
—The HYCF Project, Volume 2—

INCARCERATED JUVENILES AND RECIDIVISM IN HAWAII



A Report to the

**Office of Youth Services
Department of Human Services**

from the

**Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division
Department of the Attorney General
State of Hawaii**

February 2001

This report can be downloaded from the
Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance
Division's web site:
www.cpja.ag.state.hi.us

Printed by Hawaii Correctional Industries

—The HYCF Project, Volume 2—

INCARCERATED JUVENILES AND RECIDIVISM IN HAWAII



A Report to the
Office of Youth Services
Department of Human Services

Prepared by

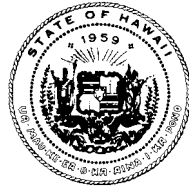
Michael "Spike" Bradford
Research Analyst

and

Paul Perrone
Chief of Research & Statistics

Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division
Department of the Attorney General
State of Hawaii

February 2001



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
820 Mililani Street, Suite 817
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Foreword

Crime in Hawaii, in particular, crimes committed by juvenile offenders continue to be a topic of emotional and anecdotal discussion among juvenile justice practitioners and the general public. Of particular interest is the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF), the only agency responsible for the care and incarceration of adjudicated juvenile offenders in the State of Hawaii. The HYCF represents the most severe sanction available in the juvenile justice system. Its purpose is to protect society by housing the most serious and dangerous juvenile offenders while simultaneously providing services to youths for their eventual return into the community.

In any given year, the number of youths admitted to the HYCF (283 in FY'99) represents a small percentage of the total number of youths arrested (13,299 in FY'99*). Juvenile arrest rates declined by 28% over the last 10 years. Did the arrest rate for youths released from the HYCF also experience a similar decline? To determine the effect of incarceration at the HYCF on a youth's subsequent criminal activity, the Office of Youth Services (OYS) contracted with the Department of the Attorney General to conduct a recidivism study of youths released from the HYCF. A recidivism study provides an overview of whether or not commitment to incarceration at the HYCF is meeting the safety needs of the community by reducing a youth's engagement in criminal activity.

From this Recidivism Report, we can generally conclude that youths released from the HYCF are continuing their involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems at a high rate (82% re-arrest rate). The task facing the juvenile justice system now is, what can we do about it? The natural inclination when confronted with such statistics is to look elsewhere for the cause. However, all agencies that work with or provide services to juvenile offenders must take responsibility for the successes and failures of our juvenile justice system. Improvements in the juvenile justice system can only come about when each individual/agency first reflects on how its own practices can be made more effective. Systemic changes can be realized when agencies agree to operate under similar principles, such as those described in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's *Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* (*Comprehensive Strategy*). The Comprehensive Strategy is a systematic and comprehensive process that provides a framework to identify,

address, and implement solutions to the juvenile crime problem. Using “best practices” information, the Comprehensive Strategy includes prevention and research-based programs and services as key components to the process.

To reduce the overall recidivism rate, juvenile offenders must be provided appropriate and effective services prior to incarceration, while incarcerated, and upon their release into the community, whether the youth remains under the jurisdiction of the HYCF, returns to the jurisdiction of the Family Court, or is released upon reaching the age of minority. Based on this Recidivism Report and the principles outlined in the National Institute of Correction’s Promoting Public Safety Using Effective Interventions with Offenders manual, the OYS is recommending the following initiatives for improving the juvenile justice system:

1. **Utilization of an objective needs and risk assessment instrument.** *This will assist in determining a youth’s risk of recidivism and identify the types of services necessary to reduce the youth’s risk to recidivate.*
2. **Implementation of effective interventions, such as cognitive programs, as described in the Promoting Public Safety Using Effective Interventions with Offenders manual.** *This will assure that programs and services implemented are based on research of effective programs and best practices.*
3. **Increase staff training to promote efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of services.** *Staff training will assist agencies to provide services in an appropriate, timely, effective and efficient manner.*
4. **Develop and implement quality assurance processes; evaluate program outcome; conduct periodic recidivism studies.** *This will assure that services are being provided and absorbed by youths as intended and that outcomes are measured periodically.*

This Recidivism Report should not be used as merely a reflection of the HYCF. It is a study of how well the Hawaii juvenile justice system has responded to the needs of a particular target group – youths who have been incarcerated at the HYCF. Working together, we can make a difference.

Bert Y. Matsuoka
Executive Director

*Crime in Hawaii, 1999, Department of the Attorney General, State of Hawaii

Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Table of Contents	iii
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	5
The HYCF Project.....	5
Juvenile Delinquency and Detention	5
The Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility	6
Method.....	6
Limitations and Issues of Concern.....	7
Profile of Committed Youths	9
Substance Use.....	10
Other Characteristics	10
Significant Relationships Between Delinquent Behaviors and Ethnicity, Gender, and Birthplace.....	11
Ethnicity	11
Gender.....	12
Birthplace.....	13
Commitment-Related Data	13
First Commitment	13
Second and Third Commitments	15
Escapes and Misconduct Reports	16
Recidivism	17
Arrest Recidivism	17
Conviction Recidivism.....	17
Confinement Recidivism	19
Profile of Recidivates	21
Number of Commitments.....	21
Number of Parole Returns.....	23
Number of Escapes	24

Number of Reported Misconducts	24
Number of Paroles	25
Age at First Substance Use	26
First Commitment Sentence Length	26
Percent of First Term Served.....	28
Runaways.....	28
Marijuana Use	28
Suicide Risk Indicators.....	29
Number of Siblings.....	29
County of Commitment	29
County Differences in HYCF Commitments and Recidivism.....	31
1984 and Today	32
Conclusion	35
References	37
Endnotes	37

List of Tables

Table 1: Juvenile Arrest Trends Nationally and Locally.....	5
Table 2: Significant Relationships Between Variables.....	11
Table 3: Comparison of County Juvenile Populations and HYCF Commitments...	15
Table 4: Commitment Number by Type of Offense.....	15
Table 5: Commitment Number by Sentence Length.....	16
Table 6: Number of Paroles Compared to Parole Returns.....	16
Table 7: Age at Release by Confinement Recidivism.....	20
Table 8: Relationships Between Demographic/Institutional Characteristics and Recidivism Measures.....	21
Table 9: Total Number of Commitments by County of Commitment.....	23
Table 10: Number of Parole Returns by Recidivism Rates.....	23
Table 11: Number of Escapes by Recidivism Rates.....	24
Table 12: Number of Misconducts by Recidivism Rates.....	25
Table 13: Number of Paroles by Conviction and Confinement Recidivism Rates.....	25
Table 14: First Commitment Sentence Length by Confinement Recidivism Rate.....	27
Table 15: First Commitment Sentence Length by Ethnicity.....	27
Table 16: First Commitment Sentence Length by County of Commitment.....	27
Table 17: Significant Relationships Reported in the 1984 and Current Studies.....	33

List of Figures

Figure 1: Ethnicity.....	9
Figure 2: Birthplace.....	10
Figure 3: Substance Use and Gender.....	12
Figure 4: Offense Type of First Commitment.....	14
Figure 5: Recidivism Rates.....	17
Figure 6: Post-Release Convictions by Offense Type.....	18
Figure 7: Severity Level of Post-Release Person Offense Convictions.....	18
Figure 8: Severity Level of Post-Release Property Offense Convictions.....	18
Figure 9: Severity Level of Post-Release Drug Offense Convictions.....	19
Figure 10: Severity Level of “Other” Post-Release Convictions.....	19
Figure 11: Comparison of Total Commitments and Recidivism Rates.....	22
Figure 12: Age at First Substance Use by Arrest and Confinement Recidivism Rates.....	26
Figure 13: Arrest Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment.....	29
Figure 14: Conviction Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment.....	30
Figure 15: Confinement Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment.....	30
Figure 16: Comparison of Recidivism Rates.....	33

Executive Summary

The HYCF Project entails a two-year research effort conducted by the Department of the Attorney General, under contract from the Office of Youth Services. A first report, *Data Assessment and Research Directions*, was published in May 2000. The current report provides a statistical profile of youth released from the facility and an exploration of post-release recidivism. A comparison of various juvenile justice professionals' perceptions regarding the purpose and effectiveness of HYCF, and a final report identifying factors that affect recidivism, are scheduled for publication in June, 2001 and December, 2001, respectively. These reports are intended to complement existing HYCF-related research, while adding to the overall knowledge base concerning the facility. It is hoped that the findings of the HYCF Project will provide juvenile justice policymakers, administrators, and practitioners with an objective assessment of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility – the “final stop” in our juvenile justice system – and better inform all interested parties on juvenile crime in Hawaii.

For the current study, the records of 805 youth released from the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) during Calendar Years 1995-1999 were analyzed in order to provide a demographic profile of youth released from the facility. Records of a subset of these youth, 370 cases released during Fiscal Years 1996-1998, were obtained from the HYCF, county police departments and prosecutor's offices, and the Department of the Attorney General. Records covering a two-year period following each youth's last release within the study period were analyzed to calculate recidivism rates based on three measures: re-arrests, re-convictions, and re-confinements at either HYCF or a secure adult facility. These data were then explored in conjunction with the demographic data in order to provide further insight into the issue of recidivism.

Profile of youths released from the HYCF between CY1995-1999 (805 cases):

- Males accounted for 83.4% of the youths, and females, 16.6%.
- Females were more likely than males to have suicide risk indicators (76.9% versus 56.9%, respectively) and to have escaped or run away from home or residential placements (83.8% versus 54.6%).
- Hawaiian/part-Hawaiians accounted for nearly half of the youths (49.6%), mixed or other ethnicities for 22.9%, Caucasians for 9.4%, Filipinos for 7.1%, non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders for 5.8%, Asians for 2.1%, and African-Americans for 1.2%.
- Non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders and Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian youths were more likely to claim prior alcohol use (93.6% and 83.2%, respectively) than were those in the entire study group (81.7%).
- Prior “ice” usage was higher for Filipinos (38.6%) and Hawaiian/part-Hawaiians (35.6%) than among the entire study group (32.5%).

- Ethnicity was strongly correlated to gang membership. While only 20.5% of the entire study group claimed current or prior gang membership, 61.7% of non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders, 40% of African-Americans, and 28.1% of Filipinos reported gang affiliation.
- The greatest proportion of youths were committed during their ninth grade school year, 43.2%, and their tenth grade year, 23.8%. Eleventh grade commitments accounted for 11.2% of cases and twelfth grade for 6.7%; 86.0% of all commitments occurred during high school years.
- Marijuana was the most commonly used substance (84.2% of youths admitting prior use), as compared to alcohol (81.7%) and “ice” (32.5%).
- Males were more likely than females to report prior alcohol (83.4% versus 72.7%, respectively) and marijuana (85.2% versus 78.8%) use, while a greater proportion of females reported prior “ice” use (46.2% versus 29.8%).

Analysis of the records of 370 youth released from the HYCF during Fiscal Years 1996-1998 revealed the following:

- One-time commitments accounted for 59.5% of all releases, while 28.4% had been committed to the facility twice, 8.9% three times, and 3.2% four or more times.
- Offenses against persons accounted for the greatest percentage of first-time commitments (38.7%). Commitments for probation revocation accounted for 27%, property offenses for 26.2%, drug offenses for 1.9%, status offenses for 1.1%, and other types of offenses for 5.2% of first-time commitments.
- Sentences of 30 days or less accounted for 34.3% of first-time commitments, 31 to 365 days for 45.1%, minority commitments (age 18) for 13.5%, and commitments until age 19 for 6.2%.
- Juveniles between the ages of 15 and 17 accounted for 71.7% of first-time commitments. Thirteen and fourteen year-olds accounted for 18.4% and eighteen and nineteen year-olds for 9.9%.

