

# RECIDIVISM REPORT 2021

A THREE YEAR FOLLOW-UP



Images are AI-generated and do not depict current or formerly incarcerated individuals

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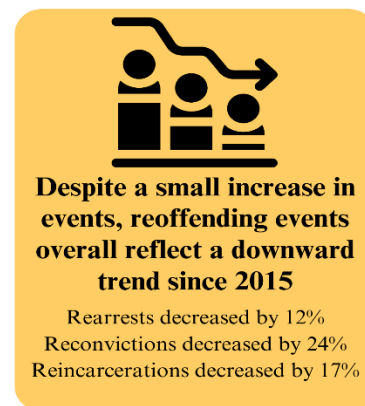
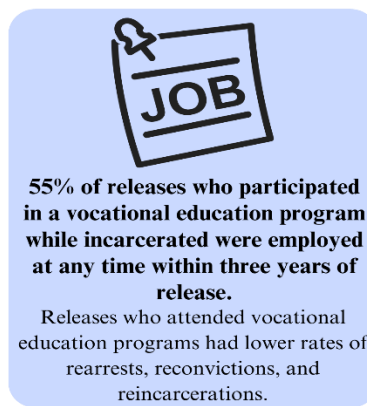
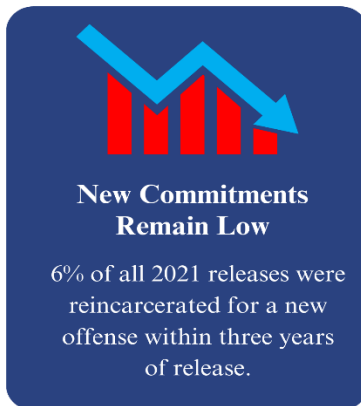
# Executive Summary

## Overview

Reincarcerations in this cohort were significantly driven by Technical Parole Violations (TPVs) rather than new criminal convictions. Only 6% of individuals released from a DOC facility were reincarcerated for a new conviction. These findings show that community supervision violations are a significant contributing factor in reincarceration percentages among males and females who are released.

## Releases

- There were 4,174 incarcerated persons (IPs) released from DOC facilities in calendar year 2021.
- Of the total release cohort, 95% identified as male and 5% identified as female.
- Of the male releases, 59% identified as Black/African American.
- Of the female releases, 59% identified as White.
- Of the total release cohort, 15% identified as Hispanic/Latino.



## Highlights from the 2021 Release Cohort

Criminal History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Of the total release cohort, 54% had at least one prior DOC admission.</li><li>• Conversely, 59% of female releases had no prior commitments compared to 46% of males.</li></ul>
Mandatory Minimum Term (MMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Of the total release cohort, approximately 50% served a MMT, while the remaining 50% did not.</li><li>• Among all females who recidivated, 33% served a MMT prior to release.</li><li>• The majority of males who recidivated (52%) did not serve an MMT prior to release.</li></ul>
Recidivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reincarcerations for new commitments, defined as those released and readmitted on a new criminal conviction, have been consistently decreasing over time from 12% in the 2011 release cohort year to 6% in the 2021 release cohort year.</li><li>• Reincarcerations for TPVs, defined as those released and readmitted on a parole violation, have been steadily increasing over time from 36% in the 2011 release cohort year to 66% in the 2021 release cohort year. However, it should be noted that the outcomes of the 2021 release cohort were likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a backlog of trial cases. During this time, the State Parole Board was operational, and parolees who seriously and/or persistently violated parole may have been returned to custody for a TPV.</li><li>• Of the total release cohort, 25% were readmitted to a DOC facility within three years for any reason, including new commitments, technical parole violations, or community supervision violations.</li></ul>
Reoffending Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Since 2011, there has been a 15% decrease in rearrests, a 27% decrease in reconvictions, and 19% decrease in recidivism among male releases.</li><li>• Among female releases, there has been an 11% decrease in rearrests, a 21% decrease in reconvictions, and a 33% decrease in recidivism since 2011.</li></ul>



This report is the result of a legislative mandate instituted by P.L. 2009, c.329, (C.30: 4-91.15). The law enforcement agencies of the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) and New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) are tasked by the legislature to compile reports that record and examine annual recidivism. This report is also the result of a legislative mandate instituted by P.L. 2015, c. 144 (C.30: 4-91.15). The DOC and SPB are tasked with measuring the effectiveness of the State's re-entry initiatives and programs. This report is the fifteenth in a series of reports that measure overall recidivism levels, describe adult cohort characteristics, and analyze recidivism factors. It is the tenth report that examines re-entry programming consistent with P.L. 2015, c. 144 (C.30: 4-91.15).

There are multiple sections to the report. The introduction presents the agencies' mission statements and describes the report methodology. Sections 1 through 4 provide details of the 2021 adult release cohort including cohort demographics, recidivism, and re-entry and rehabilitative programming analyses. The adult cohort includes 1) adult releases of the DOC who are supervised by the SPB or Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Intensive Supervision Program upon release and 2) unsupervised adult releases (i.e., max outs) from the DOC.

In New Jersey, the DOC and SPB prepare adult incarcerated persons for transition from prison to the community. Incarcerated persons start preparing for rehabilitation and reentry immediately upon intake into the DOC system, wherein incarcerated persons receive a comprehensive plan based on their assessment scores. This plan includes in-prison programs and treatment such as education, vocational classes, anger management, inpatient and outpatient Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), and substance abuse classes, among others, to assist the incarcerated persons with rehabilitation and community reentry.

As noted within the mission statements, the rehabilitation of individuals who will return to society is paramount. The two agencies in this report promote incarcerated person rehabilitation and provide services that boost a successful transition back to the community for adult incarcerated persons. This release outcome report is one tool that measures the effectiveness of New Jersey's reentry initiatives and programs. The success of these agencies is illustrated in our decreasing recidivism percentages, as fewer adult releases are returning to prison for new criminal convictions.

## **Agency Mission Statements**

### **New Jersey Department of Corrections**

The mission of the New Jersey Department of Corrections is to advance public safety and promote successful reintegration in a dignified, safe, secure, gender-informed, and rehabilitative environment supported by a professional, trained, and diverse workforce enhanced by community engagement.

The Department is responsible for managing a budget of approximately \$1.0 billion and employing approximately 7,000 persons, including almost 5,500 in custody positions, to supervise approximately 14,000 incarcerated persons. The DOC is responsible for nine institutions: eight adult male correctional facilities and one female correctional institution. These facilities collectively house incarcerated persons at minimum, medium, and maximum-security levels. In addition, the Department contracts with various Residential Community Reintegration Programs to provide for the transition of minimum-security incarcerated persons back into the community within 30 months of release.

The Department is committed to providing incarcerated persons with structured learning experiences, both academic and social, which will enhance their return to the community as productive citizens. The DOC's goal is to provide incarcerated persons with the experiences and skills necessary to enter the job market. Comprehensive academic education and career technical training are important elements to a successful transition into society and the workforce. The Department also offers an array of institutional and community-based program opportunities for incarcerated persons, including community labor assistance, library (lending and law) services, and substance abuse treatment. Other specialized services include victim awareness, chaplaincy services, transitional services, Intensive Supervision Program, and ombudsperson services, which is one of many options available to incarcerated persons to seek redress for problems and complaints.

Additionally, the DOC, acting in conjunction with the New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB), provides a continuum of treatment services for individuals as they complete their sentences. Public safety is enhanced through the development, coordination, administration, and delivery of these institutional and community-based programs and services.

### **New Jersey State Parole Board**

The New Jersey Parole Act of 1979 grants the SPB the authority and responsibility to decide which incarcerated persons of the State's and of the counties' correctional institutions shall be granted release on parole and what the conditions of that release will be.

Since 2001, the SPB has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing all of the functions, powers, and duties of the State's sworn parole officers who supervise and monitor parolees. The Parole Act of 1979 created presumptive parole, meaning that when an incarcerated person appears before a Board Panel, the assumption before anything is said or reviewed, is that the incarcerated person has a legitimate expectation of release upon his or her parole eligibility date. The Board must make appropriate release decisions based on all relevant information. To assist Board members with this important task, the SPB obtains a comprehensive pre-parole package that includes a current psychological evaluation of the incarcerated person as well as a risk and needs assessment tool (the LSI-R) to determine what degree of supervision and what program placement may be appropriate if release is authorized.



The statute further provides, as to offenses committed on or after August 19, 1997, that an adult incarcerated person shall be paroled unless he or she has failed to cooperate in his or her rehabilitation or there is a reasonable expectation that the incarcerated person will violate conditions of parole. This statutory standard implements an important objective of parole--namely, to encourage an incarcerated person to avoid institutional disciplinary infractions and for them to participate in institutional programs while incarcerated. Once an incarcerated person is granted parole release, the Board then has the continuing responsibility of ascertaining and monitoring compliance with the conditions of supervision that have been earlier established by the Board. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 30:4-123.55b, et seq., known as the “Earn Your Way Out Act,” effective February 1, 2021, eligible incarcerated persons are entitled to administrative parole release (automatic parole) at the time of primary or subsequent parole eligibility provided that: (1) The incarcerated person has not been previously convicted of, or is currently serving a sentence imposed for any enumerated exclusionary crime ; (2) The incarcerated person has not committed any serious disciplinary infraction within the previous two years from their parole eligibility date; and (3) The incarcerated person has completed relevant rehabilitation programs as determined by the DOC and SPB.

If the parolee does not comply with the conditions of supervision, the Board has the lawful authority to issue a warrant for the arrest of that parolee. Following an administrative hearing, a Board Panel may either “revoke” the grant of the offender’s parole and return the parolee to prison, or continue the offender on parole and modify the offender’s parole conditions.

The SPB is committed to a mission of promoting public safety and fostering rehabilitation of offenders by implementing policies that result in effective parole case management. The SPB seeks to accomplish this through the administration of an innovative parole system. The parole system in New Jersey addresses the needs of the community, victims, and offenders through responsible decision-making and supervision processes. The implementation of this system results in effective parole case management and serves to attain the important goals of the SPB, which are to increase public safety and decrease recidivism while promoting successful parolee reintegration.

## **Report Methodology**

Sections one through four of this report examine the demographics and outcomes of 4,174 adult incarcerated persons released from DOC custody. Throughout this report, recidivism is defined as the first reincarceration event after release from a DOC facility. Reincarceration events include community supervision violations (including technical parole violations or a violation of another form of supervision) and readmissions due to a new commitment. Data on rearrests and reconvictions after release from a DOC facility are included in this report as supplemental measures of reoffending events. The terms used throughout this report are defined in the table below.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Rearrests</b>	An arrest on criminal charges within three years of release regardless of outcome. This term includes violations for releases placed on parole supervision or other forms of supervision (e.g., Intensive Supervision Program), if an arrest occurred.
<b>Reconviction</b>	A conviction for a crime within three years of release regardless of whether or not the individual went on to be readmitted to DOC custody.
<b>Reincarceration</b>	A DOC admission subsequent to a conviction for a crime within three years of release, for any reason. This count also includes incarcerated persons released to any form of community supervision who are reincarcerated for a new offense, violation of the terms of any form of community supervision, or both.
<b>Community Supervision Violation (CSV)</b>	A type of reincarceration, defined as a return to DOC custody for community supervised releases for any violation of supervision (e.g., positive drug test, curfew infraction) within three years of release.
<b>Technical Parole Violation (TPV)</b>	A type of CSV, defined as a return to DOC custody for the violation of the conditions of SPB supervision within three years of release (e.g., absconding, failure to complete an inpatient residential community program). A technical parole violation may include violations of a criminal nature that have not yet been adjudicated (i.e., possession of a firearm, possession/distribution of controlled dangerous substance, etc.).
<b>New Commitment</b>	A type of reincarceration, defined as a return to DOC custody subsequent to conviction for a new crime within three years of release. The individual has been arrested, convicted, and incarcerated for an offense for which he/she has not served a sentence previously. Admissions for a CSV or TPV are not included in this definition.

The above metrics were collected, if applicable, for each person in the 2021 release cohort by tracking reoffending events within the three-year follow-up period using an individual's State Bureau of Identification (SBI) number. Only events that occurred in New Jersey are included in this report.

There are some releases who have been excluded from the analyses in this report. Specifically, individuals without an SBI number, individuals who were deceased within three years of release, and individuals who were released to other agencies (e.g., released to a law enforcement agency in another state, released to a federal law enforcement agency) are excluded.

In multiple sections, the categorizations of the offense of conviction, or the offense for which incarcerated persons were serving time and released in 2021, were separated consistent with the federal



government's crime types, including violent, weapons, property, drugs, and other crimes. Definitions for each crime type can be found below.

Offense Category	Definition
<b>Violent</b>	Homicide, sexual assault, aggravated and simple assault, robbery, kidnapping, other sex offenses, and other person offenses (e.g., terroristic threats, coercion, larceny from a person, death by auto, and negligent manslaughter). Violent offenses grouped as other sex offenses include criminal sexual attempt, child pornography, and endangering the welfare of a child.
<b>Property</b>	Burglary, arson, theft, forgery, embezzlement, and receiving/possessing stolen property.
<b>Weapons</b>	Weapon possession and operation.
<b>Drugs</b>	Distribution, manufacture, possession, and use of drugs.
<b>Other</b>	Offenses that do not fit into the other typologies, such as crimes against the courts (e.g., contempt, failure to appear), traffic offenses and public order offenses.
<b>CSV</b>	Any violation of supervision terms and conditions.

Unless otherwise noted, data were stratified to show comparisons between genders (male and female) and the total release cohort. Additional variables were examined to show comparisons between both gender groups. These variables include but are not limited to release status, release age, time served on sentence, race/ethnicity, offense charges, Residential Community Reintegration Program (RCRP) completion, education level, and prior criminal history. Race categories are defined as Black/African American, White, and Other. The Other race category includes Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Alaskan Natives.

Department of Labor data were collected to analyze employment status of releases during the three-year follow-up period. It is important to note that the demographic characteristics presented, including gender, race, and ethnicity, are based on self-reported information provided by the individuals themselves. All raw counts and proportions related to these demographic factors are a direct reflection of the data as self-reported by the individuals.



## Section 1: Release Cohort Demographics

This section will provide a detailed description of the incarcerated persons (IPs) released from New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) prison facilities.

In calendar year 2021, 4,174 IPs were released. Unless otherwise noted, the analyses will include the full release cohort (N=4,174). Counts may not sum to the cohort total and percentages may not sum to 100% due to missing information.

### Release Cohort Demographics

A total of 4,174 individuals were released, with 3,946 (95%) identifying as male and 228 (5%) identifying as female. Regarding age distribution, the majority of releases were between the ages of 30 and 39, comprising 34% of the total. This age group was also the most prevalent among both males (34%) and females (36%) at the time of release. Following this, releases aged 21 to 29 represented the second largest group, accounting for 30% of all releases.

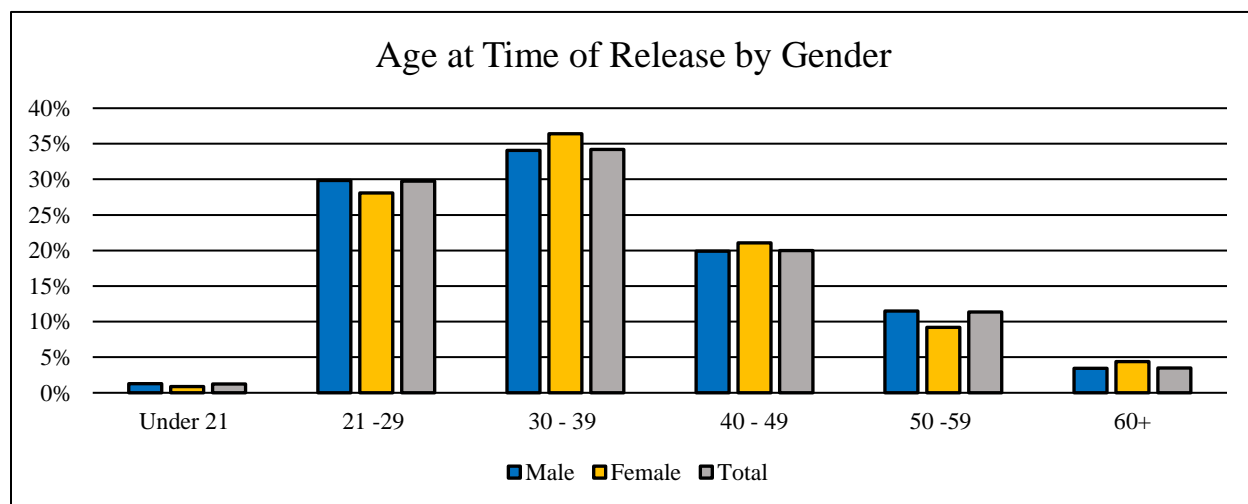


Figure 1. Age at Time of Release by Gender

Among the total cohort of releases, 59% identified as Black/African American. Specifically, a majority of males (61%) within the cohort identified as Black/African American, while the majority of females (59%) identified as White. Additionally, 15% of all releases identified as having Hispanic or Latino heritage, with males representing 15% and females 12%. The remaining 78% of the release cohort identified as non-Hispanic or non-Latino.

