Hampden County Sheriff's Office
Annual PREA Report
2025

Background:

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 was enacted to "provide for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in Federal, State and local institutions and to provide information, resources, recommendations and funding to protect individuals from prison rape" (PREA Resource Center). The goal of the act is to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse and harassment. The act was unanimously passed by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush.

The final rules became effective on August 20, 2012 after three years of review by the Department of Justice (DOJ). The final rule encompasses and defines four types of facilities which fall under the purview of the act: Adult Prisons and Jails, Lockup, Community Confinement and Juvenile Facilities. In order to maintain compliance with the ruling, agencies were required to have 1/3 of each facility type audited by DOJ certified auditors per year beginning August 20, 2013. The last audit cycle saw the Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Center (WCC) in 2025, Western Massachusetts Recovery & Wellness Center (WMRWC) in 2024 and the Main Institution (MI) in 2023.

This report has been made available pursuant to the requirements set forth in the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, 115.88/115.401.

Annual Report to the Bureau of Justice Statistics:

PREA standard 115.87/115.287 requires the collection and publication of aggregated data related to incidents of sexual abuse. The standard requires the publication of incident based data derived from the definitions set forth in the BJS annual Survey of Sexual Victimization (SSV). Aggregated data from **all HCSO correctional facilities** is included in this report.

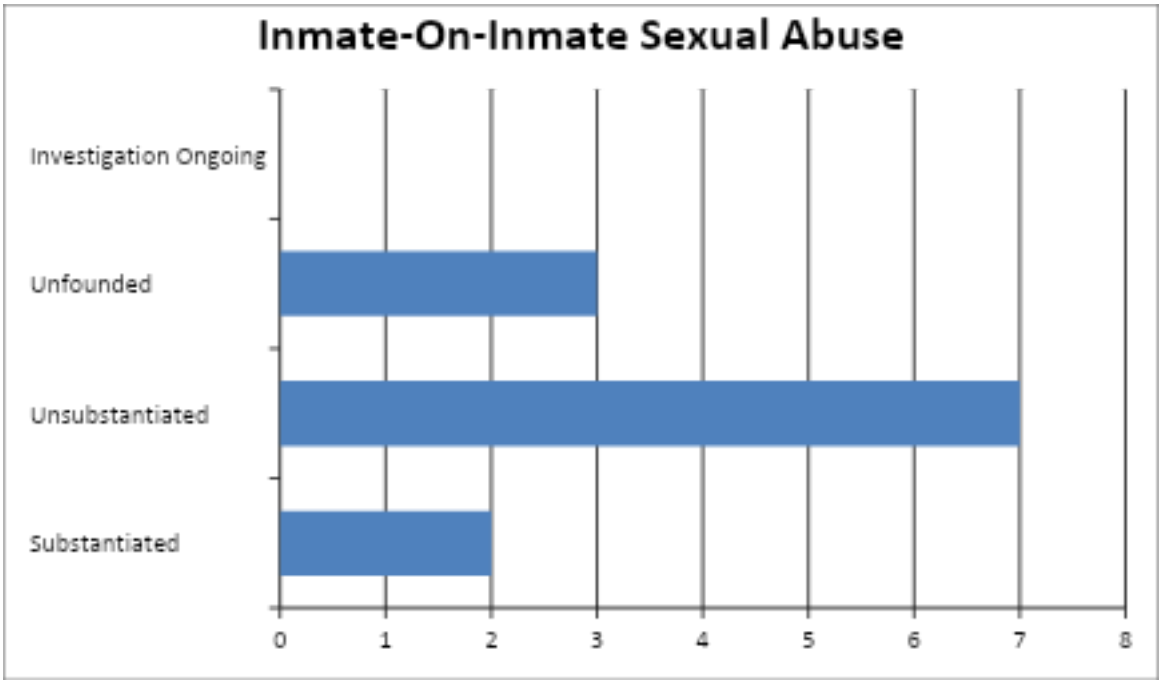
In addition to this report, the U.S. Census Bureau acting on behalf of BJS requires all correctional agencies to submit a yearly report regarding sexual victimization of inmates; the SSV. The SSV is completed for each calendar year and includes incident-based and demographic data. This report is submitted annually and once formatted, is available on the BJS website.

