



Texas Firefighter Cancer Study

September | 2026

Announcements

Recruitment Updates

WE DID IT! We have officially enrolled 700 participants in the Texas Firefighter Cancer Study (TFCS)!

We could not have done it without the firefighters, departments, associations, and stakeholders who continue to support this important research.

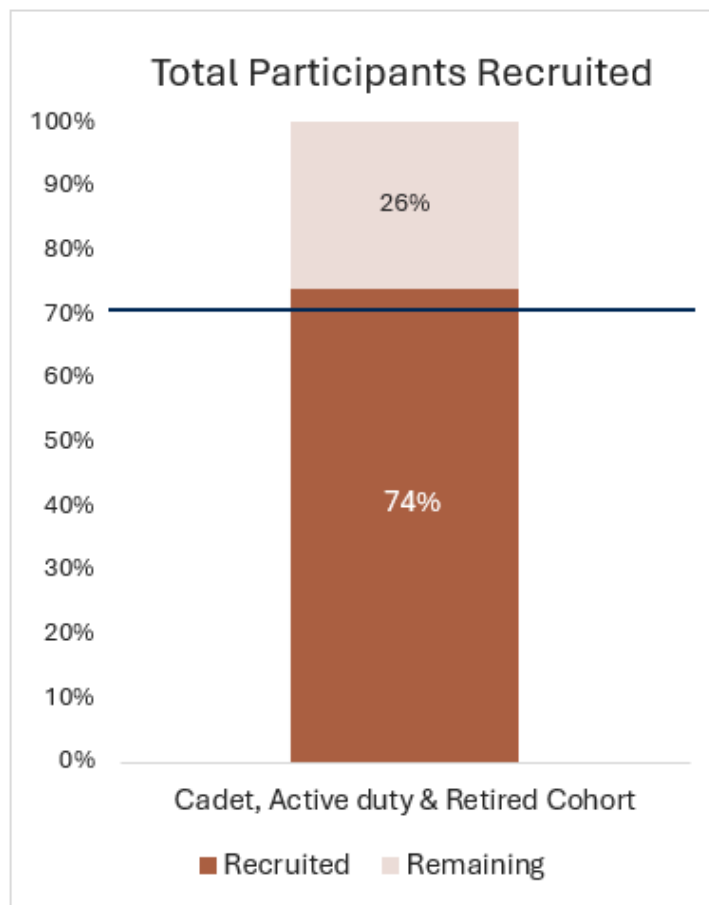
We are especially excited to celebrate our **700th participant, who joined us from Houston Fire Department District 26!** Thank you for helping us reach this milestone and for being part of something that will have a lasting impact on the fire service.

And we are not stopping here!

Thanks to the tremendous engagement of the fire service in this effort, we are raising the bar—our next milestone is 1,000 participants!

Every participant brings us one step closer to better understanding cancer risks in the fire service and advancing opportunities for prevention and early detection.

700 participants enrolled and 1,000 within reach!



Houston Fire Department Sampling District Station 26



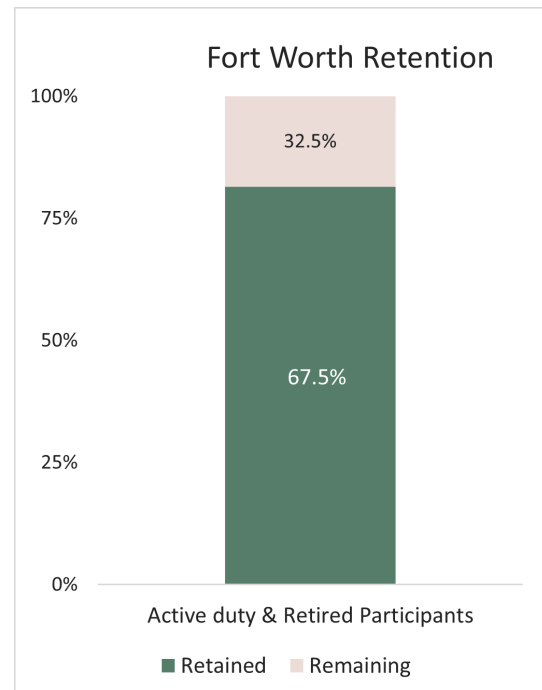
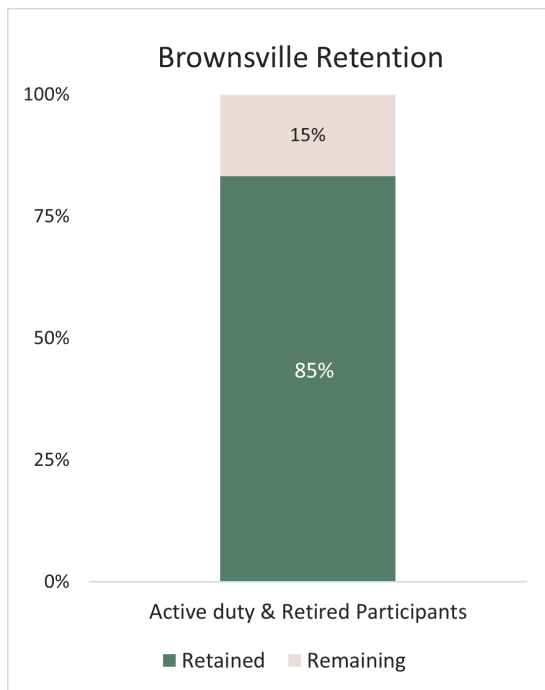
Follow-Up Visits: Thank you to Our Participants and Partners!

