

# PROBATION VIOLATIONS AS DRIVERS OF JAIL INCARCERATION IN ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI

Richard Powell and Beth M. Huebner



Supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

# Expedited Probation Violation Model

- **Assumption:** Reducing the time spent in jail awaiting probation violation hearings will reduce the jail population overall and potential unintended consequences of confinement.
- **Goal:** Client released from jail in 10 days
- **Staffing :** 2 jail case managers. In kind donations of time from probation and parole and the jail.

# Probation Violation Model

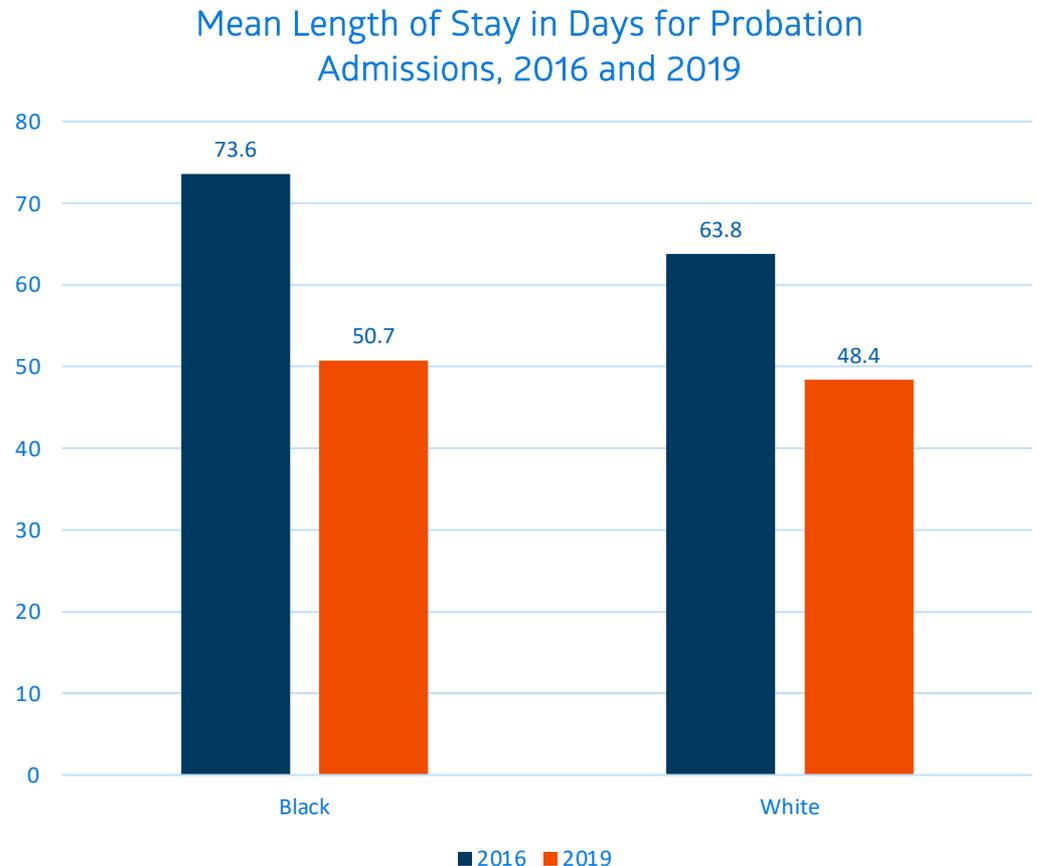
- **Phase 1:** Implemented September 2016.
  - Target Population: Individuals returned to jail on probation technical violation.
- **Phase 2:** 8/2017 – New non-violent charges considered.
- **Phase 3:** Services provided by probation (1/2019)
  - Traditional probation and enhanced services and supervision

