



Bureau of Justice Statistics

# Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2008 and 2012

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# Presentation overview

1. How is recidivism defined
2. New BJS studies based on largest cohort and follow-up period to date
3. Comparing recidivism rates over time



# Recidivism is defined multiple ways



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# Recidivism measures include three common traits

## Starting event

Placed on probation  
Released from prison

## Outcome measure

Arrest  
Conviction  
Return to prison

## Follow-up period

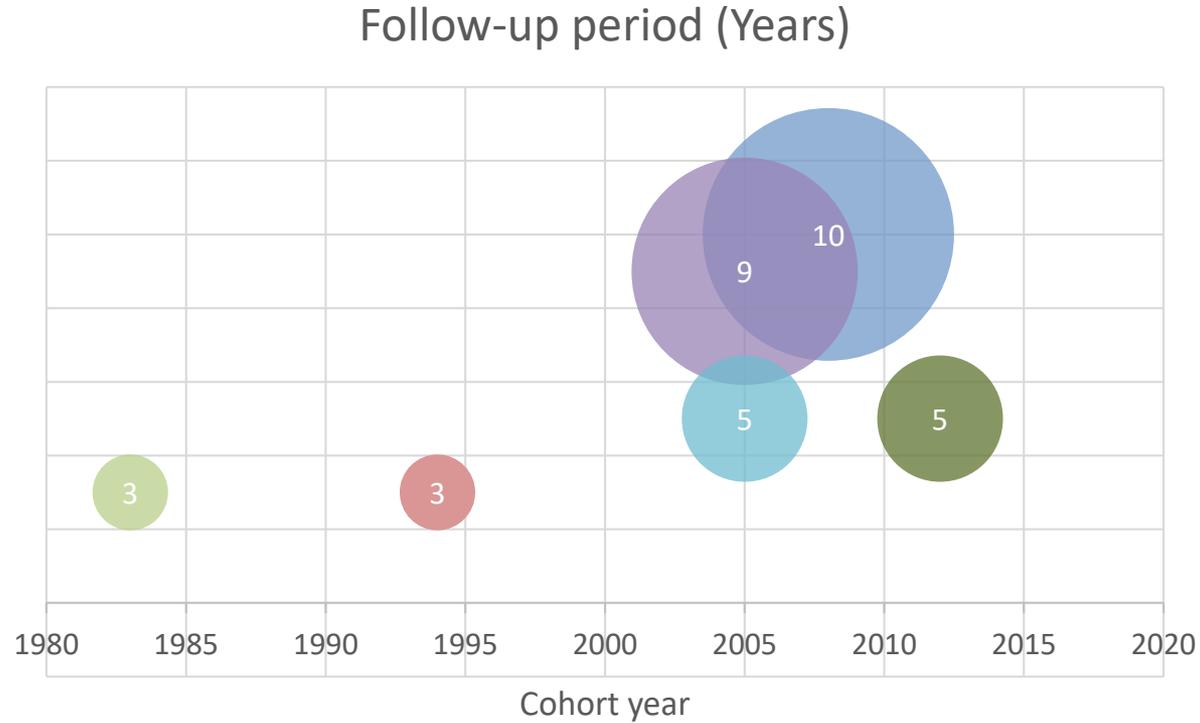
1 year  
3 years  
5 years  
8 years  
10 years



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# BJS has studied recidivism since the early 1980's



# Multiple data sources used for sample selection and outcome measures

## Prisoner records

Prison admission and release dates

Demographic characteristics

Prison commitment offenses

Sentence length

## Criminal history data

Data prior to and following prison release

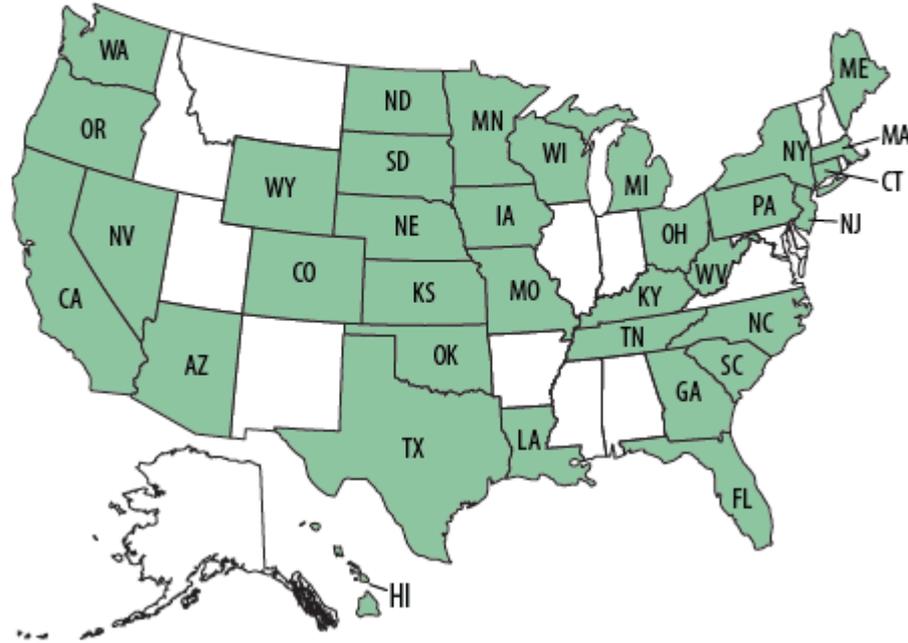
Data within and outside the state where released

