



Methodology

Data Source

Issue 14 (July 2025) of the Sentencing Snapshot provides a descriptive analysis of the characteristics of and sentences for guidelines-eligible individuals sentenced in Maryland circuit courts, in fiscal years (FY) 2020 through 2024, for offenses involving vulnerable adults. The data in these analyses were obtained from sentencing guidelines worksheets submitted to the Maryland State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy (MSCCSP) via either the Maryland Automated Guidelines System (MAGS) or paper guidelines worksheets. Sentencing guidelines worksheets are completed for all criminal sentencing events involving an incarcerable offense that originate in and are sentenced in Maryland circuit courts. Additionally, guidelines worksheets are completed for sentencing events involving jury trial prayers (JTPs) and appeals from the District Court, if a pre-sentence investigation (PSI) is ordered. A sentencing event is defined as one individual, sentenced in front of the same judge, on the same day. A sentencing event may contain multiple offenses.

These analyses exclude sentencing guidelines worksheets submitted for sentence reconsideration/modification hearings and three-judge panel reviews.¹ Sentencing guidelines worksheets are not completed for violations of probation or parole. Sentencing guidelines worksheets are not submitted to the MSCCSP for District Court cases.

¹ From FY 2020 through FY 2024, approximately 1% of sentencing events for which a guidelines worksheet was submitted were for sentence reconsideration/modification hearings or three-judge panel reviews.



Maryland Laws Prohibiting Crimes Against Vulnerable Adults

Table 1 provides the current Maryland laws prohibiting certain acts against vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult is defined as an adult who lacks the physical or mental capacity to provide for the adult's daily needs. Criminal Law Article (CR), § 3-604(a)(10), Annotated Code of Maryland.

Table 1. Maryland Laws Prohibiting Crimes Against Vulnerable Adults

Offense	Statute	Felony/ Misd.	Statutory Max	Offense Type	Ser. Cat.	Fine
1st degree abuse or neglect of vulnerable adult	CR, § 3-604	Felony	10Y	Person	IV	\$10,000
2nd degree abuse or neglect of vulnerable adult	CR, § 3-605	Misd.	5Y	Person	V	\$5,000
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, <\$1,500	CR, § 8-801(c)(2)	Misd.	1Y	Property	VII	\$500
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, or an individual at least 68 years old by deception, intimidation, or undue influence, \$1,500 - <\$25,000	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(i)	Felony	5Y	Property	VI	\$10,000
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, or an individual at least 68 years old by deception, intimidation, or undue influence, \$25,000 - <\$100,000	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(ii)	Felony	10Y	Property	V	\$15,000
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, or an individual at least 68 years old by deception, intimidation, or undue influence, \$100,000+	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(iii)	Felony	20Y	Property	III	\$25,000
Commission of mortgage fraud involving victim who is a vulnerable adult	RP, § 7-407(b)	Felony	15Y	Property	V	\$15,000



Analyses

This section provides statistics that correspond to the figures in Sentencing Snapshot #14.

Tables 2 and 3 provide the total number of guidelines-eligible sentences in Maryland circuit courts for offenses involving vulnerable adults from FY 2020 to FY 2024, by year and offense.

Table 2. Guidelines-Eligible Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults, Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts, by Year, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	Total	Abuse/Neglect of Vulnerable Adult		Obtain Property of Vulnerable Adult	
FY 2020	23	4	17.4%	19	82.6%
FY 2021	22	11	50.0%	11	50.0%
FY 2022	32	12	37.5%	20	62.5%
FY 2023	24	15	62.5%	9	37.5%
FY 2024	21	15	71.4%	6	28.6%
Total	122	57	46.7%	65	53.3%

Table 3. Guidelines Individuals Sentenced for Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults, in Maryland Circuit Courts, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	# Offenses	# Sentencing Events
Abuse/Neglect of Vulnerable Adult		
Total	57	51
1st Degree	17	16
2nd Degree	40	36
Obtain Property of a Vulnerable Adult		
Total	65	60
<\$1,500	13	12
\$1,500 - <\$25,000 ¹	32	31
\$25,000 - <\$100,000	12	12
\$100,000+	8	7
Mortgage Fraud Involving a Vulnerable Adult		
Commission of mortgage fraud involving a victim who is a vulnerable adult	0	0

¹ This category includes 1 offense that was committed prior to October 1, 2017, and prosecuted under the former dollar amount threshold that applied to CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(ii), *Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$1,000- <\$10,000*.

