

A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Ohio

Nancy G. La Vigne
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with Christy Visher, Vera Kachnowski
and Jeremy Travis

Research for Safer Communities

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Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry

This *Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Ohio* is part of a larger Urban Institute initiative entitled *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*. The purpose of *Returning Home* is to develop a deeper understanding of the reentry experiences of returning prisoners, their families, and their communities.

With support from the George Gund Foundation, the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Urban Institute has launched *Returning Home* in Ohio. This research project involves interviews with prisoners before and after their release from prison; interviews with released prisoners' family members; focus groups with residents in communities to which many prisoners return; analysis of extant data on local indicators of community well-being; and interviews with community stakeholders. State laws and policies will also be reviewed to provide the overall political and policy context. In addition, in Ohio, the Urban Institute is exploring the nexus between prisoner reentry and public health by conducting interviews and focus groups with returning prisoners diagnosed with mental and physical health conditions.

The results of this research on prisoner reentry in Ohio will be published in 2005 and will be part of a larger cross-state analysis based on *Returning Home* research conducted in Maryland, Illinois and Texas.

Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

This report describes the process of prisoner reentry* in Ohio by examining the policy context surrounding reentry in Ohio, the characteristics of inmates exiting Ohio prisons, the efforts to prepare inmates for release, the geographic distribution of prisoners returning home, and the social and economic climates of the communities that are home to some of the highest concentrations of released prisoners. This report does not attempt to evaluate a specific reentry program or empirically assess Ohio's reentry policies and practices. Rather, the report consolidates existing data on incarceration and release trends and presents a new analysis of data on Ohio prisoners released in 2001. The data used for this report were derived from several sources—the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University (for community-level census and crime-related data for Cleveland). Highlights from the report are presented below.¹

Historical Incarceration and Release Trends. For the past two decades, Ohio's rate of prison population growth mirrored that observed at the national level until 1998, when the state prison population peaked and started a three-year decline. Between year-end 1982 and mid-1998, Ohio's prison population nearly tripled in size from 17,147 to 49,029. After three years of decreases, the Ohio prison population grew by less than 1 percent from 2001 to 2002 to reach 45,284. By the end of 2002, Ohio had the 7th largest prison population in the United States and the 22nd highest incarceration rate, with 398 prisoners per 100,000 residents. The increases in the Ohio prison population can be attributed to two main factors: increased admissions and longer lengths of stay. Increased admissions, particularly from 1987 to 1992, were comprised of a dramatic increase in new commitments for drug offenses, as well as increases in serious violent crime, and thus in new commitments for violent offenders. Longer lengths of stay, especially for more serious offenders, also contributed to Ohio's prison population growth and sustained that growth even while prison admissions declined in the mid-1990s. Ohio's release patterns generally reflect the admissions trends over the past two decades. In 2002, 25,624 inmates were released from Ohio prisons, three times the number of inmates released two decades earlier (8,522 in 1982). Notably, a surge in releases in the late 1990s, driven by changes in sentencing laws and parole guidelines, pushed release counts above admission counts and resulted in a declining prison population.

*** Reentry Defined:** For the purposes of this report, "reentry" is defined as the process of leaving the adult state prison system and returning to society. The concept of reentry is applicable to a variety of contexts in which individuals transition from incarceration to freedom, including release from jails, federal institutions, and juvenile facilities. We have limited our scope to those sentenced to serve time in state prison in order to focus on the individuals who have been convicted of the most serious offenses, who have been removed from community for longer periods of time, who would be eligible for state prison programming while incarcerated, and who are managed by state correctional and parole systems.

1 All attributions to the sources of the statistics presented in the Executive Summary, as well as any additional explanations of the data, can be found in the body of the report.

Release Mechanisms and Post-Release Supervision.

Over the past two decades, changes in Ohio's sentencing laws have completely altered the composition of the release population in terms of the mechanism by which inmates are released. In 1982, the vast majority of inmates were released via discretionary means through a grant of parole from the parole board. Since that time, sentencing law changes have resulted in steady declines in the proportion of discretionary releases and corresponding increases in mandatory releases at the expiration of the inmates' sentences. By 2002, over 70 percent of inmates were released via mandatory release—the largest proportion in over two decades. Until the implementation of a new set of sentencing laws in 1996, the decline in discretionary release in Ohio was matched by a decline in the number of inmates released to parole supervision. By 1996, only about one-third of the population was released to supervision. With the implementation of Senate Bill 2 in 1996, which mandated a period of post-release supervision for the most serious crimes and allowed the parole board the discretion to place less serious offenders on post-release supervision, the proportion of inmates released to supervision rose to over 62 percent in 2001, before dipping slightly to approximately 60 percent in 2002. Whether inmates are released to supervision or not, many of them return to prison having committed new crimes or technical violations of their conditions of supervision. An increase in Ohio's rate of return to prison in the late 1990s appears to have leveled off in the last few years.

Profile of Prisoners Released in 2001. The inmates released from Ohio prisons in 2001 were predominantly male (89 percent) and were fairly evenly divided between blacks (53 percent) and whites (45 percent). Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of the release population were between the ages of 20 and 39; the average age at release was 33 years. Similar proportions of the release population had served time for drug offenses (26

percent) and violent offenses (23 percent), with 12 percent having served time for a technical violation committed while on post-release supervision. Ohio's prison population is dominated by inmates serving relatively short terms. Excluding technical violators, close to two-thirds (62 percent) of the release cohort in 2001 served one year or less in prison and 82 percent of the prisoners served three years or less; the average time served (again, excluding technical violators) was 2 years. Less than half (44 percent) of the prisoners released in 2001 had been incarcerated in an Ohio prison at least once before. Of those released in 2001, 17 percent were returned to an Ohio prison within one year.

Preparation for Reentry. Over the past two and a half years, the ODRC has been working to develop a more holistic and systematic approach to prisoner reentry in which the concept of reentry underlies the assessments and programming that a prisoner receives while in prison as well as after release. While much of the post-release reentry strategy is focused on "Reentry Intensive" inmates (those with the most serious prior criminal histories) who are released to supervision, the ODRC is launching a "Release Preparation Program" for all inmates, regardless of their risk assessment levels or whether they will exit to supervision. The Release Preparation Program, which will start six months prior to an inmate's release, includes employment readiness and other workshops and seeks to provide transitional linkages so that the inmate will continue to receive needed services after release. The fact that ODRC has launched a new reentry strategy is promising and suggests that those prisoners released in the future will be better prepared for their return home. Nonetheless, it is important to note that not all current inmates receive the full-range of institutional and post-release programming and that the new reentry strategy and the release preparation program are not yet fully implemented.

Some of the ODRC's core programming areas, which are central to the reentry strategy, are

- *Educational and Vocational*: On any given day in FY 2002, nearly one-quarter of the ODRC prison population was enrolled in an education program, and over the course of the year, over half of the population participated in a school program. In addition to educational programs ranging from literacy to college-level coursework, the ODRC offers vocational programs and apprenticeships.
- *Substance Abuse*: The ODRC provides a range of substance abuse programming from residential treatment programs to education and self-help groups. In FY 2002, the ODRC provided nearly 14,000 inmate participants with substance abuse programming in the institutions.
- *Mental Health*: The ODRC provides several levels of mental health treatment and counseling ranging from inpatient treatment for seriously mentally ill prisoners to outpatient therapy and counseling for inmates in the general population. In February 2003, just over 8,000 inmates, or approximately 18 percent of the inmate population, were on the Bureau of Mental Health Services caseload.
- *Sex Offender*: Before sex offenders are transferred to their parent institutions, they are sent to the ODRC's Sex Offender Risk Reduction Center (SORRC) for sex offender risk assessments, treatment planning and 20 hours of psychoeducational

programming. In May 2003, the ODRC housed nearly 10,000 sex offenders, comprising just over one-fifth of the incarcerated population.

- *Restorative Justice*: Since 1997, the ODRC has increasingly incorporated the concept of restorative justice into much of its programming. Some of the most direct examples of ODRC programs that are guided by the restorative justice philosophy are community service, victim awareness programs, and Citizen Circles.

For each of the specialized programming areas, the ODRC (which includes the Adult Parole Authority) has worked to establish partnerships or contracts with government agencies, halfway houses, and other service providers in the community in an effort to ensure a continuity of care for inmates after release.

Geographic Distribution of Released Prisoners. The vast majority (95 percent) of ODRC prisoners released in 2001 returned to communities in Ohio. Cuyahoga County had the highest number of returning prisoners with 22 percent of returns; of those, 79 percent returned to the city of Cleveland (4,237 released prisoners). Five of Cleveland's 36 communities—Hough, Central, Glenville, Mount Pleasant, and Union Miles—accounted for 28 percent of the prisoners returning to that city. These communities tend to be more economically and socially disadvantaged than the average Cleveland community.

Introduction

This report examines the prisoner reentry phenomenon in Ohio. Prisoner reentry—the process of leaving prison and returning to society—has become a pressing issue both in Ohio and nationwide, and with good reason. Rising incarceration rates over the past quarter century have resulted in more and more inmates being released from prison each year. Nationwide, an estimated 630,000 inmates were released from state and federal prisons in 2001,¹ more than a fourfold increase over the past quarter century. Thus, released prisoners, their families, and the communities to which they return must cope with the challenges of reentry on a much greater scale than ever before.

There are many challenges to prisoner reentry. More prisoners nationwide are returning home having spent longer terms behind bars,² exacerbating their already significant challenges of finding employment, obtaining housing, and reconnecting with family. Prisoners today are typically less prepared for reintegration, less connected to community-based social structures, and more likely to have health or substance abuse problems than in the past.³ In addition to these personal circumstances, limited availability of jobs, housing, and social services in a community can affect the returning prisoner's ability to reintegrate.⁴ These challenges affect more than returning prisoners and their families; they can also have serious public safety implications for the communities to which prisoners return. Developing a thorough understanding of the characteristics of returning prisoners and the challenges they face is an important first step in shaping public policy toward improving the safety and welfare of all citizens.

Reentry concerns are most pressing in major metropolitan areas across the country, to which about two-thirds of the prisoners released in 1996 returned—up from 50 percent in 1984.⁵ Within central cities, released prisoners may be more concentrated in a few neighborhoods.⁶ High concentrations of returning prisoners can generate great costs to their communities, including potential increases in crime and public safety expenditures, greater public health risks, and high rates of unemployment and homelessness.

In many ways, the dimensions and challenges of prisoner reentry observed on the national level are mirrored in the state of Ohio. In 2001, over 25,000 men and women were released from Ohio prisons—approximately three times the number released two decades earlier. As Ohio's population is quite broadly distributed across its several major population centers, so too are the inmates released from Ohio prisons. The city with the highest number of returning prisoners was Cleveland, which received almost one-fifth of the inmates exiting prison in 2001 (18 percent; 4,237 prisoners).⁷ A significant portion of this group of prisoners returned to a small number of neighborhoods in Cleveland. Five of Cleveland's 36 communities—Hough, Central, Glenville, Mt. Pleasant, and Union-Miles—

1 Office of Justice Programs, Office of Congressional and Public Affairs "Attorney General Ashcroft Announces Nationwide Effort to Reintegrate Offenders Back into Communities." Press Release (July 15, 2002). www.usnewswire.com/OJP/docs/OJP02214.html (accessed August 27, 2003).

2 James Lynch and William Sabol "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective." Crime Policy Report, vol. 3. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press (2001).

3 James Austin "Prisoner Reentry: Current Trends, Practices, and Issues." *Crime and Delinquency* 47, no. 3 (2001): 314–334; T.M. Hammett, C. Roberts, and S. Kennedy "Health-Related Issues in Prisoner Reentry: *Crime and Delinquency* 47, no. 3 (2001): 390–409; and Lynch and Sabol (2001).

4 For an in-depth discussion of prisoner reentry nationwide, see J. Travis, A. Solomon, and M. Waul, *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute (2001).

5 Lynch and Sabol (2001).

6 *Ibid.*

7 It should be noted that we had access to post-incarceration addresses only for those prisoners released to supervision (and for a small portion of offenders on supervision, their addresses were unknown). As a result, for 40 percent of the release population for whom we did not have post-incarceration addresses, we used their pre-incarceration addresses as a close approximation. For ex-prisoners whose pre- and post-incarceration addresses could be compared, over 70 percent showed the same city or the same zip code or both.

accounted for 28 percent of prisoners returning to Cleveland in 2001. These communities in Cleveland, which already face greater social and economic disadvantages, may experience the impact of reentry to a magnified degree.

Government leaders, corrections officials, local organizations, and service providers are keenly aware of the reentry challenges in Ohio, and they have begun to use research, programmatic knowledge and resources to address them. In 2001, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), which runs the state prisons as well as the agency that provides post-release supervision, committed to a process of examining prisoner reentry in Ohio and developing recommendations to move the department towards a more holistic and systematic approach to helping released prisoners successfully reintegrate into their communities. In 2002, the ODRC presented the results of its comprehensive assessment of reentry in a report entitled “The Ohio Plan for Productive Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction.” Through its efforts to implement the 44 recommendations in the “Ohio Plan,” the ODRC is working to establish a system in which the concept of reentry underpins the assessments, programming, and services an individual receives during incarceration as well as after release from prison. The first wave of prisoners who participated in the ODRC’s newly developed reentry process is expected to exit prison in the fall of 2003.

In addition, in 2002, the ODRC was awarded nearly \$2,000,000 by the U.S. Department of Justice (Office of Justice Programs) as part of the federal government’s *Going Home* initiative that supports state-run reentry programs nationwide.⁸ The ODRC is using these funds in its Community-Oriented Reentry (CORE) project that targets violent offenders who are at high risk of reoffending and who are returning to one of three Ohio counties (Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Allen). The ODRC is partnering with a variety of state and local agencies and organizations⁹ to help these released prisoners “avoid recidivism, find stable housing, receive substance abuse and mental health treatment, sustain long-term employment, reunite with their families, and become productive law-abiding citizens in their communities.”¹⁰

In Cleveland, government officials and other organizations and agencies have made reentry an important item on their agendas. In her State of the City address on February 20, 2003, Cleveland Mayor Jane L. Campbell made it a priority “to change the pattern of community re-entry” and acknowledged the role of the George Gund Foundation in bringing together the resources and partners to address reentry in the Cleveland area.¹¹ In recent years, the George Gund Foundation has made a number of grants to local organizations to assist ex-prisoners in overcoming problems that prevent them from obtaining employment and to provide them with needed job skills.¹²

8 The *Going Home* initiative is also known as the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative.

9 The CORE local partners are Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs, Community Connection for Ohio Offenders, and LACA/OHIO (Lima/Allen County Area Offenders Habilitating in Ohio’s Prisons); the CORE state decision makers are Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Ohio Department of Mental Health, Ohio Department of Education, and Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services; other local organizations will provide services such as employment and training, law enforcement, alcohol and drug counseling, education, health and medical, housing, and faith-based programming.

10 ODRC Workplan for U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (not dated). www.ojp.usdoj.gov/reentry/sar/pdf/wp1_oh.pdf. (accessed August 26, 2003).

11 Mayor Jane L. Campbell’s State of the City address (February 20, 2003). www.city.cleveland.oh.us/mayor/stateofthecity/stateofcity2003finalvesion.html (accessed August 26, 2003).

12 Press Release, October 7, 2002. The George Gund Foundation. www.gundfdn.org.

These various efforts are positive steps toward improving reentry outcomes at the state level and in the city of Cleveland. The premise of these programs is that a well-designed reentry system can enhance public safety, reduce returns to prison, control corrections expenditures, and help prisoners achieve successful long-term reintegration. In other words, these efforts could result in positive outcomes not for only individuals returning home, but for their families and communities as well.

This report is designed to contribute to the efforts currently underway in Ohio to enhance public safety and improve the prospects for successful prisoner reintegration in the state. It is important to note that this report does not attempt to evaluate a specific reentry program, nor does it empirically assess Ohio's reentry policies and practices. Rather, the processes and characteristics of prisoner reentry in Ohio are described by answering several questions, which frame the organization of the report:

- What is the policy context surrounding prisoner reentry in Ohio? How do state sentencing and post-release supervision practices affect the Ohio reentry picture?
- What are the characteristics of the inmates released from Ohio prisons?
- How are Ohio prisoners prepared for reentry?
- What are the Ohio communities with the greatest concentrations of returning inmates? What are the economic and social climates of those communities?

Chapter 1 describes the policy context surrounding reentry in Ohio and examines the impact of changes in crime and sentencing laws on incarceration trends over time. Chapter 2 examines how prisoners in Ohio are released, describes current post-release supervision practices, and looks at trends in the rate of ex-prisoners returned to prison. Chapter 3 draws on ODRC data to present the characteristics of inmates released from Ohio prisons in 2001. Chapter 4 describes the institutional and community-based programming ODRC offers, as well as its newly implemented reentry strategy, to help prepare inmates for successful reintegration. Chapter 5 provides information about the geographic distribution of prisoners released in 2001 and specifically looks at communities in Cleveland, the city to which the highest number of Ohio prisoners returned. The report concludes with a chapter summarizing findings and presenting next steps for future research. It is our hope that this report will provide a useful, factual foundation for individuals and organizations working to improve reentry outcomes for prisoners, their families and communities, and the general public in Ohio.

About the Data

The data used for this report were derived from several sources. Longitudinal data describing the policy context of incarceration and release trends in Ohio and the nation were derived from statistics compiled by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), as well as from the federal government's Bureau of Justice Statistics. Most of the charts showing longitudinal data from these sources present results from 1982 to 2002. For some of the data, the 2002 statistics had not yet been released and thus the charts end at 2001.

The longitudinal Ohio release data presented in **Chapter 2: What Are the Trends in Release, Post-Release Supervision, and Returns to Prison?** come from the ODRC's Summary of Institution Statistics reports, while the data presented in **Chapter 3: Who Is Returning Home?** on the population of inmates released from Ohio prisons in calendar year 2001 come from a datafile downloaded from the ODRC's Inmate Progression System (IPS). The IPS datafile we obtained represents only the first release from prison for each offender in calendar year 2001. As a result, the 2001 release counts from chapter 2 are not directly comparable to those presented in chapter 3, as the counts in chapter 2 can include multiple releases for the same offender. (See additional methodological notes in chapter 2 regarding the release data from the ODRC Summary of Institution Statistics reports.)

We obtained the post-incarceration address data utilized in **Chapter 5: Where Are Released Prisoners Going?** from a datafile downloaded from the ODRC's Community Corrections Information System (CCIS). The CCIS datafile includes post-incarceration addresses only for those inmates who are released to supervision (a small portion of the prisoners who were released to supervision did not have an address indicated in the datafile). We had no source for post-incarceration addresses for inmates who were not released to supervision. As a result, for 40 percent of the 2001 release population for whom we did not have post-incarceration addresses, we used their pre-incarceration addresses from the IPS datafile as an approximation. We can feel reasonably confident about this decision, at least as far as county- and city-level analyses are concerned, as we found that for prisoners whose pre- and post- incarceration addresses could be compared, over 70 percent had the same city or the same zip code or both. However, we were unable to validate the extent to which released prisoners returned to the same communities in which they lived prior to incarceration.

Community-level data used to develop the maps of demographic, socioeconomic status, and crime data for the 36 Cleveland neighborhoods were derived from the CANDO (Cleveland Area Network on Data and Organizing) database from the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University.

What Is the Policy Context Surrounding Prisoner Reentry in Ohio?



To understand prisoner reentry in Ohio, it is first necessary to examine the state's recent trends in sentencing and corrections practices. This policy context helps to frame the reentry issue and provides important background information for the discussion of the needs and challenges of inmates returning to their communities. This chapter provides an overview of Ohio's recent sentencing policies and incarceration trends and describes factors contributing to the growth in the number of persons released from Ohio prisons.

PRISON POPULATION ON THE RISE UNTIL RECENTLY

The Ohio prison population has grown tremendously over the past twenty years, reflecting the rise in prison populations nationwide. Between year-end 1982 and 2002, the Ohio prison population increased more than two-and-a-half times from 17,147 to 45,284 (figure 1-1).¹ Two distinct trends, however, are evident when looking at the Ohio prison population since 1982. From 1982 to 1998, the Ohio prison population grew steadily with average annual increases of 7 percent—the same average annual rate of growth as the nationwide state prison population.² Starting in 1998, the trend shifted distinctly in Ohio as the prison population began to decline. After peaking at just over 49,000 inmates in mid-1998, Ohio's prison population decreased for three consecutive years to 44,868 in 2001. By the end of calendar year 2002, Ohio had the 7th largest prison population in the United States, and the 22nd highest incarceration rate, with 398 prisoners per 100,000 residents.³

1 Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), Bureau of Research. Yearly Intake and Population (May 22, 2003). The inmate population statistics represent the end-of-calendar year counts. Unless otherwise noted in this report, annual statistics are for calendar years.

2 ODRC, Bureau of Research. Yearly Intake and Population (May 22, 2003); BJS datafile: corpop05.wk1: Prisoners in Custody of State or Federal Correctional Authorities, National Prisoner Statistics data series (NPS-1), August 2000.

3 The incarceration rate represents sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities. Paige M. Harrison and Allen J. Beck. *Prisoners in 2002*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice (July 2003). Between 1925 and 1973, the per capita rate of imprisonment in the United States remained relatively constant, at about 110 per 100,000 residents. From 1973 to 2000, the rate of imprisonment steadily increased, peaking in 2000 at 478 prisoners per 100,000 residents—more than four times the rate of imprisonment that had been maintained during the early part of the 20th century. A. Blumstein and A.J. Beck. "Population Growth in U.S. Prisons, 1980–1996," in M. Tonry and J. Petersilia (eds.) *Prisons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1999); Bureau of Justice Statistics, Key Facts at a Glance: Incarceration Rate, 1980–2002, U.S. Department of Justice. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/incrttab.htm (accessed September 20, 2003).

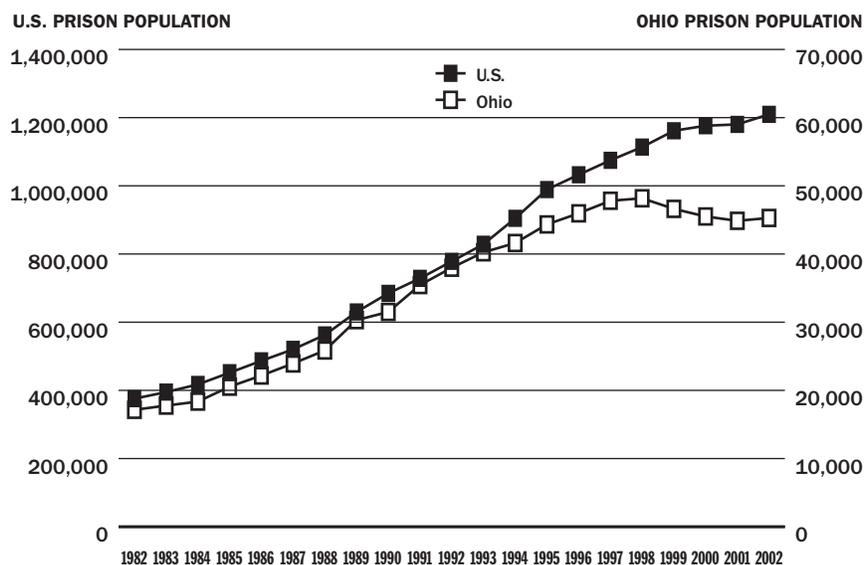


FIGURE 1-1. U.S. AND OHIO STATE PRISON POPULATIONS, 1982–2002

Sources: ODRC, Bureau of Research. Yearly Intake and Population (May 22, 2003); BJS datafile: corpop05.wk1: Prisoners in Custody of State or Federal Correctional Authorities, National Prisoner Statistics data series (NPS-1), (August 2000); and Paige M. Harrison and Allen J. Beck. *Prisoners in 2002*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice (July 2003).

Responses to Prison Population Growth

Partially in response to the growth in Ohio’s prison population in the 1980s, the Ohio legislature created the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission in 1990 and tasked it with developing new criminal sentencing policy. The Sentencing Commission’s major recommendations were incorporated in Senate Bill 2 (SB2)⁴, passed by the legislature in 1995 and implemented in mid-1996. Senate Bill 2 brought truth-in-sentencing to Ohio, though in a form that allowed greater judicial discretion than in many states enacting similar legislation, and represented a significant change in sentencing policy in Ohio. While SB2 was designed to increase sentences for the most serious offenders, it also emphasized the need to utilize non-prison sanctions when appropriate and to ensure that prison sentences do not impose an unnecessary burden on correctional resources.⁵ (See “Sentencing Reform in Ohio” sidebar.)

Also in response to Ohio’s prison population growth, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC), which oversees the state prisons as well as the parole authority that supervises inmates after release, opened 23 new correctional facilities between 1982 and 1998.⁶ The Ohio prison system currently consists of 33 institutions: 3 institutions that house female inmates only, the Corrections Medical Center that operates as a medical hospital, the Oakwood Correctional Facility that serves as an intensive psychiatric treatment facility, and 28 facilities that house male inmates (including two privately-operated facilities).⁷ As the number of offenders under the ODRC’s responsibility has grown, so too have the ODRC’s expenditures. The fiscal year 2002 expenditures for the ODRC, which include spending for prisons as well as for community supervision (including probation), were just under \$1.5 billion—almost double the expenditures a decade earlier.⁸

⁴ Amended Substitute Senate Bill No. 2, 121st General Assembly of Ohio.

⁵ John Wooldredge, Fritz Rauschenberg, Timothy Griffin, and Travis Pratt. *The Impact of Ohio’s Senate Bill 2 on Sentencing Disparities*. Project Report Submitted to the National Institute of Justice, April 19, 2002. (NIJ Grant # 98-CE-VX-0015); Burt Griffin and Lewis Katz. “Sentencing Consistency: Basic Principles Instead of Numerical Grids—the Ohio Plan.” 53 *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 1 (2002); and Mark Painter. “Appellate Review Under the New Felony Sentencing Guidelines: Where Do We Stand?” 47 *Cleveland State Law Review* 533 (1999).

⁶ Note that two facilities were closed during the period from 1982 to 1998. ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/prisprog.htm (accessed June 4, 2003).

⁷ ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/prisprog.htm (accessed June 4, 2003). As of July 1, 2003, ODRC was operating at 124 percent of capacity. ODRC, Master Population Count, July 1, 2003.

⁸ ODRC Fiscal Year 2002 Annual Report. The FY 1992 expenditures were \$600 million in 1992 dollars, which translates to \$769,350,000 in 2002 dollars. This calculation is based on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index. www.bls.gov/cpi (accessed June 4, 2003).

FACTORS INFLUENCING INCARCERATION TRENDS

The substantial increase in the Ohio prison population that started in the early-1980s and peaked in 1998 can be attributed both to increased admissions to prison and longer lengths of stay in Ohio's prisons. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, significant increases in admissions were largely responsible for the expansion of the prison population, while increasing lengths of stay sustained the prison population growth when admissions were declining in the mid-1990s. A variety of factors characterize the periods of rising admissions over the past twenty years, including increases in the number of drug offenders admitted to prison and increases in serious violent crime that translated into growing numbers of offenders admitted to prison for violent offenses.

The decline in Ohio's prison population that started in 1998 was the result of a rapid increase in releases from Ohio prisons, such that releases exceeded admissions. One factor contributing to the rise in releases was the adoption of new parole guidelines that resulted in a surge in the number of prisoners released by the Parole Board. More generally, the various changes resulting from the enactment of Senate Bill 2 appear to be largely responsible for the distinct shift in Ohio's population trends in the late 1990s. The prison population decline will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

Admissions to Prison

Over the past two decades, the number of offenders admitted to prison in Ohio has more than doubled from 11,005 in 1982 to 25,679 in 2002 (figure 1-2).⁹ The picture, however, has not been one of steady increases, but instead has been marked by fairly distinct trends in each five-year period from 1982 to 2002. Most notably, admissions nearly doubled from 1987 to 1992 from just fewer than 12,000 to over 23,000. This dramatic increase, which was largely driven by a surge in admissions for drug offenses, was followed by a decrease in admissions of 14 percent from 1992 to 1997.

Increases in Drug Offenders. New court commitments¹⁰ for drug offenses accounted for a substantial portion of the admissions boom that took place between 1987 and 1992. Almost half (49 percent) of the increase in new commitments in that five-year period was due to the increase in drug offenders. In 1987, 1,716 people were admitted for a drug offense compared to 6,482 in 1992, an increase of 278 percent (figure 1-3). As the number of drug offenders grew, they accounted for a quickly rising share of admissions to Ohio prisons. In 1987, drug offenders comprised 16 percent of all new court commitments, swelling to 32 percent

⁹ Admissions to Ohio prisons represent a combination of new court commitments (which include ex-prisoners who are re-incarcerated for new crimes committed while on supervision) and ex-prisoners returned to prison for technical violations of their conditions of supervision. The numbers of technical violators returned to prison from 1998 to 2002 have been adjusted downward by the ODRC Bureau of Research to control for overcounting. Due to limited space in county jails since 1998, some technical violators are held in prison pending a violation hearing. The adjusted numbers exclude those violators who were held in prison pending their hearings, but who were not revoked and thus were not officially returned to prison for the violation. All statistics reported in this section are based on Urban Institute analyses of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2002), Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002), and adjusted technical violator counts (1998–2002).

¹⁰ New court commitments are admissions to prison for new charges. In Ohio, the new court commitment counts include ex-prisoners who are re-incarcerated for new crimes committed while on supervision.