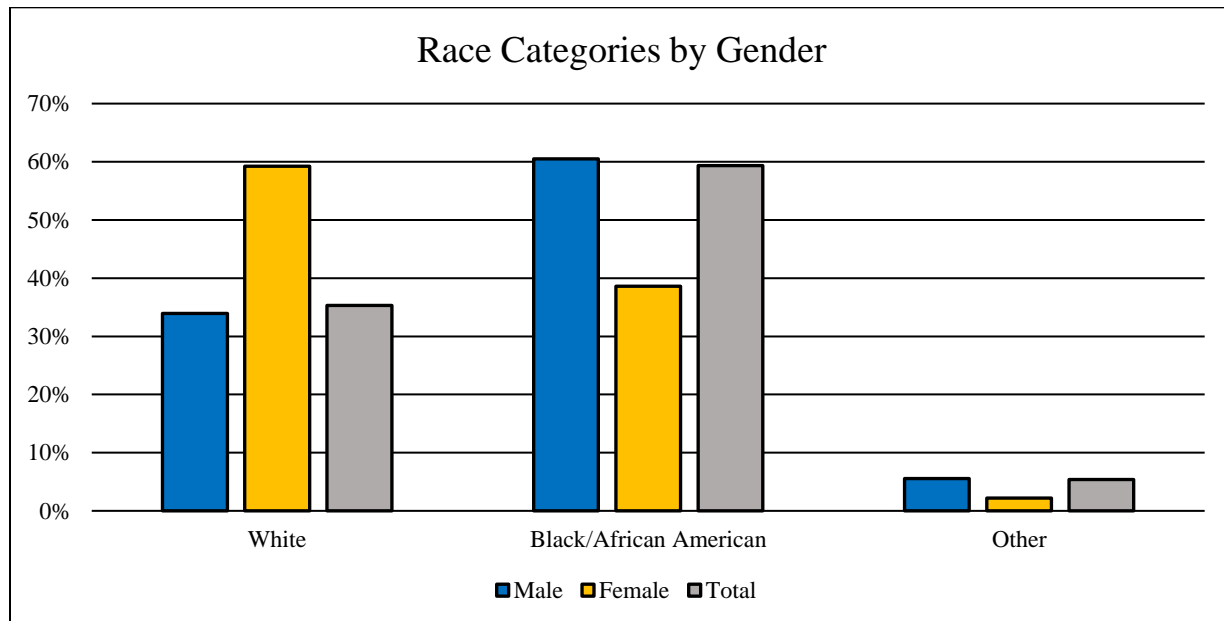


Figure 2. Race Categories by Gender

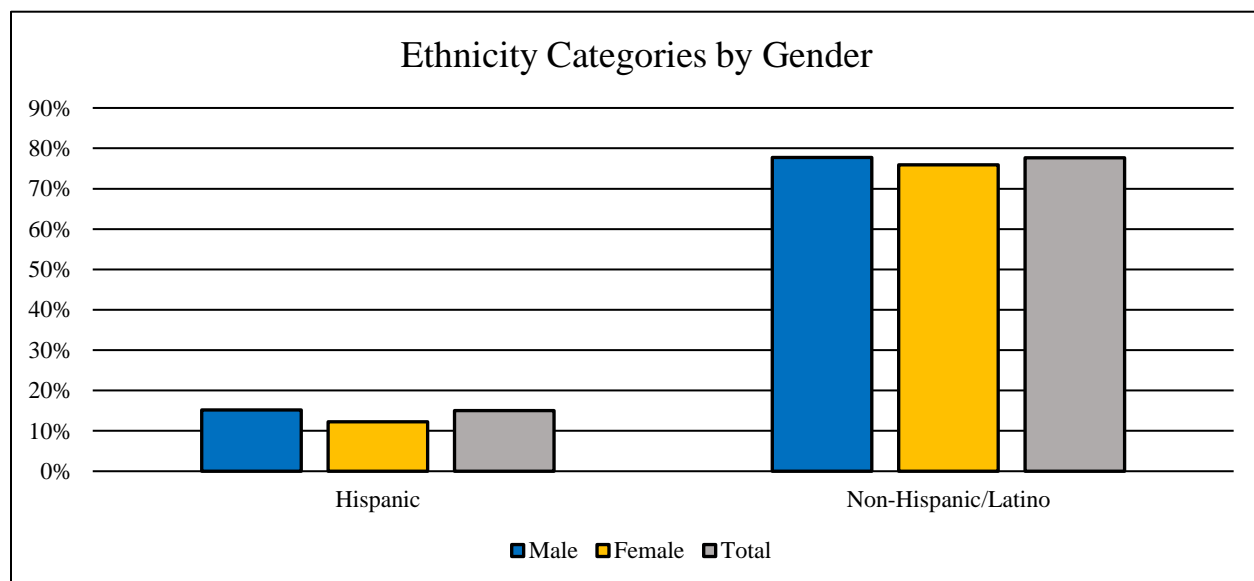


Figure 3. Ethnicity Categories by Gender

## **Education**

At the time of release, the majority of releases (61%) had attained a high school diploma or a high school equivalency degree. Approximately 10% of releases reported having some college education or higher. Notably, the proportion of female releases with some college education or higher (19%) almost doubled that of male releases (10%).

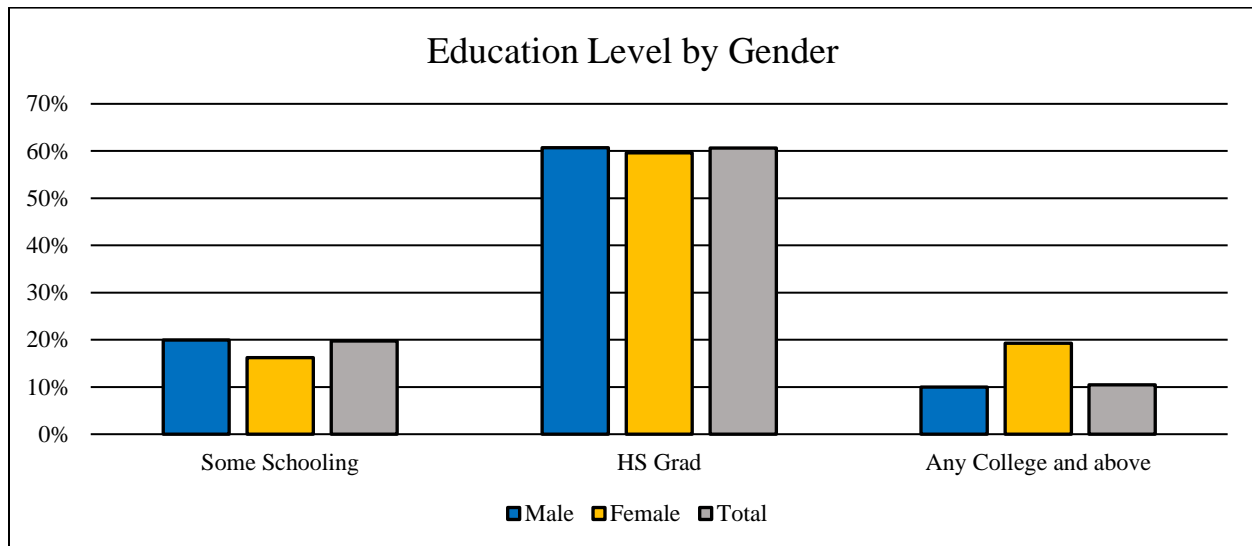


Figure 4. Education Level by Gender

## **Prior Commitments**

Approximately 54% (N=2,243) of releases had at least one prior DOC admission. When broken down by gender, 54% of males had previous commitments compared to 41% of females. In contrast, 59% of female releases had no prior commitments, compared to 46% of males.

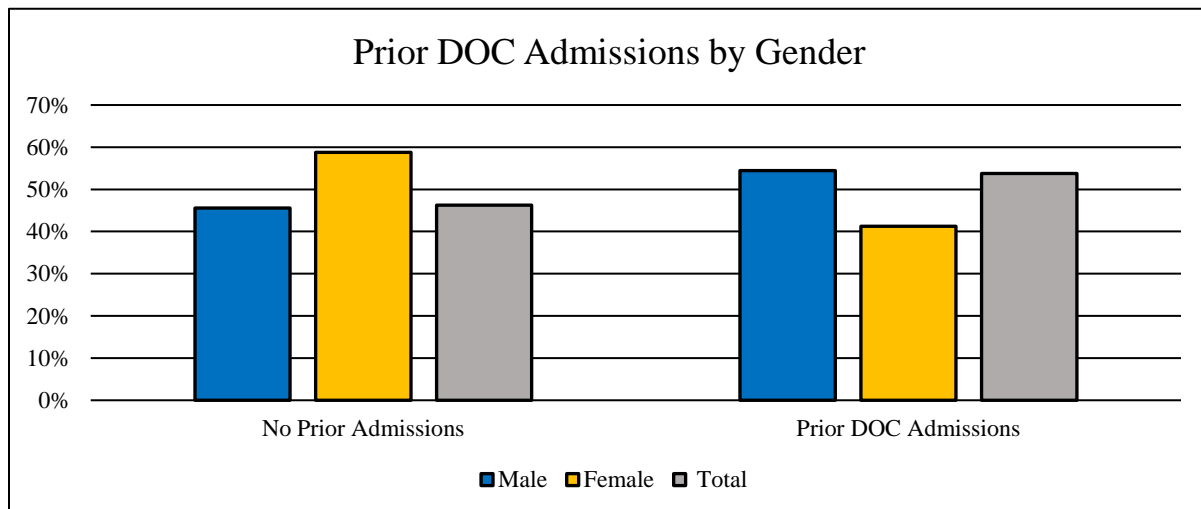


Figure 5. Prior DOC Admissions by Gender

## Most Serious Offense

This section analyzes the most serious offense of conviction for which individuals in the release cohort were initially booked and entered prison, categorized by crime type and gender.

For male releases, the most common offense category was violent offenses (41%), followed by drug offenses (22%) and weapons offenses (17%).

Female releases were similar, with violent offenses (30%) representing the largest share. However, unlike males, females were more likely to be incarcerated for drug offenses (29%), followed by property offenses (21%).

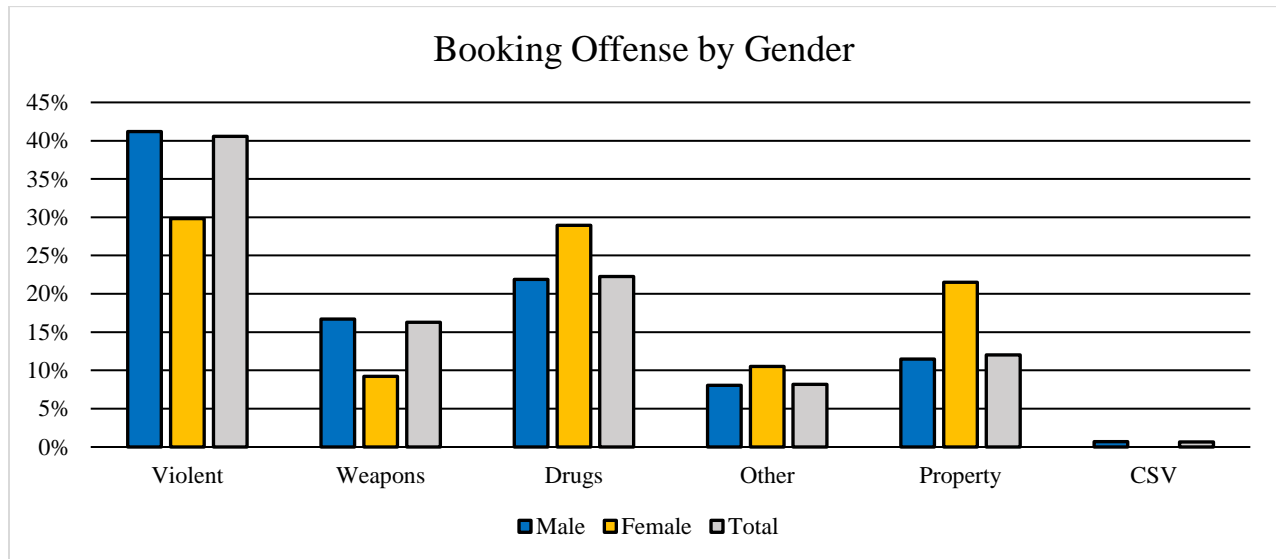


Figure 6. Booking Offense by Gender

Violent offenses were the most common booking offense across all age groups. Among releases under the age of 21, violent offenses accounted for 48% of bookings, followed closely by drug offenses (31%). For those aged 60 and older, violent offenses represented 62% of bookings. While this percentage appears high, it should be interpreted with caution, as this age group makes up only a small share (3.4%) of the total release cohort. Additionally, weapons offenses accounted for a smaller proportion of bookings as age increased.

Booking Offense by Age							
Booking Offense	Under 21	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Violent	48%	40%	40%	34%	46%	62%	41%
Weapons	31%	27%	15%	11%	6%	2%	16%
Property	13%	10%	12%	12%	14%	16%	12%
Drug	4%	16%	24%	31%	23%	12%	22%
Other	4%	8%	8%	10%	8%	7%	9%

Table 1. Booking Offense by Age

## **Mandatory Minimum and No Early Release Act**

Approximately 50% of releases served a mandatory minimum term (MMT). In New Jersey, IPs with a MMT must serve the mandatory minimum portion of their sentence before becoming eligible for parole. This calculation does not include earned credits for commutation, minimum security, or work. Releases sentenced under the “No Early Release Act (NERA)”, N.J.S.A. 2C:43-7.2, are mandated to a term of parole supervision upon release. Under NERA, IPs who are convicted of enumerated first or second-degree crimes must serve at least 85% of their sentence before reaching parole eligibility. Only 19% of releases served a sentence under NERA.

Among male releases, 51% (N=2,016) served a MMT prior to release, while 49% (N=1,930) did not. In contrast, the majority of female releases did not serve a MMT prior to release, (70%, N=159) while 30% (N=69) did.

Similar patterns were observed for sentences served under NERA. Among males, 19% (N=754) served a NERA sentence compared to 81% (N=3,192) who did not. For females, 17% (N=39) served a NERA sentence, while 83% (N=189) did not.

**MMT Status by Gender:  
Male Releases**

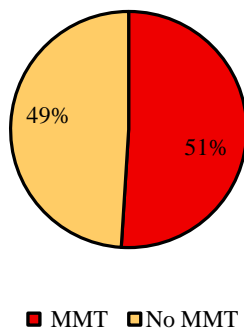


Figure 7. MMT Status by Gender: Male Releases

**NERA Status by Gender:  
Male Releases**

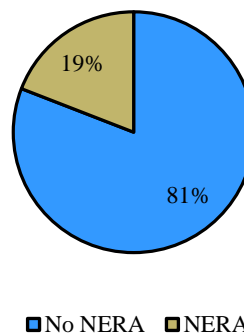


Figure 8. NERA Status by Gender: Male Releases

**MMT Status by Gender:  
Female Releases**

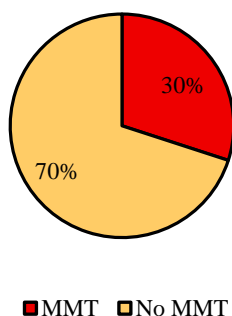


Figure 9. MMT Status by Gender: Female Releases

**NERA Status by Gender:  
Female Releases**

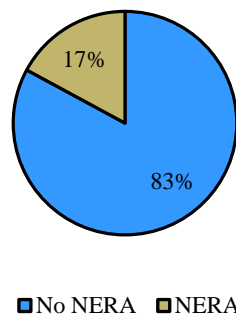


Figure 10. NERA Status by Gender: Female Releases

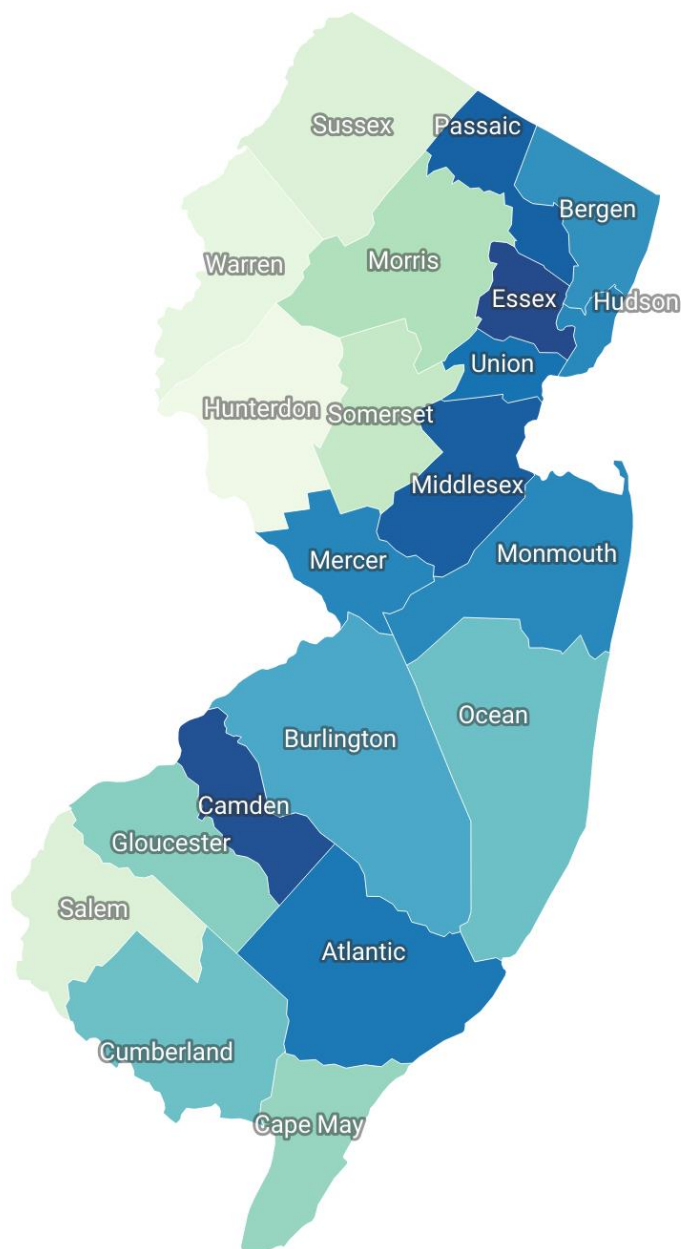


## County of Commitment

The majority of releases were committed from Essex County (N=553) and Camden County (N=493). When analyzing the counties of commitment by gender, male releases were primarily committed from Essex (N=538) and Camden (N=465) counties; female releases were predominantly committed from counties in the Southern (Camden, N=28) and Central (Middlesex, N=20) regions of the state.

