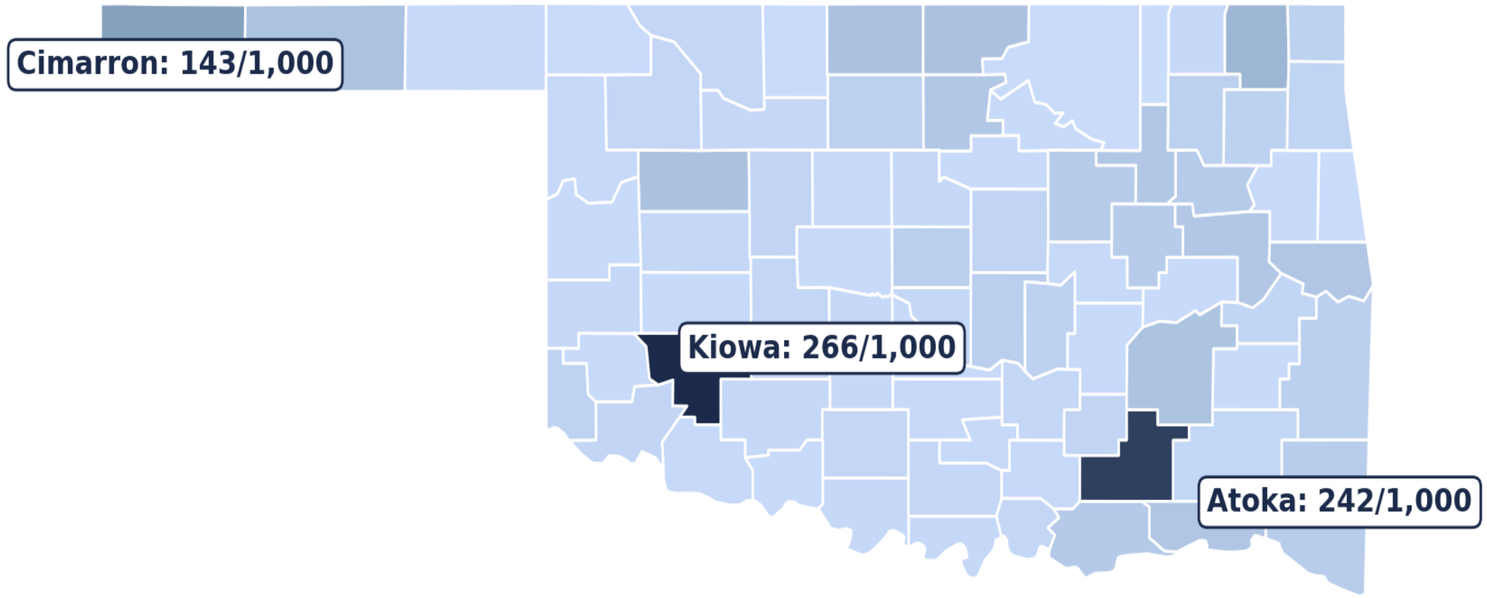
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Oklahoma License Suspensions Geography & Economic Impact

MICHAEL OLSON **POLICY COUNSEL**

Geographical Disparities



41%

License suspensions for Failure to Pay are are issued at a rate 41% in counties classified as rural by the USDA on a per capita basis.

31.7

Unweighted Statewide County Average For Failure to Pay License Suspensions

38 Months

Average time restrained for Failure to Pay License Suspensions

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Court Debt Collection & Suspension Rates

Comparing High vs. Low Driver's License Suspension Counties in Oklahoma (2022–2025)

High Suspension Group

15 Oklahoma Counties

95.0 suspensions per 1,000 residents
(Unweighted County Average)

18.7% fines & fees collected
(Cases filed 2022–2025)

Counties: Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Cimarron, Craig, Dewey, Grant, Kay, Kiowa, Muskogee, Noble, Pittsburg, Sequoyah, Texas, Tulsa.

Low Suspension Group

16 Oklahoma Counties

5.6 suspensions per 1,000 residents
(Unweighted County Average)

23.4% fines & fees collected
(Cases filed 2022–2025)

Counties: Adair, Alfalfa, Canadian, Cherokee, Cotton, Greer, Harper, Hughes, Latimer, McIntosh, Osage, Pawnee, Payne, Roger Mills, Washington, Washita.

