

# **Illegal Marijuana Market Enforcement Grant Program Report**

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## **Oregon Criminal Justice Commission**

Ken Sanchagrin  
Executive Director

## Executive Summary

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

The Legislature funds this grant program with \$6 million on a biennial basis. In response to a sharp increase in reports of unaddressed illegal grow sites and associated worker abuse in 2021 and 2022, the Legislature infused the grant program with an additional \$26 million in emergency one-time funding, which the CJC awarded to grantees in 2022. In 2023, the legislature supplemented the \$6 million in base funding with an additional \$5 million, for a total of \$11 million in biennial funds that will be awarded through a competitive grant solicitation process in 2024. This report examines the status of the grant program and grantee expenditures from 2021 to 2023.

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 424 illegal cannabis incidents, occurring in 96 unique zip codes.
- Eleven zip codes saw 10 or more incidents involving grant-funded law enforcement activities during the reporting period. The zip codes experiencing the highest number of incidents were 97523 (the greater Cave Junction area, with 35 incidents) and 97526 (Grants Pass and areas north, with 17 incidents).
- The number of incidents in which law enforcement observed or suspected labor trafficking and/or worker abuse decreased from 39 (20 percent) in 2022 to eight (3.5 percent) in 2023. However, the number of survivors of human trafficking served by grant funded community-based organizations (CBOs) increased from 100 to 344 during the same time period.
- Survivors served by CBO grantees were primarily male (41.4 percent), Hispanic (48.9 percent), and ages 18-35 (28.8 percent). The majority received legal assistance (63.5 percent) and/or referrals to other needed crisis or long-term support services (56.8 percent).
- Grantees reported that the 424 incidents resulted in 184 felony case filings in Oregon circuit courts.
- Of the 424 reported incidents, 54.2 percent involved a land, natural resource, or civil code violation.
- Law enforcement grantees seized approximately 1.8 million illegal cannabis plants and 351,781 pounds of illegal processed cannabis, as well as other illegal narcotics and substances, firearms, and equipment used to operate illegal grows off-grid.

Based on the best available information, the projected cost for existing grantees to maintain operations for two years at requested funding levels would require, at minimum, \$24,889,892. Expanding the grant program into new jurisdictions is estimated to cost an additional \$3,406,652.

*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.*