



2023 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment

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I. Scope

The 2023 Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Threat Assessment identifies current and emerging illicit drug trends within the region's seven-state area. It strives to deliver accurate and timely strategic intelligence to assist law enforcement executives and other officials in the development of drug enforcement strategies to ensure the safety of our communities. This document provides an illicit drug threat overview with respect to the abuse, transportation, and organizations involved in drug trafficking. This document fulfills the statutory and grant requirements issued by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and has been approved by the Midwest HIDTA Executive Board.

II. Executive Summary

Overview

Considering its nexus to drug poisoning deaths, fentanyl^a is now the greatest drug threat to the Midwest HIDTA region.^b This is evident in both the Midwest HIDTA's Law Enforcement (LES) and Public Health Surveys (PHS), along with Performance Management Process (PMP) data reported by Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives. Methamphetamine and heroin are the region's second and third-greatest drug threats, respectively. A slightly higher percentage of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) were found to be gang-related and violent in 2022 compared to the previous year. Polydrug DTOs remained the same percentage from 2021 to 2022 with over a little more than one in four DTOs being polydrug. The Midwest HIDTA's central location within the continental United States (U.S.) and extensive network of roadways make the region ideal for DTOs and criminal enterprises intent on moving drugs into or through the region, to other destinations.

Key findings derived from the data sources listed in Appendix I are presented and discussed in detail throughout this document. A description of the drug and DTO threats facing the Midwest HIDTA region include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ❖ Marijuana, methamphetamine, and fentanyl are the most widely available and widely used drugs in the Midwest HIDTA.
- ❖ Law enforcement and public health agencies report unprecedented levels of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids in the region's illicit drug supply.
- ❖ Privately owned vehicles, the United States Postal Service (USPS), and commercial parcel services (e.g. FedEx, UPS) are the most common methods used by DTOs to traffic drugs into and throughout the Midwest HIDTA.
- ❖ Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives documented 955 DTOs and four MLOs operating within the region in 2022, with 8,469 members and 1,381 leaders identified.¹ This is a 17 percent increase from the 815 DTOs identified in 2021.
- ❖ DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA utilize novel technologies to facilitate communication, obtain payment, and monitor drug courier location. These platforms include encrypted messaging applications, social media, portable GPS devices, and the dark web.
- ❖ The Midwest HIDTA experienced a six percent decrease in drug-related poisoning deaths from 2021 to 2022. Sixty-one percent of these deaths involved opioids including fentanyl and heroin.^{2c}

^a Unless indicated otherwise, the term fentanyl refers to fentanyl and all its analogs which are manufactured illicitly and not pharmaceutically manufactured fentanyl.

^b The term drug poisoning deaths (often interchangeably referred to as drug overdose deaths) is derived from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes which are used by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to report deaths by drug exposure.

^c A drug poisoning death may involve more than one drug type.

III. The Midwest HIDTA Region

The Midwest HIDTA region is a vast and varied area with equally varied drug threats. The region spans more than 428,000 square miles, making it the largest geographic area of the 33 HIDTAs. The Midwest HIDTA region consists of 73 designated counties that fall within the following seven states: Iowa (IA), Illinois (IL), Kansas (KS), Missouri (MO), Nebraska (NE), North Dakota (ND), and South Dakota (SD). The Midwest HIDTA has a total of 60 initiatives (see Appendix III for complete list, by state), including 43 drug enforcement task forces, six domestic highway interdiction initiatives, five intelligence initiatives, and six support initiatives, including Management and Coordination. The 60 initiatives include 183 participating agencies from federal, state and local law enforcement. A map of the Midwest HIDTA region is shown in Figure 1 depicting HIDTA designated counties, interstate highway systems and ports of entry with Canada. Additional state maps may be found in Appendix V: State Maps.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the population of the Midwest HIDTA to be 15.97 million in 2022. The region is comprised of metropolitan districts, medium and small cities, and many rural areas. The most populous urban centers are St. Louis, MO, and Kansas City, KS-MO, which rank 21st and 31st, respectively, amongst the largest metropolitan statistical areas in the United States. Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA, Des Moines, IA, and Wichita, KS, are other cities ranking in the top 100 most populated metropolitan statistical areas, according to 2020 U.S. Census Bureau information. However, less than half of the overall population of the Midwest HIDTA resides in these large urban areas. Table 1 presents information on the most populous metropolitan areas in the Midwest HIDTA region.

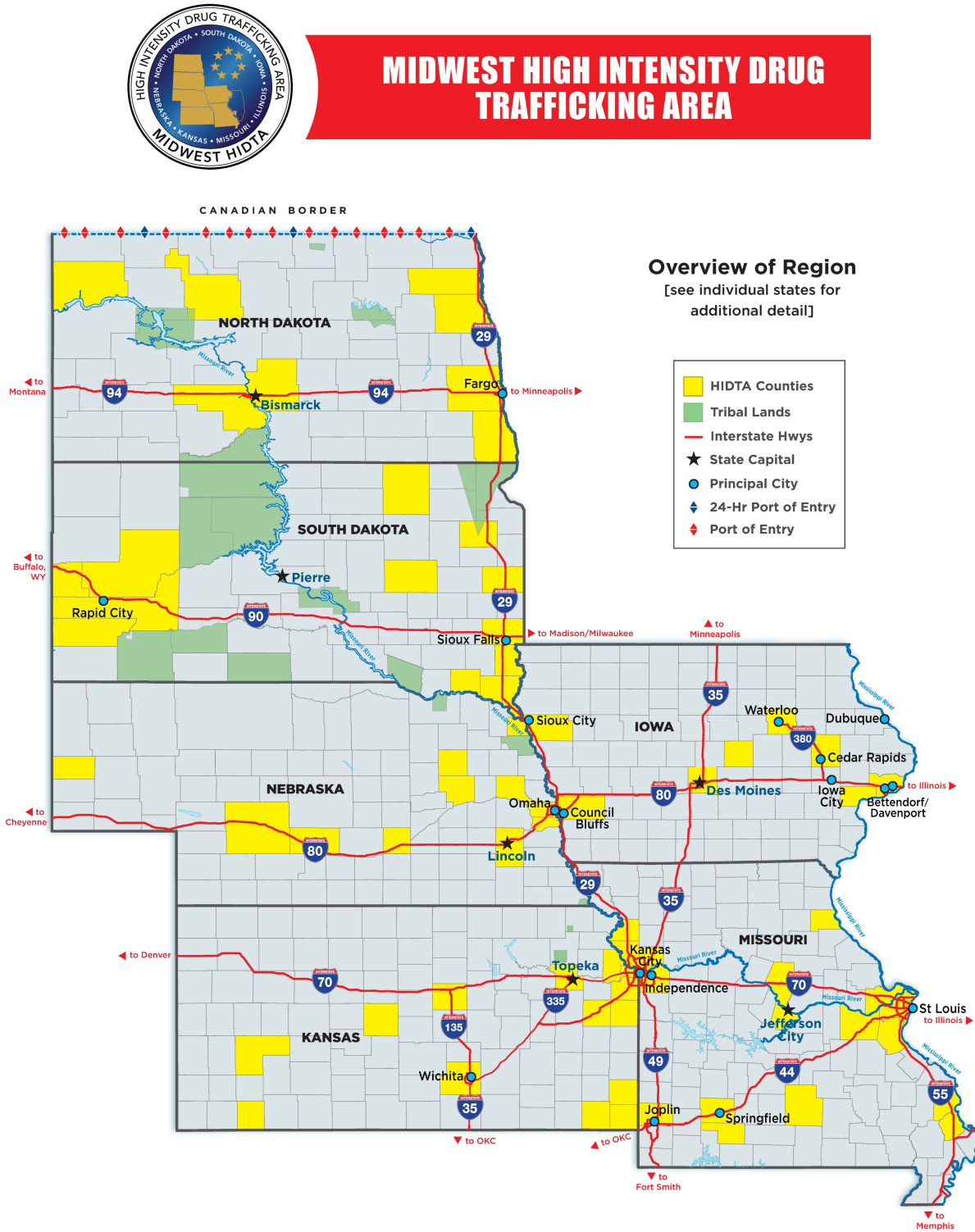
Table 1. 2020 U.S. Population Ranking of the Most Populated Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the Midwest HIDTA Region.^{3 d}

2020 Ranking of the Most Populated Metropolitan Areas		
U.S. Population Ranking	City, State	2020 Estimated Population
21	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,802,253
31	Kansas City, KS-MO	2,192,035
58	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	967,604
82	Des Moines, IA	709,466
93	Wichita, KS	647,610

Considered the heartland of the country, the population of the Midwest HIDTA is diverse, with all races, classes, genders, religions, and socioeconomic statuses represented. Criminal organizations can easily assimilate within any of the communities and conceal their operations to avoid detection.

^d 2022 metropolitan statistical area data from the U.S. Census Bureau is not yet available.

Figure 1. Overall Map of the Midwest HIDTA Region Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties, Interstate Highway System and Ports of Entry with Canada.^{e,f}



^e Individual state maps may be found in Appendix V

^f Although not depicted on the map, Madison, St. Clair, and Rock Island, Illinois are HIDTA designated counties within the Midwest HIDTA region.

Drug Transportation Methods

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that private passenger vehicles, the United States Postal Service (USPS), and commercial mailing services are the primary drug transportation methods used by DTOs to transport illicit drugs into and throughout the Midwest HIDTA region. The Midwest HIDTA region contains more than 4,300 miles of interstate highways and an international border stretching over 300 miles. The key transportation routes are Interstate (I)-70, I-80, I-90, I-94, I-29, and I-35. With its central location, there are a number of transportation hubs in the Midwest HIDTA allowing easy access to other points in the United States. For instance, Kansas City, KS-MO, located near the geographic center of the United States and at the intersection of several of the nation's busiest interstate highways (I-29, I-49, I-35, I-70), is a major transit point for the transportation of drugs and drug proceeds to and from significant market areas across the country. Furthermore, the convergence of I-44, I-55, I-64, and I-70 in St. Louis, MO, provides easy access for the transportation of drugs and bulk cash via commercial and privately-owned vehicles. Other smaller transportation hubs include Fargo, ND, where I-29 and I-94 intersect; and Des Moines, IA, where I-80 and I-35 intersect. Given the 310-mile border, including the 18 ports of entry North Dakota shares with Canada, there is an expansive roadway infrastructure and a large international border for drug traffickers to exploit.

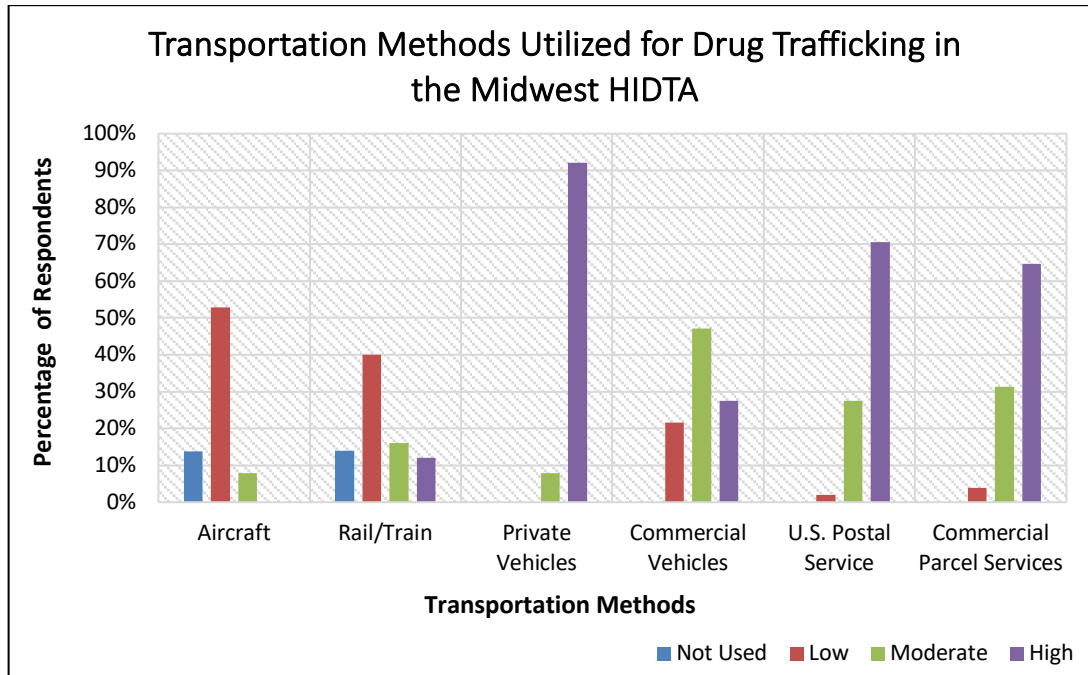
I-35 is particularly useful as a transportation route for Mexican DTOs.⁴ Converging with I-70 and I-29 in Kansas City, I-35 covers approximately 1,568 miles in the U.S., from Laredo, Texas, to Duluth, Minnesota, and runs directly through the Midwest HIDTA in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. Following I-35 into Mexico, it becomes Federal Highway 85, which runs southward from Nuevo Laredo, just across the Mexican border from the U.S., through Monterrey, Ciudad Victoria, Pachuca, and to the southern edge of Mexico City.⁵

When asked to indicate the levels at which various transportation methods are utilized in the Midwest HIDTA to traffic drugs, 92 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives indicated that privately owned vehicles are used at a high level, the highest percentage for any transportation method. Law enforcement initiatives claimed that traffickers often attempt to conceal contraband within natural or man-made compartments throughout the vehicle. Traffickers also reportedly concealed contraband within the tires, gas tanks, cardboard boxes, storage totes, and various pieces of luggage within the vehicle.

The second and third-most utilized transportation methods were the USPS (71 percent) and commercial parcel services (65 percent). Commercial vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, were also frequently used to transport drugs in the Midwest HIDTA, with 27 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reporting use as high and 47 percent reporting use as moderate. Drugs transported via tractor-trailer are often hidden within legitimate cargo items to avoid law enforcement detection. The use of aircraft and rail/trains were also utilized, although less than the aforementioned methods. Based on responses from the LES, we assess that DTOs also use trains that originate in

Mexico to transport drugs closer to their destination. Figure 2 depicts the most commonly used drug transportation methods in the Midwest region, according to Midwest HIDTA initiatives.

Figure 2. LES: Transportation Methods Utilized for Drug Trafficking in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶



The roadways that traverse the Midwest HIDTA are vital to drug trafficking organizations. The 4,300 miles of interstate connecting the Midwest region to the remainder of the U.S. are an enormous challenge to law enforcement interdiction efforts. Approximately 92 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported a high level of interstate highway use by DTOs. U.S. highways (88 percent) and state highways/rural roads (55 percent) were also reported by Midwest HIDTA initiatives to be highly used by DTOs to traffic drugs.

IV. Drug Threats

1. Overview

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and marijuana are the primary drug threats to the region. Drug trafficking activities in the Midwest HIDTA region pose significant threats to public health and safety. These activities are a driving force of both violent and property crimes. The Midwest HIDTA evaluated the threat posed by each drug type in order to determine a ranking of drug threats. The evaluation consisted of Midwest HIDTA initiative responses to the LES and public health partner responses to the PHS, as well as drug trend and other related information collected over the past 12 months. Midwest HIDTA initiatives were asked to consider the nexus of the drug type to violent and property crimes when determining their rankings. Secondary factors included drug availability, abuse, poisoning rate, and related fatalities. PHS respondents were asked to consider the greatest drug threat to their areas over the past 12 months. Upon the evaluation of these criteria, the Midwest HIDTA rankings of drug threats by drug type are represented in Table 2.

Table 2. Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment: Drug Threat Ranking.

	Drug Type	Availability	Use	Characteristics
1	Fentanyl	High	High	Major contributor to drug poisoning deaths, and violent crime
2	Methamphetamine	High	High	Primary contributor to both violent and property crime
3	Heroin	Low	Moderate	Contributor to drug poisoning deaths
4	Controlled Prescription Drugs	Moderate	Moderate	Opioids constitute majority of abuse
5	Cocaine	Moderate	Moderate	Consistent drug of abuse. Mixing with opioids increasing drug poisoning deaths
6	Marijuana	High	High	Major contributor to violent crime
7	(TIE) New Psychoactive Substances (e.g. synthetic cathinones and cannabinoids)	Low	Moderate to Low	Materials soaked in NPSs often mailed into jails/prisons
7	(TIE) Psychedelics (e.g. MDMA, LSD, psilocybin mushrooms)	Low	Low	Increasing in the region

2. Fentanyl

A. Overview

For the first time, Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives report fentanyl as the greatest drug threat to the region. Fentanyl, the most prevalent synthetic opioid, poses a significant threat in the region due to the link to violent crime, the high availability, and the high likelihood of poisoning. Approximately 53 percent of law enforcement initiatives ranked fentanyl as the greatest threat in their respective areas of responsibility (AORs), while 63 percent of PHS respondents ranked fentanyl as their greatest drug threat. Fentanyl has infiltrated rural and urban markets and is the opioid with the greatest use and abuse within the region.

Fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and other synthetic opioids such as metonitazene, butonitazene, and bupropion, are usually produced in laboratories by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in China and Mexico before being transported into the Midwest HIDTA region. Some synthetic opioid abusers in the region purchase the drugs directly through the internet or dark web sources. Fentanyl has replaced heroin in many markets within the Midwest HDITA region. It is also found in opioid and stimulant counterfeit pharmaceuticals and mixed with cocaine and methamphetamine in the region. Drug users of non-opioids and counterfeit pharmaceuticals are often unaware that the drugs they purchase and abuse have been mixed with fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, which increases the risk of poisoning. Law enforcement in parts of the region have also reported a specific demand for fentanyl and other synthetic opioids by heroin and other drug users.

