

San José Fire Department

The San José Fire Department's core mission is to serve the community by protecting life, property and the environment through prevention and response.



Fire Department Staffing, Recruitment, Hiring & Bilingual Services Annual Report

Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee

April 16, 2026

Item: (d)4

Presented by:

Robert Sapien, Jr., Fire Chief

Athena Trede, Deputy Director

San José Fire Department

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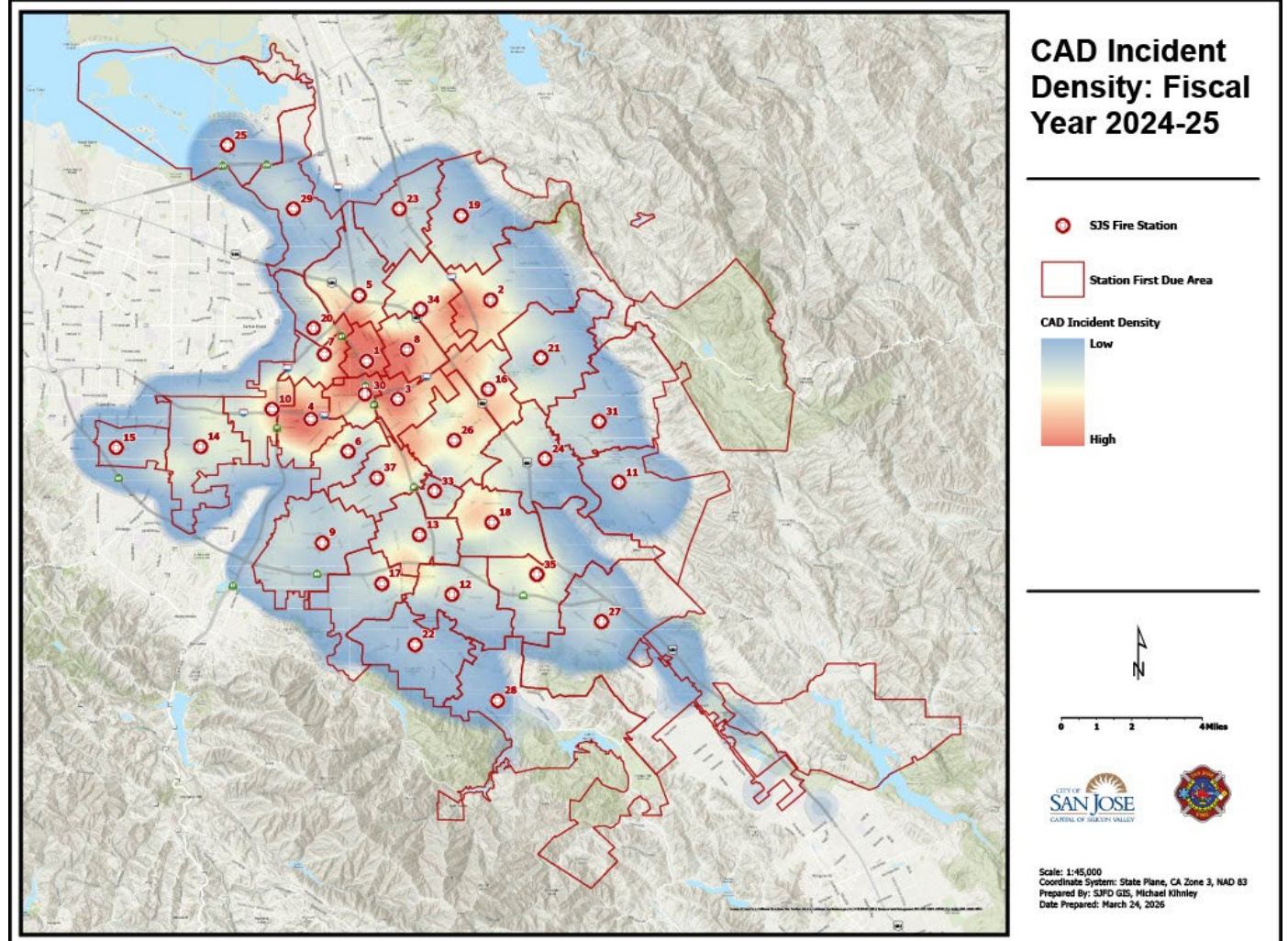
Staffing

