



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**MAINE DRUG ENFORCEMENT AGENCY**

STATE OF MAINE

# Briefing

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

AUGUSTA, ME

JANUARY 18, 2022



# Overview

- **25 M.S.A., chapter 353 – ME Drug Enforcement Act**
  - Statewide enforcement program and strategy to meet the threat to health and safety posed by drug trafficking
- **Maine Opioid Response: 2021 Strategic Action Plan**
  - *Strategy #13: Strengthen law enforcement efforts to intercept and reduce illicit opioid supply*
    - Continue to aggressively prosecute drug traffickers;
    - Continue to assist law enforcement in coordinating, cooperating, and collaboratively aligning data, programs, technology, and resources



# MDEA Mission

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- Reduce the distribution, availability and use of illicit drugs through a collaborative statewide drug enforcement effort.
  - Undermine the ability of drug suppliers to meet, expand, and profit from drug demand.
    - Supports the State's prevention efforts by making initiation to illicit drug use more difficult; and
    - Contributes to treatment efforts by eroding the ability of those to sustain their use of illicit substances.
- Multi-jurisdictional task force approach



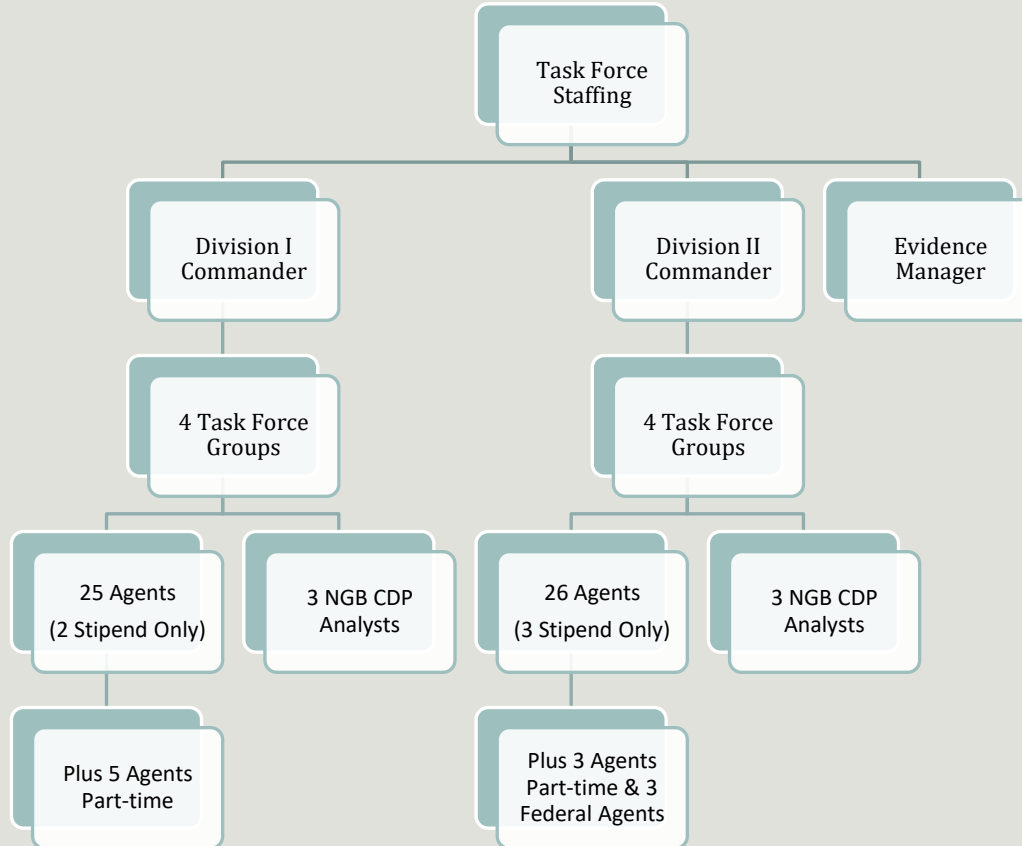
# MDEA's Strategy

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- Address the upper and mid-level drug dealers that operate below the interest of the Federal law enforcement authorities that focus on international, interstate and substantial violators, and the street level efforts that focus on the small dealers and those caught in possession
- The investigation of trafficking groups involved in the distribution of heroin, fentanyl and other opioid drugs, cocaine, and methamphetamine are priorities.



