

November 2023 SSP Report

PA Sentencing Commission

- An analysis of inmate misconducts showed that inmates who participated in SSP committed fewer misconducts than similar inmates who did not participate in the program (7.6 misconducts annually per 100 inmates as compared to 52.5 for similar inmates). This suggests that participation in the program may have a positive motivational effect on inmate behavior.
- Recidivistic outcomes for SSP participants appear to be similar to other inmates who were not enrolled. SSP participants recidivated at a rate of 15.2% for any new felony or misdemeanor arrest within the first 18 months after release. Similar inmates who did not participate recidivated at a rate of 16.0%, and all other releases from state confinement recidivated at rate of 25.7% within 18 months. A survival analysis corroborated these results, suggesting that recidivism rates are not statistically significantly different for SSP participants and non-participants with similar sentences. These results indicate that an earlier release from confinement through SSP does not seem to result in an increased risk to public safety.
- Participation in SSP has led to a median reduction of 98 days to confinement length, leading to an annual savings of 66,150 bed-days for the Department of Corrections. Using a marginal cost estimate of \$41.68 daily per inmate, the

program has resulted in approximately \$2.75 million in savings at DOC. Conversely, the reduction in bed-days directly corresponds to an increase of 66,150 days of state parole supervision, offsetting some of the correctional savings. In addition, the Parole Board has seen a reduction of more than 600 parole interviews annually since SSP implementation. However, Board staff continue to conduct administrative reviews of these case files to verify eligibility for release, set parole conditions, and approve parolee housing plans.

- Over the first two years of operation, Short Sentence Parole has been effective in reducing correctional costs while minimizing impacts to public safety.

4,058 inmates have been released on SSP through 2024.

For more information please refer to 61 Pa.C.S. § 6137.1 Short Sentence Parole or go to <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/cor.html>

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



SHORT SENTENCE PAROLE (SSP)

2025

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Short Sentence Parole (SSP)

Short Sentence Parole applies to individuals committed to the Department with an aggregate minimum sentence of confinement of two years or less, or a recidivism risk reduction incentive minimum sentence of two years or less, whichever is shorter.

Exclusions

Regardless of the sentence imposed, SSP does not apply to:

(1) individuals committed for or with an aggregate sentence containing:

- a personal injury crime, or criminal attempt, criminal solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit a personal injury crime as defined in section 103 of the act of November 24, 1998 (P.L.882, No.111), known as the Crime Victims Act;
- a crime of violence, or any criminal attempt, criminal solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit a crime of violence as defined in 42 Pa.C.S. § 9714(g) (relating to sentences for second or subsequent offenses);
- an offense under 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 61 (relating to firearms and other dangerous articles) or a criminal attempt, criminal solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit the offense;
- an enhancement for the use of a deadly weapon as defined under law or the sentencing guidelines promulgated by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing or where the attorney for the Commonwealth has demonstrated that the defendant has been found guilty of or was convicted of an offense involving a deadly weapon or a criminal attempt, criminal

solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit the offense or an equivalent offense under the laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation;

- a violation of any of the following provisions or an equivalent offense under the laws of the United States or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, including a criminal attempt, criminal solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit same: 18 Pa.C.S. § 4302(a) (relating to incest); 18 Pa.C.S. § 5901 (relating to open lewdness); or 18 Pa.C.S. Ch. 76 Subch. C (relating to internet child pornography);
- a criminal sentence pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 9712.1 (relating to sentences for certain drug offenses committed with firearms);
- an offense listed under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. H (relating to registration of sexual offenders);
- an offense listed under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 97 Subch. I (relating to continued registration of sexual offenders); or
- an offense of drug trafficking as defined in section 4103 (relating to definitions) or a criminal attempt, criminal solicitation or criminal conspiracy to commit drug trafficking as defined in section 4103.

(2) individuals awaiting trial or sentencing for additional criminal charges, if a conviction or sentence on the additional charges would cause the person to become ineligible under this subsection;

(3) individuals currently serving a state prison sentence who were denied parole on that sentence;

(4) individuals convicted of any criminal offense committed while incarcerated; or

(5) individuals who have been found guilty of a major disciplinary infraction while confined in a county correctional facility or State Correctional Institution. The term "major disciplinary infraction" means the violation:

- was sexual in nature;
- involved assaultive behavior or included a credible threat to cause bodily injury to another;
- involved possession or control of a weapon; or
- involved escape or possessing implements of escape.

(6) individuals with a pending felony charge or outstanding felony arrest warrant or detainer, unless the person may be paroled to a detainer related to an underlying felony charge.

Approval of Parole

The PA Parole Board shall exclude anyone who, in its discretion, determines:

- there exists an identifiable threat to public safety; or
- inclusion substantially jeopardizes the rehabilitative needs of the person.

For individuals determined to be eligible for SSP, the Parole Board will, without requiring an interview, approve the individual for parole.