

Prisoner Reentry in Idaho

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Contents

Executive Summary	v
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Chapter 1 Incarceration Trends in Idaho</u>	4
<u>Prison Population on the Rise</u>	4
<u>Admission and Release Trends</u>	5
<u>Idaho Department of Correction: Structure and Prisoner Classification</u>	6
<u>Chapter 2 Characteristics of Idaho’s Released Prisoners</u>	9
<u>Demographics</u>	9
<u>Why They Were in Prison</u>	12
<u>How Long They Were in Prison</u>	13
<u>Criminal History and the Revolving Door</u>	15
<u>Mental and Physical Health Challenges</u>	16
<u>Education and Programming</u>	17
<u>Chapter 3 Prisoner Release and Supervision Policies and Practices</u>	21
<u>How Prisoners are Released in Idaho</u>	21
<u>Prominence of Post Release Supervision</u>	22
<u>Chapter 4 Geographic Distribution of Released Prisoners</u>	25
<u>Reentry in Idaho</u>	25
<u>Prisoners Returning to Ada County in 2003</u>	27
<u>Prisoners Returning to Twin Falls, Washington, and Cassia Counties</u>	29
<u>Juveniles Released in 2002</u>	30
Chapter 5: Looking Forward	34

Table of Figures

Figure 1. U.S. and Idaho State Prison Populations	4
Figure 2: Total Population, Admissions and Releases for IDOC Secure Facilities, FY1996-2003	6
Figure 3. Percentage of Admissions to IDOC Secure Facilities by Initial Admission Type, FY2003	8
Figure 4. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Race/Ethnicity, 2003	10
Figure 5. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Age at Release, 2003	10
Figure 6. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Marital Status, 2003	11
Figure 7. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Number of Children, 2003	11
Figure 8. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by General Category of Most Serious Conviction Offense, 2003	12
Figure 9. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Category of Most Serious Conviction Offense, 2003	13
Figure 10. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Minimum Cumulative Sentence, 2003	14
Figure 11. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Time Served in a Secure Facility and by Incarceration Status, 2003	14
Figure 12: Average Time Served by Admission Type for Prisoners Released in 2003	15
Figure 13. Percent of IDOC Releases by Average Time Served (in Years) and Crime Type, 2003	15
Figure 14. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Number of Disciplinary Reports, 2003	16
Figure 15. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Highest Grade Attended, 2003	18
Figure 16. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Release Type, FY 2003	22
Figure 17. Percentage of Releases from IDOC Secure Facilities under Supervision, FY 1996-2003	24
Figure 18. Number of Prisoner Releases by Idaho County, 2003	26
Figure 19. Percentage of Prisoner Releases by Idaho County, 2003	26
Figure 20. Social and Economic Indicators for Ada County, 2003	28
Figure 21. Prisoner Releases to Idaho Counties, Rate Per 1,000 Residents, 2002	27
Figure 22. Three High Concentration Counties in Idaho, by Demographic, 2002	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 23. Geographic Distribution of Released Juveniles, 2002	31
Figure 24. Juvenile Releases to Idaho Counties, Rate per 1,000 Residents, 2002	32
Figure 25. Juvenile Releases, Three High Concentration Counties in Idaho, by Demographic, 2002	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Executive Summary

This report describes the process of prisoner reentry in Idaho by examining the trends in incarceration and prisoner releases in the state, the characteristics of the state's returning prisoners, and the geographic distribution of returning prisoners. This report does not attempt to evaluate a specific reentry program or empirically assess Idaho's reentry policies and practices. Rather, the report consolidates existing data on incarceration and release trends and presents a new analysis of data on Idaho prisoners released in 2003. The data used from this report were derived from several sources, including the Idaho Department of Correction, Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections, and the U.S. Census Bureau. Highlights from the report are presented below.

Incarceration Trends. Over the past seven years, Idaho's incarcerated population has grown at a faster rate than state prison populations nationwide. The Idaho prison population increased 60 percent from 1996 to 2003, compared to a 23 percent nationally during this same time period. The per capita rate of imprisonment in Idaho rose from 87 to 430 per 100,000 residents in the state between 1980 and 2000, an increase of almost 400 percent.¹ Idaho's release patterns reflect these incarceration trends: 3,194 prisoners were released from Idaho prisons in fiscal year 2003, 78 percent higher than the number released in fiscal year 1996 (N=1,790). Between fiscal years 2002 and 2003, the growth of Idaho's prison population slowed, increasing by less than one percent. The growth of the state's admission and release populations, however, climbed during this time period by nearly 5 percent and 18 percent respectively.

Characteristics of Prisoners Released in 2003. The majority of released prisoners were male (83 percent) and white (79 percent). The average age at release was 33 years. One third (33 percent) had been serving time for drug offenses, 21 percent for violent offenses, and the remaining 46 percent for non-violent (and non-drug) offenses. The average time served was 1.7 years. One-fifth (21 percent) were incarcerated for parole violations. Educational attainment is also quite low with nearly half lacking a high school diploma or GED at the time of incarceration. A vast majority (83 percent) had a need for substance use treatment; however only 11 percent of all releases participated in the IDOC's relapse prevention program during their most recent period of incarceration. Approximately 9 percent of the release population had hepatitis, 0.4 percent were HIV positive, and approximately 13 percent of the release population received psychotropic medication at some point during their most recent incarceration period.

Characteristics of Juveniles Released in 2002. In the 2002 calendar year, the IDOC system released 373 juveniles into the community. The majority was male (85 percent) and white (95 percent). Most of the juveniles released in 2002 (84 percent) were between the ages of 15 and 18 years. Approximately half had drug and alcohol problems (55 percent) and/or mental or physical health challenges (48 percent). The largest percent of juvenile Idaho prisoners who were released in 2002 had been serving time for non-violent (and non-drug) offenses (65 percent). Forty-four percent of the juvenile releases has been incarcerated for a misdemeanor offense, 41 percent had been serving time for a felony offense, and 15 percent had been incarcerated for a parole violation. On average, juveniles were in custody for 1.4 years. Twelve percent of juveniles released in 2002 had been in an Idaho juvenile facility at least once before.

¹ Bureau of Justice Statistics (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bis/prisons.htm#selected>).

Release and Supervision Policies and Practices. In fiscal year 2003, the majority (83 percent) of all exiting prisoners were released discretionarily to a period of community supervision. Since 1996, the number and share of prisoners released without supervision in Idaho has remained relatively stable.²

Geographic Distribution of Released Prisoners. Of the prisoners released to supervision in Idaho in 2003, more than one-fourth (27 percent) returned to Ada County, followed by Canyon County (13 percent). Ada County, which has the greatest number of returning prisoners however, has the lowest rate of returning prisoners: 2 per every 1,000 residents. Twin Falls and Washington Counties have the highest rates of returning prisoners (3.9 per 1,000 residents), followed by Cassia County (3.6 per 1,000 residents). As with the adult release population, the greatest share of released juvenile prisoners (28 percent) returned to Ada County, however, juvenile releases were most heavily concentrated in Clark, Power, and Bear Lake Counties.

² 84 percent of releases in fiscal year 1996 received community supervision.

Introduction

This report examines the prisoner reentry phenomenon in Idaho. Prisoner reentry—the process of leaving prison and returning to society—has become a pressing issue both in Idaho and across the nation. Rising incarceration rates over the past quarter century have resulted in more and more prisoners being released from prison each year. Nationwide, an estimated 630,000 prisoners were released from state and federal prisons in 2001, a fourfold increase over the past two decades.³ Thus, released prisoners, their families, and the communities to which they return are having to cope with the challenges of reentry on a much greater scale than ever before.

And the challenges of reentry are many. More prisoners nationwide are returning home having spent longer terms behind bars,⁴ exacerbating the already significant challenges of finding employment and reconnecting with family. Prisoners today are typically less prepared for reintegration, less connected to community-based social structures, and more likely to have health or substance abuse problems than in the past. In addition to these personal circumstances, limited availability of jobs, housing, and social services in a community may affect the returning prisoner's ability to successfully reintegrate.⁵

These challenges affect more than returning prisoners and their families; they can also have serious implications for the communities to which prisoners return. Two-thirds of the nation's prisoners released in 1996 returned to major metropolitan areas across the country—up from 50 percent in 1984.⁶ Within central cities, released prisoners are often concentrated in a few neighborhoods.⁷ These high concentrations of returning prisoners generate great costs to those communities, including potential increases in costs associated with crime and public safety, greater public health risks, and high rates of unemployment and homelessness. Developing a thorough understanding of the characteristics of returning prisoners and the challenges they face is an important first step in shaping public policy toward improving the safety and welfare of all citizens.

In many ways, the dimensions and challenges of prisoner reentry observed on the national level are mirrored in Idaho. Incarceration has increased significantly in Idaho in recent years. Between fiscal years 1996 and 2003, the Idaho prison population increased by 60 percent from 3,639 to 5,825, and the per capita rate of imprisonment in Idaho rose from 319 to 430 per 100,000 residents in the state between 1996 and 2000, an increase of 35 percent.⁸ Admissions to Idaho prisons also increased over this period. In fiscal year 1996, 2,233 individuals were admitted to Idaho prisons, and by fiscal year 2003, annual admissions had grown to 3,218, a 44 percent increase.

³ Paige M. Harrison and Jennifer C. Karberg. 2003. *Prison and Jail Prisoners at Midyear 2002*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

⁴ James P. Lynch and William J. Sabol. 2001. "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective." *Crime Policy Report*, vol. 3. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press.

⁵ For an in-depth discussion of prisoner reentry nationwide, see Travis, Jeremy, Amy L. Solomon, and Michelle Waul (2001) *From Prison to Home: The Dimensions and Consequences of Prisoner Reentry*. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

⁶ Lynch and Sabol. 2001. "Prisoner Reentry in Perspective."

⁷ Nancy La Vigne, Vera Kachnowski, Jeremy Travis, Rebecca Naser, and Christy Visher. 2003. "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Maryland." Washington, D.C. The Urban Institute; Nancy G. La Vigne, Cynthia A. Mamalian, Christy Visher, and Jeremy Travis. 2003. "A Portrait of Prisoner Reentry in Illinois." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute; Nancy G. La Vigne, Gillian Thomson, Vera Kachnowski, Christy Visher, and Jeremy Travis. 2003. "A Portrait of Prisoner REentry in Ohio." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute. Jamie Watson, Amy Solomon, and Jeremy Travis. 2004. "A Portrait of Prisoner REentry in Texas." Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

⁸ Bureau of Justice Statistics (<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bis/prisons.htm#selected>).

As with the growth in imprisonment, Idaho has also experienced a dramatic growth in the number of people being released from prison. In fiscal year 1996, only 1,790 individuals were released from the state's prisons. Seven years later, 3,194 individuals were released to the community from Idaho's prisons, a 78 percent increase. In 2003, the vast majority (90 percent) of those released from Idaho prisons to a period of post-release supervision returned to communities in Idaho. While over one-fourth (27 percent) of these releases returned to Ada county, Twin Falls and Washington Counties received the highest concentrations of returning prisoners, at 3.9 prisoners per 1,000 residents.

Government leaders, corrections officials, local organizations, and service providers are keenly aware of the reentry challenges experienced by states and communities across the country, and they have begun to use both research and programmatic knowledge to address them. This emphasis on issues pertaining to prisoner reentry prompted the National Governor's Association to launch the Prisoner Reentry State Policy Academy. Established in the summer of 2003, the goal of the Academy is to help governors and other state policymakers develop and implement effective prisoner reentry strategies that reduce costly recidivism rates. Seven states—Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Virginia—have been selected to participate in this intensive eighteen-month policy academy. Activities include an in-state policy workshop, two policy academy meetings, and customized technical assistance, including the production of this report. The purpose of the report is to present information on prisoner reentry in one document that can be used to inform state officials and policymakers as they develop strategies to address prisoner reentry in Idaho.

This report describes prisoner reentry in Idaho by examining the state's incarceration, admission, and release trends over time; describing the characteristics of prisoners released from Idaho prisons; and examining the geographic distribution of those released prisoners across the state. This report does not attempt to evaluate a specific reentry program, nor does it empirically assess Idaho's reentry policies and practices. Rather, the report consolidates existing data on incarceration and release trends and presents a new analysis of data on Idaho prisoners released in 2003.

About the Data

The data used for this report were derived from several sources. Longitudinal data describing the incarceration and reentry trends in Idaho and the nation were derived from the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC), and the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Community-level data used to develop the maps of reentry and related demographic and socioeconomic status data by county were derived from 2000 U.S. Census data.

Data on the population of inmates released from Idaho secure facilities in calendar year 2003, including post-incarceration data, were provided by the IDOC. In cases in which the IDOC released an individual more than once in 2003 (in most cases this would occur when a person was released from prison, returned to prison for a violation of the conditions of his or her release, and was then released again), only the individual's first release is included in most analyses.

