

Automatic Renewals:

Automatic renewal of materials is a new function made available with the latest upgrade to our circulation system.

How it works:

- If an item is eligible for renewal, meaning that it does not have a hold on it or it is not a "Hot" item or other non-renewable item, the system will automatically renew the item 3 days before it is due.
- The new due date is calculated from the previous due date, not from the date of renewal.
- The patron receives an email notice informing them of the new due date. This notice replaces the Courtesy Notice, which they receive now informing them that the item is coming due.

What is the impact:

- Increased circulation.
- Patron goodwill.
- Decreased staff time spent on negative interactions.
- Will potentially reduce fine revenue by 25%-50% based on numbers other libraries are reporting.
- Items are renewable twice.
- This is automating a process that is already available to patrons.

The Debate Over Fine Free Libraries

(Notes from panel discussion at ILA with representatives from ELA, Warren-Newport Public Library, Waukegan Public Library, Vernon Area Library).

What is the mission of the library?

- Elmhurst Public Library enriches life in Elmhurst by providing opportunities to connect, create and explore.

Do library fines support the mission?

Does evidence show that fines increase the rate of return of library items?

- There is little research on this topic
- Some studies show that only large fines impact return rates
- Rates of return in some libraries stayed the same or increased when fines were eliminated
- Vernon Area Library did study when they went fine free and evidence showed that materials came back 5 days sooner than before and that patrons were less likely to renew material (to guard against fines).
- Without good evidence on the value of fines, are there other ways to promote higher rates of return?
- Are return rates important? What is the real impact?

Library fines impact equity and access

- Some studies point to the fact that families with lower income are more likely NOT to use the library for fear of accumulating fees.
- Elderly patrons, patrons with disabilities, families with young children more likely not to use library for fear of accumulating fines.
- Evidence that when libraries eliminate fees, there is an increase in families getting or using library cards (especially for children).

NEWS ENTERTAINMENT AND CULTURE CHICAGO

Lightfoot's decision to eliminate library fines triggers 240% increase in book returns

Library Commissioner Andrea Telli says hundreds of long-overdue books have been returned in the three weeks since Chicago became the nation's largest major city to jump on the no-fine bandwagon.

By Fran Spielman | Oct 30, 2019, 5:25pm CDT



bring back my books. I've been hesitant to come back to the library because I owe these fines," Telli said.

Lightfoot's 2020 budget includes an \$18 million property tax increase to honor her promise to establish Sunday hours at Chicago's 77 branch libraries.

Currently, the Harold Washington central library and three regional libraries — Woodson, Sulzer and Legler — are open 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays.

Branch libraries ultimately will match those Sunday hours — but not until the end of next year.

The expansion will be phased in as fast as a hiring blitz will allow.

The library system now has 180 vacant positions. The 2020 budget includes an increase of 62 full-time staffers and 115 more part-time employees to accommodate Sunday hours.

"We're expediting filling those vacancies as quickly as possible in order to bring staffing up to where we can add those additional hours. ... We have to follow the labor agreements and the Department of Human Resources process for hiring," Telli said.

"So we'll be rolling it out equitably across the city to open maybe 15 or 20 branches at a time, depending on how quickly we can get through the hiring process. We also want to make sure there aren't any pockets in the city where many branches in this area are open on Sundays and very few in this other area. So we're gonna roll that out very carefully."



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By AARP | August 12, 2019

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