

USE OF FORCE (UOF) TASK FORCE UPDATE

AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

PRESENTATION TO AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

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APRIL 7, 2026

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DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. SUMMARY OF MAY & SEP 2025 BRIEFINGS
2. USE OF FORCE POLICY CHANGES
3. DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING
4. TRAINING UPDATES
5. NEXT STEPS

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Summary: May 19 & Sep 22, 2025 Briefings

Initial UoF Review – Findings

1. Inconsistencies across APD in all aspects of UoF (e.g., reporting, accountability, and training)
2. Significant issues with data reporting, reliability & validity, statistical analyses, and reports
3. Likely over reporting of use of force

11 specific recommendations

1. Development of UoF Task Force (include all ranks of APD and APO)
2. Suspend all public reporting of UoF patterns, trends, and data; correct and reissue reports
3. Review and adjust UoF policy, training, accountability mechanisms

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G.O. 200 Use of Force

G.O. 201 Use of Force Reporting & Review

- Policy changes dev'l in consultation with UOF Task Force, APO, City Legal
- Informed by:
 - Review of 50+ individual agency policies
 - Review of model policies from leading national LE organizations
 - Academic research
- Implemented Jan 1, 2026
 - Sworn personnel trained on new policy by Jan 31
- Periodic checks on use of force trends and reporting
- Publicly available:
<https://austin.widen.net/s/qvcd8vjsdf/116-apd-general-orders-issued-03-02-26>

Austin Police UoF Policy Changes

1. Change language from *Response to Resistance* to *Use of Force*
2. Consolidated 7 policies into 2 G.O.s
3. Updated language and content (e.g., incorporated Taser 10; removed techniques no longer used; updated legal references)
4. Added 50+ definitions for terms used in policy

Previous APD GENERAL ORDERS

- G.O. 200 – Response to Resistance (R2R)
- G.O. 202 – Firearms
- G.O. 204 – Leg Restraints
- G.O. 206 – Control Devices
- G.O. 208 – TASER
- G.O. 211 – Inquiry, Reporting & Review
- G.O. 212 – R2R Audit Group

CURRENT APD GENERAL ORDERS

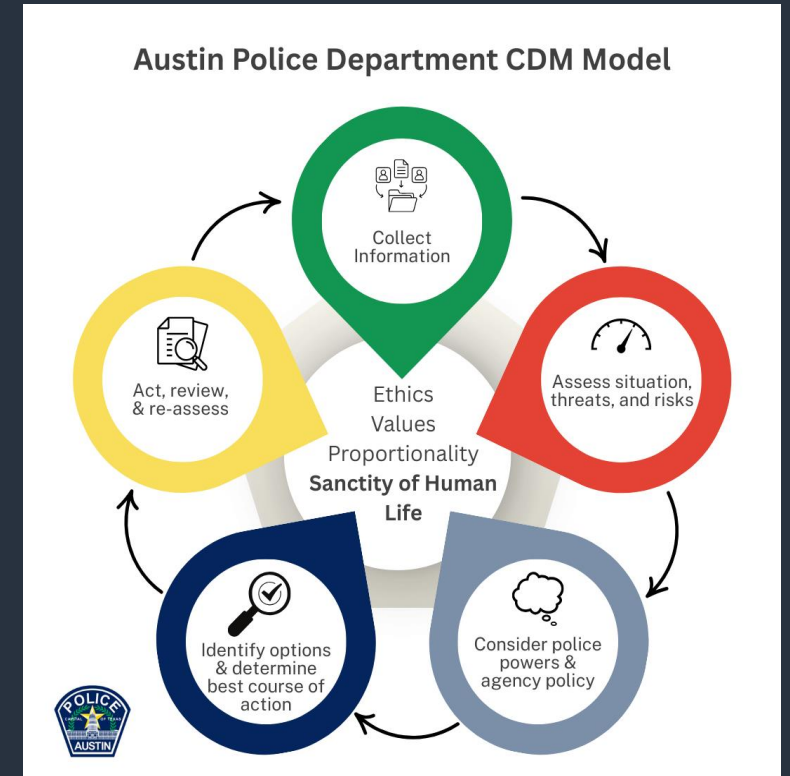
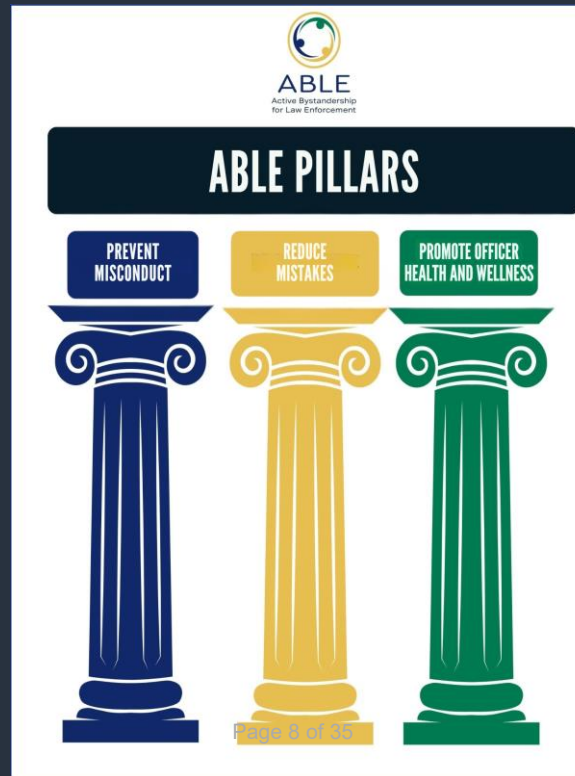
- G.O. 202 – Use of Force
- G.O. 201 – Use of Force Reporting & Review

Austin Police UoF Policy Changes

5. Section 200.3 – Renewed focus & expectation for de-escalation and use of Critical Decision Making (CDM) Model

Sec. 200.3 – “Officers shall use de-escalation techniques to reduce the likelihood and severity of force and increase the likelihood of voluntary compliance, when safe and reasonable under the totality of circumstances.”

6. Required trainings:
Integrating Communications Assessment & Tactics (ICAT)
and *Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE)*



Evidence on ICAT De-escalation Training



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Assessing the impact of de-escalation training on police behavior: Reducing police use of force in the Louisville, KY Metro Police Department


Robin S. Engel | Nicholas Corsaro | Gabrielle T. Isaia | Hannah D. McManus

Abstract
Research summary: Changing police use of force policies and training to incorporate de-escalation tactics is one of the most routinely recommended policy reform measures. Despite widespread promotion and proliferation of de-escalation trainings, to date, no research has empirically demonstrated that these trainings reduce use of force in the field (Engel, R. S., McManus, H. D., & Shook, T. D., 2020). Therefore, it is unknown if de-escalation trainings actually reduce force, have no impact, or have unintended consequences that possibly increase injuries to officers or citizens. We collaborated with the Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPO) in 2019 to evaluate the impact of the Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) de-escalation training developed by the Police Executive Research Forum. Using a stepped-wedge randomized controlled trial research design, the panel regression results demonstrated statistically significant reductions in use of force incidents (-28.1%), citizen injuries (-26.3%), and officer injuries (-36.0%) in the post-training period. These significant reductions were larger than any changes in LMPO's same periods during the

