

FEMALE CRIME AND INCARCERATION IN OKLAHOMA

David Wright

Oklahoma had the dubious distinction of having the nation's highest female incarceration rate in 2002. The rate was 131 females incarcerated per 100,000 female population, 143% higher than the national rate of 54. In 2003 this dropped to 127 while the national rate rose to 62.

Why does Oklahoma have such a high female incarceration rate?

Arrest Rates

In Oklahoma, adult women accounted for 22.4 percent of all adult arrests in 2001 (31,269 out of a total of 139,688). Comparisons based on data for 2000 indicate that Oklahoma's total adult female arrest rate (2,376 adult female arrests per 100,000 adult female population) was 62 percent higher than the U.S. total adult female arrest rate (1,469 adult female arrests per 100,000 adult female population). Moreover, **Table 1** shows that Oklahoma's total adult female arrest rate in 2000 at 2,376 was 25 percent higher than in 1990 when the rate was 1,895 adult female arrests per 100,000 adult female population. Conversely, while Oklahoma's total adult female arrest rate was increasing, the US total adult female arrest rate decreased by 15 percent.

An analysis of crime types indicates that adult drug arrests account for a substantial part of the increase in the total female arrest rate. Overall, the total adult drug arrest rate has increased by 115 percent between 1990 and 2001 (as seen in **Table 2**) from 362 to 777 per 100,000 adult population. However, during the same time span, the total adult female drug arrest rate which increased from 137 to 345 per 100,000 adult female population (or 152 percent) was even more dramatic.

A comparison (illustrated on **Table 3**) between Oklahoma and the US on 2001 female uniform crime report index crime arrests (including arrests for

Table 1. Oklahoma and US Adult Female Arrest Rates, 1990-2000
(Per 100,000 Adult Female Population)¹

Year	Oklahoma	US
1990	1,895	1,728
1991	1,897	1,654
1992	1,840	1,834
1993	1,863	1,810
1994	1,963	1,804
1995	2,034	1,761
1996	2,048	1,700
1997	2,116	1,686
1998	2,305	1,652
1999	2,375	1,461
2000	2,376	1,469

Table 2. Oklahoma Adult Drug Arrest Rates for Females and Overall, 1990-2001¹
(Per 100,000 Adult Female Population)

Year	Females	Overall/Total
1990	137	362
1991	126	326
1992	145	365
1993	161	403
1994	190	477
1995	217	530
1996	220	528
1997	276	628
1998	314	729
1999	326	753
2000	354	783
2001	345	777

murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, breaking and entering, larceny, and motor vehicle theft) found that Oklahoma women are not more violent than U.S. women. Violent arrests (those for the crimes of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) account for 21 percent of the female index crime arrests in Oklahoma and for the US. In both Oklahoma and the US the

Table 3. Comparison of Oklahoma and US Female Index Crime Arrests, 2001¹

Offense Category	Oklahoma Females		US Females	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Murder	0.53	21	0.36	1,076
Rape	0.25	10	0.06	180
Robbery	1.70	67	2.09	6,166
Aggravated Assault	18.60	734	18.88	55,671
<i>Total Violent</i>	(21.08)	(832)	(21.40)	(63,093)
Breaking & Entering	6.21	245	6.65	19,612
Larceny	66.98	2,643	68.18	200,995
Motor Vehicle Theft	5.73	226	3.77	11,114
<i>Total Non-Violent</i>	(78.92)	(3,114)	(78.60)	(231,721)
Total Crimes	100.00	3,946	100.00	294,814

remaining 79 percent of female index crime arrests are for non-violent arrests including those for breaking and entering, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

With regard to arrests and offense types, drug offenses are a higher percentage of total arrests than any of the uniform crime report index crimes. In Oklahoma during 2001, drug offense arrests, including sales or manufacturing drugs and possession of drugs, accounted for 14.6 percent of all arrests among women. Furthermore, the Oklahoma adult female drug arrest rate in 2001 of 345 per 100,000 female population 18 years of age and older is 116 percent higher than the nation's adult female drug arrest rate of 160. How arrests, especially drug arrests, impact felony convictions and prison receptions is explored next, as felony convictions are the next stage in the criminal justice process that this chapter addresses.

