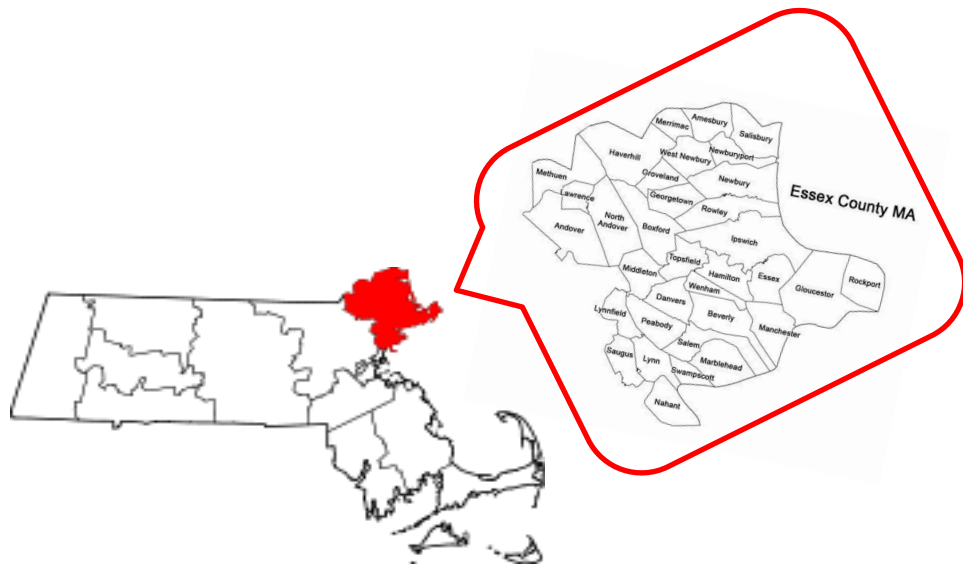


Essex County Sheriff's Department

Kevin F. Coppinger, Sheriff



2015 One-Year Recidivism



March 2017

Data Collected: January - December 2016

Inmates Released: January - December 2015

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**Essex County Sheriff's Department
Mission Statement**

The Essex County Sheriff's Department's top priority is to protect residents in the region from criminal offenders.

This is accomplished by:

- ★ Housing inmates in a secure and fair manner.
- ★ Providing rehabilitation and academic training to offenders while they are incarcerated, so they will not repeat their mistakes once they are released.
- ★ Practicing correctional policies that comply with all local, state and federal laws.
- ★ Using innovative correctional approaches that are in accord with the Essex County Sheriff's Department's top mission.
- ★ Informing and educating the public about the Department through the media, tours of the facility and public appearances by the Sheriff, administrators, K-9 Unit, and uniformed personnel.

**Research and Statistics Division
Mission Statement**

The Research and Statistics Division of the Essex County Sheriff's Department strives to remain on the cutting edge of data collection, analysis, and presentation. Through diligence, integrity and attention to detail the division will provide relevant and highly reliable information.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sheriff Kevin F. Coppinger is no stranger to the criminal justice system and his reputation for helping those in need preceded him as he joined the Essex County Sheriff's Department (ECSD). Sheriff Coppinger took over the helm at ECSD after a successful 33 year career with the Lynn Police Department; serving his last seven years as Chief. His law enforcement background, combined with his knowledge of Essex County has elevated ECSD as it continues to be on the forefront in corrections, programs, detoxification and reintegration practices. Welcome Sheriff Coppinger.

ECSD OVERVIEW

Sheriff Coppinger was inaugurated in January 2017. He and the ECSD staff stress the importance of educational courses and reintegration programs as key values of the Essex County Sheriff's Department. To that end, each employee realizes that he or she is charged with providing excellent care and custody of inmates. ECSD proudly serves the 34 communities and 800,000 people of Essex County. ECSD staff operates three correctional facilities.

Superintendent Michael Marks oversees the Middleton medium-security facility for men, which houses approximately 1,100 inmates. This number includes pre-trial inmates, individuals held overnight or a weekend for local or state police departments (i.e. safe-keeps) and sentenced inmates who do not qualify to be housed in the Department's minimum-security facility. The Middleton facility also houses both female and male detox units as well as a temporary detainment area for female inmates.

Superintendent Aaron Eastman oversees the Essex County Pre-release and Re-entry Center (ECPRC), which is ECSD's minimum-security facility for men. It houses inmates with less serious records as well as those who are approaching the end of their sentences and have earned the privilege of being transferred to the lower-security facility. The facility houses approximately 300 sentenced and 40 pre-trial inmates and supervises approximately 75 men on electronic monitoring. The ECPRC staff's primary mission is to provide reintegration services for inmates through a "step-down" process.

Assistant Superintendent Kerri Rowe oversees the Women in Transition (WIT) facility in Salisbury, which is a female minimum-security facility that houses approximately 24 women. The WIT is also responsible for another 24 women on electronic monitoring bracelets, all of whom have been transferred from MCI Framingham.

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, & REPORT DETAILS

This report presents the one-year recidivism rate for sentenced inmates released in 2015. Recidivism is considered by ECSD to be a conviction, new arraignment or probation/parole violation occurring within one year of an inmate's release. This report also details employment, education, housing, family structure, substance use, program involvement and inmates' opinions of certain aspects of the Essex County Sheriff's Department. A predominant goal of the Department is to help inmates stay out of jail or prison in the future.

Method

Information for this report was gathered from ECSD's Sheriff's Information and Reporting System (SIRS) and the Massachusetts Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS).

Each inmate was interviewed and given *The Re-entry Exit Interview/Release Plan* several times during his or her incarceration. Only Reintegration Coordinators, most of whom are trained correctional officers, were allowed to administer 60-day reviews or exit interviews. Each interview was conducted in person. The *Re-entry Exit Interview/Release Plan* was mandatory for all participants who were incarcerated. Inmates were informed that all information was confidential and would not affect their treatment or status before or after release.

Research and Statistics staff administered the *Aftercare Questionnaire* to former inmates one year after release. If an individual who was released during 2015 was re-incarcerated at ECSD (i.e. had been arrested and incarcerated since his or her release) the interview was conducted in-person when feasible. The interview was done by phone for all other former inmates whom researchers could contact. Participation in the *Aftercare Questionnaire* was voluntary. The individuals were informed that their participation or refusal to participate, as well as all responses, would not affect their treatment or status as current or former inmates.

The Release Cohort

All participants in this study were released from the custody of ECSD in 2015; 93% were male. Sixty-one percent were released from the Department's Middleton facility, 32% from the ECPRC and 7% from the WIT. Of former inmates that recidivated, 67% were released from the Middleton facility, 26% from the ECPRC and 7% from the WIT.

Measures

Recidivism was calculated by dividing the number of former inmates *who recidivated* ($n = 822$) by the number *who were released* in 2015 ($N = 2,026$). This resulted in a one-year recidivism rate of 40.57%.

Data Collection

Data on recidivism were obtained by running a Board of Probation (BOP) on each inmate one year after his or her release. In addition, as a form of self-reporting, the former inmates were asked if they recidivated. A BOP, which is a type of Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI), is a Massachusetts criminal history and court activity report which details arraignments, offenses, court of origin, and parole or probation violation notices or findings. It also includes the overall disposition of each case which could be a conviction, acquittal, continued without a finding (CWOFF), dismissal, probation imposed by a court, or default statuses by a defendant. ECSD's ability to view these data makes the BOP a highly useful resource for determining if a former inmate has recidivated according to the parameters of this report.

In compiling personal information, researchers used only information from participants who responded. This assured representative figures. All information given by current or former inmates by way of the *Aftercare Questionnaire* or *Re-entry Exit Interview/Release Plan* was self-reported.

On the first business day of each month between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016 researchers ran a *Call List* obtained through SIRS comprised of all sentenced inmates who had been released one year earlier (January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015). In addition, an *Active Inmate List* was run each month informing researchers who was in the custody of ECSD. Using these lists, researchers administered the Department's *Aftercare Questionnaire* to former inmates; in person to those re-incarcerated at ECSD, and by phone to all others researchers could locate. The *Re-entry Exit Interview/Release Plan* was given to inmates just prior to their release.

Data Analysis

Data obtained through interviews were put into two separate *Microsoft® Access* databases: *Exit Interviews* were added to ECSD ANS (Aftercare Network System), and the *Aftercare Questionnaires* were added to ECSD Aftercare Questionnaire database. Queries were used to extract desired information. *Microsoft® Access* was also used to compile the *Active Inmate List*. *Microsoft® Excel* spreadsheets were used to compile statistics and design spreadsheets and charts.

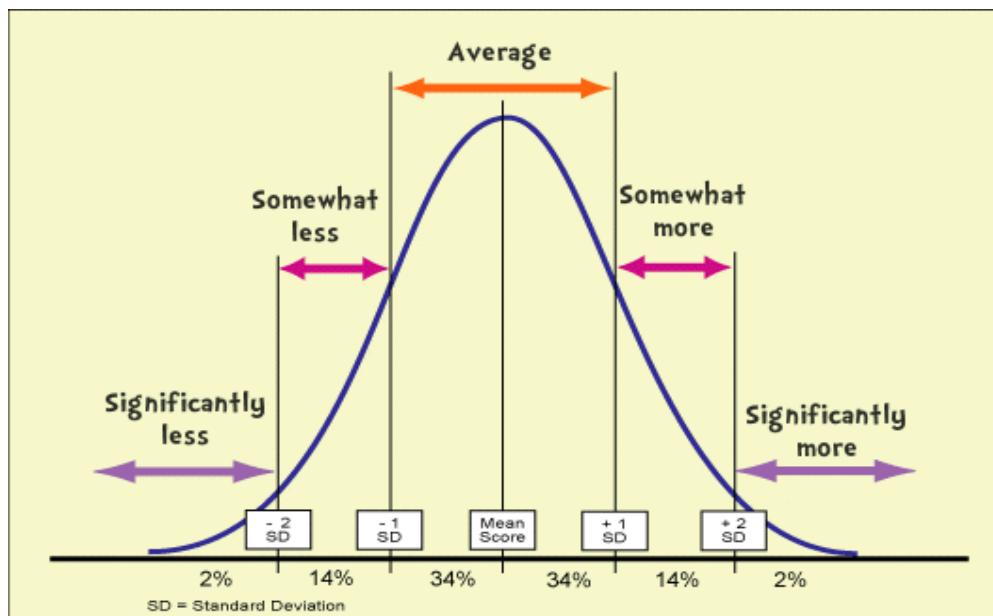
RECIDIVISM STATISTICS

During 2015, 2,026 sentenced inmates were released from the custody of the Essex County Sheriff's Department. Of these former inmates, 822 recidivated, resulting in a one-year recidivism rate of 40.57%.

The 2015 one-year recidivism rate of 40.57% represents a significant decrease of 4.76% from the 2014 rate of 45.33% and is 5.12% lower than the average for the previous five years (2010-2014) of 45.69%. A drop (or improvement) of this size causes researchers to be concerned, as it is not as close to the average as previous years.

We used two proven statistical principles to examine this change in the recidivism rate: *The Bell Curve* and the *68-95-99.7 Rule*. The basic premise of these principles is that a normal Bell Curve (actually shaped like a bell) shows the distribution of a group of measurements (i.e. batting averages, test scores or recidivism rates). The mean (or average) is calculated simply by adding all of the measurements together and dividing by the number (N or n) of measurements that were taken (again - batting averages, test scores etc.). Standard deviation (SD) is a calculation used to show how "spread out" these measurements are. Are they fairly close together or do the measurements cover a broad range? Finally, the 68-95-99.7 Rule states that in a normal distribution 68% of the measurements will be within one SD of the average (fairly closely grouped), 95% of the measurements will be within two SDs (somewhat close) and 99.7% of the measurements will be within three SDs (more spread out but still within a reasonable range). See Figure 1: A standard Bell Curve.

