

**DRUG AND VIOLENT CRIME IN ILLINOIS:  
AN OVERVIEW OF STATISTICAL INDICATORS ON THE  
EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM AND  
THE JUSTICE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE**

---

September 1996

Prepared by  
Research and Analysis Unit  
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. Introduction .....	1
II. Drug Availability in Illinois .....	2
1995 and 1996 Statewide Survey of MEGs and Drug Task Forces Regarding Perceived Drug Availability .....	2
1996 Statewide Survey of MEGs and Drug Task Forces Regarding Perceived Drug Availability .....	3
Statewide Survey of MEGs and Task Forces Regarding Drug Prices .....	4
Cocaine Purity in Illinois .....	5
Heroin Purity in Chicago .....	6
Crack Cocaine Seizures .....	7
III. Drug Use in the United States and Illinois .....	8
Illicit Drug Use Among High School Seniors .....	8
Students' Perceptions of the Dangerousness of Limited Drug Use .....	9
Drug Use Among Illinois' Arrestees .....	10
Drug Use Among Male and Female Arrestees Outside of Chicago .....	11
Focus on Heroin Use and its Impact in Chicago .....	12
Focus on Cocaine Use and its Impact in Chicago .....	13
Illicit Drug Use and Substance Affected Infants in Illinois .....	14
IV. Violent Crime in Illinois .....	15
Violent Index Offense Rates in Illinois .....	15
Admissions to Illinois Trauma Centers .....	16
Child Abuse and Neglect in Illinois .....	17
V. Impact of Current Efforts in Illinois .....	18
Drug Arrests by Authority-Funded Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Task Forces .....	18
Drug Prosecutions by Authority-Funded Multi-Jurisdictional Drug Prosecution Units .....	19
Drug Arrest Rates in Illinois .....	20
Probationers Ordered to Drug Treatment in Illinois .....	21
Admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections .....	22
VI. Conclusions .....	23
VII. Bibliography .....	24

---

## **I. Introduction**

---

This overview presents a brief introductory look at selected statistical indicators of the drug and violent crime problem and the criminal justice system's response in Illinois. It is intended to serve as a point of departure for discussion and more detailed data analysis as the Authority begins to prepare Illinois' federal fiscal year 1997 Drug and Violent Crime Control Strategy and application for federal Violent Crime Control Act funds.

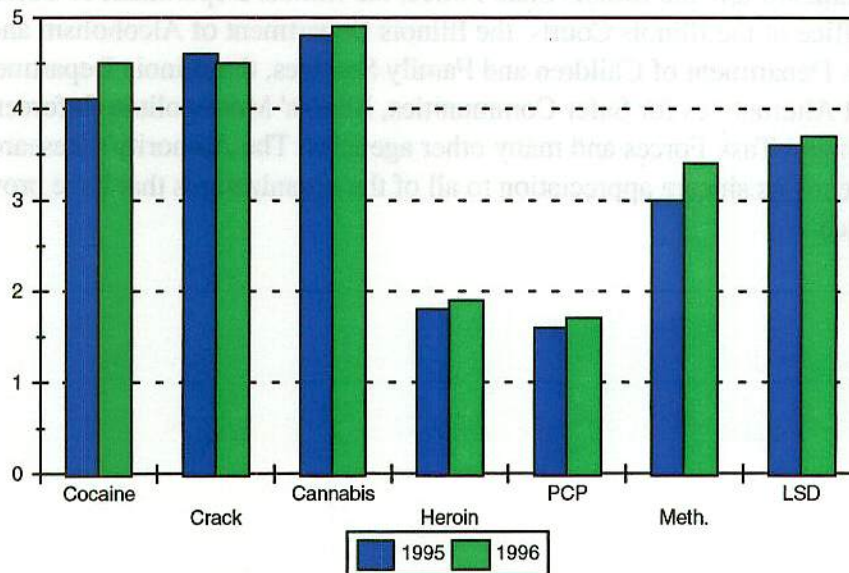
Because no single indicator can accurately reflect the scope and complexity of the drug and violent crime problem, the Authority's analysis employs multiple indicators from a variety of sources, including the criminal justice and public health systems. This requires the cooperation of numerous federal, state and local agencies, including: the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Illinois Department of Public Health, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities, Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Enforcement Task Forces and many other agencies. The Authority's Research and Analysis Unit extends its sincere appreciation to all of the organizations that have provided data and other assistance.

## II. Drug Availability in Illinois

### 1995 and 1996 Statewide Surveys of MEGs and Drug Task Forces Regarding Perceived Drug Availability

According to Authority surveys conducted in 1995 and 1996, Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Task Forces report that the perceived availability of drugs has increased slightly over the past year and that cocaine, crack and cannabis continue to be readily available across Illinois. The largest increases in perceived availability occurred for cocaine and methamphetamines, while the perceived availability of crack, cannabis, heroin and PCP remained relatively stable between 1995 and 1996.

### Availability of Drugs Across Illinois 1=Not Available 5=Easily Available



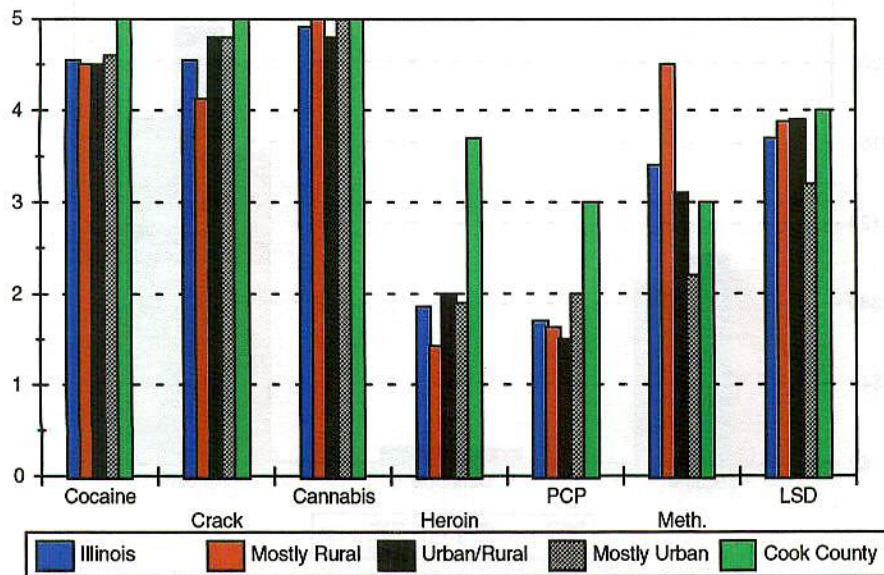
Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs & Task Forces

Most of the increase in the perceived availability of methamphetamines can be attributed to increases in specific regions of the state, namely Cook County and Illinois' rural counties.

**1996 Statewide Survey of MEGs and Drug Task Forces Regarding Perceived Drug Availability**

Cocaine and cannabis continue to be the most visible drugs on the street across Illinois. In the Authority survey conducted in June 1996, Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Task Forces reported that cocaine, crack cocaine, cannabis and LSD were readily available across all regions of the state, just as they were in 1995.

