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2025

PROBATION RECIDIVISM ANNUAL REPORT

NEW JERSEY JUDICIARY ANNUAL REPORT
TO THE **GOVERNOR** AND **LEGISLATURE**

Submitted by:

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Recidivism 2025

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 9, 2015, New Jersey enacted Statute §2C:45-6, which requires the Administrative Director of the Courts to establish a program to record and analyze the recidivism of adult probationers. The program must compile information such as arrests, convictions stemming from those arrests, participation in treatment programs, and demographic factors including race, ethnicity, sex, and age. The report has been prepared in accordance with the statute and presents detailed information on the recidivism rates and characteristics of adults sentenced to probation during the 2021 calendar year.

The overall cohort of the adult population analyzed in this report consists of 8,890 individuals. These clients were sentenced to a term of probation supervision by the Superior, Family, or Municipal Courts during the 2021 calendar year. The analysis includes only those probationers sentenced within New Jersey and excludes individuals transferred from other states. For the purposes of this report, recidivism is defined as any qualifying activity occurring within the three years following the probation sentence.

Key Findings

- Probation supervision is effective at preventing reoffending, with 6 out of 10 clients in the 2021 probation cohort remaining arrest-free throughout the recidivism period.
- Out of the original cohort 8 out of 10 remained conviction free.
- The vast majority of probation clients remained in the community, with 96% of clients not receiving a custodial sentence, demonstrating that probation successfully manages risk without reliance on incarceration.
- Recidivism risk is highest early in probation and declines over time, with rearrests and repeat arrests dropping sharply after the first 6 months, consistent with desistance-based supervision principles.
- Targeted, evidence-based probation programs strengthen outcomes, including specialized mental health supervision, Recovery Courts, domestic violence and sex offender supervision, gun violence reduction efforts, and employment-focused interventions that address criminogenic needs and support long-term stability.

II. INTRODUCTION

2025 PROBATION RECIDIVISM REPORT

The New Jersey Judiciary's Probation Division is committed to advancing the welfare and safety of children, families, and communities through fair and equitable treatment of all individuals. The Division promotes positive behavioral change through the application of evidence-based practices and ensures accountability to families and the community. It also fosters meaningful engagement and collaboration with community partners, system stakeholders, and staff while proactively responding to change and upholding the principles of justice, rehabilitation, and public safety. Probation is a sentencing alternative to incarceration that allows convicted individuals to serve their sentences within the community under the supervision of a probation officer. This form of supervision enables individuals to maintain employment, remain connected to their families, and continue to reside in their communities. The goal of probation is to support the successful reintegration of clients as responsible, law-abiding citizens. When successfully completed, probation serves as an effective means of promoting rehabilitation while preventing confinement and its adverse consequences.

In the course of their duties, probation officers assess the needs of their clients, including those that, if unmet, may increase the likelihood of recidivism. They provide guidance, resources, and support to encourage positive behavioral development and assist clients in remaining law-abiding members of the community. Probation officers employ a range of intervention strategies designed to reinforce prosocial behavior and foster lasting cognitive and behavioral change. In determining the most appropriate interventions, an objective assessment is conducted of each client's background, risks, and needs. By identifying the criminogenic needs of each individual, probation officers can intervene using evidence-based strategies that address the underlying factors contributing to criminal behavior. They also provide support in helping individuals maintain sobriety, access mental health treatment services, obtain or sustain employment, and pursue vocational training opportunities. A probation officer's primary functions are to promote positive behavioral change and enforce court-ordered conditions, with the goal of reducing crime and enhancing community safety. "In a desistance framework, crime reduction is understood as a complex, gradual process in which individuals learn to adopt law-abiding behavior over time. Unlike recidivism, which is measured in binary terms – success or failure – desistance recognizes degrees of progress, allowing for occasional setbacks while still supporting overall behavioral change.

On November 9, 2015, legislation was enacted requiring the Administrative Director of Courts to establish a program to record and analyze the recidivism of all individuals sentenced to probation, with the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the state's rehabilitation programs. The definition of recidivism varies by state, but it is generally understood as a relapse into criminal behavior following sanctions for a prior offense. Under that statute, recidivism is

defined as arrests for any offenses committed by individuals on probation within three years following the imposition of their probation sentence.

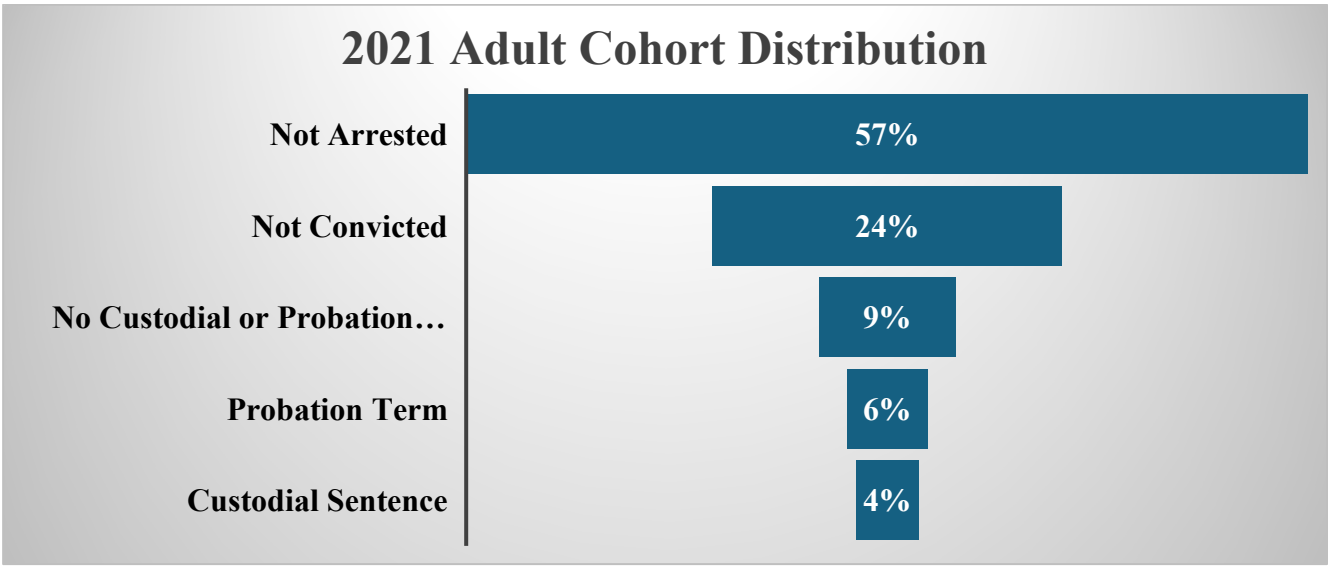
Probation Services prepared this report pursuant to N.J.S.A. §2C:45-6, which mandates that recidivism rates, trends, and patterns be compiled annually for distribution to the Legislature, the Governor, and the public. Probation Services collected and analyzed data on all individuals sentenced to adult probation in 2021 – referred to hereafter as the 2021 cohort – to determine who was arrested within three years of their probation start date. For the purpose of this report, this three-year timeframe is referred to as the "recidivism period." The conviction and sentencing data included in this report also reflect events that occurred within this period. As set forth in the recidivism legislation:

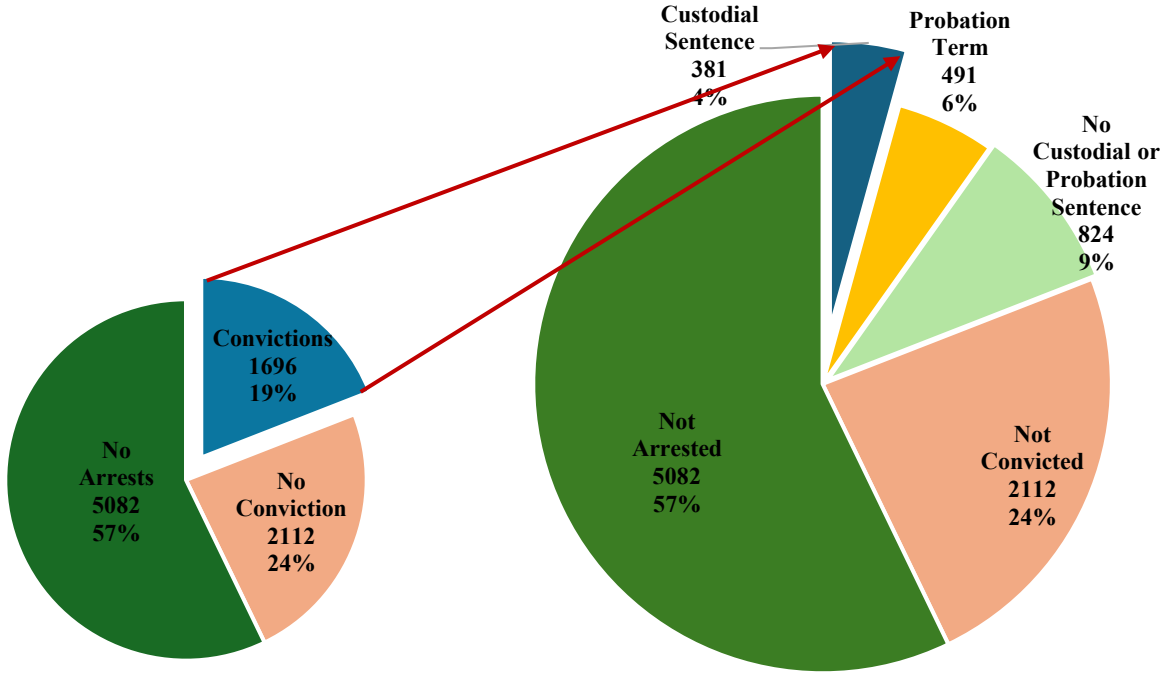
The program shall record data regarding types of crimes committed by offenders resulting in a sentence of probation, arrests for all offenses committed by individuals on probation within three years following their sentence, any convictions resulting from the arrests, crimes committed while on probation and the number of repeat offenders. This data shall be analyzed to determine whether the rates and nature of arrests and convictions differ according to the individuals' criminal histories and personal characteristics, the treatment received during probation, participation in rehabilitation initiatives and programs, and other factors relevant to the purposes of this section, including, but not limited to, race, sex, ethnicity, and age.

In May 2025, Probation Services began collaborating with the Judiciary's Information Technology Office (ITO) to extract the data used in this report. Probation cohort sizes declined steadily over the four-year period. The cohort included 18,003 clients in 2018 and decreased to 16,765 clients in 2019. A substantial decline occurred in 2020, with the cohort size dropping to 9,137 clients, followed by a similar level in 2021 at 8,890 clients. Overall, the probation cohort decreased by approximately 40% from 2018 to 2021.

