

Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
Juvenile Recidivism Report
For Clients Discharged During 2011

December 23, 2015



Charles Baker, Governor

Mary Lou Sudders, Secretary, Executive Office of Health & Human Services

Peter J. Forbes, Commissioner

**Massachusetts Department of Youth Services
2015 Juvenile Recidivism Report**

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Executive Summary

This study of the rearrests, convictions, and re-incarcerations of juvenile offenders tracked 406 discharged youth for two years after their release in 2011 from the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (“DYS”). The criminal histories of the discharge group were evaluated to find the rate of recidivism for the entire cohort, as well as the recidivism rates for selected segments of that cohort.

Of the 406 subjects, 22% were convicted within one year of discharge from DHS. This compares with a 25% rate for the 2010 discharges; a 28% rate for the 2009 discharges; and a 37% rate for the 2008 discharges. Youth at high risk for reconviction tended to be males who had been committed to DHS on property or public order offenses.

	One-Year
Gender	Reconviction Rate
Males	26.1%
Females	3.9%
Ethnicity	
Caucasian	22.9%
Afr. American	20.2%
Hispanic	22.0%
Other	22.7%
DYS Committing Offense Type	
Person	21.9%
Property	23.4%
Drug	20.7%
Motor Vehicle	7.7%
Weapons	19.4%
Public Order	24.1%
Grid Level	
<= Grid 2	22.2%
Grid 3	20.6%
Grid 4	27.0%
>= Grid 5	15.4%

¹See page 10, Table 5 for DHS Offenses and Grids

Key Findings:

- In the current study, the one-year reconviction rate was lower for the 2011 cohort (22%) compared to the 2010 cohort (25%).
- Of the youth who were reconvicted for offenses committed within one year of discharge, 66% were reconvicted within the first six months.
- The recidivism rate for males was 26% while the rate for females was only 4%.
- Recidivism rates were highest for youth whose juvenile offenses involved public order (24%), or property (23%). The lowest rates were for those committed for motor vehicle offenses (8%). See Figure 5.
- High recidivism rates were associated with clients convicted of larceny (36% convictions). Low recidivism rates were associated with client convicted of destruction of property (14% convictions).
- Of the five DYS Regions, the Western Region had the lowest recidivism rate (15%).
- Among the major Massachusetts cities, Brockton youth had the highest reconviction rates (35%), while Lawrence youth had the lowest (15%). See Table 3.

Table 1 Recidivism Rates For Former DYS Clients with Selected DYS Offenses

DYS Offense	# Convicted	Total in Sample	Recidivism Rate
Larceny	16	45	35.6%
Assault and Battery	16	66	24.2%
Armed Robbery	5	22	22.7%
Breaking and Entering	7	31	22.6%
Drug Possession	4	25	16.0%
Destruction of Property	3	22	13.6%

Table 2 Recidivism Rates For Former DYS Clients - Misdemeanors vs. Felonies

DYS Offense	# Convicted	Total in Sample	Recidivism Rate
Misdemeanor	45	200	22.5%
Felony	44	206	21.4%

Table 3 Recidivism Rates For Former DYS Clients From Five Major Cities

Client Hometown	# Convicted	Total in Sample	Recidivism Rate
Brockton	6	17	35.3%
Boston	13	48	27.1%
Worcester	8	31	25.8%
Springfield	8	38	21.1%
Lawrence	3	20	15.0%

Introduction

The Department of Youth Services (“DYS”) is the juvenile justice agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Department’s mission is to promote positive change in the youth in our care and custody and to make communities safer by improving the life outcomes for the youth we serve. DYS invests in highly qualified staff and a service continuum that engages youth, families and communities in strategies that support positive youth development.

Total Programs:

DYS operates 89 programs including:

- 64 residential facilities, ranging from staff secure group homes to highly secure locked units, and
- 25 community-based district and satellite offices to serve youth who live in the community (residing with a parent, guardian, foster parent or in an independent living program).

Total DYS Population:

- As of January 1, 2015 there were 675 committed youth being served by DYS.
- 550 of these youth were adjudicated delinquent and were committed to DYS custody until age 18.
- 125 of these youth were adjudicated delinquent and had been committed as youthful offenders until their 21st birthday.
- As a result of court orders, approximately 170 youth on any given day are held on bail at DYS facilities awaiting their next court appearance.

Juvenile Crime in Massachusetts:

- In FY 2015, Massachusetts had 10,293 juveniles arraigned on delinquency charges.
- Of these youth, 2,032 were detained at DYS facilities while they awaited their court appearance.
- 335 of these youths were committed to DYS (approximately 3% of all juveniles arraigned).

Recidivism is generally the most common measure used to determine the effectiveness of interventions with juvenile offenders. This report details recidivism data for a sample of former DYS youth who were discharged from the agency during calendar year 2011. For the purposes of this report, recidivism is defined as a conviction in the adult system for an offense committed within one year of discharge from DYS.

Prior research has found associations between juvenile recidivism and various factors related to age, socioeconomic status, educational history, peers, family dynamics, and substance use. The following have been identified (Baird, 1984; Wiebush et al., 1995) as primary risk factors for juveniles:

- Age of onset of criminality (usually age at first referral, first arrest, or first adjudication)
- Number of prior arrests / adjudications
- Prior Assaults
- Prior out-of-home placements
- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Drug / alcohol abuse
- School problems (including poor achievement, misbehavior in school, and truancy)
- Association with delinquent peers
- Family problems (including problems with parental control and poor relationships with family members)
- Mental or emotional disability

Treatment for the typical youth committed to DYS has been shown to be cost-effective in terms of reduced recidivism. Efforts have been made to estimate the costs to the community of a criminally-involved youth. Research has shown that, “Discounted to present value at age 14, [estimated] costs total \$3.2-\$5.8 million. The bulk of these costs (\$2.7-\$4.8 million) are due to crimes, while an additional \$390,000 to \$580,000 is

estimated to be the value of lost productivity due to dropping out of high school. The cost of a heavy drug abuser is estimated to range between \$480,000 and \$1.1 million, although \$700,000 of that amount is the cost of crime committed by heavy drug abusers (and hence already included in the crime cost estimates).” (Cohen & Piquero, 2009).

Figure 1 One-Year Recidivism Rates For DYS Discharges (2002 - 2011)

