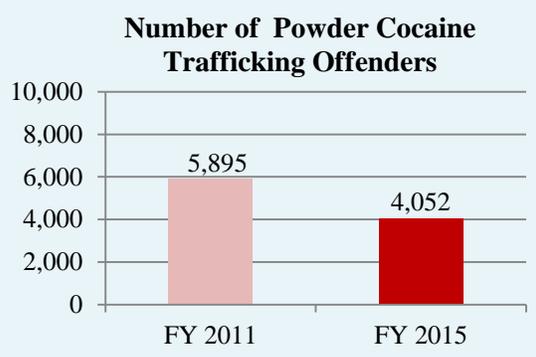




# Quick Facts

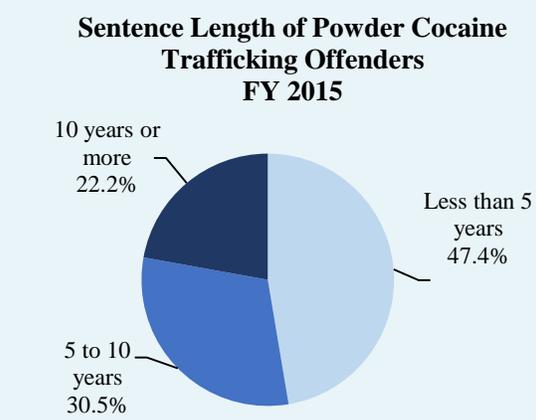
- ▶ THERE WERE 71,003 CASES REPORTED TO THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION IN FISCAL YEAR 2015.
- ▶ OF THESE CASES, 19,792 INVOLVED DRUG TRAFFICKING.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ 20.5% OF DRUG TRAFFICKING OFFENSES INVOLVED POWDER COCAINE.

## Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenses



**Top Five Districts Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenders FY 2015**

District of Puerto Rico (N=564)
Southern District of Texas (N=278)
Southern District of Florida (N=261)
Middle District of Florida (N=238)
Western District of Texas (N=186)



In fiscal year 2015, there were 4,052 powder cocaine trafficking offenders, who accounted for 20.5% of all offenders sentenced under the drug trafficking guidelines. The number of powder cocaine offenders has decreased by 31.3% since fiscal year 2011.

### Offender and Offense Characteristics

- In fiscal year 2015, the majority of powder cocaine trafficking offenders were male (89.9%).
- Over sixty percent of powder cocaine trafficking offenders were Hispanic (61.0%) followed by Black (28.8%), White (8.9%), and Other Races (1.3%).
- The average age of these offenders at sentencing was 37 years.
- Approximately seventy percent of powder cocaine trafficking offenders were United States citizens (69.7%).
- More than half (58.4%) of powder cocaine traffickers had little or no prior criminal history (i.e., assigned to Criminal History Category I). Six percent (6.6%) were career offenders.
- The median base offense level in these cases was 28. This corresponds to a quantity of drugs between 7.7 and 11.0 pounds of powder cocaine.
- Powder cocaine trafficking sentences were increased for:
  - ◆ 17.8% of offenders because the offense involved the possession of a weapon;
  - ◆ 10.1% of offenders for having a leadership or supervisory role in the offense.
- Powder cocaine trafficking sentences were decreased for:
  - ◆ 13.9% of offenders because they were a minor or minimal participant in the offense;
  - ◆ 35.9% of offenders because they met the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines.

### Punishment

- Most powder cocaine trafficking offenders were sentenced to imprisonment (97.2%).
- The average sentence for powder cocaine trafficking offenders was 72 months.
- Nearly two-thirds of all powder cocaine trafficking offenders were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty (64.1%).
  - ◆ However, more than half (53.9%) of these offenders were not subject to any mandatory minimum penalty at sentencing because:
    - ◇ 18.3% provided the government with substantial assistance in the investigation or prosecution of other offenders, 26.6% were eligible for relief through the statutory safety valve provision, and 9.0% received both forms of relief.

