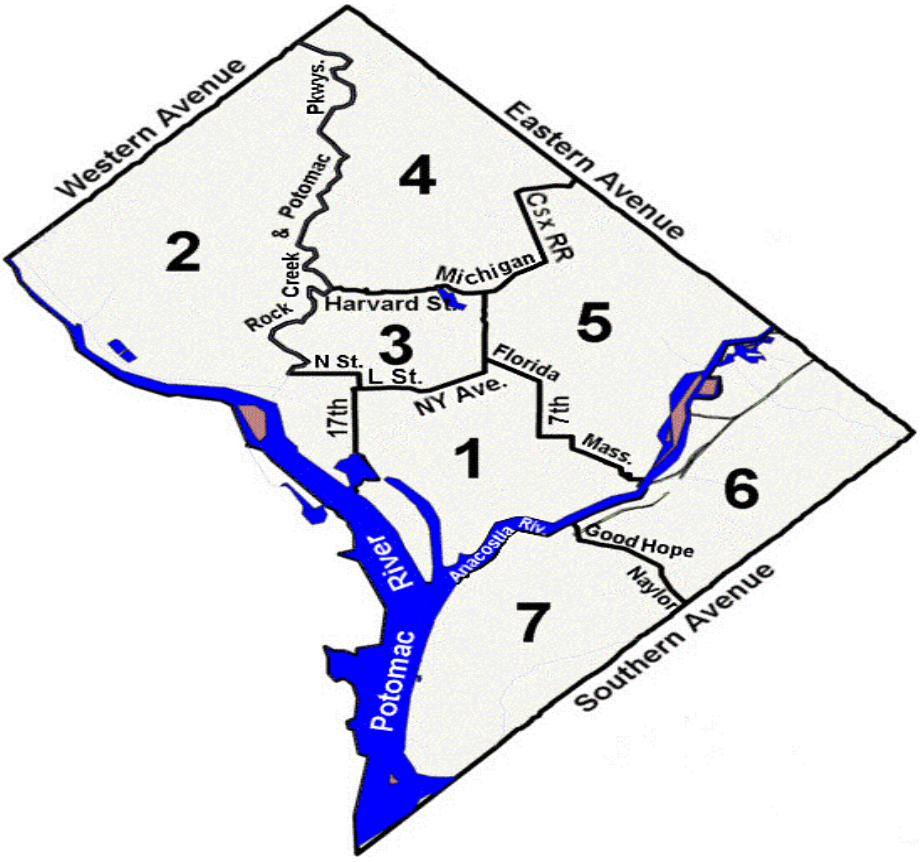
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Washington, D.C.

Profile of Drug Indicators

August 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.

Washington, D.C.

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

Demographics[1]

- Population: 519,000 (1999 estimate); 606,900 (1990 Census)
- Race/Ethnicity: 29.6% white; 65.8% African American; 0.2% American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; 1.8% Asian/Pacific Islander; 2.5% other; 5.4% Hispanic

Politics[2]

- Mayor: Anthony A. Williams
- Chief of Police: Charles H. Ramsey
- Congressional Representative: Eleanor Holmes Norton
- City Council: Sandra Allen; Sharon Ambrose; Harold Brazil; David Catania; Kevin Chavous; Linda Cropp; Jack Evans; Jim Graham; Charlene Jarvis; Phil Mendelson; Vincent Orange, Sr.; Kathleen Patterson; Carol Schwartz.

Programs/Initiatives

- Washington/Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)[3]
  Designated in 1994, this HIDTA targets drug traffickers and drug trafficking organizations in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore region. This area's interstate highways, rail and bus systems, three major airports, and international seaport combine to create a substantial challenge to interdiction initiatives.
- Executive Office of Weed and Seed[4]
  The Washington, D.C. Weed and Seed efforts began in 1992 and focused mainly on the northeast section of the city. Since this time, the D.C. Weed and Seed site has expanded to include the following four housing complexes and geographic areas: Langston/Carver; Marshall Heights/Eastgate; North Capitol; and Ivy City/Trinidad.
- Operation Crackdown[5]
  This program provides community groups with free legal representation to combat problems such as crack houses and open air drug markets. Operation Crackdown attorneys use the civil courts and city agencies to force the owners of problem properties to stop illegal drug use, sales and manufacturing on those properties.
- Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration[6]
  The mission of this D.C. Department of Health program is to help keep District residents from becoming dependant on alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and to help addicted D.C. residents return to sobriety. This program provides the following services: prevention, detoxification, residential treatment, youth services, programs for persons with HIV/AIDS; and aftercare programs.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- From January to June of 2000, the seven police districts that make up the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department reported a total of 19,181 part one offenses. This is a 5.8% decrease in the total part one offenses reported from January to June of 1999.[7]

