

COUNTY SUPERVISION AND RECIDIVISM

BASELINING RECIDIVISM AMONG SUPERVISED OFFENDERS IN 7 PENNSYLVANIA COUNTIES

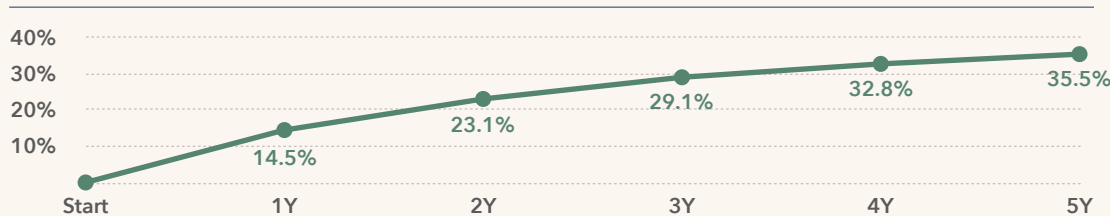
By Brandon Vick, Ph.D., Robert Orth, Ph.D. & Charles Gartside of Indiana University of Pennsylvania

ABOUT THE STUDY and the descriptive characteristics of the county-supervised offenders

This study is the first phase of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency’s efforts to baseline recidivism among county-supervised offenders. As part of a federal grant award* from the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), we studied 12,205 offenders that began supervision in 2016 across seven counties: Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Franklin, Indiana, Union, and York. In 2020, these seven counties had a combined population of 2,178,717 and represented 16.8% of Pennsylvania’s statewide population. The 12,205 offenders that began supervision in the seven counties were 73.7% male, 78.4% white, and 74.0% were at or above 26 years old, with the average offender age near 35. Over three-quarters (78.4%) of these offenders entered supervision on a lead offense graded as a Misdemeanor. A majority of offenders entered supervision on lead offenses that were categorized as either a DUI (32.5%) or a Property crime (22.4%). Combined with Drug-related offenses (18.1%), these three offense categories accounted for nearly three out of every four offenders entering onto supervision caseload.

In 2022, offender criminal history records were gathered and analyzed within two separate timeframes: 1.) beginning with their first arrest and up to the last day prior to their 2016 entrance onto supervision caseload, and 2.) beginning with their 2016 entrance onto supervision caseload and forward through September 2022. For the first timeframe, we found that offenders entering onto a county’s supervision caseload in 2016 had an average age at first arrest of 27 years old, and 7 out of every 10 offenders (72.6%) had no prior arrests for a violent offense, however, a vast majority (77.1%) did have at least one prior arrest. The second timeframe of criminal history record analysis, from an offender’s supervision start date in 2016 and forward, served as the recidivism exposure timeframe. We defined recidivism as the **first instance of rearrest for any new criminal charge, regardless of grade (e.g. Summary, Misdemeanor, or Felony), following an offender starting supervision.** Recidivism was measured up to 5 years following an offender’s supervision start date, and below we provide our findings.

7-COUNTY RECIDIVISM RATES the first instance of rearrest within each exposure timeframe

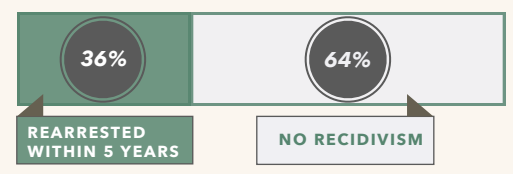


KEY TAKEAWAYS about the offenders’ characteristics and the general rearrest rate

- Overall, the supervised offenders studied tended to be white males, 26 years or older, with at least one prior arrest, and they entered supervision due to a lead offense graded as a Misdemeanor.
- Nearly 36% of 12,205 offenders studied across 7 Pennsylvania counties were rearrested within 5 years of starting supervision.

