

# Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

### Brownsville, Texas

#### Profile of Drug Indicators

March 2002



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.

## Brownsville, Texas

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

### **Demographics<sup>1</sup>**

- Population: 139,722 (2000 Census)
- Race/Ethnicity: 83.6% white; 0.4% black/African American; 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native; 0.6% Asian; 15% other race; 2.3% two or more races; 93.4% Hispanic (of any race)
- County: Cameron

### **Politics<sup>2</sup>**

- Mayor: Blanca Sanchez Vela
- City Manager: Lanny S. Lambert
- City Commission: Dr. Joseph Zavaletta, Ernie Hernandez, Henry Gonzalez, Eddie Trevino, Jr. (there are currently two open Commission positions)

### **Programs/Initiatives**

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area<sup>3</sup>  
Designated in 1990, the Southwest Border HIDTA/South Texas Partnership is responsible for the following counties: Bexar, Cameron, Dimmit, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy, Zapata, and Zavala. This region received its HIDTA designation due to the high level of illicit drugs imported into and distributed from the region throughout the United States.
- Brownsville has been designated an official Weed and Seed site.<sup>4</sup>

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

- During 2000, there were 1,402 drug possession arrests in Cameron County.<sup>5</sup>

Number of Drug Arrests, Cameron County, 1997-2000

Offense Type	1997	1998	1999	2000
Trafficking, all drugs	9	12	59	27
Possession, all drugs	1,414	1,245	1,275	1,402
Trafficking, marijuana	5	2	41	8
Possession, marijuana	952	845	843	934
All drug offenses	1,423	1,257	1,334	1,429

- From January to June 2001, there were 4,268 larceny-theft offenses known to the police in Brownsville.<sup>6</sup>
- During 2000, there were 8,893 larceny-theft offenses known to police in Brownsville.<sup>7</sup>

Number of Offenses Known to Police, Brownsville, 2000 and January-June 2001

Type of offense	Full Year 2000	January-June 2001
Murder	6	2
Forcible rape	29	14
Robbery	181	93
Aggravated assault	696	298
Burglary	1,227	477
Larceny-theft	8,893	4,268
Motor vehicle theft	388	203
Arson	9	18

**Juveniles**

- During 2000, 12.9% of elementary school students along the Texas border (including Brownsville) reported using inhalants at least once during their lifetime.<sup>8</sup>

Percent of Elementary School Students Reporting Drug Use, Texas Border, 2000

Drug Type and Grade	Used in School Year	Used in Lifetime
Inhalants	9.5%	12.9%
Grade 4	7.9	10.7
Grade 5	8.4	11.5
Grade 6	12.3	16.6
Marijuana	1.9	2.6
Grade 4	0.7	0.9
Grade 5	1.0	1.6
Grade 6	4.2	5.4

- Among Texas border students in grades 7-12, approximately 32% reported using an illicit drug at least once during their lifetime.<sup>9</sup>

Percent of Secondary School Students Reporting Drug Use, Texas Border, 1998 and 2000

Drug Type	Past Month Use		Ever Used	
	1998	2000	1998	2000
Any illicit drug	15.6%	15.6%	33.3%	32.5%
Inhalants	8.9	8.8	21.0	20.6
Marijuana	12.7	12.7	30.2	28.9
Cocaine/crack	6.0	5.7	13.7	13.8
Hallucinogens	1.4	1.0	4.0	3.3
Uppers	2.8	2.3	7.1	6.0
Downers	3.0	2.4	7.7	6.2
Rohypnol	5.0	4.2	13.4	12.6
Steroids	0.6	0.8	1.8	2.3
Ecstasy	0.7	1.5	2.1	3.5
Heroin	0.6	0.6	1.9	1.6

## Drugs<sup>10</sup>

- 8.5% of adults in the Lower Rio Grande Valley region consisting of Cameron and Willacy Counties reported using drugs in the past year.
- 1.7% of adults in the entire Lower South region of Texas (which consists of 19 counties, including Cameron) reported that they continued using drugs despite experiencing problems associated with their drug use.