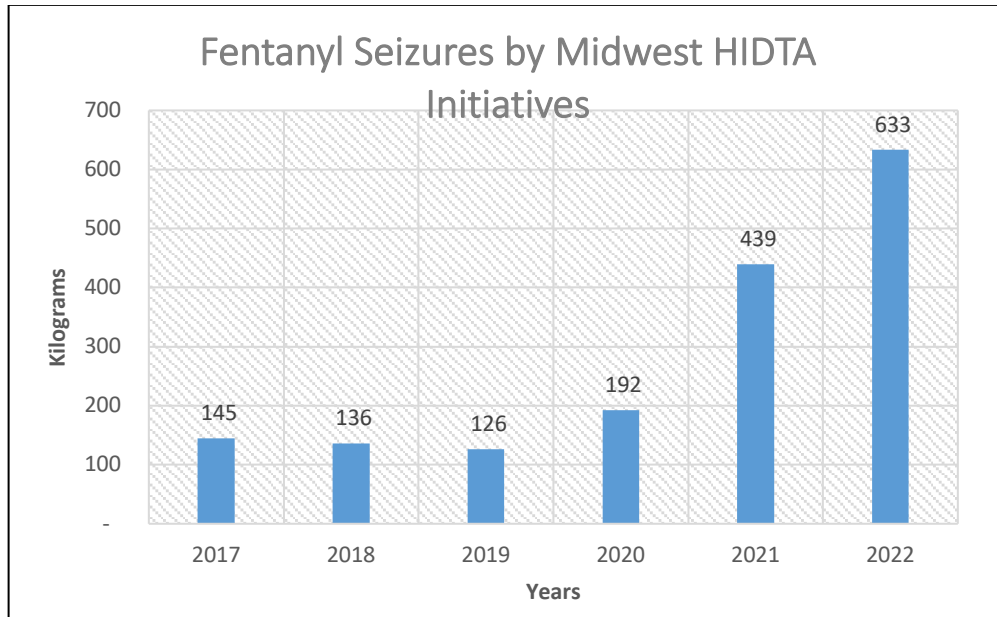
Fentanyl is often found to be mixed with a variety of other drugs including heroin, benzodiazepines, and other synthetic opioids such as metonitazene and bupropion.⁷ An additive of note that is a cause for public health concern is xylazine, an unscheduled veterinary anesthetic. Xylazine is responsible for an increase in severe injection site wounds that have resulted in the need for amputations in parts of the United States. There has also been an increase in poisoning deaths as no known treatment exists for xylazine poisoning. The widely known opioid overdose reversal agent naloxone is not effective against xylazine poisoning as xylazine is not an opioid.⁸ Forensic laboratories with the Midwest HIDTA region have identified xylazine within the fentanyl supply in the region.⁹

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the availability of fentanyl in the region as high. This was corroborated by the majority of the Midwest HIDTA's law enforcement initiatives. The law enforcement respondents to the LES indicated that fentanyl pills (e.g. counterfeit M30/oxycodone) are more prevalent in the Midwest HIDTA region than fentanyl powder. Eighty-two percent of law enforcement initiatives indicated fentanyl pills as being highly available while only 43 percent indicated fentanyl powder as being highly available. Fentanyl powder comes in a variety of colors including white, blue and purple. Fentanyl seizures increased by 44 percent in the Midwest HIDTA region between 2021 (439 kilograms/968 pounds) to 2022 (633 kilograms/1,396 pounds). Figure

3 shows the increase of fentanyl seized by Midwest HIDTA initiatives between 2017 and 2022 for the region, as reported through the ONDCP Performance Measurement Process (PMP) data.

Figure 3. Fentanyl Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.¹⁰



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the level of use in the region as high for fentanyl, as indicated by approximately 73 percent of law enforcement initiatives responding that fentanyl pill use is high and 41 percent responding that fentanyl powder use is high. Fentanyl abuse and trafficking is frequently associated with violence in the Midwest HIDTA region, although less so than methamphetamine. Approximately 18 percent of initiatives listed fentanyl as the drug responsible for the greatest level of violence, tied with marijuana as the second highest contributor to violent crimes.

The PHS respondents that work in treatment noted that fentanyl was the drug with the highest increase inpatient admissions. Approximately 86 percent noted an increase in inpatient admissions for fentanyl in their areas. Fentanyl is often combined with a variety of other drugs in order to achieve a wide range of effects. Methamphetamine was the drug most commonly taken in combination with fentanyl in 2022, according to the Midwest HIDTA's public health partners. Fentanyl was listed as being combined with everything including marijuana and cocaine by public health partners.

Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region

Three out of every five drug poisoning deaths in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022 involved opioids, predominantly fentanyl.

Counterfeit CPDs have been identified as a threat across both the Midwest HIDTA region and nationally. Counterfeit CPDs are popular among those that already abuse drugs and those experimenting such as teenagers. The most common counterfeit prescription containing fentanyl takes the form of round, blue oxycodone 30 mg pills. Many poisonings across both the Midwest HIDTA region and country as a whole have been linked to counterfeit CPDs containing fentanyl.

Counterfeit CPDs

Mexico-based DTOs are trafficking considerable quantities of counterfeit CPDs into both the U.S. and Midwest HIDTA region. These CPDs contain fentanyl and other synthetic opioids and closely resemble popular brands such as the 30mg oxycodone pills, also known as “M30s.”



Left: Authentic oxycodone M30 tablets

Right: Counterfeit oxycodone M30 tablets

The Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) is a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) program that includes drug treatment admission data. This data is routinely collected by states in an effort to monitor drug abuse among their populations. Fentanyl is included in a general category called “Other Opiates” that also includes oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, and other narcotic analgesics, opiates, or synthetics. Fentanyl is not reported separately. The TEDS data in Table 3 demonstrates a decrease in the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving opiates other than heroin in Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota between 2017 and 2021. Iowa experienced a decrease in admissions between 2017 and 2020. 2021 data is not available for Iowa. The cause for the decrease in other opiates inpatient admissions for the TEDS data is unknown at this time. Missouri was the only state in the region reporting an increase in treatment admissions for opiates other than heroin, which rose 118% percent for the same period.¹¹

Table 3. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Other Opiates¹²

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Other Opiates*						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	1,257	694	2,227	421	262	371
2018	1,242	570	3,526	364	183	345
2019	1,128	363	3,461	294	139	264
2020	843	406	3,724	227	83	208
2021	N/A	628	4,851	137	172	200

*Other Opiates includes: Fentanyl, codeine, methadone, morphine, oxycodone, and any other drug with morphine-like effects.
SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

Not only are more people using illicit fentanyl, they are also combining it with other illicit drugs such as methamphetamine and cocaine. These drug combinations significantly increase the chance of fatal poisoning, especially if the user is unaware of the presence of fentanyl.

D. Price

The price of fentanyl in the Midwest HIDTA varied significantly from region to region. The purity of the fentanyl product also dictated the price of the drug. The prices per unit of measurement for fentanyl are listed in Table 4 below and was collected from Midwest HIDTA initiatives through debriefs of confidential informants (CIs), proffer interviews of defendants, and undercover CI purchases. There was enough pricing information for counterfeit prescription pills containing fentanyl that a separate price was recorded for the Midwest HIDTA region, represented in Table 5.

Table 4. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Fentanyl¹³

Unit of Measurement	Fentanyl	
	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$12,000-\$70,000	\$38,067
Ounce	\$227-\$3,000	\$1,215
Gram	\$56-\$480	\$150
1/10 Gram	\$12-\$85	\$32
Capsule/Pill	\$1-\$13/\$0.20-\$80	\$5/\$17

Table 5. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Counterfeit CPDs¹⁴

Unit of Measurement	Percocet		Oxycodone (OxyContin)	
	Range	Average	Range	Average
Per Pill	\$5-\$50	\$17	\$0.65-\$80	\$19

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of the region's fentanyl supply originates from Mexico and China. One clandestine fentanyl manufacturing site, a counterfeit pill press operation, was identified within the region and reported to EPIC in 2022.¹⁵ DEA's Fentanyl Signature Profiling Program identified that the primary route of synthesization for fentanyl was the Gupta Method for nationwide fentanyl submissions seized in 2021. The average purity for fentanyl powder was 14.4 percent and fentanyl tablets contained on average 2.2 milligrams (mg) of fentanyl.¹⁶ Two milligrams is considered a potentially lethal dose.¹⁷ The DEA's Fentanyl Signature Profiling Program found that 44 percent of the tablets' samples examined had at least two mg of fentanyl in 2021.¹⁸

F. Transportation

Fentanyl is primarily transported into the area via private passenger vehicles and mailing services. Fentanyl pills are easily concealed in natural voids and spaces in vehicles as well as within luggage, in large quantities.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- At what stage is fentanyl added into drug mixtures in the drug distribution process?
- Why is fentanyl being found mixed with non-opioid drugs, specifically stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamine?
- Where are counterfeit prescription pills being pressed, the United States or Mexico?
- As there are very few buys of pure fentanyl in the Midwest HIDTA region, what is the actual price of pure fentanyl when not mixed with adulterants and other drugs?
- Is there a demand for xylazine adulterated fentanyl in the Midwest HIDTA region?

3. Methamphetamine

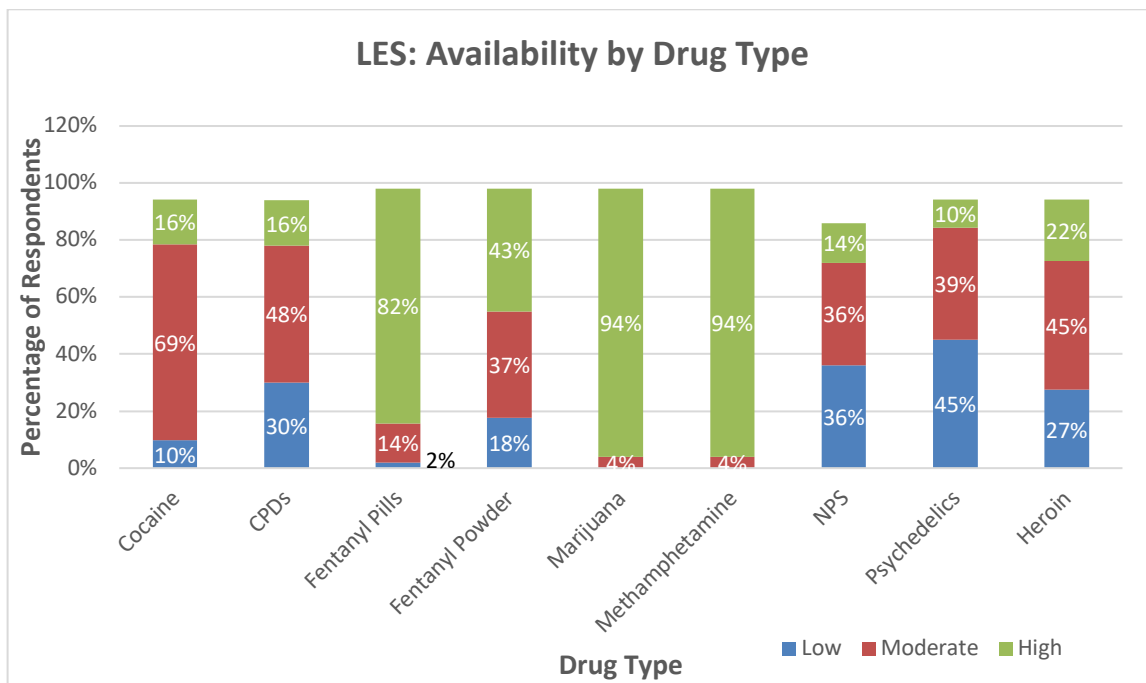
A. Overview

Methamphetamine, for the first time, is ranked as the second greatest drug threat to the Midwest HIDTA region. In previous years, it was ranked as the number one drug threat. Methamphetamine is still the main contributor to violent and property crime. Forty-five percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives indicated that methamphetamine was the second greatest drug threat in their AORs. From a public health perspective, methamphetamine is also considered the second greatest drug threat, with approximately 56 percent of PHS respondents indicating the drug as the greatest or the second greatest drug threat in their area. Thirty-eight percent of the region’s drug poisoning deaths in 2022 involved psychostimulants, which include drugs such as methamphetamine, Adderall, and Ritalin.

B. Availability

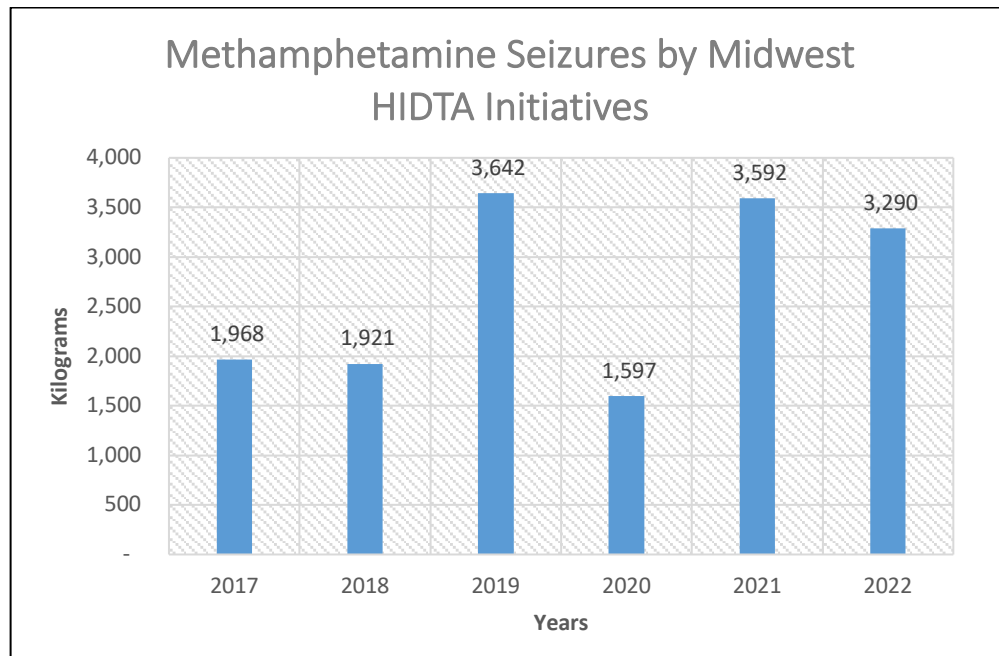
The Midwest HIDTA assesses the supply of methamphetamine in the Midwest region as high, with its popularity unlikely to fade. With the exception of marijuana, LES respondents ranked methamphetamine as more available than any other drug type. In fact, 94 percent of survey respondents indicated that methamphetamine is highly available in their respective AORs. By comparison, approximately 82 percent of respondents designated fentanyl pills as highly available. Figure 4 shows the total number of LES responses indicating “low,” “moderate,” and “high” availability for each drug type.

Figure 4. LES: Availability by Drug Type.¹⁹



Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 3,290 kilograms (7,253 pounds) of methamphetamine in 2022, a decrease of eight percent from 2021. With the exception of marijuana, more methamphetamine was seized than any other drug type. Figure 5 depicts methamphetamine seizure totals by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2017 to 2022.

Figure 5. Methamphetamine Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.²⁰



C. Use

Ninety-six percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives assessed the level of methamphetamine use in their areas as high. Methamphetamine use and trafficking has long been associated with crime and violence in the Midwest HIDTA region. This is supported by 63 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives that identified methamphetamine as the drug responsible for the greatest level of violence.

Of the PHS respondents that operated an inpatient/outpatient admissions program, approximately 55 percent noted an increase in inpatient admissions for methamphetamine in their areas, while approximately 38 percent stated that admissions remained the same as the previous year. Methamphetamine is often combined with a variety of other drugs in order to achieve a wide range of effects. The most popular drugs taken in combination with methamphetamine are fentanyl and marijuana.

Based on the TEDS data in Table 6, the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving amphetamines^g in Kansas increased between 2017 and 2021.

^g Amphetamines are the general categorization of amphetamine-type stimulants that SAMHSA records in their TEDS data. Methamphetamine is included within this dataset and is not reported separately.

Missouri peaked in 2018 and has decreased since while Nebraska and South Dakota peaked in 2019 and have decreased into 2021. North Dakota has seen a decrease in amphetamine admissions with a slight increase from 2020 to 2021. 2021 data is not available for Iowa and does not show a clear trend.

Table 6. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Amphetamines²¹

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Amphetamines						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	7,721	4,750	8,699	3,594	1,789	2,437
2018	8,404	4,234	9,757	3,612	1,339	2,994
2019	8,564	4,414	9,423	3,757	452	3,358
2020	7,352	4,480	7,288	2,941	483	3,019
2021	N/A	5,665	7,915	1,815	633	3,243

*SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

The Midwest HIDTA has historically had a high level of methamphetamine use as indicated by high treatment admissions and PHS responses. These high levels of methamphetamine use are likely to continue due to its high potency and relatively cheap price in the Midwest HIDTA.

D. Price

The drug pricing data in Table 7 for methamphetamine can be found below. The dominant form of methamphetamine in the Midwest HIDTA is crystal methamphetamine, which is reflected in the pricing table below.

Table 7. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Crystal Methamphetamine²²

Crystal Methamphetamine		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$2,251-\$10,500	\$4,897
Pound	\$1,500-\$6,133	\$3,575
1/2 Pound	\$1,750-\$3,500	\$2,673
1/4 Pound	\$600-\$2,500	\$1,214
Ounce	\$120-\$900	\$383
1/2 Ounce	\$100-\$567	\$294
1/8 Ounce (8-Ball)	\$33-\$260	\$99
Gram	\$9-\$125	\$44

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of methamphetamine in the region was produced in Mexico. Although 29 percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives stated that methamphetamine production occurred within their AORs, most of this production involved the one-pot method—which typically yields one-ounce quantities for user amounts—or the red phosphorus/iodine method. Large-scale foreign labs have replaced the majority of the Midwest HIDTA region’s local clandestine methamphetamine labs since the late 2000s. The regional supply of methamphetamine is mostly smuggled in from Mexico. Mexico-based “super labs” are capable of producing massive quantities of highly potent methamphetamine. With the shift to Mexican sources of supply, the purity levels for methamphetamine have increased and are typically over 90 percent, with some areas reporting an average purity level of 97 percent.²³ Domestic producers of methamphetamine in the Midwest HIDTA region have been unable to compete with Mexican producers, in part due to laws restricting sales of precursor chemicals utilized during production.

