

Recidivism Rates

CDOC defines recidivism as a return to prison or offender status in Colorado within three years of release for new criminal activity or a technical violation of parole, probation or non-departmental community placement. This definition is common across state corrections departments, but the methodology for computing recidivism is often not reported. After a review of other correctional recidivism

rate calculation methods and national standards, Colorado developed new methodology in 2008 (though our definition of recidivism has not changed). The current methodology is based on the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) performance-based measurement system, which has highly specific measures and counting rules for calculating recidivism rates.

Time at Risk

{if released to parole, may discharge parole before three years but are still followed}



Releases include:

- Discretionary paroles
- Mandatory paroles
- Re-paroles
- Sentence discharges

Return to inmate status: Returns after three years:

- Technical violation
- New crime
- Not considered recidivism

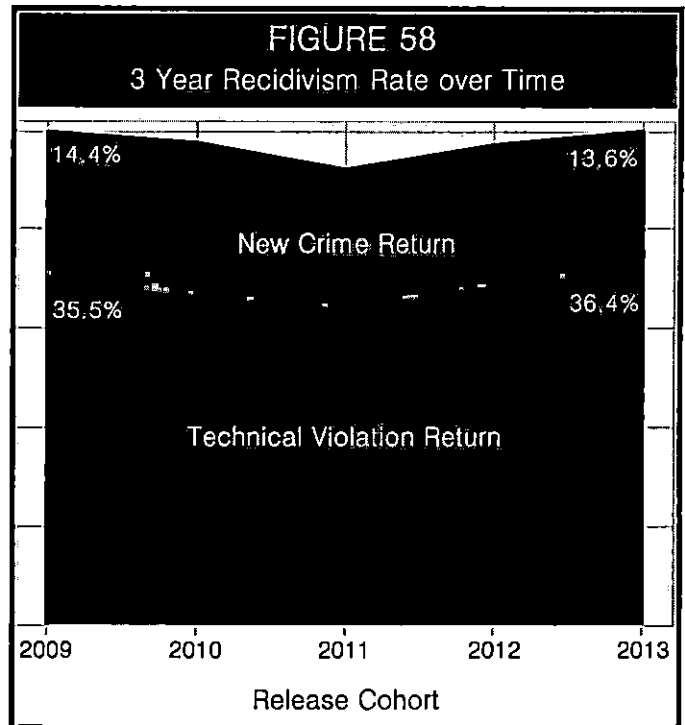
Releases do not include: Returns do not include:

- Releases to Community Corrections
- Multiple releases in the
- Community Corrections regressions

The following summarizes this methodology:

- **Recidivism:** Return to offender status calculated by combining new convictions plus technical violations for overall recidivism at one-year post-release intervals.
- **Cohort:** Includes the number of offenders released, not the number of times an offender released. Even if an offender released multiple times within a year, that individual was counted only once per release cohort. Therefore, an offender can fail only once within any given cohort.
- **Release types:** Contains offenders who released to the community to include; releases to parole, completion of sentence, court-ordered discharge, and released to probation. To be counted, offenders must release from offender status. Those who died while incarcerated, escaped, or had a sentence vacated or inactivated were not included in the recidivism cohort. Additionally, offenders who released to a detainer or pending charges were excluded.
- **Calendar year (CY):** Although the CDOC statistical report is based on fiscal year, reporting recidivism on a calendar-year basis ensures data consistent with ASCA standards and other national prison surveys.

The overall three-year recidivism rate (including returns for new crimes and technical violations) is 50.0% for the CY 2013 release cohort (Figure 58). The recidivism rate has increased 0.1% from 2009 releases to 2013 releases. More returns are for technical violations than new crime convictions.



To better explore recidivism rates by return type, Figure 59 displays cumulative return-to-prison rates across seven release cohorts, at one-year intervals up to three years post-release. Technical violations consistently constitute the largest proportion of returns to prison over time. As technical returns increased between 2011 and 2013 releases, new crime returns remained steady. So, while there may be more variations from year to year in the new crime and technical violation return rates, the overall recidivism rate varies less.

