



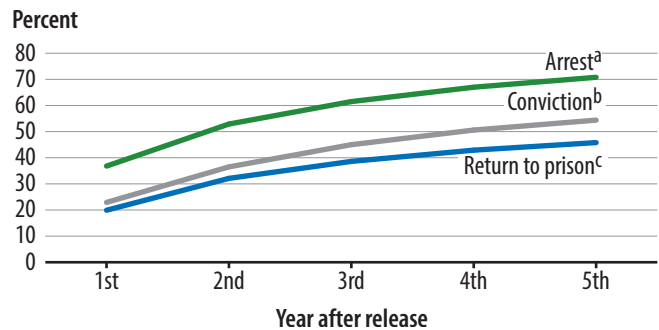
# Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 34 States in 2012: A 5-Year Follow-Up Period (2012–2017)

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Among state prisoners released in 2012 across 34 states, 62% were arrested within 3 years, and 71% were arrested within 5 years (figure 1). Among prisoners released in 2012 across 21 states with available data on persons returned to prison, 39% had either a parole or probation violation or an arrest for a new offense within 3 years that led to imprisonment, and 46% had a parole or probation violation or an arrest within 5 years that led to imprisonment.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) used prisoner records from the National Corrections Reporting Program and criminal history data to analyze the post-release offending patterns of former prisoners both within and outside of the state where they were imprisoned. This study randomly sampled about 92,100 released prisoners to represent the approximately 408,300 state prisoners released across 34 states in 2012. These 34 states were responsible for 79% of all persons released from state prisons that year nationwide. (See *Methodology*.)

**FIGURE 1**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 2012 who had a new arrest, conviction, or return to prison after release, by year following release



Note: See tables 4, 7, and 8 for estimates and appendix tables 2, 5, and 6 for standard errors.

<sup>a</sup>Estimates are based on prisoners released across the 34 states in the study who had a new arrest.

<sup>b</sup>Estimates are based on prisoners released across the 31 states that could provide the necessary court data.

<sup>c</sup>Estimates are based on prisoners released across the 21 states that could provide the necessary data on persons returned to prison for a probation or parole violation or an arrest that led to a new sentence.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- About 6 in 10 (62%) prisoners released across 34 states in 2012 were arrested within 3 years, and 7 in 10 (71%) were arrested within 5 years.
- Nearly half (46%) of prisoners released in 2012 returned to prison within 5 years for a parole or probation violation or a new sentence.
- Eleven percent of prisoners released in 2012 were arrested within 5 years outside of the state that released them.
- Eighty-one percent of prisoners age 24 or younger at release in 2012 were arrested within 5 years of release, compared to 74% of those ages 25 to 39 and 61% of those age 40 or older.
- During the 5-year follow-up period, an estimated 1.1 million arrests occurred among the approximately 408,300 prisoners released in 2012.
- Sixty-two percent of drug offenders released from prison in 2012 were arrested for a nondrug crime within 5 years.
- The annual arrest percentage of prisoners released in 2012 declined from 37% in Year 1 to 26% in Year 5.
- Of prisoners released in the 19 states in the 2005, 2008, and 2012 recidivism studies, the percentage arrested within 5 years declined from 77% of 2005 releases, to 75% of 2008 releases, to 71% of 2012 releases.

## The median age of prisoners released in 2012 was 33

Among state prisoners released across 34 states in 2012, approximately 9 in 10 (89%) were male (table 1). White (44%) prisoners comprised the largest group, followed by black (36%) and Hispanic (16%) prisoners. Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander accounted for 1%; American Indian or Alaska Native

**TABLE 1**  
Characteristics of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012

Characteristic	Percent	Standard error
All released prisoners	100%	~
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	89.0%	0.01%
Female	11.0	0.01
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White <sup>a</sup>	43.8%	0.22%
Black <sup>a</sup>	36.2	0.22
Hispanic	16.3	0.19
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	1.5	0.04
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	0.7	0.02
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	1.5	0.06
<b>Age at release</b>		
24 or younger	16.2%	0.18%
25–39	49.9	0.23
25–29	19.2	0.19
30–34	17.9	0.18
35–39	12.7	0.15
40 or older	33.9	0.22
40–54	28.4	0.21
55–64	4.7	0.10
65 or older	0.8	0.04
Median	33 yrs.	~
Mean	35.6	0.05 yrs.
<b>Type of prison admission</b>		
New court commitment	79.4%	0.19%
Conditional release violation	18.4	0.18
Other admission	2.2	0.05
<b>Type of prison release</b>		
Conditional	71.7%	0.19%
Unconditional	28.3	0.19
<b>Number of released prisoners</b>	408,300	128

Note: Data on prisoners' sex were reported for 100% of cases; age at release, for over 99%; race or ethnicity, for over 99%; type of prison admission, for 97%; and type of prison release, for 94%. Percentages exclude missing data. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

~Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

and other races made up 2% each. Half (50%) of the prisoners were ages 25 to 39 at the time of release, and a third (34%) were age 40 or older. The median age of prisoners at release was 33.

Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) prisoners released in 2012 had been admitted to prison for a new court commitment, while just under 2 in 10 (18%) had been admitted for violating their conditional release to the community on parole or probation. Other types of admissions, such as persons returning from appeal or bond, made up the remaining 2%. The majority (72%) of released prisoners were granted conditional release and placed on parole, probation, or some other form of community supervision.

## About 1 in 4 prisoners released in 2012 were serving time for a violent offense

A similar percentage of prisoners released across 34 states in 2012 were serving time for a violent (28%), property (28%), or drug (26%) offense (table 2).

**TABLE 2**  
Most serious commitment offense of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012

Most serious commitment offense	Percent	Standard error
All released prisoners	100%	~
<b>Violent</b>		
Homicide	2.0	<0.01
Rape/sexual assault	4.9	<0.01
Robbery	8.0	0.14
Assault	10.0	0.15
Other violent	2.6	0.07
<b>Property</b>		
Burglary	12.4	0.17
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	8.2	0.13
Fraud/forgery	4.1	0.08
Other property	3.5	0.08
<b>Drug</b>		
Possession	7.5	0.13
Trafficking	11.4	0.15
Other drug	6.5	0.09
<b>Public order</b>		
Weapons	4.8	0.11
Other public order	14.0	0.16
<b>Number of released prisoners</b>	408,300	128

Note: Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

Prisoners may have been serving time for multiple offenses and were categorized by the commitment offense with the longest maximum sentence.

Forty-three percent of prisoners released in 2012 had 10 or more prior arrests, compared to 31% who had 5 to 9, and 26% who had 4 or fewer (table 3). An estimated 85% were first arrested when they were age 24 or younger, including 30% whose first arrest occurred when they were age 17 or younger. Juvenile offenses may be excluded from this analysis for persons not prosecuted as an adult or due to state laws and practices regarding record sealing or expungement.

**TABLE 3**  
**Prior criminal history of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012**

	Percent	Standard error
All released prisoners	100%	~
<b>Prior arrests per released prisoner<sup>a</sup></b>		
4 or fewer	25.6%	0.19%
2 or fewer	11.6	0.13
3–4	14.0	0.15
5–9	31.1	0.21
10 or more	43.3	0.22
Median	8 arsts.	~
Mean	10.8	0.04 arsts.
<b>Prior convictions per released prisoner<sup>b</sup></b>		
Median	4	~
Mean	5.4	0.02
<b>Age at first arrest</b>		
17 or younger	30.3%	0.22%
18–19	32.2	0.21
20–24	22.7	0.19
25–29	7.3	0.11
30–34	3.4	0.08
35–39	1.8	0.05
40 or older	2.2	0.06

Note: Data on prisoners' age at first arrest were reported for over 99% of cases. Juvenile offenses may be excluded from this analysis for persons not prosecuted as an adult or due to state laws and practices regarding record sealing or expungement. Percentages exclude missing data. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

~Not applicable.

<sup>a</sup>Includes arrests in the prisoners' criminal history and the arrest that resulted in the imprisonment.

<sup>b</sup>Includes convictions prior to the prisoners' date of release in 2012 and the conviction that resulted in the imprisonment.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## 7 in 10 state prisoners were arrested within 5 years of release

During the first year after their release from state prison in 2012, about 4 in 10 (37%) prisoners were arrested at least once either within or outside of the state that released them (table 4). About 6 in 10 (62%) were arrested within the first 3 years, while 7 in 10 (71%) were arrested within 5 years. Among released prisoners, males were more likely than females to be arrested during each cumulative year following

release. At the end of the 5-year follow-up period, the cumulative arrest percentage was 72% for males and 63% for females.

One year after release from prison, black (38%) and Hispanic (39%) prisoners had been arrested at similar rates, while the rate for white prisoners (35%) was lower. At the end of the 5-year follow-up period, white (70%) and Hispanic (67%) prisoners had lower cumulative arrest percentages than black prisoners (74%).

**TABLE 4**

**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	408,300	36.8%	52.9%	61.5%	67.0%	70.8%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male*	363,200	37.7%	54.0%	62.6%	68.0%	71.7%
Female	45,100	29.6 †	44.2 †	52.9 †	59.0 †	63.1 †
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White <sup>a</sup> *	179,000	35.1%	50.7%	59.8%	65.6%	69.5%
Black <sup>a</sup>	147,700	37.8 †	55.4 †	64.4 †	70.0 †	74.0 †
Hispanic	66,500	38.9 †	52.6 †	59.4	63.7 †	66.9 †
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	6,200	43.3 †	60.4 †	68.9 †	74.9 †	78.9 †
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	2,700	38.0	51.5	57.3	61.5 †	64.8 †
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	6,100	33.3	50.3	59.3	63.5	67.8
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger*	66,200	46.9%	64.0%	72.3%	77.6%	81.0%
25–39	203,600	38.3 †	55.2 †	64.6 †	70.4 †	74.4 †
40 or older	138,400	29.9 †	44.1 †	51.8 †	56.8 †	60.5 †
40–54	116,100	31.6	46.5	54.8	59.9	63.8
55–64	19,100	22.3	33.8	39.0	43.4	46.3
65 or older	3,100	13.8	17.7	21.3	23.9	25.6

Note: Data on prisoners' sex were reported for 100% of cases; age at release, for over 99%; and race or ethnicity, for over 99%. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. See appendix table 2 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level. The significance tests were not conducted on the age subcategories.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., "white" refers to non-Hispanic whites and "black" refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

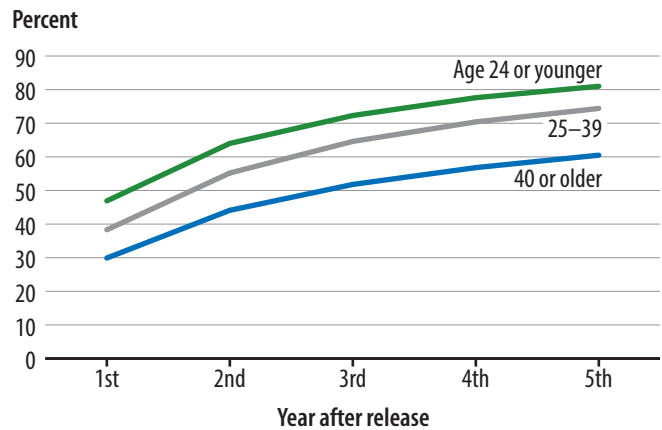
<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

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

Eighty-one percent of state prisoners who were age 24 or younger at release in 2012 were arrested within 5 years, compared to 74% of those ages 25 to 39 and 61% of those age 40 or older (figure 2). Among prisoners released at age 65 or older, 1 in 4 (26%) were arrested within 5 years (not shown).

