

You have the right to enter a plea or go to trial on any offense charged, unless a final judgment of conviction has been entered in your case.

You may contact the Court if you are unable to pay the amount owed without undue hardship to yourself or your dependents. You may request a hearing before a Judge to consider your ability to pay and request any non-monetary compliance options available to you. You should be prepared to explain and document your financial situation to the court.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO PAYMENT OF FINES AND COSTS**

A defendant who is convicted of a criminal offense punishable by fine only is entitled to alternative methods of satisfying the judgment against them if they are unable to pay the fine or costs, in whole or in part.

Those alternative methods include:

- 1) A payment plan, allowing the defendant to make payments toward the fine and costs in designated intervals. Note that if any amount is paid more than 30 days after the judgment assessing the fine or costs then a \$25 time payment fee must be assessed.
- 2) Disposition of the amount assessed by performing community service. There are many options that meet the requirements of the law for community service, see Art. 45.049 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for full details. A defendant is entitled to a minimum of \$100 credit for every 8 hours of community service performed.
- 3) If performing community service imposes an undue hardship, a defendant who is indigent or who lacks sufficient resources to pay is entitled to a waiver of the fine and costs, in whole or in part.