Key Finding: High suspension counties collect 4.7 percentage points LESS court debt despite a nearly 17x higher suspension rate.

Overall Totals & Averages

15 High-Suspension Oklahoma Counties Combined

Category	Total Pop.	County Mean	Share
Total Workers (16+)	458,692	30,579.5	100.0%
Using a Vehicle	397,718	26,514.5	86.7%
- Drove alone	353,096	23,539.7	77.0%
- Carpooled	44,622	2,974.8	9.7%
Worked from Home	46,487	3,099.1	10.1%
Public Transportation	1,346	89.7	0.3%

86.7%

Vehicle Dependency Rate

Combined solo drivers & carpoolers across all 15 high-suspension counties.

0.3%

Public Transit Usage

Virtually non-existent transit infrastructure, making driving mandatory.

10.1%

Work From Home Share

Remote work cushioning is largely restricted to larger urban centers.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimates | Oklahoma County Suspension Analysis

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What If Suspended Drivers Stopped Driving

Statewide labor-force exposure to Failure-to-Pay / Failure-to-Appear suspensions, Aug. 2026

2.02M

Oklahoma civilian labor force (BLS LAUS, 2025 annual avg.)

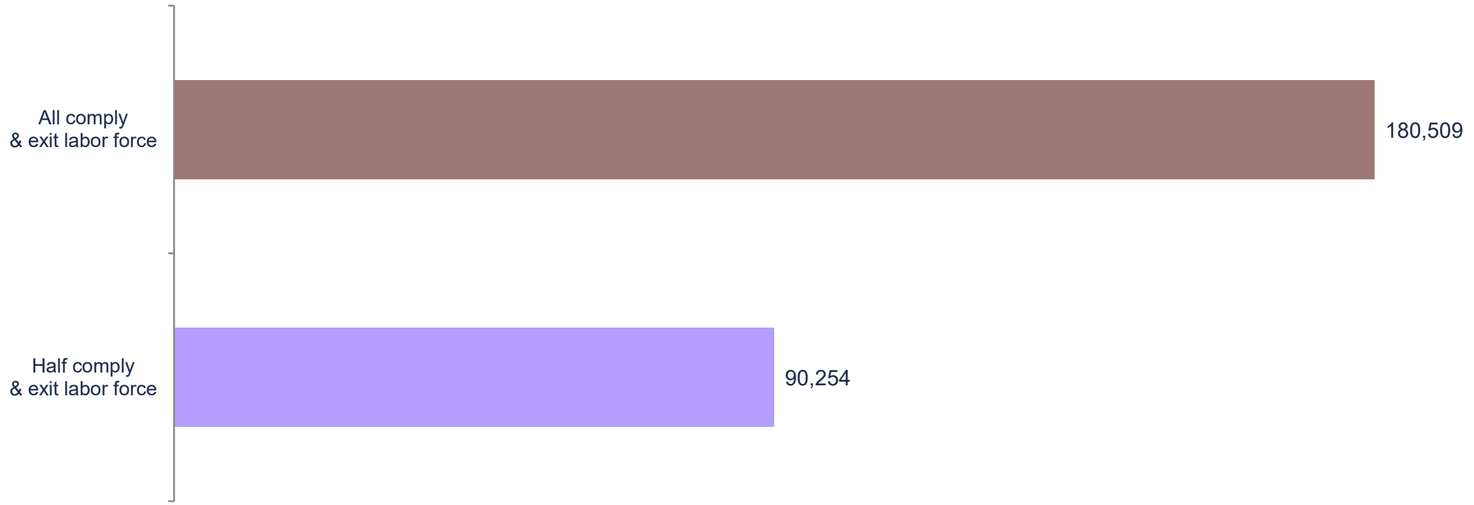
180,509

Est. unique individuals with an active debt-related suspension

8.95%

Share of the statewide labor force carrying an active debt-related suspension

Compliance Scenario: Potential Labor Force Exits



8.95

percentage-point reduction in labor force (all-comply scenario)

4.48

percentage-point reduction in labor force (half-comply scenario)

Forgone Wages

Conservative estimate — 25th-percentile wage basis (BLS OEWS Oklahoma, May 2024, all occupations)