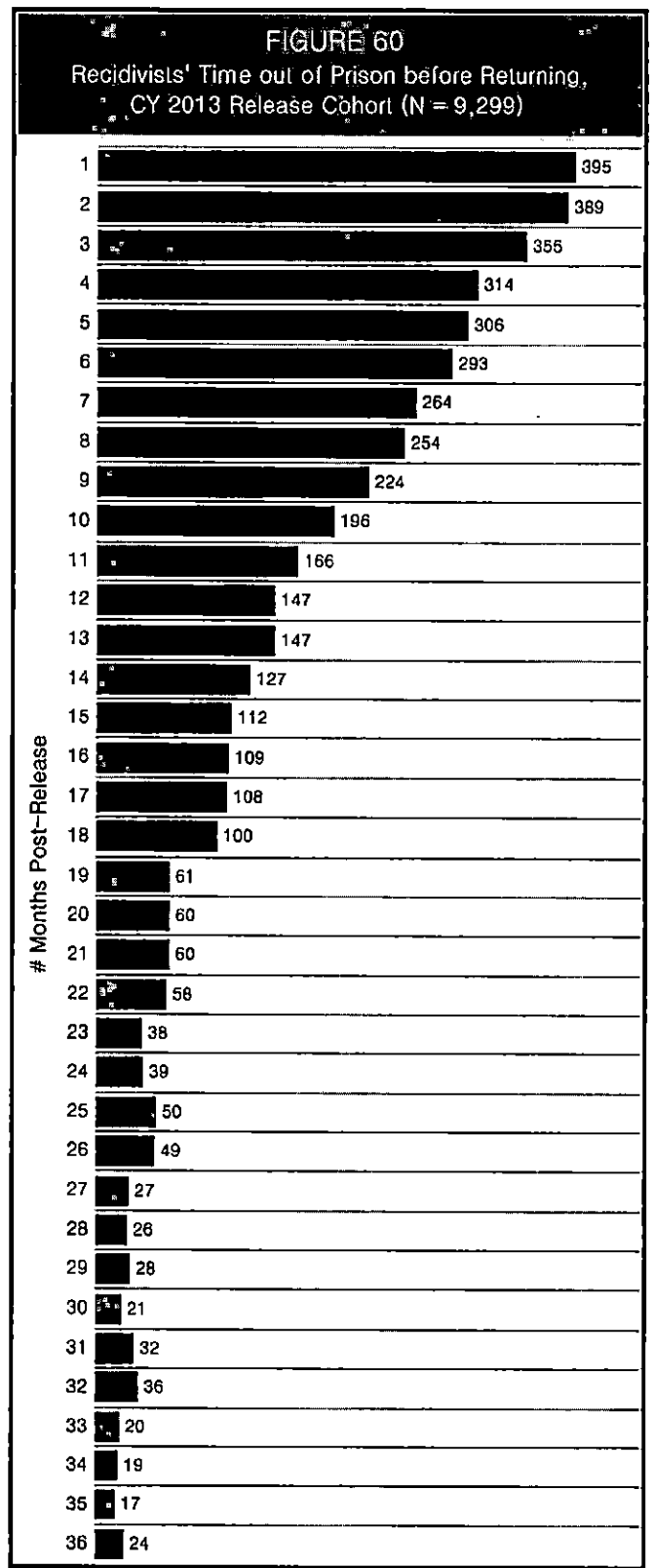
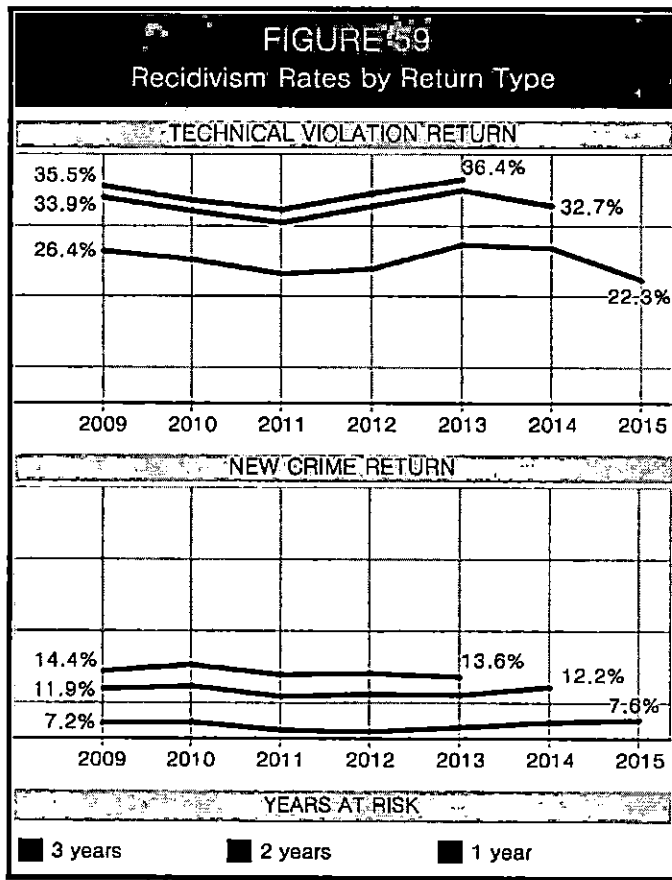
