

MARCH 23, 2026

Sonoma County Decision Point Analysis (DPA)

Executive Summary

For: Sonoma County Community Corrections Partnership

By: Dr. Hollie MacDonald and Dr. Sonia Jain, Data in Action

Acknowledgements:

Robert Halverson, Sonoma County Probation

Dr. Megan Alexander, Sonoma County Probation

Dr. Campbell Bullock, Sonoma County Probation

Larkin Morgan, Sonoma County Probation



Study Overview

Evaluation Purpose

- In 2024, the Sonoma County CCP retained DNA Global to evaluate the adult criminal justice system for effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment with evidence-based practices per AB109.
- Using CJI data from Sonoma County (IJS) and court minutes this analysis examines racial/ethnic, gender, and intersectional disparities across key stages of the justice system.
- Includes 6 interviews with key stakeholders and decision makers utilizing thematic analysis to gain important context and insight.
- [CCP Public Safety Realignment Implementation Plan \(2025-2026\)](#)

1. Are individuals of color and/or women treated differently than their counterparts?
 - a. Are specific racial or gender groups overrepresented or underrepresented at particular decision points compared to prior decision-making points?
2. Do intersectional disparities exist (e.g., Latinx men, White women, Indigenous women)?
3. Are similar behaviors or violations met with different responses depending on race, gender, or intersectional identity?
4. Do disparities compound across multiple decision points, leading to cumulative disadvantage?
5. Where in the system are the most significant disparities or patterns of bias occurring?

Methodology and Framework

Primary Measure: Relative Rate Index (RRI)

- $RRI = \text{Outcome rate (for group of interest)} \div \text{Outcome rate (for reference group)}$
- **1.00 = no difference**
- **> 1.00 = more likely**
- **< 1.00 = less likely**

Significance:

- 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs)
- CI includes 1.00 → Not statistically significant
- CI entirely above/below 1.00 → Statistically significant difference

Additional Analyses:

t-Tests, ANOVAs, Cross-Tabulations

Decision Points

1. **Arrest (*Descriptive only – CA OpenJustice data*)**
2. **Pre-Arrest Release**
3. **Pretrial Release**
4. **Mental Health Diversion (MHD)**
5. **Case Disposition (Conviction/Acquittal/Dismissal)**
6. **Sentencing Outcomes (Probation, Jail, 1170(h), Prison)**
7. **Probation Risk Level & Supervision Type**
8. **Behavior Response System (Violations and Prosocial)**
9. **Adult Day Reporting Center Participation (DRC)**
10. **Reentry and Recidivism (1 yr and 3 yr)**

Key Findings - Quantitative

Overview: Race and Ethnicity

Interpretation Example:

White RRI = 1.00

Latinx RRI = 1.35

Latinx Persons are 35% more likely to be released at the pre-arraignment stage than White individuals.

Most racial disparities are happening in the pretrial release and sentencing stages of the criminal justice process.

Bold means significant difference from reference group.

Figure 1. Relative Rate Indices (RRIs) by Race/Ethnicity Across Key Justice Decision Points

	White (Ref.)	Black	Latinx	American Indian	Pacific Islander	Other Asian	Other
Pre-Arraignment Release	1.00	0.85	1.35	0.85	1.28	0.91	1.34
Pre-Trial Release	1.00	0.92	1.05	0.86	1.50	0.66	0.93
Pre-Trial Detention	1.00	1.02	0.99	1.04	0.86	1.02	1.09
Mental Health Diversion	1.00	1.21	0.71	1.68	0.56	1.44	0.96
Convictions	1.00	1.00	1.11	1.01	1.05	1.03	0.91
Sentencing Type- Probation	1.00	0.91	1.07	0.92	1.12	1.05	1.08
Sentencing Type - Jail	1.00	1.28	0.65	1.22	0.47	0.90	0.51
Sentencing Type - 1170(h)	1.00	1.00	0.77	1.23	-	0.85	0.85
Sentencing Type- Prison	1.00	1.86	1.02	1.65	-	0.53	1.28
Sentencing Type- YTL	1.00	1.45	1.84	-	-	-	-
DRC Participation	1.00	0.89	0.83	1.19	0.57	0.59	0.50
1 -Year Recidivism	1.00	1.03	0.86	1.12	-	0.23	0.90
3 -Year Recidivism	1.00	0.99	0.86	1.09	-	0.46	0.70

Overview: Gender

Interpretation Example:

Male RRI = 1.00

Female RRI = 0.26

Female persons were 74% less likely to be sentenced to prison than males.

Females are being released more often pre-trial, convicted less, and sentenced to probation more than males. Further they are less likely to recidivate.

Gender was the most consistent driver of differences.

Figure 2. Relative Rate Indices (RRIs) by Gender Across Key Justice Decision Points

	Male	Female
Pre-Arrest Release	1.00	1.08
Pre-Trial Release	1.00	1.10
Pre-Trial Detention	1.00	0.97
Mental Health Diversion	1.00	0.94
Convictions	1.00	0.93
Sentencing - Probation	1.00	1.11
Sentencing - Jail	1.00	0.66
Sentencing - 1170(h)	1.00	0.95
Sentencing - Prison	1.00	0.26
Sentencing - YTL	1.00	0.63
DRC Participation	1.00	0.85
1 -Year Recidivism	1.00	0.68
3 -Year Recidivism	1.00	0.75

Note. Relative Rate Indices (RRIs) are calculated using males as the reference group (RRI = 1.00). Values greater than 1.00 indicate a higher likelihood of the outcome for women relative to men, while values less than 1.00 indicate a lower likelihood. Bolded values represent statistically significant differences from the male reference group based on 95% confidence intervals.

Overview:

Race x Gender

Interpretation Example:

White men RRI = 1.00

Black men RRI = 1.83

Black men were 83% more likely to be sentenced to prison than White men.

Black men and women are being released at pre-trial less, and Latinx men and women are being released more pre-trial, than White men.

All subgroups recidivate less than White men or at almost equal rates.