### Drug-Related Problems, Lower South Region, Texas, 2000

Type of Problem	Percent Reporting Problem
Used more than intended	0.5%
Tried to cut down	1.8
Spent a lot of time using	2.2
Hazardous use/neglected roles	2.5
Gave up important activities	1.0
Continued use despite problems	1.7
Developed tolerance	1.8
Withdrawal symptoms	0.6
Used drug(s) to relieve withdrawal symptoms	0.4
Felt dependent on drug	0.7

## Enforcement

- Southwest Border HIDTA/South Texas Partnership Initiatives include:<sup>11</sup>
  - Brownsville HIDTA Investigative Task Force: This task force is designed to identify, disrupt, and/or dismantle internationally-affiliated drug trafficking organizations with national or regional ties.
  - Unified Narcotics Intelligence Task Force (UNIT): This intelligence task force provides near real-time, tactical intelligence support for multiple initiatives and task forces within the southern sector of Texas.
  - South Texas HIDTA Intelligence Center: Members of this initiative collect, analyze, report, and process drug-related information into usable strategic or tactical intelligence.
- As of October 31, 2000, there were 281 full-time law enforcement employees in Brownsville.<sup>12</sup>

## Trafficking and Seizures<sup>13</sup>

- The South Texas Partnership (HIDTA) region consists of more than 23,000 square miles; a 647-mile portion of the Rio Grande River, which marks the Southern Texas Partnership boundary and its border with Mexico; and approximately 70 miles of Gulf of Mexico intercoastal waterways, which form the eastern border of this region.
- The South Texas Ports of Entry are among the busiest in the Nation.
- Drug origins found in this area are primarily Mexico, Central and South America.
- In 1999, the South Texas Partnership seized 48% (136,192 kilograms) more drugs than it did in 1998.
- The amount of U.S. currency seized increased by over 25% (\$4,193,088) from 1998.

### Courts<sup>14</sup>

- During FY 2000, 45% of the Federally sentenced offenders in Southern Texas had been charged with a drug offense. Over 60% of these offenses involved marijuana.

Federally-Sentenced Drug Offenders, Southern Texas, FY 2000

Drug Involved	Number	Percent
Marijuana	1,015	62.2%
Powder cocaine	356	21.8
Crack cocaine	149	9.1
Heroin	63	3.9
Methamphetamine	26	1.6
Other	24	1.5

### Consequences of Use<sup>15</sup>

- During 2000, there were a total of 17 drug-related deaths in Cameron County.

Number of Substance-Related Deaths, Cameron County, 1998-2000

	1998		1999		2000	
	Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult	Youth	Adult
Total alcohol-related	5	145	5	119	2	127
Direct alcohol-related	N/A	30	N/A	25	N/A	30
Indirect alcohol-related	5	115	5	94	2	97
Total drug-related	N/A	27	2	21	N/A	17
Direct drug-related	N/A	19	1	18	N/A	13
Indirect drug-related	N/A	8	1	3	N/A	4

### Treatment<sup>16</sup>

- During 2000, there were 77 adult admissions to treatment for marijuana/hashish in TCADA (Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse)-funded programs in Cameron County.

Number of Admissions to Treatment, Cameron County, 2000

Drug Type	Juveniles	Adults
Alcohol	7	336
Cocaine	10	64
Crack	--*	40
Downers	N/A	--*
Heroin	N/A	45
Marijuana/hashish	63	77
Other drugs	4	--*
Other opiates	N/A	--*
Inhalants	--*	--*

\* The number of admissions is less than 4.

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- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>
- <sup>2</sup> Brownsville Web site: <http://www.ci.brownsville.tx.us/en/>
- <sup>3</sup> Southwest Border HIDTA/ South Texas Partnership Web site:  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/stex-content.html>
- <sup>4</sup> Executive Office for Weed and Seed Web site, Texas section: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/map/tx.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Substance-Related Statistics by County:  
<http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/statistics/ctysearch.html>
- <sup>6</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, Preliminary Report, 2001*, December 2001:  
<http://www.fbi.gov/pressrel/pressrel01/01prelimcius.htm>
- <sup>7</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2000*, October 2001:  
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/00cius.htm>
- <sup>8</sup> Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *Texas School Survey of Substance Use Among Students: Grades 4-6, 2000*, June 2001: [http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/school\\_elementary2000.pdf](http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/school_elementary2000.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *Texas School Survey of Substance Use Among Students: Grades 7-12, 2000*, May 2001: [http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/school\\_survey2000.pdf](http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/school_survey2000.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *2000 Texas Survey of Substance Use Among Adults*:  
<http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/AdultHousehold.pdf>
- <sup>11</sup> Southwest Border HIDTA/ South Texas Partnership Web site:  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/stex-content.html>
- <sup>12</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2000*, October 2001:  
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/00cius.htm>
- <sup>13</sup> Southwest Border HIDTA/ South Texas Partnership Web site:  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/stex-content.html>
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Sentencing Commission, FY 2000 Federal Sentencing Statistics, Southern Texas:  
<http://www.ussc.gov/JUDPACK/2000/txs00.pdf>
- <sup>15</sup> Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Substance-Related Statistics by County:  
<http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/statistics/ctysearch.html>
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.

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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