

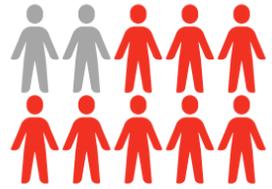
Fines & Fees ⁽¹⁾

People on supervision (probation and parole) frequently must pay fines and fees. Supervision officers are commonly responsible for monitoring and collecting fine and fee payments.

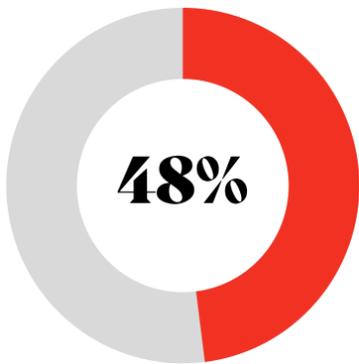
SAMPLE

We surveyed **734** probation and parole officers and administrators ⁽²⁾ employed in **6 states**.⁽³⁾

19% Non-White



59% Female
41% Male

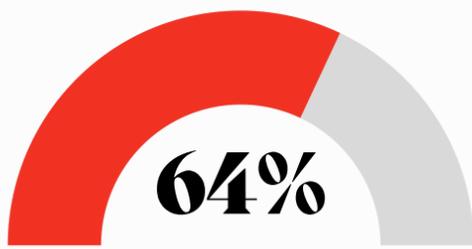


FEE AMOUNTS

Nearly half (48%) of officers surveyed believe fees charged by their agency are too high for most individuals to afford. **28% believe fees charged make it difficult to pay for daily needs.**

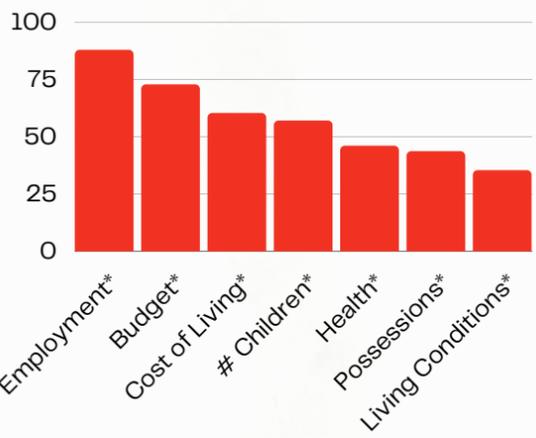
ABILITY TO PAY

In many places, courts and correctional agencies may consider an individual's ability to pay fines and fees, especially when they are late or fall behind on payments. Determining a person's ability to pay is frequently the responsibility of probation and parole officers. Guidance for how to make such decisions varies greatly by jurisdiction.



Assessments

Officers may use assessments to help them make decisions about their clients' ability to pay. Nearly 2/3 of officers (64%) reported using formal or informal assessments for this purpose. ⁽⁴⁾



Deciding who can pay*

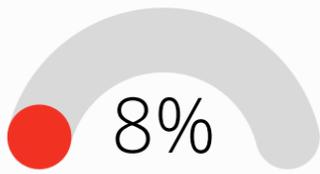
We asked officers what they use to establish if their clients can pay. More than half consider employment status or job opportunities, budget, cost of living, and/or number of children.

*See footnotes for category details⁽⁵⁾

WAIVERS

If an officer believes a client has an inability to pay, they may request that the court grant a financial waiver. These can allow individuals to skip payments or reduce how much they owe.





How often are waivers requested?

Most officers surveyed do **not** request financial waivers regularly. About **8%** of officers said they **request waivers most of the time** when appropriate. (6)

