



## ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE ARRESTS, 1995-2004

### INTRODUCTION

The patterns of total juvenile arrests, as well as felony and misdemeanor dispositions, are of particular interest when discussing Orange County crime because data on the juvenile population is not often widely discussed. The Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center prepares an annual analysis of juvenile crime to provide information for planning and implementing juvenile justice programs and policies throughout California. This issue of *Orange County Profiles* focuses on the juvenile arrest rates in Orange County and includes the most current information available on juvenile arrests and important trends regarding those arrests. The report draws from calendar years 1995 to 2004, the most recent time period for which crime and population statistics are available.

### JUVENILE ARRESTS

In 2004, nearly 90% of arrests made in Orange County were made for crimes committed by adults, while juveniles (ages 10 to 17) accounted for 11,450 (11.8%) of felony and misdemeanor arrests. Juveniles were responsible for 11.5% (3,293) of all felonies in Orange County, a law enforcement term referring to a crime that is punishable by

death or imprisonment in a state facility. About 12% (8,157) of all misdemeanors, crimes punishable by imprisonment in county jail for up to one year, were committed by juveniles in the county. Orange County juveniles were responsible for 11.6% (643) of all violent crimes. Violent crimes are a subset of felonies and are defined as crimes committed against people such as homicide, forcible rape, assault, robbery, and kidnapping. Of those juveniles arrested in 2004, 28.8% were arrested for felony crimes (both violent and non-violent), while 71.2% were arrested for misdemeanor crimes (Table 1).

The number of juvenile arrests in Orange County decreased between 1995 and 2004. The total number of arrests in 2004 represents a 25% decline in the absolute number of arrests from the ten years prior (15,175 in 1995 down to 11,450 in 2004). In the mid- to late 1990s, total juvenile arrests were between 15,000 and 16,200 annually. In the first half of the current decade, we have seen a decline of 14.2% from 13,347 arrests in 2000 to 11,450 in 2004.

The juvenile crime percentage distributions paint a clear picture of this distinction. The percentage of juvenile arrests for felony crimes has shifted to a smaller share of all

**Table 1**  
**Juvenile Arrests by Category of Offense**  
**Orange County, California, 1995-2004**

Year	Felony: Non-Violent		Felony: Violent Crimes		Misdemeanor		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1995	4,038	26.6	1,042	6.9	10,095	66.5	15,175	100
1996	4,078	25.1	974	6.0	11,169	68.9	16,221	100
1997	3,654	24.1	955	6.3	10,570	69.6	15,179	100
1998	3,625	22.7	912	5.7	11,417	71.6	15,954	100
1999	3,213	21.0	834	5.5	11,204	73.5	15,251	100
2000	2,948	22.1	710	5.3	9,689	72.6	13,347	100
2001	2,780	21.8	789	6.2	9,155	72.0	12,724	100
2002	2,592	22.3	727	6.3	8,304	71.4	11,623	100
2003	2,834	24.6	720	6.2	8,002	69.2	11,556	100
2004	2,650	23.2	643	5.6	8,157	71.2	11,450	100

Source: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

juvenile arrests, while the percentage of juvenile arrests for misdemeanor crimes has become a larger share. Felony arrests have dropped from 33.5% in 1995 down to 28.8% in 2004. The percentage of felonies in four of the last five years was less than 30%. As the share of felony arrests decline, the share of misdemeanors increases when looking at total arrests. Misdemeanor arrests rose from the 66.5% of all juvenile arrests in 1995 to 71.2% in 2004. While the trend in the changing distribution of the arrests is clear, arrests for violent crimes has averaged 5.8% of all arrests since 1998.

When converted into a rate per 100 juveniles living in Orange County (Figure 1), there is a steady decline in all arrest categories for the county with the exception of a slight rise in 1996 and 1998 for total arrests and for misdemeanors. Juvenile arrests for non-violent felonies have clearly fallen during the last part of the 1990s. After hovering at about 1.5 from 1995 to 1998, the rates of juvenile felony arrests per 100 juveniles began to drop noticeably. From 2001 to 2004 the felony rate was below 1.0 arrests per 100 juveniles. The violent felony crime rate had a steady decrease between 1995 and 2004, except in 2001. Misdemeanor rates fluctuated between 1995 and 2004 with a high in 1996 of 4.2 and a low in 2003 of 2.2.

