



Sworn Public Safety Employee Mental Health Support Audit

Austin City Auditor's Office | July 20, 2026

Background

Public safety employees are critical to the safety of Austin

3,300+
sworn employees



Image sources: City of Austin Digital Asset Manager.

What we found

2 Findings

1 Additional Observation

5 Recommendations

Finding 1

The City offers mental health resources for public safety employees, but some employees are hesitant to use them and feel they do not always address the root causes of stress.

Austin provides resources in line with peer cities and best practices

Public Safety Wellness Center



Image source: City Auditor's Office.



Peer Support
Teams



Licensed Mental
Health Providers



Medical
Services



Chaplains



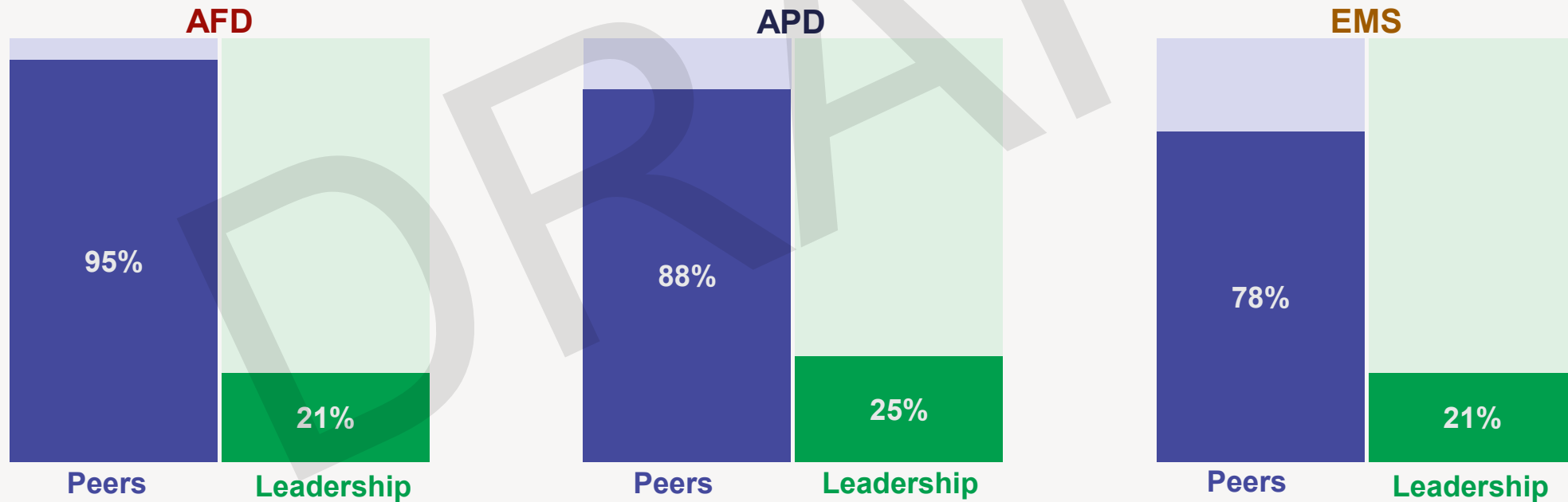
Fitness
Services



Pet Therapy
Team

Despite some satisfaction with resources employees may not feel supported

% of survey respondents who felt their *peers* versus *department leadership* cared for their mental health and well-being



Some employees reported concerns about using resources

30%

had concerns about the confidentiality of City resources

“[The resources] come from the sources of the stress, so the same offices that are causing the issues are pushing out the solutions.”

-APD Employee

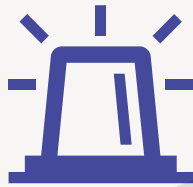
“No one really trusts those services and there is a general feeling that it does not matter.”

