



News Release

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CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY RECEIVES APPROVAL TO GO FINE FREE BEGINNING JULY 1

Elimination of late/overdue fines restores access for more than 150,000 Mecklenburg residents

Charlotte, NC – June 2, 2021 – Charlotte Mecklenburg Library received approval at the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners' June 1 budget hearing to eliminate overdue or late fines for customers. This policy change goes into effect July 1, 2021 and is part of the Library's Fiscal Year 2022 budget. Currently, more than 150,000 cardholders who carry a balance of \$10 or more are blocked from using Library resources, and more than 40,000 of these accounts were blocked in just the last three years. Beginning July 1, the Library will be "fine free" and no longer assess late or overdue fines on materials.

"We're thrilled with this support from Mecklenburg County and our Board of County Commissioners to implement this equity initiative. Late fines discourage people who can't afford to pay them from using the Library and, along with our Board of Trustees, we want everyone in our community to have equitable access to our services and collections," said Marcellus "MT" Turner, CEO and chief librarian for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. "By eliminating the late or overdue fines for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, we create a Library where access is not based on ability to pay."

With this policy change, the Library is also eliminating all current fines and fees on customers' accounts through a one-time amnesty, restoring access to Library materials for all cardholders and especially those most in need of Library resources. The Library will release more details before the change goes into effect on July 1, 2021. In the meantime, cardholders who have outstanding Library materials are encouraged to return all items to their local branch.

"Materials will still have due dates and customers are still responsible for returning those items. The bottom line is that overdue or late fines on materials will no longer prevent anyone in our community from using the Library, and we're excited to welcome back customers who have stayed away because of these fines," said Caitlin Moen, library director and chief customer officer for Charlotte Mecklenburg Library.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library joins hundreds of library systems across the United States who have already gone fine free, including several in North Carolina: Chapel Hill Public Library, Durham County Library, Greensboro Public Library, Hickory Public Library and Wake County Libraries.

The announcement of the approval for going fine free comes just days after the Library moved to its Level 3 re-opening services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers can now return to branch locations for expanded seating, computer and copier/scanner use, as well as schedule in-person appointments in the Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room

More information on the Library and services available can be found at cmlibrary.org.

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About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online resources, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and

build a stronger community. For more, visit cmlibrary.org.

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