III. RECIDIVISM TRENDS

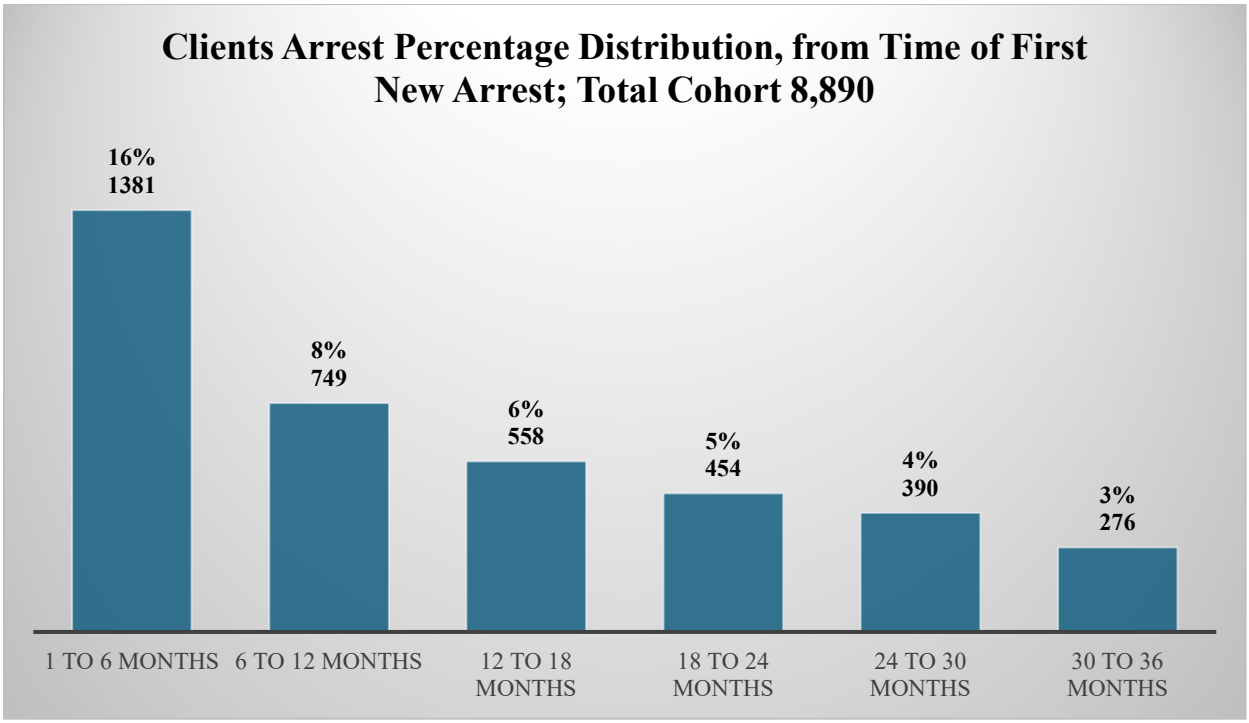
In 2021, the adult probation cohort included 8,890 clients who began their probation term during that year and 57% of these clients remained arrest free during the recidivism period, indicating that a majority avoided rearrest. When you consider the entire cohort, 80% remained arrest and conviction free and 96% of the clients did not receive a custodial sentence. Furthermore, out of the entire cohort, only 6% were placed back on probation and only 4% received a custodial sentence.



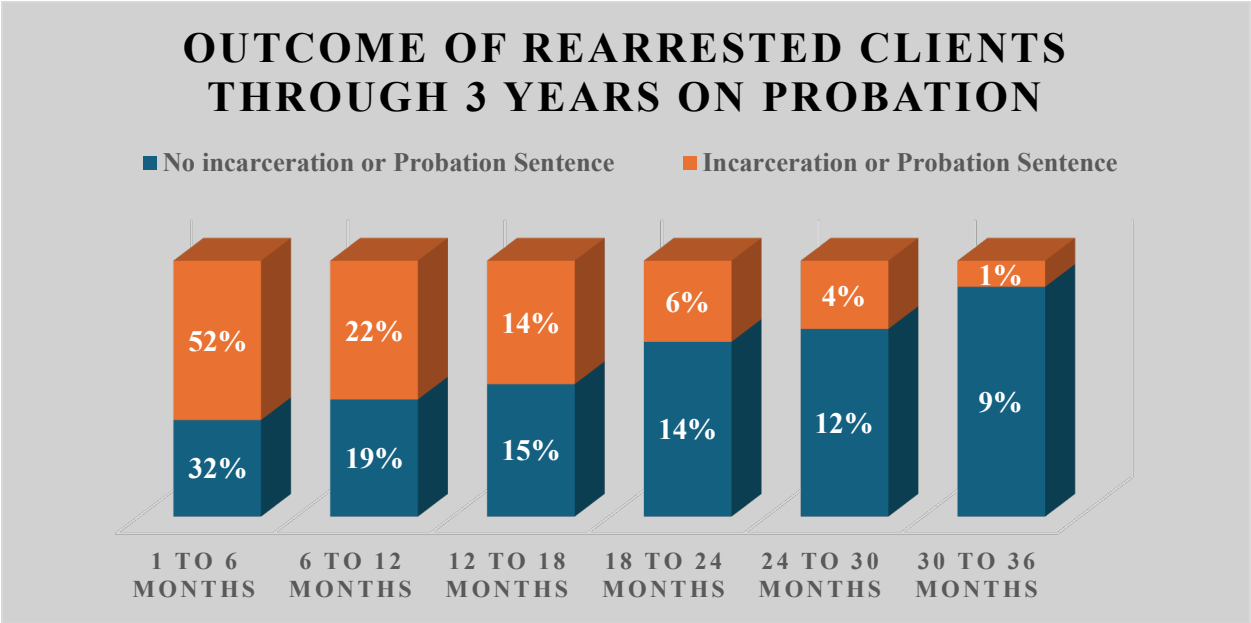


Recidivism Time Progression Trends

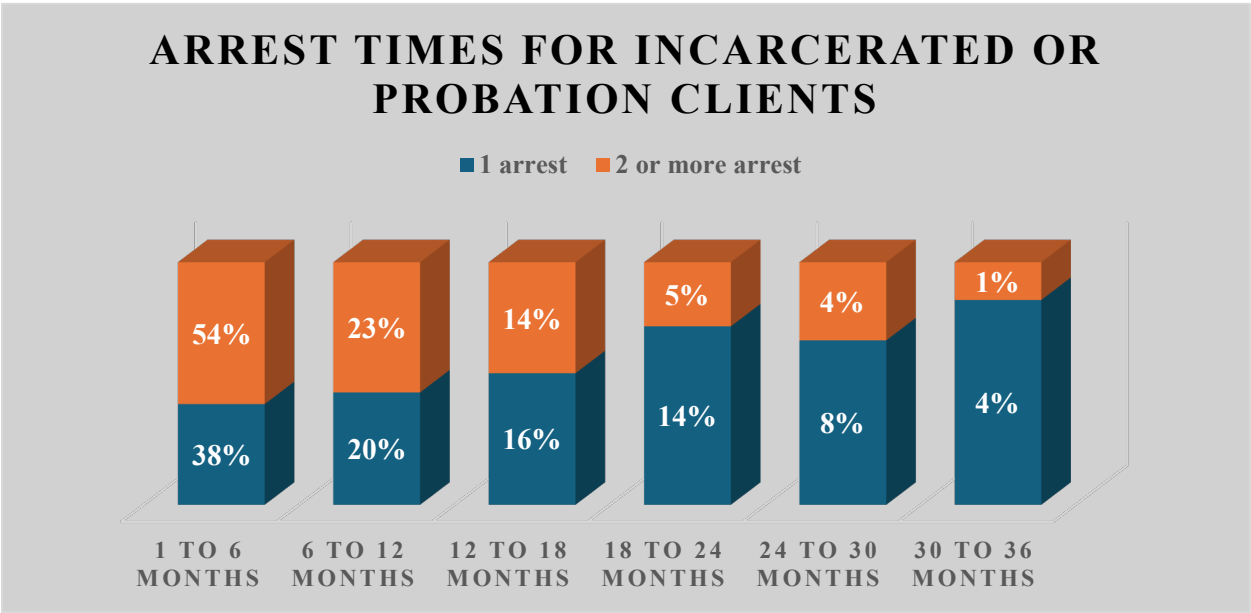
New arrest data for the 2021 adult cohort reveals a consistent decline in rearrests across the three-year recidivism period. When the data is broken down into six-month intervals, rearrest rates were highest during the first six months at 16%, decreased to 8% in the second six-month period, and continued to decline steadily over the remaining two years. Examining the rearrest frequency by timeframe provides critical insight for probation officers, helping to identify periods when interventions are most needed and likely to be most effective.



