

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Los Angeles, California

Profile of Drug Indicators

May 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.

Los Angeles, California

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

Demographics

- Population (2006 American Community Survey): 3,773,846¹
- Race/ethnicity (2006 American Community Survey): 47.1% white; 9.6% black/African American; 0.6% American Indian/Alaska Native; 10.4% Asian; 0.2% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 29.3% other race; 2.9% two or more races; 48.9% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)²
- The city of Los Angeles is located in Los Angeles County.³

Politics

- Mayor: Antonio Villaraigosa⁴
- City Council (Districts 1-15, respectively): Ed Reyes; Wendy Greuel; Dennis Zine; Tom LaBonge; Jack Weiss; Tony Cardenas; Richard Alarcón; Bernard Parks; Jan Perry; Herb Wesson, Jr; Bill Rosendahl; Greig Smith; Eric Garcetti; Jose Huizar; Janice Hahn⁵
- Chief of Police: William J. Bratton⁶
- Los Angeles County Sheriff: Lee Baca⁷

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁸
Designated in 1990, the Los Angeles HIDTA is responsible for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Crime and Drug Related Crime

- During 2006, there were 481 homicides reported in Los Angeles. There were 490 homicides reported in Los Angeles during 2005.⁹

Number of Index Offenses Reported, Los Angeles, 2005-2006

Offense	2005	2006
Homicide	490	481
Rape	973	903
Robbery	13,497	14,235
Aggravated assault	15,532	14,118
Burglary	21,815	20,020
BTFV*	32,807	29,911
Personal theft/other theft	30,634	27,779
Auto theft	26,758	24,587

*Burglary/theft from vehicle

- The Los Angeles Police Department made 1,430 adult and 189 juvenile arrests for felony marijuana offenses during 2006.¹⁰

Number of Drug Arrests, Los Angeles, 2006

Offense Type	Juvenile	Adult
Felony		
Narcotics	362	14,078
Marijuana	189	1,430
Other dangerous drug	168	3,712
Other drug violation	8	133
Misdemeanor		
Marijuana	1,185	4,162
Other drugs	62	5,012
Glue sniffing	22	27

Drugs

➤ Cocaine¹¹

In December 2006, powder cocaine prices in Los Angeles were as follows: \$12,000-\$17,000/kilogram, \$500-\$600/ounce and \$80/gram. The purity of powder cocaine in the city was reported as 73%–76% pure. The current retail price range of crack cocaine has remained consistent with previous reports. Crack cocaine sold for \$400-\$700/ounce and \$10-\$40/rock during that time.

➤ Heroin¹²

Los Angeles is the primary market for Mexican black tar heroin. This substance continues to be the predominant type of heroin used by Los Angeles County users. Black tar heroin available on the streets of Los Angeles has an average purity of approximately 31%. Recent data indicate that Mexican black tar heroin sold for \$16,000-\$40,000/kilogram, \$400-\$800/25 grams and \$70-\$100/gram in Los Angeles. Additional heroin prices in Los Angeles during that time include the following: \$24,000-\$34,000/kilogram of Mexican brown powder, \$70,000-\$80,000/700-750 grams of Southeast Asian, \$90,000/kilogram of Southwest Asian and \$80,000-\$100,000/kilogram of South American.

➤ Marijuana¹³

Wholesale marijuana prices in Los Angeles during December 2006 were as follows: \$300-\$360/pound of Mexico-produced, \$700-\$750/pound of domestic, \$2,500-\$6,000/pound of sinsemilla and \$3,300-\$6,000/pound of BC bud. Marijuana retail prices were \$5-\$10/gram of Mexico-produced, \$25/gram of domestic and \$60-\$80/one-eighth ounce of sinsemilla.

➤ Methamphetamine¹⁴

Intelligence indicates that the availability of methamphetamine in Los Angeles has remained stable. In December 2006, methamphetamine prices in Los Angeles were as follows: \$5,000-\$7,200/pound, \$300/ounce and \$35-120/gram. Crystal methamphetamine sold for \$8,000-\$12,000/pound, \$600-\$800/ounce and \$140/gram.

➤ Club Drugs

MDMA (ecstasy) is widely available in Los Angeles. LSD remains readily available throughout the Los Angeles area.¹⁵ At the retail level, ecstasy sold for \$10-\$20/tablet in December 2006.¹⁶

➤ Diverted Pharmaceuticals¹⁷

Retail prices of several types of pharmaceuticals have remained stable for the last few years. The two exceptions are Dilaudid (hydromorphone), which now retails for \$20–\$60/four milligram tablet (down from \$100), and Percocet, which now sells for \$1–\$5/five milligram tablet (down from \$5–\$10).

