

RECIDIVISM SNAPSHOT: WORK RELEASE

OCTOBER 2025

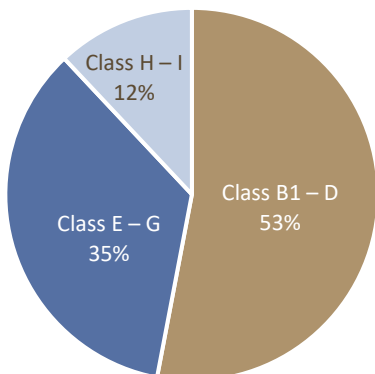
WORK RELEASE CONNECTS BUSINESSES WITH MOTIVATED, PRE-SCREENED INDIVIDUALS TRANSITIONING BACK INTO THE WORKFORCE. PARTICIPATING OFFENDERS MUST BE IN THE FINAL STAGE OF IMPRISONMENT AND ARE CAREFULLY SCREENED FOR PARTICIPATION.

917 offenders in the FY 2021 prison release sample were assigned to work release while incarcerated. 61% were assigned for 6 months or more; 39% were assigned for 5 months or less.



Most were male (94%). 53% were Black and 44% were White. The average age at prison release was 45 years. 34% were high school graduates; 46% had prior employment.

Convicted Offense Class



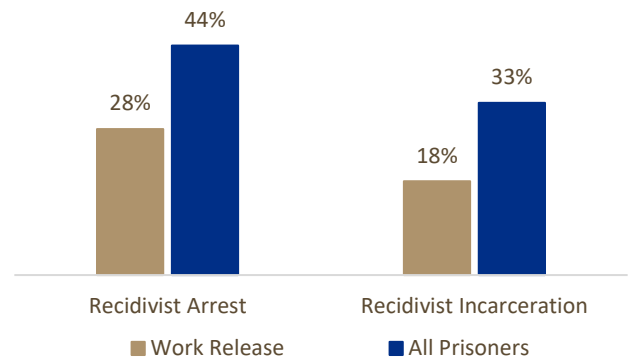
36% of prisoners assigned to work release were assessed as extreme risk and 15% were assessed as extreme need. The majority served more than 25 months in prison and had an average of 4 infractions.

Incarceration Profile

Risk Level – Extreme	36%
Need Level – Extreme	15%
Type of Prison Entry – New Crime	82%
Average Number of Infractions	4
Time Served – 25+ Months	81%
Minimum Custody at Release	89%

28% of prisoners assigned to work release had a **recidivist arrest** compared to 44% for all prisoners. **18%** of prisoners assigned to work release had a **recidivist incarceration** compared to 33% for all prisoners.

Recidivism Rates: Two-Year Follow-Up



Controlling for personal characteristics and criminal justice factors, prisoners assigned to work release had a **6% lower** probability of **recidivist arrest** and an **8% lower** probability of **recidivist incarceration** compared to those not assigned to work release.

72% of prisoners assigned to work release were **employed** in at least one quarter during the two-year follow-up period; the **annual median wage** was **\$23,478** for prisoners assigned to work release compared to \$8,569 for all prisoners.

Employment Outcomes: Two-Year Follow-Up



Source: NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission, FY 2021 Correctional Program Evaluation Data

For the NC Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission's *Correctional Program Evaluation: Offenders Released from Probation or Prison in Fiscal Year 2021* and all other publications, see the Commission's website: www.NCSPAC.org.