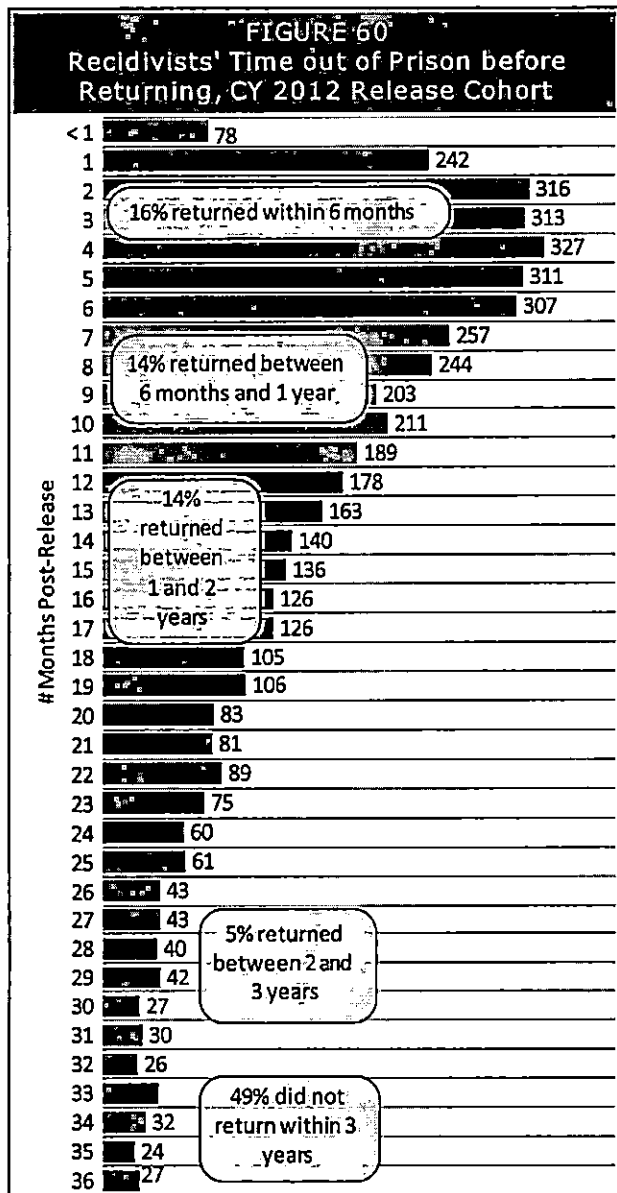


