



**Phase II: From the Voices of Girls and Stakeholders:
The Impact of Court Costs**

March 2019

Commissioned by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund



DELORES
BARR WEAVER
POLICY CENTER

What are Court Cost Fees?

Court cost fees are costs imposed on juveniles and their families. These costs are related to probation/supervision, informal adjustment/diversion, evaluation/testing, cost of care, fines, expungement costs, and restitution.¹

Juvenile Fee Schedule	
Fee Description	Amount
Restitution payments - Clerk's processing fee for each restitution payment	\$3.50
Public Defender application fee	\$50.00
Application Fee for Court Appointed Counsel	\$50.00
Application Fee for determination of indigent status	\$25.00
Issuing a summons (each summons)	\$10.00
For verifying any instrument presented for certification prepared by someone other than clerk, per page	\$3.50
Postal charges incurred by the clerk of the circuit court in any mailing by certified or registered mail shall be paid by the party at whose instance the mailing is made	(varies)

Introduction

Commissioned by the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, the Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center completed an exploratory research review of the literature as well as a review of the policies and types of data publically available to better understand the impact of court costs fees on youth in the 4th Judicial Circuit (Clay, Duval and Nassau counties). The impetus for the three part court costs research came from advocates in dialogue with the philanthropic community about creating a fund available to assist under-resourced children and families to pay their court fees. The question from the philanthropic community was –what is the size of funding pool we are looking at?

The review of the literature (Phase I) found that court fees have been shown to exacerbate poverty, increase surveillance, and widen racial disparities. For example, the inability to pay drives youth deeper into the system and unfairly increases the amount of time a child spends under increased surveillance and scrutiny (probation). As a result, children living in poverty pay higher fees because they have a longer involvement with the system due to

their inability to pay. Due to the fact that there is already an overrepresentation of youth of color in the system, the costs associated with outstanding fees or not paying further impacts youth of color the most.

The constitutionality of imposing fines that disproportionately affect a targeted population is questioned. Between 2017 and 2018 only 20 percent of Florida court fines for felonies were received, and 85 percent of fines are labeled as minimal collections expectations²; which means, the courts did not anticipate collections. Court fees are often outsourced to collection firms that can add a surcharge of up to 40 percent and additional interest rates³. This makes it increasingly difficult to pay. Access to court reports showed the amount collected in Juvenile Court fees is minuscule in comparison to amounts collected in Circuit and County Criminal court (approximately 9%)⁴.

This Phase II of this three-part exploratory research series builds off the literature review to hear from youth and their families about the impact of their experiences with court fees and fee collection. This report gives context to the issues and helps us better understand the impact of this public policy issue in our community. Most importantly, it helps to elevate the issues and make recommendations that are grounded in the shared experiences of system users. The report is reflective of the complexity of the issue of court costs. There are multiple key players– from judges, to state attorney, public defender, juvenile probation officer, to the clerk of courts. The layers of bureaucracy create a fundamental complexity of trying to understand and alleviate the issue.

It seems no one owns the responsibility of court costs.

Phase III of the court costs publication series will be an analyses of the number of youth who are impacted in our community and the range of juvenile court fees that are imposed in order to conduct a cost benefit analysis that can prompt recommendations. Additionally, the next phase of the research will consider what other jurisdictions may be doing to close disparities.

Process/Methodology

The initial plan was to conduct a listening session, however it was decided to conduct individual interviews with girls and young women who currently had or previously had court fees imposed. As part of the young women's groups at the pretrial detention center, group facilitators asked six women ages 18-24 about court fees they had imposed as juveniles and/or young adults and if they were aware how much they owed and for what. The general feedback according to facilitators was that the participants did not know about their court fees but they were aware of their jail time fees. The young women shared that they see their account balance when they log on. At the jail, there are numerous fees that add up including seeing the doctor (\$25.00) and nurse (\$5.00). There are fees for prescriptions and general over the counter medications such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen. The young women have complained that it is a hardship to afford these. The Policy Center

researchers learned that young women are not focused on or concerned about any court fees that they may have pending upon release from incarceration. This is significant issue as young women are released from incarceration, they are unaware of the impact of court fees on their conditions of probation, ability to obtain a license, future credit, etc.

