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Assessing Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Task Forces



A Profile of the North Central Narcotics Task Force

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1989, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has received funds under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to document the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the criminal justice system's response to these offenses. As a result of these efforts, the Authority has amassed a large amount of data measuring the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the impact these crimes have had on the criminal justice system. In addition, as part of its monitoring and evaluation efforts, the Authority also requires funded programs to submit monthly data reports describing their activities and accomplishments. This profile is intended to provide a general overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois' MEGs and task forces, and the response to these problems by the units.

Although the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of drug and violent crime and the response and impact of the criminal justice system. The following represent general conclusions that can be made based on the data analyzed for this report.

- In 2002, 11 local Illinois police agencies participated in NCNTF (a participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to NCNTF). Officers assigned to NCNTF (totaling 22 in 2002, 11 from participating agencies) accounted for 1 percent of the total number of sworn police officers working for agencies participating in NCNTF (page 1).
- The violent Index offense rate was collectively higher across jurisdictions participating in NCNTF than among the combined jurisdictions that did not participate in NCNTF (page 3).
- The drug arrest rate tended to be slightly higher in those jurisdictions participating in NCNTF than in those jurisdictions not participating. Although the drug arrest rate achieved by NCNTF was less than the drug arrest rate achieved by both those participating and those not participating in NCNTF, the unit made approximately one-quarter as many arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act as did all of the participating agencies, combined, with only 1 percent of all the officers working in those agencies participating in NCNTF (page 6).
- When comparing the types of drug offenders arrested by those agencies participating in NCNTF, those agencies not participating, and NCNTF, it was found that NCNTF tended to target and arrest more serious drug law violators, specifically violators of the Controlled Substances Act, which tend to be felony-level offenses (page 8).
- The majority of all drug arrests reported by NCNTF, for either violations of the Cannabis Control Act or the Controlled Substances Act, involve drug sale or delivery (page 13).
- Between 1993 and 2002, the amount of cannabis seized by NCNTF decreased slightly, while the amount of cocaine seized by NCNTF increased dramatically (pages 14 and 15).
- Between 1991 and 2002, nearly all drug arrests by NCNTF resulted in prosecution. Of these NCNTF drug offender prosecutions, 66 percent were for violations of Controlled Substances Act. In addition, between 1991 and 2002, 70 percent of all drug offenders who were prosecuted as a result of NCNTF activity were convicted (page 17).
- In 2002, among those NCNTF drug offenders convicted and sentenced, prison sentences accounted for the largest proportion (61 percent), followed by probation sentences (37 percent) and jail sentences (1 percent) (page 19).

- Between 1991 and 2002, prison sentences resulting from NCNTF cases accounted for 40 percent of all drug-law violators sent to prison from the region where NCNTF operates (page 20).
- Unlike the arrests made by the participating and non-participating agencies, the arrests made by NCNTF tended to involve the substances considered to be most serious (i.e., felony versus misdemeanor) and the substances for which a large proportion of community residents were seeking and receiving substance abuse treatment in 2002 (page 24).

I. Introduction

The North Central Narcotics task force (NCNTF) covers the Illinois counties of DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry. Combined, these counties had a 2002 total population of 812,312 – 39 percent more than in 1990. In 2002, 11 local Illinois police agencies participated in NCNTF. These include the DeKalb County Sheriff's Office and the following municipal police departments: Aurora, Algonquin, Carpentersville, Crystal Lake, DeKalb, Elgin, Lake in the Hills, McHenry, and St. Charles as well as the Northern Illinois University Police Department. These agencies served 52 percent of the population in the three-county region covered by NCNTF in 2002 (see Map 1 on page 30). A participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to NCNTF.

In addition to agencies that participate in NCNTF, these Illinois counties are served by 45 additional police departments that do not participate in NCNTF. According to the Illinois State Police, county sheriffs and local police departments, in the three-county region covered by NCNTF, combined, employed 1,478 full-time police officers as of Oct. 31, 2002, 864 of which worked in agencies participating in NCNTF. In comparison, there were a total of 22 officers assigned to NCNTF in 2002, 11 of which were assigned by participating agencies and 11 from the Illinois State Police (ISP). Thus, the officers assigned to NCNTF during 2002 accounted for a relatively small proportion—1 percent—of the total number of sworn police officers working in the participating police departments.

Since 1989, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has received funds under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 to document the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the criminal justice system's response to these offenses. As a result of these efforts, the Authority has amassed a large amount of data measuring the extent and nature of drug and violent crime in Illinois and the impact these crimes have had on the criminal justice system. In addition, as part of its monitoring and evaluation efforts, the Authority also requires funded programs to submit monthly data reports describing their activities and accomplishments. To put this information into the hands of Metropolitan Enforcement Group (MEG) and drug task force directors and policy board members, the Authority's Research and Analysis Unit has developed profiles – of which this is one – for each MEG and task force. The profile is intended to provide a general overview of the drug and violent crime problem in the jurisdictions covered by Illinois' MEGs and task forces, and the response to these problems by the units.

In addition to administering federal block-grant funds that come to Illinois for crime control initiatives, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is also responsible for providing policymakers, criminal justice professionals and others with information, tools and technology needed to make effective decisions that improve the quality of criminal justice in Illinois. The Authority provides an objective system-wide forum for identifying critical problems in criminal justice, developing coordinated and cost-effective strategies, and implementing and evaluating solutions to those problems. The specific powers and duties of the Authority are delineated in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act (Illinois Compiled Statutes, Ch. 20, Sec. 3930). Two of the Authority's many responsibilities are serving as a clearinghouse of information and research on criminal justice and undertaking research studies to improve the administration of criminal justice.

While the data presented in this report are by no means inclusive of all indicators, they do provide a general overview of drug and violent crime and the response and impact of the criminal justice system. In addition, these data are readily available and consistently defined through existing statewide data collection mechanisms. Some data presented in this profile have been analyzed differently than in previous years; therefore, caution must be taken when comparing numbers presented with previous profiles.

While a considerable amount of the information presented in this profile has been provided to the Authority by NCNTF, a number of state agencies have also provided data to the Authority that are included in this report. Specifically, the Illinois State Police, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, the Illinois Department of Corrections and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services all provided data used to develop this profile. The support and cooperation of these agencies and their staffs have helped make this report an informative and timely source of information on the activities of the criminal justice system in Illinois.

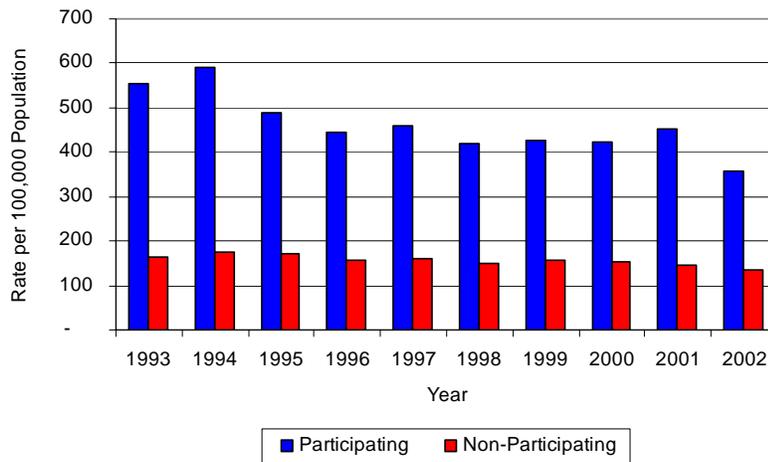
II. Trends in Violent Index Offenses and Arrests

While most of Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and drug task forces are primarily involved in drug enforcement activities, it is clear that the relationship between drugs and violence is particularly evident in a number of Illinois communities. In addition, a number of MEGs and task forces have increased their involvement in the investigation of violent crime, particularly that associated with gang activity and violence related to drug distribution, sale and turf battles. One of the most commonly used indicators of the level of crime in a particular jurisdiction is the number of Index offenses reported to the police. In Illinois, as part of the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) program, every law enforcement agency in the state is required to report crime data monthly to the Illinois State Police (ISP), either directly or through another law enforcement agency, usually the county sheriff's office. There are eight separate offenses that constitute the Crime Index, including murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault (violent Index offenses), burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (property Index offenses). Although these eight offenses do not account for all crimes reported to the police, they are considered to be the most serious, frequent, pervasive and consistently defined by different law enforcement agencies.

In 2002, the total number of violent Index offenses reported to the police in the three-county region covered by NCNTF totaled 2,041, a 12 percent decrease from the 2,307 offenses reported in 1993. The majority (67 percent) of violent Index offenses reported to the police between 1993 and 2002 were aggravated assaults, while 18 percent were robberies.

During the period analyzed, the violent Index offense rate for the region covered by NCNTF decreased 31 percent, from 366 offenses per 100,000 population in 1993 to 251 offenses per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the violent Index offense rate in the participating agencies decreased 35 percent, from 553 to 359 offenses per 100,000 population, while the rate in the non-participating agencies decreased 17 percent, from 163 to 135 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 1). Thus, the violent Index offense rate was collectively higher in the jurisdictions that did participate in NCNTF than in those jurisdictions that did not participate in NCNTF for all the years analyzed.

Figure 1
Violent Index Offense Rates for Participating
and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered
by NCNTF

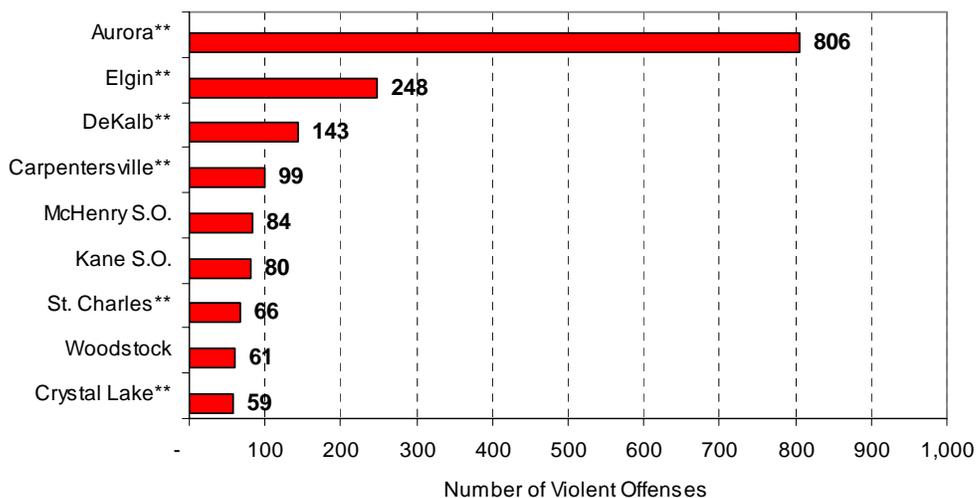


Source: ICJIA calculations using
Illinois State Police and U.S. Census Bureau data

Across the individual local law enforcement agencies covered by NCNTF's jurisdiction, three agencies, the Aurora Police Department, the Elgin Police Department, and the DeKalb Police Department accounted for 58 percent of all violent Index offenses reported to the police in 2002 (Figure 2). Agencies reporting fewer than 50 violent Index offenses in 2002 are excluded from Figure 2. When controlling for differences in the populations served by these law enforcement agencies, the violent Index offense *rate* ranged from zero violent Index offenses per 100,000 population in four agencies to 840 offenses per 100,000 population in Hebron.

Figure 2

2002 Violent Index Offenses* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by NCNTF



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting 50 or more violent offenses
 **Agencies participating in NCNTF

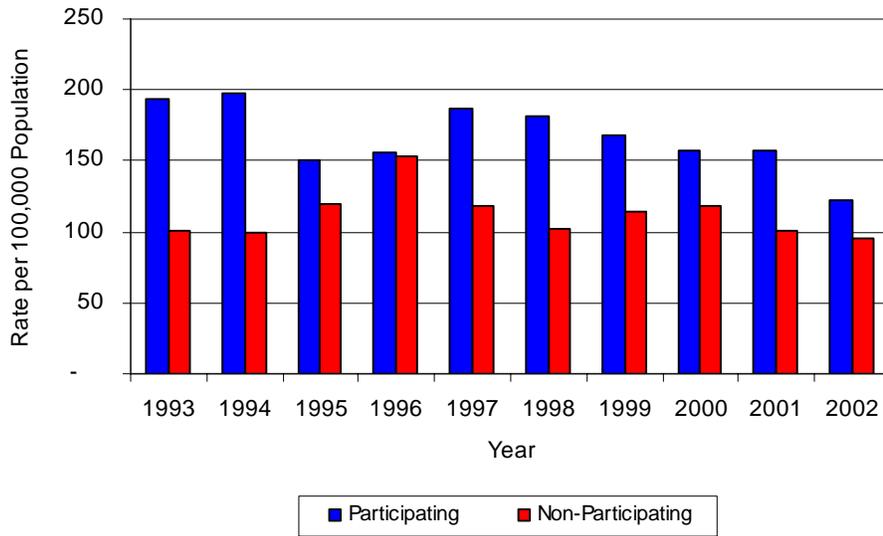
An indicator of the workload that law enforcement agencies place on other components of the justice system is the number of arrests made by police, including those for violent and property Index offenses and drug offenses. Unlike offenses, which are what police must respond to, arrests represent those offenders who may eventually be processed through other components of the justice system, including the courts, county jails, and state and local correctional programs.

