



OUR FIRST EDITION

JANUARY - MARCH

Q1.2021 REPORT

A NEW APPROACH TO
COMMUNITY
SAFETY
AND WELLNESS

WWW.ATLANTAPAD.ORG



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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I am so honored to share with you PAD's first quarterly report, which highlights the progress we have made to launch Community Referral Services in partnership with the City of Atlanta's 311 line, as well as the expansion of diversion availability to law enforcement. In this report, we also take the opportunity to describe why our work is so critical in this present moment and the values that are at the heart of our approach.

It's important to provide this context because PAD is not a program; we are a real-time, practical application of a new approach to community safety, wellness, and policing. And in order for this approach to succeed – for us to finally lay aside a punitive response to some of our communities' most challenging daily concerns – we need to take collective responsibility for it.

Callers to 311 who have requested a PAD Harm Reduction team have quickly learned that this approach is not about calling someone to arrive and “remove a problem.” No, that's the old way. What callers have found is that they are inviting a team of big-hearted, creative, persistent problem-solvers to show up and make a connection. And when that connection is sparked, change becomes possible.

It may not happen immediately, and it may not be the change that is expected. But we do this work because we believe that change is possible; change within ourselves, within communities, and within systems. We welcome your ideas, your questions, and your participation as we together build strong, thriving communities that have the tools to respond to harm effectively and with compassion for all.

With gratitude,



MOKI MACIAS

Executive Director



OVERVIEW

The Policing Alternatives & Diversion Initiative (PAD) was born out of the work and vision of Atlantans directly impacted by policing and incarceration. Committed to advancing a new approach to community safety and wellness, PAD was developed through a collaborative design process that brought together community members, city and county officials, service providers, and advocates.

Today, PAD works to reduce arrest and incarceration of people experiencing extreme poverty, problematic substance use, or mental health concerns, and to increase the accessibility of supportive services in Atlanta and Fulton County. Through a partnership with the City of Atlanta, PAD dispatches community response teams via the City's 311 non-emergency services line, making Atlanta the only city in the country to use 311 to offer immediate service for people experiencing issues related to unmet behavioral health needs. Through collaboration with the Atlanta and MARTA Police Departments, PAD provides the option to divert such persons away from jail and towards the care and support that they need.



PAD fosters a new approach to community safety and wellness by providing an alternative to punishing people for what they do to survive. We believe safety is achieved when we connect with people as people, attend to their basic needs, and work with them to reduce harm to themselves and their neighbors. Communities are safer and healthier when people have the support to not only survive, but to thrive.



THE CHALLENGE

For decades, our current systems have failed to provide care and support for those who needed it the most.

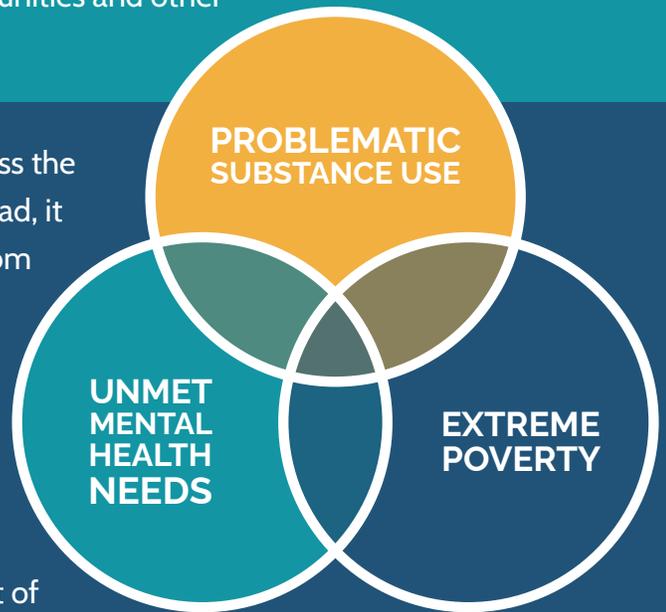
Instead, local and state governments have criminalized survival activities. They have used police intervention and detention as the primary responses to social issues of substance use, mental health challenges, and homelessness. But, as our nation examines the impacts of our over-reliance on policing, we recognize the great harm to both individuals and communities left in the wake, with Black communities and other people of color bearing the greatest burden.

The cycle of arrest and incarceration does not address the actual issues that drive quality of life concerns. Instead, it pushes people even further to the margins, away from the connections and resources that support stability and wellness. In the meantime, communities continue to suffer from a lack of housing options and consistent access to income, mental health and substance use services, and medical care.

Today, our country has arrived at a national moment of reckoning. Incarceration and arrest have failed to address our communities' real needs, and across the nation, cities are urgently searching for a meaningful alternative. This urgency is reflected in Atlanta, as the debate over how to finally shutter the all-but-empty Atlanta Detention Center has risen to the forefront of local issues.

Even as the path forward remains fraught with uncertainties, there is widespread agreement:

It is time for a different approach if we want to ensure safe and healthy communities for all.



OUR MISSION

PAD's mission is to reduce the arrest and incarceration of people experiencing extreme poverty, problematic substance use, or unmet mental health needs. We promote a new approach to community safety and wellness by reducing police involvement in issues related to quality of life concerns and by increasing the accessibility of supportive services.

OUR GOALS

PAD aims 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 each person 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, in order to foster accountability and healing.

A NEW APPROACH TO
COMMUNITY
SAFETY
AND WELLNESS



OUR VALUES

The entirety of PAD's work is rooted in our core values of social justice, harm reduction, and housing first. These are also the principles of care that inform how we interact with and serve our participants.

SOCIAL JUSTICE



- We believe that criminalization and punishment are not appropriate responses to poverty, unmet mental health needs, or problematic substance use, and that keeping people out of jail is harm reduction.
- We acknowledge and challenge racism, classism, transphobia, misogyny, ableism, xenophobia, and other systems of oppression that cause harm, trauma, and barriers to the communities we serve.