Figure 1. Standard Bell Curve



Source: Wordpress.com

To get a reasonable sample size of ECSD recidivism rates, we examined the rates for the past nine years, from 2006 to 2014 (see Figure 2). The mean is 46.42, the SD is 1.72 and all of the recidivism rates are within two SDs. The center of the chart contains the greatest number of occurrences (or measurements) and is, therefore, the highest point on the curve, as noted by the “Distribution” value. Figure 2 shows that the recidivism rates did not fluctuate all that much in nine years (see *Migration Toward the Mean* at the top of page 10). Due to the early recidivism rates of 48.90% in 2006 and 49.56% in 2007, our curve tails to the right and is not a perfect Bell Curve.

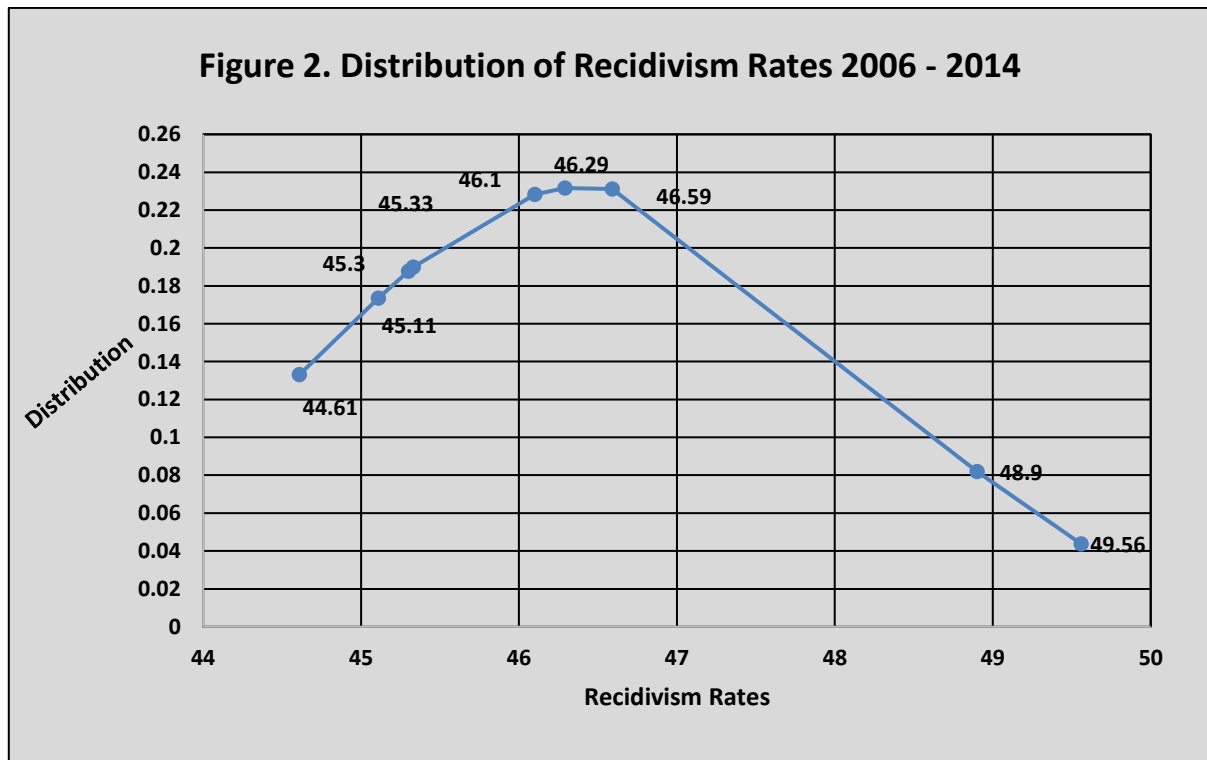
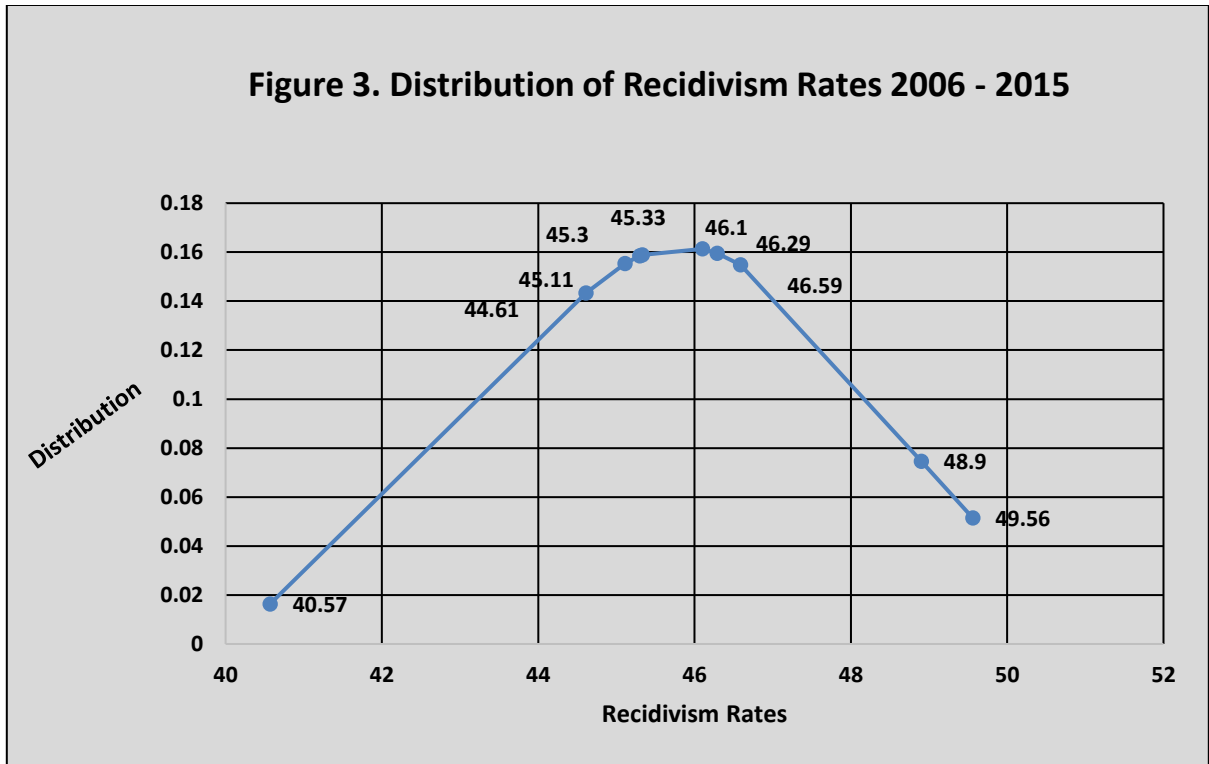


Figure 3 shows that adding the low recidivism rate of 40.57% in 2015 caused three changes in our distribution curve:

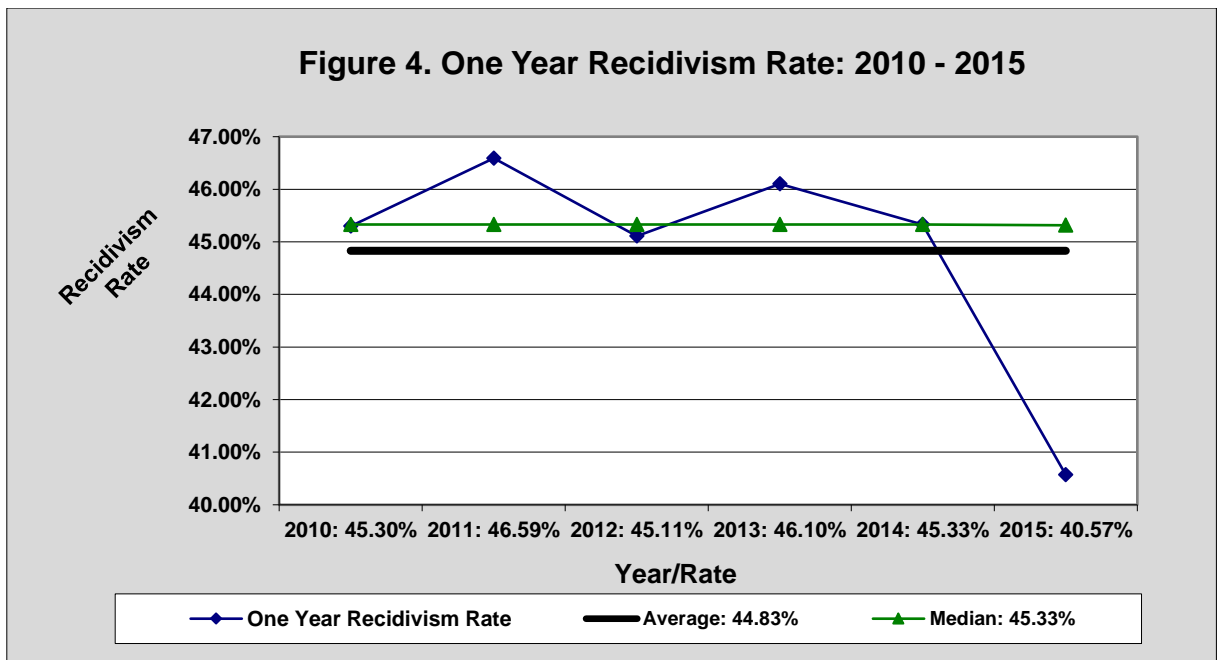
- 1) The mean decreased by .58% to 45.84%.
- 2) As we now had a low of 40.57% and a high of 49.56%, the “range” became a bit greater (i.e. the SD increased from 1.72 to 2.46). The curve was more spread out.
- 3) The 2015 rate of 40.57% somewhat offset the high rates of 2006 and 2007 and the curve became more evenly distributed. While slightly skewed to the left, it looks like a bell.

The 2015 rate of 40.57% is 2.14 SDs away from the mean – well within a reasonable range.



Figures 2 & 3 show that this decrease in the recidivism rate to 40.57% is within normal parameters.

Figure 4 is a snapshot of the past six years, showing an average of 44.83% and the sharp decrease in 2015. Indeed, researchers will be watching the 2016 results to see if 2015 was a temporary decrease or if a trend is developing.



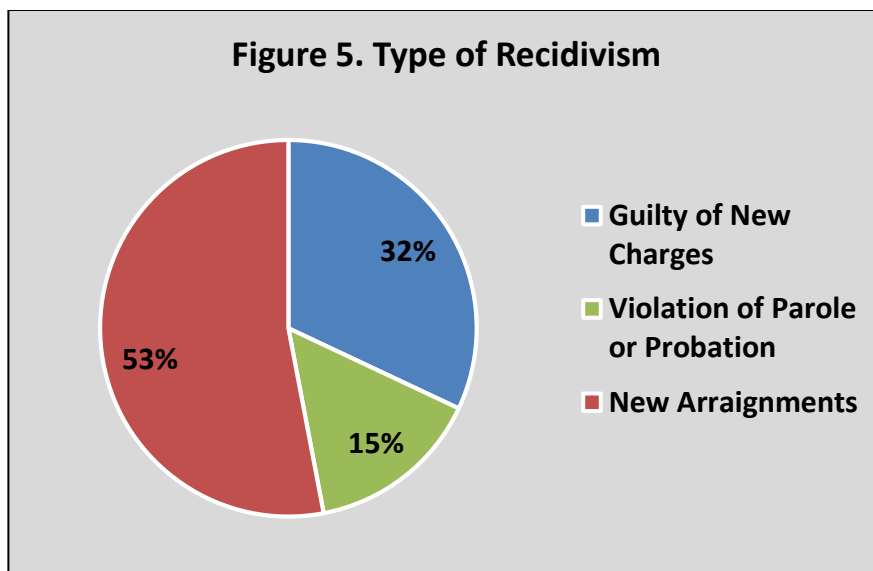
Migration toward the Mean

Figure 4 (years 2010 – 2015) shows that the one-year recidivism rate fluctuated, but stayed close to the average, especially for years 2010-2014 which had a low of 45.11% and a high of 46.59%. This demonstrates the statistical principle of ***migration toward the mean***. This principle states that under normal circumstances, everyday occurrences do not vary greatly. Occasionally, however, a variable comes into play that causes a shift away from the mean. An example would be a baseball player whose batting average has been consistent the past five years but suddenly jumps up 20 points because he got a new batting coach or adjusted his stance. In the case of ECSD's recidivism rate, former inmates engaged in less criminal activity and were, therefore, involved less in the criminal justice system. This resulted in the drop to 40.57% in 2015.

