



Merced County

County Spending on Incarceration and Responding to Crime

Over the past decade, California has reconsidered its prior “tough-on-crime” approach to criminal and juvenile justice by adopting fundamental reforms. These reforms have aimed to reduce incarceration, promote more effective pathways to rehabilitation, prevent crime, and spend tax revenues more wisely. In some cases, these changes have had a direct impact on counties, including by giving them greater responsibility for managing youth and adults involved with the justice system. On the whole, these reforms have provided an opening for counties to reassess how they *respond to crime* as well as how they approach *incarceration* – two major parts of county budgets. This *Fact Sheet* shows inflation-adjusted county spending on both incarceration and responding to crime, including as a share of the county budget, for selected fiscal years from 1990-91 to 2015-16.

Fiscal Year	Incarceration		Responding to Crime		Total	
	Dollars in Millions	% of County Budget	Dollars in Millions	% of County Budget	Dollars in Millions	% of County Budget
1990-91	\$15.0	4.4%	\$11.7	3.5%	\$26.7	7.9%
1995-96	\$18.9	5.1%	\$14.4	3.9%	\$33.3	9.0%
2000-01	\$19.1	5.3%	\$16.7	4.7%	\$35.7	10.0%
2005-06	\$28.6	7.0%	\$21.0	5.2%	\$49.7	12.2%
2010-11	\$33.6	7.6%	\$31.9	7.2%	\$65.5	14.7%
2011-12	\$29.9	7.1%	\$30.1	7.2%	\$60.0	14.3%
2012-13	\$28.6	6.9%	\$30.4	7.4%	\$59.0	14.3%
2013-14	\$29.1	6.8%	\$32.3	7.5%	\$61.4	14.3%
2014-15	\$30.0	6.8%	\$32.7	7.4%	\$62.7	14.2%
2015-16	\$32.2	7.2%	\$34.6	7.7%	\$66.7	14.9%

Incarceration: Adult and juvenile detention, jail facilities, and related capital outlay. **Responding to Crime:** District attorney prosecution, probation, public defenders, certain trial court activities, grand juries, juvenile wards of the court, and related capital outlay. **County Budget:** County expenditures, excluding spending related to “enterprise” activities, such as airports and hospitals.

Note: Inflation-adjusted expenditures reflect 2017-18 dollars. Expenditure and percentage subtotals may not sum to totals due to rounding. Relatively large increases or decreases in spending, including as a share of the county budget, could reflect one-time expenditures for jail facilities, substantial changes in total county spending, or other factors.

Source: Budget Center analysis of State Controller’s Office data. See the Technical Appendix (http://calbudgetcenter.org/Appendix_CountySpending) for a description of the methodology used to calculate the expenditures in this *Fact Sheet*.