

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

FISCAL YEAR 2024

JUVENILE RECIDIVISM REPORT



PREPARED BY:

EUGENE GAULTNEY, CIO

MAX TRAN, Deputy CIO

RADHIKA TULPULÉ, Reporting Manager

ANDREW CHANG, Data Analyst



JUVENILE RECIDIVISM REPORT

FY2024



The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) defines recidivism as a new charge within three years of the initial post-adjudication community placement, which results in a juvenile court delinquency adjudication or adult criminal conviction.

This report looks at juvenile offenders (under and up to the age of 17 at the time of offense) released in 2020 and follows the offenders for three years from their release from the Department of Juvenile Justice to the community.

FY2024 Juvenile Recidivism Rate: **36.36%**

- **2,717** Releases
 - **988** Reoffended
 - **63.64%** of juvenile releases had not received a new charge within three years of their 2020 release.
- Of all juveniles released in 2020, **38.47%** of males reoffended, while only **28.81%** of females reoffended.
 - Approximately **41.76%** of African American juvenile offenders reoffended, a higher rate than any other major race or ethnicity. Caucasian youth were the next highest with a **28.57%** recidivism rate, followed by Hispanic youth at **21.64%**.
 - Juvenile offenders whose offense severity level was classified as “Felony” were most likely to reoffend (**38.17%**)

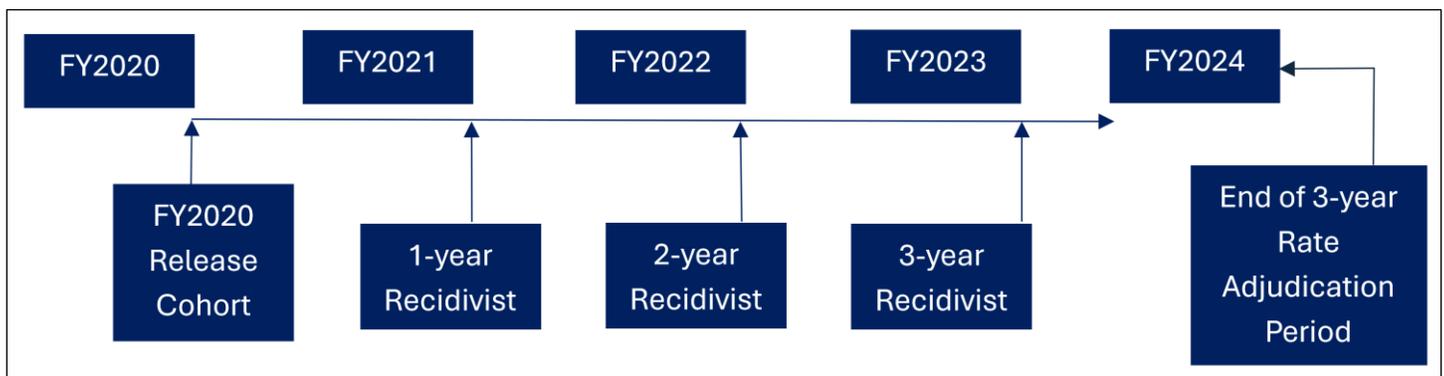
Recidivism Methodology

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) defines recidivism as a new charge within three years of the initial post-adjudication community placement which results in a juvenile court delinquency adjudication or adult criminal conviction.

This report looks at juvenile offenders (under and up to the age of 17 at the time of offense) released in 2020 and follows the offenders for three years from their release from DJJ to the community. It follows the youth for one more year for adjudication.

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice 2024 Recidivism Report analyzes juvenile release cohorts by fiscal year. Each release begins with the first day a youth becomes available for reoffending in the community and ends after either three years or the day a new qualifying re-adjudication occurs. One and two-year monitoring is conducted, and a final count occurs place when the cohort reaches its three-year maturity.

Figure 1: Spatial representation of release and recidivism



- Adjudicated releases are counted at the end of each FY
- A three-year monitoring period counts as a re-offense
- The end of the third year of release provides the final release count

The recidivism monitoring period begins once a juvenile is released into the community. This point may be at the start of a new probation or community commitment, or when a juvenile is released from secure confinement. Measurement starts at the point of release into the community when a youth has the opportunity to commit a new offense and impact public safety. Most offenders are still under DJJ supervision when released to the community on probation, in aftercare, or residential placements.

This report does not include release or recidivistic data from any of Georgia’s Independent Courts since these counties do not report recidivating events to DJJ. Georgia’s 17 counties with independent courts are Chatham, Clayton, Cobb, Columbia, Crawford, DeKalb, Dougherty, Floyd, Fulton, Glynn, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Peach, Spalding, Troup, and Whitfield counties.

For this report, DJJ classifies a juvenile as any individual who is:

- Youth under and up to the age of 17 years old
- Youth under the age of 21 who committed an act of delinquency before reaching the age of 17 and who have been placed under the supervision of the court or on probation to the court.

Recidivating Events

Georgia’s recidivism measurement methodology counts multiple recidivating events for the same juvenile as a single recidivism count. Recidivism is measured for a period of at least one year from the time of release into the community out to three years. As observed by DJJ and other states, most recidivism occurs within the first year, marking an essential window for analysis. The extended follow-up period of three years describes long-term outcomes.

Link to Adult Corrections

A juvenile may legally be considered an adult during the at-risk follow-up period after release into the community. Therefore, juvenile records are linked with adult conviction data² to capture adult recidivating events in our analysis. The data provided by the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) offers the offense date for young-adult offenders who were previously adjudicated by a juvenile court. For this population, DJJ juvenile recidivism calculation uses the date of the offense in our analysis for those young adults sentenced to an adult prison and any combination of adult offenses constitutes a singular recidivism count.

Recidivism Trends

DJJ’s release cohort population declined 27.89% during the 4-year reporting time frame, moving from 3,768 (Cohort 2017) to 2,717 (Cohort 2020).

