



# QuickFacts

## 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) Firearms Offenses

### What is Section 924(c)?

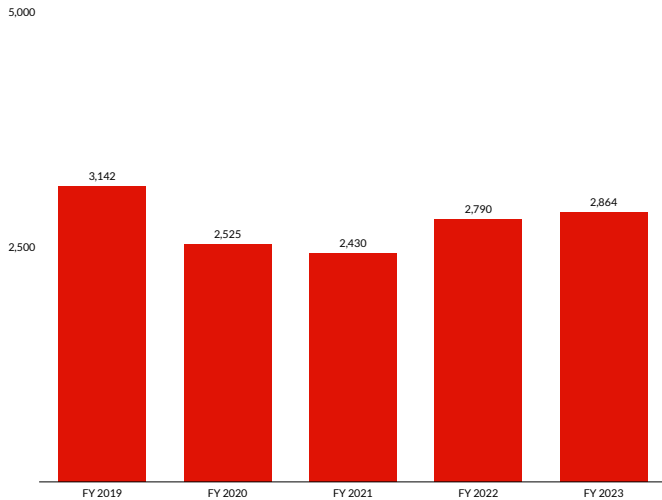
Offenses under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) involve the use or carrying of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime, or the possession of a firearm in furtherance of those crimes.

### Population Snapshot

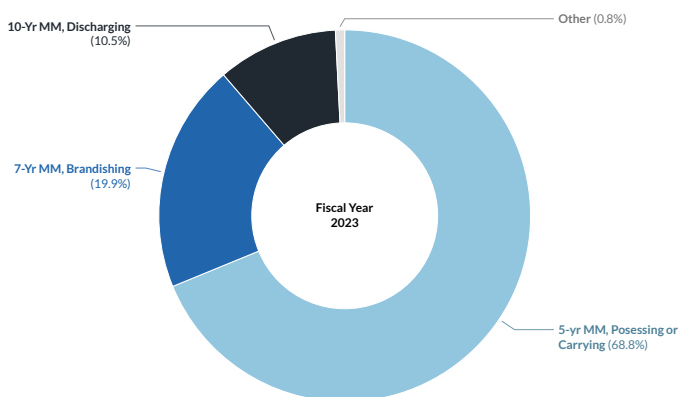
64,124 cases were reported in FY23.

2,864 involved convictions under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c).<sup>1</sup>

### Numbers Over Time



### Mandatory Minimum Penalties<sup>2,3</sup>



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### Individual and Offense Characteristics

- 95.8% of section 924(c) individuals were men.
- 51.8% were Black, 25.2% were Hispanic, 19.8% were White, and 3.3% were Other races.
- Their average age was 34 years.
- 94.4% were United States citizens.
- 26.3% had little or no prior criminal history (Category I);
  - 11.8% were CHC II;
  - 18.5% were CHC III;
  - 13.5% were CHC IV;
  - 9.0% were CHC V;
  - 20.9% were CHC VI.
- The top five districts for section 924(c) individuals were:
  - District of Puerto Rico (215);
  - Western District of Missouri (139);
  - Eastern District of North Carolina (121);
  - Southern District of Texas (85);
  - Southern District of Florida (85).
- 8.1% were career offenders (§4B1.1).
- 7.3% were convicted of multiple counts of section 924(c).

### Punishment

- 100% were sentenced to prison.<sup>4</sup>
- The average sentence for all section 924(c) individuals was 145 months.
  - 80 months for individuals convicted only under section 924(c).
  - 143 months for individuals also convicted of an offense not carrying a mandatory minimum.
  - 202 months for individuals determined to be career offenders.
- 88.2% of section 924(c) individuals were also convicted of another offense; of those individuals:
  - 53.3% were convicted of drug trafficking, 23.5% of robbery, and 8.5% of another firearms offense.
- 35.4% of all section 924(c) individuals were convicted of another offense carrying a mandatory minimum. In most cases, the other offense was a drug trafficking crime.



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### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range

#### Section 924(c) Only Cases

88.9% of individuals with a conviction only under section 924(c) were sentenced under the *Guidelines Manual*; of those individuals:

- 7.1% received a substantial assistance departure.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 43.6%.

#### Section 924(c) Cases Involving Career Offender

34.2% of section 924(c) individuals determined to be career offenders were sentenced under the *Guidelines Manual*;<sup>5</sup> of those individuals:

- 39.7% received a substantial assistance departure.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 55.5%.

