

OPM - Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division

Recidivism, 2018-release cohort

Highlights

- OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning February 2022 Recidivism Report analyzes the three-year cumulative return-to-correctional-facilities rate of the 2018 cohort.
- The 2022 recidivism report compares the return rate of the 2018 cohort to the 2015 and 2017 cohorts included in the previous year's report.
- The 2018 cohort's three-year return rate was 6 percentage points lower than the 2015 cohort's 50% benchmark and 5 percentage points lower than the 2017 cohort's 49% return rate.
- COVID-19's effects on justice operations impacted 2018 cohort rates, with declines in correctional facility returns observed following the pandemic's onset.
- The number of prior sentences remains highly predictive of recidivism, with just 29% of those completing their first sentence returning within 36 months.

Recidivism Rates: 2015, 2017, & 2018 cohorts

The OPM Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division (OPM CJPPD) is required by statute to produce annual reports on recidivism among Connecticut's correction population. For the 2022 analysis, OPM CJPPD presents a comparative study of recidivism for sentenced individuals discharged or released from Connecticut DOC facilities in 2018. This report examines rates of returns-to-correctional facilities for any reason over a 36-month period among sentenced prisoners released or discharged in calendar year 2018 and compares them with 2015 and 2017 release cohorts.

Recidivism rates commonly use at least one of four measures: 1) new arrests 2) new convictions 3) returns-to-prison for any reason, and 4) returns-to-prison to begin a new prison sentence. In keeping with prior reports, this year's report again utilizes returns for any reason. Subsequent references to "recidivism" will refer to the rate at which sentenced people released are readmitted to a Connecticut correctional facility within a designated number of months. Connecticut is one of six states to have a unified correction system, in which prisons and jails are both state-administered and both pretrial detainees and sentenced prisoners comprise the correction population. Therefore, a return to a Connecticut correctional facility for any reason provides a meaningful indicator of when an individual returned from the community, whether remanded, held for pretrial, or serving a new sentence.

Chart 1: Cumulative returns over time; 2015, 2017, & 2018 cohorts

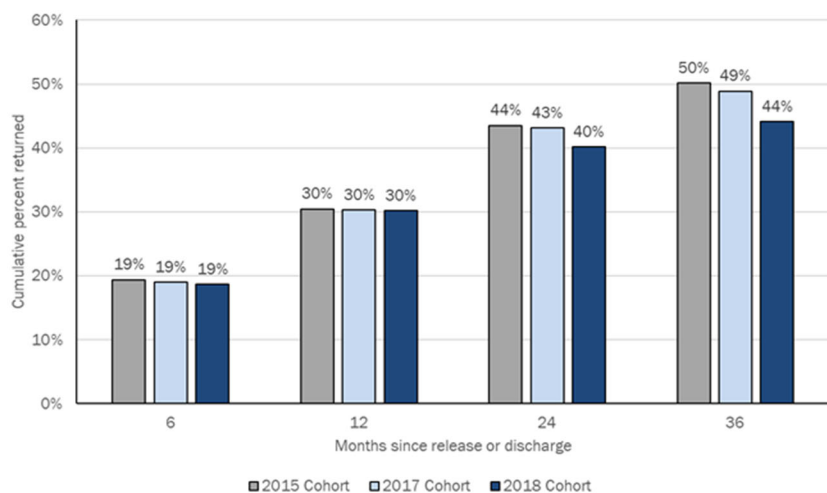


Chart 1 presents the cumulative percentage of individuals returned at six, twelve, 24, and 36 months compared across three different release cohorts: 2015, 2017, & 2018. While six and twelve month return rates are similar across all cohorts, return rates among the 2018 cohort are notably lower by years two and three following release.

Comparing three cohorts: Contracting sizes and aging populations

Table 1: Key Changes in study population, 2015, 2017 & 2018

	Release Year			Change (2015 to 2018)
	2015	2017	2018	%
DOC Population on July 1st	16,025	14,333	13,371	-16.6%
Release/Discharged Study pop.				
Sentenced	10,361	9,293	8,601	-17.0%
Male	9,103	8,055	7,478	-17.9%
Female	1,258	1,238	1,123	-10.7%
Under the age of 25	2,098	1,647	1,389	-33.8%

- The **2018 release cohort declined at a similar rate to the overall correction population** when compared to 2015.
- The **2018 cohort skews older**, with a noteworthy 33.8% drop in the total under 25 population when compared to the 2015 amount.

