



CITY OF OREGON CITY LIBRARY BOARD AGENDA

Conference Room (2nd Floor), Oregon City Public Library, 606 John Adams St, Oregon City
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Ways to participate in this public meeting:

- Attend in person, location listed above. Please see the public comment guidelines below.
- Attend the livestream of the meeting on the City's YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofOregonCity>

- Register to provide electronic testimony (email dbutcher@orc.org by 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting to register)
 - Email dbutcher@orc.org (deadline to submit written testimony via email is 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting)
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1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes of the January 28, 2026 regular meeting.

3. LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. February, 2026 Library Director's Report and Statistics

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please see the public comment guidelines below.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Rotary Peace Pole
- b. Overdue Fines - LINCC Updates and Discussion

6. COMMUNICATIONS

7. ADJOURNMENT

PUBLIC COMMENT GUIDELINES

When a public comment period is included on a meeting agenda, members of the public are allowed up to three minutes to address the Library Board on any topic. Members of the Library Board do not generally engage in dialogue with those making comments but may refer any questions or issues raised to the Library Director. Any written comments or materials must be provided at least 48 hours prior to the meeting to Denise Butcher, Library Operations Manager (dbutcher@orc.org, 503-496-1601).

ADA NOTICE

The location is ADA accessible. Individuals requiring hearing devices or other assistance must make their request known 48 hours preceding the meeting by contacting Denise Butcher, Library Operations Manager (dbutcher@orc.org, 503-496-1601).

Agenda Posted at City Hall, Pioneer Community Center, Library, City Website.

Video Streaming & Broadcasts: The meeting is streamed live on the [Oregon City's website](#) and available on demand following the meeting. The meeting can be viewed on Willamette Falls Television channel 28 for

Oregon City area residents as a rebroadcast. Please contact WFMC at 503-650-0275 for a programming schedule.



**CITY OF OREGON CITY
LIBRARY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**Conference Room (2nd Floor), Oregon City Public Library, 606 John Adams St,
Oregon City**

Meeting

Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

David Goldberg called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Rachael Pandzik were present in person.

Staff Present: Greg Williams, Library Director, and Denise Butcher, Operations Manager, were present in person.

Candice Henkin, Oregon City School District Reading Specialist, was present as a guest.

ELECTION OF 2026 OFFICERS

Cynthia Andrews nominated David Goldberg as Chair; Bill Carton seconded the nomination. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, Lisa Oreskovich, and Rachael Pandzik voted aye.

Heidi Blackwell nominated Cynthia Andrews as Vice Chair; Bill Carton seconded the nomination. Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Rachael Pandzik voted aye.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Minutes of the October 29, 2025 Meeting and Minutes of the December 10, 2025 Meeting

Cynthia Andrews moved to approve the Minutes of the October 29 and December 10, 2025 meetings as submitted; Bill Carton seconded the motion. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Rachael Pandzik voted aye. The motion passed.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2. Greg Williams reported on the receipt of Library District distributions, Neighborhood Association boundaries, and updates on the Outreach Vehicle and Book Lockers.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

3. Library Board Vacancy

The vacancy from Laurie Sponaule's resignation due to relocation was discussed. It was decided to recommend to the mayor to the appointment of an applicant from the December interview pool.

4. Library District Task Force Update

David Goldberg reported on a work session he attended and noted that funding concerns raised by the Task Force had not been addressed in the recommendations. Greg Williams reported on the Board of County Commissioners' approved recommendations, including developing an Intergovernmental Agreement amendment clarifying use of district funds for capital expenses and allocated costs and developing a District-wide strategic plan.

5. Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC) Annual Progress Reports (APRs)

Greg Williams highlighted the annual reports and noted an error discovered after the drafts were sent to the Board. Questions and discussions about the Library Fund vs Library Reserve Fund, changes to local library hours due to funding issues, and ebook usage within MIX partners followed.

Cynthia Andrews motioned to accept the reports with the correction of the noted error; Lisa Oreskovich seconded. Cynthia Andrews, Heidi Blackwell, Bill Carton, David Goldberg, Lisa Oreskovich, and Rachael Pandzik voted aye. The motion passed.

6. Draft BY 25/27 Tactical Plan

Greg Williams shared the draft Tactical Plan. Questions and discussions about going fine free ensued; it was decided that it would be a specific discussion about the subject next Board Meeting. The group identified areas for wordsmithing.

COMMUNICATIONS

7. 2026 Liaison Assignments

Rachael Pandzik became Board Liaison to Friends of the Oregon City Library.

Friends Of the Library-The bookstore was doing well and added a new mystery genre section. Funds had been donated for a menstrual product dispenser in the bathroom nearest the teen area.

Foundation-Voted to increase the donation for Library Outreach Vehicle to \$75k and decided to forgo spring fundraiser due to concerns about many similarly timed events. Organization finances were stable and interest was high for large library projects.

Library District Advisory Committee (LDAC)-Had not met since last Task Force meeting.

Because Access Matters (BAM)-Lisa Oreskovich assumed role of temporary liaison to BAM, pending confirmation of the new Board member.

Teen Advisory Committee (TAC)-Did not meet in January; no updates.

ADJOURNMENT

David Goldberg adjourned the meeting at 6:04 pm.

Library Director's Report – February, 2026

Attached Documents

- January, 2026 General Library Statistics
- January, 2026 Programming Statistics
- Budget Report through January 31, 2026
- January, 2026 Social Media Report
- FY 2026/2027 Library District Distribution Estimate
 - Every year around February, Clackamas County prepares an estimate of anticipated Library District distributions for the next fiscal year (in general, they assume a 3% growth in taxes imposed and a 95.1% collection rate). The estimate for FY 26/27 is attached. The County's estimate of FY 26/27 Library District revenue for Oregon City (\$3,173,016) is very near the amount we budgeted for in the City budget (\$3,010,100).

Other Updates

- At the March 4th meeting of the City Commission, the Library Board Chair will deliver the Library Board's annual update. Representatives from the Friends of the Oregon City Public Library and the Oregon City Library Foundation will also be in attendance and each group will be presenting the City with checks for \$75,000 to help fund the Outreach Vehicle.

Oregon City Public library
Monthly Statistical Report
Reporting period: **January, 2026**

	Current Month	FY 25/26 YTD	Last Month	Same Month Last FY	FY 24/25 YTD
<u>PATRON STATISTICS</u>					
New Patron Registrations	303	3,334	261	259	4,363
Total Registered Patrons	25,626	25,626	25,317	22,170	22,170
Library Visitors (Ins)	14,008	93,905	12,127	9,722	87,817
Library Visitors (Outs)	13,633	91,441	11,806	9,625	86,316
<u>CIRCULATION (includes 1st-time circ and renewals)</u>					
Adult materials	16,586	110,398	15,731	13,900	106,758
YA materials	1,906	14,234	1,669	1,403	13,730
Children's materials	17,621	127,832	16,991	14,876	126,599
Electronic materials	11,581	75,875	10,559	10,075	64,217
Total Circulation	47,694	328,339	44,950	40,254	311,304
1st Time Circulation (Physical)	22,389	152,145	19,639	18,196	151,063
1st Time Circulation (Self-Check)	19,711	134,626	17,363	14,572	133,048
	88.0%	88.5%	88.4%	80.1%	88.1%
Holds received from other libraries	12,948	92,056	13,052	13,000	93,068
Holds sent to other libraries	12,453	85,186	11,737	11,295	83,095
	51.0%	51.9%	52.7%	53.5%	52.8%
	49.0%	48.1%	47.3%	46.5%	47.2%
<u>CIRCULATION DEMOGRAPHICS</u>					
Borrowers - City Residents	1,878	n/a	1,731	1,714	n/a
Borrowers - Unincorporated Residents	1,115	n/a	1,054	1,042	n/a
Borrowers - Other	278	n/a	265	259	n/a
	57.4%		56.8%	56.8%	
	34.1%		34.6%	34.6%	
	8.5%		8.7%	8.6%	
Service Area Pop - City	38,029	n/a	38,029	38,049	n/a
Service Area Pop - Unincorporated	23,099	n/a	23,099	22,693	n/a
	62.2%		62.2%	62.6%	
	37.8%		37.8%	37.4%	
<u>TECHNOLOGY</u>					
Internet Sessions	752	5,047	690	3	4,648
WiFi Sessions	1,407	6,700	1,063	601	5,040
<u>SOCIAL MEDIA / EMAIL</u>					
Facebook followers	5,268	n/a	5,158	4,789	n/a
Instagram followers	2,860	n/a	2,866	2,624	n/a
Twitter followers	907	n/a	907	921	n/a
YouTube subscribers	412	n/a	413	401	n/a
YouTube unique viewers	250	n/a	206	310	n/a
YouTube views	331	3,430	295	396	2,920
Email newsletter subscribers	6,473	n/a	6,437	5,701	n/a
<i>See monthly Hootsuite report for additional social media statistics</i>					
<u>FINANCIAL</u>					
<i>See monthly Budget to Actual report</i>					
<u>ELECTRONIC RESOURCES</u>					
Kanopy plays	571	4,110	552	343	2,592
Kanopy cost	\$ 462	\$ 3,692	\$ 506	\$ 395	\$ 2,733
Kanopy average cost/play	\$ 0.81	\$ 0.90	\$ 0.92	\$ 1.15	\$ 1.05
<u>SERVICE DESK INQUIRIES</u>					
Ready Reference	761	4,774	663	607	3,743
Reference	75	630	90	111	592
Technology Assistance	238	1,545	201	130	1,129
<u>FACILITIES</u>					
Conference Room - Bookings	61	433	68	-	352
Conference Room - Hours Available	217	1,570	223	-	1,341
Conference Room - Hours Booked	94	657	97	-	547
Conference Room - Occupancy Pctg	43.3%	41.8%	43.5%	N/A	40.8%
Community Room - Bookings	51	341	44	-	278
Community Room - Hours Available	217	1,570	223	-	1,341
Community Room - Hours Booked	82	595	85	-	489
Community Room - Occupancy Pctg	37.8%	37.9%	38.1%	N/A	36.5%