- Arrests
- Convictions
- Incarcerations



Recidivism of Prisoners  
Released in 34 States in 2012:  
A 5-Year Follow-Up Period

# Largest sample for a BJS recidivism study to date



- State prisoners released in 2012 in 34 states
- Sampled 92,100 to represent 408,300 prisoners
- 79% of all prisoners released nationwide
- 5-year follow-up period

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



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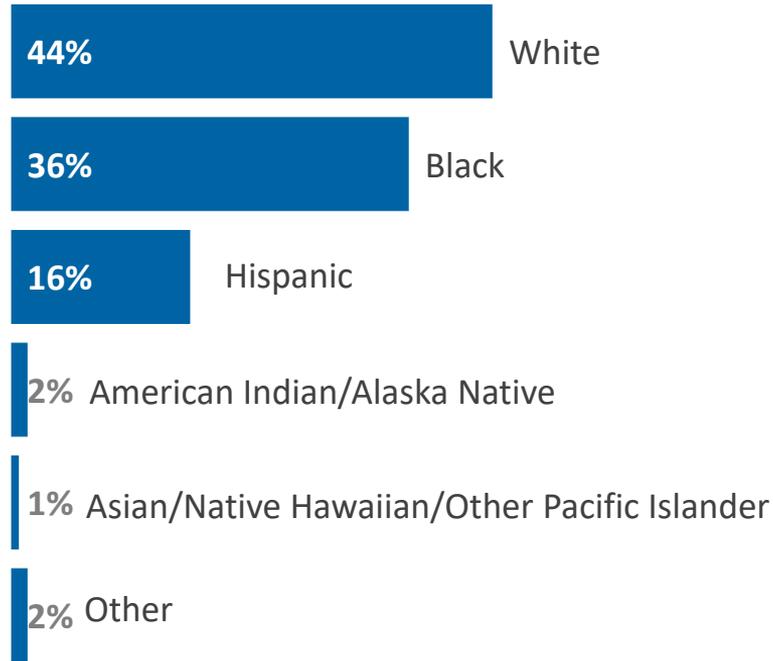
# Males accounted for 9 in 10 prisoners released in 2012



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



# White prisoners comprised the largest percentage of prisoners released in 2012



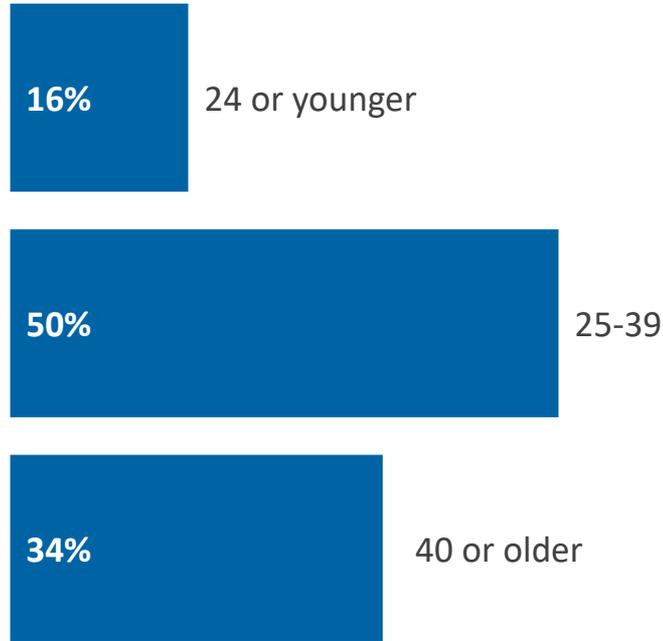
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



