

# Wylie Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting

July 22, 2024 – 7:00 PM

Council Chambers - 300 Country Club Rd., Bldg. 100 Wylie, TX 75098



---

## CALL TO ORDER

Staff Spotlight, Carmen Ramirez, Library Technician

## COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

*Any member of the public may address the Board regarding an item that is not listed on the Agenda. Members of the public must fill out a form prior to the meeting in order to speak. The Board requests that comments be limited to three minutes for an individual, six minutes for a group. In addition, the Library Board is not allowed to converse, deliberate or take action on any matter presented during citizen participation.*

## CONSENT AGENDA

*All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Board and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.*

[A.](#) Review and approve the June 24 meeting minutes

## REGULAR AGENDA

1. Nominate and vote on Board Chair
2. Nominate and vote on Board Vice Chair

## WORK SESSION

[WS1.](#) Review Fine Free Information

[WS2.](#) Review monthly report

[WS3.](#) Review upcoming programs

## ADJOURNMENT

## CERTIFICATION

I certify that this Notice of Meeting was posted on July 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. on the outside bulletin board at Wylie City Hall, 300 Country Club Road, Building 100, Wylie, Texas, a place convenient and readily accessible to the public at all times.

---

Stephanie Storm, City Secretary

---

Date Notice Removed

The Wylie Municipal Complex is wheelchair accessible. Sign interpretation or other special assistance for disabled attendees must be requested 48 hours in advance by contacting the City Secretary's Office at 972.516.6020. Hearing impaired devices are available from the City Secretary prior to each meeting.

If during the course of the meeting covered by this notice, the Board should determine that a closed or executive meeting or session of the Board or a consultation with the attorney for the City should be held or is required, then such closed or executive meeting or session or consultation with attorney as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code § 551.001 et. seq., will be held by the Board at the date, hour and place given in this notice as the Board may conveniently meet in such closed or executive meeting or session or consult with the attorney for the City concerning any and all subjects and for any and all purposes permitted by the Act, including, but not limited to, the following sanctions and purposes:

Texas Government Code Section:

§ 551.071 – Private consultation with an attorney for the City.

§ 551.073 – Discussing prospective gift or donation to the City.

§ 551.076 – Discussing deployment of security personnel or devices or security audit.



# Library Advisory Board

## Minutes

**In-person Meeting**  
**June 24, 2024 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Council Chambers**

### CALL TO ORDER

*Announce the presence of a Quorum.*

Justin called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. The following Library Board members were present: Justin Strauch, Brian Ortiz, Monica Munoz, Zachary Todd, Roberta Schaafsma, Irene Chavira & Toshia Kimball & Ofilia Barrera Board Liaison.

### STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*Megan Goode, Reference Assistant (Adult Services)*

Megan has been with the library for 11 years; she joined the staff in 2013. She enjoys the variety of different projects her position is a part of.

- Senior Book Club
- Silver Linings
  - Outreach for citizens with any kind of mobility impairment
- Interlibrary loans

Megan also enjoys her time at the help desks. This affords her the opportunity to interact with Wylie citizens.

- Toshia inquired how the books are chosen for the Senior Book Club.
  - ◆ With a need for books in a variety of formats: large print, regular print, digital, & audio, the Adult Services Staff composes a list of around 20 popular titles and the book club members vote for their top 11 choices.
    - Ofilia added, The Friends of the Library have begun purchasing the books for the club because since Covid the cost for large print books has become very expensive.
- Justin asked what the average attendance is for the Senior Book Club.
  - ◆ Usually from 15 to 20 and many have been attending for 8 or more years.
- Roberta questioned if this is the same book club that used to meet at the Senior Center.
  - ◆ It is; however, since the transformation of that facility into the Community Center, the library has fully taken on all aspects of the club.

### CITIZENS COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

*Residents may address Board regarding an item that is not listed on the Agenda. Residents must provide their name and address. Board requests that comments be limited to three (3) minutes. In addition, the Board is not allowed to converse, deliberate, or take action on any matter presented during citizen participation.*

*No citizens were present at the meeting.*

## CONSENT AGENDA

---

### 1. Consider and act upon approval of the Minutes of the April 22, 2024 Library Board Meeting.

#### **Board Action:**

- The Library Board Minutes of April 22, 2024.
    - ◆ Justin encouraged members to review the minutes.
    - ◆ A misspelling was pointed out and attributed to the autocorrect feature: three occurrences of Brain should be Brian.
      - Zach made a motion to approve the minutes with the three spelling edits.
      - Monica seconded the motion.
- All votes were in favor; the motion passed 7-0.

## WORK SESSION – DISCUSSION ITEMS

---

### WS1. Review the monthly report

While providing an overview of the report to the Board, Ofilia noted that this month's report reflects the beginning of Summer for the Library as well as the impact of the storm that left many citizens without electricity for some time.

