

What are the advantages/disadvantages to eliminating fines?

The advantages to eliminating fines is the increase in returned material and circulation. The disadvantage is the reduction of revenue.

Do fines discourage patrons from using the library?

Yes, research has shown that fines act as both a barrier to access as well as a disincentive to continue using the library once a patron has accrued fines.

How will the library be affected by the loss of revenue?

The annual loss of children's fines represents about \$2,600, which is less than 0.1% of the budget.

Do fines encourage personal responsibility by making patrons return items on time?

Research has not supported the theory that fines teach responsibility and refute the idea that materials will be returned in a timely manner. In fact, as evidenced by many other libraries eliminating fines, they act as a barrier in getting folks to return materials (most recently demonstrated by NYPL) and can delay returns to the point that patrons don't bother returning them at all.

Does the library have an alternate method to encourage patrons to return materials in a timely manner?

The library will still:

- send reminder notice,
- call patrons when something will be long overdue, and eventually
- bill for replacements, should a patron keep an item past what we consider long overdue.

What data/evidence is being considered?

Research being considered is:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdelib/removingbarrierstoaccess>

http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2019_ms_council_docs/ALA%20CD%2038%20RESOLUTION%20ON%20MONETARY%20LIBRARY%20FINES%20AS%20A%20FORM%20OF%20SOCIAL%20JUSTICE%20Revised%201_27_0.pdf

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

How can you ask for more money from the Town budget when you are eliminating a source of revenue?

By eliminating fines, we hope to better retain our collection while also encouraging more use of our library by both being more welcoming to new users and ensuring long-time patrons continue to enjoy visiting the library. As such, we would expect an increased demand, as seen at other libraries, and require a larger investment in our collections, staff, and spaces.

Why not remove fines on all materials, not just those for children?

While libraries who eliminate all fines tend to see the most dramatic increase in circulation and returned material, young patrons can't always get to the library themselves. This is especially true for young patrons of Webster, who generally rely on their caregivers to drive them to the library. Piloting fine elimination with those patrons who most benefit from it gives Webster a good test case to see if fine elimination is right for the whole community.

So, does this mean that I can keep materials for as long as I want?

No. After a set amount of time, the patron will be billed for the cost of a replacement.

What happens if I lose any materials?

Patrons who lose material will still be billed to replace the item; this is an automatic charge that is placed on a patron's account after the item is long overdue.

My child reads at an adult level, will he/she still be charged fines on adult materials?

Yes, right now the way to eliminate fines using our library system is based on the type of material being borrowed.

Will a Webster resident have to pay fines if they borrow or return materials at another MCLS library?

Yes – while we cooperate with the other MCLS libraries, we can only adjust the fines on our own materials.