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 2015 recidivism rate for offenders released from IDOC during 2012. This study found that:

- 2015 recidivism rates increased slightly for the 2nd time in as many years. Of those offenders released in 2012, 38.2% 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 2012, 39.8% returned to the IDOC, versus 28.9% of female releases.

- The recidivism rate for African American offenders decreased to 40.2%, compared to 38.2% for Caucasian offenders and 19.4% for Hispanic offenders, both of which increased slightly.

- 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 5 years with IDOC represent over 90% of all recidivists.

- Of all offenders who recidivated, approximately 50.1% returned to IDOC for the commission of a new crime, compared to approximately 49.9% for a technical rule violation of post-release supervision.

- Offenders who had zero conduct violations during their incarceration period were over 26.4% 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 16.3% less likely to recidivate compared to those offenders who did not receive any visits.

- Those offenders who participated in a work release program were more than 37% less likely to return to prison when compared to offenders who did not partake in a work release program.