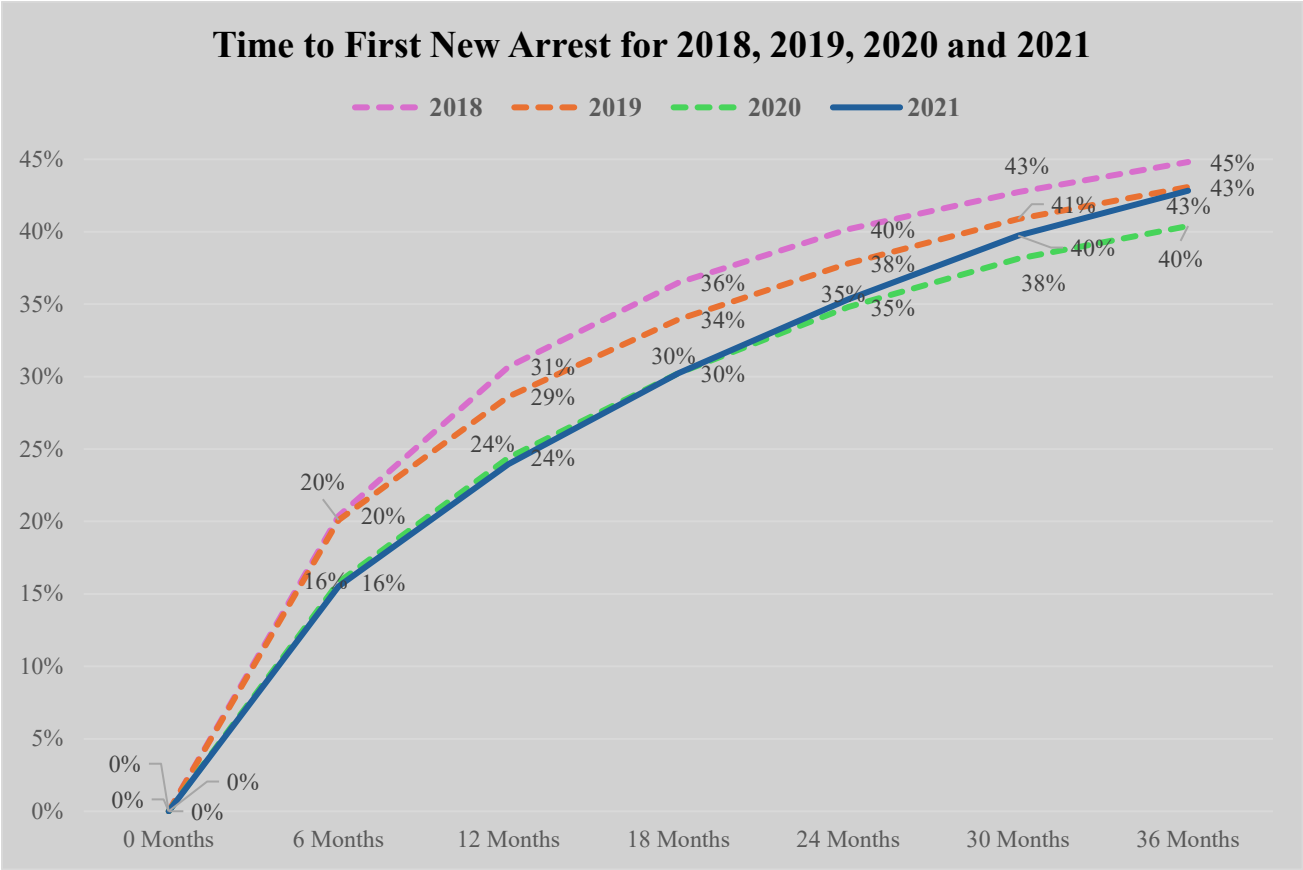
Approximately 52% of probation clients who were rearrested within the first six months received either a custodial or probation sentence. However, as the duration of probation increased, this proportion declined sharply to just 1% by the end of the three-year recidivism period.



Approximately 54% of probation clients were rearrested two or more times during the first six months of their sentence. However, this proportion declined to just 1% over the three-year recidivism period.