The following recidivism rates were calculated for a two-year post-release period for each youth:

- 82.2% of released wards were re-arrested.
- 57.3% of released wards were re-convicted.
- 32.2% of released wards were re-confined at either HYCF or a secure adult facility.

A comparison of HYCF commitments and recidivism rates between Hawaii's four counties shows:

- A disproportionately low number of commitments (based on the state juvenile population distribution) and high recidivism rates from the City & County of Honolulu.
- A proportionate number of commitments and low recidivism rates from Hawaii County.
- A disproportionately high number of commitments, and low recidivism rates from Kauai County.
- A proportionate number of commitments and high recidivism rates from Maui County.

Differences in commitment figures and recidivism rates may be due to the types of juvenile offenders committed to the facility, the availability of sentencing alternatives, the extent of post-release supervision and aftercare, or other factors.

A comparison of the current study with a similar study published in 1984 reveals:

- A higher arrest recidivism rate in the current study (82.2% versus 74.9% for the 1984 study).
- A higher conviction recidivism rate in the current study (57.3% versus 53.7% for the 1984 study).
- A slightly lower confinement recidivism rate in the current study (32.2% versus 33.3% for the 1984 study).
- Statistically significant relationships between first commitment sentence length and confinement recidivism in both studies. This was the only variable that was significantly related to recidivism in both studies.

Recidivism measures were cross-tabulated with other variables to determine statistically significant relationships:

- Total number of commitments, number of parole returns, number of escapes, and number of misconduct reports are significantly related to each of the three measures of recidivism (re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-confinement).
- The number of runaways, age at first substance use, and number of siblings are significantly related to arrest recidivism.
- The number of paroles, prior marijuana use, and number of suicide risk indicators are significantly related to conviction recidivism.

- First commitment sentence length, percent of first sentence served, and age at first substance use are statistically related to confinement recidivism.

For most readers, the study's key findings will be the high recidivism rates and that these rates have increased since the 1984 study. Of further concern, different methodologies employed in the two studies indicate a strong likelihood that, for comparison purposes, recidivism rates are either overstated in the 1984 study or understated in the current study.¹ Thus there exists the strong possibility that recidivism has increased even more than is herein reported.

At the heart of the recidivism issue lies the debate between those who question the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts in the bleak setting of what is essentially a prison for children, and those who question the extent to which rehabilitation is a realistic goal given an extremely recalcitrant target population. It is not appropriate for objective researchers to play the role of staunch advocates for either position. However, while it is difficult to propose a "reasonable" recidivism rate for Hawaii's small number of highest risk juvenile offenders, interested parties should take note of the study results and thoroughly consider whether or not the most effective methods available are being utilized to reduce recidivism among this population.

In the following report, data collection and analysis methods are described, followed by tables and charts of released youths' demographic profiles and recidivism rates. The report consists of five sections. The **Introduction** section briefly discusses national and state juvenile crime statistics, the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, and data collection and analysis methods. The **Profile of Committed Youths** section describes demographic and commitment-related data for the study cohort. A section on **Recidivism Rates** describes recidivism of selected youth using re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-confinement as measurements. A **Profile of Recidivates** highlights variables that have statistically significant relationships with the three recidivism measures and presents a brief comparison between the current study and a similar study performed in 1984. The **Conclusion** section summarizes the key findings of this report, discusses several important implications, and describes what lies ahead for the HYCF Project.

¹ A varying 4- to 10-year post-release follow-up period was likely utilized in the 1984 study, as compared to the fixed 2-year period employed in the current study. Thus, the early study's longer follow-up likely yielded higher recidivism rates than would have been reported using the current study's methodology. In addition, it is difficult to attach precise meaning to the 1984 recidivism statistics given that some youths had follow-up periods up to 7 years longer than did other youths in the study.

Introduction

The HYCF Project

This report is the second of four specified for the HYCF Project conducted by the Department of the Attorney General, as contracted by the Office of Youth Services. The first report, *Data Assessment and Research Directions*, was released in May, 2000 and outlined the various sources and applicability of data necessary for the next three reports, and is also useful as a guide for other researchers studying juvenile crime in Hawaii. The current report, *Incarcerated Juveniles and Recidivism in Hawaii*, is presented as both a stand-alone report and part of ongoing research leading to a final report to be published in December, 2001. This report provides a profile of youths committed to the HYCF as well as a description and analysis of the recidivism rate of those youths. The third report, to be published in July, 2001, will focus on a comparison of opinions held by a wide range of individuals who have a connection to the HYCF, and will further explore some of the quantitative data available on the facility. The final report will contain a detailed analysis of factors that are likely to affect recidivism, accompanied by identification of issues that the HYCF may need to address in order to reduce recidivism.

Juvenile Delinquency and Detention

Nationally and locally, juvenile delinquency has become an increasingly important political and civic issue. Overall, national arrests of juveniles increased 35% between 1988 and 1997. This increase was due mostly to a rise in arrests for person offenses (up 49% for violent index crimes and up 84% for other person offenses), drug offenses (up 125%) and public order offenses. Between 1993 and 1997 however, the increase for juvenile arrests was only 14%. During this period, serious person offenses fell 6%, while drug offenses rose 82% and public order offenses also increased (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

As evidenced above, juvenile arrest rates fluctuate over time. They also vary from state to state. During the decade between 1988 and 1997, juvenile arrests in Hawaii only rose by 3.4%, driven mostly by a 71% rise in violent index offenses. However, between 1993 and 1997 juvenile arrests in the state fell by 12.4% (Table 1)(Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division, 1999).

Table 1: Juvenile Arrest Trends Nationally and Locally

	National	Hawaii
1993-1997	+ 14%	- 12.4%
1988-1997	+ 35%	+ 3.4%

Sources: Snyder & Sickmund, 1999; *Crime in Hawaii*, 1999

Incarceration of juveniles has been used as a response to serious delinquency in the United States since as early as 1824 (Vito, et al., 1998), and has weathered changing rationales from rehabilitation to retribution and back to

rehabilitation. Nationally, between 1979 and 1991, the custody rate² of public, long-term juvenile facilities dropped by 41%. The rate fell 53% in Hawaii during the same time period. In 1997, the U.S. custody rate of youth committed to public institutions was 256 per 100,000. This same year, Hawaii had the second lowest custody rate in the nation (86), surpassed only by Vermont with a rate of 44 (Snyder & Sickmund, 1999).

The Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility

Hawaii has maintained some form of a secure juvenile facility since 1866 (Corrections Division, 1980). After several name and location changes, this institution is currently known as the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) and is located near Kailua on Oahu's windward side. The facility consists primarily of a 30-bed secure building for the most dangerous and serious youth offenders and an outlying cottage for less serious cases. The stated purpose of the HYCF currently is "to provide for the care and custody of those serious, dangerous, and violent juvenile offenders, provide rehabilitative services to aid their successful reintegration into the community and to provide for community safety" (Office of Youth Services, 1999). The current population is approximately 250 juveniles, though many are on parole or furlough and not located at the facility itself.

Adjudicated youth may be committed to the facility by any of the four Family Court Circuits in the state, thereby becoming wards of the state. Commitment lengths range from a few days to commitment until the age of majority (age 18) or until the age of 19, resulting in youths under the jurisdiction of the facility for several years, depending on age at time of adjudication.

A released or discharged ward may be readmitted to the HYCF for the adjudication of a new offense, failure on parole or in a furlough program, or after an escape from the facility.

Method

The last full scale recidivism study conducted on the HYCF was performed by the Youth Development and Research Center at the School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii in 1984 (Nagoshi, et al., 1984). Although much has changed in the sixteen years since the publication of that report, the general design and structure of the report is still applicable today. For that reason, the 1984 report was used as a rough model for the creation of this report. A comparison of some of the major findings of the 1984 report with current findings can be found at the end of the Profile of Recidivates section of this report.

Another research report, *An Inquiry into Youth Crime and Violence in Hawaii: Interim Report to the Twenty-Second Hawaii State Legislature*, published by the University of Hawaii Youth Gang Project (YGP) in March, 2000, was used for comparative purposes as much of the data and analyses were similar to the current

² Based on the number of juveniles between the ages of 10 and the upper age of juvenile court jurisdiction in their jurisdiction of residence. Source: Snyder & Sickmund, 1999.

report. The YGP report focused more acutely on gang affiliation, familial and education characteristics, and gender-related data of a random sample of 116 current wards, while the present report focuses on recidivism measures and a broader demographic profiling.

Two groups of cases were examined for this study. First, demographic data on over 800 cases were collected to provide a statistical profile of youths committed to the facility. This study population consists of all juveniles released from the facility during Calendar Years 1995 through 1999. Second, arrest, adjudication and conviction, and confinement data were collected on a subset of 370 youths who were released between Fiscal Years 1996 and 1998 (July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1998).

Data for the current report were collected from several juvenile and criminal justice system sources:

- Detailed demographic data and detention-related data were collected from the HYCF. These data were kept in three separate filing systems at the facility: archived file folders, Ward Record Cards, and a computerized database consisting of commitment, discharge, and escape logs. The archived folders held an important document, the Pertinent Information Sheet (PIS). This document contained a great deal of official and self-reported demographic data that were crucial to this study.
- Arrest data were collected from county police departments and prosecutor's offices, and from the Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) for juvenile records and the Offender-Based Transaction System/Computerized Criminal History (OBTS/CCH) for adult arrests. The JJIS and the OBTS/CCH are criminal justice databases maintained by the Department of the Attorney General.
- Adjudication and conviction³ data were collected from the Family Court's database (JUSTIS), county police and prosecutors offices, and the OBTS/CCH.
- Confinement information (e.g., HYCF commitments and adult jail or prison sentences) was extracted from the HYCF data and the OBTS/CCH.

Limitations and Issues of Concern

The 1984 recidivism study identified issues and concerns regarding the splintered nature of the HYCF data, "incomplete, inconsistent, and confusing" data retrieved from other agencies, and obvious inconsistencies found throughout all available data. Unfortunately, these problems were discovered to still exist during the data collection process phase of the current study. The data problems centered

³ The terms "adjudication" and "conviction" have the same meaning within the juvenile and criminal justice systems, respectively. For the purposes of this report the term "conviction" will be used hereafter.

around three issues: splintered data, records purging criteria, and the generally questionable nature of some data examined.

First, since no central location was available to retrieve data on the study cohort, it was necessary to collect data from several different sources. These included different county agencies, the Family Court, the HYCF, the JJIS, and the OBTS/CCH. These various sources employ different record keeping standards and practices. Consolidation of collected data into a single data set required a great deal of recoding and deciphering of each source's methods. Additionally, the level of detail varied among data sources, necessitating a data set that reflected the lowest common denominator of available data. For this reason, some data were set aside until such a time when complementary data can be obtained and analyzed.

Within the HYCF data, three records systems made data collection arduous. Archived file folders contained rich demographic data and some institutional information. However, the extraction process for these data was time-consuming. Ward record cards were more easily accessible and contained detailed information on each ward's commitment and release history as well as on paroles, furloughs and escapes. A large amount of data entry time was needed to create a workable data set. Finally, a computerized spreadsheet database was provided containing data on commitments, discharges, and escapes. This is a relatively new system however, and did not contain data on many of the earlier cases in the study cohort.

Second, certain data had been destroyed due to the purging criteria of the Family Courts (Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division, 2000) and the timeframe of the study's focus. Fortunately, this applied only to a small number of cases. Steps were taken to assure that the deletion of these cases did not skew the results. However, this issue raises the larger question of balancing the need to perform juvenile justice research using archival data and the sometimes stringent juvenile records purging criteria mandated by law. Currently, it is only possible to conduct such a study on cases less than five years old.