- The large increase in attendance for Kid Events is primarily due to the Summer Kick-Off Event which had just over 2200 in attendance.
- Justin requested clarification on the New Borrowers section.
  - ◆ Ofilia confirmed that those numbers represent new library card accounts.
- Toshia asked for an update on Business Exchange.
  - ◆ Attendance typically drops around holidays and during the summer; then picks back up in the fall.
- Zach inquired about the tour given to the Town of Prosper.
  - ◆ The mayor, city management staff, and library staff for Prosper are touring several other libraries to get ideas. They are looking to build a new library, possibly a library/rec combination, and were interested in the pros & cons of the setup.
- Toshia asked how the library garden is doing.
  - ◆ The summer heat does have an effect on the garden and its volunteers. Many of the volunteers come early in the mornings and the watering schedules have been increased. A new garden shed has been installed.
- Justin questioned what two meeting highlights were: Lisa's virtual meeting with the Hoopla Rep and Ofilia & Debbie's meeting with B&B Theaters.
  - ◆ The Hoopla meeting was to discuss possible budgeting solutions.
  - ◆ B&B Theaters invited the library to have an information table setup at the showing of IF, the movie about imaginary friends. It was a great way to connect with people from some of the farther out areas such as: Rockwall, Royse City & Greenville.
- Justin asked for more information in reference to the meeting with a vendor regarding the smart chute and people counters.
  - ◆ The current smart chute is in need of an upgrade; however, it would be very expensive. The people counters only read individuals passing through the gates near the service desk; they do not capture those who enter the building and head directly to events in the rooms just off the lobby. The meeting was with an alternate vendor in hopes that they will be able to offer some reasonable solutions.
- Justin asked how the Taste of Wylie was.
  - ◆ Xcenia shared her experience as a first time volunteer.
- Toshia inquired about the FY25 Budget talks.

- ◆ The library has only requested a slight increase for digital resources.

## **WS2. Review upcoming programs**

Ofilia highlighted a few of the noteworthy programs coming up in July.

- Friends of the Library Annual Book Sale & Presale
- Harry Potter's Birthday Party
- Mariachi Harp
- Justin asked if summer has impacted teen attendance for programs.
  - ◆ The Teen Librarian is so well connected with them, throughout the school year, that attendance stays strong for the variety summer programs.
- Brian inquired about Checkmate: Chess Night
  - ◆ The program is not necessarily a tournament, although some participants may choose to play that way. This will be the library's first chess program and is intended for all skill levels.

## **WS3. LAB Meeting Dates June 2024 - June 2025**

- During the July 22nd meeting, a vote will be taken for chair.
- The November 25th meeting may be canceled due to the proximity of the holiday.

## **WS4. Stakeholder survey for strategic plan**

The QR code provided in the agenda packet is specific to the stakeholder survey and the Board is encouraged to fill it out by August 31st. This will ensure feedback is considered for the new 5-year strategic plan. The QR codes posted throughout the library are specific to the patron survey.

## **WS5. Fine free discussion**

The library is one of few in the area that still charges a fine for late fees. Ofilia asked if the Board would be interested in discussing the removal of these fines and what data would be needed for consideration. Articles, financials, and any other data that can be gathered will be presented at a future meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Toshia made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Monica seconded the motion. All votes were in favor; the motion passed 7:0. The meeting adjourned at 7:54pm.

---

**Justin Strauch, Chair**

<https://slate.com/culture/2017/02/librarians-are-realizing-that-overdue-fines-undercut-libraries-missions.html>

# Long Overdue

Why public libraries are finally eliminating the late-return fine.

BY RUTH GRAHAM FEB 06, 2017 • 10:11 AM



In 1906, a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press* described a scene that had become all too common at the city's public libraries. A child hands an overdue book to a stern librarian perched behind a desk, and with a "sinister expression," the librarian demands payment of a late fine. In some cases, the child grumbles and pays the penny or two. But in others—often at the city's smaller, poorer library branches—the offender cannot pay, and his borrowing privileges are revoked. "Scarcely a day passes but it does not leave its record of tears and sighs and vain regrets in little hearts," the reporter lamented.

More than a century later, similar dramas are still enacted in libraries across the country every day. In some districts, up to 35 percent of patrons have had their borrowing privileges revoked because of unpaid fines. Only these days, it's librarians themselves who often lament what the Detroit reporter called "a tragedy enacted in this little court of equity." Now some libraries are deciding that the money isn't worth the hassle—not only that, but that fining patrons works against everything that public libraries ought to stand for.

Library fines in most places remain quaintly low, sometimes just 10 cents per day. But one user's nominal is another's exorbitant. If a child checks out 10 picture books, the kind of haul librarians love to encourage, and then his mother's work schedule prevents her from returning them for a week past the due date, that's \$7. For middle-class patrons, that may feel like a slap on the wrist, or even a feel-good donation. For low-income users, however, it can be a prohibitively expensive penalty. With unpredictable costs hovering over each checkout, too many families decide it's safer not to use the library at all. As one California mother told the *New York Times* last spring, "I try to explain to [my daughter], 'Don't take books out. It's so expensive.'"

The good news is that librarians are noticing. Since 2010, districts in northern Illinois, Massachusetts, California, and Ohio—to name a few—have eliminated some or all late fines. Others are dramatically lowering penalties for late returns; last year, San Jose, California, halved daily fines to 25 cents and slashed the maximum payment per item to \$5 from \$20. The American Library Association issued a policy brief on services for the poor in 2012 whose first point was a vow to promote the removal of fees and fines. Is this “the end of overdue fines?” wondered the Public Library Association as the trend continued to gather steam a few years later.

In Columbus, Ohio, the library board announced in December that it would eliminate overdue fines starting on Jan. 1. The move came when the board realized that fines not only weren’t encouraging the timely return of materials—the little existing research on the topic suggests that small fees do not affect overdue rates—but that fines were actively working against the library’s very reason for existence. “We’ve shut off access to the library when one of our staunchest principles is trying to provide the widest access to materials that we can,” the system’s CEO, Patrick Losinski, said. “We just felt fines ultimately were counter to the overall purpose and vision of our library.” Instead of issuing daily fines, the library now blocks borrowing privileges for anyone with material more than 21 days late and charges replacement fees after 35 days that are refunded if the item is returned. It already offers a separate kids’ card, which allows children to borrow up to three books at a time and doesn’t charge overdue fines.