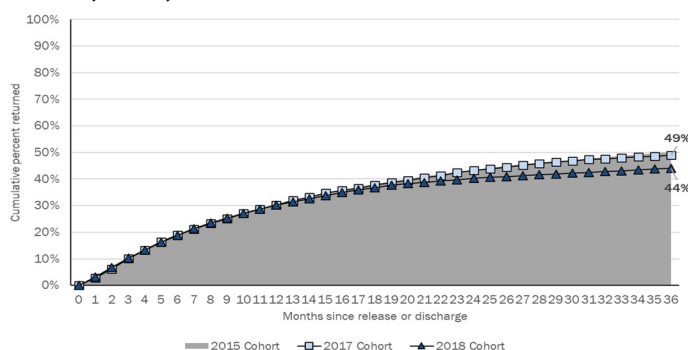
Table 2: The 2015, 2017, & 2018 release cohorts by age category

	2015		2017		2018	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
15 to 25	2098	20.2%	1647	17.7%	1389	16.1%
26 to 31	2284	22.0%	2109	22.7%	1942	22.6%
32 to 37	1921	18.5%	1795	19.3%	1717	20.0%
38 to 47	2105	20.3%	1970	21.2%	1805	21.0%
48 and Older	1953	18.8%	1772	19.1%	1748	20.3%
Total	10361		9293		8601	

- Table 2* highlights that individuals aged 15 to 25 comprised only 16.1% of the 2018 release cohort, a **4% reduction** from the 2015 cohort.
- At the same time, **those 48 and older grew to 20.3% of the 2018 cohort** compared with 18.8% of the 2015 cohort.

Recidivism among cohorts: Cumulative returns over 36 months

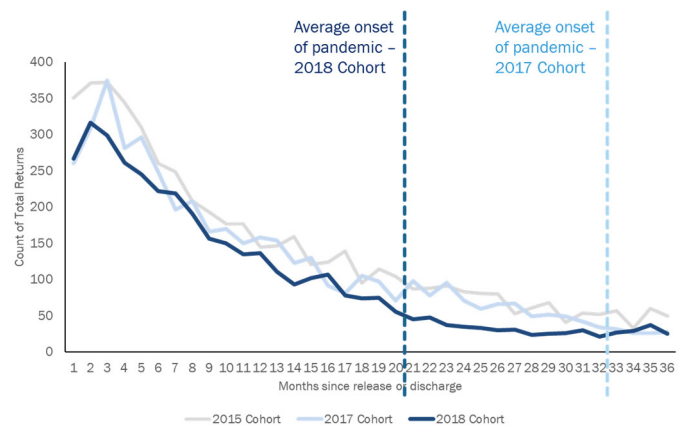
Chart 2: Cumulative returns by month following release, 2015, 2017 & 2018 cohorts



- Chart 2* illustrates the cumulative percentage by month of each cohort returned for any reason following release or discharge. The 2015 cohort's rate, our benchmark, is shaded in gray, while 2017 and 2018 cohort rates are plotted in comparison.
- As shown, the cumulative percentage returned for any reason **remained consistent across all three cohorts within the first year** following release.
- In years two and three however, the **2018 cohort's cumulative return rate dips significantly lower** than both our 2015 cohort benchmark rate and the 2017 cohort's.