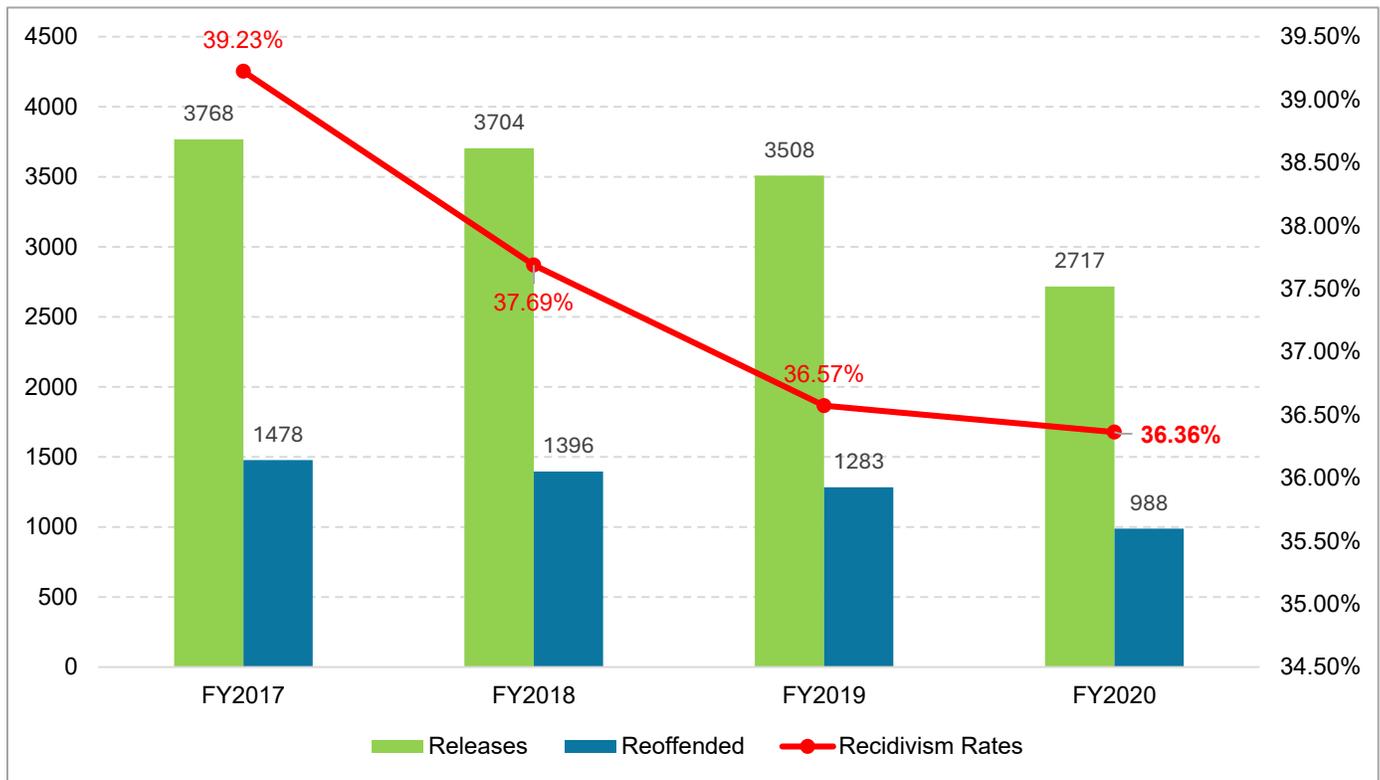
Table 1: Historical Trends

Cohort	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
Releases	2717	3508	3704	3768
1-Year Recidivists	656	941	992	1001
2-Year Recidivists	220	220	303	342
3-Year Recidivists	112	122	101	135
Total Recidivists	988	1283	1396	1478
3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)	36.36	36.57	37.69	39.23

We have seen the recidivism rate decrease for four consecutive years. The 2020 cohort showed a recidivism rate decrease of 0.21% over the 2019 cohort (36.57% and 36.36% for 2019 and 2020 cohorts respectively).

The cause of the decrease in the recidivism rate may be attributed to various factors, with COVID-19 pandemic events in the release track in Years 1 and 2 most likely contributing to the reduction.

Figure 2: Three-Year Recidivism Rates by Cohort Distribution



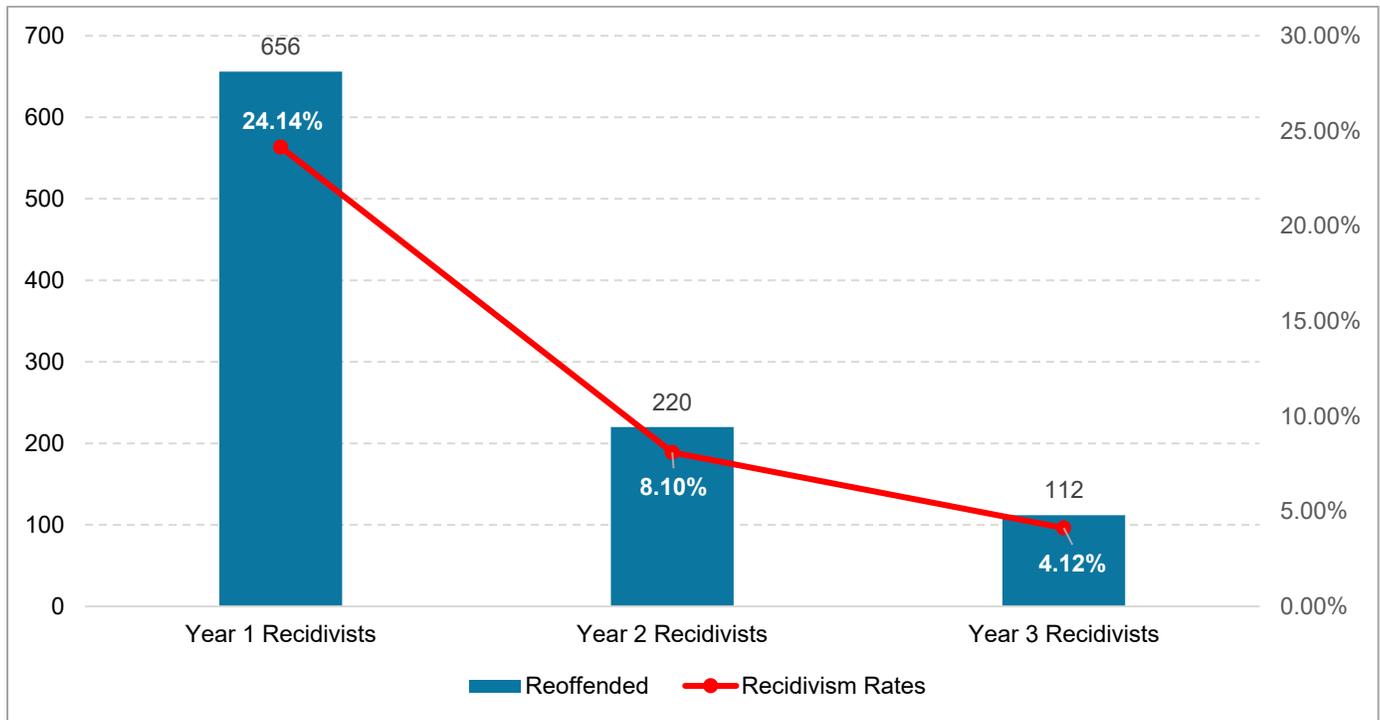
Overall Recidivism Rates

In 2020, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice released 2,717 juveniles. Of those juveniles released, 36.36% reoffended within three years of their release date. Table 2 presents recidivism rates by the length of time until a youth reoffended. The percentage of re-offenses for 2020 releases at 1-year, 2-year, and 3-year milestones.

