

Acushnet Public Library Goes Fine Free!

Effective 12/21/2022, there will be no overdue fines charged on the vast majority of Acushnet Public Library items per the Library's Board of Trustees.

Borrowing and Returning Items – The Basics

- Every item checked out will still have a due date.
- Items will continue to renew automatically and for as long as renewals are available.
- The SAILS Library Network will continue to send notices about automatic renewals and overdue items.
- Overdue fines will still be charged on Museum Passes, ILL items (material that arrives from out of network) and Equipment such as the telescope. All other items will be fine free.
- Overdue fines will still be charged on items borrowed directly at other libraries that charge fines.
- Patrons will still be responsible for damaged or lost items. Items will be considered lost when they are 60 days overdue. At that time, your account will be charged for the replacement cost of any lost items on your account. If the charge is for more than \$10, your account will be blocked as a result. You can clear your account by returning the items to any SAILS library or by paying the replacement cost. See a staff member if you need assistance with damaged or lost items. We're happy to help!

What If I Have Late Fines Prior to 12/21/2022?

- Existing overdue fines on Acushnet Public Library items will be waived by 12/21/2022.
- Please note you may still have fines on your account from material borrowed at other libraries. Additionally, fines from Museum Passes, ILL items and Equipment borrowed at Acushnet Public Library will not be waived.

Won't This Prevent People from Returning Their Items?

We don't think so!

- Overdue fines have proven to be an ineffective tool. Instead, they create a potential barrier to a great community resource.
- The Acushnet Public Library was fine free from March 2020 – May 2021. Our return rate was not impacted. We trust that our patrons will do their best to return items on time, so that other patrons may borrow them.

- Other libraries that have already gone fine free say there isn't an impact on returns or hold wait times.

I haven't been to the Acushnet Public Library in a long time – does my card still work?

Let's find out! Stop by with a photo ID and proof of address soon.

- If your account is still active, but you no longer have the physical card, we'll be happy to replace it for free. Remember if you had overdue fines from before, they will be waived by 12/21/2022.
- If you no longer have an active library card, we can set you up with a new one. This should take less than 5 minutes, and we'll be happy to share information on library services we may not have offered the last time you were in!

How will this affect the library's budget?

We don't think it will!

- In FY22, overdue fines accounted for less than 0.5% of the library's total operating budget. Revenue from overdue fines has been steadily decreasing since SAILS implemented the automatic renewal policy in 2018, and this fact has not impacted the library's budget. Therefore, removing fines should have little to no impact.
- The library staff and Trustees believe the good will from this new way of serving the community will have a much bigger impact overall.
- The decision to go fine free won't result in the library requesting additional funding from the Town of Acushnet.