



# COLLABORATING TO FIGHT DRUG CRIME: MULTI-JURISTICTIONAL TASK FORCES

## A Profile of the Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group





# Collaborating to fight drug crime: Profile of the Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group

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# Table of contents

Introduction .....	1
Drug arrest trends .....	5
Trends in prosecutions for drug offenses and all felonies.....	24
Drug offender sentencing trends .....	27
Survey of MEGs and task forces.....	31
Conclusion .....	34
References .....	36
Appendices .....	37

# List of figures and tables

Table 1: MCNEG grant totals .....	3
Map 1: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority-funded MEGs and drug task forces, 2011 .....	4
Figure 1: Drug arrest rates for MCNEG counties versus Illinois, 2000-2009 .....	6
Figure 2: Drug arrests by type, Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties, 2002-2011 .....	7
Figure 3: Drug arrests made in MCNEG counties, MCNEG versus non-MCNEG agencies, 2002-2011 .....	8
Figure 4: Drug arrests by MCNEG, 2002-2011 .....	9
Figure 5: Drug arrests by non-MCNEG agencies in MCNEG counties, 2002-2011.....	10
Figure 6: Percent of MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by offense type, 2011 .....	11
Figure 7: Percent of MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by violation type, 2011 .....	11
Figure 8: Percent of non-MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counteis by offense type, 2011 .....	12
Figure 9: Percent of non-MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counteis by violation type, 2011 .....	12
Figure 10: Percent of MCNEG versus non-MCNEG misdemeanor arrests by drug type, 2011 .....	13
Figure 11: MCNEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011 .....	14
Figure 12: Non-MCNEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011 .....	14
Figure 13: Number of MCNEG versus non-MCNEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011 .....	15
Figure 14: Number of MCNEGarrests for possession and delivery, 2002 versus 2011 .....	16
Figure 15: MCNEG cannabis arrests for possession and delivery, 2002-2011 .....	17
Table 2: Cannabis seized by MCNEG, 2002-2011 .....	19

Figure 16: MCNEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011 .....	20
Figure 17: Non-MCNEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011 .....	20
Figure 18: Percent of MCNEG versus non-MCNEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011 .....	21
Figure 19: MCNEG controlled substance arrests for possession and delivery, 2002-2011 .....	22
Table 3: Cocaine seized by MCNEG, 2002-2011 .....	23
Figure 20: Total MCNEG drug arrests and percentage of arrests resulting in prosecution, 2002-2011 .....	25
Figure 21: Sentences imposed on convicted MCNEG offenders, 2002-2011 .....	28
Figure 22: Drug offenders as a percent of total IDOC commitments from Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties versus Illinois, 2000-2009.....	29
Figure 23: Availability of drugs in Illinois, 2009.....	32
Figure 24: Price per gram in Illinois, 2009 .....	33

# Introduction

Drug task forces were developed to more efficiently and effectively fight proliferation of illicit drugs. Local police have jurisdictional restraints making it difficult to combat drug markets extending through multiple cities, and counties (Smith, Novak, Frank, & Travis, 2000). Drug task forces work across jurisdictions and pool resources, knowledge, and personnel. MEGs and task forces are staffed by officers representing federal, state, county, and local police agencies. Drug task force officers work undercover, using confidential sources, to purchase drugs in order to gather the intelligence to make arrests (Reichert, 2012).

There are two kinds of drug task forces that operate in Illinois—metropolitan enforcement groups (MEG) and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces.

MEGs have been in existence in Illinois since the 1970's through the Intergovernmental Drug Enforcement Act [30 *ILCS* 715/1]. MEG policy boards engage in an active, formal role in the management of operations. MEG policy boards are required to include an elected official and the chief law enforcement officer, or their designees, from each participating unit of government. An elected official from one of the participating agencies must be designated to act as financial officer of the MEG to receive operational funds. MEG operations are limited to the enforcement of drug laws and delineated weapons offenses and the investigation of street gang-related crimes.

Multi-jurisdictional drug task forces began in the 1980's using the organizational authority from the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act [5 *ILCS* 220/1]. Task force policy boards are not governed by legislated structure or composition requirements or restricted by statute in their scope of operations.

## Drug use in Illinois

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 718,000 Illinois adults used illicit drugs in the past month and 547,000 used marijuana in the past month in 2009. The University of Illinois' 2010 Youth Study on Substance Use interviewed 5,590 Illinois students and found marijuana was used by 25 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders, but less than 6 percent reported using illicit drugs. A majority (78 percent) of arrestees booked into Cook County Jail tested positive for drugs based on the 2010 Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM).

According to SAMHSA, an estimated 757,000 Illinois adults had an illicit drug or alcohol abuse dependence problem in the past year and 927,000 needed, but did not receive, treatment. According to the Illinois Department of Human Services' Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, in 2009, there were 91,891 admissions in Illinois for substance abuse treatment—a rate of 712 per 100,000 people. There were 60,501 admissions for treatment for illicit drugs—a rate of 469 per 100,000 people. According to the data, admissions are at the lowest rate in ten years due in part to funding cuts for state-funded substance abuse treatment. According to SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network, in 2009 there were 790 drug-related

deaths reported in nine northern Illinois counties, a rate of nine deaths per 100,000.<sup>1</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2007, the rate of unintentional drug overdoses was nine per 100,000 persons or 1,094 overdoses.

## **Combating Illinois drug crime**

The transportation and sale of drugs is a significant problem in Illinois. Illinois is classified as a “High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area” by the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (2010). The city of Chicago is a major transshipment and distribution center for drugs in the Midwest due in part to its central location in the U.S. In addition, there are extensive transportation options to and from the city—trains, highways, airports (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2001). From Chicago, smaller quantities are distributed to neighboring states (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2001).

Drug task forces combat drug markets and the supply of drugs through supply reduction techniques (Olson, 2004). Supply reduction involves crop eradication, interdiction, reducing drug production and cultivation, seizing large numbers of drugs and assets, conducting systematic investigations, interrupting supply lines, and prosecuting drug organizations, suppliers, and distributors (Moore, 1990). The other technique to fight drug crime is demand reduction which includes drug prevention, deterrence, and treatment. Some law enforcement departments use the demand reduction program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) (Olson, 2004).

## **Drug task force evaluation**

While there is an abundance of anecdotal evidence to prove the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, little empirical knowledge on the success of the task forces exists and they cannot be classified at this time as an evidence-based practice. Researchers debate the most appropriate way to evaluate the effectiveness of drug task forces (Smith et al., 2000). Since it is not possible to differentiate between the impact of drug task forces and other measures, they are difficult to evaluate (Olson, Albertson, Brees, Cobb, Feliciano, Juergens, Ramker, and Bauer, 2002).

A common measure of success of drug task forces is the number of arrests made. However, drug task forces tend to have lower arrest rates than local police departments and target different offenses. Drug task forces attempt to remove fewer higher-level distributors rather than a large number of low-level offenders and users (Olson, 2004). Drug task forces tend to focus on violations of Illinois’ Controlled Substances Act (involving cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine) and local police department arrests focus on cannabis-related offenses (Olson et. al., 2002).

Official drug arrest data is an unreliable source to measure success of drug task forces. Drug task force arrests involve multiple police departments and local jurisdictions. Therefore, arrests reported to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) data system may not accurately reflect

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<sup>1</sup> Illinois Counties participating in DAWN include Grundy, DuPage, DeKalb, Cook, Will, McHenry, Lake, Kendall, and Kane.

which agency—drug task force or local police—made the arrest (Olson, 2004). Drug crimes may be over-reported when more than one department reports the same arrest or may be under-reported or never reported (Olson, 2004).

## Drug task force profiles

Periodically, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) profiles Illinois MEGs and task forces to provide a general overview of the drug crime problems in the various jurisdictions and share responses to these problems. These profiles can provide information to MEG and task force directors and policy board members to guide decision-making and the allocation of resources. All current and previous profiles can be accessed on the ICJIA’s website: <http://www.icjia.state.il.us>.

This profile focuses on the Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group (MCNEG), which covers Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties with an estimated total population of 432,105 in 2010. In 2010, eight local police agencies participated in MCNEG. A participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to the task force. Ten officers were assigned to MCNEG in 2010, eight of the officers were assigned by participating agencies and two from the Illinois State Police (ISP). These officers are dedicated full-time to the task force and work out of a central task force office.

## ICJIA-funded drug task forces

ICJIA is designated as the State Administering Agency of many federal funds including Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants which fund MEGs and task forces. For more than 20 years the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) has been awarding federal funding to local law enforcement agencies to support drug task forces. Federal grants awarded to drug task forces pay for personnel, equipment, commodities, travel, vehicle maintenance, and communications. In 2011, the ICJIA funded 19 of 22 multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois (*Map 1*). The three other drug task forces receive the majority of their funding through the Illinois State Police.

*Table 1* indicates the amount of federal funds allocated by the ICJIA to MCNEG from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 to 2011. During the past five FFYs, the award amount has remained stable at \$71,179.

**Table 1**  
**MCNEG grant totals**

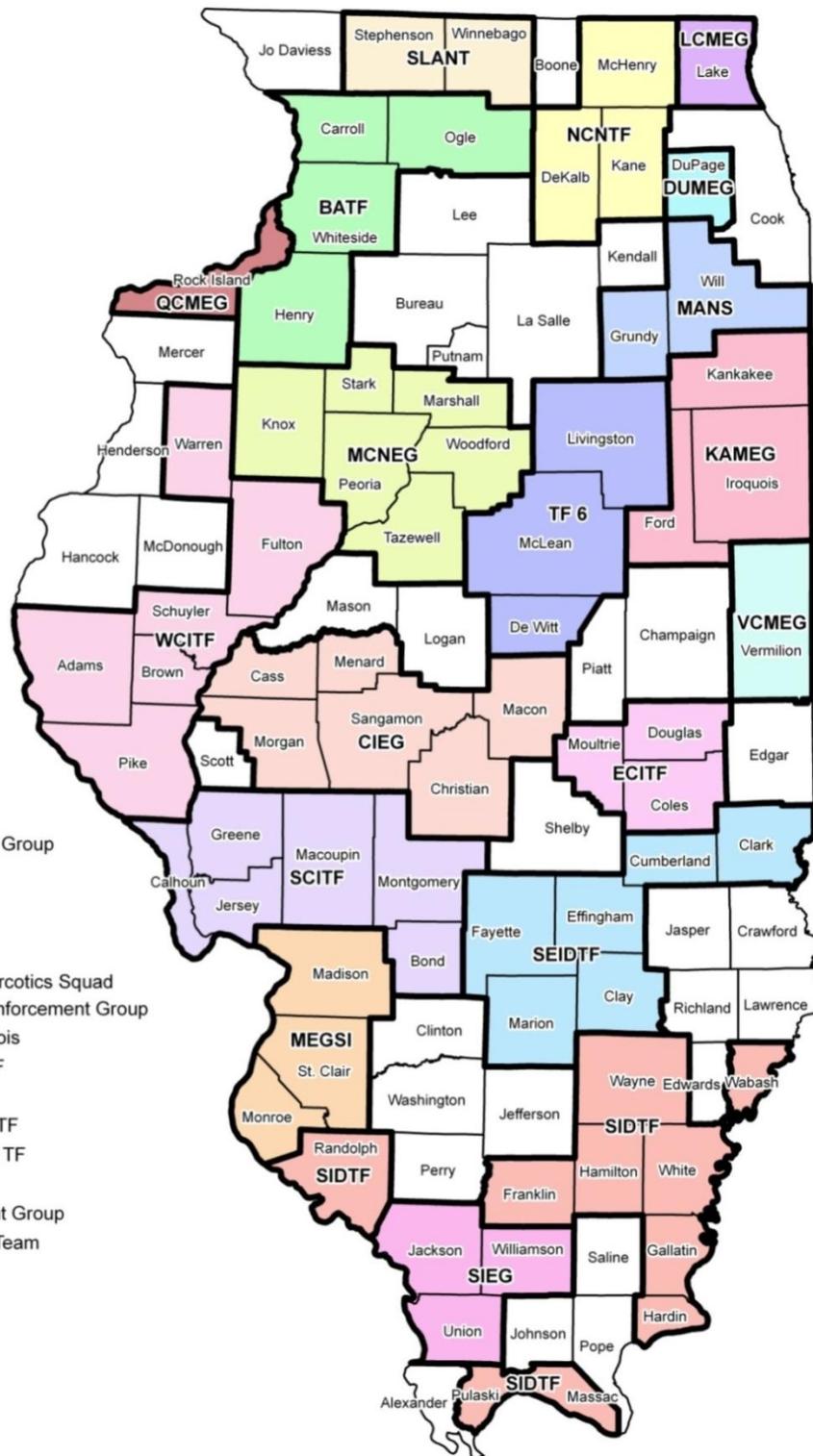
<b>Federal fiscal year</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>
2007	\$71,179
2008	\$71,179
2009	\$71,179
2010	\$71,179
2011	\$71,179

# Map 1

## Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority-funded MEGs and drug task forces, 2011

### ICJIA-funded MEGS & TFs

- BATF - Blackhawk Area TF
- CIEG - Central Illinois Enforcement Group
- DUMEG - DuPage MEG
- ECITF - East Central Illinois TF
- KAMEG - Kankakee MEG
- LCMEG - Lake County MEG
- MANS - Joliet Metropolitan Area Narcotics Squad
- MCNEG - Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group
- MEGSI - MEG of Southwestern Illinois
- NCNTF - North Central Narcotics TF
- QCMEG - Quad Cities MEG
- SCITF - South Central Illinois Drug TF
- SEIDTF - Southeastern Illinois Drug TF
- SIDTF - Southern Illinois Drug TF
- SIEG - Southern Illinois Enforcement Group
- SLANT - State Line Area Narcotics Team
- TF 6 - Task Force 6
- VCMEG - Vermillion County MEG
- WCITF - West Central Illinois TF



# Drug arrest trends

## Drug offenses in Illinois

The majority of drug offenses in Illinois are violations of either the *Cannabis Control Act* [720 ILCS 550], which prohibits the possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana, or the *Controlled Substances Act* [720 ILCS 570], which prohibits the possession, sale, distribution or manufacture of all other drugs deemed to have a high potential for abuse, including cocaine, hallucinogens, and opiates. Other Illinois laws to fight drug-related activity include the *Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act* [720 ILCS 635], which prohibits the possession or sale of hypodermic instruments, and the *Drug Paraphernalia Control Act* [720 ILCS 600/3], which prohibits the possession, sale, or delivery of drug paraphernalia.

