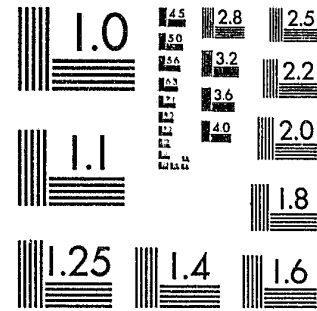


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FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF FISHKILL WORK RELEASE PARTICIPANTS

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

April 1984

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FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF FISHKILL 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. Site Selection. The initial study in this research series examined the return rate of satisfactory participants in the Rochester Work Release Program. The Rochester Work Release Program involves most of the inmates at this relatively small community based facility who are scheduled for release to the Rochester and western New York area.  
  
The Fishkill Correctional Facility program was selected for the second study in this series to provide a geographic and program contrast to the Rochester Correctional Facility program. The Fishkill work program involves only a small percentage of the inmates at this major Department facility. The participants in the Fishkill program are released to the lower Hudson Valley counties.
3. Research Design. This survey selected all 179 satisfactory work release participants released from Fishkill Correctional Facility from 1979 to 1982.
4. Follow-Up Procedure. These 179 satisfactory program participants were tracked from their varying release dates to December 31, 1983.
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 29.6% was computed for the sample of satisfactory program participants based on the number of months since their release. The actual return rate (15.6%) of this group was thus notably less than the projected rate (29.6%) based on the Department's overall return rate.
6. Conclusion. The findings of this research and the prior study of the Rochester program suggest that satisfactory participation in these two work release programs is positively related to successful post-release adjustment (as measured by return to the Department). Future studies of other facility work release programs are planned to explore the generality of these findings to other program sites.

FOLLOW-UP STUDY  
SAMPLE OF FISHKILL WORK RELEASE PARTICIPANTS

The present report examines the return rate of a sample of offenders involved in the work release program at the Fishkill 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 to assess the impact of work release on the return rate of participants from different facilities with work release programs.

A series of facility based reports was planned to ensure reasonable homogeneity within each of the successive samples drawn from different facilities.

Each report in the series is being prepared with the same basic research approach.

The principal difference in the successive reports will be the programmatic differences in the programs at the various facilities.

Site Selection. The first report in this planned series focused on the Rochester Correctional Facility Work Release Program.<sup>1</sup>

The Rochester Work Release Program was chosen as the site for the initial study due to the stability of its work release program population during the entire sampling period. From 1979 through 1982, this community based facility provided opportunities to male offenders scheduled for release to the western New York area, primarily Monroe County, and the six surrounding counties. A significant number of the program participants continued their work release jobs upon release.

The Fishkill Work Release Program was selected to provide a geographic and program contrast to the Rochester program. The Fishkill Work Release Program is part of a major facility operation (1,500 inmates) while the Rochester program involves a self-contained facility devoted solely to work release. As noted above, the Rochester program covers the Rochester/Western New York area. In contrast, the Fishkill program provides work release opportunities to inmates scheduled for release to the lower Hudson Valley counties of Dutchess, Orange, Delaware, Putnam, Ulster, Sullivan, and Broome.

As such, the Fishkill Work Release Program was seen to provide a valuable contrast to the Rochester program in terms of assessing the impact of differing types of work release programs.

Sample Selection. To generate this sample of similar cases, this survey selected all work release participants leaving the Fishkill 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 12 months.

<sup>1</sup>Macdonald and Bala, Follow-Up Study of Sample of Rochester Work Release Participants, New York State Department of Correctional Services, April 1983.

Sampling Procedure. In line with the research design, the Department's Director of Temporary Release asked the Director of the Fishkill Correctional Facility to provide the names and Department identification numbers of all work release program participants leaving the Fishkill 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 Fishkill Correctional Facility. The other main section listed by year all of the unsatisfactory program participants who were removed from the program due to their unsatisfactory performance while on work release.

Work Release Participants Leaving Fishkill Correctional Facility: 1979 - 1982. The Fishkill Correctional Facility reported the following number of work release participants leaving the program from 1979 to 1982 by release or disciplinary removal.

<u>Year Left Program</u>	<u>Satisfactory Participants Paroled</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory Participants Removed for Disciplinary Reasons</u>	<u>Total</u>
1979	24	3	27
1980	52	4	56
1981	61	21	82
1982	42	14	56
Total	179	42	221

Follow-Up Procedure. The Department's computer file was then utilized to determine (a) the number of unsatisfactory program participants who were subsequently released 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 12 month follow-up period. As such, unsatisfactory program participants who were not released until 1983 were excluded from this survey.