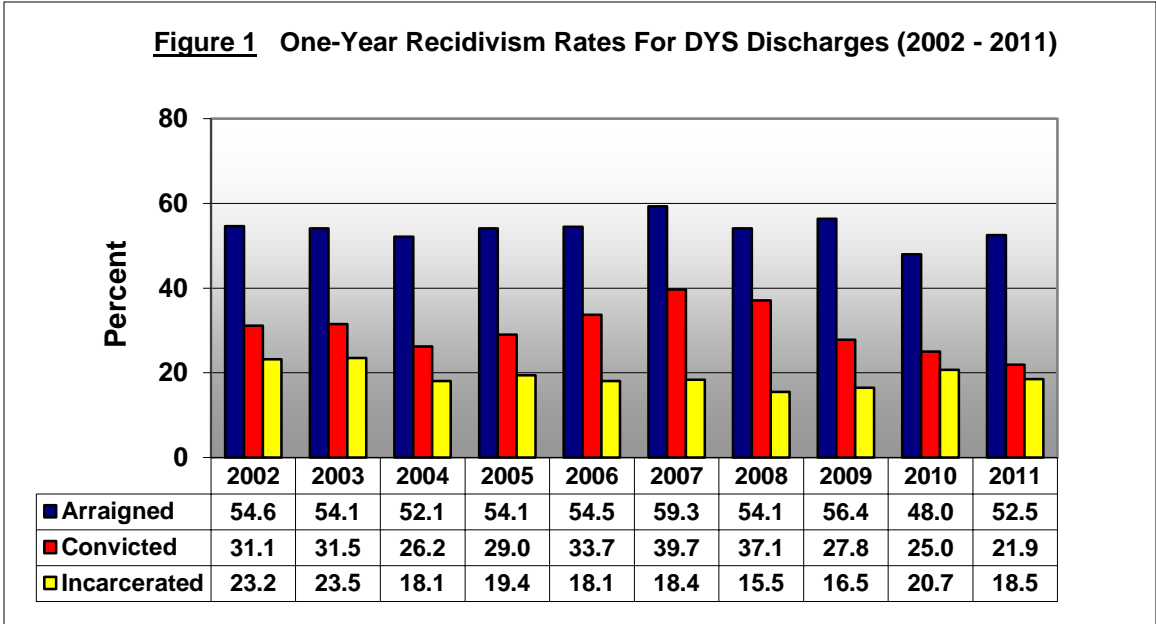
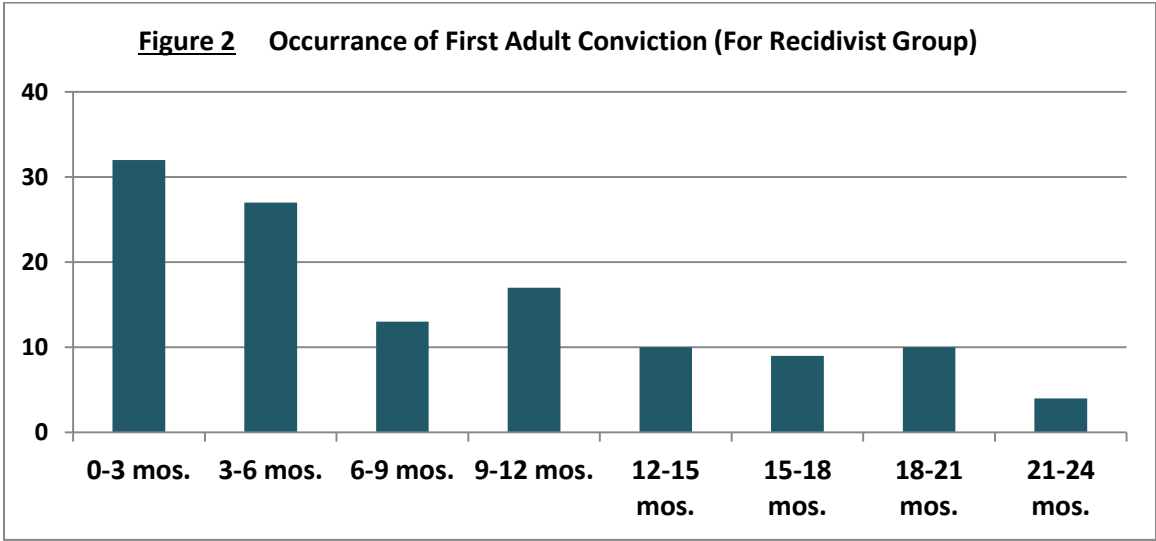


Figure 2 Occurrence of First Adult Conviction (For Recidivist Group)



Method and Subjects

A random sample was selected which consisted of 68% of the 596 DYS clients discharged during the year 2011 (Table 4). *A detailed demographic breakdown of the sample can be found in Appendix C.* Eighty-one percent of the sample were males; 41% were Caucasian; 27% Hispanic; and 27% African American. 43% of the sample were DYS grid levels 3 and above. The remaining 57% were assigned grid levels 1 or 2 (Table 5). The sample were representative in regard to DYS regions, ethnicity, and offense type. Excluded from the study were clients for whom a criminal history could not be located, and youthful offenders who moved directly from DYS to the adult system upon discharge. The subjects' criminal histories were checked using the Commonwealth's Criminal Offenders Record Information (CORI). All data was then entered for analysis into MS Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Using client information gathered from the Department's Juvenile Justice Enterprise Management System (JJEMS), it was possible to calculate recidivism rates with respect to gender, grid level, DYS region, city, county, age at first commitment, and offense type.

Table 4 Characteristics of the Sample

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age at First Arrest	406	11	17	15.2	1.2
Age at DYS Commitment	406	13	17	16.2	1.1
Length of Stay in DYS (Yrs.)	406	0.1	7.0	1.9	1.1

Table 5 Selected DYS Offenses and Grids

Offense	Grid
Disturbing the Peace	1
Petty Larceny	1
Possession of Marijuana	1
Distributing Marijuana	2
Possession of Cocaine	2
Poss. of a Dangerous Weapon	2
Receiving Stolen Property	2
B&E (Felony)	3
Larceny (Felony)	3
A&B With a Dangerous Weapon	4
Armed Robbery	4
Distributing Cocaine	4
Armed Assault & Robbery	5
Attempted Murder	5
Rape	5
Home Invasion	6
Murder in the 1 st Degree	6

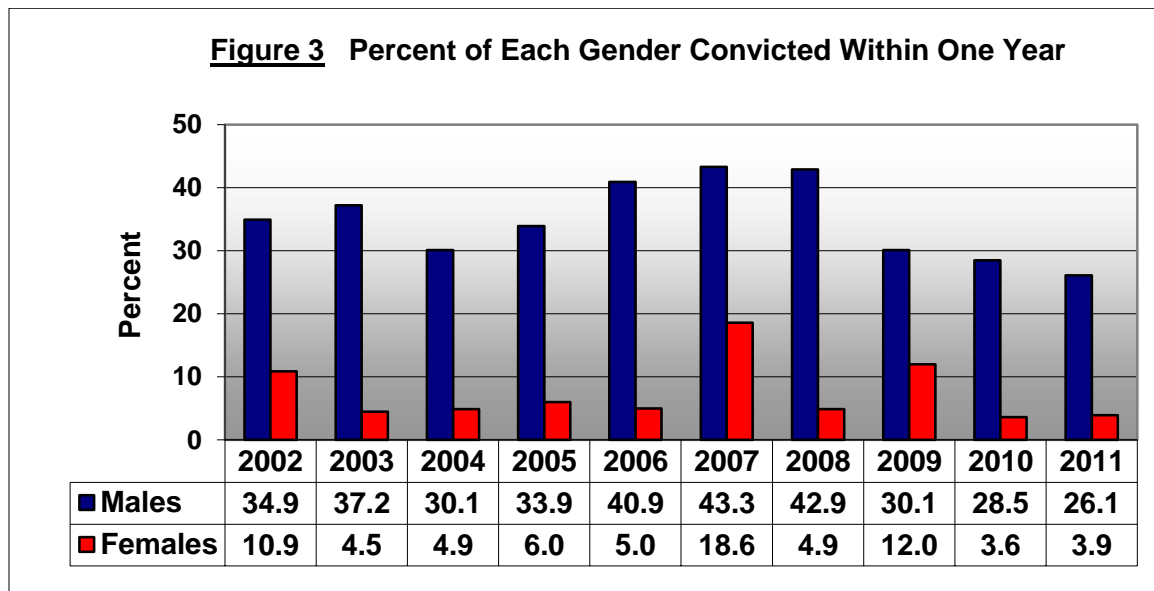
Results

Overall Rates: Of the 406 subjects chosen for the study, 22% were convicted of an offense within one year of discharge from DYS. This compares with a 25% rate for the 2010 discharges; a 28% rate for the 2009 discharges; and a 37% rate for the 2008 discharges (Figures 1 and 2).