Year-to-Date Crime Comparison, D.C., January through June 1999 and 2000

	Through 6/99	Through 6/00	Percent Change
Homicide	124	124	0
Sexual Assault	138	157	+13.8
Robbery	1,926	1,799	-6.6
Aggravated Assault	2,197	1,979	-9.9
Burglary	2,759	2,545	-7.8
Theft	10,094	9,264	-8.2
Stolen Auto	3,070	3,264	+6.3
Arson	48	49	+2.1
Total	20,356	19,181	-5.8

- The 41,320 major crimes that were reported by the D.C. Metropolitan Police in 1999 was the lowest annual total since 1972, when approximately 37,500 offenses were reported.[8]

Annual Crime Trends, Washington, D.C., 1995-1999

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Homicide	360	397	301	260	238
Sexual Assault	292	260	218	190	258
Robbery	6,864	6,444	4,499	3,606	3,507
Aggravated Assault	7,225	6,310	5,688	4,932	4,486
Burglary	10,184	9,828	6,963	6,361	5,083
Theft	32,281	31,343	26,748	24,321	21,122
Stolen Auto	10,192	9,975	7,569	6,501	6,526
Arson	209	162	150	119	100
Total	**67,607**	**64,719**	**52,136**	**46,290**	**41,320**

- During 1999, 68.9% of adult male arrestees in Washington, D.C. tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrests. 91.3% of those charged with drug possession tested positive.[9]

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, D.C., 1999

Offense Type	Cocaine	Marijuana	Metham.	PCP	Any Drug
Violent	23.5	35.3	0.0	0.0	52.9
Property	45.0	35.0	0.0	5.0	75.0
Drug	44.1	50.0	2.9	5.9	85.3
Sales	23.1	61.5	0.0	7.7	76.9
Possession	52.2	47.8	4.3	8.7	91.3
Other	37.2	20.9	0.0	7.0	58.1

- Between 1990 and 1997, adult arrests for drug offenses in Washington, D.C. dropped 23%, from 8,849 to 6,799. The majority of the total drug arrests (3,670) were of adults between the ages of 25 and 44.[10]

Drug Arrests, Washington, D.C., by Age Group, 1997

	All Ages	11-17	18-24	25-44	45 +
Sale	921	67	292	487	75
Cocaine/Heroin	617	39	165	352	61
Marijuana	283	28	122	122	11
Other	21	0	5	13	3
Possession	6,495	550	2,154	3,183	608
Cocaine/Heroin	3,552	280	832	1,950	490
Marijuana	2,831	264	1,284	1,175	108
Other	112	6	38	58	10
Total Drug Arrests	**7,416**	**617**	**2,446**	**3,670**	**683**

- The Metropolitan Police Department has made nearly 72,000 arrests for drug offenses since 1990. This is an average of 150 drug arrests every week.[11]
- Between 1992 and 1997, the Metropolitan Police Department classified one-third of city murders with known motives as "drug-related."[12]

Drugs

- Washington/Baltimore HIDTA observations:[13]
  - High purity and inexpensive heroin is readily available in many areas of the region. This heroin usually comes from New York City.
  - Powder cocaine, crack cocaine, and marijuana are also readily available in this region.
  - Most of the marijuana found here comes from the southwest U.S. and is linked to commercial parcel services.
- Cocaine[14]
  Cocaine continues to dominate the drug scene in the Washington, D.C. area. Smoking of cocaine predominates, but ethnographic reports indicate that injecting is becoming a mode of crack administration (either alone or mixed with heroin in a "speedball"). This usually occurs when cocaine HCl is not available.
- Heroin[15]
  DEA heroin purity levels have remained relatively stable for the last few years but increased during the fourth quarter of 1998. The ready availability and demand for heroin has led to competition among street dealers and a host of brand names, with quality varying by brand name.
- Marijuana[16]
  Marijuana prices have increased slightly between 1998 and the first part of 1999.
- Other Drugs[17]
  - Methamphetamine rarely appears in indicator data in D.C., but ethnographic reports indicate its use by members of various social groups.
  - MDMA is predominantly used by young adults at dance/music clubs and raves.