Notes. Sentencing event numbers for individual offenses do not necessarily sum to the total number of sentencing events in that category as a sentencing event may contain multiple offenses from that category.



Table 4 provides the characteristics of guidelines-eligible individuals sentenced in Maryland circuit courts from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

Table 4. Characteristics of Guidelines Individuals Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts for Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	Sentencing Event Contains One or More:					
	All Defendants		Abuse/Neglect of Vulnerable Adult		Obtain Property of Vulnerable Adult	
Mean Age	33.2 years		47.2 years		41.2 years	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Sex						
Male	33,562	88.0%	19	44.2%	24	48.0%
Female	4,588	12.0%	24	55.8%	26	52.0%
Race						
Black	26,395	64.7%	19	45.2%	18	36.7%
White	10,776	26.4%	21	50.0%	28	57.1%
Hispanic	2,996	7.3%	0	0.0%	3	6.1%
Other	621	1.5%	2	4.8%	0	0.0%
Offender Score						
0 points	14,435	32.5%	41	80.4%	26	43.3%
1+ point	29,965	67.5%	10	19.6%	34	56.7%
Total	44,422		51		60	

Notes: Percentages exclude missing data. Sex was missing for 6,272 guidelines individuals sentenced from FY 2020 through FY 2024, including 8 individuals sentenced for abuse/neglect of a vulnerable adults, and 10 individuals sentenced for obtain property of a vulnerable adult. Race was missing for 3,634 guidelines individuals, including 9 individuals sentenced for abuse/neglect of a vulnerable adult, and 11 individuals sentenced for obtain property of a vulnerable adult. Offender score was missing for 22 guidelines individuals sentenced during this period.

Definitions: Race and Ethnicity are separate fields on the sentencing guidelines worksheet. The following selections are available for Race: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other, and Unknown. The guidelines worksheet preparer may select more than one race. For the purposes of these analyses, some categories of race and ethnicity are combined. The Other race category combines the following race options: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Other. The Other race category also includes guidelines-sentenced individuals for whom multiple race categories were selected. Unknown race is classified as missing. The Ethnicity field asks whether the guidelines-sentenced individual is of Hispanic or Latino origin, with possible responses Yes, No, or Unknown. "Yes" responses are classified as Hispanic, regardless of selections made in the Race field. Worksheets with missing race, ethnicity, or sex, sentenced from calendar years 2018 through 2020, were supplemented with race, ethnicity, and sex data from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), where available.

The offender score ranges from zero to nine points and is calculated based on the individual's prior adult criminal record, juvenile delinquency (if the individual is under 23 years old), whether the individual was under criminal justice supervision at the time of the instant offense, and whether the individual has any prior probation or parole violations. Instructions for calculating the prior adult criminal record score are located in the Maryland Sentencing Guidelines Manual (MSGM), Chapter 7.1(C).



Table 5 provides the sentencing event characteristics for offenses involving vulnerable adults, sentenced in Maryland circuit courts from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

Table 5. Sentencing Event Characteristics for Guidelines Individuals Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts for Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults , FY 2020 through FY 2024

	Sentencing Event Contains One or More:					
	All Defendants		Abuse/Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult		Obtain Property of a Vulnerable Adult	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Disposition Type						
MSCCSP binding plea	16,661	37.6%	15	29.4%	32	53.3%
Other plea agreement	16,989	38.3%	23	45.1%	17	28.3%
Plea, no agreement	8,935	20.1%	10	19.6%	8	13.3%
Jury trial	283	0.6%	1	2.0%	1	1.7%
Court trial	1,494	3.4%	2	3.9%	2	3.3%
Compliance						
Within	36,507	82.2%	47	92.2%	50	83.3%
Below	5,872	13.2%	1	2.0%	3	5.0%
Above	2,040	4.6%	3	5.9%	7	11.7%
Prosecuting Office						
State's Attorney's Office	41,147	99.2%	42	82.4%	56	93.3%
Office of the Attorney General	333	0.8%	9	17.6%	4	6.7%
Total	44,422		51		60	

Notes: Percentages exclude missing data. Disposition type was missing for 60 guidelines individuals sentenced from FY 2020 through FY 2024. Compliance was missing for 3 guidelines individuals sentenced during this period. The figures for prosecuting office for all defendants exclude sentencing events where the prosecuting office was unknown or an agency other than the State's Attorney's Office or the Office of the Attorney General initiated the sentencing guidelines worksheet. Prosecuting office is unknown to the MSCCSP when the worksheet is initiated by a parole & probation agent or another party outside of the prosecutor's office. From FY 2020 through FY 2024, worksheets for 2,687 defendants were initiated by parole & probation agents, 29 were initiated by the Office of the Maryland State Prosecutor, 218 were initiated by other parties, and worksheet preparer was missing for 8 defendants.

