



COLLABORATING TO FIGHT DRUG CRIME: MULTI-JURISTICTIONAL TASK FORCES

A Profile of the Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group



Collaborating to fight drug crime: Profile of the Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group

November 2012

Prepared by:

Sharyn Adams, Research Analyst

With assistance from:

Kimberly Burke, Research Analyst

Jessica Reichert, Senior Research Analyst

Gregory Stevens, Manager, Federal and State Grants Unit

This project was supported by Grant # 06-DJ-BX-0681 and Grant # 08-DJ-BX-0034 awarded to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Suggested citation: Adams, S. (2012). *Collaborating to fight drug crime: Profile of the Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority
300 W. Adams, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60606-3997
Phone: (312) 793-8550
Fax: (312) 793-8422
<http://www.icjia.state.il.us>

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the following ICJIA staff and former staff for their assistance:

Lisa Braude
Jack Cutrone
Cristin Monti Evans
Mark Myrent
Mark Powers
Lisa Stephens

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

Figure 16: QCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011	20
Figure 17: Non-QCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011	20
Figure 18: Percent of QCMEG versus non-QCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011	21
Figure 19: QCMEG controlled substance arrests for possession and delivery, 2002-2011	22
Table 3: Cocaine seized by QCMEG, 2002-2011.....	23
Figure 20: Total QCMEG drug arrests and percentage of arrests resulting in prosecution, 2002-2011.....	25
Figure 21: Sentences imposed on convicted QCMEG offenders, 2002-2011	28
Figure 22: Drug offenders as a percent of total IDOC commitments from Rock Island County 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 12th 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 100,000.¹ 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

¹ 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 Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group (QCMEG), which covers Rock Island County with an estimated total population of 147,546 in 2010. In 2010, 5 local Illinois police agencies and 5 agencies from Iowa participated in the QCMEG. A participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to the task force. Twelve officers and one office manager and one criminal analyst were assigned to the QCMEG in 2010, seven of the officers were assigned by participating agencies from Illinois and five from Iowa. 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 QCMEG from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 to 2011. During the past four FFYs, the award amount has remained stable at \$31,895.

Table 1
QCMEG grant totals

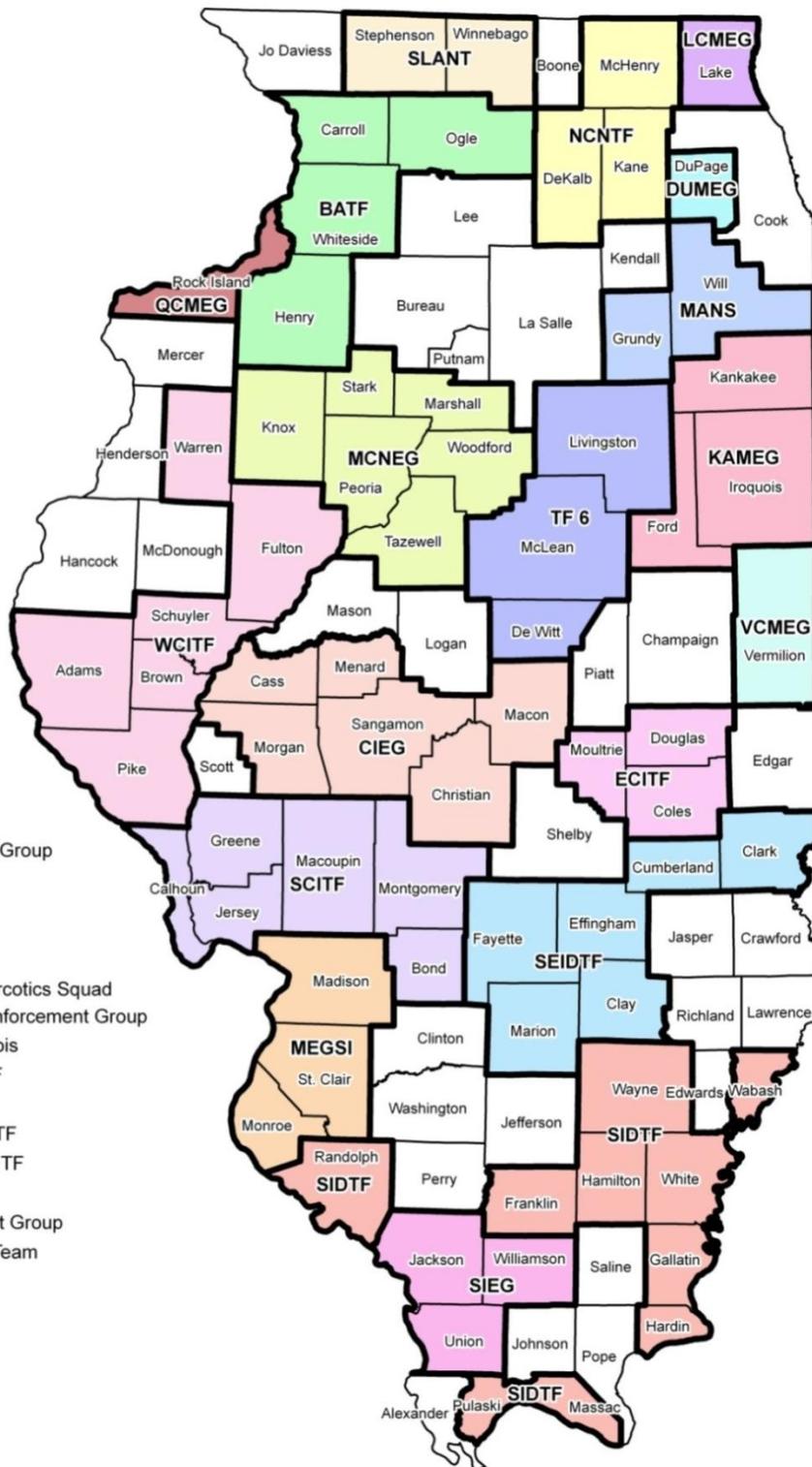
Federal fiscal year	Grant amount
2007	\$59,790
2008	\$31,895
2009	\$31,895
2010	\$31,895
2011	\$31,895

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

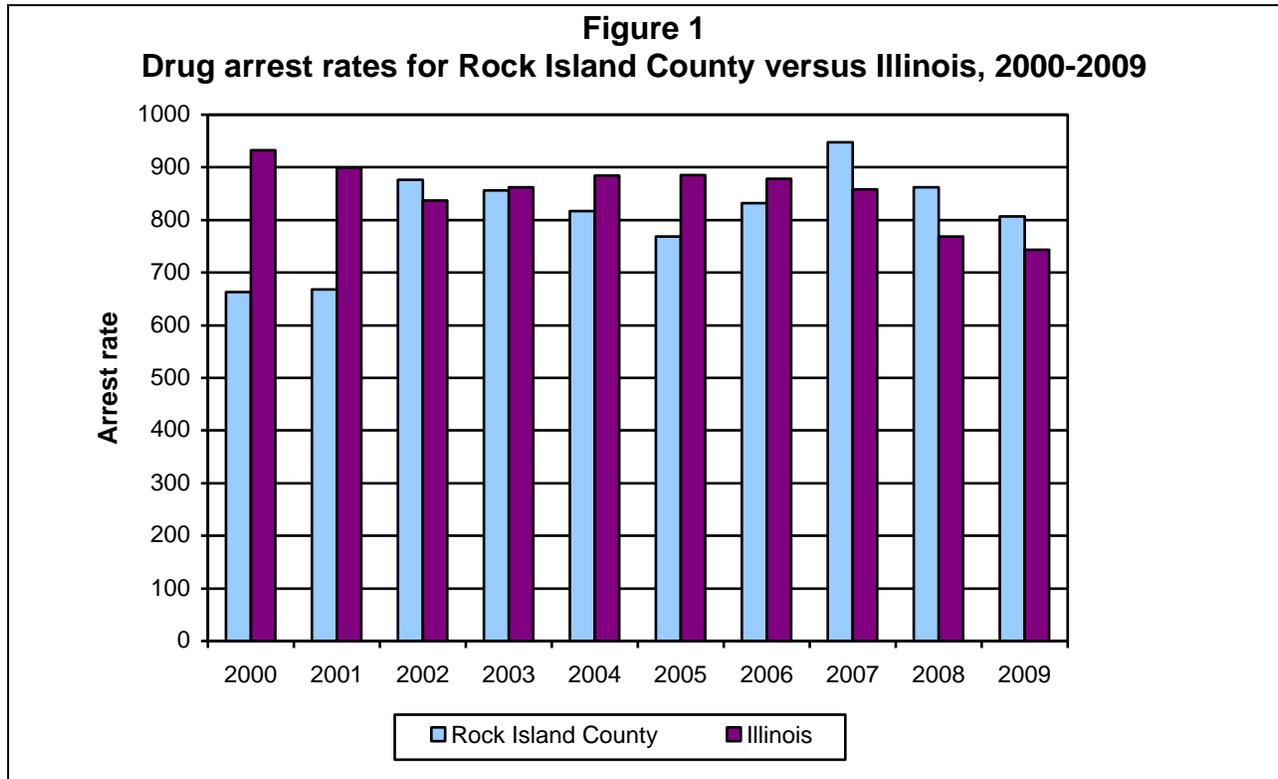
Two sources of drug arrest data are presented in this section: 1) quarterly data reports for the period 2002-2011 submitted by Quad Cities Metropolitan Enforcement Group (QCMEG) to the ICJIA as a grant requirement; and 2) drug arrest statistics for 2002-2011 derived from criminal history record information (CHRI) submitted by law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County to the Illinois State Police at the time of arrest, including those made by both QCMEG and non-QCMEG 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 QCMEG. The CHRI data were used to obtain the number of drug arrest for all law enforcement agencies in Rock Island County from 2002-2011, from which QCMEG 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.

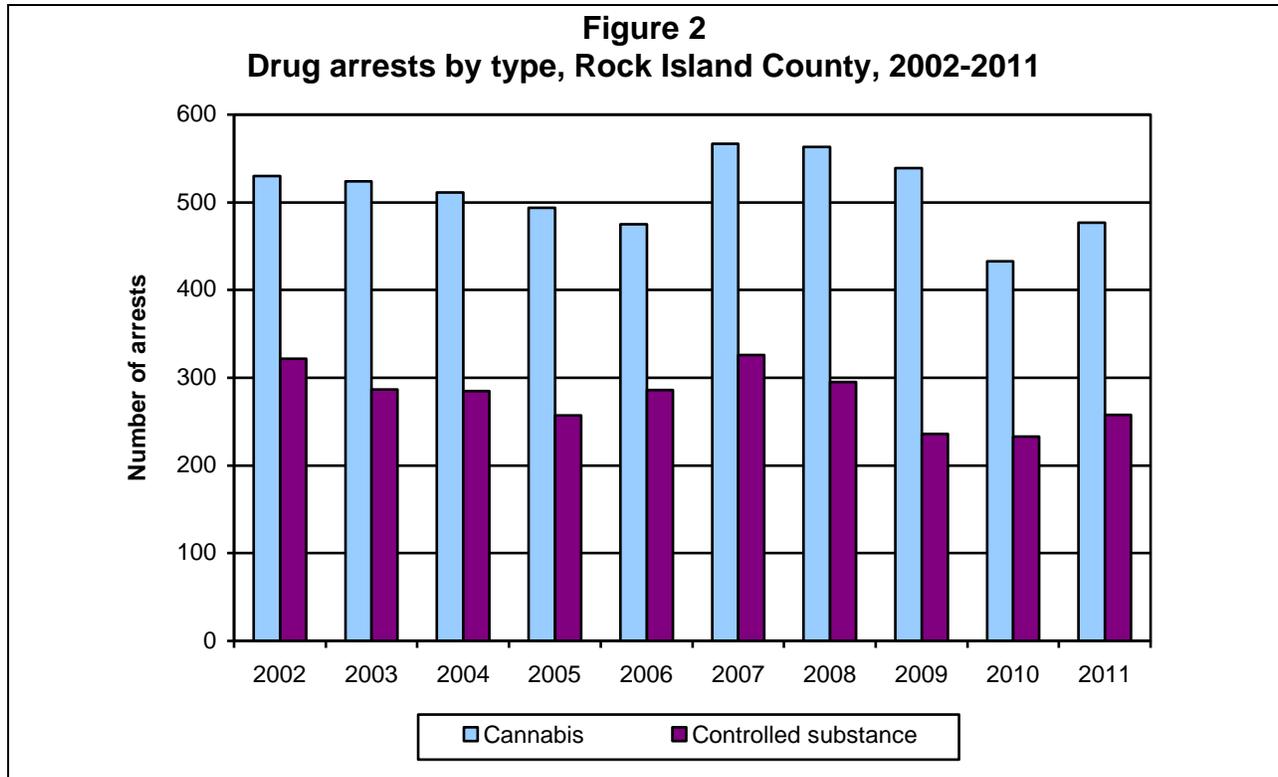
Drug arrests

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 Rock Island County increased 22 percent, from 663 arrests per 100,000 population to 806 arrests per 100,000 population (*Figure 1*).



