



Library Without Fines:

An Equitable Approach to Removing Barriers

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3 Reasons to Eliminate Fines



- 1. Fines can cause an inequitable barrier to library use.**
- 2. Fines don't work the way we think they do.**
- 3. Fines create negative experiences for patrons and staff.**

Library Mission Statement



To provide the community with equal access to physical and virtual environments that support and encourage lifelong learning and enrichment.

Current Fines and Lending



Material type	Length of Checkout	# of Renewals	Fine per Day	Maximum Fine
Books, Audiobooks, CDs	3 weeks	1	15 Cents	\$5.00
NEW materials	2 weeks	2	15 cents	\$5.00
DVDs	1 week	2	15 cents	\$5.00

- Automatic renewals unless item is requested.
- Account is blocked for use once fines/fees reach \$10.

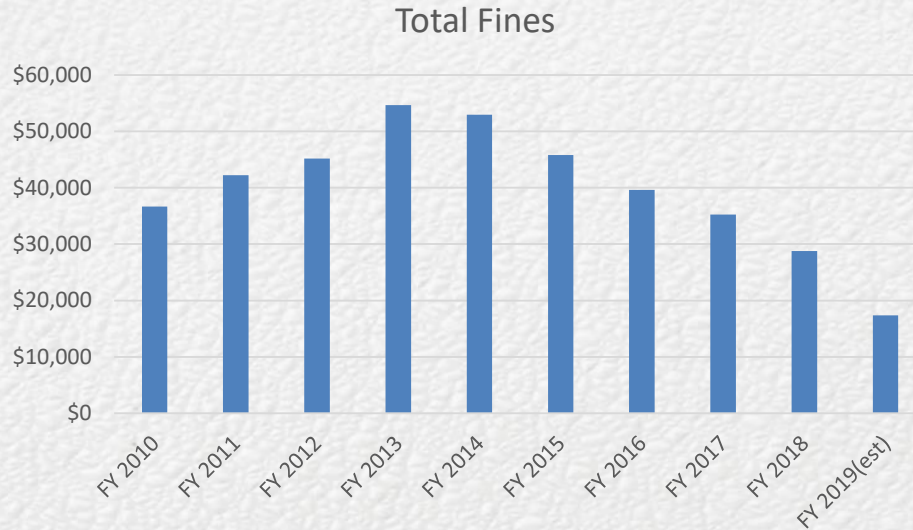
Unreturned Item Charges



At 90 days overdue, the item enters lost status

- Patron is charged the replacement price of the item plus a \$5 processing fee.
- Processing fee is waived when the item is returned.
- Borrowing privileges are suspended until items are returned/paid for.

Funds Collected Via Fines



FY 2019 - \$18,000 (est.)

FY 2017 - \$35,269

FY 2015 - \$45,817

FY 2013 - \$51,646

Decrease in fines collected is due to:

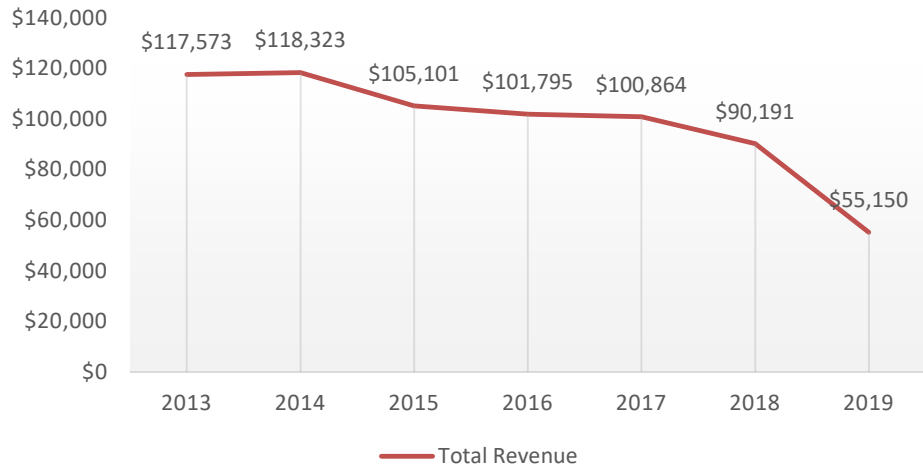
- Fine amnesty months
- Auto-renewals of items
- E-materials – no fines assessed

