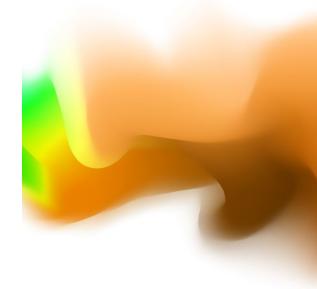
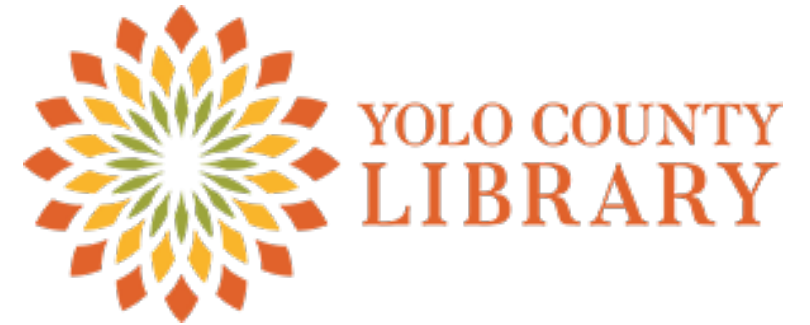
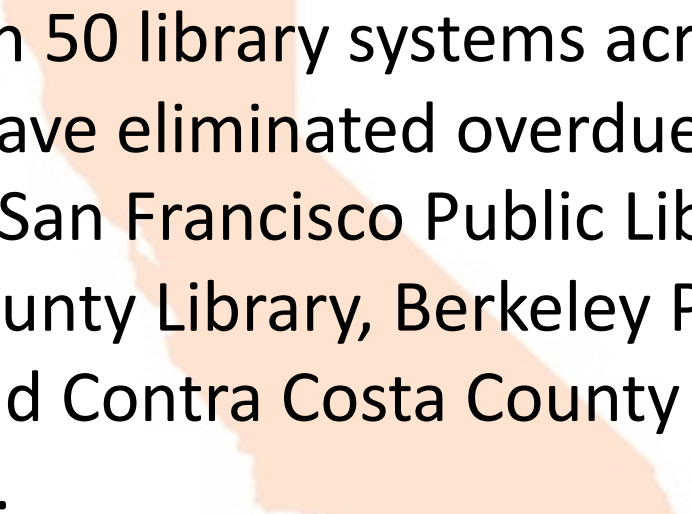


**PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE  
EXTENDED USE FEES FOR  
ALL PATRONS**

**MARCH 9, 2021**





More than 50 library systems across the country have eliminated overdue fines, including San Francisco Public Library, San Mateo County Library, Berkeley Public Library and Contra Costa County Library in California.

A national survey conducted by *Library Journal* in January 2017 found that momentum was growing nationwide to eliminate overdue fines.

In the summer of 2017, the fine-free model included major libraries Salt Lake County Public Library (Utah), Nashville Public Library (Tennessee), and Enoch Pratt Public Library (Baltimore, Maryland).

The *Urban Libraries Council* provides the best up-to-date estimate of the prevalence of fine-free libraries nationwide; as of December 2018, they cited 50 libraries had eliminated fines or fees for some or all patrons.

San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) published a study and cited several reasons to eliminate overdue fines.\*

The study found that it was clear that eliminating overdue fines has positive impacts.

*5 of the 7 libraries that eliminated overdue fines saw increases in borrowing and 4 saw an increase in the number of patrons using the library.*

\*<https://sfpl.org/uploads/files/pdfs/commission/Fine-Free-Report011719.pdf>

Reason #1: To increase patron access to materials and services.

*Overdue fines act as a barrier to access. They can lead to account suspension and dissuade some individuals from borrowing in the first place.*

Reason #2: To reduce the inequitable impact of overdue fines.

*Many patrons face overdue fines, but for those without disposable income they can be difficult to pay off. A fixed-rate fine policy is inequitable in that it most harms individuals already facing financial insecurity.*

Reason #3: To improve relationships with our patrons.

*The existence of overdue fines, and the fine payment transaction itself, is one of the most negative aspects of a patron's relationship with the library.*

Reason #4: To optimize staff time and increase efficiency.

*Collecting overdue fines can be time-consuming, lead to extended conflicts with patrons, and reduce staff time engaging in other forms of public service.*

Reason #5: Research shows overdue fines do not ensure materials are returned.

*Libraries that have eliminated overdue fines have not experienced increases in late returns. One library saw its late return rate drop from 9 percent to 4 percent following fine elimination.*

Reason #6: Concerns about lost revenue are minimal.

*Based on data from the last five years, is projected that Yolo County Library will forego \$40,000 in annual revenue, which is less than 1% of our budget.*

Reason #7: Concerns that materials will be returned late and not be available for others to use are not factual.

*While late returns are a reality facing every library, none of the libraries in the SFPL study have experienced increases in late returns, longer hold times, or gaps in the collection.*

Reason #8: Concerns that fines are necessary to teach responsible behavior are unfounded.

*There is no evidence that overdue fines consistently serve as a motivating factor to on-time returns; rather, most people will miss a deadline at some point. Fines may not help prevent occasional late returns, and they punish individuals without financial resources to spare.*



**Yolo:** Average household income of \$51,703  
2nd lowest in Yolo County by zip code

**Knights Landing:** Average household income of \$59,965  
4th lowest in Yolo County by zip code

**West Sacramento (95605):** Average household income of \$68,617  
5th lowest in Yolo County by zip code

**9.8%** of all library **accounts with fines** are in Yolo, Knights Landing and West Sacramento

**8.2%** of all library accounts are in these communities

**14.3%** of all **blocked library accounts** are in Yolo, Knights Landing, and West Sacramento

**8.2%** of all library accounts are in these communities

**13.9%** of all **blocked adult accounts** are in Yolo, Knights Landing and West Sacramento

**7.3%** of all adult library accounts are in these communities

Yolo County Library eliminated overdue fines for youth in January 2019.

RESULT: A 28% increase in borrowing on youth and children's library cards.

Recommendation:

In keeping with Yolo County Library's mission to "provide access for all to ideas that inform, entertain and inspire," it is recommended that the Board of Supervisors approve this proposal to eliminate overdue fines for all Yolo County Library patrons effective April 1, 2021.