Violations of the *Illinois Controlled Substances Act* are considered to be the most serious, since they are mostly classified under Illinois law as felonies due to the dangerous nature of the drugs involved. Felony offenses carry prison sentences of one year or more. The majority of cannabis and drug paraphernalia offenses encountered by police, on the other hand, tend to be classified under Illinois law as misdemeanors, which typically carry jail terms of less than a year.

## Drug data sources

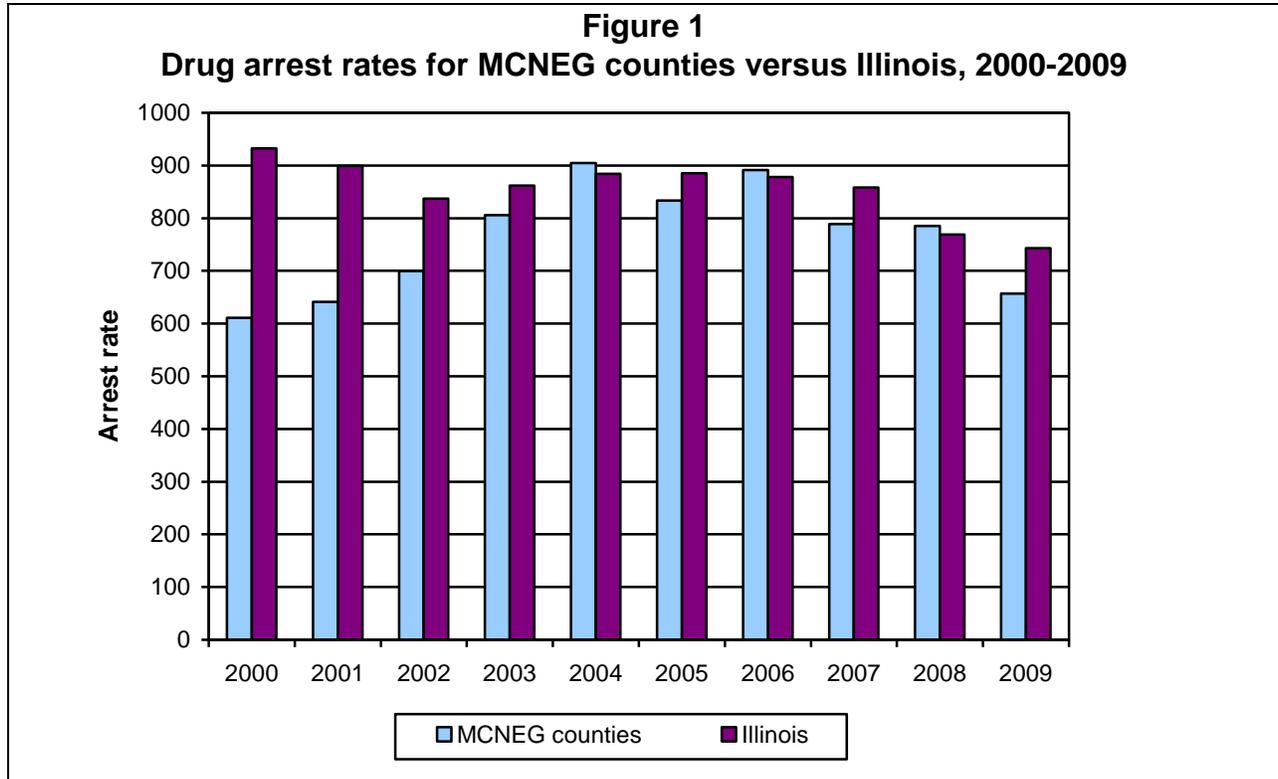
Two sources of drug arrest data are presented in this section: 1) quarterly data reports for the period 2002-2011 submitted by Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group (MCNEG) to the ICJIA as a grant requirement; and 2) drug arrest statistics for 2002-2011 derived from criminal history record information (CHRI) submitted by law enforcement agencies in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties to the Illinois State Police at the time of arrest, including those made by both MCNEG and non-MCNEG officers.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Illinois State Police (ISP), the ICJIA has established an in-house computer linkage to certain elements of the state's Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) System, which is the central repository for offenders' arrest and conviction history. The ICJIA is able to derive statistical information on arrests for specific charges and agencies from these data which are directly comparable to arrests reported by MCNEG. The CHRI data were used to obtain the number of drug arrest for all law enforcement agencies in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties from 2002-2011, from which MCNEG arrests could be subtracted to create non-MEG comparative drug arrest statistics.

Subclasses of drug arrests, for example, felonies versus misdemeanors, cannabis versus controlled substance, delivery versus possession, and detailed offense classes, may not add up to the broader drug arrest totals due to reporting omissions and inconsistencies.

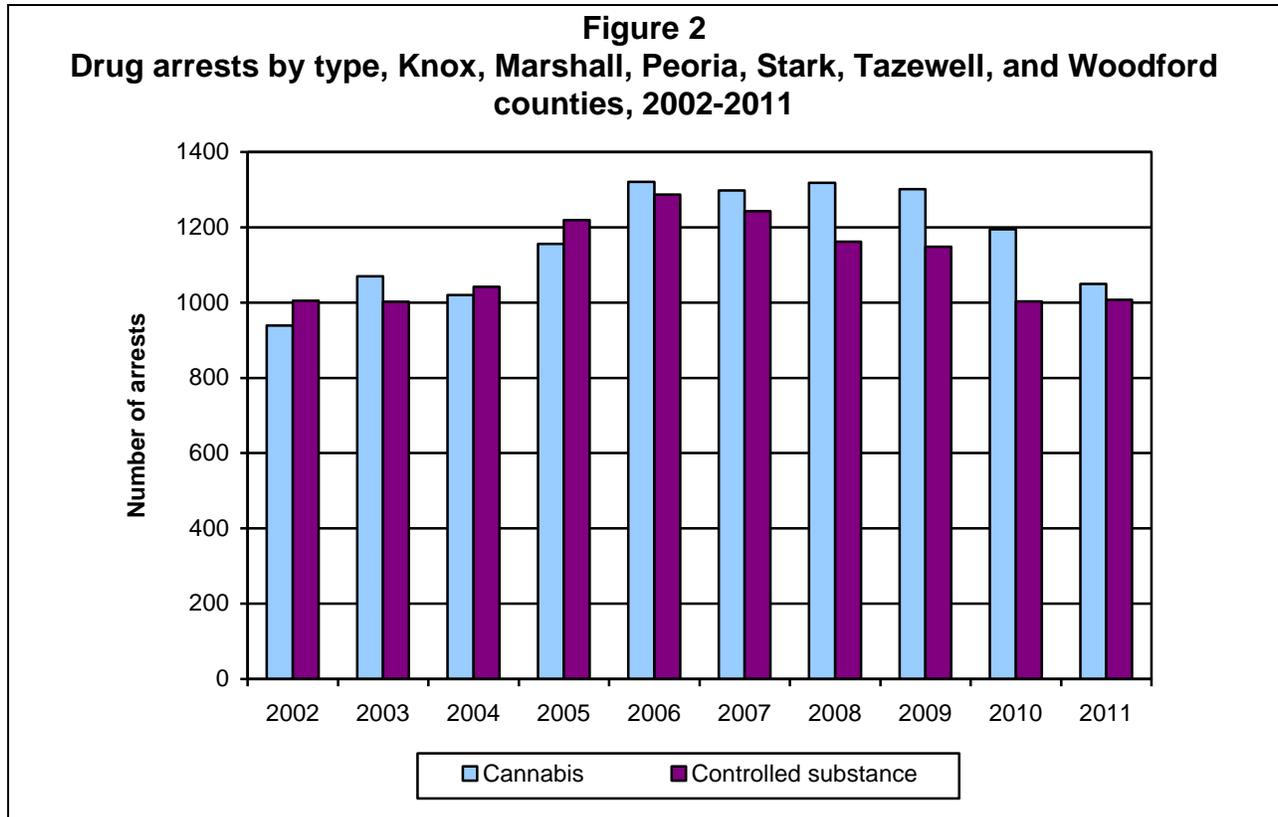
## Drug arrests

From 2000 to 2009, the drug arrest rate for Illinois decreased 20 percent from 932 arrests per 100,000 population to 743 arrests per 100,000. During the same time period, the drug arrest rate for Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties (MCNEG counties) increased eight percent, from 611 arrests per 100,000 population to 657 arrests per 100,000 population (*Figure 1*).



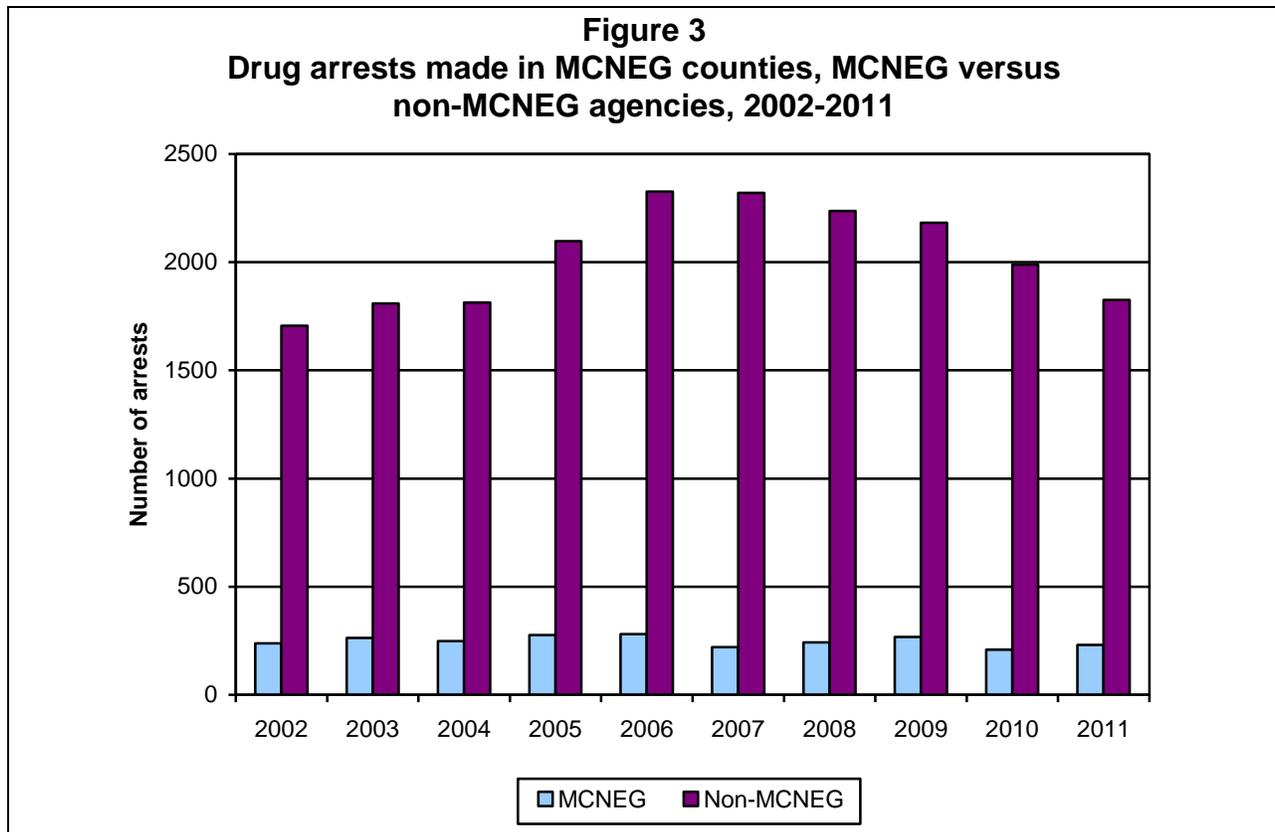
Source: Illinois State Police

From 2002 to 2011, the number of drug arrests for cannabis and controlled substances reported in the CHRI data in MCNEG counties increased. This includes arrests made by all law enforcement officers—both MCNEG and non-MCNEG. Violations of cannabis accounted for more drug arrests in the county than violations of controlled substance. *Figure 2* depicts the drug arrests by type in MCNEG counties from 2002 to 2011. The number of cannabis drug arrests in MCNEG counties increased from 939 in 2002 to 1,050 in 2011, and the number of controlled substance arrests increased slightly from 1,005 in 2002 to 1,007 in 2011.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-MCNEG drug arrests by subtracting drug arrests reported by MCNEG from the total arrests in CHRI for MCNEG counties, as both appear in CHRI through the fingerprinting process at booking. *Figure 3* shows the number of drug arrests made each year by MCNEG officers and non-MCNEG agencies from 2002 to 2011. In MCNEG counties, the number of drug arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies increased from 1,706 in 2002 to 1,826 arrests in 2011. The number of drug arrests made by MCNEG shows a slight decrease from 238 arrests in 2002 to 231 arrests in 2011.