Figure 3. Relative Rate Indices (RRIs) by Race/Ethnicity and Gender Across Key Justice Decision Points

	W M	WW	B M	B W	LM	LW	AM	AW	AIM	AIW	PIM	PIW	OM	OW
Pre-Arrest Release	1.00	1.19	0.82	1.16	1.40	1.51	0.99	1.14	0.83	1.10	1.20	1.42	1.39	1.24
Pre-Trial Release	1.00	1.11	0.91	0.94	1.07	1.08	0.64	1.90	0.72	1.84	1.25	1.53	0.89	0.95
Pre-Trial Detention	1.00	0.97	1.02	0.96	0.98	0.97	1.10	1.01	1.07	0.87	0.93	1.01	1.03	0.92
Mental Health Diversion	1.00	0.99	1.37	0.74	0.70	0.74	1.58	0.84	3.36	-	1.12	-	0.61	2.24
Convictions	1.00	0.95	1.00	0.94	1.11	1.03	1.02	1.00	1.06	0.84	1.08	0.85	1.01	0.89
Sentencing - Probation	1.00	1.24	0.86	1.07	1.07	1.28	1.04	1.31	0.83	1.05	1.07	1.30	1.09	1.33
Sentencing - Jail	1.00	0.50	1.31	0.64	0.70	0.36	0.82	0.41	1.35	0.37	0.63	0.32	0.55	0.36
Sentencing - 1170(h)	1.00	0.91	1.04	0.95	0.92	0.80	0.93	-	1.21	1.15	-	-	0.98	-
Sentencing - Prison	1.00	0.26	1.83	0.48	1.02	0.29	0.62	-	1.57	-	-	-	1.17	0.39
DRC Participation	1.00	0.75	0.90	0.55	0.78	0.84	-	-	1.07	1.29	0.25	-	0.56	0.32
1-Year Recidivism	1.00	0.60	1.03	0.40	0.80	0.89	0.24	-	1.06	-	-	-	1.00	-
3-Year Recidivism	1.00	0.69	1.01	0.32	0.81	0.91	0.48	-	1.01	-	-	-	0.79	-

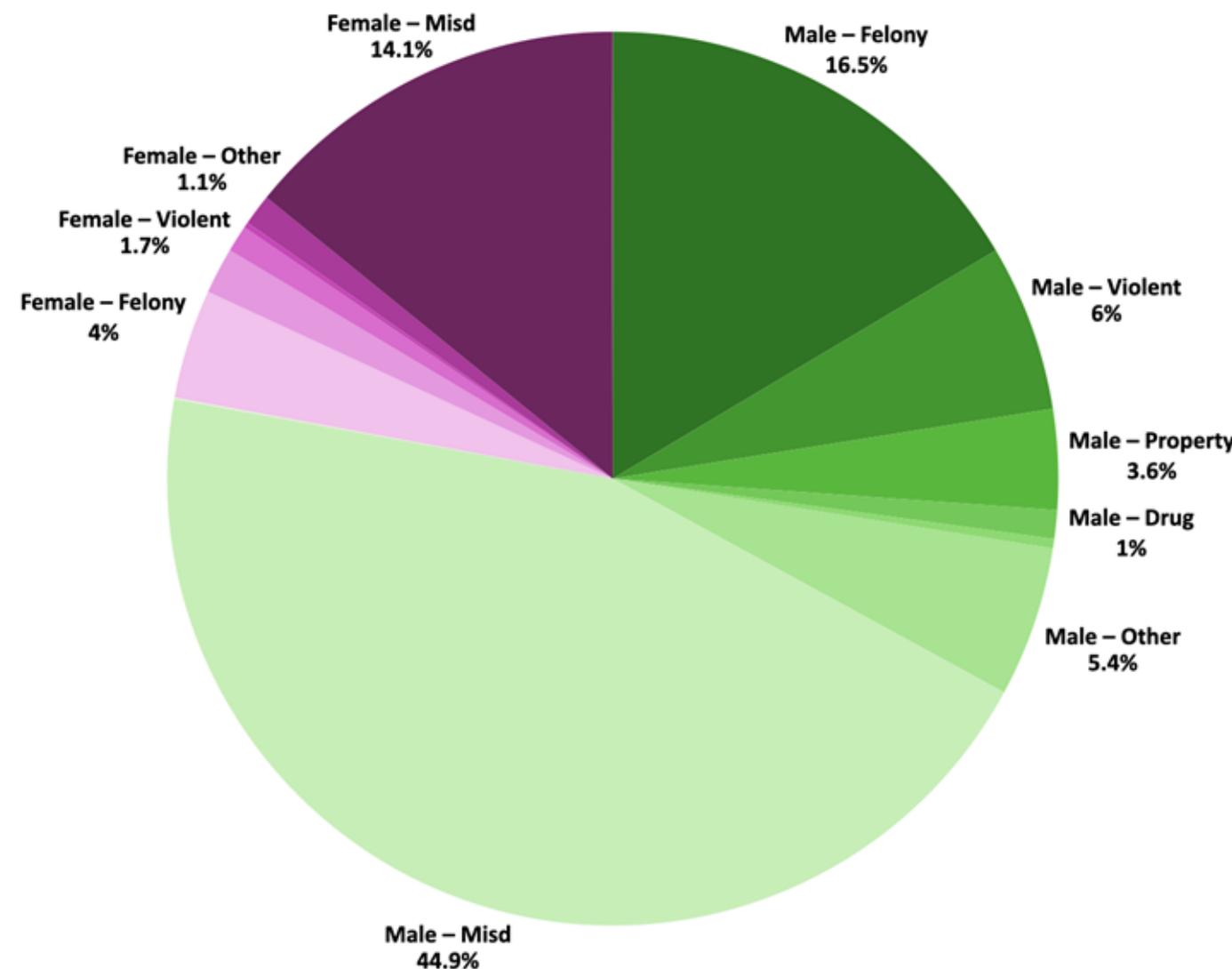
Note. Relative Rate Indices (RRIs) are calculated using White males as the reference group (RRI = 1.00). Values greater than 1.00 indicate a higher likelihood of the outcome relative to White men, while values less than 1.00 indicate a lower likelihood. Bolded values represent statistically significant differences from the reference group based on 95% confidence intervals. Dashes (-) indicate instances where RRIs could not be calculated due to insufficient sample size or lack of outcome prevalence.

Arrests by Gender and Type

While males dominated overall arrest counts (descriptive only).

- Females made up only about 23% of arrests in 2024.
- Women now represent a slightly larger share of serious felony arrests than in 2015, particularly in violent offense categories.
- Gender patterns remained structurally stable across the decade.
- Drug-related arrests declined sharply for both genders, reflecting statewide policy reforms.

