WASHINGTON STATE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS CENTER

Criminal Justice Research & Statistics Center

Informing a data-driven justice system

Long-Term Recidivism: Race and Sex Differences in Washington Prison Population's Return to Prison

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Contents

Abstract

Rates of recidivism have been commonly used as a key measure for public safety and in assessing the effectiveness of the criminal justice system – sentencing, jails, prisons, community supervision, treatment and reentry programming. Tracking recidivism can provide necessary information to support successful integration into the community following a prison sentence – which promotes community and public safety. Furthermore, understanding the individuals who are more likely to recidivate, and assessing demographic differences amongst the years can provide even more knowledge for supporting successful reentry.

To evaluate long-term recidivism in Washington, the Washington Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) applied for and received the 2021 State Justice Statistics (SJS) grant from Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Under this grant from BJS, the SAC first drew on publicly available data from the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) to evaluate the long-term recidivism trends of incarcerated individuals released from prison (Georgoulas-Sherry & Hernandez, 2024). To expand on the findings, this report utilizes the same cohort to further evaluate the racial and sex similarities and differences in recidivism rates.

Background

The U.S. prison populations

Across the U.S., individuals are being incarcerated to jails and prisons, as many as 11 million times each year. While over 50% of the nation's incarcerated population is housed in prisons, a little under a third (27%) are housed in local jails, and about a fifth (17%) are housed in juvenile facilities, federal facilities, territorial prisons or other detention facilities (Loeffler et al., 2022; Western et al., 2021). While these rates of incarceration showcase issues surrounding overall mass incarceration, these statistics do not highlight the consistent and pervasive changes within the prison populations.

Furthermore, in 2019, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the U.S. incarceration rate decreased to the lowest rates since 1995. However, despite this rate in decline, the U.S. still incarcerates a bigger percentage of its population compared to any other country. Most recently, 2022 has shown a 2% increase in population as compared to the 2021 rates – this increase made the 1% decline reported in 2021 non-existent, and most historically, highlighted the first increase in rates in both federal and state prison population within the last decade; it is important to note COVID-19 impacts might have significantly reduced this population (Martyn et al., 2022). According to the BJS (2023), "at yearend 2022, an estimated 32% of sentenced state and federal prisoners were black; 31% were white; 23% were Hispanic; 2% were American Indian or Alaska Native; and 1% were Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander" (5). Mass incarceration significantly impacts recidivism – which is typically defined as return to prison following a prison sentence and/or return to criminal behavior following commitment of a crime.

Recidivism within the U.S. prison released populations

The rate at which people return to prison following release is a key measure of the performance of the nation's criminal justice system. Recidivism has had different operationalizations, but in Washington, recidivism is operationalized as any offense committed after a release to the community that results in a Washington State court legal action (i.e., a conviction, deferred disposition, or diversion agreement as defined by Washington State statutes) within three years of release (i.e., the set period of time during which an individual's behaviors are monitored for recidivism events). Recidivism research is embedded in a wide range of criminal justice work and has been viewed as one of the most integral performance measures for criminal justice, as it can potentially assess future criminal activity, effectiveness of the carceral system and community supervision, or effectiveness of jail and prison programs. Recidivism is a significant variable when

considering the primary criminal justice themes of deterrence, incapacitation, criminal desistance and rehabilitation. There has been recent interest in tracking recidivism that spans a longer period than the typical 3-year mark, which is labeled long-term recidivism. Long-term recidivism is a multifaceted issue with significant implications for both the criminal justice system and the community the individuals are released into. Understanding and assessing long-term recidivism is essential in developing effective interventions, rehabilitation strategies and policy reforms.

Rates of recidivism are impacted by several factors. Research has shown that while severity of the original conviction offense and sentence length are not indicative of recidivism risk, types of crimes (although it is important to note that criminal activity is not highly specialized), individuals' age at time of release, and longer-term criminal histories have shown as indicative of recidivism risk (Goodley et al., 2022; Katsiyannis et al., 2019; Loeffler et al., 2022). In terms of crime type, a study by the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC) showed that violent offenders were more likely to recidivate, and recidivate quicker, at a higher rate than non-violent offenders. According to the USSC, "over one-fourth (28.4%) of the violent offenders who recidivated had assault as their most serious new charge, followed by public order crimes (15.6%) and drug trafficking (11.1%). Of the non-violent offenders who recidivated, public order crimes were the most common new charge (20.9%), followed by assault (17.9%) and drug trafficking (12.0%)" (Loeffler et al., 2022, 137).

However, in a more recent study, for national trends, the BJS has shown that recidivism rates have dropped considerably. In 2018, BJS found that individuals released from a U.S. state prison in 2012 were less likely to return to a U.S. prison than those individuals who were released in 2005; specifically, following the first year from prison release, about 20% of the 2012 prison cohort returned to prison as compared to their 2005 cohort who returned about 30%. And for the three-year prison return rate, which continues to be the more common definition of recidivism, the rates decreased from 50% to 39% and continued to persist through the full five-year tracking period. Specific to Washington, the DOC also reported decreased recidivism rates (i.e., a three-year period of return to prison), from 27.4% in May 2022 to 22.2% in June 2023. While the reason for this reduced rate is not fully clear, there are some factors to consider. For one, and most recently, the COVID-19 impact which caused reductions in prison populations, lower arrests rates and decreased court appearances (note: COVID-19 impacts are still being examined, both for short- and long-term impacts) (BJS, 2023). Additionally, minor and major criminal justice policy changes (i.e., reduction in penalizing technical violations) likely have impacted the reduction of recidivism rates as well as potential behavioral changes from those who have been released. However, findings are still novel, and more research is necessary to assess whether this trend is atypical or characteristic of a change in the criminal justice climate.

Demographic Differences within Incarceration and Recidivism

Race and sex can impact re-offending rates within the criminal justice system. These demographic differences—and at times, disproportionalities—can influence the criminal justice system which serves our communities and administers justice. Disproportionalities encompasses when the percent of persons of a certain race or ethnicity in a target population differs from the percentage of persons of the same group in a reference (or base) population. For example, in the criminal justice system, disproportionality occurs when the proportion of one group in the criminal justice system population (e.g., those who perpetrate an offense) is either proportionately larger (overrepresented) or smaller (underrepresented) than in the general population. There are substantial racial and sex disproportionalities in incarceration and recidivism rates.

In terms of incarceration, individuals who make up the BIPOC community are disproportionately represented in prisons and jails compared to their white counterparts (DuRose et al., 2021; Rucket & Richeson, 2021; Sawyer, 2020). Despite similar rates of criminal behavior across racial groups, people of color are significantly more likely to be incarcerated, leading to disparate impacts on minority communities (DuRose et al., 2021). The consequences of racial disparities in incarceration extend beyond individual-level impacts to broader societal repercussions. Mass incarceration disproportionately affects communities of color, contributing to

cycles of poverty, family disruption, and social marginalization (Jordan et al., 2024; Rucket & Richeson, 2021). Moreover, disparities in incarceration rates have long-term implications for political disenfranchisement, economic inequality, and public health outcomes within affected communities (DuRose et al., 2021; Jordan et al., 2024; Sawyer, 2020). Gender disparities extend into the correctional system, where women often face unique challenges compared to their male counterparts. Research has shown that women are more likely to experience sexual victimization, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to programming and resources while incarcerated (DuRose et al., 2021; Geppert, 2022). Moreover, the impact of incarceration on women's families and caregiving responsibilities is often overlooked, perpetuating cycles of intergenerational disadvantage (Geppert, 2022).

In terms of recidivism, a considerable amount of research has reported findings on racial differences in recidivism (Hong et al., 2020; Kolbeck et al., 2022; McGovern et al., 2009). Research that evaluated the impact of race on recidivism rates shows that Blacks are more likely than Whites to recidivate. A study by McGovern et al (2009) found that Blacks are more likely than Whites and Hispanics to be rearrested, reconvicted, and resentenced to prison. Blacks and Hispanics pose higher recidivism risks than do Whites. Black and Hispanic offenders are more likely than White offenders to be rearrested and resentenced to prison - showing the continued disadvantage Blacks and Hispanics face in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, in terms of sex differences, research further shows that men have higher recidivism rates compared to women (Bell et al., 2019; Bonta et al., 1995; Spieldness et al., 2009). Factors contributing to this difference include the types of crimes committed, socio-economic backgrounds, and access to support systems post-release. Males are also more likely to be more involved in violent and property crimes, which are associated with higher recidivism rates (Bell et al., 2019; Bonta et al., 1995). Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be involved in non-violent crimes such as drug offenses or property crimes of a less severe nature (Bonta et al., 1995;). Many factors can impact this such as social support, and legal and systemic factors. For example, as social support has shown to reduce recidivism - women often rely more on familial and community support, while men may have a harder time accessing supportive networks upon release (Bell et al., 2019; Spieldness et al., 2009). Furthermore, sentencing disparities and the treatment of gender-specific needs within the criminal justice system also influences recidivism rates. However, it is important to note the complexities of these findings as disparities and disproportionalities plague the criminal justice system; individuals who make up the BIPOC community and males are more likely to be arrested and sentenced leading to more opportunities for re-incarceration and recidivism. Mass incarceration and tough-on-crime policies have contributed to a system that disproportionately punishes and incarcerates individuals who make up the BIPOC community and males.

Current report

In recent years, there has been an increased bipartisan consensus that U.S.' mass incarceration is a mistake – both ethically and fiscally unsustainable. This mass incarceration emerged from the political push toward punitive actions in order to be "tough on crime." With a few decades worth of policies and reforms prioritizing the use of jails and prisons as the main way to address and fight crime, this has made the U.S. a world leader in mass incarceration. With mass incarceration comes a need to understand the implications of recidivism. As recidivism rates have been continuously used as a measure to evaluate the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, this report endeavors to explore the racial and sex similarities and differences in recidivism rates. This study will utilize a cohort of individuals who were released from WADOC custody in 2004. While most recidivism methodologies look at returns to incarceration within the three years following release, in this current report, long-term recidivism will be defined as Washington State criminal justice involvement for up to 19 years following release.

The Washington SAC applied for and received the 2021 SJS grant from BJS. Under this grant from BJS, the SAC

drew on publicly available data from WADOC to evaluate the racial and sex similarities and differences in recidivism rates.