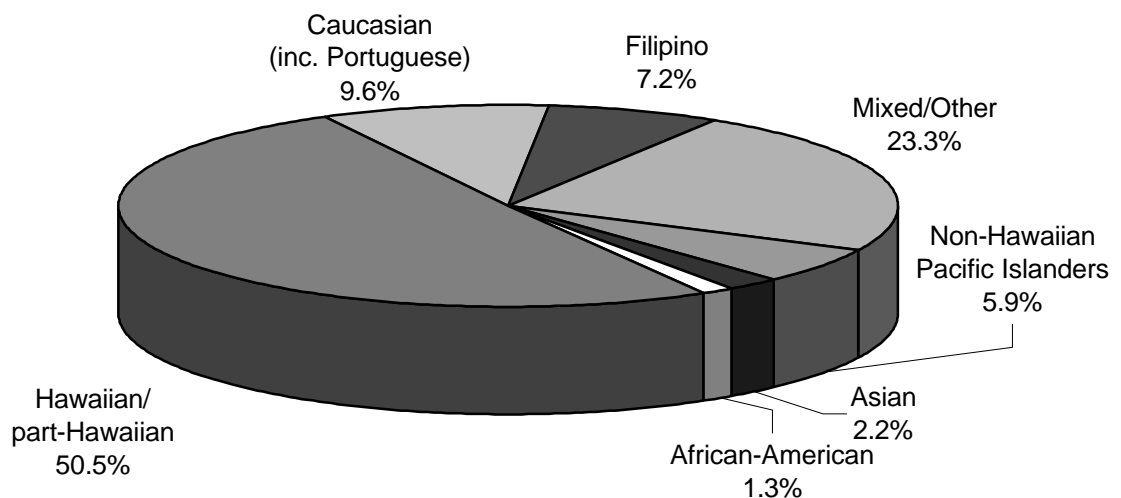
Finally, and perhaps most importantly, is the questionable nature of some of the data that were collected. Some data were obviously incomplete, bringing into question the accuracy of the information that was provided. For example, the arrest data extracted from the JJIS showed zero arrests prior to an HYCF commitment for several cases. Since data such as these do not make logical sense, it was decided to postpone analysis until such time when each case can be double-checked for errors. In this case, it meant simply notating whether an individual was arrested after release from custody, rather than counting and categorizing those arrests or providing a breakdown of pre-commitment arrests. Reported recidivism rates would almost certainly rise upon analysis of more complete data.

Profile of Committed Youths

The following is a profile of youths committed to the HYCF, highlighting demographic and personal characteristics. This profile is taken from 805 cases representing youth released at least once from the HYCF during the Calendar Years of 1995 through 1999. These cases range from one-time commitments of a few days to multiple commitments and minority sentences. The earliest commitment date of this group of juveniles was August 9, 1991 and the latest occurred November 10, 1999. All figures represent percentages of known responses. Percentages of missing data for each variable are provided in the endnotes.

Of the 805 cases examined, 83.4% were male and 16.6% were female. An analysis of self-reported ethnic makeup (Figure 1) found 50.5% to be Hawaiian or part-Hawaiian, 23.3% of mixed or other ethnicity, 9.6% Caucasian (including Portuguese), 7.2% Filipino, 5.9% other Pacific Islanders, 2.2% Asian, and 1.3% African Americanⁱ.

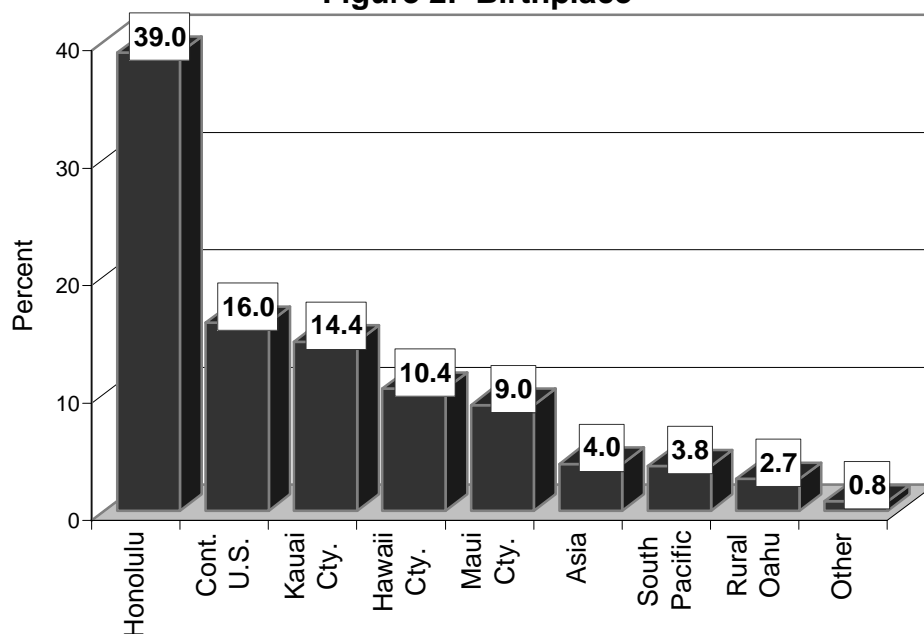
Figure 1: Ethnicity



A large proportion of these youth were born in the city of Honolulu, 39.0%. Others were born in the Continental U.S. (16.0%), Kauai County (14.4%), Hawaii County (10.4%), Maui County (9.0%), Asia (including Japan and the Philippines) (4.0%), the South Pacific (3.8%), and rural Oahu (2.7%)(Figure 2)ⁱⁱ.

Sixty-six (10.4%) cases had no siblings. Others had between one and twelve siblings with the following breakdown: 19.0% had one sibling, 42.0% had 2 or 3 siblings, 20.4% had 4 or 5 siblings, and 8.2% had 6 or moreⁱⁱⁱ.

Figure 2: Birthplace



The highest level of schooling achieved before the youth's last commitment ranged from seventh grade to graduation of high school. The greatest proportion of youth were committed during their ninth grade year, 43.2%, and their tenth grade year, 23.8%. Eleventh grade commitments accounted for 12.3% of cases and twelfth grade for 6.7%. Thus, the vast majority of commitments (86.0%) occurred during high school years^{iv}.

Substance Use

Youth committed to the HYCF are asked about their substance use history upon intake. An analysis of those responses revealed that 84.2% claimed to have used marijuana, 81.7% to have used alcohol, and 32.5% to have used crystal methamphetamine (or "ice"). When asked the age at which their substance use began, responses ranged from 5 to 18 years old. The highest proportion, 49.1%, began using between the ages of 13 and 15; 37.6% began between ages 10 and 12^v. An astonishing 9.2% of wards began substance use at ten years old or younger.

Other Characteristics

Current or former gang membership was reported for 20.5% of the cases. Assaultive history was marked for 66.1% of the cases, however this field illustrates the questionable nature of the self-reported data found in the HYCF files. It was noticed during data collection that some cases were said to have no assaultive history, when the juvenile's current or former commitments were for the charge of assault. A field on the Pertinent Information Sheet (PIS) chronicling histories of runaways and escapes from home or various service programs was also included in the HYCF files. Nearly sixty percent (59.2%) of cases examined were found to have

one or more runaways or escapes. It should be noted that this information differs from that contained in the HYCF escape logs, which will be discussed later.

Nine suicide risk indicators were found on the PIS. These include previous suicide attempts, suicide in the family, obsession with death, talks about killing self, withdrawn, recent loss or breakup with significant person, bizarre and/or inappropriate behavior, feels that s/he is a lost cause, and previous psychiatric intervention. A count was made of the number of indicators marked in each case to give a rough idea of the level of suicide risk. No indicators were marked in 39.8% of cases, while 49.3% had between one and three indicators marked. The remaining 10.9% of cases examined had between 4 and 9 indicators marked.

Of the 134 female wards examined, eleven (8.5%) were pregnant at the time of commitment, 9.2% had a history of pregnancy (previous birth, terminated pregnancy, or miscarriage). There was an unconfirmed suspicion of pregnancy in 6.9% of females at time of commitment.

Significant Relationships Between Delinquent Behaviors and Ethnicity, Gender, and Birthplace

Crosstabulations were performed between gender, ethnicity, and birthplace variables and the other demographic variables collected. Many of these crosstabulations revealed statistically significant relationships between the variables (Table 2). Some of the more prominent correlations will be discussed below.

Table 2: Significant Relationships Between Variables⁴

	Ethnicity	Gender	Birthplace
Marijuana Use	.000	NS	.000
Alcohol Use	.000	.013	.000
Ice Use	.000	.001	.000
Gang Member	.000	.000	.000
Suicide Indicators	.000	.001	.000
Assaultive History	NS	.000	.000
Escapes/Runaways	NS	.000	.001

NS=Not Significant

Ethnicity

While ethnicity was found to have a statistically significant relationship with all of the examined variables except for assaultive history and escapes/runaways, some results are more striking than others. For example, 81.7% of wards claimed to have

⁴ A conservative criterion of .05 for statistical significance was chosen for this study. Relationships between variables with a level of significance below the .05 level may be understood as having less than a 5% likelihood of having occurred merely by chance. In Table 2, a value of .000 indicates less than a 0.1% likelihood that the relationship between variables is due to chance. Thus, the smaller the reported value for statistical significance, the greater the likelihood that the relationship between variables is a meaningful one.

used alcohol at some point. Far above this percentage, 93.6% of youth in the non-Hawaiian Pacific Islander ethnicity category claimed alcohol use compared to 83.2% of Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians. As for “ice” usage, 38.6% of Filipino wards and 35.6% of Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian wards claimed to have used the substance, compared to the overall percentage of 32.5%.

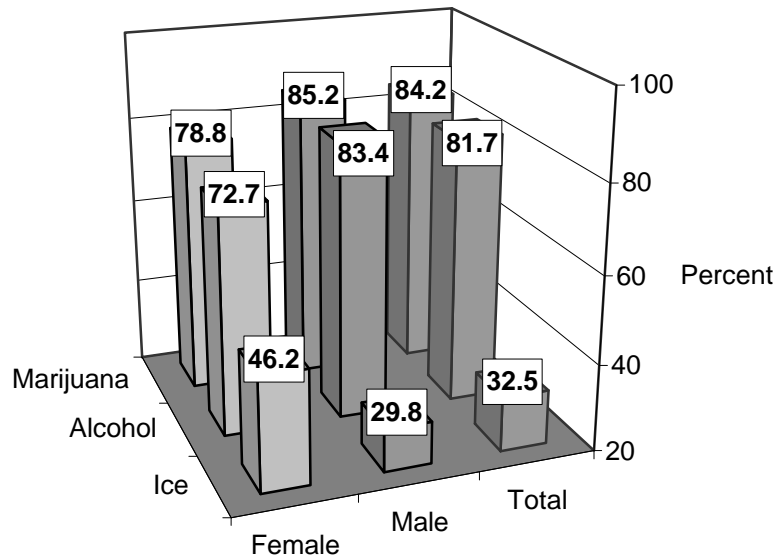
Gang membership is also strongly correlated with ethnicity. This is not surprising, as many gangs base their membership on ethnic identification. Non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders were three times as likely to be members of gangs (61.7% currently or formerly belonging to a gang) compared to only 20.5% of the 805 total study cases. Also more likely to belong to a gang were African-Americans (40.0%) and Filipinos (28.1%).

Gender

Gender is not significantly related to marijuana use, age of first substance use, or last school grade achieved, but attains statistical significance in all other examined relationships.

While males were more likely to have used alcohol than were females (83.4% versus 72.7%, respectively), females were more likely to have used “ice” than were males (46.2% versus 29.8%)(Figure 3).

Figure 3: Substance Use and Gender



Females were also more likely to have one or more suicide risk indicators notated on their Pertinent Information Sheet. A staggering 76.9% of female wards had at least one suicide indicator, as compared to 56.9% of males.

