

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

Recidivism Outcomes: FY2021 - FY2023 Cohorts



Executive Summary

The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) measures recidivism two different ways. First, recidivism is measured as a return to custody within one to three years of the youth's first release from the ADJC's secure care facility, Adobe Mountain School. A return to custody includes subsequent admission to either the ADJC secure care facility or adult prison within the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR). Next, recidivism is measured as a new conviction for an offense within one, two, or three years of discharge from the ADJC jurisdiction. A new conviction includes any disposition of guilt to a criminal offense in an Arizona limited or general jurisdiction court.

This report includes rates for three cohorts of youth, those released in FY 2021, FY 2022, and FY 2023. Analysis of data from these three cohorts produced the following findings:

Return to Custody Recidivism Rates

- Within 12 months of release in FY 2023, 35.2% of the youth returned to custody. Within 24 months, 49.5% of the FY 2022 releases returned, and within 36 months, 41.2% of the FY 2021 releases returned to custody.
- Parole violations, technical and new offenses that resulted in revocation, accounted for the largest portion of returns to custody each fiscal year, ranging from 27.0% to 35.8% of the returns.
- Admission to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) accounted for the smallest percentage of returns to custody. Specifically, of the youth released in FY 2023, 5.5% were returned to ADCRR within 12 months. Within 24 months, 17.4% of the FY 2022 releases were returned and within 36 months, 18.0% of the FY 2021 releases were returned to ADCRR.
- Return to custody recidivism rates appear to be remaining steady across time, or possibly slightly increasing.

Comparison Breakouts

- Males recidivate at a substantially higher rate compared to females.
- Youth assessed as a high risk typically have the highest recidivism rates and those assessed as low risk have the lowest recidivism rates. Youth assessed as moderate fall in the middle during most cohort timeframes.

- Youth who participated in the Sexualized Behavior Treatment Program (SBTP) during their stay in secure care recidivated at a much lower rate compared to those who were not in the program for all cohorts included in the analysis.
- Youth who participated in Seven Challenges during their stay in secure care had higher recidivism rates compared to non-participants for all cohorts included in the analysis.

Overall Success Rate

- Overall, of the youth released in FY 2023, 64.8% did not recidivate within 12 months. A total of 50.5% of the youth released in FY 2022 did not have a recidivating event within 24 months. Lastly, of the youth released in FY 2021, 58.8% did not have a recidivating event within 36 months of their release.

New Conviction Recidivism Rates

- The new conviction recidivism rates capture reoffending after all ADJC interventions have ended and the youth is discharged. These rates are lower than return to custody recidivism rates.
- Within 12 months of release, 27.1% of youth released in FY 2023 had a new conviction for a subsequent offense. Of the youth released in FY 2022, 39.3% had a new conviction within 24 months. Of the youth released in FY 2021, 40.9% had a new conviction within 36 months.
- All new conviction recidivating events included a conviction for a felony offense.
- The new conviction recidivism rates indicate that they fluctuate over time, with a slightly upward trend.

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Introduction

Recidivism rates are a standard outcome measure within the juvenile and criminal justice fields. These rates can serve as a proxy for how the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) advances public safety and prevents youth from returning to the juvenile system or entering the adult system. This report provides recidivism rates that are in-line with juvenile justice standards, and also expands upon those rates with several breakout rates to provide for comparison between various groups. Examples of these comparisons are between males and females and those participating in various programs. Finally, this report also provides further context for understanding recidivism.

Methodology

This report includes two recidivism measures. The first measure is consistent with historical ADJC publications, defining recidivism as a return to custody. The second measure defines recidivism as a new conviction for a subsequent offense following discharge. The biggest difference between the two measures is that one is limited to recidivating events that result in a return to secure care or adult prison while the other captures recidivating events that result in a new conviction which may or may not result in return to custody, but another outcome such as a fine, jail, or probation. How these recidivism rates were calculated, their limitations, the data sources, as well as their guiding definitions are described in detail below.

