

Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections

# Recidivism Outcomes: FY2018 - FY2020 Cohorts



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) measures recidivism as a return to custody within one to three years of the youth's release from ADJC's secure care facility, Adobe Mountain School. A return to custody includes both juvenile secure care as well as adult prison. This report includes rates for three cohorts of youth, those released in FY 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020. Analysis of data from these three cohorts produced the following major findings:

### **Return to Custody Recidivism Rates**

- Within 12 months, 32.5% of youth released in FY 2020 were returned to custody. Within 24 months, 40.7% of the FY 2019 releases returned, and within 36 months 44.0% of the FY 2018 releases returned to custody.
- Parole violations accounted for the largest portion of returns to custody each fiscal year, ranging from 27.5% to 30.5% of the returns.
- Admission to the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ACDRR) accounted for the smallest percentage of returns to custody. Specifically, of the youth released in FY 2020, 5.0% were returned to ACDRR within 12 months. Within 24 months, 11.7% of the FY 2019 releases were returned, and within 36 months 18.8% of the FY 2018 releases were returned.
- Return to custody recidivism rates appear to be remaining steady across time.

### **Return to Custody Comparison Breakouts**

- Males recidivate at a substantially higher rate compared to females.
- The type of location the youth was released to, urban or rural, had mixed results. Youth released to a rural location in FY 2018 recidivated at a higher rate than youth released to an urban location. However, for FY 2019 and FY 2020 releases, youth released to an urban location had the highest recidivism rates.
- Youth assessed as a high risk on the Arizona Youth Assessment System (AZYAS) have the highest recidivism rates and those assessed as low risk have the lowest recidivism rates.
- Youth who participated in the Sexualized Behavior Treatment Program 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**

- Of all the youth released in FY 2020, 67.5% did not have any recidivating event within 12 months. Of the youth released in FY 2019, 59.2% did not have any recidivating event occur within 24 months. Of the youth released in FY 2018, 56.0% did not have any recidivating event within 36 months of release.

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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 graphs to provide for comparison between various groups, such as between males and females and those participating in various programs, and provide further context for understanding the recidivism rates.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to measure recidivism is consistent with historical ADJC publications and defines recidivism as a return to custody. This report expands upon previous one-page publications by providing breakout rates for comparison groups as well as descriptive statistics of the data used for all of the calculations. 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 (a) cohorts of individuals being tracked, (b) the start date of recidivism tracking, (c) length of time that recidivism is tracked, and (d) what constitutes a recidivism event, which are as follows:

**Cohorts:** Recidivism rates are calculated by cohorts of youth released during a specific timeframe for FY 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020. The fiscal year (FY) timeframe runs from July 1st to June 30th. For example, the FY 2018 cohort includes youth released between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018.

**Start Date:** The start date is when recidivism tracking begins, which is the date that the youth was first released from ADJC's secure care facility, Adobe Mountain School. A release can be categorized as a discharge from secure care or a release to supervision by Community Corrections (parole).

**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 following release from secure care. Offenses committed prior to the juvenile's first commitment to secure care are excluded. The date of return to secure care or admission to adult prison is used as the recidivism date.

## **Data Sources**

Data for the recidivism rates are primarily captured in Youthbase, ADJC's statewide data system that tracks youth commitment and parole information. ADJC data was augmented with data from both the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR), which allows for the measures to include recidivism occurring after ADJC jurisdiction has ended. These datasets provide information on the arrival date to adult prison.

## **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, those rates 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) Native American youth and two (2) recidivated, that would result in a 50% recidivism rate. If the next cohort of Native American 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. Although recidivism rates for small groups are excluded from report tables and graphs, the actual counts are provided in the report appendix for reference.

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 among juveniles. Therefore each juvenile agency has adopted their own standards, which differ in 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 due 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 that the youth are released to, 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 ADJC’s recidivism rates may be reflective of changes in the youth population being released or the environments they are being released to rather than changes in the success rate of ADJC 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 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020 were analyzed and are presented in the following sections. Included in the analysis were 191 youth from FY 2018, 167 youth from FY 2019, and 200 youth from FY 2020.

