

# OPERATION ENGAGE 2023 REACH AND IMPACT REPORT



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# Executive Summary



## Background

The opioid epidemic in the United States has remained a multifaceted public health crisis with devastating consequences. As prescription opioids became harder to obtain, many individuals turned to cheaper and more readily available alternatives such as fentanyl, worsening the crisis. The epidemic has affected all communities, strained healthcare systems, overwhelmed law enforcement agencies, and left a trail of shattered families in its wake. The complex nature of addiction and the persistence of underlying societal issues continue to pose significant challenges.

In February of 2021, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration initiated a targeted effort aimed at curbing drug use and misuse. Called Operation Engage, this initiative empowers

DEA field divisions to prioritize combating the most pressing drug-related threats within their respective territories by implementing a comprehensive approach that bridges public health and public safety efforts. It focuses on the primary drug threat identified by each DEA field division while steadfastly increasing drug education and awareness. Each field division identifies its most challenging geographic area within its region based on drug threat data and focuses evidence-informed drug misuse prevention and community outreach efforts to make a measurable difference. The deliverables required are built on evidence-based prevention principles aimed at preventing drug use among children and adolescents. Operation Engage requires the field divisions to collaborate across multiple sectors for a universal approach. Operation Engage entered its third year in 2023, representing a continued commitment to addressing the nation's top drug challenges.





**1 New England Field Division:**  
Manchester, New Hampshire

**6 Miami Field Division:**  
Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County, Florida

**2 Philadelphia Field Division:**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**7 Detroit Field Division:**  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

**3 Washington, DC Field Division:**  
Washington, DC

**8 El Paso Field Division:**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**4 Los Angeles Field Division:**  
Los Angeles, California

**9 Phoenix Field Division:**  
Glendale, Arizona

**5 New Orleans Field Division:**  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**10 Seattle Field Division:**  
Spokane, Washington

**11 St. Louis Field Division:**  
Kansas City, Missouri

## Disclaimer

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# OPERATION ENGAGE



## 2023 Operation Engage Summary

In the third year of Operation Engage, the focus remained on engaging at the community level. DEA field divisions organized various initiatives to inform the public about local top drug threats. They collaborated with local stakeholders and national partners to spread vital information through prevention and education initiatives like conferences, health fairs, Red Ribbon events, peer to peer training, teen and citizen academies, and town hall events. Additionally, DEA continued to support national campaigns such as National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, One Pill Can Kill, and Family Summits on Fentanyl to combat rising drug-related deaths.

Empowering young people to drive change is crucial in tackling the national drug crisis. Outreach efforts targeted youth of all ages, educating them about drug use, consequences of addiction, and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Field divisions actively engaged youth through initiatives focusing on leadership development, drug awareness, and accessing local support services, empowering them to make positive effects in their communities. These endeavors reached thousands of young individuals across Operation Engage sites, resulting in a 31% increase in reach from 2022 to 2023.

DEA relied on a multimedia approach to deploy Operation

Engage in 2023 and share information with the public on local drug threats, local resources, and upcoming events. Although paid media was not available as part of the Operation Engage strategy this year, several field divisions used their media relationships to continue providing information to the public about Operation Engage and drug misuse prevention education resources. Some field divisions created press releases, launched advertising campaigns, and worked with stakeholders to provide announcements about DEA activities during sporting events. Collectively, the field divisions reached a total of 1,191,923 community members through media engagement efforts in each of the Operation Engage locations despite operating under a limited marketing budget.

In 2023, the field divisions increased school engagement and continued using the Operation Prevention curriculum to deliver drug use prevention education to students across the nation. They also capitalized on national campaigns like Red Ribbon Week and One Pill Can Kill, and leveraged local coalitions and community partners to enhance engagement within schools. Although the school engagement efforts achieved overall success in terms of reach, they faced numerous challenges over the year. Some field division

locations changed at the start of 2023, which required creating new partnerships with school district administrators. Negative perception of DEA and law enforcement in general also remained a problem in some areas. Collectively, the field divisions managed to apply the lessons learned from previous engagements and effectively used their relationships with community partners to reach an average of 3,887 students per field division.

In 2023, businesses began to recover from the negative effects from the COVID-19 pandemic that had affected operations, productivity, and profitability in the workplace. DEA greatly expanded their reach through workplace engagement by reaching over 5,760 first responders, educators, and other professionals. Operation Engage resources were valuable tools for both government and private sector employers to help address the devastating effects of drug misuse in their workplace.

Despite some DEA field division locations changing their area of operations in 2023, DEA's community outreach specialists were able to meet with over 3,000 stakeholders and create new partnerships. These new partnerships and local connections proved crucial, empowering each field division to customize Operation Engage

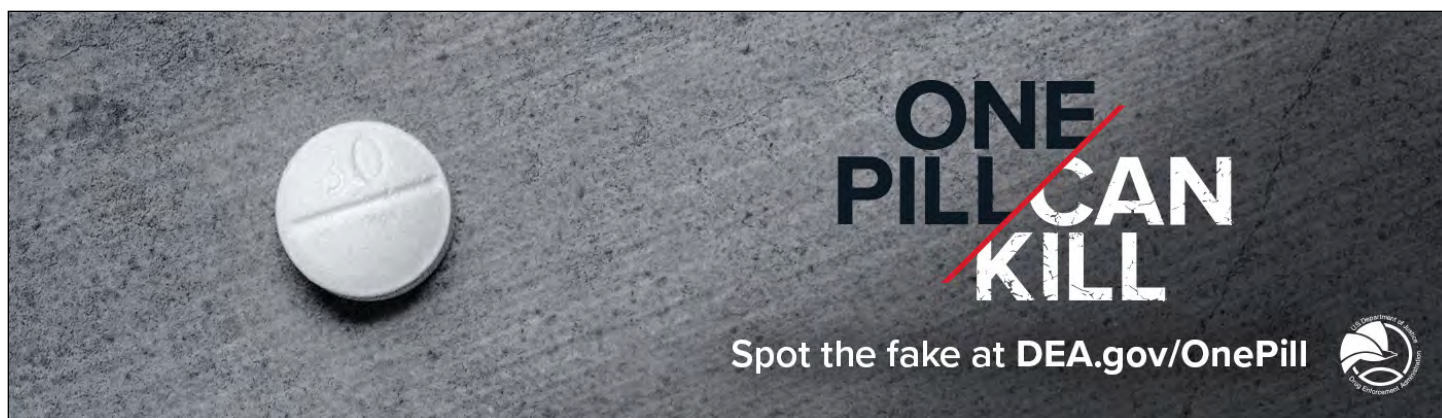
resources and tackle the challenges posed by the opioid crisis more effectively in their responsible areas.

Adult and community engagement continued to be a central objective. DEA field divisions actively participated in and organized numerous community outreach initiatives to raise awareness about local drug threats, reaching nearly 32,000 community members at 82 community events throughout 2023. The field divisions supported summits, town halls, conferences, community pop-up events, community walks, and National Night Out events, all to address the alarming rise in drug-related deaths and raise awareness of fentanyl across the nation.

Citizens Academies also continued to be a powerful tool for DEA in 2023. Ten DEA field divisions offered Citizens Academies as part of Operation Engage efforts to inform, educate, train stakeholders, and enhance community safety. No Citizens Academy data was reported by the Washington, DC Field Division. DEA field divisions encouraged 226

community members to actively support DEA's efforts by disseminating information within their communities about the risks associated with drug misuse, the significance of comprehensive prevention strategies, and available resources. Actively engaging community leaders in the fight against substance misuse ensured that initiatives remain sustainable year after year.

DEA field divisions continued to face barriers such as budget constraints and forging into new areas of operation. Several divisions noted challenges with travel due to budget limitations. Despite these challenges, Operation Engage continued to grow. In 2023, DEA continued to gain traction among the business community and school administrators. The Operation Engage initiative increased exponentially through buy-in from new local prevention stakeholders. Longtime stakeholders have made efforts to ensure the sustainability of their organization's efforts. Operation Engage continued to have a positive effect on the lives of individuals, their families, and their communities.



**One Pill Can Kill campaign banner.**

# Introduction

## Drug Climate in the United States

In 2023, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that overdose deaths decreased for the first time since 2017. However, substance use remains a serious threat and problem in the United States.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 48.5 million people aged 12 or older (17% of the population) had a substance use disorder of some kind. Of these, 828,000 people misused prescription or illicit fentanyl.<sup>1</sup> Synthetic opioids such as fentanyl remained the leading cause of overdose deaths in the United States in 2023, followed by methamphetamine and cocaine. Fentanyl was also the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.<sup>2</sup>

Many victims are unaware they are taking fentanyl. Fake pills continue to be mass produced and disguised as legitimate prescription medications and are easily accessible via the internet. In 2022, DEA announced that 6 out of 10 fake pills confiscated contained a lethal dose of fentanyl. In 2023, that ratio increased to 7 out of 10.<sup>3</sup>

**"Many of the drug poisoning deaths in the United States involve synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl, which are being distributed in new forms. Fentanyl hidden in and mixed with other illicit drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. Drug traffickers are also flooding our communities with fentanyl disguised in the form of fake prescription pills. These pills often are made to appear legitimate using pill presses and marketed by drug traffickers to deceive Americans into thinking that they are real, diverted prescription medications. These pills are not made by pharmaceutical companies but by drug trafficking organizations, and they are highly addictive and potentially deadly."**

*DEA Administrator Anne Milgram 2023*

While some states such as Washington, Alaska, and Oregon saw significant increases in drug-related overdose deaths, overdose deaths nationally decreased from 111,029 in 2022 to 107,543 in 2023. This 3% decline is the first annual decrease in overdose deaths since 2018.<sup>4</sup> Despite the nationwide decrease in overdose deaths, DEA and its partners continued their effort to raise awareness about the dangers of drug misuse in the nation's most affected areas through Operation Engage.



**A sharpened pencil with a small but lethal dose of fentanyl on its tip.**

Operation Engage is part of a comprehensive strategy to target the nation's top drug threats. The Operation Engage initiative identifies and affects local drug threat enforcement policy, supports local drug misuse prevention efforts, and bridges public safety and public health efforts. These operations have resulted in the removal of over 13 million potentially deadly doses of fentanyl while educating millions of Americans on fentanyl's deadly effects.<sup>5</sup>



### The flow of fentanyl into the United States.

DEA's Administrator Anne Milgram stated in 2023 that "DEA has acted with urgency to set a new vision, target the global criminal networks most responsible for the influx of fentanyl into the United States, and raise public awareness about how just one pill can kill. We have transformed

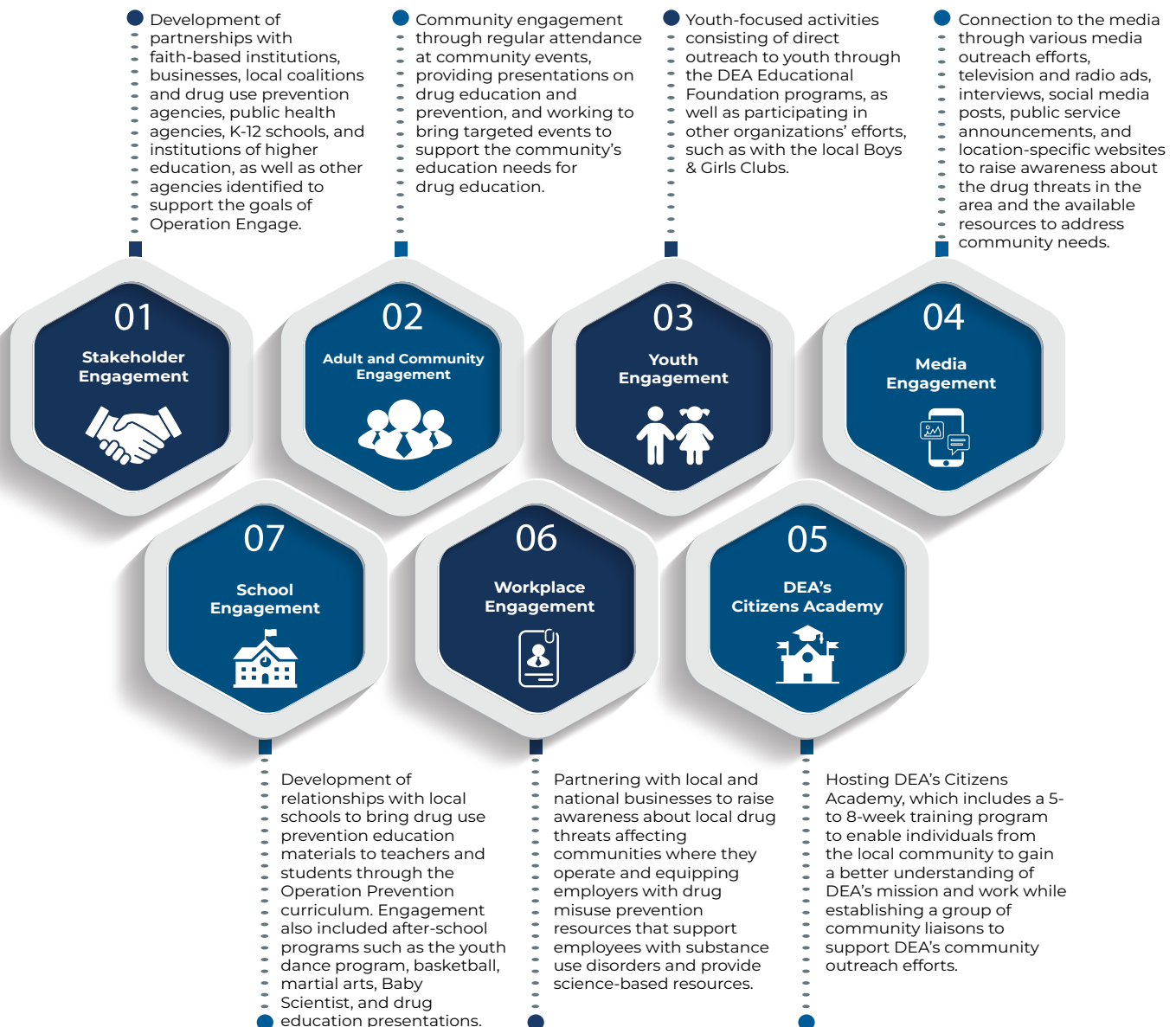
our vision by focusing on fentanyl—the drug killing the most Americans—and the criminal organizations responsible for flooding fentanyl into our communities—the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation (Jalisco) Cartel."

