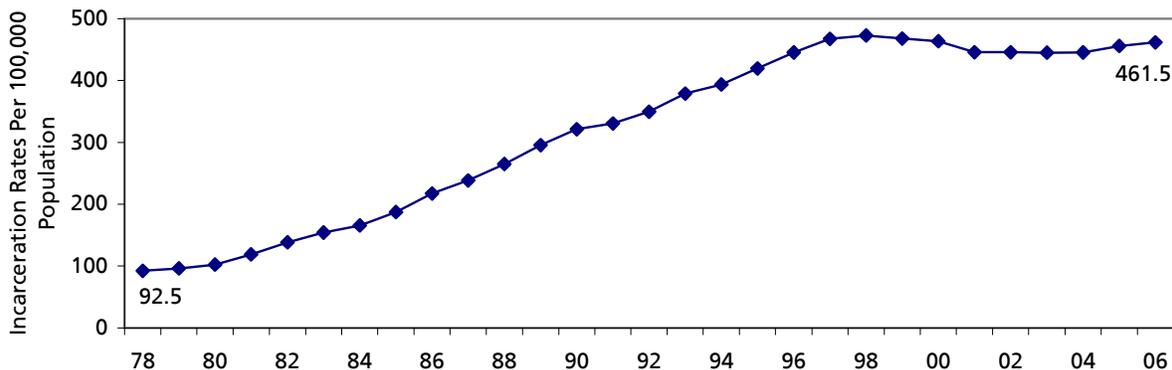


San Diego a Leader in Providing Innovative Ex-Offender Reentry Services

A recent study released by the Pew Charitable Trusts¹ paints a disturbing picture of the nation's prison system and rising incarceration rates: 1 in every 100 adults in 2007 was confined in jail or prison, as was 1 in every 30 men between the ages of 24 to 34, and 1 in every 9 Black males in that same age category. Noting that changes in public policy (e.g., Three Strikes Law), not increased crime, is primarily responsible for the growing trend, the report highlights the need for states to be innovative and aggressive in identifying alternatives to incarceration when appropriate. If not motivated by the fact that the U.S. leads the world in the number of people it incarcerates, the enormous cost and burden on state budgets is a factor catching policy makers' attention. California is a leader in this arena, allocating \$8.8 billion in 2007 towards their corrections system, which is a 261 percent adjusted increase from two decades earlier. This increased cost is easily understood when examining Figure 1, which illustrates a 400 percent increase in California's incarceration rate since 1978.

Figure 1
CALIFORNIA'S PRISON INCARCERATION RATE INCREASING SINCE 1978



SOURCE: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

One innovative program being tested in California is the San Diego County SB 618 program, authored by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office (DA). The primary goal of SB 618 is to reduce recidivism and increase the likelihood of successful offender reentry. San Diego County has the distinction of being the first and only county currently implementing SB 618. Based on best practices in the field, the DA-led program utilizes a multi-agency model to provide wrap-around, case management services to non-violent felony offenders paroling to San Diego County. The Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG is conducting an impact and process evaluation, as well as a cost-effectiveness study, to determine the results of the program. The first research participants entered the program in July 2007 and will be tracked a minimum of one year post-program participation. To learn more about the project a copy of "Improving Reentry for Ex-Offenders in San Diego County: SB 618 First Annual Report" is available on the SANDAG Web site at www.sandag.org/cjc.

¹ Warren, J. (2008). *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Charitable Trusts.