



# Quick Facts

## — Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenses —

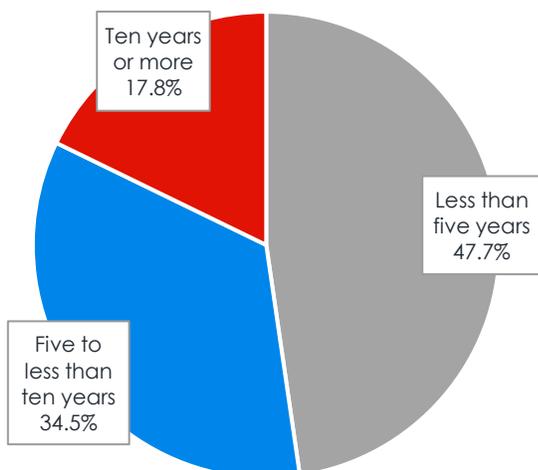
### Fiscal Year 2021

- ▶ IN FY 2021, 57,287 CASES WERE REPORTED TO THE U. S. SENTENCING COMMISSION.
- ▶ 17,692 CASES INVOLVED DRUGS.<sup>1</sup>
- ▶ 17,520 INVOLVED DRUG TRAFFICKING.<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ 16.7% OF DRUG TRAFFICKING CASES INVOLVED POWDER COCAINE.
- ▶ POWDER COCAINE TRAFFICKING OFFENDERS HAVE DECREASED BY 26.2% SINCE FY 2017.

**Number of Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenders**



**Sentence Length FY 2021**



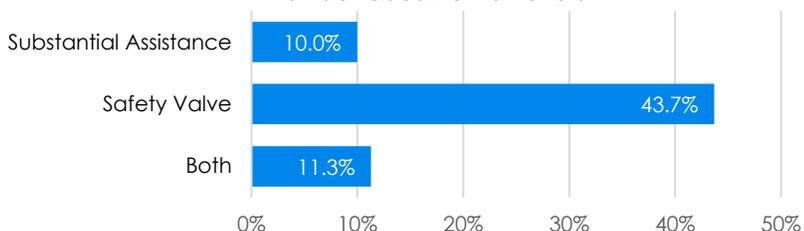
### Offender and Offense Characteristics<sup>3</sup>

- 90.0% of powder cocaine trafficking offenders were men.
- 66.9% were Hispanic, 25.0% were Black, 6.9% were White, and 1.2% were Other races.
- Their average age was 38 years.
- 67.2% were United States citizens.
- 63.5% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I); 3.4% were career offenders (§4B1.1).
- The median base offense level in these cases was 30, corresponding to between five and 15 kilograms of powder cocaine.
- Sentences were increased for:
  - ◆ possessing a weapon (21.7%);
  - ◆ having a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (9.3%).
- Sentences were decreased for:
  - ◆ minor or minimal participation in the offense (16.9%);
  - ◆ meeting the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines (45.5%).
- The top five districts for powder cocaine trafficking offenders were:
  - ◆ District of Puerto Rico (353);
  - ◆ Southern District of Texas (320);
  - ◆ Middle District of Florida (247);
  - ◆ Southern District of Florida (159);
  - ◆ Western District of Texas (146).

### Punishment

- The average sentence for powder cocaine trafficking offenders was 68 months.
- 97.3% were sentenced to prison.
- 74.2% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; of those offenders, 65.0% were relieved of that penalty.

