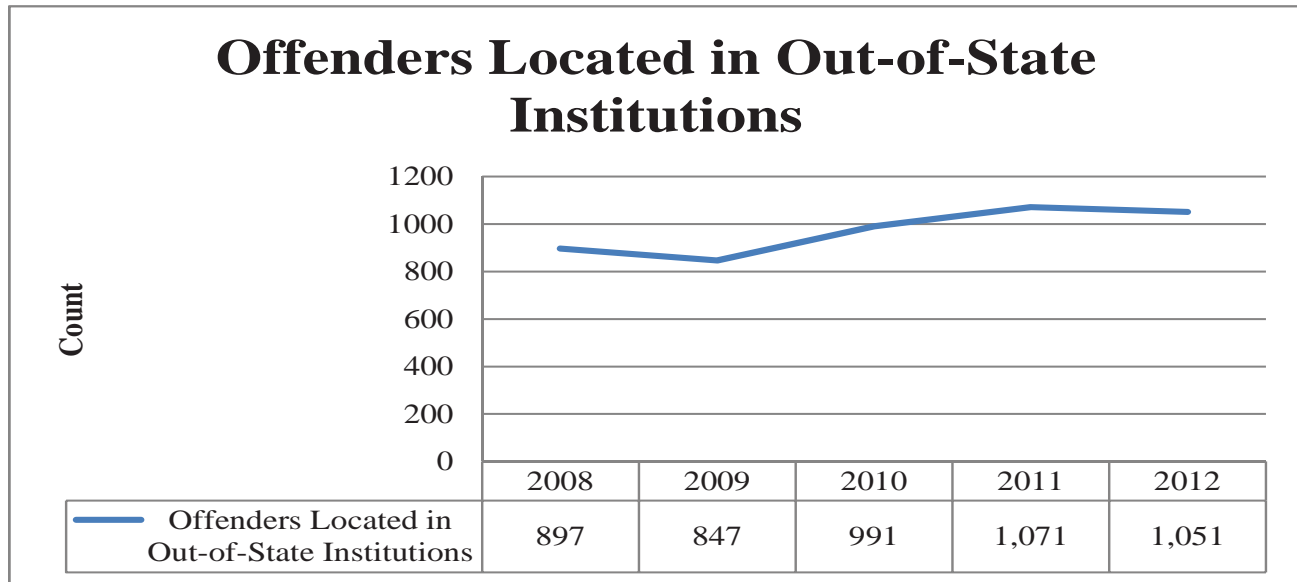


After two years of steady growth, the number of offenders located out of state declined in 2012 by nearly 2 percent (1.90%).

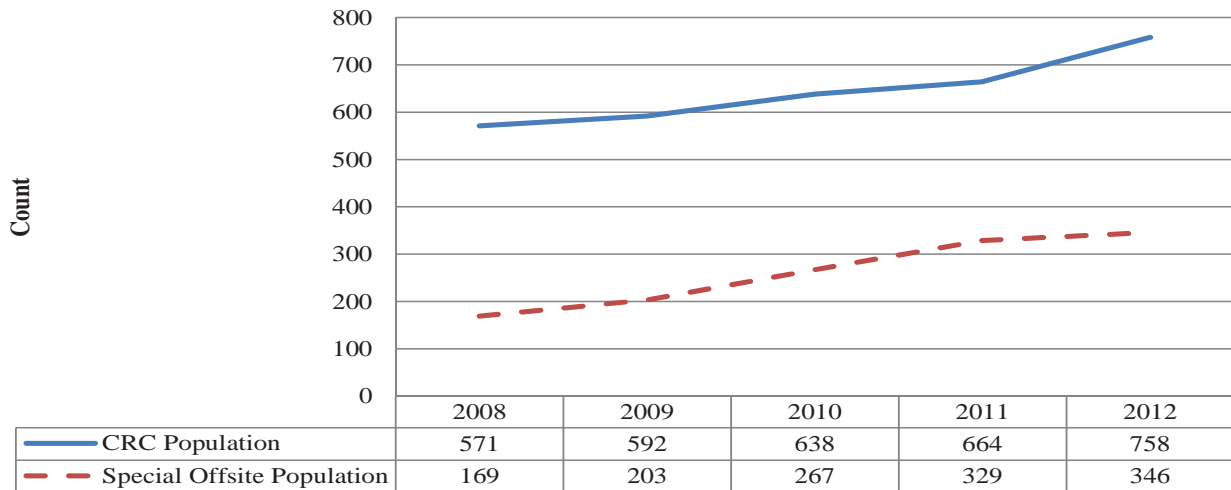


In 2012, the trend of older offenders outnumbering younger offenders continued. Five years ago, younger offenders outnumbered older offenders nearly 2:1.



