



County of Bucks

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
1730 South Easton Road, Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 348-8480 Fax (215) 340-8485
bucksdoc@co.bucks.pa.us



County Commissioners

Robert G. Loughery, *Chairman*
Charles H. Martin, *Vice Chair*
Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, *LCSW*

William F. Plantier, *Director of Corrections*
Terrance P. Moore, *Warden*
Guy E. Waller, *Superintendent*

CCAP Committee on County Criminal Justice System Best Practices for the 21st Century

- There are approximately 5,000 offenders admitted to the Bucks County Department of Corrections¹ annually who are estimated to have substance abuse problems, as are over 5,300 parolees in the Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole Department.² In 2008-2009, approximately 2,100 additional referrals from the Courts will also benefit from both treatment enhancements utilizing the Evidence-Based “Thinking for a Change” (T4C) curriculum and improved access to community based Peer Recovery support services. Research shows that over time, the high risk/ high need criminal population with substance abuse histories cost the county and state more to incarcerate than to treat (Natarajan, N et al, 2008). If effective interventions and services are provided for this population, it will considerably lessen the strain on the criminal justice system and help these populations to live drug-free pro-social lives. Additionally, research has indicated that quality pre-release treatment, comprehensive reentry planning, cognitive behavioral therapy addressing criminogenic issues and increased recovery supports will increase recovery and reduce recidivism (Thigpen, M. J et al, 2007).

Operating prior to the Forensic Re-Entry Enhancement (FREE) program; the Bucks County Department of Corrections partnered with Adult Probation and Parole to concentrate on re-entry services including a redesigned processing of offenders, implementation of new drug and alcohol assessment tools, and implementations of new curriculum for offenders. Both County Corrections and County Probation/Parole now utilize the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R developed by D.A. Andrews and James Bonta) a risk needs assessment tool and reentry planning begins within days of admission to the facility. County Probation and Parole facilitates a portion of a pre-release group and reentry team concept is used to educate offenders about County Parole. Additionally the parole plan includes a variation of the GAINS model for reentry planning with the offender. Also, several peer mentoring programs operate behind the walls. However, the most important part of release (parole) was the timely connection with community based treatment. The creation of the FREE program was able to bridge that gap that can often times is referred to as a canyon.

The FREE program not only assists with identifying this population behind the walls; it provides full wrap-around service planning complete with a schedule of first appointments and continued support in the community through the efforts of the program’s coordinator, case management and peers services.

- The Forensic Re-Entry Enhancement (FREE) program evolved from the need for enhanced reentry planning and collaboration between the criminal justice system and community treatment providers. The FREE program is a grant award from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) developed by various community partners which includes representatives from the Bucks County Department of Corrections, Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole, Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission Inc. (the Single County Authority), the recovery community specifically; Pennsylvania Recovery Organization- Achieving Community Together (PRO-AT) hosted by the Council of Southeast Pennsylvania, Inc., and Aldie Foundation as the

¹ Bucks County Department of Corrections Intake Data

² Pennsylvania Board of Probation & Parole

³ Research in Review PRSG Volume 6, Number 4: December 2003 OUTCOME EVALUATION OF

community based drug and alcohol treatment provider. Representatives from each of these agencies also are active members as the program's steering committee. The purpose is to target high risk/ high need criminal offenders with a history of substance abuse and chemical dependency with the goal of promoting recovery and reduce recidivism through early intervention and reducing barriers upon release. The foundation of the program has been guided by evidence based practices supporting both cognitive behavioral interventions and community support networks as effective in helping offenders develop necessary skills to establish and maintain drug-free crime-free lifestyles.

The program team consists of a program coordinator, a case manager, and a peer specialist. These three staffers are employed by Aldie Foundation (community based drug and alcohol treatment provider). The FREE team provides early recruiting, assessment, and intensive case management prior to release from the Bucks County Correctional Facility in order to remove barriers to successful early recovery and to develop a comprehensive reentry plan. While incarcerated, FREE participants begin their reentry case planning with the program through a comprehensive drug and alcohol assessment provided by Aldie Foundation, who is provided office space in the correctional facility. This is a partnership between a community based agency and the jail that has not been traditionally involved in corrections. Additionally, case coordination and case management services begin post assessment to ensure the offender has a solid reentry plan which addresses criminogenic risk factors. These risk(s) and need(s) factors are identified by the LSI-R including; drug and alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, medical well being, housing, employment, community recovery supports, children and youth involvement, transportation to first appointments, and legal obligations including but not limited to restitution, costs and fines, no victim contact orders, highway safety classes, and anger management classes. Peer services also begin pre-release in order to build rapport with the offender and establish a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) to address triggers and a relapse emergency plan.