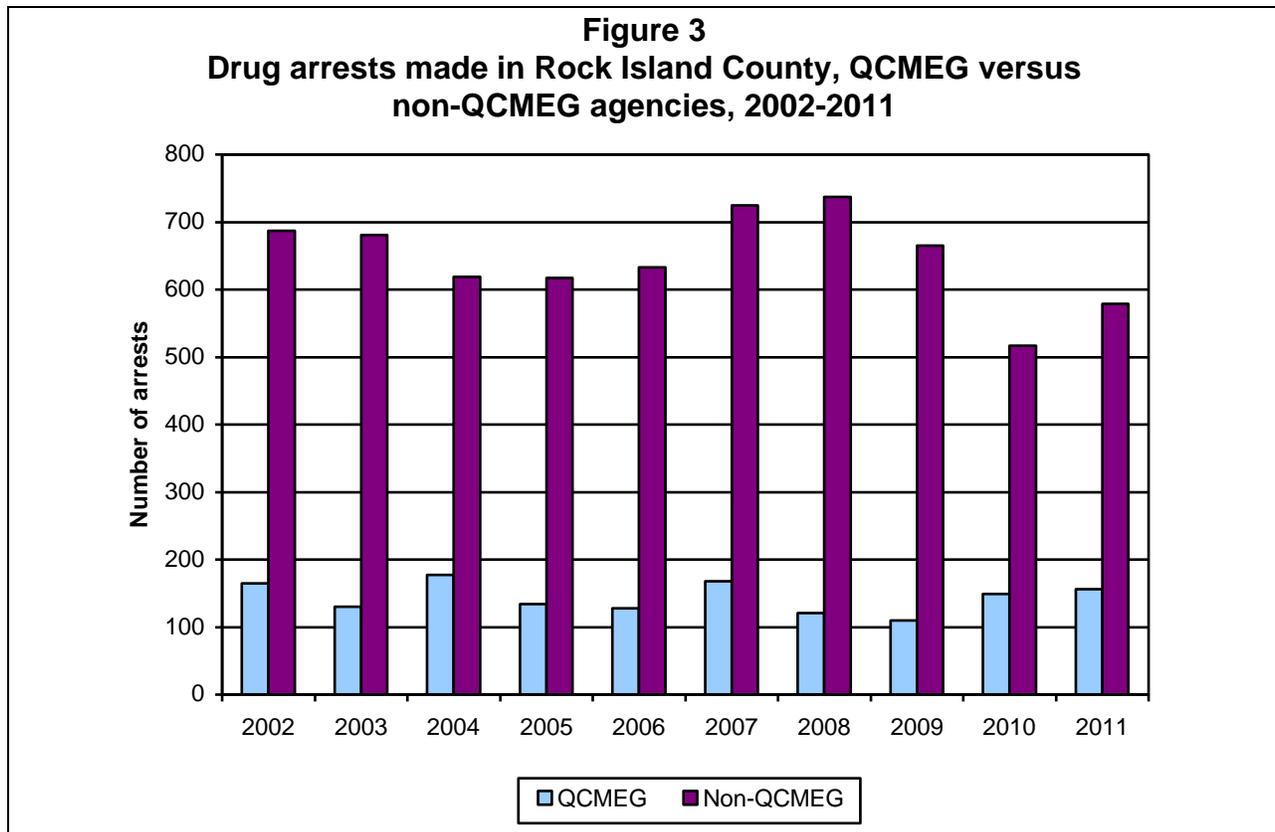
Source: Illinois State Police

From 2002 to 2011, the number of drug arrests for cannabis and controlled substances reported in the CHRI data in Rock Island County decreased. This includes arrests made by all law enforcement officers—both QCMEG and non-QCMEG. 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 Rock Island County from 2002 to 2011. The number of cannabis drug arrests in Rock Island County decreased from 530 in 2002 to 477 in 2011, and the number of controlled substance arrests decreased from 322 in 2002 to 258 in 2011.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-QCMEG drug arrests by subtracting drug arrests reported by QCMEG from the total arrests in CHRI for Rock Island County, as both appear in CHRI through the fingerprinting process at booking. *Figure 3* shows the number of drug arrests made each year by QCMEG officers and non-QCMEG agencies from 2002 to 2011. In Rock Island County, the number of drug arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies decreased 16 percent from 687 in 2002 to 579 arrests in 2011. The number of drug arrests made by QCMEG shows a decrease of five percent, from 165 arrests in 2002 to 156 arrests in 2011.

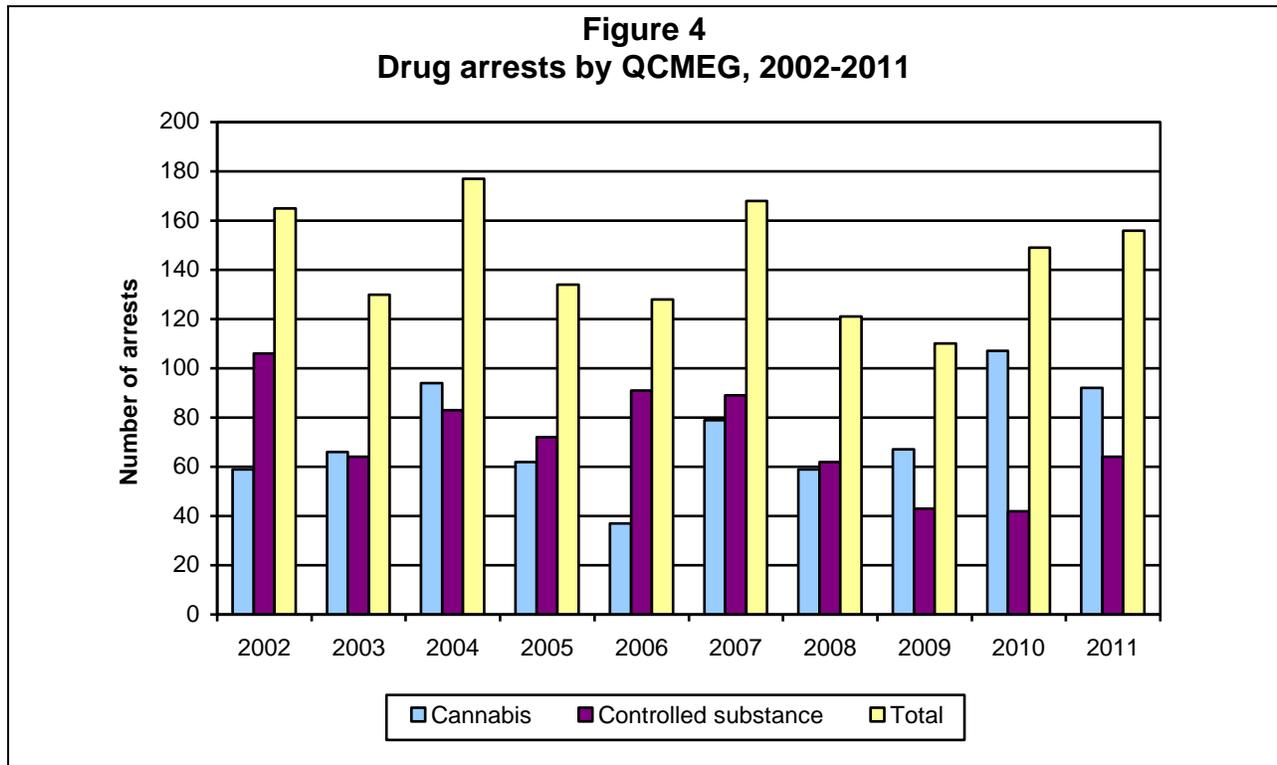


Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; QCMEG data reports submitted to ICJIA

In 2011, there were 382 felony drug arrests made in Rock Island County. QCMEG reported that they made 134 felony drug arrests in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of QCMEG arrests were made within Rock Island County, then 35 percent, were made by QCMEG. QCMEG also made approximately six percent or 21 of the 352, misdemeanor arrests in Rock Island County. In total, then, the 12 officers assigned to QCMEG—seven from Illinois and five from Iowa—made 155 drug arrests or approximately 13 drug arrests per officer (one drug arrest was not classified as felony or misdemeanor). In Rock Island County, the 319 full time sworn officers made approximately 580 drug arrests or 1.8 arrests per officer².

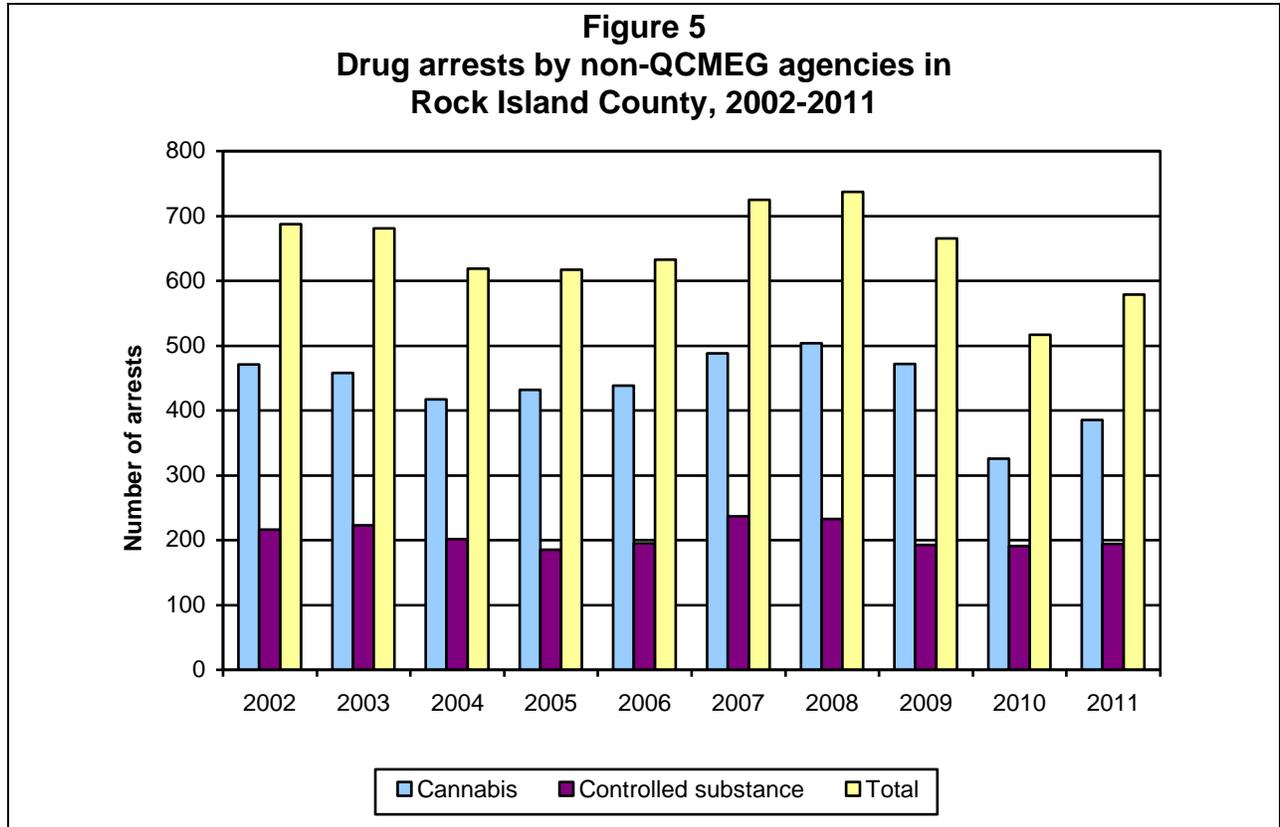
² Please note that the main focus of QCMEG officers is drug arrests. Non-task force law enforcement officers within Rock Island County handle all criminal cases and arrests within the county and are not focused solely on drug cases.