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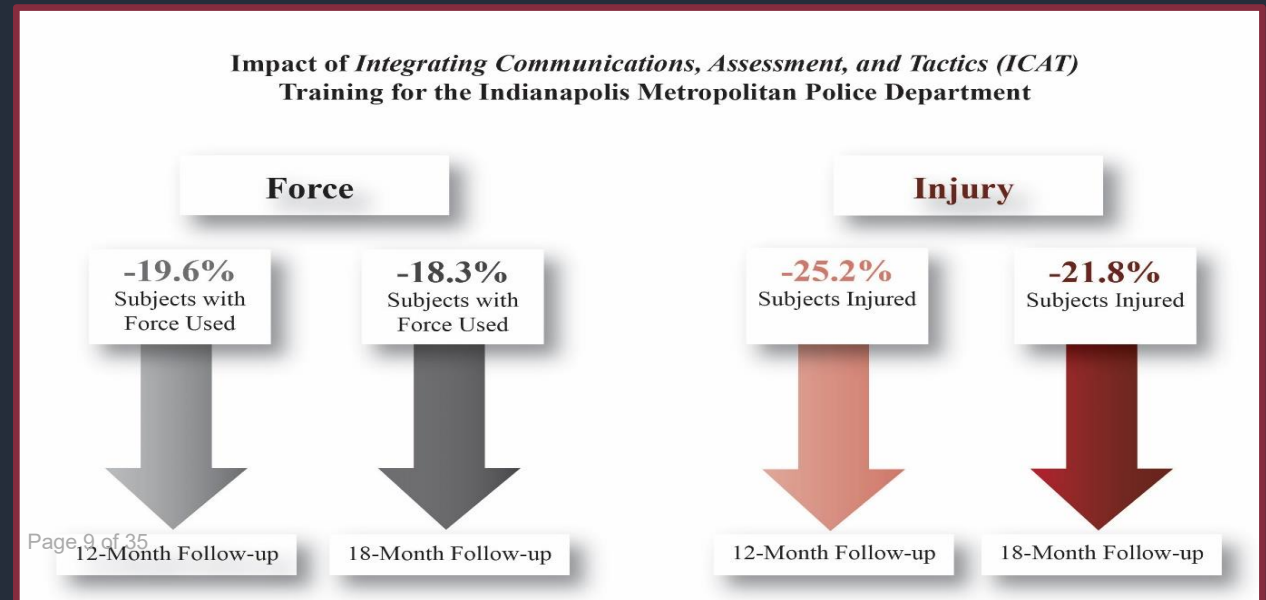
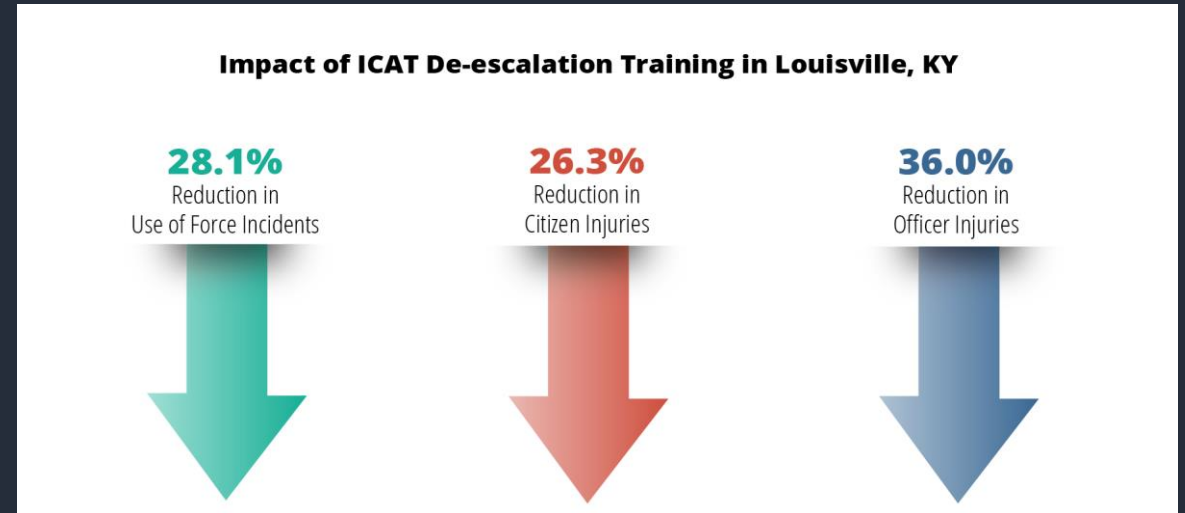
Evaluation of Integrating Communications, Assessment, and Tactics (ICAT) Training with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police

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 Ryan T. Metz, Ph.D. University of Cincinnati
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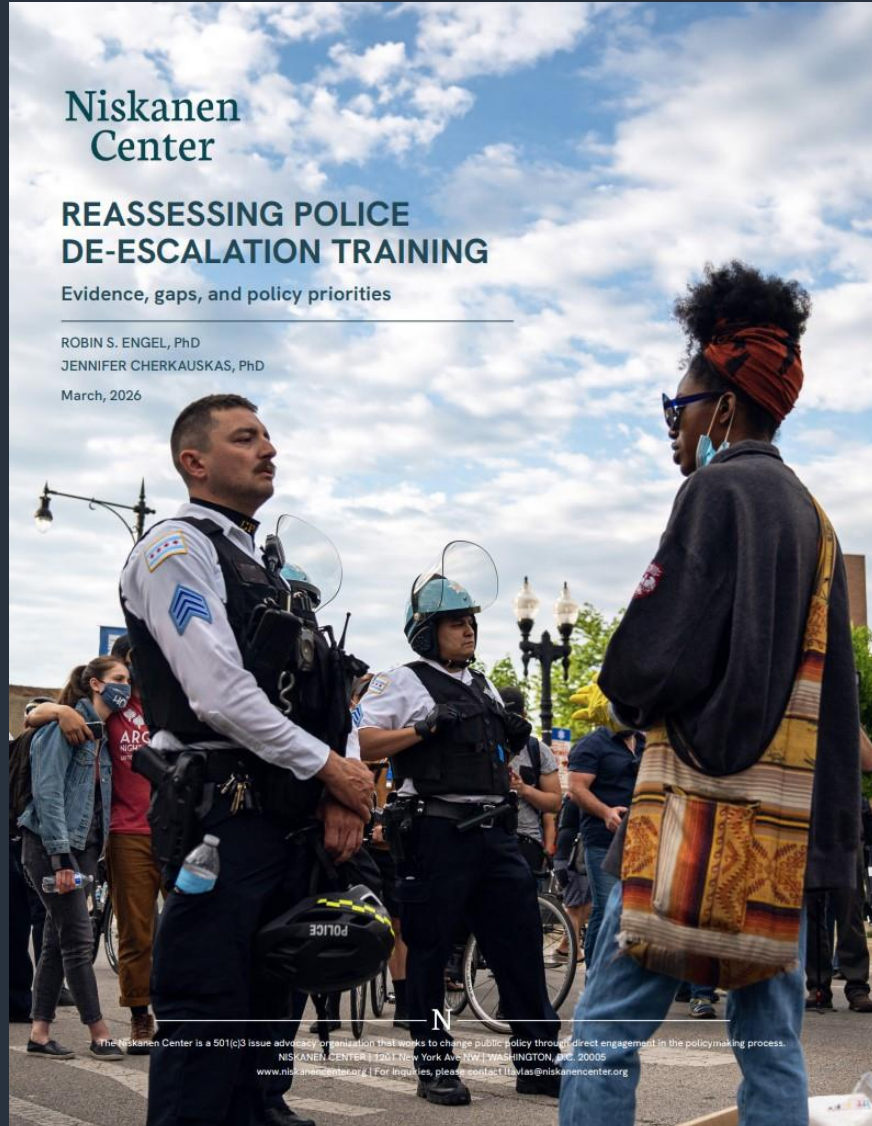


Disclaimer: This project was supported by Award No. 2020-05-00005, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. Direct all correspondence to Principal Investigator Dr. Robin Engel, engel.254@osu.edu.

June 30, 2025



Evidence on De-escalation Training



<https://www.niskanencenter.org/reassessing-police-de-escalation-training-evidence-gaps-and-policy-priorities/>

Austin Police UoF Policy Changes

7. Included terms *necessary* and *proportional* to accompany *objectively reasonable*
8. Eliminated *Preparatory Resistance* category
9. Prohibit strikes to the head or face (unless aggressive resistance)
10. Require sup approval for OC for crowds during large scale incidents

G.O. 200.2: Officers shall use only the force that is **objectively reasonable, necessary, and proportional** to the threat or resistance of a subject given the totality of the circumstances, to accomplish a lawful objective in accordance with their training, policy, and state law.

Types of Subject Resistance

1. No Resistance (Compliant)
2. Passive Resistance (Non-Compliant)
3. Defensive / Active Resistance
4. Aggressive Resistance
5. Deadly Resistance

Austin Police UoF Policy Changes

Level 4 R2R:

Force utilizing empty hand control techniques that does not result in injury or continued complaint of pain and does not rise to a Level 3 response to resistance.

