



U.S. Department of Justice FY 2020 Budget Request

DRUG ENFORCEMENT AND THE OPIOID CRISIS

+\$290.5 Million in Program Enhancements and Transfers

FY 2020 Overview

The United States is in the midst of the deadliest drug epidemic in American history. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 70,200 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2017, a 10% increase from the previous year.¹ Over 47,600, or over two-thirds, of these overdose deaths were caused by heroin, fentanyl, and prescription opioids. The President declared a National Public Health Emergency in October 2017, and the Department remains committed to doing its part to protect the American people from the impact of drugs and drug-related crime nationwide.

The FY 2020 budget requests \$291 million in program enhancements and transfers to combat the opioid crisis and bolster drug enforcement efforts. These resources enable the Department to target the drug trafficking organizations responsible for opioid abuse and drug-related violence in our communities. It also bolsters the capacity of Department agents to deny revenues to drug traffickers using the best cyber capabilities and technologies, enabling the Department to keep pace with these nefarious actors.

New Program Enhancements

- **Combating the Opioid Crisis: +\$13.1 million and 49 positions (35 Agents)**

Funds five new heroin enforcement groups (\$11.1 million, 49 positions, 35 Agents) to be deployed to DEA Field Divisions that have identified heroin as the first or second greatest threat to their area. These groups will target the link between the cartels and the drug trafficking networks operating within the United States. These resources will also increase agents at DEA Field Divisions to target the Mexican Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) that pose the greatest drug threat to the United States. This enhancement will bring the total of established heroin enforcement groups to 19.

Additionally, OCDETF has requested \$2.0 million in operational funds to support its ongoing and rapidly expanding National Opioid Initiative. This will support the hundreds

¹ Hedegaard H. Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 1999-2017. NCHS Data Brief, no 329. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2019. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db329_tables-508.pdf

of federal agents and scores of federal prosecutors who are handling the expansion of opioid investigations and prosecutions.

Current services for this initiative are \$54.9 million and 182 positions (138 agents).

- **Targeting Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs): +\$11.65 million**

An additional \$1.65 million will support DEA's flagship Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) Program to combat highly sophisticated TCOs known for supplying illicit substances to distributors and users in the United States. Of the total, \$250,000 will support re-vetting of SIU members, \$550,000 will support SIU advanced training requirements, and \$850,000 will enhance operational resources in Panama and El Salvador.

Further, DEA manages or participates in lawful Translation and Transcription Support Services telecommunications data intercepts, known as Judicial Wire Intercept Programs (JWIP), in approximately 20 countries. An additional \$10 million in funding will support consolidation of nine core legacy judicial wire intercept systems into one new judicial wire intercept platform in Colombia. This system upgrade is essential to DEA's effort to establish a combined telephony/IP data communications intercept and collection platform in Colombia, and to prevent the DEA from "going dark" in this vital region.

Current services for this initiative is \$26.4 million.

- **Cyber Investigations: +\$11.7 million and 44 positions (8 agents)**

DEA requests \$1.9 million and 7 positions to support DEA efforts to convert the Virtual Currency Initiative into the VC-Cyber Section, which will ensure that all field elements will receive the benefits, resources, and expertise available at DEA in the most efficient and effective manner. The funding will facilitate the use of cryptocurrencies, including Bitcoin, in undercover operations.

An investment of \$2.5 million and 8 positions will help DEA counter unforeseen and emerging technical challenges vital to DEA's mission, and the Cyber Technical Section will be the center of expertise in this area. DEA has an increasing need for technical guidance when conducting investigations in the cyber realm. This group will provide that guidance by serving as the center of technical expertise to support investigations, coordinate with other DEA stakeholders, provide training and outreach, develop and manage cyber capabilities and maintain strategic assessments of the latest cyber threats posed by TCOs.

A further \$3.6 million and 23 positions will allow DEA to fill the gap in divisional cyber focused enforcement initiatives by placing a technical specialist in each of DEA's 23 field offices. This will ensure that DEA investigators in the field are trained adequately on the tools, techniques, and rules relating to cyber investigation.

DEA requests \$2.7 million for the Counter Networking Group (CNWG) at its Special Operations Division (SOD). These resources will support DEA efforts to pull bulk data into analytical tools, combining that data with other sources, in order to develop leads and insights based on high-level analysis of the bulk data. The CNWG is a pressing need as the opioid epidemic has driven the expectation for immediate operational support to the field, and the increased use of cyber techniques by hostile actors has created vast amounts of data requiring analysis.

Finally, DEA's Special Testing and Research Laboratory is the premier drug intelligence lab in the world. A requested \$1.1 million and 6 positions will support the development of a Dark Web access tool for use in Cyber cases, which is not currently available. The Digital Evidence Lab has a backlog of approximately 800 exhibits waiting for analysis.

Current services for this initiative are \$9.7 million and 49 positions (0 agents)

- **High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Programs: +254.0 million, transferred from the Office of National Drug Control Policy**

The FY 2020 President's Budget permanently transfers \$254 million from the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to DEA to better facilitate coordination of the HIDTA Program grants with other drug enforcement assets. DEA currently participates in and coordinates with the various HDTAs. Transferring the administration of the program will allow HIDTA resources to be focused on combating drug trafficking in areas where the threat is the greatest and where there is a coordinated law enforcement presence. There are currently 29 HDTAs located in 49 states, as well as in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia.

FY 2020 Program Enhancement Summary
(Amount in \$000s)

Component/Initiative	Component	Positions	Agts/ Attys	Amount
Combating the Opioid Crisis				
Heroin Enforcement Groups	DEA	49	35	\$11,140
Addressing the National Opioid Epidemic	OCDETF	0	0	\$2,000
Combating TCOs				
Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) Program	DEA	0	0	\$1,650
JWIP	DEA	0	0	\$10,000
Cyber Enforcement				
Virtual Currency	DEA	7	4	\$1,860
Cyber Technical Unit	DEA	8	4	\$2,516
Field Division Cyber Support	DEA	23	0	\$3,560
Counter Network Working Group	DEA	0	0	\$2,700
Digital Evidence Lab	DEA	6	0	\$1,086
High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program (transfer from ONDCP)	DEA	0	0	\$254,000
Total, Program Increases		93	43	\$290,512