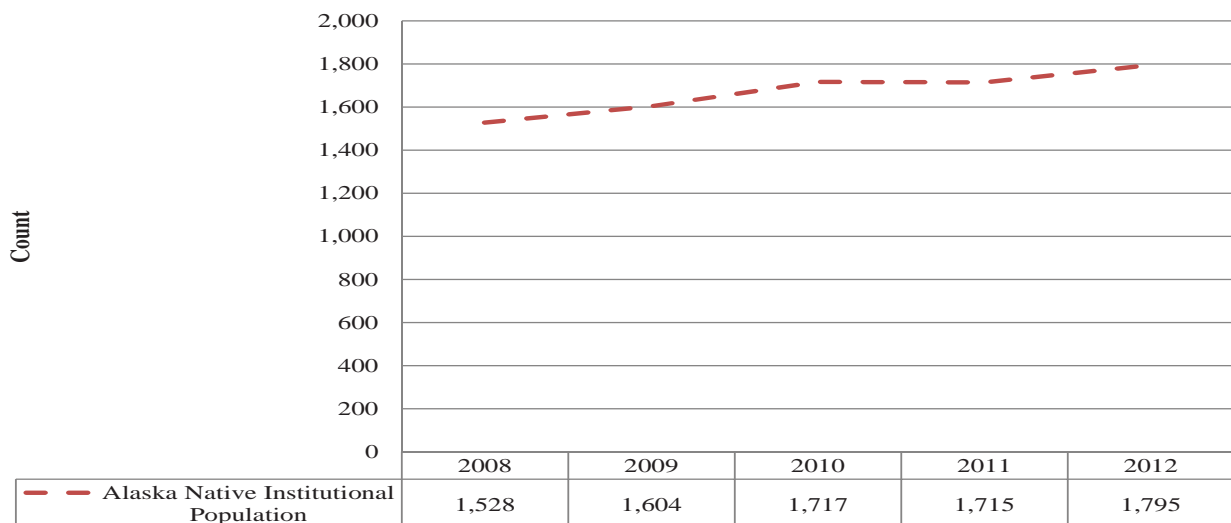
The number of offenders located in Community Residential Centers and Special Offsite Programs continues to grow faster than the institutional population. The number of offenders at these locations increased 10.04% compared to last year. Meanwhile, the institutional population increased 2.41% since last year. Since 2008, the CRC and offsite population has increased over 30 percent (32.97%).

CRC and Special Offsite Population Trend: December 31, 2008-2012



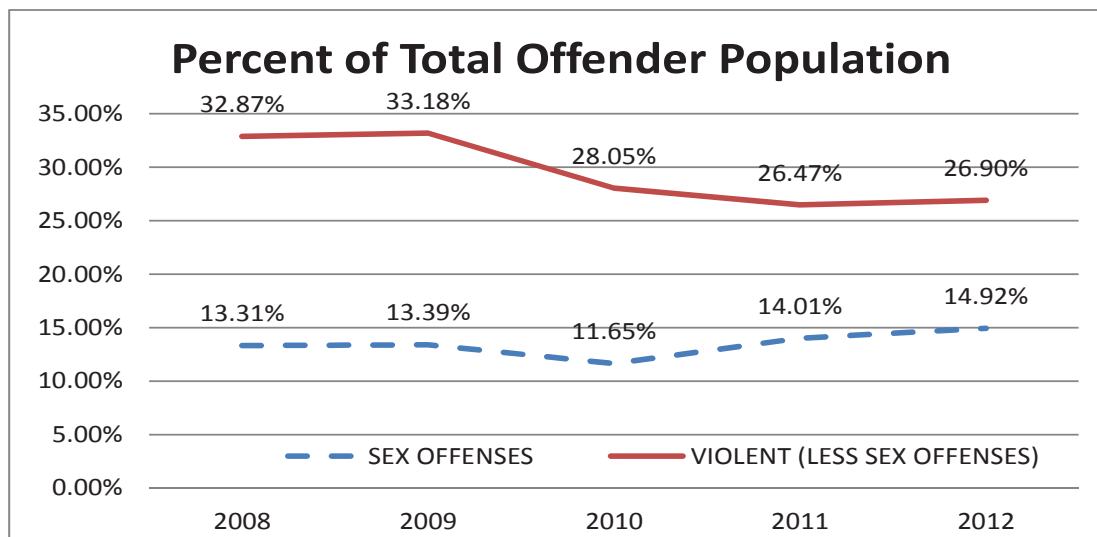
The number of Alaska Natives incarcerated in institutions increased 4.46%.

Count of Alaska Natives in Institutions: December 31, 2008-2012

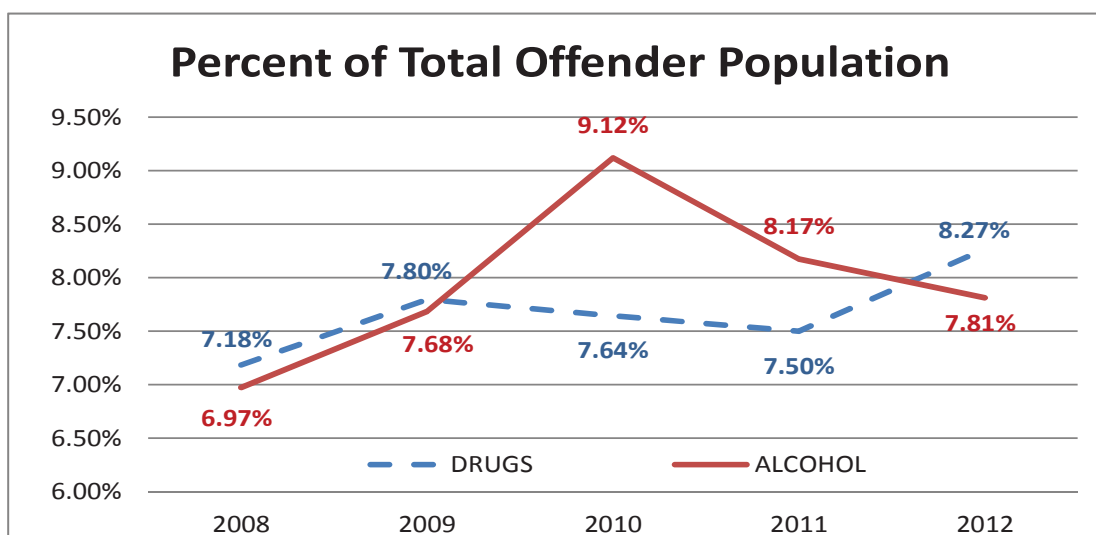


Notable Offense Classes Being Tracked by the Department of Corrections

The number of offenders incarcerated in institutions as a result of crimes against a person has dropped markedly over the last five years. Meanwhile, registerable sex offenders has increased nearly one percent compared to last year's offender population.



