

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STRATEGY

COMBATING ILLICIT DRUGS IN THE MAIL

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A Message from the Postmaster General



Louis DeJoy

Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service

The mission of the United States Postal Service is to bind all Americans across our nation through trusted, safe and secure communications and services. A critical part of that mission includes securing the mail to protect our customers, infrastructure and employees from criminal activity, including illicit drugs. The Postal Service shares the concerns of Congress, the Administration and the American public about the opioid crisis and throughout every level of the organization we are committed to ridding the mail of all illegal drugs.

In this endeavor, we rely heavily on the strength of our law enforcement arm, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. The Postal Inspection Service leads our efforts to eliminate drugs in the mail by interdicting foreign and domestic mail containing contraband, investigating criminal activity and dismantling the digital infrastructure that allows drug dealers to sell their goods through an internet connection.

The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service are fully committed to the strategy articulated in this document. As it has done throughout its history, the Postal Service is committed to taking all practicable measures to ensure our nation's mail security, and provide the American public the best, most efficient service possible.

Louis DeJoy

Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer

A Message from the Chief Postal Inspector



Gary Barksdale

Chief Postal Inspector

U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Winning the battle against illicit drugs in the mail is a top priority for the U.S. Postal Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Postal Inspectors across the country work every day to protect postal employees, the American public, and the U.S. Mail from illicit drugs and other contraband. We are achieving this goal not only by interdicting and removing drugs from the mail, but also by investigating and arresting individuals and disrupting drug trafficking organizations across the United States and overseas. I am committed to working with our federal, state, and local partners to combat this public health emergency. To that end, we are implementing innovative investigative techniques and cutting-edge analytics that significantly increase our ability to remove dangerous and illicit drugs from the mail and identify those responsible.

The strategy outlined in this document is a testament to what we have done and serves as a guidepost of what we will continue to do to combat the criminal use of the mail. As we have done throughout our history, the Postal Inspection Service remains committed to supporting the Postal Service and its mission to provide safe, reliable, and efficient service to the American public.

Gary Barksdale

Chief Postal Inspector



U.S. Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service

Combating Illicit Drugs in the Mail



Executive Summary

The U.S. Postal Service (Postal Service) works aggressively to prevent the flow of illicit drugs through the mail and takes all practical measures to ensure the safety and security of Postal Service employees and the American people. As the law enforcement arm of the Postal Service, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (Postal Inspection Service) leads our efforts to eliminate opioids and other illicit drugs from the mail by investigating mail-related crime and working closely with other law enforcement agencies to share intelligence, coordinate cases, and conduct joint enforcement operations.

This *Combating Illicit Drugs in the Mail* strategy (Hereinafter the “Strategy”) is designed to guide decision making, coordination, and resource allocation throughout the Postal Service. This Strategy aims to protect postal employees and the American people by intercepting illicit drugs, destroying drug trafficking infrastructure, and deterring traffickers from using the Postal Service as a distribution network.

We employ a whole-of-government approach that relies heavily on interagency cooperation—specifically with our partners in Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the White House’s Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division. These national partners, among others, will help us achieve the following goals:

- Advance efforts to increase employee safety, awareness, and engagement.
- Bolster and expand partnerships with key stakeholders.
- Expand and enhance intelligence and analytics capabilities.
- Identify and invest in new tools and technologies.
- Enhance law enforcement capacity, capabilities, and readiness.

As America’s most trusted brand,¹ the Postal Service is always working to keep that trust. The Postal Inspection Service plays a key role in maintaining public trust by protecting Postal Service employees, the American people, and the sanctity of the U.S. Mail from the threat of illicit activity.

This Strategy is a living document that will evolve in response to the ever-changing nature of drug trafficking.

¹ “Most Trusted Brands 2020,” Morning Consult, January 25, 2020, <https://morningconsult.com/most-trusted-brands/>.

Introduction

As set forth in the U.S. Constitution (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 7), the Postal Service has been an essential part of the fabric of the nation throughout our history. By providing universal mailing and shipping to all Americans, regardless of where they live, we help bind the nation together.²

We deliver more mail to more addresses in a larger geographical area than any other post in the world. Our letter carriers visit more than 160 million addresses six days a week. Every person living in the United States and its territories has access to postal products and services. And, they all pay the same for a First-Class Mail postage stamp, regardless of their location.³ The Postal Service also provides mailing and shipping services through more than 31,000 retail outlets and USPS.com.