F. Transportation

Methamphetamine is most commonly transported into the region in either crystal form (i.e. “ice”) or suspended in solution by private passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, and mailing services. While crystal methamphetamine is the most common form encountered by Midwest HIDTA initiatives, reporting suggests drug traffickers consider methamphetamine in solution as a

Novel Concealment Method

In 2021, a joint operation involving a Midwest HIDTA initiative in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area led to the discovery of a unique methamphetamine concealment method. The operation resulted in the seizure of a commercial semi-trailer where more than 700kg of methamphetamine-in-solution had been impregnated into spray foam insulation lining the ceiling of the trailer.



Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2nzf6bpa>

low-risk concealment method. Methamphetamine in solution can be concealed within other liquids—such as gasoline or other automotive fluids—rendering it more difficult to detect. Methamphetamine in solution is transported into the region in large quantities by commercial vehicle or in smaller quantities while being concealed in windshield washer fluid reservoirs or other containers in privately owned vehicles. Once transported into the region, methamphetamine in solution is converted into crystal methamphetamine by conversion laboratories using a variety of highly flammable materials. Makeshift conversion laboratories—capable of converting several hundred pounds of methamphetamine—have been uncovered in parts of the Midwest HIDTA region and

reported by Midwest HIDTA initiatives. In fact, 25 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported the presence of at least one methamphetamine conversion laboratory in their area. Methamphetamine in solution is an effective concealment method as law enforcement struggles to detect it. According to EPIC, there were six incidents involving methamphetamine in solution within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022, totaling approximately 25 kilograms and 28 liters.^{24,h}

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the full extent of methamphetamine conversion laboratory utilization in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- Does law enforcement recognize methamphetamine conversion laboratories as clandestine laboratories for reporting purposes?
- What other drugs are mixed with methamphetamine in the Midwest HIDA region?
- How often is methamphetamine mixed with fentanyl?
- How many counterfeit prescription pills contain methamphetamine?

^h Depending on the agency reporting the meth-in-solution seizure, the unit of measurement for the seizure may be entered as kilograms or liters.

4. Heroin

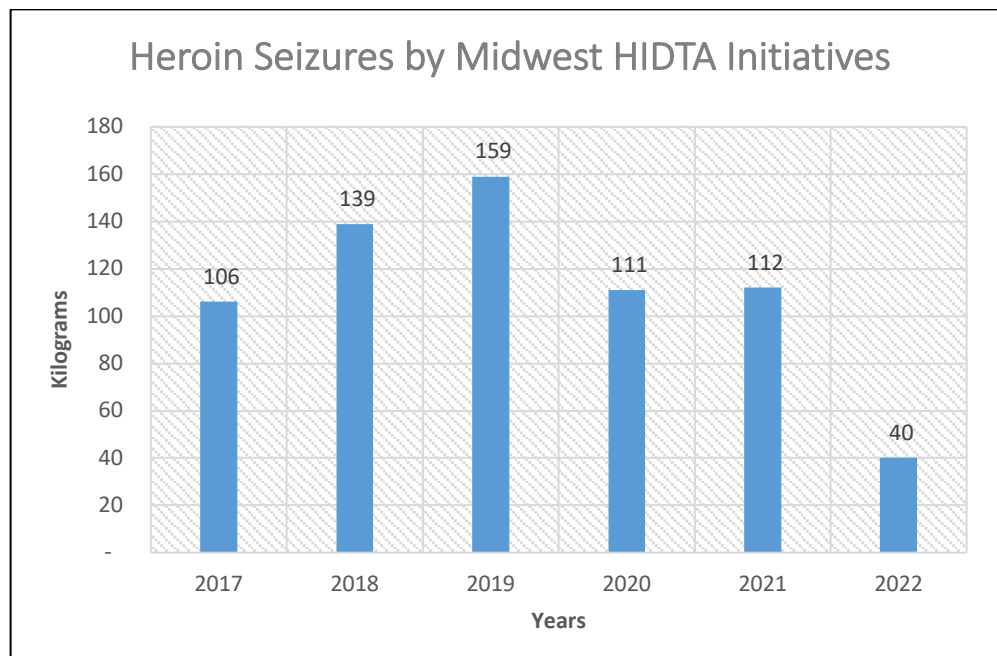
A. Overview

Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives report heroin as the third greatest drug threat. Heroin, mixed with stronger opioids such as fentanyl, result in an increased likelihood of poisoning. Thirty-eight percent of law enforcement initiatives ranked heroin as the third greatest threat in their respective AORs. Twenty-five percent of PHS respondents ranked heroin as their third greatest drug threat. Heroin has the most impact in large, urban areas. Heroin is usually found mixed with fentanyl or other synthetic opioids. The presence of heroin has decreased significantly in the Midwest HIDTA region in the last few years.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the availability of heroin in the region as moderate, which is a decrease for the region. The decrease is partly due to the replacement of heroin with fentanyl. This was corroborated by 45 percent of the Midwest HIDTA's law enforcement initiatives. Seizures of heroin by Midwest HIDTA initiatives decreased by 64 percent from 2021 (112 kilograms/247 pounds) to 2022 (40 kilograms/88 pounds). Figure 6 presents the heroin seized by Midwest HIDTA initiatives between 2017 and 2022.

Figure 6. Heroin Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.²⁵



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the level of heroin use in the region as moderate, as indicated by approximately 53 percent of law enforcement initiatives. Forty-two percent of public health

respondents noted that heroin admissions stayed the same in their areas. Heroin is often combined with a fentanyl and other drugs. It can be difficult to source heroin without fentanyl within the Midwest HIDTA region as fentanyl has supplanted the traditional heroin markets.

Based on the TEDS data in Table 8, the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving heroin, varied but overall decreased in every Midwest HIDTA state other than Kansas between 2017 and 2021. The most recent data, 2021, is not available for Iowa.

Table 8. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Heroin²⁶

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Heroin						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	953	279	5,697	105	299	139
2018	1,083	287	7,381	123	183	218
2019	1,047	254	5,429	150	42	234
2020	983	268	4,173	153	74	151
2021	N/A	467	3,337	97	101	143

*SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

D. Price

The price of heroin in the Midwest HIDTA varied significantly from region to region. There was a decrease in the heroin buys within the Midwest HIDTA region, demonstrating a decrease in availability of the drug which is supported by survey responses and seizures. The prices per unit of measurement for heroin is listed in Table 9 below.

Table 9. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Heroin²⁷

Unit of Measurement	Heroin	
	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$24,000-\$35,000	\$28,796
Ounce	\$300-\$2,400	\$1,356
Gram	\$80-\$300	\$143
1/2 Gram	\$50-\$200	\$99
1/10 Gram	\$10-\$100	\$32
Capsule/Pill	\$3-\$4	\$3

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the overwhelming majority of the region's heroin supply is cultivated outside of the region, primarily within Mexico and South America. Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives have reported a decrease in heroin seizures and an increase in fentanyl seizures, suggesting that Mexican DTOs have shifted their focus from heroin cultivation to fentanyl production.

F. Transportation

Historically, the source and type of heroin varied by area within the Midwest HIDTA region. Heroin in the eastern half of Iowa and Missouri is typically in white powder form and tends to be sourced by gangs and other DTOs from the Chicago area. In the northernmost part of the region (North and South Dakota), brown powder and black tar heroin are all transported into the area from the Minneapolis, Detroit, and California areas, respectively. Heroin in the westernmost parts of the region is sourced from Denver or California and is typically in either black tar or crude brown powder form. Many heroin markets have been supplanted by counterfeit M30 pills containing fentanyl and increasing fentanyl powder in white and other various colors. Heroin is primarily transported into the area via private passenger vehicles.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the demand for unadulterated heroin within the Midwest HIDTA region?

5. Controlled Prescription Drugs

A. Overview

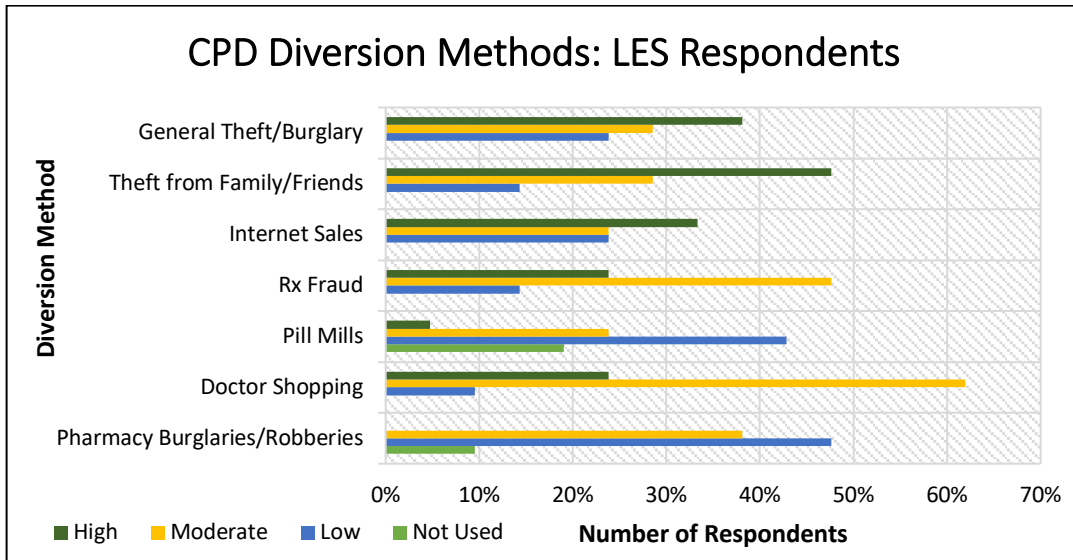
The Midwest HIDTA assesses that CPD abuse within the region is widespread and represents a constant drug threat. A significant percentage of the drugs marketed as CPDs seized by Midwest HIDTA initiatives are actually counterfeit pharmaceuticals, post seizure laboratory analysis often reveals the presence of fentanyl, methamphetamine, other opioids, or benzodiazepine analogues. Twenty-two percent of LES respondents ranked CPDs as the fourth drug threat in their AORs. Twenty-nine percent of PHS respondents reported CPDs as their fourth drug threat. The legal yet controlled status of CPDs has resulted in their moderate levels of availability and use.

All states within the Midwest HIDTA region now have a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). The prohibition of law enforcement in several Midwest HIDTA states from obtaining PDMP information to identify over-prescribing doctors also limits the overall effectiveness of these programs in addressing the opioid epidemic. There are no Midwest HIDTA initiatives focused on CPD diversion.

B. Availability

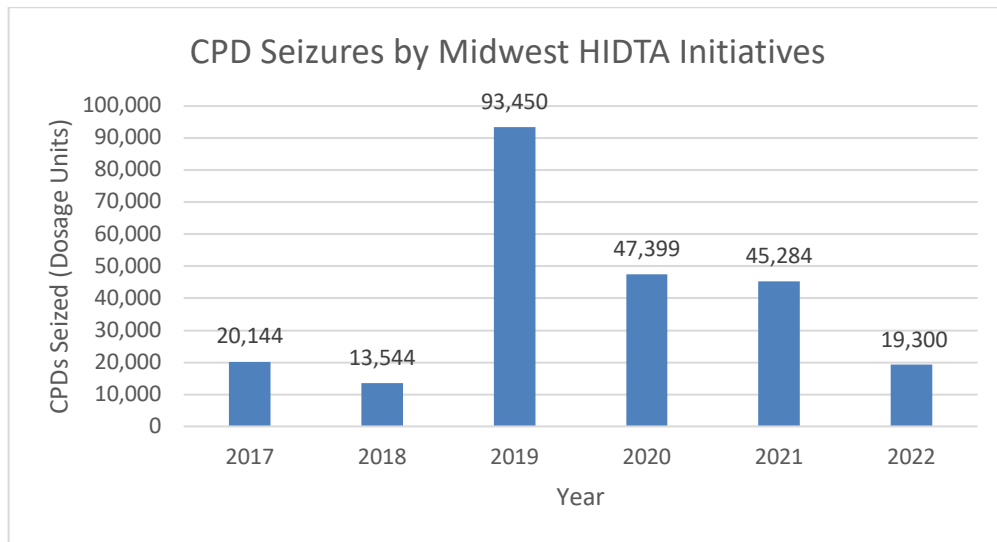
Seventy-eight percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported CPD availability as either moderate (48 percent) or low (30 percent) within their AORs. Pharmaceutical diversion is responsible for the majority of illicit use. Forty-one percent of LES respondents indicated that CPD diversion occurs in their AORs at a high (12 percent) or moderate (29 percent) rate. Figures 7 illustrate the most common CPD diversion methods, as reported by respondents to the LES.

Figure 7. CPD Diversion Methods: LES Respondents.^{28, i}



Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 19,300 dosage units and .2 kilograms of CPDs in 2022.^j Figure 8 depicts CPD seizure totals by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2017 to 2022, as reported in the PMP.

Figure 8. CPD Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.²⁹



ⁱ General theft/burglary is the theft of CPDs from individuals in possession of CPDs that do not involve friends/family or a pharmacy. Rx fraud is the illegal acquisition of prescription drugs for profit. Pill mills are clandestine operations where a medical worker offers CPDs to patients in exchange for bribes rather than needs. Doctor shopping is the illegal practice of seeking care from multiple health care providers for an illicit purpose.

^j This number is the total for all PMP prescription drug statistics, which include alprazolam, hydrocodone, oxycodone, and other CPD types.

C. Use

Almost half (48 percent) of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported moderate levels of CPD use within their AORs. If an individual with a substance use disorder loses legitimate access to their CPD supply, they may seek out illicit CPDs or transition to cheaper, more potent alternatives, such as heroin or fentanyl.

Of the PHS respondents that operate either an inpatient or outpatient admissions program, 38 percent cited an increase in admissions for CPDs over the past 12 months. Fifty-one percent stated that CPD admissions had remained the same and only six percent claimed that admissions had decreased. Opioids were the class of CPDs that treatment admissions had seen a significant increase with 59 percent of PHS respondents indicating an increase in their area. The other CPD categories including stimulants and sedatives remained the same for the majority of PHS respondents. According to the PHS, CPDs are most often combined with marijuana.

D. Price

Pricing for diverted CPDs within the Midwest HIDTA region are dependent upon the type of CPD, the dosage, and the regional marketplace. Table 10 illustrates various CPD pricing information for 2022. Benzodiazepine pricing information is available for alprazolam and diazepam. Opioid pricing information is available for hydrocodone, oxycodone, Percocet, and Suboxone. Stimulant pricing information is available for Adderall and Ritalin. Prices are based on drugs marketed as illicit CPD's, regardless of whether they are actually illicit CPD's or counterfeit.

Table 10. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– CPDs³⁰

Unit of Measurement	Per Pill	
	Range	Average
CPD Type		
Alprazolam (Xanax)	\$2-\$40	\$7
Diazepam	\$1-\$20	\$5
Hydrocodone	\$5-\$45	\$12
Oxycodone	\$2-\$80	\$17
Percocet	\$2-\$20	\$7
Suboxone	\$5-\$8	\$7
Adderall	\$5-\$20	\$12
Ritalin	\$1-\$25	\$7

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA is not aware of CPD diversion from regional pharmaceutical manufacturers at this time. Law enforcement investigations have identified numerous counterfeit CPD operations within the U.S. A significant portion of the counterfeit opioid and benzodiazepine pills encountered by Midwest HIDTA initiatives are found to contain a mixture of fentanyl and other substances when sent to a laboratory for further analysis. Similarly, many counterfeit stimulant drugs contain methamphetamine rather than the various stimulants they are marketed as.

F. Transportation

The Midwest HIDTA found that the region's most popular methods of CPD diversion in 2022 were theft from family/friends, general theft/burglary, and internet sales. Genuine CPDs encountered by regional law enforcement are produced by pharmaceutical companies and distributed to pharmacies nationwide. Counterfeit CPDs are manufactured in China, Mexico, and the United States. Counterfeit CPDs clandestinely produced outside of the Midwest HIDTA region are often shipped via mailing services from overseas or smuggled across international borders where they ultimately enter into the region transported by private vehicles.

G. Intelligence Gap

- What percentage of CPD's marketed as genuine are actually counterfeit CPDs?

6. Cocaine

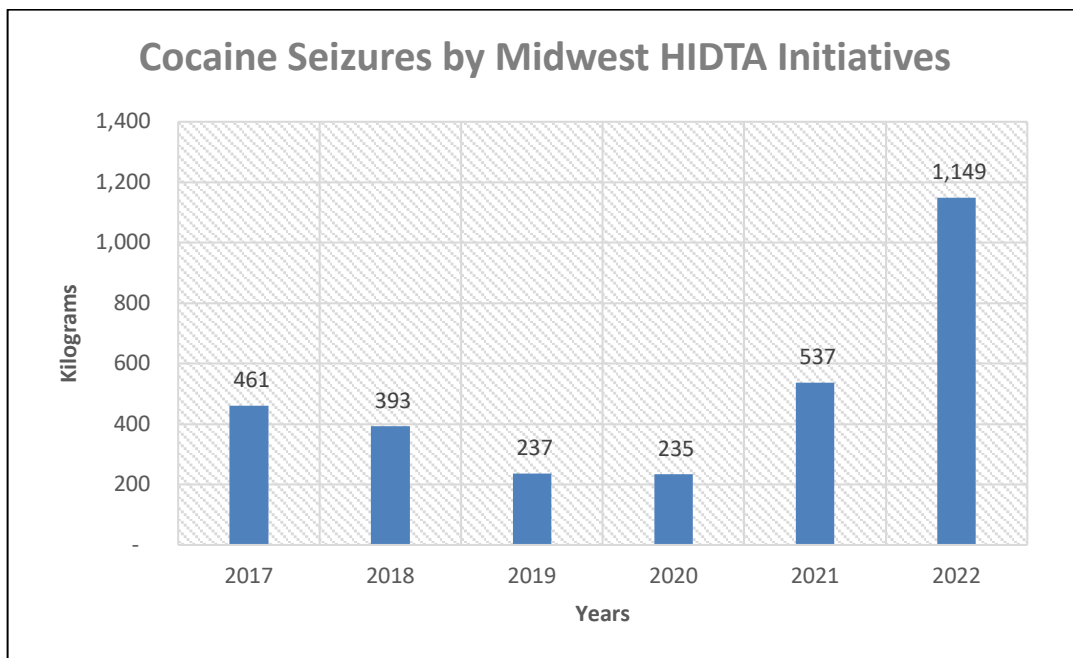
A. Overview

Seventy-five percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported cocaine as the third (22 percent), fourth (29 percent) and fifth (24 percent) greatest drug threats. PHS respondents considered cocaine to be their fifth primary drug threat, with 49 percent of respondents indicating this. High levels of violence associated with methamphetamine, marijuana, and fentanyl have rendered cocaine a lesser threat than in the past.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses cocaine availability as moderate throughout the region. This is corroborated by the majority (69 percent) of Midwest HIDTA initiatives that reported cocaine as moderately available in their areas. Seizures of cocaine by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in 2022 increased 114 percent from 2021 with initiatives seizing 1,149 kilograms (2,533 pounds). Cocaine seizures by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2017 to 2022 can be found in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Cocaine Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.³¹



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses cocaine use throughout the region as moderate. Approximately 63 percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported moderate levels of cocaine use within their AORs. Of the PHS respondents that operate an inpatient or outpatient admissions program, approximately 61 percent reported that admissions for cocaine had

remained the same over the past 12 months. Cocaine may be combined with other substances, the most popular being fentanyl and marijuana.

