

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Washington, DC

Profile of Drug Indicators

August 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.

Washington, DC

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

Demographics¹

- Population (2006 American Community Survey): 581,530
- Race/Ethnicity (2006 American Community Survey): 34.5% white; 55.4% black/African American; 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 3.4% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 4.8% other race; 1.5% two or more races; 8.2% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)

Politics

- Mayor: Adrian M. Fenty²
- City Council (Wards 1-8 respectively): Jim Graham; Jack Evans (Chair Pro Tempore); Mary M. Cheh; Muriel Bowser; Harry Thomas Jr.; Tommy Wells; Yvette Alexander; Marion Barry; Kwame Brown (at large); David Catania (at large); Phil Mendelson (at large); Carol Schwartz (at large); Vincent C. Gray (Chair-at large)³
- Chief of Police: Cathy L. Lanier⁴
- Congressional Representative: Eleanor Holmes Norton⁵

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁶
Designated in 1994, the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA is responsible for areas of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.
- Operation Crackdown⁷
The Operation Crackdown program provides community groups with free legal representation to combat problems that often arise in areas where drug use is prevalent. Operation Crackdown attorneys use civil courts and city agencies to force owners of problem properties to stop illegal drug use, sales and manufacturing on their properties.
- Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration⁸
The mission of this DC Department of Health program is to keep District residents from becoming dependant on alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, as well as to help addicted residents return to sobriety. The Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration provides the following services: prevention, detoxification, residential treatment, youth services, programs for persons with HIV/AIDS and aftercare.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- Preliminary data indicate that there were 86 homicides known to the DC Metropolitan Police Department during the first half of 2008.⁹

Index Offenses Known to Police*, DC, Jan.-Nov. 2007** & Jan.-June 2008

Offense	Jan.-Nov. 2007	Jan.-June 2008
Homicide	171	86
Sexual Assault	212	144
Robbery	3,903	2,019

Assault w/ deadly weapon	2,897	1,382
Burglary	3,558	1,998
Theft	7,563	4,075
Theft from auto	6,723	4,173
Motor vehicle theft	5,793	2,596
Arson	31	17

* Preliminary data

** Full year preliminary statistics for 2007 were not available as of July 2008.

- During 2007, the Drug Enforcement Administration made 95 drug arrests in DC¹⁰

Number of DEA Drug Arrests, Washington, DC, 2003-2007

Year	# of Arrests
2003	58
2004	170
2005	76
2006	54
2007	95

Drugs

- Cocaine

Cocaine and crack are the most significant drug problems in Washington, DC. Despite several consecutive years of decline in violent, drug-related crime, the violence associated with the crack trade in the city remains high.¹¹ In December of 2006, the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) reported that powder and crack cocaine sold for \$23,000-\$27,000/kilogram and \$800-\$1,200/ounce during 2006. Crack sold for \$10/rock or \$100/gram.¹² During part of 2007, reduced cocaine availability and higher prices indicated that there was a shortage of cocaine in the Washington, DC area.¹³

- Heroin

Washington, DC is home to a large number of long-term heroin abusers who frequent various open-air drug markets within the city.¹⁴ NDIC reported that heroin sold for \$85,000-\$110,000/kilogram, \$3,700-\$4,000/ounce and \$10/bag (50-70 milligrams).¹⁵

- Marijuana

Marijuana is the most widely abused of all drugs in the District, crossing socioeconomic, age and ethnic lines. It is readily available in qualities and quantities ranging from “nickel bags” of loose, commercial-grade product to hundred-pound quantities of high grade marijuana. The use of marijuana in blunts has not diminished and is often observed taking place openly.¹⁶ Hydroponic marijuana sold for \$3,500/pound and \$300/ounce. Commercial grade marijuana sold for \$1,200-\$1,600 per pound and \$125/ounce. At the retail level, marijuana sold for \$10/1-gram bag.¹⁷

- Methamphetamine

There is a limited market for methamphetamine in the District of Columbia. What demand exists is centered around the city's thriving rave and nightclub scene as well as among the city's gay population.¹⁸ From January through June 2007, methamphetamine sold for \$100-\$150/gram in the District.¹⁹