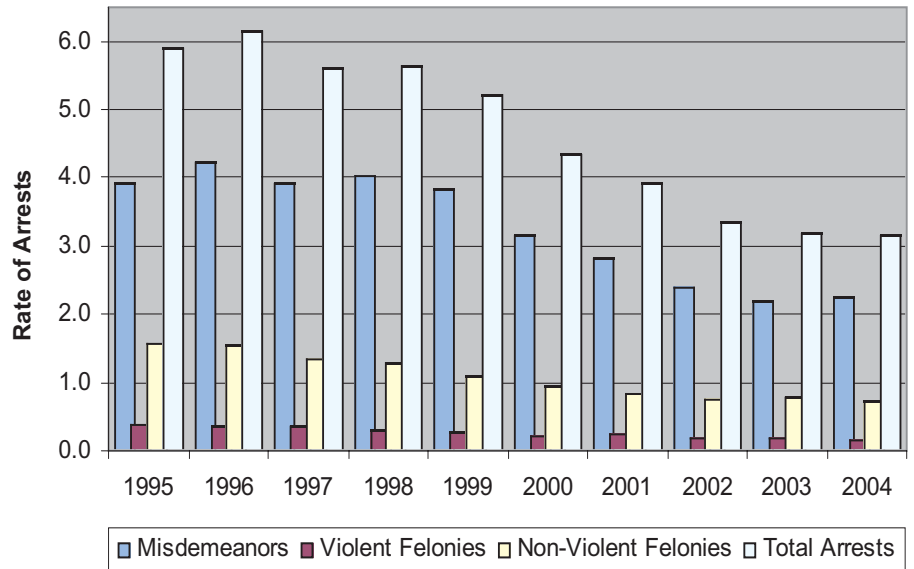
**ARRESTS BY SEX**

A trend that is clear to define is the distribution of arrests by sex (Figure 2). In 1995, 85.9% of all felony juvenile arrests were for crimes committed by males. That figure has decreased to 80.3% in 2004. Juvenile females have had the opposite trend. Females accounted for 14.1% of the juvenile felony arrests in 1995. That share grew to 19.7% resulting in a growth of 5.6 percentage points, or 64 arrests, between 1995 and 2004.

**ARRESTS BY CITY**

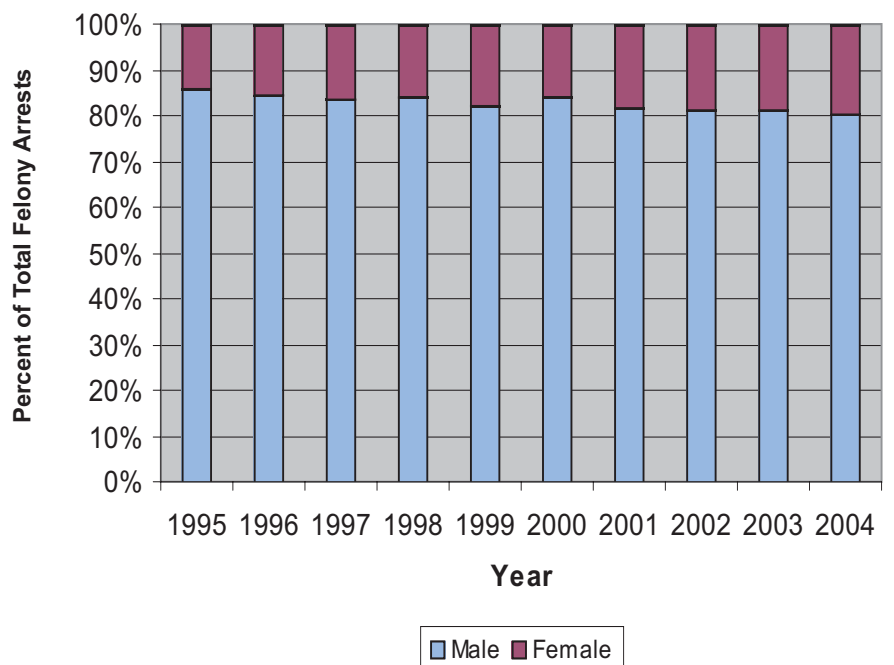
Table 2 contains the total number of juvenile arrests by the location of the

