

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**July 1, 2021**

**Compiled by the Research and Planning Division**

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

On July 1, 2021 there were 5,881 criminally sentenced inmates in the jurisdiction of the DOC. There were 620 individuals housed as civil commitments and 70 pre-trial detainees in the DOC. The total jurisdiction population was 6,571.

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

On July 1, 2021 there were 88 DOC inmates housed in other state or federal correctional facilities, 185 DOC inmates housed in county correctional facilities, and 6 on DOC Electronic Monitoring.

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

On July 1, 2021, the Department had 15 institutions and 4 security levels: Maximum, Medium, Minimum and Pre-Release.

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

**MA DOC Institutional Per Capita Costs (FY 2020)**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Security Level</b>	<b>Annual Cost Per Inmate</b>
Boston Pre Release	Min/Pre	\$89,422.48
Bridgewater State Hospital	Med	\$310,685.38
Cedar Junction	Max/Med	\$110,712.94
MCI-Concord	Med	\$93,517.95
MCI-Framingham	Med	\$162,259.42
MCI-Norfolk	Med	\$61,240.18
<i>MCI-Shirley</i>		
MCI-Shirley Medium	Med	\$63,108.01
MCI-Shirley Minimum*	Min	\$58,459.51
MASAC @ Plymouth	Min/Pre	\$234,667.11
Massachusetts Treatment Center	Med	\$84,558.15
NCCI Gardner	Med/Min	\$64,547.86
Northeastern Correctional Center	Min/Pre	\$64,170.39
<i>Old Colony Correctional Center</i>		
Old Colony Correctional Center Medium	Med	\$93,884.97
Old Colony Correctional Center Minimum	Min	\$85,405.44
Pondville Correctional Center	Min/Pre	\$71,774.23
Shattuck Hospital	Med	\$331,210.42
South Middlesex Correctional Center*	Min/Pre	\$107,593.42
Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center	Max	\$111,673.48

\*MCI-Shirley Minimum shuttered in February and South Middlesex Correctional Center shuttered during March 2021.

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**Criminally Sentenced Inmates**

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

Of the 5,881 criminally sentenced inmates in DOC jurisdiction July 1, 2021, 159 (3%) were female and 5,722 (97%) were male.

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

Inmates serving criminal sentences on July 1, 2021 reported the following race/ethnicity: White – 2,342 (40%), Black – 1,758 (30%), Hispanic - 1,599 (27%), Asian – 101 (2%), Other - 51 (1%), American Indian/Alaskan Native – 30 (1%). As of July 1, 2021 there were no Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander reported.

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

On July 1, 2021, there were 1,905 inmates serving a governing life sentence. Of the 1,905, there were 1,017 inmates serving a first-degree life sentence and 855 serving a second degree sentence. The remaining 33 were serving an out of state life sentence including first degree (22) and second degree life sentences (11).

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

During FY 2021, there were 784 new criminal court commitments to the DOC; 736 males and 48 females.

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

During FY 2021, there were 1,960 criminally sentenced inmates released from both DOC facilities, as well as facilities in other jurisdictions. Of the 1,960 inmates released, 1,853 were male and 107 were female. Of these releases, 1,585 (81%) were released to the community: 713 via parole, 839 through expiration of sentence and 33 court release/crime lab.

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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 2020, was about 3.5 years. For females, the average time served for **state** criminally sentenced releases to the community was about 2.8 years; and 165 days (5.5 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 2,145 criminally sentenced inmates released from DOC institutions in 2016<sup>2</sup> yielded the following results: within the first-year post-release 354 (17%) of the 2,145 released inmates recidivated, an additional 174 (8%) recidivated in the second-year post-release, and another 110 (5%) recidivated within the third-year post-release. The overall recidivism rate for inmates released in 2016 over the span of 3 years was 30%.

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: July 2021*

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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 tends 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.