The TEDS data in Table 11 demonstrates a decrease in the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving cocaine in every state between 2017 and 2021 for every state but Iowa. Iowa exhibited a decrease from 2017 to 2020 due to 2021 not being available.

Table 11. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Cocaine³²

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Cocaine						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	499	469	1,176	187	37	62
2018	495	356	1,100	185	14	76
2019	415	369	1,061	164	4	57
2020	346	342	726	132	9	70
2021	N/A	321	697	100	5	53

*SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

D. Price

Cocaine prices in the Midwest HIDTA region vary heavily depending on the location. Pricing information from law enforcement initiatives is available in Table 12.

Table 12. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Cocaine³³

Cocaine		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$18,000-\$40,000	\$27,848
Ounce	\$300-\$1,700	\$1,093
1/8 Ounce (8-Ball)	\$75-\$450	\$218
Gram	\$50-\$150	\$85

E. Production

Cocaine is neither cultivated nor produced within the Midwest HIDTA region. The coca plant is native to western South America, which produces the vast majority of the world's supply of cocaine. A press release from ONDCP in July 2022, presented potential cocaine production from Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia for 2021 as slightly lower (2,074 metric tons) than the high of 2020 (2,120 metric tons).³⁴ Seizures of cocaine by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for

fiscal year 2022 (70.3 thousand pounds) was a 28 percent decrease from 2021 (97.6 thousand pounds) seizures, suggesting that there may have been a production decrease of cocaine in coca-producing countries in 2022.³⁵

F. Transportation

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of U.S.-bound cocaine is transported from South America into Mexico, where it is then smuggled into the Midwest region. As with other illicit drug types, cocaine is primarily transported into the region via private passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles, and mailing services. Cocaine trafficking organizations also utilize “go-fast boats” and undersea submersible vehicles to smuggle cocaine into the U.S., though these methods are believed to be used for transporting cocaine to destinations along the eastern and western seaboards.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- How much cocaine is being diverted to more lucrative markets (e.g. Europe, Australia) instead of being sent to the U.S., specifically the Midwest HIDTA region?
- What other drugs are mixed with cocaine in the Midwest HIDA region?
- At which step are other drugs added to cocaine during cocaine trafficking?

7. Marijuana

A. Overview

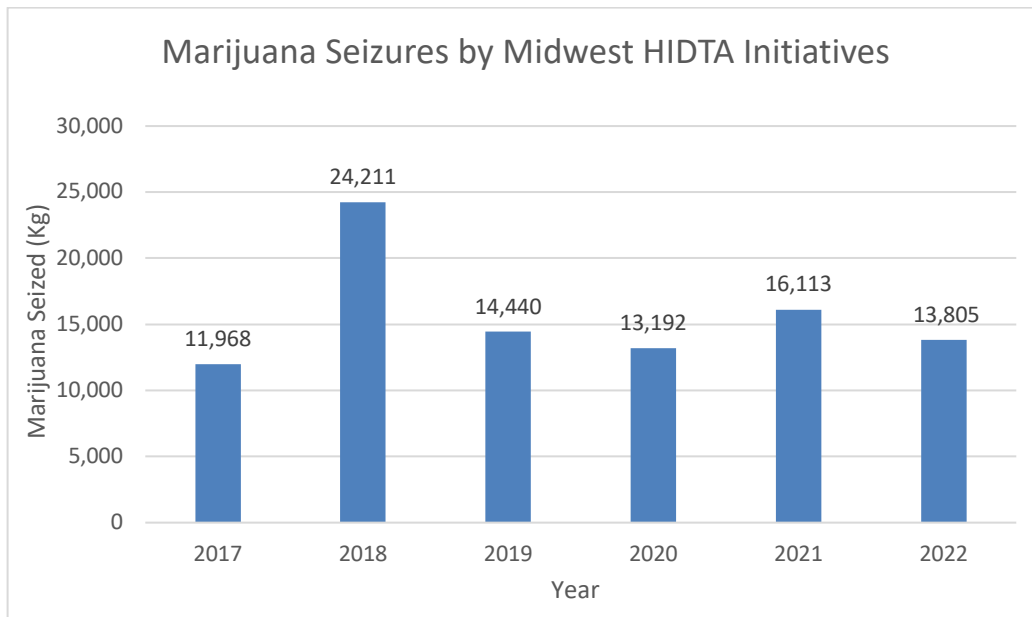
Marijuana is the most widely available and abused illicit drug within the Midwest HIDTA region. Despite its widespread abuse and availability, marijuana has dropped in ranking from the fourth to the sixth most significant drug threat to the region, most likely due to the changing laws within the Midwest HIDTA region. Midwest HIDTA initiatives ranked marijuana as a lower significant drug threat with approximately 28 percent ranking it fifth, approximately nine percent ranking it sixth, and approximately 13 percent ranking it seventh. Respondents to the PHS listed marijuana as the least drug threat (sixth for the PHS) for their area with approximately 46 percent of respondents indicating marijuana as their least drug threat. North Dakota legalized medical marijuana through regulations that became effective in April 2016. Missouri legalized medical marijuana in November 2018 and recreational in 2022. Recreational sales started February 3rd, 2023 in Missouri.³⁶ South Dakota legalized medical marijuana in November 2020. Illinois has also legalized recreational marijuana, while Iowa only allows for specialized cannabidiol (CBD) products as part of its medical CBD program.

Similar to methamphetamine, the region has experienced a change in sources of marijuana over the past decade. Whereas previously much of the marijuana in the Midwest HIDTA region was grown in Mexico and transported into the region after being smuggled through the Southwest Border, a majority of the marijuana in the region today comes from sources within the U.S. Domestically-produced marijuana, a majority of which is grown hydroponically in states where marijuana has been decriminalized and/or legalized in some form, typically has a much higher tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content than Mexican-sourced marijuana.

Marijuana decriminalization has created a readily available supply of highly potent domestically cultivated marijuana for transport into the region. This now includes states within the Midwest HIDTA that have legalized various forms of marijuana. Reporting from regional law enforcement agencies suggests that criminal organizations often clash with one another for the right to distribute marijuana from “legal” states in Midwestern territory.

B. Availability

Marijuana is the most widely available drug in the region. All but three Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported marijuana as highly available within their AORs. Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 13,805 kilograms (30,435 pounds) of marijuana in 2022, along with 244 kilograms (538 pounds) worth of marijuana plants. Figure 10 depicts marijuana seizure totals by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2017 to 2022, as reported through PMP data.

Figure 10. Marijuana Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2017-2022.³⁷

C. Use

Marijuana is the second most widely used illicit drug in the Midwest HIDTA region, according to 88 percent of law enforcement initiatives. Approximately 18 percent believed marijuana contributed the most to violence in their areas. Of the PHS respondents that operate an inpatient or outpatient admissions program, 27 percent cited an increase in marijuana-related admissions over the past 12 months. A further 53 percent of respondents cited marijuana-related admissions as remaining the same over the past 12 months. Data from the PHS states that marijuana is a drug frequently combined with other substances. The most popular drugs taken in combination with marijuana are methamphetamine and fentanyl.

Based on the TEDS data in Table 13, the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving marijuana declined for every state, except North Dakota, in the Midwest HIDTA region. The reason for the decrease in marijuana admissions is unknown at this time. The push for marijuana decriminalization in certain parts of the Midwest HIDTA region may have played a role in the decreased number of marijuana admissions, especially if court-mandated marijuana substance abuse programs are less prevalent, although this information is currently unsubstantiated.

Table 13. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Marijuana³⁸

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Marijuana						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	6,798	2,969	6,730	1,488	896	1,537
2018	6,569	2,610	6,491	1,344	462	1,637
2019	6,192	1,744	5,397	1,261	267	1,572
2020	4,788	1,622	3,718	993	202	1,149
2021	N/A	1,756	3,712	660	526	1,129

*SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

D. Price

The price of marijuana in the Midwest HIDTA region is dependent upon the origin of the marijuana and the form that it takes. For example, an ounce of marijuana flower is generally less expensive than an ounce of butane hash oil. Additionally, marijuana originating from a Colorado dispensary is generally more expensive than marijuana originating from Mexico because of its higher THC content. Table 14 depicts marijuana pricing information obtained from Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives.

Table 14. 2022 Drug Pricing Data– Marijuana³⁹

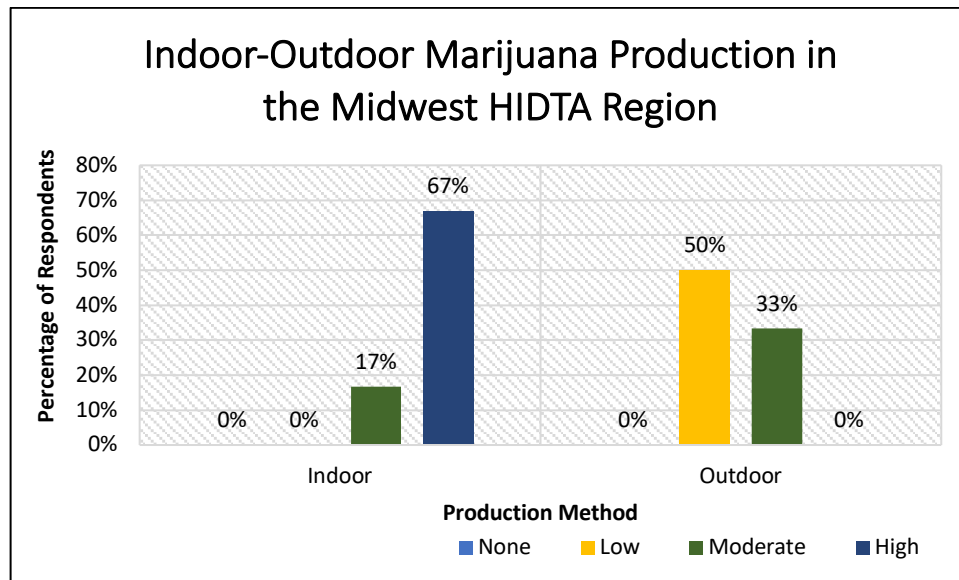
Marijuana		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Pound	\$600-\$3,300	\$1,965
Ounce	\$50-\$400	\$177
Gram	\$2-\$60	\$15
THC Cartridge	\$20-\$50	\$35
Gram of Wax	\$30-\$50	\$40
Ounce of Wax	\$250-\$1,400	\$810
Gummy	\$15-\$25	\$19

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of marijuana in the region is transported in from areas where marijuana has been decriminalized. Approximately 12 percent of initiatives stated that illicit marijuana production occurred within their area, with indoor marijuana production more prevalent than outdoor production. Sixty-seven percent of the initiatives that reported marijuana production within their areas indicated that indoor marijuana production occurred at a high level in their AORs and only 33 percent of respondents indicated that outdoor marijuana production occurred at a moderate level. Indoor production methods, which protect

plants from harsh weather conditions in the region, also allow cultivators greater control over THC content in marijuana. Indoor growing also affords a higher degree of concealment from law enforcement as the production sites are hidden from public view. Figure 11 shows levels of indoor and outdoor marijuana production in the Midwest HIDTA region, as indicated by law enforcement initiatives.

Figure 11. LES: Indoor-Outdoor Marijuana Production in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁴⁰



In December 2018, Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (also known as the 2018 Farm Bill), which legalized the production, cultivation, and retail sale of industrial hemp. Every state within the Midwest HIDTA region now participates in industrial hemp cultivation.

F. Transportation

The majority of marijuana and marijuana products are transported into the Midwest HIDTA region from California, Colorado, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington.⁴¹ For the first time, Oklahoma is a major source state for the Midwest HIDTA region for marijuana. Oklahoma is the only source state with only a medical marijuana statute while the other source states have recreational statutes. Private passenger vehicles are the most common methods of transporting marijuana into the region.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What impact will legal recreational marijuana in Missouri have on the black market marijuana in the state of Missouri?

8. New Psychoactive Substances

A. Overview

The most commonly abused new psychoactive substances (NPSs) in the Midwest HIDTA region are synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, and synthetic phenethylamines. NPSs are a class of synthetic substances that mimic the effects of established illicit drugs. Often referred to as “designer drugs,” NPSs have no legitimate industrial or medical uses. Synthetic cannabinoids are typically sprayed onto plant matter or suspended into a liquid and smoked, which are intended to simulate the effects of marijuana. Synthetic cathinones normally reside in powder or crystal form, are either swallowed or insufflated, and are intended to mimic the effects of stimulants. The synthetic phenethylamine drug class possess entactogenic, hallucinogenic, and/or stimulant properties and represent the largest category of designer drugs.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses NPS availability as moderate to low. Debuting in the late 2000s, NPSs were designed to mimic the effects of marijuana, stimulants, and hallucinogens and were most popular among young adults. Although not as prevalent as they once were, NPSs are still available and are a consistent threat to the Midwest HIDTA region. The majority of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported NPS availability as moderate (36 percent) to low (36 percent). Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized about half a kilogram of synthetic cannabinoids in 2022. Synthetic cannabinoid availability has continuously declined across the region due to the loosening of marijuana laws in states both within and surrounding the Midwest HIDTA region. The availability of high-THC marijuana, concentrates, and edibles has supplanted the much of the synthetic cannabinoids as a result.

C. Use

Forty-one percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported low levels of NPS use. While NPSs were not a primary contributor to violence and property crimes in the Midwest HIDTA region, some of these drugs have been known to induce violent and/or aggressive behavior.^{42,43,44} Of the public health respondents that operate a drug treatment program, approximately 38 percent reported that NPS admissions had remained the same over the past 12 months while 14 percent reported an increase.

NPS abuse comes with many dangers. Product inconsistency poses a serious concern for those who abuse NPSs. For synthetic cannabinoids in particular, batches of “synthetic marijuana” may vary in potency on a per-bag basis due to the methods that manufacturers use to coat the plant material in the psychoactive chemicals. Manufacturers and retailers of NPSs care little about the chemical makeup of their products, which endangers the physical and mental health of NPS consumers.

D. Price

Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported drug pricing data for NPSs as \$150 to \$700 for an ounce of synthetic cannabinoids in 2022. Sales of NPS are most prevalent online and vary in price, depending on the formulation and batch purity.

E. Production

There were no reports of NPS production within the Midwest HIDTA in 2022. Synthetic cannabinoids are typically produced in foreign laboratories and are purchased by individuals in the U.S. These individuals then spray leafy plant matter with the synthetic cannabinoid solution and package the product. Synthetic cathinones and phenethylamines are often produced in Chinese laboratories where suppliers misrepresent the drug's intended purpose, often describing the drugs as "research chemicals", in order to pass inspection by CBP.

The chemical blueprints and recipes for many NPSs are catalogued in scientific and patent literature. Many of these substances were originally created to be used in medicine, but were abandoned after they failed to meet medical standards. With the exception of phenethylamines, the relative ease of NPS production is possible by the availability of chemical blueprints on the internet. Once a NPS is scheduled as a controlled substance in the U.S. or any other major market, manufacturers will modify the molecular structure of that chemical to avoid legal penalty. This prevents law enforcement agencies from restricting the distribution of the manufacturer's products.

F. Transportation

The USPS and other mailing services are the most common methods used to ship NPSs into the Midwest HIDTA region. Semi-trailer trucks and other commercial vehicles are also used to transport NPSs to retailers that offer NPS products.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the true extent of NPS trafficking in the Midwest HIDTA region?

9. Psychedelics

A. Overview

A wide variety of other psychedelics are abused within Midwest HIDTA region. The threat posed by these drugs in the region is ever-changing due to the development of new synthetic drugs in source countries such as China, as well as resurgences in other drug types, such as “magic” mushrooms. Several types of psychedelics are available in the region, including methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), ketamine, 4-hydroxybutanoic acid (GHB), and psilocybin mushrooms. The breadth of the threat and the variance between areas in the region make it difficult to assess the overall drug threat created by psychedelics compared to other drug types. However, only four percent of LES respondents ranked psychedelics within the top three drug threats in their AORs.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the availability of psychedelics across the region as moderate to low. This is supported by the 45 percent of law enforcement initiatives that reported psychedelics availability as low and the 39 percent that reported availability as moderate. Although psychedelics have existed within the Midwest HITA region for decades, their availability has historically remained moderate to low. Psychedelics and other drugs are typically purchased at bars, nightclubs, music festivals, or online and are generally more difficult to obtain compared to drugs such as cocaine or marijuana.

Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 37,525 dosage units of ketamine, 1,201 dosage units of LSD, and a little less than half a kilogram of PCP in 2022. Initiatives also seized 10,524 dosage units of MDMA in 2022. Fifty-three kilograms (117 pounds) of psilocybin mushrooms (hereafter referred to as “mushrooms”) were seized in 2022. Mushroom seizures increased by 36 percent from 2021 (39 kilograms) to 2022 (53 kilograms). That is the largest amount seized since 2017. A first in 2022, was the seizure of psilocybin edibles, including various flavored chocolate bars and gummies, within the Midwest HIDTA region. Psilocybin edibles are likely to continue to be seized in the region in the future.

C. Use

While not as popular as other drugs of abuse, psychedelics use in the Midwest HIDTA region is low but consistent. According to approximately 53 percent of LES respondents claimed that psychedelics have low levels of use within their AORs. The majority of public health respondents (50 percent) stated that inpatient/outpatient admissions for psychedelics remained the same over the past 12 months.

The TEDS data in Table 15 depicts the low levels of hallucinogens abuse across the Midwest HIDTA region between 2017 and 2021. Inpatient admissions decreased in Kansas and

Nebraska between 2017 and 2021. Missouri and North Dakota increased between 2017 to 2021. The most recent data is not available for Iowa.

Table 15. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Hallucinogens⁴⁵

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Hallucinogens						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2017	20	27	35	6	1	6
2018	30	12	32	9	1	9
2019	42	16	32	7	1	25
2020	44	17	21	8	3	14
2021	N/A	12	43	4	5	10

SOURCE: Office of Applied Studies, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS). Based on administrative data reported by States to TEDS through October 1, 2022.

D. Price

The price of psychedelics varies depending on the purity, location, and ingredients. The price of MDMA in the Midwest HIDTA region varied between \$7 and \$30 per pill and \$57 to \$110 per gram. The price per dosage unit of LSD varied between \$2 and \$40. PCP sticks, which are usually nicotine cigarettes dipped in PCP, sell for \$10-\$13 dollars a stick. The price of a gram of ketamine ranges from \$40-\$80 in the Midwest HIDTA region.

E. Production

Most MDMA seized in the U.S. is primarily synthesized in Canada and the Netherlands.⁴⁶ LSD may be produced in clandestine laboratories across the country, although a crucial precursor chemical, known as ergotamine tartrate, is not readily available in the U.S. Ketamine is commercially produced in a number of countries, including the U.S., and is typically either diverted or stolen from legitimate sources, specifically veterinarian sources in the U.S.. PCP destined for the Midwest HIDTA region is typically manufactured in clandestine laboratories in Southern California. Psilocybin mushrooms may be grown across the U.S. and have been increasingly discovered alongside illegal marijuana grows.

F. Transportation

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of the region's MDMA is sourced from foreign countries, such as Canada and the Netherlands. PCP is transported into the region from clandestine laboratories in Southern California. Ketamine is typically diverted from veterinary clinics and other medical sources within the U.S. and transported into the region. Most psychedelics are transported into the Midwest HIDTA region in private vehicles.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What effect has the increasing decriminalization/legalization of psilocybin mushrooms had on the production of these mushrooms in both the Midwest HIDTA region and nationwide?
- How has the increased research into psychedelics as a treatment for mental health, affected the psychedelic black market?
- How often is methamphetamine marketed as MDMA and/or ecstasy pills in the Midwest HIDTA region?

10. Source Considerations

Several sources were considered in the preparation of the drug threat section of the 2023 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. Statistics from the Midwest HIDTA PMP aided the section by quantifying the volume, type, and prices of drugs seized. Survey responses from our law enforcement initiatives and public health partners via the 2023 LES and PHS identified the drugs most used and abused in the region. Data collected from SAMHSA's TEDS illustrated the number of individuals seeking treatment for various substance use disorders. Drug and asset seizure data collected by the Midwest HIDTA's Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) program allowed for the identification of source states and transportation methods for different drug categories and cash seizures. A ONDCP press release provided the most recent estimations for both global coca bush cultivation and cocaine manufacture. Open source data provided by CBP illustrated the amount of drugs seized, by category, at different ports of entry along the U.S border. Anecdotal information such as HIDTA task force phone interviews, news media reports, law enforcement agency websites, and official press releases proved useful in highlighting specific drug threat issues.

V. Drug Trafficking Organizations

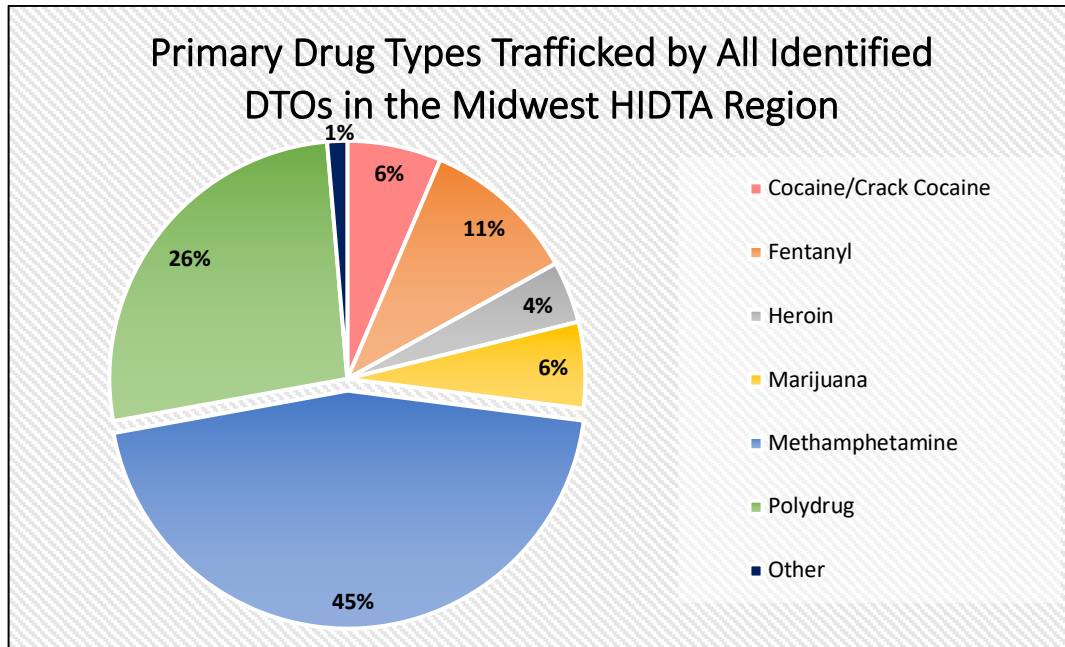
1. Overview

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that Mexican DTOs pose the greatest drug trafficking threat to the Midwest region. In the recent past, the vast majority of drug investigations involved a trafficker that was, to use a pop culture analogy, “six degrees of separation” from a Mexican drug cartel. This was based on the various levels of compartmentation between street dealers, distribution networks, and Mexico-based drug sources. This degree of separation is now often assessed at two, as Mexican cartels control the production, transportation, and wholesale—even retail level—distribution of illicit drugs in the United States.⁴⁷ As early as 2011, Mexican cartels had established a network of drug trafficking cells operating in more than 1,200 cities and towns across the U.S. utilizing a dynamic command and control structure.^{48,49} Because of this evolution of Mexican cartel dominance and pervasiveness throughout the nation, drug investigations of all sizes now directly link to major Mexican TCOs.

Midwest HIDTA enforcement initiatives documented 955 DTOs operating within the region in 2022, with 8,469 members and 1,381 leaders identified.⁵⁰ Mexico-sourced DTOs continue to have the most significant impact in the region. The average identified membership of a DTO was approximately 10 individuals; of which, nine were members and one was the leader. Midwest HIDTA-based DTOs operate in both urban and rural areas and vary in terms of size, structure, and trafficking activities. Approximately 24 percent of LES respondents noted the movement of large metropolitan gangs (e.g. Gangster Disciples, MS-13) from major cities into smaller more rural areas. However, neighborhood-based street gangs dominate violence related to drug trafficking in most areas of the Midwest HIDTA region. These groups, which are comprised of individuals that reside on a shared street or locality, are difficult to identify because they lack the traditional hierarchy associated with nationally-affiliated gangs and frequently disband and regroup. Methamphetamine constitutes the majority of single-drug DTOs and polydrug DTOs account for about 26 percent of DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region.

Missouri contains both the largest population and most initiatives of any state in the Midwest HIDTA region. As such, Missouri reported more methamphetamine trafficking organizations than any other state, accounting for approximately 30 percent of all methamphetamine trafficking organizations. Missouri also identified the highest percentage of fentanyl (50 percent), heroin (43 percent), marijuana (45 percent), and cocaine (38 percent) trafficking organizations operating in the region. Figure 12 depicts the primary drug types trafficked by all DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022.

Figure 12. Primary Drug Types Trafficked by All DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁵¹



Of the 955 DTOs operating within the Midwest HIDTA region, 10 percent were international in scope, 54 percent were multi-state, and 36 percent were local. Appendix VII summarizes key characteristics of all identified DTOs in 2022, while Appendix VIII includes a summary table for DTOs identified as operating in each state of the Midwest HIDTA region. According to 2022 data from the PMP, about 42 percent of all DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives were identified as being violent, posing a significant threat throughout the region. Fifty-two percent of international DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified as being violent, compared to 37 percent of multi-state and 46 percent of local DTOs. A state-by-state review of violent DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives may be found in Table 16.

Table 16. Violent DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives.⁵²

Violent DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives			
	Total DTOs	Violent DTOs	Violent DTOs (%)
Illinois	68	18	26%
Iowa	132	19	14%
Kansas	71	31	44%
Missouri	374	224	60%
Nebraska	147	71	48%
North Dakota	82	21	26%
South Dakota	81	16	20%
All Initiatives	955	400	42%

Fifty-eight percent of all DTOs classified as violent were also classified as gang-related, indicating a direct correlation between gangs and violence in the region. Forty-one percent of the DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Missouri were gang-related, the highest percentage for any state in the region.

DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region utilize novel technologies to facilitate communication, obtain payment, and monitor the locations of their drug couriers in real-time. These platforms include the dark web, social media, portable GPS systems, and encrypted messaging apps available through mobile devices. Many of the apps utilized by DTOs in the region have now implemented end-to-end encryption. Apps with end-to-end encryption, such as WhatsApp, provide an investigative hurdle to law enforcement due to the encryption aspect inherent in their infrastructure. Apps identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives as being most utilized in the region include Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Signal, and Telegram. Cryptocurrency, sometimes concurrent with dark web use, is used by some DTOs to transfer drug proceeds into and outside of the Midwest HIDTA region. The use of complex technology by DTOs in the region is expected to continue to increase in the future.

2. International Drug Trafficking Organizations

A. Overview

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that Mexican DTOs pose the greatest international drug trafficking threat to the Midwest HIDTA region. A total of 96 international DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022, with 162 leaders and 917 members. Table 17 lists the characteristics of international DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in 2022. Mexico was the primary country affiliated with the identified international DTOs. On average, there were 11 members per international DTO. Fifty-four percent of the international DTOs targeted in 2022 consisted of two or more ethnic groups, with Hispanic cited most frequently. Twenty-seven percent of the international DTOs trafficked more than one drug type. The percentage of international DTOs reported as violent by Midwest HIDTA initiatives was more in 2022 than in 2021, as was the percentage of DTOs with documented ties to gangs.

Table 17. International DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA.⁵³

International DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total International DTOs	96
- Mexico	81
Total Members (Leaders)	917 (162)
Average DTO Size	11.24
Multi-ethnic	52
Gang Related	45
Violent	50
Polydrug	26
Money Laundering Activities	18
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	19
CPOT	2
RPOT	2
PTO	25

B. Affiliations and Membership

The Sinaloa Cartel and New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) exert the most influence over Mexican DTOs operating within the Midwest HIDTA. PMP data indicates that 84 percent of international DTOs that operated within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022 were of Mexican origin. Similarly, 78 percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives indicated that international DTOs operated within their AORs. Of those same respondents, 85 percent listed Mexico as the primary country affiliated with those DTOs.

With their larger scope of operations, international DTOs generally have higher numbers of identified membership than multi-state or local DTOs. The targeted disruption and dismantlement of international DTOs requires a high level of cooperation and coordination amongst HIDTA initiatives, law enforcement task forces, and law enforcement agencies. Thus, investigations targeting the illicit activities of international DTOs often result in a larger number of identified DTO members and leaders. International DTOs operating within the Midwest HIDTA region have an average of 11 identified members, which is typically larger than that of multi-state and local DTOs.

Fifty-two percent of international DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region were described as violent. According to law enforcement initiatives, violence associated to international DTOs operating in the region is directly related to their associations with violent Mexico-based drug cartels and gangs. Mexican cartels have significant influence over the region's drug trafficking activities. The Sinaloa cartel is the most prevalent cartel in the region and is involved in international, multi-state, and local DTOs. Likewise, the DEA's *2020 National Drug Threat Assessment*^k indicated the Sinaloa cartel is among the most influential and pervasive Mexican cartels operating within the Midwest HIDTA region.⁵⁴ The Sinaloa cartel serves as a source of supply for multiple drug types in the Midwest HIDTA region, including cocaine, fentanyl, heroin, marijuana, and methamphetamine. The CJNG, La Familia Michoacána, Juarez Cartel, and various factions of the Los Zetas Cartel are responsible for the majority of remaining drug trafficking activity in the Midwest HIDTA region. The CJNG is based in the Mexican state of Jalisco and distributes large quantities of methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine. La Familia Michoacána is based in the Mexican state of Michoacán and is known to cooperate with CJNG and other smaller groups to facilitate their drug trafficking activities. The Los Zetas and Cartel del Noreste—the most prominent faction of the Los Zetas Cartel—are based in northeastern Mexico and traffic a variety of illicit drugs through the southwest border of the U.S. The Juarez drug cartel and La Linea are based in the Mexican state of Chihuahua and is primarily involved in the trafficking of heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, and cocaine.⁵⁵ Table 18 lists the major Mexican cartel threats to the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022 as indicated by Midwest HIDTA initiatives.

Table 18. Mexican Cartel Threats to the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁵⁶

Cartel Threats to the Midwest HIDTA, According to Law Enforcement Initiatives	
Primary Cartel Threats	Secondary Cartel Threats
Sinaloa Cartel	Juarez/La Linea
Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación	Los Zetas/Northeast Cartel
La Familia Michoacána	

^k At the time of this report, the 2022 National Drug Threat Assessment was not yet released.

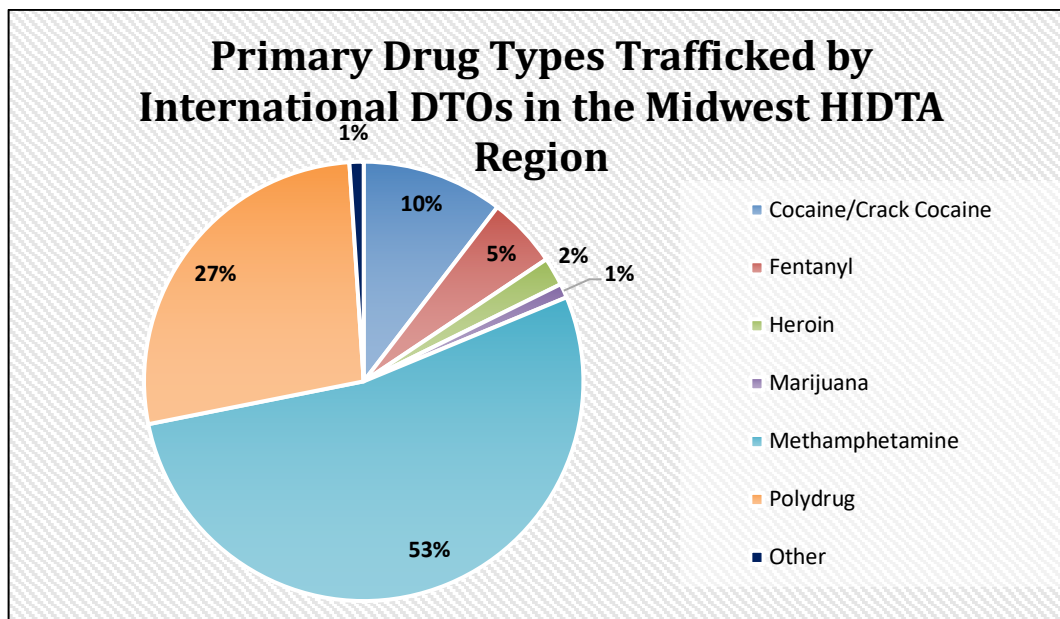
In addition to Mexican cartels, approximately 47 percent of international DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region have documented affiliations with gangs.⁵⁷ The Bloods, Crips, Aryan Brotherhood, Latin Kings, MS-13, and Sureños street gangs have all been identified by law enforcement initiatives as participating in drug trafficking activities with international DTOs in the Midwest region. The Hells Angels, Bandidos, Galloping Goose, Mongols, and Sons of Silence outlaw motorcycle groups were also identified by initiatives as coordinating drug trafficking activities with international DTOs in the region.⁵⁸

C. Activities and Methods

Eighty percent of the Midwest HIDTA region's international DTOs engaged in money laundering activities, according to law enforcement initiatives. The top two money laundering methods utilized by international DTOs in the region are bulk cash smuggling and money remittances. Approximately 81 percent of initiatives indicated that bulk cash smuggling was used at a high level by international DTOs, while 50 percent indicated that money remittances were highly utilized.

Twenty-seven percent of all international DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region were polydrug trafficking organizations. Most polydrug DTOs trafficked methamphetamine and/or fentanyl. Fifty-three percent of single drug international DTOs trafficked methamphetamine. Other primary drug types trafficked by international DTOs include cocaine (10 percent) and fentanyl (five percent). Figure 13 shows the primary drug types trafficked by international DTOs identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region.