Definitions (MSGM, Chapter 4.8):

- **MSCCSP binding plea agreement:** The term an MSCCSP binding plea agreement replaced the term ABA plea agreement in the MSGM effective April 1, 2021. An ABA plea agreement was defined as: A plea agreement that a court has approved relating to a particular sentence, disposition, or other judicial action. The agreement is binding on the court under Maryland Rule 4-243(c). (MSGM, Version 12.4). Currently, an MSCCSP binding plea agreement is defined as: "A plea agreement presented to the court in agreement by an attorney for the government and the defendant's attorney, or the defendant when proceeding pro se, that a court has approved relating to a particular sentence and disposition. An MSCCSP binding plea agreement means an agreement to a specific amount of active time (if any), not merely a sentence cap or range. The court has the discretion to accept or reject the plea. The agreement is binding on the court under Maryland Rule 4-243(c) if the court accepts the plea.
- **Other plea agreement:** A disposition resulted from a plea agreement reached by the parties that did not include an agreement to a specific amount of active time (if any) and/or the agreement was not approved by, and thus not binding on, the court.
- **Plea, no agreement:** When the defendant plead[s] guilty without any agreement from the prosecutor or judge to perform in a particular way.
- **Jury trial:** A disposition resulted from a trial in which a jury decided the factual questions.
- **Court trial:** A disposition resulted from a trial without a jury in which the judge decided the factual questions.



Table 6 provides the offense characteristics of offenses involving vulnerable adults, sentenced in Maryland circuit courts from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

Table 6. Offense Characteristics of Abuse/Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult, Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts, FY 2020 through FY 2024				
	All Person Offenses		Abuse/Neglect of a Vulnerable Adult	
	#	%	#	%
Victim Injury				
None	24,034	59.3%	20	35.1%
Non-permanent	11,379	28.1%	29	50.9%
Permanent injury or death	5,095	12.6%	8	14.0%
Weapon				
None	16,765	41.4%	55	96.5%
Non-firearm	5,794	14.3%	2	3.5%
Firearm or other explosive	17,948	44.3%	0	0.0%
Special Victim Vulnerability				
Yes	36,344	89.7%	4	7.0%
No	4,163	10.3%	53	93.0%
Total	40,602		57	

Notes: Percentages exclude missing data. Victim injury was missing for 94 guidelines-eligible person offenses sentenced from FY 2020 through FY 2024. Weapon presence was missing for 95 person offenses sentenced during this period. Special victim vulnerability was missing for 95 person offenses sentenced during this period.

Definitions: Victim injury is defined as “physical or psychological injury to the crime victim, the cause of which is directly linked to the conduct of the defendant in the commission of the convicted offense.” (MSGM, Chapter 6.1.B). Weapon presence is defined as “the presence of an article or device which reasonably appears capable of causing injury or the presence of an article that could result in conviction under CR, §4-101.” (MSGM, Chapter 6.1.C). Special victim vulnerability “refers to cases in which the relative status of the victim tends to render the actions of the perpetrator more serious.” Per the MSGM, “[a] vulnerable victim is anyone: a. Younger than 11 years old; b. 65 years old or older; or c. Having a temporary or permanent physical or mental disability, including an individual who is physically or mentally limited in a material way. Examples of a temporary physical or mental limitation include, but are not limited to, instances when the offender knew or should have known the victim was pregnant, unconscious, asleep, or intoxicated.” (MSGM, Chapter 6.1.D).