Over the last three years, the percent of offenders incarcerated for alcohol-related offenses has been decreasing. Meanwhile, the percent of offenders incarcerated for drug offenses has trended up over the same amount of time.



Top 20 Offenses: 2003 & 2012

Calendar Year 2003			
Rank	Offense	Offense Class	2003 Count
1	PROBATION VIOLATION	PAROLE/PROBATION	465
2	PAROLE VIOLATION	PAROLE/PROBATION	320
3	DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED	ALCOHOL	220
4	MURDER 1	PERSON	184
5	ASSAULT 4	PERSON	178
6	MURDER 2	PERSON	166
7	DRIVE W/ LICENSE CANC/SUSP/REVOKED/LIM	TRANSPORTATION	156
8	FELONY DWI - 2+ PRIORS W/IN 5 YRS	ALCOHOL	137
9	SEX ABUSE MINOR 1	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	97
10	SEX ASSAULT 1	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	97
11	MISCONDUCT-CNTRLD SUBSTANCE 4	DRUGS	85
12	ASSAULT 3	PERSON	83
13	THEFT 2	PROPERTY	72
14	SEX ABUSE MINOR 2	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	68
15	DISORDERLY CONDUCT	PUBLIC ORDER/ADMIN.	58
16	ASSAULT	PERSON	55
17	ROBBERY 1	PERSON	55
18	FAILURE TO REGISTER AS SEX OFFENDER 2	PUBLIC ORDER/ADMIN.	45
19	MISCONDUCT-CNTRLD SUBSTANCE 3	DRUGS	43
20	THEFT 3	PROPERTY	39

Calendar Year 2012			
Rank	Offense	Offense Class	2012 Count
1	PROBATION VIOLATION	PAROLE/PROBATION	526
2	ASSAULT 4	PERSON	226
3	FELONY DWI - 2+ PRIORS W/IN 5 YRS	ALCOHOL	198
4	ASSAULT 3	PERSON	191
5	MURDER 2	PERSON	190
6	MURDER 1	PERSON	189
7	THEFT 2	PROPERTY	177
8	PAROLE VIOLATION	PAROLE/PROBATION	171
9	SEX ABUSE MINOR 2	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	167
10	MISCONDUCT-CNTRLD SUBSTANCE 4	DRUGS	157
11	DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED	ALCOHOL	151
12	SEX ASSAULT 1	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	149
13	SEX ABUSE MINOR 1	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	141
14	DRIVE W/ LICENSE CANC/SUSP/REVOKED/LIM	TRANSPORTATION	110
15	MISCONDUCT-CNTRLD SUBSTANCE 2	DRUGS	94
16	ASSAULT 2	PERSON	91
17	SEX ASSAULT 2	SEX OFFENSE (REGISTERABLE)	89
18	MISCONDUCT-CNTRLD SUBSTANCE 3	DRUGS	88
19	ROBBERY 1	PERSON	87
20	ASSAULT 1	PERSON	76

Ten-Year Trend in Select and Notable Offenses: 2003 & 2012

Year 2003	Offenses	Year 2012
7.29%	Alcohol	3.11%
	Driving While Intoxicated In 2003, Driving While Intoxicated representing slightly more than 7 percent of the offender population. By 2012, the same offense had dropped to slightly more than 3 percent.	
6.10%	Crimes Against a Person (Violent)	3.90%
	Murder 1 In 2003, Murder 1 represented slightly more than 6 percent of the offender population. By 2012, the same offense had fallen to 3.9 percent of the offender population.	
2.82%	Drugs	3.24%
	Misconduct of a Controlled Substance Class 4. In 2003, slightly more than 2.8 percent of the offender population was in for MICS-4. In 2012, the offense increased to slightly more than 3.2 percent.	
5.47%	Registerable Sex Offenses	6.35%
	Sex Abuse of a Minor Class 1 & 2 In 2003, Sex Abuse of a Minor Class 1 and 2 represented almost 5.5 percent of the population. By 2012, the same offenses represented slightly more than 6.3 percent of the offender population.	

More than half of offenders fail surprise drug tests at Oklahoma City halfway house

A surprise urine analysis at a privately operated halfway house in Oklahoma City by the state Corrections Department showed more than half of the offenders were using drugs.

by Graham Lee Brewer (</more/Graham Lee Brewer>) (<https://plus.google.com/u/0/11293282919048601?rel=author>) Modified: March 29, 2014 at 9:00 am • Published: March 29, 2014

A surprise drug screening at a private Oklahoma City halfway house this week showed more than half of the offenders were using illegal drugs.

The state Corrections Department randomly tested 153 offenders Monday at the Carver Transitional Center, 400 S May Ave., and 78 tested positive. The community corrections center is operated by Avalon Correctional Services Inc., which ran a Tulsa halfway house where there were allegations of organized inmate fights.



