

# Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

### Atlanta, Georgia

#### Profile of Drug Indicators

November 2008



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.

## Atlanta, Georgia

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

### **Demographics**

- Population (2006 American Community Survey): 442,887<sup>1</sup>
- Race/ethnicity (2006 American Community Survey): 37.2% white; 55.7% black/African American; 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native; 2.3% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 3.7% other race; 0.9% two or more races; 5.9% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)<sup>2</sup>
- The city of Atlanta is located in sections of Fulton and DeKalb Counties.<sup>3</sup>

### **Politics**

- Mayor: Shirley Franklin<sup>4</sup>
- City Council Members (District): Lisa Borders (Council President); Carla Smith (1); Kwanza Hall (2); Ivory Lee Young (3); Cleta Winslow (4); Natalyn Archibong (5); Anne Fauver (6); Howard Shook (7); Clair Muller (8); Felicia Moore (9); Clarence Martin (10); Jim Maddox (11); Joyce Sheperd (12); Ceasar Mitchell (Post 1 at large); Mary Norwood (Post 2 at large); H. Lamar Willis (Post 3 at large)<sup>5</sup>
- Atlanta Chief of Police: Richard J. Pennington<sup>6</sup>

### **Programs/Initiatives**

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)<sup>7</sup>  
Designated in 1995, the Atlanta HIDTA is responsible for the city of Atlanta, Fulton and DeKalb Counties, as well as other areas in Georgia and North Carolina.
- Call to Manhood<sup>8</sup>  
The Call to Manhood program is an anti-violence initiative targeting young black males in Atlanta and throughout Fulton County. The purpose of the program is to instill positive attitudes that will benefit the individual and society as a whole. Some aspects of the program are conflict resolution, drug/alcohol prevention and educational and career opportunities.

### **Crime and Drug-Related Crime**

- During the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 2008, there were 50 homicides reported by the Atlanta Police Department.<sup>9</sup> During full year 2007, there were 129 homicides reported.<sup>10</sup>

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Atlanta, 2007-June 2008

Offense	Full Year 2007	Jan.-June 2008
Criminal homicide	129	50
Rape	148	65
Robbery	3,577	1,548
Aggravated assault	4,221	1,859
Burglary	8,859	4,362
Larceny	20,353	11,059
Auto theft	7,020	2,853
Total	44,307	21,796

## Drugs

- Cocaine<sup>11</sup>  
In early 2008 mixed reporting from law enforcement agencies revealed that some wholesale powder cocaine distributors continued to experience decreased cocaine availability, while others were able to supply multi-kilogram quantities. Prices for cocaine in the metropolitan Atlanta were slightly higher during the third quarter (\$16,000-\$23,500/kilogram) and fourth quarter (\$17,500-\$25,000/ kilogram) of fiscal year (FY) 2007 than the prices reported in the first quarter of FY 2007 (\$15,000-\$22,500/ kilogram). High levels of violent and property crime in Atlanta often are a result of the distribution and abuse of illicit drugs, particularly crack cocaine.
- Heroin<sup>12</sup>  
Heroin availability remains stable throughout Atlanta metropolitan area. Seizures of street-level amounts of heroin attest to the pervasiveness and the availability of the drug. The most recent domestic monitor program report has shown the reemergence of Southwest Asian heroin in the Atlanta market. The average purity for the Southwest Asian exhibits was 24.2% and South American exhibits averaged 27%.
- Marijuana<sup>13</sup>  
Ethnographic sources consistently confirm that marijuana is the most commonly abused drug in Atlanta. Most epidemiological indicators show an upward trend in marijuana use. Recent data indicate that retail prices for marijuana were \$5–\$10/gram and \$100–\$350/ounce.
- Methamphetamine  
Methamphetamine continued a five-year trend as Atlanta’s fastest growing drug problem. The availability of Ice (crystal) methamphetamine in the Atlanta metropolitan area is increasing.<sup>14</sup> Retail prices for crystal methamphetamine in Atlanta during the first half of 2007 were: \$10,000–\$20,000/pound, \$750–\$1,600/ounce and \$100–\$120/gram.<sup>15</sup>
- Club Drugs<sup>16</sup>  
Ecstasy is readily available in Atlanta’s nightclubs, “rave” parties and concerts which target the younger population. The retail price for ecstasy in Atlanta is \$8/pill.
- Other Drugs/Diverted Pharmaceuticals<sup>17</sup>  
The use of depressants, especially benzodiazepines, is on the rise in Atlanta. The most commonly abused benzodiazepine is alprazolam (Xanax).

## Juveniles

- During 2007, approximately 37.1% of high school students surveyed in DeKalb County reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime.<sup>18</sup>

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, DeKalb County, 2007

Drug Type and Use	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime marijuana use	31.5%	42.7%	37.1%
Past month marijuana use	12.9	25.0	18.9
Lifetime cocaine use	3.0	6.8	4.9
Lifetime inhalant use	9.5	9.9	9.8
Lifetime methamphetamine use	1.6	3.7	2.7
Lifetime illegal use of steroids	1.1	3.6	2.4

Lifetime injection of illegal drug	0.8	3.3	2.1
Lifetime ecstasy use	3.1	6.5	4.9
Tried marijuana before age 13	6.3	15.8	11.2

- Approximately 22.1% of DeKalb County high school seniors surveyed in 2007 reported using marijuana within the past month.<sup>19</sup>

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, DeKalb County, 2007

Drug Type and Use	9th	10th	11th	12th
Lifetime marijuana use	27.4%	40.2%	40.3%	43.8%
Past month marijuana use	15.7	20.5	18.1	22.1
Lifetime cocaine use	4.0	5.1	5.8	4.4
Lifetime inhalant use	11.9	12.1	7.2	6.0
Lifetime methamphetamine use	2.0	1.7	4.0	2.9
Lifetime illegal use of steroids	2.2	2.6	1.7	2.8
Lifetime injection of illegal drug	1.8	2.0	1.4	2.4
Lifetime ecstasy use	3.3	5.4	6.4	4.3
Tried marijuana before age 13	12.0	11.2	10.6	9.1