Felony Convictions and Prison Data

Statewide felony sentencing data for 2001 indicates that women were 23.7 percent of all felony convictions (4,444 out of a total of 18,771). The top four types of offenses for females were drug possession (26.4 percent), fraud (22.1 percent), larceny (13.8 percent), and drug distribution (10.5 percent). These four offense categories account for almost three-fourths (72.8 percent) of the total felony convictions among females (see **Table 4** for a more detailed list of offenses).

Table 4. Female Felony Offenders Convicted in Oklahoma by Offense, 2001¹

Crime	Number	Percent
Arson	10	0.2
Non-Violent Assault	65	1.5
Violent Assault	101	2.3
Burglary II	51	1.2
Deadly Sin*	171	3.9
Drug Distribution	465	10.5
Drug Manufacturing	28	0.6
Drug Possession	1,172	26.4
Drug Trafficking	13	0.3
Other Drug Offenses	173	3.9
DUI	224	5.0
Fraud	983	22.1
Larceny	614	13.8
Other Non-Violent	295	6.6
Rape	1	0.0
Sex	2	0.0
Non-Violent Weapon	14	0.3
Violent Weapon	47	1.1
Other	15	0.3
Total	4,444	100

*The Oklahoma Legislature defines 19 crimes for which a convicted person must serve 85 percent of their sentence in prison. Examples include Murder 1 and Rape 1.

Among women felony offenders, slightly over one-third (37.9 percent) were incarcerated: 24.8 percent were sentenced to prison and 13.1 percent were sentenced to jail. The majority of women receiving a felony conviction (62.1 percent) were given probation sentences.

With regard to the types of offenses that result in prison sentences for females, drug possession (27.5 percent), drug distribution (17.9 percent), and fraud (13.8%) were the top three categories. These three offense categories make up over half (59.2 percent) of the total prison receptions among Oklahoma women. Specifically, focusing on drug possession, Oklahoma's percentage of prison receptions resulting from this offense category (27.5 percent) is twice that of the national average (12.9 percent). See **Table 5** for a more detailed list of offense resulting in prison sentences.

Table 5. Female Prison Receptions in Oklahoma by Offense, 2001¹

Crime	Number	Percent
Arson	4	0.4
Non-Violent Assault	17	1.5
Violent Assault	19	1.7
Burglary II	11	1.0
Crime Involving Loss of Life	89	8.1
Drug Distribution	197	17.9
Drug Manufacturing	24	2.2
Drug Possession	303	27.5
Drug Trafficking	10	0.9
Other Drug Offenses	43	3.9
DUI	52	4.7
Fraud	152	13.8
Larceny	83	7.5
Other Non-Violent	72	6.5
Rape	1	0.1
Sex	0	0.0
Non-Violent Weapon	7	0.6
Violent Weapon	12	1.1

In the criminal justice and substance abuse arenas, much has been made about the growing problem of methamphetamine abuse in Oklahoma. Indeed, among females sentenced to prison for possession of drugs in 2001, methamphetamine was the leading drug type at 59.9 percent. This was followed distantly by Cocaine (13.4 percent), Marijuana (10.5 percent), Crack (9.3 percent), and Prescription Drugs (4.7 percent).

Not only are drug crimes, including drug possession and drug distribution, the top categories of offenses leading to female prison receptions, but they have also increased dramatically over the last twelve years. Between fiscal year 1990 and fiscal year 2002, (see **Table 6**) females experienced a 124.8 percent increase in the number of prison receptions for drug crimes. During the same time frame, the total number of female prison receptions increased by 49.4 percent from 787 in fiscal year 1990 up to 1,176 in fiscal year 2002. As a percentage of all prison receptions, drug crimes have increased from 34.8 percent of the total female receptions in 1990 to 52.4 percent in 2002, which is a 50.6 percent increase.