As detailed throughout this Strategy, winning the battle against illicit drugs in the mail is one of our top priorities because their presence poses a direct threat to our employees and the American people. In large part, we will achieve this goal through the preparedness and diligence of our internal law enforcement arm, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

The Postal Inspection Service is responsible for protecting more than 600,000 Postal Service employees and safeguarding the billions of pieces of mail transported nationally and internationally by all modes of transportation.⁴ There are more than 1,200 Postal Inspectors stationed throughout the United States and abroad who enforce more than 200 federal statutes related to crimes that involve the Postal Service system, its employees, and its customers.⁵

In addition to removing illicit drugs from the mail, Postal Inspectors investigate and arrest criminals and disrupt drug trafficking networks across the United States. In Fiscal Year 2019, Postal Inspectors made 2,562 arrests involving drug trafficking using the U.S. Mail and seized over 150,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and nearly \$25 million in illegal proceeds.⁶

In 2017, the Postal Inspection Service created a team of cross-functional experts specifically focused on the trafficking of illicit drugs through the mail. This was done because of the scale of the opioid crisis, which warranted a targeted response outside of the traditional criminal investigation services. The Contraband Interdiction and Investigations (CI2) program now leads the Postal Service's efforts to eliminate illicit drugs and other contraband in the mail.

Through our Postal Inspection Service and its CI2 program, the Postal Service demonstrates our commitment to providing reliable services to all Americans and ensuring the safety and sanctity of the U.S. Mail.



Contraband Interdiction and Investigations

The Contraband Interdiction and Investigations program protects postal employees, the American public, and the mail from dangerous and illegal contraband, specifically, illicit drugs and firearms. We aggressively investigate, arrest, and dismantle drug trafficking networks and utilize intelligence to effectively target and seize dangerous drugs nationwide. Through relationships with domestic and international law enforcement partners, we work to forcefully combat the distribution of illegal contraband through the U.S. Mail and the international postal system.

² The U.S. Postal Service Five-Year Strategic Plan FY2020-FY2024, U.S. Postal Service.

³ "A Decade of Facts and Figures," Postal Facts – U.S. Postal Service, United States Postal Service, last modified September 30, 2019, <https://facts.usps.com/table-facts/>.

⁴ "Size and Scope," Postal Facts – U.S. Postal Service, United States Postal Service, last modified February 5, 2020, <https://facts.usps.com/size-and-scope/>.

⁵ "What Do United States Postal Inspectors Do?," USPS, United States Postal Service, accessed January 30, 2020, <https://www.uspis.gov/about/what-we-do/>.

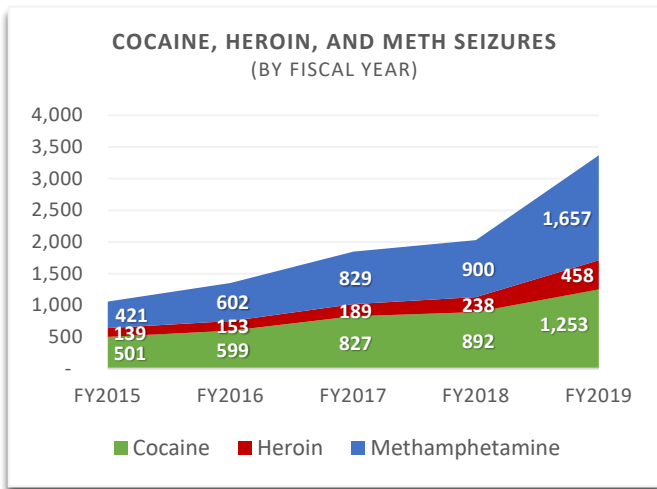
⁶ U.S. Postal Inspection Service seizure data.

Background

Over the past decade, the United States has experienced an increase in the quantity of illicit drugs entering the country.⁷ These drugs enter the United States by land, air, and sea. Drug traffickers exploit the distribution channels of the Postal Service and other express consignment carriers in the United States, putting both postal employees and the American public at risk.

While we have expanded our efforts to stem the flow of illicit drugs in the mail, the scale and complexity of drug trafficking have increased as traffickers quickly adapt to law enforcement strategies and tactics and adopt more sophisticated technologies. To meet this new reality, the Postal Inspection Service must remain equally agile in our approach.

In addition to opioids and fentanyl, our seizure data shows an influx of Schedule I and II drugs such as heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine. These drugs present a significant threat to the nation, not only because they harm individual users, but because they fuel broader criminal activity. Many investigations that begin as drug seizures uncover related criminal activity involving firearms, money laundering, and violent crime.



Postal Inspection Service Seizure Data

In addition to our focus on synthetic opioids, the Postal Inspection Service has achieved a consistent increase in seizures of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine since Fiscal Year 2015.

ONDCP has found that many illicit drugs enter the United States along the southern border with Mexico.⁸ Intelligence suggests criminal networks in China and other countries work directly with cartels to manufacture methamphetamine and synthetic opioids in Mexico. To avoid the detection of illicit drugs in the international mail, trafficking organizations now send the precursor chemical ingredients to Mexico, where drugs are manufactured and smuggled across the border. This trend speaks to the sophistication of Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs).

The Postal Inspection Service works closely with other law enforcement agencies to share information and refine tactics based on evolving criminal activity—all to match criminal adaptability with an agile and collaborative law enforcement response.

