



# FINES AND FEES ROULETTE FACILITATOR GUIDE

An educational activity to simulate the impact of fines and fees in  
the Criminal Legal System in North Carolina.

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Correct chart filled in (for notetaker/scribe)	
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## Background

Since 1999, the number of criminal court fees in North Carolina has increased from 4 to 45. Not only has the number of fines and fees increased, but their base cost have increased as well to a minimum of \$173, creating a heavier debt load for those who have involvement with the criminal court system. Many of these fines and fees are disproportionately shouldered by low-income, low-wealth and Black and Brown residents of the state and their families.

This activity was created by Charla Rios (Center for Responsible Lending) and Whitley Carpenter (Forward Justice) on behalf of the NC Fines and Fees Coalition to illustrate the impact of court fines and fees on individuals. It was developed as an introductory activity for the 2020 People's Convening on Fines and Fees, organized by the Coalition, in an effort to help non-impacted people better understand the costs associated with the court system and the collateral consequences they can have, particularly on people impacted by poverty.

The response to the activity was overwhelmingly positive and provided a channel for many participants to discuss their personal stories with fines and fees in North Carolina and allowed others to have discussions and learn more about the dire impacts of fines and fees on our communities. As such, we have adapted the activity for community use in educating others in North Carolina. If you have questions about this activity or wish to provide feedback, please contact Whitley Carpenter at [wcarpenter@forwardjustice.org](mailto:wcarpenter@forwardjustice.org) or Charla Rios at [charla.rios@responsiblelending.org](mailto:charla.rios@responsiblelending.org).

*Please note: This is our first public iteration of this activity. Please continue to check our website for the latest available edition.*



*Participants in the inaugural People's Convening on Fines and Fees in North Carolina hold a discussion about the court system and collateral consequences of expenses associated with certain crimes (Photo and caption by Melissa Boughton).*

## What You Will Need

To successfully complete this activity, you will need the following:

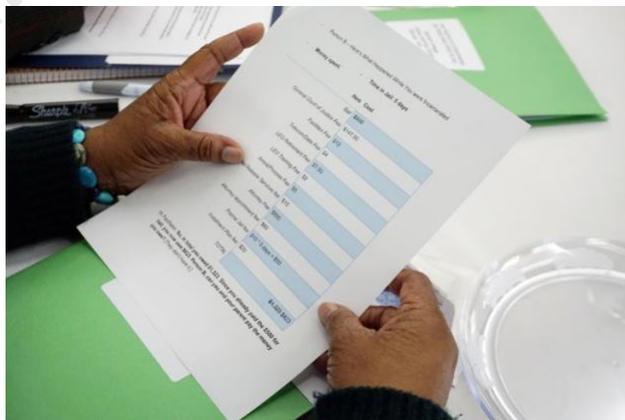
*Note those with an asterisk (\*) are included in the Appendix of this guide.*

1. A facilitator who has read through and practiced the activity
2. A piece of Flipchart paper or Black board with a rendering of the following table:

	Person A	Person B	Person C
Time spent in jail			
Total Costs			
Amount of Money			
Balance after paying F&F			
Collateral Cost(s)			

3. At least 3-5 people to participate in the activity and 1 person to be a scribe for the chart referenced in 2.
4. Accused Person A's scenario written on an envelope\*
5. \$1000 in play money for Accused person A
6. \$1000 in play money for Accused person A's spouse
7. Accused Person B's scenario written on an envelope\*
8. \$200 in play money for Accused person B
9. \$300 in play money for Accused person B's parent
10. Note for B's parent that they have to sacrifice paying the electric bill to support B\*
11. Accused Person C's scenario written on an envelope\*
12. \$50 in play money for accused person C
13. A copy of charges for Accused Person A, B, and C\*
14. A copy of the facilitator instructions (provided below)

*Play money can be handmade from paper, purchased in stores, such as dollar tree or dollar general in the toy section or purchased online.*



*At the People's Convening on Fines and Fees in North Carolina, participants were shown on a piece of paper how expenses are added up in certain situations. (Photo and caption by Melissa Boughton)*

## Facilitator Directions

**1. Introduce yourself and explain role as facilitator and explain the purpose of activity, recognizing the different perspectives and experiences of participants.** Keep in mind that you may have people in the room that have firsthand experience with fines and fees and may be triggered by this activity. To reduce the chances of harm, allow participants to volunteer vs. picking individuals.