Table 6. Total Female Receptions and Drug Crime Receptions to Prison in Oklahoma for Fiscal Year 1990 Through Fiscal Year 2002¹

Year	Female Drug Crime Receptions	Drug Crimes as Percentage of All Female Crimes	Total Female Receptions
1990	274	34.8	787
1991	259	36.6	707
1992	259	33.5	772
1993	305	36.3	841
1994	260	31.4	827
1995	365	39.0	937
1996	432	42.1	1,026
1997	415	34.6	1,200
1998	479	44.5	1,076
1999	509	45.9	1,110
2000	592	50.1	1,182
2001	571	52.6	1,085
2002	616	52.4	1,176

The overall average prison sentence length for women in Oklahoma sentenced during 2001 was 74 months (or slightly over 6 years). The average prison sentence lengths specifically, broken-out by several of the top offenses follow: drug possession 58 months (just under 5 years), drug distribution 92 months (7 years, 8 months), fraud 58 months (slightly less than 5 years), larceny 48 months (or 4 years), and other non-violent offenses 66 months (5 and a half years).

When analyzing prison sentence lengths, it is also important to consider another factor – the percent of sentence served in prison. Overall, female prisoners released in fiscal year 2003 served 36 percent of their sentence. Female offenders serving prison time for drug possession or drug distribution served 32 percent of their sentence, while offenders in prison for larceny and fraud served longer at 37 percent and 38 percent, respectively.

Combining prison sentence length and percent of time served allows the actual length of stay for offenders to be calculated. In **Table 7** the length of stay for female offenders is displayed for drug possession (19 months), drug distribution (29 months), fraud (21 months), and larceny (18 months).

The prison population in Oklahoma as of May 30, 2003 was 23,079. The breakout by gender indicates that there were 2,351 women (10.2 percent) and 20,728 males (89.8 percent).

Table 7. Average Prison Sentence Lengths in Months, Percent of Sentence Served in Prison, and Estimated Length of Stay for Females Among Selected Offenses, 2001¹

Offense Category	Average Prison Sentence (months)	Proportion of Time Served in Prison	Length of Stay for Females (months)
All Offenses	74	0.36	26.64
Possession of Drugs	58	0.32	18.56
Distribution of Drugs	92	0.32	29.44
Fraud	58	0.37	21.46
Larceny	48	0.38	18.2

Characteristics among women in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections (DOC) according to a 2002 self-report survey were as follows:

- 35% were sexually abused as a child;
- 29% were physically abused as a child;
- 30% do not have a high school diploma or Graduation Equivalency Diploma (GED);
- 71% had been in an abusive relationship;
- 81% have children;
- 25% were currently married;
- 48% had received social assistance; and
- 75% were incarcerated for drug and non-violent crimes.

Following this discussion of felony convictions and prison data, the next section of this chapter involves incarceration rates.

Incarceration Rates

Overall, Oklahoma's total incarceration rate is the 4th largest in the nation and is 24 percent higher than the US average. As mentioned previously, Oklahoma's 2002 female incarceration rate at 131 per 100,000 adult females led the nation. This compared to the US rate of 54, which made the Oklahoma rate 143 percent (or 2.4 times) higher than the US average.

Trend analysis of the total incarceration rate for Oklahoma between 1993 and 2002 shows a 31.8 percent increase.

This compares to 32.6 percent for the US (see **Table 8**). Focusing on Oklahoma's female incarceration rate during the past 10 years, the percent change for Oklahoma's female incarceration rate is 36.5 percent, while the national percent change is 58.8 percent (see **Table 9**). Two points merit mentioning. First, the Oklahoma female incarceration rate has increased more than the total incarceration rate of Oklahoma (36.5 percent versus 31.8 percent).

**Table 8. Oklahoma and US Total Adult Incarceration Rates
per 100,000, 1993-2002¹**

Year	Oklahoma	US
1993	506	322
1994	508	356
1995	552	378
1996	591	394
1997	617	410
1998	622	423
1999	662	434
2000	685	432
2001	658	422
2002	667	427

**Table 9. Oklahoma and US Female Adult Incarceration Rates,
per 100,000, 1993-2002¹**

Year	Oklahoma	US
1993	96	34
1994	96	40
1995	108	43
1996	115	47
1997	121	49
1998	122	51
1999	134	53
2000	138	53
2001	130	52
2002	131	54

Second, while the female incarceration rate in Oklahoma has increased, the national female incarceration rate has increased at a quicker pace (36.5 percent versus 58.8 percent).

