

## Automated Long Overdue Process Proposal for PINES Executive Committee

As we implemented going Fines Free for the PINES Pilot Project, we began looking at the PINES overdue notice schedule and the wording of the notices.

My staff appreciate the Overdue Notices sent by PINES, some sent directly from PINES and some contracted to an outside company. From PINES documentation:

### Typical Notifications for an Overdue Item

1. 3 Day Courtesy Notice sent 3 days prior to due date by email (if available) and SMS text (if available), and entered into Patron Message Center.
2. 10 Day Overdue Notice sent by email (if available) and entered into Patron Message Center. Vendor also telephones patrons who do not have a valid email recorded in PINES, and if they cannot be reached by phone then vendor sends a letter.
3. 30 Day Overdue letter sent by vendor via USPS.

*We think the timeframe between 30 and 180 Days Overdue is too long. In addition, the 30 Day Overdue notice says "Final Notice." So, the patron receives what they think is a Final Notice, and then, if they still have the materials, they are not contacted again until 150 days later, and that notice says they have been billed the cost of the item.*

4. 6 Month Long Overdue Notice sent by email (if available) and entered into Patron Message Center.
5. Fine Limit Exceeded is emailed when a patron reaches their fine limit (usually \$10.00). This can be for any type of fines and fees.

As we did our research into going Fines Free and what motivates patrons to return materials, we found that the possibility of being charged the replacement cost of items, and knowing what that replacement cost will be, is more of a motivation than knowing the smaller, by comparison, late fees. Therefore, we recommend **an additional 60-day notice that warns of the replacements fee due to be charged to their account in 30 days** (including the amount to be charged), and a **90-day notice** (identical to the current 180-day notice) that says the account has been charged.

A notice that informs patrons in advance that they will be charged replacement costs and how much those costs will be is more motivation to return materials than a notice that lists the smaller late fees. We are sure that this will increase returns of overdue materials in a timely manner. ***I'd like to emphasize that, even though we began looking at the Automated Long Overdue Process because we were going Fines Free, that this is an improvement that will help ALL PINES libraries communicate more clearly and effectively with their patrons.***

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth McIntyre, Director  
***Piedmont Regional Library System***