

# Research in Brief

August 2015

## RESIDENTIAL FACILITY ESCAPES



### NUMBER OF ESCAPES INCREASING

Escapes from residential correctional facilities sometimes occur when an offender residing in the facility leaves without authorization. However, more commonly, escapes from these placements involve failure to return to the facility after signing out for work, treatment, or any other authorized reason.

Between calendar years 2001 through 2014, the number of escapes from residential correctional facilities increased from 594 to 741 or by about 24.7%. The graph below shows year to year variation—increases as well as decreases—especially with regard to work release and probation.

#### What Are Residential Correctional Facilities?

Residential correctional facilities are non-secure facilities providing 24-hour supervision of offenders. Offenders may leave the facility for approved purposes such as for job-seeking, employment, or treatment.

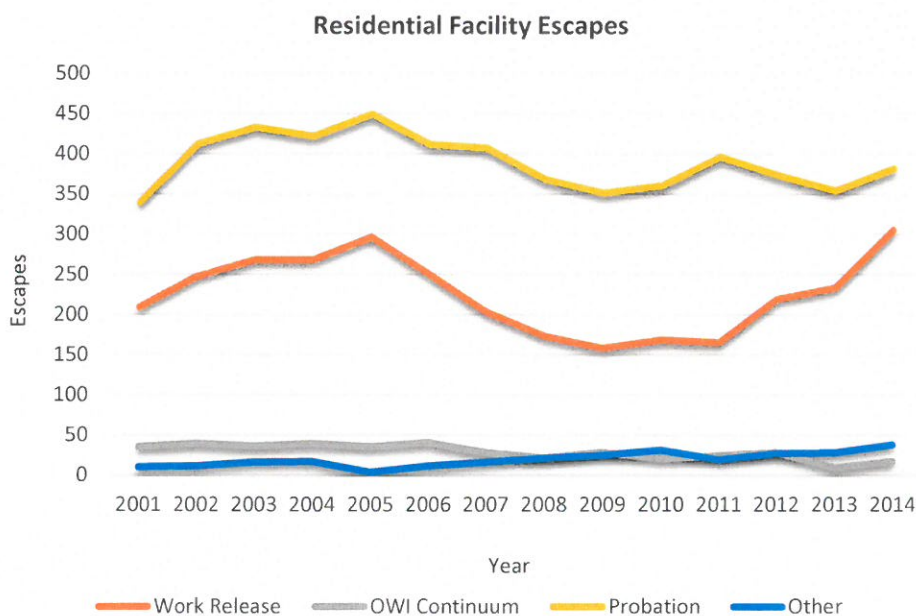
Residential correctional facilities house a number of different offender populations that are discussed in this report:

**Work Release.** Offenders who are transitioning from prison to the community.

**OWI Continuum.** Offenders sentenced to prison for second, third or subsequent offense drunk driving may be diverted to residential correctional facilities to receive substance abuse treatment.

**Probation.** Offenders ordered to community supervision by the sentencing judge may be required to reside in a residential correctional facility for a period of time, as an alternative to incarceration.

Other offenders residing in residential correctional facilities may be Federal, interstate compact, offenders on special sentence, etc.



