

WARREN COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

Prepared by the Drug Task Force Commander

The seal of the State of Ohio is centered on the page. It features a sun rising over a landscape with a field and a river. The words "STATE OF" are arched above the sun, and "OHIO" is arched below it. The seal is set against a large, light-colored five-pointed star that is part of the background design.

Year in Review

2018

January 2019

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. By combining resources and working together toward a common goal it 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 and 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.



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 canines 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. The Policy Board consists of the Warren County Sheriff, Warren and Clinton County Prosecutors, 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 provides ongoing input and oversight regarding all Drug Task Force operations. The board 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.

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 **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.



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. Additional funding sources for the Drug Task Force include the Ohio HIDTA program, the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG), the Drug Law Enforcement Grant (DLE) as well as annual contributions from the Warren County Commissioners. The long-term sustainability of our task force remains challenging, however the commitment from our local communities and the Warren County Commissioners remains strong.

Annual contributions from local communities 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, as a result of continued funding difficulty, 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.

During 2018, we received financial contributions from the entities listed below. Those making an increased contribution are recognized in **bold**.

Board of County Commissioners
Butler
Butler
Butler
Butler
Butler
Deerfield Township
Hamilton Township
Harlan Township
Harveysburg
Lebanon
Loveland
Maineville
Mason
Massie Township
Morrow
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 fulltime 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 2019 and beyond.

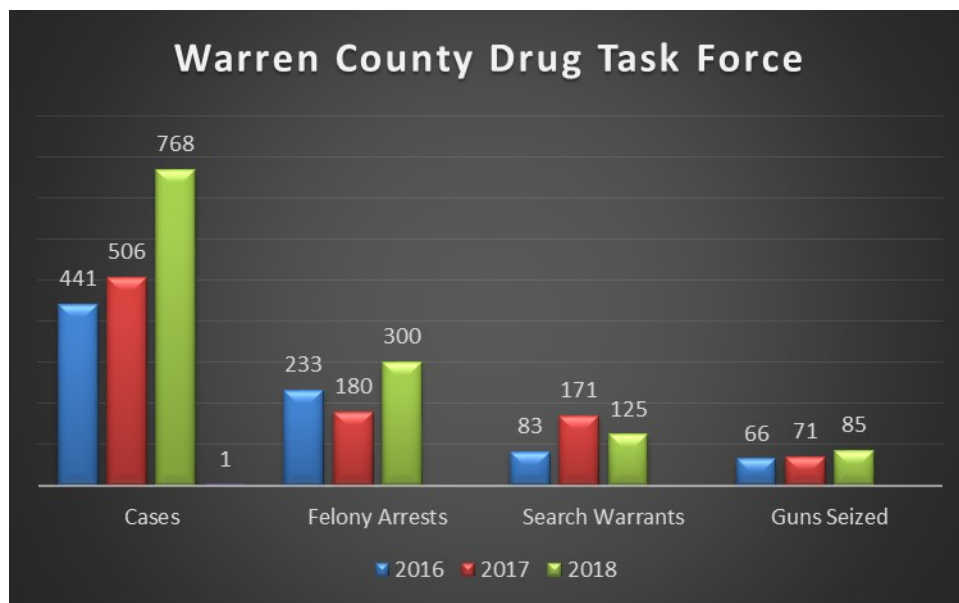
Drug trends continued to shift during 2018 from heroin and fentanyl to crystal methamphetamine. This year, our Drug Task Force was inundated with trafficking investigations involving the distribution of methamphetamine. Our investigations continue to identify Mexico as a primary source of supply for the methamphetamine seized in our area. Drugs arriving from the southwest border typically 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 a 142% increase in methamphetamine seized by our Task Force from 2017 to 2018. This same data indicates an 88% decrease in the seizure of heroin and fentanyl by our unit.

Aggressive enforcement as well as increased treatment and prevention efforts continue to positively impact the heroin and fentanyl crisis in our area of operation. While the opiate problem remains a significant concern, we are thankful to see these numbers decrease. These efforts have also contributed to a decrease in drug related overdose deaths in Warren County in 2018.

The investigation of prescription drug diversion crimes remains a priority for the Drug Task Force. During 2018, Warren County ranked 3rd in the State of Ohio for highest number of prescription drug seizures at over 11,000 unit doses. Many of those were prescription opiates which remain the common drug 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.

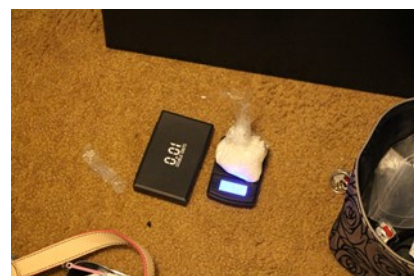
During 2018, combined investigations & interdiction operations resulted in **768** criminal cases. Drug Task Force detectives conducted **482** of those cases utilizing various specialized techniques and common undercover tactics for drug enforcement. Our uniform interdiction staff produced **286** criminal cases and conducted **2,291** vehicle traffic stops, deploying their drug detection K9's **209** times. These combined investigations resulted in **300** felony arrests and **159** misdemeanor arrests. Because of the long term nature of our investigations, many will remain active through 2019. During 2018, combined enforcement efforts resulted in **125** search warrants, and the seizure of **85** firearms.