LIBRARY PROGRAM STATS -January, 2026

DATE	PROGRAM	PRIMARY AGE GROUP	FORMAT	TOTAL ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT
1/4/2026	Embroidery Workshop Snowflake Snowman	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	15
1/5/2026	Baby Dance Party	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	32
1/6/2026	Genealogy Interest Group	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	10
1/6/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	38
1/7/2026	Art Lab Session A Northern Lights	Ages 6-11	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	33
1/7/2026	Art Lab Session B Northern Lights	Ages 6-11	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	36
1/7/2026	Music & Movement 6-Week Class	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	37
1/7/2026	Switch Lounge	Ages 12-18	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	12
1/8/2026	Library at Pioneer	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Offsite	28
1/8/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	40
1/9/2026	Oregon City Writers Group	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	9
1/10/2026	LEGO Lab	Ages 6-11	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	42
1/12/2026	B.A.M. LEGO Lab	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	17
1/12/2026	B.A.M. Movie Matinee	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	25
1/13/2026	Family Game Day	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	5
1/13/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	40
1/14/2026	Music & Movement 6-Week Class	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	33
1/14/2026	Switch Lounge	Ages 12-18	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	21
1/14/2026	Young Teen Winter Wonderland	Ages 10-14	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	8
1/15/2026	Elevated Readers Book Club	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	14
1/15/2026	Fireside Chat	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Offsite	3
1/15/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	25
1/17/2026	Art Gym	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	8
1/18/2026	January Creative Kits	Ages 18+	Self-Directed	275
1/18/2026	Yarn Enthusiasts Society	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	4
1/20/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	32
1/21/2026	Art Lab Session A Loren Long Illustrations	Ages 6-11	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	24
1/21/2026	Art Lab Session B Loren Long Illustrations	Ages 6-11	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	30
1/21/2026	B.A.M. Online Trivia	Ages 18+	Live-Virtual ONLY	6
1/21/2026	Music & Movement 6-Week Class	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	31
1/21/2026	Switch Lounge	Ages 12-18	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	21
1/22/2026	Book Chat at Gilman Grove	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Offsite	5
1/22/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	18
1/23/2026	Oregon City Writers Group	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	12
1/25/2026	AARP Brain Health	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	3
1/25/2026	Chess Drop-In	General Interest	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	13
1/26/2026	American Red Cross Blood Drive	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	25
1/26/2026	Baby Gym	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	20
1/27/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	38
1/27/2026	Young Teen Book Bites	Ages 10-14	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	1
1/28/2026	Music & Movement 6-Week Class	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	32
1/28/2026	Switch Lounge	Ages 12-18	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	12
1/29/2026	National Puzzle Day Competition	Ages 18+	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	26
1/29/2026	Weekly Storytime	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	38
1/30/2026	Library Olympics Session A	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	20
1/30/2026	Library Olympics Session B	Ages 0-5	Live/Hybrid-Onsite	10
1/31/2026	Community Puzzle-Jan	Ages 18+	Self-Directed	195
1/31/2026	Critter Quest-Jan	General Interest	Self-Directed	358
1/31/2026	January Scavenger Hunt	Ages 6-11	Self-Directed	127
1/31/2026	Lobby Art Gallery-Jan	General Interest	Self-Directed	213
	Total number of programs	50	Total Attendance	2120



Biennium Budget Report Y1 by Category








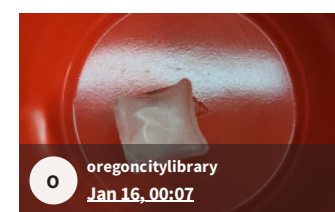
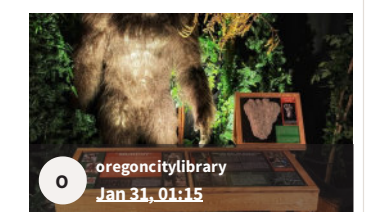
Through January, 2026

	2025-2026 Budget	January 2025-2026 Month Activity	2025-2026 Year Activity	2025-2026 Encumbrance	Year 1 Difference	2026-2027 Budget	2026-2027 Year Activity	Biennium Difference
4 - Revenue								
43 - Intergovernmental Revenues	2,966,900.00	10,056.00	2,567,832.29	0.00	399,067.71	3,020,600.00	0.00	3,419,667.71
44 - Charges for Services	5,400.00	861.13	4,522.60	0.00	877.40	5,400.00	0.00	6,277.40
47 - Miscellaneous Income	333,600.00	22,679.09	105,113.68	0.00	228,486.32	311,500.00	0.00	539,986.32
49 - Other Financing Sources	317,600.00	26,466.67	185,266.69	0.00	132,333.31	325,200.00	0.00	457,533.31
4 - Revenue Totals:	3,623,500.00	60,062.89	2,862,735.26	0.00	760,764.74	3,662,700.00	0.00	4,423,464.74
5 - Expense								
51 - Salaries and Wages	1,513,400.00	117,846.31	795,265.57	0.00	718,134.43	1,598,400.00	0.00	2,316,534.43
52 - Benefits	1,035,500.00	79,024.88	538,605.49	0.00	496,894.51	1,084,900.00	0.00	1,581,794.51
60 - Professional & Technical Services	8,100.00	0.00	433.00	0.00	7,667.00	19,800.00	0.00	27,467.00
61 - Repair & Maintenance Services	203,600.00	11,019.97	86,833.72	6,133.89	110,632.39	212,800.00	0.00	323,432.39
62 - Other Services	3,300.00	55.33	1,763.72	184.01	1,352.27	3,300.00	0.00	4,652.27
63 - Employee Costs	7,200.00	200.00	925.00	302.00	5,973.00	7,200.00	0.00	13,173.00
64 - Operating Materials & Supplies	297,500.00	24,029.21	181,621.76	26,971.47	88,906.77	298,200.00	0.00	387,106.77
65 - Office & Administrative Supplies	36,400.00	2,619.52	13,817.70	0.00	22,582.30	39,800.00	0.00	62,382.30
66 - Special Programs	68,000.00	2,377.68	27,526.50	2,780.00	37,693.50	68,000.00	0.00	105,693.50
68 - Community Programs and Grants	800.00	257.98	521.57	0.00	278.43	800.00	0.00	1,078.43
69 - Internal Service Charges	396,700.00	33,058.33	231,408.31	0.00	165,291.69	404,300.00	0.00	569,591.69
70 - Capital Outlay	535,000.00	129,893.11	165,559.11	130,543.09	238,897.80	0.00	0.00	238,897.80
80 - Debt Service	415,500.00	0.00	49,620.19	0.00	365,879.81	415,500.00	0.00	781,379.81
98 - Transfers	15,000.00	1,250.00	8,750.00	0.00	6,250.00	15,000.00	0.00	21,250.00
5 - Expense Totals:	4,536,000.00	401,632.32	2,102,651.64	166,914.46	2,266,433.90	4,168,000.00	0.00	6,434,433.90



Library Board Report

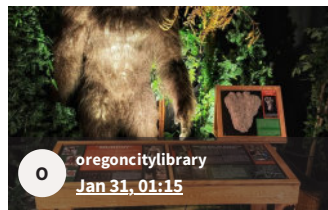
Jan 01 - Jan 31, 2026

<p>f Page followers</p> <p>5,256 followers</p>	<p>f Page new followers</p> <p>134 new followers</p>	<p>f Posts</p> <p>46 posts</p>	<p>f Post engagement</p> <p>2,361 engagements</p>
<p>f Post Reach</p> <p>46,435 people</p>	<p>f Top posts > Reach</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="437 555 774 911">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 26, 18:15</p> <p>Join us to get the wiggles out before naptime with stories, songs, and lots of dancing. Monday, February 2 at 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM.</p> <p>15,020 reach</p> </div> <div data-bbox="798 555 1134 911">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 31, 02:05</p> <p>OCPL's first National Puzzle Day Competition was a blast! We had 7 teams working to complete a 300-piece puzzle in under 90</p> <p>6,157 reach</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1158 555 1530 911">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 04, 00:00</p> <p>What will you build? We provide the LEGO, you provide the imagination! Join us for our monthly building challenge. For children</p> <p>3,350 reach</p> </div> </div>		
<p>f Post Likes</p> <p>318 likes</p>	<p>f Top posts > Reactions</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="437 972 774 1328">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 31, 02:05</p> <p>OCPL's first National Puzzle Day Competition was a blast! We had 7 teams working to complete a 300-piece puzzle in under 90</p> <p>76 likes and reactions</p> </div> <div data-bbox="798 972 1134 1328">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 26, 18:15</p> <p>Join us to get the wiggles out before naptime with stories, songs, and lots of dancing. Monday, February 2 at 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM.</p> <p>46 likes and reactions</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1158 972 1530 1328">  <p>OL Oregon City Public Library Jan 30, 16:15</p> <p>A large creature has been spotted in the woods!! Or has it? The North American Bigfoot Center in Boring has been added to</p> <p>27 likes and reactions</p> </div> </div>		
<p>@ Followers</p> <p>2,857 followers</p>	<p>@ New followers</p> <p>11 followers</p>	<p>@ Profile views</p> <p>11,771 views</p>	<p>@ Story taps forward</p> <p>127 taps forward</p>
<p>@ Posts</p> <p>45 posts</p>	<p>@ Top Posts > Reach</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="437 1805 774 2159">  <p>O oregoncitylibrary Jan 31, 02:05</p> <p>OCPL's first National Puzzle Day Competition was a blast! We had 7 teams working to complete a 300-piece puzzle in under 90</p> <p>295 reach</p> </div> <div data-bbox="798 1805 1134 2159">  <p>O oregoncitylibrary Jan 16, 00:07</p> <p>What did the kids uncover during yesterday's Winter Wonderland?</p> <p>259 reach</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1158 1805 1530 2159">  <p>O oregoncitylibrary Jan 31, 01:15</p> <p>A large creature has been spotted in the woods!! Or has it? The North American Bigfoot Center in Boring has been added to</p> <p>252 reach</p> </div> </div>		

