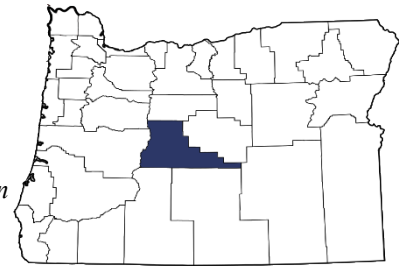




Deschutes County Drug Trends

This report summarizes major trends related to illicit drug use and trafficking in Deschutes County, Oregon based on available open-source statistics and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) supported law enforcement efforts.



HIDTA DESIGNATED - 1999

County Snapshot

Deschutes County is nearly 3,017 square miles and Bend, the county seat, is the largest metropolitan area in the county. Based on census data reported by the United States Census Bureau, Deschutes County is home to an estimated 206,549 residents, which is 5% of the state's population, and one of the more popular outdoor recreation areas in Oregon.¹⁷ This report summarizes the impact of illicit drug use and trafficking throughout the county.

Fentanyl and methamphetamine continue to impact communities throughout Deschutes County based on law enforcement and public health data reported during 2023. According to law enforcement survey data, methamphetamine and fentanyl remain the principal drug threat in the county due to high availability and high demand. Fentanyl has significantly increased in use and availability in the county, impacting local communities as overdose incidents continue to rise. Heroin availability has significantly decreased over the past year but has yet to be directly connected to the increase in fentanyl beyond anecdotal information.

Fatal and non-fatal overdose incidents continue to impact communities in Oregon from pill and powder forms of fentanyl present in the illicit drug supply lines. Informal reporting by law enforcement and public health partners indicates that people who use drugs (PWUD) desire to use fentanyl in powder form continues to be popular due to the unpredictable dosing of fentanyl in pill form. According to harm reduction partners, the PWUD community reports concern over the number of overdoses related to pill use and believes the powder is safer, allowing for more control over consistent dosing. Rising seizures of powder fentanyl throughout the United States and the presence in the local drug supply reflect this change in fentanyl use and add additional public health and safety concerns throughout the county.

Drug Availability and Use Trends

According to statistics provided by the OHA using the SUDORS, unintentional drug overdose deaths in Deschutes County have continued to rise over the past several years.¹⁸ In 2020, 16 drug overdose deaths were confirmed, and continued to rise, reaching a high of 32 total drug overdose deaths in 2022. During the first half of the year in 2023, 8 drug overdose deaths have been confirmed and the number is anticipated to increase as mortality data for 2023 is completed.

HIDTA-designated task forces in Deschutes County seized an annual average of 18.2 kilograms of methamphetamine each year between 2019 and 2023.¹⁹ The number of counterfeit pills containing fentanyl has slowly decreased since 2021, with 40,488 pills seized in 2023, nearly half of what was seized in 2021 (82,943). During this same time, powder fentanyl has significantly increased with 2.8 kilograms seized, consistent with the emerging trend reported in several of the HIDTA counties located along the I-5 corridor. Heroin availability remains low according to law enforcement survey data and continues to be low in demand. The number of

¹⁷ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

¹⁸ [CDC's State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System \(SUDORS\) | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#) – Oregon Health Authority

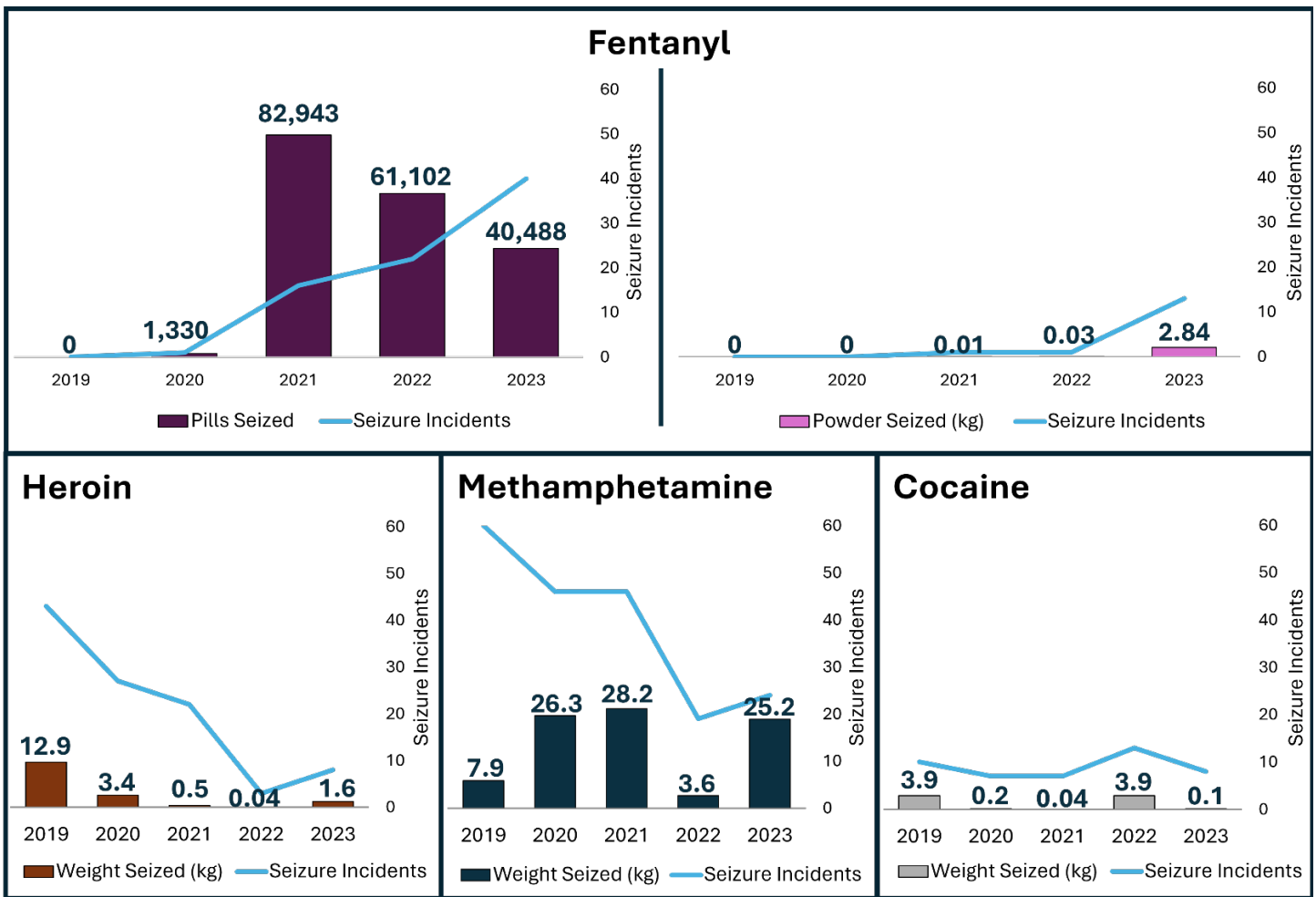
¹⁹ HIDTA Designated Task Forces: Refer to the Current Countywide Efforts section of this report.