### **Return to Custody**

The most current recidivism rates for return to custody showed that within 12 months of release in FY 2020, 32.5% of the youth returned to custody. Within 24 months, 40.7% of the FY 2019 releases returned, and within 36 months 44.0% of the FY 2018 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 (ACDRR) accounted for the smallest percentage of returns to custody. Specifically, of the youth released in FY 2020, 5.0% were returned to ACDRR within 12 months. Within 24 months, 11.7% of the FY 2019 releases were returned and within 36 months 18.8% of the FY 2018 releases were returned. Overall, the return to custody recidivism rates appear to be remaining steady across time.

RETURN TO CUSTODY RECIDIVISM RATES								
Cohort	Total in Cohort	Recidivism Type	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2018	N=191	ADCRR	7	3.6%	27	14.1%	36	18.8%
		Recommitted to ADJC	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
		Parole Revocation (Total)	55	28.8%	55	28.8%	55	28.8%
		New Offense Violation	21	11.0%	21	11.0%	21	11.0%
		Technical Violation	34	17.8%	34	17.8%	34	17.8%
		New Offenses Total	27	14.1%	43	22.5%	50	26.1%
		<b>Total Recidivism</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>44.0%</b>
FY 2019	N=167	ADCRR	7	4.2%	19	11.7%	N/A	
		Recommitted to ADJC	1	0.6%	1	0.6%		
		Parole Revocation (Total)	48	28.7%	51	30.5%		
		New Offense Violation	24	14.4%	26	15.5%		
		Technical Violation	24	14.4%	25	15.0%		
		New Offenses Total	32	19.1%	46	27.5%		
		<b>Total Recidivism*</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>33.5%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>40.7%</b>		
FY 2020	N=200	ADCRR	10	5.0%	N/A			
		Recommitted to ADJC	0	0.0%				
		Parole Revocation (Total)	55	27.5%				
		New Offense Violation	39	19.5%				
		Technical Violation	16	8.0%				
		New Offenses Total	49	24.5%				
		<b>Total Recidivism*</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>32.5%</b>				

\* 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.

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 ADJC secure care on a parole violation and then later on commit

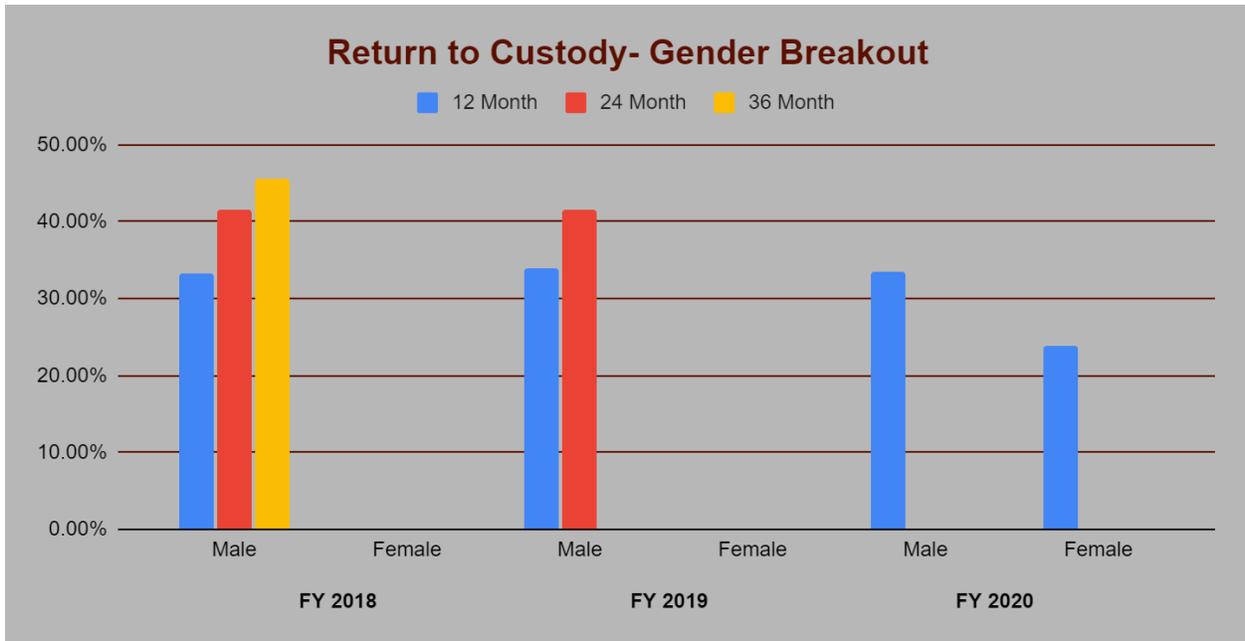
a new offense that results in a sentence to ADCRR. In this instance, the youth will be included in the parole violation statistics, included in the ADCRR statistics, but only counted once in the total recidivism count rather than twice. Therefore, the counts from ADCRR, Recommitted to ADJC, and Parole Violations (Total) combined may not always equal the total reflected in the Total Recidivism counts.