Post engagement

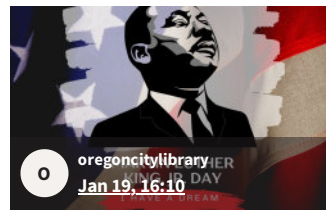
249
engagements

Top posts > Likes



A large creature has been spotted in the woods!! Or has it? The North American Bigfoot Center in Boring has been added to

16 likes



Celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.! Today we honor his dream of equality, justice, and love for all. Happy MLK

16 likes



OCPL's first National Puzzle Day Competition was a blast! We had 7 teams working to complete a 300-piece puzzle in under 90

14 likes

Followers



Tweets

40
posts

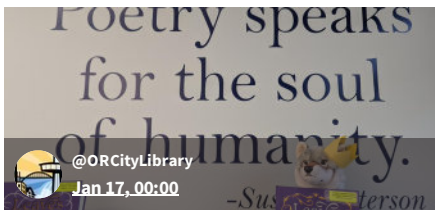
Mentions

0
mentions

Engagement > Type

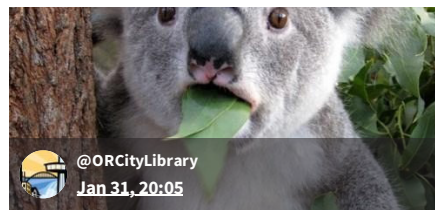
Likes	2
Quote tweets	0
Replies	0
Retweets	0

Top tweets > Engagements



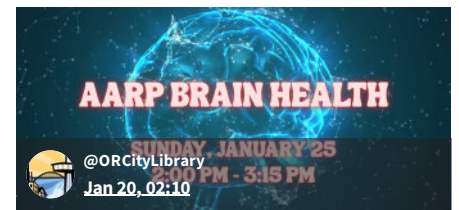
Lobo, last year's Critter Madness champ, has been roaming the library this month. Will he defend his crown? Stay tuned, madness is approaching!

3 engagements



lyad drawkcaB lanoitaN s'tl Have dinner for breakfast and breakfast for dinner. Add coffee to your milk. Say, "Goodbye" instead of "Hello". Wear your clothes backwards.

2 engagements



AARP invites you to challenge yourself to take simple steps to manage stress, spend quality time with people you enjoy, sleep better, move more, eat nutritious foods, and explore

2 engagements

Report sources

Analytics



@ORCityLibrary

Instagram Business



oregoncitylibrary

Facebook Pages



Oregon City Public Library

**Clackamas County Library District
Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Distribution Formula
FY 2026-2027 Estimate**

Total Current Year Tax Receipts	\$25,732,391	100.00%	Prior Year
City Assessed Value	\$14,263,464	55.43%	\$311,065
Unincorporated Population Served	\$11,468,927	44.57%	\$250,120

Prior Year Fund Balance	\$ -	
Interest Earned	\$ 125,164	4-YR AVG
Delinquent Tax & Interest/Penalties	\$ 436,021	4-YR AVG
Total	\$561,185	
Total Library District Revenues	\$26,293,576	

FY 2026/2027 Tax Receipts ESTIMATE Calculator			
\$ 26,270,141	FY 2025/2026 Taxes Imposed		
\$ 788,104	3%	x Estimated Growth Rate	
\$ 27,058,245	Estimated FY 2026/2027 Taxes Imposed		
\$ 25,732,391	95.1%	x Assessors Collection Rate	

	Assessed Value	Unincorporated Population Served	Assessed Value Prior Interest & Delinquent Tax	Unincorporated Prior Interest & Delinquent Tax	Tualatin Distribution	Total Distribution	%
Canby	\$845,823	\$397,972	\$18,446	\$8,679		\$1,270,920	4.83%
Estacada	\$261,021	\$856,729	\$5,692	\$18,684		\$1,142,127	4.34%
Gladstone	\$439,315	\$596,384	\$9,581	\$13,006		\$1,058,286	4.02%
Happy Valley	\$1,600,361	\$2,128,633	\$34,901	\$46,422		\$3,810,317	14.49%
Lake Oswego	\$3,662,858	\$285,576	\$79,881	\$6,228	\$64,128	\$4,098,671	15.59%
Milwaukie	\$1,028,396	\$1,255,847	\$22,428	\$27,388		\$2,334,059	8.88%
Molalla	\$320,928	\$927,836	\$6,999	\$20,235		\$1,275,998	4.85%
Oregon City	\$1,671,678	\$1,433,616	\$36,457	\$31,265		\$3,173,016	12.07%
Sandy	\$493,516	\$942,746	\$10,763	\$20,560		\$1,467,584	5.58%
Hoodland	\$0	\$355,537	\$0	\$7,754		\$363,290	1.38%
Tualatin	\$251,037	\$0	\$5,475	\$0	-\$128,256	\$128,256	0.49%
West Linn	\$1,857,103	\$145,655	\$40,501	\$3,177	\$12,826	\$2,059,261	7.83%
Wilsonville	\$1,831,429	\$178,915	\$39,941	\$3,902	\$51,302	\$2,105,489	8.01%
*Oak Lodge	\$0	\$1,963,480	\$0	\$42,821		\$2,006,301	7.63%
Total	\$14,263,464	\$11,468,927	\$311,065	\$250,120	\$0	\$26,293,576	99.99%

Tualatin Assessed Value & Prior Year Distribution		Assessed Value	Prior Year, Interest and Delinquent Tax	Total
Tualatin	50%	\$125,518	\$2,737	\$128,256
Lake Oswego	25%	\$62,759	\$1,369	\$64,128
Wilsonville	20%	\$50,207	\$1,095	\$51,302
West Linn	5%	\$12,552	\$274	\$12,826
Total	100%	\$251,037	\$5,475	\$256,512

Account	Account Descr	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	4-Year Average
30110	Restricted Beginning Fund Bala	\$ (2,991,783.40)	\$ (129,122.08)	\$ (317,207.71)	\$ (699,959.17)		
31110	Current Year RE Taxes & Penalt	\$ (21,079,668.02)	\$ (22,158,558.56)	\$ (23,196,587.03)	\$ (24,150,389.29)	\$ (23,230,403.86)	
31120	Delinquent Taxes	\$ (246,009.18)	\$ (417,211.87)	\$ (289,834.19)	\$ (306,800.40)	\$ (244,969.07)	\$ (314,963.91)
31130	Interest & Penalties-Property	\$ (47,168.17)	\$ (44,994.12)	\$ (48,214.33)	\$ (52,978.25)	\$ (36,586.99)	\$ (48,338.72)
33240	Forest Products Reserve	\$ (5,299.50)	\$ (4,703.65)				\$ (5,001.58)
33290	Payments in Lieu Of Taxes	\$ (22,049.84)	\$ (74,906.69)	\$ (88,301.19)	\$ (85,604.36)	\$ (40,480.44)	\$ (67,715.52)
36110	Interest Income	\$ (36,712.97)	\$ (143,997.74)	\$ (194,779.87)	\$ (122,577.08)	\$ (107,837.45)	\$ (125,163.53)
47520	Pass Thru Payments -Local Govt	\$ 21,388,622.00	\$ 22,656,287.00	\$ 23,434,965.15	\$ 25,418,308.55	\$ 21,195,999.11	
		\$ (3,040,069.08)	\$ (317,207.71)	\$ (699,959.17)	\$ -	\$ (2,464,278.70)	



CITY OF OREGON CITY

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

Staff Report

To: Library Board **Agenda Date:** February 25, 2026
From: Greg Williams, Library Director

SUBJECT:

Rotary Peace Pole

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

n/a - Informational only

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Library Director will update the Library Board on a proposal by the Rotary Club of Oregon City to install a Peace Pole in Library Park.

BACKGROUND:

Rotary International has adopted Peace and Conflict Resolution as one of its seven areas of focus. Rotarians all over the world are encouraged to promote peace through service projects and community outreach. One of the most visible ways that Rotary Clubs pursue this area of focus is through the installation of Peace Poles in their communities.

Peace Poles bear the message "May Peace Prevail On Earth" written in different languages representative of the community. Peace Poles have been erected on every continent in over 200,000 communities to serve as reminders to cultivate peace in thought, word, and action.

The Rotary Club of Oregon City is proposing to install a Peace Pole in Library Park. The preferred location is outside the Carnegie entrance, in place of the existing poetry pole (which has not been used for some time and is not in the best of shape). The attached images show 1) the current poetry pole and 2) a mockup of what a Peace Pole might look like in that space.