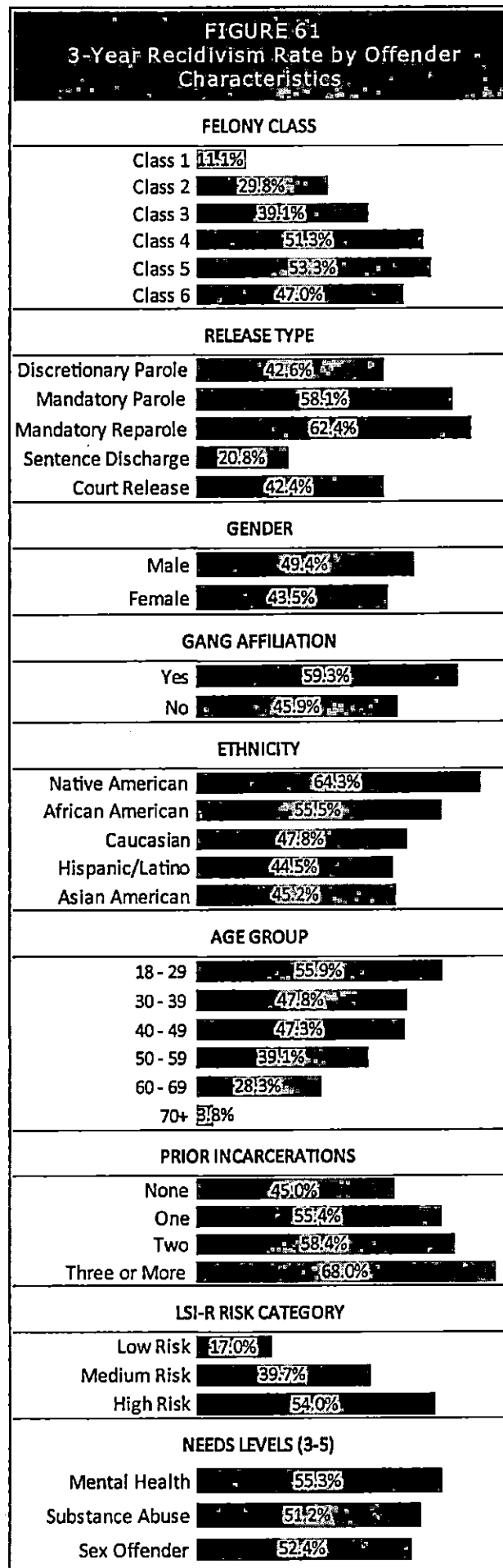
Figure 60 analyzes the 2013 release cohort, detailing the amount of time it took an offender to return back to offender status. As time passed, the number of offenders who returned to prison decreased. More offenders failed within the first year, principally within two to six months post-release, than any other time frame signifying that this time frame is the highest risk period. In the first six months after release, 18.9% of offenders returned. Another 15.0% returned between six months and one year. Between one and two years after release, 12.1% returned and between two and three years of release, an additional 4.2% returned. A total of 49.8% of offenders did not return within three years.