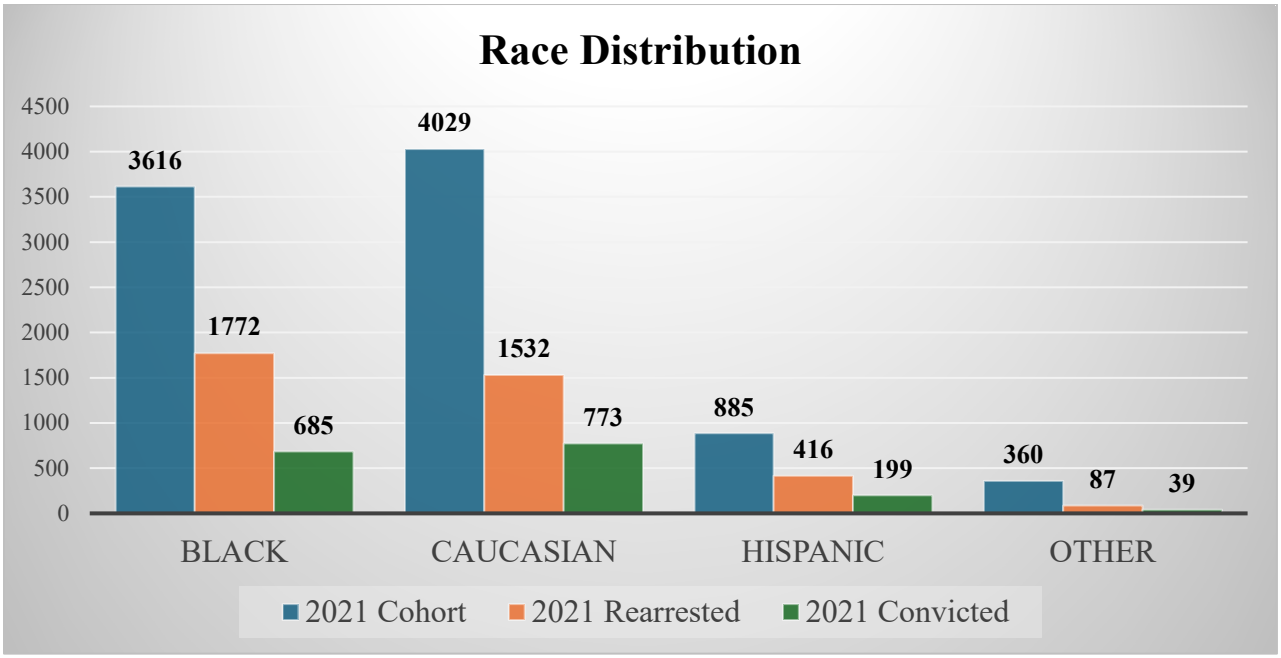


The chart below shows the cumulative rate of first new arrests over a three-year period divided into six-month intervals of the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 cohorts. The overall curve suggests that as time goes on, the recidivism rate rises at a lesser rate every six months. By the end of the three-year period, in 2021 cohort 43% of clients were rearrested cumulatively.

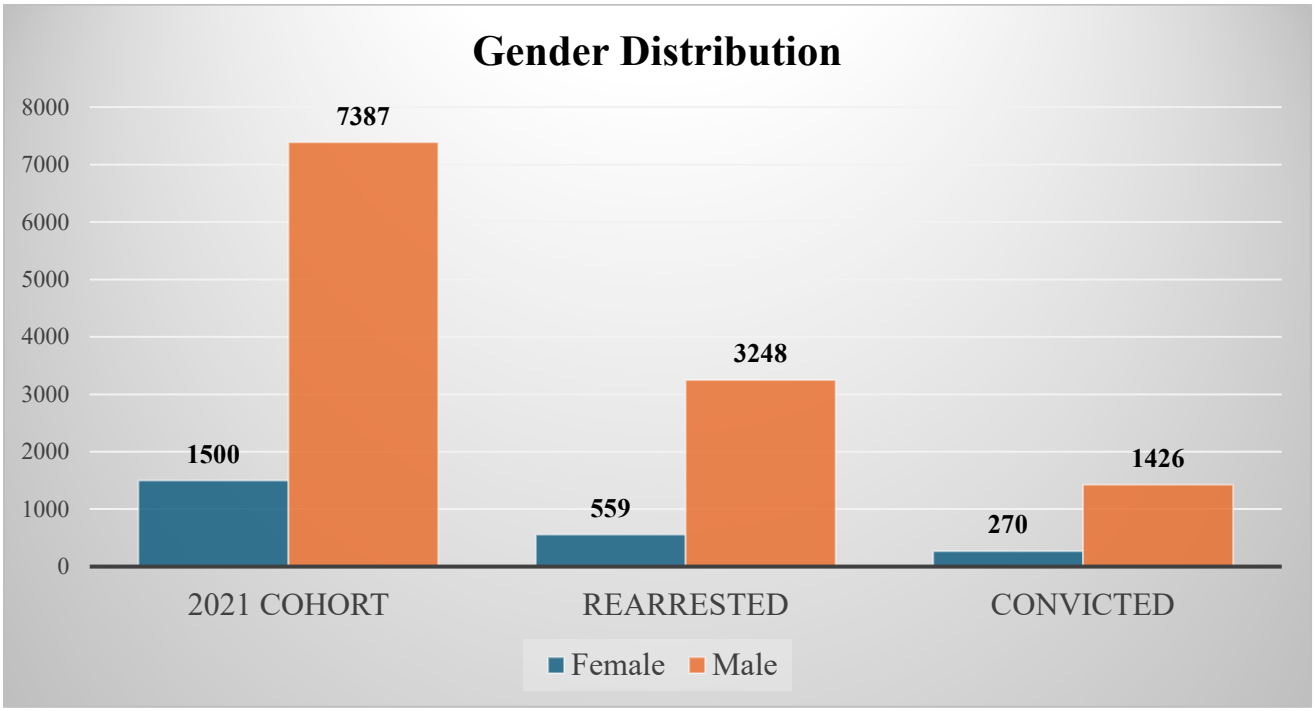


Demographics

The 2021 probation cohort consisted of 8,890 clients. Caucasian clients represented 45% (4,029) and Black clients 41% (3,616), making them the largest racial groups in the cohort. During the three-year recidivism period following their initial probation sentence, 3,807 clients were rearrested, resulting in an overall rearrest rate of 43%. The remaining 57% of clients were not arrested during the recidivism period. Among those rearrested, 45% (1,696 clients) were subsequently convicted.



