



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Justice Programs

Presented by
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Collecting and Processing Multi-State Criminal History Data to Measure Recidivism

“Using Criminal History Records for Research and Analysis” Workshop
National Forum on Criminal Justice
Long Beach, California
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BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS

Presentation Overview

- BJS's methods to convert state and federal criminal history records into national recidivism databases.
- Assessing jurisdiction-level variations in the content of criminal history data used to measure national-level recidivism.
- Findings from the most recent BJS recidivism studies.

BJS Criminal History Record Collection Process

- In 2008, BJS entered into a data sharing agreement with the FBI to directly access criminal history records through the Interstate Identification Index (III) via Nlets for data analysis purposes.
- The FBI's III is an automated pointer system that allows authorized agencies to determine whether any state repository has criminal history records on an individual.
- Nlets is a computer-based system that links together state, local and federal criminal justice agencies for the purpose of information exchange.

Criminal History Parser Programs

BJS partnered with Nlets to develop -

- A secure, automated system to receive multi-state criminal history records on samples of study cohorts.
 - States respond automatically to III record requests via the Nlets network.
- Nlets parses key data elements from criminal history records in every state.
 - Collates the multi-state records into a uniform structure and produces a relational database.
 - Leverages the standardized XML format used by some states to transmit records.

Criminal History Fields in BJS Relational Database

Arrest table

- Date of arrest and offense
- Arresting agency
- Statute number/NCIC code
- Charge description
- Charge severity
- Arrest disposition and date

Court/Sentencing table

- Court disposition date
- Court agency
- Statute number/NCIC code
- Offense description
- Type of court disposition
- Sentences (prison, fine , etc.)

Prosecution table

- Prosecution disposition date
- Prosecutor agency
- Statute number/NCIC code
- Offense description
- Prosecution action

Supervision/custody table

- Supervision date (admission, release, etc.)
- Supervision agency
- Supervision description

Examining State-Level Differences in Criminal History Data

When using multistate criminal history data for recidivism research, BJS needs to –

- Examine the differences in the content of the data it receives from the federal and state repositories.
- Understand the variations in the criminal history reporting policies and practices.
- Develop methods to compensate for these variations.

Criminal History Reporting Practices Vary Across the States

Reporting practices and content of criminal history data vary among states, such as –

- Reporting of arrest, prosecution, court, and custody events.
- Reporting of modified dispositions and sentences.
- Use of structured versus unstructured text fields.
- Record sealing and expungement.

Methods to Standardize Criminal History Data for Multi-State Recidivism Analysis

- BJS worked with the states to identify administrative records embedded in the arrest records, such as –
 - Issuance of warrant
 - Criminal registration
 - Transferring a suspect to another jurisdiction.
- BJS excludes these types of administrative records from the recidivism analysis to help provide uniformity in the data at the national level.
- Traffic violations are also excluded from analysis due to wide variations in reporting practices across jurisdictions.

Assessing Criminal History Data Completeness

To examine the completeness of the criminal history data on its study cohorts, BJS compares the information with external data sources, such as –

- State prison admissions for revocations and new sentences reported through BJS's National Corrections Reporting Program.
- Federal prison admissions for revocations and new sentences reported through BJS's Federal Justice Statistics Program.

Recidivism Measures

Measures based on criminal history data -

1. Arrest
2. Court adjudication (dismissed, acquitted, convicted)
3. Conviction
4. Incarceration sentence (prison or jail)
5. Prison sentence

Measures based on criminal history data supplemented with prison admission data from departments of corrections -

6. Return to prison for revocation or new sentence

BJS Recidivism Research

Recidivism of Prisoners Released In 30 States In 2005: Patterns From 2005 to 2010

- 77% of state prisoners arrested for a new crime within 5 years of release.
- 55% of state prisoners returned to prison within 5 years of release.