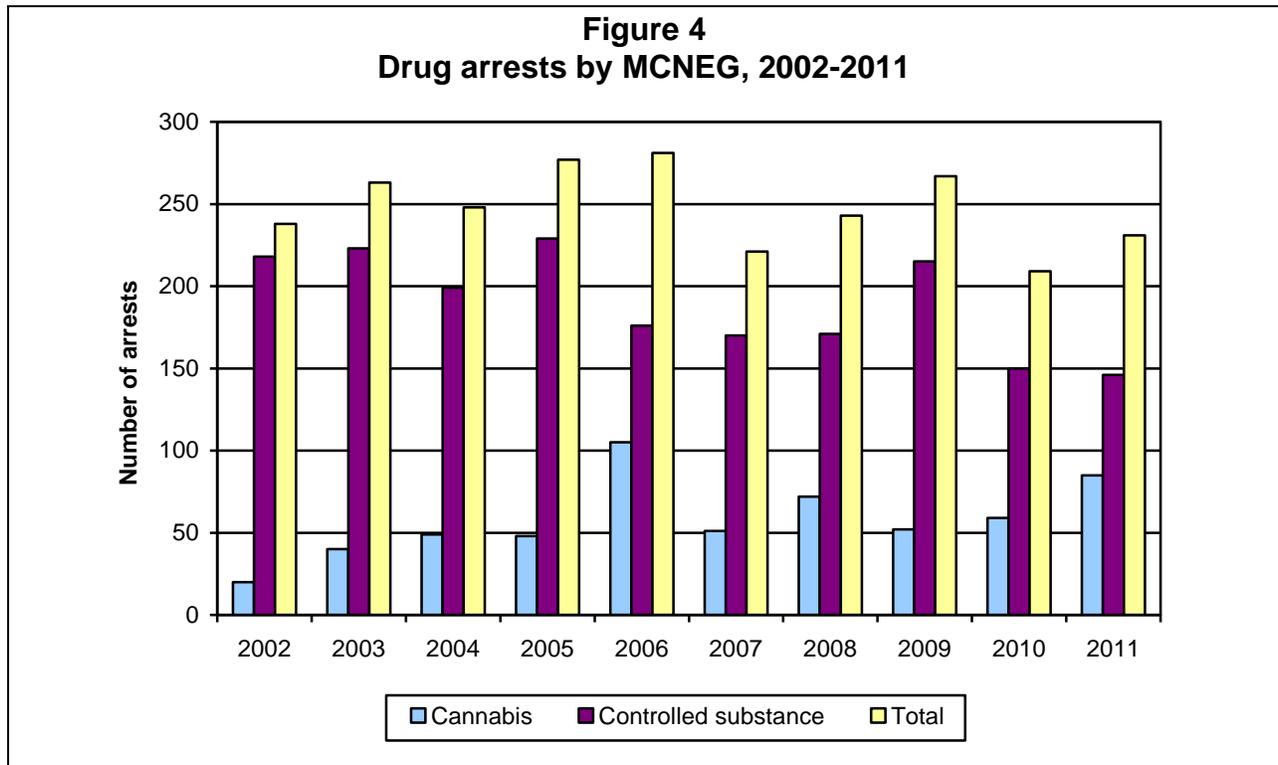


Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; MCNEG data reports submitted to ICJIA

In 2011, there were 1,255 felony drug arrests made in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. MCNEG reported that they made 203 felony drug arrests in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of MCNEG arrests were made within MCNEG counties, then 16 percent, were made by MCNEG. MCNEG also made approximately 3 percent or 28 of the 802, misdemeanor arrests in MCNEG counties. In total, the 10 officers assigned to MCNEG—eight from local agencies and two ISP officers—made 231 drug arrests or approximately 23 drug arrests per officer. In MCNEG counties, the 743 full time sworn officers made approximately 1,826 drug arrests or 2.5 arrests per officer<sup>2</sup>.

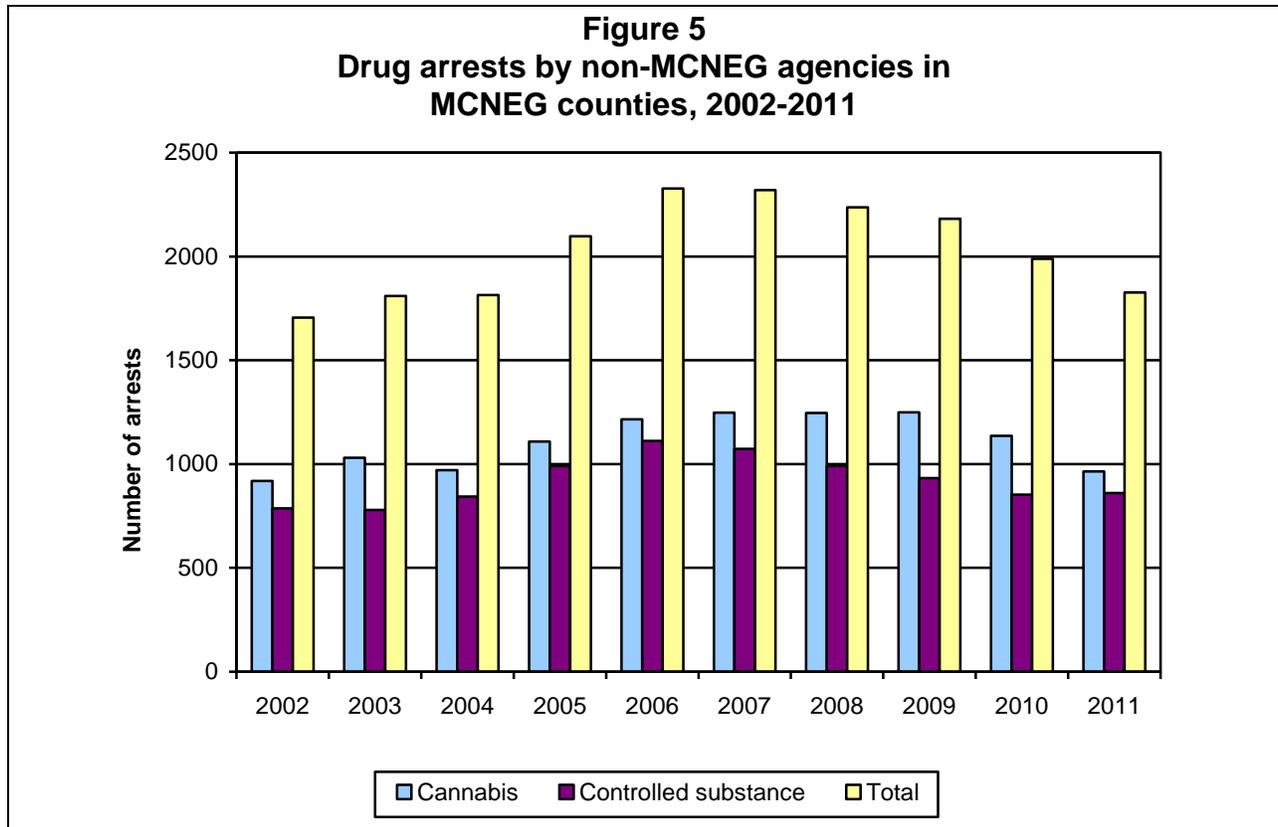
<sup>2</sup> Please note that the main focus of MCNEG officers is drug arrests. Non-task force law enforcement officers within Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford counties handle all criminal cases and arrests within the county and are not focused solely on drug cases.

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by MCNEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased slightly, from 238 to 231. Violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounted for more drug arrests made by MCNEG throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 33 percent, from 218 to 146, while the number of MCNEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* increased from 20 to 85 (*Figure 4*).



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

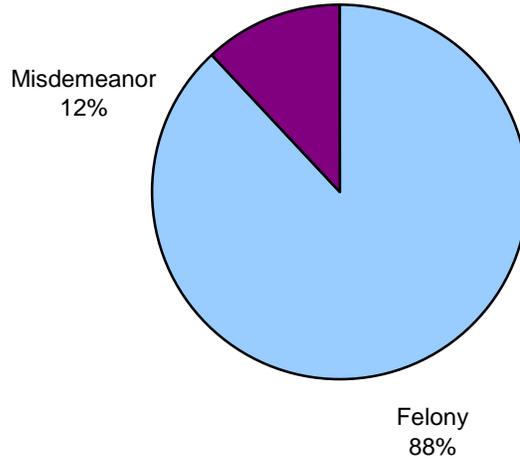
Figure 5 presents the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies in MCNEG counties during the period 2002 to 2011. From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies increased seven percent from 1,706 to 1,826. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* consistently accounted for more drug arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* increased from 919 to 965. The number of non-MCNEG agency arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* also increased, from 787 to 861.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

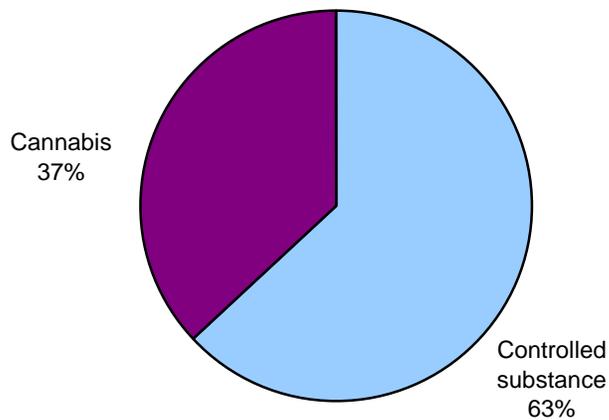
In 2011, 63 percent of the drug arrests made by MCNEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*, compared to 92 percent in 2002. In 2011, 88 percent of drug arrests made by MCNEG were felonies, while 12 percent were misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 6* and *Figure 7*).

**Figure 6**  
**Percent of MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by offense type, 2011**



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

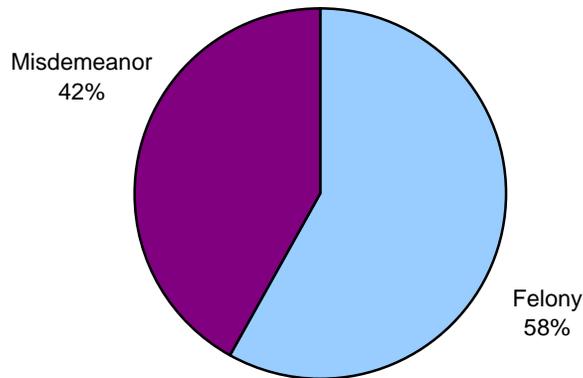
**Figure 7**  
**Percent of MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by violation type, 2011**



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

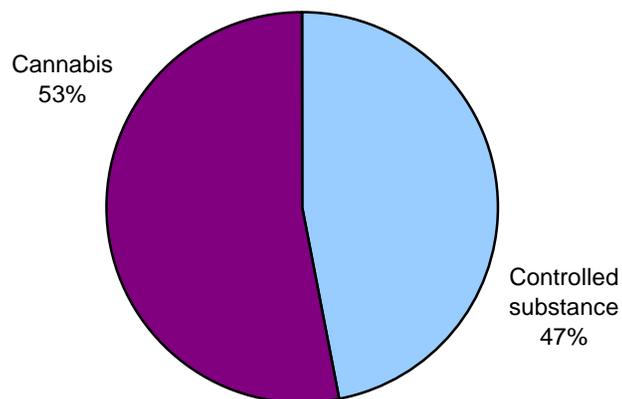
In contrast to MCNEG drug arrests, approximately 58 percent of drug arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies in MCNEG counties in 2011 were felonies and approximately 42 percent were misdemeanor arrests. In 2011, 53 percent of the drug arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 8 and 9).

