# Office of National Drug Control Policy

# Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

# Atlanta, Georgia

Profile of Drug Indicators

June 2004



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.

# Atlanta, Georgia

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

# Demographics<sup>1</sup>

- ➤ Population (2002 American Community Survey): 382,831
- Race/Ethnicity (2002 American Community Survey): 33.4% white; 58.0% black/African American; 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native; 1.7% Asian; 0.0% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.3% other race; 0.7% two or more races; 5.7% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)
- ➤ The majority (93%) of the Atlanta population lives in Fulton County and the remainder of the population lives in DeKalb County.

# **Politics**

- ➤ Mayor: Shirley Franklin²
- City Council Members (District): Cathy Woolard (Council President); Carla Smith (1); Debi Starnes (2); Ivory Lee Young (3); Cleta Winslow (4); Natalyn Archibong (5); Anne Fauver (6); Howard Shook (7); Clair Muller (8); Felicia Moore (9); Clarence Martin (10); Jim Maddox (11); Vernell Mosley (12); Ceasar Mitchell (Post 1 at large); Mary Norwood (Post 2 at large); H. Lamar Willis (Post 3 at large)<sup>3</sup>
- ➤ Atlanta Chief of Police: Richard J. Pennington<sup>4</sup>
- ➤ Fulton County Sheriff: Jacquelyn Barrett<sup>5</sup>
- ➤ DeKalb County Sheriff: Thomas Brown<sup>6</sup>

#### **Programs/Initiatives**

- ➢ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)<sup>7</sup>
  Designated in 1995, the Atlanta HIDTA is responsible for the city of Atlanta and Fulton and DeKalb Counties. As a major transportation hub of the United States, Atlanta is a consumer of and major transshipment center for cocaine, heroin, marijuana, and other dangerous drugs.
- Call to Manhood<sup>8</sup>
  - The Call to Manhood program is an anti-violence initiative targeting young black males in Atlanta and throughout Fulton County. The purpose of the program is to instill positive attitudes that will benefit the individual and society as a whole. Some aspects of the program are conflict resolution, drug/alcohol prevention, and educational and career opportunities.
- ➤ Unity Project<sup>9</sup>
  The Council on Alcohol and Drugs and AID Atlanta developed the Unity Project to address HIV/AIDS and substance abuse. The goal of Unity Project is to reduce substance abuse and HIV/AIDS in African American youth and their parents living in the Atlanta area.

### **Federal Funding**

➤ Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in Atlanta (total funds received since original award year):<sup>10</sup>

- FY 2003, FY 2002, and FY 2001: no Atlanta grantees
- FY 2000: \$375,000 was awarded to the Genesis Prevention Coalition
- FY 1999: no Atlanta grantees
- ➤ Community Capacity Development Office<sup>11</sup>
  - The Pittsburgh/Mechanicsville area of Atlanta has been officially recognized and received Federal funding as a Weed and Seed site.
- ➤ There were no Fulton or DeKalb County recipients of the FY 2003 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant Program. <sup>12</sup>
- ➤ Atlanta did not receive any methamphetamine funding in 2003 from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. <sup>13</sup>
- ➤ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) FY 2003 Discretionary Funds received in Atlanta: 14
  - Center for Mental Health Services: \$720,000
  - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: \$1,946,302
  - Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: \$1,829,170
- ➤ FY 2003 Office of Justice Programs and Community Oriented Policing Services grant amounts received by Atlanta recipients: 15
  - Community Based (discretionary): 1 award valued at \$200,000
  - Counter-terrorism (discretionary): 3 awards valued at \$53,548,362
  - Juvenile Justice:
    - discretionary: 4 awards valued at \$2,010,000
    - formula: 4 award valued at \$6,397,960
  - Law Enforcement:
    - discretionary: 21 awards valued at \$86,926,575
    - formula: 6 awards valued at \$21,480,826
  - Substance Abuse:
    - discretionary: 0 awards
    - formula: 1 awards valued at \$1,927,091
  - Victims:
    - discretionary: 2 awards valued at \$949,645
    - formula: 2 awards valued at \$12,339,000
- FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant amount received in Atlanta: 16
  - \$200,000 to the Bedford Pines Apartments

