

# REDUCING RECIDIVISM

June 2014

For years, elected state officials responded to the public's frustration with high crime rates by making incarceration the centerpiece of their crime policy. Suggesting that "nothing works" to rehabilitate individuals incarcerated in prisons and jails, policymakers across the political spectrum saw high rates of reoffense as inevitable, and keeping people who committed crimes behind bars was seen as the best way to ensure public safety.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last 15 years, a series of developments has contributed to a seismic shift in that mindset. Among these developments was a body of research that began to emerge demonstrating that certain programs and approaches to supervision can change some people's criminal behaviors and help them succeed upon release

from incarceration. Encouraged by this research and the success that programs were experiencing in their communities, in 2008, Congress passed the Second Chance Act, which established grant programs to stimulate further innovation at the state and local level.

Today, improved reentry and recidivism reduction are cornerstones of state and local crime policies across the country. Governors routinely highlight the importance of reducing recidivism in their state of the state addresses,<sup>2</sup> and mayors, sheriffs, and other local leaders across the country have established task forces focusing on reentry in their cities and counties.<sup>3</sup>

Compelling evidence is now emerging that shows that recidivism rates for an entire state can indeed change. In 2012, the National Reentry Resource

Three-Year Returns to Prison	Release Cohort	Recidivism Rate	Release Cohort	Recidivism Rate	Percentage-Point Change	Percent Change
Colorado	2007	52.0%	2010	49.0%	-3.0%	-5.8%
Connecticut	2007	43.9%	2010	40.0%	-3.9%	-8.9%
Georgia	2007	28.9%	2010	26.0%	-2.9%	-10.0%
North Carolina <sup>i</sup>	2006	35.8%	2010	28.9%	-6.9%	-19.3%
Pennsylvania	2007	43.9%	2010	40.8%	-3.1%	-7.1%
Rhode Island <sup>ii</sup>	2004	54.0%	2010	48.9%	-5.1%	-9.4%
South Carolina	2007	33.5%	2010	27.5%	-6.0%	-17.9%
Wisconsin	2007	56.2%	2010	51.1%	-5.1%	-9.1%

<sup>i</sup> In North Carolina, the Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission computes recidivism rates on a biannual basis for the state. The most recent rates were reported for 2009 and 2011 release cohorts, computed for one-year and two-year intervals. Prior to adopting this newer protocol of two-year intervals, the Sentencing Commission computed three-year recidivism rates for a FY2006 release cohort. It was decided to use the FY2006 three-year rate for this report, so that a similar follow-up period was available for all states. Moreover, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety computed the three-year rates for a 2010 release cohort on request for this report.

<sup>ii</sup> Rhode Island computes its rates approximately every five years; the most recent recidivism reports computed rates for 2004 release cohorts and 2009 release cohorts. Thus, there was not an available data point for 2007 against which to compare the 2010 rates. It was decided to compare the 2004 recidivism rates with rates for 2010, which were computed on request for this report, to provide a longer timeframe of analysis.

Recidivism Reductions	Percentage-Point Change in Three-Year Recidivism Rates	Percentage Change in Three-Year Recidivism Rates	Number of Inmates Released in 2010	Number Fewer Returned to Prison for the 2010 Release Group
Colorado	-3.0%	-5.8%	11,033	331
Connecticut	-3.9%	-8.9%	15,536	606
Georgia	-2.9%	-10.0%	21,874	634
North Carolina	-6.9%	-19.3%	25,467	1,757
Pennsylvania	-3.1%	-7.1%	18,417	571
Rhode Island	-5.1%	-9.4%	2,596	132
South Carolina	-6.0%	-17.9%	12,744	765
Wisconsin	-5.1%	-9.1%	15,237	777

Center (NRRC) highlighted seven states that had achieved reductions in three-year recidivism rates for 2005 to 2007 releases.<sup>4</sup> In this report, the NRRC highlights eight additional states that have lowered their recidivism rates: Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

This report focuses on statewide recidivism data for adults released in 2007 and 2010 with a three-year follow-up period, offering a current snapshot of criminal justice outcomes in these states. The data are as reported by the states to the Council of State Governments Justice Center following various methodologies used by the states as noted below. The data highlighted from these states do not represent a statistical sampling and cannot be used to propose findings related to national recidivism rates.

The information presented here, however, has national value for three reasons. First, the data in

this report (which follows release cohorts through 2013) are more recent than those in any other report examining recidivism in multiple states. For example, the most recent federal reports on recidivism analyzed outcomes for adults released in 2005 and followed them through 2010.<sup>5</sup> Second, the report highlights an interesting cross-section of states representing different regions of the United States, sizes of prison populations, and correctional systems (two of the states have a unified system, combining what are traditionally separate state prison and county jail systems into one system operated at the state level). Third, the data presented here and in the NRRC's 2012 report demonstrate that it is possible for states to achieve significant statewide reductions in their recidivism rates. While these reports focus on recidivism reductions in the past six years, a comparison of recidivism rates for at least some of these states over a longer period of time would demonstrate even larger reductions.

The declines in recidivism rates highlighted in this report have occurred while these states have each experienced declines in incarceration rates and crime rates. (See appendix for incarceration and crime data.)

## COMPARING RECIDIVISM RATES

Data provided in this report compare the change in an individual state's recidivism rate from one period to another. This brief does not compare one state's recidivism rate to another state's recidivism rate for several reasons. First, each state has its own definition of recidivism and its own methodology for calculating recidivism.<sup>6</sup> For example, some state measurements of recidivism account only for reincarceration, while others include reconvictions that do not result in a prison or jail sentence. Furthermore, states differ in their definitions of "reincarceration." For example, Pennsylvania and South Carolina both define recidivism as a return to the custody of the state Department of Corrections. In Pennsylvania, however, state custody may include prison, county jail, or a Parole Violator Center, whereas state custody in South Carolina is defined as a prison sentence of more than 90 days. (See citations throughout this report for each state's definition of and methodology for calculating recidivism.)

Another factor that makes comparing recidivism rates across states problematic is the distinct composition of each state's prison population. For instance, a state that sentences to prison large numbers of people who are at low risk of reoffending will logically have a lower recidivism rate than a state that uses its prison facilities for people who are at higher risk of reoffending.

The organization of a state's correctional system can also influence its recidivism rates, as is the case for Connecticut and Rhode Island, which operate unified correctional systems where all individuals are under the state's jurisdiction rather than separate state prison and county jail systems.

Because of these and other factors, comparing recidivism rates from state to state is discouraged.

