

public safety

Most public safety measures show positive trends.

The overall crime rate fell for the fifth year in a row, and measures of child abuse and domestic violence dropped significantly. Gangs—which are responsible for a large portion of serious crime in the county—have consistently been one of the top concerns of residents.

Crisis Intervention Collaboration

The Crisis Intervention Program is a partnership between the Sheriff's Department and the Department of Behavioral Health. Deputies, Station Coordinators and Dispatchers receive a higher level of training for responding to and dealing with citizens in crisis, particularly those with mental health needs. The goal of the program is to provide individuals in crisis with intervention and treatment rather than incarceration.

To date, over 160 Patrol Deputies, 34 Station Coordinators and 20 Dispatch staff have received this unique training. In both the Victor Valley and Morongo Valley areas, Crisis Walk-In Centers and Community Crisis Response Teams have been established. In the first nine months of the program, the number of clients taken into custody for involuntary psychiatric evaluations declined by 24% in the Morongo area, and an astounding 45% in the Victor Valley, and similar programs are scheduled to be implemented in the valley areas in 2010.

Child Abuse Reports, Spousal Abuse Arrests Decline

Description of Indicator

This indicator tracks child abuse by measuring confirmed child abuse and neglect reports (substantiated referrals) and the number of children entering foster care. Domestic violence is tracked by measuring calls for assistance and spousal abuse arrests.

Why is it Important?

Foster care placement is often the final act to protect children from abuse and neglect after repeated attempts to stabilize their families. Domestic violence threatens the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and women in particular and can have lasting negative impacts. It can also lead to homelessness when the abused flees a dangerous environment.

How is San Bernardino County Doing?

Recent data show a decrease in child abuse and neglect reports, mirroring statewide trends:

- In 2008, San Bernardino County had the fewest substantiated child abuse and neglect referrals per 1,000 children when compared to regional peers and the statewide rate, as well as a 15% decrease over 2007 levels.
- The number of children entering foster care fell 21% from 2007 to 2008.
- The 10-year trends for referrals and entries are downward.
- At 2.7 per 1,000 children, San Bernardino County has the second lowest rate of children entering foster care compared to regional peers and the statewide rate.
- 37% of substantiated referrals in San Bernardino County result in foster care placement, a similar proportion as the statewide rate and all peers compared except Orange County.

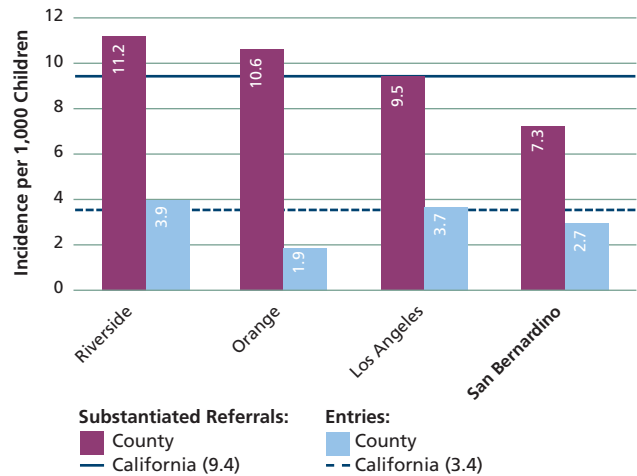
Spousal abuse arrests declined:

- Calls for assistance decreased 1% between 2007 and 2008, for a total of 7,579 calls in 2008.
- Spousal abuse arrests declined 3% since 2007 at 2,490 in 2008.
- In 2008, San Bernardino County had a higher rate of spousal abuse arrests than the statewide average, but a lower level of calls for assistance.