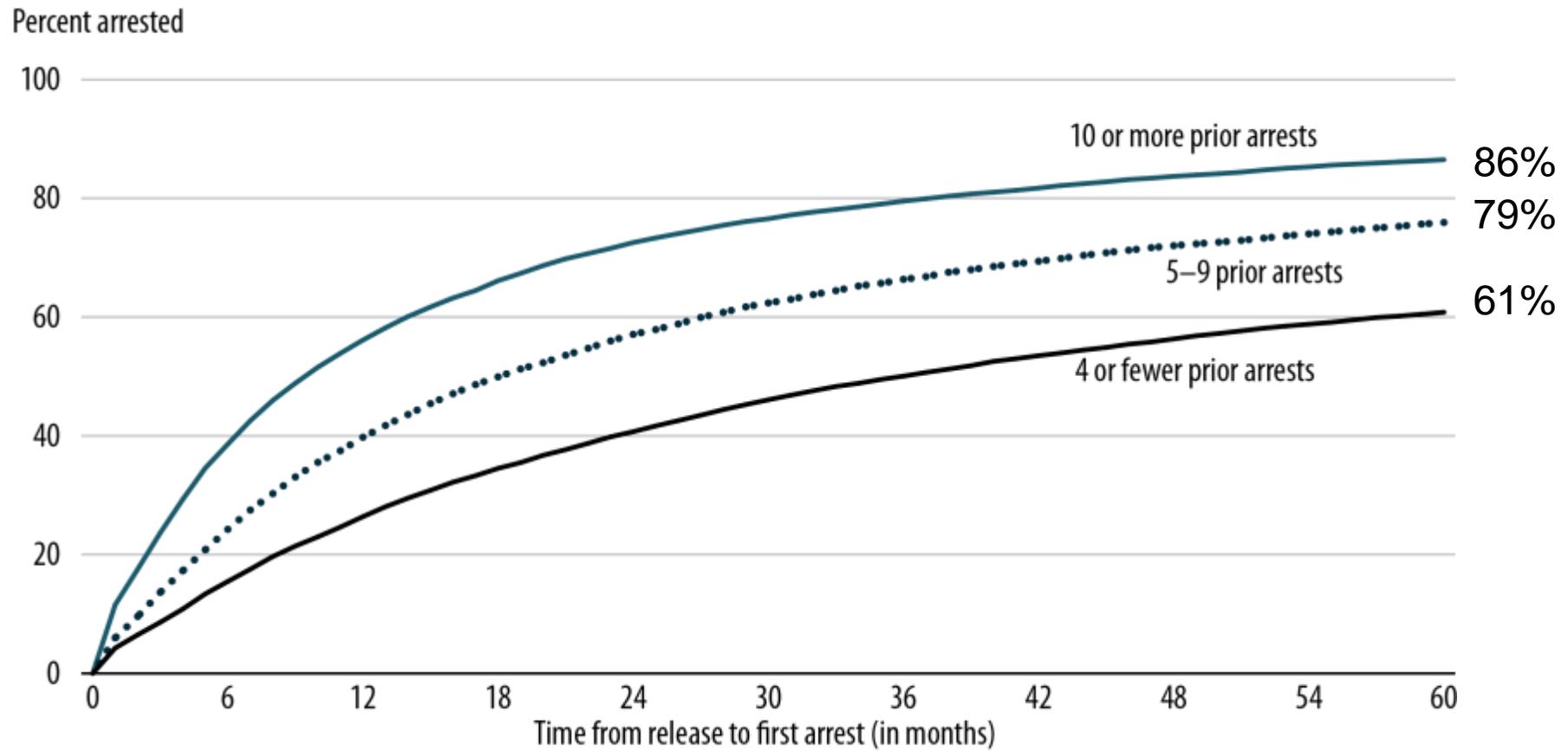
Multistate Criminal History Patterns of Prisoners Released in 30 States

- 25% of state prisoners had a prior arrest in another state.
- 11% had an out-of-state arrest within 5 years of release.
- Percentage of former prisoners with out-of-state arrests varied across states.

Recidivism of Offenders Placed on Federal Community Supervision in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010

