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This report explores the recidivism rates for prisoners released from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC) during calendar year 2004.

Study Methodology

To compute recidivism rates, Planning & Research staff extracted case-level data, from the Inmate Tracking System database, for each sentenced release in CY04. Releases that did not result in the offender being returned to the community (e.g., a transfer out of state or release to pretrial detention for a pending charge) were eliminated from the release cohort. The remaining release events were then matched to all pretrial and sentenced commitments occurring in CY04, CY05, and CY06. Offenders who were released more than once in CY04 were counted each time they were released. Each offender was examined for return to the DOC within 24 months of his/her release date.

As Rhode Island operates a unified correctional system, we were able to analyze pretrial and sentenced re-admissions. Additionally, in this report, the sentenced population is divided into "jail" and "prison" based on length of incarceration; sentences of less than or equal to 1 year are referred to as jail terms and sentences of greater than 1 year are referred to as prison terms. Please pay special attention to what data are being presented as RIDOC's recidivism calculations

Summary of Findings

- Of the 3324 offenders released from RIDOC, 32% returned under sentence within 1 year of release. By 24 months post-release, 46% had returned under sentence.
- For the 770 offenders who were released after serving more than 1 year, 25% returned to serve another prison term (greater than 1 year) within 2 years of release.
- For the 2554 offenders who were released after serving less than or equal to 1 year, 39% returned to serve another jail term (less than or equal to 1 year) within 2 years of release.
- Most offenders returned to prison soon after release, with the median time until re-sentencing at approximately 7½ months from release.
- Offenders who were released from Home Confinement had lower recidivism rates than those released from secure facilities.

may vary significantly from other jurisdictions.

General Definition of a Recidivist:

- An offender who was released from sentence at RIDOC, and
- Who was returned to RIDOC as a sentenced inmate.

The Release Cohort

There were 3105 offenders released in CY04, accounting for 3324 distinct release events. The majority of offenders in the release group were white (56%), male (88%), and averaged 33 years of age.

Table 1. Race of release cohort.

Race	% of Total
American Indian	<1%
Asian	<1%
Black	26%
Hispanic	17%
White	56%
Other/Unknown	<1%

Two-thirds of those released had served time for a nonviolent (42%) or drug-related crime (24%¹).

Table 2. Offense category of releasees.

Offense Category	% of Total
Violent	26%
Sex	2%
B&E	5%
Drug	13%
Drug Possession	10%
Nonviolent	42%
Weapons	1%

The median length of sentence was 152 days, or about 5 months. As a result of the relatively short sentences, most offenders are ineligible for parole and thus, the most common manner of release was "expiration of sentence" (83%). Sentenced offenders are released from all facilities and from Home Confinement.

Table 3. Release facility for releasees.

Release Facility	% of Total
WOM-Min	6%
WOM-Med	4%
WOM-Transitional Housing	<1%
High Security	<1%
Intake Service Center	13%
Maximum Security	3%
Medium Security I	12%
Medium Security II	9%
Minimum Security	36%
Home Confinement	11%

Sentenced Readmissions

Of the total number of releases from sentence, 3324, 1059 (32%) resulted in a sentenced readmission within 12 months of release. An additional 478 (14%) offenders were readmitted between months 13 and 24, for a 2-year return rate of 46%. The average time until re-sentencing was only about 7½ months from release. There was no statistical difference in the time until re-sentencing based on the sex of the inmate.

Of those offenders who recidivated, 11% were female. Of all the females who were released, 40% returned to RIDOC within 2 years of release (29% in year 1, and 11% in year 2). Of all the males who were released, 47% returned to RIDOC within 2 years (32% in year 1, and 15% in year 2).

The racial distribution of the recidivists nearly mirrors that of the release group.

Table 4. Race of recidivists.

Race	% of Total
American Indian	<1%
Asian	<1%
Black	31%
Hispanic	17%
White	52%
Other/Unknown	<1%

Nearly half (49%) of the recidivists returned to custody for a probation violation, another 8% returned for a violation of parole. Forty-two percent (42%) returned for a new sentence.

The majority of recidivists returned for committing a nonviolent offense.

Table 5. Offense categories of recidivists.

Offense Category	% of Total
Violent	26%
Sex	1%
B&E	5%
Drug	8%
Drug Possession	13%
Nonviolent	45%
Weapons	<1%
Pending	<1%

Offenders re-sentenced for a

nonviolent crime returned to prison sooner than other offenders (mean time to re-sentence was 253 days). Sex offenders had the longest time until re-sentence, 350 days.

Offenders released from minimum-security facilities remained in the community longer than others (mean time to re-sentence for men 297 days and for women 263 days). Interestingly, those released from maximum security spent more time in the community than offenders released from other secure facilities.

While 46% of the entire release group has been re-sentenced within 2 years of release, it includes all offenders, regardless of sentence length. In order to make meaningful comparisons from RI to other jurisdictions, the data must be disaggregated by sentence length.

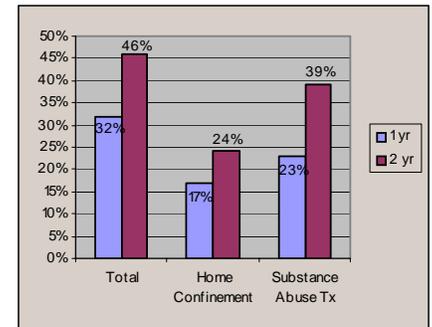
- For the 770 prisoners, who were released after serving more than 1 year, 25% (194) returned to serve another prison term (>1 yr) within 24 months of release.
- For the 2554 “jail” inmates who were released after serving up to a 1 year term, 39% (1007) had returned to serve another jail term (<=1yr) within 24 months of release.
- While the majority of “jail” inmates who returned did so to serve another short-term sentence (<=1 yr), 166 (6%) offenders returned to serve a longer prison sentence (>1 yr).
- The remaining recidivists (n=170) were prisoners who returned to serve a shorter sentence than the one on which they were released.

Promising Programs

Offenders who completed substance abuse treatment in prison (n=369) had lower recidivism rates than the total population. Only 23% of those who completed treatment returned within in 1 year, compared to 32% of the total release group. In two years time, 39% of those who received treatment returned, compared to 46% of the total.

Similarly, offenders who were released after serving a portion of their sentence on Home Confinement did better than those released from secure facilities. Only 24% of Home Confinees returned to prison within 2 years (17% occurring in year 1).

Graph 1. Recidivism rates by program.



How does RI compare to other states?

Massachusetts:

Sample: 2,912 offenders released from a State facility (typically, males who have served more than 2.5 years for felony conviction).

Rate: 32% reincarcerated at 2 years.

Connecticut:

Sample: More than 8,000 offenders released after having served at least 6 months in custody.

Rate: 39% reconviction at 3yrs.

Vermont:

Sample: 2,506 offenders released from custody.

Rate: 45% reconviction at 3 years.

Pretrial Readmissions

Within 12 months of release, 44% of the release group had returned to custody for pretrial detention. An additional 14% (n=470) returned as pretrial detainees in year 2.

Almost 12% of the offenders who returned to pretrial detention were female (this represents 55% of all females in the release group).

Data Caveats:

1. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding or missing data.
2. In compiling year 2 statistics, the methodology was modified from year 1. As a result, reported numbers may have changed slightly from year 1 to year 2. For more information, please contact Bree E. Derrick, at bree.derrick@doc.ri.gov or Greg McCarthy at greg.mccarthy@doc.ri.gov.