65.8% received a variance.

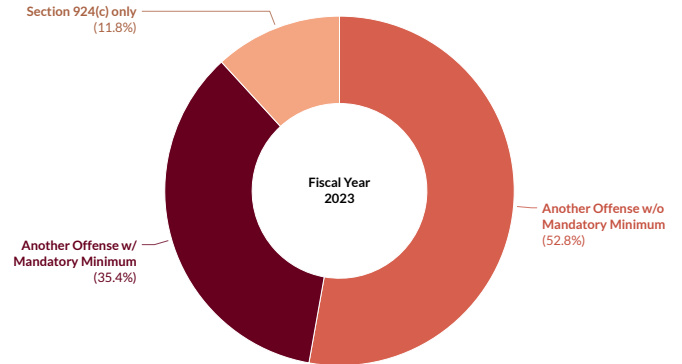
- 100% received a downward variance.
  - Their average sentence reduction was 38.9%.

#### All Section 924(c) Cases

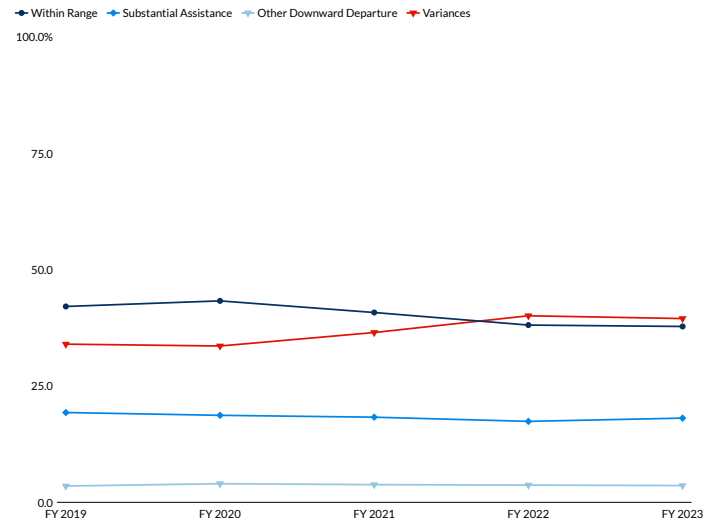
The average guideline minimum slightly decreased and the average sentence imposed fluctuated for all section 924(c) individuals over the past five years.

- The average guideline minimum decreased from 185 months in fiscal year 2019 to 183 months in fiscal year 2023.
- The average sentence imposed increased and decreased throughout the fiscal years. The average sentence was 138 months in fiscal year 2019 and 145 months in fiscal year 2023.

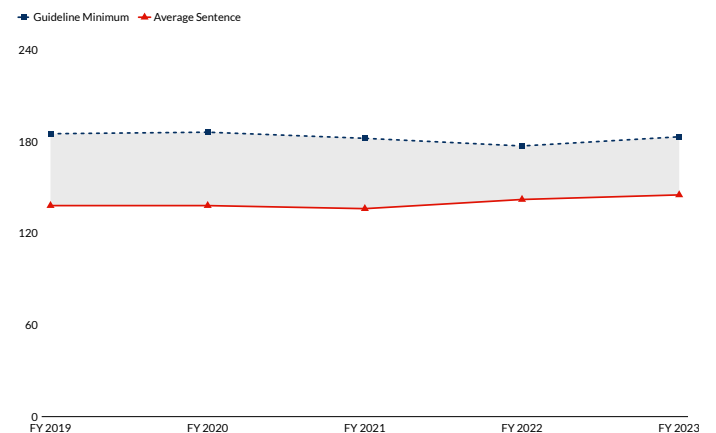
### Section 924(c) Distribution With Other Offenses



### Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range



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



<sup>1</sup> Cases with incomplete sentencing information were excluded from the analysis.

<sup>2</sup> These values represent the highest mandatory minimum an individual was subject to under section 924(c).

<sup>3</sup> The "Other" category includes individuals with a mandatory minimum of 25 years (0.4%), 30 years (0.2%), and life (0.2%).

<sup>4</sup> Offenses under section 924(c) carry one of several mandatory minimum penalties depending on the circumstances of the offense.

<sup>5</sup> The guideline sentence for a section 924(c) offense is the minimum term of imprisonment required by statute. USSG §2K2.4. Punishments under section 924(c) run consecutive to any other term of imprisonment. 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(D)(ii).