



DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Duluth Public Library is now Free From Fines!

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Why Go Free From Fines?

Going Free from Fines aligns with the library's strategic plan. One of our main goals is to enhance our current library services to better serve community needs. That includes exploring new strategies to increase access, service, and resources for under-resourced households. Overdue fines are punitive and act as a barrier, especially for people whose income is not high.

Will my library materials still have due dates?

Yes. Library materials are a shared community resource. They still have a due date and you are asked to return or renew your items by the due date so they are available to others in the community.

Will my old fines be forgiven?

If you've returned all materials to the library, your fine for overdue materials will be waived!

Will people return items if there are no late fines?

Free From Fines does not mean anyone can keep materials as long as they want. Fines were meant as a way to encourage patrons to return their materials on time. Instead, fines create a barrier to access, and going Free From Fines will remove that barrier. Patrons will still be charged if they damage items or if they keep items 28 days past the due date (two weeks for Interlibrary Loans and Express Collections) and the computer system declares the item lost.

I didn't really lose these items, can I still bring them back?

YES! It is weird but librarians call a book that is not returned Lost, even if the person who checked it out knows exactly where it is. If you've been billed for an item, we will take it back, remove the replacement charges from your account, and you can check out materials again.

What will happen if I don't return my materials on time?

If you have 5 or more overdue materials or fees from lost or damaged items, you will be unable to check out any more materials or download any ebooks or audiobooks.

Will I be charged anything?

No, as long as you return the items in good condition.

How many items can I check out?

The total number of items you can check out was reduced from 150 to 100.





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Will I still receive reminders about returning materials?

Yes! An overdue reminder will be sent two days before an item is overdue by email or text. After that, the first overdue notice will be sent at 7 days overdue. The second overdue notice will be sent at 14 days overdue, the third overdue notice will be sent at 21 days overdue. After that the item is declared lost and you will be billed at 28 days overdue. Interlibrary Loans and Express Collections (Bestseller, DVD, and Blu-Ray) will be billed as lost at two weeks overdue. We encourage you to keep your contact information and notification preferences up to date. Talk to a library staff member to verify that you will get the notifications you want and need.

Fines have been waived, so why does my account show a balance?

If you have returned all materials to the library, your old overdue fines will be soon be waived. Until then, stop by any of our locations and we will waive existing overdue fines manually. Fees for lost or damaged items will remain.

How much money did the library make from late fees?

Revenue collected from overdue fines went into the City's General Fund budget. For years, fines have been a shrinking source of revenue. In 2013, library fines generated almost \$86,000, and by 2018, the total was less than \$60,000. This accounted for less than .025% of revenue going into the General Fund. The amount of staff time spent collecting small fines, ringing them into cash registers, counting coins and preparing deposits began to exceed the amount of money collected. Becoming Free From Fines allows library staff to focus more time on helping patrons and providing programs.

How was the decision made to go Free From Fines?

Libraries across the country are eliminating overdue fines as a way to reduce barriers, and DPL staff has been advocating for years to become Free From Fines. In the spring of 2019, the Duluth Library Board formally recommended moving to a fines-free model of service. The recommendation was presented to the City's leadership team, which approved it.

I always considered paying my fines as my library donation. How can I donate to the library?

We have many ways you can help your library! Visit <http://www.duluthlibrary.org/support-us/> for more information.

I haven't used my library card in years! Will it still work?

Library cards expire every three years. If it is inactive for one year after expiration, it may have been deleted. The best way to find out the status of your card is to contact a library staff member. Call or stop in at any of our library locations.



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