

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Seattle, Washington

Profile of Drug Indicators

May 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.

Seattle, Washington

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

Demographics

- Population: 526,594 (2002 American Community Survey)¹; 563,374 (2000 Census)²
- Race/Ethnicity (2002 American Community Survey): 69.6% white, 5.5% black/African American, 1.0% American Indian/Alaska Native, 13.3% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, 0.5% other, 3.0 two or more races, 6.8% Hispanic/Latino origin³
- Seattle is located in King County.

Politics

- Mayor: Greg Nickels⁴
- City Council (Positions 1-9, respectively): Jean Godden, Richard Conlin, Peter Steinbrueck, Jan Drago (President), Tim Rasmussen, Nick Licata, David Della, Richard McIver, Jim Compton⁵
- Seattle Chief of Police: Gil Kerlikowske⁶
- King County Sheriff: Dave Reichert⁷

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁸
Designated in 1997, the Northwest HIDTA is responsible for 14 counties in Washington, including King.
- Project Link (Leading Integrated Networks in King County)⁹
Project LINK is an innovative initiative focused on community coalition building to combat drugs and violence. This project creates and sustains effective linkages between law enforcement agencies and grass roots coalitions. The primary strategy of Project LINK is to educate rental property owners and motel owners about the threat of drug trafficking on their premises.
- Chronic Public Inebriate (CPI) Systems Solutions Workgroup¹⁰
The CPI Systems Solutions Workgroup is a public-private partnership of concerned citizens and public servants who work to improve the conditions of life for CPIs who inhabit the Seattle area and who live with the social conditions caused by homelessness and public drinking and drugged behavior.
- Needle Exchange¹¹
Seattle's needle exchange program began operating in 1989. Currently, Public Health conducts exchange programs at 3 sites within Seattle and 2 sites in South King County. Two additional sites are operated by community-based service agencies in the University and Broadway Districts.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in Seattle:¹²
 - FY 2001, FY 2002, and FY 2003: no Seattle grantees

- FY 2000: \$100,000 to the King County Department of Community Human Services
- FY 1999: \$100,000 to the Seattle Public Schools Drug and Alcohol Advisory Committee Partnership
- Office of Weed and Seed¹³
There are currently 2 Weed and Seed sites located in Seattle.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) FY 2003 Discretionary Funds received in Seattle:¹⁴
 - Center for Mental Health Services: \$2,018,898
 - Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: \$597,800
 - Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: \$825,000
- FY 2003 Office of Justice Programs and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services grant amounts received in Seattle:¹⁵
 - discretionary: \$36,555,210
 - formula: \$1,541,148
- Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant:
 - FY 2003: no Seattle grantees¹⁶
 - FY 2002:¹⁷
 - \$300,000 to the King County Superior Court
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Methamphetamine Grant:
 - FY 2003: no Seattle grantees¹⁸
 - FY 2002: no Seattle grantees¹⁹
- There were no Seattle recipients of the FY 2001 Department of Housing and Urban Development's Federally Assisted Low-Income Housing Drug Elimination Grant.²⁰

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During 2003, there were 34 murders known to the Seattle Police Department. This is up from 27 such offenses during 2002.²¹ There were 25 murders in Seattle during 2001.²²

Number of Index Offenses Known to Police, Seattle, 2000-2003

Offense	2000	2001	2002	2003
Murder	36	25	27	34
Rape	181	164	152	174
Robbery	1,653	1,594	1,576	1,509
Aggravated assault	2,463	2,367	2,338	2,229
Burglary	6,157	6,684	7,290	8,536
Theft	26,424	26,502	26,742	28,718
Auto theft	8,386	8,755	8,308	9,052
Arson	172	220	211	205

- There were 1,855 drug offenses known to the Seattle Police Department during 2003.²³ This is a decrease from the 2,051 drug offenses known to police in 2002.²⁴ There were 1,993 drug offenses reported during 2001.²⁵