$14.93

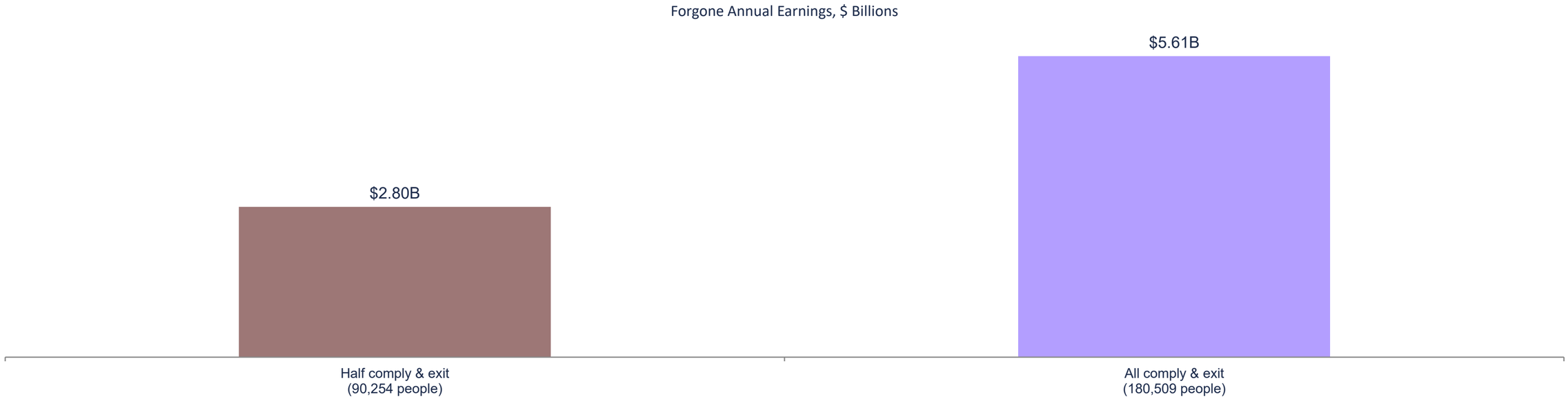
25th-percentile hourly wage, all occupations statewide

$31,054

Annualized (2,080-hr work year) — the wage basis used below

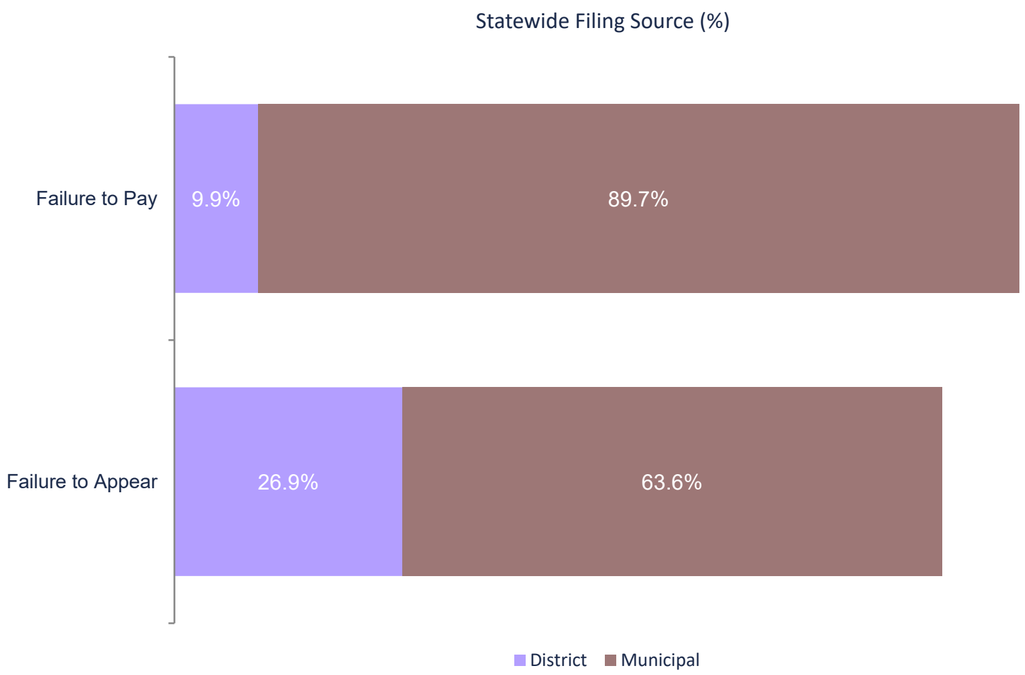
$2.80B

Forgone earnings/yr — half-comply scenario (conservative headline figure)