# Operation Engage Initiative

DEA's Operation Engage initiative is a comprehensive community-level approach to address the drug epidemic through implementing prevention strategies, facilitating conversations, and collaborating with local partners. Each field division identifies its most challenging geographic area within their region based on drug threat data, designates a city or region, and focuses science-based and evidence-informed substance use prevention and community outreach efforts to make a true and measurable difference.

In its third year, DEA expanded the reach of Operation Engage, especially in high-risk locations that DEA identified to continue to support with resources. Operation Engage is a strategy to increase engagement with the community at the grass roots level and provide drug misuse prevention education that is customized to meet the specific needs of each community. Leveraging the progress and insights gained from the first two years of Operation Engage and the DEA 360 Strategy that preceded it, DEA continued to broaden its strategy by focusing on community outreach and raising awareness about the dangers of fentanyl.

In 2023 Operation Engage continued to partner with local community leaders, and stakeholders to implement comprehensive strategies aimed at drug misuse prevention and education. This community-centered initiative targeted specific deliverables based on prevention and strategies for community change.



## Report Overview

This report summarizes an assessment of the reach and impact of outreach activities in and around the communities within each DEA field division for Year 3 (calendar year 2023) of Operation Engage. Results are based on a summary of metrics provided by the field divisions, various program facilitators, and phone interviews with community partners and stakeholders. The data is collected and evaluated based on the following core outcomes:

- Increase in number of public-private partnerships in each location to collaborate on efforts to reduce drug misuse-related problems.
- Increase in community members' awareness of the scope of drug misuse-related problems in that community.

- Increase in engagement by educators and parents in using science-based prevention materials, such as DEA's Operation Prevention, to prevent drug misuse in each location.
- Community stakeholders' development of a formal strategic action plan to decrease drug misuse-related overdoses in each Operation Engage community.

## Collaborating Partners

Operation Engage was launched through partnerships with several facilitators along with state and local stakeholders that included partnerships with community organizations and community members.

## Operation Engage National Partners



**DEA Educational Foundation:** The DEA Educational Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit educational organization established in 2001, whose goal is to educate the public on the many costs and consequences of illegal drugs in our society. The foundation funds multiple youth programs, such as its three national programs around dance, baseball, and martial arts, as well as art, basketball, soccer, and more. These programs offer a free after-school alternative to drugs through fun, healthy, and expressive outlets.



**Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America:** Since 1992, CADCA has been the premier membership organization representing those working to make their communities safe, healthy, and drug free. CADCA brings its expertise in building effective community coalitions and facilitating valuable dialogues to empower communities and support prevention efforts. CADCA's mission is to strengthen the capacity of community coalitions by providing technical aid and training, drug use-related public policy training for youth and adults, media strategies, marketing programs, conferences, and special events.



**A. Bright idea, L.L.C.:** DEA partnered with A. Bright Idea L.L.C. to develop an Operation Engage media toolkit to help DEA field divisions develop compelling and informative media messages. This toolkit assists in the creation of digital ads, print ads, billboards, and videos. Also, the toolkit allowed DEA to customize its media messaging to local drug threats while maintaining consistency in branding.



**The Milken Institute Center for Public Health:** The Milken Institute Center for Public Health partnered with DEA as part of the Operation Engage employer outreach work. These efforts were designed to raise awareness about local drug threats affecting communities in which employers operate and to provide organizations with drug misuse prevention, treatment, and recovery support resources that can be shared with their employees.



**SheRay's & Associates, L.L.C.:** SheRay's & Associates, L.L.C. partnered with DEA to provide consulting services focused on evidence-based prevention and treatment/intervention strategies to engage community members to affect behavioral change.

## Reach and Impact Research Approach

For all engagement areas, the report highlights key elements that demonstrate reach and impact using the following data gathering approach:

- Obtain detailed metrics on activities conducted in every engagement area
- Conduct individual interviews with the DEA field division's Community Outreach Specialist to gain a deeper understanding of Operation Engage during 2023
- Assess strategies for engagement
- Understand local challenges and successes
- Develop lessons learned
- Obtain specific metrics not captured in the monthly reports
- Obtain photos, flyers, newsletters, and presentations, highlighting Operation Engage

## Methods and Data Sources

At DEA's direction, SRCA used a mixed-method approach to assess Operation Engage in each of the 11 locations using quantitative and qualitative data. Specifically, the SRCA research team collected, organized, and analyzed quantitative metrics received from DEA's Community Outreach Specialist (or program representative) in each location along with information from the national partners. SRCA also conducted and analyzed qualitative data from phone interviews with division contacts and local stakeholders.

## Quantitative Data

DEA's national partners and field division contacts who participated in phone interviews shared relevant quantitative metrics data related to their deliverables during the year (January 2023–December 2023), although most deliverables did not begin until February/March 2023 due to delays in congressional budget approval. Examples of data shared are completed deliverable activities with associated metrics, news articles and social media posts with mentions of Operation Engage, summary documents of completed activities, counts of participants (where available), and photos from Operation Engage events.

## Qualitative Data

SRCA conducted 10 qualitative interviews with local stakeholders to gather information on their exposure to Operation Engage and their perception of the reach and impact associated with those efforts. Stakeholder contacts were recommended by each Operation Engage location and approved by DEA. During these interviews, the following topics were covered:

- Description of relationship with the field division
- Specific experiences with Operation Engage in that location
- Measurable effects of DEA activities
- Support of drug use prevention efforts
- Sustainment of Operation Engage in the following year
- Lessons learned and/or recommendations

## Research Questions

- What is the mission of your organization/coalition and how does it help with substance misuse problems in the community?
- How would you describe your relationship with the DEA field division, and how did you learn about Operation Engage?
- What steps did you use to gain buy-in from the community and reflect on whether you found the process to be successful?
- What strategies were used to help sustainability?
- What were the key messages/calls to action?
- Can you share any specific experiences with Operation Engage that led to increased awareness and/or change in the community?
- Have you seen any measurable effects from Operation Engage's involvement? If so, can you provide details on how you measure that effect?
- How did Operation Engage support and/or enhance drug misuse prevention efforts in the community?
- How has Operation Engage promoted organization/coalition sustainment since the campaign's launch and throughout 2023?
- Are there any lessons learned from the experience with Operation Engage?

# Lessons Learned

Several key lessons were learned from assessing the effect of Operation Engage and comparing its 11 locations during 2023. Some of the lessons learned were captured from interviews with stakeholders, while others were derived from the data.

## Sustainability

Encouraging and supporting sustainable organizations and coalitions remained an important goal for the field divisions. Often spanning thousands of square miles, DEA field divisions employ only one Community Outreach Specialist. The most effective Operation Engage locations have leaned on established stakeholders to determine the most efficient allocation of resources. These stakeholders have valuable insights into the culture of an area that can improve the chance of the initiative becoming sustainable. Working with stakeholders, these

field divisions have formulated long-term strategic plans tailored to their communities. These plans empower the Community Outreach Specialist to operate strategically rather than tactically. This practice of supporting sustainable organizations often results in these organizations expanding their mission, strategy, and objectives.

As a result of partnering with the New Orleans Field Division, Millie Mattered is an example of a sustainable organization expanding their mission. Millie Mattered began in 2017. After

the death of her daughter, Lilly Harvey started the organization to raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl. Millie Mattered raised awareness by organizing community walks where information about fentanyl was made available and the family members lost to the overdose epidemic were remembered. DEA has supported Millie Mattered through Operation Engage since 2021, and that support has allowed Millie Mattered to expand its mission to include encouraging state and federal legislation to support stronger anti-drug trafficking laws.

**“People are more aware [of fentanyl] now. We are going to push forward into more policies and politics. I’ve been doing this for eight years now. I believe that my events have raised awareness, but all my chairmen now have started branching out and doing different types of events. That was my intent. We now have the ear of judges who realize the importance of sending people to rehab instead of just jail. We have people now that are on overdose response teams, and we are encouraging legislation in Louisiana and Washington.”**

*Millie Mattered founder Lilly Harvey*

The Culinary Arts Initiative is another example of a sustainable outreach. The initiative created new partnerships between DEA and DEA Educational Foundation, Richmond Police Department, the Culinary Department, Challenge Discovery Projects, and the Richmond community. DEA EF provides drug use prevention and education to the students along with the cooking skills taught by Chef Davis.

The Culinary Arts Initiative was started in Richmond in 2022 by Celebrity Chef Sammy Davis, Jr., a Richmond native, who received recognition after winning Food



**Culinary Arts Class in Richmond.**

Network's "Chopped Redemption." Chef Davis had a difficult and violent childhood, and he credits skills, help, and life lessons learned while working in the restaurant business for saving his life. This initiative created new partnerships between DEA and DEA Educational Foundation, Richmond Police Department, the Culinary Department, Challenge Discovery Projects, and the Richmond community. The program expanded to include an additional class in 2023.

The Lowrider Bike Club that was started in Olathe, Kansas, is another sustainable program. This program, replicated in Albuquerque, was started with Operation Engage funding, but the community and stakeholders are heavily invested in running the program. In 2023, the program established additional chapters. The Lowrider program offers a safe place for youth to learn how to build lowriders while learning about the costs and consequences of substance misuse. The El Paso Field Division is confident that its local partners will continue to support the Lowrider program without direct DEA involvement. If programs prove self-sustaining due to stakeholder



**The Lowrider Bike Club.**

and community involvement, Operation Engage can leverage this success and experience to establish new, self-perpetuating outreach initiatives.

## Funding

Funding limitations continued to be a source of uncertainty for stakeholders in 2023. During stakeholder interviews, several stakeholders stated that having DEA personnel at their organization's events gave legitimacy to the organization's purpose. Also, having DEA personnel show up in support of the community opens doors to more opportunities by gaining trust. However, travel fund limitations prevented some Community Outreach Specialists from attending events or meeting potential stakeholders. Jeff Hertz, a board member for Vehicle for Change, an Albuquerque coalition that includes the Lowrider Club, stated, "virtual meetings are invaluable for keeping us connected, but real progress happens at in-person gatherings. That's where the true connections and collaborations are made."

Spokane Tribal Network Director Penny Spencer also emphasized the importance of DEA's personal involvement in community events. She stated, "Several stakeholders emphasized the importance of DEA's in-person involvement with their community during stakeholder interviews. That involvement is limited if travel funding isn't available."

**"Tribal communities are all about trust, and there's always been a bit of skepticism toward outsiders, especially government entities. But [Community Outreach Specialist] Marcus Pickett did things differently. He made it clear that he wasn't just showing up once and leaving—he was committed to staying involved. He even came to our state basketball games—who does that? It really showed that he cared, and that made a huge difference."**

*Spokane Tribal Network Director Penny Spencer.*

## Cultural Appeal

Instances where youth outreach events considered culture are more successful. The DEA Educational Foundation, SheRays & Associates, CADCA, and the Lowrider Bike Club have considered culture in the development of their youth outreach programs. The DEA Educational Foundation offered Hip Hop dance classes for American Indian and African American communities. However, the Hip Hop dance class for the African American community included components of African American history, and the class for American Indian communities included expressions of Native American heritage. The student retention rates for both classes were 100% and feedback was overwhelmingly positive for both. The Vehicle for Change coalition took the Lowrider Bike Club to Espanola, New Mexico, but adapted it to be more culturally relevant. In Espanola, the Lowrider Club faced significant challenges securing funding and finding mentors who could donate enough time to support its activities. However, many Espanola youth ride skateboards, more so than bicycles. By adapting the program to skateboards, Espanola was able to attract more youth, stretch its limited funding, and reduce the time required of its mentors.

**“It’s not necessarily about the lowriders; it’s about the project and the relationships built during the process. For example, it doesn’t have to be a lowrider bike. We scaled down to skateboards because the bike work was labor-intensive, and the kids loved them. With skateboards, they can complete the project more easily, personalize it, and take it home. It’s about building connections between the students and mentors while creating something meaningful.”**

*Espanola Lowrider Club President Diego Lopez*

## Enhance Metric Tracking and Data Collection Process

To improve the evaluation of activities across all engagement areas, DEA should leverage a more efficient system for recording, tracking, and maintaining metrics. After reviewing the metric data, discrepancies were identified in event categories and inconsistencies in the types of information recorded due to each Community Outreach Specialist entering their data differently. Additionally, some locations lacked specific attendance metrics for events.

DEA’s Operation Engage website usage continues to increase. Using a data analytics tool to track the most popular website content could further increase website relevancy and traffic. Social media analytics could be used to improve the popularity of posts.

# Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

The success of Operation Engage is heavily dependent upon the involvement of stakeholders and partners. In 2023, DEA continued to cultivate and expand public and private partnerships in every community through Operation Engage. To achieve this, DEA partnered with local community organizations and provided Operation Engage resources to bolster their drug misuse prevention and community education initiatives. DEA fostered a more robust and collaborative approach in 2023 and focused on improving the sustainability of stakeholder organizations.

DEA partnered with state, local, and federal law enforcement in all chosen Operation Engage sites. Local police departments are important stakeholders and are crucial to identifying the most disadvantaged and underserved areas enabling DEA field divisions to deliver Operation Engage resources more effectively. In some cases, DEA field divisions supported local police department initiatives and provided more support for events organized by local law enforcement.

As 2023 marks the third year of the Operation Engage initiative, DEA field divisions continued collaboration with established partners. The steadfast commitment of DEA and the longstanding relationships with partners enabled DEA to build

upon the successes of Operation Engage efforts, amplifying the effect of drug misuse prevention education and overcoming obstacles more effectively. The Lowrider Bike Club is an example of a longstanding, sustainable partnership. Founded in 2016 in Olathe, Kansas, the Lowrider Bike Club has prospered through its Operation Engage partnership and now has firmly established itself across New Mexico.

**“Now, there are about 10 or 11 [Lowrider] chapters around the country. They’re really trying to expand the model and grow the program. A lot of that growth has been supported by DEA Operation Engage funding, which has served as seed funding for many of these chapters.”**

*El Paso Field Division, Vehicle for Change Coalition Partner Jeff Hertz*



**DEA and Albuquerque PD Lowrider Bike Program Press Conference June 2023.**



**Los Angeles Field Division's Special Agent in Charge Bill Bodner and Diversion Program Specialist Elizabeth Jimenez, at National Night Out in Carson on August 2, 2023.**

While established stakeholders expand the reach of Operation Engage, creating new relationships helps raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl by reaching new audiences. In pursuit of this goal, DEA field divisions welcomed new partners and stakeholders over the course of the year. This expansion of partnerships enabled DEA field divisions to reach previously untapped segments of the community, introduce fresh perspectives, and expand efforts in drug misuse prevention education.

