

New Mexico Statewide Drug Strategy

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Drug Enforcement Advisory Council
DEAC

New Mexico Statewide Drug Strategy

Introduction

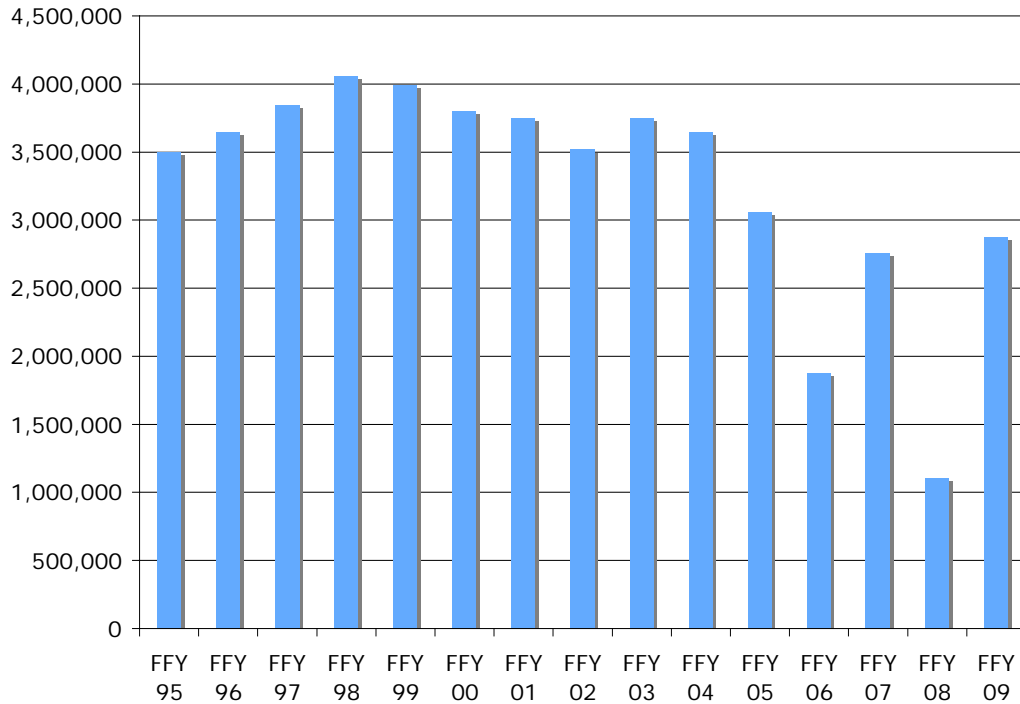
New Mexico's Justice Assistance Grant (JAG)

New Mexico has received block grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance for over a decade. The Edward Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Program, Drug Control and System Improvement Formula (DCSI) Grant Program, have been the primary statewide drug enforcement funding source for programs outside of the New Mexico State Police. The Byrne funding is awarded to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) as the State's Criminal Justice Authority.

This funding has been awarded to community level projects over this period in up to twenty-eight program areas which have been prioritized by the State. This has primarily supported Multi Jurisdictional Task Forces, prosecution/alternative sentencing activities, with lesser funding amounts for Gang Task Force activity, Criminal Justice Records Improvement initiatives, evaluation, and in some years, domestic violence intervention and treatment programs within a community corrections setting. The core focus of all these activities has been on enforcement strategies targeting the trafficking of illegal drugs.

The Byrne funding is awarded by the Department of Public Safety on an annual basis, and is monitored by the Grants Management Bureau of the Department. While there was some fluctuation from year to year of the funding level, in general it was relatively stable from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1995 to FFY 2004, ranging from a low of \$3,519,173 in FFY 2002 to a high of \$4,056,434 in FFY 1998.

A reorganization of the federal law enforcement block grant funding to states occurred five years ago, with a resulting change in the funding mechanism, its funding level, and in its permissible program areas. A state-by-state allocation formula was followed for these awards. In 2005, the funding formula for the state block grant portion reduced New Mexico's award by 28%. The permissible program areas for the utilization of these funds were reduced from twenty-eight to seven categories. In FFY 2006, the JAG award to DPS was reduced by an additional 25%. Funding since that time has remained low compared to the earlier high levels of grant awards, and somewhat volatile, as the next chart illustrates. In the 2009 fiscal year, the JAG funding was increased in a one time allocation through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA). This additional funding provided more than \$11,000,000 for public safety efforts in New Mexico. The chart below shows base funding levels since 1995.



The DEAC has created an intensive focus on illegal drugs, violent crime, criminal gang activity, and the nexus of crime across these three areas. Evidence-based practices are used extensively. Coordination and information sharing among law enforcement agencies to recognize and address both domestic and international terrorism is an on-going emphasis. The infusion of funding from ARRA has been vital in retaining jobs and rehiring essential staff whose positions had been eliminated during 2008 budget cuts. After two years of ARRA funding, the base funding level will be, once gain, the only funding to support strong, cross-jurisdictional drug enforcement and criminal gang interdiction. With this in mind, the DEAC makes the following priority recommendations in this Drug Strategy for the purpose of reducing illegal drug and other criminal activity in New Mexico’s communities.

Program Priorities

The Drug Enforcement Advisory Council (DEAC) endorses a regionally coordinated approach to New Mexico’s Drug Strategy. The Council recommends the Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force approach as the foundation and the force required to *eradicate drug trafficking, drug abuse, and criminal activity associated with illicit drug abuse* in New Mexico. The seven Regional Narcotics Task Forces, with the New Mexico State Police, New Mexico Gang Task Force, and Southwest Investigative Fugitive Team, must continue to collaborate with Federal law enforcement agencies and HIDTA to disrupt and dismantle drug trafficking organizations. The coordination of intelligence and the exchange of information among Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies are crucial elements of the drug strategy that must continue to build upon the existing foundation.

Federal programs, such as the JAG and HIDTA, allow law enforcement agencies to enhance enforcement activities, provide focus to regional and local problems, and facilitate cooperation between criminal justice agencies. In addition, collaboration of enforcement operations, intelligence collection and sharing, and training programs significantly contribute to the overall activities conducted by the Task Forces.

1. New Mexico has witnessed a dramatic increase in serious and violent crime and drug trafficking along its border with Mexico, including substantial direct involvement of Mexican drug cartels that use murder as a weapon of intimidation. As part of this phenomenon, murders have increased; weapons, drugs, and cash are transported in bulk shipments north and south; children are exploited to smuggle narcotics. *The DEAC recommends a coordinated effort by New Mexico authorities, both state and local, with Federal agencies and the National Guard, to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reduce this violent nexus of criminal activity.*
2. Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces are one of the few law enforcement structures that have proven to be most effective at the local level in addressing complex drug trafficking organizations, coordination, and cross-jurisdictional investigations. The cross agency strengths that result from the collaboration among local, state, and federal law enforcement officers are substantial. The most successful task forces in the state have historically had the strong presence of local, state, and federal officers in intelligence gathering, operational planning and execution. *The DEAC recommends the support of these structures wherever possible at the county or regional level and the prioritization of funding for these structures.*
3. The New Mexico State Police function in many capacities, often as a Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Task Force, often in roles as part of regional task forces, and often as Impact Teams that complement the work of narcotics activities by focusing on criminal activity that overlaps with local drug trafficking activity. Funded programmatically as a Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Task Force under previous Federal funding to New Mexico, and as law enforcement under the new JAG funding stream, the State Police assume a leadership role in statewide drug enforcement activity in New Mexico. *The DEAC recommends the continuing prioritization of funding for overtime activity by the State Police in order to expand and enhance drug enforcement activity supported by the Department of Public Safety's budget.*
4. Law enforcement's response to the gang problem has taken a variety of forms. The most comprehensive, both substantively and geographically, has been through the New Mexico Gang Task Force (NMGTF). This Task Force was created in 1990 to assist law enforcement and criminal justice agencies throughout New Mexico in dealing with mounting gang problems. NMGTF is currently the largest organized multi-jurisdictional gang task force in the state, collaborating with more than 85 law enforcement member agencies, ten district attorneys offices, the state Attorney General's Office, and the New Mexico Department of Corrections. The primary goal of the NMGTF is to provide all levels of law enforcement with training, intelligence, and funding to reduce criminal gang activity, including narcotics trafficking, throughout New Mexico. To this end, the NMGTF provides a centralized clearinghouse for gang intelligence and initiatives; maintains GangNet, the core gang intelligence database for the state; awards and coordinates funding for multi-jurisdictional

overtime and emergency initiatives to suppress gang activity; provides high-quality, cost effective training for criminal justice agencies on gang related strategies; advocates for appropriate anti-gang crime policies; and supports youth gang prevention initiatives as resources permit. *The DEAC recommends the continuation and support of the New Mexico Gang Task Force to reduce violent criminal gang activity including narcotics trafficking.*

