlanta and MARTA police departments, PAD also accepts referrals from the Fulton County District Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender’s Office, and the Office of the Solicitor General, as well as the City of Atlanta Public Defender and Solicitor.

### DIVERSIONS BY CHARGE



# USING DATA TO SHIFT POLICING PRACTICE

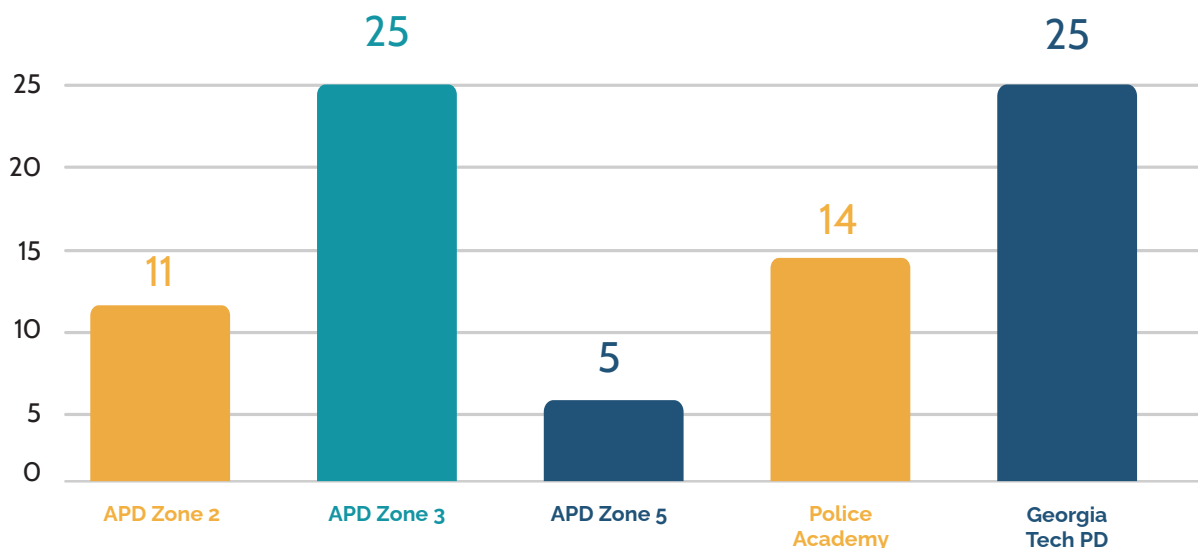
To support the use of diversion, APD has recently begun providing PAD with comprehensive data about arrests citywide (including charge, location, arresting officer, demographics, and whether the arrest resulted from proactive enforcement or in response to a 911 call). In the third quarter, PAD will begin analyzing arrest trends to identify opportunities to substantially increase the police department’s use of diversion.

By analyzing frequently occurring charges that would have been eligible for diversion, we will work with command staff to promote and monitor officers’ use of diversion as a problem-solving approach. By identifying the officers that make the most arrests, we will tailor our officer training and engagement strategies. And by determining the “hotspot” locations where arrests are occurring, we will conduct proactive outreach to residents and businesses to ensure they are aware of alternative responses such as PAD 311 Community Referral Services. In addition, we will use the data collected on 911 call codes and charges to better understand dispatch decisions and where there may be opportunities to dispatch alternate teams through ATL311 or 911.

**67** OFFICERS TRAINED

**10** LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAININGS HELD

## POLICE TRAINING BY JURISDICTION



# CARE NAVIGATION AND DIRECT SERVICES

*A new approach to safety and wellness through community-based case management.*

PAD's Care Navigation team provides case management services, addresses immediate needs, and supports participants in developing pathways to broader community resources. Additionally, PAD works with each participant to navigate barriers to care (legal, institutional, financial, etc.) and to facilitate linkages to the most appropriate long-term supports.



