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- [» VICTIM SERVICES](#)
- [» RECIDIVISM](#)
- [» SUBSTANCE ABUSE](#)

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Recidivism

The most recent study on prison recidivism in Connecticut was conducted in 2006 by the Department of Correction and Central Connecticut State University's Institute for the Study of Crime and Justice.

The study strongly supports the expectation that the agency's Re-Entry Model enhances public safety. It took into account the release of all sentenced inmates, with terms of confinement longer than six months that had occurred during 2000 and followed them through the start of 2006. In all, more than 8,000 cases were analyzed. Nearly 90 percent of those cases involved male offenders, 45 percent of whom are African American with an average age of 30. This study defined recidivism as reconviction during that time period.

Overall, the study found the reconviction rate was 39 percent. This is a seven-percent reduction from a previous study, which was conducted by the Connecticut General Assembly's Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee in 2001. ([Link to Recidivism study full report.](#)) Additionally, the results of this most recent study confirm that a period of supervised re-entry in the community, prior to the end of sentence is extremely beneficial in reducing the rate of recidivism.

It found that offenders who are merely discharged from a correctional facility at the end of their sentence experience a higher reconviction rate of 47 percent. While different forms of supervised reintegration prior to the end of sentence all decreased that number, the most significant reduction occurred when offenders are assigned to a supervised period in a halfway house. This cut reconviction to 24 percent or nearly half the rate of those offenders who discharged directly from a correctional facility.

Substance Abuse Treatment

A separate study, conducted through the Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies at Brown University and the Schneider Institute for Health Policy, Heller School at Brandeis University, studied the effects of substance abuse treatment on released offenders. This evaluation sampled inmates who were released between 1996 and 1997 with a sub-sample of 1,463 selected for intensive data collection.

The study found that inmates who had attended the Department of Correction's Tier Substance Abuse Treatment Program were significantly less likely to be rearrested, with 32.5% who attended the Tier Program re-arrested within one year of release compared to 45.9% who did not attend the program. There was a linear relationship between the intensity of the program and the benefits of treatment.

While 46% of inmates who completed Tier One, a basic six-session substance abuse program, were re-arrested within one year, only 17% of inmates who attended Tier Four, a six-month residential therapeutic community, were re-arrested. The study also found that attending the Tier Program significantly

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reduced the severity of crimes committed.

[SPRP Project: Analysis of the Cost Effectiveness of Correctional Substance Abuse Treatment Programs](#)

Religious Programming

While not scientific, nor of a long duration, a March 2005 review of the graduates from the faith based Chrysalis program at the York Correctional Institution for women, shows promising results for those offenders who discharge after graduating. The program, which embraces all religious beliefs in an atmosphere which encourages faith and commitment to productive lifestyles, found that of the 69 offenders who had completed the program since its inception in May 2003, only three of those released have returned to prison with new charges reflecting a rate of about four percent.

Gang Management Program

The agency has also had a great deal of success with its innovative gang management program, which has been copied by a number of other states across the country. Initiated in 1994, the intensive Close Custody program requires that designated Security Risk Group/gang members ultimately renounce their membership to successfully complete the program.

To date more than 5,200 offenders have been designated as gang members once admitted to the agency and all have been involved to some extent with the Close Custody program. Recidivism in this regard is defined as gang members who renounce and complete the program, but are then found to have become re-involved with Security Risk Groups either once released or while still incarcerated. To date slightly more than 400 offenders have recidivated and have been re-designated as gang members. This translates into a recidivism rate of approximately 8%.

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