# Jail Trends

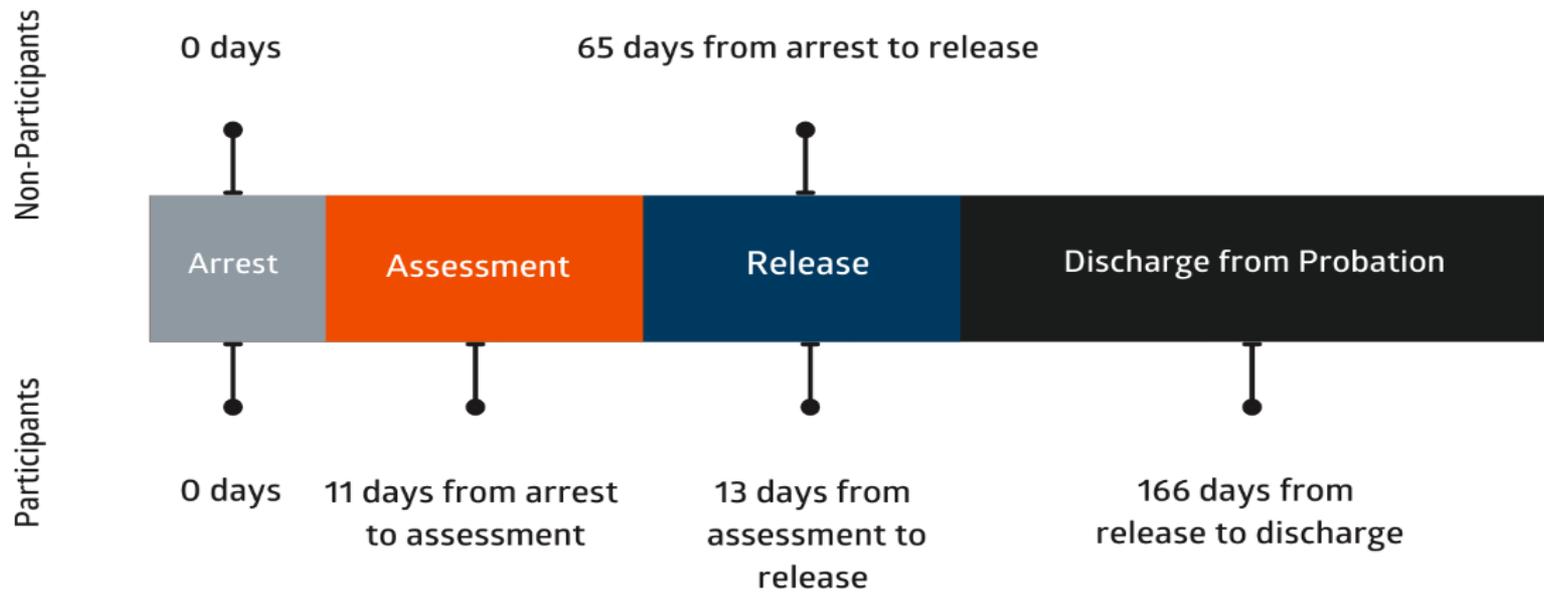
## Probation Violations Overall

- People booked on probation violations have substantially longer lengths of stay than other groups.
- Individuals who came into the jail on a probation violation were most often admitted with multiple charges