Data Parameters and Methods

This exempt study was reviewed by the Washington State Institutional Review Board; this study does not intend to generalize any findings.

As part of the 1981 Corrections Reform Act, the Washington State Legislature transferred the administration of adult correctional institutions from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Division of Adult Corrections to the newly created WADOC. As such, WADOC manages all state-operated adult prisons and supervises individuals who live in the community and are under WADOC supervision; WADOC maintains information for people incarcerated in WADOC facilities and for people under community supervision in Washington.

Operationalizations and data parameters include:

- Demographic variables included sex, race and gender. Demographic values are limited to WADOC values (i.e., sex was limited to the binary values of "male" and "female"; race was limited to "black," "white," "Aleut," "Eskimo," "Noth American Indian," or "Asian/Pacific Islander" [note: for analysis purposes only, this report will break demographic variable to binary values: Black, Indigenous, and/or people of color (BIPOC) and non-BIPOC]). Age is operationalized as the age of the individual at the time of release in calendar year (CY) 2004. Only individuals 18 and older when they released from WADOC in CY 2004 are included in the data.
- Recidivism is operationalized as any offense committed after a release to the community during the follow-up period (i.e., a set period during which an individual's behaviors are monitored for recidivism events) that results in a Washington state prison admission. As this report endeavored to assess long-term recidivism, a 19-year long follow-up period was utilized. Typically, in Washington state, a common follow-up period is 36 months. It is important to note that time is critical in follow-up periods as criminal proceedings (e.g., legal court actions, etc.) can be long and complex.
- Recidivistic event is operationalized as the event that resulted in a Washington state prison admission; this includes any offense committed after a release to the community, during the follow-up period. It is important to note that in this report, individuals could have multiple recidivistic events within the same day, month or year as an individual can be convicted for more than one offense.
- Release cohort: A group of persons released from confinement into the community during a specific period (i.e., release from prison during a specific year). For the current report, this refers to a person released in CY 2004.
- Custody level: Per DOC 300.380 Classification and Custody Facility Plan Review, custody level and appropriate facility placement of incarcerated individuals are determined using an objective scoring tool that measures individual progress, while evaluating risks to the community, staff, other incarcerated individuals, visitors, the orderly operations of facilities and agency needs. Custody level designation is determined by the Custody Review Score. The Custody Review Score is based on current custody level, infraction behavior, program behavior, detainers and escape history. The levels include the most severe (close [i.e., more supervision, less freedom of movement, limits on property and programs]), second most severe (maximum [i.e., less supervision than close but more supervision than medium, more freedom than close but less freedom of movement than medium]), second least severe (medium [i.e., less supervision than maximum but more supervision than minimum, may participate in outside work crews, within four years to release]), and least severe (minimum [i.e., less supervision, more freedom of movement, less limits on property and programs]).

- Prior prison is operationalized as an individual who has previously been incarcerated in a prison.
- Offense is defined as the worst crime convicted and sentenced. It is important to note that there is a potential that one incarcerated individual could have been convicted and sentenced for more than one offense – in this report, only the worst offense was utilized.
- Admission region is operationalized as the region of the admission associated to the CY 2004 release. Due to potential low numbers, admission region, not county, was utilized.
    - North Central: Chelan, Douglas, Grant, Kittitas, and Okanogan counties
    - North Puget Sound: King, Snohomish and Island counties
    - Northeast: Ferry, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens and Spokane counties
    - Northwest: San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties
    - Peninsula/Coastal: Clallam, Jefferson, Gray's Harbor Kitsap and Pacific counties
    - South Central: Benton, Franklin, Klickitat, Walla Walla and Yakima counties
    - South Puget Sound: Lewis, Mason, Pierce and Thurston counties
    - Southeast: Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Whitman counties
    - Southwest: Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties

The present study utilized a sample of 8,140 individuals who were incarcerated in one of WADOC's facilities and were released in CY 2004.

Limitations

First, in terms of demographic assessment (i.e., sex, age, race), these results must be interpreted with caution due to the limitations of the data. It is important to note that any analysis of race in criminal justice data is negatively impacted by true reliability and validity, as race data can be misclassified. Additionally, any analyses of demographic disproportionality are based on comparisons of outcomes for individuals who are convicted of a criminal offense. This report's findings, as with other findings retrieved from criminal justice data, can be skewed due to the already documented disproportionate treatment in criminal justice. For example, equal dispensation of justice is a consistent concern of policymakers and the public (Kovera, 2019). The evidence of differential treatment, unequal dispensation and injustice in the justice system is significant. Additionally, demographic values are limited to WADOC values (i.e., sex was limited to the binary values of "male" and "female"; race was limited to "black," "white," "Aleut," "Eskimo," "Noth American Indian," or "Asian/Pacific Islander.").

Second, analyzing trends in recidivism can be difficult because criminal justice data are collected by different agencies and often lack a common identifier. Measuring recidivism is complex not only due to unique operationalizations utilized throughout different local, state and national agencies, but also in large part due to the timeliness of the criminal justice system. The siloed nature of Washington state's criminal justice records complicates the ability to link criminal justice data together. For example, while WADOC provided admission and release data, this data was limited to recidivistic events recorded in Washington state. If an offense occurred in a different state, this would likely not be present in the data sets used. This data might not reflect a true picture of potential crime committed by the sample.

Third, individuals incarcerated in prison represent only a small portion of the overall offending population, and as such, only felony offenses meet the statutory requirements for a prison sentence. This sample is more likely to include individuals with potentially longer prison sentences and a greater degree of severity in seriousness of crime. This means individuals who committed offenses with lesser degrees of seriousness were likely not in the sample, as these individuals would be serving out their sentence in the community or jail. As this report measures recidivism as an event that returns one to prison, this approach likely generates larger rates of more serious recidivism. Additionally, as this sample was more likely to have committed more serious offenses, individuals who returned to prison in the first few years of the study's time frame might not have been out in the community long enough to potentially recidivate. Moreover, as this report evaluated

return to prison, it does not capture any true crime trends, as not all charges result in prison convictions.

Fourth, the time frame of this sample employed for this endeavor was significantly limiting, as this report captures only individuals who were released in CY 2004. A CY 2004 sample was utilized to evaluate recidivism with a longer follow-up period in the community due to the need to assess long-term recidivism. Furthermore, this report followed the same CY 2004 cohort for 19 years, and results from this sample cannot be generalized to other released cohorts. Additionally, as the follow-up period began at the at-risk date and continued for a set period of time (note: The at-risk date begins when an individual is released to the community and consequently has the opportunity to commit a new criminal offense), the follow-up period might have been limiting for individuals who were convicted with longer sentences, and therefore, were still in prison and did not have the opportunity to recidivate. Additionally, as this data evaluated returns to prison from 2004 to 2023, there is potential that the data could have been skewed with the impact of COVID-19 with the court closures associated with the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order. This may have impacted court filing data due to court closures and impacted prison admissions due to social distancing. Furthermore, 19 years of data can also be impacted by other significant changes to criminal sentencing laws and policies (e.g., Blake Decision, law enforcement reform). This report does not reflect the true magnitude or representation of the WADOC population, and results should be interpreted cautiously. Analyses of recidivism within this report do not utilize multiple release cohorts, and therefore cannot assess year-over-year patterns of desistance during reentry into the community.

Lastly, this report does not attempt to identify causal relationships that may explain changes in trends. This report intends to provide analyses that were descriptive and non-generalizable in nature. The results are modest, and subsequently, inferences and implications are limited. Results should be interpreted with caution.

While some limitations are identified in this report, there are likely more not listed that could impact information and conclusions yielded from this work.

Results

Demographics of the Released Cohort and Recidivating Cohorts

As reported by Georgoulas-Sherry and Hernandez (2024), 8,140 individuals under WADOC custody were released in CY 2004. Individuals ranged in age at the time of release from 18 to 105 years old (M = 34.8, SD = 9.9). On average, individuals spent 1.8 years incarcerated (SD = 2.5), ranging as high as 35 years of incarceration; it is important to note that due to potential earned jail credit, individuals might not have technically served time at a DOC facility. For more information, Table 1 shows the distribution of the released cohort from WADOC.

Out of the 8,140 individuals who were released, 51.1% recidivated (n = 4,162) within 19 years following release to the community; a little less than a half (42.4%) of released individuals (n = 1,772) recidivated only once. The average days from date of release to date of re-incarceration was 936 days – approximately 31 months. At the most, 7 individuals recidivated up to 8 times within the 19-year follow-up period (Appendix A). As such, the released cohort produced 9,136 recidivistic events. On average, recidivating individuals spent 1.5 years initially incarcerated (SD = 1.9), ranging as high as 32 years of incarceration by the time they released in CY 2004; it is important to note that due to potential earned jail credit, individuals might not have technically served time at a WADOC facility. Table 1 shows the distribution of the CY 2004 released and recidivating cohort from WADOC.

As a supplement to Table 1, Appendix B shows the distribution of incarcerated individuals released in CY 2004, and then those who recidivated by admission region, and Appendix C shows the frequency of

recidivators by year of recidivism. Of interest, 2020 and 2022 were the only two recidivating years that presented with higher rates of 18- to 25-year-old initial release age, indicating these individuals recidivated later in life – for all other years, recidivators that initially released at 26 to 35 years of age in CY 2004, were the largest age group to return to prison within the 19-year follow-up. While males made up the majority of the recidivating cohort, regardless of year of recidivism, when evaluating female recidivators, 2005, 2015, and 2013 showed the larger percent of returns to prison. And lastly, 2021, 2010, and 2007 presented the highest rates of individuals who make up the BIPOC community.