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by QCMEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased five percent, from 165 to 156. Violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounted for more drug arrests made by QCMEG for half the period analyzed than violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 39 percent, from 106 to 64, while the number of QCMEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* increased 56 percent, from 59 to 92 (*Figure 4*).



Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

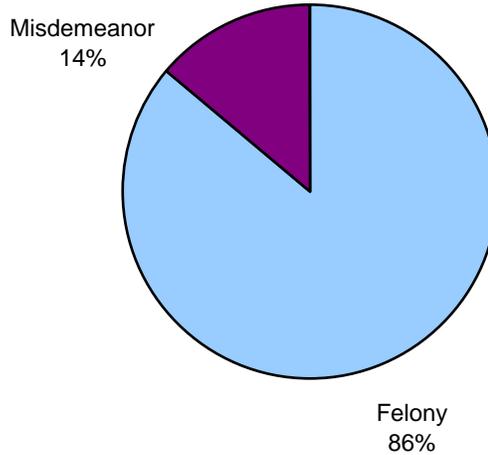
Figure 5 presents the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies in Rock Island County during the period 2002 to 2011. From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies decreased 16 percent from 687 to 579. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* consistently accounted for more drug arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* decreased from 471 to 385, while the number of non-QCMEG agency arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* also decreased from 216 to 194.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

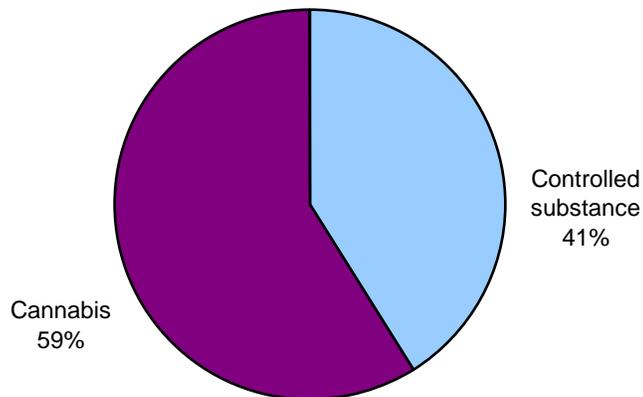
In 2011, 41 percent of the drug arrests made by QCMEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*, compared to 64 percent in 2002. In 2011, 86 percent of drug arrests made by QCMEG were felonies, while 14 percent were misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 6* and *Figure 7*).

Figure 6
Percent of QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County by offense type, 2011



Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

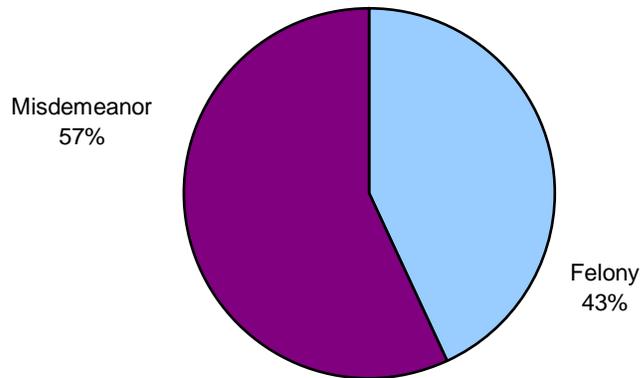
Figure 7
Percent of QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County by violation type, 2011



Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

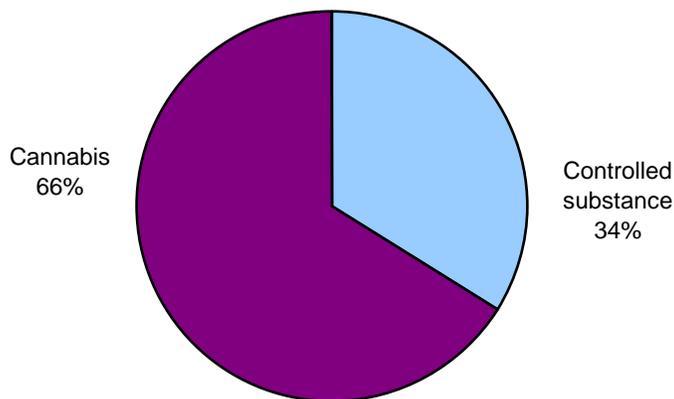
Similar to QCMEG drug arrests, approximately 43 percent of drug arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies in Rock Island County in 2011 were felonies and approximately 57 percent were misdemeanor arrests. In 2011, 66 percent of the drug arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 8 and 9).

Figure 8
Percent of non-QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County by offense type, 2011



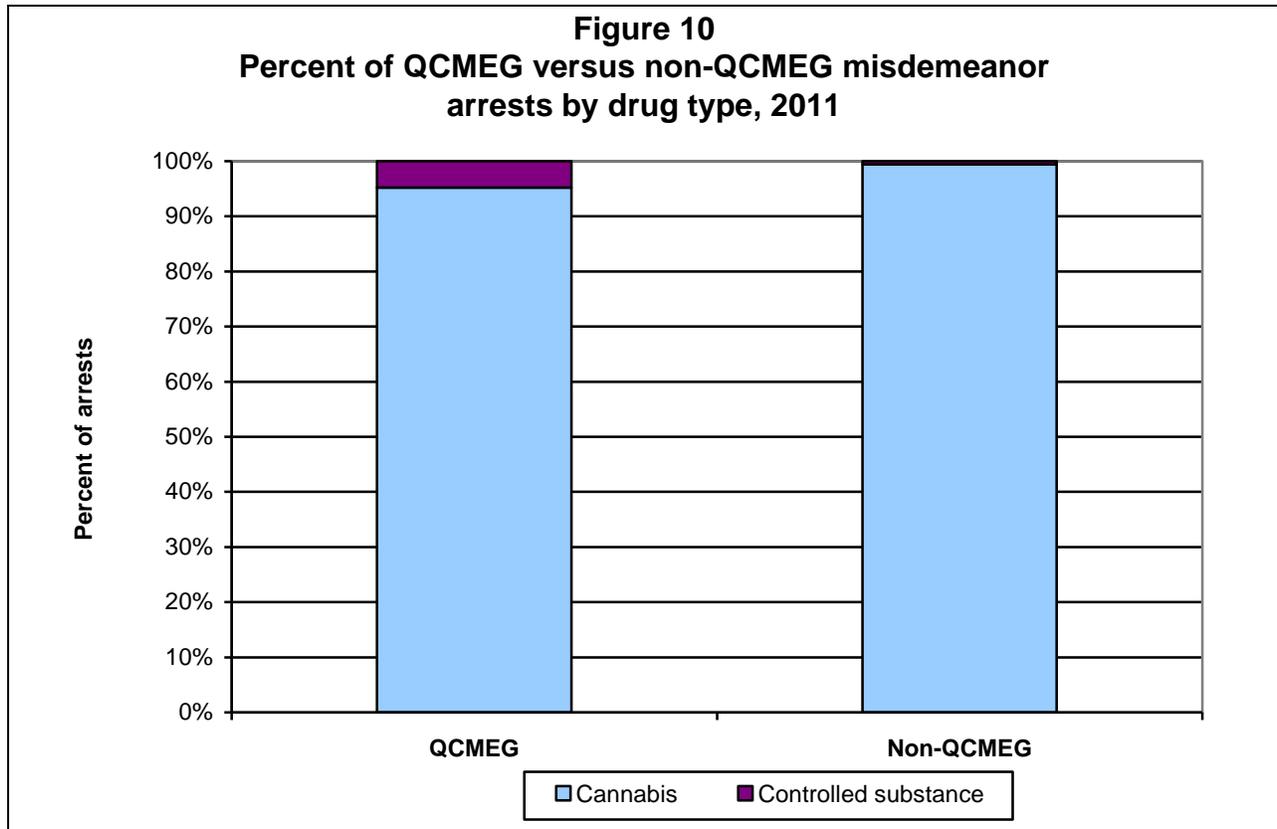
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Figure 9
Percent of non-QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County by violation type, 2011



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

In 2011, QCMEG made 21 misdemeanor arrests. Of those arrests, 95 percent were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. During the same time period, non-QCMEG agencies made 331 misdemeanor arrests, with 99 percent being for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (*Figure 10*).



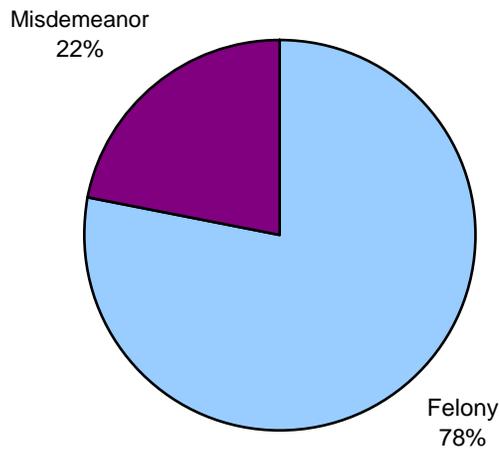
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; QCMEG data reports to ICJIA

Cannabis arrests by class of offense

As seen in *Figure 2*, cannabis arrests in Rock Island County (for both QCMEG and non-QCMEG 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.

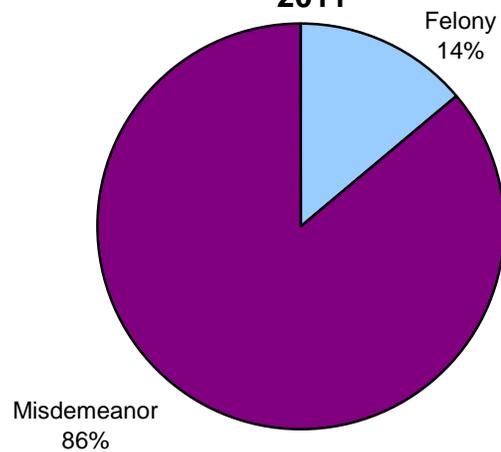
More than two-thirds of the cannabis arrests made by QCMEG were felony arrests. In 2011, 78 percent of the cannabis arrests made by QCMEG were felony arrests compared to 14 percent for non-QCMEG agencies. In contrast, non-QCMEG cannabis arrests were primarily for misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 11 and 12*).

Figure 11
QCMEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011



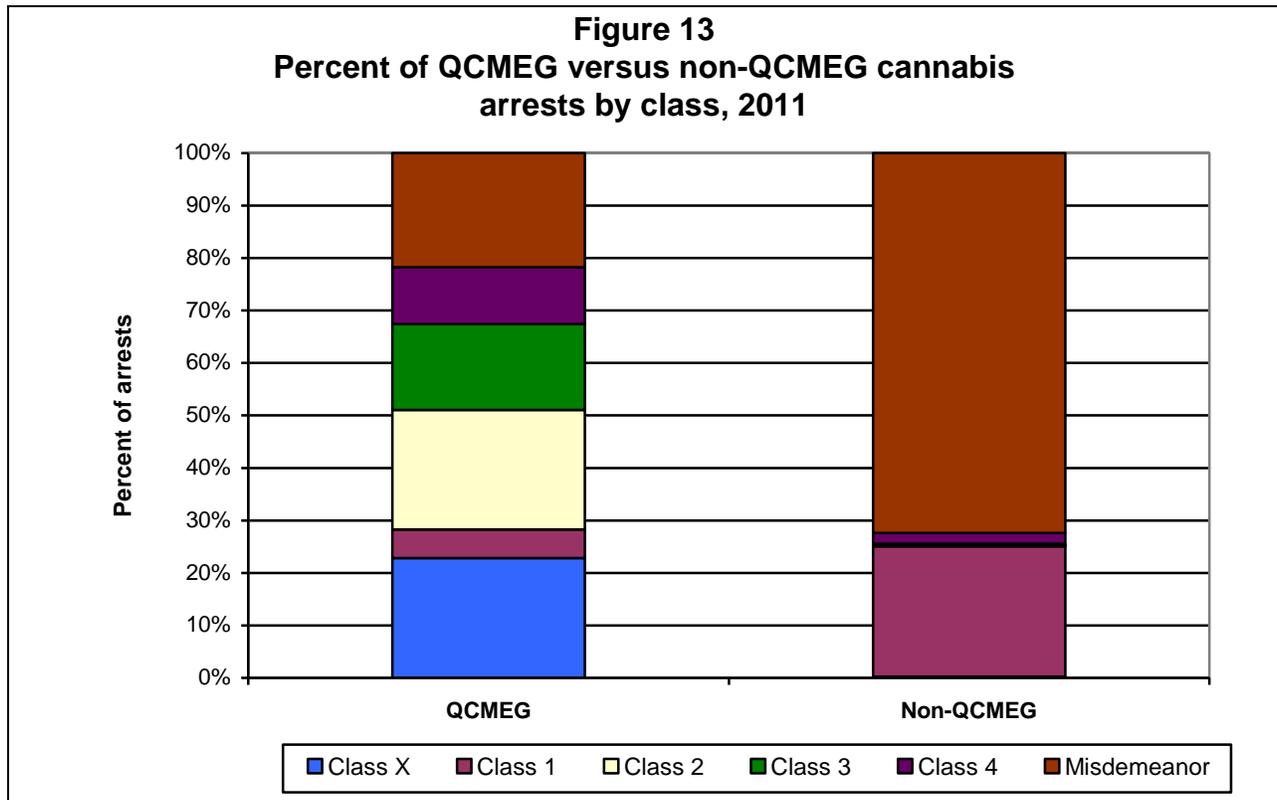
Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Figure 12
Non-QCMEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011



