

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

# RECIDIVISM REPORT 2020

A THREE YEAR FOLLOW-UP



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# Executive Summary

## Overview

Community supervision violations are a significant contributing factor to reincarceration percentages among males and females who are released from a DOC facility. The overwhelming majority of reincarcerations for both genders stems from violations of parole or probation conditions.

## Releases

- There were 8,778 incarcerated persons (IPs) released from DOC facilities in calendar year 2020.
- Of the total release cohort, 95% identified as male and 5% identified as female.
- Of the male releases, 62% identified as Black/African American.
- Of the female releases, 53% identified as White.
- Of the total release cohort, 15% identified as Hispanic/Latino.



**New commitments have been steadily declining since 2015**

5% of all 2020 releases were reincarcerated for a new offense within three years



**Nearly 55% of persons who participated in a vocational education program during their stay of incarceration were employed at any time within three years of release.**

Across both genders, releases who participated in vocational education programs had lower rearrests, reconvictions and reincarcerations.



**Reoffending events within three years have been steadily declining since 2015**

Rearrests decreased by 12%  
Reconvictions decreased by 29%  
Reincarcerations decreased by 27%

## Criminal History

- Of the total release cohort, 55% had at least one prior DOC admission.
- Conversely, 65% of female releases had no prior commitments compared to 44% of male releases.

## Mandatory Minimum Term (MMT)

- Of the total release cohort, 52% served a MMT while 48% of the release cohort did not serve a MMT.
- Among all females who recidivated, approximately 37% served a MMT prior to release.
- The majority of males who recidivated (51%) served a MMT prior to release.

## Recidivism

- Reincarcerations for new commitments, defined as those released and readmitted on a new criminal conviction, have been consistently decreasing over time from 13% from the 2010 release cohort year to 5% in the 2020 release cohort year.
- Reincarcerations for Technical Parole Violations (TPVs), defined as those released and readmitted on a parole violation, have been steadily increasing over time from 33% from the 2010 release cohort year to 74% in the 2020 release cohort year.
- Of the total release cohort, 22% were readmitted to a DOC facility within three years for any reason including new commitments, technical parole violations or community supervision violations.

## Reoffending Events

- Since 2010, there has been a 4% decrease in rearrests, 23% decrease in reconvictions and a 33% decrease in reincarcerations for male releases. Among female releases, there has been a 15% decrease in reconvictions, a 35% decrease in reincarcerations and a 3% increase in rearrests since 2010.



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 reentry initiatives and programs. This report is the fourteenth in a series of reports that measure overall recidivism levels, describe adult cohort characteristics, and analyze recidivism factors. It is the ninth report that examines reentry 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 2020 adult release cohort including cohort demographics, recidivism, and reentry 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 mission is realized by ensuring the safety and security of staff and incarcerated persons, providing the highest quality rehabilitative and reintegration programs guided by gender-informed care and trauma services with the support of community partners.

The Department is responsible for managing a budget of approximately \$1.1 billion and employing approximately 6,000 persons, including almost 4,500 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. 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 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 8,778 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>Rearrest</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 2020 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 2020, 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 2020, 8,778 IPs were released. Unless otherwise noted, the analyses will include the full release cohort (N=8,778). Counts may not sum to the cohort total and percentages may not sum to 100% due to missing information.

### Release Cohort Demographics

Among the 8,778 IPs released, 8,324 IPs (95%) identified as male and 454 IPs (5%) identified as female. The majority of IPs were aged 30-39 (35%) at release, followed by IPs aged 21-29 (30%). The majority of males (34%) and females (41%) were within the 30-39 age range at release.

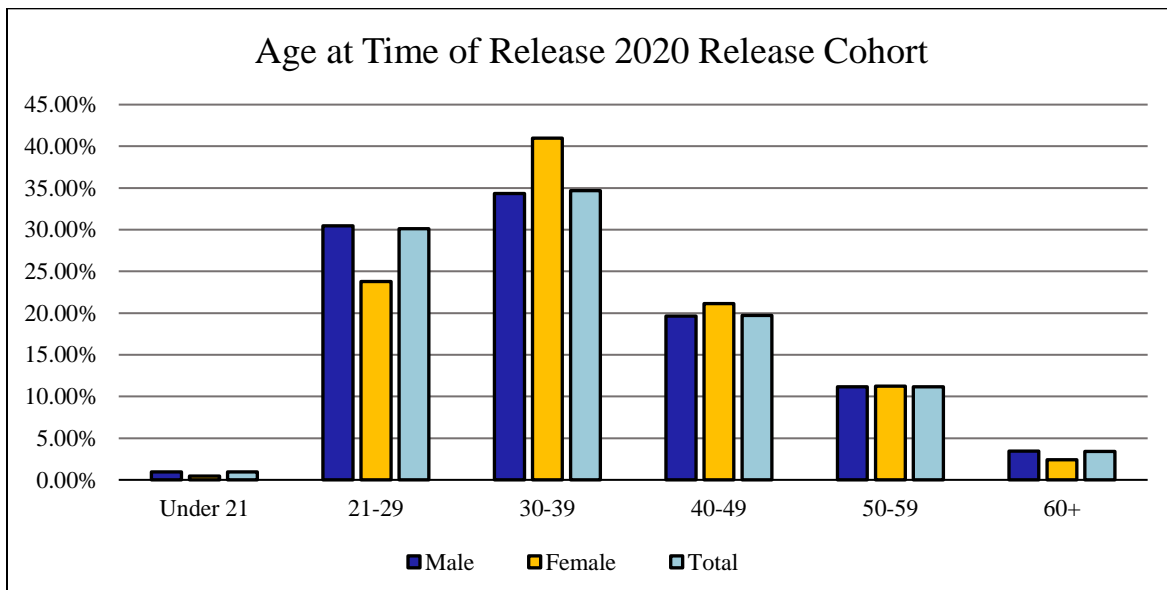


Figure 1. Age at Time of Release 2020 Release Cohort

Sixty-one percent of the entire release cohort identified as Black/African American. The majority of males identified as Black/African American (62%) while the majority of females (53%) identified as White. Overall, 15% of releases identified as having Hispanic/Latino heritage (Males: 15%, Females: 11%).

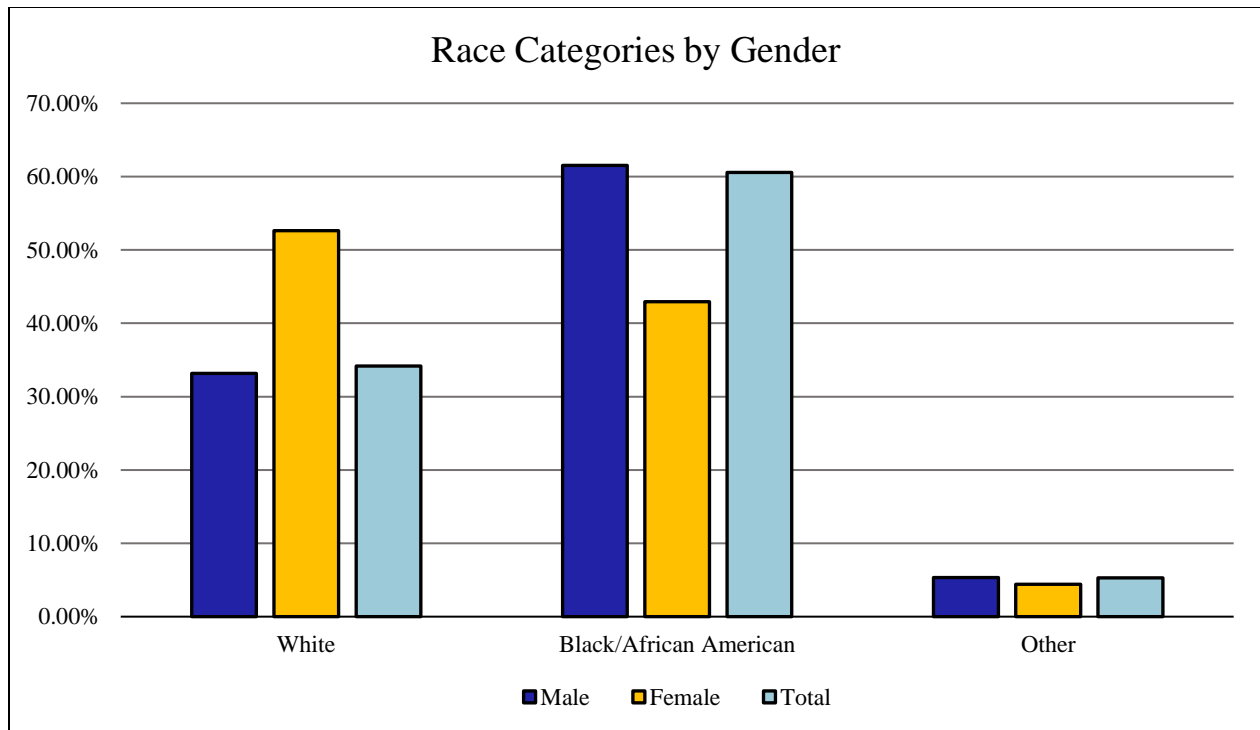


Figure 2. Race Categories by Gender

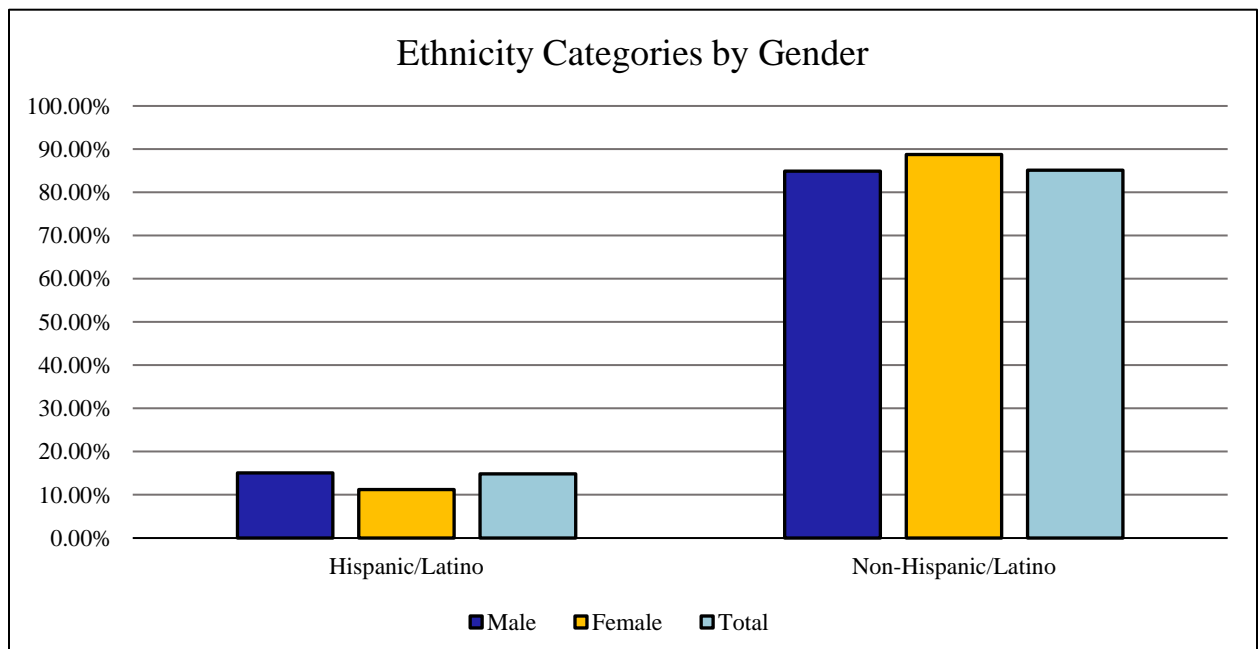


Figure 3. Ethnicity Categories by Gender

## **Education**

At the time of release, the highest level of education was a high school diploma or high school equivalency degree for 41% of releases and approximately 8% of releases had some college education or higher. A higher percentage of female releases had some college education or higher (12%) compared to male releases (7%).

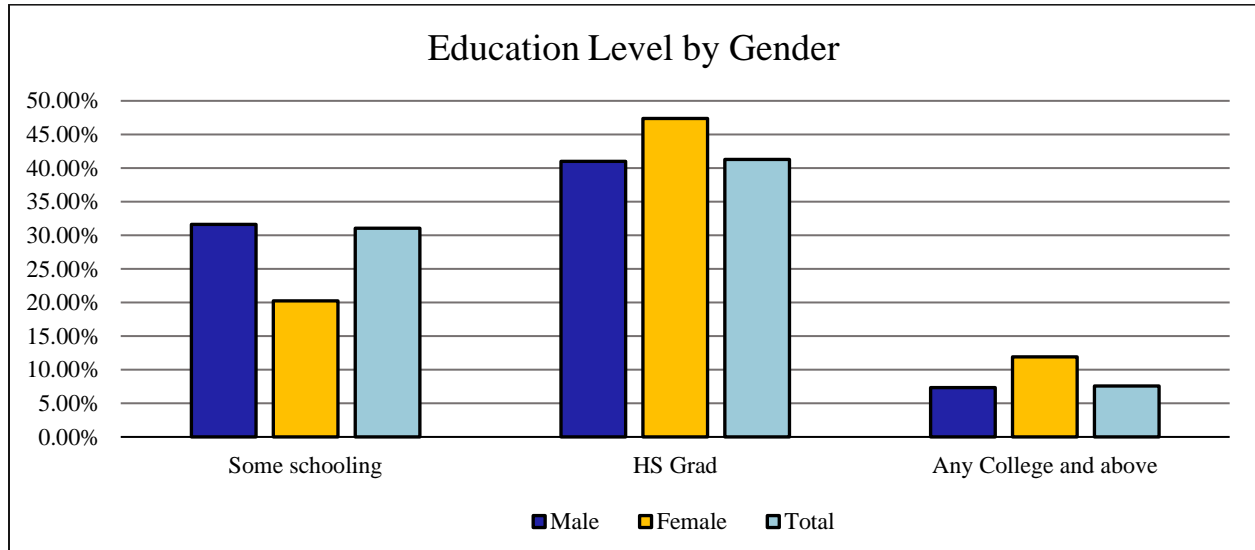


Figure 4. Education Level by Gender

## **Prior Commitments**

Approximately 55% (N=4,849) of released IPs had at least one prior DOC admission. Fifty-six percent of male releases had prior commitments compared to 35% of females. Conversely, 65% of female releases had no prior commitments compared to 44% of male releases.

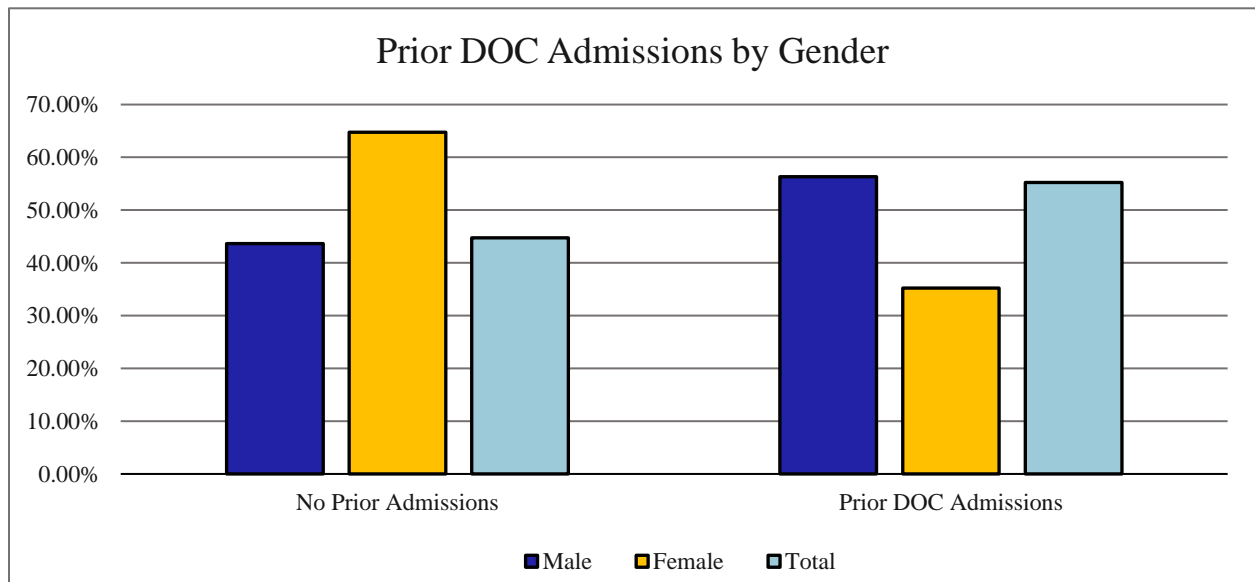


Figure 5. Prior DOC Admissions by Gender

## **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.

Among males, the most common offense of conviction was a violent offense (45%). This was closely followed by weapons (19%) and drug offenses (19%).

