

HIDTA Program Summary 2019

PURPOSE:

The mission of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program is to enhance and coordinate drug control efforts among federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in order to eliminate or reduce drug trafficking and its harmful consequences in critical regions of the United States.

ORS:

The Overdose Response Strategy is an initiative designed to enhance public health-public safety collaboration and to strengthen and improve efforts to reduce drug overdose deaths.

ODMAP:

ODMAP provides real-time overdose surveillance data across jurisdictions to support public safety and health efforts to mobilize an immediate response to a drug overdose spikes.

In 2019, the 29 HIDTAs, including the five regions of the Southwest Border HIDTA, investigated 8,420 drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) and money laundering organizations (MLOs) and were successful in disrupting or dismantling 3,122 of these organizations. Fifty-six percent of the disrupted or dismantled organizations were part of an international or multi-state drug trafficking or money laundering organization.

More than 22,000 federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agents, officers, analysts, and support personnel took part in 881 HIDTA initiatives. Seventy percent of the participants were from state, local, or tribal agencies.

In 2019, HIDTA initiatives seized 7,225 tons of marijuana, 186 tons of powder and crack cocaine, 176 tons of methamphetamine powder and crystal methamphetamine, 7.3 tons of heroin, 3.6 tons of fentanyl powder, and approximately one-half ton of prescription narcotics. HIDTA initiatives also seized more than 1.6 million dosage units of fentanyl and 446,815 dosage units of prescription narcotics.

The wholesale value of these and other illicit drugs seized by HIDTAs in 2019 was \$41.7 billion.

The combined value of the illegal drugs seized and the cash and assets taken from traffickers equates to a return on investment (ROI) of \$158.56 for every HIDTA dollar budgeted in 2019, excluding funding for treatment and prevention. This figure is more than the two prior years combined.

HIDTA initiatives have been in the forefront in the fight to eliminate the production of synthetic drugs. Between 2004 and 2015, HIDTAs dismantled more than 19,000 methamphetamine labs, an average of more than 1,600 a year, including 241 “super labs” capable of producing more than 10 pounds of meth in a single “cook.” With the increasing availability of Mexican-produced methamphetamine, the number of labs operating in the United States has declined sharply. In 2019, only 84 meth labs were dismantled by HIDTAs, although three of them were “super labs.”

Traffickers also operate laboratories to manufacture synthetic drugs and to convert certain substances to more potent forms of the active ingredient, primarily marijuana into cannabis oil. HIDTA initiatives dismantled 22 production labs that were manufacturing DMT (11), fentanyl (2), MDMA (3), Steroids (3), and GHB, oxycodone, and diazepam (1 each). The dismantled DMT labs were capable of producing almost 27.5 kilograms in a single production run and the fentanyl labs could produce almost five kilos in a single run.

HIDTA initiatives also dismantled 211 conversion labs that were transforming cannabis to “honey oil,” “wax,” or hashish and 18 labs converting powder methamphetamine to crystal methamphetamine. These conversion labs had the capacity to produce more than 421 kilograms of enhanced cannabis products and 76 kilograms of crystal methamphetamine in one procedure.

HIDTA deconfliction systems performed 289,379 event deconflictions, actions that can alert agencies when their tactical operations are occurring in the same general location and timeframe as operations by other agencies, and compared 1.2 million pieces of case information looking for connections between cases. In 2019, 3,750 law enforcement agencies participated in the HIDTA event deconfliction system.

HIDTAs supported training for 100,643 officers, agents, analysts, and support staff on drug-related subjects. Follow-up surveys of those attending HIDTA training have routinely been 97% positive.

HIDTA analysts provided analytical support to 26,177 investigations in 2019, and 96% of agents and officers surveyed reported the assistance was useful.

HIDTAs made 109,678 arrests, took 25,761 firearms off the street, seized 88,706 vaping cartridges, and apprehended 46,657 fugitives in 2019. HIDTA-funded prosecutors indicted 13,289 individuals, prosecuted 15,544 persons, and obtained 9,701 convictions in 2019.

HIDTAs were responsible for investigating 1,291 OCDETF cases in 2019.