Table 6 Rates of Arrests, Convictions, and Incarcerations

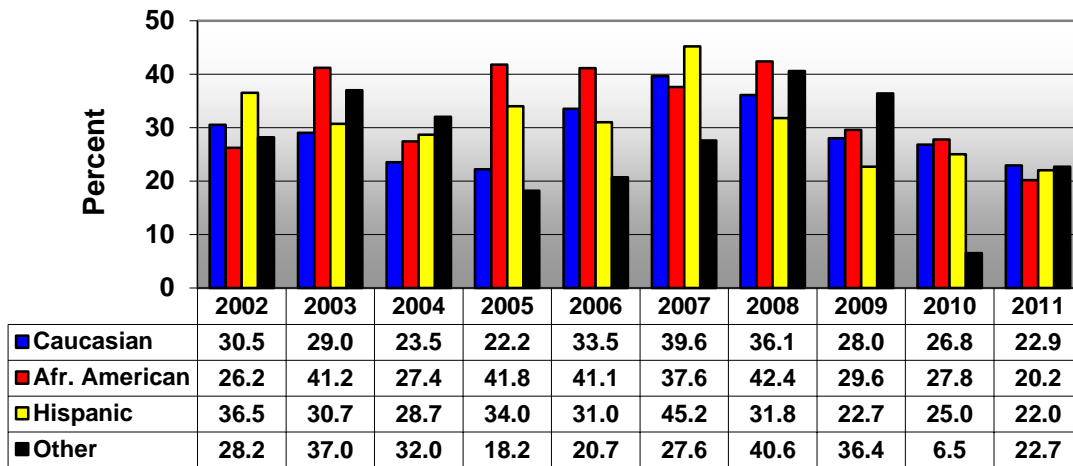
	Within One Year		Within Two Years	
	N	%	N	%
Arrests	213	52.5	274	67.5
Convictions	89	21.9	122	30.0
Incarcerations	75	18.5	107	26.4

Gender: Males re-offended at a much higher rate than females (26.1% and 3.9% respectively). For most of the 2001 - 2011 discharge cohorts, the re-conviction rate for females was less than 10%. (Figure 3).



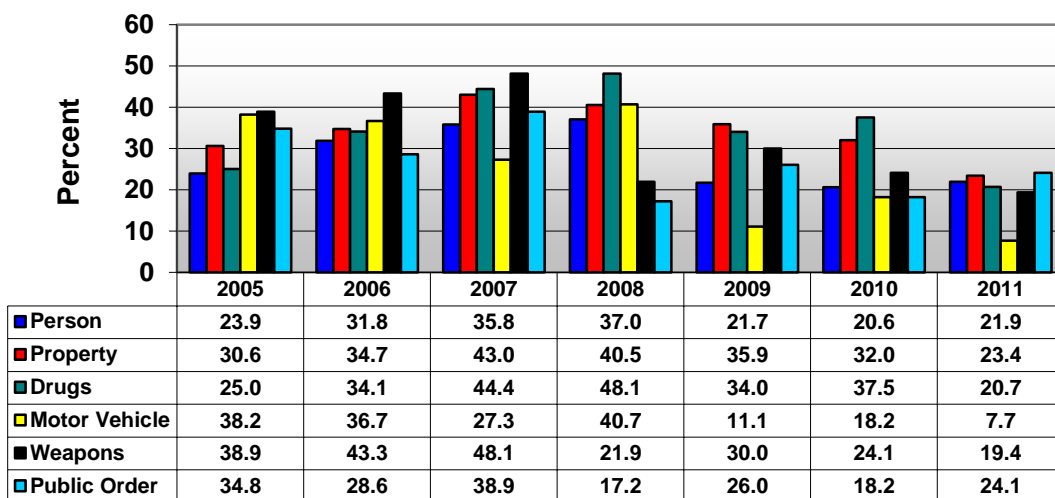
Ethnicity: 23% of the Caucasians; 22% of the Hispanics; and 20% of the African Americans in the sample were reconvicted for offenses committed within one year of discharge (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Percent of Ethnic Groups Convicted Within One Year

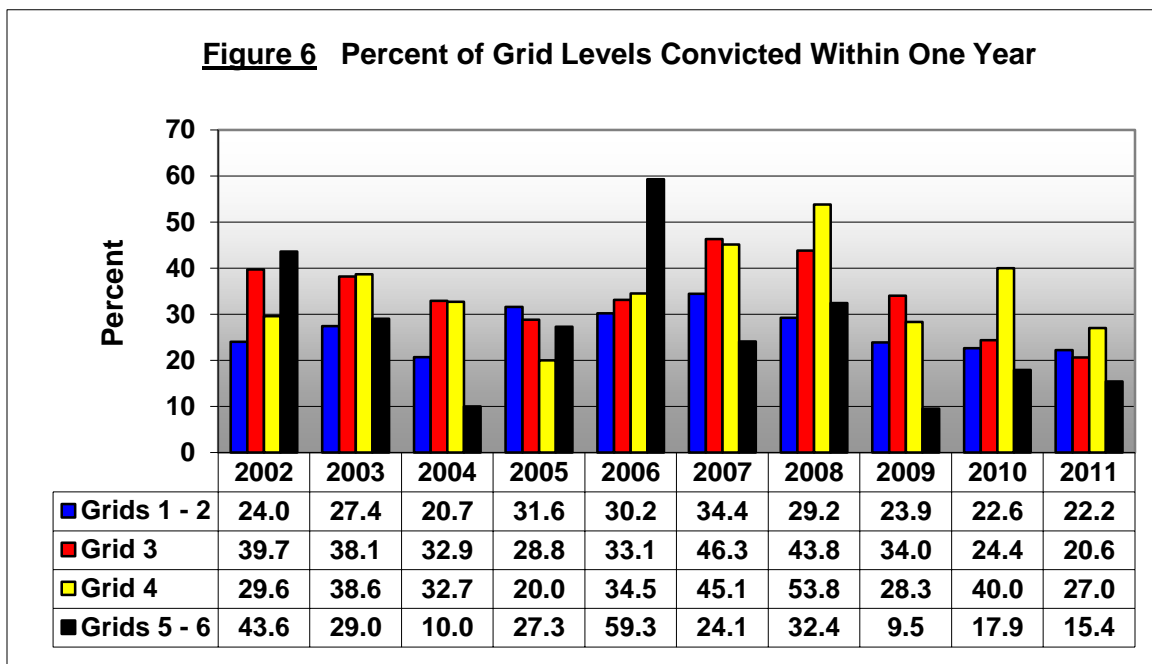


Offense Type: With respect to the most serious DYS commitment, 24% of the public order offenders; 23% of the property offenders; 22% of the person offenders; 21% of the drug offenders; 19% of the weapons offenders; and 8% of the motor vehicle offenders were reconvicted for offenses committed within one year of discharge. Historically, property and drug offenders have tended toward the higher recidivism rates. (Figure 5). Refer to Appendix A for a detailed list of offenses and offense types.

