

# MARIN COUNTY FREE LIBRARY



March 31, 2015

Marin County Board of Supervisors  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**Sara Jones**

Director of County Library Services

**SUBJECT:** Review and recommend Marin County Free Library (MCFL) policy changes to align with education partnerships and the Library's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan

**Library Administration**

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Dear Supervisors:

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- Revise policies to discontinue charging overdue fines on children's material
- Revise the policy in regards to delinquencies of youth cards to allow for a "clean slate policy" for students establishing a library card by forgiving MCFL fines and overdue materials
- Revise the policy for charging a \$1.00 replacement fee for juvenile library cards.

**SUMMARY:** MCFL began a comprehensive needs assessment and process of community engagement in January 2014 to develop a strategic plan to guide the library in services to the community. Key opportunities and themes emerged from this process that led to development of three specific goals and the Library's mission statement:

*Create connections for our community to explore, imagine and innovate.*

Three goals clearly emerged as priorities for MCFL to set direction for the library. These goals are:

- Goa 1: Support family Literacy and youth development-by being the preferred place for children, families and caregivers to connect, learn and grow together.
- Goal 2: Support youth in our community with opportunities for self-discovery and expression through strategic partnerships.
- Goal 3: Be a positive environment for mobile and digital literacy by improving access to resources, improved connectivity and availability.

To align current practices with the identified strategic Goals 1 & 2 and to make a targeted effort to increase equity of access to library services for youth in Marin County the following polices need revising:

The Library's Fee Schedule, by Amending Resolution 2012-27 to:

- Eliminate fines on youth materials. Item 2 of the Resolution reads:

Juvenile library materials: Twenty Five Cents (\$.25) per item per day to a maximum of Three Dollars (\$3.00)/item.

Item 2 will now read

Juvenile library materials accumulate NO fines to encourage reading and literacy in Marin County.

The accumulation of fines from overdue materials often leads to youth no longer using the Library. Eliminating the fines on juvenile materials will eliminate that barrier to continued use of the Library.

- Insert a new Item as item 3 establishing a "Clean Slate" policy whereby the Director of County Library Services or their designees may waive any or all existing Marin County Free Library charges for youth (under 18) who have amassed fines and fees for overdue or lost materials. It is common for a student/youth to have both overdue fines and owe for materials not returned. This situation has kept many youth under 18 from using the library for years and it continues to be a barrier to their use. These fines and fees have also moved them to collection procedures which can have many negative consequences. Waiving these charges will assist in getting Library cards into the hands of youth and students in our partnerships with schools and community organizations.
- Eliminate the \$1.00 charge to replace a juvenile library card in what will now be item 9 b.

MCFL will still require that children's materials are returned to the library. If materials are not returned they will be charged for those materials and prevented from future use until items are returned or paid for. The "clean slate" policy is designed to give children a second chance to responsibly borrow and return library materials. It is not designed to give them the ability to never return materials. It is intended the "clean slate" policy will be used to issue and reissue library cards to students in the MCFL service area.

These changes to the fines and fees policy will eliminate barriers that prevent use of the library by youth in our county. These changes will give the library a stronger foundation to improve collaboration with local educational partners and parents by giving broader access to the vast array of educational resources available from the Marin County Free Library. In particular these changes will improve equity of access to educational opportunities for all residents of Marin County.

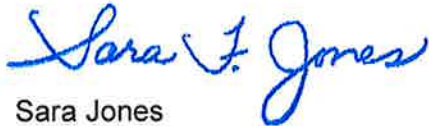
The intention for juvenile fines and fees when enacted were for them to be affordable to all users and to provide incentive for library users to bring materials back on time. In reality these fines and fees create financial barriers for the children and their parents that most need free library resources to promote their life-long learning opportunities. Additionally this trend nationally has been found to not adversely affect the return of library materials but to increase the use of the library by children and their parents.

**FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT:** The library will see a reduction in revenue from fines and fees and this reduction is accounted for in the Library's FY 15/16 budget. The positive outcomes of serving the disadvantaged and underserved youth in our community that need our services will be far more valuable than the decrease in revenue.

<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Department of Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	County Counsel	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



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Director of County Library Services

SJ:elg

attach

cc: Sheila Lichtblau, Deputy County Counsel  
Janell Hampton, Administrative Analyst III  
Barbara Schoen, President, Library Commission