

PINES Best Practices: Money Owed Between Libraries

The Policy

PINES Policy allows patrons to pay their PINES bills at any library (unless the patron has been referred to a collections agency, in which case the patron must pay their fees directly to the library that referred them to collections).

If a patron pays for one of the following types of bills at a library other than the owning library of the item, then the library that receives payment is required to send remittance (check or other form of payment) to the owning library for the amount paid:

- Lost Item
- Lost Item Processing Fee
- Long Overdue Item
- Long Overdue Processing Fee
- Damaged Material

The Difficulty

The Evergreen software is designed to monitor how much money each patron owes and which bills they have and have not paid. However, it is not designed to track whether the money paid should be kept by the library that accepts the money or whether that money should be sent to a different library.

Libraries have developed a variety of local procedures for tracking these payments, but for the most part libraries have stored this information outside of Evergreen so it is not available to other libraries. As a result, a significant amount of staff time is spent contacting other libraries to see if/when they sent payments. Current procedures usually rely on the front-line staff accepting payments noticing that the money is meant to go to a different library and filling out the proper paperwork to request that a payment be sent. Because of this, some required payments are overlooked. As libraries are beginning to accept online credit card payments, these payments also risk being overlooked because front-line staff members are not able to monitor them as they come in.

For these reasons, the following procedure has been developed. Removing the burden from the front-line staff members and changing it to a monthly process should be more efficient and reduce the likelihood of overlooking transactions. If all libraries follow these steps to record payments sent and received between libraries, then the information will be readily available to all parties involved and payments will be more consistent.

The Procedure for Sending Money to Other Libraries

This should be done at least once per month, but may be done more frequently.

1. Identify Eligible Bills

To identify bills where payment was accepted by your library for a Lost, Long Overdue, or Damaged item owned by another library, run the following Quick Report:

Quick Reports > Quick Report Templates > Bills > Patron Accounts with Payments Owed by My Library to Other PINES Libraries

2. Review and Verify Each Bill

- a. Go to the account for the first patron listed on the report.
 - If the Last Bill Note indicates that a payment was already sent (or does not need to be sent), skip to the next account on the report.
- b. Switch to the Bills tab.
- c. Click on the History button.
- d. Find the bill number listed on the report.
 - You may need to change the Start Date if you are reviewing a payment on an old bill.
 - You can click on the column header for Bill # to sort the bills numerically.
- e. Select the bill and click Full Details.
- f. Review the bill's details to determine whether a payment needs to be sent or not, and if so, for how much, then close the Full Details window.
 - If a payment needs to be sent, move on to step 3.
 - If not, go back to the beginning of step 2 to begin reviewing the next account on the report.
 - i. Optional: If a payment does not need to be sent, you may wish to add a billing note indicating the reason why a payment is not needed (see step 4 below for instructions on adding a note).

3. Request Remittance for Each Verified Bill

- a. Fill out a form to request a check (or other form of payment) from your business services office or staff. A copy of the form should be sent to the receiving library along with the payment. Each library may develop its own form or use a basic template supplied by PINES staff, but the form should include:
 - Date of payment request
 - Owning library name
 - Owning library address
 - Owning library code
 - Patron name
 - Patron barcode number
 - Item barcode number
 - Bill number
 - Title
 - Type(s) of payment (Lost, Lost Processing Fee, Long Overdue, Long Overdue Processing Fee, Damaged Material)
 - Amount paid

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- Your library name
 - Your library code
 - Your name (employee who is requesting the payment)
- b. If multiple payments are requested for a particular library, your business services office may wish to combine them onto one payment. That is acceptable, but all of the related forms (one per bill) should be included with it to the receiving library so that they may update all of the related accounts.
 - c. Follow your local procedures for submitting the form to your business services office or staff.
 - d. For record-keeping purposes, save a copy of the form (either electronically or on paper) you submitted to your business services office or staff. If the library that receives the payment does not receive a copy of the form along with it, they may contact you asking what account it was for.

4. Add a Note to the Bill

- a. From the Bill History screen, select the bill that you have been reviewing.
- b. Click the Add Billing button.
- c. You will be asked to confirm that you would like to add a billing – click Yes.
- d. For Billing Type, select “Billing Note (No Amount)”
- e. Leave the Amount at 0.00.
- f. In the Note field, type a message in this format:
Payment requested from [My Library Code] to [Owning Library Code] for [Amount] by [Your Name and Date]
 - Example:
Payment requested from ARL-ATH to OCRL-DUBLN for \$24.99 by JSmith 11/12/2015
- g. Click the “Submit this Bill” button.
 - If you view the full details of the bill or if you display the Last Billing Note column in the Bill History, you will see the note. It will also appear the next time the report is run.
- h. Return to step 2 to review the next account in the report and repeat until all accounts have been reviewed.

The Procedure for Receiving Money from Other Libraries

When a payment is received from another library, add another billing note to the account so that it will be clear on future reports or review of individual accounts that the payment was received.

1. Open the Patron Account

- a. Refer to the paper you received with the payment to determine which patron account the payment is associated with and open that patron’s account.
- b. If you are unable to tell what patron account and bill the payment should be associated with, contact the sending library.

2. Add a Note to the Bill

- a. Switch to the Bills tab.
- b. Click on the History button.
- c. Find the bill number listed on the paperwork.
 - You may need to change the Start Date if you are reviewing an old bill.

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- You can click on the column header for Bill # to sort the bills numerically.
- d. Select the bill and click the Add Billing button.
- e. You will be asked to confirm that you would like to add a billing – click Yes.
- f. For Billing Type, select “Billing Note (No Amount)”
- g. Leave the Amount at 0.00.
- h. In the Note field, type a message in this format:
[Payment Type] received from [Sending Library Code] at [My Library Code] for [Amount] by [Your Name and Date]
 - Example:
Check received from OCRL-DUBLN at ARL-ATH for \$24.99 by MJones 11/15/2015
- i. Click the “Submit this Bill” button.
 - If you view the full details of the bill or if you display the Last Billing Note column in the Bill History, you will see the note. It will also appear the next time the report is run.

To Review Payments Owed to Your Library By Other Libraries

For auditing and account management purposes, you may run a report to identify bills for your library's items that were Lost, Long Overdue, or Damaged and payment accepted by another library.

Quick Reports > Quick Report Templates > Bills > Patron Accounts with Payments Owed to My Library by Other PINES Libraries

The “Last Billing Note” column should indicate whether or not a payment has been sent to your library and whether or not it has been received by your library. For additional details, look up the full details of the bill to review its activity.