

NFLIS Data Terms

DATA TERMS

Census Region: The four regions of the United States as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau are:

- ❖ **Northeast Region:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont
- ❖ **Midwest Region:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin
- ❖ **South Region:** Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia
- ❖ **West Region:** Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

Data Availability: Any changes in participating and reporting forensics laboratories for an SCS in a given year are indicated in a note entitled *Data Availability* for that site/year.

Data Run Date: *NFLIS-Drug* report counts are subject to change; “the *NFLIS-Drug* database is dynamic—even across years—and queries of the data may result in updated drug counts for more recent years. Therefore, it is important to note the date on which the data were generated because it underscores the reality that these tables reflect a snapshot in time and may not be comparable with data queries generated on a different date.”¹ The specific dates each site’s data were run are noted in the source section or hover boxes in the visualization.

Drug Rank: Based on the number of drug reports. In a tie (i.e., two or more drugs have the same number of reports), drugs are assigned the same ranking and a gap is left in the ranking numbers. Each item is assigned a rank equal to the number of items ranked above it plus one.

Drug Report: Drug that is identified in law enforcement items, submitted to and analyzed by Federal, State, or local forensic labs and included in the NFLIS database. “Drug cases secured in law enforcement operations (i.e., drug seizures) are submitted to forensic laboratories for analysis. An individual drug case can vary in size, and one case can consist of one or more drug items. Within each item, multiple drugs may be identified and reported. A single report equates to one documented occurrence of a drug. Each report is counted separately and added to the *NFLIS-Drug* data.”¹ The data presented in these data visualizations are based on the top three drug reports per item submitted for analysis.

Drug Report Count: For each NDEWS Sentinel Community Site (SCS), the NFLIS drug reports are based on actual reported data or counts rather than estimates of submissions of items seized in

the site's catchment area. DEA does not recommend comparing year-to-year trends using raw counts from *NFLIS-Drug* published tables.¹ The differences in counts may be more reflective of differences in laboratory reporting for that time frame rather than changes in drug abuse or trafficking.¹ The data represent a snapshot of the *NFLIS-Drug* database as of the date the data were run. The catchment area for each NDEWS SCS is described in the *NDEWS Sentinel Community Sites (SCS)* note. The timeframe is January through December of each year.²

Drug Report Estimate (data not presented in these visualizations): National and regional estimates are the statistically adjusted number of reports that account for nonreporting and nonsampled laboratories and allow for inferences to be made of the total number of analyzed drug reports in the entire *NFLIS-Drug* “universe” of State and local forensic drug laboratories.¹ Estimates are not available for the SCS catchment areas; however, national and regional estimates are available from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in mid-year and annual reports at: <https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>.

Fentanyl and Select Synthetic Opioids (SSO): Includes fentanyl, fentanyl-related substances, and U-47700 (3,4-DICHLORO-N-[2-(DIMETHYLAMINO)CYCLOHEXYL]-N-METHYLBENZAMIDE).

National Drug Early Warning System (NDEWS): NIDA-supported project that monitors emerging drug use trends to enable health experts, researchers, and concerned citizens across the country to respond quickly to potential outbreaks of illicit drugs such as heroin and to identify increased use of designer synthetic compounds. The Center for Substance Abuse Research (CESAR) at the University of Maryland serves as the NDEWS Coordinating Center and is the author of these NFLIS visualizations.

NDEWS Sentinel Community Sites (SCS): The 12 NDEWS sites and their respective catchment areas are listed below:

- ❖ **Atlanta Metro:** Includes the following 29 counties—Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jasper, Lamar, Meriwether, Morgan, Newton, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton Counties.
- ❖ **Chicago Metro:** Includes the following 14 counties—Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, McHenry, Will, Jasper, Lake, Newton, Porter, Lake County, IN, and Kenosha County, WI.
- ❖ **Denver Metro:** Includes the following 9 counties—Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, and Jefferson Counties.
- ❖ **King County (Seattle Area)**
- ❖ **Los Angeles County**

- ❖ **New York City:** Includes the following 5 boroughs in NY MSA—Bronx, Kings, Queens, New York, and Richmond, and data from the New York City Police Department Laboratory.
- ❖ **Philadelphia**
- ❖ **Maine**
- ❖ **San Francisco**
- ❖ **Southeastern Florida (Miami Area):** Includes the following 3 counties—Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties.
- ❖ **Texas**
- ❖ **Wayne County (Detroit Area)**

NFLIS-Drug: National Forensic Laboratory Information System, a DEA program that systematically collects results from drug analyses conducted by participating Federal, State and local forensic laboratories. These laboratories analyze controlled and non-controlled substances secured in law enforcement operations across the United States.

NPS Categories: Drugs in six New Psychoactive Substance (NPS) categories are of current interest to the NDEWS project because of the recent increase in their numbers, types, and availability. The NPS categories are: Fentanyl and Select Synthetic Opioids (SSO); 2C Phenethylamines, Piperazines, Synthetic Cannabinoids, Synthetic Cathinones, and Tryptamines.

Categorization of drugs/substances comprising 2C Phenethylamines, Piperazines, Synthetic Cannabinoids, Synthetic Cathinones, and Tryptamines were provided to the NDEWS Coordinating Center by the DEA Diversion Control Division. Fentanyl-related substances were identified by the NDEWS Coordinating Center by searching on the term “fenta” for drugs/substances that were identified by DEA as narcotic analgesics.

Note that these are not comprehensive lists of substances for each NPS category. Because of the nature of the *NFLIS-Drug* data, it is highly likely that some drugs or substances have not yet been seized by law enforcement and reported by *NFLIS-Drug* laboratories.¹

SOURCES

¹U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Diversion Control Division. (undated). *National Forensic Laboratory Information System: NFLIS Public Resources Library, NFLIS Questions and Answers (Q&A)*. Retrieved from

<https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Resources/NFLISPublicResourceLibrary.aspx>

²U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Diversion Control Division. (2018). *National Forensic Laboratory Information System: 2017 Annual Report*. Springfield, VA: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/DesktopModules/ReportDownloads/Reports/NFLIS2016AR.pdf>