

# LOS ANGELES COUNTY URBAN CRIME RATES DECLINE IN JUSTICE REFORM ERA (2010-2018)



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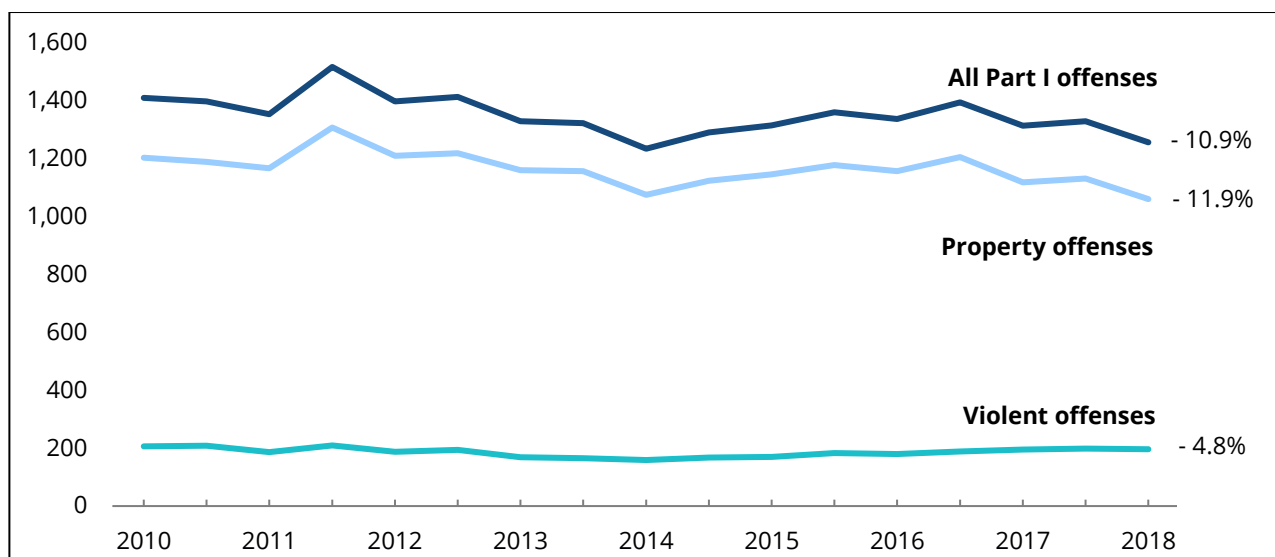
Fact Sheet

Newly released crime statistics show that crime rates in Los Angeles County's 15 largest cities<sup>1</sup> (a combined population of 6.4 million) declined from 2010 through the first half of 2018 (FBI, 2019; CJCJ, 2019). During this eight-year period, termed the justice reform era, California implemented large-scale criminal justice reforms.

- **Part I crime rates declined by 10.9 percent during the justice reform era among Los Angeles County's 14 large cities with consistent crime reporting<sup>2</sup>.**

From the first half of 2010 to the first half of 2018, violent crime rates declined by 4.8 percent and property crime rates fell by 11.9 percent in Los Angeles County's 14 large cities with consistent crime reporting, which exclude the City of Los Angeles (Figure 1; Table 1). During this period, rates of assault increased by 5.4 percent while other Part I offenses decreased: burglary (-24.2 percent), homicide (-20.9 percent), robbery (-18.7 percent), motor vehicle theft (-18.7 percent), larceny/theft (-5.5 percent), and arson (-3.9 percent).

**Figure 1. Semiannual crime rates per 100,000 population in Los Angeles County's 14 largest cities (excluding City of Los Angeles), 2010-2018**



Sources: FBI (2019); DOF (2019). Notes: Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013. Each listed year indicates its January-June period; July-December is indicated by a tick mark following the year.

- **From early 2017 to early 2018, the Part I crime rate declined by 4.4 percent in these 14 cities.**

In Los Angeles County's 14 large cities with consistent crime reporting, the violent crime rates fell by 0.4 percent from the first half of 2017 to the first half of 2018. Property crime rates fell by 5.2 percent during the same period.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for a list of the 15 cities in Los Angeles County with populations of more than 100,000.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this analysis, the City of Los Angeles is shown separately from Los Angeles County's 14 other largest cities due to the Los Angeles Police Department's under-reporting of crime between 2003 and 2015 (see Poston et al., 2015).

