



Pennsylvania State Report Community Corrections Fines and Fees Project Administrative Data

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Allegheny County Adult Probation
Dauphin County Probation Services
Montgomery County Adult Probation

Fines, Fees, and Community Corrections in Pennsylvania

The application of legal financial obligations (LFOs) or monetary sanctions such as fines, fees, and costs has come under much greater scrutiny in recent years (Beckett & Harris, 2011; Martin et al., 2018). Scholars have begun to address and unpack the variable nature of these obligations and their assessment across jurisdictions. These pursuits are critical as research suggests that LFOs and associated debt obligations can be large and consequential (Harris, 2016; Harris et al., 2010). Moreover, when they are not paid, or not paid on time, they can engender serious and long-lasting legal and collateral consequences across a range of life domains (Bannon, 2010).

The intersection of LFOs and community corrections is of particular interest given that the reentry or post-adjudication stage is when the gravity of LFOs and their consequences come into sharp relief (Link, Hyatt & Ruhland, 2020). Community corrections departments can assess additional LFOs, such as the monthly supervision fee, oversee the repayment of LFOs assessed at previous stages of the system (e.g., police, courts, jails), and are responsible for, in most cases, collections on these balances. They are often responsible for initiating punitive action for non-payment, even when the sanctions are judicial. Supervising agencies additionally influence the enforcement of LFO repayment processes, empowered with a range of legal and administrative tools to encourage compliance, including, in some jurisdictions, violations, and arrests for non-payment (Harris et al., 2010). As such, probation and parole agencies have enormous influence over people under supervision and whether they complete their community supervision sentences successfully.

The issues arising from the intersection of financial sanctions and community corrections are especially pronounced given that many court systems do not rely on ability-to-pay assessments when imposing fines and fees (Colgan, 2017). This procedural dynamic can have large consequences on individuals and families that are generally financially disadvantaged (Western & Pettit, 2010). In light of these factors, in addition to creating legal and collateral consequences, the effectiveness of enforcement of unpaid debt by courts and corrections agencies has been called into question; described by some as seeking to “dra[w] blood from stones” (Harris et al., p. 1753).

While a limited amount of research underscores the policy and correctional concerns related to financial sanctions, there remain very few studies—especially large, quantitative investigations—that can speak to the universe of these sanctions, their amounts, and their effects on diverse populations, across places, and over time. There are many reasons that few studies have been conducted, including that LFOs can pose a challenge for researchers given their sometimes mandatory, sometimes discretionary application throughout different stages of the criminal justice process and involving different actors. Thus, accounting for the totality of LFOs and their sources has proven difficult. Furthermore, local and state administrative rules, supervision policies, and the controlling law regarding the assessment, collection, and enforcement of LFOs are highly variable. They are too often opaque, both to the person under supervision, the agency, and the general public. As a result, though many stakeholders may agree that LFOs can too often engender negative impacts and that there is a pressing need for policy reform generally, the fundamental data necessary to comprehensively understand this issue remains elusive.

In this context, the administrative data set collected for this project complements and expands the existing literature by illuminating some of the foundational assumptions for these core empirical

questions, allowing us to paint a detailed descriptive picture of how LFOs are applied and experienced among a large number of people in a variety of different places. Throughout, in addition to distinguishing between costs/fees, fines, and restitution, we organize our analysis by distinguishing between LFOs that are assessed during court processes (“court-incurred LFOs”) and those incurred during community supervision (“supervision-incurred LFOs”).

The research questions identified at the beginning of the study and that animate our analyses are:

1. What type of fines, fees, and restitution are individuals on probation and parole assessed for and how much are they (e.g., what is the total load the individual has before entering supervision)? What additional fees are imposed as a result of community supervision (e.g., how does the load increase)? How many probationers/parolees have their fines and fees waived or adjusted? Why did they get their fees/fines waived/adjusted?
2. How does LFO assessment vary across certain dimensions, including race, sex, and type of conviction (i.e., felony vs. misdemeanor)?
3. What is the total departmental revenue collected from fees and fines in a given year? What proportion of agency budgets are funded by supervision fees?
4. Are probationers/parolees receiving civil judgments for nonpayment? If so, what types of civil judgments do they receive?¹
5. Are probationers/parolees who owe greater amounts in fees and fines or have issues with nonpayment of fees and fines:
 - More likely to receive sanctions/violations?
 - More likely to have their sentence extended?
 - More likely to be revoked?
 - Less likely to complete supervision successfully?

Site and Setting

The research team investigated these questions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This site is ideal to study financial sanctions and punishment as its correctional policy is characterized by some of the highest levels of community supervision and the second-highest level of “correctional control”—which includes incarceration and community supervision—in the U.S. (Jones, 2018). Moreover, with 67 counties, the state is diverse across many theoretically- and practically- relevant dimensions, including racial, political, and cultural, in addition to wide variability in geography—spanning the continuum from rural to suburban to urban.

¹ As described in Section IV, our criminal court data do not contain information germane to civil judgment proceedings. Instead, we present data on payment behavior—a relevant prerequisite to enforcement actions.

To gain a broad understanding of the nature of LFOs and their impacts in this state, we intentionally approached county agencies based on geographic location and population density. As probation and parole are primarily organized at the county level in Pennsylvania, we identified and ultimately partnered with adult probation departments in Allegheny County (containing Pittsburg), Montgomery County, and Dauphin County as our urban, suburban, and rural sites, respectively. In collaboration with these agencies, we accessed administrative data on the relevant jurisdictions from the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

The remainder of this report addresses the results of our analyses as they related to the key empirical questions identified above for each of the three jurisdictions. In the next section, we further describe our data source, key measures, and analytic strategy. Findings are then presented, which are organized into five subsections: I. LFO Assessments due to Community Supervision, II. Subgroup Variation in LFO Assessments, III. LFO Revenue and Operational Costs IV. LFO Payments, and V. LFO Assessments and Supervision Outcomes. We conclude by reviewing some of the more notable findings that are novel to the LFO literature.

Executive Summary

I. LFO Assessments due to Community Supervision

- Across the entire sample, nearly 100% of dockets involved court fees and costs, while approximately 37% and 22% contained fines, and restitution, respectively. At the community corrections stage, most dockets (73%) showed an assessed monthly supervision fee, while just over half (54%) were associated with other probation-related fees.
- The average docket in the sample has been assessed a total of \$3,823.62 in LFOs as a result of their case being processed through the system, with a median amount of \$1,983.00 in total assessments. This average amount is highest in Montgomery County (\$4,762.94) and lowest in Dauphin County (\$3,182.88).
- Community supervision adds to individuals' LFO burdens, but LFOs incurred through court processing constitute the vast majority (about 70%) of the total amount of LFOs that individuals on community supervision are assessed.
- Though common, LFO assessments are dynamic, with about 40% of cases receiving a post-assessment adjustment. Descriptive statistics indicate that downward adjustments outweigh upward adjustments in our sample, suggesting the use of adjustments as a form of relief following initial assessments.

II. Subgroup Variation in LFO Assessments

- Significant differences emerge in the number and amount of assessed LFOs across demographic groups, but the exact form of the difference varies across categories of LFOs.
- Black respondents are assessed a significantly lower amount of LFOs in total (about \$3,150) as compared to nonblack respondents (about \$4,300). Across subcategorizations of LFOs, an interesting pattern emerges: Black respondents are assessed significantly lower amounts of all court-incurred LFOs but are assessed significantly higher amounts of all supervision-incurred LFOs.
- In general, findings indicate a general pattern of racial differences in LFO assessment amounts in which Black persons are assessed lower amounts of LFOs overall, but higher amounts when looking at supervision-related fees and costs specifically.
- Respondents convicted of felonies are, on average, assessed significantly higher amounts of LFOs than respondents convicted of misdemeanors.
- Overall, differences across sex were smaller, although women tended to be assessed slightly more than their male counterparts.

III. LFO Revenue and Operational Costs

- LFO collection revenue appears to account for a relatively small portion of agency operating budgets, even in a state where fees are legislatively justified and allocated toward operational costs.

IV. LFO Payments

- About two-thirds of cases in our sample have made at least one payment towards their LFO balance, with this proportion varying at the county level (54% Allegheny; 88% Dauphin). On average, payments equal about half of the total initial assessed amount.
- On average, the highest percentage of assessed LFOs that were ultimately paid was in Dauphin County, where payments constituted an average of about 75% of total assessments. This value is lowest in Allegheny County, where payments amount to 42% of total assessments. Montgomery was in the middle county, with payments accounting for about 46% of assessment totals.
- The analysis of payment data suggests that individuals are indeed making progress towards repaying their assessed LFOs, but this process will, for most, take time and many transactions to complete. Approximately one-third of the entire sample has not made a payment towards their LFOs, suggesting an elevated risk for sanctioning in line with local policy and practice.

V. LFO Assessments and Supervision Outcomes

- Supervision fees make a small contribution to total LFO balances but are significantly correlated with supervision outcomes in varying ways. Specifically:
 - The assessment of the supervision fee and higher assessed amounts of supervision incurred LFOs decrease the likelihood of completing supervision in all three counties;
 - The assessment of the supervision fee and higher assessed amounts of supervision-incurred LFOs increases the likelihood of receiving a violation in Dauphin and Montgomery counties;
 - The magnitude of the relationship between assessed amount and violation likelihood is larger for SI LFOs than CI LFOs, suggesting that the additional LFOs incurred due to supervision have a stronger and more direct influence on performance on supervision.
 - The magnitude of the relationship between the assessed amount and the likelihood of a revocation or supervision extension (relative to incarceration) is larger for CI LFOs relative to SI LFOs.

Data and Methodology

The Pennsylvania research team received administrative data from the Administrative Office of the Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC, hereafter), a state-level government agency responsible for the aggregation and management of data on court administration and criminal justice outcomes from agencies throughout Pennsylvania, including providing policy guidance and oversight to court leadership and administrators, operating information technology, administrative oversight, and providing continuing education opportunities to judges and court employees. The AOPC operates a statewide database of county court records from three court levels – Magisterial District Judge/ Municipal Courts, Courts of Common Pleas, and appellate courts (Supreme, Superior, and Commonwealth). These data are used internally by court employees and other government agencies, including law enforcement.

In Pennsylvania, court records were identified as the ideal source of information for the administrative data analysis component of the *CCFF* project. AOPC records of court data contain the measures necessary for answering project research questions, including LFO assessment and payment, sentencing, and case information, in a single dataset. AOPC data contain consistent variable fields for each partner county in this project. However, the exact applied meaning of each field varies in practice because community corrections in Pennsylvania are administered at the county level. Throughout this report, the narrative text explains how each variable was coded by the research team so that the analysis captured the unique policy and practice of each county as recorded in court records, to the closest extent possible.

Because they originate from court records, AOPC data track all events within a case that are formally recorded on the docket record, producing highly detailed data on the included measures. However, this level of granularity comes at a tradeoff: the data do not include informally transpiring events and/or events transpiring outside of formal court records, such as that which would be captured in probation agency databases. We reference this tradeoff throughout the presentation and discussion of our findings in this report but focus attention on how the data enable us to draw conclusions that are relevant to the study's goals.

Sampling Procedures

In 2019, the team worked in partnership with staff at Dauphin County Adult Probation to submit a formal request for data to the AOPC inclusive of all data fields from the *CCFF* Study Codebook created at the project's onset to guide each site's pursuit of administrative data within their state infrastructures and systems. In March 2021, Dauphin and the research team received the requested data from the AOPC and shared it securely with the PA research team. AOPC data were delivered in a collection of large .txt files fragmented into various categories: case data, sentence data, financial data, court calendar events, and attorney information.

Our sample eligibility criteria follow the *CCFF* study-wide criteria: all cases that received a sentence to probation from 2012-2017 in our three partner counties: Allegheny, Dauphin, and Montgomery counties.

The analytic dataset was created by merging received data subfiles into a single dataset of a cohort of criminal cases (dockets) that met these inclusion eligibility criteria and had valid data on both their docket number (unique case identifier) and offense sequence number (internally consistent charge identifier), the two fields that comprised the unique identifier required to link docket records across subfiles. This process required extensive programming efforts to first reshape data subfiles into a format with a consistent unit of analysis that preserved the data complexity and comprehensiveness of the original file, then merge files across the unique identifier of docket number and offense sequence number. The research team performed this procedure for each county, creating three county-specific datasets, then appended all three counties together in a single dataset. These tasks were performed in Stata 16 and Stata 17. Because of the size of some of the data files, Stata programs were often executed on “Picotte,” Drexel’s main high-performance computer cluster².

This process yielded a cohort of N=118,050 cases sentenced to probation in Pennsylvania in either Allegheny, Dauphin, or Montgomery counties between 2012-2017. Table 1 provides a breakdown of cases in the sample across counties. Column 3 indicates the total number of recorded LFO transactions in each county’s cohort of cases (Column 1) meeting CCFF eligibility. These transactions were reshaped and aggregated to the case level to proceed with the analysis.

Table 1: Sample Size and County Breakdown.

	(1) Number of Cases	(2) Percent of Analytic Sample	(3) # of LFO Transactions
Entire Sample	118,050	100.00%	
Allegheny	66,973	56.73%	4,611,531
Dauphin	16,599	14.06%	1,459,395
Montgomery	34,478	29.21%	2,447,614

Measures

This section details how we created the measures used in the analyses presented in this report. The overarching logic of our coding procedure was to ensure that constructed measures were an accurate reflection of local practice within each of our three partner counties. This process was necessary because the state-level uniform fields in AOPC data are a compilation of varied localized practices in Pennsylvania’s decentralized system of administration of criminal justice, implicitly collapsing between-county variation. To ensure that our measures accurately translated AOPC fields to actual county practice, the research team spoke at length with local agency partners to understand how their local practice was recorded and represented on court dockets. These consultations were important for coding several variables key to this analysis – specifically, our dependent and independent variables of supervision outcomes and LFO assessment categories, respectively. Our county-specific coding creates some inconsistency in the exact fields coded within each variable, noted as needed throughout this report.

² See: <https://drexel.edu/core-facilities/facilities/research-computing/service/picotte/>.

Dependent Variables: Community Supervision Outcomes

There is some variation in our ability to measure outcomes of supervision of interest to this analysis; availability is summarized in Table 2. These outcomes are organized around ‘positive’ and ‘adverse’ outcomes of supervision.

Table 2: Availability of Supervision Outcome Measures, by County.