Number of Drug/Alcohol Offenses Known to Police, Seattle, 2001-2003

Offense	2001	2002	2003
Drug abuse violations	1,993	2,051	1,855
Driving under influence	107	145	134
Liquor laws	370	231	160

- Data from 2003 indicate that 36.6% of Seattle adult male arrestees tested positive for cocaine at arrest.²⁶

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Testing Positive, Seattle, 2003

Drug Type	Percent Positive
Cocaine	36.6%
Heroin	6.8
Marijuana	37.2
Methamphetamine	12.1
Any of above drugs	67.3
Multiple drugs	25.3

- Additional Seattle arrestee drug use data for 2003 indicate that 52.6% of the adult male arrestees used marijuana within the past year. Among those reporting past year marijuana use, the average number of days the drug was used in the past month was 9.2 days.²⁷

Past Drug Use Among Adult Male Arrestees, Seattle, 2003

Drug Type	Past 7 Days	Past 30 Days	Past Year	Avg. # Days
Crack cocaine	19.2%	20.8%	28.1%	9.3 days
Powder cocaine	8.2	13.0	21.6	4.5 days
Marijuana	34.7	42.2	52.6	9.2 days
Methamphetamine	11.4	13.8	19.2	8.5 days
Heroin	5.6	7.0	10.9	8.9 days

Drugs

- Cocaine

Powder cocaine is increasingly more available in King County.²⁸ While adolescents are the predominant crack sellers in Seattle, young adults (ages 18-30) and older adults (over age 30) are the predominant users.²⁹ Some crack cocaine users ingest benzodiazepines to “take the edge off.”³⁰ Crack cocaine sells for \$100/gram and is 40-85% pure. Crack is typically sold in \$2, \$5, or \$10 rocks.³¹ Powder cocaine prices range from \$500 to \$1,000/ounce for 57-68% pure product. A gram of powder cocaine sells for \$35 to \$50.³² Anal use of powder cocaine is a phenomenon that has recently been reported in Seattle.³³

- Heroin

The primary form of heroin available in the Seattle area is Mexican black tar.³⁴ According to law enforcement sources, heroin is widely available in Seattle and heroin use is spreading to the Seattle suburbs. Heroin and powder cocaine are sometimes

injected simultaneously and heroin and crack are sometimes smoked sequentially. Sequential swallowing of clonazepam or alprozolam with heroin has also been reported.³⁵ An emerging group of heroin users is taking methamphetamine in combination with the heroin.³⁶ There are occasional reports of high quality heroin found at local needle exchanges.³⁷ The Northwest HIDTA reports that Mexican black tar heroin prices in King County during 2002 were \$25-\$100/gram, \$450-\$900/ounce, \$6,000-\$10,000/pound, and \$11,500-\$20,000/kilogram.³⁸

➤ Marijuana

Adolescents and young adults are the most likely age groups to use marijuana.³⁹ BC bud is the most common and most expensive of the marijuana varieties found in King County.⁴⁰ Prices associated with locally grown marijuana are \$15-\$25/gram, \$40-\$50 per 1/8 ounce, and \$325-\$400/ounce.⁴¹ One pound of Mexican marijuana costs \$500-\$700, one pound of BC bud costs \$2,800-\$3,000, and 100 starter plants cost \$1,500.⁴² THC levels of marijuana found in Seattle are 2-3%/pound of Mexican; 12-18%/pound of domestic indoor hydroponic; and 15-25%/pound of BC bud.⁴³

➤ Methamphetamine

The use of methamphetamine has increased in Seattle, with young adults the most common age group to use the drug. Law enforcement has noticed a decrease in purity of Mexican methamphetamine, due to an increase in dilution with methylsulfonylmethane (MSM).⁴⁴ Locally produced methamphetamine is now more pure than Mexican methamphetamine.⁴⁵ Street prices of methamphetamine in Seattle/King County are \$20-\$100/gram, \$350-\$1,200/ounce, and \$5,000-\$15,000/pound.⁴⁶

