

Huntsville Public Library

Circulation Policy Proposal

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1.0 Circulation

The purpose of this policy is to provide consistent, unbiased service to all Library customers, to accommodate the needs of all customers whenever possible, and to provide guidance for library staff.

1.1 Library Card Guidelines

Huntsville Public Library respects its customers' privacy by keeping gathered information confidential.

1. Library membership is free to all residents of Texas.
2. Photo identification and proof of current mailing address (such as a utility bill, paystub or other piece of USPS delivered mail) are required.
3. Customers without a permanent Texas address, including those who live out of the state and those staying at a SAAFE House, the Good Shepherd Mission, or other local shelters, may be issued a 'PC Only' library card for computer use. 'PC Only' cards will expire after 1 year.
4. Cards for Children:
 - There is no minimum age for obtaining a library card.
 - Parent or legal guardian must present his/her photo identification and proof of current address for cards issued to children under the age of 18.
 - Parents or legal guardians are responsible for items checked out by their minor children.
5. Emancipated minors may obtain a library card without the permission of a parent or legal guardian by presenting proof of their emancipation as well as a valid, government issued photo ID and current proof of permanent address.
6. Customers must present either their library card or their valid, government issued photo ID to borrow materials or use a library computer.
7. Acceptable forms of identification include:
 - Driver's license
 - Federal, state or local government ID card
 - Passport
 - School ID card

- U.S. Military card
 - Permanent Resident Card / Alien Registration Receipt Card
 - Consulate ID
8. Customers must present a current ID to obtain a library card and accounts must be in good standing (i.e. not delinquent) before a card is renewed. Library Cards must be renewed every 3 years.
 9. It is the customer's responsibility to notify the Library of any change of address, phone number, or email address as soon as the change is made. This enables the Library to notify the customer of any issues with their account, such as overdue items, etc.
 10. Customers are responsible for all materials borrowed on their library card. If a card is lost, the customer must notify the Library immediately. Once notified, the account will be suspended until a replacement card is obtained. The customer is responsible for all activity on the card until the library is notified.

1.2 Collection Usage Rules

1. Loan of materials: There is a checkout limit of 25 total items per library card. Loanable materials have a maximum of 2 renewals. Loanable items have a checkout period of 2 weeks.

Borrowed items will be renewed automatically three days before the due date, with some exceptions:

- Another user has requested the item
- The item reached its maximum number of renewals
- The user's account is blocked due to fines or fees of \$25.00 or more
- The item is an electronic resource, such as an ebook or eaudiobook
- The item has been borrowed via interlibrary loan

Customers who have opted to receive email and text notices will receive a courtesy message three days before the item's due date. This notice will indicate which items were renewed and which items could not be renewed.

2. Holds: Any circulating library material may be placed on hold. When the requested item is available, the customer is notified that the material will be

held for 7 days. After 7 days, the hold will be removed and the item returned to the shelf or held for the next person who has requested the item. In extenuating circumstances, staff may decide to hold the item for more than 7 days.

Customers may place up to 25 holds per account. Holds may be requested through the Library's catalog or by phone, voicemail, email, or in-person.

3. Suspension or revocation of borrowing privileges: The Library Director may suspend or revoke borrowing privileges when fines are not paid, library materials are not returned, or library policies are not followed.
4. Equipment malfunctions: The library is not responsible if a customer's equipment malfunctions when playing media borrowed from the library.
5. Library Staff: Library staff will check out all materials for personal use through circulation channels in accordance with the policies established for all library customers.

1.3 Fines and Fees

1. Fines for overdue materials are assessed based on format:
 - Books, magazines, and music CDs: \$0.10/day
 - Audiobooks and videos: \$1.00/day
 - Interlibrary Loans (ILLS): \$1.00/day for late returns and \$3.00/item for items requested but never picked up.
2. The maximum fine per item is \$10.00, with the exception of ILLs.
3. Fees are assessed as follows:
 - Replacement Library Cards: \$1.00/card
 - Lost Materials: \$10.00 processing fee plus the replacement cost of the book
 - No refunds will be given for returned items for which payment has been received
 - The library will accept a replacement copy in lieu of the cost of the item. The replacement item must match the item exactly. The customer will still be required to pay the processing charge and fines
4. Damaged Materials

- Book cover with barcode: \$1.00 each
 - Barcodes: \$1.00 each
 - Spine label: \$1.00 each
 - Lost case for DVD or Video: \$5.00 each
 - Damaged materials that cannot be repaired will be charged as lost items
 - Individual components and the packaging for kits and their components that are lost or returned damaged will be charged the current replacement cost of said component or packaging, if available to order individually.
5. The Library Director, Assistant Library Director, or designee may forgive fines or fees under extenuating circumstances.

1.4 Regulations

1. A library card becomes delinquent when the charges on his/her account reach \$25.00. Borrowing privileges are suspended until the total charges owed are less than \$25.00.
2. All library debts are discharged when listed in a customer's bankruptcy.
3. A police report (filed within 60 days of items being due) is necessary for the Library to waive related fees and replacement costs on items stolen from the customer or checked out on a lost/stolen library card.
4. The library will attempt to contact customers up to two (2) times regarding overdue items, but it is ultimately the customer's responsibility to take note of due dates and return items in a timely manner. Failure to receive notices from the library is not grounds for dismissal of fees or fines.
5. Email reminders, for materials due, are a courtesy of the library. Customers are obligated to return their materials on time, even in the event reminder notifications are not received. If overdue items have not been returned within seven days of the due date, the customer will receive an email reminder notice. A second courtesy reminder notice will be sent 14 days after the due date. A third courtesy reminder notice will be sent 21 days after the due date. A postcard reminder will be mailed 30 days after the due date. The customer's account will be billed a lost item fee for any material not returned for the

overdue material 60 days after the due date and a billing notice will be sent to the customer.

1.5 Claims Returned

If a customer feels certain they have returned an item but library records indicate it has not been returned, library staff will:

1. Initiate an immediate search.
2. If the item is not found, it will be identified as Claims Returned. The library will search for the item at least 3 times for 60 days. After 60 days the customer will be held accountable for the lost item and charged for both the replacement cost of the item and the processing fee.

Adopted _____

Updated _____

2.0 Copies/Printing

The library and its customers are expected to comply with the U.S. copyright laws as outlined in Title 17 of the U.S. Code.

1. Customers are responsible for making their own copies or prints
2. Fees:
 1. Printing: \$0.15/page
 2. Copies: \$0.15/page for black and white, \$0.75/page for color
 3. The above costs are for single sided, double-sided copies are \$0.30 each
3. Any problems with a copy that was caused by the customer will not be refunded
4. Customers will not be charged for unusable copies caused by machine malfunctions
5. Customers may use their own printer paper with staff approval, but the cost for prints/copies will not be discounted.

The following section will be switched to the Behavior Section:

1.1 Telephone Use

While the telephone at the circulation desk is a business phone, customers may make a short call to arrange for transportation or to address library related issues.

Agenda Packet:

5/23/23

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. (Pending change in Circulation Policy)

Current 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 September 5, 2023, 7920 library patrons have a fine with a total of 64,095.50. These range in price from 5 cents to \$220.00. In the past, late fees were 5 cents per day per item.

- Library visits:

- o June 2022: 4894

- o July 2022: 4052

- o August 2022: 2444

- o 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.

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.

Draft: 6/5/23