

South Carolina 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: 95% of forfeiture proceeds go to law enforcement (75% to police and 20% to prosecutors).

Recent Reforms

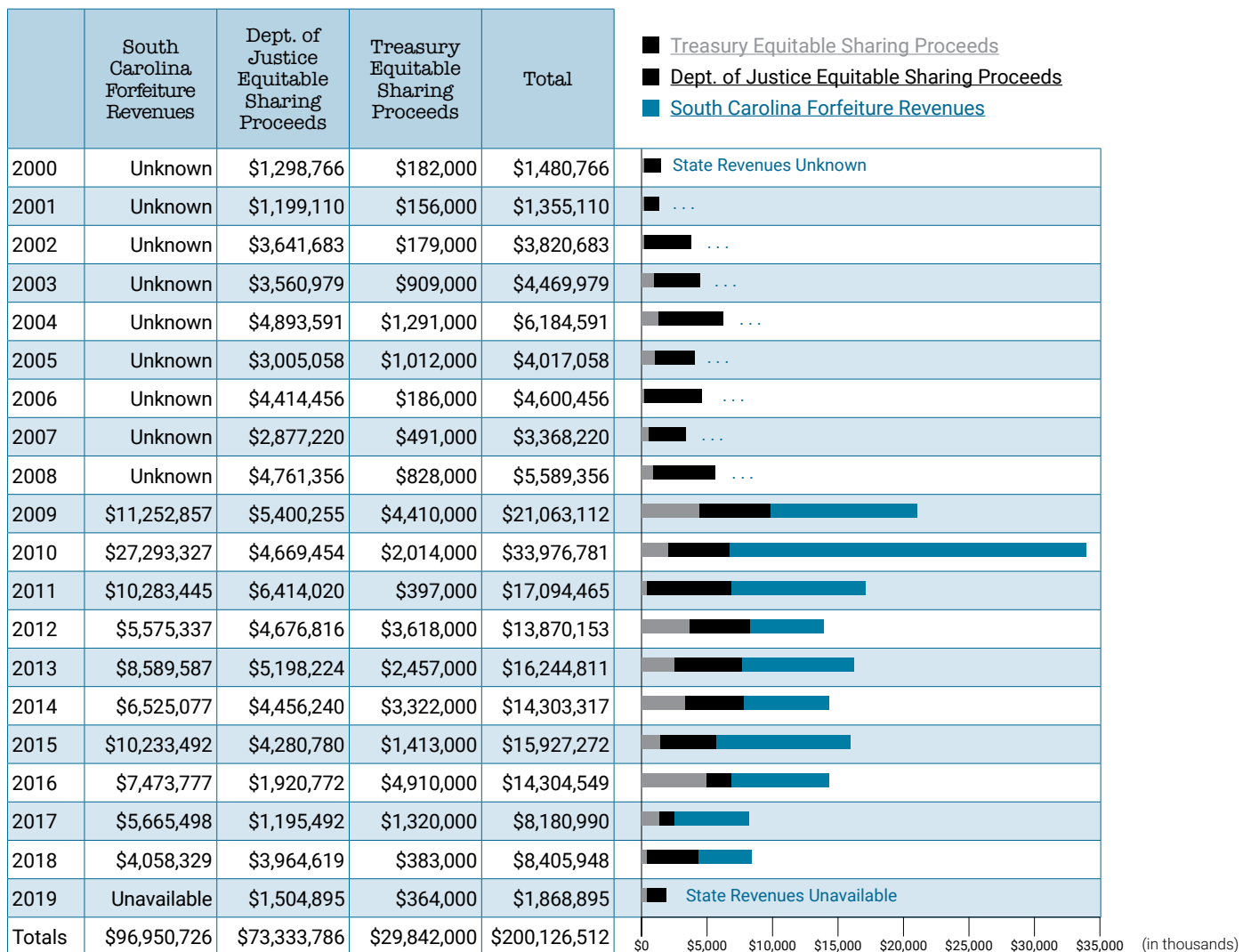
- (2019) State Court Ruling in *Richardson v. \$20,771.00 U.S. Currency*: Found South Carolina’s civil forfeiture laws unconstitutional. At time of publication, case was on appeal to the South Carolina Supreme Court.

State and Federal Forfeiture Revenues, 2000–2019

Between 2009 and 2018, South Carolina law enforcement agencies forfeited nearly \$97 million under state law. Between 2000 and 2019, they generated an additional \$103 million from federal equitable sharing, for a total of at least \$200 million in forfeiture revenue. South Carolina ranks 17th 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 \$200 million
in state and federal
forfeiture revenue**

2000–2019



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

South Carolina's Forfeiture Transparency and Accountability Report Card

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

[†] No reporting requirements to enforce.

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

Forfeitures Under South Carolina Law: Key Facts

Median Value



South Carolina does not report property-level data necessary to calculate median forfeiture value.

Property Types

UNKNOWN

South Carolina does not report the types of property forfeited.

Civil vs. Criminal

UNKNOWN

South Carolina does not report whether forfeitures are processed under civil or criminal forfeiture law.

Expenditures

UNKNOWN

South Carolina does not report how forfeiture funds are spent.

Data Notes

Forfeiture records were obtained via public records request to the South Carolina State Treasurer. Figures presented are calculated estimates of statewide forfeiture proceeds based on fiscal-year deposits to the state general fund, which receives, by law, 5% of all forfeiture proceeds. 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.