Late fines and replacement fees can have a huge cost to the communities libraries are meant to serve. Low-income children are dramatically less likely to have access to books at home or to spend time reading with their parents. A study conducted in the 1990s found that the average child in Beverly Hills, California, had four times as many books at home as the average child in Compton, California, had in her classroom library. (The average Compton kid, meanwhile, had 2.7 books at home.) More recent research has identified many poor neighborhoods as “book deserts,” with dramatically fewer reading resources than wealthier areas. “We’re disproportionately affecting the people we’re most interested in getting to the library,” said Meg DePriest, the author of a 2016 white paper recommending that Colorado libraries eliminate fines on children’s materials, “the people who can’t afford to buy books themselves.”



<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/imagining-fine-free-future/>

# Imagining A Fine-Free Future

## Midwinter panel argues for the elimination of fines

By Phil Morehart | February 11, 2018



Peter Bromberg, Sarah Houghton, and Gretchen Caserotti, at "Fine Free Future," a Center for the Future of Libraries program at the 2018 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Denver

**T**o fine or not to fine? The question divides the library community. In Fine Free Future, a Center for the Future of Libraries program at the 2018 Midwinter Meeting & Exhibits in Denver, three librarians waded into the argument to advocate for the elimination of fines for overdue materials and to advise librarians on how to make a case to administrators and community members who may be opposed to the idea.

revenue stream for the city” to “It’s a tool to teach responsibility to younger patrons.” She said there is little research to support these, according to “Removing Barriers to Access,” a Colorado State Library white paper. Rather, there are larger philosophical arguments against fines.

Gretchen Caserotti, director of Meridian (Ida.) Library District, began by asking the standing-room-only crowd why libraries charge fines. Answers ranged from “It’s a

“Are they the right thing to do?” asked Peter Bromberg, director of Salt Lake City Public Library.

Fines adversely affect lower-income populations, Bromberg said, and can make people avoid the library altogether. He relayed an anecdote about a conversation he had with a Lyft driver about fines. The driver stopped going to the library because of his backlogged fines.

“It’s like having to pay another credit-card bill at the end of the month that I can’t afford,” the driver told Bromberg. The words had an impact on the librarian.

The panel broke down various arguments and conversation points to help librarians justify eliminating fines. They said that it was not the library’s job to teach responsibility to patrons.

Sarah Houghton, director of San Rafael (Calif.) Public Library, said fines get in the way of a library’s mission to serve the entire community, regardless of socio-economic standing. Barriers exist for some populations to pay fines, and by enforcing them, libraries are subverting their core values.

“Is it the library’s job to teach moral instruction?” Houghton asked. “It’s not our job to do that; it’s not a core value. We have to weigh our core value of access to all over moral responsibility.”

The trio insisted that knowing baseline census, demographic, and economic data is crucial to swaying administrators and community to eliminate fines. Politics must be considered as well. Bromberg noted that compelling arguments can be made to convince detractors of all political leanings by simply using the right data for the right audience.

Logistics must be considered as well, they said. Libraries must know what their ILS systems can and cannot do in regards to fine elimination. Fine overrides may have to be conducted manually. Staff retraining may be necessary, especially for staffers who may be opposed to the elimination of fines. And policies explaining just what fines will be eliminated or reduced must be put in place.

The panelists explained their own libraries’ experiences with fine elimination, and the results were overwhelmingly positive.

Bromberg said checkouts rose 10% at Salt Lake City Public Library, and the number of new cardholders rose 3.5%. Getting rid of fines brought new people into the library and allowed previous users to return, he said.

Houghton relayed a story about a mother who came into the library to return an armful of long-overdue children’s books shortly after San Rafael Public Library instituted its no-fine policy for kids’ books. When told that she wouldn’t be fined, the mother broke down in tears.

“I can now afford to buy dinner tonight,” she said to Houghton. The woman’s response alone is enough to justify the end of fines, the panel agreed.

# Fine Farewells: LJ's 2022 Fines and Fees Survey

by [Andrew Gerber](#)

Sep 28, 2022 | Filed in [News](#)

## LJ's 2022 Fines and Fees Survey shows a transformed landscape since 2017



Many public libraries are finding it valuable—even profitable in ways that go beyond revenue—to reduce and eliminate some fees, particularly late fines, as shown by the responses to LJ's 2022 Fines and Fees Survey. In comparison to LJ's 2017 survey, the percentage of U.S. public libraries charging

patrons overdue fines dropped dramatically from 92 to 36. From near universal to a minority represents an amazing sea change in the core assumptions of how U.S. public libraries operate in only five years. Some other fees (such as those for printing, copying, and faxing) are still charged by 78 percent of libraries, still a significant decrease from 2017's 86 percent.

While eliminating late fees was not an option for some libraries surveyed in 2022, the respondents whose libraries did abolish them pointed to increases in patron satisfaction and participation and to staff morale. One librarian in Minnesota enthused, "It has engendered a lot of good will in the community and we have seen people—and even materials!—return to the libraries after years away."

Three hundred twenty people participated in the survey. In every size category, especially the largest, the number of libraries that have dropped fines have increased in the past five years.

Among the 64 percent of libraries that do not currently charge late fees, certain trends emerge. A nearly universal 95 percent of this group previously charged fines for overdue materials. About half (54 percent) eliminated fees during the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2022, and many chose to keep this policy afterward.