Figure 5 Percent of Offense Group Convicted Within One Year

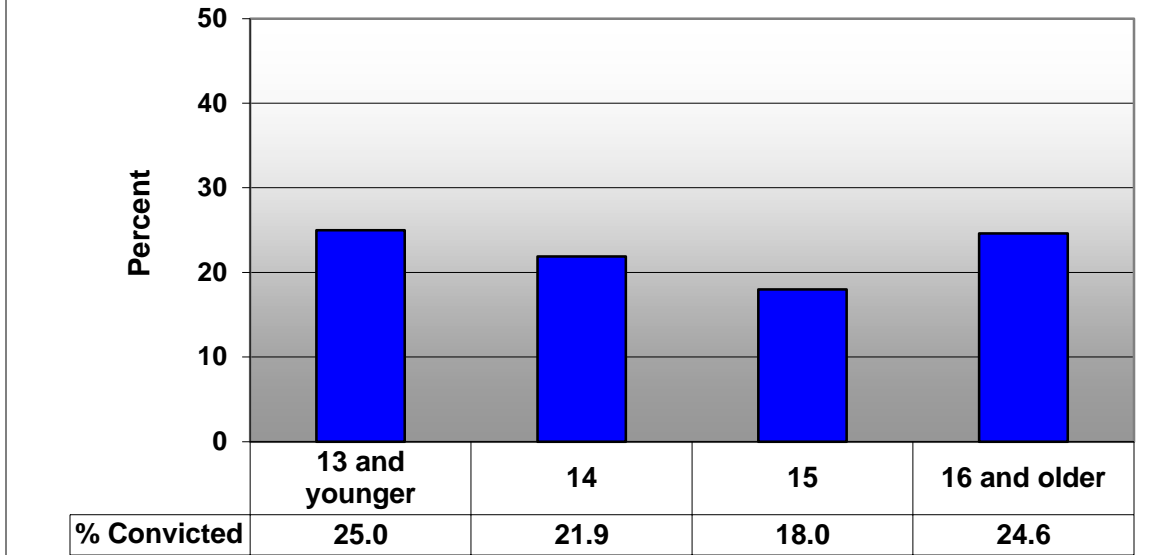


Grid Levels: The one-year reconviction rates by grid level for the 2011 cohort were: 22% for grid levels 2 and below; 21% for grid level 3; 27% for grid level 4; and 15% for grid levels 5 and above (Figure 6). The recidivism rates for low-level offenders (grids 1 and 2) have been higher in the past seven years than in previous years, but the highest rates of recidivism continue to be by youth who have been committed to DYS for offenses at the grid level 4.



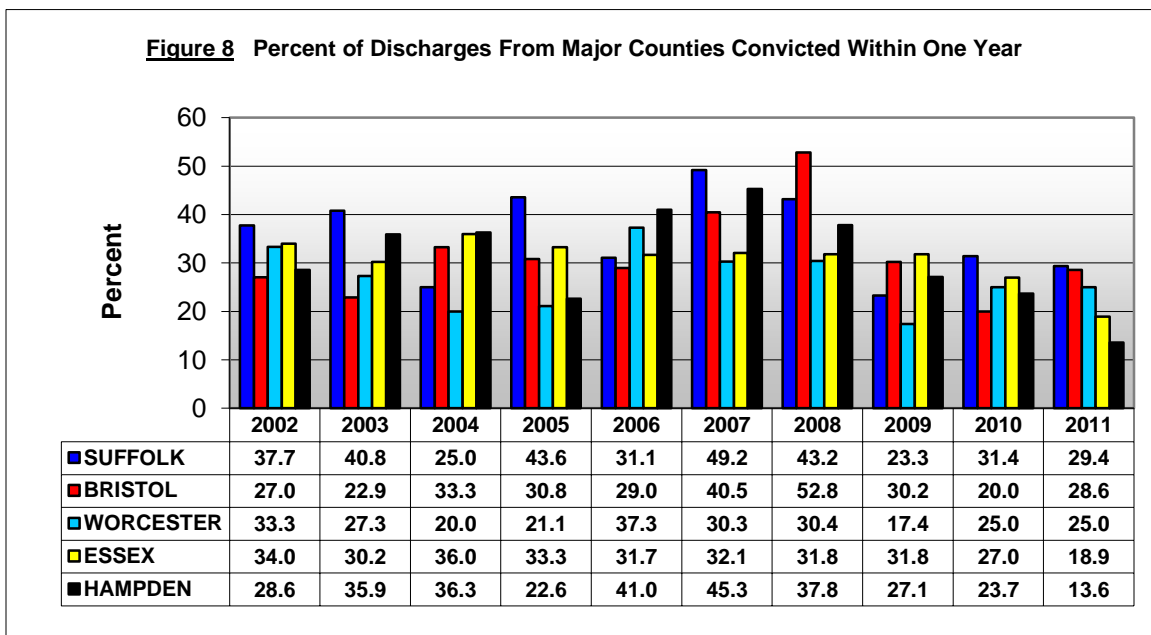
Age at First Arrest: Youth who were age 13 or younger at the time of their first arrest had the highest reconviction rate (25%) in the 2011 cohort. The lowest reconviction rate (18%) was for those first arrested at age 15 (Figure 7). Previous research has often shown high recidivism rates for individuals who have a young age at first arrest.

Figure 7 Percent of First Arrest Age Groups Convicted Within One Year



County: The re-conviction rates for clients from the major Massachusetts counties were as follows: Bristol County, 29%; Suffolk County, 29%; Worcester County, 25%; Essex County, 19%; and Hampden County, 14% (Figure 8). Historically, the highest rates of recidivism have been by youth living in Suffolk and Hampden counties.

Figure 8 Percent of Discharges From Major Counties Convicted Within One Year



DYS Region: The reconviction rates for the five DHS regions were: Metro, 26%; Central, 26%; Northeast, 22%; Southeast, 22%; and Western, 15% (Figure 9). Compared to the previous year, the Western and Metro Regions showed significant decreases in reconviction rates. A breakdown of each DHS Region by County can be found in Appendix B.