In this report, we examine the causes of the drop in the recidivism rate in 2015.

Recidivism Categories

Of the 822 former inmates who reoffended, 53% had new arraignments, 32% were found guilty of new crimes and 15% recidivated by violating parole or probation (see Figure 5). Recidivism type is examined in more detail in Table 1 and Figures 6-8.



Looking closely at the type of recidivism allows us to shed light on one of the causes of the 4.76% decrease from 2014 to 2015. While Figure 5 gives a breakdown of recidivism by type, it is helpful to look at these three categories not just as a percentage *of those who recidivated*, but also as a percentage *of those who were released*. Table 1 shows that the percentage found guilty of new crimes decreased slightly (.48%) but the percentage of those who had new arraignments (the largest portion of those who recidivated) decreased by 5.16%. This had a large impact on the recidivism rate dropping.

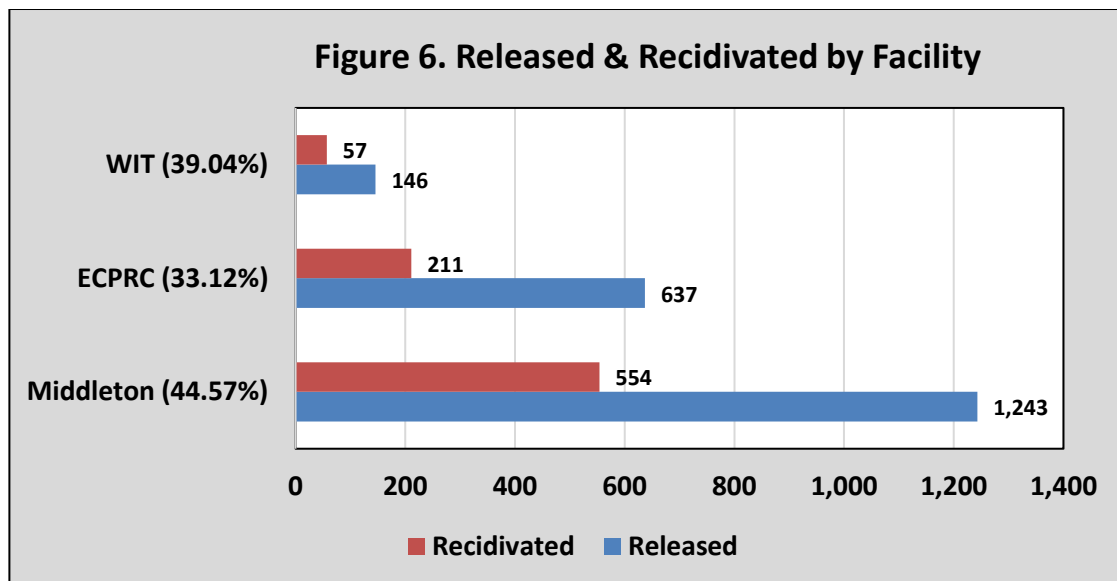
Table 1. Type of Recidivism as a % of Inmates Released: 2014 - 2015

Year of Release and Total Number of Inmates Released/Recidivists	Guilty of New Charges	New Arraignments	Violation of Parole/Probation
2014: 2,226 total releases 1,009 recidivists	303 recidivists (13.61%)	595 recidivists (26.73%)	111 recidivists (4.99%)
2015: 2,026 total releases 822 recidivists	266 recidivists (13.13%)	437 recidivists (21.57%)	119 recidivists (5.87%)
% Change	-0.48%	-5.16%	0.88%

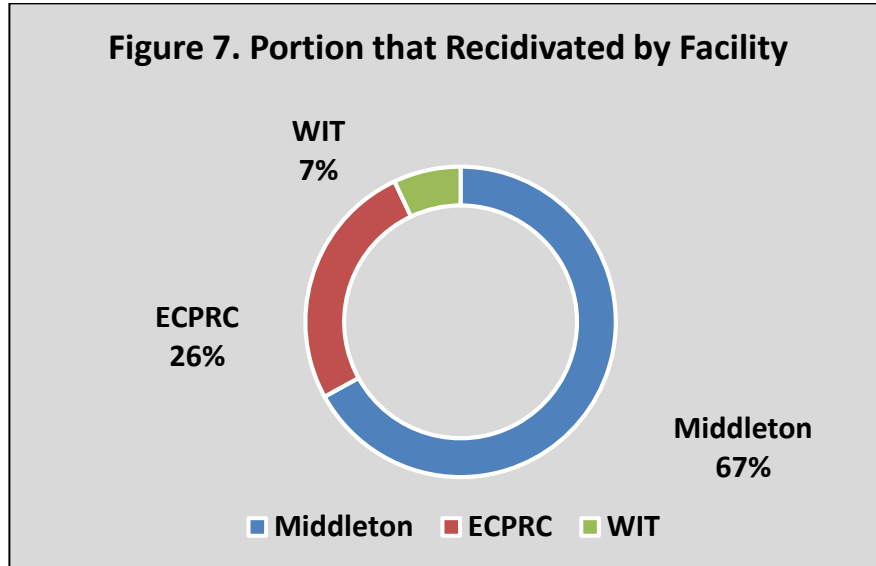
Recidivism by Facility

Another factor in the decrease in the recidivism rate can be found by looking at the **facility from which the inmates were released** (see Figures 6-8 & Table 2). ECSD operates three correctional facilities, each housing a different level of offender. As Middleton is medium-security, it houses the more serious male offenders as well as those male inmates who do not qualify for the ECPRC. Accordingly, it consistently exhibits the highest recidivism rate. The ECPRC is a minimum security pre-release facility for men. Minimum security means the inmates either have less serious charges than the inmates at the Middleton facility, or they have earned their way to the ECPRC as part of the step-down process. Accordingly, the ECPRC typically has a lower recidivism rate than Middleton. The Women in Transition center in Salisbury is also a minimum-security facility. The recidivism rate for the WIT is traditionally the lowest of the Department's three facilities.

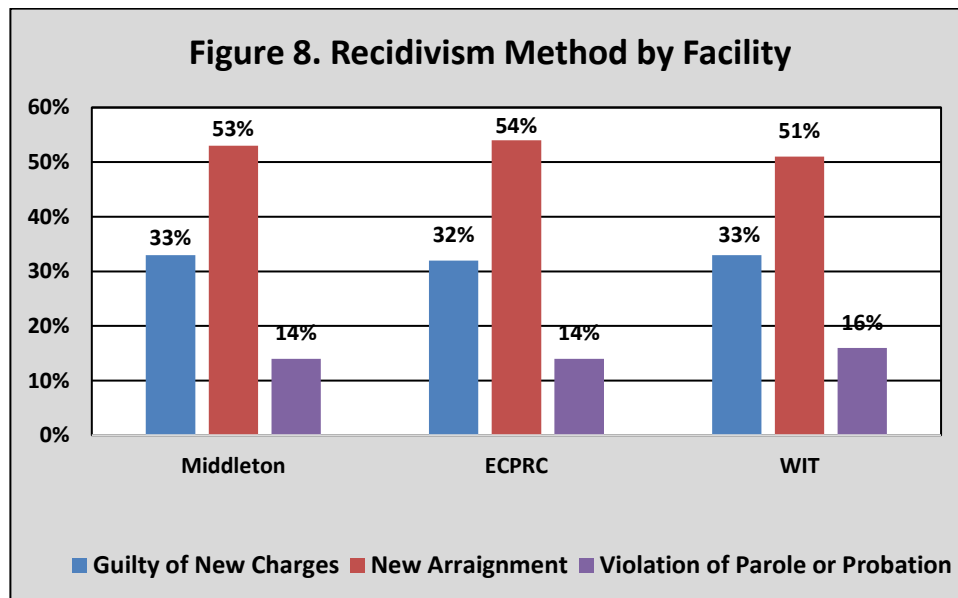
The step-down process classifies and houses inmates according to their criminal history, risk level, rehabilitation needs and conduct while incarcerated. This is reflected in the recidivism rate for each facility (see Figure 6).



The Middleton facility also accounted for the largest portion of inmates who recidivated. The ECPRC had the second largest portion of inmates who recidivated and the WIT had the smallest portion. Of inmates who recidivated after being released in 2015, 67% were released from Middleton, 26% from the ECPRC and 7% from the WIT (see Figure 7).



New arraignments were the most common form of recidivism across the three facilities. Guilty verdicts were the next most frequent type of recidivism for each of the three facilities, followed by violations of parole or probation (see Figure 8).



Different possibilities may explain the high percentages of new-arraignments including recidivists having open and unresolved cases, court scheduling issues, dismissal or non-prosecution of charges or continuances without a finding.

Individuals who recidivate through new arraignments or being found guilty of new charges often violate parole or probation because of the new arraignment or conviction. The new arraignment or guilty finding outweighs the parole or probation violation in this situation. This, in general, decreases the number of violation of parole or probation findings. Probation and parole can also be violated through technical violations of conditions set by the courts. Probationers or parolees found in violation could have convictions entered on their records, be committed to a house of correction such as ECSD, have additional conditions imposed or have their term of parole or probation extended.

Table 2 shows that the largest drop in recidivism (6.39%) came from Middleton, the facility that released the largest number of inmates. A modest decrease, but a decrease nonetheless, came from the ECPRC, the facility that released the second largest number of inmates. An increase came from the WIT, which released the smallest number of inmates. Notice that with such small numbers of inmates being released by the WIT, a slight increase in the actual number of inmates that recidivated can result in a large percentage increase.

The overall result was a decrease in the recidivism rate.