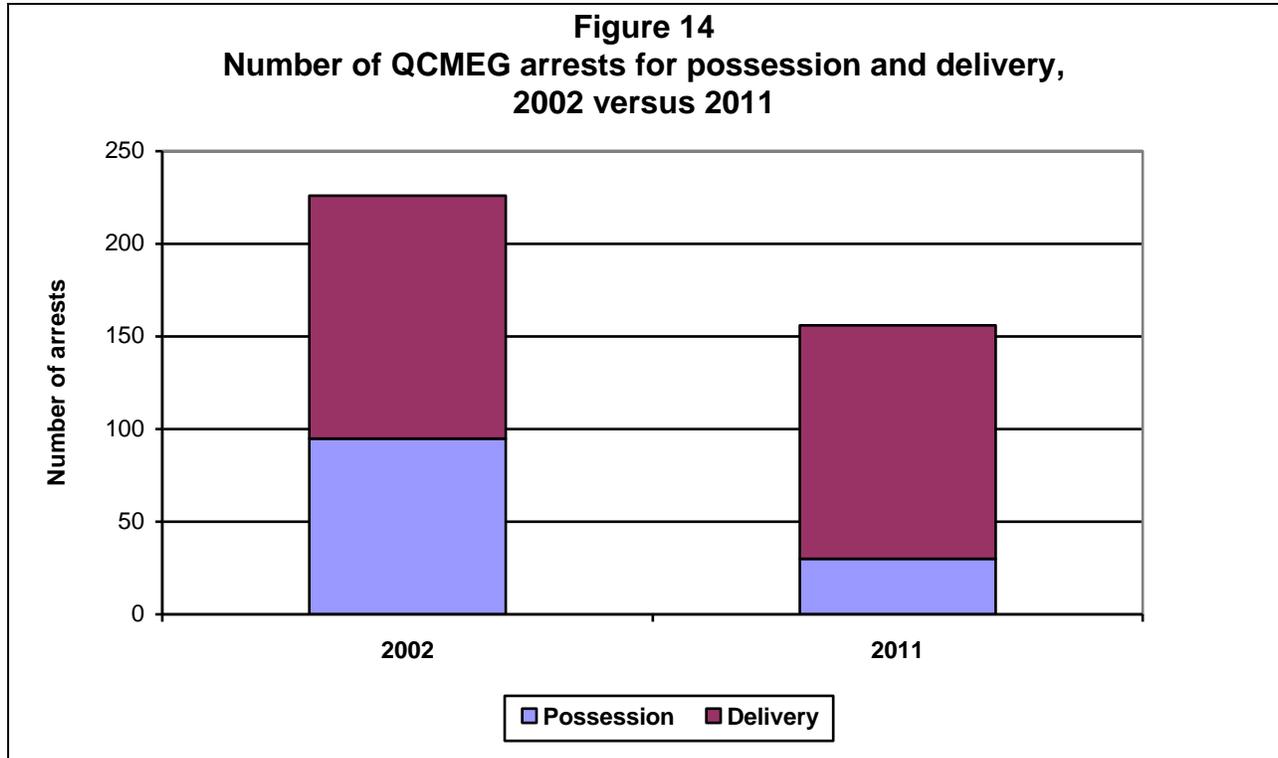
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Figure 13 shows the number of cannabis arrests by class for both QCMEG and non-QCMEG agencies in 2011. Most felony arrests by QCMEG were for Class X felonies. The majority of felony arrests by non-QCMEG agencies were for Class 1 felonies, however, as indicated earlier, felony arrests overall were much less prevalent compared to QCMEG agencies. Approximately 23 percent of QCMEG cannabis arrests were for a Class X felony compared to less than one percent for non-QCMEG agencies.



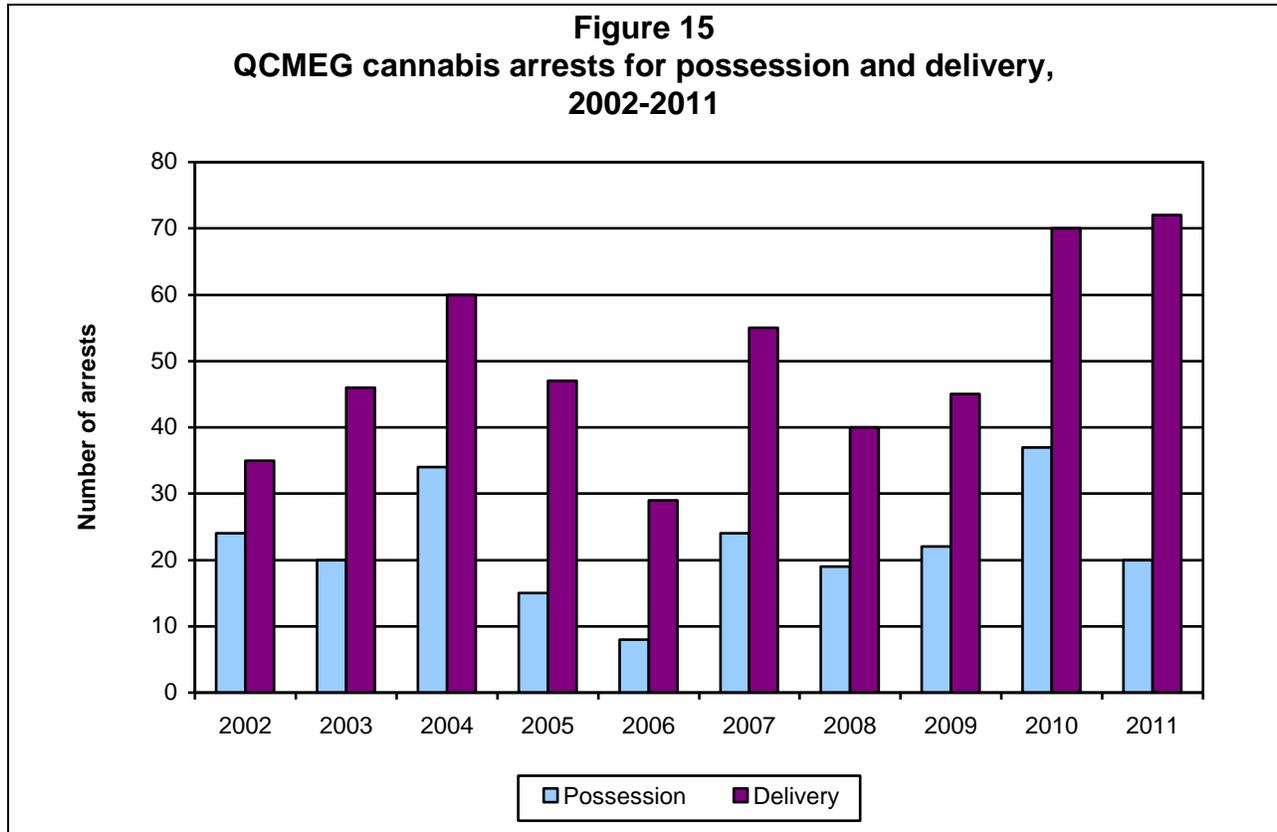
Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA; CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of drug delivery arrests made by QCMEG decreased from 131 to 126 (*Figure 14*). Arrests for drug delivery accounted for 76 percent of all drug arrests made by QCMEG between 2002 and 2011



Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

During the period analyzed, delivery of cannabis accounted for 69 percent of all arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 15). In 2011, 20 arrests were made by QCMEG for possession of cannabis compared to 72 arrests in 2011 for delivery of cannabis compared to 35 arrests for delivery of cannabis in 2002.



Source: QCMEG 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 QCMEG and reported to the ICJIA. QCMEG 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 QCMEG 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 QCMEG fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. In 2007, QCMEG seized over 232 million grams of cannabis and in 2003 QCMEG seized nearly 1.6 million grams of cannabis (*Table 2*). Cannabis accounted for an average of 89 percent of the total drug seizures made by QCMEG from 2002 to 2011.

Table 2
Cannabis seized by QCMEG, 2002-2011

Year	Amount seized in grams
2002	175,228
2003	1,595,805
2004	246,902
2005	408,118
2006	671,528
2007	232,010,562
2008	118,187
2009	65,158
2010	170,956
2011	190,724

Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

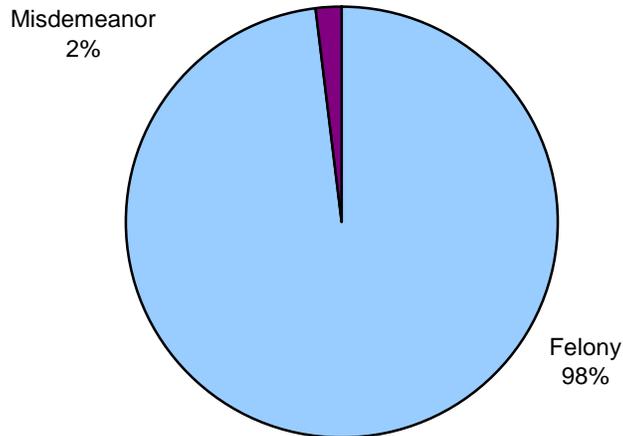
Controlled substance arrests

In Rock Island County, based on CHRI data, arrests for violations of Illinois' *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 20 percent between 2002 and 2011, from 322 to 258 arrests.

QCMEG arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 40 percent from 106 to 64 arrests during that time. In 2011, the 64 arrests for controlled substance violations accounted for 41 percent of all drug arrests reported to the ICJIA by the unit.

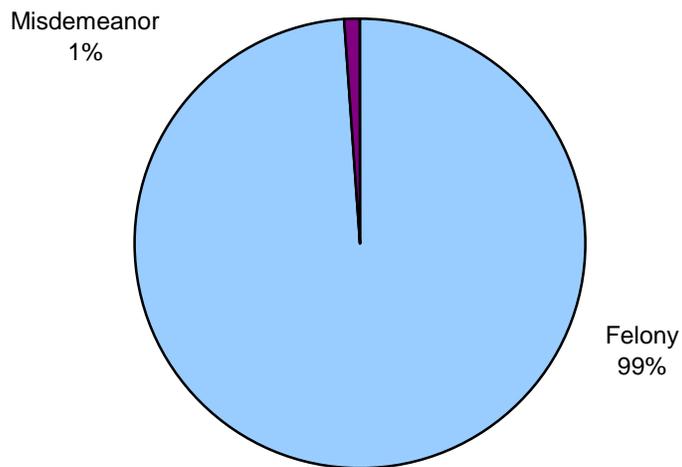
Approximately 98 percent of controlled substance arrests made by QCMEG were felony arrests, compared to 99 percent for non-QCMEG controlled substance arrests in 2011 (*Figure 16 and 17*).