Characteristics	7-Counties
Offenders in Study	12,205
<i>Demographics</i>	
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	73.7%
Female	26.3%
<i>Race</i>	
White	78.4%
Nonwhite	21.6%
<i>Age</i>	
Under 26	26.0%
26 & Up	74.0%
Average Age	35.2
<i>Initial Lead Offense</i>	
<i>Charge Grade</i>	
Misdemeanor	78.4%
Felony	21.6%
<i>Charge Category</i>	
DUI	32.5%
Drugs	18.1%
Property	22.4%
Public Order	15.7%
Violent	10.0%
Weapons	1.2%
<i>Criminal History</i>	
<i>Age at First Arrest</i>	
	26.8
<i>Prior Arrests (All Offenses)</i>	
None	22.9%
One to Two	34.4%
Three or More	42.7%
<i>Prior Arrests (Violent Offenses)</i>	
None	72.6%
One	15.2%
Two or More	12.2%

5Y RECIDIVISM rearrest vs. no rearrest



*Note — While this project was funded through the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), neither the DOJ, nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse, this project (including without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure and policies, and any services or tools provided).

7-COUNTY KEY 5Y RECIDIVISM OUTCOMES



35.5%
All Offenders
First Rearrest for Any Charge



7.0%
Misdemeanor Offenders
First Rearrest for Felony Charge
(Charge Grade Escalation)

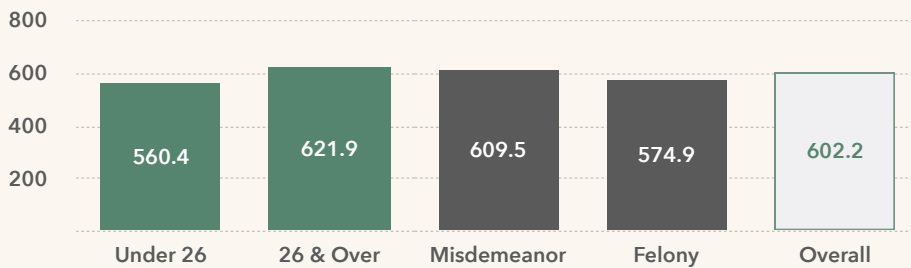


3.7%
Nonviolent Offenders
First Rearrest for Violent Charge
(Violent Charge Escalation)

REARREST RATES by offender characteristics

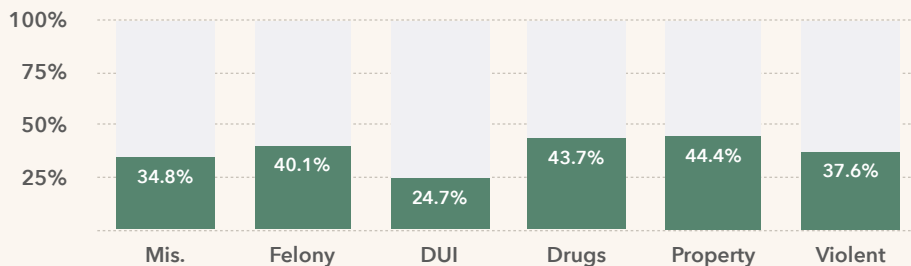
Overall, 35.5% of all offenders were rearrested within 5 years of starting supervision. On average, the recidivating offenders were rearrested within 602 days, or around 20 months. When analyzing rearrest by offender characteristics, Age and Initial Lead Offense are two particular areas that stand out in terms of rearrest rate differences.

Average Days to Rearrest (5Y), By Age, Initial Lead Offense Charge Grade, & Overall



Younger offenders (under 26 yo) were rearrested at a 43.7% rate compared to the 32.6% rate of those 26 years and older. Additionally, younger offenders were rearrested within an average of 560 days, 10% earlier than their older counterparts (622 days). Misdemeanor offenders were rearrested less than Felony offenders (34.8% vs. 40.1%), and DUI offenders (24.7%) were rearrested less than all other offense categories. The highest rates of recidivism were found within Property (44.4%) and Drug (43.7%) offenders. Violent offenders had the third highest rearrest rate (37.6%), but on average took longer to be rearrested (644 days) than most other offense categories.

5Y Rearrest, By Notable Initial Lead Offense Charges



KEY TAKEAWAYS about rearrest rates and offender characteristics

- The youngest offenders (Under 26) had a noticeably higher 5Y rearrest rate (43.7%) than those 26 years of age or older (32.6%). On average, younger offenders were rearrested nearly 10% earlier (560 days vs. 622 days) than older offenders.
- Misdemeanor offenders had a slightly lower 5Y rearrest rate (34.8%) than Felony offenders (40.1%).
- Property (44.4%) and Drug (43.7%) offenders had the highest rates of recidivism, followed by Violent (37.6%) offenders, but DUI offenders had the lowest rearrest rates (18.1%).