<sup>1</sup> Drug trafficking offenses include cases with complete guideline application information in which the offender was 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).

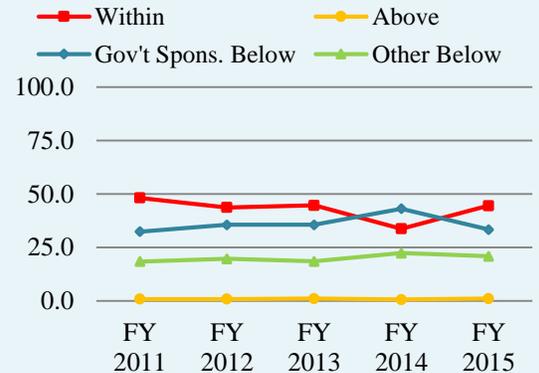
# Quick Facts

## Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenses

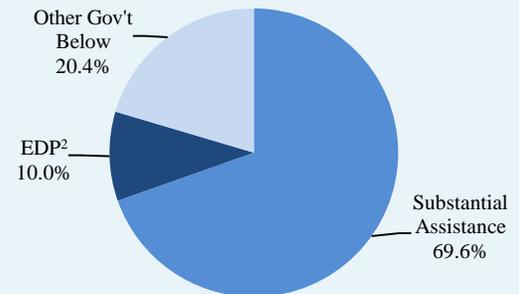
### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

- The rate of within range sentences for powder cocaine trafficking offenders in fiscal year 2015 was 44.5%.
- The rate of government sponsored below range sentences for powder cocaine trafficking offenders in fiscal year 2015 was 33.4%.
  - ◆ Substantial assistance departures were granted for approximately a quarter of offenders in each of the past five years. The rate was 23.2% in fiscal year 2015.
    - ◇ In fiscal year 2015, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 51.2%.
  - ◆ Early Disposition Program (EDP) departures<sup>4</sup> were granted for a small proportion of approximately three to four percent of powder cocaine trafficking offenders in each of the last five years.
    - ◇ In fiscal year 2015, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 51.6%.
  - ◆ The rate of powder cocaine trafficking offenders receiving a below range sentence sponsored by the government for reasons other than substantial assistance or participation in an Early Disposition Program was 6.8% in fiscal year 2015.
    - ◇ In fiscal year 2015, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 37.6%.
- The rate of non-government sponsored below range sentences for powder cocaine traffickers has generally increased in recent years, but decreased from 22.4% in fiscal year 2014 to 20.9% in fiscal year 2015.
  - ◆ In fiscal year 2015, these offenders received an average reduction in their sentence of 34.4%.
- The average guideline minimum for powder cocaine trafficking offenders increased from fiscal year 2011 to fiscal year 2012, but has decreased in each subsequent year, with average sentences following the same pattern.
  - ◆ The average guideline minimum decreased from 101 months in fiscal year 2014 to 95 months in fiscal year 2015;
  - ◆ The average sentence imposed increased decreased from 73 months in fiscal year 2014 to 72 months in fiscal year 2015.

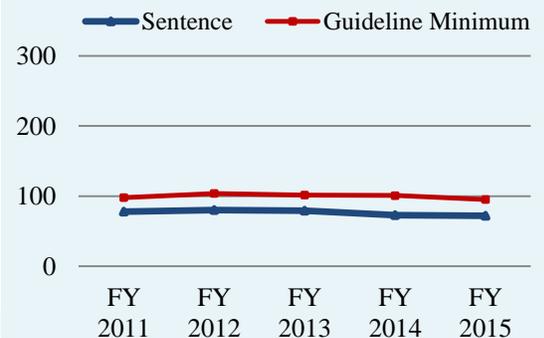
### Sentence Relative to the Guideline Range



### Government Sponsored Below Range Sentences FY 2015



### Average Sentence and Average Guideline Minimum (in months)



<sup>2</sup> "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.

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SOURCE: United States Sentencing Commission, 2011 through 2015 Datafiles, USSCFY11-USSCFY15.



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