Figure 16
QCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011



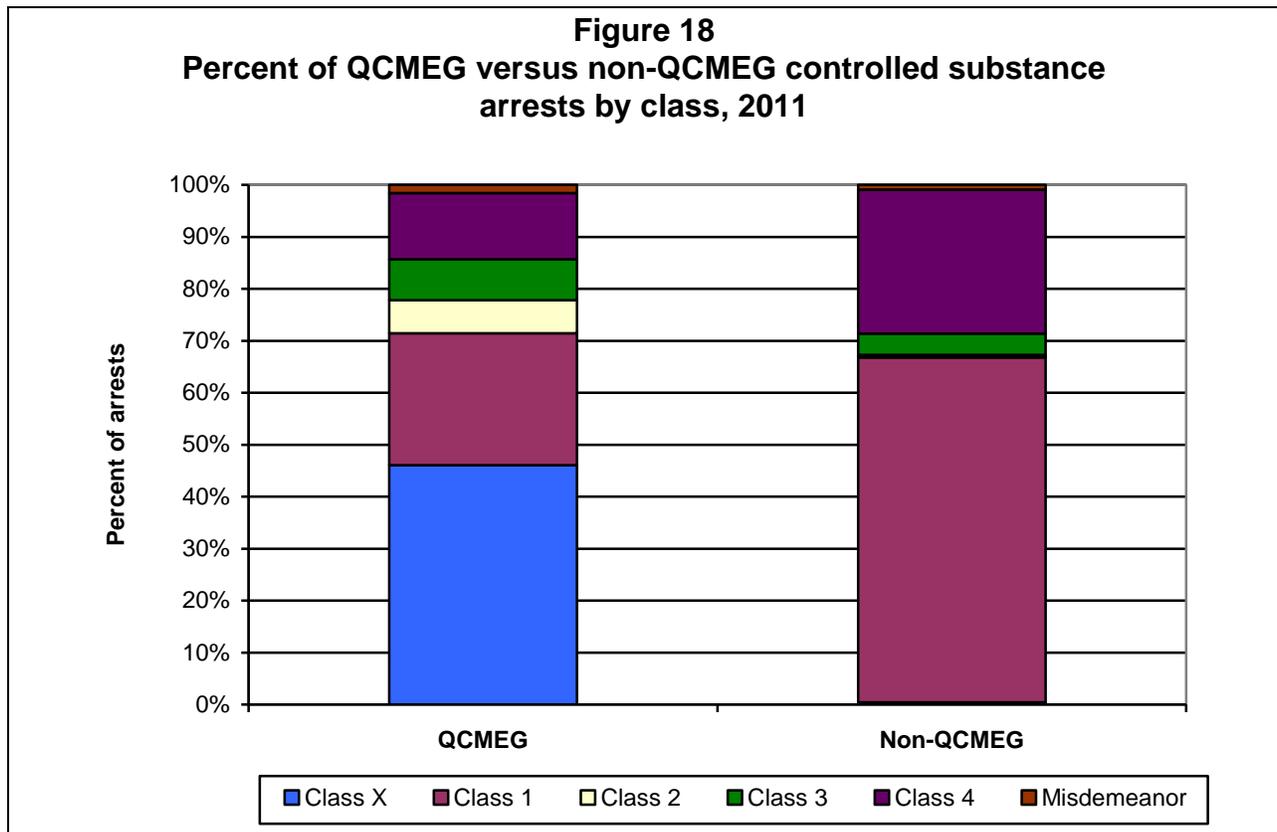
Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Figure 17
Non-QCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

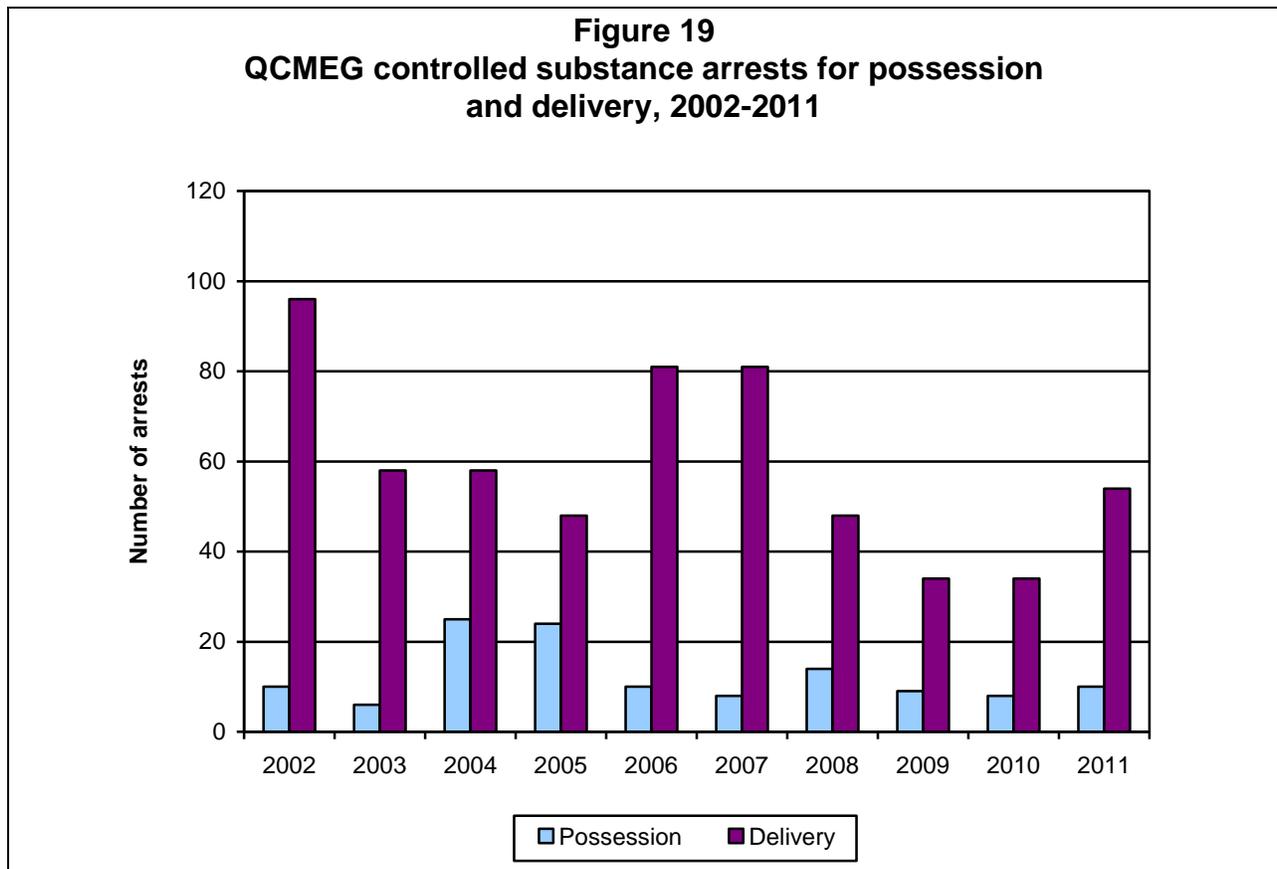
Figure 18 shows the number of controlled substance arrests by class for both QCMEG and non-QCMEG agencies in 2011. Approximately 46 percent of QCMEG controlled substance arrests were for Class X felonies. Also, approximately one-quarter of the controlled substance arrests made by QCMEG were for Class 1 felonies and 13 percent were for Class 4 felonies. The highest portion, 66 percent, of controlled substance arrests by non-QCMEG agencies were for Class 1 felonies.



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

QCMEG drug arrests by type

As indicated previously, the majority of all drug arrests reported by QCMEG 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 QCMEG decreased from 96 to 54. During the same period, arrests for drug delivery accounted for nearly 70 percent of all drug arrests made by QCMEG between 2002 and 2011. Arrests for delivery of controlled substances accounted for 83 percent of the total number of arrests made for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act* (Figure 19).



Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Cocaine seizures

Between 2002 and 2011, QCMEG seized 584,802 grams of cocaine (*Table 3*). QCMEG seized over 131,000 grams of cocaine in 2004. This is in comparison to a low seizure of 297 grams in 2011.

During the period analyzed, powder cocaine, rather than crack cocaine, accounted for nearly all cocaine seized by QCMEG and the region covered by QCMEG (99.5 percent).

Table 3
Cocaine* seized by QCMEG, 2002-2011

Year	Amount seized in grams
2002	19,406
2003	173,963
2004	131,110
2005	86,513
2006	132,976
2007	31,996
2008	6,138
2009	1,306
2010	1,097
2011	297

*Includes both powder and crack cocaine seizures
Source: QCMEG 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.

QCMEG seized 3,111 grams of methamphetamine between 2002 and 2011, including 908 grams in 2007 and 232 grams in 2011. QCMEG also seized 175 grams of heroin between 2002 and 2011. QCMEG has had an increase in prescription drug seizures over the past three years, seizing 165 grams in 2009, 520 grams in 2010, and 1,569 grams in 2011. The amounts all of other controlled substance seizures are small relative to cocaine seizures.

Trends in prosecutions for drug offenses and all felonies

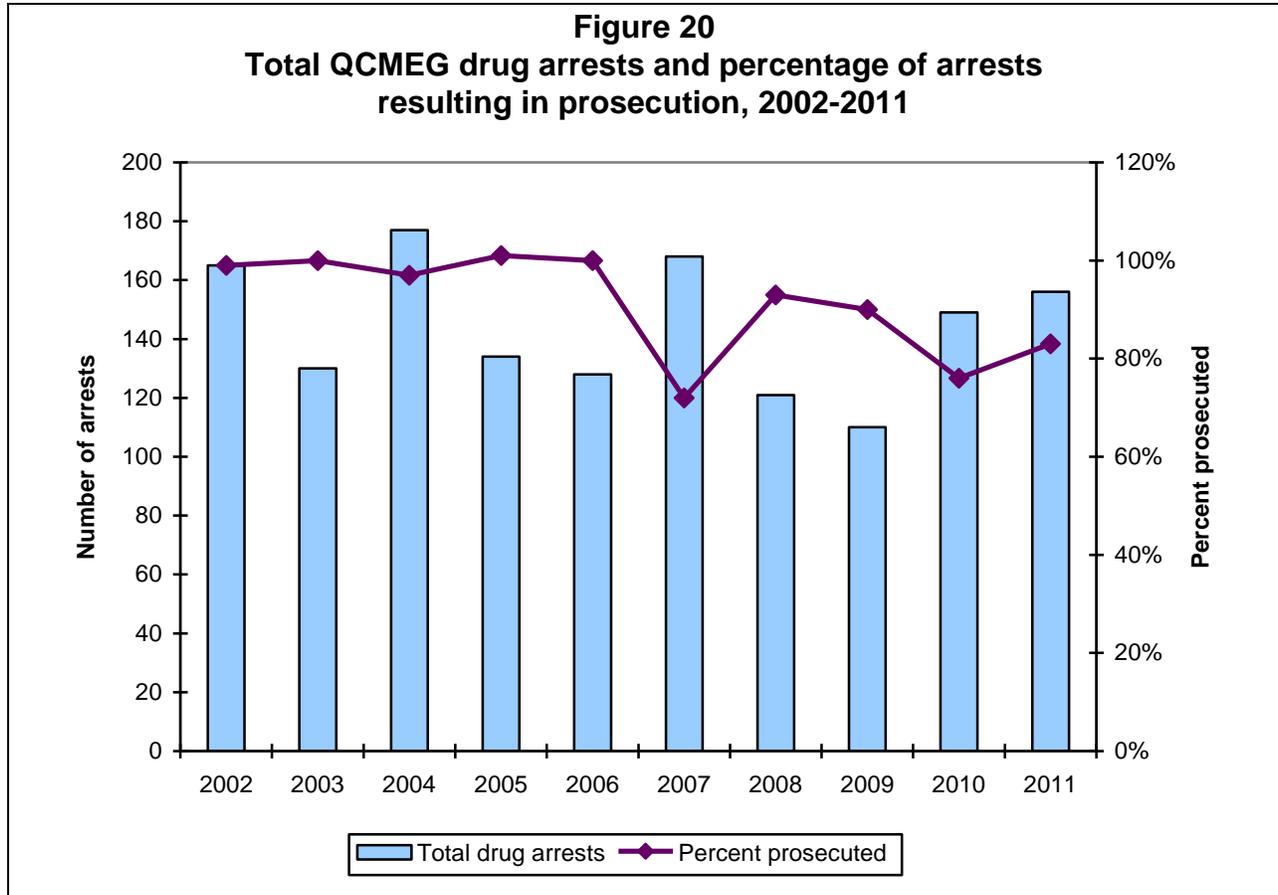
Drug prosecutions

Between 2002 and 2011, 1,303 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County. 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, QCMEG drug arrests decreased 5 percent, from 165 in 2002 to 156 in 2011 (*Figure 20*). During that time period, 91 percent of all drug arrests by QCMEG resulted in prosecution. Forty-eight percent of QCMEG 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: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Drug convictions

Between 2002 and 2011, 80 percent of the 1,303 drug offenders prosecuted as a result of QCMEG activity were convicted (n=1,038). Convictions for controlled substances accounted for 50 percent of all QCMEG initiated prosecutions during the period analyzed. 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 QCMEG is currently the only readily available information on drug convictions.

