

Overtime and staffing-related challenges for law enforcement agencies in FY 2021-22

On an annual basis, the Criminal Justice Research Division of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) collaborates with local jurisdictions and public safety agencies to compile budget and staffing data to longitudinally track public safety spending in the San Diego region. With the release of the FY 2021-22 Budget Bulletin in March 2023, this CJ Flash presents some highlights on expenditures and staffing issues in law enforcement.

Highlight 1

The region's public safety expenditures in FY 2021-22 equated to \$777 per resident, a rate that has remained relatively consistent throughout the years. Almost half (49%) of every dollar spent per resident supports law enforcement functions, and on average, local jurisdictions with their own police department spend about one in every three (32%) of their general fund dollars towards law enforcement expenditures.

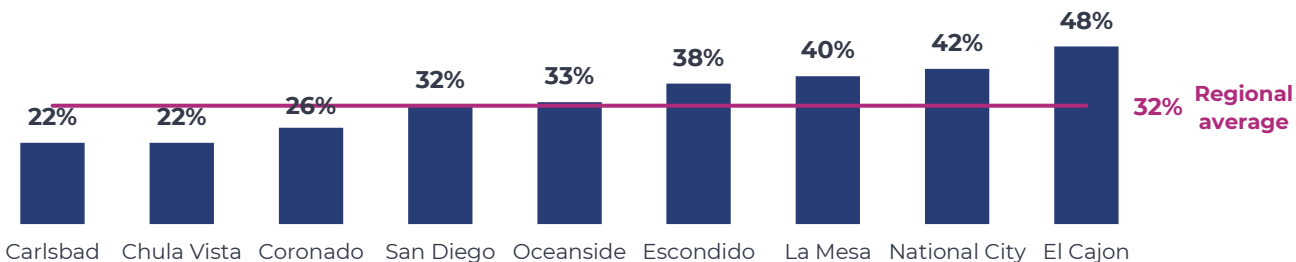
Figure 1

FY 2021-22 allocations of public safety expenditures



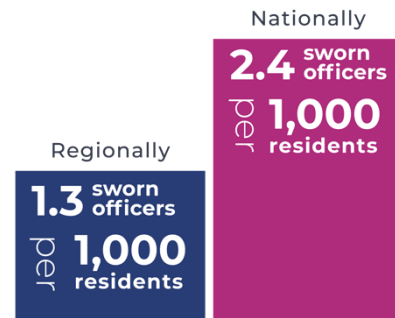
Figure 2

Proportion of FY 2021-22 general funds allocated to law enforcement



Highlight 2

Regionally, there were 1.3 sworn officers per 1,000 residents in FY 2021-22 (ranging from 0.9 to 2.4 among various agencies), which is below the national average (2.4), but still consistent compared to the last few years. While not reflected in the sworn officer rate, almost all law enforcement agencies have noted experiencing staffing-related challenges and difficulties in FY 2021-22, mainly due to higher-than-average attrition and retirement rates, and a steadily decreasing candidate pool.

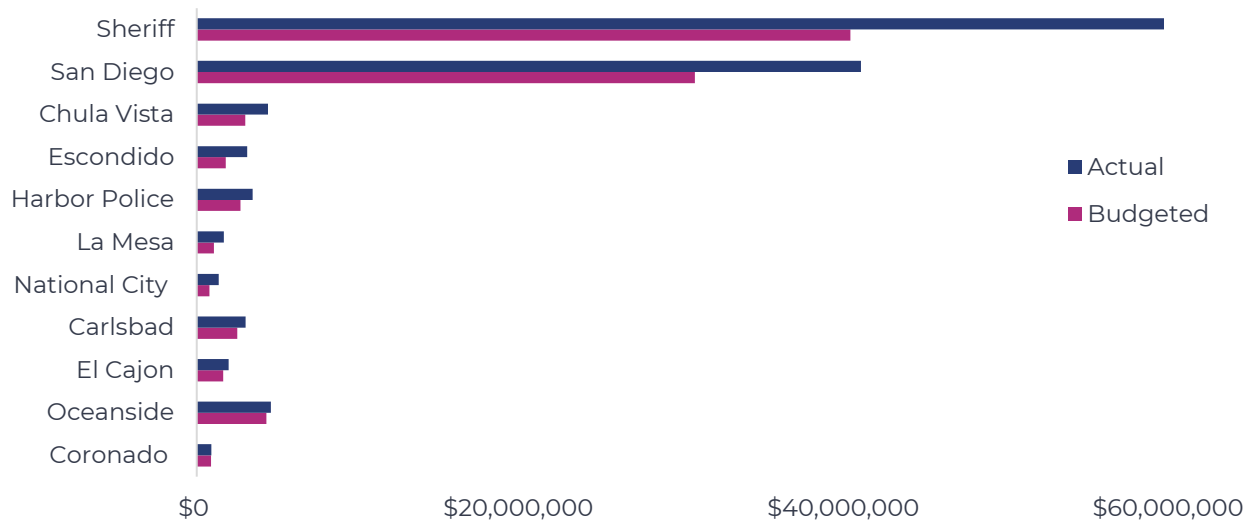


Highlight 3

While budgeting for law enforcement overtime is a standard practice to guarantee sufficient coverage and public safety for unexpected events, in FY 2021-22 all law enforcement agencies had to spend more on overtime than originally budgeted. On average, agencies surpassed the allocated overtime amount by 38% (ranging from 2% to 75%). The variation between the budgeted amount and the actual amount spent on overtime reflects the staffing difficulties agencies have faced in the past fiscal year.

Figure 3

Law enforcement overtime spending in FY 2021-22 exceeded budgeted amount for all agencies



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