

# Moving away lowers re-incarceration risk for parolees

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Relocation substantially lowers the likelihood of re-incarceration for parolees, according to new research at The University of Texas at Austin.

Using the occurrence of Hurricane Katrina--which ravaged numerous neighborhoods throughout the Louisiana Gulf Coast—as a natural experiment, David Kirk, sociologist at The University of Texas at Austin, was able to examine how consequential a change of residence is to behavioral outcomes such as crime. His findings will be published in the June issue of *American Sociological Review*.

According to the study, ex-prisoners who have relocated away from their prior residence are 15 percent less likely to be re-incarcerated within the first year of their release from prison. The study included two pre-Katrina groups consisting of 1,538 and 1,731 parolees, as well as 1,370 post-Katrina parolees, all of whom were originally convicted in the New Orleans metropolitan area.

"Successful prisoner reintegration depends, in part, on providing opportunities for [prisoners](#) to separate from their criminal past," Kirk said. "Prisoners typically return home to the same crime-producing environment, with the same criminal opportunities and peers that proved so detrimental prior to incarceration.

"We may find that Hurricane Katrina led to positive outcomes for this particular slice of the population. The lesson may be that residential

change can lead to a turning point in the lives of parolees."

Source: University of Texas at Austin ([news](#) : [web](#))

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