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-QCMEG convictions by subtracting drug convictions reported by QCMEG from the total drug convictions in CHRI for Rock Island County, as both appear in CHRI. In 2011, there were 226 drug convictions in Rock Island County. QCMEG reported that they had 106 task force drug convictions in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of QCMEG arrests were made within Rock Island County, then 47 percent of the Rock Island County drug convictions were from QCMEG. QCMEG convictions accounted for approximately 51 percent, or 74 of the 145, *Cannabis Control Act* convictions and 35 percent, or 28 of the 81, *Controlled Substance Act* convictions in Rock Island County (four QCMEG convictions were not classified as either cannabis or controlled substance convictions).

Drug offender sentencing trends

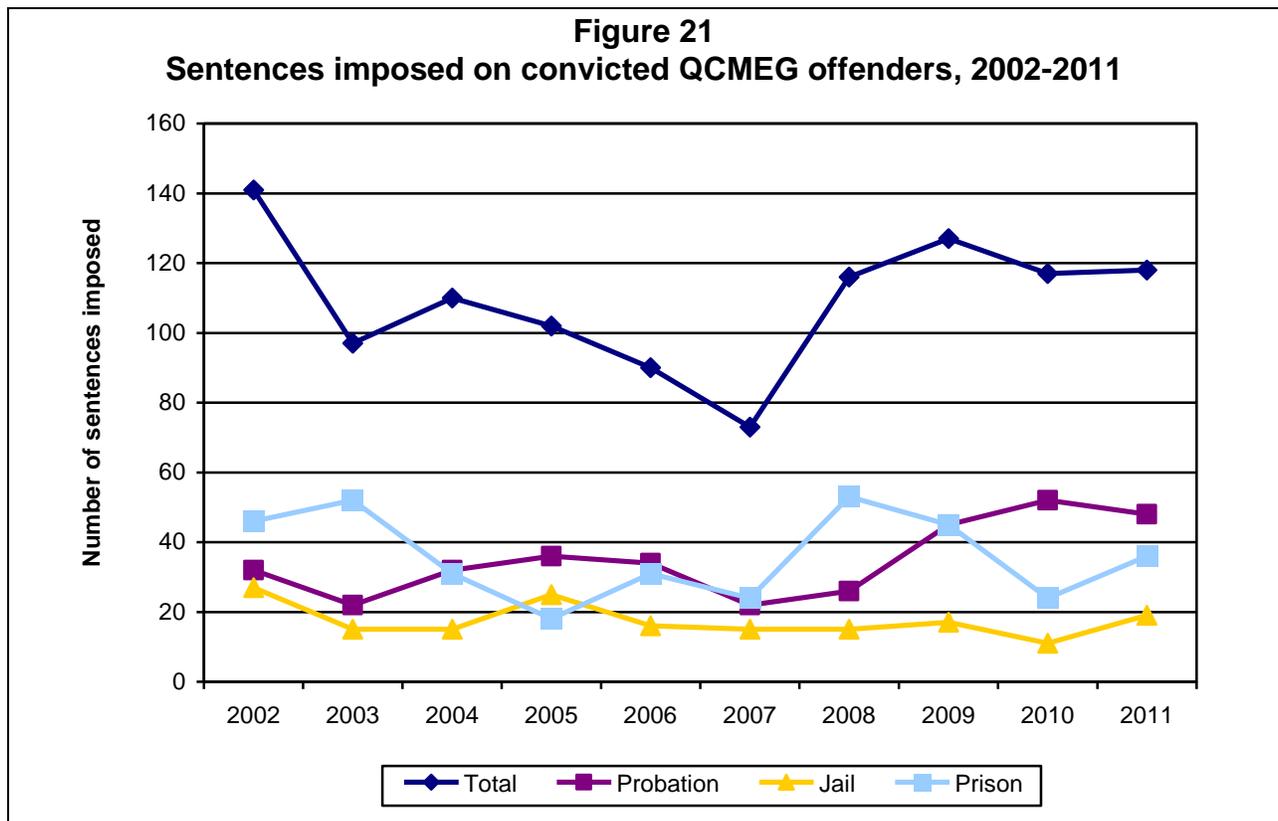
Under Illinois law, those convicted of most Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 felonies can be sentenced to a period of probation, periodic imprisonment, conditional discharge, imprisonment, a fine, restitution to the victim, and/or participation in an impact incarceration program. A fine or restitution cannot be 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 QCMEG, between 2002 and 2011, the number of QCMEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced for their offenses decreased, from 141 to 118.

According to QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA, between 2002 and 2011 the number of convicted QCMEG drug offenders sentenced to prison (including Federal Bureau of Prisons) decreased from 46 to 36. The number of convicted QCMEG drug offenders sentenced to county jail (which could include jail in combination with probation) also decreased from 27 to 19. The number increased for probation sentences, from 32 to 48 (Figure 21). In 2011, 15 drug offenders had a sentence of ‘other’.

In 2011, probation sentences were most common among convicted QCMEG drug offenders (41 percent), followed by prison sentences (31 percent), and jail sentences (16 percent). The remaining 12 percent consisted of sentences to conditional discharge, fines and suspended sentence.

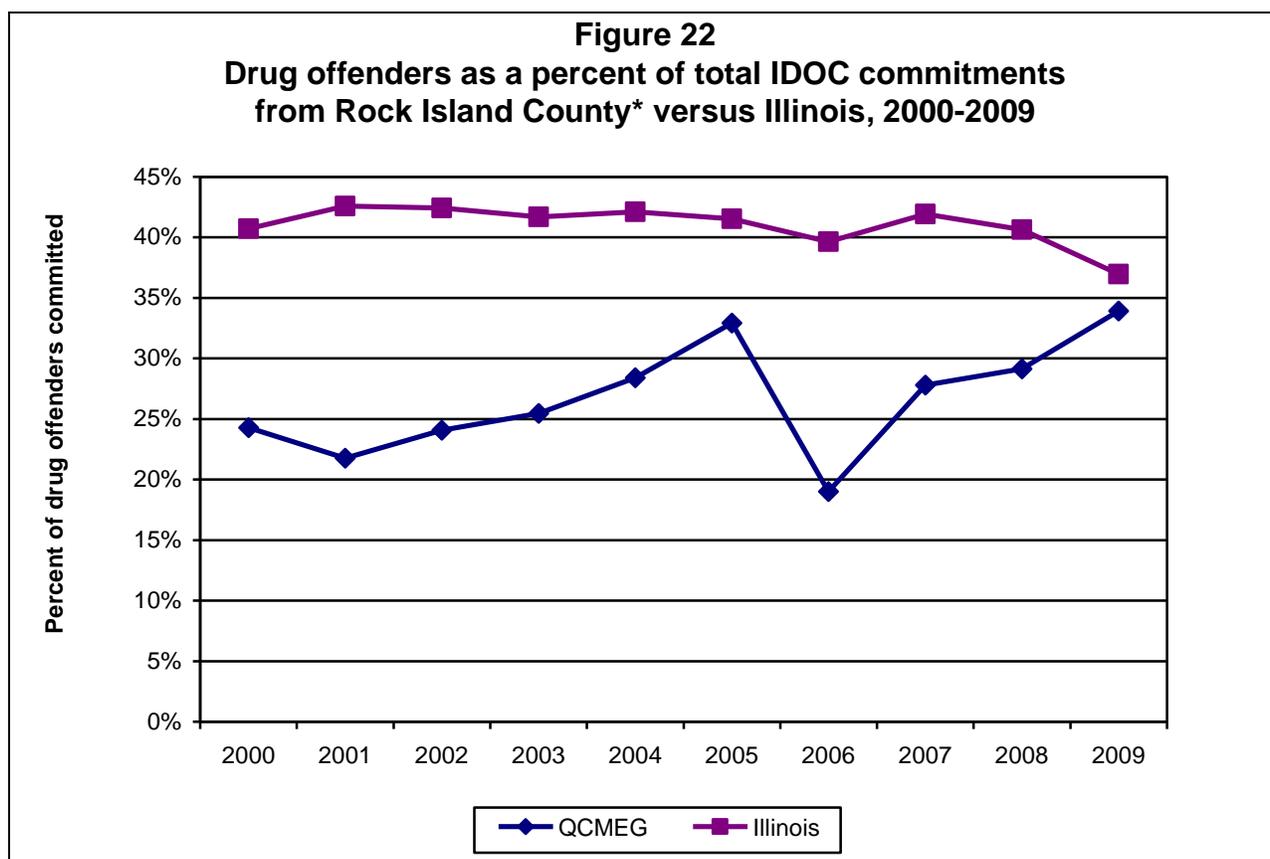


Source: QCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Sentences to corrections

According to the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC), between state fiscal years³ 2000 and 2009, the number of new court commitments to corrections for drug arrests made by Rock Island County local law enforcement agencies and QCMEG combined decreased slightly, from 60 to 59. The number of drug offender commitments resulting from QCMEG arrests more than doubled, from eight to 17 between 2001 and 2010. IDOC commitments from QCMEG cases accounted for 29 percent of all drug-law violators sentenced to IDOC from the region, up from 13 percent in 2001⁴.

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 Rock Island County. In 2000, drug offenses accounted for 24 percent of all Rock Island County-related commitments to IDOC, compared to 34 percent in 2009 (*Figure 22*).



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

³ 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.

⁴ While total prison sentences are obtained from IDOC data, those resulting from QCMEG arrests are obtained from QCMEG data reports.

Drug sentences to corrections by offense class

The offense class for drug sentences to corrections in Rock Island County (which includes offenders arrested by QCMEG) also was examined. Class 1 felonies accounted for the largest proportion (38 percent) of sentences to IDOC for drug offenses during the period studied, followed by Class 4 felonies (34 percent), Class 2 felonies (12 percent), Class X felonies (9 percent) and Class 3 felonies (7 percent). Jail data is not currently available by offense type.

Between 2001 and 2010, the number of Class 1 felony sentences in Rock Island County more than doubled, from 7 to 18, while Class 2 felony sentences increased from 1 to 8, Class 3 felony sentences remained unchanged at 3, and Class 4 felony sentences decreased from 17 to 3. The number of Class X felonies increased from 1 to 8, 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.

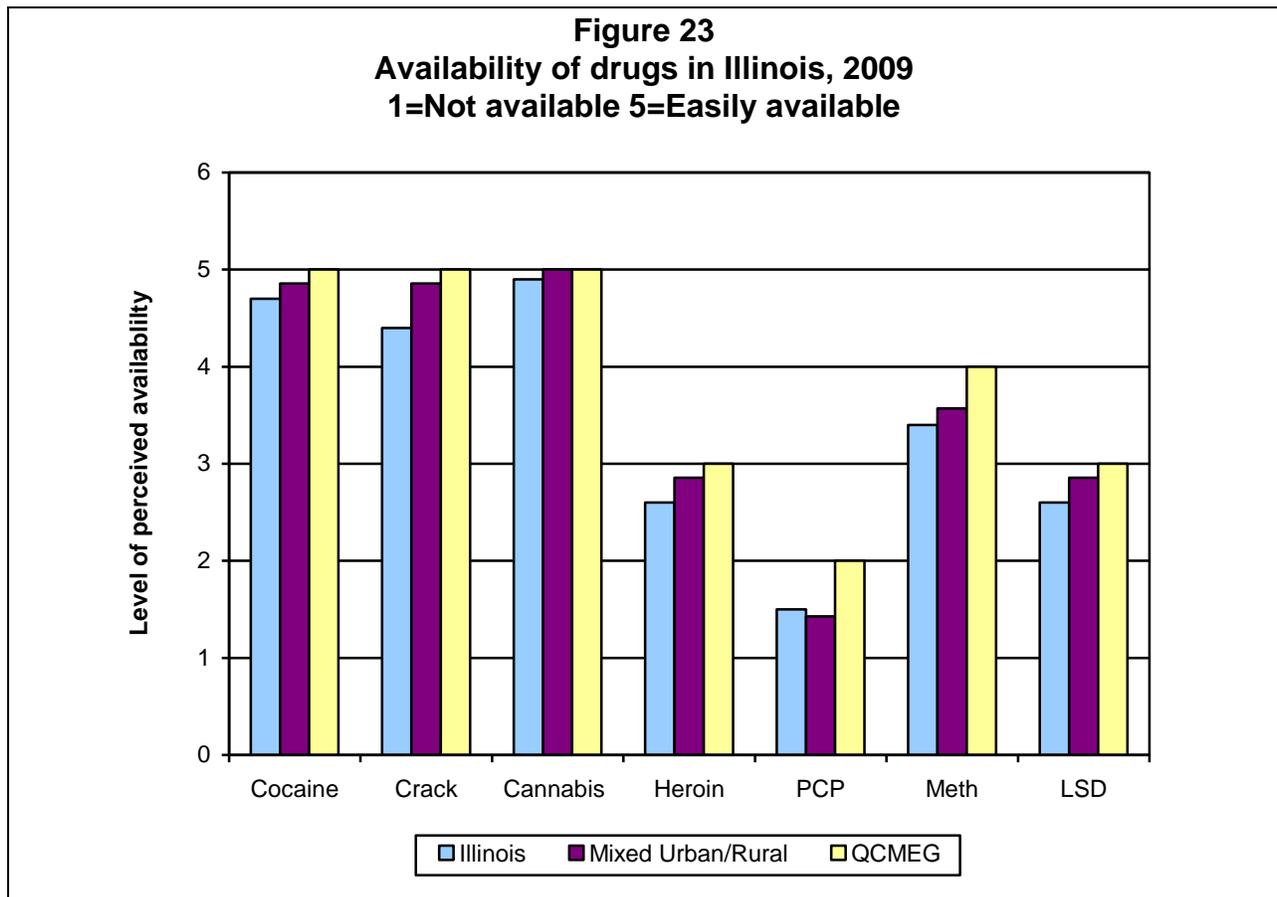
When applicable, responses from the 2000 survey and the most recent 2009 survey were compared. Results were analyzed by region. MEG and task force regions are classified as being either mostly urban, mostly rural, or mixed urban/rural, and were compared to similar units for purposes of this report.