**Figure 8**  
**Percent of non-MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by offense type, 2011**



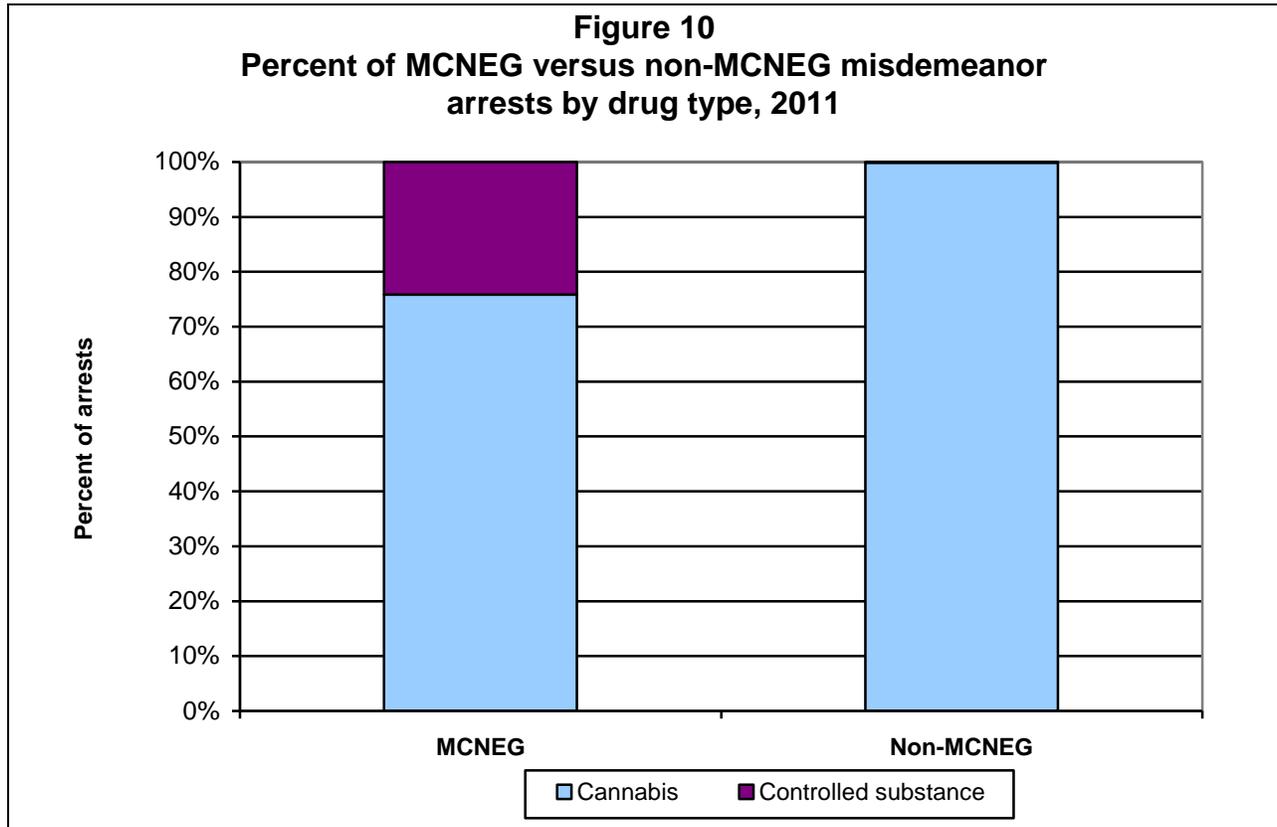
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

**Figure 9**  
**Percent of non-MCNEG arrests in MCNEG counties by violation type, 2011**



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

In 2011, MCNEG made 28 misdemeanor arrests. Of those arrests, 76 percent were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. During the same time period, non-MCNEG agencies made 774 misdemeanor arrests, with 99.9 percent being for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 10).



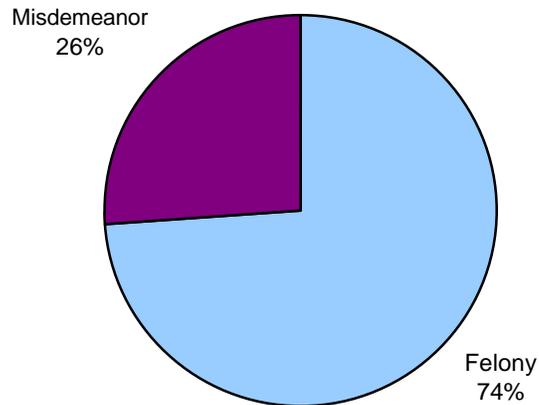
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; MCNEG data reports to ICJIA

### Cannabis arrests by class of offense

As seen in *Figure 2*, cannabis arrests in MCNEG counties (for both MCNEG and non-MCNEG agencies) accounted for a large proportion of all drug arrests made each year from 2002 to 2011. As previously stated, more of the offenses under the *Cannabis Control Act* are classified as misdemeanor offenses. Therefore, it would be expected that a majority of cannabis arrests would be misdemeanors.

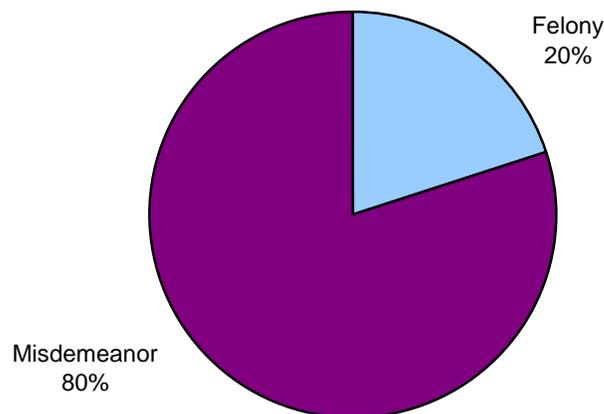
Nearly 80 percent of all cannabis arrests made by MCNEG were felony arrests. In 2011, 74 percent of the cannabis arrests made by MCNEG were felony arrests compared to 20 percent for non-MCNEG agencies. In contrast, non-MCNEG cannabis arrests were primarily for misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 11 and 12*).

**Figure 11**  
**MCNEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011**



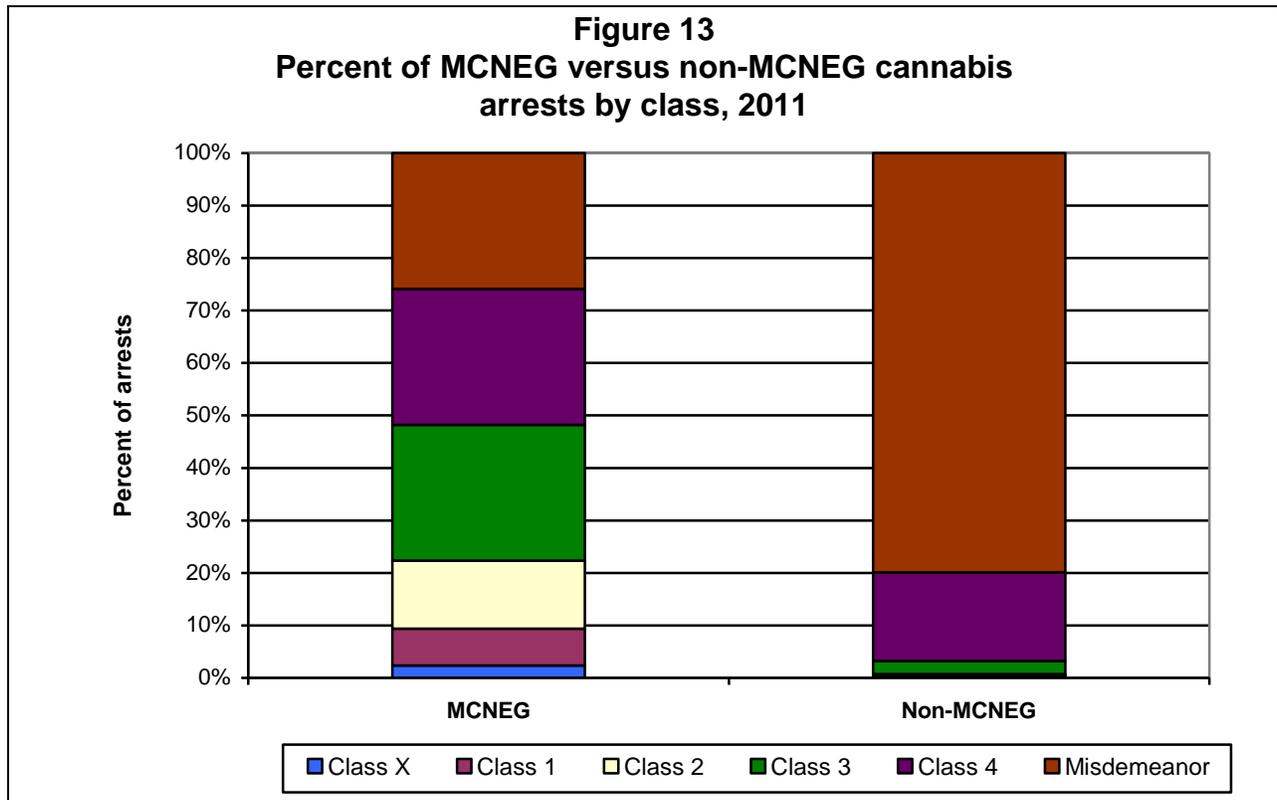
Source: MCNEG data reports to ICJIA

**Figure 12**  
**Non-MCNEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011**



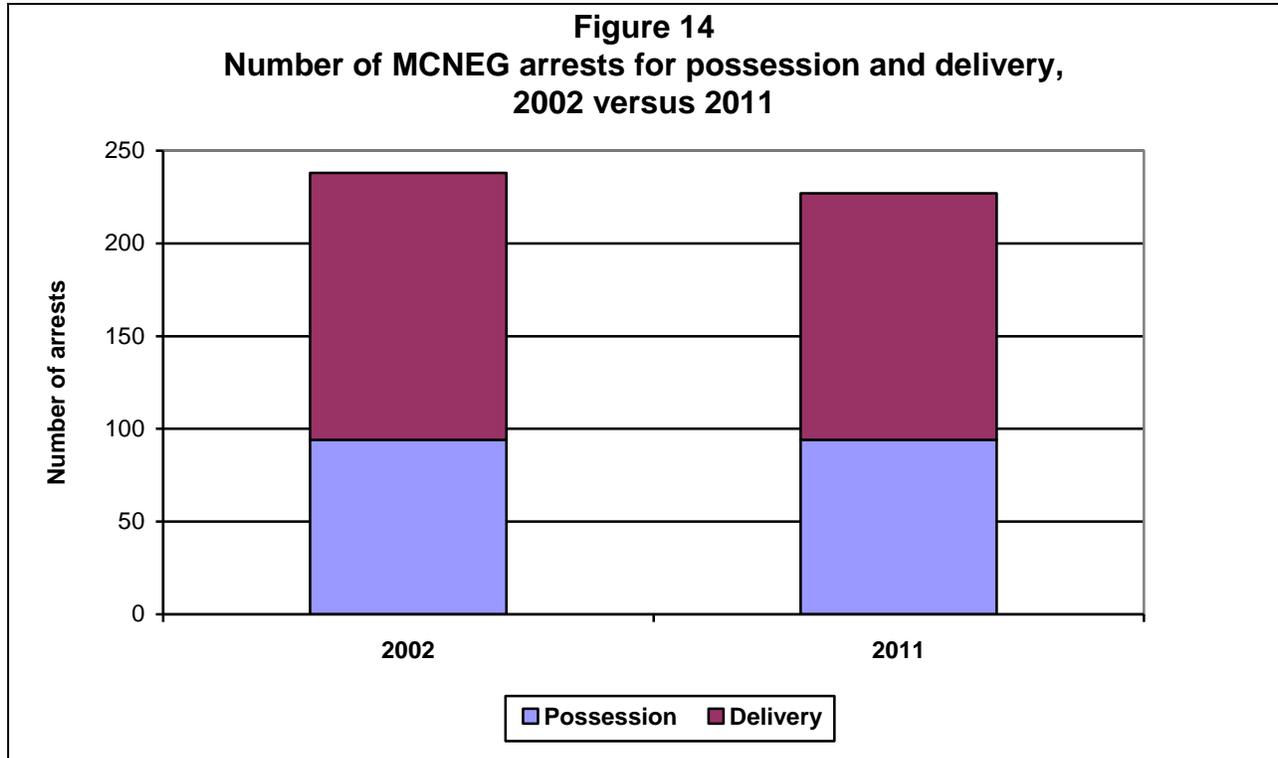
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Figure 13 shows the number of cannabis arrests by class for both MCNEG and non-MCNEG agencies in 2011. Most felony arrests by MCNEG were for Class 3 or 4 felonies. The majority of felony arrests by non-MCNEG agencies were for Class 4 felonies, however, as indicated earlier, felony arrests overall were much less prevalent compared to MCNEG agencies. Approximately 2 percent of MCNEG cannabis arrests were for a Class X felony compared to less than one percent for non-MCNEG agencies.