2025 Use of Force Counts 2,919 subjects

LEVEL 1 = 0.4%

LEVEL 2 = 5.6%

LEVEL 3 = 55.3%

LEVEL 4 = 38.7%

11. Eliminated Level 4 R2R category

12. Created *Reportable Incidents* (mandatory reporting; reviewed by first-line supervisor)

Reportable Incidents

1. Physical Officer Actions (without injury or continued complaint of pain)
 - a) Restricting movement by strength or body weight, including resisting handcuffing or escorting
 - b) Using leverage or strength to bring arms or legs together for restraint
 - c) Soft/empty hand control; control holds
2. Leg Restraint Devices
3. TASER Arc and Warning Alert displays
4. Active Targeting of a Firearm at a Person

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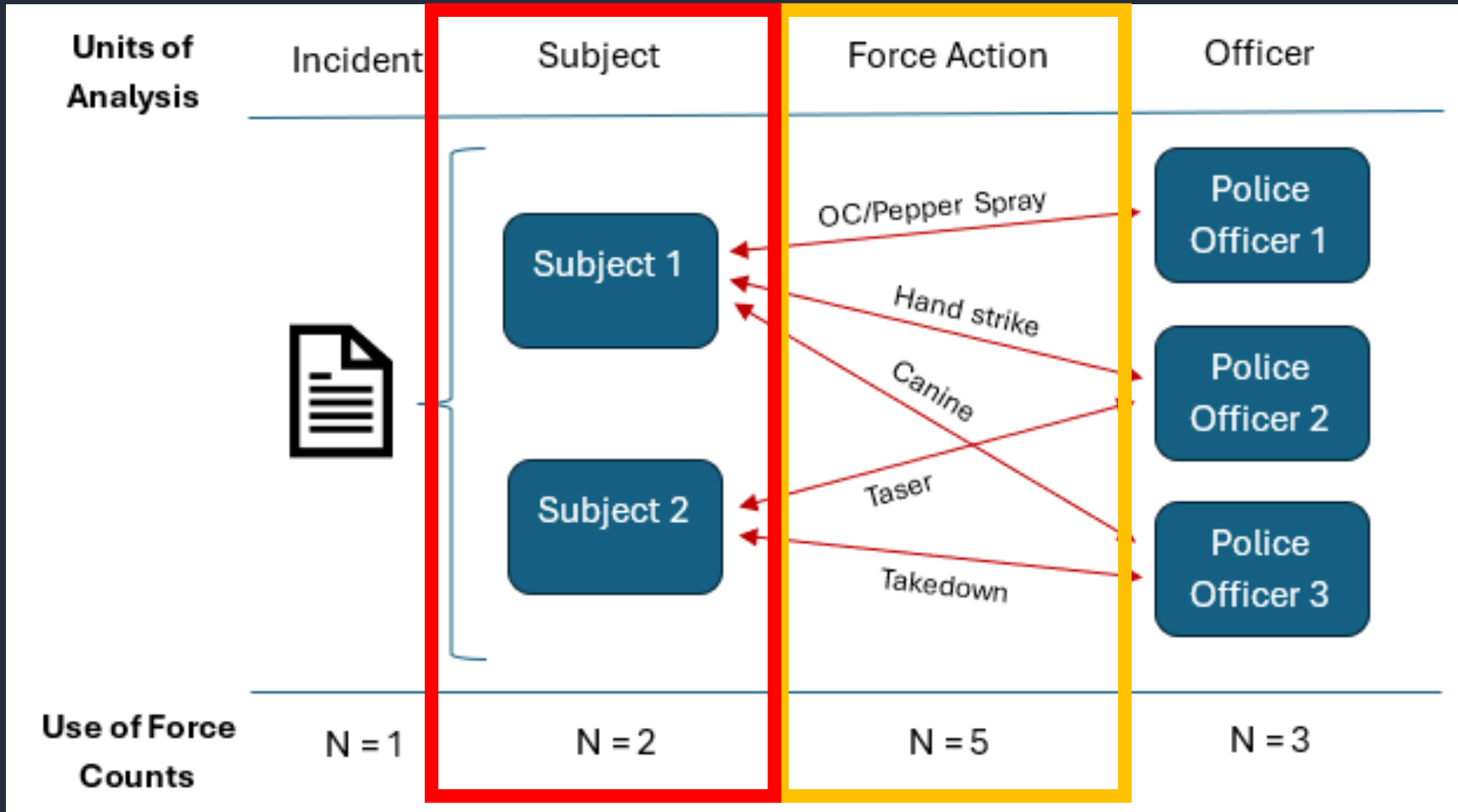
Changes to APD Annual Use of Force Reports

1. Errors in 2020 – 2022 Annual Reports corrected and reports reissued
2. New APD automated report format for 2023 onward (modeled after Kroll Report)
3. 2023, 2024, and 2025 Annual Reports completed
4. Reports based on new unit of analysis (Subjects)
5. Reports include multiple measures of racial/ethnic disparities

Open Data Portal Update

- Data removed from ODP last year
- Data corrected and ready to upload
- Multiple options re: unit of analysis and data elements to include
- Opportunity to build dashboard to assist with public data use and interpretation

