



2024 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment

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I. Scope

The 2024 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 cocaine are the region's second and third-greatest drug threats, respectively. A slightly higher percentage of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) were found to be violent in 2023 compared to the previous year, while a slightly lower percentage were gang connected. Polydrug DTOs remained the same percentage from 2022 to 2023, 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:

- ❖ Methamphetamine, marijuana, and fentanyl are the most widely available and widely used drugs in Midwest HIDTA.
- ❖ The trend of mixing fentanyl and other synthetic opioids into other drugs in the region's illicit drug supply continues, as reported by both law enforcement and public health agencies.
- ❖ 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 Midwest HIDTA.
- ❖ Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives documented 1,039 DTOs and 5 money laundering organizations (MLOs) operating within the region in 2023, with 8,680 members and 1,447 leaders identified.¹ This is a nine percent increase from the 955 DTOs identified in 2022.
- ❖ DTOs in Midwest HIDTA utilize technologies to facilitate communication, obtain payment, and monitor drug courier location. These platforms include encrypted messaging applications, social media, and portable GPS devices.

^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.

- ❖ Midwest HIDTA experienced a one percent increase in drug-related poisoning deaths from 2021 to 2022. Seventy-seven percent of these deaths involved opioids including fentanyl and heroin.^{2 c}

III. The Midwest HIDTA Region

The Midwest HIDTA region is a vast and varied area with equally diverse drug threats. The region spans more than 428,000 square miles, making it the largest by geographic area of the 33 HDTAs. 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). Midwest HIDTA has a total of 60 initiatives (see Appendix III for complete list, by state), including 43 drug enforcement task forces, 6 domestic highway interdiction initiatives, 5 intelligence initiatives, and 6 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 area comprising Midwest HIDTA to be over 16.02 million in 2023. The region is comprised of metropolitan districts, medium and small cities, and many rural areas. The most populous urban centers are St. Louis, MO-IL; 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 2022 U.S. Census Bureau information, which is not yet available for 2023. However, less than half of the overall population of 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. 2022 U.S. Population Ranking of the Most Populated Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the Midwest HIDTA Region.^{3 d}

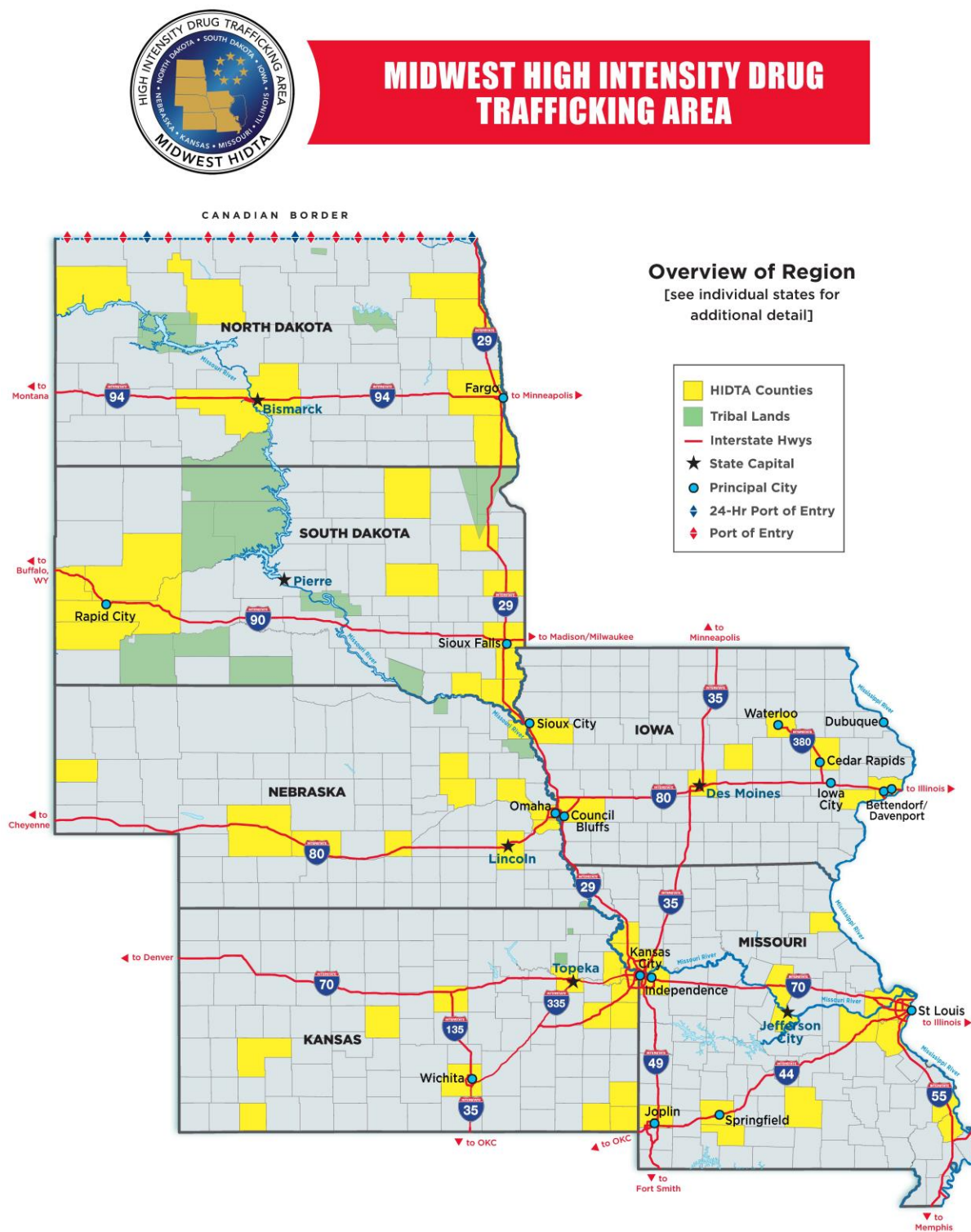
2022 Ranking of the Most Populated Metropolitan Areas		
U.S. Population Ranking	City, State	2022 Estimated Population
21	St. Louis, MO-IL	2,801,319
31	Kansas City, KS-MO	2,209,494
58	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	967,671
82	Des Moines, IA	729,053
93	Wichita, KS	650,039

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

^d 2023 metropolitan statistical area data from the U.S. Census Bureau is not yet available.

Considered the heartland of the country, the population of 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.

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

Midwest HIDTA assesses that private passenger vehicles, the 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 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.

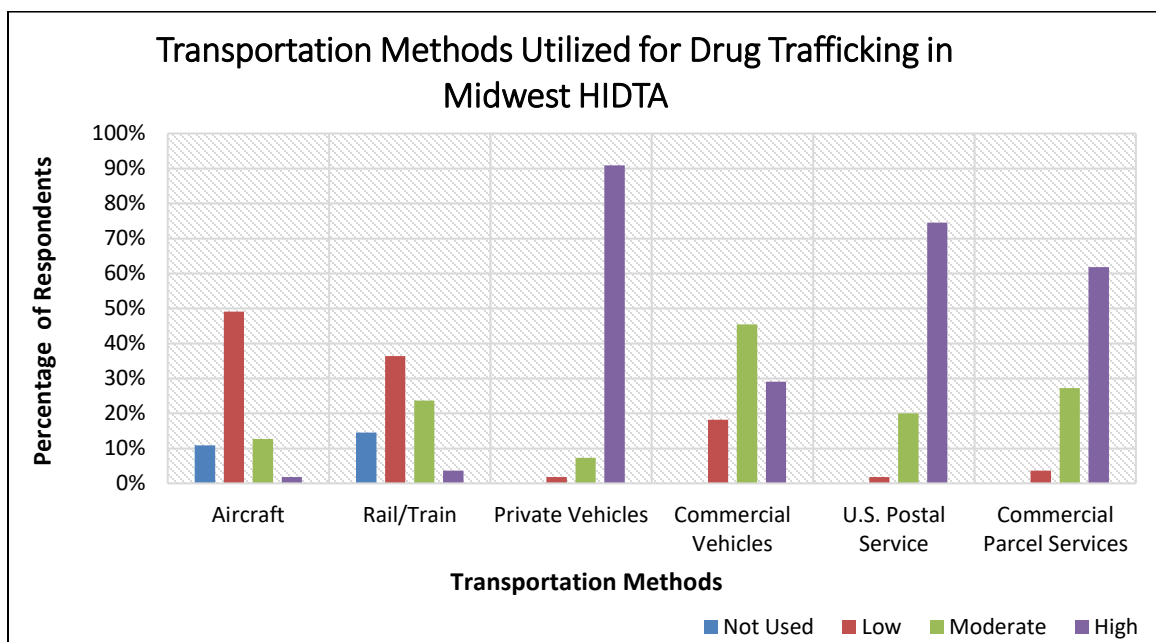
I-35 is a particularly useful transportation route for Mexican DTOs.⁴ Converging with I-70 and I-29 in Kansas City, I-35 covers approximately 1,568 miles in the U.S., from Laredo, Texas, to Duluth, Minnesota, and runs directly through Midwest HIDTA in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa. Following I-35 into Mexico, 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 Midwest HIDTA to traffic drugs, 91 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 (75 percent) and commercial parcel services (62 percent). Commercial vehicles, such as tractor-trailers, were also frequently used to transport drugs in Midwest HIDTA, with 29 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reporting use as high and 45 percent reporting use as moderate. Drugs transported via tractor-trailer may be hidden within legitimate cargo items to avoid law enforcement detection or found in the cabin of the tractor. Midwest HIDTA, as a large transshipment area, sees the movement of vehicles such as cars, trucks and SUVs on tractor-trailers. Drugs have been

increasingly discovered in vehicles that are being hauled by tractor-trailer within the region. 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 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 87 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported a high level of interstate highway use by DTOs. U.S. highways (82 percent) and state highways/rural roads (49 percent) were also reported by Midwest HIDTA initiatives to be highly used by DTOs to traffic drugs.

IV. Drug Threats

1. Overview of All Drug Threats

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. 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.^g

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

^g Arrows indicate the movement of drug types within the ranking of drug threats.

2. Fentanyl

A. Overview

For the second year, Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives and public health respondents 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 and property crime, the high availability, and the high likelihood of poisoning. Sixty-seven percent of law enforcement initiatives ranked fentanyl as the greatest threat in their respective areas of responsibility (AORs), while 51 percent of PHS respondents ranked fentanyl as their greatest drug threat. Fentanyl has infiltrated rural and urban markets, and is the opioid with both the greatest use and abuse within the region.

Fentanyl, fentanyl analogs, and other synthetic opioids such as metonitazene and protonitazene, are usually produced in laboratories by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in Mexico before being transported into the Midwest HIDTA region with precursors provided from China.⁷ Some synthetic opioid abusers in the region purchase the drugs directly through the internet or dark web sources.⁸ It is also found in opioid and stimulant counterfeit pharmaceuticals and mixed with cocaine and methamphetamine in the region.⁹ Drug users of non-opioids and counterfeit pharmaceuticals can be unaware that the drugs they purchase and abuse have been mixed with fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, which increases the risk of poisoning.¹⁰

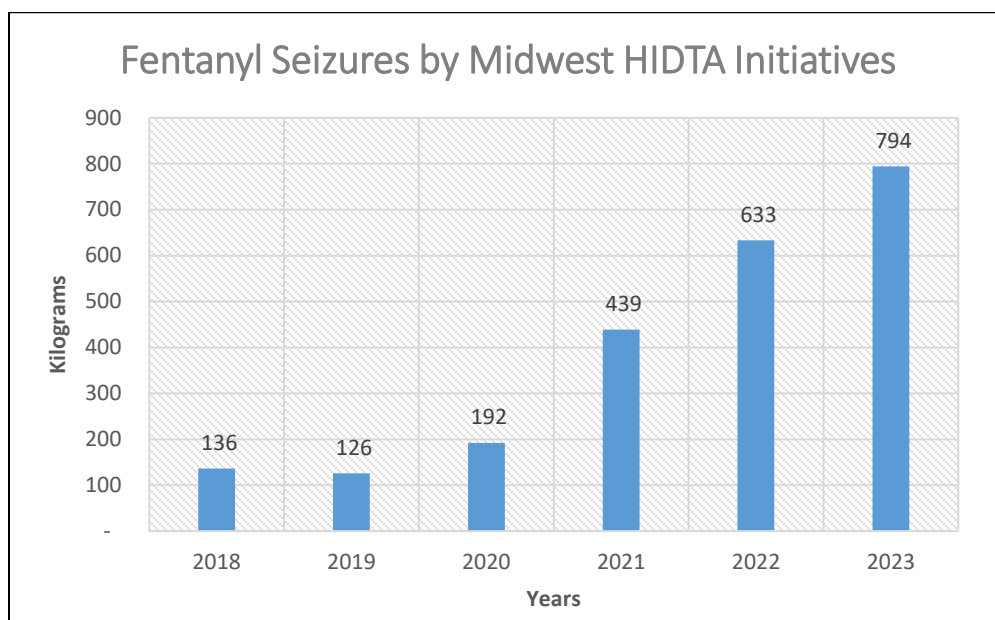
Fentanyl is often found to be mixed with a variety of other drugs including heroin, benzodiazepines, and other synthetic opioids such as metonitazene and protonitazene. An additive of note that is a cause for public health concern is xylazine, an unscheduled veterinary anesthetic. Xylazine is responsible for an increase in severe necrotic wounds, not limited to injection sites, 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.¹¹ Forensic laboratories within the Midwest HIDTA region have identified xylazine within the fentanyl supply in the region.¹² Public health respondents noted an increase in xylazine use related wounds appearing in the region. Due to xylazine being unregulated in the Midwest HIDTA region, it is difficult to know the true extent of the issue in the region.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the availability of fentanyl in the region as high. This was corroborated by the majority of 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 45 percent indicated fentanyl powder as being highly available. Fentanyl powder comes in a variety of colors

including white, brown, pink, and purple. Fentanyl seizures increased by 25 percent in the Midwest HIDTA region between 2022 (633 kilograms/1,396 pounds) to 2023 (794 kilograms/1,750 pounds). Figure 3 shows the increase of fentanyl seized by Midwest HIDTA initiatives between 2018 and 2023 for the region, as reported through the ONDCP Performance Measurement Process (PMP) data.