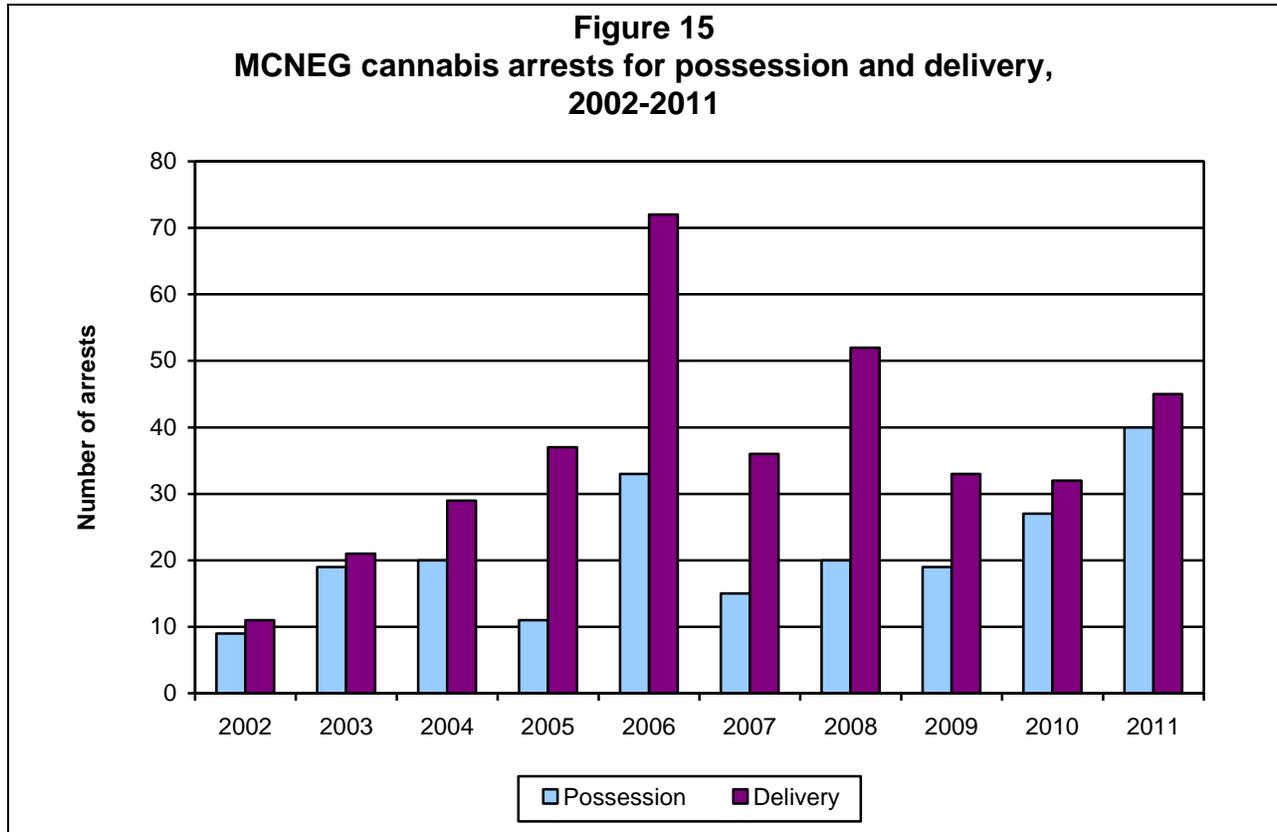
Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA; CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of drug delivery arrests made by MCNEG decreased from 144 to 133 (*Figure 14*). Arrests for drug delivery accounted for 66 percent of all drug arrests made by MCNEG between 2002 and 2011.



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

During the period analyzed, delivery of cannabis accounted for 63 percent of all arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 15). In 2011, 40 arrests were made by MCNEG for possession of cannabis compared to nine arrests in 2002. Forty-five arrests were made for delivery of cannabis in 2011 compared to 11 arrests for delivery of cannabis in 2002.



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

## Cannabis drug seizures

Drugs seized by law enforcement agencies are another indicator of the extent and nature of illegal drug trade in a jurisdiction. This section will look at the quantities of drugs seized by MCNEG and reported to the ICJIA. MCNEG data include total quantities of all drugs seized.

When illegal drugs are seized by law enforcement agencies, all or a portion of the total amount seized is submitted to a crime lab for analysis. Most agencies submit drugs to one of the Illinois State Police (ISP) crime labs. Depending on the location of the arrest and the type of arrest (i.e. local vs. federal), law enforcement agencies also submit drugs to the DuPage County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory, the DEA crime laboratory, private laboratories, or local police departments. Currently the only statewide data available on drug seizures is from the ISP crime lab, which represents the quantities of seized drugs that were submitted to ISP for analysis. It is due to these limitations that only the drug seizures made by MCNEG will be discussed in this section and therefore comparisons cannot be made.

The primary factors influencing the amount of drugs seized are the number of officers assigned to the unit and type of investigations which are undertaken. Although experienced narcotics agents enhance the successful outcome of the unit's investigations, without sufficient manpower the ability to initiate and sustain successful investigations is greatly diminished. The state of the economy has placed many federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies at reduced staffing levels. This in turn has required some agencies to reassign their officer(s) from the unit back to the parent agency thereby depleting available manpower in the unit. A traditional undercover investigation may develop into a conspiracy investigation which is time and labor intensive. A lack of manpower coupled with a time and labor intensive investigation translates into less time available for developing new investigations, conducting proactive enforcement details and undercover drug purchases.

Changes in drug trends also play a role in the type and quantity of seizures. An increase in new forms of designer drugs such as synthetic cannabis and bath salts, as well as quicker production methods of methamphetamine, requires a learning period for the agents. Agents then direct their efforts towards this new emerging community threat at the expense of time spent on traditional drug investigations. Spiked increases in these emerging drugs will skew seizures from previous years. Agents must constantly balance immediate community drug threats with investigations which attack the source of supply to the community. The availability of traditional drugs such as cocaine, crack, cannabis and heroin fluctuate with the supply chain. If an investigation in a community has sent members of a drug distribution network to prison, then a noticeable disruption in that particular drug is observed, even if for a brief period. Finally, seizure numbers may be lopsided if an investigation leads to a source of supply with an unusually large amount of contraband being seized during transportation or storage. (R. Bodemer, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

County-level cannabis, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and heroin seizure rates for Illinois' 102 counties based on ISP crime lab data are provided in the appendices of this report.

## Cannabis seizures

The quantity of cannabis seized by MCNEG fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. In 2003, MCNEG seized nearly 140,000 grams of cannabis and in 2007 MCNEG seized nearly 150,000 grams of cannabis (*Table 2*). Cannabis accounted for an average of 81 percent of the total drug seizures made by MCNEG from 2002 to 2011.

**Table 2**  
**Cannabis seized by MCNEG, 2002-2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount seized in grams</b>
2002	19,545
2003	139,422
2004	103,637
2005	26,190
2006	46,489
2007	148,843
2008	85,856
2009	37,171
2010	59,080
2011	61,368

Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

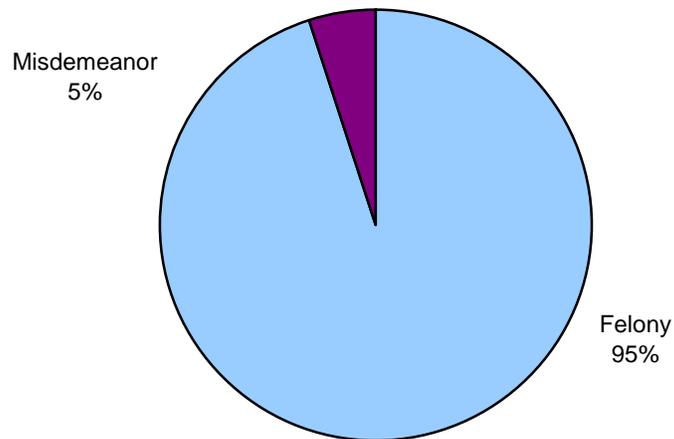
## Controlled substance arrests

In MCNEG counties, based on CHRI data, arrests for violations of Illinois' *Controlled Substances Act* increased slightly between 2002 and 2011, from 1,005 to 1,007 arrests.

MCNEG arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 33 percent from 218 to 146 arrests during that time. In 2011, the 146 arrests for controlled substance violations accounted for 63 percent of all drug arrests reported to the ICJIA by the unit.

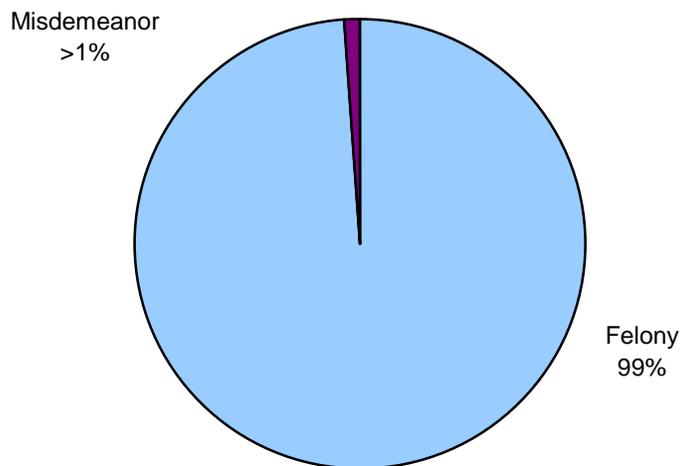
Approximately 95 percent of controlled substance arrests made by MCNEG were felony arrests, compared to 99.9 percent for non-MCNEG controlled substance arrests in 2011 (*Figure 16 and 17*).