- Club Drugs²⁰
MDMA, Ketamine, GHB, crystal methamphetamine and various other hallucinogenic and stimulant drugs have been in demand and readily available in DC for almost a decade.
- Diverted Pharmaceuticals²¹
Current investigations indicate that the diversion of oxycodone products continues to be a problem in Washington, DC. Hydrocodone products, benzodiazepines, methadone and Percodan®/Percocet® were also identified as being among the most commonly abused and diverted pharmaceuticals in the city.
- Other Drugs²²
PCP has a long history of higher-than-average levels of abuse in Washington, DC, but its introduction into the battery of drugs abused by young adult ravers, both within the city and in the surrounding suburbs, has contributed to renewed interest in the dangerous substance.
- Approximately 60,000 DC residents are addicted to alcohol and other drugs.²³
- According to 2005-2006 data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), approximately 53,000 (11%) of Washington citizens (ages 12 or older) reported past month use of an illicit drug.²⁴

Citizens (Ages 12 or Older) Reporting Drug Use, Washington, DC, 2005-2006 Data

Drug Type and Use	Number*	Percent
Past month illicit drug use	53	11.05%
Past year marijuana use	72	15.03
Past month marijuana use	40	8.44
Past month use of illicit drug other than marijuana	21	4.49
Past year cocaine use	23	4.90
Past year non-medical pain reliever use	20	4.14

* The number of users is in thousands

- Approximately 153,000 (31.97%) Washington citizens reported that using marijuana occasionally (once a month) was a “great risk”.²⁵
- Additional 2005-2006 NSDUH results indicate that 20,000 (4.25%) Washington citizens reported illicit drug dependence or abuse within the past year. Approximately 16,000 (3.33%) reported past year illicit drug dependence.²⁶
- According to the District of Columbia Pretrial Services Agency approximately half of all adult arrestees tested positive for drugs from January through April 2007.²⁷

% of Adult Arrestees, Testing Positive for Selected Drugs, DC, 2003-April 2007

Drug Type	Full Year 2003	Full Year 2004	Full Year 2005	Full Year 2006	Jan-April 2007
Cocaine	34.8%	36.6%	37.3%	41.0%	39.7%
PCP	13.5	6.2	7.5	9.2	9.1
Opiates	10.0	9.8	9.3	8.9	8.3
Any Drug	47.3	43.5	44.7	48.9	49.8

Juveniles

- Approximately 21% of Washington, DC high school students surveyed in 2007 reported being current users of marijuana.²⁸

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, by Gender, DC, 2007

Drug Type and Use	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime marijuana use	39.2%	41.4%	40.4%
Current marijuana use	19.0	22.6	20.8
Lifetime cocaine use	2.9	9.4	6.2
Current cocaine use	1.3	5.2	3.6
Lifetime inhalant use	8.0	11.1	10.1
Lifetime heroin use	2.0	8.3	5.4
Lifetime methamphetamine use	2.9	8.9	6.1
Lifetime ecstasy use	4.6	10.2	7.7
Lifetime illegal steroid use	3.3	9.4	6.5
Lifetime injecting illegal drug use	3.0	8.0	5.5
Tried marijuana before age 13	8.0	15.9	11.9

- Approximately 49% of Washington, DC 12th graders surveyed in 2007 reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetime.²⁹

Percent of High School Students Reporting Drug Use, by Grade, DC, 2007

Drug Type and Use	9th	10th	11th	12th
Lifetime marijuana use	33.0%	38.5%	44.2%	48.8%
Current marijuana use	15.4	19.5	22.8	27.8
Lifetime cocaine use	5.3	6.3	7.7	7.1
Current cocaine use	1.4	4.3	4.0	6.3
Lifetime inhalant use	9.8	11.4	8.8	8.2
Lifetime heroin use	4.9	5.7	6.0	5.1
Lifetime methamphetamine use	4.1	6.6	7.3	6.3
Lifetime ecstasy use	3.7	8.4	9.1	8.8
Lifetime illegalsteroid use	5.4	7.2	8.1	4.4
Lifetime injection of illegal drug	3.1	5.8	7.0	5.3
Tried marijuana before age 13	13.4	11.5	11.4	10.2

- According to 2005-2006 NSDUH data, approximately 11% of Washington 12-17 year olds reported past month use of an illicit drug.³⁰

Youth (12-17 Year Olds) Reporting Drug Use, Washington, DC, 2005-2006 Data

Drug Type and Use	Number*	Percent
Past month illicit drug use	4	10.92%
Past year marijuana use	5	13.38
Past month marijuana use	2	6.81
Past month use of illicit drug other than marijuana	2	4.70
Past year cocaine use	0	0.59
Past year non-medical pain reliever use	2	5.01