The Phoenix Field Division established a partnership with Rise Up! Glendale, which significantly expanded its drug misuse prevention education efforts among the youth community. Rise Up! Glendale collaborates with law enforcement, healthcare providers, educators, and community organizations to diminish drug demand. They employ strategies like online and social media awareness campaigns, educational initiatives, and drug take back events. They also distribute naloxone and prescription drug disposal kits and conduct community surveys to assess needs and offer tailored in-school prevention education to enhance community resilience.<sup>6</sup> Rise Up! Glendale was able to increase its reach by 300% through its partnership with Operation Engage.

Community Outreach Specialists continued to overcome obstacles such as budget constraints, personnel changes, and skepticism. When the field divisions overcome the difficulties of building a relationship and getting a commitment from a new stakeholder, there is also the challenge of training stakeholders in the complexities of being an effective coalition member. The Citizens Academy and Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America provided instrumental training aimed at educating stakeholders and increasing coalition effectiveness.

CADCA's Coalition Capacity Building training is for stakeholders who represent youth, parents, educators, law enforcement professionals, healthcare workers, and tribal and government leaders who have a common goal of strengthening communities by making them safe, healthy, and drug free. This training introduced participants to the Strategic Prevention Framework, which included the principal elements of capacity building, the fundamental concepts of effective prevention, and strategies for successfully recruiting and engaging new community partners. This in-demand training galvanized the collective sustainability of the coalition and extended needed drug misuse prevention services to the communities. CADCA

**"In the first school year [2020, before Operation Engage] we only reached 1,000 kids consistently. Last school year [2023], we were at 30,000. This year, it was something like 34,000 people we reached with Rise Up! Glendale. That does not include social media or anything like that."**

*Phoenix Field Division, Rise Up! Glendale Executive Director Brandi Jordan*



**Los Angeles Field Division's CADCA Capacity Building Event.**

challenged key stakeholders to expand their efforts. Capacity training is about bringing different people in and keeping them engaged in the work. The goal is sustainability and success.

DEA's Citizens Academy is a crucial avenue for community engagement and recruitment while offering extensive training to stakeholders. It features a comprehensive curriculum tailored for community members, leaders, and corporate figures, offering unique insights into DEA's operational strategies. Participants benefit from lectures across various departments, intelligence briefings, enforcement strategies, and drug misuse education and prevention resources. This initiative allows for potential collaborations with new agencies, with recruitment conducted through internal networks and quarterly stakeholder gatherings to make sure a robust pool of qualified candidates gain access to DEA resources.



### **El Paso Field Division's Citizens Academy participants learn from DEA's forensic chemists.**

Despite the addition of stakeholders, partners, and outstanding support for drug misuse prevention education training across every Operation Engage field division, challenges persisted. The limitations of funding presented a challenge. Some Community Outreach Specialists had difficulties scheduling and traveling to drug misuse prevention education events.

Overcoming negative perceptions by the community has been an important DEA goal since the beginning of Operation Engage. This negative perception has been a significant challenge among Indigenous communities. Both DEA's El Paso and Seattle Field Divisions serve large American Indian and Alaska Native communities, and both have made considerable progress overcoming this challenge through their relationship with American Indian Tribal community stakeholders.

Spokane Tribal Network Director, Penny Smith, spoke highly of the Seattle Field Division, and their dedication to the community. She feared that Operation Engage would not have a lasting effect, and that her community was just a box on a checklist. However, the Seattle Field Division's Community Outreach Specialist, Marcus Pickett, impressed Tribal leaders by being present and not pushing an agenda. That built the trust required to allow drug misuse prevention education resources to be given to both the youth and adults in the community.

## **Summary**

Operation Engage expanded partnerships and collaboration within communities, using local resources for sustainable progress. DEA's collaboration with law enforcement and community organizations has led to notable achievements, including the addition of new partners and stakeholders. Effective communication and training initiatives further enhanced coalition effectiveness and community engagement.

Effective communication, flexible planning, and feedback mechanisms between DEA field divisions and the community were crucial to strategizing drug awareness events and distributing resources. Collaborating with community leaders and nonprofits across various sectors allowed the divisions to adopt a strategic approach.

**On average, each division held at least 15 meetings involving 591 stakeholders from 60 organizations. Collectively, DEA field divisions met with over 3,000 stakeholders throughout 2023.**

This collaboration empowered each DEA field division to customize Operation Engage resources to discuss the challenges posed by drug threats more effectively.



# Highlights

## Adult and Community Outreach

Tailoring drug misuse prevention messaging to local communities, enabling them to grasp the effect, and forge personal connections with the content improves the acceptance of drug misuse education. To achieve this, DEA has made new alliances and strengthened existing relationships, expanding ongoing outreach and public awareness initiatives. These alliances have developed innovative engagement strategies and laid the groundwork for the effective implementation of Operation Engage across various field divisions. DEA's field divisions have focused intensively on communities severely affected by drug use and misuse. In these targeted areas, DEA has encouraged prevention strategies such as training in drug misuse prevention, offering technical support to community groups, bolstering coalitions, and organizing local town hall meetings and summits, among other initiatives.

As part of its community outreach efforts, Operation Engage locations offered a wide array of resources, programs, and services to support local communities. This grassroots approach complemented DEA's enforcement efforts by incorporating drug misuse education, prevention-focused community events, online resources, and special initiatives. Embracing this comprehensive strategy and collaboration across all sectors to effectively address drug-related threats allowed DEA field divisions to reach nearly 32,000 adult community members in 2023.

Operation Engage aimed to raise awareness within local communities about drug threats and the resources at their disposal. To achieve this objective, DEA supported community members by participating in local events, fostering trust, and building rapport. These efforts enabled DEA to grasp the community's needs and priorities, and ascertain how Operation Engage could aid communities in advancing their objectives. Adult community engagement events included:

- Family and community summits
- National Night Out
- Drug misuse prevention conferences and health fairs

- Community walks
- Community pop-up events
- Drug misuse prevention workplace trainings

## Family Summits on Fentanyl

DEA continued to build on the success of family summits in 2023. Family summits address the alarming rise in drug-related deaths across the nation, particularly the unprecedented toll from fentanyl and methamphetamine. With an estimated 74,702 deaths due to drug poisoning in 2023, these substances are more accessible than ever, posing a serious threat to anyone with a smartphone. Illegal drug traffickers are using smartphones to advertise, connect with perspective buyers, and receive payment. DEA asks family members who have lost loved ones to tell their stories in hopes of saving other families from suffering the same loss. The National and Regional Family Summits on Fentanyl, led by DEA, bring together families and family-led nonprofit organizations to tackle this epidemic.



**2023 National Family Summit.**

The Family Summits aim to advance public awareness efforts, reverse the devastating trend of drug poisonings, and save lives. Participants engage in discussions about the current scope of drug threats, collaborative community prevention efforts, and potential areas for future cooperation.<sup>7</sup> Some field divisions hosted a regional family summit in their Operation Engage cities, modeled after the National Family Summit. These regional family summits fostered new local connections and provided valuable insights into overdose response strategies. The events included presentations, a panel discussion on collaboration, and breakout sessions covering advocacy, community engagement, youth involvement, and media outreach. Through these initiatives, the family summits strove to empower communities to collectively combat the drug crisis and work toward a safer future.



DEA Resource Booth at 2023 National Family Summit.



Phoenix Field Division Regional Family Summit participants.

Regional Family Summit	
DEA Field Division	Reach
Detroit	126
Los Angeles	48
Philadelphia	45
Phoenix	51
Washington, DC	33
St. Louis	42
Seattle	34
New England	35
Miami	60

### National Night Out

Several Operation Engage cities took advantage of local National Night Out events to share resources and raise awareness in their local community. National Night Out provides the field divisions with an opportunity to provide Operation Engage resources at an event that promotes community building, violent crime prevention, partnerships, and camaraderie between law enforcement and the communities they serve. National Night Out serves as a platform to establish new connections, offer drug misuse prevention education, and enhance the public’s perception of DEA. Local



DEA booth at National Night Out.

police departments contribute by organizing K-9 demonstrations, displaying agency vehicles and equipment, and arranging activities for youth to encourage community involvement.

DEA field divisions used National Night Out events to disseminate drug misuse prevention materials and informed the attending community members who come by the Operation Engage booth about DEA's drug education initiatives, such as Operation Prevention, One Pill Can Kill, and an assortment of drug fact sheets.

National Night Out	
DEA Field Division	Reach
Los Angeles Field Division	1,200
Miami Field Division	300
New England Field Division	1,000

## Albuquerque

### Meth and Fentanyl Awareness Summit

The El Paso Field Division participated in the Meth and Fentanyl Awareness Summit, hosted by Pastor Robert Tso of Victory Life Church in Shiprock, New Mexico, and the local Boys & Girls Clubs. This drug misuse prevention training was a result of several suicides in the community. The goal of the event was to educate the community on the dangers of methamphetamine and fentanyl.<sup>8</sup> The El Paso Field Division presented One Pill Can Kill information and



El Paso Field Division Public Information Officer Carlos Briano presenting at the Shiprock Chapter House.

resources and provided a resource booth along with other health providers. The event generated interest in having similar events in the future, however, it also attracted negative attention. The church was vandalized, and members have been harassed since bringing awareness to the opioid overdose and fentanyl epidemic. Despite these obstacles, Pastor Tso invited DEA back to present again. DEA connected Pastor Tso with special agents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Drug Enforcement who can help with gang intimidation.

Reach	50
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### “Good Medicine Bundle” Workshop

The Good Medicine Bundle, an Operation Prevention module that combines American Indian wisdom and traditions with modern science to teach students about substance misuse prevention, was a success in 2022 and continued in 2023. This culturally sensitive curriculum was created by DEA, the National Indian Education Association, and Discovery Education.



CADCA "Good Medicine Bundle" training event.

It reached both Native and non-Native students through an exploration of American Indian heritage and wellness practices. This curriculum provides relevant substance misuse prevention education for schools, workplaces, and communities.

In October, the El Paso Field Division conducted a workshop titled The Good Medicine Bundle: Interactive Engagement with Culture-based Resources for Drug Prevention. During this workshop, the field division disseminated resources on Operation Prevention, One Pill Can Kill, Drugs of Abuse, a variety of drug fact cards, and the three DEA-affiliated websites: ([Get Smart About Drugs](#), [Just Think Twice](#), and [Campus Drug Prevention](#)).

Reach	115
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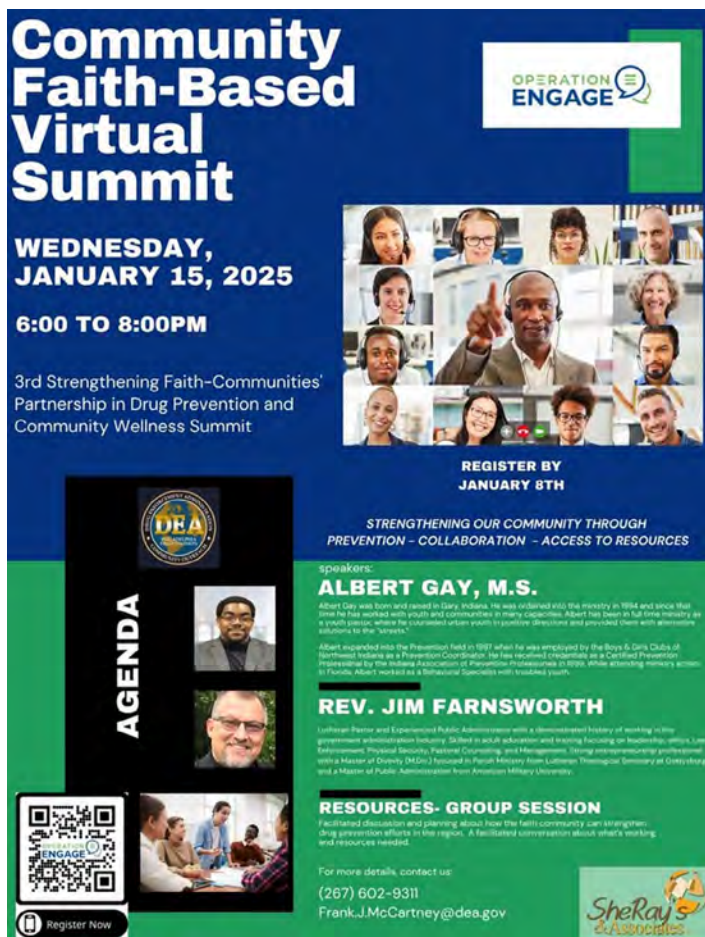
## Philadelphia

### Faith-Based Virtual Summit

On February 6, the Philadelphia Field Division, with the help of SheRay's & Associates, hosted a Faith-Based Virtual Summit. The summit was well received and attended by faith-based leaders. The summit provided faith leaders from Philadelphia with a DEA threat assessment, followed by sharing of best practices for substance misuse prevention from other regions. The program provided participants with an opportunity to share what they are doing in their communities to prevent substance use and misuse as well as explore collaboration opportunities. The program concluded with DEA sharing community resources that can assist in strengthening prevention efforts in the region.

Reach

30



**Community Faith-Based Virtual Summit**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025**

**6:00 TO 8:00PM**

3rd Strengthening Faith-Communities' Partnership in Drug Prevention and Community Wellness Summit

**REGISTER BY JANUARY 8TH**

**STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH PREVENTION - COLLABORATION - ACCESS TO RESOURCES**

**speakers:**

**ALBERT GAY, M.S.**  
Albert Gay was born and raised in Gary, Indiana. He was ordained into the ministry in 1984 and since that time he has worked with youth and communities in many capacities. Albert has been in full-time ministry as a youth pastor, where he counseled urban youth in positive direction and provided them with alternative solutions to the "street".

Albert expanded into the Prevention field in 1987 when he was employed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Indiana as a Prevention Coordinator. He has received credentials as a Certified Prevention Interventionist for the Indiana Association of Prevention Professionals in 1999, where attending "ministry action" in Florida. Albert worked as a Behavioral Specialist with troubled youth.

**REV. JIM FARNSWORTH**  
Lifelong Pastor and Experienced Public Administrator with a demonstrated history of working in the government administration industry. Skilled in adult education and training, focusing on leadership, ethics, law enforcement, physical security, pastoral counseling, and management. Strong entrepreneurial professional with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) focused in Pastoral Ministry from Lutherans Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids and a Master of Public Administration from American Military University.

**RESOURCES- GROUP SESSION**  
Facilitated discussion and planning about how the faith community can strengthen drug prevention efforts in the region. A facilitated conversation about what's working and resources needed.

