



## 2016 Annual Report

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## ABOUT US...



The Warren County Drug Task Force is a multi-jurisdictional unit specializing in the investigation of drug trafficking, prescription drug diversion, money laundering and other drug related crimes. Our area of operation is all of Warren County and the City of Wilmington in Clinton County.

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to be an initiative of the Ohio HIDTA (High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area), based in Cleveland, Ohio. The HIDTA program provides assistance to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies operating in areas determined to be critical drug trafficking regions of the nation. HIDTA assistance is granted through the Executive Office of the President of the United States, Office of Drug Control Policy.



As a result of this program, the Warren County Drug Task Force includes multiple local, state and federal law enforcement agencies combining resources and working together toward a common goal which allows us to operate more efficiently. This program allows us to target larger criminal organizations, some stretching to our southern most borders of the United States and beyond. This collaboration of resources results in a better coordinated effort to address all levels of drug trafficking and abuse with a concentrated effort toward mid to upper level offenders.

The Warren County Drug Task Force provides specialized drug enforcement services including a team of detectives & agents with advanced training in the area of covert law enforcement operations. This team uses a variety of techniques and tactics to target those involved in drug trafficking activities in our community. Also serving our jurisdiction is a full time detective specializing in the investigation of prescription drug diversion crimes. This area of investigation remains a priority as the abuse of opiate pain medications and heroin use has never been more obvious. We also continue our highway interdiction efforts with the assistance of our Ohio State Highway Patrol partners who provide a full-time uniform interdiction team with canines to our task force. Working with this team is a deputy sheriff and canine from the Warren County Sheriff's Office. This highly trained team aggressively patrols the roadways of Warren County and southwest Ohio focusing on bulk shipments of illegal drugs in transit from various source cities across the United States.



Enforcement and Investigative Operations are supported by a Criminal Intelligence Analyst and Investigative Assistant. These support personnel provide ongoing assistance to investigators and are valued members of our unit.

We are fortunate to have such a diverse and talented team of law enforcement professionals working to reduce the supply of illegal drugs in our jurisdiction. These dedicated men and women are committed to improving the quality of life in our communities and are proud to serve the citizens of Warren County and the City of Wilmington.

## POLICY BOARD



The Warren County Drug Task Force is governed by a controlling authority known as the Policy Board. The Policy Board consists of the Warren County Sheriff, Warren and Clinton County Prosecutor's, Clearcreek Township Police Department, Franklin Police Department, Hamilton Township Police Department, Lebanon Police Department, Loveland Police Department, Maineville Police Department, Mason Police Department, Monroe Police Department, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), Springboro Police Department, Waynesville Police Department and the Wilmington Police Department.

Our Policy Board establishes the policies of the Drug Task Force and conducts monthly meetings throughout the year. The Drug Task Force Commander reports directly to the Policy Board and ensures the board remains fully briefed on all Drug Task Force activities.

## DRUG TASK FORCE PERSONNEL



The Warren County Drug Task Force could not operate without the dedicated men and women assigned to our unit. We currently have a staff of 21 law enforcement and support personnel who are fully committed to serving our combined jurisdictions.

We would like to thank the following agencies for providing these specially trained, dedicated and professional individuals.

- Warren County Sheriff's Office
- Warren County Prosecutor's Office
- Springboro Police Department
- Lebanon Police Department
- Franklin Police Department
- Wilmington Police Department
- Monroe Police Department
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI)
- Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP)
- Ohio National Guard - Counterdrug Unit



## DRUG TASK FORCE FUNDING

Because we are a multi-jurisdictional drug task force we are funded in a variety of ways. Most personnel assigned to the task force are fully funded by their home agencies. Because of the unique structure of our unit, some personnel as well as all operating expenses are funded by other means such as grants and governmental entity contributions.

Annual contributions are requested based upon one dollar per person using the most recent Census numbers. Without these additional funding sources, our drug task force would be unable to safely and effectively operate. The assignment of full time personnel and the financial contributions from our communities send a clear message of commitment to the mission of the Warren County Drug Task Force.

