



QuickFacts

18 U.S.C. § 924(c) Firearms Offenses

What is Section 924(c)?

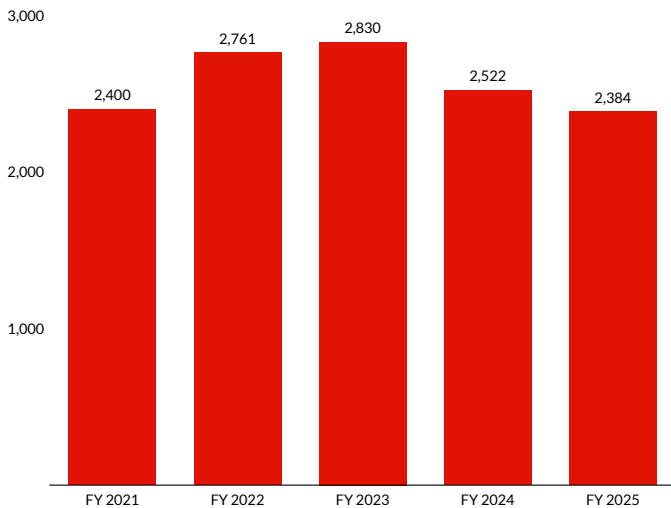
Offenses under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) involve the use or carrying of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime, or the possession of a firearm in furtherance of those crimes.

Population Snapshot

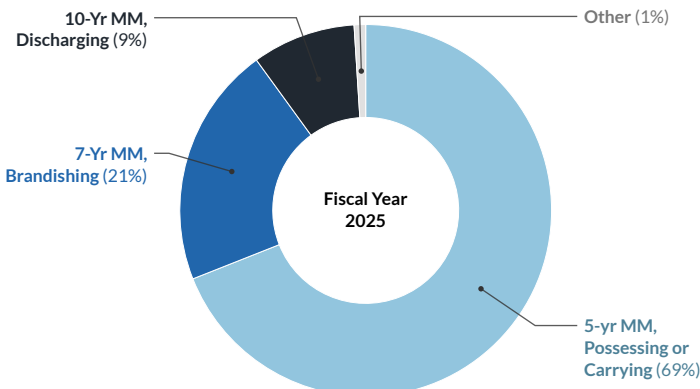
66,662 cases were reported in FY25.

2,384 involved convictions under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c).¹

Number of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) Offenses



Mandatory Minimum Penalties^{2,3}



Individual and Offense Characteristics

97% of section 924(c) individuals were men.

58% were Black, 23% were Hispanic, 15% were White, and 4% were Other races.

Their average age was 34 years.

94% were United States citizens.

31% had little or no prior criminal history (CHC I);

- 15% were CHC II;
- 19% were CHC III;
- 10% were CHC IV;
- 8% were CHC V;
- 16% were CHC VI.

The top five districts for section 924(c) individuals were:

- District of Puerto Rico (126);
- Southern District of New York (112);
- District of New Mexico (92);
- Eastern District of North Carolina (87);
- Eastern District of Virginia (86).

7% were career offenders (§4B1.1).

8% were convicted of multiple counts of section 924(c).

Punishment

100% were sentenced to prison.⁴

The average sentence for all section 924(c) individuals was 149 months.

- 80 months for individuals convicted only under section 924(c).
- 142 months for individuals also convicted of an offense not carrying a mandatory minimum.
- 209 months for individuals determined to be career offenders.

89% of section 924(c) individuals were also convicted of another offense; of those individuals:

- 56% were convicted of drug trafficking, 23% of robbery, and 8% of another firearms offense.

35% 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

85% of sentences for convictions only under section 924(c) were under the *Guidelines Manual*.

- 6% were substantial assistance departures.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 53%.*

Section 924(c) Cases Involving Career Offenders

35% of sentences for convictions under section 924(c) for individuals determined to be career offenders were under the *Guidelines Manual*.⁵

- 16% were substantial assistance departures.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 47%.*

65% were variances.

