No Price Tag On Justice

The Fines & Fees Justice Center seeks to restore integrity to our justice system by eliminating the harmful and unjust impacts of fines and fees.

LEARN MORE

FFJC Responds to Coronavirus Crisis

READ OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND TRACK POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19
Policy Recommendations For Our Communities:

1. State and local jurisdictions should discharge all outstanding fines, fees and court debt. Where full discharge is not yet feasible, government and courts should implement immediately the following alternatives:
   - End all collection of fines, fees, and court debt, including but not limited to: payments due under payment plans, wage garnishment, property liens, off-sets of tax refunds, unemployment insurance and other public benefits, especially those related to housing.
   - Stop sending delinquent cases to private collection companies, and direct private collection companies and probation and parole officers to stop all collection efforts.
   - Stop imposing penalties for late or missed payments of fines, fees and court debt.
   - Suspend interest on unpaid fines, fees and court debt.

2. Immediately cease issuing and enforcing warrants for unpaid fines and fees or for failure to appear at a hearing addressing unpaid fines and fees.

3. State and local jurisdictions should stop driver’s license suspensions for unpaid fines and fees or for not appearing in court, and reinstate driver’s licenses suspended for non-safety reasons.

4. Law enforcement officers should release individuals with a warning who are driving on a suspended license. Alternatively, law enforcement should cite and release any person apprehended for driving on a suspended driver’s license, when the underlying suspension is based on unpaid fines and fees or not appearing in court. Under no circumstances should these individuals be arrested and jailed.

5. Local governments should stop issuing parking tickets and municipal code violations that do not impact public safety, and stop booting, towing and impounding vehicles for unpaid fines and fees.

6. Judges should waive or reduce any fines they impose, recognizing people’s precarious financial circumstances.

7. Jurisdictions should proactively and widely communicate any changes made in their fines and fees policies.
Policy Recommendations For People in the Criminal Legal System:

1. Co-pays for medical visits of people in custody should be waived.

2. Incarcerated people should be provided free liquid soap, hand sanitizer, and other disinfecting products.

3. People who are incarcerated and their families and loved ones should be provided with free, easily accessible phone and email communication.

4. Release any individuals incarcerated for outstanding fines and fees, and stop jailing or detaining individuals for unpaid fines and fees.

5. Probation and parole should not be extended or revoked, nor sanctions imposed, for unpaid fines and fees or other technical violations.
COVID-19 Fines and Fees Policy Tracker

This page was last updated on April 17.

Federal

- **Stimulus Bill**: Prohibits state or local governments from intercepting the $1,200 recovery checks and using them to pay for outstanding fines and fees.

**Alabama**: The DOC is providing one free call per week (up to 15 minutes) and extended hours of availability. The DOC also suspended all co-pays (including for medical services not directly related to COVID-19) for 60 days.

**Alaska**: The DOC is providing two free 15-minute phone calls per inmate per week while visitation is suspended. The DOC also suspended copays for incarcerated people with COVID-19 related symptoms or questions.

**Arizona**: The Arizona Department of Corrections is waiving medical co-pays for incarcerated people experiencing flu-like symptoms and providing incarcerated people with free soap.
COVID-19 Advocacy Materials

- FFJC sent a letter to Florida Governor DeSantis outlining our fines and fees policy recommendations: Link
- FFJC sent a letter to New York Governor Cuomo outlining our fines and fees policy recommendations: Link
- The Free to Drive Coalition called on the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to urge member agencies to end debt-related driver’s license suspensions: Link
- Several advocacy organizations asked the California’s Judicial Council to release driver’s license holds imposed for failure to appear in court: Link
- The Debt Free Justice California coalition drafted an executive order for California Governor Newsom that would provide relief for people who owe government-imposed debt: Link
- Several advocacy organizations asked the California State Controller to suspend the accrual of interest on government-imposed debt: Link
- Several advocacy organizations asked California Governor Newsom to provide relief for people who owe government-imposed debt: Link
- Colorado criminal justice leaders and legislators called for the immediate suspension of the assessment and collection of all criminal and juvenile fees, fines and costs: Link
Links