**FIGURE 2**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by age at release and year following release



Note: Data on prisoners' age at release were reported for over 99% of cases. See table 4 for estimates and appendix table 2 for standard errors. Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**About two-thirds of prisoners released after serving time for a violent offense were arrested for any crime within 5 years**

More than half (56%) of state prisoners released in 2012 after serving time for a violent offense were arrested within 3 years for any type of offense, while about two-thirds were arrested within 5 years (table 5). Prisoners released after serving time for a violent offense (65%) were less likely to have been arrested for any type of crime within 5 years than prisoners released after serving time for a property (78%), a drug (70%), or a public order (69%) offense.

Among prisoners released after serving time for a violent offense, the percentage arrested for any offense within 5 years was lower for those in prison for

homicide (41%) or sexual assault (48%) than those in prison for robbery (73%) or assault (72%). Among prisoners released after serving time for a property offense, the 5-year cumulative arrest percentage was lower for those in prison for fraud or forgery (73%) than those in prison for burglary (79%) or larceny (79%).

About a third (34%) of released prisoners who were admitted on a new court commitment were arrested during the first year after release, compared to about half (48%) of those admitted for a conditional release violation. By the end of the 5-year follow-up period, the cumulative arrest percentage increased to 69% among released prisoners who had been admitted on a new court commitment and 80% among those admitted for a conditional release violation.

**TABLE 5**  
**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by most serious commitment offense, type of prison admission, and year following release**

	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	408,300	36.8%	52.9%	61.5%	67.0%	70.8%
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	112,300	33.0%	47.8%	56.3%	61.5%	65.2%
Homicide <sup>a</sup>	8,200	16.3	26.1	32.6	37.8	41.3
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	5,400	16.5	25.7	32.0	37.1	40.3
Negligent manslaughter	2,600	16.1	26.8	33.7	39.3	43.6
Rape/sexual assault	20,000	22.9	33.4	39.9	44.5	48.0
Robbery	32,600	36.8	53.7	63.2	68.8	72.8
Assault	40,900	37.9	53.7	63.0	68.2	71.9
Other violent	10,600	34.9	50.8	59.1	63.8	67.2
Property	115,600	44.0	60.9	69.7	74.8	78.3
Burglary	50,700	42.8	60.4	70.0	75.3	78.9
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	33,700	47.7	64.2	72.3	76.5	79.3
Fraud/forgery	16,900	39.3	54.9	63.1	69.3	73.3
Other property	14,300	45.2	61.6	70.4	75.7	79.9
Drug	103,900	34.3	51.0	59.7	65.6	69.8
Possession	30,800	38.4	55.2	63.4	68.7	73.0
Trafficking	46,700	32.3	48.1	56.9	63.0	67.2
Other drug	26,400	33.2	51.1	60.3	66.9	70.6
Public order	76,500	35.0	50.8	59.3	64.9	68.9
Weapons	19,500	40.1	55.6	64.5	70.1	73.3
Other public order	57,000	33.2	49.2	57.5	63.1	67.4
<b>Type of prison admission<sup>b</sup></b>						
New court commitment	315,700	34.2%	50.2%	59.0%	64.7%	68.6%
Conditional release violation	73,200	47.6	63.9	71.9	76.4	79.7

Note: Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. Data on prisoners' type of prison admission were reported for 97% of cases. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. See appendix table 3 for standard errors.

<sup>a</sup>Includes unspecified homicide offenses that are not shown separately.

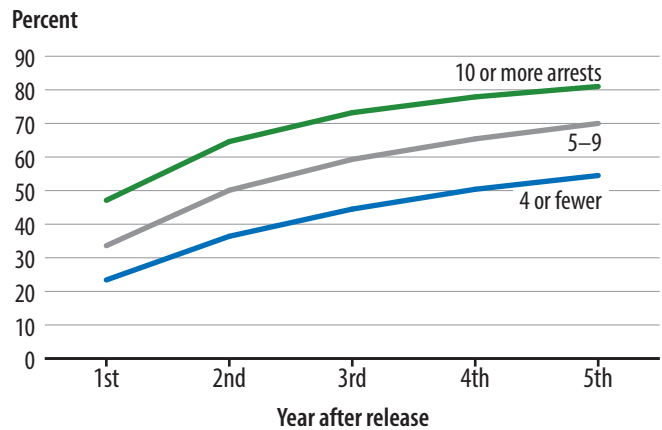
<sup>b</sup>Excludes missing data.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

Prisoners with more prior arrests in their criminal history were arrested at higher rates during the post-release follow-up period. Fifty-five percent of prisoners with 4 or fewer prior arrests were arrested during the 5 years following release, compared to 70% of those with 5 to 9 prior arrests, and 81% of those with 10 or more prior arrests (figure 3).

Although juvenile offenses may be excluded from this analysis for persons not prosecuted as an adult or due to state laws and practices regarding record sealing or expungement, this study found that prisoners who were first arrested at younger ages were more likely than those first arrested at older ages to be arrested following release. At the end of the 5-year follow-up period, prisoners whose first arrest in their criminal history occurred before they were age 18 (80%) were more likely to be arrested following release than prisoners whose first arrest occurred at age 18 or older (table 6).

**FIGURE 3**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by number of prior arrests and year following release



Note: Number of prior arrests includes arrests in the prisoners' criminal history and the arrest that resulted in the imprisonment. Juvenile offenses may be excluded from this analysis for persons not prosecuted as an adult or due to state laws and practices regarding record sealing or expungement. See table 6 for estimates and appendix table 4 for standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**TABLE 6**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by number of prior arrests, age at first arrest, and year following release

	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	408,300	36.8%	52.9%	61.5%	67.0%	70.8%
<b>Number of prior arrests<sup>a</sup></b>						
4 or fewer*	104,500	23.4%	36.4%	44.5%	50.4%	54.5%
2 or fewer	47,300	19.5	30.7	37.9	43.4	47.6
3–4	57,300	26.6	41.1	50.0	56.1	60.3
5–9	127,100	33.6 †	50.1 †	59.3 †	65.4 †	70.0 †
10 or more	176,600	47.1 †	64.6 †	73.2 †	77.9 †	81.0 †
<b>Age at first arrest<sup>b</sup></b>						
17 or younger*	123,200	44.9%	62.7%	71.7%	76.6%	80.0%
18–19	131,000	39.4 †	56.9 †	65.8 †	71.7 †	75.6 †
20–24	92,400	31.5 †	46.8 †	55.8 †	61.8 †	65.9 †
25–29	29,800	27.3 †	40.0 †	48.3 †	53.8 †	57.7 †
30–34	13,900	22.8 †	33.4 †	39.9 †	44.3 †	49.0 †
35–39	7,300	18.1 †	27.6 †	33.7 †	38.0 †	42.5 †
40 or older	9,000	13.9 †	19.3 †	23.3 †	26.9 †	29.1 †

Note: Data on prisoners' age at first arrest were reported for over 99% of cases. Juvenile offenses may be excluded from this analysis for persons not prosecuted as an adult or due to state laws and practices regarding record sealing or expungement. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. See appendix table 4 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level. The significance tests were not conducted on the prior arrest subcategories.

<sup>a</sup>Number of prior arrests includes arrests in the prisoners' criminal history and the arrest that resulted in the imprisonment.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes missing data.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## About half of released prisoners had an arrest within 5 years that led to a conviction

The percentage of prisoners who had an arrest during the 5 years following release that resulted in a court conviction was based on prisoners released from the 31 of 34 states in the study that had the necessary data. (See *Methodology*.) Because not all arrests result in a conviction, recidivism rates based on the court conviction measure are lower than those based on a new arrest.

About half (54%) of released prisoners had an arrest within 5 years that led to a conviction (**table 7**). Males (55%) were more likely than females (47%) to have an arrest within 5 years that resulted in a conviction. During the 5 years following release, released prisoners age 24 or younger (65%) were more likely than those ages 25 to 39 (58%) and those age 40 or older (44%) to have an arrest that led to a conviction.

**TABLE 7**

**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 31 states in 2012 who had an arrest after release that led to a conviction, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	22.9%	36.5%	45.0%	50.6%	54.4%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male*	23.6%	37.4%	46.0%	51.6%	55.4%
Female	16.6 †	29.0 †	36.7 †	42.4 †	46.5 †
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White <sup>a*</sup>	21.7%	34.9%	43.5%	49.4%	53.5%
Black <sup>a</sup>	23.5 †	38.3 †	47.1 †	52.9 †	56.7 †
Hispanic	24.3 †	36.6 †	44.0	48.4	51.7 †
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	28.0 †	43.0 †	51.9 †	58.6 †	63.0 †
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	14.8 †	24.6 †	31.8 †	36.1 †	39.2 †
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	23.1	38.4	47.6	53.0	56.7
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger*	29.5%	45.6%	54.8%	61.3%	65.2%
25–39	24.3 †	38.7 †	48.0 †	54.0 †	58.2 †
40 or older	17.7 †	29.0 †	36.1 †	40.5 †	43.8 †
40–54	18.9	30.9	38.6	43.4	46.8
55–64	12.1	20.6	25.1	28.0	30.5
65 or older	4.8	7.7	10.3	12.4	13.0

Note: Estimates are based on prisoners released across the 31 states that could provide the necessary court data. See appendix table 5 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level. The significance tests were not conducted on the age subcategories.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.



## Nearly half of released prisoners returned to prison within 5 years

Among state prisoners released in 2012 in the 21 states with available data on persons returned to prison (see *Methodology*), 39% had a parole or probation violation

or an arrest that led to a new sentence within 3 years, a percentage that increased to 46% within 5 years of release (**table 8**). Nearly half (47%) of males released from prison in 2012 returned to prison within 5 years, compared to about a third (34%) of female prisoners.