For more details, contact us:  
(267) 602-9311  
Frank.J.McCartney@dea.gov

**AGENDA**

**DEA**

**OPERATION ENGAGE**

**SheRay's & Associates**

**register Now**

Faith-Based Town Hall, Miami Field Division.

## Los Angeles

### Fighting Fentanyl Antelope Valley



Los Angeles Field Division display at Fighting Fentanyl Antelope Valley.

In April 2023, the Los Angeles Field Division participated in the Fighting Fentanyl Antelope Valley event in Palmdale. This event brought awareness to the community about the dangers of fentanyl. The event included local community-based organizations, parent groups, substance use treatment centers, and city of Palmdale leaders. The Los Angeles Field Division provided the 120 Antelope Valley participants with One Pill Can Kill awareness campaign materials, drug misuse prevention fact sheets, and Operation Prevention resources. Those who attended the event signed a pledge to fight against fentanyl and illicit drugs.

Reach

120

# Ft. Lauderdale and Broward County Faith-Based Town Hall Meetings

## Town Hall Meeting

THURSDAY  
SEPTEMBER 28TH

REGISTRATION 9:00AM  
PROGRAM 9:30AM - 2PM  
LUNCH PROVIDED

First Baptist Fort Lauderdale  
301 East Broward Blvd, Fort Lauderdale,  
FL, 33301

3rd Strengthening Faith-Communities' Partnership in Drug Prevention and Community Wellness Forum

Register by  
September  
25th

**SPEAKERS:**

**Tracy Johnson**  
Principal at Shelby's and Associates with 30 years of experience in community mobilization, coalition building and community prevention efforts. Tracy will provide an interactive presentation discussing the importance of prevention with a lens on diversity, equity and inclusion.

**Carl Alves**  
Carl J. Alves is President/CEO of Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction, Inc. (PAACA) in New Bedford, MA, where he directs a multi-service recovery support center, and citywide coalition whose mission is to improve the quality of life in New Bedford through substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery support strategies. Carl will provide an interactive presentation discussing adverse childhood experiences, the connection to substance misuse risk & protective factors RDM Continuum.

**Reverend Walter Jones**  
Rev. Jones has been a Community Organizer and Activist for Social Change and Family Empowerment for over 25 years; he has devoted his professional life and resources to the advancement of our Community and our Future Leaders, he is very proud of being considered as a Servant for Social Change first and Messenger second, in the positive development of our future leaders and their extended family members. Rev. Jones will lead an interactive presentation Effective Prevention Strategies: The Role of Faith Leadership, Coalition Development, and Drug Prevention.

**Group Planning Session**  
Join us for an engaging and collaborative event aimed at enhancing drug prevention efforts within our faith community. We invite you to participate in an open discussion and strategic planning session that focuses on the vital role faith-based organizations play in promoting community wellness and countering drug-related challenges.

For more details, contact us:  
954-612-3285  
Gretchen.M.Rovira@dea.gov

Register Now

## Faith-Based Town Hall, Miami Field Division.

The Miami Field Division worked with faith-based leaders in the community to provide Operation Engage resources. Working with SheRay's & Associates, the Church of God in Davie, Florida, and First Baptist Church of Ft. Lauderdale, the Miami Field Division provided drug misuse prevention and educational resources to the community at several events. In September, SheRay's & Associates partnered with DEA to provide the 2023 Strengthening Faith-Communities' Partnership in Drug Prevention and Community Wellness Summit at First Baptist, Ft. Lauderdale. These events, combined with a Pompano Beach Town Hall, provided the field division with an opportunity to share information with community providers and community members from the areas of Fort Lauderdale, Lauderdale Lakes, Margate, and Pompano.

Reach

88

# Latino Substance Use Prevention Conference



Community Outreach Specialist Gretchen Rovira and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Erika Jimenez at the Latino Conference presented by United Way and the Commission on Behavioral Health and Drug Prevention.

Through a collaborative effort with United Way, the Miami Field Division actively participated in Latino Substance Use Prevention Conference events, delivering essential drug misuse education resources to the Hispanic community in May 2023. The Miami Field Division provided a One Pill Can Kill table with Spanish resources. This event served as a platform to disseminate information, raising awareness about the risks associated with substance misuse. The field division not only provided valuable resources but also made a positive impression on the community. This initiative contributed to an improved perspective of DEA within the community, highlighting the agency's commitment to education and public welfare.

Reach

225

## New Orleans

### Millie Mattered Community Walks



#### Millie Mattered New Orleans Community Walk.

The New Orleans Field Division participated in several Millie Mattered Community Walk events. Millie Mattered Overdose & Addiction Advocacy is a local organization dedicated to saving lives by bringing attention to the opioid crisis.<sup>9</sup> Millie Mattered is comprised of 14 individuals who have suffered addiction and two of these individuals have survived fentanyl overdoses. Lilly Harvy, the organization's founder and mother of Millie, believes this gives her organization unique insight and provides those seeking help with substance misuse a level of trust. DEA partnered with Millie Mattered to use community walks to raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl and fake pills in New Orleans. Ms. Harvey indicated that Operation Engage resources have allowed Millie Mattered to increase their outreach. As a result, Millie Mattered shifted their focus from raising awareness through community walks to influencing Louisiana policy and education. In all, the New Orleans Field Division and Millie Mattered held 13 drug misuse awareness events throughout 2023.

Reach

150

## Glendale

### Phoenix Suns



#### Operation Engage message displayed at Phoenix Suns NBA Basketball Game.

The Phoenix Suns professional basketball home games provided an excellent venue to present the Operation Engage initiative to a large number of people. During the Phoenix Suns home opener game on October 30, DEA distributed literature on Red Ribbon Week, One Pill Can Kill, Operation Engage, an assortment of drug fact sheets, Arizona's "Good Samaritan" law, and naloxone. During the game, DEA's One Pill Can Kill PSA was played on the Jumbotron. Over 5,500 educational publications were distributed during the event to the 17,000 fans.

Reach

17,000

## Spokane

### 2023 Hoopfest



#### Operation Engage outreach at Hoopfest in Spokane.

In June 2023, the Seattle Field Division provided an Operation Engage resource table and distributed drug misuse prevention education resources to the Spokane community at Hoopfest. Spokane Hoopfest is the largest three-on-three outdoor basketball tournament globally. The Spokane Hoopfest Association is a respected, 31-year-old charitable organization that has given over \$2.5 million to local charities, supporting youth sports programs and the Special Olympics. Operating an Operation Engage resource booth, the Seattle Field Division met with attendees, shared information about the Operation Engage initiative, and distributed drug misuse prevention educational materials.

Reach

1,675

## Washington, DC

### Community Pop-Up Events

A community pop-up event is a temporary gathering or activity that occurs in a public space within a community. These events are often organized by local groups, businesses, or individuals with the intention of bringing people together, fostering community engagement, and creating a sense of belonging. Community pop-up events play a key role in strengthening social ties, fostering a sense of belonging, and enhancing the vibrancy and livability of neighborhoods and communities. They provide valuable opportunities for people to come together, celebrate local culture and creativity, and contribute to the collective well-being of their community and learn about the costs and consequences of substance misuse.



**Washington, DC Field Division and Metropolitan Police Department at Seventh District Beat the Streets.**

The Washington, DC Field Division set up exhibit tables and provided Operation Engage resources like One Pill Can Kill and an assortment of drug fact sheets as part of a series of street pop-up events held in different parts of DC. These street pop-ups were organized in collaboration with the DC Metropolitan Police Department along with 25 other local, state, and federal agencies, advocacy groups, and private organizations.

The goal of these events was to raise awareness, provide resources, and bridge the gap between law enforcement and the communities they serve. These events were held throughout the month of July, in six different districts across Washington, DC.

Reach

1,500

## Overview

During the third year of Operation Engage, adult community engagement continued to be a central objective. DEA field divisions actively participated in and organized numerous community outreach initiatives to raise awareness about local drug threats. Collaborating with local coalitions, drug misuse prevention providers, and national youth-serving organizations, they disseminated vital information within the local community through various channels.

DEA field divisions reached nearly 32,000 community members and provided drug misuse prevention education resources at 82 community events throughout 2023. The field divisions supported summits, town halls, conferences, community pop-up events, community walks, and National Night Out events to address the alarming rise in drug-related deaths and raise fentanyl awareness across the nation.

## Youth Engagement

Operation Engage aims to elevate the level of awareness among youth in the community about the dangers of substance use and misuse. Through programs provided by Operation Engage national partners, and with the help of local organizations, youth could actively take part in age-appropriate activities designed to educate about the dangers of drug use and misuse in a fun way.

The National Institutes of Health reported a significant decrease in prescription opioid misuse among youth. Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, stated that “illicit opioid use is generally at the lowest in the history of the survey, and it is possible that being in school offers a protective factor against opioid misuse and addiction.”<sup>10</sup> DEA continues to support the decrease of teen drug misuse by providing consistent drug misuse education, empowering youth, promoting positive and healthy activities, fostering youth leadership and mentorship, and upholding other fundamental principles. These efforts are carried out through training events, youth summits, teen academies, and youth activities. Collaborating with various youth groups and coalitions, the field divisions aimed to further educate and empower young individuals as advocates within their communities.

## DEA Educational Foundation Youth Programs

The DEA Educational Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization whose goal is to educate the public about the costs and consequences of illegal drugs. The DEA Educational Foundation's youth program empowers youth by offering after-school programs supported by Operation Engage. These initiatives not only present constructive alternatives to substance use but also discourage violence by offering engaging and enjoyable activities after school. Violent crimes by youth between the ages of seven and 17 occur most frequently at the end of the school day and in the evenings on non-school days.<sup>11</sup>

DEA Educational Foundation youth programs heavily rely on the involvement of local mentors who collaborate with DEA to teach skills and present messages about staying drug free. The program places accomplished professionals in the classroom with underserved youth to learn skills related to dance, martial arts, baseball, soccer, basketball, art, and other activities. Programs typically close with demonstrations and drug misuse prevention messages for the entire community.

## Youth Dance

Dance classes were held twice a week for a span of six weeks or more. Classes are designed to be culture specific to better connect with the community they are trying to serve. For example, dance demonstrations at Jamez and Nambe Pueblos in the El Paso Field Division were led by Native American instructors that taught a combination of hip hop and cultural expression. The Miami Field Division's dance program celebrated African American culture. All the dance activities were coupled with a drug use prevention and education session teaching students about the dangers of substance use and connecting them to local resources.



**New England Field Division DEA EF Dance instructor and students.**

DEA Educational Foundation Dance Programs were held in El Paso, Los Angeles, Miami, New England, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and St. Louis Field Divisions in 2023.

Reach

855

## Martial Arts

The martial arts program included fun and healthy workshops about living a healthy lifestyle and drug use prevention discussions. At the end of the program, participants demonstrated their new skills to parents and earned a martial arts belt along with a certificate for their work. The success of these programs has inspired school administrators to consider additional Operation Engage drug misuse

prevention education programming. The Detroit, Phoenix, St. Louis, and Seattle Field Divisions held Martial Arts programs.



**St. Louis Field Division and DEA EF Martial Arts Program.**

Reach

223

## Baby Scientist



**Dr. McDowell, Founder of Baby Scientist, providing instruction to New Orleans students.**

The Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Washington, DC Field Divisions partnered with the DEA Educational Foundation to bring the Baby Scientist program into their communities. Baby Scientist is a nonprofit organization delivering fun and engaging Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics programs to underserved students. Dr. Kristy L. McDowell, founder of Baby Scientist and Ph.D. in Molecular Biology, along with outreach specialists, visited schools in the underserved communities to introduce youth to fun activities, encouraging drug

use prevention messages, and career inspiration. These hands-on activities contained messages about resisting peer pressure and building self-confidence.

Reach

243

## Soccer

The Miami, New England, Philadelphia, and St. Louis Field Divisions provided DEA Educational Foundation soccer programs. They promoted drug use prevention and anti-violence messages to underserved students with otherwise limited access to programming. This program has been so successful that DEA Educational Foundation plans to continue to fund the program using non-DEA resources to ensure sustainability.

Reach

235

## Baseball



**St. Louis Field Division providing drug use prevention education for DEA EF baseball program.**

In the Philadelphia Field Division, the DEA Educational Foundation offered a baseball program at Roberto Clemente Middle School. Lessons were coupled with drug use prevention and education during class time. Free baseball lessons were offered, giving students the opportunity to work with mentors. Finally, students were able to display the skills they learned in the final demonstration. Baseball lessons were also given as part of health and wellness events sponsored by the Detroit and Seattle Field Divisions.

Reach

172

## Basketball



**DEA EF Youth Basketball Program at East San Jose Elementary School.**

The El Paso Field Division and the DEA Educational Foundation worked with Albuquerque Public Schools to host a basketball program at East San Jose Elementary School. This new partnership was extremely positive. DEA and coaches shared the Operation Engage message mixed with fun basketball instruction.

Reach

21

## Kickball



**DEA EF Kickball Coach Rick Zeitlin.**

Collaboration between the Detroit Field Division and Huron Tribal leaders led to the establishment of a five-day kickball program.

The overwhelming support for the event's continuation into 2023 reflects a sustained commitment to empowering youth and promoting a drug-free environment, emphasizing the enduring effect of collaborative efforts in enhancing community well-being.

Reach

19

## Bicycle

A new DEA Educational Foundation Youth Program for 2023 was the Deerfield Beach Biking Program. This was an eight-week program that focused on safety, maintenance, community biking, and making healthy lifestyle choices.



**DEA EF Deerfield, Miami Bike Program Student.**

The Miami Field Division, DEA Educational Foundation, and local law enforcement provided drug use prevention education during the bike meetings.

Reach

30

## Fishing

The DEA Educational Foundation conducted two youth fishing programs in the Detroit and New Orleans Field Divisions. The coaches provided team building exercises and fishing instruction. Both programs included environmental stewardship lessons paired with drug use prevention education, which was provided by DEA Community Outreach Specialists, special agents, and their special agent in charge.

**"That's why we really jumped on it. We had done a fishing program before about fishing weather, being outside, and just getting kids out there holistically. [Operation Engage] combined the message of living a healthy lifestyle, drug misuse prevention, and fishing. This is the perfect way to [enhance a drug misuse awareness message.]"**

*Millwood Magnet School Teacher James Warner*

Reach

38

## Lowrider Bike

Founded in 2016 in Olathe, Kansas, the Lowrider Bike Program serves at-risk high school students, allowing them to work side-by-side with law enforcement and other mentors to build customized lowrider bicycles. Students work all through high school customizing these bikes and get to keep them when they graduate. So far, the program boasts a 100% high school graduation rate for the last seven years.<sup>12</sup> It provides space for students to gather and share experiences, while building positive relationships with law enforcement. The field division uses these opportunities to have conversations about illegal drug use as well as living healthy and productive lives.