From April 2010 through January 2012, a total of 56 clients were released from the correctional facility to participate in the FREE program. Upon release into the community each offender begins engaging the reentry plan developed pre-release including drug and alcohol treatment appointments and mandatory involvement in the Thinking for Change (T4C) group. Thinking for a Change is an evidence-based cognitive behavioral program designed to target criminal thinking and enhance social skills. In addition to the first appointment, FREE clients are required to continue their involvement with case management and peer services as well as develop a recovery plan with PRO-ACT, the community recovery support organization. Peer services have been recognized by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as an evidence based strategy, that when engaged in after outpatient treatment, can help reduce both drug use and criminal activity by helping offender to build drug-free supports in the community.

Lack of housing for this population remains a persistent issue; one additional evidence based benefit for FREE offenders in the community is the potential for contingency management in the form of recovery house funding for eligible offenders. To-date 22 out of 56 FREE offenders have received recovery house funding. In order to qualify for this service, the offender must have no other financial support (no unemployment benefits, no employment, no SSI or SSD income and no financial help from family). The funds are set aside by the Drug and Alcohol Commission Inc. (Single County Authority) for FREE offenders only by approval of the program's coordinator. To maintain funding they must have applied for Medical Assistance and maintain their appointments as outlined in their reentry plan (continue treatment and recovery appointments).

Throughout the offenders' participation, additional services were provided as needed to FREE offenders. In total 50 FREE offenders engaged in outpatient drug and alcohol services. A total of 13 offenders were placed at an inpatient treatment facility at some point during their engagement. All 56 offenders were referred to the Community Recovery center for peer recovery activities and social support. All 56 offenders were referred to and discussed 12 steps meetings and groups with the FREE peer. There were 37 offenders who were referred and placed in a recovery house with 22 of those receiving a minimum of 1 week of recovery house funding up to 90 days of funding. Thirty-eight participants were referred and engaged in a mental health evaluation. A total of 32 participants were provided transportation from the FREE program to an appointment in the community and/or to their approved residence upon release from Bucks County Correctional Facility. Additional services are recommended for offenders throughout their participation, which can include; clothing banks, housing programs, parenting programs, medical services, etc. Of the "other" services recommended, 17 of the referrals were followed through (see table 1).

- Cognitive Behavioral based curriculums are an imperative part of re-entry and relapse prevention. There are three target areas that this project intends on concentrating its efforts on for a successful re-entry: reducing the number of offenders being admitted to the criminal justice system (due to local law enforcement continuing to be trained in Crisis Intervention Training). Reduce the length of stay in Community Correction programs (by having an enhanced re-entry plan). And to reduce the number of offenders coming back into the system for violations, especially ones for substance abuse issues.

The cost to house a prisoner in Bucks County Prison is approximately \$85 per offender per day. With this fact, the financial burden on the public the cost of re-incarceration begins to be clearer. If we can reduce the recidivism rate for only half of the offenders we intend to target with this program we will save the County and the Commonwealth a significant amount of money.

At the start of the FREE program two main measurable objectives were established. The first is to ensure 80% of participants do not commit another criminal offense within 12 months of release.

The FREE program can work with clients for up to 1 year once released from BCCF. To be considered successfully discharged from the FREE program a client must complete the T4C program, maintain communication with the FREE program while participating, maintain sobriety for a minimum of 90 days prior to discharge, attend a minimum of two appointments with a recovery specialist at the community recovery center (PRO-ACT), and have a plan to stay on target with all probation and parole conditions. Clients are unsuccessfully discharged from the FREE program if they commit another criminal offense, fail to maintain contact with the FREE program for more than 30 days, or fail to complete all FREE program requirements within 1 year from their release from the Bucks County Correctional Facility.

Due to the limited of time the program has been in operation and the specific eligibility requirements for the FREE program, at the time of this narrative there have only been a total of 19 FREE program participants who have been released from BCCF for at least 12 months. Of those 19 participants only 5, or 26%, were charged with new criminal offenses. The majority (74%) of FREE participants released from BCCF for at least 12 months did not commit another criminal offense. This is close to the predicted rate that 80% of FREE participants would not commit another criminal offense. Additionally, of the total number of FREE clients released from BCCF for at least 12 months none of the participants that successfully completed the FREE program committed another criminal offense (see table 2).