The IDOC data included only the county to which prisoners who were supervised upon release returned. Since the vast majority of inmates released from the IDOC in FY 2003 (83 percent) are released to supervision, the geographic analysis includes most released prisoners. Post-incarceration addresses for inmates who were not released to supervision were unavailable, and thus were not included in the geographic analysis.

Data for the juvenile cohort were provided by the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections.

CHAPTER 1

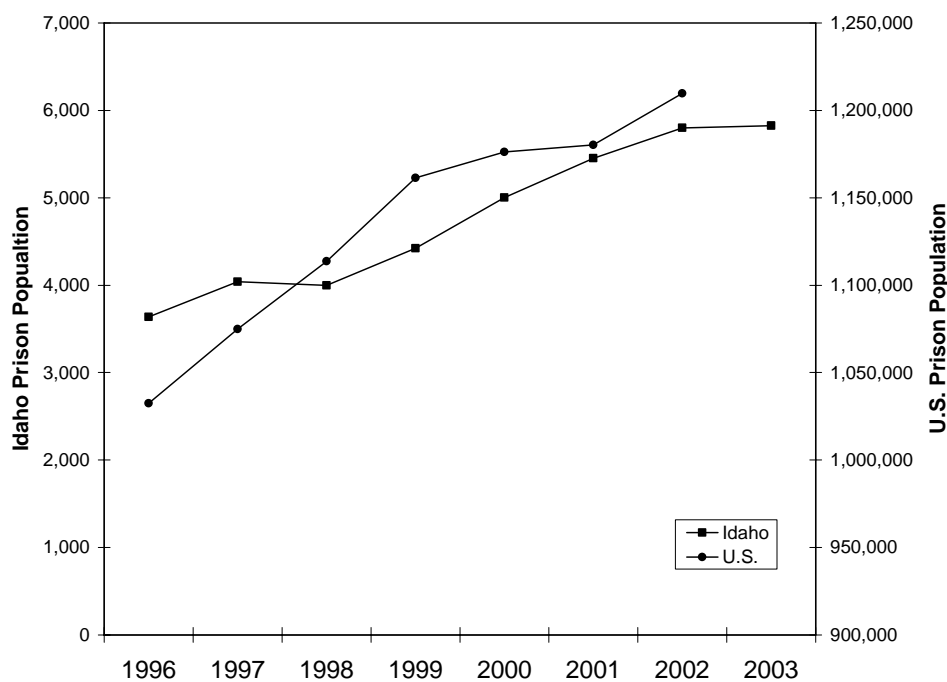
Incarceration Trends in Idaho

In order to understand the reentry phenomenon in Idaho, it is first necessary to examine prison admission and release trends in the state. This section provides an overview of recent incarceration history in Idaho and describes some basic changes in the state's prisoner population and release cohorts. This context will help frame the reentry issue and will provide background for the discussion of the needs and challenges of returning prisoners that follows later in this report.

PRISON POPULATION ON THE RISE

The Idaho prison population has grown significantly over the past seven years. Between year-end fiscal years 1996 and 2003, Idaho's incarcerated population increased by 60 percent from 3,639 to 5,825 people (figure 1).⁹ While the prison population grew steadily from fiscal years 1998 to 2002 at an average rate of 10 percent per year, it tapered off between 2002 and 2003, rising by just 23 offenders, or 0.4 percent.

Figure 1. U.S. and Idaho State Prison Populations



Source: Idaho Department of Correction and U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics
Note: Years represent fiscal years for Idaho and calendar years for the United States.

⁹ Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC). 2003. "Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003." http://corrections.state.id.us/facts/monthly_stats/AdmitRls95-01Rpt.pdf. (Accessed August 13, 2003.)

Despite the slower growth in recent years, Idaho's prison population grew at a faster rate (seven percent annually) in the past seven years than the prison population nationwide (three percent annually).¹⁰ Nonetheless, in 2002, however, Idaho had a slightly lower incarceration rate compared to the nation (461 versus 476 per 100,000 residents).¹¹

As the prison population has increased in Idaho, so too has spending on corrections. Between fiscal years 1997 and 2002, the IDOC budget increased 55 percent (as adjusted for inflation),¹² rising from \$71,125,800¹³ to \$123,136,300.¹⁴

ADMISSION AND RELEASE TRENDS

Between fiscal years 1996 and 2003, admissions to IDOC secure facilities increased by 44 percent from 2,233 to 3,218 people. During this same time period, the number of inmates released from prison increased by 78 percent from 1,790 to 3,194 people (figure 2). As can be seen in Figure 2, when the number of admissions and releases are essentially the same (fiscal years 1998 and 2003), the total prison population remains steady, and when the number of admissions exceeds the number of releases (all other years), the total prison population increases.

Idaho has had no significant changes in sentencing policy in recent years that might relate to these admissions and release trends from the mid-1990s to the present. However, in 1986 the Unified Sentencing Act (House Bill No. 524) was signed into Idaho law, and became effective February, 1987. This Act, also known as the Truth in Sentencing Act, required that a minimum (fixed) period must be served prior to a prisoner's release on parole.¹⁵ It is difficult to link Truth-in-Sentencing legislation to the Idaho admission and release trends described above because of the relatively short time period for which we have data. However, it is likely that Truth-in-Sentencing has contributed to increases in the prison population over time, since prisoners generally serve longer terms under this law.¹⁶

¹⁰Comparisons are based on statistics from FY 1996 to FY2003 for Idaho and statistics from CY1995 to CY2002 for the nation. Idaho Department of Correction. 2001. *Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003*; Bureau of Justice Statistics. 2000. Datafile corp05.wk1: Prisoners in Custody of State or Federal Correctional Authorities, National Prisoner Statistics data series (NPS-1). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, August; Harrison, Paige M. and Allen J. Beck. 2003. "Prisoners in 2002." *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

¹¹ The incarceration rate represents sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities. Paige M. Harrison and Allen J. Beck. 2003. "Prisoners in 2002."

¹² This calculation was based on the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Consumer Price Index, www.bls.gov/cpi (Accessed June 3, 2004).

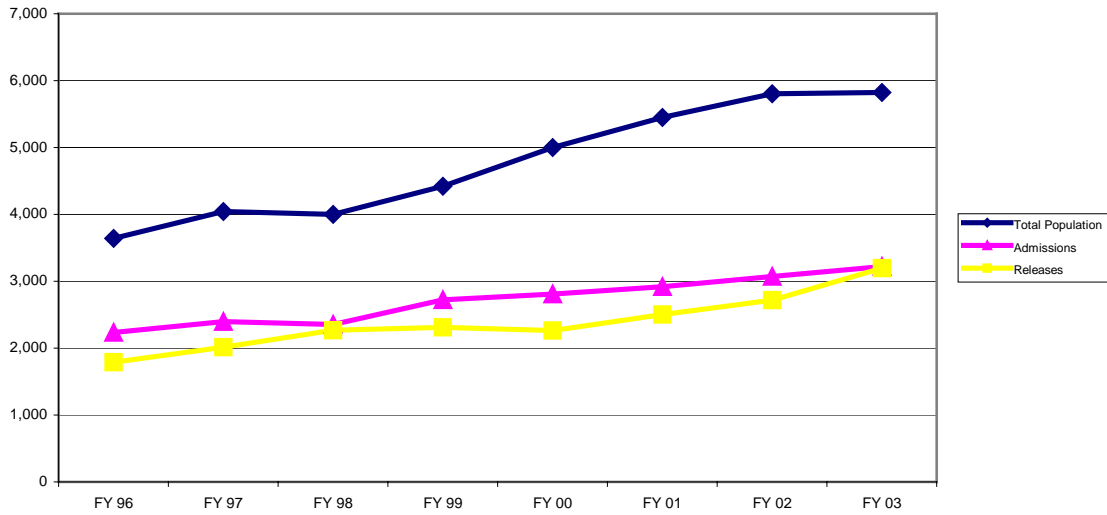
¹³ Idaho Department of Correction *Annual Report, FY2002*. \$71,125,800 is \$79,722,918 in 2002 dollars.

¹⁴ Idaho Department of Correction *Annual Report FY2002*.

¹⁵ At the time of sentencing, judges may impose a fixed sentence during which time the prisoner is not eligible for parole. Judges may also impose a subsequent indeterminate period. The aggregate sentence can not exceed the maximum provided by law. "The court can impart the specific amount of punishment it feels to be just and still impose an indeterminate period to be used by the Commission of Pardons and Parole for rehabilitation and parole purposes (Idaho Code § 19-2513)." Idaho also has a "three-strikes" policy (Idaho Code § 19-2514- Persistent Violator- Sentence on Third Conviction for Felony, effective 1923, amended 1970) for which a third felony conviction requires a sentence between 5 years and life.

¹⁶ Paula M. Ditton and Doris James Wilson. January 1999. "Truth in Sentencing in State Prisons" Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, Washington, DC.

Figure 2: Total Population, Admissions and Releases for IDOC Secure Facilities, FY1996-2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of Idaho Department of Correction, "Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003."

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION: STRUCTURE AND PRISONER CLASSIFICATION

Idaho's Department of Correction (IDOC) differs in structure from that of many other states. In Idaho, the Department of Correction is responsible not only for incarcerating adult felons but also for supervising probationers and parolees in the community, as well as providing pre-sentence investigation reports for the courts. The IDOC operates eight correctional institutions, one privately operated correctional institution, four community work centers,¹⁷ and 22 probation/parole district and satellite offices.¹⁸

With respect to the incarcerated population, the IDOC categorizes its inmates into three broad groups: Termers, Riders, and Parole Violators. "Termers" are offenders committed to prison by the courts or by the Parole Commission.¹⁹ Termers tend to correspond most closely with prisoners incarcerated in other state prison systems who receive a minimum sentence of at least one year.

"Riders"²⁰ are offenders for whom the judge has imposed a prison sentence, but who remain under the jurisdiction of the courts. These prisoners serve approximately 120 to 180 days in a specialized IDOC correctional facility where they undergo psychiatric and other testing, and may participate in

¹⁷ The community work centers are secure facilities that allow work release opportunities for minimum and community custody inmates, many of whom are nearing release. Among the prisoners released in 2003, four percent participated in a community work center program during their most recent period of incarceration.

¹⁸ Idaho Department of Correction website (http://www.corr.state.id.us/about_us/overview.htm, accessed June 16, 2004).

¹⁹ Termers are committed by the Parole Commission in cases for which parole violators are revoked.

²⁰ Also called "Retained Jurisdiction Offenders" because the courts retain jurisdiction until the offender completes this special program.

rehabilitation programs. This alternative is available only for felony cases.²¹ Toward the end of the Rider program, the facility completes a report for the judge (based on program participation and behavior) to help make the decision to either place the offender on probation or “drop jurisdiction” and have the prisoner serve the imposed sentence.²² Among the offenders exiting Rider status from fiscal years 1996 to 2003, 87 percent were released to probation and 13 percent received additional prison time.²³

Finally, “Parole Violators” are offenders that violated the conditions of their parole or committed a new crime while on parole and are awaiting a revocation hearing from the Parole Commission. The Parole Commission will determine whether to revoke the offender to prison, reinstate the offender to parole, or discharge the offender. Parole Violators remain in this temporary custody status until the Parole Commission decides how to respond to the violation. A parole violator’s custody status changes to Term if the Board decides to revoke parole.²⁴ For parole violators whose parole status was changed between fiscal years 1996 and 2003, 73 percent had their parole revoked, 22 percent were reinstated on parole, and 4 percent were discharged.²⁵ Parole Violators spend approximately 3 to 4 months, on average, in IDOC facilities prior to receiving a change in their status.

Nearly half (44 percent) of the admissions²⁶ to IDOC secure facilities in fiscal year 2003 were of Rider status, 40 percent were of Term status and 16 percent of Parole Violator status (figure 3). As described above, some of the prisoners who were initially classified as Riders or Parole Violators may become Termers with the court’s or Parole Commission’s determination.

²¹ Idaho’s Sixth Judicial District Court webpage (<http://www.co.bannock.id.us/sentenci.htm>, accessed June 16, 2004).

²² Idaho Department of Correction brochure (http://corrections.state.id.us/our_facilities/brochure.pdf, accessed June 16, 2004).

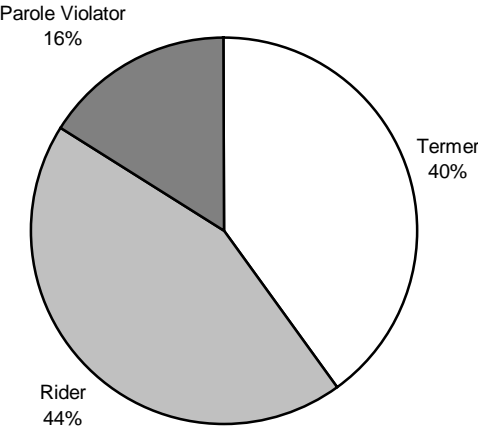
²³ IDOC. 2001. “Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003.”

