

Inspections of Firearms Sellers Under the White House's 2021 Zero Tolerance Policy

Kathy Sanchez

2024-12-30

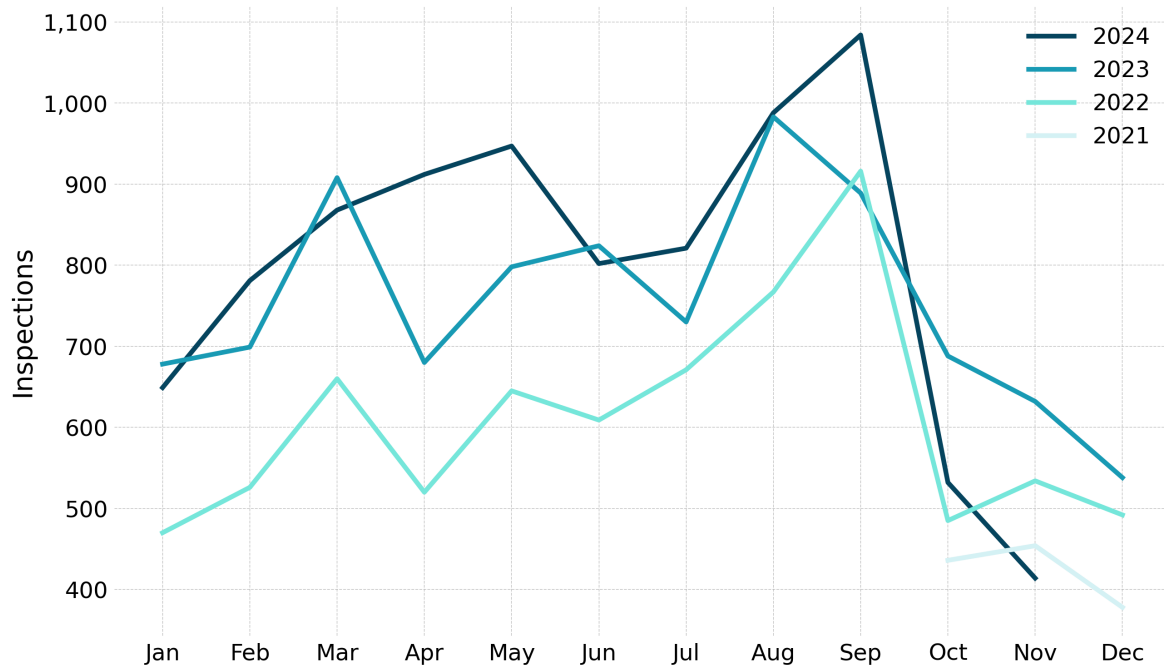
This document shares key findings from my analysis of publicly available Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) inspection data. The ATF, which conducts the nation's inspections of licensed firearms sellers (Federal Firearms Licenses or FFLs), launched these limited data on its website soon after the White House announced its "zero tolerance" policy.

The Biden Administration announced this policy in [June 2021](#), explaining that it had zero tolerance for "rogue gun dealers" and planned to "crack down" on them with increased inspections as part of a wider gun control and public safety strategy. So I examined the number of inspections from October 2021 through 2024 to measure the ATF's response under the Biden Administration.

The Number of Inspections Grew from 2022 to 2024

The number of ATF inspections grew each year. Figure 1 shows this increase, accounting for seasonal patterns. The ATF inspected firearms sellers (known as Federal Firearms Licensees) the most during late summers.

Figure 1.



The Number of Inspections Varied by Field Office

Dallas, Kansas City and Columbus—cities in the south and midwest—had the most inspections over the full period of data (Figures 2 and 3). Field offices in the west and northeast tended to have fewer inspections. These differences are likely because ATF field offices receive more funding when they have more licensees in their area. ATF has likely set up more offices where they have more licensees.

Figure 2.