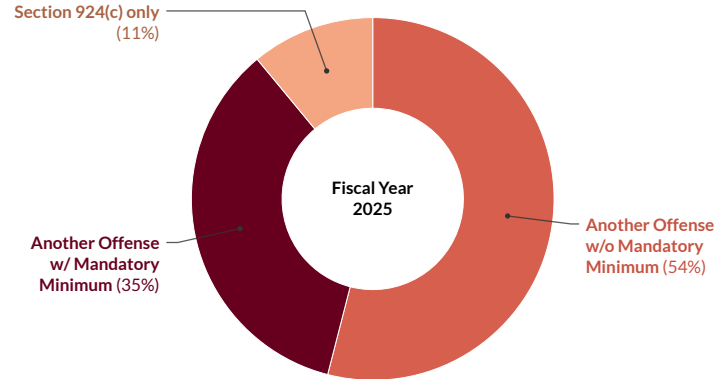
- All were downward variances.
 - *The average sentence reduction was 34%.*

All Section 924(c) Cases

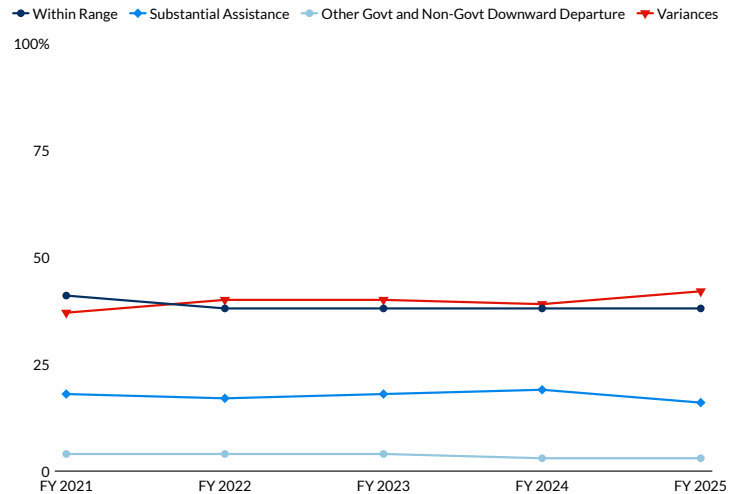
The average guideline minimum fluctuated and the average sentence imposed increased over the past five years.

- The average guideline minimum was 182 months in fiscal year 2021 and 185 months in fiscal year 2025.
- The average sentence increased from 136 months in fiscal year 2021 to 149 months in fiscal year 2025.

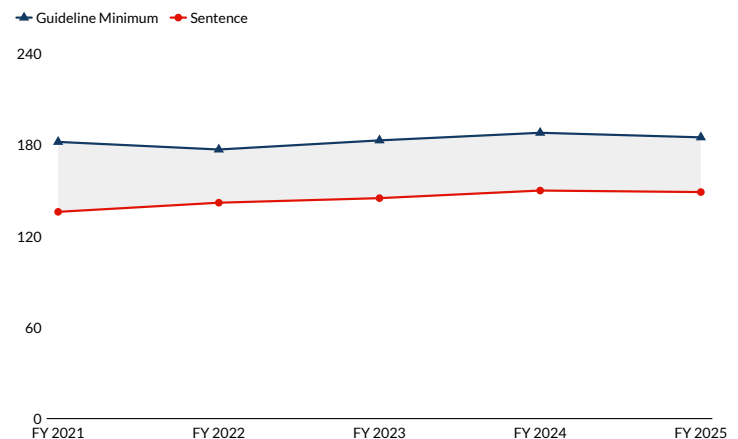
Section 924(c) Distribution With Other Offenses



Sentences Relative to the Guideline Range by Fiscal Year



Average Guideline Minimum and Average Sentence (months)



¹ Cases with incomplete sentencing information were excluded from the analysis.

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

³ The "Other" category includes individuals with a mandatory minimum of 25 years (0.3%), 30 years (0.5%), and life (0.1%).

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

⁵ 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).