Figure 13. Primary Drug Types Trafficked by International DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁵⁹



3. Multi-State Drug Trafficking Organizations

A. Overview

Multi-state DTOs are the most common DTO type encountered by Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives. A total of 511 multi-state DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022. Twenty-seven percent of multi-state DTOs were linked to California, the state most affiliated with multi-state DTOs. Illinois, Arizona, Colorado, Texas, and Minnesota were the other states most closely tied to multi-state DTOs in the region. Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 710 leaders and 4,586 other members. According to 76 percent of law enforcement initiatives, at least one multi-state DTO within their AOR had a connection to a Mexican cartel. This connection typically involves the use of a cartel member as a source of supply.⁶⁰ Table 19 shows the characteristics of multi-state DTOs identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022.

*Table 19. Multi-State DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.*⁶¹

Multi-State DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total Multi-State DTOs	511
- California	137
- Illinois	76
- Arizona	54
- Colorado	46
- Texas	36
- Minnesota	34
Total Members (Leaders)	4,586 (710)
Average DTO Size	10.36
Multi-ethnic	229
Gang Related	115
Violent	190
Polydrug	143
Money Laundering Activities	42
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	61
CPOT	5
RPOT	1
PTO	60

B. Affiliations and Membership

Multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region have an average of 10 members per organization, including one leader and nine additional members, the same as local DTOs. This is slightly lower than the average identified membership of international DTOs that operate within

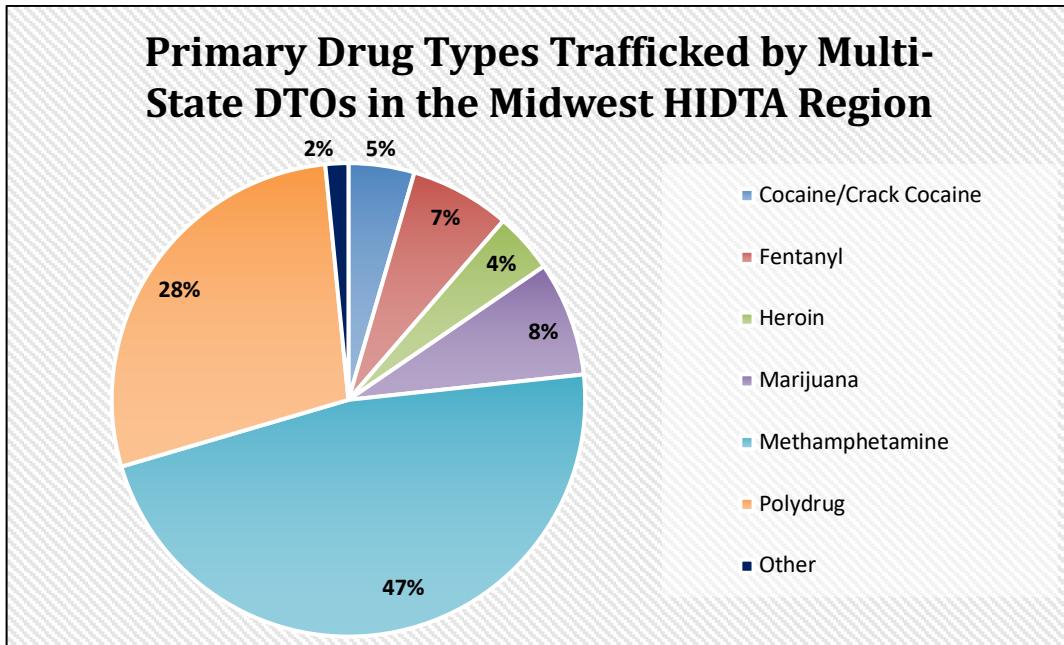
the region. PMP data states that 37 percent of multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified as violent and that approximately 23 percent have connections to gangs. A higher percentage of Missouri-based multi-state DTOs were identified as being either violent (61 percent) or associated with gangs (40 percent) than any other state in the region. According to law enforcement initiatives, multi-state DTOs operating within the region are linked to nationally-affiliated street gangs, including the Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples, and Latin Kings. They are also linked to outlaw motorcycle gangs, including the Bandidos, Galloping Goose, Hells Angels, and Sons of Silence.⁶²

C. Activities and Methods

Although only eight percent of multi-state DTOs were identified through PMP data as conducting money laundering activities, 71 percent of law enforcement initiatives reported that multi-state DTOs within their AOR conducted money laundering activities. Similar to international DTOs, the top money laundering methods utilized by multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region are bulk cash smuggling, money remittances, and online payment systems (e.g. Cash App, PayPal, Venmo). Two-thirds of initiatives indicated that multi-state DTOs used bulk cash smuggling at a high level and 40 percent indicated multi-state DTOs in their AORs use money remittances and online payment systems at a high level.

Twenty-eight percent of multi-state DTOs operating in the region were identified as polydrug trafficking organizations. Methamphetamine trafficking organizations accounted for 47 percent of multi-state DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region, the highest percentage of any drug type. Other primary drug types trafficked by multi-state DTOs operating in the region include marijuana (eight percent), fentanyl (seven percent), cocaine (five percent), and heroin (four percent). Multi-state DTOs are responsible for more marijuana trafficking than any other DTO type. Most of the marijuana in the Midwest HIDTA region is transported in from Western states with recreational and medical marijuana programs (e.g. California, Colorado). Figure 14 shows the primary drug types trafficked by multi-state DTOs identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region.

Figure 14. Primary Drug Types Trafficked by Multi-State DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶³



4. Local Drug Trafficking Organizations

A. Overview

Local DTOs were the second most encountered DTO type encountered by Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives, behind multi-state DTOs. A total of 348 local DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022. Of the local DTOs, Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 509 leaders and 2,966 members. Fifty-six percent of initiatives indicated that local DTOs within their AORs are known to have connections to Mexican drug cartels. As with other DTO types, the Sinaloa cartel is most often connected to local DTOs. Other cartels associated with local DTOs as reported by initiatives were the CJNG, La Familia Michoacána, and Los Zetas/Northeast Cartel.⁶⁴ Table 20 lists the traits of local DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022.

Table 20. Local DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶⁵

Local DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total Local DTOs	348
Total Members (Leaders)	2,966 (509)
Average DTO Size	9.99
Multi-ethnic	101
Gang Related	94
Violent	160
Polydrug	84
Money Laundering Activities	24
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	25
CPOT	1
RPOT	0
PTO	23

B. Affiliations and Membership

Local DTOs operate within each state of the Midwest HIDTA region. Ninety-four percent of law enforcement initiatives indicated that local DTOs were operating within their AORs. Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 2,966 members and 509 leaders belonging to local DTOs, with an average of 10 members per organization.

More than half (56 percent) of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported that local DTOs within their AOR were affiliated with Mexican drug cartels. The Sinaloa Cartel and the CNJG were the most cited Mexican cartels affiliated with local DTOs. Other cartels affiliated with local DTOs include the Los Zetas/Northeast Cartel and La Familia Michoacána.

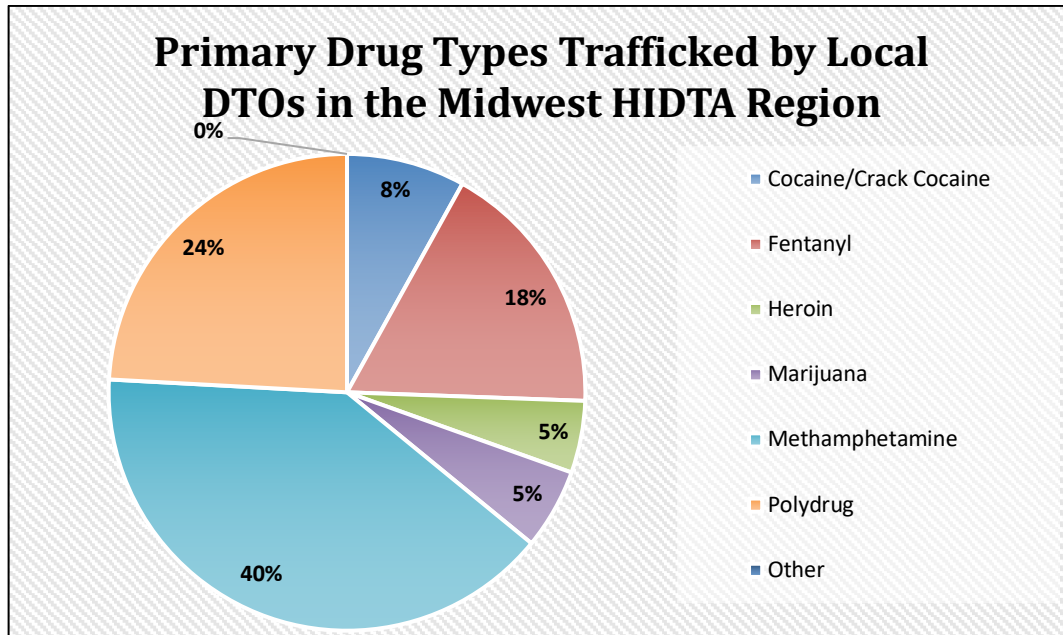
According to data from the PMP, 46 percent of local DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified as violent. Twenty-seven percent of local DTOs had connections to street and outlaw motorcycle gangs. Local DTOs based in Missouri were affiliated with more violence and gang activity than any other state in the Midwest HIDTA region. According to law enforcement initiatives, local DTOs coordinated criminal activities with nationally-affiliated street gangs such as the Bloods, Crips, and MS-13. Furthermore, many local DTOs collaborate with localized street gangs that have no national affiliation. These neighborhood-based street gangs are believed to have greater nexus to drug trafficking and violence in the Midwest HIDTA region than nationally-affiliated street gangs. Hells Angels, Sons of Silence, El Foresteros, Galloping Goose, and Saddle Tramps OMGs are believed to be affiliated with local DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region.

C. Activities and Methods

Similar to the PMP results for other DTO types, only seven percent of local DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region were connected to money laundering activities. However, 65 percent of LES respondents stated that local DTOs within their AORs engaged in money laundering activities. Bulk cash smuggling and online payment systems (e.g., Cash App, PayPal, Venmo) were the top money laundering methods utilized by local DTOs.

Methamphetamine trafficking organizations accounted for 40 percent of local DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region. Twenty-four percent of local DTOs were identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives as polydrug trafficking organizations. Other primary drug types trafficked by local DTOs include fentanyl (18 percent), cocaine/crack (eight percent), marijuana (five percent), and heroin (five percent). Figure 15 shows the primary drug types trafficked by local DTOs identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region.

Figure 15. Primary Drug Types Trafficked by Local DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶⁶



5. Intelligence Gaps

- What methods and recruitment strategies do local DTOs use in order to recruit drivers to transport drugs?
- What is the true extent of cartel associations to Midwest HIDTA-based DTOs?
- Beyond acting as the source of supply, how involved are Mexico-based DTOs with street gangs and outlaw motorcycle gangs in the Midwest HIDTA region?

6. Source Considerations

There were several sources consulted in the development of the DTO section of the 2023 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. These sources include Midwest HIDTA PMP data, law enforcement initiative responses to the 2023 LES, the DEA's 2020 National Drug Threat Assessment, and the National Drug Intelligence Center's 2011 National Drug Threat Assessment.

VI. Money Laundering Organizations

A. Overview

Four money laundering organizations (MLOs) were identified within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2022, according to PMP data. Most DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region conduct their own money laundering activities without the use of separate and distinct MLOs. Only eight percent of LES respondents claimed that MLOs existed within their AOR which were not a part of a DTO. Of that percentage, the MLOs were described as international in scope. Only one respondent claimed the presence of multi-state MLOs within their AORs while two respondents indicated local MLOs in their AOR.⁶⁷

Bulk cash smuggling and the banking system (deposit with a quick withdrawal in a different area) were the most-utilized money laundering techniques by Midwest HIDTA-based MLOs. Cryptocurrency and casinos were also indicated as being highly used by MLOs in the region.

Table 21. Money Laundering Organizations Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶⁸

Money Laundering Organizations Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives			
Total Identified	International	Multi-State	Local
4	1	1	2

B. Affiliations and Membership

Mexico was the country affiliated with the international MLO. Law enforcement initiatives also indicated China as being affiliated with international MLOs. Initiatives reported that the international MLOs were linked to Mexican drug cartels, primarily the Sinaloa and CJNG Cartels. The multi-state MLO reported in the PMP listed Massachusetts and New York as source states. The one initiative response to the LES that reported the presence of multi-state MLOs in their area listed Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska as states linked to the multi-state MLO. The group allegedly have ties to Sinaloa, CJNG, and La Familia Michoacána Cartels. One initiative indicated that the local MLO was linked to the Sinaloa, CJNG and La Familia Michoacána.

C. Activities and Methods

MLOs operating within the Midwest HIDTA region often use the same methods and trafficking routes for money laundering as DTOs do for drug trafficking. The heavy utilization of bulk currency smuggling by the region's MLOs corroborate this. MLOs capitalize on the Midwest HIDTA region's extensive interstate system by smuggling large volumes of cash to criminal elements across or outside of the region using privately owned or commercial vehicles on interstates or U.S. highways. The utilization of the banking system is used more by MLOs than

DTOs. The method is a quick withdrawal scheme where a member of the MLO deposits money in a bank branch in the Midwest HIDTA region then another member of the MLO withdraws the money quickly from another state, usually a Southwest border state. Both DTOs and MLOs also use casinos to launder money, though typically in smaller amounts (i.e. structuring) to avoid transaction reports. Cryptocurrency is also utilized by both MLOs and DTOs, though to a lesser extent.

D. Intelligence Gaps

- How prevalent is cryptocurrency use by MLOs within the Midwest HIDTA region?
- What is the true number of organizations within the Midwest HIDTA whose sole purpose is to launder money?
- Are identified MLOs in reality engaged in drug trafficking or other criminal ventures?

E. Source Considerations

There were two sources consulted in the development of the MLO section of the 2023 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. These sources are Midwest HIDTA PMP data and law enforcement initiative responses to the 2023 LES.

VII. Drug-Related Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) WONDER Data

Data collected from the CDC WONDER database illustrates that the Midwest HIDTA region experienced a six percent decrease in drug-related poisoning fatalities from 2021 to 2022. There was a 12 percent increase in drug poisoning deaths across the U.S. as a whole during the same period. States within the Midwest HIDTA region reported 4,013 drug poisoning deaths in 2022, down from 4,266 in 2021. North Dakota experienced the only rise in drug poisoning deaths in the region during this time, an increase of approximately 7 percent.⁶⁹ The Midwest HIDTA utilized CDC WONDER data in this section because poisoning death data reporting is not standardized across the states, which makes it difficult to accurately compare one state to another. Table 22 shows the change in the number of drug poisoning deaths across the Midwest HIDTA region from 2021 to 2022.

Table 22. Drug Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022.⁷⁰

Drug Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022			
	2021	2022 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	548	539	-- 2 percent
Kansas	778	737	-- 5 percent
Missouri	2,443	2,272	-- 7 percent
Nebraska	248	221	-- 11 percent
North Dakota	135	144	+ 7 percent
South Dakota	114	100	-- 12 percent
All Midwest HIDTA states**	4,266	4,013	-- 6 percent

*These numbers reflect ICD-10 Codes: T36-50.
 **The sum of the poisoning deaths for specific drug categories may exceed the total poisoning deaths in this table as more than one drug may be present in a poisoning death case.

Table 23. Cocaine Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022.⁷¹

Cocaine Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022			
	2021	2022 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	40	46	+ 15 percent
Kansas	83	91	+ 10 percent
Missouri	317	358	+ 13 percent
Nebraska	18	11	-- 39 percent
North Dakota**	--	--	--
South Dakota**	--	--	--
All Midwest HIDTA states	458	506	+ 10 percent

*These numbers reflect ICD-10 code T40.5
 **Data suppressed by CDC WONDER.

Cocaine poisoning death data was not available for every state within the region. As a result, the percentage change for 2021 and 2022 represents only Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska. Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri all reported an increase in the number of cocaine-related poisoning deaths, while Nebraska reported a decrease from the previous year.

Table 24. Psychostimulant Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022.⁷²

Psychostimulant Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022			
	2021	2022 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	243	256	+ 5 percent
Kansas	357	329	-- 8 percent
Missouri	890	793	-- 11 percent
Nebraska	78	72	-- 8 percent
North Dakota	55	47	-- 15 percent
South Dakota	61	46	-- 25 percent
All Midwest HIDTA states	1,684	1,543	-- 8 percent

*These numbers reflect ICD-10 code T43.6 and include: Adderall (dextroamphetamine), Ritalin (methylphenidate), and other amphetamine-type stimulants (methamphetamine, etc.)

Not only did past-year deaths involving psychostimulants decrease eight percent across the Midwest HIDTA region, they decreased within every state except Iowa. Although methamphetamine does not have its own ICD-10 code and is combined within the psychostimulant category, deaths from methamphetamine in 2022 decreased despite previously projected increase.⁷³ Table 24 shows the change in psychostimulant poisoning deaths across the Midwest HIDTA region from 2021 to 2022.

Table 25. Opioid Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022.⁷⁴

Opioid Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 and 2022			
	2021	2022 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	266	233	-- 12 percent
Kansas	446	441	-- 1 percent
Missouri	1,638	1,524	-- 7 percent
Nebraska	122	107	-- 12 percent
North Dakota	75	86	+ 15 percent
South Dakota	47	45	-- 4 percent
All Midwest HIDTA states	2,594	2,436	-- 6 percent

*These numbers reflect ICD-10 codes T40.0-T40.4, T40.6.

Opioid poisoning deaths for the entire Midwest HIDTA region decreased six percent from 2021 to 2022. The number of opioid poisoning deaths increased in North Dakota, while Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota reported decreases in the number of opioid

poisoning deaths. Table 25 shows information on opioid poisoning deaths in the Midwest HIDTA region from 2021 to 2022.

