

Reducing Harm and Increasing Accountability: Court Debt Collection Examples

<p>San Francisco, CA</p>	<p>In 2018, San Francisco changed their payment plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased payment plan enrollment fee to \$5 for low-income people and \$25 for all others • Allowed for very modest payments <p>RESULT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3/1/2018 – 5/1/2018: 96 people enrolled in payment plans; \$64,890 collected • During a comparable period, 3/1/19-5/1/19: 441 people enrolled; \$223,993 collected¹
<p>State of California</p>	<p>In June 2017, the California legislature eliminated nonpayment-based license suspensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court provides an ability-to-pay regarding fine amount, payment plans, and community service <p>RESULT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 8.9% increase in collections on newly issued tickets ○ \$840.3 million 2016-2017, \$922.3 million in 2017-2018²
<p>Dallas & Fort Worth, TX</p>	<p>The State of Texas allows local courts to prohibit license renewals for nonpayment of court debt, but some courts voluntarily opt out of issuing prohibitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dallas and Fort Worth form a single metro area, but only Dallas Municipal Court prohibits renewals, while Fort Worth does not. <p>RESULT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fort Worth Municipal Court collects more revenue, \$116 per case, compared to \$113 per case in Dallas³
<p>Palm Beach County, FL</p>	<p>In 2014, Palm Beach County implemented a program to make paying down court debt easier</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment plans as low as \$20/month • If a payment is missed, a clerk calls, reminds them, and asks if they need payment adjusted <p>RESULT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduced suspensions by 75% in non-traffic cases and 36% in traffic cases ○ Payments and revenue increased: from \$50,659.97 in 2014, to more than \$1.6 million in 2017⁴

¹ Data provided by the Fines and Fees Justice Center

² 2019 Report on the Statewide Collection of Delinquent Court-Ordered Debt for 2017-18, https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/lr-2018-statewide-court-ordered-debt-2017-18-pc1463_010.pdf

³ Driven by Debt: How Driver License Suspensions for Unpaid Fines and Fees Hurt Texas Families <http://stories.texasappleseed.org/driven-by-debt>

⁴ Johnson v Jessop Coalition Amicus Brief