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City of Duluth - Duluth Public Library

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SUBJECT: Duluth Public Library goes Free From Fines

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Duluth Public Library goes Free From Fines

In a press conference on Tuesday, September 3, Duluth Mayor Emily Larson announced that the Duluth Public Library is officially 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.

One the main goals in the [library's strategic plan](#) is to enhance current library services to better serve community needs. That includes exploring new strategies to increase access, service, and resources for under-resourced households. Research from library staff found that a fines-free library aligns with the strategic plan.

This does not mean that one could check out a book and keep it forever. Library materials checked out will still have a due date and patrons are asked to return or renew items by the due date so they are available to others in the community. If an item is not returned, and it is so long overdue that the computer system deems it "lost," the cost of that item will be charged to the patron's account. Five or more overdue materials will also block the account.

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, providing programs, and creating more positive staff interactions.

For more information visit <http://duluthlibrary.org/free-from-fines>

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**FREE
FROM
FINES**



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