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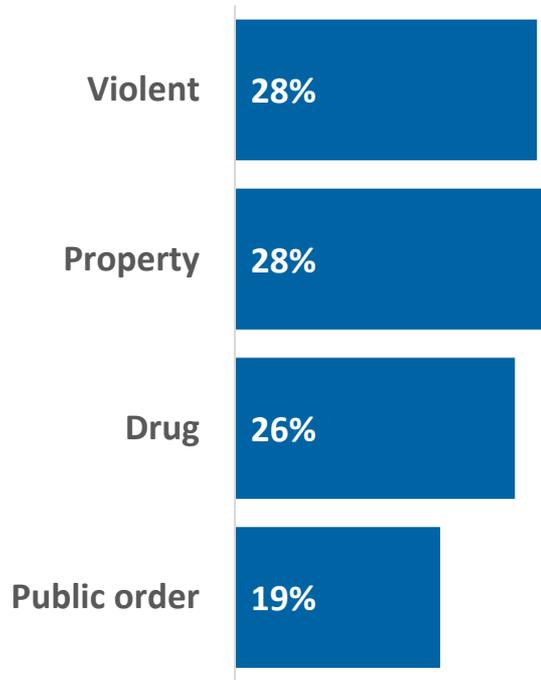
# The median age of prisoners released in 2012 was 33



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



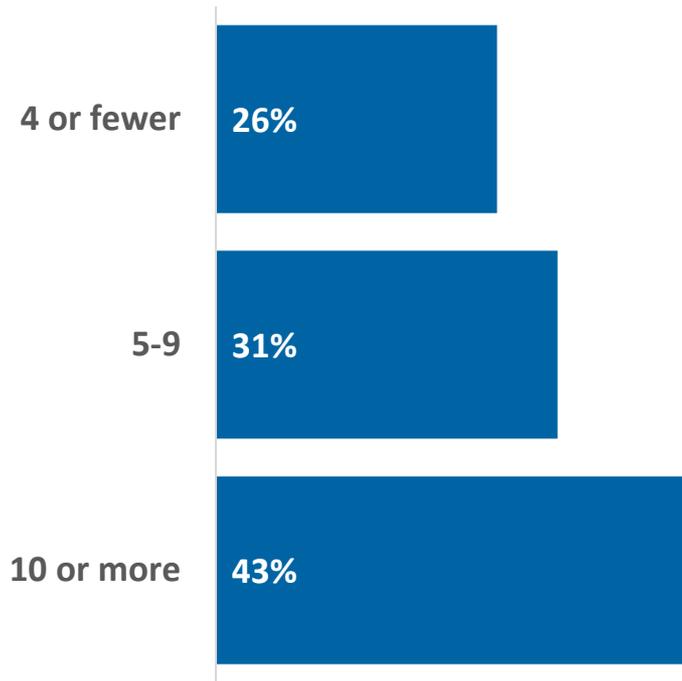
# About 1 in 4 prisoners were serving time for a violent offense



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



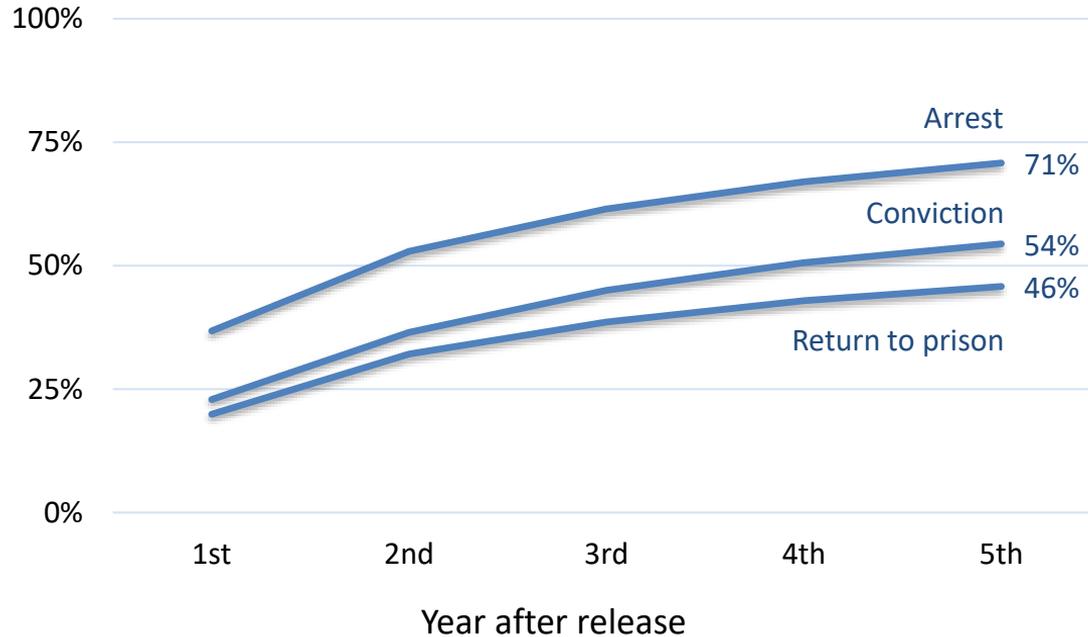
# About 4 in 10 prisoners had 10 or more prior arrests



