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Debt-Related Driver's License Suspensions, Demographics and Social-Needs

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Every year, over a million Ohio drivers have their license suspended for reasons that have nothing to do with being a bad driver. Known as debt-related suspensions (DRS), they severely limit personal mobility, create a nearly inescapable cycle of debt, and are not spread evenly across communities. We address two fundamental research questions relating to DRS.

First, we analyze the demographic and economic characteristics of DRS-clustered communities. DRS are not spread evenly over the landscape, and so we begin by identifying areas of significant debt-related suspension concentration. Matching our DRS data to data from the American Community Survey, we then identify, compare and contrast the demographic and economic characteristics of these DRS clusters.

Second, we examine the social service needs of individuals in DRS clustered communities. The suspension of a driver's license is likely one of many related challenges. To better understand their scale and scope, we analyze the nature and distribution of calls to the region's social service hotline (2-1-1) across the previously identified DRS-clustered communities.

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