



COLLABORATING TO FIGHT DRUG CRIME: MULTI-JURISTICTIONAL TASK FORCES

A Profile of the Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group



Collaborating to fight drug crime: Profile of the Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group

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Introduction

Drug task forces were developed to more efficiently and effectively fight proliferation of illicit drugs. Local police have jurisdictional restraints making it difficult to combat drug markets extending through multiple cities, and counties (Smith, Novak, Frank, & Travis, 2000). Drug task forces work across jurisdictions and pool resources, knowledge, and personnel. MEGs and task forces are staffed by officers representing federal, state, county, and local police agencies. Drug task force officers work undercover, using confidential sources, to purchase drugs in order to gather the intelligence to make arrests (Reichert, 2012).

There are two kinds of drug task forces that operate in Illinois—metropolitan enforcement groups (MEG) and multi-jurisdictional drug task forces.

MEGs have been in existence in Illinois since the 1970's through the Intergovernmental Drug Enforcement Act [30 *ILCS* 715/1]. MEG policy boards engage in an active, formal role in the management of operations. MEG policy boards are required to include an elected official and the chief law enforcement officer, or their designees, from each participating unit of government. An elected official from one of the participating agencies must be designated to act as financial officer of the MEG to receive operational funds. MEG operations are limited to the enforcement of drug laws and delineated weapons offenses and the investigation of street gang-related crimes.

Multi-jurisdictional drug task forces began in the 1980's using the organizational authority from the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act [5 *ILCS* 220/1]. Task force policy boards are not governed by legislated structure or composition requirements or restricted by statute in their scope of operations.

Drug use in Illinois

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 718,000 Illinois adults used illicit drugs in the past month and 547,000 used marijuana in the past month in 2009. The University of Illinois' 2010 Youth Study on Substance Use interviewed 5,590 Illinois students and found marijuana was used by 25 percent of 12th graders, but less than 6 percent reported using illicit drugs. A majority (78 percent) of arrestees booked into Cook County Jail tested positive for drugs based on the 2010 Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM).

According to SAMHSA, an estimated 757,000 Illinois adults had an illicit drug or alcohol abuse dependence problem in the past year and 927,000 needed, but did not receive, treatment. According to the Illinois Department of Human Services' Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, in 2009, there were 91,891 admissions in Illinois for substance abuse treatment—a rate of 712 per 100,000 people. There were 60,501 admissions for treatment for illicit drugs—a rate of 469 per 100,000 people. According to the data, admissions are at the lowest rate in ten years due in part to funding cuts for state-funded substance abuse treatment. According to SAMHSA's Drug Abuse Warning Network, in 2009 there were 790 drug-related

deaths reported in nine northern Illinois counties, a rate of nine deaths per 100,000.¹ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2007, the rate of unintentional drug overdoses was nine per 100,000 persons or 1,094 overdoses.

Combating Illinois drug crime

The transportation and sale of drugs is a significant problem in Illinois. Illinois is classified as a “High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area” by the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (2010). The city of Chicago is a major transshipment and distribution center for drugs in the Midwest due in part to its central location in the U.S. In addition, there are extensive transportation options to and from the city—trains, highways, airports (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2001). From Chicago, smaller quantities are distributed to neighboring states (National Drug Intelligence Center, 2001).

Drug task forces combat drug markets and the supply of drugs through supply reduction techniques (Olson, 2004). Supply reduction involves crop eradication, interdiction, reducing drug production and cultivation, seizing large numbers of drugs and assets, conducting systematic investigations, interrupting supply lines, and prosecuting drug organizations, suppliers, and distributors (Moore, 1990). The other technique to fight drug crime is demand reduction which includes drug prevention, deterrence, and treatment. Some law enforcement departments use the demand reduction program, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) (Olson, 2004).

Drug task force evaluation

While there is an abundance of anecdotal evidence to prove the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, little empirical knowledge on the success of the task forces exists and they cannot be classified at this time as an evidence-based practice. Researchers debate the most appropriate way to evaluate the effectiveness of drug task forces (Smith et al., 2000). Since it is not possible to differentiate between the impact of drug task forces and other measures, they are difficult to evaluate (Olson, Albertson, Brees, Cobb, Feliciano, Juergens, Ramker, and Bauer, 2002).

A common measure of success of drug task forces is the number of arrests made. However, drug task forces tend to have lower arrest rates than local police departments and target different offenses. Drug task forces attempt to remove fewer higher-level distributors rather than a large number of low-level offenders and users (Olson, 2004). Drug task forces tend to focus on violations of Illinois’ Controlled Substances Act (involving cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine) and local police department arrests focus on cannabis-related offenses (Olson et. al., 2002).

Official drug arrest data is an unreliable source to measure success of drug task forces. Drug task force arrests involve multiple police departments and local jurisdictions. Therefore, arrests reported to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) data system may not accurately reflect

¹ Illinois Counties participating in DAWN include Grundy, DuPage, DeKalb, Cook, Will, McHenry, Lake, Kendall, and Kane.

which agency—drug task force or local police—made the arrest (Olson, 2004). Drug crimes may be over-reported when more than one department reports the same arrest or may be under-reported or never reported (Olson, 2004).

Drug task force profiles

Periodically, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) profiles Illinois MEGs and task forces to provide a general overview of the drug crime problems in the various jurisdictions and share responses to these problems. These profiles can provide information to MEG and task force directors and policy board members to guide decision-making and the allocation of resources. All current and previous profiles can be accessed on the ICJIA’s website: <http://www.icjia.state.il.us>.

This profile focuses on the Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group (LCMEG), which covers Lake County with an estimated total population of 703,462 in 2010. In 2010, 22 local police agencies participated in LCMEG. A participating agency is defined as one that contributes either personnel or financial resources to the task force. Twenty-four officers were assigned to LCMEG in 2010, 19 of the officers were assigned by participating agencies, two from the Illinois State Police (ISP) and three from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). These officers are dedicated full-time to the task force and work out of a central task force office.

ICJIA-funded drug task forces

ICJIA is designated as the State Administering Agency of many federal funds including Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants which fund MEGs and task forces. For more than 20 years the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) has been awarding federal funding to local law enforcement agencies to support drug task forces. Federal grants awarded to drug task forces pay for personnel, equipment, commodities, travel, vehicle maintenance, and communications. In 2011, the ICJIA funded 19 of 22 multi-jurisdictional drug task forces in Illinois (*Map 1*). The three other drug task forces receive the majority of their funding through the Illinois State Police.

Table 1 indicates the amount of federal funds allocated by the ICJIA to LCMEG from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 to 2011. During the past five FFYs, the award amount has remained stable at \$271,209.

Table 1
LCMEG grant totals

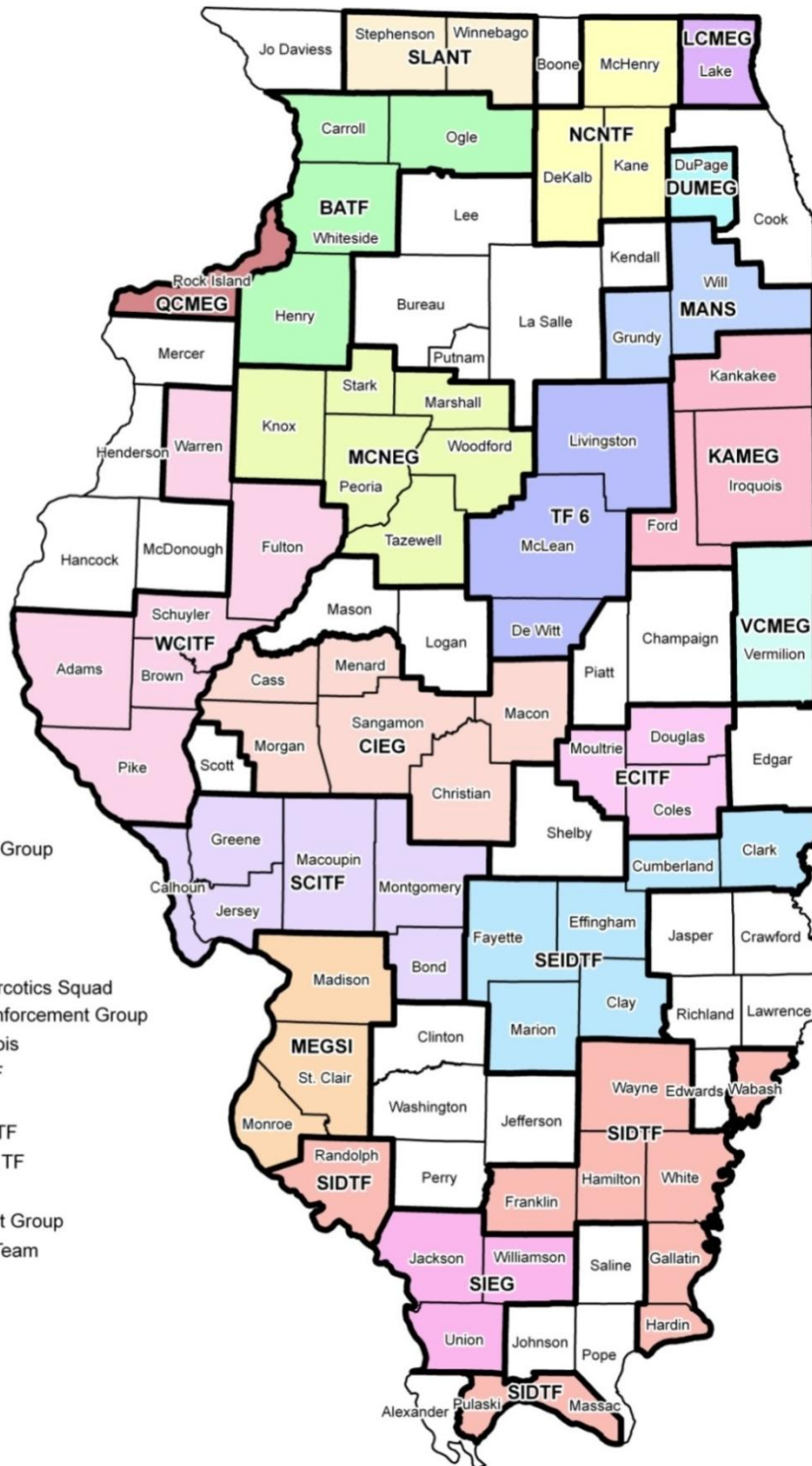
Federal fiscal year	Grant amount
2007	\$271,209
2008	\$271,209
2009	\$271,209
2010	\$271,209
2011	\$271,209

Map 1

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority-funded MEGs and drug task forces, 2011

ICJIA-funded MEGS & TFs

- BATF - Blackhawk Area TF
- CIEG - Central Illinois Enforcement Group
- DUMEG - DuPage MEG
- ECITF - East Central Illinois TF
- KAMEG - Kankakee MEG
- LCMEG - Lake County MEG
- MANS - Joliet Metropolitan Area Narcotics Squad
- MCNEG - Multi-County Narcotics Enforcement Group
- MEGSI - MEG of Southwestern Illinois
- NCNTF - North Central Narcotics TF
- QCMEG - Quad Cities MEG
- SCITF - South Central Illinois Drug TF
- SEIDTF - Southeastern Illinois Drug TF
- SIDTF - Southern Illinois Drug TF
- SIEG - Southern Illinois Enforcement Group
- SLANT - State Line Area Narcotics Team
- TF 6 - Task Force 6
- VCMEG - Vermillion County MEG
- WCITF - West Central Illinois TF



Drug arrest trends

Drug offenses in Illinois

The majority of drug offenses in Illinois are violations of either the *Cannabis Control Act* [720 ILCS 550], which prohibits the possession, sale and cultivation of marijuana, or the *Controlled Substances Act* [720 ILCS 570], which prohibits the possession, sale, distribution or manufacture of all other drugs deemed to have a high potential for abuse, including cocaine, hallucinogens, and opiates. Other Illinois laws to fight drug-related activity include the *Hypodermic Syringes and Needles Act* [720 ILCS 635], which prohibits the possession or sale of hypodermic instruments, and the *Drug Paraphernalia Control Act* [720 ILCS 600/3], which prohibits the possession, sale, or delivery of drug paraphernalia.

Violations of the *Illinois Controlled Substances Act* are considered to be the most serious, since they are mostly classified under Illinois law as felonies due to the dangerous nature of the drugs involved. Felony offenses carry prison sentences of one year or more. The majority of cannabis and drug paraphernalia offenses encountered by police, on the other hand, tend to be classified under Illinois law as misdemeanors, which typically carry jail terms of less than a year.