Receiving basic needs (food, clothing, cell phone, public transportation access)



Securing housing for immediate and long-term needs



Obtaining documentation and identification



Applying for benefits and employment



Accessing medical, dental, and mental healthcare

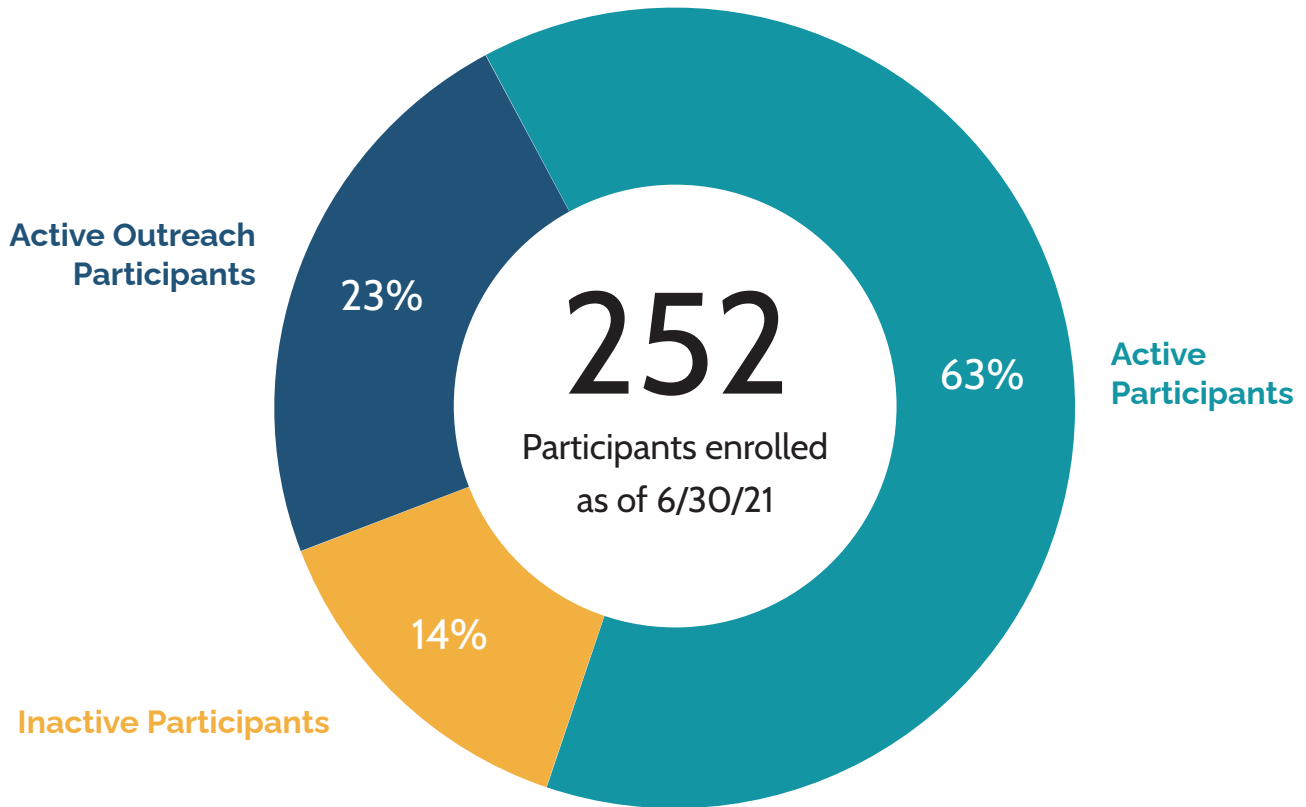


Navigating the court system for previous cases or civil legal issues



Reconnecting with family members

# PAD PARTICIPANTS IN THE SECOND QUARTER



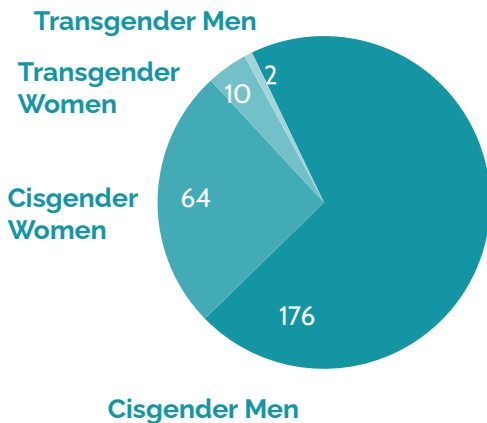
**ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS**  
have been engaged in the last month