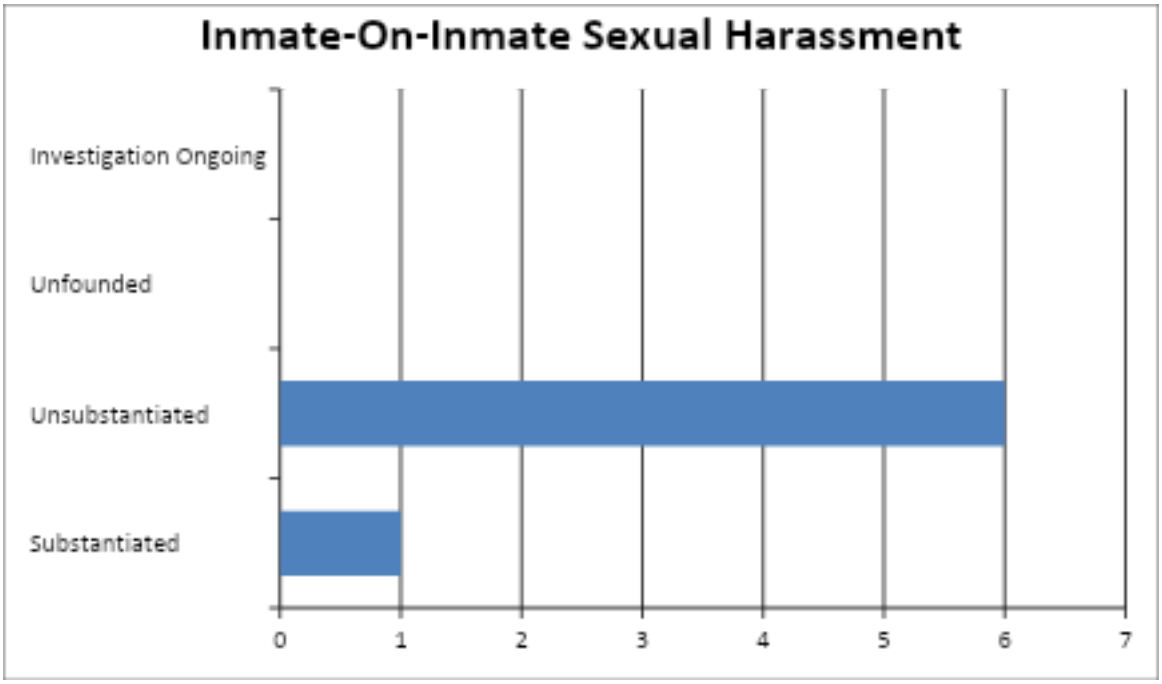
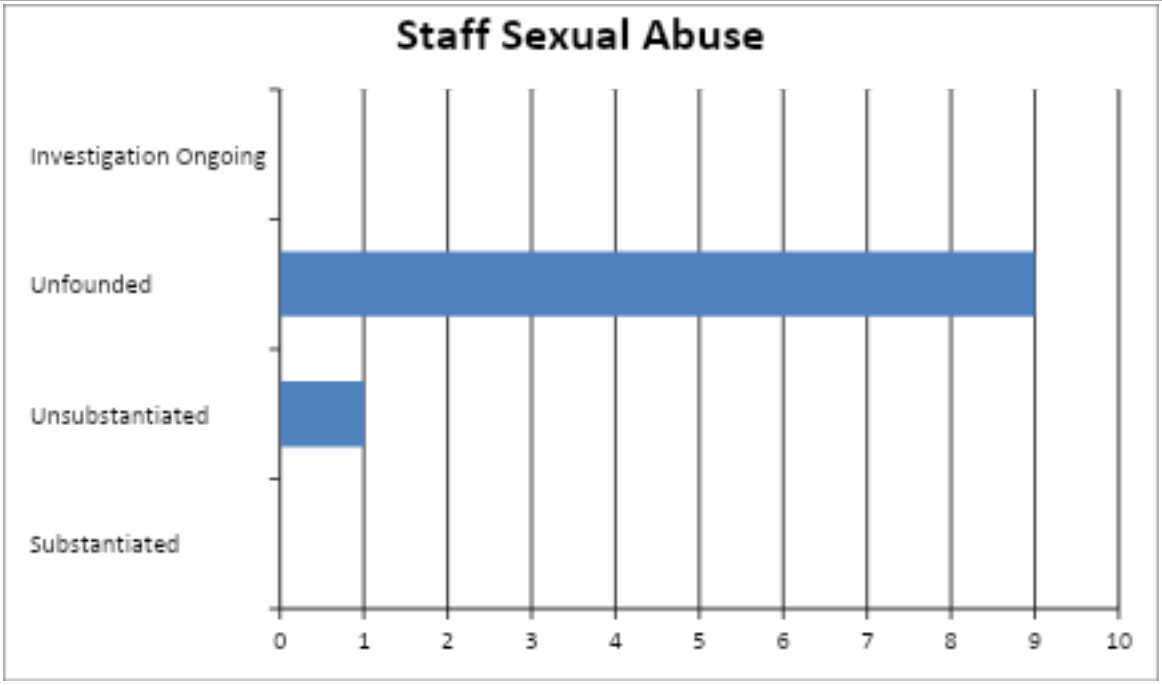
Report Timeframe:

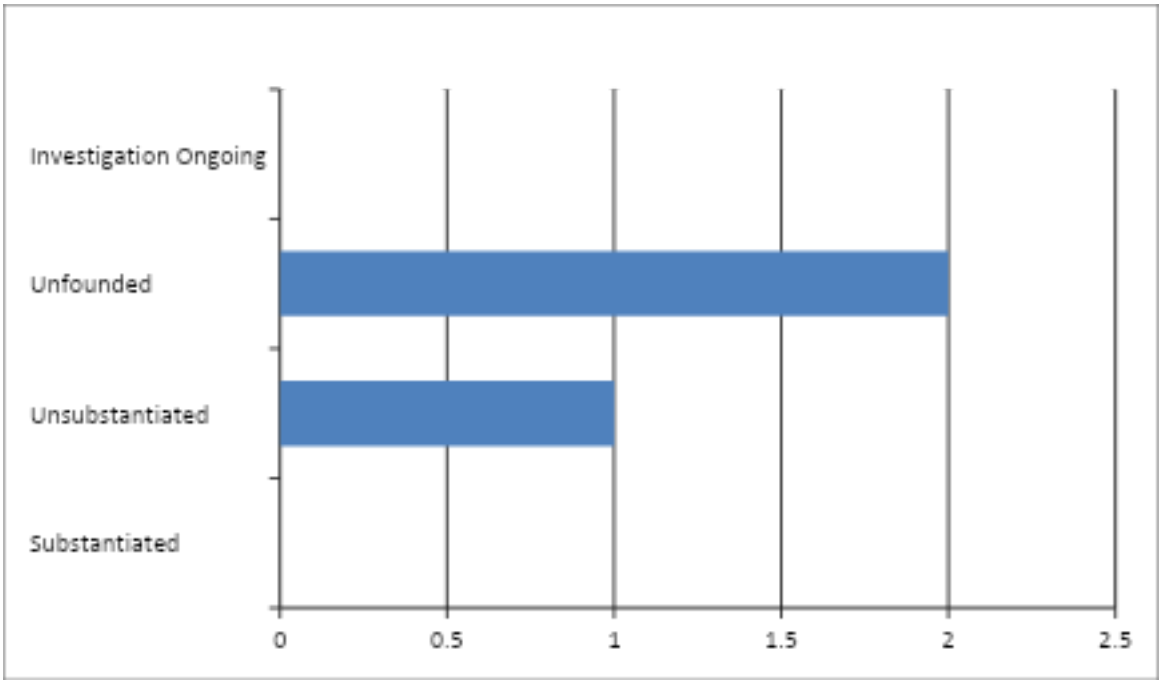
This report utilizes the data gathered from calendar year 2025, which is the format utilized by BJS for the SSV. The information and corrective actions cited in this document are a compilation of efforts which began in 2013.

Inmate on Inmate Incident Data:

Data was collected from January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. During this time period there were a total of thirty-two (32) allegations. Of those thirty-two (32) allegations, three (3) were substantiated.

Sexual Victimization Data for the Hampden County Sheriff's Office (All Correctional Facilities)	
Incident Type	**Calendar Year 2025**
Inmate-On-Inmate Sexual Abuse **Total = 12**	

Inmate-On-Inmate Sexual Harassment **Total = 7**	
Staff Sexual Abuse **Total = 10**	

Staff Sexual Harassment **Total = 3**	

Definitions Related to Sexual Victimization:

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by another inmate, detainee, or resident includes any of the following acts, if the victim does not consent, is coerced into such act by overt or implied threats of violence, or is unable to consent or refuse:

1. Contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, including penetration, however slight;

2. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus;

3. Penetration of the anal or genital opening of another person, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument; and

4. Any other intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or the buttocks of another person, excluding contact incidental to a physical altercation.