Recidivism rates vary by offender characteristics (Figure 61). Recidivism rates are higher for males than females and higher for younger offenders than older offenders.

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Recidivism rates vary by offender characteristics (Figure 61). Recidivism rates are higher for males than females and higher for younger offenders than older ones. Certain minority groups are more likely to fail (Native Americans and African Americans) than other



higher for males than females and are higher for younger offenders than older ones. Certain minority groups are more likely to fail (Native Americans and African Americans) than other minority groups (Hispanics/Latinos and Asian Americans).

Criminal history is a strong predictor of post-release success. The number of prior incarcerations and type of release are among the strongest recidivism predictors. Offenders who discharge their sentence receive no post-release supervision and cannot return

on a technical violation. As stated before, technical violations constitute the largest portion of returns, thus offenders who discharge their sentences have the lowest return rate. Discretionary parole is granted by the Parole Board to offenders who are the most prepared to re-enter society, and their recidivism rate is the next lowest. Offenders who do not release until their mandatory parole date or who re-parole after a failure have the highest return rates. Felony class alone does not have a clear relationship with outcomes,

FIGURE 59
Recidivists' Time Out of Prison Before Returning, CY 2011 Release Cohort

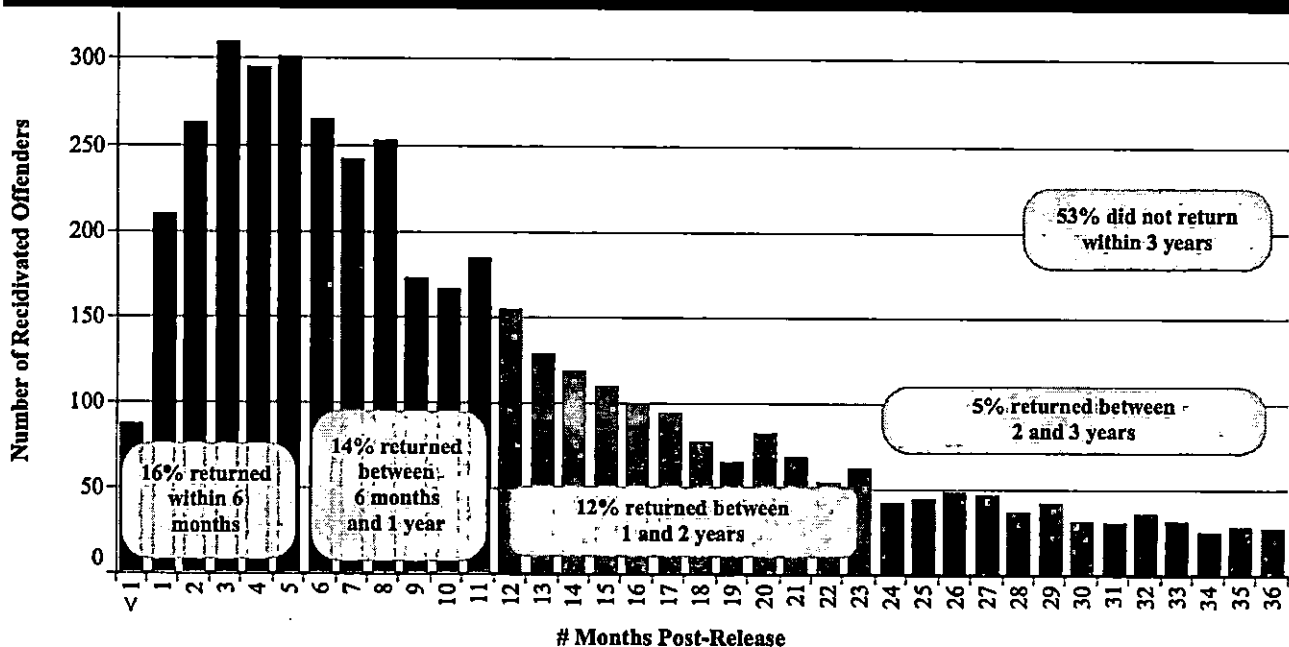
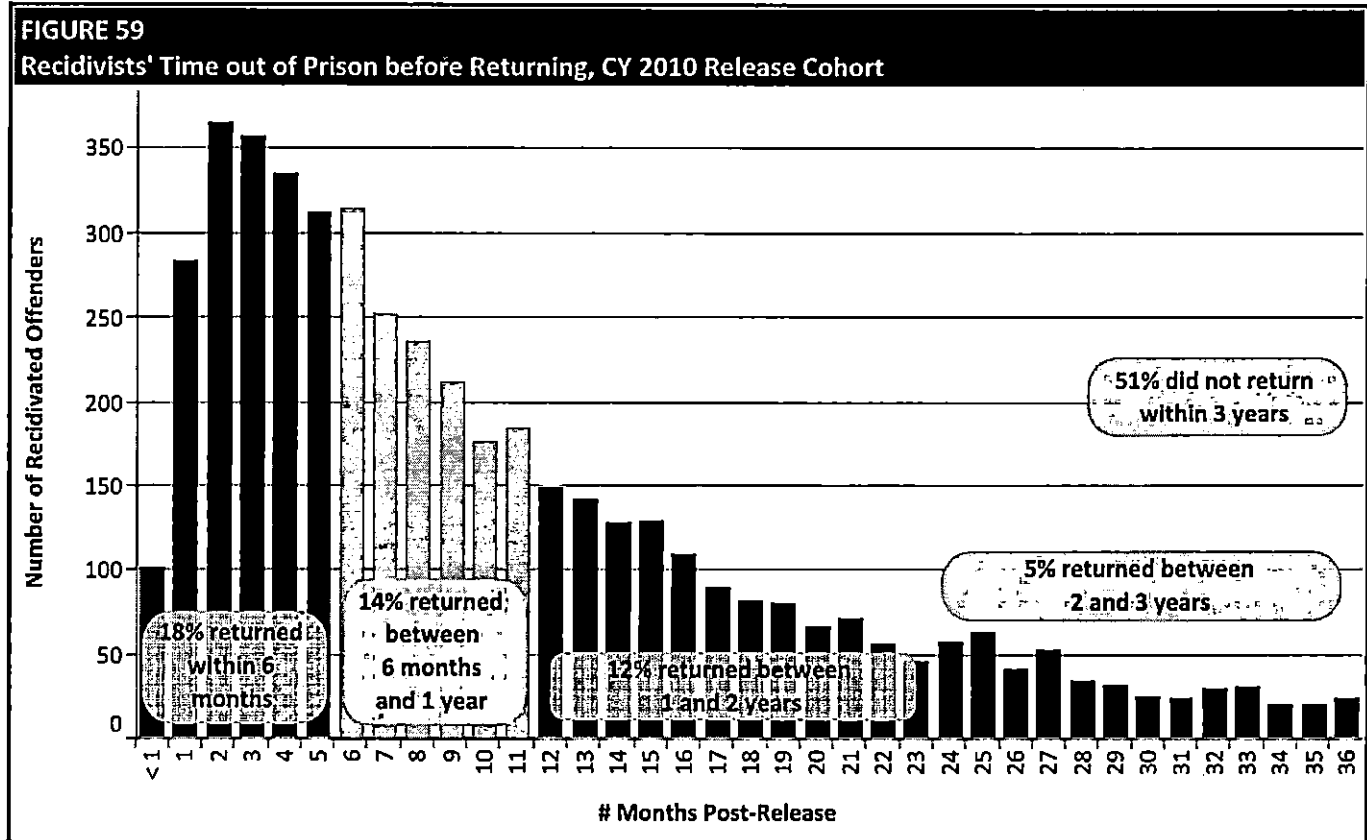