Table 1. Distribution of released and recidivating cohort

Released Cohort			Recidivating Cohort		
	N	%		N	%
Age at Time of Release			**Age at Time of Release**		
18 to 25	2,290	28.1	18 to 25	904	21.7
26 to 35	2,817	34.6	26 to 35	1,629	39.1
36 to 45	2,174	26.7	36 to 45	1,250	30.0
>= 46	786	9.7	>= 46	379	9.1
BIPOC Community			**BIPOC Community**		
Yes	3,065	37.7	Yes	1,540	37.0
No	5,075	62.3	No	2,622	63.0
Sex			**Sex**		
Female	1,058	13.0	Female	435	10.4
Male	7,082	87.0	Male	3,727	89.6
Offense			**Offense**		
Assault	302	3.7	Assault	37	0.9
Drug	1,523	18.7	Drug	528	12.7
Manslaughter	37	0.5	Manslaughter	--	--
Murder	39	0.5	Murder	--	--
Other/Unknown	5,325	65.4	Other/Unknown	3,404	81.8
Property	519	6.4	Property	170	4.1
Robbery	95	1.2	Robbery	--	--
Sex Offense	300	3.7	Sex Offense	16	0.4
Custody Level			**Custody Level**		
Minimum	5,782	71.0	Minimum	2,797	67.2
Medium	1,412	17.4	Medium	896	21.5
Closed	418	5.1	Closed	279	6.7
Maximum	60	0.7	Maximum	43	1.0
Prior Prison			**Prior Prison**		
Yes	3,350	41.2	Yes	2,195	52.7
No	4,790	58.8	No	1,967	47.2

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. Offense is defined as the worst crime sentenced suggesting that there is a potential that one incarcerated individual could have been sentenced for more than one offense – in this report only the worst offense was utilized.

Assessing disproportionality in the CY 2004 released cohort in Washington

Assessing disproportionality in the released cohort by sex

As the CY 2004 released cohort in WADOC is the base sample for this report due to the need to evaluate long-term recidivism, the potential disproportionality of this cohort was assessed. Table 2 shows the counts of the released cohort, and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex. While the overall state population is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex, the sex distribution in the released cohort is skewed towards males - on average, the majority of DOC incarcerated individuals were more likely to be males (87.0%) than females (13.0%).

Table 2. Counts of released cohort and Washington population estimates by sex

	Released Cohort N (%)	2004 Washington Population N (%)
Sex		
Female	1,058 (13.0)	3,113,248 (50.1)
Male	7,082 (87.0)	3,095,267 (49.9)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

As a visual supplement to Table 2, Figure 1 shows the average frequency distribution of the released cohort and the WA population estimate by sex. Figure 1 illustrates the larger percentage of males as compared to females within the WADOC released cohort when contrasting the overall WA population. As a supplement to Figure 1, Appendix D shows the distribution of sex by year of recidivism compared to the overall average of the Washington population estimates from 2004 to 2023.

Figure 1. Average frequency distribution of released cohort and population estimates by sex

Furthermore, to examine sex differences of the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by male offenders as compared to female offenders was computed. Table 3 shows the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by sex. Findings revealed that, on average, male offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the released cohort suggesting that males are proportionally larger in the released cohort than the general population.

Table 3. Disproportionality ratio of the released cohort by sex

Male Offenders	Female Offenders
1.74	0.26

Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the released cohort by sex and by county/region at admission

To further assess the potential disproportionality in the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort by sex, geographical variations were also included in the analysis. Due to small number standards, Table 4 shows the percent of the released cohort, and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission. While the overall state population is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex, the sex distribution in the released

cohort is skewed towards males – of notable interest, the Northwest, Peninsula/Coastal, and Southwest regions showed higher percentages of males in the released cohort as compared to the other regions.

Table 4. Counts of released cohort and Washington population estimates by sex and by region at admission

	Released Cohort		WA Population	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
North Central	84.2	15.8	50.2	49.8
North Puget Sound	86.5	13.5	50.0	50.0
Northeast	84.8	15.2	50.2	49.8
Northwest	92.1	7.9	49.3	50.7
Peninsula/ Coastal	91.8	8.2	50.0	50.0
South Central	83.6	16.4	50.6	49.4
South Puget Sound	85.3	14.7	50.0	50.0
Southeast	87.9	12.1	49.8	50.2
Southwest	90.3	9.7	49.9	50.1

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Due to small number standards, the table shows the percent only (not the counts) of the released cohort and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

Additionally, to examine sex differences of the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by male offenders as compared to female offenders was computed for region by admission. Table 5 shows the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by sex and by region at admission. Findings revealed that, on average, male offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the released cohort, regardless of region at admission, suggesting that males are proportionally larger in the released cohort than the general population. Findings revealed that the proportionality was largest in the Northwest, Peninsula/Coastal, and Southwest region for male released individuals. As a supplement to Table 5, Appendix E shows a visualization of sex disproportionality ratios by county of admission for the CY 2004 released cohort. The five counties with the highest male disproportionality ratios included: San Juan, Columbia, Garfield, Wahkiakum, and Pacific; the five counties with the lowest male disproportionality ratios included: Pend Oreille, Klickitat, Okanogan, Whitman, and Asotin.

Table 5. Disproportionality ratio of the released cohort by sex and by region at admission

Region at Admission	Male Offenders	Female Offenders
North Central	1.65	0.34
North Puget Sound	1.73	0.27
Northeast	1.70	0.35
Northwest	1.87	0.23
Peninsula/ Coastal	1.84	0.16
South Central	1.65	0.33
South Puget Sound	1.70	0.29
Southeast	1.77	0.40
Southwest	1.81	0.26

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by sex, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the released cohort by BIPOC community

Table 6 shows the counts of the released cohort, and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by BIPOC

community. While the individuals who are part of the BIPOC community, make up 15.5% of the Washington population, they make up 37.7% of the released cohort.

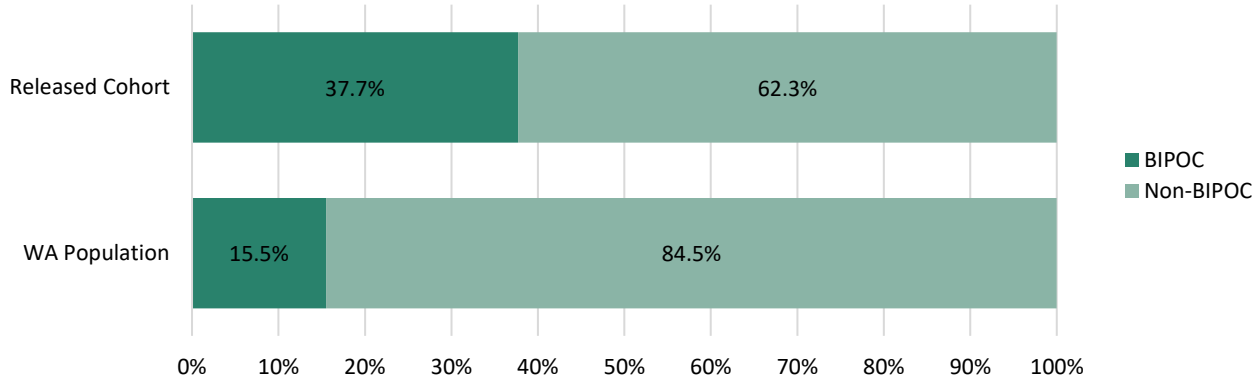
Table 6. Distribution of released cohort and Washington population estimates

	Released Cohort N (%)	2004 Washington Population N (%)
BIPOC Community		
Yes	3,065 (37.7)	960,286 (15.5)
No	5,075 (62.3)	5,248,229 (84.5)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

As a visual supplement to Table 6, Figure 3 shows the average frequency distribution of the released cohort and the WA population estimate by BIPOC community. Figure 2 illustrates the larger percentage of individuals in the BIPOC community as compared to non-BIPOC community within the WADOC released cohort when contrasting the overall WA population. As a supplement to Figure 2, Appendix F shows the distribution of BIPOC status by year of recidivism compared to the overall average of the Washington population estimates from 2004 to 2023.

Figure 2. Average frequency distribution of released cohort and population estimates by BIPOC community



Furthermore, to examine racial differences of the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by offenders who were part of the BIPOC community as compared to offenders who were not part of the BIPOC community was computed. Table 7 shows the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by BIPOC community. Findings revealed that, on average, BIPOC community offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the released cohort suggesting that the BIPOC community are proportionally larger in the released cohort than the general WA population.

Table 7. Disproportionality ratio of the released cohort by BIPOC community

BIPOC Community Offenders	Non--BIPOC Community Offenders
2.43	0.74

Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the released cohort by BIPOC community and by county/region at admission

To further assess the potential disproportionality in the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort by BIPOC community, geographical variations were also included in the analysis. Due to small number standards, Table 8 shows the percent of the released cohort, and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by BIPOC community and region of admission of notable interest, the Northwest, North Central, and South Central regions showed higher percentages of individuals who make up the BIPOC community in the released cohort as compared to the other regions.

Table 8. Counts of released cohort and Washington population estimates by BIPOC community and by region at admission

	Released Cohort		WA Population	
	BIPOC (%)	Non-BIPOC (%)	BIPOC (%)	Non-BIPOC (%)
North Central	35.9	64.1	5.4	94.6
North Puget Sound	34.7	65.3	18.3	81.7
Northeast	17.4	82.6	7.7	92.3
Northwest	37.8	62.2	5.1	94.9
Peninsula/ Coastal	18.0	82.0	7.3	92.7
South Central	35.3	64.7	5.6	94.4
South Puget Sound	25.6	74.4	9.1	90.9
Southeast	25.8	74.2	3.9	96.1
Southwest	20.9	79.1	4.3	95.7

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Due to small number standards, the table shows the percent only (not the counts) of the released cohort and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

Additionally, to examine racial differences of the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by offenders who were part of the BIPOC community as compared to offenders who were not part of the BIPOC community was computed for region by admission. Table 9 shows the disproportionality ratios of the released cohort by BIPOC community and by region at admission. Findings revealed that, on average, BIPOC offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the released cohort suggesting that offenders who were part of the BIPOC community are proportionality larger in the released cohort than the general population. Findings revealed that the proportionality was largest in the Southeast, North Central, and Northwest region for BIPOC released individuals. As a supplement to Table 9, Appendix G shows a visualization of racial disproportionality ratios by county of admission for the released cohort. The five counties with the highest racial disproportionality ratios by BIPOC community included: Wahkiakum, Adams, Chelan, Columbia, and Franklin counties; the five counties with the lowest disproportionality ratios included: Island, Stevens, King, Thurston, and Pacific counties.