-AFD Employee

“We can’t speak up if we’re afraid of being stigmatized”

-EMS Employee

Significant sources of stress may not be addressed by available supports



Workload and
work schedule



Sleep and rest

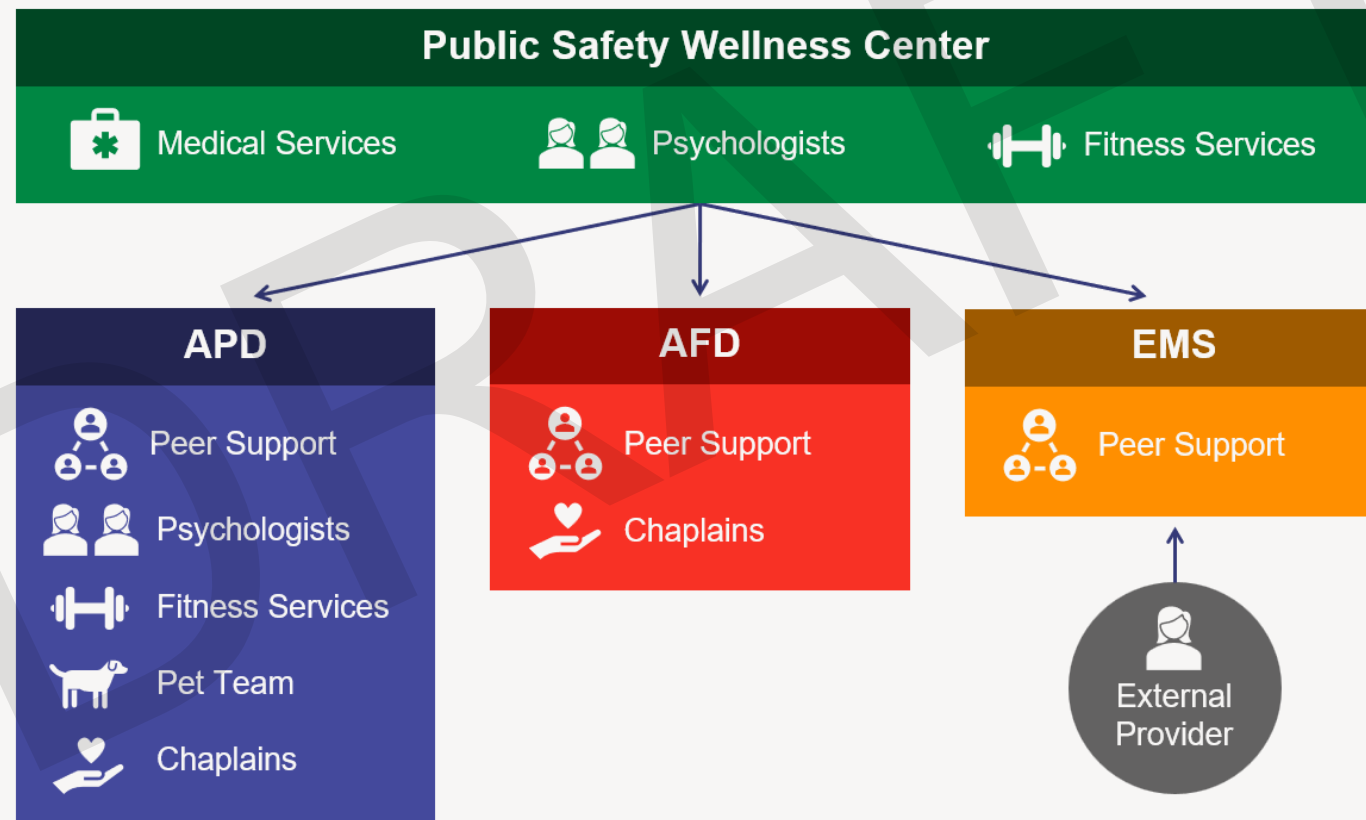


Cumulative stress

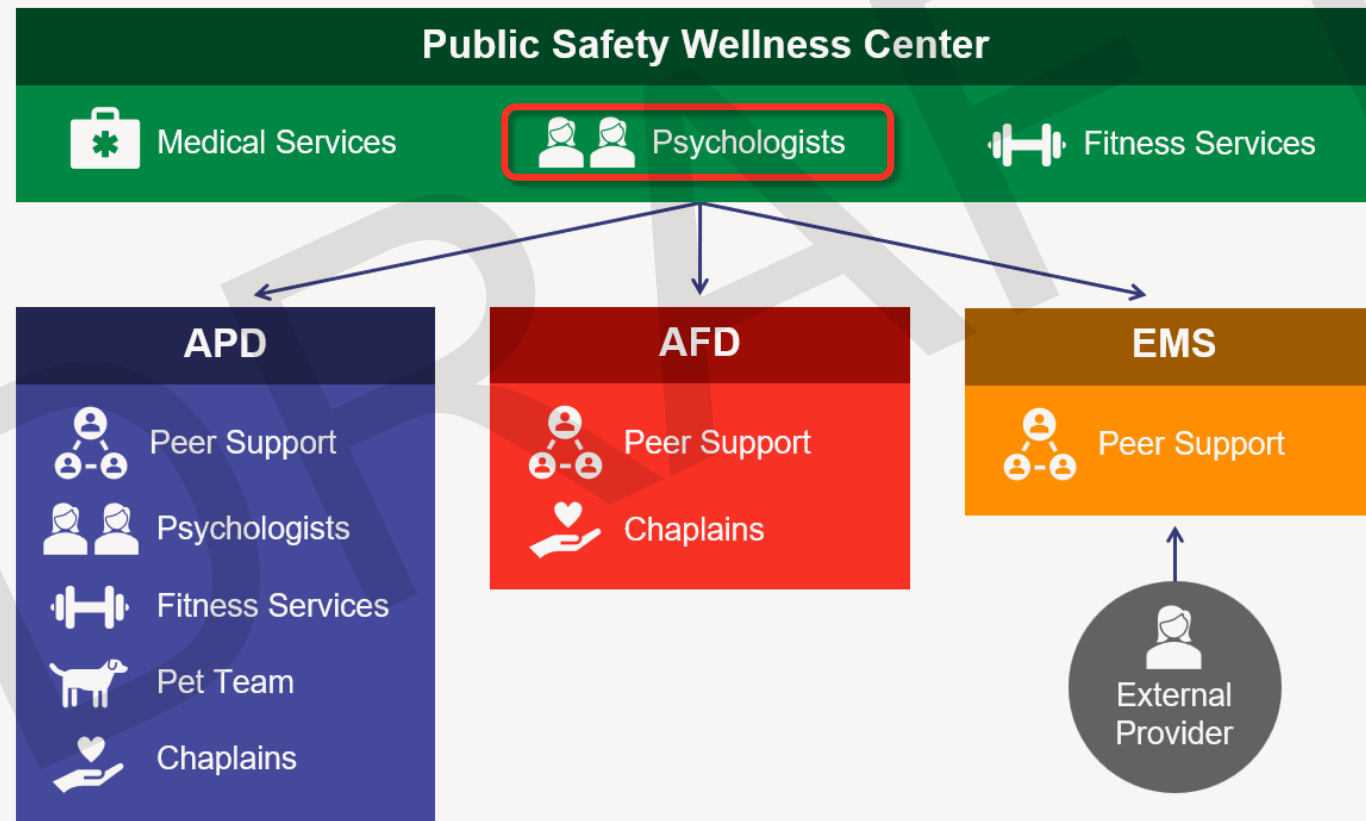
Finding 2

Public safety employees may not receive consistent or proactive mental health support across departments.