Using the most recent CDC WONDER data, the Midwest HIDTA assesses that the regional drug poisoning deaths is primarily attributable to opioids and psychostimulant abuse. Opioids were linked to 61 percent of poisoning deaths in the Midwest HIDTA. Psychostimulants were linked to 38 percent of poisoning deaths, some of which also included opioids. The increasing availability and potency of both psychostimulants and synthetic opioids in the Midwest HIDTA has significantly contributed to both fatal and non-fatal poisoning statistics. Synthetic opioids continue to be mixed with other drugs, often unbeknownst to users, which increase the chance of poisoning. If synthetic opioids continue to be mixed with other illicit drugs, such as methamphetamine or cocaine, the number of drug poisoning deaths will likely rise.

2. Intelligence Gaps

- What impact has naloxone availability had on reducing drug poisoning deaths in the Midwest HIDTA region?

3. Source Considerations

The drug-related poisoning mortality section relied upon one data source: the CDC WONDER dataset. The CDC WONDER dataset represents the most recent drug mortality data that the Midwest HIDTA is able to access for each of its six states. This data is based on the residence (state) of the decedent and not the location (state) of occurrence.

VIII. Outlook

The Midwest HIDTA region serves as an attractive area for drug trafficking and money laundering organizations because of its extensive transportation network, varied demographics, substantial population, and centralized geography. For these reasons, the Midwest HIDTA region serves as the principal transit corridor for drug trafficking between the east and west coasts of the United States. The Midwest HIDTA, having herein presented the drug threat status in this region, provides its assessment of what is expected to occur within the next year.

The Midwest HIDTA assesses with a high degree of confidence that:

- ❖ Increased drug production in Mexico and South America will result in higher levels of drug availability in the Midwest.
- ❖ Fentanyl will continue to pose the greatest threat to the region as the supply is expected to increase. Use is expected to increase as the supply becomes even more readily available in the region. Fentanyl will continue to be the greatest driver of drug poisoning deaths. Adulterants such as xylazine are of great concern to the Midwest HIDTA and will continue to be such, especially as they have an impact on poisoning deaths in the region.
- ❖ Methamphetamine will continue to pose a significant threat to the region with its high levels of availability, demand, use, and transportation. Low-cost, high potency methamphetamine transported from the Southwest Border will continue to saturate both rural and metropolitan drug markets. The level of violence and crime surrounding methamphetamine production, trafficking, and use will remain a threat to both law enforcement and the public.
- ❖ Heroin, CPDs, and cocaine will remain consistent threats in the region.
- ❖ The availability, demand, use, and transportation of marijuana will increase as the medical marijuana programs in North Dakota, and South Dakota, and the recreational marijuana programs of Illinois and Missouri mature. The Midwest HIDTA will continue to see high levels of marijuana trafficking if more states loosen restrictions on marijuana.
- ❖ Mexico-based DTOs will remain the primary suppliers of fentanyl, methamphetamine, heroin, cocaine, and counterfeit prescription drugs. Mexican cartels and their affiliated DTOs will continue to expand their influence in the region's illicit drug trade as they increasingly control each stage of the drug distribution process.
- ❖ The use of mailing services by DTOs to smuggle illicit drugs will increase as criminals realize the decreased risk of detection and anonymity that accompany this technique over traditional transportation methods.
- ❖ The use of encrypted mobile applications (e.g. WhatsApp, Signal) and social media platforms (e.g. Facebook Messenger, Snapchat) will be increasingly used by both DTOs and MLOs to avoid law enforcement interception of group communications.

IX. Appendices

Appendix I: Methodology

The 2023 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment addresses the current drug threat within the region. The Midwest HIDTA Investigative Support Center (ISC), the Kansas Intelligence and Information Exchange, The St. Louis Intelligence Group, the Omaha DEA Intelligence Group, prepared the Threat Assessment. Both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized to complete the Threat Assessment. The Threat Assessment process began with the development of a Law Enforcement Survey and Public Health Survey. The surveys were created to assess the drug threat in the Midwest HIDTA region and to fulfill ONDCP annual reporting requirements. The LES was sent to all HIDTA enforcement and intelligence initiatives, while the PHS was sent to its public health partners across the Midwest region. Survey respondents completed the survey online. Respondents were asked to consider only their initiative's AORs when responding to survey questions. The results of the survey, combined with information from other data sources, were used to form the Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. Additional informational sources that were utilized to develop the Threat Assessment include: CDC WONDER data, DEA's *National Drug Threat Assessment*, EPIC, PMP data, SAMHSA's TEDS dataset, a press release from ONDCP, CBP Seizure Data, and information from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The assessment of the drug threat in the Midwest HIDTA region was made while considering limitations of data sources utilized. For example, the survey was only disseminated to Midwest HIDTA enforcement and intelligence initiatives and may not represent the illicit drug threat outside of those areas represented by Midwest HIDTA initiatives. This is also true for PHS respondents, as we are not in contact with every agency. However, HIDTA initiatives have been established in areas of the region that are believed to have the greatest drug threats. Likewise, PMP data is obtained only from HIDTA initiatives. Quantitative data reported in the Threat Assessment was obtained on the following dates: PMP (MLO-related information) – February 27, 2023; PMP (DTO-related information) – February 27, 2023; PMP (drug seizure-related information) – March 4, 2023. The information provided by these sources, though incomplete, provides an important perspective into Midwest HIDTA regional drug threats and any DTO/MLO presence in 2022. An explanation of primary sources utilized to develop the Threat Assessment is provided below.

Appendix II: Explanation of Sources

Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Performance Management Process (PMP) Data-

A component of the Executive Office of the President, ONDCP was created by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988. ONDCP advises the President on drug-control issues, coordinates drug-control activities and related funding across the Federal government, and produces the annual National Drug Control Strategy, which outlines Administration efforts to reduce illicit drug use, manufacturing and trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences. PMP data contains information related to drug seizures, drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), and money laundering organizations (MLOs) known to operate in the HIDTA region. At least quarterly, each HIDTA funded task force and HIDTA are required to update the PMP database with information regarding seizures of drugs and drug-related assets, as well as changes in the status of a DTO/MLO, including when a DTO/MLO has been disrupted or dismantled.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics Mortality

Data on CDC WONDER – This dataset is updated annually by the CDC. The data captures drug-specific poisoning death data using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). Drug poisoning deaths are identified using underlying cause-of-death codes T36-T42 and T44-T50.

El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) National Seizure System (NSS)

– NSS is an EPIC-managed repository for seizure information from 2000 to the present containing drugs, weapons, and currency seized above federal threshold limits.

Midwest HIDTA Law Enforcement Survey (LES)

– Annual Survey administered by the Midwest HIDTA ISC and used to obtain information related to the various drug threats within the Midwest HIDTA region covering: specific threats, drug-related violence and crime, distribution, smuggling, money laundering, and drug trafficking organizations. Responses are collected from HIDTA funded task forces within the Midwest HIDTA region. There were 51 responses to this year's Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey. Appendix III lists the Midwest HIDTA initiatives who responded to the 2023 LES.

Midwest HIDTA Public Health Survey (PHS)

– Midwest HIDTA ISC and Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) teams developed and administered this survey to public health agencies throughout the Midwest HIDTA to obtain information related to the various drug threats from a public health perspective in order to supplement LES data. There were 105 responses to this year's Midwest HIDTA PHS, listed in Appendix IV.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Drug Seizure Statistics

– This data is publicly available via CBP's public-facing website. This data represents the total weight of drug seizures interdicted

at various ports of entry along the U.S. border. Drug seizure statistics are represented in pounds and may be refined using several filters.

Appendix III: Midwest HIDTA Initiatives

The following Midwest HIDTA initiatives are grouped according to the state in which they are located. Those marked with an * participated in the 2023 LES.

Illinois

Drug and Crime Reduction Initiative of the Metro East (DCRIME)*
Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group*

Iowa

Cedar Rapids DEA Task Force*
Des Moines DEA Task Force*
Iowa Interdiction Support*
Muscatine Drug Task Force*
Tri-State Sioux City DEA Task Force*

Kansas

Garden City/Finney County Drug Task Force*
Kansas City/Overland Park DEA Task Force*
Kansas Intelligence and Information Exchange*
Kansas Interdiction Support*
Kansas Parcel Interdiction Task Force
Northeast Kansas Drug Task Force*
Topeka DEA Task Force*
Wichita DEA Task Force*

Missouri

ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Center
Cape Girardeau DEA Drug Task Force*
Franklin County Narcotics Enforcement Unit*
Jackson County Drug Task Force*
Jefferson City DEA Task Force*
Jefferson County Municipal Enforcement Group*
Kansas City DEA Interdiction Task Force*
Kansas City DEA Northland Task Force*
Kansas City FBI Combined Task Force*
Kansas City HSI Financial Task Force*
Kansas City, Missouri Metro Task Force*
Midwest HIDTA Investigative Support Center
Missouri Interdiction and Information Exchange*
Office of the Director
Ozark Drug Enforcement Team (ODET)* (Formerly: Jasper County Drug Task Force)
Regional Training Initiative
St. Charles County Drug Task Force*
St. Louis County Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Enforcement Task Force*
St Louis County Multi-Jurisdictional Heroin Prevention Initiative

St. Louis DEA Intelligence Group* (Filled out one survey for two of the three St Louis DEA Initiatives)

St. Louis DEA Major Investigations/Conspiracy Group 37

St Louis DEA Regional Intercept Center

St. Louis DEA Violent Traffickers Task Force*

St. Louis FBI Squad 5*

St Louis HSI Border Enforcement Task Force (BEST)

Southeast Missouri Drug Task Force*

Springfield DEA Task Force*

Technology Coordination

Nebraska

TRIDENT (Tri-City Drug Enforcement Team) *

C.O.D.E Task Force*

Greater Omaha Safe Streets Task Force*

Lincoln/Lancaster Drug Task Force*

Nebraska Interdiction Support*¹

Omaha ATF Illegal Firearms Task Force*

Omaha DEA Drug Task Force*

Omaha Metro Drug Task Force*

WING Drug Task Force*

North Dakota

Fargo DEA Task Force*

Grand Forks County Task Force* (Formerly: Grand Forks Narcotics Task Force)

Metro Area Narcotics Task Force*

North Dakota Interdiction*

South Dakota

Unified Narcotics Enforcement Team (UNET)*

Sioux Falls Task Force*

South Dakota Interdiction Support*

¹ Nebraska Interdiction Support completed two surveys, one for the interdiction unit and one for the intelligence unit of the initiative.

Appendix IV: 2023 Public Health Survey Participating Agencies

The following agencies/organizations participated in the 2023 Midwest HIDTA PHS and are grouped according to the state in which they are located.

Kansas

CDC Foundation	Reno County Coroner
COMCARE-Addiction Treatment Services	Reno County Health Department
DCCCA	Rise Up Reno Prevention Network
Franklin County Health Department	S.A.C.K.
High Point Advocacy and Resource Center, Inc	Salvation Army
Horizons Mental Health	Shawnee County Health Department
Hutchinson Community College	Substance Abuse Center of Kansas - CrossOver Recovery Center
Hutchinson Regional Medical Center	UG Public Health Department
Mirror, Inc	Valeo Recovery Center
NAMI	Valley Hope Addiction Treatment
ReDiscover	Wichita Comprehensive Treatment Center

Missouri

19 th Judicial Circuit, State of Missouri	Gibson Center for Behavioral Change
ASCENT Recovery/The ROCC	Goliath House
Assisted Recovery Centers of America	H.E.A.L.: STOP HEROIN
BASIC Treatment Center	Healing House, Inc
Behavioral Health Group	In2Action
Better Life in Recovery	Mark Twain Behavioral Health
BHG Behavioral Group	Mission Missouri
Branson Police Department	Missouri Hospital Association
Burrell Behavioral Health	Missouri PTA
Central Ozarks Medical Centers	New Season St Charles Treatment Center
Citizens Memorial Hospital	Ozark Center
Clarity Healthcare/PFH	Partners in Prevention
Clark Community Mental Health Center	Preferred Family Healthcare
CMHS/Burrell	ReDiscover
Columbia Boone County Public Health and Human Services	Simmering Center
COMC	Springfield Fire Department
Comprehensive Mental Health Services	Springfield-Greene County Health Department
Counselors Obediently Preventing Substance Abuse	St Louis Metro Treatment Center
CoxHealth	Stepping Into the Light Ministry
DHSS-Bureau of Narcotics	Swope
Family Guidance Center	Tri-County Mental Health Services
FCC Behavioral Health	University Health Behavioral Health
Gateway Foundation	

Nebraska

Central District Health Department
Four Corners Health Department
Loup Basin Public Health Department

North Central District Health Department
Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

South Dakota

ARCBH
Avera Addiction Care Center
CACs
DCI/Stepping Stones

Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health SUD
Main Gate Counseling Services
PCSO-ATS
Southeastern Behavioral Healthcare

Appendix V: State Maps

Individual state maps may be found in the following figures: Iowa may be found in Figure 16, Kansas in Figure 17, Missouri in Figure 18, Nebraska in Figure 19, North Dakota in Figure 20, and South Dakota in Figure 21. The Midwest HIDTA does not have a map for the three HIDTA-designated counties within Illinois. The maps include HIDTA designated counties, major highways and, in North Dakota’s case, the ports of entries shared with Canada.

Figure 16: Detailed Map of Iowa Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.

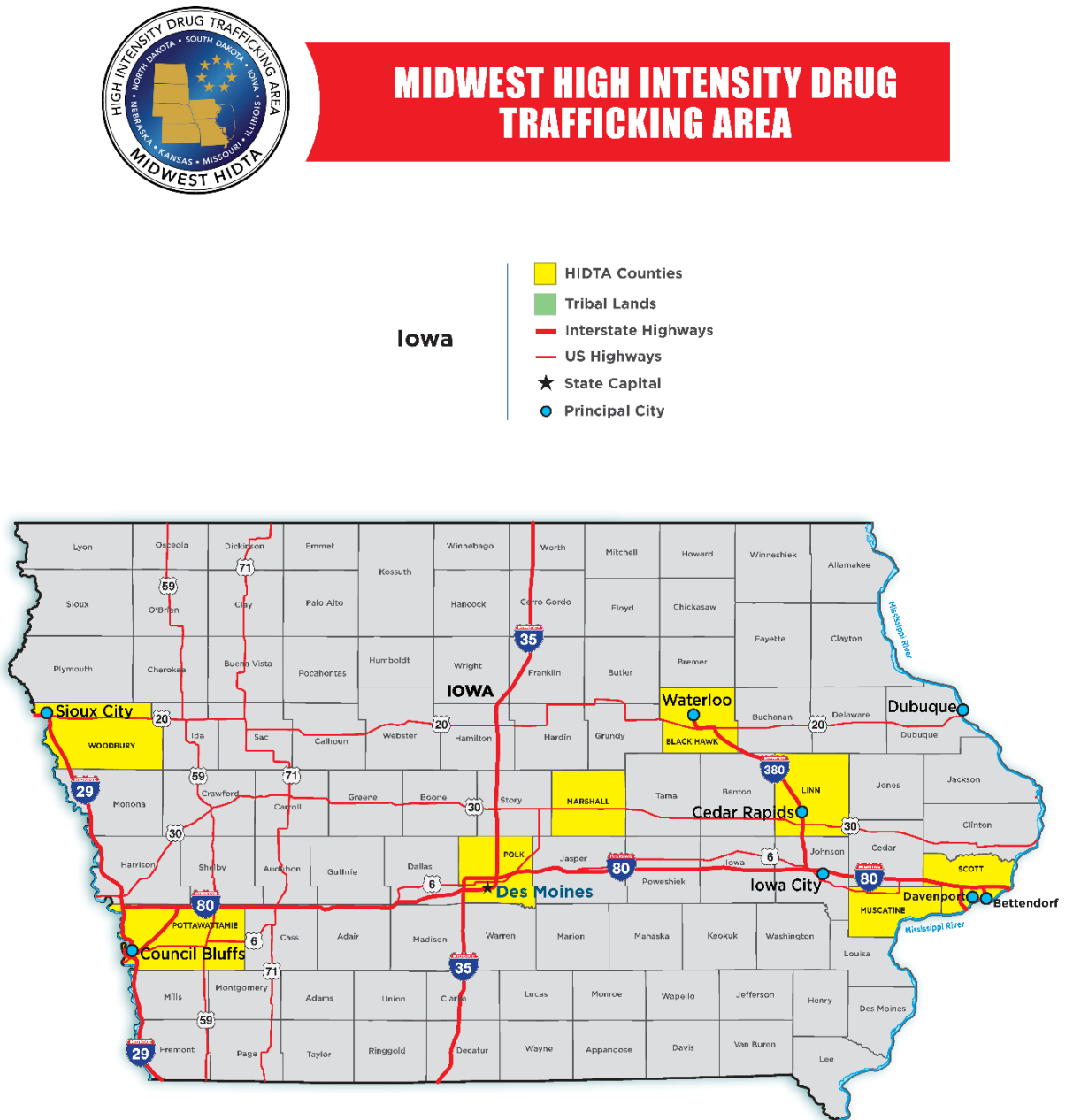


Figure 17. Detailed Map of Kansas Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.