Drug data sources

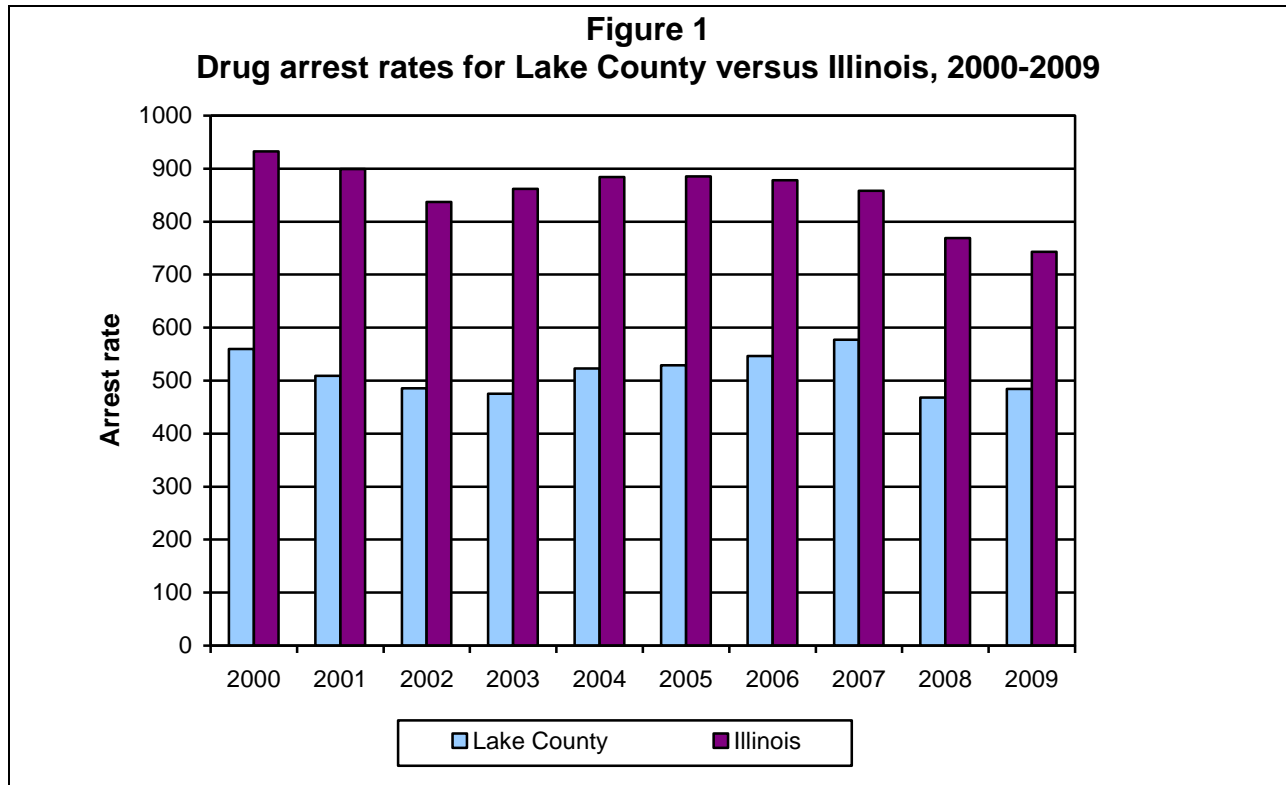
Two sources of drug arrest data are presented in this section: 1) quarterly data reports for the period 2002-2011 submitted by Lake County Metropolitan Enforcement Group (LCMEG) to the ICJIA as a grant requirement; and 2) drug arrest statistics for 2002-2011 derived from criminal history record information (CHRI) submitted by law enforcement agencies in Lake County to the Illinois State Police at the time of arrest, including those made by both LCMEG and non-LCMEG officers.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Illinois State Police (ISP), the ICJIA has established an in-house computer linkage to certain elements of the state's Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) System, which is the central repository for offenders' arrest and conviction history. The ICJIA is able to derive statistical information on arrests for specific charges and agencies from these data which are directly comparable to arrests reported by LCMEG. The CHRI data were used to obtain the number of drug arrest for all law enforcement agencies in Lake County from 2002-2011, from which LCMEG arrests could be subtracted to create non-MEG comparative drug arrest statistics.

Subclasses of drug arrests, for example, felonies versus misdemeanors, cannabis versus controlled substance, delivery versus possession, and detailed offense classes, may not add up to the broader drug arrest totals due to reporting omissions and inconsistencies.

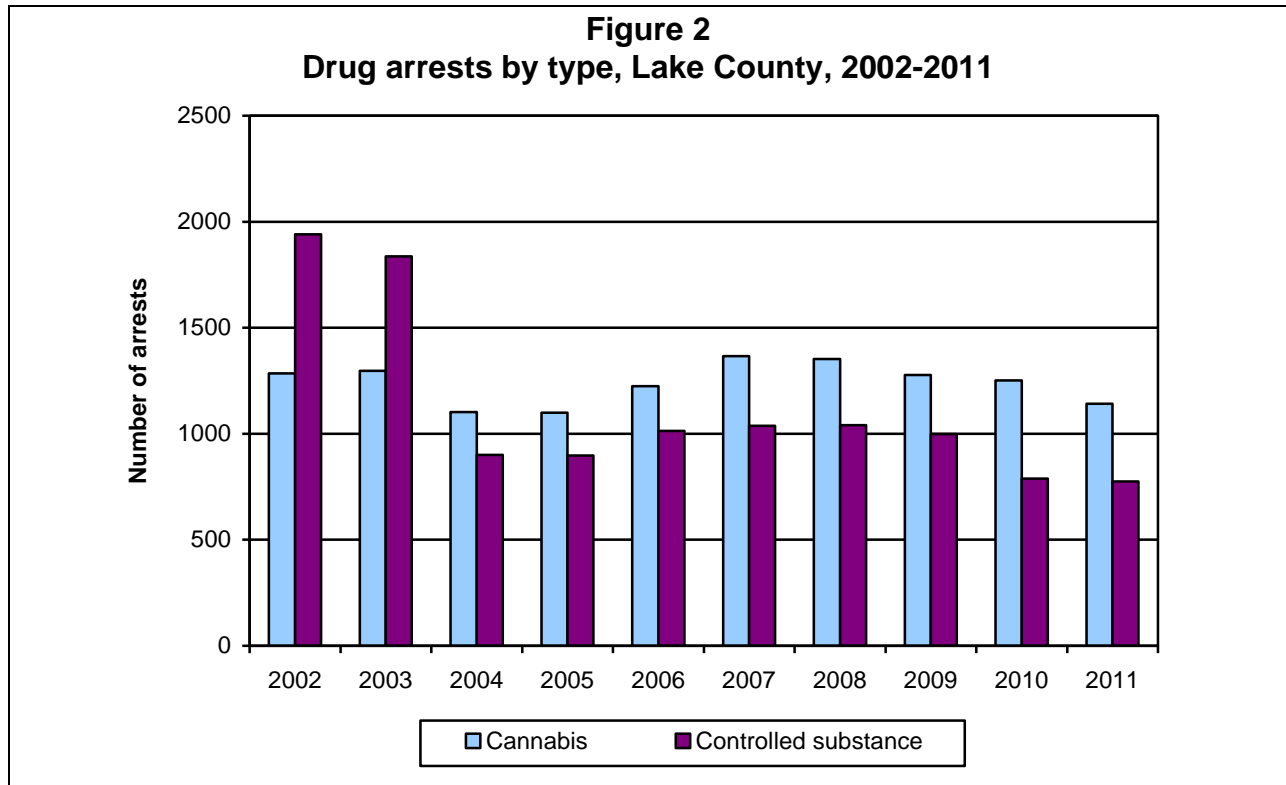
Drug arrests

From 2000 to 2009, the drug arrest rate for Illinois decreased 20 percent from 932 arrests per 100,000 population to 743 arrests per 100,000. During the same time period, the drug arrest rate for Lake County decreased thirteen percent, from 560 arrests per 100,000 population to 485 arrests per 100,000 population (*Figure 1*).



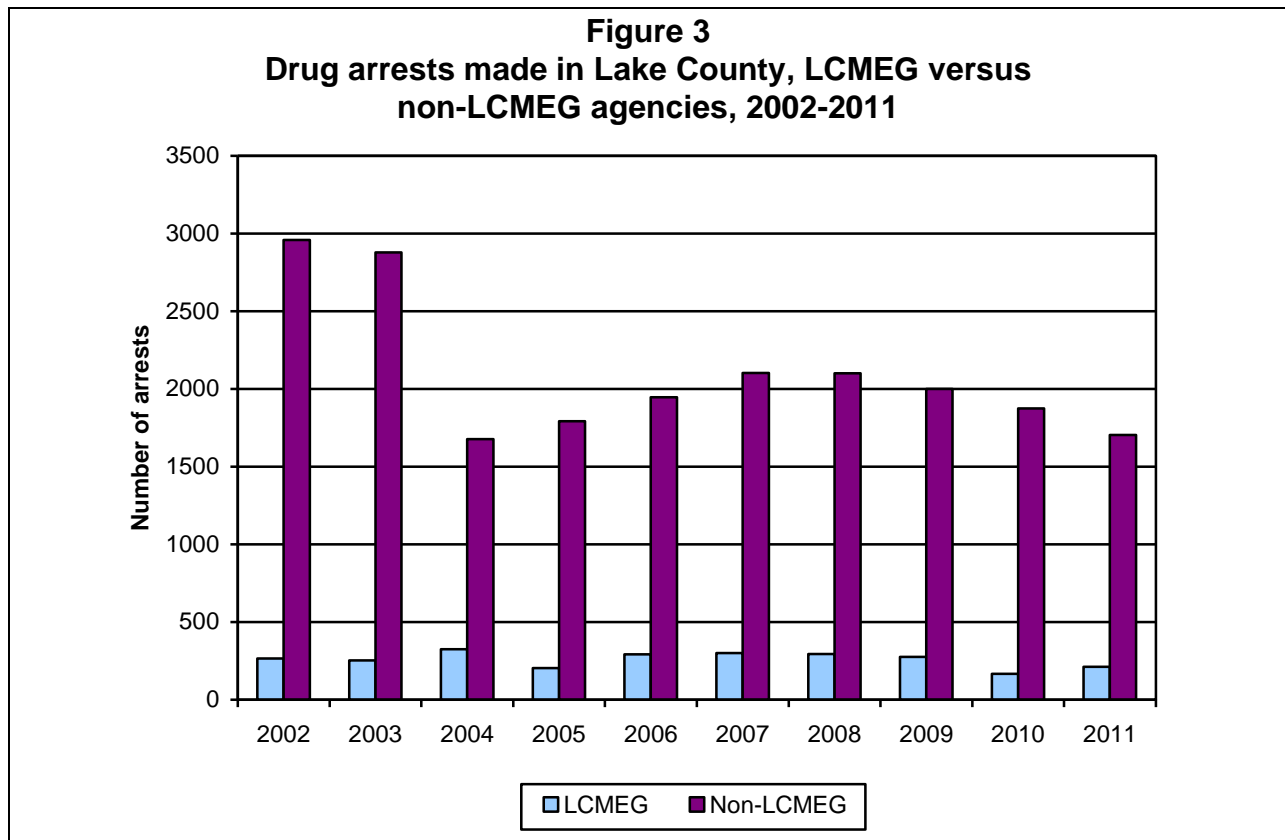
Source: Illinois State Police

From 2002 to 2011, the number of drug arrests for cannabis and controlled substances reported in the CHRI data in Lake County decreased. This includes arrests made by all law enforcement officers—both LCMEG and non-LCMEG. Violations of cannabis accounted for more drug arrests in the county than violations of controlled substance. *Figure 2* depicts the drug arrests by type in Lake County from 2002 to 2011. The number of cannabis drug arrests in Lake County decreased from 1,285 in 2002 to 1,141 in 2011, and the number of controlled substance arrests decreased from 1,940 in 2002 to 775 in 2011.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-LCMEG drug arrests by subtracting drug arrests reported by LCMEG from the total arrests in CHRI for Lake County, as both appear in CHRI through the fingerprinting process at booking. *Figure 3* shows the number of drug arrests made each year by LCMEG officers and non-LCMEG agencies from 2002 to 2011. In Lake County, the number of drug arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies decreased 42 percent from 2,959 in 2002 to 1,704 arrests in 2011. The number of drug arrests made by LCMEG shows a 20 percent decrease from 266 arrests in 2002 to 212 arrests in 2011.

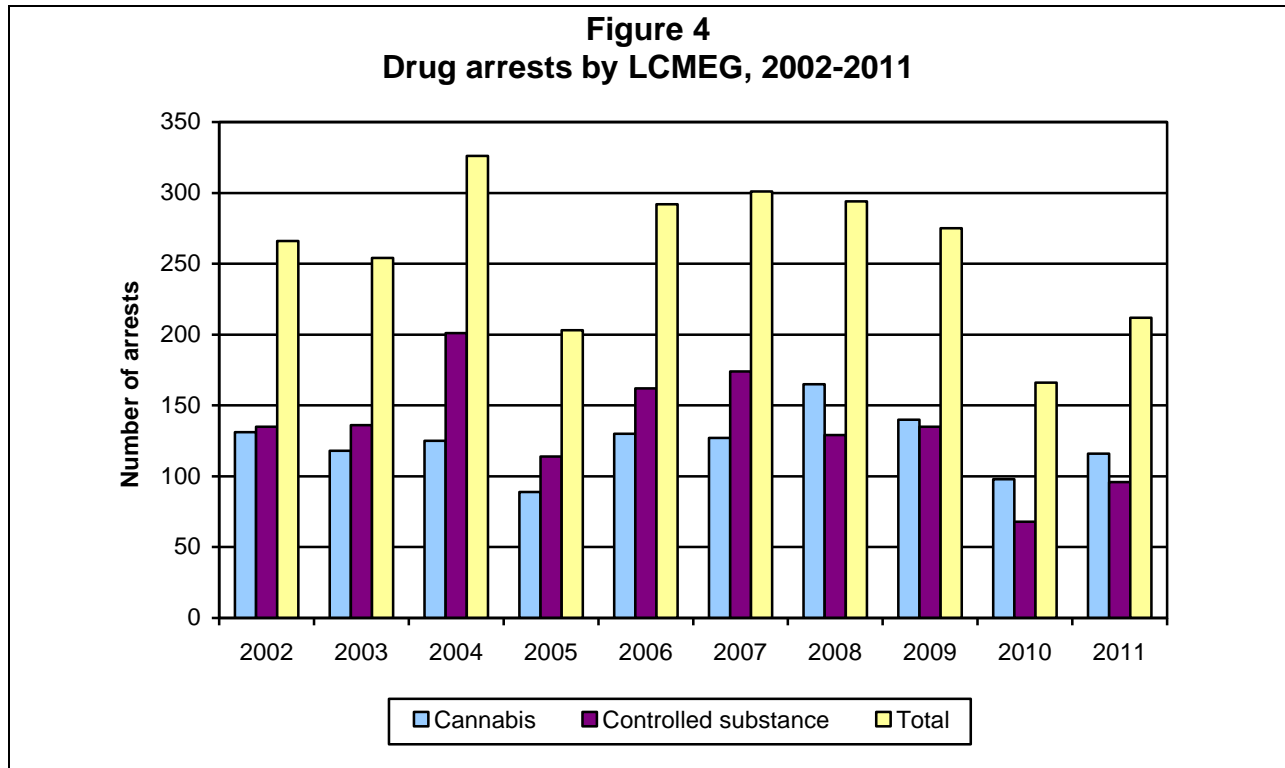


Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; LCMEG data reports submitted to ICJIA

In 2011, there were 984 felony drug arrests made in Lake County. LCMEG reported that they made 150 felony drug arrests in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of LCMEG arrests were made within Lake County, then 15 percent, were made by LCMEG. LCMEG also made approximately 7 percent or 62 of the 932, misdemeanor arrests in Lake County. In total, then, the 24 officers assigned to LCMEG—19 from local agencies, two ISP officers, and 3 from the Federal Bureau of Investigations—made 212 drug arrests or approximately 9 drug arrests per officer. In Lake County, the 1,200 full time sworn officers made approximately 1,704 drug arrests or 1.4 arrests per officer².