5. Funding levels from the Federal Justice Assistance Grant Program (JAG) to fight criminal activity have been inconsistent and are unpredictable. In the past, reduced funding levels have compromised the ability of Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces to successfully impact drug trafficking and the organizations responsible for drug trafficking. Future reductions may again jeopardize the efficacy of these Task Forces. It is imperative that Task Forces be maintained where they are viable, and strengthened where possible, in all regions of the State. Additionally, as the only gang-enforcement initiative in the state, the New Mexico Gang Task Force should be maintained to support the creation of new capacity and on-going infrastructure throughout the state through its provision of training, technical assistance, coordination, and gang activity tracking and intelligence. As discretionary funding from the JAG is awarded, the priority for this fund should be clearly articulated. *The DEAC recommends that the first priority for JAG funding be the support of those Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces proven to be effective in their regions, core capacity and infrastructure building activities of the New Mexico Gang Task Force that are shown to contribute to the reduction of criminal gang activity, felony fugitive warrant round-up operations of the Southwest Investigative Fugitive Team (SWIFT) and effective drug and related enforcement activities, especially Impact Teams that focus on the nexus of drugs and violent crime, of the New Mexico State Police.*
6. Criminal gang activity has increased and produced more severe consequences across New Mexico, leading to further increases in violent crime, victimization, drug trafficking and drug use in recent years. Recognizing the overlap between drug and gang activity, it is important that New Mexico develop means to link all law enforcement activities in a common pursuit of positive objectives in relation to gang intervention and deterrence activities. *The DEAC recommends that Multi Jurisdictional Task Forces be engaged to pursue both drug and gang activities with effective enforcement strategies.*
7. Collaboration among the District Attorney's Association, local District Attorneys, the Governor's Special Investigations Division, DEAC, and Drug Task Forces should continue to the fullest extent possible. Specific collaborations that have shown to result in more productive outcomes and more effective criminal justice systems include the following: data sharing, policy development at the local and state level on prosecutorial priorities, and joint investigative strategies that involve law enforcement as well as District Attorneys. However, it is essential that severe and certain penalties be instituted as a deterrent to trafficking illicit drugs in New Mexico. *The DEAC recommends that a consistent policy approach to this issue be developed across law enforcement, prosecutorial, judicial, and corrections systems.*
8. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), being a federal single-mission agency, has, and will continue to, assist all law enforcement entities in the State of New Mexico on mutual narcotics investigative matters. The DEA brings a long history of mutual cooperation

with state and local law enforcement, and brings considerable assets to assist on attacking drug trafficking organizations that impact local, domestic, and international markets. *The DEAC recommends on-going strong collaboration with the Drug Enforcement Administration.*

9. Drug Courts have become a significant criminal justice intervention initiative in New Mexico. They represent the coordinated efforts of the judiciary, prosecution, defense, probation, law enforcement, treatment and child protective services to provide community-based treatment and supervision to selected offenders identified as having substance abuse issues. Drug Courts place these individuals under strict court monitoring, including drug testing and probationary supervision, coupled with long-term treatment services and case management, while reporting to regularly scheduled hearings before a judge. New Mexico drug courts demonstrate excellent performance when compared with national averages, including low recidivism rates and high retention rates. Their success has led to broad support from state legislators and the executive branch, and repeated pledges to help fund the expansion of drug court programs to underserved parts of the state. *The DEAC recommends the continuation of support for drug court and other effective alternative sentencing strategies.*
10. The Department of Public Safety, State Police Division, is the only statewide component of the drug enforcement system in New Mexico. It is essential to support strong budget allocations by the state for full staffing, officer retention and state-of-the-art technology, especially for intelligence gathering and analysis and crime scene investigations. Coordination, collaboration, co-location whenever possible, and participation on Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces are essential to the successful conclusion of all types of narcotics investigations. The work of the State Police is essential to the success of local community efforts to reduce the trafficking of illicit substances. *The DEAC recommends increasing and strong budget support for the State Police and necessary support structures. In addition, it is imperative that a strong focus on the nexus between gangs and violent criminal activity -- and crime scene investigation and processing to gather evidence to support strong prosecution -- be present in all regional planning and operations of the State Police Investigations Bureau.*
11. Drug money laundering and related financial investigations are an essential component of effective drug enforcement strategies. Enormous revenues are generated through retail and midlevel drug transactions, most of which are conducted in cash. This necessitates the laundering of large sums of money to insulate traffickers from detection and to minimize the risk of drug proceeds being seized by law enforcement and forfeited. *The DEAC recommends a comprehensive training program to help local officials identify potential offenses and the broad use of money laundering and financial investigation strategies by appropriate enforcement agencies to deter the business of drug trafficking. The DEAC also recommends a permanent, institutionalized unit be established to comprehensively address this activity, including active utilization of the ISC.*
12. The creative use of Impact Teams by State Police to assist enforcement activity at the local level is a promising strategy that merits study and more widespread use for other purposes.

The strategy can address a host of issues, most of which are inextricably linked to the illegal drug nexus at the local and state levels. *The DEAC recommends the enhanced and expanded use of Impact Teams to address violent and drug related felony criminal activity.*

13. State and community resources are being mobilized to prevent drug abuse and gang violence in both short- and long-term gang education programs. Programs include using law enforcement agencies to “weed” out those responsible for gang violence in communities in crisis, as well as to “seed” with gang prevention programs to include legal sanctions, violence intervention, alternatives to violence, community mobilization and interagency coordination. *The DEAC recommends and supports the drug and gang prevention initiatives initiated in local communities and supported by law enforcement.*
14. Community Justice Programs, initiated at the local level, can create effective local partnerships between local citizen groups and law enforcement agencies to proactively problem-solve and improve public safety. These focus on strategies to prevent, control, and reduce crime, as well as the reparation of harm created by crime. These approaches can be successfully utilized by communities to address narcotics concerns at the local level, increasing the effectiveness of law enforcement approaches alone. Community-oriented policing approaches often support his improved effectiveness. *The DEAC recommends the use of Community Justice Program approaches in communities where there is a public willingness and political will to address criminal activity comprehensively, and the consideration of institutionalizing these approaches statewide if feasible.*
15. The New Mexico Corrections Department Security Threat Intelligence Unit supports the use of intelligence, various investigative strategies and techniques, and collaboration with statewide law enforcement entities. Together these contribute to an effective approach to reduce the impact of both prison gangs and street gangs on narcotics and other criminal activity within prison facilities, which extend into the community. *The DEAC recommends strengthening this group, increasing the emphasis even more on gathering useful intelligence, and sharing this intelligence as effectively and as efficiently as possible to further impact the influence of prison gangs.*
16. Year-to-year planning by local, regional, and even state agencies is difficult at best. Unfortunately, because of statewide budgetary crises and resulting manpower shortages at NMSP and local agencies, it is increasingly difficult to create long-term goals with major objectives. *The DEAC recommends providing funding in ways that promote program stability and opportunities for long-term planning that can increase the reach and impact of narcotics enforcement activity.*

Legislative Priorities

Sustainability of successful initiatives established to combat violent crime and narcotics trafficking and abuse will require support from the state general funds. Currently, New Mexico relies on federal grants for many of these efforts, resulting in a relatively low capacity. *In an effort to sustain on-going activities and the foundation established with the help of Federal*

grants, the DEAC recommends developing legislation to seek state appropriations for the purpose of supporting the ongoing efforts of the system. In addition, the DEAC makes the following legislative and priority recommendations to create a more effective approach to the safety and security of New Mexican citizens.

- Create an independent Organized Crime and Investigation Commission to focus specifically on organized crime and money laundering activities. The unit should be comprised of Federal, State, and local appointees.
- Create, with the District Attorney's Association and other interested parties, policy recommendations that would ensure a rigorous sentencing approach with increasing criminal penalties and mandatory sentences to address repeat offenders of drug-trafficking and violent crime statutes, including enhanced provisions for crimes committed with a firearm.
- Enhance penalties for criminal street gang activity and the recruitment of others to join a criminal street gang activity; enhance penalties for recruitment and inducement of minors. Grant-funded juvenile programs help states, counties, cities, and towns hold young criminal offenders more responsible for their actions and impose increasingly serious sanctions for each delinquent or criminal act.
- Strengthen the state asset forfeiture law through a revision process, with the State of New Mexico holding assets and disbursements based on a formula among the prioritized activities – enforcement, treatment, and prevention. Work with the District Attorney's Association to create policy recommendations that address forfeiture issues created by the Nunez decision.

Illicit Drugs in New Mexico

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Drug Market Analysis, 2009

The most recently published market analysis from HIDTA makes a number of observations that underscore the seriousness of the illegal drug situation in New Mexico, as well as the importance of effective cross-jurisdictional drug enforcement policies and activities in combating drug trafficking:

- Highly sophisticated Mexican DTO are based in New Mexico, and closely aligned with the most significant drug cartels in Mexico. These groups maintain control of smuggling and wholesale distribution of illicit drugs in New Mexico, and also supply drug markets in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, and South Carolina.
- Mexican DTO use any means to smuggle illicit drugs into the region from Mexico; recently they have begun to use low-flying aircraft, such as ultralights, to transport drugs into New Mexico. Law enforcement agencies report that criminal groups are also exploiting school-age children from Mexico who attend school in New Mexico to smuggle drugs.

- U.S. Interstates 10, 25, and 40 connect New Mexico to major drug markets throughout the country. Additionally, secondary and tertiary roadways traverse the state, making it conducive to private and commercial transit, which plays a substantial role in the New Mexico economy. The flow of drugs to and through New Mexico is significant; in 2008, the New Mexico Motor Transportation Division alone seized 19,187 kilograms of illicit drugs.

Heroin

New Mexico continues to rank high in the number of overdose rates nationwide, primarily due to the heroin addiction rate concentrated in the counties of Bernalillo, Rio Arriba and Santa Fe. The heroin epidemic that previously devastated a community in Northern New Mexico required exhaustive community and state resources. Intensive federal, state and local law enforcement resources continue to focus on these counties. Analyses by the New Mexico Department of Health found that heroin drug overdoses have fluctuated somewhat, but remained steady over the past decade.