**Availability of Drugs in Illinois, 1996**  
1=Not Available 5=Easily Available



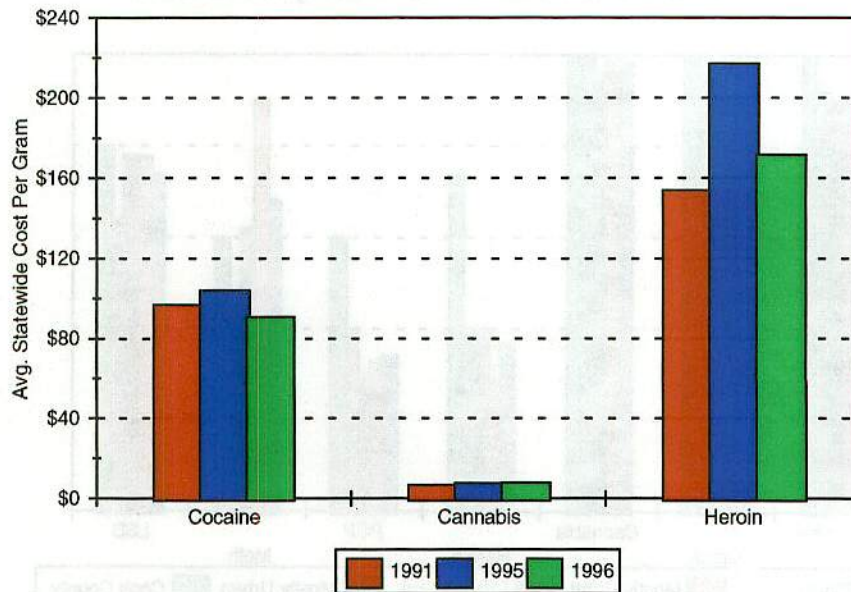
Source: Authority Survey of Illinois MEGs & Task Forces

There was variation in the perceived availability of heroin and methamphetamines, however, across regions of the state. Heroin was reported as more readily available in Cook County than elsewhere, while methamphetamines were reported as readily available in Illinois' rural areas, but only moderately available in other parts of the state.

**Statewide Surveys of MEGs and Drug Task Forces Regarding Drug Prices**

While street-level prices for cocaine and cannabis have remained relatively stable over the past six years, heroin prices have fluctuated. For example, the average price for one gram of cocaine has been at or slightly below \$100 since 1991. Street-level prices for heroin, however, increased dramatically between 1991 and 1995, before decreasing to approximately \$170 per-gram in 1996.

**Price Per Gram Comparison Between  
1991, 1995 and 1996 Surveys**

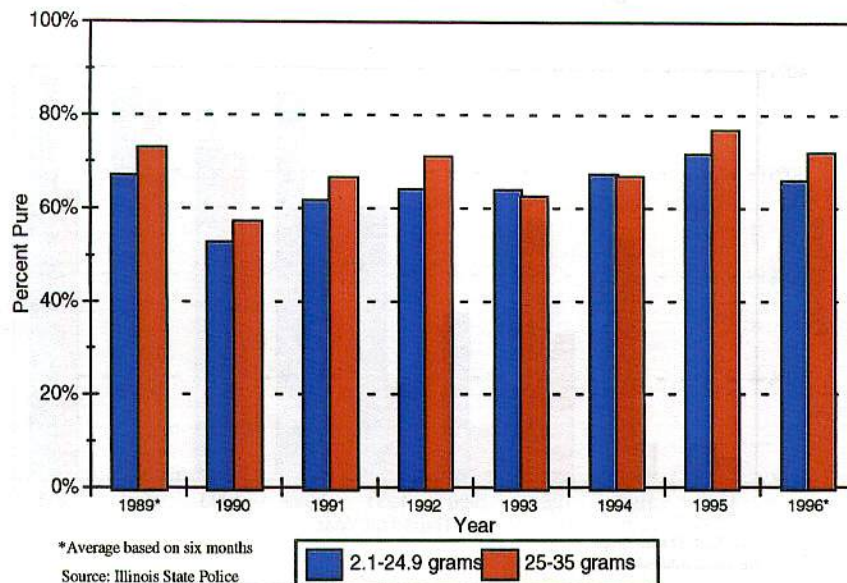


Part of the explanation behind the dramatic changes in heroin prices has been a change in the heroin market, with higher purity Southeast Asian white heroin replacing brown heroin in many of Illinois' jurisdictions since the early 1990s.

### Cocaine Purity in Illinois

While cocaine purity increased steadily between 1993 and 1995, data for the first half of 1996 indicates a reduction in cocaine purity from 1995 levels. Based on data from the Illinois State Police's crime labs, the average purity of cocaine samples weighing 2.1 - 24.9 grams increased from 64 percent in 1993 to 72 percent in 1995, before decreasing to 66 percent through May 1996. Similarly, the average purity of samples weighing 25 - 35 grams increased from 63 percent to 77 percent between 1993 and 1995, before decreasing to 72 percent in 1996.

Average Purity of Cocaine  
Submitted to ISP Crime Labs

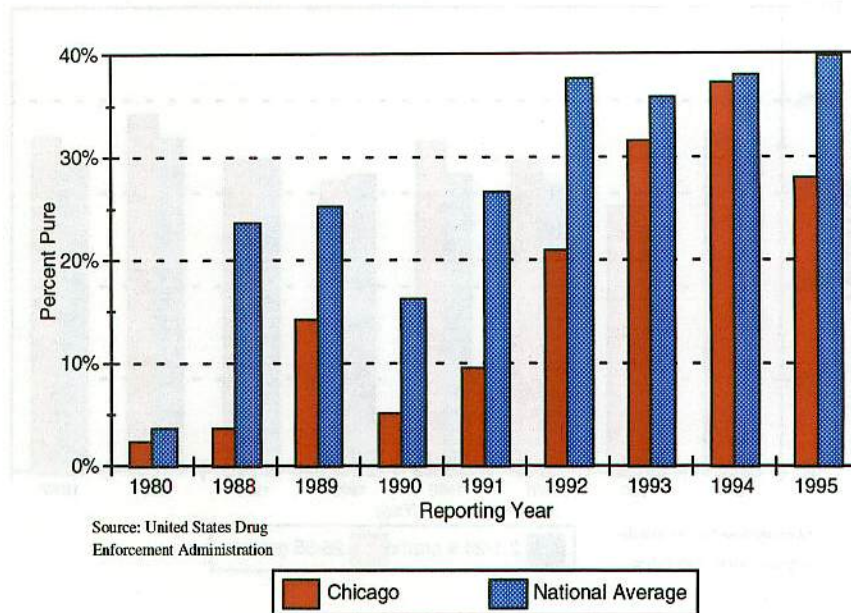


As would be expected, seizures of larger quantities of cocaine (25-35 grams) represent seizures at earlier points in the marketing of the drug and, on average, these seizures are higher in purity than seizures involving smaller, street-level quantities.

### ***Heroin Purity in Chicago***

Although the average purity of heroin in Chicago increased dramatically between the early 1980s and 1994, it decreased between 1994 and 1995. The average purity of Chicago street-level heroin tested by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration was approximately 28 percent pure in 1995, compared to 37 percent in 1994 and 2.3 percent in 1980.