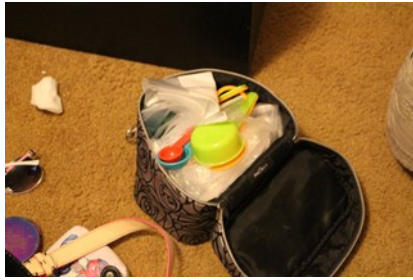


Many Drug Task Force investigations are a direct result of drug tips received from our community. Some significant Drug Task Force investigations occurring this year are mentioned below:

Methamphetamine Drug Trafficking Organization

Beginning in early 2018, Drug Task Force detectives identified a local drug trafficking organization operating in the **Wayne Township** area of Warren County. This organization was distributing significant amounts of crystal methamphetamine, and supplying customers throughout **Waynesville, Franklin, Lebanon, Middletown** and surrounding areas. Approximately 25 individuals were identified as members of this criminal organization. Drug Task Force detectives and uniformed personnel used coordinated interdiction stops, undercover drug purchases, specialized surveillance techniques and search warrants to disrupt this criminal enterprise throughout the year. Seized from various members was over 2 kilograms of methamphetamine.





In addition to trafficking methamphetamine, while out of jail after posting bond, many of these same suspects conspired to convey, or transport drugs to other associates still incarcerated in the Warren County Jail. While many of these individuals have been arrested, this investigation remains ongoing and additional indictments are expected in early 2019.

Heroin, Fentanyl, Crystal Methamphetamine Investigation



The Warren County Drug Task Force and Wilmington Police Department conducted a federal drug trafficking investigation on an upper level heroin trafficker operating in the **City of Wilmington**. Drug Task Force detectives, with the assistance of the Wilmington Police Department SWAT team, ultimately conducted a search warrant in the City of Wilmington locating 4 ounces of heroin/

fentanyl, 1 ounce of crystal methamphetamine and 122 unit doses of fentanyl. This investigation was the end result of hundreds of hours of investigation. This trafficker was suspected of being the source of supply to a number of overdose incidents occurring in the City of Wilmington. This drug trafficker was also a source of supply for surrounding areas with significant connections to the **Harveysburg** area in Warren County. This drug trafficker was sentenced to 13 years in Federal Prison.



Methamphetamine Trafficking into Ohio Prisons

In early 2018, a methamphetamine trafficking investigation led detectives to a prison kitchen worker involved in drug trafficking inside an Ohio prison located in London, Ohio. This investigation required the collaboration of the Warren County Drug Task Force, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), as well as investigators from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections and other outside jurisdictions.

It was determined that this individual was part of a prison drug trafficking organization involving the distribution of various drugs and contraband using a network of inmates. After months of investigation, to include the involvement of the United States Attorney's Office, undercover detectives began communicating with this person and conversations began to coordinate the conveyance of drugs into a state correctional facility.

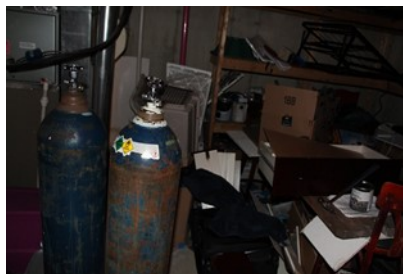




Ultimately, this individual met with an undercover detective in the **Franklin Township** area to pick up two ounces of methamphetamine, 340 Suboxone strips and an amount of cocaine for transport into the prison. This investigation led to the federal indictment of this individual as well as five inmates. Drugs in Ohio prisons sell for more than four times the typical street value and create a dangerous environment for inmates and staff.

Large Scale Intoxicant Investigation

During early Spring, we received information through various sources, including neighborhood complaints, reporting suspicious activity consistent with drug trafficking in the Kings Mills area of Union Township. Detectives conducted an investigation involving extensive surveillance operations and the use of other specialized investigative techniques. After several



months of investigation, detectives obtained a search warrant for the residence resulting in the seizure of various amounts of drugs to include Ecstasy and hash edibles. Also seized from the residence were 44 gas cylinders, many containing Nitrous Oxide. During the investigation, it was determined the individuals residing at the residence were involved in transferring Nitrous Oxide from larger tanks to smaller tanks for the purpose of trafficking harmful intoxicants. This case is one of many examples that emphasizes the importance of reporting any suspicious activity in your neighborhood.

