



# Fact Sheet

## SEX OFFENDERS IN PRISON

### Introduction

- This report examines two subpopulations of sex offenders incarcerated in Minnesota correctional facilities on July 1, 2013. The first subpopulation consists of inmates whose governing offense is a felony-level, criminal sexual conduct (CSC). This group is referred to as Governing Sex Offenders or GSOs. The second subpopulation includes inmates whose governing offense is a crime other than CSC, but who previously have been convicted of a felony-level sex crime (in Minnesota or elsewhere) or are required to register as a predatory offender. These offenders are referred to as Other Sex Offenders or OSOs.
- As of July 1, 2013, there were 9,751 inmates incarcerated in Minnesota correctional facilities. A total of 3,044 (31%) of these offenders met the sex offender definitions used in this report. The majority (53%) of the 3,044 sex offenders were classified as a GSO. OSOs accounted for the remaining 47 percent.

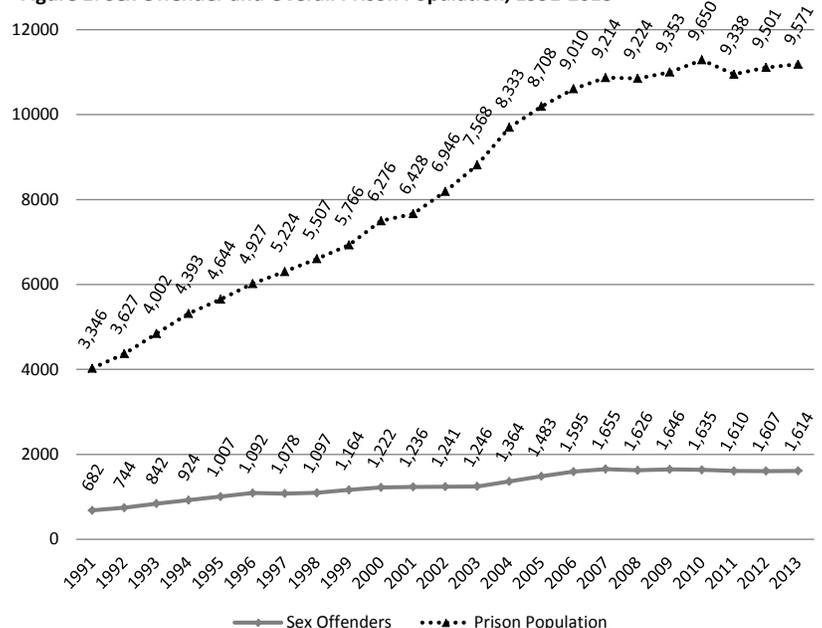
### GSO Size, Growth

- Historical information on the size of the GSO subpopulation is presented in Figure 1. Between 1991 and 2007, the GSO population increased by 143 percent, from 682 to 1,655. The average rate of growth during this time period was six percent annually. The GSO population has since decreased slightly from its 2007 peak.
- Growth in the number of new court commitments contributed little to the increase in the GSO population. The average annual growth rate for sex offender new commitments has been less than one percent since 1991. Rather, the increase is attributable to longer sentence lengths for sex offenders as well as a sharp rise in admissions of supervised release violators. For example, from fiscal year (FY) 1991 to 2012, the average sentence length for GSOs admitted as new commitments increased from 63 months to 95 months. Offenders returning to prison as release violators also increased considerably during this time period. Supervised release violators accounted for 14 percent of GSO admissions in FY1991; by FY2001, supervised release violators accounted for 54 percent of GSO admissions. The percentage has remained around this level in subsequent years. In the last two fiscal years, 53 percent of GSO admissions were release violators.

### Demographic and Offense Characteristics

- As shown in Table 1, the incarcerated sex offender population is overwhelmingly male. The average age is 38 years, with the GSO subpopulation being slightly older on average (39.1 years) than the OSO subpopulation (37.3 years). Sixty-six percent of the total population falls between the ages of 26 and 49. Over half (54%) of the OSO population were committed by a county in the metropolitan area, while 45 percent of the GSO population was committed by a metro-area county.
- More than half of the GSOs are incarcerated for first-degree CSC, close to one-fourth are incarcerated for third-degree CSC, and 20 percent are incarcerated for second-degree CSC. Six percent of the GSOs are incarcerated for fourth-degree CSC. Third- and fourth-degree CSC offenders are more likely than first- and second-degree offenders to be under the age of 25. First-

Figure 1: Sex Offender and Overall Prison Population, 1991-2013



degree CSC offenders are most likely to have been committed by a county in the metropolitan area (53%); GSOs convicted of fourth-degree CSC are least likely to have been convicted in a county in the metropolitan area (30%).