Table 9. Disproportionality ratio of the released cohort by BIPOC community and by region at admission

Region at Admission	BIPOC Community Offenders	Non--BIPOC Community Offenders
North Central	8.38	0.70
North Puget Sound	1.89	0.78
Northeast	2.87	0.88
Northwest	6.28	0.66
Peninsula/ Coastal	2.42	0.88
South Central	6.05	0.68
South Puget Sound	3.43	0.83
Southeast	9.37	0.71

Southwest	5.83	0.83

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by race, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing Disproportionality in the Recidivating Cohort in Washington

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by sex

Out of the 8,140 individuals who were released, 51.1% recidivated (n = 4,162) within 19 years following release to the community; a little less than a half (42.4%) of released individuals (n = 1,772) recidivated only once. To assess disproportionality of this cohort, Table 10 shows the counts of the recidivating cohort, and the average population estimates in Washington by sex. While the overall WA population is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex, the sex distribution in the recidivating cohort is skewed towards males - on average, the majority of DOC individuals were more likely to be males (89.6%) than females (10.4%).

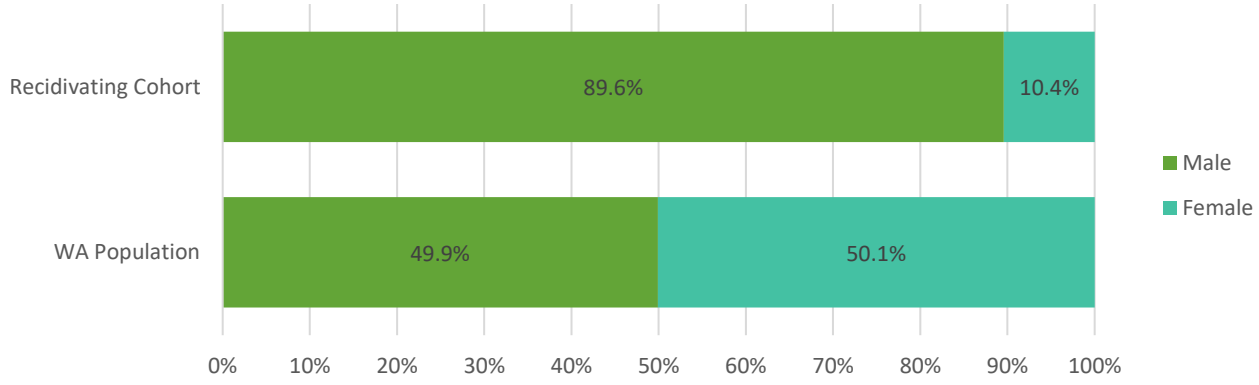
Table 10. Distribution of released cohort and Washington population estimates

	Recidivating Cohort N (%)	Average Washington Population N (%)
Sex		
Female	435 (10.4)	3,526,436 (50.1)
Male	3,727 (89.6)	3,509,168 (49.9)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data. Average Washington Population was assessed by taking the average of 2004 to 2023 population estimates.

As a visual supplement to Table 10, Figure 3 shows the average frequency distribution of the recidivating cohort and the WA population estimate by sex, and Figure 3 shows the average frequency distribution of the recidivating cohort and the WA population estimate by BIPOC community. Figure 3 illustrates the larger percentage of males as compared to females within the WADOC released cohort when contrasting the overall WA population.

Figure 3. Average frequency distribution of recidivating cohort and population estimates by sex



Furthermore, to examine sex differences of the recidivating cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by male offenders as compared to female offenders was computed. Table 11 shows the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by sex. Findings revealed that, on average, male offenders

were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the recidivating cohort suggesting that males are proportionally larger in the released cohort than the general population. These trends followed the WADOC CY 2004 released cohort.

Table 11. Disproportionality ratio of the recidivating cohort by sex

Male Offenders	Female Offenders
1.79	0.21

Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by sex and by county/region at admission

To further assess the potential disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by sex, geographical variations were also included in the analysis. Due to small number standards, Table 12 shows the percent of the recidivating cohort, and the average population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission. While the overall state population is almost evenly distributed in terms of sex, the sex distribution in the recidivating cohort is skewed towards males – of notable interest, the Northwest, Peninsula/Coastal, and Northeast regions showed higher percentages of males in this cohort as compared to the other regions.

Table 12. Counts of recidivating cohort and Washington population estimates by sex and by region at admission

	Recidivating Cohort		WA Population (average)	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
North Central	85.4	14.6	50.5	49.5
North Puget Sound	90.6	9.4	50.0	50.0
Northeast	91.0	9.0	49.6	50.4
Northwest	91.4	8.6	49.5	50.5
Peninsula/ Coastal	91.2	8.8	50.5	49.5
South Central	88.1	11.9	50.3	49.7
South Puget Sound	90.2	9.8	49.5	50.6
Southeast	76.9	23.1	50.0	50.0
Southwest	85.8	14.2	49.5	50.5

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Due to small number standards, the table shows the percent only (not the counts) of the released cohort and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

Additionally, to examine sex differences of the recidivating cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by male offenders as compared to female offenders was computed for region by admission. Table 13 shows the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by sex and by region at admission. Findings revealed that, on average, male offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the recidivating cohort, regardless of region at admission, suggesting that males are proportionally larger in the released cohort than the general population. Findings revealed that the proportionality was largest in the Northeast, Northwest, and Southeast region for male recidivating individuals. As a supplement to Table 13, Appendix E shows a visualization of sex disproportionality ratios by county of admission for the recidivating cohort. The five counties with the highest male disproportionality ratios included: San Juan, Columbia, Lincoln, Garfield, and Wahkiakum; the five counties with the lowest male disproportionality ratios included: Okanogan, Klickitat, Asotin, Douglas, and Kitsap.

Table 13. Disproportionality ratio of the recidivating cohort by sex and by region at admission

Region at Admission	Male Offenders	Female Offenders
North Central	1.69	0.29
North Puget Sound	1.81	0.19
Northeast	1.83	0.18
Northwest	1.85	0.17
Peninsula/ Coastal	1.81	0.18
South Central	1.75	0.24
South Puget Sound	1.82	0.19
Southeast	1.54	0.46
Southwest	1.73	0.28

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by sex, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by sex and by year of first recidivism

To further assess the sex disproportionality of the recidivating cohort, analyses included year of first recidivism. Note, out of the 4,162 who recidivated within the 19 years following release to the community, first time recidivators returned to a WADOC prison before the first year (n = 1,031) of their 2004 release. Fifty-five individuals who were released in CY 2004 returned to a WADOC facility for the first time in year 15 or subsequent years. Following release in CY 2004, individuals recidivated the most in 2005 (n = 1,227) – around the one-year mark; note, the sample included individuals who released as early as January 1, 2004 – therefore, some individuals could have returned to prison within the same year they were released, CY 2004 (n = 382).

Table 14 shows the count of the recidivating cohort and WA population estimates by year of first recidivism (first time of recidivistic event throughout the 19-year follow up period) and by sex. While the proportion between males and females remained stable from 2004 to 2023, the recidivating cohort persisted as having a large male presence, ranging from 85.7% to 100%.

Table 14. Counts of the recidivating cohort and WA population estimates by sex and by year of first recidivism

	Recidivating Cohort		WA Population	
	Males N (%)	Females N (%)	Males N (%)	Females N (%)
2004	346 (90.6)	36 (9.4)	3,095,267 (49.9)	3,113,248 (50.1)
2005	1,113 (90.7)	114 (9.3)	3,141,258 (49.9)	3,157,558 (50.1)
2006	763 (89.8)	87 (10.2)	3,202,917 (49.9)	3,217,341 (50.1)
2007	448 (89.2)	54 (10.8)	3,256,141 (49.9)	3,268,945 (50.1)
2008	256 (85.9)	42 (14.1)	3,298,333 (49.9)	3,309,912 (50.1)
2009	180 (89.6)	21 (10.4)	3,330,741 (49.9)	3,341,418 (50.1)
2010	121 (87.7)	17 (12.3)	3,349,707 (49.8)	3,374,833 (50.2)
2011	87 (86.1)	14 (13.9)	3,372,248 (49.8)	3,395,652 (50.2)
2012	96 (87.3)	14 (12.7)	3,397,971 (49.8)	3,419,799 (50.2)
2013	-- (90.0)	-- (10.0)	3,431,037 (49.9)	3,451,363 (50.1)
2014	-- (90.2)	-- (9.8)	3,474,653 (49.9)	3,493,517 (50.1)
2015	-- (85.7)	-- (14.3)	3,521,914 (49.9)	3,539,496 (50.1)
2016	-- (92.3)	-- (7.7)	3,583,710 (49.9)	3,599,990 (50.1)
2017	-- (78.4)	-- (21.6)	3,647,541 (49.9)	3,662,759 (50.1)
2018	-- (95.7)	-- (4.3)	3,706,524 (49.9)	3,721,046 (50.1)
2019	-- (96.7)	-- (3.3)	3,766,161 (49.9)	3,780,249 (50.1)
2020	-- (100.0)	-- (0.0)	3,844,284 (49.9)	3,862,026 (50.1)

2021	-- (91.7)	-- (8.3)	3,874,347 (49.9)	3,892,62 8(50.1)
2022	-- (87.5)	-- (12.5)	3,922,810 (49.9)	3,941,590 (50.1)
2023	-- (85.7)	-- (14.3)	3,965,793 (49.9)	3,985,357 (50.1)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

To examine these sex differences, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by male offenders as compared to female offenders was computed. Table 15 shows the disproportionality ratios of presence of the recidivating cohort by sex. Findings revealed that, on average, male offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one). Of interest, 2017 to 2019 presented with the highest rates of disproportionately – these years showed that males were proportionality larger in the recidivating cohort than the general WA population in terms of the year of first recidivism.

Table 15. Disproportionality ratio of the recidivating cohort by sex and by year of first recidivism

Year of First Recidivism	Male Offenders	Female Offenders
2004	1.82	0.19
2005	1.80	0.20
2006	1.79	0.22
2007	1.72	0.28
2008	1.80	0.21
2009	1.76	0.25
2010	1.73	0.28
2011	1.75	0.25
2012	1.80	0.25
2013	1.81	0.20
2014	1.72	0.29
2015	1.85	0.15
2016	1.57	0.43
2017	1.92	0.09
2018	1.94	0.07
2019	2.00	0.00
2020	1.84	0.17
2021	1.75	0.25
2022	1.72	0.29
2023	1.82	0.19

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by sex, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community

Table 16 shows the counts of the recidivating cohort, and the average population estimates in Washington by BIPOC community. While the individuals who are part of the BIPOC community, make up an average 17.2% of the Washington population, they make up 37.0% of the recidivating cohort.

