
Expungements and Their Effect on Recidivism and Life Success

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The Research Questions

- Does the expungement process show an obvious decrease in recidivistic behavior?
 - Have those who had their records expunged remained crime free or have they returned to criminal acts?
 - Of those who have remained crime free, how many have well-paying jobs and feel a level of success that was previously thought to be unattainable with a criminal record?
 - Do the results show a high enough level of desistance to make the expungement process more readily available?
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Literature Review

In the past, research which has been documented in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* of Northwestern University amongst other journals, has shown that expungements can lead to a decrease in the overall rates of which individuals recidivate, but research has failed to show how individuals levels of success have been drastically impacted as a result of the expungement, and if that is a determining factor in the rates at which recidivism occur post expungement.

Problems Encountered and Solved!

The main issue we faced with data collection was receiving the necessary permission from a government entity to perform our research. We were luckily able to resolve this by partnering with the Salt Lake County Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Initiatives, who then distributed our survey for us.

Research Design

- The overall purpose of this research is to determine the benefit of expungement in regard to economic opportunity for the convicted population.
 - First, we found our population through Jacob Smith, who is the Expungement Navigator for the Salt Lake Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Initiatives
 - Second, we developed our survey to answer our research questions and sent it to Jacob Smith for approval.
 - Once he approved the survey, Jacob sent the survey to our sample population.
 - There were 277 total individuals in our population
 - Our response rate goal was 10.8%
 - On April 4th, Jacob sent a reminder email to our sample and by April 11th, we had our results.
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The Survey

Population: individuals who have participated in the expungement process in the state of Utah

- Population size: 277
- Total respondents: 73 (52 full responses, 21 partial responses)
- Response rate: $52/277 = 18.8\%$
- Confidence level: 95%
- Confidence interval: ± 12.25

Since our response rate was only 18.8% and our sample size was so small, we cannot generalize our results.

In order to improve the response rate over the data collection period, we issued two emails (an original and a reminder) to the sample population in an effort to collect as much data as available.

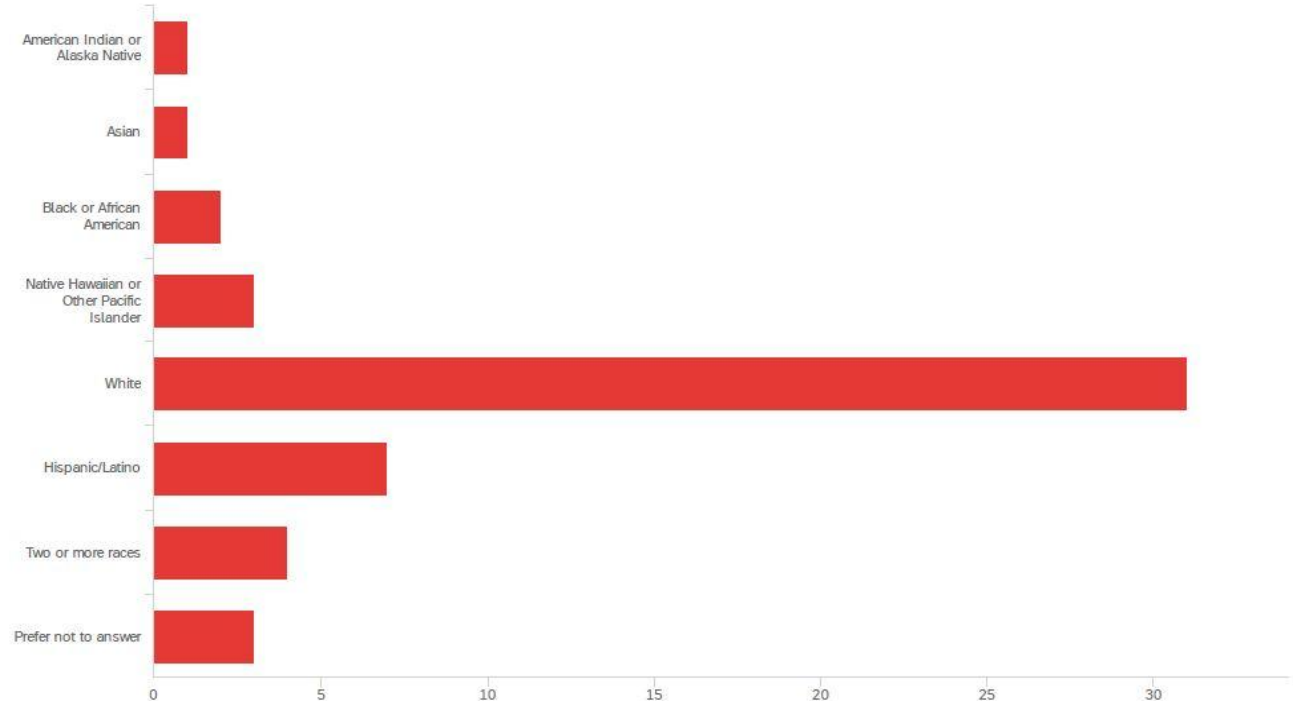
We included all 73 responses in our findings because the partial responses still offered valuable information regarding post expungement success

