

# 2023 Drug Overdose Fatality Report



**KENTUCKY INJURY PREVENTION  
AND RESEARCH CENTER**

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**Released by**

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**Prepared for**

Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy



In 2023, **1,984 Kentuckians lost their lives** to drug overdose, a rate of 45.9 deaths per 100,000 residents. This is a **9.8% decrease** from 2022.

The age group of 35- to 44-year-olds had the highest number of drug overdose deaths in 2023 at 571 deaths.

Among Black Kentuckians, 264 lost their lives from a drug overdose, an increase from the 259 Black resident deaths in 2022.

The rate of drug overdose deaths among Black residents in 2023 was 68.3 deaths per 100,000 Black residents.

- ▶ This was 51.8% greater than the rate of deaths among white residents and an increase from the 67.6 deaths per 100,000 Black residents in 2022.
- ▶ The rate for white residents in 2023 was 45 deaths per 100,000 residents, a decrease from the 51.4 deaths per 100,000 White residents in 2022.

## Counts of Kentucky Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Race, 2021-2023

Race	2021	2022	2023
Black	233	259	264
White	2,005	1,903	1,692
Other	19	38	28

Fentanyl was found in 1,570 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents 79.1% of the total drug overdose deaths that year and a decrease of 7.1% from the 1,690 drug overdose deaths involving fentanyl in 2022.

# The Fentanyl Factor

- Dealers make a profit of \$15,000 – \$20,000 per kilo.
  - A kilo produces 75,000 – 100,000 pills
    - 1-1.5 milligram pill
  - \$10 - \$15 per pill
  - \$750,000 – 1,000,000 return on investment
- Among 18–45-year-olds, fatal overdose is now the number one cause of death.



Methamphetamine was found in 1,095 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents 55.2% of the total drug overdose deaths that year and a decrease of 6.2% from the 1,168 drug overdose deaths involving methamphetamine in 2022.

Cocaine was found in 427 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents 21.5% of the total drug overdose deaths that year and an increase of 14.8% from the 372 drug overdose deaths involving cocaine in 2022.

Oxycodone was found in 154 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents a decrease of 7.2% from the 166 drug overdose deaths involving oxycodone in 2022.

Heroin was found in 43 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents a decrease of 15.7% from the 51 drug overdose deaths involving heroin in 2022.

Alprazolam was found in 158 drug overdose deaths.

- ▶ This represents an increase of 1.3% from the 156 drug overdose deaths involving alprazolam in 2022.

## Kentucky Counties with the Highest Rates of Drug Overdose Deaths among Residents in 2023

	Kentucky County	Rate of Drug Overdose Deaths per 100,000 Residents	Count of Drug Overdose Deaths
1	Estill	187.3	27
2	Lee	155.9	11
3	Breathitt	150.6	18
4	Powell	121.1	16
5	Floyd	109.9	35

## Kentucky Counties Where the Highest Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl Occurred, as Identified through toxicology in 2023

	Kentucky County	Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl
1	Jefferson	494
2	Fayette	160
3	Kenton	56
4	Madison	56
5	Pike	36

## Kentucky Counties Where the Highest Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Methamphetamine Occurred, as Identified through toxicology in 2023

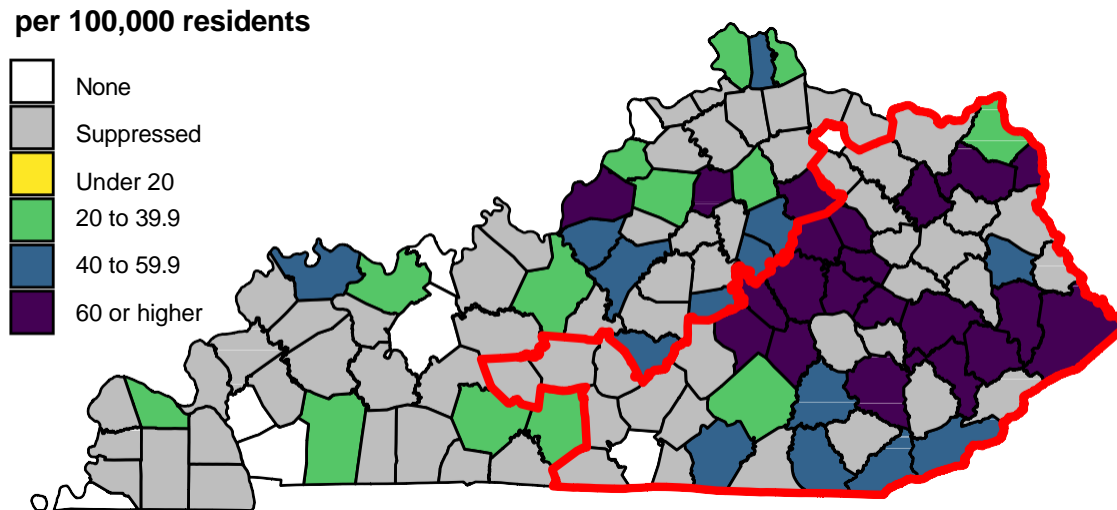
	Kentucky County	Drug Overdose Deaths Involving Fentanyl
1	Jefferson	294
2	Fayette	80
3	Kenton	46
4	Madison	38
5	Pike	26

# Counts of Kentucky Resident Drug Overdose Deaths by Age Group, 2021-2023

Age	2021	2022	2023
0—4	<5	6	9
5—14	0	<5	<5
15—24	139	119	92
25—34	485	446	363
35—44	675	659	571
45—54	495	516	477
55—64	372	347	362
65—74	82	89	95
75—84	5	14	9
85+	<5	<5	<5`

# Age-Adjusted Rates of Drug Overdose Deaths by Kentucky County of Residence, 2023

(Red line denotes Appalachian counties)



# Kentucky's Progress on Addiction Recovery

Since taking office, the Beshear-Coleman administration has worked tirelessly to fight the drug epidemic in Kentucky by increasing treatment resources and law enforcement support. Due to these efforts, in 2023, Kentucky saw:

- 160,000 doses of Narcan distributed;
- 84 syringe exchange program sites served 35,918 unique participants;
- 18,100 individuals provided substance-use treatment services
- 14,630 individuals received help in accessing recovery services;
- 26 Kentuckians sought treatment through the Kentucky State Police Angel Initiative
- 3,920 incoming calls made to the KY HELP Call Center with 14,087 outgoing follow-up calls; and
- 265,170 fentanyl pills, 208.3 pounds of fentanyl, 822 pounds of methamphetamine and more than 310 pounds of cocaine seized with the support of Kentucky's Counterdrug Program.



# TREATMENT RESOURCES

 KY HELP Call Center 833-8KY-HELP  
(833-859-4357)

 FindHelpNowKY.org

 FindRecoveryHousingNowKY.org

 FindNaloxoneNowKY.org

 SecondChance.ky.gov

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