**Average Purity Level of Heroin,  
Chicago and the National Average**



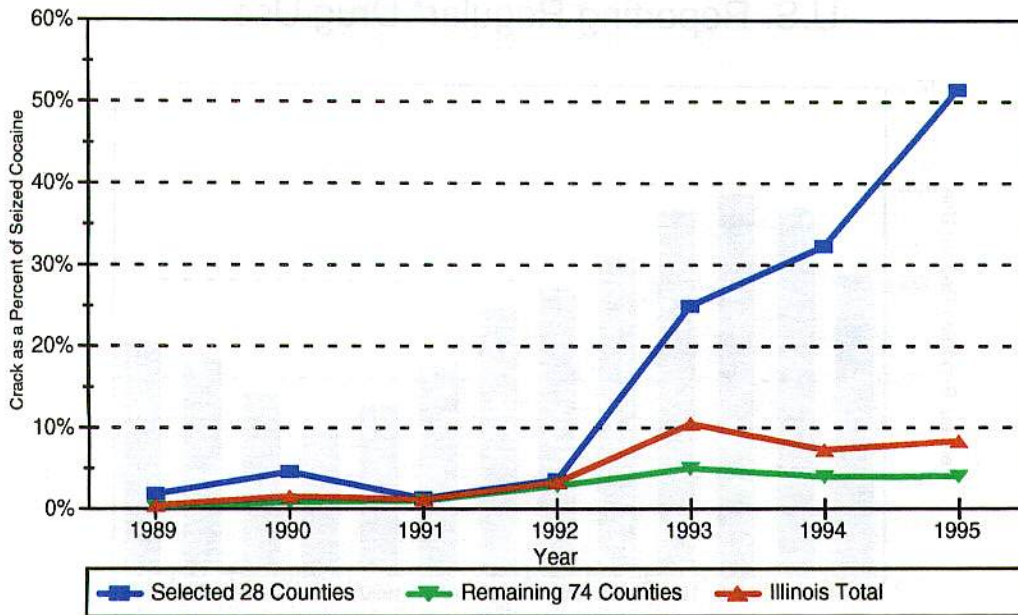
Chicago epidemiologists and drug treatment providers report that the higher purity levels are a response to younger users' desire to snort, rather than inject, heroin. Chicago also is starting to see users smoke heroin and use it in combination with cocaine. Treatment providers report that heroin users who snort the drug are much younger in age than the treatment population which still prefers injection as the route of administration.



### Crack Cocaine Seizures

Although crack cocaine seizures are concentrated in the Chicago area, crack can be found across all regions of the state. Outside of Chicago, 16,709 grams of crack cocaine were seized in 1995, almost twice the amount seized just three years earlier. For example, in 28 counties outside of Cook County, over one-half of the cocaine seized by law enforcement agencies in 1995 was in the form of crack, compared to only 2 percent in 1989. Across the remaining counties (including suburban Cook County), crack has accounted for less than 6 percent of the cocaine seized annually since 1989.

### Crack Cocaine as a Percent of Total Cocaine Seized Outside of Chicago



Source: Illinois State Police

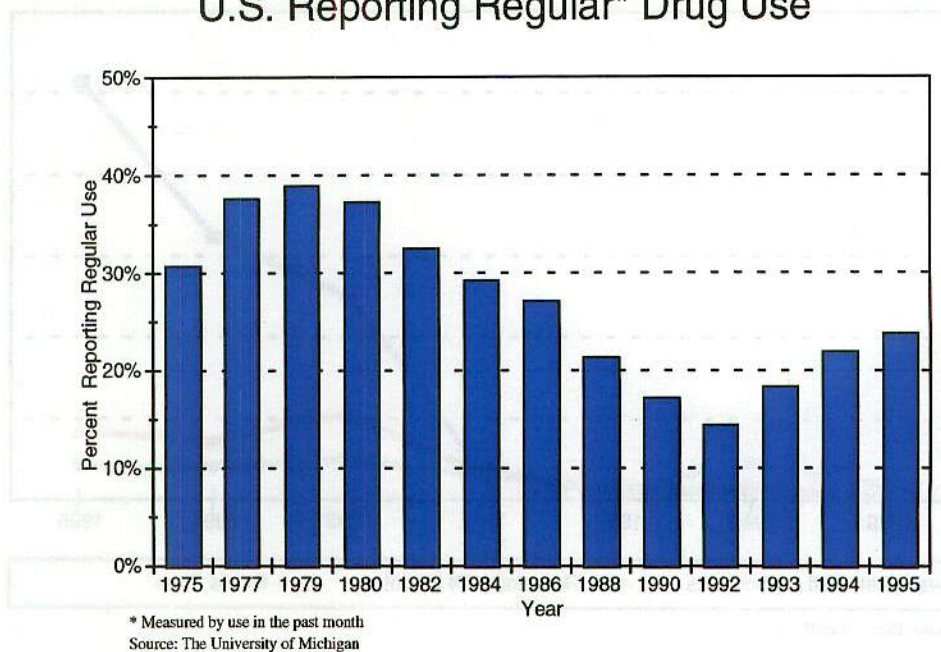
Those counties experiencing the greatest influx of crack were also the ones which experienced some of the largest increases in violence and firearm-related violence during the early 1990s.

### III. Drug Use in the United States and Illinois

#### Illicit Drug Use Among High School Seniors

The percentage of high school seniors across the country reporting regular drug use increased for the third consecutive year in 1995; reversing a long-term trend of declining drug use among this population. The proportion of high school seniors reporting drug use during the past month in 1995 was the highest rate of illicit drug since 1986. In 1995, almost 24 percent of the seniors in the national survey reported regular drug use, compared to 22 percent in 1994, 18 percent in 1993 and 14 percent in 1992.

Percent of High School Seniors in the  
U.S. Reporting Regular\* Drug Use

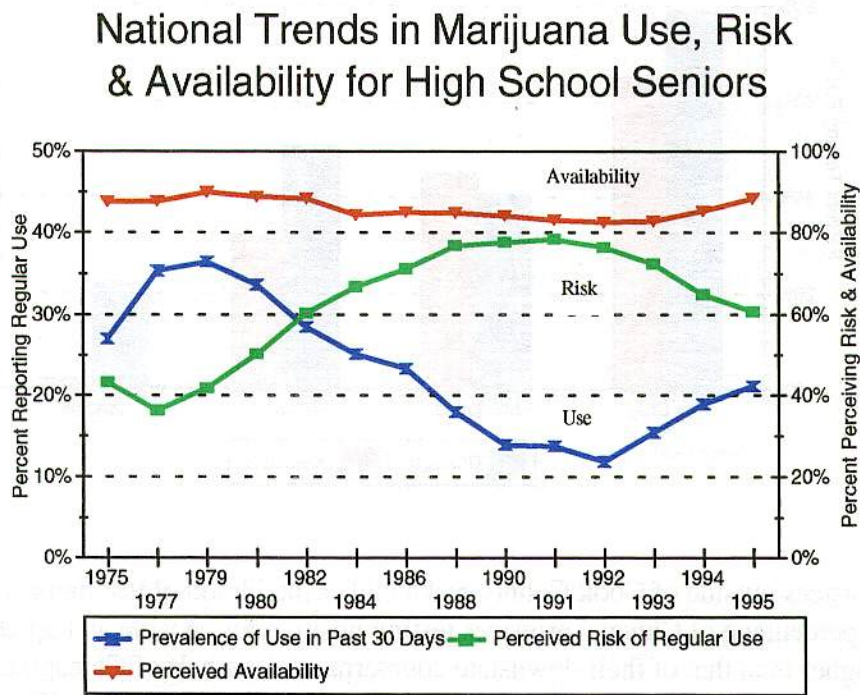


Marijuana has consistently been the most frequently cited drug, other than alcohol, by high school seniors when asked about past-month use. Twenty-one percent of the high school seniors surveyed in 1995 reported marijuana use in the past month, compared to 1.8 percent reporting cocaine use during the past month.

### Students' Perceptions of the Dangerousness of Limited Drug Use

The recent increase in reported drug use by high school seniors has been matched by a decline in the perceived dangerousness of drugs. In 1995, 54 percent of the students in the national high school survey perceived danger in using cocaine once or twice, compared to 60 percent in 1991. Similarly, in 1995, 16.3 percent of the students perceived danger in limited marijuana use, compared with 27 percent in 1991.