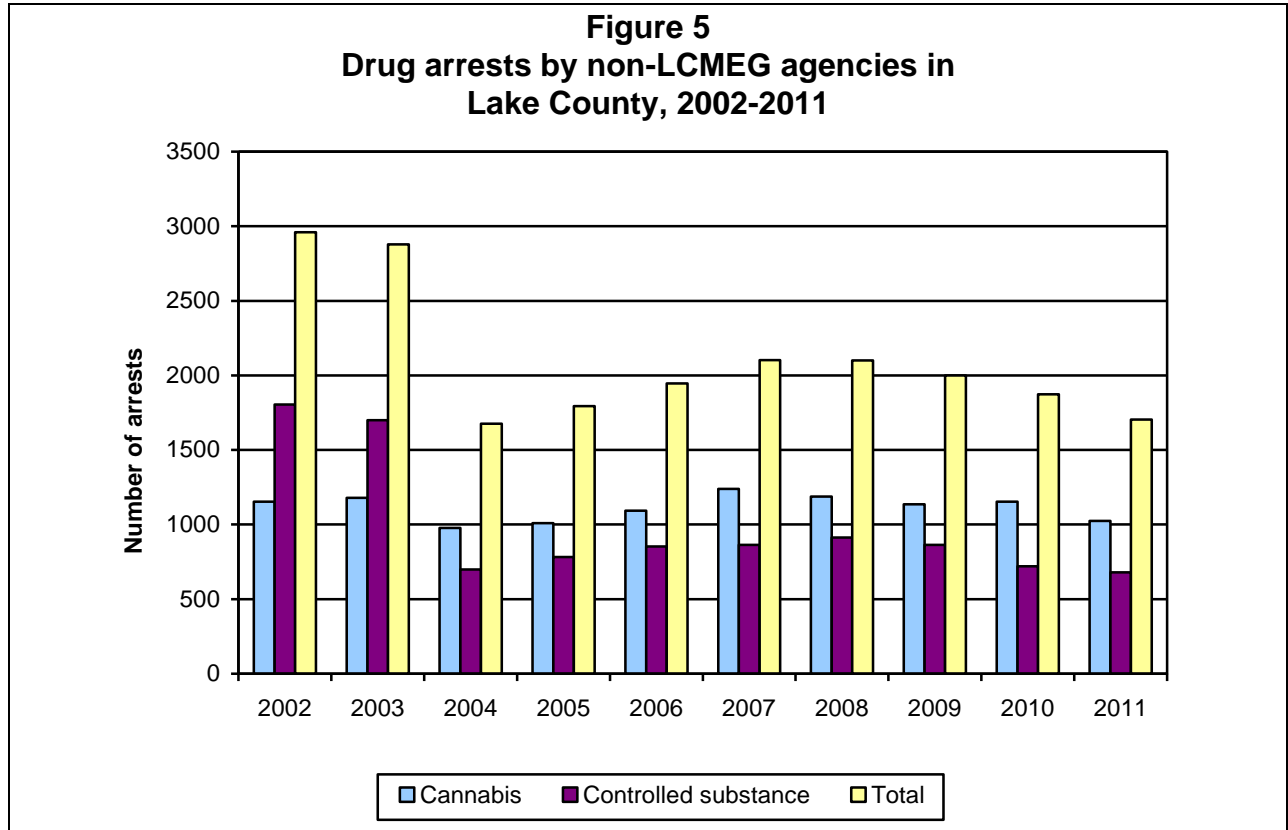
² Please note that the main focus of LCMEG officers is drug arrests. Non-task force law enforcement officers within Lake County handle all criminal cases and arrests within the county and are not focused solely on drug cases.

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by LCMEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased 20 percent, from 266 to 212. Violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounted for more drug arrests made by LCMEG for the majority of the period analyzed than violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 29 percent, from 135 to 96, while the number of LCMEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* decreased 11 percent, from 131 to 116 (Figure 4).



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

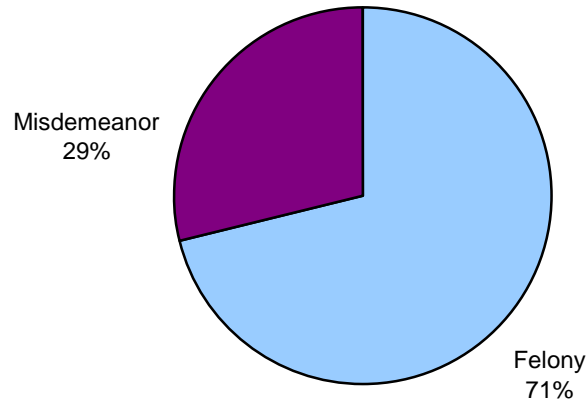
Figure 5 presents the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies in Lake County during the period 2002 to 2011. From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies decreased 42 percent from 2,959 to 1,704. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* accounted for more drug arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies throughout the majority of the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*. From 2002 to 2011, arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* decreased from 1,154 to 1,025, while the number of non-LCMEG agency arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased from 1,805 to 679.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

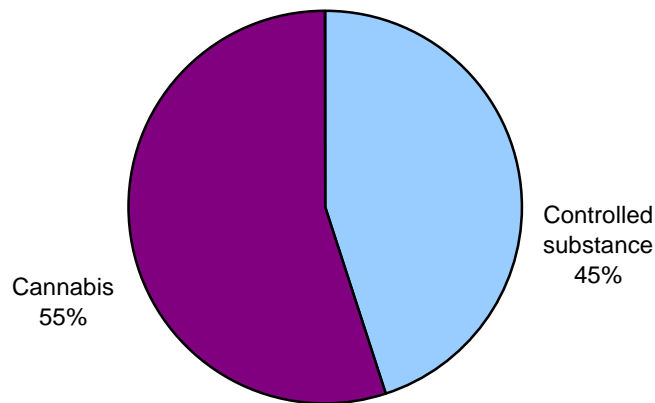
In 2011, 45 percent of the drug arrests made by LCMEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*, compared to 51 percent in 2002. In 2011, 71 percent of drug arrests made by LCMEG were felonies, while 29 percent were misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 6* and *Figure 7*).

Figure 6
Percent of LCMEG arrests in Lake County
by offense type, 2011



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

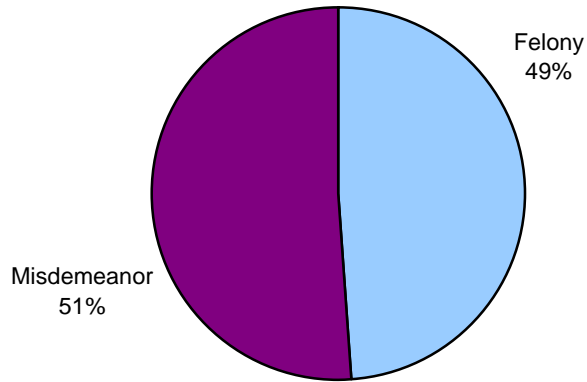
Figure 7
Percent of LCMEG arrests in Lake County
by violation type, 2011



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

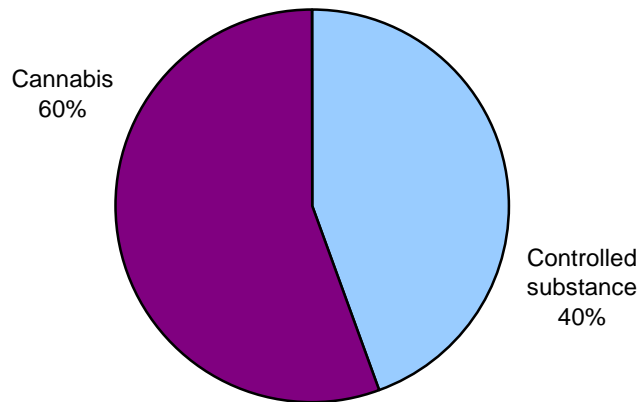
In contrast to LCMEG drug arrests, approximately 49 percent of drug arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies in Lake County in 2011 were felonies and approximately 51 percent were misdemeanor arrests. In 2011, 60 percent of the drug arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 8 and 9).

Figure 8
Percent of non-LCMEG arrests in LAKE County by offense type, 2011



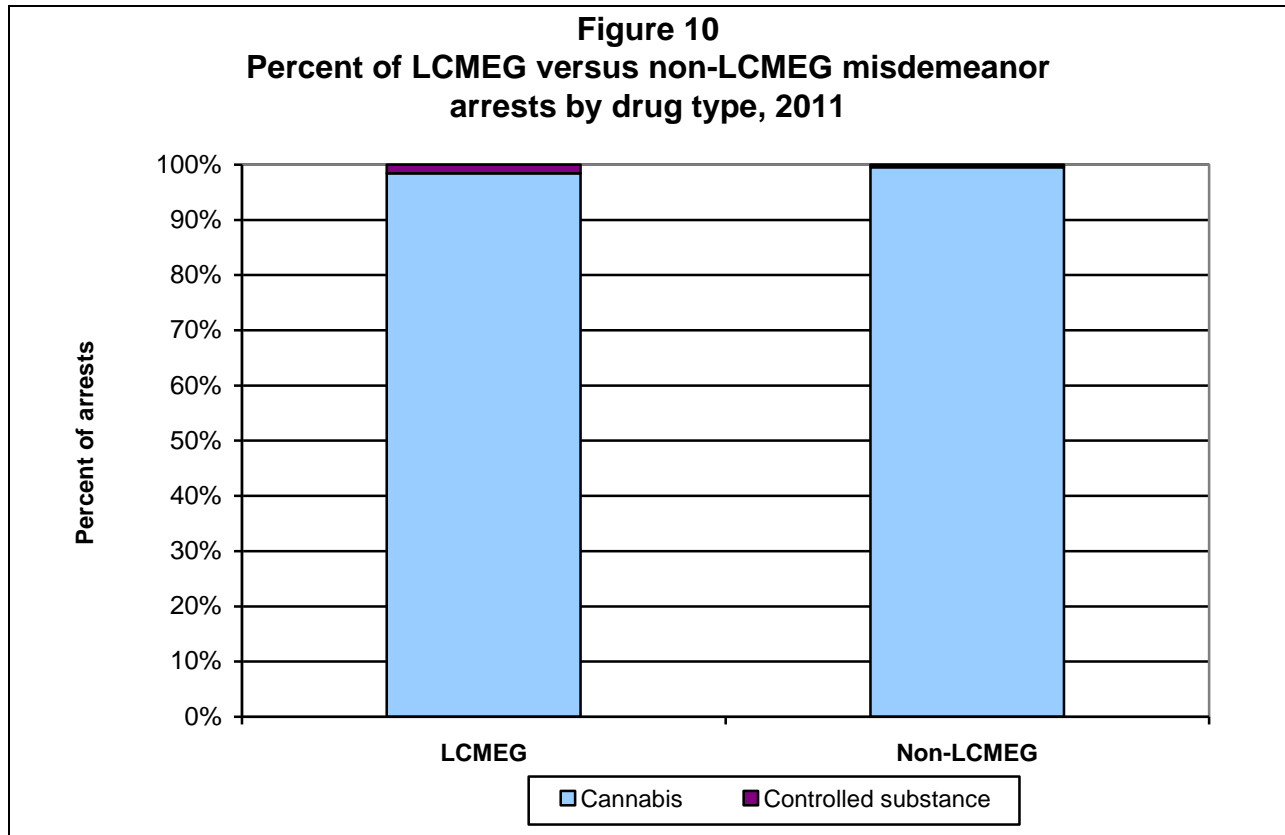
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Figure 9
Percent of non-LCMEG arrests in Lake County by violation type, 2011



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

In 2011, LCMEG made 62 misdemeanor arrests. Of those arrests, 98 percent were for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. During the same time period, non-LCMEG agencies made 870 misdemeanor arrests, with 99 percent being for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (*Figure 10*).



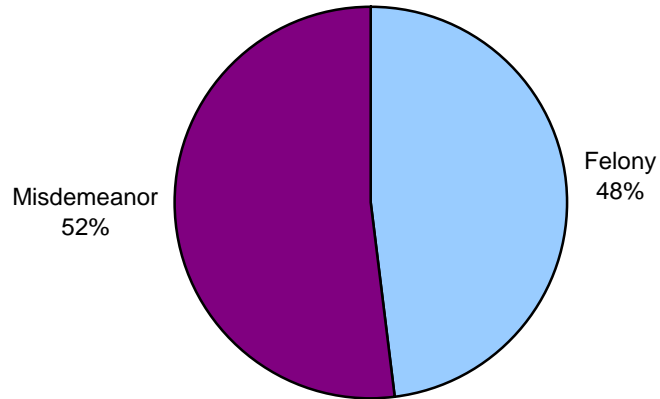
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; LCMEG data reports to ICJIA

Cannabis arrests by class of offense

As seen in *Figure 2*, cannabis arrests in Lake County (for both LCMEG and non-LCMEG agencies) accounted for a large proportion of all drug arrests made each year from 2002 to 2011. As previously stated, more of the offenses under the *Cannabis Control Act* are classified as misdemeanor offenses. Therefore, it would be expected that a majority of cannabis arrests would be misdemeanors.

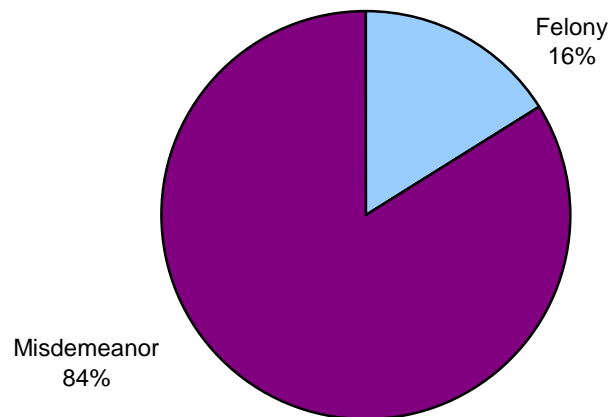
Forty-eight percent of all cannabis arrests made by LCMEG were felony arrests. In 2011, 48 percent of the cannabis arrests made by LCMEG were felony arrests compared to 16 percent for non-LCMEG agencies. Non-LCMEG cannabis arrests were primarily for misdemeanor arrests (*Figure 11 and 12*).