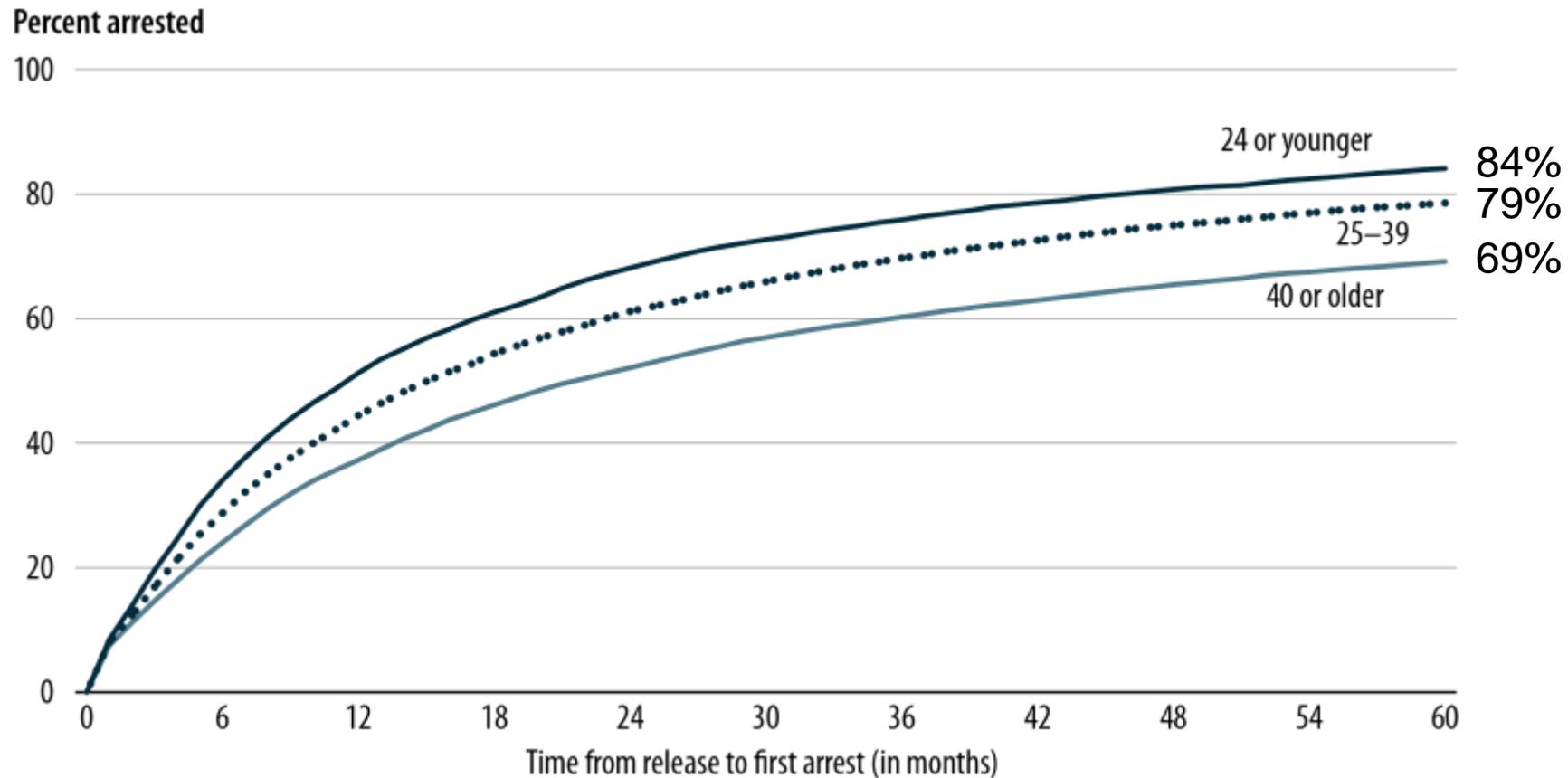
- 43% of persons on federal community supervision arrested within 5 years.
- State and local police accounted for about two-thirds of arrests made on federal offenders during the 5-year follow-up period.

Recidivism rates increased with the number of prior arrests in the prisoner's criminal history



Note: State prisoners released in 30 states in 2005 were tracked for 5 years.

Recidivism rates declined based on the prisoner's age at release



Note: State prisoners released in 30 states in 2005 were tracked for 5 years.