When comparing trends in the reported use, perceived risk and perceived availability of marijuana (the drug other than alcohol used most frequently by this population), it is clear that use is related much more to perceived danger than availability. While the perceived availability of marijuana did not fluctuate much over the past two decades, drug use and perceived danger consistently moved in opposite directions.

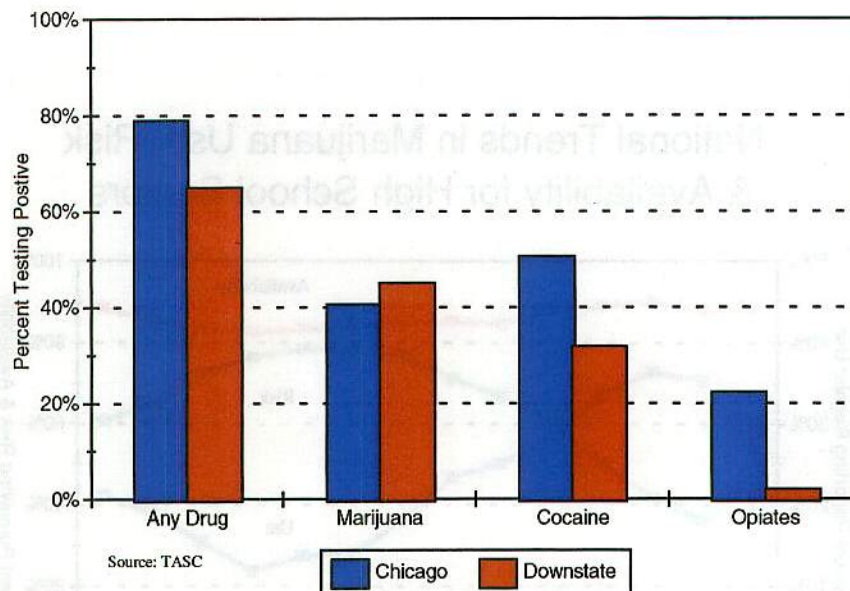


A similar pattern of use, perceived danger and perceived availability was also evident with respect to cocaine.

### Drug Use Among Illinois' Arrestees

The Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) program has tested Chicago arrestees for drug use since 1987. In 1995, the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and the Authority funded an expansion of the DUF program in Illinois to six counties outside of Cook County. Data from the study indicate that drug use among arrestees is generally lower outside of Chicago, with the exception of marijuana use. Among the 831 male arrestees tested across the six counties outside of Cook, 65 percent tested positive for illicit drugs, compared to 79 percent of the Chicago male arrestees tested that year.

Percent of Male Arrestees Testing  
Positive For Drugs In Illinois, 1995

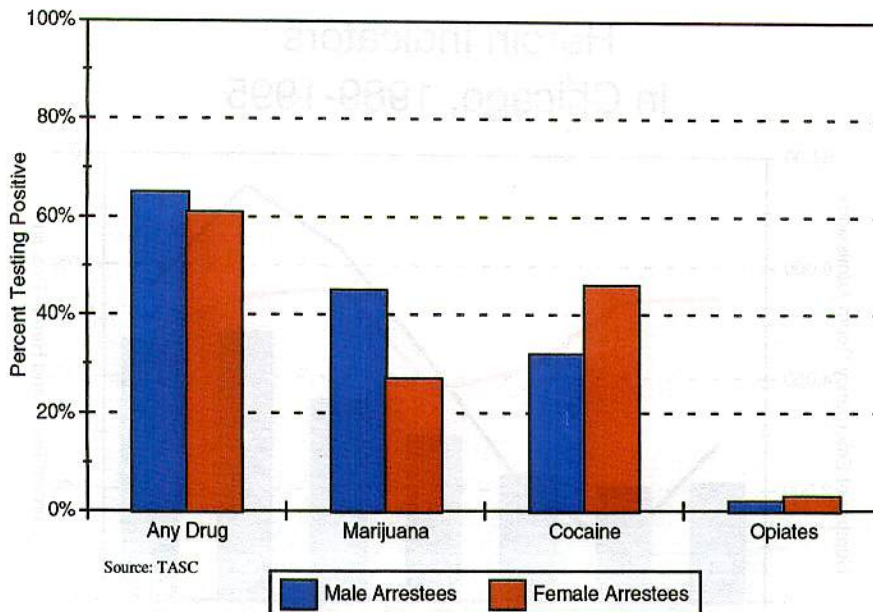


While male arrestees outside of Cook County had a higher likelihood of testing positive for marijuana, the percentage of Chicago arrestees testing positive for cocaine and opiates was dramatically higher than that of their downstate counterparts. One-half of Chicago arrestees tested positive for cocaine in 1995, compared to 32 percent of arrestees outside of Cook County; and nearly one-quarter of Chicago arrestees tested positive for opiates, compared to 2 percent of those tested downstate. On the other hand, 45 percent of arrestees outside of Cook County tested positive for marijuana, compared to 41 percent of Chicago arrestees.

### Drug Use Among Male and Female Arrestees Outside of Chicago

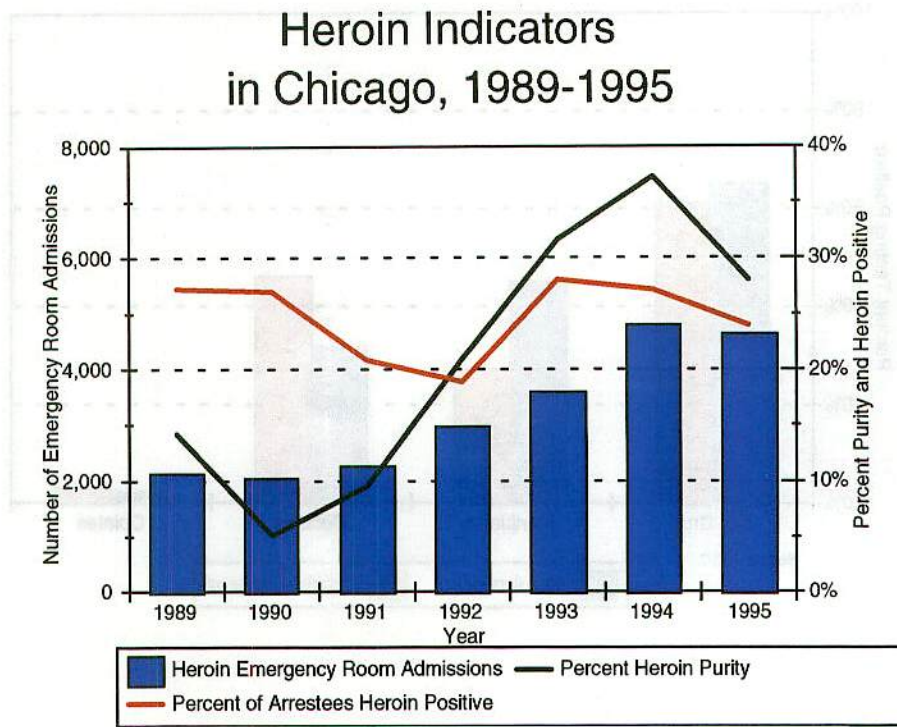
In 1995, 65 percent of the male arrestees and 61 percent of the female arrestees tested outside of Chicago were positive for any illicit substance. However, a higher percentage of female arrestees (46 percent) tested positive for cocaine when compared to male arrestees (32 percent). On the other hand, 45 percent of the male arrestees tested positive for marijuana, compared to 27 percent of female arrestees.