**Figure 16**  
**MCNEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011**



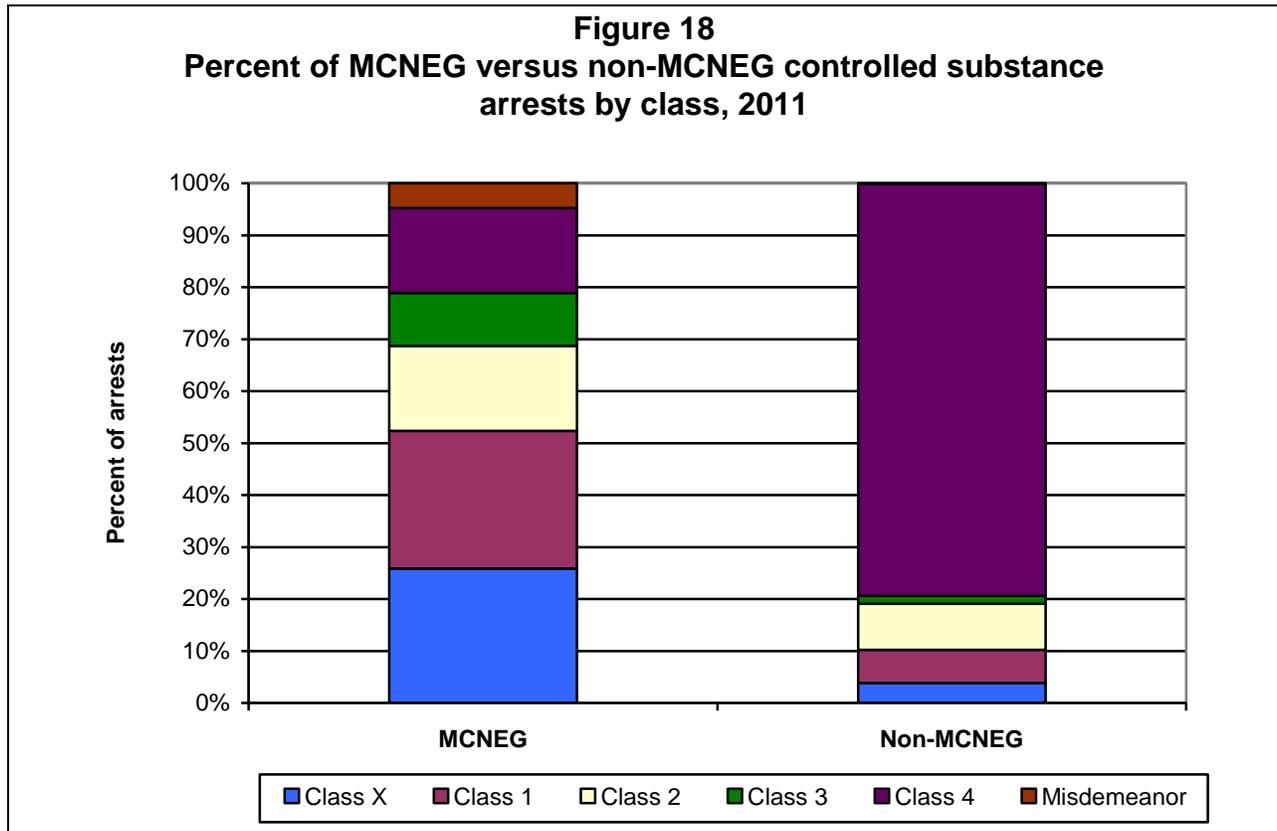
Source: MCNEG data reports to ICJIA

**Figure 17**  
**Non-MCNEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011**



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

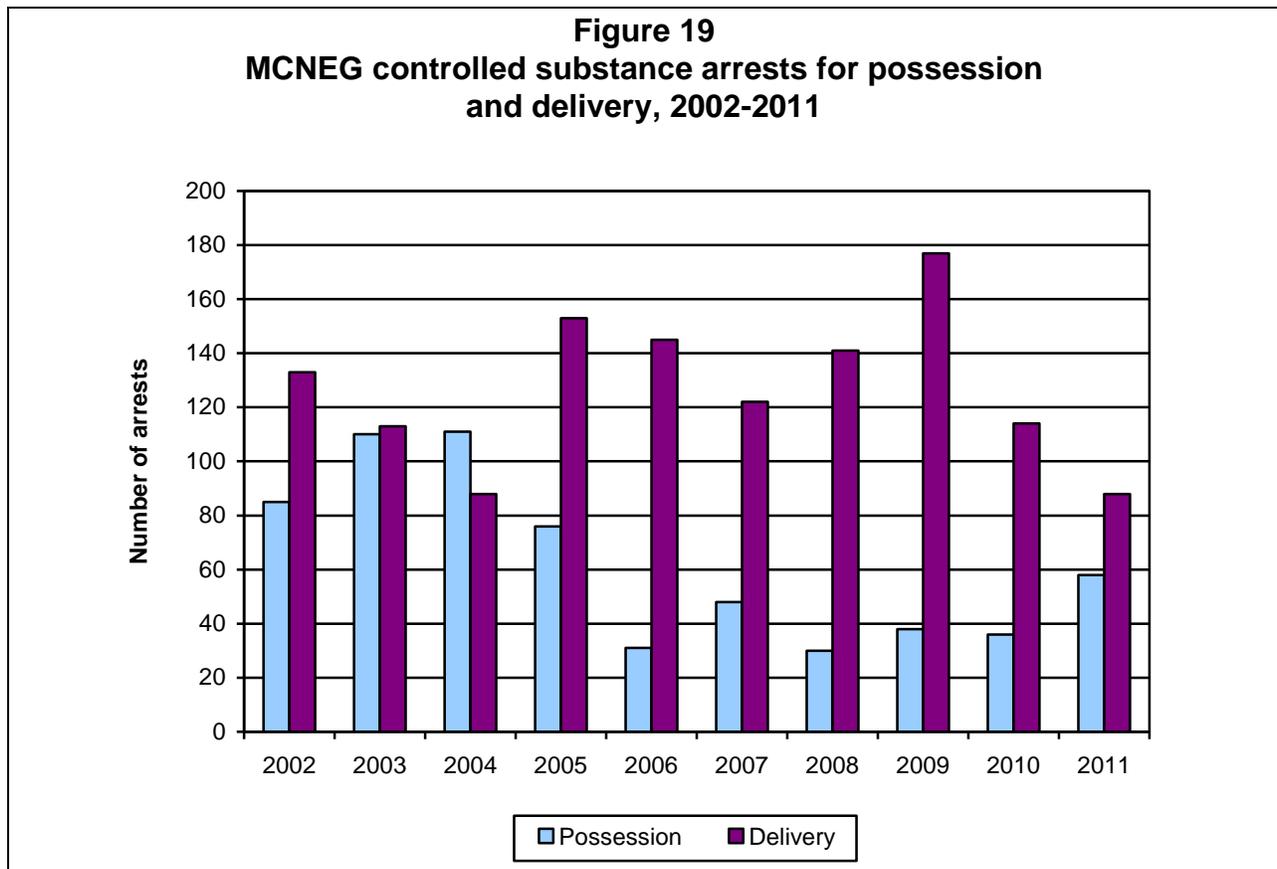
Figure 18 shows the number of controlled substance arrests by class for both MCNEG and non-MCNEG agencies in 2011. Approximately 26 percent of MCNEG controlled substance arrests were for Class X felonies. Also, approximately 27 percent of the controlled substance arrests made by MCNEG were for Class 1 felonies. The highest portion, 79 percent, of controlled substance arrests by non-MCNEG agencies were for Class 4 felonies.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; MCNEG data reports to ICJIA

## MCNEG drug arrests by type

As indicated previously, the majority of all drug arrests reported by MCNEG were for delivery and possession with intent to deliver controlled substances. Between 2002 and 2011, the number of controlled substance drug delivery arrests made by MCNEG decreased from 133 to 88. During the same period, arrests for drug delivery accounted for 66 percent of all drug arrests made by MCNEG between 2002 and 2011. Arrests for delivery of controlled substances accounted for 67 percent of the total number of arrests made for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act* (Figure 19).



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

## Cocaine seizures

Between 2002 and 2011, MCNEG seized 29,950 grams of cocaine (*Table 3*). MCNEG seized over 7,700 grams of cocaine in 2008 and nearly 5,100 grams in 2009. This is in comparison to a low seizure of 755 grams in 2005.

During the period analyzed, powder cocaine, rather than crack cocaine, accounted for the majority of cocaine seized by MCNEG and the region covered by MCNEG (76 percent).

**Table 3**  
**Cocaine\* seized by MCNEG, 2002-2011**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount seized in grams</b>
2002	2,148
2003	1,190
2004	4,283
2005	755
2006	1,381
2007	5,135
2008	7,702
2009	5,061
2010	1,251
2011	1,044

\*Includes both powder and crack cocaine seizures  
Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

## Methamphetamine and heroin seizures

In May 2005, the Illinois State Police created six regionally located methamphetamine response teams (MRT). These units were created specifically to target meth-related crimes with MRT personnel taking the lead on meth cases, including investigation and meth lab deconstruction and decontamination.

MCNEG seized 44,575 grams of methamphetamine between 2002 and 2011, including 1,022 grams in 2011. MCNEG also seized 334 grams of heroin between 2002 and 2011 and 30,709 grams of prescription drugs during the same time period. The amounts all of other controlled substance seizures are small relative to cocaine seizures.

# Trends in prosecutions for drug offenses and all felonies

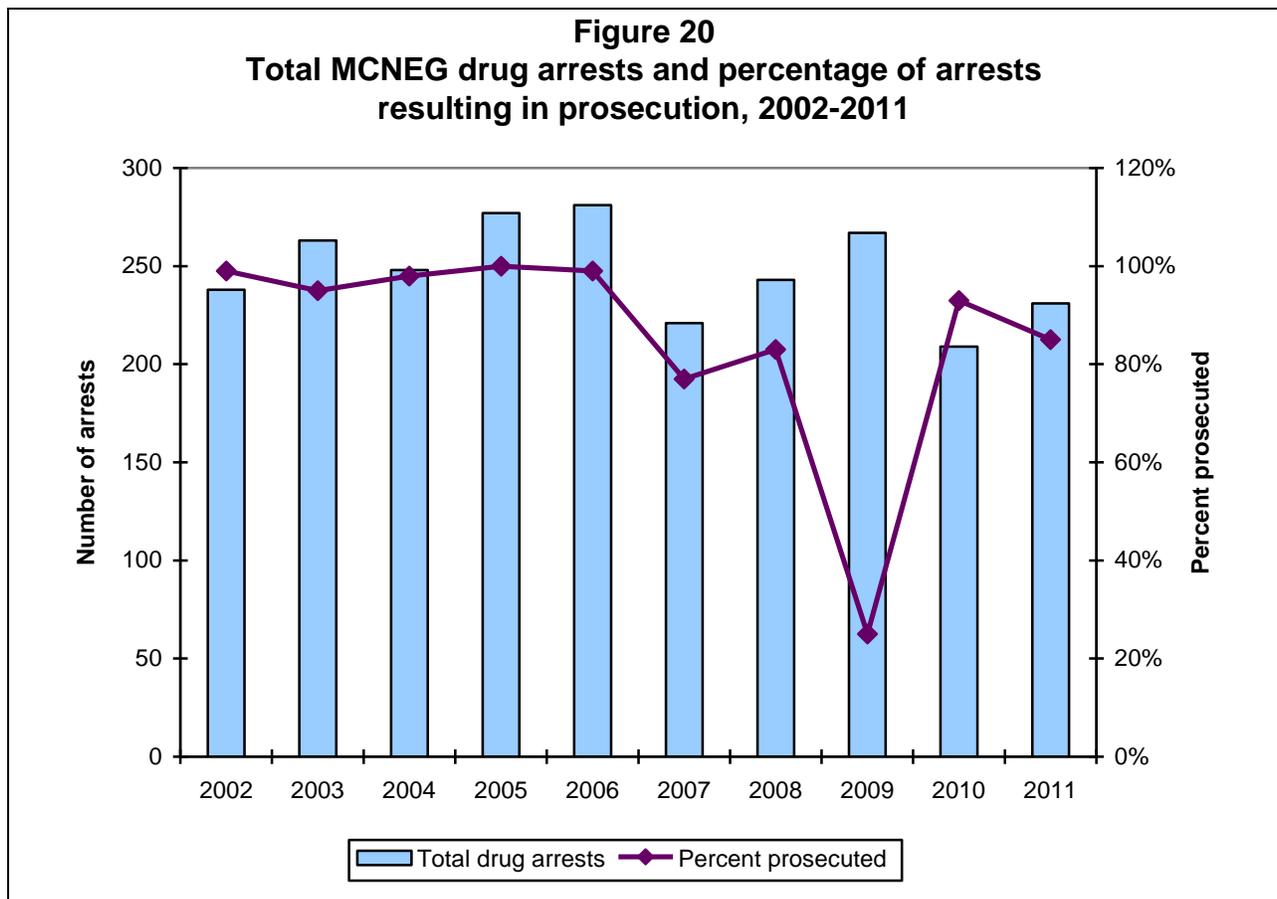
## Drug prosecutions

Between 2002 and 2011, 2,115 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of MCNEG arrests in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. A prosecution occurs after a prosecutor files charges against a defendant in court following an arrest. However, not all arrests result in a prosecution. A prosecutor may not file charges due to insufficient evidence or because the defendant was offered a deferred prosecution diversion. In addition, prosecution decisions may vary according to prosecutor practices in each county, which affects the number of prosecutions and ultimately the number of convictions.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) funds prosecution units in some, but not all, MEG/TF counties. These drug prosecution units work directly with drug task forces to handle their complex cases and high caseloads. These units develop drug cases, prosecute offenders, and conduct forfeitures. In FY10, there were eight drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA working with drug task forces in Illinois. Seven counties had a designated drug prosecution unit—Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, St. Clair, and Will. In addition, the State’s Attorney’s Appellate Prosecutor provided attorneys to assist in prosecuting drug cases in 11 counties: Champaign, Jefferson, Kankakee, Macon, Madison, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell, and Winnebago.

Between 2002 and 2011, MCNEG drug arrests decreased slightly, from 238 in 2002 to 231 in 2011 (Figure 20). During that time period, 85 percent of all drug arrests by MCNEG resulted in prosecution. Seventy-four percent of MCNEG drug offender prosecutions during that time period were for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

In some years, data shows the percentage of prosecutions exceeded 100 percent of arrests. This is due to differences in the timing of an arrest and the filing of charges being reported by the unit.



Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

## Drug convictions

Between 2002 and 2006, 26 percent of the 1,285 drug offenders prosecuted as a result of MCNEG activity were convicted (n=332). No conviction data was received from MCNEG from 2007 to 2011. Convictions for controlled substances accounted for 78 percent of all MCNEG initiated prosecutions from 2002 to 2006. Due to the time lapse between an arrest and subsequent prosecution, the number of prosecutions and convictions during a year does not directly reflect the number of arrests during the same year. Convictions may also be impacted by various drug diversion programs for which certain defendants may be eligible. Illinois also has “710” and “1410” probation, which are two types of first offender probation specifically for drug offenders. Unlike other probation offenses, the convictions may be eligible to be expunged. Data from MCNEG is currently the only readily available information on drug convictions.

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-MCNEG convictions by subtracting drug convictions reported by MCNEG from the total drug convictions in CHRI for Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties, as both appear in CHRI. In 2006, there were 889 drug convictions in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. MCNEG reported that they had 61 task force drug convictions in 2006 (the most recent year available). Assuming that the majority, if not all, of MCNEG arrests were made within MCNEG counties, then seven percent of the Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties drug convictions were from MCNEG. MCNEG convictions accounted for approximately three percent, or 14 of the 438 *Cannabis Control Act* convictions and 10 percent, or 47 of the 451, *Controlled Substance Act* convictions in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties.