Figure 11
LCMEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011



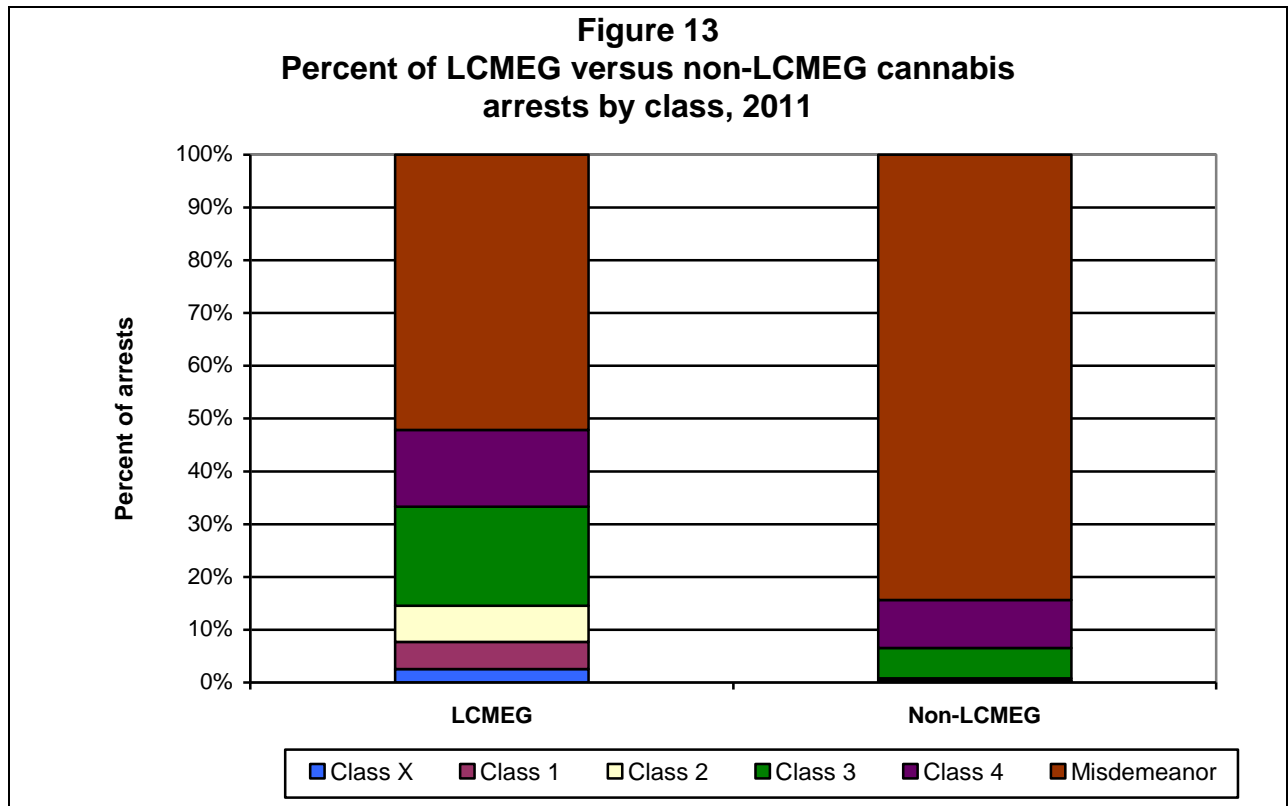
Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Figure 12
Non-LCMEG cannabis arrests by class, 2011



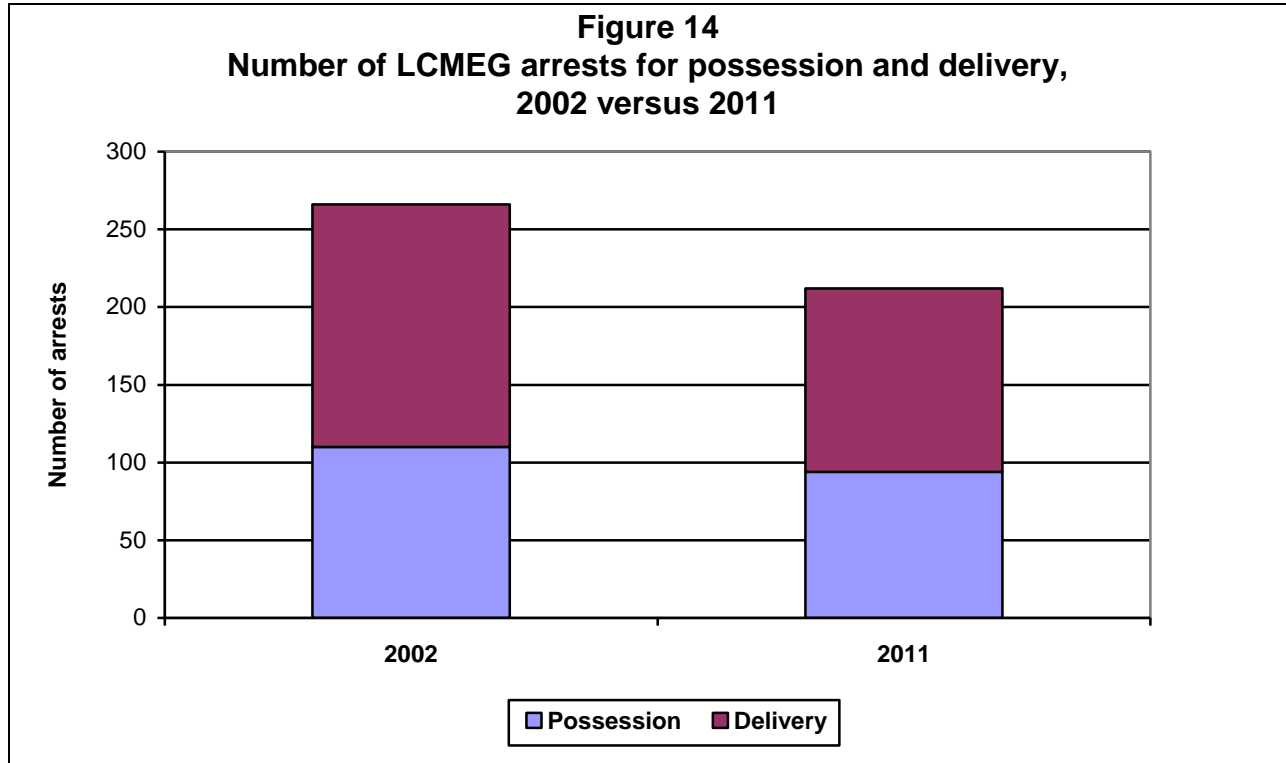
Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Figure 13 shows the number of cannabis arrests by class for both LCMEG and non-LCMEG agencies in 2011. Most felony arrests by LCMEG were for Class 3 felonies. The majority of felony arrests by non-LCMEG agencies were for Class 4 felonies, however, as indicated earlier, felony arrests overall were much less prevalent compared to LCMEG agencies. Approximately 3 percent of LCMEG cannabis arrests were for a Class X felony compared to less than one percent for non-LCMEG agencies.



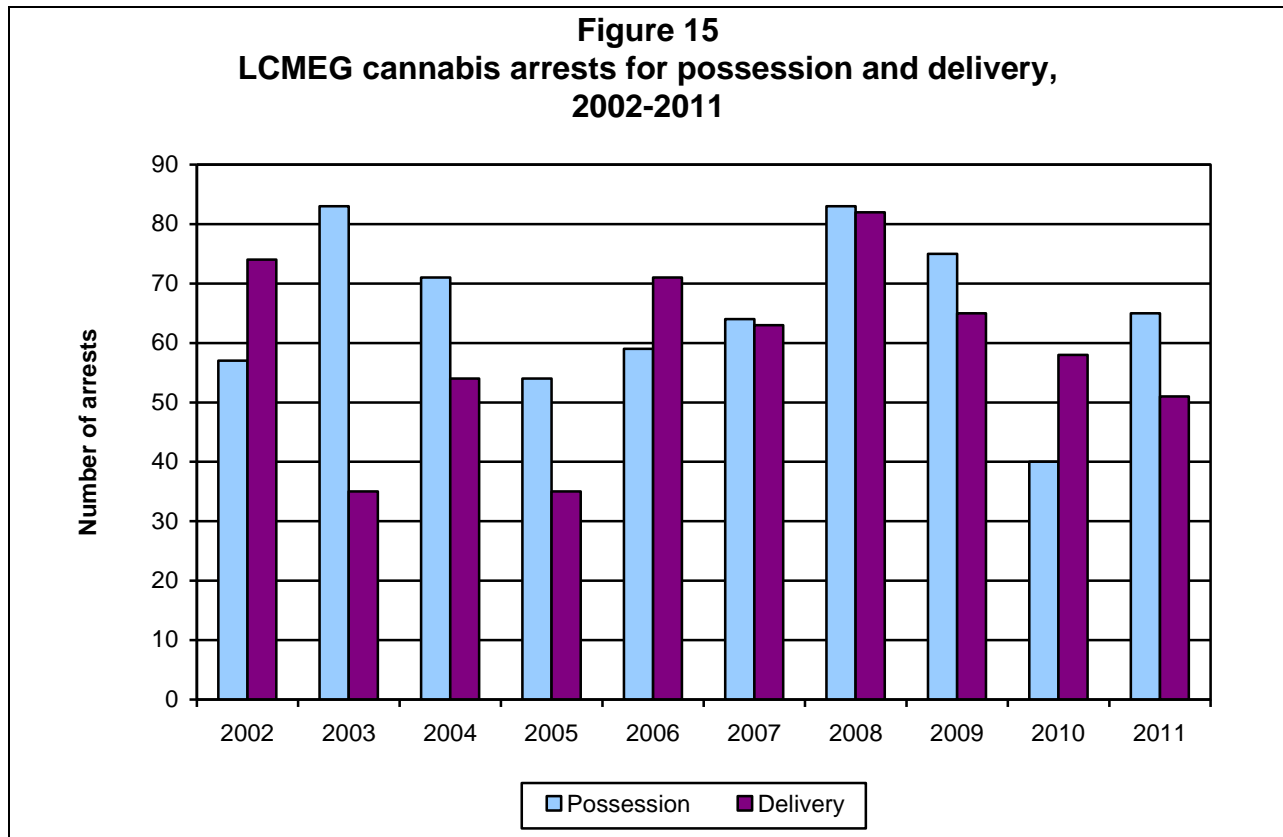
Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA; CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of drug delivery arrests made by LCMEG decreased from 156 to 118 (*Figure 14*). Arrests for drug delivery accounted for nearly 60 percent of all drug arrests made by LCMEG between 2002 and 2011.



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

During the period analyzed, delivery of cannabis accounted for 47 percent of all arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* (Figure 15). In 2011, 65 arrests were made by LCMEG for possession of cannabis compared to 57 arrests in 2002. Fifty-one arrests were made for delivery of cannabis in 2011 compared to 74 arrests for delivery of cannabis in 2002.



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Cannabis drug seizures

Drugs seized by law enforcement agencies are another indicator of the extent and nature of illegal drug trade in a jurisdiction. This section will look at the quantities of drugs seized by LCMEG and reported to the ICJIA. LCMEG data include total quantities of all drugs seized.

When illegal drugs are seized by law enforcement agencies, all or a portion of the total amount seized is submitted to a crime lab for analysis. Most agencies submit drugs to one of the Illinois State Police (ISP) crime labs. Depending on the location of the arrest and the type of arrest (i.e. local vs. federal), law enforcement agencies also submit drugs to the DuPage County Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory, the DEA crime laboratory, private laboratories, or local police departments. Currently the only statewide data available on drug seizures is from the ISP crime lab, which represents the quantities of seized drugs that were submitted to ISP for analysis. It is due to these limitations that only the drug seizures made by LCMEG will be discussed in this section and therefore comparisons cannot be made.

The primary factors influencing the amount of drugs seized are the number of officers assigned to the unit and type of investigations which are undertaken. Although experienced narcotics agents enhance the successful outcome of the unit's investigations, without sufficient manpower the ability to initiate and sustain successful investigations is greatly diminished. The state of the economy has placed many federal, state, county and local law enforcement agencies at reduced staffing levels. This in turn has required some agencies to reassign their officer(s) from the unit back to the parent agency thereby depleting available manpower in the unit. A traditional undercover investigation may develop into a conspiracy investigation which is time and labor intensive. A lack of manpower coupled with a time and labor intensive investigation translates into less time available for developing new investigations, conducting proactive enforcement details and undercover drug purchases.

Changes in drug trends also play a role in the type and quantity of seizures. An increase in new forms of designer drugs such as synthetic cannabis and bath salts, as well as quicker production methods of methamphetamine, requires a learning period for the agents. Agents then direct their efforts towards this new emerging community threat at the expense of time spent on traditional drug investigations. Spiked increases in these emerging drugs will skew seizures from previous years. Agents must constantly balance immediate community drug threats with investigations which attack the source of supply to the community. The availability of traditional drugs such as cocaine, crack, cannabis and heroin fluctuate with the supply chain. If an investigation in a community has sent members of a drug distribution network to prison, then a noticeable disruption in that particular drug is observed, even if for a brief period. Finally, seizure numbers may be lopsided if an investigation leads to a source of supply with an unusually large amount of contraband being seized during transportation or storage. (R. Bodemer, personal communication, January 25, 2011)

County-level cannabis, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine, and heroin seizure rates for Illinois' 102 counties based on ISP crime lab data are provided in the appendices of this report.

Cannabis seizures

The quantity of cannabis seized by LCMEG fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. In 2002, LCMEG seized over 2.3 million grams of cannabis and in 2005 LCMEG seized over 18.5 million grams of cannabis (*Table 2*). Cannabis accounted for an average of 82 percent of the total drug seizures made by LCMEG from 2002 to 2011.

Table 2
Cannabis seized by LCMEG, 2002-2011

Year	Amount seized in grams
2002	2,321,171
2003	119,829
2004	521,668
2005	18,531,778
2006	1,148,430
2007	90,258
2008	90,005
2009	23,825
2010	104,038
2011	91,916

Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

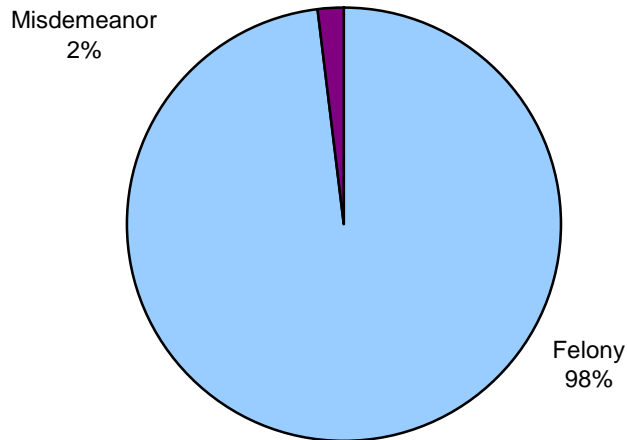
Controlled substance arrests

In Lake County, based on CHRI data, arrests for violations of Illinois' *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 60 percent between 2002 and 2011, from 1,940 to 775 arrests.