HARM REDUCTION



- We respect each individual's choice to identify and implement the best strategies for their own well-being, which may or may not include abstinence.
- We understand that people are accountable for their own actions and behaviors, and we commit to non-judgmental, open, and honest conversations about the impact of risky behaviors.
- We support and celebrate any and all positive life changes an individual chooses to make.

HOUSING FIRST



- We believe that housing is a basic human right and that housing and basic needs services are critical to support and sustain positive change.
- We advocate for housing options that are no- or low-barrier and that do not require abstinence, adherence to mental health treatment, or other mandated behavior change as a condition of housing.

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

Through PAD 311 Community Referral Services, PAD partners with the City of Atlanta's 311 non-emergency services line to accept community referrals for concerns related to mental health, substance use, or extreme poverty. When a caller refers an individual with one or more of these issues, a PAD response team conducts outreach to meet the individual, assess their needs, and provide ongoing support.

2

PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE ALTERNATIVE TO ARREST

Through the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program (LEAD), PAD accepts pre-arrest diversion referrals from law enforcement officers. This provides an immediate alternative to arrest for individuals who are detained by law enforcement and are experiencing substance addiction, mental health concerns, or extreme poverty. While PAD 311 Community Referral Services empower community members to seek assistance regarding concerns without police intervention, LEAD provides Atlanta Police Department (APD) and Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) officers the option to divert individuals to PAD whom they would otherwise arrest and book at the Atlanta City Detention Center or Fulton County Jail.

3

DIRECT SERVICES & CARE NAVIGATION

PAD conducts a needs-assessment for all referred individuals, connecting each person to the support they need. Those with more extensive needs are enrolled as participants in PAD's Care Navigation services. For these individuals, PAD provides direct support, including housing support, direct basic needs assistance, and case management. We aim to build relationships to support our participants in achieving their goals for more stable and healthy lives.

RECENT SUCCESSES

LAUNCHING PAD 311 COMMUNITY REFERRAL SERVICES

PAD's biggest impact in the first quarter of 2021 was launching PAD 311 Community Referral Services in partnership with the City of Atlanta. Today, Atlanta is the only major city in the nation using its 311 line to connect people with care and services. Through this partnership, community members are able to seek assistance with issues of substance use, mental health concerns, and extreme poverty without police involvement. Individuals who are referred through 311 are engaged by PAD response teams and offered resources to address the concerns they identify.

As a widely popular and rapidly growing service, this program represents a structural change to how our city responds to behavioral health concerns. The PAD and 311 partnership is becoming a model for other communities across the country. The availability of PAD 311 Community Referral Services is a major shift that empowers the community with a new way to address quality of life issues.



On a daily basis, our small restaurant witnesses at least one community member experience harm from extreme poverty or mental distress. Thankfully, we can now call PAD to help center our community members by treating them with dignity and respect. We experience the success of their approach within the hour, but more importantly, the effects of helping someone long term. Instead of criminalizing individuals, their compassion and consent-based approach offers sustainable results that uplift our community. someone long term. Instead of criminalizing individuals, their compassion and consent-based approach offers sustainable results that uplift our community.

— Ryan Buchanan, Noni's Manager



EXPANDING ACROSS ATLANTA

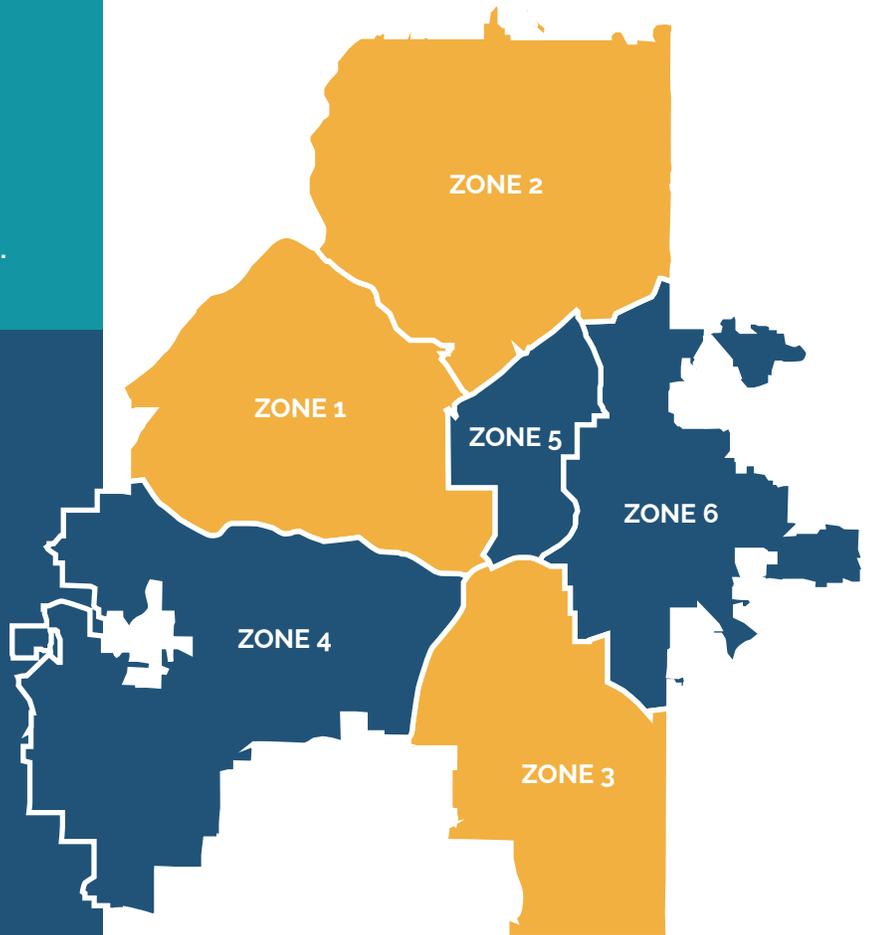
PAD expanded rapidly in Q1 to provide full 311 Community Referral Services and LEAD services to APD Zones 4, 5, and 6. To support this innovation, PAD provided in-person training to 34 APD officers and created a 12-minute training video for APD, which has been viewed by over 1,200 personnel. To educate residents on how to use PAD 311 Community Referral Services, PAD presented at 41 community meetings throughout Atlanta.

