



QuickFacts

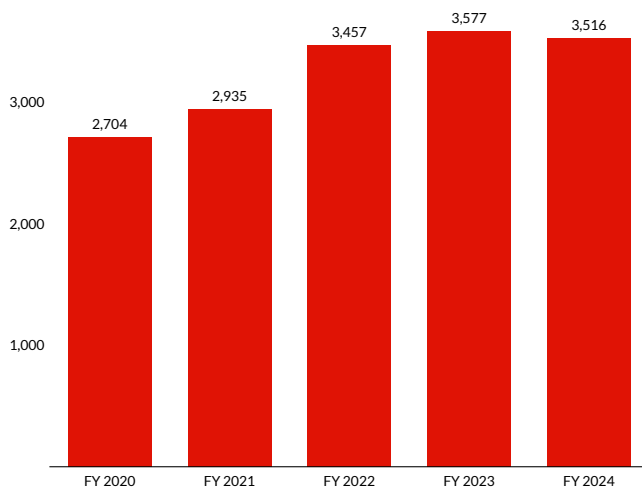
Powder Cocaine Trafficking

Population Snapshot

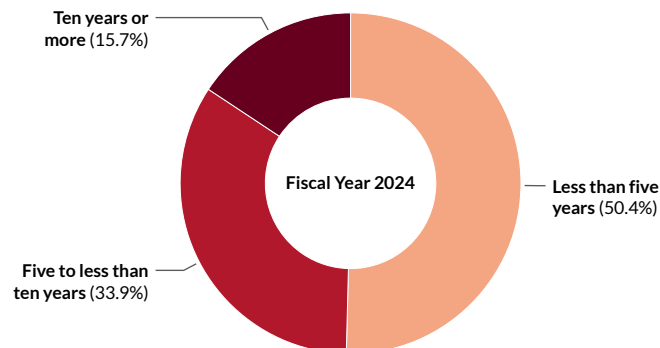
61,678 cases were reported in FY24;
18,150 involved drugs,¹
18,029 involved drug trafficking.²

19.5% of such cases involved
powder cocaine, up
30.0% since FY20.

Number of Powder Cocaine Trafficking Offenses



Sentence Length³



Individual and Offense Characteristics

91.4% of individuals sentenced for powder cocaine trafficking were men.

72.3% were Hispanic, 21.0% were Black, 5.6% were White, and 1.1% were Other races.

Their average age was 39 years.

62.2% were United States citizens.

68.1% had little or no prior criminal history (Criminal History Category I); 2.8% were sentenced under the career offender guideline (§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 (21.2%);
- a leadership or supervisory role in the offense (9.1%).

Sentences were decreased for:

- minor or minimal participation in the offense (18.2%);
- meeting the safety valve criteria in the sentencing guidelines (47.5%).

The top five districts for powder cocaine trafficking offenses were:

- District of Puerto Rico (563);
- Southern District of Texas (364);
- Western District of Texas (171);
- Southern District of California (170);
- Middle District of Florida (170).

Punishment

The average sentence for individuals trafficking powder cocaine was 64 months.

96.5% were sentenced to prison.

65.1% were convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum penalty; 63.0% of those individuals were relieved of that penalty.

Means of Relief from Mandatory Minimum Penalty for Powder Cocaine Trafficking

Means of Relief	Percent
Safety Valve	41.4%
Substantial Assistance	10.8%
Both	10.8%



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Powder Cocaine Trafficking

Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

61.8% of sentences for powder cocaine trafficking were under the *Guidelines Manual*.

- 35.8% were within the guideline range.
- 18.4% were substantial assistance departures.
 - The average sentence reduction was 52.9%.
- 3.4% were Early Disposition Program (EDP) departures.⁴
 - The average sentence reduction was 61.3%.
- 4.0% were some other downward departure.
 - The average sentence reduction was 40.2%.
- 0.2% were upward departures.
 - The average sentence increase was 43.7%.

38.2% of sentences for powder cocaine trafficking were variances.