Between 1993 and 2002, the number of arrests for violent Index offenses made by law enforcement agencies in the region covered by NCNTF decreased 5 percent, from 940 to 891. As with reported violent Index offenses, the majority (84 percent) of violent Index arrests were for aggravated assaults, followed by robberies (9 percent).

During the period analyzed, the violent Index arrest rate for the region covered by NCNTF decreased 26 percent, from 149 offenses per 100,000 population in 1993 to 110 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the violent Index arrest rate in the participating agencies decreased 37 percent, from 194 to 122 offenses per 100,000 population, while the rate in the non-participating agencies decreased 5 percent, from 101 to 96 offenses per 100,000 population (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Violent Index Arrest Rates for Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by NCNTF

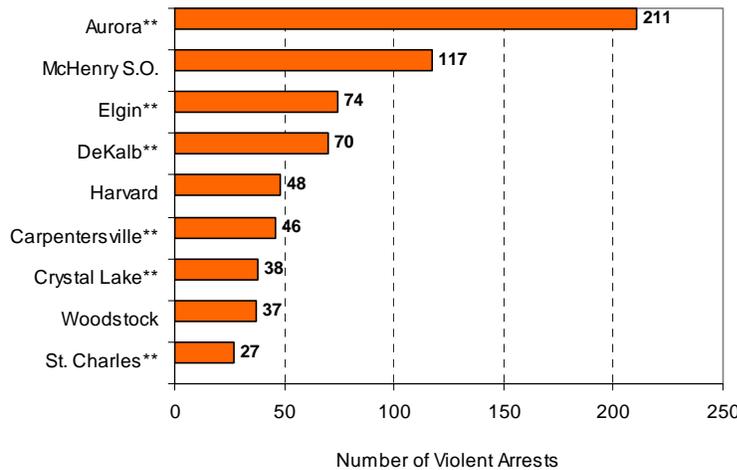


Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and U. S. Census Bureau data

The majority (53 percent) of arrests for violent Index offenses occurring in the three-county region covered by NCNTF were made by four agencies. Agencies reporting fewer than 25 arrests for violent Index offenses in 2002 are excluded from Figure 4. Of the 891 violent Index arrests made in 2002, the Aurora Police Department accounted for the largest proportion (24 percent), followed by the McHenry County Sheriff’s Office (13 percent) and the Elgin and DeKalb police departments (8 percent each) (Figure 4).

Figure 4

2002 Violent Index Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by NCNTF



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting 25 or more violent arrests

**Agencies participating in NCNTF

III. Trends in Drug Arrests

There are two sources of drug arrest data presented in this section. One source is the Illinois Uniform Crime Reporting (I-UCR) program that includes information submitted by local law enforcement agencies on the number of persons arrested for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act, Controlled Substances Act, Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act, and Drug Paraphernalia Control Act. In addition, data on drug arrests made by Illinois' MEGs and task forces are reported to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. In some jurisdictions, arrests made by the MEG or task force may be reported by both local law enforcement agencies through the I-UCR and to the Authority by the unit. In other jurisdictions, arrests made by the MEG or task force are only reported to the Authority by the unit. Therefore, in some instances drug arrests may be double counted – included in both local agency statistics reported to I-UCR and those of the MEG or task force. Currently there is no mechanism in place to ensure that drug arrest statistics are not being duplicated at both the local agency and MEG/task force level. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the information presented in the following section.

The majority of drug offenses in Illinois are violations of either the *Cannabis Control Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana – or the *Controlled Substances Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale, distribution or manufacture of all other illegal drugs, such as cocaine and opiates. Illinois also has various other laws prohibiting other drug-related activity. These include the *Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act* – which prohibits the possession or sale of hypodermic instruments – and the *Drug Paraphernalia Control Act* – which prohibits the possession, sale or delivery of drug paraphernalia. In general, violations of Illinois Controlled Substances Act are considered to be more serious, since they primarily involve cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and hallucinogens, and are almost all classified under Illinois law as felonies – offenses for which a sentence to prison for one year or more is provided. The majority of cannabis and drug paraphernalia offenses encountered by police, on the other hand, tend to be misdemeanor-level offenses – those offenses for which a sentence to a term of incarceration in other than a prison for less than one year may be imposed.

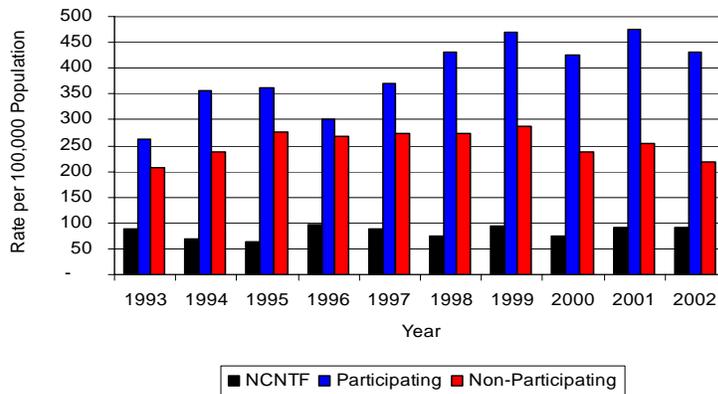
In 2002, local law enforcement agencies in the counties covered by NCNTF reported 3,847 arrests for drug law violations, more than double the 1,527 arrests reported in 1993. Between 1993 and 2002, arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act consistently out-numbered arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act every year analyzed in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties, combined. During the same period, the number of arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act in these three counties, combined, more than doubled, from 799 to 1,746. Arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act in the three counties, combined, increased 35 percent, from 684 to 923. In addition, arrests for violations of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, enacted in 1993, increased from 18 in 1993 to 1,148 in 2002. Much of this increase can be attributed to a 1994 addition to the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act, which included the possession of drug paraphernalia as a violation.

Because arrests for violations of the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act are frequently made in conjunction with other drug offense arrests, these arrests may be double-counted, thus skewing the actual number of drug arrests. Therefore, only arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act will be used for drug arrest comparisons between NCNTF and the participating and non-participating agencies.

During the period analyzed, the drug arrest rate for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act, combined, in the region covered by NCNTF increased 40 percent, from 235 arrests per 100,000 population in 1993 to 329 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. Similarly, the drug arrest rate in the participating agencies increased 65 percent, from 262 to 431 arrests per 100,000 population, while the rate for non-participating agencies increased 5 percent, from 207 to 218 arrests per 100,000 population. The arrest rate for NCNTF increased 4 percent, from 88 to 92 arrests per 100,000 population

(Figure 5). Thus, the drug arrest rate tended to be collectively higher for those agencies participating in NCNTF than in those jurisdictions that did not participate in NCNTF. The drug arrest rate achieved by NCNTF was less than the drug arrest rate achieved by both those agencies participating and those not participating in NCNTF, meaning that the unit made approximately one-quarter as many arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act and Controlled Substances Act as did all of the participating agencies combined, with only 1 percent of all the officers working in those agencies participating in NCNTF.

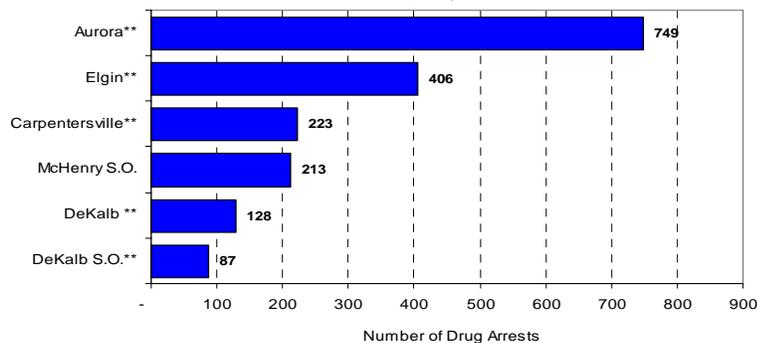
Figure 5
Drug Arrest Rates for NCNTF and Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by NCNTF



Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, NCNTF, and U.S. Census Bureau data

Across the individual local law enforcement agencies in the region covered by NCNTF, the total number of drug arrests, including all types of drug offenses, ranged from zero to 917. Of the 3,847 drug arrests made during 2002 in the three-county region, four agencies accounted for 59 percent of these drug arrests. Agencies reporting fewer than 100 drug arrests in 2002 are excluded from Figure 6. Aurora accounted for 28 percent, while the Elgin Police Department accounted for 15 percent, and the Carpentersville Police Department and McHenry County Sheriff's Office each accounted for 8 percent of all drug arrests in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties (Figure 6). Of the six agencies with the highest number of drug arrests, five participate in NCNTF.

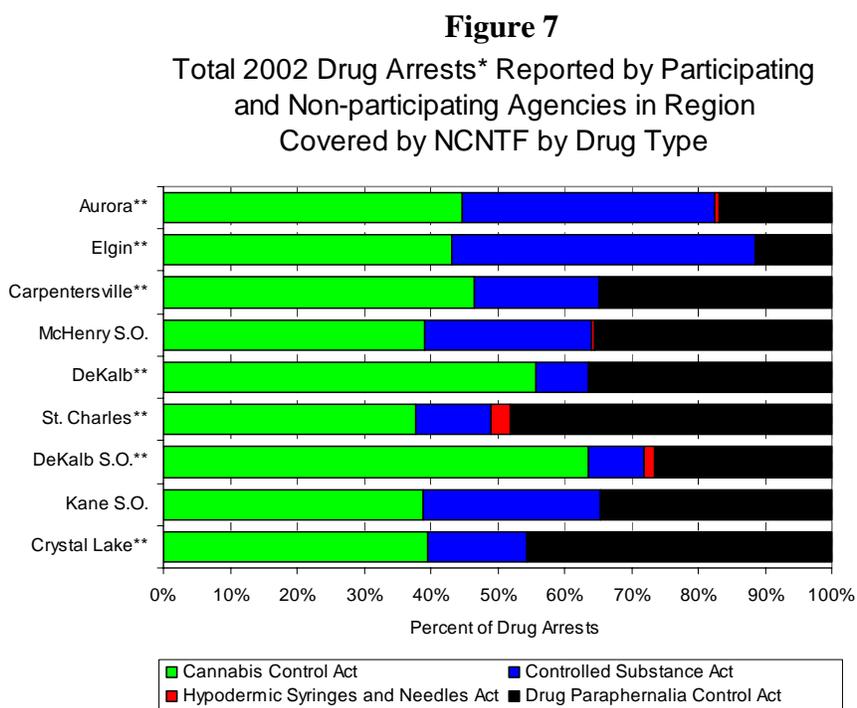
Figure 6
2002 Drug Arrests* Reported by Participating and Non-participating Agencies in Region Covered by NCNTF



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting 100 or more drug arrests
**Agencies participating in NCNTF

In addition to the dramatic difference in the number of drug arrests made, there are also differences in the types of drug law violation arrests across the agencies in the region. In 2002, violations of the Cannabis Control Act and the Drug Paraphernalia Control Act accounted for the majority of arrests across most individual agencies in the region covered by NCNTF (Figure 7).