²⁴ Some parole violators who are revoked are never assigned parole violator status. Rather, they go straight to term status. This is a very small segment of the parole violator population. Also, some of the parole violators in the datafile should have been reclassified as term offenders and then released from that status, but were not. For that reason, some parole violators have much longer time served calculations than the parole violators awaiting a hearing. Some parole violators are also absconders and they are given meaningless exit dates. In addition, some mental health offenders cannot, without a judge’s decision, be labeled as term offenders, so they remain on parole violator status indefinitely. Admissions to parole violator status prior to 2002 (N=40) were excluded from these analyses since they do not represent current practices or they fall into the absconder or mental health categories as explained above.

²⁵ IDOC. 2001. “Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003.” Figures do not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

²⁶ Admissions to IDOC’s non-secure facilities are not included in these calculations. Admissions represent inmates’ initial admission types.

Figure 3. Percentage of Admissions to IDOC Secure Facilities by Initial Admission Type, FY2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of: Idaho Department of Correction. "Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003."

CHAPTER 2

Characteristics of Idaho's Released Prisoners

In order to better understand prisoner reentry in Idaho, it is important to examine the characteristics of the population being released from Idaho secure facilities. This section describes the cohort released from secure facilities in the Idaho Department of Correction in 2003, examining basic demographics, program need and programs available, most serious conviction offenses, time served, prior incarceration histories, and physical and mental health conditions.²⁷

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the 2003 calendar year, the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC) system released 3,113 men and women into the community. The demographic composition of this 2003 release cohort reflects the composition of the Idaho prison population: The majority was male (83 percent) and white (79 percent). The release cohort also included individuals of other races, 14 percent of which were Hispanic and 4 percent Native American (figure 4). The racial distribution of the release cohort differs from the racial distribution of the state, which is 91 percent white, with all other races totaling less than 1 percent each.

Most prisoners were relatively young at the time of their release, with nearly three-quarters (73 percent) between the ages of 20 and 39 (figure 5). The average age of those released in 2003 was 33 years. Females released from Idaho's prisons in 2003 were slightly older than males; the average age at release for females was 33.5 years compared to 32.9 years for males. Termers released from Idaho's prisoners in 2003 were older than the Riders; the average age at release for Termers was 35.3 years compared to 29.7 years for Riders.

At the time of their admission, slightly more than half (52 percent) of all prisoners released during 2003 reported that they were not married (figure 6),²⁸ and over half (59 percent) of released prisoners also reported having at least one child.²⁹ Among male releasees, 55 percent had at least one child compared to 81 percent of female releasees. While the percentage of male releasees with children declines as the number of children increases, the percentage of female releasees with children stays relatively constant (between 17 and 25 percent) for each category of total children (figure 7). Of released prisoners with

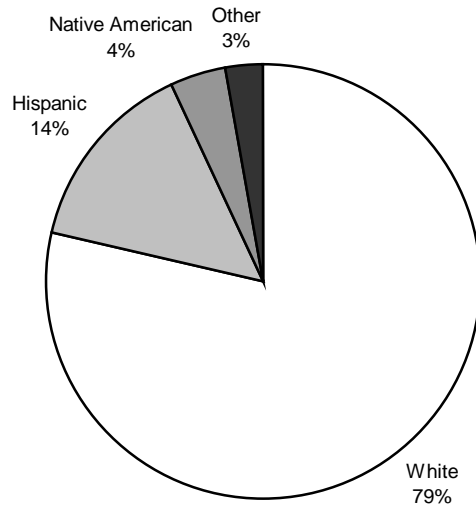
²⁷ Unless otherwise noted, the results presented in this chapter were generated from a datafile provided by the IDOC. The analysis includes only the first release from IDOC for each inmate in calendar year 2003. Of the 3,113 prisoners released in 2003, all but 2 percent had only one exit in 2003; only 56 prisoners had 2 or 3 exits in 2003. The analysis includes prisoners released from IDOC secure facilities (both correctional institutions and community work centers). Sample sizes for the analyses presented in this chapter are indicated on each chart. Differences in sample sizes are a function of missing data or data excluded for reasons explained in accompanying notes.

²⁸ Marital status is reported upon admission to prison. Only 22 percent of prisoners were married when they entered prison, and it is possible that some prisoners may have divorced while incarcerated.

²⁹ Over one-third (35 percent) of the released prisoners were missing data regarding number of children and educational attainment. A large percent (57 percent) of the missing data is associated with prisoners sentenced in Ada County, even though Ada County accounts only for 23 percent of incoming prisoners. This finding suggests that a disproportionately high percentage of prisoners from Ada County did not have pre-sentence investigations (PSI) -- the source for these data. Until recently, the IDOC performed PSIs for all Idaho counties except Ada County, although it is responsible for Ada County's PSIs. In light of these missing data, the IDOC Review and Analysis unit analyzed a cohort of prisoners sentenced in Ada County and found that these prisoners had a similar number of children and level of educational attainment as those prisoners (state-wide) who did have these data available.

children, the average number of children for male releasees is 1.2, versus an average of 2.1 children for female releasees.

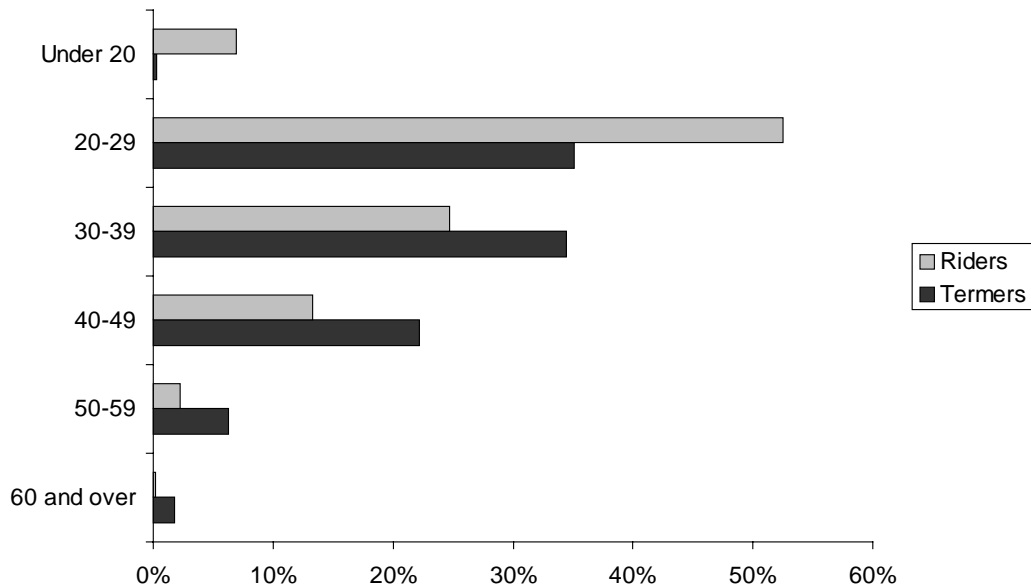
Figure 4. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Race/Ethnicity, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: These data were available for 3,096 observations.

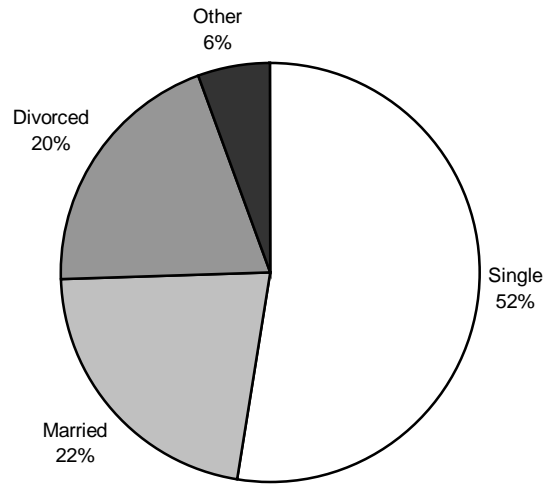
Figure 5. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Age at Release, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: These data were available for 3,113 observations.

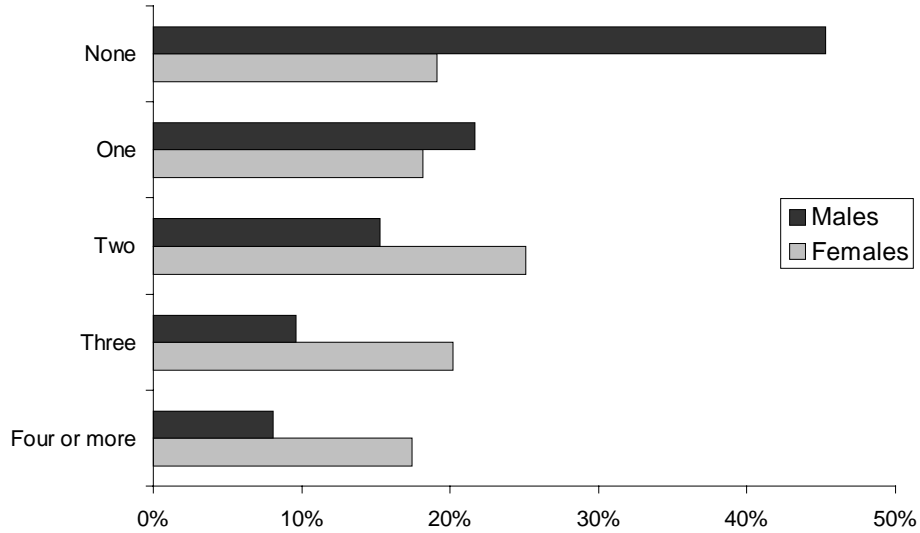
Figure 6. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Marital Status, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: These data were available for 2,985 observations.

Figure 7. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Number of Children, 2003



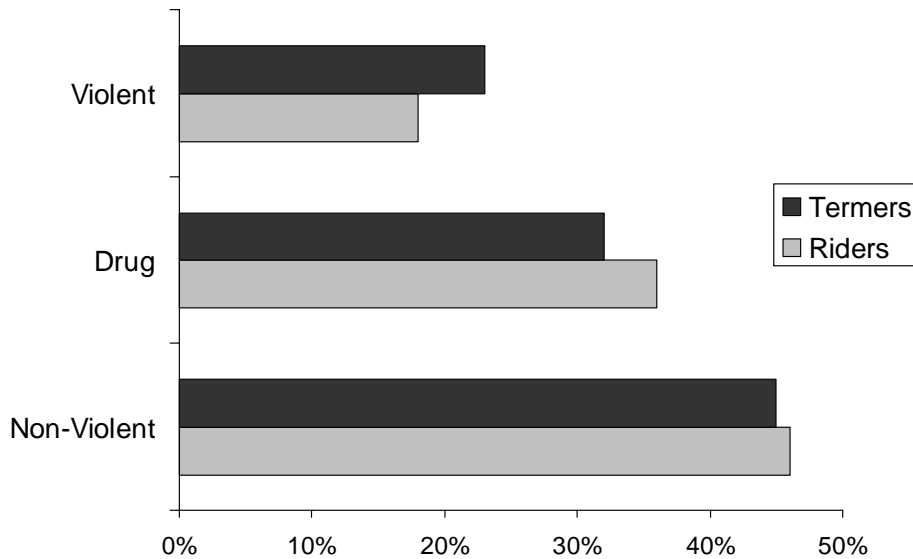
Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: These data were available for 2,013 observations.