Background



Mission:

- Protect life, property, and the environment through prevention and response
- 208 Square Miles protected
 - 181.36 within City limits
 - 26.81 Zone 1 (under contract with Santa Clara Central Fire Protection District)
- **City Population:** 979,415
- **111,372** Emergency Responses in FY 2024-2025
- **720** Authorized Sworn Positions in FY 2024-2025



FY 2024-2025* Daily Staffing (Typical) = 190



Resource (Staffing)	Number	Personnel
Battalion (1)	6	6
Fire Engine (4)	33	132
Fire Truck (4)	9	36
Rescue Medic (2)	3	6
ARFF (6)	1	6
US&R (4)	1	4

FY 2024-2025* Authorized Sworn Staffing



Sworn Position (Rank)	Authorized Positions	Filled Positions	Vacant Positions
Fire Chief	1	1	0
Assistant Fire Chief	1	1	0
Deputy Fire Chief	4	4	0
Battalion Chief	24	24	0
Fire Captain	172	171	1
Arson Investigator	4	4	0
Fire Prevention Inspector	13	12	1
Fire Engineer	234	211	23
Firefighter	267	239	28
Total	720	667	53

*Fiscal Year End (Pay Period 13)

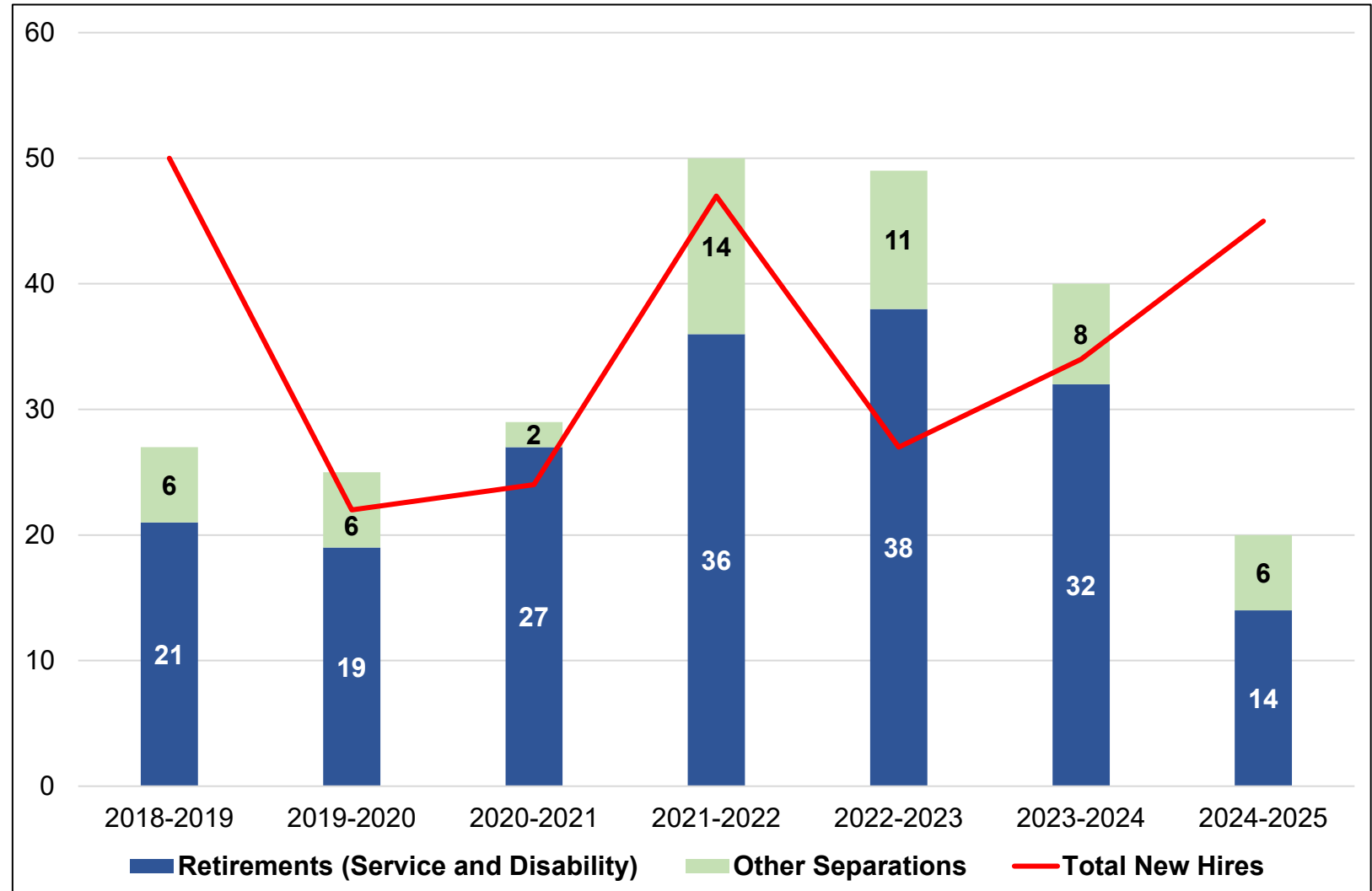
Vacancy Rate:

7.36%

Sworn Retirements, Other Separations & Total Hires



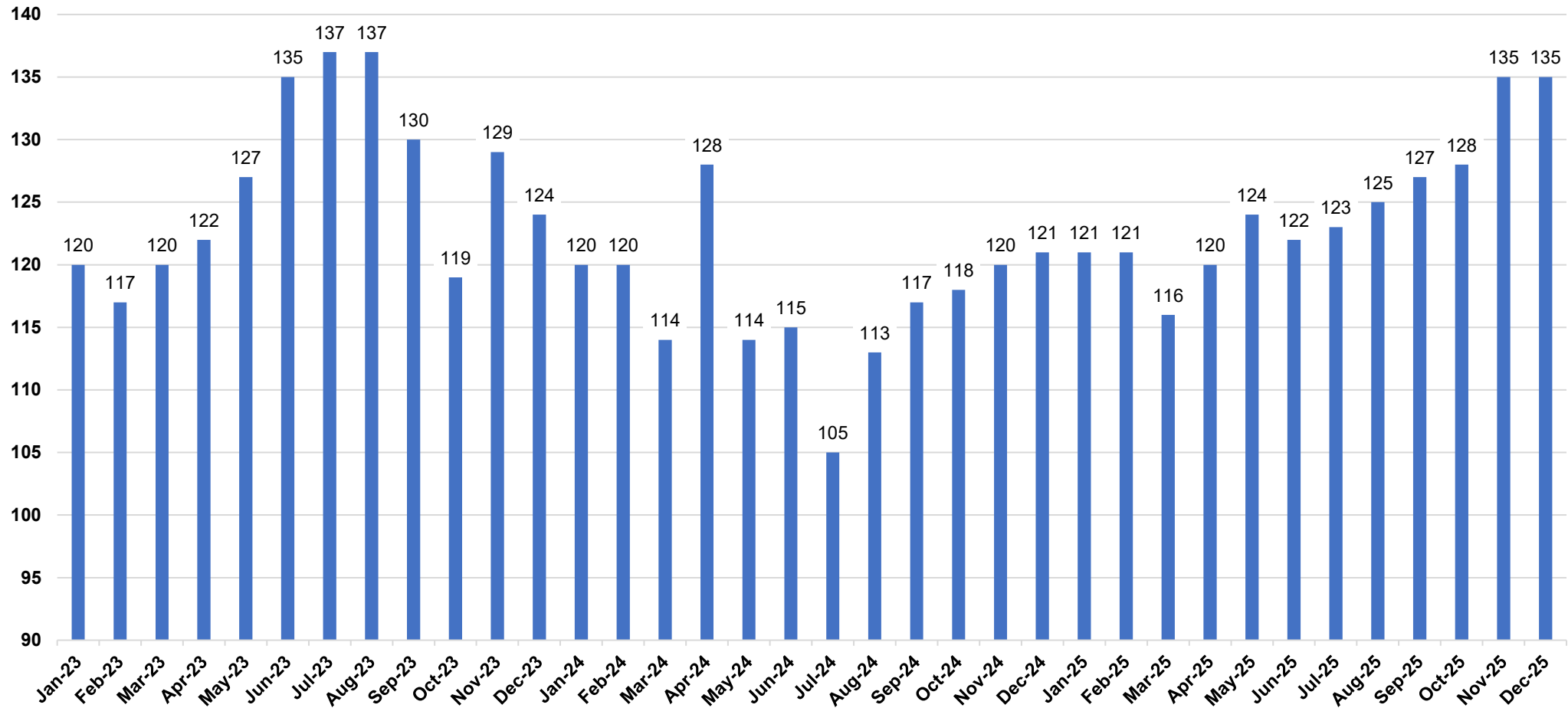
- Sworn separations averaged 35.28 over a seven-year period
- Sworn hiring averaged 35.57 over a five-year period
- Target: Two Academies with 25-30 Firefighter Recruits per Academy (as needed)
- Firefighter Recruit Academy is 20 weeks