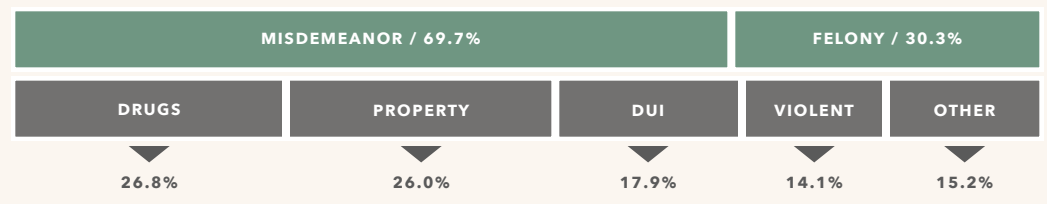
7-Counties

Rearrest Rates	7-Counties			Avg Days to Rearrest (5Y Rate)
	1Y	3Y	5Y	
All Offenders	14.5%	29.1%	35.5%	602.2
<i>Demographics</i>				
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	14.9%	30.0%	36.7%	605.9
Female	13.8%	27.0%	32.6%	590.5
<i>Race</i>				
White	14.5%	28.6%	34.8%	599.2
Nonwhite	14.8%	31.6%	38.8%	612.0
<i>Age</i>				
Under 26	19.4%	36.6%	43.7%	560.4
26 & Up	12.8%	26.5%	32.6%	621.9
<i>Initial Lead Offense</i>				
<i>Charge Grade</i>				
Misdemeanor	14.1%	28.5%	34.8%	609.5
Felony	17.1%	33.4%	40.1%	574.9
<i>Charge Category</i>				
DUI	8.9%	19.1%	24.7%	684.6
Drugs	19.0%	36.7%	43.7%	575.8
Property	19.0%	37.3%	44.4%	561.9
Public Order	16.0%	30.5%	36.2%	559.1
Violent	14.1%	29.9%	37.6%	643.7
Weapons	11.0%	21.9%	28.8%	702.3
<i>Criminal History</i>				
<i>Prior Arrests (All Offenses)</i>				
None	8.5%	16.3%	20.1%	613.3
One to Two	11.2%	23.6%	29.2%	622.5
Three or More	20.4%	40.4%	48.7%	589.9
<i>Prior Arrests (Violent Offenses)</i>				
None	13.4%	26.4%	32.1%	594.6
One	14.5%	31.3%	38.9%	632.4
Two or More	21.0%	42.6%	51.5%	602.0

REARREST CHARGES the most serious charge at rearrest

The majority (51.5%) of the 4,349 rearrested offenders from the seven counties were rearrested outside of the county that originally supervised them, and 73.5% were rearrested on a charge (the most serious in the arrest incident) graded as a Misdemeanor. Put another way, nearly 3 in 4 rearrested offenders recidivated on a Misdemeanor charge, as opposed to a Felony. Seven out of every 10 rearrested offenders were rearrested on either a Drug charge (26.8%), Property charge (26.0%), or DUI charge (17.9%), and perhaps most noteworthy, only 14.1% were rearrested for a Violent charge.

Rearrest Charges, By Initial Charge Grade and Charge Category



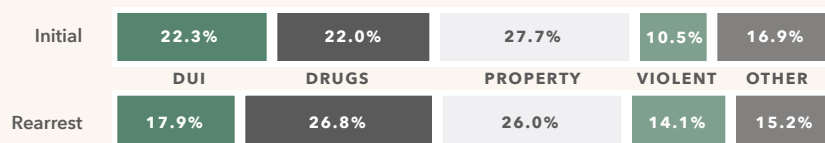
Rearrest Charges	7-Counties	
	n	%
Offenders Rearrested (5Y)	4,349	35.5%
<i>Initial Charge Grade</i>		
Misdemeanor *	3,197	73.5%
Felony	1,152	26.5%
<i>Initial Charge Category</i>		
DUI	776	17.9%
Drugs	1,163	26.8%
Property	1,128	26.0%
Public Order	590	13.6%
Violent	612	14.1%
Weapons	70	1.6%
<i>Rearrest Location</i>		
In-County	2,109	48.5%
Out of County	2,240	51.5%