Escapes and/or runaways from home or other programs were also more likely to be committed by female wards (83.3%) than by males (54.6%).

Birthplace

Wards born in Honolulu were most likely to have used marijuana (88.2%) or alcohol (86.2%). Wards born in rural Oahu were the most likely to have used ice (52.4%).

Youth from the South Pacific (40.0%) and those born in Asia (38.7%) were most likely to be associated with a gang. One-third of wards born in rural Oahu claimed some gang affiliation.

An assaultive history was recorded for 81.0% of committed youths born in rural Oahu, 80.0% born in the South Pacific, and 71.4% born in Honolulu.

Commitment-Related Data

The study cases represent a wide range of youth with an equally wide range of experience and contact with the juvenile justice system. Commitment-related data were gathered for 370 juveniles released from the HYCF during Fiscal Years 1996 through 1998. Of these, the majority, 59.5%, were committed to the facility only once. Of the remaining 150 cases, 70% were committed twice, 22% were committed three times, and 8% had four or more commitments.

First Commitment

First commitment dates for examined cases ranged from March, 1991 to June, 1998. Offenses against persons accounted for 38.7%, technical probation violations or revocations (e.g., missed appointments, failed urinalysis, failure to meet the conditions of probation, etc.) for 27.0%, property offenses for 26.2%, drug offenses for 1.9%, status offenses for 1.1%, and other offenses⁵ for 5.2% (Figure 4).

Offenses against persons were further broken into severe and less severe subcategories. Offenses such as robbery, assault, kidnapping, and extortion comprised the severe category, while offenses such as harassment and terroristic threatening comprised the less severe category. This is not meant to imply that these crimes are not traumatic for the victim, but rather to give an idea of the level of violence for each offense since it is impossible to determine the statute level of severity at this time.

For first-time commitments for an offense against a person, 78.0% were for the more severe crimes such as assault, robbery and the like, while 21.8% were for less severe offenses.

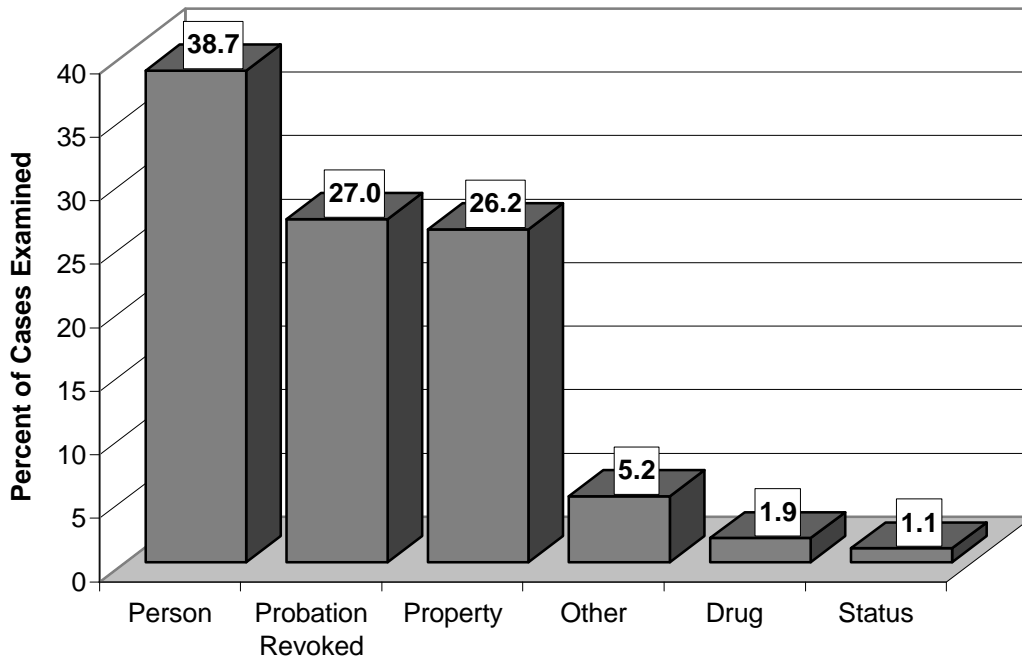
Sentence lengths for first-time commitments ranged from four days to custody until the age of nineteen. Sentences of 30 days or less accounted for 34.3% of

⁵ Other offenses include Criminal Contempt of Court, weapons violations, driving offenses, and public order offenses. Due to the low number of cases, these were consolidated into one category.

cases; 31 to 365 days for 45.1%; minority commitments (age 18) for 13.5%; and commitments until age 19 for 6.2%. The majority of wards served out their full sentence (74.4%), while 14.8% served between 51% and 99%, and 10.8% served fifty percent or less.

Juveniles between the ages of 15 and 17 comprised 71.7% of first-time commitments. Eighteen and nineteen year-olds accounted for 9.9%, and thirteen and fourteen year-olds for 18.4%.

Figure 4: Offense Type of First Commitment



Wards were sent to the HYCF from each of Hawaii’s four counties (Table 3). Of first-time commitments, 57.5% came from the City and County of Honolulu, 16.9% from Kauai County, 13.6% from Hawaii County, and 12.0% from Maui County. As shown in the table, the City and County of Honolulu was under-represented in commitments while Kauai County was over-represented. Hawaii and Maui Counties were close to proportional representation. This issue is explored further in the “Profile of Recidivates” section.

Table 3: Comparison of County Juvenile Populations and HYCF Commitments

	Average Juvenile Population ⁶	% of State Juvenile Population	Committed to HYCF during study period	% of First-Time Commitments
State of Hawaii	126,510	100	367	100
Honolulu County	89,115	70.4	211	57.5
Maui County	13,479	10.7	44	12.0
Hawaii County	17,364	13.7	50	13.6
Kauai County	6,551	5.2	62	16.9

Second and Third Commitments

A comparison of offense types for first, second, and third commitments show differences between percentages of youth committed for the various offense types (Table 4). Property offenses were consistently represented across subsequent commitments while a steady increase in commitments for probation revocations or violations was seen from first to third commitments. Juveniles committed for the second or third time were also more likely to be charged with a drug offense or other offense, however commitments for offenses against persons decreased with each subsequent commitment.

Table 4: Commitment Number by Type of Offense (percent committed)

	Person	Property	Probation Revo/Vio	Drug	Other	Status Offenses
First Commitment	38.7	26.2	27.0	1.9	5.2	1.1
Second Commitment	27.4	27.1	31.5	2.1	11.0	0
Third Commitment	17.9	25.6	41.0	5.1	10.3	0

It is logical that a greater percentage of second and third commitments are for probation revocations and violations, drug offenses, and other types of offenses, as those who have been released from the facility on probation are probably more likely to be detected and prosecuted for less serious offenses. In these cases, behavior that might be handled unofficially or even overlooked becomes a probation or parole violation which could lead to revocation. Also, those who are not on probation status upon release are more likely to be sent to the HYCF for less serious offenses simply due to their juvenile histories.

The fact that recommitments are less likely to be for offenses against a person may be indicative of the nature of those types of crimes – that they are often one-time, situational crimes, unlike property or drug offenses. Those who are recommitted for person crimes are probably individuals for whom violent behavior is more chronic and habitual and may escalate over time. In fact, for those committed for offenses against a person, 78.0% were for the more severe offenses for first-time

⁶ Average of 1996-1997 population estimates of persons between age 10 and 17 years old. Source: Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, State of Hawaii.

commitments, while 72.5% were for the more severe offenses for second commitments, and 85.7% for third commitments. This represents a slight drop in percentage points from the first commitment to the second, and a substantial increase for third commitments.

Sentence lengths also show variation across first and subsequent commitments (Table 5). The highest proportion of wards were committed to the facility for a period between 31 and 365 days. This remains constant from the first to the third commitment. However, commitments of 30 days or less decline dramatically between the first and third commitments while minority commitments increase. These findings are not surprising, as youth committed for a second or third time would be expected to receive lengthier sentences.

Table 5: Commitment Number by Sentence Length (percent committed)

	30 days or less	31 to 365 days	age 18	age 19
First Commitment	34.3	45.1	13.5	6.2
Second Commitment	11.3	43.7	29.8	15.2
Third Commitment	6.7	46.7	33.3	13.3

Parole was granted to 34.9% of wards. Of those, most were granted parole only once. Parolees were a little less than 50% likely to be returned at least once from parole. About half of those were returned only once (Table 6).

Table 6: Number of Paroles compared to Parole Returns (percent)

Count	Paroles	Parole Returns*
0	65.1	50.7
1	19.5	24.6
2	6.8	8.5
3	3.2	9.2
4 or more	5.4	7.0

*Figures derived from 34.9% of youth who were paroled.

Escapes and Misconduct Reports

About one-sixth (16.9%) of the study cohort, 62 wards, had escaped from the facility at least once. Of the escapees, 61.3% escaped only once and 38.7% escaped two or more times.

Misconduct reports provide an official record of wards' rule violations at the HYCF. About half (49.5%) of the examined juveniles received no misconduct reports during their commitments. One or more misconduct reports were given to 39.2%, eleven to twenty reports to 6.7%, and 20 or more reports to 4.6% of the wards.

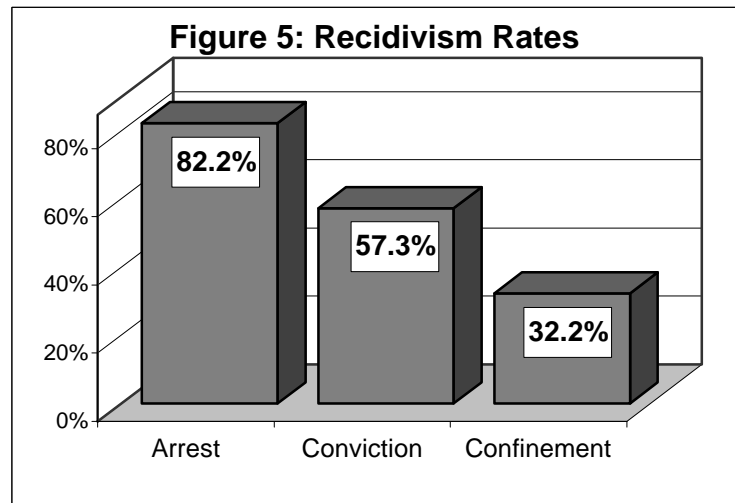
Recidivism

The recidivism rate was calculated for 370 juveniles released from the HYCF between Fiscal Years 1996-1998 (July 1, 1995 - June 30,1998). The wards were tracked for precisely twenty-four months following their last release date within the study period. Recidivism was measured on three levels representing increased involvement within the justice system: arrest recidivism, adjudication or conviction recidivism, and confinement recidivism.

Arrest Recidivism

Data obtained from the Department of the Attorney General's Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS) were combined with data received from some of the county police departments and the Department of the Attorney General's Offender-Based Transaction System/Computerized Criminal History (OBTS/CCH) to determine whether any arrests, as a juvenile or an adult, followed each ward's last HYCF release during the study period. Of the 370 juveniles examined in this part of the study, 304 were arrested at least once within two years of that date, for an overall **arrest recidivism rate of 82.2%**.