Definitions

Recidivism may be broadly defined as a return to delinquent or criminal behavior. For this report, and to establish consistency in comparing recidivism across time, each measure of recidivism includes clearly defined cohorts of individuals being tracked, the start date of recidivism tracking, length of time that recidivism is tracked, and what constitutes a recidivism event. These definitions are as follows:

Cohorts. Recidivism rates are calculated by cohorts of youth released or discharged during a specific timeframe. This report includes FY 2021, FY 2022, and FY 2023. The fiscal year (FY) timeframe runs from July 1st to June 30th. For example, the FY 2021 cohort includes youth released or discharged between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

Start Date. The start date is when recidivism tracking begins. For the return to custody recidivism measure, the start date is the date that the youth was first released from the ADJC's secure care facility, Adobe Mountain School, to community supervision or discharge. For the new conviction recidivism measure, the start date is when the youth received final discharge from the ADJC jurisdiction.

Length of Time. Recidivism is tracked for a period of 12, 24, and 36 months (1, 2, and 3 years) following the respective recidivism tracking start date.

Return to Custody. Return to custody is measured by the occurrence of a new, subsequent offense or technical parole violation leading to a return or subsequent commitment to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections or Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR) following their first release from secure care. Offenses committed prior to the juvenile's first release are excluded. Parole revocations are categorized into two types: delinquent and technical. Delinquent revocations occur when the individual commits a new offense, while technical revocations involve violations of their conditions of community supervision without a new offense. Among technical violations, there is a specific subgroup for those returned due to absconding. Absconding refers to situations where the individual leaves their approved residence without permission and/or fails to report to their parole officer, making their whereabouts unknown. For this subgroup, absconding is the only adjudicated violation resulting in a return to custody. The date of return to secure care or admission to adult prison is used as the recidivism date. Return to custody is limited to returns to the state of Arizona.

New Conviction. New conviction is measured by the occurrence of a guilty conviction for an offense following discharge from the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections' jurisdiction. The disposition date resulting in conviction is used as the recidivism date. Only cases filed within the limited and general jurisdiction courts of Arizona are included. The first conviction following release is used in the calculations, if the record includes multiple counts or cases with qualifying dispositions.

Data Sources

Data for the recidivism rates are primarily captured in Youthbase, the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections' statewide case management system that tracks youth commitment and parole information. These data were augmented with data from both the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR), which allows for the measurement of recidivism occurring after ADJC jurisdiction has ended.

Calculations and Limitations

Each recidivism measure is presented as a rate. These rates are inclusive to the entire tracking period. The recidivism rates reflect the number of youth who have recidivated as a percentage of the cohort (or breakout group) for the respective timeframe. The recidivism rates include all youth who have recidivated through the end of the tracking period. Therefore, youth

who recidivate within the 12-month timeframe will be counted, while also being included in the recidivism rate calculation for the 24-month and 36-month timeframe.

During the various recidivism measure calculations, if any cohort or breakout results in a sample size of 15 or less youth, the rate will be omitted from the report. Rates calculated with a small sample size can be very misleading. For example, if there were only four (4) females and two (2) recidivated, that would result in a 50% recidivism rate. If the next cohort of female youth was composed of two (2) youth and neither recidivated, that would yield a 0% recidivism rate. Clearly, both rates are misleading and the difference between the two rates (a 50% decrease) has little meaning. The threshold of 15 youth means that each youth who recidivates can impact the rate by no more than 6 percentage points.

There are some other cautionary points that must be taken into consideration when interpreting the recidivism measures presented in this report. First, comparing the recidivism rates included in this report to those from other agencies or jurisdictions is discouraged. Although it can be useful to examine and compare how one agency or jurisdiction is performing relative to others, it is nearly impossible to do so. Currently, there is no national standard for measuring recidivism. Therefore each juvenile justice agency has adopted their own standards. The standards from one agency to another differ in terms of the groups being tracked, when the recidivism tracking period begins, how long the recidivism tracking period lasts, and what constitutes a recidivism event.

Even with equivalent definitions and methodologies in place, rates still cannot be compared between jurisdictions unless all other factors which contribute to the likelihood of recidivating are also equivalent. For example, youth released from Adobe Mountain School may have different “at-risk environments” than youth released from other secure care facilities in different states. Environmental factors contributing to risk to reoffend include such things as the community supervision type and intensity, the community’s poverty level, availability of treatment services and other resources, presence of gang activity, family dynamics, etc. If youth released from one program are put in a “riskier” environment than youth from a different program, differences in recidivism rates may be attributable to the risk environment rather than the actual program or intervention. Similarly, differing individual risk and protective or resiliency factors influence recidivism rates. Therefore, differing rates can be more reflective of the differing youth composition in the program rather than the program itself. As a result, recidivism rates between different states are not comparable due to differing definitions and measures, differing environments to which the youth are released, and varying youth profiles.

