



## State Courts Reduce the Burden of Fines and Fees

### Key Points

- State courts suspend late fees, driver license suspensions for failure to pay a fine, collection referrals, and new garnishments.
- The Chief Justice, by order, strongly encourages state courts to waive or suspend fines, fees, and costs for persons with limited financial resources to the extent permitted by law.
- The Chief Justice does not have authority or oversight over municipal, county, and justice courts, which are outside of the state court system.

### **Oregon State Courts Ease the Burden of State Court Fines, Fees, and Collections During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Oregon's state courts have reduced the burden of outstanding court fines and fees during the state of emergency by suspending and modifying collections fees and practices, issuing orders encouraging the waiver and suspension of fines, fees, and costs, and carefully considering the impact of fines and fees prior to imposition. Oregon law continues to authorize individual courts and judges to pursue collection actions on delinquent debt if a court determines such actions should take place.

Oregon's state court system includes circuit courts, the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Tax Court. Other courts such as municipal, county, justice, federal, and tribal courts are not part of the state court system and are not affected by these changes.

#### **Collections Actions Suspended**

State courts **suspended** the following actions on all delinquent debt:

- Imposing Late Fees on Judgments Over 30 Days Old
- Ordering Driver License Suspensions for Failure to Pay Fine Within 30 Days
- Sending Delinquency Notices
- Imposing Collection Fees and Referring Cases to Department of Revenue and Private Collection Firms
- Issuing New Garnishments

#### **Chief Justice Actions**

The Chief Justice issued multiple orders governing state court operations during the state of emergency.

- Chief Justice Order (CJO) 20-010 allows state courts to suspend or waive late fees until 60 days after the end of the state of emergency.
- Amended CJO 20-006 strongly encourages state courts to waive or suspend fines, fees, and costs, as allowed by law, for persons with limited financial resources.

#### **Questions about OJD's Actions on Fines and Fees?**

For case-specific questions, please contact the applicable court. For general questions, please email

[cjofeedback@ojd.state.or.us](mailto:cjofeedback@ojd.state.or.us).