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



# 7 in 10 prisoners released were arrested and about half returned to prison

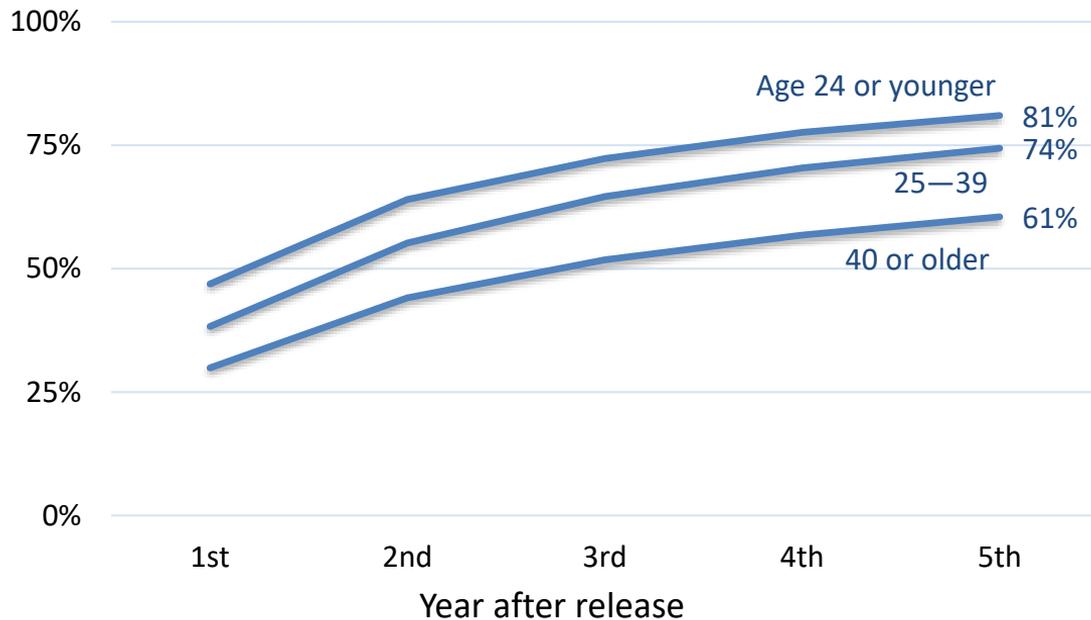


Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



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# Younger persons were arrested at higher rates than older persons following release