Peace Poles typically include languages spoken in the communities where they are installed. For the proposed Peace Pole in Library Park, it is anticipated it would bear the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in English, Chinuk Wawa, and up to 6 other languages most frequently spoken in the community (determined by most recent data from the Oregon City School District). We have validated the Chinuk Wawa translation with the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde (who are very supportive of the project). The pole would look similar to one that has been installed at Clackamas Community College (see attached images).

Since Library Park is under the jurisdiction of the Parks Department, the proposal will also be presented at a future meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. It is hoped that as part of that presentation, the presenters can confirm/relay that the Library

Board is supportive of the project.

NEXT STEPS:

n/a - Informational only

OPTIONS:

Images 1-4, Peace Pole at Clackamas Community College



Image 5, Proposed Peace Pole Location in Library Park (site of existing Poetry Pole)



Image 6, Mockup of Proposed Peace Pole Installation





CITY OF OREGON CITY

625 Center Street
Oregon City, OR 97045
503-657-0891

Staff Report

To: Library Board **Agenda Date:** February 25, 2026
From: Greg Williams, Library Director

SUBJECT:

Overdue Fines - LINCC Updates and Discussion

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

n/a - Library Board discussion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Library Director will update the Library Board on recent steps taken by several LINCC libraries to eliminate overdue fines. The Library Board will also discuss whether or not the elimination of overdue fines at the Oregon City Public Library should be considered/recommended.

BACKGROUND:

(Note: in the following staff report, discussions of fine elimination refer only to overdue fines charged when library materials are not returned by the due date. These discussions do not refer to fees for lost or damaged library materials; lost/damaged fees are typically still charged even when libraries choose to eliminate overdue fines).

Except for Clackamas County, most libraries and library systems in or near the Portland Metro area no longer charge fines for overdue materials. Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries have been fine-free since 1970, Multnomah County Libraries eliminated overdue fines in 2020, Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) and Hood River County Library District eliminated overdue fines in 2021, and both the City of Camas Public Library and the City of Salem Public Library eliminated overdue fines in 2022.

Statewide, the situation is very similar, with the majority of Oregon libraries having eliminated overdue fines. According to the most recent (FY 24/25) data from the Oregon Public Library Statistical Report, nearly 80% of library branches (98 out of 136) in the State of Oregon had no overdue fines, and the vast majority of the State's residents (83%, or 3,324,731 out of 3,997,967) are not charged overdue fines when using their local library. Of the remaining State residents (673,236) who are still charged overdue fines when using their local library, 64% of them (428,012 out of 673,236) live in Clackamas County. Through FY 24/25, LINCC libraries were in a small minority of Oregon libraries (17%) still charging overdue fines, and Clackamas County residents accounted for nearly 2/3 of Oregon residents who are charged overdue fines when using their local library.

Historically, when LINCC libraries have explored the idea of eliminating overdue fines, it has

been with the hope of doing it simultaneously across the entire LINCC cooperative to minimize patron confusion and maintain consistency across all LINCC locations. For a variety of reasons, however, it has not been possible for all LINCC libraries (who are operated by individual, distinct, autonomous local governments) to commit to the LINCC-wide elimination of overdue fines.

In 2019, the American Library Association passed its "Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity" (included in this packet), concluding that, for a variety of reasons, "monetary fines ultimately do not serve the core mission of the modern library." There has been much literature written highlighting the negative impacts of overdue fines on patrons and refuting arguments that have historically been used to justify the imposition of overdue fines (particularly, financial benefit and behavioral enforcement). Much of the most relevant research and literature is incorporated into (and noted in the bibliography of) the included 2025 report by a specially-commissioned Task Force of LINCC library staff.

In FY 25/26 several individual LINCC libraries decided to move forward with eliminating overdue fines for their patrons, electing not to wait until all LINCC libraries were ready/able to do so. To date, the Ledding Library of Milwaukie, Molalla Public Library, Lake Oswego Public Library, West Linn Public Library, and Wilsonville Public Library have eliminated overdue fines.

The Oregon City Public Library currently charges overdue fines (except on OCS Student Cards). Library staff are empowered to work with any library patron for whom overdue fines are a barrier to try to ensure no Oregon City Public Library patron loses access to library materials and services due to overdue fines. In addition, for several years, the Library (with the support of the Library Board) has not budgeted overdue fines as part of the Library's operating revenue. This was done to ensure that if overdue fines were eliminated in the future (either locally or through a coordinated LINCC effort), there would be no financial impact to the Library's operating budget. Any overdue fine revenue currently collected is credited to the Community Facilities Fund for future facility needs. Overdue fine revenue is estimated to be between \$10,000 - \$12,000 this fiscal year.

It is generally accepted that overdue fines have negative impacts on patrons and libraries. The Library Board has already supported steps to ensure that day-to-day Library operations are not dependent on fine revenue in anticipation of potentially eliminating overdue fines in the future. Given that the ability now exists for individual LINCC libraries to eliminate overdue fines (rather than waiting for the entire cooperative to do so) and that 5 other LINCC libraries have already made the decision to do so, the Library Director feels it is an appropriate time to engage the Library Board in a discussion of whether or not to eliminate overdue fines at the Oregon City Public Library.

NEXT STEPS:

OPTIONS:



Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity

Whereas monetary fines present an economic barrier to access of library materials and services;

Whereas there is mounting evidence that indicates eliminating fines increases library card adoption and library usage;

Whereas monetary fines create a barrier in public relations, and absorb valuable staff time applying, collecting, and managing dues;

Whereas the first policy objective listed in ALA Policy B.8.10 (Library Services to the Poor) as approved by ALA Council on January 28, 2019, states that the American Library Association shall implement these objectives by "Promoting the removal of barriers to library and information services, particularly fees, and overdue charges";

Whereas ALA Policy B.4.2 (Free Access to Information) "asserts that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services";

Whereas in Economic Barriers to Information Access, An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, ALA states "All library policies and procedures, particularly those involving fines, fees, or other user charges, should be scrutinized for potential barriers to access;

Whereas libraries will need to take determined and pragmatic action to dismantle practices of collecting monetary fines

Whereas libraries of all types are responsive to bodies, be they school districts, boards of trustees, college and university administration, or government entities and therefore need to be able to make the case to those bodies about eliminating fines; and

Whereas monetary fines ultimately do not serve the core mission of the modern library; now, therefore, be it



Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members

1. adds a statement to the Policy Manual that establishes that "The American Library Association asserts that imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to the provision of library and information services.";
2. urges libraries to scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them; and
3. urges governing bodies of libraries to strengthen funding support for libraries so they are not dependent on monetary fines as a necessary source of revenue.
4. establish a working group to develop information resources, including strategies and tips, for libraries interested in abolishing fines, with a report due to Council at the 2019 Annual Conference

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Monday, January 28, 2019, in Seattle, WA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary W. Ghikas".

Mary W. Ghikas, Executive Director
and Secretary of the ALA Council



LINCC

Libraries in Clackamas County Staff Report:

Proposed Elimination of Overdue Fines

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Introduction

In April 2023, the LINCC Directors Group (DG) codified the [district's core values](#) and made a commitment to empower patrons through continually listening to our communities, adapting services to meet patron needs, enhancing and simplifying access to services, and providing opportunities for communities to gather, connect, and learn. These documents became the foundation of the [23-26 Strategic Direction for LINCC](#).

As the libraries in LINCC are operated by 11 different municipalities, implementing a fine-free policy to widen access requires a wide range of evidence. In September 2024, DG Champions Melissa Kelly and Sarah McIntyre tasked staff members with developing a report that Directors could use when presenting to their city managers.

We developed a project charter, brought in the chairs of the Circulation¹ and Equity² committees, recruited a core team, and got to work on the following deliverables:

- Gather data related to the pros and cons of overdue fines.
- Survey the opinion of LINCC staff related to going fine-free.
- Develop financial- and equity-related arguments to increase support for the elimination of overdue fines.

This report provides an overview of existing literature and evidence around the elimination of overdue fines, an analysis of the current state of LINCC & the impact that fines have on the consortium, and a recommendation for the removal of overdue fines LINCC-wide.

Note: Artificial intelligence tools were used to assist with grammar editing, citation formatting, and preliminary fact-checking. The authors take full responsibility for the interpretation and accuracy of the final content.

¹ The Circulation Committee (CircComm) is composed of operations managers from all LINCC libraries. They're responsible for managing patron accounts, standardizing customer service procedures, supporting frontline staff, and other responsibilities essential to the operation of LINCC.

² The Equity Committee is composed of one staff member from each LINCC library. Their mission is to advance equity & inclusivity by collaborating to address community needs, remove access barriers, enrich learning & cultural engagement, and support a culture of belonging in all library spaces.

Literature Review

According to the 2022 Library Journal Fines & Fees Survey, which received 320 responses from U.S. public library employees, the landscape of fine policies has shifted dramatically in recent years. While the data is directional and not statistically projectable, it offers valuable insight into national trends and staff experiences. It also gives a solid foundation to examine the reasons libraries go fine-free.

During our literature review, we examined several case studies and found major changes that going fine-free brought about for libraries in the United States, as shown in Figure 1 (Bromberg, 2020; Cisneros, 2019; Newark Public Library, 1932; Washington County Cooperative Library Services, 2020).

