

Fine Forgiveness Month

Definition:

A set time period in which patrons with late fines may contact the library (in person, via email, or over the phone) to request that their late fines are cancelled.

Rationale:

Late fees prevent a person (or their household) from checking out items. Hosting an annual Fine Forgiveness Month helps patrons who are struggling financially and who are unable to utilize the library.

Current Fine Policy:

- Books accrue a late fee at the rate of 10 cents per day per item.
- DVDs & Books on CD accrue a late fee at the rate of \$1 per day per item with a maximum fee of \$10.
- Once an item is 60 days late, the item is automatically billed as lost (cost of the item plus a \$10 processing fee) and the late fine is removed.
- Members of the same household are linked together. If one member of the household has a fine, no one in the household can check out items until the fine is paid.

Currently Circulation Policy:

- All items have a check-out period of 2 weeks.
- An item may be renewed up to two times as long as no other patron has placed a reserve on the item.
- Based on patron preferences, the Library sends out a **pre-overdue notice** (3 day warning for those who have selected text or email notifications), a **7 day overdue notice** (phone call or an email/text message), a **14 day overdue notice** (phone call from staff plus a text or email notification), a **21 day overdue notice** (phone call from staff plus a text or email notification) and a **30 day overdue notice** (mailed postcard to the address on file).

Fine Forgiveness Requirements:

- This only applies to late fines, not to damage or lost item fines.
- The item must have already been returned to the library before the fines can be cancelled.

- The patron must request the fine cancellation during the set time period of fine forgiveness month. The fines may have been accrued at any time.

Data:

- Our last Fine Forgiveness Month in August 2022 resulted in the cancellation of \$980.80 in fines.
- 207 patrons requested and received fine forgiveness. The fines ranged in price from 10 cents to \$19.70.
- As of May 18, 2023, 7888 library patrons have a fine with a total of 64,333.80. These range in price from 5 cents to \$97.00. In the past, late fees were 5 cents per day per item.
- Library visits:
 - June 2022: 4894
 - July 2022: 4052
 - August 2022: 2444
 - September 2022: 3956

Sample press release from previous Fine Forgiveness month

The Huntsville Public Library is pleased to announce Fine Forgiveness Month. During August 2022, patrons who have accrued late fines on their accounts may request that the Library waive these fees. Charges for items that have been lost, damaged, or returned more than 60 days late do not qualify for this forgiveness program. The only two requirements are that the patron must contact the Library, whether by phone, email, or in person, during the month of August 2022 to request the fine cancellation and the items on which fines have accrued must already be returned to the library at the time of the request. For more information, please contact the Library at 936-291-5472.

Policy Proposal: Library Displays

Book Displays at Huntsville Public Library

Proposal 6/5/23

Summary

Permanent Displays

The Library will display new items (received within the last three months) in the following areas:

- Adult Fiction: on a round display in front of the new DVD collection
- Adult Non-Fiction: on a round display in front of the new DVD collection
- DVDs: on a round display in front of the new DVD collection
- Children's: on the slat walls in the children's room / on a display unit outside of the children's room
- Teen: on the display table that is in front of the new Teen area

*New items will be on display for three months.

Temporary Displays

Temporary displays will be created based on:

- Community needs and interest
- Availability of display space
- Historical or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs

These monthly book displays will be featured on free standing book displays in the library. At times staff may use a folding table to extend the space availability for more library materials.

Month	Topic
February	Black History Month
March	Spring – weather, flowers, nature, hiking, gardening
April	Cooking
June	Book to movie Juneteenth
July	U.S. History

* This is a six month sample.

** Additional displays of general interest such as holiday and seasonal themes will be considered.

Policy Recommendation

Huntsville Public Library provides displays and exhibits in the Library to highlight the library's collection.

Selection of Displays

Library displays are planned, organized, and/or implemented by library staff. Displays are used to highlight new materials, the variety of subjects, genres, and formats offered in the library, and to stimulate interest in the library collections, services, and resources.

Library staff use the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interest
- Availability of display space
- Historical or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions, or events
- Relation to library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs

The Library Director will propose suggested display topics to the Library Board as a recurring agenda item. Following Board approval, the Library Director will submit the display topics to the City of Huntsville for final approval.

*For the first six months, the Director will review display topics with LS&S before placement.

Placement of materials on displays does not imply the Library's endorsement of ideas, opinions, or viewpoints expressed therein. The City reserves the right to take down or have taken down displays.

Questions and Concerns

The Library welcomes expressions of opinion from patrons concerning library exhibits and displays. Questions or concerns should first be addressed with the Library Director. Patrons who wish to continue their request for review may submit a Request for Reconsideration form, which can be obtained at the Library or on the Library's website. Requests for review of library displays and exhibits will be considered in the same manner as requests for reconsideration of materials, as outlined in the Request for Reconsideration Policy.

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