

FINAL REPORT
One-Cent Late Fees

September 2023

Recap: Request from County Council

- “Suspend overdue fees on children’s material as a summer-pilot program that would run in conjunction with the library system’s summertime reading programming.”
 - The pilot would provide Board and Council with data to consider adjusting or eliminating overdue fees in order to make libraries more accessible to children and families
 - Are more books returned and therefore do not need to be repurchased?
 - Does removal of the overdue fee barrier lead to greater participation in children’s reading programming?
 - Are more families visiting library branches across the county?

Results

- “Are more books returned and therefore do not need to be repurchased?”
 - Looked at how quickly our holds queue satisfied outstanding holds.
 - Our time to fill holds decreased by a half-day in June-August 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. (9.06 days in 2023 vs 9.72 in 2022)



Results

- “Does removal of the overdue fee barrier lead to greater participation in children’s reading programming?”
 - Programming attendance in June-August 2023 increased by 26% compared to June-August 2022
 - There was a modest increase in the overall number of youth Summer Reading participants in 2023 over 2022



Results

- “Does removal of the overdue fee barrier lead to greater participation in children’s reading programming?”
 - In a survey sent to the County Library’s email list about the 1-cent late fee program
 - 88% of respondents said they checked out children’s or teen materials this summer
 - 55% said they visited the library more often
 - 65% of respondents said they checked out more children’s or teen books and other materials
 - 44% said they attended more programs at the County Library this summer



Results

- “Are more families visiting library branches across the county?”
 - 7.9% increase in door count visits, June-August 2023 compared to June-August 2022
 - 1.75% increase in patron registrations during the same period in 2023 compared to 2022



Results

- Financial impact: \$42,389.07
 - Late fee charges on children's and teen materials reduced by the one-cent late fee pilot (\$45,172.25 at 0.25 vs. \$2,783.18 at 0.01)
 - That equates to \$170,000 in annual charges that would be reduced
 - Note that charges do not typically match money collected



Next Steps

- 94.6% of survey respondents viewed their experience with the 1-cent pilot program as positive (Excellent-71.54; Very Good-10.77; Good-12.31)
- We have submitted a revenue reduction request of \$115,000 in our budget to remove late fees on Children and Teen materials for 2024