Table 2: Percent Reoffended by Year

Releases	Year 1 Recidivism Rate	Year 2 Recidivism Rate	Year 3 Recidivism Rate	3-Year Recidivism Rate
2717	24.14%	8.09%	4.12%	36.36%

Figure 3: Recidivism Rates by Year Distribution



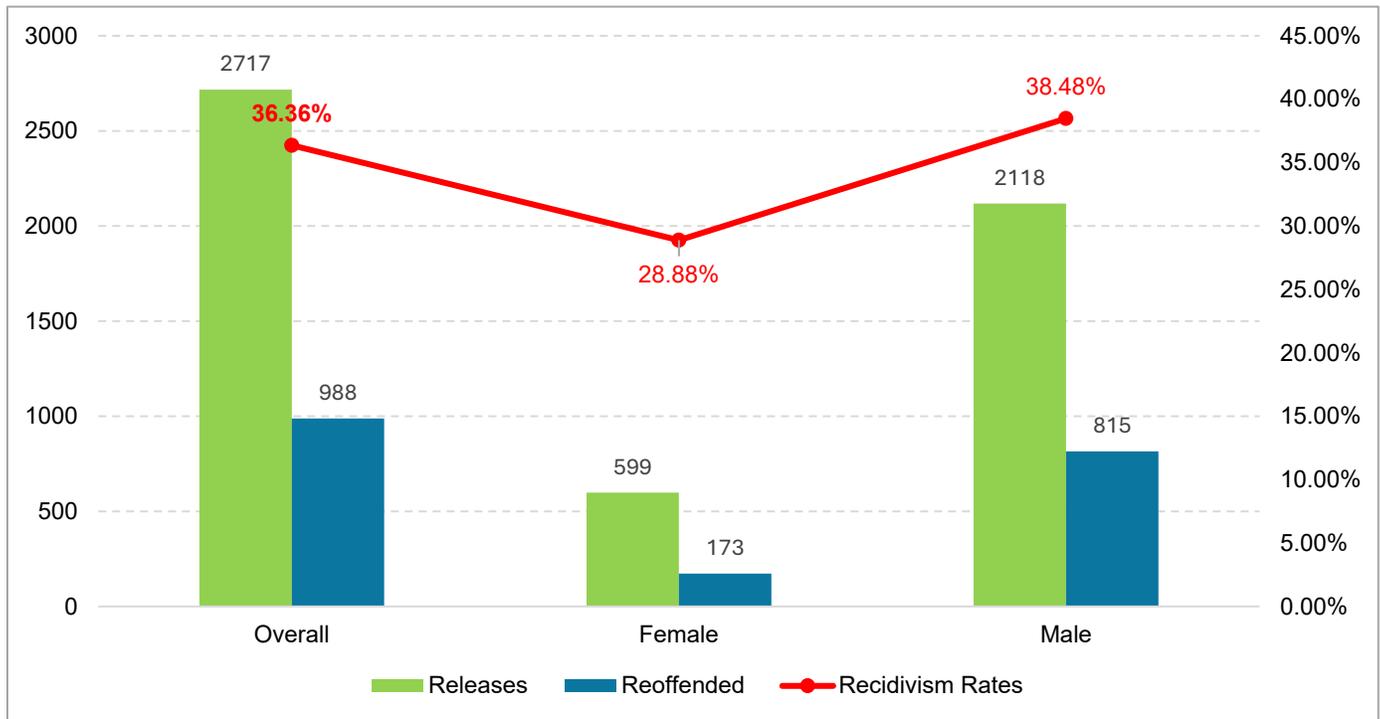
Recidivism Rates by Gender

Similar to previous years, data for 2020 releases indicate a marked difference in the recidivism rates of **male** and **female** juveniles (see Table 3). As shown in Figure 3, of those juveniles released in 2020, **males** were more likely to recidivate (38.48%) than were **females** (28.88%).

Table 3: Number and Percent Reoffended by Gender

	Releases	Female	Male
Releases	2717	599	2118
1-Year Recidivists	656	118	538
2-Year Recidivists	220	37	183
3-Year Recidivists	112	18	94
Total Recidivists	988	173	815
3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)	36.36	28.88	38.48

Figure 4: Recidivism Rates by Gender Distribution



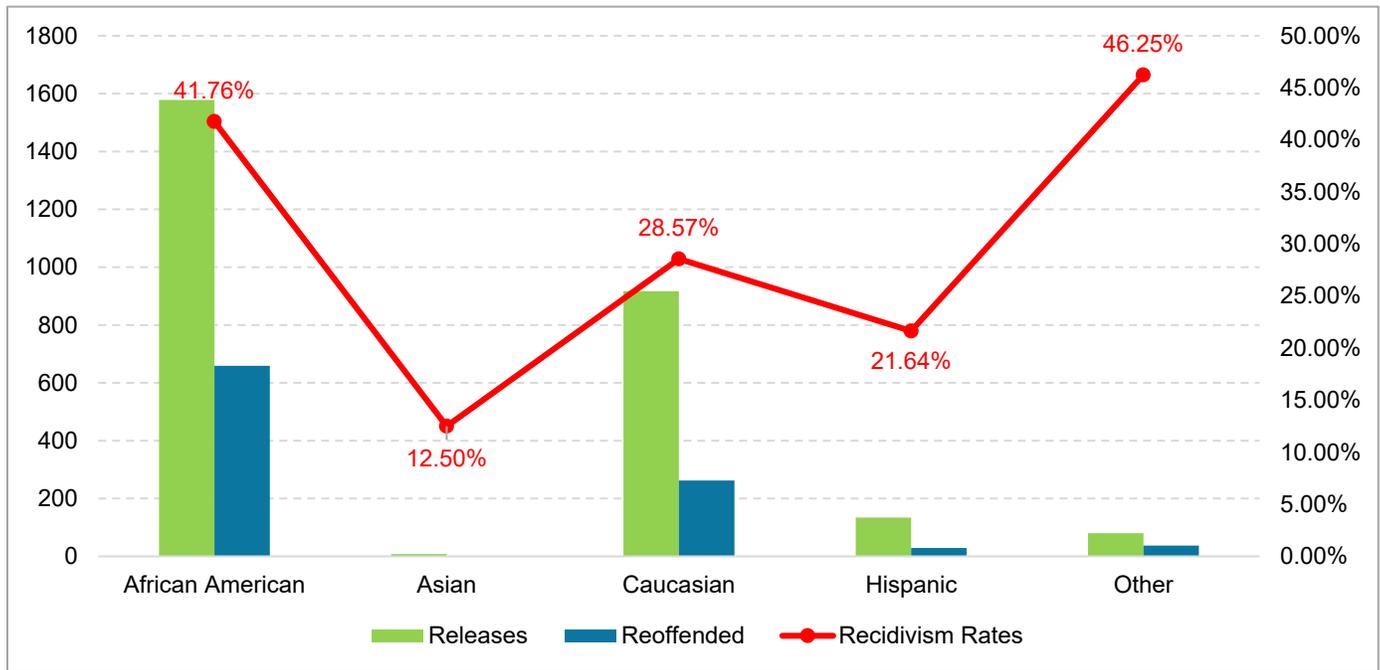
Recidivism Rates by Race and Ethnicity

Among all racial groups, **African American** individuals comprised the largest portion of releases (1,578) and the highest number of recidivists (659), with a recidivism rate of 41.76%, which is significantly higher than the overall average. This group alone represented nearly two-thirds of all recidivism cases in the dataset.