**ACTIVE OUTREACH PARTICIPANTS**  
have had contact in the last 90 days

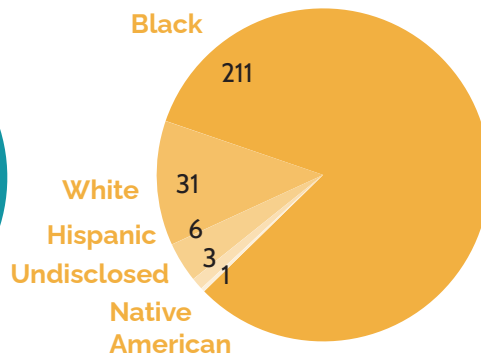
**INACTIVE PARTICIPANTS**  
have NOT had contact in the last 90 days

## PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

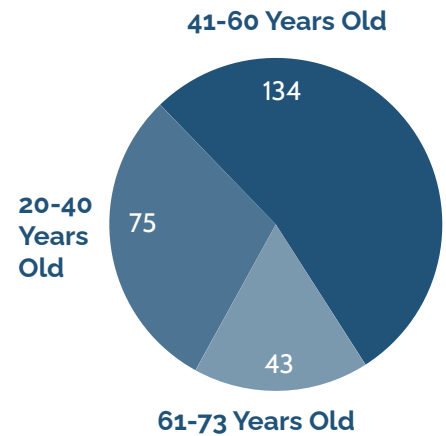
### GENDER



### RACE

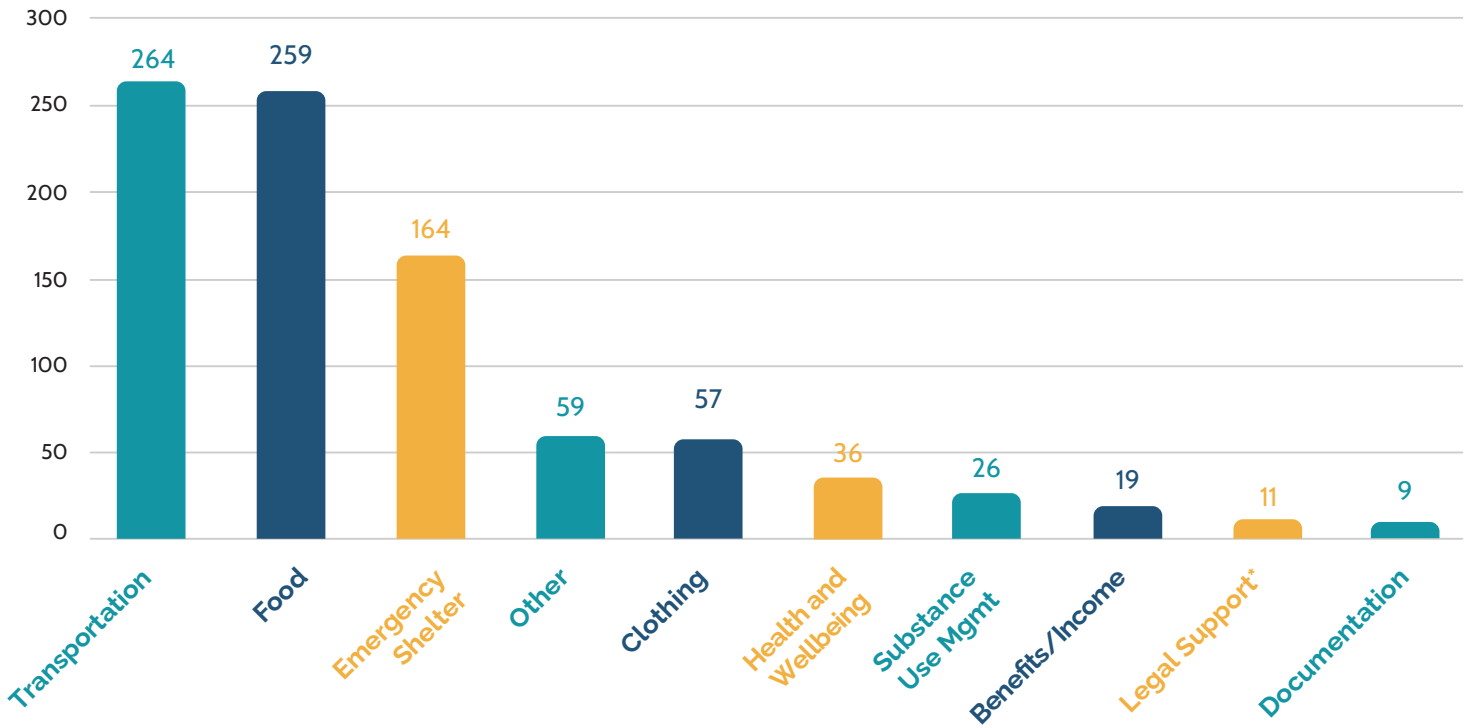


### AGE





# SERVICES PROVIDED



\*Excluding anyone who is discharged

PAD doesn't enroll participants in a temporary, time-limited program that imposes mandates and deadlines. Instead, we start with respect and compassion for each person, creating a sense of community, collaboration, and self-determination. We help each participant clarify their goals, and we walk with them along a path of progress.

## PARTICIPANT SUCCESS STORY

Hubert had been homeless for two years when he faced arrest for sleeping on private property. Rather than taking him to jail, however, APD diverted him to PAD. During his first meeting with Faye, his Care Navigator, Hubert shared that he really missed his mother and sister. With Hubert's permission, Faye called Hubert's