Heroin use by New Mexico high school students is an ongoing problem. According to the 2007 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (YRRS), 3.9% of high school students reported using heroin in the past 30 days, compared to 2.9% in 2005. This survey also reported that in 2007, 5% of New Mexico high school students had used heroin at some point, compared with 2.3% in the U.S. In New Mexico, the overdose death rate from heroin increased from 5.4 per 100,000 in 2007 to 7.4 in 2008.

Much of New Mexico's heroin problem is concentrated in Northern New Mexico. Although heroin is a multigenerational problem that will take time to alter within the communities, progress has been made in expanding collaboration efforts and implementing accountability measures among state government agencies, local governmental entities and treatment providers.

Methamphetamine

Methamphetamine overdoses decreased from 1.7 per 100,000 in 2007 to 1.1 in 2008, and were highest in southeast New Mexico, at 2.7 per 100,000 and northwestern New Mexico, at 1.8 per 100,000. Methamphetamine abuse remains a serious problem, and has led to increased violent crime in New Mexico to include associated crimes such as robbery, identity theft, fraud, forgery and child endangerment and abuse.

Substantial law enforcement resources have been dedicated to the suppression and elimination of methamphetamine labs in New Mexico, and great strides have been made in a number of significant areas. However, most Regions continue to identify methamphetamines as posing one of the worst drug threats in their areas, and in 2009, the distribution and abuse of Mexican ice methamphetamine was considered the principle illicit drug threat by the National Drug Intelligence Center. New Mexico Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces have seen a decrease in meth investigations and search warrants but a 78% increase in arrests, and a 169% increase in the amount of meth seized. Unfortunately, law enforcement agencies have also seen an increase in the growth of mobile meth labs, which are extremely difficult to detect, and present major environmental hazards.

New Mexico Methamphetamine Statistics October 1-September 30 All MJTF and NMSP		
	2007-2008	2008-2009
Meth-related Investigations	921	671
Meth-related Search Warrants	176	107
Meth-related Arrests	209	358
Meth Labs Seized	83	36
Meth Lab Seizures Involving Minors	6	7
Meth Dump Sites Discovered	28	10
Meth Sites Mitigated or Cleaned Up	65	27
Amount of Meth Seized (grams)	33,153.47	89,259.64
Value of Meth Seized	\$4,048,988	\$9,893,541

Data derived from New Mexico MJTF Annual Reports.

The table above compares meth-related activities for all task forces and the NMSP from the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 fiscal years. While the number of investigations has decreased by 27% and the number of search warrants by 39%, the quantity of meth seized has increased more than 269%.

Cocaine/Crack

Cocaine is readily available throughout New Mexico. Law enforcement agents consistently rank cocaine and crack cocaine distribution and use as one of the state's most prominent drug problems. A 2008 report from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration cites ethnic gangs as the primary distributors of crack cocaine in New Mexico urban areas, and a high level of violence is often associated with these traffickers.

The overdose death rate for cocaine in 2005 was 5.6 per 100,000, and 5.7 in 2006. Overdoses dropped from 5.8 in 2007 to 5.0 in 2008. However, cocaine use among New Mexico high school students is high: in a 2005 YRRS survey, 7.9% of those surveyed reported current cocaine use. In the 2007 survey, 5.4% of high school students reported current usage.

Prescription Drugs

According to the *New Mexico Epidemiology Report* (Vol. 2007, No. 4), overdose rates from prescription drugs are adding to an ever-increasing drug problem in New Mexico. MJTF are reporting more seizures of prescription drugs during executions of search warrants; OxyContin and hydrocodone are frequently uncovered and are reported to have a high street-level demand.

From 2005 to 2006, the death rate from any prescription drug increased approximately 25%. This number remained relatively stable from 2007, at 11.1 deaths per 100,000, to 10.8 in 2008. Researchers believe that overdose death rates are increasing among non-Hispanic whites and females due to the increase in prescription drug overdose deaths. The majority of these deaths are attributed to prescription opioid painkillers, which are used as a foundation for pain management. Numerous recent studies report an increase in nonmedical use of these drugs among persons aged 12 and older, and surpasses the number of new marijuana users. Epidemiologists have recommended the expansion of current public health strategies and harm reduction services to

increase overdose prevention education for prescription painkillers (Shah, *New Mexico Epidemiology*, Vol. 2008, No. 7).

Marijuana

Marijuana is the most readily available illicit drug in New Mexico. The majority of marijuana confiscated in the state is produced in Mexico, although it is cultivated illegally throughout the state. In 2006, over 3,200 cultivated plants were seized and eradicated. Marijuana is also the most widely used drug in the state: the most recently published, 2007 YRRS survey of high school students found that approximately 25% of surveyed students reported current marijuana use, compared to 19.7% in the U.S., the second-highest rate of usage of the 39 states participating in the survey. New Mexico is worst in the country for early marijuana use: 18.2% of surveyed students had tried marijuana before age 13, compared to a national rate of 8.3%.

Drug Trends

Drug sales, availability, and use vary somewhat throughout the State. One trend more frequently identified by law enforcement agencies, and supported by epidemiological data, is the increased illicit use of prescription drugs. These are more frequently reported in drug seizures: in 2006, New Mexico High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area drug seizures included 3 doses of OxyContin; in 2007, this number rose to 401, and in 2008 to 5,015. Law enforcement agencies are also seeing an increase in prescription fraud for opioid painkillers. Following are the most prominent drug problems and trends, as identified by each MJTF in New Mexico:

Region I – Traffickers seem to be moving to cocaine and marijuana, with more large, outdoor grows, still methamphetamine, and more mobile “shake and bake” meth labs;

Region II – Meth, which is the cause of gang violence and property crimes;

Region III – Slight shift from heroin to cocaine, more illegal prescription pills, especially Oxycotin, Hydocodone, Oxycodone;

Region IV – Crack and cocaine, which are readily available and hold stable prices;

Region V – Meth and crack; crack usage is up, accompanied by crime. Both of these drugs are easily obtained; crack is being made for personal use, which has also increased the flow of coke;

Region VI – Meth, as well as a big increase in prescription drugs, drug fraud and diversion;

Region VII – Methamphetamine, marijuana, heroin and cocaine are widely present throughout the region. Supply and demand continue to vary throughout this region.

SWIFT – Meth

New Mexico JAG-Funded Initiatives

New Mexico has funded several core program categories to support effective local law enforcement strategies aimed at reducing drug trafficking and violent crime.

All recipients of funds from the Justice Assistance Grant are expected to participate, with other stakeholders, in an on-going strategic planning process under the auspices of the Drug Enforcement Advisory Council (DEAC). This planning process will contribute to a revised New Mexico Statewide Drug Strategy. The New Mexico Drug Strategy will present statewide

criminal justice priorities, including the use of evidence based strategies and programs that address drug trafficking, violent crime, and the role of the criminal justice system in preventing and combating both domestic and international terrorism. Recipients will demonstrate their alignment with these priorities in the execution of their contracted activities throughout the award year.

All recipients are expected to demonstrate an emphasis on effective, evidence-based strategies that use intelligence and all available data to focus on reducing violent crime and drug trafficking. Recipients are also expected to demonstrate collaboration and cooperation with the New Mexico's Children Youth and Families Department to ensure that children who are exposed to violence and trauma are effectively integrated into child-serving systems to ensure that their risk of entering into a life of violence and crime is reduced.

The Drug Enforcement Advisory Council continues to prioritize effective re-entry programs so that recidivism is reduced. To this end it supports the work of New Mexico Department of Corrections in evaluating the outcomes of its evidence based re-entry program to determine whether modifications are appropriate to make it more effective in the complex cultural conditions that exist in New Mexico, and will seek to make policy recommendations based on the results of that study. In addition, the DEAC has prioritized intelligence-based money laundering and other financial crimes that harm the State's citizens and that support the economic viability of drug trafficking. The Council has a policy recommendation to create an independent organized crime task force to oversee these efforts.

Finally, the DEAC has endorsed within its Drug Strategy the use of effective and innovative approaches to prosecution, including the use of drug courts, DWI courts, and other means to connect appropriate treatment and positive behavior change strategies to the justice system. Its strategic planning process will seek additional involvement from representatives of all segments of the judicial system in order to create more meaningful and effective linkages and to make policy recommendations that will improve the state's criminal justice system.

Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces

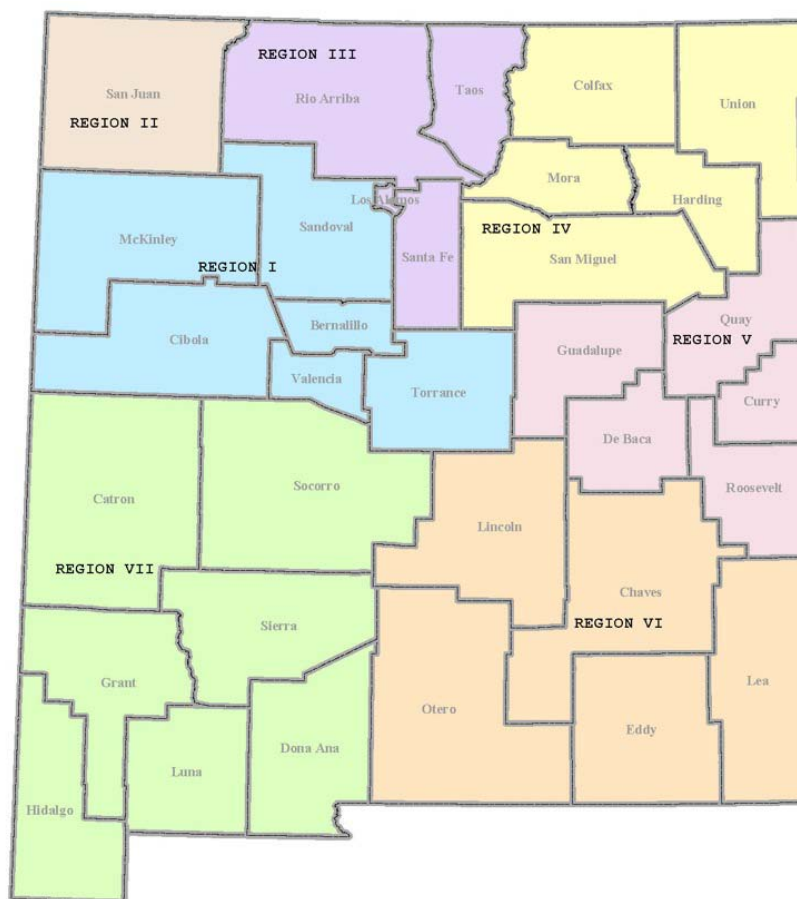
New Mexico has high per capita crime rates and one of the highest illicit drug death rates in the United States. The effects of drugs in New Mexico, particularly on youth, present ever-increasing social and economic burdens on the state and the nation. Ten law enforcement agencies in New Mexico are funded by New Mexico Department of Public Safety (DPS) through Justice Assistance Grants: seven regional multi-jurisdictional task forces, New Mexico State Police (NMSP), the New Mexico Gang Task Force (NMGTF), and Southwest Investigative Fugitive Team (SWIFT), a task force directed by the U.S. Marshals which focuses on clearing felony warrants

The MJTF and NMSP collaborate with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, and these partnerships have proven to be the most effective means to increase drug arrests and seizures. While the MJTF and NMSP have made huge strides in disrupting and dismantling drug trafficking organizations in New Mexico and around the country, DTO continue to thrive. The following table compares drug seizures made by all MJTF and NMSP for the five-year period beginning 2004-2005.

New Mexico Statewide MJTF/NMSP Drug Seizures					
July-June	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Marijuana (lb)	43,103.15	120,208.21	53,641.59	53,799.88	40,251.14
Cocaine (g)	150,382.91	174,831.60	204,828.20	336,458.04	528,348.48
Crack (g)	3,991.18	1,753.20	1,286.09	3,555.55	3,654.91
Heroin (g)	6,011.13	10,350.35	6,279.08	32,933.56	11,092.44
Meth (g)	74,207.65	31,580.24	48,975.40	45,835.55	67,060.34

Data derived from New Mexico MJTF quarterly reports.

The map below shows the areas of New Mexico in which each MJTF operates. New Mexico State Police, SWIFT, and NMGTF operate throughout the state.



Region 1

Region I Middle Rio Grande Valley Task Force (MRGVTF) is comprised of Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, Cibola, Valencia and McKinley counties and is located in the center of the state. In this 9,288 square mile area, the population has grown from 729,649 in 2006 to 845,913 in 2008. Bernalillo County has the highest population density of any county in New Mexico with 477 persons per square mile. The per capita income for Region I is \$18,471.25. Both Sandoval and Torrance Counties have a per capita income under \$19,174. In Region I, 80.9% of the

population over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, while 21% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Slightly more than 15% of the population is living below poverty. Nine reservations are located in Region I. Two major Interstates intersect in Bernalillo County, I-40 that traverses the country east west and I-25, a north-south route from Mexico through Colorado.

The MRGVTF is faced with a number of law enforcement challenges, including those of sheer demographics: the counties in this Region include the most densely populated area of the state, as well as very sparsely populated areas. Rural communities face very different challenges, and most local law enforcement agencies lack funding and personnel resources to address drug-related problems. Region I agents have developed teams to work with local law enforcement in these areas. However, smaller, local jurisdictions often are able to provide intelligence information for their areas, which Task Force agents may use to provide necessary links to larger operations and investigations.

The Region is seeing large quantities of marijuana and cocaine trafficking. In two large cases, these involved violent street gangs who use drug trafficking as their main source of income. They were involved in numerous crack investigations, but these primarily targeted street-level dealers. Numbers of heroin-related investigations are relatively stable, and for this area of New Mexico, it appears methamphetamine remains easier to import than to manufacture, although there has been an increase in the number of "bathtub labs" producing smaller amounts of meth. Similarly, Region members have uncovered several large outdoor marijuana grows, but availability and cost make this drug easier to import than to cultivate.

Region I Task Force considers their collaborations with federal authorities to be one of their major accomplishments for the year. MRGVTF agents successfully conducted joint operations with the DEA, FBI, USCIS, ICE, the New Mexico State Police, numerous local police departments and sheriff's offices to target and track career criminals and habitual offenders, and address firearm and immigration violations. Joint efforts to target DTO have led to several OCDETF/Title III investigations, resulting in dismantlement of these organizations, large seizures of controlled substances, and many arrests. In every investigation, efforts are made to establish links to a higher level DTO.

During 2008-2009, agents in the Task Force executed 260 search warrants throughout the six counties. These warrants included residences, storage facilities, and vehicles. Three ongoing investigations are being conducted with federal agents and are directed toward an LDTO, an RPOT, and an established link to a CPOT, which connected three ongoing OCDETF investigations in California, Oregon, and Washington. Two Title III investigations are continuing. Additionally, the Task Force dismantled 27 meth labs, seized 4,271 grams of heroin, 2,797 grams of crack cocaine, 7,017 grams of meth, 8,349 grams of cocaine, and 813 pounds of marijuana.

Region II

Region II Narcotics Task Force consists of San Juan County, with a land area of 5,500 square miles, and a population base of 122,500. The population density of this region is 20.6 persons per square mile, and the average per capita income in 2007 was \$27,155 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, Apr. 2008). In San Juan County, 76.8% of the population over the age of 25 has a high

school diploma, while 13.5% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Just over 18% of the population is living below poverty. Three reservations, including the Navajo Nation, are located in Region II.

Much of the Navajo Nation and reservation land has minimal law enforcement presence, making the Region II Task Force the primary narcotics enforcement agency investigating drug-related crimes in the County. While the primary focus of Region II is narcotics sales and usage, local law enforcement agencies collaborating with the Task Force have identified additional priorities with which they have requested assistance from the Force. These are primarily drug use, domestic violence, and youth issues. The Task Force actively seeks to collaborate with other agencies to develop trend analyses to correlate these community concerns with drug trafficking and abuse.

Methamphetamine is the drug creating the largest problems for Region II, and Region members connect a great percentage of violent crime, gang violence, and property crime to meth sales and use. Gang violence is also a big concern, and local gang members have been identified as mid-level dealers in DTO, with ties and connections outside the Region II area, including Mexico. Increasingly, Region members have linked gang violence to drive-by shootings, homicides, and assaults. There is also evidence to indicate local DTO are using gang members for sales and protection.

Region II considers their greatest accomplishment of the year to be the completion of an 18-month investigation with DEA and the FBI Safe Streets Task Force. This OCDETF case led to a Title III investigation, and when indictments are completed, they expect the dismantling of three different DTO with arrests of their top-level dealers.

During 2008-2009, Region II MJTF identified eleven separate DTO ranging from local, multi-state, national, and international. Some are comprised of Mexican nationals with direct ties to suppliers in Mexico. Because Region II borders Colorado, Arizona and Utah, San Juan County has become a distribution hub for several DTO cell leaders. Additionally, during the past fiscal year, Region II Task Force members investigated 132 cases referred by local law enforcement, conducted 15 combined operations with patrol personnel, conducted 41 undercover operations, targeted nine violent criminals involved in drug-related crimes for prosecution, and disrupted and dismantled four DTO.

Region III

Region III is composed of Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Taos counties in the North central area of the state, and includes eight reservations. The total population for this region is 234,325 living in 10,079 square miles. The population density of this region is 23 persons per square mile. Demographics for this population vary dramatically: the average per capita income for Region III is \$37,991, with the low end in Rio Arriba at \$23,976 and the high end in Los Alamos at \$56,928 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, Apr. 2008). In Region III, 83.2% of the population over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, while 34.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher. In Rio Arriba, 15.4% of the population has a B.A., while 60.5% of Los Alamos residents hold this degree. In Los Alamos County, 2.7% of the population is living below the federal poverty level, while 21.5% of Taos County residents live below poverty.

Much of the northern section of Region III is remote and economically depressed, creating areas that have long been a haven for drug traffickers. This has resulted in an increase in both drugs and associated crimes, such as residential and commercial burglaries, larceny, and violent crime. Additionally, much of Region III, including Pueblo land, has been a destination for Mexican Nationals who are able to remain fairly anonymous and conceal criminal activities, particularly trafficking in heroin, cocaine, and marijuana.

Region III continues to have a severe heroin problem in Rio Arriba and Santa Fe Counties, and an overall increase in availability of cocaine. The Region has also seen an increase in gang activity: Sureno 13, from Los Angeles, has been recruiting heavily in Santa Fe, trying to establish roots in Española, and is involved in burglaries, firearm violations, assault, and battery. Sureno 13 is clashing with an already-established local gang—West Siders, resulting in a number of drive-by shootings. Both gangs have been linked to drug trafficking.

Region III members consider their major accomplishment of the previous year to be the 100% completion of all programmatic goals with only six full-time agents. This manpower shortage represents a 33% reduction over the 2007-2008 fiscal year, and the Region has spent two years rebuilding staff and developing effective working relationships and experience.