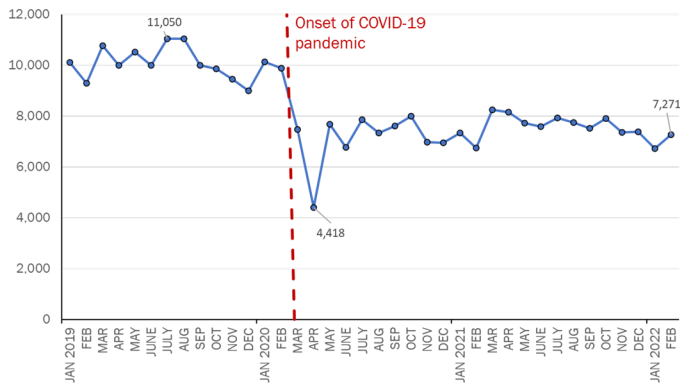
COVID impacts on returns: Pandemic decreases in returns

Chart 3: Count of correctional returns by month following release, 2015, 2017 & 2018 cohorts



- Chart 3* displays the total count of returns by the month subsequent to release or discharge, a companion to the cumulative return percentages shown previously.
- A key detail in *Chart 3*:** The 2017 cohort's returns diverge from 2015 trends beginning in month 32; 2018's diverges from trend beginning in month 21.
 - These months correspond to **when each cohort on average began encountering the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- The observed dip in returns suggest that **the pandemic's wide-ranging impacts on justice systems trends also impacted rates of correctional facility returns** among the study cohorts.

Chart 4: Monthly arrests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic begins

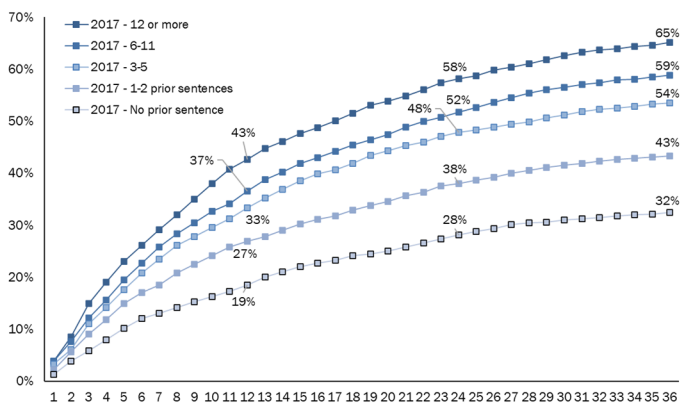


Source: CRMVS via CJIS, as reported from Monthly Indicators publication

- **Chart 4** presents monthly criminal and motor vehicle arrests for the months between January 2019 and February 2022, as reported in OPM CJPPD’s *Monthly Indicators* reports.
 - Demonstrates the steep drop in arrest volumes immediately following the pandemic’s onset.
 - By 2022, arrest volumes had yet to reach typical pre-pandemic levels.
- OPM CJPPD posits that **the reduction in rates corresponds to pandemic impacts upon arrest trends**, as arrests are a key mechanism for initiating returns to the DOC.

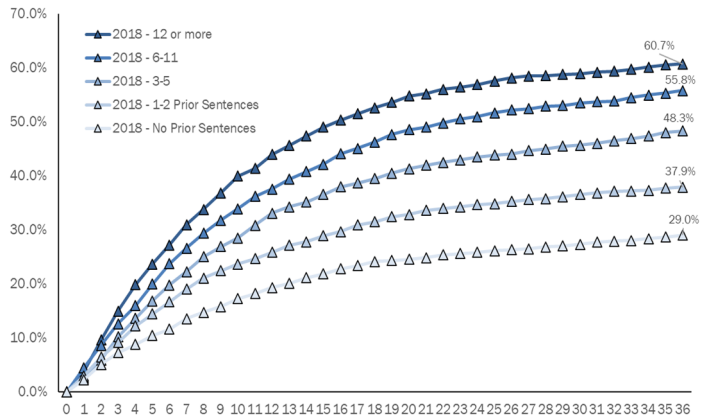
Recidivism and sentence history: Prior sentences more likely to return

Chart 5: Correctional returns by number of sentences prior to release or discharge, 2017 cohort



- Again, OPM CJPPD analyzed returns by prior sentence histories for the 2018 cohort. **Chart 5** and **Chart 6** present cumulative returns by sentence history categories over three years following release or discharge for the 2017 and 2018 cohorts.

