

LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE IMPACT OF BUDGET CUTS

Understanding how local public safety agencies are weathering the current economic storm was the focus of a recent survey conducted by the Criminal Justice Research Division of SANDAG. As part of its annual Public Safety Budget Bulletin, SANDAG included results of the survey sent to agencies inquiring about budget constraints they were already experiencing in FY 2009, as well as how they were preparing for possible additional budget reductions in FY 2010. Nearly half (46%) of the agencies surveyed reported that they were already unable to maintain previous operations and staffing levels in FY 2009 and over three-quarters (79%) were expecting future budget cuts in FY 2010. In terms of what effect these cuts would have, 57 percent felt the quality of service would not be hurt in the long run, while 43 percent thought there would be some negative long-term impact.

When asked about strategies their agencies have already taken to address budget cuts, reducing staff travel, limiting overtime, and implementing hiring freezes were noted most frequently by respondents. In addition, other strategies that may be more likely to occur in FY 2010 include eliminating salary increases, increasing fees for some services, and discontinuing/decreasing new recruitments (Table 1).

Table 1
LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCIES' STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BUDGET CUTS

	Implemented FY 2008-2009	Anticipated FY 2009-2010
Limit staff travel	64%	79%
Eliminate salary increases	21%	79%
Limit use of overtime	64%	71%
Increase fees for some services	21%	64%
Hiring freezes	57%	57%
Discontinue/decrease new recruitments	43%	50%
Limit acquisition of new technology	21%	43%
Leaving vacant positions empty	50%	36%
Reduce staff training	36%	36%
Reduce salaries/benefits	7%	36%
Lay offs/mandatory retirements	29%	29%
Discontinue special units	29%	21%
Unpaid Furlough	21%	21%
Increased reliance on non-sworn staff	21%	14%
Reduce public access hours	14%	7%
Close/consolidate offices/stations	7%	0%

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 14

SOURCE: SANDAG; *Public Safety Budgets in the San Diego Region: Expenditures and Staffing for Fiscal Year 2009*.

In the coming year, the SANDAG Criminal Justice Clearinghouse will continue to monitor regional crime statistics as local public safety agencies continue to best leverage their resources in fighting crime. For more information about this survey and to view the CJ Bulletin "*Public Safety Budgets in the San Diego Region: Expenditures and Staffing for Fiscal Year 2009*", please visit www.sandag.org/cj.