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 QCMEG. The reported availability of heroin and PCP decreased slightly in the region, while LSD and meth increased slightly. In all MEGs and task forces in mixed urban/rural regions similar to QCMEG, the perceived availability of heroin increased slightly while PCP, methamphetamine, and LSD decreased slightly.

Methamphetamine was reported as moderately available across Illinois. QCMEG reported that meth was more available in this region, similar to the perceptions of other MEGs and task forces in mixed urban/rural regions. PCP and heroin appeared to be more readily available in this region than other mixed urban/rural areas (*Figure 23*).

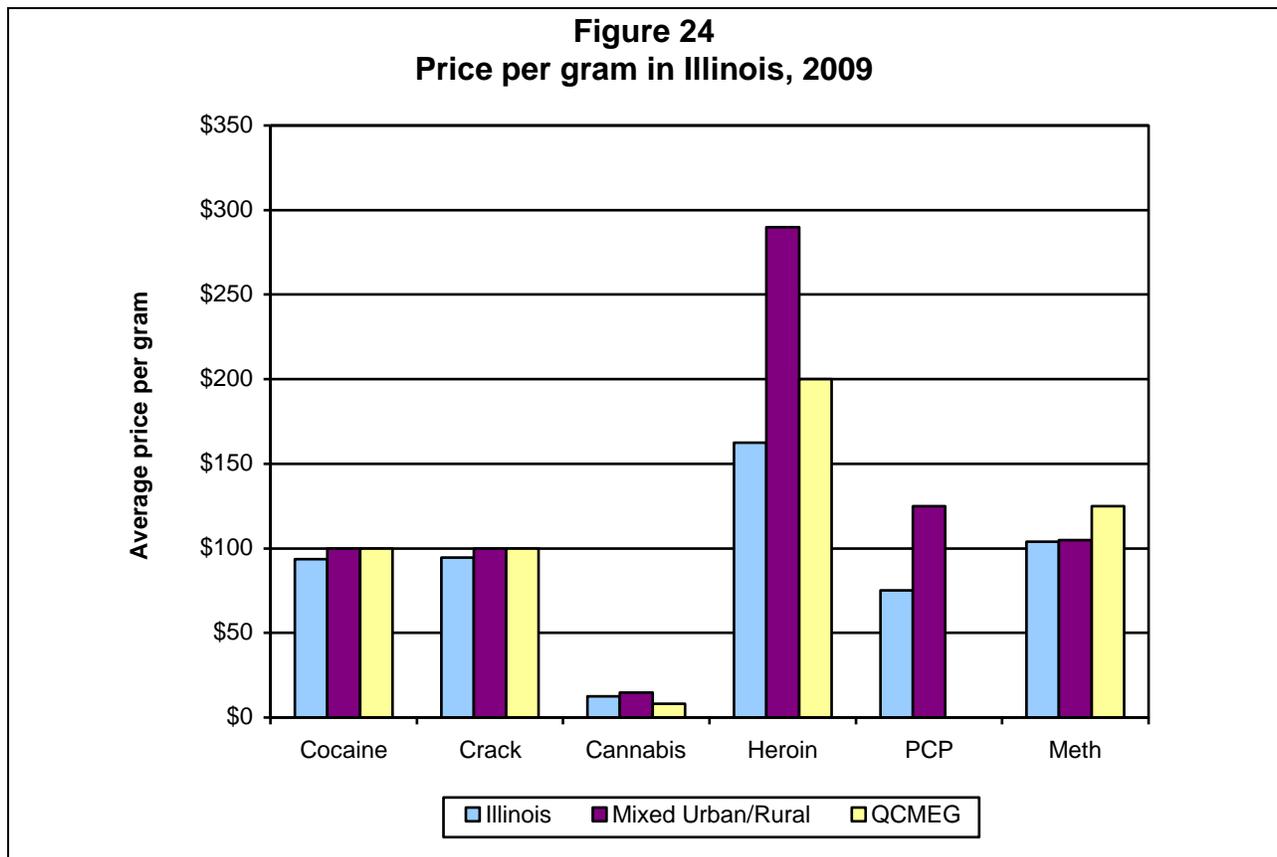


Source: Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

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 mixed urban/rural regions.

There were changes in the average prices of cannabis and heroin in the region covered by QCMEG. 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 \$8 per gram in the QCMEG region compared to \$1 per gram in the QCMEG region in 2000. The average price of heroin was reported as \$162 per gram statewide, \$290 in mixed urban/rural regions, and \$200 per gram in the region covered by QCMEG. The average price of methamphetamine was slightly higher in the QCMEG region than in other areas of the state. The average price of PCP was not reported for QCMEG (*Figure 24*).



Source: ICJIA Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

Conclusion

Twelve officers, one office manager and one criminal analyst were assigned to the QCMEG in 2010. Seven of the officers were assigned by participating agencies from Illinois and five from Iowa.

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by QCMEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased, from 165 to 156 with violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounting for more drug arrests made by QCMEG for one-half of 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-QCMEG agencies decreased from 687 to 579. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* consistently accounted for more drug arrests made by non-QCMEG agencies throughout the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of QCMEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* increased 56 percent, from 59 to 92, while arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* more decreased 39 percent, from 106 to 64. In 2011, 41 percent of all drug arrests made by QCMEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*.

The quantity of cannabis seized by QCMEG fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. QCMEG also seized 584,802 grams of cocaine between 2002 and 2011.

Between 2002 and 2011, 1,303 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of QCMEG arrests in Rock Island County. During the period examined, the number of QCMEG drug arrests decreased 5 percent, and 91 percent of all drug arrests by QCMEG resulted in prosecution. Forty-eight percent of QCMEG drug offender prosecutions during this period were for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Using CHRI data, it was determined that in 2011, there were 226 drug convictions in Rock Island County. QCMEG reported that they had 106 task force drug convictions in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of QCMEG arrests were made within Rock Island County, then 47 percent of the Rock Island County drug convictions were from QCMEG. QCMEG convictions accounted for approximately 51 percent, or 74 of the 145, Cannabis Control Act convictions and 35 percent, or 28 of the 81, Controlled Substance Act convictions in Rock Island County.

According to the data reports provided by QCMEG, in 2011, the majority of QCMEG drug offenders were sentenced to probation. Of the 118 offenders sentenced in 2011, 41 percent were sentenced to probation, 31 percent were sentenced to prison, and 16 percent were sentenced to a combination of jail or jail and probation. The remaining 12 percent consisted of sentences to conditional discharge, fines and suspended sentence

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.

QCMEG reported that cocaine, crack, cannabis, heroin, PCP, methamphetamine and LSD were all more readily available in Rock Island County than in other areas of the state.

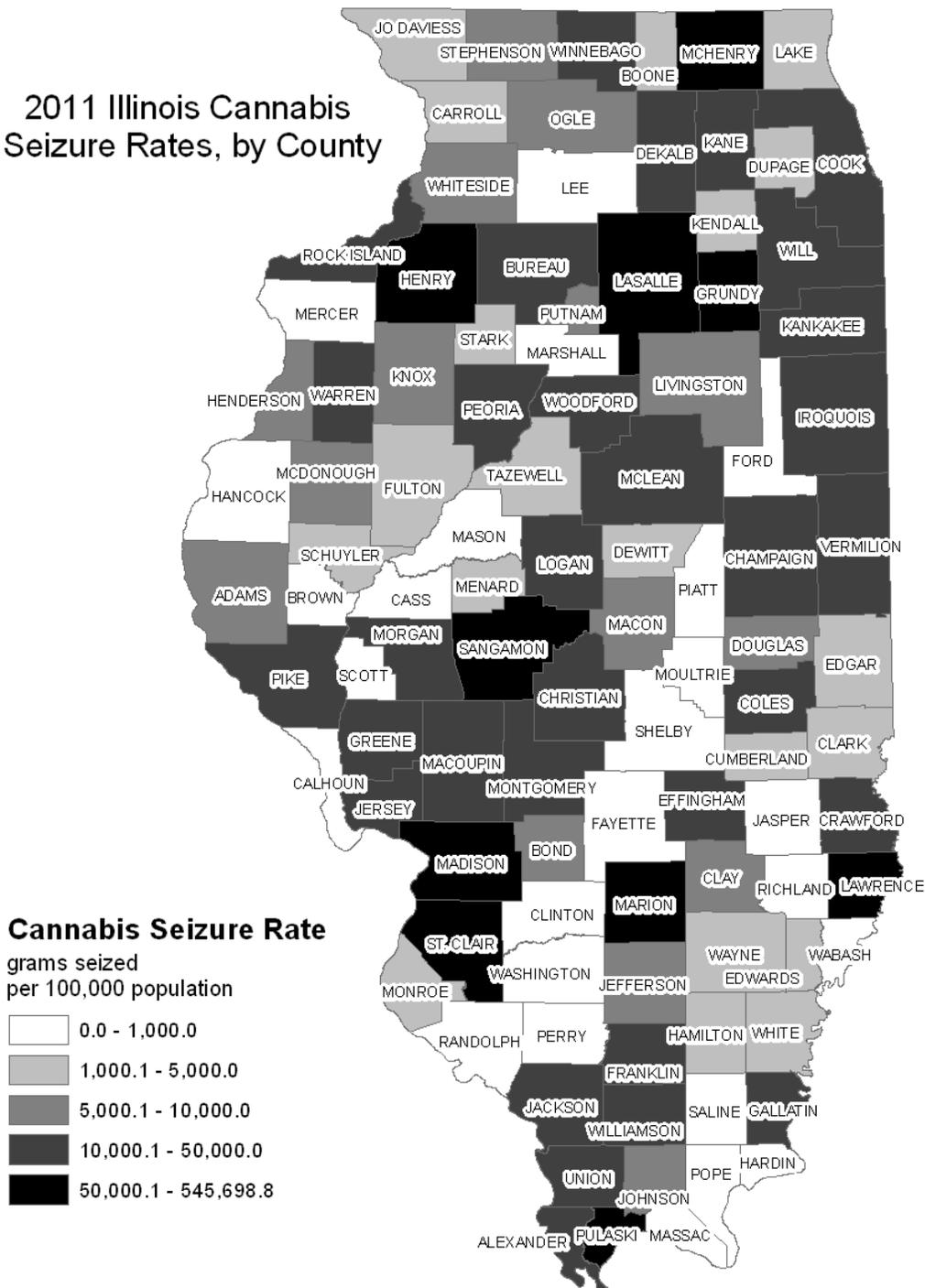
The reported 2009 average prices of cocaine, crack, and cannabis were relatively consistent statewide and in mixed urban/rural regions. Methamphetamine had a higher average price in the QCMEG region than other regions, but heroin had a slightly lower average price.