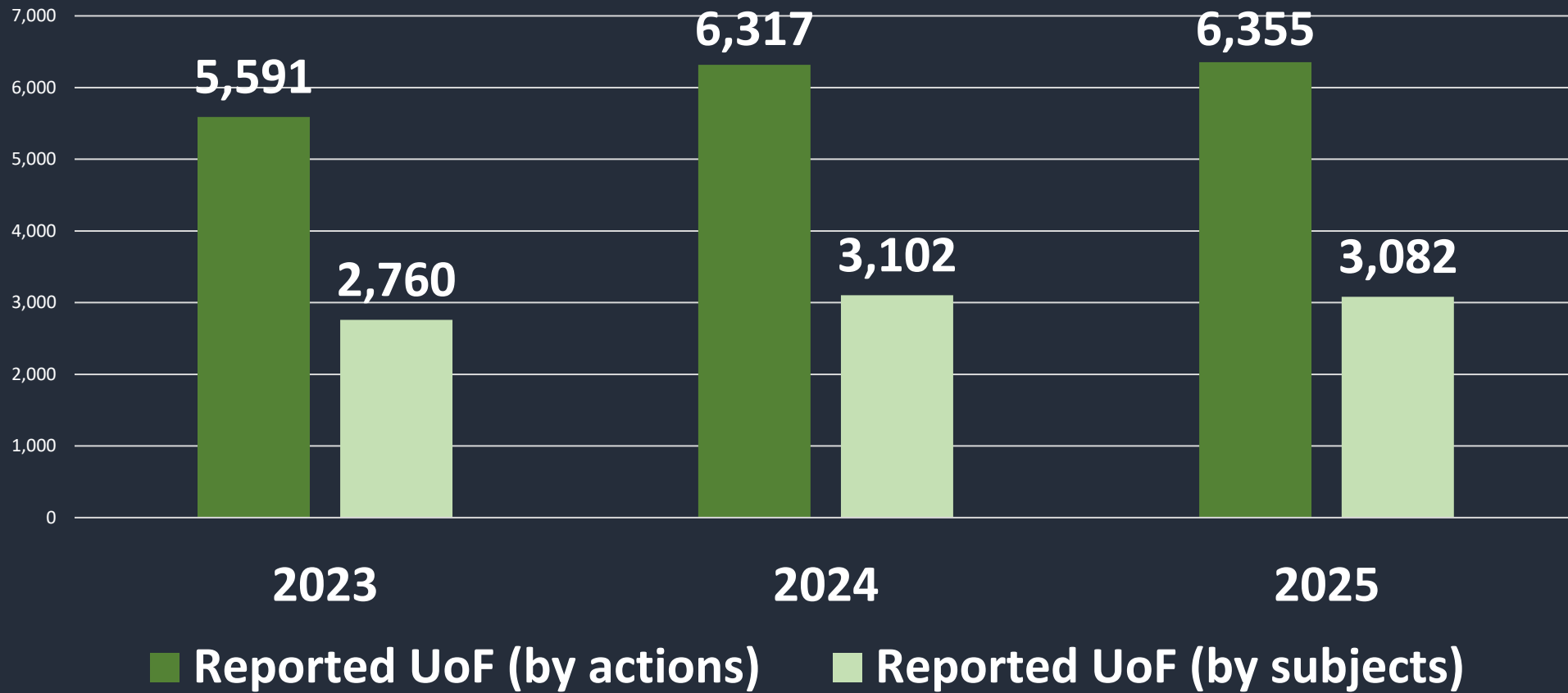
Measuring Use of Force



*Previous APD measure:
of UoF Actions*

*New APD measure:
of Subjects*

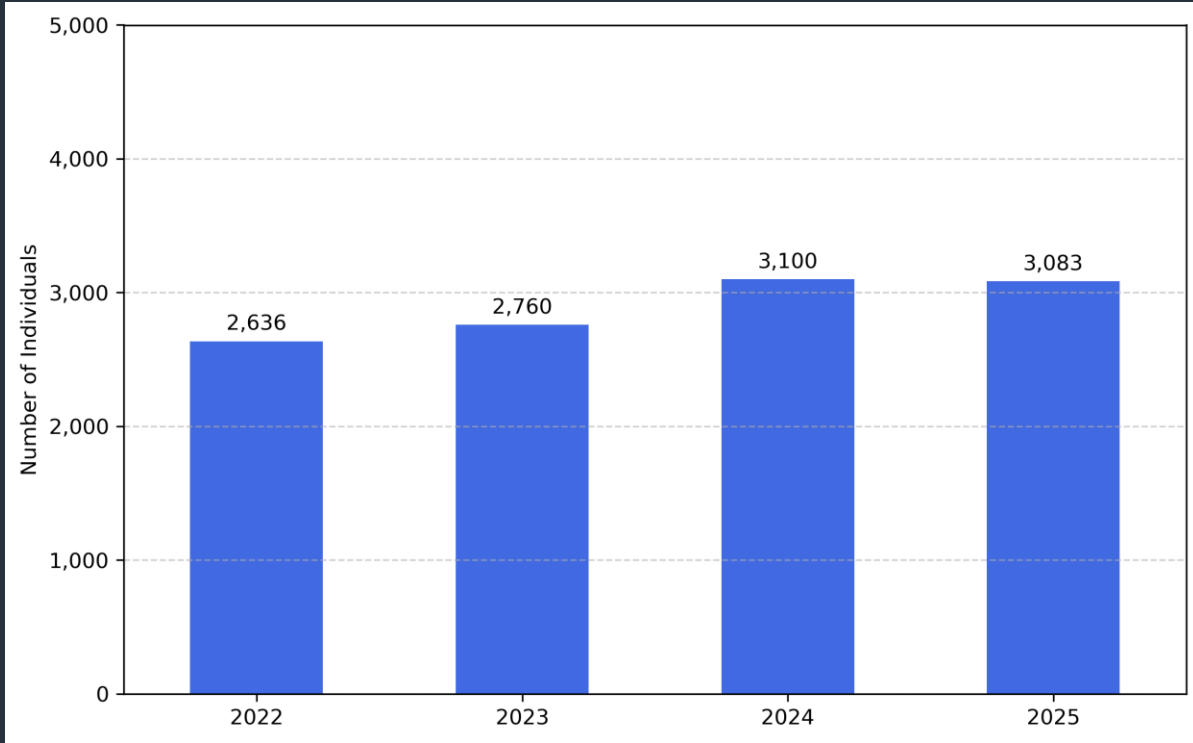
Measurement Matters: APD Use of Force Reported in 2023 - 2025



Findings from Austin Police 2025 Annual Use of Force Report

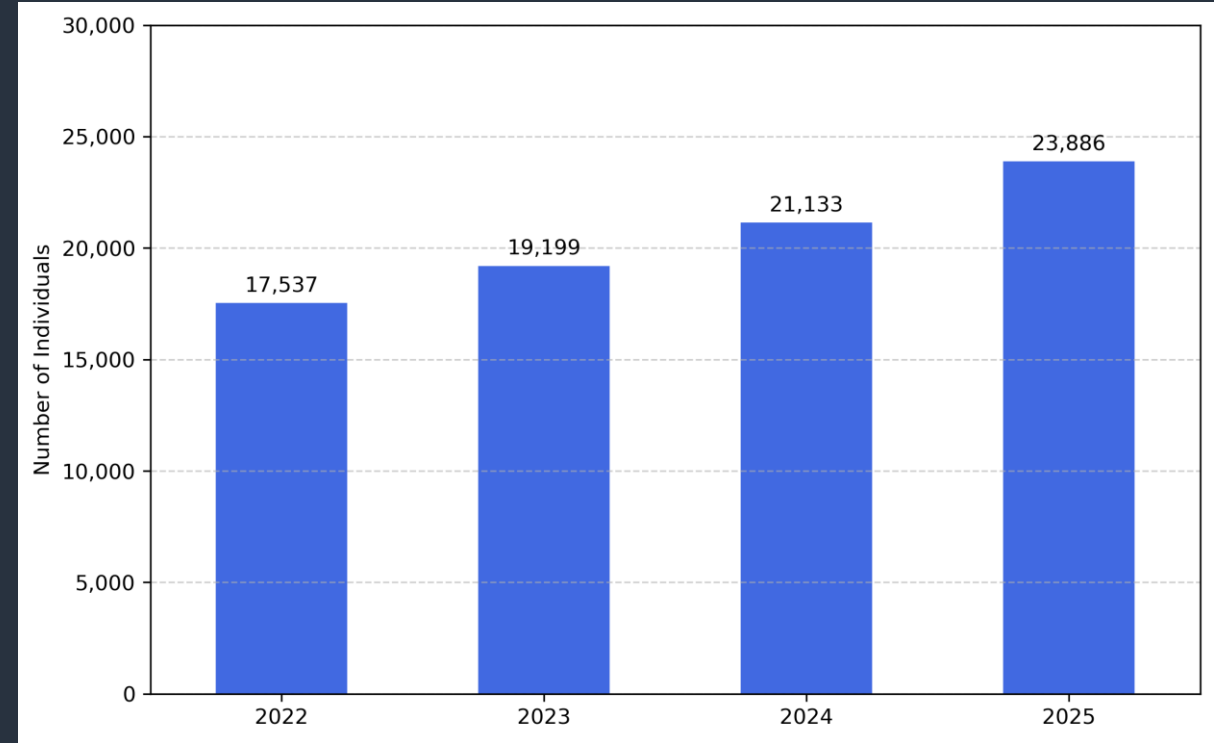
**From Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2025, the APD reported:
2,809 use of force incidents, involving 3,083 individual subjects,
and 908 officers.**

2025 Use of Force Subjects (n=3,083)



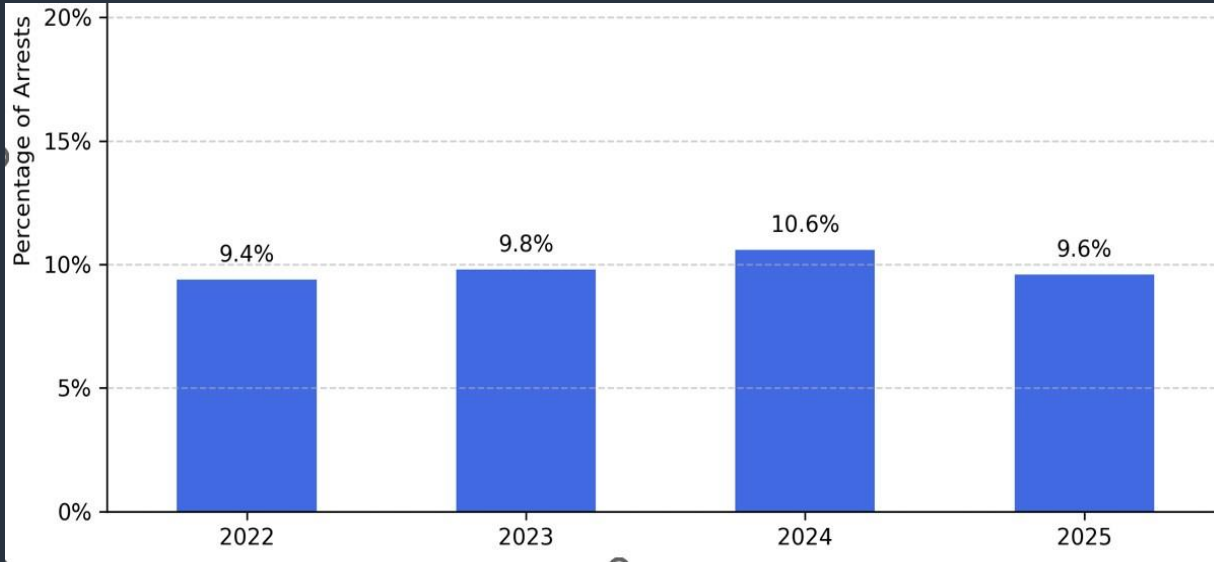
- **1% decrease** 2024 to 2025
- **9% increase** 2025 from 3-year avg