Percent of Downstate Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs, by Gender, 1995



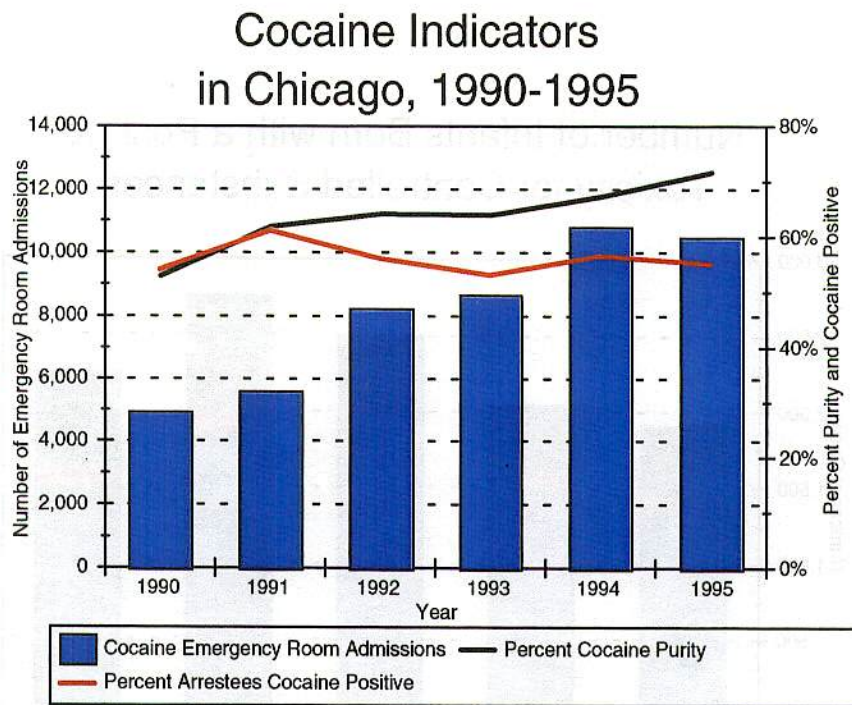
**Focus on Heroin Use and its Impact in Chicago**

Heroin has reemerged as a serious problem in several metropolitan areas across the country, including Chicago. When data on heroin-related emergency room admissions, the average purity of street-level heroin and the proportion of arrestees testing positive for opiates are compared, an interesting pattern emerges. The increase in purity, and hence availability, that occurred in recent years did not appear to appreciably impact heroin use, at least among the adult arrestee population. Higher purity levels do appear, however, to be correlated with an increase in adverse health outcomes, such as emergency room admissions.



**Focus on Cocaine Use and its Impact in Chicago**

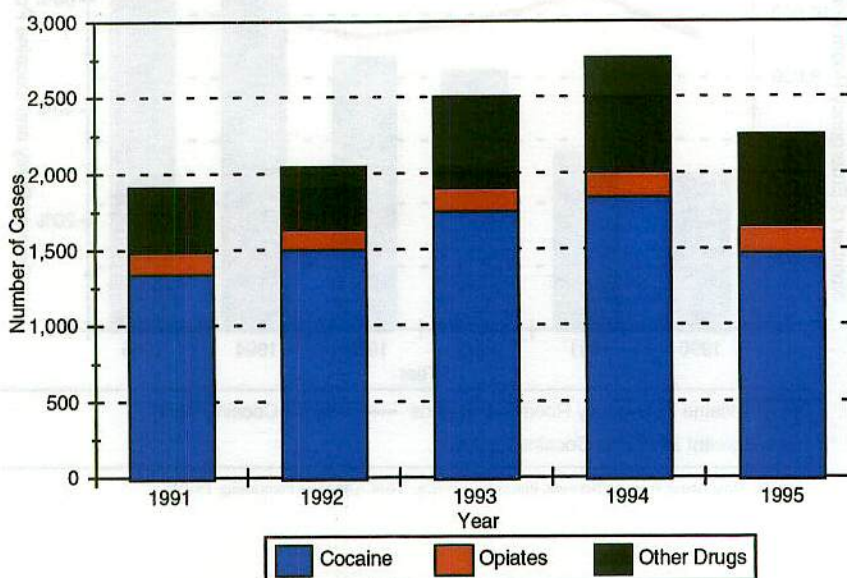
A similar pattern can be seen when data on cocaine-related emergency room admissions, the average purity of street-level cocaine and the percent of arrestees testing positive for cocaine are compared. As cocaine purity has gradually increased there has been an increase in emergency room admissions involving cocaine, but little change in cocaine use among arrestees.



### Illicit Drug Use and Substance Affected Infants in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) Adverse Pregnancy Outcome Reporting System (APORS) provides information on infants who test positive for controlled substances in Illinois. Although the number of infants testing positive for controlled substances increased steadily between 1991 and 1994, the number decreased 18 percent between 1994 and 1995, from 2,759 to 2,249. While the number of infants testing positive for cocaine and "other controlled substances" drove the overall decrease between 1994 and 1995, the number of infants testing positive for opiates increased 6 percent during that period, from 165 to 176.

#### Number of Infants Born with a Positive Toxicity for Controlled Substances



Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

Cases involving cocaine accounted for the majority (70 percent) of the positive results, while opiates accounted for approximately 7 percent of the positive cases. Cook County has consistently accounted for more than 80 percent of the positive APORS cases statewide.



---

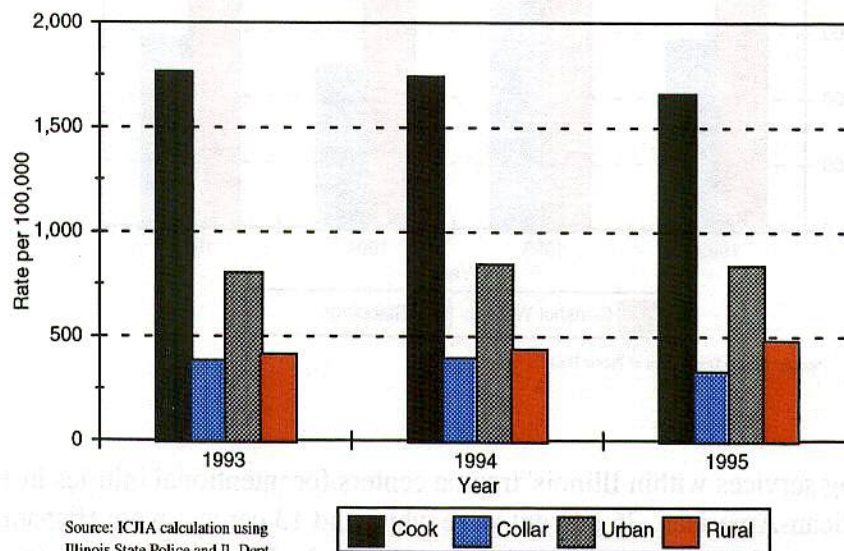
#### IV. Violent Crime in Illinois

---

##### *Violent Index Offense Rates in Illinois*

Statewide, the number of violent Index offenses reported to local law enforcement agencies in Illinois decreased 3 percent between 1993 and 1995, from 125,381 to 121,082. Most of the statewide decrease can be attributed to a 5.8 percent decline in Cook County and a 13 percent decline in the collar counties. Illinois' urban counties (outside of Cook and the collar counties) and rural counties, however, experienced increases in violent Index offenses between 1993 and 1995. During that period, reported violent Index offenses increased 4.5 percent in Illinois' urban counties and 16 percent in Illinois' rural counties.

