

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**January 1, 2019**

**Compiled by the Research and Planning Division**

**How many inmates are incarcerated by the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC)?**

On January 1, 2019 there were 8,044 criminally sentenced inmates in the jurisdiction of the DOC. There were 486 individuals housed as civil commitments and 254 pre-trial detainees in the DOC. The total jurisdiction population was 8,784.

**How many Massachusetts inmates are incarcerated in other jurisdictions' facilities?**

On January 1, 2019 there were 94 DOC inmates housed in other state or federal correctional facilities, and 235 DOC inmates housed in county correctional facilities. One DOC inmate was housed in a juvenile facility.

**How many institutions do you have and how many security levels are there?**

The Department has 16 institutions and 4 security levels: Maximum, Medium, Minimum and Pre-Release.

**What is the average cost to house an inmate per year?**

For Fiscal Year 2018, the average cost per year to house an inmate in the Massachusetts DOC was \$70,892.56.

**Criminally Sentenced Inmates**

**What is the gender breakdown of the inmate population?**

Of the 8,044 criminally sentenced inmates in DOC jurisdiction January 1, 2019, 343 (4%) were female and 7,701 (96%) were male.

**What is the racial/Hispanic ethnicity composition of the inmate population?**

Inmates serving criminal sentences on January 1, 2019 reported the following race/ethnicity: White – 3,359 (42%), Black - 2,257 (28%), Hispanic - 2,212 (27%), Asian – 112 (1%), Other -65 (1%), American Indian/Alaskan Native – 39 (<1%).

**How many "lifers" are incarcerated in Massachusetts DOC facilities?**

On January 1, 2019, there were 2,059 inmates serving a governing life sentence. Of the 2,059, there were 1,058 inmates serving a first-degree life sentence and 967 serving a second degree sentence. The remaining 34 were serving an out of state life sentence including first degree (23) and second degree life sentences (11).

**How many people are committed to the DOC in a year?**

There were 2,086 new criminal court commitments to the DOC during 2019; 1,578 males and 507 females.

**How many people are released from the DOC in a year?**

During the 2018, there were 2,767 criminally sentenced inmates released from both DOC facilities, as well as facilities in other jurisdictions. Of these releases, 2,168 (74%) were released to the community: 593 via parole, 1,527 through expiration of sentence and 48 court release/drug lab. Of the 2,168 inmates released, 415 were female and 1,753 were male.

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**What is the average time served?**

The estimated time served for state criminally sentenced males, including all inmates released to the community from a sentence at the DOC due to expiration of sentence, parole, court release, or payment of fines in 2018, was about 3.6 years. For females, the average time served for **state** criminally sentenced releases to the community was about 2.9 years; and 151 days (5.0 months) for **county** criminally sentenced releases to the community. Inmates with life sentences were not included in the above noted numbers due to significantly longer stays and differences in sentence structure.

Time served is calculated by adding together an inmate's jail credits and their length of stay<sup>1</sup>. To clarify, each is defined as:

**Jail credits** are days of credit for time served awaiting trial. The DOC does not award or take away jail credits; pre-trial confinement is determined by the courts.

**Length of stay** is the total number of days an inmate is incarcerated on the same DOC commitment number within the DOC jurisdiction population; the total number of days may include time from multiple admission and releases on that same commitment number.

**Time Served** is defined as the sum of an inmate's total length of stay on the same commitment number within the DOC jurisdiction population including jail credit days.

**What is the recidivism rate?**

A 3 year recidivism study of 2,436 criminally sentenced inmates released from DOC institutions in 2014<sup>2</sup> yielded the following results: within the first year post-release 423 (17%) of the 2,436 released inmates recidivated, an additional 200 (8%) recidivated in the second year post-release, and another 148 (6%) recidivated within the third year post-release. The overall recidivism rate for inmates released in 2014 over the span of 3 years was 32%.

The Massachusetts Department of Correction (MADOC) defines a recidivist as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the community from MADOC jurisdiction who is re-incarcerated in a Massachusetts state or county facility or to a federal facility for a criminal sentence within three years of their release to the community.

*Date last updated: January 2019*

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<sup>1</sup> All measures of **inmate time served** were done using the median, which is preferred to the average when examining time served due to the skewed nature of the variable; the average has a tendency to produce greatly inflated values.

<sup>2</sup> Starting in 2008, the cohort includes MA DOC inmates released from county, federal and out of state facilities.