

## Research in Brief

September 2016

# PRISON RECIDIVISM FY2016

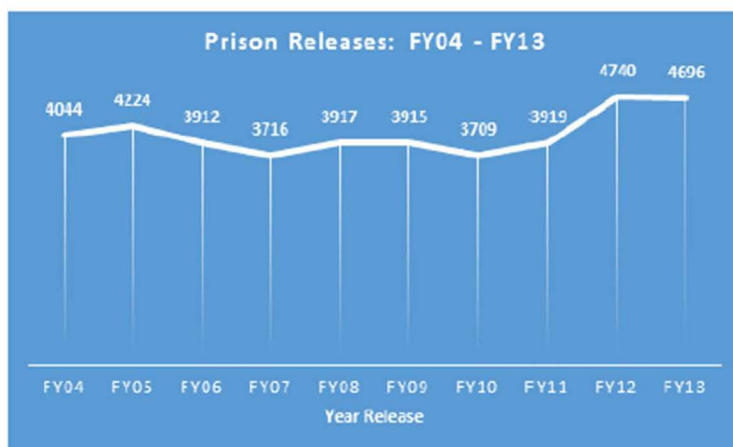


### TREND

Recidivism rates have increased since a low in FY14, but remain lower than rates in FY08 and FY09. Compared with last year, the increase in the return rate to prison in FY16 is small but statistically significant.



The increase in prison recidivism may be related at least in part with an increase in prison releases. Prison releases increased sharply during FY12 and FY13, which are the cohorts associated with the FY15 and FY16 recidivism reporting years.



### Measuring Recidivism

Recidivism definitions and terms use in this report were developed by The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) to establish standard performance measures of importance to corrections.

The recidivism rate is the percent of offenders released from prison or work release who returned to prison within three years. The releases tracked are paroles, discharges due to end of sentence, and sex offender releases to special sentence supervision.

The recidivism rate may be further defined by the reason for the prison return: new convictions with sentences to prison; and technical returns (all other reasons).

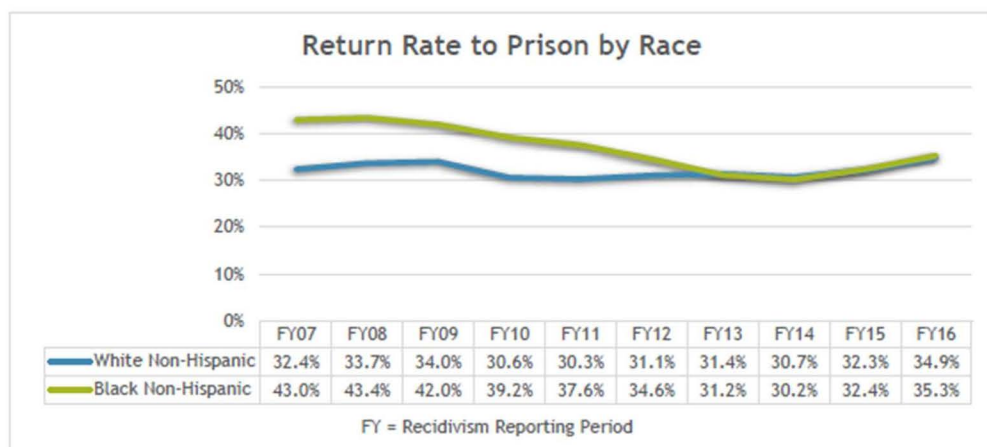
The recidivism reporting year is the conclusion of the three-year tracking period for a release group. The FY2016 reporting year describes recidivism for offenders leaving prison in FY2013.