Table 2. Recidivism Rate by Facility: 2014 - 2015

Facility	2014 Releases	2014 Recidivists	2014 Recidivism Rate	2015 Releases	2015 Recidivists	2015 Recidivism Rate	% Change
Middleton	1,450	739	50.96%	1,243	554	44.57%	-6.39%
ECPRC	658	237	36.02%	637	211	33.12%	-2.90%
WIT	118	33	27.97%	146	57	39.04%	11.07%

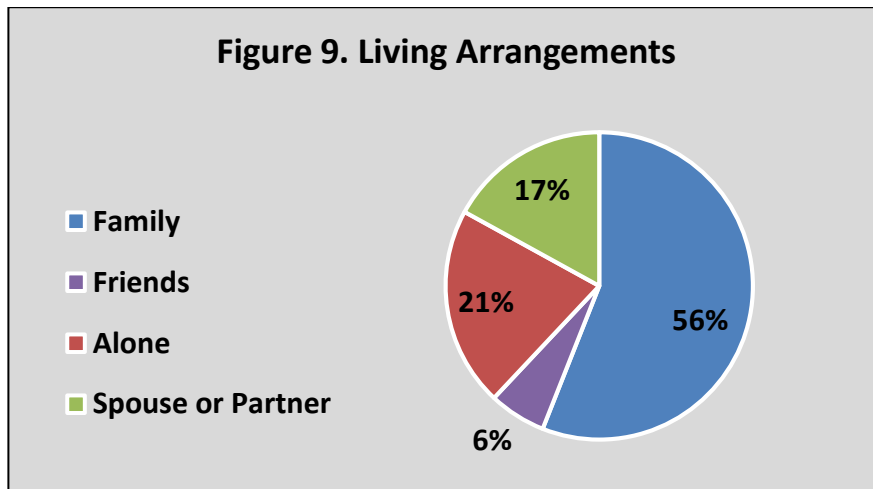
DEMOGRAPHICS

Section Overview

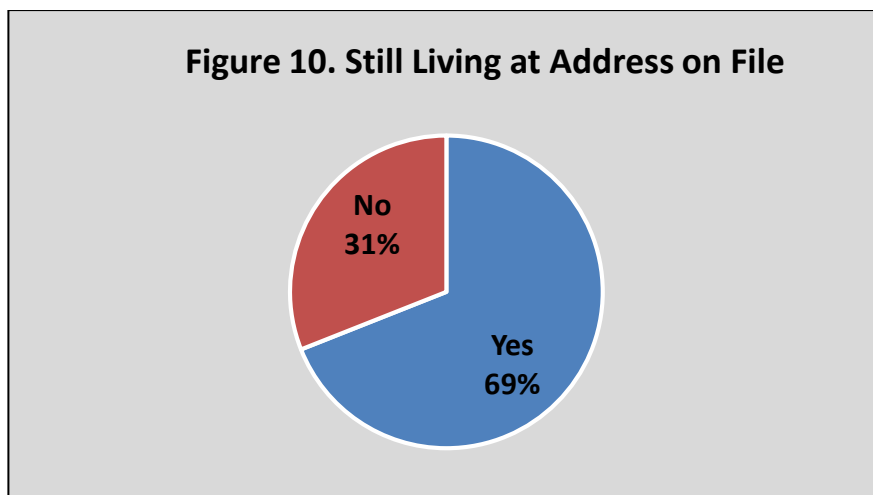
This section covers demographic data obtained through ECSD's *Aftercare Questionnaire*. Current and former inmates that took the questionnaire did so on a voluntary basis. Participants were informed that neither their choice to participate nor their responses would affect their pre or post-release treatment. Housing, employment, education, substance abuse, rehabilitation, post-release supervision and family information were the areas that were examined. All participants were released from the custody of the Essex County Sheriff's Department during 2015.

Housing

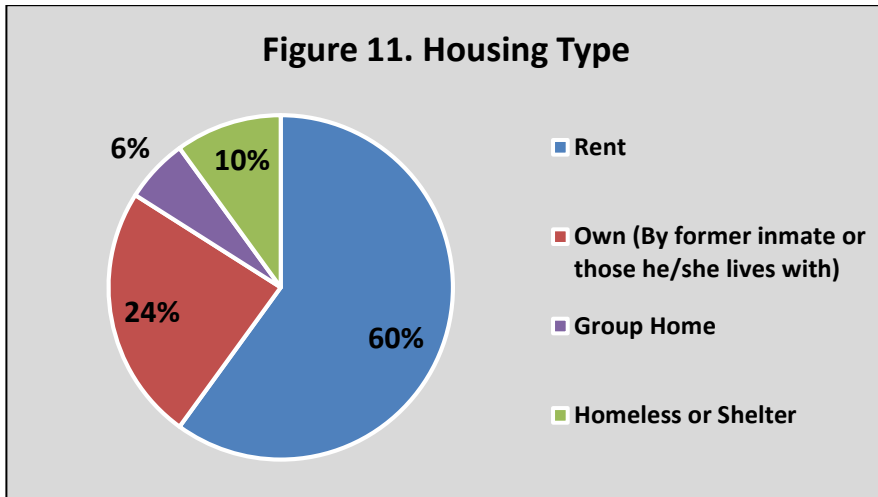
More than half (56%) of respondents reported living with family members one year after release. Approximately one in five (21%) stated they lived alone. Seventeen percent were residing with a spouse or partner and 6% lived with friends (see Figure 9).



Sixty-nine percent reported living at the same address they were at when released (see Figure 10).



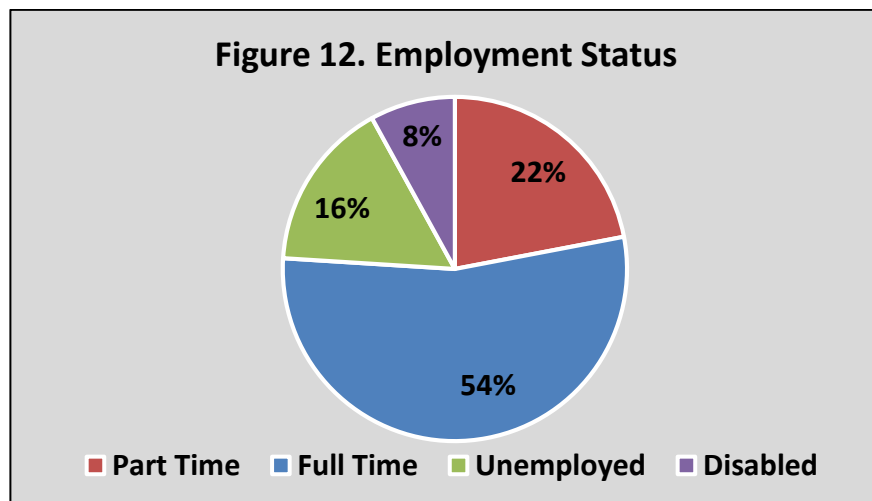
Sixty percent of questionnaire participants reported renting and 24% reported owning a home or living with a person who owned a home. Ten percent self-reported being homeless or living in shelters and 6% lived in group homes (see Figure 11).



A “grain of salt” regarding Housing Type: As researchers cannot readily contact former inmates who are homeless, the homeless cohort may be under-represented. This limited access may not only affect data obtained on living arrangements but also on other factors such as employment, income and sobriety. This limited access to homeless former inmates, however, is offset by contacting relatives to obtain data on these individuals.

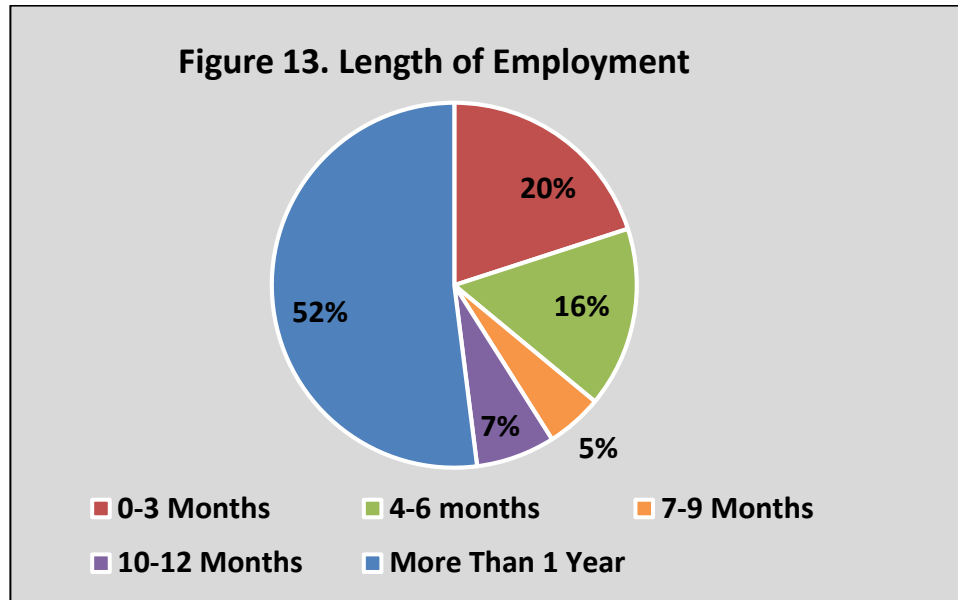
Employment

The unemployment rate among former inmates released in 2015 was 16% (see Figure 12). Current inmates are excluded from these figures, as 100% of them are unemployed and their inclusion would skew results.

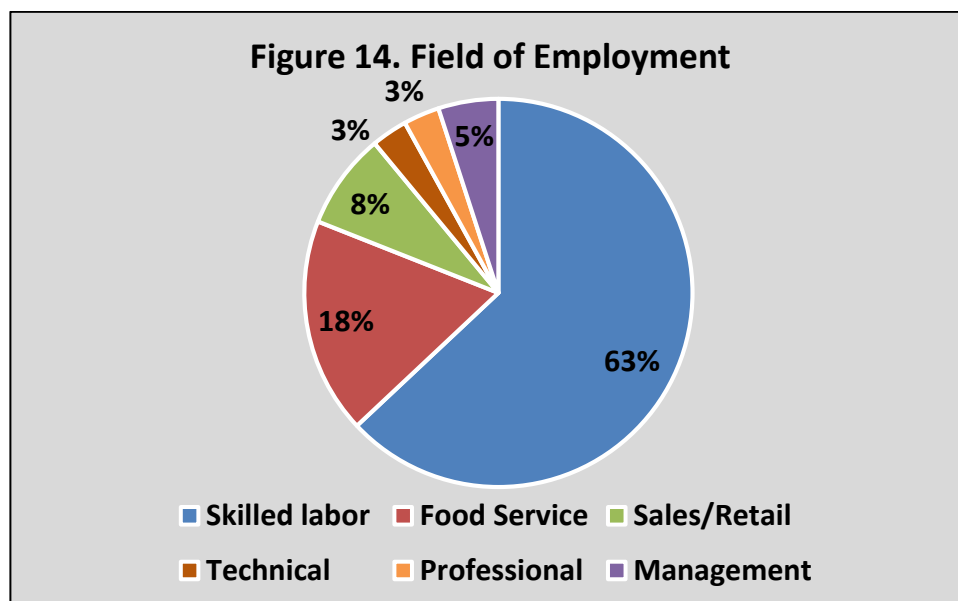


It could be argued that respondents who are incarcerated *should* be included in the unemployment rate (as they are not gainfully employed outside of the jail). Including respondents who were incarcerated increased the unemployment rate to 35%.

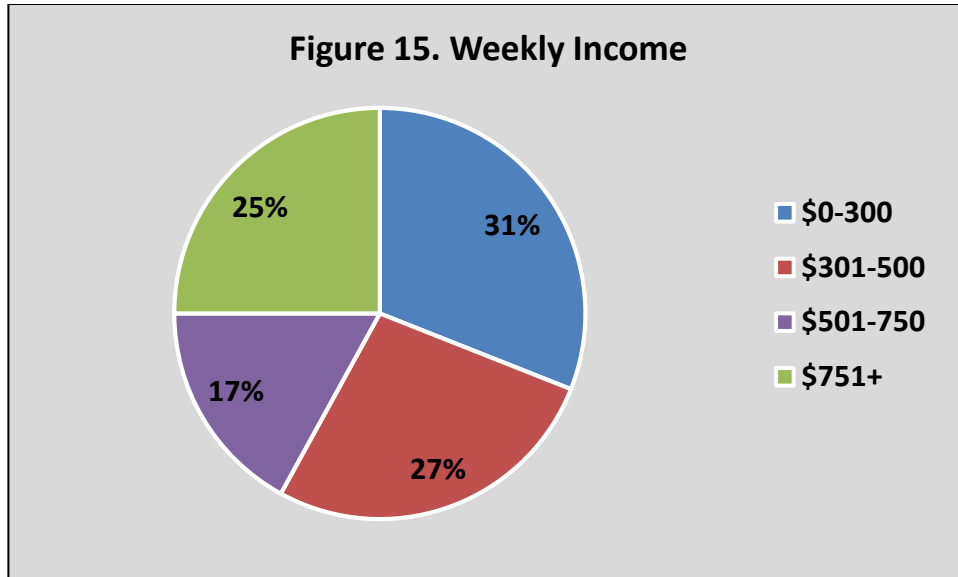
Of former inmates who were employed, 52% reported holding their positions for more than a year. Employment reported for more than one year is indicative of an employer holding a position for an employee during incarceration. A combined 12% had been employed for seven to 12 months and a combined 36% had been employed for six months or less (see Figure 13).



