



Fine-Free Summer

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you doing Fine-Free Summer?

Our goal is to provide the highest possible quality of service to everyone in our community, and fines can sometimes get in the way of that goal. We don't want anyone to stop using the library because of fines.

How does Fine-Free Summer work?

During the months of June, July, and August, we'll be waiving all fines on items owned by the Palmer Public Library. Please note that items owned by other libraries, including items that you request and pick up here, will still accrue fines as usual.

How will this affect the library's funding?

Fines are not the library's primary source of funding, but they do provide important supplemental income that currently supports programming for adults and young adults. If the library were to go fine-free permanently, we would need to replace the lost revenue through donations, increased fundraising efforts, or other sources. It's important to note that we'll be considering many options later this year, including the possibility of eliminating fines permanently, but we won't make any decision that would significantly detract from our ability to maintain a high level of service.

How much money does the library collect from fines?

In 2016, the library collected \$7,781.52 in fines on overdue materials. Please see a librarian for more information.

How will you make sure that items still come back on time?

There's quite a bit of research suggesting that fines aren't actually an effective method of ensuring that library materials are returned on time, and most libraries that have stopped charging fines report little to no effect on return rate. Instead, we're relying on continued use of the library as an incentive to ensure timely returns. Items that are overdue for three weeks will still be billed to their borrower as they are now. Once a borrower has a bill on their record, they won't be able to check anything else out until the billed item has been returned, paid for, or replaced.

What if I have fines that accumulated before the start of Fine-Free Summer?

In the spirit of Fine-Free Summer, we'll be forgiving older Palmer fines as well. Finding and clearing older fines will be a big project, so we'll be working on it throughout the summer and possibly beyond. If you still have fines on your record, come see us at the desk and we'll take care of it.

Why are there still fines on my record?

Since Fine-Free Summer is currently intended as a temporary promotion, we haven't changed the default fine settings in our circulation system. Instead, we're waiving all fines on Palmer items when they're checked in. That means that fines will still accrue on overdue items and that you may see them on your record, but they'll disappear once we check those items in. Please note that Palmer items that are checked in at other libraries will not have the fines cleared automatically, but we will try to clear those up periodically throughout the summer. If you still have fines on your record after returning a Palmer item, it may be because the item was returned at another library, or it could be a mistake on our part. Regardless, if you need a Palmer fine cleared from your record, just let us know and we'll take care of it. This is a new process for us, so there will be some hiccups. We appreciate your patience!

How can I share my opinion?

We're glad you asked! There's a brief survey available on our website. There are also paper copies of the survey available at the circulation desk. Later this year, we'll be taking the survey results into account as we reevaluate our fine policies and consider the possibility of becoming fine-free permanently. We'd love to know what you think!