The Albuquerque Lowrider Bike Club began in 2020. The El Paso Field Division and Operation Engage have supported the New Mexico program for the last three years, and with DEA support, the program has added new chapters every year.



**Section Chief Sean Fearn, DEA Museum Director Jan Wrzesinski, and Associate Administrator Jon DeLena at DEA Museum bike presentation by St. Louis Field Division Public Information Officer Andree Swanson Erazo, Student Support Specialist Jean Cantero, and Public Information Officer Carlos Briano.**

**"Vehicle for Change aims to integrate lowrider culture into community engagement and policing initiatives and strives to build stronger relationships while promoting understanding among youth and their communities. This culture acts as a thread that runs through all our programs, whether we're establishing a lowrider bike club or a lowrider police vehicle, to engage with youth."**


*Albuquerque City Council Jeffrey Hertz*

Reach

24

## Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America


### Youth Leadership Training



DEA NEW ORLEANS AND CADCA PRESENT:

# YOUTH LEADERSHIP PREVENTION WEBINAR

**Training Description**



CADCA Youth Leadership trainings teach young people to fight drug use and other problems in their communities by engaging in coalition work every year. Graduates of CADCA Youth trainings have a proven increase in their leadership, social justice, and political engagement skills.


In this interactive Youth Leadership session, youth will receive an introduction to prevention, coalition work, and the Strategic Prevention Framework.

**Date and Time:**

September 15, 2023  
1:00-2:30PM CST  
Virtual

**Register with Link or QR Code!**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/registration/tZludemqrDoiEtWY4RIsT1UwkG6XUoWhGMR4>



FOR ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT DR. LESLIE M. FAULKNER:  
[Leslie.M.Faulkner@dea.gov](mailto:Leslie.M.Faulkner@dea.gov)

### CADCA Youth Leadership Training.

CADCA has tailored its Youth Leadership Training course to fit the drug use issues specific to each local community, allowing youth to learn more about the prevention, education, and treatment options available at their locations. This training contributes to building a more resilient community by harnessing the power of youth voices and addressing substance use prevention in a comprehensive manner. The New Orleans and New England Field Divisions provided this two-day youth training. The participants learned about advocating for mental health, the drug crisis, and how they can be heard among their peers, respective schools, parents, and communities.

Reach	273
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## Photovoice Training

On December 18–19, 2023, the Photovoice Training was presented by CADCA to the students at Alice Harte Charter School in New Orleans. The training teaches photography as a means for advocacy and data collection. It inspires students to speak about important issues and use their skills to bring about change. The course tasked students with using Photovoice as a tool to develop effective intervention strategies and create an effective prevention-related Photovoice Project. The students were instructed in photography theory and tasked with capturing an issue in their community through their photographs. The training inspired students to get involved in their communities to bring about positive change.<sup>13</sup>




**Youth Leadership Photovoice**

**December 18-19**  
**10:00am-3:00pm**

**Alice M. Harte Charter School**  
**5300 Bertley Drive**  
**New Orleans, LA 70094**



**Register Here or Use QR Code!**



**For questions, contact:**  
**[Leslie.M.Faulkner@dea.gov](mailto:Leslie.M.Faulkner@dea.gov)**

Join us for CADCA's Youth Photovoice training! You will learn how photography and caption writing can be a way to transform your community and the world around you. Photovoice gives a voice to those who are not normally heard, and it brings to light issues that may often be ignored. It has created local and nationwide change, and it empowers youth to be positive role models and leaders in their communities!

### CADCA Youth Leadership Photovoice marketing campaign sample.

Reach	296
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## Youth Citizens Academy

DEA's Citizen Academy continues to be a useful resource to educate and recruit adult stakeholders in the community. The Miami and Phoenix Field Divisions recognized the benefit of bringing that program to youth. The condensed youth program introduced participants to police K9 operations, helicopter operations, and drug use prevention education resources.

Reach

76



**Phoenix Field Division Youth Citizens Academy participants.**

## Camp Cre8 (L.A.)

In October, Way Up Media provided a five-week multimedia class for youth at Camp Cre8 in Inglewood, California. Camp Cre8 specializes in working with youth with disabilities. The course demonstrated how to use a camera, lighting, editing, and audio equipment. The objective was to give them a skill that is transferable to a career in videography, photography, and editing. The Los Angeles Field Division used the class as an opportunity to provide Operation Engage resources including One Pill Can Kill and Operation Prevention fact sheets to the participants.

Reach

10

## Hoops After Dark (L.A.)

The Los Angeles Field Division, in collaboration with Hoops After Dark<sup>14</sup>, provided a youth basketball program led by an alumni coach from the Long Beach Boys & Girls Club. The Hoops After Dark program is patterned after Midnight Basketball. Hoops After Dark provided a safe environment for area youth to develop athletic and leadership skills, educational workshops, mentorship, and career counseling.

Reach

30

## DEA Presentations

A primary goal of Operation Engage is to elevate the level of awareness among the youth in the community about the dangers of substance use. The primary way DEA spreads this message is through drug use prevention education and providing Operation Engage resource booths at community events. DEA provided Operation Engage resources at the following youth-focused events:

Event	DEA Field Division	Reach
<b>Albuquerque Police Department Junior Academy</b>	El Paso Field Division	21
<b>Summer Enrichment and Empowerment Program</b>	El Paso Field Division	86
<b>Lion's Club Presentation</b>	Philadelphia Field Division	500
<b>York County Drug Prevention Youth Summit</b>	Philadelphia Field Division	25
<b>Southwest Prevention Fest</b>	Phoenix Field Division	150
<b>Youth Leadership Conference</b>	Seattle Field Division	90
<b>School Night Out</b>	Seattle Field Division	300
<b>Martin Hall Juvenile Detention Center</b>	Seattle Field Division	33
<b>Family Career and Community Leaders of America Conference</b>	Seattle Field Division	65
<b>FBI Summer Camp at Broward College</b>	Miami Field Division	25
<b>Alternative Spring Break Event (United Way)</b>	Miami Field Division	200

## Overview

In 2023, the overall reach of Operation Engage youth engagement initiatives increased by 31%, from 3,050 in 2022 to 4,579 in 2023. DEA field divisions and their partners were able to spread the Operation Engage initiative to new communities and offered new educational youth training programs. DEA provided Operation Engage resources and drug use prevention education to 1,495 youth throughout the year.

## Media Engagement

Operation Engage funding limitations drive DEA field divisions to search for creative methods to spread fentanyl and drug misuse prevention education messaging. However, DEA did partner with A. Bright Idea to standardize messaging and develop effective advertising content. The division-specific websites remained vital for communication and notification among the divisions, their partners, local media, and communities. Traffic to these websites continued to increase in 2023. DEA community outreach specialists also relied on social media platforms to keep their community aware of threats, initiatives, and community events.

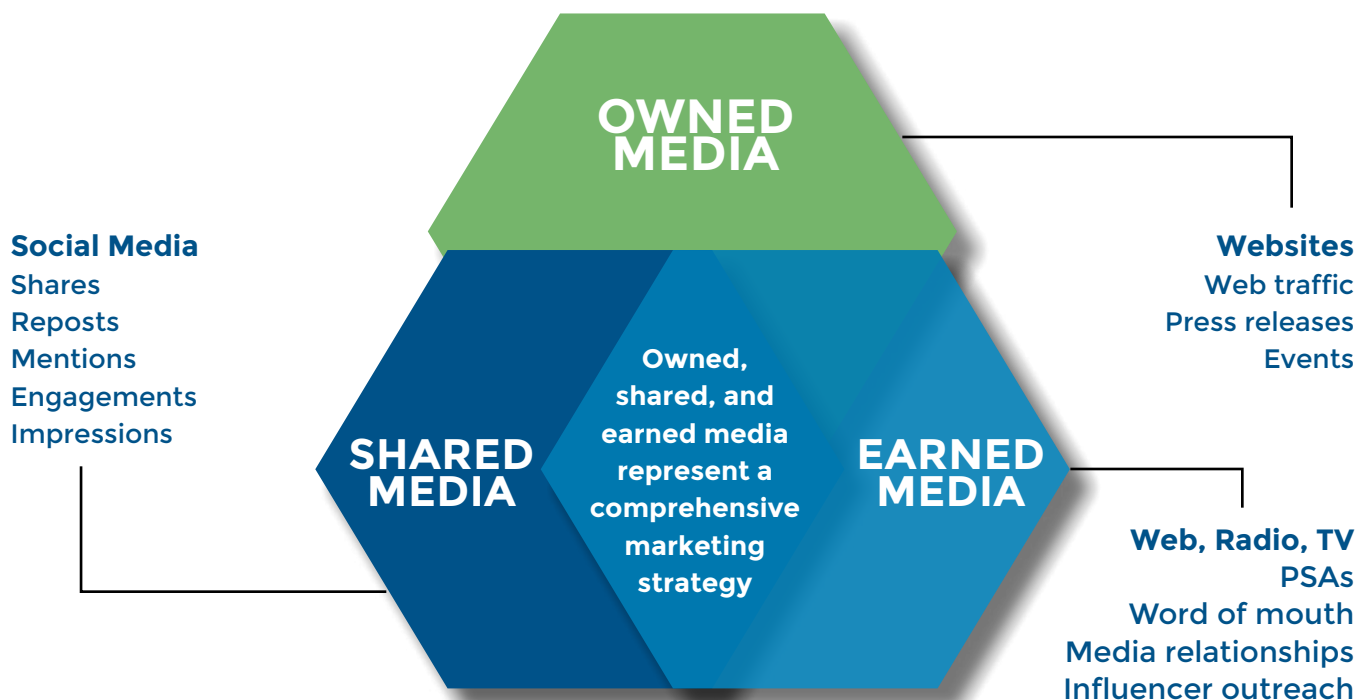
A vital aspect of community outreach and communication involves developing a media strategy that encompasses a multifaceted, thorough approach to engaging with the media. DEA's objective regarding media engagement for Operation Engage began by equipping each location with the necessary tools and resources to show brand consistency and a unified voice, along with a blend of targeted communications aimed at raising awareness, providing education, and issuing clear, direct calls to action. Despite encountering challenges with paid media funding, DEA advertised during local sporting events, leveraged existing relationships with local media, and provided billboards to facilitate awareness of preventing drug use and misuse and advertise Operation Engage events.

Every location has an Operation Engage toolkit containing files and templates tailored for local

DEA offices, community organizations, and partner organizations for use throughout the year. All materials featured approved branding and messaging from DEA headquarters, with versions available in both English and Spanish. Certain files were editable, enabling divisions to incorporate localized information pertaining to additional resources or area-specific events.

In addition to the toolkit provided, Operation Engage locations were encouraged to raise awareness about the local drug threats through:

- Individualized Operation Engage websites (owned media)
- Local television and radio (earned media)
- Social media (shared media)



Owned Media

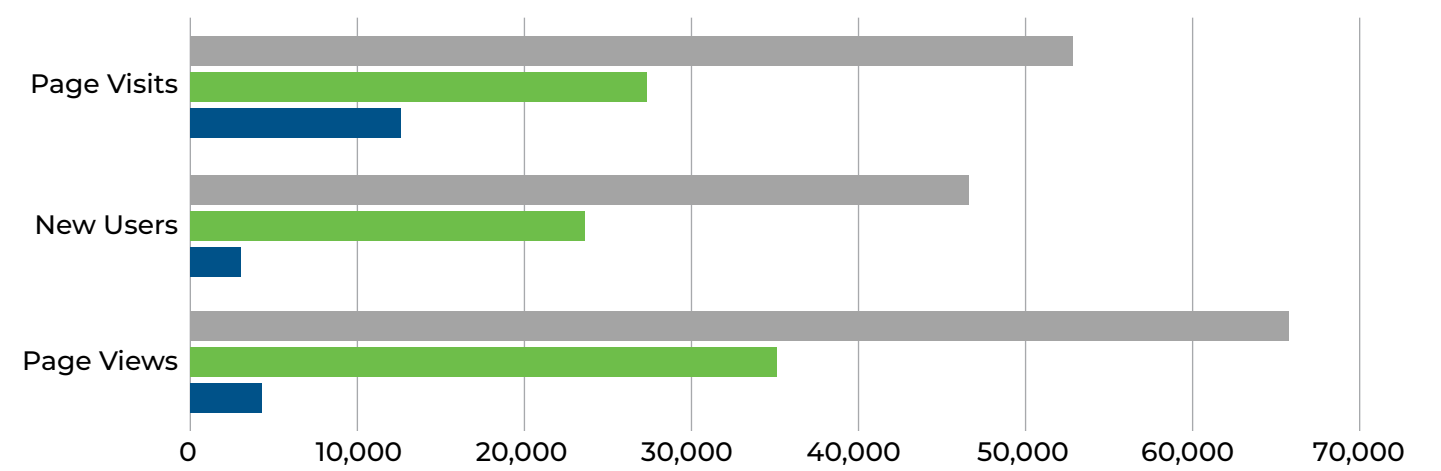
Operation Engage Websites

Every Operation Engage location received access to a website designed to function as a central repository for information, resources, and materials. This website offered convenient access for both internal and external audiences to explore and participate in the initiative. The website featured standardized branding and messaging for uniformity, along with links to drug education resources and community/partner organizations.

The central website directed the flow of traffic from advertising across various media channels, enabling comprehensive data collection while preserving the capability to analyze site traffic on a city-by-city basis, pinpointing active audience engagement points for Operation Engage. Divided into two main sections, one dedicated to opioids and the other to stimulants, the sites provided targeted information and resources tailored to each drug category, serving as direct click-through destinations for advertising.

The field divisions updated their individual web pages with real-time information regarding Operation Engage, alongside other ongoing initiatives and positive news stories. This provided an additional avenue for engaging audiences who might visit the field division pages instead of, or alongside, the central Operation Engage site.

The websites contained fundamental details about Operation Engage, encompassing the Welcome Letter, prominent local drug threats, drug fact sheets, listings of local partners and resources, and upcoming events. During 2023, Operation Engage website traffic increased significantly when compared to 2022 data. For comparison, percentages of page visits, new users, and page views increased by approximately 87%, 97%, and 95%, respectively. DEA community outreach specialists and public information officers encouraged those seeking additional information about Operation Engage to visit the websites during public appearances and through social media posts.



Year	Page Views	New Users	Page Visits
2023	65,909	46,842	52,910
2022	35,231	23,743	27,152
2021	4,293	3,018	12,612

Website Metrics.