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

From January through April 2004, there were 36 homicides reported to the Atlanta Police Department. There were 151 homicides reported during 2002 and 149 homicides reported in 2003. 18

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Atlanta, 2002-April 2004

Offense	Full Year 2002	Full Year 2003	JanApril 2004
Criminal homicide	151	149	36
Rape	276	281	86
Robbery	4,168	3,701	983
Aggravated assault	5,373	4,360	1,374
Burglary	8,554	8,065	2,032
Larceny	23,706	22,931	6,894
Auto theft	7,222	7,235	1,971
Total	49,450	46,722	13,376

- ➤ The Atlanta Police Department estimates that 75% of all area drug-related arrests involve crack cocaine. <sup>19</sup>
- ➤ Data from 2003 indicate that 41.8% of Atlanta adult male arrestees tested positive for marijuana at arrest.<sup>20</sup>

Adult Male Arrestee Positive Drug Results, Atlanta, 2003

Drug Type	Percent Positive
Cocaine	49.8%
Opiates	3.0
Marijuana	41.8
Methamphetamine	2.0
Any of above drugs*	72.4
Multiple drugs*	22.8

<sup>\*</sup> Includes cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamine, opiates, and PCP.

➤ Half of the Atlanta adult male arrestees reported using marijuana at least once during the past year.<sup>21</sup>

Adult Male Arrestee Drug Use, Atlanta, 2003

	Crack	Powder			
Use	Cocaine	Cocaine	Marijuana	Meth.	Heroin
Past year	25.3%	8.5%	41.1%	1.9%	1.1%
Past 30 days	26.6%	10.1%	46.3%	2.1%	1.6%
Past year	28.2%	15.5%	50.7%	4.0%	2.0%
Average # of days in month	10.5	5.3	10.5	8.6	8.7

# **Drugs**

#### Cocaine

Cocaine (in all forms) is the most regularly encountered drug by local and Federal law enforcement in Atlanta.<sup>22</sup> Powdered cocaine is widely available at Atlanta openair drug markets, nightclubs, and other night entertainment establishments.<sup>23</sup> Many Atlanta users who report that cocaine is their drug of choice are also experimenting with ecstasy.<sup>24</sup> Crack cocaine sells for \$5-\$20 per rock in Atlanta. Powder cocaine in Atlanta sells for \$5 per rock and is usually 60% pure.<sup>25</sup> Purity levels for crack cocaine in Atlanta at both the wholesale and retail levels average 75%.<sup>26</sup>

#### > Heroin

The Vine City/The Bluff area of Atlanta is a hot spot for heroin distribution.<sup>27</sup> South American heroin is commonly available in Atlanta. The Georgia Department of Public Health estimates that there are at least 7,000 heroin addicts in Atlanta. Wholesale quantities of heroin are generally 75-85% pure.<sup>28</sup> Between January to June 2003, heroin sold for \$10-\$20 per bag, \$462 per gram, \$6,160 per ounce, and \$112,000 per kilogram in Atlanta.<sup>29</sup> Heroin users tend to be black men who are over the age of 30. Heroin users are also of low socioeconomic status and live in the central city.<sup>30</sup>

# > Marijuana

Marijuana remains the most widely abused drug in Atlanta. Because of its high profitability and the lack of prosecution following arrest, it continues to be of concern to area law enforcement. Some young marijuana users mix small amounts of cocaine with marijuana. A dime bag of marijuana (2-3 grams) sells for \$10 in Atlanta where as an ounce sells for \$120.