These factors must also be taken into account when comparing recidivism rates across time for a single agency. For example, fluctuations in the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections’ recidivism rates may be reflective of changes in the youth population served or the environments to which they are being released rather than changes in the success rate of the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections’ programs directly. These intervening factors, both at the individual and environmental level, are not controlled for or included in the analyses of this report. Therefore, their influence on the presented recidivism rates are unknown.

Results

Data from FY 2021, FY 2022, and FY 2023 were analyzed and are presented in the following sections. Included in the analysis were 211 youth from FY 2021, 109 youth from FY 2022, and 128 youth from FY 2023.

Return to Custody Recidivism Rates

The most current recidivism rates for return to custody showed that within 12 months of release in FY 2023, 35.2% of the youth returned to custody. Within 24 months, 49.5% of the FY 2022 releases returned, and within 36 months 41.2% of the FY 2021 releases returned to custody. Consistent across all three fiscal years included in the analysis, parole violations accounted for the largest proportion of returns to custody. Admission to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) accounted for the smallest percentage of returns to custody. Specifically, of the youth released in FY 2023, 5.5% were returned to ADCRR within 12 months. Within 24 months, 17.4% of the FY 2022 releases were returned and within 36 months 18.0% of the FY 2021 releases were returned to ADCRR. Lastly, no youth returned on a recommitment to the ADJC.

If a youth had multiple recidivating events that result in a return to custody, each recidivating event will be included in the respective category. However, the youth will be counted once in the total recidivism count and rate. The total recidivism counts only count each youth once, even if they may be reflected in the above table in more than one category. For example, a youth may return to secure care on a parole violation and then later on commit a new offense that results in a sentence to ADCRR. In this instance, the youth will be included in the parole violation statistics, included in the ADCRR statistics, but only counted once in the total recidivism count rather than twice. Therefore, the counts from ADCRR, Recommitted to ADJC, and Parole Revocations (Total) combined may not always equal the total reflected in the Total Recidivism counts.

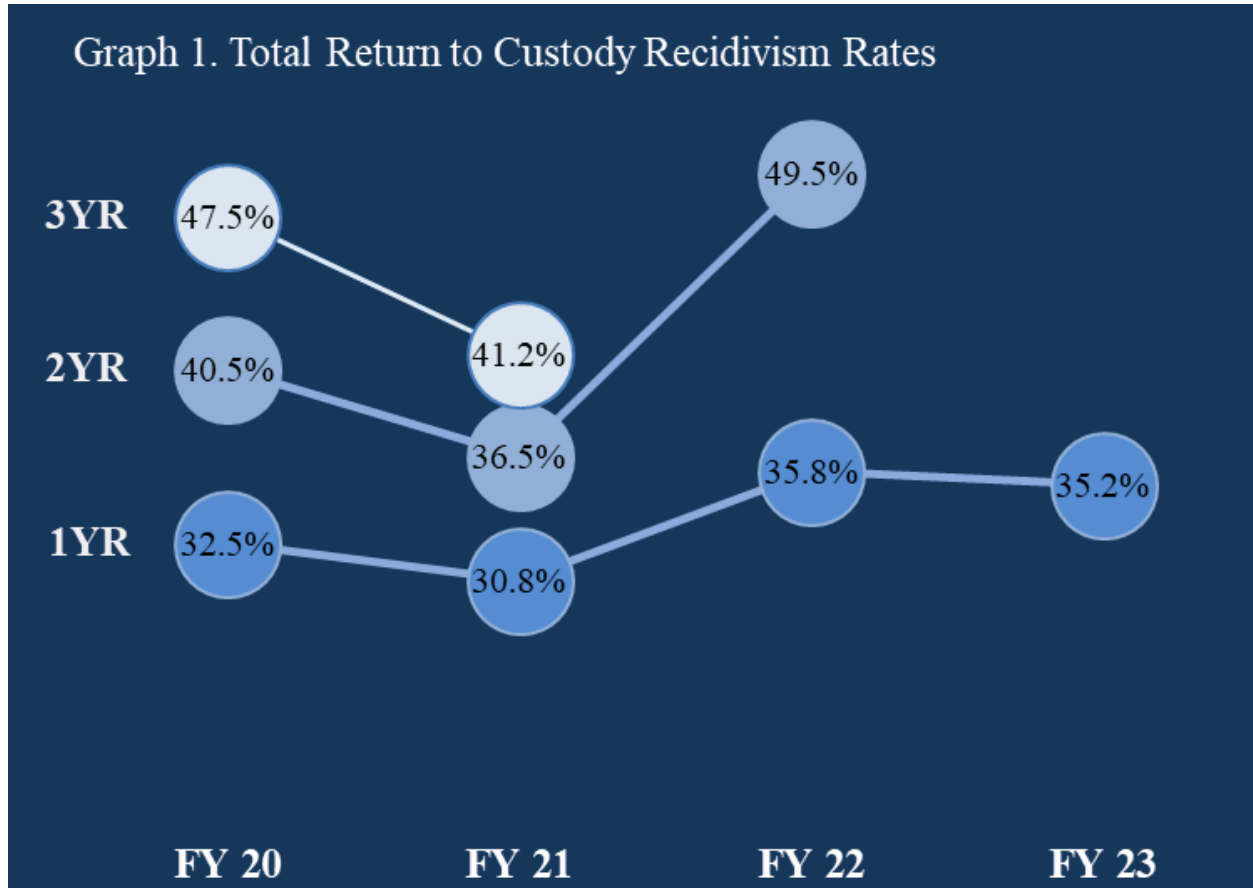
Table 1. Return to Custody Recidivism Rates