Some hoped the lack of fines would increase patrons' usage of the library, and in a number of cases this appears to be true. A quarter (26 percent) said circulation in their libraries has increased, about the same (25 percent) stated that it hadn't, and the remaining 49 percent did not know—comments indicated that they were unsure whether circulation changes were attributable to changes in fine policy, the pandemic, or both.

Eight percent of newly fine-free libraries, according to the survey, attempted to replace or offset lost fine revenue through fundraising, collecting voluntary donations at the circulation desk (such as via a fine forgiveness jar), and increasing their local budgeting request. One library added a

07/22/2024 Item WS1.

passport agency; another started charging for for-profit/private meeting room reser

**LIBRARY CHARGES A FEE FOR...**

	2017	2022
Printing	94%	95%
Copy machine/Photocopier	97%	94%
Faxing	n/a	61%
Processing fee for replacement of lost/damaged items	54%	53%
Library card replacement	77%	52%
Non-resident fee	48%	48%
Space rental/Meeting rooms	38%	34%
Debt collection processing fee	34%	25%
Interlibrary loan/Document delivery	32%	22%
3-D printing	6%	19%
Scanning	16%	11%
Test Proctoring	n/a	10%
Notary services	n/a	6%
Holds not picked up	12%	3%
Special Collections/Genealogy services	3%	2%

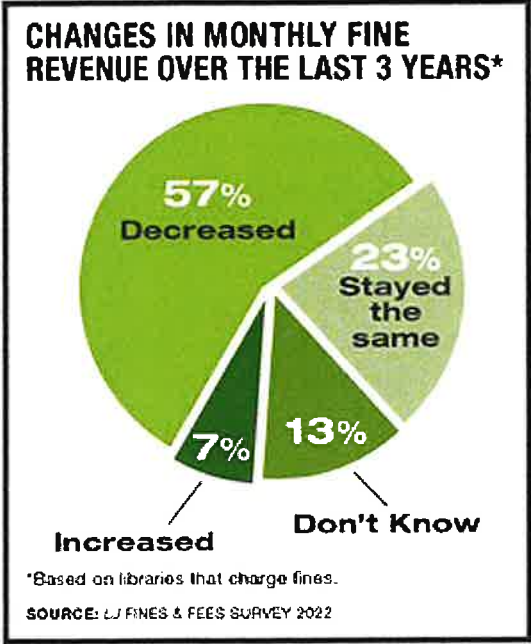
SOURCE: L/ FINES &amp; FEES SURVEY 2017, 2022

**A WEALTH OF REASONS**

Respondents who chose to eliminate fines listed various grounds for their decisions, including opportunities to foster good will and improve customer service, promote social justice, and adhere to their mission statements and directives. In some cases, the decision to discontinue late fees came about because libraries successfully suspended them during the COVID pandemic and decided to continue doing so. Other libraries made the decision to not charge late fees decades ago.

12

Some looked at the success of other libraries that have gone fine-free. Adult Program Coordinator and Reference Librarian Kristina Giovanni of Bloomingdale Public Library, IL, recounted, “A neighboring library stopped charging fines/fees in 2019 and their success, on top of the pandemic in 2020 that involved patrons holding onto materials far longer than we would typically allow, made going fine-free the most sensible option.”



San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) Strategic Data Analyst Zahir Mammadzada described how the library came to a similar conclusion. “Based on extensive research of national publications, conversations with library leaders and experts across the country, surveys of patrons and staff, and rigorous analysis of SFPL data, SFPL concluded that the use of overdue fines did not align with the library’s goals,” he wrote. “Overdue fines restrict access and exacerbate inequality by disproportionately affecting low-income and racial-minority communities, create conflict between patrons and the library, require an inefficient use of staff time, and do not consistently ensure borrowed materials end up back on library shelves.” Many other respondents agreed.

President and CEO Tonya Aikens explained that Howard County Library System (HCLS), MD, found the decision to be both practical and in accordance with the library’s philosophy. The lack of late fees “removes a barrier to access,” she wrote. “Being fine-free is in keeping with HCLS’s commitment to equity and inclusion, and it positions us to more fully live our mission of providing high quality public education for all Howard County residents. At any given time, seven percent of customers have their accounts blocked due to overdue fines. Full access has a dividend for Howard County—we all benefit from a curious and engaged community.”

Libraries’ consideration of communities’ needs was often a factor. “We originally stopped charging fines because of COVID,” wrote Tami Cox, assistant director of East Moline Public Library, IL. “Our mission is to serve our patrons and some of them cannot afford to pay a \$10 fine. That is literally a dinner for their family, and why would we want someone to have to pick between food and a library fine?” Casandria Crane, director of American Fork Library, UT, commented, “We realized the poorest in our community were paying the most.”

## COLLECTING FEES

All fee-collecting libraries accept cash payments. Personal checks and money orders accepted at 88 percent of libraries, a sizable majority but still down from 2017's 96 percent. Conversely, the percentage of libraries that accept credit and debit card payment for fines has increased from 59 to nearly three quarters, at 73 percent. Four percent of libraries take digital payment methods through apps such as Paypal, Venmo, and Apple Pay.

Most (92 percent) libraries' circulation staff notify and remind patrons about owed fines. Four-fifths (82 percent) inform patrons on their online accounts, and two-thirds (64 percent) use email. Other methods include paper mail (54 percent), phone calls (41 percent), texts (37 percent), printed messages on checkout slips (31 percent), and mobile apps (17 percent). Ninety-one percent of libraries train staff to communicate with patrons about fines owed and the concept of shared resources.