- A PhD level Professor out of the University of Pennsylvania was hired as a consultant to evaluate the program. The evaluation plan for this project comprised both outcome and process measures utilized both quantitative (survey data) and qualitative (focus groups and/or interviews) data collection.

Data was collected from each participant to measure the project outcomes that included: decreased recidivism; decreased substance use; stabilize living situations; and improved functioning that would increase the likelihood that a participant could remain in the community. The source of these data included 5 Texas Christian University (TCU) instruments (Drug Screen, Social Skills, Criminal Thinking, and Motivation for Treatment, Psychiatric or psychological problems); the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R); the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) instrument; and the Client Satisfaction with services form.

At the outset, it was determined that our best approach was to look at the implementation of FREE as a pilot or feasibility study that might show some preliminary outcomes. The sample is small and the time frame is limited which will make findings of statistical significance hard to achieve. On the other hand, we anticipated that we would learn a great deal about the County's ability to pull together all the community based resources and the elements of FREE that seem to be most associated with positive outcomes.

As of January 18, 2012, 54 participants had been recruited into FREE to receive reentry services. Of those 54, 41 (73%) are males and 15 (27%) are females. Fifty-one (91%) participants identified themselves as Caucasian, two (3.5%) as Hispanic or Latino, and 3 (5.5%) as African American. Forty-three participants were screened for co-occurring disorders and, of those 43, 29 (67.4%) were positive for co-occurring disorders. This project succeeded in recruiting its proposed

high risk-high need participants with substance abuse involvement. What was unexpected was a much high incidence of co-occurring mental health disorders within this group. Not surprisingly, the participants that stayed engaged with the FREE program had better outcomes than the ones that did not fully engage. Regarding the community outcomes, collaboration in many areas has improved significantly through the process.

Lessons Learned

Recruitment:

One of the greatest challenges facing the FREE program was to achieve its goal of recruiting 50 participants per year. There are multiple things that have impacted the ability of FREE to achieve this goal. Some examples include: 1. finding participants which meet all of the selection criteria as well as agreeing to participate in the program. In 2011 for example, 878 potential cases were screened for eligibility, of those 176 were appropriate (High risk, substance abuse, length of time left on conviction), of those 72 individuals were interviewed, and 35 agreed to participate. Less than 20% of all eligible individuals chose to participate. 2. Staffing issues: Medical/maternity leave for the project coordinator and staff turnover slowed the momentum of recruitment efforts. 3. Identifying the most effective pathway to appropriate referrals within the criminal justice system was a challenge. There seemed to be no reliable shortcut to reach the intended population.

Retention:

Retaining FREE participants in program services was an ongoing learning process. While there will always be individuals who drop out shortly after release, for many of the reentry population it is the lack of access to basic needs that is the challenge. Each barrier that arose often required a totally new response. The main challenges appear to be in the areas of housing, employment and transportation. These are typical problems faced by a reentry population and frequently become an obstacle to living safely and productively in the community. These problems faced by the general reentry population are exacerbated by a mental health diagnosis. For this group which represented almost 70% of the FREE population, access to medications and treatment is hampered by lack of transportation or inability to pay for transportation. There is a higher unemployment rate among those with a mental health disorder and they have an even more difficult time finding housing.

- The County of Bucks is a suburb of Philadelphia bordering New Jersey. Bucks County has a population of approximately 620,000 over 608 square miles. There is a mixture of rural, urban, and suburban territories that are identified as Upper, Central and Lower Bucks.