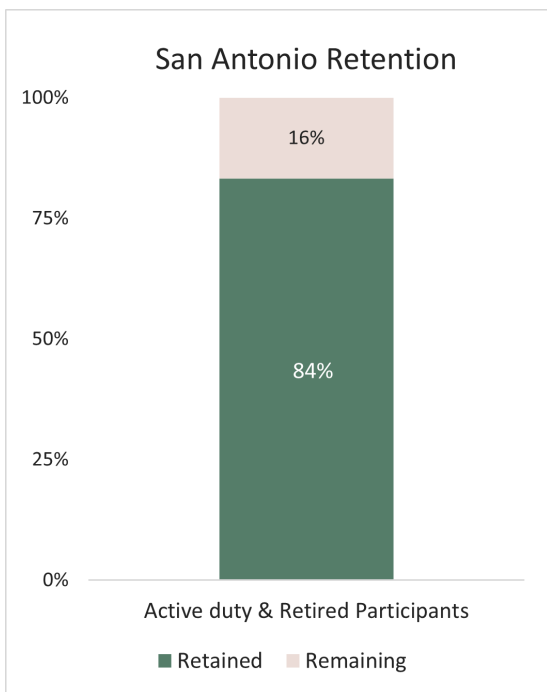
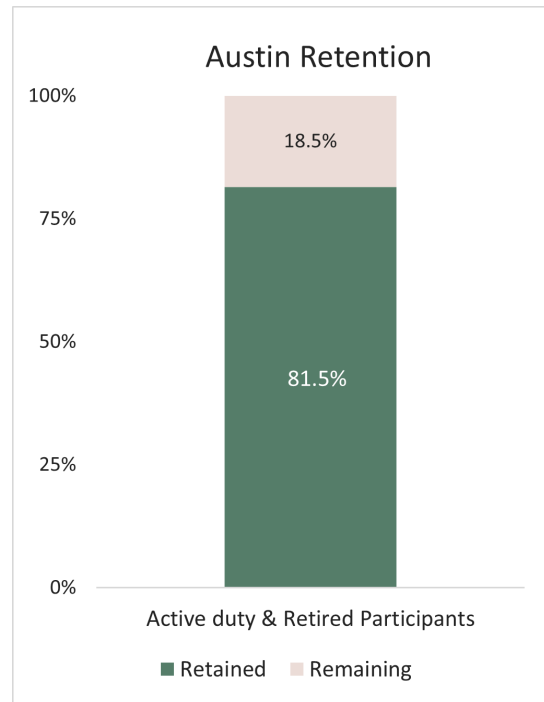
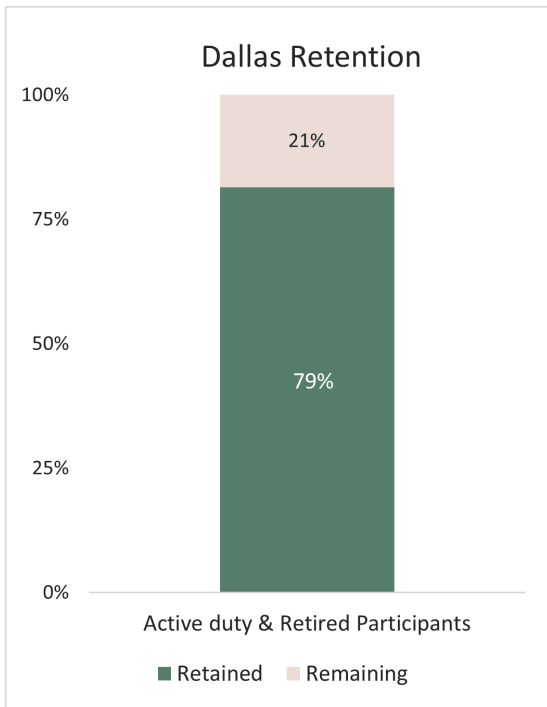
We successfully completed the first follow-up visits in Austin, San Antonio, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Brownsville.

