

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Birmingham, Alabama

Profile of Drug Indicators

October 2004



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Birmingham, Alabama

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics

- Population: 236,620 (July 2003 Census estimate)¹; 242,820 (2000 Census)²
- Race/Ethnicity (2000 Census): 23.5% white; 73.2% black/African American; 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.8% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.1% other; 0.7% two or more races; 1.6% Hispanic/Latino origin (any race)³
- Birmingham is located in Jefferson County.⁴

Politics

- Mayor: Bernard Kincaid⁵
- City Council (Districts 1-9, respectively): Joel Montgomery; Carol Reynolds; Valerie Abbott; Gwen Pouncy Sykes; Elias Hendricks, Jr.; Carole Smitherman; Bertram Miller; Lee Wendell Loder; Roderick Royal⁶
- Chief of Police: Annetta Watts Nunn⁷

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁸
Designated in 1996, the Gulf Coast HIDTA is responsible for Baldwin, Jefferson, Madison, Mobile, Montgomery, and Morgan counties in Alabama. In addition to Alabama, the Gulf Coast HIDTA is also responsible for areas of Louisiana and Mississippi.
- Breaking the Cycle⁹
Birmingham is one of 4 jurisdictions nationwide participating in Breaking the Cycle, a joint project of ONDCP and the National Institute of Justice. Breaking the Cycle tests the idea that early identification and assessment of drug using defendants, followed by individualized treatment, intensive supervision, and strong judicial oversight can reduce drug use and crime. The Breaking the Cycle model includes: drug testing of all arrestees before the initial court hearing; placement of drug users in appropriate treatment and monitoring programs; intensive pretrial and post-sentence case management; appropriate, graduated sanctions and incentives to address offender behavior; and judicial oversight of offender compliance.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- There were 85 homicides known to police in Birmingham during 2003. This is a 27% increase from the 67 homicides known to the Birmingham Police Department in 2002.¹⁰

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Birmingham, 2002-2003

Offense	2002	2003	% change
Homicide	67	85	+ 27%
Rape	239	204	- 15
Robbery	1,186	1,352	+ 14
Assault	1,697	1,706	+ 1
Burglary	4,389	4,831	+ 10
Larceny	11,640	11,934	+ 3
Auto theft	2,049	2,809	+ 37

- Data for 2003 indicate that 66.1% of adult male arrestees and 68.0% of adult female arrestees in Birmingham tested positive for at least one of the following drugs at arrest: cocaine, heroin, marijuana, methamphetamine, or PCP.¹¹

Percent of Adult Arrestees Testing Positive, Birmingham, 2003

Drug Type	Male	Female
Cocaine	34.3%	36.0%
Heroin	8.3	12.0
Marijuana	44.6	40.0
Methamphetamine	1.2	0.0
Any drug	66.1	68.0
Multiple drugs	19.8	20.0

- Approximately 47% of Birmingham's adult male arrestees reported using marijuana in the past year. Among the male arrestees reporting past year marijuana use, the average number of days the drug was used in the past month was 10 days.¹²

Past Drug Use, Adult Male Arrestees, Birmingham, 2003

Use	Crack Cocaine	Powder Cocaine	Marijuana	Meth-amphet.	Heroin
Past 7 days	17.2%	6.6%	35.3%	1.2%	1.3%
Past 30 days	20.0%	8.6%	40.6%	1.2%	1.5%
Past year	22.7%	11.5%	47.0%	2.5%	1.8%
Avg. # of days used in month	9.7	6.5	10.0	4.8	11.6

- Approximately 46.4% of Birmingham's adult female arrestees reported using marijuana in the past year. Among the female arrestees reporting past year marijuana use, the average number of days the drug was used in the past month was 5.1 days.¹³

Past Drug Use, Adult Female Arrestees, Birmingham, 2003

Use	Crack	Powder	Marij.	Meth.	Heroin
Past 7 days	17.9%	10.7%	21.4%	3.6%	3.6%
Past 30 days	17.9%	14.3%	28.6%	3.6%	3.6%
Past year	17.9%	14.3%	46.4%	3.6%	7.1%
Avg. # of days used in month	11.8	3.3	5.1	9.2	0.5

- During 2003, there were 2,456 adult arrests for drug possession in Jefferson County.¹⁴ This is down from 2002, when there were 2,572 adult arrests for drug possession.¹⁵

Number of Adult Drug Arrests, Jefferson County, 2002-2003

Drug Type	Sales		Possession	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Opium/cocaine	37	18	1,103	932
Marijuana	21	53	1,253	1,308
Synthetic drugs	9	7	199	199
Other	28	23	17	17
Total	95	101	2,572	2,456

- There were 176 juvenile arrests for drug possession in Jefferson County during 2003.¹⁶ In 2002, there were 178 juvenile arrests for drug possession in the county.¹⁷

Number of Juvenile Drug Arrests, Jefferson County, 2002-2003

Drug Type	Sales		Possession	
	2002	2003	2002	2003
Opium/cocaine	0	3	21	24
Marijuana	0	0	131	140
Synthetic drugs	3	1	25	12
Other	0	0	1	0
Total	3	4	178	176