Similar to males, the most common offense of conviction for females was a violent offense (39%). Drug offenses were more prevalent among females (28%) than males as the second-most common offense of conviction.

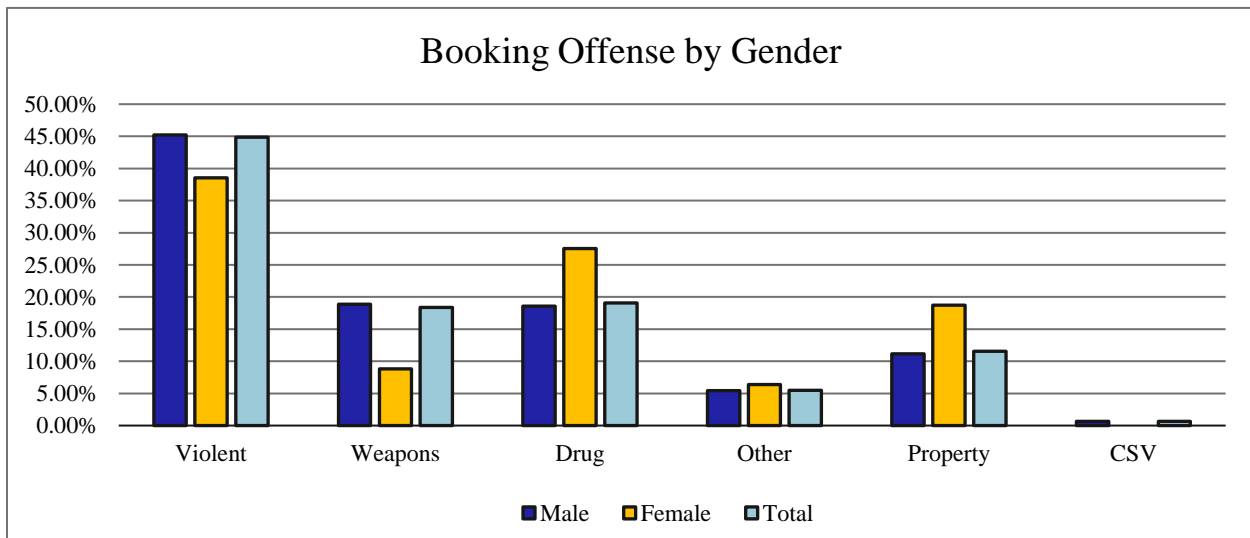


Figure 6. Booking Offense by Gender

The most common offense of conviction among IPs ages 21 and older was a violent offense. For IPs under the age of 21, the most common offense of conviction was a weapons offense (48%). When comparing weapons convictions across all age groups, a downward trend is observed as the percentage of weapons convictions decreases as the age of the IP increases.

Booking Offense by Age							
Booking Offense	Under 21	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Violent	31%	46%	45%	41%	46%	57%	45%
Weapons	48%	28%	17%	13%	7%	5%	18%
Property	7%	8%	11%	13%	19%	16%	12%
Drug	5%	13%	22%	25%	18%	14%	19%
Other	9%	5%	5%	6%	8%	5%	5%

Table 1. Booking Offense by Age



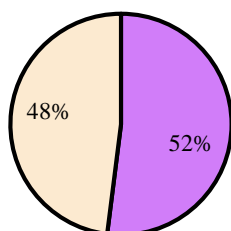
## **Mandatory Minimum and No Early Release Act**

Approximately 52% 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 1st or 2nd degree crimes must serve at least 85% of their sentence before reaching parole eligibility. Only 23% of releases served a sentence under NERA.

Among male releases, 52% (N=4,349) served a MMT while 48% (N=3,975) did not serve a MMT prior to release. The majority of female releases (62%, N=280) did not serve a MMT prior to release while 38% of female releases (N=174) did.

Similar percentages were observed among male and female releases who served a sentence under NERA. Twenty-two percent (N=1,870) of male releases served a sentence under NERA while 78% of male releases (N=6,454) did not serve a sentence under NERA. For females, 24% (N=109) of releases served a sentence under NERA while 76% of female releases (N=345) did not serve a sentence under NERA.

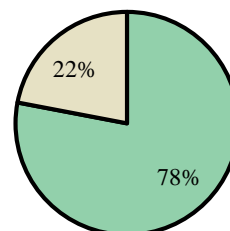
**MMT Status by Gender:  
Male Releases**



■ MMT ■ No MMT

Figure 7. MMT Status by Gender: Male Releases

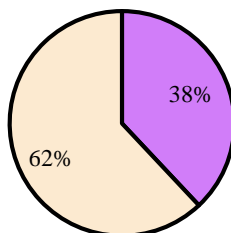
**NERA Status by Gender:  
Male Releases**



■ No NERA ■ NERA

Figure 8. NERA Status by Gender: Male Releases

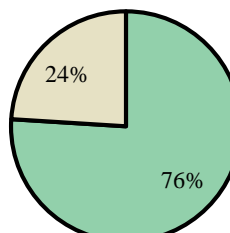
**MMT Status by Gender:  
Female Releases**



■ MMT ■ No MMT

Figure 9. MMT Status by Gender: Female Releases

**NERA Status by Gender:  
Female Releases**



■ No NERA ■ NERA

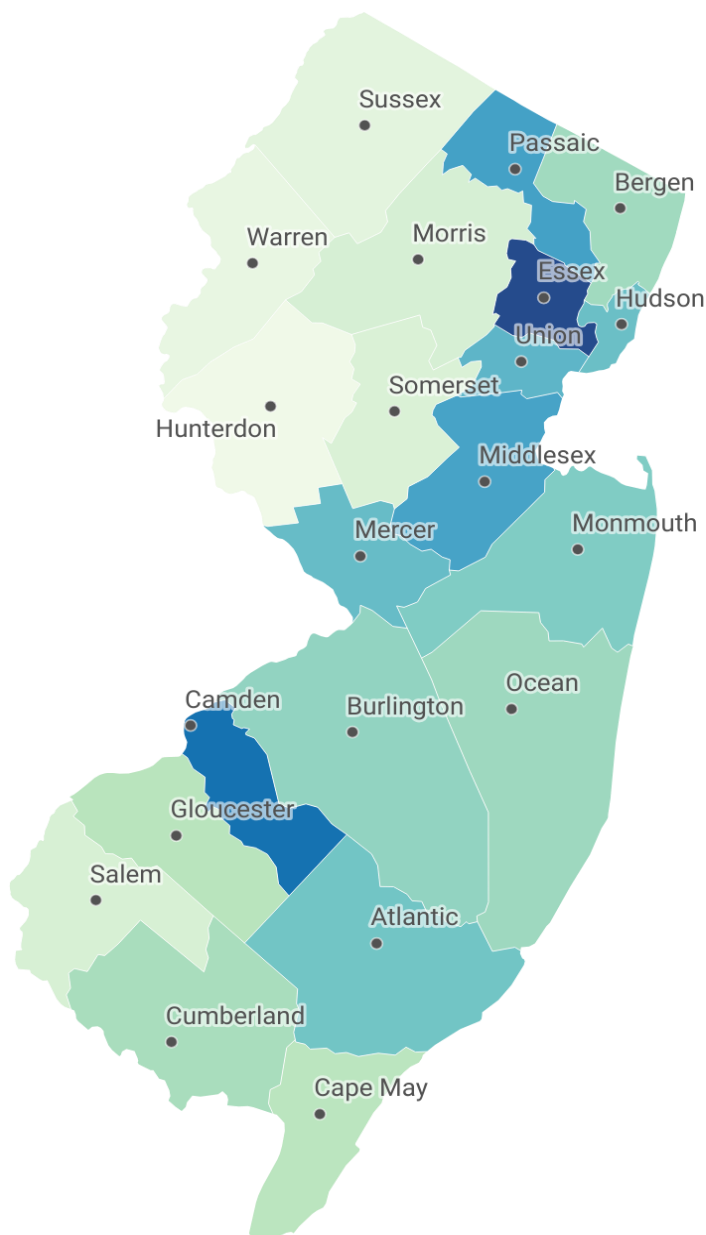
Figure 10. NERA Status by Gender: Female Releases

## County of Commitment

The majority of released IPs were committed from Essex County (N=1,326) and Camden County (N=1,056). When analyzing the counties of commitment by gender, male releases were primarily committed from Essex and Camden counties; female releases were predominantly committed from counties in the Central (Middlesex, N=50) and Southern (Camden, N=54) regions of the state.

## County of Commitment

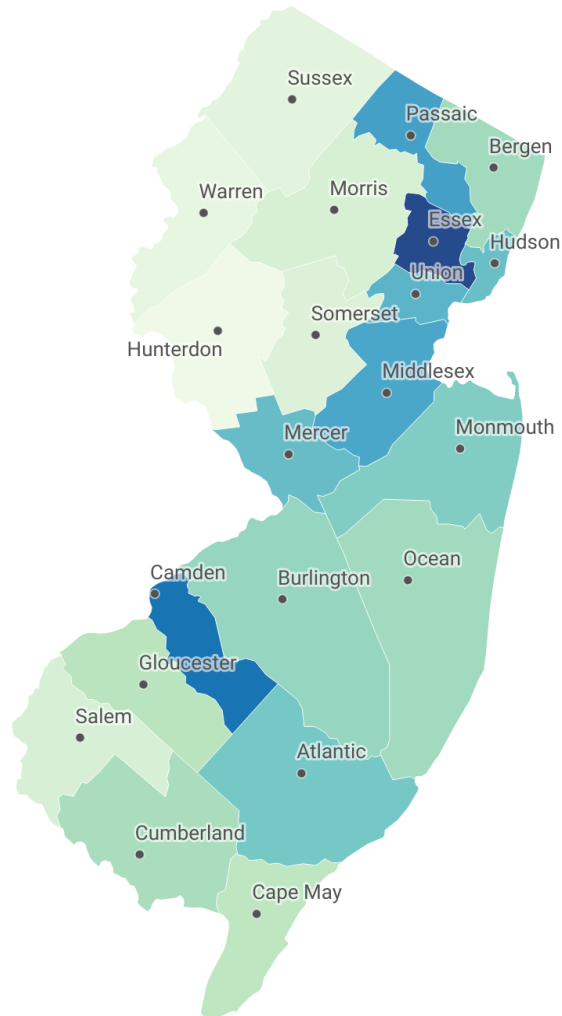
Total Releases



Map 1. County of Commitment: Total 2020 Cohort

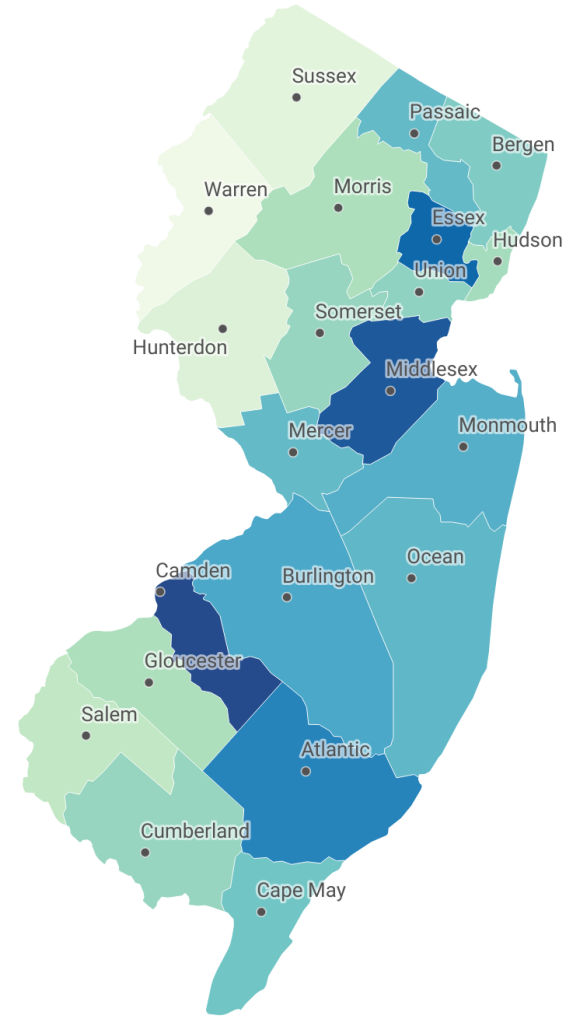
## County of Commitment

Male Releases



## County of Commitment

Female Releases



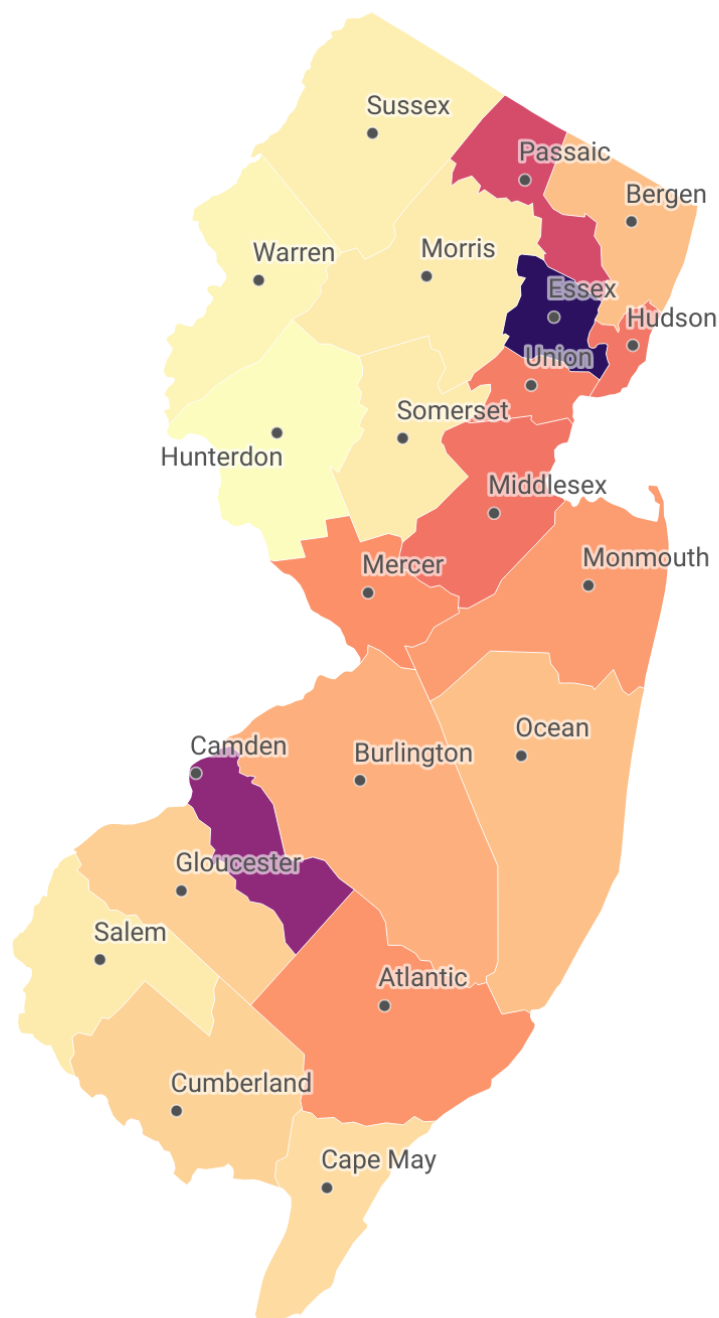
Map 2. County of Commitment: Male Releases

Map 3. County of Commitment: Female Releases

As noted previously, the majority of 2020 releases were admitted for violent offenses. Camden and Essex Counties comprised 30% of violent crime commitments. Additionally, Northeast Counties (Essex, Hudson, Passaic, Middlesex, and Union Counties) collectively accounted for 47% of all violent crime commitments.