In the City of Los Angeles<sup>3</sup>, all Part I crime rates fell by 0.7 percent from the first half of 2017 to the first half of 2018, including decreases of 2.3 percent in violent offenses and 0.3 percent in property offenses. During this period, Los Angeles County's 15 major cities including the City of Los Angeles collectively reported slight declines in total Part I crime rates (-1.8 percent), violent crime rates (-1.5 percent), and property crime rates (-1.9 percent).

**Table 1. Semiannual urban crime rates in Los Angeles County, Jan-June 2010 to Jan-June 2018**

14 large cities (excluding City of Los Angeles)				City of Los Angeles (undercounted, 2010-2015)		
	Total Part I	Violent	Property	Total Part I	Violent	Property
2010 (Jan-June)	1,409.9	206.4	1,203.5	1,480.6	276.1	1,204.5
2010 (July-Dec)	1,397.3	208.1	1,189.1	1,456.6	265.1	1,191.6
2011 (Jan-June)	1,353.1	186.6	1,166.5	1,417.5	251.2	1,166.3
2011 (July-Dec)	1,516.6	209.3	1,307.3	1,373.9	250.5	1,123.4
2012 (Jan-June)	1,397.2	187.7	1,209.5	1,350.8	226.4	1,124.3
2012 (July-Dec)	1,412.8	194.0	1,218.9	1,398.8	228.9	1,169.9
2013 (Jan-June)	1,329.3	168.8	1,160.5	1,293.2	199.8	1,093.4
2013 (July-Dec)	1,322.3	165.5	1,156.8	1,347.3	204.1	1,143.2
2014 (Jan-June)	1,234.0	158.9	1,075.1	1,242.7	208.2	1,034.4
2014 (July-Dec)	1,290.8	167.7	1,123.1	1,359.5	250.6	1,108.9
2015 (Jan-June)	1,314.7	169.5	1,145.2	1,419.8	256.6	1,163.2
2015 (July-Dec)	1,360.3	183.1	1,177.2	1,548.2	322.5	1,225.7
2016 (Jan-June)	1,336.4	179.8	1,156.6	1,558.7	327.4	1,231.3
2016 (July-Dec)	1,394.4	188.9	1,205.5	1,621.0	336.1	1,284.9
2017 (Jan-June)	1,313.7	195.6	1,118.1	1,598.4	334.2	1,264.2
2017 (July-Dec)	1,329.4	198.7	1,130.7	1,661.6	363.4	1,298.2
2018 (Jan-June)	1,256.5	196.4	1,060.1	1,587.4	326.6	1,260.7

Sources: FBI (2019); DOF (2019). Notes: Violent and total crime rates exclude rape because the definition was broadened in 2013. The boxed area indicates the period of the Los Angeles Police Department's under-reporting of crime.

- **Compared to other cities<sup>4</sup> statewide, Los Angeles County's urban crime rates saw larger decreases in property crime, but lower declines in violent crime from early 2010 to early 2018.**

From the first half of 2010 to the first half of 2018, the Part I crime rate decline among Los Angeles County's 14 major cities (-10.9 percent) was larger than the 9.6 percent decrease in cities elsewhere in California. These 14 cities also showed larger decreases in property crime rates (-11.9 percent) than California cities outside the county (-9.2 percent). During the same period, violent crime rates in Los Angeles County's 14 cities saw a considerably smaller decrease of 4.8 percent compared to an 11.8 percent decline in other cities statewide.

- **Crime rates in Los Angeles County's 14 large cities vary, with a majority experiencing crime declines during the justice reform era.**

Crime trends at the local level in Los Angeles County vary considerably, though they have generally shown favorable trends. Nine of the 14 large cities showed Part I crime rate declines from 2010 to 2018, seven of which exceeded 20 percent decreases. Changes in Part I crime rates ranged from a 7.2 percent increase in Lancaster to

<sup>3</sup> The City of Los Angeles is included in this calculation since its under-reporting appears to have been corrected by 2017.