## County of Commitment

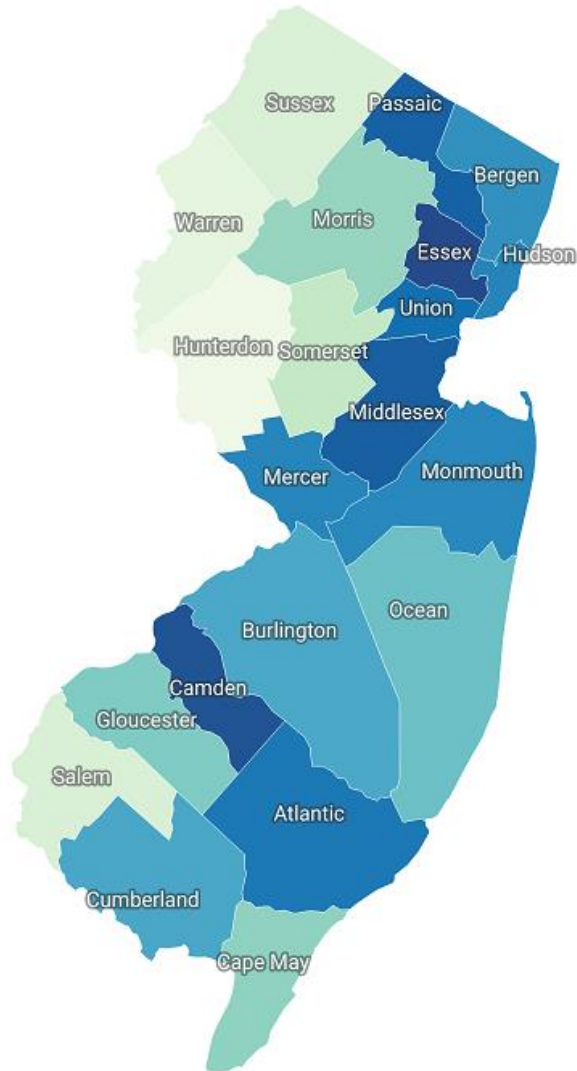
Total Releases



Map 1. County of Commitment: Total 2021 Cohort

## County of Commitment

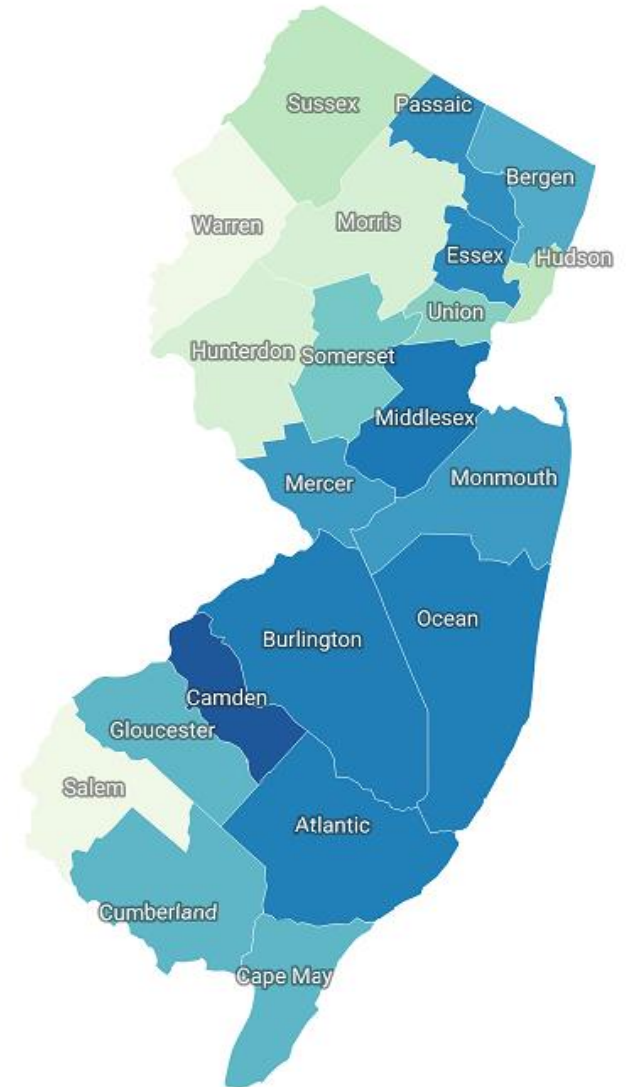
Male Releases



Map 2. County of Commitment: Male Releases

## County of Commitment

Female Releases

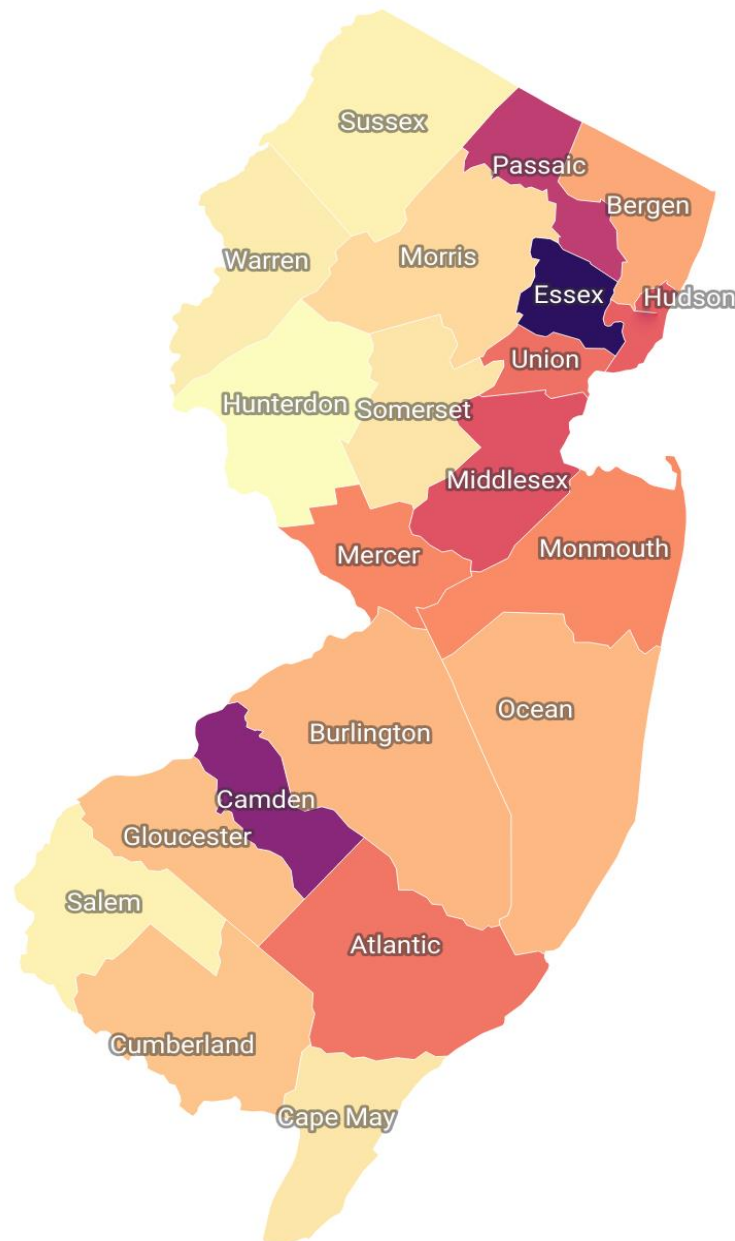


Map 3. County of Commitment: Female Releases

As noted previously, the majority of releases were admitted for violent offenses. Camden and Essex Counties, which both had the highest incidents of violent offense commitments, together accounted for 27% of all violent crime admissions. Additionally, Northeast Counties (Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic and Union) collectively represented 47% of all violent crime commitments, a pattern consistent with the 2020 release cohort.

## County of Commitment: Violent Offenses

Total Releases



Map 4. County of Commitment: Total Releases, Violent Offenses

## Mean Time Served

Across all genders, the average time served was approximately 2.7 years (991 days). When disaggregated by gender, male releases served an average of 2.7 years, while female releases served an average of 1.5 years.

Mean Time Served by Gender			
	Male	Female	Total
Mean time served (years)	2.7	1.5	2.7
Mean time served (days)	1015	574	991

Table 2. Mean Time Served by Gender

## Prior Arrests and Convictions

When analyzing the total release cohort, the majority of releases had less than 10 prior arrests (64%). Most releases fell within the range of 1 to 9 prior arrests (Males: 54%, Females: 49%, Total: 54%). Although relatively small, an equal percentage of male and female releases had 31 or more prior arrests. It should be noted that not all arrests result in adjudicated convictions.

Similarly, most releases had between 1 and 9 prior convictions (Males: 67%, Females: 58%, Total: 66%), and the vast majority (85%) had fewer than 10 convictions.

Prior Arrests by Gender			
Arrests	Male	Female	Total Releases
No prior arrests	10%	14%	10%
1 – 9	54%	49%	54%
10 – 20	28%	28%	28%
21 – 30	6%	7%	6%
31+	2%	2%	2%

Table 3. Prior Arrests by Gender

Prior Convictions by Gender			
Convictions	Male	Female	Total Releases
No prior arrests	19%	22%	19%
1 – 9	67%	58%	66%
10 – 20	12%	18%	12%
21 – 30	1%	3%	1%
31+	0%	0%	0%

Table 4. Prior Convictions by Gender



### Recidivism: IP Demographics

Of the 4,174 IPs released in 2021, 1,059 (25%) recidivated.

Among those who recidivated, the vast majority were male (97%, N=1,023), while only 3% (N=36) were female. Overall, 36% of recidivists were between the ages of 30 to 39 years. Notably, within this age group, a higher proportion of females recidivated (42%) compared to males (36%).

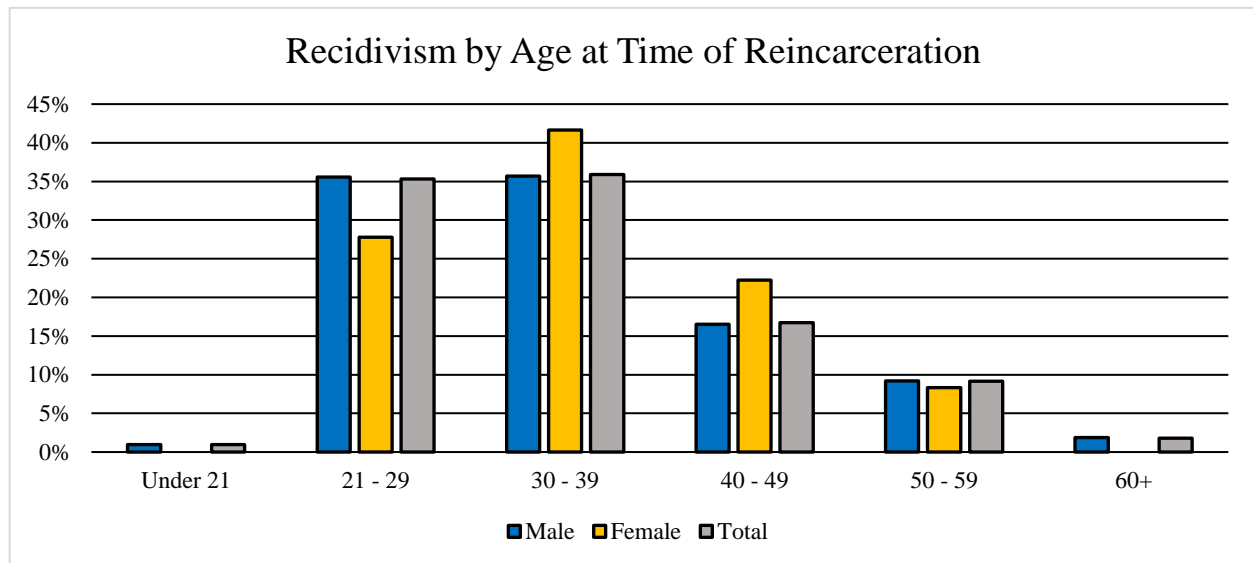


Figure 11. Recidivism by Age at Time of Reincarceration

Releases who served less than one year in DOC custody for the offense leading to their 2021 release recidivated at a similar rate (40%) as those who served more than 2 years prior to release, but at a higher rate compared to those who served 1 to 2 years (20%). When examining time served by gender, a larger proportion of females who served less than one year recidivated (67%) compared to males (39%). Conversely, males had higher recidivism rates than females among those who served 1 to 2 years (20% vs. 11%) and more than 2 years (40% vs. 22%).

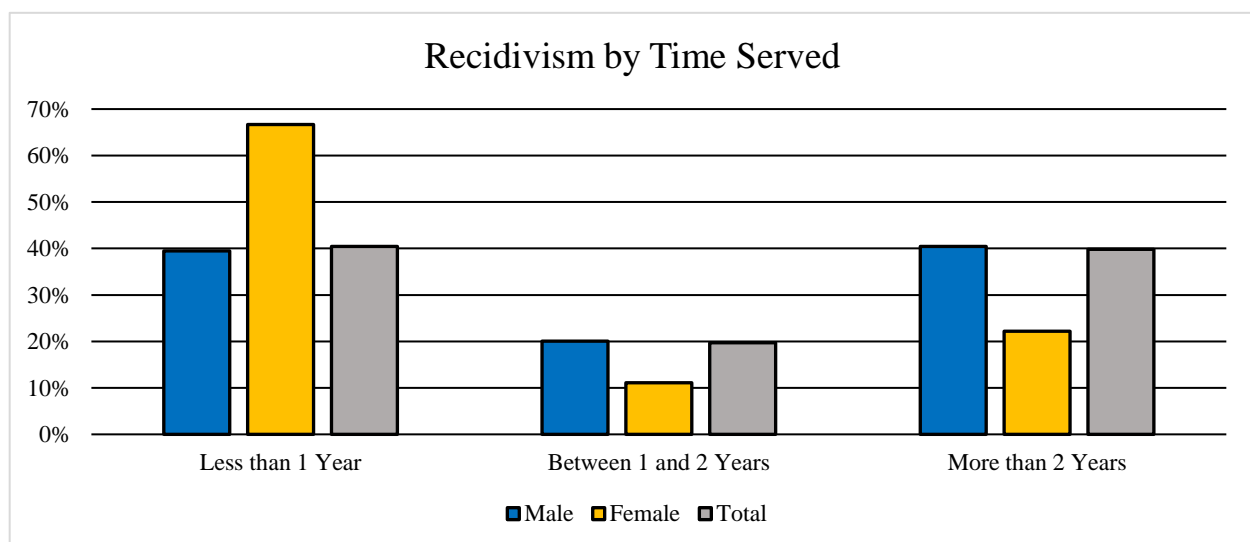


Figure 12. Recidivism by Time Served

Higher recidivism rates were observed among Black/African American males compared to other racial groups. Specifically, Black/African American males comprised 65% of males who recidivated within the three-year follow-up period, while 30% were White. In contrast, among females who recidivated, the majority were White (69%), compared to 28% who were Black/African American.

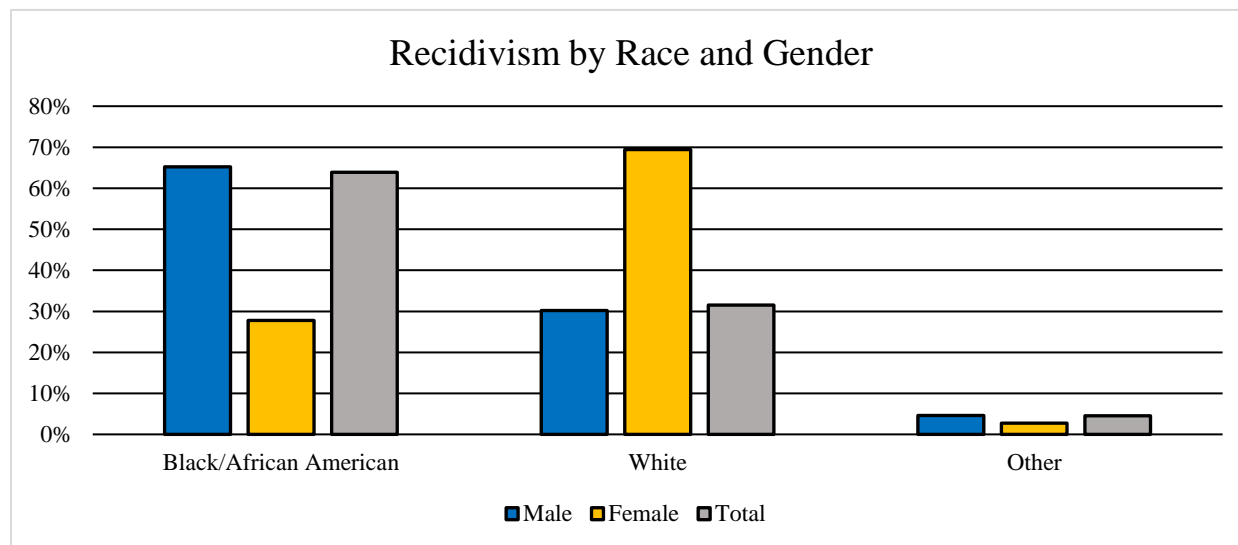


Figure 13. Recidivism by Race and Gender

Across all releases who recidivated, most (78%) self-identified as Non-Hispanic/Latino, while 12% identified as Hispanic/Latino.