### Colorado<sup>7</sup>

**Three-year recidivism rate for 2007 prison releases**

**52.0 percent**

**Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases**

**49.0 percent**

**Percent decline in recidivism rate**

**5.8 percent**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	22,519	22,989	23,186	22,860	22,610	21,037	20,134
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	10,625	11,038	10,992	10,704	9,935	9,116	9,620
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	10,110	10,565	10,803	11,033	10,161	10,657	10,506

In 2007, Colorado was experiencing high rates of recidivism and one of the fastest-growing corrections populations in the United States. To address these and other concerns, state lawmakers established the Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state's sentencing and corrections policies, with

reentry as one of its primary initiatives. The CCJJ issued a report in 2008<sup>8</sup> based on its findings, and many of the commission's policy recommendations have since been enacted. The work of the commission now focuses on evidence-based recidivism-reduction initiatives in addition to promoting the cost-effective use of criminal justice funds. State agencies have

received a total of eight Second Chance Act awards to further support reentry initiatives.

State officials point to these and other efforts that incorporated the following strategies and have contributed to the state's reduction in recidivism:

■ ***Investing in community-based treatment.*** In 2010, the state reclassified certain substance use and possession offenses, reducing the length of sentence associated with these offenses. The first year this law went into effect, it generated \$1.4 million in savings for the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC), which the state reinvested in mental health and substance use treatment programs in the state. That same year, lawmakers reduced the length of time that certain adults under parole supervision (including those at low or medium risk of reoffense) can serve in prison when they violate the conditions of their parole. More than \$4.5 million in savings generated through this change in policy was invested into mental health and substance use treatment and other individualized services for people on parole.

■ ***Promoting continuity of care from incarceration to the community.*** CDOC continues to work toward ensuring that individuals in administrative segregation are not released directly to the community and, instead, move through a step-down process and receive services to promote a successful transition.

■ ***Tailoring approaches to individual needs.*** Colorado State Board of Parole members receive training in motivational interviewing and apply these skills in parole hearings. An evidence-based practice, motivational interviewing focuses on decreasing resistance and promoting an individual's readiness for change and commitment to programming.

■ ***Providing incentives for participation in programs designed to reduce likelihood of a person reoffending.*** State law allows adults who are incarcerated and convicted of certain crimes to earn as much as 12 days per month off their sentence by complying with rules and participating in correctional programs such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, mental health or substance use treatment, educational classes, and vocational training.

## WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

Research has shown that certain practices and policies can reduce recidivism, including:

### ***Using risk and need assessments to inform case management.***

Research shows that correctional programs with the greatest impact on recidivism sort individuals based on their risk of reoffending. Risk and need assessment tools examine both static (historical and/or demographic) and dynamic (changeable) criminogenic needs (also known as criminogenic risk factors) that research has shown to be associated with criminal behavior and make someone more likely to reoffend. The assessment produces a risk score that allows programs to sort individuals based on risk levels in a consistent and reliable manner, tailor interventions, and prioritize resources for those who are at higher risk of reoffending.

### ***Establishing programs that have been shown to reduce recidivism and ensuring they are implemented with fidelity.***

While specific approaches may vary across states, programs should be based on the best available science and research. Interventions that address criminogenic needs and take into account an individual's responsivity factors—such as motivation for change, learning styles, and mental health needs—are more

likely to impact recidivism than those that do not. Programs should also establish desired outcomes and ensure means for measuring progress, such as regular quality assessments and evaluations. Studies show that implementing evidence-based programs and practices can reduce reoffense rates by 10 to 20 percent.<sup>9</sup>

**Implementing community supervision policies and practices that promote successful reentry.<sup>10</sup>**

Improved community supervision to provide greater support and access to services is critical to efforts to reduce recidivism. Supervision conditions and programs should be informed by an individual’s risk and needs, focusing resources on those who are assessed to be at higher risk. Parole and probation officers should also have a range of options for swift and certain sanctions and incentives that are proportionate to the event and appropriate for the individual under supervision.

The Council of State Governments Justice Center outlined these practices in *The National Summit on Justice Reinvestment and Public Safety: Addressing Recidivism, Crime, and Corrections Spending*,<sup>11</sup> a report summarizing the innovative strategies discussed over the course of a summit of state leaders, federal officials, practitioners, and researchers in 2010. In 2012, the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Reentry Resource Center released a series of user-friendly checklists specifically designed to help executive and legislative policymakers, state corrections administrators, and state reentry coordinators implement these proven strategies in their states.<sup>12</sup>



Three-year recidivism rate for 2007 prison releases	Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases		Percent decline in recidivism rate				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
43.9 percent	40.0 percent		8.9 percent				
<b>Prison Population</b>	14,998	14,745	13,876	13,578	12,955	12,104	12,417
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	10,532	9,222	9,154	8,514	8,218	7,874	7,411
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	16,371	16,295	16,317	15,536	15,515	14,784	13,533

*The state of Connecticut operates a unified correctional system, meaning that all offenders (i.e., those awaiting trial and those sentenced to incarceration) in the state are under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC). Connecticut does not have county jails; therefore, offenders sentenced to any length of stay, even short-term “jail” sentences, are housed in a CTDOC facility. Data above reflect the sentenced population; pretrial detainees have been excluded from these numbers.*

When Connecticut state leaders employed a justice reinvestment approach in 2004 to determine why their state had the third-fastest-growing prison population in the country, they found that a significant percentage of their admissions to prison were for probation violations. As a result, state leaders enacted a legislative package designed to reverse this trend. Between July 2003 and

September 2005, the number of adults on probation returned to prison declined by 50 percent,<sup>14</sup> which enabled the state to bring inmates being housed out of state back to Connecticut, generating nearly \$50 million in cost savings, some of which was reinvested into mental health and substance use treatment services, community-based pilot projects, and other

programs. In 2007, two parolees (whose circumstances had nothing to do with reforms implemented in 2004) invaded a home and committed a triple homicide, rocking the state. The prison population spiked, and lawmakers made additional changes to policy to improve the parole decision-making process.

Today, state leaders point to legislation enacted in 2004 and 2008, along with additional subsequent improvements to policy, as being instrumental in the state's declining recidivism rates:

■ ***Reentry planning and intensive supervision.***

The legislation enacted in 2004 created an intensive probation supervision program for high-risk individuals who will be released to probation as part of a split sentence. Within 90 days prior to their release, program staff meet with participants to discuss their probation terms and develop a reentry plan that incorporates needs such as housing, employment, or substance use treatment. Upon release, they receive up to four months of intensive probation supervision, followed by standard probation supervision.

■ ***Improving the response to people who violate conditions of probation.*** Individuals who violate the terms of their probation receive up to 120 days of

intensive supervision and services as an alternative to incarceration. At the start of this supervision period, individuals are assessed for risk and need and receive appropriate services; they are also required to meet with their probation officer at least once each week. Intensive supervision is followed by standard probation if the person has complied with the terms of supervision.

■ ***Providing continuity of care to people with mental health needs released from prison.***

The Connecticut Department of Correction (CTDOC) and the University of Connecticut's Correctional Managed Health Care partnered in 2006 to establish a licensed medical and mental health position in prisons and jails to assist in discharge planning and ensure continuity of care for individuals with mental disorders being released to the community.