Table 16. Distribution of released cohort and Washington population estimates

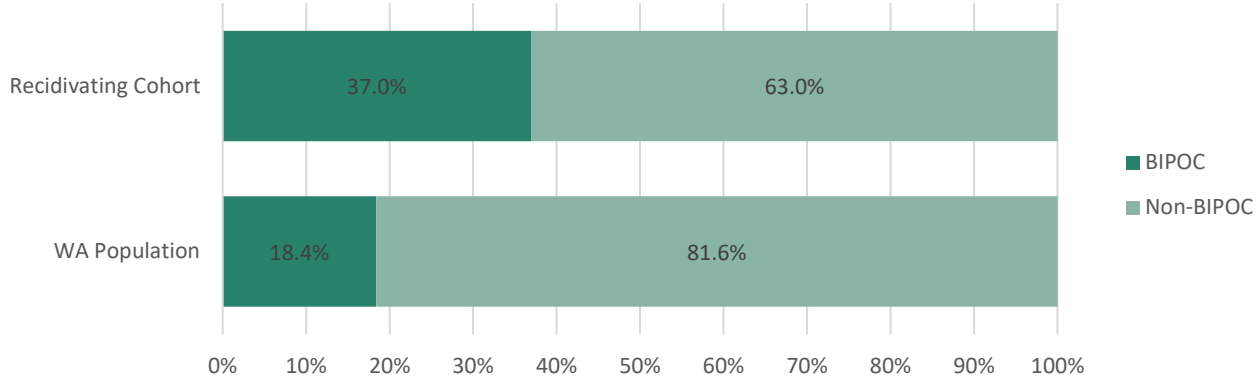
	Recidivating Cohort N (%)	Average Washington Population N (%)
BIPOC Community		
Yes	1,540 (37.0)	1,266,011 (18.4)
No	2,622 (63.0)	5,607,007 (81.6)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual

level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data. Average Washington Population was assessed by taking the average of 2004 to 2023 population estimates.

As a visual supplement to Table 16, Figure 4 shows the average frequency distribution of the recidivating cohort and the WA population estimate by BIPOC community. Figure 4 illustrates the larger percentage for individuals in the BIPOC community who make up a larger part of the WADOC released cohort as compared to the overall WA population.

Figure 4. Average frequency distribution of recidivating cohort and population estimates by BIPOC community



Furthermore, to examine racial differences of the recidivating cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by offenders who were part of the BIPOC community as compared to offenders who were not part of the BIPOC community was computed, respectively. Table 17 shows the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community. Findings revealed that, on average, BIPOC community offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the recidivating cohort suggesting that individuals in the BIPOC community, respectively, are proportionally larger in the recidivating cohort than the general WA population. These trends followed the CY 2004 released cohort.

Table 17. Disproportionality ratio of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community

BIPOC Community Offenders	Non--BIPOC Community Offenders
2.01	0.77

Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community and by county/region at admission

To further assess the potential disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community, geographical variations were also included in the analysis. Due to small number standards, Table 18 shows the percent of the recidivating cohort, and the average population estimates in Washington by BIPOC community and region of admission– of notable interest, the North Puget Sound, South Puget Sound, and Peninsula/Coastal regions showed higher percentages of BIPOC individuals in the recidivating cohort as compared to the other regions.

Table 18. Counts of released cohort and Washington population estimates by BIPOC community and by region at admission

	Recidivating Cohort		WA Population	
	BIPOC (%)	Non-BIPOC (%)	BIPOC (%)	Non-BIPOC (%)
North Central	5.4	94.6	7.5	92.5
North Puget Sound	18.3	81.7	26.1	73.9
Northeast	7.7	92.3	9.5	90.5
Northwest	5.1	94.9	10.0	90.0
Peninsula/ Coastal	7.3	92.7	13.4	86.6
South Central	5.6	94.4	9.3	90.7
South Puget Sound	9.1	90.9	19.6	80.4
Southeast	3.9	96.1	10.1	89.9
Southwest	4.3	95.7	10.8	89.2

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Due to small number standards, the table shows the percent only (not the counts) of the released cohort and the 2004 population estimates in Washington by sex and region of admission Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data.

Additionally, to examine racial differences of the recidivating cohort, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by offenders who were part of the BIPOC community as compared to offenders who were not part of the BIPOC community was computed for region by admission. Table 19 shows the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community and by region at admission. Findings revealed that, on average, BIPOC offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one) in the released cohort suggesting that offenders who were part of the BIPOC community are proportionally larger in the recidivating cohort than the general population. Findings revealed that the proportionality was largest in the Southeast, Southwest, and South Puget Sound region for BIPOC recidivating individuals. As a supplement to Table 19, Appendix G shows a visualization of racial disproportionality ratios by county of admission for the recidivating cohort. The five counties with the highest racial disproportionality ratios included by BIPOC community: Douglas, Franklin, Adams, Asotin, and Grant; the five counties with the lowest disproportionality ratios included: Pacific, Walla Walla, Klickitat, Snohomish, and King.

Table 19. Disproportionality ratio of the released cohort by BIPOC community and by region at admission

Region at Admission	BIPOC Community Offenders	Non--BIPOC Community Offenders
North Central	1.39	0.98
North Puget Sound	1.43	0.90
Northeast	1.23	0.98
Northwest	1.96	0.95
Peninsula/ Coastal	1.84	0.93
South Central	1.66	0.96
South Puget Sound	2.15	0.88
Southeast	2.59	0.94
Southwest	2.51	0.93

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by race, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Assessing disproportionality in the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community and by year of first recidivism

Further assessment of the race disproportionality of the recidivating cohort was additionally completed. Table 20 shows the count of the recidivating cohort and WA population estimates by year of first recidivism (first time throughout the 19-year follow up period) and by BIPOC community. The BIPOC status of the

Washington population estimates steadily increased while the presence of BIPOC individuals in the recidivating sample showed to be inconsistent yet higher than the general public.

Table 20. Counts of the recidivating cohort and WA population estimates by year of first recidivism and by BIPOC community

	Recidivating Individuals		Washington State Population	
	BIPOC N (%)	non-BIPOC N (%)	BIPOC N (%)	non-BIPOC N (%)
2004	132 (34.6)	250 (65.4)	960,286 (15.5)	5,248,229 (84.5)
2005	424 (34.6)	803 (65.4)	998,209 (15.8)	5,300,607 (84.5)
2006	319 (37.5)	531 (62.5)	1,042,417 (16.2)	5,377,841 (83.8)
2007	211 (42.0)	291 (58.0)	1,083,928 (16.6)	5,441,158 (83.4)
2008	118 (39.6)	180 (60.4)	1,121,587 (17.0)	5,486,658 (83.0)
2009	84 (41.8)	117 (58.2)	1,156,030 (17.3)	5,516,129 (82.7)
2010	45 (32.6)	93 (67.4)	1,189,278 (17.7)	5,535,262 (82.3)
2011	37 (36.6)	64 (63.4)	1,209,253 (17.9)	5,558,647 (82.1)
2012	39 (35.5)	71 (64.5)	1,233,818 (18.1)	5,583,952 (81.9)
2013	31 (44.3)	39 (55.7)	1,267,504 (18.4)	5,614,896 (81.6)
2014	13 (21.3)	48 (78.7)	1,312,116 (18.8)	5,656,054 (81.2)
2015	17 (40.5)	25 (59.5)	1,356,526 (19.2)	5,704,884 (80.8)
2016	20 (38.5)	32 (61.5)	1,409,530 (19.6)	5,774,170 (80.4)
2017	13 (35.1)	24 (64.9)	1,468,832 (20.1)	5,841,468 (79.9)
2018	11 (47.8)	12 (52.2)	1,533,135 (20.6)	5,894,435 (79.4)
2019	10 (33.3)	30 (66.7)	1,601,736 (21.2)	5,944,674 (78.8)
2020	-- (63.6)	-- (36.4)	1,293,951 (18.7)	5,629,190 (81.3)
2021	-- (25.0)	-- (75.0)	1,318,987 (18.9)	5,647,289 (81.1)
2022	-- (50.0)	-- (50.0)	1,362,276 (19.3)	5,678,817 (80.7)
2023	-- (28.6)	-- (71.4)	1,400,816 (19.7)	5,705,783 (80.3)

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. OFM population estimates were based on 2020 U.S. Census data since the 2021-2023 U.S. Census data for race/ethnicity was not fully released by the time of publication so * indicates an estimate.

To examine these racial differences, the disproportionality ratios of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community offenders as compared to non-BIPOC community offenders was computed. Table 21 shows the disproportionality ratios of presence of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community. Findings revealed that, on average, BIPOC community offenders were overrepresented (as their disproportionality ratio exceeds one). Of interest, 2020, 2007, 2009, and 2022 presented with the highest rates of disproportionately – these years showed that individuals who make up the BIPOC community were proportionally larger in the recidivating cohort than the general WA population in terms of the year of first recidivism.

Table 21. Disproportionality ratio of the recidivating cohort by BIPOC community

Year of Offense	BIPOC Community Offenders	Non-BIPOC Community Offenders
2004	2.23	0.77
2005	2.19	0.77
2006	2.31	0.75
2007	2.53	0.70
2008	2.33	0.73
2009	2.42	0.70
2010	1.84	0.82
2011	2.04	0.77
2012	1.96	0.79
2013	2.41	0.68
2014	1.13	0.97
2015	2.11	0.74
2016	1.96	0.76

2017	1.75	0.81
2018	2.32	0.66
2019	1.57	0.85
2020	3.40	0.45
2021	1.32	0.92
2022	2.59	0.62
2023	1.45	0.89

Notes: To evaluate disproportionality by race, disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Discussion and Conclusion

Reviewing and understanding the individuals who are more likely to recidivate, and assessing demographic differences amongst the years can offer a larger look into individuals' long-term involvement with the criminal justice system. Future research should evaluate all involvement with the criminal justice system and not just WADOC recidivism. Due to data constraints, the present study could not accurately show individuals' trajectories through the Washington criminal justice system. Showing the long-term recidivism trends through each decision point (i.e., arrest, jail bookings, sentencing) is vital in improving the Washington criminal justice system and how individuals of different demographics are impacted.