Juveniles

- Approximately 14% of the Jefferson County 8th grade students surveyed in 2002 reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetime.¹⁸

Percent of Students Reporting Lifetime Drug Use, Jefferson County, 2002

Substance	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
Cigarettes	18%	27%	34%
Alcohol	22	31	42
Marijuana	3	12	14
Inhalants	8	13	8
Hallucinogens	2	2	1
Cocaine	2	2	1
Other drugs	5	8	9

- Forty-four percent of Jefferson County high school seniors surveyed in 2002 reported lifetime marijuana use.¹⁹

Percent of High School Students Reporting Lifetime Drug Use, Jefferson County, 2002

Substance	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Cigarettes	42%	46%	54%	53%
Alcohol	51	67	72	78
Marijuana	22	35	39	44
Inhalants	15	11	8	5
Hallucinogens	7	7	9	11
Cocaine	3	5	4	6
Other drugs	17	16	17	18

Enforcement

- As of October 2003, there were 1,115 full-time law enforcement employees in Birmingham (810 officers and 305 civilians).²⁰

Trafficking and Seizures

- The Gulf Coast HIDTA’s geographic location between the southwest border and the eastern seaboard serves as a strategic corridor for traffickers transporting drugs and money to and from the eastern and northern parts of the country.²¹
- The area’s waterways, deepwater ports, railway and highway systems, and airports are used extensively by drug trafficking and smuggling operations.²²

Courts

- Drug Courts²³
As of September 2004, there were 2 drug courts in Birmingham that had been operating for over 2 years. No additional drug courts were in existence or being planned at that time.

Corrections

- Based on the total Alabama Department of Corrections population in August 2004 (26,588), Jefferson County contributed 16.6% of the population with 4,426 offenders.²⁴
- Birmingham Work Release Center²⁵
Opened in 1973, the Birmingham Work Release Center can hold 300 male or female community custody inmates. The Center has a full-time drug treatment counselor to facilitate relapse classes and monitor active aftercare programs of recovering inmates.

Consequences of Use

- During 2002, there were 132 drug-related deaths reported to DAWN by Medical Examiners (ME) in the Birmingham area. Narcotic analgesics were mentioned in 89 of the drug abuse deaths.²⁶

Number of Drug Mentions Reported by ME, Birmingham Area, 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	33	29	33	36	32
Cocaine	47	39	41	52	55
Heroin/morphine	--	4	3	7	13
Marijuana	2	--	2	2	4
Amphetamines	1	--	1	--	3
Methamphetamine	--	--	1	--	2
Club drugs	1	--	3	4	1
Hallucinogens	--	--	--	--	--
Inhalants	--	1	--	1	--
Narcotic analgesics	31	40	69	60	89
Other analgesics	9	14	16	11	17
Benzodiazepines	32	26	47	58	63
Antidepressants	36	40	60	51	66
All other substances	37	33	63	59	78
Total drug deaths	92	79	111	110	132
Total drug mentions	229	226	339	341	423

Treatment

- During 2003, 13.4% of adult male arrestees and 7.1% of adult female arrestees in Birmingham reported receiving outpatient substance abuse treatment at some point within their lives.²⁷

Adult Arrestees Reporting Substance Abuse Treatment, Birmingham, 2003

Arrestees	Outpatient		Inpatient	
	Ever	Past Year	Ever	Past Year
Male	13.4%	2.9%	20.7%	2.9%
Female	7.1	0.0	25.0	14.3

- There are 8 treatment programs in Birmingham that receive funds from the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.²⁸

Type of Service Provided, Birmingham Treatment Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Program/Facility	Intensive outpat.	Crisis resident.	Resident. rehab.	Meth- adone	Detox.
Aletheia House	X		X		
Fellowship House			X		
JCCEO	X				
Oakmont Center	X				
O'livia's House			X		
Pearson Hall	X	X			X
St. Anne's Home			X		
UAB Sub. Abuse Prog.	X			X	

- There were 762 clients admitted to Aletheia House during FY 2002-2003.²⁹

Number of Clients, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Program/Facility	# of Clients
Aletheia House	762
Fellowship House	543
JCCEO	296
Oakmont Center	119
O’livia’s House	85
Pearson Hall	1,758
St. Anne’s Home	89
UAB Sub. Abuse Prog.	3,337

- During FY 2002-2003, 416 of those admitted to Aletheia House (AH), 118 of those admitted to Fellowship House (FH), 230 of those admitted to JCCEO, and 112 of those admitted to Oakmont Center (OC) were referred to treatment through the criminal justice system.³⁰

Number of Clients by Referral Source, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Referral Type	AH	FH	JCCEO	OC
Criminal justice-related	416	118	230	112
Community	31	47	25	0
Doctor/hospital	22	40	0	0
Mental health/psychiatric service	2	38	0	0
Other/school/employee assis. prog.	56	0	18	5
Relative/friend	78	13	2	0
Substance abuse treatment	21	108	4	0
Self	136	179	17	2