The funding sources for the drug task force include the Ohio HIDTA program, the Justice Assistance Grant, the Drug Law Enforcement Grant as well as annual contributions from the Warren County Commissioners and the communities listed below:

- Board of County Commissioners
- Butlerville
- Clearcreek Township
- Corwin
- Deerfield Township
- Franklin Township
- Hamilton Township
- Loveland
- Maineville
- Mason
- Massie Township
- Morrow
- Pleasant Plain
- South Lebanon
- Turtlecreek Township
- Union Township
- Washington Township
- Wayne Township
- Waynesville

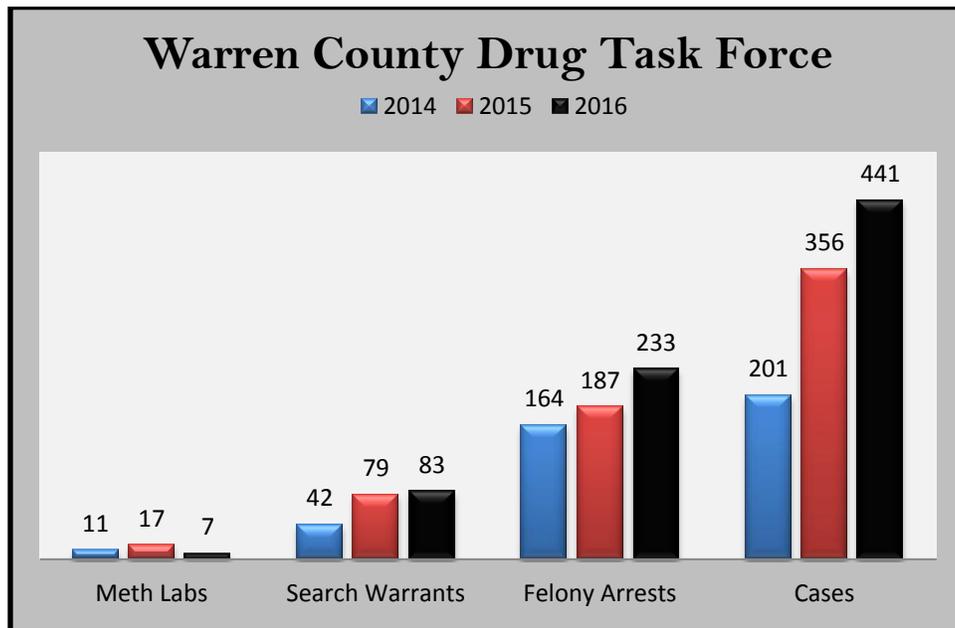
We would like to thank each community listed for their financial support in 2016. The Warren County Drug Task Force remains committed to providing specialized drug enforcement services to the communities we serve. This continued collaboration remains essential to our existence and is sincerely appreciated.

## CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS



The Warren County Drug Task Force remains the only unit within our jurisdiction conducting specialized drug investigations on a full time basis. Our investigations target all levels of drug trafficking with an emphasis on felony crimes, from the lowest level felonies to long-term federal conspiracy cases. The drug trafficking activities occurring in our jurisdiction are much different than the open-air trafficking common in larger metropolitan areas. These factors contribute to the difficulty and length of time of these investigations. Our detectives and investigators work tirelessly to prepare the best possible cases for a successful prosecution.

During 2016, combined investigations & interdiction operations resulted in **441** criminal cases. Drug task force detectives produced **235** of those cases utilizing various specialized techniques and common covert tactics for drug enforcement. Our uniform interdiction staff produced **206** criminal cases and conducted **2,110** vehicle traffic stops. These combined investigations resulted in **233** felony arrests and **104** misdemeanor arrests. Many of these investigations will remain active through 2017. During 2016, combined enforcement efforts resulted in **83** search warrants, **418** vehicle searches, **7** methamphetamine laboratories and the seizure of **66** firearms.



We remain focused on all drug trafficking activities with a concentrated effort on the heroin epidemic. The devastation of this problem continues to worsen with the injection of fentanyl into the heroin market. The powerful cocktail of heroin and fentanyl has become commonplace resulting in continued loss of life and worsening addictions throughout our community and the State of Ohio.

Many drug task force investigations are a direct result of drug tips received from our community. Some significant Drug Task Force investigations occurring this year are listed below:

Federal Heroin Conspiracy: The Warren County Drug Task Force collaborated with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to target two heroin trafficking organizations significantly affecting our jurisdiction. These criminal organizations were operating in northern Warren County and southern Montgomery County and supplying bulk amounts of heroin to most counties in southwest Ohio.