The drug trafficking problem has been exacerbated by the growth of e-commerce, which has significantly increased the number of packages the Postal Service processes and delivers. Drug traffickers, particularly those who use the internet for sales and distribution, are adept at using shipping providers to transport their products. Overall, the proliferation of the internet, e-commerce, and the dark web has made it easier for criminals to market and sell illicit drugs through anonymous online marketplaces.

The Postal Service is committed to developing and sustaining a sophisticated and modern approach to combating the criminal activity in the mail through the increased use of technology, intelligence and analytics, enhanced law enforcement capabilities, and working closely our law enforcement partners, as outlined in this Strategy.

⁷ National Drug Threat Assessment Report 2019, December 2019, Drug Enforcement Administration, https://www.dea.gov/sites/default/files/2020-01/2019-NDTA-final-01-14-2020_Low_Web-DIR-007-20_2019.pdf.

⁸ Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, February 2020, Office of National Drug Control Policy, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Southwest-Border-Counternarcotics-Strategy.pdf>.

Strategic Goals

We have developed five strategic goals that form the *Combating Illicit Drugs in the Mail* strategy. These goals enable us to define a future centered on key factors for sustained success, and they serve as a guidepost for our decisions along the way:

1. Advance efforts to increase employee safety, awareness, and engagement.
2. Bolster and expand partnerships with key stakeholders.
3. Expand and enhance intelligence and analytics capabilities.
4. Identify and invest in new tools and technologies.
5. Enhance law enforcement capacity, capabilities, and readiness.

This Strategy provides a broad outline of our priorities and sets the direction and approach for our future. It does not attempt to detail every activity or initiative we will pursue to achieve our strategic goals.

1. Advance efforts to increase employee safety, awareness, and engagement

Safeguarding our workforce and infrastructure is critical to our mission. To mitigate the risks posed by illicit drugs in the mail, we have taken a proactive approach and developed a culture of vigilance through awareness and training programs, well-documented policies and procedures, and world-class training for our Postal Inspectors.

1.1 Improve and expand employee safety and awareness programs

Provide Postal Service employees with safety and awareness training programs to equip them with the knowledge they need to safely conduct their duties.

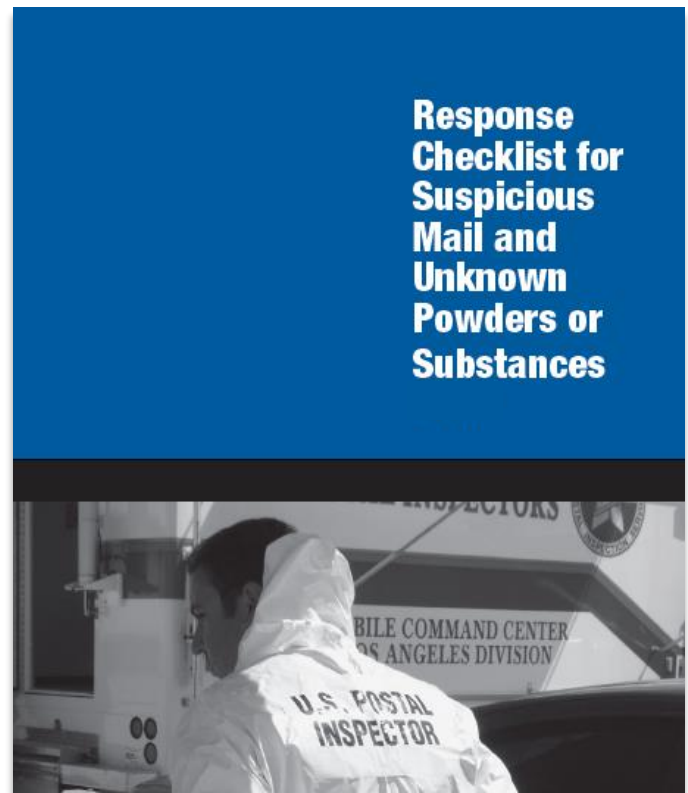
Training Postal Service employees is key to ensuring their safety. Our Learning and Development team frequently assesses shifting trends and threats and creates or updates safety initiatives.

For example, through the *Strategic Training Initiative*, we provide comprehensive annual training to all employees. These mandatory trainings, such as the *Suspicious Package Program*, teach employees what constitutes “dangerous goods,” how to spot potentially hazardous mail, and how to contact the Postal Inspection Service and other relevant law enforcement organizations. Recently, Postal Service employees were trained on the dangers of opioid addiction, addiction treatment options, and what to do in the event of an overdose or accidental exposure.

Additionally, our *Safe and Secure: Employee Collusion Prevention Initiative* illustrates the dangers of helping criminals use the mail to traffic drugs—either knowingly or inadvertently. In situations where the Postal Inspection Service identifies collusive Postal Service employees, we coordinate with the Office of Inspector General (USPS OIG) to investigate and take enforcement action, as appropriate.

Office of Inspector General (USPS OIG)

The Postal Inspection Service regularly shares intelligence and seizure data with the USPS OIG to enhance their abilities to proactively identify and investigate collusive employees. The USPS OIG plays a key role in maintaining the integrity and accountability of America's postal service, its revenue and assets, and its employees. They help ensure confidence in the postal system and improving the Postal Service's bottom line through independent audits and investigations.