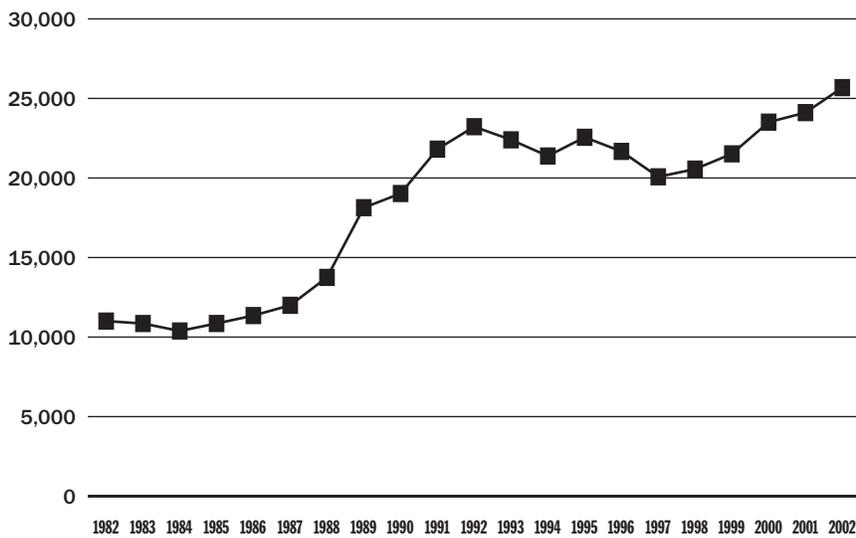


FIGURE 1-2. ADMISSIONS TO OHIO STATE PRISONS, 1982–2002

Sources: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2002), Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002), and adjusted technical violator counts (1998–2002).

by 1992. Since 1992, the proportion of new commitments that are drug offenders has remained steady, ranging from 30 to 32 percent each year (figure 1-4).¹¹

Nationwide trends show similarly dramatic increases in incarcerated drug offenders. From 1985 to 1990, the number of drug offenders incarcerated in state prisons across the U.S. nearly doubled from 23,000 to 45,500, marking the largest five-year period of growth in incarcerated drug offenders in the past two decades. The growth in the nationwide drug offender population throughout the 1980s far outpaced the growth in inmates incarcerated for violent or property offenses.¹²

In 1992, when Ohio prison admissions started to decline, new commitments for drug offenses also started to decline. For the next decade, the numbers of drug and non-drug offenders admitted to prison followed similar patterns. New commitments for drug offenses dropped 18 percent from 1992 to 1997, as those for non-drug offenses dropped 13 percent. From 1997 to 2002, new commitments for drug and non-drug offenses grew at 28 and 27 percent, respectively.¹³

Changes in Violent Crime and Admissions.¹⁴ Trends in the number of serious violent crimes reported in Ohio also help to explain the changing admissions picture. Changes in reported crime are generally expected to precede the resulting changes in prison admissions to account for the time it takes for cases to proceed through the court system. Starting just prior to the Ohio prison admissions boom of 1987 to 1992, Part I violent crime¹⁵ in Ohio increased distinctly, rising 36 percent from 1986 to 1991.

¹¹ Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2002).

¹² Bureau of Justice Statistics, Key Facts at a Glance: Number of persons in custody of state correctional authorities by most serious offense, 1980–2001, U.S. Department of Justice. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/cor-rtypab.htm> (accessed September 30, 2003).

¹³ Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2002).

¹⁴ All statistics reported in this section are based on Urban Institute analyses of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2001); and “Reported Crime in Ohio” State-level crime trends database, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice. <http://bjsdata.ojp.usdoj.gov/dataonline/Search/Crime/State/RunCrimeStatebyState.cfm> (accessed August 15, 2003).

¹⁵ The FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program includes the following crimes as Part I violent crimes: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

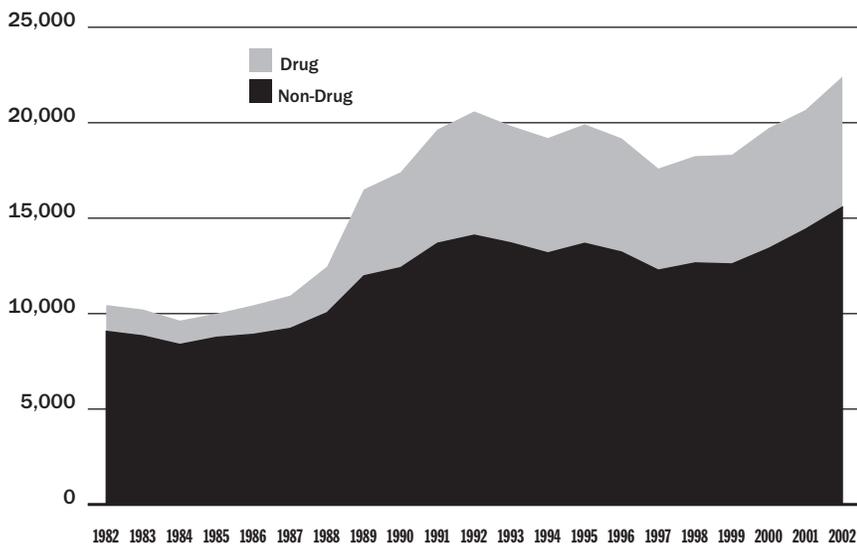


FIGURE 1-3. NEW COURT COMMITMENTS IN OHIO BY DRUG AND NON-DRUG OFFENSES, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982-2002).

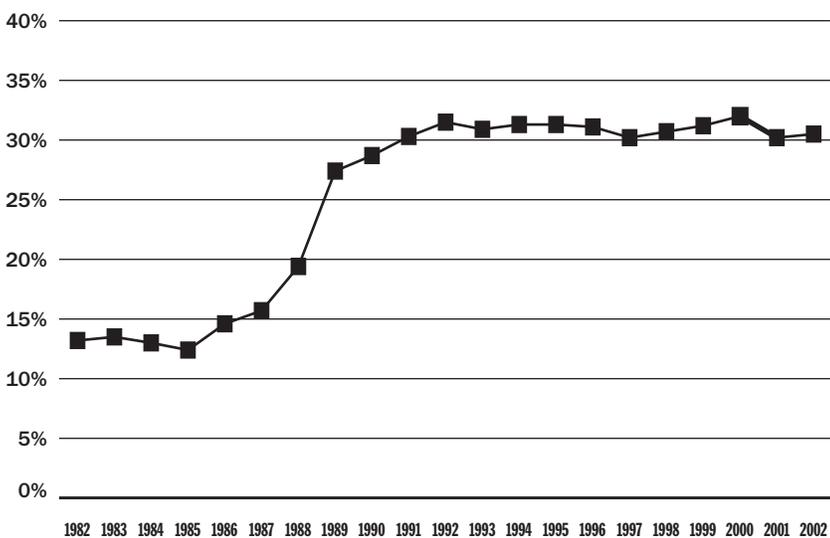


FIGURE 1-4. DRUG OFFENDERS AS PERCENTAGE OF OHIO STATE PRISON NEW COURT COMMITMENTS, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982-2002).

Correspondingly, new court commitments to Ohio prisons for serious violent offenses¹⁶ rose 54 percent from 1987 to 1992 (figure 1-5). In 1987, serious violent crimes comprised 22 percent of all new commitments in Ohio, dropping slightly to 18 percent in 1992, due to the substantial rise in the proportion of drug offenders admitted over the same time frame.

Over the two decades represented in figure 1-5, serious violent crime reported in Ohio peaked in 1991 before starting a substantial decline that ended in 1999. While exhibiting a slight downward trend from 1992 until 2000, new commitments for serious violent offenses did not decrease at nearly the same rate. It is unclear why the fairly close association observed through the 1980s between Part I violent crime and admissions for serious violent offenses diverged for much of the 1990s. One explanation may be

¹⁶ The category of serious violent offenses seeks to approximate the UCR Part I violent crime category as closely as possible. The serious violent crime category includes murder and voluntary manslaughter, robbery, rape and sexual battery, and aggravated assault.

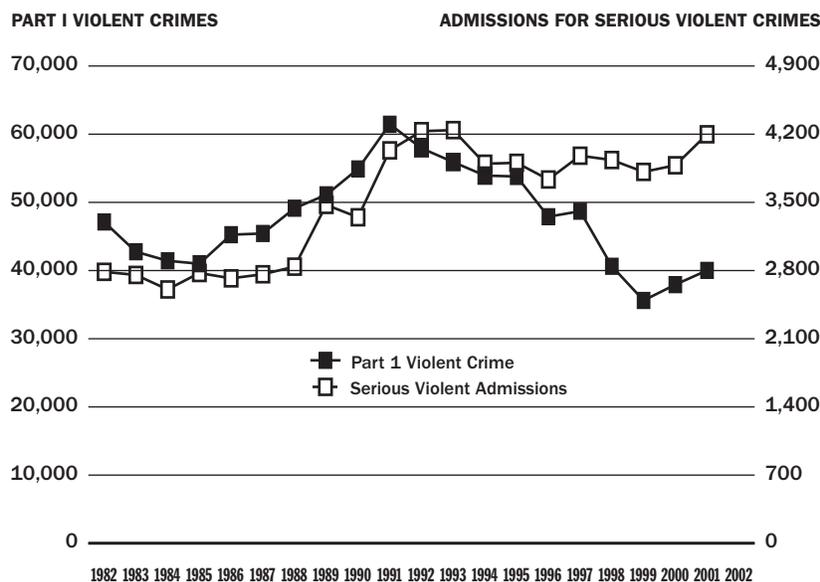


FIGURE 1-5. PART I VIOLENT CRIMES AND SERIOUS VIOLENT ADMISSIONS IN OHIO, 1982–2001

Sources: “Reported Crime in Ohio” State-level crime trends database, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice; Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2001).

that more of the offenders committing serious violent crimes had more extensive criminal histories and thus were more likely to receive prison sentences for crimes such as aggravated assault.¹⁷ Explanations may also include changes in policing strategies that resulted in increased arrests for violent crimes and changes in prosecutorial practices that resulted in higher conviction rates for violent offenders.

Time Served

Prison population size is also affected by increases in the length of stay, or the actual time served, in prison.¹⁸ Length of stay can be increased by longer sentences meted out by the court (including the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences) or by inmates serving larger portions of the sentences they receive, or both. The portion of sentence served by an inmate can grow for a variety of reasons, including changes in sentencing policies, longer time to discretionary release, and fewer good time sentence reductions. The time served data from Ohio helps to answer two questions: 1) Why did the prison population continue to grow from 1992 to 1997 when admissions were declining? and 2) What were the impacts of sentencing law changes on time served?

The ODRC Bureau of Research tracks average time served by the five felony levels established in Ohio law, and separately reports time served for drug offenders and murderers. Ohio’s felony levels range from first-degree (most serious) to fifth-degree (least serious); the fifth-degree category was created as part of Senate Bill 2. Many types of offenses, such as burglary, appear in each of the felony levels—from a first-degree felony of aggravated burglary to a fifth-degree felony of attempted burglary.

17 One indication that incoming prisoners had more extensive criminal histories is that the percentage of new commitments to the ODRC who had been incarcerated in an Ohio prison three or more times increased from 14 percent in FY 1992 to 21 percent in FY 2000. ODRC, Bureau of Research: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (FY 1991–2000).

18 All of the time served statistics reported in this section are from the ODRC, Bureau of Research Time Served Reports (1983–2001) and include only nonjudicial releases. Nonjudicial releases comprise the vast majority of releases (94 percent in 2002, up from 86 percent in 1983) and include release to parole or post-release control supervision, expiration of sentence and end of stated term. Judicial release is a form of early release granted by the court and generally results in distinctly shorter time served than nonjudicial releases for inmates in the same felony level.

Increases in Time Served as Admissions Declined. As noted earlier, admissions to Ohio prisons declined from 1992 to 1997 at the same time that the prison population was growing. The explanation for this apparent discrepancy is that the average time served by inmates in all but one of the felony level categories increased from 1992 to 1997, and thus sustained the growth in the prison population. For example, from 1992 to 1997, the average time served for first-degree felons grew from 6.6 to 8.0 years, while third-degree felons grew from 1.5 to 2.0 years (figure 1-6). The only felony category that did not experience an increase from 1992 to 1997 was the fourth-degree felony group that remained essentially unchanged. In contrast, during the admissions boom from 1987 to 1992, average time served grew for first- and second-degree felons, but fell for all others.

Impact of Sentencing Law Changes on Time Served. In Ohio, sentencing law reforms implemented in 1983 and 1996 (see “Sentencing Reform in Ohio” sidebar) led to observable changes in time served by inmates.¹⁹ In 1983, Senate Bill 199 (SB199) introduced mandatory minimums for certain serious crimes and established new, higher sentencing ranges for “aggravated” felonies. After 1983, the average time served by the most serious offenders started to increase distinctly. From 1983 to 1987, the average time served for first-degree offenders jumped from 3.2 to 5.3 years and for second-degree felons from 2.1 to 3.6 years (figure 1-6).

The next major change to sentencing policy in Ohio came in the form of Senate Bill 2 (SB2), which applies to offenses committed after July 1, 1996. One of the driving forces behind the passage of SB2 was the prison

¹⁹ One additional sentencing law reform that had an impact on time served was House Bill 261 (HB 261) that went into effect on November 1, 1987. HB 261 increased the rates at which inmates earned good time sentence reductions. Prior to HB 261, penitentiary (older) inmates were eligible for release after serving 78 percent of their sentences, while reformatory (younger) inmates were eligible at 72 percent. With the implementation of HB 261, the distinctions between penitentiary and reformatory inmates were removed and all inmates were eligible for release after serving 70 percent of their sentence terms. HB 261 also introduced “earned credit” which allowed further term reductions to a minimum of 66.7 percent of sentence served. The slight decreases in time served starting in 1988 for third- and fourth-degree felons as well as for drug offenders are probably due to HB 261. Telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 27, 2003).

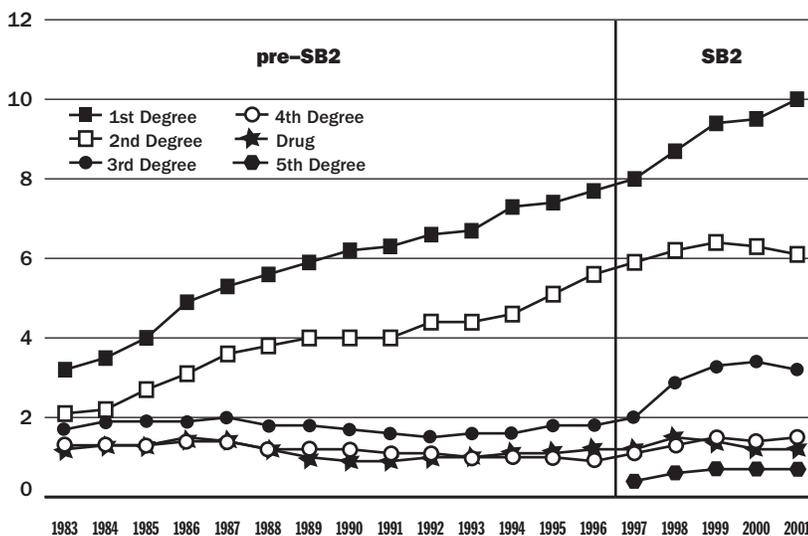


FIGURE 1-6. TIME SERVED IN YEARS BY FELONY LEVEL OF INMATES RELEASED FROM OHIO PRISONS, 1983-2001

Source: ODRC, Bureau of Research: Time Served Reports (1983-2001). Chart includes nonjudicial releases only. Time served for murderers is not included.

overcrowding that emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s. Important aspects of SB2 emphasize the need to utilize non-prison sanctions when appropriate and to ensure that prison sentences do not impose an unnecessary burden on correctional resources. SB2 contained provisions calling for tougher sentences for high-level offenders while, at the same time, guiding judges away from prison terms and toward community sanctions for certain low-level, non-violent offenders.

The Ohio prison population remains in a state of flux due to the changes mandated by Senate Bill 2 and, as a result, the impact of SB2 on time served will be difficult to ascertain until the population has more fully stabilized. In particular, three factors make it difficult to assess the impact of SB2 on time served: 1) there is still a significant, though declining, portion of the release population that was sentenced under the pre-SB2 legal code,²⁰ 2) SB2 inmates who were convicted of the most serious offenses and thus received longer sentences have yet to be released in significant numbers,²¹ and 3) SB2 altered the composition of offenses in the third- and fourth-degree felony levels at the same time that it created the fifth-degree felony level.²²

That said, the impact of SB2 on time served may be evident in the trends since 1999. From 1999 to 2001, time served by first-degree felons continued to increase. In contrast, time served for inmates in the other felony levels, as well as for drug offenders, declined or remained the same from 1999 and 2001. It appears, from observing the recent time served trends, that SB2 may be beginning to have the intended effect of limiting population growth by preserving prison bed space for the most serious offenders.

Recent Decline in Ohio's Prison Population

Ohio's prison population peaked in 1998 after increasing every year since the early 1980s. From mid-1998 to year-end 2001, the total population declined from 49,029 to 44,868. Somewhat surprisingly, admissions to Ohio prisons were increasing during the three years that the population was decreasing. The growth in releases, however, outpaced that of admissions: releases grew 28 percent from 1998 to 2001, while admissions increased by 17 percent. As figure 1-7 illustrates, when releases exceed admissions in a particular year, then the overall population declines.

The rapid increase in releases, which started just after the implementation of Senate Bill 2 in mid-1996, meant that a far greater number of ex-prisoners were returning to their communities than ever before. In 1997, 17,819 inmates were released from Ohio prisons compared to 25,624 in 2002—an increase of nearly 8,000 ex-prisoners.²³ One factor that contributed to the rapid growth in releases in the late 1990s was a surge in the

20 Inmates sentenced under the pre-SB2 legal code accounted for 22 percent of the population released from Ohio prisons (first release only) in 2001. Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

21 For first-degree felons, the minimum determinate sentence is three years. As such, the earliest (nonjudicial) release for SB2 first-degree felons would likely be in 2000 (taking court processing time into account), although one wouldn't expect a significant accumulation of first-degree felon releases until some time beyond that.

22 Specifically, SB2 shifted offenses that previously had third-degree non-violent determinate sentences to the fourth-degree felony level, and shifted fourth-degree non-violent determinate sentences to the new fifth-degree felony level. Interview with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (May 22, 2003). These shifts may account, in part, for the increases in time served from 1997 to 1999 for third- and fourth-degree felons, as the less serious offenders in each of those populations were removed to the next lower felony level, leaving behind the more serious offenders with longer sentences. Note that the number of third-degree offenders released from prison dropped from 3,320 in 1995 to 2,302 in 1998. The number of fourth-degree offenders released from prison dropped from 4,408 in 1995 to 3,334 in 1998. By 1998, there were 1,645 offenders released from the new fifth-degree felony level, growing to 3,515 in 2001. (Counts are for nonjudicial releases.) ODRC, Bureau of Research: Time Served Reports.

23 All statistics reported in this paragraph are based on ODRC, Bureau of Research: Yearly Intake and Population (5/22/03) and Urban Institute analyses of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1982–2002), Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002), and adjusted technical violator counts (1998–2002). For an explanation of how the release counts were generated see chapter 2.

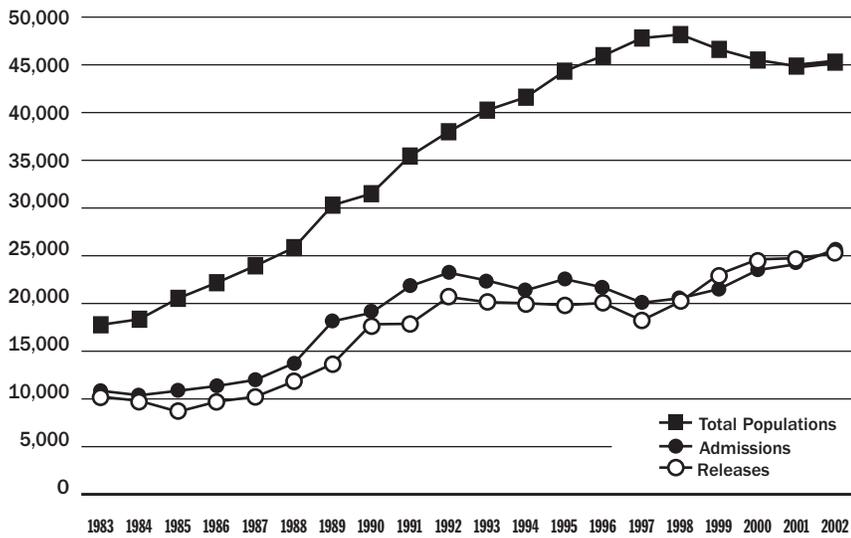


FIGURE 1-7. ADMISSIONS, RELEASES AND TOTAL POPULATION FOR OHIO PRISONS, 1983–2002

Sources: ODRC, Bureau of Research: Yearly Intake and Population (5/22/03) and Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Commitment Reports (1983–2002), Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1983–2002), and adjusted technical violator counts (1998–2002).

number of inmates released by the Parole Board following the adoption of new parole guidelines in early 1998—which was motivated in part by the passage of SB2. More generally, it appears that a combination of factors set in motion by the enactment of Senate Bill 2 have largely provoked the shift in Ohio’s prison population trends.

Surge in Releases by the Parole Board. The new parole guidelines adopted in early 1998 were prompted in part by an attempt to reduce the discrepancy in time served by inmates sentenced under the pre-SB2 and SB2 legal codes. As ODRC Director Reginald Wilkinson testified to the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee in early 1998, “The recent revision of the Parole Board guidelines, however, had two missions: take the time that would be served under Senate Bill 2 sentencing ranges into account in establishing the guideline ranges, and even more importantly, to establish ‘truth-in-parole,’ as Senate Bill 2 is attempting to do with ‘truth-in-sentencing.’”²⁴ The parole guidelines had the effect of shortening time served for the less serious offenders and lengthening time served for the most serious offenders.²⁵ The dramatic increase in the number of inmates released to parole supervision just after the adoption of the new guidelines illustrates their impact. From 1997 to 1999, parole releases nearly doubled from 3,224 to 6,150 (figure 1-8). In 1997, parole releases comprised 18 percent of the releases compared to 27 percent in 1999. Since 1999, the number of inmates released by the Parole Board has declined each year and, by 2002, parole releases again accounted for 18 percent of all releases.²⁶

Impact of Senate Bill 2. In early 2003, the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission produced an assessment of the impact of SB2. The report indi-

²⁴ Testimony by ODRC Director Reginald Wilkinson before the Senate Judiciary Committee on January 29, 1998, as quoted in John F. Kinkela, Gregory C. Trout and Steve Van Dine, “Part I: ‘Truth-in-Sentencing’ and ‘Truth-in-Parole’” Ohio Judicial Conference—For the Record, vol. 13, Issue 1 (January 2000). The concept of truth-in-parole centers around providing most inmates with “projected release dates” as a way of adding predictability to the parole process.

²⁵ Telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (July 3, 2003).

²⁶ All statistics reported in this paragraph are based on Urban Institute analyses of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002).

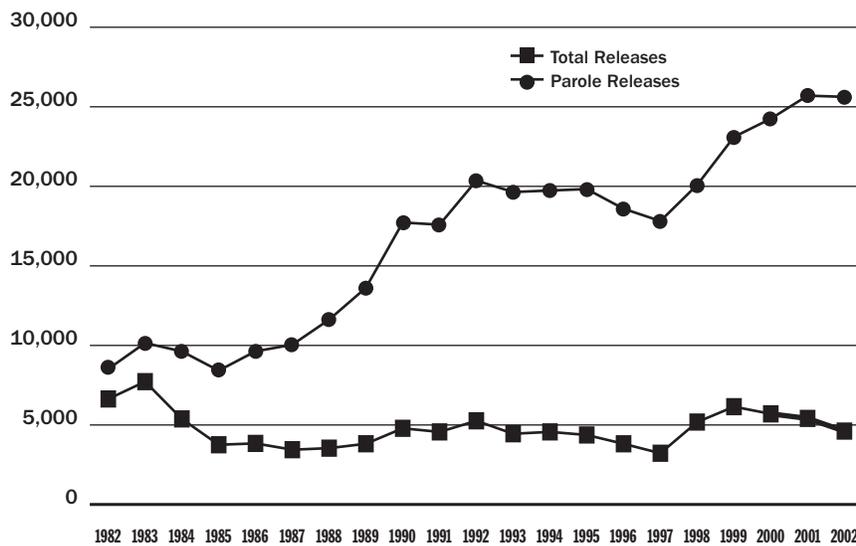


FIGURE 1-8. RELEASES FROM OHIO STATE PRISON BY RELEASE TYPE, 1982–2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002).

cated that following the implementation of SB2, the “Sentencing Commission expected the prison population to dip initially. Thereafter, the Commission expected the population to grow gradually, but at a slower rate than before.”²⁷ The decline in the prison population from 1998 to 2001, followed by an increase of less than one percent from 2001 to 2002 conforms to the Commission’s expectations. Whether the particular factors that produced the three-year decline and subsequent increase match the Commission’s expectations is still being assessed. The report concludes that, “Generally, S.B. 2 is achieving its goals. There has been progress toward the goals of better managing prison populations, imprisoning more repeat offenders, and steering low level felons into community sanctions.”²⁸ It is clear that the various changes brought about by Senate Bill 2 played a significant role in the first decline in Ohio’s prison population since the early 1980s.

SUMMARY

The state of Ohio has experienced significant growth in its prison population over the past two decades due to a mix of changes in crime and sentencing policies. These changes have produced shifts in the size and composition of the population admitted to Ohio prisons as well as in the length and type of sentences inmates receive. Recent changes in sentencing law and parole guidelines stemmed the years of sustained growth of the prison population, and Ohio prisons experienced a three-year decline in

²⁷ Fritz Rauschenberg and David Diroll. “Monitoring Sentencing Reform.” Sentencing Commission Staff Report, Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, no.5 (January 2003).

²⁸ Ibid.

population. The changes that have affected the prison population have also altered the population of inmates released from prison in terms of the magnitude of the release population and the manner in which inmates are released. All of these factors pose challenges to the goal of ensuring the successful transition of prisoners back to their communities. The next chapter explores how prisoners are released, including post-release supervision practices, and trends in the rate of ex-prisoners returned to prison in Ohio.

Sentencing Reform in Ohio

The Ohio legislature has enacted major reforms of the state's felony sentencing policies three times in the past three decades, with the most comprehensive changes taking place with the implementation of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) on July 1, 1996. SB2 brought truth-in-sentencing²⁹ to Ohio, requiring judges to impose a fixed term of incarceration³⁰ and eliminating good time sentence reductions. In addition, for offenses committed after July 1, 1996, parole was eliminated and replaced with a period of post-release control that is mandatory for the most serious offenses.

SB2's sentencing guidelines differ from the more restrictive models enacted in many other states in the 1980s and 1990s. A number of states adopted sentencing grids that paired the severity of the offender's current offense with the severity of the offender's criminal history to arrive at a fairly narrow range from which the judge selects the sentence. In Ohio, SB2 established five felony levels with fairly broad ranges of sentences and required the judges to consider a number of specific factors in determining whether the sentence should fall towards the lower or upper end of the range. As a result, SB2 allowed for more judicial discretion than did sentencing guidelines in many other states.³¹

Felony Sentencing History Before Senate Bill 2

In 1974, the Ohio legislature created four felony levels with sentencing ranges from which a judge would select a minimum incarceration term. All prison terms were indefinite.³² Once the inmate had served the minimum term (less good time), the

Parole Board would consider whether the inmate should be released. This structure placed the power to determine how much time an inmate served largely in the hands of the Parole Board.³³

In 1983, with the passage of Senate Bill 199 (SB199), the legislature introduced determinate sentences³⁴ for certain low-level, non-violent offenses (as long as the offender had no history of violence), and retained indeterminate sentences for more serious offenses. Inmates continued to receive good time reductions to their sentences.³⁵ Furthermore, SB199 created new sentencing ranges for certain "aggravated" felonies and established mandatory minimums for a number of crimes. The changes resulted in twelve sentencing ranges within the four felony levels.³⁶

Partially in response to the more than doubling of Ohio's prison population in the 1980s, the legislature established the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission in 1990. The legislature instructed the Commission to develop a sentencing policy that would achieve a number of goals, including proportionality of sentences (where sentences match the severity of the crime and the offender's criminal history) and uniformity of sentences across similar offenses, as well as provide a full range of sanctions and retain a reasonable degree of judicial discretion.³⁷ In 1993, the Sentencing Commission presented its recommendations, the major provisions of which were passed by the legislature in 1995 as Senate Bill 2.³⁸

²⁹ Truth-in-sentencing laws require inmates to serve a substantial portion of their prison sentences and reduce the disparity between the sentence imposed and the actual time served. Paula M. Ditton and Doris James Wilson. *Truth in Sentencing in State Prisons*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice (January 1999).

³⁰ SB2 retained indeterminate sentencing for life sentences.

³¹ Wooldredge et al. (2002); Griffin and Katz (2002).

³² Indefinite or indeterminate sentences have a minimum and maximum term (e.g., 2 to 10 years, 5 to 25 years, 15 years to life), although the inmate may be released prior to the minimum term due to the application of good time.

³³ Wooldredge et al. (2002); Griffin and Katz (2002).

³⁴ Determinate or definite sentences have a fixed term (e.g., 5 years, 10 years). Prior to the implementation of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) in 1996, good time credit applied to determinate sentences. SB2, however, eliminated good time.

³⁵ Inmates received a good time reduction of approximately one-quarter to one-third of their sentence. E-mail correspondence with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (June 19, 2003).

³⁶ Wooldredge et al. (2002); and Griffin and Katz (2002).

³⁷ Wooldredge et al.(2002); Painter (1999).

³⁸ Painter (1999).

Sentencing Reform in Ohio, continued

Details of Senate Bill 2

According to the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission's Director of Research, the key provisions of Senate Bill 2 (SB2) include: "1) truth-in-sentencing; 2) tougher sanctions for high level offenders; 3) application of community sanctioning for low level, non-violent offenders; and 4) appellate review of sentencing at the request of either the prosecutor or the offender."³⁹ In particular, SB2 sets forth the specific factors that a judge must consider in determining where an offender's sentence will fall within in the applicable sentencing range—fac-

tors that make the offense more or less serious and recidivism more or less likely. Furthermore, SB2 delineates the types of offenses (as well as specific factors associated with the offense, the offender, and/or the victim) that require a prison term, those that have a presumption in favor of a prison term, those with no presumption, and those that have a presumption for community sanctions (figure 1-9).⁴⁰ With the enactment of SB2, the power to determine the amount of time an inmate serves in prison largely shifted from the Parole Board to judges.

³⁹ Fritz Rauschenberg. (Jeff Newman, ed.) "Monitoring Sentencing Reform: An Excerpt from a Report by the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission." Budget Footnotes. Ohio Legislative Budget Office (April 1988).

⁴⁰ Thomas Moyer and David Diroll. *Felony Sentencing Quick Reference Guide and Felony Sentencing Table*. Prepared with support from the Ohio Judicial Conference (May 2002).

FIGURE 1-9. SENATE BILL 2: FELONY SENTENCING TABLE

Felony level	Sentencing guidance	Prison terms*	Is post-release control required?	Post-release control period
First degree	Presumption for prison	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 years	Yes	5 years, no reduction
Second degree	Presumption for prison	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 years	Yes	If sex offense, 5 years, no reduction; otherwise, 3 years, reducible by Parole Board.
Third degree	No guidance	1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 years	Yes if sex or violent offense; otherwise optional.	
Fourth degree	If any of nine factors and not amenable to other sanctions, guidance for prison; if none of nine factors, guidance against prison.	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, or 18 months	Yes if sex offense; otherwise optional.	
Fifth degree		6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, or 12 months	Yes if sex offense; otherwise optional.	

