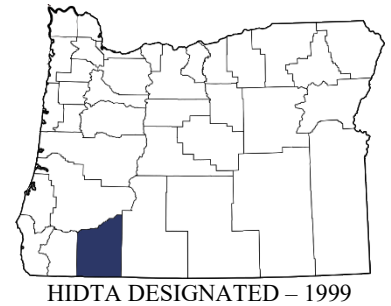




## Jackson County Drug Trends

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



### County Snapshot

Jackson County is nearly 2,783 square miles and is the sixth most populous county in the state. Based on census data reported by the United States Census Bureau, Jackson County is home to an estimated 221,644 residents, which is 5% of the state's population.<sup>23</sup> 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, fentanyl and methamphetamine continue to impact communities throughout Jackson County. According to law enforcement survey data, both 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, while heroin seizures continue to decline. Jackson County continues to be one of the primary production locations for illicit marijuana in the state.

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 Jackson County have continued to rise over the past several years.<sup>24</sup> In 2020, 32 drug overdose deaths were confirmed, and continued to rise, reaching a high of 82 total drug overdose deaths in 2021 and slightly decreasing to 76 in 2022. During the first half of the year 2023, 52 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 Jackson County seized an annual average of 82.1 kilograms of methamphetamine each year between 2019 and 2023.<sup>25</sup> Fentanyl seizures have significantly increased over the past several years with over 15 kilograms of powder and 746,036 pills seized during 2023. Cocaine has continued to be present, with an average of 15.2 kilograms seized each year between 2019 and 2023 (see Figure 1, page 2).

<sup>23</sup> [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#)

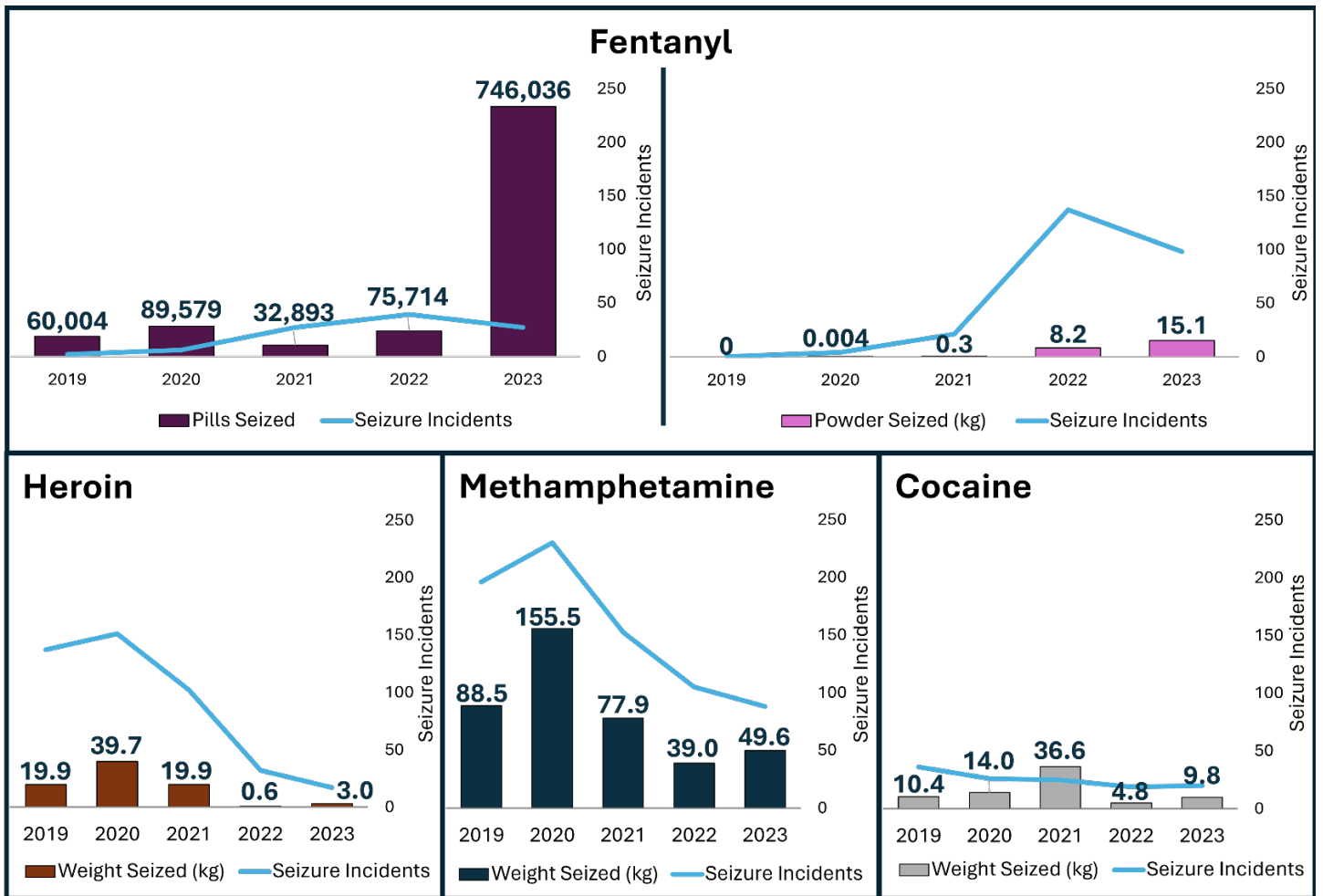
<sup>24</sup> [CDC's State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System \(SUDORS\) | Drug Overdose | CDC Injury Center](#) – Oregon Health Authority

<sup>25</sup> HIDTA Designated Task Forces: Refer to the Current Countywide Efforts section of this report.

Heroin seizures significantly decreased in 2022 and continue to decline with 17 seizures reported in 2023 for a total of 3 kilograms.

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

Jackson County has a state grant-funded dedicated marijuana enforcement team that is partnered with the HIDTA-designated task force, the Medford Area Drug, and Gang Enforcement (MADGE) team. Bulk marijuana seizures have significantly increased with over 161,000 kilograms of bulk marijuana and 791,577 plants seized in the past four years. In addition to drug seizures, HIDTA task force officers conducted 156 drug-related arrests and seized 212 firearms and \$419,402 in cash and assets. Cash and assets seized by the DEA Medford Resident Office (DEA-Medford) and 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).

### 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 San Francisco and Northern California have been identified as local supply areas for many of the HIDTA task forces operating in the county.

MADGE and DEA-Medford disrupted or dismantled 10 drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) in 2023, 40% of which were trafficking methamphetamine, followed by cocaine (2), marijuana (2), fentanyl (1), and heroin (1). The operational scope for these DTOs was identified as primarily being multi-state connected or locally controlled and operated (7), followed by two internationally controlled and one locally controlled and operated. In 2023, MADGE seized one clandestine cannabis extraction lab related to butane honey oil (BHO) and one related to psilocybin.

### **Current Countywide Efforts**

Within Jackson County, MADGE 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 DEA-Medford conducts drug investigations throughout the Southern Oregon area and coordinates with MADGE and other law enforcement agencies in Jackson 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 Jackson 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 Jackson County.

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

Please complete and submit the brief survey by following this link: [ISACC Strategic Report Survey](#)

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