Figure 4. Sonoma County Arrests by Gender and Offense Type, 2024



Data Source: State of California Department of Justice - OpenJustice

Arrests by Race and Type

Over the decade, from 2015 to 2024, the racial/ethnic composition of arrests shifted:

- White share of felony arrests declined from 58% to 45%.
- The Latinx share increased from 28% to 42%.
- Black individuals made up 8–9% of felony arrests across time.
- Misdemeanor patterns followed a similar trajectory.
- A group’s “proportion” of arrests can increase even if their actual arrest numbers are declining.

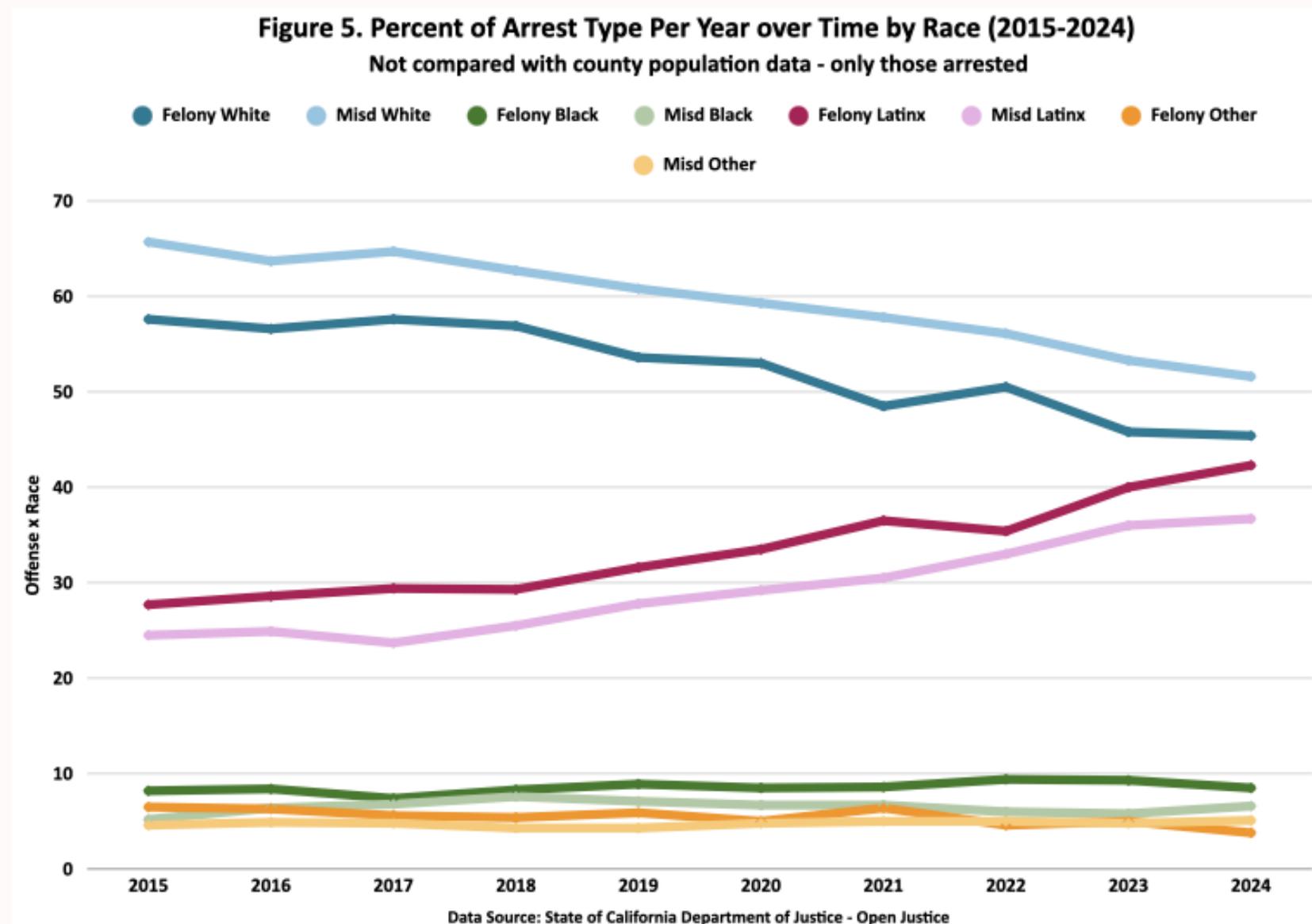


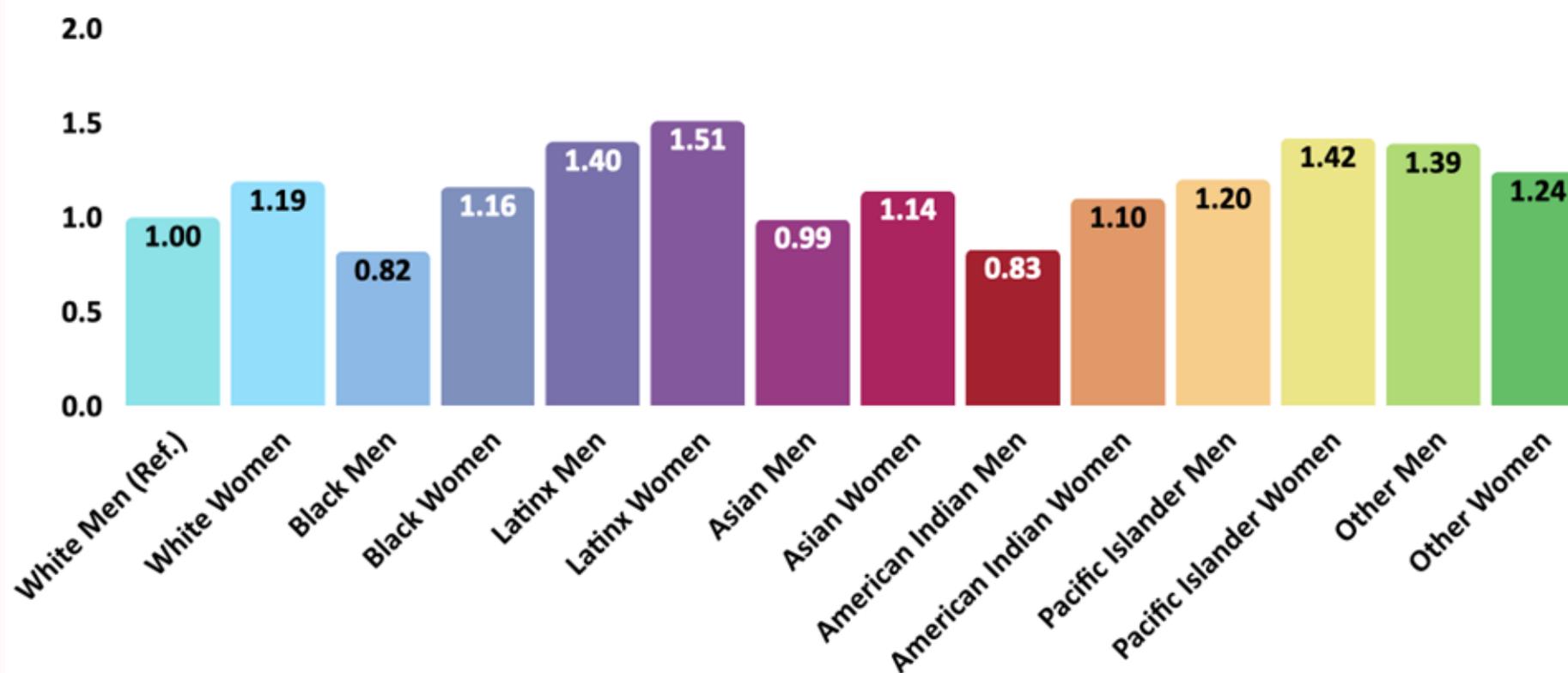
Chart: Percent of all Felonies (out of 100%)
 Percent of all Misd (out of 100%)