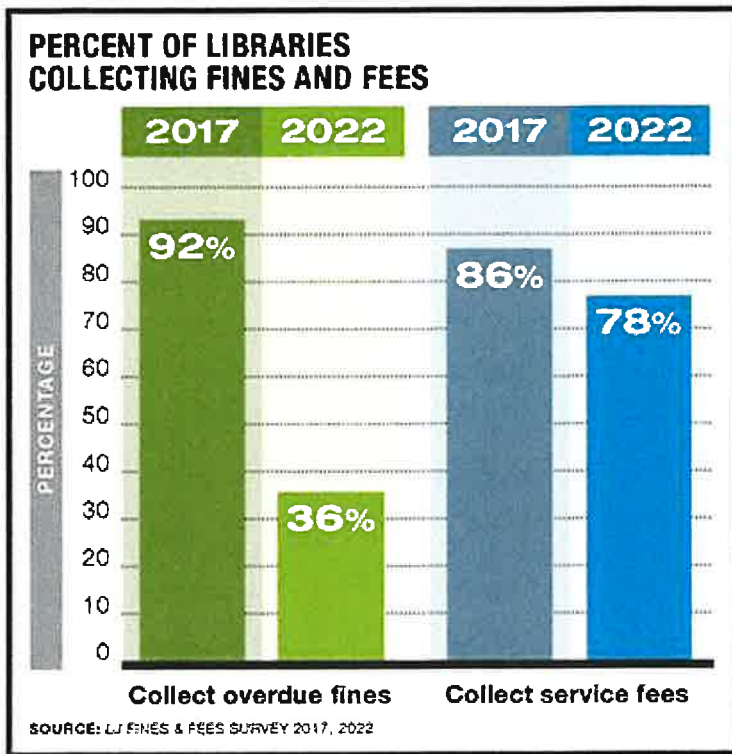
Ninety-six percent of libraries charging late fees suspend patrons' borrowing privileges after they have reached a specific amount of outstanding fees, at an average of \$11. When fines remain outstanding too long, about a third (31 percent) contact collection agencies. This is significantly fewer than 2017's 44 percent. The average fine threshold that prompts libraries to refer to a collection agency is \$39. Nine percent of respondents' libraries have pursued legal action for unpaid fines, 70 percent have not, and 21 percent were unsure.

Among the 78 percent of libraries that charge fees for services, the most common are for printing (95 percent), copying (94 percent), and faxing (61 percent). About half charge processing fees for replacement of lost and damaged items (53 percent), library card replacement (52 percent), and cards for nonresidents (48 percent). Most (81 percent) do not charge for participation in programs and events. The median monthly revenue from service fees is \$250, 38 percent lower than the median in 2017 (\$400).

**PAYMENT METHODS ACCEPTED**

	2017	2022
Cash	100%	100%
Check or money order	96%	88%
Credit/Debit card	59%	73%
Digital payments (e.g. PayPal, Venmo, Apple Pay)	n/a	4%

SOURCE: *LJ* FINES & FEES SURVEY 2017, 2022



## LATE RETURNS

At libraries that charge fines, it is estimated that 12.9 percent of all borrowed items are returned late, down from 2017's 14.9 percent, which may have to do with the introduction of automatic renewals. Some 60 percent of responding libraries automatically renew borrowed items. The survey did not ask respondents at libraries that do not charge fines what percent of borrowed materials are returned late or how late those items are.

Although there are fewer late returns at fine-charging libraries than in 2017, overdue items remain out longer. In 2017, 88 percent estimated that the average overdue book is

returned to the library within one week of the due date. In 2022, this percentage fell to 69 percent. The lateness tends to be shorter at libraries that automatically renew items.

## SHRINKING FINE REVENUE

Most libraries that still charge late fees do so out of necessity. One respondent in Pennsylvania explained, "We need the money as it is built into our budget. Even without the money we receive for fines, we are responsible for raising \$25,000 per year in fundraising activities just to balance our budget." Similarly, according to a New Jersey respondent, "We still rely on fines to support our operating budget. Until we can replace the revenue with another source, we're not in a position to get rid of them entirely."

Libraries that collect fines are earning less revenue from them in 2022 than in 2017. The monthly median fell dramatically from \$500 to \$200. Fifty-seven percent of respondents answered that fine revenue has decreased since 2019, citing various reasons. Half (51 percent) of the respondents blame decreased circulation and COVID for the decrease, 39 percent cite more digital checkouts, and 28 percent say it is the result of instituting automatic renewals. A quarter also changed their fine structure, such as eliminating fines for children's materials.

Fee-collecting libraries disperse these funds in various ways. Nearly two-thirds (64) place funds in a general library fund; 22 percent allocate the funds to a general municipality or county fund. Only 10 percent earmark the funds for library materials, and half as many use these funds for programming.