Violent Index Offense Rate in Illinois  
by Region, Rate per 100,000 Population

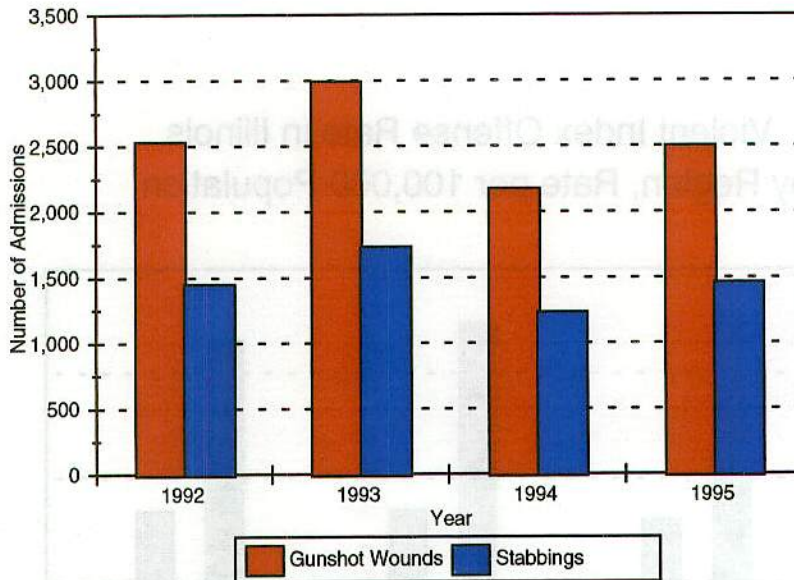


Among the four regions analyzed, Cook County experienced the highest violent crime rate in 1995, with 1,661 violent Index offenses reported per 100,000 population. Illinois' urban counties had a violent crime rate of 838 per 100,000 population that year, or one-half of Cook County's violent crime rate.

### **Admissions to Illinois Trauma Centers**

Between 1993 and 1995, the number of patients admitted to an Illinois trauma center for an intentionally-inflicted gunshot or stabbing wound decreased 16 percent, from 4,725 to 3,964. In 1995, gunshot wounds accounted for 34 percent of all trauma center admissions for intentional injury in Illinois.

**Admissions to Illinois Trauma Centers  
for Gunshot and Stabbing Wounds**

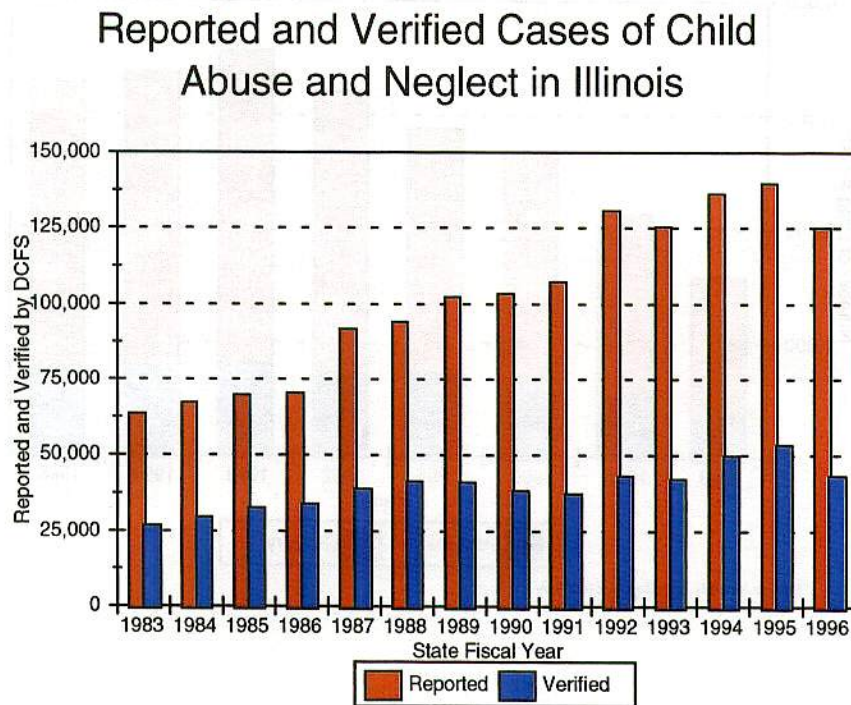


Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

Of those receiving services within Illinois' trauma centers for intentional injuries in 1995, 57 percent were African-American, 26 percent were white and 13 percent were Hispanic. The vast majority (81 percent) of trauma center admissions were male. Persons under the age of 35 accounted for 69 percent of the statewide admissions.

### Child Abuse and Neglect in Illinois

Research has consistently documented the link between child abuse and violence. Between SFYs 1989 and 1996, the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services increased 22 percent, from 102,230 to 124,997, while *verified* cases increased 6 percent, from 40,932 to 43,292. Despite this long-term increase, there was an 11 percent decrease in the number of child abuse and neglect cases reported between SFYs 1995 and 1996, from 139,711 to 124,997, and a 19 percent decrease in the number of *verified* cases, from 53,537 to 43,292.



---

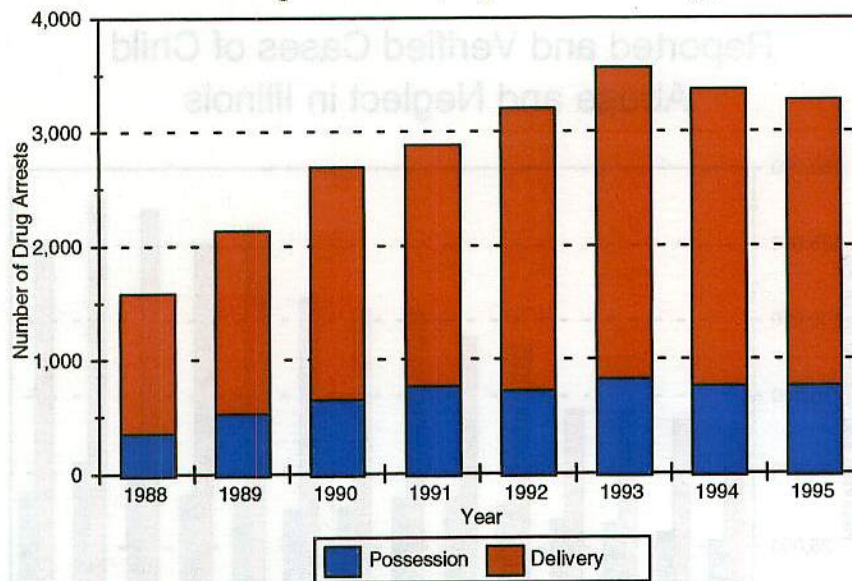
## V. Impact of Current Efforts in Illinois

---

### *Drug Arrests by Authority-Funded Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Drug Task Forces*

In 1995, Illinois' Metropolitan Enforcement Groups (MEGs) and Drug Task Forces made 3,275 arrests for drug offenses, more than double the total number of drug arrests made in 1988 when Authority funding began. Arrests for drug delivery (including Class X delivery offenses) accounted for the majority (76 percent) of the arrests made between 1988 and 1994.

