

# GOING FINE FREE



# CALDWELL LIBRARIES STRATEGIC PLAN, MISSION STATEMENT, & SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

**Credo-** The Caldwell Public library is a place where staff encourage lifelong learning by providing services and information to connect, enrich and inspire our community. We pledge to provide superior service and access to information to our patrons within the constraints of available resources.

**Mission Statement-** The Caldwell Public Library provides services and information to connect, enrich, and inspire our community.

**Strategic Plan-** Meet community demand for convenient library services and decrease barriers to access by exploring options to provide additional library service outlets within Caldwell.

Enhance the current facility by working to make the Caldwell Public Library a more welcoming and relevant library space.

# BENEFITS OF GOING FINE FREE

We are standing by the mission statement of the library to provide literacy to people in the community.

Children will not have any barriers stopping them from checking out materials, they will be able to grow their literacy skills.

Staff will spend less time negotiating fines and more time on better customer service and connecting our patrons with the information they are needing.

Fines create a negative impression and experience for families. We want there experience to be memorable, and we want them to come back and frequent the library.

# DATA TO SUPPORT

- Number of children's cards blocked from fines-  
1446 (this does include lost and damaged items)

- Staff time used to collect fines-

Between notices and interactions, estimate would be 1-3 hours each day.

- Demographics-

20.3% of people live in poverty in Caldwell

We have a higher population of Latinx and English Learners- 26% of families in Caldwell speak Spanish.

# TESTIMONIES

These are testimonies from library users.

“I would love to take my children back to the library, but we have too many fines on our cards.”

“I am a single mom of 3 kids, I can't afford the fines that go along with checking out books.”

“We used to come to the library, but one time we forgot to bring the books back on time and now our cards are blocked.”

“My kids don't understand why we can't go to the library, I don't want to tell them it is because we owe them money and I can't afford it.”



# PROFIT LOSS

Most libraries who have started this model have not experienced a lot of loss in revenue from fines. The libraries who are participating in going fine free, are reporting between 1-3% loss.

Meridian Library will be running their numbers soon. They will most likely have some good insight to add when presenting to the board of directors.

# MATERIAL LOSS

Most libraries are not experiencing high material loss after eliminating fines.

Libraries who use an agency to retrieve materials are stating their reports are about the same as they were before. There have been no big increases in people who have not returned items.

Caldwell Library uses an agency, Unique Management Services to collect on materials that have been lost or damaged. We will still have this in place for people who do not return or damage items.

“Libraries that had done away with fines reported no difference in the number of materials that were returned successfully. Fines did not teach responsibility, because patrons gave other reasonable excuses for lateness, like being unable to get to the library or forgetfulness”

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/doing-away-with-fines/>

# LIBRARIES THAT HAVE GONE FINE FREE

- Baltimore Public Library
- Brigham Young University
- Meridian Library
- Plainfield Public Library District IL
- Salt Lake City Public Library
- San Rafael Public Library CA