## Racial Disparities

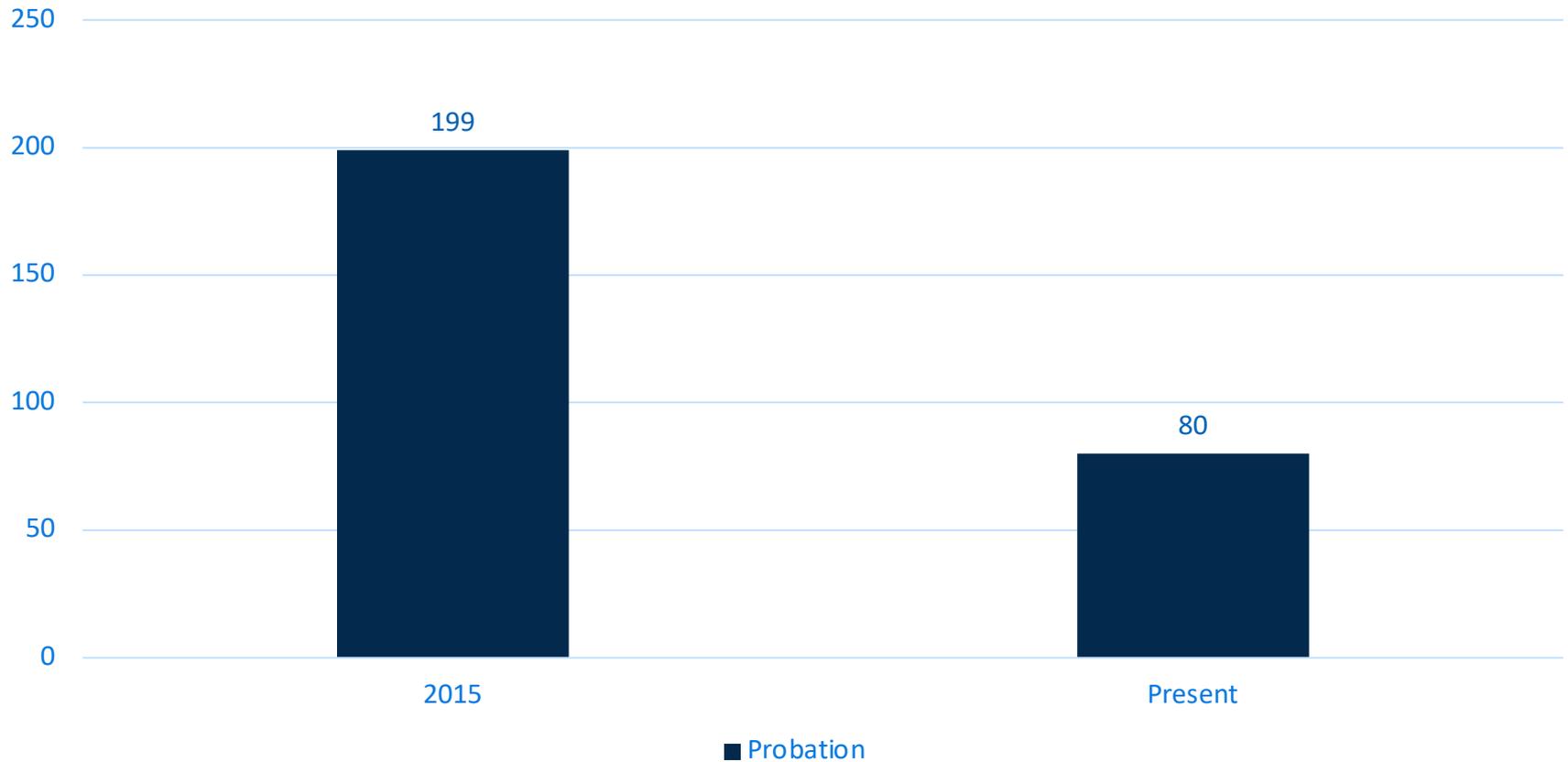


# What's changed?

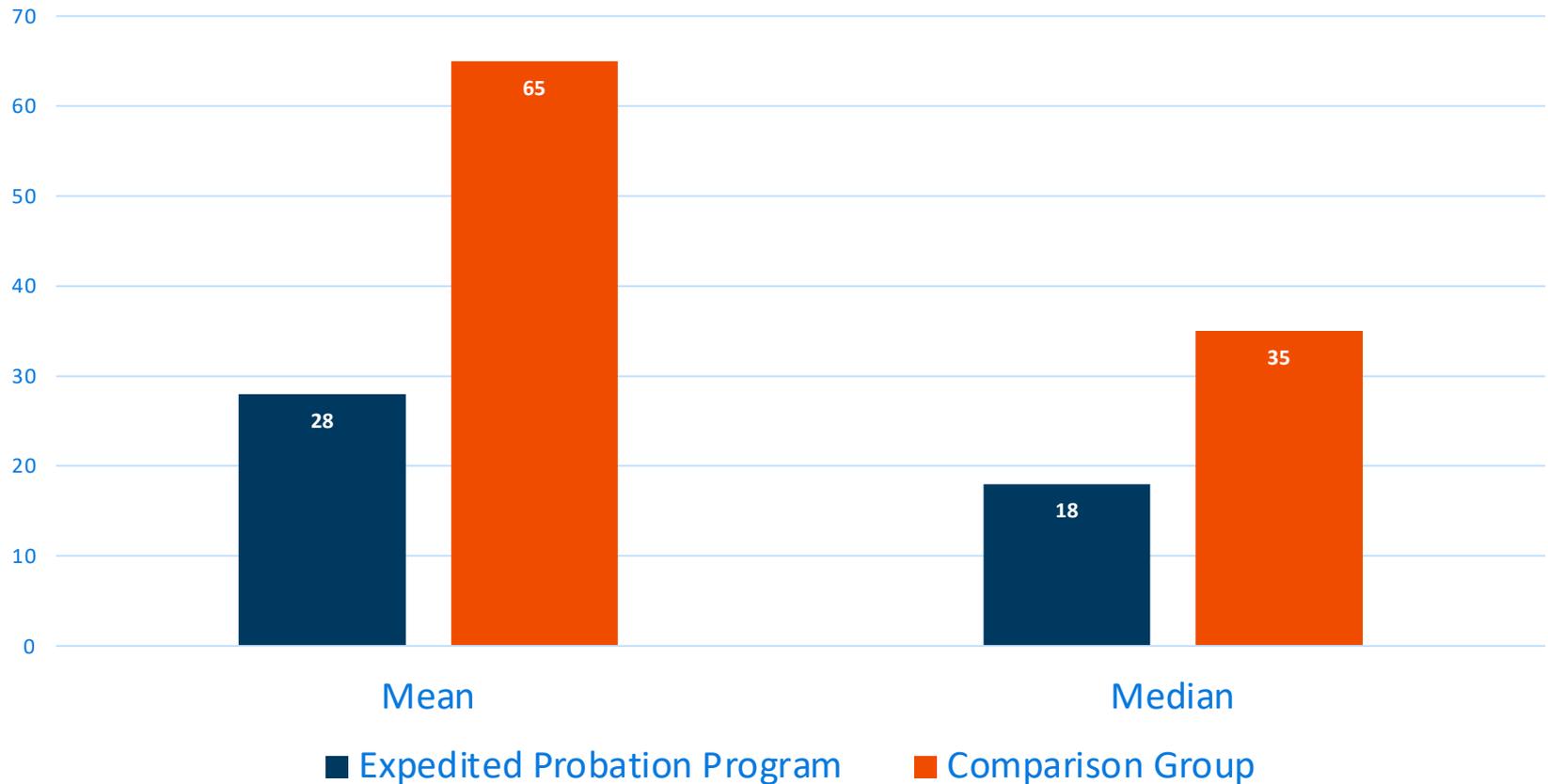