*Sentence enhancements for Repeat Violent Offenders (RVO) range from 1 to 10 years (in one-year increments) for first- and second-degree felony offenses.

Source: Thomas Moyer and David Diroll. *Felony Sentencing Quick Reference Guide and Felony Sentencing Table*. Prepared with support from the Ohio Judicial Conference (May 2002).

What Are the Trends in Release, Post-Release Supervision, and Returns to Prison?



As Ohio's prison population experienced dramatic growth in the past twenty years, the number of prisoners released in Ohio grew in a similarly substantial way. In 2002, there were 25,624 releases from Ohio prisons, three times the number of releases in 1982.¹ As noted at the end of chapter 1, releases grew distinctly after the implementation of Senate Bill 2 in mid-1996, rising from 17,819 in 1997 to 25,624 in 2002—an increase of nearly 8,000 ex-prisoners returning to their communities.

In addition to affecting the volume of prisoners being released, sentencing law reforms over the past twenty years have led to other changes in the nature of prison release and post-release supervision in Ohio. The changes include how an inmate's release date is determined and by whom, and whether an inmate will exit prison to post-release supervision and, if so, for how long. These transformations in release practices have changed the reentry landscape in Ohio. For example, in the late 1990s, many more released inmates returned to prison having committed technical violations of their conditions of supervision than in the past, although this increased rate of return to prison appears to have leveled off in the last few years. Monitoring changes in the rate of ex-prisoners returning to prison can be important to understanding a state's reentry challenges and these trends are discussed in more detail at the end of the chapter.

1 Note that the discussion of releases in this chapter concerns the number of releases, rather than the number of unique inmates released. Inmates may be released multiple times from prison during one calendar year, especially inmates who are returned to prison for a violation while on post-release supervision. Unless otherwise noted, release counts presented in this chapter come from the ODRC's Summary of Institution Statistics Reports. These reports count all exits from the institutions, including releases to transitional release statuses (often to halfway houses) that accounted for about 5 percent of the total release count in 2002. The inmates in these transitional release statuses are ultimately released to one of the final release statuses (parole, post-release control, expiration of sentence, etc.). The final release status is indicated for some of these inmates (those who are returned to prison before final release), but is not indicated for others. To try to avoid double counting the inmates who are included in both an intermediate and final release status, the inmates who are returned to prison from an intermediate status are subtracted from the transitional release counts.

TRENDS IN RELEASE MECHANISMS AND POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION

Over the past two decades, changes in Ohio’s sentencing law have altered the mechanism by which inmates are released and the prevalence of post-release supervision for inmates exiting prison. Legal changes that resulted in increasingly larger portions of inmates with determinate sentences meant that more and more inmates were exiting prison by mandatory release at the expiration of their sentences. Until Senate Bill 2, the rise in mandatory releases corresponded to a rise in inmates released without any post-release supervision. With the implementation of SB2, however, even though the proportion of mandatory releases continued to rise, the supervision trend shifted and the proportion of inmates released to supervision increased substantially.

Release Mechanisms: Discretionary versus Mandatory Release

Until 1983, Ohio operated under an indeterminate sentencing structure in which judges determined an inmate’s minimum and maximum sentence, and once the inmate had served the minimum sentence (less good time), the Parole Board would consider the inmate’s suitability for release.² As a result, prior to 1983, virtually all inmates in Ohio were released from prison by one of two discretionary mechanisms: a grant of parole from the state’s Parole Board or a judicial decision to suspend the remainder of an inmate’s sentence.³ Grants of parole accounted for the vast majority of releases.⁴

In 1983, with the passage of Senate Bill 199 (SB199), the legislature introduced determinate sentences⁵ for certain low-level, non-violent offenses (as long as the offender had no history of violence), and retained indeterminate sentences for more serious offenses. As a result of SB199, a growing share of Ohio’s inmates were sentenced to determinate terms and thus were released at the expiration of their sentences without the input of the Parole Board (see “The Role of the Parole Board in Ohio” sidebar). In these cases of mandatory release, the prisoner’s release date is determined by a calculation based on the date of admission, length of sentence imposed by a judge, and accrual of good time. In just one year, from 1983 to 1984, the proportion of inmates exiting prison by mandatory release quickly grew from nearly zero to approximately one-fifth of all releases. The proportion of mandatory releases continued to rise in the following years, accounting for approximately half of the release population in 1989 and over 60 percent in 1996 (figures 2-1 and 2-2).

² The Parole Board is a component of the Adult Parole Authority (APA), which is part of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC).

³ Prior to Senate Bill 2 (SB2), the judicial decision to suspend an inmate’s sentence was known as shock probation or suspended sentence, while under SB2, it became known as judicial release.

⁴ In 1981 and 1982, grants of parole accounted for over three-quarters of all releases.

⁵ Determinate or definite sentences have a fixed term (e.g., 5 years, 10 years).

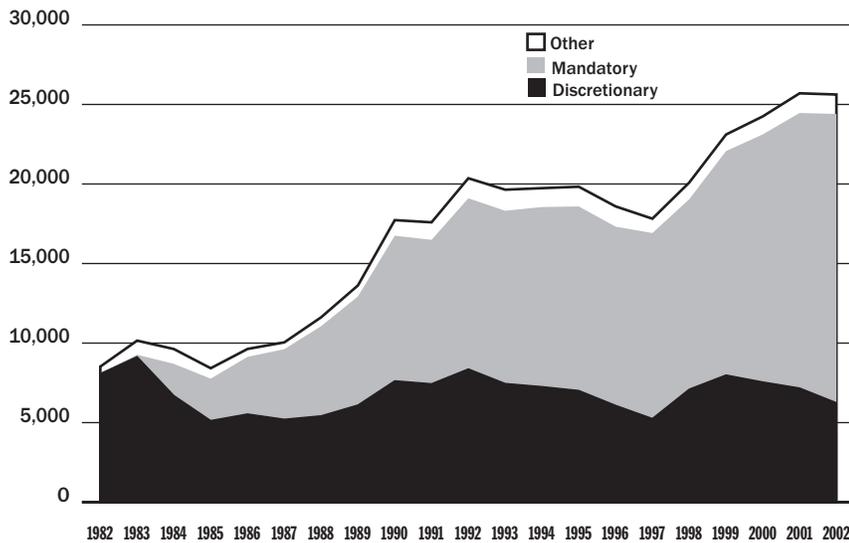


FIGURE 2-1. RELEASES FROM OHIO PRISONS BY RELEASE MECHANISM, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982-2002). The other category includes deaths and transitional releases. Transitional releases can ultimately exit by either mandatory or discretionary release.

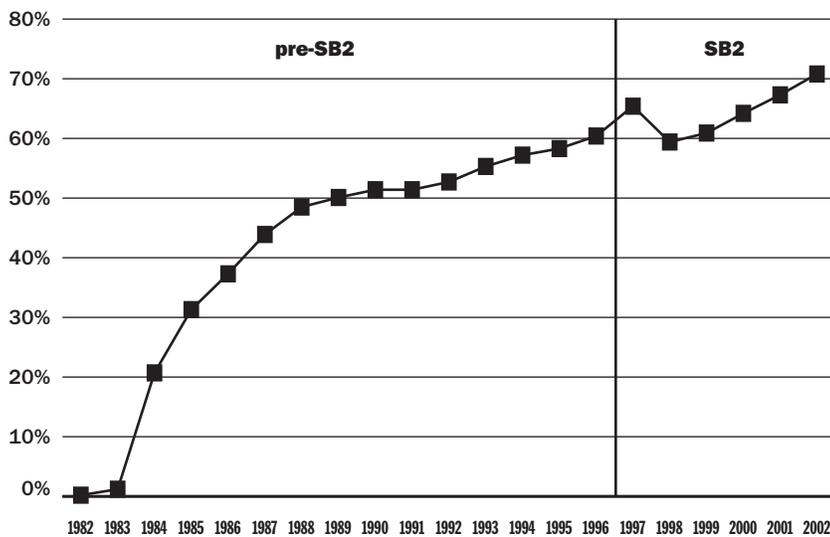


FIGURE 2-2. PERCENTAGE OF OHIO PRISONERS RELEASED VIA MANDATORY RELEASE, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982-2002).

In 1995, the Ohio legislature passed Senate Bill 2 (SB2), a truth-in-sentencing law, mandating determinate sentences for all but life sentences and eliminating good time. Under SB2, the overwhelming majority of inmates who commit their offenses after July 1, 1996 receive determinate sentences and exit prison by mandatory release at the expiration of that sentence.⁶ Aside from a one-year dip in 1998,⁷ the proportion of inmates exiting prison via mandatory release continued to grow after implementation of SB2 as more and more inmates were sentenced to determinate terms. By 2002, mandatory releases accounted for approximately 71 percent of Ohio's releases—the largest proportion of mandatory releases in over twenty years (figures 2-1 and 2-2).

⁶ A small percentage of inmates sentenced under the SB2 code will exit prison via discretionary release in the event of a successful petition for early judicial release. In 2002, 6 percent of the release population exited via judicial release. In addition, a very small population of inmates with indeterminate life sentences (e.g., 15 years to life) will have their release date determined by the Parole Board. The Parole Board also determines the release of a small number of pre-SB2 parole violators who are recommitted under a SB2 offense and served an aggregated sentence term.

⁷ The drop in the proportion of mandatory releases in 1998 was due to a rapid increase in discretionary releases from 1997 to 1999. As discussed in chapter 1, parole releases jumped 91 percent from 1997 to 1999. This rise was due to new parole guidelines adopted by the Parole Board in early 1998. Kinkela et al. (2000).

Prevalence of Post-Release Supervision

Prior to the passage of Senate Bill 2, discretionary release in Ohio meant that an inmate would be placed on supervision after release, while mandatory release meant that an inmate had completed his/her obligation to the state and received no post-release supervision. Virtually all inmates released before the implementation of Senate Bill 199 in 1983 were released to some form of community supervision following discretionary release, either to parole or to probation after their sentences were suspended by a judge. As the proportion of inmates released via mandatory release grew from 1983 to 1996 following the implementation of SB199, the proportion of inmates released to supervision started to decline at essentially the same rate. By 1987, approximately half of the exiting population was released to supervision, falling to approximately one-third in 1996 (figures 2-3 and 2-4).

With the enactment of Senate Bill 2, the axiom that mandatory release meant no post-release supervision was turned on its head. Even though SB2 mandated determinate sentencing in Ohio and thus mandatory release for the vast majority of inmates, it also made all inmates who committed their crimes after July 1, 1996 eligible for post-release supervision. As indicated in a report by the Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission, “one misconception about S.B. 2 is that its determinate sentences meant less supervision upon release from prison. In fact, another goal of the bill was to make more offenders eligible for supervision.”⁸ With the implementation of SB2, the proportion of inmates released to supervision quickly grew from approximately one-third in 1996 to over one-half in 1998. By 2001, over 62 percent of inmates exiting prison were released to some form of supervision, before dipping slightly in 2002 (figures 2-3 and 2-4).

POST-RELEASE SUPERVISION: CHANGES AND PRACTICES

Senate Bill 2 also made a number of changes to the decision making process related to post-release supervision—establishing new rules regarding who must be placed on supervision and for how long, and determining what role the Parole Board would play in those decisions. What SB2 did not alter were the practices—the day-to-day activities—of supervision. To distinguish this new form of post-release supervision from pre-SB2 parole supervision, the creators of SB2 introduced a new name: post-release control. As noted above, approximately 60 percent of the inmates exiting prison in 2002 were released to supervision: 35 percent to post-release control, 18 percent to parole,⁹ and 6 percent to judicial release (figure 2-5).¹⁰

⁸ Rauschenberg and Diroll (2003).

⁹ Inmates who were sentenced to indeterminate terms under the pre-SB2 legal code (having committed their offenses prior to July 1, 1996) will continue to have their release dates determined by the Parole Board and will exit to parole supervision, but this population continues to diminish over time.

¹⁰ Transitional releases may or may not ultimately exit to supervision.

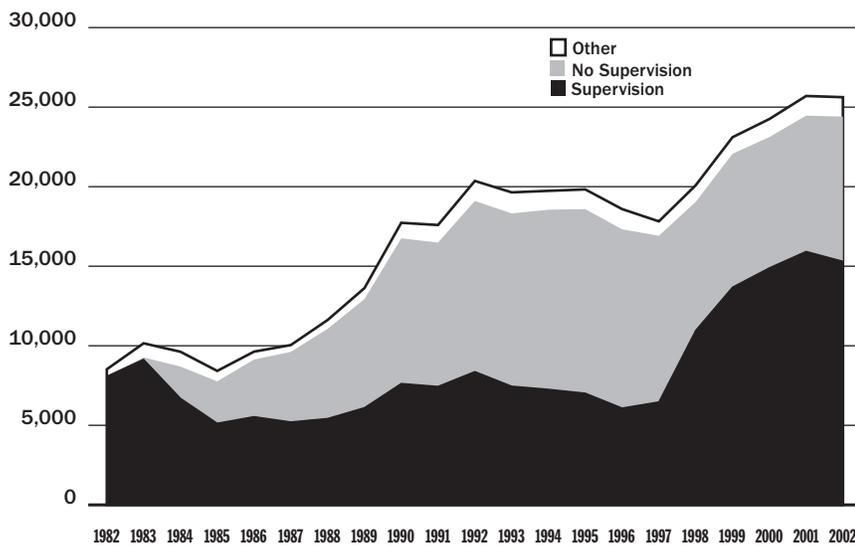


FIGURE 2-3. RELEASES FROM OHIO PRISONS BY SUPERVISION, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982-2002). The other category includes deaths and transitional releases. Transitional releases can ultimately exit to supervision or not.

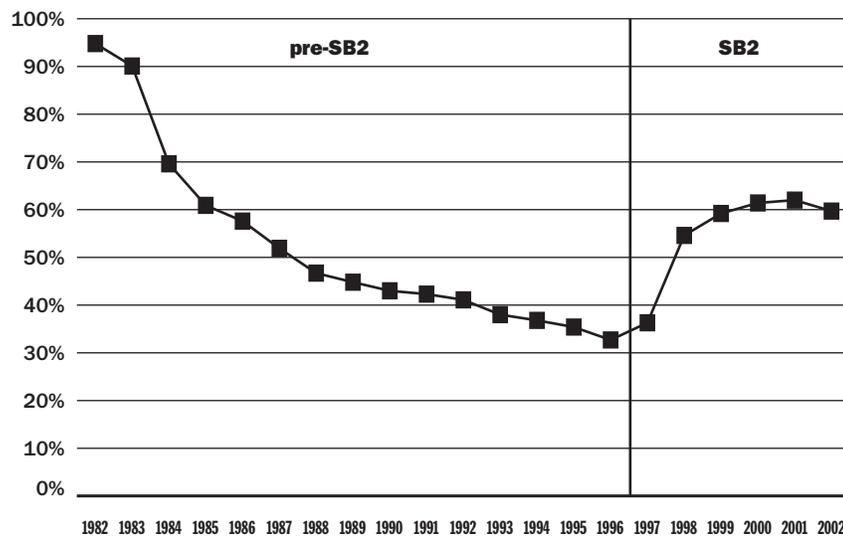


FIGURE 2-4. PERCENTAGE OF OHIO PRISONERS RELEASED TO SUPERVISION, 1982-2002

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982-2002).

Post-Release Control

For inmates sentenced under the SB2 legal code, post-release control (PRC) is mandatory for the most serious offenders and is assigned at the discretion of the Parole Board for all other offenders (figure 2-6). Specifically, first-degree felons and felony sex offenders must be supervised for five years after leaving prison. Second-degree felons and third-degree violent felons must be placed on PRC for a three-year term. Inmates who are eligible for and agree to participate in Intensive Program Prison serve 90 days in prison followed by PRC. For all other inmates, the Parole Board has the discretion to place the inmate on PRC for up to three years or to not require any period of post-release supervision.^{11,12}

¹¹ "In making its determination whether to impose discretionary post-release control, the Parole Board is directed to consider the prisoner's criminal history, any juvenile court delinquency adjudication, the record of the prisoner's conduct while imprisoned, and any recommendations from the Office of Victim Services [a department within ODRC]." ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/PRC.htm (accessed July 3, 2003).

¹² Among the release cohort in 2001 (first releases only), 54 percent of inmates released to PRC received a one-year term, 33 percent received a three-year term, and 13 percent received a five-year term. Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

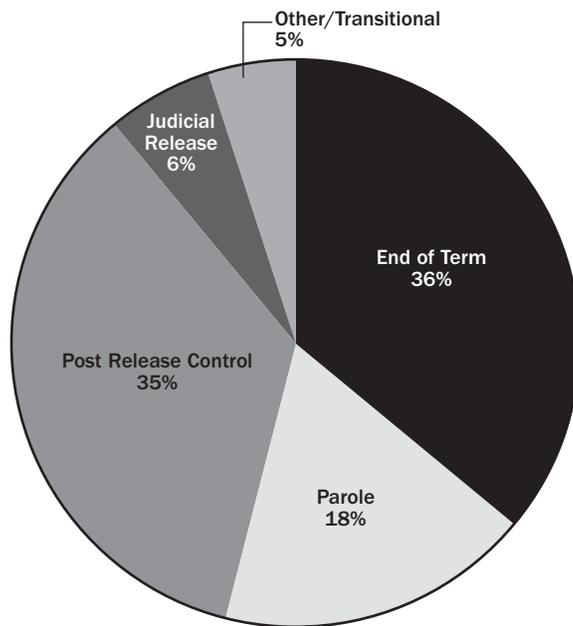


FIGURE 2-5. PERCENTAGE OF RELEASES IN OHIO BY RELEASE TYPE, 2002 (N=25,624)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982–2002). The Other/Transitional category includes deaths and transitional releases. Transitional releases will ultimately receive one of the other final release statuses that may or may not include a period of supervision.

FIGURE 2-6. POST-RELEASE CONTROL IN OHIO UNDER SENATE BILL 2

Felony level	Is PRC mandatory or discretionary?	Term	Term reduction?
First degree	Mandatory	5 years	No
Felony sex offenders	Mandatory	5 years	No
Second degree	Mandatory	3 years	No
Third degree (violence)	Mandatory	3 years	No
Third degree (no violence)	Discretionary	up to 3 years	Yes
Fourth degree	Discretionary	up to 3 years	Yes
Fifth degree	Discretionary	up to 3 years	Yes
Intensive Program Prison	Discretionary	up to 3 years	Yes

Sources: ODRC website. <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/PRCChart.htm> (accessed 7/1/03); and telephone conversation with Edward Rhine, Chief, ODRC, Office of Offender Reentry (October 27, 2003).

The portion of inmates receiving discretionary post-release control has started to decline recently due to a change in policy at the end of 2002. Evidence of the decline can be observed over the past two fiscal years. Of the 13,104 inmates eligible for discretionary PRC in FY 2002, 4,383 (33 percent) were given a term of supervision, while the rest were released without supervision. In FY 2003, of the 15,091 inmates eligible for discretionary PRC, 2,911 (19 percent) received a term of supervision.¹³

Supervision Practices

In Ohio, the Adult Parole Authority (APA) supervises ex-prisoners on parole, post-release control (PRC), and transitional control¹⁴ as well as offenders on probation. SB2 did not change the day-to-day functioning of supervision, and thus there is no substantive difference between how ex-prisoners on parole and PRC are managed. In May 2003, 537 officers were supervising a population of just under 32,000 offenders, resulting in an average caseload of 59 offenders per officer.^{15,16}

All ex-prisoners under supervision are placed in one of the following levels: Intensive, Basic High, Basic Medium, Basic Low, or Monitored Time (a nonreporting status). The different levels of supervision involve varying degrees of required contact with a supervision officer.¹⁷ A supervision officer conducts an initial assessment to determine the ex-prisoner's level of supervision, and uses the same assessment to raise or lower the supervision level based on the ex-prisoner's conduct. Under the ODRC's newly adopted reentry strategy (see chapter 4), inmates are classified as Reentry Intensive or Reentry Basic based on the results of a risk assessment performed when the inmate is admitted to prison. Reentry Intensive inmates released to supervision are supervised at the Intensive level for the first six months after release, and Reentry Basic inmates are supervised at the Basic Medium level for the first six months.¹⁸

According to the ODRC's substance abuse testing policy, all supervised ex-prisoners (except those on monitored time) should take a drug test within the first 30 days of supervision and should have at least one random test per year. For ex-prisoners with a special condition to complete a substance abuse program or those with a substance abuse history, drug testing is mandatory and its frequency is governed by the ex-prisoner's supervision level.¹⁹ After 60 consecutive days without a positive test, ex-prisoners may be moved to random testing.

Ex-prisoners who violate the conditions of their supervision (see "Post-Release Supervision Conditions" sidebar), including testing positive for drugs, may be subject to progressively more restrictive sanctions—from a minimum of a verbal warning that is recorded in the ex-prisoner's supervi-

13 ODRC, Adult Parole Authority, Parole Board Reports; and telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (July 3, 2003).

14 Approximately 5 percent of inmates were released to transitional control in 2002. Transitional control, formerly known as furlough, is an intermediate release process in which inmates are transferred to a halfway house to complete up to the last 180 days of their prison term under the supervision of the Adult Parole Authority. The Parole Board determines whether inmates are eligible and the sentencing judge must approve the transfer. The emphasis of the program is to assist inmates in the transition to their home communities. ODRC website <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/BCS.HTM> (accessed July 3, 2003).

15 In addition to their supervision duties, the 537 officers also produce several thousand reports each month that are used in sentencing, programming, and release decisions.

16 ODRC, APA Agency Reports. Note that some counties in Ohio provide probation for the courts in their county rather than having the APA supervise those offenders, although more than half of Ohio's counties receive probation services from the APA. Thus, the count of just fewer than 32,000 offenders does not represent all offenders under supervision statewide. Jill Goldhart. "Perceptions Versus Facts about the Adult Parole Authority" Ohio Judicial Conference—For the Record, vol. 13, issue 3 (May 2000).

17 Intensive supervision requires a minimum of five contacts per month (at least one of which must be face to face) between the ex-prisoner and the supervision officer; Basic High requires three contacts per month; Basic Medium requires one contact per month; Basic Low requires the ex-prisoner to submit a form to the supervising official once per quarter; and Monitored Time is a non-reporting status during which a supervision officer runs a criminal record check on the ex-prisoner and verifies the ex-prisoner's compliance with special conditions once every six months. Telephone conversation with Sharon Haines, Superintendent, ODRC, APA Field Services (September 4, 2003).

18 Reentry Basic inmates who are also sex offenders are supervised at the Basic High level. ODRC policy: APA Supervision of Reentry Cases. (July 8, 2003).

19 Per the ODRC policy of February 15, 2001, ex-prisoners on Intensive supervision should be tested at least four times per month; Basic High, at least three times per month; Basic Medium, at least two times per month; and Basic Low, at least one time per month.

sion file to a maximum of a violation hearing at which the Parole Board may decide to return the violator to prison. The graduated sanctions in between the minimum and maximum include options such as increased reporting, increased substance abuse testing, travel or curfew restrictions, changes in supervision level, and placement in a halfway house.

RETURNS TO PRISON

An important component of understanding prisoner reentry involves examining the rate at which released inmates return to prison, as well as the period of time from release to re-incarceration.²⁰ A recent study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics tracked a sample of over 30,000 prisoners with sentences greater than one year who were released from prisons in 15 states (including Ohio) in 1994. The study found that within three years of their release, 52 percent of these prisoners were back in prison for new charges or technical violations of the conditions of their release.²¹ Ohio's three-year return to prison rate for all prisoners released in 1994 was 35 percent.²²

The proportion of ex-prisoners returned to prison in Ohio increased in the late 1990s. After declining for the first half of the 1990s, the overall three-year return to prison rate (combining ex-prisoners returned to prison for technical violations and new crimes) rose from 32 percent for the 1996 release cohort to 37 percent for the 1998 release cohort (figure 2-7). The trend in ex-prisoners returned for new crimes differed from that of ex-prisoners returned for technical violations. The percentage of ex-prisoners

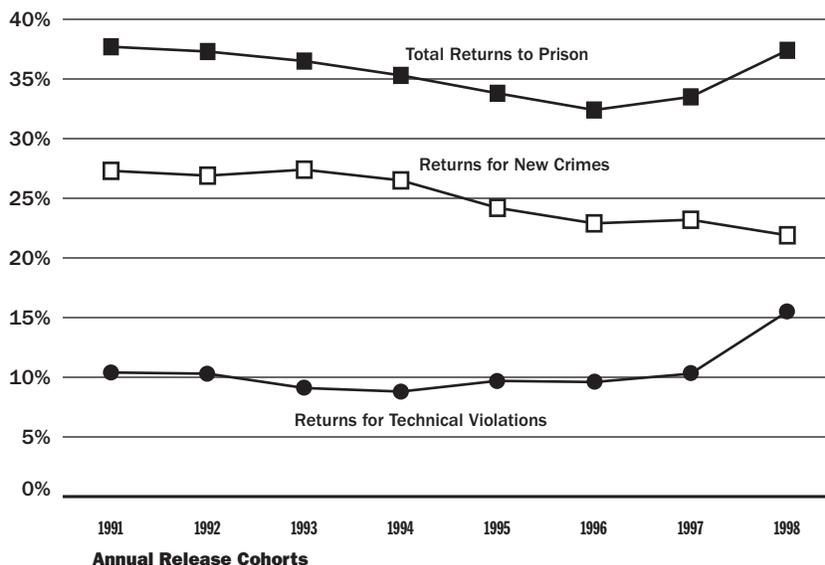


FIGURE 2-7. PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL RELEASE COHORTS RETURNED TO ODCR WITHIN THREE YEARS OF RELEASE BY REASON FOR RETURN, 1991-1998

Source: ODRC, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. Recidivism Report.

²⁰ Unless otherwise noted, all statistics in this section come from the ODRC, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. Recidivism Report.

²¹ Patrick A. Langan and David J. Levin, *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice (June 2002). This study tracked a sample (stratified by offense category) of 33,796 prisoners who met the study criteria from the 302,309 prisoners released from 15 states in 1994. The study then extrapolated from the sample to the universe from which the sample was drawn. The authors assert that the sample extrapolates to 272,111 releases in 1994.

²² The ODRC statistic includes prisoners with sentences of one year or less. Note that it is important to think about returns for new crimes and returns for technical violations separately, as the number of technical violators returned to prison can be affected by administration or policy changes, while new crimes cannot.

returned for committing new crimes dropped from 27 to 22 percent for the 1991 and 1998 release cohorts, respectively. Conversely, the percentage of ex-prisoners returned within three years for a technical violation remained fairly steady at 9 to 10 percent for the release cohorts from 1991 to 1997 and then rose to 16 percent for the 1998 release cohort.

The pattern displayed in the three-year return to prison rate for technical violations can be observed in the number of technical violators admitted to prison throughout the 1990s. Just as the three-year return to prison rate for technical violations remained steady through the early to mid-1990s, so did the number of technical violators admitted to prison (figure 2-8). The sharp rise in the three-year return to prison rate for technical violations for inmates released in 1998 translated into the dramatic increase in technical violators admitted to prison in the few years after 1998.²³

While the three-year return to prison data showed increases in the late 1990s, the one-year return to prison data shows a leveling off over the past few years. The one-year return to prison rate remained at approximately 17 percent for the 1999 through 2001 release cohorts (figure 2-9).

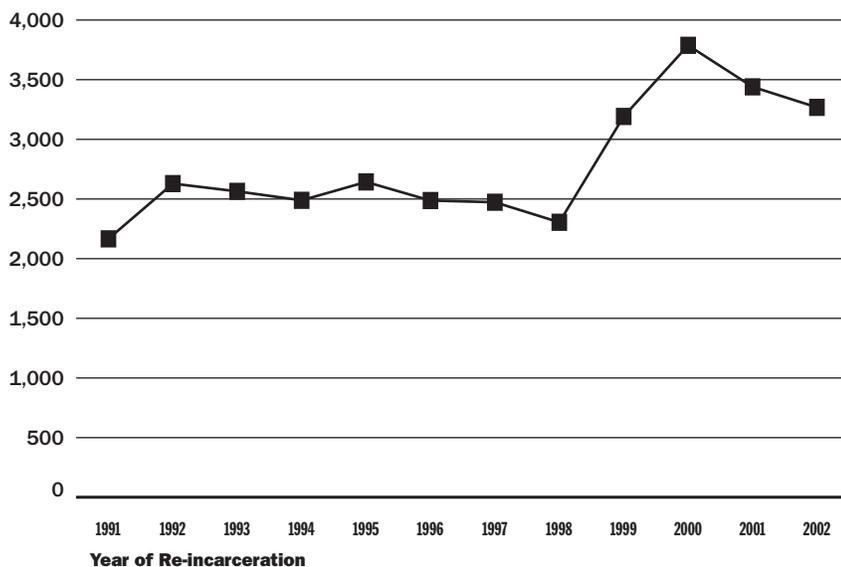
While the number of ex-prisoners returned to the ODRC is an important measure to track to understand the reentry situation in Ohio, the amount of time spent in prison for a violation of supervision is another. One of the changes mandated by Senate Bill 2 was a strict limit on the amount of time that ex-prisoners who commit technical violations of post-release control can serve in prison. Under SB2, ex-prisoners on PRC can be returned to prison for up to nine months for each technical violation. The cumulative time served for repeat violations, however, cannot exceed one-half of the inmate's original sentence.²⁴ The impact of the SB2 limits

23 As reported in chapter 1, the numbers of technical violators returned to prison from 1998 to 2002 have been adjusted downward by the ODRC, Bureau of Research to control for overcounting. Due to limited space in county jails since 1998, some technical violators are held in prison pending a violation hearing. The adjusted numbers exclude those violators who were held in prison pending their hearings, but who were not revoked and thus were not officially returned to prison for the violation.

24 For committing a new felony while on supervision, an ex-prisoner may be incarcerated for the rest of the PRC supervision period, or 12 months (whichever is greater), in addition to a prison term for the new crime. Moyer and Diroll (2002).

FIGURE 2-8. TECHNICAL VIOLATORS RETURNED TO PRISON IN OHIO, 1991-2002

Sources: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC, Bureau of Research data: Summary of Institution Statistics Reports (1982-2002), and adjusted technical violator counts (1998-2002).