All-Hazards Approach

We employ an all-hazards approach to unknown substances in the mail that is designed to minimize contact by employees until a threat assessment can be made by a Postal Inspector. By treating all suspicious packages the same—whether they are a potential bomb or unknown powder—we minimize the chances of Postal Service employee exposure.

The Postal Inspection Service creates and disseminates employee guidance through *Suspicious Mail Stand-Up Talks*. These mandatory talks provide resources and documentation on how to respond to illicit drugs and other potentially hazardous materials.

We will continue to explore new safety and awareness programming as the learning and development environment evolves, including approaches such as on-demand, online learning applications and virtual reality technology. This will ensure both the content and delivery of our programming keep pace with emerging trends and threats.

1.2 Maintain and disseminate resources and procedures for handling illicit drugs

Provide guidance and standardized policies and procedures on how Postal Inspectors should handle potential illicit drugs encountered in the mail.

We issue detailed guidance on how Postal Inspectors should handle suspicious packages, including those that may contain illicit drugs. For example, specific techniques for handling fentanyl were created by the Postal Inspection Service's Forensic Laboratory in guides including *Fentanyl and Fentanyl Related Compounds: Special Considerations* and *Best Practices for Safely Handling Controlled Substances*. We plan to expand the Illicit Drug Handling program as the nature of drug trafficking and the risks it poses to our employees continue to evolve.



Drug Detection Technology

Quickly and safely identifying unknown and potentially dangerous substances such as fentanyl is a top priority for the Postal Inspection Service. To protect our field Inspectors and deliver reliable results, we invested in handheld narcotic analyzers. These devices enable our Inspectors to scan more than 450 suspected controlled substances in a single, definitive test that can often be accomplished without direct contact with the substance. This technology reduces the risk of accidental exposure by Inspectors and laboratory personnel.

Because it takes more than just training, we are leveraging technology to quickly and safely identify unknown substances. Due to the high toxicity of many synthetic drugs,

we now use advanced technology that often allows suspicious substances to remain in their clear containers, greatly reducing the risk of accidental exposure while still providing legally accurate results.

In addition, we have equipped many Postal Service facilities with overdose reversal kits and naloxone nasal spray (brand name Narcan®) in the event of potential exposure to opioids or synthetic derivatives.

1.3 Provide world-class training to all Postal Inspection Service employees

Continue to equip, train, and support Postal Inspectors in efforts to protect postal employees, the U.S. Mail, and the American public from illicit drugs.

The Postal Inspection Service maintains the Career Development Unit (CDU), a Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation facility that oversees the national training academy and other training programs for the Postal Inspection Service. CDU has oversight of the basic training programs for Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers, the Assessment Center process for Postal Inspector applicants, the Polygraph Unit, and In-Service training programs.

Specific to illicit drugs, the CI2 program develops, evaluates, and updates courses in response to evolving investigative and interdiction techniques. This ongoing training is essential to maintaining a highly skilled and effective law enforcement agency. CI2 also routinely tests and implements new technologies to streamline training and improve the learning experience.

2. Bolster and expand partnerships with key stakeholders

Given the scale and complexity of illicit drug trafficking, no single organization or agency can fight this battle alone. To meet this challenge, we employ a whole-of-government approach that leverages the collective strengths and resources of law enforcement agencies and other federal partners.

Our key federal partners include the DEA, CBP, HSI, FBI, and the Department of Justice (DOJ). We also partner with ONDCP to contribute to the National Drug Control Strategy and inform policymakers of new developments and challenges regarding our mission.

In addition to these national partnerships, we work with a wide variety of other stakeholders, including foreign postal operators (FPOs) and intergovernmental organizations such as the Universal Postal Union (UPU). We also rely on close collaboration with nongovernmental organizations and private sector stakeholders.

2.1 Advance partnerships with local, state, and federal law enforcement

Deepen participation in national and international task forces and fusion centers to streamline collaboration, facilitate communication, and bolster support for Postal Inspectors.

Partnerships with law enforcement agencies create critical force multipliers in our efforts to eliminate illicit drugs from the mail. Task forces bring together vital resources from multiple law enforcement agencies to maximize collective impact. For example, we partner with the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) and other state and local task forces across the country to coordinate investigations. We also have Postal Inspectors on DEA, FBI, and HSI task forces across the nation. These arrangements enable the identification, investigation, and prosecution of criminal suspects.



Whole-of-Government Approach

We employ a whole-of-government approach that relies heavily on interagency cooperation—specifically with our partners in Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the White House’s Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) division.

During Fiscal Year 2020, the Postal Inspection Service created a standardized nationwide Task Force Officer (TFO) program. TFOs are typically state and local police officers who are embedded with our Postal Inspectors. They act as critical force multipliers and provide local intelligence and networks to advance interdictions and investigations.