	Completed Supervision	Violation	Revocation	Supervision Extended
Allegheny	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dauphin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montgomery	Yes	TBD	Not Analyzed *	No

* *Revocations are measurable in Montgomery County, but the number of recorded revocations is too low for statistical analysis.*

The binary variable, *completed supervision*, indicates whether a case has been completed regarding the initial supervision sentence as indicated by a single initial sentencing date and no additional sentencing date events. This qualifier means that there were no formally docketed sentencing events for negative outcomes of supervision, such as violation or revocation hearings. This variable is measurable in all three counties in the same manner.

Violations are measurable in two counties and are coded uniquely as binary variables. In Allegheny County, a case is coded as receiving a violation if the case had a “Probation/Parole Violation Hearing” or a “Violation Hearing” sentencing event type. Because this coding strategy is somewhat conservative, it may undercount the true prevalence of violations. In Dauphin County, a case is coded as receiving a violation when a case has a “Revocation Hearing” sentencing event type, an event triggered by a violation. [*Montgomery*: TBD].

Revocations are measurable in Dauphin County. The revocation binary variable equals one when a case has a “Revocation Hearing” sentencing event and received any sentence type except for “No Further Penalty.”

Extended supervision is measurable in Dauphin County. This binary variable equals one for cases that ever received a supervision extension – either a new probation or IPP sentence – as a result of a revocation hearing. The reference category is an incarceration-involved sentence following a revocation, either incarceration or a merged sentence that includes probation and incarceration. This variable only has valid values for Dauphin County cases that received a revocation.

Because our data are generated from court records, we are unable to observe supervision outcomes stored exclusively in probation agency databases, such as specific violation justifications, sanctions, or absconding from supervision.

Independent Variables: Legal Financial Obligation (LFO) Assessments and Amounts

AOPC data include highly detailed information on LFO assessments, payments, and adjustments incurred and recorded by the courts, including their categorizations and associated transactions. Table 3 displays the categorizations of LFOs we created for this report that reflect a conceptualization of ways to test hypotheses regarding the additional financial burden associated with community supervision. Reflecting the individualization of counties in setting LFOs, the number of included types varies across counties. Categories are mutually exclusive, meaning that each individual LFO type – the line-item charges – is represented exactly once and in exactly one category.

Table 3: Number of LFO Assessment Types Included in Each LFO Category.

County	Court-Incurred LFOs			Supervision-Incurred LFOs	
	1 – Court Costs & Fees (C&F)	2 – Fines	3 – Restitution	4 – Supervision Fee (SF)	5 – Probation-Related Fees (PF)
	# Types	# Types	# Types	# Types	# Types
Dauphin	96	24	25	1	8
Montgomery	105	14	19	1	4
Allegheny	108	16	40	1	6
<i>Average</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>

Note: All categories are coded in a mutually exclusive manner. See Appendix 1 for Assessment Type Names and Brief Explanations.

We split LFOs into two general categories that reference the point of system contact at which the assessments are typically incurred. *Court-incurred LFOs (CI LFOs)* include all LFOs that are assessed by the courts in the course of case processing and sentencing independent of the community supervision sentence. All CI LFOs are assessed and collected by the Clerk of Courts in all three counties. CI LFOs include the following sub-categories: (1) *court costs and fees (C&F)*, inclusive of all types categorized as “Costs/Fees” in AOPC data that are not the supervision fee or probation-related fees (SF or PF, see Table 3); (2) *finer*, inclusive of all types categorized as “Fines” in AOPC data, and (3) *restitution*, inclusive of all types categorized as “Restitution” in AOPC data.

The second general category, *Supervision-incurred LFOs (SI LFOs)* includes all LFOs that can be incurred because a case received a sentence to probation, capturing the added financial burden of a community corrections sentence. SI LFOs may be assessed by the Clerk of Courts or the Probation agency; this responsibility varies across counties. SI LFOs include the following sub-categories. First, the *supervision Fee (SF)* is the monthly supervision fee written into PA state law and titled as ‘OSP (‘County’/State) (Act 35 of 1991)’. According to state statute, the SF can be assessed at a minimum of \$25 per month; county-level practitioners are granted the discretion to set the exact amount of the SF in their jurisdiction. In Dauphin County, this fee is assessed and collected by the probation agency. In Montgomery and Allegheny counties, this fee is assessed and collected by the Clerk of Courts. Second, *probation-related fees (PF)* are conceptualized as LFOs incurred exclusively because a case receives a sentence involving community supervision.

Probation-related fees are LFO types categorized under “Costs/Fees” in AOPC records and were related to probation and/or community supervision outside of the monthly SF (described above). In Allegheny and Montgomery, PF captured in the data are exclusively assessed and collected by the Clerk of Courts; in Dauphin, PF may be assessed by Dauphin County Adult Probation or the Clerk of Courts.

We note that our conceptual categories include LFOs that are assessed and collected by the courts and/or the probation agency. The use of “incurred” indicates the point in the system at which these LFOs were imposed.

Each LFO type in the five categorizations – court costs and fees, fines, restitution, supervision fee, and probation-related fees – is coded as a binary variable that equals one if a case received any assessment that fell into the specified category. These variables are used to quantify the prevalence of the LFO assessment within the sample and to estimate its general impact on the specified outcomes.

A series of variables tabulate the *Amount Assessed* within a docket for seven categorizations of LFOs: the five type categorizations and the two general categories (CI and SI LFOs). The value of these variables is the sum of all assessed amounts for all LFOs in the specified categorization. For multivariable analyses, these variables are used in their natural logarithmic transformation to account for the skewness of the distributions.

A series of variables indicate adjustments to LFO assessments formally recorded onto a case’s court record. The variable *Ever Adjusted* is a binary indicator that equals one if a case docket record ever included an adjustment to an assessed LFO. LFO category-specific binary variables indicate whether a case ever received an adjustment associated with an LFO falling into the specified category. *Number of Adjustments* is a continuous variable counting the number of docketed adjustments within a case. The *Total Amount (\$) Adjusted* variable is the net amount of adjusted value that a case receives from all docketed adjustments. LFO category-specific total amount (\$) adjusted variables indicate the net amount of adjusted value for all LFOs falling within the specified group within a case.

In AOPC data, adjustments are generally recorded changes in assessed amounts. Adjustments can be made for a variety of reasons that are not formally recorded in AOPC data. These reasons can include LFO waivers, but it is not discernable how many adjustments are waivers. In Allegheny County, the Courts are not permitted to waive supervision fees or restitution, although a victim can request the court to have restitution amounts adjusted. In Dauphin, adjustments come from a direct order from the Court.

The variable *Payment* tabulates whether a payment was ever made and formally docketed within the specified case.

The LFO amount assessed variables are coded as missing if there was no associated assessment in the case. These variables have valid data if the case was assessed that LFO to any amount.

Covariates – Case and Demographic Variables

The continuous variable *sentence length* indicates the months of probation issued at the docket's initial sentencing date. AOPC data include minimum and maximum sentence length values measured as days, months, or years. Sentences issued in days or years were transformed to their equivalent length in months to create a consistent metric. In the vast majority of dockets, minimum and maximum values are the same. However, less than 1% of cases (N=889; 0.74%) have different minimum and maximum values on the sentence length metric. Sentence lengths for these cases include the average of minimum and maximum months.

AOPC data classify charges at the felony, misdemeanor, or summary offense level. In all counties, we created a binary variable of *Felony* that equals one if a charge was at the felony level and zero if at the misdemeanor or summary level. There were 2,167 dockets charged with a summary offense that resulted in probation (1.8% of the sample) and were collapsed with misdemeanor offenses (56.1% of the sample).

Charges is a variable that counts the number of distinct offense charges filed within the docket.

AOPC records include the following race categories, in alphabetical order: Asian; Asian/Pacific Islander; Bi-Racial; Black; Native American/Alaskan Native; Unknown/Unreported; and White. The multivariable analyses use a dichotomous measure of race, *Black*, and collapse the remaining categories into the reference variable (respondents were coded as missing if there was no race data available).³

Respondent sex is measured with a dichotomous variable, *Male*, that equals one if AOPC records indicate the respondent is a male, zero if the respondent is recorded as a female, and missing if the respondent's gender is recorded as unreported/unknown or is missing.

Respondent *Age* indicates their age in years as of the date of their first sentencing event for the case of eligibility for CCF cohort inclusion. There are 30 cases that, after investigation, appear to be clear data entry errors and have been recoded as missing for analysis: These include 18 cases where a respondent's age is a negative value or less than 1 year, and 12 where the respondent is above 0 but younger than 14.

Analytic Strategy

This report includes various quantitative data analysis methods employed to answer the research questions of the *CCFF* study. These methods include univariate methods to obtain descriptive statistics about the cohort and their LFO burdens and two-sample t-tests of differences in means of LFO assessment variables. Multivariable specifications include logistic regression models used to estimate the association between LFO assessments and outcomes of community supervision for binary variables. All analyses were performed in Stata 16 or Stata 17. The full analytic sample is comprised of N=118,050 cases.

³ AOPC data contains no information about an individual's ethnicity (e.g., Hispanic/Not Hispanic).

Findings

Our presentation of findings is organized in subsections, each answering one of the stated research questions for the *CCFF* Study.

Table 4 provides descriptive statistics on covariates used in this analysis. Just under half of the cases in the sample (42%) received a probation sentence following conviction on a felony charge, while the remaining 58% were convicted on a misdemeanor or summary charge. The average probation sentence length is about 21 months, just shy of two years. Each case in the sample has an average of just over 70 transactions (median = 46), a field that includes all assessments, payments, and adjustments associated with the case that enter into the court’s formal record.

The demographics of our sample skew young and male, with an average age of about 33.5 years old (median = 31) and with men constituting 75% of all respondents. Finally, the sample is just over 40% Black, with the remaining 60% including all other racial groups referenced above.

Table 4: Sample Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Felony	0.42	--	0.49	0	1
Sentence	20.64	12	18.47	0	288
Transactions	71.13	46	142.59	1	16996
Age	33.60	31	11.38	15	95
Male	0.75	--	0.43	0	1
Black	0.41	--	0.49	0	1
N	118,050				

I. LFO Assessments due to Community Supervision

Table 5 tabulates the prevalence of assessment of each LFO category in the entire sample and each county. Starting with court-incurred LFOs (CI LFOs), court costs and fees (C&F) are the most commonly assessed LFOs in this sample, an unsurprising proportion given that this single category includes over distinct 100 assessment types. The use of fines ranges across counties from just under 22% (Allegheny) to nearly 90% (Dauphin), suggesting localized variation in the use of fines in sentencing. Restitution is fairly evenly assessed across counties, in about 20% of cases in each jurisdiction. Turning to supervision-incurred LFOs (SI LFOs), the supervision fee (SF) is assessed in half (Dauphin) to over 80% (Allegheny) of cases. Probation-related fees (SF) are less common in cases in the sample, ranging from a low of 1.3 (Montgomery) to over 70% (Allegheny). This wide range is likely due to county-level variation in the point of assessment for this specific LFO category. The aggregated, state-level nature of our data source may undercount PF LFOs that are assessed and collected solely by the supervision agency and not formally docketed on court records.

Table 5: Frequency and Prevalence of Categorized LFO Assessments.

			All Counties	Allegheny	Dauphin	Montgomery
CI LFOs	C&F	N	117,279	66,758	16,490	34,031
		%	99.30%	99.50%	99.20%	97.00%
	Fines	N	43,524	14,403	14,937	14,184
		%	36.90%	21.80%	89.90%	40.40%
	Restitution	N	26,248	14,679	3,787	7,782
		%	22.20%	21.80%	22.80%	22.20%
SI LFOs	SF	N	85,589	53,973	8,352	23,264
		%	72.50%	80.60%	50.40%	66.30%
	PF	N	63,689	47,604	15,614	471
		%	54.00%	71.20%	49.30%	1.30%

Note: Values indicate the number and percentage of dockets in the specified sample having at least one assessment within the specified LFO category.

Assessment Amounts

Table 6: LFO Assessment Amounts – Total.

	All Counties	Allegheny	Dauphin	Montgomery
Mean	\$ 3,823.62	\$ 3,498.86	\$ 3,182.88	\$ 4,762.94
Median	\$ 1,983.00	\$ 2,068.90	\$ 1,452.71	\$ 2,179.03
Minimum	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Maximum	\$ 4,058,983.00	\$ 2,634,021.00	\$ 2,038,191.00	\$ 4,058,983.00

Table 6 presents descriptive statistics on total LFO assessments in the sample. The average docket in the sample is assessed a total of \$3,823.62 in LFOs as a result of their case being processed through the system, with a median amount of \$1,983.00 in total assessments. This mean is highest in Montgomery County (\$4,762.94) and lowest in Dauphin County (\$3,182.88).

The next two tables split these total assessment amounts into categorizations of court-incurred (CI) and supervision-incurred (SI) LFOs. Row 1 of Table 7 displays the average total of assessed CI LFOs summed across included LFO categories. There is a sample-level average assessment of CI LFOs of \$2,886.85 (median \$1,163.65), with a range of county-specific averages from just under \$2,500 (Allegheny) to about \$3,750 (Montgomery). Of all sub-categorizations, court costs and fees (C&F) contribute the most to this total: cases are assessed an average of about \$1,200 in C&F alone, a value smallest in Dauphin (\$820) and highest in Montgomery (\$1,500). The average total in fines in the sample is approximately half of the average C&F: cases receive a mean sum of about \$640 in fines. Counties appear to vary substantially in the use of fines: assessments in Dauphin (about \$350) and Montgomery (about \$440) fall far below the average in Allegheny (\$1,140). Finally, restitution is subject to even more variation. While restitution is relatively rare (~20% of cases), it is a quantitatively large financial burden in most instances. The

sample average restitution assessment is just under \$7,000, with county-specific means ranging from about \$5,700 (Allegheny) to \$9,200 (Montgomery). For most cases, C&F drives the total burden of CI LFOs, with exceptions for cases in which restitution must be paid.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics, Assessments of Court-Incurred (CI) LFOs, Court Costs & Fees (C&F), Fines, and Restitution.

