



June 11, 2025

The Honorable Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Budget Reduction/Relocation High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program

Dear Senator Smith:

I am writing today to request your assistance in 1) maintaining the placement of the HIDTA Program under the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), 2) opposing the proposed 35% budget reduction, and 3) emphasizing HIDTA's critical role in disrupting drug trafficking networks and enhancing public safety.

North Central HIDTA directly supports 17 counties and more than 150 law enforcement agencies in Minnesota and Wisconsin. In 2024, over eight million in funding helped our state and local task forces by:

- Disrupting or dismantling 80 drug trafficking organizations.
- Seizing over 2.2 million fentanyl pills, 1,700 kilograms of methamphetamine, 473 kilograms of cocaine, and more than 1,600 crime firearms.
- Arresting nearly 4,800 traffickers and violent offenders.
- Recovering more than \$77 million in drug-related assets.

Nationwide, the HIDTA Program has continued to deliver an exceptional return on investment by:

- Seizing \$17.6 billion in drugs.
- Disrupting or dismantling 3,200 drug trafficking organizations.
- Recovering over 40,000 firearms.
- Providing support for more than 30,000 investigations.
- Providing a return of \$68.07 for every \$1 invested.

On May 30, 2025, the Office of Management and Budget released its FY 2026 Budget Proposal, which included the following significant changes:

1. **A 35% reduction in HIDTA's national budget.**

This would result in an estimated **\$2.8 million reduction** for North Central HIDTA: drastically impacting the ability to address regional drug threats.

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1. The transferring of HIDTA from ONDCP to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The proposed move to the DOJ could severely impact the program's collaborative and locally driven structure. Key concerns include:

- Loss of state and local autonomy in setting priorities.
- Disruption of the balanced interagency coordination model.
- Reduced operational flexibility and long-term investigative stability.
- Risk of weakening public health partnerships, including efforts like the Overdose Response Strategy.

The current ONDCP framework ensures that HIDTA remains neutral, flexible, and responsive to local needs while aligning with the national drug control strategy. In FY 2025, HIDTA received \$298.6 million, 90% of which went directly to state, local, and tribal law enforcement. The funds support those working on the front lines to keep dangerous drugs out of our communities. In our region, most of the eight million HIDTA budget is invested directly in our state, local, and tribal partners. These dollars are not simply funding; they are a force multiplier, enabling collaborative, multi-jurisdictional efforts to combat drug trafficking and related violence.

Senator Smith, thank you, in advance, for your consideration in assisting in 1) maintaining the placement of the HIDTA Program under the ONDCP, 2) opposing the proposed 35% budget reduction, and 3) emphasizing HIDTA's critical role in disrupting drug trafficking networks and enhancing public safety. For additional information, I have enclosed the following two handouts: 1) North Central HIDTA Informational Handout (Exhibit I) and 2026 Presidential Budget Regarding HIDTA (Exhibit II).

I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 651-219-1146 or at bhodges@bloomingtonmn.gov.

Sincerely,



Booker T. Hodges
Chief of Police

Cc: Kathy Hedin, Assistant City Manager
Elizabeth Tolzmann, Assistant City Manager
Katy B. Sen, City of Bloomington Lobbyist Principal
Bloomington Police Department Command Staff
Briana Eicheldinger, Special Projects Coordinator
Ryan Shogren, Executive Director, North Central HIDTA

Enclosure



NORTH CENTRAL HIDTA INFORMATION

- The North Central HIDTA is steadfast in its commitment to keeping our communities safe from the threat posed by illicit drugs. North Central HIDTA is comprised of nine Minnesota counties and eight Wisconsin counties. In 2024 alone, North Central HIDTA seized more than \$67.8 million in drugs, seized 1,560 crime guns, and made 4,759 arrests. There were 80 Drug Trafficking Organizations that were dismantled or disrupted.
 - Approximately 1700 Kilograms of Methamphetamine seized
 - Approximately 2.2 million fentanyl pills seized
 - Approximately 473 kilograms of cocaine seized
 - Over 150 state, local, tribal, and federal partner agencies
- The North Central HIDTA achieves a return on investment (ROI) of \$10.36, meaning that for every dollar invested, it generates \$10.36 in value.

