

## NFLIS-Drug Estimates: Data Terms

**[Blank]:** Missing data points indicate that the drug was not reported for the given year or that the estimate did not meet the criteria for precision and reliability for the given year.

**Annual Year Data:** The annual estimates are based on results of drug cases submitted to State and local laboratories from January through December of a given year and analyzed by March 31 of the following year.

**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

**Drug Report:** Drug that is identified in law enforcement items, submitted to and analyzed by 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.”<sup>1</sup>

**Drug Report Estimate:** NFLIS-Drug estimates are based on the National Estimates Based on All Reports (NEAR) approach, which adjusts the number of reports of drugs recorded and submitted by *NFLIS-Drug* laboratories by accounting for nonreporting and nonsampled laboratories. These weighted and imputed data “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.”<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, an enhancement to the NEAR methodology was introduced to account for **all** drugs reported in an item submission. Prior to that, for each drug item (exhibit) analyzed by a laboratory in the NFLIS program, only up to three drugs were reported to NFLIS and counted in the estimation process. Starting with the 2016 Annual Report, all drugs reported in an item are now counted in the estimation process. “This change ensures that the estimates will take into consideration all reported substances, including emerging drugs of interest, that may typically be reported as the fourth or fifth drug within

an item. . . . Although this change could not be applied to reporting periods before 2016, the 2016 data showed that 99.97% of drug reports are captured in the first, second, or third drug report for any item; therefore, no statistical adjustments were deemed necessary to maintain the trend with prior years.”<sup>3</sup>

**Midyear Data:** The midyear estimates are based on results of drug cases submitted to State and local laboratories from January 1 through June 30 and analyzed by September 30 of the given year.

**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.

**National Estimates Based on All Reports (NEAR) Approach:** See *Drug Report Estimate*.

**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.

**Rate (per 100, 000 population aged 15 or older):** Rates were calculated using population estimates for persons aged 15 years or older queried via CDC WONDER’s bridged-race population estimates.

The population data are bridged-race derived from U.S. Census Bureau files. Please see [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged\\_race.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/bridged_race.htm) for more information about how population (used as denominator for rates) data were prepared by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

**Trends:** The national and regional trends presented in these data visualizations are the plotted lines of the estimates of drugs submitted to State and local laboratories during the reporting period.

To determine statistically significant changes in estimates, please see the [NFLIS-Drug Annual and Midyear Reports](#) published by the DEA. Because the DEA reports include results from regression analyses that test for linear and curved trends, the descriptions of trends detailed in the DEA reports may differ slightly from the plotted lines included in these data visualizations.<sup>2</sup>

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>U.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.dea/diversion.usdoj.gov/Resources/NFLISPublicResourceLibrary.aspx>

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Diversion Control Division. (2019). *National Forensic Laboratory Information System: 2018 Annual Report*. Springfield, VA: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Retrieved from: <https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, Diversion Control Division. (2017). *National Forensic Laboratory Information System: Statistical Methodology (Revised September 2017)*. Springfield, VA: U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Retrieved from: <https://www.nflis.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/Reports.aspx>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). *Bridged-Race Population Estimates, United States July 1st resident population by state, county, age, sex, bridged-race, and Hispanic origin*. Compiled from revised bridged-race 2000-2009 intercensal population estimates (released by NCHS on 10/26/2012); and bridged-race Vintage 2017 (2010-2017) postcensal population estimates (released by NCHS on 6/27/2018). Available on CDC WONDER Online Database. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/bridged-race-v2017.html> on Oct 16, 2018.