

The District of Columbia earns a **B+** for its civil forfeiture laws:

- Somewhat higher bar to forfeit some property: For motor vehicles, real property and currency up to \$1,000, prosecutors' standard is clear and convincing evidence. A very weak conviction provision requires conviction of the owner when a person's primary residence is at stake. For all other property, the standard is preponderance of the evidence.
- Stronger protections for the innocent: The government must prove third-party owners knew about criminal activity connected to their property.
- No profit incentive: All forfeiture proceeds go to the general fund.

Recent Reforms

- None.

State and Federal Forfeiture Revenues, 2000–2019

From 2010 to 2012 and 2015 to 2018, the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department forfeited nearly \$5 million under District law. Between 2000 and 2019, it generated an additional \$7 million from federal equitable sharing, for a total of at least \$12 million in forfeiture revenue. The District of Columbia ranks 7th for its participation in the Department of Justice's equitable sharing program. In 2015, D.C. prohibited federal adoption of locally seized property for equitable sharing.

**At least \$12 million
in District and federal
forfeiture revenue**

2000–2019

	District of Columbia Forfeiture Revenues	Dept. of Justice Equitable Sharing Proceeds	Treasury Equitable Sharing Proceeds	Total	
2000	Unknown	Unavailable	\$228,000	\$228,000	DOJ Proceeds Unavailable District Revenues Unknown
2001	Unknown	Unavailable	\$27,000	\$27,000	...
2002	Unknown	Unavailable	\$70,000	\$70,000	...
2003	Unknown	Unavailable	\$152,000	\$152,000	...
2004	Unknown	Unavailable	\$204,000	\$204,000	...
2005	Unknown	Unavailable	\$124,000	\$124,000	...
2006	Unknown	Unavailable	\$321,000	\$321,000	...
2007	Unknown	Unavailable	\$187,000	\$187,000	...
2008	Unknown	Unavailable	\$171,000	\$171,000	...
2009	Unknown	\$506,882	\$206,000	\$712,882	District Revenues Unknown
2010	\$1,894,278	\$670,749	\$28,000	\$2,593,027	
2011	\$1,271,889	\$531,940	\$63,000	\$1,866,829	
2012	\$1,648,599	\$866,809	\$83,000	\$2,598,408	
2013	Unknown	\$357,847	\$11,000	\$368,847	District Revenues Unknown
2014	Unknown	\$771,427	\$21,000	\$792,427	...
2015	\$15,787	\$385,950	\$2,000	\$403,737	
2016	\$23,518	\$189,247	\$34,000	\$246,765	
2017	\$700	\$673,004	\$77,000	\$750,704	
2018	\$25,996	\$774,868	\$8,000	\$808,864	
2019	Unavailable	Unavailable	\$0	\$0	DOJ Proceeds Unavailable District Revenues Unavailable
Totals	\$4,880,767	\$5,728,723	\$2,017,000	\$12,626,490	

All revenue figures include both civil and criminal forfeitures. Revenues are not adjusted for inflation. Different state revenue sources for 2010–2012 and 2015–2018.

The District of Columbia's Forfeiture Transparency and Accountability Report Card

Tracking Seized Property	D	Accessibility of Forfeiture Records	A
Accounting for Forfeiture Fund Spending	N/A[†]	Penalties for Failure to File a Report	F
Statewide Forfeiture Reports	B	Financial Audits of Forfeiture Accounts	N/A[†]

[†] These grades are not applicable as the District of Columbia does not permit law enforcement agencies to spend forfeiture revenue.

For full transparency and accountability grades, visit www.ij.org/TransparencyReportCards.

Forfeitures Under District of Columbia Law: Key Facts

Median Value



The District of Columbia does not report property-level data necessary to calculate median forfeiture value.

Property Types

UNKNOWN

The District of Columbia does not report the types of property forfeited.

Civil vs. Criminal

UNKNOWN

The District of Columbia does not report whether forfeitures are processed under civil or criminal forfeiture law.

Expenditures

N/A

The District of Columbia does not permit law enforcement agencies to spend forfeiture revenue.

Data Notes

Calendar-year reports for 2010 through 2012 were obtained via public records request to MPD. MPD did not provide records in response to a request for 2013 and 2014 forfeiture records. Fiscal-year records for 2015 through 2018 are from reports on the D.C. Council's Legislative Information Management System website. Equitable sharing data are from DOJ's and Treasury's annual forfeiture reports. Due to differences in reporting and accounting practices, figures may not match aggregate numbers produced by the District or cover the same 12-month period as the federal data.