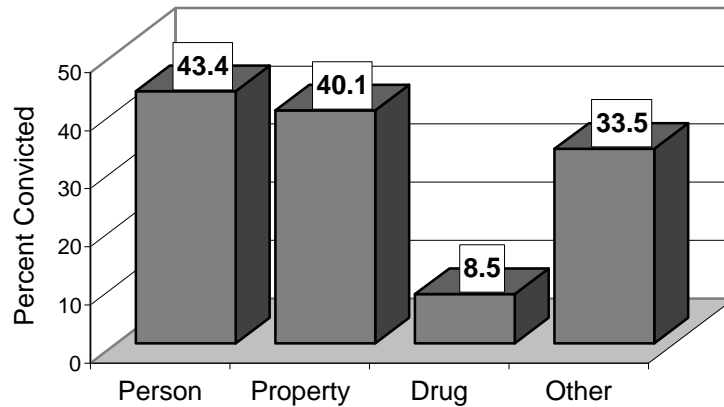
Unfortunately, at the time of this report, data sufficient to provide a breakdown of arrest types and severities had not been collected and examined. This was due to differences in record-keeping and data accessibility between the four counties and the time constraints of the project. It is hoped that this type of analysis can be provided in the final report of this two-year project.



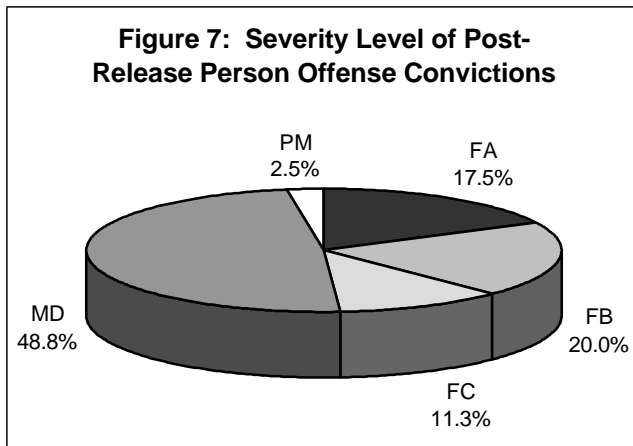
Conviction Recidivism

Data obtained from the Family Court's database, JUSTIS, and the OBTS/CCH were used to determine if the wards had any subsequent adjudications in the juvenile justice system or convictions in the criminal justice system during the two-year follow up period. It was found that 212 of the 370 examined cases showed at least one adjudication or conviction, for an overall **conviction recidivism rate of 57.3%**.

Figure 6: Post-Release Convictions by Offense Type

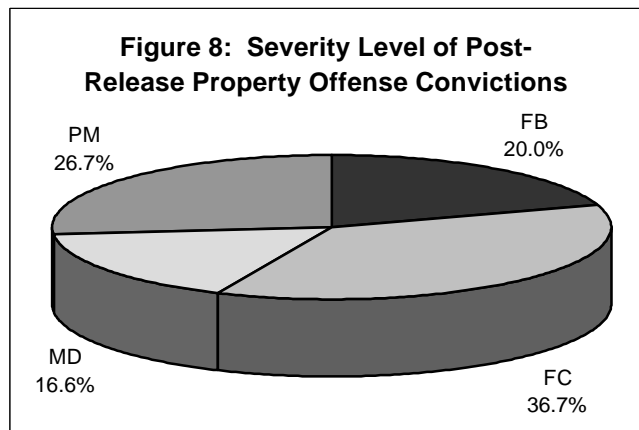


Of the 212 released wards who were convicted within two years of their HYCF release, 43.4% were charged with crimes against persons, 40.1% with property crimes, 8.5% with drug offenses, and 33.5% with other offenses⁷ (Figure 6).



Slightly more than half of those convicted of a person offense following release, 51.3%, were charged with a misdemeanor or petty misdemeanor, typically for

harassment, terroristic threatening, or lower levels of assault. Nearly the same percentage of person offenders were found guilty of felony-level offenses, of which 17.5% were convicted on Felony A charges (Figure 7)⁸. Felony A severity offenses against a person are the most serious of violent crimes, including murder, kidnapping, and first degree sexual assault.



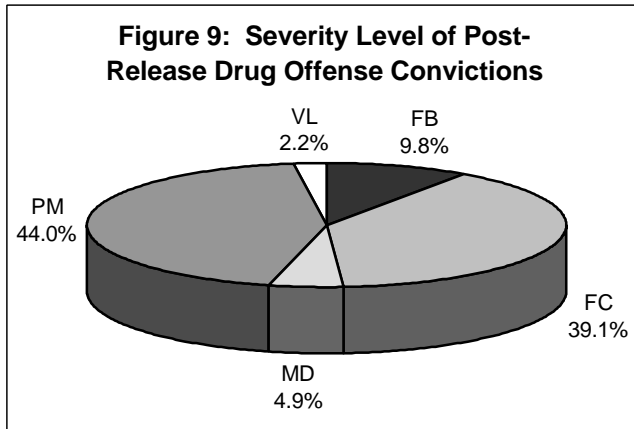
The 40.1% of conviction recidivates found guilty of property crimes were most likely to be

⁷ In this analysis, “other” offenses are those that are not encompassed by the other three categories. These include a wide range of offenses, from criminal contempt of court to driving without a license and more. Due to the nature of the data collected, it was not possible to subcategorize these offenses.

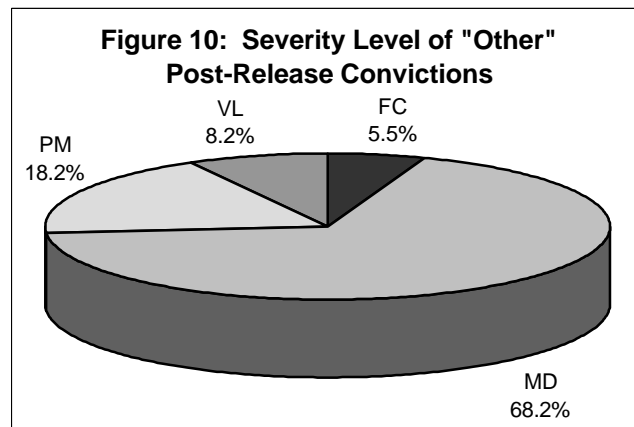
⁸ Legend for Figures 7-10: FA= Felony A; FB= Felony B; FC= Felony C; MD= Misdemeanor; PM= Petty Misdemeanor; VL= Violation.

convicted at the Felony B or C level (20% and 36.7%, respectively). Less than half (43.3%) were convicted of property crimes at the misdemeanor or petty misdemeanor levels (Figure 8).

Only 18 (or 8.5%) of the 212 conviction recidivates were found guilty of drug offenses. The majority of the drug cases, 44%, were at the petty misdemeanor level. Slightly more, 48.9%, were felony convictions, mostly at the Felony C level (Figure 9).



While the “other” conviction category is a broad one, the fact that 94.6% of these offenses occurred at or below the misdemeanor level bolsters the theory that these encompass mostly traffic offenses and administrative offenses such as criminal contempt of court (Figure 10).



Confinement Recidivism

Wards who were recommitted to the HYCF as juveniles or confined in jail or prison as adults during the two-year period following their last HYCF discharge during FY 96-98 were recorded as confinement recidivates. One hundred nineteen of the 370 examined records showed a period of confinement during the two-year period, for an overall **confinement recidivism rate of 32.2%**.

Interestingly, only two of the 119 confinement recidivates were both re-committed to the HYCF and confined as adults. Forty-three of the confinement recidivates, or 36.1%, were sentenced to another term at the HYCF while 78 (65.6%) were sent to jail or prison as adults. When the age at the beginning of the study's follow-up period is examined, it is not surprising that nearly twice the number of individuals re-committed during the follow up period were confined as adults, as over

half of the confinement recidivates were 18 or 19 years old on that date (Table 7). Relatedly, analysis of the age breakdown between juvenile and adult confinement recidivates indicates that the younger the age at the beginning of the follow-up period, the less likely an individual was to be confined as an adult, as one would expect.

Table 7: Age at Release by Confinement Recidivism (percent)

Age at release	14	15	16	17	18	19
Recommitted to HYCF	18.6	25.6	39.5	9.3	4.7	2.3
Confined as Adult	0	0	5.1	14.1	51.3	29.5

Three-quarters (75.0%) of the wards re-confined at HYCF were returned for committing new offenses; one-quarter (25.0%) were returned for technical parole or probation violations.

Profile of Recidivates

Analyzing recidivism on arrest, conviction, and confinement levels allows for an interesting examination of HYCF wards' interaction with the justice system. In this section, a comparison of the data presented earlier with each type of recidivism demonstrates how the characteristics or experiences of these individuals are related to subsequent recidivism and how the relationships between variables may change as cases move through the justice system.

The relationships between twelve demographic/institutional characteristics and one or more recidivism measures are statistically significant. Further, the relationships between four of these characteristics and all three recidivism measures attain statistical significance (Table 8).

Table 8: Relationships between Demographic/Institutional Characteristics and Recidivism Measures*

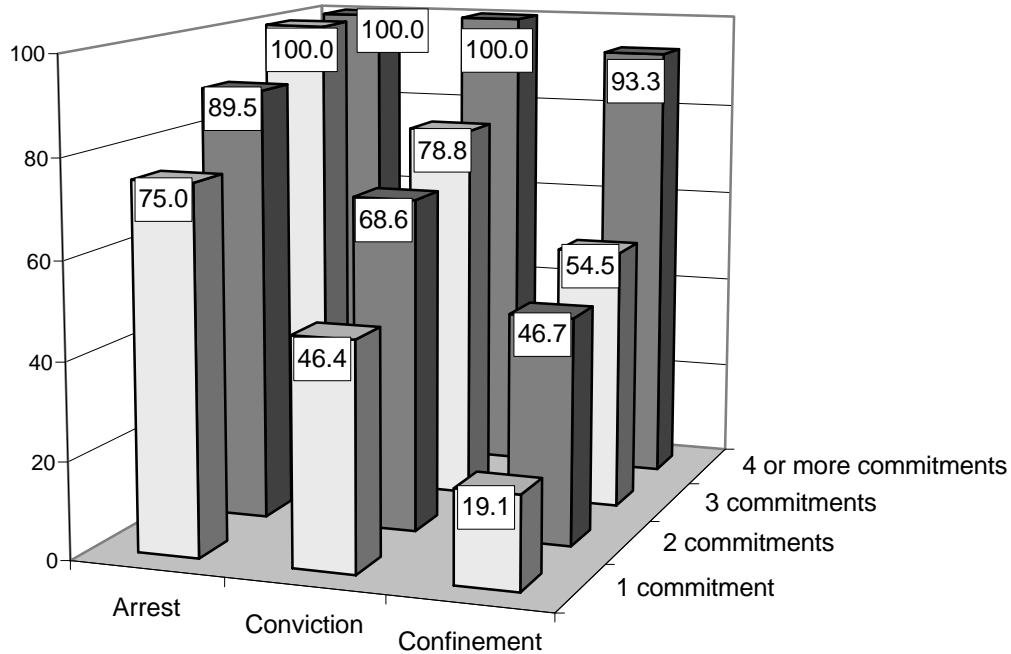
	Arrest Recidivism	Conviction Recidivism	Confinement Recidivism
Number of Commitments	.001	.000	.000
First Commitment Sentence	.387	.105	.004
Percent of First Commitment Served	.227	.240	.014
Number of Paroles	.107	.036	.000
Number of Parole Returns	.049	.031	.000
Number of Escapes	.022	.001	.000
Runaways	.012	.130	.416
Number of Misconducts	.000	.000	.000
Marijuana Use	.058	.047	.079
Age First Used Substance	.042	.532	.031
Suicide Indicators	.790	.027	.237
Number of Siblings	.044	.734	.718

*Statistically significant values are those at or below the 0.05 level (see explanation of statistical significance on page 11).