2025 Arrestees (n=23,886)



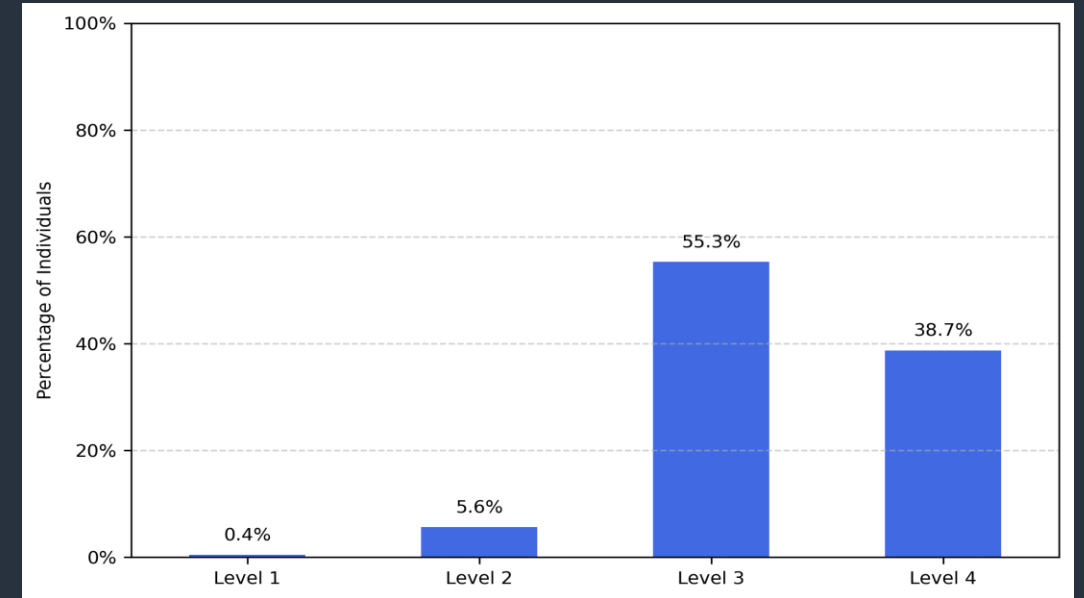
- **13% increase** 2024 to 2025
- **24% increase** 2025 from 3-year avg

2025 % Arrests with Force Used



- **1% decrease** 2024 to 2025
- Expected decrease in 2026

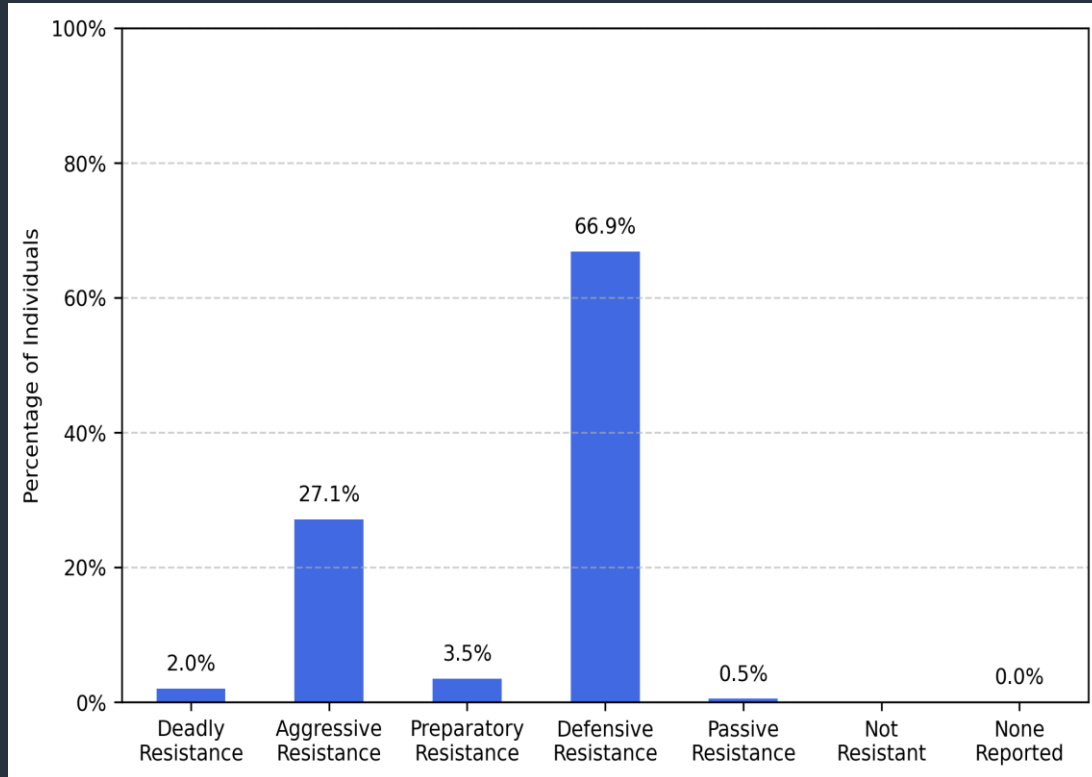
2025 Levels of Force



- Majority of force (94%) is low level
- Level 4 = 38.7%
- In 2026, some Level 4 actions will be captured as Level 3, but majority will be captured as reportable incidents

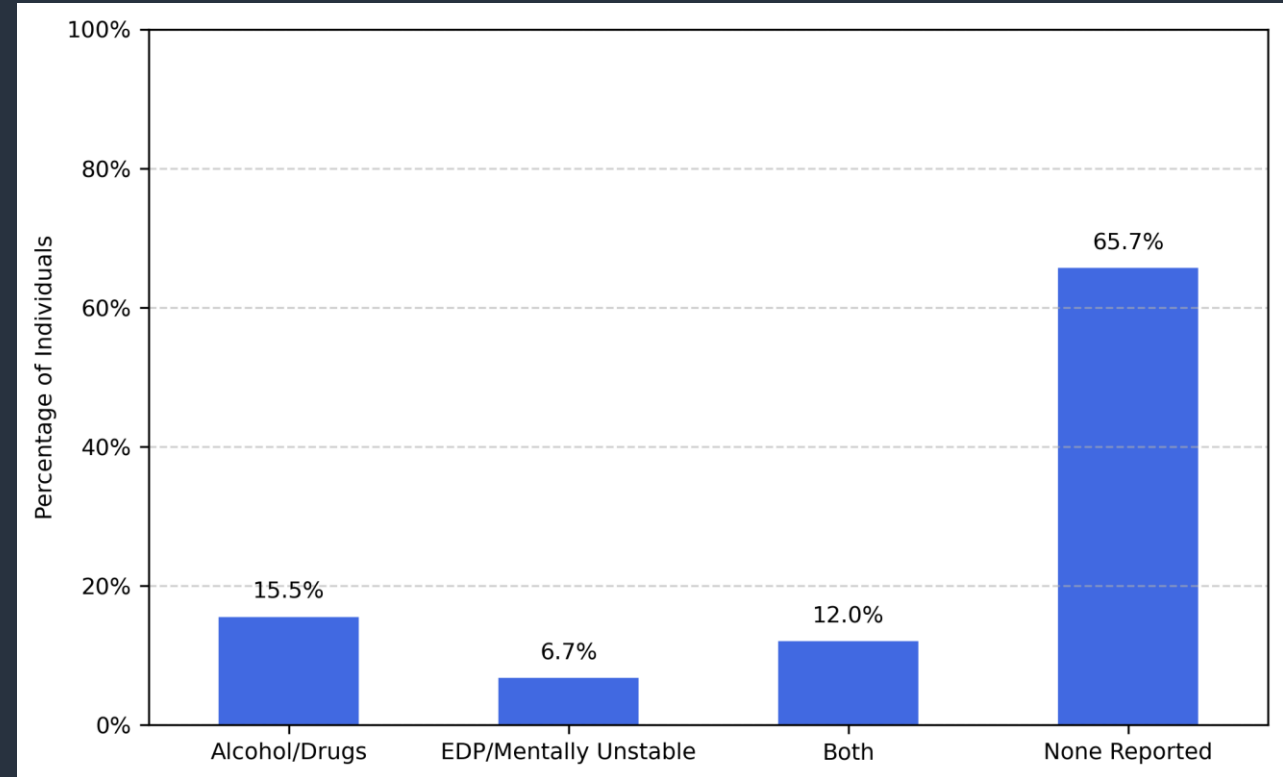
Subjects Characteristics (n=3,083)