## County of Commitment: Violent Offenses

Total Releases



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

## Mean Time Served

The mean time served in days and years for each gender is shown below. Males released in 2020 served approximately 3 years in prison and female releases served 2.2 years or 811 days in prison. Across all genders, the mean time served was 2.8 years.

Mean Time Served by Gender			
	Male	Female	Total
Mean time served (years)	2.9	2.2	2.8
Mean time served (days)	1070.8	811.3	1057.4

Table 2. Mean Time Served by Gender

## Prior Arrests and Convictions

Among the male releases, 68% had less than 10 prior arrests and 71% of females had less than 10 prior arrests. Male and female releases had the same percentage (2%) of 31 or more prior arrests. It is important to note that not all arrests will result in adjudicated convictions. When analyzing the total release cohort, the total mean number of prior arrests was 8.0, which coincides with the total mean number of prior arrests for males. For females, the total mean number of prior arrests was 7.0.

The majority of releases had less than 10 convictions (Males: 86%, Females: 85%, Total: 86%). When analyzing the total release cohort, the mean number of prior convictions was 5.0. Male releases had the same mean number of prior convictions (5.0) while female releases had a mean total of 4.0 prior convictions.

Prior Arrests by Gender			
Arrests	Male	Female	Total Releases
Less than 10	68%	71%	68%
10-20	25%	22%	25%
21-30	5%	4%	5%
31+	2%	2%	2%

Table 3. Prior Arrests by Gender

Prior Convictions by Gender			
Convictions	Male	Female	Total Releases
Less than 10	86%	85%	86%
10 - 20	12%	12%	12%
21 - 30	1%	1%	1%
31+	0%	1%	0%

Table 4. Prior Convictions by Gender





### Recidivism: IP Demographics

Of the 8,778 IPs released in 2020, 1,917 (22%) recidivated.

Among the 1,917 individuals who recidivated, 96% were male (N=1,849) while only 4% (N=68) were female. Thirty-six percent of individuals who recidivated were between the ages of 30-39 years. A higher proportion of female IPs between the ages of 30-39 (38%) recidivated compared to male IPs (36%).

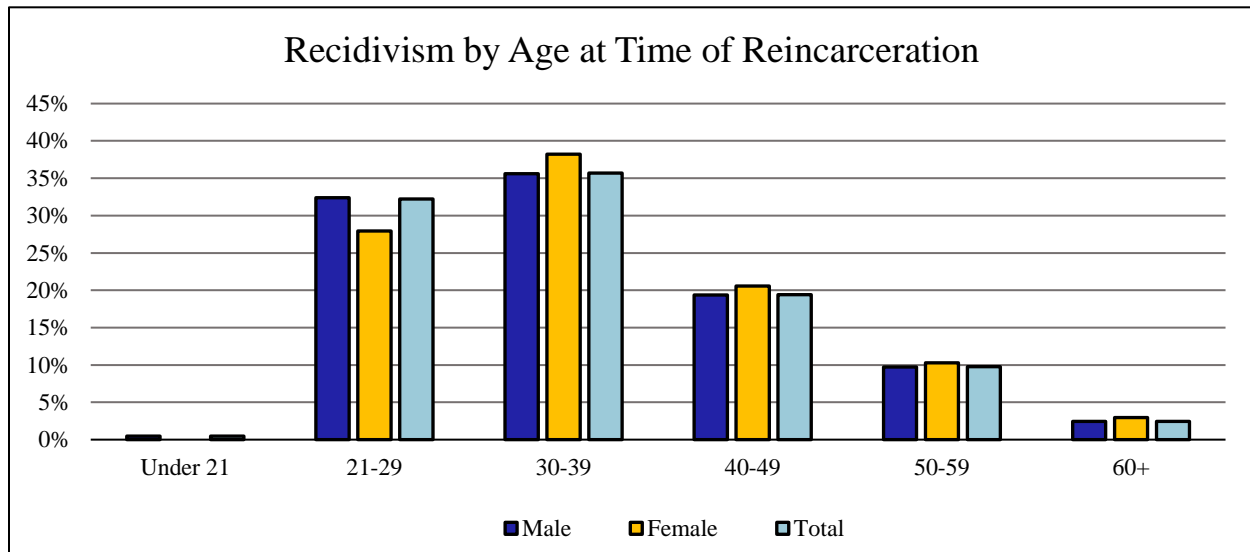


Figure 11. Recidivism by Age at Time of Reincarceration

IPs who served two or more years in DOC custody on the current offense for which they were released in 2020 recidivated at a greater percentage (48%) compared to IPs who served between 1 and 2 years (25%) and less than 1 year (27%) in DOC custody. When analyzing time served by gender, a larger proportion of female IPs who served less than one year recidivated (59%) compared to their male counterparts (26%).

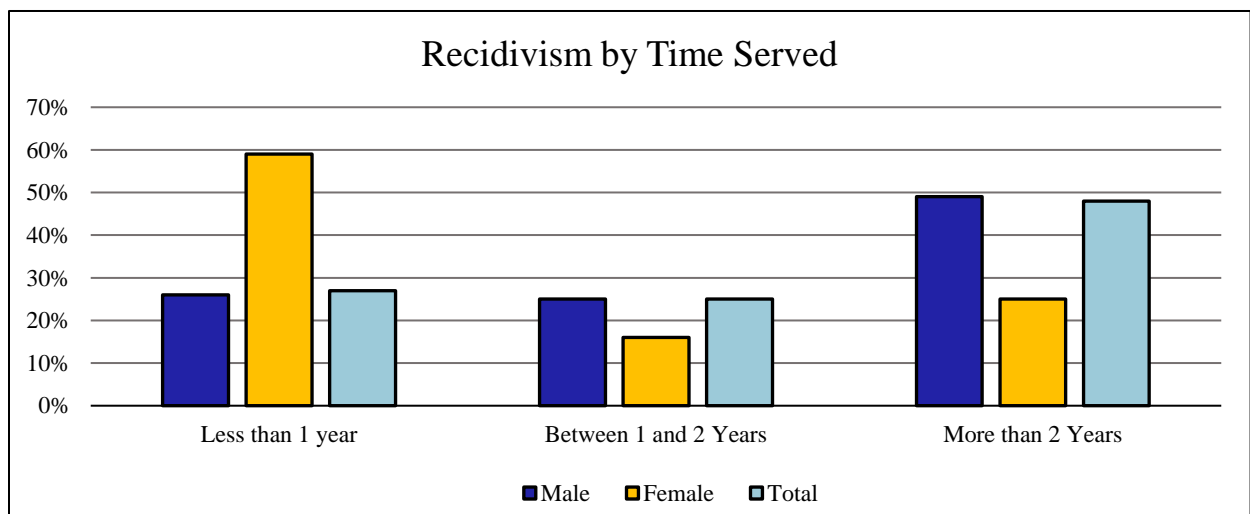


Figure 12. Recidivism by Time Served

Higher recidivism percentages were observed among Black/African American males than any other race. Black/African American males accounted for 67% of males who recidivated within the three-year follow-up period, while 29% were White.

The opposite was observed among females as the majority of females who recidivated following release were White (53%) compared to Black/African American females (47%).

Among the IPs who recidivated, the majority, 89%, self-identified as Non-Hispanic/Latino, while 11% self-identified as Hispanic/Latino.

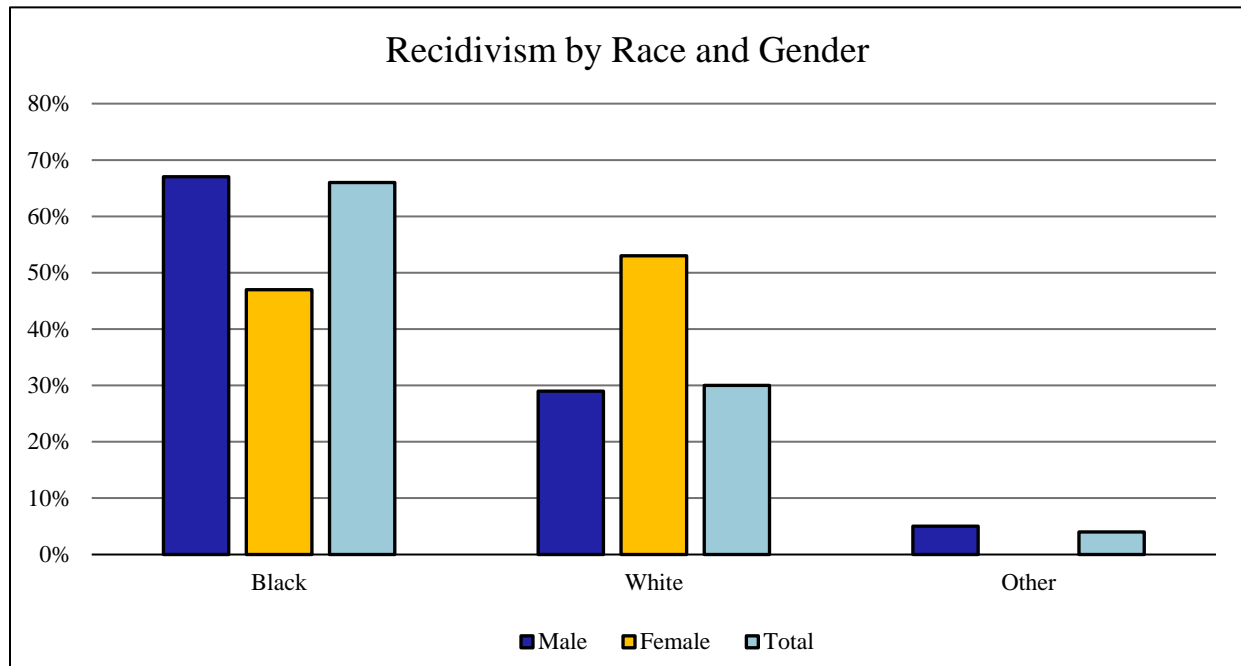


Figure 13. Recidivism by Race and Gender

Recidivism by Ethnicity and Gender		
Gender	Hispanic/Latino	Non-Hispanic/Latino
Male	11%	89%
Female	9%	91%
Total	11%	89%

Table 5. Recidivism by Ethnicity and Gender

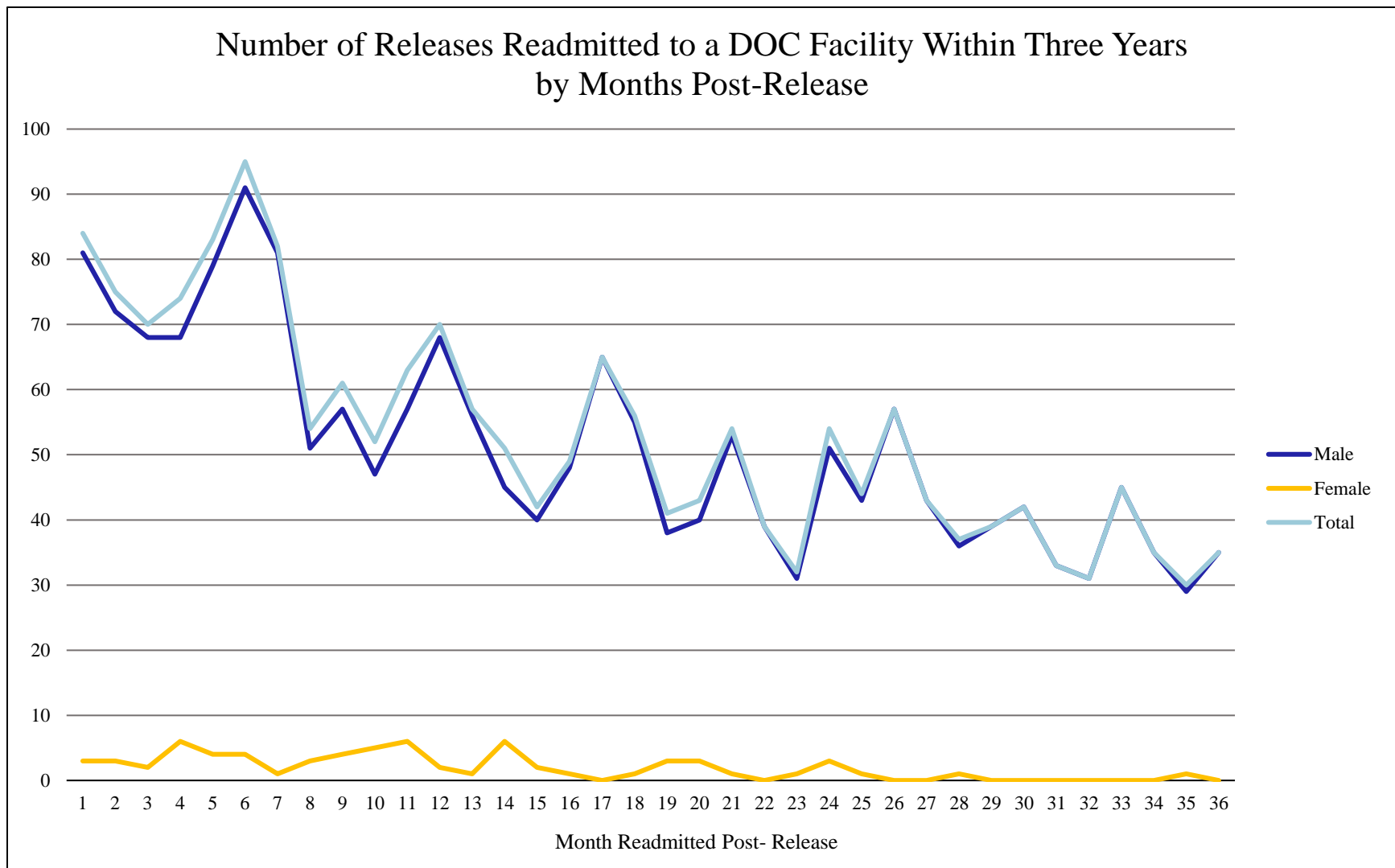


Figure 14. Number of Releases Readmitted to a DOC Facility Within Three Years by Months Post-Release

Among males who recidivated, 75% were readmitted to DOC custody due to a CSV, followed by 9% who were readmitted for a new commitment for a violent offense.

As for females who recidivated, an even higher proportion (96%) were readmitted for a CSV violation. The proportion of females who were readmitted for violent (1%), property (1%) and drug offenses (1%) were the same.

Recidivism by Offense and Gender			
Offense	Male (N=1,849)	Female (N =68)	Total (N=1,917)
<b>Violent</b>	9%	1%	8%
<b>Property</b>	3%	1%	3%
<b>Drugs</b>	4%	1%	4%
<b>Weapons</b>	7%	0%	7%
<b>Other</b>	2%	0%	2%
<b>CSV</b>	75%	96%	76 %

Table 6. Recidivism by Offense and Gender

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

Among all females who recidivated, approximately 37% served a MMT prior to release while 63% of females who recidivated did not serve a MMT prior to release. The opposite was observed for males where the majority of males who recidivated (51%) served a MMT whereas 49% of males recidivated but did not serve a MMT prior to release.