**Means of Relief from Mandatory Minimum Penalty for Powder Cocaine Traffickers**





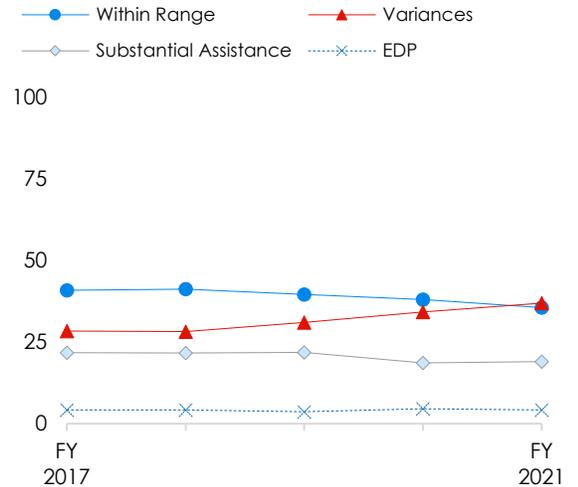
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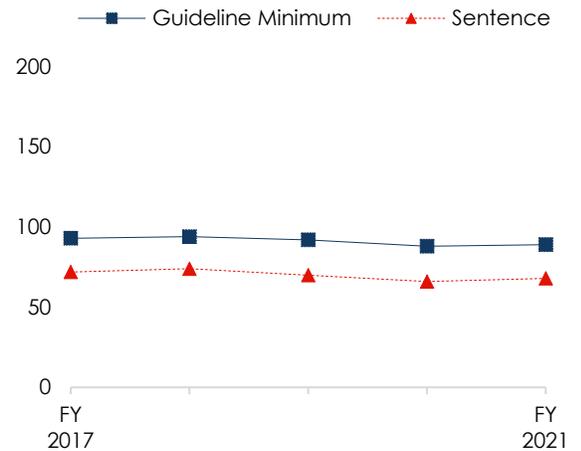
**Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range**

- Of the 63.1% of powder cocaine trafficking offenders sentenced under the *Guidelines Manual*:
  - 56.3% were sentenced within the guideline range.
  - 30.1% received a substantial assistance departure.
    - Their average sentence reduction was 48.5%.
  - 6.6% received an Early Disposition Program (EDP) departure.<sup>4</sup>
    - Their average sentence reduction was 63.2%.
- 36.9% received a variance; of those offenders:
  - 95.4% received a downward variance.
    - Their average sentence reduction was 36.2%.
  - 4.6% received an upward variance.
    - Their average sentence increase was 55.2%.
- The average guideline minimum and average sentence imposed fluctuated over the past five years.
  - The average guideline minimum increased and decreased throughout the fiscal years. The average guideline minimum was 93 months in fiscal year 2017 and 89 months in fiscal year 2021.
  - The average sentence imposed increased and decreased throughout the fiscal years. The average sentence was 72 months in fiscal year 2017 and 68 months in fiscal year 2021.

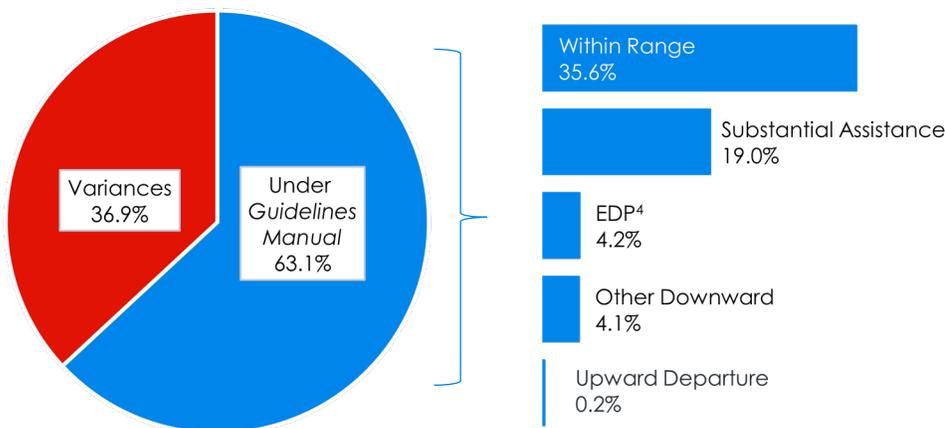
**Sentence Relative to the Guideline Range (%)**



**Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)**



**Sentence Imposed Relative to the Guideline Range FY 2021**



<sup>1</sup> Drug offenses include cases where offenders were sentenced under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs). There were 2,940 powder cocaine offenders sentenced under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs) in FY 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Drug Trafficking offenders 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).

<sup>3</sup> Cases with incomplete sentencing information were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>4</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.

SOURCE: United States Sentencing Commission, FY 2017 through FY 2021 Datafiles, USSCFY17-USSCFY21.