The United States Sentencing Commission, an independent agency in the judicial branch of the United States Government, was created by Congress in 1984 to reduce sentencing disparities and promote transparency and proportionality in federal sentencing. Operating through a group of bipartisan Commissioners nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate, the Commission works to establish sound and equitable sentencing policies and practices for the federal courts; advise and assist Congress and the executive branch in the development of effective and efficient crime policy; and collect, analyze, research, and distribute a broad array of information on federal crime.

As part of its statutory mission, the Commission is responsible for promulgating the Federal Sentencing Guidelines Manual for the United States federal courts. The Commission regularly reviews and amends these guidelines based on research, evidence, and sound policy. The Commission also provides access and transparency, providing training from judges, policymakers, and the public on sentencing issues.
The Commission offers a variety of resources and training opportunities for members of the federal court family. These resources can help to guide judges and court personnel in understanding and applying the federal sentencing guidelines and determining appropriate sentences.

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Despite the challenges of 2020, the Commission remains very productive. Here are some highlights of the Commission’s recent work.

In March, we released the Annual Report and Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics, providing detailed analyses of the 76,538 offenders sentenced in fiscal year 2019.

The Commission also launched a new Interactive Data Analyzer on our website in June. Using this new tool, you can now easily analyze general sentencing data by district or circuit, or even analyze sentencing data relating specifically to the type of offense or Chapter Two guideline before you. This resource has been helpful to judges and practitioners alike.

The Commission has also released several research reports in 2020—two relate to recidivism. Below are a list of recent online releases.
Generally, the Commission promulgates guidelines on an annual basis. When the guidelines are amended, a subsequent Guidelines Manual is published and generally takes effect on November 1. The Commission offers the manual in a variety of formats with additional helpful features.

Guidelines Manuals are distributed free-of-charge by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and U.S. Department of Justice to federal judges, prosecutors, defenders, and probation officers. If you have questions about how to obtain a copy, please feel free to contact the Public Affairs team at PubAffairs@ussc.gov.

Guidelines Manuals are also publicly available for purchase through the Government Publishing Office's U.S. Government Bookstore.

The Guidelines Manual Annotated is an online HTML version of the Guidelines Manual that provides quick access to the history of specific guideline and commentary provisions. Use the icon next to a provision to access a list of related amendments. The list is arranged in chronological order and provides hyperlinks to the full text of the

The Guidelines App is a web-based app that provides easy access to the full contents of the Guidelines Manual on mobile devices, or desktop and laptop computers. Features include:

• quick-search by guideline, amendment, statute, or keyword;
• calculate drug equivalencies and ranges;
• bookmark, highlight text, and take notes; and
• easily share text of the manual.
Did you know the Office of Education and Sentencing Practice staff conducts training sessions for judges, their law clerks, courtroom deputies and district court clerks as well as probation officers, defense attorneys, and prosecutors? We can travel to your district or conduct virtual training sessions on your topics of choice, at no cost to you. We will train the whole “court family” or conduct separate training sessions for each group according to your preference.

Our educators are former defense attorneys, probation officers, law clerks, and professional educators with years of experience in training guideline application, sentencing procedure, and case law.

Training Topics
We train guideline users with all levels of experience—from brand-new practitioners to people with decades of federal sentencing experience. Our trainers take the most complex topics and make them easy to understand and apply in your everyday work. Frequently requested training topics include:

- The Categorical Approach (*determining crimes of violence*)
- Criminal History
- Recent Case Law
- Relevant Conduct (*sentencing liability*)

Arranging a Training Session
Arranging a training session with the Commission’s training staff is easy. Email training@ussc.gov or click below. We will work closely with you to develop an agenda customized to address your training needs.

Once your training session is scheduled, the assigned trainer will contact you to finalize the program. As part of this process, we will send a pre-training survey to your attendees to be sure we address their questions.

After the training session, our staff can be available for a post-training remote meeting with attendees to answer any remaining questions or concerns. We also provide multiple opportunities to evaluate our
Each year the Commission holds a national training seminar for a broad array of members of the federal criminal justice system. More than 850 federal probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges attended our last annual national training seminar. The Commission also conducts annual national training exclusively for federal judges as they have unique training needs.

NATIONAL SEMINARS

VIRTUAL TRAINING

Video Conferencing

We also conduct remote training sessions via video conferencing technology. Our virtual sessions are interactive and tailored to fit your training needs.

Email Training@ussc.gov to arrange a remote training session.

eLearning Courses

The Commission also offers self-guided eLearning modules. Learn about course offerings on the next page.

CONTACT

Judges Training

Are you a federal judge seeking training?

Reach out directly to Raquel Wilson, Director of the Office of Education and Sentencing Practice at RWilson@ussc.gov.

HelpLine

The HelpLine assists practitioners on the spot in applying the guidelines.

Contact: (202) 502-4545

Hours: 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. (ET) Monday – Friday
**Learning Objectives**
- Explain the reasoning behind the passage of the Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) and the subsequent creation of the U.S. Sentencing Commission;
- Discuss the role of the U.S. Sentencing Commission in determining penalties for federal sentencing;
- Summarize the process for promulgating amendments to the guidelines;
- Describe how the Supreme Court’s decision in United States v. Booker impacted the federal sentencing system;
- Describe the seven statutory factors in 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) relevant to sentencing;
- Identify key goals and objectives of the federal sentencing guidelines; and

**Learning Objectives**
- Define statutory requirements that may affect sentencing outcomes;
- Describe basic principles for financial penalties and supervised release;
- Describe the information the court must provide when the defendant has pleaded guilty;
- Explain the functions and characteristics of the Presentence Report (PSR);
- Summarize the basic process of a sentencing hearing; and
- Describe how the U.S. Sentencing Commission collects data.