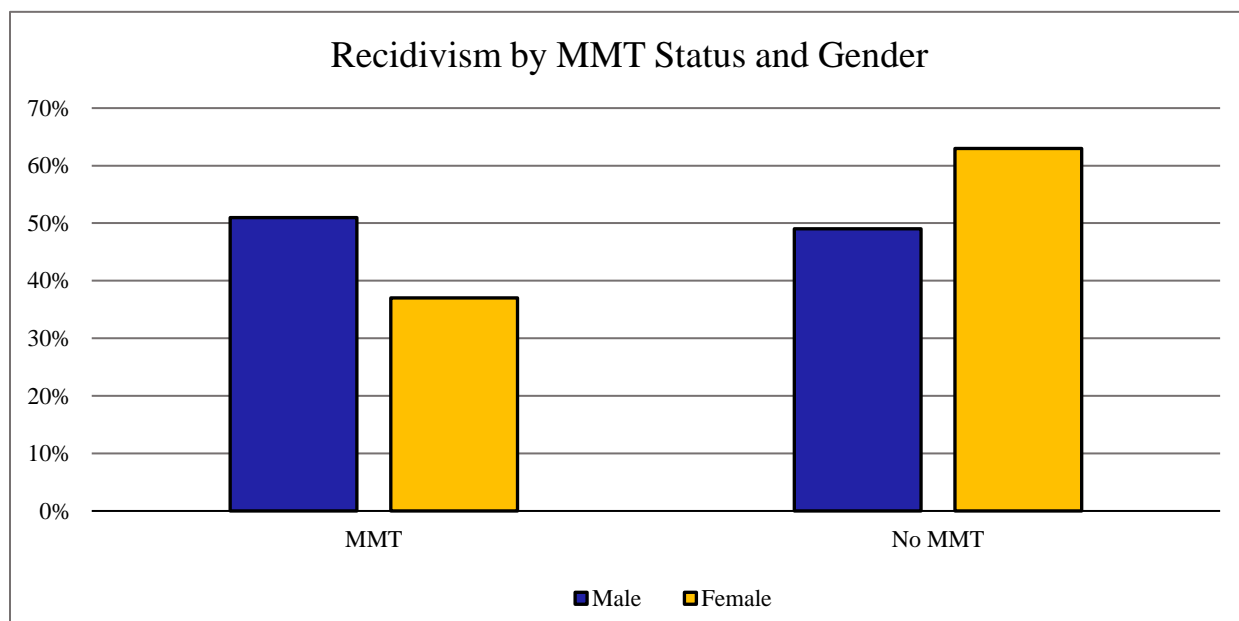


Figure 15. Recidivism by MMT Status and Gender

Recidivism outcomes based on a NERA sentence were similar across both genders. IPs who did not serve a NERA sentence had higher percentages of recidivism than IPs who served a mandatory term under NERA. Thirty-four percent of males who served a NERA sentence prior to release recidivated within three-years post release compared to 66% of males who did not serve a NERA sentence prior to release. For females, only 29% of IPs who served a NERA sentence recidivated within three-years post-release compared to 71% of females who did not serve a NERA sentence.

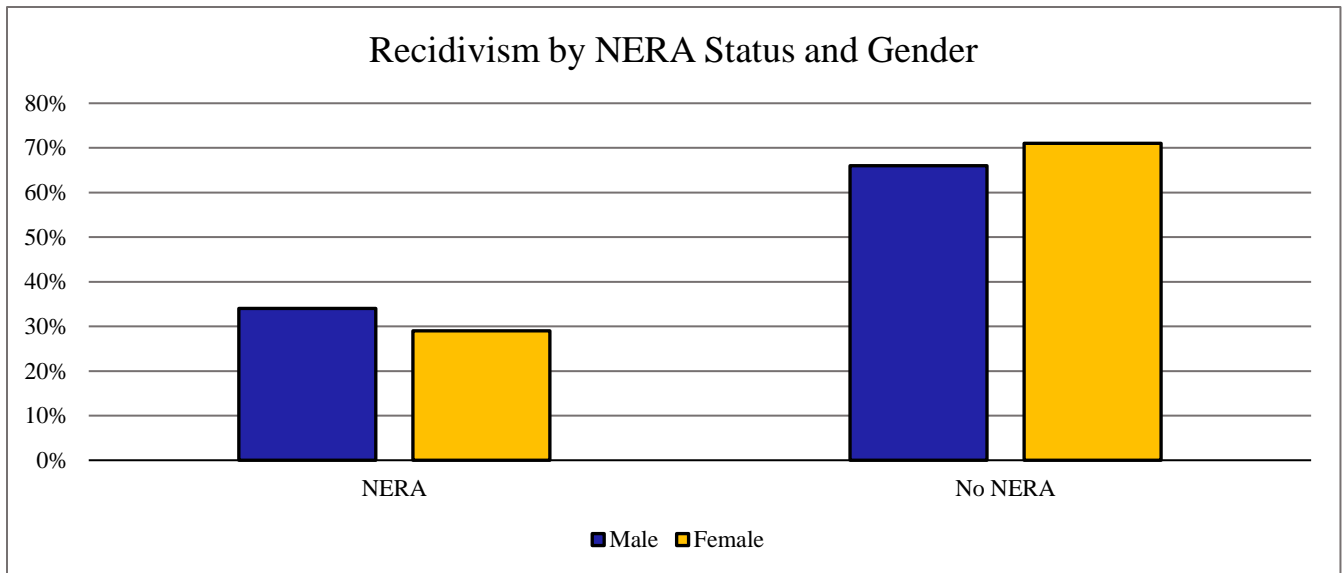


Figure 16. Recidivism by NERA Status and Gender

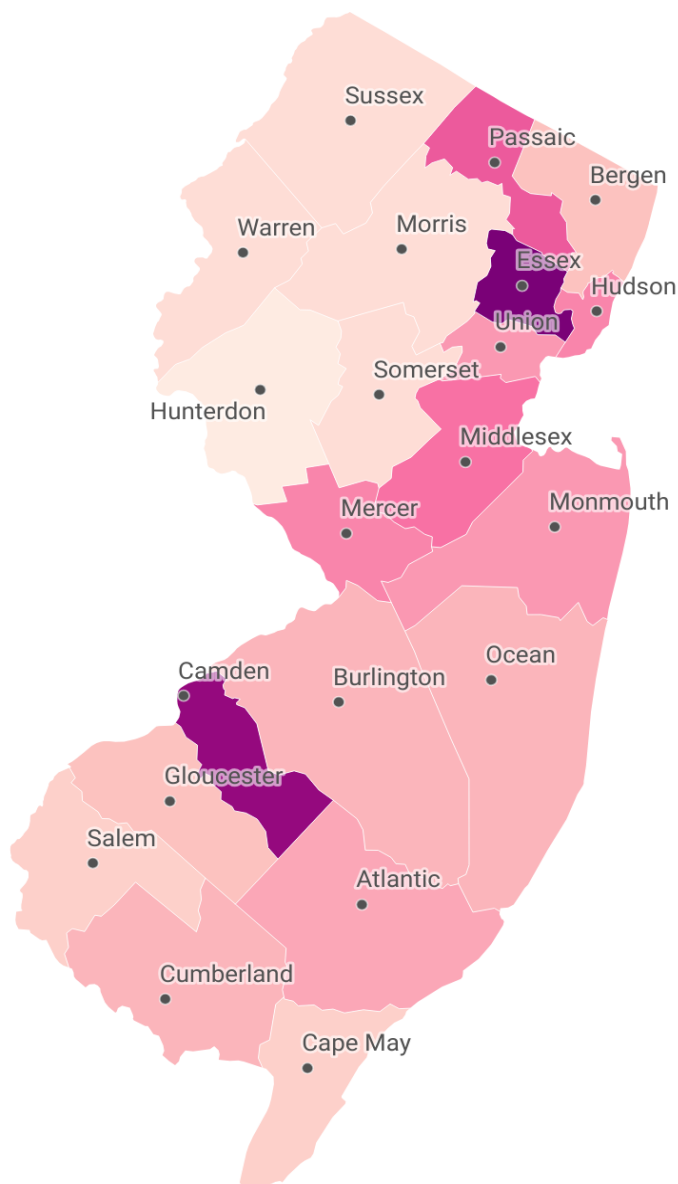


## Recidivism by County of Commitment

Essex County (14%) and Camden County (13%) had the highest percentage of IPs who were readmitted to a DOC facility following their 2020 release. Eighty-four percent of IPs readmitted from Essex County were readmitted following a technical parole violation (TPV) while 16% of IPs readmitted from Essex County returned for a new commitment. As depicted in the map below, the majority of IPs returned to a DOC facility were committed from a Northeast County.

## Recidivism by County of Commitment

Percent 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. The proportion of individuals being readmitted to a DOC facility within the three-year follow-up period has been steadily declining within the last ten years. This downward trajectory is evidenced by a 37% decrease in the percentage of individuals who recidivated annually between 2010 and 2020. This period also witnessed a concurrent decline in the three-year reoffending events including rearrests and reconviction.

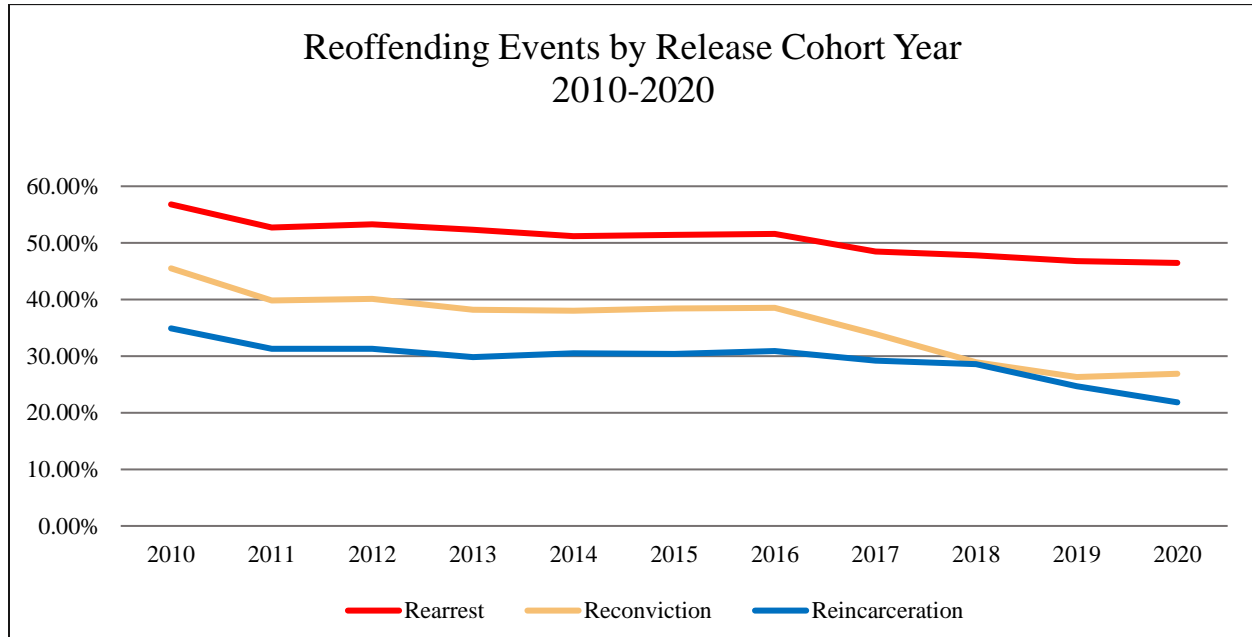


Figure 17. Reoffending Events by Release Cohort Year 2010-2020

Although overall reoffending events have shown a declining trend within the past 10 years, further analysis of the data by gender and all three reoffending measures reveals further insights. In the 2010 release cohort, 37% of female releases were rearrested but by 2020, this percentage had increased by 3% (2010: 37% vs. 2020: 38%). During the same time period a 4% decline in rearrests of male IPs was observed (2010: 49% vs. 2020: 47%).

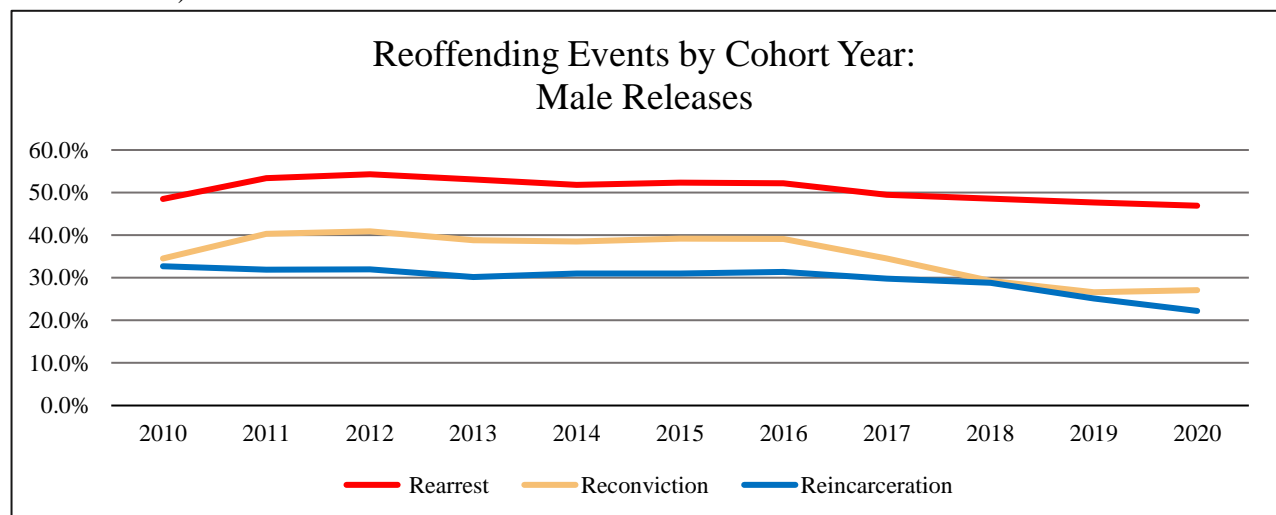


Figure 18. Reoffending Events by Cohort Year: Male Releases

The data reveal a substantial 23% decrease in reconvictions and a 33% decrease reincarcerations for male releases over the last 10 cohort years. A similar positive trend was observed for female releases, with a 15% reduction in reconvictions and a 35% decline in reincarcerations when comparing cohort year 2010.

Temporary pauses in court hearings due to the COVID-19 pandemic may have resulted in the observed decreases in reconvictions.

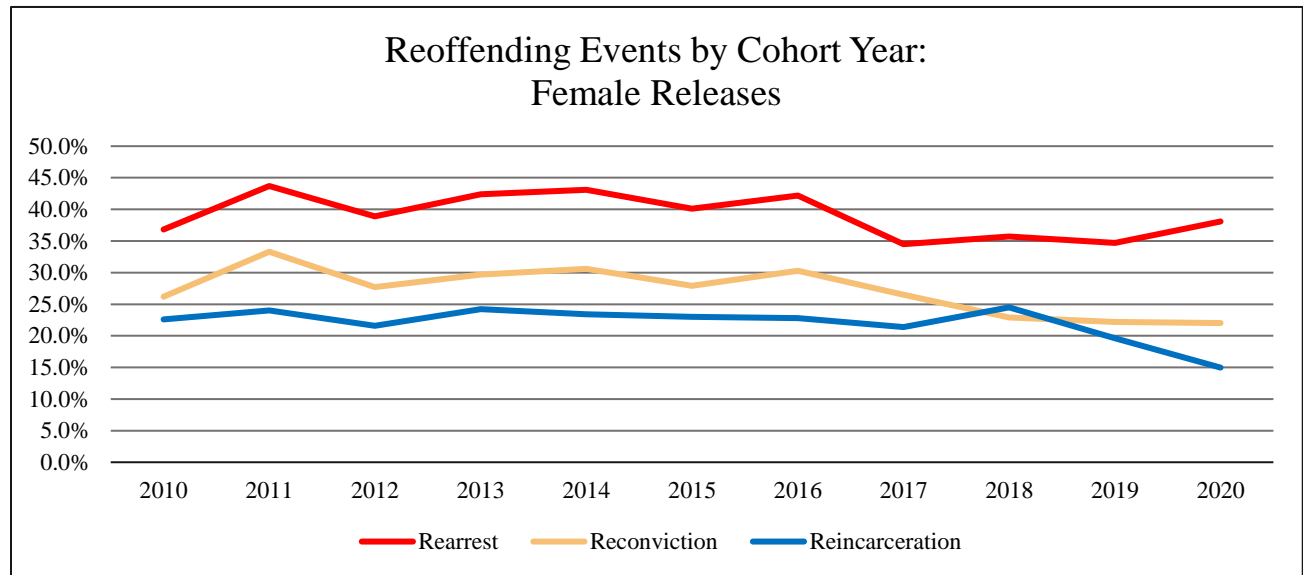


Figure 19. Reoffending Events by Cohort Year: Female Releases

### **Recidivism Trends**

Between cohort years 2013 and 2020, there was a 27% decrease in male recidivism and a 38% decrease in female recidivism. Additionally, when comparing males who recidivated in release cohort year 2020 (22%) to males who recidivated in release cohort year 2019 (25%), a 12% decrease in recidivism was observed while females experienced a 25% decrease in recidivism when comparing cohort year 2019 (20%) to cohort year 2020 (15%). This downward trajectory represents the lowest recidivism percentage observed over the past seven cohort years.

