

## **Combating Methamphetamine Production and Use**

### **Issue Description:**

The methamphetamine crisis, which began more than 20 years ago in western and southwestern regions of the country, is now affecting all areas of the United States and continues to move further eastward. Methamphetamine can easily be made in clandestine laboratories from relatively inexpensive—and legal—over-the-counter ingredients and can be purchased at a relatively low cost. There are multiple problems associated with methamphetamine production, distribution, and clean-up. In addition, methamphetamine is a highly addictive and destructive drug that requires intensive treatment responses. The U.S. Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), in coordination with the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and other domestic and international law enforcement agencies, continue to work together to fight the manufacturing, trafficking, and use of this dangerous drug and to support local and state law enforcement partners in this fight.

In 2005, Congress passed the CombatMeth Act and many states passed laws which placed limits on the amount of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine sales (the precursor chemicals used to make methamphetamine). While there was an initial dramatic decrease in domestic meth production as a result of the increased regulation of the sale and use of precursor and essential chemicals used in meth production, recent numbers have shown an increase in the number of domestic labs and use. People are getting creative using a technique often referred to as “smurfing” to get around the purchase limits of the precursor chemicals. They are using different individuals to purchase from multiple stores in multiple counties in order to get the supplies they need for production.

### **Recommended Tactics/Strategies for Addressing the Issue:**

- Methamphetamine is challenging local and state justice agencies nationwide. To win the fight against methamphetamine, individuals and communities need a myriad of resources, and justice practitioners and policymakers need guidance and information on promising practices and strategies used in other jurisdictions when dealing with this multifaceted problem. BJA is committed to achieving these goals by developing policy guidance materials and officer safety and investigative tools; increasing the enforcement capabilities of local and state law enforcement through training and technical assistance; identifying and supporting the replication of promising programs for prevention and enforcement; and supporting clean-up and response efforts.
- Law enforcement efforts combined with federal and state legislation restricting the sale of pseudoephedrine and ephedrine products has resulted in decreased domestic methamphetamine production across the U.S. While domestic production is down, the rate of decline has slowed. Thus, state and local jurisdictions have implemented or shown interest in implementing systems that track the sales of precursor chemicals for methamphetamine production. Retailers selling these precursor chemicals are required by the Combat Meth Act to maintain a log of all sales. In response, state and local jurisdictions are looking into implementing electronic tracking systems in order

to support law enforcement efforts in the fight against methamphetamine production and use. In FY 2008, BJA participated in a meeting of the NAMSDL Meth Precursor Tracking Advisory Committee. This purpose of this committee, comprised of federal, state, and other key officials, is to share information and develop recommendations for these tracking systems, to include data standards and cross-border sharing. BJA continued to support the Tennessee Meth Task Force that has created a tracking system for precursor chemicals called the Tennessee Methamphetamine Intelligence System (TMIS). TMIS has been viewed as a model for precursor tracking systems throughout the country and many states are modeling their systems after TMIS.

- BJA supports the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS) to provide secure communication capabilities and other such support and specialized surveillance equipment assistance funds for undercover operations. RISS routinely develops area-specific law enforcement intelligence reports on the involvement of street gangs in the distribution and sale of methamphetamine.
- BJA support training Methamphetamine Task Force Commanders. In recent years, more than 5,100 public safety officers were trained via its Methamphetamine Investigation Management Workshops. BJA encourages task forces to address issues of safety training for meth labs, coordinating and collaborating with neighboring communities and federal law enforcement, and involvement in interdiction and prevention efforts.
- BJA also is developing training specifically for tribal law enforcement agencies and officers. Both BJA and the COPS Office are investing funds to assist tribal communities deal with the realities of meth on reservations. Through the Tribal Community Methamphetamine Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Program, BJA is delivering services to tribal law enforcement agencies concerned with enhancing their enforcement and prevention response to methamphetamine. The training program offers instruction on interdiction and investigative strategies, forensic techniques, clandestine labs, enforcement and safety and demand reduction strategies. Assistance is also provided to help tribal communities in creating multi-agency, multi-disciplinary, and multi-jurisdictional approaches to eradicate methamphetamine in tribal communities.
- BJA has ensured that drug court initiatives respond to methamphetamine abuse. Drug courts provide the added accountability and service coordination needed to address methamphetamine addiction. This added accountability from the court, probation, and law enforcement is central to effectively managing and treating a methamphetamine involved offender. In May 2005, BJA released a bulletin, *Drug Courts: An Effective Strategy for Communities Facing Methamphetamine*, which provides an overview of the debilitating effects of methamphetamine use, examples of successful drug court programs, and policy recommendations for implementing drug courts that specifically target methamphetamine users.
- BJA continues to support prevention efforts through its partnership with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA) to enhance their community methamphetamine prevention program, Meth360, which is designed to educate community leaders, parents, healthcare professionals, and other concerned citizens about methamphetamine. In FY 2008, PDFA initiated the expansion of Meth360 into 10 states. Meth prevention presentations are co-delivered by teams of local law

enforcement, treatment and prevention professionals in order to create a lasting human infrastructure to fight drug threats beyond methamphetamine. By the end of FY 2008, lead communities have been briefed, trained, and were operating in AL, AK, AZ, CA, HI, KY, MD, and NM. PDFFA will implement the program in West Virginia and Wisconsin in FY 2009. In addition, PDFFA is developing two additional versions of Meth360 that are specifically targeted to youth and parents.

- Law enforcement efforts to fight methamphetamine have resulted in an increased focus on eliminating clandestine labs for methamphetamine production. Often, children are found to be living in homes where methamphetamine production is taking place. As a result, partnerships between law enforcement, social services, medical providers and prosecutors have emerged to offer supports for these children. The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (NADEC) has taken the lead in supporting communities across the nation to address the needs of drug endangered children. In FY 2008, BJA continued to partner with NADEC to implement strategies to support effective and sustainable state and community efforts to protect children and better leverage existing resources to assist these child victims.

**Available Resources:**

[MethResources.gov](http://MethResources.gov)

[BJA's Tribal Community Methamphetamine Enforcement Training and Technical Assistance Program](#)

[National Methamphetamine Threat Assessment 2008](#)

[DEA's National Clandestine Laboratory Register](#)

[The Partnership for a Drug-Free America Meth360 Program](#)

[Tennessee Meth Task Force](#)

[National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws Regional Methamphetamine Legislative Conferences](#)

[ONDCP's Methamphetamine Facts and Figures](#)

[The Relationship between State Methamphetamine Precursor Laws and Trends in Small Toxic Lab \(STL\) Seizures](#)

[National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children](#)

[Drug Courts: An Effective Strategy for Communities Facing Methamphetamine](#)

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