**Facilitator says:**

*a. My name is...*

*b. The purpose of this activity is to...*

*c. As the facilitator, I'll ask that you answer certain questions and role play as a part of this activity...*

*d. I understand that this activity may be triggering for some people. We have some people here who are learning about how fines and fees work in NC, but we also have many others who have personally experienced this or have family members who have experienced this firsthand. We understand if you need to take a moment to yourself, or to step out, that is okay.*

**2. Have each person in the room introduce themselves:**

Name

County, organization/role OR something they know about NC's Criminal Legal system

**3. Ask for 6 volunteers to participate.** Again, do not pick people as it may be triggering.

You will need roles for: Person A, Person A's spouse, Person B, Person B's parent, Person C and a notetaker/scribe to track the costs as the scenarios happen.

**4. Assign roles to 6 persons at the table/in the room.** If more than 6 persons are at the table, have the remainder of the attendees observe what happens to the participants. If less than 6 OR someone is not comfortable participating, the facilitator can play role of A's spouse and B's parent.

**5. Pass out Envelopes face down accordingly to the 5 persons (Person A, Person A spouse, Person B, Person B's parent and person C) and state the following:**

*"Please don't open these/turn these over until I say so. All of you have been accused of shoplifting and have been taken to Appleseed County Jail for your charges. All of you have the exact same charges. You all also happen to have access to the same lawyer who charges the same fee, given your charges are the same. Today is day 1 of time spent in jail for person A, B, and C. It's a Friday. Your Bond has been set at \$500 and the estimated fees and court costs for each of you will be assessed appropriately."*

**6. Facilitator says: Person A – Can you turn over your envelope and tell us about yourself?**

Person A should read off the following:

- Married and living in an apartment with 2 children
- Currently working at a construction company
- Some savings
- You call your spouse and let them know you are in jail.

**Facilitator says:**

*You make a call to your spouse to bail you out. Person A and Person A's spouse open your envelopes. (wait for them to open).*

*Ask: how much money do you have together? (\$2000)*

**Facilitator says:**

*4 hours later you are bailed out by your spouse. (Facilitator: collect \$500 from person A's spouse) You were convicted of a misdemeanor. Here are your associated costs for court (Facilitator - Hand person A their bill and let them review it).*

*Person A, will you please read off your costs and fees. You can stop reading after you state your total. (Facilitator should follow along to make sure they cover them all and scribe should write down answers to categories (number of hours in jail, etc.) so other participants can see.)*

**Person A's Costs to read off:**

Bail	\$500
General Court of Justice Fee	\$147.50
Facilities Fee	\$12
Telecom/Data Fee	\$4
LEO Retirement Fee	\$7.50
LEO Training Fee	\$2
Arrest/Process Fee	\$5
Pretrial Release Services fee	\$15
Attorney Fee	\$500
Attorney appointment fee	\$60
TOTAL	\$1,253 \$753

**7. Facilitator Asks Person A after reading above costs:**

- So, in total you owed \$1,253. Since you already paid the \$500 for bail, you now owe \$753. Person A, can you and your spouse pay the money you owe? (Collect money) If your total is \$753, and you have \$1500 left, how much is left? (Answer is: \$747.00).