Another way of examining incarcerations rates, especially among states, is to consider jail and prison populations together. This method accounts for and equalizes differences in how states sentence offenders to jail or prison. For instance, in Oklahoma, felony offenders sentenced in excess of one year go to prison, whereas some states have higher thresholds, often at two years. When jail and prison populations are compared together, Oklahoma's 2001 female incarceration rate (179 adult females per 100,000 adult female population) was 70 percent or 1.7 times higher than the US average (105 adult females per 100,000 adult female population). Oklahoma's female jail/prison incarceration rate was the second highest in the nation, just behind Texas, which had a rate of 180.

When Oklahoma is included in analyses of states' female incarceration rate in conjunction with state spending patterns, not specific to females, several interesting and critical findings emerge:

- Low incarceration states spend more for state-supported alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs than high incarceration states. Oklahoma's per capita expenditure for state-supported alcohol and other drug abuse treatment programs at \$6.06 is 117 percent less than the US average at \$13.17 (see **Table 10**).
- Low female incarceration states spend roughly twice the amount per inmate per day than high female incarceration states. Oklahoma's average cost per inmate per day at \$44.62 is 37 percent less than the US average at \$61.04 (see **Table 11**).
- There is a link between lower probation spending on offenders and higher female incarceration rates. States that incarcerate the most women consistently spend less than average on probation costs. Oklahoma spends \$2.04, half the US average of \$4.37, for probation/parole cost per offender per day (see **Table 12**).
- There is a pattern of lower spending on judicial and legal services and higher female incarceration rates. States that incarcerate the most women spend consistently less than average on courts, prosecutors, and criminal defenses. Oklahoma spends 71 percent less than the US average (see **Table 13**).

Table 10. Per Capita Expenditures for State-Supported Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Treatment Programs in 1999 Among High and Low Female Incarceration Rate States¹

High Female Incarceration States		Low Female Incarceration States		U.S.
OK (131)	\$6.06	NH (22)	\$5.72	(54) \$13.17
MS (126)	\$5.44	MN (18)	NA	
TX (96)	\$8.04	ME (12)	\$8.43	
LA (96)	\$9.22	MA (11)	\$11.64	
ID (94)	NA	RI (11)	\$14.37	

Numbers in parentheses are the 2002 state adult female incarceration rates per 100,000 population.

Table 11. Average Prison Costs per Inmate per Day in 2000 Among High and Low Female Incarceration Rate States¹

High Female Incarceration States		Low Female Incarceration States		U.S.
OK (131)	\$44.62	NH (22)	\$53.12	(54) \$61.04
MS (126)	\$42.91	MN (18)	\$84.87	
TX (96)	\$40.96	ME (12)	\$76.00	
LA (96)	\$32.10	MA (11)	\$98.99	
ID (94)	NA	RI (11)	\$96.06	

Numbers in parentheses are the 2002 state adult female incarceration rates per 100,000 population.

Table 12. Average Prison Costs per Probation/Parolee per Day in 2000 Among High and Low Female Incarceration Rate States¹

High Female Incarceration States		Low Female Incarceration States		U.S.
OK (131)	\$2.04	NH (22)	NA	(54) \$4.37
MS (126)	\$1.67	MN (18)	\$2.71	
TX (96)	\$2.81	ME (12)	\$4.50	
LA (96)	\$1.82	MA (11)	\$10.32	
ID (94)	\$9.85	RI (11)	\$1.56	

Numbers in parentheses are the 2002 state adult female incarceration rates per 100,000 population.

Table 13. Per Capita Government Expenditures for Judicial and Legal Services in 2000 Among High and Low Female Incarceration Rate States¹

High Female Incarceration States		Low Female Incarceration States		U.S.
OK (131)	\$55.90	NH (22)	\$74.40	(54) \$98.80
MS (126)	\$54.20	MN (18)	\$89.70	
TX (96)	\$64.60	ME (12)	\$53.70	
LA (96)	\$80.20	MA (11)	\$98.70	
ID (94)	\$78.20	RI (11)	\$100.10	

Numbers in parentheses are the 2002 state adult female incarceration rates per 100,000 population.