## Earned Media

Earned media outreach was conducted in conjunction with a few larger DEA events, as well as through proactive outreach to media conducted by the local DEA office. Earned media includes news articles or video segments available from print or online news sources.

Many Operation Engage locations have forged robust ties with the media, enabling them to sustainably use these connections to disseminate information about the drug epidemic and DEA's community outreach and prevention support resources.

**Kalamazoo:** The Detroit Field Division's partnership with CBS affiliate WWMT resulted in an interview with DEA lab technicians about fentanyl, the Detroit Family Summit on Drug Poisonings and Overdoses, DEA's Citizens Academy, DEA Educational Foundation events, and an Operation Engage news segment titled, "Operation Last Mile," being aired across Kalamazoo. These efforts provided valuable information about the dangers of fentanyl and awareness about the Operation Engage initiative.



**WWMT CBS Kalamazoo Reporter Autumn Pitchure learns about methamphetamine and fentanyl pills during a tour of the DEA North Central lab for a story updating west Michigan viewers on the dangers these drugs present to the public.**

Reach

329,354

**Washington, DC:** The Washington, DC Field Division leveraged their relationship with local news stations to provide televised coverage of the "Silent No More" fentanyl awareness event. These actions expanded the reach of Operation Engage across Maryland and Washington, DC.

[www.DEA.gov/OnePill](http://www.DEA.gov/OnePill)

Drug Enforcement Administration  
Washington Division

WASHINGTON LIBERTY  
HIGH SCHOOL

Virginia | Arlington



SILENT  
NO  
MORE

Overdose Prevention Initiative: Outreach on Invisible Dangers  
O.P.I.O.I.D.



**Silent No More fentanyl awareness event.**

Reach

813,201

**Spokane:** The Seattle Field Division's partnership with Fox News resulted in an Operation Engage message and a fentanyl public service announcement being aired during a Seahawks football game and the Super Bowl. Also, the partnership resulted in a community press conference regarding a Spokane Alliance for Fentanyl Education community event aired locally and published online. This partnership expanded the effectiveness of the Seattle Field Division's media outreach efforts.

Reach

1,086,300

**Glendale:** On January 13, Special Agent in Charge Cheri Oz and students from Tempe Union High School appeared on KVOI Law Matters to discuss the fentanyl crisis, One Pill Can Kill, community outreach efforts including Operation Engage in Glendale, and the successful peer-to-peer messaging campaign that Tempe Union High School students launched throughout Arizona. Also, the Phoenix Field Division initiated a quarterly community outreach newsletter that is distributed to all the field division's community partners and stakeholders. The top highlight of this quarterly newsletter was a welcome message from SAC Oz. The newsletter covers events that occurred in the past quarter, highlights upcoming events, provides new/updated DEA seizure data, and highlights national and Arizona press releases, events, and work.



**Phoenix Field Division Special Agent in Charge Cheri Oz.**

Reach

10,000

**Lowell:** The New England Field Division partnered with Demand ZERO, Assistant Special Agent in Charge Dave Lanzoni, the Rendon Group, CT-NBC, and several residents who work in the drug misuse prevention field to host a youth summit

on prevention. The forum was covered in an hourlong broadcast on CT-NBC. The show focused on the drug epidemic and featured a story about Lisa Deane's son, Joe, whom she lost five years ago to substance misuse. Two of his high school and college friends were invited to speak on the broadcast, to further the message that an overdose can happen to anyone. Also featured was a former drug dealer named June Boy, who now conducts outreach in Connecticut. The show received positive feedback.

Reach

15,000

## Interviews



**Public Information Officer Carlos Briano on Community Conversations.**

**Albuquerque:** Throughout 2023, Public Information Officer Carlos Briano and Community Outreach Specialist Michelle Rincon provided several interviews for local television networks. Over 30 appearances were made to raise awareness about fake pills, Duke City Lowrider Bike Program, DEA Museum, joint DEA operations, Citizens Academy, and community resources. These interviews increased public knowledge regarding the Operation Engage initiative and raised fentanyl awareness.

Reach

1,686,054

## Newspaper Articles

**Philadelphia:** The Philadelphia Field Division provided an interview for the Delaware County Times newspaper at the Association of People Against Lethal Drugs event in Media, Pennsylvania, which was hosted by members of DEA's family summit. Community Outreach Specialist Frank



**Community Outreach Specialist Frank McCartney at Regional Family Summit.**

McCartney was interviewed for the article titled “Lives were stolen: Rally in Media a call to action against fentanyl.” Kathleen Carey, reporter for the Daily Times wrote about the event, the devastating effect that fentanyl has had on Delaware County, raising awareness about fentanyl overdose, and ongoing community outreach efforts.<sup>15</sup>

Reach	5,000
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**Billboard Media Campaign**

**Spokane:** The Seattle Field Division and its stakeholders had seven billboards installed in the Spokane area where they prominently displayed the Operation Engage message for a month.

Reach	25,000
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**Billboard media in Spokane.**



**Fentanyl steals our family billboard media.**

**Advertising Campaign**

**Spokane:** The Seattle Field Division, in collaboration with A. Bright Idea, created an advertising campaign to reach the community with a positive message about resources available to prevent illicit fentanyl use. This campaign promoted awareness and encouraged healthy living.

Reach	7,800,000
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**Sporting Events**

**Glendale:** The Phoenix Field Division used school sporting events to get drug use prevention messages to parents and students. During the month of October 2023, along with football ads, One Pill Can Kill messages were placed at three local high school football fields in partnership with Rise Up! Glendale Coalition. High school football games attract an average of 13,000 fans in the Glendale area, making advertising at these venues a valuable media outreach tool.<sup>16</sup>

Reach	39,000
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**Shared Media**

**Social Media**

Social media functions as an instant method for swiftly engaging with audiences to disseminate crucial campaign messages and materials, while also highlighting community resources and events. Every field division received a dedicated “X” handle corresponding to the Operation Engage site (e.g., @DEAABQ) for publishing both original and curated

content. Additionally, locations were urged to coordinate with headquarters to jointly distribute content and amplify messaging to broader audiences across “X” and Instagram. The content encompassed various aspects such as thought leadership, resource provision, event promotion, and sharing and tagging content from community partners involved in Operation Engage.

All Operation Engage locations used their “X” accounts to actively share information on Operation Engage. The combined efforts of the field divisions to engage their communities through social media in 2023 more than doubled the engagement achieved in 2022. The common theme for the hashtags were related to Operation Engage, prescription drug take back events, One Pill Can Kill campaign, Red Ribbon Week, and family summits.

**82** Users

**1,092** Engagements

**198** Posts

**411,261** Reach



## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

**@mark\_ehigiator**

**1,005 potential impressions**

**40 retweets**

**51 likes**



**@DEANEWENGLAND**

**34,000 potential impressions**

**34 retweets**

**102 likes**



**@\_cingraham**

**13,000 potential impressions**

**10 retweets**

**94 likes**



## Overview

DEA relied on a multimedia approach to launch Operation Engage and share information with the public on local drug threats, local resources, and upcoming events. Paid media is one of many strategies to raise awareness about fentanyl, providing information to the public about Operation Engage and drug misuse prevention education resources. Some field divisions created press releases, launched advertising campaigns, and worked with stakeholders to provide announcements about DEA activities during sporting events. Collectively, the field divisions reached 1,191,923 community members through media engagement efforts across the Operation Engage locations despite operating under a limited marketing budget.

**Reach**

**1,191,923**

## School Engagement

Educational institutions hold significant sway in prevention efforts. Frequently, it's the educators and administrative staff who initially identify indicators of potential drug issues, like irregular school attendance or decreasing academic achievement. Engaging students actively and empowering them to take the lead in drug use prevention initiatives not only benefits their school but also enhances their effect as catalysts for change within their community.

Operation Engage aims to reach a wide audience of young people, striving to make a substantial difference either through direct involvement by DEA or by collaborating with educators, parents, and community coalitions. Its mission is to equip students with the knowledge and abilities needed to choose healthy, drug-free lifestyles. DEA field divisions conducted informative sessions in elementary, middle, and high schools, centering on topics such as adolescent brain development, susceptibility to substance use, prevalent illicit drugs like opioids, stimulants, and marijuana, as well as emerging concerns like vaping and techniques for refusing drug use. These efforts use tools like Operation Prevention and other evidence-informed online resources provided by DEA to reinforce the presentations.

## School Drug Prevention Education

Field divisions delivered drug use prevention education using the Operation Prevention curriculum for students and delivered training sessions to educators and school administrators during professional development days. Working with DEA, Discovery Education developed the Operation Prevention curriculum to educate students about the science behind addiction and its impact on the brain and body. The latest updates to the curriculum included content that supported the One Pill Can Kill initiative, which raises awareness about fake pills that are falsely marketed as legitimate prescription pills.<sup>17</sup> Operation Prevention served as an attractive educational platform for DEA to offer to schools nationwide. Presentations, often in conjunction with Red Ribbon Week, included the Operation Prevention curriculum, DEA's community outreach efforts, current drug trends, risks, and protective factors.

Because they are distributed to such a wide demographic within the schools, Operation Engage presentations are designed to be age and culturally appropriate. Presentations conclude

with a question-and-answer session and drug use prevention education resources are distributed.

### El Paso Field Division



#### El Paso Field Division at an Albuquerque school for Red Ribbon Week.

In early September 2023, the El Paso Field Division formed a powerful new partnership with Albuquerque Public Schools and Bernalillo County. The intent was to introduce the Operation Prevention curriculum into their district. Albuquerque Public Schools is the largest school system in New Mexico, serving 68,000 students spread across 141 schools.<sup>18</sup> The student population is also one of the nation's most diverse, and 20% of district youth live in poverty.<sup>19</sup> The El Paso Field Division, working with the New Mexico National Guard, gave Operation Prevention and Red Ribbon Week educational resources to over 15 schools in Albuquerque.

Reach

6,160



#### Los Angeles Field Division at Prevention Week-Eastside High School-Tabling Event.



**“Administrators [from SOAR High School] told us they enjoyed participating in the program. Even those who hadn't participated heard from teachers about how students were talking about it in class. Some students even approached their teachers, asking, “Do you know how to use Narcan™?” or “Do you have any?” Teachers were often surprised, responding with things like, “Why do you know that?” It sparked a lot of meaningful conversations and even made other schools interested in joining the program. That was one of the biggest and most successful events we had.”**

*Prevention Coordinator Keisha Como, Change Lanes Youth Support Services*

Polytechnic High School, Woodrow Wilson Senior High School, and Jump Beyond Torrence. At the end of each clinic, DEA's community outreach specialist discussed the importance of making healthy choices and remaining drug free. DEA discussed the importance of life choices and how decisions can affect long-term goals. School administrators were pleased with the event and discussed the planning of future events. DEA presentations generated interest from administrators about future educational presentations specifically for parents on fentanyl awareness.

Reach	175
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### Miami Field Division

The Miami Field Division delivered the Operation Prevention curriculum to 20 public schools throughout Broward County and the Ft. Lauderdale area. By leveraging its partnership with Broward County School District and working with partner United Way, the Miami Field Division increased its reach by 89% when compared to students reached in 2022.

**United Way of Broward County has united the community to tackle the most complex, critical challenges and create long-lasting positive change. United, we stand up for those who can't stand up for themselves, united we support those who are working hard and struggling, and united we fight for the Health, Education, and Financial Prosperity of EVERY person in our community.<sup>20</sup>**

Reach	1,981
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**Los Angeles Field Division at Quartz Hill High School.**

### Los Angeles Field Division

The Los Angeles Field Division was highly involved in school engagement and used Operation Prevention education resources at multiple public schools within the Baldwin Park, Bellflower, Indian Springs, and San Bernadino School Districts. Operation Prevention was presented to students, staff, and administrators at Synergy Academy. The field division provided the “Operation Prevention School Guide for School Administration” to administrators and the “Just Think Twice” website to students. Also, the Los Angeles Field Division partnered with Change Lanes Youth Support Services and Educare Foundation to provide a one-day Achievement and Commitment to Excellence event at SOAR High School.

National Prevention Week and Back-to-School Night provided the field division with an opportunity to reach students and parents at Quartz Hills and Eastside High School. The field division set up resource booths, delivered the Operation Prevention curriculum, and provided the Operation Prevention Parent Toolkit to attending parents.

Reach	1,110
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### Los Angeles Sparks Women's Basketball Clinic

The Los Angeles Field Division and the Los Angeles Sparks women's professional basketball team collaborated to host one-day basketball clinics at

## New England Field Division



**Red Ribbon Week Region 1 Award presentation at Braintree High School.**

In 2023 the New England Field Division transitioned their Operation Engage initiatives from Manchester, New Hampshire, to Lowell, Massachusetts. Despite the challenges associated with the transition, DEA continued its partnership with BeBOLD Bedford, formed a new partnership with Paula Young of Achieve Greatness, and reached multiple schools in the New England area to provide Operation Prevention education. The Operation Prevention curriculum was often delivered in conjunction with other events like Red Ribbon Week. These schools included Braintree High School, Lurgio Middle School, Pinkerton Academy, Raymond High School, Hollis Brookline Middle School, Londonderry High School, Northeastern University, Wilmington High School, and the Manchester School Board staff. DEA also provided schools with hundreds of drug use prevention publications, including: One Pill Can Kill and prescription drug misuse flyers.

Reach

1,966

**BeBOLD's mission is to prevent substance abuse in the Bedford community by educating Bedford's adults and youth about the current dangers of all kinds of substance abuse, including alcohol, illegal drugs, prescription drugs, and tobacco.<sup>21</sup>**

## New Orleans Field Division



**Community Outreach Specialist Dr. Leslie Faulkner accompanied by the New Orleans Diversion Team at Benjamin Franklin High School.**

The New Orleans Field Division's school engagement activities in 2023 were extremely successful. The field division increased the number of students reached by 58%. The New Orleans Field Division, working with the National Guard, delivered the Operation Prevention curriculum to six schools. By pairing the drug use prevention training with K-9 demonstrations and displays of DEA equipment, the field division gained community support for the valuable science-based curriculum from educators and reached a significant audience.

Reach

2,760

## Philadelphia Field Division

The Philadelphia Field Division used Operation Prevention resources to deliver educational presentations to over 15 schools, including Philadelphia School District faculty, the School District of Philadelphia Office of Prevention and Trauma, and Pennsylvania State University criminal justice majors. In addition to Operation Prevention training, teachers at the Chester Community Charter School assigned a writing project for students to author a paper on the importance of drug use prevention and awareness. The Philadelphia Field Division reviewed the papers and awarded prizes for the best ones.