</gallery/articleid/3948112/1/pictures/2388363>
Carver Transitional Center, 400 S May Ave., on Friday in Oklahoma City. Photo by Paul B. Southerland, The Oklahoman **PAUL B. SOUTHERLAND** -

The vast majority of the drug test failures at Carver were for the active ingredient in marijuana. Others tested positive for PCP, methamphetamine and opiates.

While still under the purview of the state Corrections Department, offenders at halfway houses like Carver are allowed to leave the facility during the day and work. They are required to return each evening and pass through a security checkpoint before entering the center.

They also have most of the same restrictions as prisons, such as prohibitions on the use of drugs and cellphones.

The Corrections Department canceled its contract with a Tulsa halfway house operated by Avalon in January amid three ongoing investigations and removed 212 offenders from that facility.

In a January letter to Avalon, the department said it had "lost confidence in the administration of the Tulsa facility," and no offenders will be sent there until after the department has completed and reviewed the findings of the investigations.

One of those investigations pertains to allegations that officers at the Tulsa facility organized fights between offenders, which *The Oklahoman* first reported Nov. 23.

Many of the offenders who were transferred from the Tulsa center ended up at Carver.

Newly hired Corrections Department Director Robert Patton said he had received information there was a drug problem at the facility and ordered the tests.

"I'm extremely concerned with these numbers," Patton said. "I contacted Avalon, directed an action plan be developed to address these issues, and expect that action plan no later than Monday."

The tests are an example of an increase in accountability with private operators, said Patton, who has said recently that greater oversight of private contracts is one of his top priorities.

Avalon has asked the Corrections Department to repopulate their Tulsa facility, and Patton said he will review the company's plan of action next week before making a decision on whether or not to send state offenders back to that center.

Brian Costello, president of Avalon, acknowledged drug use is a large and ongoing problem in community correction centers such as Carver.

"When these offenders get to a halfway house and get their first taste of freedom many of them make bad decisions and fall back to drug use," Costello said in an emailed statement.

Costello said their plan will include increased drug testing of their offenders, the creation of substance abuse programs, and heightened security measures to keep drugs out of their facilities.

Police chase, arrest Juneau man wanted for escaping halfway house

Shane McCourt, 33, charged with second-degree escape and resisting arrest

Posted: October 16, 2013 - 1:05pm | Updated: October 17, 2013 - 12:10am

By [EMILY RUSSO MILLER](#)

JUNEAU EMPIRE

A 33-year-old man wanted for walking away from a Juneau halfway house was arrested Tuesday night after a police chase on Egan Drive.

The chase began at about 11:09 p.m. when a Juneau police officer responded to a disabled vehicle across from Fred Meyer and recognized one of the two occupants as Shane McCourt, 33, due to his neck and face tattoos. Two days earlier, the adult probation office provided police a picture of McCourt and said he walked away from the Glacier Manor Halfway House.

Lt. David Campbell, a spokesman for the Juneau Police Department, said McCourt took off running while the officer was waiting for back-up to arrive. Campbell said McCourt twice ran across the highway through traffic and twice jumped a bike path fence as the officer pursued McCourt on foot.

The officer deployed his Taser at one point during the chase, but Campbell said it did not hit McCourt because he was too far away. McCourt eventually stopped running and surrendered once more officers converged on the scene.

"He stopped and complied once he realized he was surrounded," Campbell said in a phone interview Wednesday.

Police arrested McCourt on suspicion of felony second-degree escape for allegedly walking away from the halfway house, which is considered an official detention facility. He was also charged with resisting arrest, a misdemeanor, in connection to the police chase.

The person driving McCourt in the vehicle was also arrested on suspicion of hindering prosecution in the first degree, a felony offense. Police identified him as 33-year-old Juneau resident William Buck Ratliff.

Both men were taken to Lemon Creek Correctional Center and held without bail. Ratliff's vehicle was impounded.

- Contact reporter Emily Russo Miller at 523-2263 or at emily.miller@juneauempire.com.

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HOME NEWS

State police seek woman who escaped from halfway house

Reading Eagle

Saturday July 19, 2014 12:01 AM

State police at Reading are asking for help finding a woman who ran away from the ADAPPT halfway house, 428 Walnut St., Thursday afternoon.

Troopers said Amanda M. Horner ran out of the drug and alcohol treatment center for state prison inmates at 2:40 p.m. in an unknown direction.

Court records show Horner, 30, of Bellefonte, Centre County, was serving a two-year state prison sentence on burglary and drug-trafficking charges when she was released to the halfway house June 29, 2013.

Horner is described as 5 feet, 8 inches tall with blue eyes, brown hair and tattoos of a butterfly on her left upper arm and a heart with flames on her chest.

State police ask anyone with information is asked to call the Reading station at 610-378-4011.

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Halfway House

Cops arrest woman wanted for 1991 escape from halfway house

July 9, 2014 | By Hanna Marcus, Orlando Sentinel

CLERMONT — After 23 years on the lam, lead-footed driving finally spurred the capture of a woman who walked away from a Connecticut halfway house and her remaining time sentenced there, authorities said Wednesday.

A woman initially identified as Christina Ramirez, 52, of Davenport was pulled over Sunday night going 12 mph over the 40-mph speed limit in a Kia Spectra at Fifth Street and State Road 50. An officer who ran a records check discovered a 1991 Connecticut warrant against her for escape, police said.



