

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Houston, TX

Profile of Drug Indicators

May 2002



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Houston, Texas

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, funding, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- The following demographic data is on Harris County, which the City of Houston is located in.
- Total Population: 3,400,578 (2000 Census)
- Age Distribution: 29.0% under 18 Years Old, 7.4% over 65 years old.
- Race/Ethnicity: White 58.7%; Black 18.5%; American Indian or Alaskan Native 0.4%; Asian 5.1%; Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander 0.1%; Hispanic Origin (can be of any race) 32.9%

Politics

- Mayor: (Former ONDCP Director) Lee P. Brown²
- Director of Mayor's Office of Public Safety and Drug Policy: Donald K. Hollingsworth³
- City Controller Sylvia R. Garcia⁴
- Council Members: Annise D. Parker, Gordon Quan, Shelly Sekula Rodriguez, Michael Berry, Carroll Robinson, Bruce Tatro, Carroll Mims Galloway, Mark Goldberg, Ada Edwards, Addie Wiseman, Mark Ellis, Bert Keller, Gabrielle Vasquez, Carol Alvarado⁵
- Chief of Police: C.O. Bradford⁶

Programs/Initiatives

- Houston HIDTA⁷

The Houston HIDTA was designated in 1990 and encompasses the city of Houston, and the surrounding areas of Aransas, Brooks, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jefferson, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Liberty, Nueces, Orange, Refugio, San Patricio and Victoria counties.
- Houston Crackdown⁸

Houston Crackdown is a division of the Mayors Office for Public Safety and Drug Policy. The program coordinates and supports volunteer projects in the areas of substance abuse prevention, treatment, and law enforcement. Houston Crackdown also runs a 24-hour bilingual *Drug Information Hotline* (713.247.8888) that provides access to treatment and recovery resources, drug information for youth and parents, a means to report illegal drug activity, and how to get involved in community drug prevention efforts. There is also a *volunteer coalition* of individuals and organizations both in Houston and Harris County. A *community awareness campaign* about the negative effects of substance abuse is also part of the program.
- Mayor's Anti Gang Office⁹

Houston Mayor Lee P. Brown established the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office and the Houston Police Department Gang Task Force in 1994. Together they provide a balanced approach, combining prevention and suppression tactics focused toward reduction of street gang growth and development. This office plans to reduce crimes

committed by and against juveniles; deter youth gang recruitment by offering real social and economic alternatives; and prevent local youth gangs from developing into sophisticated criminal enterprises.

➤ Operation Renaissance¹⁰

Operation Renaissance is a collaborative effort by the police department, other city departments, other government agencies, and various community groups to revivify the city's inner-city neighborhoods. Operation Renaissance employs a holistic approach and embraces the philosophy of Neighborhood Oriented Government and the Super Neighborhood concept. It is comprised of five pillars: (1) Narcotics Interdiction, (2) Directed Patrol, (3) Nuisance Abatement, (4) Trash Removal, and (5) Graffiti Abatement. The community assists the police by reporting known drug dealers and locations while the police utilize a two-phase approach in targeting identified individuals and locations. Phase One calls for a highly visible police presence in areas of known "open-air" markets and Phase Two targets indoor locations.

➤ Executive Office of Weed and Seed: Houston¹¹

In 1995 Gulfton's ZIP Code, 77081, was identified as one of 11 in the state with the most referrals of delinquent youth to the juvenile justice system. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) organized the Gulfton Youth Development (GYDP) Program to implement a coordinated system of youth programs to address Gulfton's serious juvenile delinquency problems. In 1997, Gulfton was designated a federal Weed & Seed community.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

➤ The crime index total for Houston, Texas was 121,711 in 2000.¹²

The Number of Offenses Known to Police in Houston 1998-2000

Offense	1998	1999	2000
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	254	241	230
Forcible rape	654	748	813
Robbery	7,711	8,350	8,256
Aggravated assault	11,564	12,178	12,192
Burglary	23,065	24,744	23,254
Larceny-theft	64,070	66,068	67,102
Motor vehicle theft	20,499	19,445	16,864
Arson	1,641	1,735	1,642
Crime Index Total	127,817	131,774	131,711

- In Harris County during 1999 there were 17,815 arrests for drug offenses.¹³

Arrests in Harris County, 1999

Offense	Number	% of All Arrests
DWI	8,956	2.4%
Liquor Law Violations	2,830	0.7
Public Intoxication	26,633	7.1
Drug Trafficking (All Drugs)	165	0.0
Drug Possession (All Drugs)	17,650	4.7
Marijuana Trafficking	78	N/A
Marijuana Possession	6,751	N/A
All Drug Offenses	17,815	4.7
Violent Crime	4,354	1.2