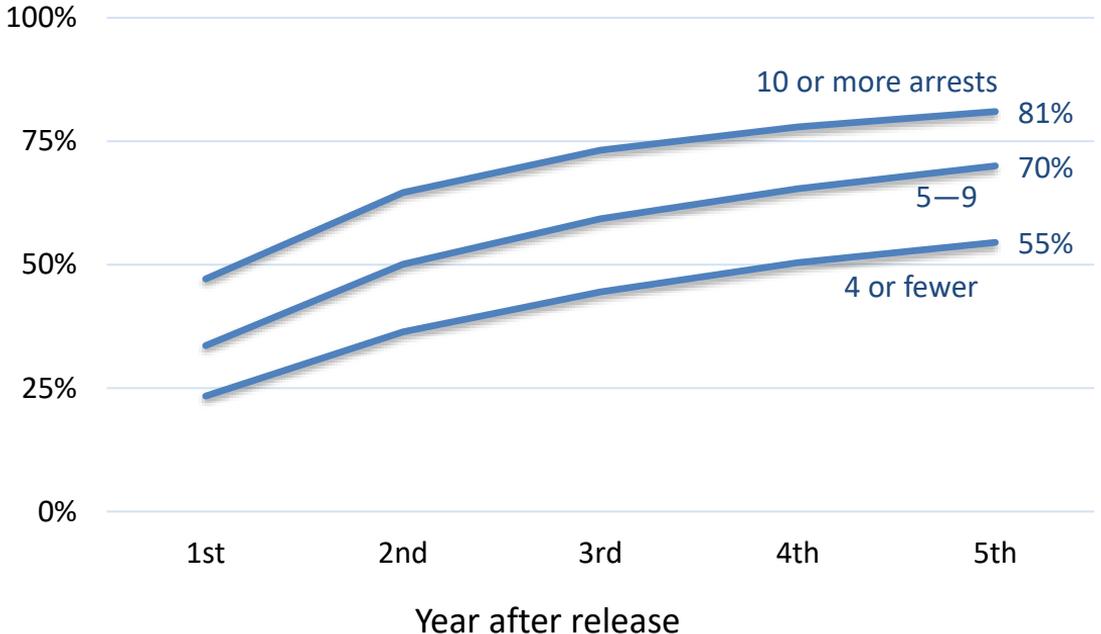


Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.

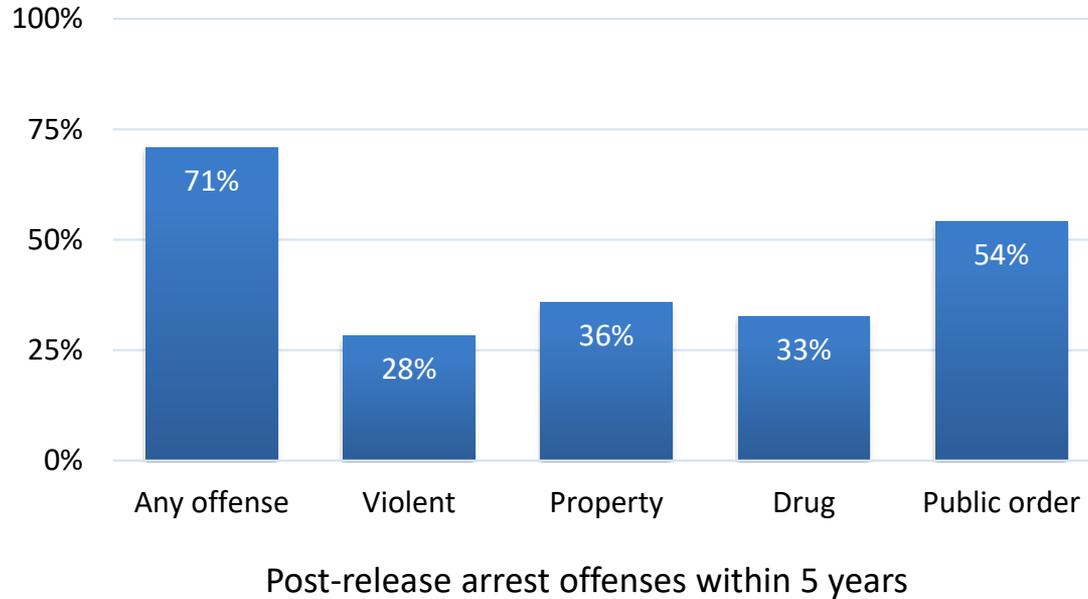


# Those with more prior arrests in their criminal history were re-arrested at higher rates



Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.  
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.

# 1 in 3 were arrested for a drug offense



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



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# Other key findings

- About 1 in 10 were arrested within 5 years outside of the state that released them.
- An estimated 1.1 million arrests occurred within 5 years.
- The annual arrest percentage declined from 37% in Year 1 to 26% in Year 5.

