

ILLINOIS METH PROJECT

Illinois Meth Project Overview

The Illinois Meth Project is a large-scale, prevention program aimed at significantly reducing first-time Meth use through public service messaging, public policy, and community outreach. The program is part of the national Meth Project organization, which oversees individual state programs currently active in Illinois, Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, and Hawaii.

The Illinois Meth Project was launched as a response to the state's critical methamphetamine problem. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, methamphetamine is the primary drug threat to central and southern Illinois and is increasingly available in the Chicago area.ⁱ While all of Illinois bears the burden of this destructive drug, the statistics below reflect the impact of Meth not only on the state but highlight its prevalence in rural areas not commonly associated with illicit drug use.

The financial and social consequences of methamphetamine abuse in Illinois are devastating. Meth use increases crime, costs millions of dollars in lost productivity, contributes to jail and prison populations, and adversely impacts families and children.

- Illinois ranks #4 in the country for Meth-related arrestsⁱⁱ
- 72% of people in treatment for methamphetamine in Illinois began using at age 17 or youngerⁱⁱⁱ
- Rural admissions for Meth-related treatment are five times higher than the state average^{iv}
- The cost of methamphetamine to Illinois is roughly \$2 billion per year^v

Strategic Approach

The Illinois Meth Project has implemented an integrated prevention campaign that includes public service messaging, community outreach, and public policy initiatives. The centerpiece of the program is research-based advertising that graphically communicates the risks of Meth use.

The program is based on the Meth Project model, which was first implemented in Montana in 2005. Since its inception in Montana, the Meth Project's prevention program has demonstrated significant results in reducing Meth use.

- When the program first launched, Montana ranked #5 in the country for Meth abuse; after two years, the state ranked #39^{vi}
- Adult Meth use declined 72%^{vii}
- Teen Meth use declined 63%^{viii}
- Meth-related crimes dropped 62%^{ix}

Recognition for the Program

The Illinois Meth Project began airing advertisements in the state in February 2008. The ads, created by the Meth Project, have received 45 advertising industry awards, including:

- 2 Gold Effie Awards
- Grand Effie Award Finalist
- 11 Gold ADDY Awards
- 19 Silver ADDY Awards
- Cannes Lion Award
- 7 AdCritic.com "Top Ten" Awards for the best ads in the U.S.

In 2006, the Meth Project was cited by the White House as one of the most effective prevention campaigns in history and a model for the nation.

Research and Measurement

To track and refine the program's effectiveness, the Illinois Meth Project utilizes a comprehensive research program, including both quantitative and qualitative studies, to measure attitudes and behaviors related to methamphetamine use. This research guides the program's messaging and outreach initiatives.

For more information, please visit www.illinoismethproject.org

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ⁱ Department of Justice. "DEA Fact Sheet: Illinois." 2008.

ⁱⁱ Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration Data: Illinois. "Compiled Rankings of State Methamphetamine Arrests/Seizures from 2004 DEA Data." 2004.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Drug and Alcohol Services Information System (DASIS). "Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)." 2003.

^{iv} National Association of Counties. "The Meth Epidemic in America – Two Surveys of U.S. Counties: The Criminal Effect of Meth on Communities & The Impact of Meth on Children." July 2005.

^v Professor J. Fred Giertz, University of Illinois. 2007.

^{vi} Office of National Drug Control Policy. "Pushing Back Against Meth: A Progress Report on the Fight Against Methamphetamine in the United States." November 2006.

^{vii} Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-up Report on Trends and Progress. April 2008.

^{viii} Montana Office of Public Instruction. "2009 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey." June 2009.

^{ix} Montana Attorney General, Mike McGrath. Methamphetamine in Montana: A Follow-up Report on Trends and Progress. April 2008.