LCMEG arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 29 percent from 135 to 96 arrests during that time. In 2011, the 96 arrests for controlled substance violations accounted for 45 percent of all drug arrests reported to the ICJIA by the unit.

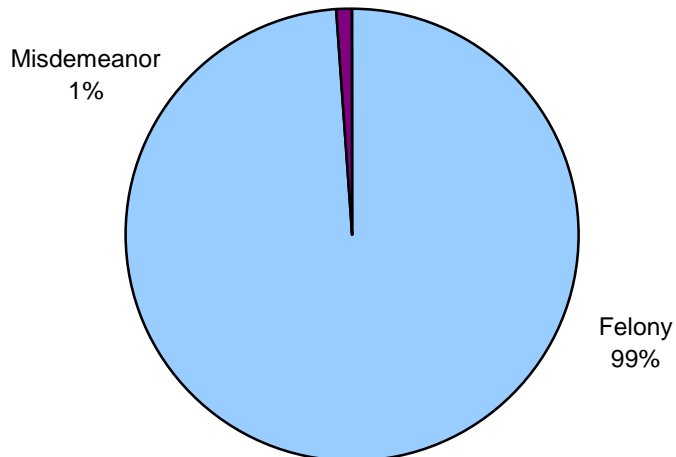
Approximately 98 percent of controlled substance arrests made by LCMEG were felony arrests, compared to 99 percent for non-LCMEG controlled substance arrests in 2011 (*Figure 16 and 17*).

Figure 16
LCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011



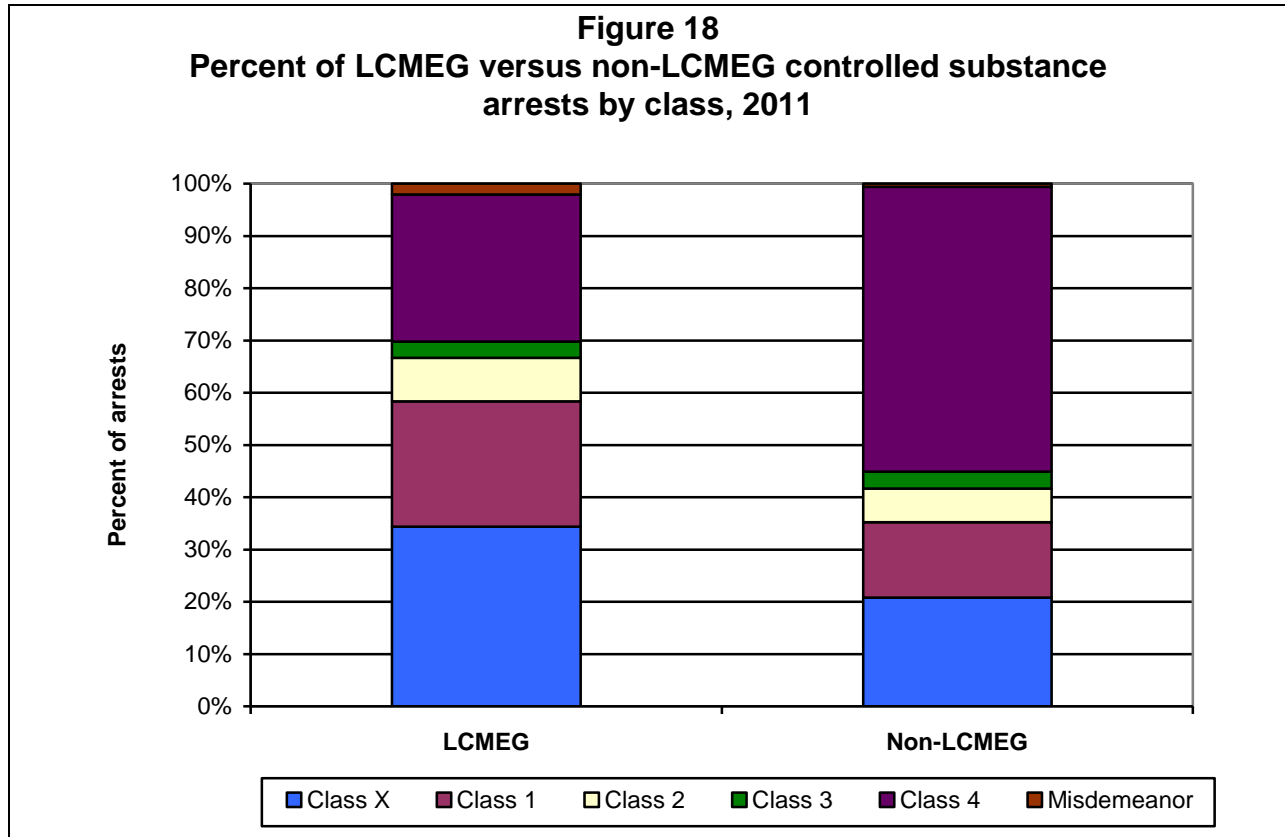
Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Figure 17
Non-LCMEG controlled substance arrests by class, 2011



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA

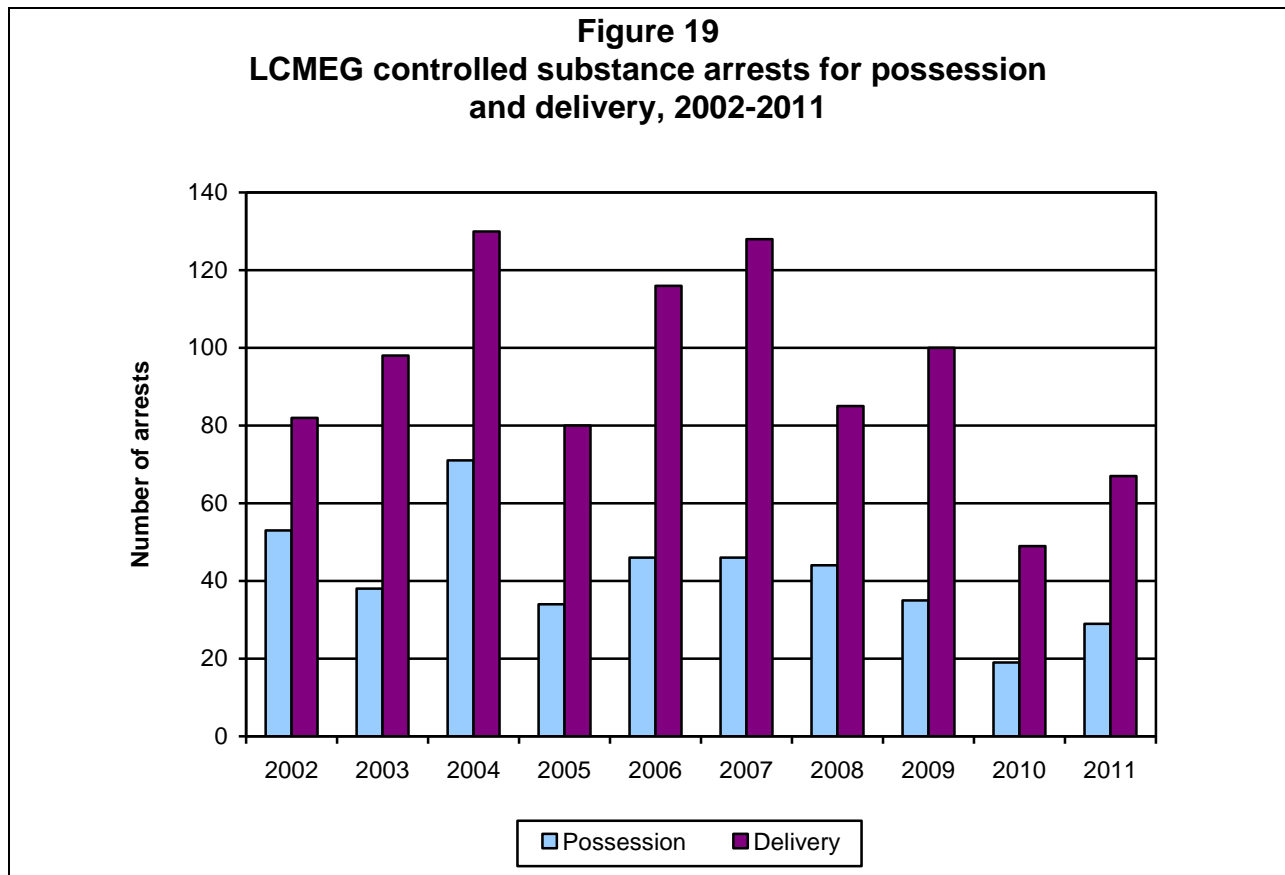
Figure 18 shows the number of controlled substance arrests by class for both LCMEG and non-LCMEG agencies in 2011. Approximately 34 percent of LCMEG controlled substance arrests were for Class X felonies. Also, approximately one-quarter of the controlled substance arrests made by LCMEG were for Class 1 felonies and one-quarter were for Class 4 felonies. The highest portion, 55 percent, of controlled substance arrests by non-LCMEG agencies were for Class 4 felonies.



Source: CHRI data as interpreted by ICJIA; LCMEG data reports to ICJIA

LCMEG drug arrests by type

As indicated previously, the majority of all drug arrests reported by LCMEG were for delivery and possession with intent to deliver controlled substances. Between 2002 and 2011, the number of controlled substance drug delivery arrests made by LCMEG decreased from 82 to 67. During the same period, arrests for drug delivery accounted for nearly 60 percent of all drug arrests made by LCMEG between 2002 and 2011. Arrests for delivery of controlled substances accounted for nearly 70 percent of the total number of arrests made for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act* (Figure 19).



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Cocaine seizures

Between 2002 and 2011, LCMEG seized 576,757 grams of cocaine (*Table 3*). LCMEG seized over 235,000 grams of cocaine in both 2004 and 2005. This is in comparison to a low seizure of 620 grams in 2010.

During the period analyzed, powder cocaine, rather than crack cocaine, accounted for nearly all cocaine seized by LCMEG and the region covered by LCMEG (99 percent).

Table 3
Cocaine* seized by LCMEG, 2002-2011

Year	Amount seized in grams
2002	7,096
2003	58,252
2004	256,839
2005	238,673
2006	5,460
2007	3,405
2008	2,248
2009	2,127
2010	620
2011	2,037

*Includes both powder and crack cocaine seizures
Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Methamphetamine and heroin seizures

In May 2005, the Illinois State Police created six regionally located methamphetamine response teams (MRT). These units were created specifically to target meth-related crimes with MRT personnel taking the lead on meth cases, including investigation and meth lab deconstruction and decontamination.

LCMEG seized 618 grams of methamphetamine between 2002 and 2011, including 86 grams in 2010. LCMEG seized 6,706 grams of heroin between 2002 and 2011. LCMEG seized nearly 2,100 grams of heroin in 2010. LCMEG has also seized 56,720 grams of prescription drugs between 2001 and 2011. The amounts all of other controlled substance seizures are small relative to cocaine seizures.

Trends in prosecutions for drug offenses and all felonies

Drug prosecutions

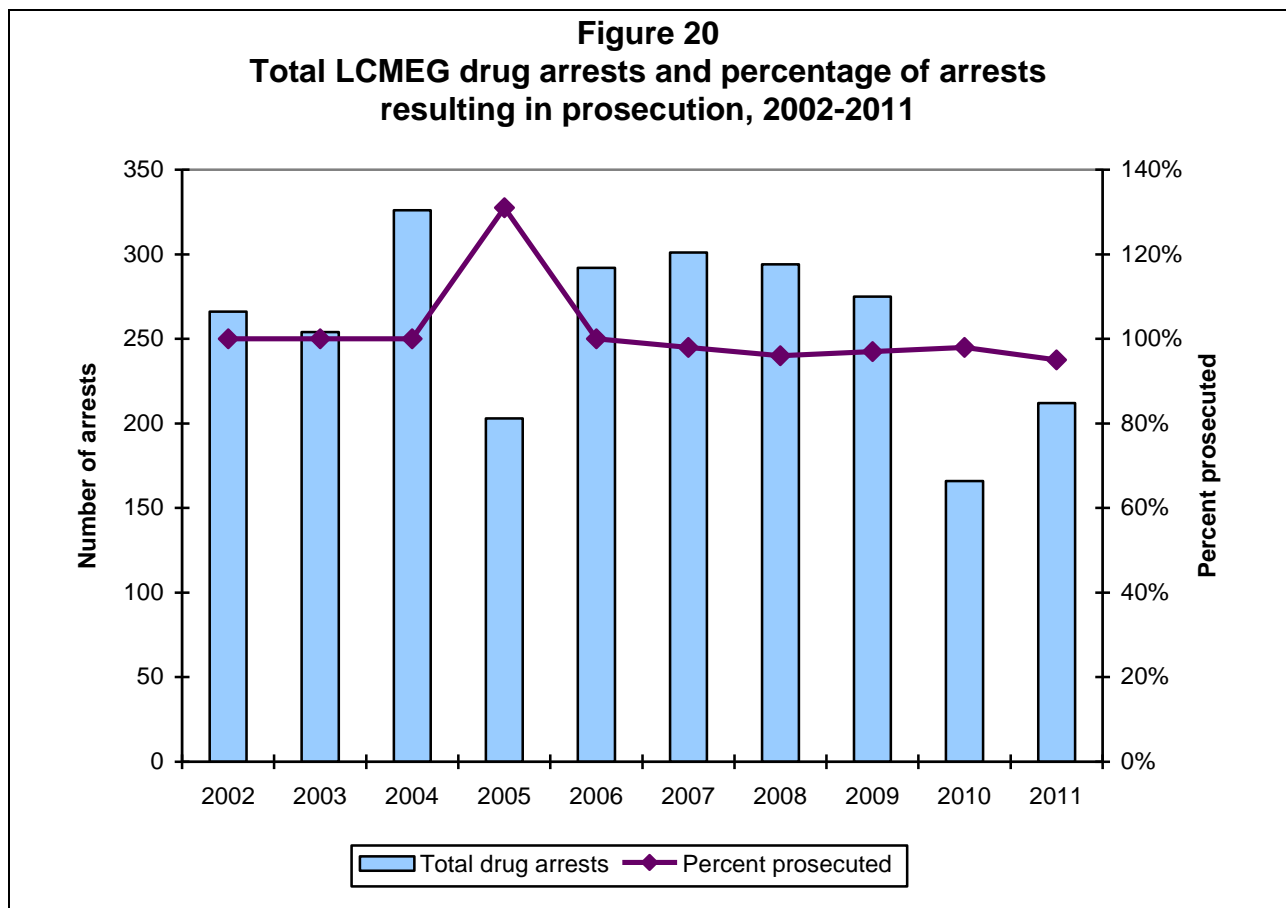
Between 2002 and 2011, 2,608 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of LCMEG arrests in Lake County. A prosecution occurs after a prosecutor files charges against a defendant in court following an arrest. However, not all arrests result in a prosecution. A prosecutor may not file charges due to insufficient evidence or because the defendant was offered a deferred prosecution diversion. In addition, prosecution decisions may vary according to prosecutor practices in each county, which affects the number of prosecutions and ultimately the number of convictions.

