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## Hartford Public Library Goes Fine Free!

**(HARTFORD, JUNE 23, 2021)** Hartford Public Library (HPL) is now fine free for all library customers. In a unanimous decision this month by Hartford Public Library's Board of Directors, HPL will no longer be charging late fees on overdue HPL materials.

"I applaud our Board of Directors for their vision. Universal fine free aligns with our mission, improves customer relations, removes barriers to additional library resources and reaffirms our commitment to the community and our dedication to service," said Bridget E. Quinn, HPL President and CEO.

In 2018, HPL went fine free for children and young adults. This year's unanimous vote extends fine free to adult materials. According to Marie Jarry, HPL's Public Services Director, HPL saw a 19% increase in circulation of youth materials in 2019 and, by 2020, the number of unreturned items decreased by 60%.

"We predicted that eliminating fines for children's materials would lead to increased use, and our experience proved just that. Making it easy for children and families to access reading materials is critical to creating lifelong readers and learners. We are excited to expand fine-free borrowing to all of our users, for all of our materials," said Quinn.

The Library's Materials Lending Policy (available [HERE](#)) states that there are no fines for overdue materials, so long as materials are returned within one week of exhausting all renewal or automatic renewal options. Customers will be billed for the replacement of the item if the item is not returned.

Because overdue fines disproportionately affect lower income customers, HPL staff and its Board of Directors found fines to be inequitable and at odds with the library's mission.

"Hartford Public Library is excited to help make fines a thing of the past," said Leticia Cotto, HPL's Customer Experience Officer. "Personally, the systemic structure of fines created a barrier that contributed to me not fully being able to access what was rightfully mine to access, my city library, the Hartford Public Library. Fines

send the indirect message that you are 'irresponsible' and 'if you can't afford to pay, this space is not for you.' Barriers such as this do not align with the values of public libraries," said Cotto.

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### **About Hartford Public Library**

Now celebrating its 127th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st century. With locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org).