Several search warrants were conducted in Warren and Montgomery Counties resulting in the seizure of multiple kilograms of heroin, several firearms, U.S. Currency and large amounts of packaging equipment and materials. These long term and complicated cases directly impacted the availability of heroin in communities throughout Warren County and the City of Wilmington. Although these types of investigations are taxing on manpower, the federal prosecution of these criminal organizations make it time well spent. These types of investigations reduce the availability of heroin within our jurisdiction and throughout the State of Ohio.



Cocaine trafficking: During the early summer months of 2016, the Warren County Drug Task Force conducted an investigation into two cocaine traffickers operating in the southern communities of Warren County.



This investigation involved the undercover purchase of multiple ounces of cocaine. A search was ultimately conducted at a residence located in the Cincinnati area and another 8 ounces of Cocaine was seized. This investigation dismantled a significant source of supply responsible for distributing large quantities of cocaine throughout our Warren County communities.

Although most law enforcement agencies in Ohio are inundated with the heroin and fentanyl epidemic, most still recognize that cocaine abuse & trafficking is still alive and well. It has become common for drug traffickers in our area to provide a variety of addictive drugs such as powder cocaine, crack cocaine and heroin.

Heroin & Cocaine: The Warren County Drug Task Force conducted undercover purchases from two individuals operating in central Warren County that were involved in the distribution of heroin and cocaine. A search warrant was ultimately conducted resulting in the seizure of 2 ounces of cocaine, 1+ ounce of heroin and a 9mm handgun.

This investigation led to the identification of these individuals source of supply located in the Middletown area. An additional search warrant was conducted at this location resulting in the seizure of 17+ ounces of cocaine, another ounce of Heroin, two handguns and an AR-Pistol. Four arrests were made as a result of this investigation including two suspects who have been trafficking cocaine and heroin in the greater Warren County area for many years. This investigation led to Felony-1 drug charges with Major Drug Offender specifications.



LSD (Acid), MDMA (Ecstasy): During the summer of 2016, the Warren County Drug Task Force conducted a drug investigation in southern Warren County involving northern Kentucky and Cincinnati area drug traffickers. Two drug traffickers were arrested for trafficking in various drugs. One suspect was armed with a loaded Smith & Wesson 9mm handgun. Recovered during this investigation was a pound of Marijuana, 10+ ounces of Hash, 300 unit doses of LSD, 4+ ounces of MDMA (Ecstasy) and various prescription drugs.



These drug traffickers were responsible for distributing a variety of drugs to individuals within our jurisdiction. The geographical location of Warren County and close proximity to both Cincinnati and Dayton create a significant customer base for drug traffickers with unlimited supplies of illegal drugs.

LSD (Acid) & Psilocybin mushrooms: During the fall of 2016, the Warren County Drug Task Force conducted an investigation involving the trafficking of LSD. Detectives identified an individual residing in northern Kentucky who had relocated from Colorado and was responsible for distributing LSD throughout Warren County. This individual utilized various sources of supply in Colorado to obtain illegal drugs for distribution throughout southwest Ohio and northern Kentucky.



Various covert techniques were utilized during this case to include an undercover purchase of LSD. Seized during this investigation were 300 unit doses of LSD and 4 ounces of psilocybin mushrooms. This is another example of the fluid nature of

drug trafficking as these activities consistently cross jurisdictional boundaries. A continued multi-jurisdictional approach is essential as we collaborate to reduce drug trafficking activities and related crimes in our communities.

Methamphetamine manufacturing & trafficking: A drug investigation was conducted in central Warren County that also involved the dangerous & illegal manufacture of methamphetamine.



Detectives utilized various confidential sources, electronic & physical surveillance techniques and other specialized tactics while investigating this case. This investigation took several months to complete and culminated with a search warrant at a



Warren County residence.

The search resulted in the seizure of the largest methamphetamine laboratory ever dismantled in Warren County along with a marijuana cultivation operation, 2+ ounces of methamphetamine, 1 ounce of cocaine, 1 ounce of psilocybin mushrooms and a cache of firearms.

Drug task force investigations such as this impact our entire jurisdiction and beyond. Most communities realize that those involved in this illegal activity show no regard for the jurisdictional boundaries of law enforcement. A drug trafficker of this size is a source of supply for many of our addicted population regardless of where they may actually reside.



