



# Customer Comments

## May 2024

*The following comments were received by the Library during the months of May 2024. Where the customer requested a personal reply by phone or email, it was provided. Customer comments and responses are posted on the Library's website.*

**Comment:**

Suggestion - i love this library. i want to make that very clear. i have only one negative to share with you. i have been on a waiting list for a few book for MONTHS. long months. i know people want to read the same books i want to read. i feel however, that many just hold the books after reading before bringing them back in. why? because there is no penalty for not sharing with other people. i feel honestly that there should be perhaps the old fashion penalty charge after 3 weeks for not returning a book. it would bring revenue into the library, and people anxiously waiting to read a book will be able to finally get a call that it has been returned.

Its called "sharing". its called respect. we are so lucky to have a free library for our entertainment and learning new things. Please bring back the books you have read or just dont have time for. Others would love to read them.

**Response:**

Thanks for sharing your concerns. I understand it can be frustrating waiting for a book long after its due date.

In 2019, the North Olympic Library System (NOLS) joined libraries across the country in going fine-free, recognizing that overdue fines create barriers to access, have negative impacts on public relations, consume valuable staff time, and are not an effective tool to encourage on-time return of library materials.

The American Library Association (ALA) also passed a resolution in 2019 affirming that the imposition of monetary library fines creates a barrier to the provision of library and information services; urging libraries to scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them; and urging governing bodies of libraries to strengthen funding support for libraries so they are not dependent on monetary fines as a necessary source of revenue.

The experiences of fine-free libraries have produced a substantial body of data regarding the impacts of eliminating overdue charges. That data supports the following outcomes associated with a shift to a fine-free model:

- Contrary to popular expectation, overdue materials are returned *earlier* when fines are eliminated;
- There are fewer accounts blocked from checking out materials – more patrons, particularly youth and low income users, are able to continue utilizing library services;
- Lapsed-users return to the library;
- New cardholders numbers increase;
- First time checkouts increase;
- Circulation overall increases;

NOLS instituted a 10¢ /day overdue charge in 2003, and increased the charge to 20¢ /day in 2010. Many things have changed at NOLS, and in society, since 2010. In 2010, NOLS received \$39,683.81 in revenue from overdue fines. In 2018, only \$20,503.29 in revenue was received from overdue fines. The Library's 2024 Operating Budget is nearly \$6.5 million, which made overdue fines only about 0.3% of the Library's budget.

Even though overdue fines are no longer charged, NOLS implements other methods to encourage patrons to return materials on time. An almost overdue notice is automatically sent via email, text message, or phone 3 days before an item is due. Overdue notices are then sent when an item is 10 days overdue, 17 days overdue, and 30 days overdue.

If a patron has an item that is 14 days overdue, their account is blocked, preventing them from checking anything else out until the overdue item is returned. If an item is 30 days overdue, the patron is sent a bill for the cost of replacing the item (the fee is waived if the item is returned).

Additionally, the Library's Collection Management Team closely monitors reports about how long holds queues are for popular titles and can purchase additional copies if appropriate. As you mentioned, demand can sometimes be very high for new titles, so wait times for those will be long regardless.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further, please let me know.

I hope you continue to utilize and enjoy the Library!