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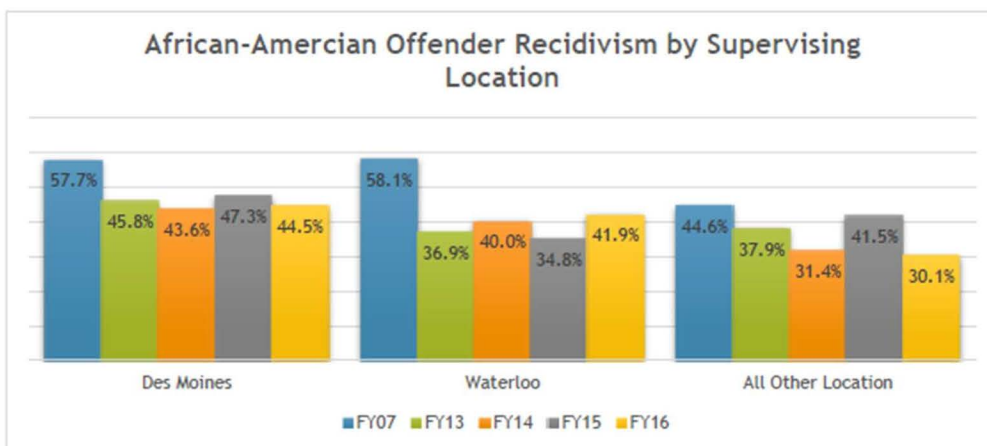
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### RECIDIVISM DOWN FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN OFFENDERS IN MOST LOCATIONS

In the past there was a large disparity in recidivism rates between White and Black offenders, but due to reentry efforts focused specifically on African-American offenders, recidivism rates for this group substantially declined. For the past four years, there has been no statistically significant difference in recidivism rates between non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks.



Nearly half of African-American offenders released to supervision in Iowa are supervised in Des Moines and Waterloo. Reentry efforts focused specifically on this population began in these locations in early 2009, and consequently, recidivism rates declined more rapidly in these locations than for the rest of the state. Compared with last year, there was a continued decline in African-American offender recidivism in Des Moines as well as in locations other than Waterloo in FY16.

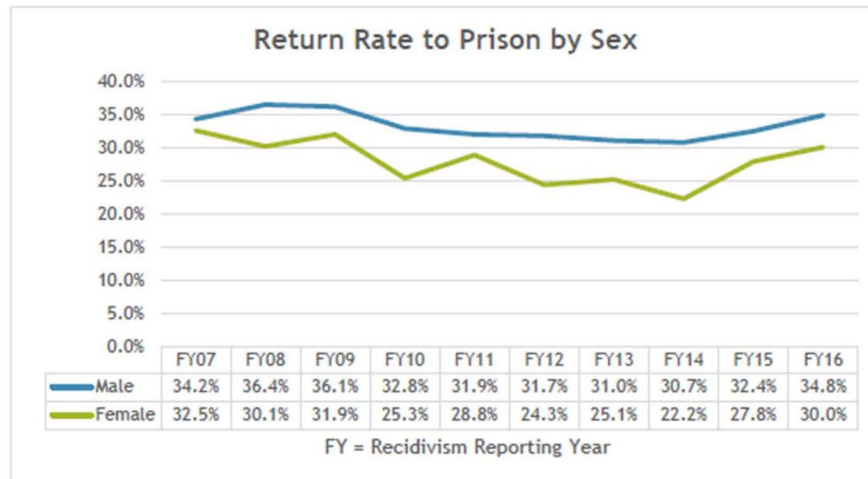


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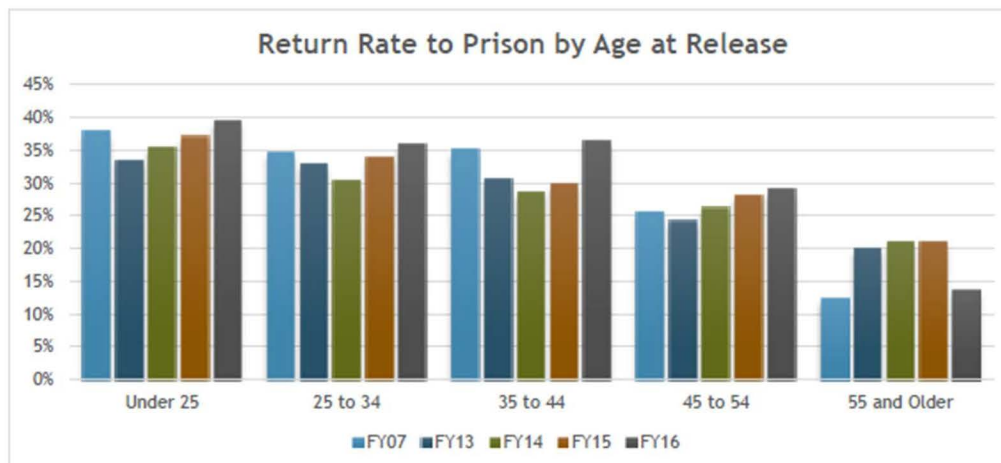
### RECIDIVISM UP FOR MALE & FEMALE OFFENDERS

Compared with last year, recidivism rates increased for both male and female offenders in FY16.



