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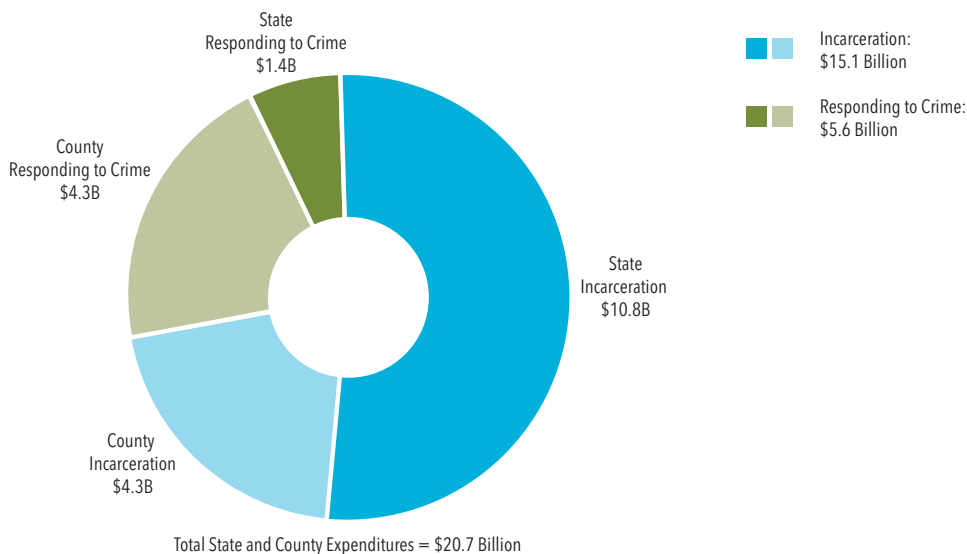
California State and County Governments Spend More Than \$20 Billion Annually on Incarceration and Responding to Crime

In recent years, California has made a series of criminal justice reforms aimed at reducing the number of people involved with state and county correctional systems, promoting rehabilitation, preventing crime, and spending limited tax dollars more wisely.¹ For example, through the 2011 public safety “realignment,” California policymakers transferred responsibility and funding for many adults convicted of “lower-level” felonies from the state prison and parole systems to the counties.² Since 2007, these criminal justice reforms have helped to reduce the number of state prisoners by more than one-quarter and the number of state parolees by nearly two-thirds. In contrast, the statewide county jail population has fluctuated since 2007. However, as of late 2015, county jails held only slightly more people than they did in September 2011 – the month before the state-to-county realignment took effect.³

Despite these significant reforms, spending on incarceration and crime-related activities at the county and state levels remains high. As of 2014-15, California’s state and county governments spent \$20.7 billion on incarceration and responding to crime, according to a Budget Center analysis of state data.⁴ Specifically:

California State and County Spending on Incarceration and Responding to Crime Exceeded \$20 Billion in 2014-15

Dollars in Billions



Note: Data reflect operating expenditures and capital outlay and exclude the City and County of San Francisco. Subtotals may not sum to total due to rounding.
Source: Department of Finance and State Controller's Office

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of this spending – **\$15.1 billion** – was for **incarceration** of adults and juveniles at the state and county levels. At the state level, spending on incarceration (\$10.8 billion) reflects state operations and related capital outlay for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). At the county level, spending on incarceration (\$4.3 billion) includes adult and juvenile detention, jail facilities, and related capital outlay.
- More than one-quarter (27%) of this spending – **\$5.6 billion** – was for activities associated with **responding to crime**. At the state level, this spending (\$1.4 billion) includes support for trial courts as reflected in the state budget along with related capital outlay. At the county level, this spending (\$4.3 billion) reflects support for district attorney prosecution; probation; public defenders; certain trial court activities (expenditures not reflected in the state category); juvenile wards of the court; grand juries; and related capital outlay.⁵ County-level expenditures in this category exclude the cost of policing that is provided by county sheriff's departments.⁶