**8. Facilitator asks:**

Person A, how much money collectively do you and your spouse have remaining? (Remind them that the answer is on the bottom of their bill sheet. Answer: Money remaining: \$747.00)

**Facilitator says:** Your Collateral Cost is loss of funds. Your housing and job remain secure. (Facilitator should refer to scribe to make sure the chart now looks like this:

	Person A	Person B	Person C
<b>Time spent in Jail</b>	4 hours	5 days	
<b>Total Costs</b>	\$500 bail; \$753 in costs = \$1253 total		
<b>Amount of Money available</b>	\$2000		
<b>Remaining funds</b>	\$747		
<b>Collateral Cost(s)</b>	Loss of funds		

**Facilitator Announce:** At the end of day 1, person B and C are still in jail. Day 2, 3, 4 and 5 also come.

**9. Facilitator says:** Person B – Can you turn over your envelope and tell us about yourself?

Person B should read off the following.

- Not married
- Currently working at a bookstore
- 1 child and helping to take care of parent
- lives with child and parent in apartment
- little savings
- You call your parent and let him/her know you are in jail

You make a call to your parent to bail you out. Person B and Person B’s parent open your envelopes. (wait for them to open).

**Facilitator Asks:** How much money do you have together? (\$500) But for person B’s Parent, there was a sacrifice you made to help bail your child out of jail, correct?

{have person B’s parent read the note on their envelope stating they aren’t able to pay the electricity bill due to using this for bail funds.}

**Facilitator collects bail money** (Collect \$500 from person B and person B’s parent).

**Facilitator says:** After 5 days, you were bailed out of jail. You were convicted of a misdemeanor. Here are your associated costs for court (Facilitator hands person B their bill).

**Facilitator says: Person B, will you please read off your costs and fees. You can stop reading after you state your total.** (Facilitator should follow along to make sure they cover them all and scribe should write down answers to categories (number of hours in jail, etc.) so other participants can see.)

**Person B's Costs to read off:**

Bail	\$500
General Court of Justice Fee	\$147.50
Facilities Fee	\$12
Telecom/Data Fee	\$4
LEO Retirement Fee	\$7.50
LEO Training Fee	\$2
Arrest/Process Fee	\$5
Pretrial Release Services fee	\$15
Attorney Fee	\$500
Attorney appointment fee	\$60
Pretrial Jail fee	\$10 * 5 days = \$50
Installment Plan fee	\$20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,323 \$823</b>

**10. Facilitator:** So, in total you owed \$1,323. Since you already paid the \$500 for bail, you now owe \$823. Person B, can you and your parent pay the money you owe? [They don't have it.]

**11. Facilitator Announce:**

Your Collateral Costs are:

- Money remaining: -\$823.00. this is how much you still owe the court
- Your parent gave you \$300 that was supposed to go toward the electricity bill. You are not sure how that will be paid.
- You haven't been to work in 5 days with no calls to your manager, so you have effectively lost your bookstore job.

Facilitator should refer to scribe to make sure the chart currently looks like this before moving forward.

	Person A	Person B	Person C
<b>Time spent in Jail</b>	4 hours	5 days	
<b>Total Costs</b>	\$500 bail; \$753 in costs = \$1253 total	\$500 bail; \$823 in costs= \$1323 total	
<b>Amount of Money available</b>	\$2000	\$500	
<b>Remaining funds</b>	\$747	-\$823.00	
<b>Collateral Cost(s)</b>	Loss of funds	No funds left, parent's electricity bill unpaid, lost job	

**12. Facilitator Announce:** Day 5 comes and goes, and the final person left is person C. After 35 days of sitting in jail, person C has a court date and is convicted of a misdemeanor.

**Facilitator says:** Person C – Can you turn over your envelope and tell us about yourself?

Person C should read off the following:

- Not married
- Currently working at a restaurant
- Lives alone in an apartment
- Very little savings
- You call your friends and your dad and let them know you are in jail. No one was able to help.