Of former inmates who were employed, 63% worked in the skilled labor field. Eighteen percent worked in food service, while 8% were in sales/retail. A combined 6% were in technical or professional fields and five percent were in management (see Figure 14).

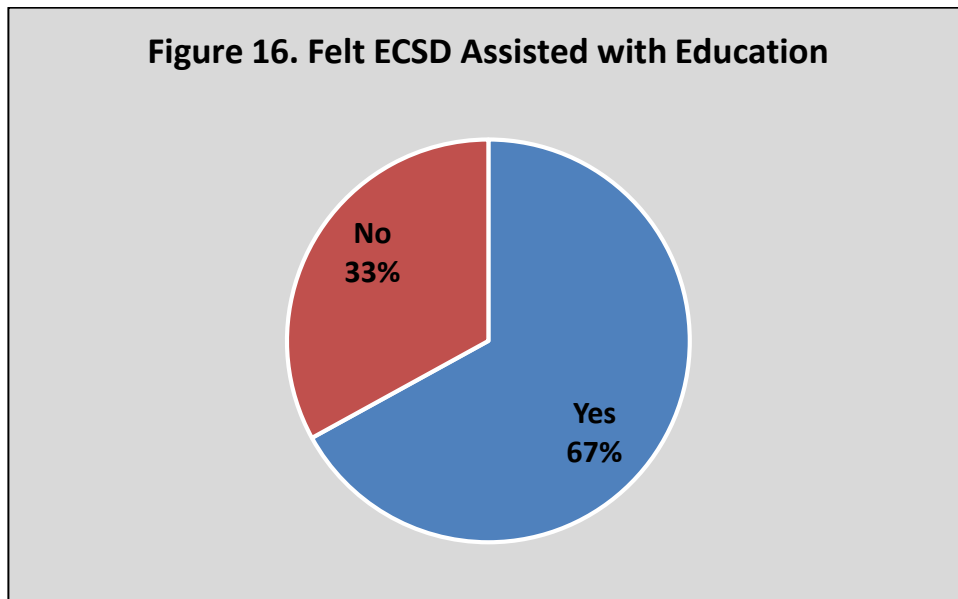


A combined 58% earned \$500 or less per week and 17% earned between \$501 and \$750 per week. Twenty-five percent earned \$751 or higher per week (see Figure 15).

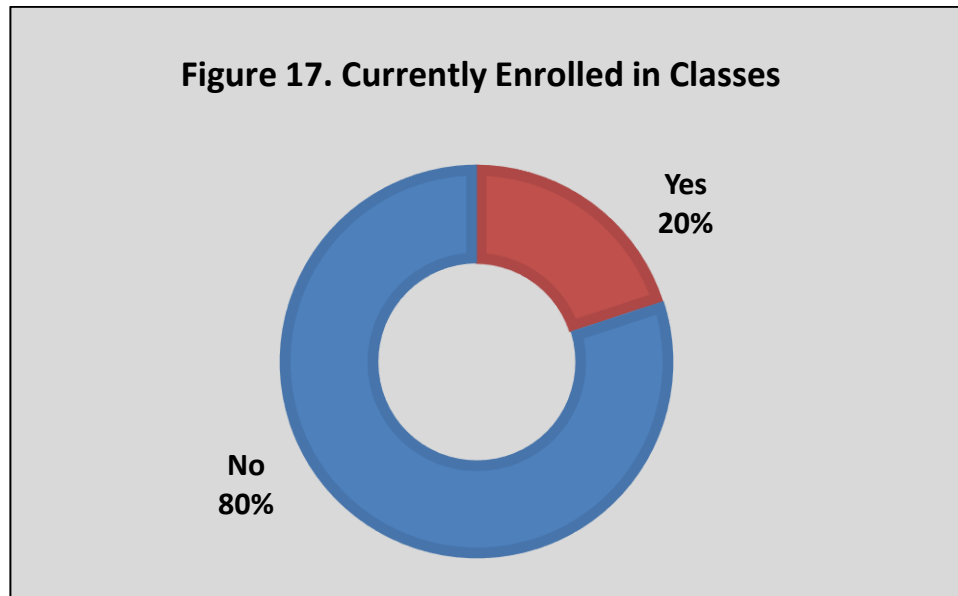


Education

ECSD staff members encourage inmates to pursue education during their sentences. Not all inmates participate in classes, however, due to several factors. Brevity of sentence may limit educational opportunities, or inmates may have already obtained general equivalency, a high school diploma or a degree. Disciplinary issues may prevent some inmates from taking part, while others choose not to take classes. Sixty-seven percent of respondents stated that ECSD assisted them with their education (see Figure 16).



Twenty percent of former inmates were pursuing education one year after release (see Figure 17).



Nineteen percent of respondents reported having at least some college. Thirty-nine percent reported having received high school diplomas and 19% had GEDs or HiSet certification. Twenty-three percent reported having no high school diploma, GED or HiSet certification (see Table 3). A comparison of education levels at time of release and one year post-release is available in Table 9.

Table 3. Education Levels Among Former Inmates

Level of Education	%
No HS Diploma, GED or HiSet	23
GED or HiSet	19
High School Diploma	39
Some College	16
College Graduate	3

Education and Employment

Former inmates with no high school diplomas, GEDs or HiSet certification had an unemployment rate of 33%. The unemployment rate for those with high school diplomas or equivalent was 13%. Former inmates with college experience saw an unemployment rate of 22%. The overall unemployment rate for former inmates was 16% (see Table 4).

These rates are lower than years past. Perhaps reflecting not only the overall improvement in the economy and thereby the decrease in unemployment, but also the increase in demand for laborers. Table 4 also shows the unemployment rate for all respondents, including those who were incarcerated at the time of their interviews.

Table 4. Education & Employment

Education	Unemployment Rate (%) Only Those NOT Incarcerated	Unemployment Rate (%) All Respondents
No HS Diploma, GED or HiSet	33	38
HS Diploma, GED or HiSet	13	40
College experience	22	27
Overall	16	35

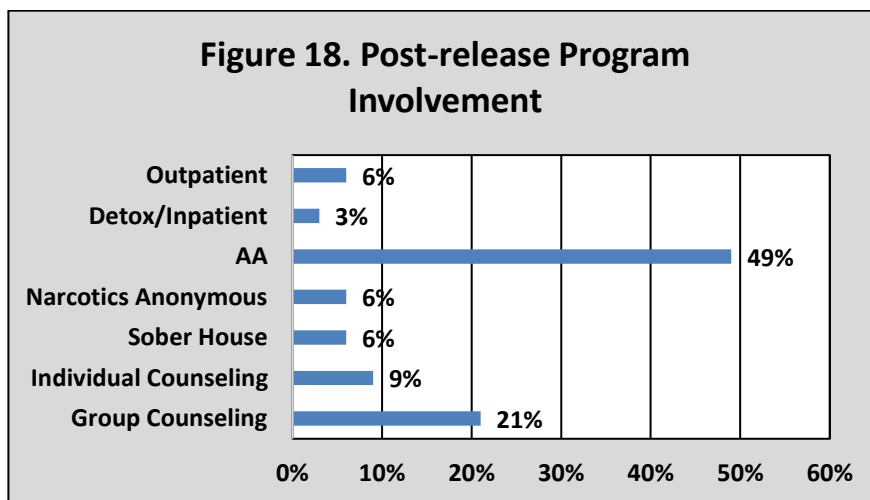
Substance Abuse

Approximately 85% of ECSD inmates have substance related issues. Several drug and alcohol programs are offered to offenders while they are incarcerated. Eighty-one percent of inmates released in 2015 participated in substance abuse programs prior to their release. Upon release from ECSD, inmates may participate in outside programs through referral, court mandate or personal choice. One year after release, 49% stated they had participated in a substance abuse program after release (see Table 5).

Table 5. Participation in Substance Treatment Programs Pre/Post-release

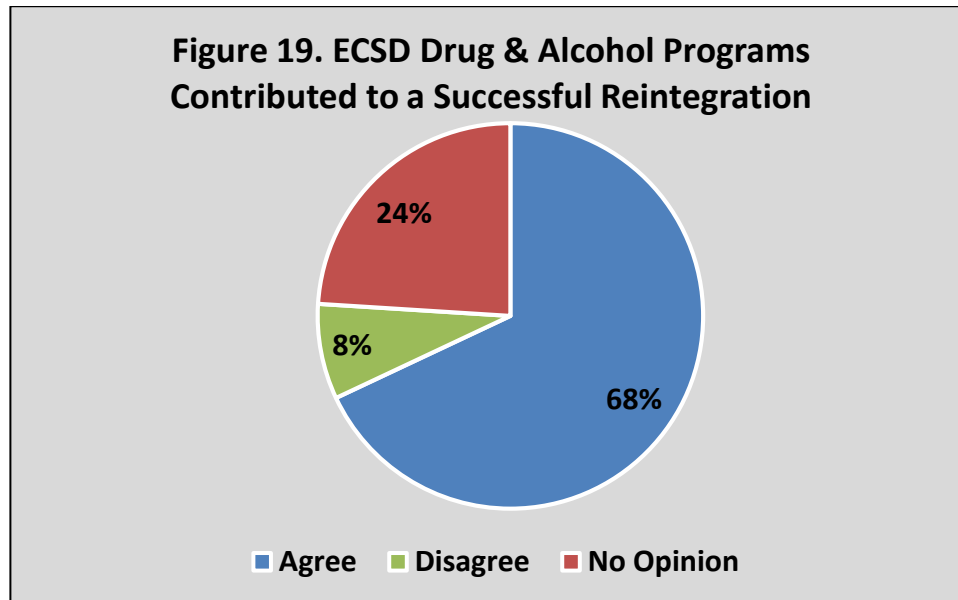
Status	Participated (%)	Did Not Participate (%)
In Custody	81	19
Post-release	49	51

Of former inmates who participated in post-release counseling, treatment or programs, 49% attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Thirty percent attended individual or group counseling. Narcotics Anonymous (NA), sober houses and outpatient care each accounted for 6% and detox/inpatient care accounted for 3% (see Figure 18).

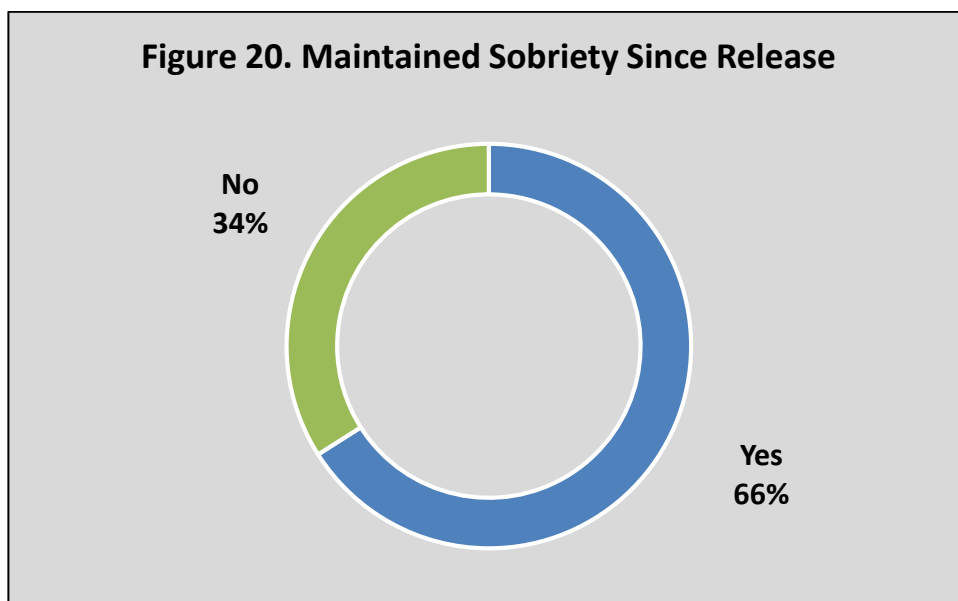


Rehabilitation Programs

ECSD staff is committed to the care and custody of inmates. Inmates' attitudes toward ECSD program offerings show that they appreciate and respond to the staff's efforts. Sixty-eight percent of former inmates interviewed believed that drug and alcohol programs available through ECSD contributed to a successful reintegration (see Figure 19).