Sworn Vacancy Rates: Paramedic Recruitment Efforts



Post-COVID-19 Firefighter Paramedics



Comparative Staffing to Population in Santa Clara County



Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Staffing to Population

- Agencies listed total 852,002 in population and 763 total sworn personnel (0.90 staffing per 1,000 of population)
- Agencies staffed by CalFire excluded (Morgan Hill, South Santa Clara County FPD, CalFire Unit)

Fire Agency	Population Served	Sworn Personnel	Staffing to Population
San José*	979,415	720	0.75 per 1,000
Santa Clara County	258,315	248	2.70 per 1,000
Sunnyvale DPS**	159,673	85	0.53 per 1,000
Santa Clara	134,587	138	1.02 per 1,000
Mountain View	86,513	80	0.93 per 1,000
Milpitas	81,915	75	0.93 per 1,000
Palo Alto	68,794	93	1.36 per 1,000
Gilroy	62,205	44	0.71 per 1,000

*Excludes population within 26.81 square miles of Santa Clara County Zone 1 Contract coverage area.

**Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety provides both law enforcement and fire protection.

Santa Clara County Fire Agencies Company Staffing



Fire Agency	Engine Company Staffing	Truck Company Staffing	Daily Total Staffing
San José	4	4	190
Santa Clara County	3	4	79
Sunnyvale DPS	2	2	26
City of Santa Clara	3	4	36
Mountain View	3	3	21
Milpitas	3	4	21
Palo Alto	3	3	24
Gilroy	3	3	9

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Sworn Recruitment/Hiring Status

Sworn Recruitment/Hiring Status



- Filled 101 sworn vacancies
- Each classification has unique job requirements and minimum qualifications; requires separate recruitment processes
- External recruitments - conducted for entry-level Firefighter rank resulting in 45 new hires
- Internal recruitments - conducted for promotion to non-management sworn ranks



© San José Fire Department

Recruitment, Marketing, & Outreach



- SJFD Women's+ Boot Camp
- San José Fire Explorer Post 888
- Accredited Local Academy
- South Bay Regional Public Safety Training Consortium
- California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee
- Advertising, Marketing and Social Media Resources
- Career Fairs

