

**Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy –  
Revision, Implementation & Communication Plan**

<b>Date:</b>	March 28, 2022
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	City Librarian

**SUMMARY**

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The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval for changes to the *Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy*, primarily resulting from the elimination of overdue fines for material borrowed on teen and adult library cards. Funding for the elimination of overdue fines is included in the Council-approved 2022 operating budget, and this report highlights the policy changes required to effect this change.

The proposed changes to the *Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy* include:

- required changes to the borrowing rules resulting from the elimination of teen and adult overdue fines;
- changes to borrowing limits and thresholds to strengthen stewardship of materials in the absence of overdue fines;
- addition of language that will allow inactive customers' long outstanding credit balances to be purged from the Library's customer and circulation database;
- removal of other fees including lost card replacement and image licensing fees.

Some minor wording changes have also been made to improve the clarity of the policy.

Finally, information is provided on the implementation and communication plans around the elimination of overdue fines.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:**

1. approves the revised *Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy*, appended as Attachment 1; and
2. approves the write-off of outstanding overdue fines for teens and adults, holds not picked up fines for teens, and lost card fees for children, teens and adults with an estimated value of \$430,000.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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The Council-approved 2022 operating budget includes \$1.4 million of funding for the elimination of overdue fines for teen & adult cardholders, comprised of \$300,000 from the Toronto Public Library Foundation and \$1.1 million from the City. The approved funding will be adequate to fund minor lost revenues from the elimination of both the lost card replacement fee and the fine for holds not picked up for teens.

With the permanent elimination of overdue fines for teens and adults, as well as other minor charges noted as above, an estimated \$430,000 will be written off. Because the fines budget is based on what is expected to be collected, the write-off of these outstanding charges will not have any significant impact on the 2022 operating budget.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan identifies priorities through an equity lens, working to understand and break down barriers for all, with a focus on equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations. The recommendation to eliminate overdue fines aligns with TPL's Strategic Plan actions such as Focus on Equity. Expected outcomes are equitable access to library service, improved customer service, and increased membership and usage of library collections and services.

## **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The recommended changes to the Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy will have a positive impact on equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations. The

changes align and support the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction and Equity Initiatives, including Anti-Black Racism, the Toronto Newcomer Strategy, Toronto Youth Equity Strategy, Toronto Recovery and Rebuilt Strategy, and Toronto Strong Neighborhoods Strategy. These changes will help to remove barriers to library use, especially those living in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs).

## DECISION HISTORY

The *Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy* is reviewed regularly to ensure fines, fees, loan periods and limits are reasonable, effective and consistent with nearby public library systems and other large urban Canadian public library systems. Typically, this review is conducted annually.

The Policy was reviewed and approved by the Toronto Public Library Board at the June 22, 2020 meeting, with a further revision at the Board meeting on September 21, 2020: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2020/sep21/17-membership-circulation-and-collection-use-policy-2020-changes-revised-combined.pdf>

At the October 19, 2020 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board approved the 2021 operating base budget submission that included phased budget enhancements including fines elimination: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2020/oct19/14-2021-operating-budget-submission-combined-revised.pdf>

At the February 18, 2021 City Council Meeting, City Council approved TPL's operating budget which included funding for the elimination of children's overdue fines and on February 22, 2021, the Library Board adopted the Council-approved budget: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2021/feb22/11-2021-operating-budget-adoption-combined.pdf>

At the April 26, 2021 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board approved the revised Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy that reflects the permanent elimination of all overdue fines on material borrowed on children's library cards and the write-off of outstanding overdue fines on children's cards with an estimated value of \$150,000: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2021/apr26/11-membership-circulation-and-collection-use-policy-update-combined.pdf>

At the October 25, 2021 Toronto Public Library Board meeting, the Board approved the 2022 operating base budget submission that included budget enhancements for fines elimination: <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2021/oct25/14-2022-operating-budget-submission-combined.pdf>

At the February 17, 2022 City Council Meeting, City Council approved TPL's operating budget which included funding for the elimination of teen and adult overdue fines and on February 28, 2022, the Library Board adopted the Council-approved budget: <https://torontopubliclibrary.typepad.com/board-meetings/2022-02-28/12-2022-operating-budget-adoption-combined-final-revised-01.pdf>

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy is intended to maximize use of library materials and make them widely available to the community, facilitate requests for library materials by customers, and retrieve overdue materials. The policy establishes: eligibility and customer age criteria; conditions and use of the library card; borrowing privileges, responsibilities and restrictions; and a schedule of fees and fines.

This policy review is largely to implement the elimination of overdue fines for teen & adult customers. Minor additions and revisions have also been made and are informed by the Library's 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. All circulation policy recommendations support the strategic objectives of focusing on equity by breaking down barriers to access and increasing inclusion.

## **COMMENTS**

### **Recommended Policy Changes – 2022**

Overdue fines were originally introduced to encourage customers to return materials on time, but increasingly the fines have become a barrier to the use of library services, especially for vulnerable communities. Overdue fines have had a disproportionate impact on racialized and low-income communities in Toronto. The following changes have been made to the Membership, Circulation & Collection Use Policy as a result of the elimination of overdue fines for teens and adults and to strengthen stewardship for borrowed materials:

- removal of language relating to overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen or adult card;
- lowering of the borrowing limit for physical checkouts;

- reducing the timeline for when a customer may receive a refund for lost materials;
- reducing the timeline for when a long overdue item is assumed lost;
- changes to when borrowing privileges are suspended;
- changes to collection agency service thresholds;
- removal of the Adult-under 25 user profile code;
- removal of the holds not picked up charge for teen customers.

As part of the annual policy review, other changes have been made to align with TPL's 2020-2024 strategic plan:

- elimination of lost card replacement fee;
- purging of long outstanding credit balances from inactive customer accounts;
- removal of image licensing fees.

