



QuickFacts

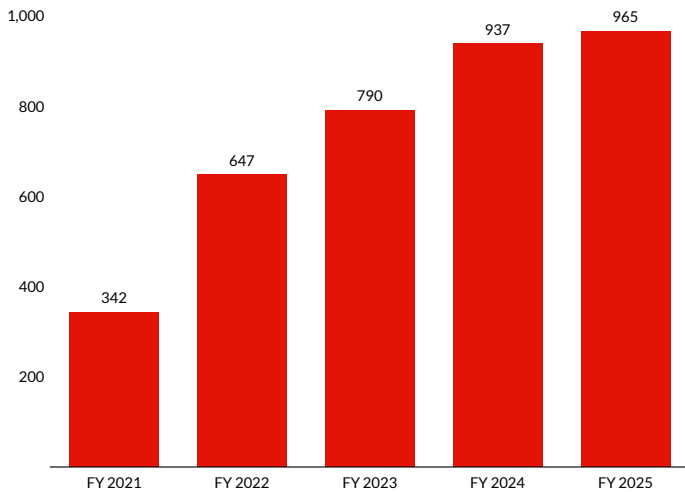
Government Benefits Fraud

Population Snapshot

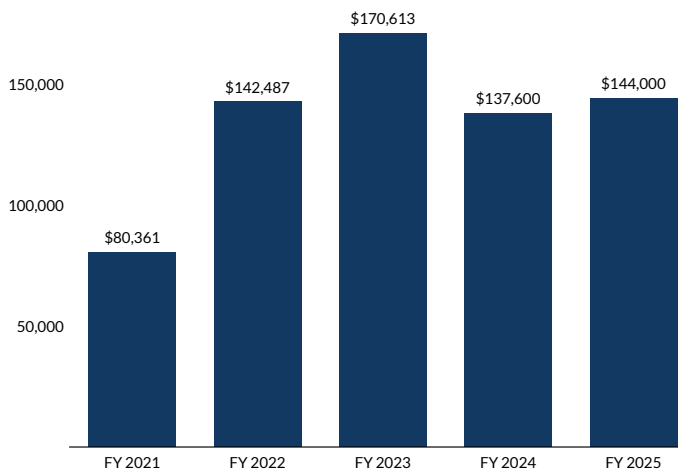
66,662 cases were reported in FY25;
965 involved government benefits fraud.^{1,2}

Government benefits fraud offenses have increased 182% since FY21.

Number of Government Benefits Fraud Offenses



Median Loss for Government Benefits Fraud Offenses



Individual and Offense Characteristics

62% of individuals sentenced for government benefits fraud were men.

57% were Black, 20% were White, 20% were Hispanic, and 3% were Other races.

Their average age was 41 years.

90% were United States citizens.

72% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I).

56% received the adjustment at USSG §4C1.1 for zero criminal history points.

The median loss for these offenses was \$144,000;³

- 2% involved loss amounts of zero;
- 26% involved loss amounts greater than \$550,000.

Sentences were increased for:

- the number of victims or the extent of harm to victims (15%);⁴
- using sophisticated means to execute or conceal the offense (13%);
- using an unauthorized means of identification (18%);
- fraud or theft in connection with a major disaster or emergency (22%);
- a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (7%);
- abusing a public position of trust or using a special skill (3%);
- obstructing or impeding the administration of justice (2%).

Sentences were decreased for:

- minor or minimal participation in the offense (4%).

The top five districts for government benefits fraud were:

- District of Puerto Rico (64);
- Southern District of Florida (57);
- Eastern District of Texas (50);
- Middle District of Florida (42);
- Eastern District of Virginia (38).

Punishment

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

66% were sentenced to prison.

3% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; 8% of those individuals were relieved of that penalty.



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Government Benefits Fraud

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

56% of sentences for government benefits fraud were under the *Guidelines Manual*.

- 41% were within the guideline range.
- 12% were substantial assistance departures.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 63%.*
- 3% were some other downward departure.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 59%.*
- Less than 1% were an upward departure.⁵

44% of sentences for government benefits fraud were variances.

- 43% were downward variances.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 64%.*
- 1% were upward variances.
 - *The average sentence increase was 55%.*

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

- The average guideline minimum was 20 months in fiscal year 2021 and 23 months in fiscal year 2025.
- The average sentence was 13 months in fiscal year 2021 and 16 months in fiscal year 2025.

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.

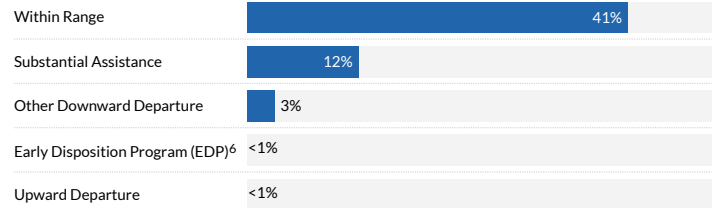
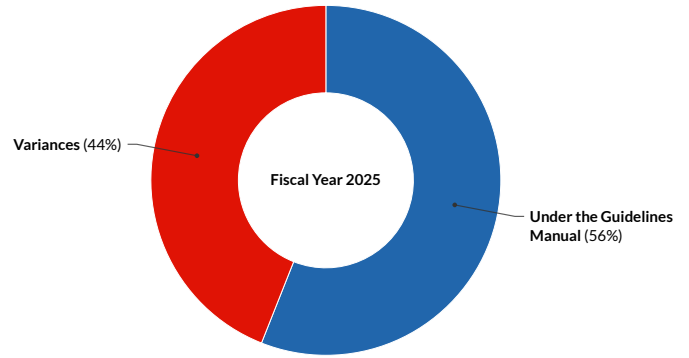
⁴ The Victims Table and Sophisticated Means adjustment were amended effective November 1, 2015.

⁵ The Commission does not report the average for categories with fewer than three cases.

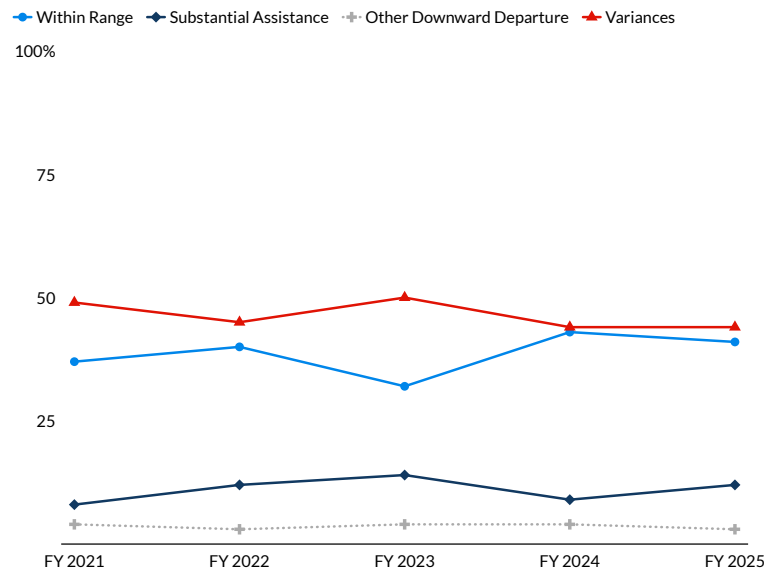
⁶ "Early Disposition Program" (or EDP) departures are departures where the government sought a sentence below the guideline range because the defendant participated in the government's Early Disposition Program, through which cases are resolved in an expedited manner. See USSG §5K3.1.

SOURCE: United States Sentencing Commission, FY 2021 through FY 2025 Datafiles, USSCFY21-USSCFY25.

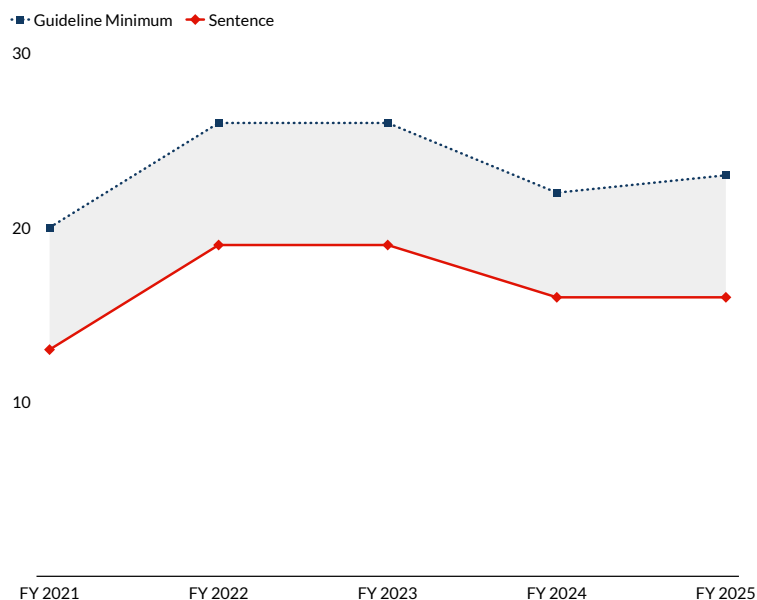
Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range



Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range by Fiscal Year



Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)



FY 2021 FY 2022 FY 2023 FY 2024 FY 2025