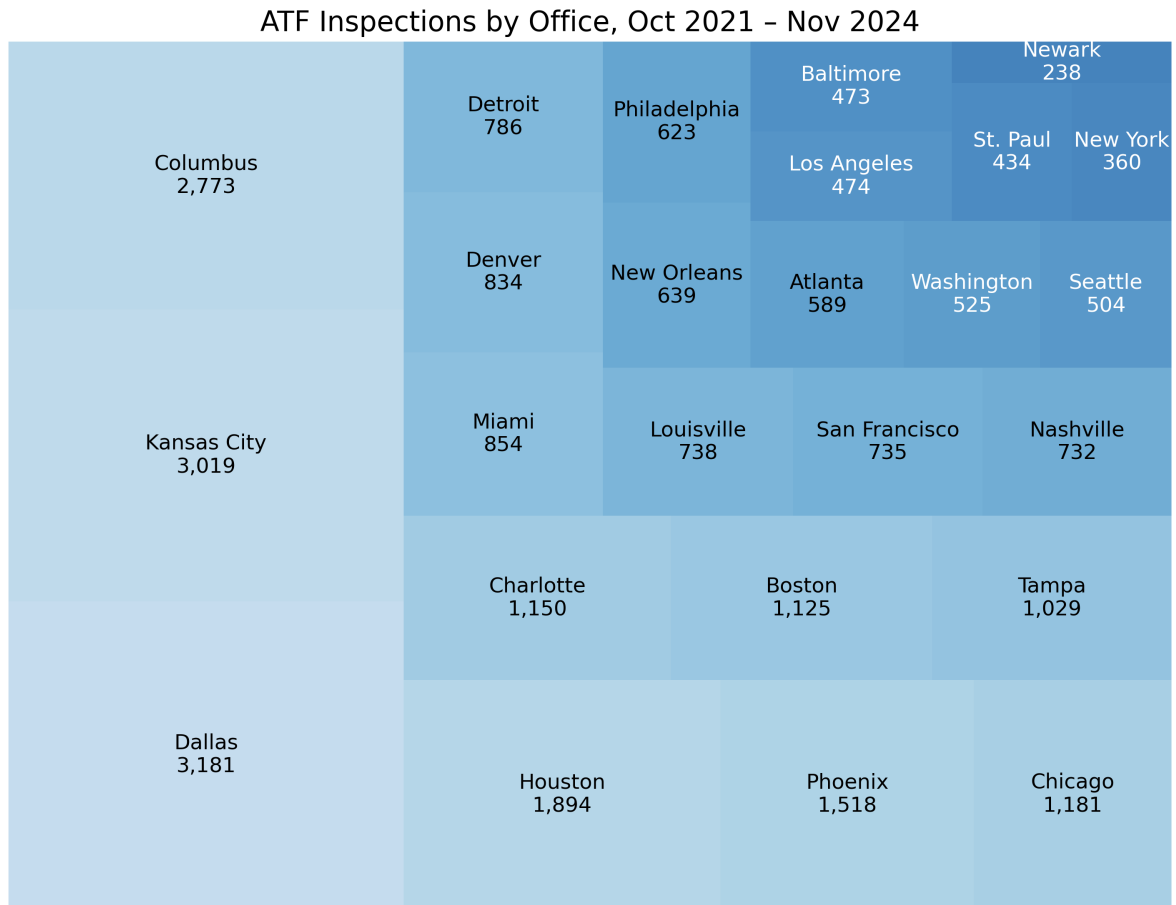
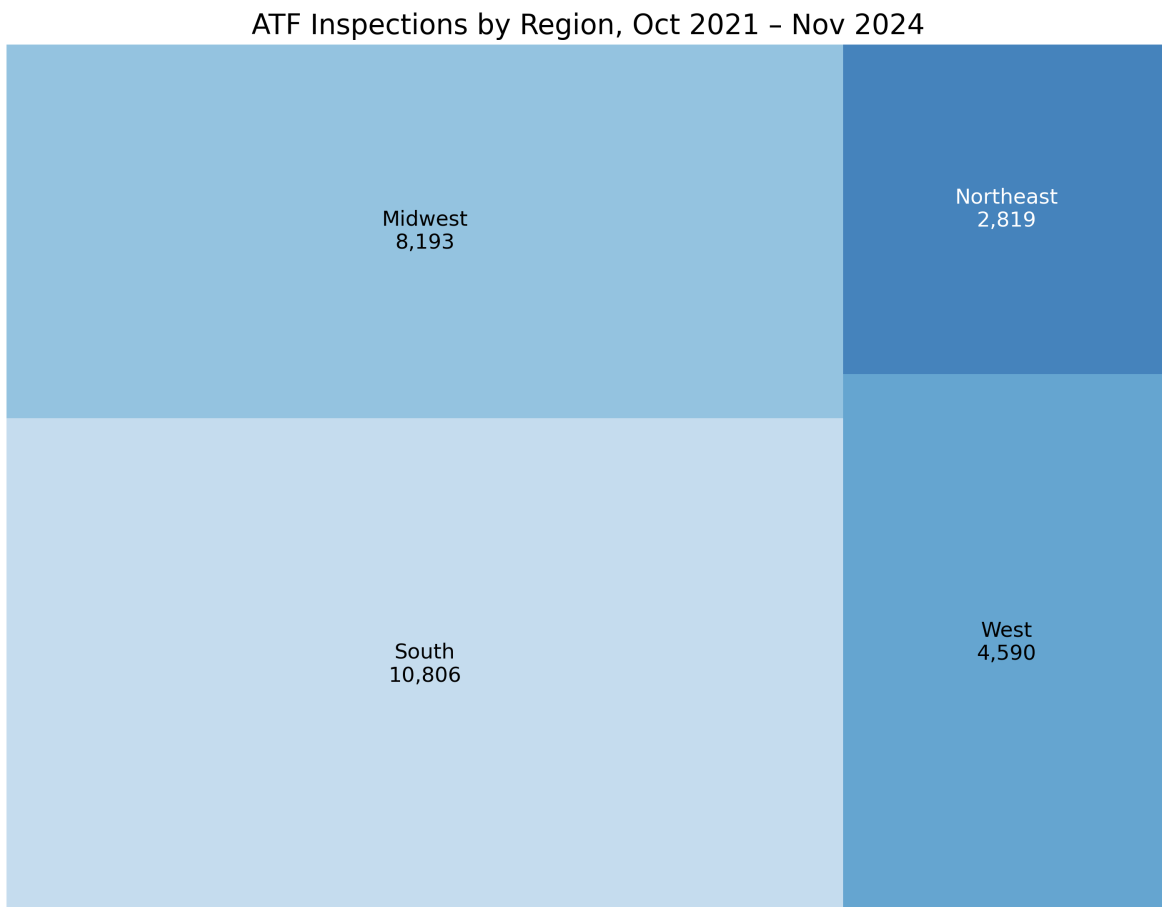