Costs and Cost Savings

While I do not necessarily advocate for the reduction of the Oklahoma female incarceration rate, some of the costs of imprisonment and some of the possible cost savings can be documented. Also, I do not calculate the costs savings that may be related to imprisonment, or the costs to victims of crime.

As detailed earlier, there has been a 49.4 percent increase in female receptions to prison. A similar pattern has also occurred for total receptions. Total receptions increased 29.5 percent between fiscal year 1990 and fiscal year 2002, from 6,396 in 1990 to 8,283 in 2002 (see **Table 14**). This increase in prison receptions, among other factors, has led to large and dramatic growth in the prison population. The Oklahoma prison population has risen from 12,091 in fiscal year 1990 to 22,981 in fiscal year 2002, which is a 90.1 percent increase. Consequently, the Oklahoma DOC budget has increased from \$143,267,691 in fiscal year 1990 to \$418,162,900 in fiscal year 2002, which represents a 191.9 percent increase. Compared to other state agencies during the last 7 years (fiscal year 1997 through fiscal year 2004), no other agency has seen the growth in its budget like the Oklahoma DOC. Indeed, the percent change in state appropriations among selected state agencies is as follows: DOC a 48.8 percent increase, Common Education a 27.2 percent increase, Higher Education a 20.7 percent increase, Transportation a 9.7 percent decrease, and among all agencies a 23.9 percent increase. Thus, the growth in the DOC budget is more than twice the growth among all agencies and is almost twice the growth of Common Education.

The cost of imprisoning women (and men for that matter) is tremendously high. It is estimated that the annual total prison costs (security and medical costs) of incarcerating a female are almost \$20,000, which on

Table 14. Total Prison Receptions, Prison Population, and DOC Appropriations, Fiscal Year 1990 Through 2002¹

Year	Prison Receptions	Prison Population	DOC Appropriations
1990	6,396	12,091	\$143,267,691
1991	5,939	13,059	\$156,248,313
1992	6,489	14,426	\$169,001,080
1993	6,783	16,148	\$172,862,571
1994	6,459	16,705	\$172,183,728
1995	6,893	17,983	\$188,110,994
1996	7,383	19,586	\$209,915,227
1997	6,779	20,329	\$251,364,812
1998	7,273	20,654	\$296,504,307
1999	6,979	21,788	\$331,165,993
2000	7,579	22,666	\$356,285,269
2001	7,282	22,737	\$389,769,454
2002	8,283	22,981	\$418,162,900

average is 10 percent higher than the costs associated with imprisoning males. Moreover, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) reports that it spends at least \$10.1 million annually in state and federal funds for the foster care, medical services, and other welfare needs of 1,816 children in Oklahoma whose parents are incarcerated. The breakout of the \$10.1 million is as follows: \$6.2 million is for foster care subsidies for 1,000 children, \$1.5 million is for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – welfare – payments on behalf of 816 children living outside the foster care system, and \$2.4 million is for Medicaid costs of 1,816 children.

If Oklahoma's female incarceration rate was the same as the national rate, Oklahoma would experience a yearly savings of approximately \$22,197,756 (Calculations based on reducing the Oklahoma female prison population from 2,259 as of December 31, 2002, to 941. This is 1,318 females, which is then multiplied by the DOC average annual cost, not specific to females - \$16,842 - and is likely low in comparison to the estimated per female costs at approximately \$20,000. Using the latter figure of \$20,000 would result in a potential savings of \$26,360,000.) Alternatively, cost savings are associated with drug courts, which are described in greater detail in the next section. This chapter briefly describes two cost savings related to drug courts.

First, since July 1, 2001, 27 babies have been born to drug court participants while they were active in court. National estimates state that

every drug-free baby saves about \$250,000 in medical and social service costs. Using these numbers, the estimated cost savings related to this are \$6,750,000.

Additionally, a model comparing the costs of imprisonment versus drug court indicates that the average cost savings per offender, not specific to females are \$6,836. Using these numbers and the 375 females that have entered or were active in drug court since July 1, 2001, the approximate cost savings are \$2,563,500. This model is based on several factors: costs to DOC, costs to Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (DMHSAS), retention rates of drug court participants and probation offenders, average sentence lengths and percent of time served, average length of stay in drug court, percent of offenders receiving prison sentences followed by probation, and revocation rates of probation offenders. The model excludes several factors: costs to local government, quality of life benefits of early intervention into addiction, taxable revenue from newly employed drug court offenders, costs to the offender, and cost savings associated with drug-free babies.