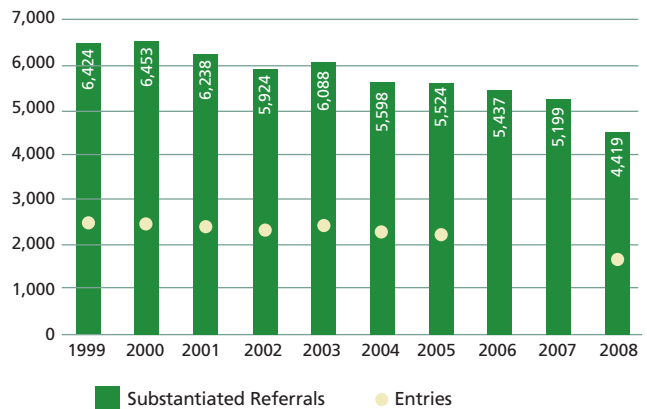
Note: Domestic violence-related calls for assistance per 100,000 are calculated using the total population. Spousal abuse arrests per 100,000 are calculated using the total population at risk, 10-69 years of age.

Source: California Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, Special Requests Unit

Substantiated Referrals and Entries to Foster Care County Comparison, 2008

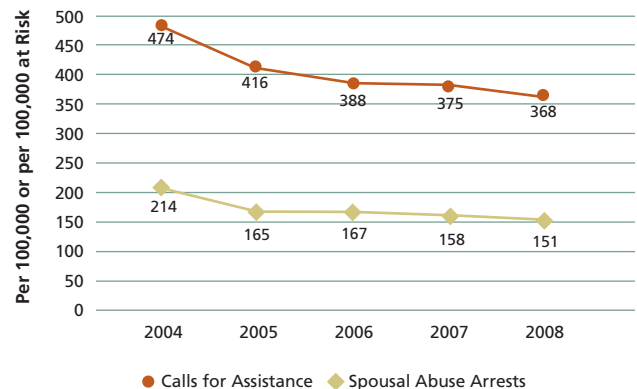


Substantiated Referrals and Entries to Foster Care San Bernardino County, 1999-2008



Source: University of California Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research, Child Welfare Research Center (http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/default.aspx)

Domestic Violence-Related Calls for Assistance and Spousal Abuse Arrests San Bernardino County, 2004-2008



Connecting the Dots

Family Safety issues may reflect external forces at work on a family and may also be the cause of, or future consequence of, Mental Health challenges.

Crime Rate Falls for Fifth Consecutive Year

Description of Indicator

This indicator compares crime rates among regions and tracks crime rate trends. Crimes included are violent felonies (homicide, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property felonies (burglary, motor vehicle theft, and larceny-theft). The number and percent of victims of homicides by race or ethnicity is also shown.

Why is it Important?

Crime impacts both real and perceived safety in a community. It can also negatively affect investment in a community if a neighborhood is considered unsafe.

How is San Bernardino County Doing?

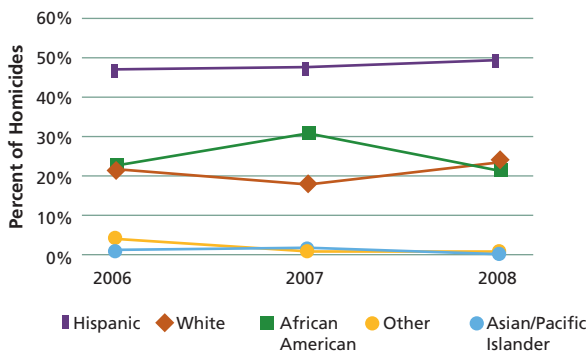
San Bernardino County's crime rate continues to fall, although more slowly, from the 10-year high in 2003:

- Over the past 10 years reported crime in San Bernardino County dropped 11%.
- Compared to peers, San Bernardino County has the fourth lowest overall crime rate.
- There was a 25% drop in the number of homicide victims in 2008 over the prior two years, falling from 161 victims in 2006 to 119 in 2008.
- In 2008, 49% of homicide victims were Hispanic, 25% White, and 22% African American.

Prisoners and Parolees in San Bernardino County
 Despite a crime rate similar to the state average, San Bernardino County has a significantly higher proportion of paroled felons under community supervision than the state average and its California peers. In 2007, 12,253 felons were paroled or reparaoled in San Bernardino County for a rate of 601 parolees per 100,000 population, compared to 365 per 100,000 statewide. Similarly, 7.3% of statewide prisoners were committed in San Bernardino County while the county has only 5.4% of the statewide population.