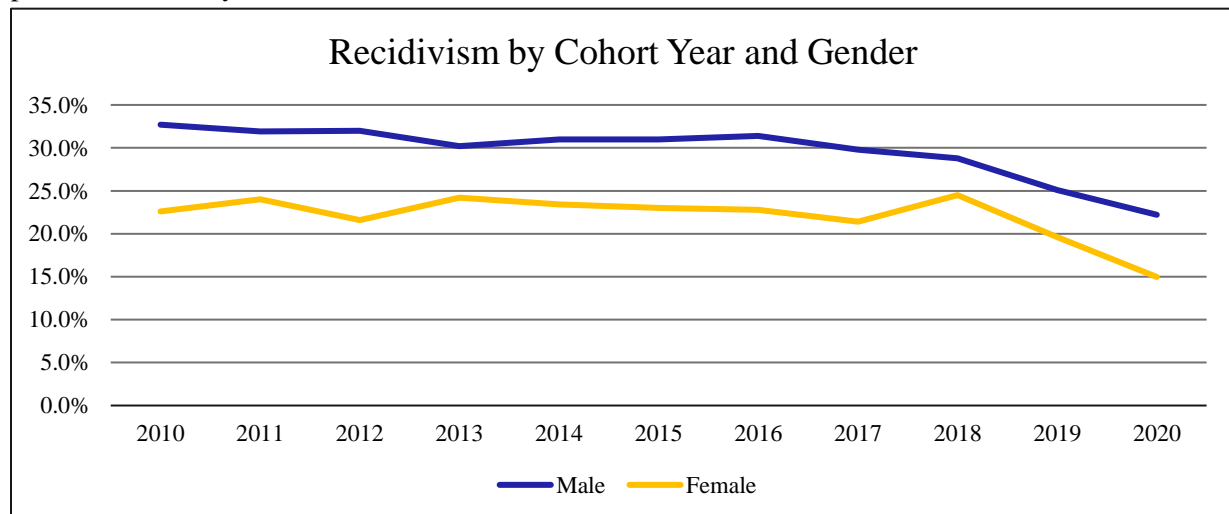


Figure 20. Recidivism by Cohort Year and Gender

Sixty-five percent of male IPs who returned for a CSV identified as Black/African American and 31% identified as White. The average age of males who returned for a CSV was 36 years old. Furthermore, the majority of males who returned for a CSV served more than 2 years (50%) in a DOC facility prior to release, 25% served less than 1 year, and 25% served between 1 and 2 years prior to release.

Among female IPs who returned for a CSV, 48% identified as Black/African American and 52% identified as White. The average age of a female IP who returned for a CSV was 37 years old. The majority of females (57%) served less than 1 year in a DOC facility prior to release, 17% served between 1-2 years, and 26% served more than 2 years prior to release.

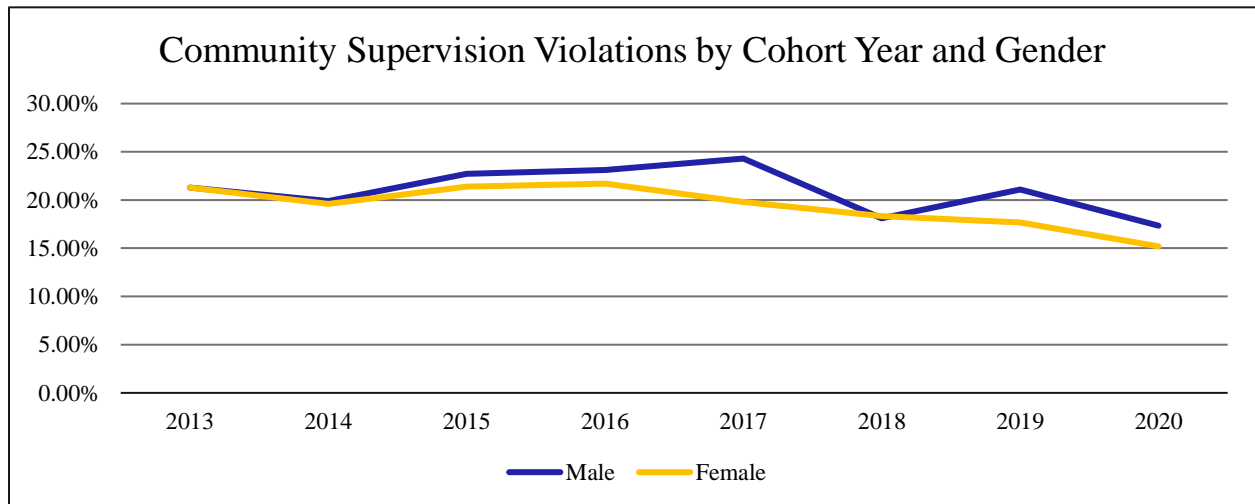


Figure 21. Community Supervision Violations by Cohort Year and Gender

Sixty-five percent of male IPs who returned for a TPV identified as Black/African American and 30% identified as White. The average age for males who returned for a TPV was 36 years old. A greater proportion of males who returned for a TPV served more than 2 years prior to release (50%) followed by males who served between 1-2 years (25%) and less than 1 year (25%).

Female IPs who returned for a TPV were mostly White (52%). The average age among females who returned for a TPV was 36 years old. Contrary to males who returned for a TPV, the majority of females who returned for a TPV served less than 1 year prior to release (58%) followed by more than 2 years (25%) and between 1-2 years (17%).

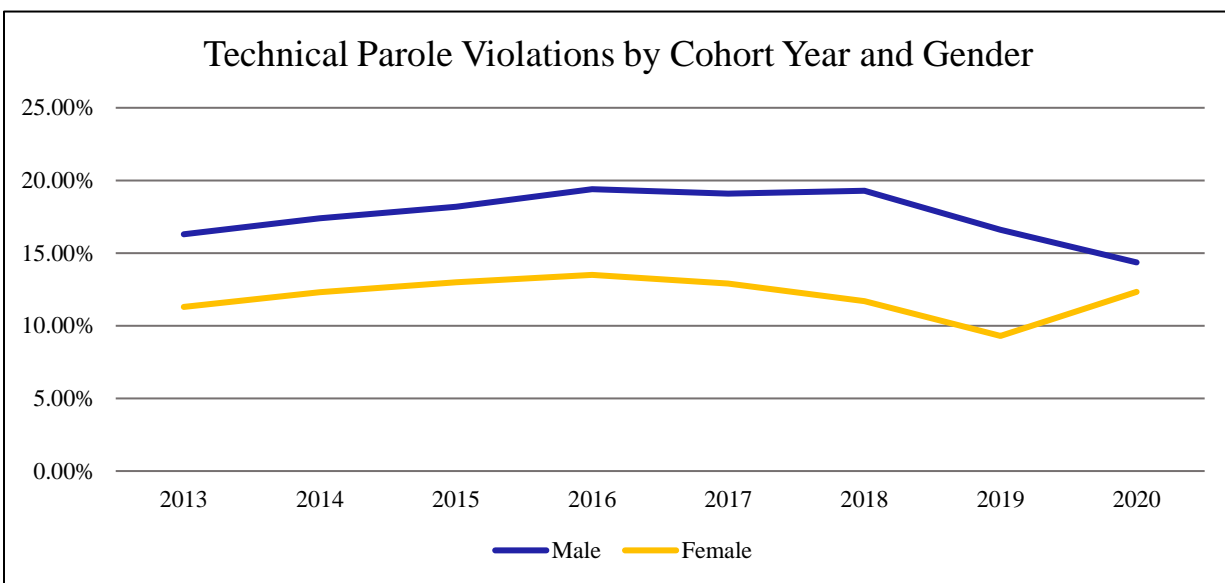


Figure 22. Technical Parole Violations by Cohort Year and Gender

Males who recidivated and were readmitted to a DOC facility for a new commitment were predominately Black/African American (71%). The average age of IPs who were readmitted on a new commitment was 36 years old. For new commitments, most males who returned served more than 2 years prior to release (45%) followed by less than 1 year (30%) and between 1-2 years (25%).

Females who recidivated and were readmitted for a new commitment (N=3) were mostly White (67%). All females who returned for a new commitment served less than 1 year at a DOC facility prior to release.



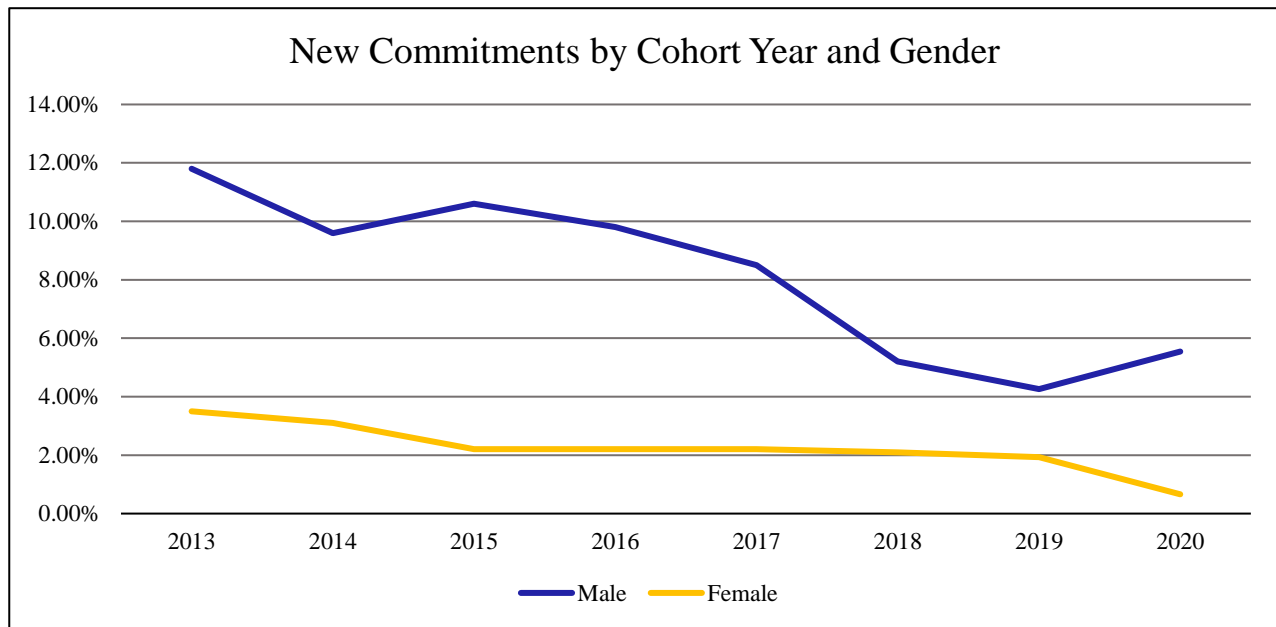


Figure 23. New Commitments by Cohort Year and Gender

### Time Until Reincarceration

Unlike prior reports where recidivism events post-release typically peaked within the first 4 months of follow-up, reincarceration events peaked in the 2020 cohort year within the first 6 months of follow-up. Forty-five percent (45%) of IPs were readmitted to a DOC facility within the first year of 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%

Table 7. Recidivism by Cohort Year and Timeframe

## **Technical Parole Violations**

Among IPs who recidivated, 74% were readmitted for a Technical Parole Violation (TPV). Comparatively, in the 2019 release cohort, 67% of IPs who recidivated were readmitted for a TPV. This data reveals an upward trend, indicating that since 2010, the recidivism percentages for TPVs have been steadily increasing. However, it should be noted that the outcomes of the 2020 release cohort, which were examined from the period of January 1, 2020 thru December 31, 2023, 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>1</sup> Whereas, the SPB was operational and those parolees who seriously and/or persistently violated parole may have been returned to custody for a TPV. Furthermore, it is noted that a technical parole violation may include violations of a criminal nature that have not yet been adjudicated.

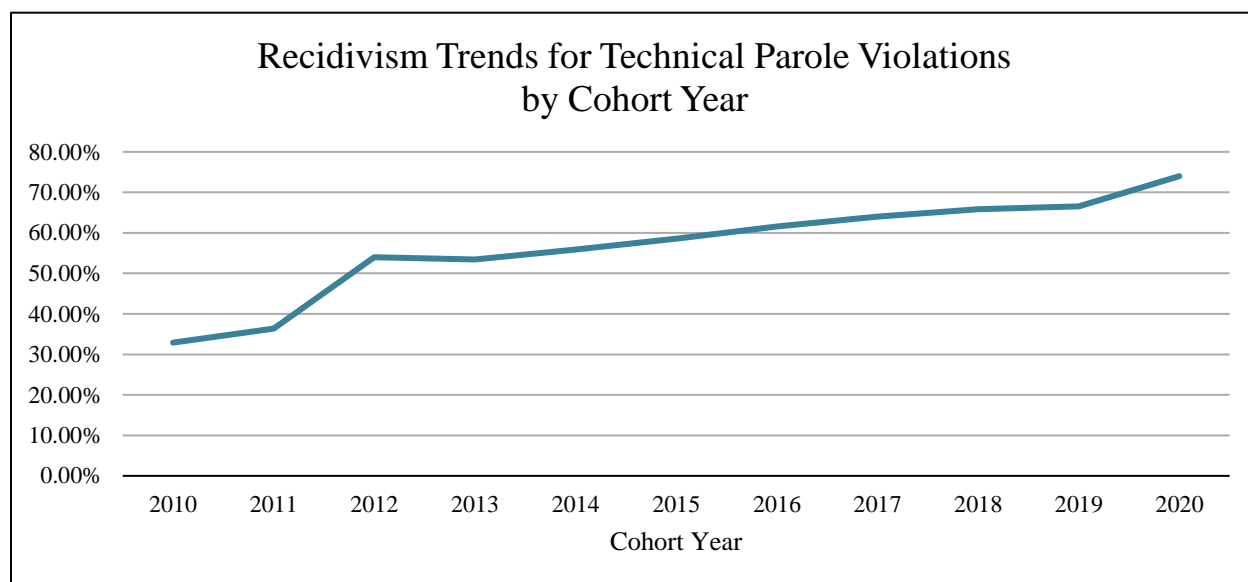


Figure 24. Recidivism Trends for Technical Parole Violations by Cohort Year

<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%20%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 2020, DOC contracted with 13 Residential Community Reintegration Program (RCRP) facilities to serve IPs transitioning from DOC custody to community corrections before being released in the community. RCRPs serve both male and female IPs. One of the contracted RCRPs was an assessment center, four were RCRPs with a work release program, and the remaining eight RCRPs utilized 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

Thirty-six percent of all releases attended a RCRP and 24% of all releases completed a RCRP. Nineteen percent of the entire release cohort completed a drug treatment RCRP and 4% completed a work release RCRP. Approximately 3% of releases in the cohort completed an assessment center RCRP.

IPs who participated in and completed any RCRP prior to release to the community experienced lower percentages of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration than IPs 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 IPs 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.

The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages of male releases who completed any RCRP prior to release were 45%, 24% and 18%, respectively. For female releases who completed any RCRP prior to release, the rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages were 41%, 19% and 14% (Figure 26).