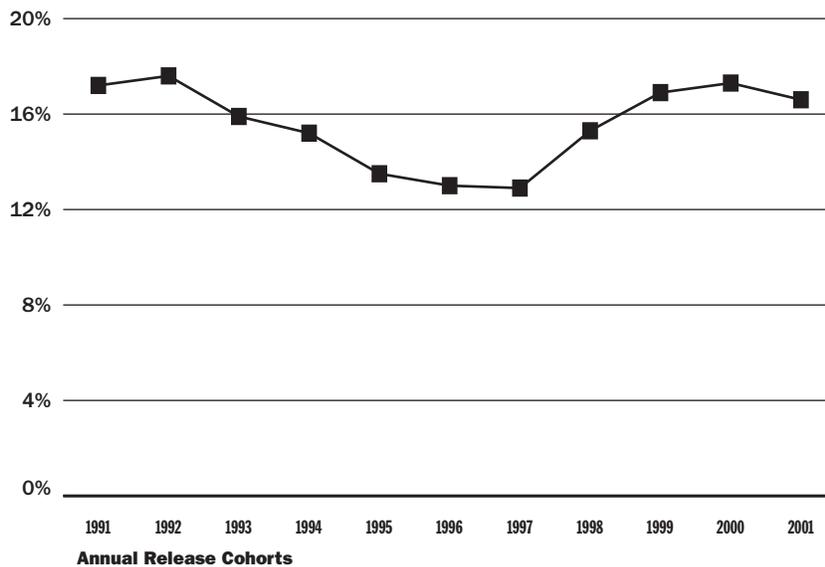


FIGURE 2-9. PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL RELEASE COHORTS RETURNED TO ODRC WITHIN ONE YEAR OF RELEASE, 1991–2002

Source: ODRC, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. Recidivism Report.

has been striking. In 2001, the median time served for *PRC* technical violators returned to prison was 2.5 months, while for *parole* technical violators, it was 14.0 months.²⁵ Since 2001, the average time served for parole technical violators has declined, in part, through efforts to reduce the disparity in time served for parole and post-release control violations.²⁶ In fact, for parole technical violators returned to prison in 2002, the median expected length of stay is 9.5 months.²⁷

SUMMARY

The passage of Senate Bill 2 had a dramatic effect on prison release trends in Ohio. SB2 further increased the already rising proportion of inmates exiting prison by mandatory release, but it also established that mandatory release no longer meant exiting prison without post-release supervision. In fact, the number of inmates released to supervision increased after implementation of SB2, rising to approximately 60 percent of the release population in 2002. Nonetheless, almost 40 percent of Ohio’s inmates are released without any post-release supervision— something that may shape the impact of the ODRC’s reentry efforts. Although the one-year rate of return to prison has remained fairly constant over the past few years, continuing to track the rate at which ex-prisoners—both supervised and unsupervised—return to prison will be an important measure of the reentry situation in Ohio. Detailed information about the characteristics of inmates released from the ODRC in 2001 is provided in the next chapter.

²⁵ ODRC, Bureau of Research analysis. The time served by PRC technical violators is artificially low in part because the prison population is still in a state of flux following the implementation of Senate Bill 2. SB2 inmates with long sentences have yet to be released in significant numbers, and thus the population of SB2 inmates released in 2001 had shorter sentences, on average, than it will in the future. Since the cumulative time served for repeat violations under SB2 cannot exceed one-half of the inmate’s original sentence, as the average sentence for the SB2 release population increases, so would the average time served for repeat violations. Telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 27, 2003).

²⁶ A new policy that went into effect in 2003 places a nine-month limit on time served for parole technical violations, although exceptions may be made for egregious cases of unadjudicated felony behavior. Telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 27, 2003).

²⁷ ODRC, Bureau of Research analysis. The expected length of stay calculation is based on the parole technical violators’ predetermined release dates. Actual time served equates with the expected time served for the vast majority of parole technical violators. Telephone conversation with Brian Martin, Assistant Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 29, 2003).

The Role of the Parole Board in Ohio

Changes in sentencing law over the past two decades have altered the roles and responsibilities of the Parole Board in Ohio. With the advent of determinate sentencing in Ohio in 1983, the authority of the Parole Board to determine prisoner release (within the sentencing range imposed by the court) started to diminish. In 1982, the Parole Board determined the release for over 80 percent of the exiting population. In 1996, the statistic was just over 20 percent. With the implementation of Senate Bill 2 in mid-1996, the Parole Board was given

the responsibility of determining whether the substantial population of lower level prisoners with SB2 determinate sentences should be released to post-release control at the end of their sentences. As a result, the proportion of prisoners whose cases are reviewed by the Parole Board for release to supervision has increased since the enactment of SB2. The Parole Board will continue to hold revocation hearings for supervision violators and set conditions of supervision.

Post-Release Supervision Conditions

The Ohio Parole Board sets the supervision conditions for inmates released to supervision.²⁸ The general conditions of supervision with which all ex-prisoners must comply include the following:

- Obey federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.
- Keep supervising officer informed of residence and place of employment.
- Obtain permission from the parole authority before leaving the state.
- Refrain from purchasing, possessing, or using any firearms, ammunition, dangerous ordinance, or particular weapons.
- Refrain from purchasing, possessing, or using any illegal drug.
- Report any arrest or other contact with a law enforcement officer to supervising officer by the next business day.

- Refrain from associating with persons having a criminal background and/or persons who may have gang affiliation without the prior permission of supervising officer.
- Comply with all financial obligations, including child support, as ordered by the Court and/or ODRC.
- Fully participate in and successfully complete any sanctions/special conditions.

While under supervision, ex-prisoners may be subject to other special conditions such as employment, educational/vocational training, drug/alcohol counseling, mental health counseling, sex offender counseling, domestic relationships/violence counseling, or other programming (see chapter 4).

²⁸ Supervision officers may add any justifiable condition with a supervisor's approval, but they may not remove any condition set by the Parole Board without the board's approval. ODRC website

Who Is Returning Home?



In order to understand the reentry picture in Ohio, it is important to examine the characteristics of the population released from Ohio prisons. This chapter describes the 2001 release cohort, including basic demographics, most serious conviction offenses, time served, and prior incarceration histories.¹

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2001, 23,874 individuals were released from Ohio's prison system. The vast majority of released prisoners were male (89 percent). In terms of race and ethnicity, slightly more than half of the release cohort were non-Hispanic black (53 percent), slightly fewer than half were non-Hispanic white (45 percent), and a small portion were Hispanic of any race (2 percent) (figure 3-1).²

Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of the release cohort were between the ages of 20 and 39 at the time of release (figure 3-2) and the average age of the release cohort was 33.3 years. The females released from Ohio's prisons in 2001 were slightly older than the males; the average age at release for females was 34.9 years compared to 33.2 years for males.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the results presented in this chapter were generated from a datafile downloaded from the ODRC's Inmate Progression System (IPS). The IPS datafile included only the first release from prison for each inmate in calendar year 2001. In addition, inmates released to transitional control release were included in the datafile only if they received a final release status during 2001. The results in this chapter are not directly comparable to the release counts presented in chapter 2 that are drawn from the ODRC's Institutional Reports and include all releases in 2001. Sample sizes for the analyses presented in this chapter are indicated on each chart. Differences in sample sizes are a function of missing data or data excluded for reasons explained in accompanying notes.

² Prisoners of other races made up 0.3 percent of the release cohort.

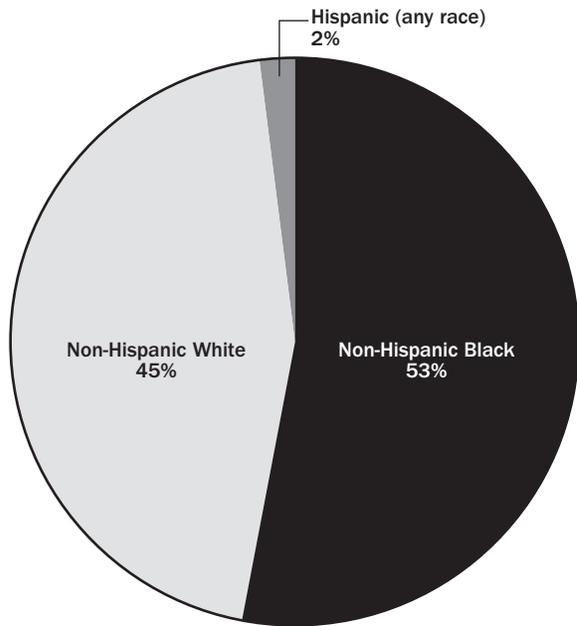


FIGURE 3-1. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2001, (N=23,874)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

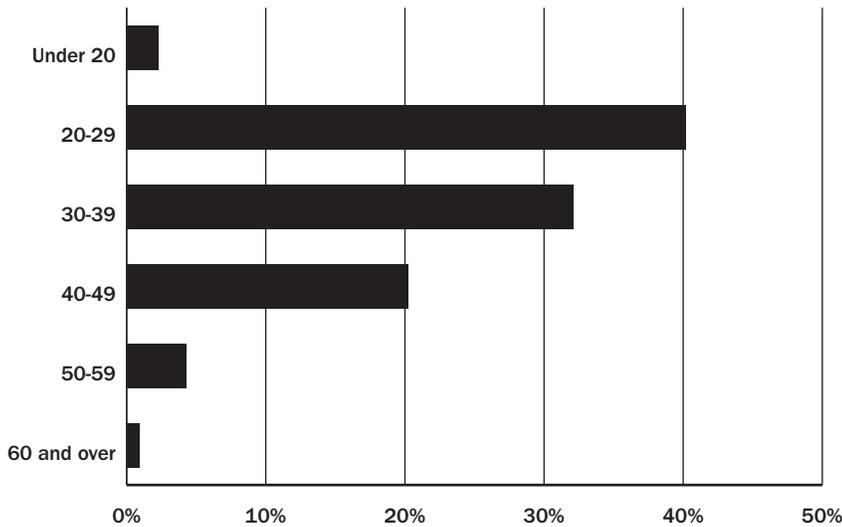


FIGURE 3-2. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY AGE AT RELEASE, 2001, (N=23,577)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

CONVICTION OFFENSE

Over one-quarter (26 percent) of the prisoners released in 2001 had a drug offense as their most serious conviction offense. When the various violent offense categories³ are combined, 23 percent of the prisoners released had a violent offense as their most serious conviction offense. Ex-prisoners under post-release supervision who had been returned to prison for a technical violation comprised 12 percent of the releases (figure 3-3).

³ The violent offense categories include homicide, sexual assault, robbery, and assault. The offense categories follow the National Corrections Reporting Program (NCRP) offense categories as closely as possible.

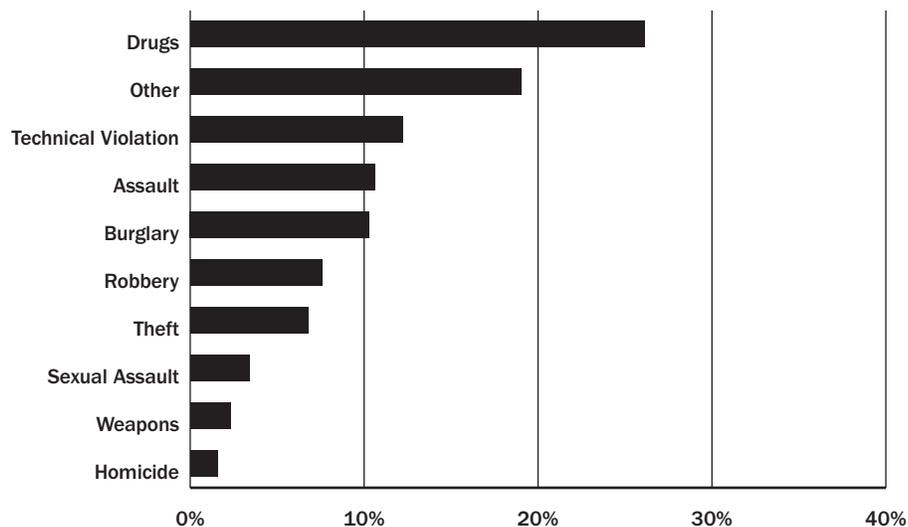


FIGURE 3-3. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY CONVICTION OFFENSE, 2001, (N=23,874)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

Ohio law categorizes felony offenses into levels that range from first-degree (most serious) to fifth-degree (least serious), with those sentenced to life or death placed in separate categories.⁴ Most of the offense categories shown in figure 3-3 include prisoners convicted of charges in a variety of felony levels. For instance, the burglary category includes prisoners charged with a first-degree felony of aggravated burglary as well as those charged with a fifth-degree felony of attempted burglary, and every felony level in between. As the felony levels become progressively less serious, the percentage of the released prisoners who were convicted at those felony levels increases (figure 3-4). Excluding the technical violators, nearly two-thirds of the prisoners released in 2001 (63 percent) were convicted of a fourth- or fifth-degree felony as their most serious offense.⁵

⁴ Inmates with life sentences made up 0.4 percent of the release cohort in 2001. In Ohio, most life sentences establish minimum terms to be served, such as “15 years to life.” Once inmates with these life sentences serve their minimum sentence, they are eligible for a parole hearing to determine their suitability for release. SB2 added the option of life without parole.

⁵ Under Senate Bill 2, which applies to inmates who committed their offenses after July 1, 1996, the sentencing range for fourth-degree felons is 6 to 18 months, and for fifth-degree felons is 6 to 12 months.

TIME SERVED

As described in earlier chapters, a significant change occurred on July 1, 1996 when Senate Bill 2, the “truth-in-sentencing” legislation, went into effect and altered sentencing and release policies in Ohio. Less than one-quarter (22 percent) of the prisoners released in 2001 were sentenced under the pre-Senate Bill 2 legal code, meaning they had committed their crimes before July 1, 1996. The remaining 78 percent in the release cohort were sentenced under Senate Bill 2 (SB2). In the analysis that follows, certain results will be disaggregated by the legal code in effect (pre-SB2 or SB2) at the time the offense was committed. The statistics and charts in the remainder of this section exclude the 2,921 technical violators released from prison in 2001.

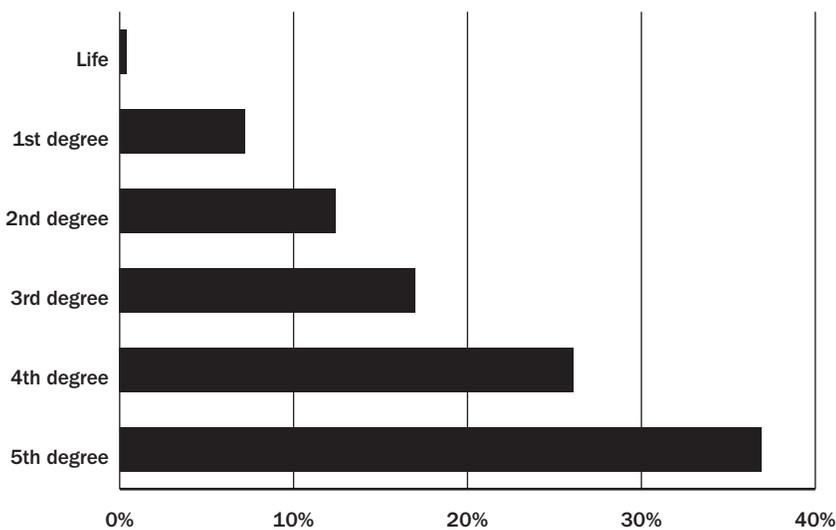


FIGURE 3-4. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY FELONY LEVEL OF MOST SERIOUS CONVICTION OFFENSE, 2001, (N=20,953)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

Sentence Length

Ohio's prison system houses adults convicted of felonies for which the statutory minimum is at least six months. In contrast, most prison systems across the nation incarcerate prisoners with a minimum sentence of at least one year. Nationwide in 2001, prisoners with sentences of more than one year comprised 97 percent of the total state prison population.⁶ As a result, Ohio has a far higher proportion of prisoners with relatively short sentences as compared to the national average; over half (54 percent) of the release cohort in 2001 had a maximum sentence of one year or less. At the other end of the spectrum, 14 percent of the prisoners released in 2001 had a maximum sentence of more than 10 years (figure 3-5).⁷

Time Served

With such a large proportion of prisoners sentenced to relatively short terms, it follows that a similarly large proportion would serve relatively short terms in prison. Indeed, close to two-thirds (62 percent) of the release cohort in 2001 served one year or less in prison and 82 percent of the prisoners served three years or less (figure 3-6). The average time served for the 2001 release cohort, excluding the technical violators, was 2.0 years.^{8,9}

⁶ Paige M. Harrison and Allen J. Beck, *Prisoners in 2001*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (July 2002).

⁷ Sentence length as reported here is based on the aggregate maximum term, plus any additional term(s) imposed for having a firearm while committing the offense (commonly referred to as a "gun specification," the time for which must be served in full and consecutive to the aggregate sentence). In the 2001 release cohort, 639 released prisoners (excluding technical violators) had additional gun specification time.

⁸ The time served statistics exclude technical violators, but include all other judicial and nonjudicial releases. The time served statistics reported in chapter 1 do not include judicial releases (who serve distinctly shorter terms than other inmates in the same felony level) and do include technical violators. Thus, the time served statistics from this chapter and from chapter 1 are not directly comparable. In addition, the time served statistics represent the time served in prison only; any time spent in jail that would be credited to the inmate is not included.

⁹ As noted in chapter 2, in the 2001 release cohort, technical violators returned to prison who committed their violations while on parole supervision had a median time served of 14.0 months, while those who committed their violations while on *post-release control* had a median time served of 2.5 months (although the 2.5 statistic is artificially low, see chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion). The time served for parole technical violators has declined since 2001, in part, through efforts to reduce the disparity in time served for parole and *post-release control* violations. E-mail correspondence with Brian Martin, Assistant Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 29, 2003).

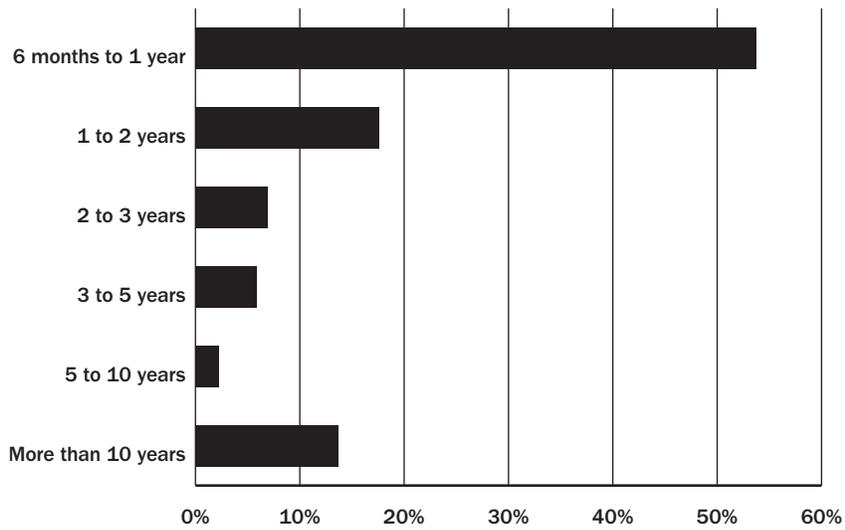


FIGURE 3-5. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY MAXIMUM SENTENCE LENGTH, 2001, (N=20,942)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases. Each category includes inmates sentenced up to and including the higher end of the range. Thus, the “6 months to 1 year” category includes inmates sentenced to exactly one year.

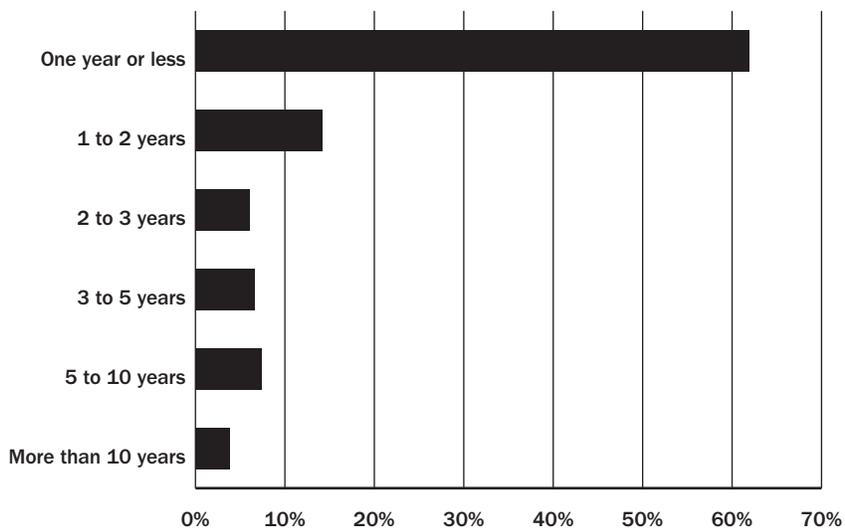


FIGURE 3-6. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY TIME SERVED IN PRISON, 2001, (N=20,950)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

Percent of Sentence Served

Truth-in-sentencing legislation requires prisoners to serve a substantial proportion of their sentences before becoming eligible for release and thus reduces the discrepancy between the sentence imposed and the time actually served.¹⁰ For the 2001 Ohio release cohort, the percent of sentence served was distinctly different for those sentenced under SB2, the truth-in-sentencing legislation, as compared to those sentenced under the pre-SB2 legal code. As expected, prisoners sentenced under SB2 served substantially higher portions of their maximum sentences. On average, pre-SB2 prisoners served 56 percent of their maximum sentences compared to 95 percent for SB2 prisoners.¹¹ The vast majority (86 percent) of prisoners sentenced under the SB2 truth-in-sentencing law served 90 percent or more of their sentences.¹² At the other end of the spectrum, 11 percent of the SB2 prisoners served less than 60 percent of their sentences (figure 3-7).¹³ These results clearly illustrate the impact of the truth-in-sentencing legislation in Ohio.

PRIOR INCARCERATIONS AND RETURNS TO PRISON

While more than half (56 percent) of the prisoners released from Ohio prisons in 2001 had not had a prior incarceration in the Ohio prison system, over one-fifth (22 percent) had been incarcerated in ODRC once before and another 22 percent had two or more prior incarcerations in ODRC (figure 3-8).¹⁴ Within one year of release in 2001, 17 percent of released inmates were returned to an Ohio prison.¹⁵ Over half (58 percent) of those returned to prison were re-incarcerated for committing a new crime (whether on supervision or not), while the remaining 42 percent were returned for a technical violation of supervision. Ohio's one-year return to prison rate was also 17 percent for the release cohorts in 1999 and 2000.¹⁶

10 To calculate the percent of sentence served, the time an inmate spent in prison as well as any jail time that had been credited towards the inmate's sentence is divided by the inmate's maximum sentence (including any gun specification time). Percent of sentence served calculations exclude 2,921 prisoners re-committed for a technical violation as well as another 102 prisoners with sentences of 100 years or more. (The populations of technical violators and prisoners with sentences of 100 years or more are not mutually exclusive). Inclusion of this small number of inmates with sentences of 100 years or more would slightly distort the percent of sentence served downward, since these inmates serve a relatively small fraction of their sentences. Finally, 341 SB2 parole re-commissions are also excluded.

11 Pre-SB2 inmates with indeterminate sentences receive a minimum and maximum term, and are eligible for release by the Parole Board at their minimum term (less good time). Given that indeterminate sentence ranges can often be quite large (e.g., 5 to 25 years), many pre-SB2 inmates with indeterminate sentences serve low percentages of their maximum sentences.

12 Inmates who served more than 100 percent of their maximum sentences often had charges added by the court after their admission to prison that are not reflected in their sentences. E-mail correspondence with Brian Martin, Assistant Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 27, 2003).

13 Of the SB2 inmates who served less than 60 percent of their sentences, 79 percent were released via judicial release.

14 For the technical violators returned to prison, their original prison term is not counted as a prior term of incarceration.

15 ODRC, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. In order to track returns to prison over an equivalent time frame for all prisoners released in 2001, the analysis included returns to prison that occurred within 365 days of each prisoner's release date.

16 ODRC, Bureau of Planning and Evaluation. Recidivism Report.

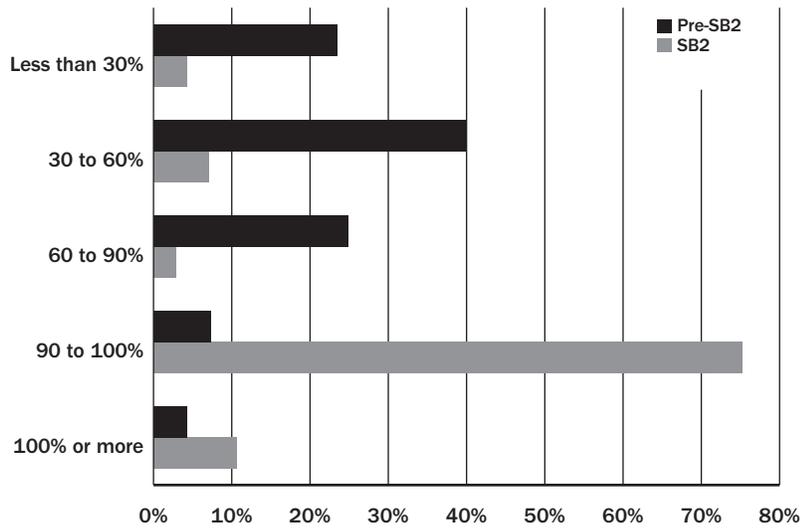


FIGURE 3-7. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY PERCENTAGE OF MAXIMUM SENTENCE SERVED IN PRISON AND BY SENTENCING CODE (SENATE BILL 2), 2001, (N=20,503)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

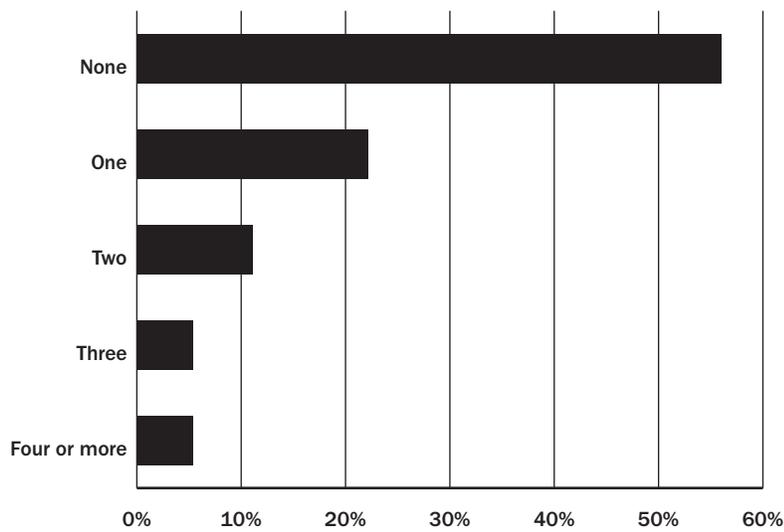


FIGURE 3-8. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONERS RELEASED IN OHIO, BY NUMBER OF PRIOR INCARCERATIONS IN THE DRC, 2001, (N=23,874)

Source: Urban Institute analysis of ODRC datafile of 2001 releases.

How Are Prisoners Prepared for Reentry?



Historically, prison programming has played an important role in American corrections. Prison administrators and others have long believed that providing educational and vocational programming to prisoners increases the likelihood of success upon their return to the community. Community-based programming is expected to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration and decrease the recidivism rate of ex-prisoners. Research has shown that a range of prison programming can contribute to positive post-release outcomes, including reduced recidivism.¹

In recognition of the importance of institutional and community-based programming to successful prisoner reentry, including the related processes of assessing inmates' needs and risks, setting goals, and monitoring progress towards those goals, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) over the past few years has committed to transforming many of its processes and programs to reflect the concepts and goals of reentry. In October 2002, the ODRC launched its reentry strategy, and the first wave of inmates to experience the core elements of the strategy throughout their prison terms are expected to be released in the fall of 2003. Many of the recommendations associated with the new approach are still in the design and/or early implementation stage, and thus elements of the strategy are still evolving. Among the core elements of the ODRC's reentry initiative are the wide range of programs provided in the institutions, as well as the efforts to provide linkages to community-based services for prisoners returning to their communities.²

¹ S. Lawrence, D. Mears, G. Dubin, and J. Travis. *The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming. Research Report*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute (2002); G. Gaes, T. Flanagan, L. Motiuk, and L. Stewart "Adult Correctional Treatment" in M. Tonry and J. Petersilia (eds.) *Prisons*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1999).

² All of the information presented in this chapter about the ODRC's reentry strategy and its specialized programming comes from ODRC publications, documents, and policies as well as from interviews with ODRC personnel.

REENTRY IN OHIO

In February 2001, the ODRC began examining prisoner reentry in Ohio and developing recommendations to move the department towards a more holistic and systematic approach to helping inmates successfully reintegrate into their communities. Rather than starting the reentry process at the very end of an inmate's prison term, the ODRC is working to establish a system in which the concept of reentry underlies the assessments, programming and services that a prisoner receives during incarceration as well as after release from prison. Ohio's reentry strategy centers around interdisciplinary teams that develop a "reentry accountability plan" (RAP) for and with a prisoner and monitor the prisoner's progress in programs both before and after release. Moreover, the reentry strategy acknowledges and prioritizes the role of family, citizens, victims, community institutions, and faith-based organizations, in addition to justice system and medical/mental health professionals.

The ODRC presented the results of its comprehensive assessment of reentry in July 2002 in a report entitled "The Ohio Plan for Productive Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction" (hereafter the "Ohio Plan"). The 44 recommendations in the Ohio Plan are subdivided into six categories that provide a sense of how wide-ranging the proposed changes are: 1) Reception, Offender Assessment, and Reentry Planning, 2) Offender Programming: Targeting Criminogenic Needs, 3) Family Involvement in Reentry, 4) Employment Readiness and Discharge Planning, 5) Reentry-Centered Offender Supervision, and 6) Community Justice Partnerships.

Ohio's reentry process starts with a risk assessment that is completed upon an inmate's admission to one of the ODRC's reception centers. The six-item risk assessment assigns points based on an inmate's age at the time of the current offense and prior criminal history (adult or juvenile). The items cover the period up to and including the current offense and are thus static factors that will not change during the course of the inmate's incarceration. A score of 0 to 4 places the inmate in the Reentry Basic status,³ while a score of 5 to 8 classifies the inmate as Reentry Intensive.⁴ As of October 1, 2002, all inmates entering an ODRC reception center receive the risk assessment. Of the over 19,000 risk assessments completed in the first eight months of the reentry initiative, 79 percent of inmates were designated as Reentry Basic, and 21 percent as Reentry Intensive.⁵

The next step in the process is a dynamic needs assessment that evaluates the inmate along seven domains: employment, marital/family, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional, and attitude.⁶ Inmates are scored at one of four levels in each domain from "fac-

3 An example of a score of 2 on the risk assessment is an inmate under age 40 who has one or two prior convictions/adjudications (adult or juvenile) that did not result in a period of incarceration of more than 60 days, and was on probation at the time of the current offense.

