



QuickFacts

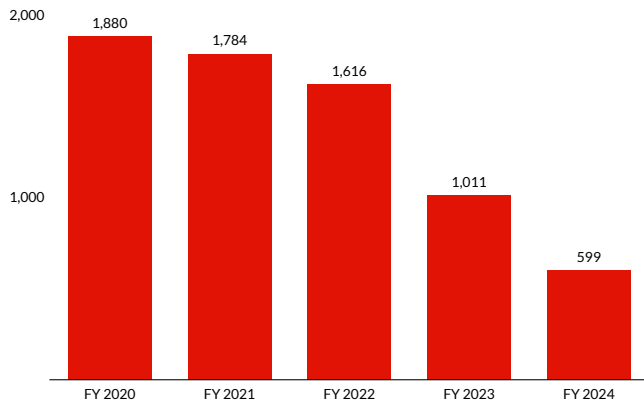
Heroin Trafficking

Population Snapshot

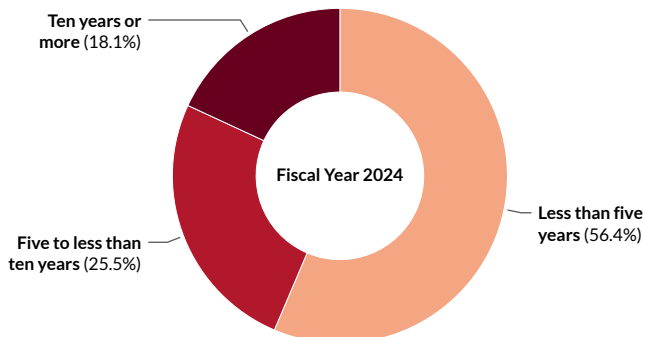
61,678 cases were reported in FY24;
18,150 involved drugs,¹
18,029 involved drug trafficking.²

3.3% of such cases involved
heroin, down 68.1%
since FY20.

Number of Heroin Trafficking Offenses



Sentence Length³



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Individual and Offense Characteristics

85.4% of individuals sentenced for heroin trafficking were men.

58.1% were Hispanic, 28.2% were Black, 12.2% were White, and 1.5% were Other races.

Their average age was 39 years.

75.0% were United States citizens.

40.7% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I); 5.3% were individuals sentenced under the career offender guideline (§4B1.1).

The median base offense level in these cases was 30, corresponding to between one and three kilograms of heroin.

Sentences were increased for:

- possessing a weapon (24.8%);
- a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (10.5%).

Sentences were decreased for:

- minor or minimal participation in the offense (16.8%);
- meeting the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines (34.6%).

The top five districts for heroin trafficking offenses were:

- District of New Jersey (45);
- Southern District of Texas (41);
- Western District of Texas (34);
- District of Utah (34);
- Northern District of Illinois (23).

Punishment

The average sentence for individuals trafficking heroin was 66 months.

95.2% were sentenced to prison.

51.8% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; 54.8% of those individuals were relieved of that penalty.

Means of Relief from Mandatory Minimum Penalty for Heroin Trafficking

Means of Relief	Percent
Safety Valve	21.6%
Substantial Assistance	20.3%
Both	12.8%



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Heroin Trafficking

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

56.7% of sentences for heroin trafficking were under the *Guidelines Manual*.

- 25.6% were within the guideline range.
- 25.1% were substantial assistance departures.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 62.5%.*
- 1.7% were Early Disposition Program (EDP) departures.⁴
 - *The average sentence reduction was 58.1%.*
- 3.7% were some other downward departure.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 43.6%.*
- 0.5% were upward departures.
 - *The average sentence increase was 90.4%.*

43.3% of sentences for heroin trafficking were variances.

- 41.3% were downward variances.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 45.0%.*
- 2.0% were upward variances.
 - *The average sentence increase was 135.8%.*

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

- The average guideline minimum was 90 months in fiscal year 2020 and 101 months in fiscal year 2024.
- The average sentence imposed was 66 months in fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2024.

¹ Drug offenses include cases where individuals were sentenced under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs). There were 602 individuals sentenced for heroin offenses under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs) in FY 2024.

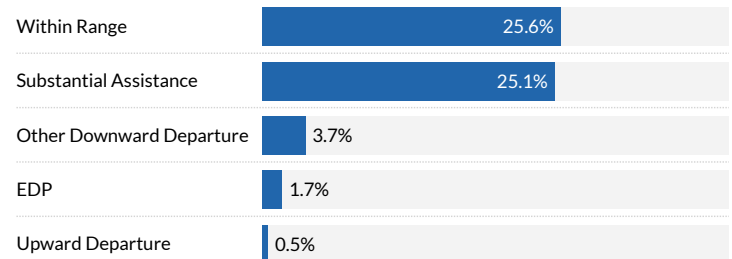
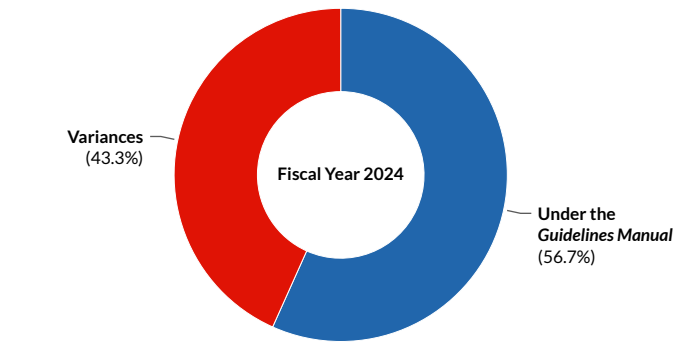
² Individuals sentenced for drug trafficking were sentenced under USSG §§2D1.1 (Drug Trafficking), 2D1.2 (Protected Locations), 2D1.5 (Continuing Criminal Enterprise), 2D1.6 (Use of a Communication Facility), 2D1.8 (Rent/Manage Drug Establishment), 2D1.10 (Endangering Human Life), or 2D1.14 (Narco-Terrorism).

³ Cases with incomplete sentencing information were excluded from the analysis.

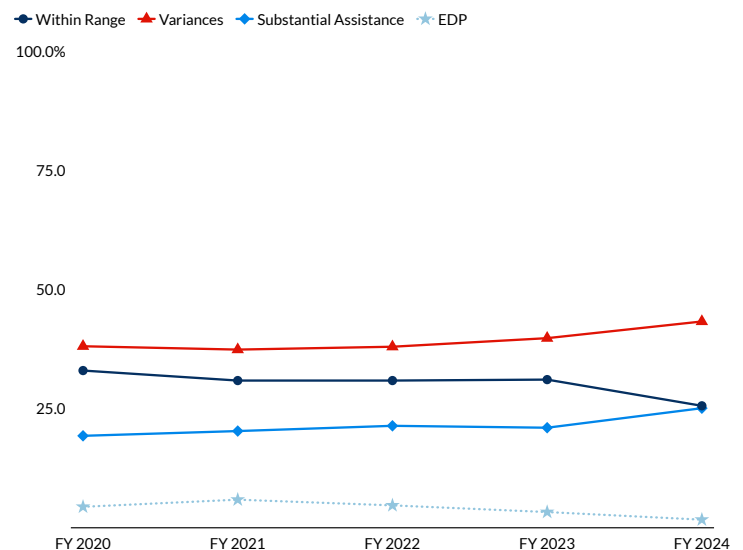
⁴ "Early Disposition Program" (or EDP) departures are departures where the government sought a sentence below the guideline range because the defendant participated in the government's Early Disposition Program, through which cases are resolved in an expedited manner. See USSG §5K3.1.

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

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range



Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range by Fiscal Year



Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)