Resistance



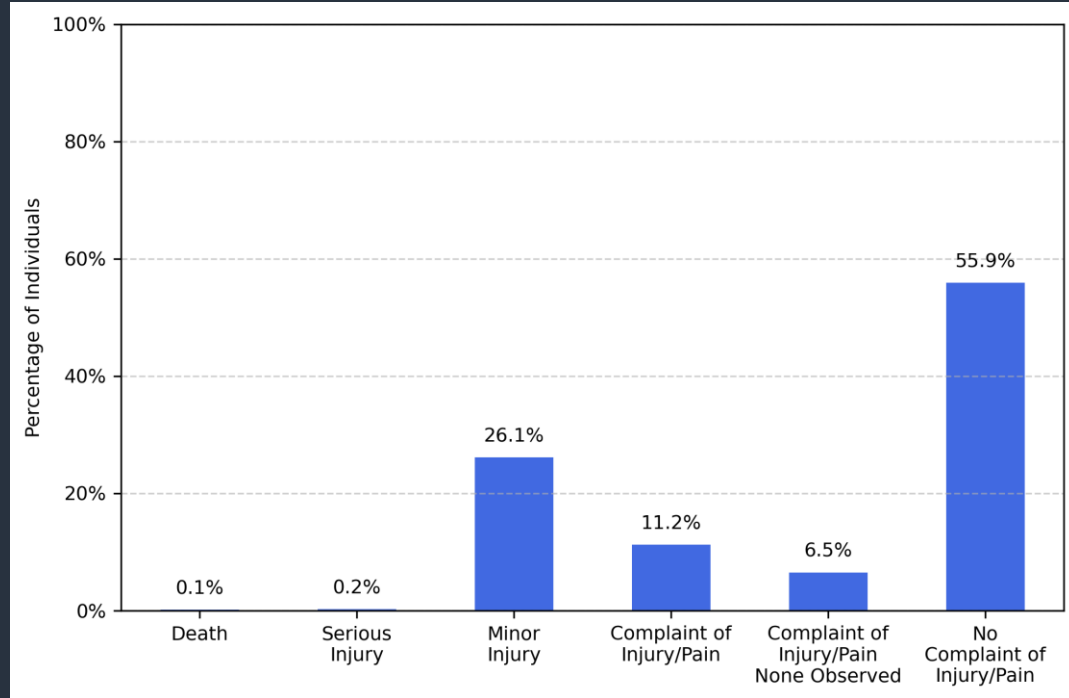
- Majority (67%) Defensive Resistance
- Preparatory Resistance (3.5%) eliminated as category in new policy

Impairment

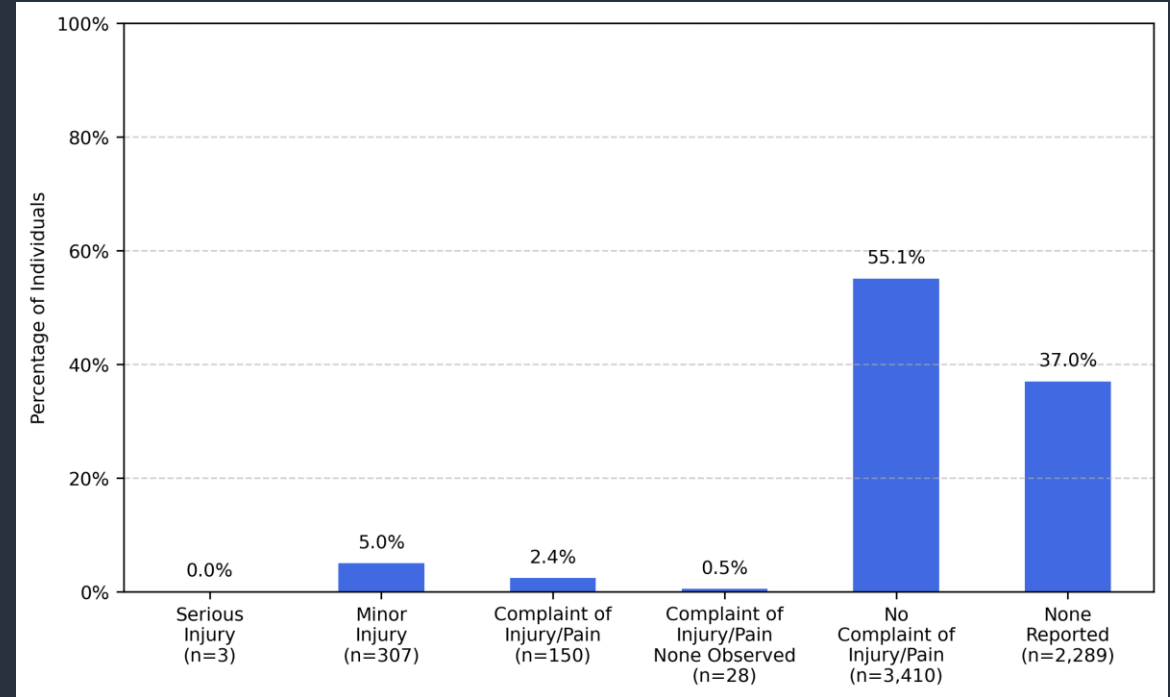


- None Reported - 65.7%
- Mandatory data field beginning Jan 1, 2026

% Subjects Injured (n=3,083)



% Officers Injured (n=908)

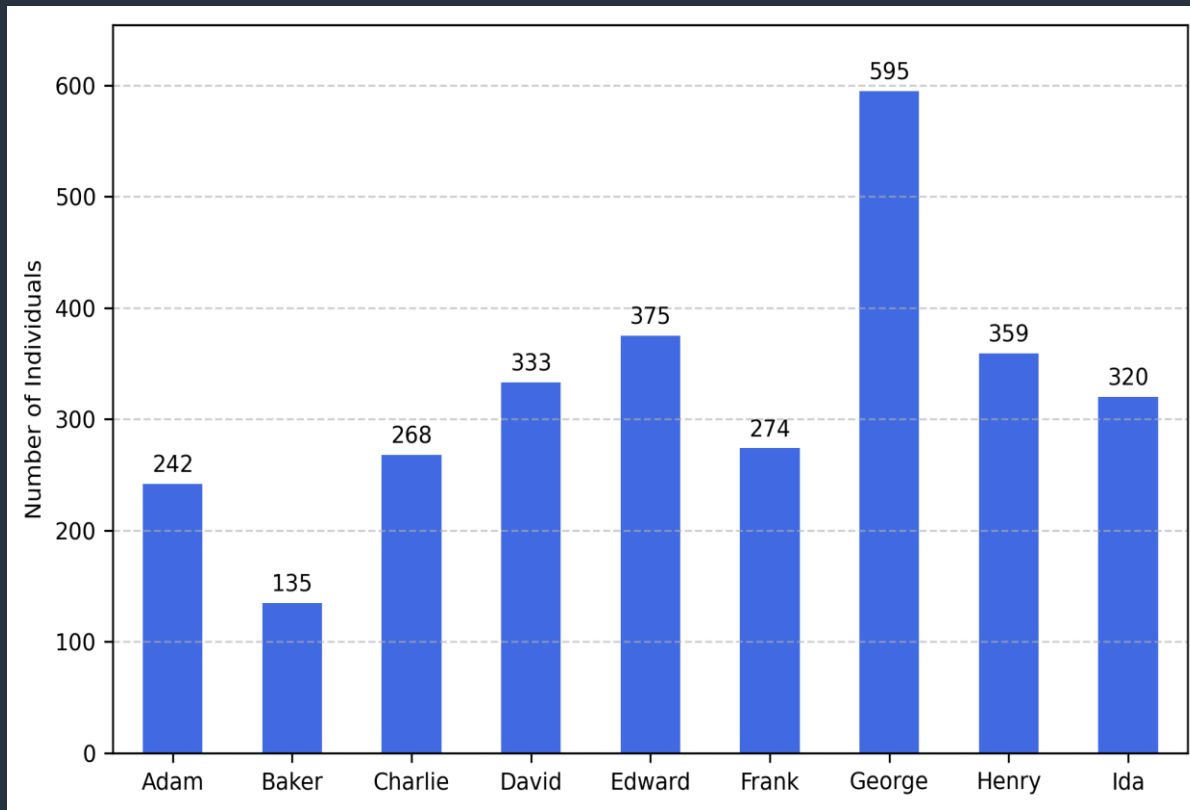


- **26%** of subjects had minor injuries
- Majority of subjects (**62%**) had no complaint of pain/injury or complaint with no injury observed