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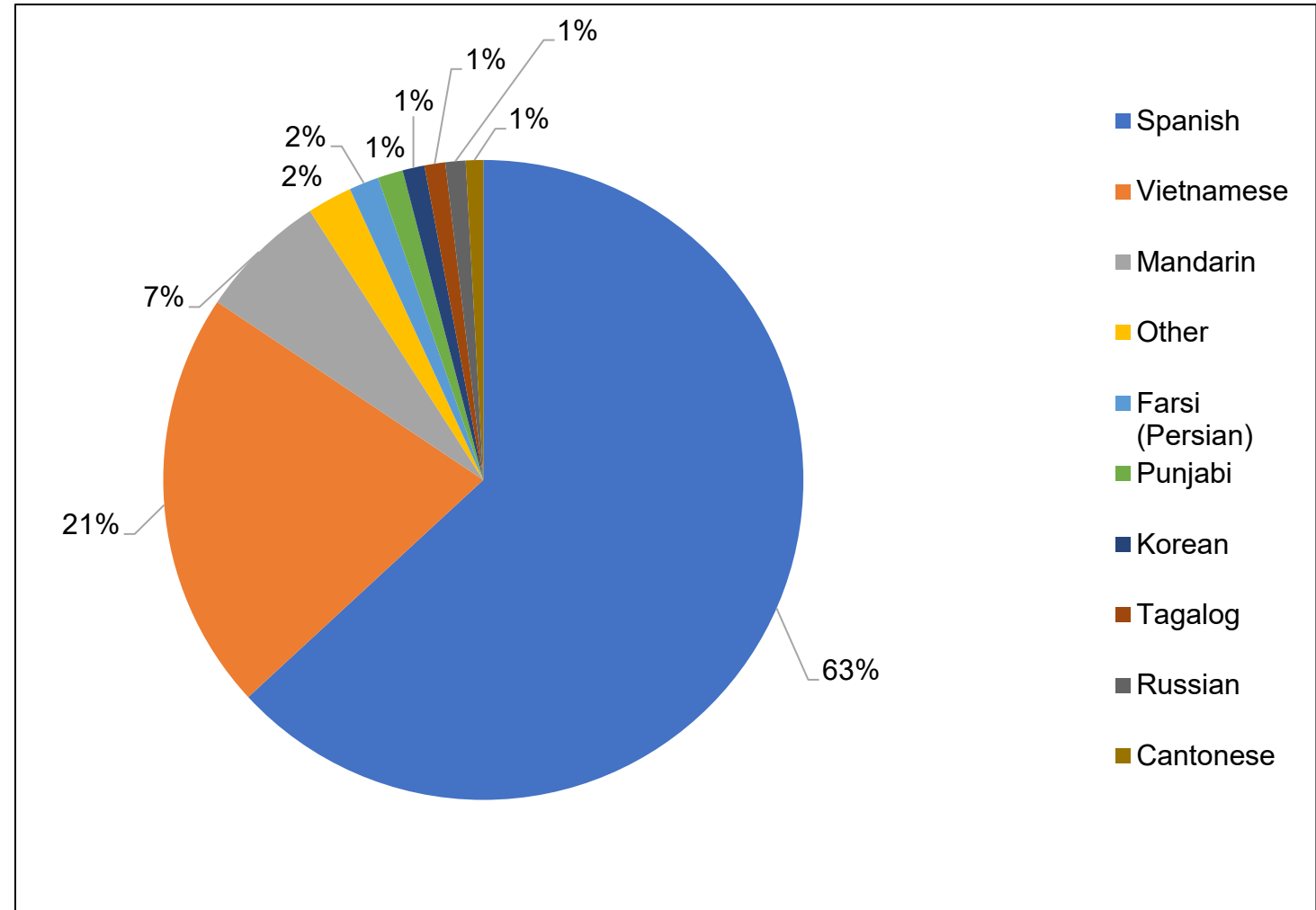


Language Access & Bilingual Services Status

FY 2024-2025 Language Translation Services Demand (Cyracom & Language Line)