BOTH SERVICES AVAILABLE IN FIRST QUARTER

ZONE 4, ZONE 5, ZONE 6

COMING Q2:

ZONE 1, ZONE 2, ZONE 3



Our participants have reconnected with family members, started working, secured disability benefits, moved into permanent housing, and resolved long-standing legal issues that had prevented them from moving their lives forward.

This is what happens when people stop being punished and start being asked:

How can we help?

IMPACT



58

Officer diversions from Atlanta Police Dept.



140

Community Referrals through 311



184

PAD participants engaging in case management



139

Participants provided emergency housing assistance

TESTIMONIAL HIGHLIGHTS



The entire PAD team was phenomenal. Everyone from the initial 311 operator, to the follow-up call from Chyna, to the [Harm Reduction Team members] who came out, went above and beyond to quickly, efficiently, and empathetically address the situation. When the individual I questioned first came to my doorstep, he was scared and visibly distressed. But by the time he left, after spending more than an hour talking with the resource officers, he was comfortable, smiling, and you could tell he felt safe. PAD is a wonderful resource. Thank you for all that you do!

– Anonymous 311 Caller



[PAD is] instrumental in me not doing drugs because I ain't gotta be out there on the streets. I was desperate, wondering where I'm gonna get my next meal or where I was going to lay my head. Before PAD, I was always in denial about mental health issues. I only see it getting better. I have a good Care Navigator, she ain't never told me no lie about what I need to be expecting from them. I appreciate that.

– Larry, PAD Participant



Growing up in one of the roughest Atlanta projects in the '80s, I found many people in my community arrested for minor crimes when they really needed help with other underlying issues such as extreme poverty, problematic substance abuse, or mental health issues... I say all that to say that the PAD program is an excellent tool for the Atlanta Police Department to help citizens with the other underlying issues... I believe the collaboration between PAD and Zone 5 is making our city safer for everyone. While working together, we can overcome many obstacles in our community, and by doing so, we will make Atlanta a better place.

– Captain Antonio B. Clay II, APD Zone Five Assistant Commander





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OUR IMPACT

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PAD COMMUNITY 311 REFERRAL SERVICES

Available Monday-Friday,
7am-7pm to Zones 4, 5 and 6 in Q1.

PAD partners with the City of Atlanta to ensure that community members can call 311 to request assistance for addressing any number of concerns related to mental health, substance use, or extreme poverty. When a referral is made, PAD's team determines whether the situation requires an immediate response (prompt engagement within 30 minutes) or an outreach response (scheduled engagement within 72 hours). Once that's determined, PAD sends a two-person Harm Reduction team to the area to respond to the referred individual. Whenever they engage with an individual, our teams offer immediate assistance and connection to appropriate resources. People who need a higher level of care are enrolled in PAD direct services (including access to food, housing, and medical care) and are connected to a Care Navigator who provides ongoing case management for as long as they need.

RESPONSE STATISTICS

133

Referral requests
through ATL311
(excludes duplicate calls)

83

Referral requests
were designated as
immediate response

28

Requests were designated
as an outreach request

103

Callers referred
someone else

17 mins

Average immediate response
time

96%

Responded to
within 72 hours

30

Callers requested
assistance for themselves

21

Requests were provided with
resources by PAD staff over
the phone

75 hours

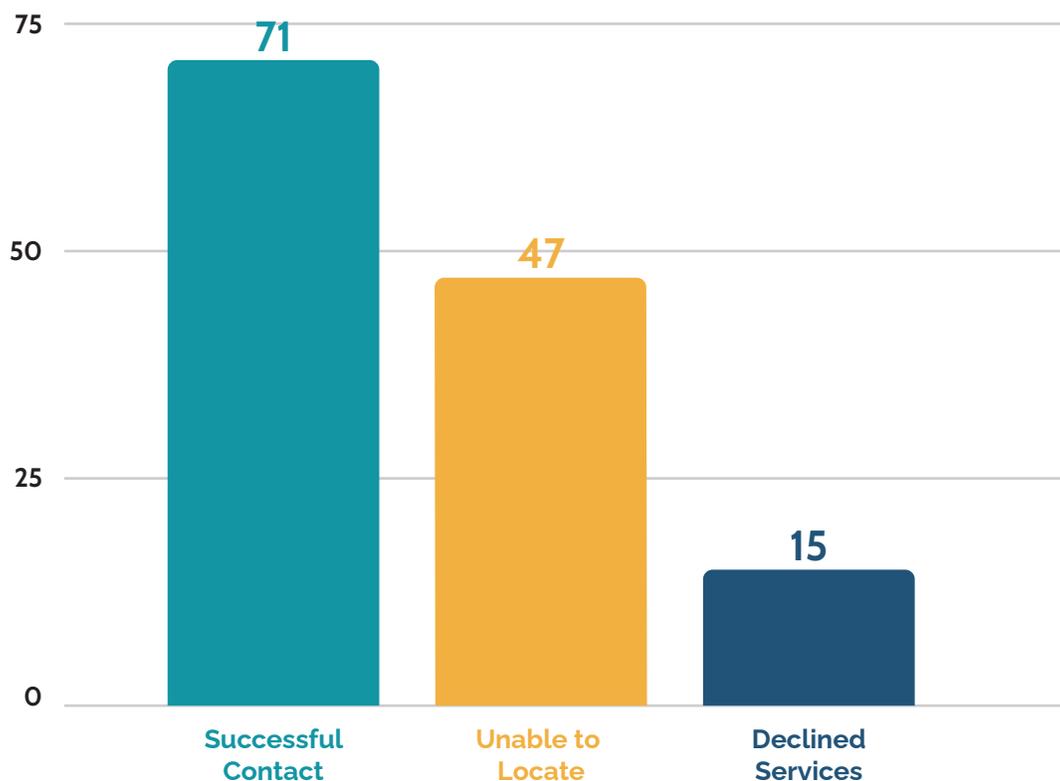
Per week of street outreach
conducted by Harm
Reduction teams

CONSENT-BASED ENGAGEMENT & PROBLEM-SOLVING

PAD responds to 311 referrals by sending a Harm Reduction team to engage with the referred individual. While our goal is to successfully find and engage each person, sometimes that may not be possible. A “Successful 311 Call” is one in which our Harm Reduction team is able to locate and provide appropriate services to the referred individual. “No Contact Made” occurs when a team is unable to locate the individual. “Declined Services” means that the referred individual is located but declines PAD’s assistance.

