

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PA

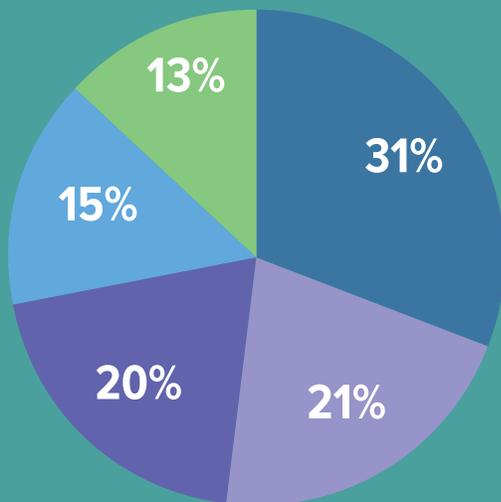
# EBP SPOTLIGHT

## Using Data to Determine Policy

In 2016, the adult probation department in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, implemented an array of research-supported practices, including the use of fourth-generation risk/needs assessments, case planning policies and procedures, motivational interviewing, and evidence-based risk reduction programming. Collecting data was a key part of the effort: measuring processes and outcomes would help the department evaluate the impact of these changes so it could target its resources in the most effective way possible.

The department partnered with the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) to analyze recidivism rates of 4,887 people over a 3-year period starting in 2016/2017. Recidivism is defined in the study as rearrest for felony, misdemeanor, or summary offense. Researchers examined variables such as gender, race, age, lead offense, time to rearrest, and type of new arrest. Age was determined to be an important factor in recidivism rates.

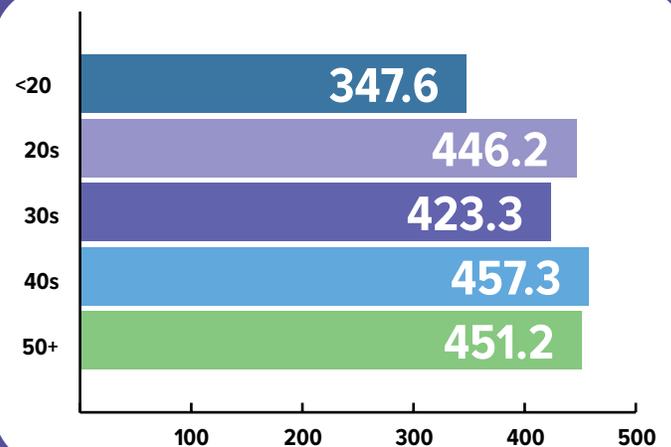
### REARREST BY AGE GROUP



People under 20 years of age were most likely to recidivate, and slightly over half of all rearrests were among people between 18 and 29.



### DAYS TO REARREST BY AGE

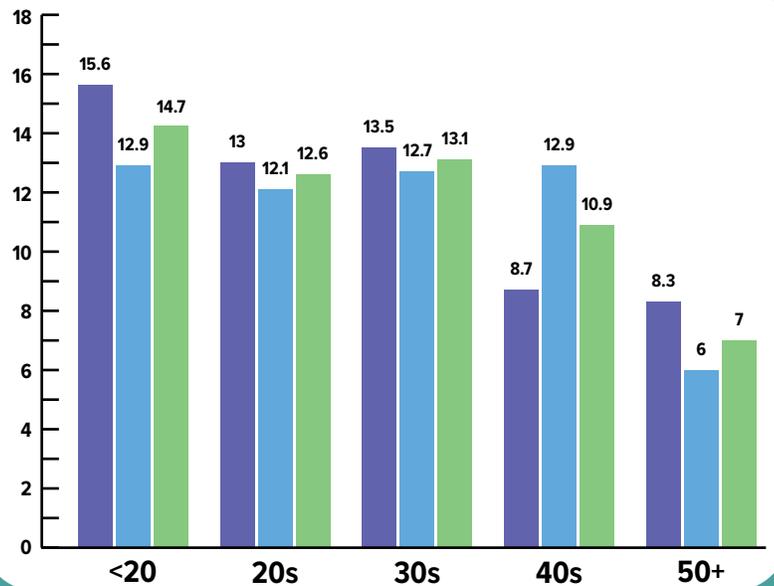


Researchers measured the average numbers of days between placement on supervision and rearrest. People under 20 years of age had the shortest average time period to rearrest.

## OFFENSE SEVERITY INCREASE UPON REARREST

In examining offense severity upon rearrest, researchers found age to be a significant factor. Those under 20 were most likely to be rearrested for a more serious offense than their original offense.

- People Released from Prison
- People on Probation
- Total



## BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Due to the study's short duration, there is a need to continue evaluating the implemented evidence-based practices as they mature and are modified. More information is needed to understand their impact on recidivism outcomes. However, several benefits of the study are already evident.

Based on the apparent increased risk of recidivism for younger people, the department initiated dialogue with the Cumberland Court of Common Pleas—Juvenile Court Division, the juvenile probation department, and the Cumberland County Commissioners' Office to explore specific interventions targeted at this population. Fortunately, the under-20 age group is the smallest proportion of the study group (190 of 4,887 people, or 4% of individuals), making it easier for decision makers to develop (and fund) the necessary program enhancements. The recidivism study was also remarkably successful in helping Cumberland County identify a need to modify policy and practice for this population. In addition, the department now has a mechanism to collect recidivism rates across variables (including age groups) and to provide policymakers with invaluable data that allows them to target limited resources to populations with high needs.

## MOVING FORWARD

In continued partnership with IUP and PCCD researchers, Cumberland County is moving forward with the next phases of its supervision evaluation. This will include validating the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS), the risk/needs assessment instrument administered to people placed on supervision in Cumberland County, to understand if assessed risk of recidivism is accurately linked to recidivism outcomes. Additionally, the 2016 and 2017 cohorts will be reanalyzed to ascertain longer-term recidivism measures (e.g., 5 years), and sequential supervision cohorts (e.g., those beginning in 2018 and 2019) will be examined. This serves the dual purpose of extending the analysis period (studying 5-year recidivism rates for earlier cohorts) and expanding the analysis in scope (studying 3-year recidivism rates for an increased number of people). Furthermore, the addition of sequential supervision cohorts allows for trend analysis to understand the trajectory of recidivism year over year among cohort groups.

Anyone interested in performing a similar study in their county can reach out to Dr. Robert Orth at the PCCD: [c-rorth@pa.gov](mailto:c-rorth@pa.gov).