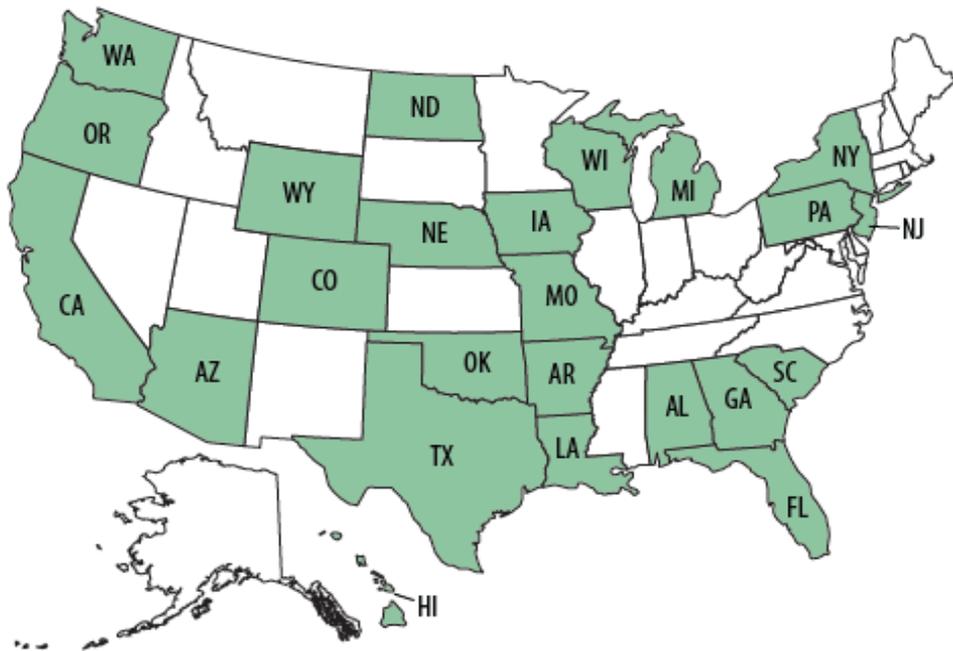
Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



Recidivism of Prisoners  
Released in 24 States in 2008:  
A 10-Year Follow-Up Period

# Longest follow-up period for a BJS recidivism study to date



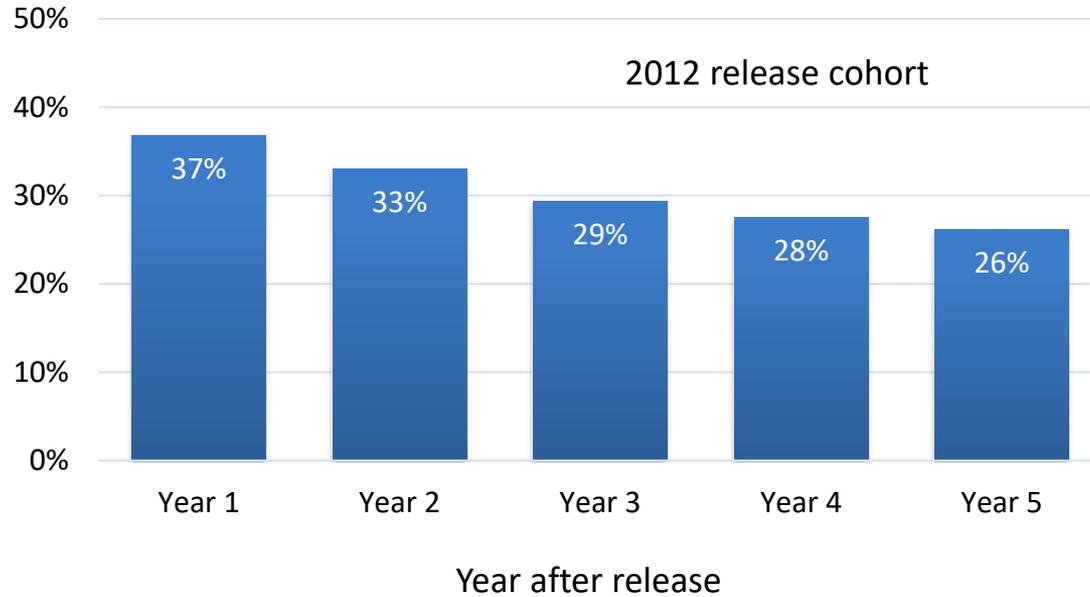
- State prisoners released in 2008 in 24 states
- Sampled 73,600 to represent 409,300 prisoners
- 69% of all prisoners released nationwide
- 10-year follow-up period

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008: A 10-Year Follow-Up Period (2008–2018)*. September 2021.



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# Annual arrest rates declined from Year 1 to Year 5

