

Why HIDTA Must Remain Under ONDCP

The **High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program**, administered by the **Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)**, is a proven, cost-effective initiative that delivers measurable results in combating drug trafficking and related crime. Its unique structure promotes collaboration among federal, state, local, and tribal agencies, making it a model of intergovernmental cooperation. As one of the federal government's most effective tools against drug trafficking and associated violence, HIDTA's continued placement under ONDCP is not merely administrative; it is essential to national drug control strategy, fiscal responsibility, and public safety.

ONDCP Oversight Is Central to HIDTA's Effectiveness

ONDCP provides neutral, high-level coordination essential to the success of the **HIDTA Program**. Its oversight ensures HIDTA operates free from agency turf battles and bureaucratic bias, allowing regional executive boards among the 33 HIDTAs across the country to maintain equal federal, state, local and tribal representation and to tailor strategies to local threats.

This decentralized structure:

- **Fosters balanced representation** among federal, state, local, and tribal partners.
- **Creates locally tailored strategies** through regional executive boards.
- **Prevents centralization** that could dilute and undermine regional effectiveness.
- **Maintains accountability** through multi-agency outcomes rather than federal metrics alone.

Removing HIDTA from ONDCP would risk politicizing its mission, undermining its neutrality, and eroding the collaborative partnerships that are key to its impact.

Expansion Driven by Success – A Proven Model

From **5 HIDTAs** in 1988 to **33 HIDTAs** in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, HIDTA's growth reflects its effectiveness. **Congress** and criminal justice leaders have consistently supported its expansion as a force multiplier that eliminates duplication and enhances coordination. This expansion reflects bipartisan recognition of its effectiveness and efficiency.

HIDTA Enhances ONDCP

The **ONDCP and HIDTA relationship** provides federal law enforcement with **timely access** to regionalized information and perspective on drug threats and trends throughout the country. This relationship is critical to ONDCP's important function of developing a national drug strategy.

The **HIDTA structure under ONDCP** also produces the most accurate and actionable regional threat assessments. Rather than being generated using a "one size fits all" perspective, these assessments are generated by regional and local expertise most knowledgeable of the specific threats.

ONDCP–HIDTA Partnership: A Foundation for National Drug Strategy

The close **partnership between ONDCP and HIDTA** is foundational to the development of an effective **national drug control strategy**. HIDTA provides ONDCP and federal law enforcement with **timely, region-specific intelligence** on emerging drug threats and trends across the country. This structure enables the production of the most accurate and actionable **regional drug threat assessments**—driven by local expertise rather than a uniform national model—ensuring that federal strategy is informed by those closest to the front lines.

HIDTA Delivers Distinct and Non-Redundant Capabilities

HIDTA's emphasis on regional collaboration and operational flexibility previously complemented the **Department of Justice's (DOJ) Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF)** federal focus, creating a seamless and effective national strategy and the same complimentary relationship will exist with the newly formed **Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTF)**

Empowering Local Leadership Through Strategic Collaboration

HIDTA strengthens local responsibility by uniting federal, state, local, and tribal resources to confront drug threats that cross jurisdictional boundaries. Rather than replacing local efforts, HIDTA enhances them—empowering law enforcement through strategic

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coordination and shared infrastructure. This collaborative approach significantly amplifies the impact of HIDTA's \$298.6 million budget, delivering greater outcomes through partner contributions while reinforcing local leadership in addressing complex drug challenges. State and local Law enforcement receive seventy percent (70 %) of all HIDTA grant funds.

