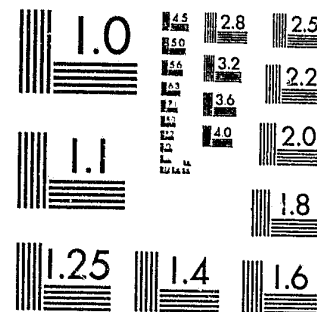


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Frank Tracy, Director

FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF ROCHESTER WORK RELEASE PARTICIPANTS

At the request of the Department's Director of Temporary Release, this report examines the return rate of a sample of participants in the Rochester Correctional Facility work release program.

July 1983

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF ROCHESTER WORK RELEASE PARTICIPANTS

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Purpose of Research. At the request of the Department's Director of Temporary Release, this research project was designed to generate statistical data pertinent to the basic question "Does satisfactory participation in a work release program reduce the participant's likelihood of return to the Department's custody following release?"
2. Research Design. To generate a sample of similar cases, this survey selected all work release participants leaving the Rochester Correctional Facility from 1979 to 1982. This sample was composed of 291 satisfactory program participants paroled from the facility and 85 unsatisfactory participants transferred to other facilities during this time period.
3. Follow-Up Procedure. Of the 85 unsatisfactory participants, 74 had been released as of December 31, 1982. These 74 unsatisfactory program participants and the 291 satisfactory program participants were tracked from their varying release dates to June 30, 1983.
4. Comparison of Return Rates of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Program Participants. The return rate of the 291 satisfactory program participants (16% or 46 cases) was considerably less than the return rate of the 74 unsatisfactory program participants (28% or 21 cases).

This finding is particularly notable since the unsatisfactory group participants as a group were in the community for shorter periods than the satisfactory program participants.

5. Comparison of Return Rate of Satisfactory Program Participants and Overall Return Rate of Department Releases. Using the average return rate of all Department releases, a projected return rate of 23.7% was computed for the sample of satisfactory program participants based on the number of months since their release. The actual return rate (16%) of this group was thus notably less than the projected rate (23.7%) based on the Department's overall return rate.
6. Conclusion. The findings of preliminary research suggest that satisfactory participation in the Rochester Correctional Facility work release program is positively related to successful post-release adjustment as measured by return to the Department.

FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF ROCHESTER WORK RELEASE PARTICIPANTS

The present report examines the return rate of a sample of offenders involved in the work release program at the Rochester Correctional Facility.

Background. The New York State Department of Correctional Services currently operates a temporary release program for male and female offenders at a number of its facilities. Under this program, selected offenders are permitted to leave facilities for specified purposes.

A major component of the Department's overall temporary release program is the work release program. Under the work release program, eligible inmates are allowed to leave the correctional facility for a specified number of hours each day for employment purposes. At the end of the individual's work day, the inmate returns to the correctional facility.

The basic objective of the work release program is to assist the offender in subsequently making a successful adjustment following his/her release. It is argued that work release programs assist offenders in avoiding subsequent recidivism in a number of ways. Work release programs are seen to aid offenders by enabling them to secure employment situations that will hopefully continue after their release, to gain valuable job experience and skills, and to earn funds that can be utilized upon release.

Purpose of Present Research. In recent years, questions have been increasingly raised on the impact of program services, including work release programs, on the subsequent recidivism rate of program participants.

At the request of the Department's Director of Temporary Release, the present research was initiated to generate statistical data pertinent to this basic question: "Does satisfactory participation in a work release program enhance an offender's likelihood of making a successful adjustment in the community upon release?" In other words, the question might be phrased: "Does satisfactory participation in a work release program reduce the participant's likelihood of returning to the Department's custody?"

Research Methodology. This research project was designed as a preliminary effort in this broad area of assessing the impact of work release on the return rate of participants. This initial research project in this area focuses on a narrowly defined sample of work release participants to insure reasonable homogeneity among the sample population.

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This approach was chosen to permit a comparison of the return rates of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants.

The primary objective of this survey is thus to assess whether or not the satisfactory work release participants in the sample have a lower return rate than the unsatisfactory program participants.

This survey also includes a preliminary comparison of the return rate of the satisfactory program participants and the overall return rate of Department releases.

Sample Selection. To generate this sample of similar cases, this survey selected all work release participants leaving the Rochester Correctional Facility from 1979 to 1982.

This sample was restricted to work release participants (rather than the overall temporary release program) to insure the individuals had all participated in the same type of temporary release program.