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) funds prosecution units in some, but not all, MEG/TF counties. These drug prosecution units work directly with drug task forces to handle their complex cases and high caseloads. These units develop drug cases, prosecute offenders, and conduct forfeitures. In FY10, there were eight drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA working with drug task forces in Illinois. Seven counties had a designated drug prosecution unit—Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, St. Clair, and Will. In addition, the State’s Attorney’s Appellate Prosecutor provided attorneys to assist in prosecuting drug cases in 11 counties: Champaign, Jefferson, Kankakee, Macon, Madison, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell, and Winnebago.

Between 2002 and 2011, LCMEG drug arrests decreased 20 percent, from 266 in 2002 to 212 in 2011 (*Figure 20*). During that time period, 100 percent of all drug arrests by LCMEG resulted in prosecution. Fifty percent of LCMEG drug offender prosecutions during that time period were for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

In some years, data shows the percentage of prosecutions exceeded 100 percent of arrests. This is due to differences in the timing of an arrest and the filing of charges being reported by the unit.

Data from the Lake County prosecution unit shows that in 2011 they prosecuted 23 production/delivery/manufacture/importation LCMEG drug cases, 48 possession with intent to deliver LCMEG drug cases, and 34 possession LCMEG cases. Of the 105 LCMEG cases that were prosecuted, the majority (21 percent) were for possession with intent to deliver cannabis.



Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Drug convictions

Between 2002 and 2011, 52 percent of the 2,608 drug offenders prosecuted as a result of LCMEG activity were convicted (n=1,359). Convictions for controlled substances accounted for 57 percent of all LCMEG initiated prosecutions during the period analyzed. Due to the time lapse between an arrest and subsequent prosecution, the number of prosecutions and convictions during a year does not directly reflect the number of arrests during the same year. Convictions may also be impacted by various drug diversion programs for which certain defendants may be eligible. Illinois also has “710” and “1410” probation, which are two types of first offender probation specifically for drug offenders. Unlike other probation offenses, the convictions may be eligible to be expunged. Data from LCMEG is currently the only readily available information on drug convictions.

Using CHRI data, it was possible to isolate non-LCMEG convictions by subtracting drug convictions reported by LCMEG from the total drug convictions in CHRI for Lake County, as both appear in CHRI. In 2011, there were 407 drug convictions in Lake County. The drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA reported that they had 67 task force drug convictions in 2011. Assuming that the majority, if not all, of LCMEG arrests were made within Lake County and prosecuted by the ICJIA funded drug prosecution units, then 16 percent of the Lake County drug convictions were from LCMEG. LCMEG convictions accounted for approximately 25 percent, or 29 of the 116, *Cannabis Control Act* convictions and 13 percent, or 38 of the 291, *Controlled Substance Act* convictions in Lake County. Nineteen percent were convicted of production, distribution, manufacture or importation, 22 percent were convicted of possession with intent to deliver, and 58 percent were convicted of possession. According to the drug prosecution unit funded by the ICJIA, in 2011, 428 Lake County offenders were convicted.

Drug offender sentencing trends

Under Illinois law, those convicted of most Class 1, 2, 3, and 4 felonies can be sentenced to a period of probation, periodic imprisonment, conditional discharge, imprisonment, a fine, restitution to the victim, and/or participation in an impact incarceration program. A fine or restitution cannot be the only disposition for a felony, and must be imposed only in conjunction with another disposition. When sentencing options exist for a judge a number of factors may influence the type and length of sentence imposed. These include the severity of the crime, the offender's criminal and social history, and the safety of the community.

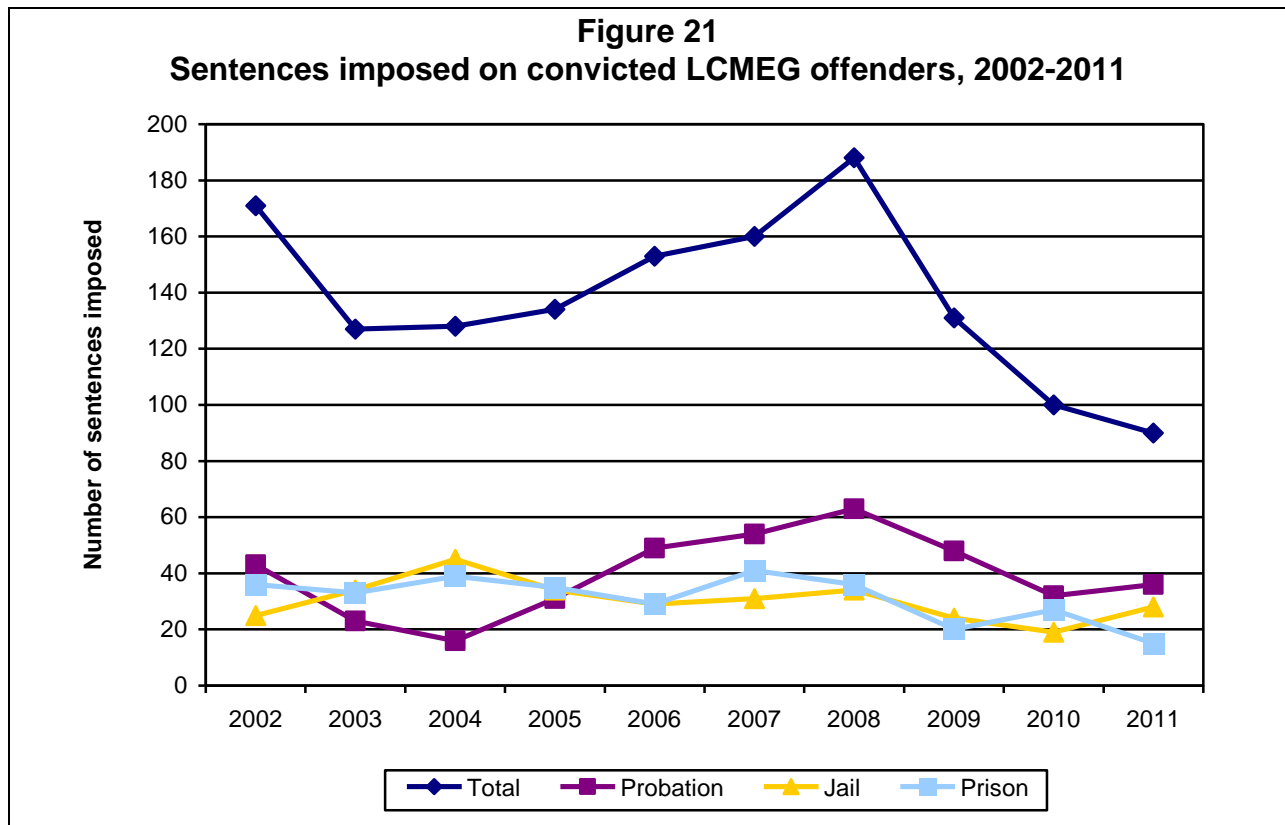
Drug sentences

According to the data reports provided by LCMEG, between 2002 and 2011, the number of LCMEG drug offenders convicted and sentenced for their offenses decreased, from 171 to 90.

According to the drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA, in 2011 the majority of drug offenders, both LCMEG and non-LCMEG offenders, were sentenced to probation. Of the 428 offenders sentenced by the drug prosecution unit in 2011, 14 percent were sentenced to a combination of jail and probation, 16 percent were sentenced to prison, and 65 percent were sentenced to probation. Nearly three-quarters, 74 percent, of offenders convicted of the Cannabis Control Act were sentenced to probation. Of those offenders convicted of the Controlled Substance Act, 14 percent were sentenced to a combination of jail and probation, 19 percent were sentenced to prison, and 62 percent were sentenced to probation.

According to LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA, between 2002 and 2011 the number of convicted LCMEG drug offenders sentenced to prison decreased from 36 to 15. The number also decreased for probation, from 43 to 36. Conversely, the number of convicted LCMEG drug offenders sentenced to county jail (which could include jail in combination with probation) increased from 25 to 28 (Figure 21). In 2011, 11 drug offenders had a sentence of ‘other’.

In 2011, probation sentences were most common among convicted LCMEG drug offenders (40 percent), followed by jail sentences (31 percent), and prison sentences (17 percent). The remaining 12 percent consisted of sentences to conditional discharge, court supervision, and supervision.

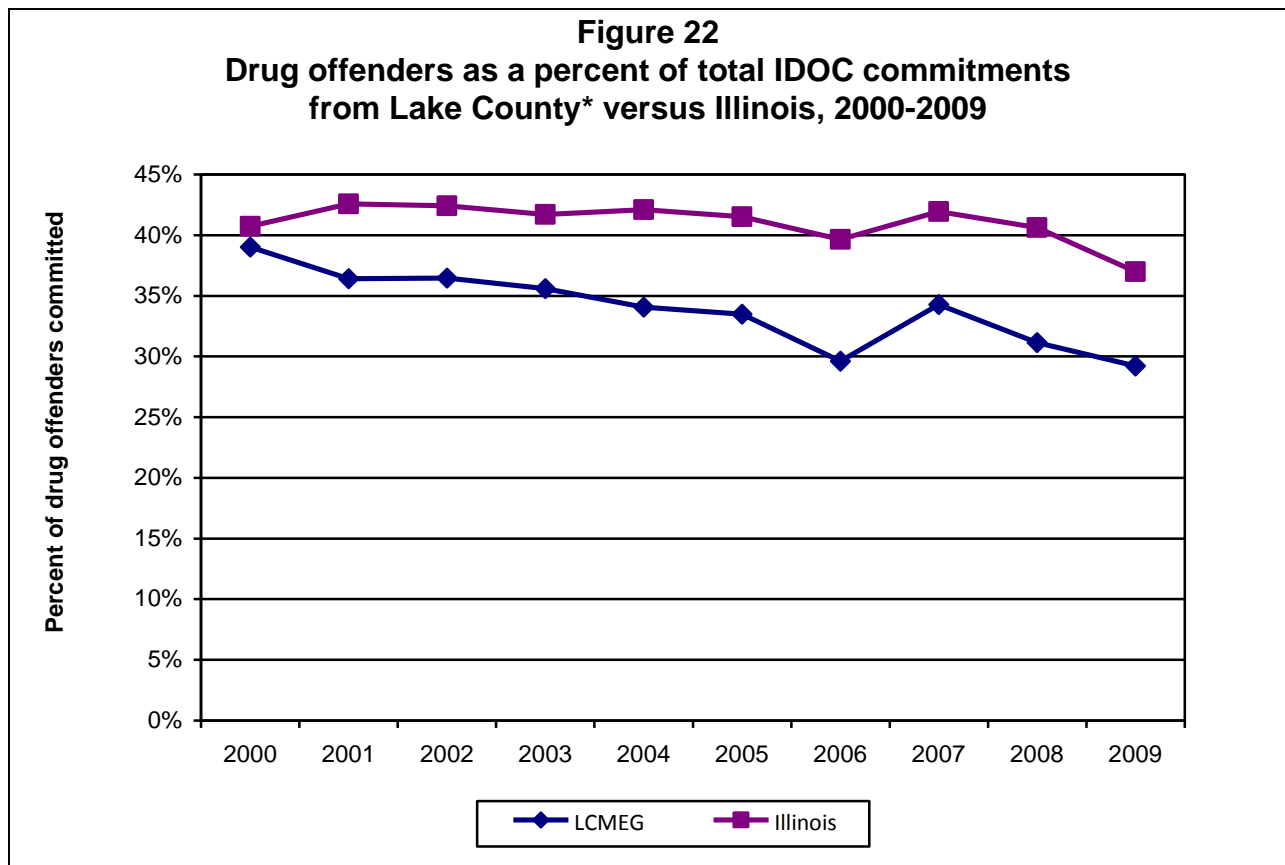


Source: LCMEG data reports to the ICJIA

Sentences to corrections

According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, between state fiscal years³ 2000 and 2009, the number of new court commitments to corrections for drug arrests made by Lake County local law enforcement agencies and LCMEG combined decreased, from 327 to 249. The number of drug offender commitments resulting from LCMEG arrests increased, from 11 to 27 between 2001 and 2010. In 2010, IDOC commitments from LCMEG cases accounted for 10 percent of all drug-law violators sentenced to prison from the region, up from 4 percent in 2001⁴.

Statewide, the percentage of total new court commitments to IDOC accounted for by drug offenders remained relatively stable. However, drug offenders accounted for a decreasing percentage of adults convicted and sentenced to IDOC from Lake County. In 2000, drug offenses accounted for 39 percent of all Lake County-related commitments to IDOC, compared to 29 percent in 2009 (*Figure 22*).



*Includes LCMEG and Non-LCMEG offenders
Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

³ Some state data are collected by state fiscal year. State fiscal years begin July 1 and end the following June 30. For example, state fiscal year 2000 covers July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000.

⁴ While total prison sentences are obtained from IDOC data, those resulting from LCMEG arrests are obtained from LCMEG data reports.

Drug sentences to corrections by offense class

The offense class for drug sentences to corrections in Lake County (which includes offenders arrested by LCMEG) also was examined. Class 4 felonies accounted for the largest proportion (50 percent) of sentences to IDOC for drug offenses during the period studied, followed by Class 1 felonies (29 percent), Class 2 felonies (10 percent), Class X felonies (6 percent) and Class 3 felonies (5 percent). Jail data is not currently available by offense type.