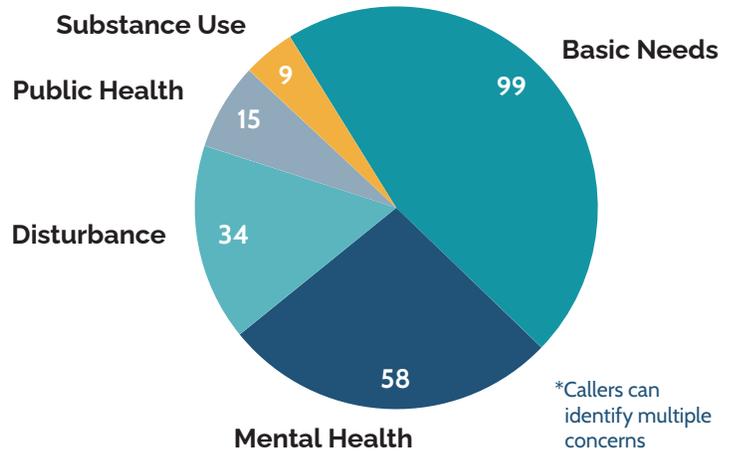
When people call 311, they are making a referral to a consent-based outreach service. PAD Harm Reduction teams never transport or engage with an individual who does not agree to our interaction. Our teams are not responsible for enforcing the law and do not detain any individual or otherwise attempt to compel them to take specific actions. Instead, PAD Harm Reduction teams attempt to build rapport with each person and identify immediate needs and challenges in order to support them in reducing harm to themselves and others.

SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT



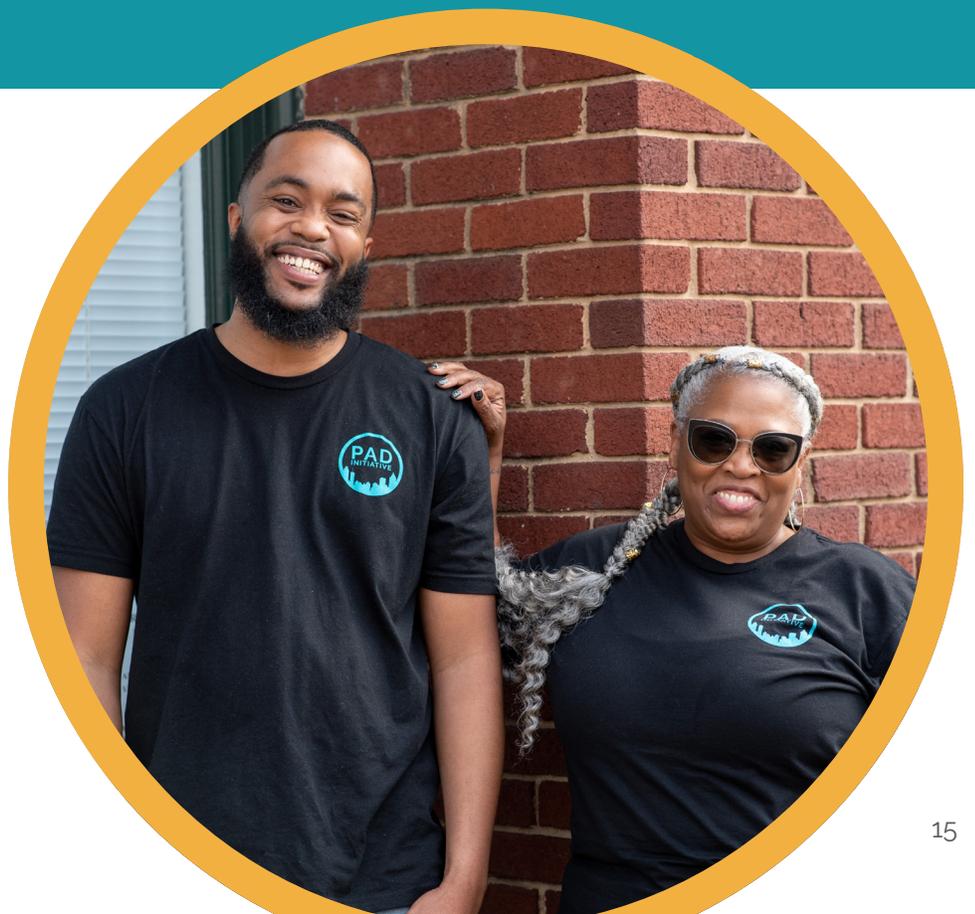
CALLER CONCERNS

People who call 311 can identify any number of reasons for why they are referring an individual. To date, more than 73% of callers reported either basic needs or mental health concerns, while 34% identified a public disturbance as the reason for the call.



PAD ENROLLMENT

In Q1, PAD successfully made contact with 71 people. Seventy-five percent were referred to resources, meaning that their immediate needs were addressed and they were connected to other services/organizations for any number of resources including housing support, medical care, food assistance, and hygiene needs. Twenty-five percent were identified as having a demonstrated need for ongoing direct support and were enrolled in PAD’s direct services.



PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE ALTERNATIVE TO ARREST

LEAD LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTED DIVERSION



58

Diversions from
Atlanta Police Dept.
from January-March

Available Monday-Friday,
7am-7pm to Zones 1, 4, 5
and 6 in Q1.

Through the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program, PAD provides an immediate alternative to arrest for individuals detained by the Atlanta Police Department or MARTA police for law violations related to mental health, substance use, and extreme poverty. If the individual consents, the officer calls the PAD Harm Reduction team instead of making an arrest, and PAD comes to the scene to begin working with the individual to address immediate basic needs. No police report is made. Following that first response, our Care Navigation team then works with the individual to identify goals, initiate case management, provide direct services (including emergency housing support as well as food and transportation assistance), and establish connections with social services and other community supports.

EXPANDING DIVERSION ACCESSIBILITY

In Q1, PAD increased the accessibility of law enforcement diversion services by increasing existing coverage and expanding to new zones, but use of these services remains underutilized. In the coming quarters, PAD hopes to promote increased police utilization of LEAD diversions in order to keep people out of jail and to better address their survival activities. In the first quarter of 2021, PAD

- **Increased hours:** LEAD now operates 7AM-7PM from M-F, an increase of 20 hours a week compared to the previous quarter.
- **Expanded geography:** At the start of Q1, in January, LEAD services were available to officers in Zones 4, 5 and 6. By the end of Q1, in March, PAD expanded coverage to Zone 1.
- **Additional staff:** PAD has added two dedicated Referral Coordinators to receive referrals and diversions, providing officers with a consistent and direct point of contact.



TRAIN POLICE IN DIVERSION

The success of LEAD depends on police officers utilizing diversion options at the point of arrest. To promote their awareness and use of LEAD, PAD provided extensive engagement and diversion training for APD and MARTA police officers in Zones 1, 4, 5, and 6. Beyond in-person training, PAD created a 12-minute training video for APD; distributed through the Department’s internal training portal, it has been viewed by over 1,200 personnel.

7
Law enforcement trainings in 2021

8
Roll call presentations were provided

7
Officers engaged from Zone 1

20
Officers engaged from Zone 6

48
Officers trained

65
Officers reached

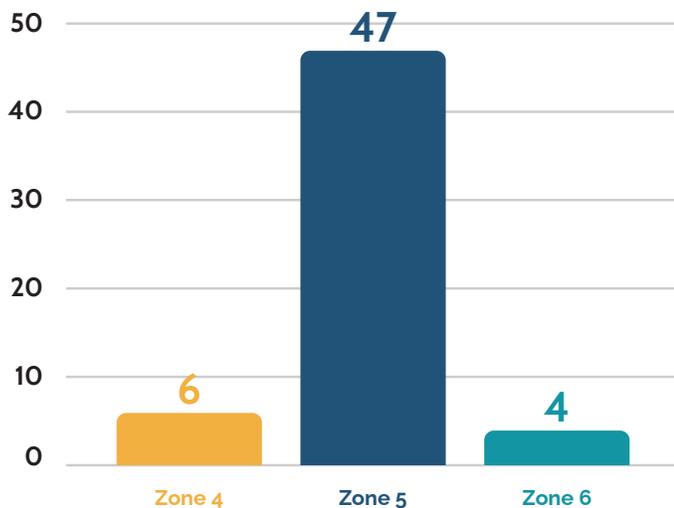
48
Officers engaged from Zone 5

9
Officers engaged from MARTA

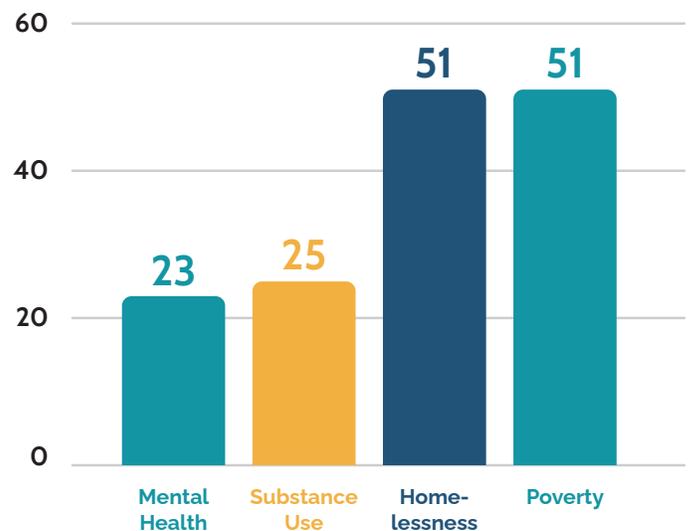
OTHER LEAD REFERRALS

Besides the Atlanta and MARTA police departments, PAD also partners with the Fulton County District Attorney, Public Defender, and Solicitor General, as well as the City of Atlanta Public Defender and Solicitor. Through these partners, PAD took in 9 additional referrals.

