



2019 Annual Report

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www.wcdtf.org

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. Our Drug Task Force has been a HIDTA Initiative since 2004.



As a result of the HIDTA 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 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 fulltime detective specializing in the investigation of prescription drug diversion crimes.

We continue our highway interdiction efforts with the assistance of our Ohio State Highway Patrol partners who provide a full-time uniformed interdiction team with K9's to our task force. 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. This team also provides full time support to task force operations, as plain clothes investigations oftentimes move rapidly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.



Enforcement and Investigative Operations are supported by a Criminal Intelligence Analyst provided by the Ohio National Guard, Counterdrug Unit and an Investigative Assistant from the Warren County Sheriff's Office. These support personnel provide ongoing assistance to investigators and are valued members of our unit.

POLICY BOARD

The Warren County Drug Task Force is governed by a controlling authority known as the Policy Board. During 2019, we welcomed the addition of the Harveysburg Police Department to our Policy Board.

Our Policy Board currently consists of the Warren County Sheriff, Warren and Clinton County Prosecutor's, Clearcreek Township Police Department, Franklin Police Department, Hamilton Township Police Department, Harveysburg 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.

The Policy Board provides ongoing input and oversight regarding all Drug Task Force operations. It also establishes the policies under which our Drug Task Force operates. The Drug Task Force Commander reports directly to the Policy Board, and ensures the board remains fully briefed on all Drug Task Force activities during monthly Policy Board meetings.

DRUG TASK FORCE PERSONNEL

The Warren County Drug Task Force could not operate without the dedicated men and women assigned to our unit. Our staffing levels can fluctuate throughout the year, as member agency needs and detective rotations are oftentimes unavoidable. Rotating personnel presented challenges during 2019, as several experienced investigators and agents rotated back to their home agencies and/or retired. We continue to work through the necessary training to ensure our newly assigned staff is prepared for their new assignment.

We began 2019 with a staff of **23** law enforcement and support personnel provided by the 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), United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSP) and the Ohio National Guard, Counterdrug 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 in Clinton County.

We would like to thank these agencies for their continued support, and for providing these specially trained, dedicated and professional individuals.

DRUG TASK FORCE FUNDING

Most personnel assigned to the Drug 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. The long-term sustainability of our task force remains challenging, however the commitment from our local communities and the Warren County Commissioners remain strong.

Annual contributions are requested based upon one dollar per resident, using the most recent Census numbers. Without these additional funds our Drug Task Force would be unable to safely and effectively operate. During 2018 and 2019, as a result of continued funding shortages, we asked each of our community partners to consider increasing their contribution toward our overall funding. Several communities graciously did just that and contributed more than the dollar amount requested.

We remain thankful to each jurisdiction for their contribution, and continued partnership. The ongoing assignment of full-time personnel and the financial contributions from each of our communities send a clear message of commitment to the mission of the Warren County Drug Task Force.

Additional funding sources for the Drug Task Force include the Ohio HIDTA program, the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), the Drug Law Enforcement Grant (DLE), the Recovery Ohio Law Enforcement Fund, as well as annual contributions from the Warren County Commissioners. During 2019, we received financial contributions from the entities listed below.

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

Thank you for your continued support. The Warren County Drug Task Force remains committed to providing specialized drug enforcement services to the communities we serve. This continued partnership 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 continue to 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 remain much different than the open-air trafficking common in larger metropolitan areas. These factors contribute to the difficulty and length of time of our investigations. Many cases beginning this year will continue into 2020 and beyond.

Drug trends remained consistent during 2019 with methamphetamine, fentanyl, LSD and prescription drugs being most prevalent. Our investigations continue to identify Mexico as a primary source of supply for the methamphetamine and fentanyl seized in our area. Drugs arriving from the southwest border continue to flow through the Cincinnati and Dayton areas, and remain readily available for use by our addicted population. Drug Task Force seizure numbers, as reported by the Ohio Department of Public Safety, indicate Warren County as the **11th** highest county in the State of Ohio for methamphetamine seizures, **7th** highest for fentanyl seizures and **1st** in the state for LSD seizures in 2019.

