



Oregon Recidivism Analysis

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Key Takeaways:

- For the examined Parole-PPS cohort, rates of arrest recidivism and rates of conviction recidivism continue to decline, while the rate of incarceration recidivism continues to slightly increase.
- For the examined Probation cohort, recidivism rates for arrest, conviction, and incarceration continue to decline. In fact, the current Probation cohort experienced the lowest incarceration recidivism rate since the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) began tracking in 1997.
- Recidivism rates in Oregon are at or near historic lows. At least part of the recent downward trend can be attributed to Measure 110, which decriminalized most instances of possession of controlled substances. Lower levels of enforcement, whether due to criminal justice system staffing shortfalls, the COVID-19 pandemic, or other related causes, likely also impact these trends.

Introduction

This semiannual recidivism report is authored by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) with the assistance of state agency partners. In this report, the CJC's methodology for connecting cohorts to potential recidivism is consistent with past reports (please see Appendix of May 2018 report¹ and the November 2020 report²). The CJC separately analyzes two groups: those released to post-prison supervision, and those who are sentenced to a new probation sentence. As required in ORS 423.557, an individual is counted as recidivating if they are incarcerated for a new crime, or arrested or convicted of a crime, within three years of release from prison/felony jail sentence or starting a probation sentence. Arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates are tracked separately, so a single individual can contribute to all three recidivism measures or a subset.

To calculate recidivism rates, the CJC combines data provided by the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC), Oregon Judicial Department (OJD), and Oregon State Police (OSP). Law Enforcement Data Systems (LEDS) data from OSP permits the CJC to count arrests for which the individual was fingerprinted. Fingerprinting is required in arrests for felony crimes and for misdemeanor drug and sex crimes. Although fingerprinting occurs for other misdemeanor crimes, it is not required, and these arrests may be omitted from the CJC's recidivism measure. In reported arrest counts, the CJC does not account for multiple arrests. Circuit court data from the OJD allows the CJC to track misdemeanor and felony convictions. In reported conviction counts, the CJC does not account for multiple convictions. Oregon DOC data permits the CJC to track incarceration for individuals within these cohorts. As with arrests and convictions, multiple incarcerations are not accounted for in the CJC's recidivism measure.

¹ <https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/May2018RecidivismReport-Final.pdf>

² https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/RecidivismReport_Nov2020.pdf

Statewide Recidivism Rates

The most recent recidivism cohort the CJC can track includes individuals released from incarceration or sentenced to probation from January through June 2020. For this group, the CJC can examine the full three-year recidivism period, which ended in June 2023. Recidivism rates for this six-month cohort are displayed in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

