

## Local Arrestees with Prior Prison Experience Face Greater Reentry Challenges

In direct response to prison overcrowding, the California governor enacted Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109) in April 2011, which calls for a plan to realign the criminal justice system, essentially handing over more responsibility to counties for housing and supervising certain offenders.<sup>1</sup> As San Diego County implements realignment locally, thereby serving more offenders with prior prison experience, it is helpful to know what differences exist between individuals who have and have not previously been incarcerated in prison, and what possible implications these differences may have for programming needs both in custody and during community supervision.

Through SANDAG's Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program, in which recently arrested individuals are interviewed in local detention facilities, arrestees are asked if they ever served time in prison. Based on the 801 interviews conducted in 2010 with valid responses to the question asking if they ever served time in prison,<sup>2</sup> around one-fifth (22%) said they had a prior prison term, with males significantly more likely (79%) than females (21%) to have had one. As Table 1 shows, in addition to being older, those with prior prison experience were significantly more likely to have children, substance abuse issues, prior homelessness, and gang involvement, and less likely to be currently employed full-time. However, no significant differences existed regarding highest level of education obtained or ever receiving treatment for mental health issues (not shown).

**Table 1**  
**PRIOR PRISON EXPERIENCE SIGNIFICANTLY LINKED TO GREATER RISK FACTORS\***

<b>Arrestee Characteristics</b>	<b>Prior Prison Incarceration</b>	<b>No Prior Prison Incarceration</b>
Average Age (years)	38.71	30.43
Have Children	63%	54%
Positive for Any Drug at Arrest	75%	56%
Ever Received Substance Abuse Treatment	57%	26%
Ever Injected Drugs	35%	12%
Ever Homeless	64%	43%
Ever Involved in a Gang	34%	18%
Currently Work Full-Time	18%	27%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>626</b>

\*Differences significant at 0.05 level.

SOURCE: SANDAG Substance Abuse Monitoring Interviews, 2010

While not all arrestees reporting prior prison experience may be subject to the new realignment criteria, it is useful to local officials when implementing realignment to have a clearer picture of the higher level of risks and needs these individuals are confronting. To access SAM reports, please visit [www.sandag.org/cj](http://www.sandag.org/cj). For more information about San Diego County's Public Safety Realignment Plan, go to <http://www.sdcourty.ca.gov/probation/docs/CCP-SanDiegoPublicSafetyImplementationPlan.pdf.9.16.11.pdf>.

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<sup>1</sup> AB109 realigns community supervision and custodial responsibilities for certain offender populations deemed to be lower risk from the state to county level.

<sup>2</sup> Bulletins detailing the full range of SAM data collected in 2010 will be released later this fall.