Figure 3. Fentanyl Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.¹³



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the level of use in the region as high for fentanyl, as indicated by 78 percent of law enforcement initiatives responding that fentanyl pill use is high and 43 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 27 percent of initiatives listed fentanyl as the drug responsible for the greatest level of violence, the second highest contributor to violent crimes. Fentanyl is also the second highest contributor to property crimes with approximately 15 percent of initiatives indicating thus.

The PHS respondents that work in treatment noted that fentanyl was the drug with the highest increase of inpatient admissions. Approximately 83 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.

Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region

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

Methamphetamine was the drug most commonly taken in combination with fentanyl in 2023, according to Midwest HIDTA's public health partners. Fentanyl was listed as being combined with everything including marijuana and cocaine by public health partners.

Counterfeit controlled prescription drugs (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 with them, such as teenagers. The most common counterfeit prescription containing fentanyl takes the form of round, blue in color, oxycodone 30 mg pills. Many poisonings across both the Midwest HIDTA region and the 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," "blues," and "30s"



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 Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota between 2018 and 2022. The cause for the decrease in other opiates inpatient admissions for the TEDS data is unknown at this time. Missouri and North Dakota were the states in the region reporting an increase in treatment admissions for opiates other than heroin, which rose 84 percent and 53 percent, respectively, for the same period. Kansas experienced an increase from 2018 to 2021 with a decrease in admissions in 2022.¹⁴

Table 3. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Other Opiates¹⁵

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Other Opiates*						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	1,259	586	3,526	364	163	345
2019	1,166	399	3,686	295	227	264
2020	861	406	3,724	227	177	208
2021	859	629	5,107	138	208	201
2022	597	566	6,500	218	249	244

*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 September 30, 2023.

Not only are more people using illicit fentanyl, it is often combined 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 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. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Fentanyl¹⁶

Unit of Measurement	Fentanyl	
	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$20,000-\$60,000	\$34,523
Ounce	\$200-\$1,800	\$1,074
Gram	\$12-\$400	\$113
1/2 Gram	\$67-\$175	\$115
1/10 Gram	\$15-\$50	\$26
Capsule	\$2-\$20	\$3
Pill	\$1-\$50	\$13

Table 5. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Counterfeit CPDs containing Fentanyl¹⁷

Unit of Measurement	Oxycodone (OxyContin)	
	Range	Average
Per Pill	\$1-\$42	\$9

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of the region's fentanyl supply originates from Mexico and China. 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;¹⁸ two milligrams is considered a potentially lethal dose. The DEA's forensic laboratories' testing had indicated that 7 out of 10 pills seized by DEA contain a lethal dose of fentanyl.¹⁹

F. Transportation

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

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?
- Is there a demand for xylazine adulterated fentanyl in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- Where in the drug distribution process is xylazine being added to fentanyl?

3. Methamphetamine

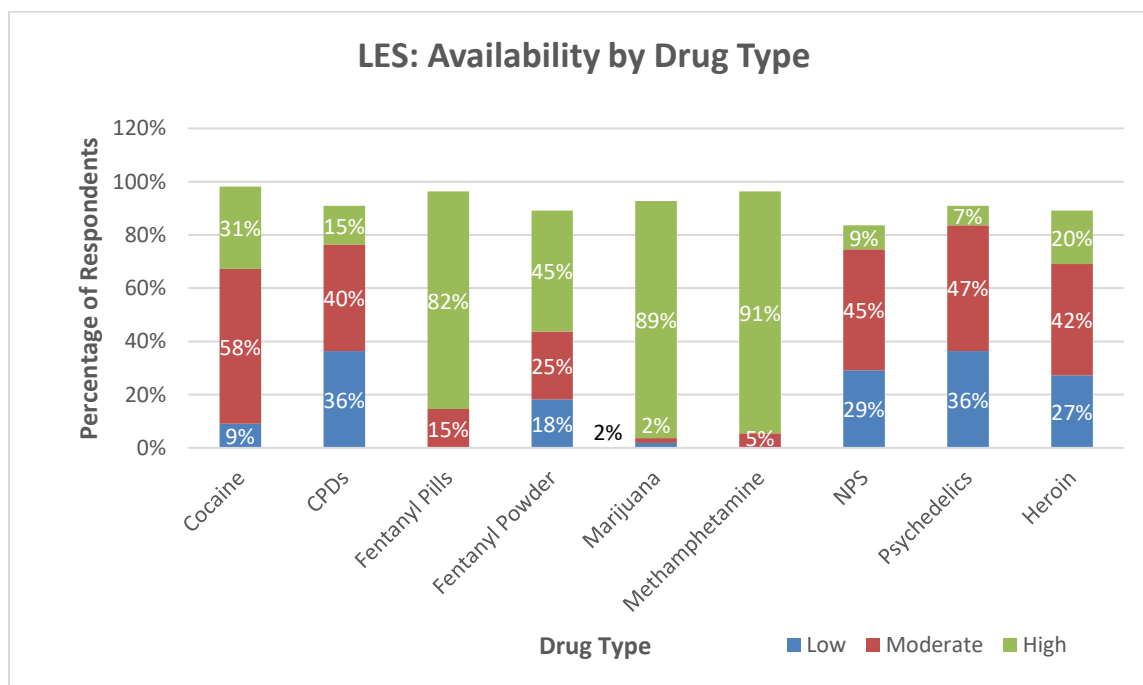
A. Overview

Methamphetamine, for the second 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. Sixty 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 66 percent of PHS respondents indicating the drug as the greatest or the second greatest drug threat in their area. Forty-nine percent of the region's drug poisoning deaths in 2022 involved psychostimulants, which include drugs such as methamphetamine, Adderall, and Ritalin.

B. Availability

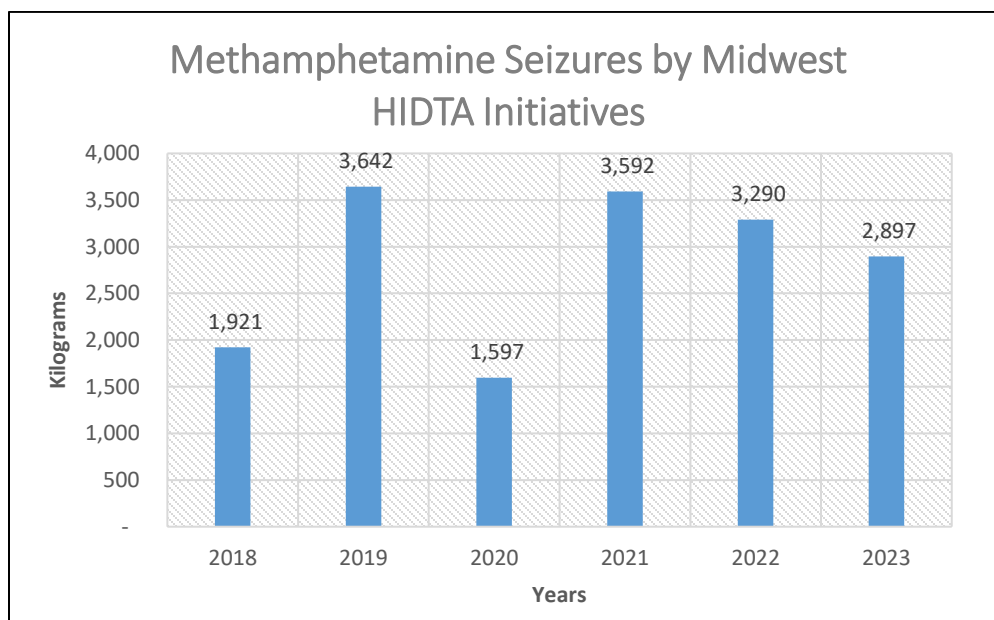
The Midwest HIDTA assesses the supply of methamphetamine in the Midwest region as high, with its popularity unlikely to fade. LES respondents ranked methamphetamine as more available than any other drug type. In fact, 91 percent of survey respondents indicated that methamphetamine is highly available in their respective AORs. By comparison, 89 percent of respondents indicated marijuana as highly available and 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.²⁰



Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 2,897 kilograms (6,387 pounds) of methamphetamine in 2023, a decrease of 12 percent from 2022. 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 2018 to 2023.

Figure 5. Methamphetamine Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.²¹



C. Use

Eighty-nine 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 approximately 62 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives that identified methamphetamine as the drug responsible for the greatest level of violence while 76 percent of respondents indicated it as the drug most responsible for property crime.

Of the PHS respondents that operated an inpatient/outpatient admissions program, approximately 43 percent noted an increase in inpatient admissions for methamphetamine in their areas, while 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^h in South Dakota increased between 2018

^h 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.

and 2022. Nebraska peaked in 2019 and have decreased into 2022. North Dakota and Iowa have seen a decrease in amphetamine admissions from 2018 to 2022. Missouri peaked in 2019 with a steep decrease in the following year, followed by subsequent increases into 2022. Kansas displays no clear trend.

Table 6. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Amphetamines²²

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Amphetamines						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	8,434	4,403	9,761	3,612	1,464	2,997
2019	8,664	5,177	9,985	3,756	1,184	3,360
2020	7,394	4,494	7,288	2,941	1,053	3,020
2021	7,196	5,680	8,306	1,822	988	3,248
2022	5,690	3,879	9,389	1,591	823	3,472

*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 September 30, 2023.

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 purity and relatively cheap price in the Midwest HIDTA AOR.

D. Price

The dominant form of methamphetamine in Midwest HIDTA is crystal methamphetamine, which is reflected in the pricing table below.

Table 7. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Crystal Methamphetamine²³

Crystal Methamphetamine		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$2,500-\$5,500	\$3,618
Pound	\$900-\$6,000	\$2,534
1/2 Pound	\$750-\$3,500	\$1,890
1/4 Pound	\$300-\$2,400	\$1,061
Ounce	\$90-\$1,200	\$326
1/2 Ounce	\$80-\$500	\$247
1/8 Ounce (8-Ball)	\$25-\$283	\$94
Gram	\$7-\$125	\$45

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of methamphetamine in the region was produced in Mexico. Although approximately 31 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 lithium ammonia/anhydrous ammonia/ephedrine process. Large-scale foreign labs have replaced the majority of the Midwest HIDTA region’s local clandestine methamphetamine labs since the late 2000s; therefore, the regional supply of methamphetamine is mostly trafficked in from Mexico. Mexico-based “super labs” are capable of producing massive quantities of highly potent methamphetamine.²⁴ 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.²⁵ 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.²⁶

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 low-risk concealment method. Methamphetamine in solution can be concealed within other

Novel Concealment Method

In 2023, two known instances of methamphetamine in solution in liquid laundry soap were discovered destined for Topeka, KS. The laundry soap was contained within 5-gallon buckets. Methamphetamine in solution would imply that the liquid soap buckets would be destined for a conversion laboratory to be reconstituted into crystal methamphetamine for distribution.

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, 20 percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported the presence of at least one methamphetamine conversion laboratory in their area.

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the full extent of methamphetamine conversion laboratory utilization in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- How often is methamphetamine mixed with fentanyl?
- At what step of the distribution process, is methamphetamine and fentanyl combined?
- How many counterfeit prescription pills contain methamphetamine?
- What is the reason(s) behind the decrease in methamphetamine seizures within the Midwest HIDTA region?

4. Cocaine

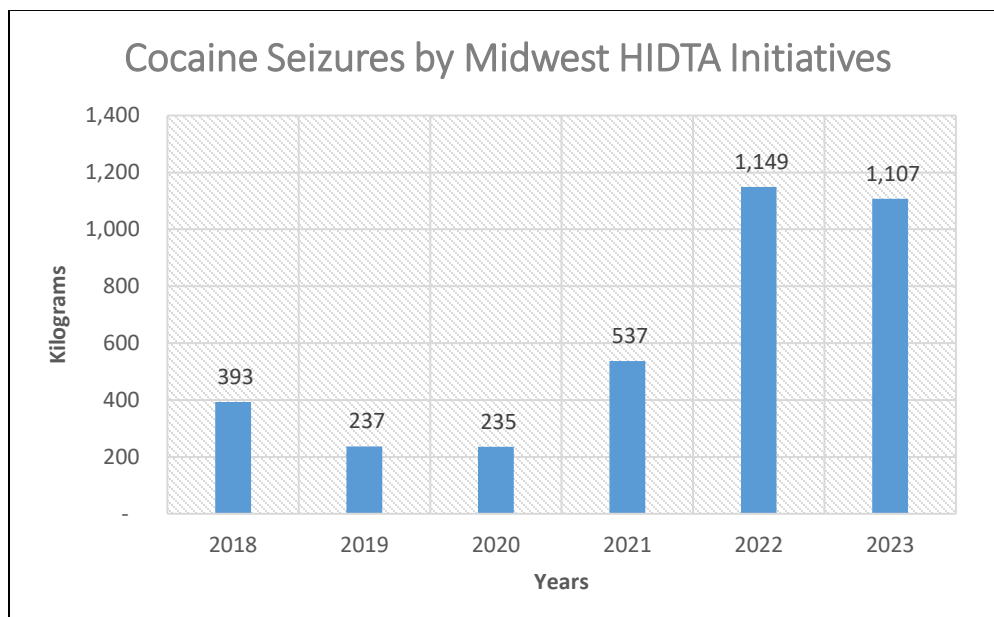
A. Overview

Midwest HIDTA ranks cocaine as the third greatest drug threat. Seventy-five percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported cocaine as the third (approximately 35 percent) and fourth (31 percent) greatest drug threats. PHS respondents considered cocaine to be their fifth primary drug threat, with 28 percent of respondents indicating this. Cocaine's expanded availability, and the surge in it being mixed with fentanyl or xylazine, has increased the threat posed by the drug.