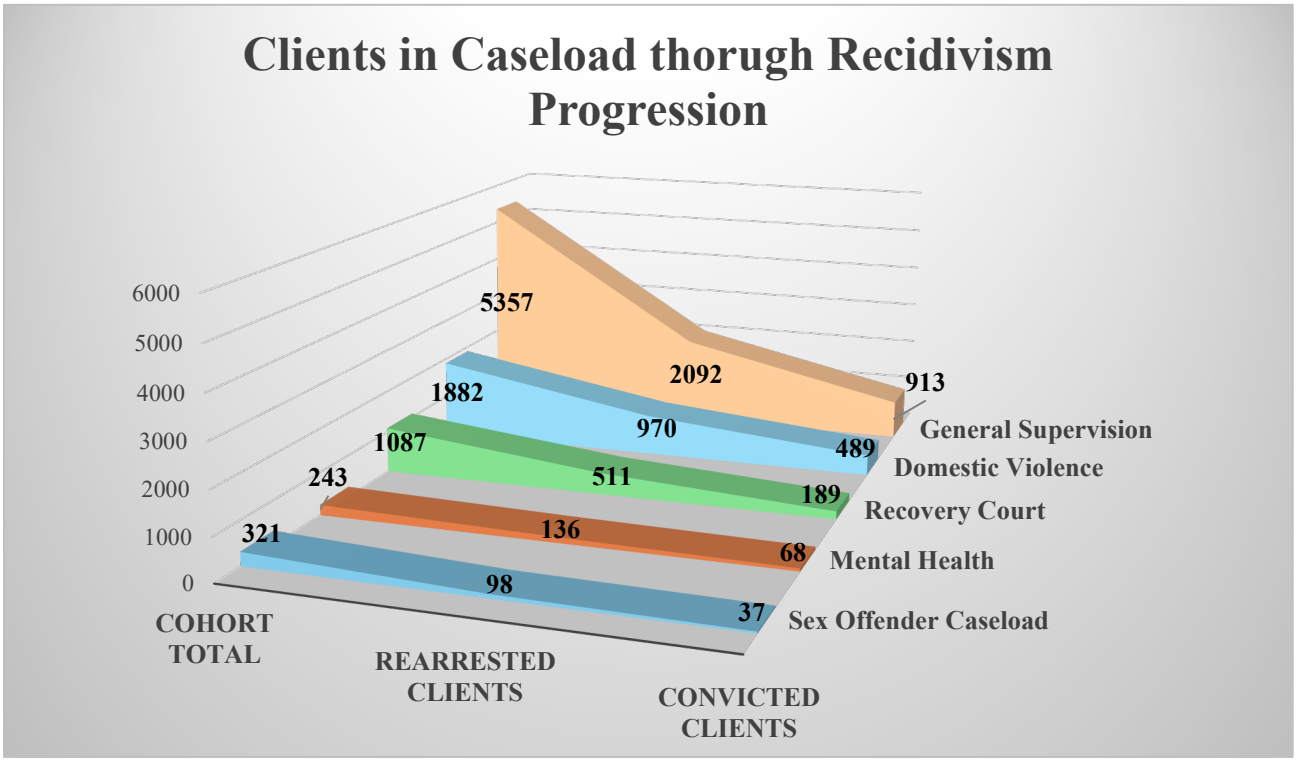
The cohort was predominantly male, with men comprising 83% (7,387) of clients and women 17% (1,500). Rearrest occurred in 44% (3,248) of male clients and 37% (559) of female clients. Among those rearrested, 44% (1,426) of males and 48% (270) of females were subsequently convicted. The number of arrested male clients decreased when comparing to the number convicted. Similarly, the number of arrested female clients decreased when comparing to the number that were convicted. When comparing the genders you can see a slightly steeper decline from arrest to conviction in males versus females.



*The genders of three clients are unknown.

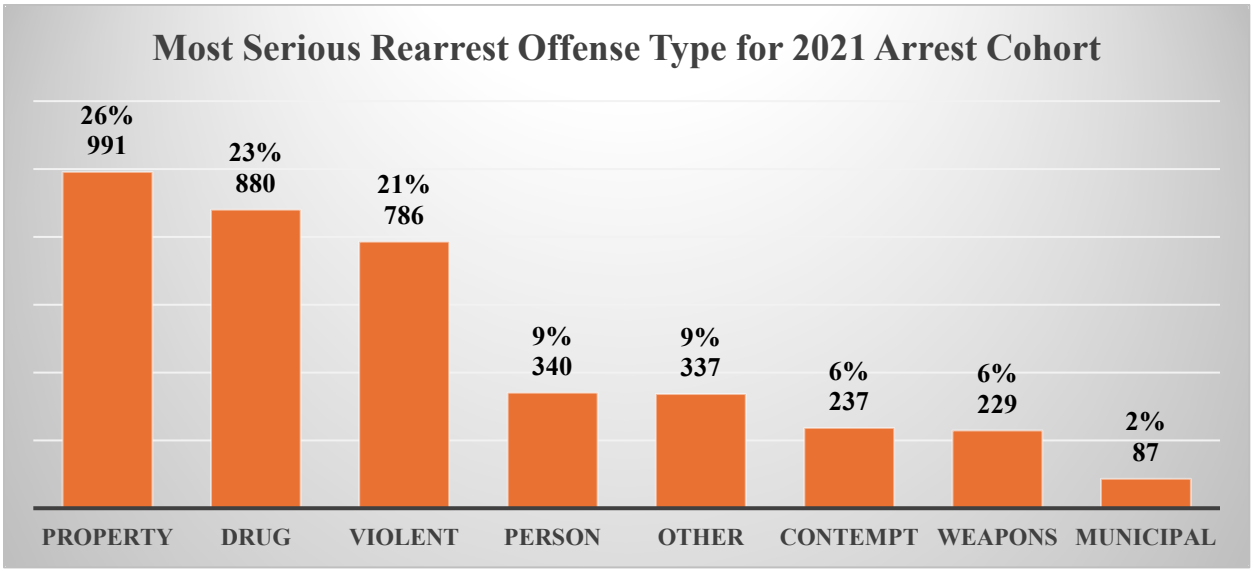
Probation Caseload Progression

The General Supervision caseload and the specialized caseload all show a decline in the number of clients who are rearrested and eventually convicted. The decline from rearrest to conviction is consistent with the overall arrest cohort.



