

Drug Policy Alliance

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://drugpolicy.org/resource/above-law-investigation-civil-asset-forfeiture-california>

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Above the Law: An Investigation of Civil Asset Forfeiture Abuses in California is a multi-year, comprehensive look at asset forfeiture abuses in California that reveals the troubling extent to which law enforcement agencies have violated state and federal law. Civil asset forfeiture law allows the government to seize and keep cash, cars, real estate, and any other property even from citizens never charged with or convicted of a crime. Because these assets often go straight into the coffers of the enforcement agency, these laws have led to a perversion of police priorities, such as increasing personnel on the forfeiture unit while reducing the number of officers on patrol and in investigation units. What emerges in the new report is a picture of a handful of relatively small cities clustered in Los Angeles County that lead the state in per capita seizures (Baldwin Park, Beverly Hills, Gardena, Irwindale, La Verne, Pomona, South Gate, Vernon and West Covina). The report's analysis of fiscal records finds that many of these cities were providing false or inconsistent reports to the Justice Department, while some other cities appeared to be engaged in budgeting future forfeiture revenue, despite this being explicitly illegal under federal law.

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Our new strategic plan takes bold steps to dismantle this war on drugs and our communities. Join us in seeing this vision through.

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