B. Availability

The Midwest HIDTA assesses cocaine availability as moderate throughout the region. This is corroborated by the majority (58 percent) of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reporting cocaine's availability as moderate in their areas. The percentage of initiatives indicating cocaine availability as high increased from 16 percent in last year's survey, to 31 percent in the current survey. Seizures of cocaine by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in 2023 decreased four percent from 2022 with initiatives seizing 1,107 kilograms (2,441 pounds). Cocaine seizures by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2018 to 2023 can be found in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Cocaine Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.²⁷



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses cocaine use throughout the region as moderate. Fifty-six 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, 45 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 of which being fentanyl.

The TEDS data in Table 8 demonstrates a decrease in the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving cocaine in every state between 2018 and 2022 for every state except North Dakota which shows no clear trend.

Table 8. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Cocaine²⁸

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Cocaine						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	497	360	1,100	185	16	76
2019	419	393	1,129	164	11	57
2020	346	342	726	132	22	70
2021	266	322	720	100	9	53
2022	326	262	860	78	20	54
*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 September 30, 2023.						

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 9.

Table 9. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Cocaine²⁹

Cocaine		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$14,500-\$32,000	\$22,083
Ounce	\$350-\$2,000	\$1,081
1/8 Ounce (8-Ball)	\$75-\$350	\$203
Gram	\$20-\$150	\$79

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. Cocaine production in Colombia, the largest producer of coca and cocaine, increased 24 percent from 2021 (1,400 tons) to 2022 (1,738 tons) according to United Nations data.³⁰ Seizures of cocaine by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for fiscal year 2023 (81.1 thousand pounds) resulted in a 15 percent increase from 2022 (70.3 thousand pounds) seizures, suggesting that there may have been a production increase of cocaine in coca-producing countries in 2023.³¹

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.³² 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 seaboard.^{33 34}

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the reason(s) for the increase in cocaine seized in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- What other drugs are mixed with cocaine in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- At which step of the distribution system, are other drugs added to cocaine during cocaine trafficking?

5. Heroin

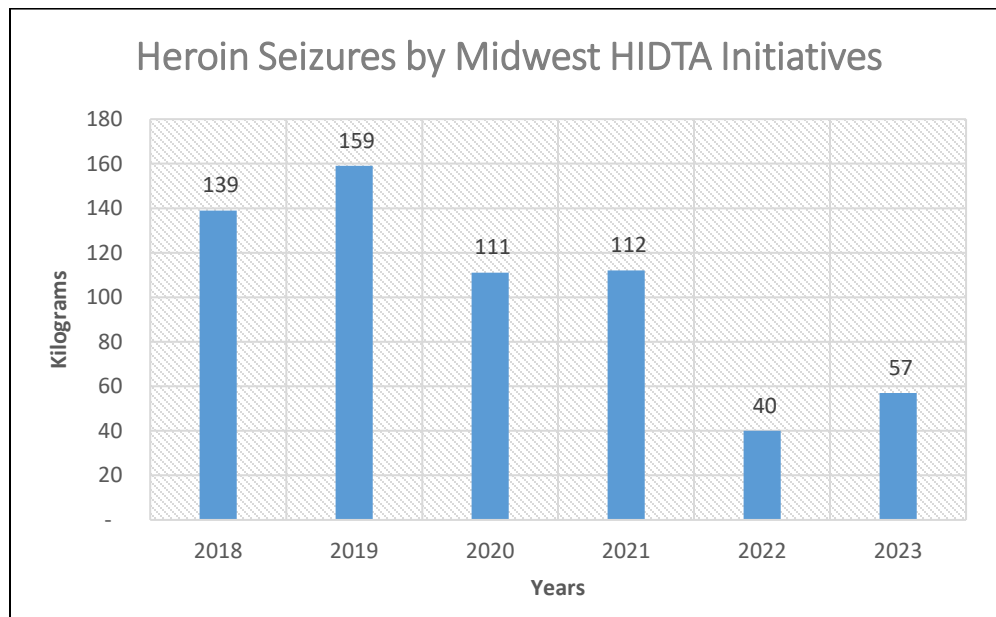
A. Overview

Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives report heroin as the fourth greatest drug threat after cocaine. Heroin, mixed with stronger opioids such as fentanyl, result in an increased likelihood of poisoning. Eighteen percent of law enforcement initiatives ranked heroin as the fourth greatest threat while 25 percent ranked heroin as their third greatest threat in their respective AORs. Twenty percent of PHS respondents ranked heroin as their fourth greatest drug threat. Heroin is now 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.³⁵

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 42 percent of the Midwest HIDTA's law enforcement initiatives. Seizures of heroin by Midwest HIDTA initiatives increased by 44 percent from 2022 (40 kilograms/88 pounds) to 2023 (57 kilograms/126 pounds). Figures 7 presents the heroin seized by Midwest HIDTA initiatives between 2018 and 2023.

Figure 7. Heroin Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.³⁶



C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the level of heroin use in the region as moderate, as indicated by approximately 44 percent of law enforcement initiatives. Thirty-three percent of public health

respondents noted that heroin admissions stayed the same in their areas. Heroin is often combined with 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 10, the number of admissions to drug treatment facilities for a substance use disorder involving heroin, decreased in every Midwest HIDTA state from 2018 to 2022.

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Heroin						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	1,098	289	7,389	123	199	219
2019	1,097	258	5,737	150	148	234
2020	1,012	268	4,173	153	132	151
2021	853	468	3,517	97	146	143
2022	633	215	2,595	61	49	91

*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 September 30, 2023.

Table 10. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Heroin³⁷

D. Price

The price of heroin varies significantly throughout the Midwest HIDTA 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 11 below.

Table 11. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Heroin³⁸

Unit of Measurement	Heroin	
	Range	Average
Kilogram	\$30,000-\$35,000	\$32,250
Ounce	\$1,000-\$2,000	\$1,563
Gram	\$57-\$300	\$149
1/2 Gram	\$20-\$219	\$107
1/10 Gram	\$20-\$100	\$42
Capsule	\$2-\$10	\$5

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 from previous years and an increase in fentanyl seizures, suggesting that Mexican DTOs have shifted their focus from heroin cultivation to fentanyl production.

F. Transportation

Heroin is primarily transported into the area via private passenger vehicles.³⁹

G. Intelligence Gaps

- What is the demand for unadulterated heroin within the Midwest HIDTA region?
- What is the reason(s) for the continued increase in heroin seizures in the Midwest HIDTA region?

6. Controlled Prescription Drugs

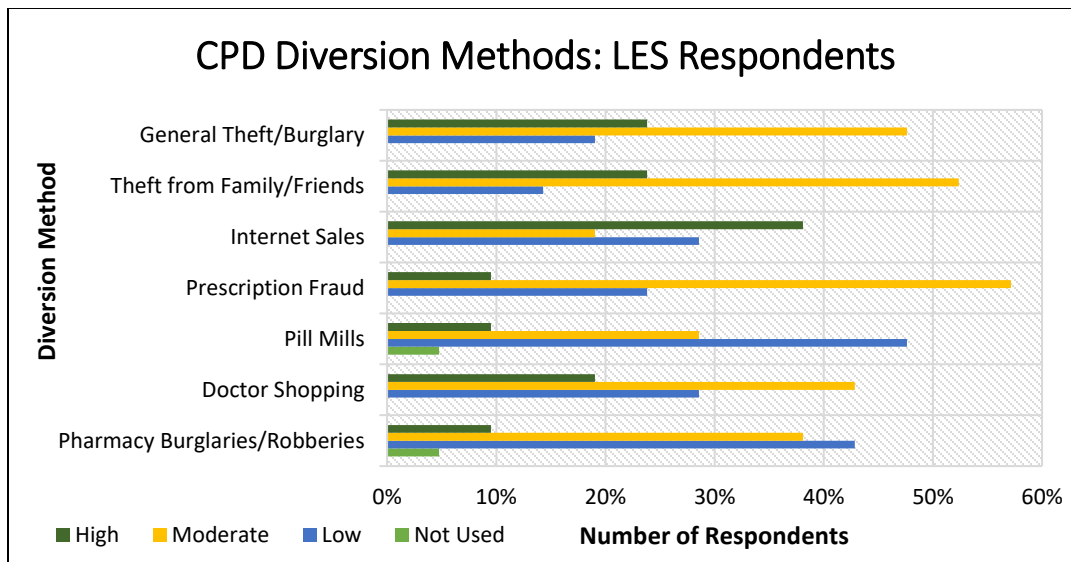
A. Overview

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-five percent of LES respondents ranked CPDs as the fifth drug threat in their AORs. Though 28 percent of PHS respondents reported CPDs as their third drug threat, their threat ranking is lower due to the lower availability and use compared to higher threat rankings. The legal yet controlled status of CPDs has resulted in their moderate to low levels of availability and low level of use in the Midwest HIDTA region.

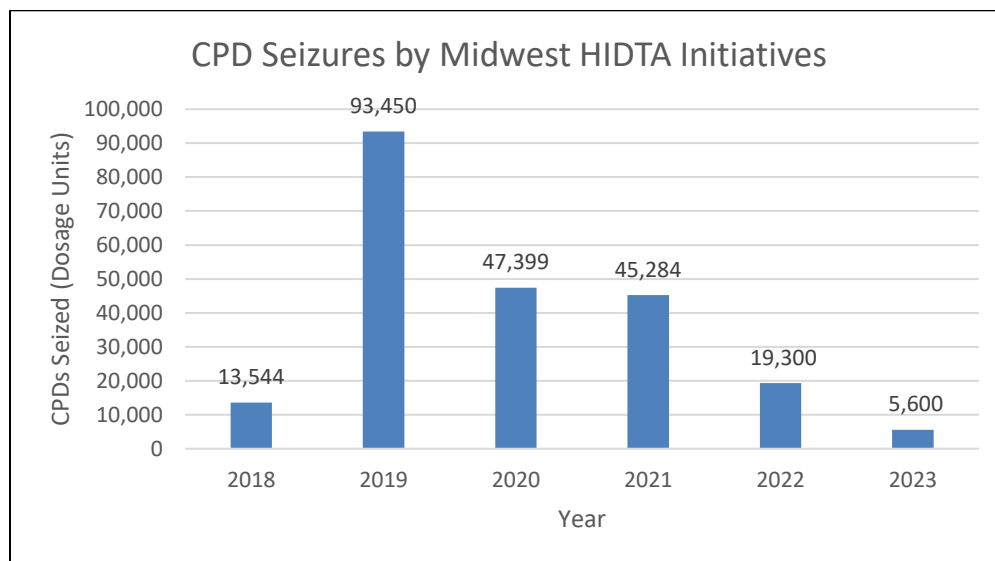
All states within the Midwest HIDTA region now have a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Missouri's PDMP program was officially launched in December 2023.⁴⁰ The prohibition of law enforcement in several Midwest HIDTA states from obtaining PDMP information to identify over-prescribing doctors also limits the overall effectiveness of these programs in addressing the opioid epidemic. There are currently no Midwest HIDTA initiatives focused on CPD diversion.

B. Availability

Seventy-six percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported CPD availability as either moderate (40 percent) or low (36 percent) within their AORs. Pharmaceutical diversion is responsible for the majority of illicit use. Thirty-eight percent of LES respondents indicated that CPD diversion occurs in their AORs. Of those respondents, 4 percent indicated a high rate while 35 percent indicated a moderate rate of CPD diversion. Figure 8 illustrates the most common CPD diversion methods, as reported by respondents to the LES.

Figure 8. CPD Diversion Methods: LES Respondents.^{41, i}

Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 5,600 dosage units of CPDs in 2023.^j Figure 9 depicts CPD seizure totals by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2018 to 2023, as reported in the PMP.

Figure 9. CPD Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.⁴²

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

Forty-two percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported low 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, 22 percent cited an increase in admissions for CPDs over the past 12 months. Forty-five percent stated that CPD admissions had remained the same and only 6 percent claimed that admissions had decreased. Opioids were the class of CPDs that treatment admissions had seen a significant increase with 34 percent of PHS respondents indicating an increase in their area. The other CPD categories including stimulants and sedatives remained the same for the plurality of PHS respondents. According to the PHS, CPDs are most often combined with fentanyl, marijuana, and methamphetamine.