When trying to determine which girls and young women on the Policy Center's caseloads had court fees imposed—the information was not readily accessible unless a girl had advised the staff. Researchers met with several staff who provide services to the girls to understand the process and where information about court fees could be found. For example, a disposition order given to a girl in Court contains a few categories that can be checked at the very bottom, there may be check marks for community service, \$100 prosecution fee.

There were 15 girls and young women identified by staff, but due to the nature of cases, many girls were in crisis or not available for listening sessions or interviews (on the run, in a lock-up facility).

Interviews with Girls and Young Women

A total of seven girls and young women were interviewed. Of the girls who reported demographic information, two had probation system involvement and four were involved in the system through probation, detention, and lockup. One was of multiple races/ethnicities, one was Hispanic, one was Black, and two were White. Two were under the age of 18, two were between 18-24 years old, and two were 25 and older.

Sample Interview Questions

- Prevalence/Range: What types of fees did you have to pay, how much were the fees? How much debt was incurred?
 - Process/Perspective from the Girls: How were these fees explained? What/When did you know about fees? What were the processes for paying?
 - Consequences: What are some consequences of not paying?
 - Community Experiences: What examples would you like to share with the community about your experiences with the system as related to court cost fees?
 - What are your recommendations to community decision-makers about court fees?
 - Insight: The research team will be pulling numbers on how many young people in Jacksonville area. Do you think there are groups that are impacted unfairly? What do you think we will find? What do you recommend we look at?
 - Do you want us to help track down your fees and see what we can do to get them waived?
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Interviews with System Stakeholders

In addition to consulting with the staff team working directly with girls, the Policy Center researchers conducted interviews with three key stakeholders—the Public Defender’s Office, a representative from the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI), and a probation officer within Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)—to better understand their perspectives regarding the process and application of court fees and recommendations from their points of view. The role of the public defender is to represent a defendant who is unable to afford legal assistance. The role of a juvenile probation officer is to supervise youth who are on probation and to ensure that youths are following court orders. The role of the JDAI is to collaborate between juvenile justice agencies, governmental entities, and community organizations and undertake joint planning and policymaking to reduce reliance on use of secure detention for warrants and violations and eliminate bias and racial disparities. We reached out to the Clerk’s Office and tried to get information from the juvenile public information officer but they were not at liberty to participate in providing information. They remarked that the Clerk’s office “serves as the keeper of the record as it relates to court records and acts in a strictly ministerial capacity. While we are happy to provide copies of any such records, questions about the juvenile justice process, impact on youthful offenders, and any recommendations for change would best be answered either by the Legislature which establishes the fee structure or the Court which imposes those fees. As a ministerial agency, the Clerk’s Office carries out the rules set forth by those two branches of government.”

Sample Interview Questions

- How are court cost fees explained to youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system?
- Do all youth in JJ have court fees imposed? What percentage of youth/families pay their fees (estimate)?
- What happens when youth/families cannot pay? Or choose not to pay? What are some consequences of not paying?
- Do you think there are disparities in the application of court fees? Are some groups more impacted than others?
- Any egregious examples that you have heard happen in our community? (e.g., family impact, system impact)
- What agencies (Who) keeps record of youth who have court fees imposed? Or court fees pending?
- What do you think we will find about the number of youth impacted when we pull data for our community? What do you recommend we look at?
- Do you have any recommendations for how the process may be improved?

Voices of Girls and Young Women: Findings

Awareness of Fees Imposed

When asked if they knew about the court fees they owed, five girls were made aware, and two girls were not. When asked if the fees were explained to them, one girl stated that she did not have court fees; two girls stated that their fees were not explained to them; and three girls (two under 18 and one between the ages of 18 and 24) stated that their fees were explained to them by either a judge, Juvenile Probation Officer (JPO), or attorney. All of the girls in this age range (under 18 or 18-24) had their fees waived, except for one girl under the age of 18 who had fees postponed. She was paying her fees (\$100-\$180), and the process has resulted in a longer time in the system. She maintains that fees should be sensitive to her financial situation.

