

Washington earns a **D-** for its civil forfeiture laws:

- Low bar to forfeit: Prosecutors must prove by preponderance of the evidence that property is 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

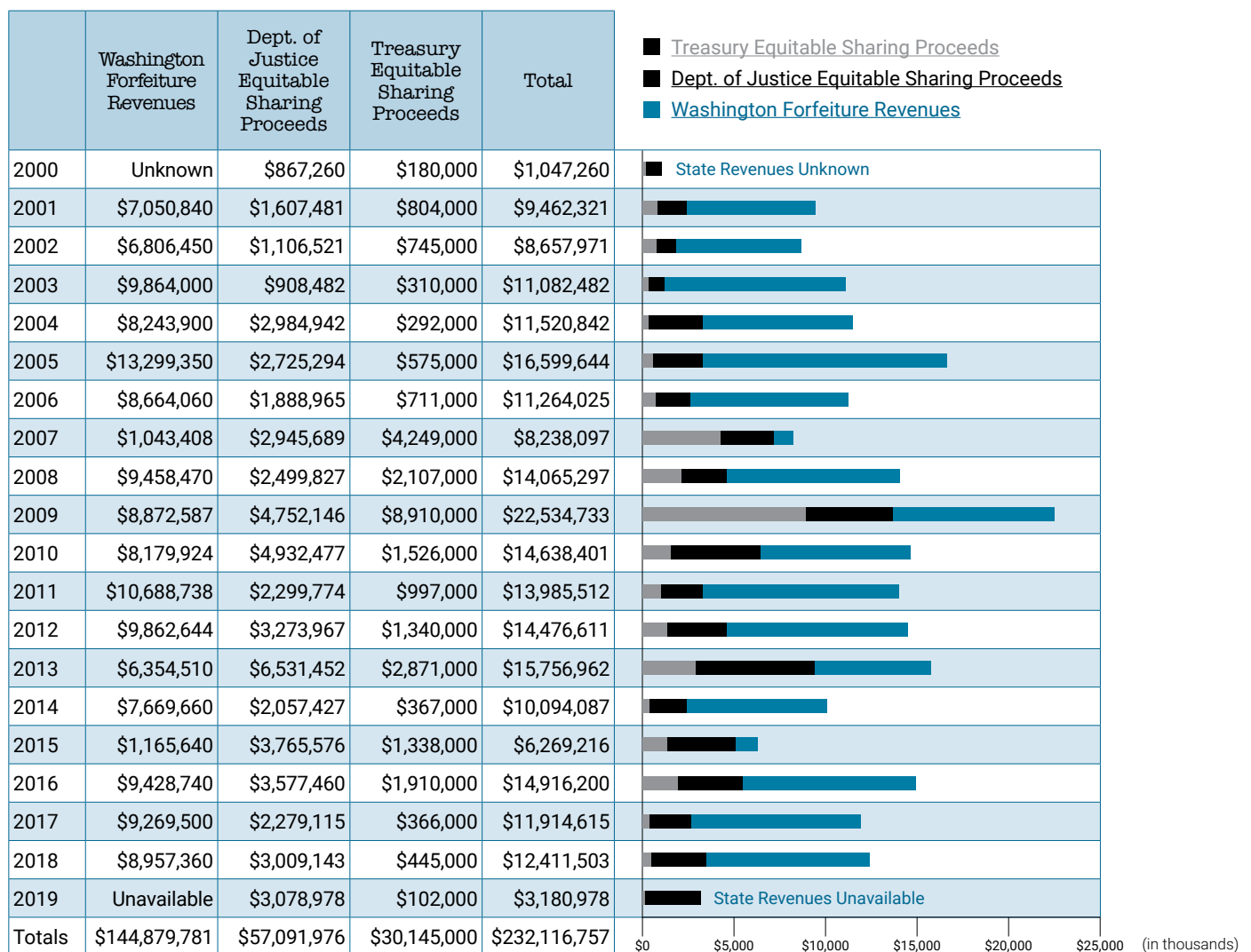
- None.

State and Federal Forfeiture Revenues, 2000–2019

Between 2001 and 2018, Washington law enforcement agencies forfeited nearly \$145 million under state law. Between 2000 and 2019, they generated an additional \$87 million from federal equitable sharing, for a total of at least \$232 million in forfeiture revenue. Washington ranks 42nd 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 \$232 million
in state and federal
forfeiture revenue

2000–2019



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

Washington's Forfeiture Transparency and Accountability Report Card

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

* Agencies must file even when they have nothing to report.

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

Forfeitures Under Washington Law: Key Facts

Median Value



Washington does not report property-level data necessary to calculate median forfeiture value

Property Types

UNKNOWN

Washington does not report the types of property forfeited.

Civil vs. Criminal

UNKNOWN

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

Expenditures

UNKNOWN

Washington does not report how forfeiture funds are spent.

Data Notes

Agency-level forfeiture data were obtained via public records requests to the Washington State Treasurer. Figures presented are calculated estimates of statewide forfeiture proceeds based on calendar-year deposits to the state general fund, which receives, by law, 10% 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.