■ ***Data collection and performance measurement.***

The state made a priority of holding community-based programs—and community supervision agencies—accountable for delivering results. To that end, CTDOC upgraded its data tracking system and created a Best Practices Unit in 2011 to measure the agency's performance and promote evidence-based policies and practices within the agency.

## USING A JUSTICE REINVESTMENT APPROACH

Justice reinvestment is a data-driven approach to improve public safety, reduce corrections spending, and reinvest savings in strategies that can decrease crime and reduce recidivism. In the process, policymakers, experts, and stakeholders work together to analyze a variety of state-specific data to develop practical policies that are based on the best available data and research and are tailored to the distinct public safety needs of the jurisdiction. These policies are designed to generate cost savings, a portion of which can then be reinvested in correctional and community-based programs aimed at further reducing crime and recidivism, such as treatment for mental health and substance use disorders.

To date, the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), The Pew Charitable Trusts, and other organizations have supported justice reinvestment efforts in 31 states. Connecticut, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Wisconsin are among the states that have both adopted the justice reinvestment approach and lowered recidivism rates.

Three-year recidivism rate for 2007 prison releases	Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases	Percent decline in recidivism rate
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28.9 percent	26.0 percent	10.0 percent
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Three-year reconviction rate for 2007 prison releases	Three-year reconviction rate for 2010 prison releases	Percent decline in reconviction rate
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27.9 percent	26.6 percent	4.7 percent
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	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	53,940	54,294	54,369	51,820	51,576	53,348	52,123
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	19,881	20,193	20,698	19,335	21,093	21,400	20,087
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	18,685	19,839	20,633	21,874	21,337	19,628	21,312
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Parole Population</b>	20,884	21,557	21,307	22,403	23,729	22,480	25,020
<b>Parole Violators: Technical Revocations*</b>	567	505	424	360	276	155	134
<b>Parole Violators: New Offense Revocations*</b>	2,993	2,620	2,669	2,390	2,342	2,463	2,065

\* Revocations can be to prison or to local jails

In 2009, the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) developed “The Ten Step Framework,” a set of guiding principles for revamping community supervision through the use of risk assessments; targeted, evidence-based interventions and community impact programs; and swift and proportionate sanctions and incentives. In 2011, Governor Nathan Deal established the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgia, which was tasked with analyzing sentencing and corrections data to develop policy options aimed at addressing the growth of the state’s prison population,

improve public safety, and hold offenders accountable. The analysis that resulted from this effort found that more than half of all prison admissions were for low-level drug and property offenses.

Recommendations from the council resulted in comprehensive adult sentencing and corrections reform legislation during the 2012 and 2013 sessions. The new laws emphasized rehabilitation over incarceration for nonviolent offenders, and prioritized community supervision and programs and services focused on addressing reentry needs. Experts projected that, once fully implemented, these policies would

reduce the prison population by nearly 5,000 over 5 years, saving the state at least \$264 million.

In 2013, Governor Deal established the Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Reentry to promote successful transition to the community after incarceration, reduce recidivism, enhance collaboration among stakeholders, and ensure that cost savings from justice reforms are reinvested in evidence-based, community-focused services. Georgia officials have received two Second Chance Act Statewide Recidivism Reduction grants and are pursuing several other grants to support the continued development of reentry policies and practices focused on lowering recidivism among people at highest risk of reoffending.

Georgia officials cite various aspects of the above initiatives that have contributed to the statewide reductions in reincarceration rates for people released from prison:

■ ***Improved probation and parole supervision.*** A partnership between the GDC and the State Board of Pardons and Parole has resulted in the movement of certain offenders, who would otherwise max out their prison sentence with no community supervision, from prison to transitional centers. These individuals are paired with parole officers who help connect them

to housing, employment, and treatment programs in the community. Additionally, probation officers have been given the authority to impose community-based graduated sanctions for probation violators rather than recommending a prison sentence.

■ ***Accountability courts.*** Reforms in 2012 significantly expanded the use of accountability courts, requiring that those courts use validated risk and need assessments to guide decisions about treatment and supervision, as well as incorporate programs addressing criminogenic risk factors. Over \$10 million was appropriated by the state legislature to support and encourage the accountability courts as they incorporate the new standards and establish additional courts. Accountability courts have expanded to better address mental health and substance use needs, as well as the unique needs of veterans.

■ ***Alternatives to incarceration.*** State officials have created and expanded day reporting centers, residential substance abuse treatment centers, and integrated treatment facilities in order to provide the courts with viable community-based alternatives to prison for individuals with mental health or substance use disorders.

We think one of the most important parts of [our state's reforms] is the data collection and evidence-based practices, essentially making sure we're spending money where results are predictable and the best results will be achieved.

GEORGIA GOVERNOR NATHAN DEAL



Three-year recidivism rate for 2006 prison releases	Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases		Percent decline in recidivism rate				
35.8 percent	28.9 percent		19.3 percent				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	38,423	39,326	40,824	40,102	41,030	38,385	37,469
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	27,934	28,535	30,350	28,164	28,975	24,036	21,538
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	26,986	27,637	28,860	28,889	28,048	26,685	22,455
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Probation Population</b>	113,376	113,027	109,820	107,696	104,095	98,752	99,089
<b>Probation Violators: Technical Revocations*</b>	17,555	18,059	19,540	19,045	19,455	15,588	9,458
<b>Probation Violators: New Offense Revocations*</b>	3,627	4,053	4,221	4,168	4,140	4,131	3,496
<b>Probation Violators: Graduated Sanctions</b>	-	-	-	-	-	1,974	8,240

\* Revocations can be to prison or to local jails

To address rising incarceration rates and corrections costs, North Carolina policymakers began a justice reinvestment process in 2009 that revealed that probation revocations accounted for 50 percent of prison admissions that year, and of those admissions, 76 percent did not involve a new offense. In 2011, policymakers enacted sweeping legislation focused on strengthening community supervision and reducing revocations. These improvements and resulting cost savings have enabled the state to close 9 correctional facilities, fund 175 additional probation officers, and support community-based treatment programs.

State officials point to elements of this law, along with other improvements to policy and practice, that they believe contribute to declines in recidivism, including:

- **Increased emphasis on individualized case planning.** Risk and need assessments during incarceration and community supervision inform case plans to ensure that people receive supervision and services aimed at reducing their likelihood of reoffending, prioritizing those assessed to have high risk and high need.
- **Ensuring fidelity to evidence-based practices.** Probation officers receive monthly trainings to support and advance competencies in evidence-based practices, such as using risk and need assessments to inform case plans, building effective alliances to increase motivation for change, and applying incentives and sanctions.

■ **Graduated sanction options.** Statewide, probation officers are utilizing “delegated authority” that allows them to impose certain sanctions without requiring an appearance before a judge. These sanctions—such as two- to three-day stays in local jails for recurring supervision violations—allow probation officers to respond quickly to these violations and provide a practical alternative to lengthier and more disruptive sanctions in prison.