Multistate Criminal History Patterns of Prisoners Released in 30 States in 2005

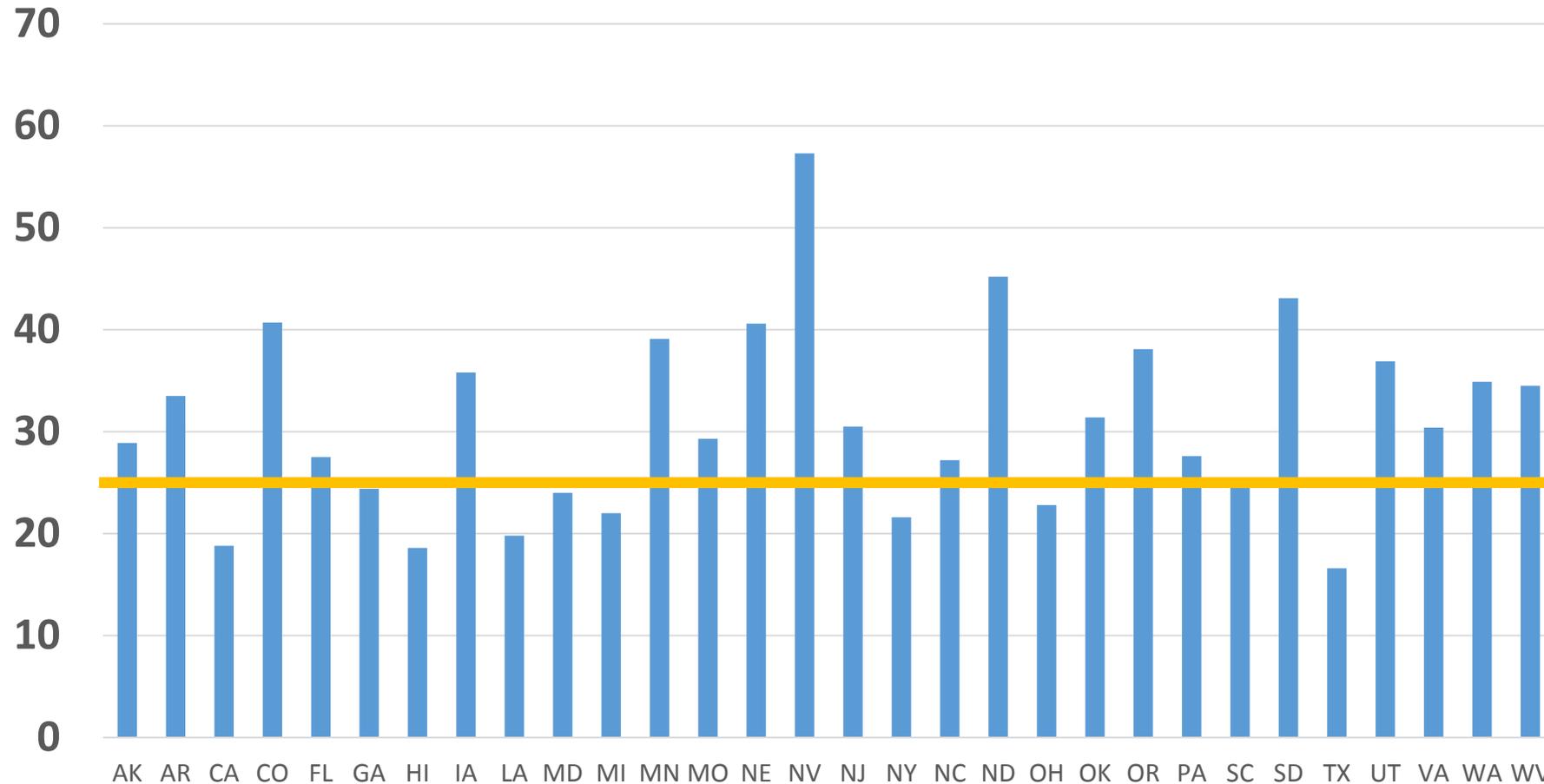
Prior to release –

- 25% arrested outside the state of release.