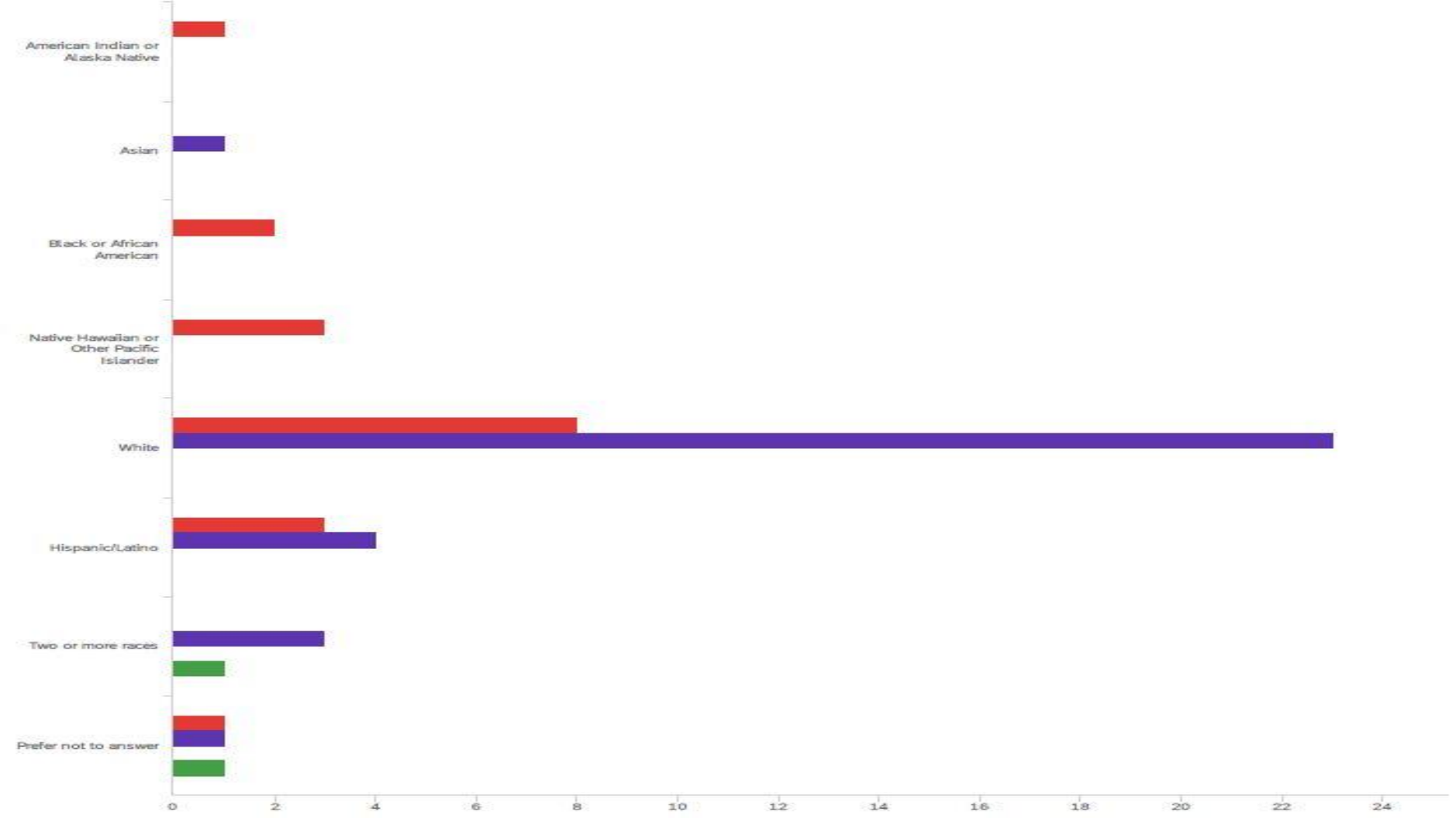
Demographics Results (Gender & Age)

Male: 18, Female: 32, Non-Binary/Third Gender: 0, Prefer not to answer: 2

Male age: 20-51 with a median of 36.5, Female age: 21-57 with a median age of 36.66, Prefer not to answer was 24-24 with a median of 24

Demographic Results (Race/Ethnicity)





When did people start their expungement process?