sister, who was thrilled to hear news of him. Within three days of Faye's first conversation with Hubert, his family picked him up from PAD emergency housing and brought him home. Months later, Faye still receives text messages from Hubert, who is happy to be reunited with his family and back home.



# COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA & INSIGHTS

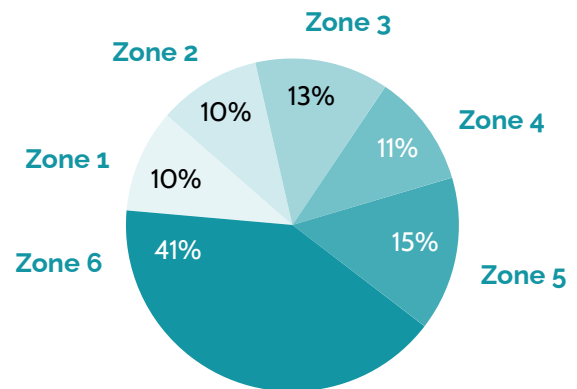
As part of our expansion citywide, we recently conducted a public survey to gain insight into the unique experiences of Atlanta residents and to spread the word about PAD 311 Community Referral Services.

## METHODOLOGY

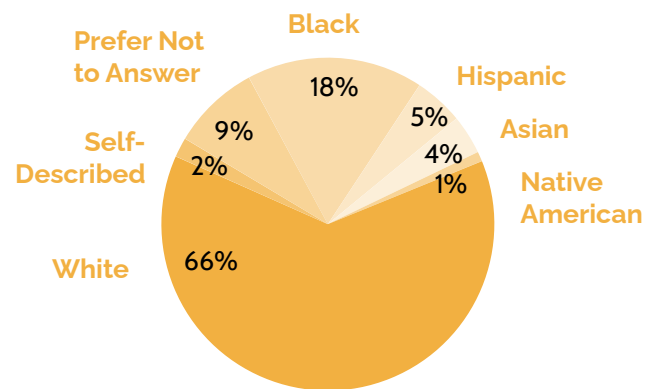
We conducted the survey from May 5th–July 6th, 2021, asking Atlanta residents questions about community needs, experiences with police, behavioral health, drug use, and poverty. We distributed the survey through social media and email as well as at multiple Neighborhood Planning Unit and community association meetings; we also sent it to City Council representatives and candidates. A total of 778 respondents responded to the survey.

## RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

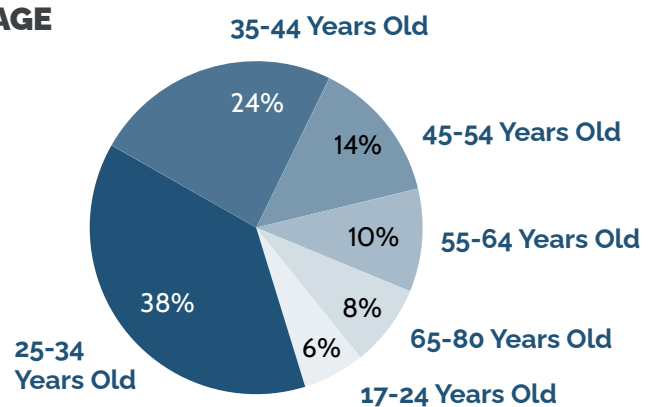
### ZONE OF RESIDENCE



### ETHNICITY

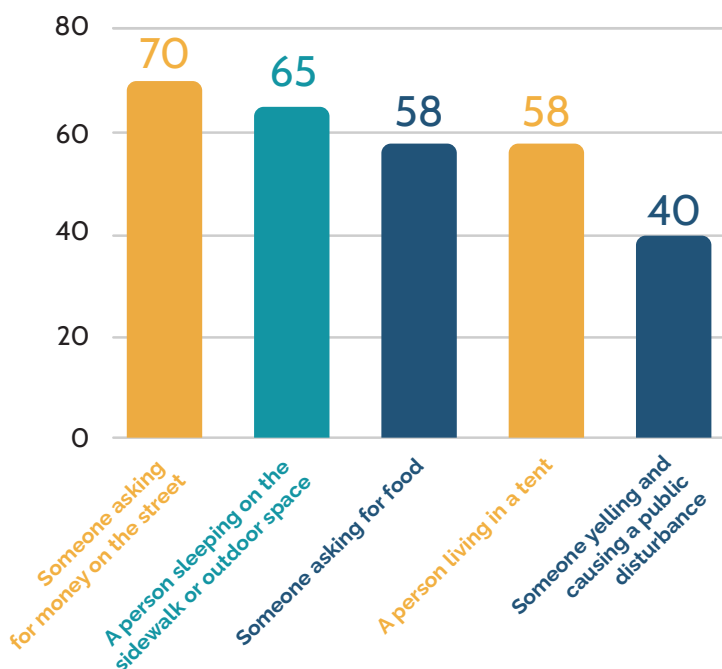


### AGE

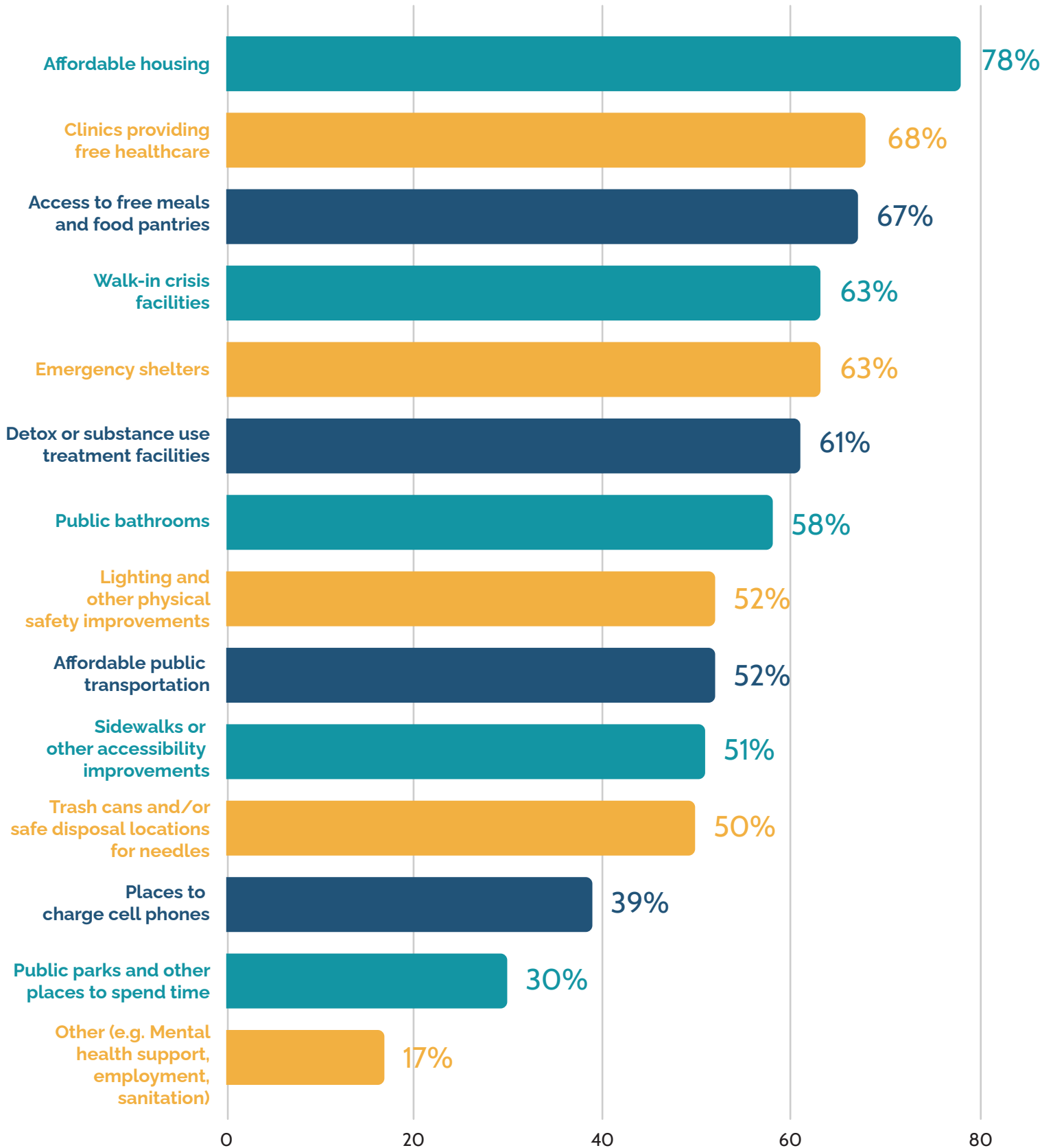


## COMMUNITY NEEDS

### TOP 5 CONCERNS SEEN AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK:



# RESOURCES THAT RESPONDENTS BELIEVE WOULD REDUCE THE CHALLENGES THEIR COMMUNITY MEMBERS FACE:



# KEY INSIGHTS

1

## Respondents are already trying to meet the needs of community members more holistically without police involvement.

In order to respond to an individual they were concerned about:

67%

Offered direct support

40%

Contacted a City Council member or other elected official

39%

Called 911 for a police response

19%

Worked with community advocates to advocate on the person's behalf

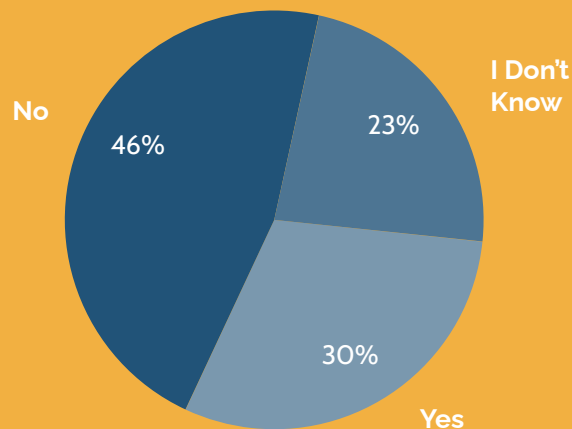
19%

Contacted social service providers on the person's behalf

2

## Of respondents who called the police to report activity related to unmet mental health needs, poverty, or substance use, less than a third felt satisfied with the police response.

WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE POLICE RESPONSE TO YOUR CONCERN?



# KEY INSIGHTS

3

**Overwhelmingly, survey respondents want to use PAD 311 Community Referral Services instead of police for issues related to mental health, extreme poverty, or substance use.**

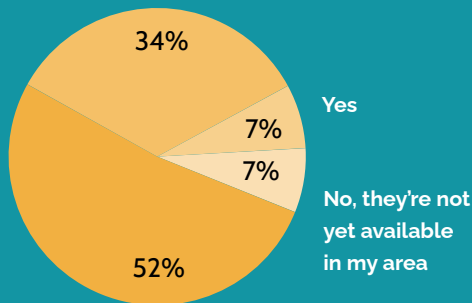
	Do you think you'll use PAD 311 Community Referral Services in the future?		
Have you ever called the police to report activity that you believed was connected to unmet mental health needs, extreme poverty, or substance use?	Yes	No	I don't know
No	81%	2%	17%
Yes	84%	4%	13%

4

**Many survey respondents are still unaware of PAD 311 Community Referral Services, but the vast majority of those who have used it plan to use it again in the future.**