Table 4: Number and Percent Reoffended by Race and Ethnicity

Race	Releases	# Recidivists	3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)
African American	1578	659	41.76
Asian	8	1	12.50
Caucasian	917	262	28.57
Hispanic	134	29	21.64
Native American	0	0	0
Other	80	37	46.25
Total	2717	988	36.36

Figure 5: Recidivism Rates by Race Distribution



Caucasian individuals, the second-largest group (917 releases), had 262 recidivists, with a recidivism rate of 28.57%, which is notably lower than the overall rate. **Hispanic** individuals (134 releases) had 29 reoffenders and a recidivism rate of 21.64%, making it one of the lowest among the groups with substantial representation.

Asian individuals showed the lowest recidivism rate at 12.50%, though this was based on just eight releases and one recidivist, making the rate less stable for general comparison. The “**Other**” racial category, with 80 releases and 37 recidivists, had the highest recidivism rate at 46.25%, despite its smaller group size. No data was recorded for **Native American** individuals in terms of releases or recidivism.

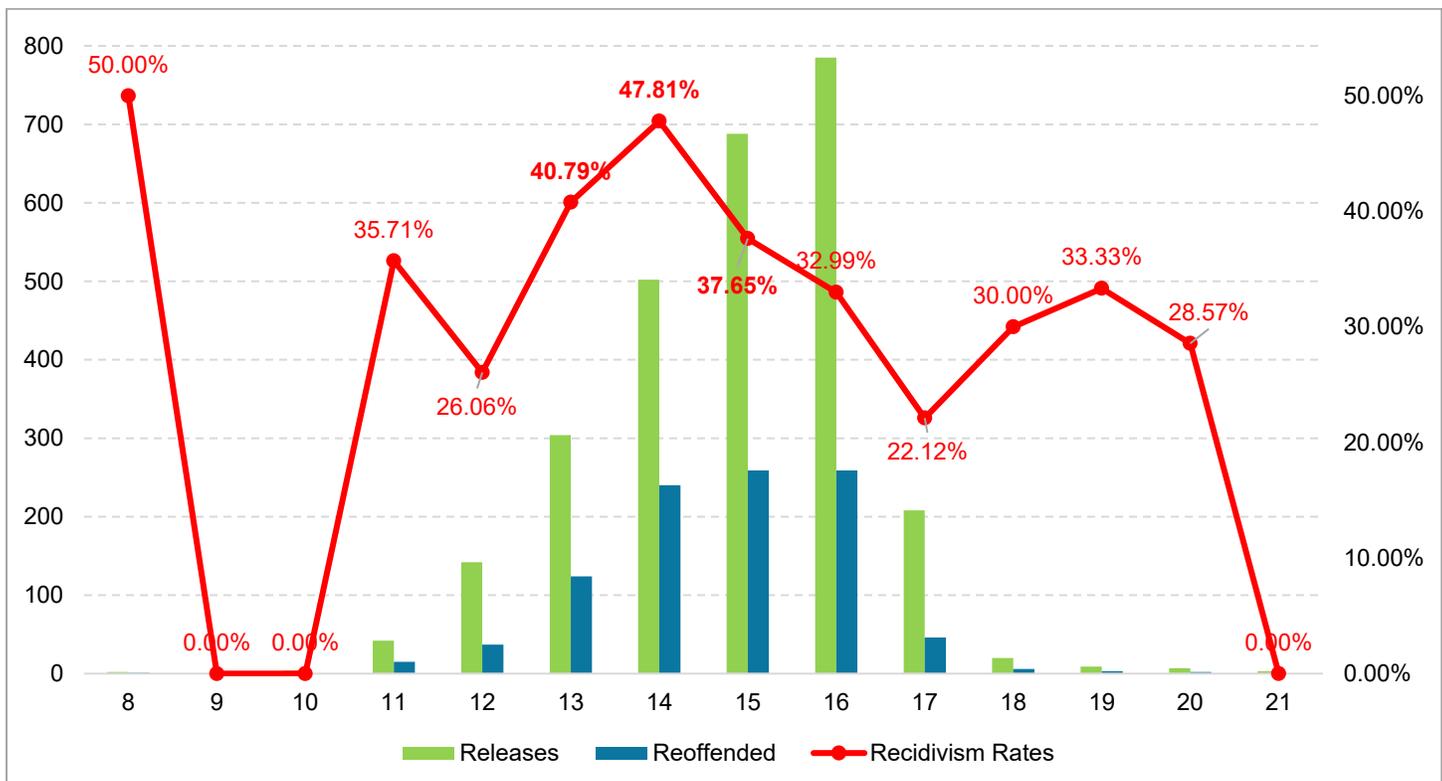
Recidivism Rates by Age at Release

Recidivism among released individuals shows a clear age-related pattern, with the highest rates clustered between ages **13** and **15** and a gradual decline beginning at age **16**. The data indicate that individuals released at younger adolescent ages are more likely to reoffend within three years than those released later. The distribution of reoffending appears to follow a curve that peaks in mid-adolescence and decreases toward adulthood.

Table 5: Number and Percent Reoffended by Release Age

Age	Total	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Releases	2717	2	0	4	42	142	304	502	688	785	208	20	9	7	3
1-Year Recidivists	656	1	0	0	9	28	72	154	197	164	25	4	2	0	0
2-Year Recidivists	220	0	0	0	2	18	30	66	46	43	11	2	0	2	0
3-Year Recidivists	112	0	0	0	4	9	22	20	16	30	10	0	1	0	0
Total Recidivists	988	1	0	0	15	55	124	240	259	237	46	6	3	2	0
3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)	36.36	50	0	0	35.71	38.46	40.79	47.81	37.65	30.39	22.12	30	33.33	28.57	0

Figure 6: Recidivism Rates by Age Distribution



Recidivism Rates by Offense Category

Table 6 compares the number of releases (2,717) with the number of juveniles who reoffended (recidivists) within 1, 2, and 3 years, broken down by offense categories.