■ **The establishment of five local reentry councils across the state.** State funds support a dedicated coordinator for each council who builds relationships with service providers, probation and parole agencies, and other stakeholders. Through these councils, state officials maintain close connections with local organizations engaged in reentry initiatives in their community, and provide resources to adults released from prison who are seeking services to aid them in their transition to the community.

## DOES A DECLINE IN REINCARCERATION RATES EQUATE TO INCREASED PUBLIC SAFETY?

Reducing recidivism is about changing the behavior of people who have committed crimes in the past. It is also about changing the business of the people who supervise, treat, and support people who are incarcerated and released to the community. Accordingly, anyone seeking to make sure recidivism reduction strategies are increasing public safety will need to look beyond reincarceration rates, which are driven by two factors: people returning to prison because of a sentence for a new crime; and/or people returning to prison because they violated a condition of their community supervision.

To what extent are reductions in recidivism highlighted in this report achieved by changes in rates at which people released from prison reoffend—as opposed to just tolerating more instances of non-compliance among people released from prison? Data immediately available from Georgia, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin describing felony conviction rates for people released from prison suggest success in changing the behaviors of people released from prison. Reconviction data, however, capture only instances of more serious felony offenses for which a prison sentence was deemed appropriate by the sentencing judge. Using all reconvictions or arrests as a measure of recidivism offers an opportunity to measure criminal justice involvement that may be more reflective of criminal behavior. The three-year reconviction rate (that is, reconviction for any crime, not only those that resulted in a return to prison) declined by 4.7 percent in Georgia and 9.8 percent in Wisconsin from 2007 to 2009. In addition to reconviction data, some states, such as Pennsylvania, match arrest data to prison release cohorts. Pennsylvania reported a 7-percent decline in one-year rearrest rates and a 2-percent decline in two-year rearrest rates from 2007–2011 release cohorts.

**Three-year recidivism rate for 2007 prison releases**      **Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases**      **Percent decline in recidivism rate**

**43.9 percent**                      **40.8 percent**                      **7.1 percent**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Prison Population</b>	46,028	49,307	51,487	51,321	51,638	51,184	51,512
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	18,601	19,049	18,859	18,518	19,960	20,238	21,816
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	16,832	15,591	16,331	18,417	19,364	20,439	21,815
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Parole Population</b>	22,615	24,164	22,622	24,043	25,914	27,287	29,442
<b>Parole Violators:</b>							
<b>Technical Revocations*</b>	3,371	2,947	3,161	2,869	2,516	3,386	3,161
<b>Parole Violators:</b>							
<b>New Offense Revocations*</b>	1,696	1,802	1,983	1,931	1,836	1,990	2,060
<b>Parole Violators:</b>							
<b>Graduated Sanctions</b>	1,875	2,050	1,864	1,770	1,852	1,695	2,823

\* Revocations can be to prison or to local jails

Since 2006, Pennsylvania officials have made concerted efforts to address high recidivism rates and corrections costs by using evidence-based practices with correctional populations, such as risk assessment to inform interventions. Four Second Chance Act grants have been awarded to state agencies since 2009 to enhance reentry programs, including a Statewide Recidivism Reduction planning grant for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PDOC) in 2012. In the same year, policymakers undertook a justice reinvestment approach and enacted sweeping legislation to reduce inefficiencies in the current corrections and parole systems and establish more cost-effective approaches to reduce recidivism among parolees. State officials point to various aspects of these initiatives as having contributed to the statewide reduction in recidivism, including the following:

- **Targeted reentry services.** PDOC has adopted a wide range of evidence-based programs, including Thinking for a Change to address criminal thinking and behaviors; violence prevention programs; and prison-based therapeutic communities, which offer a therapeutic culture and environment in which individuals with substance use disorders receive treatment and other services in a housing area separated from the rest of the incarcerated population. Second Chance Act grants have supported many of these services, including a pilot program providing medical treatment for alcohol and opiate dependence, which PDOC plans to expand. Participants receive comprehensive case management and services and are connected to treatment in the community upon release.

■ ***Incentives and sanctions.*** In PDOC's Recidivism Risk Reduction Incentive program created in 2008, certain individuals convicted of nonviolent offenses can reduce their sentences through good behavior and participation in programs that target criminogenic risk factors. Additionally, the state uses a graduated sanctioning grid to respond to parole violations and is exploring a similar sanctioning system for probation.

■ ***Data collection and performance measurement.*** About 75 percent of halfway houses in the state are operated by private contractors. After studies found that individuals who had transitioned to the community

through the halfway houses had higher rates of recidivism than those who did not, PDOC implemented a performance incentive funding model in which contractors work with PDOC to establish baseline recidivism rates and then to review their recidivism rates every six months. Contractors can receive additional funds if they reduce recidivism below the baseline, or are at risk of having their contracts revoked if recidivism is above the baseline. Results from the first reporting period indicate a 16-percent reduction in recidivism among the contractors. To support continued progress, PDOC has provided training in cognitive-behavioral interventions to the contractors and is planning additional trainings.

## TRACKING AND REPORTING RECIDIVISM

As policymakers intensify their focus on recidivism rates, states are finding that they need to build or expand capacity to collect and analyze corrections, probation, and parole data. In order to gain an accurate and meaningful picture of recidivism, states should incorporate the following in their practices to collect and report recidivism data:

1. A primary definition of recidivism; a common definition is a return to prison for a new offense or a technical violation within three years of release.
2. Various recidivism measures, including returns to prison, arrests, convictions, and violations of probation or parole conditions.
3. Information about the recidivism event, including whether it was a new offense or a technical violation, the offense type, and the geographic region.
4. Information about the offender, including risk level, age, gender, prior criminal histories, and behavioral health needs.
5. Consistent follow-up periods of one, two, and three years post-release.
6. Annual recidivism calculations.
7. Calculations based on all releases if computerized data are available (rather than a representative sample of releases).

In its entirety, this list does not represent current practices in most states; rather, it is a set of measures and standards that states should strive to incorporate. Maintaining reliable and useful systems of data collection requires considerable time and resources, and practices vary widely from state to state. Some states have changed how they define recidivism over time. As a result of these challenges and variations, many states are unable to calculate statewide recidivism rates or to analyze trends. Yet investments to track a variety of information in a consistent manner will help states understand trends, identify drivers, and inform new policies to effectively reduce recidivism.