NATIONAL HIDTA PROGRAM INFORMATION

- The mission of the HIDTA Program is to disrupt the market for illegal drugs in the United States by assisting Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement entities participating in the HIDTA Program to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations, with particular emphasis on drug trafficking regions that have harmful effects on other parts of the United States.
- The HIDTA Program does not duplicate but enhances the drug law enforcement efforts in a designated HIDTA area.
 - The HIDTA Program gives Federal, state, and local criminal justice leaders a balanced and equal voice in helping to identify the regional threat, develop a strategy, invest in the strategy, assess performance, and make necessary adjustments in a timely fashion. It is truly a team effort and not directed by a single agency.
- HIDTA supports coordinated law enforcement strategies which *maximize the use of available resources* to reduce the supply of illegal drugs in designated areas and in the United States as a whole.
- HIDTA does not fund agencies but rather invests in strategies developed by Federal, state, local and tribal partnerships.

- The strength of the HIDTA Program is also found in its innovation, expanded scope of mission, and diversity. The program embraces a balanced and holistic approach to address prevailing drug issues that require a multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted plan of action.
- A main attribute of the HIDTA Program is found in the governance provided by the Executive Board. Each HIDTA is governed by an Executive Board comprised of an equal number of state, local and federal agency heads tasked with establishing and achieving goals targeting the threats in that region.
- The HIDTA program gives the federal, state, local and tribal criminal justice leaders a balanced and equal voice in identifying the regional threat, developing a strategy, investing in that strategy, and assessing performance. The flexibility of this leadership model creates the ability for the Executive Board to quickly, effectively, and efficiently adapt to emerging threats that may be unique to their HIDTA by redirecting resources as necessary to provide for the greatest level of impact.
- Training is an essential ingredient to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HIDTA initiatives. The HIDTA training curriculum makes a significant contribution to advancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of drug law enforcement, treatment, and prevention professionals, while also offering unique networking opportunities across agencies and disciplines.
- HIDTA funds are used to advance drug law enforcement efforts to:
 - Fund overtime for state and local law enforcement
 - Fund analyst positions
 - Fund leases to bring drug law enforcement together through co-location
 - Purchase specialized equipment that can be shared with all participants
 - Purchase of evidence
 - Fund investigations and required travel
- The HIDTA Program can demonstrate the impact it has on drug law enforcement efforts through its Performance Management Process (PMP) - a formalized process to assess the quantitative performance of each HIDTA and the overall HIDTA Program.
- **2024 National HIDTA Program Effectiveness**
 - \$17.6 Billion in drug seizures
 - Approximately 167,263 kilograms of cocaine seized
 - Approximately 121,311 kilograms of methamphetamine seized
 - Approximately 7,302 kilograms of fentanyl seized
 - Approximately 113,526,123 fentanyl pills seized
 - Approximately 40,216 firearms seized
- The **National** HIDTA Program achieves a return on investment (ROI) of \$68.07, meaning that for every dollar invested, it generates \$68.07 in value.

The Importance of the HIDTA Program Remaining Under ONDCP

- The HIDTA Program is best administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), given its unbiased and neutral position towards any one department or agency. This structure guarantees neutrality and multi-agency partnerships – not just the directives of one specific agency.
- The neutrality of the HIDTA program is a key to its success. HIDTA is not an agency; it does not espouse the views of any one agency and is not beholden to the mandates of any one agency. HIDTA is truly an agency neutral program that serves only to facilitate and coordinate.
- The Office of National Drug Control Policy has the important responsibility to establish priorities and objectives for the nation's drug policy, which includes treatment, prevention and law enforcement. The goals include reducing illicit drug use, trafficking, drug-related crime and violence, and drug-related health consequences.
- The HIDTA Program is an essential component of the National Drug Control Strategy. It is clear that federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement plays an integral role in the balanced strategy to reduce drug use and its consequences.
- The strength of the HIDTA program is truly multi-dimensional. One of the cornerstones of the program is its demonstrated ability to bring people and agencies together to work towards a common goal.
- The HIDTA Program, which differs from single mission agencies, employs a comprehensive multi-disciplinary, holistic strategy to address the prevailing public health and public safety issues raised by drug abuse and misuse in our society. The HIDTA Overdose Response Strategy is a perfect example of this ability to adapt and improvise, based on the evolving threat.
- While the primary mission focus of enforcement remains of paramount importance, HIDTAs throughout the nation are also involved in drug prevention educational activities that stress training, partnerships, sponsorship and community outreach.
- HIDTA enhances law enforcement intelligence sharing among Federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. HIDTA also provides the important service of deconfliction of investigational targets and locations to prevent “blue on blue” situations and promote officer safety.
- Intelligence and information sharing is a critical component of the overall strategy to reduce the market for illegal drugs. The HIDTA program mandates and establishes Investigative Support Centers in designated areas, specifically to provide analytical

services and create and maintain a communication infrastructure that can facilitate information sharing among federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies.

