



NNOAC Insight

The Official Position of the National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition

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HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREAS (HIDTA) PROGRAM \$302 MILLION IN FY 2025 APPROPRIATIONS

The 40 state narcotic officers' associations and more than 50,000 law enforcement officers represented by the NNOAC strongly urge the Congress to continue the proven effective High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program within the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and provide FY 2025 funding of no less than \$302 million.

Through cooperation and collaboration with Federal, State and local law enforcement - collaboration that is assured because of the structure of the HIDTA program within ONDCP ensuring equal representation among all partners - the HIDTA program has achieved significant results. HIDTA's performance measurement system indicates that in calendar year 2022:

- HIDTAs investigated **9,135 drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) /money laundering organizations (MLOs)** and were successful in disrupting or dismantling **3,105**. The majority (**55 percent**) of the DTOs/MLOs were **international** or **multi-state** operations.
- HIDTAs were involved in the seizure of approximately **1,100,371 kilograms of marijuana plants and product, 182,810 kilograms of cocaine, 119,629 kilograms of methamphetamine, 2,538 kilograms of heroin and 13,657 kilograms of fentanyl powder, and 44,408,465 dosage units of fentanyl pills.**
- HIDTAs have **subject deconfliction systems** to ensure that information is shared and that potential conflicts between agencies investigating the same organizations or subjects are resolved. HIDTAs submitted over 1.1 million items of information on drug trafficking suspects for subject deconfliction.
- HIDTAs have **event deconfliction systems** that alert agencies when there are **tactical operations planned for** the same general location and timeframe. This helps **prevent conflicts** between different operations for officer safety purposes. HIDTAs **deconflicted 281,821 tactical operations from 3,312 law enforcement agencies.**
- HIDTAs **apprehended more than 32,686 fugitives, and took 31,243 firearms off the street.**
- There are more than **23,040 federal, state, and local** law enforcement officers, analysts and support personnel from more than **3,592 different agencies** involved in the HIDTA program. Seventy-two percent of the participants are from state, local, or tribal agencies.
- HIDTAs are involved in **prevention through training, partnering, sponsorship and community outreach.**

The HIDTA program gives federal, state, local and tribal criminal justice leaders a **balanced and equal voice** in determining the priorities and initiatives required to address the emerging threats unique to their regions. The 33 HIDTAs are located in 50 states plus Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia, and include 65.5 percent of the U.S. population. The HIDTA program is administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The placement of the HIDTA program within ONDCP provides for a neutral, non-agency biased environment that is not mired in bureaucracy or directed by a single federal agency. HIDTA is an innovative and unique program that is essential in addressing the opioid crisis facing this country. The HIDTA program does not duplicate but enhances drug law enforcement efforts nationwide.

HIDTAs address regional drug problems based upon a unique **threat assessment process**. Each HIDTA develops its own strategy consistent with the National Drug Control Strategy. Executive Boards implement their strategies by funding formal initiatives like task forces which can best address identified drug threats. Each initiative is annually assessed based on measurable outputs (HIDTA's one-of-a-kind **Performance Management Process**). HIDTA-funded multi-agency task forces are co-located with over 23,000 federal, state and local law enforcement investigators/officers and support staff. This coordination is highly unique among federally supported law enforcement initiatives and ensures a substantial return on investment for the federal taxpayer. In 2022, the HIDTA National Program shows \$82.91 for every dollar invested in the Program by Congress. Any participating law enforcement agency, whether it is federal, state or local, may lead a HIDTA task force, which also is a unique concept.

HIDTA Executive Boards, comprised of an equal number of federal and state/local law enforcement executives, meet regularly to manage each HIDTA. The HIDTA structure creates a level playing field among federal, state and local partners who understand all aspects of law enforcement and put the interests of the HIDTA above their own. This partnership concept does not exist in any other program. Executive Boards hire directors who are highly experienced law enforcement professionals. Directors act as neutral brokers for participating agencies and are charged with carrying out the collective policy decisions of their executive boards.

Oversight of the HIDTA initiatives is provided by participating agencies and by a structured self-review managed by the executive board. Individual HIDTA's management annually completes fiscal and performance audits. Additionally, ONDCP sends regularly scheduled formal review teams to each HIDTA and has contracted a firm to audit HIDTA fiduciaries. The U.S. Government Accountability Office has also reviewed the program on several occasions. This structure assures performance tracking and accountability assuring each HIDTA is as efficient and effective as possible both operationally and fiscally.

HIDTA's most important contribution to the nation is the set of partnerships it has nurtured among participating agencies to drive results in drug enforcement. These partnerships, developed over years, have become an institutionalized part of the program. This has led to efficiencies and leveraging of resources among its participants.

HIDTA Accomplishments: A Model of Demonstrated Success

Another cornerstone of the HIDTA program is the initiation and promotion of innovative methods and ideas in enforcement and information sharing. The evolution of the HIDTA intelligence subsystem exemplifies this approach. HIDTA program requirements include maintenance of **intelligence support centers within each HIDTA**, and co-location of federal, state and local agencies. The result has been intelligence sharing on an unprecedented scale related to drug trafficking threats.

The **HIDTA.net/RISS.net/LEO** information system architecture electronically links each HIDTA. Each HIDTA has direct access to multiple agency and commercial databases and provides a full range of analytical services. HIDTA intelligence support centers (ISCs) now stand as prime examples of interagency cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. HIDTA ISCs played an integral role in the investigation of the terrorist attacks on "9/11" and because of their relationships were able to obtain critical information in a very timely manner. HIDTAs routinely partner with state and local fusion centers; in some cases they are collocated.

HIDTA Executive Boards have the flexibility to adapt to emerging needs. Two examples of that quick adaptation relate to the ongoing fentanyl crisis:

Overdose Response Strategy (ORS): HIDTA believes in investing in partnerships to build safe and healthy communities. The Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) is an innovative platform designed to enhance public safety and public health partnerships and inter-agency collaboration across 50 states, as well as enhancing prevention efforts with the overarching goal of reducing drug overdose deaths.

Overdose Mapping (ODMAP): The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) funded the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA to develop ODMAP and provide it free of charge to first responders and government agencies. As of the end of 2022, over 4000 agencies in 50 states are entering data into ODMAP and receiving real-time updates and spike alerts.

We are in the middle of the worst drug epidemic in our nation's history. Drug-related deaths are at an all-time high. Collaborative multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement efforts have not been adequately supported over the past several years. Ensuring adequate funding for the HIDTA program in FY 2025 is critical to targeting the most significant drug trafficking organizations that are killing people in our communities every day.