- 36.4% were downward variances.
 - The average sentence reduction was 35.6%.
- 1.8% were upward variances.
 - The average sentence increase was 39.8%.

The average guideline minimum has fluctuated while the average sentence imposed remained steady over the past five years.

- The average guideline minimum was 88 months in fiscal year 2020 and 85 months in fiscal year 2024.
- The average sentence imposed was 66 months in fiscal year 2020 and 64 months in fiscal year 2024.

¹ Drug offenses include cases where individuals were sentenced under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs). There were 3,524 individuals sentenced for powder cocaine offenses under USSG Chapter Two, Part D (Drugs) in FY 2024.

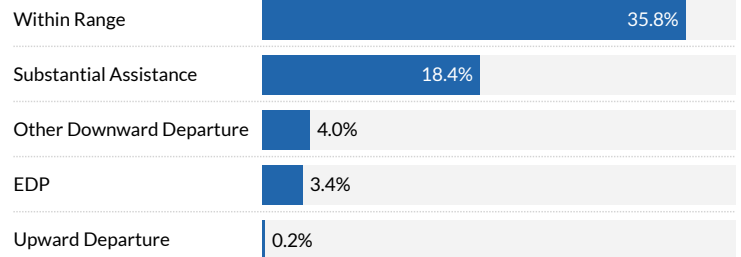
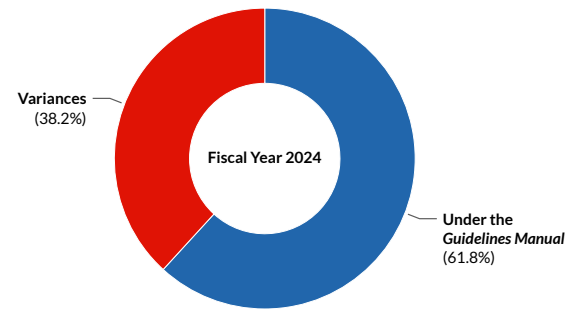
² Individuals sentenced for drug trafficking were sentenced under USSG §§2D1.1 (Drug Trafficking), 2D1.2 (Protected Locations), 2D1.5 (Continuing Criminal Enterprise), 2D1.6 (Use of a Communication Facility), 2D1.8 (Rent/Manage Drug Establishment), 2D1.10 (Endangering Human Life), or 2D1.14 (Narco-Terrorism).

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

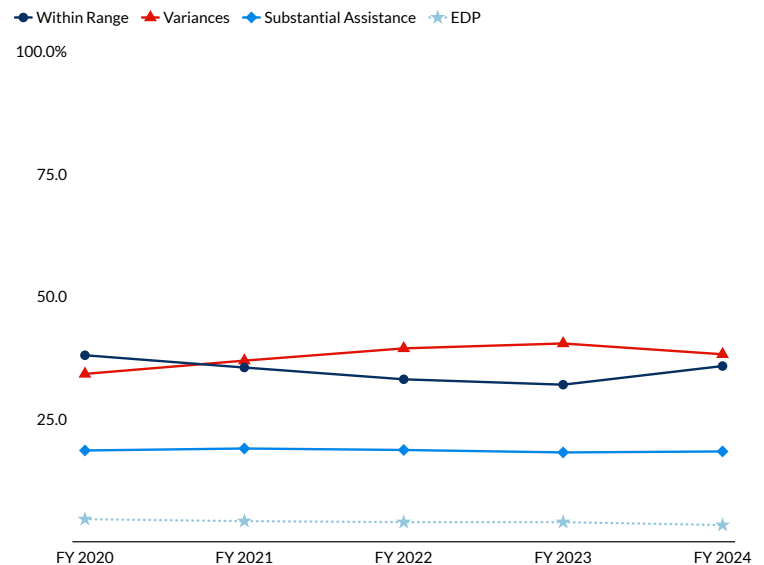
⁴ "Early Disposition Program" (or EDP) departures are departures where the government sought a sentence below the guideline range because the defendant participated in the government's Early Disposition Program, through which cases are resolved in an expedited manner. See USSG §5K3.1.

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)