## Rhode Island<sup>18</sup>

**Three-year recidivism rate for 2004 prison releases**      **Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases**      **Percent decline in recidivism rate**

**54.0 percent**      **48.9 percent**      **5.1 percent**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	2,777	2,782	2,466	2,277	2,202	2,143	2,221
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	2,483	2,379	2,404	2,151	2,015	1,927	1,875
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	2,467	2,545	2,723	2,596	2,324	2,106	1,884

*The State of Rhode Island operates a unified correctional system, meaning that all offenders (i.e., those awaiting trial, sentenced, and under community supervision) in the state are under the jurisdiction of the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC). Rhode Island does not have county jails; therefore, offenders sentenced to any length of stay are housed at RIDOC's Adult Correctional Institutions. The data in this table refer to the felony-level population and individuals with sentence lengths of one year or more; these numbers do not reflect the entire RIDOC inmate population.*

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Probation Population</b>	25,302	26,201	25,360	25,049	24,097	23,546	22,658
<b>Probation Violators: Technical Revocations</b>	650	307	200	247	193	300	434
<b>Probation Violators: New Offense Revocations</b>	993	823	860	754	713	867	940

*The probation population refers to both felony and misdemeanor probation cases.*

A 2004 Executive Order from then-Governor Donald Carcieri created Rhode Island's Steering Committee on Corrections Reform and Prisoner Reentry, which included directors, managers, and front-line workers from key state agencies representing corrections, labor, housing, human services, and youth and family services, among others. The committee initiated many

reforms in the state, including the expansion of the use of validated risk assessment tools in the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC).

In 2007, state policymakers began a justice reinvestment process to develop further policy options addressing incarceration rates and corrections costs, some of which were enacted through legislation passed

in 2008. Since then, RIDOC's population has seen a significant drop in commitment and releases, causing an overall population decrease of 18 percent. Supported by a 2012 Second Chance Act Statewide Recidivism Reduction grant, RIDOC is pursuing a variety of initiatives to build on the state's progress, including expanding the implementation of evidence-based practices, strengthening the staff's capabilities in the new practices, and adopting systems of quality assurance.

These various initiatives changed the state's approach to prisoner reentry. State officials highlight these reforms in particular as contributing to the state's reduction in recidivism:

- **Risk and need assessments.** Reentry plans are created during an individual's incarceration based on their assessed level of risk and need. RIDOC staff are trained in the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of applying the three principles in case management and programs.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, the policy changes enacted in 2008 required the use of risk assessments to inform parole release decisions.
- **Incentivizing compliance and participation in reentry programs.** The 2008 legislation standardized RIDOC's system of incentives for

behavior and added a component based on program participation. Depending on their crime, individuals incarcerated in RIDOC facilities may now earn up to 10 days per month of earned time toward their sentence for good behavior and additional time for participating in rehabilitation or work programs.

- **Targeted reentry programming.** Individuals may receive a number of services—including education and employment programs, substance use treatment, and family support—to address needs and assist in their transition upon release. RIDOC is currently working to incorporate interventions to address criminal thinking, such as the evidence-based Thinking for a Change program.
- **Collaborating with local partners.** RIDOC coordinates with local stakeholders through the state's regional reentry councils, composed of elected local officials, community and faith-based organizations, law enforcement, service providers, and business leaders. The department is working to create standard operating procedures for referrals of high-risk individuals to the local councils, which help facilitate successful transitions to the community.

Safe, secure, orderly prisons—those are bedrock. But we can truly deliver on our commitment to the safety of our citizens by also assuming leadership in implementing principles and practices that reduce post-release recidivism.

A.T. WALL, DIRECTOR,  
RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

**Three-year recidivism rate for 2007 prison releases**      **Three-year recidivism rate for 2010 prison releases**      **Percent decline in recidivism rate**

**33.5 percent**                      **27.5 percent**                      **17.9 percent**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	23,430	24,598	24,460	24,400	23,306	22,160	22,167
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	13,906	13,950	13,199	12,586	10,888	10,170	9,569
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	13,499	12,807	13,454	12,744	12,024	11,409	9,623

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Percent Change
<b>Admissions Due to Probation Revocations</b>	1,869	1,884	1,856	1,766	1,497	1,213	1,008	-46.1%
<b>Admissions Due to Parole Revocations</b>	1,185	1,175	1,064	999	835	746	638	-46.2%
<b>Admissions Due to Community Supervision Revocations</b>	325	336	285	269	215	192	109	-66.5%
<b>Revocations as a Percent of Admissions</b>	24.3%	24.3%	24.3%	24.1%	23.4%	21.2%	18.3%	-24.5%

To address high crime rates and corrections costs, the South Carolina legislature established the Sentencing Reform Commission in 2008 to review sentencing and corrections policies. Based on data from multiple agencies and input from a broad range of stakeholders, the commission recommended significant changes that were enacted in the Omnibus Crime Reduction and Sentencing Reform Act of 2010. The legislation created alternatives to incarceration for technical violations and ensured that more people receive supervision and support upon release from prison. The bill also designated a committee to produce annual reports on reductions in revocations and new felony convictions for people under probation or parole supervision. The reforms have resulted in cost savings for the state—in 2013, the state attributed a savings of more than \$5 million to the new practices.

State officials highlight the following as key components of their efforts to reduce recidivism:

- ***Expanding the use of risk assessments.*** Probation and parole agents of the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (SCDPPPS) must use a risk and need assessment to guide decisions about supervision and services. The South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) has developed and fully implemented a risk assessment instrument specifically designed for the youthful offender population (ages 17 to 25). This instrument has been further developed, adapted, and piloted to meet the unique needs of SCDC’s female population, and will be expanded throughout all SCDC institutions this year.

■ ***Training in effective supervision practices.***

Probation and parole agents receive regular trainings in core correctional skills, including the Effective Practices in Correctional Settings (EPICS) module. Developed by the University of Cincinnati, EPICS helps staff apply principles based on the RNR model. Funds from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and Second Chance Act grant programs have supported these trainings, among other activities.

■ ***Focus on high-risk youth and young adults.***

In response to high rates of recidivism among youthful offenders, SCDC provides these individuals with intensive community supervision and services to help reduce technical violations of conditions of parole and ultimately reduce the rate of recidivism. Services to address family relationships, education,

employment, mental health, and substance use are among those available. All youthful offenders released from SCDC initially receive intensive supervision but, over time, may be reduced to a moderate level of supervision based upon their progress with their case plan and reassessments of their risk, needs, and strengths.

■ ***Addressing individual needs and responsivity factors.***

SCDC is expanding the use of telemedicine and telepsychiatry in its facilities in order to better address individuals' health and behavioral health needs pre-release. Additionally, SCDC will soon start a virtual visitation program inside facilities to help maintain family and social relationships, fostering the support network that can be critical to a successful return to the community.