Charge Switch	7-Counties	
	Misdemeanor	Felony
<i>Initial Charge Grade</i>		
Misdemeanor	2,720 (80%)	686 (20%)
Felony	460 (50%)	460 (50%)
<i>Initial Charge Category</i>		
DUI	849 (87%)	126 (13%)
Drugs	688 (72%)	272 (28%)
Property	779 (65%)	428 (35%)
Public Order	531 (77%)	160 (23%)
Violent	313 (68%)	145 (32%)
Weapons	26 (62%)	16 (38%)

CHARGE SWITCH examining initial offense vs. most serious rearrest charge

Of the 3,406 Misdemeanor offenders that were rearrested, the vast majority (80%) were rearrested on a Misdemeanor charge, and only 20% switched to a Felony charge. However, half of all Felony offenders that were rearrested switched to a Misdemeanor charge, representing a notable step-down in terms of offense severity. Upon analyzing the rearrested offenders by their initial charge, we find the pattern of being rearrested for a similar charge mostly continues. Examples of this include 47% of DUI offenders, 52% of Drug offenders, 53% of Property offenders, and 45% of Violent offenders were rearrested for charges in the same offense categories. However, we do find observational evidence that charge switch, particularly towards Drug and Violent charges has occurred. Among 4,323 rearrested offenders (where we could establish charge categories for both their initial lead offense charge and their rearrest charge), the initial composition of the notable lead offense categories was 22% DUI, 22% Drug, 28% Property, and 11% Violent. Upon rearrest, this composition switches to 18% DUI, 27% Drug, 26% Property, and 14% Violent, showing a move towards proportionally more Drug and Violent charges following rearrest.

Charge Category Proportions Before/After Rearrest Among Rearrested Offenders



KEY TAKEAWAYS about rearrest charges

- Of all rearrested offenders, nearly 3 out of every 4 were rearrested on a Misdemeanor charge.
- Only 14% of all rearrested offenders were rearrested on a Violent charge.
- 80% of Misdemeanor offenders were rearrested on a Misdemeanor charge, with only 20% switching to a Felony charge.
- Offenders were largely rearrested on similar offense charges aligning with their initial lead offense.

Charge Switch, By Category	7-Counties						
	DUI	Drugs	Property	Pub. Order	Violent	Weapons	
<i>Initial Lead Charge Category</i>							
DUI	460 (47%)	183 (19%)	107 (11%)	112 (12%)	96 (10%)	14 (1%)	
Drugs	110 (11%)	503 (52%)	162 (17%)	93 (10%)	72 (8%)	19 (2%)	
Property	71 (6%)	250 (21%)	638 (53%)	131 (11%)	101 (8%)	13 (1%)	
Public Order	75 (11%)	150 (22%)	132 (19%)	195 (28%)	128 (19%)	10 (1%)	
Violent	52 (11%)	64 (14%)	72 (16%)	56 (12%)	206 (45%)	6 (1%)	
Weapons	4 (10%)	10 (24%)	10 (24%)	3 (7%)	7 (17%)	8 (19%)	

Charges Before/After Rearrest	7-Counties	
	Initial Charge	Rearrest Charge
<i>Charge Category</i>		
DUI	22.3%	17.9%
Drugs	22.0%	26.8%
Property	27.7%	26.0%
Public Order	15.9%	13.6%
Violent	10.5%	14.1%
Weapons	1.0%	1.6%

*Note — 132 of 4,349 offenders were rearrested on a Summary (non-traffic) charge. Due to the low number, these offenders were grouped into the “Misdemeanor” category.

REARREST ESCALATION viewing recidivism through the lens of offense severity

CHARGE ESCALATION from misdemeanors to felonies

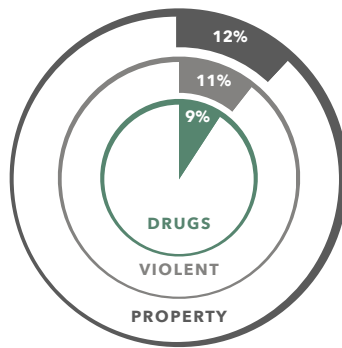
Here we analyze the Misdemeanor offenders to understand whether their charge severity escalated to a Felony charge at rearrest. Of the 9,884 Misdemeanor offenders, only 686, or 7.0%, were rearrested on a Felony charge within 5 years. We found that charge escalation is most pronounced among Property (12.0%), Violent (10.6%), Nonwhite (10.3%), and Drug (9.2%) offenders. DUI offenders (3.2%) and first-time offenders (3.1%) had the lowest charge escalation rates.