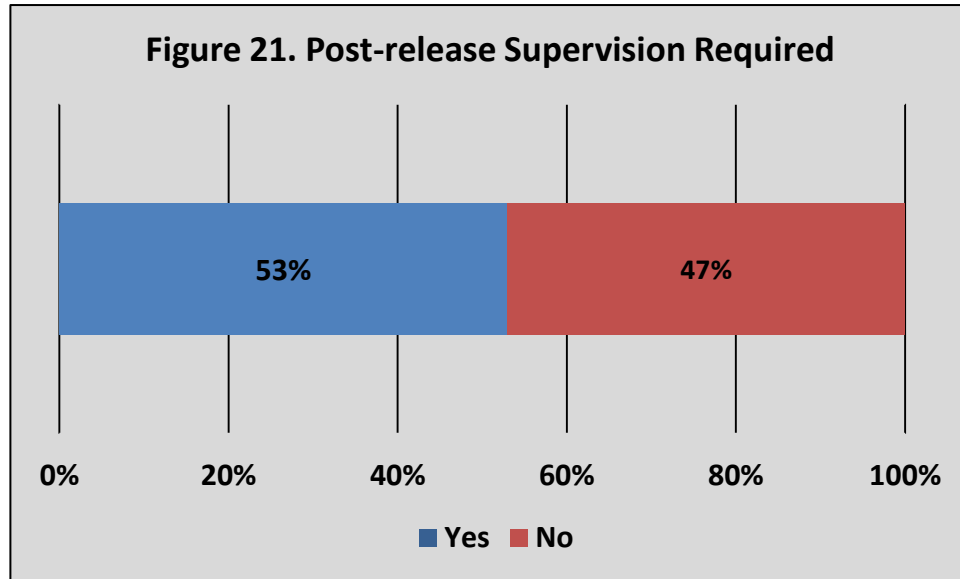


Sixty-six percent of respondents stated that they had maintained sobriety since their release (see Figure 20). This may reflect some bias, as former inmates may attempt to put themselves in the best possible light. It also reflects, however, the success of the programs taken while incarcerated at ECSD and after release. As noted previously, this figure may also reflect researchers' limited ability to contact homeless individuals, some of whom may not have maintained sobriety.

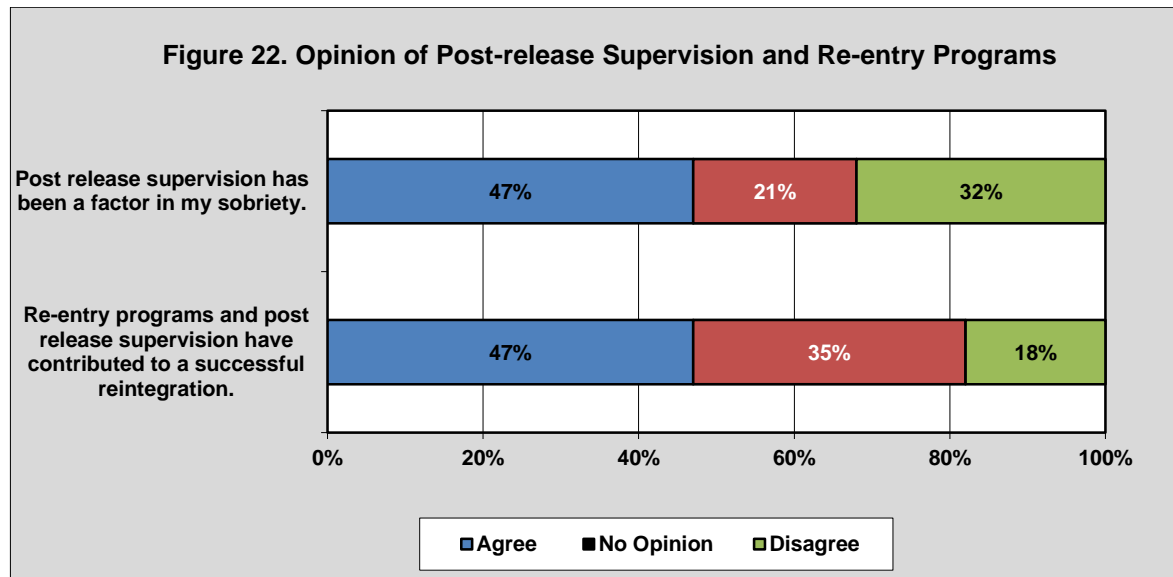


Post-release Supervision

The post-release supervision provided by parole and probation gives structure and accountability to aid in the success and reintegration of former inmates. More than half (53%) of the inmates released in 2015 were required to be on parole or probation (see Figure 21).

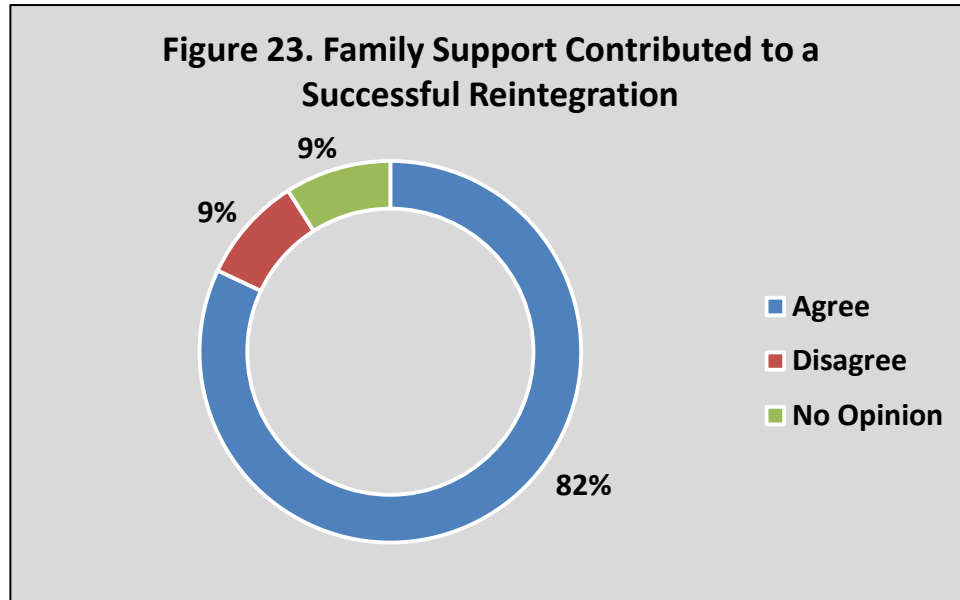


Of former inmates who were required to have post-release supervision, 47% felt that such supervision helped them maintain sobriety. This same portion, 47%, felt that the combination of post-release supervision *and* ECSD's Re-entry programs were helpful (see Figure 22).

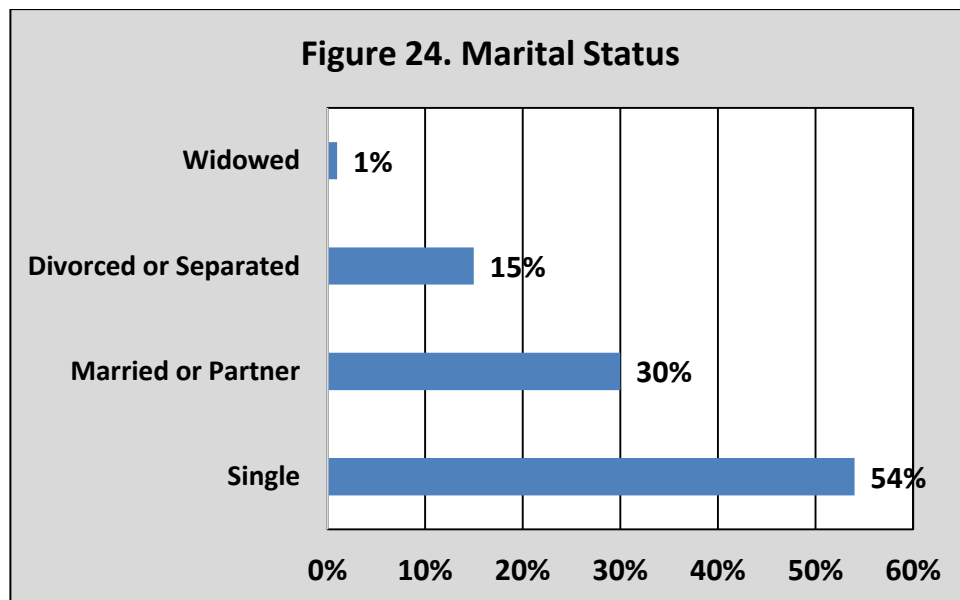


Family Status

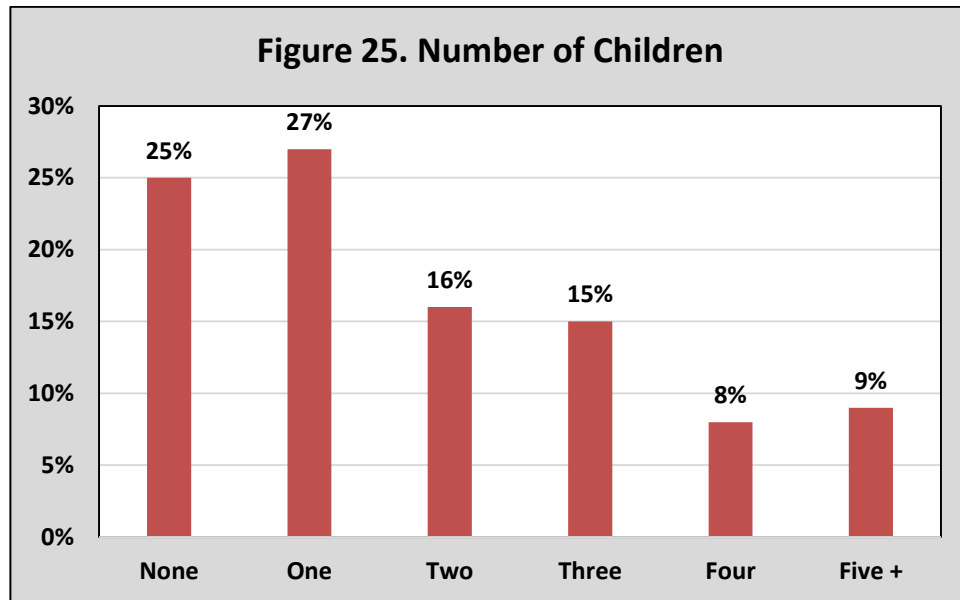
Most former inmates felt that family support helped them: 82% responded that that they felt family contributed to a successful re-entry (see Figure 23). Loved ones often provide stability, a place to live and financial support.



