

Rhode Island earns a D- for its civil forfeiture laws:

- Low bar to forfeit: Once the government seizes property, the owner must prove by preponderance of the evidence that it is not connected to a crime.
- Poor protections for the innocent: Third-party owners must prove their own innocence to recover seized property.
- Large profit incentive: 90% of forfeiture proceeds go to law enforcement.

Recent Reforms

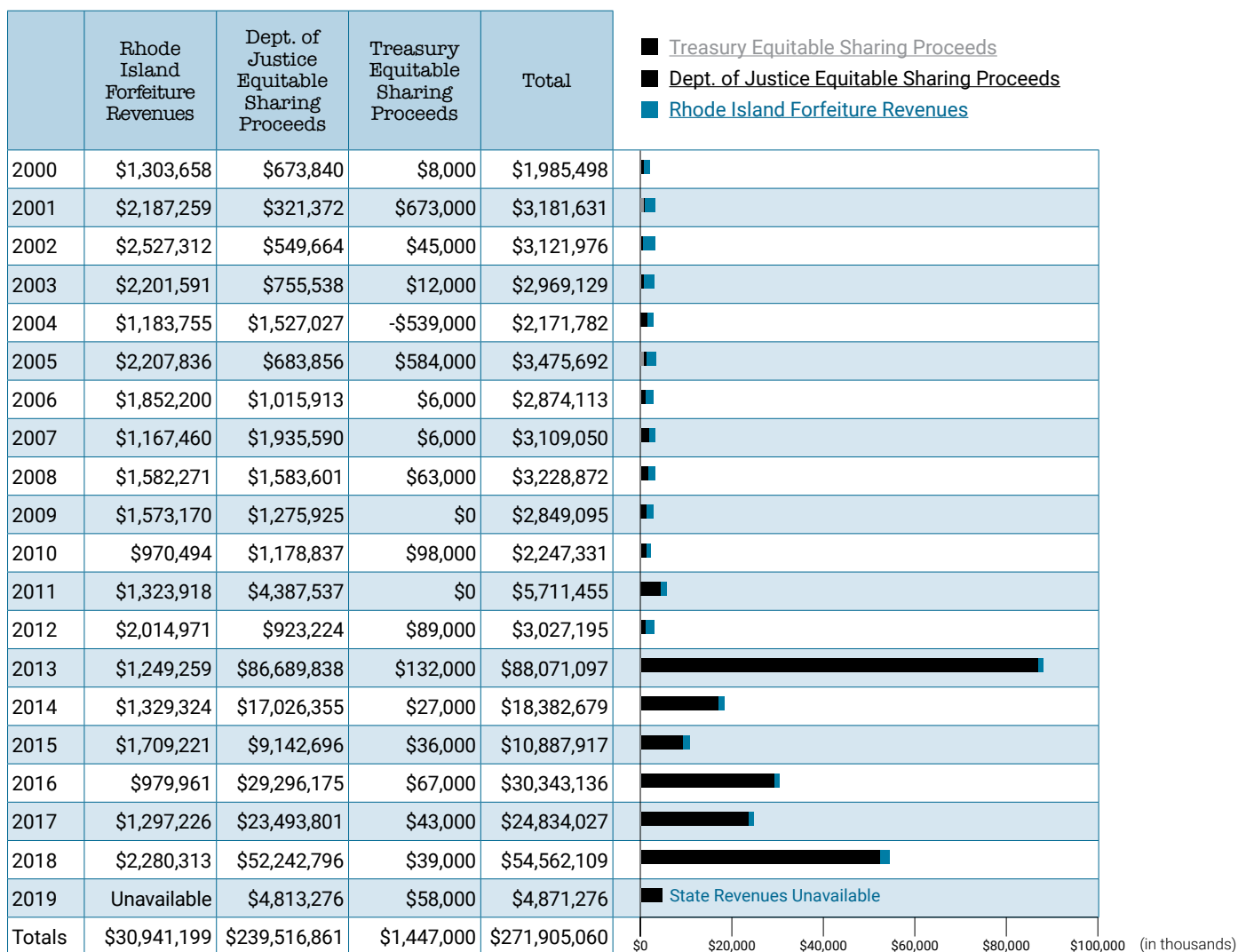
- None.

State and Federal Forfeiture Revenues, 2000–2019

Between 2000 and 2018, Rhode Island law enforcement agencies forfeited nearly \$31 million under state law. Between 2000 and 2019, they generated an additional \$240 million from federal equitable sharing, for a total of at least \$271 million in forfeiture revenue. Rhode Island ranks 51st for its participation in the Department of Justice's equitable sharing program. The state does not prevent state and local agencies from using equitable sharing to circumvent state forfeiture law.

**At least \$271 million
in state and federal
forfeiture revenue**

2000–2019



All revenue figures include both civil and criminal forfeitures. Revenues are not adjusted for inflation.

Rhode Island's Forfeiture Transparency and Accountability Report Card

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

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

Forfeitures Under Rhode Island Law: Key Facts

Median Value



Rhode Island does not report property-level data necessary to calculate median forfeiture value.

Property Types

UNKNOWN

Rhode Island does not report the types of property forfeited.

Civil vs. Criminal

UNKNOWN

Rhode Island does not report whether forfeitures are processed under civil or criminal forfeiture law.

Expenditures

UNKNOWN

Rhode Island does not report how forfeiture funds are spent.

Data Notes

Agency-level forfeiture data were obtained via public records requests to the Rhode Island Attorney General. The calendar-year figures purport to represent total value of forfeited property. Equitable sharing data are from DOJ's and Treasury's annual forfeiture reports. Due to differences in reporting and accounting practices, state figures may not match aggregate numbers produced by the state or cover the same 12-month period as the federal data.