In addition to the residents of Bucks County, the key stakeholders of Bucks County involved in the FREE program include the following:

- Aldie Counseling Center, a non-profit drug and alcohol treatment provider that services those with no medical insurance or those with Medical Assistance through the Department of Public Welfare. Aldie is also the agency that employees the FREE program including the Program Coordinator, Case Manager, and Peer Specialist.
- Bucks County Department of Corrections, a County funded and operated criminal justice agency, part of the executive branch of county government. The Department services all municipal and state law enforcement authorities via the Bucks County Court of Common Pleas and 20 local Magisterial District Justice Centers. The Department is the single largest criminal justice agency within Bucks County, employing over 340 people in various types of jobs.
- Bucks County Adult Probation and Parole, is operated by the Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County the Seventh Judicial District of Pennsylvania. This agency employs 62 people, 41 of which are probation/parole officers that provide services for the Courts and community-based supervision of offenders placed under our jurisdiction.
- Bucks County Drug and Alcohol Commission, the single county authority in Bucks County which manages the county drug and alcohol treatment dollars, provides measures of quality assurance, and advances drug and alcohol preventions and treatment services for the residents of Bucks County
- Pennsylvania Recovery Organization- Achieving Community Together (PRO-ACT hosted by the Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania) is a grassroots organization dedicated to reduce addiction stigma, increase access to recovery services, and provide recovery supports. PRO-ACT acts mainly as a volunteer drop-in community support center for those in recovery with peers helping one another.

- The FREE program was initially started to focus on a very specific offender population, high risk/high need offenders with substance abuse histories. As originally stipulated in the grant, an eligible offender must have a high risk LSI-SV score of 6 or above, be engaged in D/A treatment during incarceration, have a sentence term of 3 months – 23 months pending the formal parole application process, and volunteer to participate. During the course of the project, these specific requirements limited those the program could service and neglected many offenders with multiple convictions and incarcerations due to a substance abuse problem and limited sober supports. In the future the FREE program plans to break from the original eligibility requirements and begin accepting offenders with multiple conviction and incarceration histories (as opposed to a specific LSI-SV score) who are currently involved in the Bucks County Department of Corrections Drug and Alcohol Department program and will have a remainder of approximately 1 year probation or parole term while in the community. Additionally, the FREE program has already started working with currently incarcerated individuals pending the disposition of their Parole Violation hearings in an effort to get these offenders identified sooner and begin building thorough reentry plans by the date of the Violation hearing. Thus, allowing for quicker release into the community.

An additional alteration of the original project plan evolved to maintain a focus on recovery as a process. Initially, FREE program participants were considered unsuccessful and services were terminated if they were re-incarcerated during the course of their participation. As the program evolved, it was determined that if an offender becomes incarcerated for a technical offense and remains in contact with the FREE program FREE will continue to work with the offender through the VOP process and create a new reentry plan prior to the offenders release. Also, originally if an offender was charged with a new offense they were considered unsuccessful and terminated from the program. As the program evolved, it has become practice that if the FREE offender is charged with another offense and is re-incarcerated the offender could be eligible to reenter the program.

Finally, an additional layer of the team approach was added to the FREE program procedures to help strengthen the message of a united front to the offender and the relationship of collaboration between Aldie as a treatment provider and Adult probation and parole as a criminal justice agency. If an offender begins to exhibit a consistent negative behavior pattern (i.e. missing appointments and failing to follow-through with program requirements), the FREE case manager will meet with both the offender and the Parole officer to address the issues of concern in an effort to interrupt negative patterns before they result in a parole violation.

- The Forensic Re-Entry Enhancement (FREE) Program is funded by grant from Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The monies received from this grant funded this program in order to expand re-entry services as defined above. As for a cost savings, this is difficult to obtain at this juncture due to not having a control group for comparison. The program continues to obtain relevant data by continuing to work with the County Probation/Parole Department towards this initiative. More information on the impact of this program is defined in the data elements section of this submission.

References:

Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2009). What are Peer Recovery Support Services? HHS Publication No. (SMA) 09-4454. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Natarajan, N., Petteruti, A., Walsh, N., & Ziedenberg, J. (2008). Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety. Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute

Thigpen, M. J., Beauclair, T. J., Keiser, G.M., & Guevara, M., Mestad, R. (2007). Cognitive Behavioral Treatment: A Review and Discussion for Corrections Professionals. NIC Accession Number 021657. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Corrections, U.S Department of Justice.

Trotman, A.J., & Taxman, F.S (2011). Implementation of a Contingency Management-Based Interventions in a Community Supervision Setting: Clinical Issues and Recommendations. *J Offender Rehabil.* 2011 ; 50(5): 235–251. doi:10.1080/10509674.2011.585924.