*this is not rate of population, just arrest counts within felony and misd. arrests per year

Pre-Arrest Release

Pre-arrest release was uncommon (only 18.2% of full sample).
 Among eligible arrestees, 41.6% were released on pretrial monitoring.

Figure 6. Rate of Pre-Arrest Release by Race and Gender (RRI)



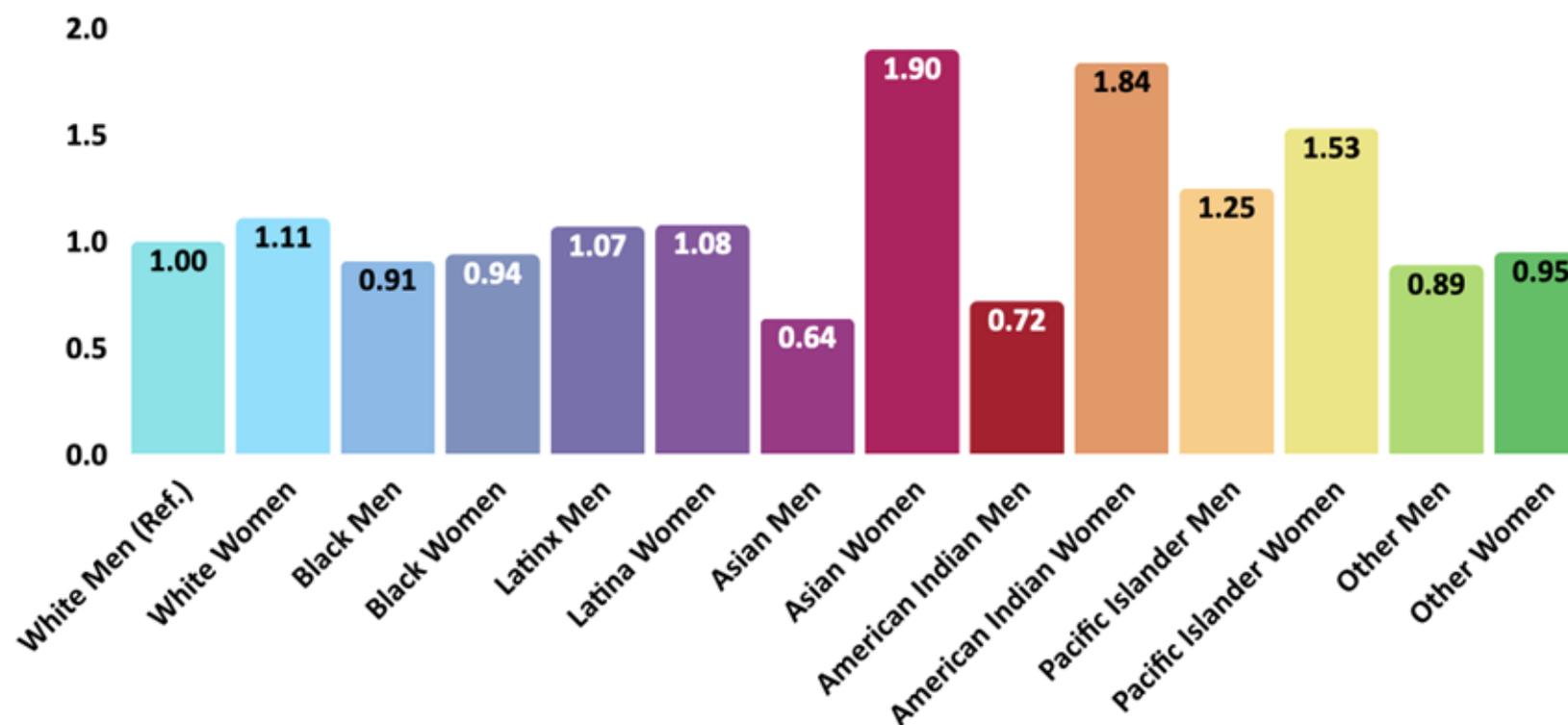
Data Source: Sonoma County IJS

- Black men 18% less likely to be released, Black women 16% more likely to be released.
- **Latinx men and women much more likely (40% and 51%).**
- No significant gender differences alone.
- American Indian men, lowest release rates (17% less).

Pretrial Release

- 22% released onto pre-trial monitoring of 14,908 (3,232).
 - Does not include those released on ROR or bail.
- Pacific Islanders: 25 - 50% higher release likelihood.
- Asian, AI, and PI women - much higher release likelihood (53- 90%) but smaller subgroup size.
- Asian men: 36% less likely to be released (lowest).