While stated above, it merits repeating that this report provided analyses that were descriptive and non-generalizable in nature. The results are modest, and subsequently, inferences and implications are limited. Results should be interpreted with caution. As the report was non-generalizable and was not a true representation of the entire population of data, causal relationships cannot be determined and conclusions, if any, are incredibly limiting. No recommendations outside of a need for further analyses, including true research endeavors, are presented. While this report was limiting, it did offer an opportunity to discuss the need to further assess and review demographic differences—and at times, disparities—in how long-term recidivism and involvement with the Washington criminal justice impact different demographic groups, and how these trends vary by offense categories and time.

Evaluating recidivism can assist as an effective tool in assessing the success of criminal justice policies and programs. Likewise, descriptive measures of recidivism, like those studied in this report, can inform practitioners and policy makers about the necessity to create new interventions or programs, or modify what is currently available. As there is no one true operationalization of recidivism, the assessment of recidivism can be complex. For example, different follow-up periods can result in various outcomes of recidivism rates. This report, which utilized a longer follow-up period, likely reported more recidivism than reports that utilized a shorter follow-up period. While it is important that follow-up periods should be long enough to sufficiently capture much of the reoffending behavior of individuals, too long of a follow up can also negatively impact results. Follow-up periods, especially ones that look at return to prison, should also include enough time to allow the criminal justice system to process offenses and render a final disposition and/or sentence. Also, as the definition includes only returns to prison, this consists of only a small portion of convictions, since not all convictions result in an incarceration sentence. Furthermore, since analyses were limited to felony offenses, the rates of recidivism are lower than if the definition of recidivism includes misdemeanor offenses (however, those individuals would likely not have resulted to serving a prison sentence). In this report, for example, most individuals recidivated within the first few years of release from prison, so there is potential that a 19-year follow up might have been unnecessary.

Practitioners, researchers, and policy makers must continuously and cautiously assess the operationalizations behind each recidivism measure to address different varieties of policy and research questions. The lack of caution can lead to incorrect conclusions and impact. However, different measures in recidivism can allow for unique approaches to assisting in research and policy questions. Future endeavors to evaluate impact on

recidivism could potentially include investigating disparities in sentencing decisions; evaluating programs available to those currently incarcerated to divert criminogenic thoughts, feelings and actions; or reviewing community resources for individuals reintegrating into the community as an aid to reverting individuals from continuing to be justice involved.

Disclaimer

This material utilizes publicly available data from DOC. The views expressed here are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of the DOC or other data contributors. Any errors are attributable to the author(s).

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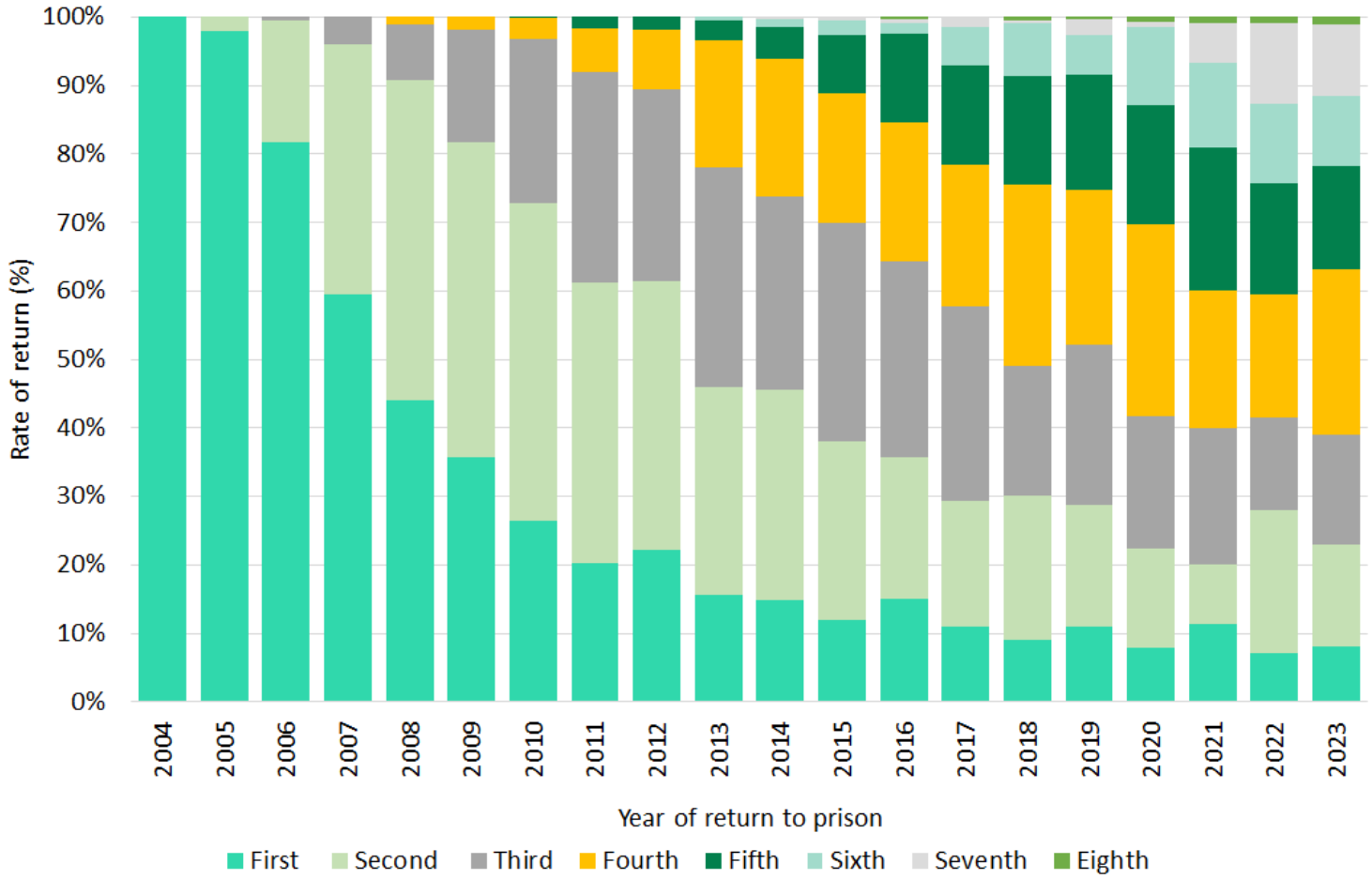
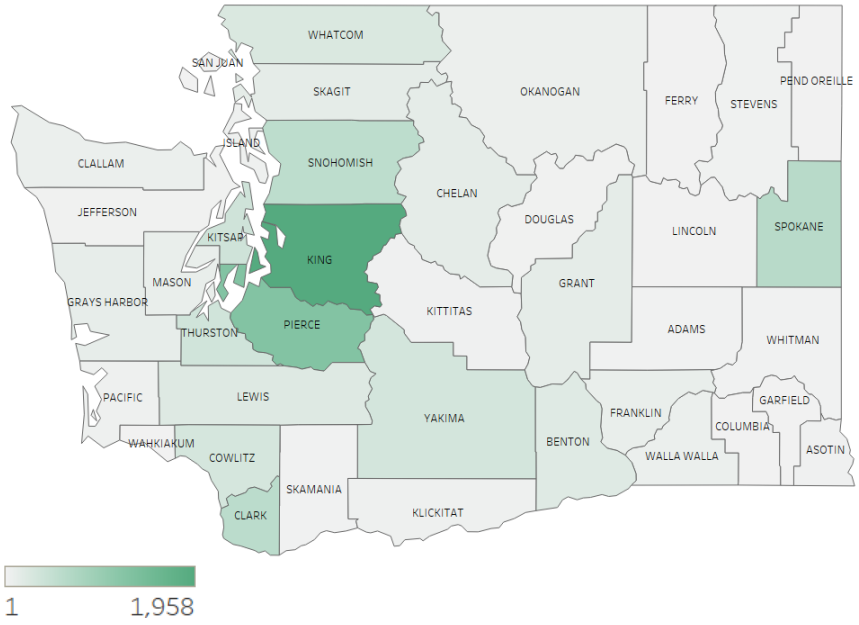
Appendix

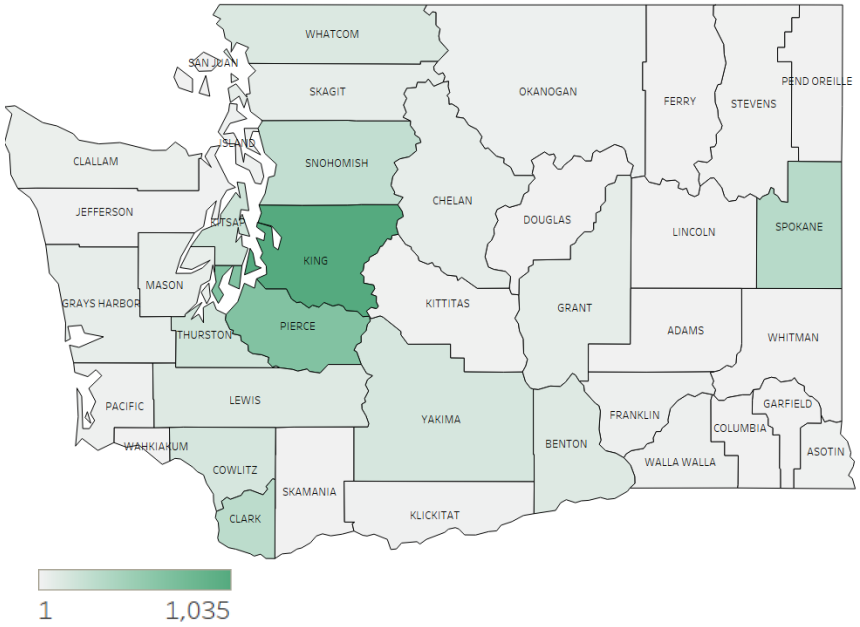
Appendix A. Percentage of recidivators, by year and by frequency of return



Notes: Recidivators from sample of individuals released from DOC in CY2004. Recidivators showed a minimum of one recidivist event up to 8 recidivist events following 19 years of release. Individuals could have multiple recidivistic events within the same day, month or year as an individual can be convicted for more than one offense, and therefore, there is potential that one individual can be present in multiple years as they can return to prison more than once.