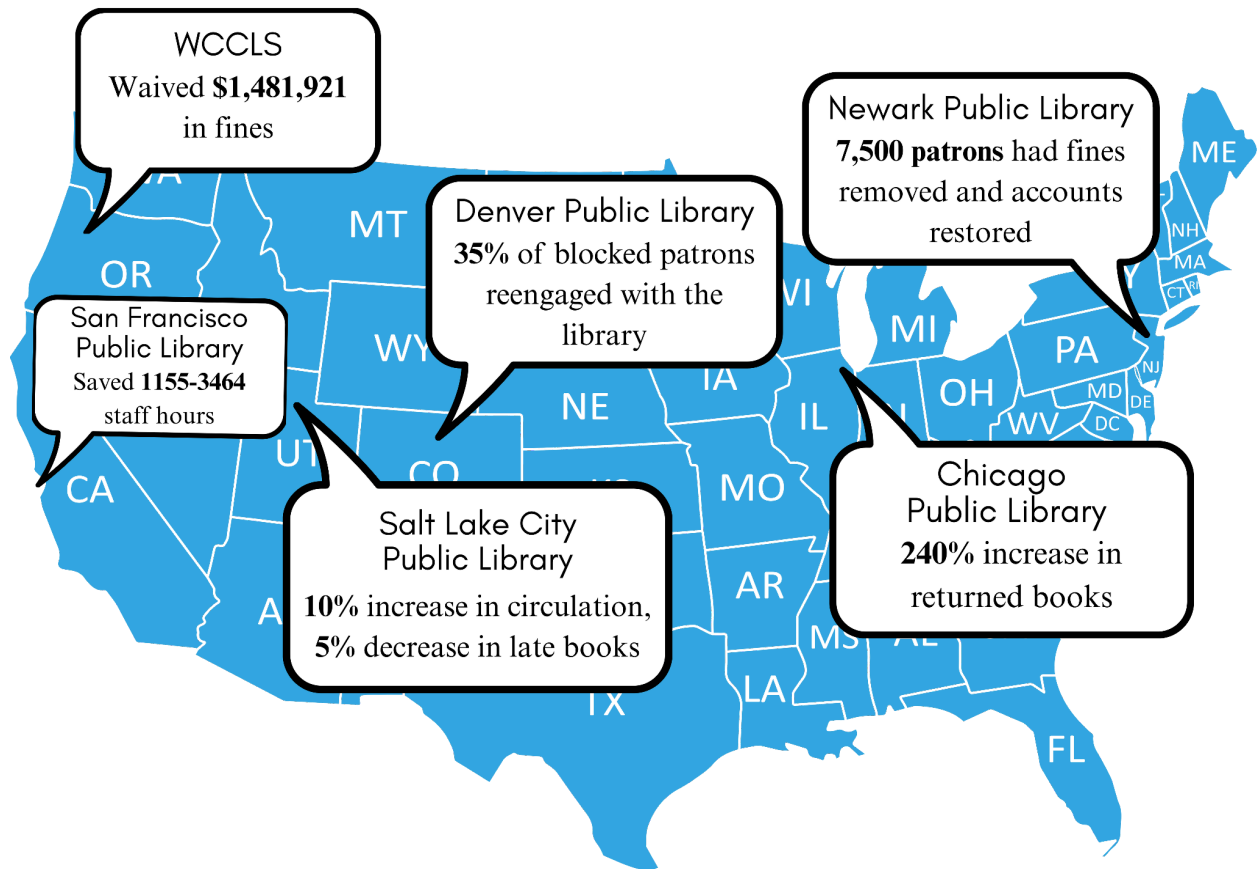


Figure 1. Select fine-free library statistics.

The Regressive Nature of Fines

In their Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity, the American Library Association (ALA) stated that “there is mounting evidence that indicates eliminating fines increases library card adoption and library usage” (2019a). They also clearly stated that libraries ought to consider waiving or reducing fines, as economic challenges create barriers to accessing library services (ALA, 2019b).

There are countless examples of the “mounting evidence” the ALA referenced; studies have regularly shown correlations between blocked or heavily fined accounts and populations with high rates of poverty (Banta, 2022; City of Chicago, 2019; Colorado State Library, n.d.; Long Overdue, 2019; Multnomah County Communications Office, 2020; Unrein, 2020). Others have found overdue fines disproportionately impact people of color, a group that has also been historically prohibited from using libraries, or experienced little to no library services in the past (Carter & Belser, 2020).

In a striking report from the Colorado State Library (CSL, n.d.) that investigated ways to support parents in early literacy efforts, caregivers residing in both urban and rural low-income areas were surveyed about their library use, and overdue fines were listed as one of the primary barriers to library usage. The report also noted a study that found “libraries in economically disadvantaged areas of the community had significantly lower circulation rates than middle class neighborhoods.” Residents in San Jose, California were similarly affected— when fines increased, a third of patrons who had their accounts blocked due to unpaid fines lived in lower income neighborhoods (CSL, n.d.).

A study conducted by the Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector for the City and County of San Francisco, in partnership with the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL), found that overdue fines disproportionately impacted people of color and those experiencing poverty. In a 2018 patron survey, 88.9% of respondents reported being unable to access the library at some point due to fines (Cisneros, 2019). While patrons across all income levels returned items late, repayment rates varied significantly: in FY 17-18, only 9.3% of total debt was paid, with higher-income neighborhoods repaying around 25%, compared to just 2.6% to 5.6% in low-income areas.

Racial disparities were also evident in the SFPL report. According to the survey, African American residents were less likely to visit the library monthly than any other racial group and less likely to rate the library highly. Neighborhoods with the largest African American populations also carried the highest average debt. The report suggested that overdue fines may be contributing to these disparities in library

usage and perception. In response to these findings, SFPL eliminated overdue fines and forgave over \$1.5 million in outstanding patron debt, a policy change supported by city leadership as a step toward greater equity (Cisneros, 2019).

Closer to home, both Multnomah County Library (MCL) and Eugene Public Library have made recent decisions to go fine-free. An Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) article on MCL's 2020 policy change highlighted a strong correlation between blocked accounts and zip codes in areas with higher poverty rates (Powell & Notarianni, 2020). In an interview from the same article, Vailey Oehlke, MCL's director at the time, noted that fines often accrued due to transportation challenges, demanding work schedules, and caregiving responsibilities.

Similarly, the *Register-Guard* reported that Eugene eliminated fines in 2022 to increase equity and make borrowing "as easy and accessible as possible," recognizing that fines were disproportionately blocking access for patrons experiencing financial hardship (Banta, 2022). The article emphasized that fines were preventing access for many community members and that the Eugene Public Library, like other institutions, retained its policy of charging replacement costs for long overdue items. While less data was shared publicly than in MCL's case, the decision reflected a broader commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

The Quiet Exit from Library Spaces

Nowadays, it is broadly accepted that overdue fines discourage library use, reducing both library card adoption and ongoing engagement (ALA, 2019). Research from CSL (n.d.) and LJ (2022) supports this conclusion, showing that patrons often avoid the library altogether due to overdue fees. In focus groups, it was revealed that "both fines for late items and fees for lost or damaged books make parents reluctant to check out books and to have their children enjoy library books at all" (CSL, n.d.).

In the same focus group, a principal at a local elementary school noted that while fines were a minor inconvenience for middle class families, impoverished families might face the choice of paying fines or buying food, among other necessities. The report concluded that "treating all library patrons equally by assessing a fine for late materials is inequitable: it disproportionately affects low-income families."

When researching the advantages and disadvantages of fines, Unrein found several examples of increased library usage after fines were eliminated. High Plains Library District saw an increase in circulation after 6 months of being fine-free, with a 16% increase in circulation in children's materials. Salt Lake City also saw an increase in monthly borrowers and the number of items borrowed in the year following their

elimination of fines (Unrein, 2020). It should be noted though that there could be other causes for these increases as well.

We Just Want Our Stuff Back

Most agree the main purpose of overdue fines is to encourage the prompt return of library materials, though some people believe fines teach civic responsibility (Cisneros, 2019; Holson, 2020; Moeller-Peiffer, 1984; Unrein, 2020). Moeller-Peiffer notes examples of fines being used to teach budgeting to children, with one librarian stating that “students showed more eagerness to return materials on time when fines were charged” (1984). While this argument may seem outdated, it still finds contemporary echoes. In a 2020 New York Times article, a civil litigation lawyer argued that removing fines sets a bad precedent and that penalties help reinforce rules (Holson, 2020).

We do not believe this position reflects the realities of library usage and access.

More and more evidence shows that while fines may cause a small increase in return rates, they do not improve returns in the long run (Burgin & Hansel, 1984; Cisneros, 2019; EveryLibrary, 2021; Hansel & Burgin, 1983). Material return rates were a motivating factor for Nunavut Public Library Services (NPLS) to consider fines, as 15% of their annual circulation was overdue, affecting access and collection quality (Su, 2014).

Yet others question whether fines align with the library’s mission. Unrein (2020) challenges the idea that libraries should teach civic responsibility, asking whether ensuring returns “outweigh[s] its commitments to equal access for all patrons.” Eric Klinenberg, a social science professor, echoes this in the *Times*, describing libraries as safe havens that foster learning through access (Holson, 2020).

Historical evidence supports this view. As far back as the Great Depression, large library systems created amnesty programs to unblock patron accounts. Newark Public Library launched such a program in 1932 after discovering that hundreds of patrons had stopped using the library due to small fines. The initiative was a success: over 7,500 patrons had their fines canceled— totaling more than \$4,200— and 5,000 of those cases involved fines under 50 cents (Newark Public Library, 1932; Moeller-Peiffer, 1984).

Not all fine-free experiments have succeeded. Windsor Public Library reinstated fines after 18 months, citing poor return rates (2013). However, their policy included

immediate account blocks for a single overdue item— a punitive measure that may have undermined the fine-free model's intent.