Recidivism by Ethnicity and Gender		
Gender	Hispanic/Latino	Non-Hispanic/Latino
Male	12%	78%
Female	8%	83%
Total	12%	78%

Table 5. Recidivism by Ethnicity and Gender



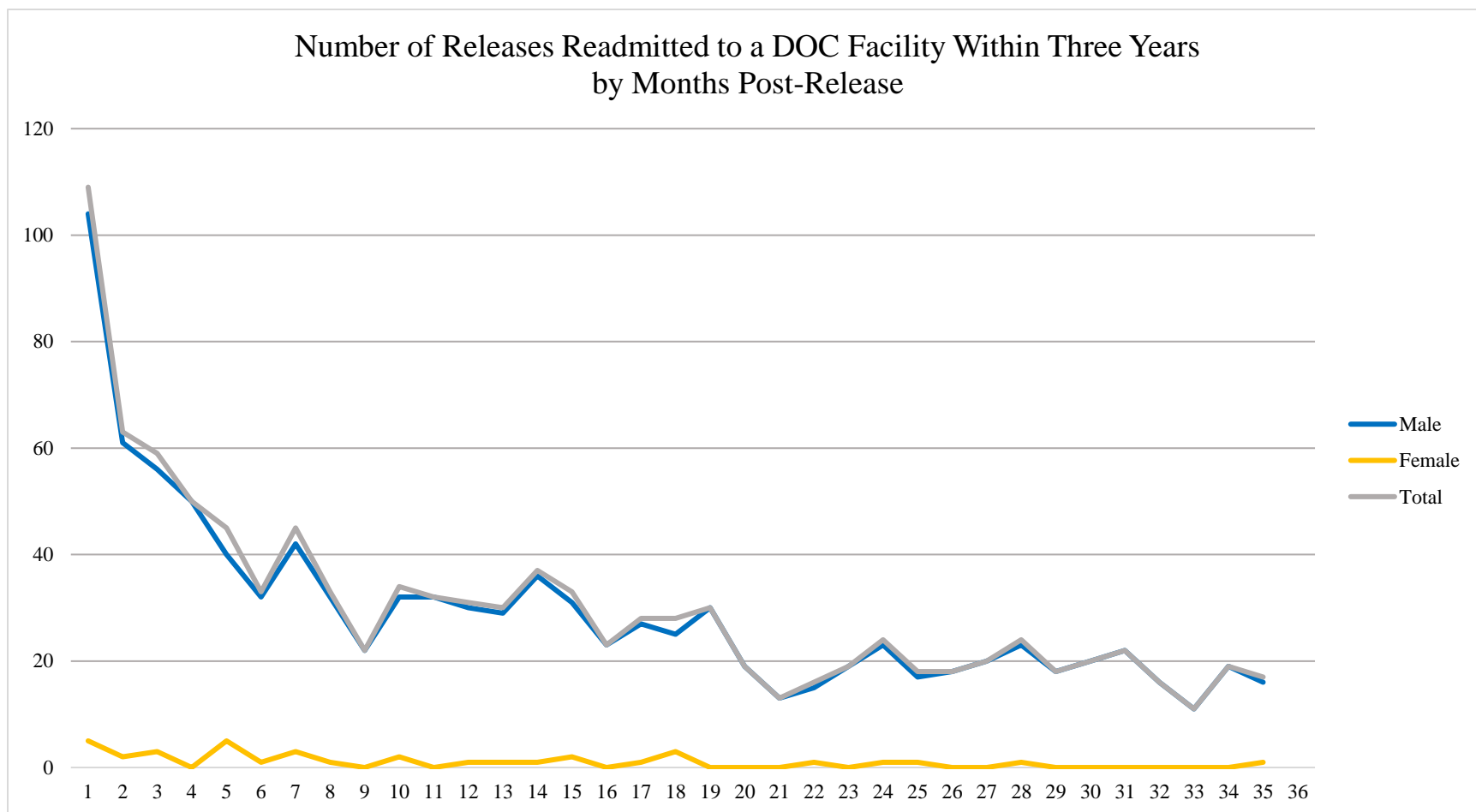


Figure 14. Number of Releases Readmitted to a DOC Facility Within Three Years by Months Post-Release

Among males who recidivated, the majority (76%) were readmitted to DOC custody for a community supervision violation (CSV), followed by 8% who were readmitted for a violent offense. Of those readmitted for a CSV, the majority (42%, N=329 of 781) violated conditions specifically related to NERA.

Among females who recidivated, a larger proportion (88%) were readmitted for a CSV. Following CSV, violent, property, drugs, and other offenses each accounted for 3% of readmissions.

Recidivism by Offense and Gender			
Offense	Male (N=1023)	Female (N =36)	Total (N=1,059)
<b>Violent</b>	8%	3%	8%
<b>Property</b>	3%	3%	3%
<b>Drugs</b>	4%	3%	4%
<b>Weapons</b>	7%	0%	6%
<b>Other</b>	2%	3%	2%
<b>CSV</b>	76%	88%	77%

Table 6. Recidivism by Offense and Gender

### **Recidivism by MMT and NERA Status**

Among females who recidivated, approximately 33% had served a Mandatory Minimum Term (MMT) prior to release, while 67% had not. A similar pattern was observed among males who recidivated, with the majority (52%) not having served an MMT, compared to 48% who had served a MMT prior to release.

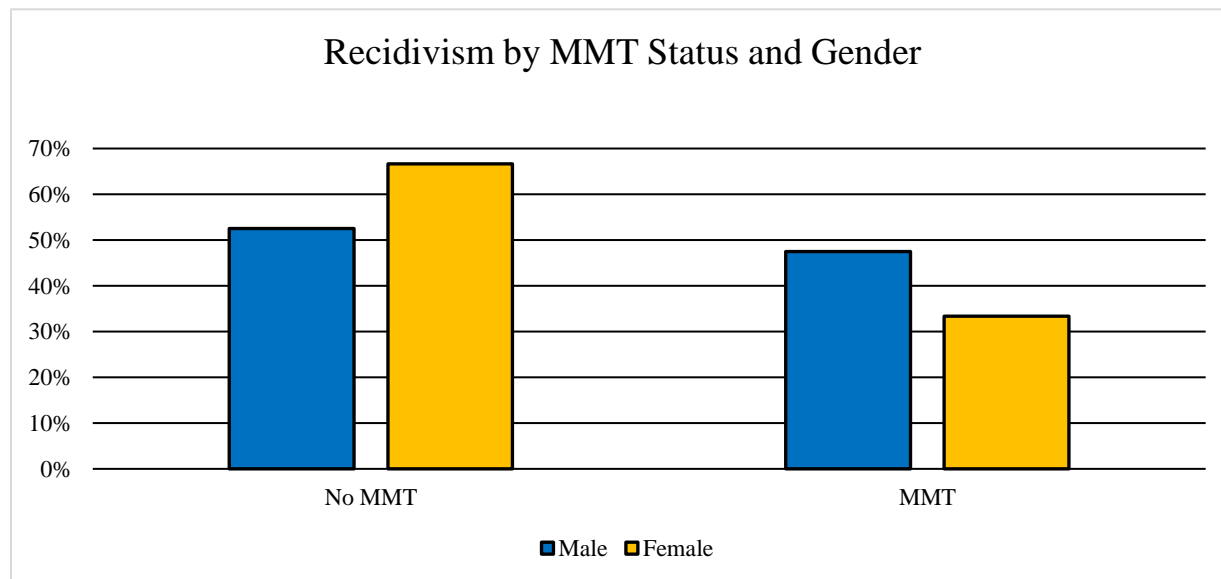


Figure 15. Recidivism by MMT Status and Gender

Recidivism outcomes based on a NERA sentence were similar across genders. Releases who did not serve a NERA sentence had higher recidivism rates than those who served a mandatory term under NERA. Among males, 28% of those who served a NERA sentence recidivated within three years post-release, compared to 72% who did not serve a NERA sentence. Similarly, among females, 22% of those who served a NERA sentence recidivated within three years post-release, compared to 78% of females who did not serve a NERA sentence.

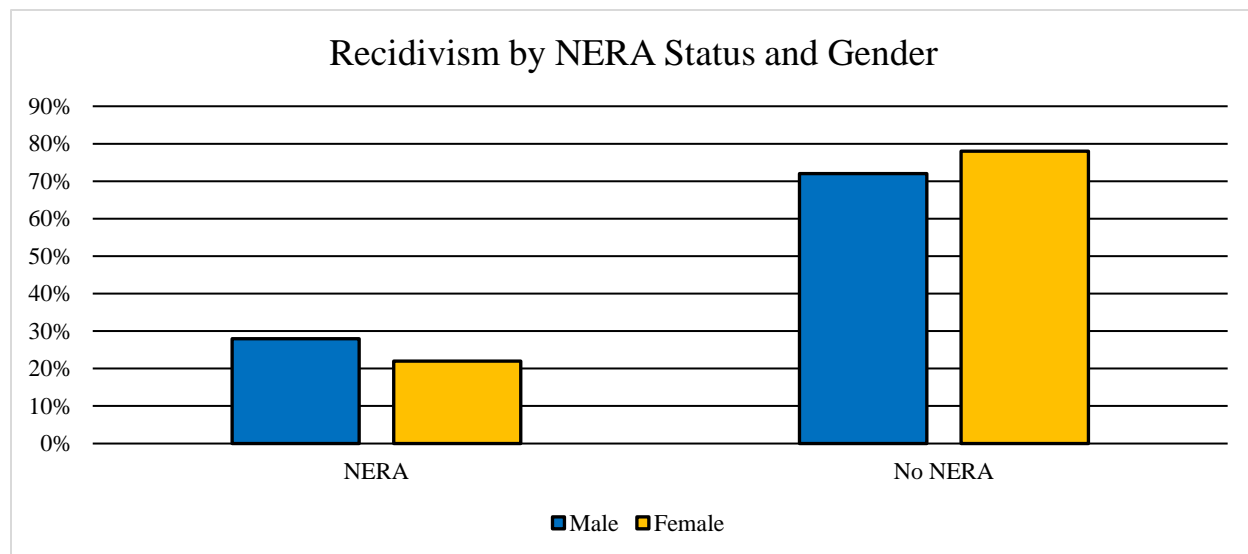


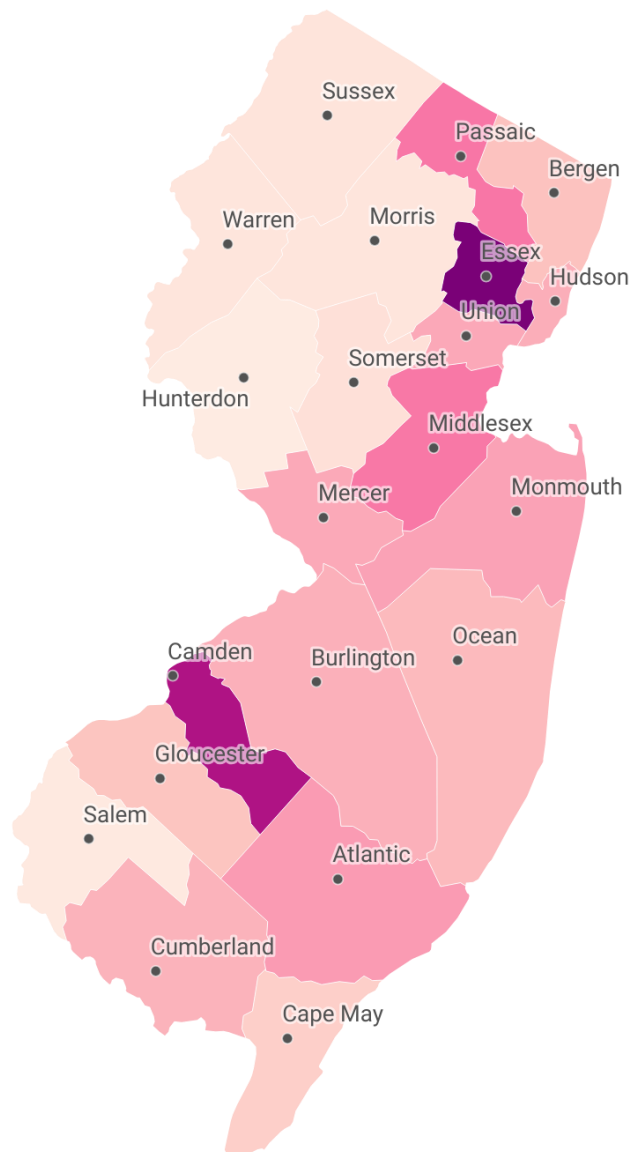
Figure 16. Recidivism by NERA Status and Gender

## **Recidivism by County of Commitment**

Essex and Camden Counties had the highest percentages of releases readmitted to a DOC facility following their 2021 release. Among those readmitted from Essex County, 67% returned following a Technical Parole Violation (TPV), while 30% returned for a new commitment. As illustrated in the map below, the majority of releases who returned to a DOC facility were from the Northeast and Southern Counties.

### **Recidivism by County of Commitment**

Count of releases who recidivated within 3 years post-release



Map 5. Recidivism by County of Commitment



## Section 3: Reoffending Events

This section will examine reoffending trends in rearrests, reconvictions and reincarcerations of IPs released by cohort year. Over the past decade, recidivism rates have generally declined, with the three-year reincarceration rate decreasing from 31% for the 2011 release cohort to 25% for the 2021 cohort. When comparing more recent years, the 2021 release cohort recorded a slightly higher reincarceration rate (25%) than the 2020 cohort (22%). Similarly, reconviction rates increased for the 2021 cohort, while rearrests rates remained relatively the same.

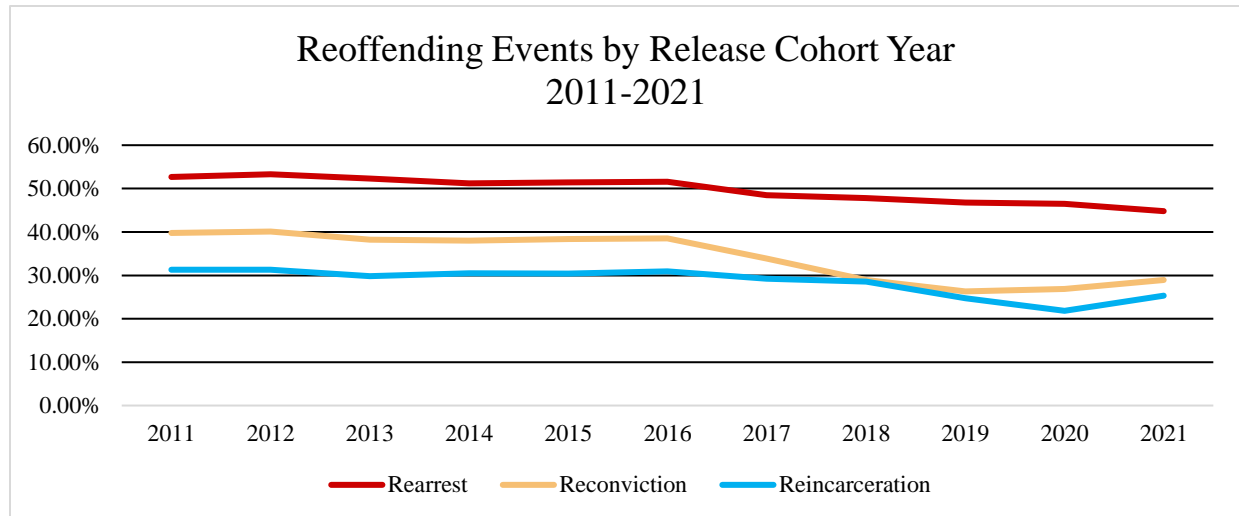


Figure 17. Reoffending Events by Release Cohort Year 2011-2021

In the 2011 release cohort, 44% of female releases were rearrested; by 2021 (39%), this percentage had declined by 11 percent. During the same period, male rearrests rates also declined by 15 percent, from 53% in 2011 to 45% in 2021.

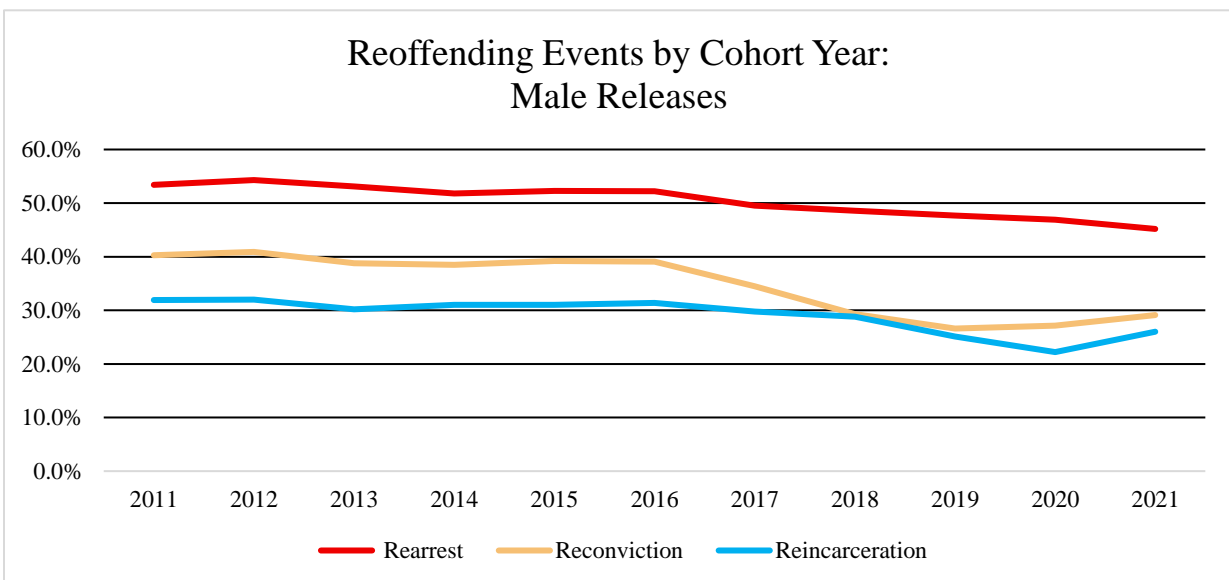


Figure 18. Reoffending Events by Release Cohort Year: Male Releases

The data indicate a substantial decline in reoffending events over the last 10 cohort years. Among male releases, reconvictions decreased by 27% and reincarcerations decreased by 19%. A similar positive trend was observed for female releases, with a 21% reduction in reconvictions and a 33% decline in reincarcerations from the 2011 cohort.