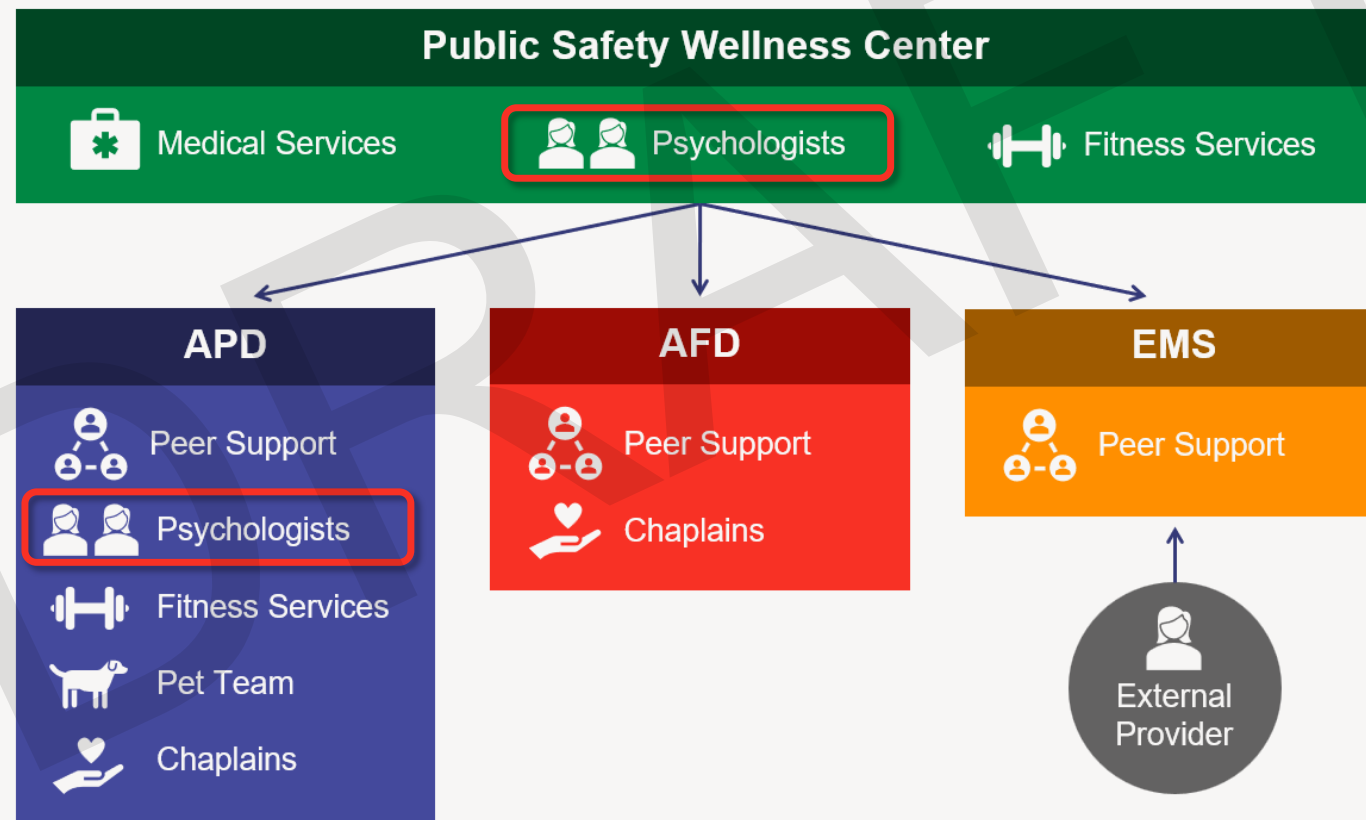
Resources and access may vary across departments



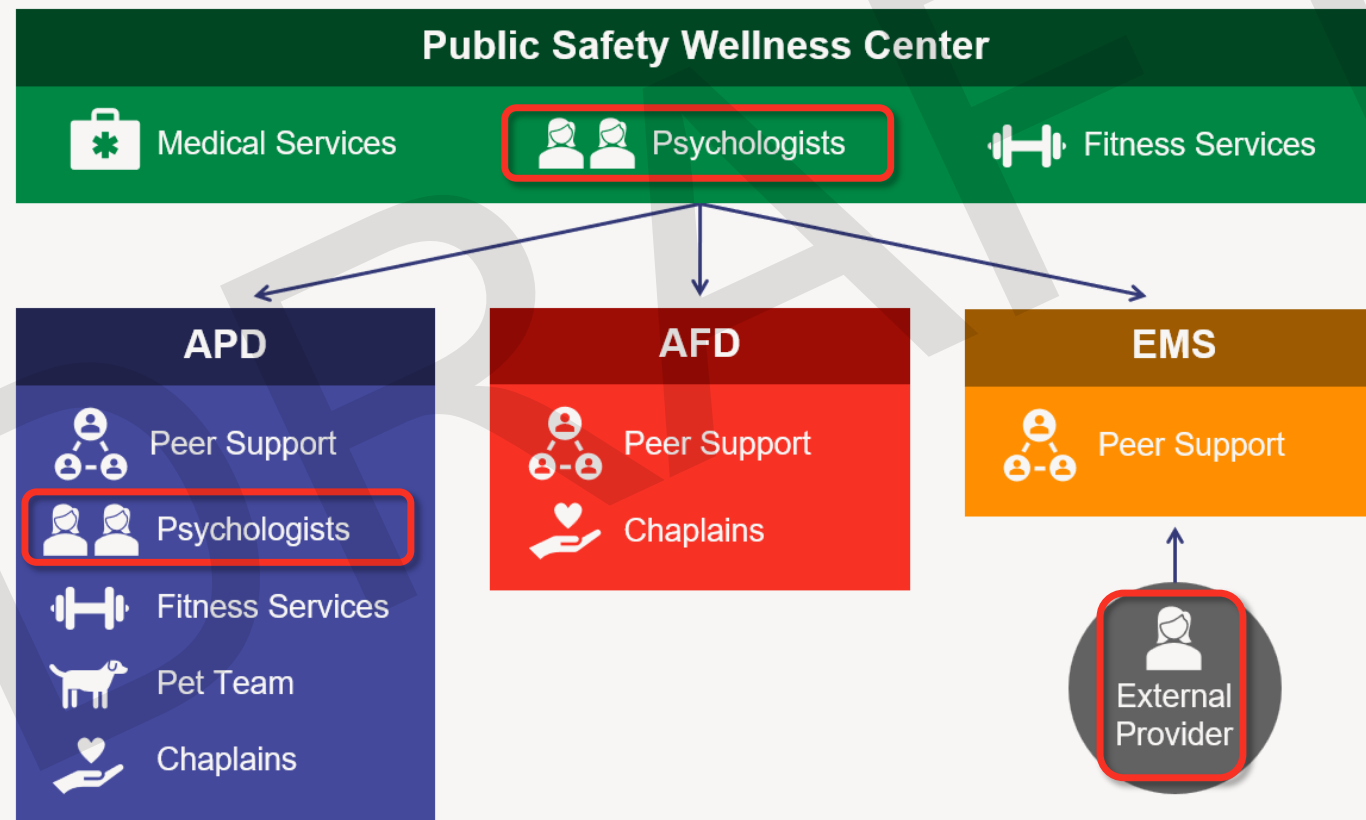
Resources and access may vary across departments



