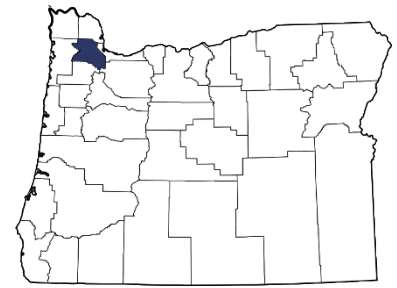




Washington County Drug Trends

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



HIDTA DESIGNATED - 2002

County Snapshot

Washington County at nearly 724 square miles, and part of the western Portland metropolitan area. Based on census data reported by the United States Census Bureau, Washington County is home to an estimated 600,176 residents, which is 14% of the state's population, making it the second most populous county in the state.⁴⁷ This report summarizes the impact of illicit drug use and trafficking throughout the county.

Based on law enforcement and public health data reported during 2023, methamphetamine and fentanyl continue to impact communities throughout Washington County. According to law enforcement survey data, fentanyl and methamphetamine remain the principal drug threats 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 and cocaine availability has remained low over the past year, with law enforcement officers reporting a significant decrease in heroin and an increase in cocaine availability within the illicit drug supply.

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 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 Washington County have continued to rise over the past several years.⁴⁸ In 2020, 41 drug overdose deaths were confirmed, and continued to rise, reaching a high of 75 total drug overdose deaths in 2022. During the first half of the year 2023, 46 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 Washington County seized an annual average of 64.3 kilograms of methamphetamine each year between 2019 and 2023.⁴⁹ Counterfeit pills containing fentanyl emerged as a threat during this same time, with 716,600 pills seized in 2023. Starting in 2021, task forces began seizing notable quantities of powder fentanyl that significantly increased with 25.5 kilograms seized in 2023 (see Figure 1, page 2). Cocaine and heroin seizures have remained relatively stable over the past five years. Washington County is

⁴⁷ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

⁴⁸ [CDC's State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System \(SUDORS\) | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#) – Oregon Health Authority