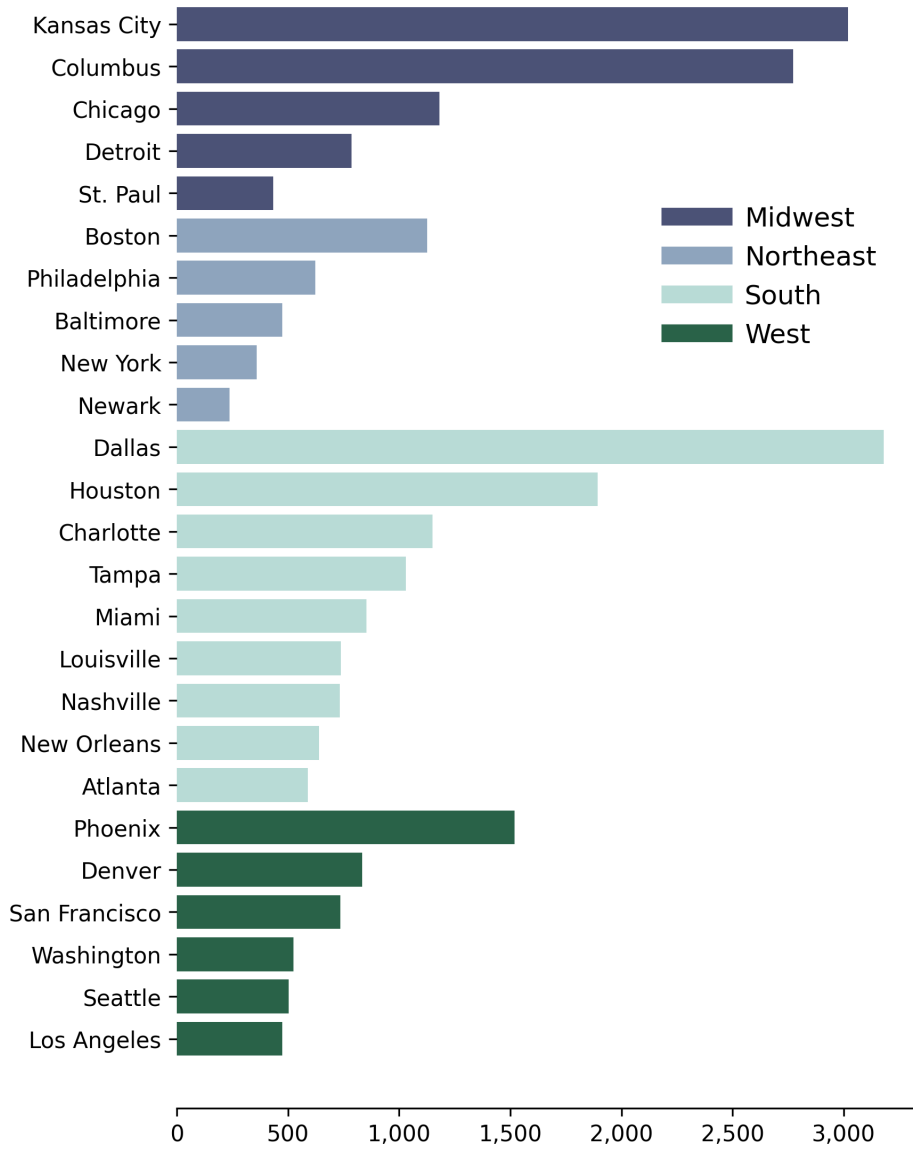
Figure 3.



