



# QuickFacts

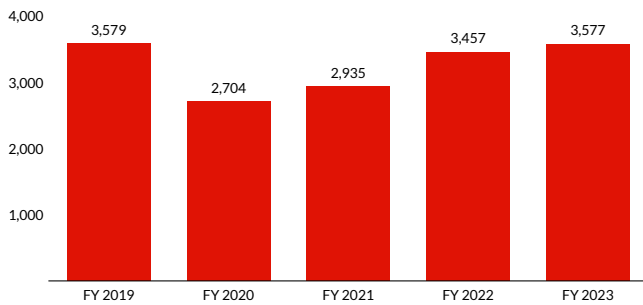
## Powder Cocaine Trafficking

### Population Snapshot

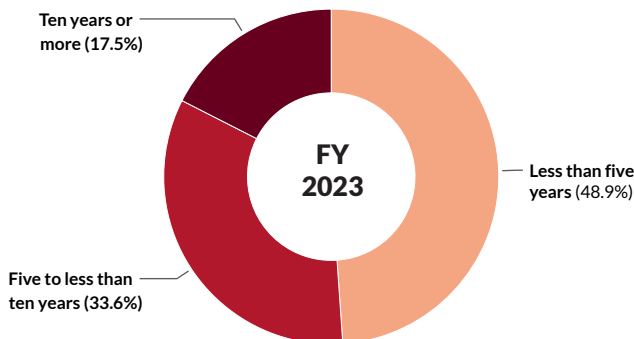
**64,124 cases** were reported in FY23;  
**19,066** involved drugs,<sup>1</sup>  
**18,939** involved drug trafficking.<sup>2</sup>

18.9% of such cases involved powder cocaine, down 0.1% since FY 2019.

### Number of Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenses



### Sentence Length<sup>3</sup>



### Individual and Offense Characteristics

- 91.8% of individuals sentenced for powder cocaine trafficking were men.
- 71.3% were Hispanic, 22.3% were Black, 5.4% were White, and 1.0% were Other races.
- Their average age was 39 years.
- 65.5% were United States citizens.
- 63.5% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I); 3.1% were sentenced under the career offender guideline (§4B1.1).
- The median base offense level in these cases was 30, corresponding to between 5 and 15 kilograms of powder cocaine.
- Sentences were increased for:
  - possessing a weapon (21.2%);
  - a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (9.6%).
- Sentences were decreased for:
  - minor or minimal participation in the offense (17.0%);
  - meeting the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines (44.1%).
- The top five districts for powder cocaine trafficking offenses were:
  - District of Puerto Rico (515);
  - Southern District of Texas (401);
  - Southern District of Florida (223);
  - Southern District of California (214);
  - Middle District of Florida (214).

### Punishment

- The average sentence for powder cocaine traffickers was 68 months.
- 97.4% were sentenced to prison.
- 70.6% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; 62.5% of those individuals were relieved of that penalty.

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

	Percent
Safety Valve	40.8%
Substantial Assistance	10.6%
Both	11.0%



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## Powder Cocaine Trafficking

### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

Of the 59.6% of individuals sentenced for powder cocaine trafficking under the *Guidelines Manual*:

- 53.8% were sentenced within the guideline range.
- 30.6% received a substantial assistance departure.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 53.9%.
- 6.7% received an Early Disposition Program (EDP) departure.<sup>4</sup>
  - Their average sentence reduction was 64.9%.
- 8.8% received some other downward departure.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 39.1%.

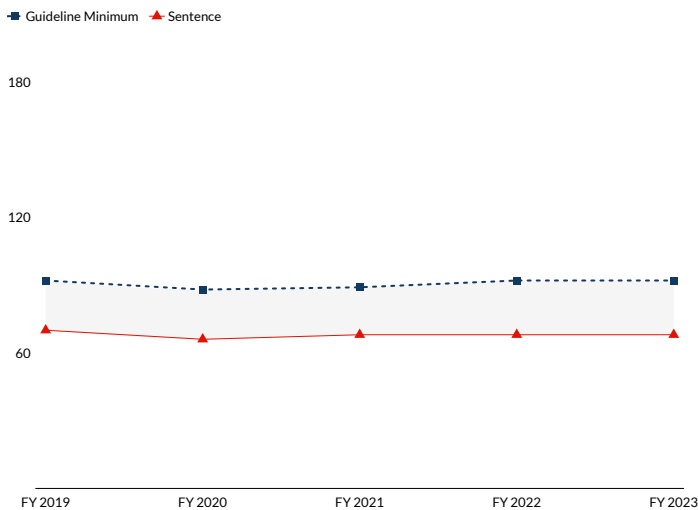
40.4% received a variance; of those individuals:

- 96.3% received a downward variance.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 37.4%.
- 3.7% received an upward variance.
  - Their average sentence increase was 76.5%.

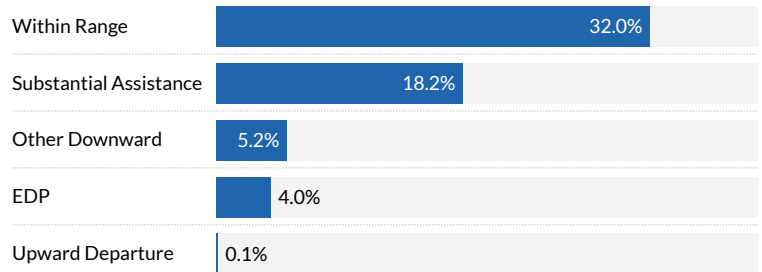
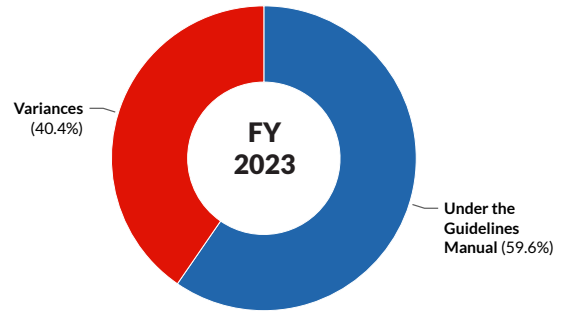
The average guideline minimum and average sentence imposed remained steady over the past five years.

- The average guideline minimum was 92 months in fiscal year 2019 and 92 months in fiscal year 2023.
- The average sentence was 70 months in fiscal year 2019 and 68 months in fiscal year 2023.

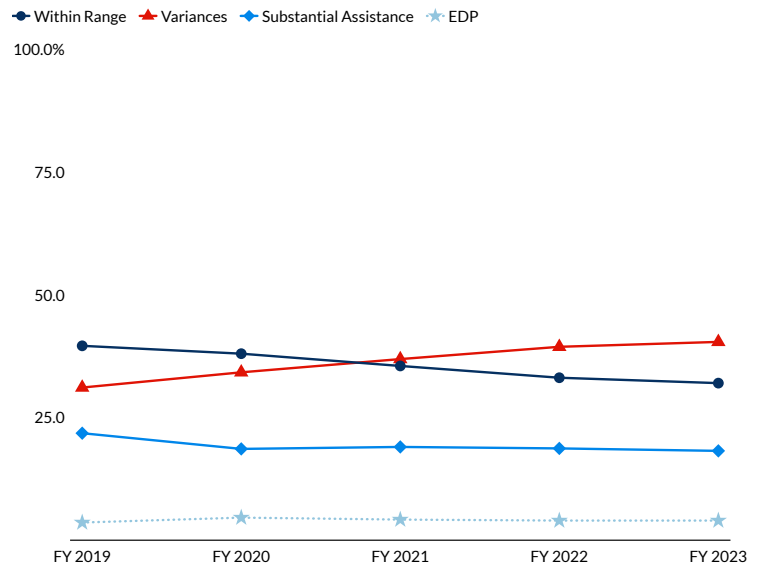
### Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)



### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range



### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range



<sup>1</sup> Drug offenses include cases where individuals were sentenced under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs). There were 3,589 individuals sentenced for powder cocaine offenses under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs) in FY 2023.

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<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.