**13. Facilitator says:** Person C, will you open your envelope and see how much money you have? (wait for Person C to open envelope. They will have \$50)

**Facilitator says:** After 35 days in jail, you finally had a court date. You were convicted of a misdemeanor. Here are your associated costs for court (Hand person C their bill). Person C, will you please read off your costs and fees. You can stop reading after you state your total. (Facilitator should follow along to make sure they cover them all.)

**Person C's Costs to read off**

Bail	-
General Court of Justice Fee	\$147.50
Facilities Fee	\$12
Telecom/Data Fee	\$4
LEO Retirement Fee	\$7.50
LEO Training Fee	\$2
Arrest/Process Fee	\$5
Pretrial Release Services fee	\$15
Attorney Fee	\$500
Attorney appointment fee	\$60
Pretrial Jail fee	\$10 x 35 days = \$350
Installment Plan fee	\$20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1123</b>

**Facilitator Says:** So, in total you owe \$1,123. Person C, can you pay the money you owe? [They don't have it, only \$50.]

**Facilitator Announces:**

- After paying \$50, the Money remaining: -\$1073.00, this is what you owe the court
- Collateral Costs:
  - o You have lost your restaurant job after not showing up to work for over a month
  - You are behind in your apartment rent and unsure if you will be able to find a way to pay rent from last month and this month.

*Facilitator should refer to scribe to make sure the chart currently looks like this before moving forward.*

	Person A	Person B	Person C
<b>Time spent in Jail</b>	4 hours	5 days	35 days
<b>Total Costs</b>	\$500 bail; \$753 in costs = \$1253 total	\$500 bail; \$823 in costs= \$1323 total	No bail, but \$1123 total
<b>Amount of Money available</b>	\$2000	\$500	\$50
<b>Remaining funds</b>	\$747	-\$823	- \$1073
<b>Collateral Cost(s)</b>	Loss of funds	No funds left, parent's electricity bill unpaid, lost job	No funds left, lost housing and job

14. **Facilitator announces and refers to chart:** Just so we are all clear, lets recap:

- *Person A: spent ½ day in jail and how much money do you owe now? (none) Do you have savings? (yes)*
- *Person B spent 5 days in jail. How much do you owe now? (\$823) What additional consequences did you face? (Lost job and unsure about how to pay the electric bill)*
- *Person C spent 35 days in jail. How much do you owe now? (\$1073) What additional consequences did you face? (Lost job, unsure how to pay rent)*

**15. Facilitator shares discussion questions for volunteers and larger group. Prompts may include the following:**

- For those who participated in the activity, how did you feel going through the activity?
- For those watching, what did you observe and how did it make you feel?
- Do you feel the scenarios were equitable for each person? Why or why not? (Follow up: If not, what would you do to change the situation?)

**16. Facilitator can follow up with noting that these are actual costs of fees in North Carolina and this simulation did not factor in other costs such as restitution and fees for phone calls, laundry, etc. You could also discuss any of the following:**

- Pervasiveness of poverty in NC
- Disproportionate impact on people of color

**17. Facilitator wraps up session and thanks participants for participating.**

## Additional Resources

In addition to this activity, there are several resources you can utilize to supplement your discussion points. We recommend the following resources to shape your post activity discussion:

1. NC ACLU Report: At All Costs – The Consequences of Rising Court Fines and Fees in North Carolina - <https://www.acluofnorthcarolina.org/en/atallcosts>
2. Monetary Obligations in NC Criminal Cases (2018) from James Markham (UNC School of Government) - <https://nccriminallaw.sog.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-07-31-20180094-Monetary-Obligations-Card%E2%80%93for-proofing.pdf>
3. Court Fines and Fees: Criminalizing Poverty in North Carolina (2017) by Heather Hunt and Gene Nichol (North Carolina Poverty Research Fund) - <http://www.ncpolicywatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Court-Fines-and-Fees-Criminalizing-Poverty-in-NC.pdf>

## Appendices

### Scenarios

#### **Person A**

- **Married and living in an apartment with 2 children**
- **Currently working at a construction company**
- **Some savings**
- **You call your spouse and let them know you are in jail.**