Juveniles

- During 1998, 59.3% of juvenile male arrestees in Washington, D.C. tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest.[18]

Percent of Juvenile Male Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, D.C., 1998

Offense Type	Cocaine	Marijuana	PCP	Any Drug
Violent	0.0	42.9	3.6	46.4
Property	3.3	36.7	0.0	36.7
Drug	3.2	77.4	6.5	77.4
Other	6.9	69.0	0.0	75.9
Total	3.4	56.8	2.5	59.3

- Nearly 30% of the high school students surveyed in Washington, D.C. during 1999 reported being current users of marijuana.[19]

Percent of High School Students Reporting Selected Drug Use, D.C., 1999

	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime Marijuana Use	43.3	47.3	45.1
Current Marijuana Use	22.8	29.0	25.7
Lifetime Cocaine Use	2.3	3.2	2.8
Current Cocaine Use	0.7	1.9	1.3
Lifetime Inhalant Use	5.8	6.3	6.1
Current Inhalant Use	1.9	2.3	2.1
Lifetime Heroin Use	1.1	1.9	1.5
Lifetime Methamphetamine Use	1.5	2.3	1.9
Lifetime Illegal Steroid Use	1.1	1.6	1.4
Lifetime Injecting Illegal Drug Use	0.8	1.5	1.1
Tried Marijuana Before Age 13	8.3	16.8	12.3

- In 1997, 617 youths were arrested for drug offenses in D.C. 89% of these arrests were for possession.[20]
- At this time, juvenile boys aged 14 to 19 comprised only 3% of the District's population, but accounted for 19% of all drug arrests in the city.[21]

Trafficking and Seizures

- On July 13, 2000, approximately 400 law enforcement agents, including D.C. Police officers and officers from the FBI, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Park Police, made arrests and seizures after a year-long investigation. This investigation focused on open-air drug markets and on the 3rd Police District, but it also included the 1st and 5th districts. At this time, the following arrests and seizures were made:
  - 37 people were arrested; approximately 100 additional suspects have also been named in arrest warrants
  - $30,000 worth of crack cocaine seized
  - $70,000 in cash seized
  - 13 guns, including an assault rifle and an Uzi-style weapon seized.[22]

Consequences of Use

- In 1998, Medical Examiners (ME) in the Washington, D.C./Maryland/Virginia/West Virginia metropolitan area reporting to the Drug Abuse Warning Network reported 252 total drug abuse deaths.[23]

Drug Mentions Reported by MEs, Selected Drugs, D.C. Metropolitan Area, 1996-98

	1996		1997		1998	
Drug Type	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**	**#**	**%**
Cocaine	101	46.8	81	36.2	112	44.4
Heroin/Morphine	93	43.1	107	47.8	104	41.3
Marijuana/Hashish	--	--	1	0.4	--	--
Methadone	5	2.3	8	3.6	9	3.6
Methamphetamine	--	--	1	0.4	1	0.4
PCP	9	4.2	5	2.2	4	1.6
Total Drug Mentions	**499**		**542**		**537**	

- From January to June 1999, there were an estimated 8,295 Emergency Department (ED) drug mentions in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.[24]

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Washington, D.C. Metro. Area, 1997-Mid-Year 1999

Drug Type	Full Year 1997	Full Year 1998	Jan.-June 1999
Cocaine	3,223	3,718	1,436
Heroin/Morphine	1,691	2,112	853
Marijuana/Hashish	2,394	2,362	1,217
Total Mentions	18,975	19,068	8,295

- In 1997, 44% (337) of the total new AIDS cases reported in D.C. (763) were related to injection drug use (IDU). 36% (3,841) of the cumulative AIDS cases in D.C. at this time (10,632) were IDU-related.[25]

Enforcement

- Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Initiatives:[26]
  - D.C. Drug and Violent Crime Initiative: This initiative, supervised by the DEA, targets violent street dealers of crack cocaine and heroin.
  - Street Terrorist Offender Initiative: Supervised by ATF, this initiative conducts long-term, complex investigations targeting street gangs and other drug trafficking organizations with emphasis on firearms violations and firearms-related violence.
  - Regional Drug Interdiction Initiative: This initiative, supervised by the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, identifies and arrests individuals using bus and rail mass transportation facilities and conveyances to transport illegal drugs and/or weapons into and through the D.C. metropolitan area.
  - Other Washington/Baltimore HIDTA initiatives involving D.C. include the following: Prince George's County Cross Border Initiative; Regional Airport Drug Interdiction Initiative; and the Washington, D.C. Treatment Initiative.