The sampling period of 1979 through 1982 was selected to insure all of the sample cases were covered by the same State statute and Department regulations, which underwent major revision in 1978. The cut-off date of December 31, 1982 was selected to permit a follow-up period of at least 6 months.

The Rochester Correctional Facility was chosen as the site for this initial study due to the stability of its work release population during the entire sampling period. From 1979 through 1982, the Rochester Correctional Facility provided work release opportunities to male offenders scheduled for release to the Western New York area, primarily Monroe County and the six surrounding counties.

Sampling Procedure. In line with the research design, the Department's Director of Temporary Release asked the Director of the Rochester Correctional Facility to provide the names, DIN and NYSID numbers of all work release program participants leaving the Rochester Correctional Facility from 1979 through 1982.

This listing was divided into two main sections. One section listed by year all of the satisfactory program participants who were paroled from Rochester Correctional Facility. The other main section listed by year all of the unsatisfactory program participants who were transferred from Rochester to other facilities due to their unsatisfactory performance while on work release.

The Rochester Correctional Facility also provided data on the nine offenders who absconded from the work release program during this time period. All of these individuals were returned to

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The Rochester Correctional Facility also provided data on the nine offenders who absconded from the work release program during this time period. All of these individuals were returned to

Department custody. Since these individuals were not released to the community, these cases are excluded from this study in accordance with the Department's regular practice in follow-up research. To include these offenders in the unsatisfactory participation group would unduly bias the survey's findings.

Comparability of Samples of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Program Participants. Prior to reviewing the return rates of these two samples of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants, the comparability of these two samples should be highlighted.

All offenders in these two groups had previously been approved for transfer to Rochester Correctional Facility in accordance with the facility's eligibility criteria and the Department's Temporary Release point system. This approval process involves consideration of numerous factors, such as prior criminal record, conviction crime and institutional behavior.

As such, these two samples may be viewed as representing similar groups of program participants, whose primary difference is their performance in the work release program.

Work Release Participants Leaving Rochester Correctional Facility: 1979 - 1982. The Rochester Correctional Facility reported the following number of work release participants leaving the facility from 1979 to 1982 by parole or transfer.

| Year Left<br>Facility | Satisfactory<br>Participants<br>Paroled | Unsatisfactory<br>Participants<br>Transferred to<br>Other Facilities | Total     |
|-----------------------|---|--|-----------|
| 1979                  | 67                                      | 22   | 89        |
| 1980                  | 84                                      | 25   | 109       |
| 1981                  | 70                                      | 21   | 91        |
| 1982                  | <u>70</u>                               | <u>17</u>  | <u>87</u> |
| TOTAL                 | 291                                     | 85   | 376       |

Follow-Up Procedure. The Department MIS file was then utilized to determine (a) the number of the unsatisfactory program participants who were subsequently released from other facilities, and (b) the number of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants returned to Department custody.

As noted previously, a cut-off date of December 31, 1982 was utilized for releases to permit at least a six month follow-up period. As such, unsatisfactory program participants who were not released until 1983 were excluded from this survey.

Return Rate of Surveyed Program Participants. The table on the next page indicates the number of work release participants in each category who were returned to Department custody for a parole violation or with a new sentence as of June 1983.

| Year Left<br>Rochester | Satisfactory<br>Participants<br>Paroled |                            | Unsatisfactory<br>Participants<br>Transferred To<br>Other Facilities |                            |  |
|------------------------|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|
|                        | Released                                | Returned<br>Number Percent | Released   | Returned<br>Number Percent |  |
| 1979                   | 67                                      | 15 22%                     | 22   | 8 36%                      |  |
| 1980                   | 84                                      | 15 18%                     | 23   | 10 43%                     |  |
| 1981                   | 70                                      | 11 16%                     | 20   | 2 10%                      |  |
| 1982                   | <u>70</u>                               | <u>5 7%</u>                | <u>9</u>   | <u>1 11%</u>               |  |
| TOTAL                  | 291                                     | 46 16%                     | 74*  | 21 28%                     |  |

As indicated by the above table, 16% (46) of the 291 satisfactory program participants paroled from Rochester Correctional Facility had been returned to Department custody as of June 30, 1983.

Of the 74 unsatisfactory program participants who were transferred to other facilities and subsequently released, 28% (21) had been returned to Department custody.

As illustrated by this table, the return rate of the satisfactory program participants was notably less (16%) than the return rate of the unsatisfactory program participants (28%).