Library Revenue



- All library revenue is part of the General Fund of the City of New Braunfels

Total Library Revenue



Inequitable Barrier



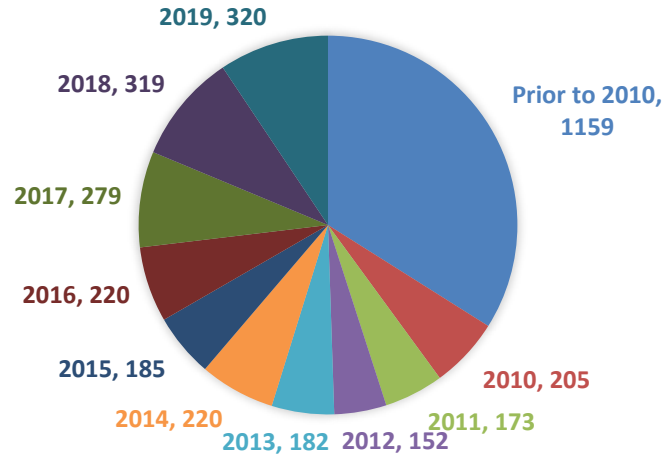
- 36% of NBISD and 29% of CISD students are Economically Disadvantaged (living in poverty)
- 99% of main library users arrive at library by private vehicle
- Fear of accidentally incurring late fees is a deterrent to many

“Transportation and mobility can sometimes become an issue. For our family, fines can add up very quickly because of these mobility issues.”