### HAVE YOU ALREADY USED PAD 311 COMMUNITY REFERRAL SERVICES?

No, but was aware of resource



No, and wasn't aware of resource

	Do you think you'll use PAD 311 Community Referral Services in the future?		
Have you already used PAD 311 Community Referral Services?	Yes	No	I don't know
Yes	86%	9%	5%
No, and I didn't know about them until now.	83%	3%	15%
No, but I was aware it was an available resource.	78%	2%	19%
No, they're not yet available in my area	76%	2%	22%

# CALL TO ACTION: PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

*Six actionable policy recommendations for Atlantans to make tangible progress in public safety.*

In the City of Atlanta today, a person can be arrested and jailed in the Atlanta City Detention Center for up to six months for loitering, public urination, panhandling, urban camping, or failure to pay traffic tickets, among many other city ordinance and traffic violations. For state charges like criminal trespassing, shoplifting, or drug possession, Atlanta residents may be booked into Fulton County Jail and subjected to unsafe and overcrowded conditions.

Jailing people for violations related to poverty, substance addiction, and mental illness exacerbates quality of life issues instead of solving them. Meanwhile, our communities continue to suffer from a lack of housing options and consistent access to legal income, mental and physical healthcare, and substance use treatment. Punitive responses to these structural inequities have caused incredible harm, with Black communities and other people of color bearing the greatest burden.

The City of Atlanta has both a responsibility and an opportunity to advance public safety by moving away from policies and practices that criminalize poverty and unmet behavioral health needs. Instead, it is time to invest in solutions that improve the health, stability, and safety of all Atlantans. PAD recommends the following actions to advance public safety in our communities:

# CALL TO ACTION: PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

1

**Ensure that every APD officer is trained and directed to divert eligible people away from arrest and towards existing community services for problematic conduct involving youth, unmet behavioral health challenges, and extreme poverty.**

- a. Require diversion training for all new APD recruits and current personnel through the police academy, ongoing in-service training, and monthly zone-level training.
- b. Provide a monthly public report on the percentage of sworn APD personnel who have completed diversion training (training saturation rate).
- c. Provide incentives to divert by ensuring performance credit for diversions to PAD as well as for youth diversions to At-Promise Youth and Community Centers.
- d. Provide a monthly public report on the percentage of APD interactions that have resulted in diversion (diversion utilization rate).
- e. Provide a monthly public report on arrest trends that includes charges, booking facility, and demographics of those arrested.

2

**Identify and invest in a continuum of first responders to respond to emergency and non-emergency requests received through ATL311 and 911.**

- a. Increase city funding to PAD to support the citywide harm reduction response to 311 Community Referrals and diversions by law enforcement. Currently, the City of Atlanta only funds a third of PAD's \$4.5M budget, and PAD's hours are limited to weekdays 7am–7pm.
- b. With community input, develop dispatch protocols and service partnerships to reduce police involvement in responding to 911 calls related to mental health.
- c. Identify and implement workforce policies and training that supports the health, wellbeing, and capacity of 911 call takers and dispatchers who are critical gatekeepers to services and care.
- d. Solicit community feedback and implement technology, policies, and/or training to improve 911 and ATL311 services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, people who require in-language services other than English, and people who are trans, non-binary, or LGBTQ.
- e. Establish a Civilian Reporting Services unit outside of the police department to fulfill administrative requests currently directed to 911 or ATL311, including traffic incident reporting, code enforcement, and licensing issues.
- f. Invest in evidence-based violence interruption teams (such as those based on the Cure Violence Global model) in communities where gun violence rates are high. Coordinate community violence interruption teams with hospital-based gun violence interventions (such as the programs currently being implemented at Grady Memorial Hospital).

# CALL TO ACTION: PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

3

Enact the recommendations of the City of Atlanta's Reimagining the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC) Task Force to end the practice of jailing people for quality-of-life ordinance violations, traffic infractions, or inability to pay fines and fees.

- a. Implement the recommendations of the Reimagining ACDC Policy Workgroup to end the practice of jailing people for city ordinance violations.
- b. Transform the ACDC into a Center for Equity to more effectively address the needs that drive minor law violations.
- c. Authorize and fund the City of Atlanta Public Defender's office to provide representation for civil legal matters and holistic services to address the barriers that lead to recurring interactions with the criminal legal system.