WHY THEY WERE IN PRISON

The largest percent of Idaho prisoners who were released in 2003 had been serving time for non-violent (and non-drug) offenses (46 percent), followed by drug offenses (33 percent) and violent offenses (21 percent) (figure 8). Of those released in 2003, a slightly higher percentage of Termers had a violent offense (23 percent) as compared to Riders (18 percent). Figure 9 presents, in more detail, the most serious offenses for which the prisoners released in 2003 were convicted and incarcerated.³⁰

Figure 8. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by General Category of Most Serious Conviction Offense, 2003

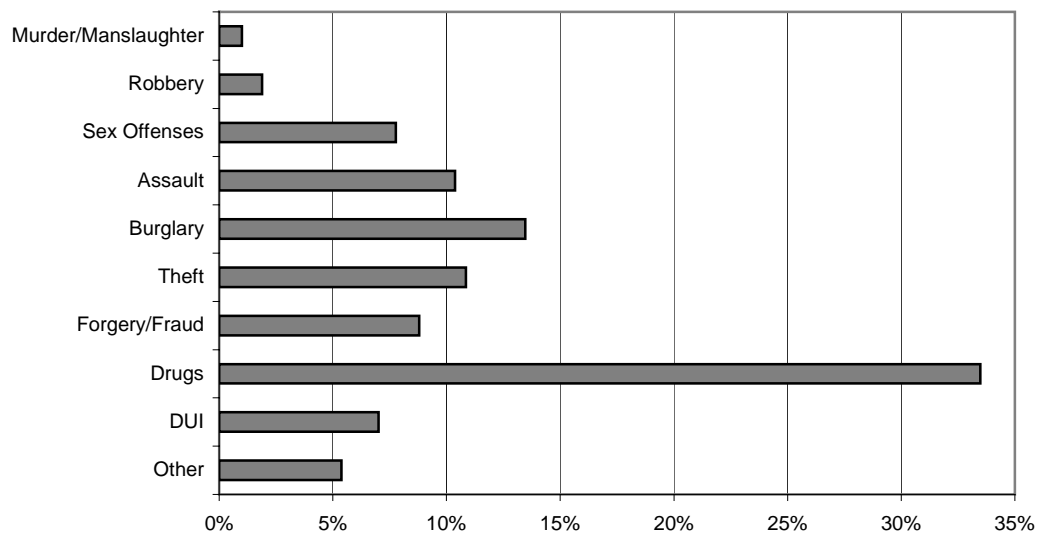


Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: Figure excludes parole violators who were released after awaiting a parole commission hearing (who were not revoked) (n=192). The data are based on 2,921 observations.

³⁰ Parole violators who were released after awaiting a Parole Commission hearing (who were not revoked) were excluded from this figure. In the cases of offenders who were incarcerated after being on probation or parole, their most serious conviction offense may represent the offense for which they were originally convicted or it may represent a new offense that they committed while on probation or parole and for which they were convicted and incarcerated.

Figure 9. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Category of Most Serious Conviction Offense, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: Figure excludes parole violators who were released after awaiting a parole commission hearing (who were not revoked) (n=192). The data are based on 2,921 observations.

HOW LONG THEY WERE IN PRISON

For prisoners sentenced under Idaho’s Unified Sentencing Act, once they have served their minimum terms, the Parole Commission may release them to parole or decide to keep them in IDOC custody up to their maximum sentences. These rules do not apply to the Rider population that remains under the jurisdiction of the courts. Given the role that offenders’ minimum sentences play in determining their time served in IDOC custody, the analysis that follows focuses on minimum sentences.

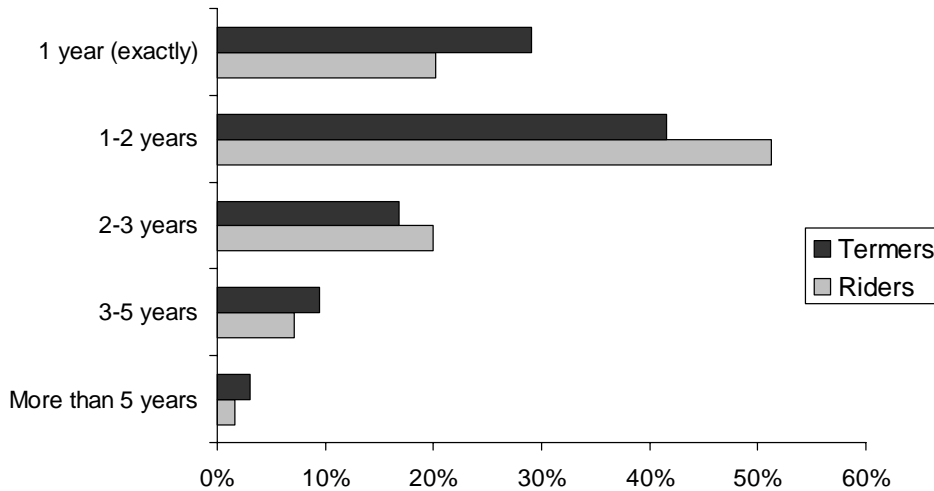
Prisoners released in 2003 had been sentenced to an average minimum of 27 months (2.25 years) in the Idaho correctional system. This average is the same for both Termers and Riders. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of the 2003 release cohort had a cumulative minimum sentence totaling two years or less, just over a quarter (27 percent) had a minimum sentence of between two and five years, and only two percent had a minimum sentence of more than five years (figure 10).³¹

Sentence lengths and actual times served for the 2003 release cohort are reasonably consistent. Over half (55 percent) of the release cohort served one year or less, and nearly three-quarters (73 percent) served two years or less. Five percent served more than five years (figure 11). Time served does, however, vary by the prisoner’s status: Term status prisoners serve far longer terms than Riders and Parole Violators awaiting Parole Commission hearings. The majority of Riders and Parole Violators

³¹ Parole violators who were not revoked and who were thus released in 2003 after being held pending a Parole Commission hearing were excluded from the analysis of sentence length. Prisoners with a minimum sentence of 0.0 years (n=72) were also excluded from the analysis of sentence length. Some of these prisoners have a sentence of life and some may be data entry errors.

awaiting Parole Commission hearings served six months or less. While the average time served for the 2003 release cohort was 20.1 months (1.7 years), Term prisoners served an average of 32.1 months, Riders 6.2 months, and Parole Violators awaiting Parole Commission hearings 3.6 months, on average (figure 12). As might be expected, the average time served is greater for violent and sexual offenses than for property and drug-related offenses (Figure 13).

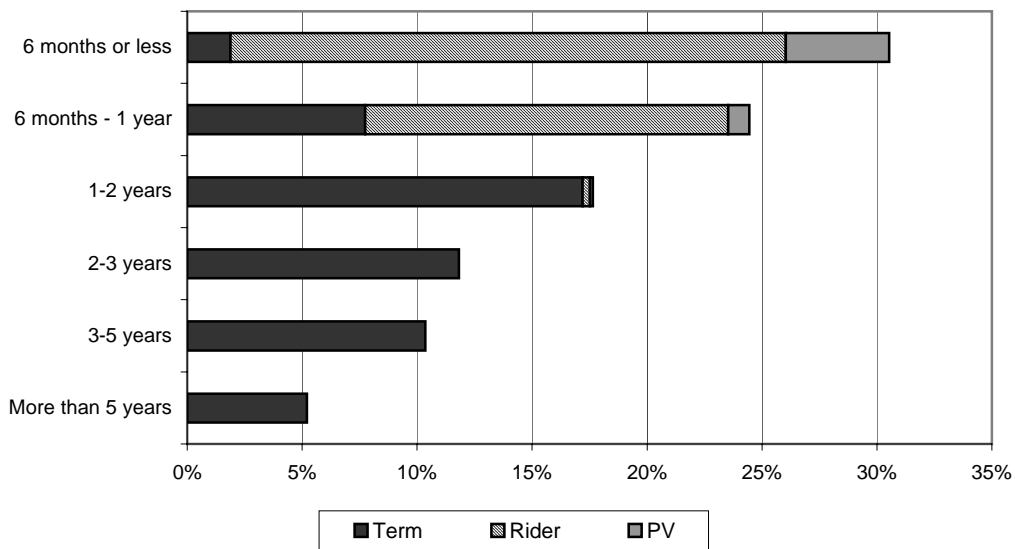
Figure 10. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Minimum Cumulative Sentence, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: Figure excludes parole violators who were released after awaiting a parole commission hearing (who were not revoked) (n=192); as were prisoners with a minimum sentence of 0.0 years (n=72). The data are based on 2,849 observations.

Figure 11. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Time Served in a Secure Facility and by Incarceration Status, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

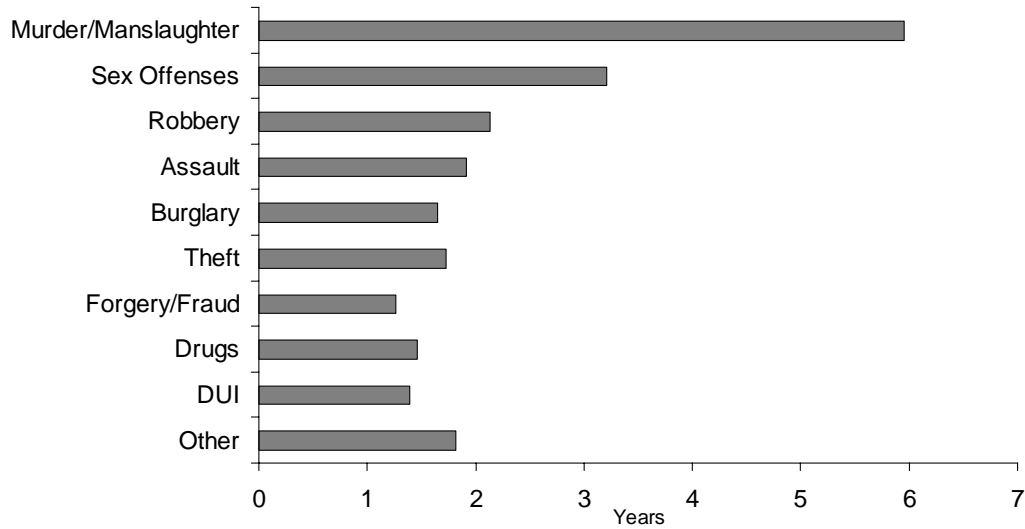
Note: The data are based on 3,089 observations.

Figure 12: Average Time Served by Admission Type for Prisoners Released in 2003

Admission Type	Average Time Served (months)	Count of Released Prisoners
Term	32.1	1,674
Rider	6.2	1,244
Parole Violators awaiting Parole Commission hearings (not revoked)	3.6	171
All of the above	20.1	3,089

Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Figure 13. Percent of IDOC Releases by Average Time Served (in Years) and Crime Type, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: The data are based on 2,921 observations.

CRIMINAL HISTORY AND THE REVOLVING DOOR

Cycling in and out of prison is common among released prisoners, whether they are returned to prison while under parole supervision or not. A study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that 52 percent of prisoners released in 1994 were returned to prison for new sentences or for technical violations within three years of their release.³² Another BJS study found that among state *parole* discharges nationwide in 2000, 42 percent were returned to prison or jail and 9 percent absconded within three years.³³ In Idaho, the share of released prisoners who have been previously incarcerated is

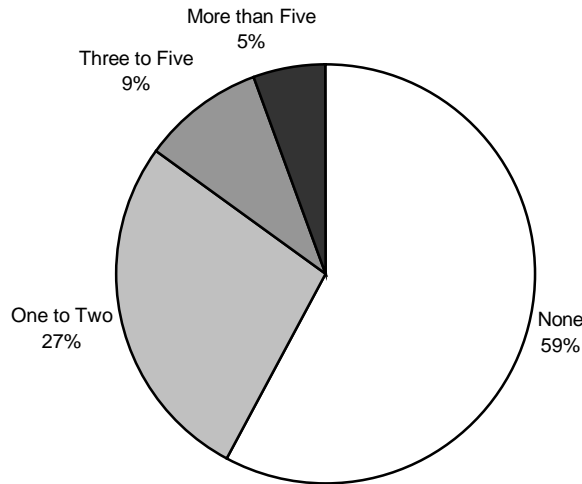
³² Patrick A. Langan and David J. Levin. 2002. "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994, Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

³³ Timothy Hughs and Doris James Wilson. 2003. *Reentry Trends in the U.S.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

lower than these national recidivism studies might suggest, with approximately 34 percent of the 2003 release cohort having been incarcerated in the IDOC at least once before.³⁴

During their term of incarceration, just over one quarter (27 percent) of the prisoners released in 2003 had one or two disciplinary reports, and 14 percent had more than two (figure 14). More than half (59 percent) of the prisoners (excluding Parole Violators awaiting hearings) received no major or minor disciplinary reports while incarcerated.

Figure 14. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Number of Disciplinary Reports, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: The data are based on 2,921 observations.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Many prisoners suffer from co-occurring and chronic mental and physical health disorders that make it difficult for them to transition from prison to free society.³⁵ A 2002 report to Congress on the physical and mental health conditions of soon-to-be-released prisoners by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care found that tens of thousands of prisoners are released to communities every year with communicable and chronic diseases that are left largely untreated.³⁶ Statistics on Idaho's inmate population are not readily available, but if medical costs are any indication health problems may

³⁴ This statistic may be an overestimate. The 2003 release cohort data provided by the IDOC indicated that only 11 percent of the releaseses had been incarcerated in the IDOC once before and only 1 percent had two or more prior incarcerations in the IDOC. However, the number of prior incarcerations represents the number of previous commitments to incarceration, but is not indicative of the number of times the offender has been in and out of prison. Thus, these data do not include those prisoners who had been returned to the IDOC for a parole revocation. The total number of offenders returned to the IDOC previously (and released) for parole revocations was 22 percent, according to a telephone conversation with Greg Sali of the IDOC (May 3, 2004). Combining these two categories of prisoners who had prior incarcerations in the IDOC produces the 34 percent estimate. What we do not know, however, is the extent to which the two estimates may overlap.