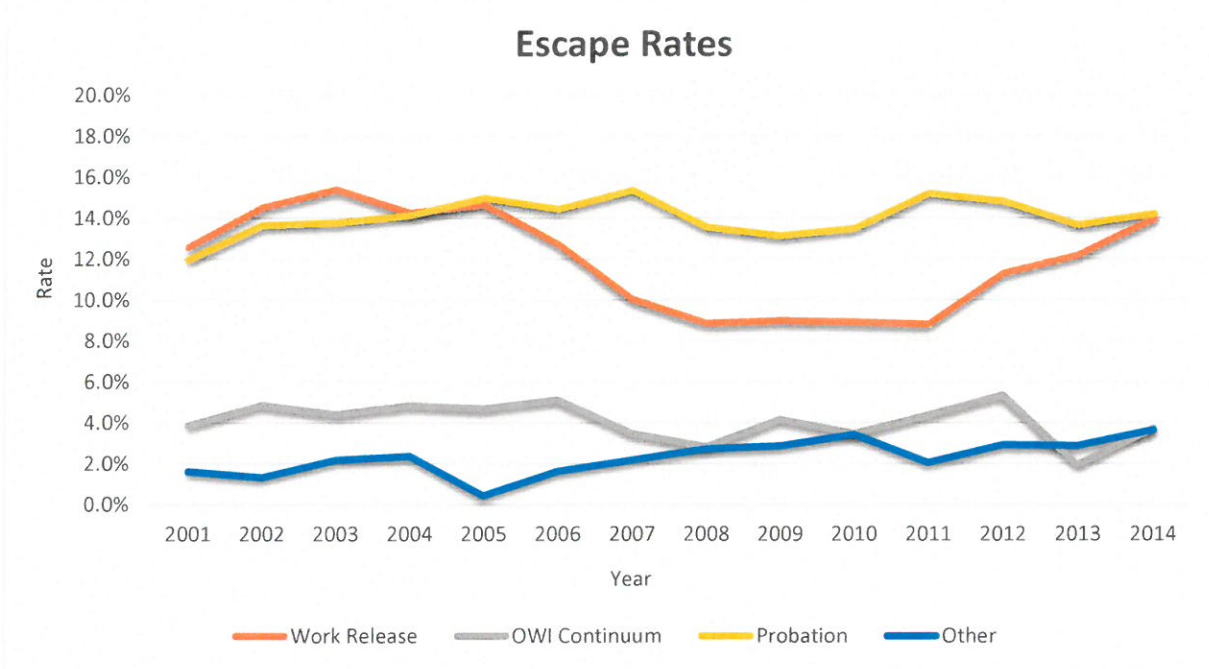
### ESCAPE RATES FAIRLY STABLE

Over this time period, residential facility capacity increased, meaning more offenders going through the facilities each year. Between 2001 and 2014, total offenders served in the facilities increased from 1,392 to 1,476 or by about 6.0%. Total served is facility population at the beginning of the year plus admissions during the year; because offenders may transfer from one facility to another, transfers were subtracted in order to avoid counting offenders more than once during the year.

# Research in Brief

August 2015

In order to take the growing numbers of offenders over time, escape rates were computed as total escapes for the year divided by the total offenders served in the facilities during the year. The graph below shows escape rates for the different offender populations and how they changed from year to year. Escape rates for probationers have been more stable over time compared to escape rates for work release, which are similar to escape rates for probation at the beginning and end of the period shown, but dipped to 10% and lower between 2007 and 2011. The lowest escape rates are for OWI Continuum and Other.



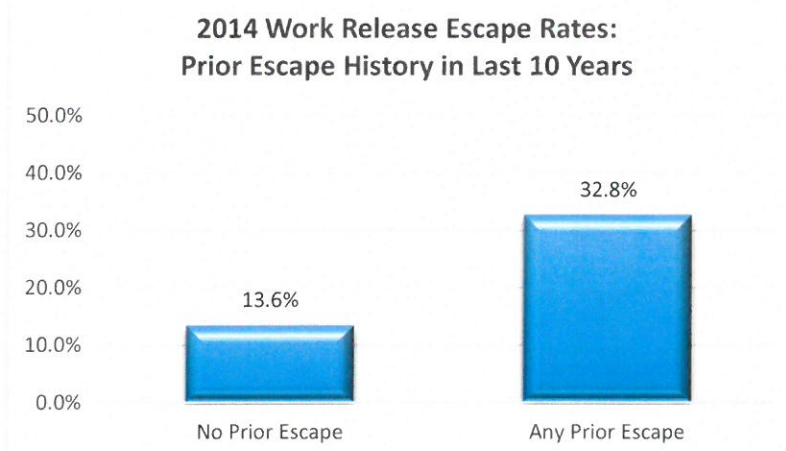
Though the number of escapes has increased over the 14-year period, the rate at which escapes are occurring shows no statistically significant change, which means the small increases in the rates are not meaningful. The percentage point changes in escape rates between 2001 and 2014 are shown in the table below.