# Organizational Structure



# Challenges

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## Task Force Staffing

- Training
- Vacancies

## Technology

- Acquiring
- Training

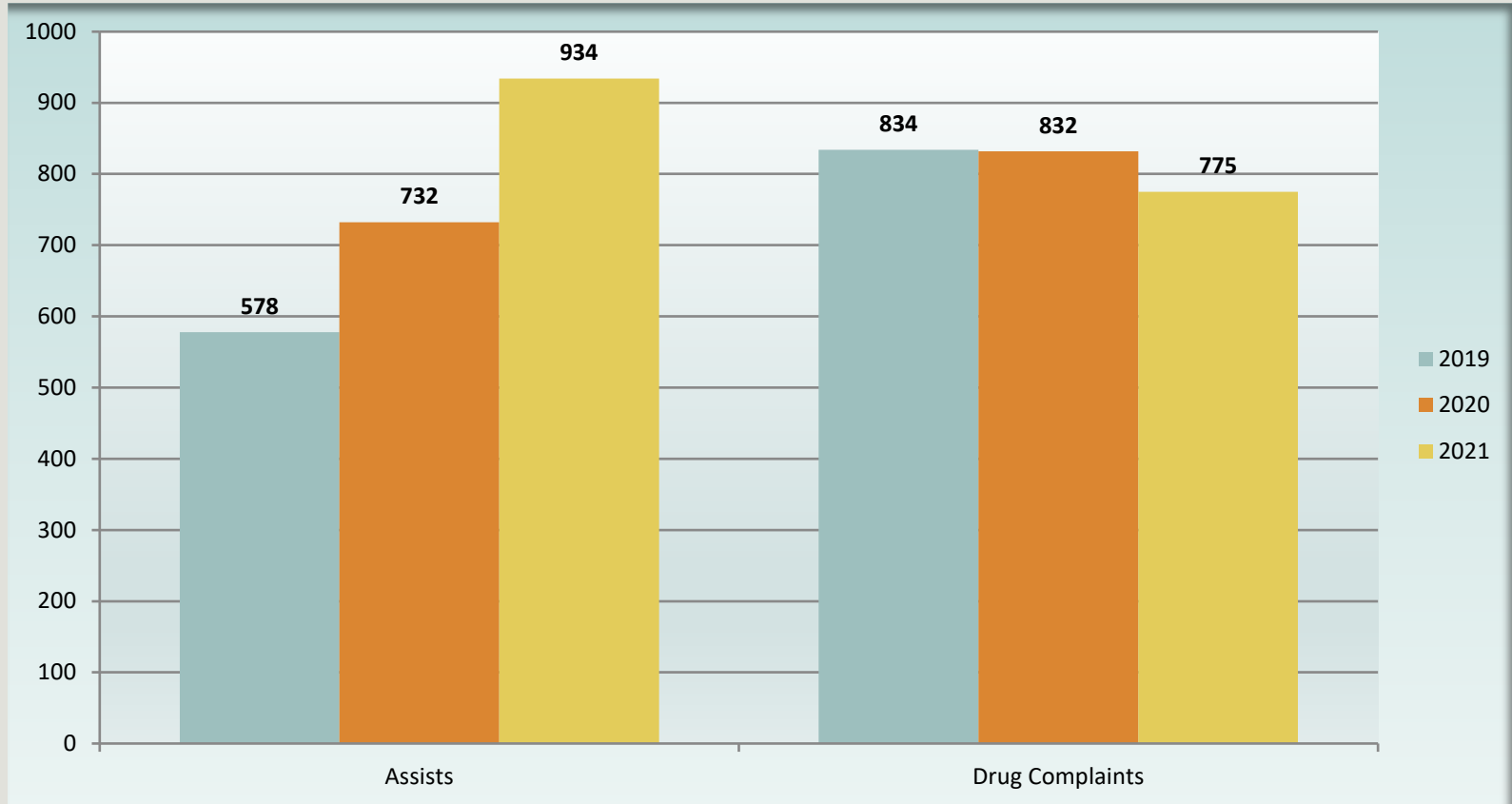
## Trafficking Trends

- Drug Trafficking Organizations
- Fentanyl / Dangerous Drugs

## COVID-19

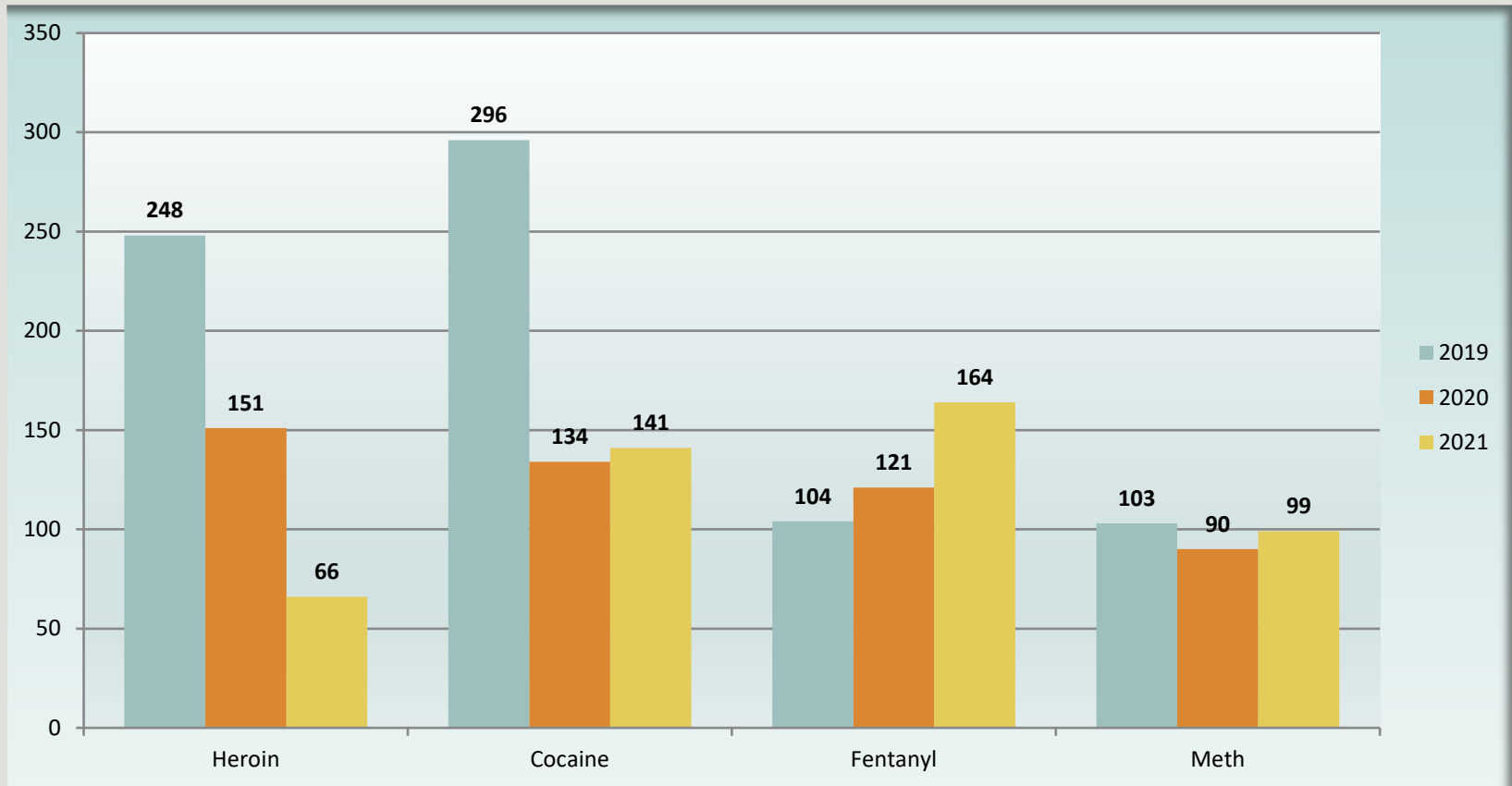