- The HIDTA program has been at the forefront of establishing, coordinating, and supporting innovative approaches in partnership with relevant disciplines to stem the tide of drug abuse. The emerging partnership between public health and public safety has never been more important as the nation confronts the opioid crisis, and the HIDTA Program provides the perfect platform to promote that partnership.
- The HIDTA Program is unique in its capability to promote the synergistic effect of enforcement, prevention, and education, working together across disciplines toward achieving a sustainable quality of life in our communities which allows our citizens to remain healthy and achieve their full potential.
- ONDCP and the HIDTA program have developed a partnership that has been instrumental in the continuing success of the HIDTA Program. It is a partnership that has consistently paved the way for greater achievement in addressing the significant challenges of drug use and abuse throughout the Nation.

From Pages 628 and 629 of the President's 2026 Budget:

**HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREAS PROGRAM (INCLUDING
TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)**

For necessary expenses of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, as authorized by section 707 of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 ("the Act"; 21 U.S.C. 1706), \$196,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2027, for drug control activities consistent with the approved strategy for each of the designated High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas ("HIDTAs"): Provided, That not less than 51 percent of the amounts made available under this heading shall be transferred to State and local entities for drug control activities and shall be obligated not later than 120 days after enactment of this Act: Provided further, That up to 49 percent of the amounts made available under this heading may be transferred to Federal agencies and departments in amounts determined by the Attorney General, of which up to \$4,000,000 may be used for auditing services and associated activities: Provided further, That any unexpended funds obligated prior to fiscal year 2024 may be used for any other approved activities of that HIDTA, subject to the procedures set forth in section 504 of this Act: Provided further, That upon a determination that all or part of the funds so transferred from this appropriation are not necessary for the purposes provided herein, such amounts may be transferred back to this appropriation: Provided further, That section 707 of the Act shall be applied by substituting "Attorney General" for "Director" and "Department of Justice" for "Office", respectively, in each place they appear: Provided further, That unexpended balances in the "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program, Federal Drug Control Programs, Executive Office of the President" account may be transferred to this appropriation. Program and Financing (in millions of dollars) Identification code 015–1103–0–1–754 2024 actual 2025 est.

2026 est. Obligations by program activity:

0001 Grants and Federal Transfers	\$192,000,000
0002 Auditing Services and Activities	\$4,000,000
0900 Total new obligations, unexpired accounts	\$196,000,000

The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program was established by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, as amended, to provide assistance to Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement entities operating in those areas most adversely affected by drug trafficking. The HIDTA program provides resources to Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies in each HIDTA region to carry out activities that address the specific drug threats of that region. A central feature of the HIDTA program is the discretion granted to HIDTA Executive Boards to design and carry out activities that reflect the specific drug trafficking threats found in each HIDTA region. This discretion ensures that each HIDTA Executive Board can tailor its strategy and initiatives closely to local conditions and can respond quickly to changes in those conditions. Among the types of activities funded by the HIDTA program are: drug enforcement task forces comprised of multiple Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies designed to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking organizations; multi-agency intelligence centers that provide drug intelligence to HIDTA initiatives and participating agencies; initiatives to establish or improve interoperability of communications and information systems between and among law enforcement agencies; and investments in technology infrastructure. For 2026, the Budget proposes to transfer management of the HIDTA program from the Office of National Drug Control Policy to OJP to improve coordination with the Department's other drug enforcement efforts.

From Pages 972 and 973 of the President's 2026 Budget:

OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY

Federal Funds SALARIES AND EXPENSES For necessary expenses of the Office of National Drug Control Policy; for research activities pursuant to the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998, as amended; not to exceed \$10,000 for official reception and representation expenses; and for participation in joint projects or in the provision of services on matters of mutual interest with nonprofit, research, or public organizations or agencies, with or without reimbursement, \$21,785,000:

Provided, That the Office is authorized to accept, hold, administer, and utilize gifts, both real and personal, public and private, without fiscal year limitation, for the purpose of aiding or facilitating the work of the Office. Note.—This account is operating under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Division A of Public Law 119–4).

Program and Financing (in millions of dollars)

Outlays, net (total) 4190

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), pursuant to the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998, as amended, is charged with developing policies, objectives, and priorities for the National Drug Control Program. This account provides funding for personnel compensation, travel, rent, and other basic operations of the Office. For FY 2026, the Budget proposes to transfer the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program to the Department of Justice. Also, the Budget proposes to transfer the Drug-Free Communities Support (DFC) program, the Anti-Doping Activities Program, and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Dues to the Department of Health and Human Services. These proposals will enable ONDCP to focus resources on its core mission: to reduce drug use and its consequences by leading and coordinating the development, implementation, and assessment of U.S. drug policy.