

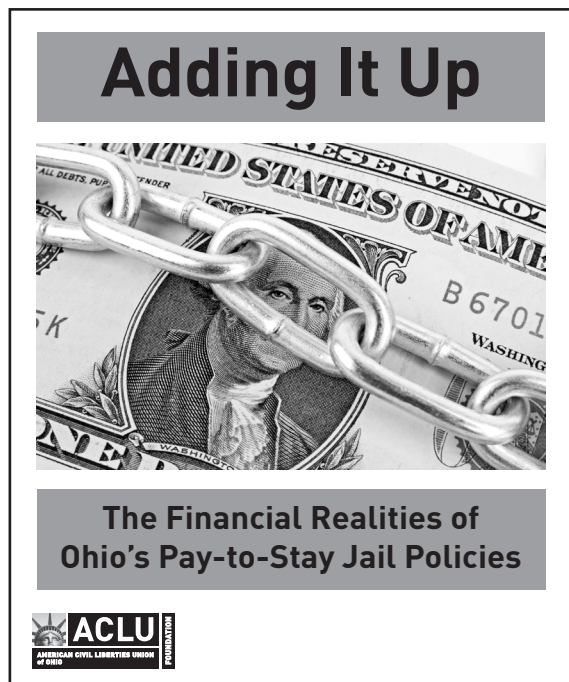
# Pay-to-Stay Fees Don't Add Up



Local governments are looking for revenue from jail inmates.  
But pay-to-stay policies create more problems than they solve

**O**n June 26, 2013, the ACLU of Ohio released *Adding It Up*, a report that analyzes “pay-to-stay” programs at three Ohio jails (Fairfield County Jail, Hamilton County Jail and Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail), and concludes that charging inmates for their incarceration is not the revenue generator it appears to be.

In conjunction with this report, the ACLU has sent a letter and a copy of *Adding It Up* to every sheriff and county commissioner in the state urging them to abandon pay-to-stay programs.



To download this report, visit  
[www.acluohio.org/AddingItUp](http://www.acluohio.org/AddingItUp)

## Fast Facts

- **Larger fees that build up over time do not lead to more revenues.** The vast majority of individuals in jail have low incomes, and cannot afford pay-to-stay fees. Exorbitant charges lead to larger outstanding bills, but do not translate into higher collection rates.
- **Aggressive programs to collect fees after incarceration are likely to fail.** Collection agencies often promise large revenues for local officials, but data suggests that low-income people are no more likely to pay their fees when collection agencies are used. Additionally, these agencies impose new costs on jails that are not offset by the meager revenues accrued through pay-to-stay programs.
- **Local officials cannot hope to balance their budgets by assessing fees on low-income people.** The vast majority of people who enter prison are already indigent, and even more leave prison with large financial obstacles. The burden of pay-to-stay fees is often shared by entire families, as commissary funds deposited by loved ones are seized to satisfy the fees.
- **Officials should seek to depopulate their jails rather than rely on ineffective pay-to-stay fees.** The only long-term remedy for our overcrowded jails and exploding jail budgets is to invest in programs that keep people out of jail. Pay-to-stay policies only make it more likely that they will return.