# Public Requests for Assistance from the San Antonio Police Department:
# An Assessment of Calls for Service Received between Jan 2018-Oct 2020

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# Project Overview

- The City has been engaged in a discussion of reviewing police services since the Summer of 2020
  - Discussions began in Fall 2020 about this project
- Project Goals:
  - Provide an empirical analysis of SAPD's response to calls for service (both emergency and non-emergency) to assist city leadership and other stakeholders in deciding which, if any, calls could be assigned to non-police personnel or to a co-response by police and other service providers

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# Methodology & Data

- Worked collaboratively with SAPD to access calls for service data and understand the dispatch process and protocols
  - Several meetings with SAPD
  - Visited to central call center
  - Access to all training materials for call takers and dispatchers
- Data were provided from several internal SAPD data repositories and combined into a single dataset for analysis

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# Methodology & Data

- Data represent calls for service incidents received by SAPD between January 2018-October 2020

- Over 4 million records (i.e., calls) were identified

- Some records were not analyzed because they did not fit the scope of interest:
  - Officer-initiated actions (i.e., do not represent a civilian call for service)
  - No police unit dispatched (e.g., reports taken over the telephone by expeditors)

- Total number of unique <u>incidents</u> analyzed: **3,090,823**
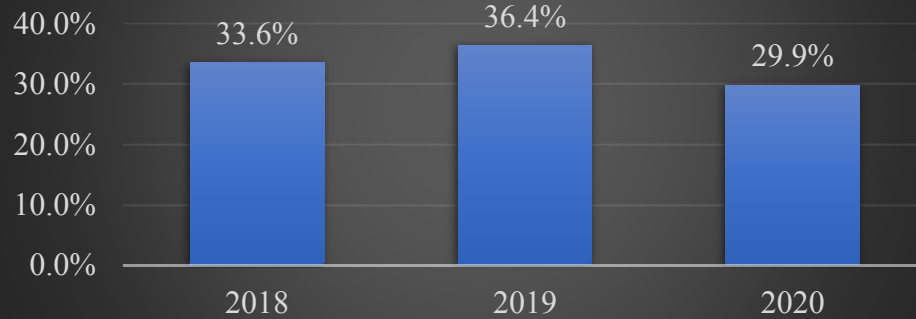
# Definitions

- All incidents were categorized in three ways:
  - **Call Type**: Categorization of caller's request (over 100 categories)
  - **Priority Category**: Ranges from 1-7, <u>lower</u> numbers indicate greater seriousness
  - **Response Code**: Ranges from 1-3, <u>higher</u> numbers indicate greater seriousness

- Police Resources
  - Number of police units dispatched
  - Response time: Time between call receipt and arrival on scene
  - Time on scene: Time between arrival and officer returning to service

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# Definitions

- Incident Disposition:
  - **Cleared**: a written report is taken by SAPD officers
    - E.g., When evidence of a crime exists, an incident report is written, and the incident is classified as 'cleared' with a designation of the type of crime reported (i.e., burglary, assault, etc.)
  - **No Official Report (NOR):** an official report is not taken, and the incident is resolved in some other manner
    - Brief notes and "n" codes are stored in the system, indicating the nature of the call
    - For example, a disturbance or traffic activity may be identified as the resolution because the incident did not require an official report
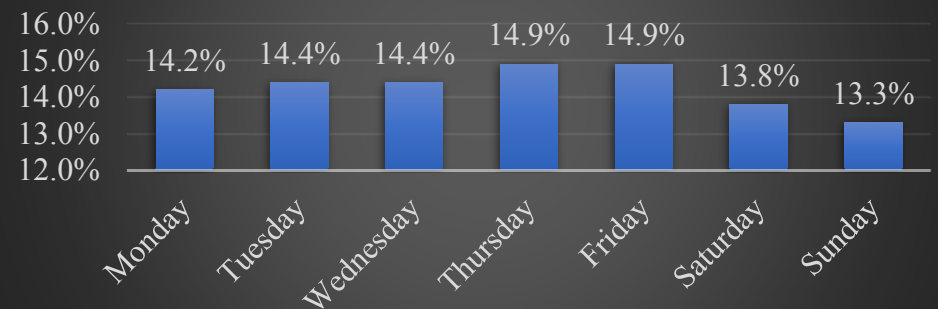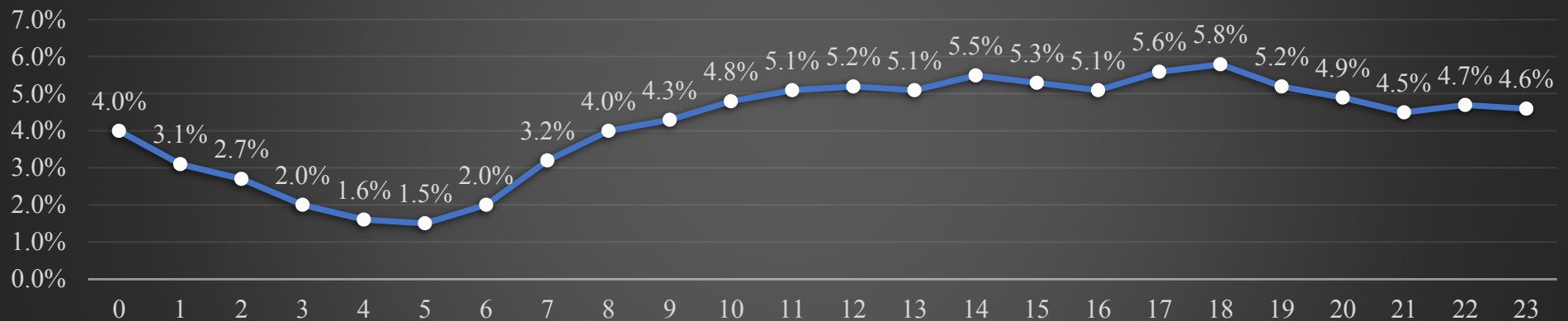
## Calls for Service by Year
### (N=3,090,823)