Tables 7 through 10 provide sentence and economic loss information for offenses involving vulnerable adults and theft, sentenced in Maryland circuit courts from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

Table 7. Maryland Circuit Court Sentences for Guidelines-Eligible Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	#	Mean Non-Suspended Sentence	Statutory Maximum	Statute
1 st degree abuse/neglect of a vulnerable adult	17	3.6 years	10Y	CR, § 3-604
2 nd degree abuse/neglect of a vulnerable adult	40	3.6 months	5Y	CR, § 3-605
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, <\$1,500	13	3.6 months	1Y	CR, § 8-801(c)(2)
Theft or theft scheme, \$100 - <\$1,500 ¹	691	2.4 months	6M	CR, § 7- 104(g)(2)(i)(1)
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$1,500 - <\$25,000 ²	32	8.4 months	5Y	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(i)
Theft or theft scheme, \$1,500 - <\$25,000	1,023	9.6 months	5Y	CR, § 7- 104(g)(1)(i)
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$25,000 - <\$100,000	12	2.2 years	10Y	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(ii)
Theft or theft scheme, \$25,000 - <\$100,000	374	1 year	10Y	CR, § 7- 104(g)(1)(ii)
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$100,000+ ³	8	2.8 years	20Y	CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(iii)
Theft or theft scheme, \$100,000	163	2 years	20Y	CR, § 7- 104(g)(1)(iii)

¹ The total number of offenses and mean sentence for this category does not include offenses sentenced pursuant to the subsequent offender statutes in CR, § 7-104(g)(2)(i)(2) or CR, § 7-104(g)(4), as the statutory maximum penalties for subsequent offenses are greater than the penalty for a first offense.

² This category includes one offense that was committed prior to October 1, 2017, and prosecuted under the former dollar amount threshold that applied to CR, § 8-801(c)(1)(ii), *Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$1,000-<\$10,000*, which was then subject to a 10-year statutory maximum penalty.

³ All 8 offenses in this category were prosecuted pursuant to the statutory maximum penalty for *Obtain property of a vulnerable adult, \$100,000+*, in place prior to October 1, 2017, which was then 25 years.

Table 8. Incarceration for Guidelines-Eligible Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults, Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	Incarcerated		Not Incarcerated		Total
Abuse/neglect of a vulnerable adult	37	64.9%	20	35.1%	57
Obtain property of a vulnerable adult	47	72.3%	18	27.7%	65
Total	84	68.9%	38	31.1%	122



Table 9. Economic Loss Reported for Guidelines-Eligible Offenses Involving Vulnerable Adults or Theft, Sentenced in Maryland Circuit Courts, FY 2020 through FY 2024

Economic Loss	Obtain Property of a Vulnerable Adult	Theft or theft scheme, pursuant to CR, § 7-104 ¹
# Offenses	65	2,374
Mean	\$18,956.16	\$21,689.02
Median	\$8,566.20	\$1,623.48
Minimum	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maximum	\$174,150.00	\$2,074,813.00

¹ The theft figures here include all theft offenses prosecuted under CR, § 7-104, including those subject to the penalties and dollar amount thresholds in place prior to October 1, 2017, and those prosecuted pursuant to the subsequent offender statutes in CR, § 7-104(g)(2)(i)(2) and CR, § 7-104(g)(4).

Notes. Economic loss must be entered on the sentencing guidelines worksheet for all theft and fraud related offenses under Titles 7 and 8 of the Criminal Law Article. Economic loss is defined as the amount of restitution ordered by a circuit court judge or, if not ordered, the full amount of restitution that could have been ordered (MSGM, Chapter 12.3). The exact economic loss is not always known at the time the court submits the sentencing guidelines worksheet; and restitution is sometimes ordered at a hearing separate from sentencing. Therefore, these figures may underestimate actual economic loss. Economic loss was reported as unknown for 13 (20%) obtain property of a vulnerable adult offenses and 690 (29.1%) theft offenses. The mean and median figures here exclude unknown values.

Table 10. Total Economic Loss Reported for Guidelines-Eligible Offenses Involving the Obtainment of the Property of a Vulnerable Adult, by Year, FY 2020 through FY 2024

	#	Total Loss
FY 2020	23	\$177,845.45
FY 2021	22	\$144,183.93
FY 2022	32	\$210,554.00
FY 2023	24	\$330,937.00
FY 2024	21	\$122,200.18
Total	122	\$985,720.52

Notes. The exact economic loss is not always known at the time the sentencing guidelines worksheet is submitted, and restitution is sometimes ordered at a hearing following sentencing. Therefore, these figures may underestimate actual economic loss (See Note to Table 9).