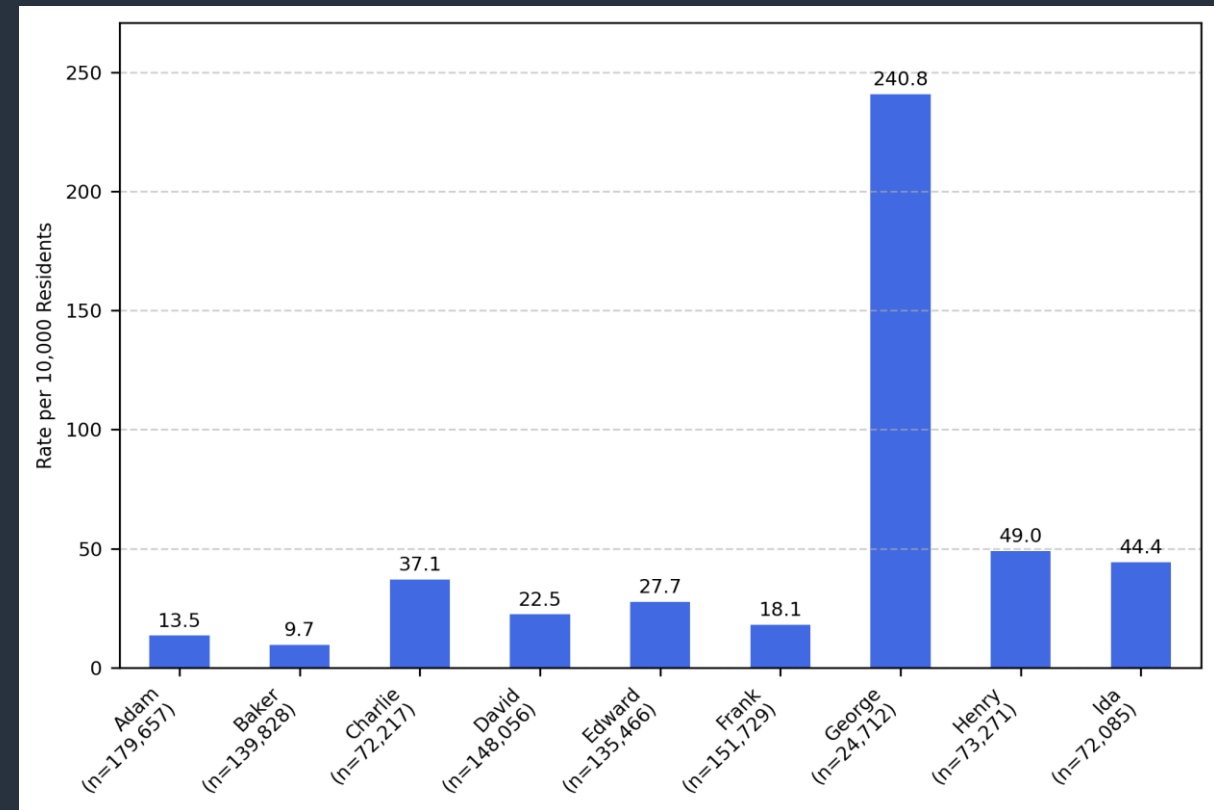
- **7%** officers reported some type of injury
- Officer injury not mandatory field - **37%** missing data

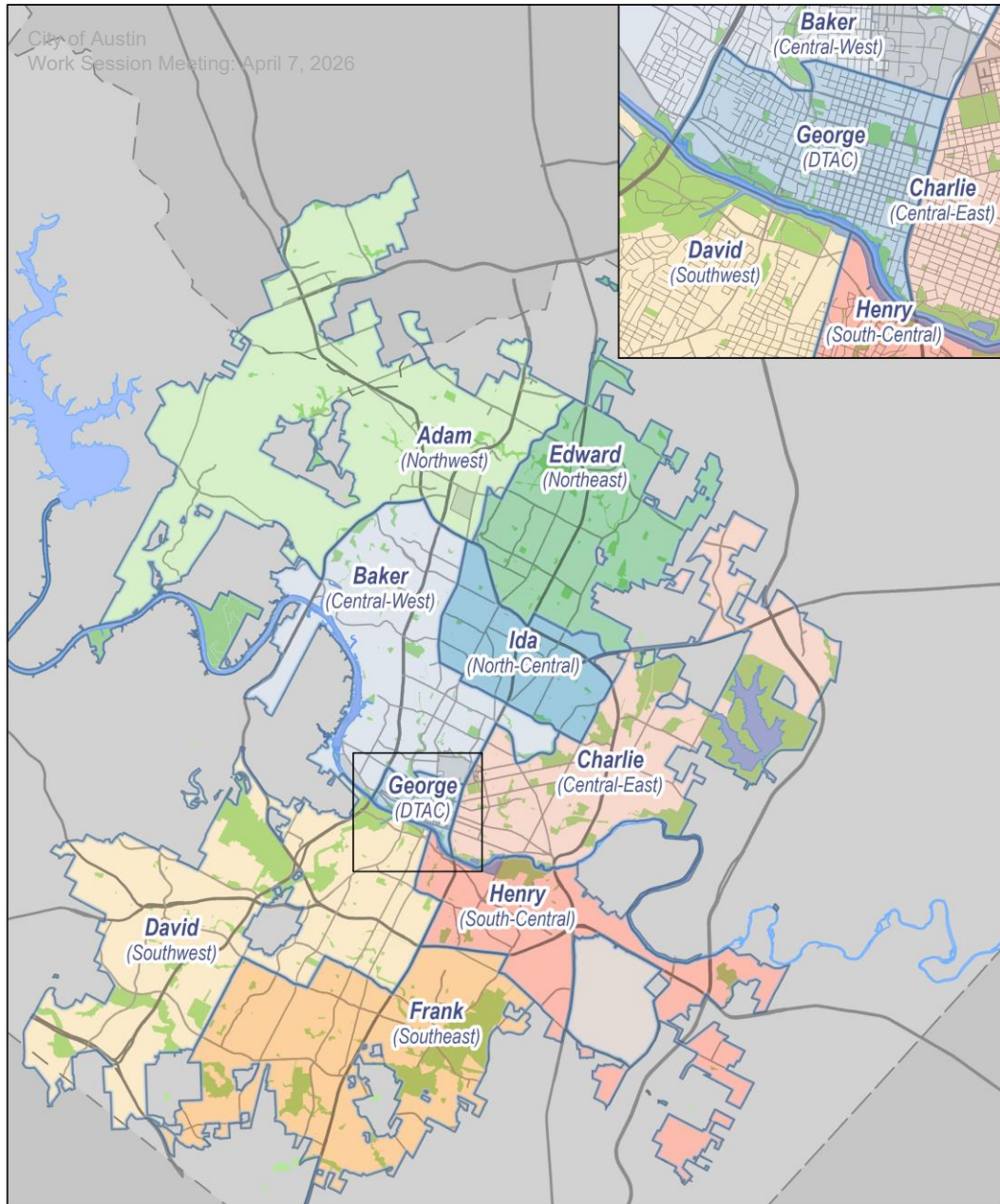
George Sector (downtown) as an Outlier

Use of Force Subjects by Sector



Use of Force Subjects by Sector per 10,000 residents





APD Sectors

Since April 2025

This map has been produced by the Austin Police Department for the sole purpose of the geographic display of available crime and/or traffic data. No warranty is made with regards to its accuracy or completeness. Created using ESRI ArcGIS Pro 2.9.5. Data is projected using North American Datum 1983, Texas State Plane Central. Units are measured in US Feet. Data sources: Austin Police Department, City of Austin Corporate GIS.