The recommended changes are consistent with other large North American Library systems' implementation of fines elimination.

### **Overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen and/or adult card**

Currently, no overdue fines are being charged, and blocks on library cards due to outstanding charges have been lifted as part of TPL's COVID-19 pandemic response. These measures were taken to ensure Torontonians have continued access to our collections, including resources to support remote learning. By eliminating all overdue fines permanently, TPL will remove a barrier for service access, especially for vulnerable groups, and join hundreds of library systems across North America that have already gone fine-free. The experience from other library systems that have gone fine-free has been that materials continue to be returned at the same rate or better. Another finding is that eliminating fines increases use, encourages membership renewals and attracts new customers.

### **Maximum number of physical items checked out**

The borrowing threshold was raised from 50 to 75 as part of a COVID-19 response to allow customers to borrow more material and visit the library less frequently. With the easing of restrictions and the elimination of overdue fines, it would be prudent to bring back pre-pandemic borrowing limits to strengthen stewardship of materials and as a risk-mitigation strategy.

### **Refund timeline**

The current refund timeline of six months has been recognized as too long to allow for refunds if lost materials are subsequently found. Often the material returned after six

months is outdated and/or replacement copies have already been purchased to fulfill holds. With the elimination of overdue fines, the shortening of the refund timeline to 90 days will also ensure that the time period is not being used as an opportunity to extend loan periods.

### **Lost material status**

To ensure the timely return of material and as part of a risk and mitigation strategy for fines elimination, it is recommended to shorten the time from which an item is long overdue to when it is categorized as lost. Shortening the time from 40 days to 30 days will implement the stop-service provision sooner and improve the probability of having the material returned sooner.

### **Suspension of borrowing privileges thresholds**

Currently, borrowing privileges are suspended when more than 15 items are overdue and/or there are more than \$30 in charges. Reducing the number of overdue items to 10 will encourage customers to return materials sooner and potentially avoid receiving a billing notice as the stop-service provision will begin sooner. The average cost of print material has also increased; therefore, increasing the threshold to \$100 is in line with market prices and allows approx. 2-5 adult items or 4-10 children items before a customer reaches the \$100 threshold.

### **Collection agency service thresholds**

To ensure effective financial stewardship, TPL will continue to use a collection agency service to collect long overdue unpaid charges and recover materials from borrowers age 18 years and older. The small balance program was implemented in 2013 to assist TPL in recovering small outstanding charges resulting from overdue fines. With the elimination of overdue fines, fewer customers will have accounts with small balances; therefore, this program is no longer required. With the elimination of overdue fines, customers will only be referred to the collection agency when they have long overdue unpaid charges of \$50 or more.

### **Adult-Under 25 user profile code**

The Adult-Under 25 user profile code was implemented to ensure that Young Adults benefitted from a lower overdue fine rate. With the elimination of overdue fines, this status is no longer needed.

## **Holds not picked up fines for teen customers**

A fine for holds not picked up was introduced in 2012 to encourage customers to manage their holds more effectively. A fine of \$1 is charged for every item placed on hold but not picked up. While the fine has successfully reduced the amount of material that expires on the hold shelf, it also acts as a deterrent for placing holds. This fine was eliminated for child cardholders in 2021 and is recommended to be removed for teen cardholders as well. Most holds are placed on adult bestseller material; therefore, this fine will remain for adult cardholders to ensure effective circulation and handling of materials.

## **Lost card replacement fee**

This fee can create a barrier to access for some cardholders and disproportionately impact customers in lower-income communities. TPL data shows that 39% of lost card bills remained unpaid in branches in neighbourhood improvement areas. The operational cost to source library cards is low; therefore, eliminating this fee would assist in removing another barrier to service access.

## **Credit balances on customer accounts**

TPL conducts a regular annual purge of fines and customer accounts, and the criteria for purging are outlined in the Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy. It has been identified that there are many customer accounts that are inactive and have small credit balances. By introducing purging for inactive customer accounts with long-outstanding credits, TPL will be able to purge these inactive accounts and align the purge with TPL's regular annual purge schedule. The purging of credits is a standard business practice for libraries and serves very practical and pragmatic business and financial purposes.

## **Image licensing fees**

Since the implementation of the public domain merchandise and marketing license fee schedule in 2010, there has been a significant rise in interest and the influence of the open access, open source movement, and Creative Commons practice, particularly in the area of public domain content.

Many cultural institutions have eased or eliminated their commercial licensing fees for public domain content in their collections. Staff have also noted there have been multiple instances in the past where customers have declined orders once they were informed of the licensing fee for marketing use.

Removing the licensing fees will help eliminate social equity barriers by ensuring that we are reaching and engaging marginalized communities who may not have the resources to pay licensing fees for content that is already in the public domain.

## **Implementation and Communication Plans**

Implementation of the policy changes will begin following Board approval. An online copy of the revised policy will be made available for the public on the Library's website at <http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/>

The communication plan for the elimination of overdue fines for teens and adults includes all of TPL's in-branch and digital channels (website, email and social media) to ensure that TPL customers are aware of these changes. Attachment 2 provides a detailed communications plan for fines elimination.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

TPL will be collecting information and baseline data needed to monitor and evaluate the fines elimination initiative and policy changes with an equity and inclusion lens and against policy outcomes to ensure the effectiveness of the changes and risk-mitigation strategy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Once TPL branches fully reopen and all services are reinstated, the Library will play an even more critical role in connecting people to resources for learning as the economic impacts of COVID-19 will continue. These impacts will likely be more significant for those from racialized and low-income communities. The elimination of overdue fines for all customers will be a welcome change as Torontonians continue to use their library, now with reduced barriers.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Revised Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy  
(DRAFT)