Data Elements:

Table 1:

	Intensive Outpatient / Outpatient	Inpatient treatment	Recovery Center	12 Steps	Recovery House	Recovery house Funding	Mental Health evaluation	Transport Provided to appt and/or residence	*Other Social Services
Total	50	13	56	56	37	22	38	32	17

* Other Social Services included: clothing, NOVA, medical services, etc)

Figure 1:

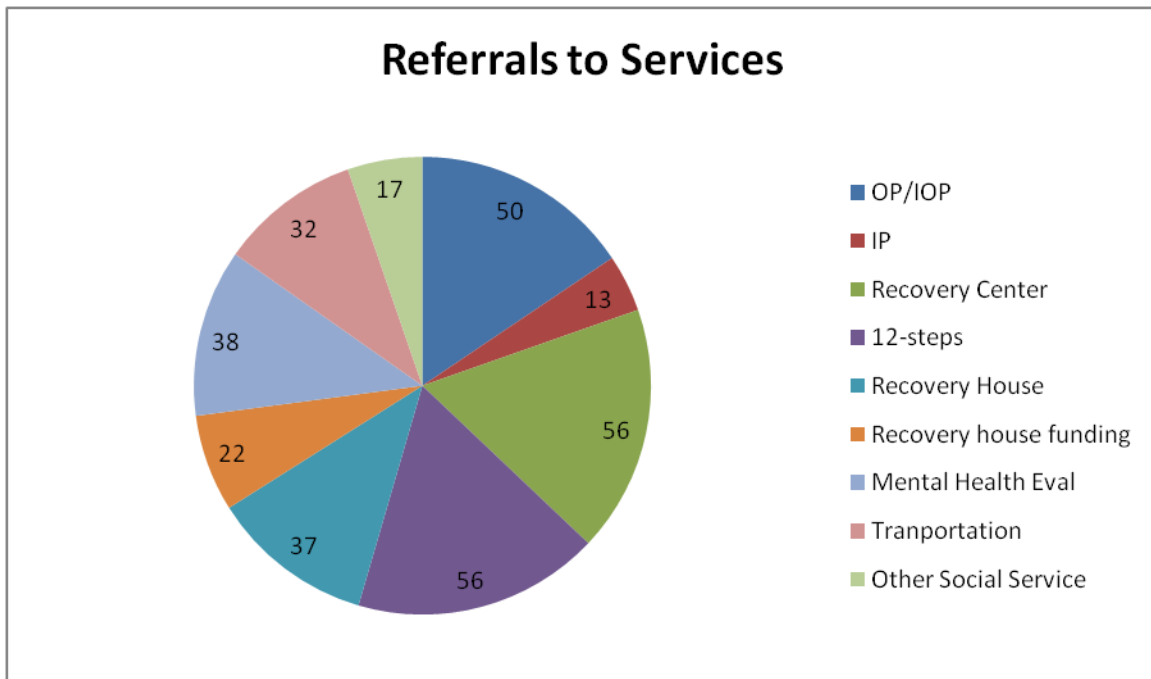


Table 2:

	Total Released from BCCF for 12 months	Total released from BCCF 12 months successfully discharged from FREE	Total released from BCCF 12 months unsuccessfully discharged from FREE
Total Released from BCCF for at Least 12 Months	19	8	11
New Criminal Charges of FREE participants release from BCCF for 12 months	5	0	5

FREE Participants Released from BCCF

Between the period of June 1, 2010 and February 28, 2012 there have been a total of 56 offenders released from BCCF to the FREE program. As shown below in Table 3, there have been 52 FREE participants released from BCCF for at least 3 months. Of those 42, 3 (6%) participants were charged with a new criminal offense, 2 (4%) participants were re-incarcerated for a technical VOP and 47 (90%) remained active in FREE program within 3 months of release. There have been a total of 42 FREE participants that were released from BCCF for at least 6 months. Of those 42, 8 (19%) were re-incarcerated for a new criminal offense, 3 (7%) were re-incarcerated for a technical VOP post discharge from the FREE program, and 31 (74%) remained active in the FREE program within 6 months of release. There have been a total of 19 FREE participants who have been released from BCCF for at least 12 months. Of those 19, 5 (26%) participants were re-incarcerated for a new criminal offense, 4 (21%) participants were re-incarcerated for a VOP post discharge from the FREE program, and 10 (53%) participants remained actively engaged in the FREE program within 12 months of release until their discharge.