During the year, Region members initiated 278 new cases, executed 35 search warrants which yielded 81 arrests, seized 1,192 grams of heroin, 7,622 grams of cocaine, and six pounds of marijuana. Additionally, identified a major heroin DTO operating in Regions I and III, and worked with federal agencies to arrest three individuals and seize more than one pound of heroin. Members also identified and targeted three additional DTO trafficking in cocaine and crack cocaine. The Region collaborated with the FBI and DEA, resulting in the arrest of several individuals and the seizure of more than 2,000 grams of cocaine.

Region IV

Region IV encompasses Colfax, Harding, Mora, San Miguel and Union counties, and is located in the Northeast area of the state. The total population for this region is 51,448 living in 16,360 square miles. Harding County has the lowest population, and population density, of any county in New Mexico; the population density of the entire region is only 3.15 persons per square mile. The average per capita income for Region IV is \$23,102. In Region IV, 75.4% of the population over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, while 17.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher. An average of 19% of the population lives below the Federal poverty level.

According to the US Department of Justice, this Region is on the No. 2 principle drug corridor extending from Los Angeles to New York. Interstate 25 passes through the Region, as do passenger and freight railway systems. The terrain of this Region features expanses of open plains, wilderness and isolated ranching areas, all ideal for marijuana grows and small aircraft landing sites. These geographic features, combined with sparse population and a depressed economy create situations that lend themselves to drug trafficking.

Availability and stable pricing combine to make cocaine and crack cocaine the greatest challenges in Region IV. Recent intelligence indicates the presence of gang activity: these are

typically groups of six to 20 members involved in assaults, burglaries, property crimes, and drug trafficking.

During the past year, members of Region IV have been successful in collaborating with local Sheriff and police departments to conduct a number of search warrants and arrest offenders. They located and eradicated two marijuana grows, seized 6.3 pounds of marijuana, 17 grams of cocaine, 32 grams of crack cocaine, and 22 grams of methamphetamine.

Region V

Region V is comprised of Curry, DeBaca, Guadalupe, Quay and Roosevelt counties and is located in the East Central area of the state. The total population for this region has dropped by almost 10% overall, to 77,826, living in 12,084 square miles; the population density for Region V is 6.4. Curry County has the highest population density in the region with 31 persons per square mile while two counties have less than 2 persons per square mile. The average per capita income for Region V is \$23,133, and an average of 21.3% of the population is living below the federal poverty level. Almost 74% of the population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma, while 15.6% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

Within this Region are numerous small communities with no local law enforcement; members of Region V serve these areas, in collaboration with Sheriff's Offices and Police Departments from all five counties and six smaller towns. Activities include multi-jurisdictional operations, street enforcement, and highway interdiction.

In Region V, methamphetamine and crack pose the largest problems. In the last few months of the year, use of crack rose, and Region members saw a corresponding rise in crime. Both meth and crack are easily obtained, and many individuals are making their own crack, which has increased the flow of cocaine. Gang activity is present in this Region: the head of one major DTO, recently released from prison, was arrested and convicted in the past year. While most gang activity has involved burglaries, car thefts, and street-level drug dealing, three homicides appear to be related to gang and drug activity.

The greatest accomplishment Region members achieved for 2008-2009 was the successful acquisition of stimulus funding through JAG, which have enabled the purchase of much-needed equipment and supplies, and allowed agents to better focus on investigations. In the past year, Region V initiated 305 investigations, dismantled seven meth labs, conducted three multi-jurisdictional highway interdictions efforts, and arrested 111 repeat offenders. Region members identified nine DTO, eight local and one international, and dismantled four. Additionally, the Region sized six pounds of marijuana, 401 grams of cocaine, 199 grams of crack, 18 grams of heroin, and 356 grams of meth.

Region VI

Region VI includes Chaves, Eddy, Lea, Lincoln, and Otero Counties and is located in the Southeast quadrant of the state. The total population for this region is approximately 220,000, living in approximately 26,125 square miles, for an average population density of 12. The average per capita income for Region VI is \$27,220. In Region VI, 76.0% of the population over the age of 25 have a high school diploma, while 15.9% have a bachelor's degree or higher. An

average of 18.3% of the population is living below the Federal poverty level. There is one reservation located in Region VI.

The geography of the Region varies widely and includes large mountainous areas and thousands of square miles of open desert plains. The south and east sections of the Region border Texas, and the southwestern corner is approximately ten miles from Mexico. Task Forces in Region VI cover approximately 25% of the land area of New Mexico. Region VI has a single coordinator based in Hobbs, who oversees administrative activities for five units of the force; Chaves County Metro Narcotic Task Force (CCMNFT) and Lincoln County Task Force received JAG funding for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Methamphetamine continues to be the most widely abused and distributed drug in the Region. Region members may see an occasional lag in availability, but it is generally short-lived. Members are also witnessing an increase in prescription drug fraud and diversion. Criminal gang activity in Region VI is most frequently demonstrated by graffiti and inter-gang violence over drugs. In Lincoln County, drugs play a major role in burglary and other property crimes, generally to support drug use and abuse. The problem is much more serious in Chaves County, where drug abuse and drug trafficking are cited as the primary cause for most crimes, both violent and nonviolent. This Task Force has been overtly pressuring known drug houses, forcing dealers to change methods, and relocate. Additionally, they have been working to prosecute convicted felons with firearms. Both of these tactics have resulted in a visible improvement in the quality of life in the area.

Agents with Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are co-located with the Chaves County Drug Task Force, and these groups collaborate in an effort to control the extremely high number of firearms present in the region, and share intelligence on drug trafficking and violent crime. Task Force members are gathering evidence indicating large numbers of weapons from the area are being transported to Mexico in exchange for drugs.

Lincoln County Task Force members consider the continued building of working relationships to be one of the largest accomplishments. Successful collaborations include participants from four municipal Police Departments, Sheriff's Departments, New Mexico State Police, and individuals from the District Attorney's office, Probation and Parole, and a variety of federal agencies. These solid relationships have proven to be very effective assets. Chaves County members consider their greatest accomplishment to be the conclusion of several multi-state operations involving federal agencies. One OCEDTF case led to the arrest of 15 individuals. Three others resulted in the issuance of federal warrants, arrests of several individuals, seizures of cocaine, meth, and more than 20 firearms.

JAG-funded activities for the two Task Forces of Region VI account for 429 new cases, 439 closed cases, 253 arrests, 95 individuals identified with a prior felony conviction. Chaves County Task Force members identified five DTO, one international, and targeted a total of nine. Two of these were disrupted, and five (one international) was dismantled. The Task Force also seized 32 pounds of marijuana, 142 grams of cocaine, 2,827 grams of heroin, and 1,304 grams of meth. Members of the Lincoln County Task Force seized 16 grams of cocaine, one pound of marijuana, and 272 grams of meth.

Region VII

Region VII is comprised of Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro counties and is located in the Southwest area of the state. The total population for this region is approximately 295,000 living in 31,940 square miles. The average population density for Region VII is 10. The per capita income for Region VII is \$22,620. In Region VII, 72.1% of the population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma, while 16.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Luna has the lowest percentage (59.8) of high school graduates in the state, while Hidalgo has the lowest percentage (9.9) of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher. In this region, 24% of the population is living below the Federal poverty level.

This Region includes the city of Las Cruces, which has grown in population approximately 10% per year for the past several years. Both Interstate 25 and Interstate 10 run through the Region, and 180 miles of the southern edge of Region VII borders Mexico. More than half the length of this border is desolate public land that contains innumerable footpaths, roads and trails. These are major drug smuggling corridors and serve as primary routes for DTO for drugs and to return illicitly-generated cash to Mexico. Some strategies Region VII has employed are: improve interagency investigative collaboration between Region VII members and federal, state, and local law enforcement; enhance highway interdiction efforts to increase seizures and prosecution; and improve intelligence sharing through NMISC.

The biggest drug concerns vary throughout the Region; in Silver City, police have identified meth, followed by marijuana the most significant threats to their community. Socorro reports heroin is the largest problem, followed by meth and crack cocaine. The Las Cruces office of New Mexico State Police cite cocaine, marijuana, and meth as the greatest problems, and other law enforcement believe marijuana and meth smuggled from Mexico and Arizona pose the most significant problems.

Gang-related violence has been reported in and around the community of Anthony, and many of these individuals are also involved in drug trafficking. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Detention and Removal reports that 15-20% of illegal/deportable convicted felons provide a previous home address in Anthony, NM. Drug and gang problems are also present in Deming, Chaparral, Sunland Park, Las Cruces, and Silver City, with two known gangs involved in drug trafficking and traditional gang-related criminal activity. Region VII is planning an extensive, coordinated anti-gang enforcement operation in these communities.

Region VII considers one of its biggest accomplishments to be the hiring of a permanent coordinator and administrative assistance to ensure compliance with, and adherence to, all requirements of JAG funding and goals of the Drug Enforcement Advisory Council. The Board Chairman has also reinstated regular board meetings and is eliciting the active participation of all involved agencies throughout the Region.

Region VII reports significant accomplishments related to DTO in the past year. Members identified 56 organizations, 17 of which were international. They targeted 51 of these, disrupted 15 (four international) and dismantled two. Region VII members seized the following drugs: heroin—2,885 grams, cocaine—990 grams, crack cocaine—77 grams, and meth—146 grams.

Additionally, the Region initiated 439 new cases, closed 323 cases, made 272 arrests, and identified 86 offenders with prior felony convictions.