4 An example of a score of 6 on the risk assessment is an inmate under age 40 who has three or more prior convictions/adjudications (adult or juvenile), two of which resulted in a period of incarceration of more than one year, and was on parole at the time of the current offense (having been released less than three years prior to the current offense).

5 ODRC Office of Offender Reentry and Correctional Best Practices. *Reentry Today: The Ohio Plan*, volume 1, issue 2 (June 2003). From October 1, 2002 to June 10, 2003, ODRC reception staff completed 19,545 static risk assessments.

6 The seven domains were developed by the Correctional Service of Canada. ODRC policy: Offender Reentry Assessments and Planning (October 1, 2002).

tor seen as an asset to community adjustment” to “considerable need for improvement.” Inmates who are rated to have considerable need for improvement in a domain are normally referred to programming to address that need. While the initial reentry policy envisioned that the needs assessment would be administered primarily to prisoners classified as Reentry Intensive, proposed revisions to the current policy state that all prisoners admitted to the ODRC should receive the needs assessment either at reception or the parent institution.⁷ In addition, virtually all inmates are evaluated at reception for educational skill level, physical and mental health, and alcohol and drug use. The results from these evaluations, as well as from the risk and needs assessments, are utilized by the inmate’s reentry management team to develop the inmate’s reentry accountability plan (RAP). All inmates admitted to ODRC since October 1, 2002, regardless of risk assessment score, receive a RAP.⁸

Once the inmate has been moved from the reception center to the inmate’s parent institution, the institutional reentry management team meets periodically with the prisoner and monitors the prisoner’s progress. Each parent institution has its own reentry management teams comprised of unit managers and case managers as well as staff members who specialize in program areas such as physical/mental health, education, and substance abuse. All prisoners admitted since October 1, 2002 meet with either their case manager or their reentry management team on a quarterly basis in their first and last years of incarceration, and on an annual basis for any time in between.⁹ For Reentry Intensive inmates who are within six months of being released to supervision, the reentry management team establishes contact with staff from the Adult Parole Authority’s Offender Services Network to facilitate the transition.

Each of the seven Adult Parole Authority regions in Ohio has its own community reentry management teams that work with Reentry Intensive prisoners who are released to supervision to link them to community services and monitor their progress towards the goals on their RAPs. These Reentry Intensive inmates are supervised at an Intensive level for the first six months.¹⁰ Reentry Basic inmates are initially supervised at a Basic Medium supervision level¹¹ and work with their supervision officers to follow their RAPs, but they typically do not participate in the community reentry management team process. The community reentry management teams will build on and draw from the Offender Services Network (OSN) teams that have existed in each of the APA regions since 1995. The OSN teams are tasked with assisting supervision officers in identifying the needs of offenders and developing partnerships with community providers to address those needs.¹² The OSN teams are headed by regional services coordinators and also include chemical dependency specialists, sex offend-

7 E-mail correspondence with Edward Rhine, Chief, ODRC, Office of Offender Reentry (October 27, 2003).

8 Some ODRC institutions have taken the step of developing RAPs for inmates who were admitted prior to October 1, 2002. Telephone conversation with Edward Rhine, Chief, ODRC, Office of Offender Reentry (July 28, 2003).

9 ODRC policy: Offender Reentry Assessments and Planning (October 1, 2002).

10 The APA has several levels of supervision: Intensive, Basic High, Basic Medium, Basic Low and Monitored Time (a non-reporting status). See chapter 2 for information about the different supervision levels and the associated reporting requirements.

11 Reentry Basic inmates who are also sex offenders are supervised at the Basic High level. ODRC policy: APA Supervision of Reentry Cases (July 8, 2003).

12 ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/offender.HTM (accessed July 3, 2003)

er specialists, psychologists, and lab technicians. Staff from the OSN teams will participate on the community reentry management teams.

Inmates who are released without supervision, regardless of risk assessment score, are not included in any further reentry-coordinated programming, although efforts are made to make them aware of or refer them to available community resources. While much of the post-release reentry strategy is focused on Reentry Intensive inmates released to supervision, the Ohio Plan also emphasizes the importance of improving pre-release programming for all inmates. The ODRC is currently in the process of launching a more expansive and consistent release preparation program for inmates within six months of release (see “Release Preparation Program” sidebar).

Several recommendations in the Ohio Plan focus on the importance of family involvement in the reentry process. These recommendations build on the ODRC’s existing family-centered programs, such as the long-term prison nursery for new mothers, parenting programs, and children’s reading rooms in visiting areas.¹³ The proposed changes include 1) creating a Family Orientation Program at each of the ODRC reception centers to provide family members with information and encourage their involvement during the inmate’s term of incarceration, 2) changing existing visitation policies to facilitate contact, 3) developing new parenting/family-related lesson plans for existing programs, 4) encouraging family involvement in post-release supervision by including family members in planned supervision visits, 5) establishing new collaborative efforts with other governmental agencies, including a proposal to work with the Department of Education to assist inmates in maintaining contact with their children’s teachers, and 6) creating a Family Council to address offender/family issues across the reentry continuum.

The first wave of inmates to be classified as Reentry Intensive is expected to exit prison in the fall of 2003. As such, it is too early to assess the process of the reentry strategy or its impact on recidivism or other measures of reentry success or failure. The ODRC is in the process of examining what elements of the reentry strategy need to be modified and will conduct a review of the first year of implementation of its reentry policy.¹⁴

The fact that ODRC has launched a new reentry strategy is promising and suggests that those prisoners released in the future will be better prepared for their return home. Nonetheless, it is important to note that not all current inmates receive the full range of institutional and post-release programming and that the new reentry strategy and the release preparation program are not yet fully implemented. In addition, program administrators are still in the process of refining the structure and content of the programs to ensure that they are effective and responsive to returning prisoners’ needs.

13 ODRC. “The Ohio Plan for Productive Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction.” (July 2002).

14 Telephone conversation with Edward Rhine, Chief, ODRC, Office of Offender Reentry (July 28, 2003).

Release Preparation Program

Prior to embarking on its reentry initiative, the ODRC provided “pre-release programming” to all inmates during the last six weeks of their incarceration. The programming, which varied somewhat from institution to institution, lasted three weeks and addressed issues such as employment readiness, life-coping skills, and community resources and services. Two of the 44 recommendations in the Ohio Plan for Productive Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction articulated the need to expand and standardize ODRC’s pre-release programming. The new “Release Preparation Program” applies to almost all inmates, regardless of whether they will exit to supervision or not,¹⁵ and starts six months prior to an inmate’s release. The program involves a wide range of workshops with detailed lesson plans and utilizes a series of checklists to track the inmate’s completion of the program components. Inmates must participate in at least five workshop sessions. The workshops fall into the following categories:

- Employment readiness (interviewing, résumé writing, etc.)
- Community resources
- Faith-based resources
- Recovery services (alcohol and drug relapse prevention)
- Mental health
- Community justice
- Adult Parole Authority (rules of supervision)

¹⁵ Some inmates with serious physical and mental health conditions may be exempt from the release preparation program. In addition, inmates who exit prison early via judicial release generally will not participate in release preparation (unless they are within six months of release), as their release dates are determined on short notice by a judge.

¹⁶ E-mail correspondence with Susan Renick, Reentry Administrator, ODRC (July 29, 2003).

The checklists also set time frames for an inmate, with the assistance of a case manager, to make housing arrangements, obtain identification (e.g., social security card, birth certificate, etc.), and establish connections with employment resources. In order to facilitate employment, each ODRC institution will provide an annual job fair, and some institutions have videoconferencing capabilities that can be used for employer videoconferences. For inmates receiving substance abuse, physical or mental health services while incarcerated, the release preparation program utilizes another checklist to track ODRC staff efforts to establish transitional links so that the inmate will continue to receive services after release.

The release preparation program was established by ODRC policy in January 2003 and training sessions were ongoing in the institutions in late spring 2003. As of July 2003, all institutions were holding release preparation workshops on a monthly basis and the institutions were instructed to begin offering workshops to inmates who were six months from release.¹⁶ The ODRC’s electronic information system is in the process of being modified to include a release preparation screen so that the various checklists can be completed and accessed by all of the relevant parties.

SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

An important component of Ohio’s reentry strategy is the provision of educational, substance abuse, physical and mental health, and other programs and services to inmates who demonstrate a need or desire for such services. Within many of the institution-based programming areas, the ODRC provides a range of service or treatment levels to address the varied needs of the inmate population. In addition, the ODRC (which includes the Adult Parole Authority) has established partnerships or contracts with government agencies, halfway houses, and other service providers in an effort to ensure continuity of care for inmates after release. ODRC policies and guidelines dictate how programs should operate in the institutions and

APA regions. While in some locations, programs already meet ODRC policy requirements, in other locations administrators are still working towards making programs operate as described below.

Most ODRC programs existed before the reentry initiative was launched, but all are being evaluated to determine whether they will be certified as “reentry-approved” programs. To gain certification, all institutional and community-based programs will be assessed to determine whether they address one or more of the seven dynamic factors from the needs assessment,¹⁷ include at least two community justice elements,¹⁸ are grounded in theory or research, are run by staff with appropriate training/credentials, and have a lesson plan, clear admission and discharge criteria, a set of rules and expectations, and an evaluation plan. After July 1, 2004, non-approved programs may continue to exist in certain institutions or APA regions, but only approved programs can be included in the prisoners’ reentry accountability plans (RAPs). One of the likely results of the certification process will be that more programs will be standardized and offered in many institutions or supervision regions, rather than distinct programs operating in single institutions or regions.

Educational and Vocational Programs

Prior research findings suggest that the education level of prisoners is well below the average for the general population.¹⁹ To address many prisoners’ educational deficiencies and increase their likelihood of successful reentry, the ODRC provides educational programming through the Ohio Central School System (OCSS). The OCSS is an accredited school district chartered by the Ohio Department of Education in 1973 to provide educational programming to inmates incarcerated within the ODRC. Under Ohio law, inmates who have not received a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) diploma are required to take courses leading towards an Ohio certificate of high school equivalence or courses that provide vocational training.²⁰ The OCSS reported that, in FY 2002, 80 percent of incoming inmates did not have a verified high school or GED diploma.²¹ Furthermore, the average educational achievement for the inmates admitted in FY 2002 was assessed at a grade level of 7.7, and 30 percent of the male population and 20 percent of the female population were considered functionally illiterate.²²

The Ohio Central School System reports that approximately half of the inmates admitted in FY 2002 have suspected incidences of learning disabilities. Moreover, approximately 18 percent of inmates under age 22 may qualify for special education services that are mandated by the federal Individuals with Educational Disabilities Act.²³ Each special-needs inmate under age 22 is required to receive an Individualized Education Plan. In an

17 Recall that the seven domains are employment, marital/family, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional, and attitude.

18 Community Justice elements include community service, restitution, victim empathy, inmate accountability/responsibility, and community involvement. ODRC Reentry Program Assessment, form DRC4366.

19 D. Andrews and J. Bonata. *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Anderson (1994); as cited in Lawrence et al. (2002); Gaes et al. (1999).

20 Ohio Revised Code §5145.06(B)(1). The law further states that for inmates with their high school diplomas, the ODRC “shall encourage the prisoner to participate in a program of advanced studies or training for a skilled trade.” According to ODRC policy, inmates who are required to participate in educational programs must be enrolled for at least two quarters (six months). ODRC policy: Inmate Assessment and Placement in Educational Programs. (October 17, 2002). Beyond that time frame, inmates may opt out of education programs, but most inmates remain. Interview with Jerry McGlone, Superintendent, Ohio Central School System (May 22, 2003).

21 By contrast, 48 percent of incoming inmates reported that they did not have a high school diploma or GED. ODRC 2001 Intake Study (June 2003). Periodically, the ODRC undertakes a large data collection effort to present a profile of all of the inmates admitted to ODRC over a two-month period. The study looks at demographic and social characteristics, characteristics of the current commitment offense, and the inmate’s prior criminal history. The ODRC has conducted these studies in 1985, 1992, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2001. Various statistics presented in this chapter will be drawn from the intake studies.

22 ODRC Inmate Profile – Education; Ohio Central School System (March 12, 2003).

23 *Ibid.*

effort to avoid special-needs labeling, these inmates participate in the same educational programs provided to other inmates at levels that are appropriate for them.²⁴

On any given day in FY 2002, nearly one-quarter of the ODRC prison population was enrolled in an education program, and over the course of the year, over half of the population participated in a school program.²⁵ The cost per student was \$1,526 in FY 2002.²⁶ In a recent study of the impact of correctional education on recidivism in Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio, the Correctional Education Association and the Management and Training Corporation Institute found, “For Ohio, all three measures of recidivism—re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-incarceration—showed statistically significant lower rates for participants [in correctional education programs] vs. non-participants.”²⁷

The OCSS provides a range of basic educational programs.²⁸ For inmates who read below a sixth-grade level, most ODRC institutions have at least one housing unit dedicated to Adult Basic Literary Education (ABLE). Each literacy housing unit includes approximately 60 students, 30 tutors, and one teacher. Most of the tutors are inmates who are certified to tutor as their work assignment and live in the literacy unit. In institutions that do not have literacy units, inmates reading below the sixth-grade level may participate in all-day adult basic education schooling. In FY 2002, 4,417 inmates were enrolled in ABLE programs and 989 received ABLE certificates. For inmates who read at a sixth- to ninth-grade level, the OCSS offers pre-GED instruction. Inmates in pre-GED programs typically live in the general population and participate in school on a full-time basis. Once inmates can read at a ninth-grade level or higher, they usually take on a full-time job assignment and may attend GED classes in the evenings. In FY 2002, 11,688 inmates were enrolled as pre-GED/GED students and 2,708 inmates received a pre-GED certificate or a GED diploma.²⁹

After release from prison, some inmates continue to receive educational programming at one of four learning centers under contract to the ODRC called Community Justice ABLE centers. In a new set of contracts established in 2001, these centers provide academic programs that focus on adult basic education and GED completion. Most offenders who participate in the centers are former inmates under community supervision, but other participants include probationers and offenders who are not under supervision.³⁰

In addition to the basic educational classes, inmates meeting the eligibility requirements may participate in vocational classes, advanced job training, and apprenticeships. The ODRC has approximately 100 vocational programs throughout its institutions, including programs such as accounting, auto mechanics, computer repair, and carpentry. In FY 2002,

24 Interview with Jerry McGlone, Superintendent, Ohio Central School System (May 22, 2003).

25 ODRC Inmate Profile—Education; Ohio Central School System (March 12, 2003).

26 Ibid.

27 Stephen J. Steurer and Linda G. Smith, *Education Reduces Crime: Three-State Recidivism Study—Executive Summary*. Correctional Education Association and the Management & Training Corporation Institute (Feb 2003).

28 Most of the OCSS’s academic programs have eligibility requirements and waitlists. For inmates eligible for OCSS academic programs, priority is given to 1) inmates under 22 years of age who are identified as, or suspected of, having a disability, 2) inmates under 22 years of age, 3) inmates with the earliest release or parole consideration dates, and 4) inmates who are being hired to work in the Ohio Penal Industries shop. Similar priority criteria apply to vocational program waitlists. ODRC policy: Inmate Assessment and Placement in Educational Programs. (October 17, 2002).

29 A small number of inmates are enrolled as high school students (219 in 2002) and receive a high school diploma upon completion (35 in 2002). ODRC Inmate Profile—Education; Ohio Central School System (March 12, 2003).

30 Telephone conversation with Jerry McGlone, Superintendent, Ohio Central School System (July 24, 2003).

3,329 inmates were enrolled in vocational programs and 981 received career-technical certificates. The ODRC's advanced job training program provides college-level courses that focus on technical education to enhance inmates' job marketability. Instructors from nearby colleges come to ODRC institutions to teach these classes, or they teach the classes off-site and the inmates participate via computer link in their institution's distance learning lab. In FY 2002, 3,433 inmates participated in advanced job training and 973 received certificates. Finally, the ODRC offers an apprenticeship program that began in the early 1970s under an arrangement with the U.S. Department of Labor. ODRC institutions offer 70 apprenticeship programs for which inmates can earn certificates from the Department of Labor upon completion. In FY 2002, 2,485 inmates participated in apprenticeships.

In addition to vocational programs and apprenticeships, the ODRC runs the Ohio Penal Industries (OPI) in which inmates manufacture a wide range of products, repair cars and furniture, and run a printing shop. The goals of OPI are 1) to provide inmates with skills and work experience that will improve their job marketability upon release, 2) to offer meaningful activity to keep inmates occupied and supervised, and 3) to generate cost-efficient, quality products and services for Ohio's institutions and agencies.³¹ In FY 2002, OPI employed 2,682 inmates who earned wages that can be used to pay court costs, child support, victim compensation, and to buy items in the ODRC commissaries. In FY 2002, total OPI sales were approximately \$30 million.³²

Substance Abuse Treatment and Testing

The link between substance abuse and criminal activity has been well documented. In a 1997 national survey, just over half of state prisoners reported that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time they committed the offense that led to their imprisonment.³³ Substance abuse problems that are not treated both while the prisoner is incarcerated and after release can impose a severe impediment to successful reintegration. Not only do substance abuse problems increase the chance of reoffending, but they may also hinder the returning prisoner's ability to complete job requirements and reestablish relations with family. A recent study found that 74 percent of state prisoners nationwide who expected to be released within the next 12 months reported a history of drug use and/or alcohol abuse.³⁴

Ohio statistics on substance abuse among inmates mirror the national findings: the 2001 ODRC Intake Study reported that 86 percent of incoming inmates had an indication of a history of drug abuse, and 68 percent had an indication of a history of alcohol abuse.³⁵ In response to the significant

31 OPI website. www.opi.state.oh.us/about_OPI/mission.asp (accessed July 3, 2003).

32 OPI website. www.opi.state.oh.us/About_OPI/about_opi.asp (accessed July 3, 2003).

33 C. Mumola. *Substance Abuse and Treatment, State and Federal Prisoners*, 1997. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice (1999).

34 Allen J. Beck. "State and Federal Prisoners Returning to the Community: Findings from the Bureau of Justice Statistics." Paper presented at the First Reentry Courts Initiative Cluster Meeting, Washington, D.C. (April 13, 2000). www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/sfprc.pdf.

35 ODRC 2001 Intake Study (June 2003). (See Footnote 21 for explanation of the ODRC Intake Studies.)

need for services, the ODRC provides a continuum of substance abuse programming from residential treatment programs to education and self-help groups in the institutions, as well as referrals to community providers or the Adult Parole Authority's chemical dependency specialists for continued care after release from prison.

Upon admission to ODRC, virtually all inmates undergo substance abuse screening and 10 hours of alcohol and other drug (AOD) education.³⁶ Once they are transferred to their parent institutions, inmates with substance abuse problems may choose to participate in AOD programming. Approximately half of the ODRC institutions have residential substance abuse treatment programs (including the more intensive therapeutic communities) with a total of 1,095 beds. The residential programs last from 3 to 12 months. Approximately one-third of the institutions have day treatment services lasting 2 to 6 months with a total of 431 beds. In addition, many institutions have counseling and AOD education groups, while all institutions have alcoholics and narcotics anonymous or other self-help groups. One institution, the privately-run North Coast Correctional Treatment Facility, is dedicated to AOD treatment, with a focus on prisoners convicted of drunk driving. In FY 2002, the Bureau of Recovery Services provided nearly 14,000 inmate participants with AOD programming in the institutions: 25 percent in residential or day treatment programs, 38 percent in group counseling or drug education, and 37 percent in self-help groups.³⁷ The successful completion rate for most types of AOD programming in the institutions in FY 2002 was just over 50 percent, with approximately 30 percent terminating the program early and the remaining inmates still participating in the program at the end of the fiscal year.³⁸ In FY 2002, ODRC Recovery Services had 244 staff members, down from 260 in 2001, but far exceeding the 83 staff members in FY 1992.³⁹

Even prior to the initiation of the ODRC reentry strategy, the Bureau of Recovery Services made efforts to provide a seamless transition from substance abuse programming in the institutions to continuing care after release from prison. For inmates released without community supervision, recovery services staff can make referrals to community substance abuse treatment providers. For inmates with post-release supervision, institutional recovery services staff work with the chemical dependency specialist in the Adult Parole Authority region to which the inmate is returning. The chemical dependency specialists help to identify and make referrals to community treatment resources, in addition to screening offenders and providing substance abuse education and crisis intervention. The Recovery Services FY 2002 Report stated that the APA's chemical dependency specialists screened 3,176 offenders and linked 98 percent of those in need of treatment to services within 10 days.⁴⁰

36 In FY 2002, 15,783 inmates were screened and 19,204 received the AOD education. ODRC Recovery Services FY 2002 Report.

37 ODRC Recovery Services FY 2002 Report. It is important to note that the nearly 14,000 participants do not necessarily represent nearly 14,000 unique inmates. It is very likely that some inmates will have participated in more than one type of AOD programming over the course of one year and thus will be counted more than once.

38 The combined successful completion rate for residential (excluding therapeutic communities) and day treatment programs as well as counseling and AOD education groups was 54 percent, with 30 percent terminating the program early and 16 percent still participating in the program at the end of the fiscal year. These statistics do not include the self-help groups. Therapeutic communities had a 50 percent early termination rate, 22 percent successful completion, and a 29 percent carryover to the next fiscal year (percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding). ODRC Recovery Services FY 2002 Report.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

The ODRC conducts drug testing on inmates in the institutions and offenders under supervision in the community. In addition to an annual drug test that includes approximately 20 percent of the inmates, the ODRC conducts random tests of 5 percent of the inmate population each month, as well as tests as part of AOD program participation and tests of inmates suspected of drug use. Less than 1 percent of the samples from the FY 2002 annual drug test were positive, while 1.5 percent of the monthly random tests were positive.⁴¹ In FY 2002, the ODRC carried out nearly 60,000 drug tests of inmates in the institutions, and another nearly 160,000 tests of offenders under supervision in the community.⁴² The positive test rate for offenders under APA supervision was 15 percent.⁴³ In the institutions and on community supervision, according to ODRC policy, every positive test is met with a response. In the institutions, an inmate's first positive test is followed by a mandatory 36-hour AOD education program, as well as period of sanctions that can be applied for up to two months.⁴⁴ During the two-month time frame, the inmate must be drug tested at least once each month. After a second positive test, the inmate is subject to a period of sanctions for up to six months and must be drug tested at least once each month during that period. Ex-prisoners who test positive on post-release supervision may be subject to progressively restrictive sanctions from a minimum of a verbal warning that is recorded in the ex-prisoner's supervision file to a maximum of a violation hearing, at which the parole board may decide to return the inmate to prison.

Physical Health Treatment

The ODRC's Bureau of Medical Services is responsible for coordinating the delivery of health care to all inmates in Ohio's prisons. As the Bureau of Medical Services points out, most prisoners did not receive regular medical and dental care prior to incarceration and many did not lead lifestyles that were compatible with good health.⁴⁵ Upon admission to prison, inmates are initially assessed and designated in one of four levels of medical need. Level 1 indicates medical stability, while Level 4 signifies the need for constant skilled medical care and/or assistance with multiple activities of daily living.⁴⁶

To respond to all types of medical needs, from routine health care to treatment of chronic or life-threatening illnesses, the ODRC provides several levels of care. First, each institution is equipped with an infirmary to provide basic and routine health care services. Next, there are two skilled nursing facilities that handle more serious or longer-term health care needs. Some inmates are permanently housed in one of these two facilities.⁴⁷ Finally, the Ohio State University Medical Center provides emergency room, specialty consultation, and surgical and inpatient hospital services.

41 The positive drug test rates were higher for "for cause" tests of inmates suspected of drug use (7.6 percent) and for testing as part of AOD program participation (2.4 percent). ODRC Recovery Services FY 2002 Report.

42 As noted in chapter 2, according to the ODRC's substance abuse testing policy, all supervised offenders (except those on monitored time) should take a drug test within the first 30 days of supervision and should have at least one random test per year. For those inmates with a special condition to complete a substance abuse program or those with a substance abuse history, drug testing is mandatory and its frequency is governed by the offender's supervision level.

43 ODRC Recovery Services FY 2002 Report. Not surprisingly, the rate of positive drug tests is far higher for the population on community supervision than in the institutions. The overall institutional positive rate in FY 2002 was 2.5 percent, compared to 15.0 percent for offenders in the community. Note that the community supervision population includes offenders on probation.

44 Positive drug test sanctions can include special housing, visitation restrictions, restricted commissary, loss of telephone privileges as well as other similar sanctions. Telephone conversation with Rod Woods, Chief, ODRC Bureau of Recovery Services (August 19, 2003).

45 ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/medical.htm (accessed July 3, 2003).

46 The initial assessment also includes a designation of any applicable functional limitations, such as hearing or vision impairments or mobility limitations.

47 The Correctional Medical Center (CMC) has 55 long-term beds for inmates with Level 4 medical needs. The Frazier Health Center has approximately 100 inpatient care beds for inmates with Level 3 medical needs. (Older inmates with Level 3 medical needs are housed at the Hocking Correctional Facility.) Interview with Kay Northrup, Deputy Director, ODRC, Office of Correctional Healthcare (May 22, 2003).

An additional method of health care service provision occurs through a technology implemented by the ODRC in 1995 called telemedicine. Telemedicine allows for two-way video communication between inmates in the institutions and the Ohio State University Medical Center. The technology also incorporates medical devices that provide real-time results to the physicians. Approximately 5,000 telemedicine consultations occur each year, resulting in improved communication and continuity-of-care, as well as transportation cost savings, and reduced opportunities for escape.⁴⁸

As part of the implementation of the ODRC reentry strategy, the Bureau of Medical Services began in 2002 to provide medical summaries to community supervision officers for all prisoners released to supervision.⁴⁹ In addition, in 2003, the Bureau of Medical Services established an interagency agreement with the Ohio Department of Health to bring community linkage coordinators into the institutions to assist in making contacts between HIV positive prisoners and health services in the community.⁵⁰

Mental Health Treatment

Compared with the general population, prisoners experience higher rates of mental illness.⁵¹ Without proper treatment or counseling, seriously mentally ill inmates can create unsafe situations for themselves, other prisoners, and staff, and will face increased challenges when trying to reintegrate into society. The ODRC's 2001 Intake Study showed that 22 percent of males admitted to the ODRC and 43 percent of females had a history of mental health problems.⁵² Upon admission to prison, inmates are initially assessed and classified into one of four mental health statuses, from no mental health problems to serious mental illness. In February 2003, just over 8,000 inmates, or approximately 18 percent of the inmate population, were on the Bureau of Mental Health Services caseload, with nearly 10 percent classified as seriously mentally ill.⁵³

Since 1995, the ODRC has had full responsibility for providing mental health services to its inmates. Prior to 1995, the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) had primary responsibility for delivery of psychiatric services to inmates, while the ODRC offered other mental health programs.⁵⁴ Similar to the range of services offered by the Bureau of Medical Services, the Bureau of Mental Health Services provides several levels of mental health treatment and counseling. Seriously mentally ill prisoners who need hospital care are treated and housed at the Oakwood Correctional Facility, a 131-bed accredited psychiatric hospital run by the ODRC. The next levels of care take place in one of eight residential treatment units (RTUs). The RTUs are housing units for inmates with intermediate or chronic mental illnesses. While some inmates are permanently

48 ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/medical.htm; and "Is there a Doctor in the House?" Interview with Reginald Wilkinson, Director, ODRC. Published in TechBeat (Spring 1998) and Corrections Forum (July/August 1998).

49 Inmates must authorize release of their medical information to the supervision officer. E-mail correspondence with Kay Northrup, Deputy Director, ODRC, Office of Correctional Healthcare, (August 19, 2003).

50 Interview with Kay Northrup, Deputy Director, ODRC, Office of Correctional Healthcare (May 22, 2003).

51 According to a 1992 national survey, 6 percent of federal and state prisoners reported having a mental illness, compared with 2 percent in the general population. In 1997, a similar survey placed the level of mental illness among prisoners at 10 percent. Laura M. Maruschak and Allen J. Beck, *Medical Problems of Inmates, 1997*, Bureau of Justice Statistics: Special Report, Washington: U.S. Department of Justice (January 2001).

52 ODRC 2001 Intake Study (June 2003). (See Footnote 21 for explanation of the ODRC Intake Studies.)

53 Bureau of Mental Health Services. February 2003 Caseload.

54 ODRC website www.drc.state.oh.us/web/mentalhealth.html (accessed July 3, 2003).

housed in an RTU, most stay on a temporary basis; the average length of stay in an RTU is six to eight months.⁵⁵ Within an RTU setting, inmates can have increasing levels of interaction with the general population depending on improvements in or stabilization of their conditions. Inmates in the general population who need mental health services may receive outpatient therapy and counseling.⁵⁶

To ensure continued mental health services for inmates nearing release, the mental health staff in the institutions work with community linkage social workers from the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH). Under a joint agency agreement between the ODRC and the ODMH made in 1997, the ODMH social workers are assigned to one or more ODRC institutions to assist in the coordination of mental health services for inmates returning to the community. For severely mentally ill inmates exiting prison with supervision, the ODRC established a pilot program in July 2002 called Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) in which ODRC has teamed up with local mental health boards in Cleveland and Cincinnati to provide mental health treatment as well as assistance with housing and other services through almost daily contact with the ex-prisoners.⁵⁷ Moreover, there are 55 halfway house beds for inmates with mental health needs who are transitioning from prison to the community. The average stay in the halfway houses for these offenders is four to six months.⁵⁸ (See “Halfway Houses” sidebar.) Finally, the psychologists on the Adult Parole Authority’s Offender Services Network teams conduct assessments and identify other resources for mentally ill inmates released to supervision.

Sex Offender Programs

The Bureau of Mental Health Services provides specialized assessments and programming for sex offenders. In 1995, the ODRC opened the Sex Offender Risk Reduction Center (SORRC) in the Madison Correctional Institution. After leaving one of the ODRC reception centers and before transferring to their parent institution, inmates who are currently incarcerated for a sex offense⁵⁹ or who have been convicted of a felony sex offense in the past 15 years are sent to SORRC for sex offender risk assessments, treatment planning, and psychoeducational programming. The goals of the mandatory 20-hour psychoeducational programming are for the inmate to develop an understanding of 1) the wrongfulness of sexual assault, 2) victim awareness, 3) destructive behavior cycles (including relapse prevention), and 4) systems of denial.⁶⁰ In an effort to emphasize the need to give back to the communities they victimized, SORRC inmates engage in community service work, primarily for victim advocacy groups and agencies.⁶¹ Once inmates are placed in their parent institutions, they may participate

55 Reginald A. Wilkinson. “Director of large prison system relates mental health services available to inmates.” *The National Psychologist* (March/April 2000).