Figure 7. Rate of Pre-Trial Release by Race and Gender (RRI)



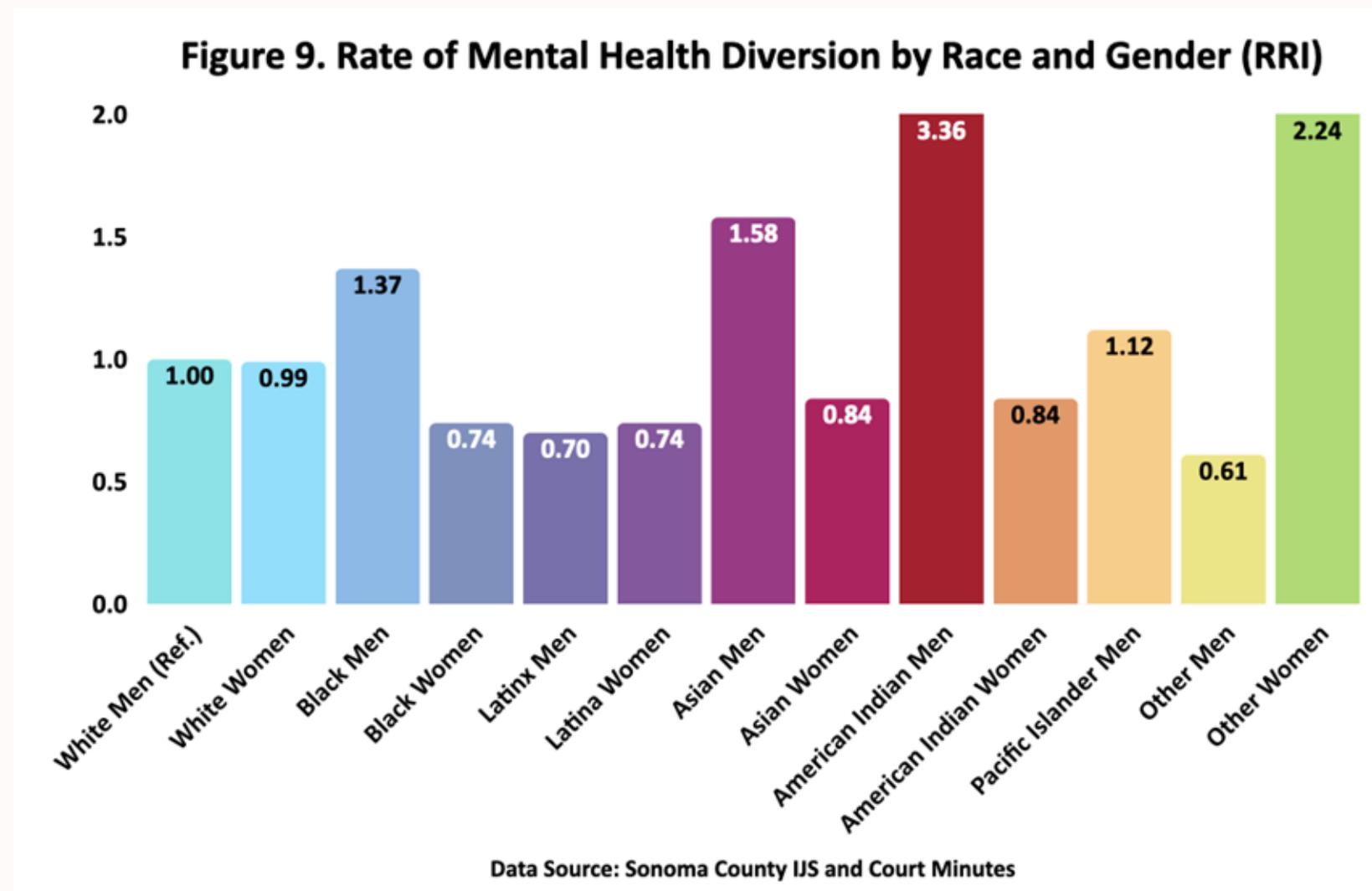
Data Source: Sonoma County IJS

Mental Health Diversion

Of all cases considered for diversion, 28.4% (n = 378) were granted Mental Health Diversion, while 71.6% (n = 955) were not.

There were no significant gender differences alone, but there were racial/ethnic differences.

- Black men were significantly more likely than White men to receive mental health diversion (37%).
- Latinx men were significantly less likely (30%).
- American Indian men had the highest likelihood of diversion but with a small group size (*n = 2: interpret with extreme caution*).



Dispositions/Convictions

Latinx men 75% conviction rate (highest of all groups)

- White men 68% conviction rate.

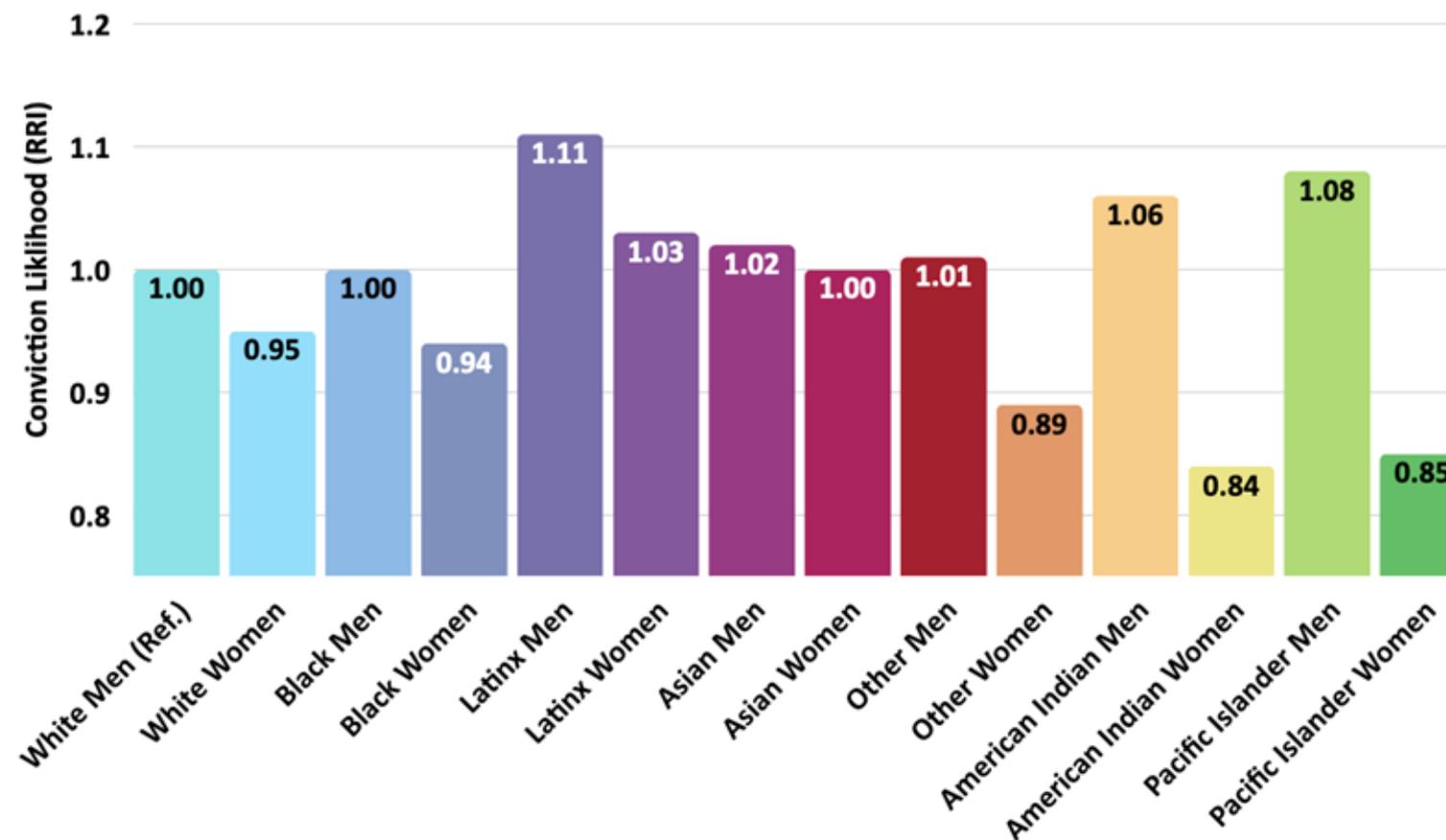
Women overall 7% less likely than men to be convicted than White men.