## **Return to Custody Comparison Breakouts**

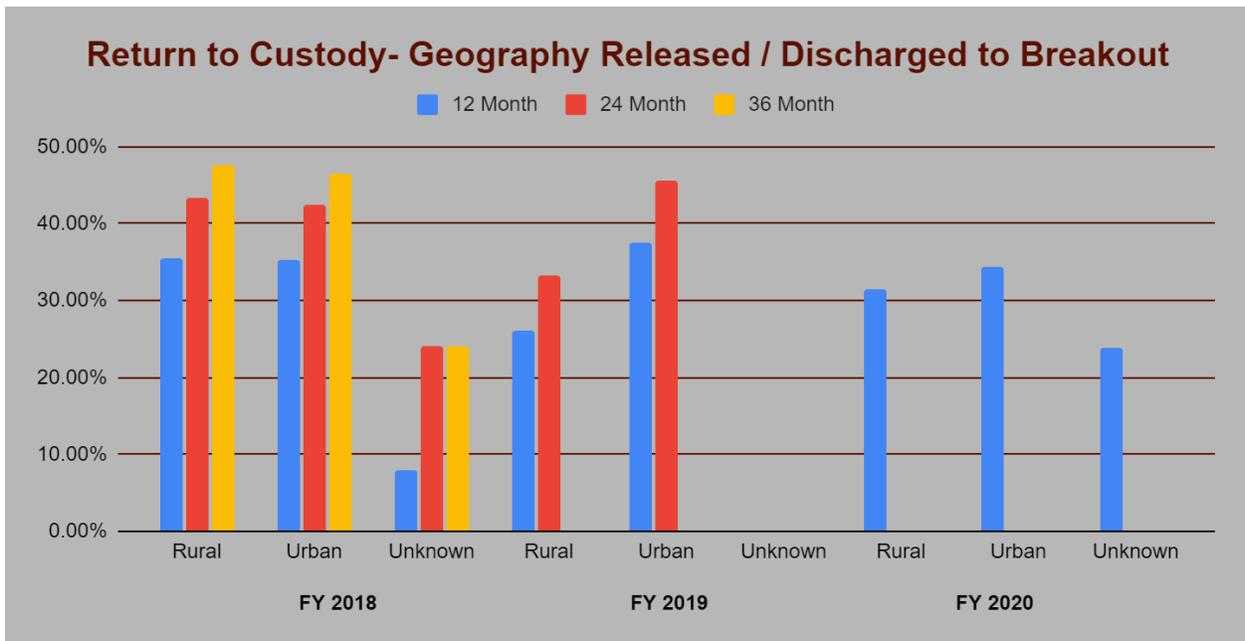
The return to custody recidivism data was broken into five (5) comparison groups. These breakouts provide more detailed information on recidivism and the ability to make general comparisons between groups. The first three (3) breakouts are on youth demographics and depicted in charts with gray backgrounds. These include gender, geography released/discharged to, and risk level.

Gender was measured using the biological gender assigned at birth. For each cohort and recidivism timeframe, males had a substantially higher recidivism rate. Geography released/discharged to was measured using the address the youth was released to from secure care. Releases to residential addresses in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties were coded as 'Urban', with all other residential addresses being coded as 'Rural'. Releases that were to out-of-state or to another jurisdiction such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement were coded as 'Unknown'. Location released to had mixed results. Youth released to a rural location in FY 2018 recidivated at a higher rate than youth released to an urban location. However, for FY 2019 and FY 2020 releases, urban had the highest recidivism rates.