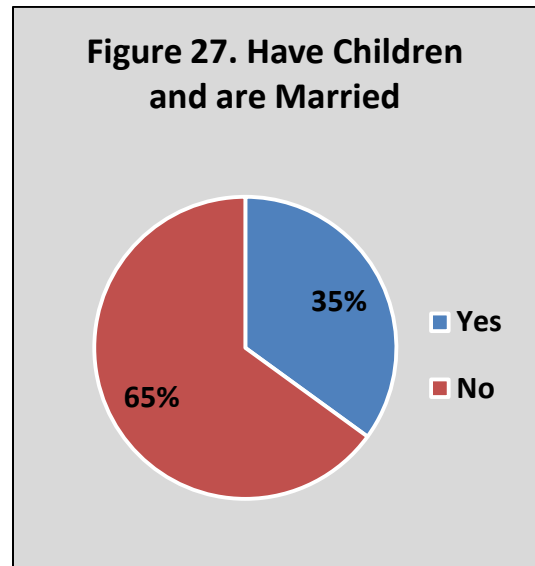
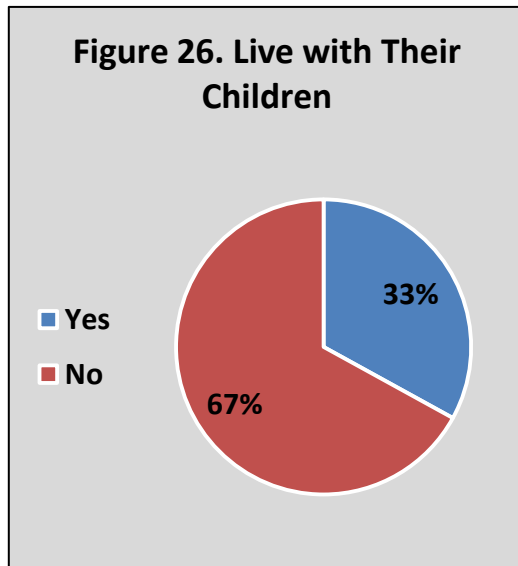
While the family unit provides support for former inmates, the majority (54%) of former inmates remained single (see Figure 24).



Seventy-five percent of former inmates had at least one child (see Figure 25).



One third of respondents reported living with their children (see Figure 26). Of those former inmates who had children, 35% were married (see Figure 27).



RE-ENTRY EXIT INTERVIEW/RELEASE PLAN

Section Overview

The information in this report does not reflect a longitudinal study (i.e. the same group of people studied over an extended period of time). The inmates who took part in the *Exit Interviews* (just prior to release) are not necessarily the same people who took part in the *Aftercare Questionnaires* (one year after release). Therefore, the results shown in the “Exit Interview” section may be different than those in the “Demographics” section. The information contained in this section was obtained through ECSD’s “Re-entry Exit Interview/Release Plan” administered to inmates just prior to release. Participation was mandatory. Inmates were informed that their responses would not affect their pre or post-release treatment. The following areas were examined: facility from which released, offenses for which incarcerated, cities to which released, post-release supervision, primary drug used, education level and program involvement. All participants were released from the custody of the Essex County Sheriff’s Department in 2015.

ECSD Reintegration Process

Reintegration Coordinators at ECSD’s facilities assist inmates in preparing for their release. Each sentenced inmate meets with his or her Reintegration Coordinator every 60 days and again just before release. A schedule of programs, classes and/or treatments are planned for the inmate to help him or her succeed after incarceration. Before his or her release, each inmate is required to complete a *Re-entry/Exit Interview and Release Plan*. In addition to helping the inmate prepare to leave, the plan helps staff obtain useful information about each inmate.

New inmates and their Reintegration Coordinators discuss several key issues relevant to their incarceration. These include an examination of the inmate’s CORI record including current/open charges and a review of the ECSD Inmate Handbook. Willingness to accept responsibility, substance abuse history, domestic violence issues and gang affiliations are also discussed. Areas which may need focus such as education, life and family skills and job skills are covered as well.

ECSD offers a variety of “in-house” programs to assist inmates with their transition out of the criminal justice system and back into their communities. A variety of programs, classes, support groups, life skills classes, peer meetings and one-on-one counseling sessions are available to ECSD inmates at Middleton, the ECPRC and the WIT. The Reintegration and Classification Departments work diligently to provide these resources and programs to help increase the chances of a successful reintegration for released inmates, and to overall reduce the recidivism rate.

Some of the many programs ECSD offers:

Adult Basic Education/HiSet classes provide the fundamentals of high school education.

Computer Literacy presents a basic understanding of personal computer applications.

Treatment and Recovery of Addictions in Corrections (TRAC) is a therapeutic program that is a collaboration between Middleton's 80-bed (Substance Abuse) unit and the ECPRC.

The Essex County Re-entry Center offered at the ECPRC is a cognitive-behavioral treatment with a focus on inmates' release plans.

Alternatives to Violence is designed to identify and address negative behavior with inmates living on a separate unit committed to intense treatment.

Drug and Alcohol Group Counseling offers clients help in substance abuse recovery, accessing aftercare and further understanding relapse, recovery and sponsorship.

Alcoholics Anonymous and **Narcotics Anonymous** meetings are held daily. Volunteers provide in-house commitments.

Vocational training such as **Barbering master licensure**, **Serv-Safe** certification (kitchen cleanliness) and **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** (OSHA) certification are available to inmates.

Motheread at the WIT provides a nationally recognized approach to teaching literacy skills to adults and children.

Substance Abuse/Understanding Addiction at the WIT provides drug and addiction education as well as addressing the cycle of addiction.

Consumer Education Financial Literacy is based on the *Money Smart Curriculum*. This 30 hour course provides money management skill, and is intended to educate students to become wise consumers.

Small Business Seminar is a five-week program designed to provide instruction in developing one's own business.

English for Speakers of Other Languages is a three level developmental program for adults with limited or non-existent English skills.

Partnering with other agencies and utilizing community-based resources, ECSD is able to expose inmates to a variety of services that are catered specifically to their needs. The following are examples of agencies and programs that the Department works closely with to further assist inmates in the reintegration process.

United Teen Equality Center (UTEC) provides vocational, educational, job placement and other support services for youthful offenders in Lowell and Lawrence.

ROCA assists current and former inmates by providing education, counseling, job skills and job placement assistance to ECSD high-risk inmates, ages 18-24.

In partnership with **Straight Ahead Ministries**, inmates from the North Shore receive assistance in obtaining jobs and housing upon release.

ECSD/Probation (PDs, private entities) Working Group is a collaborative effort among ECSD, the Essex County Court's Probation Departments, law enforcement agencies and non-profit entities. The team provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and initiatives regarding programs and services for inmates and former inmates.

The **HOPE Project** is a partnership involving ECSD, the Department of Probation, the courts and law enforcement. This innovative approach provides swift yet reasonable sanctions to former inmates who violate terms of probation.

Upon completion of the 28-day **Detox Unit**, individuals may be able to dispose of their cases and utilize non-custodial tools such as sober houses, AA/NA meetings and day-reporting to an Office of Community Corrections. An **Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant** supports the 42-bed Male Detox Unit.

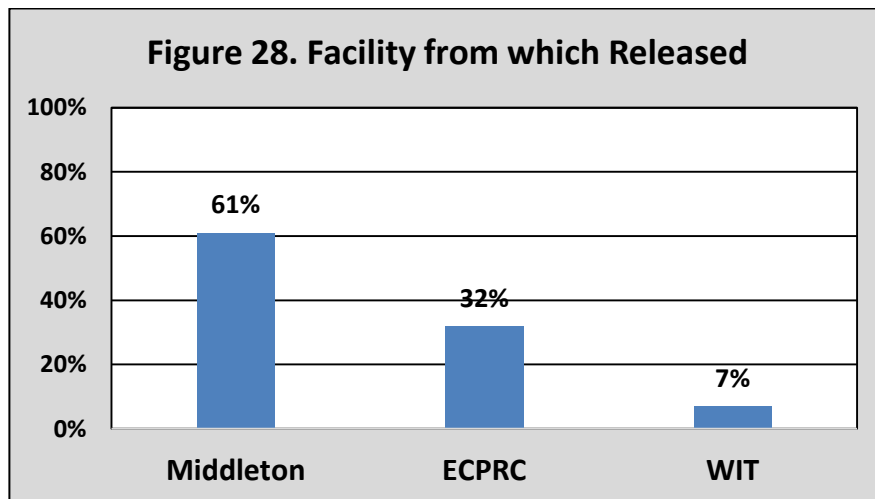
Veterans' Services involves ECSD staff working closely with local and state veteran agencies to assist inmates in the transition back into society using resources specific to those who have served our country.

Information Sharing means ECSD provides data to a variety of local, state and federal agencies to strengthen communication and share vital information in a timely manner.

Each of the Department's three **Offices of Community Corrections** offers day reporting for inmates who have been released from one of ECSD's three correctional facilities but are required by the court to attend programs, provide urine samples or hold part-time jobs through an OCC.

Facility from Which Released

In 2015, 61% of sentenced inmates who were released came from the Middleton Facility, ECSD's largest facility. Thirty-two percent of sentenced releases came from the ECPRC, the second largest facility, and 7% came from the WIT, the smallest of the three facilities (see Figure 28).



Offenses for Which Incarcerated

Assault and battery, drug-related charges, and motor vehicle offenses are the perennial top three charges for which inmates are sentenced to ECSD. Of sentenced inmates released in 2015, 22% were incarcerated for A&B, 15% for drug-related charges and 9% for motor vehicle offenses. Burglary/larceny and OUI each accounted for 8% and violation of parole/probation accounted for 6% (see Table 6).

Most inmates have substance abuse issues, and that underlying issue or addiction may have spurred criminal behavior. An inmate may have been under the influence while committing a crime; was committing a crime to get money to fuel a substance habit; or was involved in buying or selling drugs.

Table 6. Offenses for Which Incarcerated	
Offense	(%)
Assault and Battery	22
Drug-related Charges	15
Motor Vehicle	9
Burglary/Larceny	8
OUI	8
Violation of Parole/Probation	6
Breaking and Entering	4
Abuse Prevention Act/Restraining Order/209A Violations	4
Firearms/Weapons	3
Receiving Stolen Property	3
Non-payment of Child Support	3
Sex Crimes	3
Fraud/Bribery/Forgery	2
Resisting Arrest	2
Threat/ Attempt to Commit a Crime	2
Destruction of Property	1
Shoplifting	1
Other*	4
*"Other" includes offenses with less than 1% response.	

Communities to Which Released

Of the 2015 release cohort, 76% were going to live in Essex County upon release. Consistently, the largest portions of inmates released reside in the Lawrence, Haverhill and Lynn. This trend continued for inmates released in 2015: 17% went to Lawrence, 13% to Haverhill and 11% to Lynn. (see table 7). One year after release, the top five communities remained the same, demonstrating that there was not a lot of movement among former inmates.

Table 7. Residence Upon Release & One Year Post-release

City/Town	Upon Release (%)	City/Town	1 Year Post-release (%)
Lawrence	17	Lawrence	17
Haverhill	13	Haverhill	13
Lynn	11	Lynn	11
Peabody	5	Peabody	5
Salem	5	Salem	5
Beverly	4	Methuen	4
Methuen	4	Beverly	3
Amesbury	2	Amesbury	2
Danvers	2	Gloucester	2
Gloucester	2	Salisbury	2
Salisbury	2	Danvers	1
Newburyport	1	Other Communities in Essex County	8
Other Communities in Essex County	8	Out of Essex County	21
Out of Essex County	18	Out of Massachusetts	6
Out of Massachusetts	6		

Substance Use

The term “drug of choice” was used in previous recidivism reports. The opioid epidemic has taught us that the word “choice” is inaccurate. Many of the people using drugs are in the throes of addiction, which is an illness. Going forward, the term “primary drug (or substance) used” will be utilized in these reports.