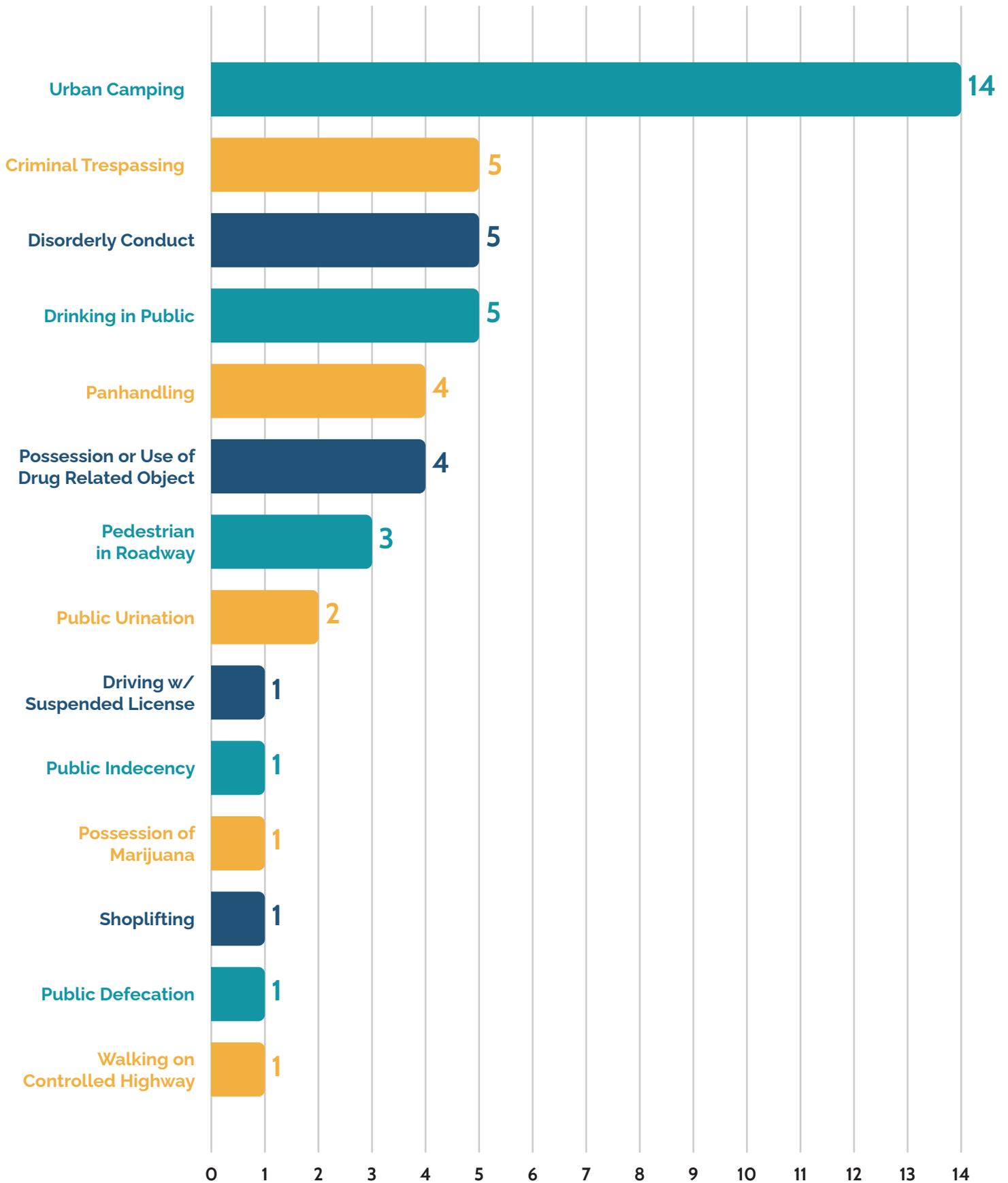
APD DIVERSIONS BY ZONE



PRIMARY CONCERN AT TIME OF DIVERSION



DIVERSIONS BY CHARGE



DIRECT SERVICES & CARE NAVIGATION

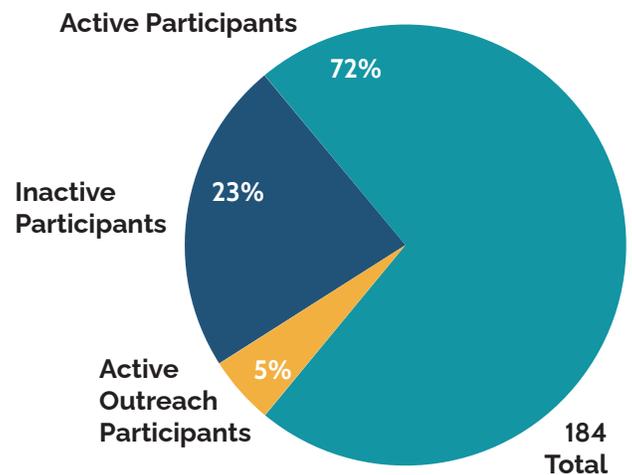
A new approach to safety and wellness through community-based case management.

After receiving referrals from 311 and LEAD, PAD’s Care Navigation team provides direct case management services for participants who have ongoing demonstrated needs. By providing a supportive connection, immediate safe shelter, and tending to basic needs, our Care Navigation team provides participants with a pathway to broader community resources.

The focus of our Care Navigation services is to address quality of life concerns in a way that honors the dignity and self-determination of each participant. Care Navigators offer many types of support, including assistance securing documentation and identification, applying for benefits and employment, identifying and securing housing, accessing medical, dental and mental healthcare, navigating the court system for previous cases or civil legal issues, and re-connecting with family members or community supports. PAD does not impose requirements, but instead works with participants to identify and reach their personal goals.

PAD PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST QUARTER

At the end of the first quarter, PAD Care Navigators were working with 133 Active Participants in weekly navigation meetings (community-based or over the phone). Forty-two participants were inactive at the end of the period, meaning that the participant had not engaged with their Care Navigator for at least three months. Even for participants in “inactive” status, PAD still continues to proactively reach out in order to re-establish contact.



ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS
have been engaged in the last month

*PAD participant status of 3/31/2021

ACTIVE OUTREACH PARTICIPANTS
have had contact in the last 90 days

INACTIVE PARTICIPANTS
have NOT had contact in the last 90 days

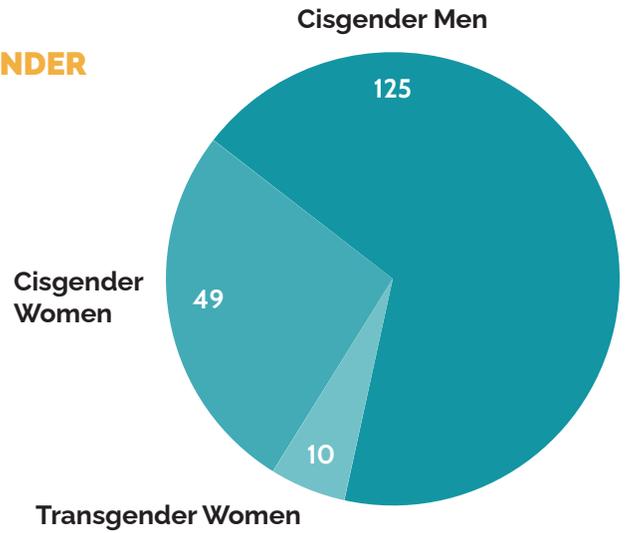
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