Lake County Jail mugshot of Christina Medina. (lcsj.org)

Authorities quickly learned her true identity is Christina Medina, who escaped from a halfway house on March 1, 1991, said Karen Marticcu, acting director of external affairs for the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

Medina was serving a three-year sentence for the sale of a hallucinogen narcotic and had been released to the halfway house on Oct. 11, 1990.

Marticcu didn't have further details about the exact location of the halfway house or more information to shed light on the long-ago case.

Police spokesman Sgt. Steven Strickland said Miami was Medina's last known address.

Medina is still registered in Connecticut's system as an escapee, but the term can be deceiving, according to Marticcu.

"You think someone is going over a fence or digging a tunnel," she said. "Yes, it's considered an escape, but it was someone who was approved of a low level offense in the community that walked away. We could even call it a walk-away. She was a low-level offender out in the community and she failed to fulfill her obligation."

After being stopped by Clermont police, she was arrested and turned over to the Lake County Sheriff's Office for extradition to Connecticut.

Marticcu said Medina's sentence had a maximum release date of July 13, 1993.

That will be re-evaluated when she is returned to Connecticut.

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Scranton woman does not return to halfway house, charged with escape

STAFF REPORT

Published: May 1, 2014

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SCRANTON — A city woman was charged with escape Wednesday morning for failing to return to the halfway house a court committed her to, state police at Dunmore said.

Khrystia Lynn Price, 22, was described as 5 feet 6 inches tall and 164 pounds with brown hair and green eyes. Police did not provide a photo or say why she was committed to the halfway house.

She was charged with drug crimes in 2011 and pleaded guilty in 2013 to conspiracy to deliver. She was sentenced to two years of intermediate punishment and three years of probation.

Anyone with information should contact state police at 570-963-3156.

— JOSEPH KOHUT

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The state sent Rafael Miranda, incarcerated on drug and weapons charges, to a similar halfway house, and he also escaped. He was finally arrested in 2010 after four months at large, when, prosecutors said, he shot a man dead on a Newark sidewalk — just three miles from his halfway house.

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Valeria Parziale had 15 aliases and a history of drugs and burglary. Nine days after she slipped out of a halfway house in Trenton in 2009, Ms. Parziale, using a folding knife, nearly severed a man's ear in a liquor store. She was arrested and charged with assault but not escape. Prosecutors say they had no idea she was a fugitive.

After decades of tough criminal justice policies, states have been grappling with crowded prisons that are straining budgets. In response to those pressures, New Jersey has become a leader in a national movement to save money by diverting inmates to a new kind of privately run halfway house.

At the heart of the system is a company with deep connections to politicians of both parties, most notably Gov. [Chris Christie](#).

Many of these halfway houses are as big as prisons, with several hundred beds, and bear little resemblance to the neighborhood halfway houses of the past, where small groups of low-level offenders were sent to straighten up.

New Jersey officials have called these large facilities an innovative example of privatization and have promoted the approach all the way to the Obama White House.

Yet with little oversight, the state's halfway houses have mutated into a shadow corrections network, where drugs, gang activity and violence, including sexual assaults, often go unchecked, according to a 10-month investigation by The New York Times.

Perhaps the most unsettling sign of the chaos within is inmates' ease in getting out.

Since 2005, roughly 5,100 inmates have escaped from the state's privately run halfway houses, including at least 1,300 in the 29 months since Governor Christie took office, according to an analysis by The Times.

Some inmates left through the back, side or emergency doors of halfway houses, or through smoking areas, state records show. Others placed dummies in their beds as decoys, or fled while being returned to prison for violating halfway houses' rules. Many had permission to go on work-release programs but then did not return.

While these halfway houses often resemble traditional correctional institutions, they have much less security. There are no correction officers, and workers are not allowed to restrain inmates who try to leave or to locate those who do not come back from work release, the most common form of escape. The halfway houses' only recourse is to alert the authorities.

And so the inmates flee in a steady stream: 46 last September, 39 in October, 40 in November, 38 in December, state records show.

"The system is a mess," said Thaddeus B. Caldwell, who spent four years in New Jersey as a senior corrections

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5



Rafael Miranda
137 days
Arrested in Newark on a murder charge.

6



David Goodell
About 12 hours
Arrested in Ridgefield Park in the murder of Viviana Tulli.

7



Freddy Alfonso
139 days
Arrested in Camden on charges of carrying a handgun and dealing drugs near a school.

Crimes on the Run
Fugitives from New Jersey halfway houses have been arrested for weapons possession, aggravated assault, drugs and murder. Often, they had escaped months earlier.
Sources: New Jersey Department of Corrections; New Jersey State Parole Board (Jan. 2012)

investigator. “No matter how many escaped, no matter how many were caught, no matter how many committed heinous acts while they were on the run, they still kept releasing more guys into the halfway houses, and it kept happening over and over again.”

By contrast, the state’s prisons had three escapes in 2010 and none in the first nine months of 2011, the last period for which the state gave figures.

After The Times began its investigation last year, Mr. Christie adopted measures that his aides said would more tightly regulate the system. They said that because of these reforms, only 181 inmates had escaped in the first five months of 2012 — a 35 percent decline when compared with a similar period in 2009, before he took office.

But over several months of inquiries from The Times, state officials also revised downward the escape totals during Mr. Christie’s tenure.

