

[Frequently Asked Fine Questions](#)

In order to reduce barriers and promote equitable access for all members of the community, the Library no longer charges fines for late returns, effective March 1, 2020.

- Are all items free of overdue fines?
Yes.
- Do I still have to pay an overdue fine or collection agency fee that was on my account prior to March 1, 2020?
No, these have been waived.
- What happens if I don't return my items by the due date?
Items that are 21 days overdue are assumed to be lost and you will be billed for them, however, if the items are returned in good condition, the charges will be removed and your account will resume good standing.
- Will there still be two auto-renewals for items without holds?
Yes.
- Will I still receive reminders about returning materials?
Yes. The Library will use a robust notification schedule, notifying you multiple times before (and after) you are billed for an item. Please be sure your phone, email, and mailing address are current.
- Why does my account still have a balance after March 1?
You owe the replacement fee of a lost or damaged item(s). Items that you lost, returned with damaged or missing parts, or otherwise did not return in the same condition as when they were checked out are billed accordingly.
- What's the difference between a fine and a replacement fee?
Fines are a daily penalty assessed for the late return of items. Replacement fees are assessed for items that are long overdue, or that were returned damaged or with missing parts.
- If I owe money, can I still borrow from the Library?
If you owe less than \$20, you can still check out items. For accounts owing more, you can pay 10% of the amount due each time you check out items until your account has no balance.
- Will the Library issue refunds or credits for lost items that have been paid for?
No. Once a lost item is paid for (either in part or in full), it is effectively "purchased." If an item is returned after a partial payment, the remainder due will be waived, but no credit will be issued for what has been paid.
- What if I can't return materials?
If you are unable to return materials borrowed, payment plans are available. The Library also offers programs to earn credit through volunteering and/or reading.
- What about exceptional circumstances?
Please ask to speak to a Library supervisor.
- I still have a book that was due 6 months ago. What should I do with it?
Bring it back! Even if you've had it for years, you can still return it and use the Library with no late fines or replacement fees for this item.

- I paid \$10 in fines earlier this year. Do I get them back?
No, this change in policy is only effective moving forward.
- Why the change?
The overall goal is to facilitate the Library's mission to provide free and equitable access to all members of the community while still requiring users to be responsible borrowers.
- Without fines, will others return materials in a timely manner?
Libraries across the country that eliminated overdue fines report that patrons still return items on time, that more items are checked out, and that interactions between staff and patrons are positive.
- How will this new policy affect the Library's budget?
Studies have shown that because of costs associated with tracking and collecting the money, overdue fines are close to cost-neutral. Overdue fine revenue constitutes less than 1% of the Library's annual operating budget.
- Can items be returned to any Monroe County Public Library location?
Yes.

[Read the full press release.](#)

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