### RECIDIVISM UP FOR MOST AGE GROUPS EXCEPT AGE 55 & OLDER

Compared with last year, recidivism rates increased for most age groups in FY16, except rates for offenders aged 55 and old, which declined sharply.

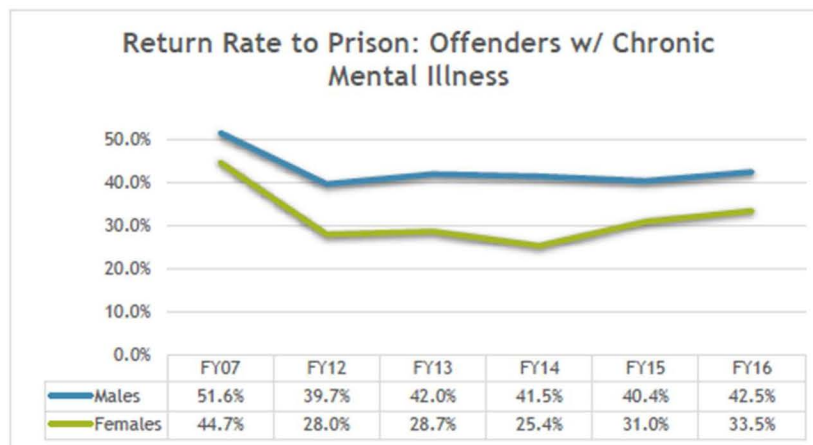


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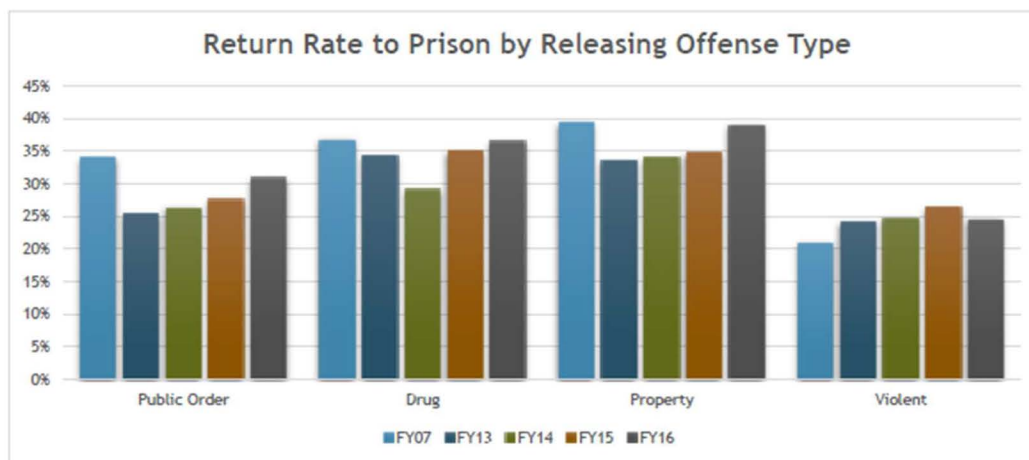
### RECIDIVISM UP FOR MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS

Compared with last year, recidivism rates increased for offenders with chronic mental health diagnoses in FY16.



### RECIDIVISM UP FOR MOST OFFENSE TYPES EXCEPT VIOLENT CRIME

Compared with last year, recidivism rates increased for most releasing offense types in FY16, except rates for offenders released for violent crimes, which declined. About 24.4% of prison releases are for offenders whose most serious offense was a violent crime, and recidivism rates for this group remain the lowest.



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### RECIDIVISM: NEW CONVICTIONS VS. TECHNICAL RETURNS

The previous sections document the increase in recidivism rates across a range of offender characteristics (sex, age, mental illness) and by offense type. Compared with last year, the rate of return to prison for technical reasons increased by 1.6 percentage points in FY16, while returns due to new conviction increased by 0.8 percentage points. This is noteworthy given the previous stability of technical return rates.

