

Increasing Public Safety & Generating Savings: Options For Vermont Policymakers



Property and drug offenders are the fastest growing segment of the prison population.

- From 2000 to 2005, the number of people admitted to prison for felony offenses increased by nearly 60 percent.
- Property and drug offenders accounted for over half of the increase in the felony prison population between 2000 and 2006.

People incarcerated and on community reintegration who have a substance use disorder are not receiving treatment, which would reduce their risk to public safety.

- Judges do not routinely have access to substance abuse assessments for individuals when making sentencing decisions.
- The majority (77 percent) of people sentenced for a property or drug felony has a substance use disorder; they need treatment to reduce their likelihood of reoffending. Only 13 percent of those incarcerated who need treatment are in a treatment program.
- Two-thirds of property and drug offenders in need of substance abuse treatment report having received mental health treatment in the past.
- More than half of property and drug offenders (55 percent) report being frequently unemployed prior to their incarceration.
- Upon release from prison, people in need of substance abuse treatment are not always connected to appropriate levels of treatment in the community.

A significant share of people eligible and appropriate for placement on reintegration status are still incarcerated due to a lack of community-based resources.

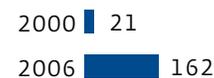
- Approximately 70 people meet the criteria each month for assignment to reintegration status and would benefit from placement on this status. Just under half of these people, however, are not placed on reintegration status because of insufficient housing options in the community.
- Although state statute provides that people approved for reintegration status can be released 90 days prior to their minimum sentence date, people who participate in this program are, on average, not released until 53 days prior to their minimum sentence date.

Number of People in Prison for Felony Sentences by Offense Type, 2000 - 2006

PROPERTY FELONY

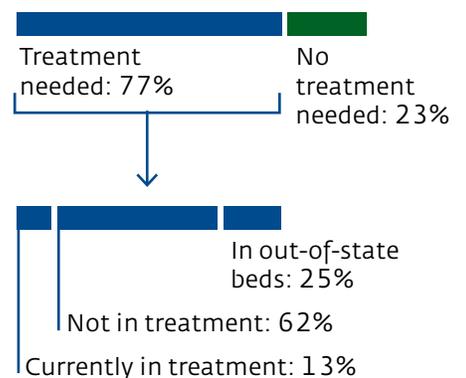


DRUG FELONY



Substance Abuse Treatment Needs of Property and Drug Offenders

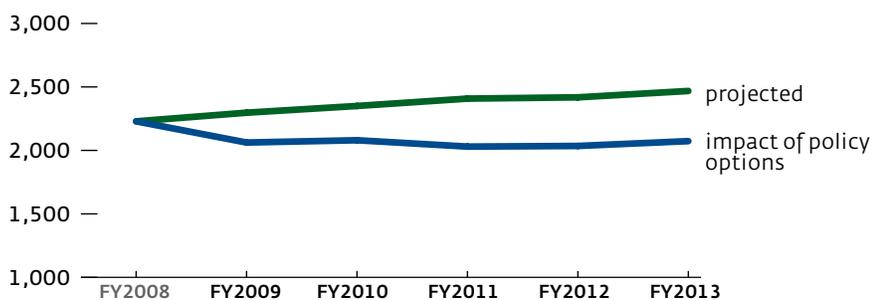
Vermont Sentenced Prison Population, October 2007



Options for Policymakers

POLICY OPTION	POLICY ELEMENTS	FY 2009 BED SAVINGS	FY 2018 BED SAVINGS
1. Expand use of community-based treatment programs for people with substance abuse problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the Intensive Substance Abuse Program (ISAP) to also include a community-based residential substance abuse treatment program Ensure that judges have information about the substance use disorders of defendants to inform sentencing and consideration for ISAP 	20	90
2. Put property and drug offenders in work camps with substance abuse treatment and vocational training programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-task 100–200 beds in FY2009 and FY2011 in existing in-state facilities as work camps with residential treatment programs for certain property and drug offenders with current, untreated substance abuse problems Provide vocational training and ensure that work camp assignments assist in preparing people for post-release employment 	100	200
3. Ensure people on conditional reentry are connected to treatment upon release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect people on conditional reentry with identified substance abuse needs and a high risk to reoffend to treatment programs in the community Set a goal of reducing the use of incarcerative graduated sanctions and suspensions of conditional reentry for people with substance abuse treatment needs by 10 percent 	10	20
4. Reduce failures on probation by creating incentives for good behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an incentive for people on probation to comply with the conditions of their supervision by allowing them to earn credit reductions off of their term Provide 20 days off of their term for each month without violations Reduce probation violations resulting in incarceration by 10 percent from previous fiscal year levels 	7	10
5. Ensure that reintegration status is utilized whenever appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of transitional housing beds to assist in stabilizing this population upon return to the community Of those who are appropriate for reintegration status, increase the number placed in the program each month from 40 to 70 Ensure that eligible persons are put on reintegration status the full 90 days prior to their minimum date as currently allowed by statute. 	98	116
Combined Impact		235	436

Estimated 5 Year Cost Savings of Policy Options



	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
BED IMPACT	235	270	378	383	395
SAVINGS*	\$4.9m	\$5.8m	\$8.4m	\$8.7m	\$9.3m
POLICY COSTS*	\$2.7m	\$2.5m	\$3.1m	\$3.2m	\$3.3m
NET SAVINGS	\$2.2m	\$3.3m	\$5.3m	\$5.6m	\$6.0m

*Estimated cost savings are based on the current annual cost of an out of state prison bed, adjusted for inflation. Policy costs do not include any construction costs.

FY2009 - 2018

Cumulative Savings*	\$92 Million
Estimated Policy Costs*	\$38 Million
Estimated Net Savings	\$54 Million

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