

# **Discussion 1: Best Practices for Patrons in Collections**

## **Background**

At the September Director's Meeting, the PINES Executive Committee accepted the Subcommittee's recommendation to allow patrons that are in collections to pay their fines at any library rather than having to go to the referring library to pay them.

Concerns were raised about those patrons that were barred at the time they were put into collections, since the barred status can only be removed by the referring library. So, if the patron paid their fines, they might still have to contact the referring library to have the bar lifted.

The Subcommittees have been asked to discuss the various approaches and come up with a recommendation for a consistent approach to handling patrons in collections.

## **Subcommittee Feedback**

### **Rely on Automated Block**

The majority of subcommittee respondents are of the opinion that the automatic blocking of the patron due to exceeding the maximum fine limit was sufficient, and no additional staff action is needed to block or bar the account.

By relying on the automatic Block, the patron will regain account services once they have paid below the maximum fine limit of \$10.00 without waiting for staff intervention (even if they have paid online or at a different library than the library that put them into collections). This reduces staff time and effort and improves services for patrons.

### **Add Alert (Optional)**

The majority of subcommittee respondents feel there is no need to add any additional alert on the account because the collection agency automatically adds a Note to the account.

However, nearly as many libraries prefer that an Alert is added to the account because it displays more prominently to staff.