Marijuana Trafficking: A multi-agency investigation was conducted during 2016 involving a marijuana trafficking organization with multiple local members. This organization was responsible for distributing hundreds of pounds of high-quality marijuana throughout Warren, Butler, Montgomery and Hamilton Counties. Detectives discovered the marijuana was being shipped in packages from California to various addresses in southwest Ohio.



Members of this organization regularly traveled to California making 10+ pound bulk purchases of marijuana for \$3,000-\$4,000 per pound. Hoping to avoid detection, the organization would then break their marijuana purchase into smaller 1-2 pound packages for shipment to Ohio. Detectives determined that this organization was in operation in southwest Ohio for 2+ years.



Marijuana continues to be the number one recreational drug used in Ohio. With the legalization of marijuana in the western regions of the United States there has been a definitive shift in the origination of marijuana available in Ohio. California and Colorado are consistently identified as primary source areas of high quality marijuana. Lower quality marijuana also remains readily available throughout the area and most commonly originates from the southwest border of the United States.

Mobile Methamphetamine Lab: During the Spring of 2016 the Warren County Drug Task Force & BCI Clandestine Laboratory Response Teams were involved in the investigation & processing of a mobile methamphetamine laboratory in northern Warren County. Our team was requested by a local law enforcement agency after a uniform officer recognized the subtle and often missed signs of a possible methamphetamine lab inside a motor vehicle.



Inside the vehicle were flammable solvents, various unknown & unmarked chemicals and other items used to manufacture methamphetamine. The illegal manufacture of methamphetamine creates an incredible risk of serious harm to the community, law enforcement and to those who choose to engage in this activity. This investigation resulted in the seizure of 100 times bulk amounts of methamphetamine. This case is an exceptional example of the continued collaboration of local law enforcement with the drug task force.

Prescription Drug Diversion: The Warren County Drug Task Force conducted an investigation in early 2016 involving the deception to obtain dangerous drugs. This case involved a subject using deception to obtain Tramadol from various veterinarian offices in Warren, Clermont and Hamilton Counties.



The investigation revealed that a suspect had obtained over 6,000 unit doses of 50mg Tramadol. The suspect in this case utilized multiple identities for themselves and for their dog for purposes of obtaining these drugs. This is an example of the desperate measures often taken by individuals with a powerful addiction to prescription drugs.

Prescription pain medications remain the most abused medicines today. Recent studies by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) indicate the non-medical use of prescription pain relievers is the second-most prevalent form of illicit drug use in the Nation. The correlation between prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse remain obvious. Many people who abuse heroin report the misuse of prescription pain medications before starting to use heroin.

## EDUCATION & PREVENTION

We continue to support and participate in drug education & prevention efforts throughout our combined jurisdictions. The Drug Task Force recognizes that drug education for our community, especially our youth is extremely important. We are committed to this ongoing process of stopping addiction before it starts and realize that aggressive enforcement efforts alone remain insufficient.

We utilize various community events and activities as opportunities to meet with our community as we spread our message of being drug free and making good decisions. In 2016, the Drug Task Force attended many activities such as National Night Out in Clearcreek Township and the City of Lebanon as well as several "Touch a Truck" events in Deerfield & Hamilton Townships. We visited many other jurisdictions this year participating in parades and other public settings to engage with our community.

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to collaborate with the Warren County Educational Services Center and all DARE programs throughout the county. We continue to update our web page with current educational information for parents, teachers and students. Please visit our web page at [www.wcdtf.org](http://www.wcdtf.org)

## CURRENT DRUG TRENDS

**Heroin/Fentanyl:** Heroin trafficking, abuse and overdoses have surged beyond what most believe are epidemic proportions and remain the greatest drug threat to our jurisdiction, the State of Ohio and the United States. The devastation of this problem continues to worsen with the injection of fentanyl, and now carfentanil into the heroin market. This powerful cocktail of heroin and fentanyl/carfentanil has become commonplace resulting in the loss of life and worsening addictions throughout our community.



