

PRESS RELEASE

CITY OF BENICIA
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BENICIA PUBLIC LIBRARY GOES FINE-FREE!

Benicia, CA (June 30, 2020) – As of July 1, 2020, the Benicia Public Library joins a growing list of public libraries, including neighboring Solano County Library, in eliminating the practice of charging fines for overdue materials.

“Primarily, it’s an issue of equitable access to the resources of the Library,” said David Dodd, Benicia’s Director of Library and Culture Services. “Libraries across the country have come to realize that fines disproportionately impact those who are most in need of the services the public library offers.”

The Benicia Library Board of Trustees voted in November to recommend that fines be eliminated, and applicable circulation policies revised, and at their June 9 meeting, the Benicia City Council approved this recommendation.

Since the Benicia Public Library’s closure due to COVID-19, library late fees have been suspended. According to Dodd, under the new policy, all existing fines will be wiped from patron records as of July 1, and no overdue items will have fines attached once the item is returned. “Really, we just want the items back, so they can be available for others to use,” he said.

Items that are lost or damaged will still be charged to the person who checked them out.

Library staff have long noted that the amount of time and effort spent in talking with upset patrons about fines and other charges (such as the one dollar charge for not picking up items placed on hold—also eliminated by City Council action) far exceed the benefit to the City’s General Fund. Staff time can be better spent providing library services to the public.

Benicia Public Library remains closed to the public; however, staff continues to offer virtual events, curbside pickup by appointment and offer book drop dates. More information is available at www.BeniciaLibrary.org.