Civilian Staffing

Austin City Auditor’s Office | November 2026

Objective

To determine if the City is effectively assigning civilian staff to tasks that create efficiencies and allow sworn staff to focus on responding to emergencies

Departments

- Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS)
- Austin Fire
- Austin Police
- Austin Labor Relations

Staffing is critical to public safety departments.

Austin/Travis County Emergency Medical Services (ATCEMS)
• 714 sworn staff
• 89.5 civilian staff
• 134 sworn vacancies

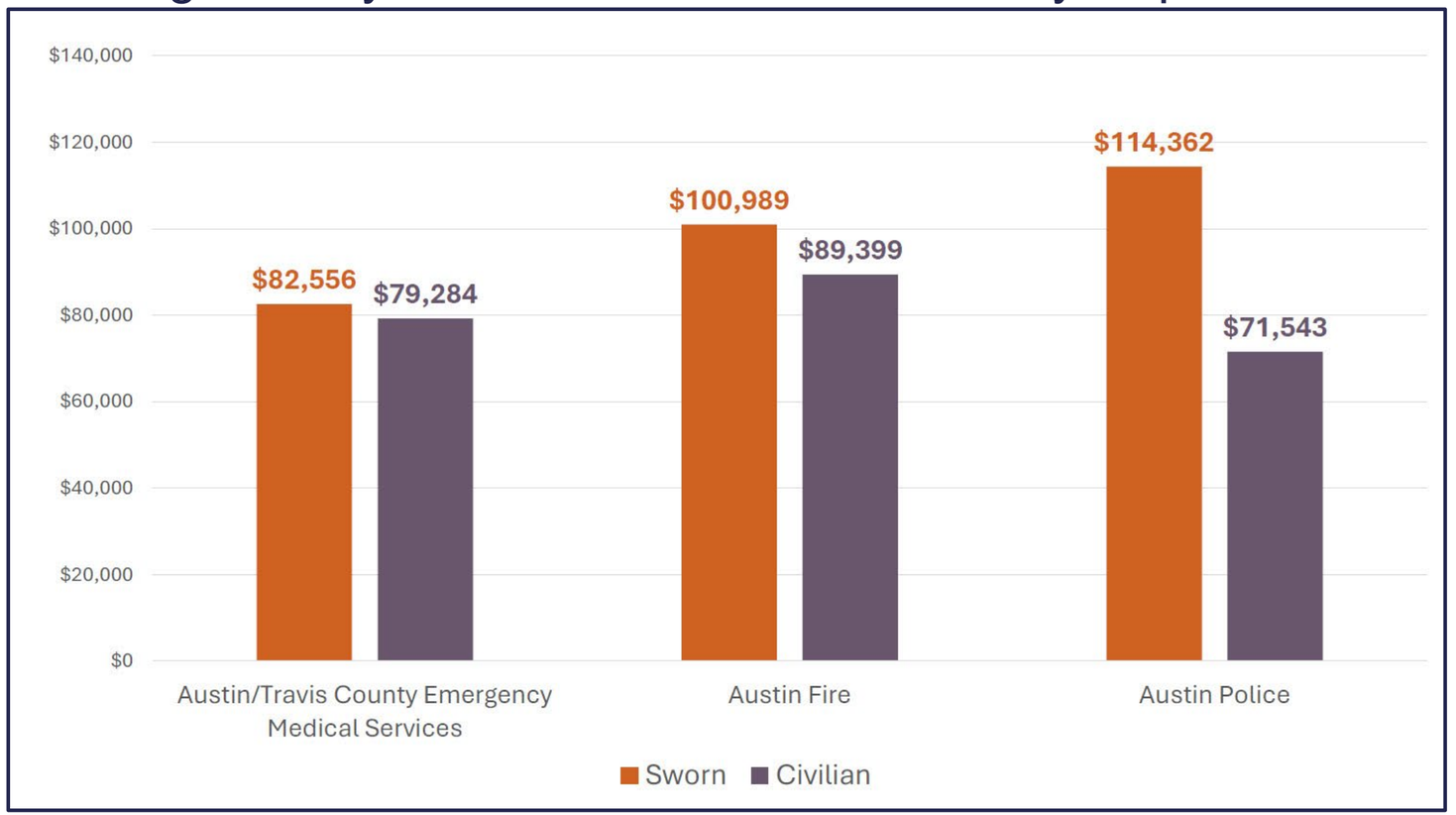
Austin Fire
• 1,357 sworn staff
• 135 civilian staff
• 80 sworn vacancies

Austin Police
• 1,819 sworn staff
• 512.75 civilian staff
• 350 sworn vacancies

There are costs when it comes to staffing.

- Generally, sworn staff cost more than civilian staff.
- Over $75 million was spent on overtime costs last fiscal year.