- In Houston during 2000,¹⁴
 - 32% of males and 32% of females tested positive for cocaine at the time of arrest.
 - 5% of male arrestees and 2% of female arrestees tested positive for PCP use at the time of arrest.
 - 7% of male arrestees and 3% of female arrestees tested positive for opiates at the time of arrest.
 - 36% of male arrestees and 27% of female arrestees tested positive for marijuana at the time of arrest.
 - 1% of male arrestees and 2% of female arrestees tested positive for methamphetamine use at the time of arrest.
- In Houston during 1999 59.5% of male arrestees and 43.3% of female arrestees tested positive for drugs.¹⁵

Percent of Houston Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs by Offense 1999

Offense	Cocaine		Marijuana		PCP		Any Drug	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Violent	30.5	11.8	36.9	16.2	0.0	1.5	57.4	26.5
Property	45.1	15.6	37.8	25.6	5.7	5.6	66.3	43.3
Drug	46.0	55.0	52.0	38.3	10.4	1.7	75.2	78.3
Prostitution	60.0	77.8	40.0	44.4	0.0	0.0	80.0	77.8
Other	32.1	22.5	32.8	21.4	7.6	3.3	53.3	41.2
Total	35.7	23.3	38.2	22.8	6.5	3.1	59.5	43.3

Drugs¹⁶

- A pound of commercial grade marijuana costs \$350-\$500.
- A pound of methamphetamine costs \$6,000-\$8,000.
- In 2000, heroin cost \$1.04 per milligram and was 38% pure in the Houston area.
- Powder cocaine cost ranges from \$80-\$100 per gram and \$400 to \$650 per ounce. Crack cocaine costs between \$400-\$600 per ounce.

- Hydrocodone, promethazine with codeine and other codeine cough syrups as well as benzodiazepines (such as alprazolam) are the most commonly diverted drugs in the Houston area. Promethazine or phenergan with codeine sells for \$75 to \$100 for four ounces, \$125 for eight ounces, and \$1,600 for a gallon. Xanax is also one of the most commonly diverted drugs in the area according to DEA sources.

Juveniles¹⁷

- A 1999 survey of Houston high school students indicated that 40.6% of them had tried marijuana at least once in their lifetimes. The national average for lifetime marijuana use was 47.2%.

Percent of Houston High School Students Using Selected Drugs, 1999

Drug Type and Use	Female	Male	Total
Lifetime Marijuana Use (1)	35.5%	44.9%	40.6%
Current Marijuana Use (2)	13.9	23.5	19.0
Lifetime Cocaine Use	6.1	10.3	8.7
Current Cocaine Use	2.1	5.1	3.7
Lifetime Inhalant Use	7.2	8.1	7.8
Current Inhalant Use	2.3	1.9	2.1
Lifetime Heroin Use	1.2	2.7	2.0
Lifetime Methamphetamine Use	3.0	4.4	4.1
Lifetime Illegal Steroid Use	2.7	3.6	3.2
Lifetime Injecting Illegal Drug Use (3)	1.0	1.8	1.4

1. Lifetime Use = ever tried drug in life
2. Current Use = used drug one or more times in last 30 days before survey
3. Used a needle to inject drugs

Enforcement

- As of October 31, 2001 there were 7,290 total law enforcement employees in Houston, Texas. Of the 7,290 employees, 5,437 were officers.¹⁸
- The HIDTA consists of Federal, State, and local authorities. Participating agencies include:

Federal agencies: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Department of Defense, Drug Enforcement Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Internal Revenue Service, United States Attorneys Office, United States Customs Service, United States Coast Guard, United States Marshals Service.

State Agencies: Texas Department of Banking, Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas National Guard, Texas Office of the Attorney General.

Local Agencies: Beaumont Police Department, Chambers County Sheriffs Office, Corpus Christi Police Department, Hardin County Sheriffs Office, Harris County Sheriffs Department, Houston Police Department, Jefferson County Sheriffs Office, Nueces County Sheriffs Office, Orange County Sheriffs Office, Pasadena Police Department and City of Baytown.

Trafficking and Seizures¹⁹

- Houston is the nation's fourth largest city and with its proximity to Mexico, it is also and one of the nation's major narcotics gateways. The cities transportation infrastructure, racial and ethnic diversity, corporate economy, and international trade continue to make Houston one of the nation's primary distribution hubs, as well as a conduit for the movement of illegal drug proceeds to source countries.
- The majority of Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in Houston are run by Mexican and Colombian traffickers, but there are many other traffickers from all over the world who also operate in Houston. Overland routes continue to be the preferred method of transporting illegal drug to and through the area. A maritime threat continues to be posed from the large volume of container cargo shipped through the region's ports, as well as from commercial and noncommercial vessels operating in the Texas Gulf Coast region. Air smuggling, via private aircraft and "passenger carry" on commercial airlines, is a threat due to the high volume of air traffic through the area and the number of landing facilities in the region.
- Money laundering organizations transfer bulk currency in commercial and personal vehicles shipped via sea or driven into Mexico. Additionally, legal and illicit wire transmitters in the region send money worldwide. Local gangs, trying to avoid affiliation by not displaying gang-related clothing and tattoos, traffic and disseminate drugs while attempting to appear legitimate in owning record shop businesses, auto detail shops, entertainment enterprises and other cash intensive activities.

