

Law Enforcement Staffing in California

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➤ **Research shows that increased police staffing is a cost-effective way to prevent crime.**

The most recent credible research finds that each additional police officer reduces crime by 1.3 violent crimes and 4.2 property crimes per year. Other recent research estimates that the crime-reducing benefits of hiring an additional police officer exceed \$300,000 per year, much more than the annual cost of an additional officer. With California's incarceration rates declining since the implementation of public safety realignment and Proposition 47, adding law enforcement staff is one cost-effective strategy to consider.

➤ **Californians share national concerns about community-police relationships.**

Community-police relationships have recently become a focus of national attention, as incidents across the country have brought concerns about the treatment of racial and ethnic minorities by law enforcement to the forefront. According to the March 2017 PPIC Statewide Survey, 66% of Californians think that African Americans and other minorities do not receive equal treatment relative to whites in the criminal justice system, an increase of 11 percentage points from January 2015. Majorities across racial and ethnic groups hold this view, including 60% of whites and 90% of African Americans, with Asian Americans and Latinos falling in between.

➤ **Almost half of California's law enforcement officers work for municipal police departments.**

In 2017 there were more than 119,500 full-time law enforcement employees in California; roughly 78,500 were sworn law enforcement officers (with full arrest powers) and 41,000 were civilian staff. Of all sworn officers, about 48% were municipal police officers, 39% were county sheriff officers, and almost 10% were with the California Highway Patrol (CHP). About 3% were employed by other agencies, such as university, port, and transportation districts and the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

➤ **Sworn law enforcement staff predominantly work as patrol officers, and most are male.**

Of the 78,500 sworn officers in 2017, there were roughly 67,200 patrol officers ("beat cops") and 11,300 officers working in county jails. Of all sworn officers, 68,400 (or 87%) were male. In 2017, there were 30,400 civilian staff in municipal police departments, CHP, and other non-jail settings, and 10,600 civilian staff in jails. Of the roughly 41,000 civilian staff, only 15,400 (or 38%) were male.

➤ **Staffing has not fully rebounded since the Great Recession.**

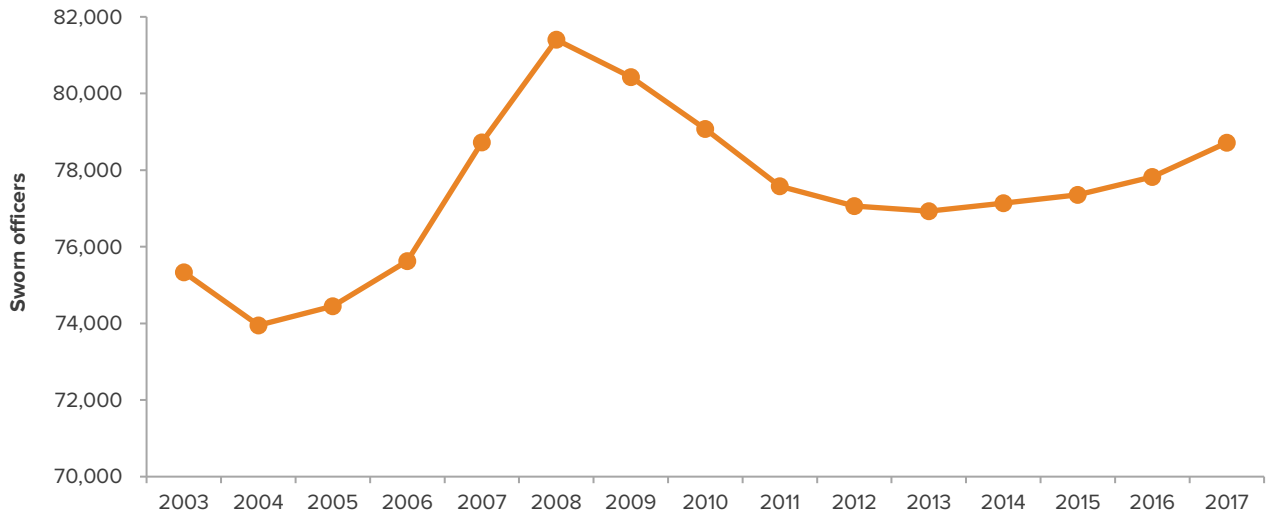
The number of law enforcement staff began to decline in California at the onset of the Great Recession. Between 2008 and 2011, the state lost almost 4,000 sworn staff and 3,000 civilian staff—declines of 5% and 7%, respectively. Since 2011, the state has added back more than 1,000 sworn staff and almost 2,000 civilian staff. However, looking at the numbers across agency types from 2008 to 2017, we see that police officers are still down almost 6% and sheriff's deputies are down 2%, while other officers have increased about 1%. The number of highway patrol officers was slightly higher in 2017 than it was in 2008, but that is because the CHP did not experience drastic cuts until 2010. Between 2010 and 2017, the CHP lost 3% of officers.