## THE SECOND CHANCE ACT: INVESTING IN PROGRAM INNOVATION AND SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGE

Since 2008, the Second Chance Act has advanced the reentry field by incubating a broad range of reentry programs. The landmark, bipartisan legislation authorized federal grants to support vital services—including employment training and assistance, substance use treatment, education, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims support, and other services—to make a person's transition from prison or jail safer and more successful. As of September 2013, Second Chance Act programs had served nearly 90,000 individuals across 49 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>21</sup>

The Bureau of Justice Assistance has also used grant programs authorized under the Second Chance Act to position states not just to design or expand a reentry program, but also to change policies and build infrastructure that enables them to have an impact on recidivism rates across the entire state. Through the Second Chance Act Comprehensive Statewide Adult Recidivism Reduction Program, states have received millions of dollars in funding support toward system-wide reforms related to risk- and need-driven case planning and programming, as well as community supervision policies that research has shown can lead to reductions in recidivism. States participating in this grant program set specific recidivism reduction targets and track progress toward these goals. The grant program was created in direct response to challenges that leaders from all 50 states identified during a forum hosted by the National Reentry Resource Center in 2011. Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island are among the 16 states that have received these specialized grants.



Three-year return-to-prison rate for 2007 releases	Three-year return-to-prison rate for 2010 releases	Percent decline in return-to-prison rate
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56.2 percent	51.1 percent	9.1 percent
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Three-year reconviction rate for 2007 prison releases	Three-year reconviction rate for 2010 prison releases	Percent decline in reconviction rate
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32.8 percent	29.6 percent	9.8 percent
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	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Prison Population</b>	23,542	23,219	23,007	22,571	22,521	22,494	22,469
<b>Admissions to Prison</b>	14,249	14,739	14,651	14,758	13,659	12,607	12,674
<b>Releases from Prison</b>	13,976	15,107	14,903	15,237	13,763	12,668	12,725
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Probation Population</b>	53,056	50,273	47,666	46,504	46,794	46,689	47,328
<b>Probation Violators: Technical Revocations*</b>	2,172	2,001	1,858	1,663	1,481	1,395	1,501
<b>Probation Violators: New Offense Revocations*</b>	632	639	549	616	548	511	588
<b>Parole Population</b>	16,683	18,049	18,838	19,663	19,784	19,733	19,952
<b>Parole Violators: Technical Revocations*</b>	3,269	2,904	3,055	2,876	2,739	2,665	2,548
<b>Parole Violators: New Offense Revocations*</b>	560	675	636	455	376	383	422

\* Revocations to prison

Wisconsin policymakers initiated a justice reinvestment process in 2008 to address projected growth in their prison population, driven by a 40-percent increase from 2000 to 2007 in the number of people admitted to prison because their community supervision was revoked. The following year, legislators established and funded an array of initiatives under the Becky Young Community Services to Reduce Recidivism appropriations law, which required the use of risk and need assessments,

intermediate sanctions, cognitive-behavioral interventions, and other evidence-based practices. Since 2009, state leaders have continued to invest in a wide range of correctional programs, policy changes, and partnerships to ensure that planning for reentry begins at intake and individuals receive the support needed to reduce their likelihood to reoffend. Corrections officials identified the following as examples of initiatives having an impact on recidivism in the state:

■ **Case planning and risk assessment.** The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (WIDOC) uses an automated risk and needs assessment and a unified case planning system to assess individuals at intake into facilities or community corrections and reassess these individuals at various points during their sentence. Staff are in frequent contact with the individuals and regularly update case plans. All divisions and many agency partners share the same information system and are able to access assessments and information about program participation, which increases efficiency and ensures that interventions are appropriate for an individual's most current needs.

■ **Supporting employment readiness.** WIDOC partners with the state's 11 workforce development boards on the Windows to Work program, which offers comprehensive reentry services (3 to 9 months prior to release) and post-release

programming (for approximately 12 months after release) with a focus on skills training, financial literacy, and other assistance needed to help participants find and maintain employment.

■ **Alternative sanctions to reduce revocations.** Before reforms in 2009, low-level violations often resulted in revocations to prison. Community corrections agents are now able to use shorter jail stays as an alternative to revocation for individuals on extended supervision.

■ **Investments in targeted services.** In 2011, WIDOC expanded a variety of interventions designed to increase community-based alternatives to revocation, including cognitive behavioral programming, alcohol and drug treatment, education, vocational and employment opportunities, and treatment for individuals with serious mental disorders.

## THE NATIONAL REENTRY RESOURCE CENTER

Established by the Second Chance Act, the National Reentry Resource Center (NRRC) provides education, training, and technical assistance to states, tribes, territories, local governments, community-based service providers, nonprofit organizations, and corrections institutions involved with prisoner reentry. The NRRC's mission is to advance the reentry field by disseminating information to and from policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and by promoting evidence-based principles and best practices.

The NRRC is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the American Probation and Parole Association, the National Association of Counties, and other key partner organizations.

## Recidivism Reduction in California

It is impossible to consider national trends in corrections and recidivism without accounting for the oversized impact the state of California has on these trends. The size of its prison population and high reincarceration rate among people released from prison put the state in a category of its own. Coupling the sheer dimensions of the California system with the scope of the reforms that the state has enacted in recent years, the transformation of California's corrections system is on a scale unlike what any other state has experienced.

Until relatively recently, California incarcerated more adults in prison than any other state in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Prisons in the state were notoriously crowded. Report after report pointed to the state's failure to supervise parolees effectively; a 2003 report

found that 70 percent of the state's parole population returned to prison within 18 months of release, which was calculated to cost the state nearly \$1 billion per year.<sup>ii</sup> The size of the state's parole population and its high recidivism rates skewed national recidivism data; criminologists cited the Bureau of Justice Statistics' 2002 report on prisoners released in 1994 that showed national recidivism data that incorporated California data (51.8 percent) and that did not incorporate California data (40.1 percent).<sup>iii</sup>

In the last three years, state leaders have fundamentally changed the policies of the California corrections system. Recognizing that parole revocations were a key driver of the prison population, lawmakers enacted Senate Bill (SB) 18 in 2009, which established a new type of “non-revocable” parole (NRP) for individuals, who, according to the validated risk assessment tool used by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), did not pose a high risk to reoffend. Additional criteria were included in the statute that a person had to meet to be placed under NRP.<sup>iv</sup> Parole for people under NRP cannot be revoked for any reason; they can only be incarcerated again for a new crime.<sup>v</sup> Also enacted in 2009, SB 678 created the California Community Corrections Performance Incentive Program, which promoted the use of evidence-based strategies for reducing the rate of failure on probation. SB 678 also developed a mechanism for providing additional funding to probation departments via corrections expenditure savings realized through fewer revocations to prison.

Moving to comply with orders by federal court judges, the legislature enacted Assembly Bill (AB) 109 and AB 117. Known as the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, this law realigned custody responsibilities for a particular class of offenders—those identified as non-violent, non-serious, and non-sex offenders—from state to local jurisdictions and transferred post-release supervision responsibilities for this population from state parole officers to county probation officers.

Between 2010 and 2013, the state's prison population declined by 17 percent, a decline unmatched by any other state. The number of adults on parole has dropped even more dramatically—from 105,128 in 2010 to 45,585 in 2013, a 57-percent decline.

