The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) defines recidivism as a return to incarceration within three years of the offender’s date of release from a state correctional institution. A recent study by the IDOC calculated the 2011 recidivism rate for offenders released from IDOC during 2008. This study found that:

- 2011 recidivism rates witnessed a decrease after two consecutive years of marginal increases. Of those offenders released in 2008, 37.9% were recommitted to the IDOC within three years of their release date, for either a new conviction or a violation of post-release supervision.

- Male offenders had a higher recidivism rate when compared to female offenders. Of male offenders released in 2008, 39.3% returned to the IDOC, versus 29.5% of female releases.

- The recidivism rate for African American offenders decreased from prior years to 43.3%, while recidivism rates for Caucasian offenders has averaged around 36% for the last three years.

- The younger the offender is at the time he/she is released, the more likely they are to return to the IDOC. Also, offenders serving less than 2 years with IDOC represent over 84% of all recidivists.

- Of all offenders who recidivated, approximately 52% returned to IDOC for the commission of a new crime, compared to approximately 48% of returns for a technical rule violation.

- Offenders who had zero conduct violations during their incarceration period were 28% less likely to recidivate when compared to offenders who had at least one conduct violation.

- Offenders who received visits from family or friends while incarcerated were 14% less likely to recidivate compared to those offenders who did not receive any visits.

- Those offenders who participated in a work release program were 27% less likely to return to prison when compared to offenders who did not partake in a work release program.