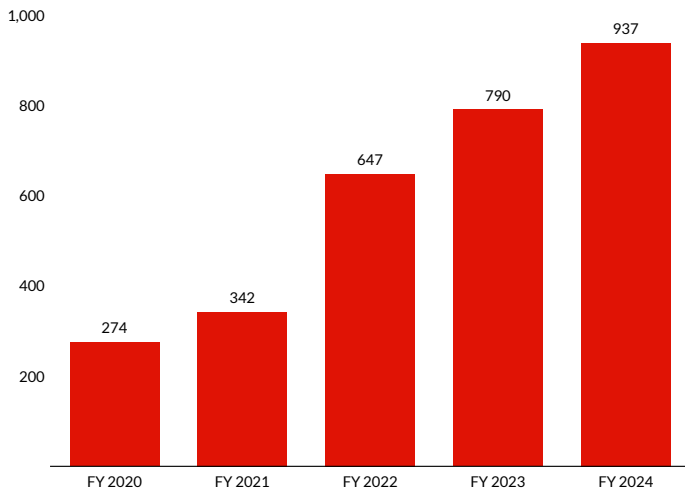# QuickFacts

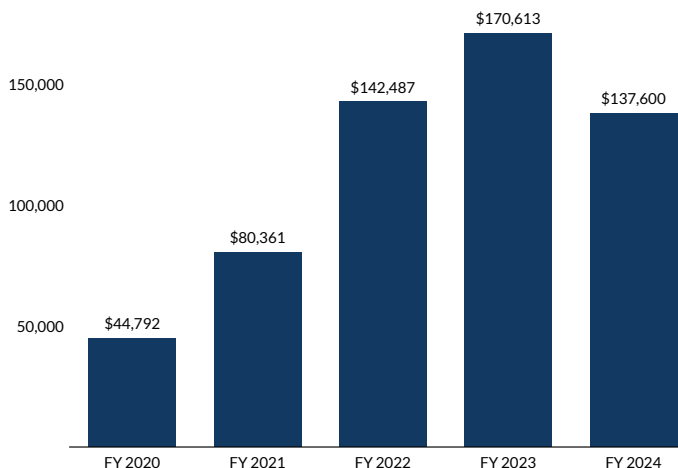## Government Benefits Fraud

Population Snapshot

61,678 cases *were reported in FY24;*

937 *involved government benefits fraud.*[1,2]

Government benefits fraud offenses have increased 242.0% since FY20.

Number of Government Benefits Fraud Offenses

FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
274	342	647	790	937

Median Loss for Government Benefits Fraud Offenses

FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
$44,792	$80,361	$142,487	$170,613	$137,600

This document was produced and published at U.S. taxpayer expense.

Individual and Offense Characteristics

64.6% of individuals sentenced for government benefits fraud were men.

62.4% were Black, 19.7% were White, 14.1% were Hispanic, and 3.8% were Other races.

Their average age was 41 years.

93.3% were United States citizens.

71.2% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I).

The median loss for these offenses was $137,600;[3]
- 2.8% involved loss amounts of zero;
- 22.6% involved loss amounts greater than $550,000.

Sentences were increased for:
- the number of victims or the extent of harm to victims (11.3%);[4]
- using sophisticated means to execute or conceal the offense (14.3%);
- using an unauthorized means of identification (13.9%);
- fraud or theft in connection with a major disaster or emergency (20.4%);
- a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (7.0%);
- abusing a public position of trust or using a special skill (2.0%);
- obstructing or impeding the administration of justice (2.9%).

Sentences were decreased for:
- minor or minimal participation in the offense (3.5%).

The top five districts for government benefits fraud were:
- Southern District of Florida (69);
- Eastern District of North Carolina (35);
- District of Puerto Rico (33);
- District of South Carolina (29);
- Eastern District of Virginia (26, tie);
- Southern District of New York (26, tie);
- Southern District of Texas (26, tie).

Punishment

The average sentence for individuals sentenced for government benefits fraud offenses was 16 months.

68.6% were sentenced to prison.

2.3% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; 4.5% of those individuals were relieved of that penalty.

QuickFacts
Government Benefits Fraud

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

56.0% of sentences for government benefits fraud were under the *Guidelines Manual*.

- 43.1% were within the guideline range.

- 9.0% were substantial assistance departures.
  - *The average sentence reduction was 60.2%.*

- 0.1% were Early Disposition Program (EDP) departures. [5,6]

- 3.8% were some other downward departure.
  - *The average sentence reduction was 49.2%.*

44.0% of sentences for government benefits fraud were variances.

- 42.6% were downward variances.
  - *The average sentence reduction was 63.9%.*

- 1.4% were upward variances.
  - *The average sentence increase was 79.5%.*

The average guideline minimum and average sentence imposed have fluctuated over the past five years.

- The average guideline minimum was 15 months in fiscal year 2020 and 22 months in fiscal year 2024.

- The average sentence imposed was 13 months in fiscal year 2020 and 16 months in fiscal year 2024.

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

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

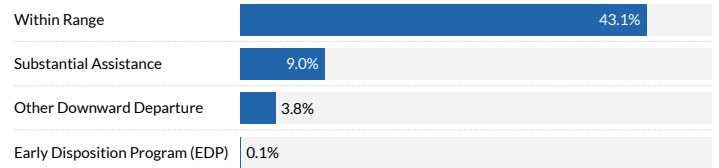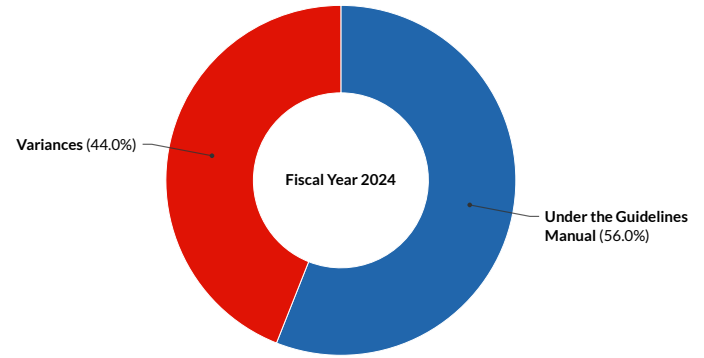[3] The Loss Table was amended effective November 1, 2001 and November 1, 2015.

[4] The Victims Table and Sophisticated Means adjustment were amended effective November 1, 2015.

[5] "Early Disposition Program" (or EDP) departures are departures where the government sought a sentence below the guideline range because the defendant participated in the government's Early Disposition Program, through which cases are resolved in an expedited manner. *See* USSG §5K3.1.
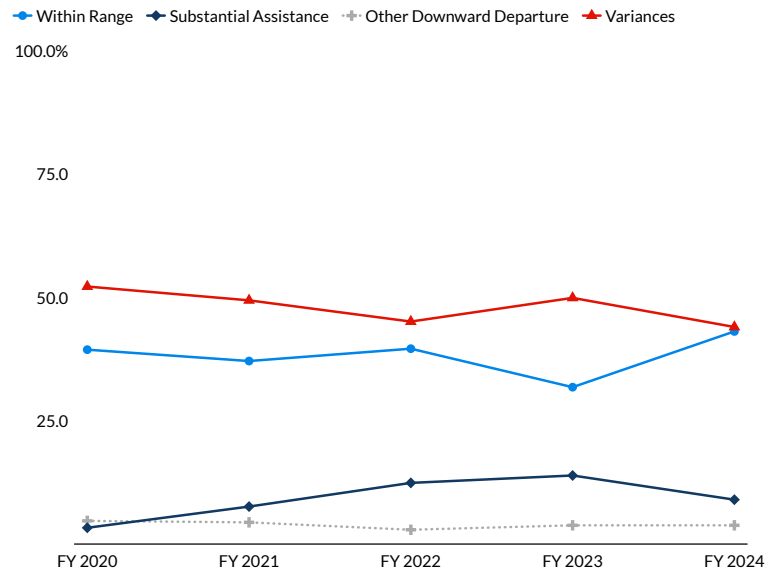
[6] The Commission does not report the average for categories with fewer than three cases.

SOURCE: United States Sentencing Commission, FY 2020 through FY 2024 Datafiles, USSCFY20-USSCFY24.

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

Variances (44.0%)

Fiscal Year 2024

Under the Guidelines Manual (56.0%)

Within Range	43.1%
Substantial Assistance	9.0%
Other Downward Departure	3.8%
Early Disposition Program (EDP)	0.1%

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range by Fiscal Year

— Within Range — Substantial Assistance ⋯+⋯ Other Downward Departure — Variances

Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)

⋯■⋯ Guideline Minimum — Sentence