Appendix B. Distribution of incarcerated individuals released in CY 2004 (left) and those who recidivated (right), by admission region



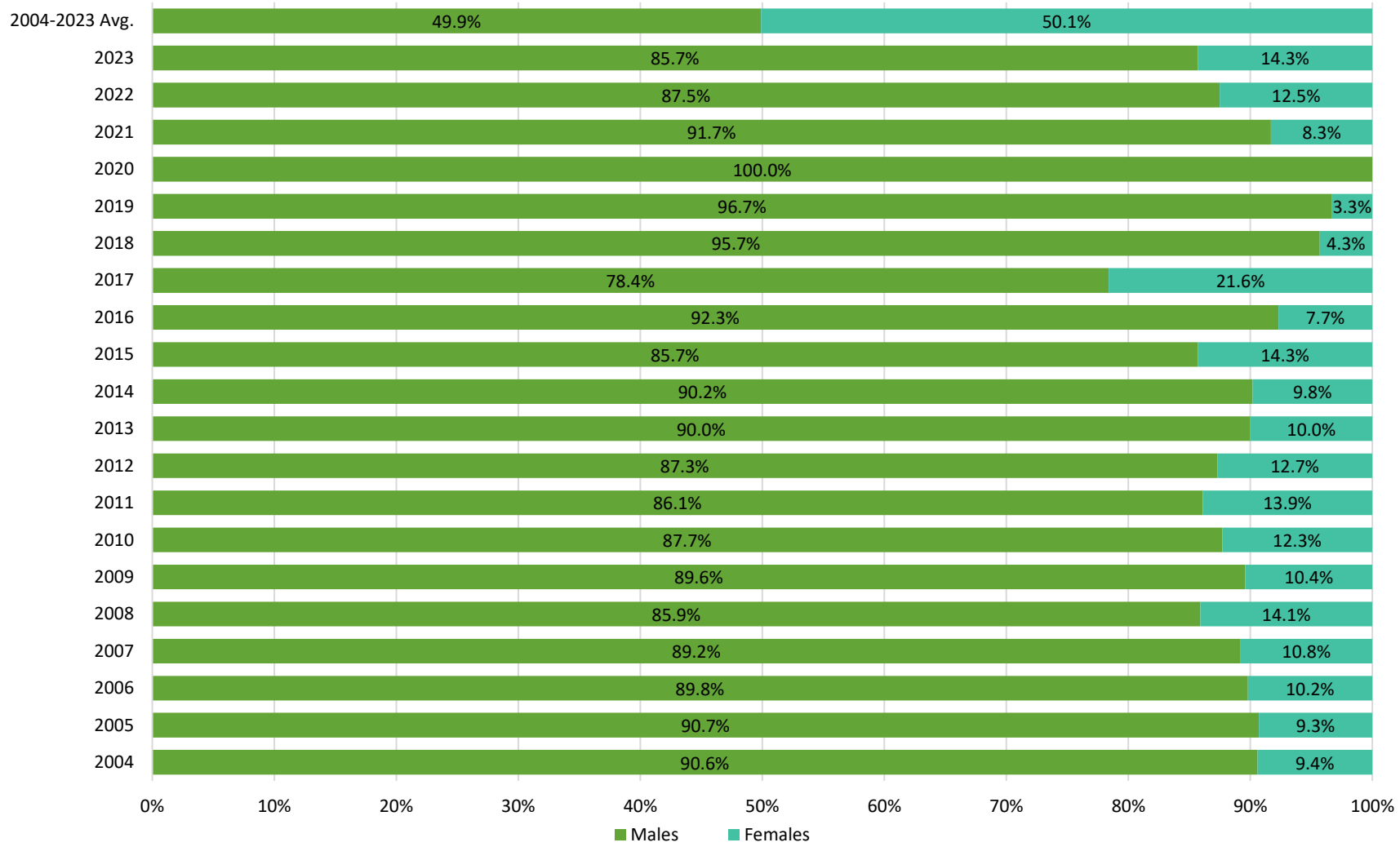


Appendix C. Frequency of recidivators by year of recidivism

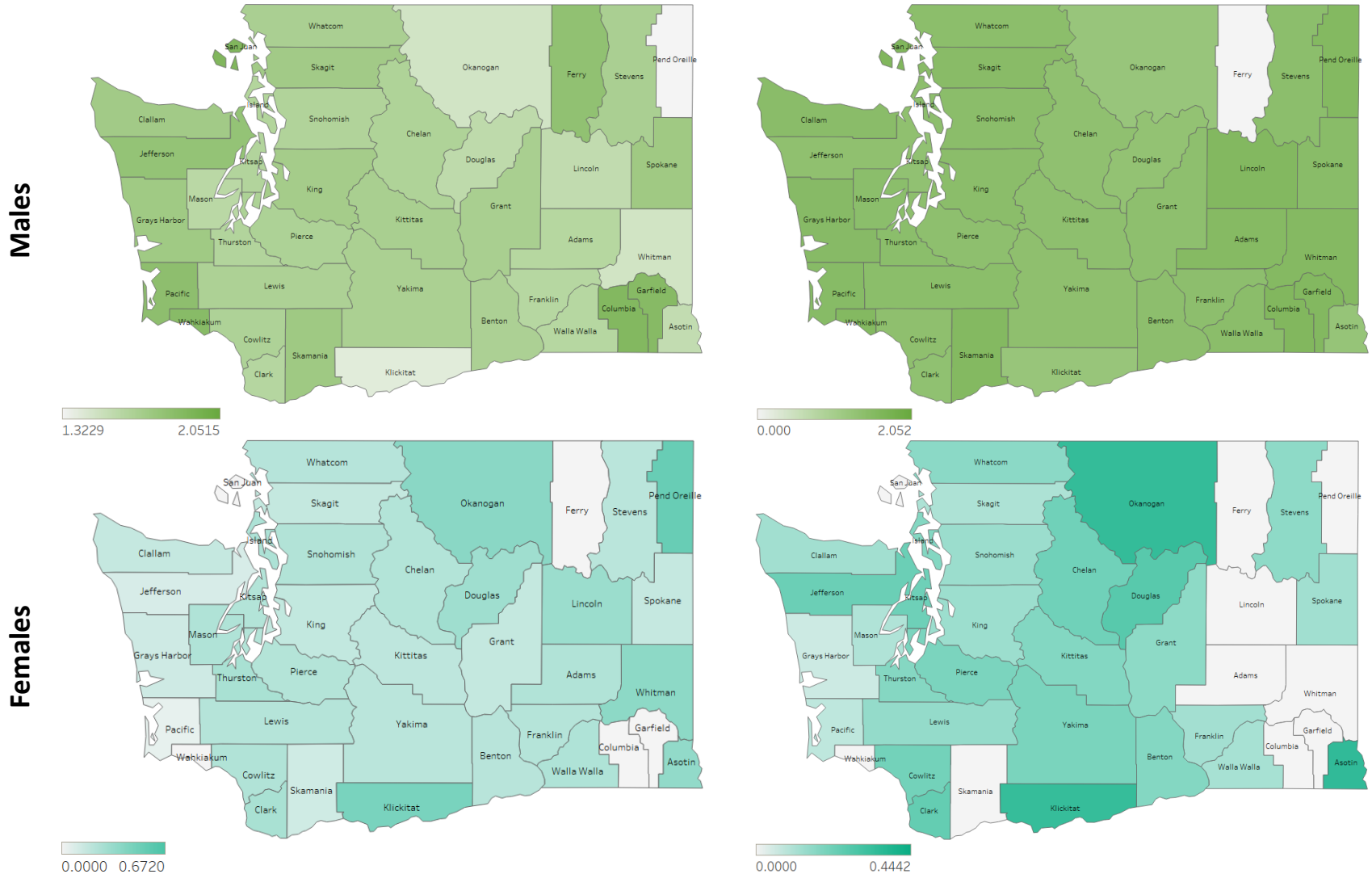
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Age at Time of Release																				
18 to 25	33.8	29.2	33.0	30.4	32.8	33.6	30.5	35.5	34.4	29.0	34.7	32.0	39.3	33.5	33.4	40.0	46.2	42.9	51.0	38.8
26 to 35	42.8	44.6	39.5	40.8	41.9	45.5	44.1	39.1	44.6	45.2	45.2	45.3	42.8	47.7	43.9	42.1	36.8	49.1	37.6	50.5
36 to 45	19.4	21.5	23.6	24.6	22.1	18.0	21.7	21.6	16.3	23.0	17.9	19.3	16.0	17.1	21.0	15.1	15.4	5.2	8.6	10.7
>= 46	3.9	4.7	3.9	4.2	3.2	2.9	3.6	3.9	4.7	2.8	2.2	3.4	1.9	1.7	1.7	2.8	1.6	2.8	2.8	--
BIPOC Community																				
Yes	33.5	34.8	35.7	38.7	35.7	34.0	38.8	33.5	31.2	33.7	35.9	36.1	30.9	37.8	37.3	38.1	37.5	41.4	31.1	32.4
No	66.5	65.2	64.3	61.3	64.3	66.0	61.2	66.5	68.8	66.3	64.1	63.9	69.1	62.2	62.7	61.9	62.5	58.6	68.9	67.6
Sex																				
Female	6.6	6.7	7.6	6.4	9.1	6.8	6.9	6.5	5.0	8.2	4.5	8.4	6.7	5.7	5.9	4.7	7.7	1.9	4.7	1.7
Male	93.4	93.3	92.4	93.6	90.9	93.2	93.1	93.5	95.0	91.8	95.5	91.6	93.3	94.3	94.1	95.3	92.3	98.1	95.3	98.3
Offense																				
Assault	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.5	--	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3
Drug	8.5	9.9	10.1	8.1	9.1	105	8.5	7.1	7.9	12.5	7.9	8.3	7.6	7.8	11.3	8.6	12.0	6.6	5.8	2.3
Murder	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other/Unknown	88.8	87.0	87.3	88.6	87.9	86.7	89.5	90.6	89.4	85.7	89.7	89.3	90.1	90.4	85.1	88.7	85.8	90.3	90.7	91.1
Property	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.5	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.6	2.3	1.9	2.2	1.5	3.4	2.6	2.0	2.4	2.9	6.3
Robbery	0.1	0.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0.2	--
Sex Offense	--	0.1	--	0.2	--	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3	--	0.1	--	0.1	0.1	0.1	--	--	0.2	--	--
Custody Level																				
Minimum	58.8	68.9	63.9	68.7	66.3	67.1	63.9	64.7	59.6	67.5	58.2	63.5	63.5	63.9	63.2	59.1	54.1	48.1	50.2	55.5
Medium	28.0	23.3	26.7	25.0	26.3	24.0	26.2	27.3	29.2	24.8	29.9	27.2	27.1	27.0	27.4	27.7	27.4	34.4	42.0	27.9
Closed	9.6	7.2	8.3	5.7	6.7	7.9	8.9	6.9	9.8	6.3	10.7	7.0	7.7	7.7	8.8	9.6	17.2	14.1	6.8	14.1
Maximum	3.6	0.7	1.1	0.7	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2	2.3	1.7	1.4	0.6	3.6	1.3	3.3	0.9	2.6
Prior Prison																				
Yes	62.2	59.6	57.0	57.2	56.0	53.8	57.9	54.2	58.4	61.4	55.7	59.8	56.0	58.4	58.1	55.0	56.5	55.6	55.1	61.9
No	37.8	40.4	43.0	42.8	44.0	46.2	42.1	45.8	41.6	38.6	44.3	40.2	44.0	41.6	41.9	45.0	43.5	44.4	44.9	38.1