Many inmates who escape from halfway houses are recaptured within hours or days, or turn themselves in after having second thoughts. But many remain at large for weeks, if not months, and are caught only after committing new crimes.

They have been arrested on charges of assaulting police officers, holding up a gas station and shooting strangers. They have been found selling drugs outside Newark schools and wielding a knife inside a Cape May bus station. Some have been caught as far away as Miami.

At least 85 inmates are currently at large, according to state records.

These men and women could be charged with felonies for escaping but typically are not. Usually, they are simply returned to prison to finish their original sentences. Some end up back at halfway houses.

The Times’s investigation encompassed more than 200 interviews with current and former halfway house workers, inmates, officials and others, as well as a review of thousands of pages of government, court and corporate records.

Mr. Christie, a Republican who took office in January 2010, has for years championed the company that plays a principal role in the New Jersey system, [Community Education Centers](#).

Community Education received about \$71 million from state and county agencies in New Jersey in the 2011 fiscal year, out of total halfway house spending of roughly \$105 million, according to state and company records.

The company first obtained substantial contracts for its “re-entry centers” in New Jersey in the late 1990s, as state financing began increasing sharply. In recent years, it has cited its success in New Jersey in obtaining government contracts in Colorado, Pennsylvania and other states.

William J. Palatucci, who is the governor’s close friend, [political adviser](#) and former law partner, is a senior vice president at Community Education.

Mr. Christie himself was registered as a lobbyist for the company in 2000 and 2001 when he was a private lawyer, according to disclosure reports that his law firm filed with the state. In early 2010, he hired the son-in-law of

CTTNA EXHIBIT 40 executive as an assistant in the governor’s office,

according to state personnel records.

And as United States attorney for New Jersey and then governor, Mr. Christie has often visited the company's halfway houses and praised its work. The company has highlighted those visits in its publicity material.

"Places like this are to be celebrated," Mr. Christie said in a 2010 speech at a 1,200-bed Community Education facility in Newark, a speech [featured](#) on the company's Web site.

"A spotlight should be put on them as representing the very best of the human spirit," he said. "Because as you walk through here, as I've done many times, what you see right before your very eyes are miracles happening."

Mr. Christie would not be interviewed for this article.

In a statement, his spokesman, Michael Drewniak, said Community Education had been "associated with public contracting in New Jersey going back no less than 18 years to the administration of Gov. James Florio and every governor, Democrat or Republican, since that time."

"The suggestion of favoritism is defeated by the demonstrable fact that none has occurred," Mr. Drewniak said.

Mr. Drewniak emphasized that Mr. Christie had had a deep interest in improving drug treatment and other services for prisoners since his days as a county lawmaker in the 1990s.

Community Education said it had developed a highly successful model of "community corrections" that had improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of inmates across the country. It said the rate of escapes at its halfway houses in New Jersey was "staggeringly low," given the many people who go through the system. And it blamed other halfway house operators for allowing escapes of inmates whom Community Education had first handled.

"To focus on walkaways from halfway houses would be to report on only part of the story and not include the positive outcomes for the majority of offenders who complete a halfway house program without walking away," the company said in a statement.

Roughly 10,000 prison inmates and parolees a year — equivalent to about 40 percent of the state prison population — now pass through the system of halfway houses; most spend time at a Community Education halfway house.

But regulation by a patchwork of state and county agencies has been lax. The state comptroller [determined](#) last year that there were "crucial weaknesses in state oversight."

The Christie administration began fining Community Education and other operators for escapes only in April, eight months after The Times undertook its investigation.

The Legislature has not scrutinized the system either.

Assemblyman Charles Mainor, a Democrat and police detective who is chairman of the Law and Public Safety Committee, was asked for his estimate of how many people escaped from halfway houses in 2011.

"TTNA EXHIBIT 40
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three," he responded.



'Miracles Happening'

In a video posted on Community Education Centers' Web site, Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey praises the work of one of the company's halfway houses at its tenth anniversary celebration.

C.E.C. Web site

According to state records, the number was 452.

Assemblyman Sean T. Kean, a Republican, said of the escapes, “It’s not really a problem.”

“It’s a cheaper way of doing business,” he said of the system, “so that’s why it behooves us to use that option.”

‘The Greatest Times’

Viviana Tulli stuck out her tongue in family photos. She threw water balloons at friends. Once, to make her sister laugh, she took a running jump and dived into an eight-foot bush in front of their home in Garfield, N.J., a suburb of New York.

She had worked at a pet store — few animals were ever loved more than her Chihuahuas, Mikey and Hennessy — but had not settled on a career.

She was 16 when she met David Goodell, who was a decade older and claimed to be affiliated with the Bloods gang.

“Everybody had a bad feeling about him,” said Martha Galan, now 22, a close friend, who often shared secrets with Ms. Tulli on her family’s porch.

Mr. Goodell wore baggy jeans and oversize sweatshirts that swallowed his 140-pound frame. He had the temper and swagger of an insecure man trying to act tough.

He was arrested in 1997 for committing three robberies and then briefly spent time in Talbot Hall, a Community Education halfway house. In 2003, he was released on parole.

He worked as a warehouse packer and a truck driver but was arrested again in 2008, after he pinned a former girlfriend to the ground and threatened to kill her if she did not give him money.

While he was in custody on those charges, his romance with Ms. Tulli took off. He wrote her dozens of long letters addressed to “Supergirlfriend” or “Princess.” He promised her a future far from New Jersey.

