

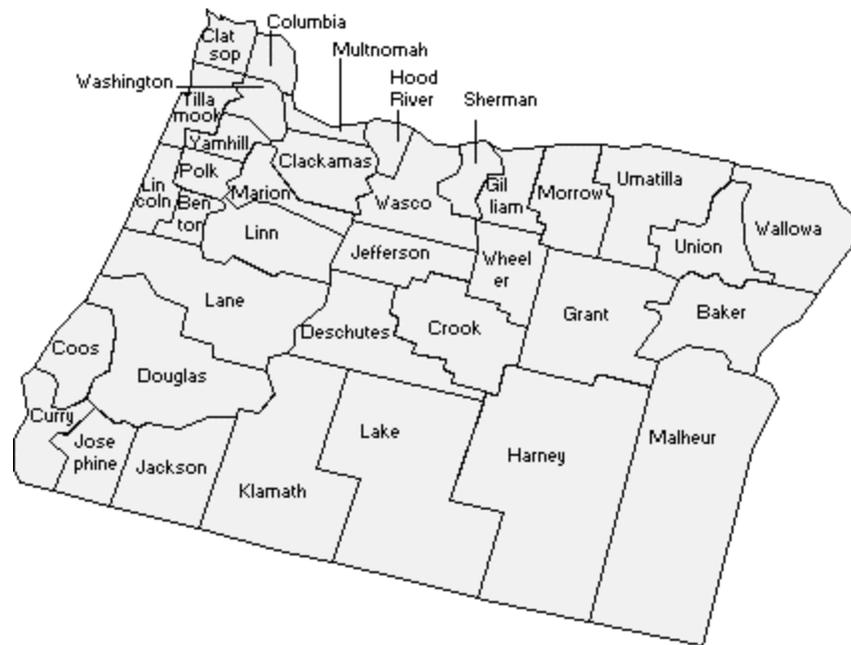
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Medford, Oregon

Profile of Drug Indicators

October 2000



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.

Medford

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

Demographics¹

- Medford, population estimated at 60,000, is the largest city within Jackson County and serves as its County Seat. The following Statistics are for Jackson County, Oregon.
- Population: 175,822 (1999 estimate)
- Gender: 84,894 Male, 88,229 Female (1998)
- Age: 24.5% under 18 years old, 16.1% 65 years or older
- Race/Ethnicity: 97.1% White, .3% Black, 1.3% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.3% American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut, 6.2% Hispanic Origin
- Percent of population below poverty level: 14.6%
- Children below poverty level: 19.3%

Politics²

- Mayor: Lindsay Berryman
- City Manager: Michael Dyal
- City Council: Curt Bennett, Jim Key, Sal Esquivel, Skip Knight, Matthew Hart, John Michaels, Bill Moore, Bob Strosser
- Chief of Police: Eric Mellgren
- Jackson County Sheriff: Robert Kennedy

Programs/Initiatives

- In FY 1998 ONDCP awarded Southern Oregon Drug Awareness, Inc. in Medford, Oregon \$87,740 under the Drug Free Communities Support Program. Southern Oregon Drug Awareness, Inc. (SODA) was founded in 1981 in Jackson County, Oregon. SODA is a consortium of community-based agencies, parents, school administrators, elected officials, law enforcement officers, and representatives of the faith, business, and community sectors. Proposed project activities include:
 - Providing after school programming to at-risk elementary school youth.
 - Providing specialized resiliency and empowerment programs for young male and female adolescents.
 - Initiating a community-wide plan to prevent and address illicit drug use and early problem behavior.³
- The Oregon HIDTA was designated in 1999 and includes Deschutes, Jackson, and Marion Counties. These counties are geographically situated in the State to counter drug trafficking and smuggling into, out of, and through Oregon. The three counties

comprise a total of 3,477,000 acres, of which approximately 2,253,000 acres are forested. Each county has several metropolitan areas. Interstate 5, Interstate 84, and US highways 97 and 20 are major ground transportation routes into and through Oregon. The Oregon HIDTA counties are situated to intersect these routes and support interdiction efforts by local task forces and law enforcement agencies.⁴

- In December 1994, the Medford Police Department implemented the Drug/Blight House Abatement Program, which uses a non-traditional, multi-agency approach in dealing with drug houses and/or blight nuisance houses. The goal is to increase the livability of neighborhoods by ridding them of drug dealers and improving the physical appearance of the neighborhood. Residential properties where an accumulation of unsightly trash, garbage, debris, abandoned vehicles, or any health or environmental hazard, would qualify as a blight property. The program uses a coordinated code enforcement technique, in partnership with other government agencies and negotiates with property owners to improve their properties and obtain law-abiding tenants. Cases where property owners are uncooperative or refuse to comply with the law are litigated civilly under Oregon's Drug Nuisance Abatement Act. In January 1997, a city ordinance was passed, requiring property owners to provide trash service to the tenants of their rental properties. In October 1998, the city's Chronic Nuisance Ordinance was passed. This established that any property, on which 3 or more nuisance activities occur during any 30-day period, can be physically secured. The person in charge of the property can be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$100 per day, for each day the nuisance activity occurs following notice. The intent of the Blight/Drug House Program is to gain compliance from the occupants and owners of the property to improve the quality of the livability for everyone in the neighborhood. As of October 1999, over 130 cases have been closed, with 63 open cases pending.⁵
- The Gangs & Street Drugs Unit (GSD) was formed in April 1999 to specifically address the ever-growing threat of street gangs and the violence that follows them. The city of Medford has experienced an increase in the presence of gang activity through the 90's. The GSD's responsibility is to identify and develop intelligence on known gang members, and target them and their associates, using a "zero-tolerance" policy of enforcement. The other half of the GSD unit is to address the ongoing problem with street-level drug dealing, use, and manufacturing in Medford. An advisory committee comprised of private citizens who are employed in youth-related businesses, was formed to exchange information and give direction to the GSD unit. The board meets quarterly and makes recommendations regarding the priorities of the unit. The Medford Police Department has also developed a close working relationship with the Medford School District. The GSD unit is currently comprised of (1) Sergeant, (1) Detective, (2) Patrol Officers, and (2) School Resource Officers.⁶

