



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 2005, there were 2,378 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 2005 releases, 1,476 (62%) were males and 902 (38%) were females. The male releases saw a 1% decrease from 2004 while the number of females released increased by 20%. 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 2005 FEMALE RELEASES TO THE STREET BY COUNTY		
	Frequency	Percent
WORCESTER COUNTY	247	27.4%
MIDDLESEX COUNTY	205	22.7%
ESSEX COUNTY	126	14%
SUFFOLK COUNTY	104	11.5%
NORFOLK COUNTY	55	6.1%
PLYMOUTH COUNTY	53	5.9%
BRISTOL COUNTY	44	4.9%
HAMPDEN COUNTY	23	2.5%
BARNSTABLE COUNTY	6	0.7%
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY	3	0.3%
FRANKLIN COUNTY	1	0.1%
OUT OF STATE	35	3.9%
Total	902	100%

The vast majority (96%) 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 2005 are preliminary at this writing.

Over 64% of female offenders released from the DOC in 2005 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 (12%) of returning female offenders from the DOC. However, the 109 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 2005 returned to 15 cities.

MA DOC 2005 FEMALE RELEASES TO THE STREET:		
TOP 15 CITIES		
	Frequency	Percent
WORCESTER	109	12.1%
BOSTON	96	10.6%
FRAMINGHAM	35	3.9%
LYNN	29	3.2%
BROCKTON	28	3.1%
LOWELL	27	3.0%
ASHLAND	26	2.9%
LAWRENCE	25	2.8%
FITCHBURG	24	2.7%
HAVERHILL	18	2.0%
NEW BEDFORD	15	1.7%
SOUTHBRIDGE	15	1.7%
QUINCY	15	1.7%
CAMBRIDGE	14	1.6%
WESTBORO	11	1.2%
Total	487	54.2%