MEETING DATE: Thursday, January 17, 2019
AGENDA ITEM #: 4.
ITEM: PROJECT EQUITABLE ACCESS

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Commission members will be presented with two press releases and “Goodbye To Fines” Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to Project Equitable Access.
Goodbye to Fines
FAQs

When will fines be eliminated?

The Library will eliminate fines beginning on January 1, 2019.

Why is the Library eliminating fines?

Eliminating fines removes barriers for our community and makes access easy, equitable, and enjoyable for everyone. Our doors are open for the entire community to take advantage of all the Library has to offer. Ending the collection of overdue fines will also result in more positive customer interactions.

If there are no fines, how will the library recover books and other materials that have been checked out?

We have eliminated overdue fines, but not the charges associated with damaged or lost materials. Checkout periods for library materials have not changed and we expect patrons to return items to the library on time.

If an item is not returned within 30 days after its due date a lost charge and $10 non-refundable processing charge will be assessed. However, if the billed item is returned in good condition, the lost and processing charges will be removed from the account.

Will the elimination of fines impact the Library’s budget?

Fines and charges make up only slightly more than two percent of the library’s total budgeted revenue. Revenue from fines has decreased significantly in the last several years and we don’t expect the elimination of fines to have any impact on library operations.

What about the balance on my account from before the elimination of fines?

All charges on all accounts prior to the elimination of fines have been waived to give everyone an opportunity to restart their relationship with the library.

Do I get a refund for late fines I recently paid?

No. Fines paid before the new fines and charges schedule was approved are not refundable. We thank you for your support of the Library.

Will the Library still send reminders about returning materials?

Yes.
I always considered my fines as a donation to the Library. How can I continue to support the Library financially?

- The Contra Costa County Library can accept financial donations through the website or via check. Here is a link with information on both options: http://ccclib.org/donations/donate_library.html

- Donate books or become a member of any of the Friends of the Library groups at our 26 branches. Money raised by the Friends from sales at their bookstores supports the Library.

- Some Community Library Foundations and some Community Library Friends groups are registered as a 501(c)(3) California nonprofit organizations. The Library and these two support organizations are considered qualified charitable organizations for tax purposes by the IRS. Your contributions may help lower your income tax bill.

What about teaching a sense of responsibility to children?

Libraries have traditionally been viewed as a place charged with teaching responsibility and consequence, but that has never been part of our mission. We believe what’s most important is getting more books in the hands of the children who need them most.

The mission of the Contra Costa County Library is to bring people and ideas together. Our strategic goals focus on easy and equitable access, literacy, high-quality customer service and promoting the value of the library.

All library materials will still have the same checkout periods. We still expect books to be returned on time. Any materials not returned 30 days after the due date are considered lost and patrons will be charged for them.