

UNDERSTANDING COURT COSTS + FEES IN ILLINOIS

JUNE 2020

ILLINOIS HAS AT LEAST 90 DISTINCT FINES, FEES, AND COSTS THAT ARE IMPOSED ON DEFENDANTS BY THE CRIMINAL COURTS, AND NO LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF COSTS FOR A SINGLE OFFENSE.

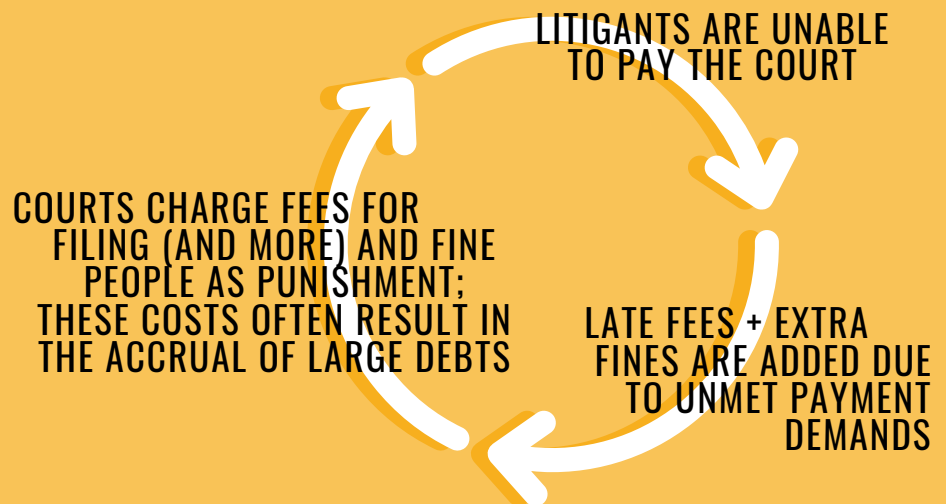
THE RISE IN COURT FINES, FEES, AND COSTS IS DEEPLY CONNECTED TO OVER-INCARCERATION AND MEASURES TO REDUCE PUBLIC FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

REDUCING THE NUMBER OF FINES, FEES, AND COURT COSTS WOULD LEAD TO ADMINISTRATIVE SAVINGS AND MORE EFFICIENT PROCESSING OF OTHER KINDS OF CASES.

COURT DEBT PUNISHMENT CYCLE

These fines, fees, and costs support a system where our poorest community members are subject to repeated court appearances and, potentially, additional jail time.

Once caught in the cycle, it can be very difficult for defendants to emerge from the criminal legal system, regardless of their original crime of conviction.



TAKE ACTION

Extend Fee Waiver Pilot:

While we determine the effects of fines and fees conclusively, we should increase compliance with constitutional mandates by only assessing fines and fees to those who can actually afford them.

Support Efforts to Improve Illinois' System of Monetary Sanctions:

Monetary sanctions are ineffective and harmful. There are more efficient, equitable ways to fund our courts that do not undermine public safety or community and family wellbeing in the way regressive court debts have.

Support Committee for Data Collection:

Illinois needs to generate conclusive data about the impact of fines & fees on agency budgets and the lives of Illinoisians.