Source: Illinois State Police

*Agencies reporting 100 or more drug arrests

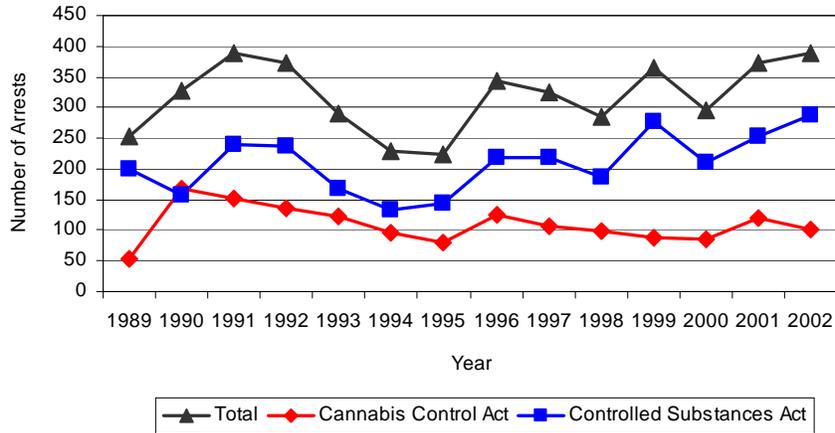
**Agencies participating in NCNTF

Between 1993 and 2002, the number of combined cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by NCNTF increased 34 percent, from 290 to 389 (Figure 8). Unlike drug arrests made by most local police departments in the region, violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for the majority of drug arrests made by NCNTF throughout most of the period analyzed.

During the period analyzed, the number of NCNTF arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act decreased 16 percent, from 122 to 102, while arrests for violations of the Controlled Substances Act increased 71 percent, from 168 to 287 (Figure 8).

Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of drug arrests accounted for violations of the Controlled Substances Act decreased for participating and non-participating agencies. On the other hand, for NCNTF, the proportion of drug arrests accounted for by violations Controlled Substances Act increased between 1993 and 2002. In 2002, 74 percent of the drug arrests made by NCNTF were for violations of the Controlled Substances Act, compared to 58 percent in 1993; whereas, in 2002, arrests for controlled substances violations accounted for 38 percent of the drug arrests made in the participating agencies and 27 percent for the non-participating agencies, compared to 58 percent and 29 percent, respectively, in 1993. Thus, NCNTF drug arrests were more likely than arrests by either participating or non-participating agencies to involved violations of the Illinois' Controlled Substances Act, as opposed to the Cannabis Control Act. One interpretation of this pattern is that NCNTF is more focused in who they are targeting and arresting than local departments, and are also getting a more serious drug law violator, since violations of the Controlled Substances Act are more likely to involve felony-level offense.

Figure 8
Drug Arrests by NCNTF

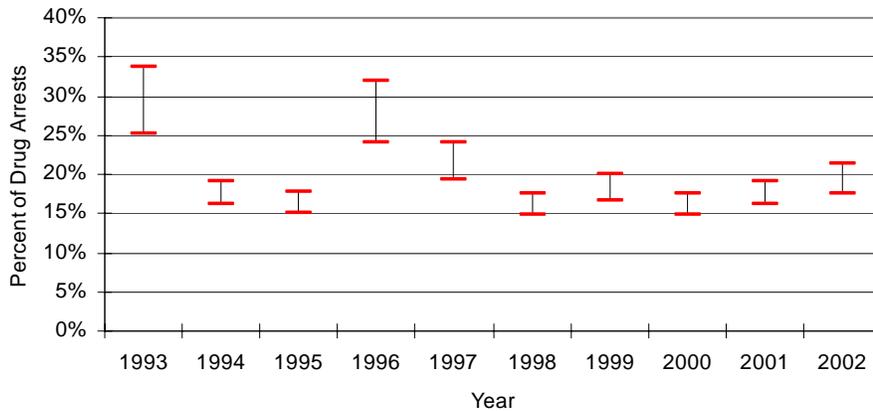


Source: NCNTF

The data presented below represent the percent of total drug arrests made by participating agencies that were accounted for by NCNTF. An upper and lower bound is shown in Figure 9, which accounts for whether or not the units numbers are counted as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions.

It is estimated that the proportion of all drug arrests made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, and accounted for by NCNTF, was between 25 to 35 percent in 1993, but decreased to between 18 to 21 percent in 2002. Thus, despite the fact that the officers assigned to NCNTF accounted for a very small proportion of the total number of officers in participating agencies, they accounted for a relatively large proportion of the drug arrests made in the jurisdiction of the participating agencies in most of the years analyzed.

Figure 9
Percent of Total Drug Arrests
Accounted for by NCNTF



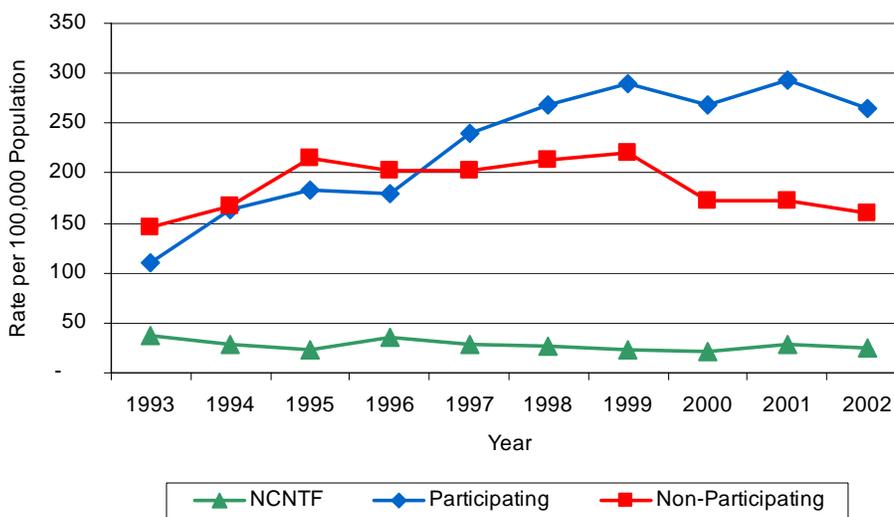
Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and NCNTF

The number of arrests for violations of Illinois' Cannabis Control Act in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties totaled 1,746 in 2002, more than doubled the 799 arrests made for cannabis violations in 1993. Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of all drug arrests accounted for by violations of the Cannabis Control Act in the three-county region increased from 54 percent to 65 percent. Agencies participating in NCNTF accounted for the largest portion (64 percent) of the total number of arrests for cannabis violations. NCNTF reported a total of 102 arrests for cannabis violations in 2002, 26 percent of the unit's drug arrests.

During the period analyzed, the cannabis arrest rate for the region covered by NCNTF increased 70 percent, from 127 arrests per 100,000 population in 1993 to 215 arrests per 100,000 population in 2002. The cannabis arrest rate in the participating agencies more than doubled, from 109 to 265 arrests per 100,000 population, while the arrest rate in the non-participating agencies increased 10 percent from 146 to 160 arrests per 100,000 population. The cannabis arrest rate for NCNTF, on the other hand, decreased 35 percent, from 37 to 24 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 10). Thus, the arrest rate for violations of the Cannabis Control Act was collectively higher in the area served by participating agencies than in the combine jurisdictions of the non-participating agencies.

Figure 10

Cannabis Arrests Rates in the Region Covered by NCNTF as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and NCNTF

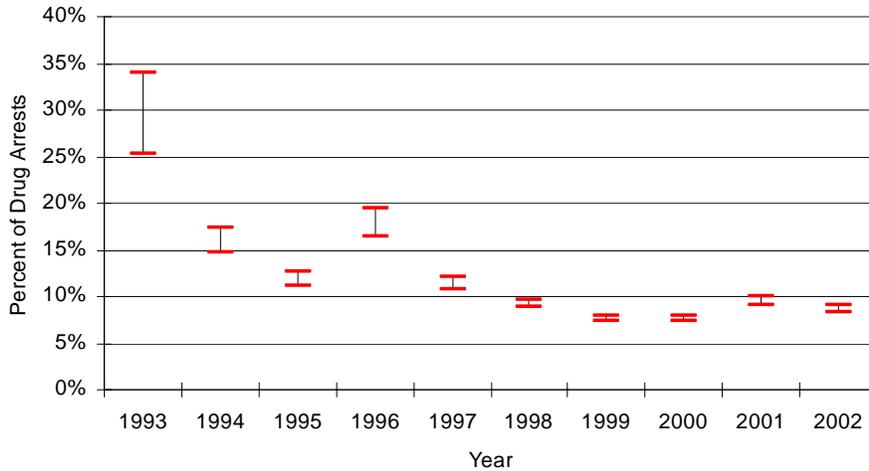


Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, U.S. Census Bureau, and NCNTF data

The data presented below represent the percent of total arrests for the violation of the Cannabis Control Act made by participating agencies that was accounted for by NCNTF. An upper and lower bound is shown in Figure 11, which accounts for whether or not the units numbers are counted as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions.

It is estimated that the proportion of all arrests for the violation of the Cannabis Control Act made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, and accounted for by NCNTF, was between 25 to 34 percent in 1993, but decreased to between 8 to 9 percent in 2002. The data presented in Figure 11 suggest that although arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act made by NCNTF in 1993 represented a large proportion of such arrests made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, this proportion dropped and has remained relatively stable in subsequent years.

Figure 11
Percent of Cannabis Arrests
Accounted for by NCNTF



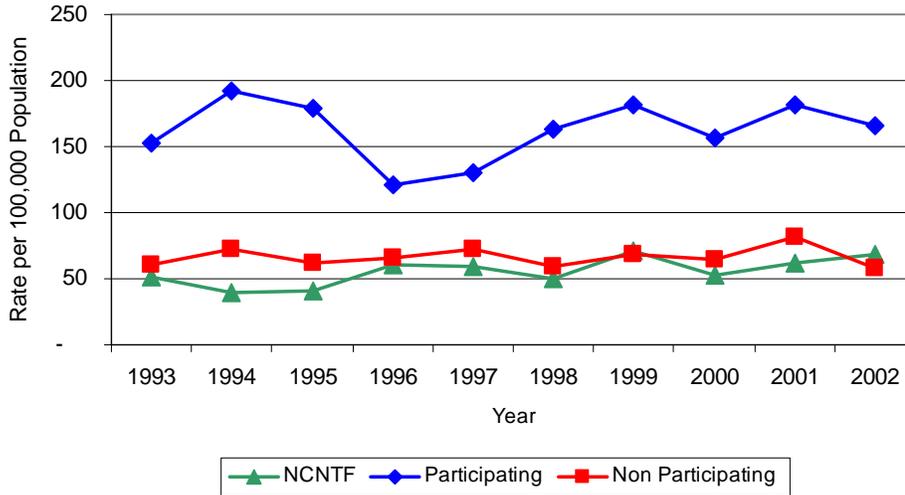
Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and NCNTF data

In DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties, the number of arrests for violations of Illinois' Controlled Substances Act increased 36 percent between 1993 and 2002, from 684 to 923. Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of all drug arrests accounted for by violations of the Controlled Substances Act in the three-county region decreased from 46 percent to 35 percent. In 2002, NCNTF reported 287 arrests for controlled substance violations, 74 percent of all drug arrests reported to the Authority by the unit.

Between 1993 and 2002, the arrest rate for controlled substances act violations for the region covered by NCNTF increased 5 percent, from 109 to 114 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 12). The controlled substances arrest rate in the participating agencies increased 8 percent, from 152 to 165 arrests per 100,000 population, while the arrest rate in the non-participating agencies decreased 5 percent, from 61 to 58 arrests per 100,000 population. The controlled substances arrest rate for NCNTF increased 33 percent, from 51 to 68 arrests per 100,000 population (Figure 12). Thus, the arrest rate for violations of the Controlled Substances Act was higher in the participating agencies and in the region covered by NCNTF than the combined jurisdictions of the non-participating agencies.

Figure 12

Controlled Substances Arrest Rates in the Region Covered by NCNTF as Reported by Participating Agencies, Non-participating Agencies, and NCNTF

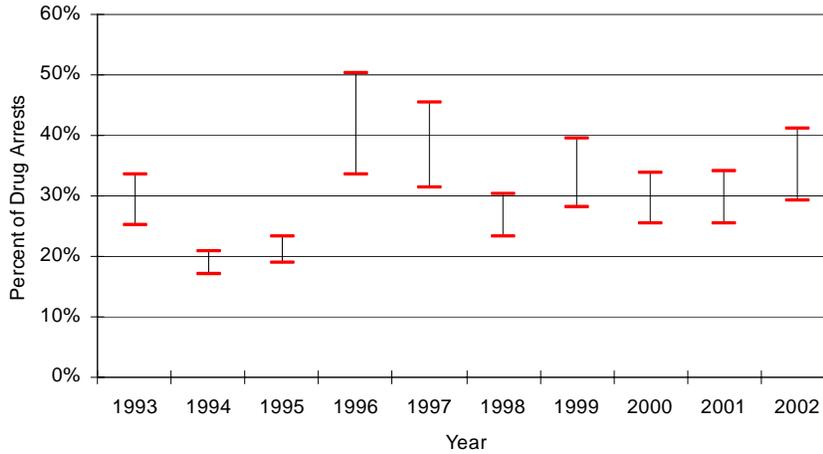


Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police, U.S. Census Bureau, and NCNTF data

The data presented below represent the percent of total arrests for the violation of the Controlled Substances Act made by participating agencies that was accounted for by NCNTF. An upper and lower bound is shown in Figure 13, which accounts for whether or not the units numbers are counted as part of the UCR submissions made by participating departments (which is unknown at this point). The upper bound indicates the percentage of arrests if *all* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions. The lower bound indicates the percentage if *none* of the NCNTF arrests are included in the local UCR submissions.