Origin Point for License Suspensions

Share of Failure-to-Appear / Failure-to-Pay suspensions filed in municipal vs. district court



County	FTA % Muni.	FTP % Muni.
Tulsa	87.5%	99.9%
Atoka	66.1%	97.9%
Kiowa	89.8%	97.3%
Comanche	66.6%	99.7%
Oklahoma	81.5%	99.6%
Alfalfa	6.1%	7.1%
Beckham	19.6%	3.7%
Noble	12.1%	1.8%

Noble, Bechkam, and Alfalfa counties run almost entirely through district court — the exceptions to the statewide pattern.

88%

Across 77 jurisdictions analyzed, cities and court systems with high FTA rates show an 88% correlation with high FTP debt rates.

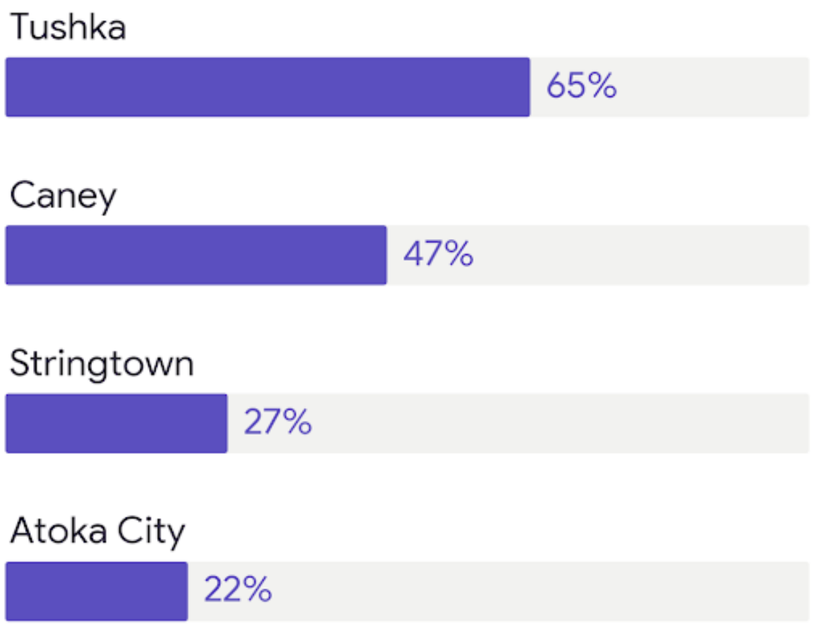
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Municipal Revenue Reliance: Fines & Forfeitures

Percentage of Budgeted Government Revenue Derived from Fines & Forfeitures

Atoka County Municipalities

Municipal Suspension Rate = 237 per 1,000



Pawnee County Municipalities

Municipal Suspension Rate = .62 per 1,000



Takeaway: Extreme municipal reliance on fines creates an intense citation pipeline, driving up county suspension rates.

Top Jail Booking Charges by County

Comparing Most Common Offenses in High vs. Low Suspension Counties

Cimarron County

3rd Highest Failure to Pay Suspension Rate

1. Driving W/ License Canceled/Susp./Revoked	85
2. Possession of Controlled Substance	39
3. Possession of Paraphernalia	28

Craig County

4th Highest Failure to Pay Suspension Rate

1. Possession of Controlled Substance	360
2. Possession of Paraphernalia	261
3. Driving W/ License Canceled/Susp./Revoked	231

Washington County

Lowest Failure to Pay Suspension Rate

1. Serve Warrant Other Agency	284
2. Failure to Appear (MUN City Warrant)	205
3. Possession of CDS	196
...	
9. Driving While Suspended	101

Pawnee County

Low Suspension Group

1. Possession of Controlled Substance	168
2. Public Intoxication	153
3. Possession of Paraphernalia	147
...	
15. Driving W/ License Susp. / Revoked	52

Source: Jail Data Initiative (NYU Public Safety Lab). All data reflects total jail booking charge counts from entry date.

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THANK YOU

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