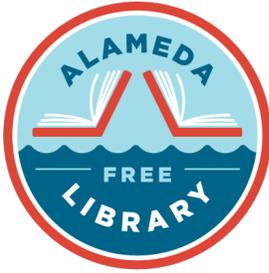


PRESS RELEASE



**SEPTEMBER 16, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Putting the “Free” In Alameda Free Library

It’s time to start a new chapter at the library! Beginning September 16, 2019, the Alameda Free Library will eliminate all overdue fines on all library materials and waive any previous fines. The Library understands life happens, and that it can be difficult to return items on time to the library. Late fines can add up and visiting the library can start to feel like a burden, especially on your wallet. That’s why we’re excited to announce that the Alameda Free Library is putting the “FREE” back in our library by saying farewell to fines!

The Library is committed to providing equal access to every member of our community and eliminating fines offers our customers a fresh start to re-discover the library and all that it has to offer. By eliminating fines, the library is removing barriers and making access easy, equitable and enjoyable for everyone. All existing library fines have been waived to ensure that all customers can start a new chapter at the now fine-free library. Of more than 79,000 cardholders in the City, over 26,000 customer accounts had overdue fines removed from their accounts, which included 8,000 cards for children.

The decision to eliminate fines was made by the Library Board with staff input and is fully supported by the Alameda City Council. Overdue fine transactions

accounted for 82% of library customer transactions and the Alameda Free Library staff recognizes that the elimination of library fines will increase accessibility for all library customers. Eliminating overdue fines will also result in more positive customer interactions and allow staff to focus on creativity and exceptional service, as well as freeing up staff time to work on other projects.

The current three week check-out period will remain but fines will not accrue if items are not returned on time. There will be the added convenience of two automatic renewals. However, if an item is on hold for another customer, it will not be renewed and the customer will be asked to return it. If an item does not come back, customers will still be held financially responsible for it. In addition, fees will still be assessed for replacement library cards, printing, and lost materials.

The Alameda Free Library will be joining many other Bay Area Libraries, and libraries across the country, who have also gone fine-free. The Library is committed to sharing information and resources with all members of our community. Along with over 220,000 books, the Alameda Free Library also has DVDs, Blu-rays, board games, puzzles, audiobooks, seeds, and garden tools that customers can check out. The Alameda Free Library also has multiple digital streaming services and ebooks, audiobooks, and digital magazines that customers can access. The Alameda Free Library also hosts special events and recurring programs every month for children, teens, and adults. To encourage returning library customers who may have lost their library cards, the Library will waive the fee for replacement library cards until October 31. All returning and new library customers are invited to check out something new and

attend an event! It the Library's sincere hope that library customers will continue to utilize all resources and return to their library.

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Alameda Free Library is located at 1550 Oak Street and is wheelchair accessible. The Main Library is served by AC Transit routes 21 and 51A. Bicycle parking racks are available at the library.