		All Counties	Allegheny	Dauphin	Montgomery
(1) CILFOs	Mean	\$ 2,886.85	\$ 2,495.58	\$ 2,665.59	\$ 3,753.40
	Median	\$ 1,163.65	\$ 1,068.37	\$ 1,077.50	\$ 1,350.49
	Minimum	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Maximum	\$ 4,058,983.00	\$ 2,634,021.00	\$ 2,038,166.00	\$ 4,058,983.00
(2) C&F	Mean	\$ 1,119.84	\$ 991.71	\$ 820.37	\$ 1,516.29
	Median	\$ 963.70	\$ 929.00	\$ 784.65	\$ 1,145.72
	Minimum	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 0.10	\$ -
	Maximum	\$ 812,621.10	\$ 18,951.14	\$ 10,774.70	\$ 812,621.10
(3) Fines	Mean	\$ 642.09	\$ 1,144.14	\$ 349.30	\$ 440.63
	Median	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 250.00
	Minimum	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00
	Maximum	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 51,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
(4) Restitution	Mean	\$ 6,915.30	\$ 5,753.34	\$ 6,733.74	\$ 9,195.43
	Median	\$ 927.50	\$ 927.00	\$ 689.43	\$ 1,050.00
	Minimum	\$ 0.99	\$ 1.00	\$ 1.00	\$ 0.99
	Maximum	\$ 3,246,362.00	\$ 2,633,800.00	\$ 2,000,000.00	\$ 3,246,362.00

Descriptive statistics in

Table 8 indicate that assessments of supervision-incurred LFOs average about \$936 in the sample (median \$480), with county-specific averages ranging from \$517 (Dauphin) to \$1,010 (Montgomery). This amount is far smaller than that of CI LFOs. Supervision fees account for a much larger proportion of the total burden from supervision-incurred LFOs: the mean total assessment of the monthly supervision fee is about \$1,040 (SF, Row 2), while the mean total assessment of probation-related fees (PF, Row 3) is about \$340.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics, Assessments of Supervision-Incurred (SI) LFOs, Supervision Fee, and Probation-Related Fees.

		All Counties	Allegheny	Dauphin	Montgomery
(1) SI LFOs	Mean	\$ 936.77	\$ 1,003.28	\$ 517.29	\$ 1,009.55
	Median	\$ 480.00	\$ 780.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 480.00
	Minimum	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Maximum	\$ 74,240.00	\$ 70,980.00	\$ 12,075.00	\$ 74,240.00
(2) SF	Mean	\$ 1,042.07	\$ 895.13	\$ 800.95	\$ 1,469.54
	Median	\$ 720.00	\$ 540.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,160.00
	Minimum	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.70	\$ 5.00	\$ 5.98
	Maximum	\$ 74,240.00	\$ 49,140.00	\$ 12,050.00	\$ 74,240.00
(3) PF	Mean	\$ 335.95	\$ 396.60	\$ 121.49	\$ 1,315.57
	Median	\$ 240.00	\$ 240.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 930.00
	Minimum	\$ 11.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 30.00
	Maximum	\$ 21,840.00	\$ 21,840.00	\$ 7,275.00	\$ 9,432.00

Note: These LFOs are not necessarily assessed nor collected by the county probation agency. See the ‘Measures’ section for a description of the LFOs included in each category and the local allocation of responsibility for assessment and collection.

To descriptively assess the additional financial burden incurred by a probation sentence, we calculated CI and SI LFO assessment amounts as a percentage of total assessment amounts in each docket, then computed county-level averages of these percentages. In the entire sample, on average, CI LFOs account for just over two-thirds (69.7%) of the total value of assessed LFOs, while SI LFOs account for the remainder, slightly less than one-third (30.3%). Figure 1: Breakdown of Total LFO Assessment across Court-Incurred and Supervision-Incurred LFOs plots these splits for each county. SI LFOs account for about one-fifth to one-third of all assessed LFOs in each county. These percentages are much smaller in magnitude than those for CI LFOs, indicating that the bulk of an individual’s LFO burden is incurred through the court process and somewhat independent of the supervision sentence. However, the community supervision sentence does contribute a nontrivial amount of additional LFO responsibility to individuals’ debt burdens. This figure suggests that the added financial assessments incurred through community supervision are relatively small compared to those incurred “as usual” through court processing.

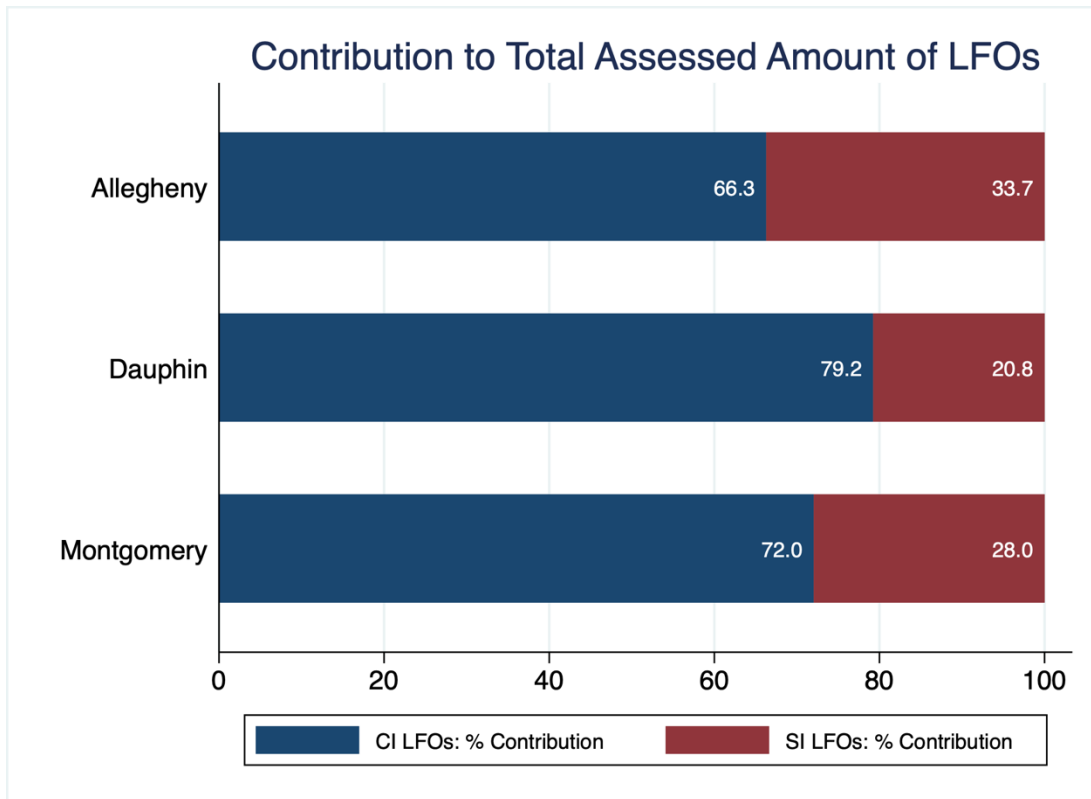


Figure 1: Breakdown of Total LFO Assessment across Court-Incurred and Supervision-Incurred LFOs

Adjustments

In our data, we can observe and quantify adjustments to assessed LFOs that are formally docketed on the court record associated with the case at hand. Importantly, these adjustments follow a formal assessment – indicating they are used as a remedy, not a preventative measure (e.g., waiver). This section provides an overview of the prevalence of LFO adjustments in the sample and the amount recorded associated with the adjustment. The raw AOPC data file included adjustment values that were positive or negative, indicating that individuals can receive adjustments that increase or decrease initial LFO amounts. The computations to create the variables presented here summed the values associated with the specified grouping of adjustments to fully capture the net outcome of upward and downward departures formally docketed for the case.

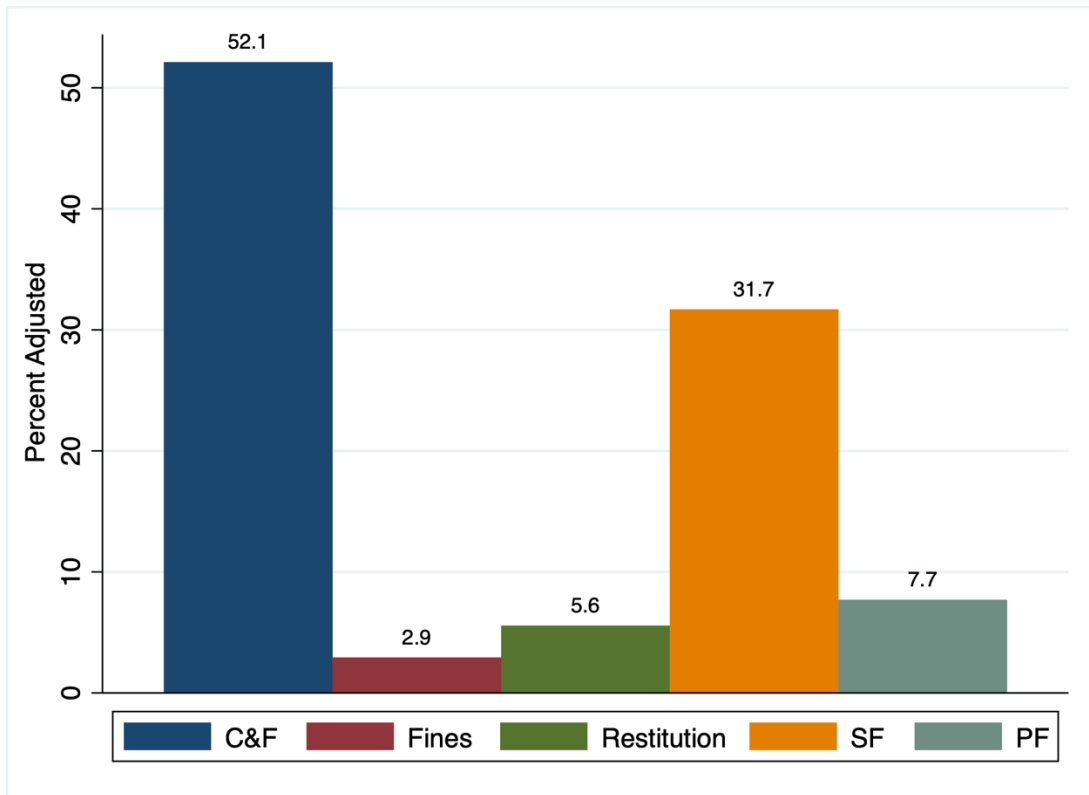


Figure 2: LFO Adjustments, Entire Sample.

Note: N=118,050.

In the entire dataset, about 40% of cases received an adjustment to their LFO assessments at any point in time post-assessment (T

Table 9). Figure 2 plots sample-level percentages of adjustments for each type of LFO categorization. Court costs and fees are incredibly common: over half of the cases in the analytic sample received at least one adjustment to their assessed court costs and fees. The monthly supervision fee is the next most common adjustment, with just short of one-third of cases having their supervision fee adjusted. Adjustments for other LFOs are far less common in these sample-wide proportions.

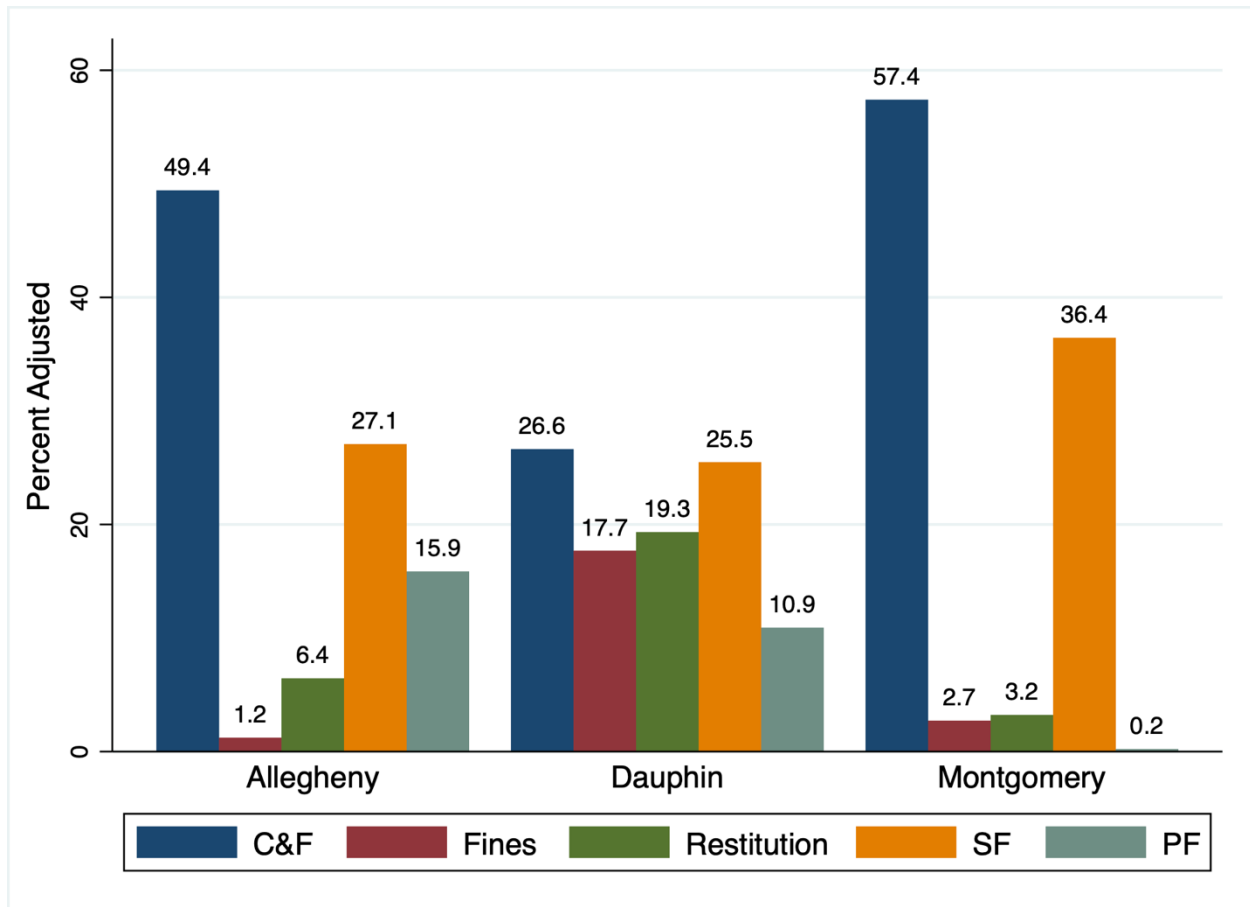


Figure 3: LFO Adjustments, by County.

