

COMPLETION/NON-COMPLETION RATES FOR
RELEASES FROM DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
PRE-RELEASE CENTERS, 1975-1976

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the valuable rehabilitative potential of community resources, the Massachusetts Department of Correction has implemented an extensive network of community based correctional facilities, entitled the Community Reintegration System (CRS). The purpose of the present research was to document and analyze 1975 and 1976 CRS individual program termination data.

Several interesting findings resulted from the research. First, 817 individuals participated in and terminated from the various centers in 1976, an increase over the previous year of approximately 44%. Secondly, notwithstanding the large increase in pre-release participants, the overall CRS successful completion rate went up from 60% in 1975 to 62% in 1976. Finally, the majority of individual pre-release centers reported an increase in the number of successful terminations during the year 1976.

INTRODUCTION

The gradual reintegration of an offender into the community has been recognized as an important step towards an individual's ultimate rehabilitation. Citing the continued failure of traditional incarceration, the Massachusetts Department of Correction, with the passage of the 1972 Correctional Reform Act, implemented an extensive system of community corrections, entitled the Community Reintegration System. These community facilities were either directly operated by the Department of Correction or sub-contracted to private agencies but under the supervision of the Department of Correction. In November of 1972, two departmental community facilities began accepting residents on a pre-release basis. At the time of this writing, 14 facilities are accepting residents on a pre-release status. Five of these centers are operated directly by the Department of Correction. The remaining nine are administered by two private contracting agencies.

Since the program's inception, the number of yearly community pre-release referred placements has risen steadily from 296 clients in 1973 to 911 individuals during the year 1976.¹ It should be noted, however, that referred placements denote only those residents admitted to the various CRS facilities during a given year. It does not address the individual's eventual type of termination from the community facilities. Regarding cumulative CRS terminations, it was determined that the number of individuals released directly from CRS facilities to the streets (successful completion) during this time period has also increased. Specifically 109 or 11% of the total number of individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions (MCI) during the year 1973 were terminated successfully from the CRS facilities. By the year 1976, 39% or 365 of the total departmental releases were discharged or paroled directly from pre-release centers.²

Despite this increase in CRS referrals and the increase in successful terminations, the community programs are still plagued with a relatively high program non-completion rate.

The CRS non-completion category is made up of those individuals who are chosen for and enter into the pre-release programs but for various reasons do not complete the program. In lieu of direct release from the pre-release centers the non-completers are instead returned to their original sending institution where they usually serve out the remainder of their sentence. This fact is particularly disturbing in that individuals in the non-completion sample are deprived of the valuable rehabilitative experience offered by pre-release participation. Research has consistently documented that successful pre-release program participation is directly

associated with low recidivism rates.³

Anticipating a continued increase in pre-release placements, analysis has begun in an attempt to differentiate risk potentials, among prospective CRS candidates. Using a prediction instrument referred to as "Salient Factor Score", an attempt will be made to predict potential CRS program failures.

Analysis of this nature is useful for the following reason. If, in advance, program administrators could predict an individual's pre-release program success/failure probability, the pre-release selection process would obviously be greatly enhanced.

Preliminary data collection for the proposed "Salient Factor Score" analysis revealed several findings regarding 1975 and 1976 CRS program termination data. This report, then, will be limited to a documentation and discussion of these findings. The actual work on Salient Factor Score will be dealt with in a future study. For the purpose of this study two samples were drawn:

- (1) all individuals released from CRS facilities in 1975: and
- (2) all individuals released from CRS facilities in 1976.

A total of 569 individuals were terminated from the various pre-release centers collectively during the year 1975. During the year 1976 a total of 817 residents were released from the CRS facilities.

Each of the samples were subdivided into three distinct termination type categories: (a) successful terminations, (b) unsuccessful terminations, and (c) other terminations.

A successful program completion was defined as a resident who successfully completed his or her stay at a pre-release facility and was released to the streets either by permit of the parole board or a certificate of discharge or as an individual who transferred out of a particular CRS facility to another facility of the same or lower security. A program non-completion was defined as any resident who did not complete his or her stay at a CRS facility but was instead returned to his or her sending institution. Finally, the category "other" included those individuals transferred from a pre-release facility to an institution of higher security at their own request or for medical reasons.

Termination data for each CRS sample was gathered from individual pre-release termination packages and community facility admission and release forms maintained at the Central Office.

FINDINGS

During the years 1975 and 1976 a marked increase in the number of individuals terminating from CRS facilities was noted. Specifically, 569 residents terminated from the various community correctional centers during the year 1975, while 817 individuals terminated in 1976, an increase of almost 44%.