# > Methamphetamine

From January to June 2003, prices for methamphetamine ranged from \$20-25 per hit (\$45-\$50 per hit of ice), to \$110 per gram, to \$1,300 per ounce, to \$8,250 per pound. Hethamphetamine users in Atlanta tend to be between the ages of 13-30, white, and reside in the suburbs or rural areas. Some MDMA users report that they have developed a tolerance to MDMA, causing them to move on to methamphetamine to achieve a stronger, longer-lasting high. Some individuals who frequent raves and nightclubs in Atlanta also abuse crystal methamphetamine or ice. Many Atlanta law enforcement personnel link the continued rise of methamphetamine availability with the rise in migrant Hispanic workers.

# Club Drugs

MDMA is readily available in Atlanta nightclubs.<sup>39</sup> MDMA pills in Atlanta have been shown to contain dextromethorphan and methamphetamine.<sup>40</sup> Gamma hydroxybutyrate (GHB) and ketamine are additional club drugs identified as drugs of concern for Atlanta law enforcement.<sup>41</sup> MDMA users tend to be between the ages of 13-30, male, and reside in the suburbs.<sup>42</sup>

# ➤ Diverted Pharmaceuticals

Some Atlanta treatment clients report that they used OxyContin, Vicodin, and Dilaudid before moving to heroin. The use of methamphetamine-OxyContin combinations has been reported in the Atlanta area. OxyContin sells for \$1/milligram. Hydrocodone and similar opiates sell for \$5-\$10. Hydromorphone (Dilaudid) pills are more expensive, selling for \$40-\$80/pill. Some heroin users prefer prescription opiates because they are "cleaner" and price and purity are consistent. OxyContin users in Atlanta tend to be over 30 years old, white, and residing in the suburbs.

#### **Enforcement**

As of October 31, 2002, there were 2,090 full-time law enforcement employees in Atlanta (1,535 officers and 555 civilians). 46

# **Trafficking and Seizures**

- Atlanta has become an important strategic point for drug trafficking organizations since it is the largest city in the South and has a nexus for all East/West and North/South travel.<sup>47</sup>
- Atlanta is the base for several major dealers (particularly Mexican-based traffickers) who maintain trafficking cells in Georgia's surrounding states.<sup>48</sup>
- Atlanta is Georgia's source of supply for Mexican-controlled methamphetamine. The methamphetamine typically arrives in the city from Mexico, California, or Texas.<sup>49</sup>
- ➤ Atlanta is frequently used as a transit city for MDMA originating in Europe and destined for other U.S. cities. <sup>50</sup>
- ➤ Most of the LSD found in Atlanta is mailed from the western United States.<sup>51</sup>
- ➤ Cocaine seizures have increased dramatically as a result of the Mexican organizations moving into Atlanta. <sup>52</sup>
- ➤ Nearly 32 kilograms of MDMA were seized at Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport in 2001.<sup>53</sup>
- ➤ In 2000, 113.3 kilograms of cocaine were apprehended at Hartsfield Airport. This is more than double the amount of cocaine seized at the Airport in 1999. Approximately 39 kilograms of heroin were seized at Hartsfield Airport in 2000, four times the amount seized in 1999.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Courts**

➤ Drug Courts<sup>55</sup>
As of May 2004, there was 1 drug court in Atlanta that had been operating for over 2 years and 2 additional drug courts that were being planned.

#### **Corrections**

- ➤ On May 19, 2004, approximately 9% (4,366) of the statewide active prisoners within Georgia Department of Corrections facilities (excluding jails) were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit.<sup>56</sup>
- ➤ On May 17, 2004, approximately 7% (8,621) of the active probationers in Georgia were convicted within the Atlanta Circuit. More than 10,000 probationers (10,735), representing 8% of the statewide probation total, were being supervised in the Atlanta Circuit.<sup>57</sup>
- ➤ In 2002, the Atlanta Department of Corrections provided custody for 54,065 offenders. <sup>58</sup>

### **Consequences of Use**

- ➤ Approximately 18% of the Atlanta AIDS cases are related to injection drug use.<sup>59</sup>
- According to the Fulton County Medical Examiners Office, there were 100 accidental deaths in Fulton County during 2002 that were caused by drugs. Cocaine by itself was involved in 10 deaths.<sup>60</sup>

