

## Action Item 3: Replacement Card Fee

### Proposed Change to Policy:

Proposal submitted by Martha F. Powers-Jones, Director of Okefenokee Regional Library System

#### SUMMARY:

I respectfully request that the PINES Executive Committee either reduce or eliminate the charge to replace library cards. The current charge is set at \$2.00.

#### DETAILED PROPOSAL:

<https://pines.georgialibraries.org/sites/default/files/AI-3-Replacement-Card-Fee.pdf>

### Survey Results (Overall Responses)

The following summary is based on survey results from 57 PINES Subcommittee members and Directors representing 37 library systems. Two questions were asked.

#### 1. Do you agree that the replacement card fee should be reduced or eliminated?

	Responses	%
Yes	45	79%
No	11	19%
Not Sure	1	2%

#### 2. If this proposal is approved, which option would you prefer?

	Responses	%
Completely eliminate the fee	26	46%
Reduce the fee to \$1.00	14	25%
Allow each library system to set their own replacement fee	14	25%
You have the option of not billing for the card or billing for the card and forgiving the charge. If you eliminate the charge as an option, the statistics of tracking how many	1	2%

people benefited from the change will be lost. If you create the bill, then forgive it, you'll have a data point in 6 months, 1 year, to show how many people benefited. If you eliminate the "bill type" - lost card - those who wish to continue charging will be forced to use a generic "miscellaneous" or "sale" bill type. I would support changing the wording of the policy to give each library the option to charge or not charge - that is, to remove the flat statement of replacement card are \$2.00		
None of the above	1	2%
Should not be approved	1	2%

## Survey Results (Broken Down by Role)

### 1. Do you agree that the replacement card fee should be reduced or eliminated?

#### Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:

	Responses	%
Yes	8	62%
No	5	38%

#### Responses from Other Subcommittee Members:

	Responses	%
Yes	14	82%
No	3	18%

#### Responses from Directors who are not subcommittee members:

	Responses	%
Yes	23	85%
No	3	11%
Not Sure	1	4%

**2. If this proposal is approved, which option would you prefer?**

**Responses by Circulation Subcommittee Members Only:**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Completely eliminate the fee	4	31%
Reduce the fee to \$1.00	3	23%
Allow each library system to set their own replacement fee	6	46%

**Responses from Other Subcommittee Members:**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Completely eliminate the fee	7	41%
Reduce the fee to \$1.00	3	18%
Allow each library system to set their own replacement fee	5	29%
None of the above	1	6%
Should not be approved	1	6%

**Responses from Directors who are not subcommittee members:**

	<b>Responses</b>	<b>%</b>
Completely eliminate the fee	15	56%
Reduce the fee to \$1.00	8	30%
Allow each library system to set their own replacement fee	3	11%
You have the option of not billing for the card or billing for the card and forgiving the charge. If you eliminate the charge as an option, the statistics of tracking how many people benefited from the change will be lost. If you create the bill, then forgive it, you'll have a data point in 6 months, 1 year, to show how many people benefited. If you eliminate the "bill type" - lost card - those who wish to continue charging will be forced to use a generic "miscellaneous" or "sale" bill type. I would support changing the wording of the policy to give each library the option to charge or not charge - that is, to remove the flat statement of replacement card are \$2.00	1	4%

## Comments In Favor

- As with fines, the card fee should motivate the patron to keep his/her library card and not be so careless as to lose it. The proposal mentions that patrons can present other forms of ID to access their PINES account; similarly, the patron must be careful not to lose other forms of ID! Managers of FRRLS are unanimous that the replacement fee may be reduced, but not eliminated.
- A small fine may help hold patrons accountable for keeping up with their library cards while not being an amount which is difficult for most to pay.
- Baldwin (Twin Lakes) County library supervisor staff agree that elimination of the fee would be the best course of action but a \$1.00 fee would suffice to help off-set costs of card replacements. There was a small mention concerning patrons who may abuse this by constantly replacing their card for any number of personal reasons or just because they can -- I suggest the consideration of ONE or TWO free card replacements per calendar year with the third replacement being at the \$2 fee level.
- By having a replacement fee we are limiting those who want access to the library but have simply misplaced their library card.
- Getting a replacement card should not be a barrier.
- I think this is a great idea and I am glad it is being brought before the Executive Committee. My staff and I are all in favor of this and believe that it would be easier if it was a Pines wide ruling.
- I would vote to eliminate it, but some small libraries with a very tight budget may be negatively impacted financially by this change, and I would not want to cause stress by making a sweeping change that could impact them. I feel allowing each system to make that decision is best.
- "Our team had a good discussion about this. There was concern that eliminating the fee entirely would be financially difficult for libraries that rely on fees for funding - we would be okay to absorb the cost but I feel other libraries might not. There was also concern that no fee would lead to constant replacement cards being issued to those who can't remember to bring their cards once they realize there is no fee.