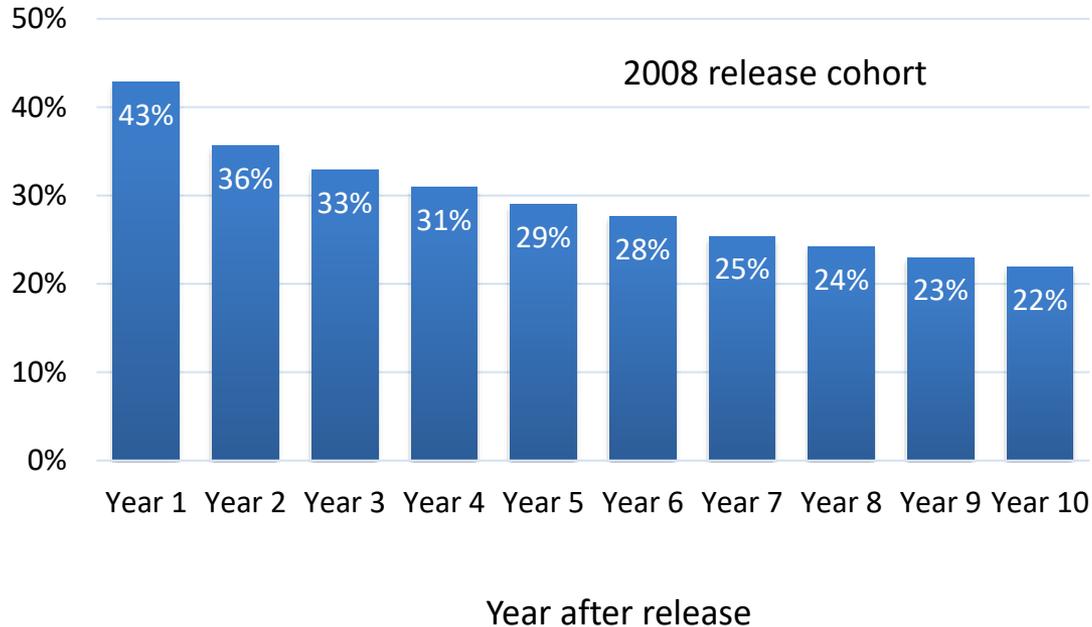


Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



# Annual arrest rates declined from Year 5 to Year 10

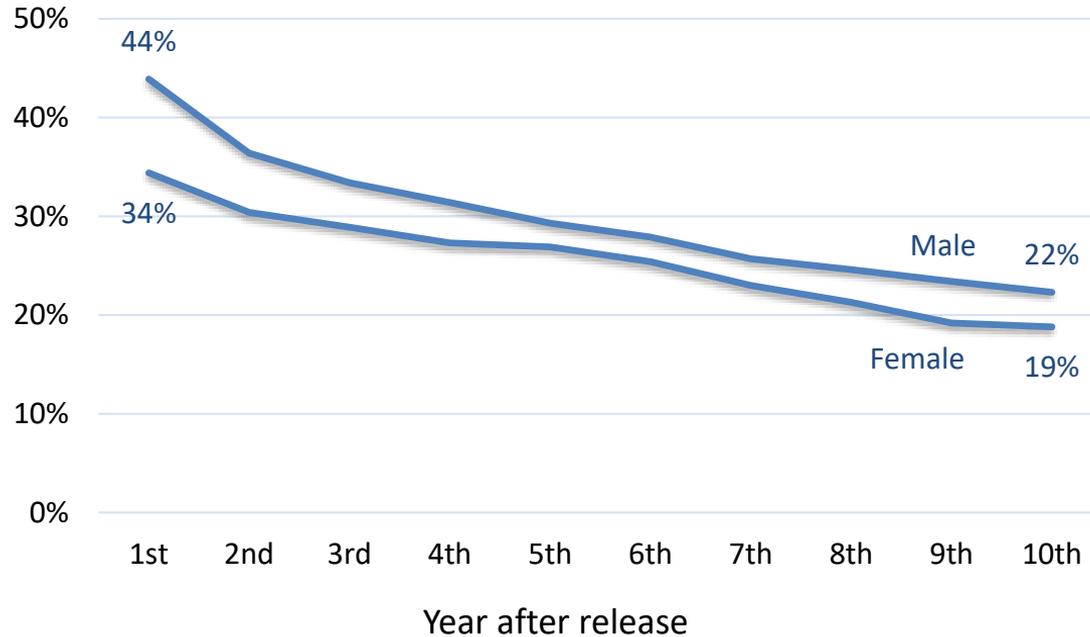


Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008: A 10-Year Follow-Up Period (2008–2018)*. September 2021.