We know that leveraging our partnerships with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies is key to maximizing our resources and impact. Members of the Postal Inspection Service are assigned at ONDCP, DEA’s Special Operation

Division (SOD), DOJ’s Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) Fusion Center and Joint Criminal Opioid Darknet Enforcement (J-CODE) team, and CBP’s National Targeting Center (NTC). We also work with the FBI, DEA, HSI, and local police to seize thousands of drug parcels per year, identify drug-related money laundering operations, and seize the assets of violators.

Since we started embedding Postal Inspectors in task forces and fusion centers, we have noticed a marked improvement in the quality of our collaboration with our law enforcement partners.

2.2 Strengthen efforts with foreign postal operators and intergovernmental organizations

Increase coordination with foreign postal operators to align strategic focus, enhance collaboration, and coordinate the fight against illicit drugs in the mail.

We work directly with other FPOs to fight international illicit drug trafficking by ensuring that FPOs provide advance electronic data (AED) on inbound packages and target, detect, and intercept illicit drugs in origin countries.

This happens through bilateral or multilateral agreements and active participation in international postal organizations and alliances. One example is the Kahala Posts Group (KPG), an alliance of the postal administrations of Australia, Canada, China, France, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We are an active member of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), a 192-member specialized agency of the United Nations that facilitates mail exchange among its member countries through international agreements. A Postal Inspector is assigned to the UPU headquarters in Bern, Switzerland.

We also engage with the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), an independent, quasi-jurisdictional expert body that advances international efforts to combat the trafficking of opioids and synthetic derivatives. Internationally, a Postal Inspector is also assigned to the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol), located in The Hague. Through participation in international law enforcement platforms, we can combat would-be illicit drug shipments before they reach the United States.

In addition to these efforts, diplomacy also plays a role in our Strategy, as we work closely with the Department of State to advance international efforts on the capture and transmission of AED, improve targeting and detection, and provide critical training to postal employees around the world.

2.3 Engage nongovernmental partners to leverage the resources of a broader range of stakeholders

Leverage partnerships with private companies and nongovernmental organizations to enhance and expand collaboration opportunities and develop new and innovative solutions to shared challenges.

Beyond partnerships with law enforcement agencies and foreign postal operators, expanding collaboration with public and private sector partners will enable us to leverage the collective ingenuity of our nation. Private companies, educational institutions, and other nongovernmental organizations are investing in research and development and finding solutions to advance the work we do.



The Opioid Detection Challenge

As part of the comprehensive government effort to address the opioid crisis, the Postal Inspection Service joined the DHS S&T, CBP, and ONDCP to seek new tools and technologies to detect opioids in packages at International Service Centers (ISCs) without disrupting processing. DHS ultimately awarded multiple winners.

We recently experienced the power of innovative partnerships through our participation in the Opioid Detection Challenge. The challenge was a public-private partnership sponsored by the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), CBP, the Postal Inspection Service, and ONDCP. This global competition included a \$1.55 million prize for rapid, nonintrusive illicit drug detection tools.

Private companies are developing tools and approaches that have direct application to our mission. For example, we recently adopted a graphics processing technology that combines artificial intelligence and edge computing to streamline mail flow and package screening. This technology will soon be used in almost 200 Postal Service facilities.

Academic institutions are also a natural fit for collaboration with the Postal Service and our government partners. DHS recently worked with the University of Houston to create a center of excellence “to conduct research, develop innovative solutions, and provide educational materials to enhance the nation’s ability to secure our borders, facilitate legitimate trade and travel, and ensure the integrity of our immigration system.”⁹ We are exploring similar academic relationships to identify new and creative techniques to secure the mail.

3. Expand and enhance intelligence and analytics capabilities

The rapidly evolving nature of drug trafficking requires us to maintain operational dexterity. While our Postal Inspectors are adept at manually pinpointing suspicious packages and identifying the techniques that criminals use to send illicit drugs through the mail, the sheer volume of packages makes it impossible to manually review every piece of mail. The Postal Service is exploring new ways to use analytics to streamline operations, improve the customer experience, and protect our employees.

3.1 Centralize and streamline intelligence and analytics functions

Explore opportunities to enhance intelligence and analytics capabilities that will advance law enforcement efforts, direct operational focus, and guide strategic decision making.

In addition to more traditional law enforcement techniques, we rely heavily on data and analytics to support drug-related interdictions and investigations. Intelligence and analytics are critical to combating illicit drugs in the mail. Big data creates countless possibilities to develop leads and pursue cases.

For this reason, we continue to prioritize intelligence and analytics to enhance Postal Inspection Service investigations. We leverage a Cyber and Analytics Unit to gain better insights from data and more accurately target criminal activity. The unit uses data from a variety of sources, including partner agency data, to aid in investigations and develop leads.

In furtherance of our commitment to intelligence and analytics, CI2 is standing up an investigative support center that will focus on illicit drugs. This center will consist of intelligence analysts and subject matter experts who will directly support Postal Inspectors and ensure field divisions have the intelligence and actionable information they need to build comprehensive high-impact, end-to-end investigations.