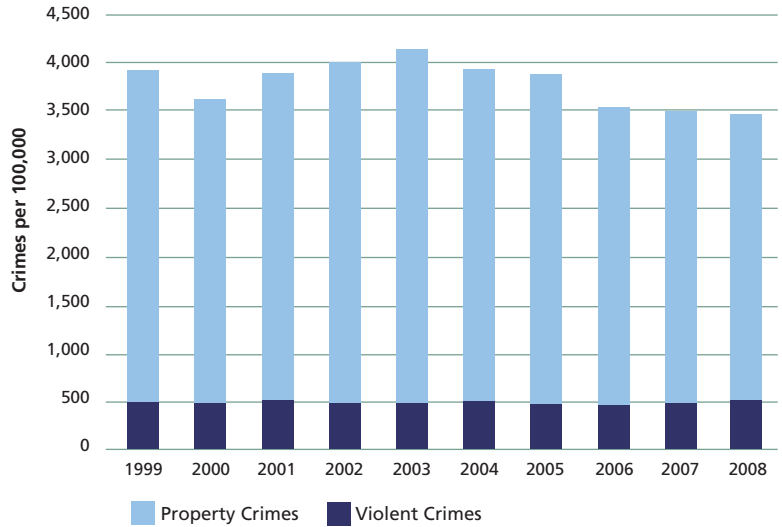
Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, California Prisoners and Parolees, 2007 (www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Annual/CalPris/CALPRISd2007.pdf)

Victims of Homicides by Race/Ethnicity San Bernardino County, 2006-2008



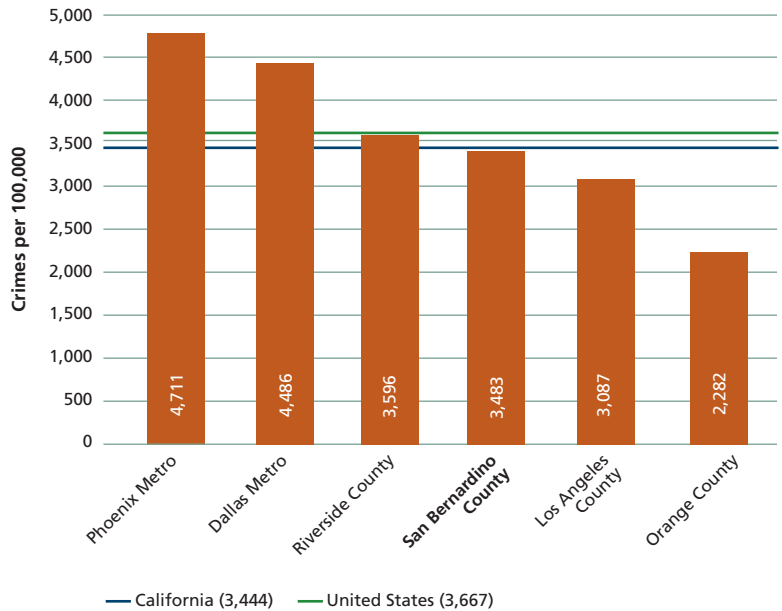
Source: California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, Special Request Unit (<http://caag.state.ca.us/cjisc/>)

Crime Rate San Bernardino County, 1999-2008



Source: California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Statistics Center (<http://caag.state.ca.us/cjisc/>)

Crime Rate Regional Comparison, 2008



Sources: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program (www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm) (Phoenix and Dallas data) and California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Statistics Center (<http://caag.state.ca.us/cjisc/>) (Riverside, San Bernardino and Orange County data)

Connecting the Dots

A low **Crime Rate** is a critical aspect in attracting business to the region, and is also an indicator of an environment within which families can thrive and **Family Safety** can improve.

Gangs Responsible for 30% of Homicide Filings

Description of Indicator

This indicator measures gang-related crime filings and the percentage of countywide filings that are gang-related. Also measured are the numbers of identified gang members and the number of identified gangs in San Bernardino County.

Why is it Important?

This indicator can help the community gauge the extent and nature of gang-related crime. It can aid policymakers in decisions regarding the effectiveness of programs to combat gang-related crime and the level of funding needed to support these programs now and in the future.