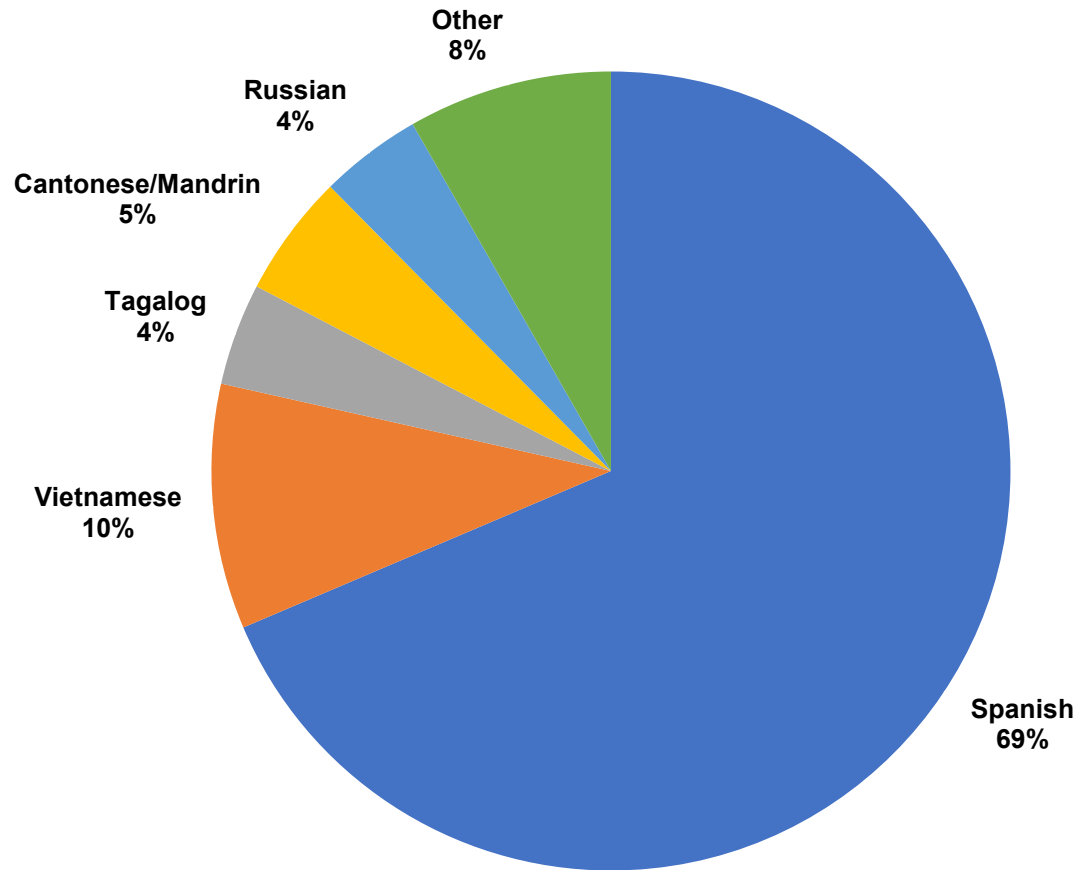


- Cyracom utilized 5,523 times
- Field responders reported requiring language translation at 3,320 incidents
 - Need met 95% of the time via bilingual Fire Department responders, assistance from bystanders, bilingual Police Department responders, Language Line Solutions translation service, or other means.
- 84% utilize Spanish and Vietnamese translation



*Languages recognized for bilingual certification

Current Certified Bilingual Employees



- Department recognizes 19 languages for bilingual certification.
- Department Vision is to provide bilingual services at each station on each shift (102 bilingual placements)
- 151 Sworn Bilingual Staff assigned to Field Operations.
 - 121 with permanent assignments
 - 30 assigned to shift vacancy relief

**Note: Other languages include the following – Armenian, Assyrian, German, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Portuguese, & Turkish.*

Questions?

Robert Sapien, Jr., Fire Chief
Fire Department

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