Ultimately, many libraries have found that eliminating overdue fees had limited to no negative effect on return rates, and some even saw increases. Among New York City's three library systems, over 88,000 items were returned after fines were eliminated— some overdue by decades, many accompanied by notes of heartfelt relief (Cherelus, 2021). Salt Lake City saw late returns drop from 9% to 4%, and High Plains Library District reported that 95% of materials were returned within a week (Cisneros, 2019). A national survey by *Library Journal* found that “even without fines, the majority of library materials do make their way back to the library eventually” (Dixon & Gillis, 2017).

Public Image, or the Cost of Doing Business

Shortly after eliminating fines In 2021, the NYPL President Tony Marx succinctly captured the recent change in the national debate: “We’re not in the fine-collection business. We’re in the encouraging-to-read-and-learn business” (Cherelus). This sentiment is a common thread among decision-making conversations and one that may need repeating to stakeholders who focus on budgets and measurable outputs. One facet of Marx’s statement circles around the library’s public image.

Eliminating fines has increasingly been seen not just as a matter of access or doing the right thing, but also of improving public perception of libraries. While early advocates like Truett (1981) and Anderson (1984) noted improved relationships and reduced stigma in school and public libraries, more recent studies have echoed and expanded on these insights. Unrein (2020) argues that enforcing fines can lead to uncomfortable interactions between staff and patrons, eroding trust and goodwill.

The removal of fines instead fosters a more welcoming environment and strengthens the library’s role as a community-centered institution. LJ reports that staff morale improved and they encountered fewer stressful interactions after going fine-free (2022). One respondent noted, “You can’t pay for that kind of consumer relation... the stress is off of circ staff.”

Several studies have shown that collecting and enforcing fines can be a stressful experience for both patrons and staff. The ALA has noted that fines often create barriers in public relations, as well as absorbing valuable staff time (Cisneros, 2019). A 2017 LJ survey found that many libraries provide staff training to manage these interactions, highlighting the emotional toll fines can take (Dixon & Gillis).

Respondents to the survey emphasized that fines can damage relationships over minor infractions, especially when families face large penalties due to circumstances like vacations or illness. As one participant put it, “Libraries have enough to combat—this is a matter of hospitality and being supportive of our customer needs.”

These findings suggest that fines may undermine the very values libraries aim to uphold: equity, access, and building community.

How Much Will This Cost the Taxpayers?

One factor that keeps libraries from removing overdue fines is concern over budget impacts. For example, Windsor Public Library in Ontario reinstated fines after a trial period, citing a significant budget shortfall (2013). Similarly, Fort Vancouver Regional Library (FVRL) considered reintroducing fines in 2009 after being fine-free for nearly 40 years, due to rising overdue rates and the need for additional revenue. Ultimately, the board rejected the proposal, choosing not to place further financial strain on patrons (Cameron, 2020). After all, when FVRL went fine-free in 1970, they did so because they were spending \$12,000 to collect \$8,000 fines; we can only assume that inflation has not lessened that ratio (Cameron, 2020).

Despite these cases, most systems report minimal financial impact from eliminating fines. ALA has emphasized that fines absorb valuable staff time and do not serve the core mission of libraries. They urge governing bodies to strengthen funding so libraries are not dependent on fines as revenue sources (ALA, 2019b).

In Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS), data from FY 19-20 showed that only 25% of assessed fines were actually collected, meaning the system was already losing revenue under the fine model. WCCLS concluded that the equity benefits of going fine-free outweighed the financial cost (2021).

Other systems report similarly low revenue from fines:

- SFPL found that fines made up just 0.2% of its operating budget before going fine-free (Cisneros, 2019).
- The Luther Callaway Public Library in Florida found that collecting fines was a net loss and “not worth the time spent” (Gerber, 2022).
- The Tehuma Public Library in California reported that fines made up less than 1.9% of their overall budget (Gerber, 2022).

This trend holds across smaller libraries as well. The Canyon Area Library in Texas, Cannon Beach Library in Oregon, and Ardmore Public Library in Oklahoma have all operated fine-free for years without major budget disruptions (Urban Libraries Council, n.d.-a).

After examining the data, it becomes clear that the cost to taxpayers is minimal, and the benefits to access and equity are substantial.

Okay, But How Do We Encourage Returns?

Libraries that eliminate overdue fines often adopt alternative strategies to ensure materials are returned. SFPL, for example, retained billed item fees, shortened the billing timeline from 60 to 21 days, and increased the number of late notices sent (Dixon & Gillis, 2017). The same report shows that when FVRL implemented similar changes, including reducing the lost-item billing window and lowering the account-blocking threshold, they saw a notable drop in billed items and an average overdue rate of just 18%.

Amnesty programs can also play a powerful role in recovering materials. During Chicago Public Library's "Welcome Home" campaign, over 20,000 items were returned—valued at approximately \$500,000 (Marcotte, 2016). Los Angeles Public Library's "LAPL Misses You" initiative saw 64,633 items returned and 13,701 patrons regain access to their accounts (Urban Libraries Council, n.d.-b). San Francisco's six-week amnesty drive recovered nearly 700,000 overdue items, including over 12,000 that were more than 60 days late (Dixon & Gillis, 2017). These results demonstrate that when financial barriers are removed, patrons respond—often in overwhelming numbers.

Other forms of innovation offer clues to alternatives. Libraries are increasingly turning to behavioral science to promote timely returns without imposing fines. The Brooklyn Public Library partnered with the Nudge4 Solutions Lab at the University of Virginia to test interventions such as social norm messaging ("bring books back so other families can enjoy them"), visual cues in overdue notices, and multilingual outreach. These strategies contributed to a reduction in blocked accounts and helped re-engage patrons—most notably, 70,000 youth regained access to their accounts following a one-time fine forgiveness initiative (Nonko, 2021).

Finally, gamification has emerged as a promising tool. A 2024 study published in *Libri* found that libraries using point systems, challenges, and digital badges saw increased engagement and improved return rates. These techniques foster a sense of accomplishment and community participation, reframing returns as part of a

positive library experience rather than a punitive obligation (Zare, Varnaseri, & Bayati, 2024).

Together, these approaches demonstrate how libraries can encourage responsible borrowing through supportive, inclusive, and psychologically informed practices.

Examining LINCC

Current Overdue Fines

Most Items.....	\$0.10 a Day, Maximum of \$1.00 per Item
Interlibrary Loan.....	\$0.25 a Day, Up to the Price of the Item
Library of Things.....	\$1.00 a Day, Up to the Price of the Item

Even if LINCC libraries eliminate overdue fines, patrons will still be assessed fees for lost and damaged materials. Currently, a patron is billed the full price of an item if it has not been returned by 30 days after the due date. If the patron returns the item within a year, the lost charge would change to the maximum overdue fine.

The exception to this rule is Interlibrary Loans which, after the bill has been posted to the patron's account, does not change when the item is returned. It can only be paid or waived by a LINCC library.

Due Dates by Material

Most Items.....	28 Days
Magazines.....	14 Days
DVD/Blu-Ray.....	14 Days
Lucky Day.....	14 Days
Video Games.....	14 Days
Interlibrary Loan.....	Varies by lending institution
Library of Things.....	Varies by owning Library

Users can renew materials— with the exception of Lucky Day items and most Interlibrary Loans— so long as there are enough available copies to fulfill holds placed by other patrons.

By the Numbers

The costs LINCC libraries incur just to collect overdue fines are substantial. To assess how inefficient these processes are, we analyzed reports from our Integrated Library System to measure fine income (excluding lost or damaged item charges) and surveyed managers to estimate staff wages spent on reconciling and depositing funds³.

The data show that, excluding outliers like Molalla and Lake Oswego, libraries spent nearly 54% of their fine revenue on operational costs (Figure 2). That percentage climbs even higher when factoring in libraries that are currently fine-free⁴.

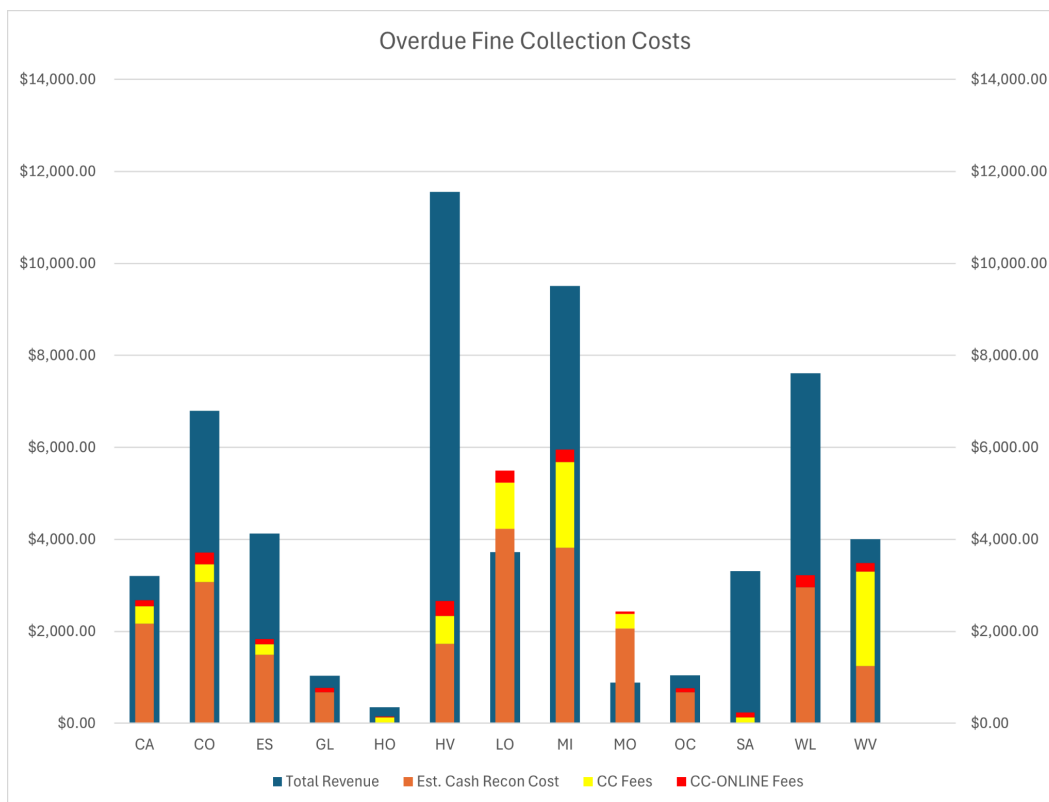


Figure 2. Revenue lost to credit card fees and staff time.