Courts

- As of January 2002, there is one drug court being planned in Houston, Texas.²⁰
- In Eastern Texas during FY 2000, there were 583 Federal defendants, 49.5% of them were charged with a drug-related crime. The most common charge was drug trafficking, accounting for 45.5% of all defendants. The most common drugs involved were crack (43.0%), followed by methamphetamine (19.7%), powder cocaine (15.8%), marijuana (15.4%), heroin (5.0%), and other (1.1%).²¹

Consequences of Use²²

- There were a total of 475 drug-related deaths in Harris County during 2000.

Drug and Alcohol Related Deaths (Youth/Adults) in Harris County, 2000

	Adult	Youth	Total
<i>ALCOHOL</i>			
Total Alcohol Related Deaths	1,445	43	1,488
Direct Alcohol Related Deaths	278	N/A	278
Indirect Alcohol Related Deaths	1,167	43	1,210
<i>DRUGS</i>			
Total Drug Related Deaths	468	7	475
Direct Drug Related Deaths	310	3	313
Indirect Drug Related Deaths	158	4	162

Treatment

- There were a total of 805 youth clients admitted to treatment in Harris County in 2001.²³

Youth Treatment Clients in Harris County, 2001	
Total Admissions (All Drugs)	805
Alcohol Admissions	43
Amphetamines	9
Powder Cocaine	29
Crack Cocaine	16
Inhalants	12
Marijuana	654
Other Drugs	29
Other Opiates	5
Client Characteristics	
Average Age	16
Average Age at 1 st Use	13
% Male	85%
% Using Needles	0%
% African American	33%
% White	21%
% Hispanic	45%
% Criminal Justice Referral	59%
Average Education	8

- In Harris County during 2001, there were a total of 5,058 adult clients admitted to substance abuse treatment.²⁴

Adult Treatment Clients in Harris County, 2001	
Total Admissions (All Drugs)	5,058
Alcohol Admissions	1,708
Amphetamines	62
Powder Cocaine	305
Crack Cocaine	1,628
Inhalants	5
Marijuana	606
Other Drugs	74
Heroin	387
Other Opiates	208
Client Characteristics	
Average Age	36
Average Age at 1 st Use	22
% Male	58%
% Using Needles	13%

% African American	45%
% White	41%
% Hispanic	13%
% Criminal Justice Referral	19%
Average Education	11

Sources

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>
- ² City of Houston Web site: <http://www.cityofhouston.gov>
- ³ City of Houston, Office of Public Safety and Drug Policy: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/opsdp/>
- ⁴ City of Houston Web site: <http://www.cityofhouston.gov>
- ⁵ City of Houston Web site: <http://www.cityofhouston.gov>
- ⁶ Houston Police Department Web site: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/departments/police/home.htm>
- ⁷ Office of National Drug Control Policy Web site, Houston HIDTA—FY 2000 Site Fact Sheet: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_hous.html
- ⁸ City of Houston Web site: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/opsdp/>
- ⁹ City of Houston Web site: <http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/opsdp/antigang.htm>
- ¹⁰ Houston Police Department Web Site: http://www.ci.houston.tx.us/departments/police/operation_renaissance.htm
- ¹¹ U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office of Weed and Seed Web site: <http://www.weedseed.org/siteinfo.asp>
- ¹² U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports, 1998, 1999, 2000: <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>
- ¹³ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *Indicators of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Texas, 1999*, January 2001: <http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/99indicators.pdf>
- ¹⁴ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, *Substance Abuse Trends in Texas*, December 2001: <http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/trends/dec2001.pdf>
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- ²⁰ OJP Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County, January 17, 2002*: <http://www.american.edu/academic.depts/spa/justice/publications/drgchart2k.pdf>
- ²¹ United States Sentencing Commission, Eastern Texas, 2000: <http://www.uscc.gov/JUDPACK/2000/txe00.pdf>
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- ²³ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Substance-Related Statistics, Harris County, *Substance Abuse Treatment Clients (TCADA Funded Programs) Youth*, 2001: http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/statistics/codap_youth01.php3
- ²⁴ Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Substance-Related Statistics, Harris County, *Substance Abuse Treatment Clients (TCADA Funded Programs) Adult*, 2001: http://www.tcada.state.tx.us/research/statistics/codap_adult01.php3

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