

A PROFILE OF PROBATIONERS AND PAROLEES IN NEW MEXICO

Executive Summary

This Working Paper presents information on a six percent sample of probationers and parolees (625) under the supervision of the New Mexico Department of Corrections, Probation - Parole Division on September 26, 1996. Information covers general characteristics of probationers and parolees, offense characteristics, length of supervision, criminal history, special conditions of supervision, risks and needs assessments, behavior, treatment, and violations.

General Characteristics of Probationers and Parolees

- ▶ **Status:** About 85% of the sample were on probation. The other 15% were either on parole or dual status (both probation and parole).
- ▶ **Level of supervision:** Probationers were evenly split between maximum and medium supervision, with less than ten percent under minimum supervision. Parolees tended to be under stricter levels of supervision.
- ▶ **Gender:** About 85% of both parolees and probationers were male.
- ▶ **Age:** On average, parolees were older than probationers by about 2.5 years.
- ▶ **Ethnicity:** Over half of both parolees and probationers were Hispanic.
- ▶ **Education:** Both probationers and parolees had an average education level of slightly less than twelve years.
- ▶ **Employment:** Almost half of probationers were employed at the time they were admitted to probation, while, as expected, over half of parolees were unemployed when they began parole (having just been released from prison).
- ▶ **Income:** The average reported monthly income was much lower for parolees than for probationers.
- ▶ **Region:** The largest number of both parolees and probationers were from Bernalillo County, with heavy concentrations from the southeast as well.

Offense Characteristics

- ▶ Parolees were more likely than probationers to have been convicted of violent offenses.
- ▶ Probationers were more likely than parolees to have been convicted of public order offenses.

Length of Supervision

- ▶ The average term for all probationers and parolees was 2.68 years.
- ▶ The average term for probationers was 2.77 years.
- ▶ The average term for parolees was 2.23 years.

Criminal History

- ▶ Parolees were more likely than probationers to have had at least one prior felony conviction in addition to their current offenses.
- ▶ Parolees were more likely than probationers to have committed a previous violent offense.
- ▶ Three quarters of parolees had served previous terms of probation or parole.

- ▶ Parolees were more likely than probationers to have had past probation or parole revocations.

Special Conditions of Probation/Parole

- ▶ Parolees tended to receive more special conditions regarding prohibitions and treatment requirements than did probationers.

- ▶ Probationers were more likely to be subject to conditions regarding compensation, such as restitution, community service and fee reimbursements.

Risks and Needs Assessments

- ▶ Parolees tended to be rated as higher supervisory risks than did probationers.
- ▶ Changes in employment and alcohol or drug use were the biggest risk factors for parolees, while drug use appeared to be less of a problem for probationers.
- ▶ Parolees also tended to have higher levels of need than probationers.
- ▶ Parolees had higher needs than probationers in the areas of alcohol or drug use and companionship.

Contact

- ▶ The frequency of contact between the probation/parole officer and the offender diminished over time, with the most frequent contact occurring in the first six months of supervision.
- ▶ On average in the first six month period of supervision, there was generally at least one contact per week, across all levels of supervision.

Behavior

- ▶ Offenders tended to complete their required restitution payments and community service hours.
- ▶ Offenders tended not to change residence or employment very often.
- ▶ Offenders who asked for permission to travel generally received it.
- ▶ About one quarter of the urinalyses conducted (about half of offenders tested) in any particular six month period showed a positive indication of drug use.

Treatment

- ▶ About 60% of offenders had participated in at least one program.
- ▶ The majority of programs were either alcohol or drug treatment programs.
- ▶ About a third of programs had dropouts, and almost half of the programs were satisfactorily completed. The rest were completed, but not satisfactorily.
- ▶ Parolees were more likely than probationers to have participated in programs.
- ▶ Those required to participate in alcohol or drug treatment programs were more likely to do so than those who were not required. However, at least half, and up to two-thirds, of offenders required to participate in alcohol or drug treatment programs had not done so as of the time we collected the data.

Violations

- ▶ 42% of offenders had at least one technical violation at some point during their period of supervision.
- ▶ One quarter of offenders had at least one non-technical violation (by being charged with or arrested for, but not necessarily convicted of, a crime).
- ▶ Of the violations that occurred during the first six months of supervision, 68% were technical violations and 32% were non-technical violations.
- ▶ More than half of all technical violations involved offenders failing a urinalysis drug test.
- ▶ When offenders had non-technical violations, they tended to be charged with felonies. Thirty-five percent of non-technical violations were misdemeanors.