Reach

2,016



**Council Rock Middle School.**

**"I would encourage the DEA to continue doing what it's doing and expand it. If there's any place they're going to invest resources and drive change, it'll be in the schools. It's chump change compared to the larger agency operational budget. I think it will pay significant dividends down the road."**

*Council Rock School District Security Supervisor  
Donald J. Mihalek*

### **Seattle Field Division**

In response to a rise in opioid deaths in Seattle, DEA transitioned its focus area from Spokane to Seattle in 2023. Though this transition led to challenges in establishing new stakeholder relationships, the Seattle Field Division was highly involved in school engagement and used Operation Prevention education resources at multiple public schools. The Seattle Field Division in partnership with SheRay's & Associates, Children of the Sun Coalition, Spokane Tribal Council, Spokane Tribal Police, Bureau of Indian Affairs Division, Spokane Tribal Prevention, Wellpinit Middle and High School, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Spokane Tribal Mental Health hosted a Tribal Fentanyl Education Health & Awareness event at Wellpinit Middle



**Wellpinit High School students listen to DEA Community Outreach Specialist Marcus Pickett deliver a presentation.**

and High School. The field division provided an Operation Engage booth, where they distributed drug use prevention education resources including One Pill Can Kill, Emoji Decoded fact sheet, and an assortment of additional drug fact sheets. Also, the field division provided educational resources at the Second Annual Northeast Washington School Safety Summit<sup>22</sup>, presented by the Regional School Safety Team from Northeast Washington Educational Service District 101.

**Reach**

**1,451**

### **St. Louis Field Division**

The St. Louis Field Division gave drug use education presentations to 14 schools within the St. Louis area. The prior year, no numbers were reported, making 2023 a significant improvement. DEA partnered with organizations and speakers that provided students with a broader understanding of the reality of substance use. One of these speakers is Libby Davis, founder of the Cooper Davis Memorial Foundation. Libby Davis spoke at schools in Belton, Missouri, a community that had recently lost four high school students to fentanyl. Libby Davis shared a compelling story about the loss of her son, Cooper, to fentanyl. Her message urged students to refrain from substance use. Another featured speaker was from First Call, a prevention and recovery organization in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Reach**

**4,463**

## Overview

Operation Engage successfully engaged schools by delivering the Operation Prevention curriculum. Additionally, they supplied teachers and support staff with both printed and digital resource materials. They also capitalized on national campaigns like Red Ribbon Week to enhance engagement within schools. Leveraging local coalitions and community partners, who often had deeper connections with schools, was another strategy employed by field divisions to amplify the message of drug misuse prevention through Operation Engage. Although the school engagement efforts achieved overall success in terms of reach, they faced numerous challenges over the year. Some field divisions changed Operation Engage locations, which required creating new partnerships with school district administrators. Collectively, the field divisions managed to apply the lessons learned from previous engagements and effectively used their relationships with community partners to reach 3,887 students on average.

## Workplace Engagement

Drug use and misuse continued to be a problem in the workplace in 2023. According to the National Safety Council, three-quarters of businesses have experienced repercussions due to employees' opioid use. However, merely 17% of these businesses believe they possess the necessary tools to tackle this concern. Substance misuse stands out as a prevalent issue nationwide, imposing a staggering financial burden of over \$78.5 billion each year, covering healthcare expenses, productivity losses, associated criminal activities, and additional societal expenses. Specifically, \$20 billion is attributed to productivity declines, while \$29 billion accounts for health-related costs.<sup>23</sup>

Each year, DEA in collaboration with partners such as Capacity Builders, CADCA, FBI, Department of Justice, local municipalities, and American Indian Tribal organizations work with local businesses to bring awareness and educational resources to business owners and employees in a variety of professional fields. Presentations such as One Pill Can Kill, Hidden in Plain Sight, and Operation Prevention's Workplace Module on Opioids are presented to healthcare workers, first responders, educators, and other professionals. Workplace engagement events have a large impact on the community, often attracting more stakeholders and inspiring additional workplace training. In 2023, seven out of the 11 DEA field divisions worked with stakeholders to provide workplace engagement events.

## Detroit Field Division



**DEA traveling for a weekly event.**

Throughout the summer of 2023, the Detroit Field Division partnered with the Kalamazoo Police Department to reach employees on a weekly basis. Kalamazoo Parks and Recreation held a Lunchtime Live! event, a weekly summer gathering that highlights local musicians. Local businesses, DEA, and Kalamazoo Police Department interacted weekly with employees and provided Operation Engage resources, including One Pill Can Kill publications, marijuana information, and DEA website information to employees and employers from local businesses including Bronson Hospital and Western Michigan University.

Reach	708
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## El Paso Field Division

Despite challenges stemming from lack of travel funding and the geographic distance between communities, the El Paso Field Division was the most active division in workplace engagement with an impressive 93% increase in 2023 total reach when compared to the numbers reached in 2022.

In April, the field division hosted drug misuse prevention and education training for employees at Santa Ana Casino and a local pueblo. The training included computer-based learning developed using the One Pill Can Kill resource combined with an assortment of drug fact sheets. This event was so successful that some employers made the training mandatory for all their employees.

The El Paso Field Division and partner Capacity Builders, Inc. also offered a training event for the Navajo Nation Police Department, the New Mexico Department of Health, and other first responders, treatment specialists, and health educators. The



### Public Information Officer Carlos Briano presents on THC and Fentanyl with First Responders on Navajo Nation.

field division provided drug misuse prevention and education training focused on fentanyl and marijuana. This training event was deemed a great success by the El Paso Field Division and led to additional outreach events and new stakeholders.

The El Paso Field Division, Bureau of Indian Affairs, FBI, and U.S. Department of Justice developed a three-day “Bureau of Indian Affairs Workshop Training” to cover a range of topics for employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, tribal law enforcement officers, special agents, and criminal investigators. DEA provided information regarding current drug threats and the Operation Engage initiative available to American Indian Tribal communities in New Mexico.

Reach

1,953

### Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

On July 11, the El Paso Field Division and Bernalillo County offered CADCA’s “Community Workplace Engagement Training” at the Commissioner Chambers in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The training helped companies and other organizations address substance use and misuse in the workplace. The training introduced participants to the problems caused by substance use, how to recognize the signs of substance use, how to start a conversation, and how to introduce recovery resources.

CADCA’s Community Workplace Engagement Training is designed to help employers:

- Access the Drug-Free Workplace Program
- Describe the impact alcohol and drugs have on job performance

- Discuss supervisory attitudes related to maintaining a healthy workplace
- Acknowledge the role stigma plays in recovery
- Identify legal implications related to substance use in the workplace
- Illustrate the best practice supervisor guidelines

### CADCA Workplace Engagement Flyer.

Reach

64

### Miami Field Division

The Miami Field Division was able to leverage strong partners like United Way and Broward County Sheriff’s Office to increase its reach over 2022 numbers by 40% in 2023. Working with the Miami Dade Chamber of Commerce, the field division offered Operation Prevention’s computer-based Workplace Module on Opioids to their staff.

The Miami Field Division also had the opportunity to provide drug misuse educational resources at a local behavioral health conference. Behavioral health conferences are significant events designed to bring



**Assistant Special Agent in Charge Erika Jimenez delivering a One Pill Can Kill presentation.**

together professionals, researchers, policymakers, and advocates in the field of mental health and substance use to address emerging challenges, share advancements, and discuss best practices in prevention, treatment, and policy. The primary goals are to foster collaboration, encourage the exchange of new research and practices, and improve outcomes for individuals and communities facing behavioral health challenges. This event provided the field division with the opportunity to network, share drug education resources, and influence local policy.

Reach	675
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### New Orleans Field Division



**Dr. Faulkner with the Nurse Practitioner professors at LSU School of Nursing.**

The New Orleans Field Division brought the Operation Engage message to educators, health care and social workers, and law enforcement professionals in their area. The field division reached professionals across New Orleans. The field division's relationship with Louisiana State University School of Nursing allowed DEA to present the latest educational resources to Louisiana's current and future nurses at the Opioids and Prescription Authority meeting.

Reach	680
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**“The implementation of workplace education is crucial in establishing a secure and efficient work environment. This resource aids employees in comprehending their rights and obligations, along with the potential risks and hazards they may encounter in the workplace. Engaging in collaboration with law enforcement agencies is of utmost importance in ensuring workplace safety. These agencies play a vital role in providing guidance on legal compliance and aiding in the prevention of criminal activity. Through collaboration, employers and law enforcement agencies can establish impactful strategies aimed at preventing workplace accidents, mitigating criminal activities, and fostering a culture that prioritizes safety and security.”**

*New Orleans Field Division Community Outreach Specialist Dr. Leslie Faulkner*

### Philadelphia Field Division

The Philadelphia Field Division participated in a "Safe Schools" conference hosted by the United States Secret Service at Neuman University. Most audience members were education and law enforcement professionals. DEA presented the importance of drug use prevention education in schools and current drug trends, such as fake pills, vaping, and increased use of marijuana among teens. Also highlighted were DEA prevention initiatives such as National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, Red Ribbon, One Pill Can Kill, Operation Prevention, and Citizens Academy.

Reach	470
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## Seattle Field Division

The Seattle Field Division hosted four major workplace engagement events in 2023. In addition to bringing awareness to more commonly known illicit substances such as fentanyl and marijuana, two of these events focused on xylazine, which is a large animal veterinary sedative commonly added to fentanyl to increase the duration of the high. This drug, becoming prevalent nationwide, is especially of concern in the Washington area.<sup>24</sup> This provided a unique opportunity to bring the Operation Engage message to members of the veterinary profession.



## Washington, DC Field Division

The Washington, DC Field Division was asked to provide a drug misuse prevention education training for the Potomac Job Corps Center, which is one of the largest residential career centers in the DC area. Along with speaking about the dangers of fentanyl and opioid use, the field division provided Operation Engage publications including Drugs

of Abuse, Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Substance Use Prevention, Prevention with Purpose: A Strategic Planning Guide for Preventing Drug Misuse Among College Students, Prescription for Disaster: How Teens Misuse Medicine, and an assortment of drug fact sheets.



## Overview

Operation Engage's effect in the workplace was significantly greater in 2023. In 2022, a total of 2,099 individuals were reached. In 2023, that number rose to more than 5,760. Working with community stakeholders and partners, DEA field divisions were able to provide drug misuse prevention education to healthcare providers, first responders, educators, and other professionals. Their efforts provided valuable tools for both government and private employers to help address the devastating effects of drug misuse in their workplace.



## Citizens Academy

DEA's Citizens Academy is a significant source of community involvement and a valuable tool for recruiting, educating, and training stakeholders. The course provides comprehensive training for community members, leaders, and corporate figures, and the training provides attendees with a unique insight into DEA's operations. These training sessions included lectures from various departments, intelligence briefings, discussions on firearms, surveillance techniques, enforcement strategies, and prevention resources, all aimed at highlighting DEA's role in law enforcement and drug misuse prevention efforts. This initiative also paved the way for potential collaborations with new agencies. Participants were recruited through internal networks and quarterly stakeholder gatherings, ensuring a large pool of qualified candidates received access to DEA resources.

While every DEA field division tailored the program to fit its needs, Citizens Academy usually is an in-person 5- to 8-week dynamic training that provides a unique opportunity to gain an understanding of DEA's critical mission.

### Citizen Academy Goals

- Enhances the ability of a DEA field division to cultivate, leverage, and strengthen community relationships.
- Rallies community awareness for enforcement accomplishments, community outreach, and prevention support activities.
- Increasing community awareness of DEA's law enforcement and community outreach and prevention support efforts.
- Developing new community relationships.
- Establishing a qualified pool of vetted and trained community liaisons to support DEA's community outreach and prevention support efforts.

DEA's Citizens Academy attendees represented a wide range of individuals including community leaders, business professionals, educators, civic engagement organization and faith-based organization members, youth development agencies, and representatives from state and local government. Upon completing the Citizens Academy, graduates were encouraged to actively support DEA's efforts by spreading information within their communities about the risks associated with drug misuse and the significance of prevention measures and available resources.

**Detroit**



**Special Agent Scott Smith gives Heather Fitzgerald training on how to fire a handgun during the Kalamazoo Regional Citizens Academy.**

The Detroit Field Division partnered with the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety, the Kalamazoo Township Police, Western Michigan University Police, Portage Police, and the local Sheriff's Department to provide a successful Citizens Academy. This partnership strengthened the relationship between DEA and the local police department. Presentations and workshops were provided for 45 attendees on a variety of topics including the Department of Homeland Security's role, drug trafficking in the region, prosecution, and working with legislators. DEA also gave a drug trafficking overview, provided firearm instruction, discussed drug trends, and provided a Hidden in Plain Sight demonstration.

Reach

45

**Albuquerque**

The El Paso Field Division's Citizens Academy was held in Albuquerque and was highly successful. The participants met three days a week for two weeks. Working with the Albuquerque Police Department, DEA provided an expansive program that included an overview of Operation Engage initiatives. The participants were asked to provide feedback about their experience. They all had an overwhelmingly positive review of the Citizens Academy and stated they learned a lot about DEA and its operations.

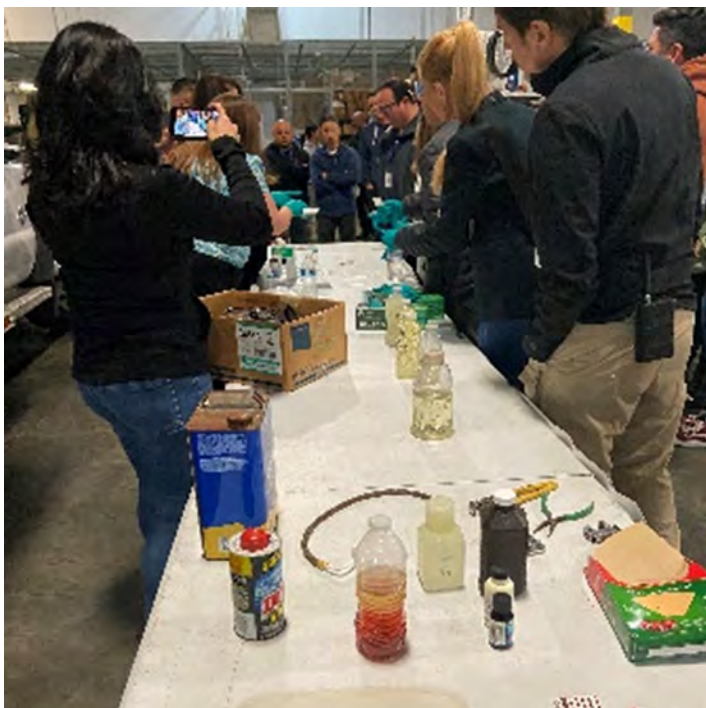


**El Paso Field Division Citizens Academy Participants at the Airwing.**

Reach

18

## Los Angeles



**Los Angeles Field Division Citizens Academy Lab Day.**

The Los Angeles Field Division provided its first Operation Engage Citizens Academy in 2023. The event was a tremendous success and resulted in an increase of qualified, vetted, and informed stakeholders. The Los Angeles Field Division's Citizens Academy curriculum included a day at a DEA laboratory where attendees learned about DEA's ability to test on site.

