



A Tradition of Stewardship  
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 3/24/2020

Agenda Placement: 6B

## NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Anthony Halstead - Director  
Library

**REPORT BY:** Michelle Carreon, Staff Services Analyst II - 707.253.4819

**SUBJECT:** Elimination of late fines on all borrowed materials to ensure equitable access for all Napa County community members

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Director of Library Services and Community Outreach requests waiver of all outstanding late fines and eliminate assessing fines for all Napa County Library materials.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Public Libraries are a resource for information, recreation and to help aid in successful educational endeavors. To help ensure that all our community members have ready access to resources, the Director of Library Services and Community Outreach is requesting the elimination of all overdue fines and discontinue the practice of assessing fines for future materials returned after their due date.

Late fines can be a considerable barrier to our most vulnerable populations and addresses concerns regarding fines as a result of or prior to our county's Shelter At Home Order. The American Library Association in January 2019 passed a resolution encouraging the elimination of fines to promote social equity. Libraries no longer consider fines a viable tool to encourage timely return of materials. The current fine policies are ineffective and libraries that discontinued the practice found circulation of materials increased, while return rates remained the same. Additionally, staff hours needed to collect fines can be redirected towards programs and services that positively impact the community. Libraries that have previously eliminated fines find that user and staff satisfaction increases.

Numerous libraries throughout the Bay Area have eliminated fines. Those nearest us include: Sonoma County Library, Oakland Public Library, Marin County Library, San Francisco Public Library and Alameda County Library.

**FISCAL & STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT**

Is there a Fiscal Impact?	Yes
Is it currently budgeted?	No
What is the revenue source?	In the calendar year 2019 the Library received \$22,000 from the collection of library fines.
Is it Mandatory or Discretionary?	Discretionary
Discretionary Justification:	This reduction in revenue accounts .3 percent of our annual operating budget but prior library outcomes suggest elimination will result in increased patron use and decrease in staff time spent collecting fines, which includes mailings, phone calls, spreadsheet management, deposit preparation and in person interactions.
Is the general fund affected?	No
Future fiscal impact:	Loss of roughly \$20,000 annually.
Consequences if not approved:	The Library will continue to collect fines.
County Strategic Plan pillar addressed:	Collaborative and Engaged Community Healthy, Safe, and Welcoming Place to Live, Work, and Visit
Additional Information:	

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION**

Public Libraries across the nation have come to realize the collection of fines is a time consuming venture that does not result in an increase return of materials. In most cases, it disenfranchises residents and discourages use. At the Napa County Library there are roughly 2,500 patrons who do not utilize the library due to a balance owed of more than \$10, yet have no lost items.

Eliminating these fines helps meet the needs of our citizens hardest hit during the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent Shelter In Home requirements. They no longer need to worry that fines will impede their ability to use our resources and can focus on their family and community.

This change in policy will not impact our efforts to recover lost materials through either return or payment. We use a third party to help alert people to lost materials. Lost materials are items unreturned after 28 days beyond the due date. Over 75% of patrons contacted resolve their account with us.

The change will not include items loaned by all libraries, such as Napa Valley College and Solano Community College.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

None

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi