Fiscal Year 2018

- In FY 2018, 69,425 cases were reported to the U.S. Sentencing Commission.
- 5,948 of these involved theft, property destruction, and fraud.\(^1\)
- 6.9% of theft, property destruction, and fraud offenses involved government benefits fraud.\(^2,3\)
- Government benefits fraud has decreased by 34.7% since FY 2014.

### Number of Government Benefits Fraud Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2014</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2015</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2016</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2017</td>
<td>477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2018</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Median Loss for Government Benefits Fraud Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Median Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2014</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2015</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2016</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2017</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2018</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Offender and Offense Characteristics

- 61.6% of government benefits fraud offenders were men.
- 35.7% were White, 30.0% were Hispanic, 28.3% were Black, and 6.0% were Other races.
- Their average age was 45 years.
- 74.0% were United States citizens.
- 76.2% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I).
- The median loss for these offenses was $52,206.\(^4\)
  - 22.4% involved loss amounts of $0.
  - 12.2% involved loss amounts greater than $95,000.
- Sentences were increased for:
  - the number of victims or the extent of harm to victims (6.7%);
  - using sophisticated means to execute or conceal the offense (3.7%);\(^5\)
  - using an unauthorized means of identification (19.8%);
  - leadership or supervisory role in the offense (9.1%);
  - abusing a public position of trust or using a special skill (5.0%);
  - obstructing or impeding the administration of justice (3.2%).
- Sentences were decreased for:
  - minor or minimal participation in the offense (5.7%).
- The top five districts for government benefits fraud offenders were:
  - Eastern District of Texas (26);
  - Eastern District of Michigan (21);
  - Southern District of Florida (17);
  - District of Nebraska (16);
  - Middle District of Florida (15).

Punishment

- The average sentence length for government benefits fraud offenders was 12 months.
- 64.9% were sentenced to prison.
- 7.2% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; of those offenders, 17.2% were relieved of that penalty.

For more Quick Facts, visit https://www.ussc.gov/research/quick-facts.
Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

- Of the 60.9% of government benefits fraud offenders sentenced under the Guidelines Manual:
  - 79.3% were sentenced within the guideline range.
  - 15.0% received a substantial assistance departure.
    - Their average sentence reduction was 61.9%.
  - 5.3% received some other downward departure.
    - Their average sentence reduction was 62.0%.
- 39.1% received a variance; of those offenders:
  - 98.7% received a downward variance.
    - Their average sentence reduction was 67.2%.
  - 1.3% received an upward variance.
- The average guideline minimum and average sentence imposed has remained stable over the past five years.
  - The average guideline minimum remained steady at 17 months from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2018.
  - The average sentence imposed remained steady at 12 months from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2018.

### Sentence Imposed Relative to the Guideline Range FY 2018

- **Within Range**: 48.3%
- **Substantial Assistance**: 9.2%
- **Other Downward**: 3.2%
- **Upward Departure**: 0.2%
- **Variances**: 39.1%

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1. Theft, property destruction, and fraud offenses include cases with complete guideline application information in which the offender was sentenced under §2B1.1 (Larceny, Embezzlement, and Other Forms of Theft; Offenses Involving Stolen Property; Property Damage or Destruction; Fraud and Deceit; Forgery; Offenses Involving Altered or Counterfeit Instruments Other than Counterfeit Bearer Obligations of the United States) using a Guidelines Manual in effect on November 1, 2001 or later. See www.ussc.gov/research/quick-facts for the Quick Facts on §2B1.1 offenders.

2. Cases with incomplete sentencing information were excluded from the analysis.

3. Government benefits fraud includes cases where the offense conduct as described in the Presentence Report involved a false claim to the federal or state government involving assistance programs from federal agencies.

4. The Loss Table and Victims Table were amended effective November 1, 2015.

5. The Sophisticated Means adjustment was amended effective November 1, 2015.