It is estimated that the proportion of all arrests for the violation of the Controlled Substances Act made in the jurisdictions of participating agencies, and accounted for by NCNTF, was between 25 to 34 percent in 1993 and increased to between 29 to 41 percent in 2002. Thus, NCNTF accounted for a large portion of all arrests made for violations of the Controlled Substances Act, specifically since 1995. When examining the three figures together (Figures 9, 11, and 13), the data suggest that NCNTF focused on arresting individuals violating the Controlled Substances Act, most of which are felony offenses.

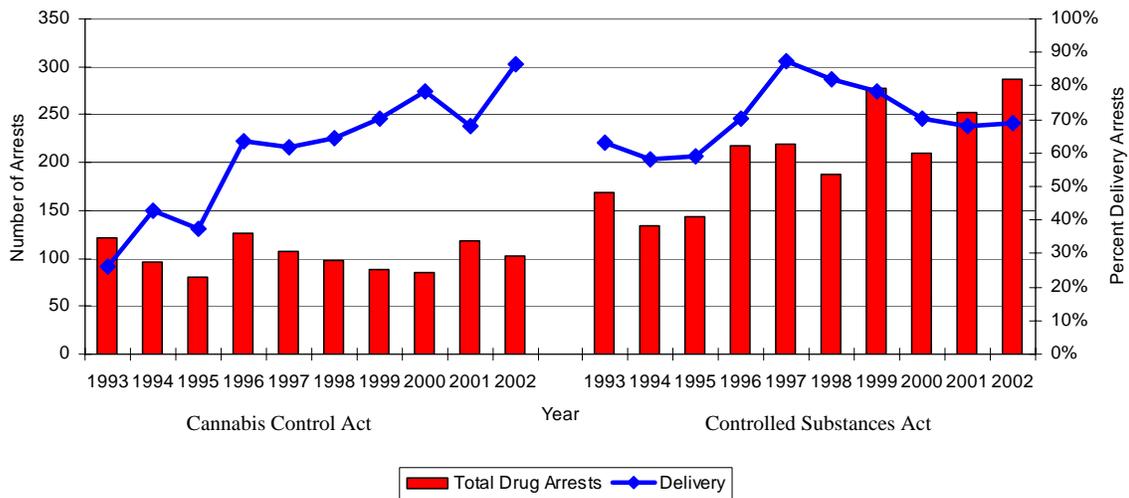
Figure 13
Percent of Controlled Substances Arrests
Accounted for by NCNTF



Source: ICJIA calculations using Illinois State Police and NCNTF data

The majority of all drug arrests reported by NCNTF are for delivery. Between 1993 and 2002, the number of drug delivery arrests made by NCNTF more than doubled, from 138 to 309, and drug delivery offenses accounted for increasing proportions of arrests. Arrests for drug delivery accounted for 70 percent of all drug arrests made by NCNTF between 1993 and 2002. When cannabis and controlled substance arrests were examined separately during the period analyzed, arrests for delivery of controlled substances accounted for 71 percent of the total number of arrests made for violations of the Controlled Substance Act, while increasing from 26 percent in 1993 to 87 percent in 2002. Arrests for the delivery of cannabis also accounted for an increasing proportion of cannabis arrests between 1993 and 2002, increasing from 63 percent to 69 percent, while accounting for 60 percent of all arrests for violations of the Cannabis Control Act during the period analyzed.

Figure 14
NCNTF Drug Arrests for Possession versus Delivery, by Drug Type



Source: ICJIA calculations using NCNTF data

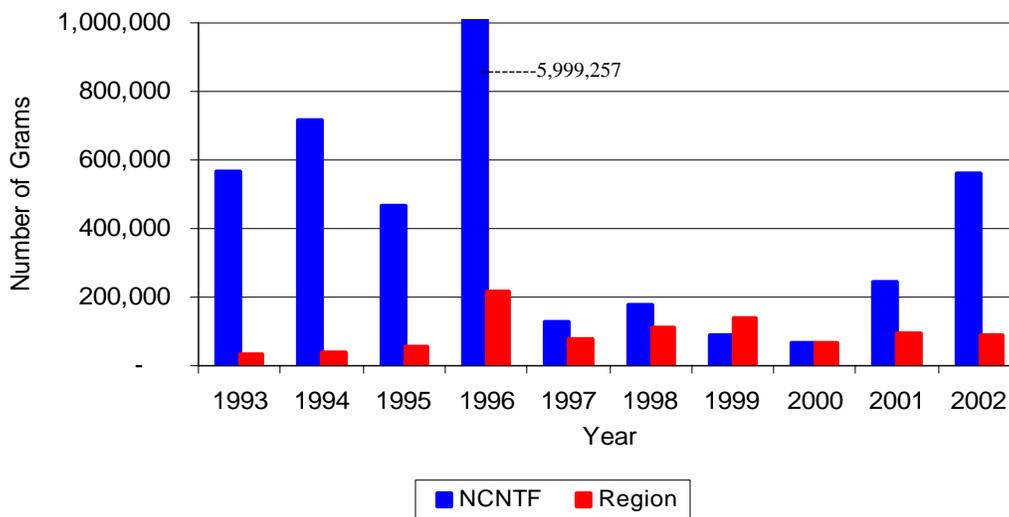
IV. Trends in Drug Seizures

Drugs seized by law enforcement agencies are another indicator of the extent and nature of illegal drug trade in a jurisdiction. 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 crime labs. These labs record the quantity of drugs submitted from each county. This section discusses trends in the quantities of illegal drugs seized and submitted to the Illinois State Police from local law enforcement agencies in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties as well as the quantities of drugs seized by NCNTF. It is important to note, however, that while NCNTF data report the total quantities of drugs actually *seized*, local agency data only represent the quantities of seized drugs that are *submitted* to the Illinois State Police for analysis. County-level cannabis, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and heroin seizure rates for Illinois' 102 counties are provided in maps located in the Appendix of this report.

As in most Illinois jurisdictions, cannabis accounts for the majority of illegal drugs seized in the three-county region covered by NCNTF. The quantity of cannabis seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties more than doubled, from 32,390 grams in 1993 to 87,611 grams in 2002. However, the quantity of cannabis seized by NCNTF decreased 2 percent between 1993 and 2002, from 569,424 grams to 558,562 grams despite jumping to almost six million grams seized in 1996 (Figure 15). In 2002, NCNTF's cannabis seizure rate of 132,168 grams per 100,000 population was nearly seven-times higher than the statewide cannabis seizure rate of 19,437 grams per 100,000 population, and more than 12-times greater than the seizure rate of 10,785 grams per 100,000 population in the three-county region covered by NCNTF (Map 2).

Figure 15

Cannabis Seized and Submitted to ISP by DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties and Seized by NCNTF



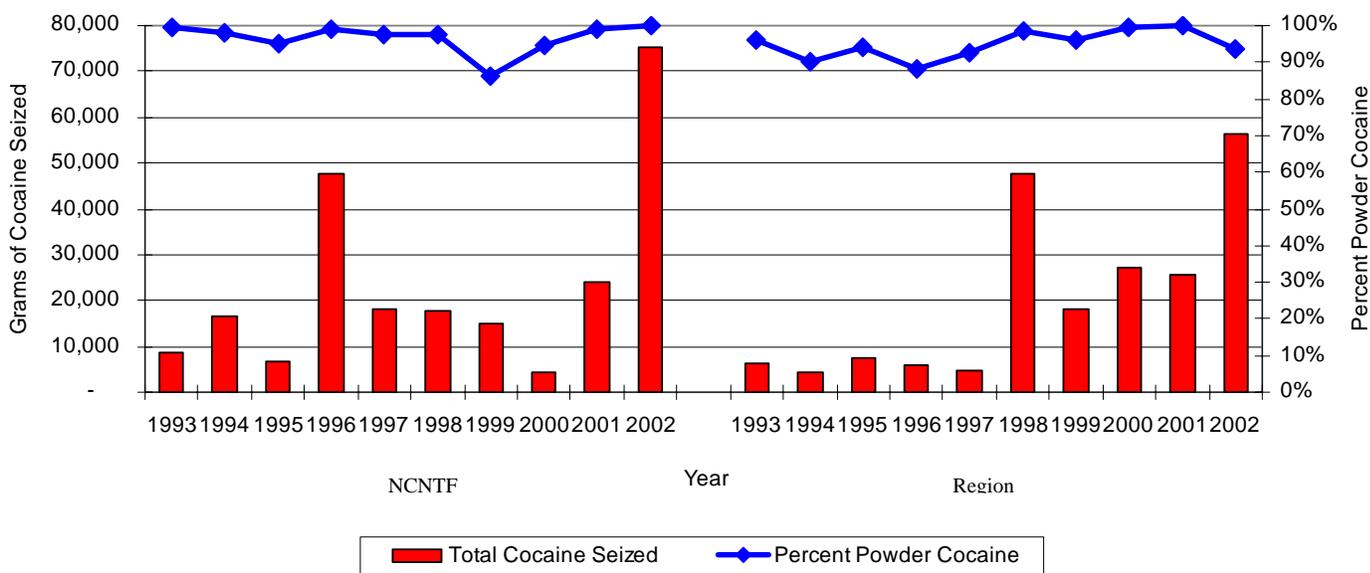
Source: Illinois State Police and NCNTF

Between 1993 and 2002, a combination of crack and powder cocaine has accounted for an increasing proportion of drugs seized in the three-county region covered by NCNTF, increasing from 16 percent to 39 percent. As a result, the quantity of cocaine seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties increased more than eight-fold, from 6,231 grams in 1993 to 56,444 grams in 2002. Between 1993 and 2002, the quantity of cocaine seized by NCNTF increased nearly eight-fold, from 8,687 grams to 75,375 grams.

Despite these increases, the proportion of all cocaine seized accounted for by powder cocaine remained relatively stable between 1993 and 2002. Powder cocaine accounted for 95 percent of all cocaine seized in the three-county region covered by NCNTF, and accounted for 97 percent of all cocaine seized by NCNTF (Figure 16). In 2002, NCNTF's cocaine seizure rate of 17,835 grams per 100,000 population was more than double the cocaine seizure rate of 6,949 grams per 100,000 population in the three-county region covered by NCNTF, but 18 percent less than the statewide cocaine seizure rate of 21,891 grams per 100,000 population (Maps 3 and 4).

Figure 16

**Powder and Crack Cocaine Seized and Submitted to ISP
by DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties and Seized by NCNTF**



Source: Illinois State Police and NCNTF

The total quantity of illegal drugs seized and submitted by law enforcement agencies in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties increased between 1993 and 2002, from 38,682 grams to 144,465 grams, with a high of 221,171 grams seized in 1996. On the other hand, the total quantity of illegal drugs seized by NCNTF has increased 10 percent, from 578,422 grams in 1993 to 637,597 grams in 2002.