#### RCRP Completers vs. Non-Completers

**Rearrest** ↓ 4%  
**Reconviction** ↓ 17%  
**Reincarceration** ↓ 25%

Reoffending Events by RCRP Program Type			
	Rearrest	Reconviction	Reincarceration
<b>Complete Any RCRP</b>	45%	24%	18%
<b>Complete Work Release RCRP</b>	35%	14%	11%
<b>Complete Drug Treatment RCRP</b>	39%	18%	14%
<b>Complete Assessment Center RCRP</b>	40%	23%	19%

Table 9. Reoffending Events by RCRP Program Type

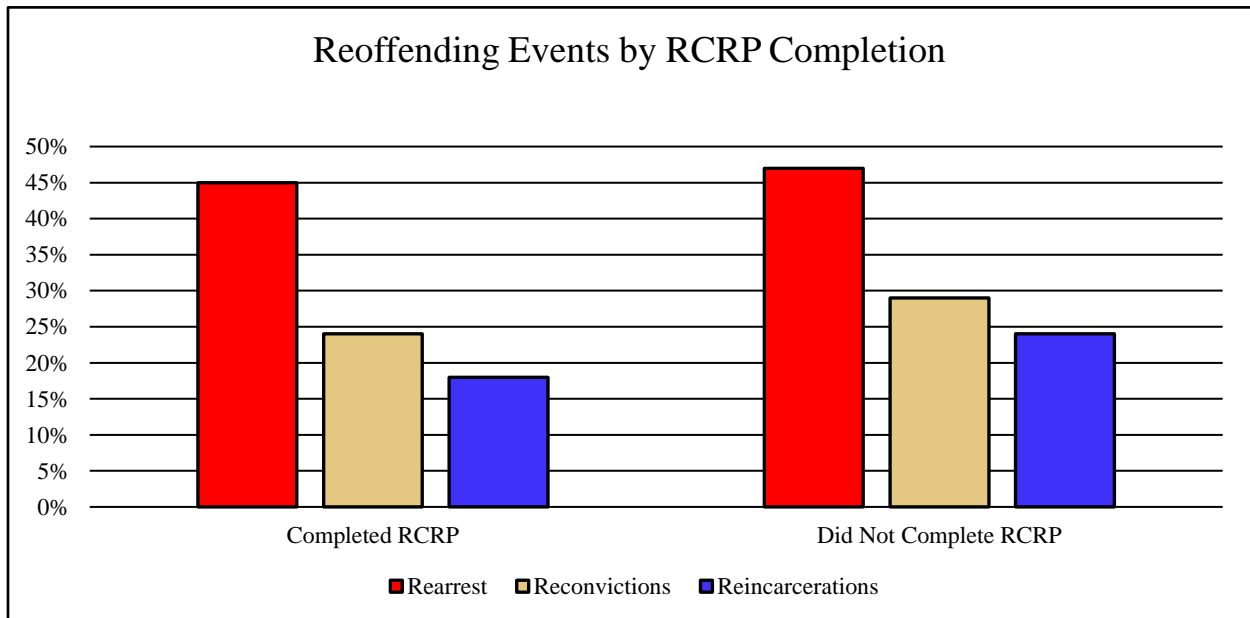


Figure 25. Reoffending Events by RCRP Completion

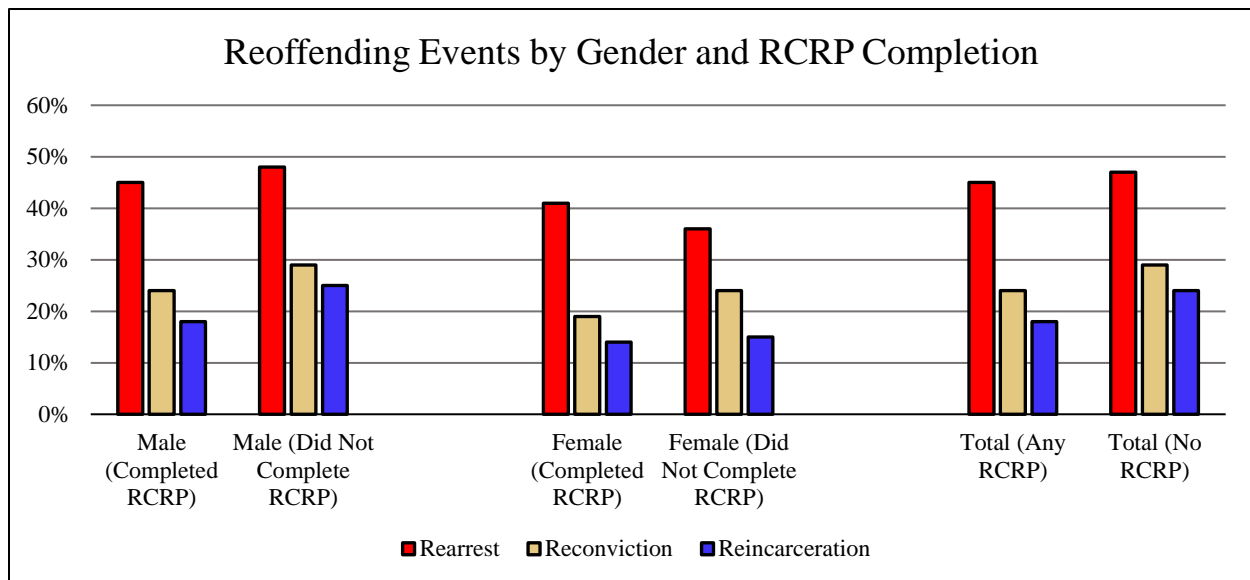


Figure 26. Reoffending Events by Gender and RCRP Completion

The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages of male releases who participated in a work release RCRP prior to release were 35%, 14% and 11%. Of the female releases who were enrolled in a work release RCRP (N=2), 50% were rearrested. Among all releases who participated in a work release RCRP, 35% were rearrested, 14% were reconvicted and 11% were reincarcerated within three-years of release.

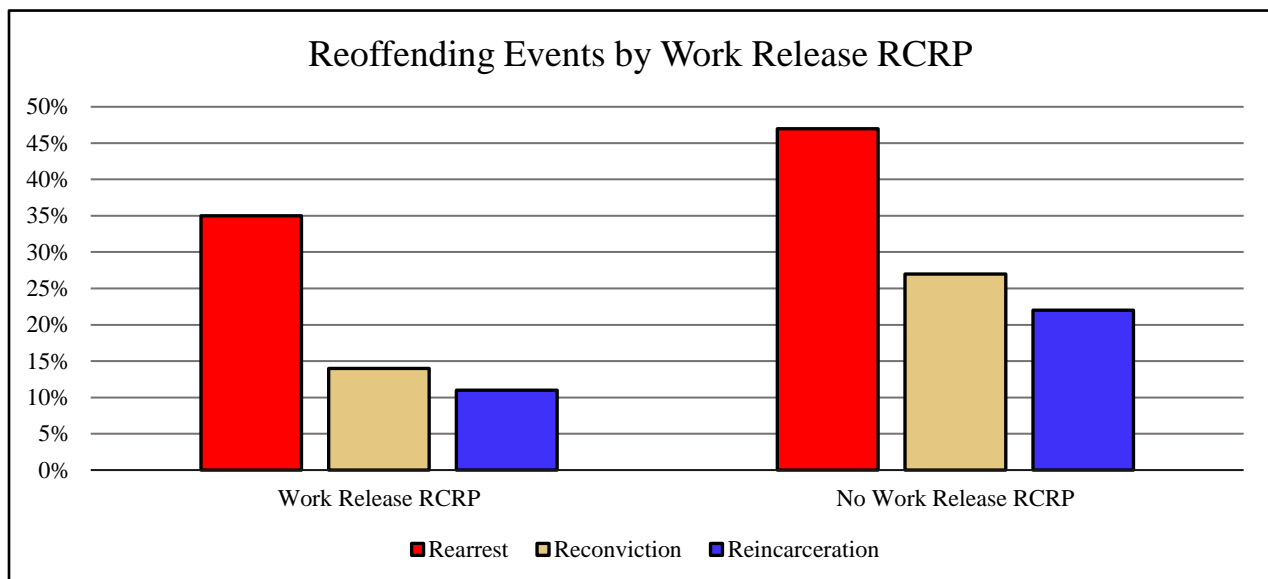


Figure 27. Reoffending Events by Work Release RCRP

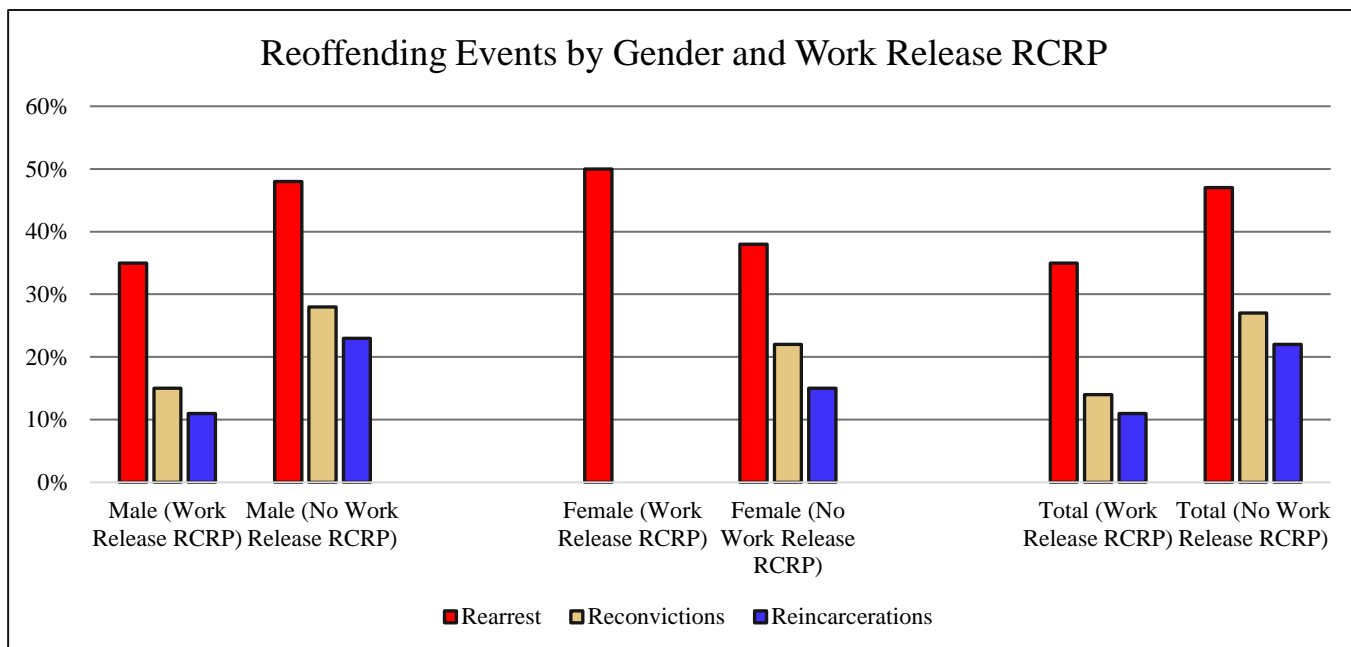


Figure 28. Reoffending Events by Gender and Work Release RCRP

Among all releases who participated in a drug treatment RCRP, 39% were rearrested, 18% were reconvicted and 14% were reincarcerated within three-years of release. The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages of male releases who participated in a drug treatment RCRP prior to released were 39%, 18% and 14%. For female releases who participated in a drug treatment RCRP, 38% were rearrested, 14% were reconvicted and 15% were reincarcerated within three-years of release.

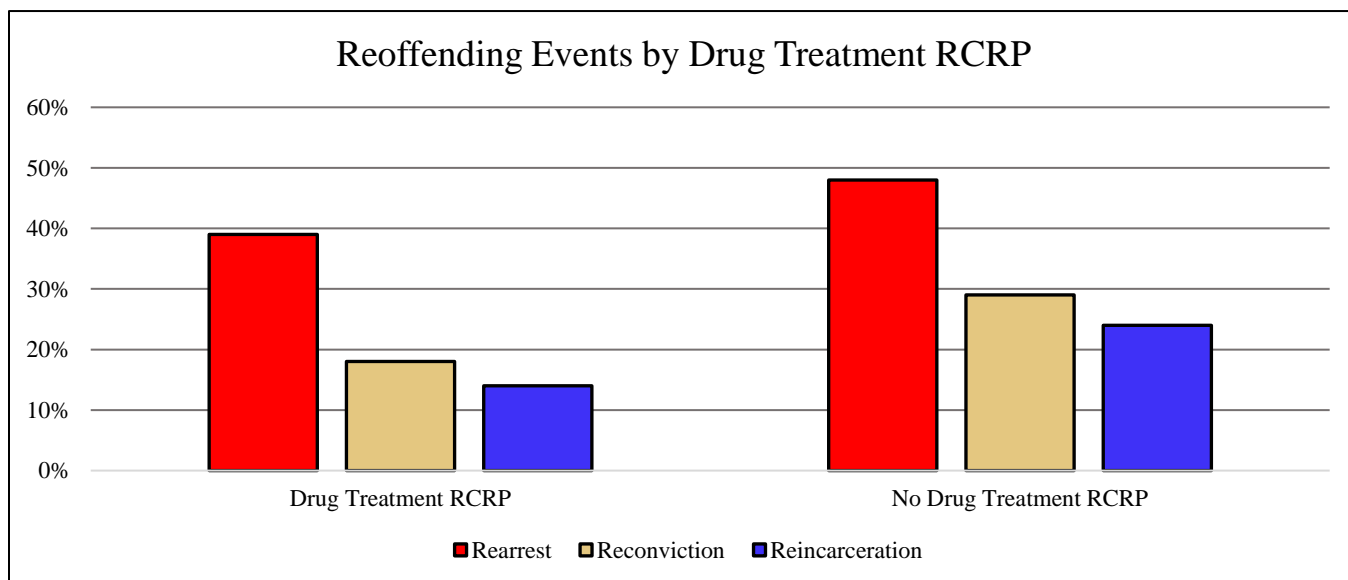


Figure 29. Reoffending Events by Drug Treatment RCRP

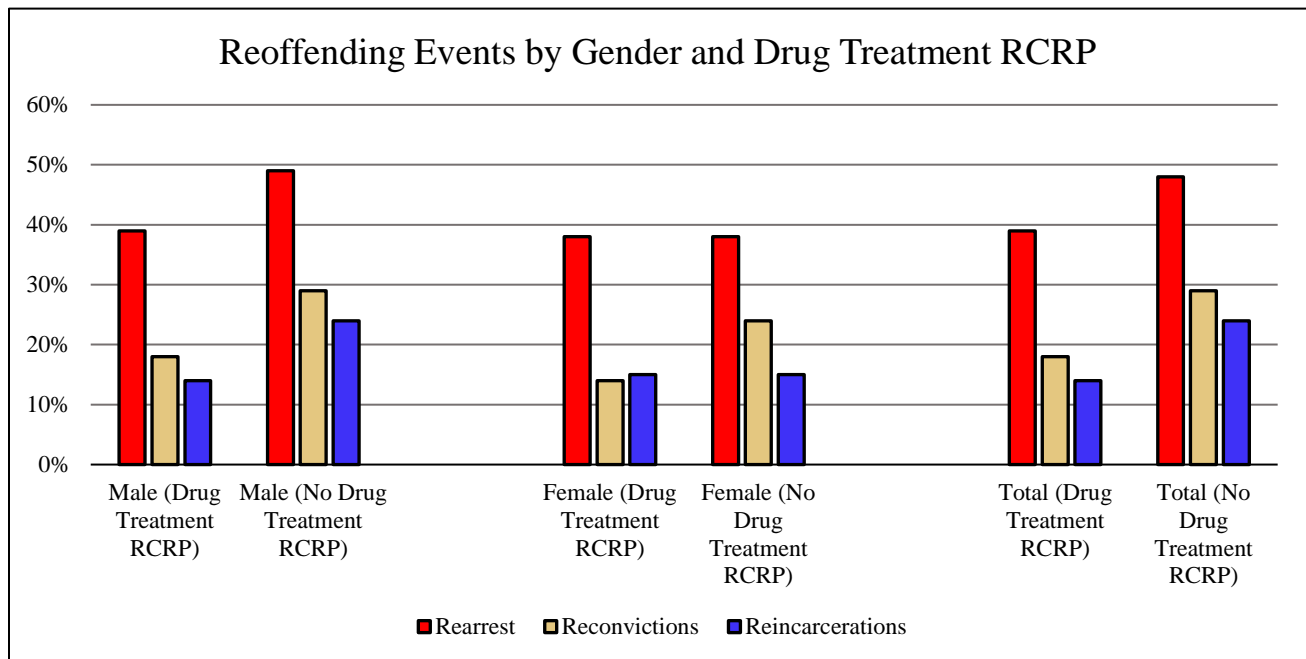


Figure 30. Reoffending Events by Gender and Drug Treatment RCRP

Reoffending events for releases from an assessment center RCRP were lower than releases who were not in an assessment center RCRP. For releases in an assessment center RCRP, the rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages were 40%, 23%, and 19%, respectively. For releases who were not in an assessment center RCRP, the rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages were 47%, 27%, and 22% within three-years of release.