### Enforcement

- As of October 31, 2007, there were 2,177 full-time law enforcement employees in Atlanta (1,701 officers and 476 civilians).<sup>20</sup>

### Trafficking and Seizures

- The city of Atlanta has become an important strategic point for drug trafficking organizations as it is the largest city in the South and is a nexus for all East/West and North/South travel.<sup>21</sup>
- Mexican drug trafficking organizations transport large quantities of marijuana, cocaine and ice methamphetamine from the Southwest Border into Atlanta. These organizations use a complex network of transportation and distribution cells to coordinate drug shipments from sources of supply operating in California, Texas or Mexico to the region. Most midlevel and retail-level distributors depend on Mexican organizations as their sources for these illicit drugs.<sup>22</sup>
- African American street gangs are geographically based, usually forming around public housing areas or school associations. However Atlanta authorities have been closing and demolishing many of the public housing units that fostered these street gangs; families of gang members have been relocated to housing elsewhere in the city or beyond. The impact of these relocations on gang-related crime remains unknown and constitutes an intelligence gap.<sup>23</sup>
- Traffickers' limited use of commercial airlines in the region is quite likely the result of increased security at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.<sup>24</sup>
- Atlanta is a transit city for Ecstasy (MDMA) destined for other U.S. cities.<sup>25</sup>
- The Atlanta HIDTA was involved in the disruption of 17 and dismantling of 11 drug trafficking organizations during 2006.<sup>26</sup>

- Members of the Atlanta HIDTA seized 64,238 dosage units of MDMA in 2007.<sup>27</sup>

Amount of Drugs Seized by Atlanta HIDTA, 2007

Drug Type	Amount Seized
Powder cocaine	1,005.82 kilograms
Crack cocaine	1.61 kilograms
Heroin	6.45 kilograms
Marijuana	4,086.21 kilograms
Hydroponic marijuana	6,001.65 kilograms
Methamphetamine (powder)	0.49 kilograms
Crystal methamphetamine	46.98 kilograms
GHB	12.00 kilograms
MDMA	64,238.00 dosage units

**Courts**

- Drug Courts<sup>28</sup>

As of August 11, 2008, there were 3 drug courts in existence or being planned in Atlanta. Two drug courts had been operating for at least two years and another had recently been implemented.

**Corrections**

- On October 14, 2008, approximately 8.65% (4,580) of the statewide active prisoners within Georgia Department of Corrections facilities were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2006, there were 256 prison admissions resulting for cocaine possession from Fulton County and 136 such admissions from DeKalb County.<sup>30</sup>
- On October 14, 2008, approximately 6.58% (9,551) of the active probationers in Georgia were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit. More than 11,000 (11,210) probationers, representing 7.57% of the statewide probation total, were being supervised in the Atlanta Circuit.<sup>31</sup>

**Treatment**

- During the first half of FY 2006, 34.2% of the drug treatment admissions in Atlanta were for primary abuse of powder or crack cocaine.<sup>32</sup>
- Methamphetamine treatment admissions in Atlanta fell during the first half of FY 2006 to 7.7% of total admissions from 11.9% in FY 2005.<sup>33</sup>

Admissions to Treatment, Atlanta, FY 2002-1<sup>st</sup> half of FY 2006

Drug Type	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	1 <sup>st</sup> Half FY 2006
Cocaine/crack	43.1%	42.8%	39.5%	37.2%	34.2%
Heroin	7.6%	6.3%	5.6%	5.0%	4.9%
Marijuana	18.7%	20.0%	21.7%	20.9%	20.9%
Methamphetamine	3.1%	5.1%	8.5%	11.9%	7.7%
Other drugs	21.3%	25.8%	24.6%	25.0%	32.4%
Total admissions	7,909	7,178	7,996	9,320	4,409

## Sources

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- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> USCitycounty.com Web site, Atlanta City Demographics data: [http://www.uscitycounty.com/georgia-state/dekalb\\_fulton-counties/atlanta-city-demography.htm](http://www.uscitycounty.com/georgia-state/dekalb_fulton-counties/atlanta-city-demography.htm)
- <sup>4</sup> Atlanta Mayor's Web site: <http://www.atlantaga.gov/Mayor/Default.aspx>
- <sup>5</sup> Atlanta City Council Web site: <http://apps.atlantaga.gov/citycouncil/council.htm>
- <sup>6</sup> Atlanta Police Department Web site: <http://atlantapd.org/>
- <sup>7</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area section: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/atlanta.html>
- <sup>8</sup> Fulton County Department of Human Services, Call to Manhood Program: <http://www.fultonhumanservices.org/manhood.htm>
- <sup>9</sup> Atlanta Police Department, June 2008 Crime Report: <http://atlantapd.org/ucr/2008/June2008.pdf>
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- <sup>11</sup> National Drug Intelligence Center, *Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Market Analysis 2008*, June 2008: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27485/27485p.pdf>
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- <sup>18</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Youth Online: Comprehensive Results: <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/>
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2007*, September 2008: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/>
- <sup>21</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, 2008 Georgia State Factsheet: <http://www.dea.gov/pubs/states/georgia.html>
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- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, 2008 Georgia State Factsheet: <http://www.dea.gov/pubs/states/georgia.html>
- <sup>26</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Atlanta High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Annual Report 2006*, Atlanta section: [http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/rpts06/06\\_atlanta.pdf](http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/rpts06/06_atlanta.pdf)
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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

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