MEG Unit and Narcotics Task Force  
Drug Arrests, by Offense Type

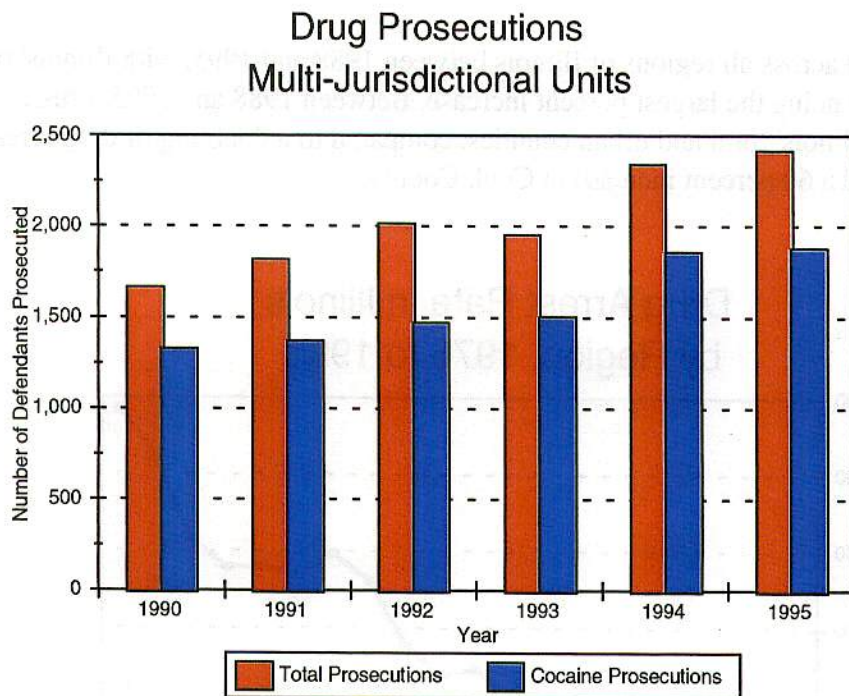


Source: Monthly Data Reported to ICJIA

The majority of arrests made by these units have involved drugs other than cannabis; 61 percent involved cocaine, opiates or hallucinogens, while 33 percent involved cannabis and 3 percent involved other drugs.

**Drug Prosecutions by Authority-Funded Multi-jurisdictional Drug Prosecution Units**

Between 1990 and 1995, the six multi-jurisdictional drug prosecution units funded by the Authority prosecuted 12,205 drug defendants, the majority for cocaine and delivery offenses. The annual number of prosecutions by these units increased 45 percent over the time period, from 1,664 to 2,417.



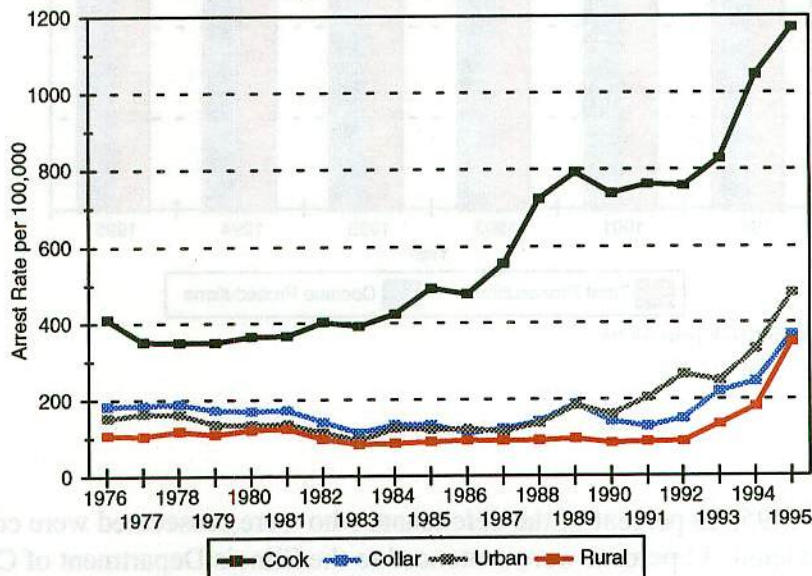
Between 1990 and 1995, 89 percent of the defendants who were prosecuted were convicted. Of the defendants convicted, 32 percent were sentenced to the Illinois Department of Corrections, 42 percent were sentenced to probation and 26 percent were sentenced to other sanctions.

### Drug Arrest Rates in Illinois

In 1995, there were 86,058 drug arrests by law enforcement agencies in Illinois, which was a 90 percent increase since 1988. Unlike arrests made by Illinois' MEGs and Drug Task Forces, the majority of arrests made by local law enforcement agencies involved drug possession rather than drug delivery. Statewide, violations of the Controlled Substances Act accounted for 59 percent of the total 1995 drug arrests.

Drug arrests increased across all regions of Illinois between 1988 and 1995, with Illinois' rural and urban counties experiencing the largest percent increase. Between 1988 and 1995, drug arrests more than tripled in Illinois' rural and urban counties, compared to a doubling of drug arrests in the collar counties and a 60 percent increase in Cook County.

### Drug Arrest Rate in Illinois by Region, 1976 to 1995



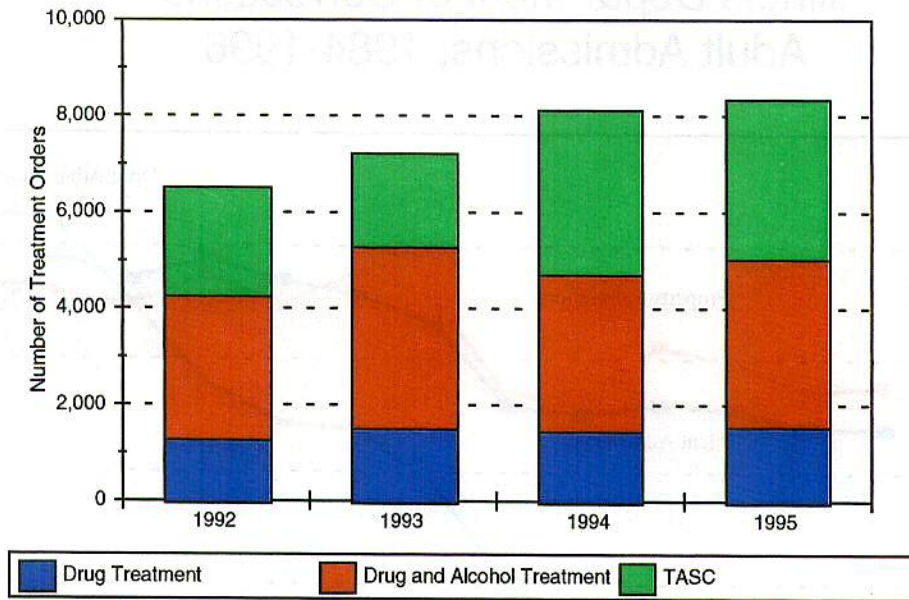
Source: ICJIA calculation using Illinois State  
Police and Il. Dept. of Public Health data

Despite the fact that Cook County experienced the smallest percent increase in drug arrests between 1988 and 1995, the drug arrest rate in Cook County has been more than twice as high as the rate in all the other regions throughout the past two decades. In 1995, the drug arrest rate in Cook County was almost 1,200 per 100,000 population, followed by Illinois' urban counties, with a drug arrest rate of almost 500 per 100,000.

### Probationers Ordered to Drug Treatment in Illinois

Along with increases in the total number of offenders on probation in Illinois, the number of adult probationers ordered to substance abuse treatment continues to increase in Illinois. Between 1992 and 1995, the number of probationers ordered to some form of treatment for illicit drugs increased 28 percent, from 6,506 to 8,337. Still, less than 20 percent of adults placed on probation in 1995 were ordered by the court to some form of drug treatment.

