

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Las Vegas, Nevada

Profile of Drug Indicators

August 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.

Las Vegas, Nevada

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

Demographics¹

- Population (2002 American Community Survey): 499,297
- Race/Ethnicity (2002 American Community Survey): 57.06% white; 8.25% black/African American; 0.32% American Indian/Alaska Native; 4.24% Asian; 1.13% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.05% other race; 1.85% two or more race; 27.1% Hispanic/Latino origin (of any race).
- Las Vegas is located in Clark County.

Politics

- Mayor: Oscar Goodman²
- City Council (Wards 1-6 respectively): Janet Moncrief, Steve Wolfson, Mayor Pro Tem Gary Reese, Larry Brown, Lawrence Weekly, Michael Mack³
- City Manager: Douglas Selby⁴
- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Sheriff: Bill Young⁵
- Las Vegas Department of Detention and Enforcement Chief: Mike Sheldon⁶

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)
Designated in January 2001, the Nevada HIDTA is responsible for Clark County.⁷
- Cops Racing Against Violence Through Education (CRAVE)⁸
CRAVE, which started in 1995, is run by the Las Vegas Police Department with the goal of educating youth about the dangers of violence and substance abuse. The program involves officers visiting schools and appearing at Las Vegas racetracks. They also teach driver education, DUI awareness, take children on field trips, and give away scholarships.
- Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)⁹
The Las Vegas Police Department DARE Program began in 1986 with assistance from the Clark County School District and Junior League of Las Vegas. The DARE program currently serves more than 15,000 fifth grade students in more than one hundred schools in Las Vegas.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program¹⁰
From FY 1999 to FY 2003, there have been no Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in Las Vegas.
- Community Capacity Development Office¹¹
Las Vegas has received funding and been officially recognized as a Weed and Seed site.
- FY 2003 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration discretionary funds awarded to Las Vegas:¹²
 - Center for Mental Health Services: \$1,748,981

- Center for Substance Abuse Prevention: \$0
- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment: \$499,631
- There were no Las Vegas recipients of the FY 2003 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court grant.¹³
- Las Vegas did not receive any methamphetamine funding in 2003 from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.¹⁴
- FY 2003 Office of Justice Programs and Community Oriented Policing Services grant amounts received in Las Vegas:¹⁵
 - Community Based (discretionary): 1 award valued at \$225,000
 - Counter-terrorism (discretionary): 0 awards
 - Juvenile Justice:
 - discretionary: 1 award valued at \$198,700
 - formula: 0 awards
 - Law Enforcement:
 - discretionary: 4 awards valued at \$7,040,253
 - formula: 3 awards valued at \$2,242,404
 - Substance Abuse: 0 awards
 - Victims:
 - discretionary: 1 award valued at \$400,000
 - formula: 1 award valued at \$1,995,000
- No grantees in Las Vegas were awarded funding as part of the FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant.¹⁶

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During 2002, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department reported 137 murder/non-negligent manslaughter offenses.¹⁷ According to preliminary 2003 data, there were 144 reported murder offenses in Las Vegas.¹⁸

Number of Crime Index Offenses Known to Police, Las Vegas, 2002-2003

Offense	2002	2003
Murder/non-negligent manslaughter	137	144
Forcible rape	494	511
Robbery	3,776	3,955
Aggravated assault	4,574	4,551
Burglary	11,136	12,782
Larceny-theft	24,204	30,052
Motor vehicle theft	12,489	14,718
Arson	270	280
Crime index total	57,080	--

- In 2003, 65.3% of adult male arrestees in Las Vegas tested were positive for drugs.¹⁹

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Positive for Drugs, Las Vegas, 2003

Drug Type	Percent Positive
Cocaine	21.9%
Opiates	6.4
Marijuana	34.4
Methamphetamine	28.6
Any of above drugs	65.3
Multiple drugs	22.4

- 14.3% of male arrestees in Las Vegas reported using marijuana within the past year.²⁰

Past Drug Use Among Adult Male Arrestees, Las Vegas, 2003

Drug Type	Past 7 Days	Past Month	Past Year
Crack cocaine	9.6%	11.0%	14.3%
Powder cocaine	7.2	9.6	14.1
Marijuana	33.7	41.0	48.9
Heroin	3.8	4.8	6.0
Methamphetamine	23.4	27.3	33.5

- There were 212 gang-related shootings in Las Vegas during 2003.²¹

Gang Statistics, Las Vegas, 2002-2003

	2002	2003
Number of gangs	446	416
Number of gang members	6,876	6,315
Number of gang associates	3,238	2,945
Number of gang related shootings	194	212
Number of gang related stabbing/assaults	54	62
Number of deceased gang members	26	34