While these figures will shift if all LINCC libraries go fine-free, the extent of that change is hard to predict. What's clear is that, after accounting for hidden costs,

³ Estimates of staff costs are conservative; the times spent on reconciliation were multiplied by each municipality's minimum wage.

⁴ The Lake Oswego library has been waiving patron fines since 2021. The Molalla library has had a policy of fine-free check-in since 2020.

LINCC libraries collected only about \$24,000 in overdue fines during FY 24–25—just 0.02% to 0.25% of each library’s operating budget (Figure 3).

Fines as % of Budget by Library

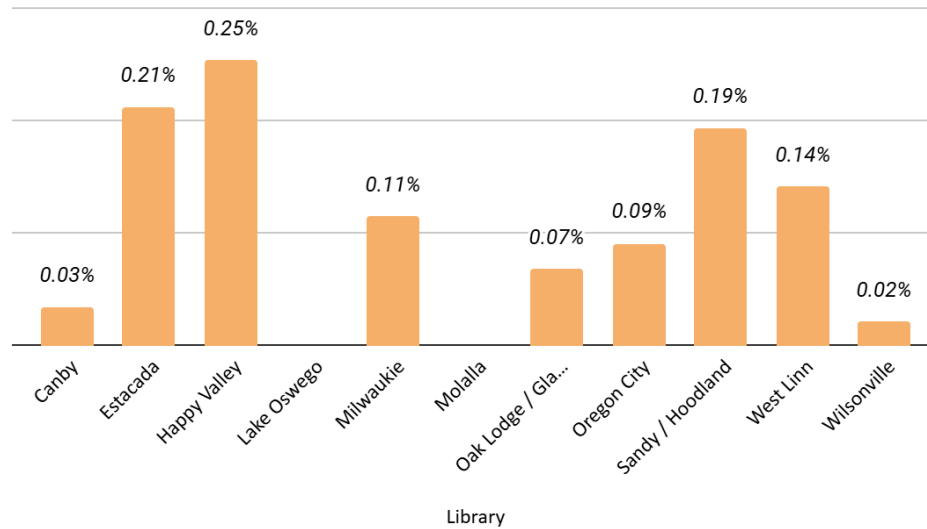


Figure 3. Fines as % of budget by library

Return rates at LINCC are phenomenal, with 94.2% of items returned on or before their due date (Figure 4). The spikes at 7, 14, 21, and 28 days prior to due dates are interesting, but we don’t currently understand what causes them. The slight increase in returns at 3 days prior is explained by the courtesy notice we send to patrons.

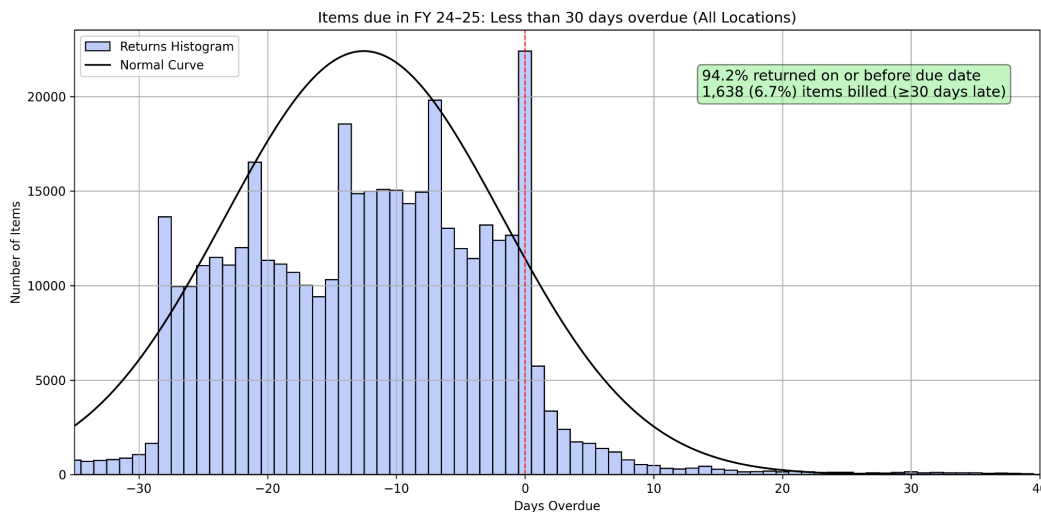


Figure 4. Return rates for all items due in FY 24-25.

One gratifying statistic is that, of the 32,190 items that were returned late in FY 24-25, just over 71% of them were returned within the first week of coming due (Figure 5). That left just under a thousand items, or 2.2% of all checkouts, that were returned more than 7 days after their due date.

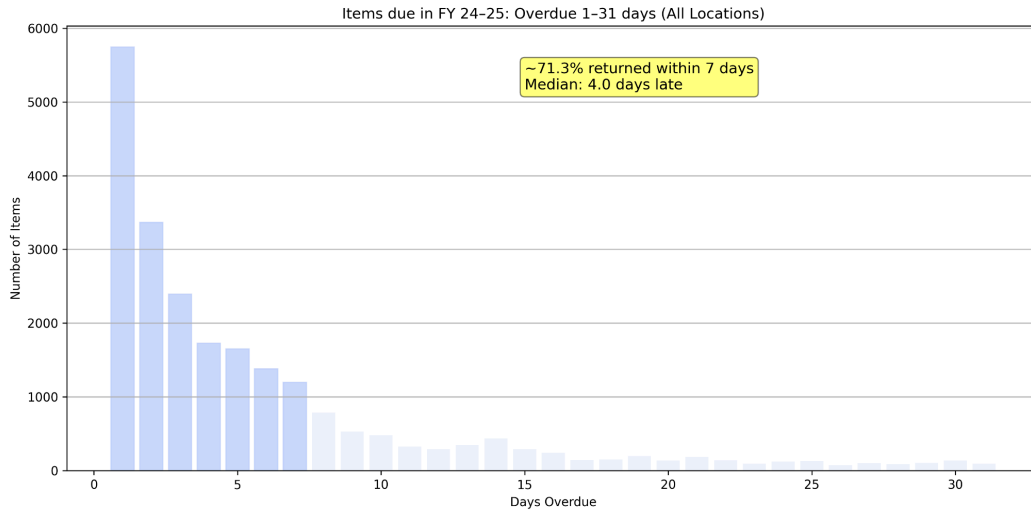


Figure 5. Typical days overdue (FY 24-25).

Staff Survey

In May 2025, the LINCC Fine-Free Initiative conducted a system-wide survey to assess staff perceptions of overdue fines and gather insight into the potential impacts of adopting a fine-free policy. The survey was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback on the effects these fines have on patrons, staff workflows, and the library’s overall mission. It was sent to 279 staff across the district and a total of 115 responded, giving us a 41% response rate.

Staff shared valuable insight into the practical, emotional, and systemic impacts of overdue fines and expressed overwhelming support for adopting a fine-free model. When asked directly whether they support removing overdue fines, 74% responded “yes,” while 13% were “neutral” and only 11% responded “no”. The results reflect a strong, district-wide sentiment that overdue fines are incompatible with the foundational values of public library service.

Public Library Values and Mission

Staff responses emphasized that they understood the core mission of public libraries: to serve as inclusive, accessible, and equitable resources for the entire community.

Respondents described libraries as more than just repositories for books; they defined them as trusted institutions that provide access to knowledge, technology, educational support, civic resources, and safe gathering spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds. Many respondents characterized the library as a "lifeline" for individuals who otherwise lack access to information or technology due to financial constraints.

Overdue fines were predominantly framed as misaligned with these values. Dozens of respondents highlighted how fines create psychological and financial barriers, especially for patrons who most rely on library services: low-income families, people with disabilities, youth, immigrants, and seniors. Staff noted that imposing fines often discourages patrons from engaging with the library— creating feelings of fear, guilt, or embarrassment, along with financial stress for those already facing economic hardship. These obstacles can prevent people from using library services, ultimately undermining the mission of providing free and universal access.

- 71% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that fines make the library harder to access (Figure 6).
- 48% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that fines negatively impact the library’s public image, while only 28% disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 7).