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 12 illustrates various CPD pricing information for 2023. Benzodiazepine pricing information is available for alprazolam. Opioid pricing information is available for hydrocodone, oxycodone, and Vicodin®. Stimulant pricing information is available for Ritalin®. Prices are based on drugs marketed as illicit CPD's, regardless of whether they are actually illicit CPD's or counterfeit.

Table 12. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– CPDs⁴³

Unit of Measurement	Per Pill	
CPD Type	Range	Average
Alprazolam (Xanax®)	\$3-\$40	\$14
Hydrocodone	\$5-\$45	\$15
Oxycodone	\$5-\$80	\$21
Vicodin®	\$8-\$20	\$12
Ritalin®	\$4-\$25	\$12

E. Production

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

Midwest HIDTA found that the region's most popular methods of CPD diversion in 2023 were internet sales, theft from family/friends, and general theft/burglary. 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?

7. Marijuana

A. Overview

Marijuana is the most widely available and abused illicit drug within the Midwest HIDTA region. Midwest HIDTA initiatives ranked marijuana as a lower significant drug threat with approximately 12 percent ranking it fifth, approximately 12 percent ranking it sixth, and 11 percent ranking it seventh. Respondents to the PHS listed marijuana as the lowest ranked drug threat (sixth for the PHS) for their area with 25 percent of respondents indicating marijuana as their lowest ranked 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 in Missouri started February 3, 2023.⁴⁴ 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. Currently, neither Kansas nor Nebraska have implemented a public marijuana access program.

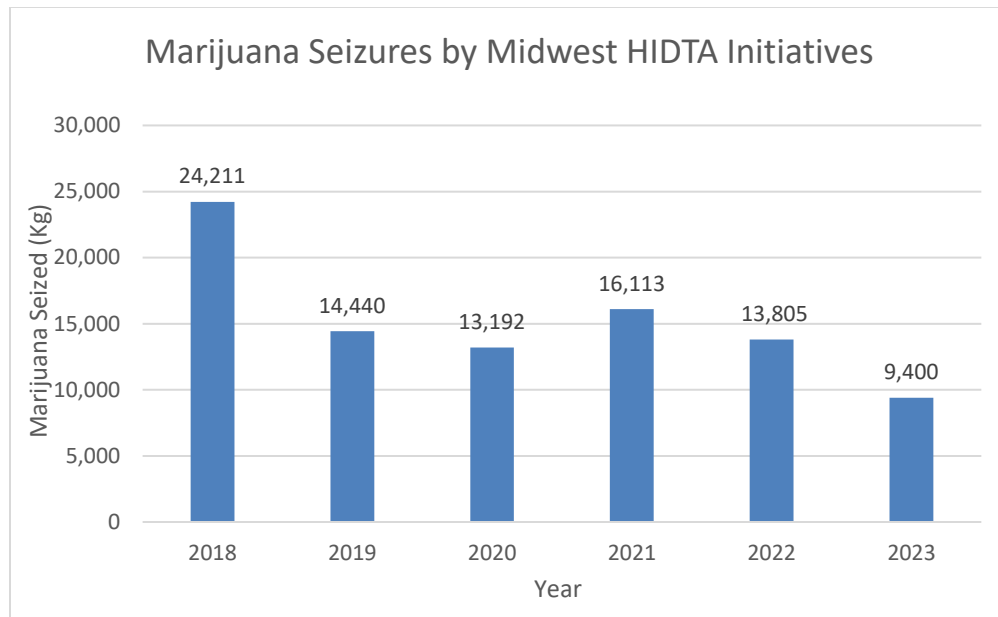
Similar to methamphetamine, the region has experienced a change in sources of marijuana over the past decade. Whereas previously much of the marijuana in the Midwest HIDTA region was grown in Mexico and transported into the region after being smuggled through the Southwest Border, a majority of the marijuana 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 Midwest HIDTA that have legalized various forms of marijuana

B. Availability

Marijuana is the most widely available drug in the region. All but two Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported marijuana as highly available within their AORs. Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 9,400 kilograms (20,723 pounds) of marijuana in 2023, along with 161 kilograms (355 pounds) worth of marijuana plants. Figure 10 depicts marijuana seizure totals by Midwest HIDTA initiatives from 2018 to 2023, as reported through PMP data.

Figure 10. Marijuana Seizures by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives, 2018-2023.⁴⁵



C. Use

Marijuana is the second most widely used illicit drug in the Midwest HIDTA region, according to 87 percent of law enforcement initiatives. Eleven percent believed marijuana contributed the most to violence in their areas. Of the PHS respondents that operate an inpatient or outpatient admissions program, 36 percent cited an increase in marijuana-related admissions over the past 12 months. An additional 38 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 in the Midwest HIDTA region, except North Dakota, which peaked in 2019 and has decreased every year since to 2022. The reason for the decrease in marijuana admissions is unknown at this time. The push for marijuana decriminalization in 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 – Marijuana⁴⁶

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Marijuana						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	6,597	2,639	6,491	1,341	564	1,638
2019	6,257	1,871	5,604	1,261	758	1,577
2020	4,822	1,624	3,718	993	623	1,149
2021	4,383	1,759	3,811	662	590	1,130
2022	3,388	1,347	3,956	564	560	1,036
*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 September 30, 2024.						

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 or other concentrate. 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. 2023 Drug Pricing Data– Marijuana⁴⁷

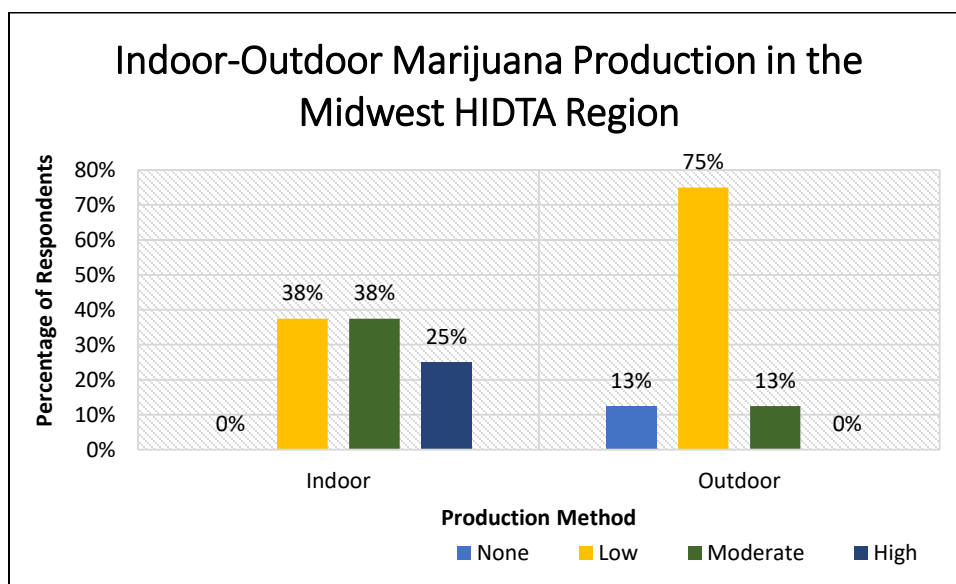
Marijuana		
Unit of Measurement	Range	Average
Pound	\$800-\$3,000	\$1,781
Ounce	\$60-\$400	\$170
Gram	\$5-\$40	\$18
THC Cartridge	\$20-\$75	\$33
THC Pen	\$13-\$35	\$20
Pound of Wax	\$1,900-\$2,600	\$2,133
Ounce of Wax	\$200-\$375	\$261
Gram of Wax	\$15-\$50	\$28

E. Production

The Midwest HIDTA assesses that the majority of marijuana in the region is produced in areas where marijuana has been decriminalized. Thirteen percent of initiatives stated that illicit

marijuana production occurred within their area, with indoor marijuana production more prevalent than outdoor production. Twenty-five 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 13 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.⁴⁸



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.⁴⁹ Industrial hemp and marijuana are the same plant only differentiated by the delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) amount in the plant. Hemp must not contain more than 0.3 percent delta-9 THC.⁵⁰ Every state within the Midwest HIDTA region now participates in industrial hemp cultivation. Marijuana may be produced under the guise of industrial hemp.⁵¹ Hemp concentrates also contend with the issue of high amounts of delta-9 THC.⁵²

F. Transportation

The majority of marijuana and marijuana products are transported into the Midwest HIDTA region from Arizona, California, Oklahoma, Utah, and Oregon.⁵³ For the first time, Utah is a major source state for the Midwest HIDTA region for marijuana. Oklahoma and Utah are source states with only a medical marijuana statute, while the other source states have legalized recreational/adult use. 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 (“snorted”), 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 (45 percent) to low (29 percent). Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 33 kilograms (73 pounds) of synthetic cannabinoids in 2023, the most in the last five years and a 5,250 percent increase from 2022 where a little more than half a kilogram was seized. The dramatic increase in seizures of synthetic cannabinoids is currently unknown.

C. Use

Forty percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported moderate levels while 38 percent 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 linked to assaults, erratic behavior which can result in property damage, and overdoses in the region, especially in jails and prisons.⁵⁴ Of the public health respondents that operate a drug treatment program, 25 percent reported that NPS admissions had remained the same over the past 12 months while 22 percent reported an increase.

D. Price

The Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives reported a sheet of paper soaked with synthetic cannabinoids cost \$150-\$400 in 2023, as the only NPS price for the year. 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 Midwest HIDTA in 2023. Synthetic cannabinoids are typically produced in foreign laboratories and are purchased by individuals in the U.S. These individuals then spray leafy plant matter or paper 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 an 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 creates significant challenges for the law enforcement agencies investigating the distribution of these 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?
- Why are synthetic cannabinoid seizures increasing with continuing marijuana legalization in the Midwest HIDTA region?

9. Psychedelics

A. Overview

A wide variety of other psychedelics are abused within the 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, and psilocybin mushrooms (hereafter referred to as “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 two 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. This is supported by the 45 percent of law enforcement initiatives that reported psychedelics 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 similar 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, though Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized more psychedelics in 2023 than in previous years.

Midwest HIDTA initiatives seized 11,761 dosage units of ketamine and approximately 34 kilograms of PCP in 2023. The 34 kilograms of PCP seized was the highest amount seized in the Midwest HIDTA region in the last five years. There was a total of 2,243,182 dosage units of LSD seized in 2023 by Midwest HIDTA initiatives, also the most in the last five years. Initiatives seized 13,169 dosage units of MDMA in 2023. Three hundred and twenty-nine kilograms (725 pounds) of mushrooms were seized in 2023. Mushroom seizures increased by 521 percent from 2022 (53 kilograms) to 2023 (329 kilograms). That is the largest amount seized since 2017. For the second year in a row, Midwest HIDTA initiatives also seized psilocybin edibles including various flavored chocolate bars and gummies.

C. Use

The Midwest HIDTA assesses the use of psychedelics in the region to be moderate to low. According to 42 percent of LES respondents, psychedelics have a low level of use within their AORs. The same percentage (42 percent) indicated that psychedelics are used at a moderate level. The plurality of public health respondents (42 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 2018 and 2022. Inpatient admissions decreased in Nebraska between 2017 and 2021 while South Dakota peaked in 2019 and decreased into 2022. Iowa peaked in 2020 and has decreased into 2022. North Dakota increased between 2018 to 2022. Missouri and Kansas do not show a clear trend.

Table 15. Treatment Episode Data Sets – Hallucinogens⁵⁵

Treatment Episode Data Sets (TEDS)						
Hallucinogens						
	Iowa	Kansas	Missouri	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota
2018	30	12	32	9	3	9
2019	42	16	32	7	1	25
2020	44	17	21	8	5	14
2021	34	12	46	4	5	10
2022	13	17	16	3	10	5
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 September 30, 20223.						

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 \$1 and \$30 per pill, \$50 to \$120 per gram and \$800 to \$1,200 per ounce. The price per dosage unit of LSD varied between \$1 and \$3. The price of a gram of ketamine ranges from \$47 to \$100, while an ounce ranges from \$1,000-\$1,620 in the Midwest HIDTA region. PCP sticks, which are usually nicotine cigarettes dipped in PCP, sell for \$8 to \$10 dollars each. The price for an ounce of PCP ranges from \$250 to \$400 in the Midwest HIDTA region. The price for a gram of psilocybin mushrooms in the Midwest HIDTA region varies between \$8 to \$20, the price of an ounce varies from \$113 to \$200, while a pound varies from \$1,400 to \$1,600 in the region.⁵⁶

E. Production

Most MDMA seized in the U.S. is primarily synthesized in Canada and the Netherlands.⁵⁷ 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. There have been DMT extraction laboratories identified in the Midwest HIDTA region.⁵⁸

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?
- What is the reason(s) for the increase in seizures of psychedelics in the Midwest HIDTA region?
- Does the increase in seizures indicate an increased demand and/or usage in the Midwest HIDTA region?