³⁵ Laura Maruschak and Allen Beck. 2001. *Medical Problems of Inmates, 1997*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. NCJ 181644. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice.

³⁶ National Commission on Correctional Health Care. 2002. *The Health Status of Soon-To-Be-Released Inmates: A Report to Congress*. Volume 1. March.

pose a challenge to returning prisoners: from Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2003, medical costs for prisoners increased 4.5 percent and represented 9 percent (\$9.8 million) of annual department expenditures. Medical costs have increased an additional 4.3 percent for Fiscal Year 2004.³⁷

With respect to mental illness, the IDOC reports that over 600 prisoners (10 percent) have identified mental health issues, and that during fiscal year 2003, 897 prisoners (15 percent) were on psychotropic medication.³⁸ Statistics for the 2003 release cohort are similar: Approximately 13 percent had been on psychotropic medication at some point during their most recent incarceration period.

A specific area of heightened concern is the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in prison populations. Nationally, in 2000, 2.2 percent of state prisoners were HIV positive, and the overall rate of confirmed AIDS cases among the nation's prison population was four times the rate in the U.S. general population (0.52 percent versus 0.13 percent).³⁹ Idaho's statistics are lower than the national rate: A 2002 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 0.4 percent of inmates in Idaho's state prisons were known to be HIV positive. The numbers are identical for prisoners who were released from IDOC's secure facilities in 2003: Less than one percent (0.4 percent, n=12) were HIV positive.⁴⁰

EDUCATION AND PROGRAMMING

Historically, prison programs have played an important role in American corrections. Prison administrators and others have long believed that providing prison-based educational and vocational programs increases the likelihood that prisoners will return to the community with greater success. Recent research supports this rationale, showing that a range of prison-based programming can contribute to positive post-release outcomes for prisoners, including reduced recidivism.⁴¹ In addition to prison-based programming, community-based services for released prisoners have shown to increase the likelihood of successful reintegration and decrease the recidivism rate of returning prisoners.⁴² In fact, research has shown that some of the most effective programs are those that combine in-prison programming with aftercare in the community.⁴³

³⁷ Idaho Department of Correction. *Annual Report Fiscal Year 2003*.

³⁸ Idaho Department of Correction, Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2003. At the end of fiscal year 2003, the number of individuals incarcerated in IDOC facilities totaled 5,825.

³⁹ Laura Maruschak. 2002. *HIV in Prisons, 2000*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin. NCJ 196023. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice. The cumulative number of AIDS cases in Idaho reported through December 2002 was 547, a rate of 2.3 per 100,000 population. The cumulative number of AIDS cases reported through December 2002 for the United States was 859,000, rate of 15 per 100,000 population). The estimated number of persons living with AIDS in Idaho at the end of 2002 was 262 compared with 384,906 for the nation (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts Online, <http://statehealthfacts.kff.org>, accessed June 8, 2004).

⁴⁰ Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2003 release cohort data. Also, approximately 9 percent (n=270) of the release population had hepatitis.

⁴¹ Gerald G. Gaes, Timothy J. Flanagan, Laurence L. Motik, and Lynn Stewart. 1999. "Adult Correctional Treatment." In *Prisons*, edited by M. Tonry and J. Petersilia. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

⁴² Sarah Lawrence, Daniel P. Mears, Glenn Dubin, and Jeremy Travis. 2002. *The Practice and Promise of Prison Programming*. Research Report. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

⁴³ Gerald Gaes, Timothy S. Flanagan, Laurence L. Motiuk, and Lynn Stewart. 1999. "Adult Correctional Treatment." In *Prisons*, edited by Michael Tonry and Joan Petersilia (26):361-426. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

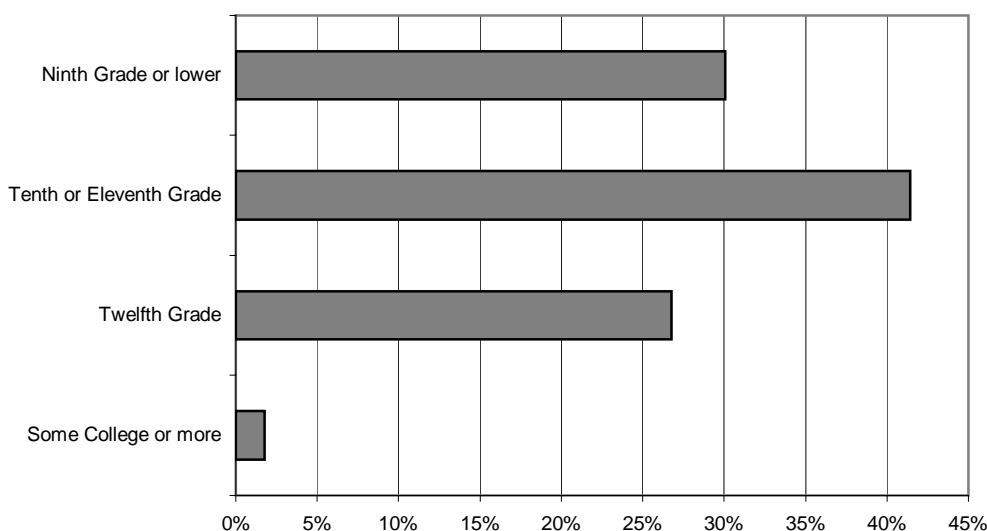
Education

Of those prisoners released in 2003, 53 percent possessed a high school diploma or GED prior to incarceration.⁴⁴ Thirty percent of the 2003 release cohort had gone no farther than ninth grade, 41 percent had tenth or eleventh grade as their highest grade attended, and 29 percent had attended twelfth grade or higher (figure 15).

One-third (33 percent) of all prisoners released in 2003 participated in a high school-level education class during their most recent period of incarceration. This statistic jumps to 43 percent for only those inmates who did *not* have a high school diploma or a GED prior to incarceration.⁴⁵ Education class participation also differed greatly by incarceration status: 62 percent of the released Riders participated in high school level education classes compared to 30 percent of Termers.⁴⁶

A smaller portion of the 2003 release cohort *completed* a high school level education or equivalent exam (such as a GED) during their most recent period of incarceration. Among inmates who did not have a high school diploma or a GED prior to incarceration,⁴⁷ 18 percent completed a high school level education or equivalent exam. Again, incarceration status mattered: Nearly one-third (31 percent) of released Riders completed a high school level education or equivalent exam compared to 10 percent of Termers.

Figure 15. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Highest Grade Attended, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC datafile of 2003 releases.

Note: These data were available for 1,850 observations.

⁴⁴ The IDOC captures at admission, the highest educational grade attended (though not necessarily completed) by prisoners, and whether prisoners had a high school diploma or GED prior to incarceration.

⁴⁵ Or who did not have that information recorded in the datafile.

⁴⁶ Note that the 192 parole violators who were released after awaiting a Parole Commission hearing (who were not revoked) are not included in the results of the prison program section since their participation in or completion of programs may have occurred during their original period of incarceration rather than during the period that they were awaiting a Parole Commission hearing. Data only indicate the year in which a prisoner participated in a program.

⁴⁷ Or who did not have that information recorded in the datafile.

Other Prison Programs

As with prisoners around the country,⁴⁸ the need for substance abuse treatment appears to be high among Idaho prisoners. The Level of Service Inventory assessment tool indicated that 83 percent of prisoners released in 2003 had a need for treatment. However, only 11 percent of all prisoners released in 2003 participated in the IDOC Relapse Prevention Program⁴⁹ during their most recent period of incarceration. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of those who participated in the program completed it.

In three facilities, the IDOC also offers therapeutic community programs,⁵⁰ which last 6 to 12 months and target high-risk inmates with chronic criminal and substance abuse histories. Eleven percent of the prisoners released in 2003 participated in this program during their most recent period of incarceration, and nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of participants completed the program.

The IDOC also offers a Cognitive Self Change program, which is “designed to change the criminal thinking patterns of offenders in an effort to reduce negative behavior.”⁵¹ Almost one-fifth (17 percent) of the prisoners released in 2003 participated in a Cognitive Self Change program during their most recent period of incarceration, with over half (56 percent) of the participating prisoners completing the program.

⁴⁸ For example, see the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (1998) *Behind Bars: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population*. New York: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. Drug and alcohol abuse and addiction were implicated in the crimes and incarceration of 80 percent of inmates in State and Federal prisons and local jails at the end of 1996. Forty-one percent of first-time offenders and 81 percent of offenders with five or more prior convictions have a history of regular drug use. From 1993 to 1996, as the number of inmates needing substance abuse treatment climbed from 688,000 to 840,000, the number of inmates in treatment hovered around 150,000. From 1995 to 1996, the number of inmates in treatment decreased as the number in need of treatment rose. (<http://www.casacolumbia.org/pdshopprov/shop/category.asp?catid=2>, accessed June 16, 2004).

⁴⁹ The Relapse Prevention Program is a “comprehensive developmental recovery treatment model that is devised to help recovering offenders identify appropriate recovery plans, set treatment goals, and measure progress. The Developmental Model of Recovery addresses six stages of periods of recovery. Each stage has tasks to be accomplished and skills to be developed” (Idaho Department of Correction, http://www.corr.state.id.us/programs/programs_substance.htm, accessed June 16, 2004).

⁵⁰ These programs “use a hierarchical model with treatment stages that reflect increased levels of personal and social responsibility. Peer influence, mediated through a variety of group processes, is used to help individuals learn and assimilate social norms and develop more effective social skills. TCs differ from other treatment approaches principally in their use of the community, comprised of treatment staff and those in recovery as key agents of change. This approach is often referred to as “community as method.” TC members interact in structured and unstructured ways to influence attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors associated with drug use” (Idaho Department of Correction, http://www.corr.state.id.us/programs/programs_therapeutic.htm, accessed June 16, 2004).

⁵¹ IDOC. 2004. “Appendix 3 – Offender Programs and Education Report.” In *Annual Statistical Report Fiscal Year 2003*. Boise, ID: IDOC, Review and Analysis, Evaluation and Compliance. <http://corrections.state.id.us/facts/annualreport.pdf>. (Accessed November 12, 2003.)

Juveniles Released in 2002

To more fully understand the reentry phenomenon in Idaho, it is important to examine juvenile releases from state correctional institutions. Understanding the characteristics of the released juvenile population may help focus reentry interventions aimed at preventing recidivism and future admissions to the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC).

In the 2002 calendar year, the IDOC system released 373 juveniles into the community. With regard to gender and race, the composition of this 2002 juvenile release cohort reflects the composition of the larger Idaho prison population: The majority was male (85 percent) and white (95 percent). Most of the juveniles released in 2002 (84 percent) were between the ages of 15 and 18 years.⁵² Approximately half had drug and alcohol problems (55 percent) and/or mental or physical health challenges (48 percent).

The largest share of juvenile Idaho prisoners who were released in 2002 had been serving time for non-violent (and non-drug) offenses (65 percent).⁵³ Forty-four percent of the juvenile releasees had been incarcerated for a misdemeanor offense, 41 percent had been serving time for a felony offense, and 15 percent had been incarcerated for a parole violation. On average, juveniles were in custody for 1.4 years. Twelve percent of juveniles released in 2002 had been in an Idaho juvenile facility at least once before.

⁵² Age distribution of 2002 juvenile release cohort: ages 11 to 14 years (7 percent); 15 or 16 years (34 percent); 17 or 18 years (50 percent); and 19 years or older (9 percent).

⁵³ Offense type distribution of 2002 juvenile release cohort: property offense (43 percent); persons offense (22 percent); sexual offense (13 percent); drug and alcohol (3 percent); other offense (19 percent).

CHAPTER 3

Prisoner Release and Supervision Policies and Practices

The first year after release is a critical period during which released prisoners are susceptible to reoffending, emphasizing the importance of post-release supervision. Post-release supervision typically serves two primary functions with regard to preventing such recidivism: (1) promoting the successful reintegration of prisoners back into society and (2) monitoring released prisoners for public safety purposes. Idaho Community Corrections embraces both roles, using individual support and community programs and services to promote successful reintegration into the community, and employing supervision functions to ensure that released prisoners are maintaining drug- and crime-free lifestyles. This chapter provides an overview of how Idaho's prisoners are released and supervised in the community.

HOW PRISONERS ARE RELEASED IN IDAHO

Idaho prisoners are released through one of three mechanisms: discretionary release by panel or judge review and approval, expiration of sentence, or by pardon or death (figure 16).