Individual termination data for the successive year CRS populations is presented below in Table I.

TABLE I

1975 & 1976 COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION SYSTEM PROGRAM TERMINATION DATA:
TYPE OF TERMINATION

	<u>1975</u>		<u>1976</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Paroled	246	(43)	335	(41)
Discharged	18	(3)	42	(5)
Movement to same or lower security	79	(14)	129	(16)
New Arrest	4	(1)	10	(1)
Violation of House Rules	0	(0)	9	(1)
Inability to Adjust	0	(0)	5	(1)
Violation of Departmental Rules	0	(0)	2	(1)
Return to Institution of Higher Security	138	(24)	189	(23)
Transferred for Medical Reasons	0	(0)	7	(1)
Escape While on Work Release	1	(1)	1	(1)
Other Escape	80	(14)	87	(11)
Transferred at Own Request	0	(0)	1	(1)
TOTAL	569	(100)	817	(100)

As the data indicates in Table I, the terminating category "paroled", contains the largest number of individuals in each CRS year population. The second largest individual category was "return to an institution of higher security", followed by the category "Other Escape".⁴ It should be noted that the latter two categories denote unsuccessful CRS program terminations.

It might be expected that a substantial increase in CRS program terminations would be reflected either positively or

negatively in terms of pre-release completion rates.

Termination data for the successive year CRS populations is presented below in Table II.

TABLE II
COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION SYSTEM TERMINATION FOR 1975 & 1976

	<u>1975</u>		<u>1976</u>		<u>PERCENTAGE INCREASE</u>
	N	%	N	%	
Successful Termination	343	(60)	506	(62)	+48%
Unsuccessful Termination	223	(39)	303	(37)	+36%
Other Termination	3	(1)	8	(1)	+167%
TOTAL	569	(100)	817	(100)	+44%

During the year 1975, a total of 343 individuals (60% of the total CRS sample) successfully terminated from the various pre-release facilities. A slight increase was noted for the year 1976. That is, 506 individuals (62% of the sample) successfully completed their stay at the community centers. Notwithstanding the relatively large increase in the actual number of individuals terminated from the CRS facilities in 1976, the difference in terms of successful completions for the two years was not statistically significant.⁵ This is an important observation in that 44% more clients were released from pre-release centers in 1976 than in 1975. Despite this substantial increase in population, the CRS program non-completion rate remained relatively stable for the second consecutive year. The pre-release successful completion rate went up two percentage points in 1976.

Of the 14 CRS facilities, Shirley Pre-Release, Boston State Pre-Release, the two largest centers, terminated the greatest number of individuals during the consecutive year populations. A breakdown of termination data by facility for 1975 and 1976 is documented below in Table III.

TABLE III

TOTAL RELEASES FROM PRE-RELEASE FACILITIES
FOR THE YEARS 1975 AND 1976

	1975		1976	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION FACILITIES</u>				
Shirley Pre-Release	189	(33)	293	(36)
Boston State Pre-Release	148	(26)	115	(14)
Norfolk Pre-Release	32	(6)	26	(3)
Lancaster Pre-Release	-*	-	71	(9)
South Middlesex Pre-Release	-*	-	16	(2)
<u>CONTRACTED FACILITIES</u>				
Brooke House	46	(8)	56	(7)
Coolidge House	39	(7)	33	(4)
T.H.P.	11	(2)	7	(1)
699 House	36	(6)	65	(8)
577 House	12	(2)	57	(7)
METAC	-*	-	43	(5)
Charlotte House	13	(2)	18	(2)
BOSP	3	(1)	9	(1)
RMSC	40	(7)	8	(1)
TOTAL	569	(100)	817	(100)

* Lancaster Pre-Release, South Middlesex Pre-Release and METAC were not in operation during the year 1975.

As can be noted in Table III, Shirley Pre-Release, the largest of the community facilities, terminated the greatest number of individuals during the two year period. Boston State Pre-Release, the second largest center, followed in terminations despite a decline in 1976.

Significant increases in community terminations were recorded for Shirley Pre-Release, 699 House and 577 House, of which the latter two are contracted pre-release facilities.

During the year 1976, three additional community facilities began accepting residents on a pre-release basis. Two of these facilities, Lancaster and South Middlesex Pre-Release, were directly administered by the Department of Correction. METAC, the third facility, was sub-contracted to Massachusetts Halfway Houses, Inc., a private organization.