Between 2001 and 2010, the number of Class 4 felony sentences in Lake County decreased 39 percent, from 133 to 81, Class 1 felony sentences decreased 30 percent from 67 to 47, Class 2 felony sentences decreased slightly from 23 to 22, and Class 3 felony sentences increased from eight to 14. The number of Class X felonies decreased 25 percent, from 16 to 12, during the same period.

Drug sentences to corrections by sentence length

An offender can be sentenced for a Class 4 felony to a period of incarceration from one to three years in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). The incarceration length for a Class 3 felony is two to five years and a Class 2 felony is three to seven years in IDOC. The length of incarceration in IDOC for a Class 1 felony is four to 15 years. A person who pleads guilty to or is found guilty of a Class X felony can be sentenced to a minimum of 6, 9, 12, or 15 years depending on the amount of the drug, and a maximum of 30 years extendable in certain cases to 60 years.

According to IDOC, the average sentence length for Class 4 felony drug offenders has slightly increased, from 1.8 to 1.9 years. The average sentence length for Class X felony drug offenders decreased from 8.9 to 8.8 years. Average sentence length for Class 3 felony drug offenders in Illinois increased, from 2.9 to 3.0 years. Class 2 felony drug offender average sentence lengths increased from 4.0 to 4.2 years and Class 1 drug offender average sentence length increased from 5.1 to 5.5 years.

Survey of MEGs and task forces

Although the distribution of illegal drugs is difficult to measure precisely, data obtained from criminal justice sources can be helpful in estimating drug availability and prices. The ICJIA periodically conducts a survey of each MEG and task force in Illinois to gauge perceived availability and cost of drugs in their jurisdictions. The most recent survey was conducted in July 2009.

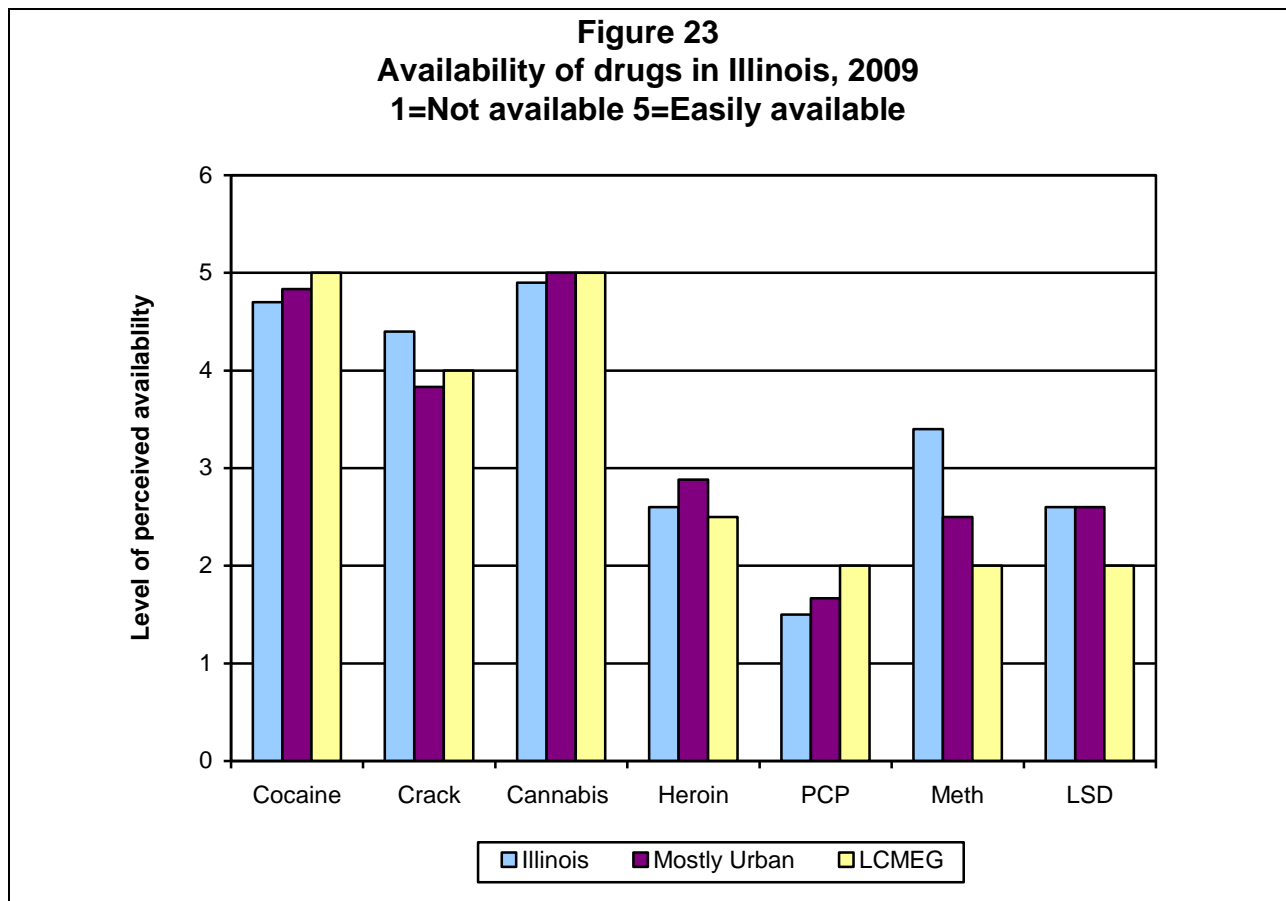
When applicable, responses from the 2000 survey and the most recent 2009 survey were compared. Results were analyzed by region. MEG and task force regions are classified as being either mostly urban, mostly rural, or mixed urban/rural, and were compared to similar units for purposes of this report.

Availability of drugs

According to survey responses, cannabis, powder cocaine, and crack cocaine continued to be the most visible drugs on the street. These drugs were reported as readily available across nearly all regions analyzed.

The perceived availability of most drugs in 2009 was relatively unchanged from 2000 in the region covered by LCMEG. The reported availability of PCP, methamphetamine, and LSD decreased slightly in the region. In all MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions similar to LCMEG, the perceived availability PCP, methamphetamine, and LSD decreased slightly.

Methamphetamine was reported as moderately available across Illinois. LCMEG reported that meth was less available in Lake County, similar to the perceptions of other MEGs and task forces in mostly urban regions. Cocaine, crack, and PCP appeared to be slightly more readily available in Lake County than other mostly urban areas (*Figure 23*).

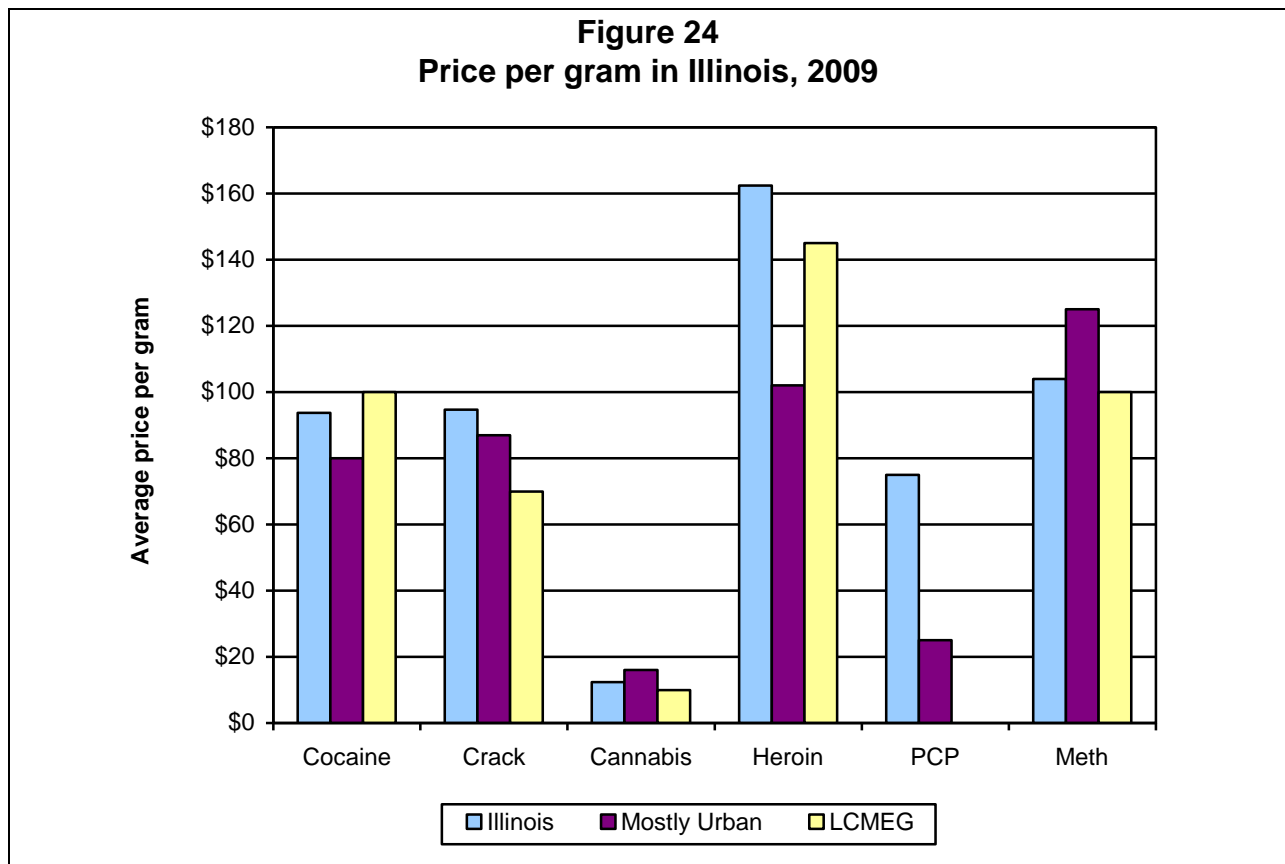


Source: Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

The price of drugs

Another market indicator is drug price—a change in supply, demand and availability are a few of the forces that determine drug price. In the statewide survey of MEG and task force units, changes in the average price of all the drugs examined between 2000 and 2009 varied across regions. The reported 2009 average prices of cocaine, crack, and cannabis were relatively similar statewide and in mostly urban regions.

There were changes in the average prices of cannabis and heroin in the region covered by LCMEG. In 2009, MEGs and task forces reported the average price of cannabis was \$12 per gram statewide, \$16 per gram in mostly urban regions, and \$10 per gram in the LCMEG region compared to \$7 per gram in the LCMEG region in 2000. The average price of heroin decreased during the last decade to \$162 per gram statewide and \$102 in mostly urban regions. Conversely the average price of heroin in Lake County increased to \$145 per gram compared to \$95 per gram in 2000 in the LCMEG region. The reported price of heroin in the LCMEG region was much higher than in other mostly urban areas. The average price of PCP was not reported for LCMEG (*Figure 24*).



Source: ICJIA Survey of Illinois MEGs and task forces

Conclusion

In 2010 LCMEG consisted of 24 officers, 19 of the officers were assigned by participating agencies, two from the Illinois State Police (ISP) and three from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI).

From 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by LCMEG and reported to the ICJIA decreased 20 percent, from 266 to 212 with violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* accounting for more drug arrests made by LCMEG throughout the majority of the period analyzed than violations of the *Cannabis Control Act*. In comparison, from 2002 to 2011, the number of cannabis and controlled substances arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies decreased 42 percent, from 2,959 to 1,704. Violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* consistently accounted for more drug arrests made by non-LCMEG agencies throughout the majority of the period analyzed than violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Between 2002 and 2011, the number of LCMEG arrests for violations of the *Cannabis Control Act* decreased 11 percent, from 131 to 116, while arrests for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act* decreased 29 percent, from 135 to 96. In 2011, 45 percent of all drug arrests made by LCMEG were for violations of the *Controlled Substances Act*.

The quantity of cannabis seized by LCMEG fluctuated greatly between 2002 and 2011. LCMEG also seized 576,757 grams of cocaine between 2002 and 2011.

Between 2002 and 2011, 2,608 drug prosecutions were initiated as a result of LCMEG arrests in Lake County. During the period examined, the number of LCMEG drug arrests decreased 20 percent, and 100 percent of all drug arrests by LCMEG resulted in prosecution. Fifty percent of LCMEG drug offender prosecutions during this period were for violations of the *Controlled Substance Act*.

Using CHRI data, it was determined that in 2011 there were 407 drug convictions in Lake County. The drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA reported that they had 67 drug convictions in 2011. Assuming LCMEG arrests were made within Lake County and prosecuted by the ICJIA funded drug prosecution units, then 16 percent of the Lake County drug convictions were from LCMEG and accounted for approximately 25 percent of the Cannabis Control Act convictions and 13 percent of the Controlled Substance Act convictions in Lake County.

According to the drug prosecution units funded by the ICJIA, the majority of drug offenders, both LCMEG and non-LCMEG offenders, were sentenced to probation. Of the 428 offenders sentenced by the drug prosecution unit in 2011, 14 percent were sentenced to a combination of jail and probation, 16 percent were sentenced to prison, and 65 percent were sentenced to probation.

According to survey responses, cannabis, powder cocaine, and crack cocaine continued to be the most visible drugs on the street and were reported to be readily available across nearly every region.

While LCMEG reported that methamphetamine was less available in Lake County, cocaine, crack, and PCP appear to be more readily available in the county.