# MDEA Activity - Investigative Assists / Drug Complaint Incidents 2019-2021





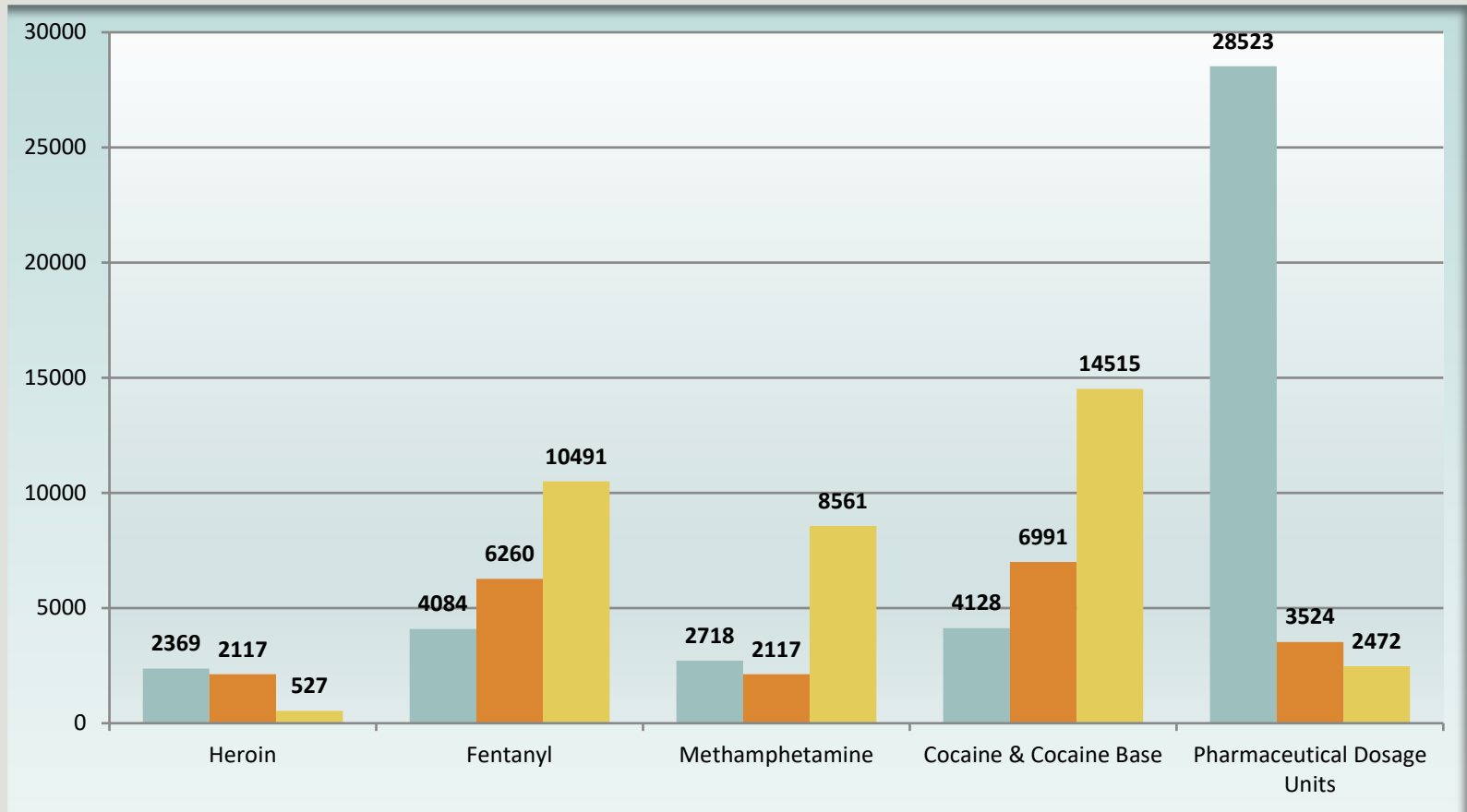
# Drug Offense Investigations by MDEA, 2019 - 2021