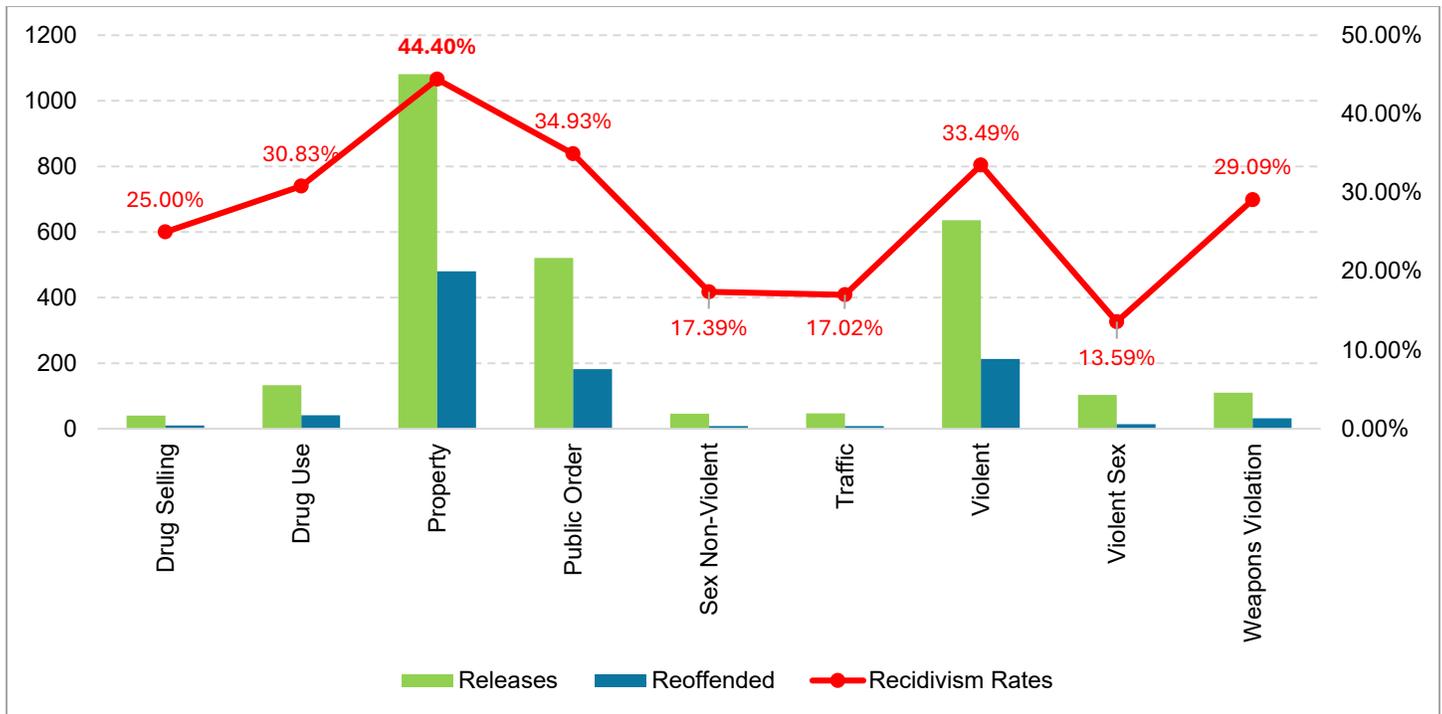
Property offenses have the highest recidivism rate (44.44%), significantly above the overall average. This indicates a persistent cycle of reoffending in this category. **Sex**-related offenses (both non-violent and violent) have much lower rates than the general population. **Weapon** violations have a moderate recidivism rate of 29.09%, slightly below the average. **Drug**-related offenses (use and selling) fall below the overall recidivism rate but still contribute to a significant number of reoffenders.

Property and **Violent** offenses show consistent year-over-year growth in reoffending. **Weapon** and **Drug** categories increase moderately, but steadily, over three years.

Table 6: Number and Percent Reoffended by Offense Category

Offense Category	Releases	1-Year Recidivists	2-Year Recidivists	3-Year Recidivists	Total Recidivists	3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)
Drug Selling	40	5	4	1	10	25.00
Drug Use	133	20	12	9	41	30.83
Property	1081	331	96	53	480	44.44
Public Order	521	123	46	13	182	34.93
Sex Non-Violent	46	7	1	0	8	17.39
Traffic	47	4	4	0	8	17.02
Violent	636	144	46	23	213	33.49
Violent Sex	103	4	3	7	14	13.59
Weapons Violation	110	18	8	6	32	29.09
Total	2717	656	220	112	988	36.36

Figure 7: Recidivism Rates by Offense Category Distribution



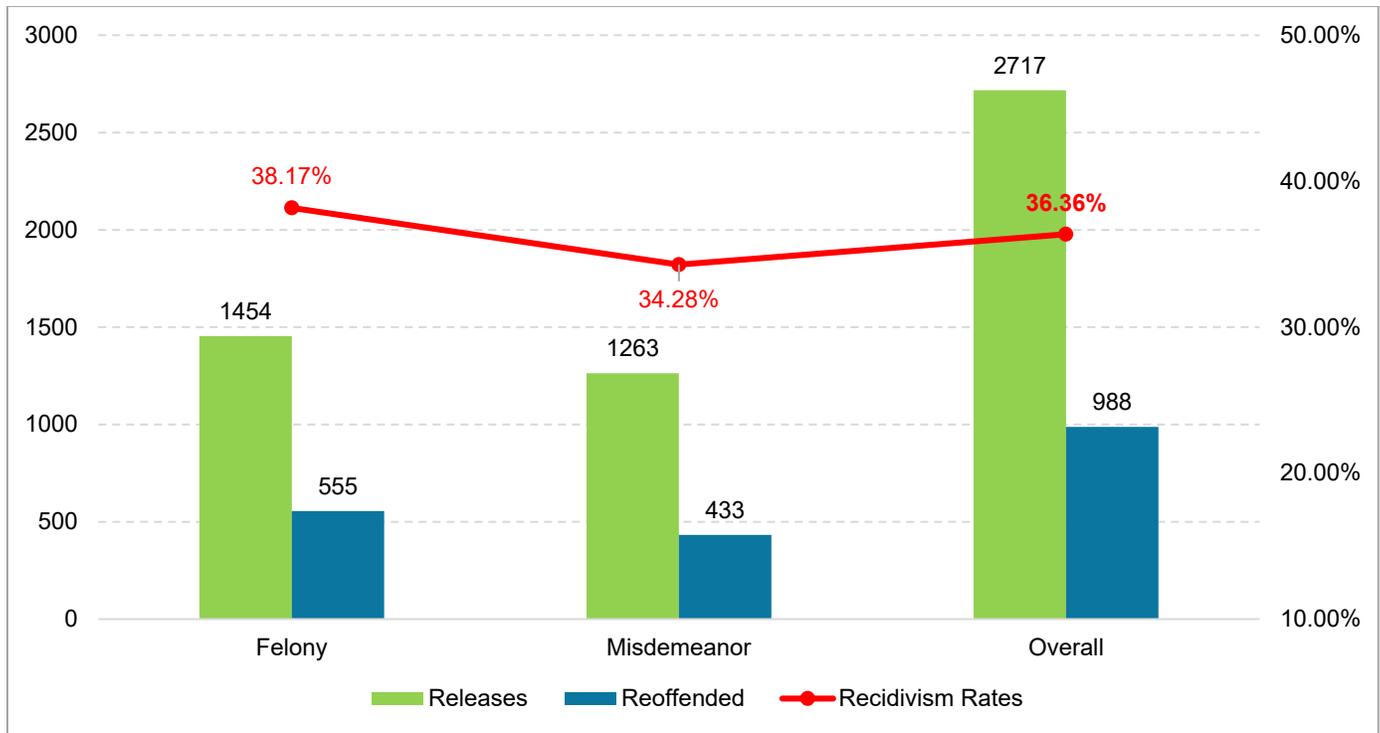
Recidivism Rates by Offense Type (Felony vs. Misdemeanor)

Table 7 provides insight into the recidivism patterns of juveniles released in 2020, segmented by offense type (**felony** vs. **misdemeanor**). Out of 2,717 juveniles released in 2020, 36.36% (988 individuals) reoffended within three years. **Felony** offenders had a slightly higher 3-year recidivism rate (38.17%) compared to those released for **misdemeanors** (34.28%).