Attachment 2: Adult & Teen Overdue Fines Elimination Communications Plan

## **MEMBERSHIP, CIRCULATION and COLLECTION USE (including Fees and Fines)**

### **Policy Classification: Board Policy**

#### **Motion # and Approval Date:**

<b>98 - 023 - January 29, 1998</b>	<b>13 - 184 - November 18, 2013</b>
<b>99 - 108 - September 21, 1999</b>	<b>14 - 079 - April 28, 2014</b>
<b>02 - 149 - September 23, 2002</b>	<b>15 - 073 - April 20, 2015</b>
<b>03 - 154 - October 20, 2003</b>	<b>16 - 063 - March 21, 2016</b>
<b>05 - 084 - April 4, 2005</b>	<b>17 - 094 - May 15, 2017</b>
<b>07 - 176 - October 15 2007</b>	<b>18 - 112 - June 18, 2018</b>
<b>10 - 030 - February 16, 2010</b>	<b>20 - 112 - June 22, 2020</b>
<b>11 - 097 - July 26, 2011</b>	<b>20 - 157 - September 21, 2020</b>
<b>11 - 169 - December 12, 2011</b>	<b>21 - 073 - April 26, 2021</b>
<b>13 - 067 - April 29, 2013</b>	<b>22 - xxx - March 28, 2022 (TBC)</b>

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#### **Effective Date**

March 28, 2022

#### **Last Reviewed**

April 26, 2021

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Toronto Public Library (the Library) Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy is to:

- promote universal access to a broad range of human knowledge, experience, information and ideas;
- protect intellectual freedom and respect individuals' rights to privacy and choice;
- ensure stewardship of materials, which are public assets;
- make materials widely available to the community;
- maximize use of collections and services;
- facilitate requests for materials; and
- retrieve overdue materials

## **Scope**

The policy applies to all users of Toronto Public Library. It covers activities relating to the registration of library users and the borrowing and use of library collections and services. It sets:

- conditions and use of library membership;
- borrowing privileges, responsibilities and restrictions; and
- a schedule of fees and fines.

## **Underlying Principles**

The Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy reflects the Library's mission and values. The Public Libraries Act (R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44, Section 23) permits the Library to impose fees and make rules.

Fines, fees, loan periods and borrowing limits are all reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are reasonable, effective and in line with nearby public library systems and with other large urban Canadian public library systems.

## **Policy Statement**

The Library's Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy will:

- provide a mechanism for ensuring the equitable access and fair use of collections and services;
- determine rules and regulations that protect library collections and services in a manner that is consistent with the principles of financial accountability and the Library's responsibility to its stakeholders; and
- be administered in a manner ~~that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities that considers the individual accessibility needs of persons with disabilities and respects the principles of dignity, independence, equal opportunity, and integration.~~

## **Specific Directives**

### **1.1 Eligibility**

Any person who lives, works, attends school or owns property in the City of Toronto, or who has an immediate family member living at the same address who owns property in the City of Toronto, or any person who lives on a First Nations reserve in Ontario, is eligible for membership with borrowing privileges without charge, upon presentation of acceptable

identification, and is entitled to use the Library's services.

A **Non-Resident** is an individual who does not live, work, attend school or own property in Toronto, or does not live on a First Nations reserve in Ontario, and may access services and borrow physical materials only from the Toronto Public Library by paying a non-refundable fee. Payment of this fee entitles each member of the non-resident household to library membership. Non-resident privileges can be purchased for a three-month or 12-month period at a time.

## **1.2 Customer Age Categories**

A **Child** is an individual from birth up to and including age twelve (12).

A **Teen** is an individual from thirteen (13) years up to and including age seventeen (17).

~~An **Adult – Under 25** is an individual from eighteen (18) years up to and including age twenty-four (24).~~

An **Adult** is an individual who is ~~twenty-five (25)~~ eighteen (18) years old and older.

## **1.3 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

To obtain library membership, customers must present name and address identification and disclose date of birth and contact information. Certain additional information may be supplied in whole or in part and is not a requirement for registration or re-registration. Address information is not a requirement for visitor and access membership types. Information presented during the registration process is entered into the Library's customer and circulation database, and is retained subject to the purging schedule (Section 1.~~14~~**13 & 1.14**).

- A parent or guardian of a person up to sixteen years of age may exercise the right of access to the child's personal information in the customer or circulation databases.

- An individual customer who has requested and been assigned supplementary library membership privileges and who has signed the accompanying consent form, voluntarily gives a right of access to the personal information in their customer and circulation database records to the individual documented on the consent form.
- When requests for personal information in the customer and circulation databases are received from offsite, the number of the library membership, or the customer database identification number, and name and address will constitute acceptable identification. A Personal Identification Number (PIN) must be entered by individuals in order to access their own personal circulation records through the public access catalogue where available.
- In accordance with Section 32(g) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the staff member in charge of the branch at the time has the authority to release personal information to a law enforcement agency in Canada to aid an investigation undertaken with a view to a law enforcement proceeding or from which a law enforcement proceeding is likely to result. The information requested must be documented on the Disclosure of Personal Information form.
- In accordance with Section 32(I) of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the staff member in charge of the branch at the time has the authority to release personal information in compassionate circumstances to facilitate contact with the next of kin or a friend of an individual who is injured, ill or deceased.
- The circulation records of Home Library Service customers are retained with their permission.
- Items returned remain on a customer's record until the end of that working day. Information messages on a customer's record related to holds are deleted after seven months. A customer's borrowing history is only retained if requested by the customer.

- Borrowing activity information is retained in the customer database as long as the circulation record indicates that an item remains on loan or fees remain unpaid, subject to the purging schedule (Section 1.~~1413~~ & **1.14**).
- Backup files of customers' borrowing activity are temporarily retained for the purpose of restoring data in cases of system failure and file corruption. These files are subsequently destroyed on a scheduled basis.

#### **1.4 Library Membership - Conditions and Use**

To obtain a library membership, applicants must present acceptable identification to library staff in a branch or demonstrate their eligibility through the online registration process.