Date Saved: 8/5/2025
Created by: AP7753



Measuring Racial/Ethnic/Gender Disparities in Use of Force

Race/Ethnicity	N (%)
Hispanic	1,183 (40.3%)
Black	898 (30.6%)
White	818 (27.8%)
Other	40 (1.4%)
Gender	
Male	2,120 (72.1%)
Female	817 (27.8%)
Gender Diverse	2 (0.1%)

- Disparities do not necessarily indicate officer bias
- What factors increase likelihood of use of force?

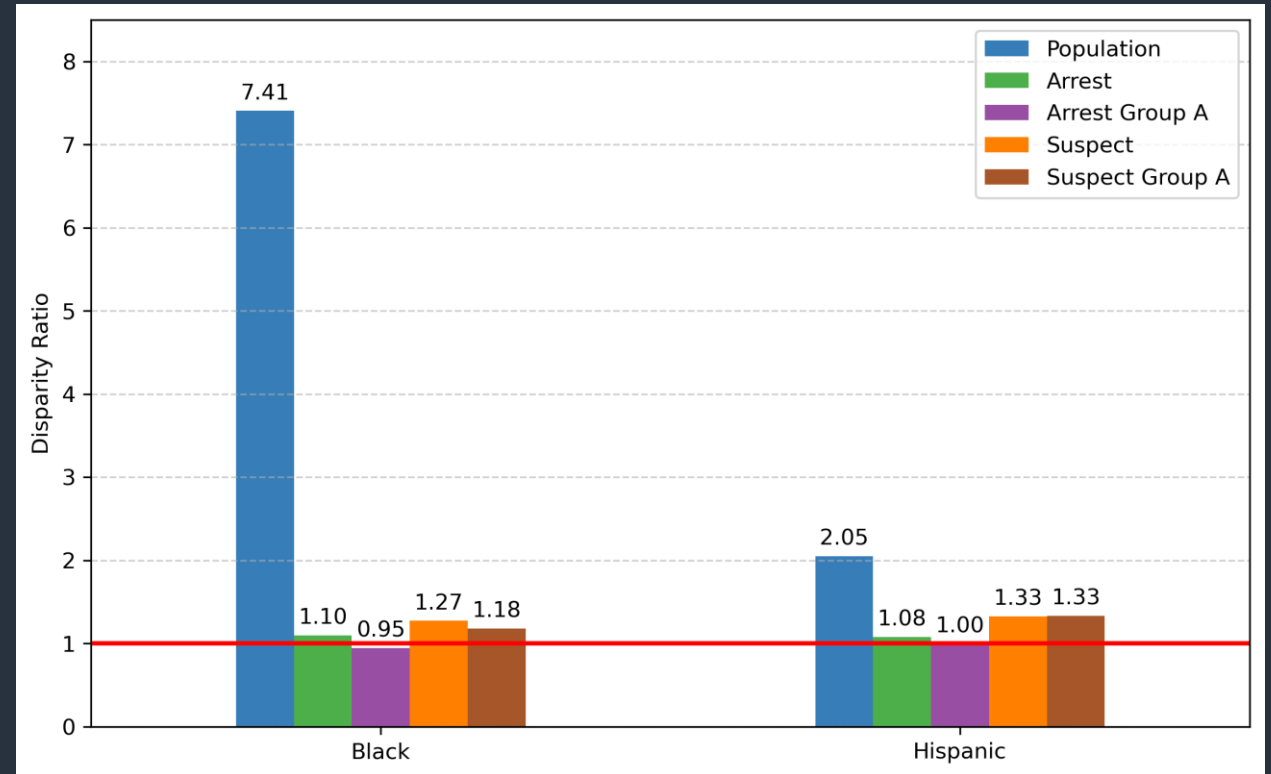
Benchmark Analyses – Answer “Compared to What?”

- **Benchmarks are proxy measures for people who are “similarly situated” or “at risk” of experiencing the same outcome (force), assuming no bias exists**
- **Risk of having force used may be influenced by:**
 - Frequency, nature, & location of contacts with the police
 - Known or suspected involvement in criminal activity
 - Individual characteristics and behaviors during the encounter (particularly resistance)
- **No benchmarks can measure all risk factors**
- **Some benchmarks are more reliable/valid than others**

- **Statistical results vary widely across benchmark – leading to different conclusions**
- **Residential census data is an especially flawed benchmark in terms of ability to measure risk**

Measuring Racial/Ethnic Disparities – 1. Benchmark Analyses

- 3 data sources – Census, Arrest, Suspect
- 5 benchmarks
- Using multiple benchmarks shows Census data not accurate comparison



**No substantive racial/ethnic
disparities found in use of force**

2. Multivariate Regression Analyses – Answer “likelihood if all else held constant”

Statistical models that simultaneously isolate impact of multiple factors that might predict use for force of arrested population

“Holding all else constant” models can estimate impact of single factor (e.g., race/ethnicity)

- But not all factors are measured with arrest data (e.g., subject resistance)
- “Model misspecification”

Measuring Racial/Ethnic Disparities –

2. Multivariate Model Predicting Use of Force of Arrestees

- 78.8% of subjects who had force used against them were arrested
- Examine all arrests (n=23,886)
- Use statistical models to estimate who has force used against them
- Controls for arrestee, incident, and legal characteristics (captured in arrest data)

	Coef (SE)	P-value	Odds Ratio	Probability
Intercept	-1.649* (0.102)	0.000	0.19	
Arrestee Characteristics				
Age	-0.018* (0.002)	0.000	0.98 (1.02)	14.5%
Male	-0.017 (0.052)	0.738	--	--
Black	0.098 (0.059)	0.093	--	--
Hispanic	-0.015 (0.056)	0.795	--	--
Other	-0.551* (0.208)	0.008	0.58 (1.73)	5.1%
Incident Characteristics				
Night Time	0.101* (0.048)	0.034	1.11	8.7%
Weekend	0.141* (0.048)	0.003	1.15	9.2%
Summer (Jun-Aug)	0.102* (0.050)	0.041	1.11	9.0%
George Sector	0.407* (0.056)	0.000	1.50	11.5%
Legal Characteristics				
Firearm	-0.328* (0.110)	0.003	0.72 (1.39)	6.3%
Warrant Arrest	-1.247* (0.075)	0.000	0.29 (3.48)	3.5%
Felony Arrest	0.063 (0.046)	0.176	--	--

Race/ethnicity of arrestee is **not** a statistically significant predictor of use of force

Summary of Factors Impacting Use of Force during Arrests

Factors significantly associated with an increased likelihood of force during arrest:

- Younger age
- Nighttime hours
- Weekends
- Summer months
- George Sector
- No firearm
- No warrant

After controlling for other factors, Black and Hispanic arrestees had **equal likelihood** as Whites of having force used against them

Arrestees of “other” race were ***less likely*** than Whites to have force used

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Integrating UoF Policy into APD Training

- LMS Training on new policy completed by 96% of personnel by Jan 31, 2026
- Policy changes added to mandatory 2026 Refresher Training
 - 20 hrs for officers
 - 40 hrs for first-line sup and above
 - 2 classes completed
- ICAT national trainers hired to work with academy staff & observe training

Critical Decision Making (CDM) Model incorporated into:

- Cadet Training
 - Scenario debriefs
 - Use of CDM to guide report writing
- FTO School and FTO Recert Training
 - Guide debriefs
 - Training for Probationary Police Officers
- First-line Supervisor Training
 - Guide to debrief CFS with officers
 - Guide to debrief incidents with shifts

Why Focus on ICAT Training?

The evidence shows

- ICAT training has been independently tested
- Only training program with demonstrated reductions in use of force, subject injuries, and officer injuries in more than one study

But

- Training content and delivery matters – trainee receptivity is critical
- Focus on first-line supervisors has greatest immediate and long-term impact
- Holistic approach (policy + supervision + managerial reinforcement + integrated training) will improve impact

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Next Steps

- Continue monthly review of use of force trends and reporting
- Develop dashboard for APD executive level and supervisor oversight
- Work with national ICAT trainers:
 - Observe ICAT training
 - Conduct ride-alongs with officers
 - Review first-line sup training
- Focus on accountability and oversight mechanisms
 - Review of Force Review Unit (FRU)
- Review related APD policies (e.g., vehicle pursuits, foot pursuits, ped /traffic stops)
- Design and implement study to determine impact on use of force

CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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