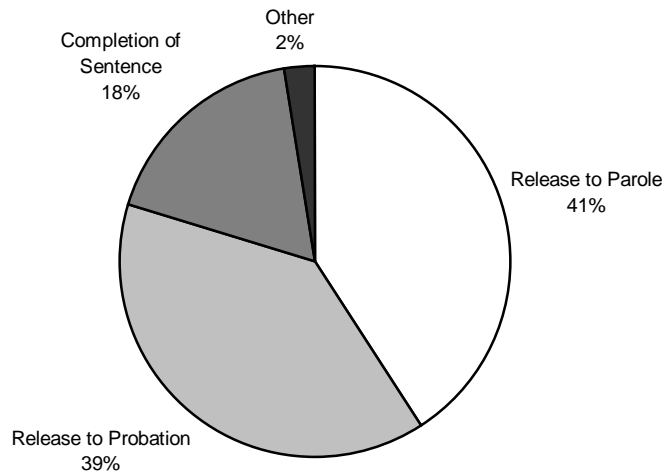
The most common release mechanism employed in Idaho is through discretionary means, whereby during their incarceration, prisoners appeared before a panel or a judge that reviewed their application and decided to approve their release. Of those prisoners released in 2003, 83 percent (2,594 prisoners) were released discretionarily to supervision. The Commission of Pardons and Parole reviewed and approved approximately half (51 percent or 1,335) of all prisoners released discretionarily, and the sentencing judge reviewed and approved the remainder of the prisoners released discretionarily (49 percent or 1,259). Of those released to community supervision, roughly equal portions exited to parole (41 percent) as to probation (39 percent).⁵⁴

Prisoners can also “maxout” and be released through mandatory (nondiscretionary) means, having fully served their maximum sentence while incarcerated, and are released to no supervision at all.⁵⁵ In 2003, 519 individuals, or 17 percent of the released population, were released without supervision by mandatory release. Finally, prisoners can be released through a pardon or death. This represents a very small percentage, 64 prisoners or 2 percent of those released.

⁵⁴ Note that most (87 percent) of the Rider population exits to probation, and nearly a quarter (22 percent) of Parole Violators were released to parole without ever being revoked (they were simply reinstated on parole after their Parole Commission hearing).

⁵⁵ No supervision means there are no conditions attached to their freedom and they are not required to report to a parole or probation officer.

Figure 16. Percentage of Prisoners Released in Idaho by Release Type, FY 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of Idaho Department of Correction, "Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003" (8/13/2003).

Note: The data are based on 3,194 observations.

PROMINENCE OF POST RELEASE SUPERVISION

Community Corrections Offices of the IDOC, in coordination with the Commission of Pardons and Paroles, have jurisdiction over those prisoners released to a period of probation or parole. These offices were established "to integrate the delivery of correctional programming into related community supervision and operations as deemed necessary for the protection of society and the habilitation of offenders."⁵⁶ The number and share of Idaho prisoners being released to supervision in the community has remained stable in recent years, with approximately 80 percent of all prisoners being released to supervision (figure 17). As noted previously, the majority of prisoners released in 2003 (83 percent) were released to a period of probation or parole supervision. Seventy percent of Termers were released to supervision, the majority of which (98 percent) were released to parole, and 100 percent of Riders were released to probation supervision.

Towards the end of fiscal year 2003,⁵⁷ approximately 144 community corrections officers supervised 9,940 released prisoners, a ratio of 69 prisoners per officer.⁵⁸ Community Corrections provides accountability and protection to released prisoners by prescribing individual case management plans that are facilitated, monitored and supervised through an assigned probation/parole officer. Released prisoners are assigned a supervision level (e.g., maximum, medium, and minimum) based on an

⁵⁶ Specifically, these offices supervise probationers and parolees; provide programming, either directly or through other community resources, to assist releasees in achieving a crime-free life style and satisfactory adjustment back to society; complete evaluations and provide information to the courts for use in sentencing decisions, and; utilize practical methods to encourage self-improvement in the conduct and behavior of probationers and parolees. Idaho Department of Correction, Policy and Directive Pages (http://www.corr.state.id.us/about_us/policy.htm, accessed June 21, 2004).

⁵⁷ Data are for May 2004

⁵⁸ Idaho Department of Correction, Email correspondence with Steve Nelson, Program Coordinator, June 23, 2004.

assessment of their individual risk and/or needs, which determines the level of active supervision and the frequency of surveillance each month.⁵⁹

Prisoners released to a period of parole supervision are subject to a number of conditions of release. A parolee must: (1) live in an approved residence and request permission to change residence or travel; (2) work in a lawful occupation or a program approved by the Commission; (3) support dependents to the best of his ability; (4) obey all municipal, county, state and federal laws; (5) conduct himself in a manner which is not, nor intended to be, harmful to himself or others; (6) follow written or oral instructions of the parole officer or Commission; (7) not possess or use a firearm or other dangerous weapon; (8) abstain from excessive use of alcoholic beverages; (9) abstain from possession, procurement, use or sale of narcotics or controlled substances; (10) freely cooperate and voluntarily submit to medical and chemical tests and examinations for the purposes of determining if the parolee is using or under the influence of alcohol or narcotics; (11) participate in treatment programs as specified by the Commission or ordered by the parole officer;⁶⁰ and (12) submit to random searches of person and/or property. In addition to general rules of parole, the commission may also add special conditions appropriate to the individual case.⁶¹

There is, however, no fixed length of time that a released prisoner is supervised. Parolees are discharged from parole when the maximum sentence has expired, unless a Commission warrant was issued before the full term or the good time release date. Parolees may be discharged prior to completion of their maximum sentence if the Commission of Pardons and Parole believes that an early discharge is compatible with the parolee's welfare and that of society.⁶² However, the Commission is prohibited by law from granting a discharge from parole prior to the parolee has serving at least one year under supervision, and certain other restrictions apply to sex and violent offenders, as well as those serving a life sentence.⁶³

Parole is revoked when a parolee violates a condition of release or commits a new crime.⁶⁴ The department has, however, implemented several changes in the way it responds to parolees who have committed violations, relying instead on alternative graduated responses to violations other than immediate revocation (e.g., increased treatment requirements combined with discretionary jail time; day reporting combined with curfew; electronic monitoring; and increased parole officer contact). As a result, fewer parolees are being returned to prison: From 1996 to 2002, 33 percent of parolees, on

⁵⁹ Officers usually have much more contact than these standards imply, due to their community involvement and the needs of offenders (Idaho Department of Correction, http://www.corr.state.id.us/our_facilities/community.htm, accessed June 21, 2004).

⁶⁰ "Counselors provide group and individual services in conjunction with trained probation/parole officers in all districts offices and community work centers. Counselors provide linkage, coordination and consistency in substance abuse treatment between Department of Correction institutions, Community Corrections and community agencies and referrals. The primary focus is recovery from addiction; group/cognitive self-change; preventative education; transition; rational thinking; and prevention. Assessment, screening, and specialized substance abuse training for probation and parole staff also is provided. Substance abuse counselors work in conjunction with these trained substance probation/parole officers to develop effective treatment plans intended to facilitate long-term abstinence and stability." (Idaho Department of Correction, http://www.corr.state.id.us/our_facilities/community.htm, accessed June 21, 2004).

⁶¹ Idaho Administrative Code (IDAPA 50.01.01) Rules of the Commission of Pardons and Parole. (<http://www2.state.id.us/adm/adminrules/rules/idapa50/0101.pdf>, accessed June 21, 2004).

⁶² The commission will not consider an early discharge for a parolee who has a sex crime or violent crime until one-third (1/3) of the remaining time from the parole release date to the maximum expiration date has been served on parole; or until five (5) years have been served on parole on a life sentence for any crime.

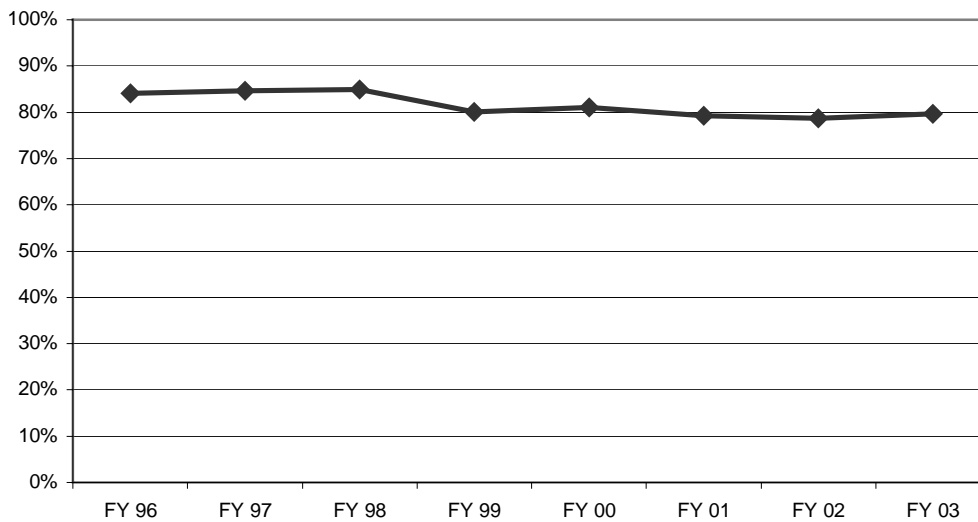
⁶³ Idaho Administrative Code (IDAPA 50.01.01) Rules of the Commission of Pardons and Parole. (<http://www2.state.id.us/adm/adminrules/rules/idapa50/0101.pdf>, accessed June 21, 2004)

⁶⁴ For both probation and parole, a report of violation must be filed with either the judge in a probation case or with the Parole Commission in a parole case. The report of violation is discussed with district office management and sometimes with the judge or the parole commission. Depending on the nature of the violation, officers must document the use of intermediate sanctions and interventions before the report of violation will be approved by management (IDOC).

average, had their parole status revoked.⁶⁵ By Fiscal Year 2003, that percentage had fallen to 24 percent.

The court retains jurisdiction of riders (probationers) through the Department of Correction; thus, restrictions, lengths of supervision, and special instructions are given by the court, with the understanding that the probationer is also subject to the rules and regulations of the Division of Community Corrections. “Unlike parole, there is no minimum amount of time that is required of a probationer. The amount of time to be served is instead governed by (1) no more than the maximum time of the probationary terms and (2) a combination of the judge’s dictates in the matter along with attitude and adjustment of the probationer.”⁶⁶

Figure 17. Percentage of Releases from IDOC Secure Facilities under Supervision, FY 1996-2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of Idaho Department of Correction, “Idaho Department of Correction Historical Admissions and Releases for Fiscal Years 1996 to 2003” (8/13/2003).

⁶⁵ From Fiscal Year 1996 through 2002, 39 percent of male parolees revoked and 27 percent of female parolees revoked. Of the male parolees who revoke, 85 percent do so within 24 months of parole, and of the female parolees who revoke, 89 percent do so within 24 months of parole. In FY 2004, 18 percent of the parole revocations were for a new crime conviction.

⁶⁶ Idaho Administrative Code (IDAPA 50.01.01) Rules of the Commission of Pardons and Parole. (<http://www2.state.id.us/adm/adminrules/rules/idapa50/0101.pdf>, accessed June 21, 2004).

CHAPTER 4

Geographic Distribution of Released Prisoners

The community context of prisoner reentry can have an important influence on post-release success or failure. It stands to reason that ex-prisoners returning to communities with high unemployment rates, limited affordable housing options, active drug markets, and few services may be more likely to relapse and recidivate. This chapter presents findings from a geographic analysis of returning prisoners by county, and examines this reentry distribution in relation to the socioeconomic characteristics of three counties with the highest *concentrations* of returning prisoners, and also Ada County, which had the highest *percentage* of released prisoners in 2003.