# Drug offender sentencing trends

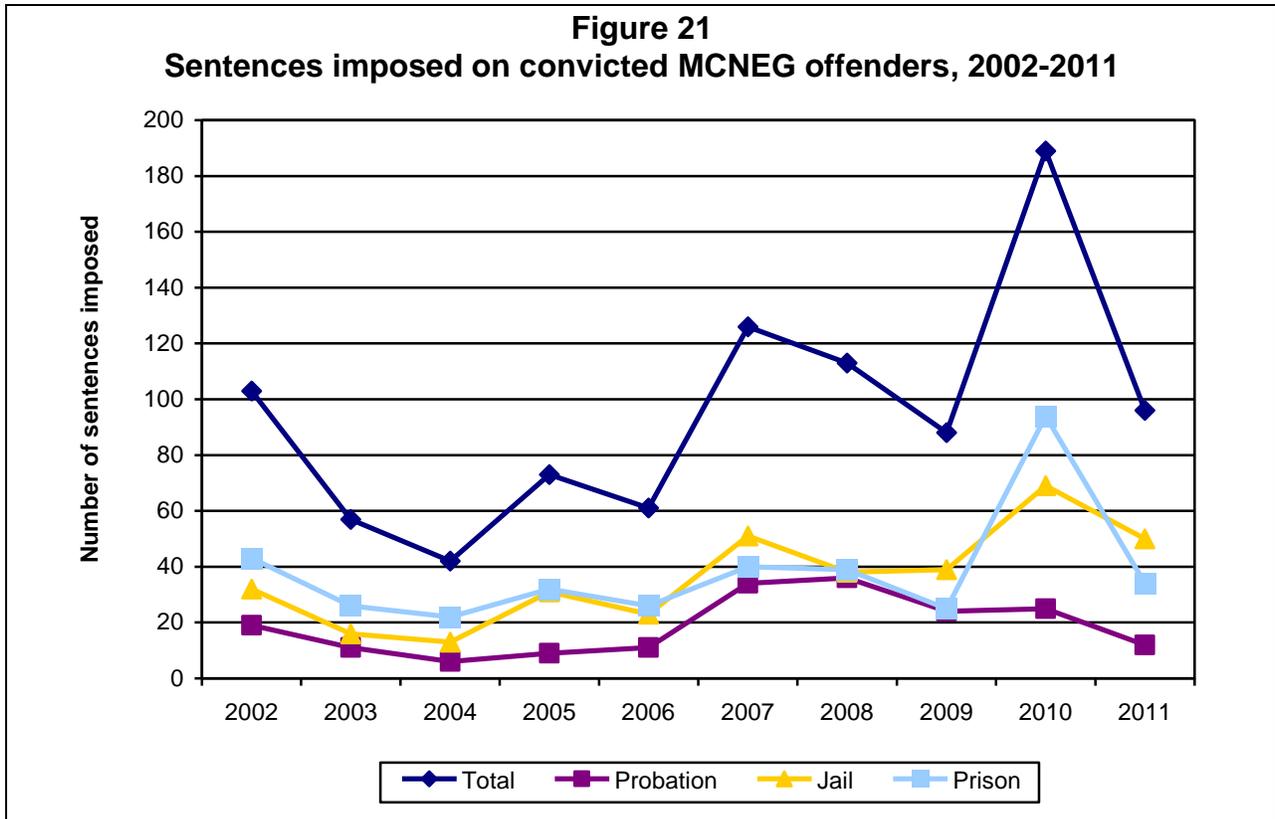
Under Illinois law, those convicted of most Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 felonies can be sentenced to a period of probation, periodic imprisonment, conditional discharge, imprisonment, a fine, restitution to the victim, and/or participation in an impact incarceration program. A fine or restitution cannot be the only disposition for a felony, and must be imposed only in conjunction with another disposition. When sentencing options exist for a judge a number of factors may influence the type and length of sentence imposed. These include the severity of the crime, the offender's criminal and social history, and the safety of the community.

## Drug sentences

According to the data reports provided by MCNEG, between 2002 and 2011, the number of MCNEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced for their offenses decreased, from 103 to 96. In general, MCNEG sentences of all types have increased since 2002.

According to MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA, between 2002 and 2011 the number of convicted MCNEG drug offenders sentenced to prison (including the Federal Bureau of Prisons) decreased from 43 to 34. The number also decreased for probation, from 19 to 12. In addition, the number of convicted MCNEG drug offenders sentenced to county jail (which could include jail in combination with probation) increased from 32 to 50 (*Figure 21*).

In 2011, jail sentences were most common among convicted MCNEG drug offenders (52 percent), followed by prison sentences (35 percent), and probation sentences (13 percent).

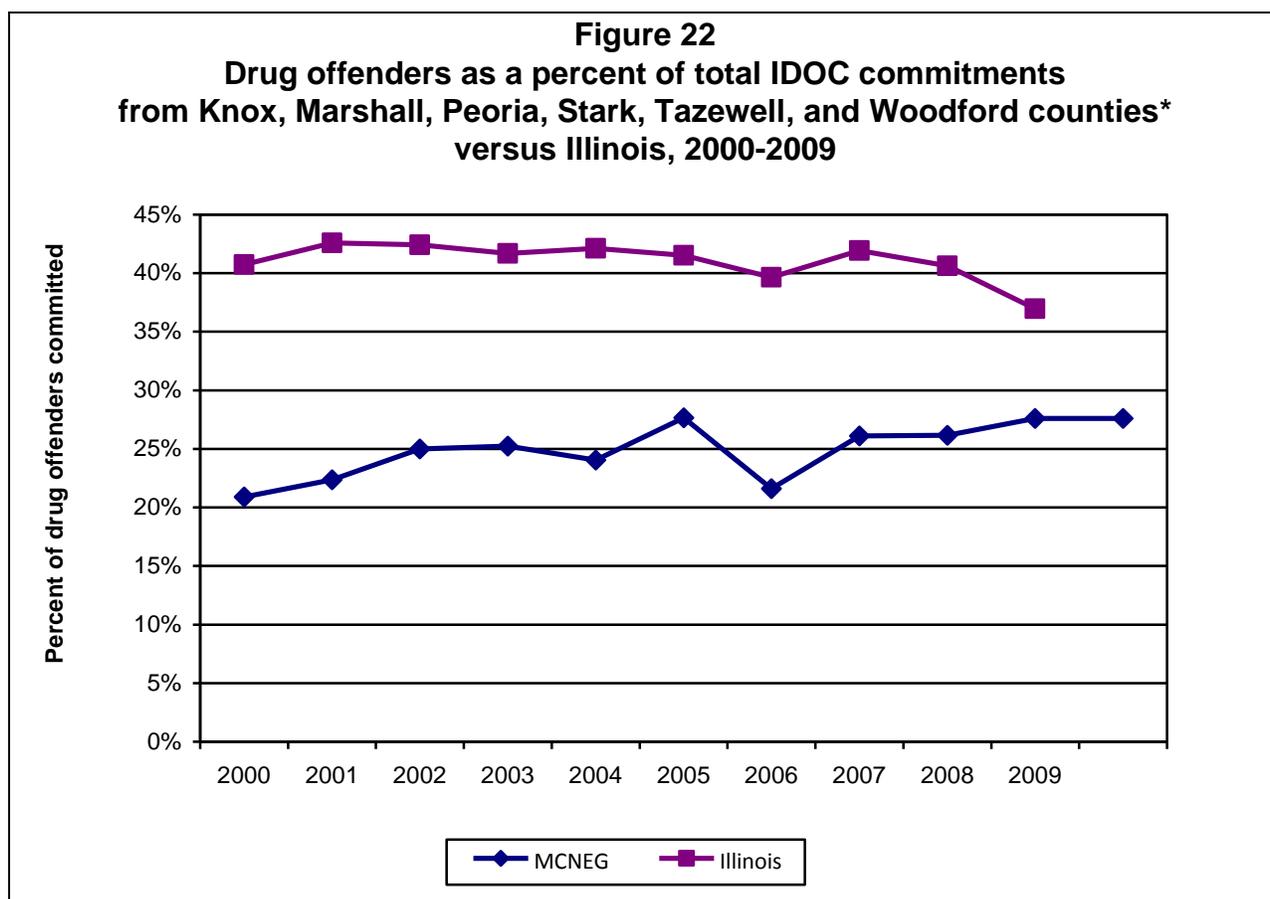


Source: MCNEG data reports to the ICJIA

## Sentences to corrections

According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, between state fiscal years<sup>3</sup> 2000 and 2009, the number of new court commitments to corrections for drug arrests made by Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties local law enforcement agencies and MCNEG combined doubled, from 120 to 293. The number of drug offender commitments resulting from MCNEG arrests more than tripled, from 15 to 94 between 2001 and 2010. IDOC commitments from MCNEG cases accounted for nine percent of all drug-law violators sentenced to prison from the region, down from 12 percent in 2001<sup>4</sup>.

Statewide, the percentage of total new court commitments to IDOC accounted for by drug offenders remained relatively stable. However, drug offenders accounted for a slightly increasing percentage of adults convicted and sentenced to IDOC from MCNEG counties. In 2000, drug offenses accounted for 21 percent of all MCNEG counties-related commitments to IDOC, compared to 28 percent in 2009 (*Figure 22*).



\*Includes MCNEG and Non-MCNEG offenders  
 Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

<sup>3</sup> Some state data are collected by state fiscal year. State fiscal years begin July 1 and end the following June 30. For example, state fiscal year 2000 covers July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> While total prison sentences are obtained from IDOC data, those resulting from MCNEG arrests are obtained from MCNEG data reports.

## **Drug sentences to corrections by offense class**

The offense class for drug sentences to corrections in MCNEG counties (which includes offenders arrested by MCNEG) also was examined. Class 4 felonies accounted for the largest proportion (51 percent) of sentences to IDOC for drug offenses during the period studied, followed by Class 1 felonies (20 percent), Class 2 felonies (16 percent), Class 3 felonies (7 percent) and Class X felonies (6 percent). Jail data is not currently available by offense type.

Between 2000 and 2009, the number of Class 4 felony sentences in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties increased, from 56 to 72, while Class 1 felony sentences increased nearly 60 percent from 32 to 51, Class 2 felony sentences increased from 37 to 46, and Class 3 felony sentences rose slightly from 12 to 17. The number of Class X felonies decreased from 8 to 6 during the same period.

## **Drug sentences to corrections by sentence length**

An offender can be sentenced for a Class 4 felony to a period of incarceration from one to three years in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The incarceration length for a Class 3 felony is two to five years and a Class 2 felony is three to seven years in IDOC. The length of incarceration in IDOC for a Class 1 felony is four to 15 years. A person who pleads guilty to or is found guilty of a Class X felony can be sentenced to a minimum of 6, 9, 12, or 15 years depending on the amount of the drug, and a maximum of 30 years extendable in certain cases to 60 years.

According to IDOC, the average sentence length for Class 4 felony drug offenders has slightly increased, from 1.8 to 1.9 years. The average sentence length for Class X felony drug offenders decreased from 8.9 to 8.8 years. Average sentence length for Class 3 felony drug offenders in Illinois increased, from 2.9 to 3.0 years. Class 2 felony drug offender average sentence lengths increased from 4.0 to 4.2 years and Class 1 drug offender average sentence length increased from 5.1 to 5.5 years.

# Survey of MEGs and task forces

Although the distribution of illegal drugs is difficult to measure precisely, data obtained from criminal justice sources can be helpful in estimating drug availability and prices. The ICJIA periodically conducts a survey of each MEG and task force in Illinois to gauge perceived availability and cost of drugs in their jurisdictions. The most recent survey was conducted in July 2009.

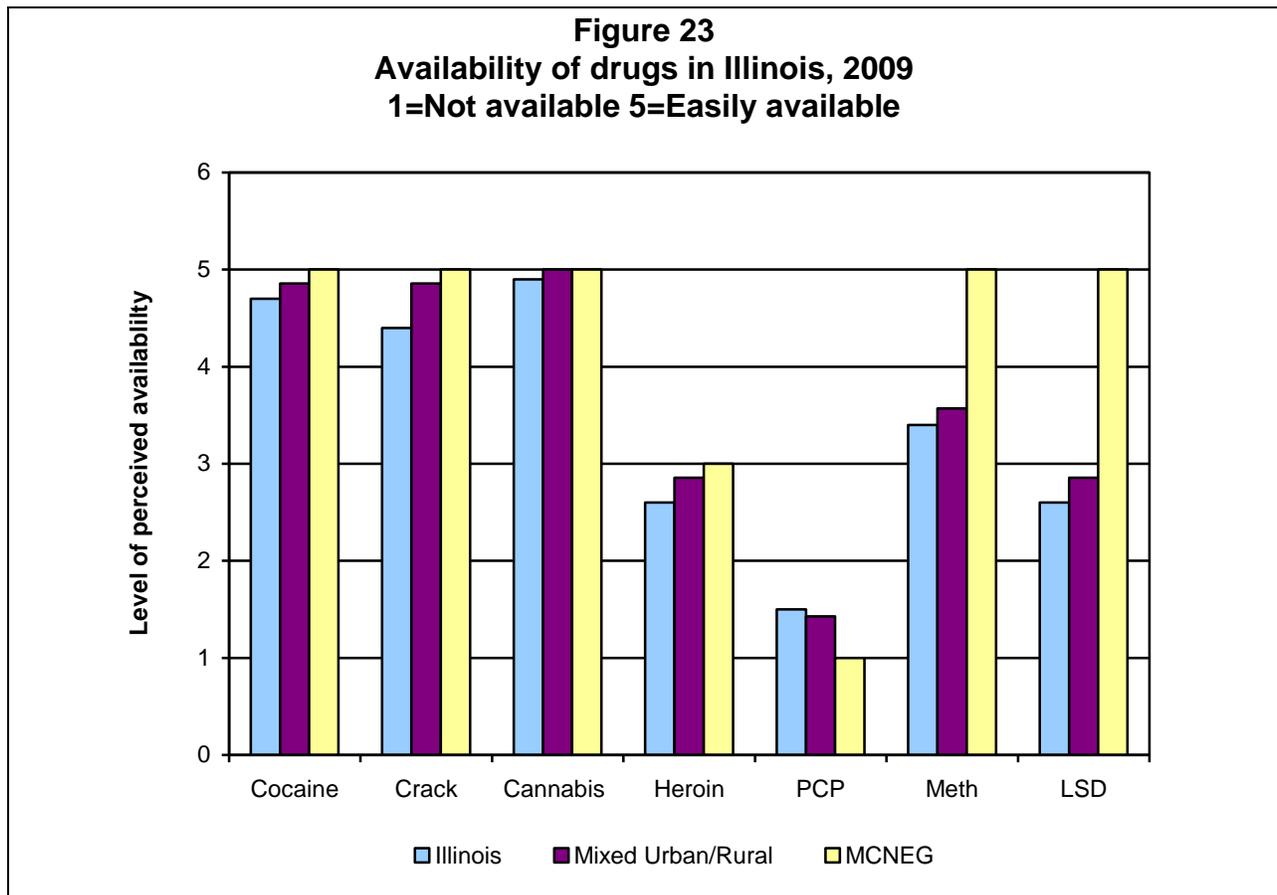
When applicable, responses from the 2000 survey and the most recent 2009 survey were compared. Results were analyzed by region. MEG and task force regions are classified as being either mostly urban, mostly rural, or mixed urban/rural, and were compared to similar units for purposes of this report.