It is important to note that temporary pauses in court hearings due to the COVID-19 pandemic may have contributed to previously observed decreases in reconvictions, and may also explain the slight increase seen in the 2021 cohort.

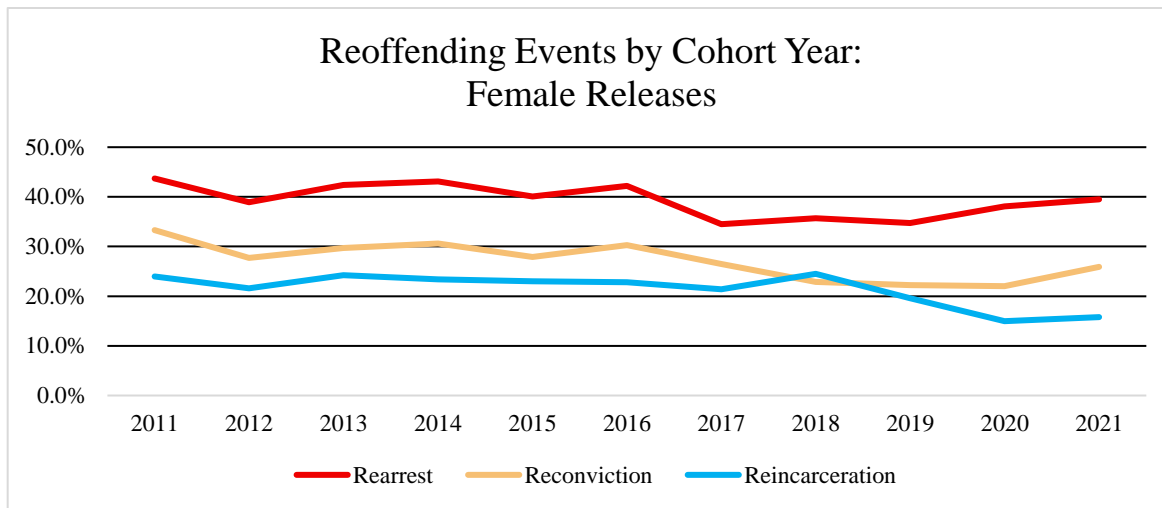


Figure 19. Reoffending Events by Cohort Year: Female Releases

### **Recidivism Trends**

When comparing more recent years, recidivism among males increased from 22% in the 2020 cohort to 26% in the 2021 cohort, representing an 18% increase, while reincarcerations among females increased by approximately 1% between the 2020 (15%) and 2021 (16%) cohorts.

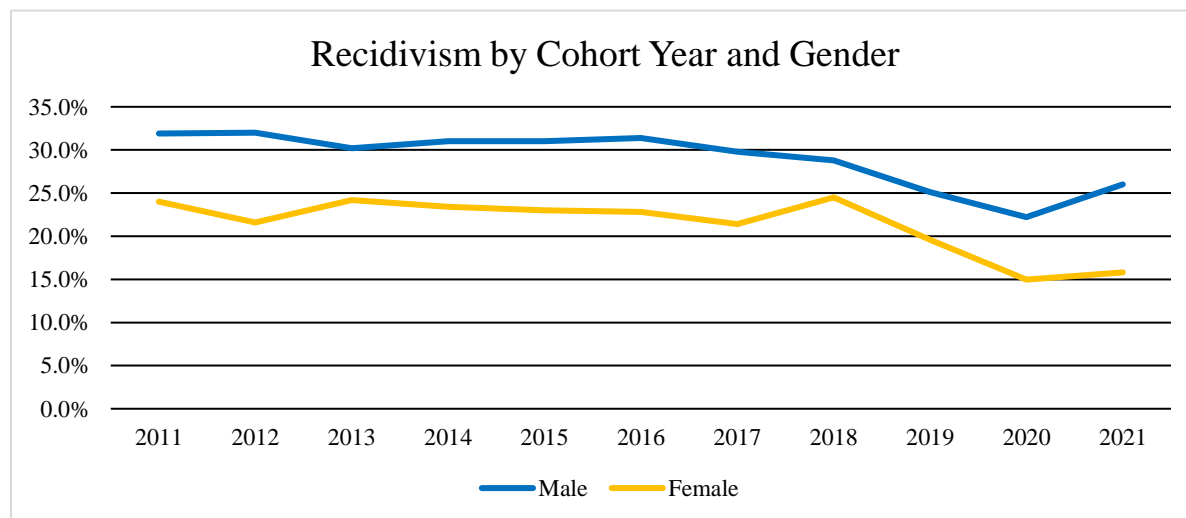


Figure 20. Recidivism by Cohort Year and Gender



### Community Supervision Violation (CSV) Trends

Among male releases who returned for a CSV, 61% identified as Black/African American and 34% as White. The average age was 36 years. In terms of time served prior to release, 50% served more than 2 years, 25% served less than 1 year, and 25% served between 1 and 2 years.

Among female releases who returned for a CSV, 28% identified as Black/African American and 69% as White, with an average age of 37 years. The majority of females (57%) served less than 1 year prior to release, 17% served between 1 and 2 years, and 26% served more than 2 years.

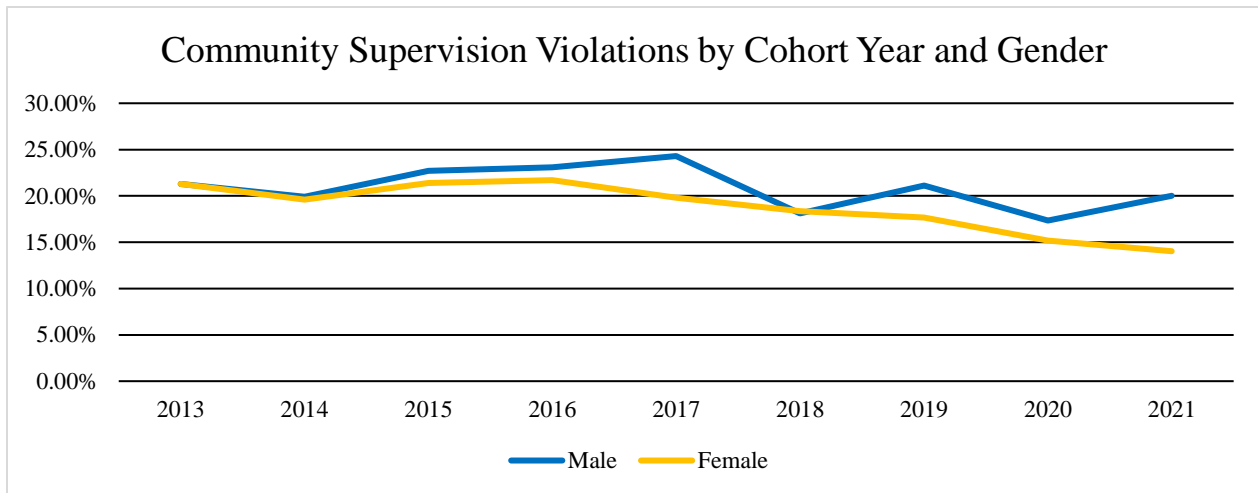


Figure 21. Community Supervision Violations by Cohort Year and Gender

### Technical Parole Violation (TPV) Trends

Among males who returned for a TPV, 61% identified as Black/African American and 34% as White, with an average age of 35 years. In terms of time served prior to release, 45% had served more than 2 years, 34% served less than 1 year, and 20% served between 1 and 2 years.

Among females who returned for a TPV, the majority were White (68%), followed by Black/African American (28%), with an average age of 33 years. Unlike males, the majority of females (68%) had served less than 1 year prior to release, followed by 28% who served more than 2 years and 4% who served between 1 and 2 years.

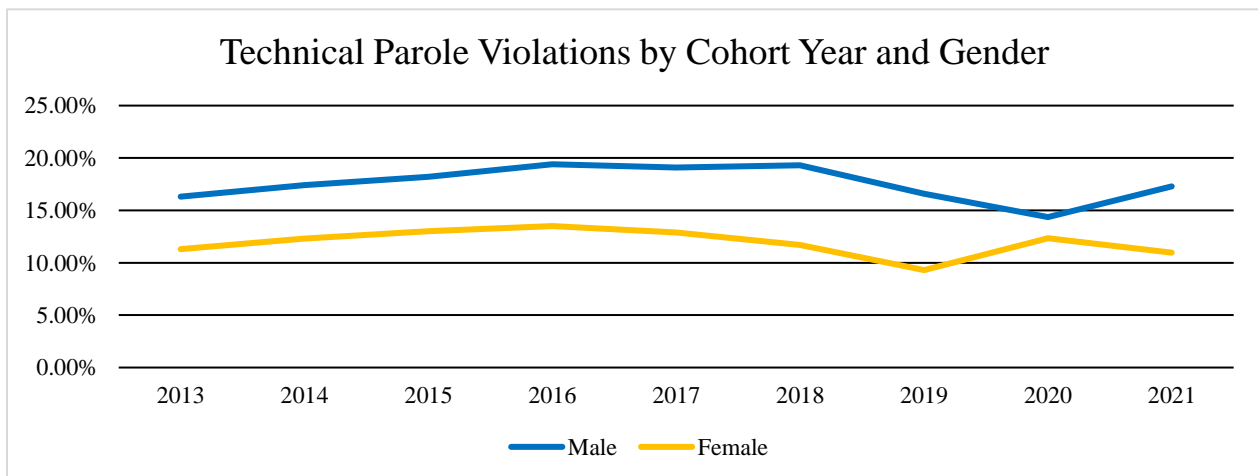


Figure 22. Technical Parole Violations by Cohort Year and Gender

## New Commitment Trends

Six percent of all 2021 releases were reincarcerated for a new offense within three years post-release. Among males who recidivated and were readmitted for a new commitment, most were Black/African American (77%), followed by White (19%), with an average age of 34 years. Regarding time served prior to release, 41% had served less than 1 year, 34% had served more than 2 years, and 25% served between 1 and 2 years.

Among females who recidivated and were readmitted for a new commitment (N=5), the majority were White (80%), followed by Black/African American (20%), with an average age of 41 years. In terms of time served, 60% had served less than 1 year, and 40% had served between 1 and 2 years prior to release.

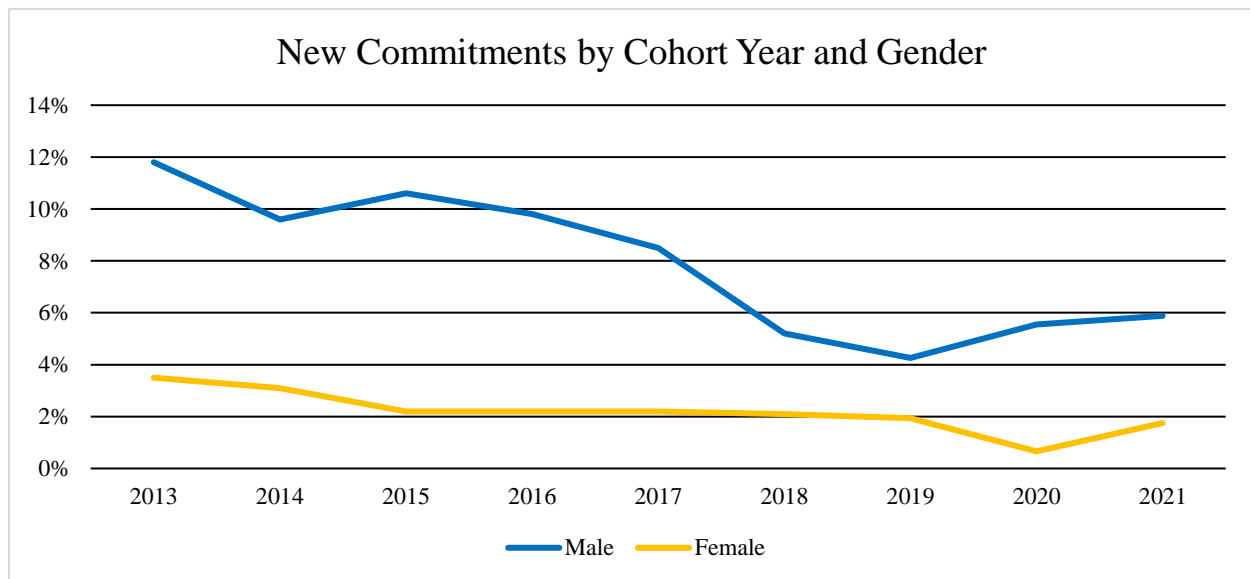


Figure 23. New Commitments by Cohort Year and Gender

## Time Until Recidivism

Unlike prior reports where recidivism events typically peaked within the first four months post-release, recidivism events in the 2021 cohort peaked within the first two months of follow-up. Overall, 53% of releases were readmitted to a DOC facility within the first year following release.

Recidivism by Cohort Year and Timeframe				
Cohort Years	≤ 6 Months	≤ 1 Year	≤ 2 Years	≤3 years
2015	29%	52%	81%	100%
2016	31%	56%	84%	100%
2017	33%	57%	87%	100%
2018	36%	63%	89%	100%
2019	39%	58%	84%	100%
2020	25%	45%	75%	100%
2021	34%	53%	81%	100%

Table 7. Recidivism by Cohort Year and Timeframe

## Technical Parole Violations

Among releases who recidivated, 66% were readmitted for a TPV. By comparison, 74% of recidivists in the 2020 release cohort were readmitted for a TPV, representing a decrease for the 2021 cohort. It is important to note that outcomes for the 2021 release cohort—examined from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2024—were likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the New Jersey Judiciary, restrictions limited in-person trials and on-location services from March 2020 through August 2021, creating a backlog of trial court cases.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, the State Parole Board (SPB) remained operational, and parolees who seriously or persistently violated parole may have been returned to custody for a TPV. Additionally, a TPV may include violations of a criminal nature that have not yet been adjudicated, which should be considered when interpreting these recidivism outcomes.

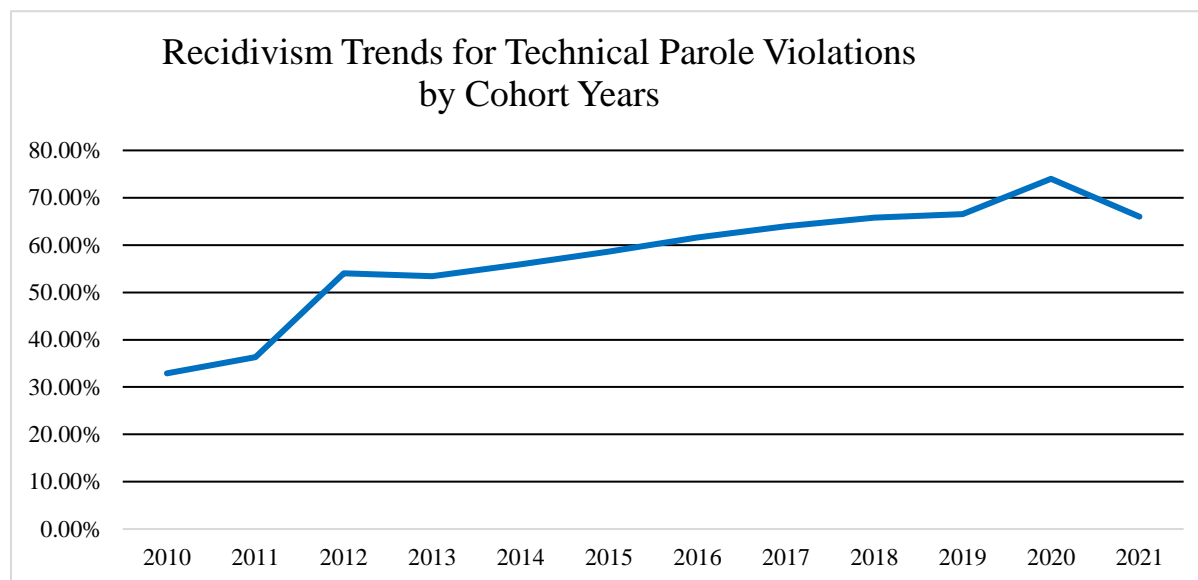


Figure 24. Recidivism Trends for Technical Parole Violations by Cohort Year

<sup>1</sup> Biryukov, N. (2021, August 2). N.J. courts to fully re-open amid stunning backlogs, broad vacancies [Review of N.J. courts to fully re-open amid stunning backlogs, broad vacancies]. New Jersey Monitor. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/briefs/n-j-courts-to-fully-re-open-amid-stunning-backlogs-broad-vacancies/#:~:text=By%3A%20Nikita%20Biryukov%20%2D%20August%202%2C%202021%207%3A00%20am&text=State%20courts%20resumed%20holding%20in,will%20be%20lifted%20starting%20today>



## Section 4: Rehabilitation and Reentry Programs

In calendar year 2021, DOC contracted with 13 Residential Community Reintegration Program (RCRP) facilities to support individuals transitioning from DOC custody to community corrections prior to release. These RCRPs served both males and females. Of the contracted facilities, one RCRP was an assessment center, four were RCRPs with a work release program, and the remaining eight RCRPs combined drug treatment with a work release component.

RCRP by Program and County		
Name	Program	County
Albert M. “Bo” Robinson	Assessment Center (Other)	Mercer
Clinton House	Educational/Vocational/Work Release RCRP	Mercer
Comunidad Unida Para Rehabilitación de Adictos (CURA)	Drug Treatment RCRP	Essex
Fenwick House	Drug Treatment RCRP	Passaic
Fletcher House	Educational/Vocational/Work Release RCRP	Camden
Garrett House	Drug Treatment RCRP	Camden
Hope Hall	Drug Treatment RCRP	Camden
James A. Hemm House	Work Release RCRP	Essex
Kintock-Bridgeton 1	Drug Treatment RCRP	Cumberland
Kintock-Bridgeton 2	Work Release RCRP	Cumberland
Kintock-Newark	Drug Treatment RCRP	Essex
The Harbor	Drug Treatment RCRP	Essex
Tully House	Drug Treatment RCRP	Essex

Table 8. RCRP by Program and County

### Residential Community Reintegration Program

Among all releases, 23% attended a RCRP while 16% completed a RCRP. Specifically, 12% of the release cohort completed a drug treatment RCRP, 3% completed a work release RCRP, and approximately 3% completed an assessment center RCRP.