New Mexico State Police

The New Mexico State Police assist all seven Regional Drug Task Forces in New Mexico by providing expertise and a variety of resources. Since the reorganization of the State Police Department, NMSP no longer have a separate Narcotics Unit, and provide varied assistance to law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Frequently, this aid is in the form of expertise and personnel in rural areas with no, or limited, local law enforcement.

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year New Mexico State Police assisted other agencies at crime scene investigations 83 times and at violent crime investigations 203 times. NMSP investigate every officer-involved shooting, work with the FBI, and assist with a variety of investigations on Indian land; in 2009, NMSP also worked on the West Side homicide cases in Albuquerque.

In assisting Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces, NMSP frequently contribute undercover personnel, contingency funds, hazardous-material response officers, and audio/visual surveillance equipment. They are also called upon by other law enforcement agencies to investigate clandestine methamphetamine labs. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, NMSP conducted 12 undercover drug operations in 16 counties while insuring participating agencies were involved from preliminary investigation through post-investigation.

State Police have been focusing on IMPACT operations, which generally address quality of life issues, including violent crimes, narcotics, property crimes, and outstanding warrants. These are primarily one-day operations targeting crime issues in a particular community and are intelligence driven. This strategy consistently results in increased arrests, a reduction in the cost of each arrest, and a decrease in calls for services. These operations address both emerging and chronic crime problems. In the previous fiscal year, NMSP conducted 202 intelligence-led IMPACT operations throughout the State.

New Mexico State Police conducted one Level I and six Level II operations and identified 41 Level II DTO. State Police initiated 431 arrests and executed 34 interdiction operations. Additionally, they seized the following quantities of drugs: 27,921 pounds of marijuana, 423,301 grams of cocaine, 157 grams of crack, 3,463 grams of heroin, and 73,689 grams of meth.

Southwest Investigative Fugitive Team (SWIFT)

This Team was established to locate and capture outstanding violent crime and narcotics-related fugitives across the State. According to the Team, Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Santa Fe, and San Juan Counties alone have thousands of outstanding felony warrants. Some fugitives that SWIFT targets include the following:

- Felons wanted for a variety of charges, including drugs and violent crimes.
- Felons wanted for violent crimes, including, but not limited to sexual offenses/predation, gang activities, weapons offenses.
- Probation/parole violators.
- Individuals wanted for questioning in a criminal investigation.

Additionally, the Team helps New Mexico counties fund international extradition efforts to have fugitive felons returned to New Mexico for prosecution.

To achieve these goals, SWIFT collaborates with numerous law enforcement agencies and judicial agencies in New Mexico: Police Departments, Sheriff's Offices, District Attorney's Offices, New Mexico State Police, New Mexico Dept. of Corrections–Probation and Parole Division, and the United States Marshal's Service. The Team considers these joint efforts to be their greatest accomplishment; in the previous year they have added the San Juan County Sheriff's Office, US Bureau of Indian Affairs, and US Fish and Wildlife Service to their list of partners.

SWIFT members have seen a distinct overlap in violent crime, gang activity, and drug trafficking in New Mexico; a large percentage of repeat offenders they apprehend are involved in these activities. Team members identify meth as the drug that creates the worst problems in New Mexico. Its effects impact entire families - particularly children. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, SWIFT members initiated 1,388 felony arrests, conducted 33 multi-agency fugitive roundups, and conducted the first roundup in their new partnership with San Juan County. These are extremely targeted operations conducted domestically and internationally.

New Mexico Gang Task Force

There are 295 documented gangs with an estimated 7,560 members in New Mexico. The New Mexico Gang Task Force (NMGTF) is the largest organized multi-jurisdictional task force in the state dealing with criminal gang activity. NMGTF assists law enforcement agencies across New Mexico by identifying subjects and providing intelligence. The ultimate goal of the Task Force is to reduce criminal gang activity, including narcotics trafficking, throughout the state.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Task Force collaborates with numerous local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, including regional drug task forces, the FBI, Project Safe Neighborhood, New Mexico HIDTA, Rocky Mountain Information Network, and several District Attorneys Offices. Task Force staff enter information into GangNet and provide these statistics, as well as intelligence bulletins, and contact information to law enforcement agencies upon request.

The Task Force also works with communities and schools to educate, facilitate partnerships, and provide training, funding and networking resources. The Task Force coordinates various community activities and school programs around the state. In 2009, NMGTF held the first Annual Youth Seminar, and the fifth Annual Community Seminar, which were attended by 93 youth, and 235 adults, respectively. Sessions included presentations about gangs and gang identification, drug trends, and the importance of educational achievement.

The *2005 National Gang Threat Assessment* identifies the following as some current gang trends:

- Gangs are the primary distributors of drugs throughout the United States.
- Gangs associate with organized crime entities, such as Mexican drug organizations, and a variety of criminal groups. These groups often turn to gangs to conduct low-level criminal activities, protect territories, and facilitate drug-trafficking activities. Financial gain is the primary goal of any association between these groups.
- Gang members are becoming more sophisticated in their use of computers and technology.

These new tools are used to communicate, facilitate criminal activity, and avoid detection by law enforcement.

- Few gangs have been found to associate with domestic terrorist organizations. The susceptibility of gang members to any type of terrorist organization appears to be highest in prison.
- While the number of all-female gangs remains low, the role of women in gangs is evolving. Women are taking more active roles, assisting in the movement of drugs and weapons, and gathering intelligence from other gangs.
- Indian Country is increasingly reporting escalating levels of gang activity, gang-related crime and drug trafficking. The remote nature of many reservations and a thriving gang subculture make youth in these environments particularly vulnerable to gangs.
- Outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG) are expanding their territory and forming new clubs. This is reflected in increased violence among OMG as they battle over territories.

The Threat Assessment also notes: “Forming multi-agency task forces and joint community groups is an effective way to combat the problem. However, decreases in funding and staffing to many task forces have created new challenges for communities.”

University of New Mexico – Institute for Social Research (ISR)

In the 2009 ARRA funding cycle, the New Mexico DPS funded a program proposed by the Institute for Social Research to help law enforcement agencies report UCR data. The Institute established that of the approximately 146 law enforcement agencies in New Mexico, only 66 were consistently reporting crime incident activity to DPS – the designated repository for the collection, analysis and reporting of such data. According to the FBI publication, *Crime in the United States, 2007*, New Mexico has one of the lowest reporting rates in the country; 47 states with centralized reporting systems have higher reporting rates than New Mexico. Counties who do not report crime data will be excluded from federal funding opportunities as well as Rural Law Enforcement monies. Additionally, lack of reporting has resulted in the entire state consistently under-reporting crime rates.

The goal of this program is to increase the number of agencies in the state reporting crime data, and to improve the quality of data reported. ISR is working with two types of agencies to accomplish these goals: those that do not report data at all, and those that report to the FBI, but not to DPS. Through a combination of manually collecting data and training users on the DPS web-based reporting mechanism, ISR aims to increase crime data reporting, and ultimately, increase the number of law enforcement agencies eligible for various types of funding.

New Mexico Corrections Department

New Mexico Department of Public Safety awarded 2009 ARRA funds to the Corrections Dept. to support an initiative for technology improvement and evaluation. Corrections is working with an outside evaluator to assess the effectiveness of the Reentry Initiative for Public Safety Program (RIPS) in New Mexico in reducing recidivism among drug-related and violent crime offenders. This initiative includes intensive staff training in Transition to Community Programs.

Overall Operations

The following figures show the data submitted by the Regional and State Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces in their quarterly reports. Because the emphasis for the Southwest Investigative Fugitive Team and the New Mexico Gang Task Force differs from the other MJTF, their data is not included in this graphic. The figures below indicate the number of cases handled by all Multi Jurisdictional Task Forces and the New Mexico State Police for the previous federal fiscal year.

Aggregate Data for New Mexico MJTF and NMSP October 2008-September 2009					
	New Cases	Cases Closed	Cases referred/ expanded to another Jurisdiction	Arrests	Offenders with prior felony conviction(s)
Level IV	3,451	2,456	219	1,867	807
Level III	681	599	76	406	155
Level II	299	284	24	196	76
Level I	66	57	23	74	36
Totals	4,497	3,396	342	2,543	1,074

Data derived from the New Mexico MJTF Fourth Quarterly Report, October 2009 Operational case or investigation levels range from IV (primarily street crime) to Level I (international crime organization).

Of particular interest is the number of cases that have been expanded or referred to other jurisdictions, as this has been a focus of MJTF effort. A critical factor for a successful MJTF is strong cross-jurisdictional relationships. Task forces that can develop and maintain strong relationships with the agencies in their Region, with other MJTF, with the State Police, and federal agencies demonstrate more effectiveness.

Crime Statistics

Violent and Property Crimes

The three tables which follow show crime rates in New Mexico for the past several years, as reported in the FBI Uniform Crime Report (UCR), 2007-2008.

Property Crime in New Mexico		
Year	Rate Per 100,000 Population	Percent Change From Previous Year
1997	4,867	
1999	4,458	- 8.4%
2003	4,124	- 7.5%
2005	4,148	+1%
2006	3,937	-5%
2007	3,726	-5%
2008	3,909	+ 5%

The table above compares property crime rates in New Mexico between 1997 and 2008. Property crime is defined as burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. With the exception of a slight increase in 2005, these rates decreased fairly steadily from 1997 until 2007. However, between 2007 and 2008 property crimes rose 5%.