Black men showed conviction rates statistically indistinguishable from those of White men (95% CI = .98 - 1.03).

Minimal differences otherwise.

N=66,180 disposed cases

Figure 10. Conviction Rate by Race and Gender (RRI)



Data Source: Sonoma County IJS

Sentencing Type & Prison Likelihood

- Sentencing was most common stage for disparities.
- Black males were 83% more likely to receive prison than White males and 14% less likely to receive probation than white males (RRI = 0.86).
- American Indian males were 57% more likely to receive prison than White males.
- Women overall were:
 - 11% more likely to get probation than men
 - 34% less likely to receive jail sentences
 - 74% less likely to get sentenced to prison
- Race by Gender subgroups varied in likelihood

Figure 10. Type of Sentencing by Race and Gender (RRI)

	WM	WW	BM	BW	LM	LW	AM	AW	AI M	AI W	PI M	PI W	OM	OW
Probation	1.00	1.24	0.86	1.07	1.07	1.28	1.04	1.31	0.83	1.05	1.07	1.30	1.09	1.33
Jail	1.00	0.50	1.31	0.64	0.70	0.36	0.82	0.41	1.35	0.37	0.63	0.32	0.55	0.36
1170(h)	1.00	0.91	1.04	0.95	0.92	0.80	0.93	-	1.21	1.15	-	-	0.98	-
Prison	1.00	0.26	1.83	0.48	1.02	0.29	0.62	-	1.57	-	-	-	1.17	0.39

Sentence Length by Type

- Black individuals = **38% more jail time** than White individuals.
- American Indian individuals = **30% more jail time** than White individuals.
- Latinx individuals were sentenced to **8% less jail time**.
- PI and “Other” race individuals were sentenced to **19%–29% less time** than White Individuals.

- Men were sentenced to 45% more jail time than women, on average.
- Black men and AI men were sentenced to 31% more jail time than White men.
- Black women and AI women were sentenced to 15-32% more jail time than White women.

State Prison Days

Latinx 1.2 years longer on average than White.

No significant gender disparities.

1170(h)

No statistically significant differences in allocation of mandatory supervision under 1170(h).

Years-to-Life

Only 4.1% of all prison sentenced cases.

Latinx 84% more likely to receive a YTL sentence than White.

Life Sentences

Extremely rare (8 total) and all men.

(W = 2; B = 2; Lx = 4)

Too few to make conclusions.

Risk Level Classification

Men:

- **Black men** far less likely to be placed in low risk (**RRI = 0.43**), more likely to be placed in high violent (**1.78**), and combined high risk categories (**1.41**).
- **American Indian men:** Lower chance of being placed in low risk, highest placement in high violent disparity (**2.17**); elevated combined high likelihood (**1.44**).
- **Latinx & Asian men:** More likely to be placed in low/moderate; lower risk of being placed in combined high (Latinx **0.65**, Asian **0.78**).

Women overall: High-violent classification is extremely rare (White **0.03**, Black **0.03**, Latinx **0.01**).

- Black women less likely to be placed in low risk (**1.21**) than White women (**1.89**) but more likely than White men.

Disparities are concentrated in who gets put on low (with less supervision), and who gets placed into the high (with higher likelihood of downstream impact i.e., violations).

Figure 12. Relative Rate Index of Probation Supervision Level Placement at Initial Risk Assessment (RRI)

Race × Gender	Low RRI	Moderate RRI	High Drug RRI	High Property RRI	High Violent RRI	Combined High RRI
White Men	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
White Women	1.89	0.79	1.14	0.77	0.03	0.48
Black Men	0.43	1.02	0.88	1.17	1.78	1.41
Black Women	1.21	1.15	0.53	1.61	0.03	0.41
Latinx Men	1.15	1.35	0.40	0.63	0.74	0.65
Latinx Women	1.94	0.90	0.62	0.69	0.01	0.37
Asian Men	1.28	1.01	0.52	0.54	1.08	0.78
Asian Women	2.14	0.73	—	0.83	—	0.32
Other Men	0.90	1.28	1.12	1.31	0.43	1.02
Other Women	2.27	0.62	0.85	0.87	—	0.39
American Indian Men	0.55	1.09	0.64	0.50	2.17	1.44
American Indian Women	1.33	0.89	2.69	1.13	—	0.63
Pacific Islander Men	1.41	0.98	0.67	0.95	0.52	0.76
Pacific Islander Women	2.80	0.64	—	—	—	0.17

BRS Response to Violations

From 2022-2024, one-third of probationers experienced at least one recorded violation. Overall, behavioral response level was **largely equitable** across groups but we know this system has been underutilized.