Note: Allegheny N=66,973; Dauphin N=16,599; Montgomery N=34,478.

Figure 3 plots county-specific percentages of cases receiving an adjustment of each type. Again, there seems to be the most capacity to adjust court costs and fees within the sample, particularly in Allegheny and Montgomery counties. Adjustments to the monthly supervision fee are also somewhat common, with one-quarter to one-third of cases receiving this adjustment in the sample. However, the variation in the exact proportions of adjustments suggests important county-level policy and practice in filing for adjustments post-assessment.

Table 9 provides descriptive statistics on the amounts associated with these adjustments plotted in Figure 2 and Figure 3. On average, a case in the sample receives about 5 adjustments to its LFOs. This value is slightly higher in Allegheny County (about 6) and lower in Dauphin County (just over 1). All average adjustment amounts of LFOs are negative, indicating that adjustments are used to the largest degree to decrease initial LFO assessment amounts.

Table 9: LFO Adjustment Amounts.

	N	Mean/ Proportion	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
(1) Entire Sample						
Ever Adjusted	118,050	.41	--	.49	0	1
# of Adjustments	118,050	4.94	0	12.35	0	1272
Total \$ Adjusted	45,256	\$ (1,860.90)	\$ (775.00)	21692.32	\$ (2,040,176.00)	\$ 108,797.60
C&F \$	36,361	\$ (733.78)	\$ (512.00)	5339.32	\$ (810,761.60)	\$ 2,099.75
Fines \$	2,042	\$ (540.80)	\$ (200.00)	1883.35	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ 13,500.00
Restitution \$	3,881	\$ (7,028.43)	\$ (529.00)	67297.59	\$ (1,985,710.00)	\$ 108,797.60
SF \$	22,110	\$ (1,223.37)	\$ (960.00)	1361.30	\$ (74,210.00)	\$ 3,465.00
PF \$	5,375	\$ (391.73)	\$ (240.00)	562.86	\$ (21,720.00)	\$ 1,660.00
(2) Allegheny						
Ever Adjusted	66,973	.29	--	.45	0	1
# of Adjustments	66,973	5.84	0	11.38	0	241
Total \$ Adjusted	19,206	\$ (1,408.68)	\$ (745.00)	12777.07	\$ (983,052.00)	\$ 21,700.00
C&F \$	15,145	\$ (683.41)	\$ (699.06)	477.24	\$ (15,160.58)	\$ 1,300.00
Fines \$	374	\$ (1,227.72)	\$ (1,000.00)	2883.45	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ 13,500.00
Restitution \$	1,972	\$ (4,863.84)	\$ (600.00)	39427.82	\$ (983,052.00)	\$ 21,700.00
SF \$	8,298	\$ (583.11)	\$ (360.00)	968.69	\$ (48,870.00)	\$ 3,465.00
PF \$	4,858	\$ (373.74)	\$ (240.00)	491.52	\$ (21,720.00)	\$ 1,660.00
(3) Dauphin						
Ever Adjusted	16,599	.37	--	.48	0	1
# of Adjustments	16,599	1.32	0	4.38	0	55
Total \$ Adjusted	2,621	\$ (2,960.18)	\$ (500.32)	55298.58	\$ (1,985,710.00)	\$ 108,797.60
C&F \$	1,075	\$ (436.79)	\$ (300.00)	396.84	\$ (3,110.94)	\$ 517.30
Fines \$	714	\$ (392.82)	\$ (125.00)	1960.32	\$ (49,000.00)	\$ 3,000.00
Restitution \$	780	\$ (7,698.86)	\$ (234.01)	101218.50	\$ (1,985,710.00)	\$ 108,797.60
SF \$	1,029	\$ (780.61)	\$ (583.66)	903.50	\$ (9,500.00)	\$ 1,750.00
PF \$	440	\$ (455.16)	\$ (25.00)	868.82	\$ (7,140.00)	\$ 600.00
(4) Montgomery						
Ever Adjusted	34,478	.68	--	.47	0	1
# of Adjustments	34,478	4.96	2	15.92	0	1272
Total \$ Adjusted	23,429	\$ (2,108.64)	\$ (960.00)	20803.64	\$ (2,040,176.00)	\$ 16,630.78
C&F \$	20,141	\$ (787.52)	\$ (329.94)	7160.91	\$ (810,761.60)	\$ 2,099.75
Fines \$	954	\$ (382.27)	\$ (200.00)	1113.77	\$ (29,700.00)	\$ 1,000.00
Restitution \$	1,129	\$ (10,346.08)	\$ (641.97)	75941.81	\$ (1,711,287.00)	\$ 16,630.78

SF \$	12,783	\$	(1,674.64)	\$	(1,440.00)	1430.04	\$	(74,210.00)	\$	3,080.00
PF \$	77	\$	(1,164.57)	\$	(754.26)	1397.30	\$	(6,768.00)	\$	10.00

Note: Values in (parentheses) indicate negative values – specifically, downward adjustments of prior LFO assessments. SD = Standard Deviation.

In Panel 1 of Table 9, the average total amount adjusted within a case is a decrease of approximately \$1,850 (median \$775), which constitutes about a 50% decrease in the average total assessment in the sample (Table 6). The highest average adjustment amount is for restitution, reflecting the relatively high amounts of restitution that individuals can be assessed. The next highest amount is for the supervision fee, suggesting that this LFO is particularly flexible and subject to change post-assessment.

County-specific adjustment data displayed in Panels 2, 3, and 4 of

Table 9 indicate localized variation in the use of adjustments concerning amounts and LFO types. Although in the middle of the pack for the proportion of cases receiving any adjustment, the average adjusted amount is highest in Dauphin County at an average of nearly \$3,000. This high value appears to be driven by the amount of adjusted restitution – nearly \$7,700, on average, in Dauphin.

Looking specifically at SI LFOs, the amounts adjusted vary across counties. The average adjustment amount is highest in Montgomery County, at nearly a \$1,700 decrease for supervision fees and \$1,200 for probation-related fees. The magnitude of these adjustments suggests that officers and/or agency practice frequently utilizes adjustments to remedy assessments, potentially for persons on supervision with a low likelihood of repayment of the full amount of their initial assessed LFOs. These amounts are lower – but still sizable – in Dauphin County, averaging a downward adjustment of \$780 and \$450 for the supervision fee and probation-related fees, respectively. Finally, cases in Allegheny receiving adjustments for SI LFOs are alleviated from an average of \$580 in the supervision fee and \$370 in the probation-related fees. Across all counties, these amounts all indicate a sizable degree of relief of LFO burdens incurred specifically as a result of community supervision policy.

II. Subgroup Variation in LFO Assessments

The second research question regards whether there is variation in the amount of assessed fines and fees among subgroups within the administrative data sample. We first examined racial differences in assessed LFO amounts across Black and non-Black respondents by estimating a series of two-sample t-tests of group-level means of LFO assessments across various categorizations.

Table 10 displays a series of results from t-tests exploring differences in average assessment amounts for Black and non-black persons in the all-county analytic sample. All relationships are statistically significant, indicating consistency in racial differences regarding LFO assessments. Black respondents are assessed a significantly lower amount of LFOs in total (about \$3,150) as compared to nonblack respondents (about \$4,300). Looking across subcategorizations of LFOs, an interesting pattern emerges: Black respondents are assessed significantly lower amounts of all CI LFOs but are assessed significantly higher amounts of all SI LFOs.

Table 10: All Counties: Race Group Differences in LFO Assessment Amounts.

		<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SE</u>
Total LFOs	Non-Black	69,826	\$ 4,284.70	133.3
	Black	48,224	\$ 3,156.01	56.6 ***
CI LFOs	Non-Black	69,826	\$ 3,367.37	133.0
	Black	48,224	\$ 2,191.07	56.0 ***
C&F	Non-Black	69,350	\$ 1,139.61	15.4
	Black	47,929	\$ 1,091.23	4.7 *
Fines	Non-Black	27,452	\$ 722.27	6.7
	Black	16,072	\$ 505.14	6.6 ***
Restitution	Non-Black	16,172	\$ 8,426.31	526.7
	Black	10,076	\$ 4,490.12	258.7 ***
SI LFOs	Non-Black	69,826	\$ 917.32	4.7
	Black	48,224	\$ 964.94	5.5 ***
SF	Non-Black	51,465	\$ 1,002.97	4.9
	Black	34,124	\$ 1,101.05	5.6 ***
PF	Non-Black	37,920	\$ 327.94	2.3
	Black	25,769	\$ 347.75	2.6 ***

*Note: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Results presented in Table 11 explore racial variation in LFO assessment amounts in the Allegheny County subsample. Black respondents in the sample are assessed with significantly lower total amounts of LFOs than non-black persons. The same pattern of CI LFOs and SI LFOs emerges in which Black persons are assessed fewer amounts of CI LFOs but greater amounts of SI LFOs than non-Black persons in the sample.

Table 11: Allegheny County: Race Group Differences in LFO Assessment Amounts.

		N	Mean	SE
Total LFOs	Non-Black	39,663	\$ 3,920.24	128.6
	Black	27,310	\$ 2,886.88	49.4 ***
CI LFOs	Non-Black	39,663	\$ 2,953.92	127.9
	Black	27,310	\$ 1,829.93	48.0 ***
C&F	Non-Black	39,532	\$ 995.13	2.4
	Black	27,226	\$ 986.75	3.6 *
Fines	Non-Black	9,857	\$ 1,217.44	9.3
	Black	4,546	\$ 985.20	17.2 ***
Restitution	Non-Black	9,387	\$ 7,012.00	536.7
	Black	5,292	\$ 3,520.70	242.8 ***
SI LFOs	Non-Black	39,663	\$ 966.32	6.2
	Black	27,310	\$ 1,056.95	7.4 ***
SF	Non-Black	32,462	\$ 849.27	5.0
	Black	21,511	\$ 964.33	6.0 ***
PF	Non-Black	28,726	\$ 374.51	2.3
	Black	18,878	\$ 430.22	2.8 ***

*Note: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Results reported in

Table 12 demonstrate the differences in average assessment amounts for Black and non-Black persons in Dauphin County. There are relatively fewer significantly different averages in Dauphin County, with only two comparisons falling beneath the threshold of .05 for statistical significance – fines and probation-related fees. In both, Black persons are assessed significantly lower amounts of fines and probation-related fees than non-Black persons. Although only marginally significant ($p < .10$), Black persons appear to be assessed lower total amounts of court costs and fees than non-Black persons.

Table 12: Dauphin County: Race Group Differences in LFO Assessment Amounts.

		N	Mean	SE
Total LFOs	Non-Black	9,294	\$ 3,509.70	356.3
	Black	7,305	\$ 2,767.07	262.8
CI LFOs	Non-Black	9,294	\$ 2,988.45	355.9
	Black	7,305	\$ 2,254.81	262.3
C&F	Non-Black	9,230	\$ 825.11	4.3
	Black	7,260	\$ 814.35	4.6 +
Fines	Non-Black	8,391	\$ 385.41	10.7
	Black	6,546	\$ 303.00	7.4 ***
Restitution	Non-Black	2,170	\$ 7,799.47	1495.6
	Black	1,617	\$ 5,303.54	1176.6
SI LFOs	Non-Black	9,294	\$ 521.25	9.5
	Black	7,305	\$ 512.26	9.4
SF	Non-Black	4,527	\$ 811.61	13.4
	Black	3,825	\$ 788.35	12.2
PF	Non-Black	8,816	\$ 132.75	4.6
	Black	6,798	\$ 106.89	4.3 ***

*Note: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Finally, results in

Table 13 present racial differences in LFO assessments in Montgomery County. Five of the eight comparisons are statistically significant. Black persons in Montgomery are assessed significantly lower total amounts of LFOs, by an average amount of about \$1,400, relative to non-Black persons. It is again the case that Black persons are assessed significantly lower amounts of CI LFOs in Montgomery, including fines and restitution. The single significant difference in SI LFO – the supervision fee – again replicates the pattern where Black persons are assessed significantly higher amounts of SI LFOs than non-Black persons.

Table 13: Montgomery County: Race Group Differences in LFO Assessment Amounts.

Montgomery		N	Mean	SE
Total LFOs	Non-Black	20,869	\$ 5,322.51	337.6
	Black	13,609	\$ 3,904.87	102.3 ***
CI LFOs	Non-Black	20,869	\$ 4,321.92	337.2
	Black	13,609	\$ 2,881.59	101.3 ***
C&F	Non-Black	20,588	\$ 1,558.03	51.6
	Black	13,443	\$ 1,452.36	14.5
Fines	Non-Black	9,204	\$ 499.08	12.7
	Black	4,980	\$ 332.62	7.7 ***
Restitution	Non-Black	4,615	\$11,597.79	1310.7
	Black	3,167	\$ 5,694.68	389.0 ***
SI LFOs	Non-Black	20,869	\$ 1,000.59	9.7
	Black	13,609	\$ 1,023.28	11.0
SF	Non-Black	14,476	\$ 1,407.47	11.9
	Black	8,788	\$ 1,571.80	13.7 ***
PF	Non-Black	378	\$ 1,340.80	62.7
	Black	93	\$ 1,213.01	165.3

*Note: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Overall, findings from the descriptive analysis in this section indicate a general pattern of racial differences in LFO assessment amounts in which Black persons are assessed lower amounts of total and CI LFOs, but higher amounts of SI LFOs. The reason for the heightened financial load of community supervision for Black persons could be driven by numerous factors. Black persons may receive longer probation sentences, which incur additional time-based LFOs (e.g., the supervision fee assessed monthly). It may also be the case that Black persons are more likely to receive different conditions of supervision that have additional associated fees, increasing their financial load. There are other possibilities as well, including the role of discretion at the time of assessment that systematically favors non-Black persons, or the fact that ability to pay instruments are generally not being employed at the community corrections stage. Across these possibilities, the finding of a differential – and larger – financial obligation incurred through community

supervision, but not necessarily the courts, for Black persons suggests that they face an unequal burden of probation and parole.

Table 14: Charge and Sex Differences in LFO Assessment Amounts.