The number of accidental overdose deaths related to the abuse of opiates, heroin and fentanyl/carfentanil continue to rise. The supply of heroin continues to be unlimited and it remains readily available throughout our communities. In 2015, the Warren County Drug Task Force seized 12 ounces of heroin (and/or fentanyl mix). In 2016, drug task force investigations & interdiction operations resulted in the seizure of 67 ounces of heroin (and/or fentanyl/carfentanil mix) establishing a 558% increase. The investigation into heroin trafficking and abuse is more important now than ever as the devastation and collateral damage of this epidemic become more and more tragic.

Our addicted population create a steady customer base for drug traffickers operating within our communities. Consistent & aggressive enforcement coupled with drug education & treatment options are essential as we continue to battle this horrible epidemic.



Prescription Drugs: The trafficking, diversion and abuse of pharmaceutical drugs continues to be a problem in Warren County, the City of Wilmington and all of Southwest Ohio. The abuse of prescription opiates and obvious connection to heroin addiction remains apparent. Although still a significant problem, overall prescription drug seizures have declined somewhat statewide for the third year in a row.

Some of this reduction is believed to be attributed to basic economics. The dosage price of heroin is about a fifth or sixth of the cost of one opioid pill on the street. As an addiction grows, most users are forced to seek the most cost-effective and viable solution to satisfy their habit, making heroin the cheaper option. Another factor to consider are new prescription guidelines for physicians established by the State of Ohio in January 2016. These are intended to deter over-prescribing of opioids when treating acute pain. These guidelines establish protocols to prompt the doctor and patient to have conversations about non-opioid options for treatment.

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to utilize one detective devoted solely to pursuing those who violate the law involving prescription drugs. This includes doctor shoppers, forged and altered prescriptions, and the pursuit of health professionals that violate criminal statutes. In 2016, over 12,000 unit doses of prescription drugs were seized or identified as diverted.

**Marijuana:** Marijuana continues to be a commonly used illicit drug in our combined jurisdictions and in the United States. A portion of the marijuana sold and abused in our area comes from states that have



passed legislation for medical marijuana or for personal use. This high-quality marijuana is typically higher in THC and demands a very high street value, as much as \$5,000 per pound. This type of marijuana regularly arrives in our communities via package delivery services.

Mexico also remains a major supplier of marijuana for our jurisdiction. Most marijuana originating in Mexico is typically transported to southwest Ohio by motor vehicle. This marijuana tends to be of much less quality and is easily obtained throughout our community. Marijuana is regularly found during task force investigations into other drug activities and commonly combined with all other drugs of abuse.

**Methamphetamine:** Methamphetamine seizures within our jurisdiction declined slightly from 2015-2016 however this drug remains readily available within our jurisdiction. Like many of the other drugs



trafficked in our area, the trafficking and abuse of heroin can mask the ever present problem of another drug. This seems to be true with methamphetamine.

Consistent with 2015, crystal methamphetamine is a drug that has remains widespread in our region. Crystal meth, sometimes called “ice” due to its appearance, is highly addictive like the methamphetamine made clandestinely in our area. Crystal methamphetamine however also comes from Mexico, and is either transported by motor vehicle or shipped utilizing a variety of means through package carriers. These shipments consistently come from source states near the southwest border or from states located in the western United States.

We continue to investigate the local manufacture of methamphetamine throughout our combined jurisdictions. The most common method of manufacturing methamphetamine locally continues to be the one-pot method. This is extremely dangerous as most of the manufacturing process occurs in one container. Common containers of choice are plastic bottles adding to the potential hazards where incompatible and dangerous chemicals are combined creating violent reactions and extreme pressures. Container failures resulting in fire & explosions are common.



The manufacture of methamphetamine requires the use of pseudoephedrine and other common household items & chemicals such as drain cleaner, lye, cold packs and lithium batteries. The Drug Task Force continues to investigate suspicious purchases of pseudoephedrine tablets and other reports of suspicious activity during meth lab investigations.

## THANK YOU!

The Warren County Drug Task Force recognizes that in order to be truly successful in our endeavors, the support and assistance of the general public, our local governmental entities and the Warren County Commissioners is essential. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to serving you in 2017.

Please continue to report drug tips to the Drug Task Force or to your local law enforcement agency. No one can identify suspicious activity in our neighborhoods better than those who live there. Please contact us by email at [drugtips@wcdtf.org](mailto:drugtips@wcdtf.org) or by using our toll free number at 1-866-307-0070.