COLUMBUS—The Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) Board of Trustees has approved a resolution to eliminate overdue fines on all borrowed materials beginning Jan. 1, 2017. (Note: All CML locations will be closed Jan. 1 and 2.)

CML has historically instituted fines for overdue materials as an incentive to see those items returned by their due dates. The library has taken steps in recent years, however, to minimize the impact of overdue fines on customers. Daily fine rates and maximum fines were reduced in 2012 and auto-renewal was introduced in 2014, as were fine-exempt Kids Cards.

“Removing barriers to get more materials into the hands of more customers brings us closer to achieving our vision of a thriving community where wisdom prevails,” said CML CEO Patrick Losinski.

Rather than imposing fines for overdue items, CML will defer to its longstanding policy of blocking library cards of customers who have materials 21 days or more overdue. This block prevents the customer from checking out more physical items until the long overdue materials have been returned. If an overdue item is not returned 35 days after its due date, it is deemed lost and the customer is charged a replacement fee. That fee would be removed if and when the customer returns the item. CML will continue to use regular customer notices to see overdue materials returned and a materials recovery agency to pursue debts from lost or damaged items.

Customers with cards blocked for long overdue materials are still able to access eBooks, reserve meeting rooms, use public PCs and other library services.

CML does not rely on the revenue generated from overdue fines.

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Customers with existing overdue fines will still be required to pay them, as these fines cannot be removed from all customer accounts in bulk. However, CML staff are empowered and encouraged to use good judgement to waive existing fines on customer accounts.

Within the last decade, industry trends have shifted on the subject of overdue fines and library professionals have questioned whether they are an effective method for motivating customers. Examples of local libraries that have eliminated overdue fines include: Delaware County District Library (except AV materials, since 1986), and Worthington Libraries (since October 2016). Additionally, Stark County District Library went fine-free in 2014.

Visit [columbuslibrary.org/press](http://columbuslibrary.org/press) to view other Columbus Metropolitan Library press releases.

*Columbus Metropolitan Library has served the people of Franklin County, Ohio since 1873. With its Main Library and 22 branches, CML is well known for signature services and programs like Homework Help, Reading Buddies, Summer Reading Club and Ready for Kindergarten. The library’s Strategic Plan supports the vision of "a thriving community where wisdom prevails," which positions CML to respond to areas of urgent need: kids unprepared for kindergarten, third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation, college readiness and employment resources.*

*CML was named a 2011 National Medal Winner by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums. Columbus Metropolitan Library has been rated a 5-Star Library by Library Journal for seven of the eight years the magazine has published its industry ratings.*

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