What has happened to recidivism rates during this period? Preliminary data from the first year of Public Safety Realignment implementation reveal promising trends. The most recent data available, which are current through 2012, all show declines in recidivism from the previous year.<sup>vi</sup> This includes returns to prison, rearrests, and reconvictions at one year, two years, and three years post-release. Changes in three-year reincarceration and reconviction rates since 2007 (the main point of reference used in this report) show even greater declines over a longer period of time.

Three-Year Recidivism Metrics	Release Cohort	Recidivism Rate	Release Cohort	Recidivism Rate	Percent Change
Returns to Prison	2007	65.1%	2009	61.0%	-6.3%
Reconvictions	2007	51.5%	2009	49.1%	-4.7%

Correctional Metrics	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Percent Change
Prison Population	170,129	170,020	167,711	162,006	147,051	132,624	134,333	-21.0%
Parole Population	123,739	120,730	106,355	105,128	98,719	56,342	45,585	-63.2%

California's recidivism rates are based on fiscal year cohorts; all correctional metrics presented here are based on calendar year data.

<sup>i</sup> E. Ann Carson and Daniela Golinelli, *Prisoners in 2012* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2013), [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p12tar9112.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p12tar9112.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> Little Hoover Commission, *Back to the Community: Safe and Sound Parole Policies* (Sacramento: Little Hoover Commission, 2003), [www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/172/report172.pdf](http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/172/report172.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Patrick A. Langan and David J. Levin, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, 2002), [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rpr94.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rpr94.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> To be eligible, an individual must meet criteria as established under Penal Code section 3000.03. For these eligibility criteria, see [www.cdcr.ca.gov/Parole/Non\\_Revocable\\_Parole/pdf/Non\\_Revocable\\_Parole\\_FAQs.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Parole/Non_Revocable_Parole/pdf/Non_Revocable_Parole_FAQs.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> “CDCR implements public safety reforms to parole supervision, expanded incentive credit for inmates,” California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, accessed July 26, 2011, [www.insidecdcr.ca.gov/2010/01/cdcr-implements-public-safety-reforms-to-parole-supervision-expanded-incentive-credits-for-inmates/](http://www.insidecdcr.ca.gov/2010/01/cdcr-implements-public-safety-reforms-to-parole-supervision-expanded-incentive-credits-for-inmates/).

<sup>vi</sup> California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *Realignment Report: An Examination of Offenders Released from State Prison in the First Year of Public Safety Realignment* (Sacramento: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2013), [www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult\\_Research\\_Branch/Research\\_Documents/Realignment\\_1\\_Year\\_Report\\_12-23-13.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/Realignment_1_Year_Report_12-23-13.pdf); California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *2013 Outcome Evaluation Report* (Sacramento: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2013), [www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult\\_Research\\_Branch/Research\\_Documents/Outcome\\_Evaluation\\_Report\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Adult_Research_Branch/Research_Documents/Outcome_Evaluation_Report_2013.pdf).

## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA ON RECIDIVISM, INCARCERATION, AND CRIME

One-Year Returns to Prison	Prior to 2007	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Colorado	-	33.0%	33.0%	34.0%	32.0%	29.0%	30.0%
Connecticut	-	22.2%	19.5%	18.5%	18.4%	17.2%	18.3%
Georgia	-	10.5%	8.8%	8.5%	7.9%	8.2%	8.8%
North Carolina	12.7%	-	-	12.0%	-	11.1%	10.2%
Pennsylvania	-	23.4%	22.0%	20.1%	22.5%	24.4%	24.7%
Rhode Island	31.8%	-	-	30.6%	31.2%	-	33.2%
South Carolina	-	13.1%	12.3%	11.9%	9.9%	-	8.2%
Wisconsin	-	32.4%	31.6%	31.9%	30.0%	28.6%	27.0%

Three-Year Returns to Prison	Prior to 2007	2007	2008	2009	2010
Colorado	-	52.0%	52.0%	50.0%	49.0%
Connecticut	-	43.9%	41.4%	40.3%	40.0%
Georgia	-	28.9%	27.6%	26.6%	26.0%
North Carolina	35.8%	-	-	-	28.9%
Pennsylvania	-	43.9%	43.0%	38.9%	40.8%
Rhode Island	54.0%	-	-	47.8%	48.9%
South Carolina	-	33.5%	30.6%	29.4%	27.5%
Wisconsin	-	56.2%	53.4%	51.9%	51.1%

National Crime Figures, 2007 and 2012	Index Crime Rate			BJS Incarceration Rate		
	2007	2012	Change	2007	2012	Change
Colorado	3,351	2,994	-10.7%	472	392	-17.0%
Connecticut	2,772	2,423	-12.6%	413	333	-19.4%
Georgia	4,381	3,790	-13.5%	569	542	-4.8%
North Carolina	4,548	3,723	-18.1%	364	357	-1.9%
Pennsylvania	2,780	2,515	-9.5%	363	398	9.6%
Rhode Island	2,826	2,825	-0.04%	235	190	-19.2%
South Carolina	5,081	4,381	-13.8%	527	458	-13.1%
Wisconsin	3,135	2,734	-12.8%	398	357	-10.3%

<b>Index Crime Rates, by Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Colorado	3,351	3,175	3,010	2,998	2,910	2,994
Connecticut	2,772	2,798	2,649	2,471	2,428	2,423
Georgia	4,381	4,494	4,101	4,042	4,015	3,790
North Carolina	4,548	4,510	4,068	3,806	3,847	3,723
Pennsylvania	2,780	2,822	2,581	2,540	2,587	2,515
Rhode Island	2,836	3,098	2,871	2,819	2,909	2,825
South Carolina	5,081	4,971	4,584	4,508	4,518	4,381
Wisconsin	3,135	3,038	2,871	2,758	2,700	2,734

<b>Incarceration Rates, by Year</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Colorado	472	472	454	452	427	392
Connecticut	413	407	383	372	350	333
Georgia	569	543	565	563	547	542
North Carolina	364	370	372	371	362	357
Pennsylvania	363	390	407	402	403	398
Rhode Island	235	239	211	198	197	190
South Carolina	527	521	515	492	473	458
Wisconsin	398	399	395	386	385	357

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The most notable of these studies is Douglas Lipton, Robert Martinson, and Judith Wilks' 1975 publication *The Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment: A Survey of Treatment Evaluation Studies*.

<sup>2</sup> California, Delaware, Georgia, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, and West Virginia are examples of states where governors highlighted reentry and recidivism-reduction efforts in their 2014 state-of-the-state addresses.

<sup>3</sup> A requirement of the Second Chance Act Adult Reentry Demonstration program is that grantees form a reentry task force that includes state and local stakeholders. Since 2009, adult demonstration grants have been awarded to 67 counties, cities, and tribes and to state-level agencies in 30 states. In addition, in 2008, Public/Private Ventures highlighted a number of cities' reentry task forces in the publication *From Options to Action: A Roadmap for City Leaders to Connect Formerly Incarcerated Individuals to Work*.