Drug Courts

Community sentencing and drug courts are the primary alternative sentencing programs in Oklahoma. Because drug courts have been in existence longer than community sentencing and have more outcomes, and due to the increase in the number of arrests, convictions, and incarcerations for alcohol and other drugs, information is provided on the drug court program.

The Oklahoma Drug Court Act was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in 1997. This Act provided the impetus for the development of drug courts statewide. The key components of this Act are in **Table 15**.

Among drug court participants active or entering between July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2003 there were 375 (30 percent) women and 880 (70 percent) men, in cases where the gender of the participants was recorded. An important performance and outcome measure of drug courts is the retention rate; that is the number and percentage of active and graduated participants. **Table 16** shows the status including retention rate of drug court participants broken out by gender. The overall retention rate of drug court participants is 83.8 percent. Among the females in drug court, there were 308 out of 375 that were active or graduated. This retention rate of 82.1 percent is just slightly lower than the overall statewide rate. In either case, this rate is about 20 percent above the total US rate of 70 percent according to the National Drug Court Institute and is a positive measure.

Table 15. Selected Sections of the Drug Court Act (22 O.S. 471)¹**Prison Diversion Program (22 O.S. 471.1)**

Drug court "... means an immediate and highly structured judicial intervention process for substance abuse treatment of eligible offenders which expedites the criminal case, and requires successful completion of the plea agreement in lieu of incarceration".

Drug Court programs formed prior to July 1, 1997, were allowed to continue under this act (22 O.S. 471.11).

Eligibility of Offenders (22 O.S. 471. 2)

Current felony charge.

Offender is a drug addict or offense makes them eligible for the program.

No current violent arrest or charge.

No prior violent felony conviction.

No arrest or charge for Drug Trafficking.

Has not been in drug court in the last 5 years.

Offender Entry into Drug Court (22 O.S. 471.2 & 471.8)

Offender must be willing to plea guilty to be considered (22 O.S. 471.2).

Offenders may enter court as a disciplinary sanction of probation or parole (22 O.S. 471.8).

Sentence Upon Failure of Drug Court (22 O.S. 417.7)

Drug court judge shall recognize relapse and restarts but may revoke after graduated sanctions or when offenders conduct requires revocation.

Revocation requires notice and a revocation hearing.

Unsuccessful offenders shall be sentenced for the offense as provided in the plea agreement.

Disposition of Case Upon Successful Completion of Program (22 O.S. 471.9)

Case dismissed if the offense was a first felony offense.

If the offender has a prior felony conviction, the disposition shall be as specified in written plea agreement.

Table 16. Drug Court Status by Gender of Participants Active or Entering Between July 1, 2001 and July 1, 2003¹

Status	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Active	510	58.0	210	56.0	720	57.3
Graduated	233	26.5	98	26.1	331	26.5
Terminated	82	9.3	40	10.7	122	9.7
Absent	27	3.1	16	4.3	43	3.4
Other (death, withdrawal)	2	0.2	2	0.5	4	0.3
Unknown	26	3.0	9	2.4	35	2.8
Total	880	100	375	100	1,255	100

This high retention rate among women is achieved despite these women facing tremendous odds in the sense of possessing poor education, employment, and income levels and previous involvement in the criminal justice system, as well as other health, social, economic, legal, mental health, and substance abuse problems. Some examples include the following:

- The average education level among females entering drug court is less than that of a high school graduate.
- Almost half (47.9%) of all female drug court participants enter as unemployed.
- The average monthly income of female drug court participants is approximately \$450.
- Women entering drug court have at least one prior felony conviction on average and over 25% entered with at least two or more prior felony convictions.
- Problems measured at entry through a clinical assessment - the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) - including medical, employment/support, alcohol, drug, legal, family/social, and psychiatric have been determined to be high/severe.
- In regard to drugs of choice, the top four among women in drug court are as follows: methamphetamine (37%), Cocaine (22%), Marijuana (16%), and Alcohol (9%).