56 Reginald A. Wilkinson. “Mental Health Care for Ohio State Prisoners: The view from the Director’s Office.” *Correctional Mental Health Report* (January/February 2000).

57 Telephone conversation with Ellen Venters, Superintendent of Special Services, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services (August 1, 2003).

58 Telephone conversation with Linda Janes, Chief, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services, Bureau of Community Sanctions (August 5, 2003).

59 In the commitment reports produced by the ODRC Bureau of Research, sex offenses include the following: rape, gross sexual imposition, sexual battery, felonious sexual penetration, corruption of a minor, pandering obscenity, and compelling or promoting prostitution (and a few other offenses that account for a very small portion of the sex offender population).

60 Reginald A. Wilkinson. “Sex Offender Risk Reduction Center” *Correctional Best Practices: Directors’ Perspectives*. Association of State Correctional Administrators (August 2000).

61 *Ibid.*

in intensive sex offender treatment, although they must admit to their crimes in order to be eligible to participate.

In May 2003, the ODRC housed nearly 10,000 sex offenders, comprising just over one-fifth of the incarcerated population.⁶² For sex offenders released to supervision,⁶³ the Adult Parole Authority receives an ex-prisoner's SORRC report, and the sex offender specialist on the APA's Offender Services Network team recommends whether the ex-prisoner will be referred to one of the 20 sex offender programs for which ODRC contracts.⁶⁴ These sex offender programs last 18 to 24 months. In late summer 2003, a working group was assembled to develop a new master plan for ODRC sex offender programs at the request of Director Wilkinson. Part of the new master plan will likely focus on developing a more structured program for sex offenders in the several months prior to release to supervision. The release preparation could include additional psychoeducational programming, increased efforts to establish linkages with community-based treatment and services, and ensuring that community sex offender registration requirements are fulfilled. The overarching concepts driving the master plan are risk management and risk reduction.⁶⁵

Restorative Justice: Community Service, Victim Awareness Programs, and Citizen Circles

Since 1997, the ODRC has increasingly incorporated the concept of restorative or community justice as an overarching philosophy for much of its programming. Restorative justice seeks to repair the harm that crime imposes on victims and communities through offender accountability and meaningful dialogue and partnerships between victims, ex-prisoners, and other community and justice system representatives. As ODRC Director Wilkinson stated, "Community justice views crime as a violation against individuals, their families, and the community in which they live. It promotes an inclusive system, bringing all those involved or impacted by a crime into the decision-making process. It is more concerned with repairing the harm done to the victim and the community through negotiation, mediation, empowerment and reparation, rather than through vengeance, deterrence and punishment."⁶⁶ Ohio's reentry initiative incorporates and compliments the ODRC's restorative justice focus. Some of the most direct examples of ODRC programs that are guided by the community justice philosophy are community service, victim awareness programs, and Citizen Circles.

⁶² ODRC Departmental Tracking System (DOTS). *Incarcerated Sex Offender Totals (May 1, 2003)*. Of the 9,917 incarcerated sex offenders, 3,865 (39 percent) were designated as habitual sex offenders, sexual predators, or violent sexual predators.

⁶³ Recall that under Senate Bill 2, all offenders convicted of a sex offense must serve a mandatory 5-year period of post-release control.

⁶⁴ Telephone conversation with Ellen Venters, Superintendent of Special Services, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services (August 1, 2003). Each APA region has contracts with one to five sex offender programs.

⁶⁵ Telephone conversation with David Berenson, ODRC, Director of Sex Offender Services (August 21, 2003).

⁶⁶ Reginald A. Wilkinson. "Community Justice in Ohio: Department Implements Variety of Programs to 'Restore' the Community." *Corrections Today* (December 1997).

Community Service

Since 1991, inmates in the ODRC have participated in community service work for a variety of non-profits, government agencies, schools, and charitable organizations. The types of services range from building homes with Habitat for Humanity, training dogs for people with special needs, and providing and repairing items for under-resourced schools. In 2002, inmates provided more than 5.6 million hours of community service.⁶⁷ Through this program, communities and deserving organizations receive free services and products, and inmates gain valuable skills as they learn about the importance and satisfaction of giving back to the community. Recently, the ODRC added a requirement that inmates participate in coursework that addresses personal responsibility and reparation before performing community service work.⁶⁸ An internal evaluation of the impact of ODRC's community service work showed that inmates who participated in community service (and particularly those who served more than 100 hours) were returned to prison at significantly lower rates than inmates who did not.⁶⁹

Victim Awareness Programs

The ODRC, through its Office of Victim Services, offers a voluntary 12-week victim awareness class in every institution and Adult Parole Authority region. Each week, the standardized curriculum addresses a different type of crime and its impact on the victim. An important part of the class involves panels of survivors and victim advocacy groups talking to inmates about how they have been affected by crime. In 2002, over 750 offenders participated in victim awareness classes.⁷⁰ In addition to these classes, a small number of inmates participate in victim/offender dialogues in which the victim initiates the process and, in order for the offender to meet with his or her victim, the offender must agree to accept responsibility for the offense.⁷¹ The Office of Victim Services also handles more than one thousand calls each week from victims seeking information and assistance. The Ohio Plan outlines recommendations for the Office of Victim Services to develop standardized curriculum for domestic violence programming and to contact victims of sex offenders and domestic violence offenders six months prior to the inmate's release in order to assist in safety planning.

⁶⁷ Reginald A. Wilkinson. "Director's Message." ODRC Bureau of Quality and Community Partnerships, 2003 Community Service Calendar.

⁶⁸ Reginald A. Wilkinson. "Offender Reentry: A Storm Overdue." *Corrections Management Quarterly* (2001).

⁶⁹ Reginald A. Wilkinson. "The Impact of Community Service Work on Ohio State Prisoners: A Restorative Justice Perspective and Overview." *Corrections Management Quarterly* (2000).

⁷⁰ E-mail correspondence with Ronette Burkes, Assistant Administrator, ODRC, Office of Victim Services (August 22, 2003).

⁷¹ Interview with Karin Ho, Administrator, ODRC, Office of Victim Services (May 22, 2003).

Citizen Circles

Citizen Circles are a forum in which a group of volunteers from the community meets with recently released prisoners to assist them in finding employment, housing, and other resources. At the same time, the Citizen Circle makes clear to the ex-prisoners the expectations and requirements of participation. Released prisoners who are selected for a Citizen Circle must accept full responsibility for their crimes, acknowledge the harm done to others, and must agree to participate in community service and abide by the Circle's recommendations. The community volunteers can include a wide range of participants, such as members of the faith community, victims, the ex-prisoner's family, former prisoners, employers, and social service and justice system representatives. At the end of each Circle meeting, all of the participants sign a worksheet that details the recommendations that the ex-prisoner agrees to work toward. The recommendations are categorized into the seven domains (employment, marital/family, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional, and attitude) around which ODRC is structuring its programming.⁷² Citizen Circles are fully operational in four communities in Ohio and are being developed in another three communities. From midyear 2002 to midyear 2003, approximately 90 ex-prisoners participated in one of the four Citizen Circles.⁷³ One of the recommendations in the Ohio Plan is to expand the program to include Citizen Circles in all Adult Parole Authority regions.

72 ODRC Citizen Circles: Partnership Between ODRC and Ohio Communities. Pamphlet.

73 E-mail correspondence with John Matthews II, Regional Services Coordinator, ODRC, Adult Parole Authority, Offender Services Network, Mansfield Region (July 25, 2003).

SUMMARY

Since early 2001, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) has made a strong commitment to transforming many of its processes and programs to encompass the concepts and goals of successful prisoner reentry. In addition, other state government agencies and community service providers are working, in partnership with the ODRC, to provide the services and programs that many ex-prisoners need after release from prison. Many of these efforts and partnerships are in the early stages of planning and/or implementation and thus, it will be some time before evaluations of outcomes are possible.

The impact of these reentry strategies will depend in part on the proportion of offenders who receive the full range of reentry planning and services. At this point in time, the ODRC's post-release reentry efforts are targeted towards inmates who are released to supervision and who were assessed at admission to the ODRC as Reentry Intensive (determined by

severity of criminal history and age). These criteria substantially limit the number of ex-prisoners who receive the full range of post-release reentry services, although it is important to emphasize that efforts are made to link non-Reentry Intensive offenders on supervision to community-based services through the ODRC's Offender Services Network, and all inmates will receive pre-release preparation programming in the institutions to assist in the transition to life in the community. As the ODRC concludes the first year of implementation of its reentry strategy, it will undertake a thorough evaluation of the processes and results thus far and will make adjustments based on those findings.

Halfway Houses

The ODRC contracts with halfway houses to provide alternatives for transitioning inmates from prison to the community or for sanctioning offenders who violate their conditions of supervision.⁷⁴

For FY 2004, the ODRC has contracts with 26 halfway houses in Ohio for a total of 1,614 beds. The ODRC houses three primary populations in halfway houses. The largest portion of the population are ex-prisoners on parole or post-release control (whether housed as a transition or a sanction); they accounted for 54 percent of the 7,351 halfway house participants in FY 2002.⁷⁵ The remainder of the population was evenly split between offenders on probation (now called community control) and a work release program called transitional control (TRC). Through TRC, the Parole Board, with the sentencing judge's approval, may decide to place a minimum-security inmate in a halfway house for up to the last six months of the inmate's sentence. Offenders who violate conditions of TRC can be returned to prison. In October 2003, medium security inmates will also be eligible for TRC.⁷⁶ In 2002, approximately 5 percent of released inmates were placed in TRC.⁷⁷ While

the average stay in a halfway house under TRC is close to six months, the average stay for ex-prisoners on parole or post-release control is approximately three months.⁷⁸

Part of the ex-prisoner population in the halfway houses are offenders who are placed there as part of a mental health transition (see Mental Health Treatment section) and those who are eligible for and agree to participate in Intensive Program Prison (IPP). IPP is restricted to primarily lower-level, non-violent offenders who agree to serve 90 days in prison followed by up to three years on post-release control. In the past, all IPP participants were transitioned through halfway houses for 30 to 60 days. The new policy will utilize halfway house beds for those IPP participants who are determined to need them.⁷⁹ According to the FY 2002 Annual Report for ODRC Halfway Houses, 51 percent of offenders placed in a halfway house bed successfully completed the program, and 58 percent were employed at the time of discharge. In addition, in FY 2002, 71 percent of halfway house participants received substance abuse programming, 9 percent received mental health treatment, and 57 percent received employment assistance.⁸⁰

74 In addition, the ODRC currently contracts with three agencies to provide day reporting slots in three Ohio counties. Each agency offers a 45-day program that is utilized as a sanction or as a structured transition from prison to the community. In FY 2003, 138 offenders participated in day reporting programs. E-mail correspondence with Tyrone Reynolds, Coordinator, ODRC, Offender Services Network (September 2, 2003).

75 Telephone conversation with Linda Janes, Chief, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services, Bureau of Community Sanctions (August 5, 2003); and ODRC, Annual Report Fiscal Year 2002: Halfway House.

76 Telephone conversation with Linda Janes, Chief, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services, Bureau of Community Sanctions (August 5, 2003).

77 ODRC, Bureau of Research, 2001 Summary of Institution Statistics Report.

78 Telephone conversation with Linda Janes, Chief, ODRC, Division of Parole and Community Services, Bureau of Community Sanctions (August 5, 2003).

79 Ibid.

80 ODRC, Annual Report Fiscal Year 2002: Halfway House.

Where Are Released Prisoners Going?



The community context of prisoner reentry can have an important influence on post-release success or failure. It stands to reason that ex-prisoners returning to communities with high unemployment rates, limited affordable housing options, high crime rates, and few services are more likely to relapse and recidivate. In order to understand the community context of reentry in Ohio, it is first necessary to examine the geographic distribution of released inmates. This chapter presents findings from a geographic analysis of released inmates and examines this reentry distribution in relation to the socioeconomic characteristics of the areas with the highest percentage of released prisoners in 2001, as well as the characteristics of the prisoners who returned to these areas.

During 2001, 95 percent of all men and women released from Ohio prisons returned to communities in Ohio.¹ Seven of Ohio's 88 counties (Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Summit, Montgomery, Lorain, and Lucas) accounted for 62 percent of inmates released (figures 5-1 and 5-2). Those seven counties accounted for 45 percent of Ohio's population.² Aside from the seven counties noted above, no other county is home to more than 4 percent of released prisoners.

In other states, including Illinois and Maryland, the majority of released prisoners return to a single city that is the largest metropolitan area in the state.³ In Ohio, no one or two cities serve as the main population center of the state; rather, Ohio is home to several comparably-sized large cities. Ohio's largest city, Columbus, has just over 711,000 people, but five other cities in Ohio have populations of over 100,000 people. Cleveland is the largest of these second tier cities with a population of 478,403, Cincinnati and Toledo each have over 300,000 residents, and Akron (217,074) and

1 The results presented in this chapter were generated from two data files from the ODRC. The data files represent only the first release from prison for each inmate in calendar year 2001. In addition, the data files include post-incarceration addresses only for those inmates who are released to supervision (a small portion of the inmates who were released onto supervision did not have an address indicated in the data file). We had no source for post-incarceration addresses for inmates who were not released to supervision. As a result, for 40 percent of the 2001 release population for whom we did not have post-incarceration addresses, we used their pre-incarceration addresses from the ODRC data file as a close approximation. We can feel reasonably confident about this decision, at least as far as county- and city-level analyses are concerned, as we found that for prisoners whose pre- and post- incarceration addresses could be compared, over 70 percent had the same city or the same zip code or both. However, we were unable to validate the extent to which released prisoners returned to the same communities in which they lived prior to incarceration.

2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

3 In 2001, 53 percent of released prisoners in Illinois returned to Chicago and 59 percent of released prisoners in Maryland returned to Baltimore. See Nancy G. La Vigne and Cynthia A. Mamalian. *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute (2003).; and Nancy G. La Vigne and Vera Kachnowski. *A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute (2003).

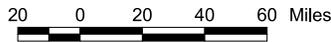
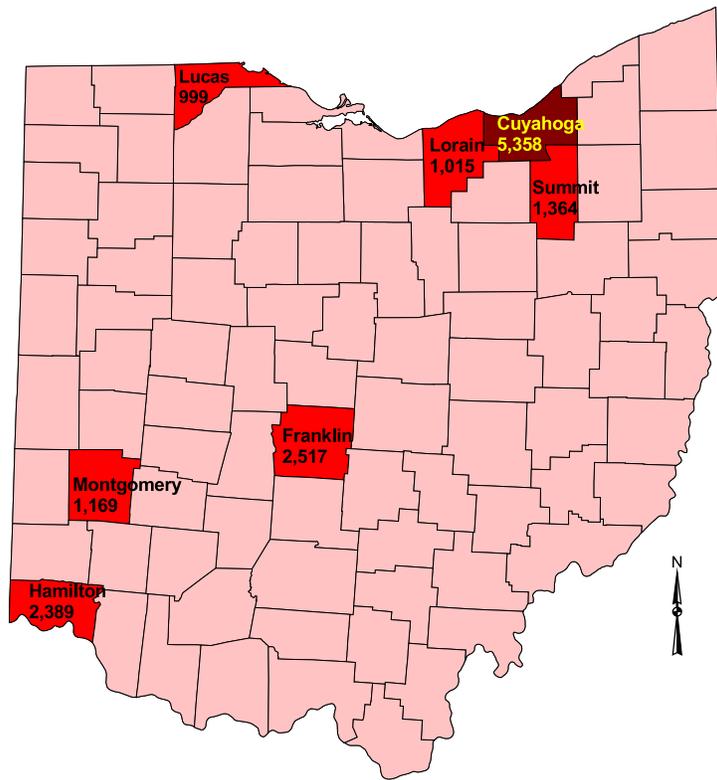


FIGURE 5-1. NUMBER OF PRISONER RELEASES BY OHIO COUNTY, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Ohio = 22,769; 415 or 1.8% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses.

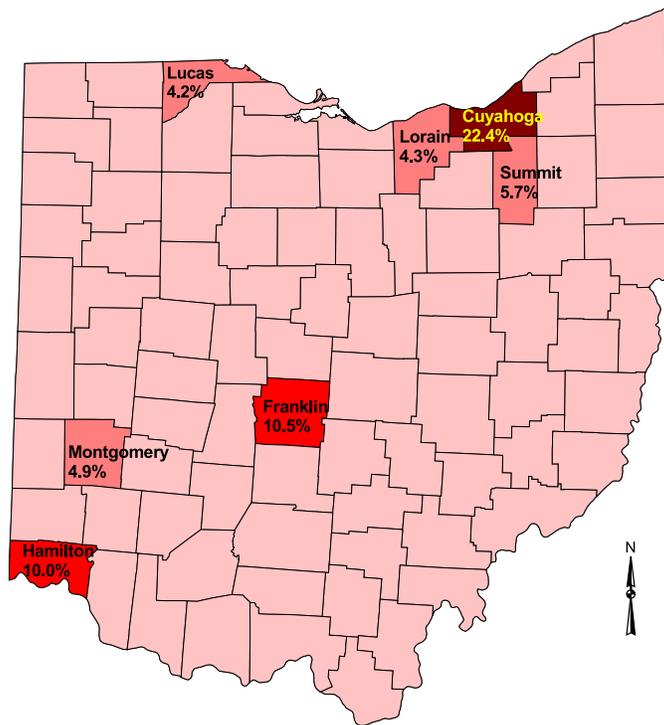
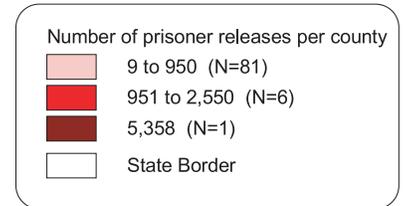
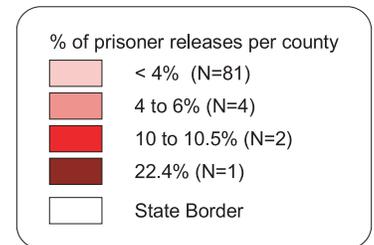


FIGURE 5-2. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONER RELEASES BY OHIO COUNTY, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Ohio = 22,769; 415 or 1.8% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses.



Dayton (166,179) round out the Ohio cities with over 100,000 people.⁴ Given the relatively broad distribution of Ohio's population across these cities as well as the rest of the state, it is not surprising that the population of released prisoners is more widely dispersed than in other states (figure 5-3).

Nonetheless, the concentrations of returns in several of Ohio's cities are significant and have important implications for the communities to which these prisoners return. For this report we focus our attention on Cuyahoga County, which had the highest share of returning prisoners in the state (22 percent), and on Cleveland, which is located in Cuyahoga County and is the city that received the highest percent of returning prisoners in the state (18 percent). Although Cleveland is not the largest municipality in Ohio, it has the highest rate of returning prisoners per 100,000 residents among the largest cities in the state (886 returning prisoners per 100,000 residents). Cleveland's rate of returning prisoners is roughly 2.5 times greater than that of Columbus (336 returns per 100,000 residents) and is higher than that of Cincinnati (687 returns per 100,000 residents).

4 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

PRISONER REENTRY IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY

With over 1,393,978 residents and covering an area of 458 square miles, Cuyahoga County is the 36th largest county in Ohio geographically, but the largest in terms of population. Twelve percent of Ohio's population resides in Cuyahoga County, which has the highest population density per square mile in the state. Two-thirds (67 percent) of the county residents are white,

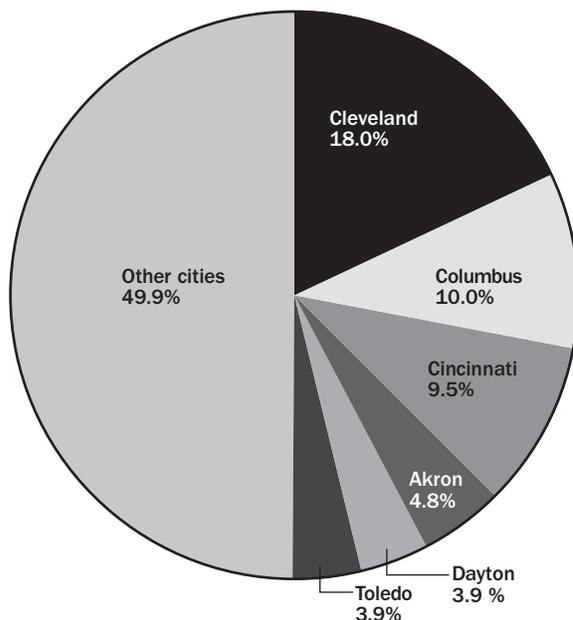


FIGURE 5-3. PERCENTAGE OF PRISONER RELEASES BY OHIO CITY OF RETURN, 2001

over one-quarter (27 percent) are African American, and 3 percent are Hispanic (of any race). Just over half (53 percent) of county residents are female, and the median age in 2000 was 37.3 years, with persons under the age of 18 accounting for nearly 25 percent of the total county population. Female-headed households with children under the age of 18 account for 9 percent of the county households, and the county is characterized by 34 percent renter-occupied housing and 7 percent vacant housing.⁵ In 2001, the largest proportion of admissions (25 percent) to Ohio prisons was from Cuyahoga County, as it had been for over a decade.⁶ Interestingly, Cuyahoga is the only major county in Ohio that does not have a Community Based Correctional Facility (CBCF). State-funded, but locally controlled, CBCFs are minimum-security facilities for non-violent felony offenders that serve as alternatives to prison incarceration.⁷ Without the alternative of a CBCF, Cuyahoga County likely sends more of its non-violent felons to state prison than do other counties.⁸ Correspondingly, the population of non-violent prisoners exiting state prison and returning to Cuyahoga County is likely larger than it would be if Cuyahoga County had a CBCF.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

⁶ ODRC, Bureau of Research, Commitment Reports.

⁷ ODRC, Annual Report Fiscal Year 2002: Bureau of Community Sanctions, Community Based Correctional Facilities.

⁸ Telephone conversation with Steve Van Dine, Chief, ODRC, Bureau of Research (October 27, 2003).

⁹ Racial distribution for releasees to Cuyahoga County: black (75.5 percent), white (21.0 percent), Hispanic (3.2 percent), and other (0.4 percent).

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Overview of Released Prisoners Who Returned to Cuyahoga County

In 2001, 5,358 released inmates returned to Cuyahoga County—3.8 per 1,000 residents. This group represents 22 percent of Ohio inmates released that year (figure 5-4). The majority of inmates released to Cuyahoga County were male (88 percent) and black (76 percent).⁹ Thirty-nine percent had been serving time for drug crimes, 22 percent for violent crimes, 12 percent for burglary and theft, and 9 percent for technical violations of their conditions of supervision. Released inmates who returned to Cuyahoga County had an average age of 31 years. Approximately 53 percent of released prisoners returning to Cuyahoga County had been incarcerated in the ODRC at least once before. A majority of inmates released to Cuyahoga County received a period of supervision (56 percent); the remaining 44 percent were discharged from prison with no post-release supervision requirements.

PRISONER REENTRY IN CLEVELAND

The city of Cleveland encompasses 78 square miles and is home to 478,403 residents. Of the city's almost one-half million residents, 11 percent of the work force is unemployed, 26 percent of all residents live below the federal poverty level, and 15 percent of households are female-headed and include children under the age of 18.¹⁰

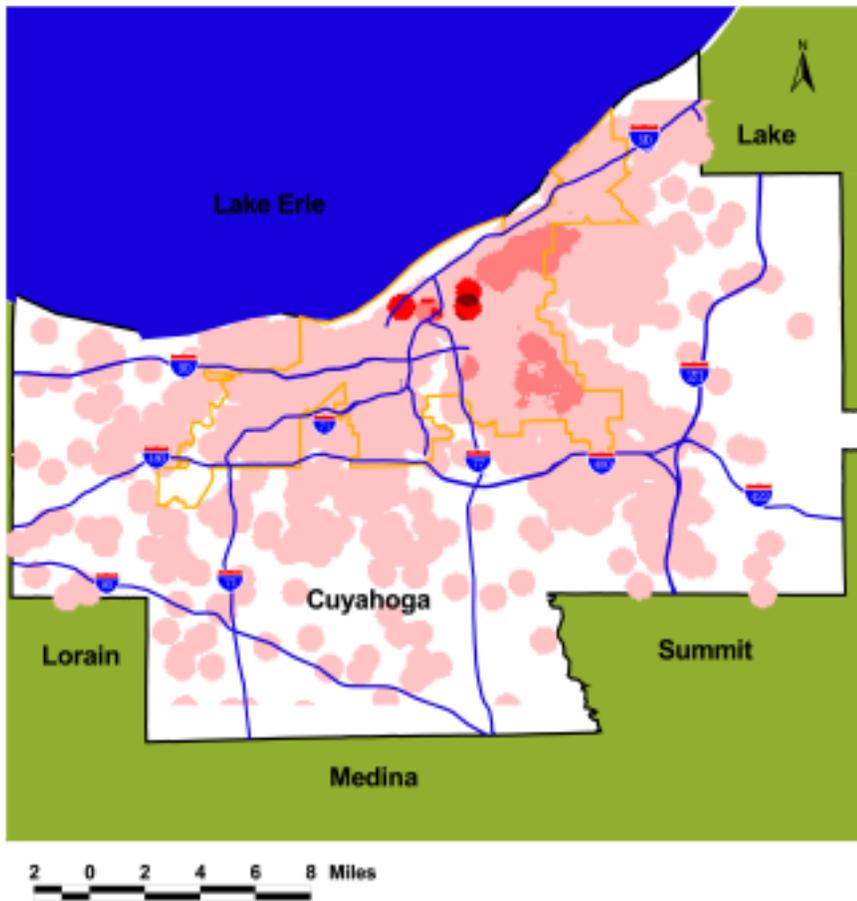
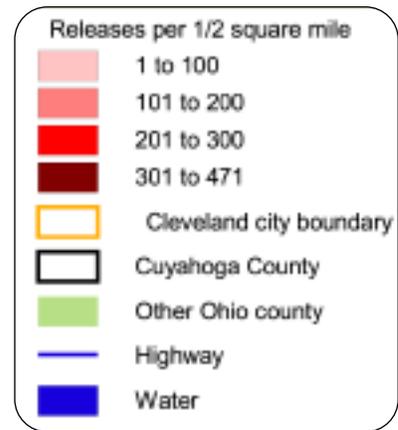


FIGURE 5-4. PRISONER RELEASE DENSITY IN CUYAHOGA COUNTY, OHIO, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Cuyahoga County = 5,358; 529 (or 9.9%) are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses.



Overview of Released Prisoners Who Returned to Cleveland

In 2001, of the 5,358 inmates released to Cuyahoga County, 4,237 (79 percent) were released to the city of Cleveland—8.9 per 1,000 residents. Within the Cleveland city boundary, released inmates are further concentrated within a few communities (figure 5-5); these concentrations will be explored in greater detail in the next section of this report. The majority of the prisoners who returned to Cleveland in 2001 were male (88 percent), and the average age was 31 years. About 78 percent of returning prisoners to Cleveland were black, while 18 percent were white. This reflects a different racial distribution than that of Cleveland residents overall (41 percent white, 51 percent black).

With regard to criminal histories, about 55 percent of released prisoners returning to Cleveland in 2001 had been incarcerated in an Ohio prison at least once before, which is slightly higher than the 44 percent of all inmates released in 2001 and 53 percent of inmates released to Cuyahoga County. Twenty-two percent of the inmates released to Cleveland in 2001 had been serving time for violent crimes and 10 percent for technical violations, while 40 percent had been incarcerated for drug crimes, which is higher than the 26 percent of all inmates released in 2001 who had been incarcer-

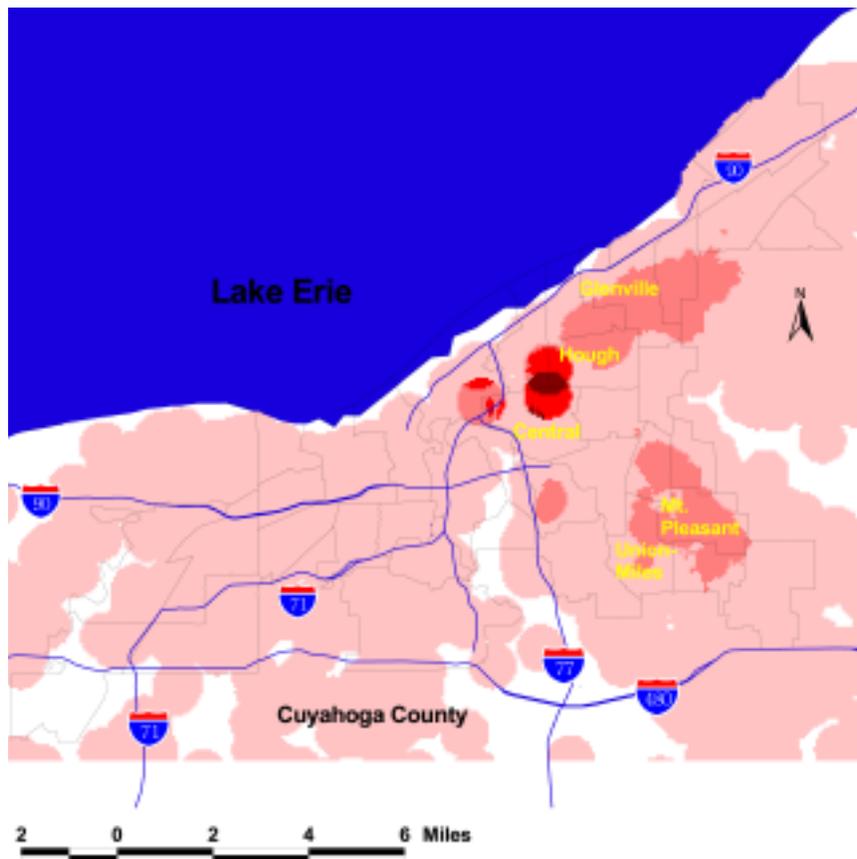


FIGURE 5-5. PRISONER RELEASE DENSITY IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Cleveland = 4,007; 356 or 9.1% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses. An additional 230 persons were released to county or city jails and are not shown on the map.



ated for drug crimes. Of those prisoners released to Cleveland, 65 percent had served less than one year in prison, and 12 percent had served one to two years. The majority of these inmates were released to a period of supervision (56 percent), with the remaining 44 percent being discharged from prison with no post-release supervision requirements.

