

# INTRODUCTION

The annual Criminal Justice Profile series supplements and expands on the data provided in the Criminal Justice Statistics Center's (CJSC) publication *Crime in California*. The collection and publication of these data are mandated by California Penal Code sections 13010-13012. Most of the data included in these publications are reported to the CJSC by state and local agencies. Other sources are noted.

The Criminal Justice Profile consists of a statewide report and individual reports for each county. Each publication consists of three sections:

- **Criminal Justice Trend Data, 1995-2004.** Ten-year trend data are presented for crimes, arrests, arrest dispositions, adult probation, jail populations, criminal justice personnel, and expenditures.
- **Current Year Data, 2004.** This section displays selected data in more detail for the current reporting year. In the statewide Criminal Justice Profile, the current data are presented for the state and by county. Each county publication presents data for the county and for each contributing jurisdiction within the county.
- **Appendices.** This section contains (1) data characteristics and known limitations, (2) computational formulas, (3) a list of arrest offense codes that are included in the felony and misdemeanor arrest offense categories, (4) a glossary of criminal justice terms, and (5) an acknowledgments page.

A number of factors can influence crime counts in particular jurisdictions. These factors should be considered when using crime statistics, especially for comparative purposes.

- Variations in population composition, particularly age structure.
- Population density and size of the locality and its surrounding area.
- Stability of population with respect to residents' mobility, commuting patterns, and transient factors.
- Modes of transportation and highway system.
- Economic conditions.
- Cultural factors and educational, recreational, and religious characteristics.
- Effective strength of law enforcement agencies.
- Administrative and investigative emphases of law enforcement.
- Policies of other components of the criminal justice system (i.e., prosecutorial, judicial, correctional, and probational).
- Changes in laws and data collection procedures.

Using reported crimes to compile rankings of cities and counties lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting cities and counties, along with their residents. Geographic and demographic factors specific to each jurisdiction must be considered and applied if one is going to make an accurate and complete assessment of crime in the jurisdiction.

Crime and arrest rates are calculated using annual population estimates provided by the Demographic Research Unit, California Department of Finance.

An electronic version of this report and other reports are available on the California Attorney General's website. A printed version of this report and customized statistical information may be requested by contacting the CJSC Special Requests Unit.