Release Dates of Unsatisfactory Program Participants. The table below indicates how many of the total 42 unsatisfactory program participants had been released by the cut-off date of December 31, 1982.

<u>Year of Release</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory Program Participants (released as of 12/31/82)</u>
1979	-
1980	-
1981	4
1982	5
	13
Total	22

As noted on the preceding page, only 22 of these 42 unsatisfactory program participants had been released by December 31, 1982. This very small sample does not permit a valid comparison to the 179 satisfactory program participants released by December 31, 1982.

Similar to the preceding report on the Rochester program, a subsequent report will compare the return rates of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants in the Fishkill program.

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

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 1980, 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 (as of 12/31/83)</u>	<u>Projected Percent Returned</u>
1982	13 - 24 Months	23.4%
1981	25 - 36 Months	29.3%
1980	37 - 48 Months	32.9%
1979	49 - 60 Months	35.3%

For example, the program participants released in 1982 would have been in the community between 13 and 24 months as of December 31, 1982 depending on their respective release dates. Based on the Department's average return rate, it may be projected that 23.4% of these individuals released in 1982 would be returned to Department custody for a parole violation or with a new sentence by December 31, 1983.

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.

Release Year	Number Released In Year	X	Projected Return Rate	=	Projected Number Returned by 12/31/83
1982	42	X	23.4%	=	10
1981	61	X	29.3%	=	18
1980	52	X	32.9%	=	17
1979	24	X	35.3%	=	8
Total	179		29.6%		53

Overall, it might be projected that 29.6% (or 53) of the 179 satisfactory program participants would have been returned to the Department's custody as of the end of December 1983.

Comparison of Actual and Projected Return Rates. The following table compares the actual return rate of the satisfactory program participants to the projected rate based on the Department's overall release population.

As illustrated by this table, the actual return rate (15.6%) of the program participants was considerably lower than their projected return rate (29.6%).

Release Year	Number Released In Year	Projected Return Rate	Actual Return Rate
1982	42	$\frac{10}{42} = 23.4\%$	$\frac{7}{42} = 16.7\%$
1981	61	$\frac{18}{61} = 29.3\%$	$\frac{9}{61} = 14.7\%$
1980	52	$\frac{17}{52} = 32.9\%$	$\frac{10}{52} = 19.2\%$
1979	24	$\frac{8}{24} = 35.3\%$	$\frac{2}{24} = 8.3\%$
Total	179	29.6%	15.6%

Based on the Department's average return rate, it was projected that 53 of the 179 program participants would be returned to the Department's custody by December 31, 1983.

This survey found that only 28 were actually returned by this date.

Conclusion. This survey found that the sample of satisfactory work release participants had a substantially lower return rate than a projected rate based on the Department's overall release population. Based on this finding, it might be claimed that the Fishkill Work Release Program had served to reduce the recidivism rate of program participants.

In reviewing this finding, however, it may be argued that those inmates who successfully complete work release programs are more motivated and/or more capable than those who do not complete these programs and that these same factors are related to their future satisfactory adjustment on parole. As such, it could be contended that these individuals might be expected to do well on parole.

In view of this possible self-selection bias, it may then be asked how the impact of these programs (if any) can be clearly and conclusively identified. A definitive analysis of program impact would ideally require a controlled experiment in which equally motivated and competent offenders were randomly assigned to work release programs or a control group without work release programs. However, such an approach in a correctional setting raises ethical, legal and operational questions.

In light of these considerations, this research series was designed to analyze the relationship of successful work release program completion and post-release recidivism without attempting to attribute any observed differences wholly to the impact of the program. As such, the lower return rate of the sample of offenders who satisfactorily completed the Fishkill Work Release Program may be jointly attributed to both the offenders' motivation and capabilities and the impact of the program.

In conclusion, these research considerations and the sample size caution against any definitive conclusions concerning the overall impact of the Department's statewide work release program. However, the findings of this report and the preceding report on the Rochester program do suggest that successful participation in these two work release programs is positively related to satisfactory post release adjustment as measured by return statistics. These findings highlight the value of continued research in this area with respect to the work release programs of other facilities.

**END**