Shifting attention to outcome results among female drug court graduates reveal the following between entry and graduation:

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- Females experienced a 32% increase in employment (38.7% versus 51.1%)
- Females saw a 130% increase in their monthly income (\$489 versus \$1,128).
- Females improved their average education levels (level of education below that of a high school graduate versus level of education beyond/higher than that of a high school graduate).
- Females recognized improvements in problem areas measured with the ASI.

Each of these short-term outcome measures illustrates positive results. However, the measures are short-term, measuring time between entry and graduation and not a substantial length following graduation, which would constitute a long-term measure.

One long-term outcome measure among drug court graduates indicates the following (see **Table 17**): 14 percent of females were re-arrested 3 years after entry into drug court. This compares favorably to male drug court graduates at 21 percent and to the total of drug court graduates at 19 percent. The female drug court graduate re-arrest rate is also positive compared to traditional/standard probation offenders (a comparison group). Female drug court graduates were 118 percent less likely to be re-arrested than female standard probation offenders. This was substantially higher than the percent difference between drug court graduates and standard probation offenders who were male (74 percent) and the percentage difference between the total drug court graduate population and the total probation population (86 percent).

It is encouraging to see these tangible benefits of drug courts among participants, especially women involved in the Oklahoma criminal justice system. Nevertheless, opportunities exist for improvement in this area, as well as others, such as mental health. In the future Oklahoma will, hopefully, be able to boast about its low female incarceration rate.

Table 17. Re-Arrest Percentage Among Drug Court Graduates and Traditional Probation Offenders by Gender 36 Months After Entry¹

	Male	Female	Total
Drug Court Graduates	21.4	14.2	18.9
Traditional Probation	37.3	31.0	35.1

End Notes

¹The analysis and data presented here is based on work done for the Special Task Force for Women Incarcerated in Oklahoma, created by Senate Bill 810 of the 2003 Legislative Session and published in the January 2004 task force Report. The project involved the work of many persons including the author, K.C. Moon, Debbie Simpson, Marsha Boling, Nancy Warren, and Lorrie Byrum.

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DID YOU KNOW?

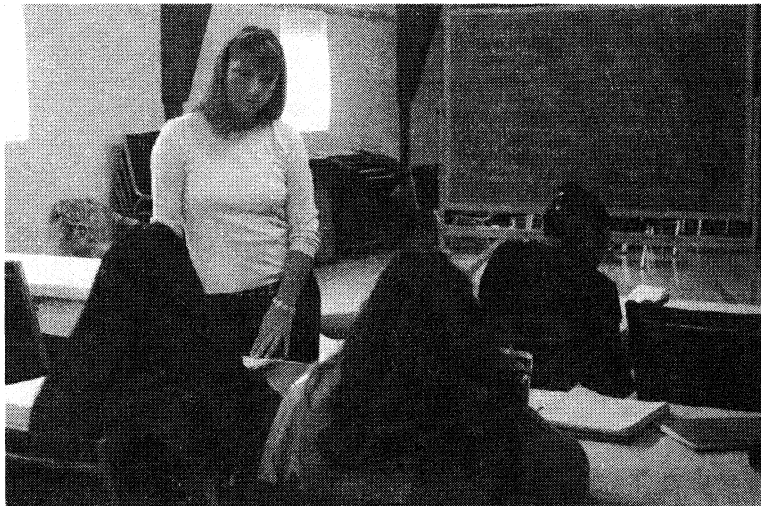
Oklahoma had the nation's highest female incarceration rate in 2002 with 131 females incarcerated per 100,000 population? (page 61)

Drugs account for the largest portion of Oklahoma female arrests, convictions and incarcerations? (page 63)

In 2001 the average prison sentence for Oklahoma women was 74 months? (page 66)

Oklahoma spent \$418,162,900 keeping women and men in prison in 2002? (page 71)

Whereas 31% of Oklahoma females on probation are re-arrested, the rate is only 14.2% for Drug Court graduates? (page 76)



Delores Beuler, office administrator for Resonance, teaches a life-skills class to Tulsans. Resonance provides services from prevention to intervention designed to break the cycle of multi-generational incarceration, reunify mothers and children, and help women and families become self-sufficient.

Photo courtesy Tulsa People Magazine