Thank you to all of the participants who returned for their second visit. We are especially grateful to those participants that faced obstacles in getting to us, including those challenges we knew about and those we may not have. **Whether you cut your trip short and traveled more than 400 miles roundtrip, came with an injury, brought your children, were in your final trimester of pregnancy, dealt with car trouble, or simply had a difficult day, we appreciate that you made the effort to be with us.** Every visit and every sample helps move this important research forward and brings us one step closer to better understanding cancer risks in the fire service.

We also want to extend a sincere thank you to those who stepped in to help when needed. Your willingness to pitch in made these visits possible.

Finally, thank you to the participating fire departments and local associations for once again welcoming our team. Your continued involvement and partnership are crucial to this effort.





Participants: If you were unable to attend your scheduled visit, please email us so we can coordinate a follow-up visit.

Dallas and Fort Worth Follow-up Sampling



Rio Grande Valley Follow-Up Sampling



Texas Firefighter Occupational Cancer Epidemiology

We continue to make progress as we await the Texas Department of State Health Services Institutional Review Board approval, with our application expected to be considered at the meeting later this month. Approval will allow us to move forward with the statewide data linkage and subsequent epidemiological analyses.

In parallel, we are making progress on our scoping review of cancer incidence and site-specific risks among firefighters and are preparing an abstract based on its findings. This work continues to inform and strengthen the epidemiological framework for Project Two. We look forward to sharing our results at the Texas Firefighter Cancer Study Research Symposium in October.

Texas Firefighter Cancer Screening Promotion

Over the past month, our team completed two additional in-person focus group interviews with 10 firefighters. Thank you again to everyone who participated and shared their experiences. We are in the process of scheduling our final interviews and plan to finish them by the end of this month. If you are interested in participating, please contact Derek Craig, PhD, at Derek.W.Craig@uth.tmc.edu to schedule an interview.

We have also begun analyzing the interview data to identify key themes and factors that may influence cancer screening behaviors. We have completed analysis of three transcripts thus far. Additionally, we welcomed a new graduate research assistant to the project team, who will support ongoing data analysis and other project activities.

Finally, we submitted multiple abstracts to the Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting and the Texas Firefighters Cancer Study Symposium to highlight the important

work being done through this project. We look forward to sharing what we have learned and continue building on the valuable input provided by Houston-area firefighters.

Research



Toxic smoke triggers cancer-linked changes in firefighters

New research shows firefighters experience measurable biological changes in their blood and urine within 24 hours of fighting a fire.

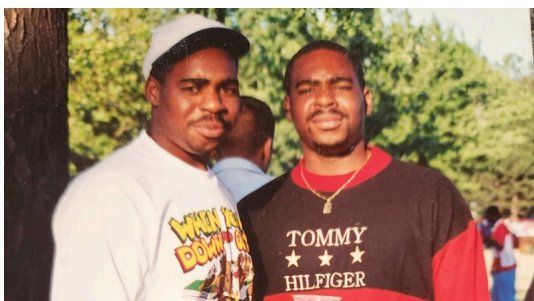
[Explore the findings](#)

To explore our team's previous research, please visit [TFCS Research Activities](#).

Remembering 9/11

25 years after September 11, 2001, we remember the firefighters, first responders and others who lost their lives in the attacks and in the years that followed. We also honor those who continue to live with the physical and emotional consequences of their service that day.

Their stories remind us that the impact of 9/11 did not end when the towers fell. For many first responders, the health effects of their exposure and the experiences they endured have continued for decades. Their sacrifices and the lessons we have learned from them remain deeply relevant today.



One point separated these twin brothers then 9/11 happened

A Houston firefighter reflects on losing his identical twin brother on 9/11 and how that day ultimately changed the course of his own life.

[Read more](#)



Firefighter health, 25 years after 9/11

In this edition of “Ask the Expert”, a UTHealth Houston news series featuring insights from leading experts on pressing health challenges, Dr. Hwang examines what 9/11 has taught us about the long-term health of firefighters and why those lessons matter beyond New York.