**TABLE 8**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 21 states in 2012 who returned to prison for a parole or probation violation or an arrest that led to a new sentence, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	19.9%	32.1%	38.6%	42.9%	45.8%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male*	20.6%	33.2%	39.9%	44.3%	47.2%
Female	13.8 †	23.0 †	28.2 †	31.6 †	34.0 †
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White <sup>a*</sup>	20.1%	32.0%	38.5%	42.8%	45.5%
Black <sup>a</sup>	20.1	33.1	40.2 †	44.8 †	48.0 †
Hispanic	19.3	30.3 †	36.3 †	39.9 †	42.3 †
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	24.6 †	37.2 †	43.2 †	49.0 †	51.2 †
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	11.4 †	21.9 †	25.8 †	27.4 †	28.4 †
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	12.8 †	26.1	31.4 †	35.7 †	41.0
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger*	25.5%	39.9%	47.8%	53.3%	56.8%
25–39	20.8 †	33.9 †	41.0 †	45.6 †	48.8 †
40 or older	16.1 †	25.8 †	30.9 †	34.2 †	36.3 †
40–54	17.2	27.7	33.1	36.6	38.8
55–64	11.3	17.4	21.1	23.0	24.5
65 or older	5.1	9.2	10.7	13.6	14.4

Note: Estimates are based on prisoners released across the 21 states that could provide the necessary data on persons returned to prison for a probation or parole violation or an arrest that led to a new sentence. See appendix table 6 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level. The significance tests were not conducted on the age subcategories.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

### The total number of arrests among the released prisoners declined from Year 1 to Year 5

The approximately 408,300 state prisoners released across 34 states in 2012 had an estimated 1,113,000 arrests during the 5-year follow-up period (table 9). The total number of arrests of released prisoners declined from 268,000 in Year 1 to 191,000 in Year 5. Of the 1,113,000 arrests during the 5-year follow-up period, about 1 in 4 (24%) occurred in the first year, while 17% of the total occurred in Year 5.

### 1 in 3 released prisoners were arrested for a drug offense within 5 years

Recidivism patterns varied based on the specific types of offenses that prisoners were arrested for following release. During the 5-year follow-up period, 28% of all prisoners released in 2012 were arrested for a violent offense (table 10). Assault (22%) made up the largest percentage of arrests for a violent offense. One-third (33%) of released prisoners were arrested within 5 years for a drug offense, and slightly more than a third were arrested for a property offense (36%). Approximately 1 in 5 (22%) were arrested for larceny or motor vehicle theft.

More than half (54%) of released prisoners were arrested for a public order offense within 5 years of release. A similar percentage of released prisoners were arrested for a weapons offense (9%) as were arrested for driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated (DUI/DWI) (9%). About half (49%) of released prisoners were arrested for other public order offenses, such as probation or parole violations, obstruction of justice, contempt of court, failure to appear, commercialized vice, or disorderly conduct.

**TABLE 9**  
Post-release arrests of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012, by year of arrest

	Number of arrests	Percent of arrests	Standard error	
			Number of arrests	Percent of arrests
Total	1,113,000	100%	7,346	~
Year 1	268,000	24.0	2,336	0.17%
Year 2	240,000	21.6	2,318	0.15
Year 3	215,000	19.3	2,257	0.15
Year 4	200,000	17.9	2,192	0.15
Year 5	191,000	17.2	2,178	0.15

Note: The number of post-release arrests was rounded to the nearest 1,000. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**TABLE 10**  
Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years following release, by type of post-release arrest offense

Post-release arrest offense	Percent	Standard error
<b>Any</b>	70.8%	0.21%
<b>Violent</b>	28.3%	0.22%
Homicide	0.8	0.04
Rape/sexual assault	1.4	0.05
Robbery	4.8	0.11
Assault	21.6	0.20
Other violent	8.8	0.13
<b>Property</b>	35.7%	0.22%
Burglary	9.4	0.14
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	21.6	0.19
Fraud/forgery	8.9	0.13
Other property	18.5	0.18
<b>Drug</b>	32.6%	0.22%
Possession	21.9	0.20
Trafficking	11.3	0.15
Other drug	16.8	0.16
<b>Public order</b>	54.1%	0.22%
Weapons	9.4	0.15
DUI/DWI	8.7	0.14
Other public order	48.8	0.22
<b>Number of released prisoners</b>	408,300	128

Note: Details may not sum to totals because a person may be arrested for more than one offense. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

### One in 3 prisoners released after serving time for assault were arrested for assault within 5 years

One in 3 (32%) prisoners released in 2012 after serving time for an assault were arrested for an assault within 5 years (table 11). Among prisoners released after serving time for rape or sexual assault, 4% were arrested for rape or sexual assault within 5 years. During the 5-year follow-up period, released sex offenders were more likely to be arrested for a public order (41%) offense than for a violent (16%), property (12%), or drug (9%) offense.

### Prisoners released after serving time for a property offense were more likely than other released prisoners to be arrested for a property offense

A higher percentage of prisoners released after serving time for a property offense (52%) were arrested for a property offense within 5 years, compared to prisoners released after serving time for a violent (29%), drug (30%), or public order (29%) offense. Prisoners released for a drug offense (43%) were more likely to be arrested for a drug offense than those released for a property (35%), violent (24%), or public order (28%) offense.

**TABLE 11**

**Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years following release, by most serious commitment offense and type of post-release arrest offense**

Most serious commitment offense	Post-release arrest offense											
	Any	Violent					Property					
		Total violent <sup>a</sup>	Homicide	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Assault	Total property <sup>b</sup>	Burglary	Larceny/motor vehicle theft	Fraud/forgery	Drug	Public order
All released prisoners	70.8%	28.3%	0.8%	1.4%	4.8%	21.6%	35.7%	9.4%	21.6%	8.9%	32.6%	54.1%
<b>Violent<sup>a</sup></b>	65.2%	32.4%	1.0%	1.9%	6.2%	24.6%	28.9%	6.7%	15.8%	6.3%	24.1%	51.1%
Homicide	41.3	17.5	1.8	0.9	2.5	13.0	14.0	2.9	6.3	3.1	14.1	30.2
Rape/sexual assault	48.0	15.5	0.2	4.3	1.2	9.8	12.0	2.3	5.7	2.9	9.3	41.0
Robbery	72.8	37.7	1.5	1.3	11.4	26.9	38.7	10.0	23.0	9.2	30.7	54.2
Assault	71.9	39.4	0.8	1.4	5.5	32.4	32.7	7.0	16.8	6.2	27.9	57.1
<b>Property<sup>b</sup></b>	78.3%	29.6%	0.7%	1.2%	5.4%	22.5%	51.9%	17.1%	35.3%	14.3%	34.7%	58.6%
Burglary	78.9	31.8	0.6	1.4	5.9	24.6	50.1	21.1	31.8	11.5	34.4	58.3
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	79.3	30.4	0.7	1.3	5.6	22.4	56.9	14.5	43.4	15.8	36.4	59.9
Fraud/forgery	73.3	19.4	0.6	0.7	3.3	14.4	47.5	10.5	31.6	22.9	31.2	53.4
<b>Drug</b>	69.8%	22.6%	0.7%	0.8%	3.2%	17.4%	29.7%	6.0%	16.5%	7.5%	43.0%	51.6%
<b>Public order</b>	68.9%	28.1%	0.9%	1.7%	3.7%	21.5%	29.0%	6.5%	16.3%	6.5%	27.7%	54.9%

Note: The numerator for each percentage is the number of persons arrested for that offense during the 5-year follow-up period, and the denominator is the number released after serving time for each type of commitment offense. Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. Details may not sum to totals because a person may be arrested more than once for different types of offenses and each arrest may involve more than one offense. See appendix table 7 for standard errors.

<sup>a</sup>Includes other miscellaneous violent offenses that are not shown separately.

<sup>b</sup>Includes other miscellaneous property offenses that are not shown separately.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**About 6 in 10 prisoners released after serving time for a drug offense were arrested for a nondrug offense within 5 years**

During the 5-year follow-up period, 62% of the prisoners released after serving time for a drug offense

were arrested for a nondrug offense, such as a violent, property, or public order offense (table 12). About 1 in 3 (32%) prisoners released in 2012 after serving time for a violent offense were arrested for a violent offense within 5 years.

**TABLE 12**  
**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release for a type of offense that was the same as or different from the most serious commitment offense**

Most serious commitment offense	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Any arrest after release</b>					
All released prisoners	36.8%	52.9%	61.5%	67.0%	70.8%
Violent*	33.0	47.8	56.3	61.5	65.2
Property	44.0 †	60.9 †	69.7 †	74.8 †	78.3 †
Drug	34.3 †	51.0 †	59.7 †	65.6 †	69.8 †
Public order	35.0 †	50.8 †	59.3 †	64.9 †	68.9 †
<b>Arrest after release for violent offense</b>					
All released prisoners	8.6%	15.4%	20.6%	24.8%	28.3%
Violent*	10.1	18.0	23.9	28.6	32.4
Property	8.9 †	16.1 †	21.7 †	25.9 †	29.6 †
Drug	6.4 †	11.9 †	16.0 †	19.5 †	22.6 †
Public order	8.8 †	15.6 †	20.5 †	24.6 †	28.1 †
<b>Arrest after release for same type of offense as most serious commitment offense<sup>a</sup></b>					
All released prisoners	17.8%	28.4%	35.4%	40.8%	44.8%
Violent	10.1	18.0	23.9	28.6	32.4
Property	23.5	35.0	42.4	47.9	51.9
Drug	14.8	25.4	32.9	38.6	43.0
Public order	24.7	37.6	45.1	50.8	54.9
<b>Arrest after release for different type of offense from most serious commitment offense<sup>a</sup></b>					
All released prisoners	29.7%	44.2%	52.8%	58.5%	62.7%
Violent	30.0	43.7	51.9	57.0	60.8
Property	35.4	51.5	60.7	66.9	71.0
Drug	28.7	43.2	51.7	57.6	62.0
Public order	22.2	35.4	43.7	49.1	53.7

Note: Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. Each arrest may include more than one type of offense. “Type of offense” refers to the categories of violent, property, drug, and public order. See appendix table 8 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Percentages for “arrest after release for same type of offense” and “arrest after release for different type of offense” do not sum to the “any arrest after release” category because categories overlap.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

### Persons in prison for a violent offense served longer sentences than other released prisoners

State prisoners released in 2012 had served a median of 16 months from the time of their admission on the original court commitment to their first release (table 13). (The median number of months is the middle value in the range of time served.) This number excludes prisoners released in 2012 who had been admitted for a conditional release violation.