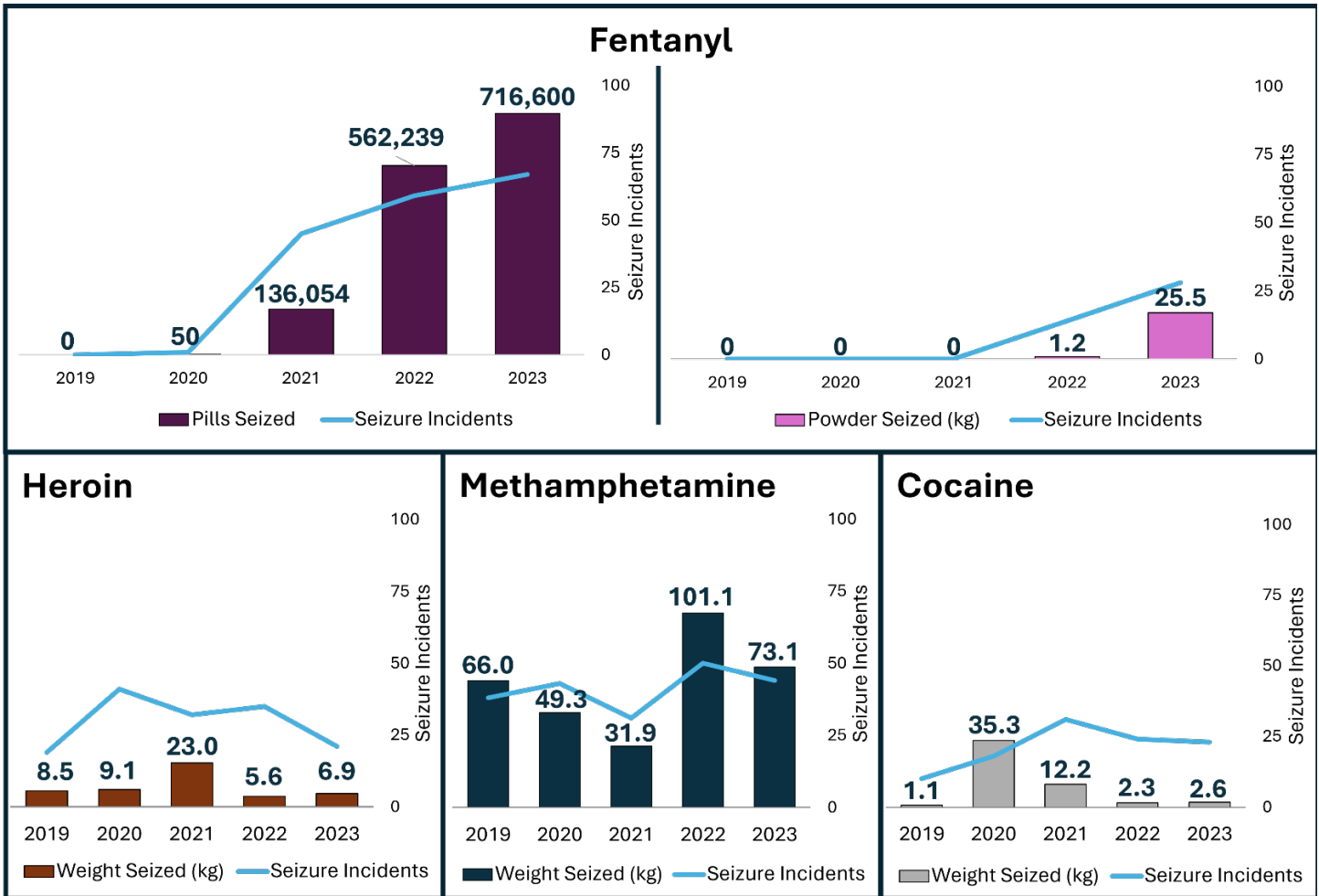
⁴⁹ HIDTA Designated Task Forces: Refer to the Current Countywide Efforts section of this report.

one of the production areas for illicit marijuana in the state, however, illicit marijuana seizures have significantly decreased over the past two years with just over 86 kilograms of bulk marijuana seized in 2023.

In addition to drug seizures, HIDTA task force officers conducted 37 drug-related arrests and seized 31 firearms and \$291,535 in cash and assets. Cash and assets seized in Washington County by the DEA-Portland District Office (DEA-Portland), Oregon State Police (OSP) Domestic Highway Enforcement (DHE), and United States Marshals Service Fugitive Task Force (USMS FTF) 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, various areas in California have been identified as the primary local supply area for many of the HIDTA task forces operating in the county.

UNCLASSIFIED

During 2023, the WIN disrupted or dismantled 10 drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), all of which were trafficking primarily in fentanyl and methamphetamine or heroin. Four of the DTOs impacted were identified as being multi-state connections and four were international with connections to Mexico. The remaining two DTOs were identified as locally controlled and operated organizations.

In 2023, WIN seized two drug-related presses being used to press fentanyl powder into counterfeit M30 pills. In addition, they seized on lab related to the manufacturing of butane honey oil (BHO) and a dumpsite of supplies and containers used to convert heroin into heroin suspended in a liquid.

Current Countywide Efforts

Within Washington County, WIN is the HIDTA-designated task force that receives federal funding and support from the HIDTA Program. Along with enforcement efforts by these task forces, three statewide HIDTA initiatives assist in investigations throughout the county and coordinate efforts with other HIDTA task forces. OSP DHE and the USMS FTF assist with highway interdiction and fugitive apprehension, while DEA- Portland conducts drug investigations throughout the Portland Metro area, north coast, and east to Umatilla and coordinates with WIN and other law enforcement agencies in Washington 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 Washington 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 Washington County.

Your feedback regarding this report is important to us and is a measured performance metric.

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This product was created by the Oregon-Idaho HIDTA Information Sharing and Analytical Coordination Center (ISACC)