The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages of male releases from an assessment center RCRP were 38%, 22% and 19%. Male releases from an assessment center RCRP had lower percentages of all three reoffending events than male IPs who were not in an assessment center RCRP (rearrest: 47%, reconviction: 27%, reincarceration: 22%) within three-years of release. Among female releases from an assessment center RCRP, 50% were rearrested, 28% were reconvicted and 15% were reincarcerated within three-years of release. Female IPs who were in an assessment center RCRP had higher percentages of rearrest (50% vs. 37%), reconviction (28% vs. 21%) and similar reincarceration percentages (15% vs. 15%) to females who were not in an assessment center RCRP.

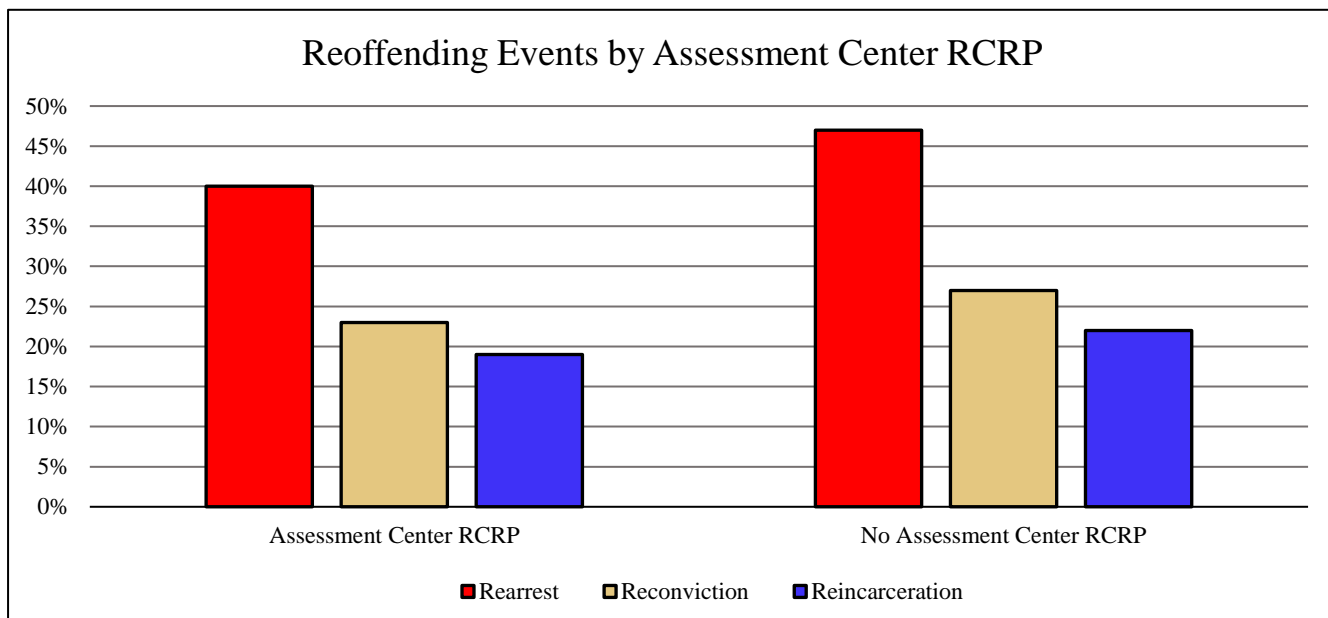


Figure 31. Reoffending Events by Assessment Center RCRP

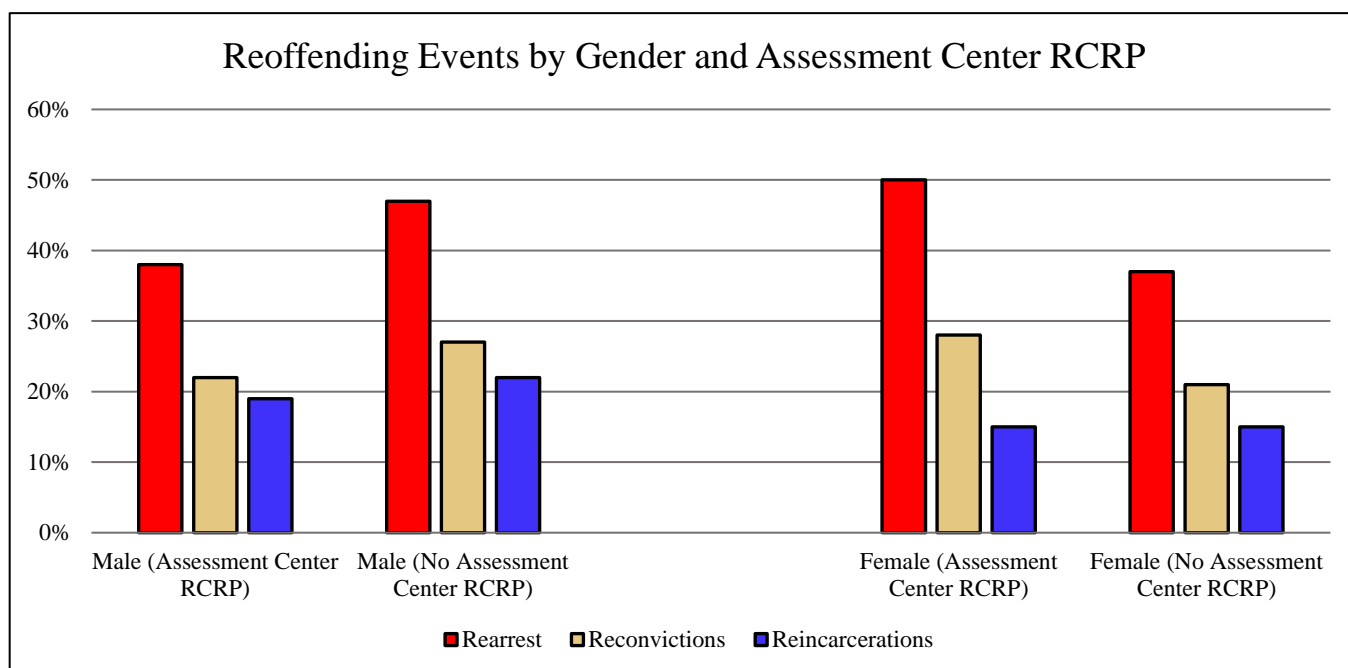


Figure 32. Reoffending Events by Gender and Assessment Center RCRP



## 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>

IPs who participated in mandatory education (N=570) were predominately Black/African American, male, and serving a sentence for a violent offense. The average age was 34 years old and the majority of IPs had a prior criminal history and nearly one prior DOC admission. These IPs served an average of 5 years.

During their stay of incarceration, 570 IPs who participated in mandatory education programming took the HSE test. Of these, 477 passed and 93 failed, for a pass percentage of 84% and a fail percentage of 16%.

Mandatory Education Demographics: Race/Ethnicity and Gender		
	N	Percentage
<b>Race</b>		
White	142	25
Black/African American	398	70
Other	30	5
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Hispanic/Latino	83	15
Non-Hispanic/Latino	487	85
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	543	95
Female	27	5

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

Mandatory Education Demographics: Criminal History	Mean	Median	Range
Age at Release (years)	34	32	21 - 67
Number of Prior Arrests	6	5	0 - 34
Number of Prior Convictions	3	2	0 - 27
Number of Prior Incarcerations	0.8	0	0 - 10
Time Served (days)	2,117.4	1,178	216 – 1,2945

Table 11. Mandatory Education Demographics: Criminal History

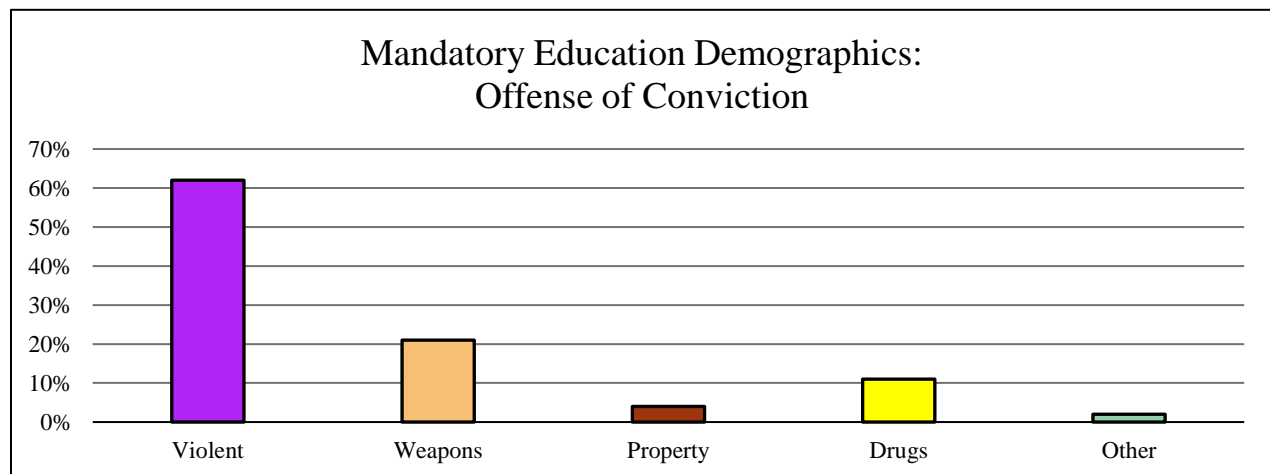


Figure 33. Mandatory Education Demographics: Offense of Conviction

<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 43%, 20% and 26%, respectively.

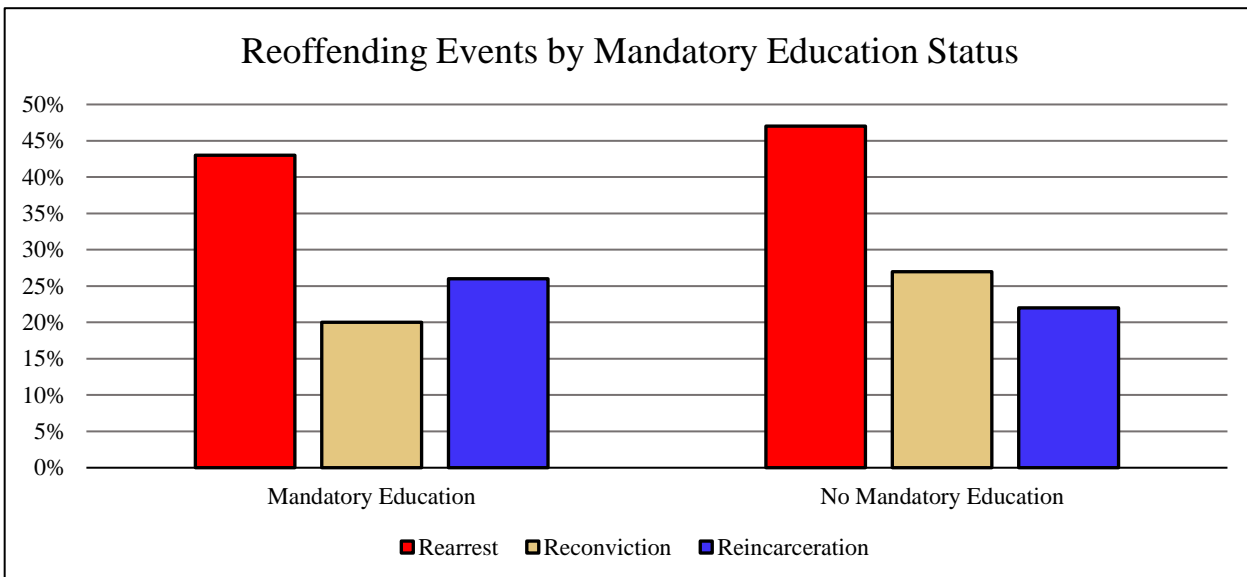


Figure 34. Reoffending Events by Mandatory Education Status

Male releases who did not participate in mandatory education had higher percentages of rearrest (47% vs. 43%), and reconvictions (28% vs. 20%) than males who participated in mandatory education. Male releases who participated in mandatory education had higher percentages of reincarceration (26% vs. 22%) than male releases who did not participate in mandatory education.

Female releases who did not participate in mandatory education had lower percentages of rearrests (38% vs. 41%), reconvictions (22% vs. 26%), and reincarcerations (14% vs. 26%) than the proportion of female releases who participated in mandatory education.

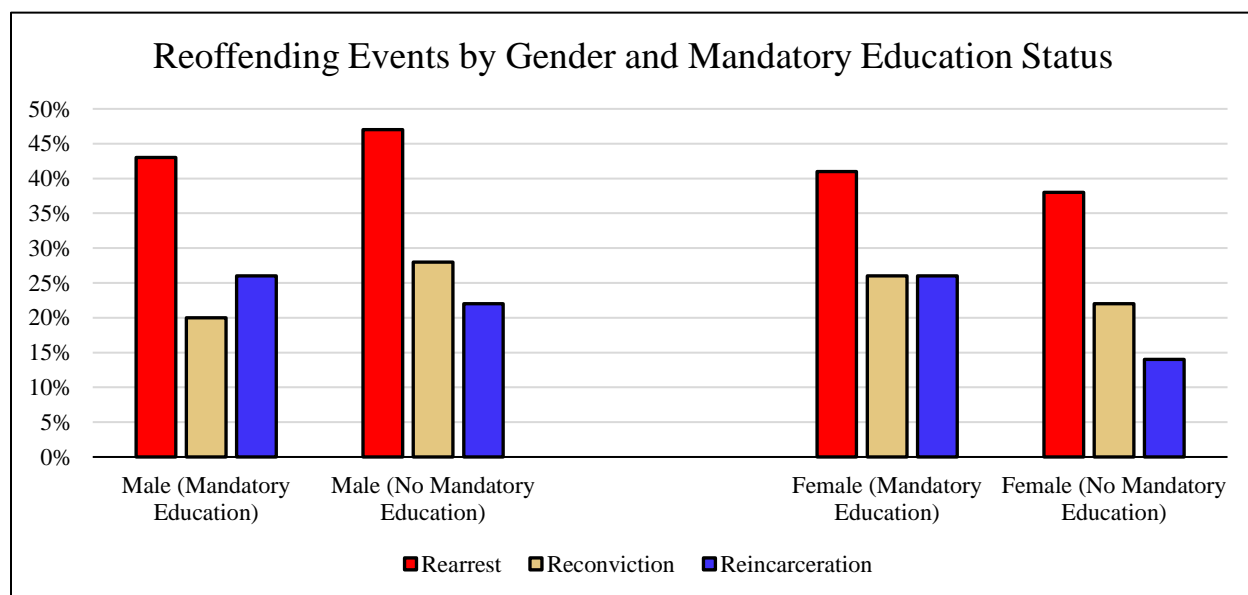


Figure 35. Reoffending Events by Gender and Mandatory Education Status

## 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 2020 releases, 2,704 IPs (31%) 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.