➤ Club Drugs

MDMA prices are lower at raves than in the community. MDMA pills sell for \$10-\$20 at raves and \$20-\$30 on the street. Fraudulent MDMA substitutions (specifically hormone replacement pills) have been reported in Seattle. GHB sells for \$100 for 100 dosage units. One dose of LSD sells for \$5.⁴⁷

➤ Other Drugs

According to the local DEA, hydrocodone is the most commonly diverted narcotic in the Seattle area. Most of the methadone sold illicitly is in tablet form and costs \$0.50 per milligram.⁴⁸ Diverted OxyContin activity has increased in Seattle.⁴⁹

Juveniles

- Among Seattle public school students surveyed in 2002, 27% of 12th graders reported using marijuana within the past month.⁵⁰

Percent of Public School Students Reporting Past Month Drug Use, Seattle, 2002

Drug Type and Use	6th Grade	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade
Alcohol	8.7%	23.1%	36.2%	47.9%
Marijuana	2.4	12.6	21.9	27.0
Cigarettes	4.1	10.7	16.8	26.7
Chewing tobacco	2.7	3.1	3.6	3.9
Inhalants	5.8	6.0	1.7	2.1
Hallucinogens	0.9	1.8	2.3	3.6
Cocaine	1.0	1.7	1.3	1.7

- Approximately 53% of Seattle 12th graders reported using marijuana at least once during their lifetimes.⁵¹

Percent of Public School Students Reporting Lifetime Drug Use, Seattle, 2002

Drug Type and Use	6th Grade	8th Grade	10th Grade	12th Grade
Alcohol	22.3%	45.8%	59.4%	70.7%
Marijuana	5.6	23.9	41.8	52.5
Cigarettes	15.1	31.1	43.5	54.2
Chewing tobacco	4.7	7.2	8.4	14.6
Inhalants	13.2	14.0	7.9	8.8
Hallucinogens	1.4	3.7	7.3	14.9
Cocaine	2.0	3.6	4.0	5.6

- More than half of the Seattle 12th graders reported having a favorable attitude toward drug use.⁵²

Percent of Students Reporting Antisocial Behavior Within Past Year, Seattle, 2002

Situation	6th	8th	10th	12th
Got high or drunk at school	6.2%	13.9%	24.2%	28.1%
Favorable attitude toward drug use	36.4	43.1	48.6	50.4
Low perceived risk of drug use	32.9	49.8	45.7	47.1
Sold illegal drugs at school	2.0	7.4	11.0	11.7

Enforcement

- As of October 31, 2002, there were 1,746 full-time law enforcement employees in Seattle (1,266 officers and 480 civilians).⁵³
- King County/Seattle Emergency Service Patrol⁵⁴
The Emergency Service Patrol provides screening for publicly inebriated persons in the downtown Seattle area and transports individuals to appropriate service agencies. The Patrol responds to calls from the 911 emergency dispatch system.

Trafficking and Seizures

- During 2003, the Washington State Department of Ecology reported 202 methamphetamine incidents (includes labs and dumpsites) in King County.⁵⁵ During 2002, there were 241 meth incidents reported.⁵⁶

Number of Meth Incidents, King County, 1990-2003

Year	Incidents	Year	Incidents
1990	6	1997	17
1991	10	1998	48
1992	2	1999	107
1993	7	2000	231
1994	7	2001	271
1995	10	2002	241
1996	23	2003	202

Courts

➤ Drug Courts⁵⁷

As of November 2003, there were 2 drug courts that had been operating for over 2 years and 1 additional drug court that was being planned in Seattle.