1

Violation Rates

Latinx and Asian individuals were 18% less likely have a violation recorded than White men.

Latinx and Other (RRI = 0.50) groups were significantly different than White individuals.

No significant gender differences.

2

Recommended Jail Time for Violations

No significant differences in race or gender groups.

3

Flash Jail Days

Statistically significant differences by race:

Black individuals had highest mean (7.8 days);

White were in the middle (7.1);

Latinx lowest mean (5.40).

No significant gender differences.

BRS Responses to ProSocial Behavior

Race

Level 1 most common response:

- American Indian individuals were significantly **less likely** to receive Level 1 incentives (40% less) as were Latinx (10% less).

Level 2 uncommon (8–22%):

- American Indian 113% more likely than White
- Black **41%** more likely than White

Level 3 disparities:

- Latinx **19% less**
- Other 6% less
- Pacific Islander **180%** more likely than White

Gender

Level 1:

- Females **11% more likely than males**

Level 2:

- No significant difference

Level 3:

- Females 42% less likely than males

Day Reporting Center Participation

Most racial differences were small and not statistically significant.

Significant Racial Disparities:

- All Latinx individuals (**17% less**)
- Latinx men (**22% less**)
- Other men (**44 % less**)

Women participate at lower rates than men (15% less).

- **Black women (45 % less)**
- **White women (25% less)**

Several subgroups (e.g., Pacific Islander women, Asian women) had very small *n*'s and unstable estimates.

DRC Participation by Supervision Type

Race-based DRC participation disparities are not systematic once supervision type is considered with one exception:

- **American Indian individuals on FP and MS** showed significantly higher DRC participation in multiple years (2021–2024).
- From 73% or 119% more likely to participate.

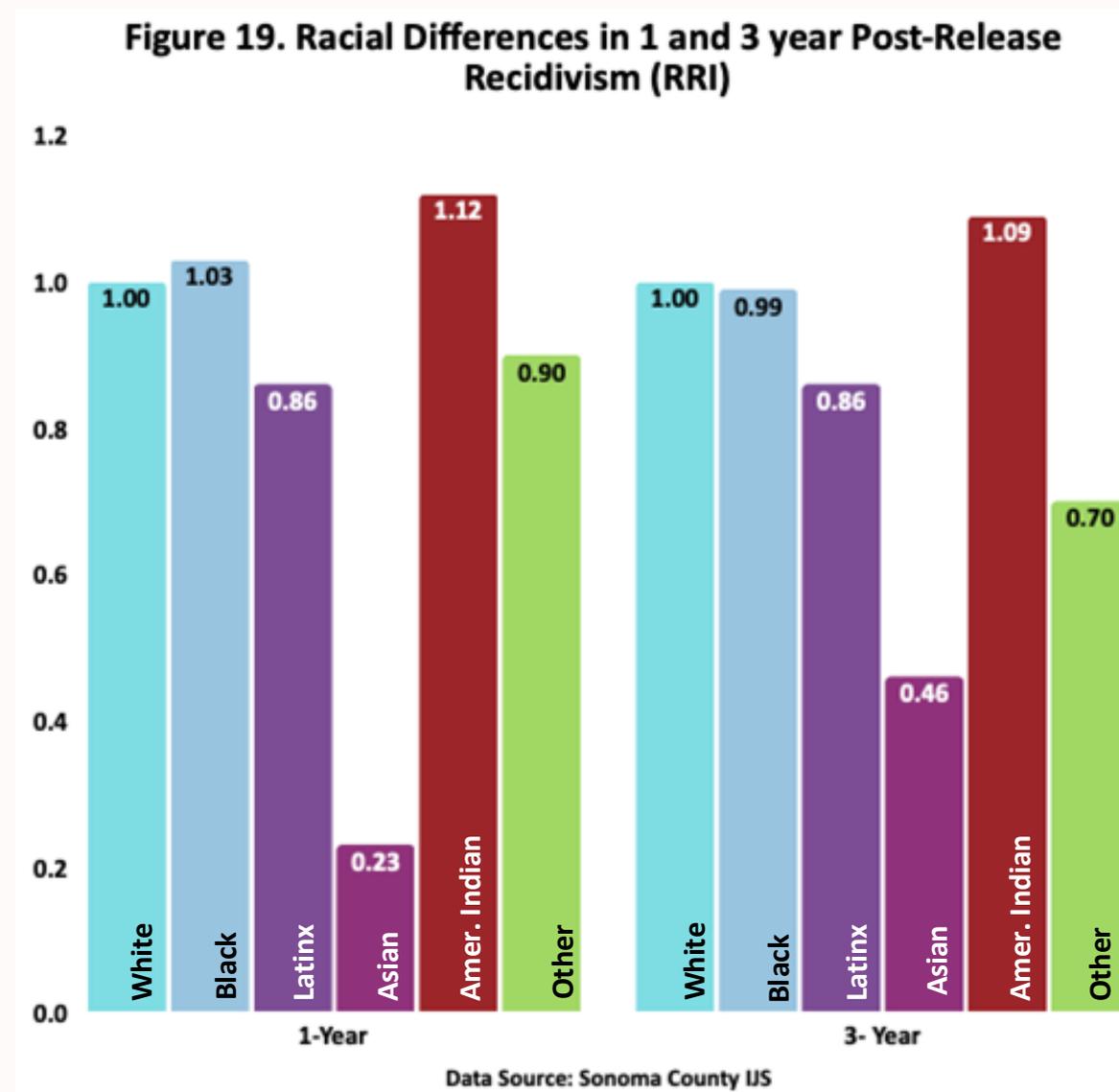
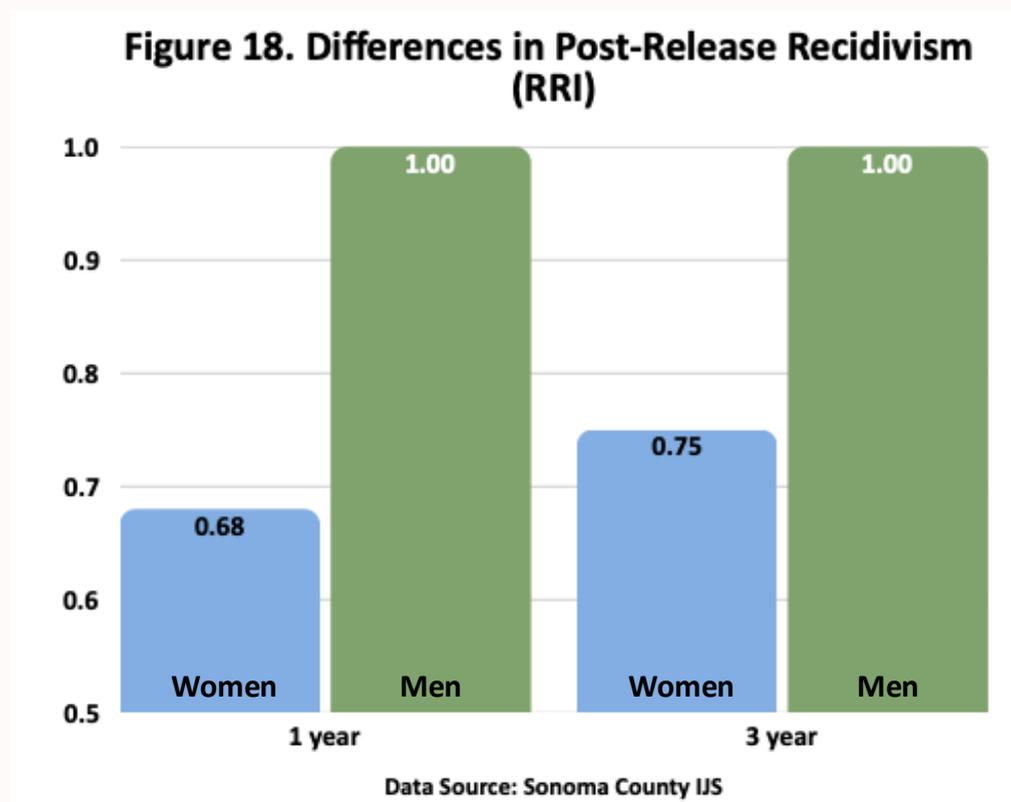
Once supervision type is accounted for, gender disparities largely disappear.