<sup>4</sup> Council of State Governments Justice Center, *States Report Reductions in Recidivism* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2012), [csgjusticecenter.org/documents/0000/1569/9.24.12\\_Recidivism\\_Reductions\\_9-24\\_lo\\_res.pdf](http://csgjusticecenter.org/documents/0000/1569/9.24.12_Recidivism_Reductions_9-24_lo_res.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Matthew R. Durose, Alexia D. Cooper, and Howard N. Snyder, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 30 States in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), [www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rprts05p0510.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rprts05p0510.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> The Association of State Correctional Administrators' Performance Measures Committee defines recidivism as a return to prison and has developed a set of standards for measuring outcomes to promote more uniform definitions across states. For more information, visit the project's website at [www.asca.net/projects/1](http://www.asca.net/projects/1).

<sup>7</sup> Recidivism is defined as a return to prison or inmate status in Colorado within three years of release for either new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation, or non-departmental community placement. Colorado's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on fiscal year data.

<sup>8</sup> Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, *Colorado Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice 2008 Annual Report* (Denver: Colorado Department of Public

Safety, 2008), [www.cjrc.org/pdf/CCCJJ\\_2008\\_Report.pdf](http://www.cjrc.org/pdf/CCCJJ_2008_Report.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Drake, Steve Aos, and Marna Miller, "Evidence-Based Public Policy Options to Reduce Crime and Criminal Justice Costs: Implications in Washington State," *Victims and Offenders* 4 (2009): 170–96, [www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/09-00-1201.pdf](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/09-00-1201.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> For additional information, see the American Probation and Parole Association's recent publication focusing on evidence-based practices in community supervision: American Probation and Parole Association, *Effective Responses to Offender Behavior: Lessons Learned for Probation and Parole Supervision* (Lexington: American Probation and Parole Association, 2013), [www.appa-net.org/eWeb/docs/APPA/pubs/EROBLLPPS-Report.pdf](http://www.appa-net.org/eWeb/docs/APPA/pubs/EROBLLPPS-Report.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Council of State Governments Justice Center, *The National Summit on Justice Reinvestment and Public Safety* (New York: Council of State Governments Justice Center, 2011), [csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/JR\\_Summit\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/JR_Summit_Report_Final.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Available at [csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/reentry-checklists](http://csgjusticecenter.org/reentry/reentry-checklists).

<sup>13</sup> Recidivism is calculated for sentenced inmates released from CTDOC and subsequently returned to custody for new convictions or technical violations within the specified follow-up period (one, two, and three years). Connecticut's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on calendar year data.

<sup>14</sup> Probation revocations dropped from 400 in July 2003 to 200 in September 2005.

<sup>15</sup> Recidivism is calculated as the conviction for a new felony within a specified tracking period for (1) Georgia inmates released from DOC custody, and (2) Georgia probationers either starting or successfully completing their probationary sentences. Follow-up periods range from 6 months to 180 months, but the most commonly reported rate is 36 months, or 3 years. Georgia also calculates return-to-prison rates for the same array of tracking periods. Georgia's recidivism rates are based on fiscal year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on fiscal year data.

<sup>16</sup> In general, North Carolina defines recidivism broadly to cover the offender's possible span of re-involvement in the North Carolina criminal justice system, to include rearrests, reconvictions, and reincarcerations. For this

report, reincarceration is defined as any return to a North Carolina prison for a new criminal offense or revocation of parole, post-release, or probation supervision. These figures represent rates of returns to North Carolina state prisons. Official recidivism rates are produced on schedules according to North Carolina statutes. These rates should not be confused with or compared to official re-incarceration rates because different methodologies may have been employed in providing data for this report. For more information on recidivism statistics for North Carolina, please link to [www.nccourts.org/Courts/CRS/Councils/spac/Publication/Recidivism/AdultRec.asp](http://www.nccourts.org/Courts/CRS/Councils/spac/Publication/Recidivism/AdultRec.asp). North Carolina's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on fiscal year data.

<sup>17</sup> Recidivism is calculated as the return to state DOC custody (which may include prison, county jail, or a Parole Violator Center) for Pennsylvania state inmates released and subsequently re-incarcerated within the specified follow-up period (one or three years). Pennsylvania also calculates re-arrest rates; the first instance of a re-arrest or re-incarceration event is counted toward the state's overall recidivism rate. Please note that the latest 1-year and 3-year recidivism rates are not yet published and should be considered preliminary at this time. Pennsylvania's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on calendar year data.

<sup>18</sup> Rhode Island defines recidivism as sentenced releases who return to RIDOC as sentenced commitments. The release cohorts include all release events from incarceration including offenders released to probation and parole supervision, as only 8 percent of sentenced releases are released to parole supervision and upwards of 90 percent of inmates who expire a sentence have probation supervision upon release. Additionally, because Rhode Island operates a unified correctional system, both misdemeanor and felony level offenders are included in the release cohorts. As 60 to 65 percent of Rhode Island's sentenced population are committed for less than 6 months, it is possible that individual offenders can be released from sentenced

incarceration more than one time in a calendar year and therefore be included as a sentenced release multiple times in a release cohort. Due to these short sentences, RIDOC's definition of recidivism is based on release events and not individual people. Rhode Island's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on calendar year data.

<sup>19</sup> James Bonta and Don A. Andrews, *Risk-Need-Responsivity Model for Offender Assessment and Rehabilitation* (Ottawa: Public Safety Canada, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> In South Carolina, recidivism is calculated for SCDC state inmates released from custody and subsequently returned to prison within the specified follow-up period (one, two, or three years). An SCDC state inmate is an individual who received a prison sentence of greater than 90 days. South Carolina's recidivism rates are based on fiscal year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on fiscal year data.

<sup>21</sup> Bureau of Justice Assistance, *Fact Sheet on Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: October 2009 – September 2013* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), [www.bja.gov/Publications/SCA-FS-Oct09-Sep13.pdf](http://www.bja.gov/Publications/SCA-FS-Oct09-Sep13.pdf); Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Fact Sheet on OJJDP Second Chance Act Grant Program Accomplishments: July 2009 – June 2013* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), [www.ojjdp-dctat.org/help/SCAFactSheetJan2009Jun2013.pdf](http://www.ojjdp-dctat.org/help/SCAFactSheetJan2009Jun2013.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> In Wisconsin, recidivism is defined as a criminal offense resulting in a new conviction and sentence to WI DOC (probation or prison) during the specified follow-up period (one or three years). The date of the offense is the date of the recidivism event. For this report, Wisconsin also calculated re-incarceration rates which can include short-term admissions for offenders who have violated the terms and conditions of supervision, but have not been revoked. Wisconsin's recidivism rates are based on calendar year cohorts; criminal justice trends are based on calendar year data.

# JUSTICE CENTER

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