# PROGRAM OUTCOMES

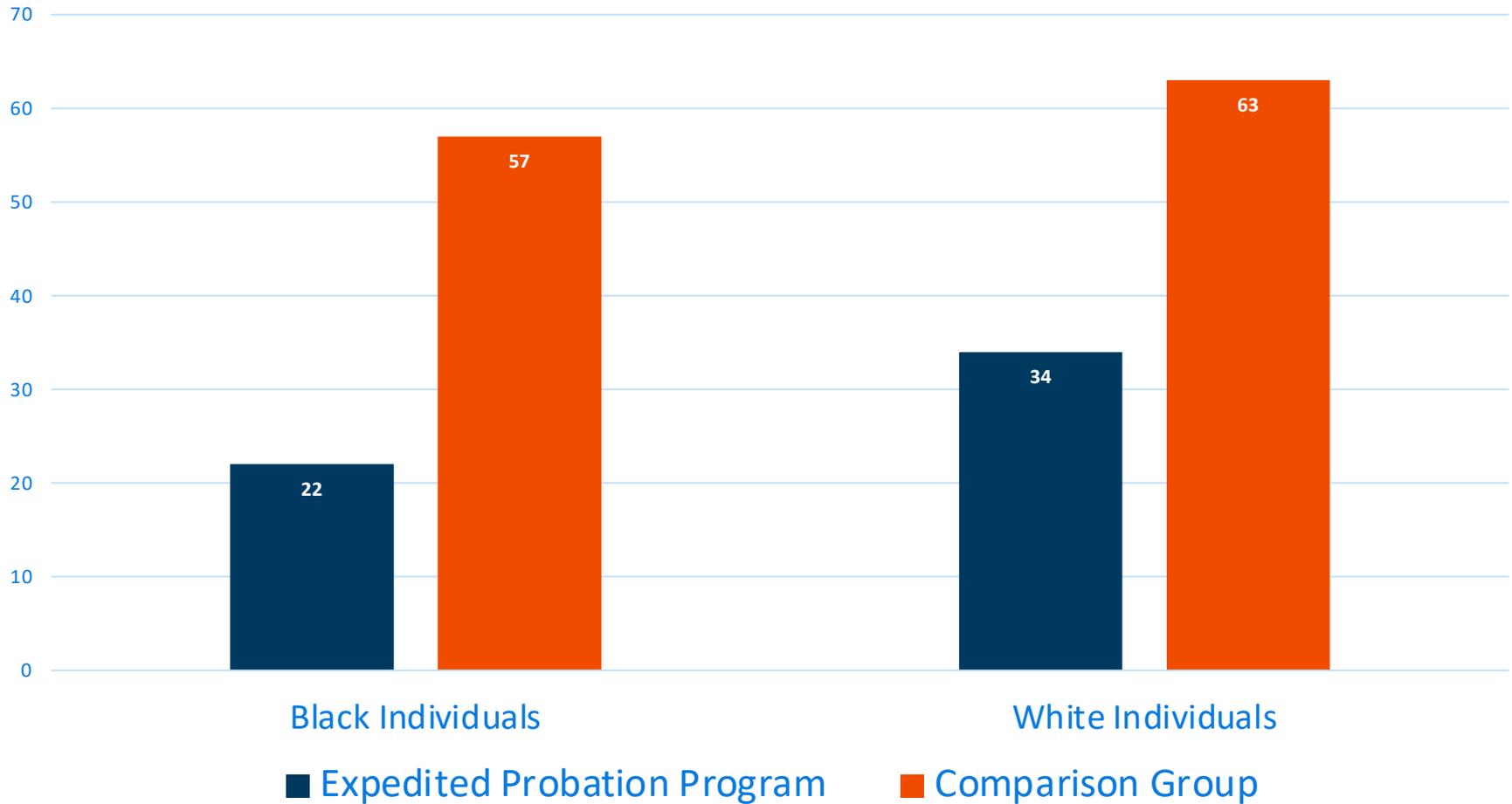
# Change in the Number of People on Probation in the Jail



