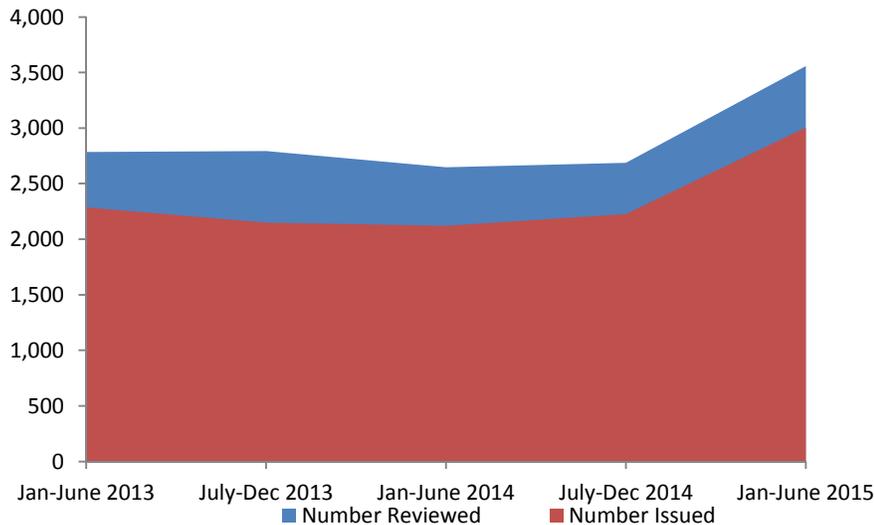


PROPOSITION 47 AND CITY ATTORNEY PROSECUTIONS

According to soon-to-be released statistics from SANDAG’s Substance Abuse Monitoring (SAM) program, 82 percent of adult arrestees interviewed in local detention facilities in 2014 reported having been arrested previously (at the age of 22.4, on average for the time) and with a median of five prior arrests. Over one in three (37%) had been arrested as a juvenile, 76 percent had been in jail before, and 77 percent had been previously on probation. These statistics demonstrate in part how involvement in the criminal justice system can be a revolving door for many.

As a result of Proposition (Prop) 47,¹ which took effect in November 2014, several drug- and theft-related charges were reduced from felonies to misdemeanors, a change that resulted in more individuals being cited and released, rather than booked into jail, and a greater number of cases referred by law enforcement to the San Diego City Attorney’s Criminal Division for prosecution.² To better understand how the City Attorney has been affected by these changes, statistics were compiled on the number of criminal cases reviewed and "issued" (accepted for prosecution) overall, as well as for drug- and theft-related cases for the five most recent six-month periods (January 2013 through June 2015). As Figure 1 shows, there have been slight fluctuations in both the number of drug- and theft-related cases reviewed and issued over the past two-and-a-half years, but both have increased considerably in the most recent six-month period since Prop 47 took effect, compared to the first half of 2013 (by 28%, from 2,785 to 3,559 for cases reviewed, and by 31%, from 2,286 to 3,005 for cases issued). In the first half of 2015, 84 percent of drug- and theft-related cases reviewed by the City Attorney were issued, compared to 77 percent to 83 percent in the previous four periods. Also in the first half of 2015, there were a total of 11,002 cases reviewed, with drug- and theft-related cases representing about one in three (32%).

Figure 1
NUMBER OF DRUG- AND THEFT-RELATED CASES REVIEWED AND ISSUED UP SINCE PROP 47



In an effort to address the potential for this revolving door earlier, the City Attorney’s Office has expanded its Community Court program and is continuing to partner with other justice entities, as well as community-based organizations. To learn more about Community Court, please visit the City Attorney’s web site at <http://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney/divisions/criminal/commcourt.shtml>.

¹ For more information about Proposition 47 and its effect in San Diego County, please refer to the March 2015 CJ Flash on the topic.

² The San Diego City Attorney’s Office prosecutes misdemeanors for the Cities of San Diego and Poway; other misdemeanors are prosecuted by the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office.