Number of Commitments

The total number of HYCF commitments for each ward is significantly related to all three measures of recidivism. That is, the greater the number of total commitments a juvenile had, the more likely s/he was to be arrested, convicted, or re-confined after release from the HYCF. Alarmingly, one hundred percent of those with three or more total commitments (45 cases) were rearrested during the two-year follow up period (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Comparison of Total Commitments and Recidivism Rates (percent)



Further exploration of these data reveals several other significant relationships between the total number of commitments and other variables. First, it is important to note that each of the four variables that are significantly related to all three recidivism measures – number of commitments, number of parole returns, number of escapes, and number of misconduct reports – is also significantly related to the other three. These relationships seem logical in that wards committed to the facility more than once have more opportunities to escape, to be reprimanded for misconducts, and to return from parole. It also shows that certain youths demonstrate across-the-board patterns of delinquent/criminal behavior. Since each of these variables demonstrates a connection to recidivism, it is important to recognize their connection to each other and to the post-release behavior of juveniles.

The County/Circuit from which a ward was sentenced to his or her first HYCF commitment is related to the total number of commitments the ward will likely serve; it is evident that wards sentenced from certain jurisdictions are more or less likely to eventually serve more than one term at the HYCF. While 26% of those sentenced from Hawaii County and 37% from Honolulu County received more than one term, 53.2% sentenced from Kauai County and 59.1% from Maui County were sentenced to HYCF two or more times (Table 9).

Table 9: Total Number of Commitments by County of Commitment (percent within County)

Number of Commitments	C & C of Honolulu	Maui County	Hawaii County	Kauai County
1	63.0	40.9	74.0	46.8
2	26.1	43.2	22.0	32.3
3	10.9	15.9	4.0	20.9

Another important relationship exists between the total number of commitments and the use of crystal methamphetamine. Those who claimed prior use of the drug were significantly more likely to be committed to the facility more than once (51.4% versus 32.7% for users and non-users, respectively).

Statistically significant relationships also exist between the number of commitments and the following variables:

- ethnicity
- first-term sentence length
- second-term sentence length
- assaultive history
- birthplace
- number of visitors at the facility
- number of paroles

Number of Parole Returns

The number of parole returns for each ward is significantly related to all three measures of recidivism. It can be surmised that failure on parole demonstrates, at least to some degree, an inability or unwillingness on the part of the individual to conform to the demands of the juvenile justice system. It is not surprising, then, that those who were returned to the HYCF from parole were very likely to be re-arrested, re-convicted, and re-confined during the two-year follow up period. In fact, nearly all of the cases with one or more parole returns were re-arrested, and nearly three-fourths of those same cases were re-convicted during this time frame (Table 10).

Table 10: Number of Parole Returns by Recidivism Rates (percent)

Number of Parole Returns	Number of Wards	Arrest Recidivism	Conviction Recidivism	Confinement Recidivism
none	305	79.0	53.8	26.6
1	31	100	74.2	54.8
2	12	91.7	58.3	41.7
3	12	100	91.3	83.3
4 or more	10	91.7	72.2	63.9
entire study group	370	82.2	57.3	32.2

Number of Escapes

Another obvious measure of non-compliant behavior is the number of escapes from the facility. Again, this variable is significantly related to arrest, conviction, and confinement recidivism rates. Of the 24 cases with two or more escapes, 100% were re-arrested, 91.7% were re-convicted, and 79.2% were re-confined after release from the HYCF. The re-confinement rate for those with two or more escapes (79.2%) is nearly two and a half times that of the overall confinement recidivism rate of 32.2% (Table 11).

Table 11: Number of Escapes by Recidivism Rates (percent)

Number of Escapes	Number of Wards	Arrest Recidivism	Conviction Recidivism	Confinement Recidivism
none	305	80.0	54.1	26.9
1	38	89.5	65.8	47.4
2 or more	24	100	91.7	79.2
entire study group	367	82.2	57.3	32.2

A closer look at escapes from the facility shows that 80.7% of escapees fled from off-grounds locations on their first escape. These include outside placements like the Bobby Benson Center, Hui Ola, and furloughs, among others. However, a crucial difference between parole and furlough status is that furloughed wards are still counted as wards of the facility and therefore are charged with escape, a felony charge, if they run. On the other hand, parolees are not counted among the HYCF population and may only receive a parole violation for leaving their assigned residence. Also, though the numbers are small for second and third escapes (24 and 9, respectively), escapees were increasingly likely to escape from the grounds of the facility with each subsequent escape. Most commonly, on-grounds escapes were from worklines, kitchen details, and the Olomana Cottage.

The placement of boys and girls probably plays an important part in the relationship between gender and number of escapes. The study results show that female wards are more likely than their male counterparts to escape from the facility. This is probably due to the fact that all females are housed outside of the secured section of the facility, primarily in the Hookipa Cottage, thus allowing more escape opportunities. This is an easy explanation of the statistically significant relationship between escapes and gender, but it should still be noted that female wards pose a proportionally greater escape risk.

Number of Reported Misconducts

Over half of the study cases show one or more reports for misconducts. The number of misconduct reports received is also related to all three recidivism measures (Table 12). As shown, wards with one or more misconduct reports have higher than average recidivism rates for each recidivism measure.

Table 12: Number of Misconducts by Recidivism Rates (percent)

Number of Misconducts	Number of Wards	Arrest Recidivism	Conviction Recidivism	Confinement Recidivism
none	169	72.8	49.1	20.7
1-10	155	87.7	58.7	35.5
11-20	27	96.3	77.8	59.3
21 or more	17	100	100	76.5
entire study group	368	82.2	57.3	32.2

As with parole returns and escapes, the number of reported misconducts is significantly related to the total number of commitments and the sentence lengths for each commitment. It follows that the more time a juvenile spends under the jurisdiction of the facility, the more opportunity he or she has to misbehave, escape, or fail on parole. The converse of this logic is true also, in that wards who misbehave, escape, and fail on parole will spend more time under HYCF jurisdiction. Two other variables show an interesting relationship to the number of misconducts.

First, the number of suicide risk indicators marked on the Pertinent Information Sheet varies with the number of reported misconducts. Indicators such as previous suicide attempts, an obsession with death, or a recent loss or breakup with a significant person are possibly the same issues or characteristics that lead to non-compliant behaviors at the facility.

Second, the number of family visitors to the facility for each ward is related to the number of misconducts per ward. However, this relationship is counterintuitive in that wards with no family visitors during their commitments were the most likely to receive zero misconduct reports. Most likely, a third variable, possibly sentence length or total number of commitments, accounts for this relationship.

Number of Paroles

The number of paroles is significantly related to conviction recidivism and confinement recidivism. Rather intuitively, as the number of paroles for each case increases so does the likelihood of being found guilty on future charges and for being confined for those offenses.

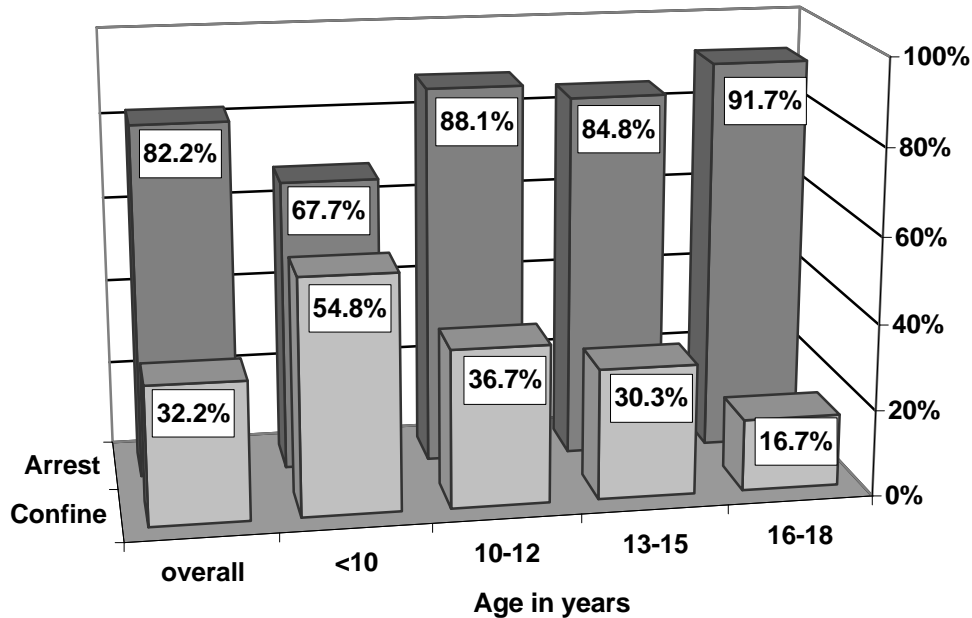
Table 13: Number of Paroles by Conviction and Confinement Recidivism Rates (percent)

Number of Paroles	Number of Wards	Conviction Recidivism	Confinement Recidivism
none	241	51.9	24.5
1	72	63.9	37.5
2	25	68.0	52.0
3 or more	32	83.8	72.1
entire study group	370	57.3	32.2

Age at First Substance Use

The self-reported age at first substance use (including marijuana, alcohol, “ice”, inhalants, or use of any other intoxicant) show a statistically significant relationship to arrest recidivism and confinement recidivism. Curiously, those who began substance use at a later age were significantly more likely to be re-arrested after their HYCF release, while those who began at a younger age were more likely to be re-confined (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Age at First Substance Use by Arrest and Confinement Recidivism (percent within age groups)



First Commitment Sentence Length

The sentence length juveniles receive upon their first commitment to the HYCF is significantly related to the confinement recidivism rate. Nearly 23% of the wards who spent 30 days or less at the facility for their first commitment were re-confined within the two-year follow up period; this is well below the overall confinement recidivism rate of 32.2% (Table 14). Those who were sentenced to 31 to 365 days were slightly more likely to be re-confined (39.6%). However, 50% of wards sentenced to the age of majority and 43.5% of those committed until age 19 were confinement recidivates.

Table 14: First Commitment Sentence Length by Confinement Recidivism Rate (percent)

First Commitment Sentence Length	Confinement Recidivism
30 days or less	22.8
31-365 days	39.6
age 18	50.0
age 19	43.5
overall rate	32.2

The first commitment sentence length is significantly related to many other variables. One of the most striking relationships is between the sentence length and ethnicity (Table 15). Youth in the Mixed/Other category were most likely to receive minority or age 19 sentences upon their first commitment to the facility. This category is problematic in that it covers such a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, accounts for 22.9% of all first-time commitments, and makes up the second largest ethnic category. However, other significant ethnic disparities are still evident. For example, 50.0% of Filipinos received a first-time sentence of 30 days or less, while 61.5% of non-Hawaiian Pacific Islanders were sentenced to a term of between 31 and 365 days; both figures are well outside the normal range.

Table 15: First Commitment Sentence Length by Ethnicity (percent within Ethnicity)

	30 days or less	31-365 days	age 18	age 19
Hawaiian/part-Hawaiian	37.4	41.6	14.7	5.8
Filipino	50.0	36.4	9.1	4.5
Caucasian	28.0	44.0	20.0	8.0
Pacific Islanders	19.2	61.5	7.7	11.5
Asian	36.4	45.5	18.2	0.0
Mixed/Other	12.4	6.7	30.3	50.1
Overall	34.3	45.1	13.5	6.2

The county of commitment is also related to the first commitment sentence length (Table 16). Kauai County sent 56.5% of its first-time commitments during the study period to the facility for 30 days or less, compared to just 27.0% from the City and County of Honolulu. At the same time, the City and County of Honolulu committed 18.5% of cases to the age of majority for their first commitment, compared to the relatively low 1.6% minority commitment rate of Kauai County. Also notable in this comparison are the comparatively high proportion of Hawaii County cases that were sentenced to majority or age 19 for a first-time commitment.