The young women who were paying their fees and/or over the age of 25 had significantly more barriers and faced harsher consequences. All three of the young women who had fees imposed were not notified about their fees in a timely or straightforward manner. Two of the young women were 25 and older; the third young woman's age is unknown. One young woman did not know about her fees (\$3,000) until she visited the courthouse herself and had her license suspended for ten years in addition to paying her fees, which she was unable to afford (while also accruing additional fees from collections). Another young woman received fees for reinstating her license (over \$700), supervision fees, drug testing fees, and classes (\$300). During her first incident, no fees were explained to her, and some fees were waived. She expressed that lack of efficient notification resulted in unanticipated negative consequences and suggested that Black individuals may receive harsher consequences. She was made aware of the fees by a private attorney regarding a second incident. She maintained that community decision-makers need to shift their focus from court fees to how to best reconnect individuals with society. The third young woman found out about her fees when her driver's license was suspended (prompting a call to collections to find out the amount owed) in addition to other fees (license reinstatement, probation fees, etc.). She expressed frustration with not being able to reinstate her license until all fees were paid.

Fees owed ranged from \$100-\$3,000. The girls and young women experienced the process of paying fees in varying ways, and there appears to be no consistency in this regard. Processes mentioned include participating in the Sheriff's Work Ethic and Training (SWEAT) Program offered in Clay county, making payments with the State Attorney's Office, calling collections, sending in a check/money order to the probation office, or attending classes at a cost. When asked about consequences for not paying court fees, the two most common responses included being threatened to have probation violated (thus imposing more fees, more time in the criminal justice system, and/or resulting in lockup) and license suspension.

Consequences

The girls were told that the Policy Center’s research has found that in some communities, the consequences of not paying court fees resulted in youth or parents having their driver’s license suspended or revoked or were prevented from obtaining a license; youth being deprived of treatment; youth or parents being held in contempt; and youth facing arrest warrants or longer time on probation. When asked about their thoughts, responses referenced finances; one girl expressed that she should not have to “pay their paycheck,” and another stated that the fees should be sensitive to the individual’s financial situation. Other responses mentioned lack of transparency regarding efficient notification of court fees due and the need to acknowledge alternative options of payment via SWEAT programs (community service hours as an alternative to court fees).

Recommendations

When asked what their recommendations are to community decision-makers regarding court fees, all of the girls expressed that community decision-makers should consider the additional financial burden court fees impose and respond by waiving court fees or eliminating court fees altogether. Preexisting burdens were also cited as a factor to be considered, such as expenses associated with children and bills. As one girl stated, “I feel like the fees should vary on the situation some people who aren’t financially stable shouldn’t have to pay the same amount as someone who can afford to pay. Depends on the charge or should have more time.”

Responses also centered around the severely restrictive nature of court fees, as it undermines their ability to obtain employment, takes away driving privileges, and consequently, proves detrimental to their productivity in the community, inflicting “debtors prison” upon those who owe. One response mentioned that community decision-makers must acknowledge how to best individualize girls’ integration into society coupled with an awareness of mental health issues and trauma.

What are your recommendations to community decision-makers about court fees?

Girls’ quotes: Recommendations to Community decision-makers about court fees

Shouldn’t impose fees at all because it affects my ability to drive and be productive in society.

Court fees should be waived even for people older than 18. People have bills and kids which is already expensive.

[They] might not have the money to pay especially if just getting released, now going back to community with charge that will make it more difficult to get employment... and then more difficult to pay any fees, which then makes them feel more distant and disconnected from the community and decreases their self value and contribution to the world.

The whole system is so much more than the court fees...The justice system does not understand—the disconnection of people at the time of entering. The system fees signify that paying this fee is going to fix this disconnection—is a misconception.