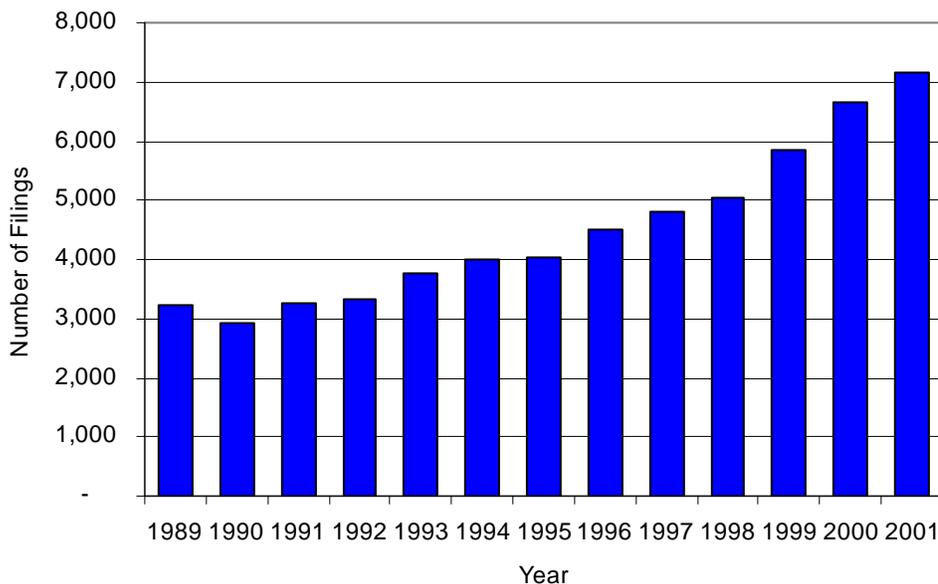
Between 1994 and 1999, NCNTF reported no methamphetamine seizures, while 486 grams were seized by the unit between 2000 and 2001, before dropping to zero in 2002. Between 1995 and 2002, the quantity of methamphetamine seized in the region covered by NCNTF increased from 0.1 grams to 73 grams, with the largest amount (575 grams) seized in 2001. In 2002, the region covered by NCNTF had a methamphetamine seizure rate of nine grams per 100,000 population, significantly lower than the statewide seizure rate of 222 grams per 100,000 population (Map 5).

V. Trends in Prosecutions for Drug Offenses and All Felonies

Although Illinois has one of the best court reporting systems in the country, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Court only collects information regarding the aggregate number of court filings. Currently, there are no statewide data available on court filings by offense type. The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts reports data on felony criminal court cases. After screening a case and deciding it warrants further action, the state's attorney must file formal charges in court. Felony cases can be punished by a probation term up to four years and incarceration for more than one year.

Between 1989 and 2001, the number of felony filings in the three-county region covered by NCNTF increased nearly every year. The number of felony filings more than doubled, from 3,243 to a period high of 7,176 (Figure 17).

Figure 17
Number of Felony Filings in DeKalb, Kane,
and McHenry Counties

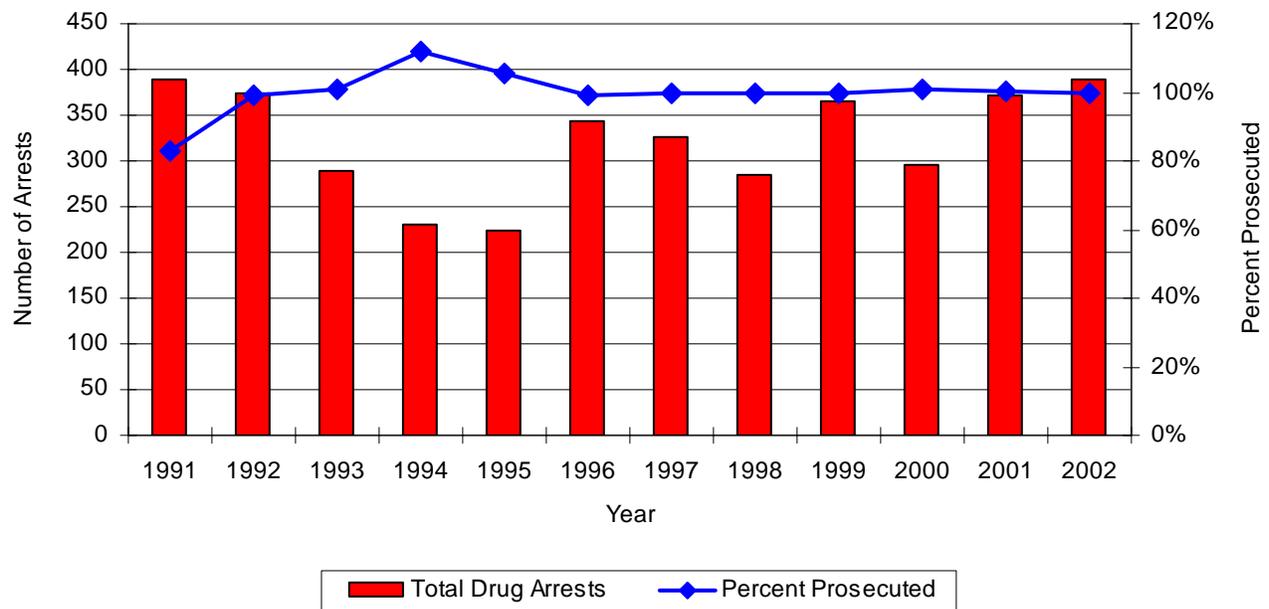


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1991 and 2002, there were a total of 3,855 drug prosecutions initiated as a result of NCNTF arrests in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties. During this time, the number of NCNTF drug arrests decreased from 390 to 389 (Figure 18). Between 1991 and 2002, nearly all drug arrests by NCNTF resulted in prosecution. Sixty-six percent of NCNTF drug offender prosecutions during this period were for violations of the Controlled Substance Act. In some years, the proportion of arrests resulting in a prosecution exceeded 100 percent. This may be due to some differences in the timing of an arrest and the filings of charges, or could be due to the number of charges, rather than the number of defendants being reported by the unit. In addition, some offenders have charges filed, and a subsequent warrant issued, without an arrest taking place.

Figure 18

Total NCNTF Drug Arrests and Percentage of Arrests Resulting in Prosecution



Source: NCNTF

Between 1991 and 2002, 70 percent (2,703) of the 3,855 drug offenders who were prosecuted as a result of NCNTF activity were convicted. Convictions for controlled substances accounted for 66 percent of all NCNTF initiated convictions during the period analyzed.

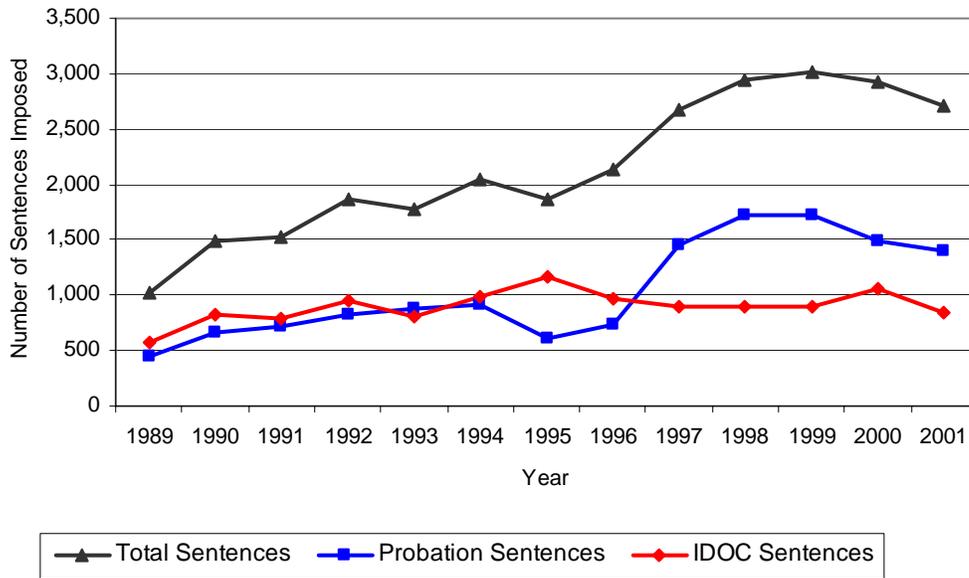
VI. Trends in Percent of Convicted Drug Offenders Sentenced to Prison

Under Illinois law, those convicted of most Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 felonies can be sentenced to probation or prison; the two most commonly used sentencing options. However, there are some exceptions. For example, those convicted of possessing 15 grams or more of cocaine, heroin, or methamphetamine are guilty of a Class 1 felony, but cannot be sentenced to probation. Such instances, as well as for all Class X felonies (e.g., sale/distribution of 15 grams or more of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine), must result in a sentence to prison and cannot be sentenced to probation. Where a sentence to probation or prison is an option, a number of factors may influence the type and length of sentence imposed, including the severity of the crime, the offender's criminal and social history, and the safety of the community.

Between 1989 and 2001, the number of offenders convicted of a felony and sentenced in the three-county region covered by NCNTF more than doubled, from 1,022 to 2,704. Although the number of convicted felons sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) increased 48 percent between 1989 and 2001, from 576 to 852, the proportion of felons sentenced to IDOC decreased during the same period, from 56 percent to 32 percent of total felony sentences. In 2001, 1,395 probation sentences were imposed on convicted felons, more than triple the number of probation sentences in 1989 (441) (Figure 19). As a result, the proportion of felons sentenced to probation increased from 43 percent in 1989 to 52 percent in 2001. Sentences other than prison or probation account for the remaining 16 percent of felony sentences imposed in 2001.

Figure 19

Sentences Imposed on Felons Convicted in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties

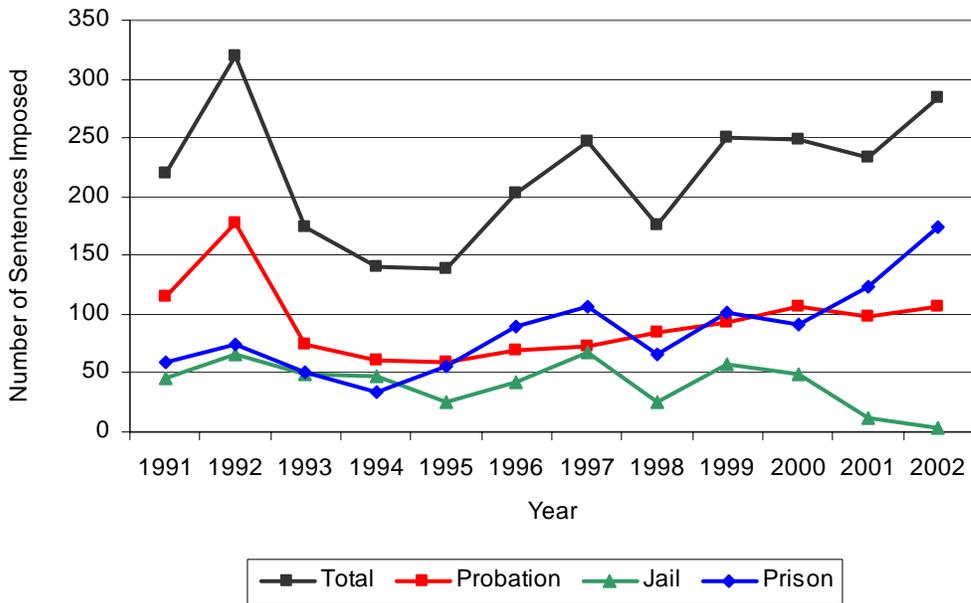


Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Between 1991 and 2002, the number of NCNTF drug offenders convicted and sentenced increased from 220 to 284. During the period analyzed, the number of convicted NCNTF drug offenders sentenced to prison nearly tripled from 59 in 1991 to a period high of 174 in 2002. Conversely, the number of convicted NCNTF drug offenders sentenced to probation decreased 8 percent, from 115 to 106, while the number of convicted NCNTF drug offenders sentenced to jail decreased 91 percent, from 46 to four (Figure 20). As a result, the proportion of drug offenders convicted and sentenced to probation and jail decreased between 1991 and 2002, while the proportion of prison sentences increased. In 2002, among those NCNTF drug offenders convicted and sentenced, prison sentences accounted for the largest proportion (61 percent) compared to just 9 percent in 1991. On the other hand, the proportion of probation and jail sentences decreased from 70 percent to 37 percent and 22 percent to 1 percent, respectively, between 1991 and 2002.