Table 7: Number and Percent Reoffended by Offense Type

Offense Type	Total	Felony	Misdemeanor
Releases	2717	1454	1263
1-Year Recidivists	656	364	292
2-Year Recidivists	220	130	90
3-Year Recidivists	112	61	51
Total Recidivists	988	555	433
3-Year Recidivism Rate (%)	36.36	38.17	34.28

Figure 8: 3-Year Recidivism Rates by Offense Type Distribution



Recidivism Rates by Legal Action

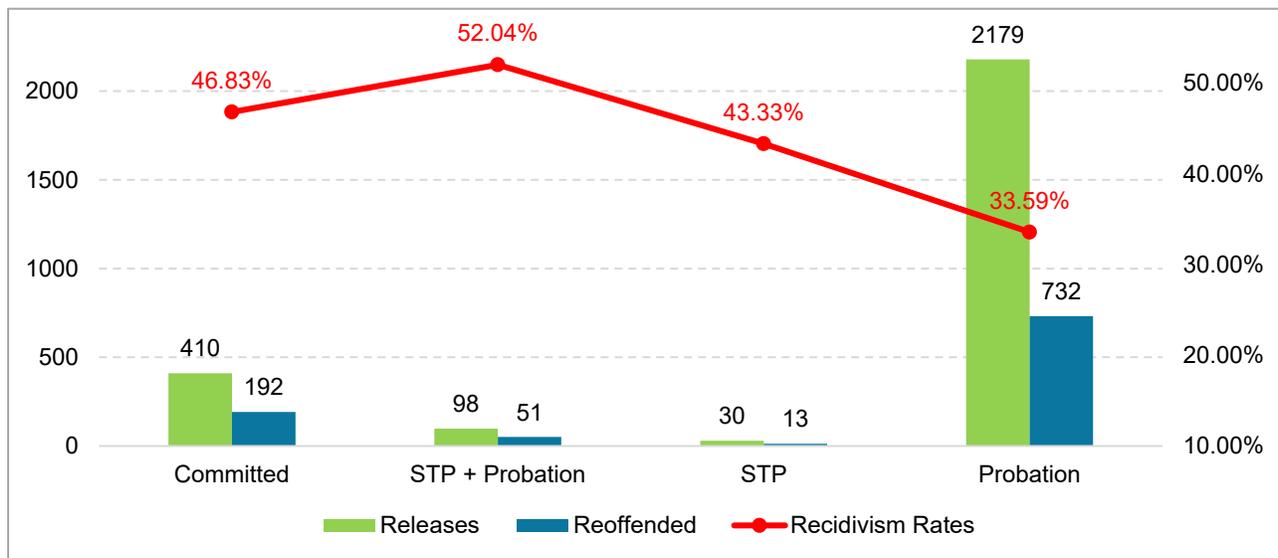
Table 7 presents juveniles released in 2020 by the type of legal action they received. Of the 2,717 juveniles released, 988 or 36.36% reoffended within three years. This indicates that over one-third of juveniles returned to the justice system within that period. **Committed** youth had a particularly high 3-year recidivism rate of 46.83%, with nearly half reoffending. Youth who received both **Short-Term Program (STP)** and **Probation** had the highest rate of 52.04%, although the total group was relatively small (98), indicating a significant proportion reoffended. **STP** group had a slightly lower rate at 43.33%, based on an even smaller cohort of 30. In contrast, the **Probation** group, the largest number of releases by far (2,179), had the lowest 3-year recidivism rate at 33.58%.

Recidivism rates increased steadily from year 1 to year 3 across all legal action categories, indicating a persistent risk of reoffending over time. The data also highlights significant variation in recidivism outcomes based on the type of legal action received. More intensive interventions, such as commitment and short-term programs, particularly when combined with probation, are associated with higher recidivism rates. In contrast, juveniles placed on probation alone, who represent the majority of releases, demonstrate the lowest likelihood of reoffending.

Table 8: Number and Percent Reoffended by Legal Action

Legal Action	Total	Committed	STP + Probation	STP	Probation
Releases	2717	410	98	30	2179
1-Year Recidivists	656	117	39	13	487
2-Year Recidivists	220	52	6	0	162
3-Year Recidivists	112	23	6	0	83
Total Recidivists	988	192	51	13	732
3-Year Recidivism Rates (%)	36.36	46.83	52.04	43.33	33.56

Figure 9: Recidivism Rates by Legal Action Distribution



Recidivism Rates by Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA)

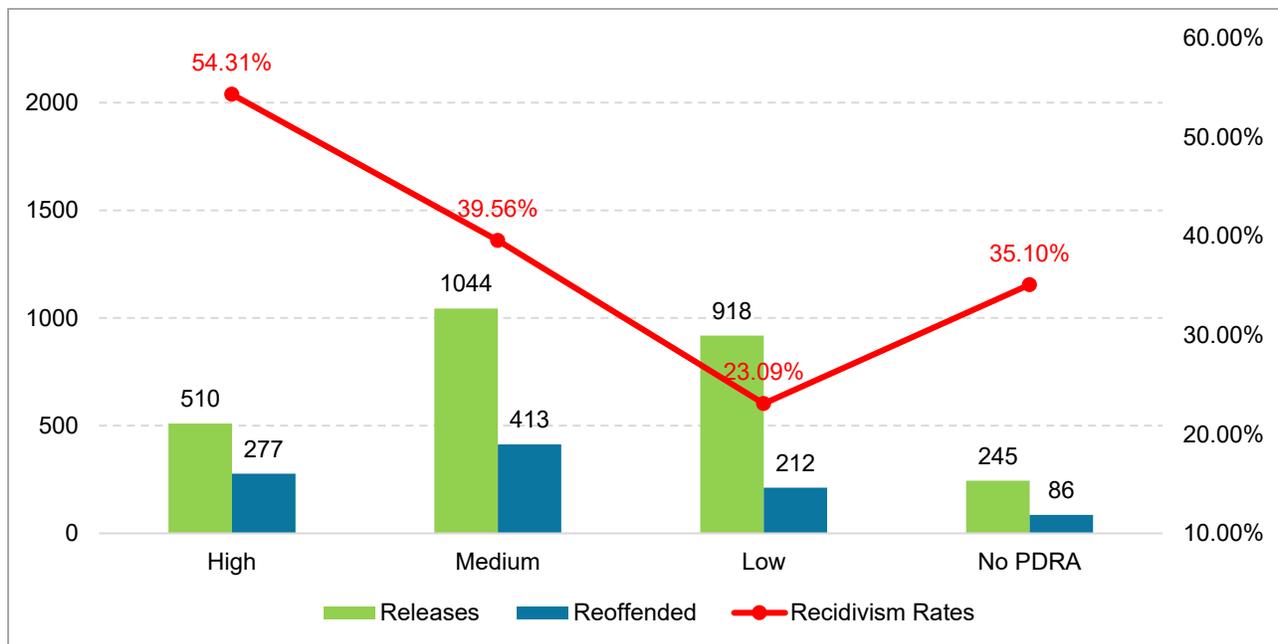
Table 9 and Figure 10 analyze the 3-year recidivism outcomes of 2,717 juveniles released in 2020, segmented by their PDRA risk level – **High**, **Medium**, **Low**, and **No PDRA**. Among the PDRA categories, **High**-risk juveniles (510) had the highest 3-year recidivism rate at 54.31%, indicating that over half reoffended. **Medium**-risk juveniles (1,044) had a recidivism rate of 39.56%. **Low**-risk juveniles (918) had the lowest recidivism rate at 23.09%. **No PDRA** group (245) showed a recidivism rate of 35.10%, slightly below the overall average.