Prisoner Reentry in Cleveland Communities

Prisoner reentry affects not only inmates who are returning home, but also the community to which they are returning. Conversely, the characteristics of the community to which released prisoners return may affect their reentry success. For instance, both the availability and cost of housing and the availability and proximity of jobs in a community may influence post-release outcomes for returning prisoners. In addition, availability and accessibility, or absence, of social services, such as health care and substance abuse treatment, are likely to affect reentry transition and subsequent recidivism.¹¹

In Cleveland, the highest numbers of releases are located in a few communities. Five of Cleveland's 36 communities—Hough, Central, Glenville, Mount Pleasant, and Union-Miles—accounted for 28 percent of prisoners

¹¹ See, for instance, K. Vigilante, M. Flynn, P. Affleck, et al. "Reduction in Recidivism of Incarcerated Women Through Primary Care, Peer Counseling, and Discharge Planning." *Journal of Women's Health*, 8 no. 3 (1999):409–415.; J. Kim, J. Rich, S. Zierler, et al. "Successful Community Follow-up and Reduced Recidivism in HIV Positive Women Prisoners." *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 4 no.1 (1997):5–17.; Kevin Haines. *After-care Services for Released Prisoners: A Review of the Literature*. Cambridge, U.K.: Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge (1990).

returning to Cleveland (figures 5-6, 5-7 and 5-8).¹² The Lee-Miles community also received a sizable number of returning prisoners, with 283 releasees representing 7 percent of all returns to the city. However, over two-thirds (69 percent) of the prisoners released to the Lee-Miles community went to a single address within Lee-Miles—the Cuyahoga County Jail. It is likely that many of these inmates were “released” to the jail to await trial on new charges. Given this anomaly in the data, Lee-Miles will not be included in the remainder of this section on reentry in Cleveland communities.

The return of released prisoners to these high-concentration communities is only half the story. The other half is the high rates of people being sent or returned to prison who come from these communities; such high concentrations of residents cycling in and out of prison may destabilize social networks and social relationships within neighborhoods. Some researchers suggest that communities with weakened social networks have less success promoting informal social control among residents, which may result in increased neighborhood crime, though little is known about this phenomenon.¹³

What we do know is that, in addition to being home to large numbers of returning prisoners, these high-concentration areas are among the Cleveland communities that are the most socially and economically disadvantaged. These communities are characterized by families living below the poverty level; moderate to high levels of vacant housing, unemployment, and female-headed households; and above average drug arrest rates. However, in 3 out of 5 of the communities, the number of renter-occupied housing units is below the city-wide mean, and the Part I crime rate in the same 3 communities is lower than the city-wide rate (figures 5-9 through 5-20).¹⁴

We describe below the five communities that received the highest number of returning prisoners in 2001. Figure 5-21 summarizes socioeconomic and crime data for those five communities, showing (1) percentage of vacant housing; (2) percentage of renter-occupied housing; (3) percentage of high

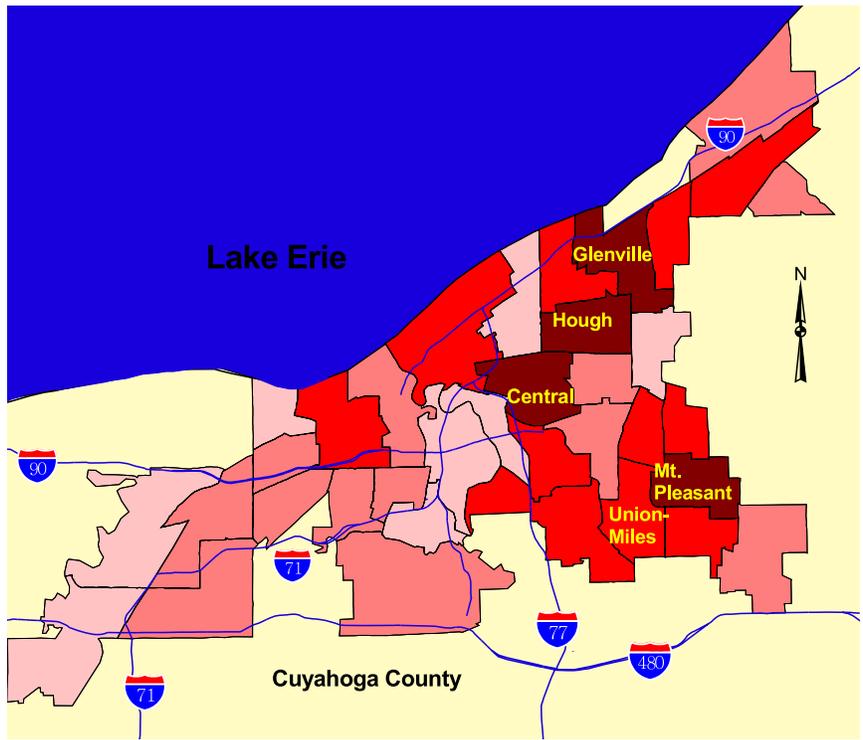
12 These five communities accounted for approximately 19 percent of the population of Cleveland. Numbers and percentages of releasees by community: Hough (283, 6.7 percent), Central (262, 6.2 percent), Glenville (225, 5.3 percent), Mount Pleasant (225, 5.3 percent), and Union-Miles (189, 4.5 percent).

13 Lynch and Sabol (2001); D. Rose and T. Clear “Incarceration, Social Capital, and Crime: Implications for Social Disorganization Theory.” *Criminology* 36 (1998): 441–79.; D. Rose and T. Clear. *Incarceration, Reentry, and Social Capital: Social Networks in the Balance*. In J. Travis, M. Waul (eds.) *Prisoners Once Removed: The Impact of Incarceration and Reentry on Children, Families, and Communities*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute (2003).

14 In the maps of Cleveland that display the percentage of various socio-economic and crime measures by community, the five communities to which the highest numbers of prisoners return are labeled. In addition, when other communities show relatively high percentages of the socioeconomic and crime measures, those communities are also labeled.

Community Area	Number of Returning Prisoners	Rate per 1,000 Residents
Hough	283	17.3
Central	262	21.6
Glenville	225	9.6
Mt. Pleasant	225	9.7
Union-Miles	189	12.2

FIGURE 5-6. NUMBERS AND RATES OF RELEASED PRISONERS TO CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES, 2001.

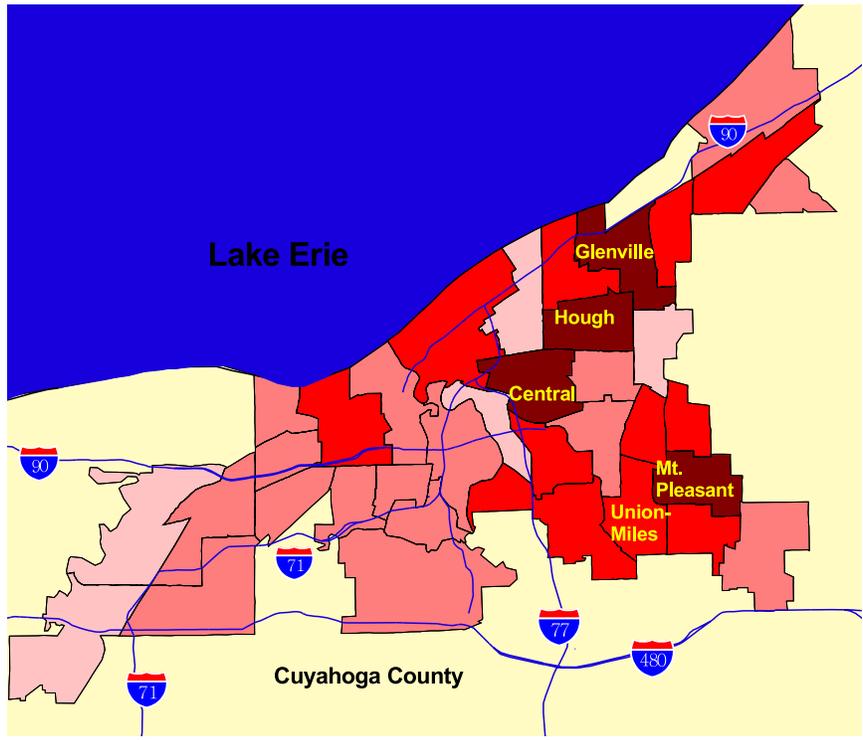
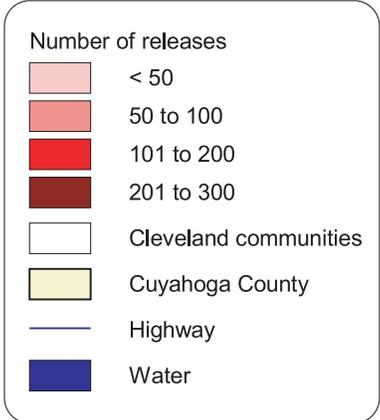


2 0 2 4 6 Miles

FIGURE 5-7. NUMBER OF PRISONER RELEASES BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Cleveland = 4,007; 458 or 11.4% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses. An additional 230 persons were released to county or city jails and are not shown on the map.

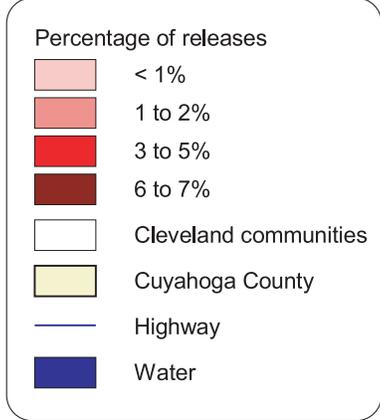


2 0 2 4 6 Miles

FIGURE 5-8. PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PRISONERS RELEASED TO CLEVELAND BY COMMUNITY, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Cleveland = 4,007; 458 or 11.4% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses. An additional 230 persons were released to county or city jails and are not shown on the map.



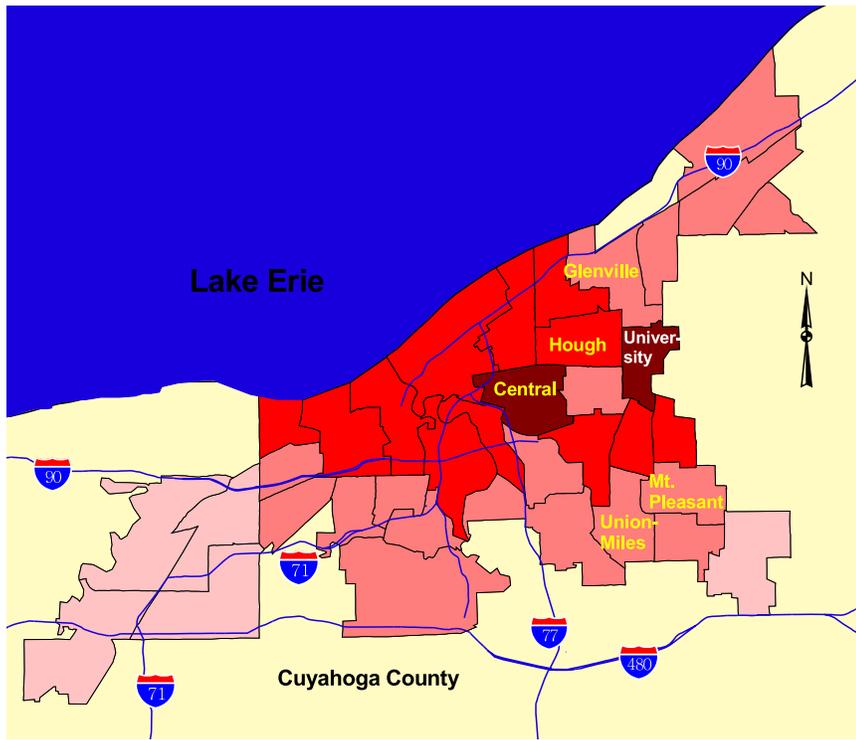
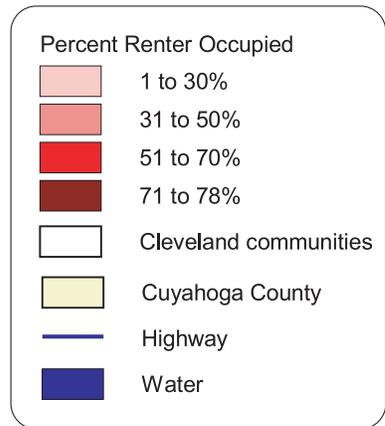


FIGURE 5-9. PERCENTAGE OF RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: The University community is shown on the map because it has the highest percentage of renter-occupied housing in Cleveland (78%).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING

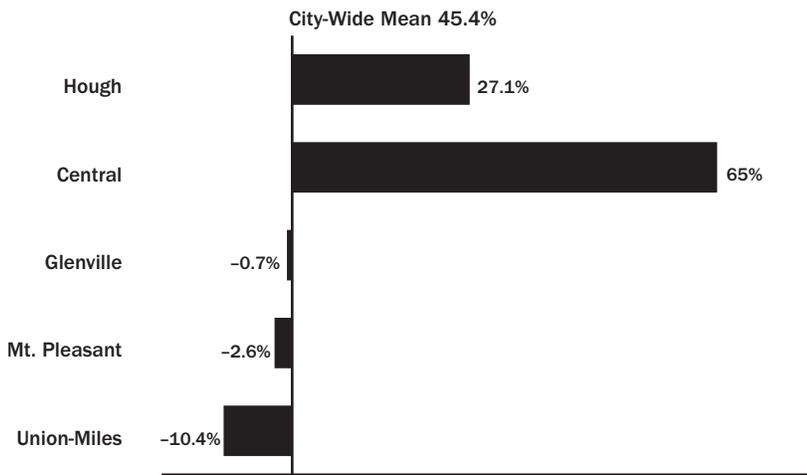


FIGURE 5-10. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING

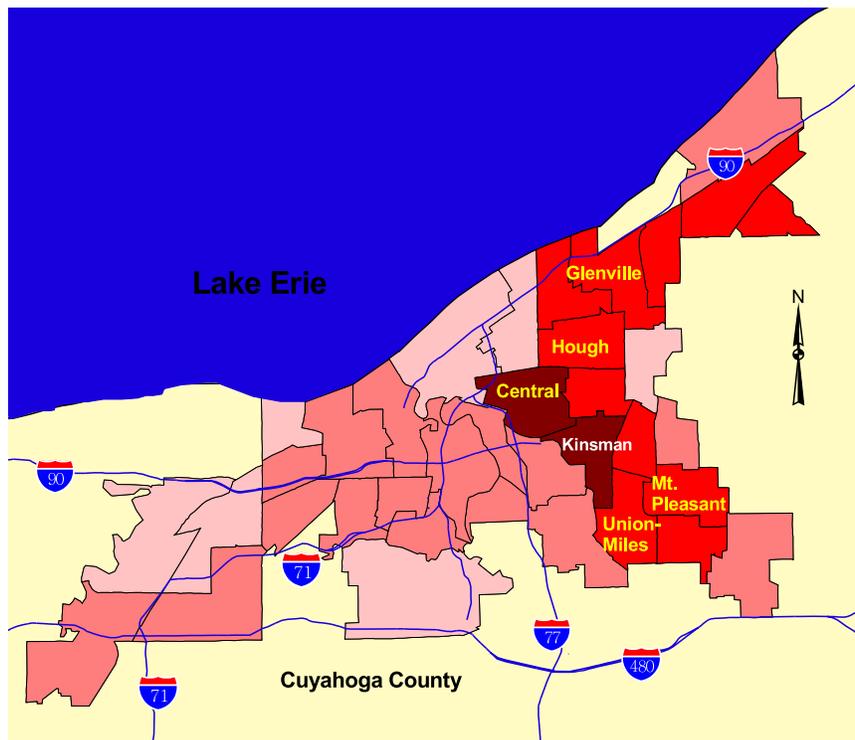
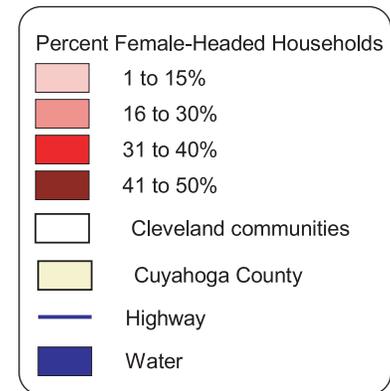


FIGURE 5-11. PERCENTAGE OF FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: The Kinsman community is shown on the map because it has the highest percentage of female-headed households in Cleveland (50%).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

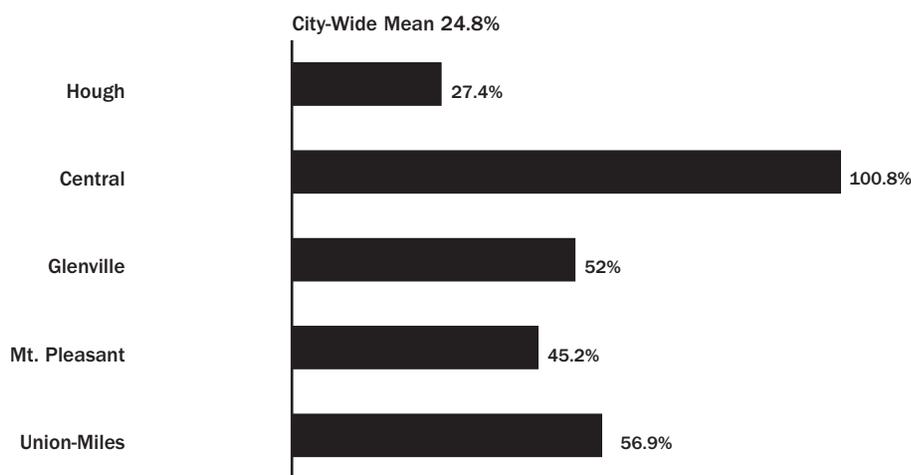


FIGURE 5-12. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

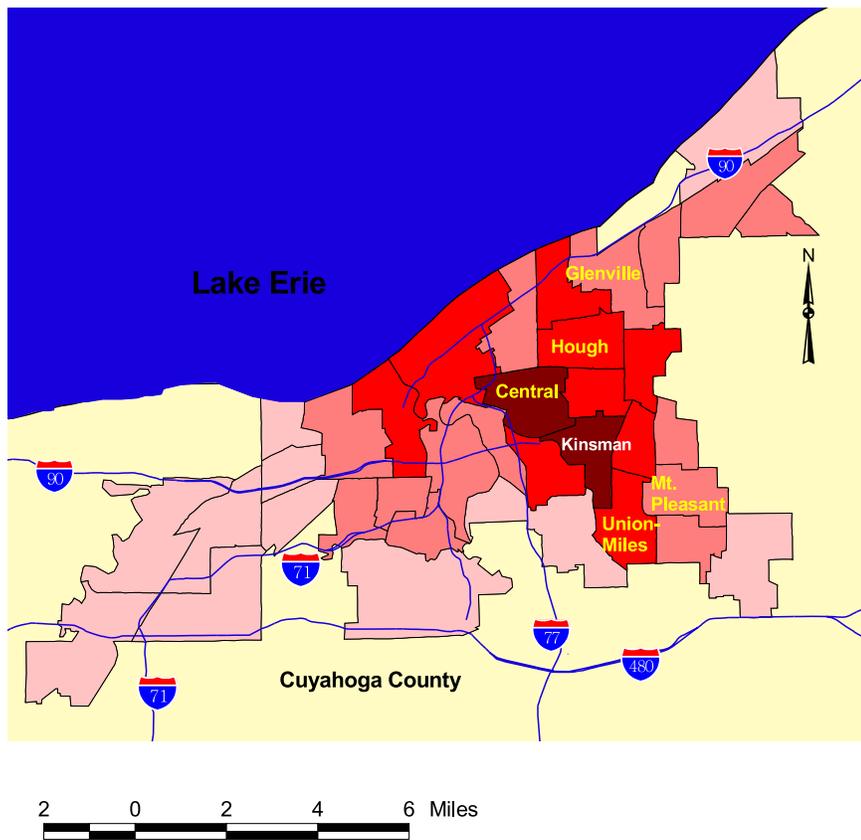
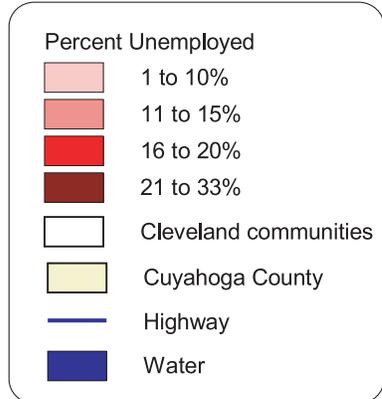


FIGURE 5-13. PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: The Kinsman community is shown on the map because it has one of the highest percentages of unemployed person in Cleveland (25%).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: UNEMPLOYMENT

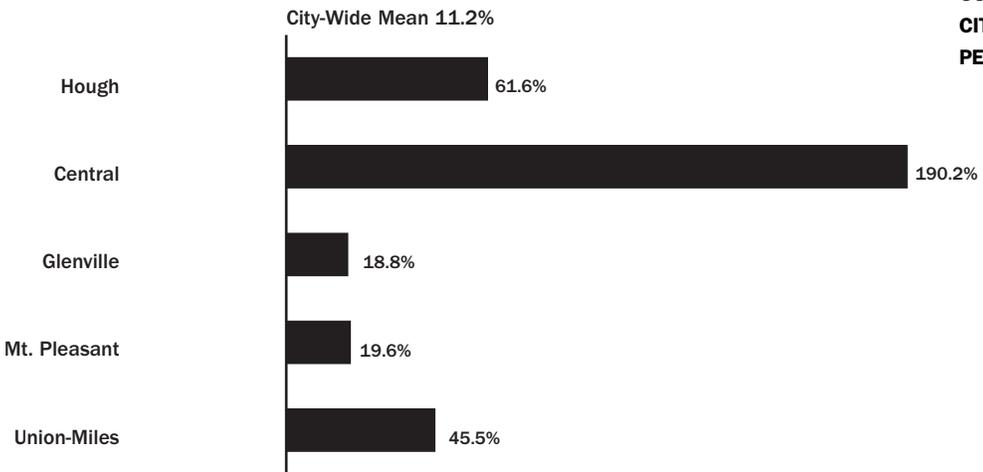


FIGURE 5-14. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: UNEMPLOYED PERSONS

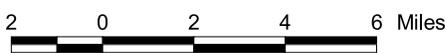
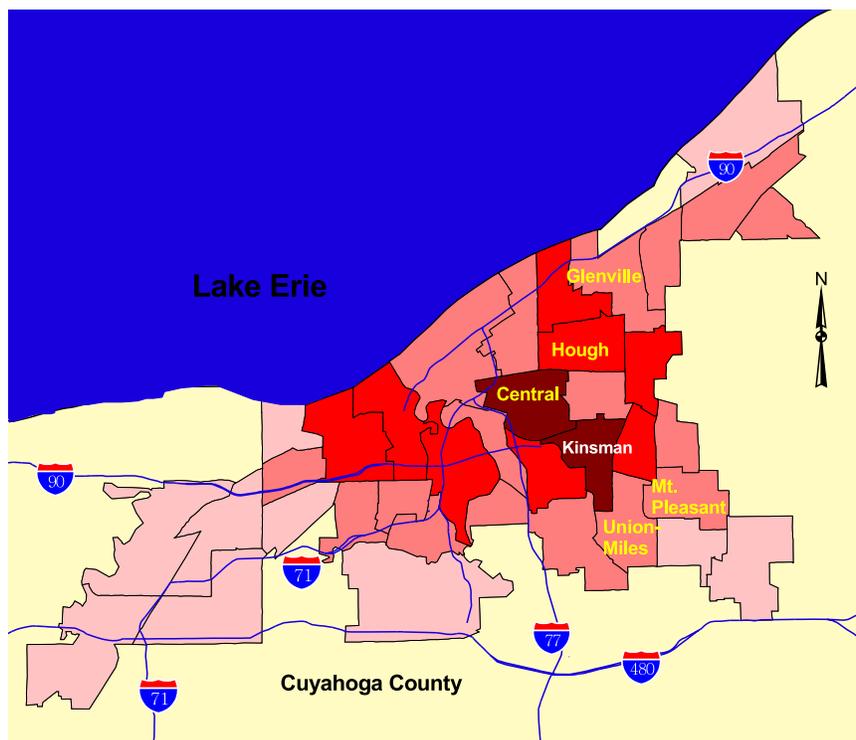
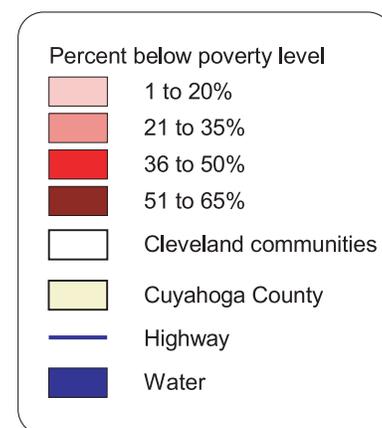


FIGURE 5-15. PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: The Kinsman community is shown on the map because it has one of the highest percentages of families below the poverty level in Cleveland (57%).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: PERSONS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

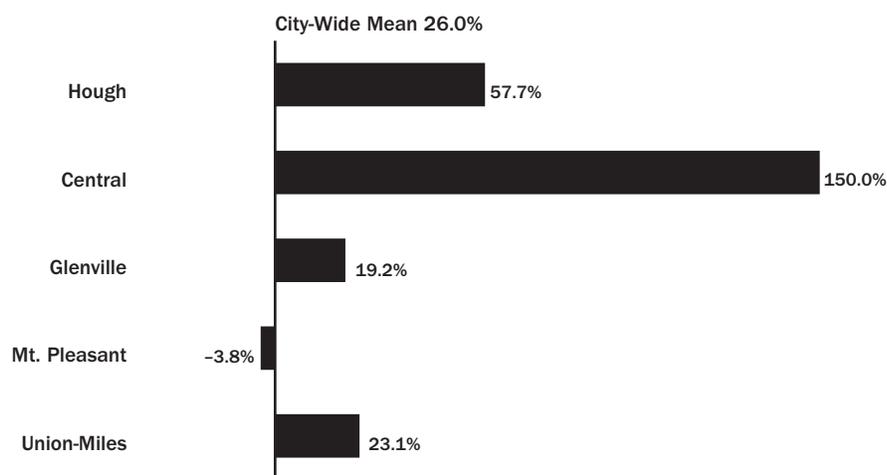


FIGURE 5-16. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: FAMILIES BELOW THE POVERTY LEVEL

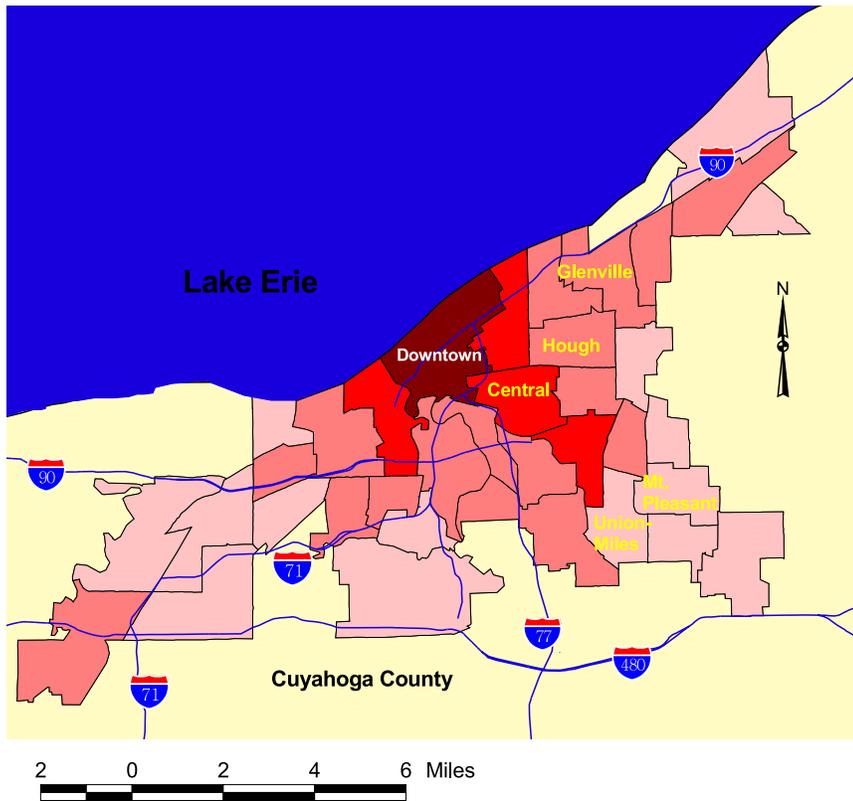
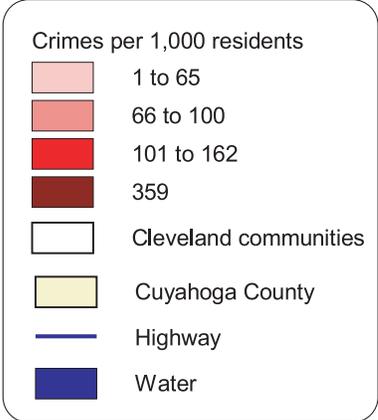


FIGURE 5-17. NUMBER OF PART I CRIMES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: Part 1 crimes include violent crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson).

The Downtown community is shown on the map because it has the greatest number of Part 1 crimes per 1,000 residents in Cleveland (359).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: PART I CRIME RATE



FIGURE 5-18. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: PART I CRIMES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

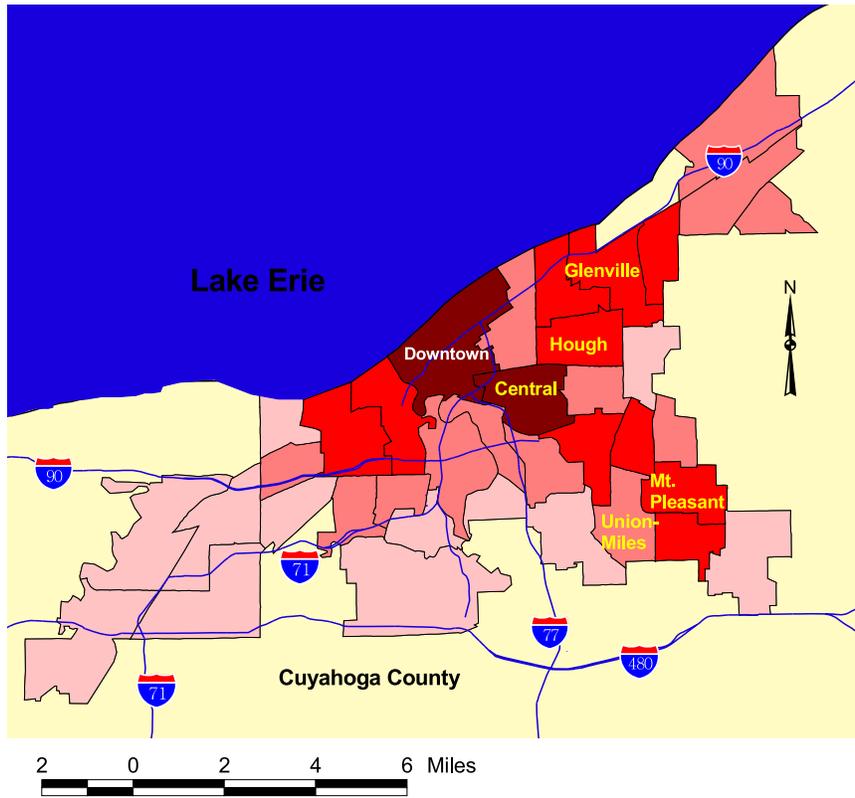
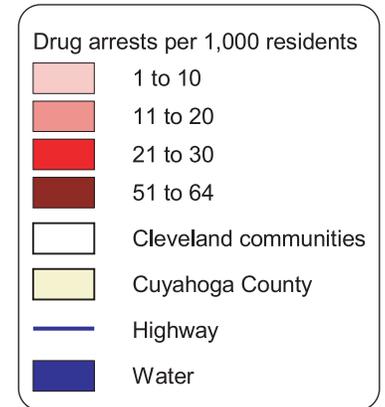


FIGURE 5-19. NUMBER OF DRUG ARRESTS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITY

Source: Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland OH; Generated using Cleveland Area Network for Data and Organizing (CANDO), <http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/cando.htm>.