Looking at offices by region in Figure 4 shows more offices in the south than the other regions.

Figure 4.

ATF Inspections by Region, Oct 2021 - Nov 2024



Inspection Results Also Varied by Field Office

Field offices that issued the most warnings and revoked the most licenses (Figures 5 and 6) were similar to those that had the most inspections (Figure 2). These similarities suggest that so-called rogue gun dealers are not concentrated in or attracted to any particular area.

Figure 5.

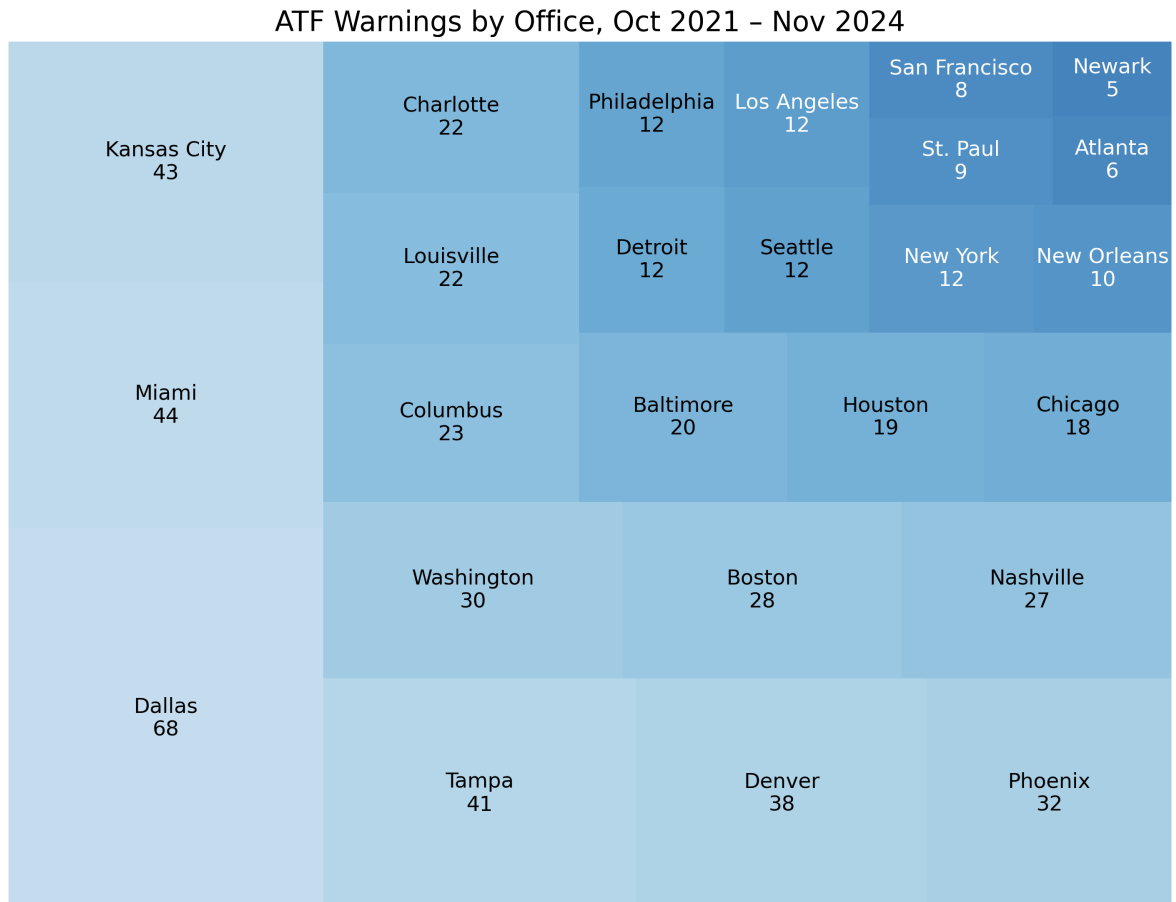


Figure 6.

ATF Revoked Licenses by Office, Oct 2021 - Nov 2024