## Felony Conviction Histories

- The 3,044 sex offenders have a total of 8,442 prior felony convictions, an average of 2.8 per offender. Thirty-one percent did not have a previous felony conviction, whereas the remaining sex offenders had at least one prior conviction. OSOs are more likely than GSOs to have one or more previous felony convictions (85% versus 54%).

**Table 1: Profile of the Sex Offender Inmate Population**

	Governing Sex Offenders	Other Sex Offenders	All Sex
<i>Offenders</i>			
Percent	53.0	47.0	100.0
Number	1,614	1,430	3,044
Percent male	98.8	98.1	98.5
Average age	39.1	37.3	38.3
Metro-area county of commitment (percent)	45.2	54.1	49.3
Average number of felony convictions <sup>1,2</sup>	1.6	4.1	2.8
Percent with prior felony conviction <sup>2</sup>	54.1	84.9	68.6
Average number of prior incarcerations <sup>1</sup>	0.4	1.1	0.8
Percent previously incarcerated <sup>3</sup>	24.0	56.0	39.0

<sup>1</sup> Excludes current conviction/incarceration.

<sup>2</sup> Based on data collected by Minnesota correctional facility caseworkers and entered into the DOC database at the time an offender is admitted to prison.

<sup>3</sup> Includes only incarcerations in an adult Minnesota correctional facility.

## Incarceration Histories

- The 3,044 sex offenders have a total of 2,118 previous incarcerations in Minnesota, an average of 0.7 per offender. More than three-fifths (61%) are experiencing their first commitment to prison in Minnesota.
- OSOs are more likely to have been previously incarcerated when compared to GSOs (56% versus 24%). Similarly, the OSO subpopulation has a greater number of previous incarcerations than the GSO subpopulation. Specifically, each OSO has been incarcerated, on average, once before, while the average for GSOs is 0.4.
- Additional analysis, not shown in Table 1, shows that many of the sex offenders have been returned to a Minnesota prison as a release violator as well. The 3,044 sex offenders have been admitted as release violators a total of 2,590 times, which averages to just under once (0.9) per offender. GSOs are less likely than OSOs to have been returned to prison as a release violator. On average, the OSOs were admitted as a release violator once while the average for GSOs was 0.6.

## Victim Characteristics

- Typically, GSOs victimized people they knew. Forty-two percent victimized an acquaintance, 33 percent victimized a family member, and four percent victimized a spouse or cohabitating adult. Only ten percent victimized a stranger. GSOs convicted of either third-degree or fourth-degree CSC were most likely to have victimized an acquaintance (71%). The vast majority of victims, regardless of the perpetrator's conviction offense, were females (89%).
- Most of the victims were children or adolescents. Forty-three percent of victims were children under 13, and 37 percent were adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17. Twenty percent of victims were adults. Overall, 65 percent were females under the age of 16.

## Sentencing Characteristics

- The average sentence length for the 3,044 sex offender inmates is 102 months, or 8.5 years. Approximately 32 percent have a sentence greater than 10 years; 28 percent are serving a sentence of three years or less. Notably, these calculations exclude 129 inmates who are serving a life-sentence, as these sentences are indeterminate, and 37 others who have been sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.
- Additional analysis of the sentencing data available shows that GSOs are serving significantly longer sentences than OSOs. The average sentence for the GSO subpopulation is 122 months while the average sentence for the OSO subpopulation is 78 months. Compared to OSOs, GSOs are less likely to be serving a sentence of three years or less. Forty-four percent of OSOs are serving a sentence which is three years or less compared to 16 percent of GSOs. Conversely, 74 percent of GSOs have sentences greater than or equal to five years compared to 38 percent of OSOs.

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