Upper level Heroin, Fentanyl and Cocaine Traffickers

During late summer, a source of supply for heroin, fentanyl and cocaine was identified in the West Chester area of Butler County. These individuals were identified as sources of supply for **Warren County** with a direct connection to the **City of Lebanon** and other surrounding areas in multiple counties. This investigation would require the collaboration of multiple law enforcement agencies to include our full-time partners with the Ohio Bureau of Investigation (BCI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). This joint investigation with the West Chester Police Department remained active for several months involving undercover drug buys, electronic and physical surveillance, and the use of other specialized investigative techniques.





A search warrant was executed at a West Chester residence resulting in the seizure of over 4 ounces of a heroin/fentanyl and cocaine mixture as well as cocaine and 2 firearms. The primary trafficker at this address is a career drug trafficker with a lengthy criminal history who was recently released from prison after serving a 10 year sentence. This investigation remains ongoing

with indictments expected in early 2019.

International Heroin & Fentanyl Trafficking:



A Cincinnati area drug trafficker was identified as a source of supply for Warren County involving several drugs to include heroin, fentanyl, and cocaine. This investigation required the collaboration of multiple law enforcement agencies to include the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Police Department and the Drug Abuse Reduction Task Force (DART) in Hamilton County.

Multiple residences were identified during this investigation and four search warrants were executed in the greater Cincinnati area. Two SWAT Teams assisted with securing each residence as suspects attempted to destroy evidence during entry. Searches resulted in the bulk seizure of a heroin, fentanyl and cocaine mixture, as well as crack cocaine and 6 firearms (3 stolen).



Additional evidence was recovered indicating Mexican Drug Cartel connections to this investigation.



This is another example of how drug trafficking investigations beginning in Warren County most often lead to larger sources of supply outside of our jurisdiction. The fluid nature of drug trafficking requires constant collaboration between specialized law enforcement units to effectively disrupt these criminal organizations.

Prescription Drug Trafficker



Detectives conducted multiple search warrants in **Monroe, Franklin** and Miamisburg over the course of several months involving an individual trafficking in prescription drugs. This investigation involved the collaboration of resources from several agencies to include the Franklin, Monroe and Miamisburg Police Departments.

During this investigation, detectives would identify local flea market booths, appearing as legitimate businesses but actually used to disguise drug trafficking activities.



Storage units used to conceal prescription drugs for later illegal sales were also located during this investigation.

Search warrants were executed resulting in the seizure of over 5300 tablets of various prescription drugs and 4 firearms. This individual has been indicted and is awaiting trial.

California Marijuana Trafficker

Drug Task Force detectives began a local marijuana trafficking investigation involving multiple pounds of high grade marijuana being sold throughout the **Warren County** area. It was determined that this high grade marijuana was coming into Warren County from California, through other sources of supply in the Cincinnati area.



Drug Task Force detectives worked closely with the Regional Enforcement Narcotics Unit (RENU) in Hamilton County to pursue sources associated with our Warren County investigation. As a result, detectives conducted investigative and enforcement operations in Cincinnati resulting in the seizure of bulk amounts of marijuana, cash and firearms.

As this investigation continued, a west coast source of supply was ultimately identified and taken into custody upon arrival in **Deerfield Township** during the delivery of bulk amounts of marijuana and hash products. The expected cash payment for this shipment was in excess of \$80,000.00. Information obtained during this investigation indicated that this source of supply was consistently visiting the Cincinnati and Warren County areas and coordinating large shipments of drugs. This investigation remains ongoing.



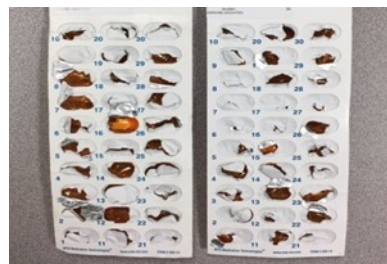
Theft of Drugs by Health Care Professional

An investigation began during the summer of 2018 involving the theft of prescription drugs from patients at a **Carlisle** area Health Care Facility. It was reported that



multiple patients were missing prescription pain pills (Hydrocodone/Oxycodone). This investigation was conducted by our Drug Task Force detective specializing in drug diversion crimes and ultimately resulted in the indictment of a registered nurse for twenty-two counts of Theft and Illegal Processing.

The suspect ultimately admitted to stealing pain medication to satisfy an addiction to opiates. It was also discovered that this nurse had been in drug treatment three times in the past for an addiction to heroin and crack cocaine and had also overdosed on heroin earlier this summer.



Health care professionals fighting addiction oftentimes have easier access to powerful prescription opiates within the facilities where they are employed. These types of investigations will remain a priority for the Drug Task Force as they directly impact our patient population and their quality of life.



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 2018. Both events were a

tremendous success and resulted in 7,454 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” cases 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 2018, 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.wcdf.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 2019.

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 513-336-0070.