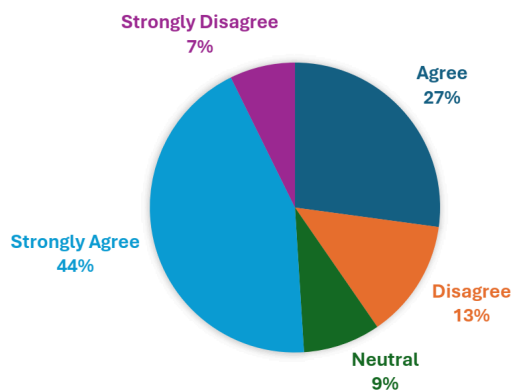


Figure 6. Do fines make libraries difficult to access?

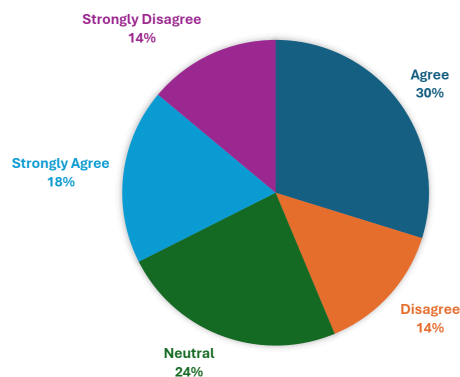


Figure 7. Do fines make the library look bad?

In summarizing the role of libraries, staff widely affirmed that libraries should be welcoming, community-first institutions rooted in the values of compassion, equity, and access for all.

Personal Observations: When Fines Were Harmful

Qualitative responses revealed a range of emotionally-resonant, firsthand accounts describing how fines caused real harm to patrons— especially those already navigating systemic challenges. Multiple staff members described children who were unable to check out materials due to outstanding fines incurred by their parents or guardians. Others recalled patrons who returned to the library after learning their fines had been waived, often expressing visible relief and gratitude.

One respondent shared that a family experiencing financial hardship stopped using the library altogether after accumulating fines they couldn't afford. Another mentioned how fines discouraged a patron from borrowing materials for their children, fearing the financial risk if items were returned late. Several staff who conduct outreach noted that many people they encounter incorrectly believe that having a fine means they are banned. Others described instances where patrons, including those with developmental disabilities or limited English proficiency, did not fully understand how fines worked or what they meant— sometimes leading to unintended consequences.

These stories collectively illustrate how fines can deepen social inequities and cause patrons to disengage from the library— not because they are careless or irresponsible, but because the system penalizes economic vulnerability. In place of punitive measures, staff advocated for policies that build trust, restore access, and support continued engagement with library services.

Common Concerns and Misunderstandings

Although the majority of staff support eliminating overdue fines, a number of respondents raised thoughtful concerns about potential unintended consequences. A primary theme was the possibility that patrons might interpret a fine-free policy as a signal that timely returns are no longer expected. Staff noted this could lead to longer wait times and reduced availability of popular items.

Several staff also expressed the belief that fines play a role in teaching responsibility, particularly to younger patrons. They shared concerns that removing fines might weaken a sense of obligation to return borrowed materials promptly— or at all. Others felt that having some form of consequence for tardy returns might encourage mindfulness about due dates and promote accountability.

- 48% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that fines encourage timely returns, while 35% agreed or strongly agreed (Figure 8).
- 55% disagreed or strongly disagreed that fines help teach responsibility, compared to 30% who agreed or strongly agreed (Figure 9).

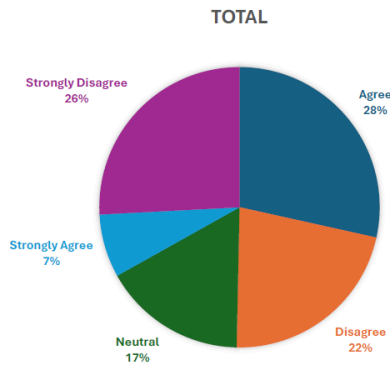


Figure 8. Do fines encourage timely returns?

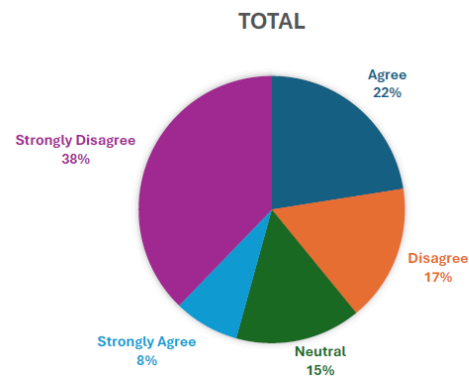


Figure 9. Do fines help teach responsibility?

Despite these concerns, most respondents believed that misunderstandings could be mitigated through strong communication strategies. Staff emphasized the importance of educating patrons about the continued expectation of timely returns and clarifying that charges for lost or damaged materials would still apply. Recommendations included providing training for frontline staff; developing talking points; and publishing clear, patron-facing materials that reinforce expectations in a friendly and non-punitive tone.

Ultimately, while concerns were noted, most staff felt they could be effectively addressed through thoughtful policy design and a proactive education campaign.

Anticipated Benefits of Going Fine-Free

Across responses, staff identified numerous anticipated benefits should the library transition to a fine-free model. Chief among these was the restoration of access for patrons currently blocked due to outstanding overdue fines. Many staff cited examples of individuals who had stopped visiting the library due to fees they could not pay. By removing this barrier, the library would be better positioned to welcome back patrons who may have stopped visiting the library for months or even years.

Another commonly cited benefit was improved customer service and reduced conflict. Without fines, staff would spend less time negotiating payments or managing emotionally charged interactions— particularly with patrons who are

frustrated, embarrassed, or facing financial hardship. Several noted that time currently spent processing payments or adjusting accounts could instead be directed to more mission-driven work, such as programming, outreach, and one-on-one patron support.

In line with this thinking, 74% of staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that fines are necessary to fund the library, while only 4% agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting widespread recognition that fine revenue plays a negligible role in the library's overall budget (Figure 10).

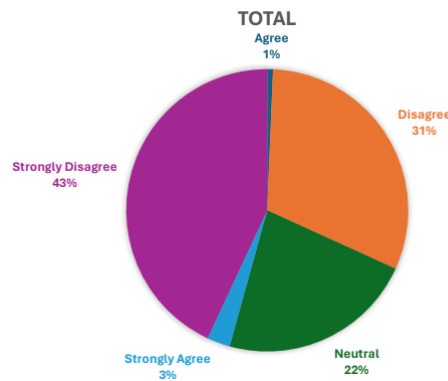


Figure 10. Are fines necessary to fund the library?

In addition, some respondents referenced studies from other library systems that have eliminated fines, emphasizing that these systems did not experience a decline in item returns or operational sustainability. Staff also pointed to the positive reception from patrons in those communities. Taken together, these examples support the idea that eliminating fines would not result in significant losses to revenue or circulation but would instead build goodwill and strengthen public trust. The gesture of eliminating fines, they suggested, signals empathy, respect, and a renewed commitment to equity.

Ultimately, the removal of overdue fines was seen not only as fiscally responsible, but as an opportunity to further align daily operations with the library's mission of promoting equal access for all.

Conclusion

The survey results revealed an overarching message from staff across LINCC: overdue fines are misaligned with the core values of public librarianship, often acting as barriers rather than motivators. Staff overwhelmingly support removing these fines,

emphasizing their disproportionate impact on vulnerable patrons, the strain they place on staff-patron relationships, and their limited operational benefit.

Numerous firsthand accounts highlighted the hardship fines can cause, especially for children, low-income families, and marginalized patrons. These accounts reflect a broader concern that fines contribute to disengagement and exacerbate existing inequities. Many staff advocated for policy changes that prioritize trust, access, and empathy over punitive enforcement.

Although some respondents raised valid concerns about potential challenges, most expressed confidence in the library's ability to address them through thoughtful planning and clear communication. With appropriate messaging, staff training, and patron education, a fine-free policy could support responsible borrowing while removing a significant barrier to access.

Staff identified a range of anticipated benefits tied to eliminating fines, including restored access for blocked patrons, reduced conflict at service points, and the ability to redirect staff time toward mission-driven work. There was strong recognition that fine revenue is minimal and does not justify the harm fines can cause.

In line with national trends and peer libraries, staff viewed the shift to a fine-free model as a fiscally sound, socially responsible, and values-aligned decision. Survey responses suggest that a substantial majority of staff support this potential change and believe it would better reflect the library's core mission.

Grounded in the firsthand experience of library professionals, these findings offer a strong foundation for continued discussion and planning as the district considers this policy shift.

Recommendation

Elimination of Overdue Fines

According to the literature, libraries across the country have found great success with eliminating overdue fines. This elimination has resulted in increased circulation, upticks in patron visits, more returned books, and ultimately, better relationships with the communities being served. Findings from the LINCC staff who work directly with patrons and regularly collect fines reflected these findings. Overdue fines are perceived as a barrier to access and harm relationships with patrons. The majority of staff also felt that overdue fines did not teach responsibility or ensure timely returns of materials. With the average cost to collect overdue fines across the county amounting to almost 54% of the revenue, the benefits seem to outweigh the risks, and this report strongly recommends eliminating overdue fines.

Proposed Steps

- Plan social media posts ahead of change for LINCC accounts and LINCC member accounts to share the news and pertinent information.
- Create documents with talking points for staff to help them discuss the changes with patrons and provide consistent information across the county.
- Updated policies on lost/damaged item returns, due date notifications, and blocked accounts.

Benefits

- Improved public image and relations with the community.
- Improved equitable access to library materials and services for marginalized populations.
- Better use of staff time and resources.
- Possible increase in circulation and patron visits.
- Consistent fee structure across the county.

Risks

- Loss of revenue for libraries.
- Patron confusion over the difference between overdue fines, and lost/damaged fees.
- Political backlash.

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