

## OVERVIEW

The York County Drug Task Force (YCDTF) is an investigative unit under the authority, control and direction of the York County District Attorney. The YCDTF is a team of investigators from York County police departments who work together within or beyond the municipal boundaries of their individual jurisdictions to investigate drug offenses. All full-time members of the YCDTF are sworn County Detectives and as such are not confined to individual municipal boundaries.

### PURPOSE OF YORK COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE

The purpose of the YCDTF is to direct its primary efforts in the following areas:

- i. Covert and overt investigations concerning individuals and organizations engaged in illicit criminal activities in the York County area, with the specific emphasis on drug and firearms offenses.
- ii. Development of intelligence data regarding drug, firearms and major crimes offenses in the York County area.
- iii. Assimilation of intelligence and maintenance of files regarding such criminal activity. Due to the nature of their job responsibilities, drug investigators, on a daily basis are in contact with informants and sources of information. These informants and sources of information possess information which is not only useful for drug investigations, but for all types of criminal activity. Therefore, the YCDTF, through its intelligence sources, can be a valuable tool and resource for law enforcement in York County.
- iv. Dissemination of intelligence information to appropriate Federal, State, and Local Law Enforcement agencies.
- v. Coordination between municipal police departments, the York County District Attorney's Office, Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, Pennsylvania State Police, and the United States Attorney's Office for legal advice and encouragement of vigorous prosecution of developed cases.

### CRITICAL FINDINGS

- Many police departments lack the personnel to remove patrol officers from their shift schedules for longer term drug investigations. Essentially, the officers are needed on patrol.
- The YCDTF provides a resource for local police departments to turn to for assistance with "drug problems" in their communities.
- The YCDTF often provides assistance to local, state and federal agencies.
  - Example: Operation Sunrise
- The YCDTF officers are highly trained. Accordingly, they are in a position to provide training to local police departments.
- The YCDTF possesses the ability to adapt its strategic priorities based on local trends in criminal activity. Local trends are identified through intelligence gathering efforts that start with street-level investigations.
- The YCDTF works hand in hand with the York County DA's Office Felony Narcotic Unit. This fosters an environment of cooperation that leads more often than not to the successful prosecution of drug dealers.
- A higher percentage of YCDTF arrests were felonies compared to other law enforcement agency arrests for felonies. The reason for this is simply that the YCDTF specifically targets felonious crimes whereas local agencies must react to all crimes including misdemeanor and summaries.

- The YCDTF primarily makes more controlled substance arrests (Cocaine, Heroin and Prescription Pills) versus Marijuana.
- The YCDTF makes more arrests for the possession of controlled substances with the intent to deliver (felony) and delivery of controlled substances (felony) than simple possession (misdemeanor).
- The YCDTF often seizes firearms in the possession of drug dealers. These firearms often have been stolen from suburban/rural places within the county.

### **CONCLUSION**

In York County, heroin and prescription drug abuse are on the rise. Although an open air drug market exists within the City of York, these problems are no longer relegated to the City alone. Drug addicts can be found in every municipality in York County...and where you find addicts, you will find dealers. Homes throughout the County are burglarized for items that can be sold for drug money or exchanged for drugs. Firearms are often stolen and end up in the hands of a dealer.

One in four violent offenders committed the offense while under the influence of drugs (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). Shootings in the City of York are more often than not associated with illegal drugs. Be it under the influence or a result of territorial distribution disputes.

Accordingly, a multi-jurisdictional approach is a vital part of the overall county-wide effort to stem the distribution of illegal drugs. The YCDTF will continue to play a crucial role in that effort.