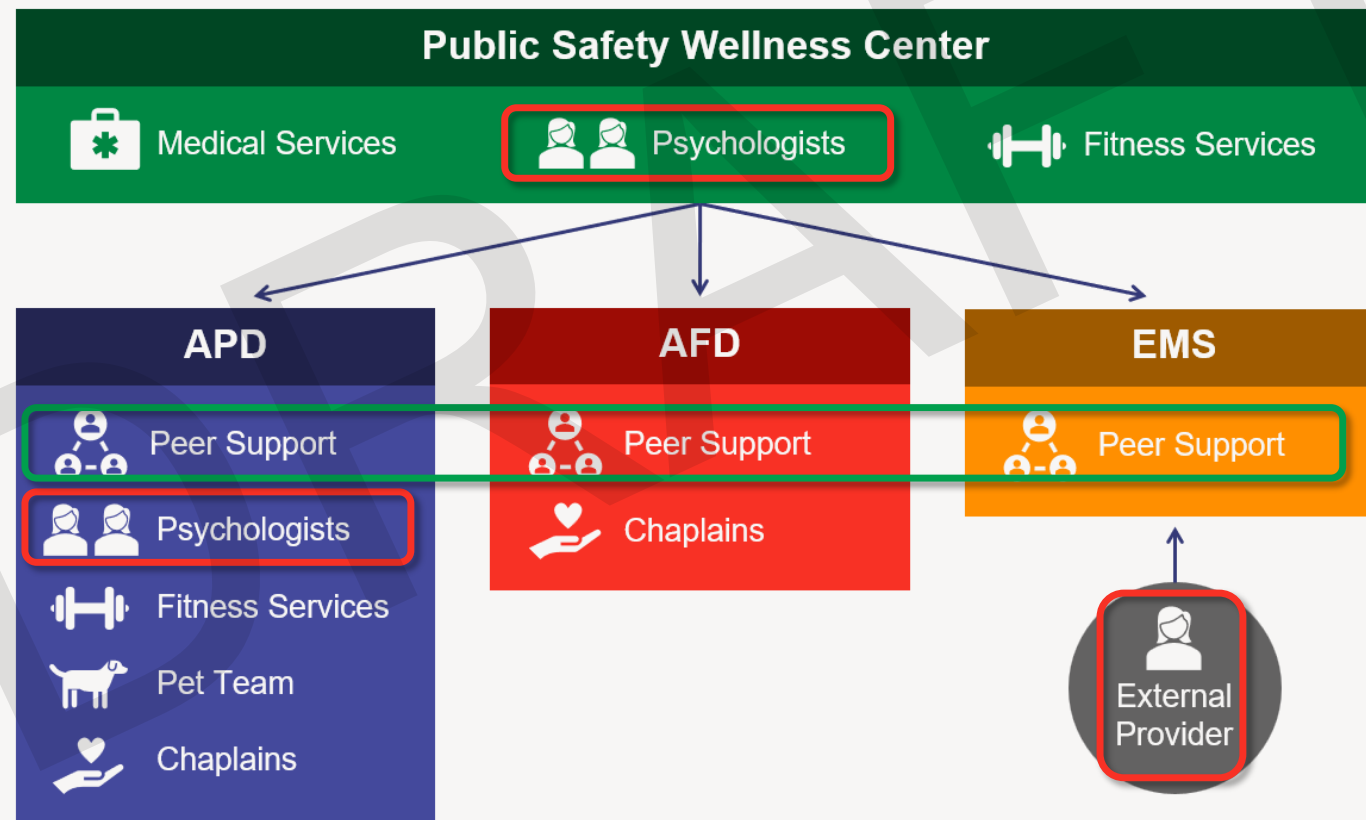
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Proactive interventions could be enhanced