Sexual Harassment:

Repeated and unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal comments, gestures, or actions of a derogatory or offensive sexual nature by one inmate, detainee, or resident directed toward another.

Staff Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse of an inmate, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer includes any of the following acts, with or without consent of the inmate, detainee, or resident:

1. Contact between the penis and the vulva or the penis and the anus, including penetration, however slight;

2. Contact between the mouth and the penis, vulva, or anus;

3. Contact between the mouth and any body part where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;

4. Penetration of the anal or genital opening, however slight, by a hand, finger, object, or other instrument, that is unrelated to official duties or where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;

5. Any other intentional contact, either directly or through the clothing, of or with the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or the buttocks, that is unrelated to official duties or where the staff member, contractor, or volunteer has the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire;

6. Any attempt, threat, or request by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer to engage in the activities described in paragraphs (1)-(5) of this section;

7. Any display by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer of his or her uncovered genitalia, buttocks, or breast in the presence of an inmate, detainee, or resident, and

8. Voyeurism by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer.

Staff Sexual Harassment:

Repeated verbal comments or gestures of a sexual nature to an inmate, detainee, or resident by a staff member, contractor, or volunteer, including demeaning references to sex, sexually suggestive or derogatory comments about body or clothing, or obscene language or gestures.

Corrective Action:

Pursuant to PREA standard 115. 87 (Data Collection) & 115.88 (Data Review for Corrective Action); the HCSO continues to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices, and training.

This includes

1. Identifying problem areas;

2. Taking corrective action on an ongoing basis; and

3. Preparation of this annual report, findings and corrective actions for each facility as well as the agency as a whole.

To this end, this report includes a comparison of the current year's data and corrective actions with those from prior years and provides an assessment of the agency's progress in addressing sexual abuse (see Table 1 and 2.)

The HCSO has a documented history of implementing practices intended to prevent and respond to instances of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Following the adoption of the PREA standards, the HCSO implemented a number of enhancements to further combat sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The HCSO will continue to be proactive in its PREA trainings, signage and education of staff and inmates in the "Zero Tolerance" policy. Staff will continue to strive as a whole to protect and ensure the safety and well-being of all inmates entrusted to HCSO care and custody.

In 2025, HCSO recorded thirty-two (32) allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, compared with fifty-six (56) in 2024, a decrease of twenty-four (24) allegations (42.9%). Of the 2025 allegations, three (3) were substantiated, fifteen (15) were unsubstantiated, fourteen (14) were unfounded, and none remained under investigation. Compared with 2024, staff sexual abuse allegations increased from seven (7) to ten (10); staff sexual harassment allegations decreased from fifteen (15) to three (3); inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse allegations decreased from fourteen (14) to twelve (12); and inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment allegations decreased from twenty (20) to seven (7).

Of the seven (7) inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment allegations reported in 2025, one (1) was substantiated and six (6) were unsubstantiated. These investigative findings do not, by themselves, establish that a report was knowingly false. HCSO will continue using direct supervision, multidisciplinary coordination, and inmate education to identify safety concerns, address interpersonal conflicts, and reinforce the importance of reporting allegations of sexual abuse and harassment.

The HCSO continues utilizing Unit Management, the Principles of Direct Supervision and a multi-disciplinary team approach so staff is able to better support inmates struggling with interpersonal conflicts with their peers and staff.

TABLE 1- Reported Cases							
Category Type	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**		**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Total Cases Reported	43	56	32				
Staff sexual abuse	5	7	10		12%	12%	31%
Staff sexual harassment	17	15	3		40%	27%	9%
Inmate-on-inmate sexual abuse	11	14	12		26%	25%	38%
Inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment	10	20	7		23%	36%	22%

TABLE 2- Findings of Reported Cases						
Year	**2023**		**2024**		**2025**	
Total Reported Cases	43		56		32	
• Unsubstantiated	10	22%	8	14%	15	47%
• Substantiated	4	9%	6	11%	3	9%
• Unfounded	31	67%	42	75%	14	44%
• Ongoing	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%