Violent Crime in New Mexico		
Year	Rate Per 100,000 Population	Percent Change From Previous Year
1998	519	
1999	697	+ 34%
2002	740	+ 5.9%
2003	665	- 10%
2005	702	+5%
2006	643	-8%
2007	664	+3%
2008	650	- 2%

The table above tracks violent crime rates for the state from 1988 through 2008. The FBI defines violent crime as those offenses that involve force or the threat of force. The following offenses are considered violent crimes: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Violent crime in New Mexico peaked in 2002, with a rate of 740 per 100,000 and dropped significantly in 2003. Rates rose again in 2005, but have been fairly stable since 2006.

When crime rates in New Mexico are compared to the nation and surrounding states, UCR statistics indicate the State's rates are high for most offenses, as shown in the table below:

FBI Uniform Crime Statistics – 2008				
Rates Per 100,000 Population				
	New Mexico	U.S.	Arizona	Colorado
Violent Crime	650	455	447	343
Murder	7.2	5.4	6.3	3.2
Robbery	110	145	249	68
Aggravated Assault	476	275	266	229
Property Crime	3,909	3,213	4,291	2,849

New Mexico's violent crime rate was 31% above that of Arizona, and 30% higher than that of the U.S. The murder rate in New Mexico is 12% higher than Arizona, and 25% higher than the U.S.; the aggravated assault rate is 44% higher than Arizona and 58% higher than the rate for the nation.

Financial Crimes

Financial crimes are frequently related to DTO and criminal groups. Reports of identity theft are increasing in New Mexico, and the state ranks ninth in the nation for identity theft complaints. According to statistics from the Federal Trade Commission, in 2007, there were 1,732 reports of theft, or 87.5 victims per 100,000. In the period from January 1 to December 31, 2008, the number of reports increased to 2,081, or 104.9 per 100,000. These crimes most often involve employment-related fraud, credit card fraud and bank fraud, and are frequently drug related. According to the *HIDTA Drug Market Analysis*, DTO and criminal groups are the primary money launderers in New Mexico. The report states that “. . . street gangs, outlaw motorcycle gangs, prison gangs, and independent dealers also transport drug proceeds in bulk from New Mexico to Mexico.”

Anecdotal information collected from drug task forces indicates DTO are engaged in transferring large amounts of cash generated by drug sales to Mexico through wire transfer services. In an arrest conducted in late March 2010, task force agents uncovered a large stack of Western Union receipts representing an estimated \$30,000 in cash transfers to Mexico.

In early 2010, the Arizona Attorney General’s Office completed a multi-year investigation of money laundering and bulk cash transfers from the southwestern United States into Mexico. The investigation, which focused on Western Union, revealed that some unscrupulous employees knowingly helped smugglers send money to Mexico. *The Miami Herald* (March 18, 2010) reported that currency exchange houses are laundering billions of dollars each year from drug-trafficking proceeds through one major U.S. financial institution, including at least \$110 million positively identified as cocaine proceeds. Drug cartels have used millions of dollars laundered through Mexican exchange houses to purchase airplanes to smuggle cocaine into the U.S.

According to a February 2010 Western Union press release, the company has agreed to pay \$50 million through a grant process for law enforcement agencies along the U.S.-Mexican border to fund money laundering, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and arms trafficking investigations and prosecutions. Funds will also be used to support law enforcement training efforts in the Southwest border area to help reduce money laundering. With these funds, New Mexico law enforcement agencies will coordinate with the Attorney General’s office to implement a comprehensive strategy to target major financial and money-laundering investigations throughout the state.

Substance Abuse Data

The rates of New Mexico youth reporting use of illicit drugs are among the highest in the nation. Of the 39 states participating in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, New Mexico high school students had among the four highest rates for current (within the past 30 days) marijuana and cocaine use, lifetime heroin use, lifetime methamphetamine use, and lifetime injection drug use.

The following charts compare drug usage data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Surveys were conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services between

2005-2006 and 2006-2007, and break usage rates into three age groups. These tables compare New Mexico use rates to those of surrounding states and the nation; rates are based upon a percentage of the population. Bolded numbers indicate the highest rates in a category.

Reported Illicit Drug Usage In Past Month Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	11.66	12.26	9.84	9.66	10.84	10.16	10.26	11.26	8.68	8.96
Ages 18-25	20.31	23.49	19.97	19.77	17.55	20.67	26.47	25.51	16.77	14.75
Ages 26 +	5.58	6.56	5.91	5.92	6.00	6.93	7.09	8.41	4.53	4.74

Notable points on the table above comparing illicit drug use in the past month:

- In the period from 2005-2006, ages 12-17, New Mexico reports the highest usage, with rates 17% higher than the national rate.
- For the same age group, New Mexico saw a 5% increase from the first reporting period to the second.
- In the 18-25 age group, New Mexico reports lower usage rates than Colorado, but higher than the national rate.
- Usage rates in the 18-25 group increased 14% in New Mexico from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, an increase surpassed only by Arizona, while all other compared areas experienced decreases in use.

Marijuana Use In Past Month Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	7.79	8.73	6.74	6.67	7.24	6.02	7.44	8.15	5.56	5.47
Ages 18-25	16.93	19.18	16.42	16.34	14.08	15.14	21.43	22.21	12.09	11.08
Ages 26 +	3.76	4.44	4.10	4.02	3.31	3.53	5.32	5.88	2.65	2.76

Notable points on the table above comparing marijuana use in the past month:

- In 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, ages 12-17, New Mexico reports the highest rates of marijuana use.
- Usage in New Mexico increased 11% from the first period to the second. With the exception of Colorado, surrounding states and the nation saw reductions between these periods.

- From 2005-2006, New Mexico's rate of use was 13% higher than the national rate; from 2006-2007, it was 24% higher than the national rate.
- For ages 18-25, from the first reporting period to the second, New Mexico experienced a 12% increase in use, the largest increase of all compared regions.
- For ages 26+, New Mexico reported the largest increase from the first to the second reporting period: 15%.

Illicit Drug Uses Other than Marijuana - Past Month Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	5.50	5.37	4.93	3.80	5.37	6.10	5.15	5.64	4.68	5.37
Ages 18-25	9.45	9.03	8.82	8.47	9.53	11.21	10.23	9.74	8.90	7.32
Ages 26 +	2.52	2.75	2.76	2.89	3.42	4.46	3.03	3.54	2.83	3.10

Notable points on the table above comparing illicit drug use other than marijuana:

- In 2005-2006, New Mexico reported the highest usage rates among 12 to 17 year olds.
- Between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, New Mexico saw a 2% decrease in use for ages 12-17. The national rate decreased 23%.
- New Mexico reports the lowest rates of use for ages 26 and higher. In the first reporting period, New Mexico's rates were 9% lower than the national rate, and in the second period, 5% lower than the national rate.

Cocaine Use in Past Year Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	1.97	2.19	1.64	1.57	2.30	2.50	1.94	2.10	2.12	2.04
Ages 18-25	7.14	7.71	6.91	6.63	8.16	8.76	8.42	8.89	7.00	5.79
Ages 26 +	1.43	1.94	1.67	1.77	1.81	2.31	1.90	2.32	1.60	1.41

Notable points on the table above comparing cocaine use in the past year:

- Cocaine use among 12-17 year olds in New Mexico exceeds national rates: from 2005-2006, use was 17% higher than national rates, and 28% higher for 2006-2007.
- Usage for 12-17 year olds in New Mexico increased 10% from the first to the second reporting period. This is the largest increase for compared areas in this age bracket.

- In the 18-25 age group, New Mexico and Arizona saw a 7% increase in use from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, which is the largest reported rate increase in compared areas.
- For ages 26+, New Mexico reports a 26% increase in use from the first reporting period to the second – the largest increase for all compared areas.

Non-medical Use of Pain Relievers in Past Year Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	8.11	8.95	7.01	6.91	8.18	8.79	7.91	7.52	6.73	7.06
Ages 18-25	12.17	12.14	12.42	12.28	12.63	14.18	13.00	12.92	11.45	9.57
Ages 26 +	3.73	4.50	3.43	3.59	4.05	4.86	3.84	4.00	3.19	3.43

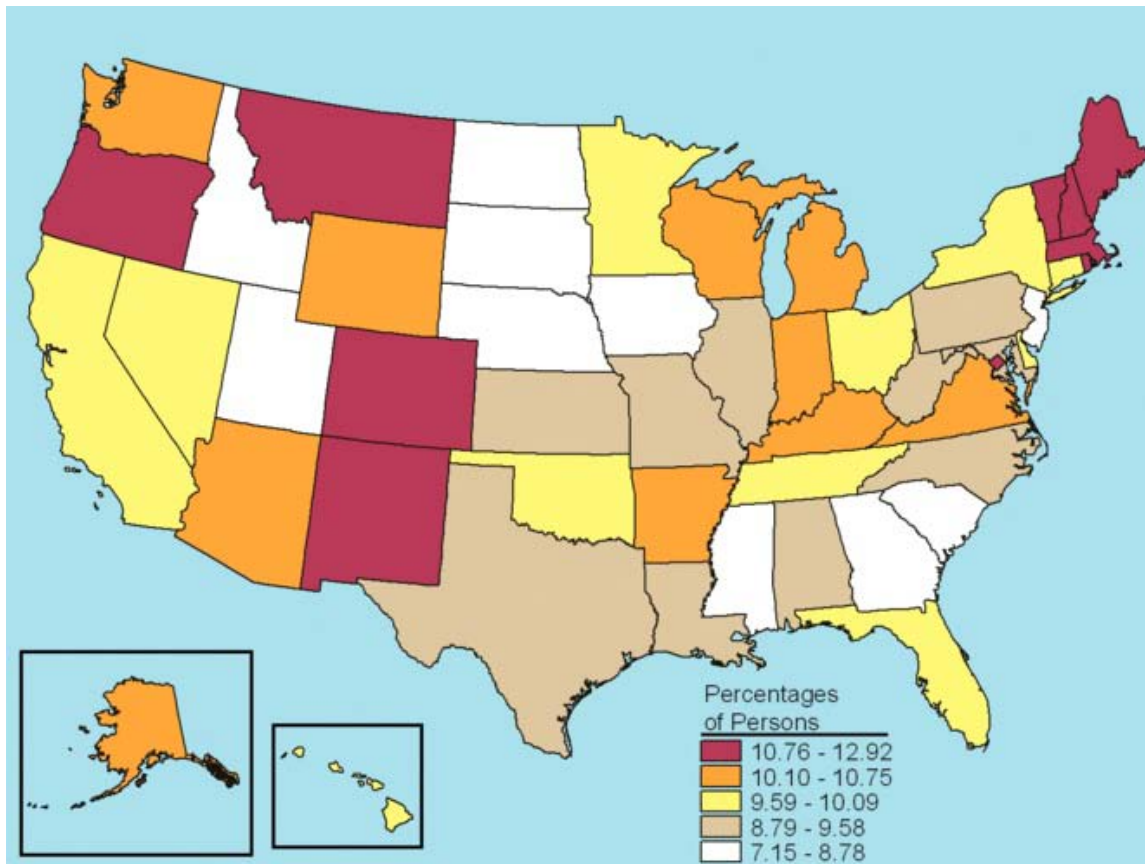
Notable points on the table above comparing nonmedical use of pain relievers:

- For ages 12-17, New Mexico reports a 9% increase in use from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007 – the largest increase for this age group.
- In 2006-2007, New Mexico has the highest usage rates for 12-17 year olds.

Illicit Drug Dependence or Abuse in Past Year Based on Percentage of Population										
	New Mexico		U.S.		Arizona		Colorado		Texas	
	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007	2005-2006	2006-2007
Ages 12-17	4.69	5.21	4.65	4.47	5.35	4.32	5.50	5.30	4.12	4.53
Ages 18-25	7.42	8.52	8.14	7.90	7.10	7.33	9.68	8.87	7.32	6.55
Ages 26 +	1.42	1.87	1.66	1.70	1.69	1.93	1.78	2.02	1.64	1.73

Notable points on the table above comparing illicit drug dependence/abuse in the past year:

- New Mexico is the only state that reported increased usage in all three age groups: 10% in the 12-17 group; 13% for ages 18-25, and 24% for ages 26+.
- The 24% increase noted above is the largest reported for all states in all age groups.
- Usage rates among 12-17 years olds in New Mexico in 2006-2007 was 14% higher than the national rate, 17% higher than the reported rate for Arizona, and 7% higher than Texas. Only Colorado exceeds New Mexico rates, by 7%.



Source: SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2006, 2007

The map above illustrates, by state, illicit drug use in the past month among persons age 12 to 17. New Mexico ranks in the top nine states, with usage percentages ranging from 10.76% to 12.92%.

Illicit Drug Death Rates

In 2005, New Mexico had the second highest drug-induced death rate in the nation, with 20.9 deaths per 100,000, compared to the U.S. rate of 11.2 per 100,000 (source: *CDC Wonder*). According to *New Mexico Epidemiology* (Vol. 2008, No. 7), during 2005-2007, Bernalillo County and northeastern New Mexico had the highest unintentional drug overdose death rates in the state, at 23.2 per 100,000 and 18.8 per 100,000, respectively. These regions also had the highest poisoning death rates from heroin, cocaine, and alcohol/drug combinations, but the lowest death rates from methamphetamine. During 2005-2007, the following counties had the highest drug poisoning death rates: Rio Arriba (49.9 per 100,000); Guadalupe (29.3); Torrance (24.3); Valencia (23.9) and Bernalillo (23.2).

The death rate due to unintentional drug overdose increased from 17.5 per 100,000 in 2006 to 18.1 per 100,000 in 2007, and 19.6 in 2008. The death rate from illicit drugs increased 4%, from 10.1 per 100,000 in 2007 to 10.8 per 100,000 in 2008. Overdose deaths from prescription drugs remained relatively stable, from 11.1 per 100,000 in 2007, to 10.8 in 2008.

Links to Drug-Related and Violent Crimes in the State of New Mexico

All multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces in New Mexico, the New Mexico State Police, SWIFT, and the New Mexico Gang Task Force report correlations between drugs, gang activity, and crime. These relationships appear in multiple ways, including the most direct fact that it is a crime to use, possess, or distribute drugs classified as having a potential for abuse. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, March 2000, “Drugs are also related to crime through the effects they have on user’s behavior and by generating violence and other illegal activity in connection with drug trafficking.” Drug-related offenses include those motivated by the user’s need for money to support continued use, as well as offenses connected to drug distribution itself. Many drug users –especially methamphetamine abusers – commit property crimes and identity theft to purchase illegal drugs. Additionally, individuals involved with drugs and engaged in illegal drug activities often do not participate in legitimate economic activities and are more exposed to situations that encourage crime.

Drug trafficking organizations in New Mexico also engage in other crimes, including murder, kidnapping, alien and weapons smuggling, and auto theft. According to the *HIDTA Drug Market Analysis, 2009*, DTO members assault and murder rival traffickers and individuals who cannot pay their drug debts. While much of this violence occurs in Mexico, and has been well reported, it has also spread into New Mexico. In 2009, two drug-related murders were committed in remote areas near Silver City. Traffickers also obtain firearms through burglaries, and generate additional income through home invasion robberies. Current gang intelligence indicates that prison and street gangs may be assuming larger roles in drug smuggling across the U.S. border, as this reduces the risk that Mexican DTO face with aliens crossing borders.

Gangs

According to the New Mexico Gang Task Force, the number of law enforcement agencies reporting gang activity in their jurisdictions increased from 52% in 2004 to 63% in 2008. Street and outlaw motorcycle gangs commit high levels of violent crime, most of which are attributed to turf battles over drug distribution territories. New Mexico law enforcement and the FBI report that much of the violence in New Mexico is primarily attributable to drug-related activities involving gangs. These crimes include murder, robbery, theft, and witness intimidation. Mexican DTO and criminal groups have forged relationships with street gangs, prison gangs, and outlaw motorcycle gangs that they supply with illicit drugs for retail distribution in communities throughout New Mexico.

The following chart shows the growth of gang members in validated New Mexico gangs since 2002 (source: New Mexico Gang Task Force, Annual Report, December 2009).

Validated Gangs in New Mexico				
Year	Number of Gangs	% Change	Number of Subjects	% Change
2002-2003	313	-	6,106	-
2003-2004	324	3%	6,888	+11%
2004-2005	295	-9%	7,558	+9%
2005-2006	305	+3%	8,484	+11%
2006-2007	318	+4%	9,336	+9%
2007-2008	309	-3%	9,634	+3%
2008-2009	313	+1%	9,299	-3%

The number of validated gangs in New Mexico has increased slightly in most years, with the exception of 2004-2005. To some extent, this decrease is attributed to the purging of records, done in accordance with federal guidelines. There was also a slight decrease in 2007-2008, but overall, the number of gangs has remained fairly constant. By contrast, the number of gang members has gone up an average of 10% annually until 2008-2009, which showed a modest decrease. Over the seven-year period tracked by NMGTF, the number of validated gang members has increased 34%.

In June 2009, an Albuquerque, New Mexico television station (*KOB New Mexico*) reported an upsurge of violence connected to a gang relatively new in the state: MS-13 (a.k.a. Mala Salvatrucha 13). The gang has a command hierarchy based in El Salvador, but also operates with independent, local cells. The gang is responsible for numerous armed robberies, one of which resulted in the murder of a restaurant employee; gang members were armed with handguns and assault-style rifles. MS-13 gang members are described as strong-arm bandits and assassins. Their activities include gun running, drug smuggling and sales, murder-for-hire, and human trafficking. The gang is considered to be one of the most violently dangerous in the country: their calling card is typically a dismembered corpse. According to a PBS report (*PBS Online*, October, 2005), Congress began working to make gang crimes a federal offense after rumors surfaced that MS-13 may have ties to al Qaida.

Prison Gangs

According to the *2005 National Gang Threat Assessment*, prison gangs pose a unique threat to law enforcement and communities. Formed originally by inmates as a means of self-protection from other groups and inmate predators, prison gangs have spread throughout the prison system and are active in New Mexico Corrections facilities. According to gang identification trainer and expert witness Robert Walker, “These groups are known for their viciousness and violence and use this reputation to maintain power and control over inmates, correctional officers and persons outside of prison walls” (gangsorus.com, Jan., 2010).

Incarceration of gang members often does little to disrupt their activities. High-ranking gang members are frequently able to exert their influence on the street from within prison. Prison gang leaders are using cell phones, Twitter, and Facebook to control illegal activities both inside and outside of corrections institutions. It is likely that upon sentencing and incarceration, individuals serving sentences for drug activities continue to pursue criminal activity through attempts to manipulate family members, visitors, and on occasion, staff members to introduce narcotics into

institutions. Generally, the narcotics desired within New Mexico Corrections facilities are heroin and marijuana. Many street gang members from various regions of the state exhibit tendencies to join or align with Security Threat Groups (prison gangs). Prison gang affiliation is often used in attempts to control narcotics introduction and distribution within corrections facilities. Gang members and drug dealers serving sentences may utilize community drug connections to pursue the introduction and distribution of narcotics in prisons for financial gain or status among inmates.