Aggressive enforcement, as well as increased treatment and prevention efforts, continues to positively impact the fentanyl crisis in our area. Although the opiate problem remains a significant concern, we are thankful to see these numbers decrease in comparison to years past. The combined efforts of aggressive supply reduction and increased treatment and prevention programs continue to be effective.

The investigation of prescription drug diversion crimes remain a priority for the Drug Task Force. During 2019, Warren County ranked **1st** in the State of Ohio for the highest number of prescription opiate drug seizures (5,917 unit doses) and **3rd** for the seizure of other non-opiate prescription drugs (9,123 unit doses). Prescription drugs remain common drugs of abuse for many, especially those employed within the medical profession with increased accessibility to prescription drugs. This specialized area of investigation directly impacts the continued addiction crisis involving prescription opiates. The Warren County Drug Task Force remains one of the few Drug Task Forces in the State of Ohio providing a full-time investigative focus to drug diversion crimes.

As specific drug threats change, our commitment to target drug trafficking activities is unwavering. The investigation of drug trafficking offenses remains challenging as drug traffickers continue to evolve and learn many of the covert tactics commonly utilized by law enforcement. The ongoing specialized

enforcement efforts of the Warren County Drug Task Force are critical as drug traffickers' prey upon our addicted population and directly impact the quality of life in our communities.

During 2019, our investigative activity included **479** new cases and drug tips from our detective unit, and **314** cases from our uniform criminal patrol staff. These combined cases resulted in **308** felony arrests, and **149** misdemeanor arrests. Overall enforcement efforts led to **66** search warrants, **56** firearms seized, **2,008** traffic stops and **288** K9 deployments/sniffs.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAKE-BACK

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to collaborate with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to encourage all citizens to properly dispose of unwanted prescription medications. The correlation between prescription drug abuse and heroin abuse remain obvious as many people who abuse heroin report the misuse of prescription pain medications before starting to use heroin. We will continue to promote this valuable program as we encourage our community to help stop addiction before it starts.

The Warren County Drug Task Force and many local law enforcement agencies participated in two national drug take-back events during 2019. Both events were a tremendous success and resulted in 2,475 pounds of prescription drugs being turned in for proper destruction.

Many jurisdictions throughout Warren County offer 24/7 access to drug take-back boxes allowing citizens to dispose of prescription medication throughout the year at their convenience. To find the closest drug drop box please visit www.rxdrugdropbox.org

DRUG DIVERSION INVESTIGATIONS

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to provide specialized investigations involving the illegal diversion of prescription medication and other prescription drug related crimes. This highly specialized area of investigation is a rare focus of most drug task forces throughout the State of Ohio. Our drug diversion program has been in existence since 2001.

The topic of prescription drug abuse gained attention over the last several years as the correlation between prescription opiate abuse and heroin abuse became obvious. While drug diversion crimes are nothing new, they remain an area of specialized drug enforcement not commonly recognized.

The trend of diversion crimes continues to shift from the once common "doctor shopping" case to cases involving diversion within healthcare facilities. These investigations typically involve medical professionals and other staff diverting and substituting drugs for their own personal use.

Our diversion detective also provides training to healthcare facilities throughout our jurisdiction. This training involves a joint presentation with the Ohio Board of Nursing to educate staff members on how to identify signs of diversion and how to reduce diversion inside a healthcare facility.

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, must remain a priority. 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 events and activities as opportunities to meet with our community as we spread our message of being drug free and making good decisions. In 2019, the Drug Task Force attended many activities such as National Night Out in **Clearcreek Township** and the **City of Lebanon**. We also participated in several “Touch a Truck” events in the **City of Monroe, Deerfield Township and Hamilton Township**.

The Warren County Drug Task Force continues to collaborate with the Warren County Educational Services Center and all DARE programs throughout the county. Our ongoing collaboration with the Educational Services Center resulted in 116 education and prevention events reaching approximately 7,438 attendees to include students, teachers, parents and other members of our community.

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

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 2020.

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 or call our office at 513-695-0070.