## Availability of drugs

According to survey responses, cannabis, powder cocaine, and crack cocaine continued to be the most visible drugs on the street. These drugs were reported as readily available across nearly all regions analyzed.

The perceived availability of most drugs in 2009 was relatively unchanged from 2000 in the region covered by MCNEG. The reported availability of PCP, methamphetamine, and LSD decreased slightly in the region. In all MEGs and task forces in mixed urban/rural regions similar to MCNEG, the perceived availability of heroin increased slightly while PCP, methamphetamine, and LSD decreased slightly.

Methamphetamine was reported as moderately available across Illinois. MCNEG reported that methamphetamine and LSD were more available in this region than perceived in other MEGs and task forces in mixed urban/rural regions. Heroin appeared to be similarly available in the MCNEG region and other mixed urban/rural regions (*Figure 23*).

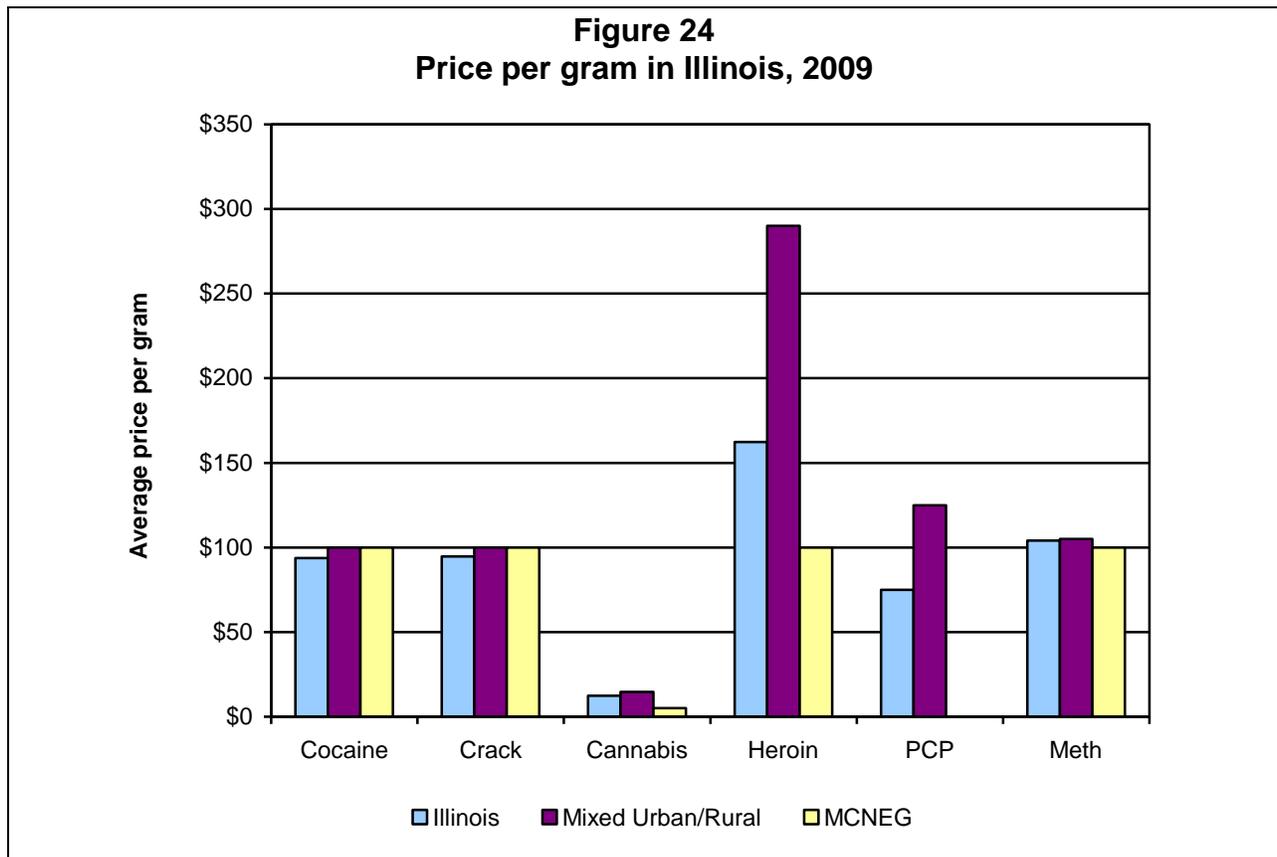


Source: Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

## The price of drugs

Another market indicator is drug price—a change in supply, demand and availability are a few of the forces that determine drug price. In the statewide survey of MEG and task force units, changes in the average price of all the drugs examined between 2000 and 2009 varied across regions. The reported 2009 average prices of cocaine, crack, cannabis, and methamphetamine were relatively similar statewide and in mostly urban regions.

There were changes in the average prices of cannabis and heroin in the region covered by MCNEG. In 2009, MEGs and task forces reported the average price of cannabis was \$12 per gram statewide, \$15 per gram in mixed urban/rural regions, and \$5 per gram in the MCNEG region compared to \$1 per gram in the MCNEG region in 2000. The average price of heroin decreased during the last decade to \$162 per gram statewide, increased from approximately \$225 to \$290 in mixed urban/rural regions and stayed at about \$100 per gram in the region covered by MCNEG. The average price of PCP was not reported for MCNEG (*Figure 24*).



Source: ICJIA Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

# Conclusion

In 2010, MCNEG consisted of 10 officers that were assigned to MCNEG. Eight of the officers were assigned by participating agencies and two from the Illinois State Police (ISP).

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by MCNEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased, from 238 to 231 with violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounting for more drug arrests made by MCNEG throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. In comparison, from 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies increased from 1,706 to 1,826. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* consistently accounted for more drug arrests made by non-MCNEG agencies throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of MCNEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* increased, from 20 to 85, while arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 33 percent, from 218 to 146. In 2011, 63 percent of all drug arrests made by MCNEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*.

The quantity of cannabis seized by MCNEG increased fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. MCNEG also seized 29,950 grams of cocaine between 2002 and 2011.

Between 2002 and 2011, 2,115 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of MCNEG arrests in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. During the period examined, the number of MCNEG drug arrests slightly decreased, and 85 percent of all drug arrests by MCNEG resulted in prosecution. Seventy-four percent of MCNEG drug offender prosecutions during this period were for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Using CHRI data, it was determined that in 2006 (the most recent year available for MCNEG conviction data) there were 889 drug convictions in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties. MCNEG reported that they had 61 task force drug convictions in 2006 (the most recent year available). Assuming that the majority, if not all, of MCNEG arrests were made within MCNEG counties, then seven percent of the MCNEG counties drug convictions were from MCNEG and accounted for approximately three percent of the Cannabis Control Act convictions and 10 percent of the Controlled Substance Act convictions in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties.

According to survey responses, cannabis, powder cocaine, and crack cocaine continued to be the most visible drugs on the street and were reported to be readily available across nearly every region.

MCNEG reported that methamphetamine and LSD were more readily available in Knox, Marshall, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, and Woodford counties than in other regions, whereas PCP appears to be less readily available in the MCNEG counties.

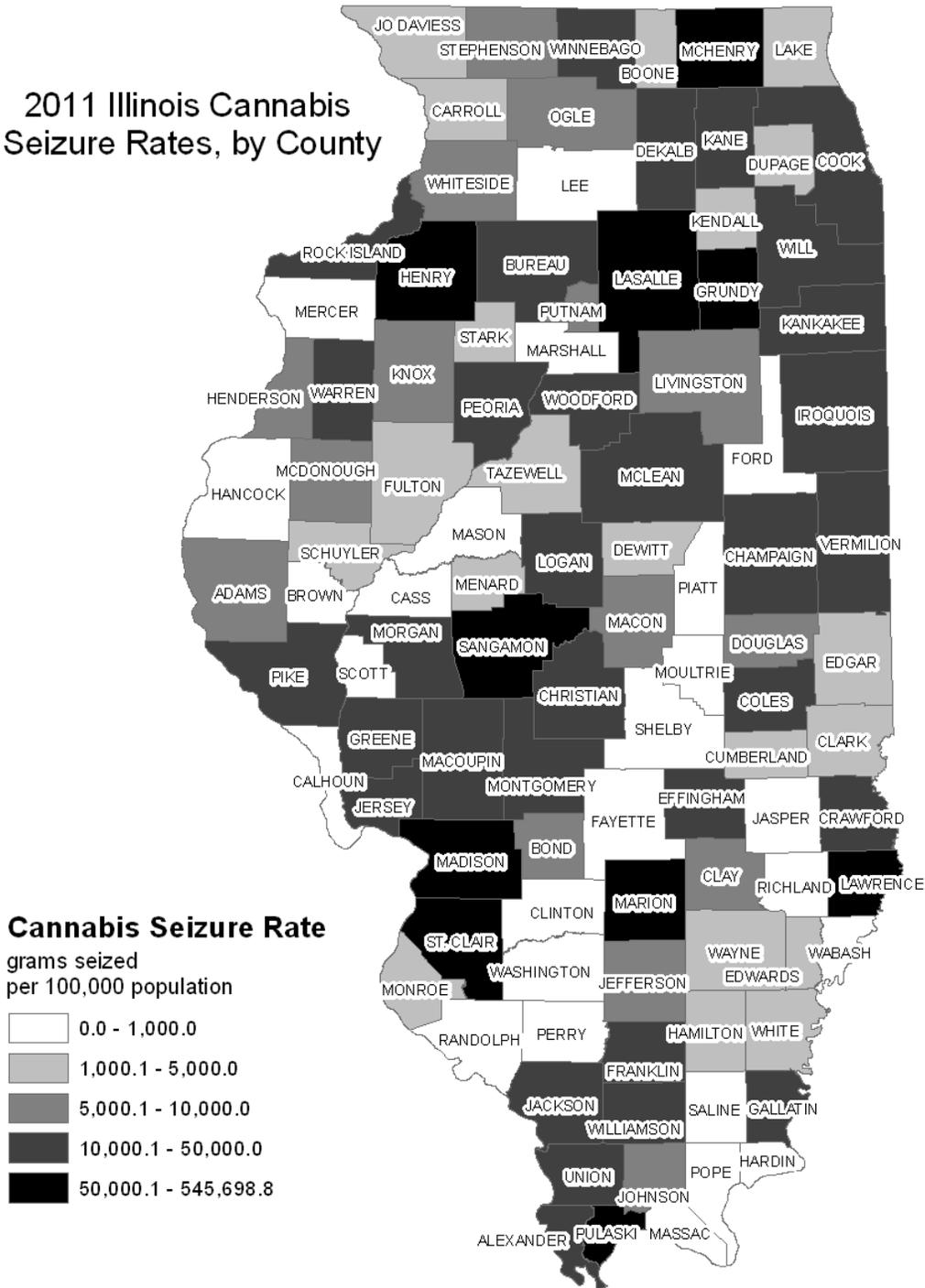
The reported 2009 average prices of cocaine, crack, cannabis, and methamphetamine were relatively consistent statewide and in mostly urban regions. Heroin had a lower average price in the MCNEG region than other regions.

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# Appendix A

2011 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County









# Appendix E

2011 Illinois Meth Seizure Rates, by County