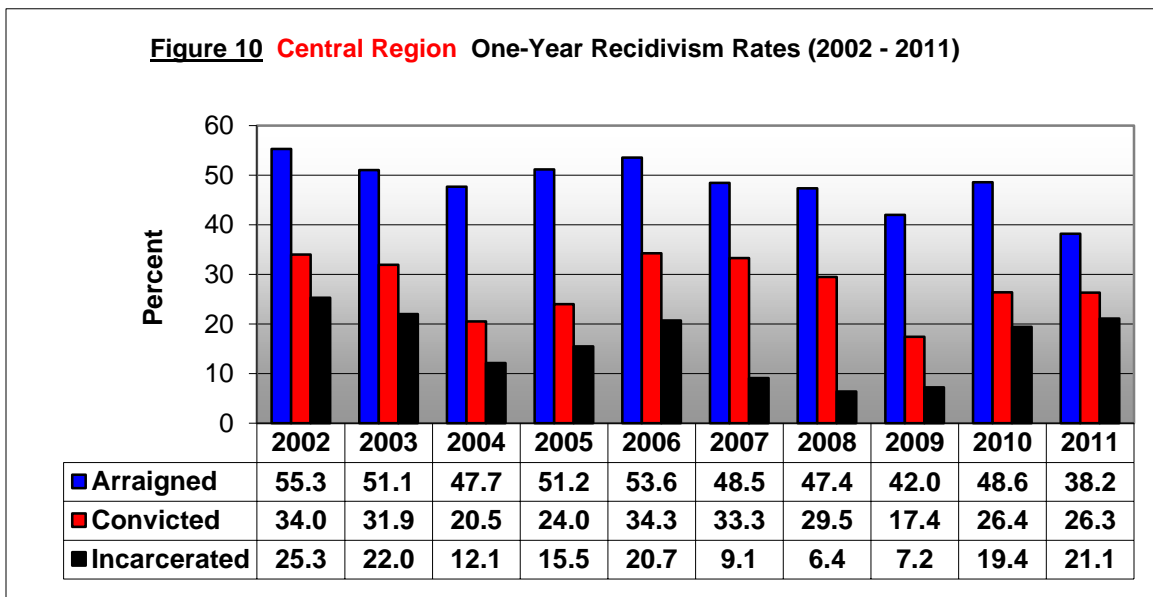
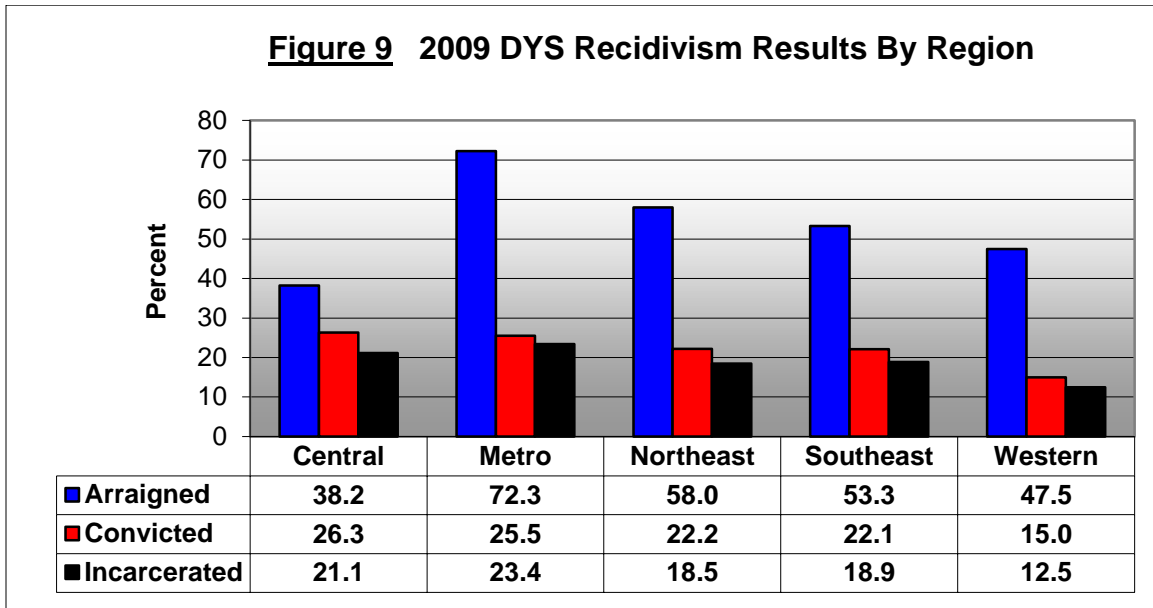


Figure 11 Metro Region One-Year Recidivism Rates (2002 - 2011)

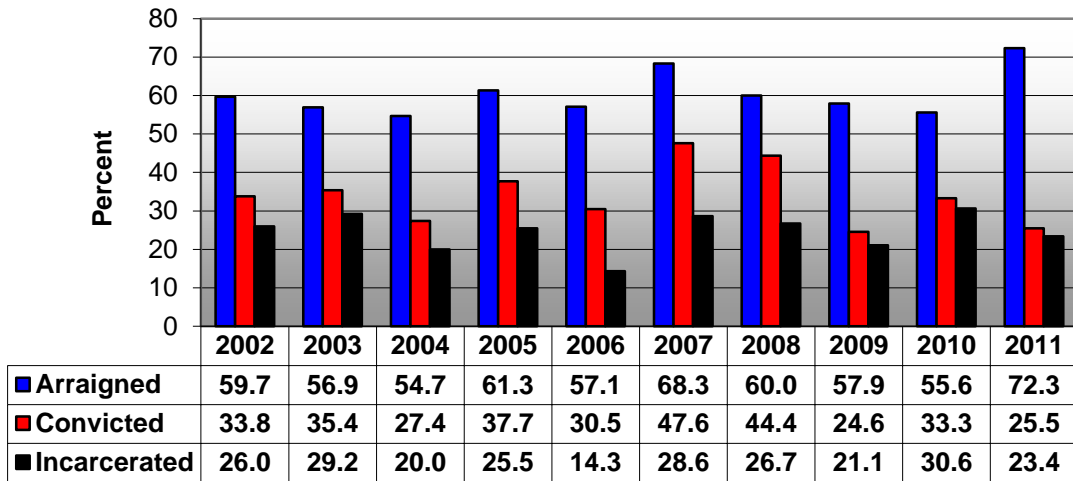


Figure 12 Northeast Region One-Year Recidivism Rates (2007 - 2011)

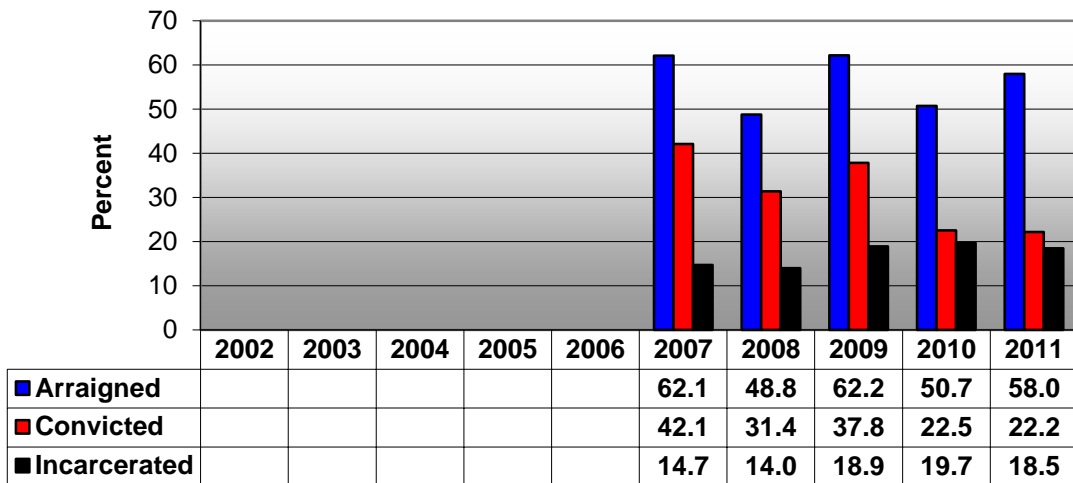


Figure 13 Southeast Region One-Year Recidivism Rates (2002 - 2011)