**Figure 1**  
Orange County Juvenile Arrest Rates, 1995-2004  
(Rates Per 100 Population Ages 10-17)



Source: CA Depart. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

**Figure 2**  
Orange County Juvenile Arrests by Sex  
1995-2004



Source: CA Depart. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

**Table 2**  
**Total Juvenile Arrests By Jurisdiction Orange County, 1995-2004**

JURISDICTION	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	1995 - 2004	
											Number	Percent
<b>NORTH COUNTY</b>												
Anaheim	2,088	2,099	1,238	1,166	1,097	1,057	1,010	1,202	1,149	1,157	-931	-44.6%
Brea	318	354	439	588	406	290	259	181	310	280	-38	-11.9%
Buena Park	577	550	636	507	517	495	368	329	407	416	-161	-27.9%
Cypress	207	207	193	191	137	118	81	64	111	135	-72	-34.8%
Fullerton	585	662	710	756	619	595	529	576	535	642	57	9.7%
La Habra	434	507	691	548	413	358	389	430	473	426	-8	-1.8%
La Palma	95	134	75	25	50	24	29	24	42	48	-47	-49.5%
Orange	818	921	942	1,005	1,483	1,293	1,381	1,062	867	691	-127	-15.5%
Placentia	147	198	182	219	181	155	142	133	164	139	-8	-5.4%
Villa Park	36	23	35	31	41	21	32	13	32	17	-19	-52.8%
Yorba Linda	220	290	380	282	181	183	155	88	145	92	-128	-58.2%
<b>North County Total</b>	<b>5,525</b>	<b>5,945</b>	<b>5,521</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>5,125</b>	<b>4,589</b>	<b>4,375</b>	<b>4,102</b>	<b>4,235</b>	<b>4,043</b>	<b>-1,482</b>	<b>-26.8%</b>
<b>WEST COUNTY</b>												
Fountain Valley	356	337	301	288	282	268	222	189	189	134	-222	-62.4%
Garden Grove	1,103	1,142	1,130	1,223	1,316	993	1,050	884	969	990	-113	-10.2%
Huntington Beach	1,220	1,807	1,040	1,545	1,050	1,162	918	774	807	634	-586	-48.0%
Los Alamitos	77	74	60	48	48	50	75	53	40	45	-32	-41.6%
Seal Beach	79	55	33	50	60	50	36	27	27	29	-50	-63.3%
Stanton	65	62	87	96	107	52	40	33	46	53	-12	-18.5%
Westminster	559	520	449	512	581	455	380	336	338	278	-281	-50.3%
<b>West County Total</b>	<b>3,459</b>	<b>3,997</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>3,762</b>	<b>3,444</b>	<b>3,030</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>2,296</b>	<b>2,416</b>	<b>2,163</b>	<b>-1,296</b>	<b>-37.5%</b>
<b>CENTRAL COUNTY</b>												
Santa Ana	1,629	1,824	1,723	1,684	1,464	1,367	1,282	1,342	1,288	1,639	10	0.6%
<b>Central County Total</b>	<b>1,629</b>	<b>1,824</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>1,684</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>1,282</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>1,288</b>	<b>1,639</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
<b>SOUTH COUNTY</b>												
Aliso Viejo	*	*	*	*	*	*	42	165	99	90	*	*
Costa Mesa	585	750	792	541	566	489	522	417	414	393	-192	-32.8%
Dana Point	131	197	162	121	162	135	153	97	95	112	-19	-14.5%
Irvine	535	520	826	823	842	897	870	800	769	758	223	41.7%
Laguna Beach	252	224	246	239	201	99	120	124	94	151	-101	-40.1%
Laguna Hills	156	114	145	180	205	147	155	126	108	74	-82	-52.6%
Laguna Niguel	74	97	71	171	111	149	114	106	104	107	33	44.6%
Laguna Woods	*	*	*	*	*	8	6	4	2	3	*	*
Lake Forest	222	213	256	279	290	254	223	148	170	137	-85	-38.3%
Mission Viejo	415	377	361	540	365	345	299	306	318	308	-107	-25.8%
Newport Beach	852	712	597	596	837	681	783	757	672	722	-130	-15.3%
Rancho Santa Margarita	*	*	*	*	*	77	145	111	80	91	*	*
San Clemente	177	208	126	256	230	133	131	106	75	80	-97	-54.8%
San Juan Capistrano	155	123	75	113	137	103	115	113	88	78	-77	-49.7%
Tustin	357	329	498	458	468	317	251	263	191	197	-160	-44.8%
Unincorporated	478	570	621	661	638	392	330	124	238	208	-270	-56.5%
<b>South County Total</b>	<b>4,389</b>	<b>4,434</b>	<b>4,776</b>	<b>4,978</b>	<b>5,052</b>	<b>4,226</b>	<b>4,259</b>	<b>3,767</b>	<b>3,517</b>	<b>3,509</b>	<b>-880</b>	<b>-20.1%</b>
Other	173	21	59	212	166	135	87	116	100	96	-77	-44.5%
<b>Orange County Total</b>	<b>15,175</b>	<b>16,221</b>	<b>15,179</b>	<b>15,954</b>	<b>15,251</b>	<b>13,347</b>	<b>12,724</b>	<b>11,623</b>	<b>11,556</b>	<b>11,450</b>	<b>-3,725</b>	<b>-24.5%</b>

