



## **Frequently Asked Questions about late fines**

### ***Why did the Library decide to stop charging late fees?***

The Board of Trustees wants to ensure that all Montclairians have access to the Libraries resources. Library fines disproportionately affect children and people who are disadvantaged socioeconomically keeping them from using the Library. Often they are unable to pay the fine and so they stop coming to the Library, but the Library is the one place they can get the resources they need.

### ***Won't late fines keep people from returning things on time?***

The widely held belief that charging late fines encourages the timely return of materials has been disproven. Once someone has a late fine they are less likely to visit the library again. Libraries who have removed late fees report few adverse affects on material return rates.

### ***Will there still be due dates?***

Yes. The Library still has a set time for materials to be borrowed and we expect items to be returned on time. If items are returned after that date, they will be considered late and must be renewed or returned before additional items can be checked out.

### ***Do any items have late fees?***

A few. Items like museum passes or hotspots still have late fees, but books, movies, and other items are fine free.

### ***What happens if someone doesn't return their items?***

If items are overdue by 90 days, customers will be charged for the item. The item must be returned or the balance paid for before they can check other materials out. Customers will be sent reminders asking them to return the items once the item is late and periodically afterwards until the 90 day charge for the item occurs.

### ***How will this affect the Library's budget?***

It will not have any significant impact. Overdue fines account for less than 2% of the Library's income.

### ***I borrowed a book from another Library and returned it to Montclair, will I have to pay late fees?***

If the item is not owned by the Montclair Public Library and it's is returned late, you will be assessed a late fee. The Montclair Public Library is not charging late fees on items we own or send to other BCCLS Libraries.

### ***I have a fine from years ago. Do I still have to pay it?***

No. The Board of Trustees issued amnesty for outstanding late fines. The Library staff is in the process of clearing outstanding debts from customers accounts. This only applies to fines received on Montclair Public Library items. If the balance is from a lost item, please speak to our staff and we can make arrangements to clear the account.