

Handout Guide & Instructions

You should have access to the following three handouts:

1. Vega – Guidelines Handout
2. 2018 USSC Guidelines Worksheet
3. 2016 USSC Guidelines Worksheet (Fillable Form)

Please download the first document, “Vega – Guidelines Handout”, prior to the CLE. Open the document directly from your computer. Do not rely on the preview in your internet browser, as you may not be able to get the full functionality of this document.

Please review the “Tech tips for success with bookmarks, cross references, and fields” prior to the CLE.

This first handout is the primary document that I use in my practice to calculate guidelines. It is a document that I created that is supposed to function as a “checklist” and “one stop shop” for calculating guidelines no matter the type of case. It’s also continuously evolving as I encounter new and different issues.

Because my custom guideline charts document is a “one stop shop,” not the portions of the document will be relevant for every case. For instance, I created the “Timeline” section on page 1 specifically for illegal reentry cases, the Guideline Range Comparison and Offense Level Charts on pages 3–6 for cases in which the client has exposure to or has been charged with a 924(c) count, and the Drug Quantity Chart on page 7 for drug cases. The more generic Offense Level Chart on page 2 of the document and the Criminal History Chart on pages 8–9 of the document are used in almost every single case. The Sentencing Table on the very last page was inserted so that I would always have a sentencing table automatically included in a client’s paper file whenever I printed out my guideline charts.

To get the full benefit of the document, you need to understand how to use bookmarks, cross references, and fields in Microsoft Word (MSWord). The document is formatted such to (1) make the math part of calculating guidelines automatic, and (2) have a change in one part of the document, which affects other the parts of the document, auto populate. If you do not know how to use bookmarks, cross references, and fields appropriately, you will lose these two primary benefits.

Tech tips for success with bookmarks, cross references, and fields:

- **Show bookmarks:** Set up your MSWord to show hidden bookmarks. Navigate to File → Options → Advanced → Show document content. Check “Show bookmarks.”
- **Turn on Field Shading:** Set up your MSWord to always designate fields through “field shading.” This will make fields instantly recognizable, because they will always be shaded in gray. Navigate to File → Options → Advanced → Show document content. Select “Always” in the Field Shading drop down.
 - I recommend also setting up your document so that fields are automatically updated when you print. That way you do not have to remember to update before printing. Navigate to File → Options → Display → Printing options. Select “Update fields before printing.”

- To manually update fields, you can right click the field and select “Update” or you can highlight the selection and press F9. I normally do Ctrl A + F9 to update everything at once.
- **Show Paragraph marks.** You can do this by selecting the Paragraph Icon in your “Home” ribbon on top of your MSWord window. I find this very helpful.
- **Do not place your cursor or add information at the end of a bookmark:** This is very tricky, as it is very easy to not use bookmarks correctly. Information that is not within the bookmark will not be updated in other parts of the document where that bookmark is cross referenced, so not using bookmarks correctly can mess up the whole document. The best rule of thumb is to never add new information to the bookmark at the end of the bookmark; add the new information in the middle of a bookmark and then delete whatever you don’t need.

During the CLE we will run through a guidelines calculation in real time, using information adapted from one of my real life cases, using this document.

The second document is downloaded directly from the USSC website; it is the worksheet that the USSC provides. I do not use this worksheet, but I send it to clients so that they can run their own guidelines.

The third document is the 2016 version of the USSC’s Guidelines Worksheet, tweaked by me when I first started. I created a “Form” so that I can type in the information that I needed rather than handwrite it in. I eventually stopped using this worksheet and created my custom guideline charts instead, as I found it easier to revise as necessary for each case. I no longer use this document, but I provide it here for those who prefer to use the USSC Guidelines Worksheet instead of my custom charts, and who prefer to type in their information rather than handwrite it in.

Happy calculating!

-MGV