



BARBALUNGA FOR SHERIFF

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“Time For Change – Justice That Works”

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BARBALUNGA WANTS BERKSHIRE COUNTY TO HAVE “ZERO COMMUNITIES” IN THE TOP TEN CRIME LIST FOR MASSACHUSETTS *North Adams and Pittsfield Are in the High-Crime List*

Berkshire County—Alf Barbalunga, a Democratic candidate for Berkshire County Sheriff, says he is concerned about recent FBI crime statistics rankings which show two communities in Berkshire County placing in the top ten per capita crime lists in the Commonwealth. Here is the top ten per capita crime list in Massachusetts, published by the Road Snacks website, compiled from 2022 FBI Uniform Crime Statistics reports. Seven of the ten communities on the per capita crime lists are in Western Massachusetts:

Crime By City in Massachusetts – Most Dangerous Cities by www.roadsnacks.net

Rank	City	Population	Violent Crimes Per Capita	Property Crimes Per Capita
1	Holyoke	40,002	904	3,114
2	Springfield	153,084	966	2,436
3	North Adams	12,620	681	2,432
4	Worcester	184,850	632	1,998
5	Hadley	5,352	485	2,821
6	Brockton	99,171	758	1,672
7	Boston	697,323	624	1,866
8	West Springfield	28,437	471	3,091
9	Pittsfield	41,865	814	1,586
10	Chicopee	54,918	535	2,090

3. North Adams, ranked number 3 in the state, is described by Road Snacks “as starting to be recognized as quite a dangerous place. For example, North Adams had the second highest burglary rate in the state, recording 69 break-ins in 2020.” “While violent crime as a whole is relatively low in North Adams,” the report adds, “the city did have the unfortunate distinction of having the 16th highest rate of rape cases in the state.”

Population: 12,620

Rank Last Year: 7 (Up 4)

Violent Crimes Per 100k: 681 (Seventh most dangerous)

Property Crimes Per 100k: 2,432 (Fifth most dangerous)

More on North Adams: | [Cost Of Living](#) | [Crime Report](#)

9. Pittsfield is the largest city and county seat of Berkshire County and the ninth most dangerous place in Mass. Road Snacks writes: “Pittsfield had about 5 burglaries per week in 2020, giving the city of 41,865 the highest burglary rate in the state. Violent crime in Pittsfield is an even bigger problem. Throughout 2020, residents had a 1 in 122 shot of being robbed, raped, assaulted, or murdered.”

Population: 41,865

Rank Last Year: 5 (Down 4)

Violent Crimes Per 100k: 814 (Fourth most dangerous)

Property Crimes Per 100k: 1,586 (16th most dangerous)

More on Pittsfield: | [Cost Of Living](#) | [Crime Report](#)

“It’s a central concern for me that two of our Berkshire County communities are consistently ranked in the top ten for per capita crime statistics in Massachusetts,” Barbalunga said. “A goal of mine as Sheriff will be to drive down the number of crimes committed by people who have been inmates in our County Jail, but end up back in jail. That’s known as ‘recidivism,’ or ‘reincarceration.’” In 2015, Hampden County District Attorney Anthony Gulluni told the Massachusetts Sentencing Commission: “The real problem in Massachusetts that we presently face is not in fact mass incarceration or harsh treatment of drug dealers, but recidivism and its driving forces. Facts are clear: Incarceration is most often the result of violent behavior and substantial recidivism.”

Barbalunga said the Jail has to focus not only on its current inmates, but also with inmates after they have been discharged. “One of the ways a county jail can help lower crime rates is to help drug-addicted inmates get on a better path forward through medication assisted therapy, coupled with a post-discharge care managed follow up to help former in-mates avoid reincarceration.” According to a 2016 report by the Council of State Governments Justice Center, the recidivism rates in Massachusetts had remained close to about 40%, and that two out of every five people released from prison return to the community without probation or parole supervision.

Barbalunga pointed to the work being done at the Franklin County Jail by Sheriff Chris Donelan. According to a reincarceration study of that jail’s support programs from 2013 through 2018:

- Franklin County saw a sharp reduction in reincarceration rates since 2013 despite the fact that over 90% of the inmates at the Franklin County House of Correction are very high or high risk and show a strong likelihood of returning to jail

