

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/research/past-due>

Policy Issue Resources

In New Orleans, as in many cities around the country, nearly every phase of the criminal justice system imposes a financial cost on the users of that system, even before they are convicted of a crime. These bail, fines, and fees take a steep toll on the people who face them and their families. They also affect taxpayers, who bear the cost of excess incarceration when people can't pay.

This video highlights the voices of four so-called justice system users: people forced to pay bond or lose their liberty till trial. Their accounts help illustrate the problems inherent in this system, particularly the difficult choices the criminal justice system pushes them to make: paying their bond fees and paying for food and clothing for themselves and their families; bailing out their family members or paying rent.

Learn more about the use of bail, fines, and fees: <http://www.vera.org/past-due>

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Examining the Costs and Consequences of Charging for Justice in New Orleans

In 2015, government agencies in New Orleans collected \$4.5 million in the form of bail, fines and fees from people involved in the criminal justice system and, by extension, from their families. Another \$4.7 million was transferred from the pockets of residents to for-profit bail bond agents. These costs have become the subject of considerable publ ...

A look at how bail, fines, and fees in the criminal justice system impact poor communities in New Orleans

The New Orleans criminal justice system, like many other local systems across the country, operates significantly on funding generated from the people cycling through it: from bail and associated fees before trial, to fines and fees levied after conviction. These practices come with hidden costs to defendants: the majority of whom are poor and black ...

A First Look

New York's recent bail reform law, which was passed in April 2019 and amended on July 2, 2020, was expected to reduce the footprint of jail incarceration by limiting the use of money bail. The new law mandated pretrial release for the vast majority of nonviolent charges and required that judges consider a person's ability to pay bail. A comprehensi ...

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