184

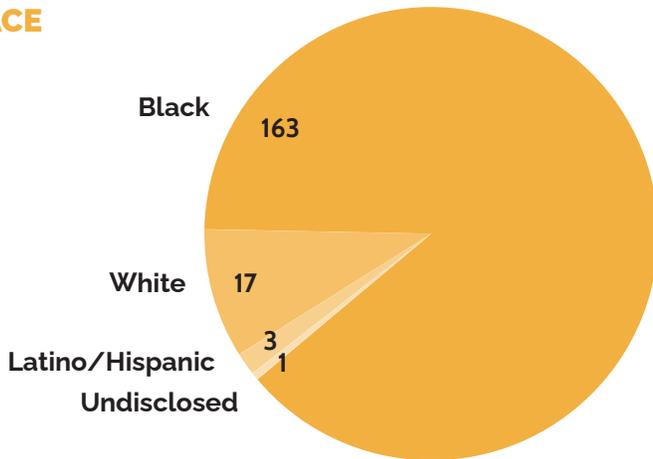
Participants enrolled as of 3/31/2021



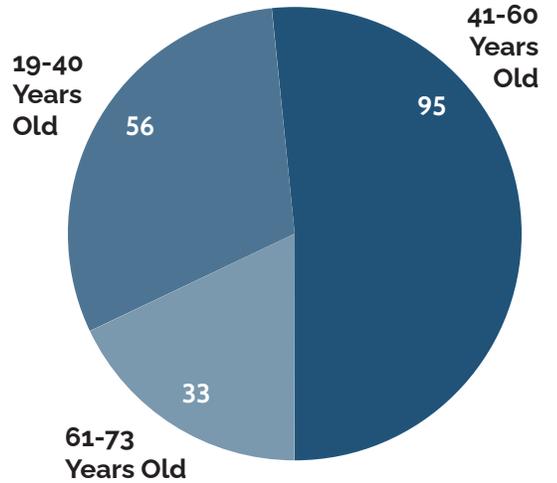
GENDER



RACE



AGE



Ben struggles with addiction and mental health problems and often sleeps in neighbors' yards and leaves his waste behind. While folks empathize with him and do not wish for him to wind up in jail, their attempts to get him in a stable living situation over the years have failed... With PAD launching its 311 initiative in Zones 5 and 6, we were able to connect Ben with someone who was able to get him to accept some help. Ben's uncle was overwhelmed with gratitude when I called and let him know that he had accepted some help.

– Katie, 311 Caller



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

For each participant, PAD works to help them navigate barriers to care (legal, institutional, financial, etc.) and facilitate linkages to the most appropriate long-term supports, including housing, healthcare, substance use management, benefits, employment, and family and community connections. PAD also provides a variety of direct services including cell phones, housing (through short-term motel stays, shelters, or private housing providers), food (providing grocery store gift cards and purchasing food as needed), and transportation (providing public transit cards).

HOUSING SERVICES

139

People provided with emergency shelter

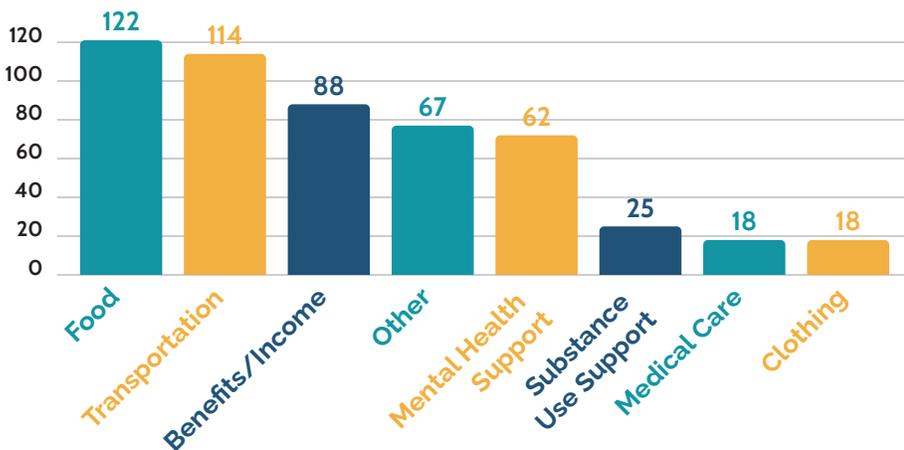
15

Individuals completed the VI-SPDAT assessment for housing placement

6

Individuals were placed in Rapid Rehousing

SERVICES PROVIDED



Participants who work with PAD aren't simply enrolled in a temporary program. Instead, they are part of an ongoing community and offered a long-term, supportive relationship to help them continue achieving their goals.

PARTICIPANT SUCCESS

PAD participant Tamara was diverted from arrest for criminal trespass in August 2018, when she was on a church property because she had nowhere else to go. For many years, Tamara endured incarceration for activities related to substance use and unmet mental health needs.

This month, Tamara and her PAD Care Navigator, Caroline Henderson, attended court together one last time as her public defender successfully advocated for the dismissal of all related charges. She is now living in temporary housing with one of PAD's housing partners and has consistent healthcare and treatment support.



1

SMOOTH EXPANSION WITH GROWING DEMAND

Strong partnerships with City of Atlanta agencies have helped drive a successful launch of PAD 311 Community Referral Services as well as the smooth rollout of PAD services in new zones. As evidenced by PAD's quarterly data, community members are actively using PAD 311 Community Referral Services even as it continues to expand beyond its first quarter.