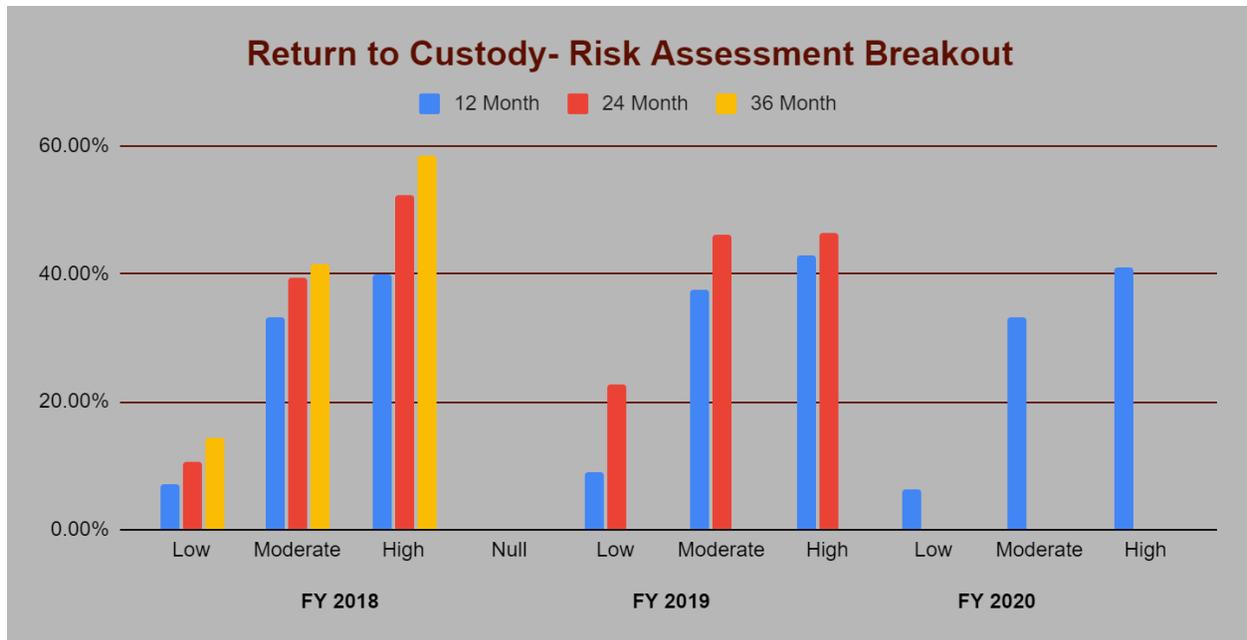
The final demographic breakout is the Risk Assessment. This breakout was measured using scores from the Arizona Youth Assessment System (AZYAS) Residential tool, which every youth is assessed with upon arrival to Adobe Mountain School. Analysis of this data showed that youth assessed as a high risk to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



*\*FY2018 & FY2019 females are excluded from the graph due to the cohort size falling below the required minimum sample size needed for analysis.*



*\*Youth released to an 'Unknown' location for FY2019 did not meet the required minimum sample size needed for analysis and are therefore not presented on the graph.*