➤ **Law enforcement funding is mainly a local concern.**

Police protection constitutes a very small percentage (less than 1%) of direct expenditures by the state, but it accounts for a larger amount (between 5% and 15%) of annual budgets at county and city levels. Local (city and county) police protection is funded by property, business, and sales taxes, federal and state grants, local fees and fines, and voter-approved increases in general and special sales taxes. In 2015, California law enforcement agencies spent \$16.2 billion (\$414 per resident) for police protection, slightly more than the \$14.3 billion the state and counties spent on corrections. For comparison, Florida spent \$7.3 billion (\$360 per resident), New York \$9.2 billion (\$465 per resident), and Texas \$7.1 billion (\$258 per resident) on police protection in 2015.

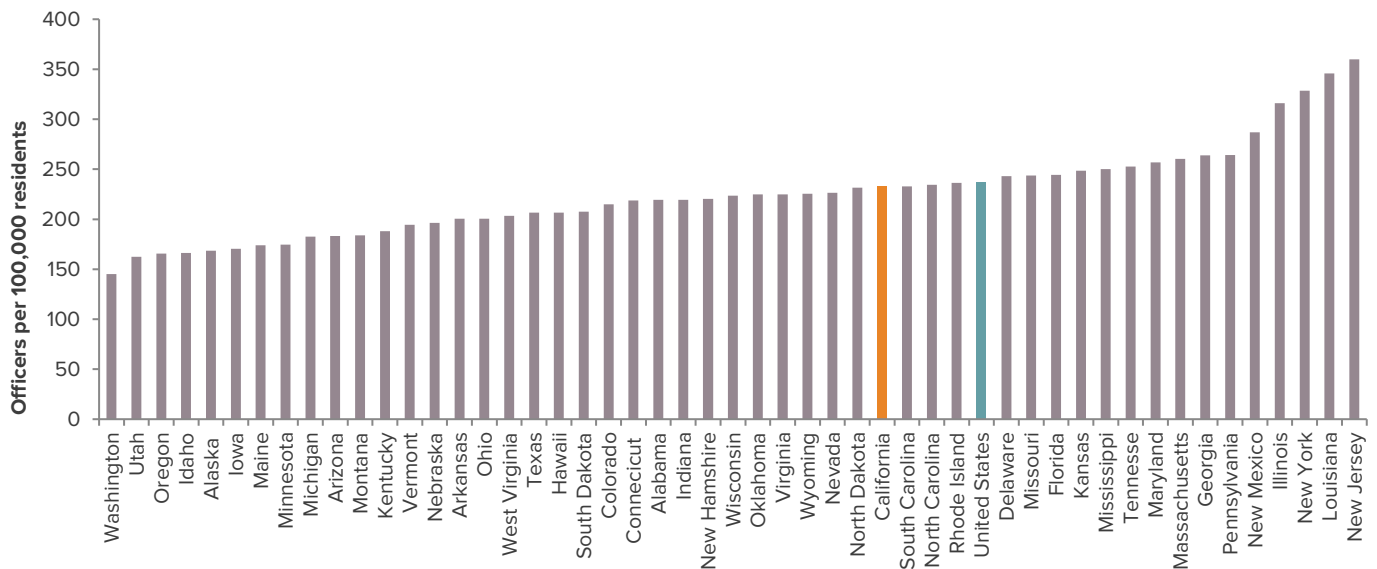


California’s law enforcement officer staffing has not fully rebounded since the Great Recession



Source: California Department of Justice’s Criminal Justice Profiles 2003–2012 and Crime in California 2013–2017, Criminal Justice Full-Time Personnel.

California has about as many officers per 100,000 residents as the nation does overall



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Crime in the US 2017, Police Employee Data.

Notes: The rate for the District of Columbia is not included in this figure (and is not factored into the US-wide rate of officers per 100,000 residents). Because these rates are based on officer and total population counts only from agencies that reported to the FBI, they may not match other sources.

Sources: Aaron Chalfin and Justin McCrary, “Are US Cities Underpoliced? Theory and Evidence,” *Review of Economics and Statistics*, March 2018. Paul Heaton, “Hidden in Plain Sight: What Cost-of-Crime Research Can Tell Us about Investing in Police” (RAND Corporation, 2010). California Department of Justice, *Crime in California, 2003–2017*. California Department of Finance, *County Population Estimates, 2003–2017*. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2003–2017*. United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Justice Expenditures Program, 2015*. California Legislative Analyst’s Office, “California’s Criminal Justice System: A Primer” (2013).

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