Figure 20

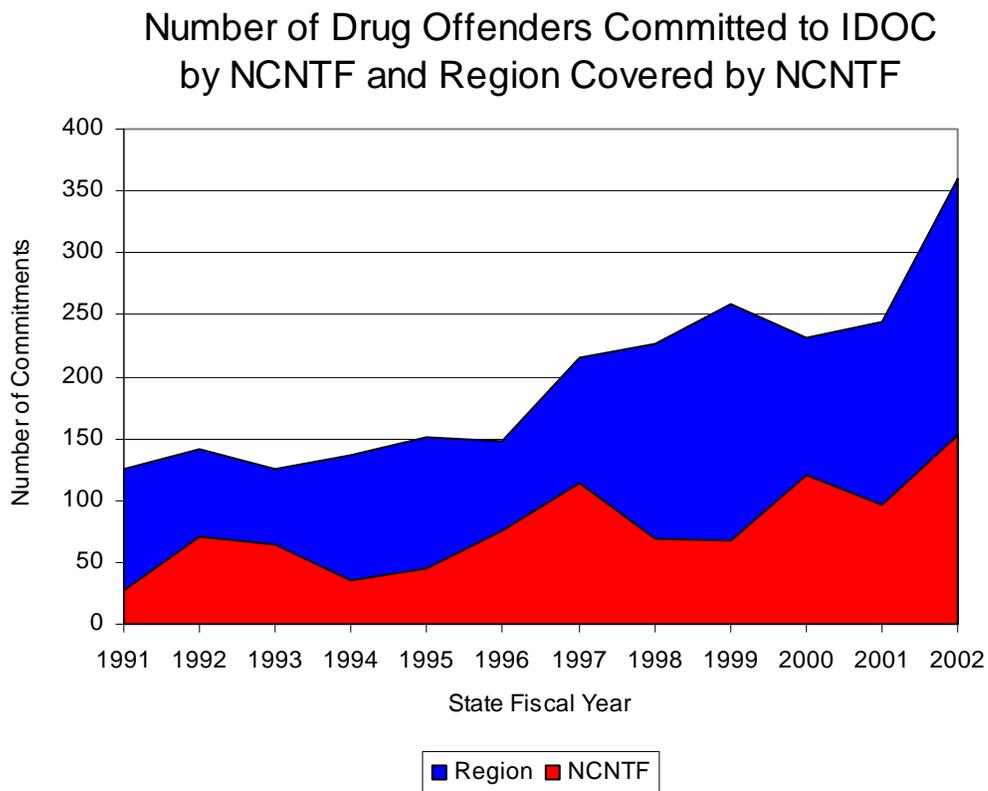
**Sentences Imposed on Convicted
NCNTF Drug Offenders**



Source: NCNTF

Between state fiscal years¹ 1991 and 2002, the number of new court commitments to IDOC's Adult Division for drug offenses from the three-county region covered by NCNTF nearly tripled, from 126 to 360. The number of drug offender admissions by NCNTF increased nearly five-fold, from 27 to 153 between 1991 and 2002 (Figure 21). Thus, NCNTF accounted for 40 percent of all drug offenders committed to IDOC from the three-county region covered by NCNTF.

Figure 21



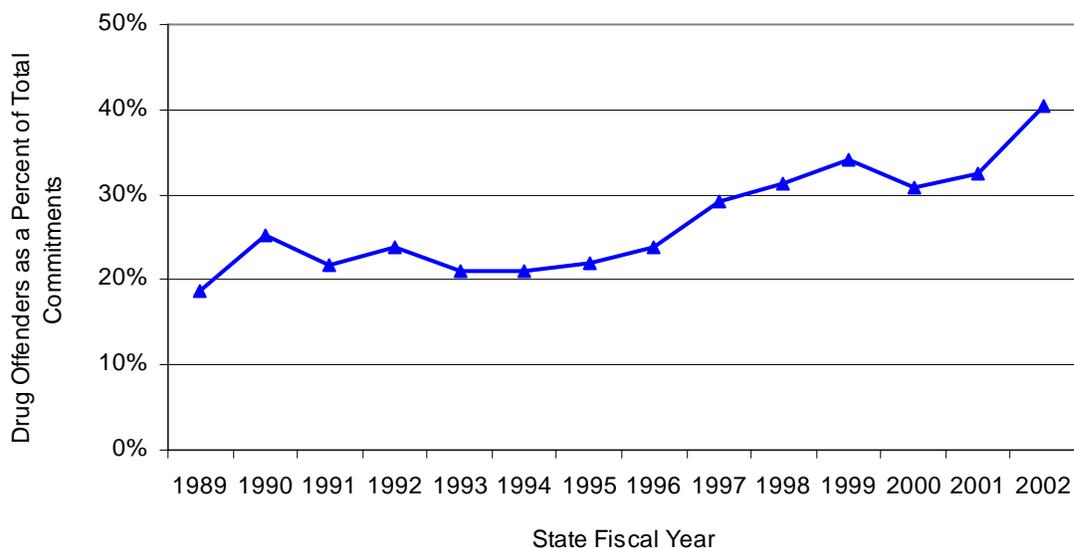
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections and NCNTF

During the period analyzed, drug offenders accounted for an increasing proportion of adults convicted and sentenced to prison from DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties. In 1991, drug offenses accounted for 21 percent of all commitments to IDOC, compared to 43 percent in 2002 (Figure 22).

¹ Some state data are collected according to State Fiscal Year (SFY) instead of calendar year. SFYs begin on July 1st and end the following June 30th, and are named according to the calendar year between January and June, e.g. state fiscal year 1991 was from July 1st, 1990 to June 30th, 1991.

Figure 22

**Drug Offenders as a Percent of Total
IDOC Commitments from
DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties**

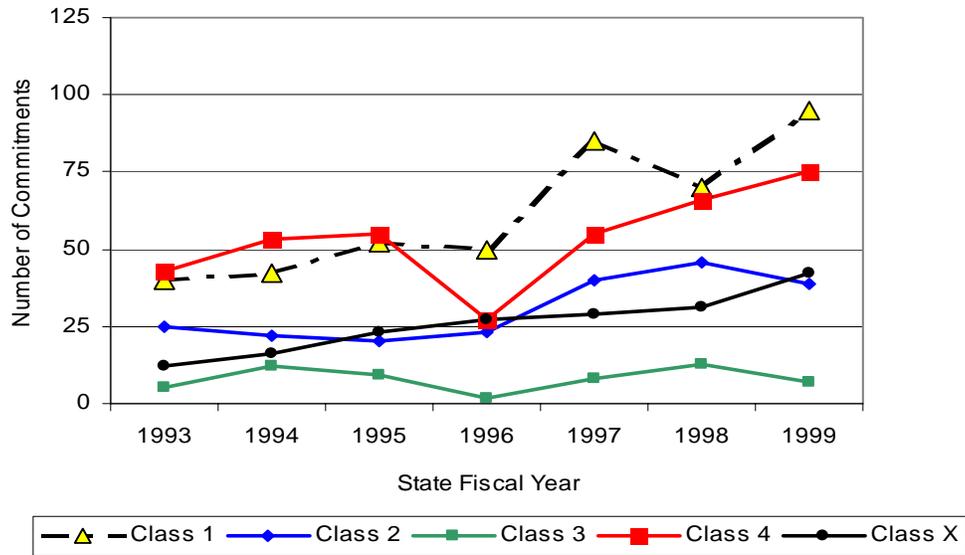


Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Penalties for drug offenses were also examined between 1993 and 2002. Class 1 felonies accounted for the largest proportion (35 percent) of sentences to IDOC for drug offenses, followed by Class 4 felonies (30 percent), Class 2 felonies (16 percent), Class X felonies (15 percent), and Class 3 felonies (5 percent). Between 1993 and 2002, the number of Class 1 felonies more than tripled, from 40 to 127, while Class 4 felony sentences more than doubled, from 43 to 115. Class 3 felony sentences tripled from five to 15, while Class 2 felonies increased 32 percent, from 25 to 33. Class X felonies experienced the largest increase during the period, increasing nearly five-fold, from 12 to 70 (Figure 23).

Figure 23

**Drug Offenders Committed to IDOC from
De Kalb, Kane and McHenry Counties,
by Offense Class**



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

Despite the dramatic increases in sentences to IDOC, the mean sentence lengths varied between 1993 and 2002. The mean sentence length for Class 1 felonies increased slightly from 5.2 to 5.4 years, while the mean sentence length for Class X felonies increased from 7.6 to 8.5 years. Conversely, the mean sentence lengths for Class 3 and Class 4 felonies declined during the period analyzed, from 4.3 to 2.5 years and 2.0 to 1.8 years, respectively. Class 2 sentence lengths, on the other hand, remained unchanged at 4.0 years between 1993 and 2002.

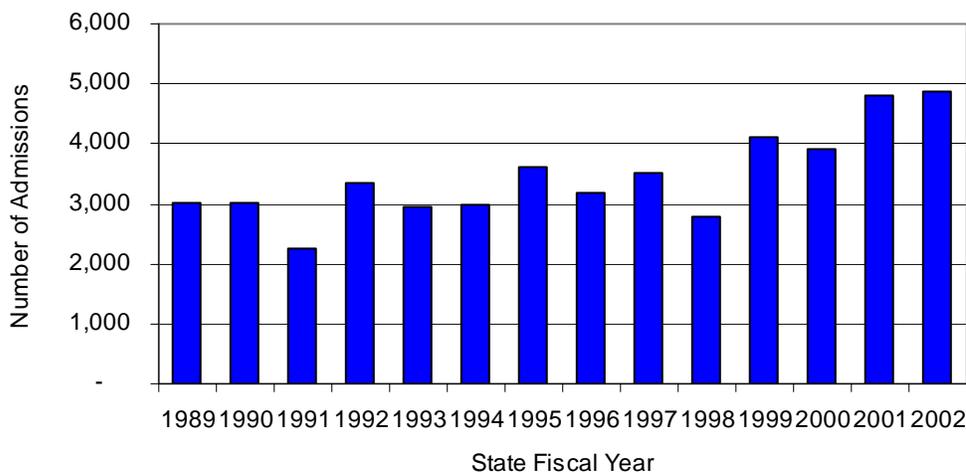
VII. Trends in Drug Treatment Admissions in NCNTF Region by Drug Type

In addition to considering indicators of the extent and nature of drug abuse as reported through the criminal justice system (for example, arrests and prison sentences), there are indicators of substance abuse available from other Illinois social service agencies. Overseeing and supporting treatment for substance users, whether they are referred from the criminal justice system or elsewhere, is the responsibility of the Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (OASA). It is important to note, however, that while OASA data represent the majority of the overall demand for substance abuse treatment in the state, some private programs provide treatment services to a smaller but significant number of clients who may not be included in the state's reporting system.

In state fiscal year 2002, OASA reported 4,861 admissions for alcohol or drug abuse treatment from DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry counties, 61 percent more than the 3,018 admissions in 1989 (Figure 24). Among the 4,861 admissions to substance abuse treatment in state fiscal year 2002, 33 percent (1,617) reported alcohol as their primary substance of abuse, while abuse of illicit substances accounted for 63 percent of admissions to substance abuse treatment.

Figure 24

Substance Abuse Treatment Admissions from DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties



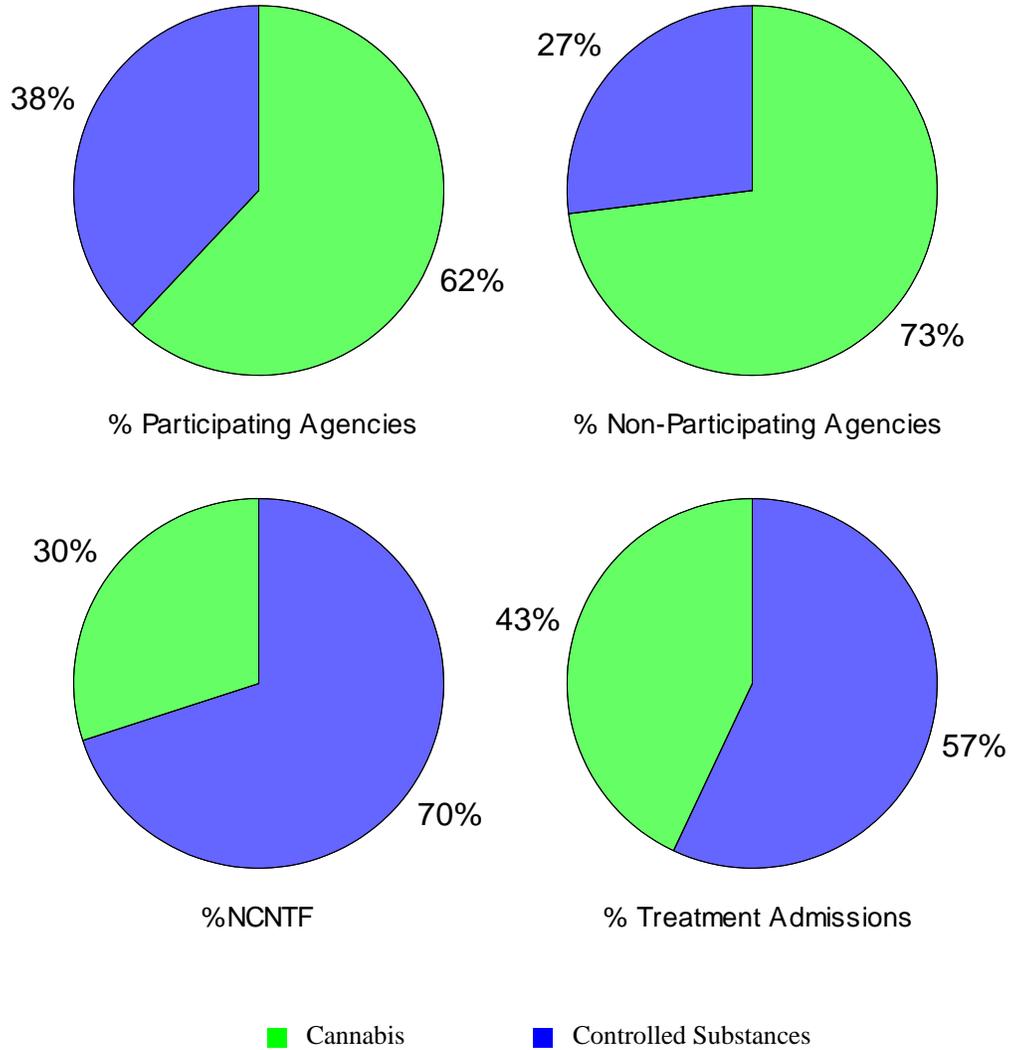
Source: Illinois Department of Human Services' Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