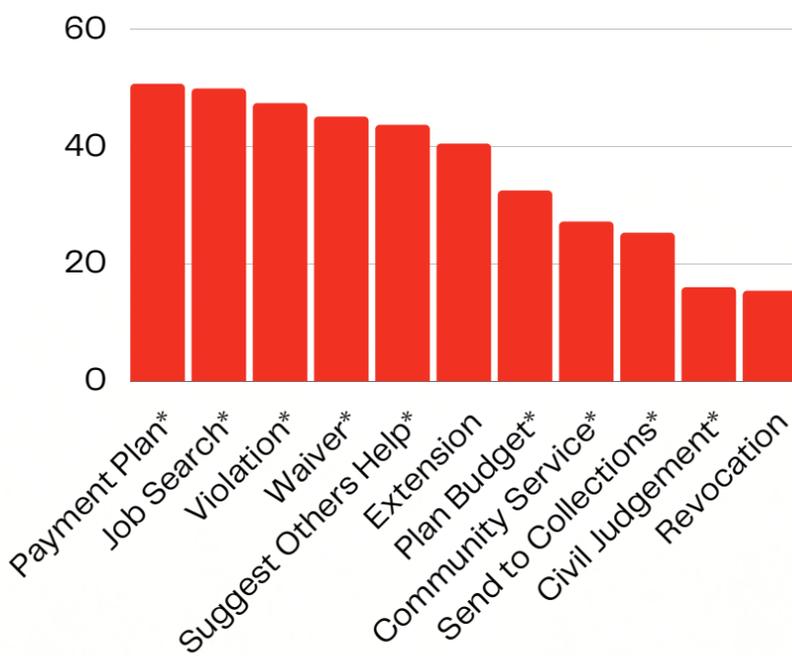


How often are waivers granted?

Just over half of officers say **most** waivers they request are granted by the court when requested. (7)

WHAT IF YOU DON'T (OR CAN'T) PAY?

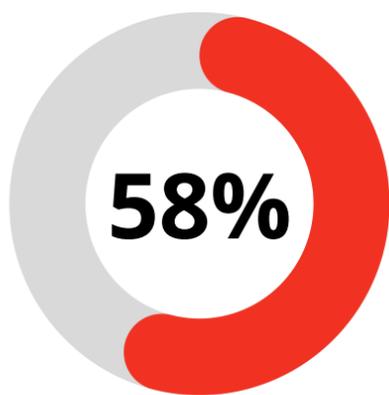
Since paying fines and fees is often required as a part of probation and parole, late or non-payment can have repercussions. When an individual misses or falls behind on payments, supervision officers (like our respondents) are responsible for recommending appropriate consequences. Their actions and discretion can therefore greatly influence the court's response.



Nonpayment Responses*

We asked officers what actions they commonly take when their clients do not make payments. About half of officers reported creating a payment plan, helping clients search for job opportunities, issuing or (adding to) a violation, requesting a financial waiver, or suggesting clients ask loved ones for help with payments

*See footnotes for category details(8)



Violations & Extensions

Officers can issue a violation or extend supervision due to late or nonpayment. **58%** of officers do **not** believe that late payments should lead to violations or extensions. (9)

Footnotes

1. Fines are monetary penalties imposed as punishment for a crime or violation by a court. Fees are payments required for the cost of services, activities, surcharges, or other probation or parole requirements.
2. Most respondents were front-line officers (73%), employed for at least 5 years (59%), and had a bachelor's degree or higher (78%). They were 42 years old on average.
3. Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, & Virginia
4. Regarding assessment type: 26% of officers report using formal assessments while 39% report using informal assessments.
5. Employment status or history=88%, client's budget=73%, cost of living or housing=61%, number of children=57%, physical or mental health=46%, material possessions=44%, living conditions=35%.
 - a. Other factors included transportation costs, household income and/or assets, government/public assistance, family size, provider status, custodial status, homelessness, disability status, social security status, indigency, current debt, drug testing, non-essential purchases (a few mentioned: Rent-A-Center, cable tv, cigarettes, illegal drugs, beauty products like fake nails and lashes), financial background, and family support.
6. 37% of officers reported requesting waivers "some of the time," 24% said "almost never," and 31% said they "never" request waivers.
7. 35% said waivers they request are granted "some of the time," 8% reported "almost never," and 3% reported waivers are "never" granted.
8. Create or revise a payment plan=51%, Help clients with searching for employment opportunities=50%, issue or add to a supervision violation=47%, waive fees or request a waiver from court=45%, suggest family or friends help=33%, extend supervision term=41%, create a budget or provide a financial planning class=29%, require community service=27%, send unpaid amount to collections=25%, send unpaid amount to civil judgement=17%, revoke supervision=16%.
 - a. Other factors included increase reporting, move to high-risk caseload, require hearing, increase reporting requirements, give weekend jail time, loss of privileges, brainstorm ways to create extra income with client, ask judge to find client indigent, suggest clients ask court to waive fees, ask for proof of child support and program fee payments, speak with treatment team, contact clerk of courts, refer to community resources, ignore it, Mail delinquent payment notice or reminder letter, and referral to city to have balance collected from taxes
9. Violations - A violations indicates an individual has broken the rules of their probation, and can lead to serious consequences. Extensions - When an individual's supervision is extended, they spend more time on probation or parole than originally planned.

This survey was conducted by the **Community Corrections Fines & Fees Study (CCFF)**. CCFF is a multi-state, multi-site, mixed-methods project examining the impact of legal financial obligations in probation and parole.

Visit www.ccffstudy.org for more information.