Adult, ~~Adult under 25~~ and Teen customers who are eligible (Section 1.1) and who do not have a Toronto Public Library membership can register for a ~~e~~**cards**-Digital Access Card on the Toronto Public Library's website. ~~E~~**cards** Digital Access Cards provide access to all of the Library's digital services, except those limited to in-branch use. Customers who have registered online can obtain access to all Library services, including the physical collection, upon presentation of acceptable identification at any branch of the Toronto Public Library.

A library membership must be renewed annually with confirmation of relevant information. All outstanding ~~fines, fees and charges~~ must be cleared at time of renewal. This can be done at a branch or, Adults, ~~Adults – Under 25~~ and Teens with full-service or ~~e~~**cards**-Digital Access Cards may use the online renewal process on the Toronto Public Library's website.

Customers age thirteen and over must sign the physical card upon registration unless unable to do so due to a disability.

The parent/guardian of a child (from birth up to and including age 12) must present identification to register the child for a library membership and sign the child's card. If the parent/guardian is not present, the child will be given a registration form for the parent/guardian to complete and authorize.

In signing the card, or, in the case of children, the registration form, the signer accepts responsibility for the choice, use and return of all materials borrowed and for charges on items that are ~~everdue~~, lost or damaged.

A customer must present their library card or confirm customer status to borrow materials and access some collections, services and programs of the Toronto Public Library.

A customer must check material out properly, treat it with care, and return it on time so that material will be available to other customers.

A library membership is not transferable (i.e. library privileges apply to individuals only and may not be transferred from one individual to another).

Upon signing a consent form, a customer may authorize one other customer to access their customer record, including borrowing privileges.

Customers are entitled to one library card only. A second library card may be issued for children of divorced/separated parents, a separate card for use with each parent/guardian.

The library card is the property of the Toronto Public Library Board.

Loss or theft of a library card must be reported immediately. Members are responsible for any materials borrowed on their cards until loss or theft is reported.

~~A charge is levied for the replacement of a lost or stolen card.~~

Change of name, address, phone number or email address must be reported immediately.

All Library members have access to the Print and Copy Account Service and are bound by the Print and Copy Account Terms and Conditions.

## **1.5 Limits**

The number of items which a customer may borrow may be limited on the basis of local demand and material supply.

Remote access to electronic products may be restricted based on licensing agreements.

Toronto Public Library establishes and reviews annually, the maximum number of items and allowable holds that may be checked out to a customer at any one time.

#### **1.6    Loan Period**

A standard loan period of three weeks exists for materials borrowed except for those materials for which special loan periods have been established.

An extended loan period is available on request unless there is high demand on materials or limited availability.

#### **1.7    Renewals**

Most library materials may be renewed if there are copies available to fill existing holds and if the number of renewals permitted has not been exceeded.

#### **1.8    Holds**

Most library materials may be reserved unless they are non-holdable or for reference.

A charge is imposed when a hold is filled for an Adult ~~or Teen~~ customer but not picked up. **The following registered customers are exempt from holds not picked up charges:**

~~Child customers are not charged for holds that are not picked up.~~  
~~Children;~~  
~~Teens;~~  
~~Home Library Service customers;~~  
~~Persons with Disabilities Status;~~  
~~Talking Book customers.~~

## **1.9 Interlibrary Loan**

Interlibrary loan is made available to registered customers of the Toronto Public Library and to external libraries upon request.

The Toronto Public Library does not charge customers for interlibrary loan services unless charged by the lending institution, in which case the charge will be passed on to the customer.

A charge is imposed when an interlibrary loan request is filled **for an Adult customer only** but not picked up.

Materials from other library systems are subject to loan conditions specified by the lending library.

## **1.10 Returns**

Materials borrowed from the Toronto Public Library may be returned to any branch of the library system.

Exceptions may exist for some unique collections.

## **1.11 Lost/Damaged Items**

All customers are responsible for library materials borrowed from any branch of the Toronto Public Library.

The Library will charge a replacement cost for material which is long overdue, and for material which is lost or damaged.

The replacement cost will be the invoiced price or the order price, whichever is greater, or default cost.

Replacement in kind, or substitution, for lost or damaged materials is not accepted.

In the event that items are damaged, the Toronto Public Library reserves the right to determine the amount of repair or replacement charges.

The Toronto Public Library reserves the right to retain library materials even in cases where full replacement cost has been paid. If an item that was reported lost and paid for is subsequently found, the replacement ~~cost, less any overdue fines accumulated to the date the item is returned,~~ will be refunded upon presentation of material, within ~~six 90 days months~~ of original payment. ~~The maximum fine deducted shall not exceed the original payment.~~

Toronto Public Library is not responsible for damage to any equipment, hardware or software incurred during the playback of any material, e.g. CDs, DVDs, digital content.

The parent/guardian of a child up to and including age 12 is responsible for lost or damaged charges incurred by the child.

#### **~~1.12 Overdue Fines~~**

~~It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that materials are returned on time so that they will be available to others. Customers will be notified of materials that are overdue.~~

~~Fines are charged to all registered borrowers for the late return of library materials, with the exception of the following:~~  
~~Home Library Service customers;~~  
~~Persons with Disabilities Status;~~  
~~Talking Book customers;~~  
~~Materials borrowed on a Child card.~~

~~Fines are calculated according to customer age categories. Adults pay Adult fines on all materials borrowed including teen and children's materials. Adults Under 25 and teens pay Teen fines on all materials borrowed including adult, teen and children's materials. No fines are charged for materials borrowed on a Child card. Separate fine rates may apply to materials as specified.~~

~~No fines are charged for days when the Library is closed.~~

### **1.132 Suspension of Borrowing Privileges**

Borrowing privileges are suspended in the following cases:

- prescribed limits to the amount of **fines or fees, or charges** a borrower may owe the Library have been exceeded
- prescribed limits to the number of allowable overdue items have been exceeded

If these limits are exceeded by a library customer, the stop-service provision in the circulation system will be implemented until the borrower restores their circulation record to within the acceptable range.