# Mean and Median Number of Days Detained for EPP Participants and Comparison Group



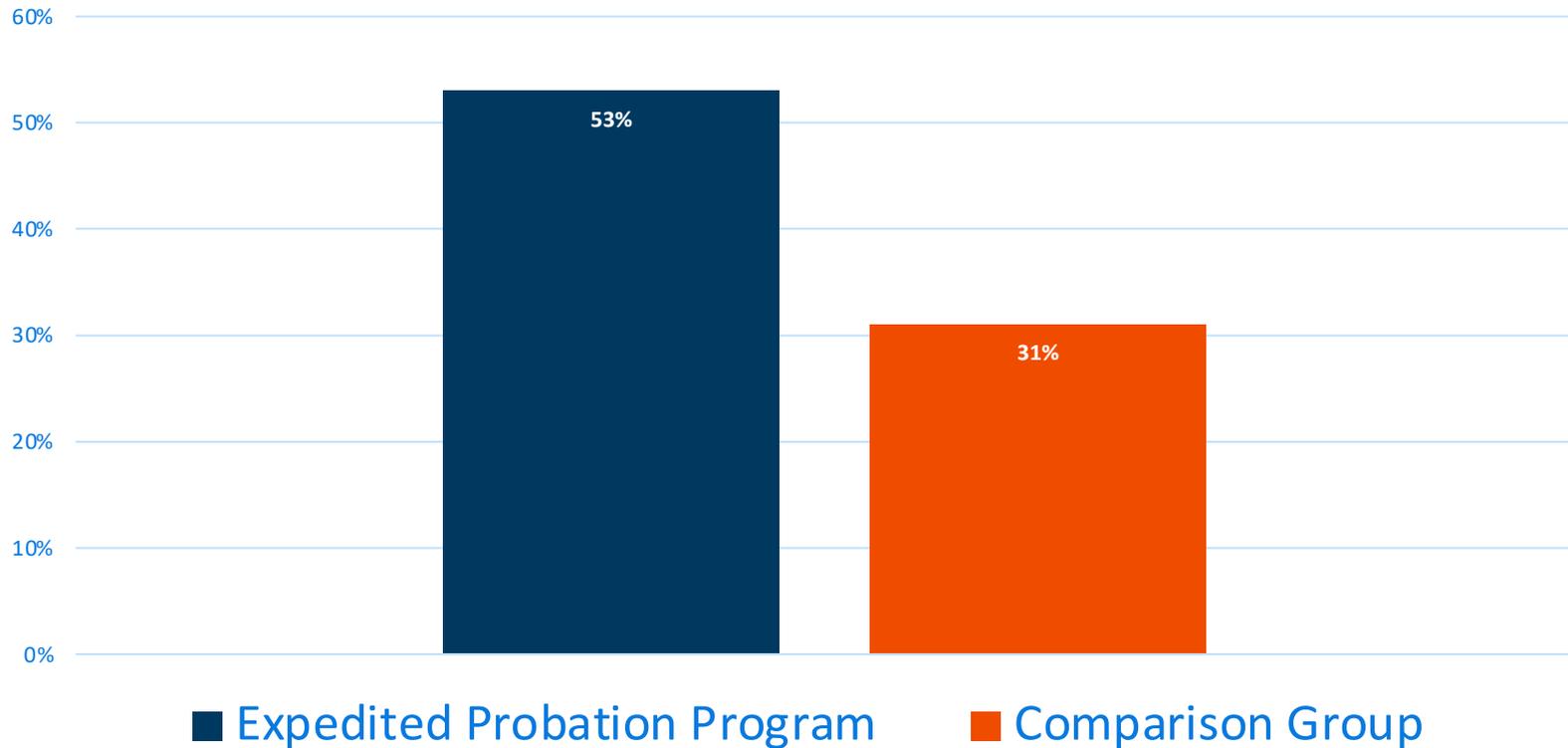
# Mean Number of Days Detained for Black and White Participants, Adjusting for Charge and Individual Characteristics