10. Source Considerations

Several sources were considered in the preparation of the drug threat section of the 2024 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 2024 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. Open source data provided by CBP illustrated the number 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

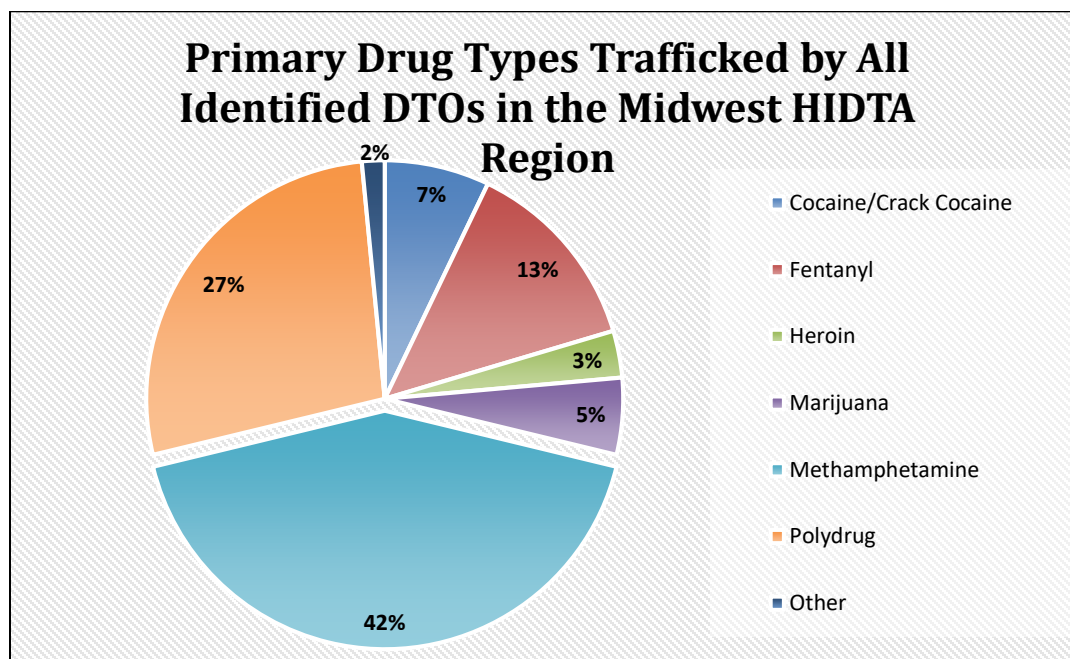
1. Overview of All Drug Trafficking Organizations

Midwest HIDTA enforcement initiatives documented 1,039 DTOs operating within the region in 2023, with 8,680 members and 1,447 leaders identified.⁵⁹ 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 held a leadership role. Midwest HIDTA-based DTOs operate in both urban and rural areas and vary in terms of size, structure, and trafficking activities. Approximately 17 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. Twenty-five percent of DTOs identified in the Midwest HIDTA region were associated to gangs, whether local street, national street, or outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs). Thirty-nine percent of the DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Missouri were gang-related, the highest percentage for any state in the region.

Polydrug DTOs account for about 27 percent of DTOs, and methamphetamine constitutes the majority of single-drug DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region. Missouri contains both the largest population and the 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 26 percent of all methamphetamine trafficking organizations. Missouri also identified the highest percentage of fentanyl (35 percent), cocaine (34 percent), heroin (30 percent), and marijuana (30 percent) trafficking organizations operating in the region. Figure 12 depicts the primary drug types trafficked by all DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023.

Figure 12. Primary Drug Types Trafficked by All DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁶⁰



Of the 1,039 DTOs operating within the Midwest HIDTA region, 12 percent were international in scope, 52 percent were multi-state, and 36 percent were local. Appendix VII summarizes key characteristics of all identified DTOs in 2023, while Appendix VIII includes a summary table for DTOs identified as operating in each state of the Midwest HIDTA region. According to 2023 data from the PMP, about 45 percent of all DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives were identified as being violent, posing a significant threat throughout the region. Sixty-five percent of international DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified as being violent, compared to 40 percent of multi-state and 44 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.⁶¹

Violent DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives			
	Total DTOs	Violent DTOs	Violent DTOs (%)
Illinois*	91	26	29%
Iowa	151	20	13%
Kansas	82	37	45%
Missouri	350	210	60%
Nebraska	172	108	63%
North Dakota	100	44	44%
South Dakota	93	19	20%
All Initiatives	1,039	464	45%

*This data only originated from the three Midwest HIDTA counties and two Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Illinois

Nebraska, for the first time in at least six years, has the highest percentage of violent DTOs of any state in the Midwest HIDTA region. In 2017, only 9 out of 115 (8 percent) of Nebraska DTOs were indicated as violent. However, in 2023, 108 out of 172 (63 percent) were reported as violent, representing a significant percentage increase in violent DTOs within Nebraska. The Nebraska initiative commanders reported an increase in gang violence, and a rise in the seizure of firearms, which when combined attributed to the increased violent DTO numbers. All of the states, excluding Iowa, within the region have experienced an increase in the percentage of violent DTOs within their borders from 2017, which may be found in table 17.

Table 17. Percentage of Violent DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives in 2017 & 2023^{62 63}

Percentage of Violent DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives in 2017 & 2023		
	2017	2023
Illinois*	11%	29%
Iowa	18%	13%
Kansas	31%	45%
Missouri	58%	60%
Nebraska	8%	63%
North Dakota	3%	44%
South Dakota	3%	20%
All Initiatives	28%	45%

*This data only originated from the three Midwest HIDTA counties and two Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Illinois

Fifty-two percent of all DTOs classified as violent were also classified as gang-related, indicating a direct correlation between gangs and violence in the region. Missouri was the Midwest HIDTA state that had that highest percentage of violent, gang-related DTOs identified. Gang-related DTOs identified in Midwest HIDTA were highly indicated as being violent with 92 percent in the region being gang-related and violent.

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.⁶⁴ 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

A total of 123 international DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023, with 187 leaders and 953 members. Table 18 lists the characteristics of international DTOs identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives in 2023. Mexico was the primary country affiliated with the identified international DTOs. On average, there were 9 members per international DTO. Twenty-eight 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 2023 than in 2022, as was the percentage of DTOs with documented ties to gangs.⁶⁵

Table 18. International DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA.⁶⁶

International DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total International DTOs	123
- Mexico	104
Total Members (Leaders)	953 (187)
Average DTO Size	9.27
Gang Related	64
Violent	80
Polydrug	35
Money Laundering Activities	22
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	19
CPOT	4
RPOT	3

B. Affiliations and Membership

The Sinaloa Cartel and New Generation Jalisco Cartel (CJNG) exert the most influence over Mexican DTOs operating within Midwest HIDTA. PMP data indicates that 85 percent of international DTOs that operated within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023 were linked to Mexico. Similarly, approximately 88 percent of Midwest HIDTA law enforcement initiatives indicated that international DTOs operated within their AORs. Of those same respondents, 91 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 had an average of 9 identified members in 2023, which is atypically smaller than that of multi-state and local DTOs.

Sixty-five 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* indicated the Sinaloa cartel is among the most influential and pervasive Mexican cartels operating within the Midwest HIDTA region.⁶⁷ 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 is another cartel responsible for drug trafficking in the region. The CJNG is based in the Mexican state of Jalisco and distributes large quantities of methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine.⁶⁸

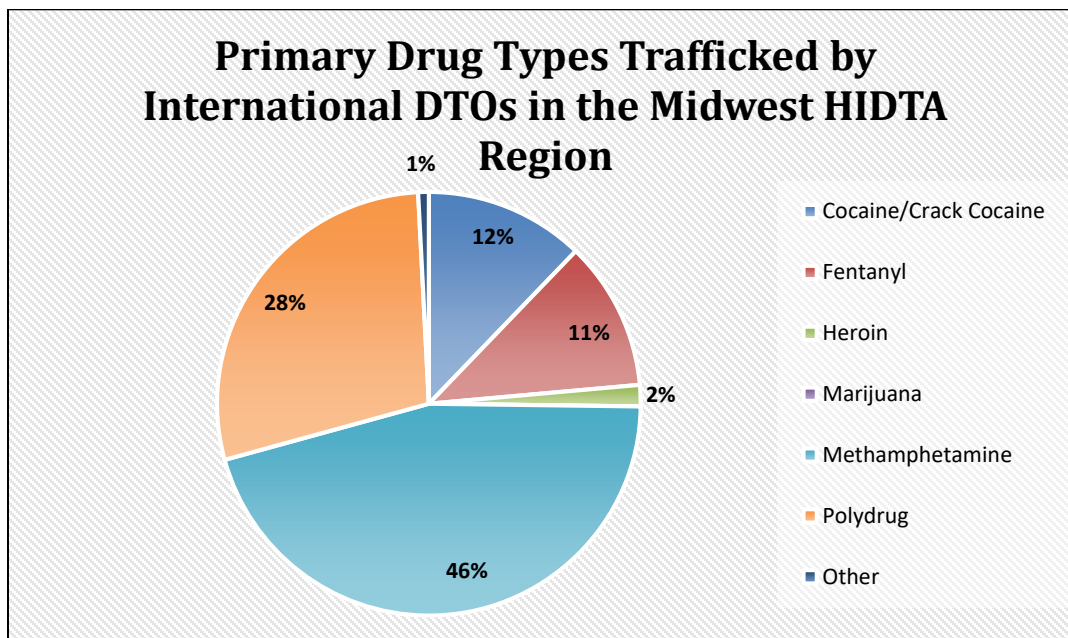
In addition to Mexican cartels, 52 percent of international DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region have documented affiliations with gangs.⁶⁹ The Bloods, Crips, MS-13, and Latin Kings street gangs have all been identified by law enforcement initiatives as participating in drug trafficking activities with international DTOs in the Midwest region. The Hells Angels and Sons of Silence OMGs were also identified by initiatives as coordinating drug trafficking activities with international DTOs in the region.⁷⁰

C. Activities and Methods

Sixty-seven percent of the Midwest HIDTA region's international DTOs engaged in money laundering activities, according to law enforcement initiatives. International DTOs in the region utilized money remittances, casinos, and the banking system, which consists of a series of deposits and withdrawals, to launder drug proceeds. Law enforcement initiatives indicated that international DTOs highly utilized bulk cash smuggling (58 percent) and online payment systems (56 percent) to return drug proceeds to the source of supply.

Twenty-eight percent of all international DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region were polydrug trafficking organizations. Most polydrug DTOs trafficked methamphetamine and/or fentanyl. Forty-six percent of single drug international DTOs trafficked methamphetamine. Other primary drug types trafficked by international DTOs include cocaine (12 percent) and fentanyl (11 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.⁷¹



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 542 multi-state DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023. Twenty-five percent of multi-state DTOs were linked to California, the state most affiliated with multi-state DTOs. Illinois, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, and Minnesota were the other states most closely tied to multi-state DTOs in the region. Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 740 leaders and 4,715 other members. According to 94 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.⁷² Table 19 shows the characteristics of multi-state DTOs identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023.

Table 19. Multi-State DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁷³

Multi-State DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total Multi-State DTOs	542
- California	133
- Illinois*	69
- Colorado	60
- Arizona	54
- Texas	34
- Minnesota	32
Total Members (Leaders)	4,715 (740)
Average DTO Size	10.06
Gang Related	117
Violent	218
Polydrug	155
Money Laundering Activities	44
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	56
CPOT	5
RPOT	1

*This data only originated from the three Midwest HIDTA counties and two Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Illinois

B. Affiliations and Membership

Multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region have an average of 10 members per organization, including 1 leader and 9 additional members, the same as local DTOs. This is slightly more than the average identified membership of international DTOs that operate within the region. PMP data states that 40 percent of multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified

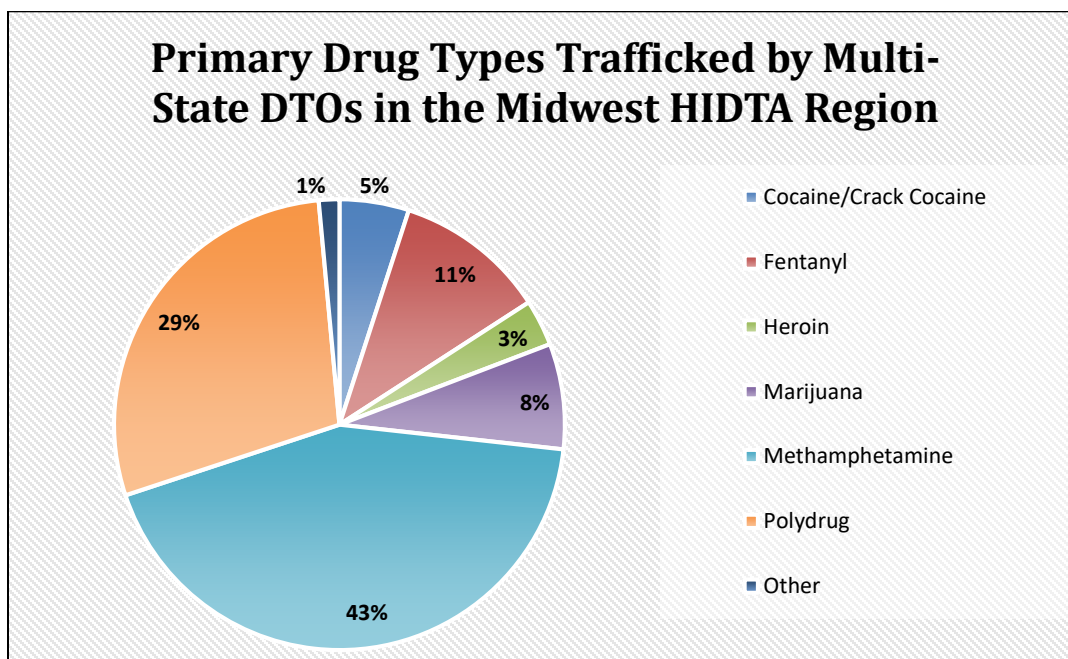
as violent and that approximately 22 percent have connections to gangs. According to law enforcement initiatives, multi-state DTOs operating within the region are linked to nationally-affiliated street gangs, including the Bloods, Crips, Gangster Disciples, Aryan Brotherhood and MS-13. They are also linked to OMGs, including the Bandidos, Galloping Goose, Hells Angels, Los Diablos, Outlaws, and Sons of Silence.⁷⁴

C. Activities and Methods

Sixty-nine percent of law enforcement initiatives reported that multi-state DTOs within their AOR conducted money laundering activities. Similar to international DTOs, multi-state DTOs in the Midwest HIDTA region utilize money remittances, and online payment systems (e.g. Cash App, PayPal, Venmo). Forty-two percent of Midwest HIDTA initiatives indicated multi-state DTOs in their AORs use money remittances and 35 percent used online payment systems. According to the initiatives, the most common method utilized to return drug proceeds to the source by multi-state DTOs was through bulk cash smuggling (60 percent).