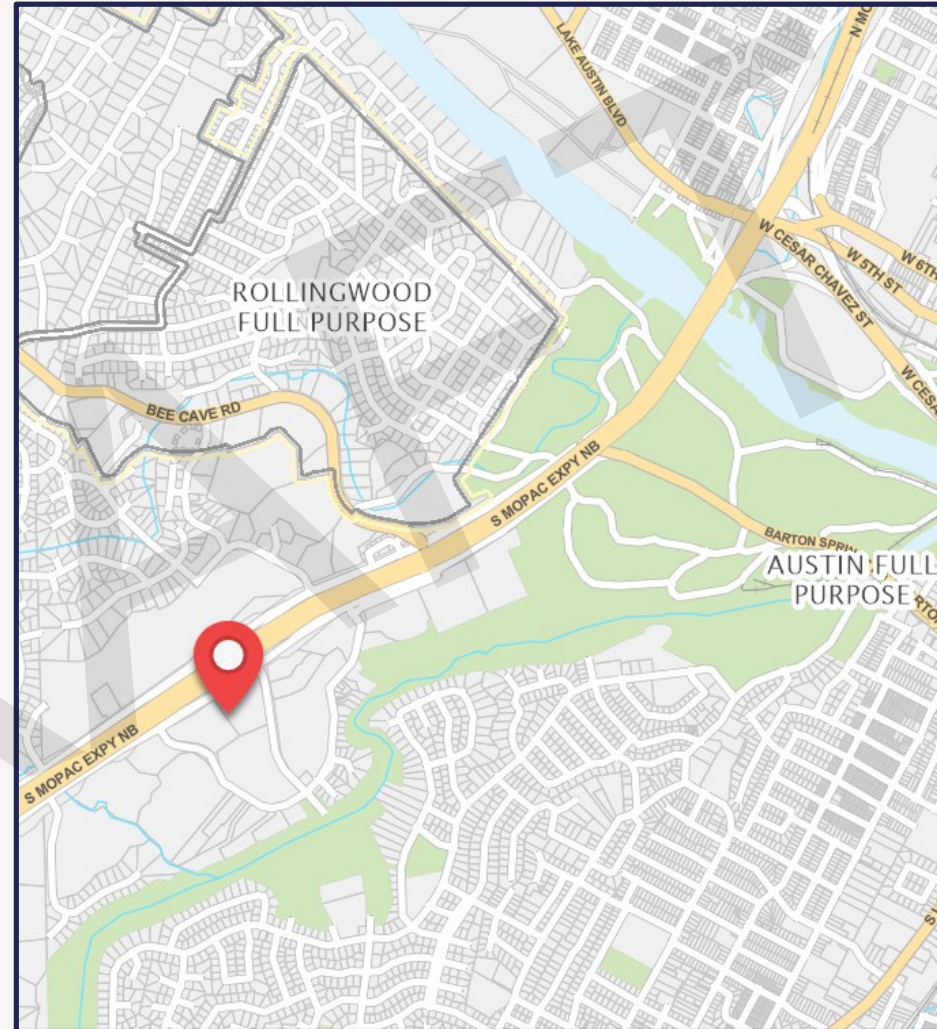
- More than 50% of respondents said they never or rarely received follow-up after a major incident
- Only AFD employees receive regular mental health screenings
- Ongoing education on mental health may be limited



Additional Observation

A **new wellness center** is in development at the new public safety headquarters

- Bring all resources across departments together
- Provide an improved and dedicated space for wellness





Recommendations

Enhance privacy
and confidentiality
assurance

01

02

Improve processes
for following up after
critical incidents

03

Ensure regular
training for AFD and
EMS peer support
teams

04

Consider periodic
mental health
assessments for all
employees

05

Provide ongoing
education on mental
health throughout
careers