<sup>4</sup> The FBI reports semiannual reported crimes for all cities of 100,000 population or more (approximately 70 California cities). Nearly all cities report offenses for January-June and January-December each year, but a few fail to report January-June and require estimations of their crime totals. In this report, offenses are estimated for January-June in one or two various years for Fresno, Oakland, Clovis, El Cajon, Rialto, San Mateo, and Santa Clarita. The estimation method pro-rates offenses based on the number of days in each half of the year. January-June has 181 and July-December has 184 days.

declines of 29.1 percent in Glendale and Palmdale. Additionally, ten cities showed decreased violent crime rates and 11 cities showed decreased property crime rates during the same period.

In Los Angeles County's 15 largest cities<sup>5</sup> from the first half of 2017 to the first half of 2018, Part I crime rates decreased in 12 of the cities. Nine of these cities showed decreases in violent crime rates and 11 showed decreases in property crime rates (see Appendix for individual cities' crime rates).

- **The Los Angeles Police Department's under-reporting of crime from 2003 to 2015 creates a major challenge in evaluating the county's and California's trends.**

This analysis reports the City of Los Angeles separately due to the large undercounting of crimes, especially robbery and assault, by the Los Angeles Police Department that occurred from about 2003 to mid-2015 (Poston et al., 2015). The LAPD's undercounting through 2015 was followed by corrected reporting in recent years, which presents a misleading picture of crime trends. In the first half of 2018, the city accounted for approximately three-quarters of reported violent crimes in Los Angeles County's 15 large cities and nearly 30 percent of urban violent crimes in California. Given the size of the City of Los Angeles and the proportion of urban crime it accounts for, the inclusion of the city's flawed crime figures has caused severe distortions in statewide crime trends. Urban violent crime rates excluding the City of Los Angeles show a general decline during California's justice reform era.

## **Recent Justice Reforms**

California's crime rates have remained at or near record-low levels during an eight-year era of major criminal justice reforms. Public Safety Realignment, which began in 2011 through Assembly Bill 109, was a legislative response to court mandates to reduce prison overcrowding by shifting responsibility for individuals with nonviolent, non-sexual, and non-serious convictions from state to local supervision (AB 109, 2011). In November 2014, California voters passed Proposition 47, which reduced six minor drug and property felonies to misdemeanors. This measure prompted the re-sentencing and release of thousands of people from jails and prisons across the state (Prop 47, 2014). Proposition 57, approved in 2016, expanded parole opportunities for people convicted of nonviolent felonies, authorized sentence credits for participation in rehabilitative programming, and ended the prosecutorial practice of direct filing juvenile cases to adult court (Prop 57, 2016). Further, the legislature decriminalized marijuana effective in 2011, and voters legalized the drug in 2016 (SB 1449, 2010; Prop 64, 2016).

Through the justice reform era, CJCJ's periodic reviews of crime trends have found no demonstrable change in crime that can be attributed to recent reforms. While statewide urban crime trends have remained low and stable, jurisdictions show wide variations in trends (CJCJ, 2019). These local variances suggest that local policies and practices in the implementation of state reforms play a significant role in crime trends across the state.

## **Promising Local Programs**

In response to changes in statewide policy, Los Angeles County has implemented the following local public safety adaptations.<sup>6</sup> Each of these approaches received funding through the Proposition 47 Safe Neighborhoods and Schools Fund for a three-year period (2017-2020) to support the county in its efforts to address community needs.

- **Housing and Reentry Services**

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' Office of Diversion and Reentry (ODR) implements numerous health-focused initiatives to support justice-involved individuals (DHS, 2019). ODR programs include

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<sup>5</sup> The City of Los Angeles is included in this calculation since its under-reporting appears to have been corrected by 2017.

<sup>6</sup> This program list is not comprehensive and is intended to highlight a selection of the promising practices being implemented in this jurisdiction.

intensive case management, housing, college and career services, and specialized diversion programs. It received \$20 million from the Proposition 47 grant program, 91 percent of which is passed through to community-based organizations supporting people at various points of contact with the justice system (BSCC, 2017).