The data demonstrates a strong correlation between PDRA-assessed risk levels and actual recidivism outcomes. Juveniles classified as high-risk had significantly higher reoffense rates than those in the medium or low categories. This trend confirms that the PDRA is a meaningful predictor of recidivism over a three-year span, with recidivism rates decreasing consistently as risk levels decrease.

Table 9: Number and Percent Reoffended by PDRA, 2020 Releases

PDRA	Total	High	Medium	Low	No PDRA
Releases	2717	510	1044	918	245
1-Year Recidivists	656	191	279	123	63
2-Year Recidivists	220	59	92	55	14
3-Year Recidivists	112	27	42	34	9
Total Recidivists	988	277	413	212	86
3-Year Recidivism Rates (%)	36.36	54.31	39.56	23.09	35.10

Figure 10: Recidivism Rates by PDRA Distribution



Recidivism Rates by Legal Action and PDRA Risk Level

The PDRA

The 2020 cohort marks the seventh consecutive year that DJJ has used the Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA) instrument. The PDRA appears critical in guiding the type of legal action applied. Each legal action category shows a different distribution of PDRA-assessed risk levels, suggesting that decisions may be risk-informed.

Table 10: Juvenile Releases by Legal Action and PDRA Risk Level

Legal Action	PDRA Risk Level Releases					Recidivism Rates (%)		
	Total	Low	Medium	High	No PDRA	1-Year Rate	2-Year Rate	3-Year Rate
Committed	410	62	132	191	25	28.54	12.68	5.61
STP + Probation	98	14	44	34	6	39.80	6.12	6.12
STP	30	3	12	12	3	43.33	Null	Null
Probation	2179	839	856	273	211	22.35	7.43	3.81

Committed Youth

Youth with a **committed** legal action represented 15.10% of the 2020 release cohort. Although a smaller portion of the overall population, this group included a large share (46.59%) of individuals assessed as high risk. Their 1-year recidivism rate was 28.54%. Consistent with previous years' recidivism reporting, committed juveniles continue to have a high PDRA risk level.

STP + Probation

The **STP + Probation** group comprised 3.61% of the 2020 release population. Within this group, 34.69% were classified as high risk, and 44.90% were medium risk, reflecting a significant presence of youth with elevated risk levels. This group had a 1-year recidivism rate of 39.80%, which is notably higher than that of the committed group. The mix of PDRA levels and the combined legal approach suggests that these youth were considered to require both structured intervention and continued supervision.

STP

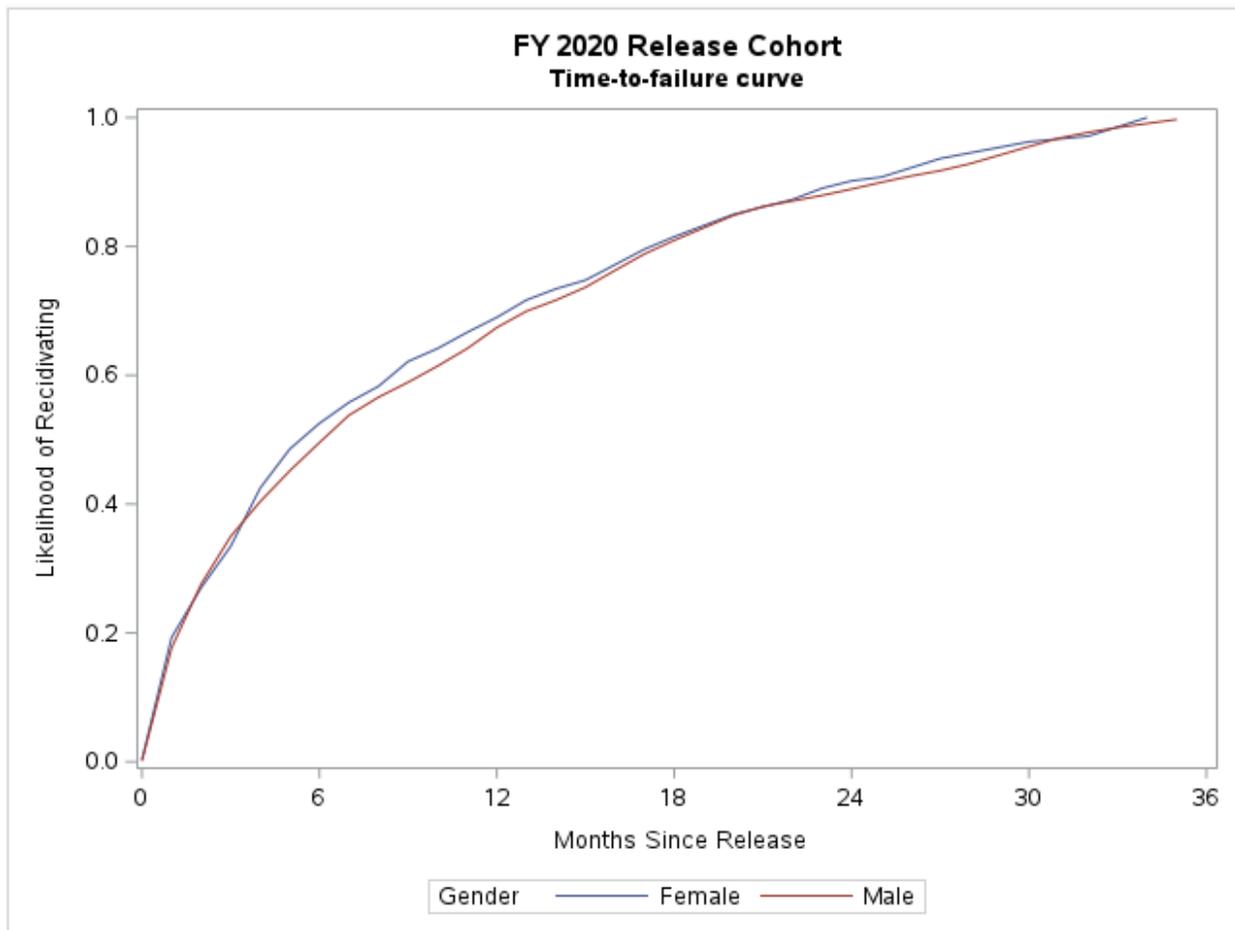
Youth released under **STP** alone comprised just 1.10% of the total release cohort. Despite its small size, this group had 40.00% high-risk and 40.00% medium-risk youth. It recorded the highest 1-year recidivism rate at 43.33%. This outcome, paired with the high PDRA scores, suggests that short-term intervention without follow-up supervision may have been insufficient for managing the risk level of this population.

