

## ELIMINATING FINES AND FEES

**Do libraries charge overdue fines?**

Small libraries (<25K) 88%

Medium libraries (25K-99K) 95%

Large libraries (100K+) 96%

**Have you considered eliminating fines?**

Small 25.9% Medium 31.6% Large 53.5%

**Others “costs” associated with collecting fines:**

- Stressful for staff
- “Not worth the severed relationships”
- Impacts those who can least afford it
- Contributes to negative stereotypes

**WHY do libraries charge fines?**

- Teaches civic responsibility
- Ensures equal access

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**Findings:**

**Late fees did not influence borrowing behavior**

- No significant difference in overdue rates between libraries that charged fees and those that did not

**Low fines did not reduce overdue rates**

- Small fines did not result in more prompt return of material
- Large fines did

**Rewards did not affect overdue and loss rates**

- Incentives (gift cards, etc.) did not change the speed of return of items
- Eliminating late fees did not affect circulation rates

**What do borrowers think about fines and fees?**

- Libraries are unfriendly places with strict rules
- Low-income users avoid using the library to avoid fines and fees
- Parents say fines and fees are a barrier to the library

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**WHY eliminate late fees?**

- Dollars are negligible
  - Fines feel like punishment
  - Removes barriers
  - Provides equitable access
  - Promotes literacy
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## **Logistics**

- **Eliminate fines**
- **Reminder notice sent 3 days prior to due date**
- **Overdue notice sent, strongly suggesting return although no fines**
- **Invoice sent at 12 weeks (60 days)**
- **Card blocked after \$10, accounts exceeding \$25 is referred to Unique**
- **Unique Management (collection agency) used for unresolved charges**

## **Still collect for (FEES not fines)**

- **Lost items**
- **Damaged items**
- **Replacement Library Cards**
- **Printing cost**

**Eliminate fines: 80-90% of patrons are (mostly) happy. 10% are a tad skeptical**

## **Eliminating fines Increase Children's Material Circulation**

- **+4% media**
- **+8% juvenile materials (fiction & nonfiction)**
- **+16% picture books**

## **Eliminating fines is a WIN-WIN**

### **For Patrons:**

- **Good will**
- **Trust**
- **Accountability**
- **More participation in library programs & services**

### **For the Library:**

- **Responsive to community needs**
- **Fewer uncomfortable conversations**
- **Continued rate of return**
- **Less cost to administer**
- **More use of collection**