

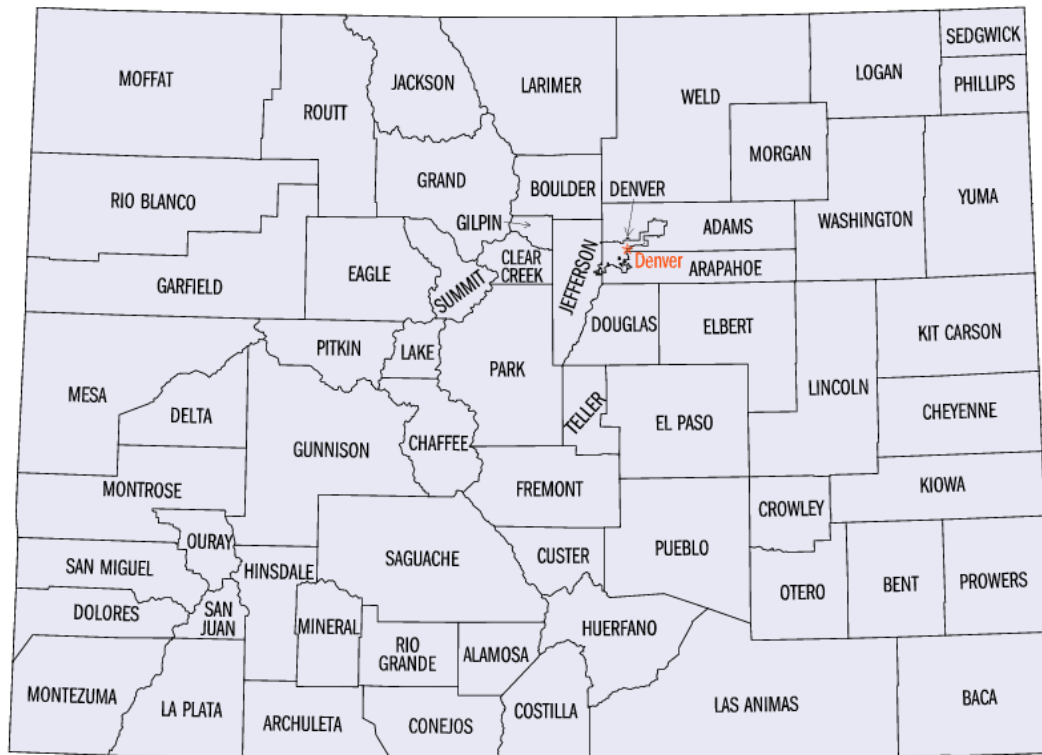
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Denver, Colorado

Profile of Drug Indicators

November 2008



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.

Denver, Colorado

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

Demographics

- Population (2006 American Community Survey): 566,974¹
- Race/ethnicity (2006 American Community Survey): 68.2% white; 9.9% black/African American; 1.0% American Indian/Alaska Native; 3.1% Asian; 0.1% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 15.0% other race; 2.8% two or more races; 34.8% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)²
- Denver is located in Denver County.³

Political

- Mayor: John W. Hickenlooper⁴
- City Council (Districts 1-11, respectively): Rick Garcia; Jeanne Faatz; Paul D. López; Peggy Lehmann; Marcia Johnson; Charlie Brown; Chris Nevitt; Carla Madison; Judy H. Montero; Jeanne Robb; Michael B. Hancock; Carol Boigon (At-Large); and Doug Linkhart (At-Large)⁵
- Denver Chief of Police: Gerald R. Whitman⁶
- Denver Manager of Safety: Alvin LaCabe⁷

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁸
Designated in 1996, the Rocky Mountain HIDTA is responsible for areas in Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming. This HIDTA is responsible for 17 Colorado counties, including Denver.
- Denver Office of Drug Strategy⁹
Created in August 2000, this office serves the residents of Denver and offers resources on substance abuse and addiction. The primary focus of the office is to educate the community in the areas of substance abuse, addiction, prevention, intervention, treatment, transition and recovery.

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- During 2007, the Denver Police Department reported 1,357 adult arrests for drug abuse violations.¹⁰ In 2006, there were 2,609 such arrests reported.¹¹

Number of Drug/Alcohol Arrests, Denver, 2006-2007

Drug Type	2006		2007	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Drug abuse violations	131	2,609	56	1,357
Driving under the influence	1	261	0	2
Liquor law violations	2	1	0	3

- The Denver Police Department reported 1 juvenile and 20 adult homicide arrests during 2007.¹² In 2006, there were no juvenile and 9 adult homicide arrests reported.¹³

Number of Index Offense Arrests, Denver, 2006-2007

Drug Type	2006		2007	
	Juvenile	Adult	Juvenile	Adult
Murder	0	9	1	20
Rape	5	76	7	63
Robbery	60	286	40	206
Aggravated assault	121	814	78	706
Burglary	167	424	115	326
Larceny	99	564	53	324
Auto theft	125	251	66	235
Arson	1	4	3	7