When individual pre-release facilities are sub-divided according to the three distinct types of terminating categories the following data results:

TABLE IV

1975 PRE-RELEASE TERMINATION TYPE BY FACILITY

FACILITY	SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION		UNSUCCESSFUL COMPLETION		OTHER		TOTAL	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Shirley Pre Release	111	59%	76	40%	2	1%	189	100%
Boston State Pre Release	74	50%	74	50%	0	0%	148	100%
Norfolk Pre Release	14	44%	18	56%	0	0%	32	100%
Brooke House	36	78%	10	22%	0	0%	46	100%
Coolidge House	30	77%	8	21%	1	3%	39	100%
T.H.P.	7	64%	4	36%	0	0%	11	100%
699 House	23	64%	13	36%	0	0%	36	100%
577 House	8	67%	4	33%	0	0%	12	100%
BOSP	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3	100%
Charlotte House	9	69%	4	31%	0	0%	13	100%
RMSC	26	65%	14	35%	0	0%	40	100%
TOTAL	341	60%	225	39%	3	1%	569	100%

TABLE V

1976 PRE-RELEASE TERMINATION TYPE BY FACILITY

<u>FACILITY</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION</u>		<u>UNSUCCESSFUL COMPLETION</u>		<u>OTHER</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Shirley Pre Release	163	56%	128	44%	2	1%	293	100%
Boston State P.R.	76	66%	38	33%	1	1%	115	100%
Norfolk Pre Release	16	62%	10	38%	0	0%	26	100%
Lancaster Pre Release	37	52%	32	45%	2	3%	71	100%
South Middlesex P.R.	14	88%	1	6%	1	6%	16	100%
Brooke House	38	68%	18	32%	0	0%	56	100%
Coolidge House	23	70%	9	27%	1	3%	33	100%
T.H.P.	6	86%	1	14%	0	0%	7	100%
699 House	44	68%	21	32%	0	0%	65	100%
577 House	41	72%	16	28%	0	0%	57	100%
METAC	27	63%	16	37%	0	0%	43	100%
Charlotte House	13	72%	5	28%	0	0%	18	100%
BOSP	4	44%	5	56%	0	0%	9	100%
RMSC	5	63%	3	38%	0	0%	8	100%
TOTAL	507	62%	303	37%	7	1%	817	100%

Of the eleven pre-release facilities that existed in 1975, eight centers recorded an increase in the proportion of successful terminations during the year 1976. As pointed out earlier in this report, this increase in the proportion of successful terminations occurred even though significantly more people were selected for pre-release participation in 1976.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to document and analyze 1975 and 1976 CRS termination data. In an attempt to discern any noteworthy differences between the consecutive year CRS termination samples, data was presented on the following: individual CRS participants' reason for termination, an index of completion/non-completion, terminating pre-release facility, and individual termination type by facility.

Several interesting findings resulted from this effort. First, during the years 1975 and 1976, a significant increase in the number of individuals terminating from pre-release centers was noted. Specifically, 817 individuals participated in and terminated from the various centers in 1976, an increase over the previous year of approximately 44%.

Secondly, notwithstanding the large increase in pre-release participants, the overall CRS successful completion rate went up from 60% in 1975 to 62% in 1976. The difference in terms of successful completions for the two years, however, was not found to be statistically significant. This is a meaningful observation, in that 44% more clients were released from the community centers in 1976, without a reduction in the successful completion rate.

Finally, the majority of individual pre-release centers reported an increase in the number of successful terminations during the year 1976. Specifically, eight of the eleven facilities that existed in 1975 exhibited this trend in increased successful terminations during the following year.

Ultimately the reintegration of the offender into community life is a primary concern of the Department of Correction. The failure of traditional incarceration to rehabilitate has led the department to establish a network of community based correctional facilities. The effectiveness of these pre-release centers, in terms of low recidivism rates has been consistently documented by the department.

The data presented in this report provides further evidence that community corrections offers a viable alternative to traditional forms of incarceration. That is, the expanded opportunities allowed by increased use of the CRS model has not led to an increased non-completion rate.

FOOTNOTES

1. Kuekan, Gail, The Movement of Population in the Massachusetts Department of Correction During 1973, and Its Effect on the Size of the Institutional Populations, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 77, April, 1974.

Metzler, Charles, Population Movements in the Massachusetts Department of Correction During 1976, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 143, October, 1977
2. I bid.
3. LeClair, Daniel P., An Analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Residents Released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During the Year 1974, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 136, September, 1977
4. Return to Higher Custody Rates Documented in this report were based on the total pre-release populations for the years 1975 and 1976. Additional methods of calculating institutional return rates have been derived on monthly base rate populations. For this reason departmental return to higher custody rates will vary depending on the calculation method utilized.
5. In terms of statistical significance, this difference is not statistically significant. $\chi^2=0.39$, $p > .05$, ldf.



END