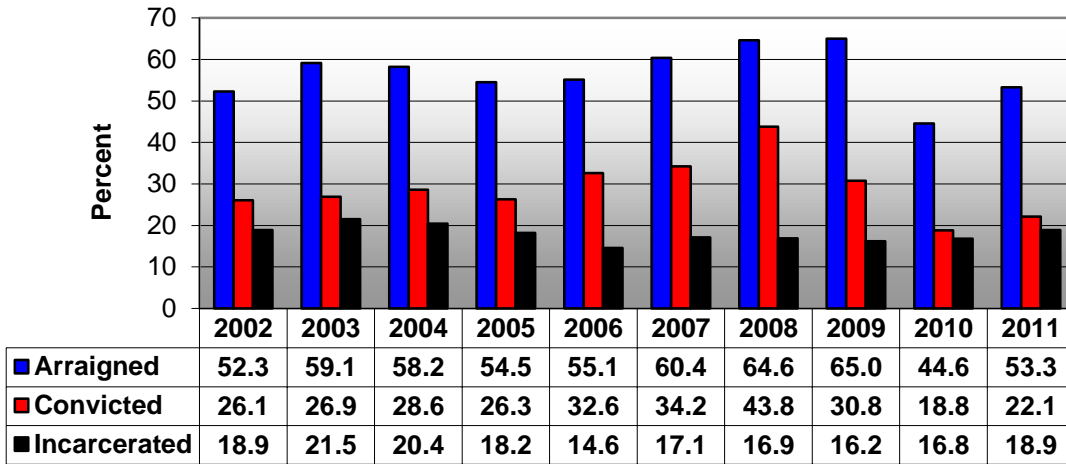
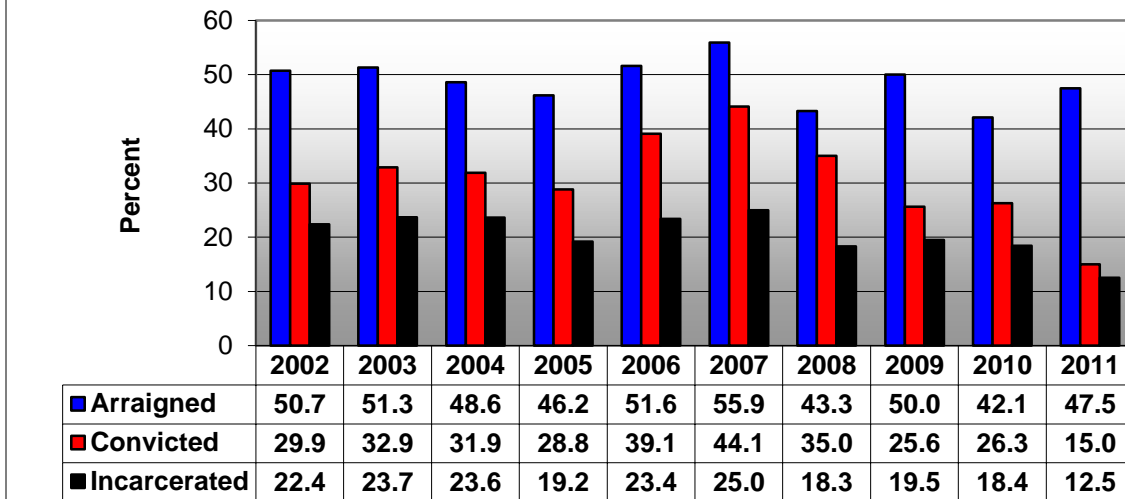
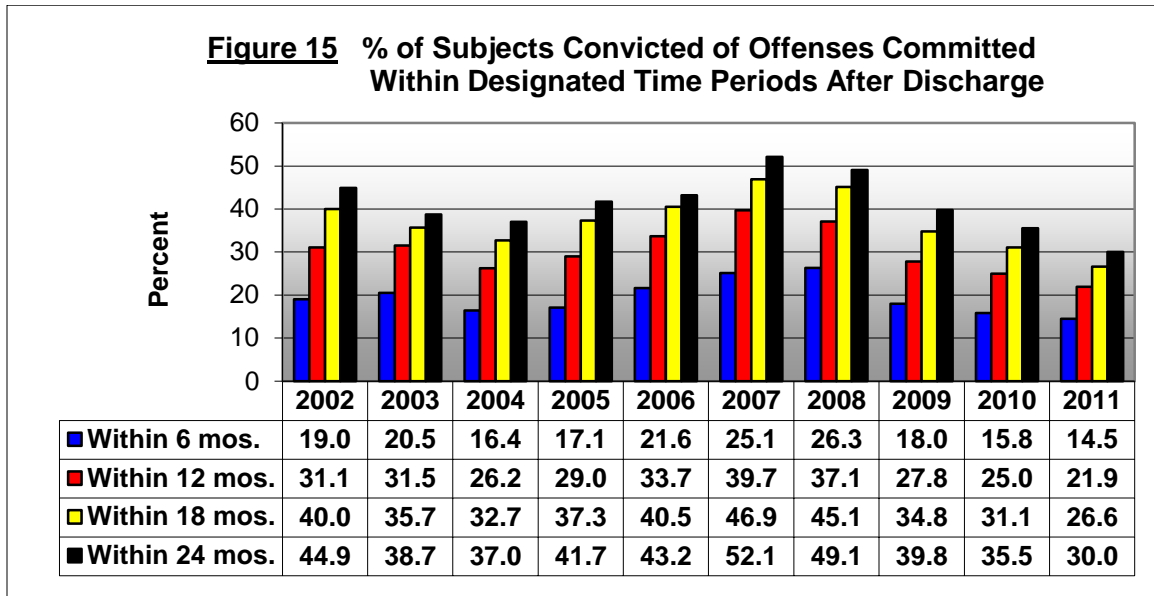


Figure 14 Western Region One-Year Recidivism Rates (2002 - 2011)



Length of Time Until First Adult Conviction: Of the 406 clients in the sample, 15% were reconvicted of an offense committed within six months; 22% were reconvicted of an offense committed within one year; and 30% were reconvicted within two years (Figure 15). Research has consistently found that when discharged clients re-offend, they

tend to do so within a short period of time. Of the clients who re-offended within one year, 66% committed their offense within six months of discharge.



Conclusions

Criminal justice professionals have not agreed on one standard definition of recidivism. Jurisdictions across the country use rearrests, reconvictions, or reincarcerations as criteria for recidivism events. Tracking periods vary from 6 months to 24 months. In addition, a recidivism event can be defined as a juvenile offense, an adult offense, or a combination of both. For these reasons, juvenile recidivism rates for Massachusetts were not compared to those from other states. Further complicating the issue is the fact that (1) Each state has its own unique population; (2) In some states, juvenile rearrests or reconvictions are referred to as “relapses” rather than recidivism events; and (3) Policy changes in local police departments and courts can influence recidivism rates. Additionally, many crimes are not reported to the authorities. For example, victims of sexual assault only report offenses 5 to 20% of the time.

Juvenile recidivism rates for Massachusetts have generally been lower in the years 1998 through 2011, as compared to the years 1993 through 1997. In an attempt to improve

outcomes for youth, DYS has increased investments in clinical, educational, and gender specific services; as well as intensive case management services for violent juvenile offenders in the Metro Boston Region (Suffolk County). Those investments signaled a shift from “warehousing” youth in the 1990s (when recidivism rates were close to 50%) to a model of juvenile justice which has demonstrated positive outcomes for youth. The focus has shifted from containment to treatment.

Research has found that juveniles who re-offend tend to do so within a short period of time following release to the community. In the current study, among the subjects who re-offended within one year of discharge, 66% re-offended within six months. Clients at high risk for reconviction tended to be males who were high-level offenders (Grid level 4); and had been committed to DYS on property or public order offenses.

