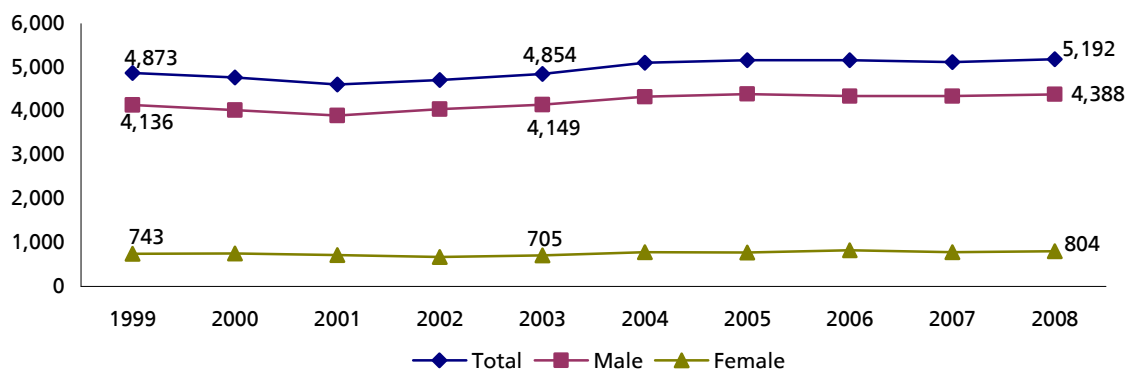


CALIFORNIA'S PRISON REFORM COULD INCREASE LOCAL DETENTION POPULATION AND COSTS

As California scrambles to develop a plan to comply with the three-judge federal court panel's 2009 ruling to produce a population plan to meet the court's operational capacity level of 137.5 percent by the end of 2011, local detention facilities are likely to feel the impact. While the State's plan has not been finalized, recent proposals have included measures to limit sentencing options to county jails for certain offenses that previously would have resulted in a prison sentence¹.

This pending policy change could burden a local detention system that is already operating near or at capacity. Specifically, the court-ordered capacity of San Diego County adult detention facilities is 5,511 and the average daily adult inmate population for 2008 was 5,192, which reflects a 6.5 percent increase over the past 10 years (from 1999 to 2008) (Figure 1). Additionally, as SANDAG reported in the 2009 arrest bulletin, the adult arrest rate in 2008 registered the first increase since 2004 and was one percent higher than the rate in 2007². While not all arrestees are booked into local detention facilities, the combination of the recent increase in arrests, the steady climb in the adult jail inmate population since 2004, and the potential to have more offenders sentenced to serve their time locally could have a significant impact on local detention facilities. The San Diego County Sheriff's Department, charged with operating the seven local adult facilities³, would bear the brunt of managing these increases in detainees.

Figure 1
SAN DIEGO COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES AVERAGE DAILY ADULT INMATE POPULATION



SOURCE: San Diego County Sheriff's Department

The average daily cost of housing an inmate is approximately \$120 per day and any increase in the number of detainees could be especially daunting given the budgetary challenges facing local government agencies that have already been forced to reduce programming and are coping with staffing vacancies and hiring freezes.

¹ More information about the judges' decision and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's response can be found on-line <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/>.

² Burke, C. (2009). *Arrests 2008: Law Enforcement Response to Crime in the San Diego Region*. Available on-line at www.sandag.org/cj.

³ More information on the local detention facilities is available at <http://www.sdsheiff.net/jailinfo.html>.