

Survey to Chief APOs

Issue: Collections Process

Question (from Delaware County):

Our county was contacted by the ACLU regarding our collections processes for fine and cost and ask a dozen specific questions. Can you ask the Chiefs if their county has been contacted and if so did they reply. Also, if they did reply and are willing to share their responses, I would be great appreciative.

Adams County

No contact to Adams from the ACLU.

Allegheny County

No contact from ACLU

Armstrong County

No contact from ACLU

Berks County

Not in Berks

Blair County

No contact from ACLU

Bradford County

Bradford County has not been contacted

Carbon County

No inquiry in Carbon County

Centre County

Nothing in Centre yet, I sure it will occur soon.

Chester County

Yes, they have contacted Chester County. Similar situation to Sally in Lebanon County, they are looking at Collection procedures.

Columbia County

Columbia County has not been contacted, yet.

Cumberland County

No in Cumberland

Dauphin County

No from Dauphin

Erie County

Erie County has had no contact from ACLU.

Franklin County

No ACLU contact to Franklin County

Jefferson County

No in Jefferson

Juniata County

No contact in Juniata

Lancaster County

No contact in Lancaster yet.

Lebanon County

Yes. The ACLU contacted Lebanon County a couple months ago. They actually sat in on our contempt court proceeding and filed lawsuit against the county on behalf of several defendants.

I've met with them once by myself and a second time with our fiscal supervisor and the PJ. After reviewing our policy and procedures, it was concluded their issue is primarily with the manner to which the judge handles the proceeding during contempt court. He is a no nonsense judge when it comes to payment of fines and costs and is not very sympathetic to a defendant's ability to pay. I've attached the letter the ACLU sent to the PJ.

The only issues they had with my department procedures were - they felt our paperwork was not clear enough in advising a defendant of how to contact legal counsel before a contempt hearing and they wanted us to send the ability to pay form along with the contempt hearing notification. They did not feel the defendant completing the ability to pay form prior to court was sufficient. They expect the fines and costs judge to make inquiry on the defendant's ability to pay during the court proceeding.

I heard through a grapevine the ACLU was awarded a grant to look into the fines and costs issue.

Let me know if you have any further questions.

Mifflin County

No contact in Mifflin County

Schuylkill County

No contact in Schuylkill County

Warren County

No contact in Warren County.

Westmoreland County

No contact in Westmoreland.

York County

York County has not had a request.