Reentry & Recidivism

Women recidivated at significantly lower rates than men:

- 1 year (M = 26.5%; W = 18%)
- 3 year (M = 33.5%; W = 25%)

- American Indian highest; Asian - lowest
- Latinx modestly lower than White by 14%



Quantitative Takeaways

Structural factors and supervision context may play a more important role in shaping outcomes than isolated discretionary decisions.

The findings do not support a pattern of cumulative racial/ethnic disadvantage operating uniformly across the system.

Gender differences were the most consistent driver of disparities, but some stages show racial differences that should be of concern.

Largest disparities appear in early release decisions and sentencing type (prison vs. jail or probation).

“Everything should be looked at through an equity lens.” - CJ System Partner

“We’re looking much more closely at the data to understand where disparities might exist.” - CJ System Partner

Key Findings - Qualitative

“There has been a lot of collaboration across agencies to really think about how decisions are made and how they impact different communities.” - CJ System Partner

*“I think there’s a willingness here [in Sonoma County] to have difficult conversations about equity and fairness.”
- CJ System Partner*

*“There’s been a real effort to be thoughtful about how policies and practices affect people differently.”
- CJ System Partner*

Interview Themes and Takeaways



System Entry

High uncertainty, unavoidable and **necessary discretion**. Early case framing shapes the "risk narrative" downstream.



Pretrial & Adjudication

Procedural consistency ≠ outcome equity. Earlier **disparities may compound at sentencing**.



Supervision & Reentry

Supervision intensity reflects capacity as much as risk. Disparities emerge through constraints, not intent.

Layered Discretion

Operates differently at each stage; **some stages have more options** than others, **variation can accumulate** across stages.

Different Definitions of Success

Success is defined differently. Some definitions are: safety, legal defensibility, rights, feasibility, fiscal balance.

Policy-Practice Gaps

High caseloads, limited infrastructure, weak cross-stage communication. **Good intent** but **bound by feasibility** and specific role.

Interview Takeaways and Recommendations

To promote equitable outcomes, attention may be warranted to:

1. Review stage specific outcomes regularly through an equity lens
2. Aligning policy assumptions with operational capacity (policy-practice gap)
3. County-wide definition of “equity” and “success what does fairness look like?”
4. Monitoring how structured tools are applied in practice (risk assessments and sentencing guidelines).
5. Addressing service limitations that results from budget (if possible).
6. While some interviews explicitly referenced disparate impacts on marginalized populations, other perspectives framed fairness primarily in terms of procedural consistency.

It is our job to “make decisions based on what’s reasonable, what’s appropriate... doing the right thing at the right moment, because it’s the right thing to do.” - CJ System Partner

“I don’t believe that I’ve ever seen anyone do anything intentionally biased... but we should create systems and processes that preclude people from doing that.”- CJ System Partner

Overall Implications / Open for Discussion and CCP Feedback

- No system-wide bias. Focus equity improvement efforts on **targeted decision points**.
 - Structural context influences outcomes more than isolated demographic factors or bias.
 - Seek to better understand the causes driving specific disparities, and if there is something that can be adjusted.
 - i.e., Sentencing is the primary equity pressure point, but discretion is limited at sentencing stage.
- Review **referral processes to mental health diversion**.
 - Assess whether language access, screening tools, or advocacy differences affect diversion eligibility.
- **Race and gender interact** in ways that affect system outcomes - not always present in race only or gender only analysis.
 - Incorporate these findings into training and policy discussions.
- Women recidivate less often than men and experience most consistent differences.
 - What is driving lower recidivism for women, or higher recidivism for men?
- The county is **actively engaging in data-driven reform with an equity focus**.
 - Continue to engage in an ongoing, proactive equity assessment and design system wide.
 - This can include data collection, feedback loops, and regular review of outcomes and access.

Thank you. Q&A



For any questions or comments, please contact:

Dr. Sonia Jain sjain@datainaction.org

Dr. Hollie Macdonald hmacdonald@datainaction.org

Data in Action, LLC (Dba: DNA Global, www.datainaction.org) is an equity-focused assessment, planning and evaluation consulting firm. Our mission is to support public programs, organizations, and systems across sectors to *reach excellence, achieve equity, and have the greatest possible impact.*

This presentation, the executive summary and DPA Full Technical Report were prepared by the DNA Global team. We appreciate the support, feedback and efforts of SCPD and CCP Committee. Note, findings and conclusions are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of funders or partner organizations. Thank you.