Prisoners who had served 6 months or less accounted for 21% of first releases in 2012, while those who had served 81 months or more accounted for 7% of the total. Persons in prison for a violent offense (28 months) had served longer median sentences before their first release than prisoners released after serving time for a property (13 months), drug (14 months), or public order (13 months) offense.

**TABLE 13**  
Time served before first release among state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012, by most serious commitment offense

Time served in prison	Most serious commitment offense				
	All first releases	Violent	Property	Drug	Public order
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
6 months or less	21.0	13.3	23.5	22.7	26.5
7–12	21.2	13.1	25.3	24.1	23.0
13–18	14.3	11.5	15.9	15.1	15.0
19–24	10.9	9.4	10.9	11.8	11.8
25–36	11.8	12.3	11.3	12.8	10.3
37–60	10.7	16.2	8.4	9.0	8.4
61–80	3.2	6.1	2.2	2.3	2.0
81 or more	6.9	18.2	2.5	2.2	3.0
Median	16 mos.	28 mos.	13 mos.	14 mos.	13 mos.

Note: First releases include prisoners released in 2012 for the first time since beginning their sentence and exclude those released under the same sentence who returned to prison for a conditional release violation. Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which is reported. Estimates exclude prisoners missing data on type of prison admission. Data on prisoners' time served were reported for over 99% of new court commitments. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding. See appendix table 9 for standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## Released prisoners who served less time had higher arrest rates than those who served longer

Among prisoners released for the first time after beginning their sentence, the percentage arrested within 5 years was higher for those whose median time served was less than the 16-month median (73%) than for those whose median time served was more than the median 16 months (65%) (table 14).

Among prisoners released in 2012 for the first time after beginning their sentence for a violent offense, the 5-year cumulative arrest percentage was higher for

those who served less than the median time served of 28 months (72%) than for those who served more (56%). This pattern was also observed among prisoners released after serving time for a property, drug, or public order offense.

Overall, the cumulative arrest percentages among released prisoners who spent less time in prison were higher than the percentages among those who spent more. Within 5 years of release, three-fourths (74%) of prisoners released after serving 6 months or less were arrested, compared to just over half (53%) of those who served 61 months or more (table 15).

**TABLE 14**  
Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years, by most serious commitment offense and median time served in prison before first release

Most serious commitment offense	Median time served in prison	Percent of released prisoners who were arrested within 5 years after serving—		Standard error	
		Less than the median time served before first release*	More than the median time served before first release	Less than the median time served before first release	More than the median time served before first release
All first releases	16 mos.	72.6%	64.7% †	0.34%	0.35%
<b>Violent<sup>a</sup></b>	28 mos.	71.6%	55.6% †	0.61%	0.62%
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	150	46.8	29.2 †	0.48	0.50
Rape/sexual assault	48	51.4	39.9 †	0.27	0.25
Robbery	34	76.8	67.6 †	1.20	1.43
Assault	18	76.4	64.2 †	1.09	1.23
<b>Property<sup>b</sup></b>	13 mos.	78.6%	75.3% †	0.59%	0.62%
Burglary	16	79.5	76.5 †	0.97	1.00
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	12	79.9	74.9 †	1.02	1.16
Fraud/forgery	11	74.4	70.2 †	1.33	1.44
<b>Drug</b>	14 mos.	69.5%	64.0% †	0.70%	0.74%
<b>Public order</b>	13 mos.	68.4%	64.2% †	0.83%	0.91%

Note: First releases include prisoners released in 2012 for the first time since beginning their sentence and exclude those released under the same sentence who returned to prison for a conditional release violation. Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. Estimates exclude prisoners missing data on type of prison admission. Data on prisoners' time served were reported for over 99% of new court commitments. Time served was rounded to the nearest month.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Includes other violent offenses that are not shown separately.

<sup>b</sup>Includes other property offenses that are not shown separately.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**TABLE 15****Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years, by most serious commitment offense and time served in prison**

Most serious commitment offense	Percent of released prisoners who were arrested within 5 years after serving—								
	6 months or less	7–12	13–18	19–24	25–36	37–60	Total	61 or more	81 or more
<b>All first releases</b>	73.7%	72.0%	71.5%	68.9%	67.4%	63.9%	53.0%	60.5%	49.5%
<b>Violent<sup>a</sup></b>	73.5%	73.5%	72.2%	68.0%	65.0%	59.7%	49.2%	57.7%	46.3%
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	47.3	40.9	53.4	54.6	49.3	51.7	34.5	41.4	34.0
Rape/sexual assault	57.4	55.7	53.7	53.7	48.7	45.4	38.0	41.4	36.9
Robbery	78.8	79.2	78.4	73.6	73.9	73.3	62.5	71.4	59.0
Assault	76.1	77.2	74.2	72.9	66.1	59.2	59.1	63.0	57.0
<b>Property<sup>b</sup></b>	80.7%	76.6%	77.1%	75.9%	74.6%	77.0%	66.1%	^	^
Burglary	83.1	77.6	77.0	79.4	76.4	78.2	67.1	^	^
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	81.4	77.2	78.4	74.1	75.9	76.0	63.4	^	^
Fraud/forgery	74.5	72.8	73.7	70.4	66.1	70.6	62.8	^	^
<b>Drug</b>	71.1%	68.0%	67.9%	66.3%	65.2%	58.9%	55.5%	^	^
<b>Public order</b>	67.8%	68.9%	66.5%	64.0%	63.6%	64.0%	59.4%	^	^

Note: First releases include prisoners released in 2012 for the first time since beginning their sentence and exclude those released under the same sentence who returned to prison for a conditional release violation. Persons could have been in prison for more than one offense, the most serious of which based on sentence length is reported. Estimates exclude prisoners missing data on type of prison admission. Data on prisoners' time served were reported for over 99% of new court commitments. See appendix table 10 for standard errors.

^Too few sample cases to form reliable estimates.

<sup>a</sup>Includes other violent offenses that are not shown separately.

<sup>b</sup>Includes other property offenses that are not shown separately.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**About 1 in 10 released prisoners were arrested in another state within 5 years**

During the 5 years after release, about 1 in 10 (11%) of prisoners released in 2012 were arrested at least once outside of the state that released them (table 16). Throughout the 5-year follow-up period, prisoners age

39 or younger at the time of release were more likely than those age 40 or older to have been arrested in a state outside of the one that released them. Within 5 years, 12% of prisoners age 24 or younger and 12% of prisoners ages 25 to 39 were arrested outside of the state of release, compared to 9% of those age 40 or older.

**TABLE 16**  
**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested outside of the state of release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	3.3%	5.8%	7.7%	9.4%	11.0%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male*	3.3%	5.9%	7.9%	9.6%	11.2%
Female	2.5 †	4.6 †	6.3 †	7.9 †	9.3 †
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White <sup>a*</sup>	3.9%	6.9%	9.2%	11.0%	12.8%
Black <sup>a</sup>	2.7 †	5.0 †	6.9 †	8.6 †	10.1 †
Hispanic	2.5 †	4.2 †	5.6 †	6.9 †	8.0 †
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	4.6	8.4 †	11.7 †	13.6 †	15.6 †
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	1.2 †	2.6 †	3.3 †	4.7 †	5.3 †
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	2.8	5.6	7.4	8.8	10.4
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger*	3.5%	6.4%	8.4%	10.3%	12.1%
25–39	3.7	6.5	8.6	10.6	12.3
40 or older	2.5 †	4.5 †	6.1 †	7.4 †	8.6 †
40–54	2.6	4.8	6.5	8.0	9.2
55–64	1.7	2.9	4.0	4.6	5.7
65 or older	0.9	1.3	1.5	2.2	2.3

Note: See appendix table 11 for standard errors.

\*Comparison group.

†Difference with comparison group is significant at the 95% confidence level. The significance tests were not conducted on the age subcategories.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

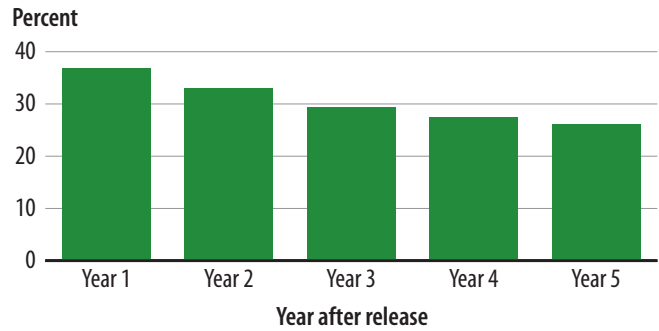


## Annual arrest percentages of released prisoners declined during the 5 years following release

During the study’s follow-up period, the annual arrest percentage among released prisoners declined from Year 1 to Year 5. About 2 in 5 (37%) of the approximately 408,300 prisoners released in 2012 were arrested at least once during their first year after release (figure 4). About 3 in 10 (29%) were arrested during their third year after release, and 1 in 4 (26%) were arrested during their fifth year.

Thirty-eight percent of male prisoners were arrested during the first year after release, compared to 30% of female prisoners (table 17). During Year 5, the difference between the annual arrest percentage among males and females narrowed, with 26% of males and 24% of females arrested. The annual arrest percentage of prisoners age 24 or younger at the time of release declined from just under half (47%) during the first year after release to about 3 in 10 (31%) during the fifth year. Among prisoners age 40 or older at the time of release, the annual arrest percentage declined from 3 in 10 (30%) in Year 1 to 2 in 10 (20%) in Year 5.

**FIGURE 4**  
Annual arrest percentage of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012



Note: Prisoners could have been arrested multiple times after release (e.g., a prisoner arrested in Year 1 and Year 3 is included in percentages for both years). See table 17 for estimates and appendix table 12 for standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**TABLE 17**  
Annual arrest percentage of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	36.8%	33.0%	29.4%	27.5%	26.1%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	37.7%	33.5%	29.8%	27.7%	26.4%
Female	29.6	28.5	26.2	25.2	23.9
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White <sup>a</sup>	35.1%	32.0%	29.3%	27.6%	26.6%
Black <sup>a</sup>	37.8	35.4	30.8	28.8	27.0
Hispanic	38.9	30.0	26.3	23.8	21.9
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	43.3	39.8	35.7	36.7	35.0
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	38.0	30.0	24.3	22.1	23.3
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	33.3	30.8	26.3	23.8	26.3
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger	46.9%	39.3%	34.9%	34.0%	30.9%
25–39	38.3	34.9	31.5	29.3	28.4
40 or older	29.9	27.1	23.7	21.7	20.4
40–54	31.6	28.8	25.3	23.1	22.0
55–64	22.3	19.8	16.9	15.2	13.2
65 or older	13.8	6.4	5.8	6.4	4.3

Note: Prisoners could have been arrested multiple times after release (e.g., a prisoner arrested in Year 1 and Year 3 is included in percentages for both years). See appendix table 12 for standard errors.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

Among released state prisoners, the longer they went without being arrested, the less likely they were to be arrested during the 5-year follow-up period. In the first year, 37% were arrested at least once (table 18). Among those not arrested during the first year, 25% were arrested in their second year. Fourteen percent of those not arrested in Years 1 through 3 were arrested during their fourth year. At the end of the follow-up period, 12% of those who went 4 years without an arrest were arrested in the fifth year.