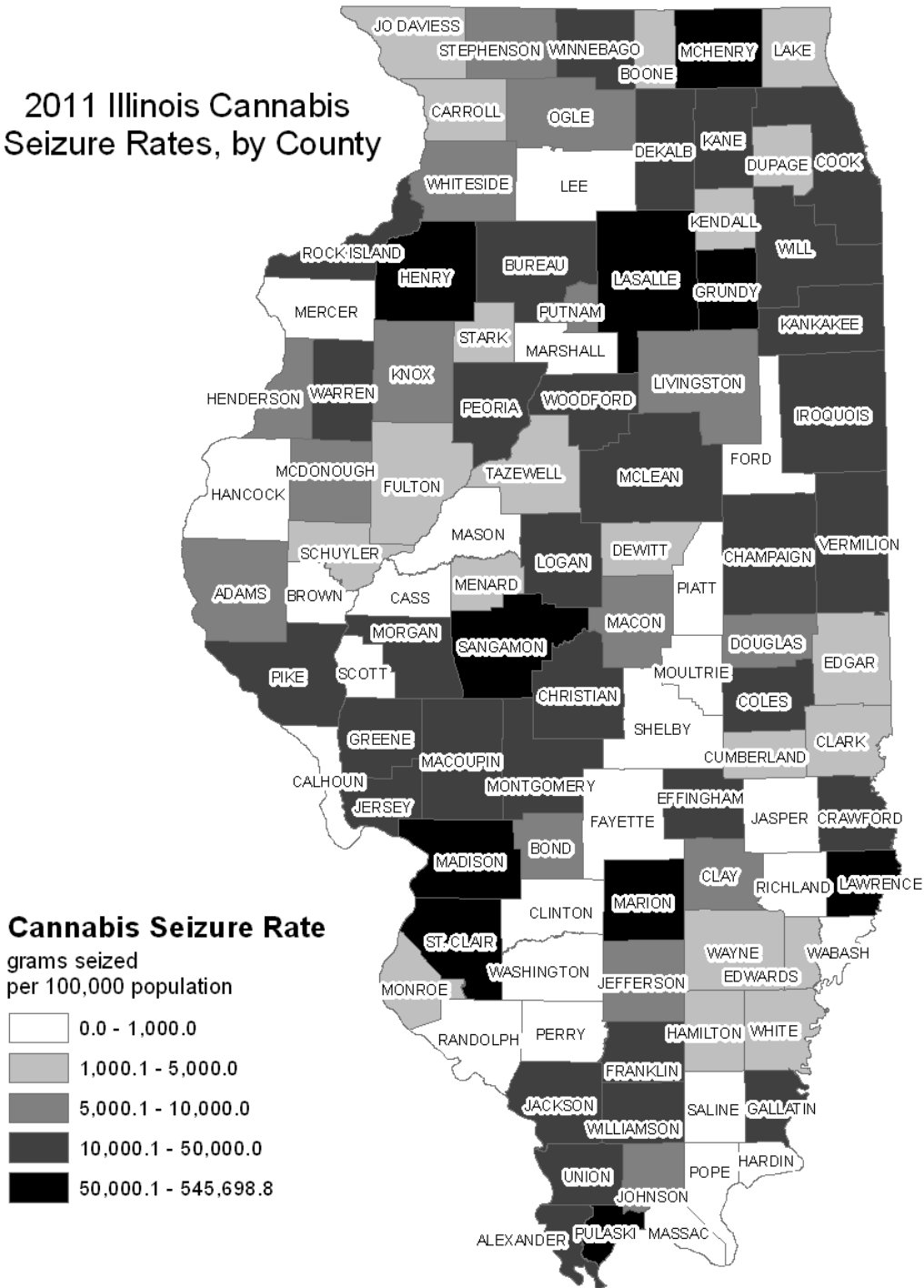
The reported 2009 average prices of cocaine, crack, and cannabis were relatively consistent statewide and in mostly urban regions. Cocaine and heroin had a higher average price in the LCMEG region than other mostly urban regions, but crack and methamphetamine had a lower average price.

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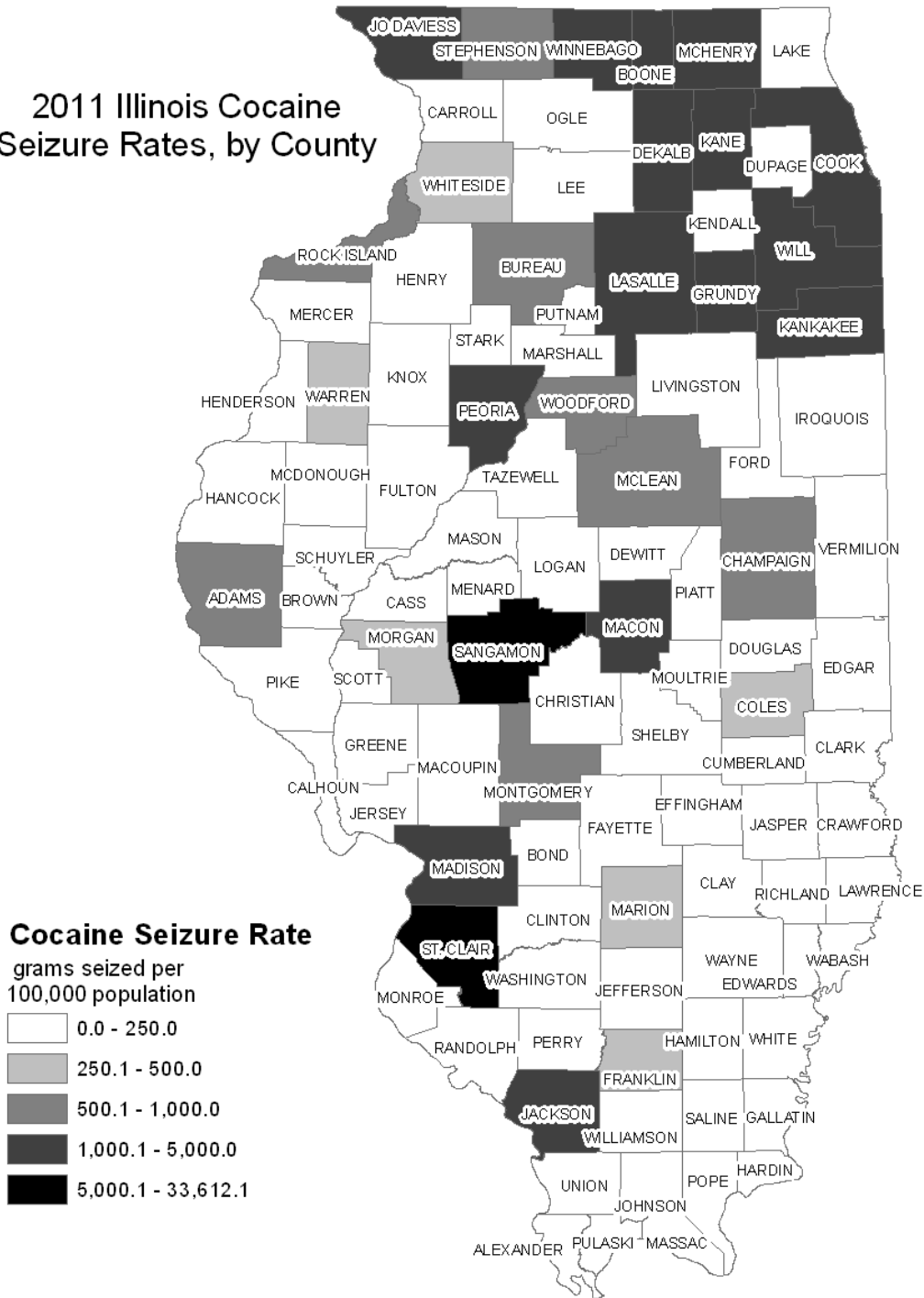
Appendix A

2011 Illinois Cannabis Seizure Rates, by County



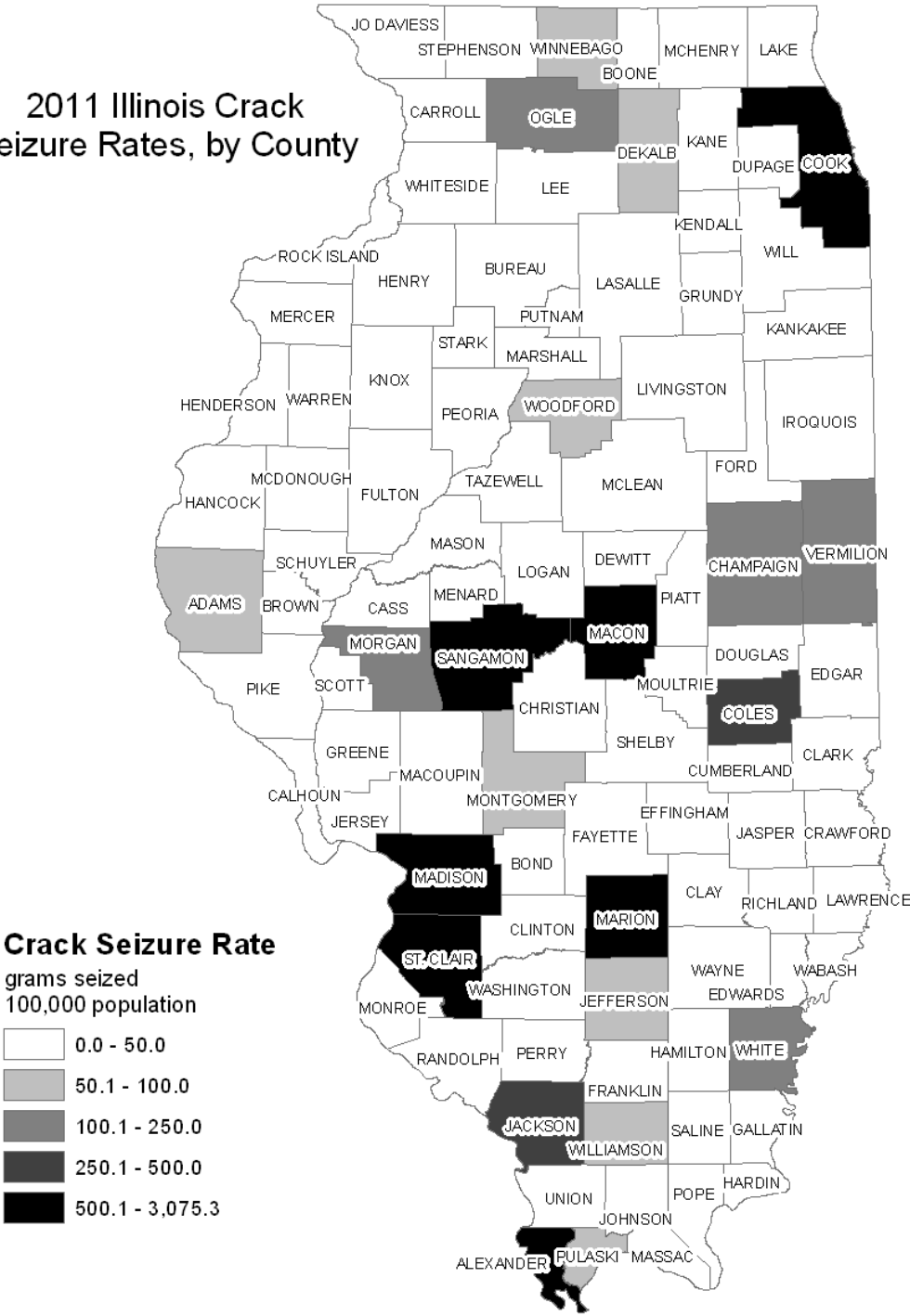
Appendix B

2011 Illinois Cocaine Seizure Rates, by County



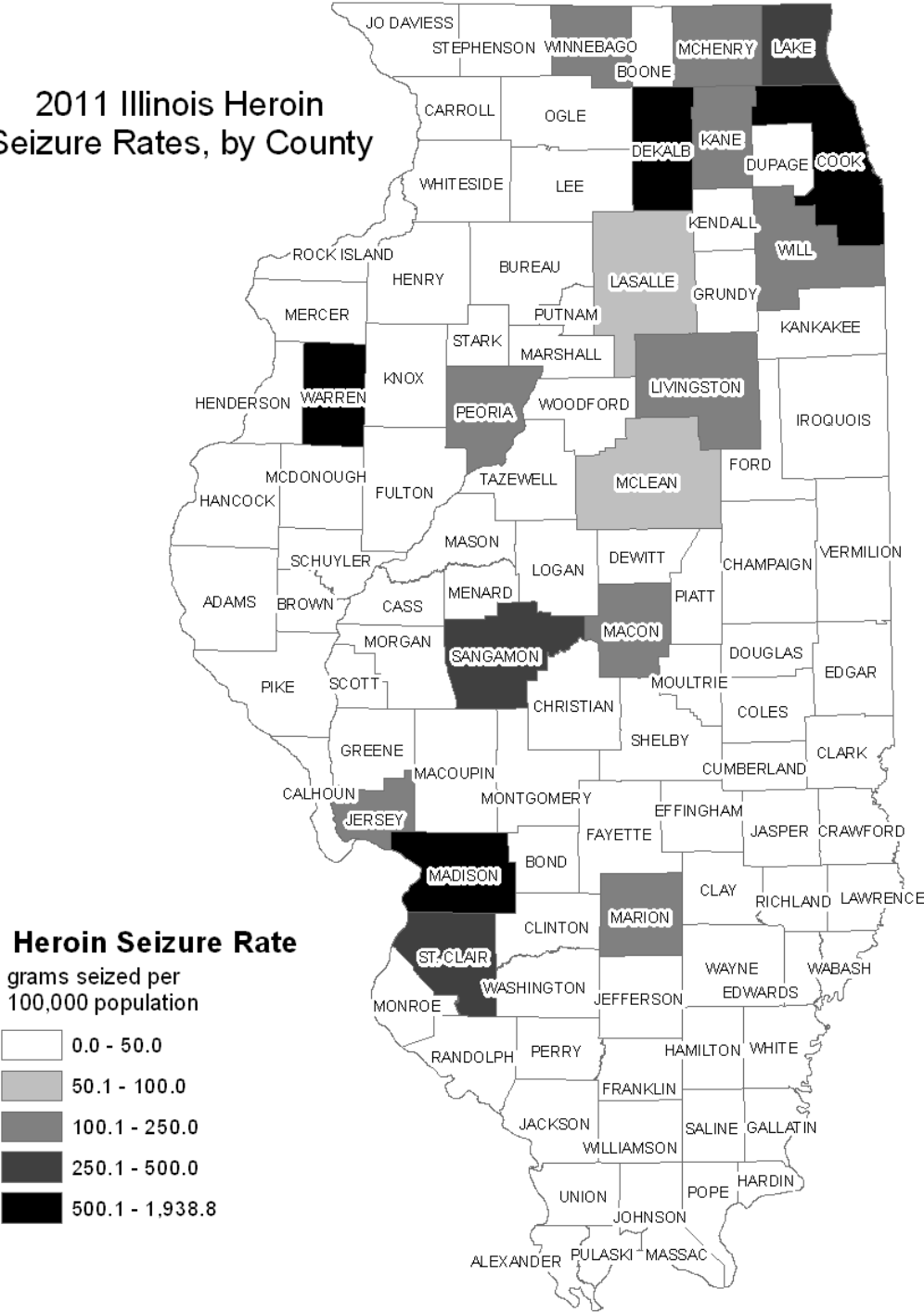
Appendix C

2011 Illinois Crack Seizure Rates, by County



Appendix D

2011 Illinois Heroin Seizure Rates, by County



Appendix E

2011 Illinois Meth Seizure Rates, by County