Drugs

- Cocaine
Cocaine HCL is readily available throughout southern Nevada.²² Crack cocaine is a common drug used among the African American community in Clark County.²³
- Heroin
Heroin is often used in combination with other drugs such as cocaine and alcohol.²⁴
- Marijuana
Marijuana is readily available in Clark County and is considered a dominant illicit drug of abuse in the area.²⁵ The prevalence of indoor marijuana cultivation in Las Vegas has increased within the past year.²⁶
- Club drugs
Club drugs, particularly MDMA, are readily available in the Las Vegas area. Most of the MDMA that passes through or is destined for Las Vegas comes primarily from southern California and New York.²⁷ GHB availability has dramatically increased in the Clark County area.²⁸

➤ Diverted Pharmaceuticals²⁹

Prescription fraud is on the rise in Las Vegas. Pseudoephedrine, a precursor for the manufacture of methamphetamine, remains the most commonly diverted pharmaceutical drug in the Las Vegas area.

Enforcement

- As of October 2002, there were 3,880 full-time law enforcement employees with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (1,951 officers and 1,929 civilians).³⁰
- Gang Diversion Unit/Gang Crimes Section³¹
The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Gang Crimes Section was formed in 1984 (as the Gang Diversion Unit) to combat the growing gang activity and related drug sales plaguing the city.

Trafficking and Seizures

- Southern Nevada, specifically Las Vegas, serves as an importation and transshipment point for drugs destined to other areas of the country.³²
- Las Vegas serves as an importation and transshipment point for MDMA.³³
- In the first 9 months of 2002, the Southern Nevada Joint Methamphetamine Task Force seized over 1,386 cases of pseudoephedrine, 50 kilos of red phosphorous, and 63 pounds of iodine, all used in the production of methamphetamine.³⁴
- During 1997, there were 160 methamphetamine laboratories identified and dismantled in Clark County. By 2001, the number of methamphetamine labs identified and dismantled in Clark County had increased to 254.³⁵

Methamphetamine Laboratory Seizures, Clark County, 1997-2001

Year	Labs Seized
1997	160
1998	319
1999	362
2000	287
2001	254

- During 2001, 1,156,156 grams of marijuana was seized in Clark County.³⁶

Drug Seizures in Grams, by Drug Type, Clark County, 1998-2001

Substance Type	1998	1999	2000	2001
Methamphetamine	213,823	77,768	48,060.8	58,716
Cocaine	144,134	57,419	27,096.06	65,141
Heroin	12,731	5,756.4	338.38	1,889
Marijuana	1,229,050	1,401,624	8,840.97	1,156,156
MDMA	22,000	8,245	39,968	26,710
PCP	3.19*	254	216.5	1,879

* Seizure in gallons instead of grams.

Courts

➤ Drug Courts³⁷

As of May 2004, there were 3 drug courts in Las Vegas that had been operating for over 2 years, 1 that was recently implemented, and 1 that was being planned.

➤ Of the 11,852 total criminal cases pending on December 31, 2001, there were 1,577 pending drug treatment petitions.³⁸ As of December 31, 2002, of the 12,060 total criminal cases pending, there were 1,517 pending drug treatment petitions.³⁹

Consequences of Use

➤ The Clark County Coroner reported 6 MDMA overdose deaths during 2001.⁴⁰

➤ During 2002, there were 376 drug-related deaths reported by medical examiners in the Las Vegas Metropolitan area (including Clark County and Mohave County).⁴¹

Number of Drug Mentions in Drug Abuse Deaths, Las Vegas Metro Area, 1998-2002

Drug Type	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alcohol-in-combination	77	80	97	81	109
Cocaine	89	76	95	88	87
Heroin/morphine	90	97	93	74	103
Marijuana	1	2	24	22	15
Amphetamines	35	31	32	33	52
Methamphetamine	49	45	49	53	72
Club drugs	1	4	8	4	1
Hallucinogens	2	3	--	2	2
Inhalants	--	--	--	--	--
Narcotic analgesics	119	126	146	153	228
Other analgesics	7	12	12	8	17
Benzodiazepines	62	66	100	86	99
Antidepressants	41	57	33	55	32
All other substances	68	78	93	69	79
Total drug deaths	232	252	286	273	376
Total drug mentions	641	677	782	728	896

Treatment

➤ As of July 2004, there were 25 treatment programs in Las Vegas that had been certified by the Nevada Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse.⁴²

➤ Over 16% of the Las Vegas adult male arrestees reported that they had received inpatient drug treatment at some point in their lives.⁴³

Percent of Adult Male Arrestees Reporting Treatment, Las Vegas, 2003

Inpatient		Outpatient		Mental Health	
Ever	Past Year	Ever	Past Year	Ever	Past Year
16.8%	3.9%	22.9%	4.6%	10.8%	1.1%

Sources

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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:

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