Research has shown improved outcomes (including reduced recidivism rates) when a highly structured transition is implemented from secure juvenile facilities to the community. This transition generally includes:

- Preparing confined youth for re-entry into the communities in which they reside.
- Making the necessary connections with resources in the community that relate to known risk and protective factors.

DYS has implemented a Community Services Network for committed youth who have been released to the community. The features of this model include increased contact with DYS youth by caring adults; emphasis on pro-social development; community connectedness; and building life skills and social competencies. DYS has seen significant decreases in recidivism rates since the agency began community supervision models in the 1990s. In 2015, DYS was awarded a \$190,000 Community Services Grant by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The goals of the initiative include reducing recidivism and increasing public safety through improving community supervision for youth at medium to high risk of reoffending.

DYS is currently collaborating with the Pew Charitable Trusts, The Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators, and the National Center for Juvenile Justice on the Results First Initiative. The Results First model compares the costs and benefits of a range of interventions geared toward incarcerated adults and youth. One of the primary goals is to ensure that adequate funding is directed toward programs and interventions that have been shown to be cost effective.

The 2012–2015 DYS Strategic Plan identified discharge and post discharge planning as a critical facet of the overall rehabilitative process. Every youth committed to DYS now goes through a thorough discharge planning process and every youth is offered an ability to remain involved with DYS on a voluntary basis (Assent of Ward). Services offered include but are not limited to: case management support, independent living options, employment and training support, and support for secondary education pursuit. These additions to the service continuum could potentially have significant and positive impacts on recidivism. The strategic planning process has also emphasized education, vocational training, and employment for committed youth. This sustained focus on positive youth outcomes is a strategic attempt to interrupt the delinquency trajectory and to assist youth in becoming productive and law abiding as they return to their home communities.

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Appendix A

Offense List

Offense	Offense Type
A&B	Person
A&B ON A CORRECTIONS OFFICER	Person
A&B ON A PUBLIC SERVANT	Person
A&B ON CHILD WITH INJURY	Person
A&B ON ELDER (+60)/DISABLED PERSON; BODILY INJURY	Person
A&B ON RETARDED PERSON	Person
A&B W/INTENT TO MURDER	Person
A&B WITH DANGEROUS WEAPON	Person
ABANDONMENT	Public Order
ABDUCTING FEMALES TO BE PROSTITUTES	Public Order
ABDUCTION	Person
ABUSE OF A FEMALE CHILD	Person
ABUSE PREVENTION ACT (VIOLATING RESTRAINING ORDER)	Public Order
ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT	Public Order
ACCESSORY TO MURDER - AFTER FACT	Person
ACCOSTING	Public Order
ADULTERY	Public Order
AFFRAY	Public Order
ARMED ASSAULT & ROBBERY	Person
ARMED ASSAULT IN DWELLING	Person
ARMED ROBBERY	Person
ARMED ROBBERY WHILE MASKED	Person
ARSON	Property
ASSAULT	Person
ASSAULT W/INTENT TO MURDER	Person
ASSAULT WITH DANGEROUS WEAPON	Person
ASSUMING TO BE AN OFFICER	Public Order
ATTACHING WRONG PLATES-124P, 124B	Motor Vehicle
ATTEMPT TO COMMIT A CRIME	Public Order
ATTEMPT TO KIDNAP	Person
ATTEMPTED ARSON	Property
ATTEMPTED B&E DAYTIME	Property
ATTEMPTED B&E NIGHT	Property
ATTEMPTED MURDER	Person
ATTEMPTED RAPE	Person
ATTEMPTED SUICIDE	Public Order
ATTEMPTED UNARMED ROBBERY	Person
B&E	Property
BIGAMY OR POLYGAMY	Public Order
BOMB THREAT	Weapons
BOXING MATCHES	Public Order
BREAKING GLASS	Property
BRIBE	Public Order
BURGLARY, UNARMED	Property
BURN A MEETING HOUSE	Property
BURNING A DWELLING	Property

Offense	Offense Type
CARJACKING	Motor Vehicle
CARNAL ABUSE OF A FEMALE	Person
CARRYING A DANGEROUS WEAPON IN SCHOOL	Weapons
CARRYING A FIREARM IN A MOTOR VEHICLE	Weapons
CARRYING DANGEROUS WEAPON	Weapons
CIVIL RIGHTS ORDER VIOLATION	Public Order
COERCION TO JOIN A GANG	Public Order
COMPULSORY INSURANCE LAW-118A	Motor Vehicle
CONSPIRACY TO VIOLATE DRUG LAWS	Drug
CONSPIRACY-OTHER CRIME	Public Order
CONTEMPT OF COURT (COURT VIOLATION)	Public Order
CONTRIBUTING TO THE DELENQUINCY OF A MINOR	Public Order
COUNTERFEIT MONEY	Property
DISCHARGING A FIREARM WITHIN 500 FEET OF A BUILDING	Weapons
DISORDERLY CONDUCT	Public Order
DISTRIBUTE (CLASS A)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE (CLASS B)-COCAINE	Drug
DISTRIBUTE (CLASS C)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE (CLASS D)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE (CLASS E)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE TO MINOR (CLASS A)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE TO MINOR (CLASS B)	Drug
DISTRIBUTE TO MINOR (CLASS C)	Drug
DISTRIBUTING IN A SCHOOL ZONE	Drug
DISTURBING A SCHOOL ASSEMBLY	Public Order
DISTURBING THE PEACE	Public Order
FAILURE TO APPEAR ON PERSONAL RECOGNIZANCE	Public Order
FALSE FIRE ALARM	Public Order
FORGERY ON CHECK OR PROMISSORY NOTE	Property
GAMBLING	Public Order
GUN LAW-CARRYING A FIREARM	Weapons
HAVING A FIREARM W/O A PERMIT	Weapons
HAVING ALCOHOL ON MDC RESERVATION	Public Order
HOME INVASION	Person
IDLE AND DISORDERLY	Public Order
ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREWORKS	Weapons
INDECENT A&B	Person
INTIMIDATING A GOVERNMENT WITNESS	Public Order
KIDNAPPING	Person
LARCENY LESS	Property
LARCENY MORE (FELONY)	Property
LEAVING SCENE OF ACCIDENT AFTER INJURING PERSON	Motor Vehicle
LEAVING SCENE OF ACCIDENT AFTER INJURING PROPERTY	Motor Vehicle
MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY-OVER \$250	Property
MALICIOUS DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY-UNDER \$250	Property
MANSLAUGHTER	Person
MAYHEM	Person