# Consequences of Long Stays

- Life disruptions
  - *“Yeah, it definitely affected my family. They don't really want nothing to do with me. And work, I lost my job. It affected getting other jobs. It's really affected a lot in my life, honestly.”* - Angela
  - *“You're sitting there missing out on life, missing out on money, everything stops. Your life is destroyed.”* - Frank
- Challenges during COVID-19
  - *“in St Louis County like they have you go and you're on lockdown quite a bit, you come out for rec at certain times. To be quite honest and quite frank, you feel kind of like a caged animal, like only let out when it's time to eat or for, you know, short increments of time and you have to be quiet.”* - Hannah

# Percent of Individuals in the EPP and Comparison Group Readmitted to Jail within a Year, Adjusting for Charge and Individual Characteristics



# Perceptions of Expedited Probation

- POs discussed the expedited probation program in a positive manner, citing its flexibility and efficiency
  - *“Well, it makes the process a lot easier and it's faster. You know, so you don't have the individual officers coming down and, you know, trying to take time out of their schedule to go, and you know, do the clients where we're here already, every day.”* - Officer Saint John

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

## Next Steps for Probation Reform

# Implementation Challenges

- Absconding as a critical event
- Right-sizing probation requirements
- *"You have clients doing a million things, and then you want them to have a job, and then you know, like boundaries, right, or balance. So now you have your probation, and you will try to manage normal life. And then, now I got an anger management class, and I got some class and then you know, all these different things, community service, and curfew, then I got to work. I'm not anti-probation, I'm saying **it's a lot for an individual potentially that has never learned how to manage the time correctly**, or, you know, prioritize things, so you throw a person who has never developed these, these systems of decision and expect now like, to make the right decision. So, there's a lot to balance." - Staff Member Carter*

# Policy Implications – Communication and Collaboration

- **Reduce time in the violation process.**
  - *"Because you feel like "Okay, I'm wasting my time. Every time I go, they keep continuing and keep continuing." Or sometimes a judge may, instead of a revocation hearing, you don't even receive anything. And they tell us it's our responsibility to look on CaseNet. That should not be our responsibility when we have other responsibilities." - Officer Norris*

# Policy Implications – Communication and Collaboration

- **Collaborate with the judiciary.**
  - Develop automated processes (computer system) to receive and respond to probation violations with officers.
  - Create unique dockets for probation violations.
  - Implement a consistent check-in process for the court to hold with clients
  - Design practices that enhance the role of probation officer recommendations.

# Policy Implications – Communication and Collaboration

- Create unique dockets for probation violations.
  - *"I worked in areas [where] they had particular probation officers who were liaisons to particular divisions, so if you have these six judges who gained a lot of criminal cases or a lot of probation violation cases, they would have **officers assigned to those divisions**, where if the judge needed information about a client or needed someone to notify a client to be in court, the judge knew who to go, who to contact. That liaison made it much more efficient... and another thing it did too [was] **built a better rapport I think between our agency and the courts.**" - Officer Wilkes*

# MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS?

**BETH HUEBNER**

**BETH.HUEBNER@ASU.EDU**

**RICHARD POWELL**

**RICHARD.POWELL@DOC.MO.GOV**