PROBATION AND RECIDIVISM IN PENNSYLVANIA

BASELINING COUNTY RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG OFFENDERS SENTENCED TO PROBATION

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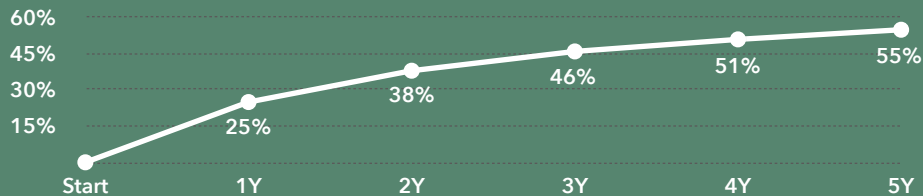
ABOUT THE STUDY and its importance

As part of a federal grant award* from the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), we studied 40,189 offenders sentenced to Probation (as the most serious sentence) in 2016 across all of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. This study is part of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's (PCCD) first-phase efforts to baseline county-supervision recidivism, and offenders with a "straight-to-Probation" sentence represent a key county-supervision subpopulation. Other subpopulations include Parole, Intermediate Punishment (IP), and Accelerated Rehabilitive Disposition (ARD). We anticipate baselining the recidivism rates of these subpopulations in the future as PCCD builds toward establishing a statewide county supervision recidivism rate.

In this study, we collected court records across every county in the state and found 40,189 unique offenders that received Probation as their most serious sentence in 2016. In 2022, we gathered and analyzed state criminal history records and calculated recidivism following each offender's sentence date to Probation. We defined recidivism as the **first instance of rearrest for any new criminal charge, regardless of grade (e.g. Summary, Misdemeanor, or Felony), following an offender receiving a Probation sentence.** Recidivism was measured up to five years following an offender's sentence date. It is worth mentioning the importance of this report. To the knowledge of the researchers, this study represents the first instance of measuring recidivism in Pennsylvania, both statewide, and within each county, among this sizable offender subpopulation, and over the longer 5-year timeframe. In that regard, the rates herein have great meaning because it is likely the first time many counties are viewing their recidivism rates for this subpopulation.