Since August 2016, the ODR Housing program has provided permanent supportive housing to individuals in the Los Angeles County jail system who are homeless and have serious mental health needs (DHS, 2019). The pre-program works with the Superior Court to offer support to participants with felony cases by resolving their cases early and offering diversion into ODR Housing. The program has supported the release of over 1,700 individuals with participants receiving intensive case management and immediate housing during reentry on the path toward permanent supportive housing.

Additionally, the ODR offers Breaking Barriers, a rapid rehousing program which began in July 2015 to serve homeless individuals on felony probation who are able to participate in full-time work (DHS, 2019). Over the course of a two-year period, the non-profit organization Chrysalis provides employment services and the non-profit Brilliant Corners provides case management and housing services to participants. Through the program, many participants have not only found stable housing and employment but have also shown an increase in educational attainment, including GEDs, high school diplomas, and college degrees.

- **Drug Intervention and Diversion**

The Diversion Outreach and Opportunities for Recovery program (known as L.A. DOOR) is a comprehensive health-focused approach to support people with substance use issues who are involved in the justice system (CCJCC, 2018). The program focuses on the needs of people with repeated misdemeanor drug possession offenses. Rather than subjecting the individual to the formal justice system, L.A. DOOR offers an opportunity for recovery services through mobile outreach and pre-trial diversion.

The Los Angeles City Attorney received \$6 million in Proposition 47 grant funding for this program (BSCC, 2017). Of these funds, 77 percent pass through to a community-based organization to provide services. Project 180, a community-based service provider in Los Angeles, implements L.A. DOOR's programming through a multi-disciplinary team that includes a mental health clinician, a substance abuse disorder specialist, and peer case managers. L.A. DOOR focuses its outreach on connecting participants to wraparound services in five South Los Angeles communities that are particularly impacted by homelessness and have high numbers of misdemeanor drug arrests. As of September 2018, there were over 200 participants in the program (CCJCC, 2018).

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## Appendix

### Total Part I, violent, and property crime rates and trends, Jan-June 2018 vs. Jan-June 2017

Los Angeles County cities with populations larger than 100,000	Change in offense rate, 2018 v. 2017			Jan-June 2018 reported offense rate		
	Total Part I	Violent	Property	Total Part I	Violent	Property
Burbank	-6.7%	15.2%	-8.3%	1,404.3	114.9	1,289.4
Downey	-16.4%	-1.9%	-17.9%	1,334.6	146.0	1,188.7
El Monte	-15.5%	13.9%	-20.1%	1,173.5	211.5	962.0
Glendale	-9.5%	-53.6%	-5.5%	763.3	32.7	730.5
Inglewood	-2.9%	-17.2%	1.2%	1,514.7	283.8	1,230.9
Lancaster	15.9%	7.8%	18.4%	1,490.8	332.7	1,158.0
Long Beach	-2.6%	9.4%	-5.4%	1,594.2	335.1	1,259.1
Los Angeles	-0.7%	-2.3%	-0.3%	1,587.4	326.6	1,260.7
Norwalk	7.4%	11.3%	6.6%	1,193.8	201.1	992.6
Palmdale	-5.8%	-5.2%	-6.0%	960.2	192.0	768.1
Pasadena	-9.3%	-19.3%	-7.6%	1,153.1	148.3	1,004.8
Pomona	6.4%	6.3%	6.4%	1,806.9	258.8	1,548.1
Santa Clarita	-19.0%	-5.2%	-20.3%	685.6	68.7	616.8
Torrance	-12.1%	-10.8%	-12.2%	993.2	76.8	916.4
West Covina	-0.9%	-6.7%	-0.3%	1,278.7	111.6	1,167.1

Sources: FBI (2019); DOF (2019).

**Please note:** Each year, every jurisdiction submits their data to the official databases maintained by appointed governmental bodies. While every effort is made to review data for accuracy and to correct information upon revision, CJCJ cannot be responsible for data reporting errors made at the county, state, or national level.

**Contact:** For more information about this topic or to schedule an interview, please contact CJCJ Communications at (415) 621-5661 x. 103 or [cjcjmedia@cjcj.org](mailto:cjcjmedia@cjcj.org).