**TABLE 18**  
**Percent of state prisoners arrested during the year who had not been arrested since release in 34 states in 2012**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	36.8%	25.4%	18.4%	14.1%	11.5%

Note: Percentages are based on the number of released prisoners who were arrested during the year, divided by the number who had not been arrested since being released in 2012. See appendix table 13 for standard errors.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

### The 2005, 2008, and 2012 BJS recidivism studies included 19 states in common

The first BJS study on state prisoners released in 1983 across 11 states and the second one on those released in 1994 across 15 states included 3-year follow-up periods.<sup>1,2</sup> The recidivism study on state prisoners released across 30 states in 2005 was the first in which BJS used a 5-year follow-up period.<sup>3</sup> The new 2008 and 2012 studies covered in this section had 19 states in common with the 2005 study: California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, and Washington. To examine the cumulative arrest percentages of released prisoners over time, BJS conducted analyses that limited the comparisons to these 19 states to control for differences in the characteristics of released prisoners.

<sup>1</sup>See *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983* (NCJ 116261, BJS, April 1989).

<sup>2</sup>See *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994* (NCJ 193427, BJS, June 2002).

<sup>3</sup>See *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 30 States in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010* (NCJ 244205, BJS, April 2014).

**The percentage of prisoners released across 19 states who were serving time for a drug offense decreased from 33% in 2005 to 26% in 2012**

About 9 in 10 persons released from state prisons across 19 states in 2005 (89%), 2008 (89%), and 2012 (90%) were male (table 19). Whites accounted for about 4 in 10 prisoners released in 2005 (38%), 2008 (38%), and 2012 (40%). Blacks also accounted for about 4 in 10 prisoners released in 2005 (39%), 2008 (38%), and 2012 (38%). While the percentage of released prisoners who were age 40 or older increased from 32% in 2005 to 35% in 2012, the median age of 34 among prisoners released in 2005 was the same as the median age of prisoners released in 2008 and 2012.

The percentage of released prisoners who were serving time for a violent offense increased from 25% in 2005 to 28% in 2012, while the percentage serving time for a drug offense decreased from 33% in 2005 to 26% in 2012. California’s Public Safety Realignment Act affected the overall composition of commitment offenses among prisoners released across the 19 states in 2012. In 2011, California began diverting nonviolent, nonserious, and nonsex offenders from prisons to jails, significantly reducing its prison population.

**TABLE 19**  
**Percent of state prisoners released in 19 states in 2005, 2008, and 2012, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, most serious commitment offense, and year of release**

Characteristic	Percent			Standard error		
	2005	2008	2012	2005	2008	2012
All released prisoners	100%	100%	100%	~	~	~
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	89.4%	89.2%	89.6%	<0.01%	<0.01%	<0.01%
Female	10.6	10.8	10.4	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White <sup>a</sup>	38.1%	38.3%	40.2%	0.34%	0.34%	0.28%
Black <sup>a</sup>	38.7	37.6	37.8	0.33	0.34	0.28
Hispanic	21.1	22.0	19.3	0.33	0.34	0.26
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.06	0.06	0.04
Asian/Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.08	0.05	0.03
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.06	0.08	0.07
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	17.4%	15.2%	15.7%	0.27%	0.26%	0.23%
25–39	50.8	50.1	49.3	0.36	0.37	0.30
40 or older	31.8	34.7	35.0	0.34	0.35	0.29
Median	34 yrs.	34 yrs.	34 yrs.	~	~	~
Mean	34.7	35.5	35.8	0.07 yrs.	0.08 yrs.	0.07 yrs.
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	25.1%	24.8%	28.3%	0.32%	0.30%	0.26%
Property	30.1	29.1	28.7	0.33	0.34	0.28
Drug	32.8	30.3	25.5	0.34	0.34	0.26
Public order	11.9	15.8	17.5	0.22	0.28	0.24
<b>Number of released prisoners</b>	326,600	361,000	291,600	32	93	73

Note: Percentages are based on prisoners released in the 19 states that participated in the 2005, 2008, and 2012 BJS recidivism studies. The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

~Not applicable.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005, 2008, and 2012 data collections.

## The percentage of prisoners arrested for any offense following release declined between 2005 and 2012

Among prisoners released across the 19 states, the percentage arrested within 3 years following release declined from 69% of those released in 2005, to 67% of those released in 2008, to 62% of those released in 2012 (table 20). The cumulative arrest percentage during the 5-year follow-up period also declined over

time, from 77% of those released in 2005, to 75% of those released in 2008, to 71% of those released in 2012. Between the 2005 and 2012 release cohorts, the 5-year cumulative arrest percentage declined for male and female prisoners and for released prisoners across the three age groups. The 5-year cumulative arrest percentage also declined between the 2005 and 2012 cohorts among prisoners released after serving time for a violent, property, drug, or public order offense.

**TABLE 20**  
Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 19 states in 2005, 2008, and 2012 who were arrested following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, most serious commitment offense, and year of release

Characteristic	Percent arrested within 3 years			Percent arrested within 5 years		
	2005	2008	2012*	2005	2008	2012*
All released prisoners	68.9% †	66.9% †	61.6%	77.4% †	75.3% †	70.6%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	69.9% †	67.9% †	62.6%	78.3% †	76.3% †	71.5%
Female	60.3 †	58.1 †	53.1	69.6 †	67.2 †	62.8
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White <sup>a</sup>	65.5% †	63.7% †	59.8%	74.2% †	72.7% †	69.0%
Black <sup>a</sup>	72.3 †	70.6 †	64.1	81.5 †	79.2 †	73.5
Hispanic	68.6 †	66.0 †	60.4	75.7 †	73.3 †	68.0
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	72.0	73.8	70.5	80.1	79.7	79.1
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	68.4 †	63.5	56.6	74.1 †	68.6	64.0
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	64.3	65.1	61.9	69.3	74.2	69.1
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	76.7% †	75.6% †	72.6%	84.7% †	83.0% †	80.9%
25–39	70.8 †	69.4 †	64.9	79.3 †	78.2 †	74.3
40 or older	61.5 †	59.4 †	52.1	70.4 †	67.8 †	60.6
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	62.2% †	61.2% †	56.0%	71.8% †	69.9% †	64.7%
Property	75.4 †	73.2 †	70.0	82.7 †	81.4 †	78.2
Drug	68.8 †	65.9 †	60.1	77.6 †	74.5 †	70.0
Public order	66.4 †	66.0 †	59.2	74.9 †	74.2 †	68.3

Note: Percentages are based on prisoners released in the 19 states that participated in the 2005, 2008, and 2012 BJS recidivism studies. See appendix table 14 for standard errors.

\*Comparison year.

†Difference with comparison year is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005, 2008, and 2012 data collections.

**The percentage of prisoners arrested for a violent offense following release was similar among those released in 2005 and 2012**

While the percentage of released prisoners arrested for any type of crime within 5 years was lower among those released in 2005 than among those released in 2012, the percentage arrested for a violent offense within 5 years did not differ significantly between prisoners released in 2005 (28%) and prisoners

released in 2012 (28%) (table 21). For both males and females, there was no statistically significant difference between the 2005 and 2012 release cohorts in the percentage of prisoners arrested for a violent offense within 5 years. For prisoners ages 25 to 39 and age 40 or older, there was no statistically significant difference between the 2005 and 2012 release cohorts in the percentage of prisoners arrested for a violent offense within 5 years.

**TABLE 21**  
**Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 19 states in 2005, 2008, and 2012 who were arrested for a violent offense following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, most serious commitment offense, and year of release**

Characteristic	Percent arrested for a violent offense within 3 years			Percent arrested for a violent offense within 5 years		
	2005	2008	2012*	2005	2008	2012*
All released prisoners	19.7% †	20.7%	20.6%	27.9%	28.6%	28.0%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	20.8% †	21.9%	21.7%	29.4%	30.0%	29.4%
Female	10.5	11.4	10.9	15.4	17.0	16.3
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White <sup>a</sup>	16.9%	18.0%	17.8%	24.1%	25.2%	24.8%
Black <sup>a</sup>	23.5	23.7	24.0	32.5	32.9	32.3
Hispanic	17.9	19.8	19.7	26.6	26.8	26.3
American Indian/Alaska Native <sup>a</sup>	23.0	35.6 †	26.2	33.8	40.6	35.8
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander <sup>a</sup>	18.9	9.6 †	14.7	24.1	18.2	20.5
Other <sup>a,b</sup>	9.7	22.0	19.3	13.2 †	32.8	26.1
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	27.2% †	28.1%	29.5%	37.0% †	38.4%	39.3%
25–39	21.0 †	22.9	22.6	29.9	31.4	30.7
40 or older	13.6	14.3	13.7	19.8	20.3	19.1
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	22.6%	24.6%	23.2%	32.1%	33.5% †	31.4%
Property	20.0 †	20.0 †	22.0	27.9 †	28.1	29.7
Drug	17.0	17.4	16.2	24.5 †	24.6 †	22.5
Public order	20.5	22.4 †	20.4	28.6	29.6	27.8

Note: Percentages are based on the 19 states that participated in all three BJS recidivism studies on prisoners released in 2005, 2008, and 2012. See appendix table 15 for standard errors.

\*Comparison year.

†Difference with comparison year is significant at the 95% confidence level.

<sup>a</sup>Excludes persons of Hispanic origin (e.g., “white” refers to non-Hispanic whites and “black” refers to non-Hispanic blacks).

<sup>b</sup>Includes persons of two or more races or other unspecified races.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005, 2008, and 2012 data collections.

# Methodology

## Sampling

This study estimates the recidivism patterns of persons released in 2012 from state prisons across 34 states. States were included if the state departments of corrections (DOCs) provided the prisoner records and the FBI or state identification numbers of the released prisoners for the study. The prisoner records and identification numbers were collected through the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP), which is administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The identification numbers were needed to obtain criminal history data on the released prisoners. The prisoner records included information on each prisoner's sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, commitment offenses, sentence length, type of prison admission and release, and date of release.