County	Probationers	Probationer Rearrest Rate & (Number Rearrested)				
		1Y	2Y	3Y	4Y	5Y
Statewide	**40,189**	**25% (10,244)**	**38% (15,381)**	**46% (18,635)**	**51% (20,606)**	**55% (21,944)**
Average Class 1 & 2	6,511	32% (2,052)	45% (2,934)	53% (3,435)	57% (3,706)	59% (3,871)
Philadelphia (1)	6,816	32% (2,182)	45% (3,078)	52% (3,574)	57% (3,856)	59% (4,017)
Allegheny (2)	6,205	31% (1,923)	45% (2,791)	53% (3,297)	57% (3,557)	60% (3,726)
Average Class 2A	2,129	20% (430)	32% (671)	39% (823)	43% (923)	46% (989)
Bucks	2,153	22% (463)	33% (701)	39% (844)	43% (935)	46% (997)
Delaware	1,660	17% (278)	28% (469)	36% (591)	41% (686)	45% (744)
Montgomery	2,573	21% (550)	33% (842)	40% (1,033)	45% (1,148)	48% (1,226)
Average Class 3	924	23% (210)	36% (330)	44% (409)	49% (456)	53% (491)
Berks	1,238	22% (275)	36% (442)	43% (534)	48% (593)	52% (648)
Chester	901	23% (204)	35% (314)	44% (391)	48% (432)	52% (464)
Cumberland	582	25% (145)	38% (223)	44% (258)	51% (293)	53% (307)
Dauphin	1,476	25% (373)	39% (570)	48% (706)	53% (779)	56% (830)
Erie	750	19% (141)	30% (222)	40% (297)	47% (351)	51% (384)
Lackawanna	189	23% (43)	36% (68)	44% (83)	49% (92)	54% (101)
Lancaster	1,029	24% (248)	38% (387)	46% (475)	50% (516)	54% (554)
Lehigh	664	23% (153)	35% (235)	45% (298)	51% (340)	55% (364)
Luzerne	795	21% (170)	36% (287)	46% (366)	51% (402)	54% (428)
Northampton	731	24% (176)	35% (252)	41% (298)	45% (329)	48% (351)
Westmoreland	1,112	24% (265)	37% (413)	46% (511)	52% (579)	56% (625)
York	1,623	20% (323)	34% (547)	42% (686)	47% (768)	51% (831)
Average Class 4	462	26% (120)	39% (182)	48% (222)	53% (245)	57% (264)
Beaver	427	36% (152)	52% (224)	60% (258)	65% (276)	69% (294)
Butler	362	31% (113)	46% (168)	54% (197)	62% (223)	65% (235)
Cambria	520	24% (124)	39% (201)	49% (253)	53% (273)	56% (292)
Centre	456	17% (77)	27% (122)	35% (161)	39% (179)	44% (202)
Fayette	519	25% (130)	42% (217)	52% (268)	57% (296)	61% (317)
Franklin	457	25% (114)	37% (168)	44% (202)	49% (221)	52% (238)
Monroe	275	21% (56)	29% (80)	39% (108)	44% (122)	49% (135)
Schuylkill	466	25% (115)	38% (176)	46% (215)	51% (237)	55% (256)
Washington	674	29% (197)	41% (279)	49% (333)	56% (375)	60% (403)
Average Class 5	317	24% (76)	36% (113)	43% (137)	50% (157)	53% (169)
Adams	276	20% (55)	29% (79)	39% (107)	45% (124)	47% (131)
Blair	510	26% (134)	39% (200)	45% (230)	52% (264)	56% (285)
Lawrence	90	27% (24)	33% (29)	44% (39)	52% (46)	58% (52)
Lebanon	415	21% (85)	30% (124)	37% (155)	44% (181)	48% (197)
Lycoming	540	24% (131)	39% (210)	47% (252)	53% (283)	56% (302)
Mercer	170	28% (47)	36% (62)	45% (75)	50% (85)	52% (88)
Northumberland	218	25% (55)	39% (85)	47% (101)	54% (116)	59% (128)

RECIDIVISM RATES BY EXPOSURE TIMEFRAME

Line chart showing: Start, 1Y 25%, 2Y 38%, 3Y 46%, 4Y 51%, 5Y 55%
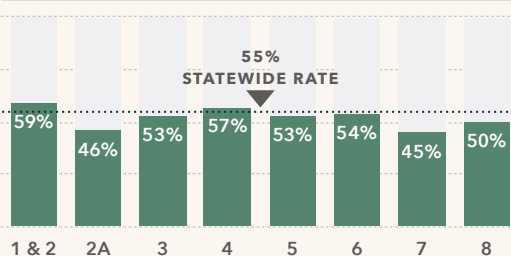
REARREST RATES findings overview

Overall, 55% of 40,189 offenders that received Probation as the most serious sentence in 2016, were rearrested within 5 years of their sentence date.
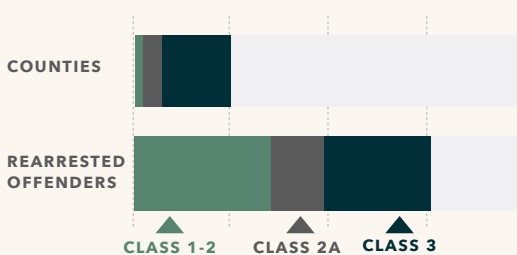
Average 5Y Rearrest, By County Class

Bar chart — 55% STATEWIDE RATE. 1 & 2: 59%, 2A: 46%, 3: 53%, 4: 57%, 5: 53%, 6: 54%, 7: 45%, 8: 50%

In analyzing rearrest rates by the average county within a particular county class, we find that the average Class 1-2 (59%) and Class 4 (57%) counties have slightly higher rearrest rates than the 55% statewide rate. The average Class 3, 5, 6, and 8 counties all have rates below the statewide rate, but they are all within a range (50%-54%) near the statewide rate. The average Class 2A (46%) and Class 7 (45%) counties have the lowest recidivism rates of all county classes.