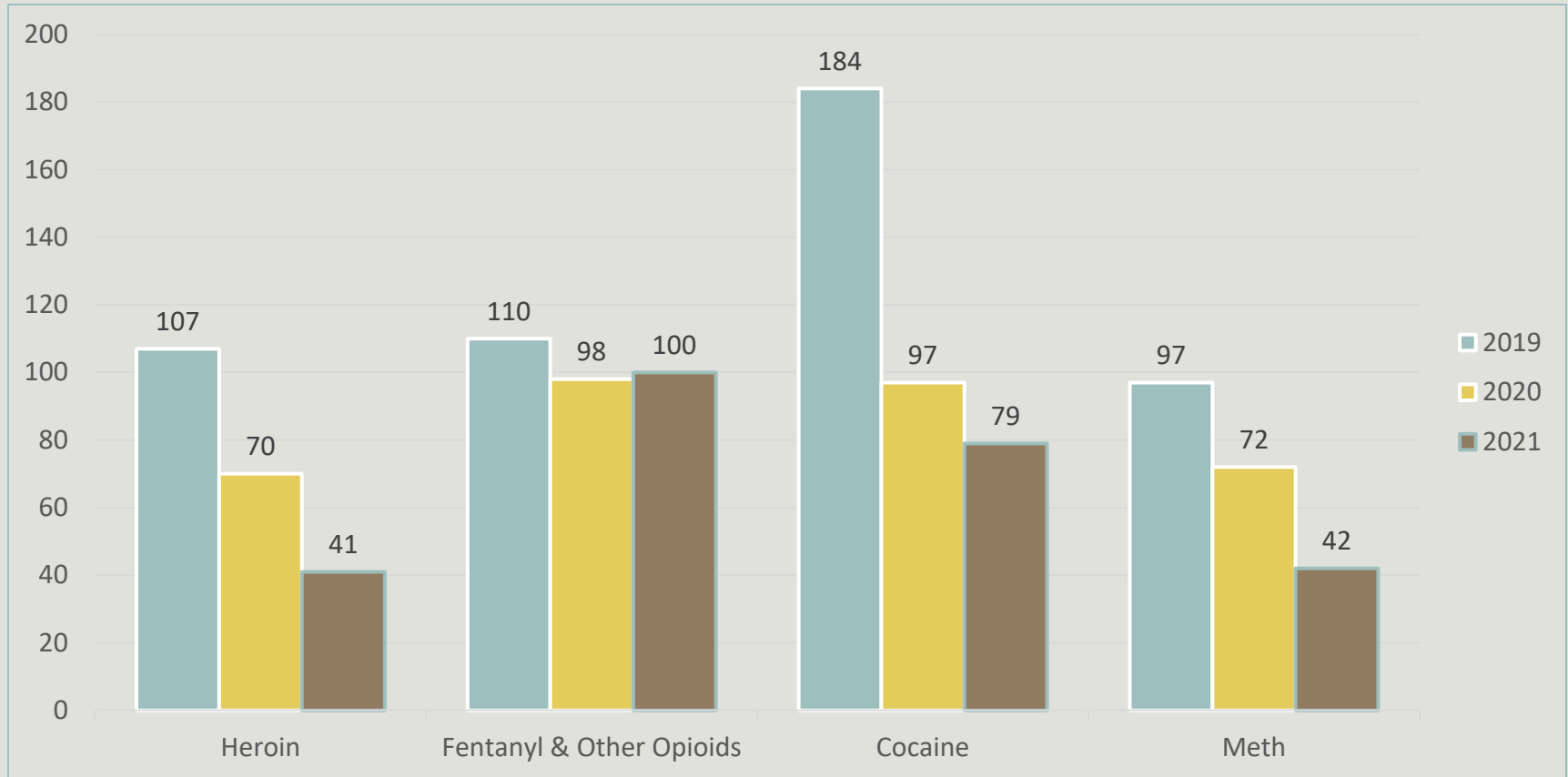


# Grams or Pharmaceutical Dosage Units of Drugs Seized by MDEA, 2019 - 2021





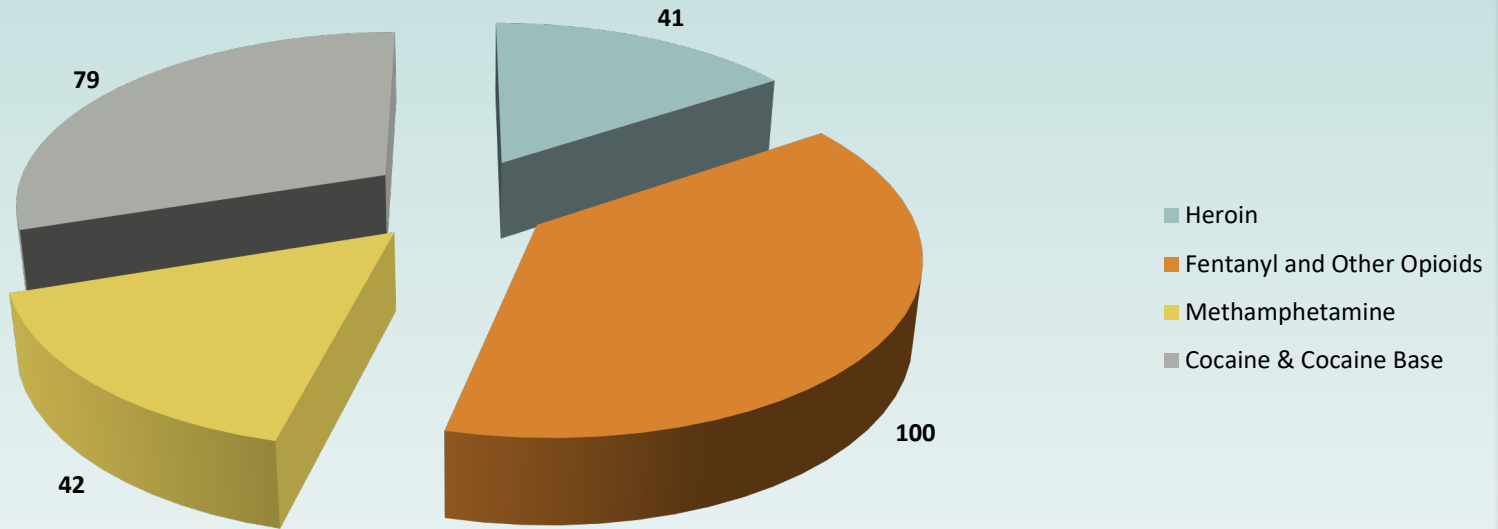
# MDEA Arrests by Substance, 2019 - 2021





In 2021, the MDEA documented 2,475 incidents including 472 MDEA drug offense investigations and 275 arrests. 264 of the arrests were for drug offenses as follows:

MDEA Drug Arrests by Substance, 2021



Heroin, fentanyl and all other opiate drugs represent 54% of all drug offenses, cocaine and cocaine base at 30%, and methamphetamine at 16%.



# Response

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**PRESQUE ISLE** - In May of 2021, a significant source of methamphetamine in Aroostook County was disrupted. MDEA agents assigned to the Aroostook Task Force gathered evidence of the group's trafficking efforts through interviews, surveillance and undercover methamphetamine purchases. A search warrant was executed at a residence where in excess of four (4) pounds of crystal methamphetamine was seized.

**SKOWHEGAN** - Agents in the Augusta-based task force office identified a group believed to be responsible for the distribution of significant quantities of fentanyl in Skowhegan and throughout Somerset County. The investigation, identified an individual who was making trips out of state and returning with fentanyl in re-sale quantities. In March of 2021, this information led to a vehicle stop on I-95 in the Augusta area resulting in the search of the vehicle and suspect's home resulting in the seizure of nearly (2) pounds of fentanyl and (2) firearms.



# Response

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ELLSWORTH - In early 2021, MDEA agents in Ellsworth opened an investigation into the sale of methamphetamine, fentanyl and crack cocaine by individuals in the Ellsworth area. The investigation, which included the undercover purchase of all these drugs, resulted in the subsequent arrest of three men and a woman from Hancock County. Utilizing information learned from that operation, agents were able to infiltrate a Detroit, Michigan-based trafficking group operating out of the Bangor area.

HERMON - agents were able to infiltrate a Detroit, Michigan-based trafficking group operating in the Bangor area. After completing a couple of undercover purchases of ounce quantities of methamphetamine from the group, agents executed a search warrant at a Hermon residence where nearly 4 pounds of suspected fentanyl, 0.75-pound of methamphetamine, 3 ounces of crack cocaine, an AK-47 and a semi-automatic handgun were recovered.



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# Questions

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ROY E. MCKINNEY, DIRECTOR

166 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0166

(207) 626-3850

[ROY.E.MCKINNEY@MAINE.GOV](mailto:ROY.E.MCKINNEY@MAINE.GOV)