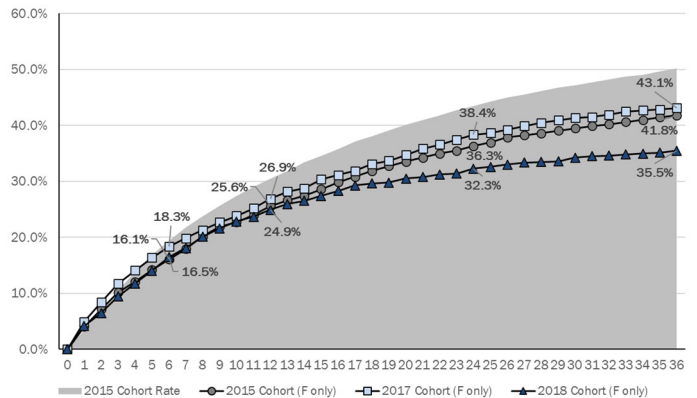
Chart 6: Correctional returns by number of sentences prior to release or discharge, 2018 cohort



- 23.4% of the 2018 cohort had no prior sentences at release or discharge, and **less than a third (29.0%) of this group returned to correctional facilities within three years.**
- 11.3% of the 2018 cohort had twelve or more prior sentences at the time of release or discharge, with **60.7% percent of this category returning within three years.**
- When comparing **Chart 5** and **Chart 6**, the 2018 cohort’s findings remain consistent with previous cohort analyses, where the likelihood of returning increases with an individual’s number of prior sentences.

Recidivism among women released from correctional facilities

Chart 7: Correctional returns among women by month, 2015, 2017 & 2018 cohorts

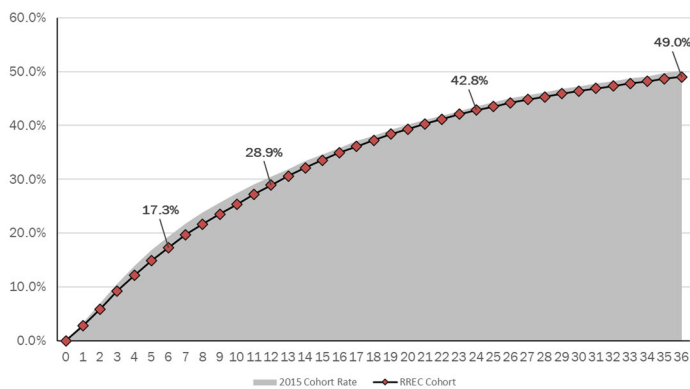


- This year, OPM CJPPD examined recidivism among women included within the three release cohorts. **Chart 7** shows the cumulative percentage of women returned in each cohort by month within three years following release or discharge. The shaded gray area provides a comparison against our benchmark, the full 2015 cohort rate.

- Across all three cohorts, **women returned to correctional facilities at significantly lower rates** than our benchmark.
- At the end of the three-year follow up period, **the 2017 cohort had the highest cumulative returns at 43.1%**. 2018's was nearly 8% lower than the 2017 rate.

Recidivism and RREC earned: Similar returns over three years

Chart 8: Correctional returns among individuals discharged with RREC



This report was produced by the Research Unit in the Criminal Justice Policy & Planning Division at:

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This report and others are available for download on the OPM CJPPD website: <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-About/CJ-SAC/SAC-Sites/SAC-Homepage>.

Please submit questions and comments to:

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- New for 2022, OPM CJPPD analyzed whether a positive Risk Reduction Earned Credit (RREC) total at discharge among individuals within the cohorts contributed to any differences in rates over the three-year follow-up period.
- *Chart 8* presents the cumulative percentages returning to correctional facilities over 36 months among individuals from all three cohorts discharged with RREC. The 2015 cohort rate is shown in gray for comparison.
- The RREC population returned at lower rates within the first year of release or discharge, and just slightly lower over the full three year period.
 - While the RREC six- and twelve-month return rates were significantly different from the 2015 cohort benchmark, the two- and three-year RREC rate was not.
- After controlling for other characteristics, like sex and sentence history for example, having earned RREC at discharge does not significantly contribute to differences in rates of correctional facility returns.