seizures remain low, with only eight reported during 2023, down significantly from the average of 30 a year between 2019 and 2021 although the amount seized increased slightly with 1.6 kilograms seized by task force officers during 2023 (see Figure 1).

Deschutes County has a state grant-funded dedicated marijuana enforcement team that is partnered with the HIDTA-designated task force, the Central Oregon Drug Enforcement (CODE) team. Illicit marijuana seizures averaged over 343 kilograms of bulk product and 4,542 illicit plants seized per year between 2019 and 2023, with a high reported in 2021 of 3,933 kilograms of bulk and 16,121 illicit plants seized. In addition to drug seizures, CODE task force officers conducted 61 drug-related arrests and seized 58 firearms and \$1,084,632 in cash and assets. Cash and assets seized by the Oregon State Police (OSP) Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE) are captured under the statewide initiatives and not broken out by location in the HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP).

Figure 1

Total of Illicit Drugs Seized by Oregon HIDTA Designated Enforcement Initiatives



Source: Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Performance Management Process (PMP) – Accessed 01/31/24

Drug Trafficking Trends

Mexico continues to be the primary source area for methamphetamine, fentanyl, heroin, and transited cocaine that is trafficked throughout the state. Once across the southwest border of the United States, illicit drugs are

transported through California and Arizona to Oregon either directly or through the neighboring states of California and Washington. From active drug investigations and survey responses, areas such as Portland and Southern California have been identified as local supply areas for many of the HIDTA task forces operating in the county.

CODE disrupted or dismantled eight drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in 2023, 87% of which were trafficking fentanyl, four of which also trafficked methamphetamine. The operational scope for these DTOs was identified as six locally controlled and operated, and two multi-state operations. During 2023, CODE seized one clandestine cannabis extraction lab related to butane honey oil (BHO) and one clandestine laboratory used to manufacture N, N-dimethyltryptamine (DMT).

Current Countywide Efforts

Within Deschutes County, CODE is the HIDTA-designated task force that receives federal funding and support from the HIDTA Program. Along with enforcement efforts by this task force, three statewide HIDTA initiatives assist in investigations throughout the county and coordinate efforts with other HIDTA task forces. OSP DHE and the United States Marshals Service Fugitive Task Force (USMS FTF) assist with highway interdiction and fugitive apprehension, while the DEA Bend Resident Office conducts drug investigations throughout the Central Oregon region as part of CODE and coordinates with other law enforcement agencies in Deschutes County.

In addition to the enforcement initiatives, the Oregon-Idaho HIDTA program provides resources and support for a public health analyst, funded by the Center for Disease Control Foundation, and a drug intelligence officer who collaborate to bring public health and law enforcement partners together focusing on overdose reduction and responses to overdoses as a part of the Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) and prevention. Through this cooperative effort these professional fields, which have traditionally operated separately, work to increase the sharing of real-time trends and emerging drug threats that impact communities.

Outlook

The fentanyl crisis continues to increase across the nation which is also consistent throughout Oregon and Deschutes County. With supply and demand increasing annually and a consistent supply of methamphetamine and cocaine, the need for resources to support law enforcement efforts is critical. This support includes the focus on supply reduction through law enforcement efforts and public health's focus on demand reduction through prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. Participation by local, state, and federal law enforcement in multi-agency task force initiatives combined with federal resources has proven to be successful in targeting organizations responsible for importing and trafficking illicit drugs within the state. Cooperative efforts through public safety and prevention messaging among public health and law enforcement are necessary to help provide residents with timely information and resources to combat the drug threats facing all communities in Deschutes County.

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