

Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement Grant Program Report

Executive Summary

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Oregon Criminal Justice Commission

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The Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) has administered the Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement Grant since 2018 and is required to issue annual reports concerning the status and effectiveness of the program and to provide future funding recommendations to the Oregon Legislative Assembly.

Since the last annual report, the grant program was expanded by funds available, eligible recipients of funds, and program purposes. Legislative changes during 2021 and 2022 appropriated \$26 million in special one-time funds, added community-based organizations as eligible grantees, and added a new grant purpose of addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis associated with worker abuse at illegal cannabis grow sites. Following these changes, the grant program expanded from four law enforcement grantees serving five counties and two cities to 10 law enforcement grantees serving 12 counties and two cities and two community-based organization grantees providing services to trafficked and abused workers statewide.

The CJC, with input from grantees, other agencies, and interested parties, also changed its program data reporting structure, in 2022, to better gauge the problems being addressed with these grant funds. Described in this report, among other things, are the following findings:

- Since April 1, 2022, grant-funded law enforcement operations reported 172 illegal cannabis incidents, occurring in 59 unique zip codes.
- Six zip codes, located in Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas counties, saw 10 or more incidents involving grant-funded law enforcement activities.
- In 38 of the 172 reported incidents (22 percent of those reported), law enforcement observed or suspected that labor trafficking and/or worker abuse was present.
- In the 172 reported incidents, law enforcement observed 218 persons known or suspected to be victims of labor trafficking and/or worker abuse, though whether this figure accounts for 218 unique persons or persons observed on more than one occasion is unknown. At least one child was observed.
- Of the 172 reported incidents, 58 percent resulted in at least one water use violation and 44 percent resulted in at least one building code violation.
- Law enforcement grantees seized approximately 1.3 million illegal cannabis plants and 490,886 pounds of illegal processed cannabis, as well as other illegal narcotics and substances, firearms, and equipment used to operate illegal grows off-grid.

Per the Oregon Legislative Assembly's instruction, the CJC also assessed the funding needs of existing programs at varying levels of services provided, as well as what funds would be needed to expand the program to more jurisdictions. Options for future program investments are provided in the full report.

A copy of the full report is available online at <https://www.oregon.gov/cjc>, or by contacting the Criminal Justice Commission at (503) 378-4830.