Borrowing privileges are also suspended when a customer account is referred to a collection agency. In this situation, the stop-service provision in the circulation system will be implemented until the customer resolves their account.

Library privileges are revoked from customers who receive system-wide exclusions of six or 12 months, during that time period.

### **1.143 Purging of Customer Accounts**

Customer accounts are purged from the database on an annual basis:

- when the last use of the library membership is more than two years and the total balance owing is less than \$100.00
- when the last use of the library membership is more than five years and the total balance is greater than \$100.00

### **1.14 Purging of Customer Account Credits**

**Any existing customer account with credits will be offset against balances owing prior to purging of a customer's account. Customer account credits are purged from the database when the last use of the library membership is more than two years.**

### **1.15 Use of a Collection Agency**

A collection agency will be used to collect long overdue unpaid **fines**-charges and recover materials from borrowers age 18 years and older when the

amount exceeds the set limit. An additional ~~fine~~**non-refundable administrative fee** will be charged to those customers whose accounts are turned over to a collection agency. **The following registered borrowers customers are exempt from being turned over to a collection agency:**

**Home Library Service customers;**  
**Persons with Disabilities Status;**  
**Talking Book customers.**

## **Schedule**

### **1. Memberships**

#### **1.1 Full-Service**

- for adults, children and teens who live, work, go to school or own property in Toronto or who live on a First Nations Reserve in Ontario
- requires name and address identification and other documentation as appropriate, e.g. proof of work location and disclosure of other personal information
- provides access to all library services, including digital and physical collections with the exception of restricted and adult accompaniment videos to children under 14

#### **1.2 Access**

- for customers who are experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed and unable to provide permanent address identification
- requires name identification and disclosure of other personal information
- provides full access to library services, including those available through digital channels
- borrowing limit of five physical items at a time

#### **1.3 Corporate**

- for corporations located in Toronto including businesses, day cares and group homes
- teachers and other school employees are not eligible

- requires name and address identification from authorized individual
- provides access to the physical collection only

#### **1.4 Visitor**

- for customers who do not meet the eligibility requirements for a library membership and who do not wish to pay the non-resident fee
- requires name identification and disclosure of other personal information
- provides access to in-library services, such as computers, printing, photocopiers, programs and some digital resources

#### **1.5 Temporary**

- for Toronto residents who have a permanent address but can only provide name identification
- requires name identification and membership will expire at 11:59 pm on the same day it was created
- full borrowing privileges granted upon presentation of full identification requirements
- may borrow one item on the initial visit with the exception of some items, such as musical instruments and digital equipment

#### **1.6 Non-resident**

- for non-residents who are not eligible for a free Toronto Public Library membership
- requires name and address identification and other documentation as appropriate plus a fee of \$30 quarterly or \$120 annually
- provides access to the physical collection only

#### **1.7 Digital Access Card**

- for adults and teens who live in Toronto
- requires name and address information that is fully validated by the online system
- provides full access to digital resources and services, except those limited to in-branch use

## **2. Borrowing Privileges and Restrictions**

### **2.1 Books, Magazines, CDs, Audiobooks**

- available to Adult, ~~Adult—Under 25~~ Teen, and Child borrowers
- ~~no restrictions~~

### **2.2 All Video (VHS, DVD and eVideo)**

- restricted: available to persons 18 and over
- adult accompaniment: available to persons 14 and over
- all other: available to all customers

### **2.3 Talking Books**

- restricted to customers with perceptual disabilities and who are registered as Talking Book customers

### **2.4 Museum and Arts Pass**

- restricted to Adult ~~Adult—Under 25~~ borrowers only
- restricted to one pass per borrower per week
- restricted to one pass for each venue every three months (depending on availability)

### **2.5 Digital Equipment**

- available to Adult, ~~Adult—Under 25~~, Teen, and Child borrowers
- Child and Teen borrowers must obtain authorization from parent/guardian

### **2.6 Musical Instruments**

- available to Adult, ~~Adult—Under 25~~, Teen, and Child borrowers
- Child and Teen borrowers must obtain authorization from parent/guardian
- customers may borrow one instrument at a time
- instruments must be returned to owning branch

### **2.7 Wi-Fi Hotspots**

- available to Adult, ~~Adult—Under 25~~, Teen, and Child borrowers
- Child and Teen borrowers must obtain authorization from parent/guardian

- customers may borrow one unit at a time
- units must be returned to owning branch
- ~~restricted to one unit every twelve months (depending on availability)~~

**2.8 Arduinos** (~~microcontroller used to build digital devices and interactive objects~~)

- available to Adult, ~~Adult Under 25~~, and Teen customers
- ~~no holds or renewals~~
- arduinos must be returned ~~kits~~ to same Digital Innovation Hub where borrowed
- ~~replacement fee of \$50 applies for lost or damaged kits~~

**2.9 Playaways** (~~audiobooks that have been preloaded onto a portable device~~)

- available to Adult, ~~Adult Under 25~~, Teen, and Child borrowers
- ~~replacement fee of \$50 applies for lost or damaged units~~

**3. Limits**

**3.1 Maximum number of physical items** checked out (including books, magazines, CDs, DVDs) at one time is ~~75~~ 50.

**3.2 Maximum number of holds on physical items** at one time is 100.

**3.3 Holds**

**Schedule of Materials Showing Whether a Hold Can Be Placed**

Item	Can a Hold be Placed
Arduino	No
Best Bet	No
Book	Yes
CD	Yes
CD-ROM	Yes
Digital equipment	No
DVD/VHS	Yes