Alcohol, heroin and marijuana are consistently the top three drugs used by respondents. Of inmates released in 2015, 33% of substance users claimed alcohol as their primary substance used. Twenty-nine percent stated heroin was their primary drug used and 26% stated it was marijuana. Crack/cocaine accounted for 7%, prescription drugs for 2% and other drugs for 3% (see Table 8).

When asked how often they used their primary drug, the highest percentage reporting daily use was found in heroin users, at a remarkable 78%. Almost eight out of 10 heroin users stated that they use the drug daily.

Table 8. Primary Drug Used Among Inmates

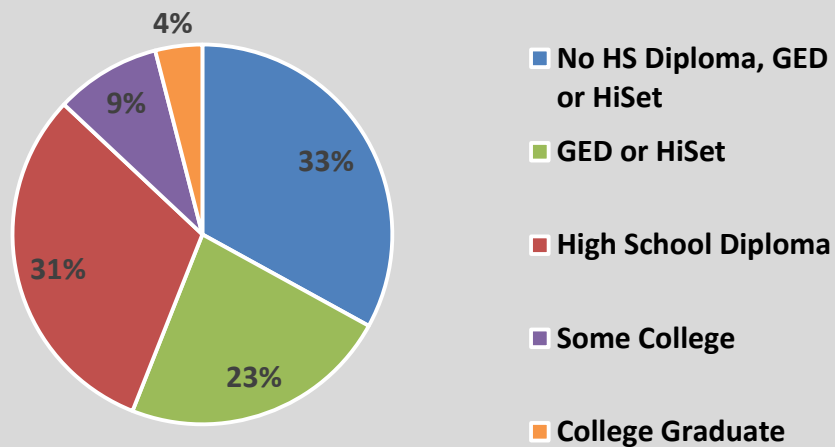
Drug	(%)	Use Daily (%)
Alcohol	33	40
Heroin	29	78
Marijuana	26	55
Cocaine/Crack	7	28
Prescription	2	71
Other*	3	63

Education

At the time of their Exit Interviews, 33% of respondents did not have high school diplomas, GEDs, or HiSet certification. Twenty three percent had GEDs or HiSet certification and 31% had high school diplomas. Nine percent had some college and 4% were college graduates (see Figure 29). A comparison of education levels at time of release and one year post-release is available in Table 9.

Of the 207 respondents that stated where they received their GEDs or HiSet certification, 15% had received them from ECSD.

Figure 29. Education Levels at Time of Release



Education Comparison: Pre-release vs. Post-release

The portion of former inmates without high school diplomas, GEDs or HiSet certification decreased from 33% at exit to 23% one year post-release. The portion of GEDs or HiSet certification decreased slightly from 23% at exit to 19% post-release, and the portion with high school diplomas increased from 31% to 39%. The percentage with college experience rose from 13% at exit to 19% post-release (see Table 9). These data, overall, indicate that former inmates may be pursuing higher education.

Table 9. Education Levels at Time of Release and One Year Post-release		
Education	Exit Interview (%)	One Year Post-release (%)
No HS Diploma, GED or HiSet	33	23
GED or HiSet	23	19
High School Diploma	31	39
Some College	9	16
College Graduate	4	3

Detox Units

The Department's Male Detox Unit opened on December 7, 2015. The Female Detox Unit opened on July 5, 2016. In order to be remanded to one of these 28-day Detox Units, an individual must meet certain standards. He or she must be alleged to have committed a quality of life crime and cannot be deemed as either a sexual or violent offender. Eligible candidates for the units include individuals who have violated probation, tested positive for opiates, other drugs or alcohol in their urine, shown clear signs of addiction, been a "frequent flyer" in the court system and are invested in receiving help at no cost to themselves.

With this new process, **pre-trial** individuals are remanded to one of the Essex County Sheriff's Department's Detox Units by the presiding judge. Upon completion of the program, individuals are often able to dispose of their cases and utilize non-custodial tools as opposed to traditional incarceration. Individuals who successfully complete the program may be recommended to continue with services such as probation, employment counseling, day reporting at an Office of Community Corrections, drug testing, electronic monitoring, and in some instances sober houses.

Individualized care on both units includes all aspects of well-being: physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual. Respect for others and the rehabilitation process, personal hygiene and accountability are expected from all participants.

The design of the units is based on efficiency and effectiveness:

- 42 beds
- A medical/detoxification environment
- Medical treatment provided by Naphcare
- Programming components provided by ADCARE
- Initial court-ordered confinement for treatment followed by a court appearance to further consider the offender's pretrial

As of March 10, 2017, 822 participants had been admitted to the male unit and 275 to the female unit. Only a small cohort of former Male Detox participants qualified for a one-year recidivism study, those inmates who were released in January and February 2016 (i.e. one year ago). Of the 85 participants who completed the program, 58 recidivated, for a one-year recidivism rate of 68.24%. While this rate is much higher than the rate of the general population, we must consider the participants: people who had serious addictions to opioids. This recidivism rate can be looked at in an entirely different light: *Almost one third of men who participated in the Detox Unit did not go back to a life of crime.*

It is helpful to look at other opioid-related statistics:

- As illustrated in Table 8, 78% of heroin users stated they used the drug daily.
- For the sixth consecutive year in Massachusetts, unintentional opioid-related overdose deaths rose (Salsberg, 2017).
- According to the Department of Public Health, 1,465 confirmed opioid-related deaths occurred in 2016. With another 469 to 562 suspected overdoses awaiting medical confirmation, the 2016 figure will surpass the 2015 figure of 1,579 confirmed and 154 suspected opioid-related fatalities (Salsberg).
- Fentanyl-an extremely powerful and addictive synthetic opioid-was involved in 75% of the 2016 fatalities (Salsberg).

While one overdose is too many and one drug-related death is horrific, the one-year success rate of 32% is a commendable starting point.

Salsberg, Bob, Associated Press (2017, February 18). Report: Massachusetts opioid deaths continue to rise. *The Salem News*. P.16.

CONCLUSION

The one-year recidivism rate for inmates released in 2015 is 40.57%. Stated in other terms, approximately six out of 10 inmates released in 2015 successfully reintegrated into society as of one year after their release. The rate of 40.57% represents a decrease of 4.76% from 45.33% in 2014 and is 5.12% lower than the average for the previous five years (2010-2014) of 45.69% (see Figure 4). This sizable decrease caused researchers to ask two questions:

- 1) Is the decrease in recidivism rate realistic (or *reasonable*)? When using statistical analysis, does the change fall within an acceptable range?
- 2) If the decrease does fall within an acceptable range, what are the likely causes?

The answer to Question 1 is, “Yes,” the recidivism rate of 40.57% is reasonable. In order to use a larger sample size, we examined the recidivism rates for the past nine years. The drop in the recidivism rate from an average of 46.42% for these previous nine years (2006 – 2014) to 40.57% (2015) is reasonable based on statistical analysis (see Figures 2 & 3).

Looking at the past 10 years (to include the 2015 findings), the recidivism rates for years 2006 to 2015 are not very spread out (i.e. have a fairly tight distribution). The curve in Figure 3 shows that 40.57% is 2.14 SDs away from the mean – well within a reasonable range.

Answering Question 2: What are the causes of this decrease?

Certain “constants” affected the decrease in the recidivism rate in 2015:

Education: Most sentenced inmates receive education in the form of programs, formal classes, peer support or treatment. Education while incarcerated helps reduce post-release unemployment.

The portion of former inmates without high school diplomas, GEDs or HiSet certification decreased from 33% at exit to 23% one year post-release. The portion of GEDs or HiSet certification decreased from 23% at exit to 19% post-release but the portion with high school diplomas increased from 31% to 39%. The percentage with college experience rose from 13% at exit to 19% post-release (see Table 9). These data indicate that former inmates may be pursuing higher education. Sixty-seven percent of respondents felt that ECSD helped them with their education and 20% were taking educational courses one year after release (see Figures 16 & 17).

Employment: Employment allows former inmates to feel good about themselves. A job helps one to be productive and improves one’s self esteem. This, in turn, helps to decrease the recidivism rate. To help former inmates find employment, ECSD staff provides not only educational courses, but also occupational training, resume writing and career training.

The employment statistics for former inmates reflect the improvement in the country’s as well as the state’s employment rates. The unemployment rate among former inmates was 16%. Of those who were employed, 54% had full-time jobs and 63% were working as skilled laborers. Many

former inmates returned to jobs they held prior to incarceration, resulting in 52% stating they held their jobs for more than one year. Another positive sign was that 25% fell into the highest earning bracket of \$751 or more per week (see Figures 12 -15).

Substance Abuse: The opioid epidemic is especially tough on the inmate population. Approximately 85% of ECSD inmates have substance abuse issues, with almost one third (29%) having heroin as their primary drug used (see Table 8).

Programs such as TRAC (Treatment and Recovery of Addictions in Corrections), Drug & Alcohol and ECRC (Essex County Recovery Center) as well as the 80-Bed Unit, which is a community-style unit dedicated to substance abuse treatment, provide excellent counseling and rehabilitation opportunities for inmates. Sixty-eight percent of respondents felt that ECSD's drug & alcohol programs contributed to a successful reintegration and 66% stated they had maintained their sobriety since being released (see Figures 19 & 20).

The Department's Male Detox Unit opened in December of 2015 and the Female Detox Unit opened in July of 2016 (see "Detox Units" section). The units provide a 28 day comprehensive treatment program to pretrial detainees to effectively address their addiction. These units serve the pre-trial population, so the statistics for the participants are not reflected in this report's figures, as this report focuses on sentenced inmates who were released. Some of the Detox participants, however, were part of the "2015 released sentenced inmates" cohort. Therefore, participating in the Detox Program may very well have helped them succeed.

Family: Family support helps inmates succeed upon release. Inmates are encouraged to reach out to their families to allow family members to help them in their reintegration process. Families are encouraged to visit inmates and plan for their release.

Upon their release, 56% of former inmates lived with family (see Figure 9), 82% felt that family support contributed to a successful re-entry (see Figure 23) and 75% had at least one child (see Figure 25) – all factors that help former inmates lead more stable lives.

Two unique factors affected the decrease in the recidivism rate in 2015:

Looking closely at the type of recidivism shows another cause of the 4.76% decrease from 2014 to 2015. It is helpful to look at these three categories not just as a percentage *of people who recidivated*, but also as a percentage *of people who were released*. Table 1 shows that the percentage found guilty of new crimes decreased slightly (.48%) but the percentage of those who had new arraignments (the largest portion of those who recidivated) decreased by 5.16%. This had a large impact on the recidivism rate dropping.

Table 2 shows that the largest drop in recidivism (6.39%) came from Middleton, the facility that released the largest number of inmates. A modest decrease, but a decrease nonetheless, came from the ECPRC, the facility that released the second largest number of inmates. An increase in

recidivism came from the WIT, which released the smallest number of inmates. The results were, therefore, significantly weighted, resulting in a decrease in the recidivism rate.

The data presented in this report were collected primarily between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016. Follow-up data collection, primarily on the Male Detox Unit, went into March 2017 to allow researchers to capture as much relevant data as possible. Extending the data collection period only enhanced the reliability of the findings.

The 2015 one-year recidivism rate of 40.57% is within normal range. In addition, analysis shows that the rate is not “by chance,” but rather the result of certain factors. Specifically, this rate, which is a decrease of 4.76% from 2014, is the result of the Essex County Sheriff’s Department staff’s effort to assist inmates in preparing for life after incarceration and the diligent work former inmates do on a daily basis to stay sober, remain employed, live with their loved ones and be productive members of society.