



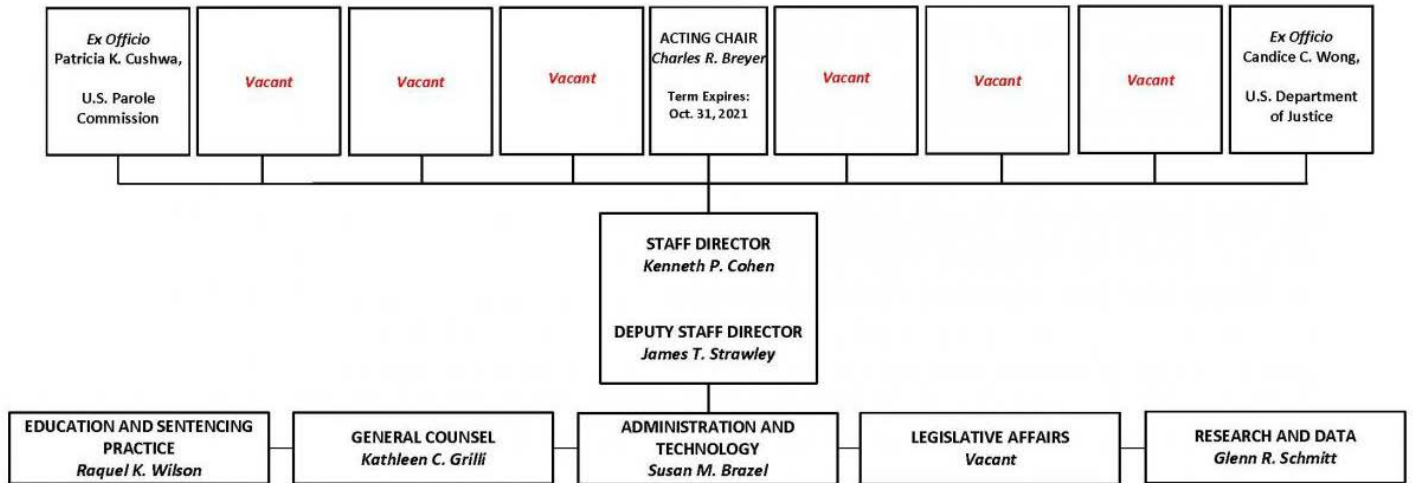
## ORGANIZATION

### Organization

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The U.S. Sentencing Commission is an ongoing independent agency in the judicial branch created by Congress as part of the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984. The Commission's seven voting members are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, and serve staggered six-year terms. No more than four members of the Commission can be members of the same political party, and at least three must be federal judges. The Attorney General, or the Attorney General's designee, and the Chair of the U.S. Parole Commission serve as *ex officio*, nonvoting members of the Commission. The affirmative vote of at least four members of the Commission is required to promulgate amendments to the sentencing guidelines.

The Commission staff of approximately 100 employees is divided into five offices with the director of each office reporting to the staff director who in turn reports to the chair. The five offices are — General Counsel, Education and Sentencing Practice, Research and Data, Legislative Affairs, and Administration and Technology. The staff director supervises and coordinates all agency functions.



## Offices

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### Office of General Counsel

The **Office of General Counsel** provides support to the Commission on a variety of legal issues, including the formulation and application of guidelines and guideline amendments, legislative proposals, and statutory interpretations. Legal staff members monitor district and circuit court application and interpretation of the guidelines and advise commissioners about statutes affecting the Commission’s work. The legal staff provides training support in conjunction with the Office of Education and Sentencing Practice.

In addition, the office performs all drafting services for the Commission, prepares the *Guidelines Manual* for printing, formally manages and maintains all papers and exhibits received by the Commission that constitute requests for Commission action on sentencing policy development, and regularly tracks the Commission’s policy initiatives.

### Office of Education and Sentencing Practice

The **Office of Education and Sentencing Practice** performs the lead role in teaching guideline application to judges, probation officers, prosecuting and defense attorneys, and other criminal justice professionals. The staff develops training materials, participates in the sentencing guideline segments of training programs sponsored by other agencies, works in conjunction with the Federal Judicial Center to create broadcasts that are aired on the Federal Judicial Television Network, and helps inform

the Commission about current guideline application practices. The office also operates a “HelpLine” to respond to guideline application questions from members of the court family.

## **Office of Research and Data**

The **Office of Research and Data** provides the Commission with statistical and other social science research and analyses on specific sentencing issues and federal crime generally. As part of its work, the office receives documents from the federal courts concerning the sentences imposed on individual offenders, analyzes and enters information from those documents into a comprehensive computer database created and maintained by the Commission, and creates annual datafiles of sentencing information. Working with the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Research and Data also collects information on organizations convicted of crimes and on appeals filed in individual and organizational cases.

As part of its ongoing work, the Office of Research and Data studies a wide variety of sentencing issues, including changes in the types and severity of federal crimes, changes in the demographic characteristics and criminal history of federal offenders, and sentencing trends in the federal courts. Using Commission data, the office creates periodic reports on federal sentencing practices and tracks the application of the sentencing guidelines. These reports provide data concerning the types of crimes committed, the offenders who commit those crimes, the punishments imposed, and the manner in which the sentencing guidelines were applied. The reports are distributed to the courts, Congress, the Executive Branch, and the public. Using Commission data and other data sources, the Office of Research and Data provides short- and long-term research and analysis for the Commission as part of its work to monitor the use of the guidelines and as it considers amending them. The office also provides projections of the effect on the federal prison population of proposed legislation and proposed guideline amendments. Additionally, the office provides analyses about specific criminal justice and guideline application issues at the request of Congress and the courts.

The office creates datafiles of the Commission’s annual sentencing data and makes that data available to researchers through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. In fiscal year 2012, the office began making sentencing data available directly to the public through the Commission’s website. Also in fiscal year 2012, the office developed and the Commission launched an

Interactive Sourcebook available to the public. Through this interactive website, users can view all of the data reported by the Commission in its annual Sourcebook of Federal Sentencing Statistics as well data from additional analyses, and can tailor all of these analyses by year, judicial district, and judicial circuit.

## Office of Legislative Affairs

The **Office of Legislative Affairs** serves as the Commission's liaison with Congress on sentencing matters, monitors Congress's criminal law agenda, analyzes legislative proposals, drafts congressional testimony, and takes the lead role in responding to congressional inquiries. The office also provides services and information to other external entities, including the judiciary, executive branch, academia, and advocacy groups. The office works closely with the Office of General Counsel on statutory interpretations and analyses.

## Office of Administration and Technology

The **Office of Administration and Technology** manages budget and finance, contracting, human resources, facilities management, and office support services for the Commission. This Office also houses the Information Technology and the Information Services units, which develop and maintain the Commission's extensive technology infrastructure, databases, and related applications.



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USSC HelpLine



The HelpLine assists practitioners in applying the guidelines.

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