Table 16: First Commitment Sentence Length and County of Commitment (percent within County)

	30 days or less	31-365 days	age 18	age 19
Honolulu County	27.0	48.3	18.5	6.2
Maui County	38.6	54.5	4.5	2.3
Hawaii County	36.0	36.0	16.0	12.0
Kauai County	56.5	37.1	1.6	4.8

Other variables significantly related to the first commitment sentence length include substance use characteristics, gang affiliation, assaultive history, sexual abuse history, and suicide risk indicators. It is possible that youths with deficiencies in these areas tend to commit comparatively more serious, or simply more, offenses, thus prompting longer sentence lengths.

A commitment to the HYCF represents a crucial period in a youth's experience with the juvenile justice system. For that reason, and since the sentence length of that first commitment is related to the individual's likelihood to be re-incarcerated, it is important to scrutinize this topic.

Percent of First Term Served

Wards may be released from custody before serving out their full sentence at the facility. Often it may be specified by the court that the youth is eligible for early release to a treatment program or to the custody of a qualified guardian. Also, the ward may be granted parole after serving only a small portion of the given term. For this reason, only 74.4% of the examined cases served out the entirety of their sentence at the facility. Interestingly, those who served between three-quarters and one hundred percent of their sentences have confinement recidivism rates very close to the overall rate of 32.2%. Those who were released after serving between 51 and 75 percent of their terms were the most likely (53.8%) to be re-confined during the two-year follow up period. Only six wards who were released before serving at least half of their first sentence were confinement recidivists. The fact that these individuals were selected for such early release most likely indicates their low-risk status and helps to explain their lower confinement recidivism rate.

Runaways

The Pertinent Information Sheet contains a field listing "runaway and escape" histories from locations other than the grounds of the HYCF facility, referring instead to runaways from home, residential placements, treatment centers, etc.. Due to the widely varying details provided in this field, it was decided to simply distinguish between those with a runaway history and those without. It was found that this variable is significantly related to arrest recidivism; those with one or more runaways had an arrest recidivism rate of 85.5%, as compared to 74.8% for those without runaway histories.

Marijuana Use

Prior marijuana use (self-reported) is statistically related to conviction recidivism. Of those who claimed no prior marijuana use, 42.5% were conviction recidivists, versus nearly sixty percent (59.8%) of those who reported using the substance.

Suicide Risk Indicators

Wards who were identified as having one or more suicide risk indicators were more likely to be re-convicted within two years of release from the facility (59.7% versus 55.2%, for those with and without suicide risk indicators, respectively). This relationship is statistically significant.

Number of Siblings

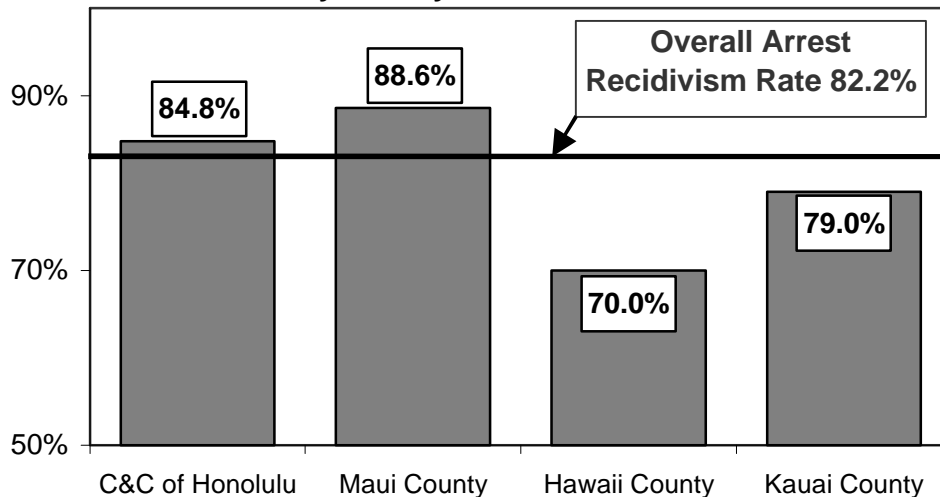
Although the number of siblings for each ward is significantly related to arrest recidivism, no discernable pattern is apparent. That is, an increase in number of siblings does not correspond with a rise or drop in the arrest recidivism rate. It should be noted, however, that all of the 19 wards with six or more siblings were arrest recidivists.

County of Commitment

Though narrowly missing the .05 significance standard used by this study (.051), the county of commitment presents an interesting look at how recidivism rates differ between jurisdictions.

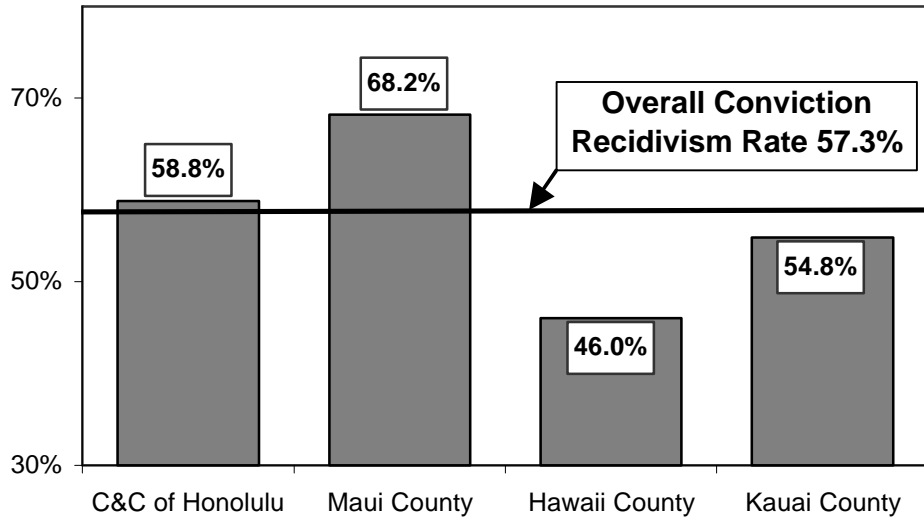
The City and County of Honolulu (84.8%) and Maui County (88.6%) have arrest recidivism rates above the overall rate of 82.2%. Hawaii and Kauai Counties' arrest recidivism rates are below the overall rate (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Arrest Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment



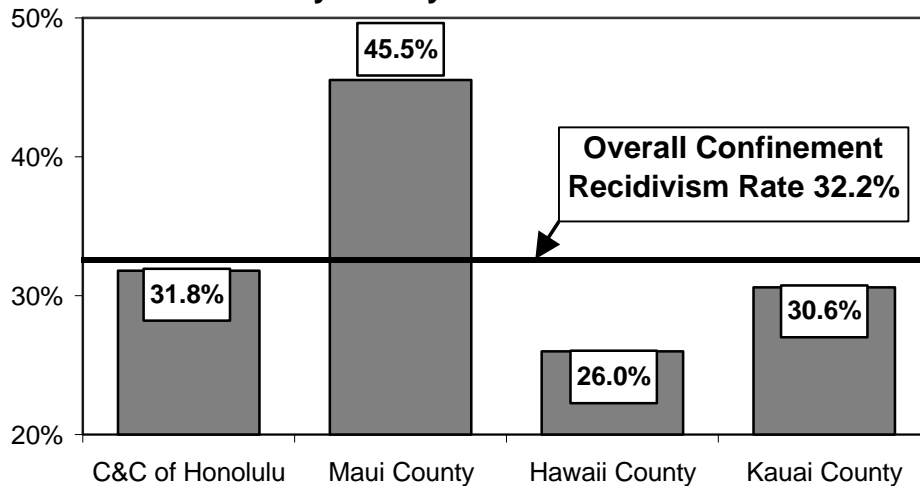
Similarly, the City and County of Honolulu (58.8%) and Maui County (68.2%) have conviction recidivism rates above the overall rate (57.3%), while Hawaii and Kauai Counties' rates are below the overall rate (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Conviction Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment



The overall confinement recidivism rate of 32.2% is surpassed only by Maui County's rate of 45.5%. The remaining three counties have confinement recidivism rates below the overall rate (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Confinement Recidivism Rate by County of Commitment



In sum, Maui County's recidivism rates are higher than the overall rate for each of the three measures of recidivism: re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-confinement. Hawaii and Kauai Counties have rates below the overall rate for all three measures, while the City and County of Honolulu's rates are higher than the overall rates for arrest and conviction recidivism and below the overall rate for confinement recidivism.

County Differences in HYCF Commitments and Recidivism

As introduced earlier, two of Hawaii's four counties commit juvenile offenders to the HYCF disproportionately to their respective shares of the state juvenile population; one county commits many more youths than might be expected, while the other commits far fewer. Recidivism rates also differ appreciably from county to county. These data suggest that county-specific factors may play a significant role in the utilization and outcomes of the HYCF. With this in mind, the following preliminary discussion is included in order provide examples of the kinds of possibilities that require further research and consideration. It is hoped that more information on these issues will be gleaned during the next two phases of this two-year research project.

Kauai County is more than three times over-represented for first-time HYCF commitments (16.9% of commitments versus 5.2% of the state juvenile population), while its recidivism rates are well below the overall state rates. One possibility is that a disproportionately high number of serious juvenile offenders live in Kauai County, and that these individuals are especially responsive to the rehabilitation efforts at the HYCF. Another possibility is that Kauai County commits a comparatively high number of lower-risk offenders who are, from the outset, less likely to re-offend. Alternatively, limited sentencing options and/or a broader definition of the "serious" juvenile offender could account for Kauai County's high commitment rate, while effective post-release services could explain the lower recidivism rates. Again, these hypothetical explanations are being presented simply to demonstrate the myriad factors which may be involved in the commitment and recidivism equations.

Hawaii County's recidivism rates are substantially below the state's overall rates, and yet, unlike Kauai County, their percentage of first-time HYCF commitments is almost exactly proportional to their share of the state juvenile population (13.6% of commitments versus 13.7% of the state juvenile population). It might seem that Hawaii County has its "fair share" of serious juvenile offenders but that these individuals are particularly responsive to the HYCF's rehabilitation efforts. It could also be that Hawaii County is able to access more resources for follow-up services upon wards' return to the Big Island.

Maui County also commits youth to the HYCF in close proportionality to their share of the state juvenile population (12.0% of commitments versus 10.7% of the state juvenile population). However, Maui County's recidivism rates are substantially higher than the overall state rates. Perhaps the HYCF is not affecting a positive change on youths sent from Maui County. It is also possible that Maui County has sentencing alternatives that help to limit the number of juveniles committed to the facility, but lacks adequate post-release treatment services to continue the rehabilitative process. On the other hand, very effective post-release supervision in Maui County may increase the likelihood that re-offenders will be apprehended.

Finally, the City and County of Honolulu is clearly under-represented in HYCF commitments (57.5% of commitments versus 70.4% of the state juvenile population), but has slightly higher re-arrest and re-conviction rates and a slightly lower re-confinement rate when compared to the overall state rates. The City and County of

Honolulu may have proportionately more sentencing alternatives and treatment services than the other counties do, suggesting the possibility that Honolulu commits only its very highest-risk offenders to the HYCF (resulting in fewer total commitments), but that these juveniles are by definition the most likely to re-offend. The benefit of additional resources could also result in the increased effectiveness of post-release supervision, apprehension, and adjudication, thus boosting recidivism rates.

These possibilities are merely suggestive as to how various factors may (or may not) explain county differences in commitment and recidivism rates. Clearly, differences in commitment figures and recidivism rates may be due to the types of juvenile offenders committed to the facility, the availability of sentencing alternatives, the extent of post-release supervision and aftercare, or other factors. Of primary concern, readers are cautioned that the current data do not prove that juvenile offenders are “better” or “worse” in one county or another, or that the juvenile justice system (including the HYCF) does a “good” or “bad” job in rehabilitating youth from different counties. More research is needed to satisfactorily explain the issue of county differences in HYCF usage and outcomes, and this will be a primary focus for the next phases of this two-year project.