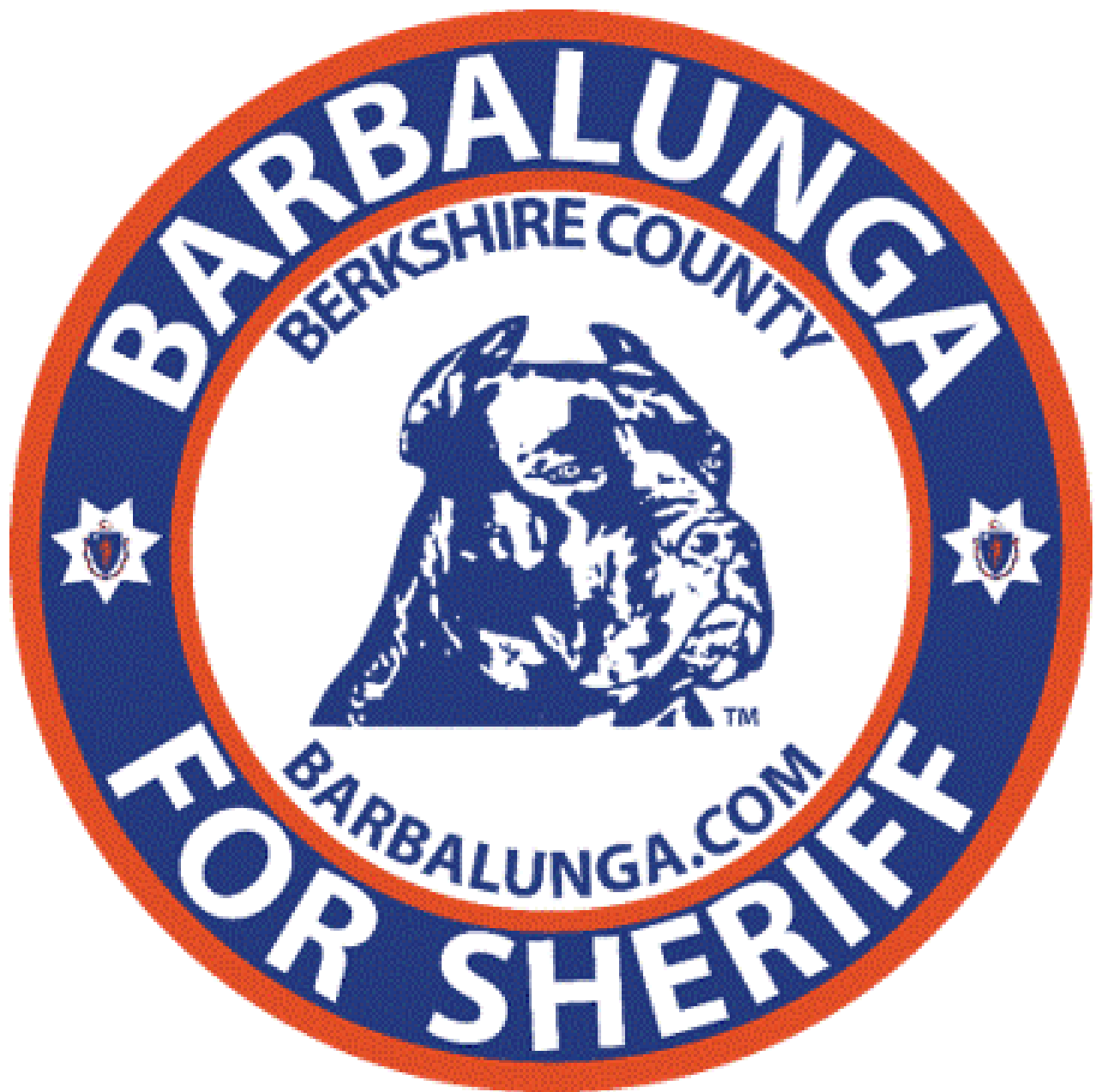
- The Franklin County recidivism rate in 2017 was 17.4%, one of the lowest rates in the state.
- Inmates are mostly likely to be reincarcerated during the first two years post-release demonstrating the need for enhanced, ongoing, and supportive reentry services and programs such as a drop-in center at the local courthouse.
- 2018 shows that women are recidivating at a very low rate (13%)

“Unfortunately, no recidivism statistics are available for the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office, and it doesn’t appear the Sheriff even tracks that data to provide to the State. This would be an easy step I would take as soon as I’m elected, we simply keep track of who comes in, who leaves, and who comes back, and report out to the community how we are doing regarding rehabilitation and recidivism.”

“We can have an impact on crime rates in Berkshire County,” Barbalunga concludes. “One important way we do that is by offering services and supports not only in the jail itself, but after release, to help inmates move beyond addiction, with educational supports, family integration support, and medication assistance treatment.”

“We have to set a goal of pushing down recidivism as far as we can,” Barbalunga said. “I’d like to see the day when zero communities in Berkshire County are in the top ten crime list for Massachusetts. The Jail definitely must be part of that solution.” See also: <https://housegrail.com/most-dangerous-cities-in-massachusetts/>

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