



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety
Department of Correction
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Female Offenders
Returning to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Strategic Planning & Research Brief
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Introduction

In 2004, there were 2,389 releases¹ from the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) "to the street." Such released offenders include those paroled and those released via good conduct discharge/expiration of sentence. Among the 2004 releases, 1,640 (69%) were males and 749 (31%) were females. This report focuses on the female offender population and where they reported they were going to live upon release.

Female offenders returning by county

When reviewing the statistics of female offenders released from the DOC it is important to note that a) these figures only account for offenders released from serving a criminal sentence and NOT those awaiting trial, detained, or serving a civil commitment, and b) most *county* houses of corrections are NOT housing female offenders, or doing so on a limited scale. Barnstable, Berkshire, Bristol, Hampden, and Suffolk County do house the majority of their female offenders. Female offenders returning to communities from *county houses of corrections* are not included in the figures reflected below as they only include releases from DOC facilities.

MA DOC 2004 FEMALE RELEASES TO THE STREET BY COUNTY

	Frequency	Percent
WORCESTER COUNTY	200	26.7%
MIDDLESEX COUNTY	146	19.5%
ESSEX COUNTY	110	14.7%
PLYMOUTH COUNTY	72	9.6%
NORFOLK COUNTY	61	8.1%
SUFFOLK COUNTY	54	7.2%
BRISTOL COUNTY	26	3.5%
BARNSTABLE COUNTY	24	3.2%
HAMPDEN COUNTY	19	2.5%
BERKSHIRE COUNTY	7	.9%
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY	5	.7%
NON-MASS	23	3.1%
NOT REPORTED	2	.3%
Total	749	100.0%

The vast majority (97%) of female offenders reported returning to a Massachusetts community.

¹ Each "release" is counted separately; the number of individual "offenders" released is less given that some, particularly females who serve shorter sentences on average, may be released more than once in a given year. Figures for 2004 are preliminary at this writing.

Over 60% of female offenders released from the DOC in 2004 returned to one of 3 counties: Worcester, Middlesex, and Essex.

Female offenders returning by city

Consistent with Worcester being the county where the largest percentage of female offenders returned, the *city* of Worcester represented having the largest percentage (14%) of returning female offenders from the DOC. However, the 108 offenders reportedly returning to the city of Worcester comprised only 54% of the females returning to the county. Though Boston ranked second, and Brockton third, the two *counties* where Boston (Suffolk County) and Brockton (Plymouth County) are located ranked 6th and 4th respectively. Compared to male offenders, female offenders are relatively less concentrated in a handful of cities in the Commonwealth. However, with that observation, one needs to factor in that female offenders released from county facilities, such as Hampden County, would account for the larger proportion of releases from cities in those counties, such as Springfield. Springfield was ranked 14th among cities where female offenders returned compared to 3rd among male offenders released from the DOC. Over *half* of male offenders released from the DOC reported returning to one of three cities in Massachusetts: Boston, Worcester and Springfield. In comparison, just over half of all the female releases in 2004 returned to 15 cities.

**MA DOC 2004 FEMALE RELEASES TO THE STREET:
TOP 15 CITIES**

	Frequency	Percent
WORCESTER	<i>108</i>	<i>14.4%</i>
BOSTON	<i>45</i>	<i>6.0%</i>
BROCKTON	<i>31</i>	<i>4.1%</i>
LYNN	<i>28</i>	<i>3.7%</i>
LAWRENCE	<i>23</i>	<i>3.1%</i>
LOWELL	<i>22</i>	<i>2.9%</i>
HAVERHILL	<i>20</i>	<i>2.7%</i>
FRAMINGHAM	<i>18</i>	<i>2.4%</i>
QUINCY	<i>17</i>	<i>2.3%</i>
FITCHBURG	<i>15</i>	<i>2.0%</i>
MARLBORO	<i>12</i>	<i>1.6%</i>
WEYMOUTH	<i>12</i>	<i>1.6%</i>
SOMERVILLE	<i>12</i>	<i>1.6%</i>
SPRINGFIELD	<i>11</i>	<i>1.5%</i>
MALDEN	<i>10</i>	<i>1.3%</i>
Total	<i>384</i>	<i>51.3%</i>