1984 and Today

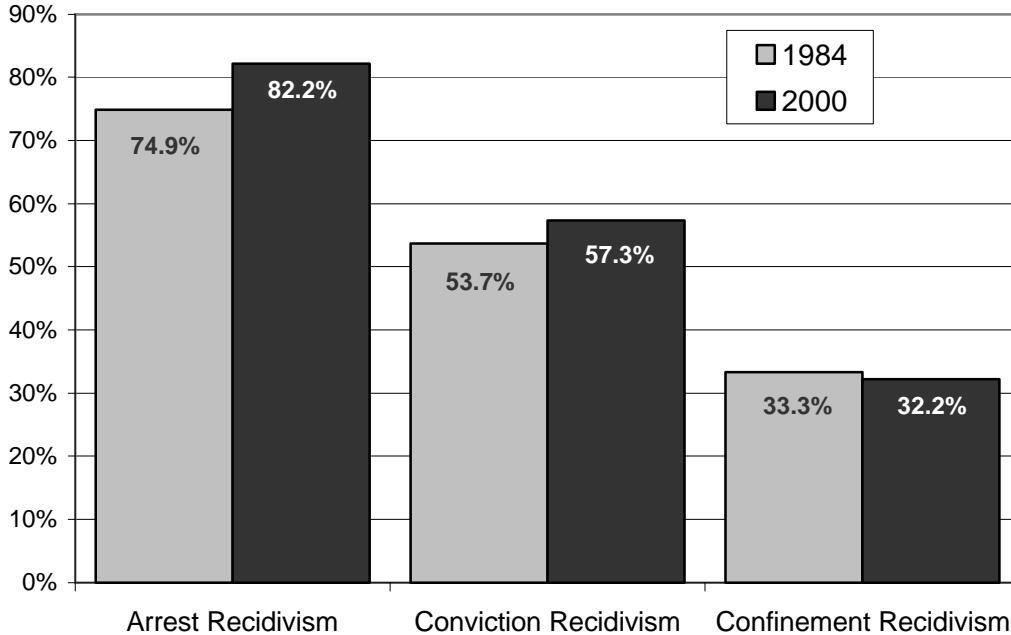
The 1984 report, *Recidivism of Dischargees from the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility – 1974-1978* (Nagoshi, et al., 1984), presented data on a cohort released from the facility roughly twenty years before the cohort currently being analyzed, providing what would seem an ideal comparison data set to assess changes in recidivism rates. Unfortunately, the post-release follow-up period is not described in the 1984 report. As that study population included youths released from 1974 through 1978, and the report was published in April of 1984, it is assumed that recidivism data were collected up through some date in 1983. This presents two problems for comparing recidivism rates between 1984 and 2000. First, the follow-up period was probably much longer in the earlier study, thus offering more time in which to recidivate. Second, an arbitrary date in 1983 chosen as “a line in the sand” for recidivism suggests that some youths had much longer follow-up periods than others did, e.g., wards released early in 1974 had up to 10-year follow-up periods, while those released late in 1978 had as short as 4-year follow-up periods. In this sense, it is difficult to attach precise meaning to the recidivism rates reported in 1984.

Given the dissimilarity between the varying 4- to 10-year follow-up period in 1984 and the fixed 2-year period in 2000, the practicability of comparing recidivism rates between the two studies is brought into question. As such, the following comparative data are at best suggestive, and likely biased toward significantly lower recidivism rates in the current study than would have been reported using the 1984 study’s methodology.

Additionally, it should be noted that the two decades separating the current study from the 1984 study have brought innumerable changes to the HYCF, juvenile justice, and society in general. While some believe that juvenile offenders

have changed dramatically (e.g., becoming more “hardened”), others argue that it is the policies and practices of the juvenile justice system that have changed the most during this period. In any event, significant changes in the overall context of juvenile crime combined with the aforementioned methodological uncertainties confound a direct comparison of the two studies.

Figure 16: Comparison of Recidivism Rates



A comparison of the three recidivism measures shows slight increases in the arrest and conviction recidivism rates and a small drop in the confinement recidivism rate since the 1984 study (Figure 16). Specifically, these figures represent a **9.8% increase in arrest recidivism** (+7.3 percentage points), a **6.7% increase in conviction recidivism** (+3.6 percentage points), and a **3.3% decrease in confinement recidivism** (-1.1 percentage points) since 1984.

Table 17 shows seven variables, analyzed in both reports, with statistically significant relationships to one or more of the three measures of recidivism. Sentence length is the only variable with a significant link to recidivism in both studies (specifically, this variable is related to confinement recidivism). An unexpected finding, then and now, is that sentence length is not significantly related to arrest or conviction recidivism. One would hope, with the judicial effort involved and the impact it has on the lives of the juveniles and their families, that sentence length would have more of an impact on the subsequent criminality of each ward.

Table 17: Significant Relationships Reported in the 1984 and Current Studies

	1984 Study			Current Study		
	Arrest	Conv.	Conf.	Arrest	Conv.	Conf.
Gender	U	U	U			
County of Commitment		U	U			
Sentence Length			U			U
Number of Commitments				U	U	U
Number of Escapes				U	U	U
Number of Siblings				U		
Number of Paroles					U	U

That youth committed to the HYCF until the age of majority or until age 19 for their first term are more likely to be reconfined is logical in that these are probably the most serious offenders. However, if six-month commitments do not reduce criminality more than terms of seven days, the efficacy of longer sentences, other than to temporarily incapacitate youth from committing more offenses, is brought into question.

The total number of commitments for each ward is significantly related to all three types of recidivism in the current study. However, in the 1984 report, it was an unexpected finding that total commitments were *not* related to recidivism.

Another variable related to the three measures of recidivism in the current study but not significantly related to recidivism in 1984 is the number of escapes. Since most escapes take place away from the facility grounds, it is likely that any changes in escape behaviors do not reflect changes in practice or policy at the HYCF.

“Contrary to what was expected,” the number of paroles for each examined case was not significantly related to recidivism in the earlier study (Nagoshi, et al., 1984). The number of paroles *is* statistically related to conviction and confinement recidivism in the current study, however, possibly suggesting changes in either the paroling process or the types of wards who receive paroles.

Conclusion

The basic demographic makeup of the study cohort is similar to those found in other studies of HYCF wards. However, recidivism rates have increased since a 1984 study, with arrest recidivism up 9.8%, conviction recidivism up 6.7%, and confinement recidivism decreasing slightly, by 3.3%. Of further concern, different methodologies employed in the two studies indicate a strong likelihood that, for comparison purposes, recidivism rates are either overstated in the 1984 study or understated in the current study. Thus there exists the strong possibility that recidivism has increased even more than is herein reported.

At the heart of the recidivism issue lies the debate between those who question the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts in the bleak setting of what is essentially a prison for children, and those who question the extent to which rehabilitation is a realistic goal given an extremely recalcitrant target population. It is not appropriate for objective researchers to play the role of staunch advocates for either position. However, while it is difficult to propose a “reasonable” recidivism rate for Hawaii’s small number of highest risk juvenile offenders, interested parties should take note of the study results and thoroughly consider whether or not the most effective methods available are being utilized to reduce recidivism among this population.

There is an apparent discrepancy between the stated mission of the HYCF and the characteristics of those actually committed to the facility. Primarily, more than half of committed wards were charged with non-violent offenses. Although each youth’s case file tells a story that may justify incarceration for a theft or property damage offense (e.g., a pattern of habitual or escalating criminality, persistent failure in multiple service programs, or potentially violent behavior), the incarceration of property or drug offenders has been questioned on its merits for enhancing public safety. Also stated as an important role of the HYCF is its rehabilitative function, and yet nearly eighty percent of the examined cases were sentenced to short-term commitments. This raises important questions, such as: How much time is needed in order to positively affect rehabilitation? Is this possible for short-term commitments, some as brief as four days?

Several variables are significantly related to all three levels of recidivism: total number of commitments, number of parole returns, number of escapes, and number of misconduct reports received while at the facility. Unfortunately, these indicators are not helpful for guiding crime prevention policy, as they occur after each ward has already been committed to the HYCF. They do, however, lend support for policy initiatives and programmatic efforts designed to reduce illegal behavior (and, ideally, increase positive behavior) following a discharge by intensifying the monitoring of high-risk youth.

Several other variables are significantly related to one or two recidivism measures. First, the number of runaways, age at first substance use, and number of siblings were significantly related to arrest recidivism. Second, number of paroles, prior marijuana use, and number of suicide indicators were significantly related to conviction recidivism. Third, first commitment sentence length, percent of first term

served, number of paroles, and age at first substance use were significantly related to confinement recidivism. These findings may allow focused attention on specific behaviors or characteristics of committed wards in order to reduce recidivism.

Differences between each county's portion of HYCF commitments contrast with Hawaii's juvenile population distribution, and also with the counties' respective recidivism rates. Important county-level differences in available resources for sentencing alternatives and post-release services, definitions of "serious" juvenile offenders, and/or in the youths themselves may account for some of these commitment and recidivism disparities. This is a topic which warrants further investigation and discussion.

As stated at the beginning of this report, these findings represent a work in progress. The HYCF Project will produce two additional reports focusing on the HYCF and its wards: one detailing and analyzing the wide range of opinions regarding the facility and its purpose and function, and a final report providing further exploration of recidivism, including correlation and regression analyses. In the final report, data that were incomplete or confusing at the time of the current report will be further investigated and deciphered to allow a more detailed look at recidivism and the factors that influence it for youth released from the HYCF. It is hoped that the findings of the HYCF Project will provide juvenile justice policymakers, administrators, and practitioners with an objective assessment of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility – Hawaii's "final stop" in the juvenile justice system – and better inform all interested parties on juvenile crime in our state.

References

- Chesney-Lind, M., Mayeda, D., Koo, J., Okamoto, S., Marker, N., Freitas, K., and Paramore, V. (2000). *An inquiry into youth crime and violence in Hawaii: Interim report to the Twenty-Second Hawaii State Legislature*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Center for Youth Research. Publication No. 406.
- Crime Prevention & Justice Assistance Division. (1999). *Crime in Hawaii 1998*. Honolulu: State of Hawaii: Department of the Attorney General.
- Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division. (2000). *HYCF Recidivism Project: Data assessment and research directions*. Honolulu: State of Hawaii: Department of the Attorney General.
- Corrections Division. (1980). *Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility*. State of Hawaii: Department of Social Services and Housing.
- Nagoshi, Jack T., Zych, P., Chesney-Lind, M., Tanji, J. H., and Nakamoto, S. (1984). *Recidivism of discharges from the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility: 1974-1978*. Honolulu: Youth Development and Research Center, School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- Office of Youth Services. (1999). *Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility Program Description*. State of Hawaii: Department of Human Services.
- Population Estimate Reports from the U.S. Bureau of the Census*. Online. Available: <http://www.Hawaii.gov/dbedt/estimates.html>. 23 October 2000.
- Snyder, H. N., and Sickmund, M. (1999). *Juvenile offenders and victims: 1999 national report*. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Vito, Gennaro F., Tewksbury, R., and Wilson, D. G. (1998). *The juvenile justice system: Concepts and issues*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Endnotes

-
- ⁱ Ethnicity was unknown in 1.9% of all examined cases.
- ⁱⁱ The place of birth was unknown in 3.1% of the cases.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Number of siblings was unknown in 20.6% of the cases.
- ^{iv} The last grade achieved was unknown in 7.8% of the cases.
- ^v The age at first substance use was unknown in 17.8% of the cases

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, P.L. 101-336, this material is available in an altered format, upon request. If you require an altered format, please call the Department of the Attorney General, Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division at (808) 586-1150.