Comparison Based on Release Date. In reviewing the above comparison, it should be noted that a number of the unsatisfactory program participants were not released in the year during which they were transferred from Rochester Correctional Facility. For example, 10 of the unsatisfactory participants transferred from Rochester in 1981 were not released until 1982. As such, the unsatisfactory participants as a group were in the community for shorter periods than the satisfactory participants. Their "periods at risk" during which they could have been returned to the Department were thus typically considerably less. Despite this bias in favor of the unsatisfactory program participants, their return rate was notably higher.

\*Of the 85 unsatisfactory program participants transferred to other facilities, 11 have not been released as of December 31, 1982.



Comparison to Overall Return Rate of Department Releases.  
For comparison purposes, the average return rate of Department releases can also be used.

The average return rate of Department releases can be utilized to compute a projected return rate among the satisfactory program participant group.

This approach permits a comparison of the return rate of the satisfactory participant group and the Department's overall return rate.

Development of Projected Return Rate for Comparison Purposes.  
The Bureau of Records and Statistical Analysis tracks all Department releases for a five year period to generate return rate statistics. Using the average return rate of all Department releases from 1972 through 1976, a projected return rate can be developed for the satisfactory program participants based on the number of months since their release.

| <u>Release Year</u> | <u>Months Since Release</u><br>(As of 6/30/83) | <u>Projected Percent Returned</u> |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1982                | 7-18 Months                                    | 10.9%                             |
| 1981                | 19-30 Months                                   | 22.6%                             |
| 1980                | 31-42 Months                                   | 28.9%                             |
| 1979                | 43-54 Months                                   | 32.7%                             |

Comparison of Actual and Projected Return Rates. These projected return rates can then be applied to the number of satisfactory program participants released in each of these years to generate the number of expected returns.

The table on the next page compares the actual return rate of the satisfactory program participants to the projected rate based on the Department's overall release population.

| <u>Release Year</u> | <u>Number Released</u> | <u>Projected Return Rate</u> |                | <u>Actual Return Rate</u> |                |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------------|
|                     |                        | <u>Number</u>                | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Number</u>             | <u>Percent</u> |
| 1982                | 67                     | 7                            | 10.9%          | 5                         | 7%             |
| 1981                | 84                     | 19                           | 22.6%          | 11                        | 16%            |
| 1980                | 70                     | 20                           | 28.9%          | 15                        | 18%            |
| 1979                | 70                     | 23                           | 32.7%          | 15                        | 23%            |
| TOTAL               | 291                    | 69                           | 23.7%          | 46                        | 16%            |

Overall, it might be projected that 23.7% (69) of the 291 satisfactory program participants would have returned to Department custody as of the end of June 1983.

The actual return rate (16%) of the satisfactory program participants was considerably lower.

Conclusion. In brief terms, the major findings of this survey may be summarized in the following fashion:

1. The sample of satisfactory work release participants at the Rochester Correctional Facility returned to the Department's custody at a notably lower rate (16%) than the comparison group of unsatisfactory program participants (28%).

This finding is particularly noteworthy in view of the similarity of these two samples. The individuals in these two samples had all previously been approved for transfer to Rochester Correctional Facility in accordance with the facility's eligibility criteria and the Department's temporary release point system.

2. The sample of satisfactory work release participants also had a lower return rate than a projected rate based on the Department's overall release population (23.7%).

In reviewing these findings, it should be noted that there may be a selection bias caused by the Department's screening procedures in approving inmates for the work release program. It might thus be argued that inmates selected for work release are better risks and should be expected to have a lower return rate than the Department's overall release population.

However, it should also be noted that this possible selection bias would not apply to the comparison of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants. All of these cases were approved for the Rochester work release program under the same procedures. As such, these samples may be more appropriately compared with respect to the impact of the program.

As noted in the introduction to this report, the specific question addressed by this program was "Does satisfactory participation in a work release program reduce the participant's likelihood of returning to the Department's custody?"

With respect to this question, this survey's findings may be seen to suggest that satisfactory participation in the Rochester Correctional Facility work release program is positively related to successful post-release adjustment as measured by return to the Department.

The preliminary nature of this research cautions against any definitive conclusions concerning this program and certainly against any generalizations to the Department's overall work release or temporary release programs. However, these positive findings do clearly suggest this positive impact and the value of further research on this Rochester Correctional Facility cohort as well as research with other samples of work release participants.

**END**