

# Court Reminder Systems Improve Justice

## A Cost-Effective Solution, Proven by Research

**Missed court dates are a major driver of jail populations nationwide.** Yet research proves that most people intend to attend. Reminders help people understand their obligations, plan ahead, and appear as scheduled. **Nationwide, effective reminder systems reduce missed court dates 20–40%.**

### → REMINDER SYSTEMS PROVIDE TREMENDOUS RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The savings realized through reminder systems far outweigh the implementation costs.

- ▶ **Each missed court date costs \$2,850** to the government and individuals involved (*see other side*)
- ▶ **State ROI projected to average tens of millions of dollars per year** for governments and individuals

### → RESEARCH AND JURISDICTIONAL EXPERIENCE PROVE THE VALUE

Scientific research and nationwide experiences have proven the value of reminders.

- ▶ As a reform, reminders flow from **decades of behavioral science research**
- ▶ **Academic and legal research** consistently support the value of reminder systems
- ▶ **(Un)warranted's study of reminder system implementation** has proven the benefits in jurisdictions nationwide

### → EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM IMPROVED COURT APPEARANCE RATES

Increasing successful court appearances:

- ▶ **Reduces court backlogs**
- ▶ **Improves government efficiency**
- ▶ **Avoids needless police engagement, incarceration,** and related sanctions

*Please see other side for specific benefits to all stakeholders.*

**State policymaking can play important roles in establishing reminder systems,** even where court operations are primarily county and local. States can:

- ▶ **Create reminder systems** that work alongside jurisdictions' case management systems
- ▶ **Provide funding** to enable court systems to provide effective reminders
- ▶ **Convene key stakeholders** to explore reminder systems, and make recommendations for various parties' roles in advancing them

Red, blue, and purple jurisdictions across the country have adopted court reminder reforms because they have proven to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and justice for all.

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**To learn about the key elements of an effective reminder program, see  
"The Essential Guide to Court Reminder Programs" at [www.ideas42.org/unwarranted](http://www.ideas42.org/unwarranted).**

## Court Reminder Systems Improve Government Efficiency

**Missed court dates burn millions in taxpayer dollars—every year.** What's more, every missed court date undermines the economic potential of the individuals, employers, and families involved. Reminder systems are extremely cost-effective and can save millions of dollars per year for any state.

**~\$2,850 per missed court date\***



### GOVERNMENT SAVINGS ~\$1,496

- ▶ Court staff
- ▶ Attorneys
- ▶ Warrant issuance
- ▶ Warrant clearance
- ▶ Arrest
- ▶ Booking
- ▶ Jail
- ▶ Possible pretrial supervision



### PERSON SAVINGS ~\$1,354

- ▶ Fines
- ▶ Lost wages (jail)
- ▶ Potential loss of bail
- ▶ Possible pretrial supervision
- ▶ Inability to work
- ▶ Benefits forgone
  - Food (SNAP)
  - Housing (Section 8)
  - Tax refunds (EITC)
  - Health (Medicaid)

*\*Conservative estimate for misdemeanor cases using easily quantifiable costs. Detailed calculations upon request.*

## EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM SUCCESSFUL COURT APPEARANCES

- ▶ **Court administrators:** More efficient operations
- ▶ **Judges:** Decreased caseloads and backlogs
- ▶ **Court staff:** Fewer wasted and duplicative efforts
- ▶ **Prosecutors and Defense Lawyers:** More promptly resolve their cases
- ▶ **Sheriffs:** Avoid processing and housing people for nonthreatening offenses
- ▶ **Police:** Time freed to focus on more serious offenses
- ▶ **Defendants:** Avoid needless sanctions and economic harm
- ▶ **Employers:** More reliable staffing and productivity
- ▶ **Families:** Economic and emotional stability
- ▶ **Taxpayers:** Tax dollars better spent for courts, policing, and jails
- ▶ **Appropriators:** Greater availability of funds for needed services

## Every State Needs a Court Reminder System.

**For more information about establishing a reminder system in your state, please contact Alissa Fishbane at [alissa@ideas42.org](mailto:alissa@ideas42.org).**