

# FBI statistics reveal violent crime in New Bedford is down 31% since 2014

This week, the FBI released the 2016 edition of its Crime in the United States (CIUS) report. The violent crime rate increased by 3.4% nationwide in 2016, the largest single-year increase in 25 years. The nationwide homicide rate increased by 7.9%, for a total increase of more than 20 percent in the nationwide homicide rate since 2014. This is not the same story for New Bedford.

New Bedford has seen a steady decline in violent crime over the past few years. For this article, I'm using FBI statistics from 2010 to 2016. For some reason, there is no available data for **2015**.

	Violent crimes	Murders	Rapes	Robberies	Aggravated assaults	Property crimes	Burglaries	Larceny-thefts	Motor vehicle thefts	Arsons
2016	819	3	31	238	547	2,924	615	2,035	274	22
2015	NO FBI DATA AVAILABLE									
2014	1,199	3	86	254	856	3,363	866	2,253	244	19
2013	1,039	6	100	256	677	3,437	916	2,186	335	20
2012	1,030	2	54	272	702	3,180	929	1,950	301	29
2011	1,093	4	59	294	736	3,329	969	2,018	342	30
2010	1,160	3	69	272	816	3,599	1,237	1,974	388	29

The data used in creating this table were from all city and town law enforcement agencies submitting 12 months of complete offense data.

Big picture, New Bedford has dropped from the **third most dangerous city in Massachusetts in 2013** to the 8th most dangerous city in 2016 (per capita percentage of violent crime). Being ranked 8th is not something to be terribly proud of, but we are moving in the right direction unlike Fall River

which has jumped to the second spot:

1. North Adams – 1.38%
2. Fall River – 1.09%
3. Brockton – 1.08%
4. Holyoke – 1.07%
5. Springfield – 1.03%
6. Chelsea – 0.92%
7. Worcester – 0.89%
8. New Bedford – 0.87%
9. Pittsfield – 0.79%
10. Fitchburg – 0.77%

Full list of cities can be found **here**.

Looking deeper into the numbers, there are things to be happy about if you live in New Bedford.

First, violent crime is down 31% from 2014 to 2016, from 1,199 to 819. It's important to note this is violent crime, not overall crime. So drug use, prostitution and other non-violent crime is not included in these statistics, but as I wrote last week **overdoses in New Bedford are down 9% so far in 2017**.

Second, rapes are down significantly from 100 in 2013, to 86 in 2014 to 31 in 2016. That's a decrease of 69% since 2013. These numbers are lower even though in 2013 the definition of rape was broadened from only counting forcible rapes to now counting "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. This includes the offenses of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault." Clearly, efforts to prevent sexual assaults in New Bedford is working.

Finally, since 2014, aggravated assaults are down by 36%, property crimes down 13% and burglaries are down by 29%. The crime numbers that increased from 2014 to 2016 were motor vehicle thefts (up 12%) and arson (up 15%). The arson numbers

are likely increasing in 2017 as **New Bedford appears to have a serial arsonist starting fires this summer.**

New Bedford has a lot to be happy about and the New Bedford police department should be proud. While violent crime has been increasing nationwide over the past few years, New Bedford has bucked the trend especially in the most important areas like homicide, rape and aggravated assaults. Naysayers will push an emotional argument void of facts that crime in New Bedford is not down and point to some cover up – either the FBI or police are participating in some cover up. This diminishes the hard work of the police and policy makers who have found success in reducing crime in New Bedford.

## **FBI Statistics**

**2016 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2015 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2014 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2013 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2012 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2011 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**

**2010 FBI Crime Stats for Massachusetts**