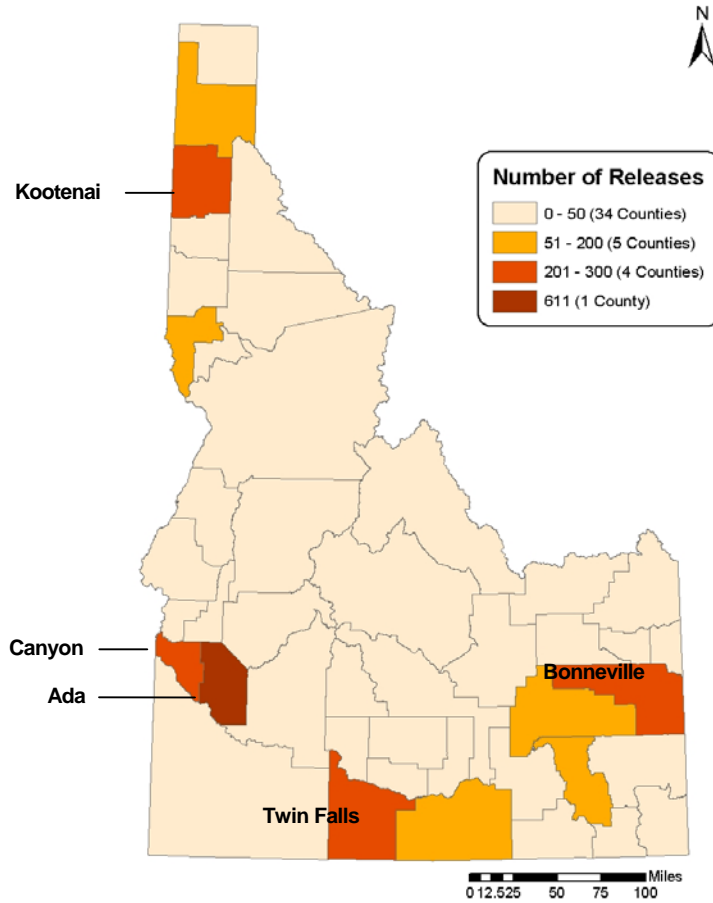
REENTRY IN IDAHO

During 2003, nearly all (90 percent) supervised releases returned to communities in Idaho.⁶⁷ Five of Idaho's 42 counties accounted for 73 percent of returning prisoners (figures 18 and 19). The greatest share (27 percent) returned to Ada County followed by Canyon (13 percent), Twin Falls (11 percent), Kootenai (11 percent), and Bonneville (10 percent).⁶⁸ Ada County, which has the greatest number of returning prisoners, however, has the lowest rate of returning prisoners: 2.0 per every 1,000 residents. Twin Falls and Washington Counties have the highest rates of returning prisoners (3.9 per 1,000 residents), followed by Cassia County (3.6 per 1,000 residents) (figure 20). Because concentrations of released prisoners may be as important (if not more so) than sheer volume, we will first describe prisoner reentry in Ada County and then examine in more detail the characteristics of Twin Falls, Washington, and Cassia counties.

⁶⁷ 3,113 incarcerated offenders were released from IDOC facilities in 2003. The county of release is known for those individuals released to supervision in the community, which is 83 percent of all releases. This 90 percent statistics excludes the 109 supervised releases (4.2 percent of all supervised releases) whose county of release was missing.

⁶⁸ Numbers of returning prisoners: Ada (N=611), Canyon (N=292), Twin Falls (N=253), Kootenai (N=236), and Bonneville (N=233).

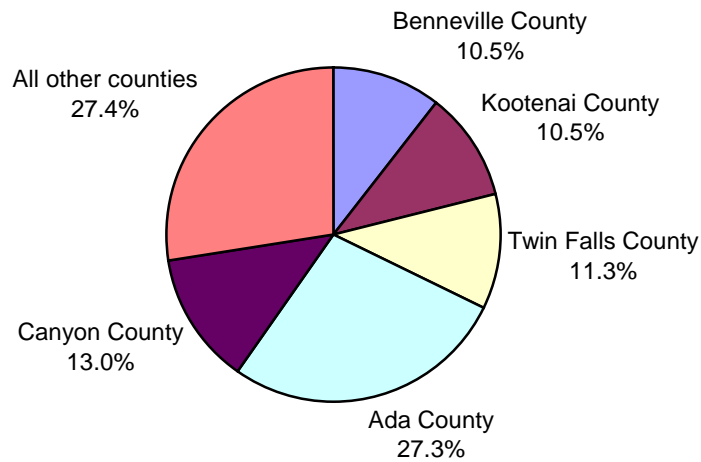
Figure 18. Number of Prisoner Releases by Idaho County, 2003



This map presents the geographic distribution of all IDOC releases remaining in Idaho and receiving supervision after release (2,239 of 3,113 releases).

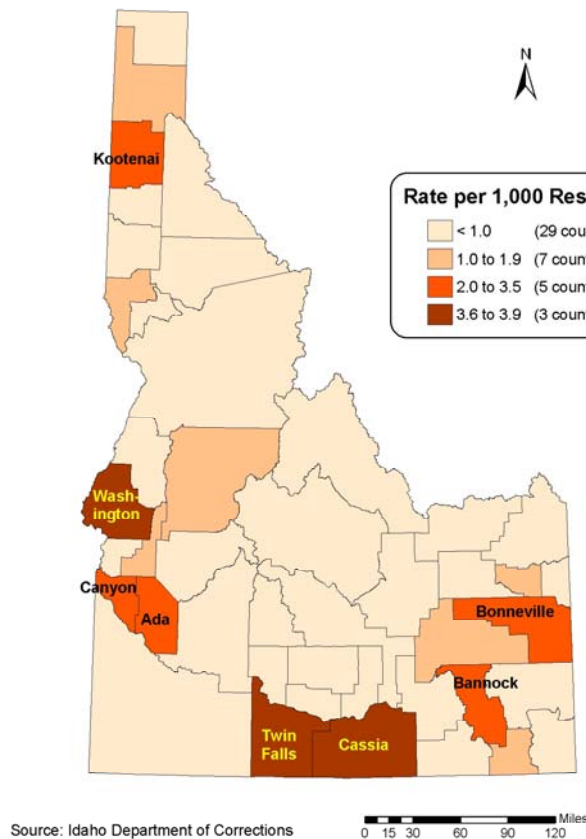
Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2003 data file

Figure 19. Percentage of Prisoner Releases by Idaho County, 2003



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2003 data file

Figure 20. Prisoner Releases to Idaho Counties, Rate Per 1,000 Residents, 2002



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2003 data

PRISONERS RETURNING TO ADA COUNTY IN 2003

Ada County is home to more IDOC supervised releases than any other county in Idaho. In 2003, over one quarter (27 percent) of releases returned to Ada County. Given the large number of residents in Ada County, however, we find that the concentration of IDOC releases is lower in this county than across the state generally.⁶⁹ Releases return to Ada County at a rate⁷⁰ that is 17 percent lower than the statewide average rate.

Ada County residents have similar social and economic indicators to residents across the state (figure 21). Ada County has less unemployment and fewer persons below the poverty level. Ada County's serious ("Group A") crime rate is, however, higher than the statewide crime rate, and the county has a higher percentage of female-headed households compared to the statewide average.

⁶⁹ There are 319,687 residents in Ada County

⁷⁰ 1.9 releases per 1,000 residents

Figure 21. Social and Economic Indicators for Ada County, 2003

Area	Number of Returning Prisoners	Population	Rate per 1,000 Residents	Percent Unemployment	Percent Female-Headed Households	Percent Persons Below Poverty Level	Group "A" Crime Rate (per 1,000 population)
Ada County	611	300,904	2.0	2.8	6.2	5.4	80.4
Idaho	3,113	1,293,953	2.4	3.8	5.8	8.3	70.0

Source: Urban Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2000 data and Idaho State Police 2002 data.

The 611 IDOC releases going to Ada County generally reflect the characteristics and experiences of the IDOC release cohort as a whole. The vast majority is white (86 percent)⁷¹ and male (74 percent).⁷² The average age at the time of release is 33. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the population was between 20 and 39 years old. Closely approximating trends across the state, slightly more than half (52 percent) of releases were single, 20 percent were married, and 19 percent were divorced. Slightly more than half (53 percent) of Ada County releases were returned to IDOC facilities after failing the conditions of release under parole or probation.⁷³ Of those who were incarcerated for a new offense (37 percent), the most serious offenses were non-violent (non-drug) offenses (43 percent), drug offenses (35 percent), and violent offenses (22 percent).

The Ada County release cohort had an average minimum sentence of 24 months, or 2 years.⁷⁴ A greater share of Ada County releases received longer minimum sentences than releases across the state. Slightly more than three-quarters (77 percent) of the release cohort had a cumulative minimum sentence totaling two years or less while nearly a quarter (21 percent) had a minimum sentence of between two and five years. The remaining two percent of releases had a minimum sentence of more than five years.

Ada County releases served an average of one year and five months for their most recent incarceration event.⁷⁵ Over half (57 percent) of the release cohort served one year or less, and over three-quarters (77 percent) served two years or less. Four percent served more than five years. This analysis, however, indicates that the average time served by prisoners varies distinctly by their status: Term status prisoners serve far longer terms than Riders and Parole Violators awaiting Parole Commission hearings. Term prisoners served 27.2 months on average, Riders served an average of 6.1 months, and Parole Violators awaiting Parole Commission hearings served 1.9 months, on average.

⁷¹ This is somewhat higher than the statewide average of 79 percent. The next largest share (8 percent) were Hispanic, lower than the statewide average of 14 percent.

⁷² This is less than the statewide average of 83 percent.

⁷³ 37 percent were failed riders, 8 percent had been revoked under parole, and 8 percent had violated parole. Another 37 percent had committed a new offense, and 6 percent had been revoked for probation (not riders). The eight percent of all releases who were parole violators, individuals who were released after awaiting a Parole Commission hearing (who were not revoked), were excluded from this analysis.

⁷⁴ The eight percent of releases who were parole violators awaiting a hearing (and never revoked) were excluded from the analysis of sentence length.

⁷⁵ This includes parole violators who were not revoked after being held pending their Parole Commission hearings.

PRISONERS RETURNING TO TWIN FALLS, WASHINGTON, AND CASSIA COUNTIES

As mentioned above, Twin Falls and Washington Counties have the highest rates of returning prisoners (3.9 per 1,000 residents), followed by Cassia County (3.6 per 1,000 residents) (Figure 20). The three counties that had the highest rates of returning prisoners are generally characterized by higher proportions of families living in poverty, higher than average unemployment rates,⁷⁶ greater shares of female-headed households,⁷⁷ and higher crime rates as compared to the state average (figure 22).⁷⁸

The demographic composition of prisoners released to Twin Falls, Washington, and Cassia Counties reflects the composition of the 2003 release cohort, with a few exceptions. While the majority of prisoners released to these counties were white males, Cassia County did have a greater percent of female released prisoners (24 percent compared to 17 percent for the 2003 release cohort), and both Cassia and Washington Counties had a greater percent of Hispanic released prisoners (32 percent and 21 percent respectively, compared to 14 percent for the 2003 release cohort). Like the 2003 release cohort, most prisoners released to these counties were relatively young at the time of their release, with over three-quarters between the ages of 20 and 39, and more than half reported that they were not married at the time of their admission.

The greatest percent of prisoners released to these three counties, like the release cohort as a whole, had been serving time for non-violent (and non-drug) offenses, followed by drug offenses, and then violent offenses. The prisoners released to Washington and Cassia counties however, had a different admission type distribution compared to the 2003 release cohort. While 54 percent of the 2003 release cohort was made up of Termers, 40 percent Riders, and 6 percent Parole Violators, the prisoners released to Washington and Cassia Counties were primarily admitted to prison as Riders (74 percent and 78 percent respectively), then Termers (23 percent and 21 percent respectively) and Parole Violators (3 percent and 1 percent respectively).

While prisoners released to Washington and Cassia Counties generally reflected the cumulative minimum sentence distribution of the 2003 release cohort,⁷⁹ a greater percent of prisoners released to Twin Falls had received longer sentences.⁸⁰ While over half (55 percent) of the 2003 release cohort had served one year or less in prison, a greater percent of the prisoners released to Twin Falls (66 percent), Washington (77 percent), and Cassia (84 percent) Counties served this same amount of time in prison. The prisoners released to these three counties also had fewer prior incarcerations compared to the 2003 release cohort as a whole.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Cassia County is an exception.

⁷⁷ Washington County is an exception.

⁷⁸ Washington County is an exception.

⁷⁹ Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of the 2003 release cohort had a cumulative minimum sentence totaling two years or less, just over a quarter (27 percent) had a minimum sentence of between two and five years, and only two percent had a minimum sentence of more than five years.

⁸⁰ Fifty-one percent of prisoners released to Twin Falls had a cumulative minimum sentence totaling two years or less, and 42 percent had a minimum sentence of between two and five years.

⁸¹ Percent of prisoners who had been incarcerated at least once before: 2003 release cohort (34 percent), Twin Falls County (17 percent), Washington County (5 percent), and Cassia County (5 percent).

Figure 22. Three High Concentration Counties in Idaho, by Demographic, 2002

Area	Number of Returning Prisoners	Population	Rate per 1,000 Residents	Percent Unemployment	Percent Female-Headed Households ⁸²	Percent Persons Below Poverty Level	Group "A" Crime Rate (per 1,000 population) ⁸³
Twin Falls	253	64,284	3.936	3.9	5.9	9.1	94.2
Washington	39	9,977	3.909	4.7	4.9	10	35.6
Cassia	76	21,416	3.549	3.2	5.9	11.1	78.6
Idaho	3,113	1,293,953	2.4	3.8	5.8	8.3	70.0

Source: Urban Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2000 data and Idaho State Police 2002 data.

JUVENILES RELEASED IN 2002

During 2002, the vast majority (83 percent) of released juveniles returned to communities in Idaho.⁸⁴ Five of Idaho's 42 counties accounted for 59 percent (N=182) of all juvenile releases with known or in-state release county data (figure 23). As with the adult release population, the greatest share of released juvenile prisoners (28.7 percent) returned to Ada County. As can be seen in Figure 23, juvenile releases are returning to the same counties as are adult releases, with one notable exception: A smaller share of juveniles are returning to Twin Falls County than are adult releases.