⁹ “BTI Institute Mission – University of Houston,” Borders, Trade, and Immigration Institute, University of Houston, accessed July 9, 2020, <https://www.uh.edu/bti/>.

3.2 Streamline information and intelligence sharing with key strategic partners

Expand information-sharing capabilities with key partners to provide both Postal Inspectors and federal law enforcement agencies with rapid, accessible, and actionable intelligence.

To support the expansion of information sharing, we have agreements with law enforcement agencies and other partners to exchange valuable package-level data. These agreements enable us to collaborate directly with our partners on illicit drug-related interdictions and investigations. To enhance our targeting efforts, we coordinated with our local, national, and international partners and standardized our tracking technologies.

For example, at the NTC, we work directly with CBP to target incoming packages containing illicit drugs based on intelligence and analytics.¹⁰ We then identify the International Service Center where the packages will be processed and share that information with CBP. Once a package is located and inspected by CBP, Postal Inspectors coordinate with federal and state partners to investigate.



Secure AED on 100 Percent of Inbound Shipments

With the support of the United States, new binding UPU Convention Regulations were approved at the April 2019 session of the Postal Operations Council, the UPU body responsible for technical and operational matters. These regulations will require, rather than recommend, transmittal of AED on parcels and small packages exchanged among FPOs.

Data sharing is also critical to achieving comprehensive federal efforts to combat illicit drugs. In 2017, the President declared the opioid epidemic a Public Health Emergency. This was followed by the enactment of the Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act (STOP Act) by Congress in 2018. We work closely with the UPU and FPOs to collect AED, with a goal of 100 percent of inbound international shipments. Package-level AED, which can include information such as the recipient's name and address, the sender's name and address, and declared package contents, is critical to stopping the flow of illicit drugs.

We will continue to explore ways to expand and enhance data sharing to support collaboration with our partners. Expanding data-sharing efforts will strengthen the ability of our Postal Inspectors to access the data and intelligence they need to conduct proactive and effective investigations and interdictions.

3.3 Expand the use of machine learning, artificial intelligence, and advanced modeling techniques

Identify opportunities to apply advanced data analytics techniques to streamline processes and improve the effectiveness of Postal Inspectors.

In addition to expanding intelligence efforts and streamlining data-sharing capabilities, our investment in advanced analytics techniques—including machine learning, artificial intelligence, and advanced modeling—is key to our approach. Understanding data helps us coordinate domestic and international operations, generate leads, and target dark web marketplaces, vendors, and sources of supply for illicit drugs in a more proactive and strategic way.

By combining individual package data with historical seizure data, we can develop models that proactively target suspicious packages and identify their position within the mail environment. This works by formalizing feedback loops, modeling past behaviors, and exploring adaptive models.

Strengthening predictive modeling will streamline targeting, detection, interdictions, and investigations. These techniques depend on the speed and efficacy with which data can be analyzed to identify trends and target and detect suspicious packages. Intelligence will also be leveraged to inform and refine models.

4. Identify and invest in new tools and technologies

Rapidly emerging technologies are influencing criminal behavior in significant ways, but they also provide important opportunities for our law enforcement efforts as we transform how we gather and share intelligence, target and detect packages, and conduct investigations.

Adopting new tools and technologies will help us perform increasingly complex law enforcement capabilities and have a more strategic approach to our mission. Expanding access to innovative tools and technologies has the potential to transform our ability to perform comprehensive interdictions and investigations.

¹⁰ "CBP National Targeting Center," U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, accessed January 30, 2020, <https://www.cbp.gov/frontline/cbp-national-targeting-center>.

Embracing mobile, advanced analytics and cloud-based technologies will create flexibility and maximize Postal Inspection Service resources, regardless of physical location, and seamlessly feed information to our databases.

4.1 Enhance package targeting and detection technologies to improve operational efficiency

Expand targeting and detection programs that increase the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of scanning, detecting, and intercepting illicit drugs in the mail.

We are adopting next generation targeting and detection technologies that increase the speed, capacity, and accuracy of suspicious package screening. We recently upgraded our Mobile Delivery Devices (MDD) and equipped our facilities with advanced scanning technologies. These efforts have enhanced our scanning capabilities to provide both the Postal Service and customers with real-time package tracking. We continuously evaluate emerging technologies that can drive operational efficiencies and curb packages containing illicit substances.

To better support Postal Inspectors, we are exploring various solutions to streamline targeting and detection efforts, including the ability to collect, analyze, and share information efficiently. As part of the *Dangerous Mail Initiative*, we are deploying advanced technologies, such as image analysis and edge computing, in several Postal Service distribution centers. Additionally, we are reviewing this technology for potential applications to illicit drug interdictions.

We are also exploring opportunities to leverage our cloud capabilities in support of targeting and detection efforts. Cloud computing offers the potential to streamline access and enhance functionality for various mobile tools that Postal Inspectors will utilize in the field. By pairing targeting and detection technology with advanced cloud computing, we can create new law enforcement-specific solutions to better equip our Postal Inspectors.