Twenty-nine percent of multi-state DTOs operating in the region were identified as polydrug trafficking organizations. Methamphetamine trafficking organizations accounted for 43 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 fentanyl (11 percent), marijuana (8 percent), cocaine (5 percent), and heroin (3 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) but that will potentially shift with Midwest HIDTA states having their own state-approved marijuana markets. 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.⁷⁵



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 374 local DTOs were identified as operating in the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023. Of the local DTOs, Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 520 leaders and 3,012 members. Table 20 lists the traits of local DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023.

Table 20. Local DTOs Identified as Operating in the Midwest HIDTA Region.⁷⁶

Local DTOs Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives	
Characteristics	
Total Local DTOs	374
Total Members (Leaders)	3,012 (520)
Average DTO Size	9.44
Gang Related	83
Violent	166
Polydrug	93
Money Laundering Activities	24
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	24
CPOT	2
RPOT	0

B. Affiliations and Membership

Local DTOs operate within each state of the Midwest HIDTA region. Ninety-eight percent of law enforcement initiatives indicated that local DTOs were operating within their AORs. Midwest HIDTA initiatives identified 3,012 members and 520 leaders belonging to local DTOs, with an average of 9 members per organization.

More than half (51 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.

According to data from the PMP, 44 percent of local DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region were identified as violent. Twenty-two percent of local DTOs had connections to street and OMGs. 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 local street gangs that have no national affiliation. Law enforcement survey data indicates that neighborhood-based street gangs are responsible for more drug trafficking and violence than nationally affiliated street gangs. Some nationally

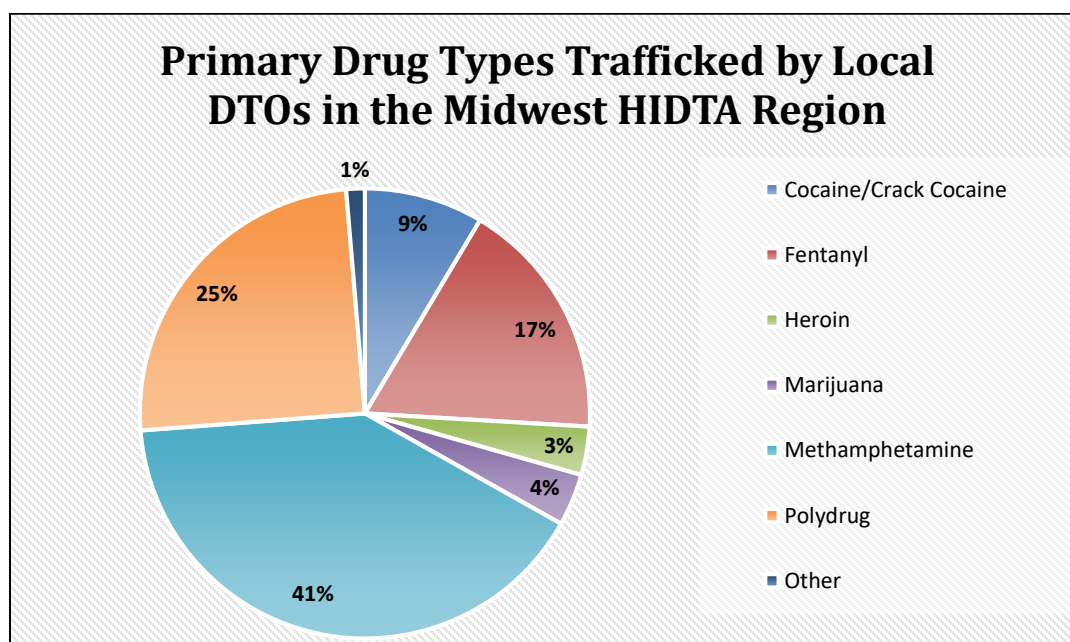
affiliated street gangs associated with local DTOs include Bloods, Crips, and Florencia 13.⁷⁷ Hells Angels, Sons of Silence, Galloping Goose, and Saddle Tramps OMGs are believed to be affiliated with local DTOs within the Midwest HIDTA region.⁷⁸

C. Activities and Methods

Sixty percent of LES respondents stated that local DTOs within their AORs engaged in money laundering activities. Money remittances and online payment systems (e.g., Cash App, PayPal, Venmo) were the top methods utilized by local DTOs. Local DTOs were indicated by initiatives to highly utilize bulk cash smuggling (68 percent) to return the drug proceeds to the source of supply.

Methamphetamine trafficking organizations accounted for 41 percent of local DTOs operating in the Midwest HIDTA region. Twenty-five percent of local DTOs were identified by Midwest HIDTA initiatives as polydrug trafficking organizations. Other primary drug types trafficked by local DTOs include fentanyl (17 percent), cocaine/crack (9 percent), marijuana (4 percent), and heroin (3 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.⁷⁹



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-associated DTOs with street gangs and OMGs in the Midwest HIDTA region?

6. Source Considerations

There were several sources consulted in the development of the DTO section of the 2024 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. These sources include Midwest HIDTA PMP data, law enforcement initiative responses to the 2024 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 of All Money Laundering Organizations

Five money laundering organizations (MLOs) were identified within the Midwest HIDTA region in 2023, 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 15 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 two respondents claimed the presence of multi-state MLOs within their AORs while three respondents indicated local MLOs in their AOR.⁸⁰

The banking system (deposit with a quick withdrawal in a different area) was the most-utilized technique by Midwest HIDTA-based MLOs. Casinos, money remittances, and prepaid cards 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.⁸¹

Money Laundering Organizations Identified by Midwest HIDTA Initiatives			
Total Identified	International	Multi-State	Local
5	1	1	3

B. Affiliations and Membership

Mexico was the country affiliated with the international MLO according to PMP data. Law enforcement initiatives also indicated China as being affiliated with international MLOs in their AOR. Initiatives reported that the international MLOs were linked to Mexican drug cartels, primarily the Sinaloa cartel. Midwest HIDTA initiatives reported a single multi-state MLO in PMP. The multi-state MLO was reported as having ties to the Sinaloa and CJNG cartels, and Massachusetts and New York as source states. Local DTOs were not linked to Mexican cartels according to PMP or survey responses.

C. Activities and Methods

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 withdrawals the money quickly from another state, usually a Southwest border state. Both DTOs and MLOs also use casinos. Money remittances and prepaid cards are also utilized by both MLOs and DTOs.

D. Intelligence Gaps

- How prevalent is cryptocurrency use by MLOs within the Midwest HIDTA region?
- What is the true number of organizations within 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 2024 Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment. These sources are Midwest HIDTA PMP data and law enforcement initiative responses to the 2024 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 1.4 percent increase in unintentional drug-related poisoning fatalities from 2021 to 2022. There was a 1.9 percent increase in unintentional drug poisoning deaths across the U.S. as a whole during the same period. States within the Midwest HIDTA region reported 3,474 unintentional drug poisoning deaths in 2022, up from 3,425 in 2021. Provisional data from the CDC WONDER database for 2023 currently shows 2,240 unintentional drug poisoning deaths for the region thus far. Due to incomplete information, as lab results and validation are still pending, it is not possible to compare 2023 to previous years; however, 2023 is not projected to show a decline in overdose fatalities.⁸²

Midwest HIDTA utilized CDC WONDER data in this section due to poisoning death data reporting not being standardized across the Midwest HIDTA 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 with provisional data for 2023.

Table 22. Drug Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023.⁸³

Drug Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023*				
	2021	2022	2023 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	409	378	269	-7.6%
Kansas	617	674	415	+9.2%
Missouri	2,019	2,015	1,314	-0.2%
Nebraska	180	197	109	+9.4%
North Dakota	113	127	83	+12.4%
South Dakota	87	83	50	-4.6%
All Midwest HIDTA states**	3,425	3,474	2,240	+1.4%
<small>*These numbers reflect ICD-10 Codes: T36-50 (drug poisoning) and X40-44 (unintentional overdose) **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.</small>				

Table 23. Cocaine Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023.⁸⁴

Cocaine Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023*				
	2021	2022	2023 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	40	49	33	+22.5%
Kansas	83	98	59	+18.1%
Missouri	317	379	261	+19.6%
Nebraska	18	13	**	-27.8%
North Dakota**				
South Dakota**				
All Midwest HIDTA states	470	550	370	+17.0%

*These numbers reflect ICD-10 code T40.5
 **Data suppressed by CDC WONDER due to their being less than 10.

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 to 2023.⁸⁵

Psychostimulant Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023*				
	2021	2022	2023 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	243	268	190	+10.3%
Kansas	357	396	238	+10.9%
Missouri	890	865	586	-2.8%
Nebraska	78	86	50	+10.3%
North Dakota	55	52	33	-5.5%
South Dakota	61	50	24	-18.0%
All Midwest HIDTA states	1,684	1,717	1,121	+2.0%

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

Deaths involving psychostimulants slightly increased in the Midwest HIDTA region as a whole, but Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska all increased by at least 10 percent with the rest of the region experiencing a decline. Table 24 shows the change in psychostimulant poisoning deaths across the Midwest HIDTA region from 2021 to 2022 with provisional data for 2023.

Table 25. Opioid Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023.⁸⁶

Opioid Poisoning Deaths in the Midwest HIDTA Region, 2021 to 2023*				
	2021	2022	2023 (Provisional)	Percent Change 2021 to 2022
Iowa	266	241	191	-10.4%
Kansas	446	523	309	+14.7%
Missouri	1,638	1,629	1,078	-0.6%
Nebraska	122	126	56	+3.2%
North Dakota	75	99	66	+24.2%
South Dakota	47	48	35	+2.1%
All Midwest HIDTA states	2,594	2,666	1,735	+2.7%
*These numbers reflect ICD-10 codes T40.0-T40.4, T40.6.				

Opioid poisoning deaths for the entire Midwest HIDTA region increased nearly 3 percent from 2021 to 2022. The number of opioid poisoning deaths increased in every Midwest HIDTA state except for Iowa and Missouri. Table 25 shows information on opioid poisoning deaths in the Midwest HIDTA region from 2021 to 2022 with provisional data for 2023.

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 77 percent of poisoning deaths in Midwest HIDTA. Psychostimulants were linked to 49 percent of poisoning deaths, some of which also included opioids. The increasing availability and potency of both psychostimulants and synthetic opioids in 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 continue to 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 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. 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 Midwest HIDTA and will continue to be such, especially as they impact 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.
- ❖ Cocaine, heroin, and CPDs 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. 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) are highly utilized by both DTOs and

MLOs and will continue to be utilized to avoid law enforcement interception of group communications.

- ❖ The mixing of opioids with other drugs will continue to impact drug poisonings in the Midwest HIDTA region, increasing poisoning deaths.

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*, PMP data, SAMHSA's TEDS dataset, 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. 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. The public health survey is limited in that the information is from those that responded to the survey and may not be the complete picture of the region. Quantitative data reported in the Threat Assessment was obtained on the following dates: PMP (MLO-related information) – March 5, 2024; PMP (DTO-related information) – March 5, 2024; PMP (drug seizure-related information) – February 21, 2024. The information provided by these sources, though incomplete, provides an important perspective into Midwest HIDTA regional drug threats and any DTO/MLO presence in 2023. 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.

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 55 responses to this year’s Midwest HIDTA Threat Assessment Survey. Appendix III lists the Midwest HIDTA initiatives who responded to the 2024 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 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 2024 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)*
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*
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

C.O.D.E Task Force*
Greater Omaha Safe Streets Task Force*
Lincoln/Lancaster Drug Task Force*
Nebraska Interdiction Support*
Omaha ATF Illegal Firearms Task Force*
Omaha DEA Drug Task Force*
Omaha Metro Drug Task Force*
TRIDENT (Tri-City Drug Enforcement Team) *
WING Drug Task Force*

North Dakota

Fargo DEA Task Force*
Grand Forks Narcotics Task Force*
Metro Area Narcotics Task Force*
North Dakota Interdiction*

South Dakota

Sioux Falls Task Force*
South Dakota Interdiction Support*
Unified Narcotics Enforcement Team (UNET)*

Appendix IV: 2024 Public Health Survey Participating Agencies

The following agencies/organizations participated in the 2024 Midwest HIDTA PHS and are grouped according to the state in which they are located.