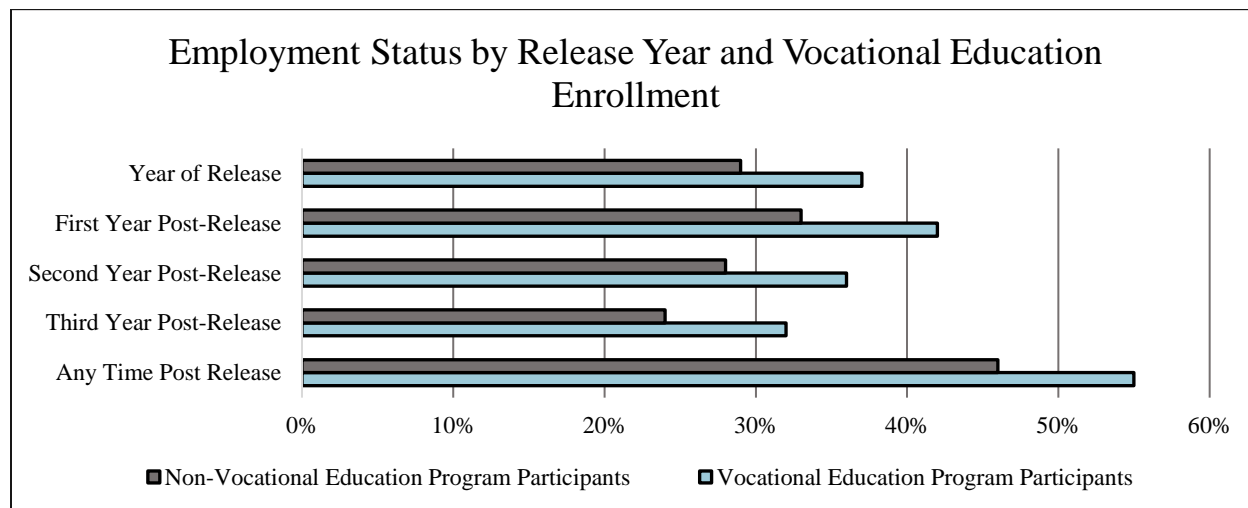


Figure 36. Employment Status by Release Year and Vocational Education Enrollment

Vocational education participants had rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages of 43%, 23% and 21%. Additionally, nearly 75% of vocational education participants were readmitted for a CSV and 24% were readmitted for a new commitment.

Across both genders, releases who did not participate in vocational education had higher percentages of rearrest, reconvictions and reincarcerations.

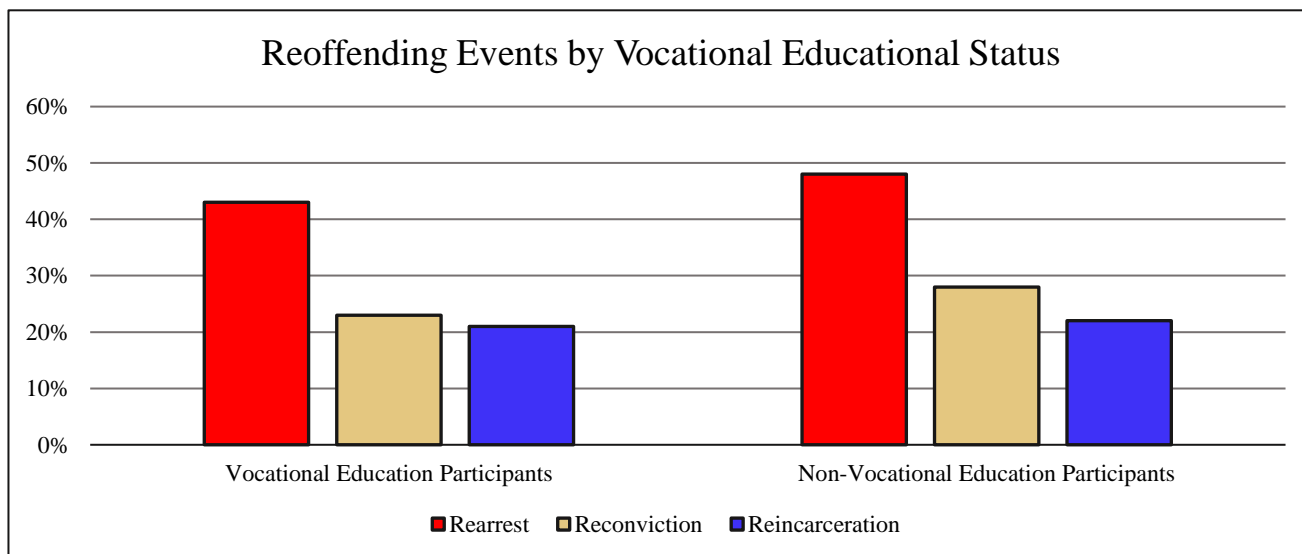


Figure 37. Reoffending Events by Vocational Education Status

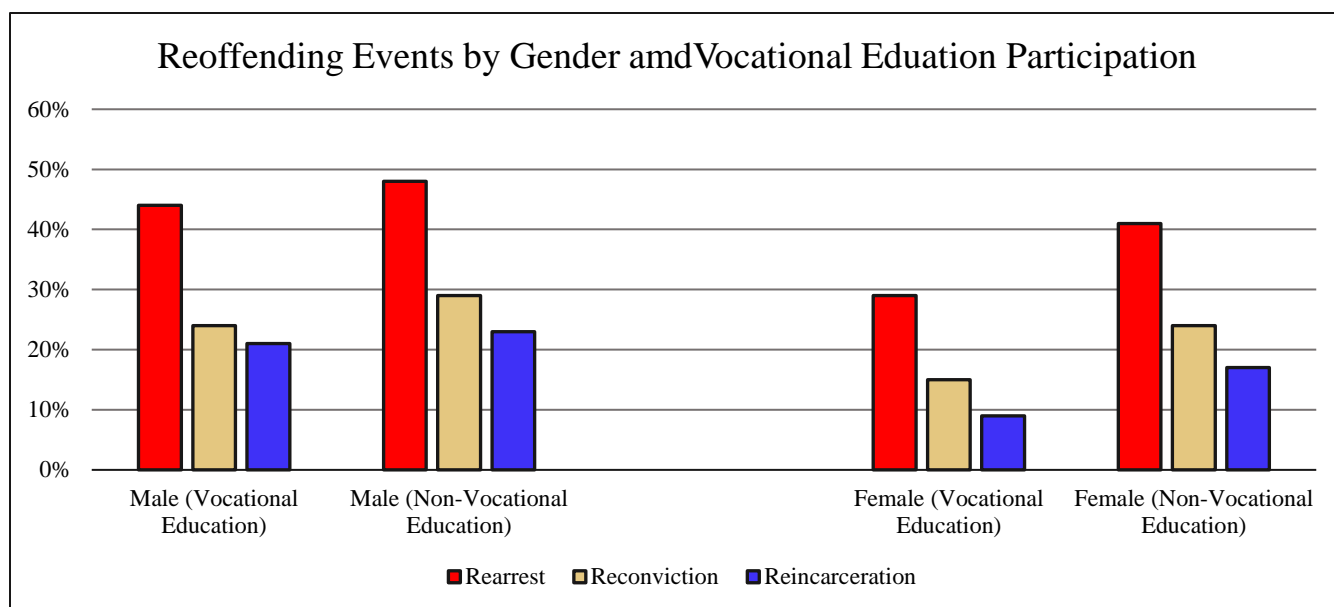


Figure 38. Reoffending Events by Gender and Vocational Education Participation

### **Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder 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.

Nearly 22% of all IPs released in 2020 participated in psychoeducational substance use disorder treatment during their stay of incarceration. Alcoholics Anonymous was the most attended psychoeducational drug treatment program followed by Narcotics Anonymous. Together, AA and NA comprised 93% of all psychoeducational drug treatment participants.

<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.

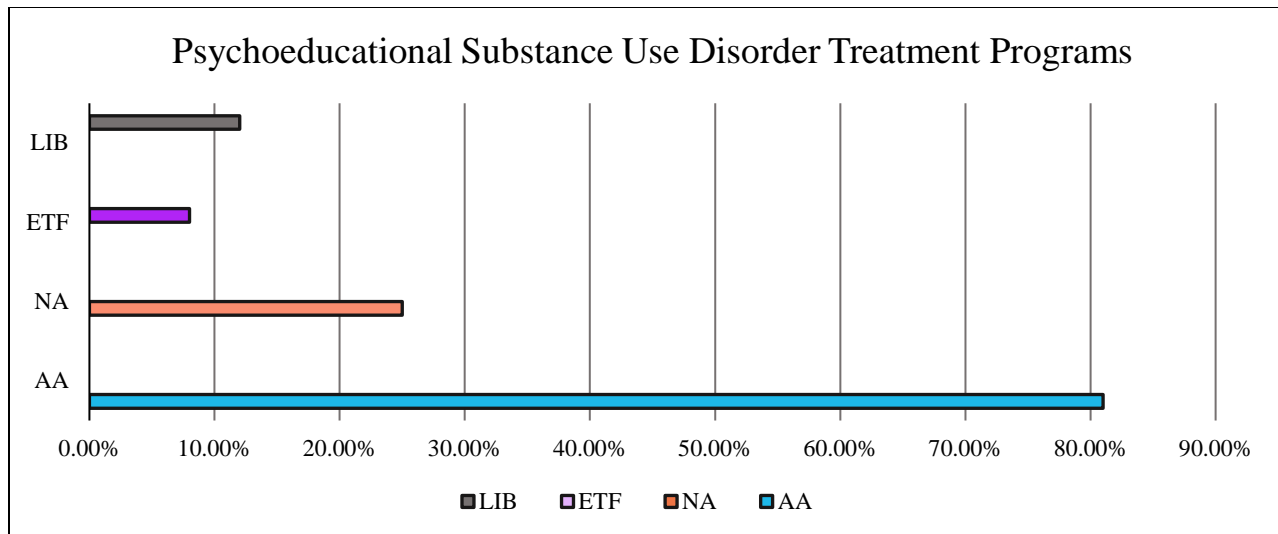


Figure 39. Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs

The rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages for psychoeducational substance use disorder program participants were 45%, 26% and 23%. When exploring recidivism percentages further, 18% of psychoeducational drug treatment participants were readmitted for a new commitment and 82% were readmitted for a CSV.

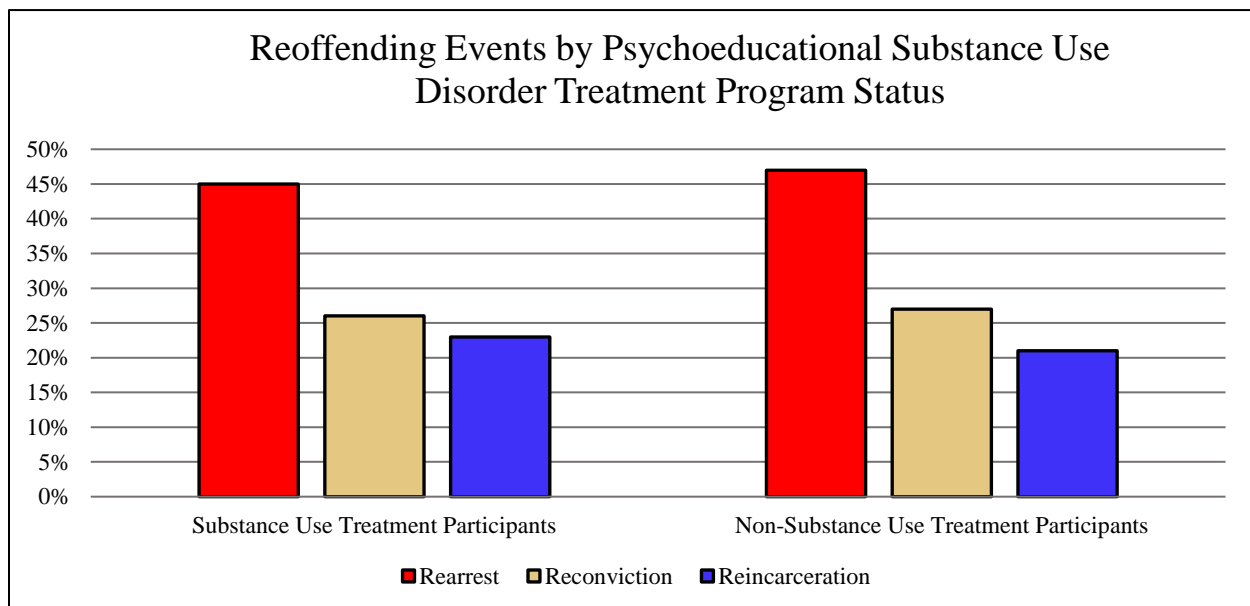


Figure 40. Reoffending Events by Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program Status

Rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration percentages varied across treatment participation and gender. Reincarceration percentages among male releases who did not participate in a substance use disorder treatment program were found to be lower (22%) than male releases who participated in a substance use disorder treatment program (24%). Reconviction percentages were similar among males who participated in a substance use disorder program and males who did not participate in a substance use disorder program (27% and 27%), however, male substance use disorder program participants had a slightly lower rearrest percentage than non-participants (46% vs. 47%). Female releases who participated in a substance use disorder treatment program had higher percentages of rearrests (37%), reconvictions (24%) and reincarcerations (17%) than non-participants (28%, 21% and 14%, respectfully)

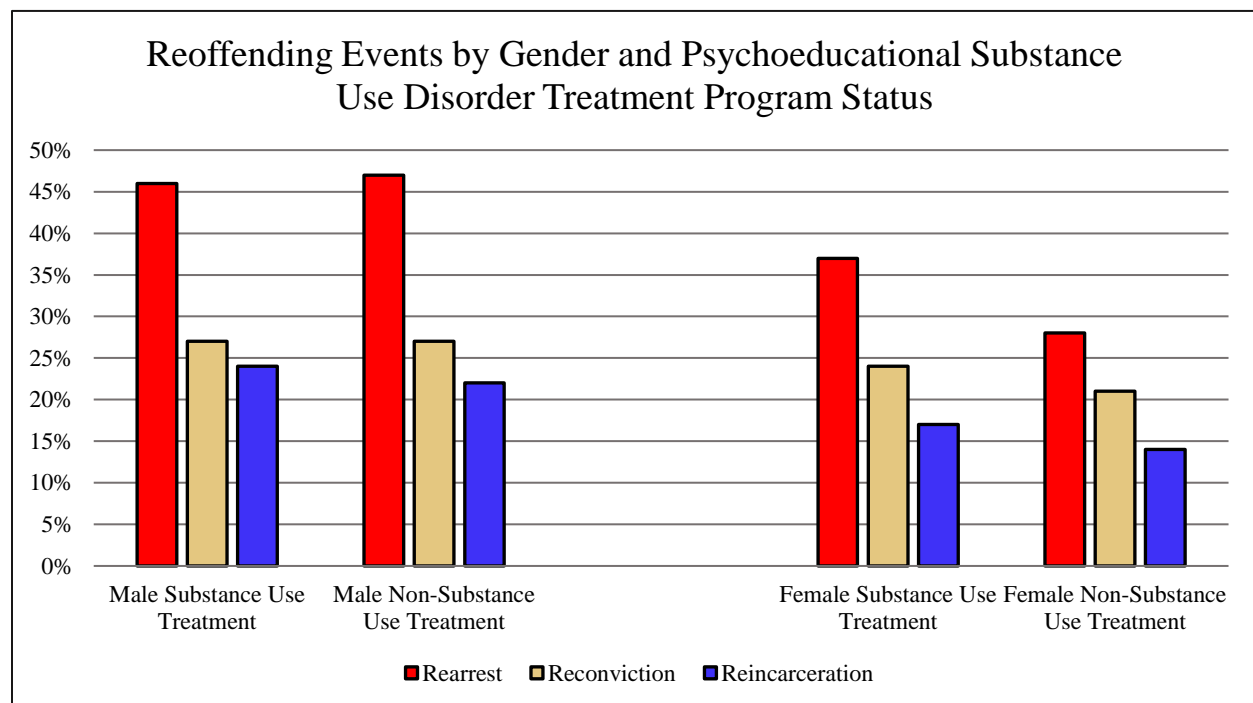


Figure 41. Reoffending Events by Gender and Psychoeducational Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program Status



This report is the fourteenth 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 2020. In addition to measuring overall recidivism levels, this report describes adult cohort characteristics between male and female releases.

For this iteration of the report, 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 2020 cohort, 22% of releases recidivated, 46% were rearrested, and 27% 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 2020 release cohort, which were examined from the period of January 1, 2020 thru December 31, 2023, 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. As of March 31, 2021, a total of 3,675 IPs have been 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 45% of releases were readmitted to a DOC facility within the first 12 months of release.

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<sup>7</sup> Lahdon, T. (2023, November 27). Justice matters Newsletter BJA. Bureau of Justice. <https://bja.ojp.gov/news/justice-matters/desk-bja-november-2023#:~:text=A%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20Justice,formerly%20incarcerated%20people%20were%20rearrested>

<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.](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, and, after an extensive planning and renovation process, Mid-State Correctional Facility reopened in April 2017 as the first licensed, clinically driven drug treatment prison operated by the DOC.

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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