Reach

21

## Miami



**Miami Field Division Citizens Academy attendees at the firing range.**

The Miami Field Division provided four sessions for its Citizen Academy participants in March and April of 2023. These sessions included classroom instruction, special guest speakers, a lab visit, and a trip to the firing range.

Reach

11

## New England

The New England Field Division provided a five-week Citizens Academy in 2023. Week One included a PowerPoint presentation by DEA leadership, who spoke about the many diverse job opportunities within DEA. Week Two included a sneak peek into the clandestine lab. DEA led the participants through a simulated shooting exercise during Week Three. Week Four included two guest speakers: Lisa Deane of Demand Zero spoke about losing her son, Joe, to overdose poisoning, and Assistant Special Agent in Charge Dayne Krey spoke about a drug case he experienced while assigned to San Diego. Both presentations were well received. The final week consisted of a well-earned graduation ceremony for the attendees.

Reach

18

## Philadelphia



**Supervisory Special Agent Patrick Trainor (left) and Andrew Edelberg (right).**

In October 2023, the Philadelphia Field Division held a one-day Citizens Academy in the field division's training room and provided tactical skill training in the lower area of the federal building. The morning presentations included recruitment and training, enforcement, diversion, intel, and community outreach. The afternoon session consisted of hands-on training. The Philadelphia Field Division received tremendous positive feedback from participants. Guest speaker Andrew Edelberg spoke about what key messages were provided to the attendees.

Reach	38
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**“The One Pill Can Kill campaign has been a major focus of the Citizens Academy instructors. A few years ago, four out of ten pills were counterfeit. Now, it's eight out of ten. Taking a [fake] pill can be more dangerous than Russian roulette because Narcan™ often doesn't work. The Academy has done a great job educating stakeholders and raising awareness about the evolving drug landscape and prevention strategies.”**

*Philadelphia Field Division Partner Andrew Edelberg*

## Summary

DEA's Citizens Academy continued to be a valuable tool to educate key stakeholders and community members about the importance of DEA's mission. Nine DEA field divisions offered Citizens Academy as part of Operation Engage efforts to inform, educate, and train stakeholders while improving DEA's image and enhancing community safety. DEA field divisions encouraged 226 community members to actively support DEA's efforts by disseminating information within their communities about the risks associated with drug misuse and the significance of prevention measures and available resources.

Reach	226
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## Glendale



### Phoenix Field Division's 2023 Citizen Academy Graduates.

The Phoenix Field Division completed its third DEA Citizens Academy in Glendale, Arizona. Over five days, DEA covered drug trends, federal laws, firearms, Narcan training, drones, and emergency first aid. Attendees were provided a rare look into DEA's drug misuse prevention efforts to include Operation Engage, Operation Prevention, and One Pill Can Kill initiatives.

Reach	25
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# NOT ALL PILLS ARE REAL



# ONE PILL CAN KILL

Taking a pill **NOT** purchased from a licensed pharmacy can be a deadly decision.



Get a closer look at the dangers of fake pills at [DEA.gov/OnePill](https://www.dea.gov/OnePill).

# Operation Engage Resources

## Federal Government Agencies

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control has been a leader in protecting Americans from injury and violence. It works proactively with its partners to track trends, conduct research, raise awareness, and implement prevention programs.

[www.cdc.gov/injury/](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/)

### National Institute on Drug Abuse

NIDA's mission is to advance science on drug use and addiction and to apply that knowledge to improve individual and public health.

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

### Office of National Drug Control Policy

ONDCP leads and coordinates the nation's drug policy so that it improves the health and lives of the American people. ONDCP is responsible for the development and implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy.

[www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp](http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp)

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and support to foster recovery while ensuring equitable access and better outcomes.

[www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

### U.S. Department of Education

ED's Office of Safe and Supportive Schools administers, coordinates, and recommends policy as well as administers grant programs and technical assistance centers addressing the overall safe and healthy school community.

<https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/safe-supportive-schools/>

## National Organizations

### Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

CADCA's mission is to strengthen the capacity of community coalitions to create and maintain safe, healthy, and drug-free communities globally. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance and training, public policy advocacy, media strategies and marketing programs, training, and special events.

[www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)

### DEA Educational Foundation

The DEA Educational Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization established in 2001 whose goal is to educate the public on the many costs and consequences of illegal drugs in our society. The Foundation funds the DEA Educational Foundation Youth Dance Program, which is a free after-school alternative to drugs through the fun, healthy, and expressive art form of dance.

[www.deaeducationalfoundation.org](http://www.deaeducationalfoundation.org)

### Elks Drug Awareness Program

The Elks National Drug Awareness Program is the largest volunteer drug awareness program in the United States and is committed to eliminating illegal drug use among all members of society.

[www.elks.org/dap](http://www.elks.org/dap)

### Milken Institute

The Milken Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank focused on accelerating measurable progress on the path to a meaningful life. With a focus on financial, physical, mental, and environmental health, it brings together the best ideas and innovative resourcing to develop blueprints for tackling critical global issues through the lens of what is pressing now and what is coming next.

[www.milkeninstitute.org](http://www.milkeninstitute.org)

## **National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Agency Directors**

NASADAD is a private, nonprofit educational, scientific, and informational organization whose purpose is to foster and support the development of effective alcohol and other drug use prevention and treatment programs throughout every state.

[www.nasadad.org](http://www.nasadad.org)

## **National Prevention Network**

NPN is a NASADAD component group working to ensure effective and evidence-based tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use prevention programs and policies that are comprehensive and culturally competent. It is comprised of state prevention coordinators who are responsible for substance use prevention systems in each state.

<http://nasadad.org/npn-4>

## **National Family Partnership**

NFP is a national leader in drug use prevention education and advocacy. Its mission is to lead and support the nation's families and communities in nurturing the full potential of healthy, drug-free youth.

[www.nfp.org](http://www.nfp.org)

## **Partnership to End Addiction**

The Partnership to End Addiction's mission is to transform how the nation addresses addiction by empowering families, advancing effective care, shaping public policy, and changing culture. It empowers families and communities to help prevent and treat substance use disorders and addiction and support recovery for their children and loved ones.

[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Methodology

### Report Objectives and Methodology

To properly document the results of Operation Engage in line with the initiative's objectives, it was recognized that a report was necessary to encompass all the achievements and obstacles encountered during its third year. Safety Research Corporation of America was enlisted to collaborate with DEA in producing the 2023 Reach and Impact Report. This report aimed to offer a comprehensive overview of the program, detailing metrics and the execution of deliverables.

The assessment of Operation Engage's deliverables involved the integration of quantitative data, representing actual participation figures, and qualitative data, which delved into the broader context of successes, challenges, and motivations surrounding the conducted activities. To align these insights with Operation Engage's strategy and objectives, a multitiered evaluation approach was adopted. This approach comprised location-specific metrics, individual interviews with the Community Outreach Specialists (or their designates), and targeted discussions with nine key stakeholders supporting the Operation Engage sites. These methodologies were employed to gauge the extent and influence of the initiative within each respective location.

### Data Collection

The metrics for each Operation Engage location were captured through:

- Monthly activity reports
- One-on-one interviews and local metric data from the Community Outreach Specialist or representative
- Additional information from DEA Headquarters and national program facilitators (e.g., DEA Educational Foundation, Milken Institute, CADCA, SheRay's & Associates)

### Engagement Activity Compilation

Initially, SRCA asked each Operation Engage location to provide a full list of activities completed in each of the engagement categories (i.e., Stakeholder, Adult/Community, Youth, School, Media, Workplace, and the Citizens Academy). Using the information provided through the monthly activity reports and field division data, SRCA compiled a full list of all completed activities by engagement category.

### Field Division Interviews

After compiling all activities by field division, SRCA conducted individual discussions with the Community Outreach Specialists (or division representatives). These discussions focused on a further review of the engagement activities provided along with understanding strategies for engagement, community involvement, supportive documentation of events, successes, and challenges of the initiative. During these discussions, SRCA asked for additional information about specific events with a timeline for completion. Due to personnel changes and budgetary restrictions, some metrics were unavailable in certain Operation Engage locations.

## Supplemental Information

Following a thorough examination of the data provided by the field divisions, SRCA initiated communication with DEA Headquarters to acquire supplementary information pertaining to social media and website analytics, original Operation Engage proposals, and national program facilitator statistics. SRCA proceeded to liaise with each national program facilitator to gather metric data concerning the events and activities conducted at each Operation Engage site. Furthermore, SRCA received a comprehensive briefing from the DEA Educational Foundation regarding the overarching program, as well as the specific achievements and obstacles encountered at individual locations.

## Analyzing and Interpreting Data

The metrics analysis was conducted using the information obtained through data collection to determine if the following objectives were met:

- Increase in number of public-private partnerships in each location to collaborate on efforts to reduce drug misuse-related problems.
- Increase in community members' awareness of the scope of drug misuse-related problems in that community.
- Increase in engagement by educators and parents in using science-based prevention materials, such as DEA's Operation Prevention, to prevent drug misuse in each location.
- Community stakeholders' development of a formal strategic action plan to decrease drug misuse-related overdoses in each Operation Engage community.

### Metric Analysis

Based on the data collected, SRCA initiated the assessment and analysis phase. A detailed report was created for each Operation Engage location, encompassing a background on the local drug climate, location-specific Operation Engage information, and a thorough analysis of each engagement category, including reach metrics where available. The analysis also documented challenges faced by the locations, as well as engagement activities that deviated from the initial plan. Each report highlighted the activities of the Operation Engage location, evaluating their success in achieving deliverable objectives and their alignment with the broader goals of Operation Engage.

### Stakeholder Interviews

In January and February 2025, a set of nine interviews took place with stakeholders, as identified by each field division, and approved by DEA. SRCA presented a list of proposed interview questions to DEA for approval. These interviews aimed to gain insight into the participants' backgrounds and roles within Operation Engage, the importance of its activities, the effect on drug use prevention awareness, lessons learned, prospects for sustainability, and recommendations for the future. After each interview, transcripts were made and any quotes used in the report are directly sourced from these transcripts.

### Research Limitations

Throughout the data collection and analysis process SRCA encountered some challenges to obtaining quantitative and qualitative information from some Operation Engage locations. During 2023, there were personnel changes in the Contractor Community Operation Specialist role, which led to a lack of available information and metrics during that absence.

## Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

**Added-value:** Includes free airtime or spots.

**Average session duration:** The total duration of all visits divided by the total number of visits.

**Bounce rate:** The percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page.

**Call to action:** Aims to persuade a viewer to perform a certain act immediately. In the case of the billboard campaigns, the call to action was to visit a website or call 211 for help.

**Click-through:** Clicks on a link included in outreach material to a specific digital asset, such as a website. In the case of this effort, click-throughs were links back to the microsite.

**Digital impression:** When an advertisement or any other form of digital media renders on a user's screen. Impressions are not action based and are merely defined by a user potentially seeing the advertisement, making cost per thousand impressions campaigns ideal for businesses intent on spreading brand awareness.

**Earned media:** Media relies on public or media relations to gain coverage about the event or effort—this may be online or offline.

**Frequency:** The average number of times a person was exposed to the media asset.

**Impact:** Short-term and long-term changes on the community as a result of Operation Engage—this may be related to sustainability of the engagement activities.

**Impressions:** The number of times a person passed and potentially saw a media asset.

**Owned media:** Content, such as websites or blogs, that the brand or organization controls.

**Pages per visit:** The total number of page views divided by the total number of visits.

**Page views:** The number of times a specific webpage is accessed. A page may be viewed multiple times in a single visit.

**Potential impressions:** Calculated by adding up the total followers of each Twitter author for a specified topic and time period.

**Reach:** Number of people exposed to the various components of Operation Engage (e.g., number of people trained, number of youth participants in the Youth Dance Program, and the reach/frequency of the PSAs).

**Visitors:** The number of unique individuals who visit the website. Visitors are determined by IP address.

**Visits:** The number of times the website is accessed.

## Appendix C – Metrics

Location	Page Views	Visits	New Users
Operation Engage Landing Page	16,719	13,953	12,686
Albuquerque	5,803	4,124	3,626
Broward County	1,575	1,168	1,020
Washington, DC	872	713	651
Glendale	736	599	514
Kansas City	8,284	6,508	5,699
Manchester	1,904	1,515	1,335
Michigan	2,516	1,895	1,666
New Orleans	902	693	597
Philadelphia	16,019	13,412	11,757
Southern California	3,582	2,836	2,552
Spokane	6,997	5,494	4,739

### Website Engagement Metrics by Field Division.

Location	Top Content
Operation Engage Landing Page	Operation Engage Fact Sheet
Albuquerque	Methamphetamine Fact Sheet
Broward County	Fake Pills Fact Sheet
Washington, DC	Synthetic Opioids Fact Sheet
Glendale	Prescription for Disaster How Teens Misuse Medicine
Kansas City	Fentanyl Fact Sheet
Manchester	Operation Prevention Parent Toolkit
Michigan	Stimulants
New Orleans	NCDAS: Opioid Epidemic: Addiction Statistics
Philadelphia	Fake Pills Factsheet
Southern California	California Alliance
Spokane	Fentanyl Fact Sheet

### Top Website Content.

Field Division	Post	Average Views Per Post	Followers	Average Field Division Reach
El Paso	79	224	2,205	17,696
Miami	91	759	3,643	69,069
Washington, DC	103	501	6,585	51,603
Phoenix	88	380	3,849	33,440
St. Louis	97	272	2,244	26,384
New England	96	309	6,519	29,664
Detroit	93	326	2,650	30,318
New Orleans	92	477	2,539	43,884
Philadelphia	96	247	2,749	23,712
Los Angeles	103	1,198	8,240	123,394
Seattle	99	1,038	4,723	102,762

#### Social Media Engagement on "X."

## Appendix D – Endnotes

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## Drug Enforcement Administration

Office of Public Affairs

Community Outreach and Prevention Support Section

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[www.operationengage.com](http://www.operationengage.com)