Instead of court fees, have volunteer opportunities that would enhance the lives personally and create change in them and feel connected to the community – With the realization that someone enters system due to trauma or disconnection within themselves or MH issues—Recommend increase better understanding of decision-makers about why people enter the system would help reconnect to selves and community instead of imposing something not necessarily relevant. [Decision-makers] should ask instead—What would be the best way (individualized) for them to be effective in the community and be successful—would inform that part better. A fee is not going to improve that. Whether temporary or permanent (e.g. needs meds) versus court fees imposed would be more helpful.

Court fees are bullshit. They cause more harm. If you really want to help people, don't impose all these fees, [which] causes more issues and more problems and can't ever get out of the hole. Puts you in a huge bind. Can't move forward. Can't even get license. Trying to do everything right in life now...but can't get license, don't even want to know how much I owe because I know I can't afford it.

There should be no court fees.

What Girls Believe: Implications for Phase III Research

When asked what they believe will be found when the research team pulls data as well as what they recommend the research team identify, the girls mentioned a lack of transparency regarding the court fees owed and how to pay them, as well as fees negatively impacting those who are without licenses. One response mentioned that researchers may find that many of those impacted are 18 years old, or parents having to pay the child's fees; another expressed that although many incarcerated are White, Black individuals may suffer harsher consequences such as increased detention time, probation, monitoring and excessive drug testing. This in turn increases the associated cost.

Stakeholder Perspectives

Process/Practice: How court cost fees are explained to youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system

The stakeholders relayed various mechanisms through which court costs are explained to youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system. A representative from JDAI stated that it is often the judges—and sometimes, public defenders—who explain court costs. A JPO from DJJ stated that they explain the court fees on three separate occasions: at intake, in front of the judge, and in written form once the girls receive their probation plan. The public defender stated that court costs are not necessarily the priority and rather ancillary to the case, and that in their jurisdiction, all of the costs are waived purely at the discretion of one sitting judge. It was emphasized that this pattern of waiving court costs could easily shift simply with the placement of a new judge in juvenile court.

Data/Estimates/Attitudes: What percentage of youth/families pay their fees?

When asked what percentage of youth/families receive court fees, responses were varied. JDAI expressed that fees are imposed more often than not; DJJ stated that they are imposed in every case with the exception of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) cases, for which fees are waived; and the public defender emphasized that at this time (with current sitting judge), many kids do not receive any court fees (while the ones that do generally owe less money than what the statutes actually say).

When asked what percentage of youth/families pay their fees, responses were also varied. JDAI expressed that 30-40% are able to pay; DJJ probation officer stated that 40% pay it out-of-pocket, 30% are taken care of through the community service alternative SWEAT program available in Clay county, and 30% receive a civil judgment which is a mechanism to document fees owed ; the public defender stated that it varies by year and by the set-up of the court system mechanism (emphasizing that for some period it was very aggressive, but that now, even costs of care (daily incarceration rates) are waived).

When asked why some youth/families don't pay, all three stakeholders expressed that poverty and financial difficulties prove a substantial burden and restriction. Furthermore, JDAI stated that the majority of their youth are from at-risk communities and/or from unstable family situations. DJJ expressed that parents may be unwilling to pay or may refuse to encourage and/or assist youth in finding a job, although youth living in Clay County are now able to participate in the SWEAT Program if they report they are unable to pay (while in the past, civil judgments were often imposed). The public defender stated that unpaid court costs indicates the lack of a mechanism to pursue them—and that costs of care may add up significantly (potentially turned over to collections).

Policy/Practice Consequences

When youth/families are unable and/or unwilling to pay, all three stakeholders referenced the crucial role of the judge in the justice process. According to the JDAI representative, youth were staying on probation for an extended period of time in the past. Their cases were labeled “in-demand cases,” where all sanctions were completed yet only fees were unpaid. A DJJ probation officer stated that families can write a letter to the judge to get the fees waived (and in other cases, youth may receive a civil judgment or lose their license until fees are paid). A public defender stated that the judge may not terminate the case when money is still owed, resulting in longer stays in probation and consequently, a higher likelihood of probation violation. The public defender and JDAI both expressed that these consequences are more likely associated with restitution costs than with court costs. When asked how often these consequences occur, JDAI stated that the sitting judge generally does not hold youth on probation but cited push-back from the state attorney’s office over unpaid restitution fees; the public defender stated that it occurred often in the past, although the current state is unknown; and DJJ stated that this occurs rarely—“only 20-30% of the time.”