Cohort	Total in Cohort	Recidivism Type	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	N=211	ADCRR**	9	4.3%	22	10.4%	38	18.0%
		Recommitted to ADJC	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
		Parole Revocation (Total)	57	27.0%	59	28.0%	59	28.0%
		New Offense Violation	37	17.5%	38	18.0%	38	18.0%
		Technical Violation	20	9.5%	21	10.0%	21	10.0%
		Abscond Violation	2	0.9%	3	1.4%	3	1.4%
		New Offenses Total	45	21.3%	60	28.4%	69	32.7%
		Total Recidivism*	65	30.8%	77	36.5%	87	41.2%
FY 2022	N=109	ADCRR**	4	3.7%	19	17.4%	N/A	
		Recommitted to ADJC	0	0.0%	0	0.0%		
		Parole Revocation (Total)	35	32.1%	39	35.8%		
		New Offense Violation	18	16.5%	19	17.4%		
		Technical Violation	17	15.6%	20	18.3%		
		Abscond Violation	1	0.9%	1	0.9%		
		New Offenses Total	22	20.2%	35	32.1%		
		Total Recidivism*	39	35.8%	54	49.5%		
FY 2023	N=128	ADCRR**	7	5.5%	N/A			
		Recommitted to ADJC	0	0.0%				
		Parole Revocation (Total)	39	30.5%				
		New Offense Violation	27	21.1%				
		Technical Violation	11	8.6%				
		Abscond Violation	0	0.0%				
		New Offenses Total	33	25.8%				
		Total Recidivism*	45	35.2%				

* Total recidivism represents the total number of youth who recidivated, with the rate being the number of youth with a recidivating event over the total number of youth in the cohort.

** ADCRR records are matched and updated each year. If records are received indicating a return to custody occurred that was not previously reported, those counts are updated accordingly. Therefore, counts may not match previous reports.

Overall, the return to custody recidivism rates appear to be slightly increasing with high variability due to possible outliers within the FY 2022 cohort.



Comparison Breakouts

The return to custody recidivism data was broken into four (4) comparison groups. These breakouts provide more detailed information on recidivism and the ability to make general comparisons between one or more groups. These breakouts include gender, risk level, participation in the Sexualized Behavior Treatment Program, and participation in Seven Challenges substance abuse group.

Gender was measured using the biological gender assigned at birth. For each cohort and recidivism timeframe, except the FY 2022 12 month timeframe, males had a substantially higher recidivism rate as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Return to Custody by Gender

		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	Male	186	58	31.2%	70	37.6%	80	43.0%
	Female	25	7	28.0%	7	28.0%	7	28.0%
FY 2022	Male	93	33	35.5%	47	50.5%	N/A	
	Female	16	6	37.5%	7	43.8%		
FY 2023	Male	114	42	36.8%	N/A			
	Female	14	*	*				

* FY 2023 Female participants were excluded from the table due to the cohort size falling below the required minimum sample size needed for analysis.