Figure 59 analyzes the 2010 release cohort, detailing the amount of time it took a recidivist to return back to inmate status. As time passed, the number of offenders who returned to prison decreased. The

majority of offenders who failed did so within the first year, particularly within two to seven months post-release, showing that this is the highest risk period.



Recidivism rates vary by offender characteristics (see Figure 60). Recidivism rates are higher for males than females and are higher for younger offenders than older ones. Certain minority groups are more likely to fail (Native Americans and African Americans) than other minority groups (Hispanics/Latinos and Asian Americans).

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the Parole Board to offenders who are the most prepared to re-enter society, and their recidivism rate is the next lowest. Offenders who do not release until their mandatory parole date or who reparole after a failure have the highest return rates. Felony class alone does not have a clear relationship with outcomes, but gang membership has one of the strongest relationships with recidivism.

Certain needs areas, including mental health, sex offender, and substance abuse, increase an offender's likelihood of recidivism. Risk, as measured by the Level of Supervision Inventory – Revised (LSI-R) is also a strong indicator of recidivism.

Figure 20 analyzes the 2009 release cohort, detailing the amount of time it took a recidivist to return to prison. As time passed, the number of offenders who returned to prison decreased. Nearly 70% of offenders who returned to prison did so within 1 year showing that this is the highest risk period. The highest number of offenders returned during the third month out of prison. Only 8% of offenders returned to prison after being out for at least 2 years but less than 3 years.

Figure 20. Recidivists' Time Out of Prison before Returning, CY 2009 Release Cohort