Egregious Examples

Child was on probation and owed \$5000 in restitution, made payments monthly, but very small payments, and state and judge refused to let him off of probation until he’d paid it all.

A kid doing a car burglary, breaking into 17 cars at a time. So if you’re looking at court fees, then each is \$218—then times 17, then it gets out of control. There’s examples of that. The judge said if they did everything they were supposed to do on probation, then the judge would waive those fees. Because the judge understood they were exorbitant

... if you send a child to maximum risk commitment, which is 18 months to 3 years, the \$5/day really adds up, and I don’t know what exactly DJJ does with that, if it’s statewide or up to individual circuits; I don’t know how often they turn that over to collections.

Record Keeping

All three stakeholders cited the clerk of courts office as having records of youth who have court fees imposed. JDAI keeps no records of court fees; DJJ keeps fees documented for probation officers’ clients, without statistical analyses; and the public defender records the costs when there is a final disposition, as attorneys are not required to be copied on such matters.

Data recommendations: What do you think we will find about the number of people impacted when we pull data for our community?

All three stakeholders expressed that indigent status is a factor regarding disparities in the application of court fees. JDAI stated that the system entraps significantly more Black youth—namely girls and young women. DJJ stated that there are no disparities in court fee application, although there may be disparities in where youth are placed in the system. The public defender emphasized the role of the time period and judge in the consistency of court fee impositions, asserting that the bottom line in the majority of cases is that the child and parent are indigent: a fact that should not continue to be ignored as it only compounds issues in the future.

JDAI believes data pulled by the research team will show Black youth as accruing significantly larger court fee balances than White youth, with more fees going unpaid—and recommends that researchers look for differences in court fee imposition by judge—while also mentioning that there may have been more court fees imposed under the former state attorney. DJJ echoed this sentiment: the data will reveal many unpaid fees, with marginalized socioeconomic groups less able to pay. The public defender expressed that an argument can be made for restitution costs, although for now, court costs are somewhat minimal.

Recommendations for System Improvement

Both JDAI and DJJ recommend that counties create and maintain programs for youth to pay off their court fees through community service, and both JDAI and the public defender emphasized that there must be a mechanism to assess the financial situation of the families and youth before imposing a fee, distinguishing between the indigent and non-indigent client. This is aligned with what girls shared about the financial impact and ability to pay. The public defender expressed that the money received through court fees is simply not worth the difficulties created overall—emphasizing the ineffectiveness of mandatory fees and subsequent need for reform. According to DJJ, the SWEAT Program outlines a certain number of volunteering days that must be completed, contingent upon the crime. Youth report to their sheriff's office and complete community service while supervised by the sheriff's office. All youth who are unable to pay their fees—and/or who would rather focus on school than find a job—are eligible for the program. One staff member who has tried to help clients pay their fees expressed her frustration with the system. She noted, “ imagine a family /child who is not savvy at navigating the system, living day to day trying to exist—and you get into this system—your focus is how do I get out of jail or not go to jail.” The reality in practice is that they are meeting with their public defenders in the hallways just before their court hearing, and in the court hearing they are standing in a public arena with adults reading long conditions of their court sanctions. They receive volumes of papers – and then sent on their way. The information is shared in an unstructured way and often the youth don't even know what to ask or who to ask questions. The kids don't even

understand half the time to what they are pleading to because there is so much going on in their life.

Conclusion/Next Steps for Research

The voices of girls and young women, along with the context provided by system stakeholders provides a local picture of the complex issue of court fees. There does appear to be a difference in the application of court fees depending on the county and the judge. This research is timely as there is a critical need to address court costs and how court costs are “held over” individuals who otherwise complete all of their sanctions but do not have the financial means to pay. The research underscores the need to dig deeper and research the questions posed by the girls and the stakeholders—in order to develop policy recommendations that are grounded in the research and lived experiences.