DVD - New Release Feature	Yes
<del>Digital content</del> Econtent	Varies as determined by licensing agreement
Magazine or Periodical	No
Museum and Arts Pass	No
Music score	Yes
Musical instrument	No
Picture collection	No
Playaways	Yes
Reference material	No
Uncatalogued material (e.g., mass market paperback)	No
Wi-Fi Hotspots	No

## 4. Loan Periods

### 4.1 Loan Periods

#### Schedule of Materials and Loan Periods

Item	Loan Period
Arduino	21 days
Best Bet	21 days
Book	21 days
CD	21 days
CD-ROM	21 days
Digital equipment	2 hours
DVD – Feature	7 days
DVD – Non-Fiction & TV Series	14 days
DVD/VHS – Language Learning including Literacy	21 days
Econtent	Varies as determined by licensing agreement
Items provided by Home Library Service	Extended loans as determined by Home Library Service
Magazine or Periodical	7 days
Museum and Arts Pass	Expiry date as specified on the <del>Pass receipt</del>
Music score	21 days

Musical instrument	21 days
Picture collection	21 days
Playaways	21 days
Wi-Fi Hotspots	6 months

## 4.2 Renewal

### Schedule of Materials and Maximum Number of Renewal Loan Periods

Please note: Items with holds outstanding cannot be renewed.

Item	Maximum Renewal Length
Arduino	None
Best Bet	None
Book	3 standard loan periods
CD	3 standard loan periods
CD-ROM	3 standard loan periods
In Library Use Digital Equipment	2 hour periods, subject to demand
DVD/VHS	2 standard loan periods
DVD - New Release Feature	2 standard loan periods
Econtent	Varies as determined by licensing agreement
Magazine or Periodical	2 standard loan periods
Museum and Art Pass	None
Music score	2 standard loan periods
Musical instrument	2 standard loan periods
Picture collection	3 standard loan periods
Playaways	3 standard loan periods
Wi-Fi Hotspots	None

## 5. ~~Fines and Collection Agency and Suspension~~

### ~~5.1 General (for all items except Materials as Specified and Laptops)~~

~~Schedule Showing Fines per day and Maximum Fines for Each Category for the Material~~

Age Category	Fine Amount Per Day Per Item	Maximum Per Item for Each Loan Period*
2. Adult	3. \$0.35	4. \$14.00

5. Adult Under 25	6. \$0.15	7. \$ 6.00
8. Teen	9. \$0.15	10. \$ 6.00

~~\*Note that each renewal is considered another loan period.~~

### **5.2 In Library Use Digital Equipment Fine**

~~\$2.00 per hour~~

### **5.31 Use of a Collection Agency**

~~\$15.00 for accounts owing \$40.00 or more~~

~~\$5.00 for accounts owing less than \$40.00~~

Accounts owing \$50.00 or more will be referred to a Collection Agency and will be subject to a \$15.00 non-refundable administrative fee.

### **5.5 Wi-Fi Hotspots**

~~No late fines applied.~~

### **5.62 Suspension**

When the customer:

- has more than ~~15~~ 10 items overdue, or
- has more than ~~\$30.00~~ \$100.00 in ~~fines or~~ charges, ~~which includes both unpaid fines on returned materials and fines accruing on items not yet returned~~
- account has been referred to a collection agency, as per Section 5.13
- has received a system-wide exclusion of six or twelve months

## **6. Charges**

### **6.1 Non-Resident**

\$30.00 per household for three months

\$120.00 per household for 12 months

### **6.2 Holds, ~~Reference Loans~~ and Interlibrary Loans Not Picked Up**

\$1.00 per item not picked up charged to Adult ~~and Teen~~ customers only.

### **6.2 Replacement card**

~~Schedule Showing Charge for Replacement Card for Each Age~~

### **Category**

<b>Age Category</b>	<b>Charge</b>
Adult	\$2.00
Adult – Under 25	\$1.50
Teen	\$1.50
Child	\$1.00

### **6.3 Lost item (~~Including In Library Use Digital Equipment and Wi-Fi Hotspots~~)**

It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that materials are returned so that they will be available to others. Lost materials **including digital equipment** are subject to a replacement fee. Replacement price is the invoiced price or order price, whichever is greater. When that information is not available, the default price to be based on the previous year's average retail price taken from the Integrated Library System (ILS).

Note: "Reported/Claims returned" items change to "lost" status after 90 days.

Time limit to obtain a refund for an item reported lost and paid which is subsequently found **and returned** is capped at ~~six months~~ 90 days after original payment. ~~Full refund of invoiced price but not fines or collection agency fees. The maximum fine deducted shall not exceed the price paid.~~

### **6.4 Photocopies and printing**

Quick Print Photocopy/Printing Card – \$1.00 (This fee and value added to a Quick Print Photocopy/Printing Card are non-refundable).

Black and White (8.5 x 11) - \$0.15

Black and White (11 x 17) - \$0.20

Colour - \$0.55

Colour Glossy (8.5 x 14) - \$3.00

Colour Glossy (11 x 17) - \$4.00

3D Prints – \$0.15 per 1 gram of filament used

**6.5 Interlibrary Loan**

Charge as applied by the lending library.

**6.6 Damaged Materials/Digital Equipment (including Arduinos and Wi-Fi Hotspots)**

It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that materials are returned in the condition in which they were borrowed so that they will be available to others. Damaged materials **including digital equipment** are subject to a replacement fee. Replacement price is the invoiced price or order price, whichever is greater. When that information is not available, the default price to be based on the previous year's average retail price taken from the Integrated Library System (ILS).