Charge Differences		N	Mean	SE
Total LFOs	Misdemeanor	68,535	\$ 2,635.96	42.67
	Felony	49,515	\$ 5,467.49	186.56 ***
CI LFOs	Misdemeanor	68,535	\$ 1,845.81	42.28
	Felony	49,515	\$ 4,327.78	186.17 ***
SI LFOs	Misdemeanor	68,535	\$ 790.16	3.77
	Felony	49,515	\$ 1,139.72	6.68 ***
Sex Differences		N	Mean	SE
Total LFOs	Female	29,902	\$ 4,084.79	190.44
	Male	88,148	\$ 3,735.03	89.10 +
CI LFOs	Female	29,902	\$ 3,244.55	189.92
	Male	88,148	\$ 2,765.51	88.81 *
SI LFOs	Female	29,902	\$ 840.24	6.68
	Male	88,148	\$ 969.52	4.24 ***

*Note: + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Table 14 presents results from a series of two sample t-tests exploring differences in group means of LFO assessment amounts for conviction charges (top panel) and respondent sex (bottom panel). Starting with charges, respondents convicted of felonies are, on average, assessed significantly higher amounts of LFOs than respondents convicted of misdemeanors by substantial margins – over double the total amount of assessments and two and a half times the total CI LFOs. The gap between SI LFOs is much smaller but still place a higher burden on persons convicted of more serious, felony charges.

Shifting down to sex differences in assessment amounts, differences in group averages are not as consistent. Men are assessed lower LFO amount totals, although this difference is marginally significant ($p=.06$). On average, males are assessed about \$500 less in CI LFOs than females, a significant difference indicating men have a smaller financial burden imposed by the courts. However, males are assessed significantly more SI LFOs than females, by about \$130. These findings indicate that women incur higher LFO assessments through court processing, but men incur higher assessments as a result of their supervision sentence.

III. LFO Revenue and Operational Costs

The next component of the analysis explores the potential revenue-generating role played by supervision-incurred LFOs. Two of our three agency partners shared this data with us, tabulated separately. Data from Dauphin and Montgomery counties are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Supervision Fee and Budget Comparisons, Dauphin and Montgomery Counties.

Year	DAUPHIN			MONTGOMERY		
	Supervision Fee Revenue	Total Operational Costs	Fee as % of Costs	Collected Offender Supervision Fees	APO Budget Spent	Fee as % of Budget
2010	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$1,912,091	\$6,657,280	28.7%
2011	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	\$1,807,127	\$6,663,903	27.1%
2012	\$281,017	\$6,419,318	4.4%	\$1,662,885	\$6,770,666	24.6%
2013	\$820,523	\$6,625,990	12.4%	\$1,813,115	\$7,141,557	25.4%
2014	\$395,406	\$8,911,864	4.4%	\$1,713,226	\$7,358,580	23.3%
2015	\$1,047,440	\$8,750,012	12.0%	\$1,772,685	\$8,073,990	22.0%
2016	\$372,667	\$9,386,411	4.0%	\$1,737,353	\$8,697,694	20.0%
2017	\$668,742	\$9,705,742	6.9%	\$1,747,998	\$9,223,212	19.0%
2018	\$622,882	\$10,009,166	6.2%	\$1,652,864	\$10,073,613	16.4%
2019	\$648,835	\$10,494,304	6.2%	\$1,513,733	\$10,239,243	14.8%
2020	\$640,000	\$10,817,855	5.9%	\$1,324,947	\$10,125,679	13.1%
2021	\$640,000	\$11,618,091	5.5%	\$1,194,347	\$9,917,892	12.0%
2022	\$645,000	\$11,494,560	5.6%	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>

Note: We were unable to obtain this data from Allegheny County. 2020, 2021, and 2022 supervision fees and operational costs in Dauphin County are estimated numbers at the time of data collection.

Starting with Dauphin County, revenue from the collection of the monthly supervision fee accounts for a minimum of 4% (2016) and a maximum of 12.5% (2013) of the agency’s operational costs during the ten years between 2012-2022. There is no clear nor discernable pattern toward an increasing or decreasing reliance on this revenue for operations throughout the observed period. Data from 2018-2022, which feature some estimated years of collection, suggest that practitioners expect a stable amount of revenue brought in via supervision fee collection against a slowly increasing operational budget.

Data from Montgomery County suggest a consistently declining role for supervision fees within operational budgets. Fees accounted for nearly 30% of agency budget expenditures in 2010. This percentage has declined nearly every year since, falling to 12% in the most recent observed year (2021). In other words, supervision fee revenue plays an increasingly smaller role in financing agency budgets in Montgomery County. While the raw revenues are still large – over \$1 million – the decline suggests that there have been other funding sources identified and leveraged to replace the role of supervision fees in supporting local operations.

IV. LFO Payments

State-level court data in PA do not contain information germane to the research question on the assessment of civil judgments or other sanctions as a result of LFO nonpayment. However, the data do include detailed information on LFO repayment – an important prerequisite and necessary condition to enforcement actions such as civil judgments. In this section, we build on the relatively small body of relevant literature (Powell, 2021) by presenting descriptive statistics on the occurrence, amount of payments in comparison to initial assessment amounts.

Table 16: LFO Payment Descriptive Statistics, Full Sample.

Variable	N	%	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Ever Made A Payment	118,050	64.2%	0.48	0	1
% of Total Assessed \$ Repaid	73,624	49.5%	45.76	0	500

Table 16 presents sample-wide data on payments of LFOs. Slightly less than two-thirds of the sample (64%) have made at least one payment towards their assessed LFOs, while one-third have not made any payments. Because LFO repayment is a common condition of supervision in PA, this group is at risk of additional sanctions for nonpayment to the extent that local practice prioritizes the enforcement of payment. On average, logged payments sum to approximately half of the total assessed amount within a given case.

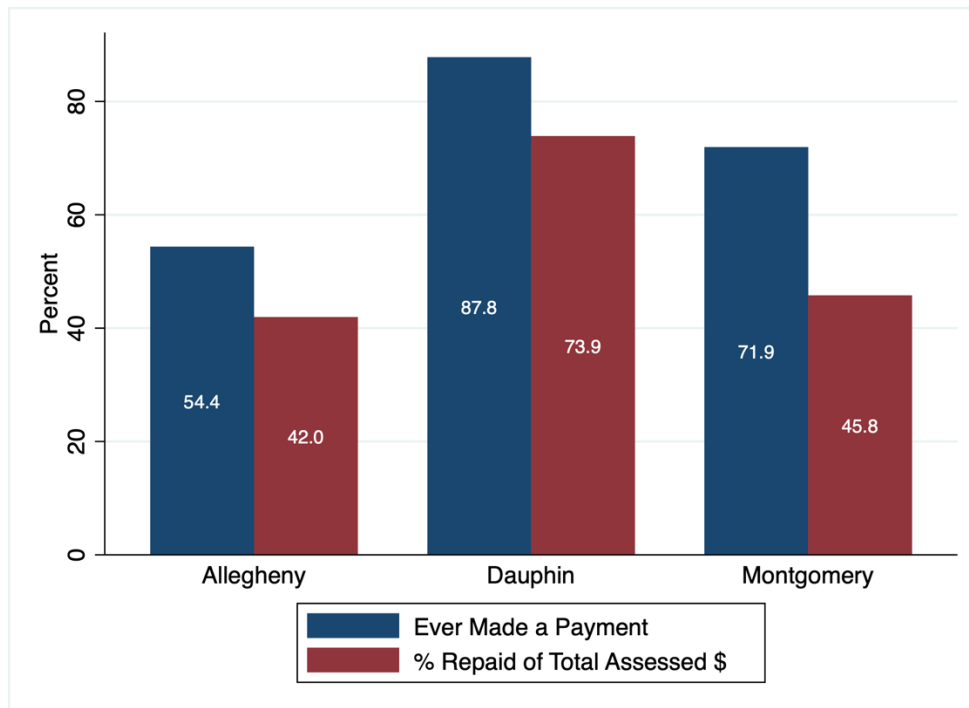


Figure 4: LFO Payment Descriptive Statistics, Across Counties.

Figure 4 presents county-level data on LFO payment. There is variation between counties in both the occurrence and relative amount of payments. At least half of the cases in each county

have made at least one payment towards their LFO balances. Dauphin County has the highest prevalence of cases with a logged LFO payment (~88%), followed by Montgomery (72%) and Allegheny (54%) counties.

The rank ordering of case payment prevalence is mirrored in the percent of total assessments logged as paid. The highest average percentage of paid assessed LFO debt is in Dauphin County, where logged payments constitute an average of about 75% of total assessments. This value is lowest in Allegheny County, where payments amount to 42% of total assessments. Montgomery remains the middle county, with payments amounting to about 46% of assessment totals, on average. Despite a similar prevalence of payment rates as observed in Dauphin County, the percentage paid back in Montgomery is much closer to what was observed in Allegheny County. This gap suggests a high incidence of payment that includes a relatively low dollar amount.

Next, we examined data on financial transactions within cases to compare types of recorded transactions: assessments, payments, and adjustments (sub-types). To understand the relative frequency of each type, we counted the number of sub-types and recorded transactions to compute percentages within dockets. Figure 5 plots the average of case-level percentages across all cases in the county analytic sample. Values indicate the percent of all recorded transactions in a docket associated with the specific sub-type.

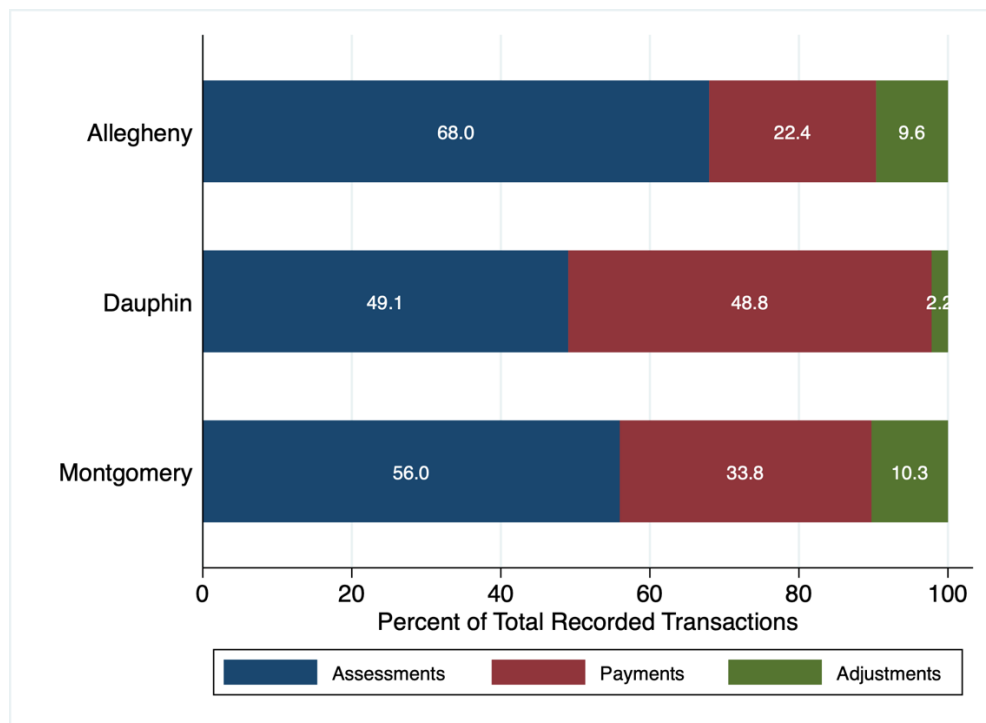


Figure 5: Assessment, Adjustment, and Payment Transactions: Relative Share of Total Transactions recorded within Dockets.

Across counties, the relative occurrence of each transaction sub-type varies. In Allegheny County, assessments comprise an average of 68% of all transactions within a docket, followed by payments (22%) and adjustments (~10%). Assessments comprise 56% of all transactions in Montgomery County, while payments and adjustments constitute about 34% and 10% of

transactions, respectively. The two major transaction sub-types of interest – assessments and payments – are nearly evenly split in Dauphin County. While this variation demonstrates localized practice in financial transactions, there is one consistent pattern across all counties: the share of transactions that assess LFOs always exceeds the share of transactions relating to repayment of – and absolution from – assessed LFOs.

Table 17: Total Observed Payment towards Assessed LFOs.

	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
All Counties	73,624	\$ (1,379.98)	\$ (646.00)	\$ 4,021.43	\$ (454,000.00)	\$ 0.00
Allegheny	35,192	\$ (1,344.19)	\$ (460.00)	\$ 4,446.74	\$ (454,000.00)	\$ 0.00
Dauphin	14,562	\$ (1,465.35)	\$ (933.17)	\$ 2,329.15	\$ (58,064.67)	\$ 0.00
Montgomery	23,870	\$ (1,380.67)	\$ (700.13)	\$ 4,172.87	\$ (272,907.60)	\$ 0.00

Note: SD=Standard Deviation. Values in parentheses are negative values indicating payments towards the total assessed amount.

Data presented in Table 17 quantify the amount paid towards LFO assessments. In the full, all-county sample, the average total amount paid within a docket is approximately \$1,380 (median ~ \$650), a value that comprises approximately 50% of the average assessed amount. Average payment totals are highest in Dauphin County, summing to about \$1,470. The average in Montgomery County (\$1,380) is nearly equal to the all-county average, while the Allegheny County mean of \$1,345 is the lowest by a relatively slim margin. There is not a substantial difference in the average total payment across counties, a somewhat surprising observation given the proportional differences in assessments and payments (Figure 5).

The analysis of payment data suggests that individuals in the analytic sample are indeed making progress towards repaying their assessed LFOs, but this process will, for most, take time and many transactions to complete. Approximately one-third of the entire sample has not made a payment towards their LFOs, suggesting a risk for sanctioning following local practices or policies.

V. LFO Assessments and Supervision Outcomes

To connect LFO assessments to outcomes of community supervision, we estimated a series of multivariable regression models specified under the dimensions of supervision being analyzed.

Table 18 displays descriptive statistics for the observed outcomes of supervision that are analyzed in this section of the report using multivariable logistic regression models. Completion of supervision is measured in all counties and is fairly common: nearly 70% of the sample completes their supervision, a proportion higher in Allegheny (~80%) but lower in Dauphin (55%) and Montgomery (50%) counties.

Looking at violations of supervision, observed in two counties, 12% of cases in Dauphin County and 26% of cases in Montgomery County received a formally docketed violation during their supervision sentence. Revocations, only measurable in Dauphin County, occur in just over 40% of violations. Among cases receiving a revocation, 35% received a supervision extension as an outcome of that revocation – with the remaining 65% of these cases in Dauphin receiving an incarceration-involved sentence (confinement or a merged sentence including confinement followed by supervision).

