

The Rikers 6-A Early Release Program — Documented Results April 22, 2020

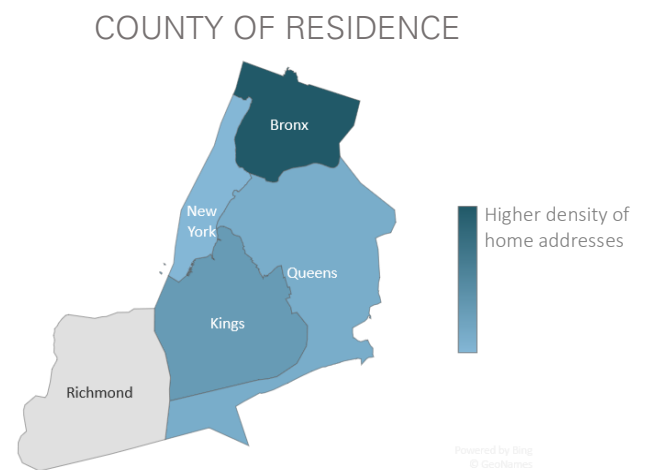
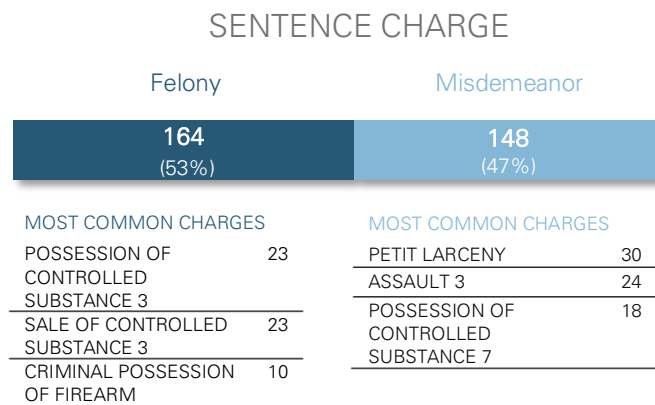
On March 18, 2020, an individual held at the Rikers Island jail complex tested positive for COVID-19. By April 23, the Board of Correction reported more than 1,200 confirmed cases in New York City jails, including 373 people held in custody and 877 correction officers. In response to this crisis, the Mayor's Office asked the City's three supervised release providers to provide daily remote supervision and services to individuals released early from a jail sentence under the so-called "6-A" program, which gives the Department of Correction the legal authority to release individuals before the end of their sentence.



A Humane Response to COVID-19

The 6-A Early Release Program is reducing health risks while also prioritizing public safety. In the first month following the start of the program on March 22, **312 individuals** were released into supervision from high-risk conditions in New York City's jails.

Who Was Released to the Program?



*NOTE: COUNTY OF RESIDENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR 87 INDIVIDUALS RELEASED.

Program Model

The development of the Rikers 6-A Early Release model was spearheaded by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice in collaboration with the Center for Court Innovation, the Criminal Justice Agency, and CASES. It integrates rigorous supervision with individualized services and supports.

Daily Supervision: Individuals must attend a remote check-in every single day, weekends included. Check-ins include: a wellness check; counseling; reminders related to state COVID-19 directives; information on available housing, income, and food assistance; and linkages to other remote services.

Outreach: Case managers respond immediately and continuously to connect with participants anytime someone misses a check-in. This includes outreach to family members, community contacts, and sending letters and text reminders reiterating program requirements.



Accountability: Daily reports are sent to the Department of Correction (DOC) on anyone arrested or otherwise non-compliant. Providers also send letter to participants and their attorneys regarding the status of non-compliance with case manager contact; DOC may revoke and return participants to jail.

Results to Date

Compliance Rate: Of 246 participants whose sentence end date was not reached as of April 17, **92 percent were in compliance with case manager contact.** In total, nearly **6,000 successful remote check-ins have been completed** since the program's inception.

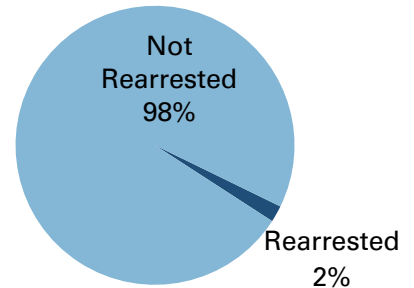
Public Safety: As of April 17, **only 7 of 312 released individuals—2.2 percent—were re-arrested** for an incident that occurred while under early release supervision. **Only 3 were re-arrested on a felony charge—one of which the District Attorney declined to prosecute.**

Only one 6-A Early Release Program participant has been returned to jail.

Referrals in Response to Needs: Providers have made **250+ referrals** for participants to obtain additional community-based services. Participants' greatest needs have been in the areas of benefits, employment, and housing.

Nearly **100 phones** have been allocated to participants in need to ensure daily engagement with case managers.

Reduced COVID-19 Exposure: From March 22 to April 22, New York City reduced the number of people potentially exposed to COVID-19 while incarcerated on a city jail sentence (of one year or less) from 553 to 125, a reduction of more than 75 percent; the Early Release Program is largely responsible for the decline.



Why Has the 6-A Early Release Program Been Effective?

The program is modeled after the **Supervised Release Program**, an initiative launched by the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice in 2009 as an alternative to pretrial detention, primarily instead of cash bail. Supervised Release, which operates collaboratively with the New York State Unified Court System, has led to a significant reduction in the city's jail population and use of cash bail—with no corresponding increase in crime. From March 2016, when the program went citywide, through mid-March 2020, **almost 20,000 cases have been sent to Supervised Release. Participants have attended 95 percent of all required court dates**, with 87 percent of participants attending every single one of their court dates without exception. **Only 8 percent of participants have been re-arrested for a new felony crime while on pretrial supervision**, and the program has contributed to dramatic declines in the city's jail population.

Justice and Compassion: A Success Story

A homeless participant was given temporary housing in a hotel to allow him to self-quarantine after being released from Rikers. He arrived late in the night hungry, exhausted, and emotionally drained. His case manager arranged for him to get a meal while helping him to search for stable housing. Working with the Fortune Society, the Supervised Release provider found an opening in a brand-new housing unit and helped the participant complete the application process, get approved to move in, and settle into his new home. He has remained in compliance with case manager contact.