

# RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

## Probation and Parole Unit

Volume 1: June 2017

The Probation and Parole Unit supervises offenders in Rhode Island who are released from prison or the courts and directed to probation. The P&P unit also supervises offenders placed on Parole by the Parole Board after serving a portion of their sentence. The Unit has a total staff of 112 and is led and managed by the Associate Director of Community Corrections and the Assistant Probation and Parole Administrator. The Unit has recently enhanced their vision, mission and values statement as part of a staff driven strategic planning process. These can be found below:

VISION

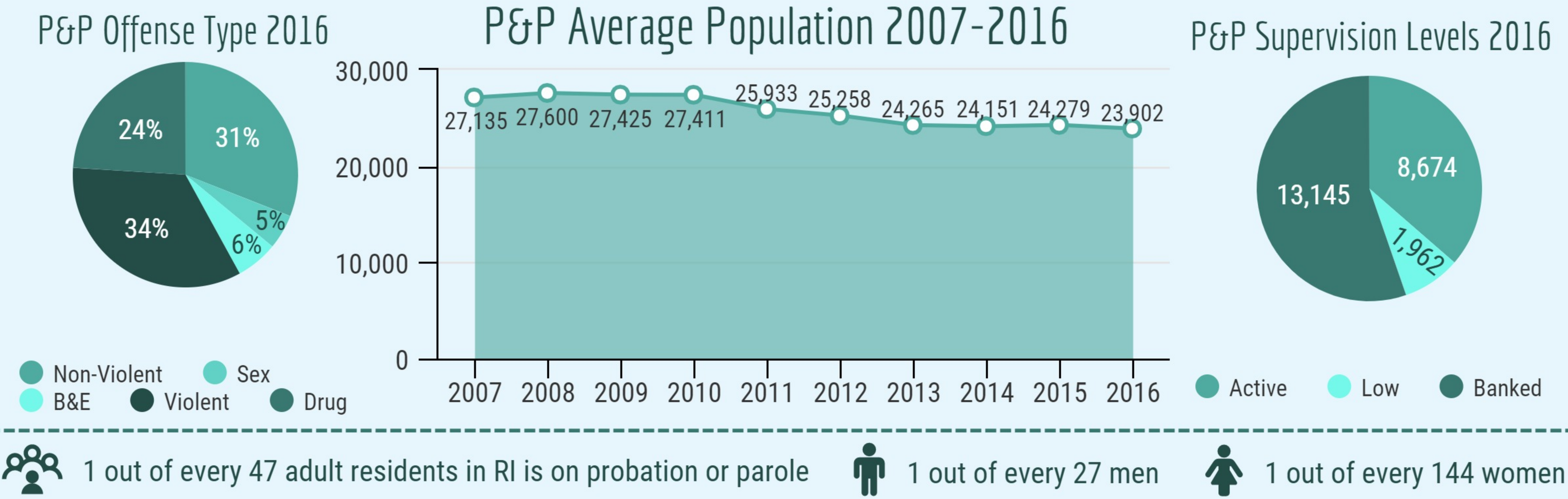
To reduce crime, recidivism, and victimization by motivating offenders to become productive and law-abiding members of society.

MISSION

The Rhode Island Probation and Parole Unit will increase public safety by promoting positive change in offender behavior, successfully reintegrating offenders into society and assisting victims of crime while upholding our core values and ethics.

VALUES & GOALS

Adhere to best practices for effective supervision. Treat staff, offenders and the community with respect. Uphold our professional integrity and ethics at all times. Maintain an awareness of victim issues and sensitivity to their needs. Promote collaboration with other criminal justice entities and community partners. Increase and effectively utilize resources and technology. To be viewed by citizens of RI as a valued partner in the prevention of criminal behavior. We commit to accountability for ourselves, and our co-workers in carrying out our mission, values, policies/directives and to uphold the laws of the state of RI. Foster diversity and inclusivity.



