



Coastal Plain Regional Library System

Serving Ben Hill, Berrien, Cook, Irwin, Tift, and Turner Counties

August 26, 2020

PINES Executive Committee

c/o Elizabeth McKinney, PINES Program Director

RE: Request for additional circulation modifiers (DVD2-ff, CD-ff, Music-ff) to allow CPRLS to implement a fines free program

PINES Executive Committee,

On behalf of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System, I am requesting that the Executive Committee approve three additional circulation modifiers: DVD2-ff, CD-ff, and music-ff. A fines free modifier for books (book-ff) already exists in the system.

Upon approval, we would work with the PINES staff to transition our collections as soon as possible. We will gather data on the number of outstanding items returned and changes in active users, circulations, and other metrics that demonstrate the impact of removing fines. We would like to run the pilot for two years, planning to report back to the Committee in Fall 2022. We are not proposing a PINES-wide elimination of overdue fees. However, the only way for us to gather true data on the effectiveness of a fines-free policy is to try it. The most efficient way to transition to a fines free system is to set all CPRLS-owned items as fines free within Evergreen using circulation modifiers, as opposed to waiving fines in-house or continuing to use amnesty mode.

Why now:

- We are already operating in a defacto fines-free environment and will already need to adjust our local budgets to accommodate for changes in revenue.
- Families in our area are hurting and they need our services more than ever. All school systems are offering online options but none have fully equipped their students in the area of technology. We need them to be able to use our resources, both physical and digital, and fines are creating a barrier.
- Over 9,000 patrons are currently blocked across our system. That's roughly the entire population of two of our counties! We need these patrons back.
- Overdue fines have been proven over and over again to be ineffective at getting items returned on time. Chattahoochee Valley Library System's recent transition to fines-free has already shown an increase in material returns and patron retention.

We are happy to address other concerns and to share the justifications we will use in making the fines-free case with our local stakeholders. At this point, we are simply asking the PINES Executive Committee to provide the functionality within the system to shift to fines-free. Without this functionality, our local discussion will need to go in a different direction.

Thanks for your time and consideration,

Sandra Hester

Sandy Hester

Director

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Member Libraries: Fitzgerald Ben Hill Co. Library ☐ Carrie Dorsey Perry Memorial Library ☐ Cook County Library ☐ Irwin County Library ☐ Tifton-Tift County Public Library ☐ Victoria Evans Memorial Library