HIDTA Delivers Unmatched Results

In **2024** alone, HIDTA's **1,032**-funded initiatives comprised of more than **23,000** federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agents, officers, analysts and support personnel achieved tremendous outcomes to include:

- **9,762 investigations** targeting major drug and money laundering organizations.
- **3,209 criminal organizations were significantly disrupted or dismantled**—over half with international or multi-state reach.
- **Massive drug seizures**, including:
 - **113,526,123** counterfeit pills containing fentanyl.
 - **7.3** metric tons of fentanyl powder.
 - **167.3** metric tons of cocaine.
 - **121.3** metric tons of methamphetamine.
 - **1.4** metric tons of heroin.
- **40,216 firearms** removed from criminal networks.
- **35,864 fugitives** apprehended.
- **30,039 investigations** supported by HIDTA intelligence analysts from **63 Investigative Support Centers (ISC)**.
- **290,236 law enforcement event deconflictions** processed.
- **104,698 law enforcement and demand reduction professionals** trained.
- **\$17.6 billion in drug value**, currency and other assets seized from criminal networks – over **61 times** the federal HIDTA budget.
- **\$488.6 million in illicit cash and \$184.6 million in other assets seized from criminal organizations** — **2 ¼ times** the federal HIDTA budget.
- **Total return on investment (ROI) of \$68.18** for every federal HIDTA dollar spent.

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These outcomes are not theoretical; they are measurable, repeatable, and scalable, reflecting HIDTA's strategic focus on high-level threats and its ability to deliver outsized returns on federal investment.

Program Overview

- The HIDTA Program is a proven, long-standing model that coordinates and supports federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations at both the regional, national and international levels.
- The 33 HIDTAs operate in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia and include 1,032 task forces nationwide, with a total of 24,638 state, local, tribal, and federal law enforcement personnel assigned.
- More than 3,000 agencies participate in HIDTA task forces across the country, including agents, detectives, officers, prosecutors, and analysts.
- In 2024, Congress allocated approximately \$298 million to the 33 HIDTAs nationwide. Over the past five years, the HIDTA Program has delivered an average return on investment (ROI) of \$94.76 for every federal dollar invested, making it one of the highest performing federal law enforcement programs.
- HIDTAs operate 44 Drug Intelligence Support Centers (ISCs) strategically positioned in major metropolitan areas and along the southern and northern borders. These ISCs deliver essential analytical and deconfliction support that is critical to identifying and disrupting fentanyl trafficking routes and dismantling drug trafficking organizations operating in these regions. The ISC's support ensures that all agencies are closely aligned, risks are minimized, and operations proceed safely.
- HIDTA fosters dynamic partnerships between law enforcement and Prevention organizations to reduce drug overdoses.
- In 2025, through the coordinated efforts of HIDTA Drug Intelligence Support Centers and dynamic partnerships between law enforcement and prevention organizations, HIDTA targeted, intelligence driven enforcement actions and overdose prevention strategies that directly contributed to the significant reduction in fentanyl overdose deaths by disrupting supply chains and preventing fentanyl from reaching communities.

The Bottom Line for Policymakers

- **ONDCP oversight ensures neutrality and effectiveness**, preventing bureaucratic bias and allowing HIDTA to remain focused on regional needs rather than federal agency agendas.
- **HIDTA's decentralized structure empowers regional executive boards** to develop locally tailored strategies, fostering balanced representation among federal, state, local, and tribal partners.
- **The program's expansion from 5 to 33 HIDTAs across all U.S. states and territories reflects bipartisan recognition** of its success and necessity.
- **HIDTA complements—not duplicates**—other federal efforts, such as DOJ's OCDETF and DHS's HSTFs, creating a seamless national strategy.
- **Local law enforcement is strengthened**, not replaced, through HIDTA's collaborative model and shared infrastructure.
- **HIDTA delivers unmatched results**, including:
 - Over **3,200** criminal organizations disrupted or dismantled
 - Seizure of **113+ million** fentanyl-laced pills and **7.3 metric tons** of fentanyl powder
 - **\$18.27** billion in drug value, currency, and assets seized
 - **\$68.18** return on investment for every federal HIDTA dollar invested
- **Removing HIDTA from ONDCP risks politicizing its mission, weakening interagency collaboration, and undermining decades of proven success.**