Probation

The largest group, **probation**-only youth, comprised 80.19% of the 2020 release cohort. The majority of these individuals were assessed as low (38.5%) or medium (39.3%) risk, with only 12.5% identified as high risk. This group had the lowest 1-year recidivism rate at 22.35%. These outcomes reflect alignment between PDRA risk levels and the less restrictive legal action, suggesting that probation was generally applied to youth with a lower risk of reoffending.

Time to Failure Analysis

Figure 11: FY2020 Release Cohort, Time-to-failure curve



Time-to-failure is a critical component of tracking recidivism. It is used to indicate the most vulnerable time periods that juveniles are more likely to engage in recidivistic behavior, after their release.

Male and female have different offense characteristics and delinquency tendencies. Therefore, recidivism for each gender was tracked separately. The Kaplan-Meier statistical model was used to generate a time-to-failure delinquency curve. The curve illustrates a cumulative pattern of juvenile delinquency over a 36-month period. However, most recidivism acts of the total acts occurred within the first year (659 of the total 988 recidivists), therefore, the data within this time frame is highly significant.

The two lines illustrated in the graph display the path of the delinquency percentage movements by gender. During the entire monitored period, male and female delinquency rates varied quite minimally which would indicate similar recidivism tendencies between the genders in this release cohort.



June 16, 2025

Commissioner Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb
Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice
3408 Covington Highway
Decatur, GA 30032

Dear Commissioner Reynolds-Cobb,

On behalf of Kennesaw State University and the Center for Data Science and Analytics (CDSA), we were delighted to partner with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) on their 2024 Recidivism Report, offering our expertise in review and suggestions. This report delves into juvenile releases and recidivism rates across fiscal years 2017 to 2020, providing valuable data to your office, lawmakers, and our community as a whole. Our continued collaboration between the DJJ and KSU's CDSA has been truly productive, fostering a strong and productive working relationship.

Our process involved a thorough review of the SQL code used to obtain the data, ensuring every line contributed to the desired accurate output for the report's summaries. We also carefully scrutinized all tables and figures, confirming their accuracy in both display and interpretation. We shared our detailed review findings and any suggested modifications with the DJJ. We then reviewed a near-final version of the report, providing comments on presentation and interpretation.

The Center for Data Science and Analytics at Kennesaw State University is incredibly proud and thankful to have been a part of this final report, and we are excited for continued collaborations moving forward.]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AB', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Austin R. Brown, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Statistics
School of Data Science and Analytics

COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING
School of Data Science and Analytics

Town Point Building • Suite 2400 • MD 9104 • 3391 Town Point Drive • Kennesaw, GA 30144
Phone: 470-578-2865 • www.kennesaw.edu

Report Limitations

Due to Georgia's unique court system, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice 2024 Recidivism Report is limited to data obtained from shared and dependent courts and excludes data from independent courts. Juvenile releases are tracked for recidivistic events through the shared and dependent courts. Data is used from the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) to capture the recidivistic events of released juveniles 17 years of age and older. GDC only provides data on inmates who have been sentenced to adult incarceration. This method omits to gather offense data on juveniles that were released from DJJ's care (17 years of age or older) that were placed on probation.

End Notes

1. In 2024, the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice changed the definition of recidivism. The DJJ Executive Team approved this definition.
2. Information provided by the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) data query. Generated by GDC in July 2024.
3. Kaplan-Meier Time-to-Failure graph provided by KSU.
4. Release cohort data references the FY2020 fiscal year release cohort, unless otherwise noted.

Definitions

Adjudication – The process for determining if allegations brought forth in the juvenile court petition are true. An adjudicatory hearing is held to determine the facts of the case and an appropriate course of action.

Commitment – A juvenile court disposition which places a youth in the custody of DJJ for supervision, treatment, and rehabilitation. Under operation of law, the commitment order is valid for two years. DJJ makes the placement determination of whether the youth should be placed in a Youth Development Campus (YDC) or on an alternate placement. Most often, a youth is committed when probation and/or other services available to the court have failed to prevent a youth from returning to the court on either a new offense(s) or violation of probation (VOP).

Designated Felony (DF) Commitment - A juvenile court adjudication that a youth has committed certain felony acts and is a disposition in which a youth has met certain criteria, which indicates the youth requires restrictive custody as well as the length of time a youth must be placed in a YDC. Class B DF commitment Orders can be up to 36 months with 18 months served in restrictive custody, while Class A DF commitment orders can be up to 60 months with all 60 months available to be served in restrictive custody. Commitments with restrictive custody have restrictions on termination and require intensive level of aftercare supervision. Under operation of law, Designated felony commitment orders expire after 36 months for Class B, 60 months for Class A or until a youth turns 21 years of age.

SB 440 – Refers to the School Safety and Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1994 (SB 440). Among other things, this legislation modified the jurisdiction of juvenile courts to provide that superior courts have exclusive jurisdiction over children ages 13-17 who are alleged to have committed one of the following offenses (commonly referred to as the "Seven Deadly Sins"): aggravated child molestation, aggravated

and sexual battery, aggravated sodomy, murder, rape, voluntary manslaughter, or armed robbery with a firearm. Prior to indictment, a district attorney may elect to send the case to juvenile court.

Youth Development Campuses (YDCs) – Residential institutions providing academic, recreational, vocational, medical, mental health, counseling and religious services for those youth committed to DJJ, or convicted of an offense under Senate Bill 440.

Regional Youth Detention Centers (RYDCs) – Secure short-term centers for youth awaiting court to enter the community, placement in the community, or long-term facilities serving youthful offenders. These centers provide quality medical, education, behavioral health, nutrition, and general programming services.

Short Term Program (STP) - Programs operated by DJJ for youth sentenced by juvenile court judges to serve up to a maximum of 30 days or for youth screened for the program as a result of an Administrative Revocation.

Pre-Disposition Risk Assessment (PDRA) - The PDRA is an assessment instrument that helps juvenile justice systems identify the system-involved youth for focus. The tool helps to classify those youth who are most likely to be involved in future adjudications, allowing agencies to know how intensively to intervene, or what, if any, intervention is necessary.