Iowa

Alcohol and Drug Dependency Services (ADDS)	Mason City Police Department
Amerigroup of Iowa	Mills County Public Health
ASAP Coalition	New Opportunities, Inc
CG Public Health	Prairie Ridge
Community Health Center	Sieda Community Action
Clinton Substance Abuse Council (CSAC)	Steps of Hope Iowa
Friends of the Family	The Best You Coalition
Globe Gazette	UCS Healthcare
Hancock County Health System	Webster County Sheriff's Office
Hillcrest Family Services	YWCA Fort Dodge
Iowa Department of Health and Human Services	

Kansas

25 th Judicial District Community Corrections	Higher Ground
Arista Recovery	Horizons Mental Health
Barton County Health Department	Hutchinson Regional Medical Center
Bright Blue Health Center	Independent
Central Kansas Mental Health Center	Johnson County Mental Health
Change Your Life Enterprises, INC	Miracles, Inc
CMHCCC (Crawford County Mental Health)	New Dawn Wellness & Recovery Center, Inc
COMCARE-Addiction Treatment Services	Pawnee Mental Health
Compass Behavioral Health	Prairie View
Compass Behavioral Health – CSS	Reno County Health Department
Child Support Services (CSS)	Seventh Direction Inc.
DCCCA	St. Francis Ministries
DCCCA Family Preservation	Substance Abuse Center of Kansas
DCCCA First Step	Substance Abuse Center of Kansas – CrossOver Recovery Center
Family Service and Guidance Center	The Center
Four County Mental Health Center	The Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas dba Crosswinds Counseling and Wellness
GEO/Wichita Day Reporting Center	Therapy Services LLC
High Plains Mental Health Center	

Missouri

19th Judicial Circuit, State of Missouri
 39th Circuit Treatment Court
 ADAPT
 Beacon Mental Health
 Behavioral Health Group (BHG)
 Branson Police Department
 Burrell – Phoenix Clinic
 City of Springfield
 CommCare
 Comprehensive Mental Health Services
 CoxHealth
 Elevate Branson
 Faith Community Health
 FCC Behavioral Health DBA Family
 Counseling Center, Inc
 Feed Northland Kids
 First Call

Missouri School Board Association
 Missouri Association of School Nurses
 Missouri Probation and Parole D21
 Ozark Center
 Preferred Family Healthcare
 PreventEd
 ReDiscover
 Restoration Connection at The Sanctuary of Hope
 Simmering Center, Inc
 Springfield Fire Department
 Springfield-Greene County Health Department
 St Louis County Police Department/STL CRUSH
 Taney County Ambulance District
 Taney County Health Department

 Taney County Juvenile Office
 The City of Kimberling City Police Department

Nebraska

CHI Health CUMC Bergan Mercy
 Coalition Rx

 Community Connections
 Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department
 (LLCHD)
 Nebraska Department Health and Human
 Services

Overdose Response Strategy
 Public Health Solution District Health
 Department
 Region 1 Behavioral Healthcare Authority
 Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare Authority

 Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department

North Dakota

Cavalier County Health District

 Fargo Cass Public
 Lamoure County Public Health Department

North Dakota Department of Corrections and
 Rehabilitation (DOCR)
 Sargent County District Health Unit

South Dakota

Avera Addiction Care Center
Avera McKennan Emergency
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital
Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of
Siouxland
Brothers and Sisters Behind Bars
Carroll Institute
Community Memorial Hospital
DCI/Stepping Stones
Encompass Health
Face It TOGETHER

Glory House Apartments
Hope House

Inter Lakes Community Action Partnership
Kingdom Boundaries Prison Aftercare
Lifeways, Inc

OneHeart
Oyate Prevention Coalition
Passages Women's Transitional Living
Philip Health Services
Southeastern Behavioral HealthCare
The Link
Wagner Community Memorial Hospital –
Avera
Western Prevention Resource Center

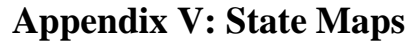
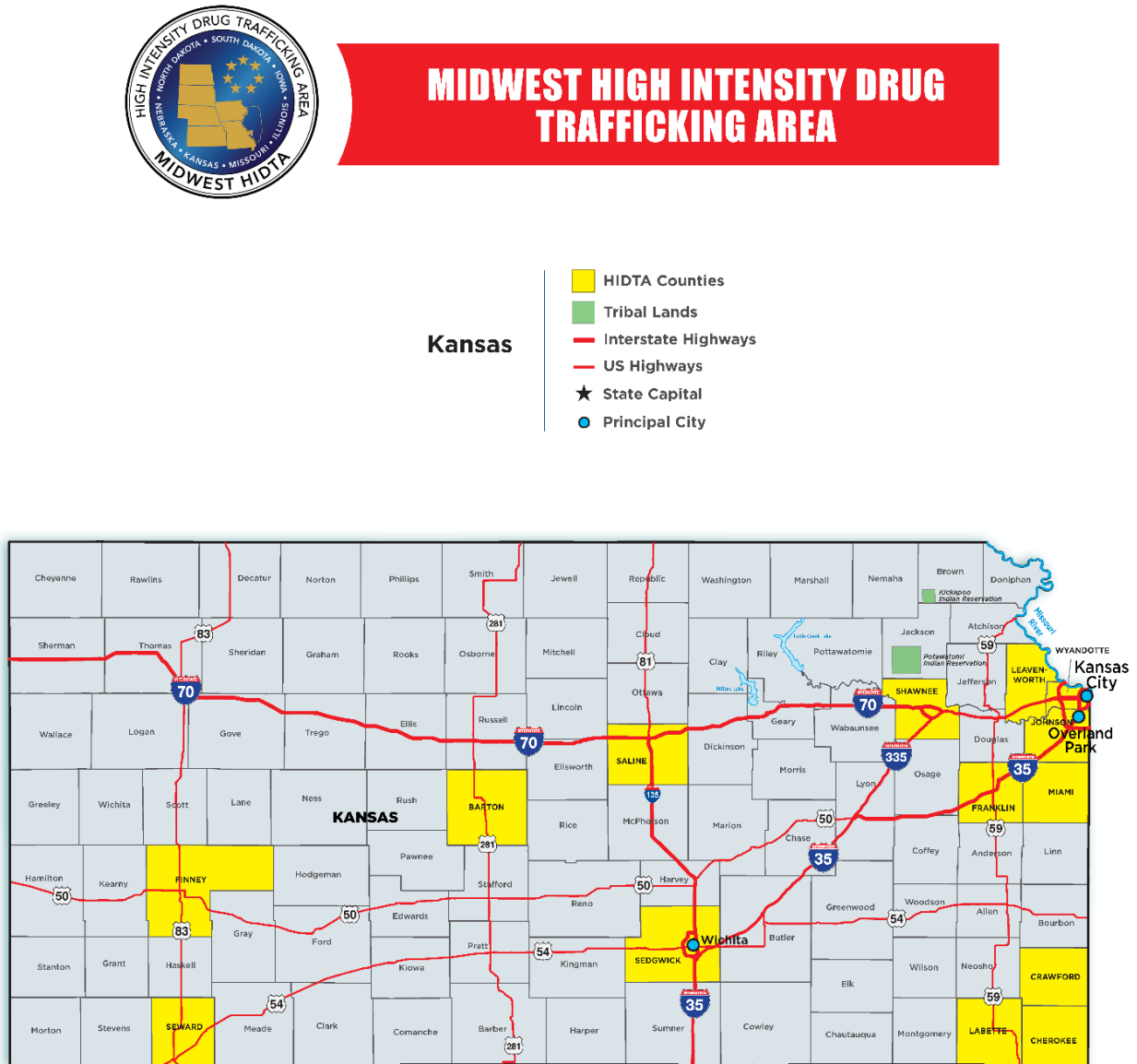


Figure 17. Detailed Map of Kansas Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.



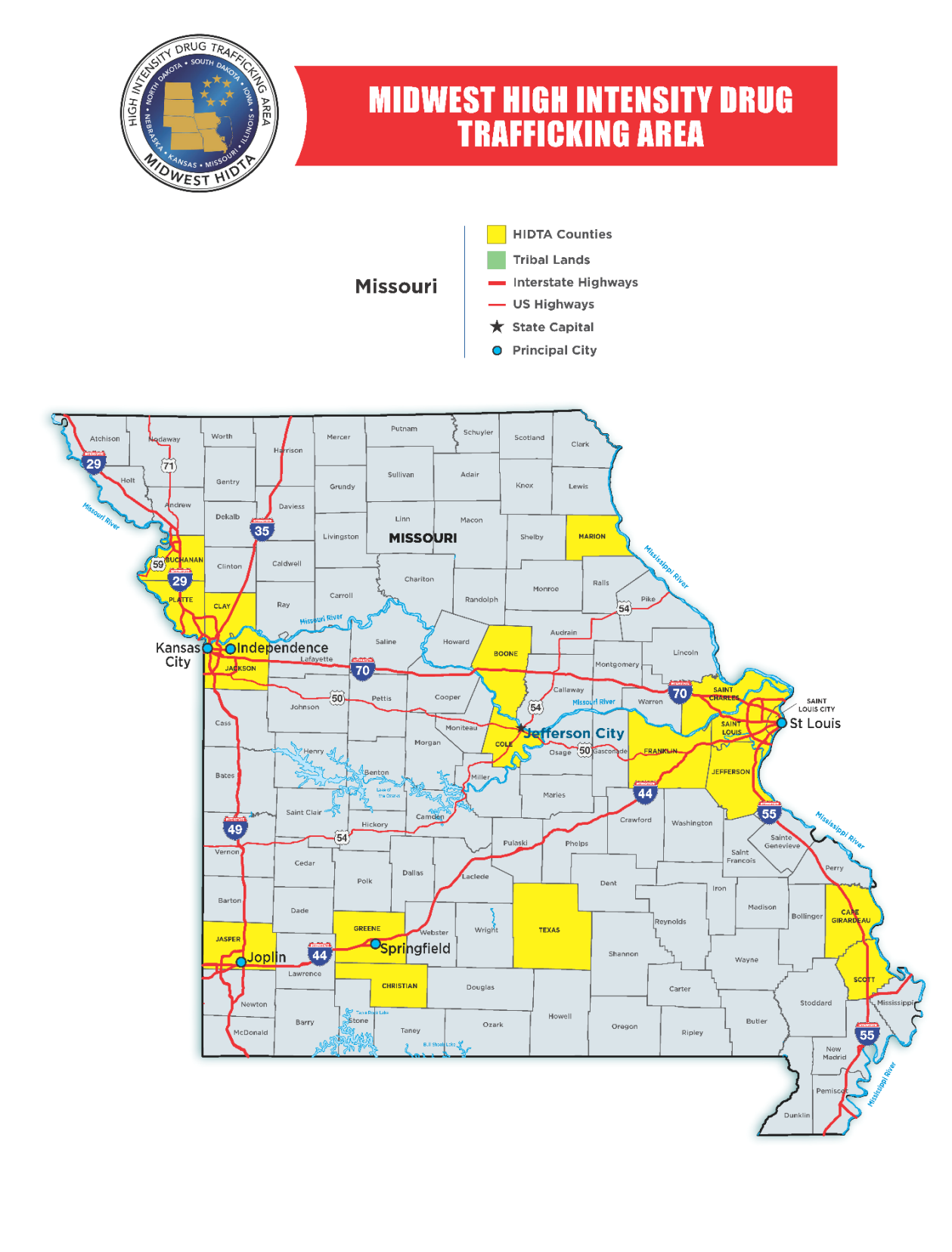


Figure 19. Detailed Map of Nebraska Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.

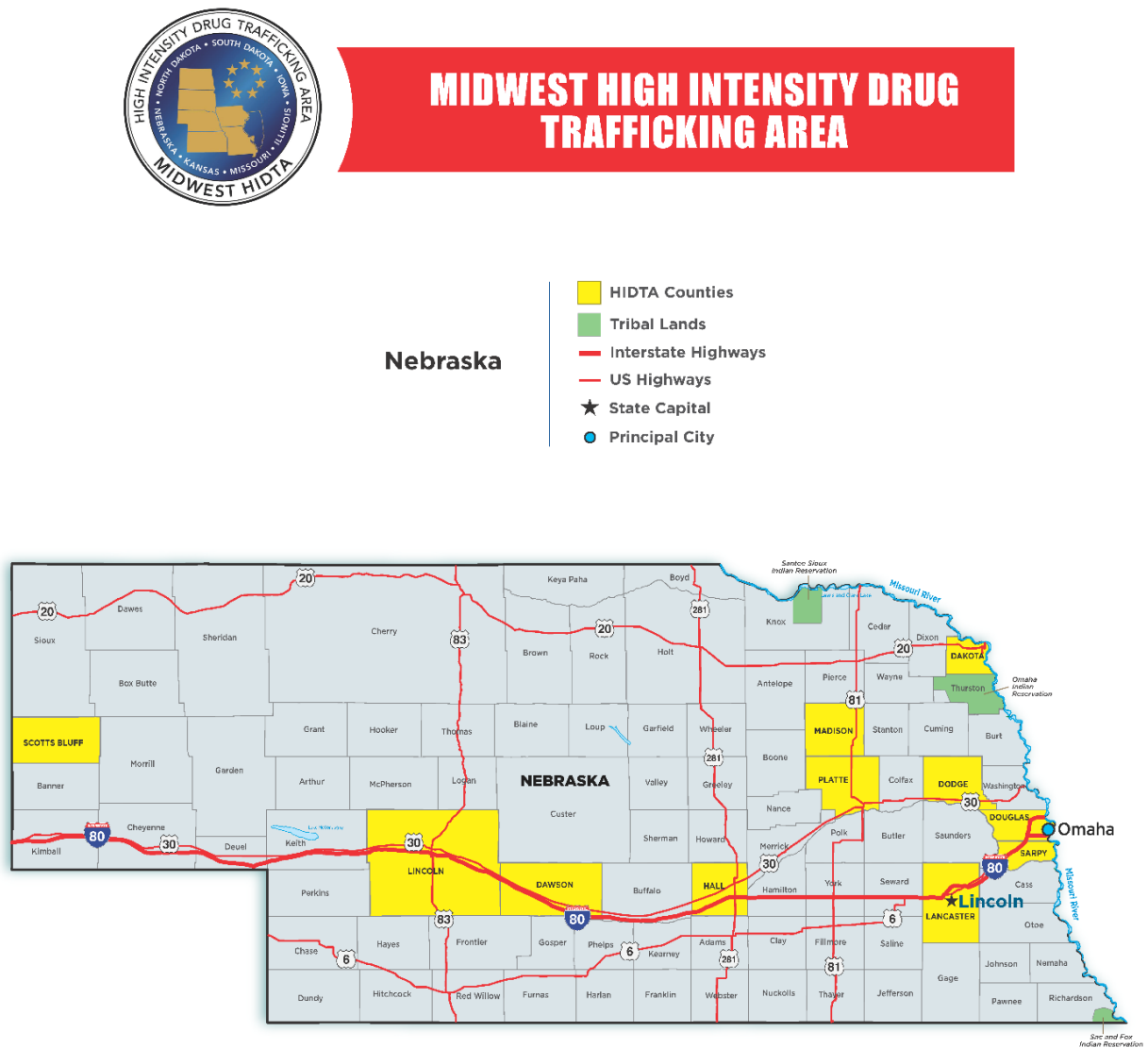


Figure 20. Detailed Map of North Dakota Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties, Ports of Entry with Canada, and Major Highway Systems.