Offense Type

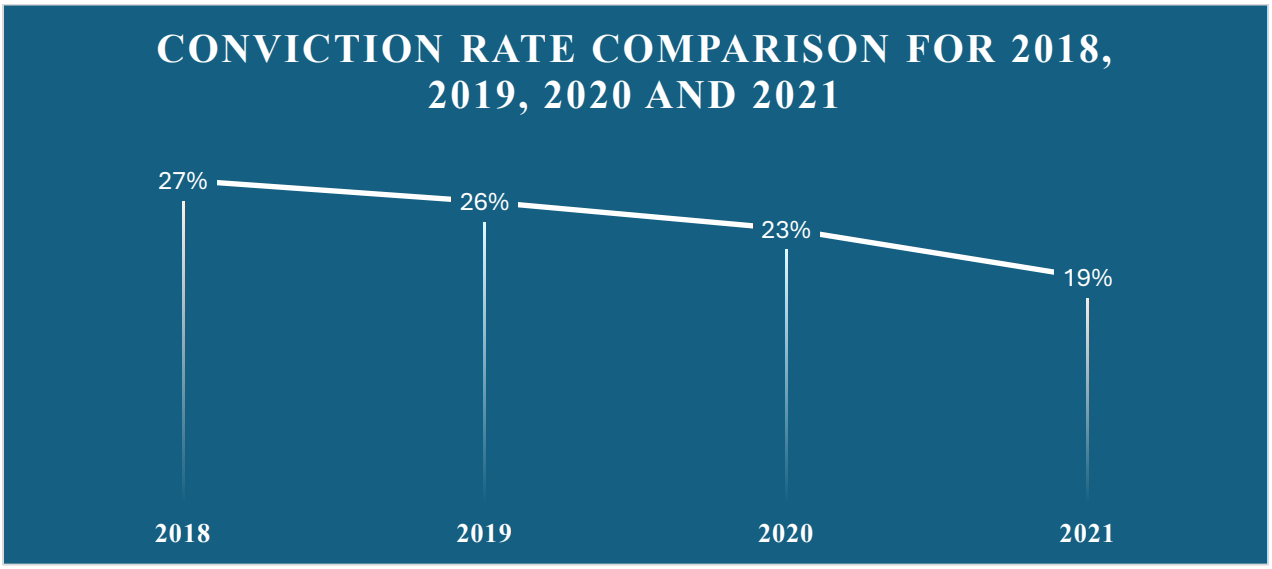
Among the clients who rearrested, property crimes accounted for 26% and drug crimes for 23%, making them the highest rates of recidivism.



Year over year comparison

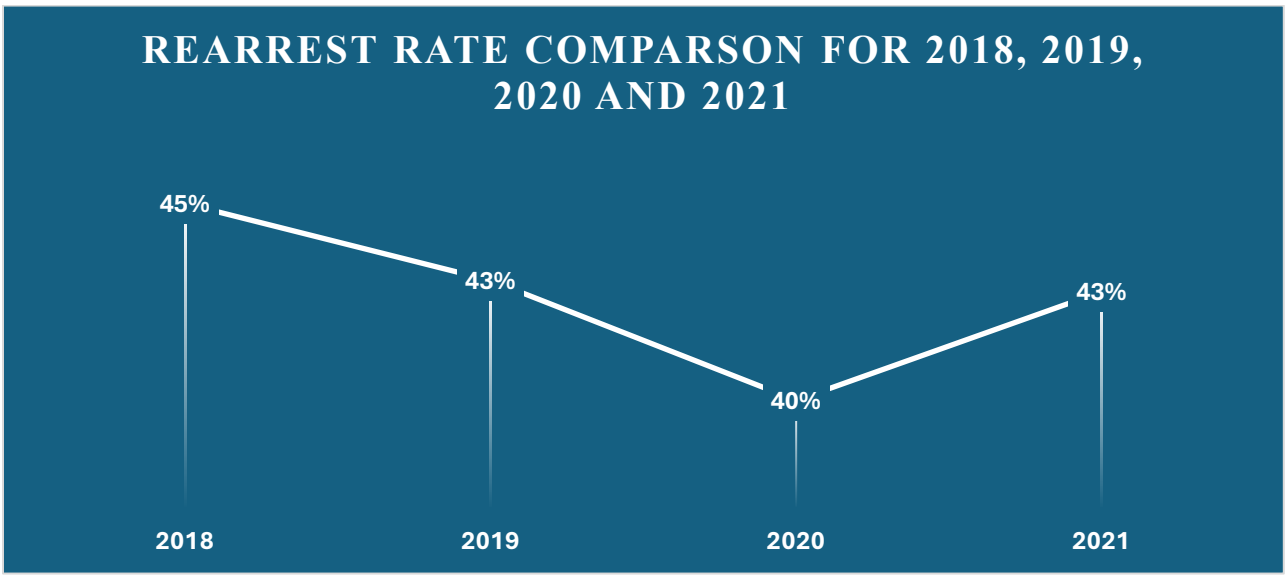
Conviction Rate

The conviction rate declined steadily over the period, decreasing from approximately three out of ten cases in 2018 to two out of ten cases in 2021.



Rearrest Rate

The rearrest rate is approximately 4 out of 10 clients for 2019, 2020, and 2021.



IV. INITIATIVES

Gun Violence Reduction Initiative

Launched in 2021, the New Jersey Judiciary's Gun Violence Reduction Initiative addresses rising gun violence by focusing on moderate – to high- risk probation clients with weapon-related offenses. The program brings together courts, community partners, and service providers to reduce violence by identifying service gaps and promoting positive behavioral change.

Eligible cases are reviewed by each participating county probation division and presented to a multidisciplinary advisory board, which assesses client backgrounds and recommends tailored services such as counseling, mentoring, job training, education, or housing support.

The initiative currently operates in Atlantic/Cape May, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic, Union, and the Juvenile Intensive Supervision Program.