Table 18: Supervision Outcomes, Descriptive Statistics.

	Variable	Completed Supervision	Violation	Revocation	Supervision Extension
All Counties	N	80,883	--	--	--
	Percent	68.52%	--	--	--
	SD	0.46	--	--	--
Allegheny	N	54,413	--	--	--
	Percent	81.25%	--	--	--
	SD	0.39	--	--	--
Dauphin	N	9,166	1,920	6,838	5,839
	Percent	55.22%	11.57%	41.20%	35.18%
	SD	0.50	0.32	0.49	0.48
Montgomery	N	17,304	8,900	--	--
	Percent	50.19%	25.81%	--	--
	SD	0.50	0.44	--	--

Note: SD = standard deviation.

Supervision Completion

Table 19: Logistic Regression Results, LFO Assessment Type (Binary) as a Predictor of Supervision Completion.

	(1) All Counties		(2) Allegheny		(3) Dauphin		(4) Montgomery	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
C&F	0.76***	-0.06	1.69***	-0.25	0.32***	-0.08	0.77**	-0.08
Fines	1.06***	-0.02	1.09**	-0.03	0.99	-0.06	1.12***	-0.03
Restitution	0.31***	-0.01	0.21***	0.00	0.56***	-0.02	0.47***	-0.01
SF	0.67***	-0.01	0.53***	-0.02	0.88***	-0.03	0.62***	-0.02
PF	1.84***	-0.04	2.37***	-0.07	0.86 +	-0.07	0.61***	-0.06
Felony	0.90***	-0.01	1.14***	-0.03	0.80***	-0.04	0.47***	-0.01
Sentence Length	0.99***	0.00	0.98***	0.00	0.99***	0.00	1.00**	0.00
Transactions	1.00	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00
Dauphin	0.18***	0.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
Montgomery	0.30***	-0.01	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age	1.01***	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.02***	0.00	1.01***	0.00
Male	0.93***	-0.01	0.83***	-0.02	1.11**	-0.04	0.98	-0.02
Black	0.82***	-0.01	0.80***	-0.02	0.78***	-0.03	0.87***	-0.02
N	118,050		66,973		16,599		34,478	

Note: OR=Odds Ratio; SE=Standard Error. LFO variables are binary indicators of whether a docket received an assessment falling within that LFO category. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Results in Table 19 demonstrate a divergence in associations estimated across jurisdictions and indicate that these impacts are place-dependent, a reality likely driven by the local organization of community corrections in Pennsylvania. There are different conclusions to be drawn from the all-county model relative to the county-specific models, suggesting the importance of local dynamics and practices that drive and contextualize court data.

Nearly every single relationship between the assessment of an LFO and supervision completion is significant, except for Fines and Probation-Related Fees in Dauphin County. Despite this near universality in significance, there is variation in the direction and magnitude of the impact of this assessment on supervision completion.

When significant, fines in this sample are associated with an increase in the likelihood of completing supervision. The directionality of the association between court costs and fees and supervision completion is mostly negative – meaning, their assessment decreases the likelihood of completing supervision. The exception is Allegheny, where their assessment increases this likelihood. Supervision fees, in all significant instances, decrease the likelihood of completing supervision. As plotted in Figure 6, The impact of these associations ranges from 3% (Dauphin) to 11% (Montgomery). Probation-related fees have a mixed impact on supervision outcomes. In both the all county and Allegheny specification, probation-related fees increase the likelihood of

completing supervision, suggesting either a ‘true’ positive impact of programming for individuals or a possible selection effect (e.g., skimming – people well-suited to completing supervision are given programing-related conditions that carry fees included in this category). Probation-related fees decrease the likelihood of supervision completion in Montgomery County by just over 11%.

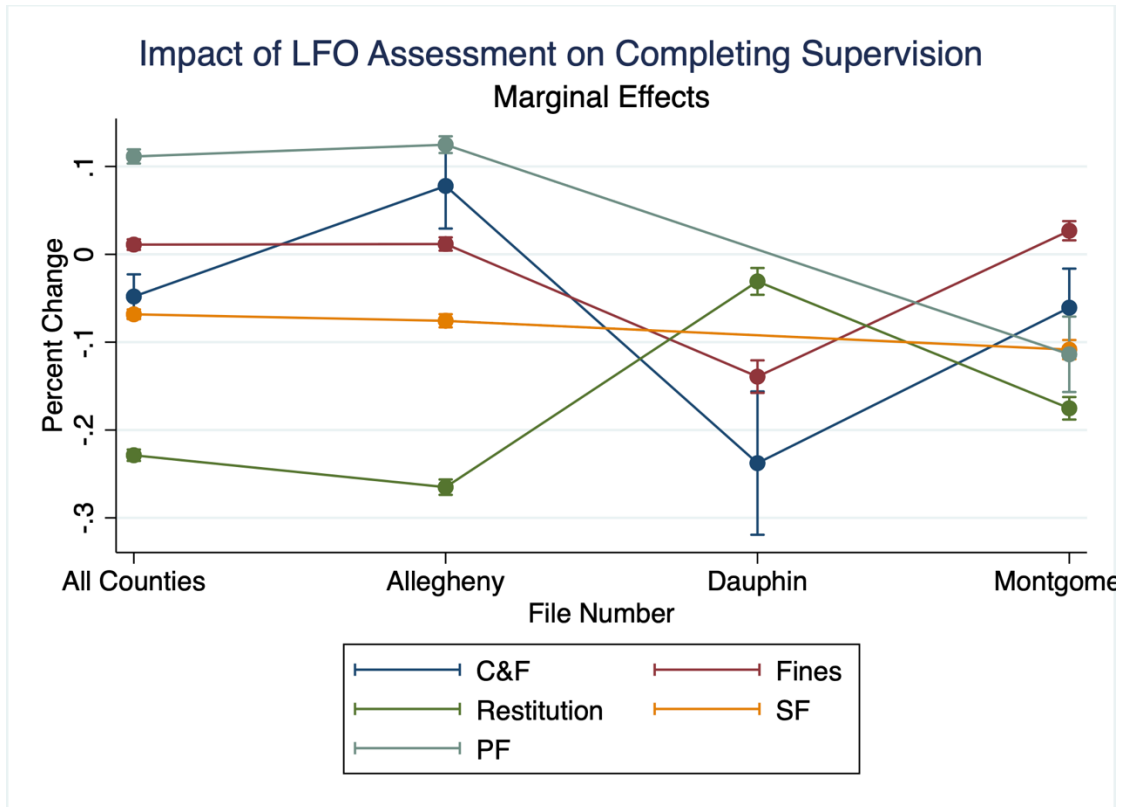


Figure 6: Marginal Effects of the Impact of LFO Assessment (Binary Variable) on the Likelihood of Completing Supervision.

Note: 95% Confidence Intervals. Plotted marginal effects are limited to estimated relationships significant at .05 or lower threshold from models presented in Table 19.

Table 20 displays the results from logistic regression models estimating associations between the amount of LFO assessments and the likelihood of completing supervision. Assessment amounts are organized into two categories: court-incurred LFOs, which collapses court costs and fees, fines, restitution, and supervision-incurred LFOs, which collapses the monthly supervision fee with other probation-related fees. This categorization is performed to parse out the added impact of LFOs incurred *because of* the probation sentence relative to LFOs incurred *relatively independent of* the probation sentence – in other words, to tease out the impact of the financial burden uniquely incurred through the LFOs assigned by nature of being on community corrections.

Table 20: Logistic Regression Results, LFO Assessment Amount (Logged) as a Predictor of Supervision Completion.

	All Counties		Allegheny		Dauphin		Montgomery	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
CI LFOs Assessed	0.85***	-0.01	0.78***	-0.01	0.82***	-0.02	1.12***	-0.03
SI LFOs Assessed	0.67***	-0.01	0.60***	-0.01	0.87***	-0.01	0.26***	-0.01
Restitution Assessed ^	0.33***	-0.01	0.23***	-0.01	0.64***	-0.03	0.46***	-0.02
Felony	0.97	-0.02	1.16***	-0.03	0.89*	-0.04	0.59***	-0.03
Sentence Length	1.00***	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.04***	0.00
Transactions	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00
Dauphin	0.11***	0.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
Montgomery	0.18***	0.00	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age	1.01***	0.00	1.01***	0.00	1.02***	0.00	1.02***	0.00
Male	0.95**	-0.02	0.87***	-0.03	1.13***	-0.04	0.96	-0.03
Black	0.80***	-0.01	0.78***	-0.02	0.78***	-0.03	0.82***	-0.03
N	93,471		54,241		16,028		23,202	

Note: LFO assessment amount variables are natural log transformed to account for skewness in the distribution. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Restitution is included as a dummy variable because it is imposed relatively infrequently (~22% of dockets in the analytic sample) but, when imposed, constitutes a large sum of owed money. The inclusion of a binary variable is intended to ‘absorb’ some of the impact of the amount of assessed restitution that is included in the CI LFO assessment total variable – so this amount doesn’t necessarily overpower the other LFO categories, like fines and court costs, which were demonstrated as important in the preceding models of assessment prevalence.

Of the eight key associations between assessment amounts and supervision completion, 7 are statistically significant and negative. In other words, incremental increases in the amount of each LFO category assessed significantly decrease the likelihood of successfully completing supervision. The magnitude of these associations is plotted in Figure 7.

Importantly, for this project, the assessed amounts of supervision-incurred LFOs have a consistently negative and significant association with the likelihood of completing probation. A 1% increase in the amount of supervision-incurred LFOs assessed to a case decreases the likelihood of completing supervision by a range of 3% (Dauphin) to as much as 26% (Montgomery). This association is much greater in magnitude than that between court-incurred LFOs and supervision completion, which is smaller and in one county, positive. This finding suggests that the additional financial burden of community supervision can be a counterproductive barrier to successfully completing supervision. To the extent that the assessment amount triggers enforcement actions for persons unable to pay and dependent upon the local context of payment enforcement priority and response mechanisms for nonpayment, this barrier may function as a tripwire to protracted if not additional system involvement.

Because our analysis uses court-generated data, we are likely under-measuring the true amount of supervision-incurred LFO assessments. Our data may thus be underestimates of the actual prevalence and impact.

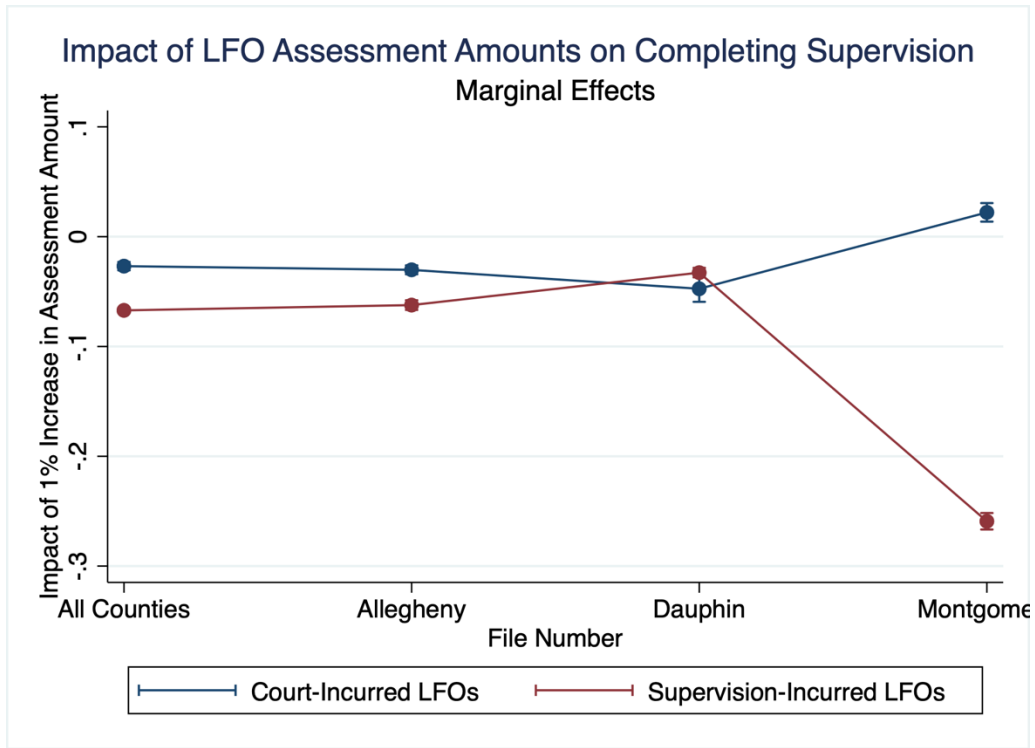


Figure 7: Impact of LFO Assessment Amount (\$, Natural Log Transformed) on the Likelihood of Completing Supervision.

Note: 95% Confidence Intervals, derived from models in Table 20, are limited to relationships significant at .05 or lower threshold.

Violation of Probation (Dauphin and Montgomery)

Table 21: LFO Assessments – Amounts and Binary – as a Predictor of Supervision Violation. Logistic Regression Results, Dauphin + Montgomery.

	Prevalence				Amount			
	Dauphin		Montgomery		Dauphin		Montgomery	
	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE	OR	SE
C&F	3.83**	-1.8	1.78***	-0.23	--	--	--	--
Fines	1.91***	-0.2	1.19***	-0.03	--	--	--	--
Restitution	1.45***	-0.08	2.47***	-0.07	1.23**	-0.08	2.16***	-0.09
SF	1.15**	-0.06	1.39***	-0.04	--	--	--	--
PF	0.44***	-0.04	2.28***	-0.23	--	--	--	--
CI LFOs Total Assessed	--	--	--	--	1.18***	-0.04	0.97	-0.02
SI LFOs Total Assessed	--	--	--	--	1.14***	-0.02	3.70***	-0.1
Felony	1.55***	-0.1	3.32***	-0.11	1.37***	-0.09	2.36***	-0.1
Sentence Length	1.00	0.00	0.99***	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.95***	0.00
Transactions	1.00***	0.00	1.00*	0.00	1.00***	0.00	1.00	0.00
Age	1.01***	0.00	1.00*	0.00	1.01***	0.00	1.00	0.00
Male	0.95	-0.05	0.96	-0.03	0.92	-0.05	0.91*	-0.03
Black	1.34***	-0.07	1.20***	-0.03	1.37***	-0.07	1.22***	-0.04
Observations	16599		34478		16028		23202	

*Note: ^ indicates that the variable is measured as a binary indicator of prevalence. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

In Table 21, results are displayed from models estimating the association between any assessment of a categorized LFO (binary indicator variable) and supervision violation. Most of the estimated associations suggest that LFO assessments are significantly linked to an increased likelihood of a violation of supervision. The marginal effects estimated following these regression models are plotted in Figure 8.