The next demographic breakout is risk level. This breakout was measured using scores from the Arizona Youth Assessment System (AZYAS) Residential tool, which every youth is assessed with upon arrival to Adobe Mountain School. The AZYAS is a validated tool designed to assess needs and risk to recidivate. Analysis of this data showed that youth assessed as a high risk typically have the highest recidivism rates and those assessed as low risk have the lowest recidivism rates. Youth assessed as moderate fall in the middle during most cohort timeframes.

Table 3. Return to Custody by Risk Level

		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	Low	34	3	8.8%	4	11.8%	5	14.7%
	Moderate	80	29	36.3%	33	41.3%	36	45.0%
	High	97	33	34.0%	40	41.2%	46	47.4%
FY 2022*	Low	22	4	18.2%	6	27.3%	N/A	
	Moderate	33	11	33.3%	14	42.4%		
	High	53	24	45.3%	33	62.3%		
FY 2023	Low	31	2	6.5%	N/A			
	Moderate	52	25	48.1%				
	High	45	18	40.0%				

*One youth in FY 2022 did not receive an AZYAS before their discharge due to a short length of stay.

The next set of return to custody breakouts are for programs, which includes participation in the Sexualized Behavior Treatment Program (SBTP) and Seven Challenges. SBTP is a specialized program designed to treat (or eliminate) aggressive physical and sexual behaviors. Qualified mental health professionals assess and refer appropriate youth to this program. Overall, the analysis revealed that youth who are referred to and participate in the SBTP during their stay

in secure care have a substantially lower recidivism rate than those who were not referred for participation in the program.

Table 4. Return to Custody by SBTP Participation

		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	Participants	19	0	0.0%	3	15.8%	4	21.1%
	Non-Participants	192	65	33.9%	74	38.5%	83	43.2%
FY 2022	Participants	7	*	*	*	*	N/A	
	Non-Participants	102	38	37.3%	53	52.0%		
FY 2023	Participants*	17	2	11.8%	N/A			
	Non-Participants	111	43	38.7%				

* FY 2022 SBTP participants were excluded from the table due to the cohort size falling below the required minimum sample size needed for analysis.

Seven Challenges is an evidence-based treatment intervention intended to motivate adolescents to make decisions and commitments to change relating to substance use and abuse. Youth who are assessed during intake to secure care as having substance use disorders are referred for participation in this program. For all of the cohorts and timeframes included in the analysis, participants in the Seven Challenges program had a higher recidivism rate compared to those who did not participate.

Table 5. Return to Custody by Seven Challenges Participation

		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	Participants	147	59	40.1%	67	45.6%	72	49.0%
	Non-Participants	64	6	9.4%	10	15.6%	15	23.4%
FY 2022	Participants	58	29	50.0%	35	60.3%	N/A	
	Non-Participants	51	10	19.6%	19	37.3%		
FY 2023	Participants	48	24	50.0%	N/A			
	Non-Participants	80	21	26.3%				

Success Rate

The return to custody recidivism measure reflects the amount of youth who have returned to delinquent or criminal behavior, evidenced by a return to custody. The corresponding tables and graphs for this measure, therefore, do not show the amount of youth who were successful in not recidivating. To measure success, each cohort of youth was examined and the rates of those who did not have a recidivating event within the 12, 24, and 36 month follow-up timeframes

were calculated. Recidivating events included events captured under return to custody definition. Overall, of the youth released in FY 2023, 64.8% did not recidivate within 12 months. A total of 50.5% of the youth released in FY 2022 did not have a recidivating event within 24 months. Lastly, of the youth released in FY 2021, 58.8% did not have a recidivating event within 36 months of their release.

Table 6. Return to Custody Success Rate

	Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
		#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	211	146	69.2%	134	63.5%	124	58.8%
FY 2022	109	70	64.2%	55	50.5%	N/A	
FY 2023	128	83	64.8%	N/A			