**Learning Objectives**
- Describe the three steps in sentencing that the courts must conduct;
- Explain relevant conduct and its implications for sentencing;
- Execute the steps involved in the guideline application process;
- Explain the differences between departures and variances;
- Identify the two ways a court can sentence below a statutory mandatory minimum; and
- Define characteristics of the two types of reasonableness review administered by appellate courts.

**Learning Objectives**
- Describe the information the court needs to conduct a revocation hearing of probation or supervised release;
- Describe the sentencing options of the court when revoking a term of probation or supervised release;
- Explain the purpose and role of the Chapter Seven policy statements in revocation of supervision; and,
- Summarize the court’s responsibility in consideration of Chapter Seven.
This eLearning module introduces the criminal history rules used to apply the federal sentencing guidelines.

**Learning Objectives**
- Explain the function and import of determining the Criminal History Category for a particular defendant;
- Calculate the length of a defendant’s prior sentence;
- Determine if a defendant’s prior sentence falls within the applicable time frame to count for criminal history points;
- Describe special rules used to score particular prior sentences; and
- Apply the criminal history rules to calculate criminal history points using real-world scenarios.

This eLearning module introduces the Relevant Conduct analysis used to apply the federal sentencing guidelines emphasizing real-world scenarios to illustrate the application of the analysis.

**Learning Objectives**
- Explain why the Commission adopted a relevant conduct analysis;
- Describe how relevant conduct impacts application of Chapters Two and Three of the federal sentencing guidelines;
- Determine which acts of the defendant are considered relevant conduct in an offense;
- Determine if acts of others in a jointly undertaken criminal activity can be attributed to the defendant as relevant conduct in an offense;
- Explain when “expanded” relevant conduct applies in application of the federal sentencing guidelines; and
- Apply the relevant conduct analysis to real-world scenarios.

This eLearning module demonstrates application of the grouping rules following the process outlined in the Decision Tree.

**Learning Objectives**
- Use the Decision Tree to determine a single offense level for a case involving multiple counts of conviction;
- Define the criteria for applying the four grouping rules in §3D1.2;
- Identify the difference between grouping multiple counts of conviction under §3D1.2(d) and grouping multiple counts under §3D1.2(a), (b), and (c);
- Describe the process of assigning units under §3D1.4;
- Distinguish between “grouping” multiple counts of conviction under §3D1.2 and the “assignment of units” to multiple counts of conviction under §3D1.4;
- Apply the multiple counts rules under Chapter Three, Part D to real-world scenarios; and
- Determine a single offense level for real-world scenarios involving multiple counts of conviction.
The Chief Judge of each district shall ensure that, within 30 days following entry of judgment in every criminal case, the sentencing court submits to the following documents to the Commission:

- the judgment and commitment order (J&C);
- the statement of reasons (SOR);
- any plea agreement;
- the indictment or other charging document;
- the presentence report (PSR); and
- any other information the Commission finds appropriate.

Information collected from the submitted documents includes:

- demographic information;
- statutes of conviction;
- complete guideline application information;
- sentencing information;
- criminal history points and additional information about prior convictions; and
- information about the sentence relative to the guideline range.

The Commission collects data from these documents using both optical character recognition (OCR) technology and in-house manual data collection to create datafiles. From these datafiles, the Commission prepares and disseminates public reports on a wide variety of sentencing issues.

The Commission also uses this data in its consulting capacity to the courts, Congress, and the Executive Branch.
The annual Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics contains descriptive statistics on the application of the federal sentencing guidelines and provides selected district, circuit, and national sentencing data. Published in April 2020, the latest edition reports information on offenders sentenced in fiscal year 2019 (October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019).

The Sourcebook is available online and in print.

- Request a hard copy of the latest edition.

Launched in June 2020, the Interactive Data Analyzer (IDA) is an online tool that can be used to explore, filter, customize, and visualize federal sentencing data for research, policymaking, and sentencing purposes. IDA offers prebuilt data dashboards for common areas of interest and a filtering menu to select data by fiscal year, jurisdiction, demographics, and more.

- Watch tutorial on navigating IDA.
- Watch tutorial on exporting files in IDA.

The Director of the Office of Research & Data will respond to special data requests from federal judges.

We can provide statistics for your district on specific sentencing issues, such as the average sentence imposed for similarly situated defendants who are sentenced in your district.

Contact Glenn Schmitt at GSchmitt@ussc.gov.
SELECT REPORTS

■ ANNUAL SOURCEBOOKS
The Sourcebook is available online from 1996-2019. Prior to 1996, annual sentencing data can be found in the Commission’s Annual Report, which is available online from 1990-2019.

■ BOOKER SERIES
Over the last decade, the Commission has released five reports examining the impact of *U.S. v. Booker* on federal sentencing. These reports include:
- Demographic Differences (2010)
- Report to the Congress (2012)
- Demographic Differences (2017)
- Intra-City Differences (2019)
- Inter-District Differences (2020)

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The Commission recently updated its 2011 report to the Congress on mandatory minimum penalties in six separate installments focusing on the following areas:
- Overview (2017)
- Drug Trafficking (2017)
- Firearms (2018)
- 851 Enhancements (2018)
- Identity Theft (2018)
- Sex Offenses (2019)

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These reports compare federal sentencing statistics for each judicial district, judicial circuit, and state to the nation as a whole.

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These reports present data on federal cases in which a motion for a reduced sentence was considered as a result of a federal statute or an amendment to the federal sentencing guidelines.

■ "$^{+!$+$}"
These reports present preliminary quarterly sentencing information submitted by the U.S. Courts.

To request a printed copy of these reports or any other Commission report, please contact PubAffairs@ussc.gov