The 34 states in the study were Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (map 1). These states were responsible for 79% of all persons released from state prisons in 2012 nationwide.

The study excludes prisoners who were sentenced to less than 1 year, were transferred to the custody of another authority, died in prison, were released on

bond, were released to participate in an appeal of a case, escaped from prison, or were absent without official leave. When a prisoner was released multiple times in the same state during 2012, the first release during the year was used for the study.

A stratified random sample of all prisoners eligible for the study was selected. All prisoners released after serving time for homicide or rape or sexual assault were included in the sample. Within each state, prisoners released after serving time for other offenses were sorted by the county in which the sentence was imposed, race or ethnicity, age, and most serious commitment offense. Male and female prisoners were sampled separately from each state at sizes that yielded estimates with equal variance to increase the sample of female prisoners and improve the precision of their recidivism estimates. Each prisoner in the sample was assigned a weight based on the probability of selection within the state.

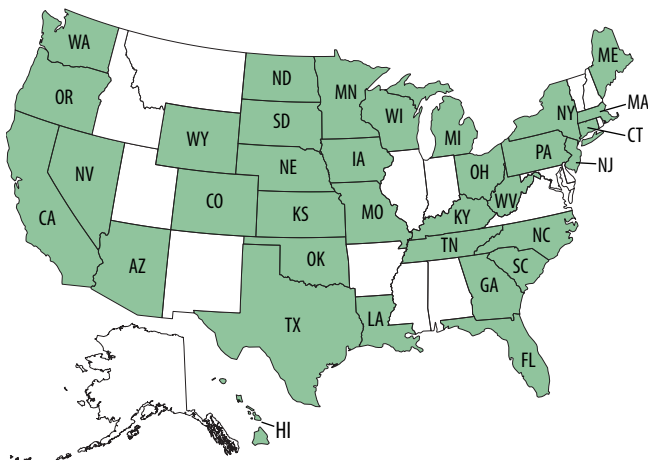
## Collecting and processing criminal history data for recidivism research

BJS used the state and FBI identification numbers to collect criminal history data on released prisoners through the FBI's Interstate Identification Index (III) via the International Justice and Public Safety Network (Nlets), which is a computer-based network responsible for interstate transmissions of federal and state criminal history records. After BJS received approval from the FBI's Institutional Review Board to conduct this recidivism study, Nlets transmitted the identification numbers of sampled prisoners to the FBI's III system to collect criminal history data on behalf of BJS. To conduct this recidivism study with a 5-year follow-up period, criminal history data on the prisoners released in 2012 were collected in 2018.

The criminal history data collected on prisoners released in 34 states included arrests and dispositions, from state and federal criminal justice agencies across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, prior to and following prison releases in 2012. Nlets parsed fields from individual criminal history records into a relational database with a uniform record layout consisting of state- and federal-specific numeric codes and text descriptions (e.g., criminal statutes and case outcome information). BJS standardized the content of the relational database into a uniform coding structure to support the research. For traffic offenses, the study included only vehicular manslaughter, driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated (DUI/DWI), and hit-and-run

### MAP 1

States included in the BJS recidivism study of state prisoners released in 2012



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

offenses, because other traffic offenses have a wide variation in coverage in state criminal history data.

This study used death information from the FBI's III to identify individuals who died during the 5-year follow-up period. BJS removed from its recidivism analysis about 400 deaths during the 5-year follow-up period that occurred among the approximately 96,700 released prisoners who were originally sampled for this study.

### Missing criminal history data

Among the approximately 96,300 prisoners in the final sample who were not identified as deceased during the follow-up period, BJS obtained criminal history data on approximately 92,100 (95.7%) of them. (See appendix table 1.) BJS did not receive criminal history data on a total of about 4,200 prisoners because either the state DOCs were unable to provide their FBI or state identification number or the prisoner had an identification number that did not link to a criminal history record either in the FBI or a state record repository. To ensure the recidivism statistics were representative of the approximately 96,300 prisoners in the analysis, BJS developed weighting-class adjustments to account for prisoners without criminal history information and nonresponse error.

To create the statistical adjustments, the approximately 96,300 sampled prisoners were stratified into groups with the same categories of sex, age at release, race or ethnicity, and most serious commitment offense. Within each subgroup, statistical weights were applied to data for the approximately 92,100 prisoners with criminal history information, so their data could represent the approximately 4,200 prisoners without criminal history information. The adjusted weights for the final sample of about 92,100 prisoners were used to produce recidivism estimates on the approximately 408,300 persons released from prison across the 34 states in 2012.

### Conducting tests of statistical significance

This study was based on a sample, not a complete enumeration, so the estimates are subject to sampling error. One measure of the sampling error associated with an estimate is the standard error. The standard error can vary from one estimate to the next. In general, an estimate with a smaller standard error provides a more accurate approximation of the true value than an estimate with a larger standard error. Estimates with relatively large standard errors should be interpreted with caution.

BJS conducted tests to determine whether differences in the estimates were statistically significant once the sampling error was taken into account. All differences discussed in this report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, unless noted otherwise. The standard errors and statistical significance tests were generated using the “survey” package in R.<sup>4</sup>

### Recidivism measures

This study used several measures to examine the recidivism patterns of former state prisoners.

The **cumulative arrest percentage** is the percentage of released prisoners who were arrested at least once during the follow-up period. For example, the cumulative arrest percentage for Year 3 is the percentage of prisoners who had at least one arrest during the first, second, or third years following their release.

The **annual arrest percentage** is the percentage of released prisoners who were arrested at least once during a particular year within the follow-up period. The denominator for each percentage from Years 1 through 5 is the total number of prisoners released in the 34 states during 2012. The numerator is the number of former prisoners arrested during the particular year, regardless of whether they had been arrested during a prior year.

The **volume of arrest offenses** is the total number of arrest offenses among the released prisoners during the follow-up period. A former prisoner may have had multiple arrests for different types of offenses during the follow-up period, and a single arrest may have involved charges for more than one crime.

The **cumulative percent with an arrest that led to conviction** is based on the time from release to the first date of arrest that led to a conviction, not the date of the conviction. The arrests that occurred within the follow-up period were tracked for 10 more months after Year 5 to determine whether the case outcomes led to a subsequent conviction. This measure included prisoners released in 31 of the study's 34 states. Prisoners released in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Maine were excluded because the disposition information from these states were generally not linked to the associated arrest.

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<sup>4</sup>See Lumley, T. (2019). *Survey: Analysis of complex survey samples* [R package version 3.35-1]. <https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/survey/index.html>; and Lumley, T. (2004). Analysis of complex survey samples. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 9(8), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.18637/jss.v009.i08>

The **cumulative percent who returned to prison** is the percentage who had an arrest or a technical violation of a condition of release within 5 years of exiting prison in 2012 that resulted in a return to prison. This measure incorporates the criminal history data from the FBI and state repositories and the prisoner records obtained from the state DOCs through the NCRP. The criminal history data provided information on arrests that resulted in a prison sentence during the 5-year follow-up period either within or outside of the state that released the prisoner. BJS used 2012-2017 NCRP prison admission data to supplement the criminal history data with information on released prisoners who returned to prison within the state that released them, for probation or parole violations or for sentences for new crimes. The return-to-prison analysis included prisoners released in 21 states for which the necessary data were available for the 5-year follow-up period. The 21 states were Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

### Offense definitions

**Violent offenses** include homicide, rape or sexual assault, robbery, assault, and other miscellaneous or unspecified violent offenses.

**Homicide** includes murder, nonnegligent and negligent manslaughter, and unspecified homicide offenses.

**Murder** is (1) intentionally causing the death of another person without extreme provocation or legal justification, or (2) causing the death of another while committing or attempting to commit another crime.

**Nonnegligent (or voluntary) manslaughter** is intentionally and without legal justification causing the death of another when acting under extreme provocation.

**Negligent (or involuntary) manslaughter** is causing the death of another person through recklessness or gross negligence, without intending to cause death. Negligent manslaughter also includes vehicular manslaughter but excludes vehicular murder (intentionally killing

someone with a motor vehicle), which is classified as murder.

**Rape or sexual assault** includes (1) forcible intercourse (vaginal, anal, or oral) with a female or male; (2) forcible sodomy or penetration with a foreign object (sometimes called “deviate sexual assault”); (3) forcible or violent sexual acts not involving intercourse; (4) nonforcible sexual acts with a minor (such as statutory rape or incest with a minor); and (5) nonforcible sexual acts with someone unable to give legal or factual consent due to intellectual or physical disability or intoxication.

**Robbery** is the unlawful taking of property that is in the immediate possession of another, by force or the threat of force. It includes forcible purse snatching but excludes nonforcible purse snatching.

**Assault** includes aggravated, simple, and unspecified assault. Aggravated assault includes (1) intentionally and without legal justification causing serious bodily injury, with or without a deadly weapon; and (2) using a deadly or dangerous weapon to threaten, attempt, or cause bodily injury, regardless of the degree of injury, if any. It also includes attempted murder, aggravated battery, felonious assault, and assault with a deadly weapon. Simple assault includes intentionally and without legal justification causing less-than-serious bodily injury without a deadly or dangerous weapon, and attempting or threatening bodily injury without a dangerous or deadly weapon.

**Property offenses** include burglary, fraud or forgery, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and other miscellaneous or unspecified property offenses.

**Burglary** is the unlawful entry of a fixed structure used for regular residence, industry, or business, with or without the use of force, to commit a felony or theft.

**Larceny** is the unlawful taking of property other than a motor vehicle from the possession of another, by stealth and without force or deceit. It includes pocket picking, nonforcible purse snatching, shoplifting, and thefts from motor vehicles. It excludes receiving or reselling stolen property (or both) and thefts through fraud or deceit.

**Motor vehicle theft** is the unlawful taking of a self-propelled road vehicle owned by another. It includes the theft of automobiles, trucks, and



motorcycles but not the theft of boats, aircraft, or farm equipment (classified as larceny). It also includes receiving, possessing, stripping, transporting, and reselling stolen vehicles and unauthorized use of a vehicle (joyriding).

**Fraud/forgery** is the use of deceit or intentional misrepresentation to unlawfully deprive persons of their property or legal rights. It also includes offenses such as embezzlement, check fraud, confidence games, counterfeiting, and credit card fraud.

**Other property offenses** include arson, stolen property offenses, possession of burglary tools, damage to property, trespassing, and other miscellaneous or unspecified property crimes.