- 2018: 33.6%
- 2019: 36.4%
- 2020: 29.9%

## Calls for Service by Day of Week
### (N=3,090,822)



- Monday: 14.2%
- Tuesday: 14.4%
- Wednesday: 14.4%
- Thursday: 14.9%
- Friday: 14.9%
- Saturday: 13.8%
- Sunday: 13.3%

## Calls for Service by Hour of Day
### (3,090,230)



- 0: 4.0%
- 1: 3.1%
- 2: 2.7%
- 3: 2.0%
- 4: 1.6%
- 5: 1.5%
- 6: 2.0%
- 7: 3.2%
- 8: 4.0%
- 9: 4.3%
- 10: 4.8%
- 11: 5.1%
- 12: 5.2%
- 13: 5.1%
- 14: 5.5%
- 15: 5.3%
- 16: 5.1%
- 17: 5.6%
- 18: 5.8%
- 19: 5.2%
- 20: 4.9%
- 21: 4.5%
- 22: 4.7%
- 23: 4.6%

## Calls for Service by Priority Category
### (N=3,080,017)



- Priority 1: 0.4%
- Priority 2: 5.3%
- Priority 3: 0.9%
- Priority 4: 29.2%
- Priority 5: 18.9%
- Priority 6: 6.6%
- Priority 7: 38.7%
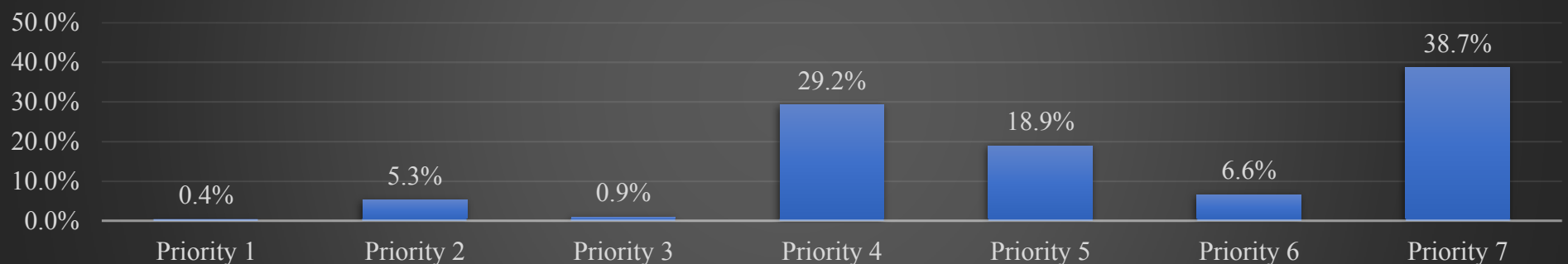
# Results

- Distribution across council districts and SAPD organizational units (substations and reporting areas)
  - Districts 1, 2, and 5 represent the majority of requests with relative equal distribution across SAPD organizational units

- Call type and priority categories
  - Priority 4 & 7 incidents are most common; Priority 1 incidents represent less than 0.5%

- Police resources applied in response (i.e., units dispatched, effort time, and dispositions)
  - Slightly more than 50% of all incidents receive a single unit response
  - SAPD spends 40 minutes on scene, on average
  - 80% of all incidents are resolved without an official written report

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# Results

- Special focus was placed on Priority 4-7 (Response Code 1) incidents to evaluate police resources applied to these situations

- These were prioritized due to the possibility that some <u>may</u> be good candidates for a non-police response

- Using this lens, a sub-set of call types were identified by the City Manager's Office, the SAPD, and the research team

- Four indicators are reported here for selected call types within this subset of calls:
  - Number of incidents
  - % of 1-unit dispatches
  - Time on Scene
  - % Cleared

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# Selected Results

| Call Type (Priority #) | # of Incidents | % of 1-unit Dispatches | Time on Scene (minutes) | % Cleared |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Minor Accident (4) | 167,961 | 63.3% | 62.3 | 53.2% |
| Mental Health Disturbance (4) | 22,081 | 56.8% | 61.0 | 32.3% |
| Panhandler (4) | 20,498 | 70.9% | 26.6 | 14.4% |
| Mental Health In Progress (4) | 9,198 | 54.6% | 71.2 | 44.8% |
| Disturbance (5) | 332,371 | 55.0% | 34.8 | 9.7% |
| Disturbance: Loud Music (6) | 69,124 | 56.1% | 18.0 | 0.5% |
| Abandoned Vehicle (7) | 35,154 | 81.1% | 32.2 | 4.3% |
| Property Lost (7) | 3,261 | 79.2% | 49.3 | 74.7% |

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# Conclusions

- Takeaways:
  - Certain call types (e.g., barking dog, loud music) rarely result in an official report being taken, are often dispatched to a single officer, and are handled relatively quickly.
  - These call types may be amenable to a response by non-sworn police personnel
  - Current categorization of call types and priority categories should be reviewed to ensure accuracy and logical consistency
- Considerations/Limitations:
  - Current data are based on what occurred when an officer was dispatched; it is not clear what would have happened if the incident received a different response
  - Transfer of response to another city unit/department will require resources, training, and oversight to maintain responsiveness to resident needs

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