**6.7 Damaged Cases (for DVDs and CDs)**

\$2.00

**6.8 NSF cheque**

\$25.00

**6.9 Portable Data Storage Devices**

USB Drives - \$12.50

**6.10 Book Bags**

\$2.00 - \$5.00, based on size and type

**7. Branch Book Sale Prices**

**Schedule of Branch Book Sale Prices**

Item	Price
Adult hardcover	\$2.00
Children's hardcover	\$2.00
Mass market paperback	\$1.00
Trade or catalogued paperback	\$2.00
Periodical/Magazine	\$0.50
CD	\$2.00
VHS	\$2.00
DVD	\$2.00
Reference/special	individually priced

## 8. IntelliSearch

### Schedule of Fees for Research Services Using IntelliSearch

Type of Service	Fee Charged
Research Service	\$100.00/hr; \$25.00 minimum charge plus applicable Access copyright license fees and/or actual database supplier charges
Rush Service	\$25.00 to be added to Research Service fee
Fax Service	\$7.00 flat fee (5-25 pages) \$15.00 flat fee (over 25 pages)

## 9. Collection Reproduction

### 9.1 Digital reproduction – delivery by electronic means

#### Schedule of Fees for Digital Reproduction

Digital Image Size	Fee Charged
New or existing digital image (any size original)	\$25.00

### 9.2 Digitization on Demand

Base Charge - Per book	Additional Charge - Per page
\$25.00	\$0.15

### 9.3 Paper reproduction on high quality paper – delivery by mail

#### Schedule of Fees for Paper Reproduction by Paper Size and Minimum Fees for Mailing

Paper Size / Mailing Destination	Fee Charged
8" x 10"	\$25.00
11"x 14"	\$40.00
16" x 20"	\$50.00
18" x 24"	\$60.00
24" x 36"	\$100.00
32" x 44"	\$150.00
42" x 60"	\$200.00
Mailing Within Canada International	\$5.00 minimum \$20.00 minimum

**10. Asquith Press**

<b>Set up Fee</b>	<b>Per book charge</b>	<b>Per page Charge</b>
\$25.00	\$6.00	\$0.04

**11. Fabrication Studio**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Price</b>
Machine Embroidery Backing 8" x 8"	\$0.75
Machine Embroidery Backing 12" x 12"	\$0.75
Embroidery Thread – Per 10,000 stitches (rounded off)	\$2.50
Single Colour Adhesive Vinyl for Cutting 12" W	\$2.50 per foot
Printable Vinyl for Printing and Cutting 20" W	\$3.00 per foot + \$0.50 per 1 ml of ink
Heat Transfer Vinyl for Printing and Cutting 20" W	\$7.00 per foot + \$0.50 per 1 ml of ink
Lock Pin Buttons 1"	\$0.50

**12. ~~Schedule of Image Licensing Fees for Non-Profit or For-Profit Use~~**

<b>End Use</b>	<b>Licensing Fee</b>
<del>Not for profit</del>	<del>\$ 150.00</del>
<del>For profit</del>	<del>\$1,000.00</del>

**Accountability**

The City Librarian and the Directors are responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented and enforced.

The Membership and Circulation Services Committee is responsible for recommending policy changes.

**Related Legislation**

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, Chapter 11
- Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, Chapter 14, Schedule 1
- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter M.56
- The Public Libraries Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. P.44, Section 23

- Toronto Public Library. "Vision, Mission & Values."

**Related Standards, Procedures, and Guidelines**

- Print and Copy Account Terms and Conditions
- Circulation Procedures Manual
- Membership, Circulation and Collection Use Policy Service Guidelines

**Contact**

Director, Collections & Membership Services  
Manager, Membership & Circulation Services



## Adult & Teen Overdue Fines Elimination Communications Plan

### Objectives

- Raise public awareness of and support for the elimination of overdue fines and related policy changes;
- Increase the use of library resources among adults and teens who owed overdue fines and/or had blocked cards due to overdue fines owing;
- Ensure that TPL staff are aware of this new service enhancement and that public service staff are familiar with procedural updates, key messaging, and resources to respond to customer questions;
- Promote the contribution and value of the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF).

### Audiences

There is a broad range of audiences who will be affected differently by the elimination of overdue fines. Multiple targeted strategies and tactics have been identified to communicate and engage with them. These audiences include:

#### **Customers with overdue fines**

- TPL adult and teen customers with overdue fines owing on their accounts
- TPL adult and teen customers with blocked cards due to unpaid overdue fines

#### **Customers with lost items**

- TPL adult and teen customers with lost material fines owing on their accounts
- TPL adult and teen customers with blocked cards due to lost fines

#### **Other audiences**

- TPL customers who don't owe overdue fines
- Non-TPL customers
- TPL staff and management
- TPL Foundation and donors
- Community partners and organizations
- Media

## **Public and Staff Communications Strategy**

Children's fines have already been eliminated, TPL customers haven't been charged overdue fines throughout the pandemic, and media have covered the impending elimination of adult and teen overdue fines at TPL. Therefore, TPL's public and staff communications approach will build on that growing awareness and expectation with a multi-phased rollout. TPL's approach will also promote and amplify TPLF messaging about their contribution to this service enhancement and the value of the Foundation.

### **Public Communications**

**Official Announcement – *March 31*:** TPL will officially announce the elimination of adult and teen overdue fines the morning of March 31 alongside Mayor John Tory at our City Hall branch. Communications will include a joint news release, online communications (tpl.ca, social media), and FAQs for staff to support customer questions.

**Targeted Communications – *April/May*:** These email and phone communications will target customers who have overdue fines owing on their accounts, letting them know that their overdue fines will be cleared, and encouraging them to return overdue materials without paying overdue fines (excluding fines for lost materials). For customers with blocked cards due to overdue fines, the communication will also encourage them to start using their library membership again.

**Updates to TPL Membership Terms and Conditions – *May*:** Once all policy changes have been implemented, online and print materials will be updated with new terms and conditions.

**Messaging included in “Welcome Back” campaign – *June*:** TPL's planned “Welcome Back” campaign this spring will encourage Torontonians to reconnect with their library. Although not the core message of the campaign, the elimination of overdue fines will be referenced as part of the overall messaging, giving people one more reason to reconnect with their library.

