

# [Debt and Democracy: How the Collection of Civil Fees and Fines Contributed to the Unrest in Ferguson](#)

Jan 29, 2015

This webinar will discuss the levying and collection of unfair fees and fines by municipalities and their courts. According to The New York Times, unjust municipal fee and fine practices were one of the “simmering” issues underlying tensions in Ferguson, Missouri following the killing of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown by a Ferguson police officer. According to The Times, “Young black men in Ferguson and surrounding cities routinely find themselves passed from jail to jail as they are picked up on warrants for unpaid fines.” The webinar will present an overview of the causes and pervasiveness of the problem, and impact on the community, both in Missouri and around the nation. The webinar will also discuss steps to address the problem, including policy advocacy and litigation.

**Presenters:** Karin Martin, Ph.D. (Assistant Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice at CUNY) ; Thomas Harvey (Executive Director, Arch City); Odette Williamson (Staff Attorney, National Consumer Law Center) ; David Seligman (Staff Attorney, National Consumer Law Center) ; Charles Lowery, Jr. (Director, Fair Lending and Inclusion, NAACP Financial Freedom Center)

This webinar is part of a series on “Rebuilding Wealth and Economic Opportunity in Communities of Color” sponsored by NCLC’s initiative on Racial Justice & Equal Economic Opportunity.

Visit: <https://www.nclc.org/issues/racial-justice.html>.