Notes: Due to missing, incomplete, unmatched, or inconsistent data, and rounding the total may not equate to 100%. Percentages represent those based on the column totals. Results could be skewed when analyzing demographic variables as the data is individual level data. Offense is defined as the worst crime sentenced suggesting that there is a potential that one incarcerated individual could have been sentenced for more than one offense – in this report only the worst offense was utilized.

Appendix D. Frequency of sex by year compared to 2004-2023 Washington population estimate average

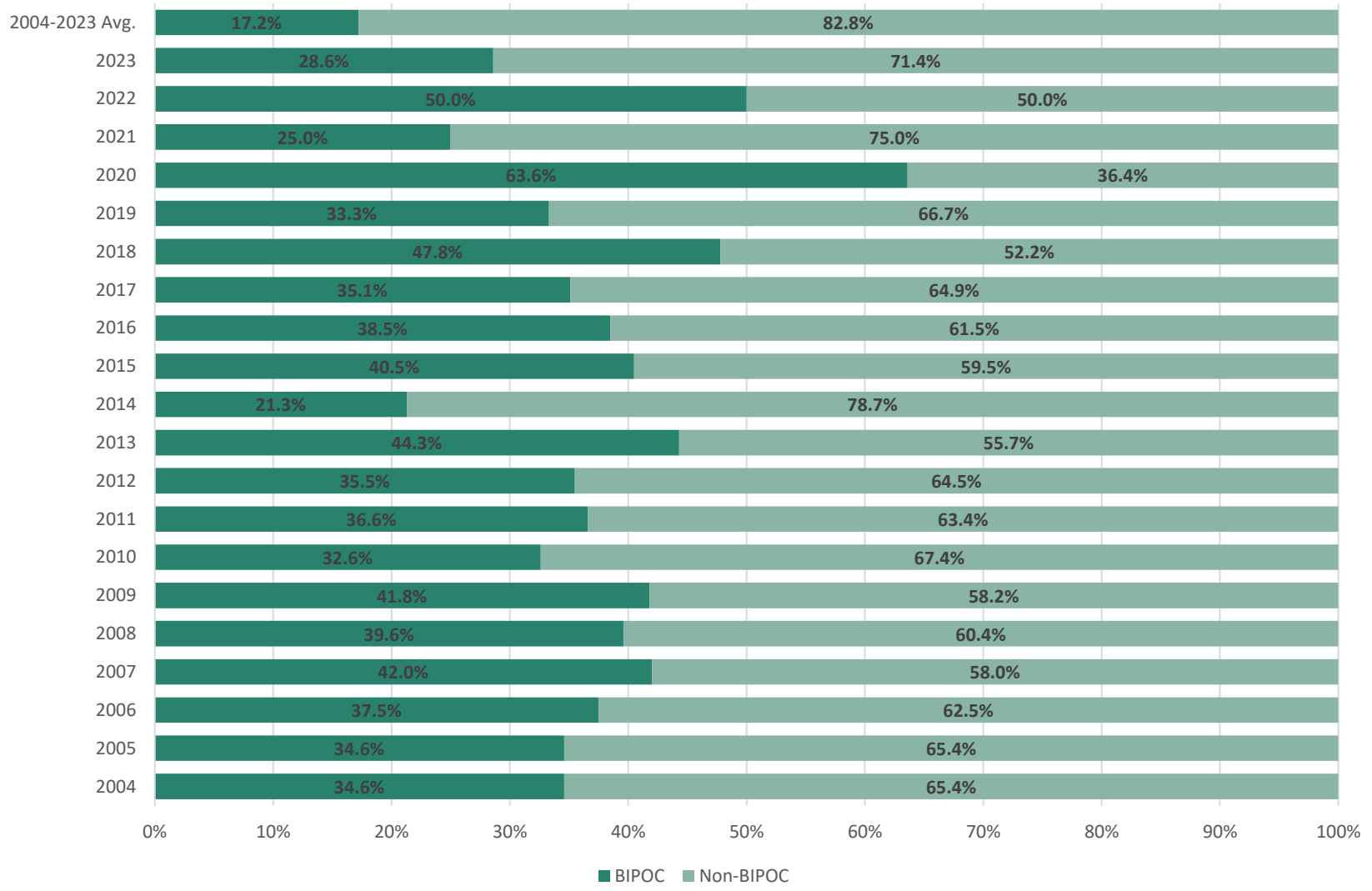


Appendix E. Sex disproportionality ratio for the released cohort (left) and the recidivators (right) by county of admission



Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.

Appendix F. Frequency of BIPOC status by year compared to 2004-2023 Washington population estimate average



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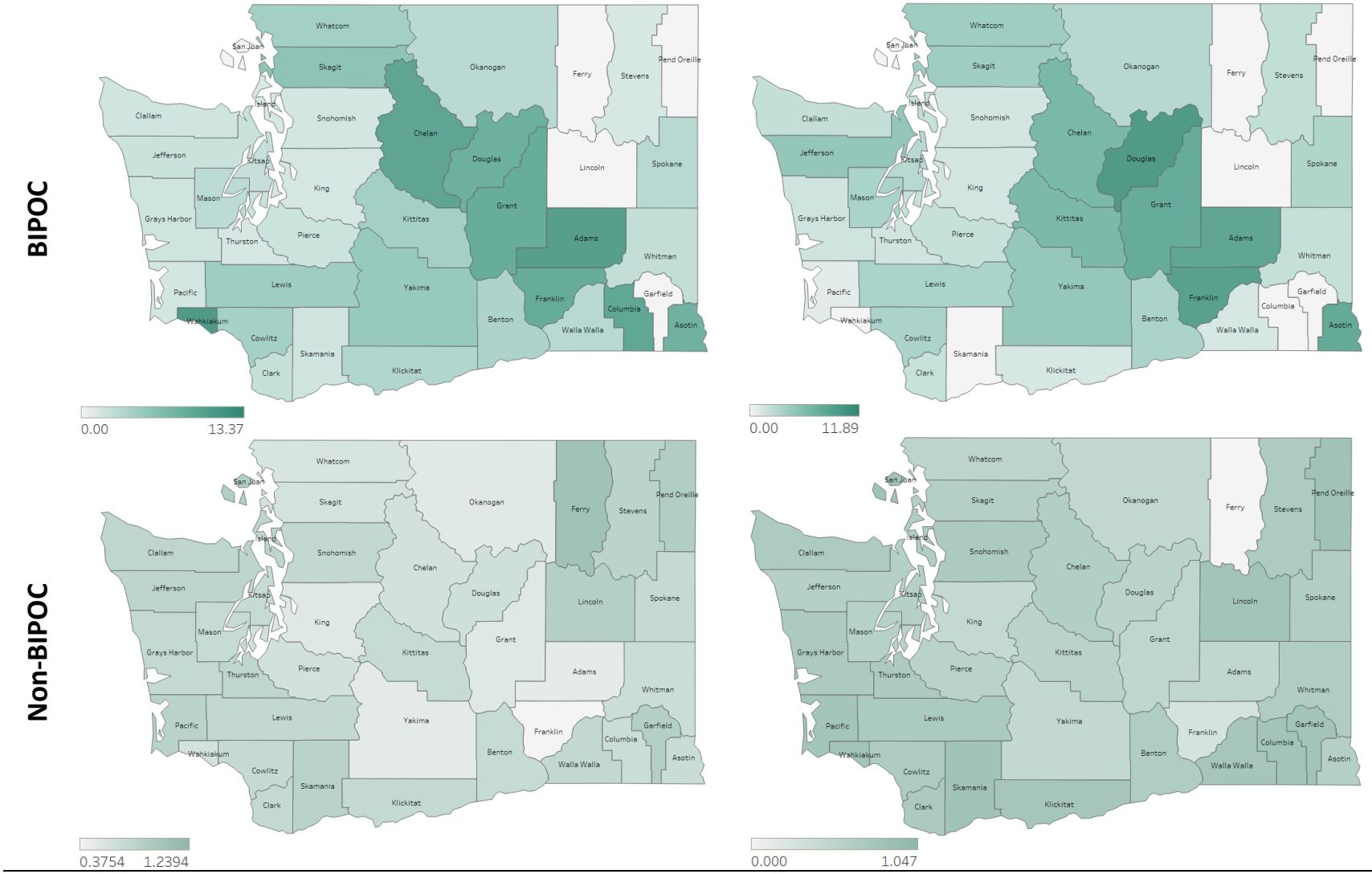
Appendix G. Racial disproportionality ratio for release cohort (left) and recidivators (right) by county of admission



Notes: Disproportionality ratios were assessed by calculating the percentage in the population of interest (e.g., those who offended) divided by the percentage in the general population (e.g., Washington State). If the disproportionality ratio is equal to 1, this shows that the population of interest and the general population are equal to one another. If the disproportionality ratio is higher than 1, this shows that the population of interest is overrepresented and disproportionality higher than the general population.