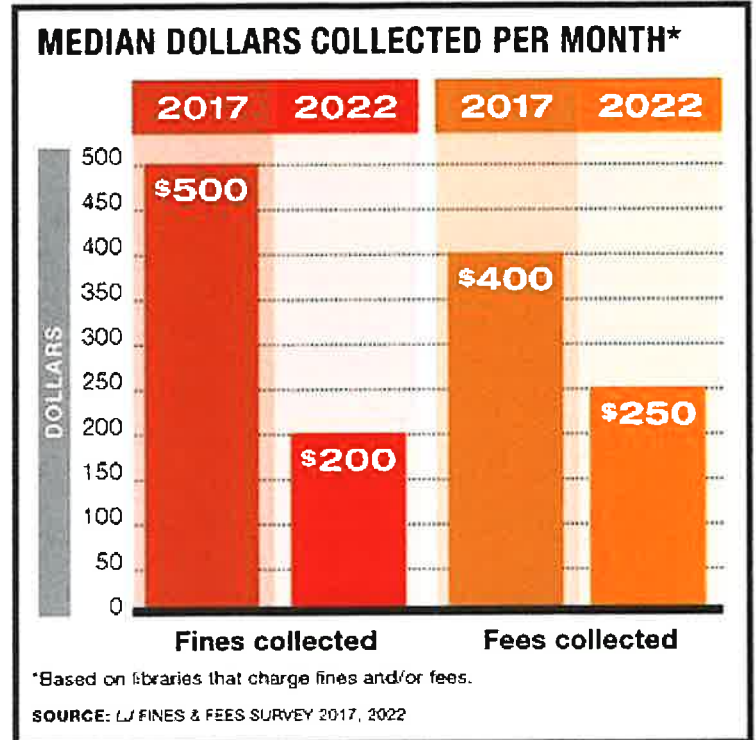
## COST OF COLLECTION

When deciding whether or not to go fine-free, the cost-effectiveness of collecting outstanding fines is a consideration for some. Libraries estimate that they spend an average of \$198 per month collecting fines in staff time, collection fees, etc.—seven percent of the average monthly fine income (\$3,001).

Library Manager SueAnn Burkhardt explained the process of how Luther Callaway Public Library, FL, approached the question: “A study was done by the library taking into consideration the staff hours spent on notifying patrons of overdue items, collecting overdue fines, reports and delivery to finance

department. It was found to be a loss for the library, not worth the time spent.” However, she added, “We were told specifically, by the county, to continue collecting fines regardless of costs incurred by the library.”

County Librarian Todd Deck said that Tehama County Library, CA, determined that stopping late fees saves the library money and benefits both staff and patrons. “It isn’t financially responsible,” he wrote about collecting fines. “Last year, the library collected \$6,000 from overdue fines. This represents less than 1.9 percent of the library’s overall annual operating budget. We estimate that going fine-free would result in a reduction of staff time to collect and process overdue fines; it will also encourage the return of library materials, so many items will not have to be repurchased. Once implemented at the Tehama County Library, a fine-free program is estimated to save \$7,280 annually.” (He also noted that it promotes the health and safety of patrons and staff by cutting down on physical transactions during the ongoing pandemic.)



## FINE ALTERNATIVES



Of libraries that collect fines, 82 percent—up from 61 percent in 2017—offer ways to clear their fines without paying money. Sixty-nine percent have waived fines for various reasons. Thirty-six percent allow people to donate food to charity drives in lieu of payment. Other methods include fine amnesty periods (31 percent), volunteering in exchange for fines (9 percent), and donations of materials to the library (5 percent). Five percent allow children and teens to “read down their fines.”

About two-thirds (68 percent) have considered eliminating fines altogether, twice the number that were considering going fine-free in 2017. By comparison, only two percent of those not charging fines are considering adding them. Respondents listed several reasons why their libraries still charge fines besides financial dependence on them. Some cited a belief that patrons must be held accountable for lateness, and that without consequences nothing would stop people from returning materials late or simply keeping them. Others said that even when directors and staff favored eliminating some or all fees, municipal officials and library boards do not support this course of action.

#### SURVEY STAT

Of libraries that collect fines, **82%** offer ways for patrons to clear their fines without paying money

## COMPELLING ARGUMENTS

While some directors and staff members received enthusiastic support from their boards or local government for dropping late fees, others found challenges to getting consensus from stakeholders. “Emotionally and morally almost everyone was in favor of it,” recalled Jessica

Paulsen, patron experience manager at Jefferson County Public Library, CO. “Practically, especially financially, was harder for some people to reconcile.”

Yolo County, CA, used a test case to convince stakeholders. “We went fine-free for youth first and monitored the results,” explained Director Mark Fink. “The data demonstrated an increase in new cardholders, and existing cardholders using the library more, and there was not a substantial increase in lost/missing items. This data made consensus easy after it was presented.” Clintonville Public Library, WI, also met success with a similar approach.

In some cases, the success of other libraries’ abolishment of overdue fees managed to convince stakeholders, as did the success of automatic renewals.

Advocates used a combination of hard data and anecdotal evidence about the virtues of dropping late fines. Meg Lojek, director of McCall Public Library, ID, wrote, “Honestly, one of the biggest arguments in our favor was that, during COVID we stopped charging fines due to wanting people to stay home and stay safe. Then we were able to show the limited impact on our budget and no impact on people getting materials back to the library. Emotionally, it is easy

to tell the stories about families who don't want to borrow books because of the fines and to show that it is an equity issue—perhaps those who could benefit from the library the most are the same people who fear they will have to pay fines.”

This point was illustrated by Deck's comment: “Lots of data was helpful. But the single most impactful tool was reading a letter from an eight-year-old asking for forgiveness for having late library books.”

The late fee discussion for Delaware County District Library, OH, also looked at a personal request, wrote Director George Needham. “This was all it took to seal the deal: One letter from a woman who couldn't pay a small fine she owed, but offered to work off her fine so that her kids could have access to the collection. I had the numbers for what we would be giving up, but the letter was the emotional impact that pushed the discussion over.”