# Females had lower arrest rates than males from Year 1 to Year 10



Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

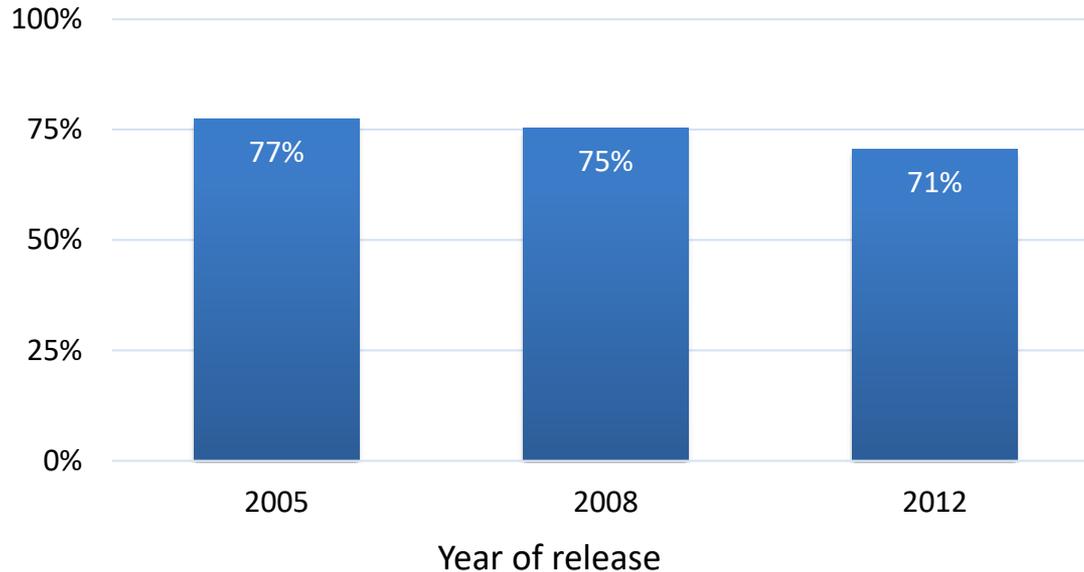
Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 24 States in 2008: A 10-Year Follow-Up Period (2008–2018)*. September 2021.



# Have recidivism rates changed over time?



# Percent arrested for any offense within 5 years declined from 2005 to 2012

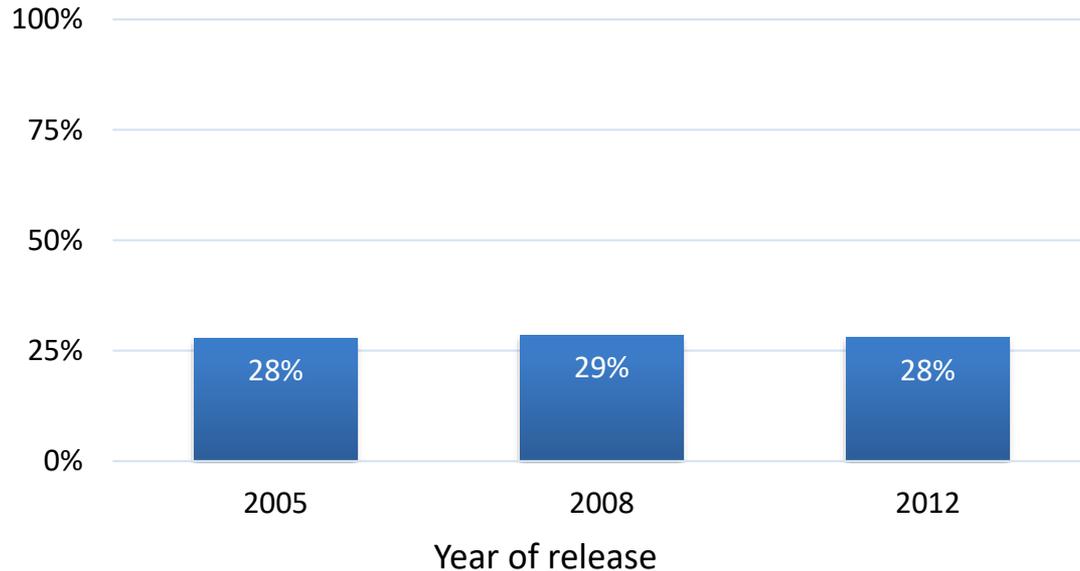


Note: All reported differences are significant at the 95% confidence level.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.



# Percent arrested for a violent offense within 5 years was similar among those released in 2005 and 2012



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)*. July 2021.





The image shows a screenshot of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) website. At the top left is the BJS logo, which includes the Department of Justice seal and the text "BJS Bureau of Justice Statistics". To the right of the logo are links for "Contact Us", "Subscribe", and "Sign In". Below these links is a search bar with the word "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. A navigation menu below the search bar lists "About BJS", "Topics", "Publications", "Data", "Funding & Awards", "Programs", "News", and "Resources", each with a dropdown arrow. The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "Bureau of Justice Statistics" in white, followed by "Your Source for Criminal Justice Statistics" and a yellow button that says "Learn more about BJS". The background of the banner shows faint data charts and graphs.

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