One example of how court fines are used to continue to marginalize and disenfranchise a group of individuals is with the proposed legislation to revise Amendment 4 that is moving through committee that would require all civil fines and court costs be paid before one’s voting rights may be restored—thus restricting the ability of the poor and people of color to vote. (See Amendment 4 additions below)

(5) FELONY CONVICTION.—The department shall identify those registered voters who have been convicted of a felony and whose 146 voting rights have not been restored. The voting disability 147 arising from a conviction for a felony offense, other than 148 murder or a felony sexual offense, terminates pursuant to s. 4, 149 Art. VI of the State Constitution upon **completion of all terms** of sentence, including probation and parole. The voting 151 disability arising from a felony conviction for an offense 152 classified as murder or a felony sexual offense does not terminate unless a voter's civil rights are restored pursuant to 154 s. 8, Art. IV of the State Constitution.

3. “**Completion**” means:

- a. For a term of incarceration, release from custody.
- b. For a term of supervision, successful termination in which all conditions of supervision were fulfilled, or unsuccessful termination for which a court, the Department of Corrections, or the Florida Commission on Offender Review waived completion of any unfulfilled condition.
- c. For a financial obligation arising from a felony conviction, full payment of the financial obligation or waiver of the financial obligation with the consent of the payee. Any financial obligation continued through the civil judgement provision described in s. 775.089(5) or s. 55.10 constitutes an outstanding obligation for the purposes of this section.

Summary of Key Findings

The failure of the system is that youth and families are not often aware that they even have court fees and even for professionals working with girls and families there is little

information about how to access the information. In the juvenile justice system, the availability of information about court fees is difficult to ascertain because there is not a central location or designated person who can provide the information (unless the families know to navigate and contact the clerk of courts office). Professionals working to help girls impacted by the justice system are perplexed about how to navigate court costs and yet, it is expected, and responsibility and consequences of not adhering to court costs falls on the shoulders of individuals who are disenfranchised and lack resources for daily living. The current system of imposing court fees is not set up for anyone to pay attention to the actual process. Individuals imposing or collecting the fees do not expect that the fees will be paid/collected, but nonetheless there is an impact on the youth and families involved. In the adult system, individuals are not properly informed of their fees in a manner that can be understood, but they soon learn about them when they try to get a driver's license or they start receiving calls from collections agencies that are now involved.

While the question posed by the philanthropic community was to assess the prevalence and size of the funding pool that might be needed, we have not been able to answer the question because no one collects the information in aggregate form. These are the key findings:

- **Unknown range** – While it appears that all youth who are impacted by justice system have some form of court fees imposed (or possibly waived), we have no idea how many youth have outstanding court fees and the range of fees imposed at an aggregate level.
- **System bureaucracy** – There is no designated keeper of the information, each stakeholder has a different piece (public defender knows the amount, court knows what has been paid, probation officer knows whether paid or not) but accessing information is difficult. Even the responses online to the frequently asked questions about process for paying court fees are challenging for someone who does not know how to navigate the system—where to look online, who to call, what to ask.
- **Professionals also struggle with obtaining and securing the information to helping families** – With so many families in crisis, how this type of information is provided and shared is important. More “savvy” professionals are able to work with the system to get fees waived, reduced, or postponed.
- **Serious consequences on the individual** – The use of collections agencies and policies that restrict getting license, voting, further prohibit individuals from contributing to society. Many of the girls and young women interviewed expressed frustration with the system, the process, the lack of transparency, and the impact for those who cannot get their fees waived.
- **Discretionary justice** – The application of court fees and amounts can vary based on the prosecutor, the sitting judge and geography. While this can be beneficial (e.g., court fees waived), it can also be applied harshly. It creates a dilemma for the public defender and the advocates on how much we elevate this issue.