Drugs

➤ Cocaine

Reports from law enforcement indicate that cocaine is still the most popular drug in Denver, although the total percent of cocaine exhibits submitted to the Denver Police Department Crime Laboratory (DPCL) has remained static from 2003 to 2007 (range 17.3% to 21%). In December 2007, powder cocaine prices in Denver were: \$18,000-\$20,000/kilogram, \$600-\$1,000/ounce and \$100-\$150/gram, with purity ranging from 50%-60% at the retail level. Crack cocaine prices were as follows: \$15,000-\$20,000/kilogram, \$650-\$900/ounce and \$20/rock with purity ranging from 75-85% at the retail level.¹⁴

➤ Heroin

Law enforcement authorities and public health professionals in Denver have reported increased heroin distribution and abuse. This increase is partly the result of the emergence of new, younger adolescent heroin abusers.¹⁵ Prices for heroin in Denver during December 2007 were as follows: \$24,000-\$35,000/kilogram and \$800-\$1,600/ounce. Heroin purity ranged in Denver from 6%-73%.¹⁶

➤ Marijuana

A 2005 vote in the City and County of Denver legalized ounce or smaller amounts of marijuana for personal recreational use.¹⁷ In the Denver metro area, Mexican marijuana is of low purity and high availability. During December 2007, marijuana prices in Denver were as follows:¹⁸

- Mexican marijuana: \$300-\$500/pound and \$80-\$100/ounce and \$30-\$60/one-quarter ounce
- Locally-produced marijuana: \$2,000/pound
- BC Bud: \$2,600-\$5,000/pound and \$300-\$400/ounce

➤ Methamphetamine

Many Denver metro area clinicians and outreach workers report that many stimulant users prefer methamphetamine over cocaine because of its cheaper price, ready availability and longer lasting high. During December 2007, powder methamphetamine produced in Mexico sold for \$12,000-\$16,000/pound and \$500-\$800/ounce. Crystal

methamphetamine produced in Mexico sold for \$16,000-\$20,000/pound and \$1,000-\$1,500/ounce.¹⁹

- Club Drugs
The trafficking and abuse of MDMA are increasing in the in the Denver area.²⁰ The street price for MDMA in Denver is \$20-\$25/pill.²¹
- Pharmaceutical Diversion
Nearly all local clinical and outreach workers report that the increase in “other opiate use” is due to the easy access to a variety of prescription narcotics, such as Vicodin, Percodan and Percocet.²²
- During 2007, approximately 46,113 Denver residents reported dependence on or Abuse of any illicit drug or alcohol within the past year, representing approximately 3.30% of the population.²³

Enforcement

- As of October 2007, there were 1,917 full-time law enforcement employees in Denver (1,561 officers and 356 civilians).²⁴

Trafficking and Seizures

- Denver serves as a principal distribution center for other regional drug markets as well as a transshipment point for drugs supplied to markets in the Midwest and the eastern United States.²⁵
- According to local law enforcement, heroin is supplied by the Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) in the Denver metro area. These DTOs are trafficking larger amounts of Mexican domestically grown opium and processed heroin (both black tar and brown powder) to raise cash in order to buy other high profit drugs such as cocaine and methamphetamine.²⁶
- Law enforcement officials report that Honduran groups in Denver are becoming more involved in retail drug distribution. Honduran youths in Denver are moving aggressively into retail heroin distribution sales.²⁷
- Numerous individuals in the Denver area are exploiting state medicinal marijuana laws and caregiver status to operate illicit indoor cannabis grows. Denver area officials report that it is not uncommon to seize indoor grow sites containing 300 to 400 plants.²⁸
- Denver law enforcement officials report that most criminal street gang activity involves street-level drugs sales, assaults, robberies, burglaries, and shootings. Law enforcement agencies in the region report high levels of violence associated with crack cocaine and ice methamphetamine, drugs commonly distributed by street gang members.

Courts

- Drug Courts²⁹
As of August 11, 2008, there were 4 drug courts in Denver that had been operating for at least two years. There were no additional drug courts in existence or being planned in Denver at that time.

Corrections

- The Denver county jail facility has been in existence since 1956, and is the largest single county jail in the Rocky Mountain region. Its daily population averages over 2,100 inmates. County Jail programs include drug and alcohol counseling.³⁰

Consequences of Use

- Preliminary, un-weighted data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) indicate that from January through December 2007, cocaine was the most common illegal drug reported in Denver area emergency department (ED) visits.³¹

Drugs Involved in ED Reports, Denver, January-December 2007

Major Substance of Abuse	# of Reports
Alcohol	5,137
Cocaine	3,926
Heroin	925
Marijuana	2,249
Amphetamines	397
Methamphetamine	779
MDMA (ecstasy)	159
GHB	16
Flunitrazepam (Rohypnol)	4
Ketamine	12
LSD	81
PCP	16
Miscellaneous hallucinogens	72
Other	79
Total	13,852