[Read more](#)

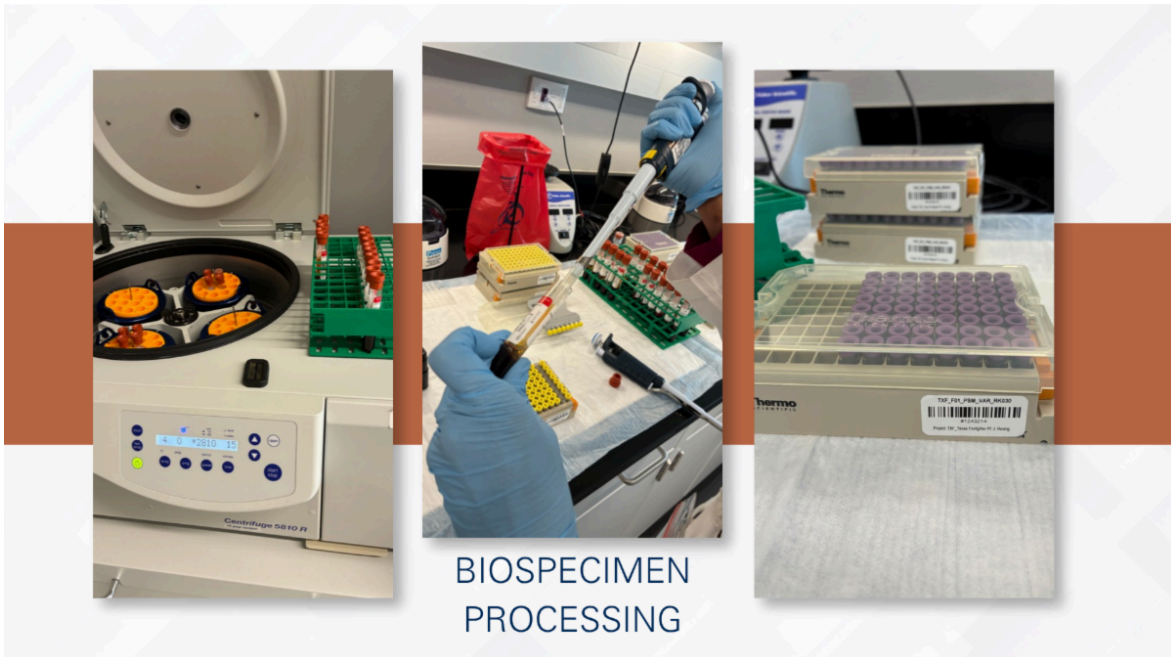
Behind the Scenes: Biospecimen Processing

The Human Genetic Center’s Biospecimen Processing team plays an important role in making our research possible. We want to recognize them for their hard work and dedication.

So, what happens to a firefighter’s biospecimen sample after it is collected?

Their team carefully prepares blood and other biological samples for researchers to study. They extract important materials, such as DNA and RNA, and perform specialized laboratory tests that help identify exposure-associated molecular biomarkers, different patterns across our cohort, and other biological information.

Their work helps advance our research by turning blood samples into valuable information that our researchers can use to better understand cancer and identify potential risk factors.



Texas Firefighter Cancer Study Research Symposium



Register now for the **Texas Firefighter Cancer Study's Research Symposium** on **Thursday, October 8, 2026** from **10:00 AM to 3:00 PM** at the School of Public Health.

The symposium will highlight one year of progress and preliminary findings from the TFCS projects, showcasing contributions from faculty, staff, and students. The event will also provide an opportunity to discuss strategies for protecting firefighter health, with a focus on cancer prevention and mental health challenges that accompany cancer risk and diagnosis.

Speakers will include firefighters and fire service leaders, state legislators, researchers, and students. The symposium will also feature poster sessions and a tour of the laboratory, providing attendees with an opportunity to learn more about our research and take a look behind the scenes.

Please RSVP using the button below.

Texas Firefighter Cancer Study

RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

October 8, 2026

10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

UTHealth Houston
School of Public Health

1930 Old Spanish Trail
Houston, TX 77054

go.uth.edu/firefightersymposium



10/08/2026



RSVP for the Research Symposium

Coming Up

Visit 2: Six-Month Follow-Up Visit (F01) Sampling

Our research team is preparing for the final stretch of the first **six-month follow-up visits (F01)** for participants who have completed their baseline sampling.

El Paso, TX

September 22 & 23, 2026

El Paso Fire Department Wellness Center

9565 Diana Dr.

El Paso, TX 79924

Texas Firefighter Cancer Study Team Travel Path

 **UTHealth® Houston**
School of Public Health



Austin | Brownsville | Dallas | El Paso | Fort Worth | Houston | San Antonio

Ways to Engage

Connect with Us

Visit our [webpage](#) to stay up-to-date on our study. Share this newsletter with your fellow firefighters and encourage them to join our mailing list.

If you are interested in taking part of this study or have questions, please submit an inquiry using the [Contact Us](#) form or by email at: TFCS@uth.tmc.edu



[TFCS Website](#) | [Contact Us](#)

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