San Francisco Taskforce on Fines & Fees
The Financial Justice Project
November 16 2016

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Municipal Reliance on Fines & Forfeitures: Motivation for Project

• The need to understand role of fine, forfeiture, and fee revenue in funding public sector.

• National picture: across all 3000+ counties, 10,000+ municipalities.

• Model economic, social, and demographic correlates:
  • State/Region of Country
  • City Size & Statutory Context
  • Race, Ethnicity, Immigration
  • Role of Revenue Shocks
Understanding The Data

• Census Definition:
  • “Revenue from penalties imposed for violations of law; civil penalties (e.g., for violating court orders); court fees if levied upon conviction of a crime or violation; court-ordered restitutions to crime victims where government actually collects the monies; and forfeits of deposits held for performance guarantees or against loss or damage (such as forfeited bail and collateral).”

• SF is consolidated City & County
  • Complicates reporting; difficult to disentangle

• Compare SF to:
  • Other CA Counties by aggregating across all cities within county
  • Other large consolidated City-County units

• Caveats
  • Data quality
  • Only see revenue dollars collected, not outstanding debts
  • Fine & Forfeiture revenue level not a measure of how punitive, regressive or impactful fine and fees are
Fines and Forfeitures: Bay Area Counties (2003-2015)

Source: California State Controller’s Office
Fines & Forfeitures in CA Counties with Similar Population Sizes, 2015

Mean per capita fines & forfeits

Kern 30.63
Fresno 32.87
San Mateo 33.23
San Francisco 36.31
Ventura 36.62

County (population = 750-850,000)

Source: California State Controller’s Office

Per capita fines & forfeits

Year

2005
2010
2015

Population ranges 750-850,000

Fresno
Kern
San Mateo
Ventura
San Francisco

Source: California State Controller’s Office
Fines & Forfeitures in Consolidated City-County Governments, 2009-2012

Mean per capita fines & forfeits

- Honolulu: 0.79
- Kansas City: 4.60
- Nashville: 22.52
- Louisville: 29.88
- Philadelphia: 29.95
- San Francisco: 38.71

Consolidated City-County
Snapshot on National Trends
County Fines and Forfeitures by Region, 2012

Per capita fines & forfeits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Per capita fines &amp; forfeits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>6.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>8.28</td>
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<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>13.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>14.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Fines and Forfeits by County Population Size, 2012

County Population Size Range

- <1000
- 1000-30000
- 30000-100000
- 100000-800000
- >800000

Fines and Forfeitures, per capita

- Mean
- Median
- IQR
Opportunity for SF to Lead

- City of San Francisco has (largely) unrestricted authority to tax and a diverse tax base.
  - Fine and Forfeits revenues small fraction of total revenue
  - Other cities restricted in legal/fiscal capacity.

- Consolidated City & County functions may facilitate reform.

- National conversation
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