### Probationers Ordered to Drug Treatment in Illinois, 1992 - 1995



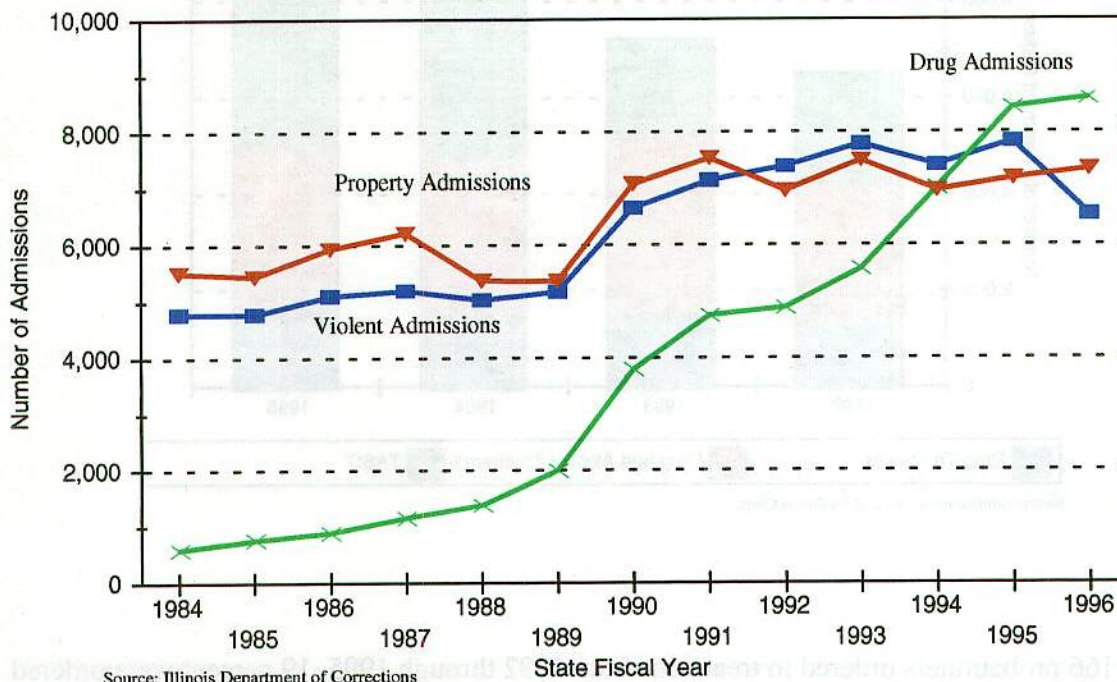
Source: Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts

Of the 30,166 probationers ordered to treatment from 1992 through 1995, 19 percent were ordered to drug treatment only, 45 percent were ordered to treatment for both drug and alcohol abuse and 36 percent were ordered to participate in a Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities (TASC) program.

**Admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections**

Although total admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections' Adult Division almost doubled between SFYs 1989 and 1996, admissions decreased approximately 3 percent between SFYs 1995 and 1996. The decrease in recent prison admissions can be attributed to a 16 percent decrease in admissions for violent offenses. Property and drug offense admissions both increased 2 percent between SFYs 1995 and 1996. Between SFYs 1989 and 1996, drug admissions increased more than four-fold. They also increased as a proportion of all admissions, from 17 percent in SFY 1989 to 38 percent in SFY 1996. For the second consecutive year, admissions for drug offenses outnumbered all other offense types.

**Illinois Department of Corrections  
Adult Admissions, 1984-1996**





---

## **VI. Conclusions**

---

Taken together, along with a variety of other available indicators, a number of general conclusions regarding drug and violent crime in Illinois and the justice system's response can be made. These are:

- > While cocaine, crack and cannabis availability has remained relatively stable across Illinois, heroin and methamphetamine availability has increased in certain regions of the state;
- > Self-reported drug use among the nation's high school seniors has increased for the third consecutive year and can be partially attributed to a decrease in the perceived danger of drug use;
- > The overall prevalence of drug use among Chicago arrestees appears to be higher than among arrestees in other parts of Illinois, and the specific types of drugs detected are quite different. Chicago arrestees are more likely to be using cocaine or heroin at the time of their offense, while arrestees outside of Cook County are more likely to be using cannabis;
- > Drug availability does not appear to drive drug use among youth or those involved in the criminal justice system, but higher levels of drug purity do appear to be related to increases in adverse outcomes related to drug use (e.g., emergency room admissions);
- > Statewide, indicators of the extent of violence have suggest a decrease in violent crime over the past few years; and,
- > The criminal justice system continues to identify, arrest, prosecute, incarcerate and treat an increasing number of drug offenders and drug users.

---

## **VII. Bibliography**

---

Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, *Annual Report of the Illinois Courts*.  
Springfield, Illinois, 1996.

DuPage County Drug Laboratory: *Drug Analysis Report*. Wheaton, Illinois, 1995.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority: *Monthly Reported Data on Law Enforcement  
Activity of Metropolitan Enforcement Groups and Narcotics Task Forces*. January 1988 -  
June 1996.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority: *Monthly Reported Data on Prosecution  
Activity of Multi-jurisdictional Drug Prosecution Programs*. 1990 - June 1996.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority: *Survey of Metropolitan Enforcement Groups  
and Narcotics Task Forces Regarding Drug Prices and Availability*, June 1995 and 1996.

Illinois Department of Corrections, Planning and Research Division: Data provided to the  
Authority on the number of adult admissions to the Illinois Department of Corrections,  
August 1996.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: *Reported and Verified Cases of  
Substance Affected Infants Data*. Springfield, Illinois, 1996.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services: *Reported and Verified Cases of Child  
Abuse and Neglect Data*. Springfield, Illinois, 1996.

Illinois Department of Public Health: *Reported Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes Reporting System  
Data*. Springfield, Illinois, 1996.

Illinois Department of Public Health, Trauma Registry: Data provided to the Authority on the  
number and type of Illinois trauma center injuries. Springfield, Illinois, 1996.

Illinois State Police, Division of Criminal Investigation: *Drug Price Guideline*. Springfield,  
Illinois, 1991.

Illinois State Police, Division of Forensic Services and Identification: *Drug Statistics, Monthly  
Report*. Springfield, Illinois, September, 1991 - May, 1996.

*Nature and Extent of the Problem and  
Impact of Current Efforts - Overview*

Northern Illinois Police Crime Laboratory: *Drug Exhibit Summary*. Highland Park, Illinois, 1995.

Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities, Inc.: *Quarterly Drug Use Forecasting Data for Chicago Arrestees*. Chicago, Illinois, 1996 (forthcoming).

Treatment Alternative for Safer Communities, Inc.: *Results of the 1995 Illinois Drug Use Forecasting Study*. Chicago, Illinois, 1995.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: *National Results on Drug Use from the Monitoring the Future Study, 1975 - 1995: 1995 Press Release*. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1995.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Chicago Field Office: *Drug Situation Report*. Chicago, Illinois, 1996 (forthcoming).



ILLINOIS  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
INFORMATION AUTHORITY

---

---

120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-3997  
Telephone: 312.793.8550  
Telefax: 312.793.8422  
World Wide Website: [www@icjia.state.il.us](http://www@icjia.state.il.us)

Jim Edgar, Governor  
Bob Kustra, Lieutenant Governor  
Peter B. Bensinger, Chairman  
Thomas F. Baker, Executive Director