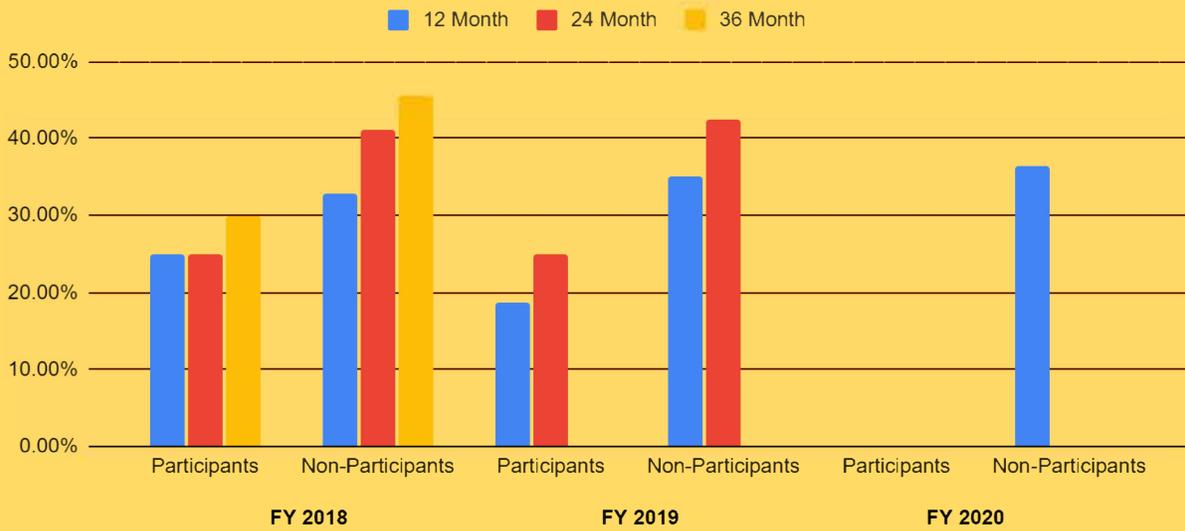


*\*FY2018 'Null' are excluded from the graph due to the cohort size falling below the required minimum sample size needed for analysis.*

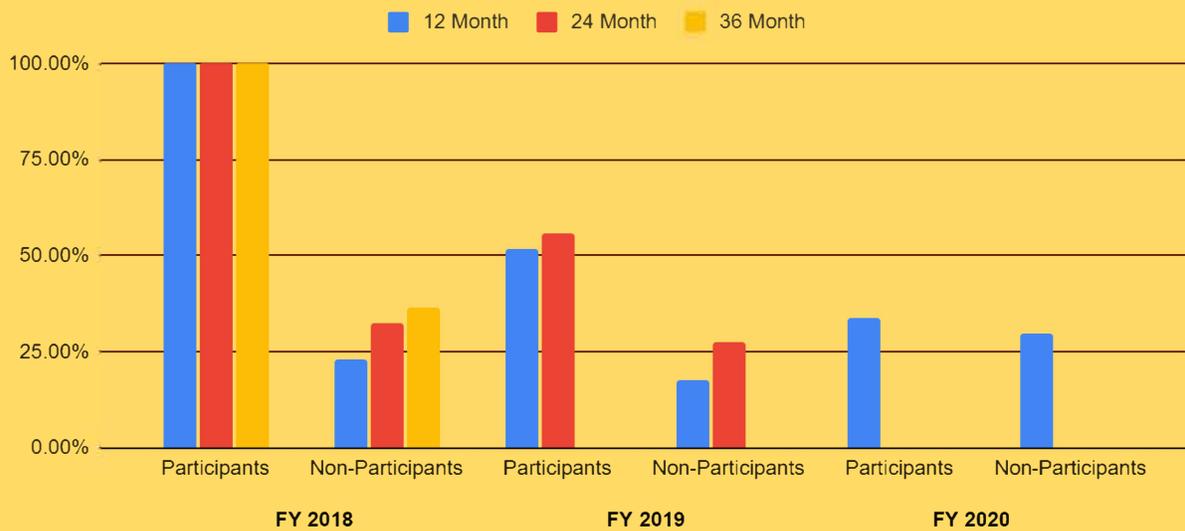
The next set of return to custody breakouts are for programs, which includes the Sexualized Behavior Treatment Program (SBTP) and Seven Challenges. SBTP is a specialized program designed to treat (or eliminate) aggressive physical and sexual behaviors. ADJC's qualified mental health professionals assess and refer appropriate youth to this program. Overall, 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.

Lastly Seven Challenges is an evidence-based treatment intervention intended to motivate adolescents to make decisions and commitments to change relating to substance use. Youth who are assessed 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.

