

Starting April 5th, 2021, Grantsburg Public Library will no longer charge overdue fines for late returns.

Have you ever:

- kept a library item for too long?
- forgot about a library item until you felt it was “too late” to return it?
- been unable to make it to the library during open hours?
- had a life event that prevented you from being able to return library items?
- felt like you couldn't or shouldn't use the library due to overdue fines?

We know life gets in the way and overdues fines keep people from using the library. We want to welcome all our library patrons back in 2021.

Why the change?

- Overdue fines act as a barrier to using the library. We want people of all ages, incomes, and experiences to use the library.

How does it work?

- If you return an item late, you will no longer be charged an overdue fine. We have even forgiven most library patron fines so you can start fresh. Overdue items checked out at other Northern Waters Libraries, as well as lost or damaged items, will still incur fines and replacement costs.

Will my library items still have due dates?

- Yes, library items will still have due dates. You are asked to return or renew items by the due date, so they are available for others to enjoy.

What happens if I do not return my items on time?

- If you have more than one overdue item, you will not be able to check out any more items until you return them. When you return the items there will not be any fee so long as the materials are in good condition.

No matter how late I return my items, I will never be charged a fee?

- Not exactly. After 28 days the library considers a item “lost” and you will be billed the replacement cost. The library needs items back so other patrons can use them.

I did not actually lose my items. I just misplaced them or forgot. Can I still return them?

- Yes! If you return the items after you receive a bill, the bill will be cleared, and no overdue fines will be charged.

Will I still receive reminders about returning my materials?

- Yes. A reminder notification will be sent two days before an item is due. After that, overdue notices are sent at 7 days, 14 days, 21 days, and billed at 28 days.

What if I had old fines on my card?

- Our computer system should have cleared any overdue fines you had. If fines remain, please check with the library. If you have unreturned or damaged items on your account, those replacement costs will remain. Remember – if you still have those unreturned items, please return them and the replacement costs will be removed.

Will people return items if the library does not charge overdue fines?

- Fines were meant as an incentive for people to return items on time. Instead, fines became a barrier that kept some people from using the library. Studies show that libraries that have eliminated overdue fines experience the same rate of return of materials as libraries that do charge fines.

I always consider paying my fines as a donation to the library. Can I still donate to the library?

- Absolutely! You can always donate cash or a check to Grantsburg Public Library.

How much money did the library make from overdue fines?

- Revenue has varied over time but has typically been between \$1000-\$2000 per year in years prior to 2020. Overdue fine revenue is a small fraction of the library budget. **Access for all is more important to our community of library users than a small amount of revenue.**
- Overdue fines have been suspended since early 2020. In March 2020, the library suspended overdue fines as part of the library Pandemic Policy. In 2020, the library collected about \$300 in library fines.

How many people were affected by this change?

- 792 patrons had some amount of fine forgiven. That amounts to approximately 37% of Grantsburg library card holders!
- \$3778.48 in largely uncollectable overdue fines have been waived overall. We are excited and eager to see our patrons again after COVID and encourage you to renew your library card if it has been a while since your last visit!