

Fines & Fees Policy

While overdue fines are assumed to help get books returned and back in circulation, the fact is that for many families in our community, overdue fines are a real barrier to access. For those who can afford the fines, paying a small late fee is no problem, so the overdue fines are not a particularly strong incentive. For those who can't afford the overdue fines, they have a disproportionately negative impact. This is contrary to our mission to engage all of our community and inspire lifelong learning. To improve access and opportunity in our community, NWCPL will be eliminating overdue fines effective February 1, 2020.

As of February 1, 2020, the North Webster Community Public Library is fine free (with a few exceptions). This means that there will no longer be any overdue fines on most items like print and audio books, music, movies, magazines, and more. This policy does exclude mobile hotspots which will still incur overdue fines if not returned by the due date.

NWCPL is making this change in order to knock down barriers to provide library service for all.

- Fines will be waived on items checked out from NWCPL unless they belong to another Evergreen library that is not fine free.
- Those with overdue fines can have their fines waived, but may still be responsible for a \$10 fee charged to the library by its collection agency.
- Fines are different than fees. Fees for lost or damaged items will still be charged and handled by our collection agency.
- Items not returned within 28 days of the due date will be marked as lost, and a replacement fee will be charged.
- Those with lost or damaged fees of more than \$10 will be blocked from checking out more items until the items are returned, or the charges are paid.

Here are some tips to make sure items are returned in a timely fashion:

- Items can still be returned at any Evergreen Indiana library.
- Make sure you are signed up for text and/or email alerts. You'll get a notification 3 days before your items are due, the day the items are due, 3 days after your items are due, 14 days after your items are due, and on the 28th day, we'll let you know that your items have been marked "lost."
- Auto-renewals began in December 2019 as well, so now most of your items will be automatically renewed with no effort on your part. When items are renewed automatically, you'll get an email (text not available) to let you know what items renewed and what items, if any, did not get renewed. Reasons an item may not renew include reaching the maximum number of renewals, the item may be on hold for another patron, or it's part of a collection that does not allow renewals at all.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Since NWCPL is part of Evergreen Indiana, can I still get overdue fines?

Yes. Many libraries in the consortium are not fine free. As long as you are checking out items from our library and other fine-free libraries, you won't be fined (see exceptions above).

I found an item that I'm being charged for as "lost." Can I bring it back?

Yes, please do! There won't be any fines, but you may still be responsible for a \$10 fee charged to the library by its collection agency.

Who can I talk to if I have questions?

Ask anyone at the circulation desks if you have more questions.