As with adult releases, we find that the counties that have the greatest number of juveniles returning to them do not have the highest rates of return. Juvenile releases are most heavily concentrated in three counties: Clark, Power, and Bear Lake (figure 24). These three counties are generally characterized by greater unemployment,⁸⁵ and increased numbers of families living in poverty,⁸⁶ as compared with the statewide average (figure 25). The statewide crime rate, however, is higher than the crime rates for these three high concentration counties.

⁸² Family households, with female householder, no husband present, with children under the age of 18.

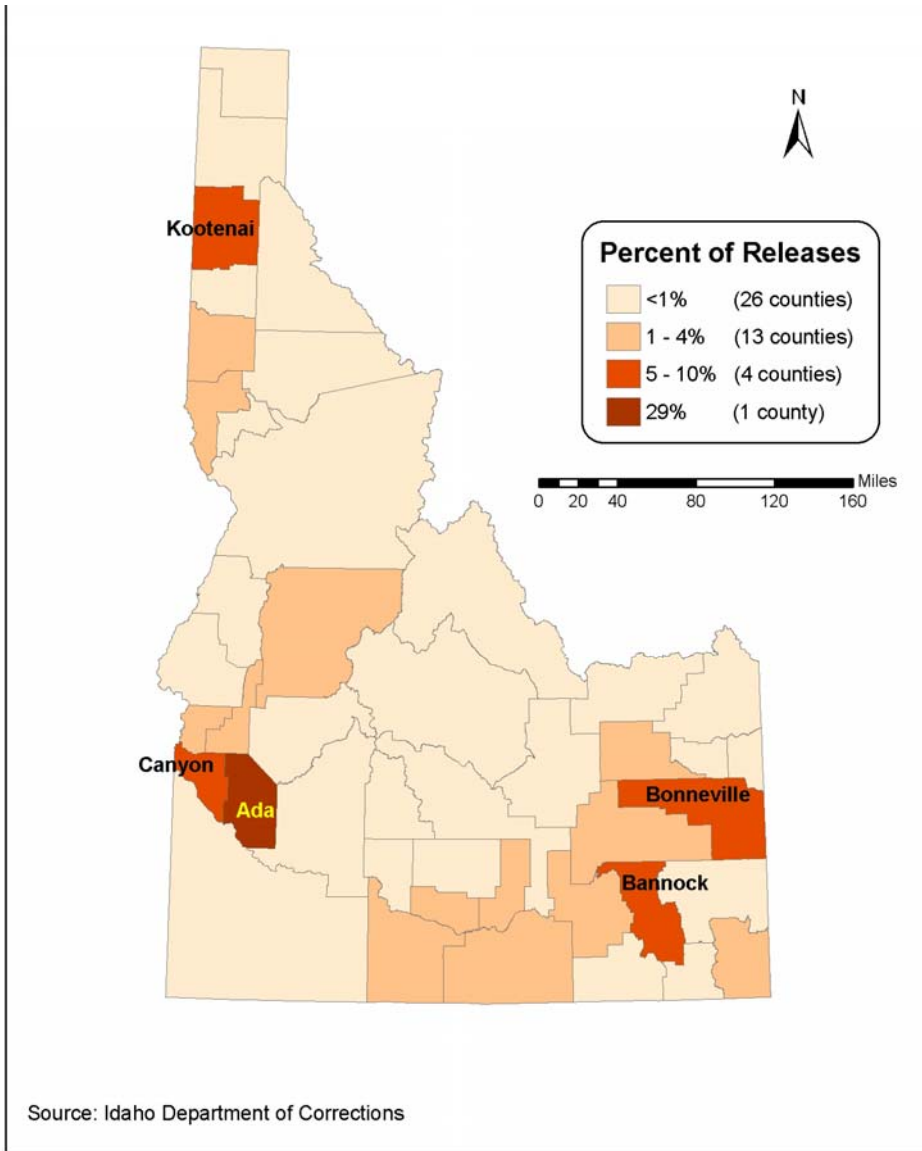
⁸³ "Group A" offenses include Murder, Negligent Manslaughter, Forcible Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny, Motor Vehicle Theft, Arson, Simple Assault, Intimidation, Bribery, Counterfeiting/Forgery, Vandalism, Drug/Narcotics, Drug Equipment, Embezzlement, Extortion/Blackmail, Fraud, Gambling, Kidnapping, Pornography, Prostitution, Forcible Sodomy, Sexual Assault w/Object, Forcible Fondling, Incest, Statutory Rape, Stolen Property, Weapon Law Violation (www.isp.state.id.us, accessed July 27, 2004).

⁸⁴ 373 incarcerated juvenile offenders were released from IDOC facilities in 2002. Thirteen percent (N=49) of juvenile releases were missing release county data or were returning to counties that were out of state.

⁸⁵ Power County is an exception.

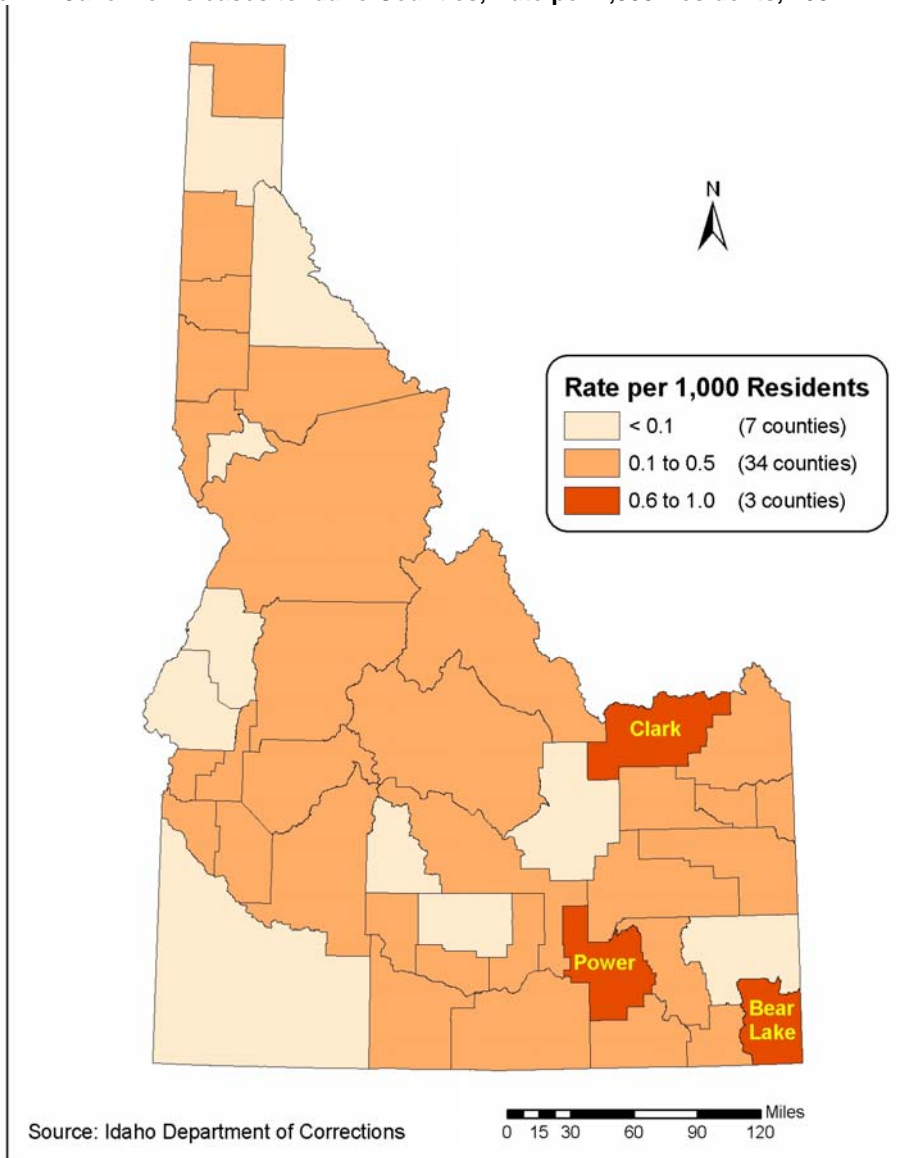
⁸⁶ Bear Lake County is an exception.

Figure 23. Geographic Distribution of Released Juveniles, 2002



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2002 data file

Figure 24. Juvenile Releases to Idaho Counties, Rate per 1,000 Residents, 2002



Source: Urban Institute analysis of IDOC 2003 data

Figure 25. Juvenile Releases, Three High Concentration Counties in Idaho, by Demographic, 2002

Area	Number of Returning Prisoners	Population	Rate Per 1,000 Residents	Percent Unemployment	Percent Female-Headed Households	Percent Persons Below Poverty Level	Group "A" Crime Rate (Per 1,000 Residents)
Clark	1	1,022	.978	4.0	5.3	18.7	41.3
Power	5	7,538	.663	3.1	6.4	10.8	65.3
Bear Lake	4	6,411	.623	4.2	4.4	7.1	6.6
Idaho	310	1,293,953	.240	3.8	5.8	8.3	70.0

Source: Urban Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau 2000 data and Idaho State Police 2002 data.

CHAPTER 5

Looking Forward

Over the past two decades, the growth in prison populations nationwide has translated into more and more people being released from prison and reentering society. The state of Idaho has experienced similar incarceration and release trends, but with even greater increases over time, and thus faces the reentry challenges that accompany such growth. Between 1996 and 2003, the Idaho prison population increased 60 percent, while state prison populations across the U.S. increased only 23 percent during this same time period. The number of people released from Idaho prisons reflects these rising admissions and population trends: In fiscal year 2003, 3,194 prisoners were released from Idaho prisons, a 78 percent increase from the number released in fiscal year 1996. The majority of these released prisoners were single white males, with an average age of 33. The largest percentage of prisoners had been serving time for non-violent (non-drug) offenses, followed by drug offenses, and the average time served was 1.7 years.

It is likely that socioeconomic community characteristics have an effect on reentry success or failure. Thus, from a reentry planning perspective, it is important to consider the community context of prisoner reentry. Are jobs available in or near the communities to which prisoners return? What is the availability of affordable housing in these areas? What is the prevalence of assets, such as faith-based institutions, versus risks, such as open-air drug markets? It is also useful to understand whether services for ex-prisoners are located within or in close proximity to these neighborhoods with high rates of returns, and whether prisoners returning to the state are able to access these resources. The highest percent of prisoners released in Idaho returned to Ada County, and the counties with the highest rates of prisoner return were Twin Falls, Washington, and Cassia. An analysis of social and economic indicators for Ada County suggests, that its residents fare better than, or close to the same as, the average state resident. This same analysis for Twin Falls, Washington, and Cassia Counties suggests that these counties generally have higher proportions of families living in poverty, higher than average unemployment rates, greater shares of female-headed households, and higher crime rates as compared to the state average. Future research should include neighborhood-level analyses of community characteristics in Ada, Twin Falls, Washington, Cassia, and other Idaho counties, which will provide a more detailed picture of the communities to which released prisoners return.

Another important facet of prisoner reentry is the family context of the reintegration experience. That more than half of the 2003 returning prisoners left children behind while incarcerated highlights the importance and challenge of family reunification upon a person's release from prison. Families may be a strong source of support to returning prisoners, while others have their own histories of substance use and criminal activity that may make them negative influences for returning prisoners. Understanding the family context of prisoner reentry is thus critical in reentry planning efforts.

Returning prisoners in Idaho, like those nationwide, have many needs as they begin the process of reintegration. Health problems and issues of dependency on drugs and/or alcohol are likely to pose significant reentry challenges to the state's returning prisoners—challenges that could seriously affect the ease of transition to life on the outside. For those released in 2003, for example, a vast majority of prisoners (83 percent) had a need for substance abuse treatment. Mental and physical health conditions of returning prisoners also have important public health implications, specifically related to the spread of infectious disease to the general population and the added strain on the health care system.

We also know that the likelihood of recidivating is high: Roughly 34 percent of released prisoners in Idaho had served prior terms in prison. Such extensive criminal histories create barriers to

employment, housing, and eligibility for food stamps and other forms of public assistance, and can limit opportunities for civic participation. It is thus paramount that state officials, service providers, and community stakeholders approach the reentry issue comprehensively, considering these many dimensions of the reentry experience and tapping the numerous resources that could provide assistance to returning prisoners and their families.

It is clear that the challenges of reentry in Idaho are great, but so are the opportunities. Successful reentry is critical for ensuring public safety, reducing the costs of incarceration, and promoting the well being of individuals, families and communities.