Juveniles

- Among Los Angeles County secondary school students surveyed during the 2004-2006 school years, approximately 7% reported lifetime use of cocaine.¹⁸

Percent of Students Reporting Lifetime Drug Use, Los Angeles County, 2004-2006

Drug Type	7th Grade*	9th Grade	11th Grade	Total
Cocaine	***	4.9%	7.1%	6.9%
Ecstasy	***	3.9	5.5	5.3
Heroin	***	2.4	2.3	2.6
Inhalants	11.9	13.5	11.7	12.8
LSD/other psychedelics	***	3.7	5.2	5.0
Marijuana	8.1	23.4	35.7	22.6
Methamphetamine	***	4.9	6.6	6.8

*The 7th grade data for several drugs were based on responses from a very small subset of 7th graders. These results have been suppressed (***).

- Additional Los Angeles County secondary school student survey results indicate that 11% reported the use of marijuana within the past 30 days.¹⁹

Percent of Students Reporting Past 30-Day Drug Use, Los Angeles County, 2004-2006

Drug Type	7th Grade*	9th Grade	11th Grade	Total
Cocaine	***	2.3%	2.5%	2.9%
Inhalants	5.5	4.7	3.0	4.6
LSD/other psychedelics	***	1.9	1.9	2.2
Marijuana	4.4	11.8	16.0	11.3
Methamphetamine	***	2.3	2.3	2.8

*The 7th grade data for several drugs were based on responses from a very small subset of 7th graders. These results have been suppressed (***).

- Approximately 40% of Los Angeles high school students surveyed in 2005 reported trying marijuana at least once in their lifetime.²⁰

Percent of High School Students Using Drugs, City of Los Angeles, 2005

Drug Type and Use	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime marijuana use	37.9%	41.5%	39.7%
Current marijuana use	17.4	18.9	18.1
Lifetime cocaine use	13.2	6.9	10.0
Current cocaine use	6.3	3.5	4.9
Lifetime inhalant use	21.5	14.5	17.9
Lifetime heroin use	1.3	2.2	1.8
Lifetime methamphetamine use	10.9	9.5	10.2

Lifetime ecstasy use	3.2	3.8	3.5
Lifetime illegal steroid use	3.9	3.1	3.6
Lifetime injecting illegal drug use	0.9	2.0	1.5
Tried marijuana before age 13	8.2	13.6	11.1

- More than 50% of Los Angeles 12th graders surveyed in 2005 reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetime.²¹

Percent of High School Students Using Drugs, by Grade, City of Los Angeles, 2005

Drug Type and Use	9th	10th	11th	12th
Lifetime marijuana use	32.3%	40.3%	44.6%	51.2%
Current marijuana use	14.0	17.9	24.0	20.7
Lifetime cocaine use	8.7	9.5	12.9	9.9
Current cocaine use	4.4	3.7	7.3	4.6
Lifetime inhalant use	19.8	18.2	18.2	12.1
Lifetime heroin use	2.2	1.2	2.1	0.6
Lifetime methamphetamine use	10.1	10.6	10.5	8.9
Lifetime ecstasy use	3.0	4.0	3.2	3.6
Lifetime illegal steroid use	3.4	3.3	3.7	4.3
Lifetime injecting illegal drug use	1.7	1.7	1.2	0.4
Tried marijuana before age 13	12.9	11.5	7.5	10.2

- Additional Los Angeles survey data indicate that 37.8% of high school students reported that they have been offered, sold or given illegal drugs by someone on school property with the past 12 months.²²

Enforcement

- As of October 2006, there were 12,685 full-time law enforcement employees in Los Angeles (9,393 officers and 3,292 civilians).²³
- Narcotics Division, Los Angeles Police Department²⁴
The Los Angeles Police Department’s Narcotics Division is one of the largest drug enforcement entities in Southern California. It is responsible for enforcing local, state and Federal drug laws throughout Los Angeles. This division often works in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies to investigate drug-related violations in neighboring communities, cities and counties.