References

- Moore, M. (1990). Supply reduction and drug law enforcement. In Tonry, M. & Wilson (Eds.) *Drugs and Crime, Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- National Institute of Justice. (2003). Evaluating multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement task forces. *NIJ Journal*, 250, 40-42.
- Olson, D. E., Albertson, S., Brees, J., Cobb, A., Feliciano, L., Juergens, R., Ramker, G. F., & Bauer, R. (2002). *New approaches and techniques for examining and evaluating multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.
- Olson, D. (2004). Specialized drug enforcement units: Strategies for local police departments. In Phillips, P.W. (Ed.), *Policing and Special Units*, (pp. 181–199). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Reichert, J. (2012). *Examining multi-jurisdictional drug task force operations in Illinois*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.
- Smith, B.W., Novak, K.J., Frank, J., & Travis III, L.F. (2000). Multi-jurisdictional drug task forces: An analysis of impacts. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 28, 543-556.

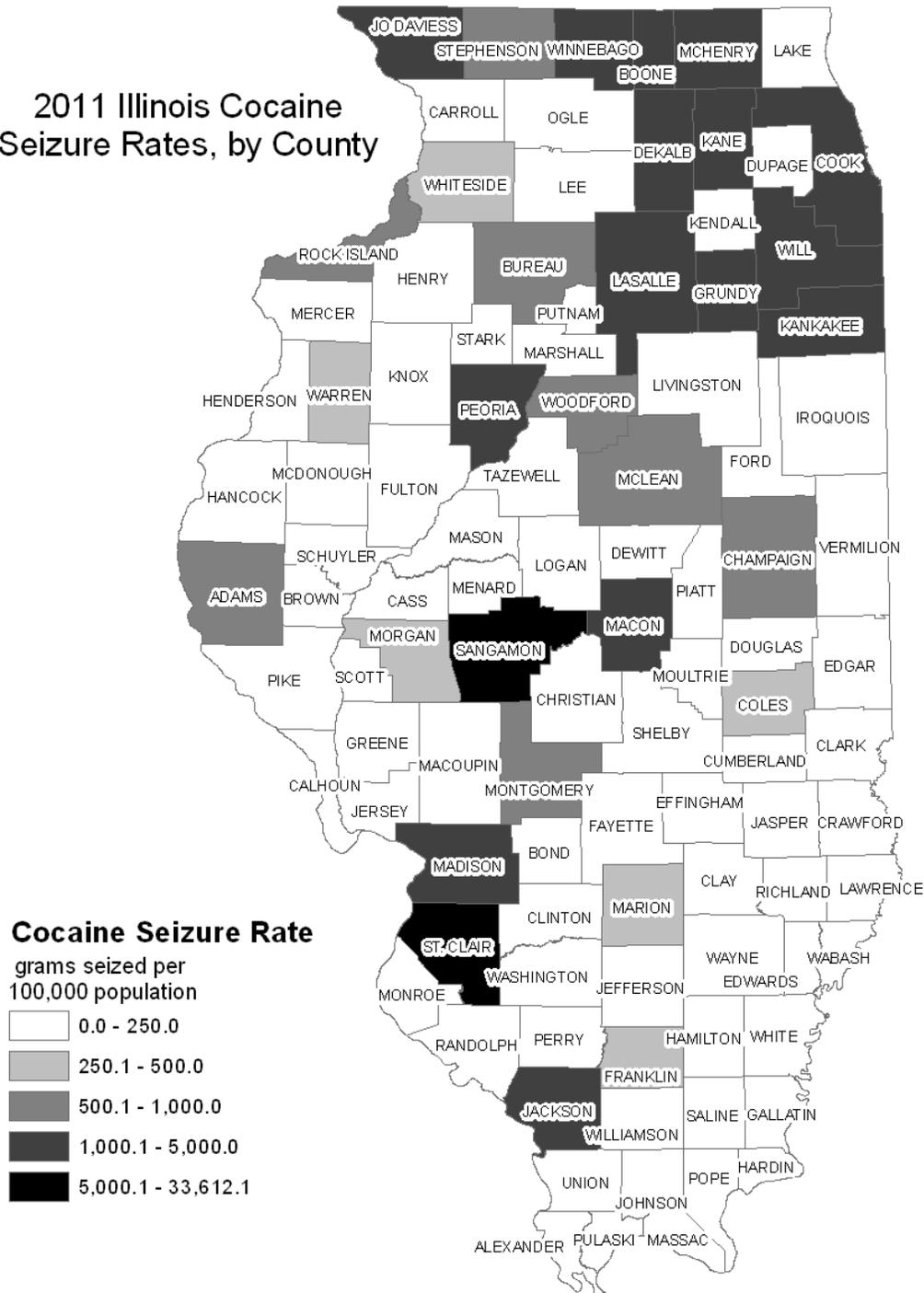
Appendix A

2011 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County



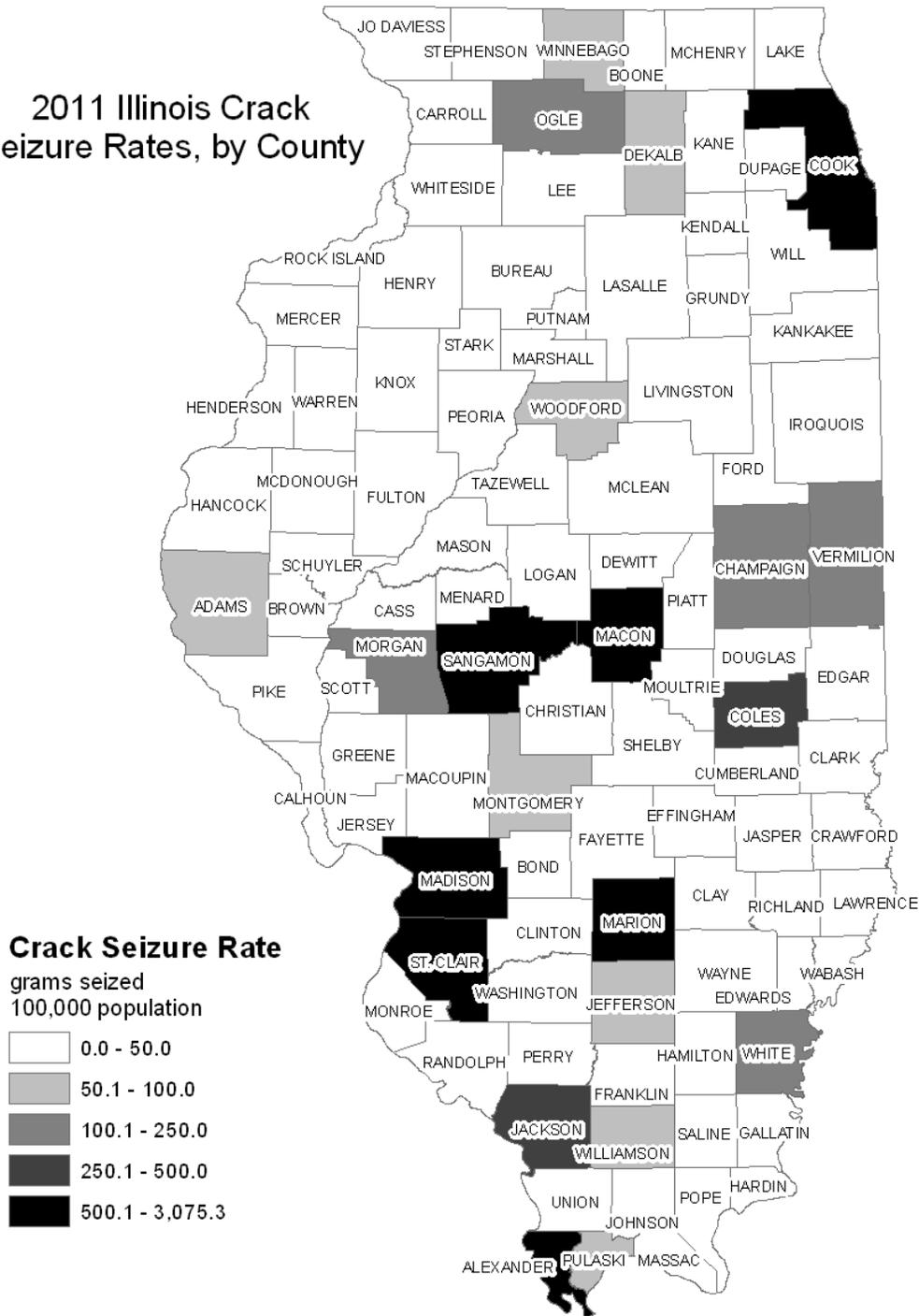
Appendix B

2011 Illinois Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County



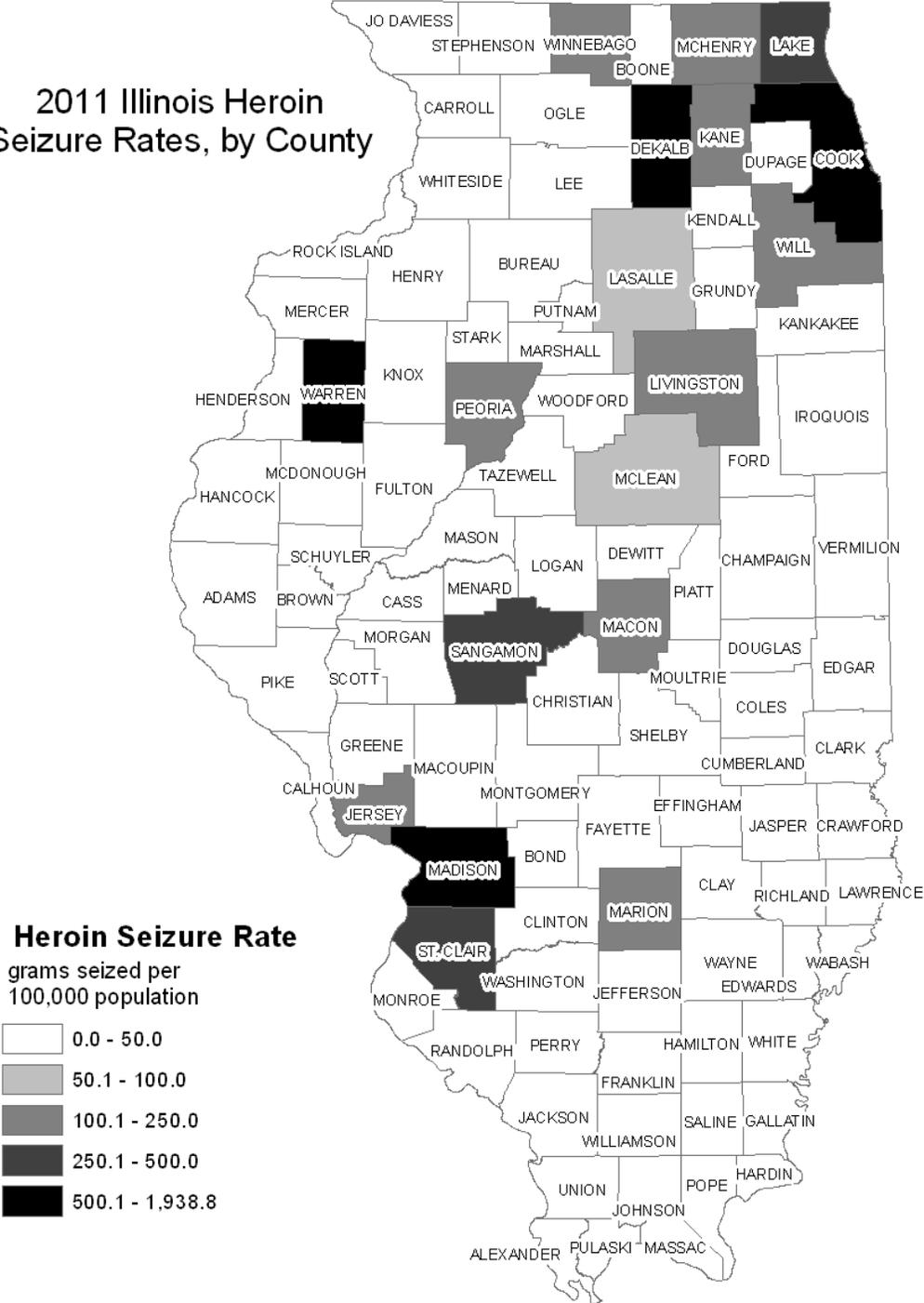
Appendix C

2011 Illinois Crack Seizure Rates, by County



Appendix D

2011 Illinois Heroin Seizure Rates, by County



Appendix E

2011 Illinois Meth Seizure Rates, by County