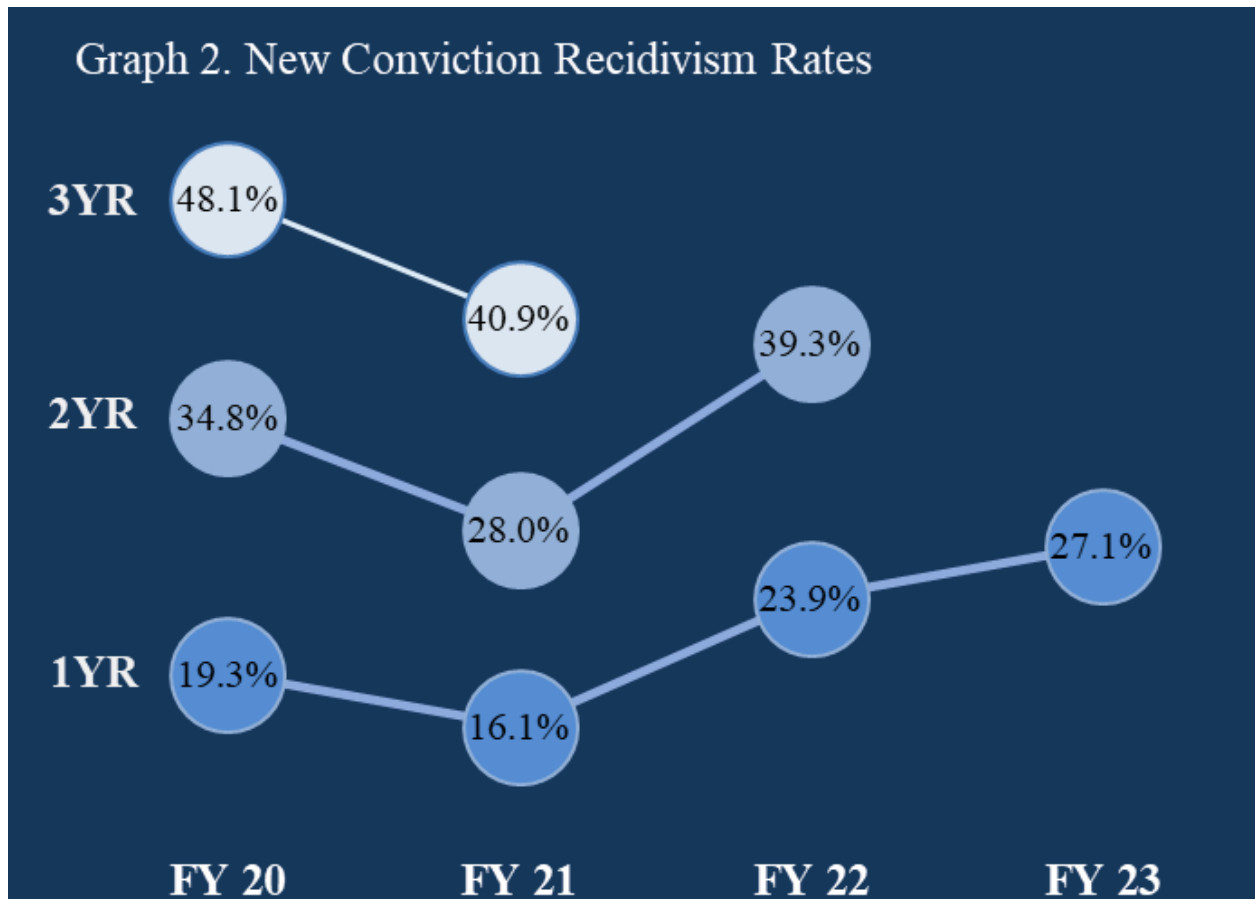
New Conviction Recidivism Rates

The new conviction recidivism rates capture reoffending that occurs after all Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections interventions have ended. As such, parole violations or offenses committed while under the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections care are not included. The cohorts are determined based on discharge date, and therefore include different youth than the return to custody cohorts which are based on first release date. These rates are lower than the return to custody recidivism rates. Specifically, within 12 months of release, 27.1% of youth released in FY 2023 had a new conviction for a subsequent offense. Of the youth released in FY 2022, 39.3% had a new conviction within 24 months. Of the youth released in FY 2021, 40.9% had a new conviction within 36 months. All of the new convictions were for felonies. The new conviction recidivism rates indicate that they fluctuate over time, with upward trends.

Table 7. New Conviction Recidivism Rates

	Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
		#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2021	186	30	16.1%	52	28.0%	76	40.9%
FY 2022	163	39	23.9%	64	39.3%	N/A	
FY 2023	133	36	27.1%	N/A			

Overall, new conviction rates appear to be slightly increasing as depicted in Graph 2.



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