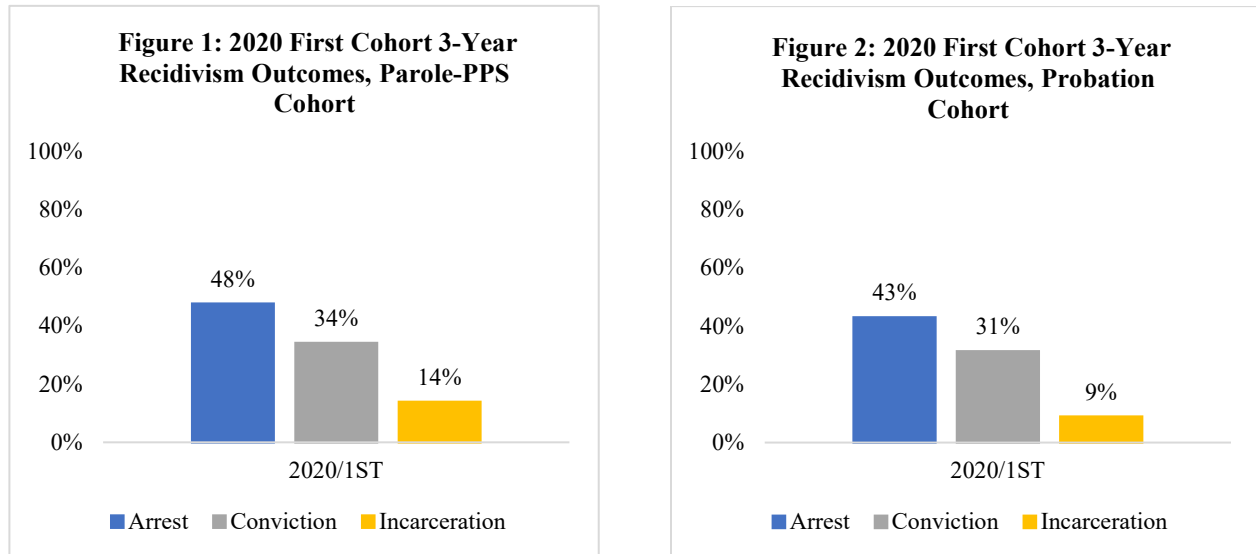


Figure 3 and Figure 4 express the above recidivism rates in greater context within Oregon. The first cohort included in the figures is from 1998 and the most recent cohort examined is the first six-month cohort of 2020 (2020/1ST). The 2020/1ST cohort overlaps with the initial COVID-19 shutdown beginning in March 2020, which may affect the size of the cohort as well as the recidivism rates. The individuals included in this cohort spent their three-year risk period in a criminal justice system impacted by COVID-19. Prior analyses by CJC show a substantial reduction in traffic stops, arrests, and prison and probation intakes over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic³. In addition, staffing at all levels of the criminal justice system has been impacted by COVID-19 and recent economic trends. Finally, Measure 110, which decriminalized most possession of controlled substances, was passed in November 2020 and became effective in February 2021. Prior analyses suggest that this decriminalization is associated with a 1 to 5 percent decrease in recidivism rates across both the Probation and Parole-PPS cohorts,⁴ although it is important to note that the Measure 110 impact does not account for the entire recent downward trend in recidivism rates.

Figure 3 displays the recidivism rates for individuals on parole or post-prison supervision, which includes all individuals released from jail or prison. For the most recent Parole-PPS cohort, arrest and conviction recidivism continued the downward trend that first appeared with the second 2017 cohort, while the rates of incarceration recidivism display a slight increase. The arrest rate for the most recent cohort (2020/1ST) is 47.6 percent, which is 3 percentage points lower than the previous cohort. The conviction recidivism rate is at a historic low of 34.1 percent. In contrast to arrest and conviction, the incarceration recidivism rate for the 2020/1ST cohort is 0.3 percentage points higher than the previous cohort, sitting at 13.8 percent. Despite this small increase from the second cohort of 2019, incarceration recidivism rates remain near historic lows.

³ https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/COVID_impacts_part1.pdf

⁴ <https://www.oregon.gov/cjc/CJC%20Document%20Library/Recidivism%20Report%20November%202022.pdf>

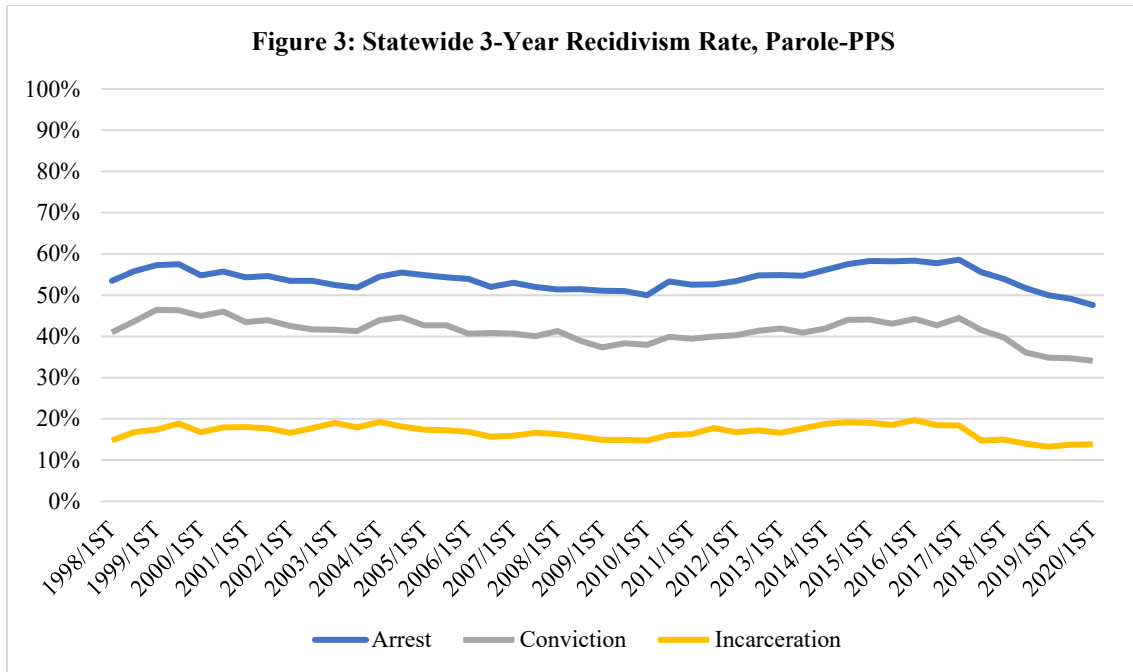


Figure 4 illustrates arrest, conviction, and incarceration recidivism rates for individuals sentenced to probation from 1997 through June 2020, a twenty-three-year period. Similar to the Parole-PPS cohort, recidivism rates are at or near historic lows. Arrest recidivism sits at 42.9 percent while conviction recidivism is at 31.3 percent. The incarceration recidivism rate reached a historical low in the previous cohort (2019/2ND), and it has continued to decline; it is now at a new historical low of 8.9 percent. This incarceration recidivism rate is 3 percentage points lower than the 2019/1ST cohort, which sat at 11.9 percent.

