

## **Population Description**

### *JRA Intensive Parole Evaluation*

In 1997, the Washington State Legislature funded intensive parole for youth placed under the supervision of the state's Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration (JRA). This legislation targets 25 percent of the JRA population at the highest risk for reoffending.<sup>1</sup> JRA contracted with the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (Institute) to evaluate the program, determine whether it reduces recidivism, and analyze the costs and benefits to taxpayers and crime victims.

The evaluation compares youth placed on intensive parole with similar youth who met the intensive parole criteria but were placed on parole prior to the start of the program. Criteria for intensive parole include the following:

- ❑ High-risk youth with an Initial Security Classification Assessment (ISCA) score of at least 32 before July 1, 1999, and a revised ISCA score of at least 45 since July 1, 1999; or
- ❑ Basic Training Camp (BTC) graduate with at least 120 days in basic training camp; or
- ❑ Sex offender with a Level III score on the Sex Offender Screening Tool (SOST); or
- ❑ Youth committed for murder and released before July 1, 1999.

For this evaluation, the program group consists of youth placed in the community on intensive parole between October 1, 1998 and October 31, 1999. The control group consists of youth placed on parole supervision between October 1, 1997 and October 1, 1998 who would have met the intensive parole criteria had the program existed at that time.

In addition to annual progress reports, the Institute will issue briefing papers during 2000 covering the following topics:

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|----------------------------------|--|
| ❑ Supervision Status             | ❑ Costs                                |
| ❑ Parole Revocation              | ❑ Programs                             |
| ❑ Whereabouts Unknown            | ❑ Fulfilling Conditions of Supervision |
| ❑ Community Contacts             | ❑ Comparison With Regular Parole       |
| ❑ Residential Contacts           | ❑ Discharges                           |
| ❑ Initial Supervision Assessment | ❑ Baseline Recidivism                  |
| ❑ 90-Day Supervisory Assessment  |  |

This briefing paper, the first in the series, compares the program and control groups along demographics and risk levels. This step in the evaluation is very important. We need to ensure that the program and control groups are similar so that differences can be attributed to the intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> RCW 13.40.210

Table 1 displays the number of youth in the program and control groups by the four eligibility criteria.<sup>2</sup> There are 441 youth in the control group and 454 youth in the program group. Most youth become eligible for intensive parole because of a high-risk score. There are few sex offenders and murderers in either the program or control group. In the control group, 34 of 441 youth (8 percent) are from the basic training camp. The program group has slightly more youth from the basic training camp, 84 of 454 youth (18 percent).

**Table 1**  
**Youth in Program and Control Groups**

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	PAROLE		BTC PAROLE		SEX OFFENDER PAROLE		TOTAL	
	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
HIGH RISK*	375	329	22	19	6	7	403	355
BTC**	0	0	34	84	0	0	34	84
GRADUATE								
SOST***	0	0	0	0	2	9	2	9
MURDER	2	6	0	0	0	0	2	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>454</b>

\* High Risk = ISCA score above the cut-off

\*\* BTC = Basic Training Graduate

\*\*\* SOST = Sex Offender Screening Tool

JRA has an Initial Screening Classification Assessment (ISCA) that is a validated measure of the risk for re-offending.<sup>3</sup> Table 2 displays the percentage distribution of ISCA score categories for the program and control groups.

**Table 2**  
**ISCA Score Comparison**

ISCA SCORE CATEGORY	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
UNDER 45	24%	39%
45 TO 49	46%	31%
50 TO 54	25%	24%
OVER 54	6%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%
AVERAGE ISCA	46.8	45.9

The program group has an average ISCA score of 45.9 that is significantly lower risk than the control group average of 46.8. Although statistically significant this difference is slight. Analyses of the individual items on the ISCA revealed that program group youth have significantly different scores on two items:

- Prior Adjudications: the program group has slightly fewer prior adjudications.
- Age at Admission: the program group consists of slightly younger offenders.