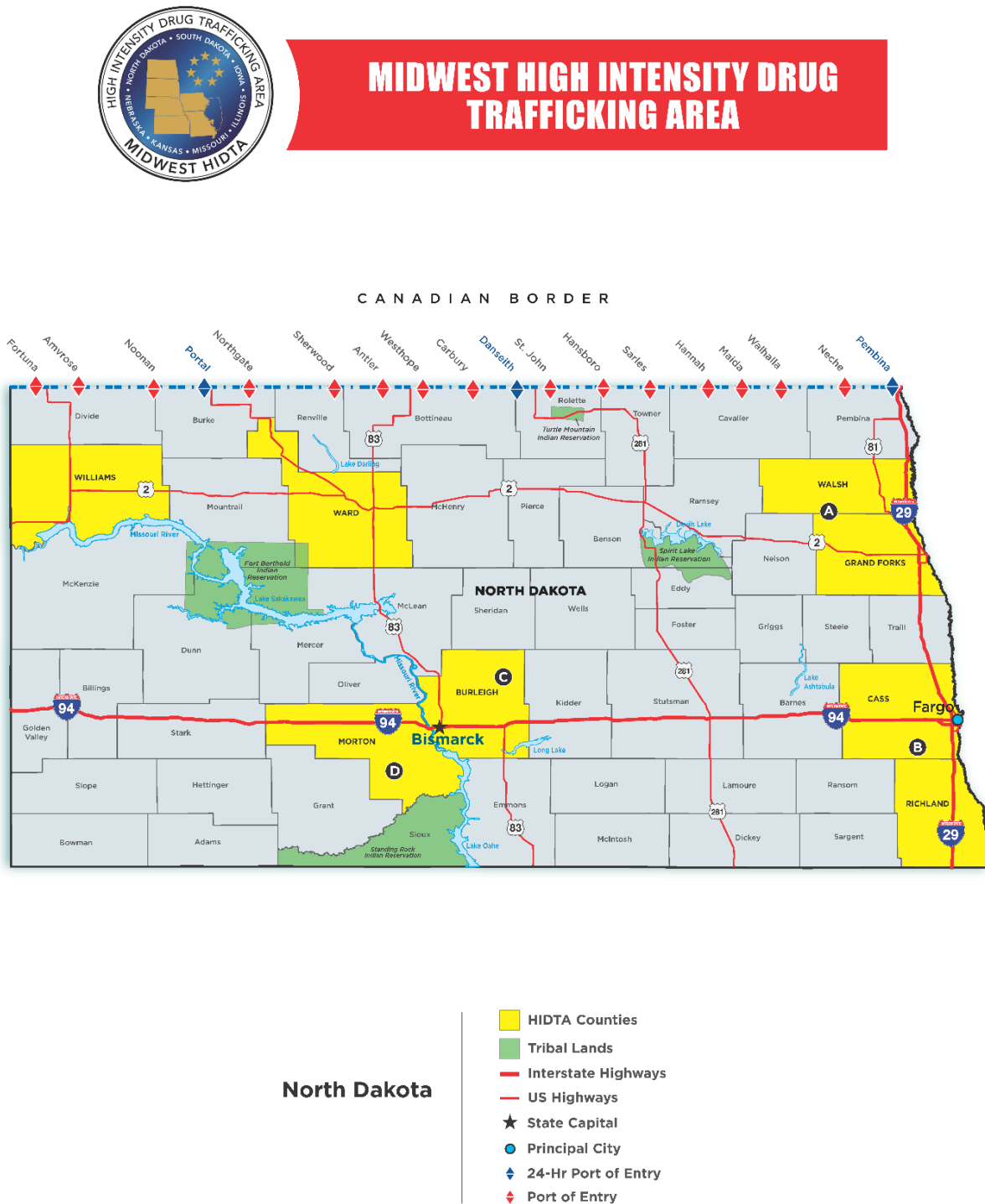
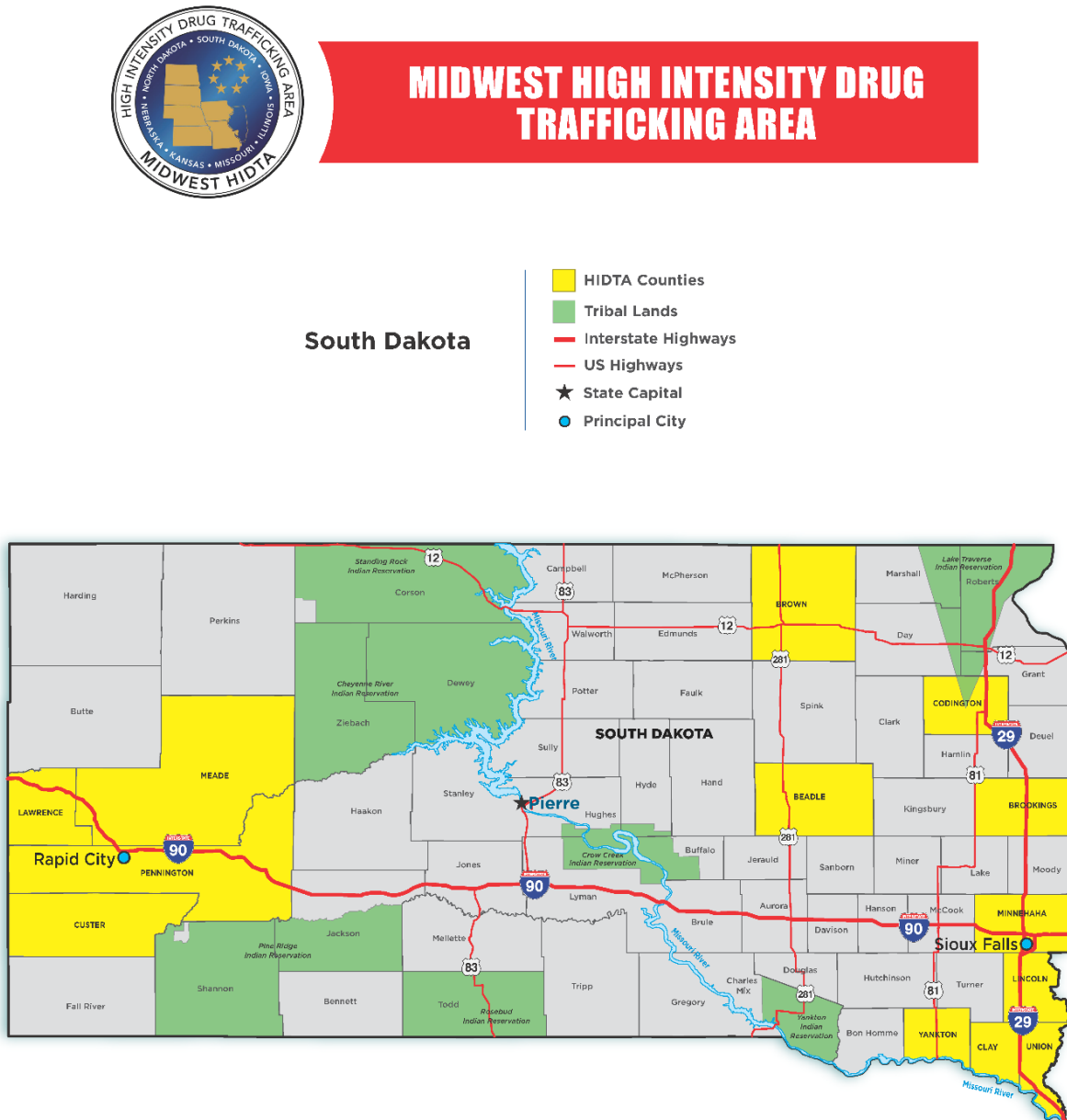


Figure 21. Detailed Map of South Dakota Depicting HIDTA Designated Counties and Major Highway Systems.



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	TIED: Fentanyl Methamphetamine	TIED: Fentanyl Methamphetamine
Iowa	Methamphetamine	Fentanyl
Kansas	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Missouri	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Nebraska	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
North Dakota	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
South Dakota	Fentanyl	Methamphetamine
Public Health Survey: Top Drug Threats By State		
	Primary Threat	
Iowa	Methamphetamine	
Kansas	Fentanyl	
Missouri	Fentanyl	
Nebraska	Methamphetamine	
North Dakota	TIED: Polysubstance* and Marijuana	
South Dakota	Methamphetamine	

*Polysubstance use is when a user is utilizing more than one substance at a time. North Dakota public health respondents indicated that the most used polysubstance trend is the use of fentanyl and 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	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
CPDs	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	Low
Fentanyl Pills	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Fentanyl Powder	Low	Moderate-Low	High	High	Low	Moderate	Low
Marijuana	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Methamphetamine	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
NPSs	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Psychedelics	Moderate-Low	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate-Low	Moderate
Other Opioids (e.g. Heroin)	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate	Moderate-High	Moderate-Low	Moderate	Low

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 2023	
Characteristics	
Identified	1,039
- International	123
- Multi-State	542
- Local	374
Total Members (Leaders)	8,680 (1,447)
Average DTO Size	9.75
Gang Related	264
Violent	464
Polydrug	283
Money Laundering Activities	90
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	99
CPOT	11
RPOT	4

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 2023.

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

Illinois DTOs Identified*	
Characteristics	
Identified	91
- International	6
- Multi-State	57
- Local	28
Total Members (Leaders)	368 (91)
Average DTO Size	5.04
Gang Related	12
Violent	26
Polydrug	17
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

*This data only originated from the three Midwest HIDTA counties and two Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Illinois

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

Iowa DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	151
- International	5
- Multi-State	93
- Local	53
Total Members (Leaders)	885 (163)
Average DTO Size	6.94
Gang Related	13
Violent	20
Polydrug	23
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	8
CPOT	1
RPOT	0

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

Kansas DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	82
- International	19
- Multi-State	38
- Local	25
Total Members (Leaders)	684 (144)
Average DTO Size	10.10
Gang Related	22
Violent	37
Polydrug	37
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	11
CPOT	1
RPOT	2

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

Missouri DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	350
- International	30
- Multi-State	161
- Local	183
Total Members (Leaders)	3,538 (575)
Average DTO Size	11.75
Gang Related	135
Violent	210
Polydrug	132
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	58
CPOT	8
RPOT	0

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

Nebraska DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	172
- International	38
- Multi-State	53
- Local	56
Total Members (Leaders)	1,563 (259)
Average DTO Size	10.59
Gang Related	56
Violent	108
Polydrug	32
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	18
CPOT	0
RPOT	1

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

North Dakota DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	100
- International	5
- Multi-State	73
- Local	22
Total Members (Leaders)	973 (122)
Average DTO Size	10.95
Gang Related	10
Violent	44
Polydrug	18
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	2
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

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

South Dakota DTOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	93
- International	4
- Multi-State	77
- Local	12
Total Members (Leaders)	669 (93)
Average DTO Size	8.19
Gang Related	16
Violent	19
Polydrug	24
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	2
CPOT	1
RPOT	1

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)
Gang Related	0
Violent	0
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

*This data only originated from the three Midwest HIDTA counties and two Midwest HIDTA initiatives in Illinois

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)
Gang Related	1
Violent	1
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	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)
Gang Related	1
Violent	1
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

Table 39. MLO Summary Table for all Identified MLOs Operating in North Dakota.

North Dakota MLOs Identified	
Characteristics	
Identified	1
- International	0
- Multi-State	0
- Local	1
Total Members (Leaders)	6 (1)
Gang Related	0
Violent	0
Federal Case Designations	
OCDETF	0
CPOT	0
RPOT	0

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Appendix XI: Endnotes

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