* The number of users is in thousands

- According to the District of Columbia Pretrial Services Agency more than half of all juvenile arrestees tested positive for drugs from January through April 2007.³¹

% of Juvenile Arrestees, Testing Positive for Selected Drugs, DC, 2003- April 2007

Drug Type	Full Year 2003	Full Year 2004	Full Year 2005	Full Year 2006	Jan.-April 2007
Marijuana	50.8%	49.0%	49.8%	51.2%	51.8%
Cocaine	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3
PCP	11.1	1.9	3.4	2.0	2.5
Any Drug	53.1	49.6	51.0	52.3	53.2

Enforcement

- Open-Air MiniStations³²
The Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department Open-Air MiniStations are highly visible picnic table-and-chair sets that serve as outdoor, portable police facilities. The MiniStations serve two main purposes: to let drug dealers, gang members and other criminals know that illegal activity will not be tolerated in the community; and to help law-abiding residents provide police with information and assistance for building safe and healthy neighborhoods.
- Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone Act of 1996³³
The Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone Act provides police officers with an additional tool to protect the public from the dangers associated with the sale, purchase or use of illegal drugs. While a Drug Free Zone is in effect, it is unlawful for a group of two or more persons to congregate in a public space or property for the purpose of participating in the use, purchase or sale of illegal drugs.
- As of October 2006, there were 4,880 full-time law enforcement employees in Washington, DC (4,196 officers and 684 civilians).³⁴

Trafficking and Seizures

- Open-air markets situated along commuting routes and within public housing projects in DC provide dealers with a constant flow of customers.³⁵
- The District's large international population provides insulation for ethnic drug trafficking groups from almost every major supply country in the world and the suburbs surrounding the city provide a steady supply of customers.³⁶
- DC heroin suppliers set up heroin shops catering to specific user populations. The markets located along commuter routes into the city peddle high purity heroin to suburban abusers, while the shops situated near methadone clinics and those co-existing with open-air markets tend to service long-term addicts with lower purity heroin. Heroin is sold under various street terms and is packaged primarily in small Ziploc baggies.³⁷
- The methamphetamine found in DC usually comes from California via overnight or regular mail delivery services.³⁸
- Marijuana is often sold alongside cocaine, crack and heroin in open-air markets.³⁹
- During 2007, Federal agencies seized 1,086 dosage units of MDMA in Washington, DC.⁴⁰

Amount of Drugs Seized by Federal Agencies, Washington, DC, 2007

Drug Type	Amount Seized
Cocaine	22.2 kilograms/19 dosage units
Heroin	3.5 kilograms
Methamphetamine	0.5 kilograms/ 88 dosage units
Marijuana	13.5 kilograms
MDMA	1,086 dosage units

Courts

- Drug Courts⁴¹
As of April 16, 2007, there were 3 drug courts in Washington, DC that had been operating for at least two years. There were no additional drug courts in existence or being planned in DC at that time.
- During FY 2007, approximately 35.6% of Federally-sentenced defendants in DC were charged with drug offenses. Crack cocaine was involved in more than 40% of the drug offenses.⁴²

Federally-Sentenced Drug Offenders, by Drug Type, DC, FY 2007

Drug Type	Number	Percent of Total
Powder cocaine	49	30.6%
Crack cocaine	68	42.5
Heroin	16	10.0
Marijuana	8	5.0
Methamphetamine	8	5.0
Other	11	6.9

Corrections

- In June 2008, the average daily population at Washington, DC Department of Corrections facilities was 2,978.⁴³

Average Daily Facility Population, Washington, DC, June 2008

Facility	Population
Central Detention Facility	1,963
Central Treatment Facility	928
Other Contract Facilities	87
Total	2,978

- As of July 2008, a drug offense was the most serious offense for approximately 24% of male and 22% of female inmates in the District.⁴⁴
- On December 31, 2006, there were 6,883 adults on probation and 5,387 adults on parole in Washington, DC.⁴⁵

Consequences of Use

- During FY 2005, there were 592 substantiated cases of children affected by substance abuse and 151 cases of children exposed to substance abuse in the District.⁴⁶

Treatment

- According to 2005-2006 NSDUH data, approximately 16,000 (3.25%) DC citizens reported needing but not receiving treatment for illicit drug use within the past year.⁴⁷

Sources

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