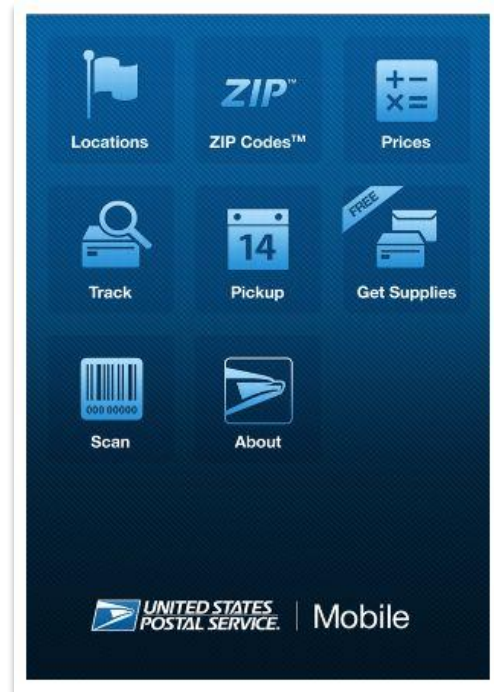
4.2 Develop, procure, and implement tools that directly support law enforcement efforts

Identify technologies within the Postal Service (and the open market) that support Postal Inspectors to carry out interdictions and investigations.

The ability to automatically capture data for individual packages and upload it to our databases without performing manual data entry and analysis is key to increasing efficiency for our Postal Inspectors. This information can be used to aid internal investigations and shared to support the broader investigative efforts of our law enforcement partners.

We are building on this experience as we consider designing a mobile app to support our Postal Inspectors. Eventually, this app would allow Postal Inspectors to scan barcode labels,

take pictures of packages, and upload other evidence or investigative data directly from their mobile device.



USPS Mobile®

USPS Mobile® enables customers to access popular USPS.com® tools (e.g., Informed Delivery) on the go. We are exploring the possibility of leveraging USPS Mobile® functionality to develop a law enforcement-specific app for the Postal Inspection Service.

Historically, one of the most important tools our Postal Inspectors have is the Case Management System. This repository captures investigative data that helps them identify leads, draw connections between cases, and deconflict cases with other law enforcement organizations. We are currently updating the Case Management System to make it more comprehensive and user-friendly.

4.3 Expand dark web tools and capabilities to combat illicit internet drug sales and distribution

Prioritize the dark web as a primary tool to gather intelligence, build investigations, and combat the use of the mail as a distribution modality.

The internet has democratized the illicit drug trade, allowing individual sellers and buyers to connect on a level not available in the past. Traffickers are using both open and dark web markets to sell illicit drugs. These markets look and feel like traditional online stores, as they allow users to find and purchase illicit drugs with increased anonymity and little risk

of exposure to law enforcement.¹¹ Drug traffickers also use cryptocurrencies and encryption to further shield themselves from detection.

We consider dark web investigations as an opportunity to identify, investigate, and prosecute the criminals who exploit the mail. Dark web investigations have grown from a small group of Postal Inspectors to a sophisticated network of specialized law enforcement experts coordinating complex interagency drug investigations.



Wall Street Market Takedown

Following a nearly two-year international investigation involving U.S. and European law enforcement, three German nationals were charged with running Wall Street Market, one of the world's largest dark web marketplaces. Wall Street Market allowed vendors to sell a wide variety of contraband, including an array of narcotics and other illegal goods and services. The Postal Inspection Service played a key role in shutting down the site and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

We are also an active member of the J-CODE team, a DOJ-sponsored initiative that combats online opioid trafficking. On a monthly basis, the Postal Inspection Service and other federal agencies meet to share intelligence and strategies through ONDCP's Heroin Availability Reduction Plan (HARP). This collaboration has enabled us to significantly expand our intelligence capabilities and investigative reach.

5. Enhance law enforcement capacity, capabilities, and readiness

As drug trafficking becomes increasingly complex, our interdiction and investigation practices are evolving to meet the challenge. In addition to building a world-class intelligence and analytics program and investing in new tools and technologies, we are also targeting larger, more sophisticated criminal groups like Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and DTOs. These groups are responsible

for the financing, infrastructure, and operations that fuel most of the illicit drug production and distribution around the world. To that end, we are prioritizing high-impact cases that lead to prosecutions of key members of these groups, as well as the long-term disruption of drug trafficking operations.

As part of this effort, we have expanded our investigative scope to prioritize other crimes directly connected to drug trafficking, such as firearms smuggling and money laundering. Focusing on interconnected criminal activity results in comprehensive cases that can lead to more meaningful prosecutions and inflict greater long-term damage on drug trafficking operations.

5.1 Intensify efforts and focus resources in locations with high levels of drug trafficking activity

Focus on areas with high levels of drug activity, using existing partnerships to diversify and maximize resources in the right places.