VIOLENT ESCALATION from nonviolence to violence

An analysis of the 10,981 nonviolent offenders who were studied found that only 404, or 3.7%, escalated to a Violent charge at rearrest within 5 years. Younger offenders under 26 years old (4.7%) and Nonwhite offenders (5.1%) both had higher violent escalation rates compared to their counterparts. However, a similar violent escalation rate (3.7%) was observed among Misdemeanor and Felony offenders.

		7-Counties	
Violent Charge Escalation (Nonviolent to Violent)		n	5Y Rearrest
All Offenders		404	3.7%
<i>Demographics</i>			
<i>Gender</i>			
	Male	330	4.2%
	Female	74	2.5%
<i>Race</i>			
	White	287	3.3%
	Nonwhite	117	5.1%
<i>Age</i>			
	Under 26	135	4.7%
	26 & Up	269	3.3%
<i>Initial Lead Offense</i>			
<i>Charge Grade</i>			
	Misdemeanor	329	3.7%
	Felony	75	3.6%
<i>Charge Category</i>			
	DUI	96	2.4%
	Drugs	72	3.3%
	Property	101	3.7%
	Public Order	128	6.7%
	Weapons	7	4.8%
<i>Criminal History</i>			
<i>Prior Arrests (All Offenses)</i>			
	None	59	2.4%
	One to Two	125	3.3%
	Three or More	220	4.7%
<i>Prior Arrests (Violent Offenses)</i>			
	None	148	1.7%
	One	116	8.5%
	Two or More	140	13.4%

Notable Misdemeanor Rearrest Escalation (to Felony)



		7-Counties	
Charge Grade Escalation (Misdemeanor to Felony)		n	5Y Rearrest
All Offenders		686	7.0%
<i>Demographics</i>			
<i>Gender</i>			
	Male	531	7.4%
	Female	155	6.0%
<i>Race</i>			
	White	484	6.2%
	Nonwhite	202	10.3%
<i>Age</i>			
	Under 26	210	8.3%
	26 & Up	476	6.6%
<i>Initial Lead Offense</i>			
<i>Charge Category</i>			
	DUI	126	3.2%
	Drugs	144	9.2%
	Property	197	12.0%
	Public Order	108	6.9%
	Violent	105	10.6%
	Weapons	6	8.3%
<i>Criminal History</i>			
<i>Prior Arrests (All Offenses)</i>			
	None	72	3.1%
	One to Two	168	4.8%
	Three or More	446	11.3%
<i>Prior Arrests (Violent Offenses)</i>			
	None	382	5.4%
	One	128	8.5%
	Two or More	176	14.6%

KEY QUESTIONS ANSWERED from this county-supervision recidivism study

- **What is the recidivism rate of 12,205 county-supervised offenders?** 35.5%, or 4,349 offenders were rearrested within 5 years of starting supervision in 2016 across seven Pennsylvania counties: Bucks, Chester, Cumberland, Franklin, Indiana, Union, and York.
- **Who had high recidivism rates?** Upon analyzing recidivism rates by characteristics, we found that the youngest offenders (Under 26) were rearrested at a rate (43.7%) that is over 11 percentage points higher than those that were 26 years or older (32.6%). Misdemeanor offenders had a slightly lower 5Y rearrest rate (34.8%) than Felony offenders (40.1%), and Property, Drug, and Violent offenders tended to have higher rearrest rates (between 37-44%) compared to other offense categories.
- **What charges were they rearrested on?** Nearly 3 out of every 4 (73.5%) offenders were rearrested on a Misdemeanor charge, and only 14% of all rearrests were for a Violent charge.
- **Were they rearrested on similar charges?** Yes, by and large, offenders tended to be rearrested on charges similar to their initial offense leading to supervision, indicating charge switch was not widespread. However, we do find evidence that charge switch has occurred in some areas, particularly towards Drug and Violent charges.
- **Were they rearrested on more serious charges?** As a group, no. Only 7.0% of Misdemeanor offenders were rearrested on a Felony charge, and only 3.7% of nonviolent offenders were rearrested on a Violent charge.