Offense	Offense Type
MINOR POSSESSIONG ALCOHOL	Public Order
MURDER IN THE 1ST DEGREE	Person
MURDER IN THE 2ND DEGREE	Person
OBSTRUCTING JUSTICE	Public Order
OPEN AND GROSS LEWDNESS	Public Order
OPERATING AS TO ENDANGER LIVES AND SAFETY-112A	Motor Vehicle
OPERATING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF LIQUOR-111A	Motor Vehicle
OPERATING WITHOUT A LICENSE-114F	Motor Vehicle
PERJURY	Public Order
POSSESSION (CLASS A)	Drug
POSSESSION (CLASS B)	Drug
POSSESSION (CLASS C)	Drug
POSSESSION (CLASS D)	Drug
POSSESSION (CLASS E)	Drug
POSSESSION OF A DANGEROUS WEAPON	Weapons
POSSESSION OF BURGULAROUS TOOLS	Property
POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISPENSE (CLASS A)	Drug
POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISPENSE (CLASS B)	Drug
POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISPENSE (CLASS C)	Drug
POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISPENSE (CLASS D)	Drug
POSSESSION WITH INTENT TO DISPENSE (CLASS E)	Drug
POSSESSION-MARIJUANA (CLASS D)	Drug
PROSTITUTION	Public Order
RAPE	Person
RAPE OF CHILD	Person
RECEIVING AND/OR CONCEALING STOLEN PROPERTY	Property
RESISTING ARREST	Public Order
SHOPLIFTING	Public Order
SPEEDING-116A	Motor Vehicle
STALKING	Public Order
STATUTORY RAPE	Person
THREATENING	Public Order
TRESSPASS	Public Order
UNARMED ROBBERY	Person
USE WITHOUT AUTHORITY-114A	Motor Vehicle
VIOLATION OF PROBATION	Public Order
WANTON DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY-OVER \$250	Property
WANTON DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY-UNDER \$250	Property

Appendix B

DYS Regions by County

DYS Central Region

- Worcester County

DYS Metro Region

- Suffolk County

DYS Northeast Region

- Essex County
- Middlesex County

DYS Southeast Region

- Barnstable County
- Bristol County
- Dukes County
- Nantucket County
- Norfolk County
- Plymouth County

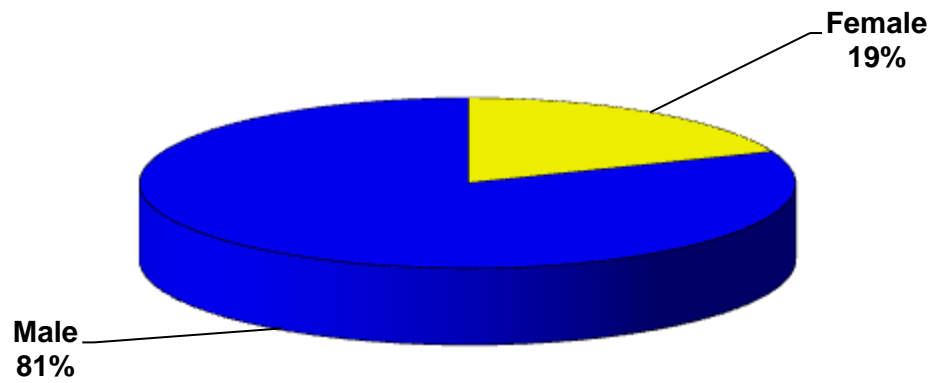
DYS Western Region

- Berkshire County
- Franklin County
- Hampden County
- Hampshire County

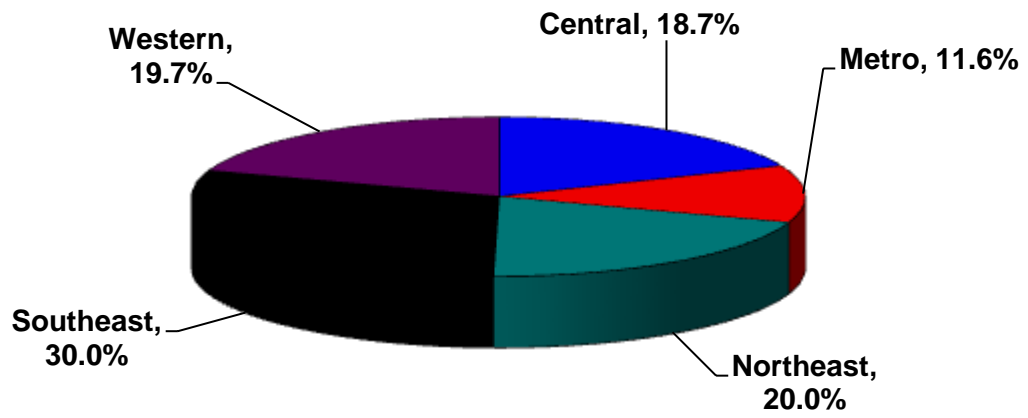
Appendix C

Demographics of the Subjects

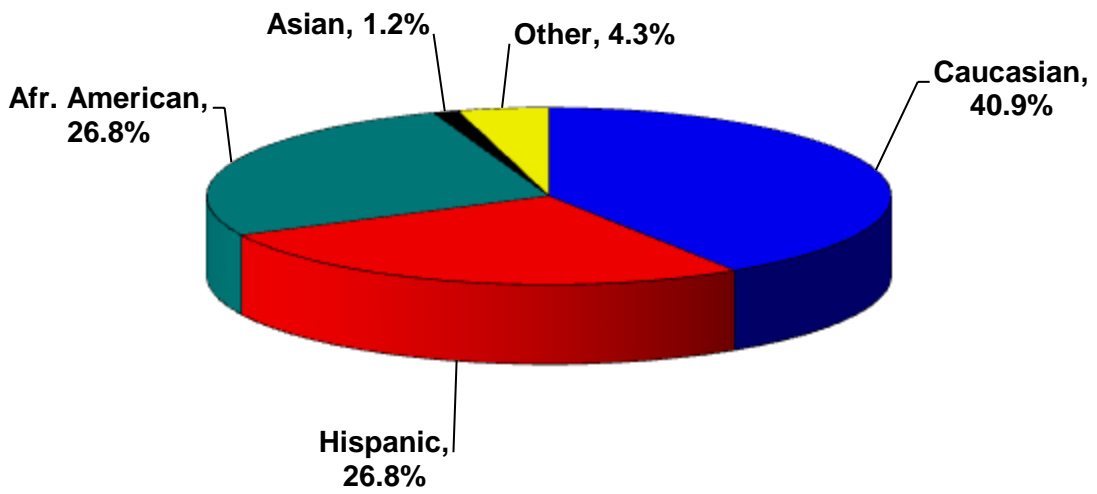
2011 Recidivism Sample (By Gender)



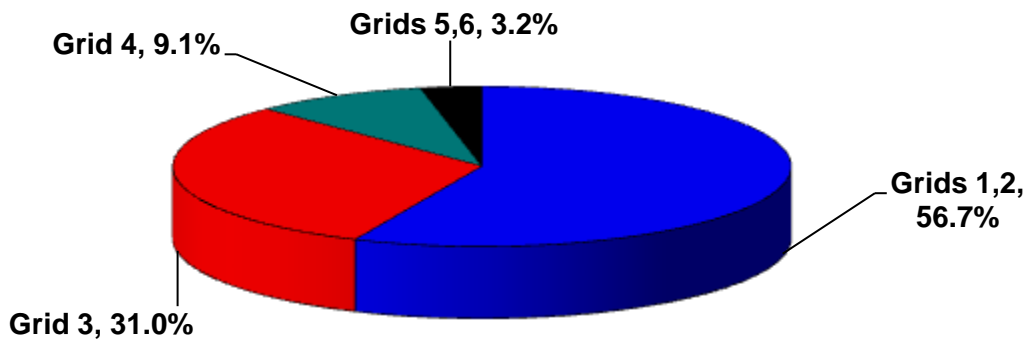
2011 DYS Recidivism Sample (By Region)



2011 Recidivism Sample (By Ethnicity)



2011 DYS Recidivism Sample (By Grid Level)



2011 DYS Recidivism Sample (By Offense Type)