- Estimates of the economic costs of unaddressed substance abuse in the City and County of Denver exceed \$600 million annually.³²
- There were 79 reported deaths in Denver related to cocaine during 2005.³³

Number of Drug-Related Deaths, Denver, 2005

Drug Type	# of Deaths
Cocaine	79
Heroin	4
Other opiates	90

Treatment

- During 2007, there were 12,027 total substance abuse treatment admissions in the Denver/Boulder metropolitan area.³⁴

Admissions to Treatment, Primary Drug of Abuse, Denver/Boulder Metro Area 2005- 2007

Drug Type	2005	2006	2007
Alcohol	3,575	4,408	4,321
Marijuana	2,695	2,901	2,824
Methamphetamine	1,494	1,696	1,672
Cocaine	1,460	1,849	1,807
Heroin	1,007	810	807
Other opiates	434	412	400
Depressants	45	57	48
Other amphetamines/stimulants	21	34	17
Hallucinogens	17	25	17
Club Drugs	24	24	39
Other	40	37	75
Total	10,812	12,253	12,027

- According to 2006 data, approximately 1,304 (2.7%) Denver residents reported needing but not receiving treatment for illicit drug use within the past year.³⁵

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder: <http://factfinder.census.gov>

² Ibid.

³ Denver Web site: <http://www.denvergov.org/>

⁴ Denver Mayor Web site: <http://www.denvergov.org/Mayor/>

⁵ Denver City Council Web site:

<http://www.denvergov.org/Default.aspx?alias=www.denvergov.org/citycouncil>

⁶ Denver Police Department Web site: <http://www.denvergov.org/Police/>

⁷ Denver County Sheriff's Department, About Us section:

<http://www.denvergov.org/Sheriff/AbouttheDenverSheriffDepartment/tabid/432509/Default.aspx>

⁸ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area:

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/rockymountain.html>

⁹ Denver Office of Drug Strategy Web site: http://www.denvergov.org/Drug_Strategies/1178aboutus.asp

¹⁰ Colorado Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in Colorado 2007*: <http://cbi.state.co.us/dr/cic2k7/>

¹¹ Colorado Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in Colorado 2006*: <http://cbi.state.co.us/dr/cic2k6/>

¹² Colorado Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in Colorado 2007*: <http://cbi.state.co.us/dr/cic2k7/>

¹³ Colorado Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in Colorado 2006*: <http://cbi.state.co.us/dr/cic2k6/>

¹⁴ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008:

http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc

¹⁵ National Drug Intelligence Center, *Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Market Analysis 2008*, June 2008: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27511/27511p.pdf>

¹⁶ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008:

http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc

¹⁷ Drug Enforcement Administration, 2008 Colorado State Factsheet:

<http://www.dea.gov/pubs/states/colorado.html>

¹⁸ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008:

http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc

¹⁹ Ibid.

-
- ²⁰ National Drug Intelligence Center, *Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Market Analysis 2008*, June 2008: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27511/27511p.pdf>
- ²¹ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Denver Office of Drug Strategy, *Denver Drug Strategy, 2008-2013*: <http://www.denvergov.org/Portals/370/documents/DenverDrugStrategyPlan7-08.pdf>
- ²⁴ Colorado Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in Colorado 2007*: <http://cbi.state.co.us/dr/cic2k7/>
- ²⁵ National Drug Intelligence Center, *Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Market Analysis 2008*, June 2008: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27511/27511p.pdf>
- ²⁶ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc
- ²⁷ National Drug Intelligence Center, *Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Drug Market Analysis 2008*, June 2008: <http://www.usdoj.gov/ndic/pubs27/27511/27511p.pdf>
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance Project, *Summary of Drug Court Activity by State and County*, August 11, 2008: <http://www.spa.american.edu/justice/documents/2416.pdf>
- ³⁰ Denver City and County Sheriff's Department, Denver County Jail: <http://www.denvergov.org/Sheriff/DenverCountyJail/tabid/393650/Default.aspx>
- ³¹ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc
- ³² Denver Office of Drug Strategy, *Denver Drug Strategy, 2008-2013*: <http://www.denvergov.org/Portals/370/documents/DenverDrugStrategyPlan7-08.pdf>
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Colorado Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, *Patterns and Trends in Drug Abuse: Denver and Colorado: January–December 2007*, June 2008: http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/Denver%20CEWG%202007_Fnl%20update%206-4-08_1.doc
- ³⁵ Denver Office of Drug Strategy, *Denver Drug Strategy, 2008-2013*: <http://www.denvergov.org/Portals/370/documents/DenverDrugStrategyPlan7-08.pdf>

This Drug Indicator Profile was prepared by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is funded by ONDCP and is a component of the [National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#). For further information concerning the contents of this Profile or other drug issues, please contact:

ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 6000
Rockville, MD 20849-6000

Web Site: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

Email Form: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/utilities/contact.html>

