

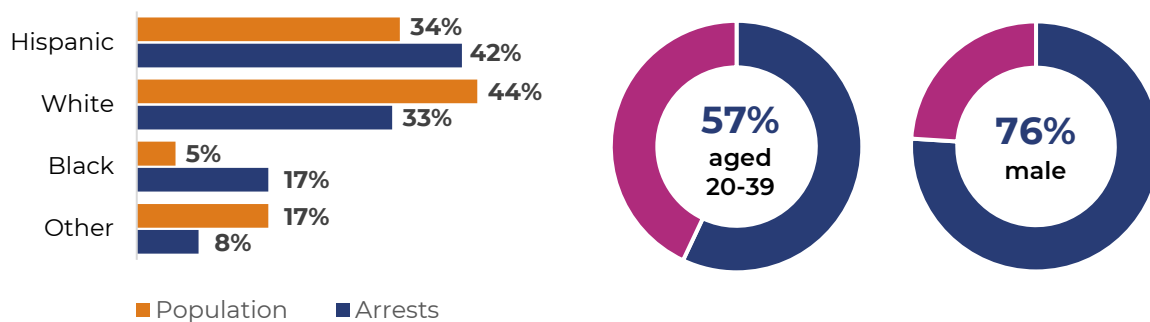
Adult Arrests on the Decline, Particularly Among Misdemeanors

Each year, the SANDAG Criminal Justice Research Division produces a report on how local criminal justice agencies respond to crime in the region, as measured by arrest data. Complementing the recently released [Arrests 2023 bulletin](#), this CJ Flash offers a snapshot of arrest demographics in the region and presents five-year comparisons of arrest trends. These patterns highlight a decline in adult arrests from 2019 to 2023, including a sharp reduction in misdemeanor arrests and a notable decrease in alcohol and drug violations.

Highlight 1: Racial and gender disparities in arrests persist in 2023

In 2023, a total of 56,930 individuals were arrested in the San Diego region (94% of which were adults aged 18 and over). Demographically, Hispanic and Black populations were overrepresented in arrests compared to their share of the region’s population. Additionally, more than half of arrestees were between the ages of 20 and 39, and three in four were male.

Figure 1: Arrestee demographics in the San Diego region (2023)



Sources: SANDAG, SANDAG Population Estimates v2023, ARJIS

Highlight 2: Adult arrests decline while juvenile arrests return to pre-pandemic levels

In 2020, both adults and juveniles experienced a decline in arrests; however, while adult arrests have continued to decrease each year since, juvenile arrests saw an increase for the second consecutive year in 2023, returning to pre-pandemic levels. Overall, adult arrests fell by 37% from 2019 to 2023.

Figure 2: Number of adult and juvenile arrests per year (2019-2023)

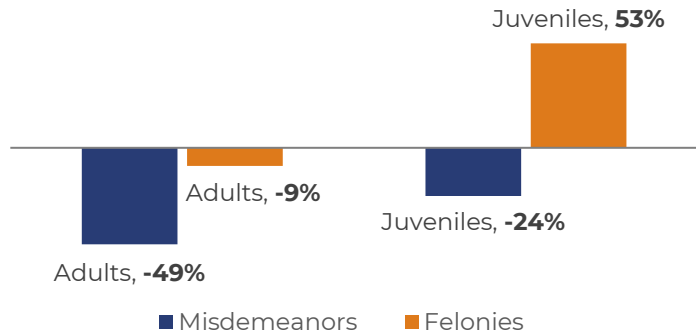


Sources: SANDAG, ARJIS

Highlight 3: Misdemeanor arrests see a sharp decline from 2019

Between 2019 and 2023, adult misdemeanor arrests dropped by 49%, reflecting a decrease of 29,659 arrests. Juvenile misdemeanor arrests also fell, though to a lesser extent, from 2,190 to 1,659 arrests (-24%). In contrast, felony arrests for juveniles rose by 53%, representing an increase of 469 serious offenses committed in 2023 than in 2019. The majority of this increase was attributed to violent, property and weapons-related offenses (not shown).

Figure 3: Percent changes for misdemeanor and felony arrests among adults and juveniles (2019 to 2023)

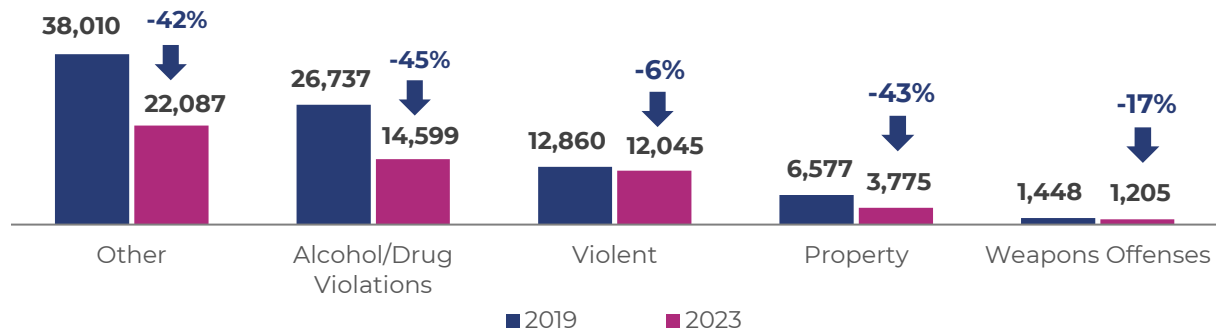


Sources: SANDAG, ARJIS

Highlight 4: Adult arrests down across all offense categories

A closer look at adult arrest trends for specific crime categories reveals that arrests for alcohol/drug violations, property crimes, and “Other” offenses saw the largest percentage declines from 2019 to 2023, with each falling by over 40%. Despite these decreases, the relative proportions of arrest categories have remained largely consistent; “Other” offenses and alcohol/drug violations continue to account for the highest number of adult arrests, comprising the majority of total arrests in both comparison years.¹

Figure 4: Number of adult arrests and their percentage changes across offense categories (2019 and 2023)



Sources: SANDAG, ARJIS

¹ “Other” offenses include sex-related crimes, arson, forgery/checks/access cards, violations of city and county ordinances, prostitution, vandalism, hit-and-run, other selected traffic offenses, failure to appear, and other offenses.

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