Alicia Blake, assistant branch manager at Worcester County Public Library, MD, offered advice for libraries considering eliminating overdue fees: “Fine receipts are less than 0.4 percent of our county library's annual budget. It was and is such an insignificant amount in library revenue, yet patrons who had fines potentially stopped visiting the library altogether. My advice: ask yourself, Would you rather collect 0.4 percent profit or let a child take books home to read with [the adults in their lives], increase literacy rates in your county, and ultimately change the way your community approaches library use (for the good)?”

As libraries continue to gather data, public input, and successful examples from their peers—particularly as the coming years let them judge the evidence on its own merits, rather than as a response to pandemic shutdowns—they will be better able to evaluate their approach to collecting fines and fees. It will be interesting to see what LJ's 2027 survey reveals.

Fine receipts are less than 0.4 percent of our county library's annual budget. It was and is such an insignificant amount in library revenue, yet patrons who had fines potentially stopped visiting the library altogether. My advice: ask yourself, Would you rather collect 0.4 percent profit or let a child take books home to read with [the adults in their lives], increase literacy rates in your county, and ultimately change the way your community approaches library use (for the good)?

—ALICIA BLAKE, WORCESTER COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY, MD

---

## METHODOLOGY

The Fines and Fees survey was emailed to a random list of U.S. public library employees on May 26, 2022, with a reminder on June 16. The survey closed on July 1, with 320 U.S. public library responses. Data reported in total was weighted by library size to match the weights used in the 2017 Fines and Fees survey.

---

The complete 2022 Fines and Fees survey can be downloaded [here](#).

# Smith Public Library

# FINE FREE INFORMATION



# \$ Why fine? \$

- **As a motivator to return items on time.**
- **Patrons think the library is getting those funds, therefore they are supporting the library.**

## The Reality of fines

- **Fines affect families and economically disadvantaged patrons most.**
- **Instead of encouraging them to return the items, those late items do not come back at all for fear of fines.**
- **Reduced use of the library because of fines on accounts.**

# What fines cost the library.

- **Staff time/stress**
- **Lost items**
- **Inferior customer service creating a combative atmosphere**
- **Lessens library use**
- **Loss in materials**



# Fine free is all around us

<b>North Texas Fine Free Libraries</b>			
Addison	Dallas	Grapevine	Richardson
Arlington	Denton	Howe	Richland Hills
Aubrey	Desoto	Irving	Rowlette
Bedford	Duncancville	Keller	Royce City
Benbrook	Euleess	Kennedale	Sachse
Burleson	Flower Mound	Lewisville	Saginaw
Carrollton	Forest Hill	McKinney	Sanger
Cedar Hill	Fort Worth	Mesquite	Sherman
Colony	Frisco	Minteral Wells	Southlake
Coppell	Garland	Plano	Weatherford



# Define fine free

**Going fine free would mean eliminating late fees. This would not affect damaged or lost item fees. If there's a barcode or spine label missing, then a patron would be charged a replacement fee for those components.**

**The only thing they would not be charged for is returning items past the due date. They would not be allowed to borrow any other items until all the past due items have been returned. This is commonly referred to as the "old Netflix model" when you had to mail back a DVD before obtaining the next one.**



# Breakdown of the numbers

Amounts Tendered	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024 - 3 quarters
Printing (3D & Paper)	\$6,015.41	\$6,774.09	\$6,712.16	\$8,532.78	\$6,313.47
Circulation Fees (Card replacement, processing)	\$912.21	\$1,065.60	\$1,275.01	\$1,254.30	\$988.79
Damaged & Lost Items	\$6,440.42	\$8,744.50	\$8,563.41	\$10,141.95	\$7,271.93
Meeting Room Rentals	\$625.00	\$922.50	\$165.00	\$1,455.00	\$930.00
Overdue items	\$20,673.02	\$17,808.78	\$14,863.40	\$15,152.38	\$12,536.80
<b>Overall Totals:</b>	<b>\$34,666.06</b>	<b>\$35,315.47</b>	<b>\$31,578.98</b>	<b>\$36,536.41</b>	<b>\$28,040.99</b>
<b>All fines and fees except Overdue Items</b>	<b>\$13,993.04</b>	<b>\$17,506.69</b>	<b>\$16,715.58</b>	<b>\$21,384.03</b>	<b>\$15,504.19</b>
<b>Overdue items</b>	<b>\$20,673.02</b>	<b>\$17,808.78</b>	<b>\$14,863.40</b>	<b>\$15,152.38</b>	<b>\$12,536.80</b>

**The City takes in on average \$4 million dollars in fees across all departments. Using an average of the overall totals for library fees, the total contributed by the library would equal .875%. Overdue items alone equal only .4265% of total City fees.**



# How would this work?

- **An ammendment to the City Ordinance would be required to eliminate late fines. This would have to be presented to City Council and would require their approval.**
- **Begin by doing a period of amnesty to encourage people to bring their items back with no penalties prior to the policy change.**
- **Set a date and eliminate fines beginning with that date.**





# Questions?

- **Any questions over what was presented?**
- **What other info would you like to see?**
- **Are there any issues that you say that have not been brought up?**

## Monthly Report for the Library Advisory Board

(Based on Weekly Reports sent to City Manager's office every Thursday)

