

Action Item 1: New Fines-Free Circulation Modifiers

Proposed Change to Policy:

Coastal Plain Regional Library System wishes to make their collection fines-free for at least two years on a pilot basis. To accomplish this, they propose using the current book-ff circulation modifier and the creation of three new fines-free circulation modifiers: dvd2-ff, cd-ff, music-ff.

Further details at: <https://pines.georgialibraries.org/sites/default/files/FF-Proposal.pdf>

The list of current circulation modifiers is at:

https://pines.georgialibraries.org/dokuwiki/doku.php?id=cat:circulation_modifiers

Survey Results:

The following summary is based on survey results from 37 PINES Subcommittee members and Directors representing 26 library systems. Four questions were asked:

1. Should we establish a new dvd-2-ff circulation modifier that has the same configuration as dvd-2 except does not charge fines?

Responses by Cataloging Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	89%
No	1	11%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses from Other Subcommittee Members and Directors:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	1	5%

2. Should we establish a new cd-ff circulation modifier that has the same configuration as cd except does not charge fines?

Responses by Cataloging Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	89%
No	1	11%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses from Other Subcommittee Members and Directors:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	1	5%

3. Should we establish a new music-ff circulation modifier that has the same configuration as music except does not charge fines?

Responses by Cataloging Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	100%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	8	89%
No	1	11%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses from Other Subcommittee Members and Directors:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	1	5%

4. If CPRL changes all of their holdings to fines-free circ modifiers, this will have the result of creating a disparity of service from one library system to the next. This will be most visible when a non-CPRL patron checks out a CPRL item or when a CPRL patron checks out a non-CPRL item through holds requests. Do you feel that this is acceptable?

Responses by Cataloging Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	7	87.5%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	1	12.5%

Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	7	78%
No	2	22%
Not Sure	0	0%

Responses from Other Subcommittee Members and Directors:

	Responses	Percentage
Yes	17	85%
No	0	0%
Not Sure	3	15%

Comments

Comments For:

- CPRL should be allowed to run this pilot to see the real-time effects of going fines-free. As a PINES member system and not a solo system this will create a disparity most notable when items are checked out. A disclaimer in conspicuous patron areas such as in the catalog, attached to the item records, and/or auto-notification about this to patrons via email/text when the pilot goes live is recommended. The ""disparity of service"" is acceptable. As the fines-free are only on CPRL items so it will be as if they will be running an amnesty program for two-years instead of just for a patron appreciation month.
- I can't wait to see what the results of the two year plan will be! (I am answering in my capacity as a member of the Circulation subcommittee as well.)
- I support libraries that are able going fines-free. I feel this project is important to help libraries explore the true possibilities/issues with moving towards fines-free. Therefore, I feel that the customer service problems that may arise will be worth it in the end. I do hope that CPRL will advertise widely that the fines-free items are their items only. I look forward to the results of this project.
- I think it's worth a try - I'd be interested in the results.
- I think Sandy is right that we have to try this somewhere to see what the possible impacts might be.
- I would like to know if hold items going to CPRL patrons could have fines suppressed too. Then that way their patron would be getting the full Fines-Free experience.
- I would love to see this go PINES-wide, state-wide.
- I'm glad to hear that CPRLS plans to advertise that non-CPRLS owned items will still incur a late fee and remind their patrons at the time of checkout if this proposal passes. If a problem does develop in which items loaned to the CPRL System are being lost, an additional measure could

be explored such as generating a separate notification. The stats gained from a similar fine-free study conducted at CVL last year was very informative (and produced impressive results!) as I believe this study at CPRLS will as well.

- If the modifiers are added, wouldn't any library system be able to do the same thing as CPRL, or would we want systems to approach PINES first? I ask because I would like our Board to consider this option as well.
- It seems the precedent and standard has already been set - "A fines free modifier for books (book-ff) already exists in the system." Maybe I misunderstand the reasoning for creating the book-ff modifier but that change would seem to initiate the move to a larger scale no-fines environment. Also, if CPRL is choosing to use the book-ff modifier, the instances of paying for overdue fines for only DVDs, CDs, and new music would be terribly confusing for staff to explain to their patrons.
- I think the discussion about fines free needs to be a larger discussion than just modifier creation. The discussion should be what all can be done or changed for the systems who want to move in the direction of a fines free environment. Given how positive the feedback and outcomes have been for systems who have made that decision already, it would seem more and more systems will want to seriously consider these changes."
- It will be interesting to see if this works. Maybe other systems will follow in ff
- Thank you for taking the time to consider this request. Please feel free to reach out with any questions, comments, and/or concerns.
- This is a good way to get hard data. The only way we can find out the impact is to let someone conduct an experiment like this.
- Will the software be able to report the amount of fines that would have been paid had the items not been set to -ff?

Comments Against:

- I would like to say yes to this proposal, but I'm concerned that patrons won't get charged overdue fines, and this would modify fines collected within our library system. If the question is whether or not we should add three additional circulation modifiers--I don't think we can take exception if book-ff is already a circulation modifier. If we have one, doesn't make sense to not have three others, especially since they are items that are not holdable through PINES anyway.
- However, since you bring it up in the final question--I still do have an issue with the disparity of service that will occur by having the book-ff modifier in use. Fines free is a lovely thought, for systems who can afford to go without the income fines provide. I've never thought of fines being in place to ensure the return of the item. Generally, THAT impetus comes from being billed for the cost of the book. For our library, fines are a necessary income to keep our library doors open. Until we are in a place where ALL our PINES libraries can go fines free, I feel like we are muddying the waters by going forward with this. That said, it is just a pilot project, and I'm very interested in the data. And perhaps the data will lead us to a place where we can argue for funding to support a state-wide fines free initiative.

Other Comments:

- I can see where there might be some issues down the road. I'm just not sure that it's a good solution for our system but am okay with CPRL doing it-as long as it doesn't impact our library system.
- I understand and support CPRL going fines free. I do however think it can present challenges for front line staff explaining why some items have fines and others don't. Also if an item travels from my library system to theirs, the patron has no incentive to return the item in a timely manner and

therefore could keep the item out of circulation for a longer than usual time period. Just a thought not a deal breaker. I am interested in their findings on going fines free.

- While I am supportive of testing a fines free program and have no qualms about the new circ modifiers being created, I am concerned about how it will affect other PINES patrons and staff. Explaining to patrons of other PINES library systems why certain items do or do not have fines seems like trouble. I'm just wondering if there is a way to implement further control over the test, so that the fines free pilot program would only apply to CPRL materials checked out by CPRL cardholders? I think this control would also improve the quality of results.