Blocked Library Cards - Fines



OF BLOCKED CARD HOLDERS



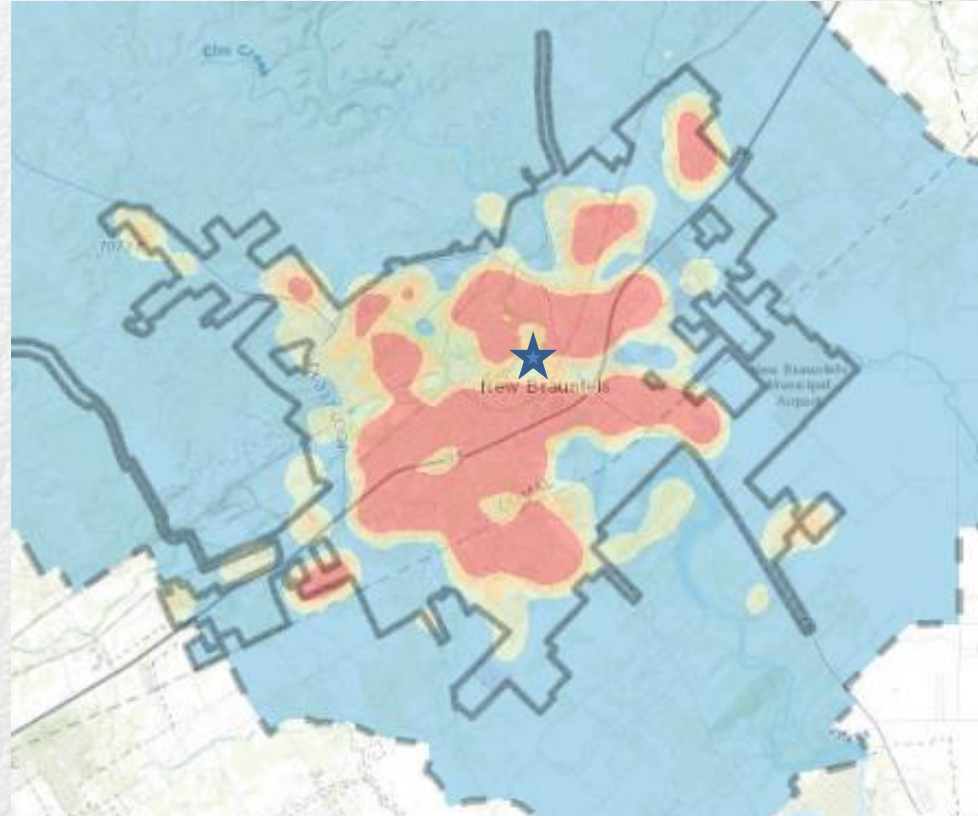
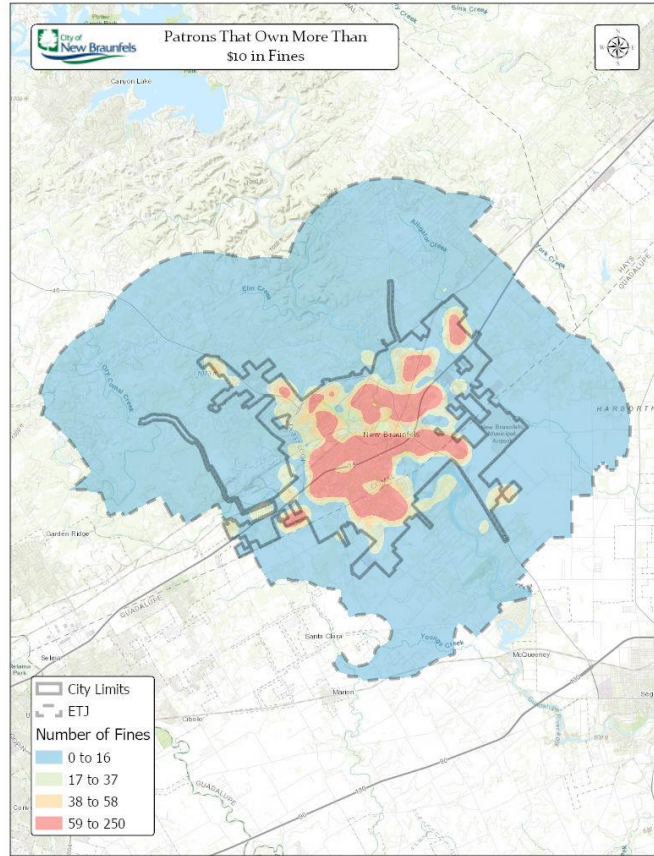
\$53,381 - Total Fines owed by blocked cards

3,256 – Total cards blocked by fines

\$16 - Average amount owed

22% - Blocked Children's cards

Map of Blocked Cards



Fines don't work



No significant difference in overdue rates between libraries that charge fines and those that don't

- Currently, 10% of the materials checked out are overdue

Only significant fines affect material return rate

- Results in significant loss of patrons

Fines teach civic responsibility to children

- Parents must drive to return materials, not the children

Negative Experience



Many people find out their card has been blocked when they try to check out

- Library software notifies about lost items, not overdue charges

Lost materials do generate a notice to the patron

Once items are returned, all fees are waived and privileges are restored.

Fine Free Texas Libraries



- Abilene
- Dallas
- Denton
- Frisco
- Georgetown
- Jeff Davis County
- Plano
- Burleson
- Flower Mound
- Haltom City
- Irving
- McKinney
- Mesquite
- Sanger
- Austin Public – Children's materials only
- San Antonio Public – Children's materials only

Proposed Actions



- **Eliminate overdue fines**
- **Clear all existing overdue fines from customer accounts**
- **Shorten time for item to be declared lost from 90 days overdue to 14 days overdue**



Questions?