In Dauphin County, 4 of 5 LFO assessment types increase the likelihood of receiving a violation of supervision. Probation-related fees decrease this likelihood. Court costs increase the odds of violation by the largest magnitude, 8%. Fines and restitution follow at 5% and 4%, respectively. Supervision fees have a small but significant impact at about 1.4%, while probation-related fees decrease violation odds by 10.5%.

In Montgomery County, all LFO assessment types increase the likelihood of receiving a violation of supervision. Restitution has the biggest impact at nearly 18%, followed closely by probation-related fees (16.5%), court costs (~9%), supervision fees (5.6%), and fines (3%).

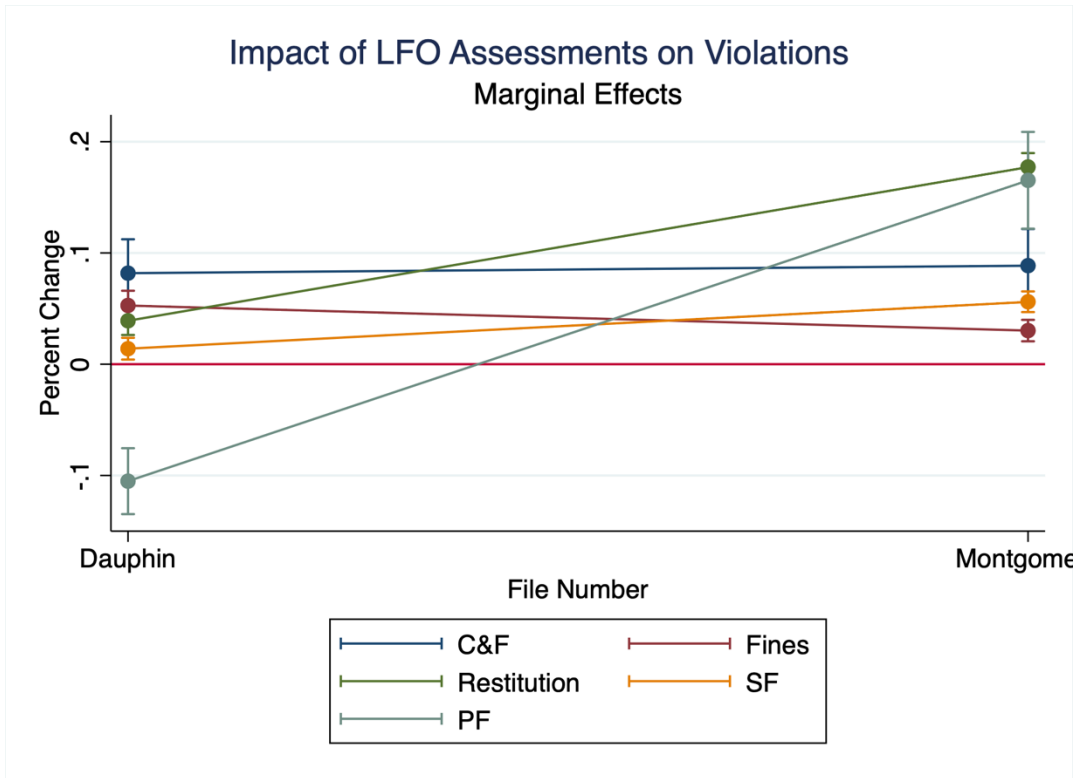


Figure 8: Marginal effects of the association between the prevalence of LFO assessment types and violations of supervision.

Note: Marginal effects include 95% confidence Intervals, Post-estimation calculations of results from logistic regression models displayed in Table 21.

Results for models estimating the impact of the amount assessed for each LFO category (Table 21) indicate that these amounts, in 3 of 4 specifications, increase the probability of a violation. Together, both results suggest that the assessment and the amount associated are impactful for violations. The marginal effects estimated from these models are plotted in Figure 9.

In Dauphin County, the magnitude of the impact of the amount of each type of assessed LFO is similar: 1% increase in court-incurred LFOs increases the risk of violation by about 1.6%, the same increase in supervision-incurred LFOs increases the risk of violation by about 1.2%. Restitution is the largest LFO by magnitude, with about a 2% increase in the likelihood of violation. The tight clustering suggests that small differences in amounts have a similar impact across all LFO types.

In Montgomery County, the amount of court-incurred LFOs is not significantly related to the likelihood of a violation. A 1% increase in the amount of supervision-incurred LFOs is associated with a 20.5% increase in the likelihood of a supervision violation. However, the assessment of restitution remains significant, suggesting that restitution is an important influence on case outcomes. Also suggests a localized prioritization of restitution, perhaps signaling an adoption of more restorative policies.

Importantly, these associations hold in models that include controls for legal factors that are also plausibly related to supervision outcomes, like felony charges, suggesting an overall importance of LFO assessments for supervision outcomes net of other known correlates.

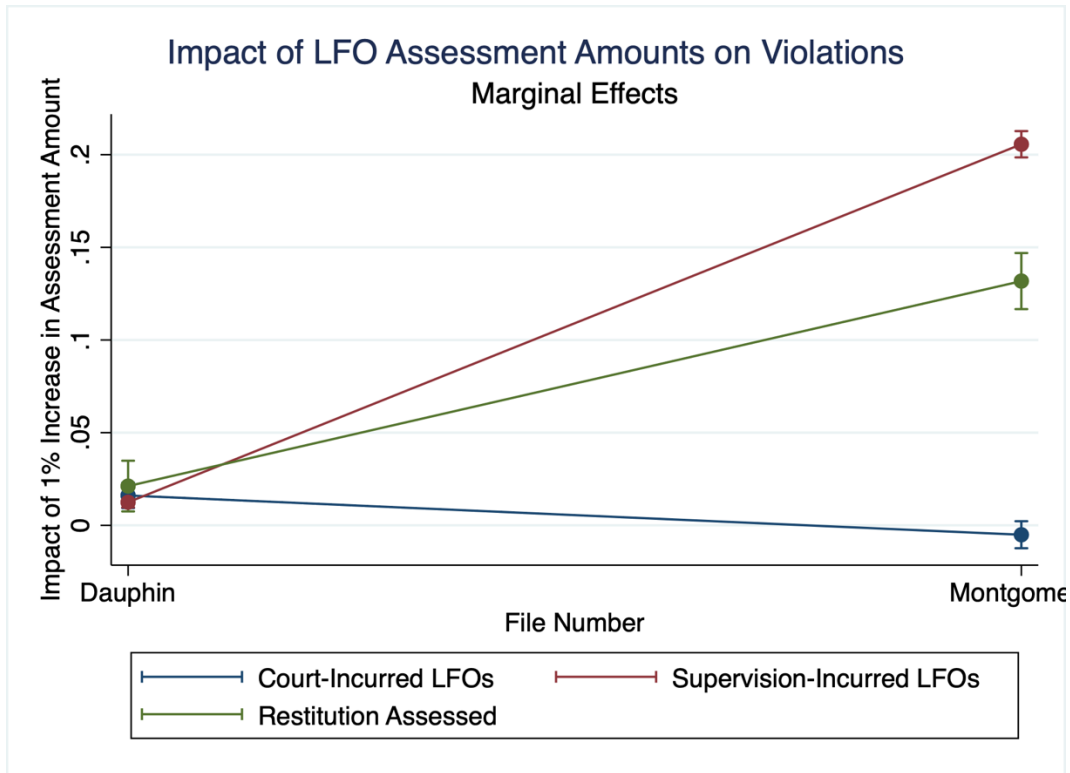


Figure 9: Marginal effects of the association between the amount of assessed LFOs and violations of supervision.

Note: 95% Confidence Intervals, post-estimation calculations of results from logistic regression models displayed in Table 21.

Revocation and Revocation Outcomes (Dauphin Only)

Table 22: LFO Assessments – Amounts and Binary – as a Predictor of Supervision Revocation. Logistic Regression Results, Dauphin.

	(1) Prevalence		(2) Amount	
	OR	SE	OR	SE
C&F ^	2.77***	-0.71	--	--
Fines ^	1.08	-0.06	--	--
Restitution ^	1.83***	-0.07	1.60***	-0.07
SF ^	1.22***	-0.04	--	--
PF ^	1.04	-0.08	--	--
CI LFO Total Assessed	--		1.22***	-0.03
SI LFO Total Assessed	--		1.17***	-0.01
Felony	1.19***	-0.06	1.08	-0.05
Sentence Length	1.01***	0.00	1.00***	0.00
Transactions	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00
Age	0.98***	0.00	0.98***	0.00
Male	0.91*	-0.03	0.90**	-0.03
Black	1.25***	-0.04	1.25***	-0.04
Observations	16599		16028	

*Note: ^ indicates that the variable is measured as a binary indicator of prevalence. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.*

Results from logistic regression models estimating the association between LFO assessment and supervision revocation are presented in Table 22. For the first set of models using binary measures of the prevalence of LFO assessment, three of five LFO assessment types are significantly related to revocation: court costs, restitution, and the monthly supervision fee. All three relationships are in the same direction, where the assessment type is associated with a significant increase in the likelihood of a supervision revocation. As conveyed in post-regression marginal effects plotted in Figure 10, court costs increase revocation odds by 20%; restitution by 14%; and supervision fees by 4.5%.

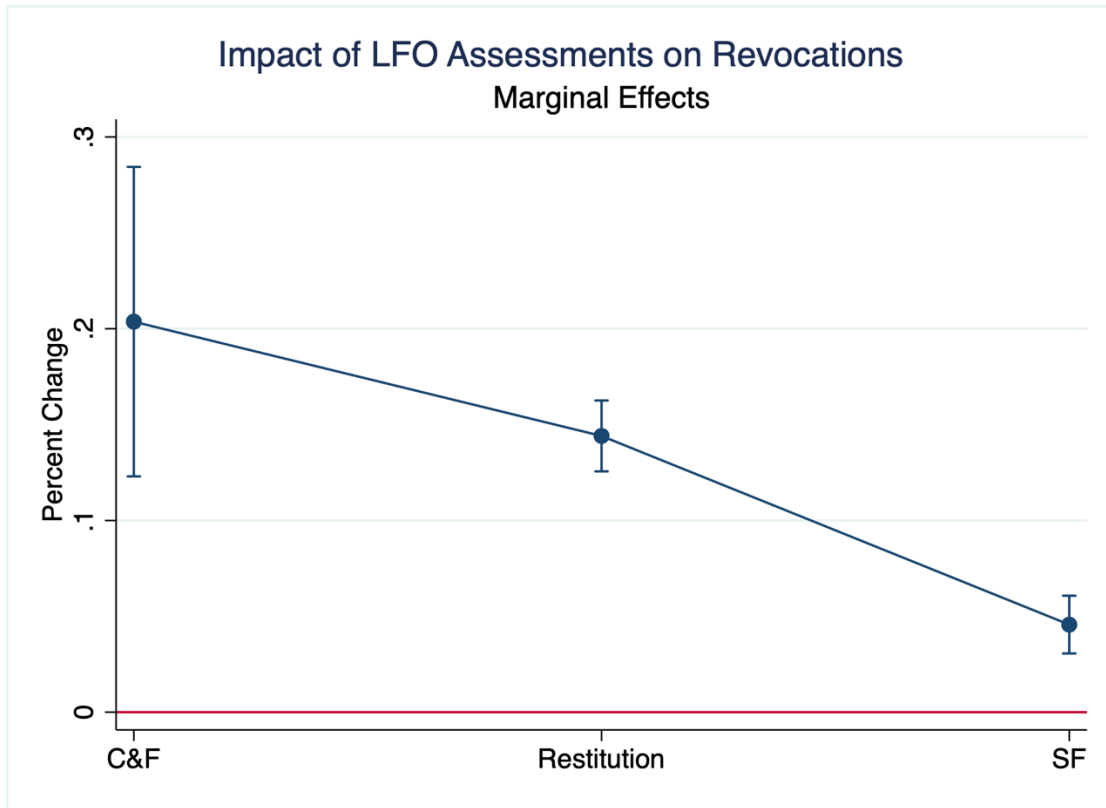


Figure 10: Marginal Effects of LFO Assessment Prevalence on Revocation of Supervision.

Results for the second set of models which estimate how the amount of each assessment type relates to the likelihood of a supervision revocation (Table 22). All categorization amounts significantly increase the likelihood of a revocation. Marginal effects plotted in Figure 11 quantify the impact of these significant associations. A 1% increase in the total amount of court-incurred LFOs is correlated with a 4.6% increase in the likelihood of a revocation of supervision; the same increase in supervision-incurred LFOs is correlated with a 3.6% increase in the likelihood of a supervision revocation. Higher assessments of court costs carry a higher impact on a very negative outcome of supervision, but the LFOs incurred by probation still matter.

Across both models and specifications, restitution (binary measure) has the largest impact on revocations, at nearly 11%. This finding suggests that restitution is a priority and alignment with restorative justice principles.