Average Salary of Sworn and Civilian Staff by Department

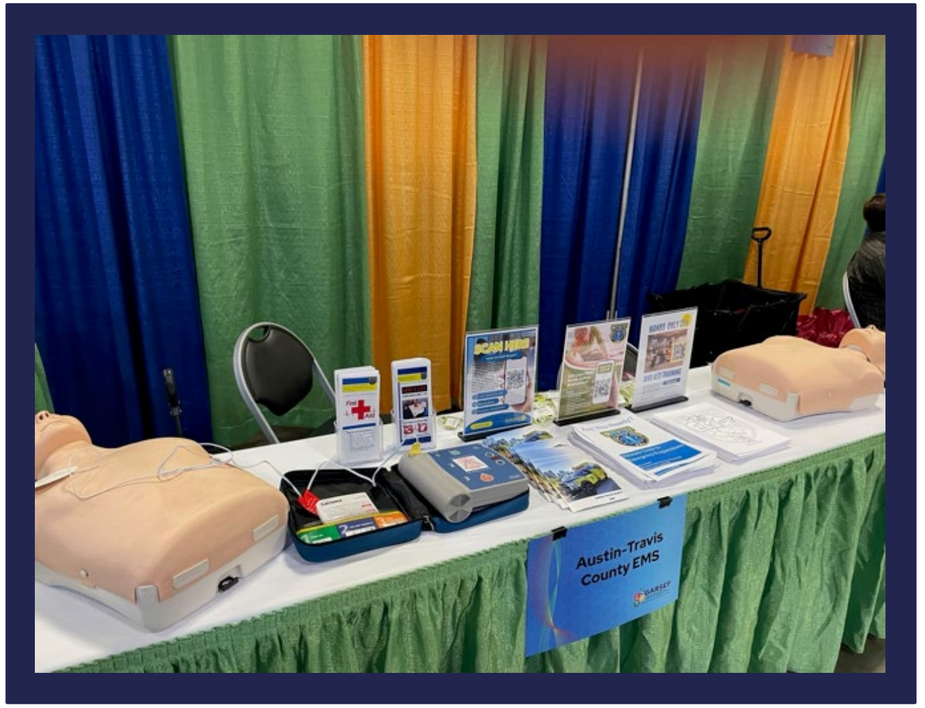


Finding 1

Under current laws and agreements, civilians could perform some tasks currently assigned to sworn staff. However, the overall efficiency gains available today are limited.

There are some opportunities to create efficiencies.

- Respond to public information requests
- Provide outreach programming
- Assist training instructors with administrative components
- Support information technology and systems
- Contact victims as a secondary person for closed cases
- Manage range operations



Retired and former sworn employees could be utilized.

- Other Texas peer cities have explored using retired sworn employees for civilian roles.
- Allowing a former sworn employee to work as a civilian can lower salary costs while also employing someone with sworn experience.

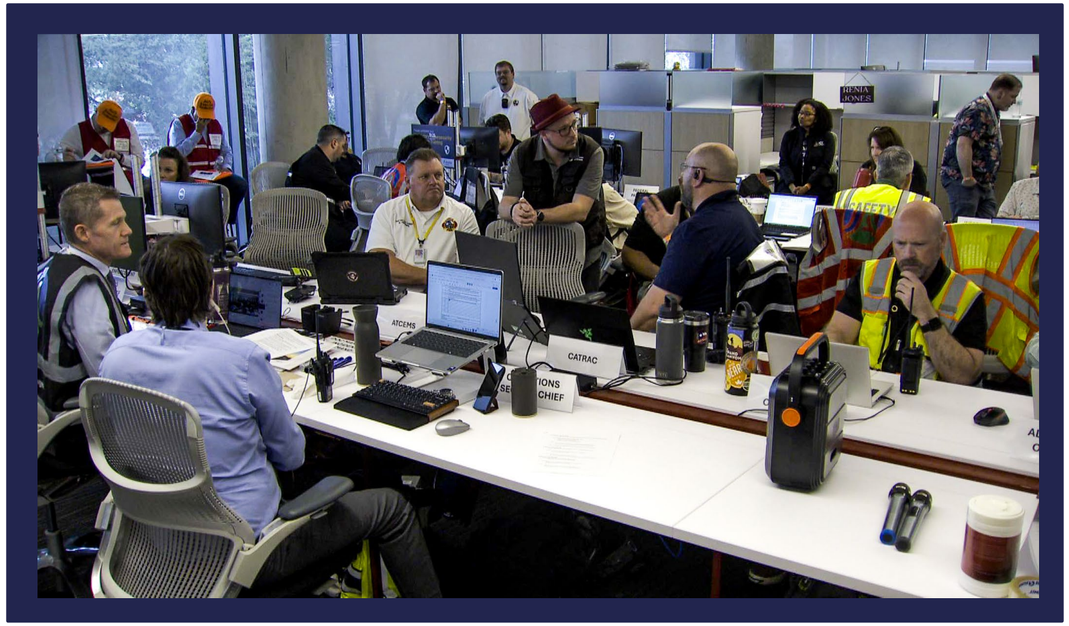


Finding 2

The City could achieve further efficiencies and more opportunities for civilians in public safety departments by using future labor negotiations to remove barriers that prevent civilians from performing certain non-operational roles.

There are some roles that could be filled by a civilian but are currently limited to sworn staff.

- Laws and agreements prevent civilians from performing roles in some public safety departments.
  - Communications
  - Fire Prevention
  - Training



Recommendations

Public safety department chiefs develop and implement a plan to identify specific tasks that are currently performed by sworn staff.

1
ATCEMS

2
Austin Fire

3
Austin Police

Labor Relations use the plan developed to inform future negotiations.

4
Labor Relations

Questions?