Note: Drug arrests include arrests for possession and trafficking of illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, etc. No community had between 31 and 50 drug arrests per 1,000 residents.

The Downtown community is shown on the map because it has the greatest number of drug arrests per 1,000 residents in Cleveland (64).



PERCENT DIFFERENCE FROM CITY-WIDE MEAN: DRUG ARRESTS

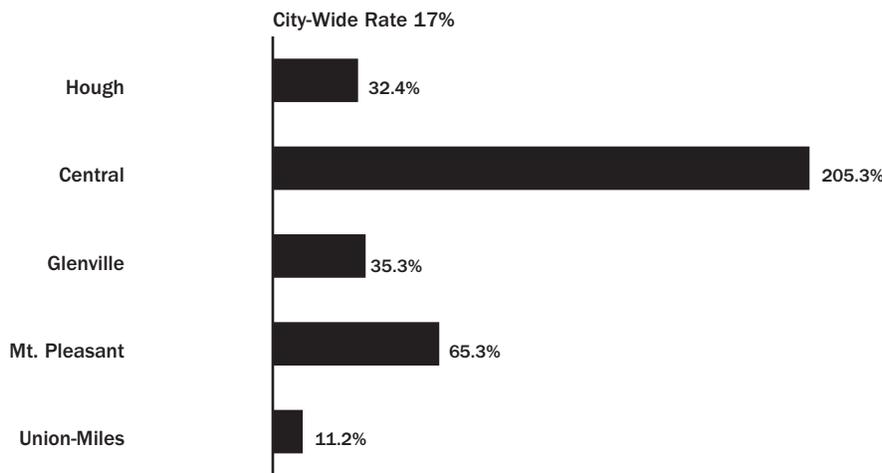


FIGURE 5-20. CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES COMPARED TO CITYWIDE MEAN: DRUG ARRESTS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

FIGURE 5-21. RANK OF FIVE HIGH CONCENTRATION AREAS AMONG 36 CLEVELAND COMMUNITY AREAS, BY DEMOGRAPHIC

Community Area	Vacant Housing	Renter-Occupied Housing	High School Graduates	Unemployment	Non-White	Female-Headed Households	Persons Below Poverty Level	Part I crime rate (per 1,000 residents)	Drug arrest rate (per 1,000 residents)
Hough	21.0%	57.7%	59.0%	18.1%	97.0%	31.6%	41.0%	84.6	22.5
% Different from city mean	79.5	27.1	-14.5	61.6	70.2	27.4	57.7	15.9	32.4
Central	18.4	74.9	55.0	32.5	94.0	49.8	65.0	107.9	51.9
% Different from city mean	57.3	65.0	-20.3	190.2	64.9	100.8	150.0	47.8	205.3
Glenville	14.3	45.1	67.0	13.3	98.0	37.7	31.0	72.8	23.0
% Different from city mean	22.2	-0.7	-2.9	18.8	71.9	52.0	19.2	-0.3	35.3
Mt. Pleasant	13.4	44.2	69.0	13.4	99.0	36.0	25.0	54.6	27.8
% Different from city mean	14.5	-2.6	0.0	19.6	73.7	45.2	-3.8	-25.2	63.5
Union-Miles	10.1	40.7	60.0	16.3	97.0	38.9	32.0	59.1	18.9
% Different from city mean	-13.7	-10.4	-13.0	45.5	70.2	56.9	23.1	-19.0	11.2
City average	11.7%	45.4%	69.0%	11.2%	57.0%	24.8%	26.0%	73.0	17.0

school graduates; (4) percentage of unemployment; (5) percentage of population that is nonwhite; (6) percentage of female-headed households (7) percentage of families below the poverty level; (8) Part I crime rates per 1,000 residents; and (9) drug arrest rates per 1,000 residents.¹⁵ As figure 5-21 shows, all of these neighborhoods are higher (or lower in the case of high school graduates) than the citywide average for these demographics, with the following exceptions: the percentage of vacant housing in Union-Miles is slightly lower than the city average, as is the percentage of renter-occupied housing in Glenville, Mount Pleasant, and Union-Miles. In Mount Pleasant the percentage of high school graduates is the same as the citywide average and the percentage of persons below the poverty level is slightly lower. Part I crime rates are lower than the citywide average in Glenville, Mount Pleasant, and Union-Miles, but the drug arrest rate is higher in all five communities.

15 Community-level demographic, socioeconomic status, and crime data for the 36 Cleveland neighborhoods were derived from the CANDO (Cleveland Area Network on Data and Organizing) database from the Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western Reserve University.

Hough

In 2001, 283 prisoners returned to the Hough community, which has a total population of 16,359 (17.3 per 1,000 residents). Forty-one percent of the residents of Hough live below the poverty level; the community has an 18 percent unemployment rate, which is 62 percent higher than the city average; and female-headed households account for 32 percent of the households in this area. The community is characterized by 21 percent vacant housing, which is 80 percent higher than the city average; and 58 percent of housing units are renter-occupied housing. Fifty-nine percent of its residents are high school graduates, and the population in this area is 97 percent black. Hough's Part I crime rate is 15 percent higher than the city average at 84.6 crimes per 1,000 residents. The drug arrest rate in Hough is 22.5 arrests per 1,000 residents, 32 percent higher than the city average.

Central

In 2001, 262 released prisoners returned to the Central community, which has a total population of 12,107 (21.6 per 1,000 residents). It is by far the most impoverished of the five communities described here; 65 percent of the residents in Central live below the poverty level, which is 150 percent higher than the city average; the community has a 33 percent unemployment rate, which is 190 percent higher than the city average; and female-headed households account for 50 percent of the households in this area, which is 101 percent higher than the city average. The community is characterized by 18 percent vacant housing, which is 57 percent higher than the city average, and by 75 percent renter-occupied housing. Fifty-five percent of its residents are high school graduates, and the population in this area is predominantly black, at 93 percent. Of the five communities described here, Central has the highest crime rate for both Part I crimes and drug arrests. The Part I crime rate exceeds the city average by 48 percent; the drug arrest rate is 51.9 arrests per 1,000 residents, which is 205 percent higher than the city average of 17.0 arrests.

Glenville

In 2001, 225 released prisoners returned to the Glenville community, which has a total population of 23,559 (9.6 per 1,000 residents). Thirty-one percent of the persons in Glenville live below the poverty level, which is 19 percent higher than the city average; the community has a 13 percent unemployment rate; and female-headed households account for 38 percent of the households in this area. The community is characterized by 14 percent vacant housing and 45 percent renter-occupied housing. Sixty-seven percent of its residents are high school graduates, which is 3 percent lower than the city average, and the population in this area is 98 percent black. With regard to crime, Glenville experienced serious crime at a nearly the same rate as the city average, but the drug arrest rate was 35 percent higher.

Mount Pleasant

In 2001, 225 released prisoners returned to the Mount Pleasant community, which has a total population of 23,197 (9.7 per 1,000 residents). Twenty-five percent of the residents of Mount Pleasant live below the poverty level, which is 4 percent lower than the city average; the community has a 13 percent unemployment rate, which is 20 percent higher than the city average; and female-headed households account for 36 percent of the households in this area, which is 45 percent higher than the city average. The community is characterized by 13 percent vacant housing, which is 15 percent higher than the city average, and by 44 percent renter-occupied housing. Sixty-nine percent of its residents are high school graduates, and the population in this area is predominantly black, at 98 percent. While Mount Pleasant's Part I crime rate, at 54.6 per 1,000 residents, is 25 percent lower than the citywide average, its drug arrest rate is 64 percent higher than the citywide average.

Union-Miles

In 2001, 189 released prisoners returned to the Union-Miles community, which has a total population of 15,464 (12.2 per 1,000 residents). Thirty-two percent of the persons in Union-Miles live below the poverty level, which is 23 percent higher than the city average; the community has a 16 percent unemployment rate, which is 46 percent higher than the city average; and female-headed households account for 40 percent of the households in this area, which is 57 percent higher than the city average. The community is

characterized by 10 percent vacant housing and 41 percent renter-occupied housing, both of which are lower than the city average. Sixty percent of its residents are high school graduates, and the population in this area is predominantly black, at 96 percent. The Part I crime rate in Union-Miles (59.1 per 1,000) is 19 percent below the city average, but the drug arrest rate at 18.9 per 1,000 residents is 11 percent higher.

Even within the five Cleveland communities that are home to the highest volumes of returning inmates, there are distinct concentrations of releases (figure 5-22). These concentrations may be indicative of dwelling units such as halfway houses, public housing and apartment complexes, or other more affordable housing units. These areas may also be the neighborhoods in which many released prisoners lived prior to incarceration.¹⁶ The area with the highest concentration of returning prisoners occurs in the northeast section of Cleveland, spanning the Hough, Central, and Goodrich-Kirkland Park communities. However, most of this concentration can be explained by the presence of City Mission, to which 161 of the 170 released prisoners in this three square-mile area went. Another five prisoners were released to the

¹⁶ As indicated in footnote 1, we used the pre-incarceration addresses as proxies for the post-incarceration addresses of 40 percent of the prisoners released.

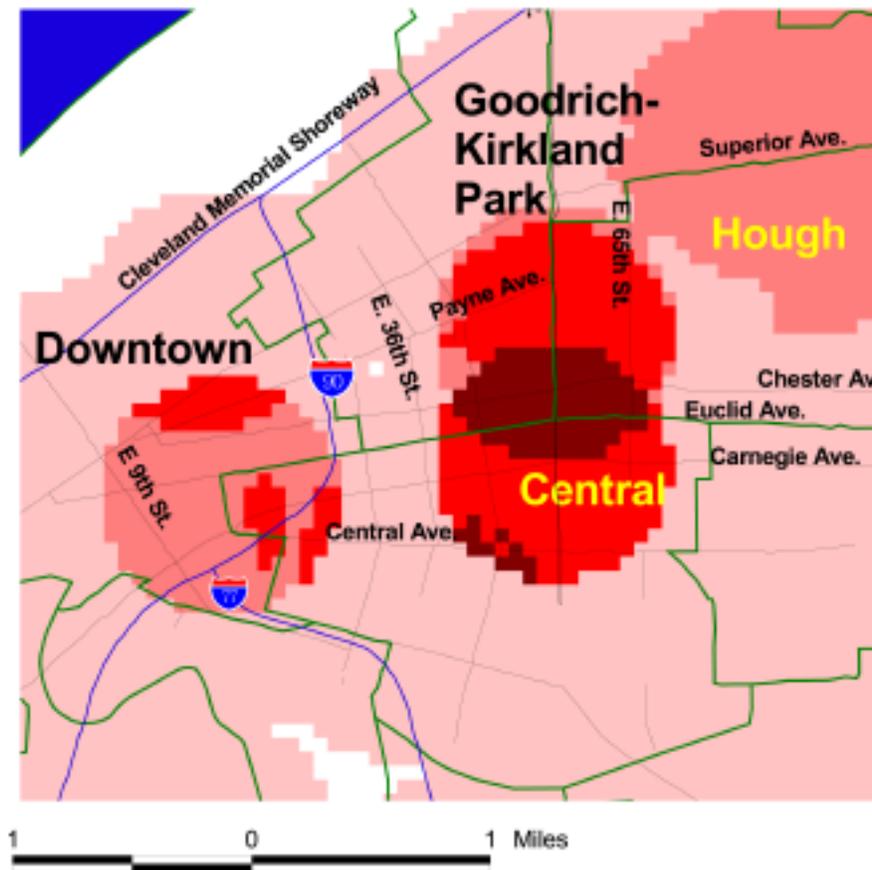
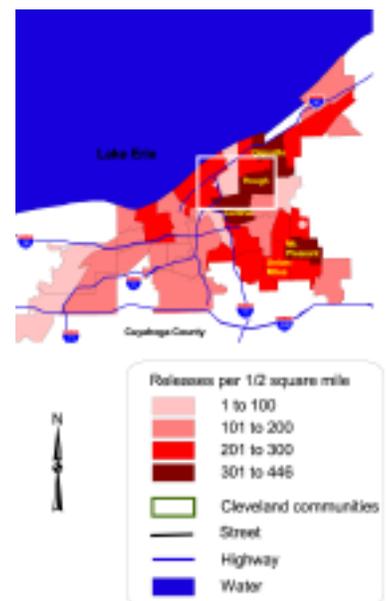


FIGURE 5-22. PRISONER RELEASE DENSITY, NORTHEAST CLEVELAND, OHIO

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

Note: Total releases to Cleveland = 4,007; 356 or 9.1% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses. an additional 230 persons were released to county or city jails and are not shown on the map.



Salvation Army on East Euclid Avenue. It is important to note that the presence of halfway houses and transition centers can often skew the picture of where released prisoners are concentrated.

SERVICES FOR RETURNING PRISONERS IN CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES

The profiles of these five neighborhood areas suggest that they are some of the most disadvantaged areas in the city, with relatively scarce economic and human capital resources.¹⁷ Perhaps it is not surprising that these communities are home to returning prisoners, but this raises important policy questions with regard to their ability both to provide resources to ex-prisoners and to insulate against the potential negative impact of returning prisoners. As shown in figure 5-23, 31 percent of the organizations that provide a range of services to former prisoners—employment, housing, drug and/or alcohol treatment, or some combination of these support services—fell within the five neighborhoods that are home to Cleveland’s highest numbers of returning prisoners. Our inventory, which may not include the universe of services for returning prisoners in the city, nonetheless did not identify any services located within the Union-Miles neighborhood (figure 5-23). In those neighborhoods with services, it is unclear whether returning prisoners are aware of the services that are available to them, and it is unknown whether the service organizations in and around these communities can meet the demand of the numbers of returning prisoners. In addition, the fact that there are no services located within the Union-Miles neighborhood suggests that transportation challenges may be a significant barrier to taking advantage of programs and assistance that might smooth the reintegration process.

17 Reentry-type services in Cleveland were identified as follows: we obtained a list of Cleveland-based social service agencies from a database maintained by the United Way; we generated a list of organizations (e.g., Cleveland Works) through searching the internet for ex-offender services; and we also contacted Mark Paulus of Community Connection in Lima, Ohio who gave us access to the Community Connection database of service providers for ex-offenders. This process generated a total of 107 social service organizations in Cleveland that are available to ex-prisoners. The types of services they provide were categorized as follows: comprehensive, drug/alcohol treatment, employment, housing, housing/employment, counseling/mentoring, and other services.

FIGURE 5-23. SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR HOUGH, CENTRAL, GLENVILLE, AND MT. PLEASANT COMMUNITIES

Community	Number and Percent of Social Service Providers	Type of Social Service
Hough	10 (9.3 %)	Comprehensive (3), substance abuse treatment (3), other (2), housing (1), and counseling/mentoring (1)
Central	19 (17.8 %)	Comprehensive (5), other (5), employment (4), housing (2), counseling/mentoring (1), housing/employment (1), and substance abuse treatment (1)
Glenville	3 (2.8 %)	Other (2), and housing (1)
Mt. Pleasant	1 (0.9%)	Housing/employment (1)

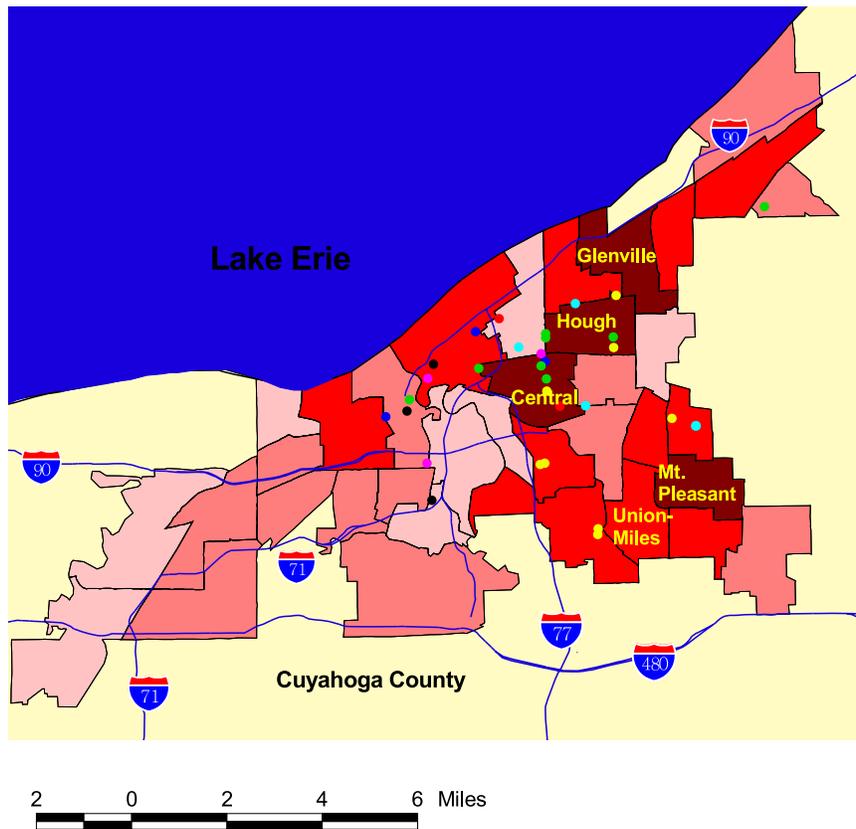
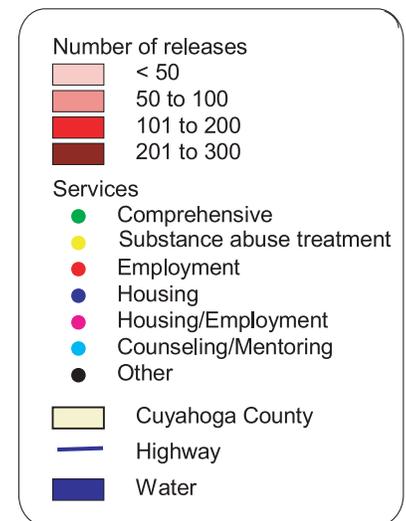


FIGURE 5-24. PRISONER RELEASES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BY CLEVELAND COMMUNITIES, 2001

Source: Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction; United Way Services web site, <http://www.linktohelp.org>; Community Connection Ohio Community Justice Resource Directory at <http://www.communityconnectionohio.com>.

Total releases in Cleveland = 4,007; 458 or 11.4% are not shown on the map because of incomplete addresses. An additional 230 persons were released to county or city jails and are not shown on the map.



Summary



As the size of the Ohio prison population has increased over the past two decades, so too has the number of inmates being released from prison. Thus, more and more released prisoners are faced with the challenges of reentry, including finding jobs, housing, and substance abuse treatment; reuniting with family; and reintegrating into the community. Given the increasing number of released prisoners and the fact that they return in higher concentrations to certain communities in the state, the impact of reentry on those communities can be a particularly pressing problem. Clearly, prisoner reentry is an important policy issue—one that has significant implications for public safety and quality of life across the state—and one that many agencies, organizations, and community leaders in Ohio have made it a priority to address. This summary chapter highlights the key findings of the report, raises additional questions with regard to reentry in Ohio, and describes future research efforts that will help to answer those questions.

HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past two decades, the growth in prison populations nationwide has translated into more and more people being released from prison and reentering society. The state of Ohio has experienced similar incarceration and release trends, and thus faces the reentry challenges that accompany such growth. Between year-end 1982 and mid-1998, Ohio's prison population nearly tripled from 17,147 to 49,029. These years of sustained growth

are attributable to increased admissions largely due to substantial increases in the number of drug offenders admitted to prison and increases in serious violent crime, as well as to longer time served, especially for the most serious offenders. After Ohio's prison population peaked in 1998, it declined for the next three years to 44,868 in 2001. These declines can largely be explained by changes in sentencing laws and parole guidelines that led to a surge in the number of prisoners released in the late 1990s.

In 2002, 25,624 inmates were released from Ohio prisons, three times the number released in 1982. Over 70 percent of those inmates exited prison via mandatory release at the expiration of their sentences, up from just over 50 percent in 1992 and from less than 1 percent in 1982. The sentencing law changes that altered *how* inmates were released from prison also impacted the proportion of inmates released to supervision in the community. In 1982, virtually all inmates exited prison to supervision, dropping to around 50 percent in 1987 and to approximately one-third in 1996. With the implementation of Senate Bill 2 in Ohio in mid-1996, however, the tide turned and the number of prisoners released to supervision quickly grew. In 2002, approximately 60 percent of inmates received post-release supervision. After inmates are released from prison, whether they receive a term of supervision or not, many of them return to prison having committed new crimes or technical violations of their conditions of supervision. An increase in Ohio's rate of return to prison in the late 1990s appears to have leveled off in the last few years. Monitoring changes in the rate of ex-prisoners returning to prison can be important to understanding a state's reentry challenges.

Of the inmates released from Ohio prisons in 2001, the vast majority were male (89 percent) and just over half were black (53 percent). Nearly three-quarters were between the ages of 20 and 39 at the time of their release, with the mean age of all releases being 33 years. Similar proportions of the 2001 release population had served time for a drug offense (26 percent) and for a vio-

lent offense (23 percent), while 12 percent had been returned to prison for a technical violation they committed while on post-release supervision. Excluding technical violators, close to two-thirds (62 percent) of the release cohort served one year or less in prison; the average time served for the 2001 release population (again, excluding technical violators) was 2.0 years. Released prisoners have many needs as they begin the process of reintegration, and the likelihood of recidivating is fairly high. A little under half (44 percent) of Ohio's released inmates in 2001 had served prior terms in the ODRC; within one year of release, 17 percent of the inmates had been returned to an Ohio prison.

To assist prisoners in preparing for the transition from prison to the community, the ODRC has committed to transforming many of its processes and programs to incorporate the concepts and goals of successful prisoner reentry. The comprehensive changes include a new series of assessment tools given to inmates upon admission to the ODRC, a new structure of management teams to monitor an inmate's progress toward reentry accountability plan (RAP) goals, enhancements to programming in the institutions—including an expanded release preparation program—and increased collaboration with other governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, and family members of prisoners. An important component of the ODRC's reentry strategy is the provision of a wide range of programs in the institutions, including educational and vocational programs, substance abuse treatment and education, physical and mental health treatment and counseling, sex offender programming, and a variety of programs that incorporate the goals of restorative justice. In addition, the ODRC, through its Adult Parole Authority and through its contracts and partnerships with other government agencies and community service providers, links released prisoners to services in the community in an effort to ensure continuity of care. The fact that the ODRC has launched a new reentry strategy is promising and suggests that those prisoners released in the future will be better prepared for their return home.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that not all current inmates receive the full-range of institutional and post-release programming and that the new reentry strategy and the release preparation program are not yet fully implemented.

Prisoners exiting the ODRC are not predominantly concentrated in one city, but are spread fairly broadly across the major population centers as well as other portions of the state. The Ohio city to which the largest share (18 percent) of ODRC inmates returned in 2001 was Cleveland, with 28 percent of those inmates returning to 5 of Cleveland's 36 communities: Hough, Central, Glenville, Mount Pleasant, and Union Miles. These five communities are generally characterized by higher levels of poverty, crime, and other measures of disadvantage than the average Cleveland community. While these community characteristics pose additional challenges for returning prisoners, government leaders and community organizations are beginning to recognize that attention should be given to the community dimension of reentry.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

This report represents the first stage of our research on reentry in Ohio and raises a number of questions that will be answered in later phases of our study. While we know much from our analysis of a cohort of released inmates in Ohio, there is much more to be learned. Additional knowledge can provide valuable guidance to practitioners and policymakers as they prepare to expand reentry efforts in the state.

We know, for example, that the largest share of prisoners released in Ohio return to the city of Cleveland and that returning prisoners are even more concentrated within a few community areas in the city. An examination of the demographic data for these areas indicates that they are economically disadvantaged

compared to the city average. What we do not know from this research, however, is how these community characteristics might affect individual post-release outcomes. For example, are released prisoners returning to high-crime areas more likely to recidivate than those returning to areas in which the crime rate is closer to the city average?

Very little is known about the family circumstances of released prisoners or about the role that family play in either facilitating or preventing recidivism. This information would be useful in developing and enhancing the content of family reunification and family-centered programs both behind bars and on the outside. It could also help guide counseling efforts aimed at encouraging ex-prisoners to establish or renew relationships with pro-social, rather than antisocial, peers.

In addition, we do not know much about the different types of reentry challenges that different populations might face. For example, youthful ex-prisoners are likely to have different issues and challenges than their older counterparts. Similarly, employment issues are probably different for those who have served long prison terms than those who served shorter terms. Reentry challenges experienced by women, who often have different and more pressing family issues, are likely to differ from those of men. Identifying the characteristics for subpopulations of released prisoners will aid in designing programs that target individuals' needs.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This report is the first product of a larger study, *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry*, which is examining prisoner reentry in four states. Many of the unanswered questions described above, among others, will be explored through other components of the Returning Home Ohio study, including interviews with inmates returning to

Cuyahoga County both before and after their release and interviews with inmates' family members after inmates are released. These interviews are critical to understanding the individual, family, and community circumstances affecting reentry.

Such interviews, combined with analyses of official records, will help to identify the needs of returning inmates that are not currently being met, such as housing, employment, and health care. The longitudinal aspect of this study will help practitioners prioritize programs by focusing on some of these needs before others. For example, we may learn that for certain types of ex-prisoners, enrolling in an outpatient substance abuse program within the first 30 days after release is more important than finding a job. We may discover that some returning prisoners find a job too early, before they have become accustomed to life on the outside, making it difficult to keep the job while managing other pressures of reentry. Such findings can help institutional and regional parole staff better prepare inmates for release and support them after release.

Interviews with family members may help to identify factors that have a bearing on the returning inmate's ability to stay drug- and crime-free. For example, we may find that family support in drug rehabilitation is an important predictor of an inmate's staying off drugs after release from prison, suggesting the expansion of drug treatment programs that include family member involvement. These family interviews will also enable us to explore the role that expectations—on the part of both the inmate and the family member—may have on the inmate's reintegration experience.

Returning Home also explores the role of community setting and organizations on prisoner reentry through an assessment of local community resources, assets, and risks; analyses of community administrative and census data; interviews with community stakeholders; and focus groups with community residents. Interviews with community stakeholders will shed light on gaps in local

resources available to returning prisoners, particularly in the areas of heaviest concentrations of returning inmates. Neighborhood focus groups can inform grassroots efforts to support returning inmates (e.g., helping them find housing and jobs, and offering child care services). And, by linking individual data on released inmates to data on neighborhood indicators, we can begin to explore the influence that community characteristics may have on post-release success or failure.

A second project is underway in Ohio to explore the nexus between prisoner reentry and public health. With funding from the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati, the Urban Institute is now launching a study of the ways that prisoners with demonstrated mental and physical health issues do or do not connect to community health care providers when they return home. The research design includes: one-on-one interviews with 80 male prisoners 60 to 90 days before their release from prison; a series of focus groups with these 80 ex-prisoners 60-90 days after their release from prison; and focus groups with health care and social service providers in Hamilton County (Cincinnati). The sample of 80 prisoners, all of whom are returning to Hamilton County, will be drawn to reflect a range of health conditions, based on the ODRC's medical and mental health classification system. The focus will be chronic and infectious diseases, and mental illness. The pre-release interviews will concentrate heavily on the prisoners' health histories, current health statuses, and planning for their return to the community after release from prison, with specific attention on their health care needs. The focus groups with community social service and health care providers will concentrate on service capacity, discharge planning, community linkages and service integration for returning prisoners.

It is clear that the challenges of reentry in Ohio are great, but so are the opportunities. The fact that the ODRC has made such a strong commitment to focusing on reentry from the very start of a prisoner's term of

incarceration and to establishing partnerships and contracts for service provision for ex-prisoners in the community, along with the fact that the federal government has awarded the state of Ohio nearly \$2 million to develop and implement a reentry program for high-risk, violent offenders returning to three Ohio counties are extremely promising. As Ohio expands its reentry

efforts, the Urban Institute is preparing to release reports and policy papers, as well as to convene a forum of practitioners and policymakers to discuss the results of the *Returning Home* study. We hope that this report and the *Returning Home* research can help to shape decisions about the best ways to serve the state's citizens, communities and returning prisoners.

Returning Home Research Questions

Returning Home's two primary research questions are **What is the experience of those being released from prison and returning home?** and **What factors influence a released prisoner's propensity to reoffend?** The first research question is primarily descriptive and qualitative in nature. We plan to document and describe the individual reentry trajectory—from prison release, to early entry, to reconnection, to full integration in society—exploring critical stages of integration and the role of individual life events, family support, community context, and state sentencing and release policies in this trajectory. The second research question is predictive in nature and is supported by ancillary questions, including the following:

- How do individual characteristics (e.g., demographics, family and criminal history, psychological attributes, life events, health and substance abuse status, and attitudes and beliefs) affect post-release criminal behavior?
- How does family support (emotional and financial) affect post-release criminal behavior?

- How do in-prison experiences (both formal and informal) affect post-release criminal behavior?
- How do an individual's post-release supervision status and conditions of release (if any) affect post-release criminal behavior?
- How do peer relationships affect post-release criminal behavior?
- How do community factors (e.g., economic viability, housing availability, social service delivery, crime rates, and social capital) affect post-release criminal behavior?

We also plan to explore intermediate outcomes that represent positive post-prison adjustment and can, in turn, affect recidivism. Examples include acquiring and maintaining a job, obtaining and paying for housing, and remaining substance abuse free.



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