“The times that are to come with you and I are gonna be the greatest times of both of our lives,” Mr. Goodell wrote.

His letters were filled with meticulous drawings shaded in pinks and blues — the two of them smiling in matching clothes, a tearful boy holding a flower for her.

Ms. Tulli told her parents he was just a pen pal, but she enjoyed the attention. She kept his letters in a folder hidden in her bedroom. She visited him and sent him photos of herself.

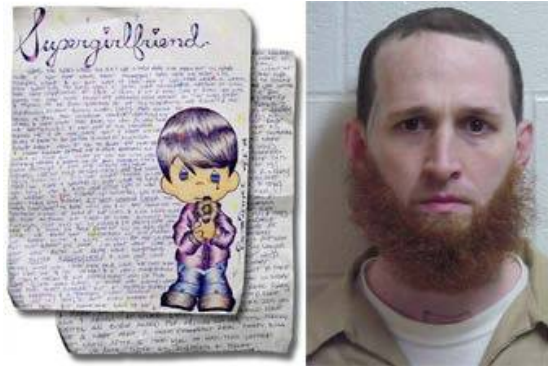
In September 2009, at the time of Mr. Goodell’s sentencing, Judge Nestor F. Guzman, of Superior Court in Passaic County, wrote that there was a “risk that defendant will commit another offense,” according to his case file.

Six months later, after 16 months behind bars, Mr. Goodell was paroled and returned to a Community Education halfway house.



‘Princess’
A romance between Viviana Tulli, in family photos, and David Goodell took off when he was in custody for threatening to kill an ex-girlfriend.

Richard Perry/The New York Times



A Deadly Turn
Mr. Goodell wrote Ms. Tulli many letters and was angered when she ended contact. At a Community Education halfway house, prosecutors say, he faked a seizure so he could go to a hospital, where he slipped away.

Left, Richard Perry/The New York Times; Right, New Jersey Department of Corrections



At the Scene
The next day, Mr. Goodell was captured in Ms. Tulli’s car. Her body was found next to him. Mr. Goodell is charged with murder.

Elizabeth Lara/northjersey.com

A Source of Laughter
Viviana Tulli dives into a bush in front of her home in Garfield, N.J., as her sister records it. The

The company's halfway houses, like others in the system, have varying degrees of security. Some allow inmates to leave on work release, and those facilities tend to have the most escapes. Other halfway houses are locked down, but restrictions are sometimes sidestepped.



video was posted on [YouTube](#).
YouTube

Mr. Goodell was sent to Logan Hall, which in recent years had one of the highest totals of escapes in the halfway house system — 185 from 2009 through 2011, according to state records. There, he used a cellphone to call Ms. Tulli constantly. Inmates are not allowed to have them, but cellphones, like drugs and almost anything else, were readily obtainable in Logan, former workers and inmates said.

Finally, Ms. Tulli, who was 21, ended contact.

That set him off.

Mr. Goodell had often boasted to her that in prison he pretended to be ill to get privileges. On Aug. 29, 2010, at Logan Hall, he did so again, to seem as if he had a seizure, prosecutors said.

A low-level Community Education worker escorted him to University Hospital in Newark.

Many Community Education workers are paid little more than minimum wage and have previous job experience that amounted to operating a convenience store register. The worker, like all halfway-house employees, had no authority to restrain Mr. Goodell.

At the hospital, he slipped away.

He persuaded Ms. Tulli to meet him nearby in the middle of the night. Before she left, she poked her head in her mother's bedroom to say goodbye and wish her a happy birthday. Her mother turned 60 the next day.

At 1:11 p.m., the police received a phone call that a man covered in blood was standing in the Ridgefield Park High School parking lot.

It was Mr. Goodell.

When the police arrived, Mr. Goodell jumped behind the wheel of Ms. Tulli's car and sped away. After a chase, he was cornered in a cul-de-sac.

Officers found Ms. Tulli's body in the passenger seat. She had been suffocated. Mr. Goodell, who had slashed his wrists, was charged with murder. The case is pending against Mr. Goodell, who is now 32.

In the days after the killing, Ms. Tulli's relatives took solace in announcements by the Christie administration and Community Education that they would conduct separate [inquiries](#) and consider adopting reforms.

"Use my sister as an example," her older sister, Stella Tulli, recalled thinking. "Security needs to be tightened in all aspects. There's money being funded, and there's no accountability."

And so they waited, hopefully, for the findings.

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A Growth Industry

When the system was created, the large halfway houses were intended to help low-level offenders toward the end of their sentences. Inmates would be housed in dormitory-style rooms and receive drug treatment, job counseling and other services.

Many experts praise the halfway-house model, saying that if facilities are well managed, inmates are less likely to return to crime. State officials and Community Education credit the system with helping to reduce the state's recidivism rate, as well as its prison population, which fell to 25,000 in 2010 from 30,000 in 2000, federal data show.

Community Education offered a tour of one of its facilities, the 500-bed Talbot Hall, showing off orderly group counseling sessions and tidy living spaces.

In interviews of inmates who had been in the company's halfway houses, some spoke highly of its programs.

"It taught me how to have patience, how to keep moving forward and stop looking back," said Sal Hemingway, 41, who was imprisoned on murder charges in the 1990s and was in a Community Education facility last year.

The financial incentive is also clear. The state spends about \$125 to \$150 a day to house an inmate in a prison. The corrections, parole and other government agencies in New Jersey pay roughly \$60 to \$75 per inmate per day to operators of halfway houses, including Community Education, based in West Caldwell, N.J.