**Drug offenses** include possession, trafficking, and other miscellaneous or unspecified drug offenses.

**Drug possession** includes possession of an illegal drug but excludes possession with intent to sell.

**Drug trafficking** includes manufacturing, distributing, selling, smuggling, and possessing a drug with intent to sell.

**Other drug offenses** include offenses involving drug paraphernalia, forged or unauthorized prescriptions, and other miscellaneous or unspecified drug offenses.

**Public order offenses** include violations of the peace or order of the community or threats to public health or safety through unacceptable conduct, interference with a governmental authority, and the violation of civil rights or liberties.

**Weapons offenses** include the unlawful sale, distribution, manufacture, alteration, transportation, possession, and use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or accessory.

**Other public order offenses** include DUI/DWI, probation and parole violations, obstruction of justice, contempt of court, failure to appear, commercialized vice, nonviolent sex offenses, liquor law violations, bribery, invasion of privacy, disorderly conduct, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and other miscellaneous or unspecified offenses.

### **Arrests for probation and parole violations**

In this report, arrests for probation and parole violations were included as public order offenses. Excluding such arrests from the analysis would have a small impact on the recidivism rates. The percentage of state prisoners released across 34 states in 2012 who were arrested at least once within 5 years would be 69.0% if arrests for probation and parole violations were excluded and 70.8% if they were included. In other words, 97% of released prisoners who were arrested during the 5-year follow-up period were arrested for an offense other than a probation or parole violation.

## APPENDIX TABLE 1

### Number of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were included in the study sample and for whom criminal history data were collected, by state

State	Released prisoners included in the study		Criminal history data collected	
	Weighted total <sup>a</sup>	Sample size <sup>a</sup>	Number <sup>a</sup>	Percent <sup>b</sup>
All states	408,300	96,300	92,100	95.7%
Arizona	14,300	3,200	3,000	96.7
California	47,000	6,200	6,200	99.8
Colorado	10,100	3,000	2,900	96.1
Connecticut	9,700	2,500	2,200	90.3
Florida	32,600	4,900	4,500	91.5
Georgia	16,600	4,100	4,000	98.4
Hawaii	1,900	1,200	1,200	99.5
Iowa	5,000	1,900	1,900	99.1
Kansas	3,600	1,900	1,800	96.5
Kentucky	14,000	3,000	2,700	88.4
Louisiana	13,400	3,100	3,100	99.5
Maine	800	600	500	84.2
Massachusetts	2,400	1,400	1,400	99.1
Michigan	12,400	4,000	3,900	98.0
Minnesota	6,400	2,700	2,700	99.8
Missouri	15,800	3,500	3,500	99.9
Nebraska	2,400	1,400	1,300	89.2
Nevada	5,100	2,000	1,900	93.2
New Jersey	10,600	2,800	2,600	92.3
New York	22,600	4,800	4,400	91.6
North Carolina	13,600	3,500	3,400	96.4
North Dakota	1,000	700	700	97.4
Ohio	16,000	3,700	3,200	87.7
Oklahoma	7,100	2,500	2,200	89.5
Oregon	4,700	2,300	2,300	99.3
Pennsylvania	19,500	4,000	4,000	99.3
South Carolina	8,100	2,500	2,500	99.8
South Dakota	2,200	1,300	1,200	97.5
Tennessee	16,700	3,400	3,100	92.2
Texas	53,300	6,400	6,400	99.9
Washington	7,600	2,700	2,700	99.9
West Virginia	2,900	1,600	1,200	77.7
Wisconsin	8,200	3,100	3,100	100
Wyoming	800	700	600	84.1

Note: This study excludes released prisoners whose sentence was less than 1 year; releases to custody, detainer, or warrant; releases due to death; escapes or absences without leave; transfers; administrative releases; and releases on appeal. The first release was selected for persons released from prison in the same state multiple times during 2012. The study also excludes sampled prisoners who died during the follow-up period.

<sup>a</sup>The number of released prisoners is rounded to the nearest 100. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

<sup>b</sup>Percentages are based on the unrounded sample sizes.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 2****Standard errors for table 4: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	128	0.22%	0.23%	0.22%	0.21%	0.21%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	127	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.24%	0.23%
Female	20	0.26	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.27
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White	894	0.31%	0.32%	0.31%	0.30%	0.29%
Black	893	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.35	0.33
Hispanic	766	0.69	0.70	0.69	0.67	0.65
American Indian/Alaska Native	163	1.35	1.28	1.20	1.13	1.05
Asian/Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	87	1.73	1.71	1.69	1.68	1.66
Other	243	1.99	2.06	1.98	1.92	1.83
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	735	0.60%	0.57%	0.53%	0.50%	0.47%
25–39	954	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.29	0.28
40 or older	898	0.37	0.40	0.39	0.39	0.38
40–54	856	0.41	0.43	0.43	0.42	0.41
55–64	409	0.94	1.07	1.09	1.10	1.10
65 or older	149	1.97	2.02	2.09	2.23	2.29

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 3****Standard errors for table 5: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by most serious commitment offense, type of prison admission, and year following release**

	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	128	0.22%	0.23%	0.22%	0.21%	0.21%
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	815	0.40%	0.42%	0.40%	0.39%	0.37%
Homicide	17	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.12
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	15	0.12	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.15
Negligent manslaughter	11	0.17	0.20	0.21	0.22	0.22
Rape/sexual assault	16	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Robbery	553	0.86	0.89	0.86	0.83	0.80
Assault	624	0.79	0.81	0.78	0.75	0.73
Other violent	295	1.37	1.41	1.37	1.32	1.27
Property	871	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.38	0.36
Burglary	676	0.72	0.71	0.66	0.62	0.59
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	531	0.83	0.77	0.71	0.67	0.64
Fraud/forgery	332	0.99	0.99	0.95	0.90	0.86
Other property	342	1.22	1.18	1.11	1.04	0.95
Drug	837	0.45	0.47	0.46	0.44	0.43
Possession	547	0.93	0.94	0.91	0.88	0.85
Trafficking	618	0.67	0.71	0.71	0.69	0.67
Other drug	350	0.75	0.78	0.75	0.71	0.68
Public order	766	0.54	0.56	0.55	0.54	0.52
Weapons	465	1.22	1.22	1.17	1.13	1.10
Other public order	656	0.59	0.63	0.62	0.61	0.59
<b>Type of prison admission</b>						
New court commitment	761	0.25%	0.26%	0.26%	0.25%	0.24%
Conditional release violation	719	0.58	0.55	0.51	0.48	0.45

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 4**

**Standard errors for table 6: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release, by number of prior arrests, age at first arrest, and year following release**

	Number of released prisoners	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	128	0.22%	0.23%	0.22%	0.21%	0.21%
<b>Number of prior arrests</b>						
4 or fewer	763	0.36%	0.41%	0.42%	0.42%	0.41%
2 or fewer	522	0.47	0.55	0.57	0.58	0.58
3–4	629	0.53	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.57
5–9	876	0.40	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.38
10 or more	904	0.37	0.35	0.32	0.30	0.29
<b>Age at first arrest</b>						
17 or younger	906	0.47%	0.45%	0.42%	0.39%	0.37%
18–19	875	0.39	0.40	0.38	0.36	0.34
20–24	774	0.44	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.44
25–29	452	0.72	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.77
30–34	306	1.00	1.09	1.11	1.11	1.11
35–39	216	1.20	1.37	1.43	1.46	1.49
40 or older	227	0.91	1.02	1.09	1.16	1.18

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 5**

**Standard errors for table 7: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 31 states in 2012 who had an arrest after release that led to a conviction, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	0.21%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%	0.24%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	0.24%	0.27%	0.27%	0.27%	0.27%
Female	0.23	0.27	0.29	0.29	0.30
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White	0.30%	0.34%	0.34%	0.34%	0.34%
Black	0.36	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.40
Hispanic	0.63	0.70	0.71	0.71	0.71
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.27	1.35	1.34	1.31	1.27
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.42	1.61	1.78	1.76	1.75
Other	1.79	2.05	2.09	2.07	2.05
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger	0.59%	0.64%	0.63%	0.62%	0.60%
25–39	0.31	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.34
40 or older	0.34	0.39	0.41	0.42	0.42
40–54	0.37	0.43	0.45	0.46	0.46
55–64	0.80	1.00	1.06	1.09	1.11
65 or older	1.38	1.49	1.64	1.92	1.93

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## APPENDIX TABLE 6

Standard errors for table 8: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 21 states in 2012 who returned to prison, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	0.22%	0.26%	0.27%	0.28%	0.28%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	0.25%	0.29%	0.31%	0.31%	0.31%
Female	0.23	0.28	0.30	0.31	0.32
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White	0.32%	0.37%	0.39%	0.39%	0.40%
Black	0.37	0.44	0.46	0.46	0.47
Hispanic	0.59	0.70	0.73	0.74	0.75
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.68	1.83	1.86	1.87	1.87
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	2.42	3.44	3.52	3.56	3.57
Other	2.39	3.12	3.29	3.37	3.45
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger	0.63%	0.72%	0.73%	0.73%	0.73%
25–39	0.32	0.38	0.39	0.40	0.40
40 or older	0.35	0.42	0.44	0.45	0.46
40–54	0.39	0.47	0.49	0.50	0.51
55–64	0.81	1.00	1.08	1.12	1.14
65 or older	1.42	1.97	1.99	2.31	2.32

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## APPENDIX TABLE 7

Standard errors for table 11: Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years following release, by most serious commitment offense and type of post-release arrest offense

Most serious commitment offense	Post-release arrest offense											
	Any	Violent					Property					
		Total violent	Homicide	Rape/sexual assault	Robbery	Assault	Total property	Burglary	Larceny/motor vehicle theft	Fraud/forgery	Drug	Public order
All released prisoners	0.21%	0.22%	0.04%	0.05%	0.11%	0.20%	0.22%	0.14%	0.19%	0.13%	0.22%	0.22%
<b>Violent</b>	0.37%	0.41%	0.09%	0.09%	0.23%	0.39%	0.40%	0.23%	0.33%	0.22%	0.39%	0.41%
Homicide	0.12	0.09	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.08	0.11
Rape/sexual assault	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.07
Robbery	0.80	0.87	0.22	0.19	0.57	0.80	0.87	0.54	0.75	0.52	0.84	0.89
Assault	0.73	0.80	0.15	0.18	0.38	0.77	0.77	0.40	0.60	0.40	0.74	0.80
<b>Property</b>	0.36%	0.42%	0.08%	0.10%	0.22%	0.39%	0.45%	0.35%	0.43%	0.31%	0.43%	0.44%
Burglary	0.59	0.68	0.10	0.16	0.35	0.64	0.72	0.58	0.67	0.46	0.69	0.71
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	0.64	0.78	0.15	0.20	0.40	0.71	0.82	0.59	0.82	0.61	0.81	0.80
Fraud/forgery	0.86	0.83	0.19	0.21	0.43	0.74	1.00	0.68	0.92	0.84	0.94	1.00
<b>Drug</b>	0.43%	0.40%	0.08%	0.09%	0.18%	0.36%	0.43%	0.23%	0.34%	0.25%	0.47%	0.47%
<b>Public order</b>	0.52%	0.51%	0.11%	0.16%	0.21%	0.46%	0.50%	0.28%	0.40%	0.27%	0.51%	0.56%