Crime and Drug-Related Crime⁷

- The Crime Index Total in Medford dropped from 4,799 in 1998 to 3,822 in 1999.

Number of Offenses Known to Medford PD, 1998-1999

Offense	1998	1999
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	2	----
Forcible rape	26	19
Robbery	41	39
Aggravated Assault	160	145
Burglary	640	456
Larceny-theft	3,715	2,967
Motor vehicle theft	215	196
Arson	63	54
Crime Index Total	4,799	3,822

Drugs⁸

The Oregon HIDTA, that includes Jackson County, states that the top four illegal drugs in their area are methamphetamine (Speed), heroin, marijuana, and cocaine.

➤ Methamphetamine

Oregon has been a domestic producer of methamphetamine for many years and had one of the highest treatment admission rates in the nation in 1992. Currently, Methamphetamine is not only being produced locally, it is also being imported into Oregon and exported from Oregon by numerous drug trafficking organizations. Methamphetamine use in Oregon increased 34% between 1995 and 1997. This drug is a highly addictive and dangerous drug manufactured in clandestine labs using volatile chemicals commercially available. Methamphetamine is clearly the "stimulant drug of choice" in Oregon.

➤ Heroin

Heroin in Oregon is distributed primarily in the form of a black gooey substance referred to as tar heroin. This heroin accounts for many overdose deaths due to unreliable potency, which can vary from 25% to 75% or more. There were 119 Heroin overdose deaths in Oregon during the first six months of 1999. This represents a 75% increase compared to the first six months of 1998.

Drug trafficking organizations with links to Mexico and Central America are responsible for virtually all of the tar heroin imported into the state. During the first half of 1999, DEA seized approximately 1 kilo of tar heroin in the city of Medford, which is located in an Oregon HIDTA county on Interstate 5 and near the border between Oregon and California. Additionally, during this same period, the Oregon State Police seized over 126 grams of tar heroin. In May of 1998, the California Highway Patrol seized 13.5 pounds of black tar heroin that was destined for the Oregon city of Aumsville, also located in an Oregon HIDTA county.

➤ Marijuana

Marijuana is the most commonly abused illegal drug in the Oregon HIDTA. Indoor marijuana grow operations are routinely encountered by drug task forces statewide. Oregon marijuana "bud" is often exported to other states and nations, and is renowned

for its high THC content. Based on samples submitted to the University of Mississippi for testing, Oregon has recorded the highest (33.6%) THC content in the nation. Normal THC content for high quality marijuana is approximately 15%. The Drug Enforcement Administration statistics ranked Oregon 14th in the nation for marijuana cultivation in 1998. Also during 1998, DEA ranked Oregon second in the nation for indoor marijuana grows seized.

➤ Cocaine

Cocaine is imported into Oregon almost exclusively by drug trafficking organizations with links to Mexico and Central America. Statewide seizure statistics indicate that during an eighteen-month period, ending June 30, 1998, a total of 58 kilograms of cocaine and 840 grams of crack were seized.

During the first half of 1999, Cocaine use continues to be the second leading cause of drug related overdose deaths. Forty-two individuals died during this period, which is up 110% from 1998.

Trafficking and Seizures⁹

- The Medford Police Department has three investigators assigned to JACNET, a countywide, interagency narcotics enforcement team, which is currently supervised by a Jackson County Sheriff's Department sergeant. In 1998, JACNET made a total of 174 narcotic violator arrests, worked 171 criminal narcotic intelligence cases and received/deposited \$83,888 in forfeited funds. JACNET confiscated 4,627 grams of methamphetamine, 14,206 grams of processed marijuana, 44 grams of heroin, seized/processed 10 meth labs and served 79 search warrants.

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² City of Medford Web site: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/index.asp>

³ Drug Free Communities Support Program Web site: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dfcs/index.html>

⁴ ONDCP Web Site, Oregon HIDTA -- FY 2000 Site Fact Sheet:

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/or-fs.html>

⁵ Medford Police Department Web Site: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=12>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 1999*, October 2000

⁸ ONDCP Web Site, Oregon HIDTA -- FY 2000 Site Fact Sheet:

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/or-fs.html>

⁹ Medford Police Department Web Site: <http://www.ci.medford.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=12>

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