Trafficking and Seizures

- Los Angeles is a distribution center for all types of illicit drugs destined for other major metropolitan areas throughout the U.S. as well as locally.²⁵
- Increased security measures at Los Angeles International Airport continue to deter drug traffickers from traveling through the airport.²⁶
- Los Angeles remains one of the nation’s largest cocaine transshipment and distribution centers.²⁷
- Los Angeles based gangs dominate the street level distribution of crack cocaine throughout the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan areas. Cocaine bought by the

gangs is “rocked” or converted into crack cocaine in the Los Angeles area, including Santa Ana and Riverside, and then sold locally or distributed to other cities in California and nationally.²⁸

- Los Angeles is one of three major gateway cities for the influx of MDMA into the U.S.²⁹
- There were 30 methamphetamine laboratory seizures in Los Angeles County reported during 2006. Two of these laboratories were classified as superlabs.³⁰
- During 2006, approximately 963 pounds of methamphetamine were seized by the Los Angeles Police Department.³¹

Amount of Drugs Seized, Los Angeles Police Department, 2006

Drug Type	Amount Seized
Marijuana	19,961 pounds
Cocaine/crack	4,609 pounds
Heroin	131 pounds
Methamphetamine	963 pounds
PCP	7.5 pounds

Courts

- Drug Courts³²
As of April 16, 2007, there were 2 drug courts in the city of Los Angeles County that had been in existence for more at least two years and one drug court that was being planned. There were no additional drug courts in existence or being planned in Los Angeles at that time.

Corrections

- As of December 31, 2006, approximately 32.9% (56,693 offenders) of the California Department of Corrections inmate population had Los Angeles County as their county of commitment.³³
- The county of commitment for 24.9% (32,761 offenders) of the California parole population on December 31, 2006 was Los Angeles County.³⁴

Consequences of Use

- The cost associated with cleaning up drug laboratories in the Los Angeles County totaled \$128,182 during 2006. This figure does not include building and environmental remediation costs.³⁵
- During 2006, there were 43 reported AIDS cases related to injection drug use. An additional 35 cases involved male-to-male sexual contact and injection drug use.³⁶
- During 2006, there were 13 children in Los Angeles County who had been affected in some way by methamphetamine laboratories.³⁷
- During 2006, there were 82 calls to the Los Angeles County Poison Control Center regarding exposure to cocaine or crack cocaine.³⁸

Drug Exposure Calls to Poison Control Center, Los Angeles County, 2006

Major Substance	Number of Calls
Cocaine/crack*	82
Heroin*	17
Marijuana*	35
Methamphetamine/amphetamine*	73
Ecstasy*	17
Rohypnol/flunitrazepam*	0
GHB*	6
Ketamine*	2
PCP*	12
LSD*	5
Mushrooms*	2
Other hallucinogens*	8
Inhalants**	20
Total	279

*Includes calls for all exposure reasons

**Includes calls for the following exposure reasons: intentional misuse, intentional abuse, intentional unknown, contamination/tampering, and other malicious

Treatment

- From January through June 2006, there were 5,506 admissions to public and private treatment programs in Los Angeles County for primary abuse of heroin. During full year 2005 there were 9,997 such treatment admissions.³⁹

Admissions to Treatment Programs, Los Angeles County, 2005-June 2006

Drug Type	Full Year 2005		Jan.-June 2006	
	#	%	#	%
Cocaine	8,418	17.1%	4,726	17.4%
Heroin	9,997	20.3	5,506	20.2
Marijuana	7,681	15.6	4,453	16.4
Methamphetamine	12,875	26.1	7,011	25.8
PCP	278	0.6	124	0.5
Other opiates/synthetics	510	1.0	440	1.6
Other (includes alcohol)	9,516	19.3	4,957	18.2
Total admissions	49,275	100.0	27,217	100.0

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site, American Community Survey: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

² Ibid.

³ Los Angeles Web site: <http://www.lacity.org>

⁴ Los Angeles Mayor's Web site: <http://www.lacity.org/mayor/>

⁵ Los Angeles City Council Web site: <http://www.lacity.org/council.htm>

⁶ Los Angeles Police Department Web site: <http://www.lapdonline.org>

⁷ Los Angeles County Sheriff's Web site: <http://www.lasd.org/>

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- ⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/losangeles.html>
- ⁹ Los Angeles Police Department, *Crime Statistics Summary 2006*: http://www.lapdonline.org/home/pdf_view/34556
- ¹⁰ Los Angeles Police Department, *Statistical Digest 2006*: http://www.lapdonline.org/inside_the_lapd/pdf_view/37580
- ¹¹ National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse Volume 2: Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group, June 2007*: http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol2_607.pdf
- ¹² Ibid.
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- ²¹ Ibid.
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- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse Volume 2: Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group, June 2007*: http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol2_607.pdf
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, April 16, 2007: http://spa.american.edu/justice/publications/us_drugcourts.pdf
- ³³ California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, *California Prisoners and Parolees 2006, 2007*: http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Annual/CalPris/CALP_RISd2006.pdf
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse Volume 2: Proceedings of the Community Epidemiology Work Group, June 2007*: http://www.drugabuse.gov/PDF/CEWG/Vol2_607.pdf
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