4

Invest in public infrastructure and programming to proactively meet people's basic needs.

- a. Invest in 24-hour public bathrooms in high traffic areas throughout the city to provide free, clean, and accessible places for residents and visitors, as is common in major cities around the world.
- b. Develop a hospitality policy for all City-owned facilities and parks to ensure that policies, programming, and facilities include amenities for people experiencing homelessness (such as places to shower, charge a cell phone, or use a storage locker). This policy should respond directly to the guidance and insight provided by people who are homeless or have experienced homelessness.



## CALL TO ACTION: PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

5

**Utilize City resources to effectively leverage county, state, federal, and private investments in crisis services, mental health care, substance use harm reduction, and treatment services for City of Atlanta residents.**

- a. Create an advisory committee of behavioral health community stakeholders, prioritizing inclusion of people with lived experiences with mental health or substance use challenges, to provide support in the design and implementation of all services.
- b. Proactively seek out opportunities through the City's Department of Grants and Community Development to pursue federal grant opportunities to fund behavioral health needs and innovations in community safety.
- c. Advocate to Fulton County and Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities for increased investments in community-based care including peer-run wellness and respite centers, mental health urgent care clinics, Community Support Teams (CST), Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), and Intensive Case Management (ICM) teams serving the City of Atlanta region.
- d. Collaborate with Fulton and DeKalb counties to ensure that walk-in crisis services and detox and drug treatment services are available to all City of Atlanta residents.

6

**Dramatically improve the safety of residents with little or no income by ensuring safe, supportive, low-barrier, non-congregate lodging for unsheltered people and increasing housing options throughout the city.**

- a. Expand and sustain hotel partnerships that provide non-congregate emergency housing options with minimal requirements for people who desire shelter.
- b. Use City entitlement funds to support only evidence-based interventions, such as low barrier shelters, street outreach, permanent supportive housing, and rapid rehousing. Require funded agencies to be low barrier, equal access and housing first.
- c. Ensure any new funding for affordable housing has a permanent supportive housing set-aside.
- d. Expand the use of housing voucher set-asides for private developments to develop and guarantee housing for people with no income or extremely low-income.
- e. Provide funding for incentives to private landlords to hold and lease units to people with housing vouchers, formerly incarcerated people, and people with eviction and poor credit histories.

## JOIN US

### SUPPORT PAD IN YOUR COMMUNITY

PAD relies on community members to partner with us in a new approach to community safety and wellness. We invite you to complete a [brief survey](#) on our website to share your skills and interests.

To invite PAD to present at a community meeting or event, please contact [info@atlantapad.org](mailto:info@atlantapad.org).

### HELP FULFILL OUR WISH LIST

Our Harm Reduction team is often in need of [items](#) to meet the immediate needs of referred individuals, from non-perishable food to personal care items.

If you have items to donate or if you wish to organize a supply drive, please contact our Office Manager, Kay Charles, at [kay@atlantapad.org](mailto:kay@atlantapad.org).

### WORK AT PAD

Our team is expanding and we are looking for highly skilled, passionate people to join us! Please see our [website](#) for job opportunities. Additionally, sign up for our [newsletter](#) to find out about new positions.

## CONTACT US

Email: [info@atlantapad.org](mailto:info@atlantapad.org)

Office: 470.819.4853

Fax: 470.819.4854

E-Fax: 1.866.311.1443

Policing Alternatives & Diversion Initiative

236 Forsyth Street SW, Suite 500

Atlanta, GA 30303

Please note: PAD accepts community referrals only through ATL311; we cannot accept referrals directly from community members. To make a referral, please dial 311 within the hours of 7AM to 7PM, Monday through Friday.



APRIL - JUNE  
**Q2.2021**  
**REPORT**

# APPENDIX

[WWW.ATLANTAPAD.ORG](http://WWW.ATLANTAPAD.ORG)



## PAD IN THE MEDIA

- [Atlanta and Fulton County Provide Mental Health Services for Atlantans in Crisis](#) | Atlanta Daily World
- [Atlanta police have option to making arrests](#) | Fox 5 Atlanta
- [Opinion: We need to rethink mental health care — and the assumptions we have about what support means](#) | The Washington Post (written by Moki Macias, PAD Executive Director)
- [Local initiative seeks problem-solving beyond policing](#) | The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