Significantly reducing state and county spending on incarceration and responding to crime will require continued implementation of recent reforms *and* going beyond recent changes in criminal justice policy. For instance, Proposition 47 (2014), which reduced penalties for several nonviolent drug and property crimes, allows individuals who are serving felony sentences for Prop. 47-related crimes to petition the court for resentencing to a misdemeanor based on this new classification, possibly resulting in early release.⁷ State and local officials should ensure that everyone in prison or jail who qualifies for resentencing under Prop. 47 has a chance to petition the court, which would likely lead to further reductions in state and county incarceration levels.⁸

Policy changes that go beyond recent reforms could include simplifying the state's complex Penal Code in order to shorten prison sentences, providing state officials with new policy options for further reducing incarceration, and increasing the use of alternatives to incarceration at the county level, particularly for youth.⁹ Decreasing the costs of incarceration and responding to crime at both the state and county levels would free up revenues that could then be redirected to public services and systems that can help more Californians achieve economic opportunity and security and promote broadly shared prosperity.

This analysis is the first part of a multiphase effort to analyze state and county spending on incarceration and responding to crime. Future phases of this work will examine trends in spending over time and provide county-by-county information.

¹ For a summary of key criminal justice reforms, see Scott Graves, *Corrections Spending Through the State Budget Since 2007-08: Still High Despite Recent Reforms* (California Budget & Policy Center: November 2015), pp. 1 and 3.

² The phrase "lower-level" refers to nonviolent, nonserious, nonsex offenses. The 2011 realignment also shifted to counties the responsibility for managing most adults who violate a condition of their parole, whether they are being supervised by the state or by the county at the time that such a violation occurs. For an overview of the criminal justice provisions of the 2011 realignment, see Scott Graves, *Steady Climb: State Corrections Spending in California* (California Budget & Policy Center: September 2011), pp. 3-4.

³ Magnus Lofstrom and Brandon Martin, *California's County Jails* (Public Policy Institute of California: August 2016).

- ⁴ This total reflects spending through the state budget as reported by the California Department of Finance (DOF) and county-level spending as reported by the State Controller's Office (SCO). The analysis focuses on 2014-15 because this is the most recent year for which SCO data are available. The SCO provides uniform and comparable data for 57 of California's 58 counties, excluding the City and County of San Francisco, which reports as a city. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the expenditures reported in this *Fact Sheet*, see the *Technical Appendix* http://calbudgetcenter.org/Appendix_State-and-County-Spending-Over-20B/.
- ⁵ The state and county spending subtotals in this category do not sum to the total due to rounding.
- ⁶ City police department expenditures are also excluded because they are not accounted for in the SCO's county spending data. See the *Technical Appendix*, endnote #3, for a discussion of the SCO's "Police Protection" line item in the county data.
- ⁷ For an overview of Prop. 47, see Selena Teji, *Proposition 47: Should California Reduce Penalties for Drug and Property Crimes and Invest in Treatment?* (California Budget & Policy Center: September 2014).
- ⁸ Assembly Bill 2765 (Weber, Chapter 767 of 2016) extends to November 2022 the deadline for current prison or jail inmates to petition the court for resentencing under Prop. 47. This deadline extension also applies to people who have a felony conviction for a Prop. 47-related crime, who have completed their sentence, and who want the court to reduce their felony sentence to a misdemeanor on their criminal record.
- ⁹ For a discussion of California's complex Penal Code, see Selena Teji, *Sentencing in California: Moving Toward a Smarter, More Cost-Effective Approach* (California Budget & Policy Center: December 2015). For an analysis of proposed policy options to further reduce state incarceration, see Scott Graves, *Proposition 57: Should Voters Provide State Officials With New Flexibility to Reduce the Prison Population?* (California Budget & Policy Center: October 2016). Proposition 57 will appear on the November 8, 2016 statewide ballot.