It was originally projected that if the FREE program could positively impact 50% of the high risk/ high need Bucks County offenders it served, and then it would make a long-term impact to the county. This data suggests that the majority (58%) of FREE offenders released for at least 12 months are likely to stay engaged in the FREE program and not incur a new criminal offense, thus meeting the program's original projection.

Table 3:

	New criminal Charge	VOP Post Discharge	Remained Active in FREE	Total Released in Period
Within 3 months of release	3	2	47	52
Within 6 months of release	8	3	31	42
Within 12 months of release	5	4	10	19

Table 3: FREE Participant Trends

Discharged FREE Participants Released from BCCF for at least 12 months

In total, there have been 19 clients discharged from the FREE program that have been released from the Bucks County Correctional Facility for at least 12 months during the period of June 1, 2010 through February 28, 2012. Of those 19, 8(42%) participants were successfully discharged from the FREE program and 11 (58%) participants were unsuccessfully discharged.

Table 4:

	Released for at least 12 months
Successfully Discharged	8
Unsuccessfully Discharged	11
Total Discharged	19

Table 4: FREE Participants Released from BCCF for 12 months

FREE Re-incarceration of Discharged FREE Participants Released at least 12 months

In total, 47% of FREE participants released for at least twelve months were re-incarcerated in BCCF after discharge from the FREE program. Overall, 50 % (5 out of 10) of those re-incarcerated committed new criminal offenses while the other 40 % (4 out of 10) were re-incarcerated for technical violations of probation or parole. As illustrated in Table 4 below, only 13 % (1 out of 8) of offenders released from BCCF for at least 12 months and successfully discharged from FREE were re-incarcerated in BCCF, opposed to 73% (8 out of 11) offenders unsuccessfully discharged from the FREE program. This suggests that clients who successfully complete FREE are less likely to be re-incarcerated. Additionally, the successfully discharged FREE offender that was re-incarcerated committed a technical parole violation. No successfully discharged FREE offenders were charged with additional criminal offenses.

At this time Bucks County, does not have county recidivism data on the high risk/ high need population. Without such information it is difficult to determine cost-savings by comparing the FREE population to the general high risk/ high need offenders in Bucks County Correctional facility.

	New Criminal Offense	VOP Post Discharge	No Re-incarceration	Total Released 12 Months
Successfully Discharged	0	1	7	8
Unsuccessfully Discharged	5	3	3	11
Total	5	4	10	19

Table 5: FREE Re-incarceration of Participants Released at least 12 months from FREE

Figure 2:

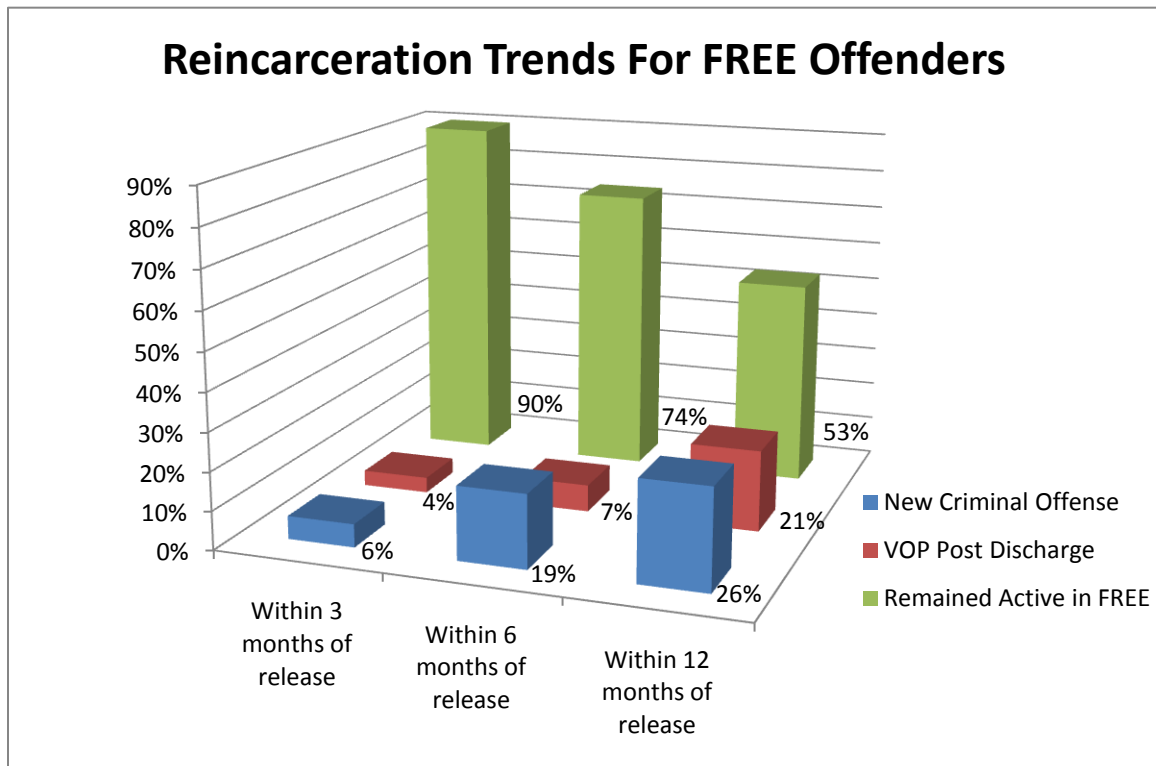


Figure 3:

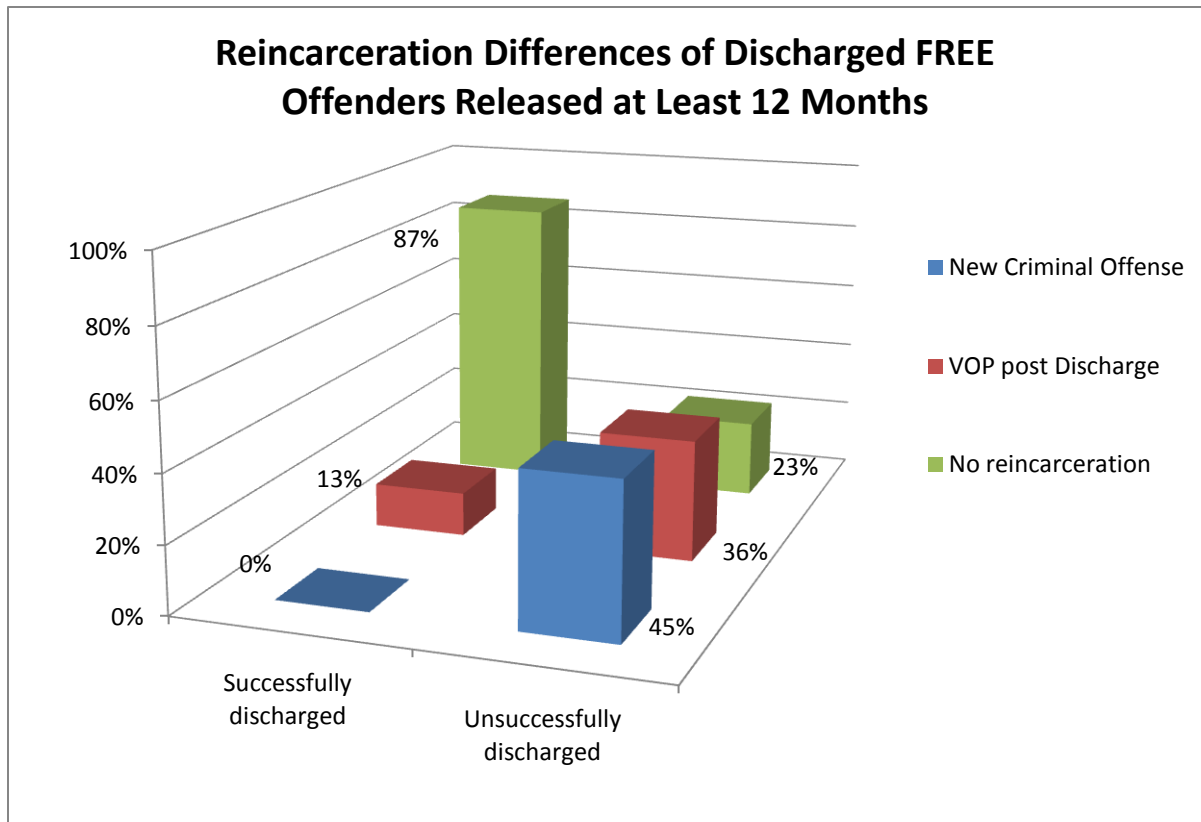


Figure 3: Re-incarceration rates between Successful and Unsuccessful Discharges