However, the issue is of critical importance. The research findings and implications can't be discussed without including the political environment. We are witnessing a dialogue right now in the Florida legislature about ensuring that court fees and fines are paid before anyone can have their voting rights restored. We are unsure of the ramifications of this legislation—how will that be implemented at the local level? What will be the message that judges and state attorneys' receive regarding the court cost issue and the collections aspect as related to funding local clerk of courts? Will the Supreme Court become involved?

Next Steps

The research and current political environment also creates an opportunity to bring other practices from jurisdictions that are closing disparities or lessening the consequences to our circuit/state. Have other jurisdictions or states found a more fair way to handle court fees? The research from the voices of stakeholders and review of promising practices in other locations that have addressed the court cost issue can be used to educate policymakers about cost effective strategies and/or pilots that can be brought to our state.

Appendix:

Online Responses by Clerk of Court to Frequently Asked Questions about the Process for Paying Juvenile Court Fees

We received a summons for Collection Court. What should I do?

Contact the Collections/Juvenile Department to set up a payment arrangement.

Attend the Collection Court hearing.

I missed my Collection Court hearing. What will happen now?

If it is your first notice for Collection Court, contact the Collections/Juvenile Department to make payment arrangement immediately to avoid a second notice.

After a second notice is issued and arrangements are not made, and after you have failed to appear in court, your driver's license could be suspended until all pending cases are paid in full.

I have moved. What do I need to do?

Juveniles or their parents are required to keep the Clerk's Office informed of their correct address. If the mailing address changes, it must be submitted in writing, in person or by mail to the Juvenile Department.

How do I set up payment arrangements?

Please visit the Collection/Juvenile Department and provide a Florida ID. The contract signer must be at least 18 years of age.

My driver's license has been suspended. How do I get it reinstated?

To reinstate a driver's license, court fees on all outstanding cases must be paid in full. At that time, the Collection Department will issue a release, and the guarantor is responsible for taking it to the Department of Motor Vehicles to have the license reinstated.

Do I have to come to court with my child?

Yes. Please understand that the Clerk's Office cannot excuse anyone from a subpoena or a summons.

Am I responsible for my child's criminal activities?

Yes, until your child is 18 years old.

Can I pay my child's restitution and/or court fees at the Duval County Courthouse?

Yes. Please make your payments at the Clerk's Office at 501 West Adams Street, 2nd Floor, Juvenile Department.

What forms of payment do you accept?

We accept cash, cashier's check, money order and credit cards (MasterCard, VISA, Discover, and American Express).

Do you accept personal checks?

No. We're sorry, but our office cannot accept personal checks.

Can I mail my payment for restitution and/or court fees?

Yes, if paying by cashier's check or money order. Please make checks payable to Clerk of Courts and mail to the Juvenile Department.

Office Information

Juvenile Department

Office Hours

Monday through Friday (excluding holidays): 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Mailing Address

Duval County Clerk of Courts
Attn: Juvenile Department
501 West Adams Street, Room 2017
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Phone

(904) 255-2000

¹ Feirerman, J, Goldstein, N., Haney-Caron, E. & Fairfax Columno, J. (2016). *Debtors' prison for kids? The high cost of fines and fees in the juvenile justice system*. Philadelphia, PA: The Juvenile Law Center. Retrieved from: <http://debtorsprison.jlc.org/documents/jlc-debtors-prison.pdf>

² The Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers. (2018). 2018 Annual Assessments and Collections Report. Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers. Retrieved from: <https://flccoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-Annual-Assessments-and-Collections-Report.pdf>

³ Diller, R. (2010), *The Hidden Cost of Florida's Criminal Justice fees*. New York City, NY: New York University School of Law Brennan Center for Justice. Retrieved from: <https://www.brennancenter.org/publication/hidden-costs-floridas-criminal-justice-fees>

⁴ Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation. (2017). Quarterly performance measure & action plans report section 28.35(2)(d) Florida statutes: 1st quarter county fiscal year 2016-2017. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Clerks of Court Operations Corporation. Retrieved from: <http://flccoc.org/MeetingMaterials/140519PIEPacket.pdf>