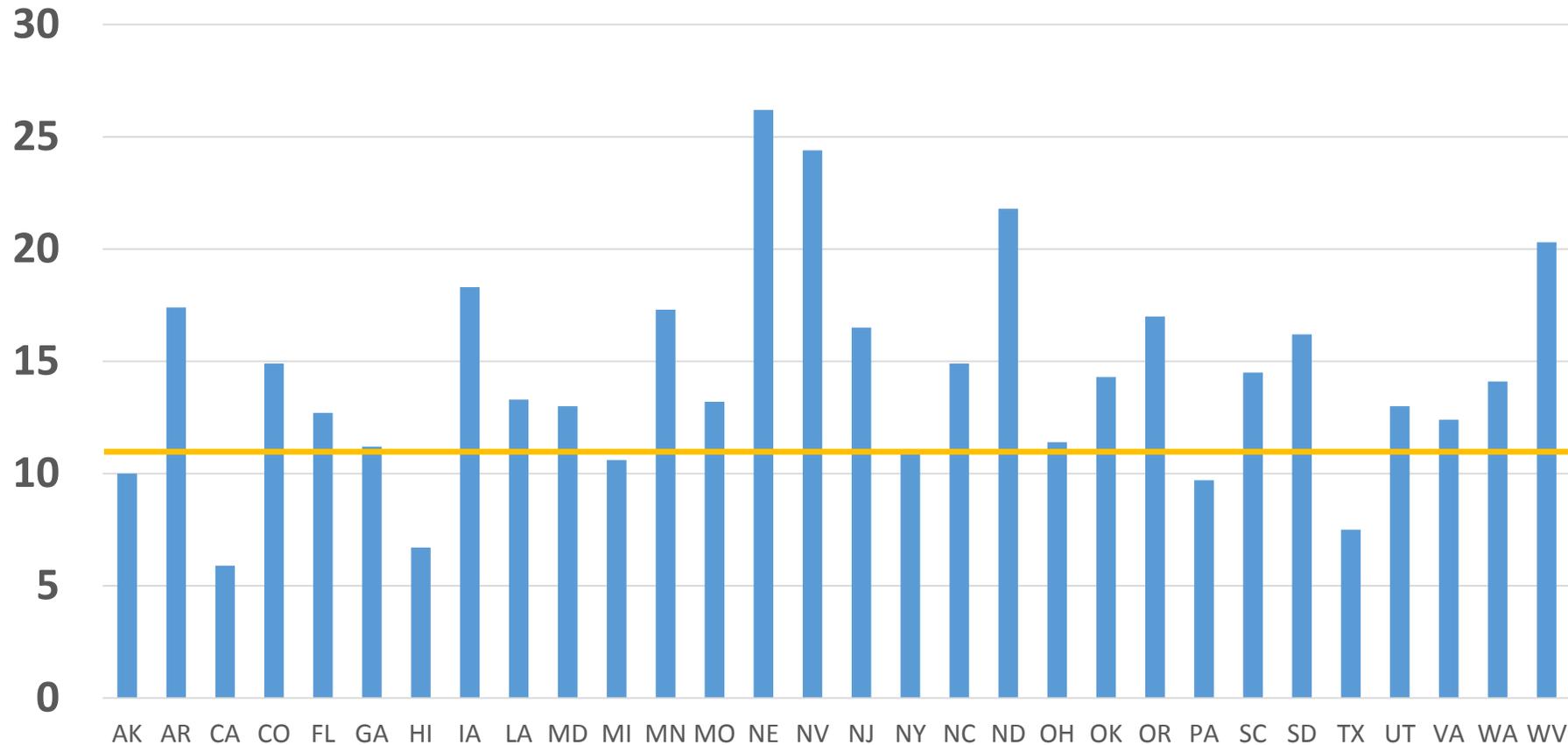
Within 5 years following release in 2005 –

- 11% arrested outside the state of release.

Percent of prisoners arrested in another state prior to release in 2005, by state of release



Percent of prisoners arrested in another state following release in 2005, by state of release



For most states, their released prisoners had arrest histories in about 50 states

States where prisoners released in 30 states in 2005 were arrested prior to and within 5 years following release

| State of release | Total number of states where released prisoners were arrested* | Most common states where prisoners were arrested outside the state of release | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------|--------------|
| Alaska | 47 | Washington | California | Oregon |
| Arkansas | 50 | Texas | Missouri | California |
| California | 48 | Nevada | Arizona | Texas |
| Colorado | 50 | California | Texas | Arizona |
| Florida | 52 | Georgia | New York | Texas |
| Georgia | 52 | Florida | South Carolina | Alabama |
| Hawaii | 44 | California | Nevada | Washington |
| Iowa | 48 | Illinois | Nebraska | Missouri |
| Louisiana | 48 | Texas | California | Florida |
| Maryland | 46 | District of Columbia | Virginia | Pennsylvania |
| Michigan | 47 | Florida | Illinois | Ohio |
| Minnesota | 47 | Wisconsin | Illinois | North Dakota |
| Missouri | 47 | Kansas | Illinois | California |
| Nebraska | 44 | Iowa | California | Texas |
| Nevada | 49 | California | Arizona | Utah |

For most states, their released prisoners had arrest histories in about 50 states (cont.)

States where prisoners released in 30 states in 2005 were arrested prior to and within 5 years following release

| State of release | Total number of states where released prisoners were arrested* | Most common states where prisoners were arrested outside the state of release | | |
|------------------|--|---|----------------------|----------------|
| New Jersey | 47 | New York | Pennsylvania | Florida |
| New York | 47 | New Jersey | Florida | Pennsylvania |
| North Carolina | 49 | South Carolina | Florida | Virginia |
| North Dakota | 42 | Minnesota | South Dakota | California |
| Ohio | 48 | Florida | Kentucky | California |
| Oklahoma | 47 | Texas | California | Kansas |
| Oregon | 50 | Washington | California | Idaho |
| Pennsylvania | 49 | New Jersey | New York | Florida |
| South Carolina | 50 | Georgia | North Carolina | Florida |
| South Dakota | 49 | Minnesota | Iowa | Nebraska |
| Texas | 50 | California | Louisiana | Florida |
| Utah | 46 | California | Nevada | Colorado |
| Virginia | 49 | Maryland | District of Columbia | North Carolina |
| Washington | 50 | Oregon | California | Idaho |
| West Virginia | 42 | Ohio | Virginia | North Carolina |

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