Accomplishments:

- Continued compliance with 115.11/115.211 **Zero Tolerance** of sexual abuse and sexual harassment and the designation of a **PREA Coordinator and facility PREA Managers:**
  - An agency PREA Coordinator and 3 facility PREA Managers were appointed; one at each correctional facility.
- Continued compliance with 115.13/115.213 regarding **Supervision and Monitoring:**
  - Facility Risk Assessments continue to be completed for all the facilities to analyze risk factors related to sexual victimization within the facility.
- Continued compliance with 115.14 regarding **Youthful Offenders:**
  - The commonwealth statue was revised. Massachusetts no longer sentences individuals under the age of 18 as adults. The HCSO no longer houses inmates under the age of 18.

- Continued compliance with 115.31, .34, .35/115.231, .235 regarding **Employee/Contractor Training:**

  - PREA training programs are incorporated into Academy Trainings, New Staff Orientation and Annual In-Service training curriculums for employees and contractors. Specialized training is conducted regularly for Specialized Areas (Investigators, Medical, Mental Health, etc.) Information trainings on various PREA topics are offered annually.

- Continued compliance with 115.33/115.233 regarding **Inmate/Resident Education:**

  - A PREA information curriculum was developed and is now utilized in all the HCSO's orientation units. This curriculum was developed utilizing the JDI PREA information video. It is available in English and Spanish.

  - Inmates/residents are given PREA informational brochures upon Intake in English or Spanish. Additional language support is available upon request.

  - Inmates receive Inmate Handbook (in English or Spanish) containing specific PREA information. Additional language support is available upon request.

  - Informational PREA Posters are posted throughout the facilities (Intake, Visiting, Housing, Programs, etc.)

  - Services are available for the translation of other languages as needed through multiple avenues.

- Continued compliance with 115.41/115.241 regarding the **Screening for Risk of Victimization and Abusiveness:**

  - The HCSO I.T. Department developed a screening database to store offender PREA risk information. This database is utilized by all facilities for offender screening, classification, housing and monitoring.

  - When assigning room assignments, software utilized by staff prohibits the placement of a known or potential victim from being placed in the same room as a known or potential predator.

- The HCSO has an **MOU** (Memorandum of Understanding) agreement with the YWCA of Western Massachusetts for **Victim Advocate Services and as a Rape Crisis Hotline.**

- Standards and Security staff continue to attend PREA trainings. Administrative staff continually seeks out staff members for additional and specialized trainings.

- The HCSO has successfully completed its scheduled Cycle PREA Audit at the Western Massachusetts Regional Women's Correctional Center in November of 2025. The WCC exceeded requirements on ten (10) of the forty-five (45) applicable standards. The Auditor noted that compliance indicators had increased significantly over the past few years and the agency has risen to those heightened those compliance indicators.

- HCSO augmented its operations to include for all inmates and residents to be re-screened after 20-30 days in a facility to include the new intakes and inter-system transfers. This provided an additional step in the screening process to check for associated risks of sexual victimization.

Conclusion

Since the implementation of the federal PREA standards in 2012, the Hampden County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) has continued to strengthen its policies, training, monitoring, and commitment to maintaining a culture of zero tolerance for sexual abuse and sexual harassment.

Reported allegations decreased from fifty-six (56) in 2024 to thirty-two (32) in 2025, representing a reduction of twenty-four (24) allegations, or 42.9%. Of the allegations reported in 2025, three (3) were substantiated, compared with six (6) in 2024. HCSO will continue emphasizing Unit Management, the principles of direct supervision, and a multidisciplinary approach to preventing, detecting, and responding to sexual abuse and sexual harassment throughout 2026.

When evaluating annual PREA data, it is important to recognize that reported allegations may be influenced by several factors, including population dynamics, interpersonal conflicts, behavioral health needs, and the reporting of multiple allegations involving individual inmates. Because the overall number of reported allegations is relatively small, changes involving a limited number of incidents can significantly affect annual totals and percentages. Accordingly, year-to-year fluctuations should be interpreted within the broader context of institutional operations and should not, by themselves, be considered definitive indicators of the prevalence of sexual abuse or sexual harassment.

HCSO remains committed to taking all allegations seriously, conducting appropriate investigations, identifying opportunities for improvement, and maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all individuals entrusted to its care and custody.