#### **Person B**

- **Not married**
- **Currently working at a bookstore**
- **1 child and helping to take care of parent – lives with child and parent in apartment**
- **Little savings**
- **You call your mom and let her know you are in jail**

#### **Person C:**

- **Not married**
- **Currently working at a restaurant**
- **Lives alone in an apartment**
- **Very little savings**
- **You call your friends and your dad and let them know you are in jail. No one was able to help**

#### **Person A's Spouse**

- **You have money saved to use for your spouse's bail.**

#### **Person B's Parent**

- **You must sacrifice paying the light bill to support B**

## Completed Chart

	<b>Person A</b>	<b>Person B</b>	<b>Person C</b>
<b>Time spent in Jail</b>	4 hours	5 days	35 days
<b>Total Costs</b>	\$500 bail; \$753 in costs = \$1253 total	\$500 bail; \$823 in costs= \$1323 total	No bail, but \$1123 total
<b>Amount of Money available</b>	\$2000	\$500	\$50
<b>Remaining funds</b>	\$747	-\$823	- \$1073
<b>Collateral Cost(s)</b>	Loss of funds	No funds left, parent's electricity bill unpaid, lost job	No funds left, lost housing and job

Bills for Person A, B and C

NC Fines and Fees Coalition

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*Person A – Here's What Happened While You were Incarcerated*

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**Time in Jail: 4 hours**

**Money spent:**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
<i>Bail</i>	\$500
<i>General Court of Justice Fee</i>	\$147.50
<i>Facilities Fee</i>	\$12
<i>Telecom/Data Fee</i>	\$4
<i>LEO Retirement Fee</i>	\$7.50
<i>LEO Training Fee</i>	\$2
<i>Arrest/Process Fee</i>	\$5
<i>Pretrial Release Services fee</i>	\$15
<i>Attorney Fee</i>	\$500
<i>Attorney appointment fee</i>	\$60
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$1,253

**Money remaining: \$747.00**

**Collateral Costs:** Loss of funds.

**Housing and job remain secure.**

**Time in Jail: 5 days**

**Money spent:**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
<i>Bail</i>	\$500
<i>General Court of Justice Fee</i>	\$147.50
<i>Facilities Fee</i>	\$12
<i>Telecom/Data Fee</i>	\$4
<i>LEO Retirement Fee</i>	\$7.50
<i>LEO Training Fee</i>	\$2
<i>Arrest/Process Fee</i>	\$5
<i>Pretrial Release Services fee</i>	\$15
<i>Attorney Fee</i>	\$500
<i>Attorney appointment fee</i>	\$60
<i>Pretrial Jail fee</i>	\$10 * 5 days = \$50
<i>Installment Plan fee</i>	\$20
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$1,323

**Money remaining: -\$823.00**

**Collateral Costs:**

**Your mother gave you \$300 that was supposed to go toward her electricity bill. She is not sure how that will be paid.**

**You haven't been to work in 5 days with no calls to your manager, so you have effectively lost your bookstore job.**

**Time in Jail: 35 days**

**Money spent:**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
<i>Bail</i>	---
<i>General Court of Justice Fee</i>	\$147.50
<i>Facilities Fee</i>	\$12
<i>Telecom/Data Fee</i>	\$4
<i>LEO Retirement Fee</i>	\$7.50
<i>LEO Training Fee</i>	\$2
<i>Arrest/Process Fee</i>	\$5
<i>Pretrial Release Services fee</i>	\$15
<i>Attorney Fee</i>	\$500
<i>Attorney appointment fee</i>	\$60
<i>Pretrial Jail fee</i>	\$350
<i>Installment Plan fee</i>	\$20
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$1,123

**Money remaining: -\$1073.00**

**Collateral Costs:**

**You have lost your restaurant job after not showing up to work for over a month**

**You are behind in your apartment rent and unsure if you will be able to find a way to pay rent from last month and this month.**