Change in Escape Rate					
Period	Work Release	OWI Continuum	Probation	Other	Total
2001-2014	1.4%	-0.2%	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%



## SPECIAL ANALYSIS: WORK RELEASE ESCAPES

Because work release is a transition from prison to the community, escapes from work release pose a special concern. In light of the upturn in the work release escape rate following a five-year low, a policy question was raised regarding appropriateness of work release placements for offenders with histories of previous escapes from work release or other type of placement. The graph below shows work release escape rates in 2014 for individuals with escape histories within the last ten years are much higher than for offenders with no previous escapes in the preceding ten years.

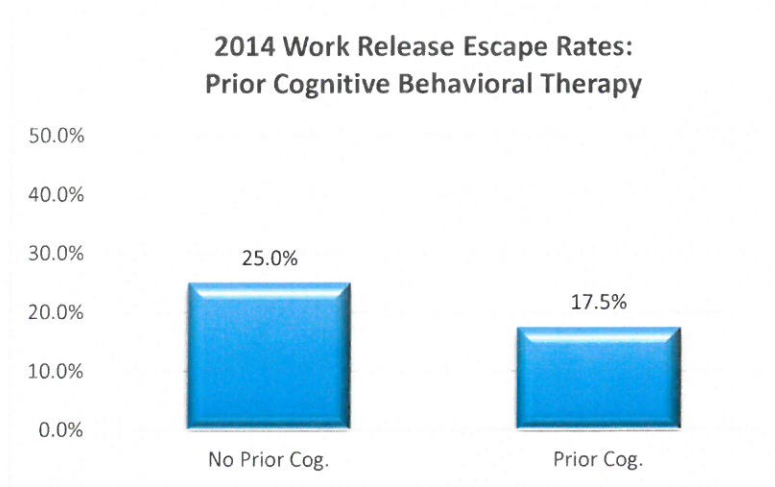


Offenders' decisions to escape are often a reflection of impulsivity and/or lack of problem-solving skills. One intervention that can address these factors and has been found to be effective in lowering recidivism rates is cognitive behavioral treatment (CBT). CBT helps offenders understand the thoughts and feelings that influence their behaviors. During the course of treatment, offenders learn how to identify and change destructive or disturbing thought patterns that have a negative influence on behavior. The goal of CBT is to teach offenders that while they cannot control every aspect of the world around them, they can take control of how they interpret and deal with things in their environment.

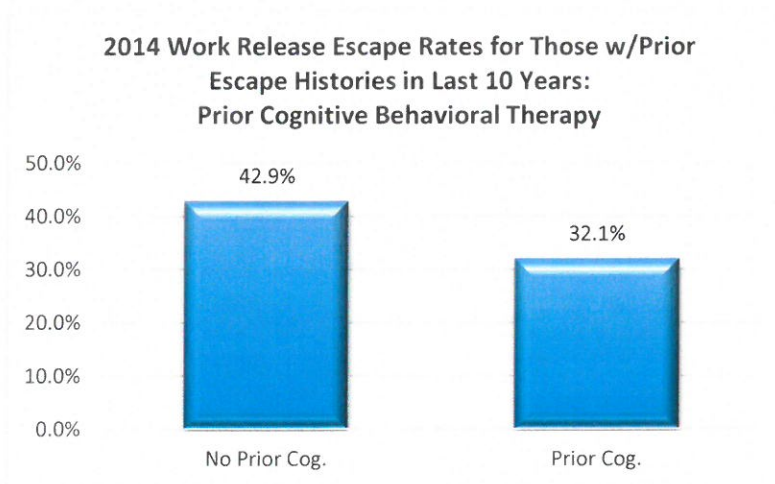
The graph on the next page shows the benefit of having prior cognitive behavioral therapy. Offenders who had previously been exposed to CBT were less likely to escape than those who had never been placed in CBT. The difference in escape rates between the two groups is statistically significant.

# Research in Brief

August 2015



The final question in this analysis was, do offenders with prior escape histories but have been exposed to CBT have lower escape rates than similar offenders who had never been placed in CBT? The graph below shows the answer is yes.



This analysis provides two areas for policy consideration with regard to work release placements. First, that offenders with prior escapes within the last ten years be scrutinized with particular care prior to placement on work release. Second, that offenders with prior escapes from work release or other placements receive CBT.

Intern Zach Little, a Grandview University student completing a degree in Applied Mathematics, computed the escape rates, prepared all charts and tables, and assisted in writing this Research in Brief, under the general direction of Lettie Prell, Director of Research.