**Encouraging the prompt return of library materials – *Ongoing*:** Throughout the year, TPL will run a multi-channel campaign encouraging customers to return their materials on time.

### **Staff communications**

Staff will play a pivotal role in communicating the elimination of overdue fines and associated policy changes to our customers. It is vital that public service staff understand

the reasons for the elimination of overdue fines and can answer any questions that customers may have.

TPL staff will develop a comprehensive internal communications plan to ensure staff have the information and supports they need, including:

- Training workshops throughout April and May for Library Service Managers and Public Service staff;
- An April Town Hall presentation;
- An organization-wide “Ask Me Anything” information session about the elimination of overdue fines; and
- Prepared messaging to respond to customer inquiries.

# Membership, Circulation & Collection Use Policy recommended changes

Toronto Public Library Board  
March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022



# **purpose of policy**

- To maximize use of library materials and make them widely available to the community
- To facilitate requests for library materials by customers
- To retrieve overdue materials

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen and/or adult card</b>	Per day, per item Adult: \$0.35 Adult-Under 25: \$0.15 Teen: \$0.15	Eliminate overdue fines

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen and/or adult card</b>	Per day, per item Adult: \$0.35 Adult-Under 25: \$0.15 Teen: \$0.15	Eliminate overdue fines
<b>Maximum number of physical items checked out at one time</b>	75 physical items	50 physical items

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen and/or adult card</b>	Per day, per item Adult: \$0.35 Adult-Under 25: \$0.15 Teen: \$0.15	Eliminate overdue fines
<b>Maximum number of physical items checked out at one time</b>	75 physical items	50 physical items
<b>Refund timeline</b>	6 months	90 days

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Overdue fines for materials borrowed on a teen and/or adult card</b>	Per day, per item Adult: \$0.35 Adult-Under 25: \$0.15 Teen: \$0.15	Eliminate overdue fines
<b>Maximum number of physical items checked out at one time</b>	75 physical items	50 physical items
<b>Refund timeline</b>	6 months	90 days
<b>Lost material status</b>	Material is assumed lost after overdue > 40 days	Material is assumed lost after overdue > 30 days

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Suspension of borrowing privileges thresholds</b>	> <b>15</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$30</b> in charges	> <b>10</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$100</b> in charges

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Suspension of borrowing privileges thresholds</b>	> <b>15</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$30</b> in charges	> <b>10</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$100</b> in charges
<b>Collection agency service thresholds</b>	Adult (18 +) accounts referred when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>\$10 or more</b> in total fines/fees + billing notice sent &gt; <b>120 days</b></li><li>• <b>\$40 or more</b> in total fines/fees + billing notice sent &gt; <b>70 days</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate small balance program</li><li>• <b>\$50 or more</b> in total fines/fees + billing notice sent &gt; <b>70 days</b></li></ul>

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Suspension of borrowing privileges thresholds</b>	> <b>15</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$30</b> in charges	> <b>10</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$100</b> in charges
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<b>Adult-Under 25 user profile code</b>	Unique profile code	Remove unique profile code

# policy changes resulting from the elimination of overdue fines

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Suspension of borrowing privileges thresholds</b>	> <b>15</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$30</b> in charges	> <b>10</b> items overdue and/or > <b>\$100</b> in charges
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<b>Adult-Under 25 user profile code</b>	Unique profile code	Remove unique profile code
<b>Holds Not Picked Up fee</b>	<b>\$1.00</b> for teens and adults	Remove fee for teens

# other policy changes

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Lost Card Replacement Fee</b>	Adult: \$2.00 Adult-Under 25: \$1.50 Teen: \$1.50 Child: \$1.00	Eliminate lost card replacement fee

# other policy changes

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Lost Card Replacement Fee</b>	Adult: \$2.00 Adult-Under 25: \$1.50 Teen: \$1.50 Child: \$1.00	Eliminate lost card replacement fee
<b>Credit balances on customer accounts</b>	Not applicable	Include language so TPL can purge customer accounts with credit balances, according to regular annual purge schedule

# other policy changes

Policy Item	Current	Proposed
<b>Lost Card Replacement Fee</b>	Adult: \$2.00 Adult-Under 25: \$1.50 Teen: \$1.50 Child: \$1.00	Eliminate lost card replacement fee
<b>Credit balances on customer accounts</b>	Not applicable	Include language so TPL can purge customer accounts with credit balances, according to regular annual purge schedule
<b>Image licensing fees</b>	Not for profit: \$150 For profit: \$1,000	Eliminate image licensing fees

# communication plan objectives

- **Raise public awareness** and support the implementation of overdue fines elimination
- **Increase use of library resources** among customers who owed overdue fines and/or had blocked cards due to overdue fines
- **Ensure staff awareness of new service enhancement** and that public service staff are familiar with procedural updates, key messaging, and resources to respond to customer questions
- **Promote the contribution and value of the Toronto Public Library Foundation** (TPLF)

# staff communications approach

Comprehensive internal communications plan which includes:

- **Training workshops** throughout April for Library Service Managers and Public Service staff
- An April **Town Hall presentation**
- An organization-wide **“Ask Me Anything”** info session
- **Prepared messaging** to respond to customer inquiries

# public communications approach

Official announcement alongside Mayor John Tory	March 31
Targeted customer communications (email/phone)	April/May
Updates to TPL Membership Terms and Conditions	May
Messaging included in “Welcome Back” campaign	June
“Return Library Materials” campaign	Ongoing

# monitoring and evaluation

Collect baseline data to monitor and evaluate the fines elimination initiative and policy changes including:

- Number of **physical items borrowed**
- **Average wait time** for a hold request
- Average **return rates of items**
- Total number of **new registered users**



questions &  
comments