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 8**

**Standard errors for table 12: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested following release for a type of offense that was the same as or different from the most serious commitment offense**

Most serious commitment offense	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Any arrest after release</b>					
All released prisoners	0.22%	0.23%	0.22%	0.21%	0.21%
Violent	0.40	0.42	0.40	0.39	0.37
Property	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.38	0.36
Drug	0.45	0.47	0.46	0.44	0.43
Public order	0.54	0.56	0.55	0.54	0.52
<b>Arrest after release for violent offense</b>					
All released prisoners	0.14%	0.18%	0.20%	0.21%	0.22%
Violent	0.27	0.35	0.38	0.40	0.41
Property	0.27	0.34	0.39	0.41	0.42
Drug	0.24	0.32	0.36	0.38	0.40
Public order	0.32	0.41	0.46	0.49	0.51
<b>Arrest after release for same type of offense as most serious commitment offense</b>					
All released prisoners	0.18%	0.21%	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%
Violent	0.27	0.35	0.38	0.40	0.41
Property	0.39	0.43	0.45	0.45	0.45
Drug	0.35	0.42	0.45	0.46	0.47
Public order	0.49	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.56
<b>Arrest after release for different type of offense from most serious commitment offense</b>					
All released prisoners	0.21%	0.23%	0.23%	0.22%	0.22%
Violent	0.40	0.42	0.41	0.40	0.39
Property	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.41	0.40
Drug	0.43	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.45
Public order	0.48	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.56

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 9**

**Standard errors for table 13: Time served before first release among state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012, by most serious commitment offense**

Time served in prison	Most serious commitment offense				
	All first releases	Violent	Property	Drug	Public order
6 months or less	0.21%	0.35%	0.42%	0.43%	0.55%
7–12	0.22	0.34	0.46	0.47	0.54
13–18	0.19	0.33	0.38	0.40	0.47
19–24	0.17	0.28	0.33	0.36	0.42
25–36	0.17	0.31	0.34	0.36	0.40
37–60	0.17	0.36	0.29	0.31	0.38
61–80	0.09	0.21	0.15	0.16	0.19
81 or more	0.12	0.32	0.16	0.16	0.25

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## APPENDIX TABLE 10

### Standard errors for table 15: Percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested within 5 years, by most serious commitment offense and time served in prison

Most serious commitment offense	Percent of released prisoners who were arrested within 5 years after serving—								
	6 months or less						61 or more		
		7–12	13–18	19–24	25–36	37–60	Total	61–80	81 or more
All first releases	0.50%	0.53%	0.67%	0.76%	0.72%	0.78%	0.75%	1.35%	0.90%
<b>Violent</b>	1.19%	1.15%	1.31%	1.42%	1.23%	1.16%	0.84%	1.66%	0.96%
Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter	1.75	2.17	2.11	2.22	1.58	1.15	0.40	1.39	0.42
Rape/sexual assault	0.66	0.69	0.70	0.71	0.56	0.42	0.28	0.58	0.32
Robbery	2.61	2.38	2.71	3.00	2.33	2.12	2.06	3.19	2.55
Assault	1.80	1.72	2.10	2.29	2.34	2.46	2.80	4.38	3.57
<b>Property</b>	0.75%	0.89%	1.10%	1.33%	1.35%	1.47%	2.30%	^	^
Burglary	1.38	1.53	1.78	2.00	1.96	2.08	3.06	^	^
Larceny/motor vehicle theft	1.27	1.52	2.00	2.58	2.39	2.94	4.89	^	^
Fraud/forgery	1.65	1.98	2.40	3.12	3.47	3.82	6.99	^	^
<b>Drug</b>	0.98%	1.04%	1.37%	1.52%	1.40%	1.77%	2.54%	^	^
<b>Public order</b>	1.12%	1.22%	1.61%	1.83%	2.01%	2.26%	3.21%	^	^

^Too few sample cases to form reliable estimates.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

## APPENDIX TABLE 11

### Standard errors for table 16: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012 who were arrested outside of the state of release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	0.08%	0.10%	0.12%	0.13%	0.14%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	0.08%	0.11%	0.13%	0.14%	0.15%
Female	0.08	0.11	0.13	0.15	0.16
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White	0.12%	0.16%	0.18%	0.20%	0.21%
Black	0.12	0.16	0.19	0.21	0.22
Hispanic	0.20	0.25	0.29	0.33	0.35
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.49	0.73	0.83	0.87	0.90
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0.37	0.87	0.89	0.94	0.96
Other	0.69	0.93	1.02	1.14	1.23
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger	0.20%	0.27%	0.31%	0.34%	0.36%
25–39	0.25	0.32	0.36	0.39	0.42
40 or older	0.11	0.15	0.18	0.20	0.21
40–54	0.13	0.17	0.20	0.22	0.24
55–64	0.28	0.34	0.41	0.43	0.49
65 or older	0.31	0.34	0.34	0.73	0.73

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 12****Standard errors for table 17: Annual arrest percentage of state prisoners released in 34 states in 2012, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, and year following release**

Characteristic	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	0.22%	0.22%	0.22%	0.21%	0.21%
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	0.25%	0.25%	0.24%	0.23%	0.23%
Female	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	0.24
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					
White	0.31%	0.31%	0.30%	0.29%	0.29%
Black	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	0.35
Hispanic	0.69	0.67	0.64	0.63	0.60
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.35	1.34	1.32	1.31	1.28
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.73	1.69	1.60	1.44	1.60
Other	1.99	2.00	1.92	1.82	1.95
<b>Age at release</b>					
24 or younger	0.60%	0.60%	0.58%	0.58%	0.56%
25–39	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.30	0.30
40 or older	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.34	0.33
40–54	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.37	0.37
55–64	0.94	0.94	0.89	0.87	0.81
65 or older	1.97	1.04	0.92	1.53	1.18

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.

**APPENDIX TABLE 13****Standard errors for table 18: Percent of state prisoners arrested during the year who had not been arrested since release in 34 states in 2012**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
All released prisoners	0.22%	0.26%	0.26%	0.26%	0.25%

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2012 data collection, 2012–2017.



**APPENDIX TABLE 14**

**Standard errors for table 20: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 19 states in 2005, 2008, and 2012 who were arrested following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, most serious commitment offense, and year of release**

Characteristic	Percent arrested within 3 years			Percent arrested within 5 years		
	2005	2008	2012	2005	2008	2012
All released prisoners	0.30%	0.31%	0.28%	0.27%	0.28%	0.26%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	0.33%	0.35%	0.31%	0.30%	0.31%	0.29%
Female	0.58	0.40	0.36	0.54	0.37	0.35
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White	0.49%	0.49%	0.42%	0.44%	0.43%	0.39%
Black	0.43	0.46	0.46	0.36	0.40	0.41
Hispanic	0.84	0.87	0.79	0.77	0.80	0.74
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.91	2.49	1.91	2.57	2.33	1.67
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	3.54	3.36	1.90	3.26	3.27	1.88
Other	7.54	5.81	3.37	7.26	5.02	3.12
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	0.65%	0.74%	0.70%	0.54%	0.66%	0.61%
25–39	0.42	0.44	0.40	0.38	0.38	0.36
40 or older	0.59	0.58	0.50	0.55	0.53	0.48
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	0.67%	0.62%	0.51%	0.61%	0.56%	0.48%
Property	0.53	0.57	0.51	0.47	0.49	0.46
Drug	0.54	0.61	0.59	0.48	0.55	0.55
Public order	0.88	0.86	0.75	0.80	0.77	0.72

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005, 2008, and 2012 data collections.

**APPENDIX TABLE 15**

**Standard errors for table 21: Cumulative percent of state prisoners released in 19 states in 2005, 2008, and 2012 who were arrested for a violent offense following release, by sex, race or ethnicity, age at release, most serious commitment offense, and year of release**

Characteristic	Percent arrested for a violent offense within 3 years			Percent arrested for a violent offense within 5 years		
	2005	2008	2012	2005	2008	2012
All released prisoners	0.29%	0.31%	0.25%	0.33%	0.34%	0.28%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	0.32%	0.35%	0.28%	0.36%	0.38%	0.31%
Female	0.39	0.28	0.23	0.45	0.33	0.27
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
White	0.42%	0.45%	0.35%	0.47%	0.50%	0.39%
Black	0.46	0.49	0.42	0.50	0.54	0.46
Hispanic	0.76	0.81	0.67	0.87	0.89	0.74
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.99	3.55	2.01	3.49	3.47	2.18
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	3.77	1.05	1.68	4.00	3.04	1.84
Other	4.64	5.49	3.06	5.50	6.22	3.31
<b>Age at release</b>						
24 or younger	0.76%	0.85%	0.74%	0.82%	0.91%	0.78%
25–39	0.42	0.46	0.37	0.47	0.50	0.40
40 or older	0.45	0.46	0.36	0.53	0.53	0.41
<b>Most serious commitment offense</b>						
Violent	0.62%	0.63%	0.48%	0.70%	0.68%	0.52%
Property	0.53	0.58	0.49	0.60	0.65	0.54
Drug	0.48	0.54	0.46	0.55	0.61	0.51
Public order	0.81	0.84	0.62	0.90	0.91	0.69

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of State Prisoners Released in 2005, 2008, and 2012 data collections.



The Bureau of Justice Statistics of the U.S. Department of Justice is the principal federal agency responsible for measuring crime, criminal victimization, criminal offenders, victims of crime, correlates of crime, and the operation of criminal and civil justice systems at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels. BJS collects, analyzes, and disseminates reliable statistics on crime and justice systems in the United States, supports improvements to state and local criminal justice information systems, and participates with national and international organizations to develop and recommend national standards for justice statistics. Doris J. James is the acting director.

This report was written by Matthew R. Durose and Leonardo Antenangeli. Steven W. Perry and Erica Grasmick verified the report.

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