- During FY 2002-2003, 22 of those admitted to O’livia’s House (OH), 651 of those admitted to Pearson Hall (PH), 14 of those admitted to St. Anne’s Home (SAH), and 3,173 of those admitted to UAB Substance Abuse Program (UAB) were referred to treatment through the criminal justice system.³¹

Number of Clients by Referral Source, Birmingham Facilities (continued), FY 2002-2003

Referral Type	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
Criminal justice-related	22	651	14	3,173
Community	6	170	0	38
Doctor/hospital	2	61	1	3
Mental health/psychiatric service	2	51	1	1
Other/school/employee assis. prog.	19	72	0	39
Relative/friend	6	135	0	11
Substance abuse treatment	15	291	71	8
Self	13	327	2	64

- In FY 2002-2003, 341 of those being treated at Aletheia House reported cocaine as their primary substance problem.³²

Number of Clients by Primary Substance Problem, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Primary Subst.	AH	FH	JCC	OC	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
Alcohol	202	245	107	13	5	538	28	556
Cocaine	341	217	70	24	49	690	22	704
Marij./hashish	146	31	113	80	11	197	1	1,612
Heroin	3	2	0	0	7	15	3	23
Non-Rx methadone	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	8
Other opiates/synth.	33	31	4	0	7	192	16	326
PCP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other hallucinogens	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	6
Methamphetamine	1	12	0	0	6	90	14	43
Other amphetamine	31	0	1	1	0	15	1	19
Other stimulants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Benzodiazepines	0	3	1	0	0	11	0	28
Other tranquilizers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Barbiturates	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Other sedatives	5	0	0	1	0	3	2	9
Inhalants/glue/ether	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Total	762	543	296	119	85	1,758	89	3,337

- Of those being treated at Aletheia House in FY 2002-2003, 271 reported daily use of their primary drug of abuse.³³

Frequency of Use of Primary Drug, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Freq. of Use	AH	FH	JCC	OC	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
Daily	271	49	102	25	81	984	76	1,114
1-2 times/week	109	44	41	23	1	150	4	593
3-6 times/week	90	29	85	11	2	276	8	412
1-3 times/month	61	116	15	14	1	109	0	512
No past month use	231	305	50	46	0	237	0	603
Other	0	0	3	0	0	2	1	103

- Approximately 9% (69) of those being treated at Aletheia House in FY 2002-2003 reported first using a substance before age 13.³⁴

Number of Clients by Reported Age of First Use, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Age of First Use	AH	FH	JCC	OC	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
Younger than 13	69	92	31	14	9	189	8	287
13-15	134	116	86	25	24	337	11	761
16-18	171	118	73	38	27	374	18	1,035
19-29	254	153	77	27	24	597	35	920
30 and older	134	64	29	15	1	261	17	334

- Of the clients being treated at Aletheia House during FY 2002-2003, 283 had used their primary drug of abuse for more than 15 years before being admitted to treatment.³⁵

Clients by Years of Use Before Admission, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Years of Use	AH	FH	JCC	OC	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
Less than 1 year	6	1	0	4	1	18	1	42
1	24	4	7	8	0	56	8	179
2	23	7	7	8	3	71	4	233
3	25	11	9	5	1	79	7	242
4	33	10	11	3	4	69	10	231
5	35	9	10	7	3	69	2	214
6-9	129	58	62	24	20	273	12	713
10-15	203	104	71	32	21	375	18	647
More than 15	283	339	119	28	32	747	27	835

- Of those being treated at Aletheia House in FY 2002-2003, 282 had no prior treatment episodes.³⁶

Clients by Reported Prior Treatment Episodes, Birmingham Facilities, FY 2002-2003

Prior Treat.	AH	FH	JCC	OC	OH	PH	SAH	UAB
None	282	72	189	111	29	760	0	2,204
One	206	170	70	5	27	499	46	694
Two	147	124	12	1	24	250	20	227
Three	73	78	17	1	2	127	10	98
Four	26	42	5	1	2	54	7	38
Five	28	57	3	0	1	68	6	76

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Population for Alabama:

<http://www.census.gov/popest/cities/tables/SUB-EST2003-04-01.pdf>

² U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Birmingham Web site: <http://www.informationbirmingham.com/>

⁵ Birmingham Mayor Web site: <http://www.informationbirmingham.com/mayor/mayor.htm>

⁶ Birmingham City Council Web site: <http://www.informationbirmingham.com/citycouncil/citycouncil.htm>

⁷ Birmingham Police Department Web site: <http://www.informationbirmingham.com/police/default.htm>

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- ⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, Gulf Coast High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area section: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_gulf.html
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- ²³ Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, September 2, 2004: http://spa.american.edu/justice/publications/us_drugcourts.pdf
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- ²⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Mortality Data From the Drug Abuse Warning Network, 2002*, January 2004: http://dawninfo.samhsa.gov/pubs_94_02/mepubs/default.asp
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- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
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- ³⁴ Ibid.
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This State Profile was prepared by the ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and is a component of the [National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#). For further information concerning the contents of this profile or other drug policy issues contact:

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