Releases who participated in a RCRP prior to community release experienced lower rates of rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration compared to those who did not complete a RCRP.

It should be noted that IPs may have attended more than one RCRP prior to release. For example, an IP could complete a drug treatment RCRP and then be transferred to a work release RCRP. Thus, the percentages should not be compared to one another and are displayed to illustrate the differences in recidivism percentages among releases who have completed a RCRP.

RCRP completion was associated with an overall decrease in reoffending events (Figures 25 and 26). Releases who attended and completed a work release RCRP prior to release had the lowest percentages of all reoffending events post-release while releases who completed an Assessment Center RCRP had the highest percentages of reoffending events post-release.

Among male releases who completed any RCRP prior to release, the percentages for rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration were 37%, 19%, and 15%, respectively. For female releases who completed any RCRP, the corresponding percentages were 34% for rearrests, 15% for reconviction, and 12% for reincarceration (Figure 26).

#### RCRP Completers vs. Non-Completers

**Rearrests** ↓ 22%  
**Reconviction** ↓ 39%  
**Reincarceration** ↓ 44%

Reoffending Events by RCRP Program Type			
	Rearrests	Reconviction	Reincarceration
<b>Complete Any RCRP</b>	36%	19%	15%
<b>Complete Work Release RCRP</b>	30%	12%	12%
<b>Complete Drug Treatment RCRP</b>	35%	18%	14%
<b>Complete Assessment Center RCRP</b>	51%	31%	22%

Table 9. Reoffending Events by RCRP Program Type

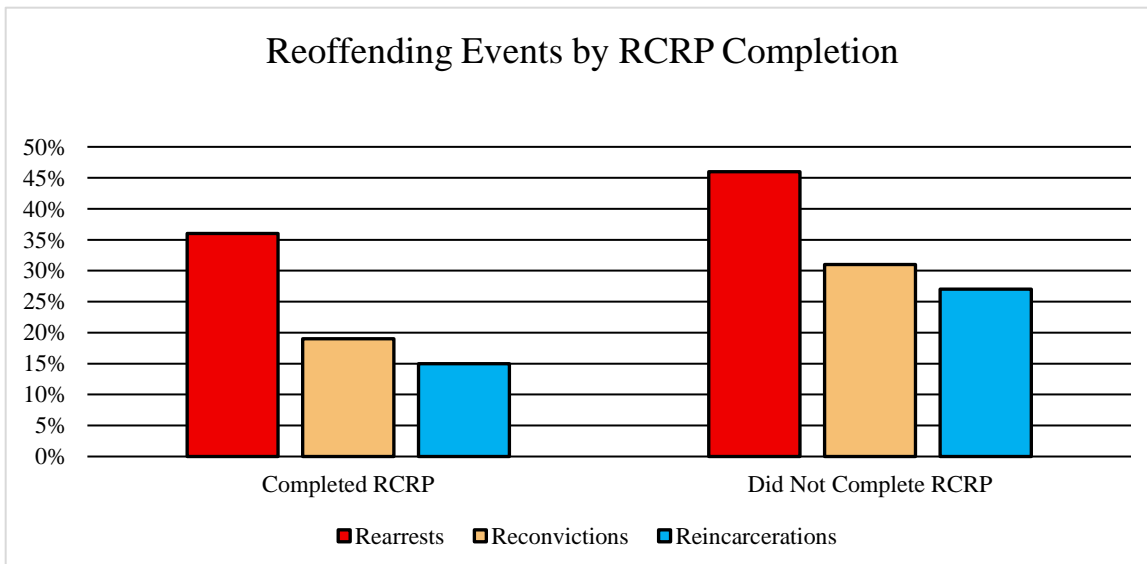


Figure 25. Reoffending Events by RCRP Completion

## Reoffending Events by Gender and RCRP Completion

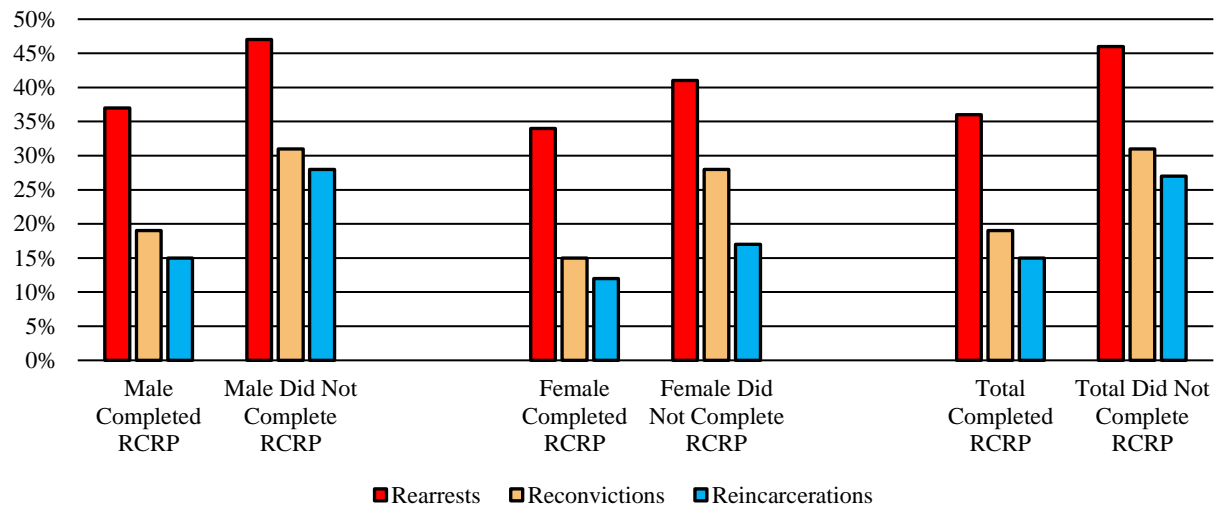


Figure 26. Reoffending Events by Gender and RCRP Completion

Among male releases who participated in a work release RCRP prior to release, the percentages for rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration were 30%, 12%, and 12%, respectively. No female releases were enrolled in a work release RCRP. Across all releases who participated in a work release RCRP, 30% were rearrested, 12% were reconvicted, and 12% were reincarcerated within three years of release.

## Reoffending Events by Work Release RCRP

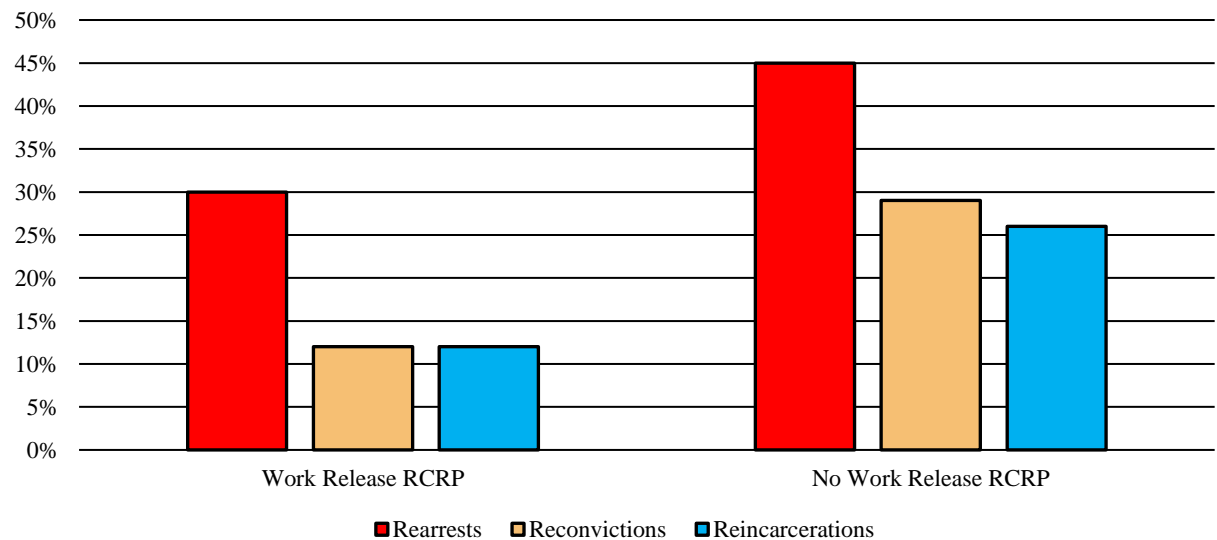


Figure 27. Reoffending Events by Work Release RCRP



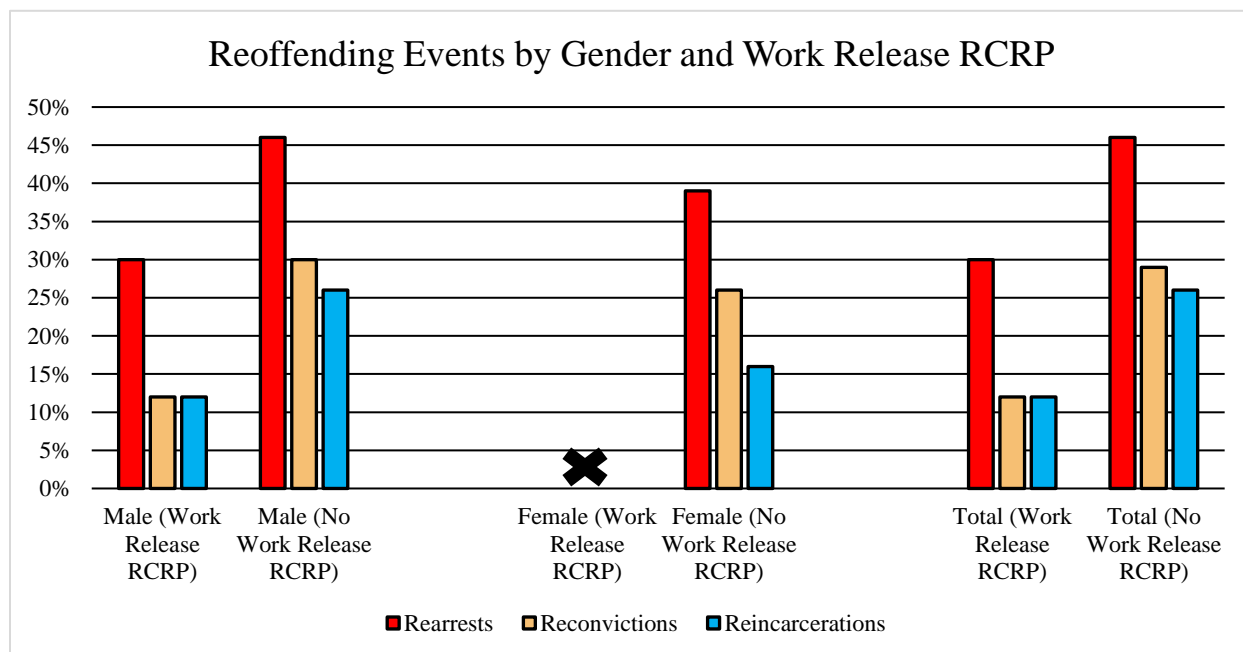


Figure 28. Reoffending Events by Gender and Work Release RCRP

Among all releases who participated in a drug treatment RCRP, 35% were rearrested, 18% were reconvicted, and 14% were reincarcerated within three years of release. For male releases who participated in a drug treatment RCRP, the percentages were 35% for rearrests, 18% for reconviction, and 15% for reincarceration. For female releases, 32% were rearrested, 18% were reconvicted, and 11% were reincarcerated within three years of release.

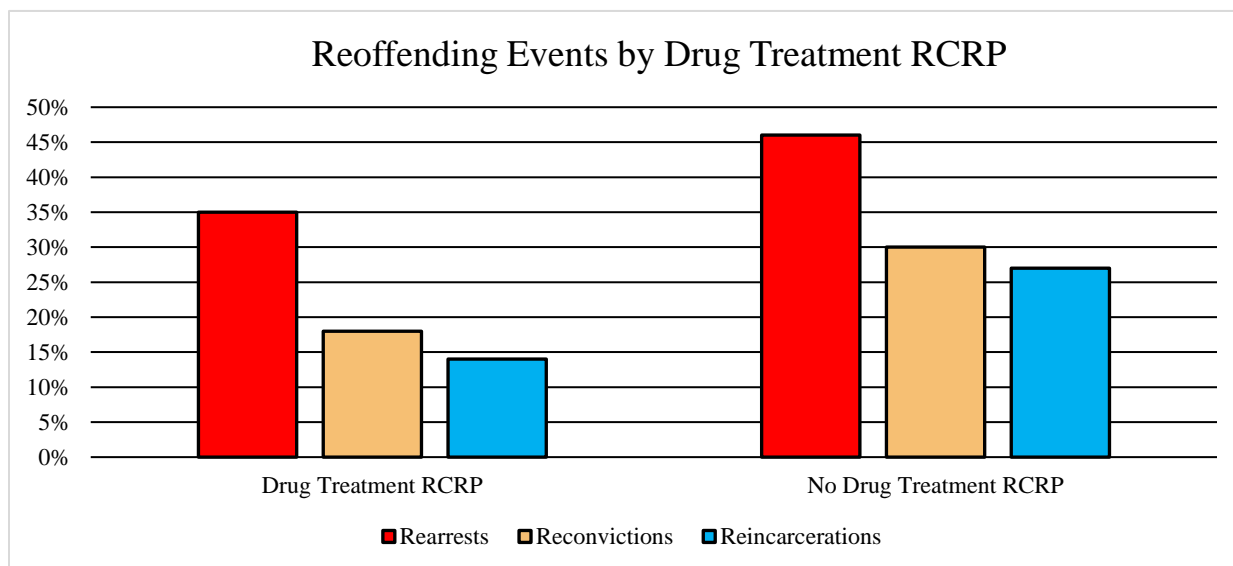


Figure 29. Reoffending Events by Drug Treatment RCRP

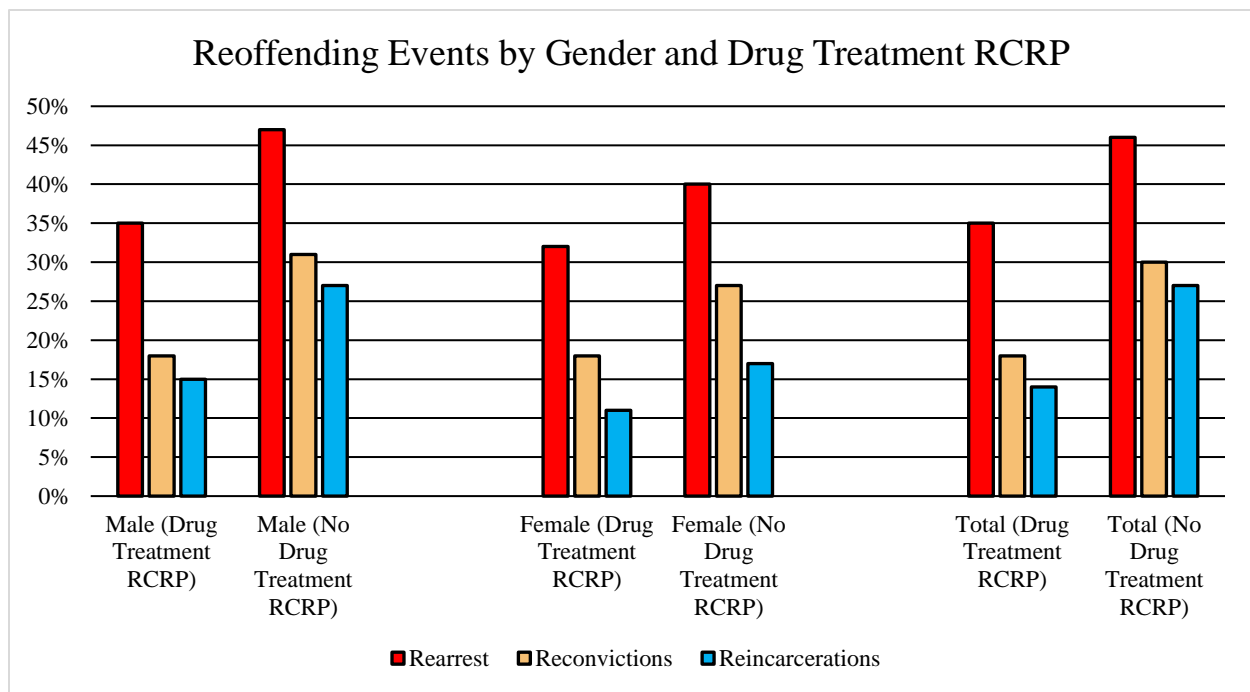


Figure 30. Reoffending Events by Gender and Drug Treatment RCRP

Reoffending rates for releases from an assessment center RCRP were generally lower than releases who did not participate in an assessment center RCRP. Among releases in an assessment center RCRP, rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates were 21%, 31%, and 22%, respectively. In comparison, releases who did not participate in an assessment center RCRP had rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates of 45%, 29%, and 25% within three years of release. Male releases from an assessment center RCRP had higher rates of rearrest (54% vs. 45%) and reconviction (34% vs. 29%) yet slightly lower reincarceration rates (24% vs. 26%) compared to males who were not in an assessment center.

For female releases from an assessment center RCRP, 36% were rearrested, 7% were reconvicted, and 14% were reincarcerated within three years. Female releases who participated in an assessment center RCRP had lower rates across all reoffending measures, with the most notable difference observed in reconviction rates (7% vs. 27% for females who were not in an assessment center).