How is San Bernardino County Doing?

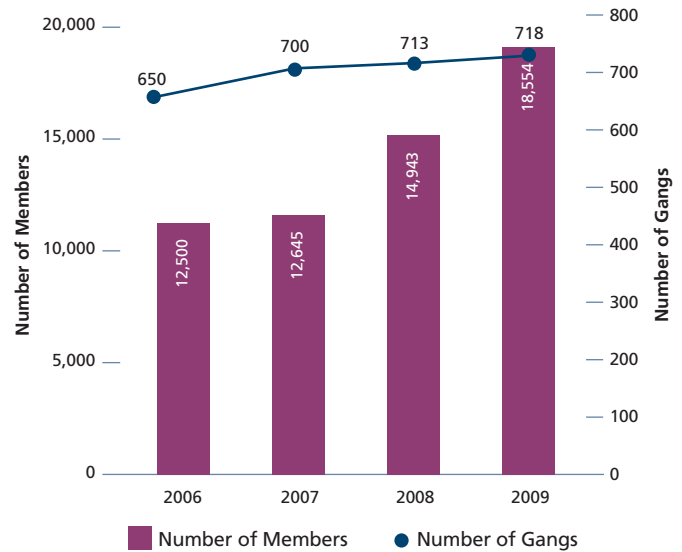
Gangs are responsible for a large portion of serious crime in San Bernardino County:

- Roughly 5% of all felony filings in San Bernardino County are gang-related (combined 2007, 2008 and first half of 2009 data).
- There were a total of 1,053 gang-related filings in 2008.
- In 2008, 30% of countywide homicide filings were gang-related.
- There were 37 gang-related homicide filings in 2008, up slightly from 36 in 2007. In the first half of 2009, there were 16 gang-related homicide filings.

The number of gangs and gang membership is rising:

- Between 2006 and 2009, the number of gangs rose 10% to 718 known gangs in the county as of 2009.
- During the same period, gang membership rose 48% to 18,554 known gang members in the county as of 2009.
- The rise in the number of gangs and gang members does not necessarily reflect a rise in gang activity, but may instead reflect increased efforts by law enforcement to identify gangs and gang members.

Gangs and Gang Membership
San Bernardino County, 2006-2009



Note: Using a detailed set of criteria, law enforcement agencies submit information on gang members to a statewide law enforcement database. Gang members are removed from the state database if they have not had contact with law enforcement in the last five years.

Source: San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, November 2009

Why Youth Join Gangs

Interviews with gang members indicate that joining a gang is seldom understood by the gang members themselves. Reasons for joining vary widely, but some of the common reasons include the excitement of gang activity, the need to belong, peer pressure, financial benefit, family tradition, protection from rival gangs, and a lack of realization of the hazards involved. Some youth may not want to join a gang, but feel they have no other choice. Others may join to retaliate for personal injury or damage to friends or family. Joining a gang may be a way for students to increase their self-esteem. A gang may be the most active organization in the neighborhood, making those who participate feel valuable. In some cases, youth are intimidated into joining a gang by threats and beatings in order to increase membership.

Source: Violence Prevention Institute (www.violencepreventioninstitute.org/youngpeople.html)

Gangs in San Bernardino County

Crime and gang activity is the most frequently cited negative factor about the county. In 2008/09, as many as 31% of San Bernardino County residents considered crime and gang activity a top negative factor. Air pollution and traffic were distant runners up at 9% and 7%, respectively. Crime and gang activity have been the top concerns for residents every year since tracking began in 1997, except in 2001 when air pollution was the top concern.

Gangs in San Bernardino County vary in size: the largest gang has approximately 1,436 members and the smallest has approximately three members. While Latino and Black gangs are the most active in San Bernardino County, there are Asian as well as White gangs.

Sources: Inland Empire Annual Survey and information derived from field interviews throughout law enforcement agencies within San Bernardino County.

¹ A filing is a charging document filed with the superior court clerk by a prosecuting attorney alleging that a person committed or attempted to commit a crime.

Connecting the Dots

Gang-Related Crime not only affects the members of the gangs and their future life options but is also a critical factor in the overall **Crime Rate**.