Corrections

➤ The total adult secure population for the King County Department of Adult and Juvenile Detention facilities was 2,373 on May 27, 2004.⁵⁸

Treatment

➤ Thirty percent of the Seattle adult male arrestees interviewed during 2003 reported receiving outpatient treatment at some point in their lives.⁵⁹

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

Type of Treatment	Ever	Past Year
Outpatient	30.1%	6.7%
Inpatient/residential	34.2	5.2

- Treatment sources in Seattle report that funding for treatment has been reduced, resulting in a decrease in slot capacity and an increase in waiting lists.⁶⁰
- During 2002, there were 1,453 admissions to treatment in Seattle/King County with marijuana reported as the primary drug of abuse.⁶¹

Number of Admissions to Treatment, Seattle/King County, 2002

Primary Drug of Abuse	Youth	Adult	Total
Alcohol	230	2,725	2,955
Cocaine	16	891	907
Heroin	6	1,030	1,036
Marijuana	887	566	1,453
Methamphetamine	60	553	613
All other drugs	71	196	267

- Dutch Shisler Sobering Support Center⁶²
Located in downtown Seattle, the Dutch Shisler Sobering Support Center serves chronic public inebriates and others in need of a safe place to recover from the acute effects of alcohol and drug intoxication. Services provided by the Center include the following: Emergency Safety Patrol van transportation to and from the facility; triage for determination of medical emergencies; sober housing for sleeping off the effects of alcohol or other drugs; and intensive case management services. Clients typically remain at the facility for 8-14 hours per visit. The Center has the capacity to serve 60 clients at any one time and serves approximately 1,000 people each year.

Consequences of Use

- There are approximately 15,000-18,000 injection drug users in King County. Up to 85% of injection drug users in King County may be infected with Hepatitis C.⁶³

- In the first half of 2003, cocaine was identified in 23 of the drug-caused deaths in Seattle/King County.⁶⁴

Drugs Identified in Drug-Caused Deaths, Seattle/King County, 1999-First Half 2003

Drug Identified	Full Year 1999	Full Year 2000	Full Year 2001	Full Year 2002	1st Half 2003
Cocaine	76	89	49	79	23
Heroin/opiates	117	102	61	87	29
Other opiates	34	49	55	78	41
Amphetamines	14	11	5	14	9
Depressants	30	37	48	55	38
Alcohol	67	76	32	58	21
Total drug deaths	205	219	153	195	83

- From 1999 to 2002, there were 6 MDMA-related deaths in Seattle/King County. In 2002, there were 3 GHB deaths.⁶⁵
- The number of King County calls to the Alcohol and Drug Helpline (ADHL) during the first half of 2003 for cocaine represented 33% of the adult calls and 10% of the youth calls. Calls involving heroin represented 14% of all calls. Marijuana represented 16% of the ADHL adult calls and 53% of the teen calls. Calls regarding methamphetamine represented 16% of the adult calls and 14% of the teen calls.⁶⁶
- During 2002, there were 11,003 drug-related episodes reported by emergency departments (ED) in Seattle. Cocaine was mentioned 3,547 times in the episodes.⁶⁷

Number of ED Drug Mentions and Episodes, Selected Drugs, Seattle, 1998-2002

Drug category	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combin.	2,221	2,228	3,173	3,145	5,094
Cocaine	2,399	2,519	3,338	3,409	3,547
Heroin	2,421	2,470	2,490	1,927	2,779
Marijuana	936	808	1,414	1,596	1,403
Amphetamines	293	345	640	699	455
Methamphetamine	266	353	540	395	541
MDMA (ecstasy)	19	32	128	115	86
Ketamine	0	3	4	1	1
LSD	94	121	107	62	33
PCP	47	47	116	128	123
Miscell. hallucin.	45	48	37	72	50
Rohypnol	--	1	0	0	1
GHB	17	34	57	39	54
Inhalants	6	16	12	15	16
Total drug episodes	8,327	8,424	11,115	11,495	11,003
Total drug mentions	13,914	13,854	18,974	19,818	21,257

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