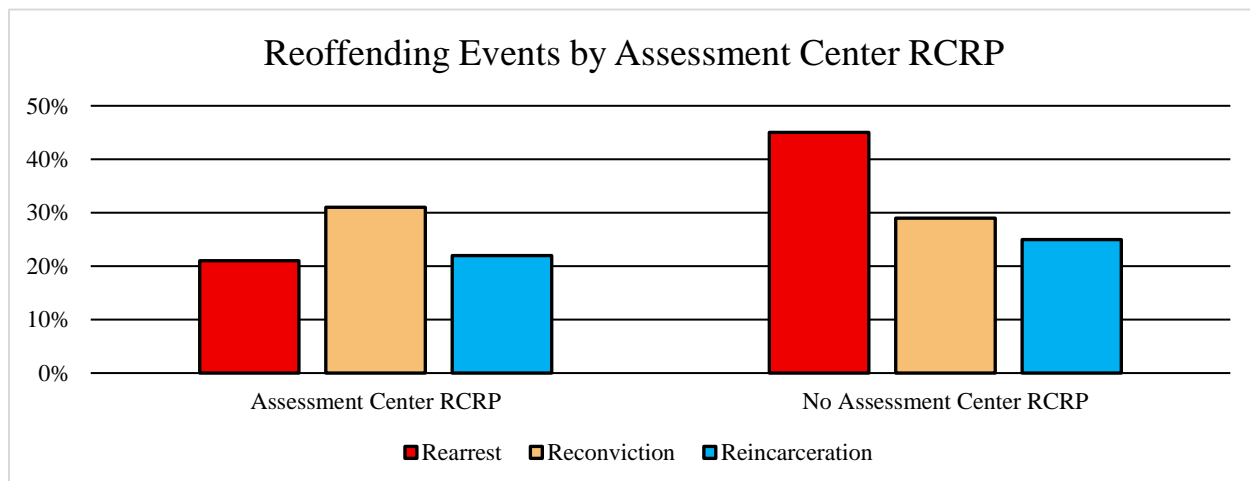


Figure 31. Reoffending Events by Assessment Center RCRP

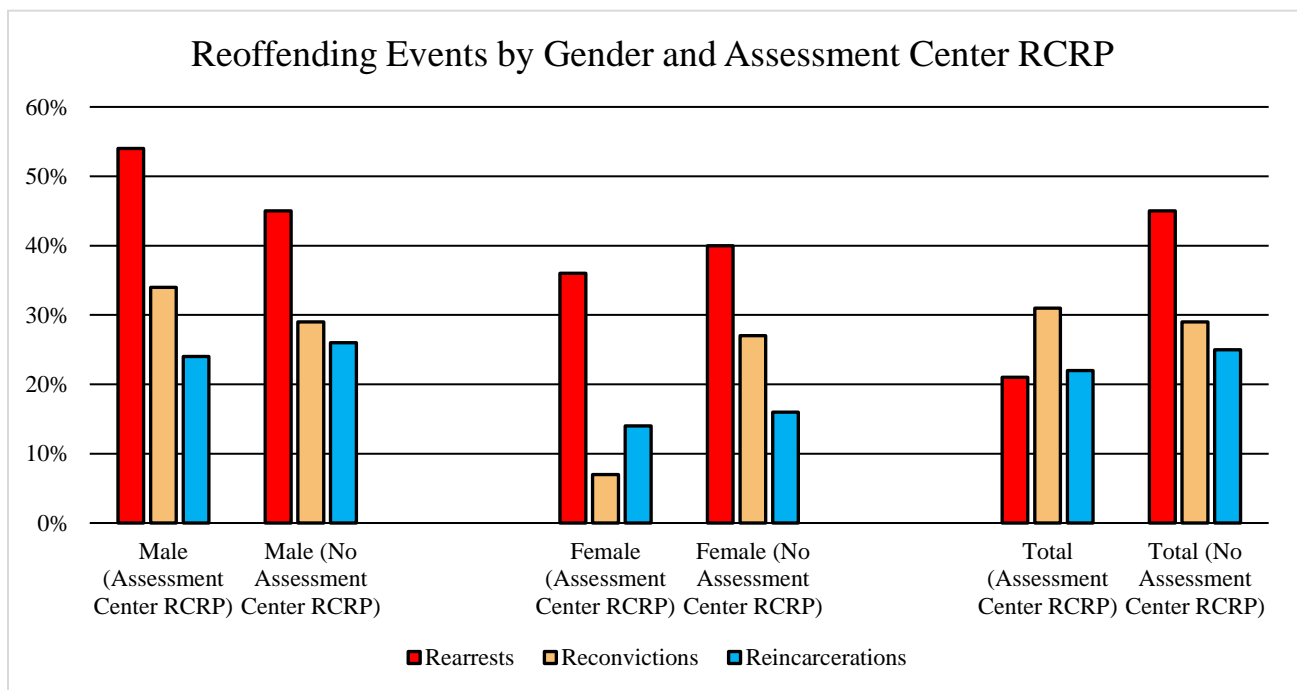


Figure 32. Reoffending Events by Gender and Assessment Center RCRP

## Mandatory Education

The DOC provides mandatory education to IPs who do not have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency (HSE) degree.<sup>2</sup> Students earn credits from their home school districts toward the fulfillment of their high school diplomas.<sup>3</sup>

Releases who participated in mandatory education programs (N=219) were predominantly Black/African American, male, and serving a sentence for a violent offense. The average age was 31 years, and most participants had prior criminal histories. On average, these individuals served about four years in DOC custody.

During their stay of incarceration, 219 IPs who participated in mandatory education programming took the HSE test. Of these, 188 passed and 31 failed, for a pass percentage of 86% and a fail percentage of 14%.

Mandatory Education Demographics: Race/Ethnicity and Gender		
	N	Percentage
<b>Race</b>		
White	64	29
Black/African American	142	65
Other	13	6
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic/Latino	42	19
Non-Hispanic/Latino	176	80
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	213	97
Female	6	3

Table 10. Mandatory Education Demographics: Race/Ethnicity, Gender

Mandatory Education Demographics: Criminal History	Mean	Median	Range
Age at Release (years)	35	34	20 - 61
Number of Prior Arrests	6	5	0 - 39
Number of Prior Convictions	3	3	0 - 22
Number of Prior Incarcerations	0.7	0	0 - 7
Time Served (days)	2596.5	1,424	236 – 14,215

Table 11. Mandatory Education Demographics: Criminal History

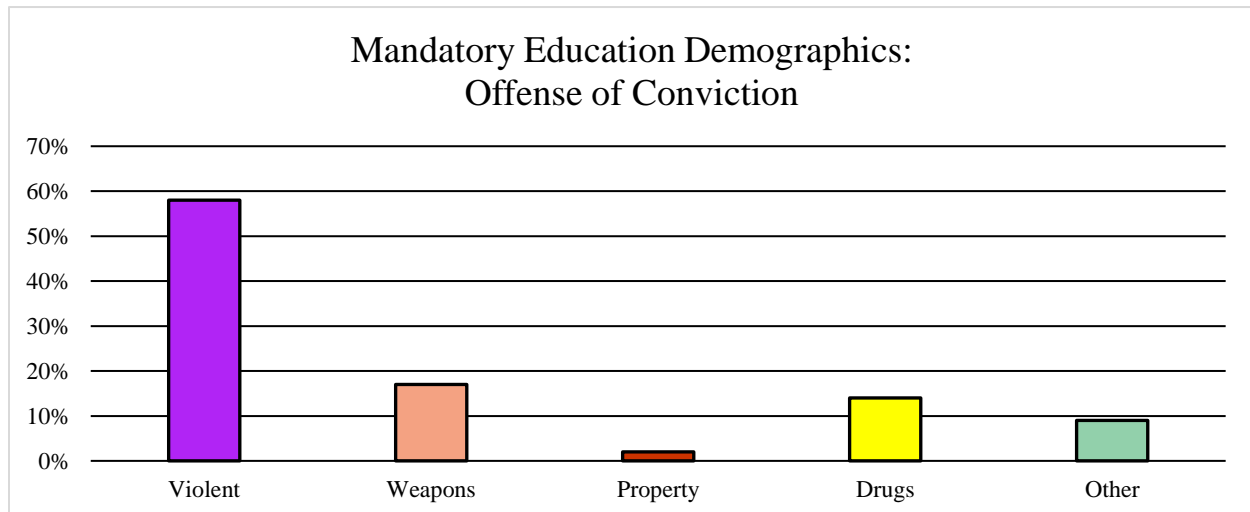


Figure 33. Mandatory Education Demographics: Offense of Conviction

<sup>2</sup> Under the State Facilities Education Act (SFEA) of 1979 (P.L. 1979, c.207, codified at N.J.S.A. 18A:7B-1 et seq.), all incarcerated persons under the age of 20, as well as those under age 21 with an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP), are provided traditional high school coursework

<sup>3</sup> IPs who are over the age of 21 who do not have a high school diploma or HSE and have 18 months or more remaining on their sentence before a mandatory release date are eligible for mandatory education programming to obtain a HSE (P.L. 2009, c.330, codified at N.J.S.A. 30:4-92.1).

The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages for mandatory education participants were 36%, 15% and 23%, respectively.

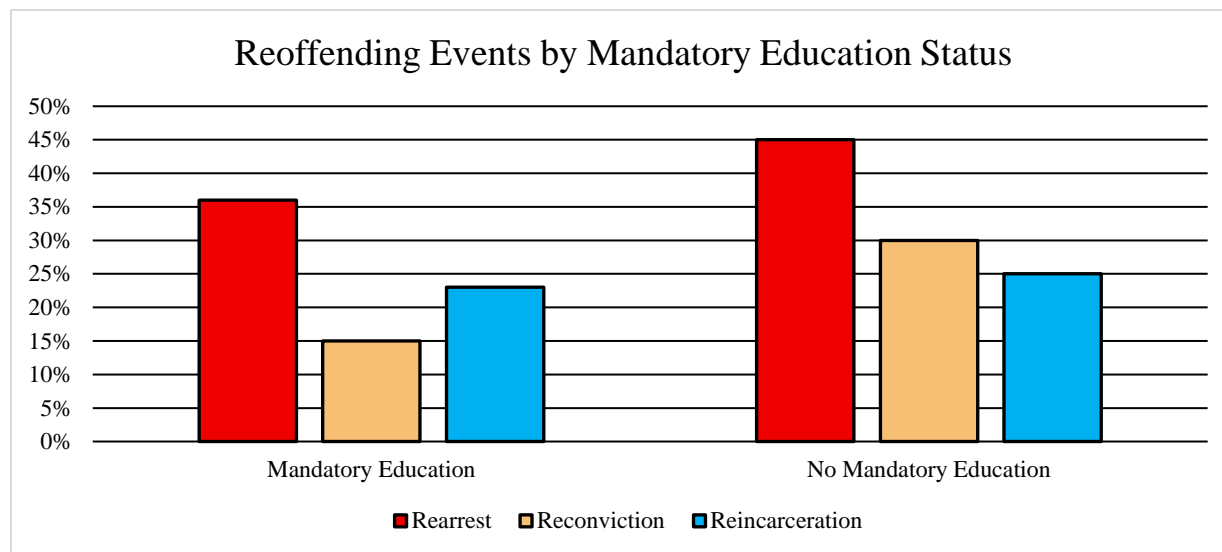


Figure 34. Reoffending Events by Mandatory Education Status

Male releases who did not participate in mandatory education exhibited higher rates across all reoffending measures compared to males who participated in the program.

In contrast, female releases who did not participate in mandatory education showed lower rates of rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration compared to females who participated.

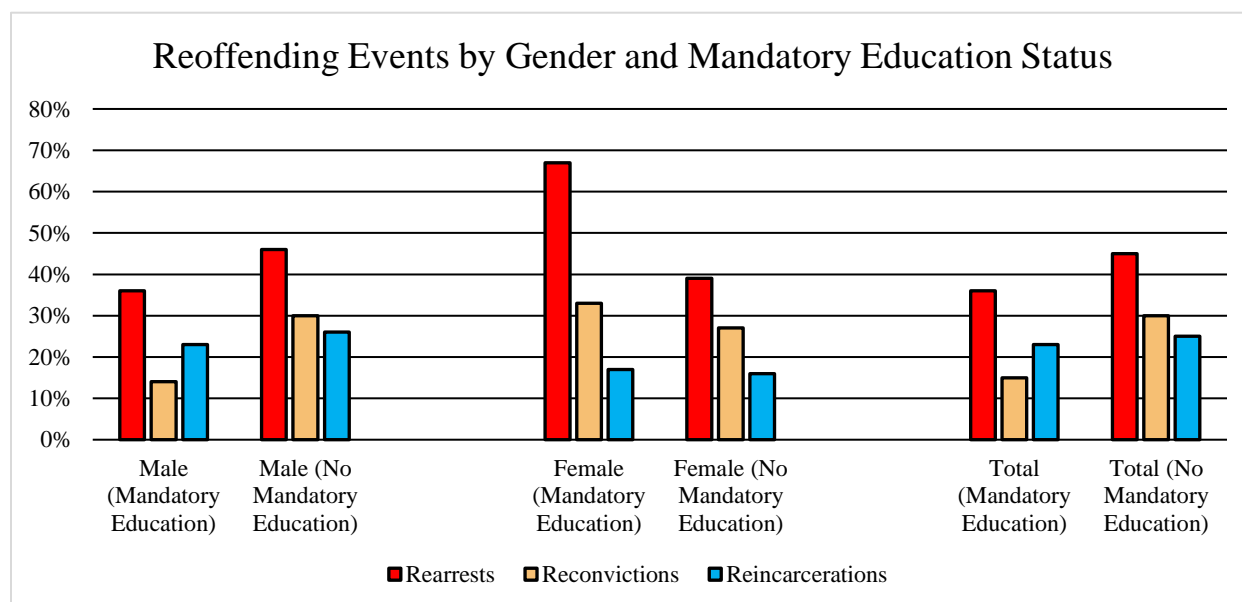


Figure 35. Reoffending Events by Gender and Mandatory Education Status

## Vocational Education

DOC provides vocational education programs to IPs at all facilities. There are 23 courses of study which include cabinetmaking, cosmetology/barbering, plumbing, and graphic arts, among others. Of the 2021 cohort, 1,163 releases (28%) completed vocational education programming during their stay of incarceration. Nearly 55% of all vocational education participants were employed at any time within three-years of release.

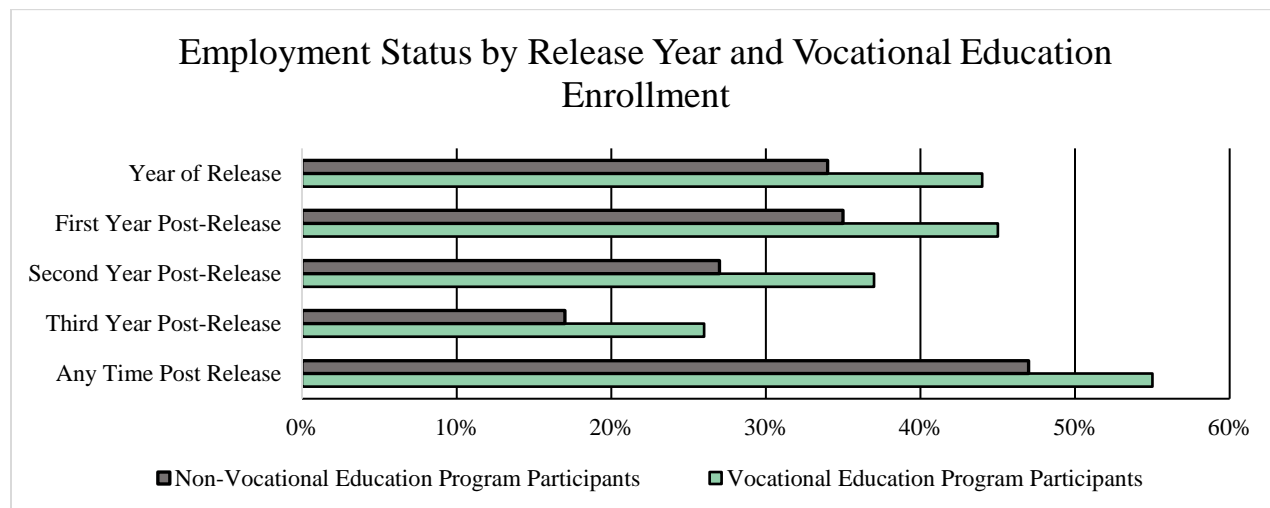


Figure 36. Employment Status by Release Year and Vocational Education Enrollment

Releases who participated in vocational education programs had rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration rates of 41%, 24%, and 25%, respectively. Additionally, nearly 78% of vocational education participants were readmitted for a CSV, while 23% were readmitted for a new commitment. Across both genders, releases who did not participate in vocational education exhibited higher rates of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration.