- As of October 31, 1998, there were a total of 4,879 full-time law enforcement employees in Washington, D.C.[27]

Full-Time Law Enforcement Employees, Washington, D.C., 1998

	Officers	Civilians
Male	3,205	291
Female	927	456

Courts

- Drug Courts[28]
  - As of March 2000, there are two drug courts found within the District of Columbia.
  - Each of these courts is in the D.C. Superior Court system. The most recently implemented of the two courts is a juvenile drug court. The court that has been operating for over two years is an adult drug court.
- Washington was the first city in the country to test arrestees for drugs as a condition of pretrial release.[29]
- During FY98, 33.8% of the Federally sentenced offenders in D.C. had been charged with a drug offense. The majority (76.1%) of these cases involved crack cocaine; 10.6% involved powder cocaine; 5% involved heroin; 1.8% involved marijuana; 0.6% involved methamphetamine; and 5% involved a different drug.[30]

Corrections

- There are four correctional facilities within the D.C. Department of Corrections:[31]
  - Central Detention Facility (D.C. Jail): Washington, D.C.
  - Central Facility: Lorton, Virginia
  - Maximum Security Facility: Lorton, Virginia
  - Community Correctional Center: Washington, D.C.
- 24.2% of those offenders in the D.C. Department of Corrections facilities have committed drug sale offenses. 2.2% have committed drug possession offenses.[32]
- Approximately 2,100 employees staff the D.C. Department of Corrections. 1,500 of these employees are correctional officers.[33]
- During FY 2000, the average D.C. Department of Corrections inmate population was 10,700.[34]
- On December 31, 1999, there were 12,129 adults on probation in Washington, D.C. At the beginning of 1999 (January 1), there were 11,234 adults on probation. These numbers represent an 8% increase in the adult probation population in Washington, D.C. for 1999.[35]
- The number of adults on parole at the end of 1999 totaled 5,103. At the beginning of 1999, there had been 7,055 adults on parole.[36]

Treatment

- The number of methadone maintenance treatment slots available decreased from 1,780 in 1994 to 1,000 in 1998. This decrease has occurred at a time when 90% of D.C. residents on a treatment waiting list in an average month are waiting for admission to a methadone maintenance program.[37]

- In October of 1997, there were 40 drug/alcohol treatment facilities in Washington, D.C. These facilities served 8,201 clients.[38]

---

[1] U.S. Census Bureau Web site: http://www.census.gov
[2] Washington, D.C. Web site: http://www.washingtondc.gov
[3] Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Web site: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/dc-fs.html
[4] Washington, D.C. Weed and Seed Web site: http://www.weedseed.org/siteinfo1.asp?ID=32
[5] Metropolitan Police of the District of Columbia Web site: http://www.mpdc.org/frame.htm
[6] District of Columbia Department of Health, Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration Web site: http://www.washingtondc.gov/agenices/detail.asp?id=27
[7] D.C. Metropolitan Police Department Web site: http://www.mpdc.org/frame.htm
[8] Ibid.
[9] National Institute of Justice, *1999 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Adult and Juvenile Arrestees*, July 2000: http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/99adltfind.pdf
[10] Drug Strategies, Washington, D.C. profile: http://www.drugstrategies.com/ff1999/index.html
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Web site: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/dc-fs.html
[14] Community Epidemiology Work Group, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, Volume I: Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group*, June 1999
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] National Institute of Justice, *1998 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Adult and Juvenile Arrestees*, April 1999: http://www.adam-nij.net/files/175656.pdf
[19] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 1999*, June 2000: ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Publications/mmwr/ss/ss4905.pdf
[20] Drug Strategies, Washington, D.C. profile: http://www.drugstrategies.com/ff1999/index.html
[21] Ibid.
[22] On-line news article, Washington Post, July 14, 2000: http://www.washingtonpost.com
[23] Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA, *DAWN Annual Medical Examiner Data 1998*, March 2000
[24] Office of Applied Studies, SAMHSA, *Mid-Year 1999 Preliminary ED Dawn Data*, March 2000
[25] Drug Strategies, *Facing Facts: Drugs and the Future of Washington, D.C.*, April 1999: http://www.drugstrategies.org/ff1999/tables.html#deaths
[26] Washington/Baltimore HIDTA Web site: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/dc-fs.html
[27] FBI, *Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 1998*, October 1999: http://www.fbi.gov/ucr.html
[28] Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, March 31, 2000
[29] Drug Strategies, *Facing Facts: Drugs and the Future of Washington, D.C.*, April 1999: http://www.drugstrategies.com/ff1999/index.html
[30] U.S. Sentencing Commission, Washington, D.C. Federal sentencing statistics: http://www.ussc.gov/judpack/1998/dc98.pdf
[31] Washington, D.C. Department of Corrections Web site: http://208.165.66.58/
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Probation and Parole in 1999*, Press Release, July 2000: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pp99pr.pdf
[36] ibid.
[37] Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR), CESAR FAX, April 19, 1999, Volume 8, Issue 16: http://www.cesar.umd.edu
[38] SAMHSA, *Uniform Facility Data Set (UFDS): 1997*, June 1999: ftp://ftp.samhsa.gov/pub/ufds/ufdsrpt97.pdf

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:

The Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000
1-800-666-3332
http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov
ondcp@ncjrs.org