But as the system has [grown](#), the percentage of New Jersey inmates convicted of violent crimes but lodged in halfway houses has been rising, to 21 percent now from 12 percent in 2006, according to state statistics. Their ranks currently include dozens of people serving time for murder, and hundreds convicted of armed robbery, assault or weapons possession — some of whom escaped.

At the same time, the state acknowledges that it has never examined whether the system helps inmates. Last year, the Christie administration commissioned a three-year study. Community Education has financed its own [research](#) that it says shows the success of its programs.

Mr. Christie has also established a task force to coordinate the state's efforts intended to help inmates as they leave prisons.

Over all, New Jersey's system has about 3,500 beds in two dozen or so halfway houses. Community Education runs six large facilities, with a total of 1,900 beds for state inmates and parolees, along with others for county and federal inmates.

Community Education's leading role in the system means that the company had been responsible at one point for many of the inmates who escaped.

All inmates transferred to halfway houses by the Corrections Department are required to first spend about two months at a Community Education halfway house that serves as an assessment center. (Parolees generally do not.)

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T Page 7 of 15 the inmates and recommends to the state which

ones are low-risk and unlikely to escape. Those inmates are then transferred to other halfway houses — run by Community Education or other operators.

Thus, though facilities run by a nonprofit organization, [the Kintock Group](#), accounted for nearly half of the escapes in recent years, according to state records, many of those inmates arrived at Kintock after first being deemed low-risk by Community Education halfway houses. From 2009 through 2011, about 16 percent of escapes were from Community Education halfway houses, according to state data. Another 43 percent were inmates who had been evaluated by Community Education halfway houses and then escaped from others.

Robert Mackey, a senior vice president at Community Education, said in an interview that the company had excellent security and strove to prevent escapes by providing therapy and other services to discourage inmates from leaving.

“If somebody was climbing over that fence right now, our recourse would be to notify the authorities,” Dr. Mackey said. “We could not physically take them off the fence to restrain them from escaping.”

He added, “The staff here are not law-enforcement officers.”

The company said a better way to measure its security was to examine how few inmates escaped, given the tens of thousands who went through its facilities in recent years. It said that by its calculation, since 2005, 0.53 percent of inmates from the Corrections Department and 3.3 percent of inmates from the Parole Board had escaped.

Dr. Mackey said the company could not be held responsible for inmates who had entered the halfway house system through its facilities and then escaped from others. “We certainly didn’t cause the escape,” he said. “The other halfway houses also have to look at, what are they doing.”

David D. Fawcner, chairman of the Kintock Group, said he was surprised to learn of the frequency of escapes from Kintock halfway houses.

“The number does take me back a little bit,” he said.

Mr. Fawcner said halfway houses served a difficult population moving into the community.

“We’re not a prison,” he said. “Our job is not to keep them in.”

Kintock paid Mr. Fawcner \$778,316 in 2009 when he was chief executive, according to disclosure forms.

Last year, the New Jersey comptroller, Matthew Boxer, released an [audit](#) that found that many halfway houses had loose security, and that state inspections were lenient, if done at all. One halfway-house administrator had the dates for supposedly unannounced inspections noted in advance on a calendar.

“As a state, we have done a poor job of monitoring the program and have made no real attempt to find out what taxpayers are getting for their money,” Mr. Boxer said.

Experts said it was extremely difficult to compare halfway house escape rates and that they varied greatly.

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But Mary Shilton, executive director of the [International Community Corrections Association](#), a trade group that supports the halfway house movement, said she was startled to hear of The Times's findings on the numbers of escapes in New Jersey.

"Given that there will always be risk, are we doing our very best to respond to escapes at the state and local level?" she asked.

Gary M. Lanigan, the state corrections commissioner, who was appointed by Mr. Christie, defended the system.

"I've not been shown what I think is a better model," Mr. Lanigan said in an interview.

Asked whether he felt pressure because of Community Education's political ties, he said, "Absolutely not."

He said the company obtained state contracts through an impartial bidding process that was "fair and insulated."

Mr. Lanigan was told that state records showed that roughly 5,100 inmates under the supervision of the Corrections Department and Parole Board had escaped since 2005.

"That's not a familiar number to me," he said.

But he called escapes "a significant concern."

"Acceptable is zero," he said. "An escape is an escape."

Mr. Lanigan said he was tightening oversight. In April, the department issued \$15,000 in fines against Community Education for three escapes last year. The department also fined Kintock \$5,000, and another nonprofit agency, CURA, \$10,000.

"I've been out to every one of the halfway houses more than once," Mr. Lanigan said in the interview. "I'd venture a guess you're not going to find one of the prior commissioners that ever did that."

After the interview, the Corrections Department emphasized that inmates who fled halfway houses should be referred to as "walkaways" to distinguish them from inmates who escape prisons.

The term "walkaway," though, does not exist in state law. Inmates who flee halfway houses can be charged with escaping or absconding, depending on which agency is supervising them. Both are felonies with a sentence of three to five years.

This month, the department also revised downward its calculation for the number of escapes in 2010 and 2011 by 15 percent. It said it had weeded out what it referred to as "technical violations," including inmates who were listed as having escaped but merely returned late from work-release programs.

Politics and Prisons

Last summer, many of New Jersey's most powerful officials assembled for a wedding that bridged the worlds of politics and prisons.

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