The five most populated counties in Class 1, 2, and 2A accounted for nearly half (49%) of all rearrested offenders. When we add-in the 12 Class 3 counties, we find that 17 of 67 counties accounted for 76% of all rearrested offenders. Put another way, a quarter of all Pennsylvania counties accounted for three-quarters of all rearrested offenders.

Share of Rearrested Offenders By Three County Classes

COUNTIES / REARRESTED OFFENDERS — CLASS 1-2, CLASS 2A, CLASS 3

		Probationer Rearrest Rate & (Number Rearrested)				
County	Probationers	1Y	2Y	3Y	4Y	5Y
Average Class 6	119	22% (26)	34% (40)	44% (52)	50% (59)	54% (64)
Armstrong	101	39% (38)	49% (48)	53% (54)	60% (61)	65% (65)
Bedford	133	16% (20)	29% (39)	37% (49)	49% (64)	54% (72)
Bradford	87	14% (11)	28% (24)	33% (28)	37% (32)	40% (35)
Carbon	240	23% (55)	35% (85)	53% (126)	58% (139)	62% (148)
Clarion	92	16% (15)	28% (26)	41% (38)	46% (41)	49% (44)
Clearfield	141	25% (35)	35% (48)	42% (58)	50% (69)	56% (79)
Clinton	144	26% (36)	42% (60)	50% (72)	53% (76)	56% (80)
Columbia	117	19% (22)	31% (35)	47% (55)	59% (69)	62% (72)
Crawford	147	21% (31)	31% (44)	41% (60)	47% (69)	53% (77)
Elk	75	20% (15)	35% (26)	41% (30)	52% (39)	59% (44)
Greene	44	36% (16)	41% (17)	45% (20)	55% (23)	66% (28)
Huntingdon	178	28% (50)	42% (73)	50% (89)	55% (98)	60% (105)
Indiana	216	32% (70)	40% (87)	51% (110)	56% (121)	61% (131)
Jefferson	128	20% (26)	31% (40)	42% (54)	48% (61)	52% (66)
McKean	63	16% (10)	24% (14)	41% (25)	48% (30)	48% (30)
Mifflin	147	24% (34)	39% (56)	46% (66)	50% (72)	54% (79)
Perry	135	19% (25)	38% (51)	46% (62)	57% (77)	61% (81)
Pike	74	16% (12)	27% (20)	32% (23)	41% (29)	46% (34)
Somerset	176	19% (33)	28% (49)	38% (66)	44% (77)	47% (82)
Susquehanna	46	13% (6)	33% (15)	43% (19)	46% (20)	48% (22)
Tioga	96	18% (16)	26% (25)	32% (31)	41% (39)	43% (40)
Venango	167	19% (32)	34% (55)	45% (75)	50% (83)	53% (87)
Warren	56	11% (6)	20% (11)	27% (14)	34% (18)	41% (23)
Wayne	46	15% (6)	26% (12)	41% (19)	41% (19)	48% (22)
Average Class 7	87	15% (13)	28% (24)	36% (31)	40% (35)	45% (39)
Juniata	65	15% (10)	32% (20)	38% (25)	48% (31)	51% (32)
Snyder	152	16% (23)	32% (48)	38% (57)	41% (63)	45% (67)
Union	58	21% (12)	28% (16)	48% (27)	52% (30)	64% (36)
Wyoming	74	12% (8)	15% (10)	20% (14)	24% (17)	31% (22)
Average Class 8	20	20% (4)	25% (5)	35% (7)	45% (9)	50% (10)
Cameron	13	46% (6)	62% (7)	62% (7)	77% (10)	85% (10)
Forest	2	50% (1)	50% (1)	50% (1)	100% (2)	100% (2)
Fulton	29	14% (3)	24% (6)	31% (8)	41% (11)	52% (15)
Montour	28	14% (3)	25% (7)	46% (12)	57% (16)	61% (17)
Potter	42	24% (9)	26% (11)	31% (12)	31% (12)	33% (13)
Sullivan	5	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	20% (1)