From the respondents:

Minimum: Was 1 month

Maximum: 144 (12+ years)

Mean: 72.36 Months (A little over 6 years)

How long did it take for people to complete the expungement process?

From start to finish, the expungement process took the respondents:

Minimum: 3 months

Maximum: 121 Months (A Little over 10 years!)

Mean: on average it took 13.28 months to complete the process

Employment Prior and After Expungement

Prior

49 found employment, 17 did not

40 had full time, 9 had part-time

It took a minimum of 1 month, maximum of 144 months, and a mean of 8.94 months to find employment

42 offered hourly, 5 offered salary

Average Salary: \$47,500, Average Hourly: \$13.37

After

53 found employment, 9 did not

37 had full time, 14 had part-time

It took a minimum of 1 month, maximum of 24 months, and a mean of 2.19 months to find employment

39 offered hourly, 13 offered salary

Average salary: \$39,615.38, Average Hourly: \$20.22

Housing Prior and After Expungement

Prior

32 did qualify, 29 did not qualify

Minimum months to qualify: 0, Maximum: 100,
Mean: 14.43 months.

3 placed in low income housing, 6 in section VIII, 1
low income housing tax credit, 2 unsure, 5 other, 15
no assistance

13 in apartments, 1 in a duplex, 12 in a single home,
6 in other

Minimum denied applications: 0, Maximum: 20,
Mean denied applications: 1.29

After

37 did qualify, 21 did not

Minimum months to qualify: 0, Maximum: 36, Mean months to
qualify: 6.33

1 placed in low income housing, 6 in section VIII, 1 low income
housing tax credit, 2 unsure, 3 other, 12 no assistance

10 in apartments, 1 duplex, 8 in single family homes, 4 other

Minimum denied applications: 0, Maximum: 20, Mean denied
after expungement: 1.11

Did anyone return to crime after expungement?

Sadly, yes. But not many! Out of the 52 people who completed the survey all the way through, only 1 returned to crime. Meaning that 99.48% of the respondent population remained crime free (or at least had not been caught) after their expungement.

The individual who did return to crime was charged with a felony 1 year after having his record expunged. The crime was not drug related.

Was there any apparent Racial Disparity in the Data?

The short answer is yes. The population most affected is the native hawaiian or other pacific islander population and hispanic populations. According to our data for prior to expungement items, they were disqualified from housing more and found less employment than that of the majority population (white). After expungement, when these individuals qualified for housing, they received smaller living spaces than their white expungement counterparts. Following expungements as well, while every other race was denied only at most three times (excluding those who elected to not signify race who had been denied a max of 20 times), native hawaiian or other pacific islanders were denied a minimum of 6 times, and a max of 8 times for housing.

Data to support previous slide

#	Field	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Hispanic/Latino	Two or more races	Prefer not to answer
1	Yes	2.63% 1	0.00% 0	5.26% 2	2.63% 1	63.16% 24	10.53% 4	10.53% 4	5.26% 2
2	No	0.00% 0	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	14.29% 2	50.00% 7	21.43% 3	0.00% 0	7.14% 1

#	Field	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Hispanic/Latino	Two or more races	Prefer not to answer
1	Yes	4.35% 1	0.00% 0	8.70% 2	0.00% 0	69.57% 16	4.35% 1	4.35% 1	8.70% 2
2	No	0.00% 0	3.45% 1	0.00% 0	10.34% 3	51.72% 15	20.69% 6	10.34% 3	3.45% 1

#	Field	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Hispanic/Latino	Two or more races	Prefer not to answer
1	Apartment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	22.22% 2	33.33% 3	11.11% 1	11.11% 1	11.11% 1
2	Duplex	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
3	Single home	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	8.33% 1	0.00% 0	66.67% 8	16.67% 2	0.00% 0	8.33% 1
4	Other	14.29% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	71.43% 5	0.00% 0	14.29% 1	0.00% 0

Conclusions

Based on our data, we can infer that:

- The expungement process does indeed show an decrease in recidivistic behaviour
 - Individual life success does increase on the basis of hourly wage increasing by \$6.85, more individuals being offered a salary position post expungement, and the average time to find employment decreasing by 6.75 months
 - While we recognize that there is a bias in the data set (those who responded could be seen as more invested in their success), we feel that with a 99.48% level of desistance, that the expungement process is a valid means of reducing crime and therefore should be made more widely accessible.
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