MIDWEST HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA

Kansas

- HIDTA Counties
- Tribal Lands
- Interstate Highways
- US Highways
- State Capital
- Principal City

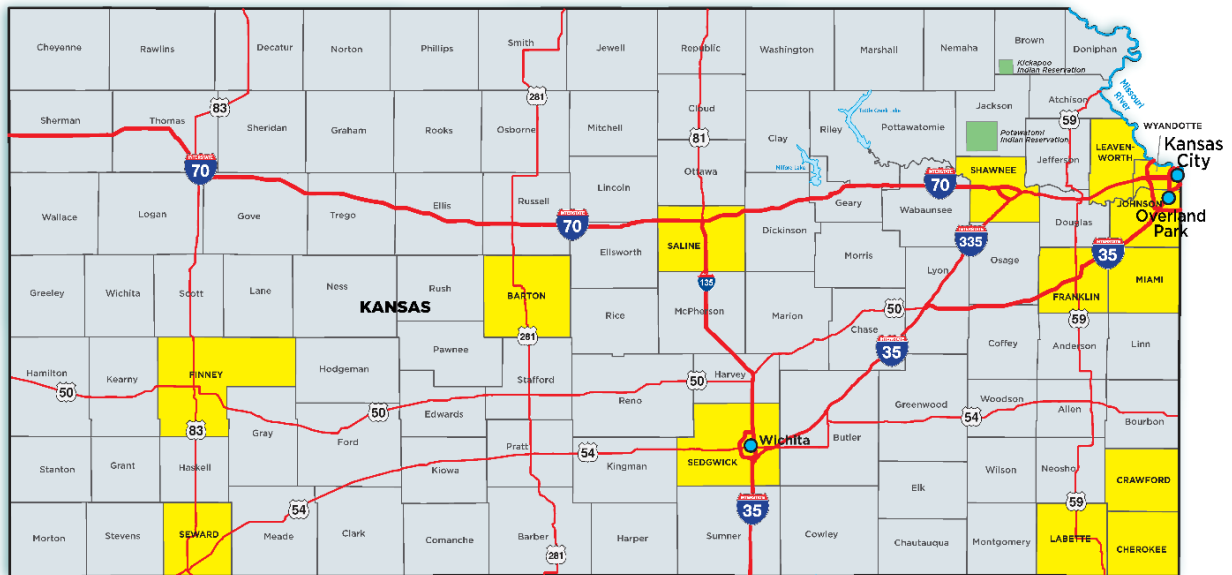


Figure 18. Detailed Map of Missouri Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.

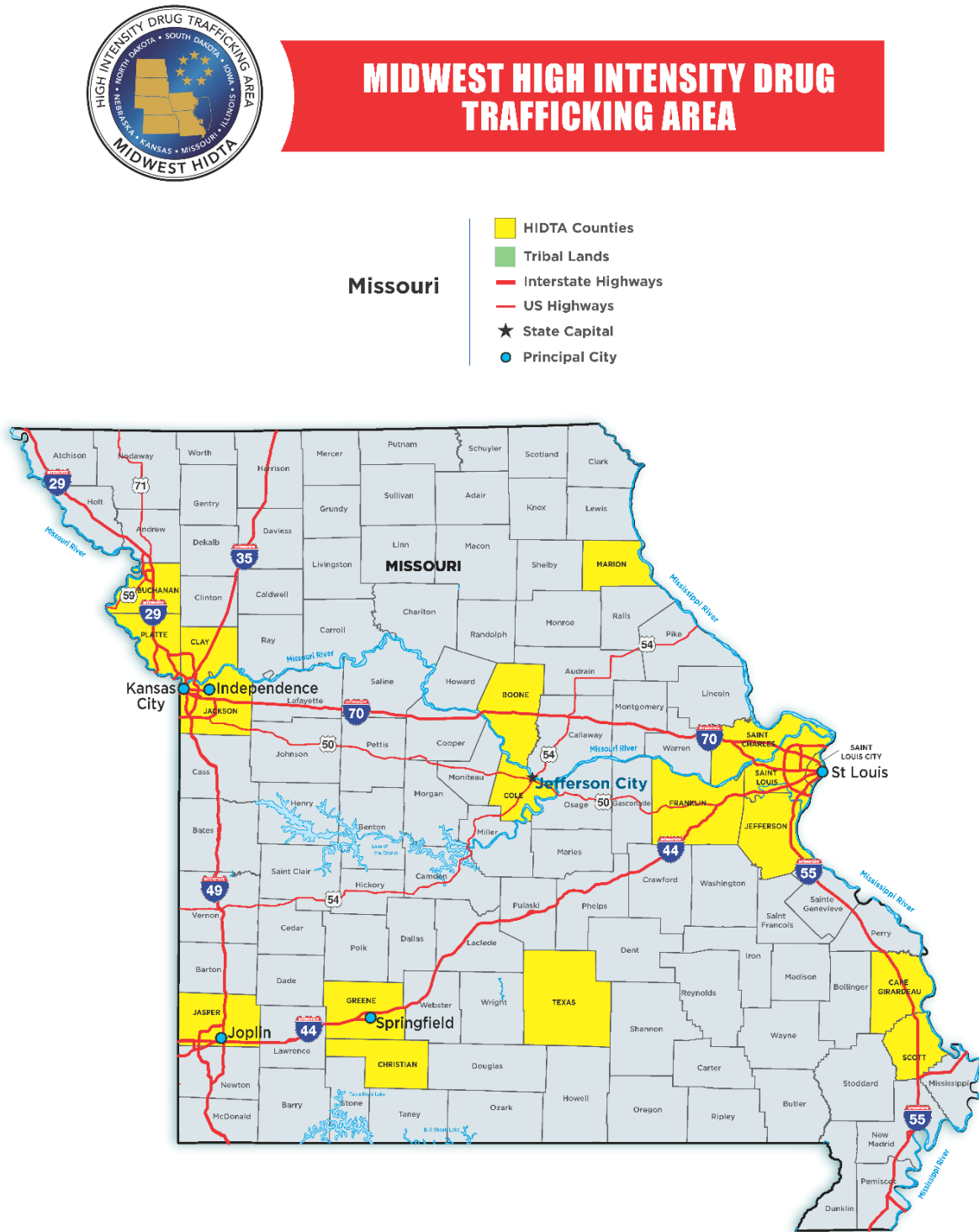


Figure 19. Detailed Map of Nebraska Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.



MIDWEST HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA

Nebraska

- HIDTA Counties
- Tribal Lands
- Interstate Highways
- US Highways
- State Capital
- Principal City

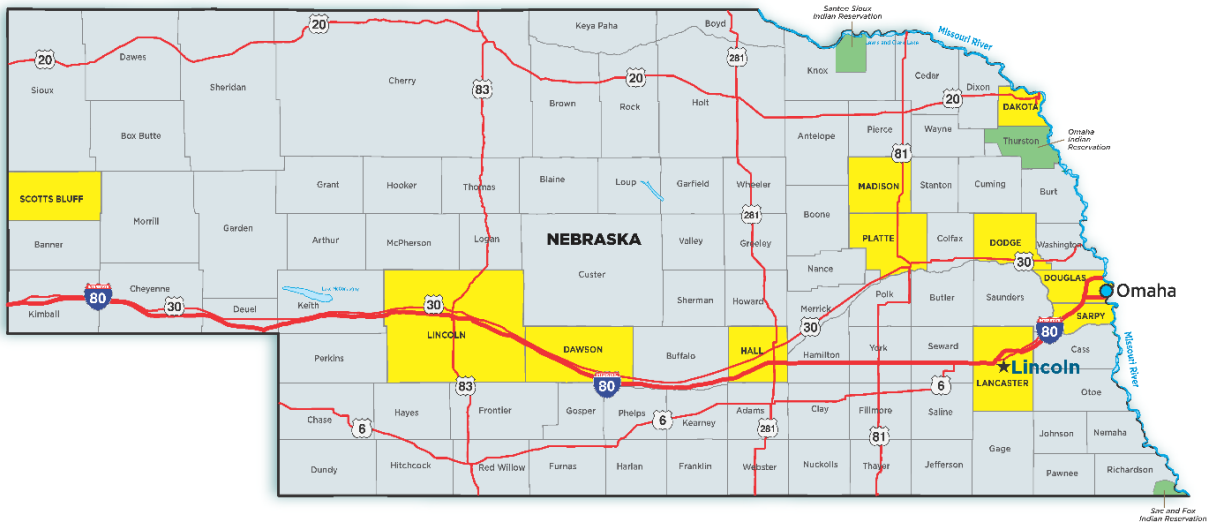
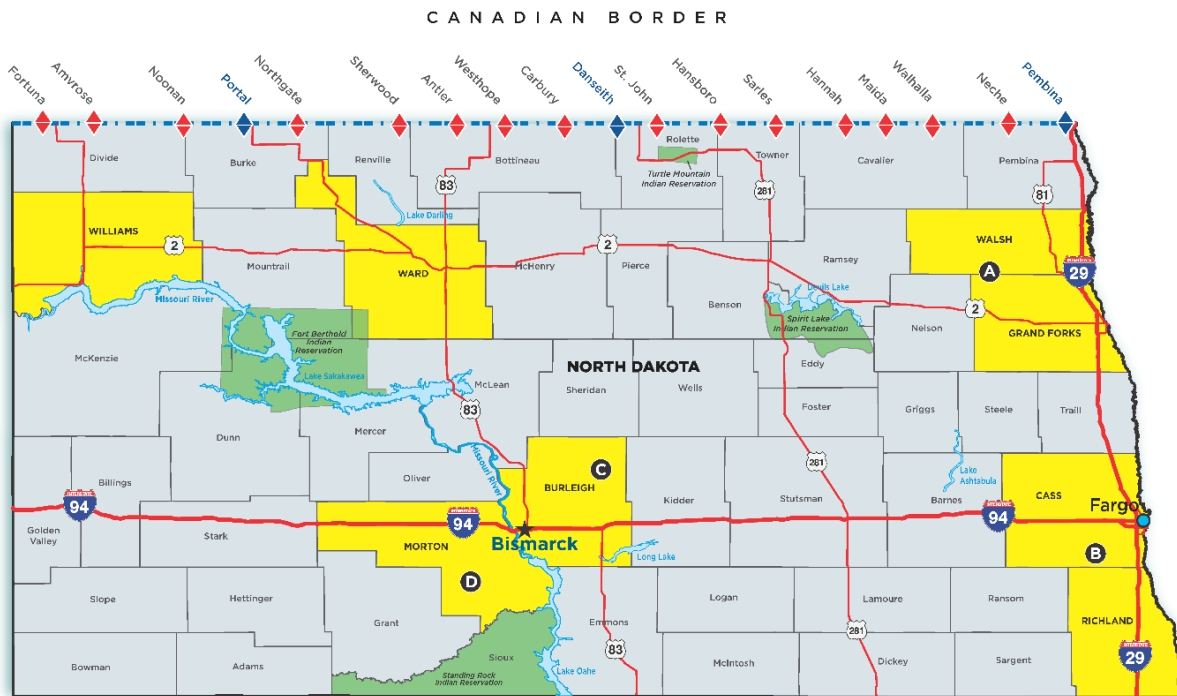


Figure 20. Detailed Map of North Dakota Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties, Ports of Entry with Canada, and Major Highway Systems.



MIDWEST HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA



North Dakota

- HIDTA Counties
- Tribal Lands
- Interstate Highways
- US Highways
- State Capital
- Principal City
- 24-Hr Port of Entry
- Port of Entry

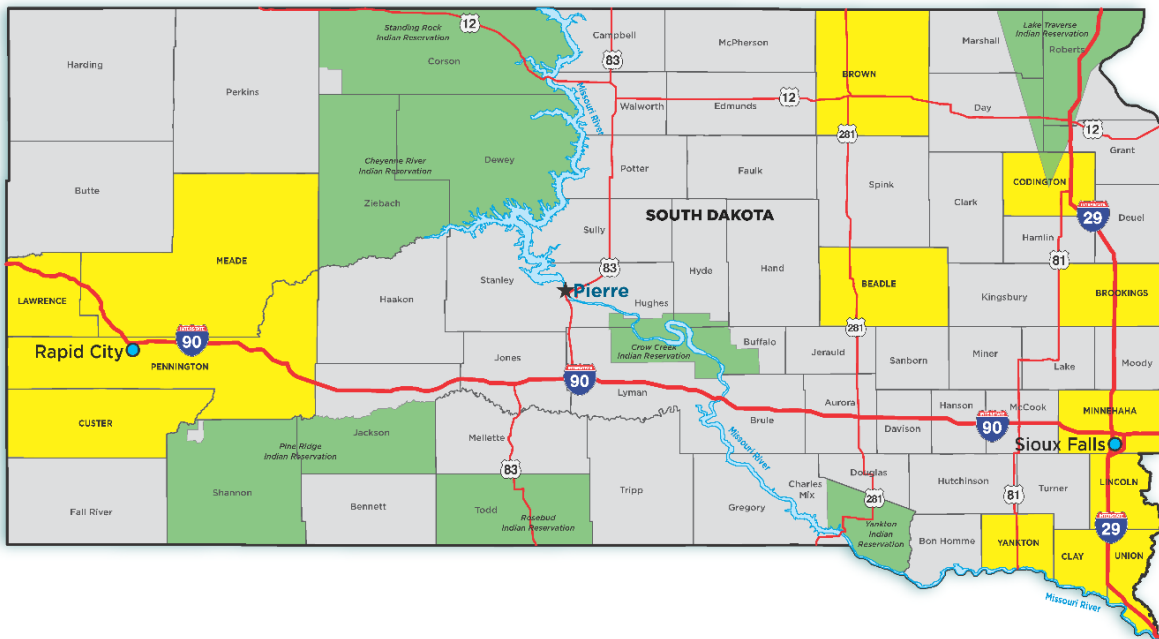
Figure 21. Detailed Map of South Dakota Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.



MIDWEST HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA

South Dakota

- HIDTA Counties
- Tribal Lands
- Interstate Highways
- US Highways
- ★ State Capital
- Principal City



Appendix VI: State-Level Data Tables

Table 26. LES and PHS: Greatest Drug Threats by State

Law Enforcement Survey: Top Drug Threats By State		
	Primary Threat	Secondary Threat
Illinois	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Iowa	Methamphetamine	Fentanyl
Kansas	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Missouri	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Nebraska	TIED: Fentanyl Methamphetamine	TIED: Fentanyl Methamphetamine
North Dakota	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
South Dakota	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Public Health Survey: Top Drug Threats By State		
	Primary Threat	
Iowa	N/A	
Kansas	Fentanyl	
Missouri	Fentanyl	
Nebraska	Methamphetamine	
North Dakota	N/A	
South Dakota	Methamphetamine	

Table 27. LES: Drug Availability by State

Law Enforcement Survey: Level of Availability By State (LES)							
	Illinois	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
Cocaine	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
CPDs	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate
Fentanyl Pills	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Fentanyl Powder	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-High	High	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Low
Heroin	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate	High
Marijuana	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Methamphetamine	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
NPSs	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Low	Low	Moderate
Psychedelics	Low	Moderate-Low	Low	Moderate-Low	Low	Moderate-Low	Moderate

Appendix VII: Drug Trafficking Organization Summary Table

Table 28. DTO Summary Table for All Identified DTOs Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.

Midwest HIDTA DTOs Identified in 2022	
Characteristics	
Identified	955
- International	96
- Multi-State	511
- Local	348
Total Members (Leaders)	8,469 (1,381)
Average DTO Size	10.31
Multi-ethnic	382
Gang Related	254
Violent	400
Polydrug	253
Money Laundering Activities	84
Federal Case Designations	
OCDEF	105
CPOT	8
RPOT	3
PTO	108

Appendix VIII: Drug Trafficking Organization Summary Table by State

The individual DTO summary table for each state may be found in the following figures. Illinois may be found in Table 29, Iowa may be found in Table 30, Kansas in Table 31, Missouri in Table 32, Nebraska in Table 33, North Dakota in Table 34, and South Dakota in Table 35. The tables present information on the DTOs found in each state that were identified in 2022.

Table 29. DTO Summary Table for all DTOs Identified in Illinois.

Illinois DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	68
- International	2
- Multi-State	51
- Local	15
Total Members (Leaders)	276 (68)
Average DTO Size	5.06
Multi-ethnic	12
Gang Related	7
Violent	18
Polydrug	11
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	0

Table 30. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in Iowa.

Iowa DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	132
- International	5
- Multi-State	86
- Local	41
Total Members (Leaders)	820 (143)
Average DTO Size	7.3
Multi-ethnic	45
Gang Related	11
Violent	19
Polydrug	19
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	12
CPOT	1
RPOT	0
PTO	19

Table 31. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in Kansas.

Kansas DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	71
- International	14
- Multi-State	31
- Local	26
Total Members (Leaders)	624 (132)
Average DTO Size	10.65
Multi-ethnic	27
Gang Related	16
Violent	31
Polydrug	32
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	11
CPOT	1
RPOT	2
PTO	23

Table 32. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in Missouri.

Missouri DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	374
- International	30
- Multi-State	161
- Local	183
Total Members (Leaders)	4,164 (646)
Average DTO Size	12.86
Multi-ethnic	138
Gang Related	153
Violent	224
Polydrug	129
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	59
CPOT	5
RPOT	0
PTO	14

Table 33. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in Nebraska.

Nebraska DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	147
- International	38
- Multi-State	53
- Local	56
Total Members (Leaders)	1,172 (201)
Average DTO Size	9.34
Multi-ethnic	64
Gang Related	46
Violent	71
Polydrug	23
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	19
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	37

Table 34. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in North Dakota.

North Dakota DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	82
- International	3
- Multi-State	63
- Local	16
Total Members (Leaders)	833 (110)
Average DTO Size	11.5
Multi-ethnic	40
Gang Related	6
Violent	21
Polydrug	18
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	2
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	15

Table 35. DTO Summary Table for all Identified DTOs Operating in South Dakota.

South Dakota DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	81
- International	4
- Multi-State	66
- Local	11
Total Members (Leaders)	580 (81)
Average DTO Size	8.16
Multi-ethnic	56
Gang Related	15
Violent	16
Polydrug	21
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	2
CPOT	1
RPOT	1
PTO	0

Appendix IX: Money Laundering Organization Summary Table by State**Table 36. MLO Summary Table for all Identified MLOs Operating in Illinois.**

Illinois MLOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	2
- International	1
- Multi-State	1
- Local	0
Total Members (Leaders)	8 (2)
Multi-ethnic	1
Gang Related	0
Violent	0
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	0

Table 37. MLO Summary Table for all Identified MLOs Operating in Missouri.

Missouri MLOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	1
- International	0
- Multi-State	0
- Local	1
Total Members (Leaders)	21 (2)
Multi-ethnic	1
Gang Related	1
Violent	1
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	0

Table 38. MLO Summary Table for all Identified MLOs Operating in Nebraska.

Nebraska MLOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	1
- International	0
- Multi-State	0
- Local	1
Total Members (Leaders)	12 (1)
Multi-ethnic	0
Gang Related	1
Violent	1
Federal Case Designations	
OCDEF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0
PTO	0

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