Drugs Involved in Accidental Deaths, Selected Drugs, Fulton County, 2002

Drug Involved	Number of Deaths
Cocaine	10
Cocaine and opiates	6
Cocaine and opiates and Ethanol	6
Cocaine complicating disease	22
GHB, benzodiazepines	1
Methadone	1
Methamphetamine	1
Opiates – heroin	1
Opiates complicating disease	3
Total*	100

<sup>\*</sup> Includes deaths caused by drugs not mentioned in table

➤ During 2002, there were 156 drug-related deaths reported to Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) by medical examiners (ME) in Fulton County. 61

Number of ME Drug Mentions, Atlanta (Fulton County), 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	49	32	30	36	39
Cocaine	103	121	89	95	115
Heroin/morphine	26	25	11	4	4
Marijuana	8	8	7	11	36
Amphetamines		3	2	1	26
Methamphetamine		1	1		1
Club drugs		2		1	
Hallucinogens	1				
Inhalants					
Narcotic analgesics	16	23	51	43	72
Other analgesics	5	2	2		3
Benzodiazepines	9	13	12	11	36
Antidepressants	10	7	7	5	3
All other substances	20	20	24	2	9
Total drug deaths	125	155	114	131	156
Total drug mentions	247	257	236	209	344

➤ There were 14,211 drug abuse episodes reported to the DAWN by emergency departments (ED) in Atlanta during 2002. Cocaine was mentioned in nearly 9,000 of the drug-related ED episodes. <sup>62</sup>

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Selected Drugs, Atlanta, 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	4,660	4,952	6,436	6,878	6,743
Cocaine	5,980	5,236	6,229	8,891	8,947
Heroin	473	415	485	848	732
Marijuana	2,633	2,515	2,431	3,486	3,602
Amphetamines	295	275	311	365	615
Methamphetamine	162	83	109	172	246
MDMA (Ecstasy)	33	62	68	175	118
Ketamine	4	13	8	4	9
LSD	108	85	70	80	18
PCP	46	28		35	
Miscellaneous hallucinogens	12		7		10
Flunitrazepam	1			2	0
GHB	80		129	84	40
Inhalants	13	13		16	9
Combin. not found above	2			7	2
Total ED drug abuse episodes	10,717	10,189	11,111	14,452	14,211
Total ED drug mentions	20,159	19,475	21,931	27,250	26,551

<sup>➤</sup> Of the 49 deceased motor vehicle drivers who were tested for THC in Fulton County during 2002, 7 were positive. <sup>63</sup>

Toxicology Results for Vehicle Operators and Pedestrians, Fulton County, 2002

	Drivers/Operators		Pedes	trians
Drug	# Tested	# Positive	# Tested	# Positive
Ethanol	53	18	27	6
THC	49	7	24	0
Benzodiazepines	50	5	25	2
Cocaine	52	4	27	3
Amphetamines	51	2	25	0

### **Treatment**

➤ During the first half of 2002, 58.4% of the illicit drug treatment admissions in Atlanta were for primary abuse of cocaine. Approximately 83% of the cocaine admissions were for crack cocaine. 64

Admissions to Treatment (Excluding Alcohol), Atlanta, 2000-First Half 2002

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Drug	Full Year 2000	Full Year 2001	1st Half 2002		
Marijuana	19.4%	20.9%	26.1%		
Cocaine	70.3	68.1	58.4		
Heroin	6.6	8.6	10.3		
Methamphetamine	Not available	Not available	9.5		

> During 2003, approximately 25.7% of the Atlanta adult male arrestees reported that they had received inpatient treatment at some point in their lives.<sup>65</sup>

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Reporting Past Drug Treatment, Atlanta, 2003

<u>Inpatient</u>		<b>Outpatient</b>		
<b>Ever</b>	Past Year	Ever	Past Year	
25.7%	4.8%	15.1%	1.5%	

#### Sources

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<sup>25</sup> Office of National Drug Control Policy, *Pulse Check: Trends in Drug Abuse*, January 2004: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/drugfact/pulsechk/january04/index.html

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