Mental Health Caseload

The mental health caseload serves probation clients whose mental health symptoms affect their ability to comply with supervision. Each vicinage assigns specially trained mental health probation officers who provide tailored supervision using therapeutic and strategic interventions to promote stability and positive behavioral change.

Treatment is delivered by qualified community providers and may be court-ordered or initiated by probation officers based on identified needs. Services include mental health, substance use, domestic violence, sex-specific, and related interventions. Access to treatment varies statewide due to factors such as transportation, language, staffing and funding.

To improve service delivery, Probation is strengthening partnerships with community providers, enhancing communication, and reducing wait times. Substance abuse evaluations are conducted primarily by Judiciary-employed licensed evaluators, who determine appropriate levels of care and connect clients to services. Probation continues to refine policies to expand access to community-based treatment and supportive services.

Adult Sex Offender Supervision (ASOS)

New Jersey's Adult Sex Offender Supervision (ASOS) program provides intensive, specialized probation supervision for individuals convicted of sexual offenses, with a primary focus on public safety and risk management. Specially trained probation officers maintain reduced caseloads and apply evidence-based practices to closely monitor compliance and address risk factors. Clients are carefully screened for eligibility based on Megan's Law registration status, offense history, and assessed risk.

ASOS supervision begins with a formal orientation that outlines legal obligations, registration requirements, and technology-use restrictions. Supervision plans are individualized using validated risk assessment tools, and any changes to supervision levels occur only after comprehensive reassessment and supervisory approval. Officers conduct randomized field visits, actively monitor behavior, and apply a Structured Response Grid to address violations. Serious violations result in immediate enforcement actions, and early discharge from probation is granted only in rare, exceptional circumstances.

A critical component of ASOS and Interstate Probation and Parole Compact (IPPC) supervision is the regulation of technology use. Given the potential for technology to facilitate sexual offenses, clients may face strict limitations on electronic devices and internet access, including monitoring, inspections, and disclosure of online accounts. Compliance with these conditions is routinely verified through field visits and supervision activities.

For clients relocating across state lines, ASOS works through the Interstate Compact (ICAOS) to ensure continued supervision and adherence to registration requirements. All transfers require thorough documentation and approval to ensure that supervision standards and public safety expectations are consistently maintained across jurisdictions.

Domestic Violence (DV) Supervision

New Jersey's Domestic Violence (DV) Supervision program provides specialized, intensive probation oversight for adults convicted of DV offenses, reflecting the elevated risks associated with the population. Clients are supervised by probation officers with mandatory advanced training in domestic violence dynamics, risk assessment, trauma-informed practices, and intervention strategies. Reduced caseloads allow for close monitoring, rapid response, and proactive intervention.

All DV clients are immediately assigned and begin supervision at the highest level for a minimum of 180 days following comprehensive assessment using validated DV risk tools. Individuals convicted of strangulation offenses remain at the highest supervision level for the full probation term due to their significantly increased lethality risk. Strict enforcement of specialized DV conditions – Including no-contact orders, weapons prohibitions, and mandated treatment – is central to the supervision model.

Probation officers work collaboratively with courts, law enforcement, treatment providers, and victim advocacy organizations, prioritizing victim safety and confidentiality. Supervision includes regular home visits, contact monitoring, and behavioral interventions to identify and manage risk factors. Serious violations, particularly those involving victim contact or new DV offenses, result in immediate corrective action. Early discharge is granted only in rare cases where clients demonstrate sustained low risk and full compliance and is never available to individuals convicted of strangulation offenses. Continuous supervisory oversight,

structured case reviews, and ongoing officer training ensure consistent adherence to program standards.

Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) Program

New Jersey's Judiciary's Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS) Program connects eligible probation, recovery court, and child support clients with employment opportunities through partnerships with private companies and nonprofit organizations. The program addresses employment as a key barrier to successful rehabilitation and reentry.

Overseen by the Probation Division, JOBS identifies appropriate participants, facilitates referrals to employers, and provides ongoing support throughout the hiring and placement process. Participants must remain under active supervision, comply with probation, child support, and recovery court requirements, and, when applicable, submit to substance testing.

The program is supported by a broad network of employers and the New Jersey Department of Workforce Development, which provides job readiness training and access to transportation, equipment, and work attire. The Judiciary monitors placements, ensures accountability, and evaluates program effectiveness to promote stable employment and long-term success.

Recovery Courts

New Jersey's Recovery Courts provide a structured, community-based alternative to incarceration for substance-involved offenders, combining intensive judicial oversight with comprehensive treatment services. Eligible participants complete thorough legal and clinical assessments and engage in a rigorous, multi-phase program lasting one to two years.

The program integrates frequent court reviews, intensive probation supervision, random drug testing, counseling, and access to a full continuum of treatment, including Medication-Assisted Treatment when clinically appropriate. Established as a mandatory option for eligible offenders through legislative reforms, Recovery Courts exclude individuals with disqualifying or violent histories.

Recovery Courts have demonstrated reduced recidivism and substance use, cost savings compared to incarceration, and positive impacts on racial disparities. Successful participants may qualify for expungement. The program operates in accordance with nationally recognized best practice standards, ensuring an evidence-based response to substance use disorders.

Future

The Mental Health Collaboration and Strategic Partnerships Pilot Program is a judge-led, treatment-first diversion initiative in New Jersey designed to reduce the overrepresentation of individuals with serious mental illness in the criminal justice system. Launched in 2019 by Chief Justice Stuart Rabner, the program is a collaboration among Judiciary, Department of Human

Services, prosecutors, public defenders, and behavioral health professionals. It targets individuals charged with primarily nonviolent, lower-level offenses, providing voluntary enrollment, behavioral health assessments, case management, and court-supervised treatment. Successful completion can lead to dismissal of charges, emphasizing therapeutic intervention over punishment

Currently operating in Camden, Essex, Middlesex, Morris, and Sussex Counties, the program has shown promising early outcomes, with over 90% of participants engaging in treatment and sustained involvement exceeding national benchmarks. The pilot demonstrates that cross-system collaboration, early intervention, and person-centered care improve stability, increase access to treatment, and reduce deeper justice system involvement while maintaining public safety.

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