## Justice Reinvestment Initiative

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, as of December 2015, RI ranked 2nd in the nation in rate of probation supervision (2,822 per 100,000 residents), a rate is 85% higher than the national average.\* Additionally, offenders in RI serve post-release probation terms that are 3 times longer than the national average. Due to these disparities and the success of the first Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) in 2008, on July 7, 2015, Governor Gina M. Raimondo signed Executive Order 15-11 establishing the Justice Reinvestment Working Group\*\* and requested technical assistance from the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. By December 2015, the CSG Justice Center presented potential changes to the JRI Working Group which had four main goals.\*\*\* Legislation to support JRI was submitted in 2016 and 2017 but has not passed. In the meantime, RIDOC has begun implementing some of the CSG Justice Center's recommendations which are highlighted below.






| GOALS |  |
|-------|--|
| 1     | modernize sentencing and probation supervision policies  |
| 2     | focus probation supervision resources on high-risk, high-needs people and expand community-based programs to reduce recidivism |
| 3     | assess defendants to inform diversion opportunities and pretrial supervision conditions  |
| 4     | improve services to victims throughout the criminal justice system   |

## Level of Service Inventory-Revised Screening Version

The Level of Service Inventory-Revised Screening Version (LSI-R:SV) is a screening tool that contains 8 of the 54 items included in the complete LSI-R assessment. It covers the four major risk factors (criminal history, criminal attitudes, criminal associates and



antisocial personality patterns) that identify problem areas in an offender's life and predict his/her risk of recidivism. The RIDOC implemented this process in September 2014 and expanded it to all offices by August 2015. It is administered by trained P&P Officers to all offenders sentenced directly from court, or those offenders who are released from a facility and did not receive a LSI-R:SV/full LSI-R within the past year. The tool is currently being used to triage low-risk offenders without special conditions into low supervision caseloads. The average LSI-R:SV score for those on probation is 3.

-  59% have had 2 or more prior convictions
-  26% report having been arrested under the age of 16
-  17% indicate having a drug or alcohol problem that has affected their work or school life
-  38% report having some criminal friends
-  41% report being unemployed

## Risk Assessment Unit

The Risk Assessment Unit (RAU) was created with the governor's support as a pilot program in Fall 2016. Its foundation is based on research indicating supervising offenders by risk level rather than offense type is more effective. This allows staff to focus resources on higher risk offenders who require intense supervision while the majority of low-risk offenders are supervised through group supervision, forums, and can report by email, fax or phone. The RAU is comprised of 5 P&P Staff (2 Probation Officers who complete risk assessments, 2 Probation Officers who carry caseloads and 1 supervisor) who serve probation offenders in Providence County sentenced to community supervision directly from court. The LSI-R:SV is conducted on all new probation cases in this geographical catchment area; those who score moderate or high will be given the full LSI-R assessment and triaged into the appropriate supervision level.



**31** offenders in the high-risk caseload

Average LSI-R score for the high-risk caseload: **25**

**154** offenders in the low-risk caseload

## Early Probation Termination

The Rhode Island Superior Court Rule 35(c) was changed recently to allow probationers in the community to seek approval from the court to end their probation sentence early if several criteria are met. (The criteria can be found by following this link: <http://www.doc.ri.gov/probation/rule35.php>.) P&P staff have screened nearly 400 cases to ascertain eligibility. For those qualified, P&P provides a certificate required for the submission of a motion by the probationer for early termination consideration by the court. The first offenders' motions were heard on December 19, 2016. As of March 2017:

**363** offenders  
have been screened for eligibility for early termination

**4** days of hearings  
for early termination have occurred and hearings will continue monthly

**106** offenders  
have received their qualification certificate

**67** motions  
for early termination have been granted by the Superior Court



## P&P Strategic Planning

Since August 2016 the Council of State Governments Justice Center has provided Probation and Parole with technical assistance for developing a 3 year strategic plan. The goals for the strategic plan are to empower staff and promote buy-in through enhanced communication, expand the use of assessments/case planning to all offenders on probation, create and implement sanctions/incentives for use in probation, create and implement sanctions/incentives for use in parole and provide appropriate training to staff. As staff involvement in this process is very important, five working groups were created to assist with developing objectives to ensure the goals are met. Additionally all staff were asked to complete a survey to help guide the process. The survey results highlighted some staff strengths in the Unit worth noting. These included the indication that they have a clear understanding of their balanced role in the justice system and endorse many of the evidence-based practices that have been introduced as the best way to reduce recidivism.

\*Bureau of Justice Statistics (2016). *Prisoners in 2015*. Available online: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p15.pdf>. 02/28/17.  
\*\*Rhode Island Department of Corrections (2015). *Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Population Report*. Available online: <http://www.doc.ri.gov/administration/planning/docs/FY15%20Population%20Report.pdf>. 04/06/2017.  
\*\*\*Council of State Governments Justice Center (2017). Rhode Island. Available online: <https://csgjusticecenter.org/jr/ri/>. 04/06/2017.

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