\* Represent unavailable data  
Source: CA Depart. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

arrest for 1995 through 2004. In 2004, the Orange County cities with the most juvenile arrests were Santa Ana (1,639), Anaheim (1,157), and Garden Grove (990). This is expected for Santa Ana and Anaheim because they have two of the largest city populations in the county. Over those ten years, the cities with the largest percent decreases in total juvenile arrests were Seal Beach (-63.3%), Fountain Valley (-62.4%) and Yorba Linda (58.2%). The three cities with the largest numerical decreases were Anaheim (-931), Huntington Beach (-586) and Westminster (-281).

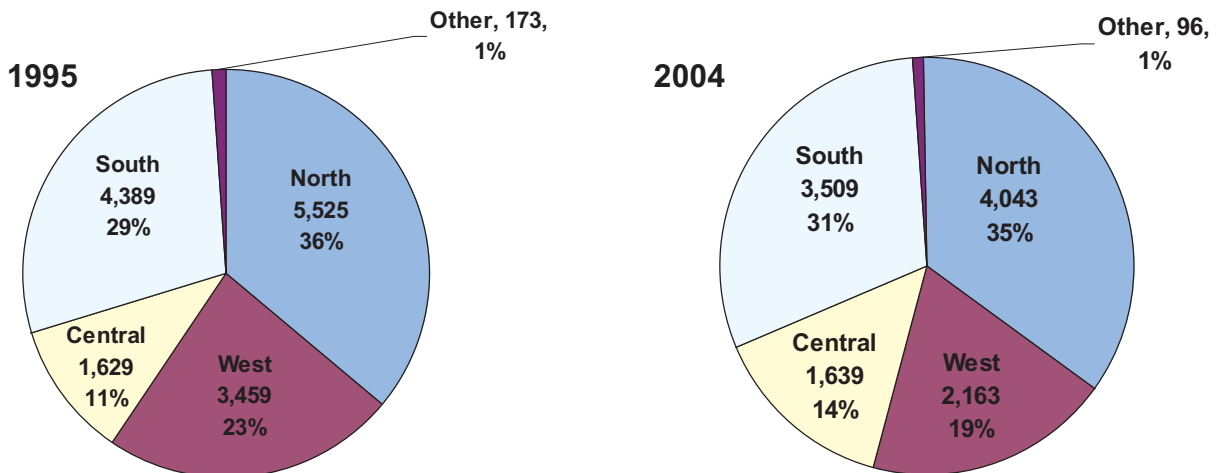
The jurisdictional groupings in Table 2 coincide with the Orange County Probation Department's supervision regions shown in Figure 3. While the number of arrests in North County decreased between 1995 and 2004, the share of county juvenile arrests remains about the same (36%). South County arrests also decreased from 4,389 arrests (29%) in 1995 to 3,509 (31%). West County arrests decreased from 3,459 in 1995 to 2,163 in 2004 and also showed the largest percentage point change from 23% to 19%. Central County contains only the City of Santa Ana, which reported 1,629 juvenile arrests (11%) in 1995 and 1,639 in 2004 (14%). One point of clarification: the designation "Other" in Table 2 and Figure 3 is due to different arresting agencies, such as the CHP, U.S. Marshalls and universities, reporting separately and not necessarily by location of arrest.

**CONCLUSION**

It is important to note that data on conviction rates from the arrests reported here and the outcome of convictions are not available at the present time. Each county in California handles their juvenile offender populations differently. Depending upon the political climate and the current capacity at the local correctional facilities, placement after a juvenile conviction is difficult to determine. A misdemeanor offense will usually result in formal or informal probation in Orange County, while a juvenile felony conviction may result in placement at a correctional facility or formal probation. In addition, many factors influence changes in arrest patterns, such as an increase in youth population through annexation of an area into a city, changing patrolling agencies (e.g. city police department to county sheriffs), changes in city council or police management, and directives within a city.

In summary, although we cannot report on the outcome of the juvenile arrests in Orange County, it is important to know that while Orange County's population increased by 16.3% from 1995 to 2004, we have seen major reductions in total arrests (-24.5%), misdemeanors (-19.2%), non-violent felonies (-34.4%), and violent felony crimes (-38.3%) for juveniles. This pattern for juveniles also follows the less dramatic decrease of 13.3% in adult arrests over the same time period.

**Figure 3**  
**Total Number of Juvenile Arrests By Orange County Probation Department Supervision Regions, 1995 and 2004**



Source: CA Dept. of Justice, Criminal Justice Statistics Center

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