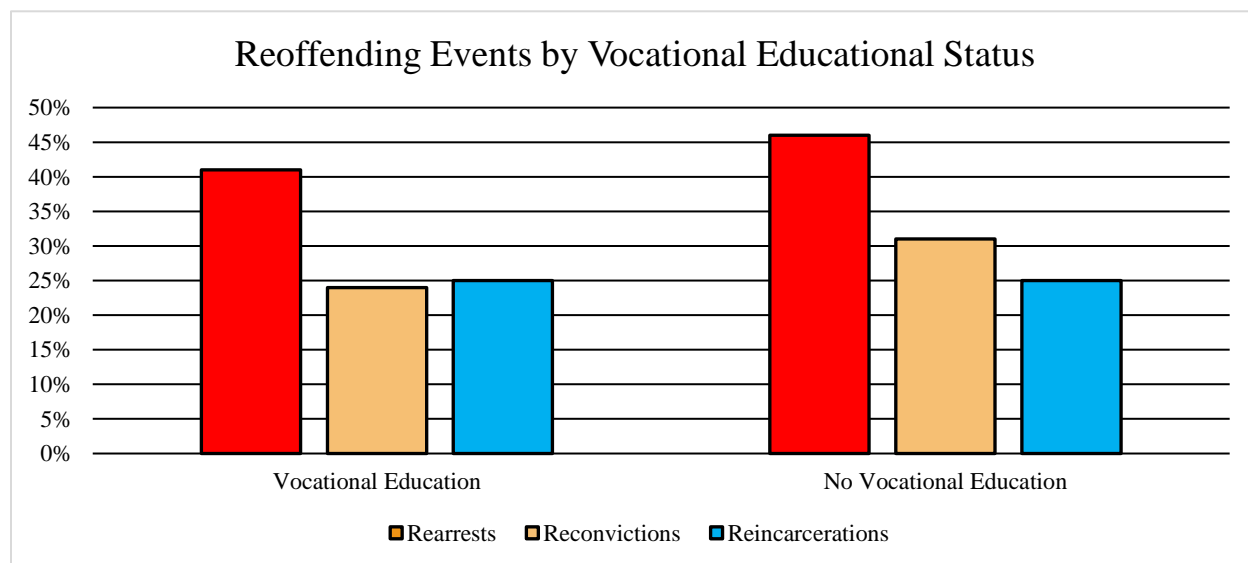


Figure 37. Reoffending Events by Vocational Education Status

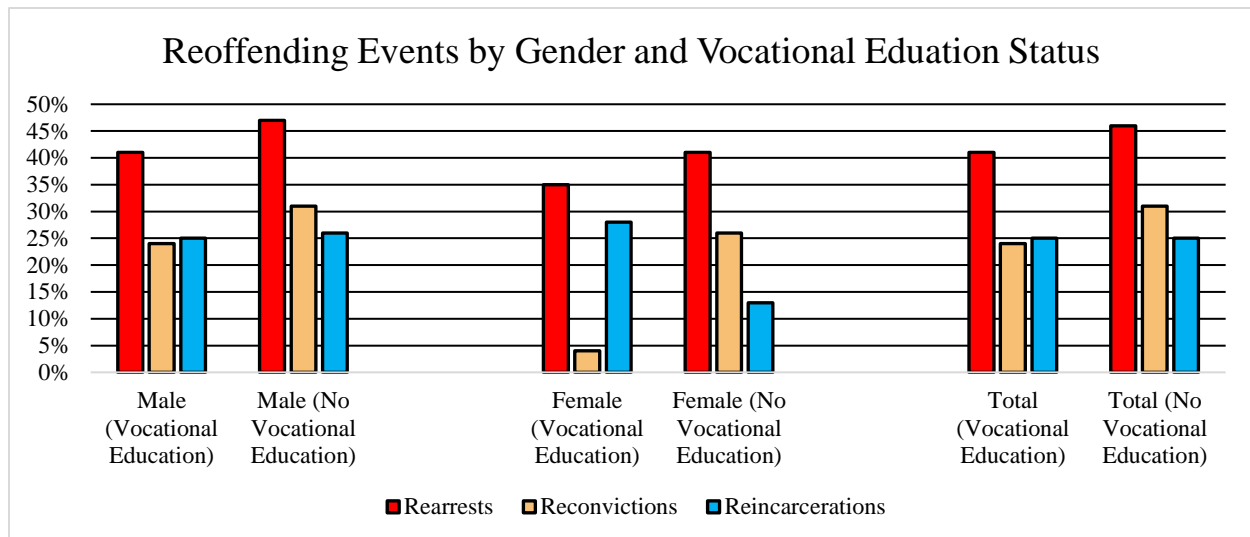


Figure 38. Reoffending Events by Gender and Vocational Education Status

### **Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs**

The DOC provides addiction treatment services to its substance use disorder IP population through programs including Living in Balance (LIB), Engaging the Family (ETF), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Gamblers Anonymous (GA).<sup>4,5,6</sup>

The goals of the programs are to strengthen marriage and family relationships of IPs, enhance the well-being of children of incarcerated parents, and motivate and prepare incarcerated parents to maintain drug and crime free lifestyles. Participation is focused on IPs who will serve the entirety of their sentence incarcerated.

Six percent of all releases in 2021 participated in psychoeducational substance use disorder treatment during their stay of incarceration. Alcoholics Anonymous and Engaging the Family were the most attended psychoeducational drug treatment programs followed by Living in Balance.

<sup>4</sup> Living in Balance (LIB) is a research-based, psychoeducational program that provides treatment sessions for persons who abuse or are addicted to alcohol and other drugs. Participation is dependent on sentence length and RCRP eligibility.

<sup>5</sup> LIB programs are available in all DOC facilities. The Engaging the Family (ETF) program engages the spouse/committed partner and children of incarcerated persons as allies in the rehabilitation process.

<sup>6</sup> ETF is available in seven DOC facilities. Alcoholics Anonymous is available in all DOC facilities, Narcotics Anonymous is available in two facilities, and Gamblers Anonymous is available in one facility.

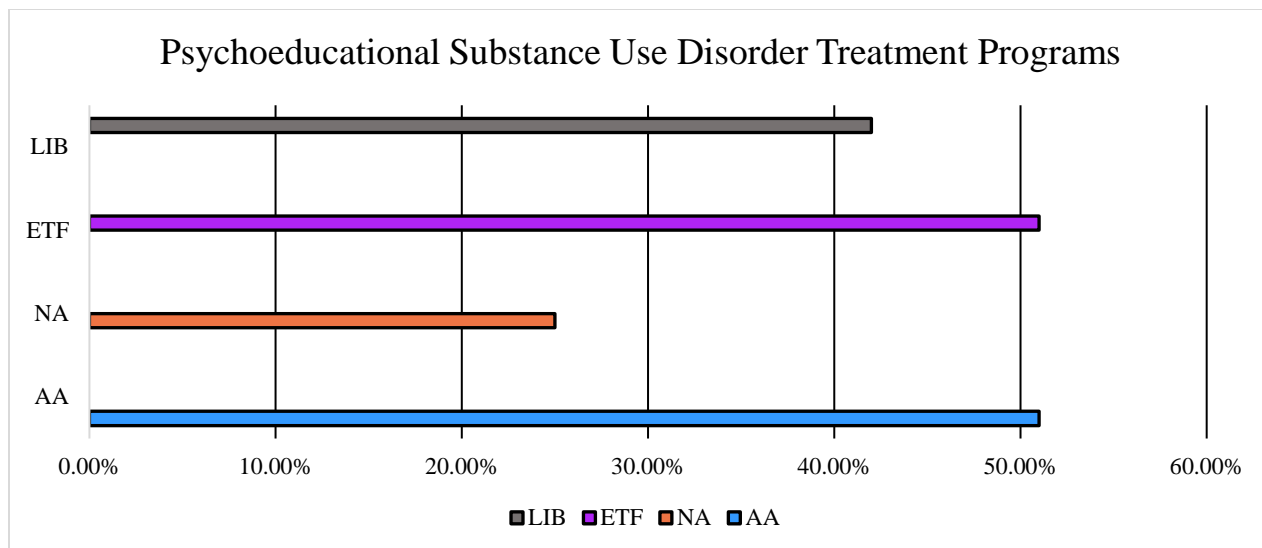


Figure 39. Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs

Participants in the psychoeducational substance use disorder treatment program had rearrests, reconviction, and reincarceration rates of 31%, 19%, and 28%, respectively. Further analysis indicates that 18% of program participants were readmitted for a new commitment, while 84% were readmitted for a CSV.

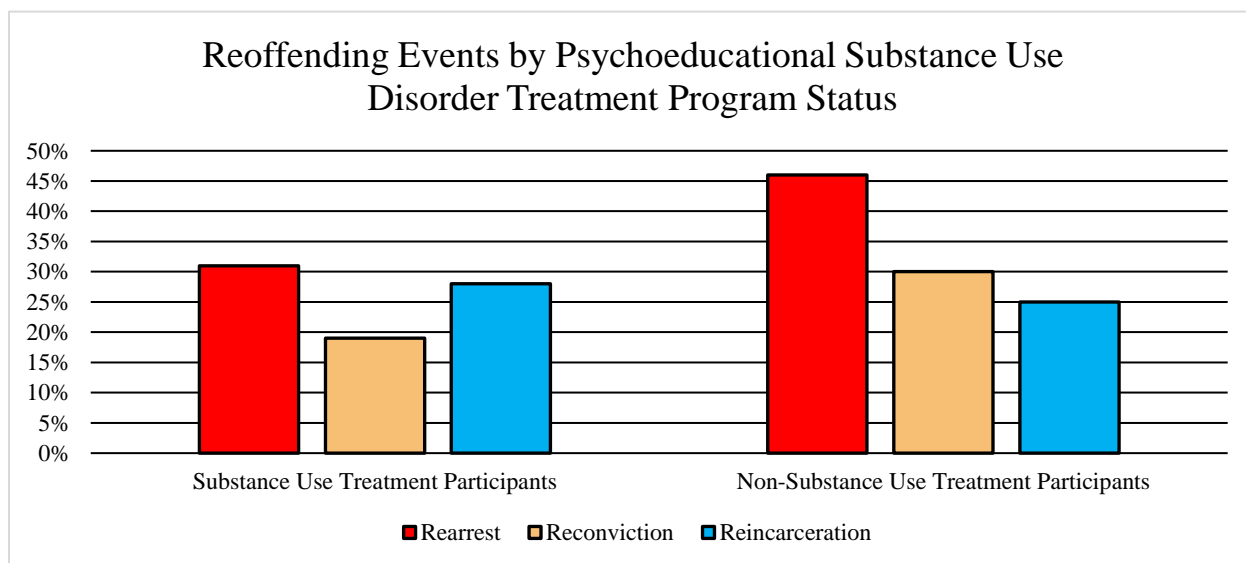


Figure 40. Reoffending Events by Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program Status



Rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages varied across substance use disorder treatment participation and gender. Among male releases, reincarceration rates were slightly higher for those who participated in a substance use disorder treatment program (29%) compared to non-participants (26%). However, rearrest and reconviction rates were lower for participants (32% and 19%, respectively) than for non-participants (46% and 30%).

Among female releases, those who participated in a substance use disorder treatment program had lower rearrest rates (17% vs. 40%), higher reconviction rates (50% vs. 25%), and similar reincarceration rates (17% vs. 16%) compared to non-participants.

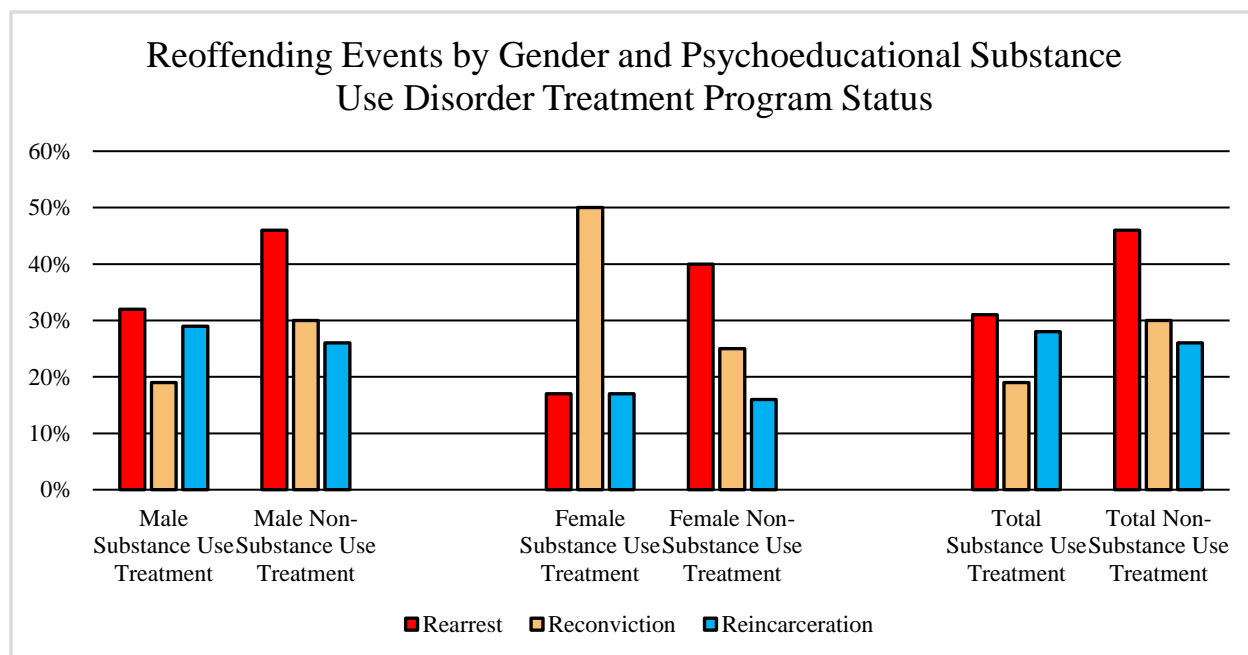


Figure 41. Reoffending Events by Gender and Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program Status



This report is the fifteenth in a series of reports measuring various outcomes relative to New Jersey's adult offender populations and meets a legislative mandate. To this end, the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) and the New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) examined the recidivism of a select cohort of adult releases from the custody of DOC in calendar year 2021. In addition to measuring overall recidivism levels, this report describes adult cohort characteristics between male and female releases.

Recidivism is defined as the first reincarceration event after release from a DOC facility. Data on rearrests and reconvictions after release from a DOC facility are included in this report as supplemental measures of reoffending. A three-year follow-up period was utilized for all analyses including reincarcerations due to community supervision violations and new commitments.

For the 2021 cohort, 25% of releases were reincarcerated, 45% were rearrested, and 29% were reconvicted within three-years of release. Overall, these percentages are lower than national estimates.<sup>7</sup> However, it should be noted that the outcomes of the 2021 release cohort, which were examined from the period of January 1, 2021 thru December 31, 2024, were likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, within the New Jersey Judiciary, restrictions were in place limiting in-person trials and on-location services from March 2020 thru August 2021, creating a backlog of trial court cases.<sup>8</sup> In an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within correctional facilities, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 124 on April 10, 2020. This critical public health measure created the Emergency Medical Home Confinement Act which allowed eligible IPs to be transferred to temporary home confinement. Incarcerated persons convicted of murder, manslaughter, sexual assault, robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault or IPs serving a sentence under the No Early Release Act (NERA) were excluded from the program. A total of 369 IPs were transferred to temporary home confinement through this Act. In addition to this response, Governor Murphy passed the Public Health Emergency Credit Act (PHEC). This initiative allowed those nearing the end of their sentence(s) to receive credits that reduced their sentence length for every month served within a DOC facility during the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 3,675 IPs were released through PHEC.

The data suggest that efforts to support and provide resources for individuals during their reintegration process may be yielding positive results, though there is room for further improvement, particularly in the immediate months following release. The initial six months following release are critical for the successful reintegration of individuals who have recently been incarcerated. Research suggests that the transition from the highly structured environment of prison to the freedom of society can be overwhelming, leading some individuals to revert to criminal behavior or violate the conditions of their parole.<sup>9</sup> Approximately 53% of individuals who recidivated within three years of release were readmitted to a DOC facility within the first year following release.

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<sup>7</sup> Durose, M. R., (2021, July). Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017. <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/recidivism-prisoners-released-34-states-2012-5-year-follow-period-2012-2017>

<sup>8</sup> Biryukov, N. (2021, August 2). N.J. courts to fully re-open amid stunning backlogs, broad vacancies [Review of N.J. courts to fully re-open amid stunning backlogs, broad vacancies]. New Jersey Monitor. <https://newjerseymonitor.com/briefs/n-j-courts-to-fully-re-open-amid-stunning-backlogs-broad-vacancies/#:~:text=By%3A%20Nikita%20Biryukov%20%2D%20August%20%2C%202021%207%3A00%20am&text=State%20courts%20resumed%20holding%20in,will%20be%20lifted%20starting%20today.>

<sup>9</sup> Haney, C (2001, November 30). The Psychological Impact of Incarceration: Implications for Post-Prison Adjustment. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/psychological-impact-incarceration-implications-post-prison-adjustment-0>.

Demographic patterns observed among individuals who recidivated highlight the disproportionate representation of males and the increased vulnerability to recidivate among those released at a younger age. Additionally, the data suggests that the 30-39 age group may represent a critical period during which a significant portion of recidivism occurs.

This report also highlights the prevalence of community supervision violations as a significant contributing factor to recidivism among both males and females who were previously released from a DOC facility. While violent offenses accounted for a smaller portion of reincarcerations for males, the overwhelming majority of reincarcerations for both genders stemmed from violations of parole or probation conditions. This underscores the importance of tailoring rehabilitation programs, support services, and reentry strategies to address the specific needs and circumstances of different gender groups who are under supervision at release.

The DOC aims to not only protect the public by operating safe, secure and humane correctional facilities, but also provide proper classification, appropriate treatment of incarcerated persons and offer programs in the areas of education, behavior modification and substance use treatment that promote successful reentry into society. Specifically, the Department has provided those in DOC custody with licensed substance use disorder treatment and other programming to prevent substance use and relapse. The DOC has worked closely with the Department of Human Services to tailor licensing standards to a correctional setting, thus providing incarcerated persons with the same treatment opportunities available in the community. Licensed drug treatment programs are available at eight RCRP facilities, with the first clinically licensed drug treatment program being offered at Mid-State Correctional Facility.

The Department has also continued its efforts to provide educational services to those in custody with great success. While completing their sentences, large numbers of incarcerated persons are earning their high school and equivalency diplomas and associate degrees. The Department offers a wide range of vocational programming and has issued increasing numbers of industry-based vocational certificates so that incarcerated persons are better prepared for meaningful employment once released. Finally, as IPs complete their sentences and prepare to return to the community, they receive assistance in obtaining necessary identification documents. Assistance is also provided in such areas as family reunification and linkages to housing as well as other important resources.

In this regard, the results of the present analyses support the missions of the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Residential Community Reintegration Program completion was related to decreased percentages of recidivism post-release. Incarcerated persons who participated in psychoeducational drug treatment programming had lower percentages of rearrest and reconviction after release. Further, vocational education participants experienced decreases in rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration compared non-vocational education participants. The DOC will continue to examine these data to ensure that the Department is making a positive difference in the lives of incarcerated persons as they prepare for reentry, resulting in improved public safety in communities throughout New Jersey and beyond.



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