While drug treatment admissions can be considered a measure of the demand placed on a specific component of the human services system within Illinois, the extent and nature of drug treatment admissions could also be indicative of the substance abuse problem within a particular region. In some respects, the characteristics of those admitted to drug treatment can be considered a profile of the most serious drug abusers in the community, since admission to treatment requires a documented, formal assessment of a drug problem and a level of substance abuse warranting treatment. By comparing the types of drugs of abuse reported by those admitted to substance abuse treatment with the types of drugs involved in law enforcement agency arrests, one can get a sense of the degree to which arrests reflect the drugs which are most problematic within a community.

In the following analyses, the percent of arrests accounted for by drugs classified under Illinois' Controlled Substances Act (primarily cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine) versus the Cannabis Control Act (marijuana) across the participating agencies combined, non-participating agencies combined and NCNTF are compared to the proportion of drug treatment admissions accounted for by these groups of substances. From these comparisons, a number of general conclusions can be made. First, the proportion of arrests made by NCNTF accounted for by drugs other than marijuana (Controlled Substances Act offenses) was very close to the proportion of drug treatment admissions from the covered region accounted for by these substances. Thus, there is considerable convergence between the drugs involved in NCNTF arrests and treatment admissions. On the other hand, the majority of arrests by local police departments (including those participating in NCNTF and non-participating agencies) were for cannabis offenses. Thus, while local arrests may reflect the most widely available and used drug in the region, they did not tend to involve the substances considered to be most serious (i.e., felony versus misdemeanor) nor the substances for which individuals were seeking and receiving treatment (Figure 25).

Figure 25

Comparison of Drug Arrests by NCNTF and Participating and Non-participating Agencies vs. Drug Abuse Treatment Admissions in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties, 2002



Source: Illinois Department of Human Service's Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and NCNTF

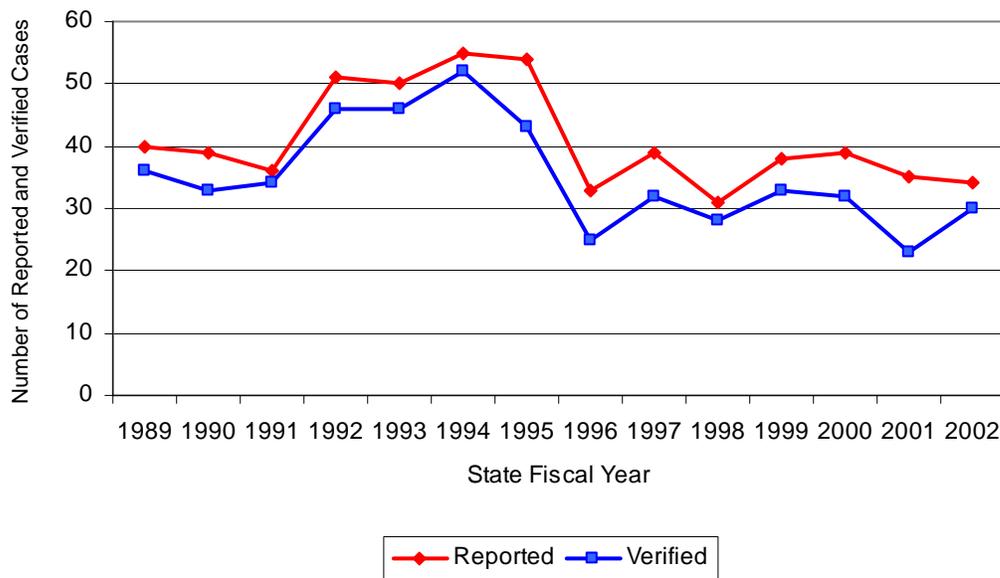
VIII. Trends in Substance-Exposed Infants

Illinois continues to experience the effects of prenatal substance abuse. In Illinois, if a baby is born and thought to have been exposed to illegal substances or alcohol, either through observation by physicians or toxicology tests, the case is reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. These cases are then investigated by DCFS to verify the child's prenatal exposure to either alcohol or illegal substances. Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, 96 of Illinois' 102 counties reported at least one case of a substance-exposed infant.

Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, the number of substance-exposed infant cases reported in the three-county region covered by NCNTF decreased 15 percent, from 40 to 34 reported cases; however, between 1992 and 1995, the number of cases reported reached over 50 each year. Between state fiscal years 1989 and 2002, 493 cases, or 86 percent of all cases reported, were verified as involving prenatal drug use by a DCFS investigation. Mirroring the trend of reported cases, verified cases of substance-exposed infants in the NCNTF region also decreased between 1989 and 2002, from 36 to 30, again with an increase in verified cases between 1992 and 1995 (Figure 26).

Figure 26

Cases of Substance-Exposed Infants in DeKalb, Kane, and McHenry Counties



Source: Department of Children and Family Services

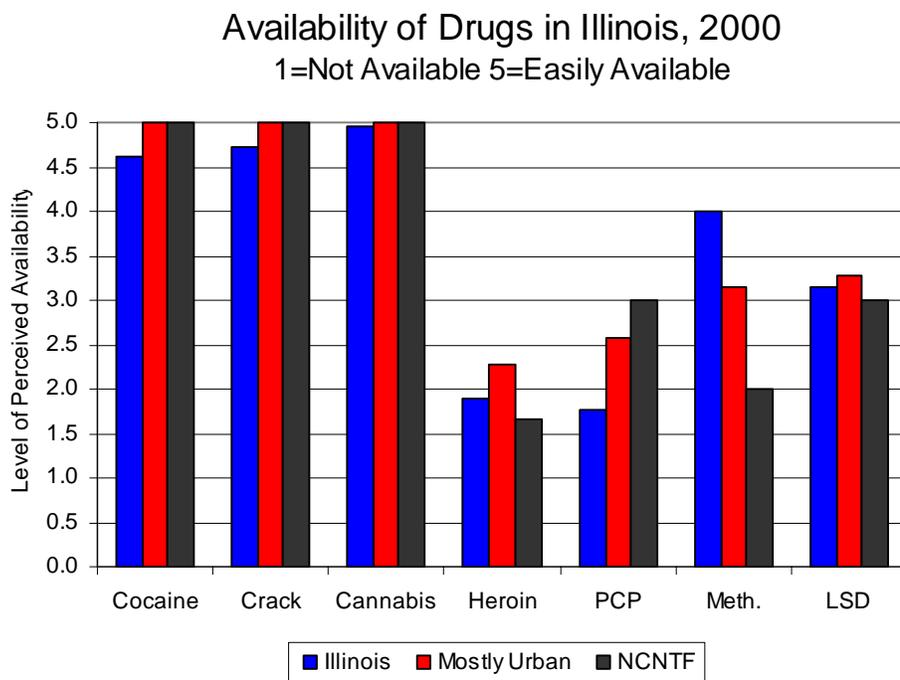
IX. Summary of Drug Situation

Although the distribution of illegal drugs is difficult to measure precisely, data obtained from criminal justice sources can be helpful in estimating drug availability. Information from a recent survey of Illinois drug enforcement units, as well as the most up-to-date data available on drug price, are presented as indicators of the drug supply in Illinois.

The Authority periodically conducts a survey of each MEG and task force in Illinois to gauge the perceived availability of drugs in the areas they cover (the most recent being conducted in 2000). Questions were asked concerning the availability of specific drugs, and results were analyzed by region of the state. MEGs and task forces are classified as being either mostly urban, mostly rural, or mixed urban/rural based upon the classification of the county(s) that each unit covers, and, for purposes of this report, are compared to the average of similar units.

According to NCNTF survey responses, cannabis, cocaine, and crack continued to be the most visible drugs on the street and were all reported to be “readily available” across all regions analyzed. While perceived availability of cannabis remained unchanged across all regions examined. Meanwhile, the perceived availability of cocaine, crack, and PCP increased across all regions since the 1998 survey. The perceived availability of methamphetamine increased statewide and in other regions covered by mostly urban MEGs and task forces, but remained unchanged in the regions covered by NCNTF. As a result, methamphetamine was reported as moderately available across Illinois but available to a somewhat lesser degree in the region covered by NCNTF and by all MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions in 2000. The perceived availability of LSD declined since the 1998 survey statewide and in other mostly urban regions, but remained unchanged in the region covered by NCNTF (Figure 27).

Figure 27



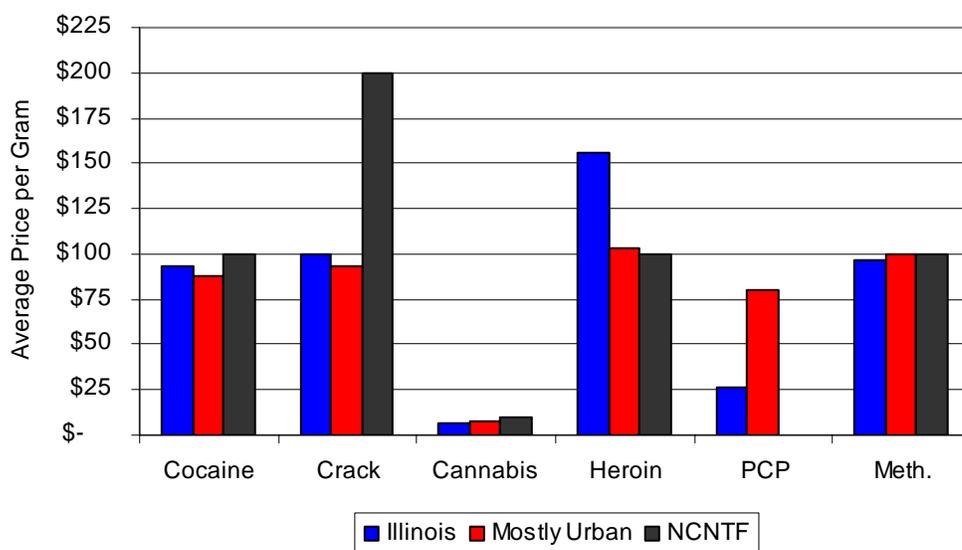
Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

Another market indicator that can be used to assess availability is drug price. Lower prices tend to suggest a sufficient supply to meet demand, while increasing prices indicate decreased availability.

Based on a statewide survey of MEG and task force units, the average price of cocaine, cannabis, and methamphetamine appear to be relatively stable across all regions surveyed in 2000, while prices for PCP, crack, and heroin appear to vary somewhat across Illinois. The average price of crack increased across all regions examined between 1998 and 2000, particularly in the region covered by NCNTF. In 1998, the price of crack was reported as \$60 per gram in the region covered by NCNTF, but according to the 2000 survey, the price of crack jumped to \$200 per gram. The 2000 average price of cocaine reported by NCNTF was \$100 per gram, compared to \$93 per gram across Illinois and \$88 per gram reported by all MEGs and task forces in other mostly urban regions (Figure 28). On the other hand, the average price of heroin in the region covered by NCNTF was reported as \$100 per gram, lower than the price of \$156 per gram across Illinois and the price of \$103 per gram reported by all other MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions. In 2000, the average price of cannabis was reported as approximately \$10 per gram in the NCNTF region (down from \$25 per gram in 1998), \$7 per gram in mostly urban regions and \$6 per gram across Illinois.