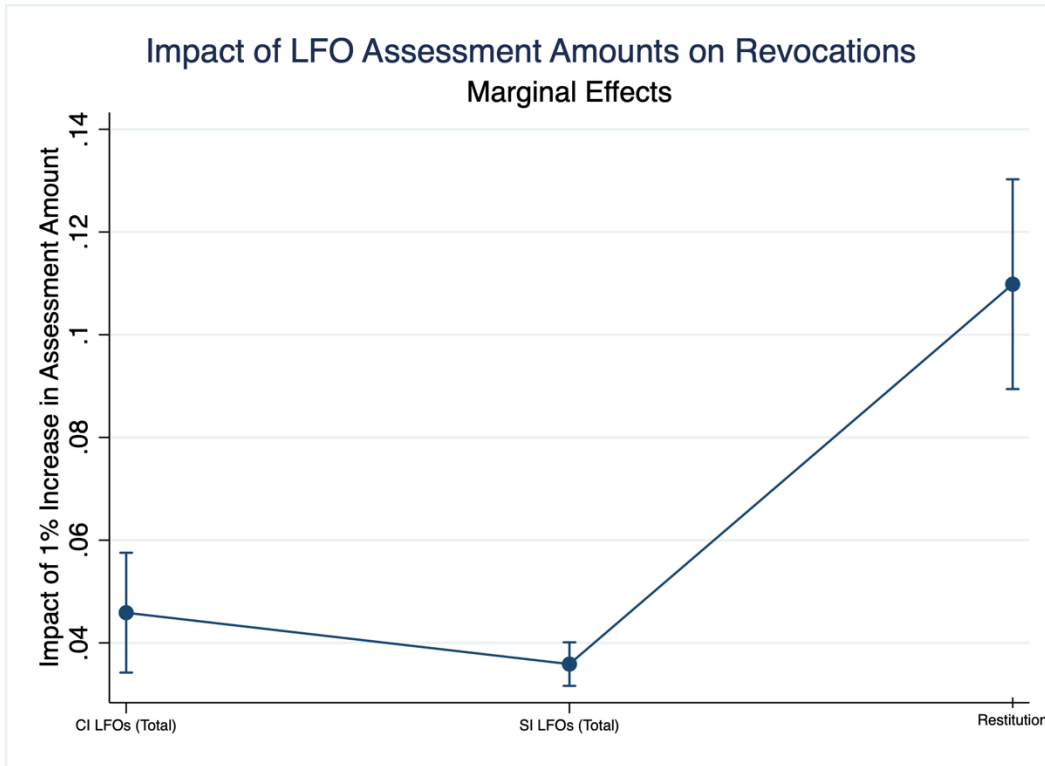


Figure 11: Marginal Effect of LFO Assessment Amount on Revocation of Supervision.

Supervision Extension

Table 23: LFO Assessment Amount as a Predictor of Supervision Extension. Logistic Regression Results. Dauphin County Only.

	(1) Prevalence		(2) Amount	
	OR	SE	OR	SE
C&F	1.06	-0.82	--	--
Fines	1.48***	-0.18	--	--
Restitution	1.47***	-0.12	1.20*	-0.11
SF	1.02	-0.07	--	--
PF	0.47***	-0.10	--	--
CI LFOs Total		--	1.28***	-0.08
SI LFOs Total		--	1.05*	-0.02
Felony	0.94	-0.09	0.85	-0.08
Sentence Length (Months)	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00
Transactions	1.00***	0.00	1.00***	0.00
Age	1.01***	0.00	1.01***	0.00
Male	0.82*	-0.06	0.80**	-0.06
Black	1.07	-0.08	1.07	-0.08
Observations	6838		6629	

Note: OR=Odds Ratio; SE=Standard Error. + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

The final regression results, presented in Table 23, examine associations between LFOs and outcomes of revocations. The dependent variable, Table 23: LFO Assessment Amount as a Predictor of Supervision Extension. Logistic Regression Results. Dauphin County Only. supervision extension, equals 1 if the outcome of the revocation sentencing event was primarily a community supervision sentence (e.g., Probation or IPP). The reference group is any incarceration-involved sentence – confinement or a merged confinement/supervision sentence. These are any time revocation outcomes that reflect at least one time of occurrence within the docket.

Results for the prevalence of various LFO assessments, presented in the first set of results columns, indicate that fines, restitution, and probation-related fees are significantly related to the likelihood of getting a supervision extension after a revocation, relative to a sentence that includes incarceration. Marginal effects visualized in Figure 12 indicate that fines and restitution increase the odds of a supervision extension by 5.4% and 4.4%, respectively, while probation-related fees decrease the odds of a supervision extension by 7%.

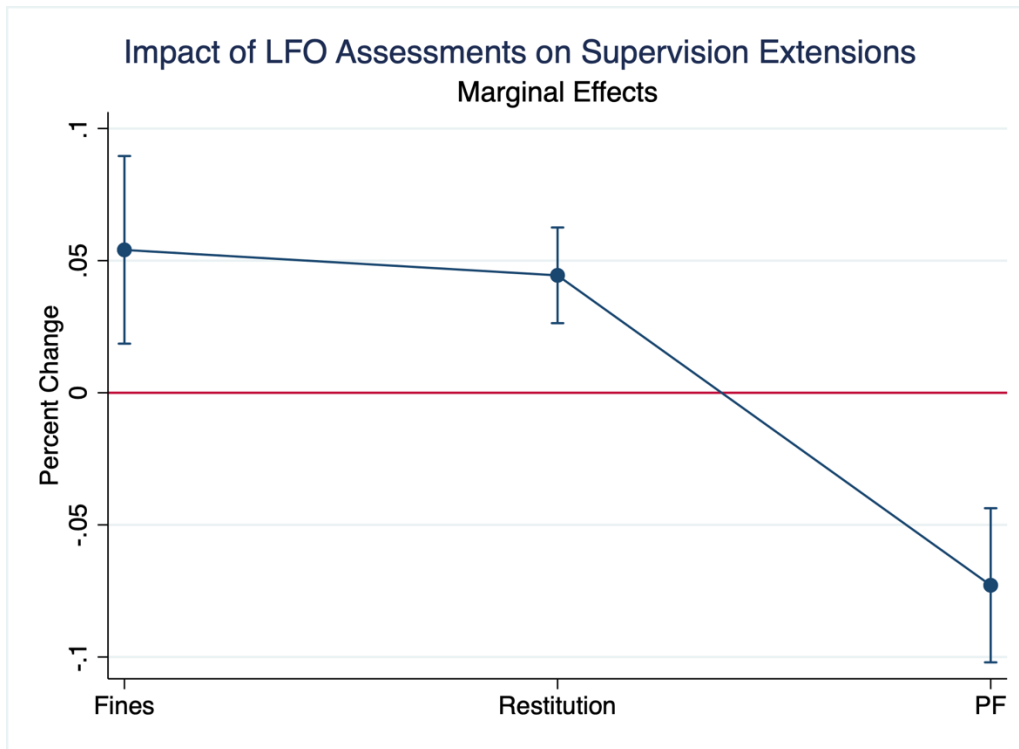


Figure 12: Marginal Effect of LFO Assessment Prevalence on Extension of Supervision as a result of a Revocation.

Note – reference group is ‘sentences to incarceration.’

Results in Table 23 suggest that higher amounts of LFO assessments increase the likelihood of a supervision extension relative to an incarceration-involved outcome of revocation. Marginal effects plotted in Figure 13 reveal that marginal increases in the amount of CI LFO assessments have the quantitatively largest impact on the likelihood of a supervision extension (about a 3% increase), while SI LFOs have a smaller impact (less than 1%). Restitution assessment continues to be important for supervision outcomes, as it increases the likelihood that a revocation will result in a supervision extension instead of an incarceration-involved sentence.

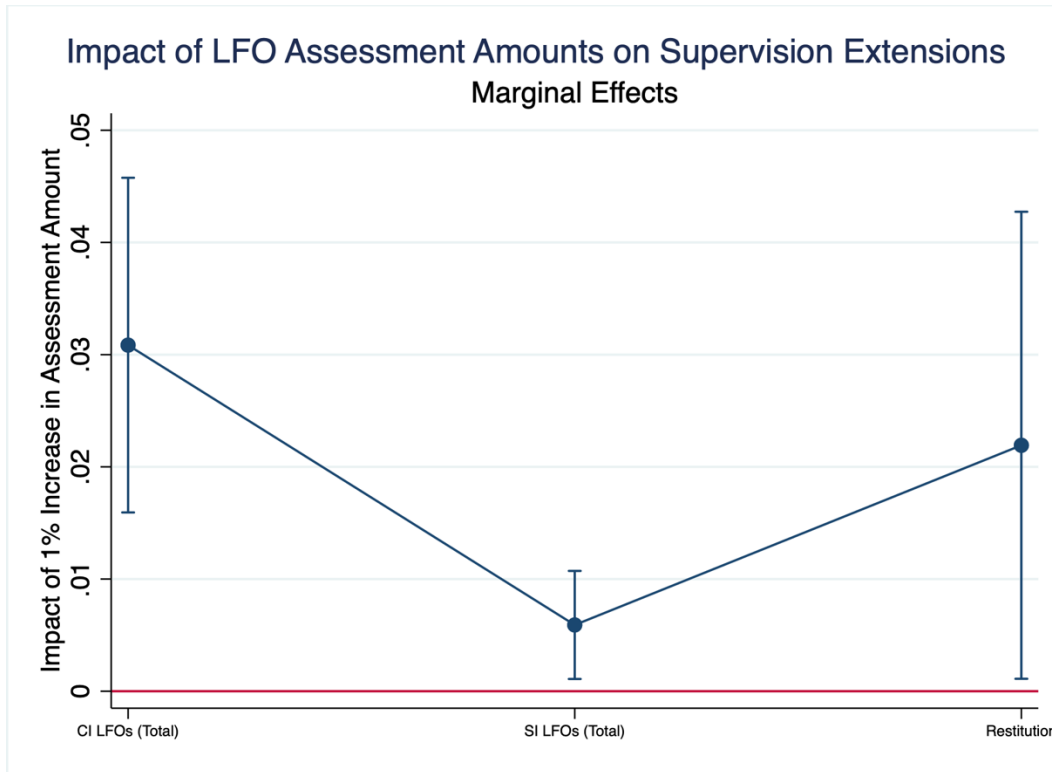


Figure 13: Marginal Effect of LFO Assessment Amount on Extension of Supervision as a result of a Revocation.

Note – reference group is ‘sentences to incarceration.’

Discussion

Our analyses, highlighting the nature and impact of supervision practices in three key counties, detail the complex landscape of LFOs in Pennsylvania. Our descriptive study found substantial variation in the amount of money that was assessed, paid, and still owed related to these sanctions, as well as variation in amounts across jurisdictions and demographic groups. Moreover, important patterns emerged when we examined the links between these balances and critical supervision outcomes such as supervision violations, time extensions, and successful closures of cases. Below we reflect on some of these key findings.

Prevalence of LFOs Types and Debt Amounts

Results showed that while about one-third and one-quarter of cases involved fines and restitution, respectively, nearly 100% of cases involved court fees and costs. Within community corrections agencies specifically, three-quarters of respondents owed monthly supervision fees, and over half were assessed fees of other kinds. As the public discourse on the issues stemming from overall debt burdens related to criminal justice has become prominent, these basic findings highlight the outsized role of fees and costs as potentially large contributing factors to overall debts. Should agencies and policymakers seek to address or limit the use of financial sanctions, addressing the volume of fees/costs—as well as addressing the funding structures that may necessitate or encourage their application—may represent a meaningful avenue. Furthermore, although revenue generation stemming from the collection of fees/costs may be critical to agency operations, their heavy reliance, especially in comparison to fines and restitution, may be questionable considering the fundamental goals of criminal justice systems.

Importantly, although our analyses demonstrate a proliferation of supervision-related fees and related debts across jurisdictions, their impact should be evaluated in the context of overall debt burdens. Our data indicate that nearly three-quarters of LFOs are incurred through court processing, meaning that people often arrive at the supervision phase with extensive and pre-existing justice-related debts. Community supervision agencies may be responsible for the collection and enforcement of these court debts and therefore hold substantial discretion over the life course of the probation term. But the accrual of debts themselves is only partially explained by LFOs assessed by community corrections themselves. Implications for research and reform suggest examining LFOs from a systems perspective, accounting for the totality of LFOs and their variable sources, perhaps in an “LFO Index” (Link, Hyatt, & Ruhland, 2020).

On average, cases in our sample owed roughly between \$3,000 and \$5,000 in criminal justice system-related LFOs, although some cases experienced considerably higher amounts. Given the localized nature of LFO policy, we found variation in debt amounts across counties, suggesting the need for jurisdiction-limited initiatives to address the unique impact of LFO burdens and understand their impact on people, communities, and agency operations.

Interesting patterns emerged when examining these amounts among subgroups. For instance, overall, Black respondents were assessed significantly lower amounts of LFOs in total (about \$3,150) as compared to non-Black respondents (about \$4,300). This pattern is explained by the

fact that Black respondents are assessed significantly lower amounts of all LFOs at the court stage. However, Blacks were assessed significantly higher amounts when it comes to supervision-related fees, suggesting the ability to pay assessment mechanisms that may exist to an extent within courts may not exist within community corrections agencies. Overall, differences across sex were small, although women tended to be assessed slightly greater amounts than their male counterparts, perhaps explained by the types of offenses that women are more likely to be convicted of, such as property and drug offenses, and differing accrual of incident LFOs like restitution in those cases.

Payments and Adjustments to LFO Balances

Evidence from our data suggests that many respondents struggle to repay their debt burdens; only two-thirds of cases made at least one payment toward the balance and, on average, the amount of payments equals about half of the overall assessed amount. Although we again identified some variation across jurisdictions, our analysis suggests that individuals are attempting to make payments toward their balance, but this process will, for most, require many transactions over many years. This tethers the individual to the system for a long time, placing them at risk of experiencing collateral and other legal consequences of non-payment.

Fortunately, we uncovered some evidence that balances can be adjusted. Nearly half of the cases received a post-assessment adjustment, and downward adjustments (i.e., reductions in owed amounts) are more common than upward adjustments. This is critical as it suggests there is a mechanism to mitigate the overall burdens after they have already been assessed. The extent to which they are applied consistently and equitably remains unclear. Precisely how these systems work across jurisdictions warrants further attention as it may be part of the solution to overbearing and consequential LFOs.

Associations with Key Community Supervision Outcomes

Finally, while our data do not allow us to make causal determinations about the impact of LFOs on supervision outcomes, we do find several associations worthy of further investigation. Although supervision fees per se comprise a small amount of total LFO balances, they are significantly correlated with a few supervision outcomes, including:

- The assessment of supervision fees and greater amounts of supervision-incurred LFOs *decrease the likelihood of completing supervision in all three counties*;
- The assessment of supervision fees and higher assessed amounts of supervision-incurred LFOs increases the likelihood of receiving a probation/parole violation in Dauphin and Montgomery counties;
- The magnitude of the relationship between the assessed amount and violation likelihood is larger for supervision-related LFOs compared to court-related LFOs, suggesting that the additional LFOs incurred due to supervision have a stronger and more direct influence on performance on supervision;
- The magnitude of the relationship between assessed amounts and the likelihood of a revocation or supervision extension (relative to incarceration) is larger for court-related LFOs as compared to supervision-related LFOs.

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