Because the program group has a slightly lower average risk for re-offense, future comparisons of the two groups during the course of this evaluation will statistically adjust for this difference.

<sup>2</sup> Source: JRA administrative data system, MAPPER, as of February 10, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Barnoski, Robert *Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration Assessments: Validity Review and Recommendations*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, September 1998.

Table 3 presents the types of offenses for both groups recorded in MAPPER, JRA's administrative data system, and JUVIS, the Washington State Office of the Administrator for the Courts' (OAC) juvenile court database. There is very close agreement between the JRA and JUVIS data concerning the types of offenses in these youth's criminal histories.

The distribution of offense types is nearly identical for the program and control groups. Five out of every ten youth in both the control and program groups has an against-person<sup>4</sup> felony offense in their backgrounds. More than eight out of ten youth have been convicted of a property offense. Approximately 15 percent have been convicted of a drug offense, and nearly all have been convicted of a misdemeanor offense.

**Table 3**  
**Offense History**

TYPE OF OFFENSE(S) IN HISTORY	JRA OFFENSE HISTORY <sup>5</sup>		JUVIS OFFENSE HISTORY <sup>6</sup>	
	CONTROL GROUP	INTENSIVE PAROLE PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	INTENSIVE PAROLE PROGRAM GROUP
AGAINST PERSON	50%	50%	51%	51%
PROPERTY	88%	85%	85%	81%
DRUG	14%	14%	17%	20%
OTHER FELONY	18%	16%	21%	19%
MISDEMEANOR	97%	93%	96%	93%

Table 4 shows the age of the youth when placed on parole. Very few youth are under the age of 14. The majority of youth placed on parole are between 15 and 18 years old. The difference in age between the program and control group is statistically significant. Because the program group consists of slightly older youth, future comparisons of the two groups will statistically adjust for this difference.

**Table 4**  
**Age at Start of Parole**

AGE AT START OF PAROLE	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
UNDER 14	3%	1%
14	10%	6%
15	20%	14%
16	20%	26%
17	24%	26%
18	18%	20%
OVER 18	6%	6%
TOTAL	100%	100%
AVERAGE AGE	16.3	16.5

<sup>4</sup> An against-person offense includes homicide, sex offense, assault, and robbery.

<sup>5</sup> This criminal history is based on the offense data within JRA's MAPPER.

<sup>6</sup> This criminal history is based on the offense data within OAC's JUVIS (Juvenile Information System).

Table 5 shows that approximately nine out of ten youth in the program and control groups are males. There is no statistically significant difference in gender between the two groups.

**Table 5**  
**Gender**

GENDER	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
FEMALE	7%	11%
MALE	93%	89%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Over half of the youth in the program and control groups are European American. Approximately 20 percent are African American, and fewer than 10 percent are either Native American or Asian American. After excluding the unknown category, there is no statistically significant difference in ethnic background between the two groups.

**Table 6**  
**Ethnic Background**

ETHNIC BACKGROUND	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
EUROPEAN AMERICAN	52%	52%
AFRICAN AMERICAN	23%	19%
NATIVE AMERICAN	6%	8%
ASIAN AMERICAN	3%	6%
OTHER/UNREPORTED	16%	15%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Table 7 shows the number of youth in the program and control groups by the four eligibility criteria for each of JRA's six regions.

**Table 7**  
**Number of Youth in Program and Control Groups**  
**Within Each of the Six JRA Regions**

REGION	PAROLE		BTC PAROLE		SEX OFFENDER PAROLE		TOTAL	
	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP	CONTROL GROUP	PROGRAM GROUP
REGION 1 SPOKANE	58	46	14	19	1	5	73	70
REGION 2 YAKIMA	54	59	8	14	0	1	62	74
REGION 3 EVERETT	58	69	6	10	1	2	65	81
REGION 4 SEATTLE	89	101	12	17	3	4	104	122
REGION 5 TACOMA	78	80	7	25	0	3	85	108
REGION 6 OLYMPIA	36	74	9	22	3	5	48	101

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