A large percentage of illicit drugs enter the United States along the Southwest Border (SWB) with Mexico, which is the primary entry point for illicit drugs such as heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, and fentanyl.¹² After entering the United States, they are distributed throughout the country through various methods, including through the mail stream.

To stem this flow of drugs, the Postal Inspection Service is focusing resources in areas with high levels of narcotics activity. Our objective is to aggressively target, detect, and intercept drugs in source locations at the point of entry into the mail stream. We are currently implementing operations that will include the deployment of jump teams to specific border locations to ramp up interdictions and generate intelligence on drug trafficking activities in these areas.

We are also enlisting the support of key partners to participate in joint enforcement operations. By continuing to deepen our collaborative efforts with partner agencies along the SWB (especially CBP, DEA, and HIDTA), our goal is to prevent the flow of narcotics from this region and gain valuable intelligence and insight into drug trafficking networks. These operations require dedicated resources, periodic surge support, and consistent involvement of law enforcement partners.

¹¹ 2019 Heroin Availability Reduction Plan Annual Update, National Opioids and Synthetics Coordination Group, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

¹² Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy, February 2020, Office of National Drug Control Policy, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Southwest-Border-Counternarcotics-Strategy.pdf)

[content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Southwest-Border-Counternarcotics-Strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Southwest-Border-Counternarcotics-Strategy.pdf).

5.2 Deter, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations

Target drug trafficking organizations by leveraging existing partnerships and force multipliers to diversify and maximize resources in the right places.

Much of the drug trafficking in the United States (domestic and international) is orchestrated by sophisticated international criminal organizations. These groups run complex enterprises involving drugs, firearms, money laundering, and other criminal activity. Although we do everything in our power to remove illicit drugs from the mail, we aspire to do more to disrupt the underlying infrastructure and operations of the groups that produce and distribute illicit drugs at scale. By working with our partners to systematically target drug trafficking groups, we will have a greater collective impact on preventing the availability of illicit drugs in the United States.

ONDCP has demonstrated the executive branch's focus on disrupting large-scale drug trafficking groups. As stated in its *National Drug Control Strategy*, "responding to the aggressive trafficking and distribution techniques of DTOs is an urgent national security and law enforcement priority."¹³ Given this urgency, the Postal Inspection Service is being designated as a National Drug Control Program (NDCP) agency.

Following their upcoming designation as an NDCP agency, ONDCP will also designate the Postal Inspection Service as an active member of The Interdiction Committee (TIC). TIC is a multi-organizational body that meets to discuss and resolve issues related to the coordination, oversight, and integration of international, border, and domestic drug interdiction efforts.

While our primary focus remains removing drugs from the mail, we will aggressively expand our efforts to disrupt and dismantle DTOs. We will capture and share vital information and intelligence to directly support investigations by partner law enforcement agencies.

5.3 Increase focus on crimes that are directly connected to the trafficking of illicit drugs through the mail

Focus on connected crimes, such as money laundering, firearms smuggling, and potential instances of violence, to advance investigations against drug trafficking groups.

As we continue to prioritize high-impact cases and focus resources in areas with high levels of illicit drug activity, we

will expand our investigative scope to include criminal activity directly connected to drug trafficking. This includes how drug trafficking groups finance, produce, and distribute illicit drugs. Illicit drug investigations usually involve some aspect of related crimes, mainly money laundering, firearms, or violence.

Financial crimes such as fraud and money laundering are integral components of most DTOs. For drug traffickers, financing is key, and understanding the flow of money is critical to building a strong case against a DTO. Financial crimes are important because they provide critical intelligence about how DTOs operate. When we uncover evidence of money laundering connected to drug trafficking, we will pursue those leads in partnership with our law enforcement colleagues.

Trafficking of any illicit contraband poses a direct threat to our employees and the American people. The Postal Service actively conducts investigations to remove firearms from the mail. Seizure data and intelligence often reveal direct connections between the smuggling of firearms and the trafficking of drugs. By linking cases and investigations, Postal Inspectors will build stronger cases that can have a larger long-term impact on removing drugs from the mail.

Strategically focusing on associated criminal activity will help our Postal Inspectors develop comprehensive investigations against drug trafficking groups and uncover critical investigative information and intelligence that support collective law enforcement agencies. The linchpin of disrupting large DTOs is understanding and interrupting their ability to finance the production and distribution of illicit drugs.

Conclusion

We at the Postal Service take our responsibility to protect the sanctity and security of the mail very seriously. Throughout every level of the organization, winning the battle against illicit drugs in the mail is a priority. As we carry out the mandate to bind the nation together through the mail, we will work tirelessly with our partners and stakeholders to ensure that our postal system is not exploited for drug trafficking. In keeping with our history, we are dedicated to taking all necessary actions to protect Postal Service employees and the American people.

¹³ National Interdiction Command and Control Plan, February 2020, Office of National Drug Control Policy, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-National-Interdiction-Command-and-Control-Plan.pdf>.