2

311 COMMUNITY REFERRALS ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN POLICE DIVERSION FOR PREVENTING ARRESTS

Reducing police involvement for quality of life concerns reduces arrests. Welcomed by Atlanta residents and the police department alike, PAD 311 Community Referral Services offers an effective new option for increasing community safety and wellness.

3

PAD IS A PATHWAY, NOT THE COMPLETE SOLUTION

PAD connects individuals to the array of available services that can help them meet their needs. But PAD alone cannot address our community's need to increase capacity for community-based services. More behavioral health services, housing, and other supports are required. Additional investments and continued collaboration with the City of Atlanta and Fulton County are essential as we, as a community, turn away from punishment and incarceration.



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NEXT STEPS

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COMPLETING OUR EXPANSION

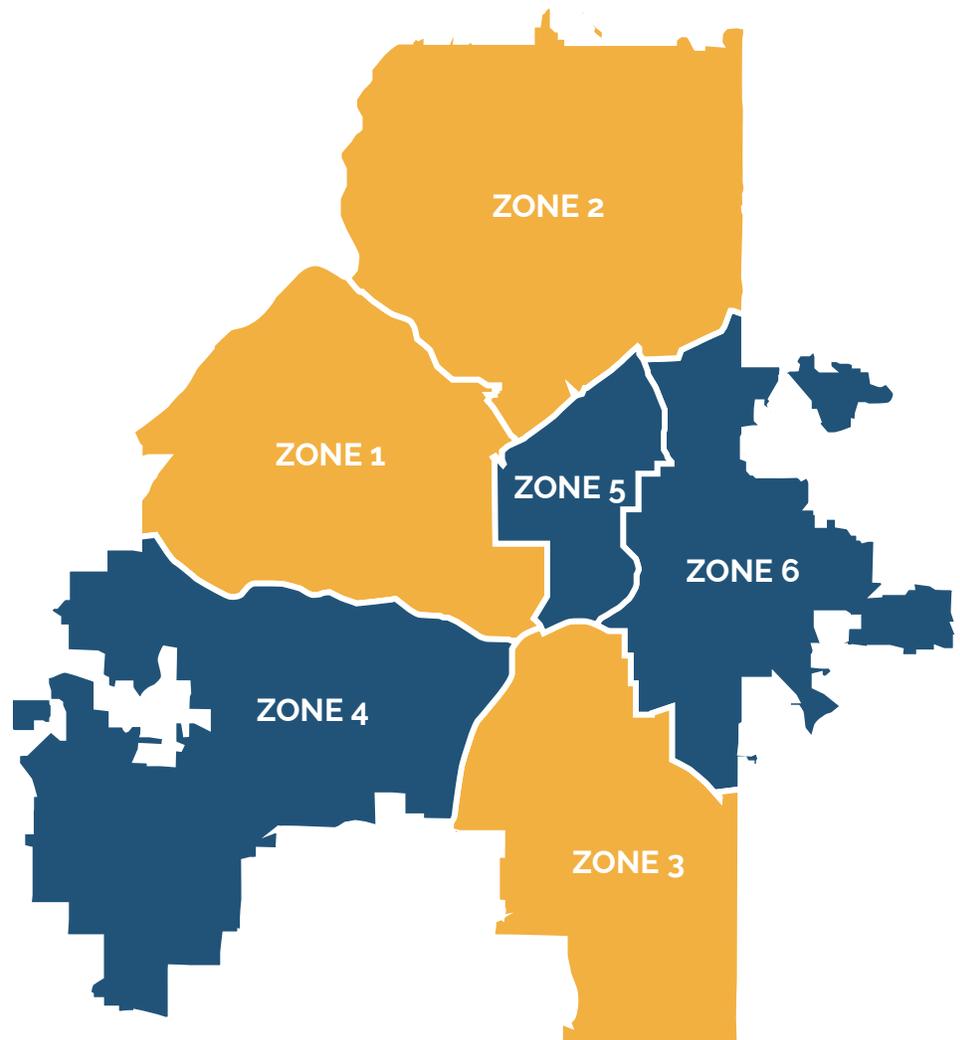
In Q2, we will continue expanding PAD 311 Community Referral Services and LEAD Diversion services rapidly across the City of Atlanta. PAD is on track to achieving complete city-wide service coverage by June 2021, Monday-Friday from 7AM-7PM.

OPERATING NOW IN APD ZONES:

ZONE 4, ZONE 5, ZONE 6

COMING Q2:

ZONE 1, ZONE 2, ZONE 3



COLLABORATING TO IMPROVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS SERVICES

PAD is a key partner in the Fulton County Justice and Mental Health Taskforce, the ongoing planning effort to close the Atlanta City Detention Center, and the SAMHSA Competent Crisis Care System Community of Practice. Through these efforts and others, PAD will continue to partner with key city, county, and state agencies, as well as Grady Hospital, Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, BehaviorHealthLink, and others to develop the resources our communities need to provide care and end incarceration of people experiencing behavioral health emergencies.





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 with us.

To invite PAD to present at a community meeting or event, please contact our Community Engagement Manager, Clara Totenberg Green, at clara@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 wish to organize a supply drive, please contact our Office Manager, Kay Charles, at 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

Please note, PAD does not accept referrals directly from community members. To make a referral, please call 311 between the hours of 7AM–7PM, Monday–Friday.

Email: 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



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APPENDIX

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PAD IN THE MEDIA

- [Opinion: We need to rethink mental health care — and the assumptions we have about what support means](#) (*The Washington Post*, May 6, 2021)
- [Reimagine Safety: Mental illness is not a crime. Police should not respond like it is](#) (*The Washington Post Editorial Board*, March 11, 2021)
- [An alternative to 911: Atlanta 311 line now takes non-emergency mental health, drug calls](#) (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, February 2, 2021)
- [Atlanta police have option to making arrests](#) (*Fox 5 Atlanta*, April 15, 2021)