I'm not sure I like the idea of inconsistent replacement fees - we might see library hoppers who want to save a couple of dollars and use multiple PINES systems, which could get confusing and skew our patron registration numbers.

- Removing the replacement card fee will remove one more barrier keeping folks from using the library.
- Replacement cards are \$0.12 per. Seems a rather nominal cost and much like a barrier to access.
- Since we have to buy the cards, I do think the patrons should bear some of the cost when they lose a card. We already replace worn out cards for free. One of my assistant directors pointed out that if we go to free, some people will take advantage of the situation. Perhaps we should limit the number of free cards--if that's what the majority wants.
- The libraries in my system do not have the budget to take over replacement card costs entirely, but if other systems would like to test or implement this change, they should have the option.
- This is a barrier that we can remove without taking a significant hit to our bottom line.

- This is another important step in removing barriers to service.
- Very much against letting each library system do their own thing. I think we've learned over the past years that the more flexible we are, the more issues arise, so whatever we decide, I'd like to take the "Allow each library system to set their own replacement fee" off the table.

As few cards as we replace, I don't think this is a significant revenue stream for our vulnerable libraries.

I think we mentally need to prepare ourselves that if replacements do become free, we may see a significant increase in the number of cards replaced. At less than 12 cents a card, we obviously can handle a significant increase without it being an issue financially.

If we get in situations where the free replacement is becoming abused - how do we train staff to handle situations? How many free cards can they get within, say, 1 year? Do we have the authority to decline to replace a card if it's been replaced \*too often\*? How do we define \*too often\*? Not saying this is going to happen - and I think that the app is going to be a heavily utilized tool - but want to make sure we are considering all angles.

## Comments Opposed

- Being a small rural library with a limited budget the elimination of the replacement card fee would affect our budget. By allowing each library system to set their own replacement fee that would allow each library to accommodate the financial needs of their patrons.
- eliminates revenue with little benefit
- I am minimally interested in replacing library cards a lot more frequently, along with having the customer conversation, "No, ma'am, this isn't your current card -- you've had four since this one." "Well, just make me a new one, I guess." If there's no incentive -- even a small one -- to hang onto a card, there are a lot of customers that won't." Just my -- admittedly somewhat petty -- opinion.
- Patrons can already use their photo IDs to check out, and the PINES app is available. Considering how we do spend money to order library cards, eliminating or reducing the fee for a physical card seems to be accepting a (further) loss of revenue in exchange for no real benefit.
- The elimination of replacement fee will only hurt our budget further. Although the total income from this fee is minimal it does indeed cover the cost of our library card order each year.
- While I and my staff are very much in favor of greatly reducing or eliminating the card replacement fee, our other regional member libraries felt VERY differently, and I feel I must represent their strong feelings. This is the first issue I have heard back nearly immediately from our other eight member branches - all very strongly against any elimination of or change to the card replacement fee. All respondents felt this would create too much additional staff work as well as create a financial burden in terms of purchasing replacement cards. All sited not only the PINES app but the recent change to allowing photo ID for check out as reasons. Many stated that as the initial card is free and designed for longevity, not charging for replacements devalues and dis-incentivizes

keeping up with the card. Underlying all is the idea that we are, in fact, teaching our patrons to undervalue what libraries provide and represent.

- With the recent changes in allowing patrons to show ID after the initial card means that a patron never has to show their card again. In addition, there is the option for many to use the PINES app on their phone. In general, there is no penalty or barrier for the lack of a physical card. Recommend no change.
- You have the option of not billing for the card or billing for the card and forgiving the charge. If you eliminate the charge as an option, the statistics of tracking how many people benefited from the change will be lost. If you create the bill, then forgive it, you'll have a data point in 6 months, 1 year, to show how many people benefited. If you eliminate the "bill type" - lost card - those who wish to continue charging will be forced to use a generic "miscellaneous" or "sale" bill type. I would support changing the wording of the policy to give each library the option to charge or not charge - that is, to remove the flat statement of replacement card are \$2.00

## **Comments Unsure**

- If you allow each library system to set their own replacement fee, it will confuse patrons who visit multiple library systems.