Figure 28

Price Per Gram in Illinois, 2000

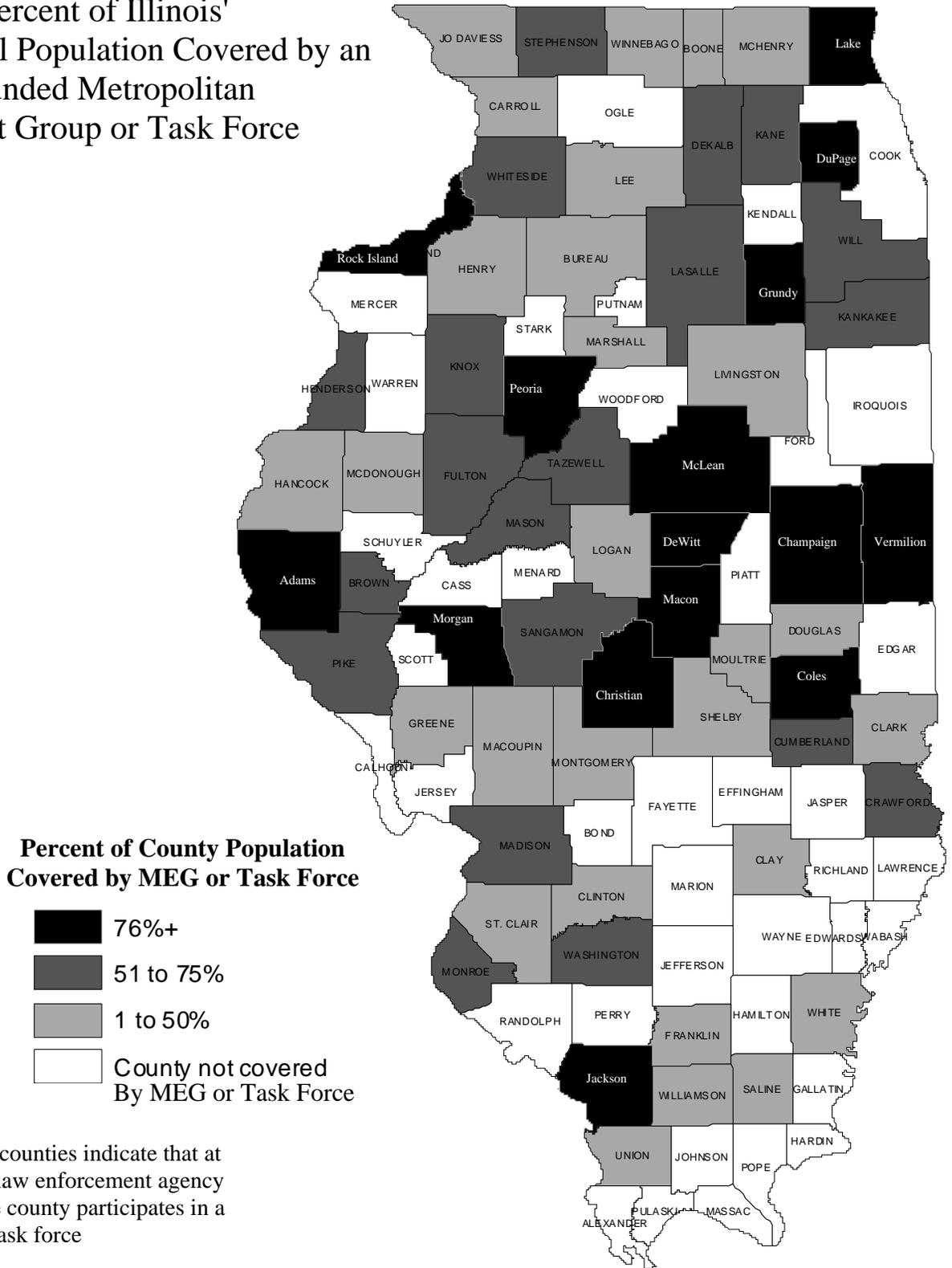


Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

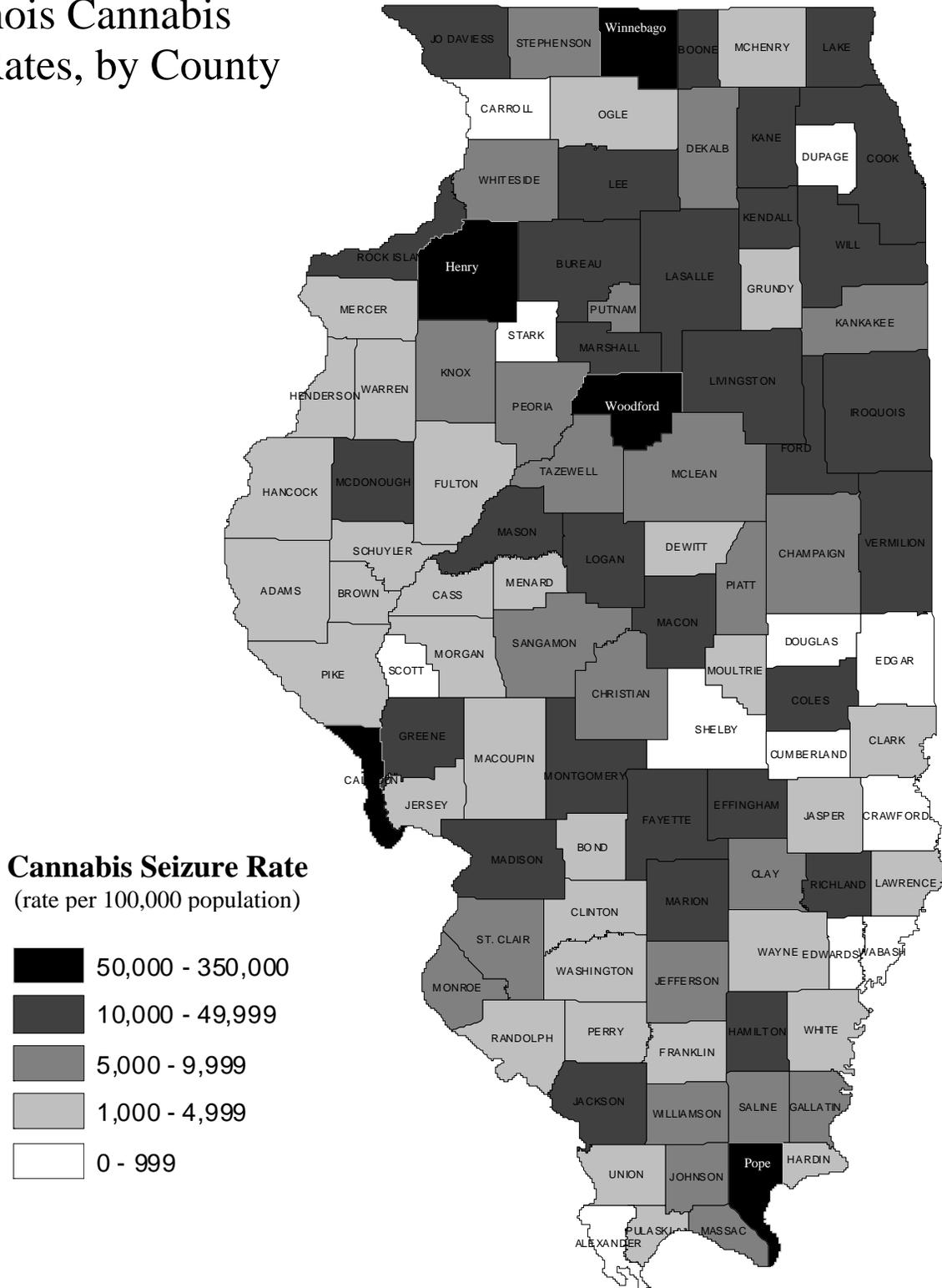
X. Appendices

Map 1

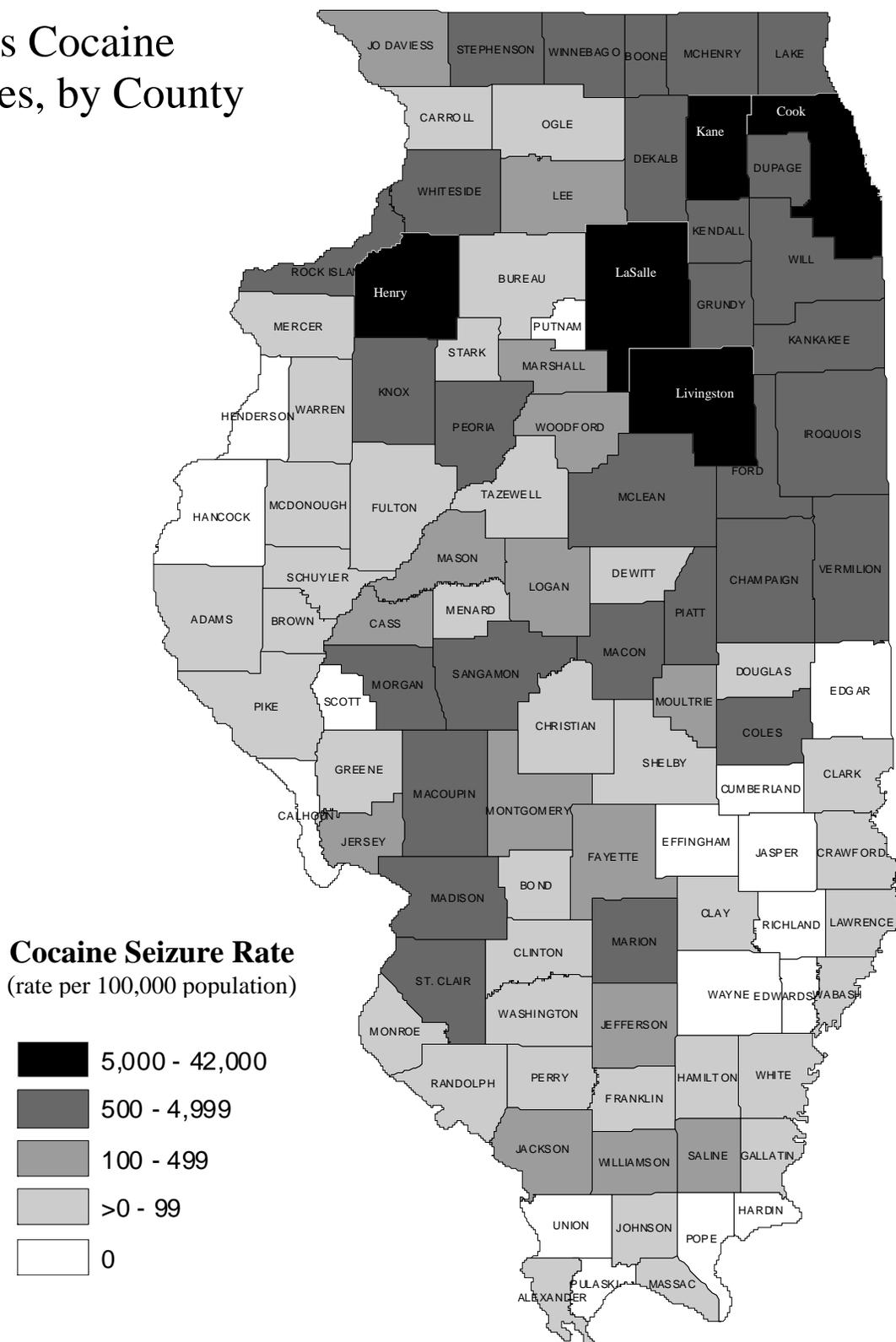
SFY 2002 Percent of Illinois' County-level Population Covered by an Authority-funded Metropolitan Enforcement Group or Task Force



2002 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County

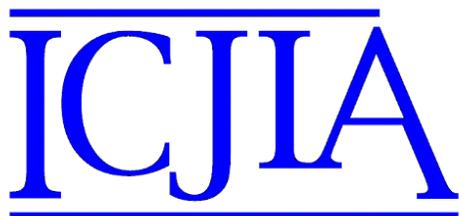


2002 Illinois Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County



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