### Return to Custody- SBTP Breakout



### Return to Custody- Seven Challenges Breakout



## Overall Success Rate

The return to custody recidivism measure reflects the amount of youth who have returned to delinquent or criminal behavior. The corresponding tables and graphs for this measure, however, fail to show the amount of youth who did not recidivate. To calculate overall success, each cohort of youth was examined and the rate of those who did not have a recidivating event of any kind within the 12, 24, and 36 month follow-up timeframes were calculated. Recidivating events included events captured under return to custody definitions. Overall, of the youth released in FY 2020, 67.5% did not recidivate within 12 months. Of the youth released in FY 2019, 59.2% did not have any recidivating event occur within 24 months. Of the youth released in FY 2018, 56.0% did not have any recidivating event within 36 months of release.

OVERALL SUCCESS RATE							
	Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
		#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2018	191	130	68.0%	114	59.6%	107	56.0%
FY 2019	167	111	66.4%	99	59.2%	N/A	
FY 2020	200	135	67.5%	N/A			

## APPENDIX

Return to Custody - Gender Breakout								
		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2018	Male	180	60	33.3%	75	41.6%	82	45.5%
	Female	11	1	9.1%	2	18.2%	2	18.2%
FY 2019	Male	156	53	33.9%	65	41.6%	N/A	
	Female	11	3	27.3%	3	27.3%		
FY 2020	Male	179	60	33.5%	N/A			
	Female	21	5	23.8%				

Return to Custody - Geography Released / Discharged to Breakout								
		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2018	Rural	67	24	35.6%	29	43.3%	32	47.7%
	Urban	99	35	35.3%	42	42.4%	46	46.4%
	Unknown	25	2	8.0%	6	24.0%	6	24.0%
FY 2019	Rural	42	11	26.2%	14	33.3%	N/A	
	Urban	112	42	37.5%	51	45.5%		
	Unknown	13	3	23.0%	3	23.0%		
FY 2020	Rural	57	18	31.5%	N/A			
	Urban	122	42	34.4%				
	Unknown	21	5	23.8%				

Return to Custody - Risk Assessment Breakout								
		Total in Cohort	12 Months		24 Months		36 Months	
			#	Rate	#	Rate	#	Rate
FY 2018	Low	28	2	7.1%	3	10.7%	4	14.3%
	Moderate	96	33	33.3%	39	39.4%	41	41.4%
	High	65	26	40.0%	34	52.3%	38	58.4%
	Null	2	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
FY 2019	Low	22	2	9.1%	5	22.7%	N/A	
	Moderate	89	30	37.5%	37	46.2%		
	High	56	24	42.8%	26	46.4%		
FY 2020	Low	31	2	6.4%	N/A			
	Moderate	81	27	33.3%				
	High	88	36	40.9%				

<b>Return to Custody - SBTP Breakout</b>								
		<b>Total in Cohort</b>	<b>12 Months</b>		<b>24 Months</b>		<b>36 Months</b>	
			<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>
FY 2018	Participants	20	5	<b>25.0%</b>	5	<b>25.0%</b>	6	<b>30.0%</b>
	Non-Participants	171	56	<b>32.7%</b>	72	<b>41.1%</b>	78	<b>45.6%</b>
FY 2019	Participants	16	3	<b>18.7%</b>	4	<b>25.0%</b>	N/A	
	Non-Participants	151	53	<b>35.1%</b>	64	<b>42.4%</b>		
FY 2020	Participants	21	0	<b>0.0%</b>	N/A			
	Non-Participants	179	65	<b>36.3%</b>				

<b>Return to Custody - Seven Challenges Breakout</b>								
		<b>Total in Cohort</b>	<b>12 Months</b>		<b>24 Months</b>		<b>36 Months</b>	
			<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Rate</b>
FY 2018	Participants	22	22	<b>100.0%</b>	22	<b>100.0%</b>	22	<b>100.0%</b>
	Non-Participants	169	39	<b>23.1%</b>	55	<b>32.5%</b>	62	<b>36.7%</b>
FY 2019	Participants	77	40	<b>51.9%</b>	43	<b>55.8%</b>	N/A	
	Non-Participants	90	16	<b>17.7%</b>	25	<b>27.7%</b>		
FY 2020	Participants	136	46	<b>33.8%</b>	N/A			
	Non-Participants	64	19	<b>29.6%</b>				

Produced and Published by:

**Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections  
Continuous Improvement Bureau**

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