	June 20 - July 17	May 23 - June 19	Apr 18 - May 22
<b>Storytime</b>	1,088	751	474
<b>Kid Events</b>	1,437	3,244	296
<b>Teen Events</b>	101	45	23
<b>Adult Events</b>	86	262	77
<b>Outreach</b>	47	200	230
<b>Business Exchange</b>	141	115	179
<b>Circulation</b>	50,723	56,573	56,353
<b>Visitors</b>	21,329	22,742	17,984
<b>New Borrowers</b>	664	875	493
<b>Drive-Thru</b>	278	256	339
<b>Holds Processed</b>	5,711	5,767	6,034
<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Searches</b>	
Apr 2024	37	722	
May 2024	25	293	
Jun 2024	12	337	
<b>Creativebug</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Total Video Views</b>	<b>Hours Viewed</b>
Apr 2024	4	0	0
May 2024	6	10	0.37
Jun 2024	6	25	1.27
<b>Data Axle</b>	<b>Log-ins</b>	<b># of Searches</b>	<b>Total Records Downloaded</b>
Apr 2024	22	70	1,755
May 2024	15	44	1,155
Jun 2024	23	153	6,435
<b>Gale Courses</b>	<b>Enrollments</b>	<b>Total Course Log-ins</b>	<b>Total Minutes in Class</b>
Apr 2024	21	154	19,389

May 2024	18	251	32,531
Jun 2024	31	233	24,199
<b>Mango Languages</b>	<b>Total Sessions</b>	<b>Total Learning Time</b>	<b>Average Learning Time</b>
Apr 2024	184	18:48:23	0:06:38
May 2024	125	12:09:33	0:05:19
Jun 2024	107	14:17:49	0:07:31
<b>Udemy</b>	<b>Active Users</b>	<b>Courses Enrolled</b>	<b>Video Mins</b>
Apr 2024	67	163	15,594.8
May 2024	60	135	9,641.3
Jun 2024			
<b>Library App</b>	<b>Devices</b>	<b>Launches</b>	<b>New Devices</b>
Apr 2024	729	4,180	119
May 2024	771	4,293	126
Jun 2024	859	4,817	176

**Digital Resources Usage:**  
**(Presented by calendar month)**

<b>Libby (Overdrive)</b>			
<b>Totals for Consortium</b>	<b>June 2024</b>	<b>May 2024</b>	<b>April 2024</b>
<b>Unique Users</b>	17,006 SPL - 1,929	16,633 SPL - 1,865	16,304 SPL - 1,829
<b>Check-Outs</b>	65,250 SPL -7,075	65,116 SPL - 7,049	63,795 SPL - 7,201
<b>Holds</b>	32,098	30,102	29,854
<b>Purchases</b>	818	484	647

<b>Hoopla Circulation Counts by Month:</b>								
	<b>Audio</b>	<b>Binge</b>	<b>Comics</b>	<b>Ebooks</b>	<b>Movies</b>	<b>Music</b>	<b>TV</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>April 2024</b>	1,147	15	145	461	109	39	68	1,984
<b>May 2024</b>	1,117	25	194	495	166	51	95	2,143
<b>June 2024</b>	1,021	31	95	442	136	62	63	1,850

<b>Kanopy</b>				
<b>Stats</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Pages</b>	<b>Plays</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b>April 2024</b>	3,115	3,841	611	14,537
<b>May 2024</b>	3,312	3,950	508	12,317
<b>June 2024</b>	2,970	3,585	343	8,047
<b>Kanopy</b>				
<b>Plays by Device</b>	<b>Tablet</b>	<b>Desktop</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Television</b>
<b>April 2024</b>	12.4%	11.1%	51.1%	25.4%
<b>May 2024</b>	15%	22.8%	38%	24.2%
<b>June 2024</b>	23.6%	9.6%	42.3%	24.5%

**Meetings/Training Highlights:**

- 6/20/24 Ofilia attended the Rotary Club meeting
- 6/20/24 Ofilia, Lisa and Debbie attended the post Kickoff Review meeting
- 6/21/24 Ofilia and Lisa one on one
- 6/24/24 Ofilia and Xcena attended the Library Advisory Board meeting
- 6/25/24 Ofilia and Lisa attended the monthly Chamber Luncheon
- 6/25/24 Weekly admin team meeting
- 6/25/24 Ofilia attended the City Council meeting
- 6/26/24 Ofilia attended the Collin County Historical Commission meeting for the grant presentation to the Wylie Historical Society for the annual downtown ghost tours
- 6/26/24 Ofilia and Debbie one on one

- 6/27/24 Ofilia and Lety one on one
- 6/28/24 Ofilia met with Audrey from Five Loaves
- 7/2/24 Lisa attended Statewide ILL Migration webinar
- 7/9/24 Ofilia and Elizabeth one on one
- 7/9/24 Ofilia attended the City Council meeting
- 7/10/24 Ofilia presented for ICAN + library tour
- 7/16/24 Ofilia attended the director staff meeting
- 7/16/24 Ofilia attended the Friends of the Library meeting

**Misc. Information:**

- 7/4/24 Library Closed for Independence Day
- 7/12/24 Friends of the Library Annual Book Presale
- 7/13/24 Friends of the Library Annual Book Sale

## Upcoming Library Programs - August 2024

### Programs for All

#### **Friends of the Library Tee Up for School - Mini Golf Event**

Saturday, August 10 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

This event will feature 18 mini golf holes all throughout the library! Families are encouraged to come and play after hours in the library. Registration on the Friends page at [WylieTexas.Gov/About/Friends](http://WylieTexas.Gov/About/Friends). There is a donation requested for admission.

### Adults

#### **Booked on Friday**

Friday August 9 @ Noon

August is our planning meeting, so no specific book discussion, but planning the list for the following year.

#### **Third Tuesday Book Club**

Tuesday, August 20 @ 1:00pm

Social networking and a good book. Immerse yourself into a good story with friends.

*Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver

### Preschool

Storytime, Kids and Teen Programming are on a break until September 4.