

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Oct 14, 2020**

## **SPL Permanently Eliminating Late Fines**

On Jan 1, 2021, Saskatoon Public Library (SPL) will be discontinuing the practice of charging late fines for overdue items. All late fines currently on patron accounts will also be forgiven at this time.

SPL is joining more than 100 other library systems across North America that have gone fine free in recent years, including Calgary, Edmonton and Halifax. Libraries that have adopted a fine free model have reported increases in the number of active library users, as well as overall circulation numbers.

"Going fine free is something we have been exploring at SPL for many years, and we are thrilled to be making this announcement today," said Carol Cooley, CEO of SPL. "Providing equal access to library services for all Saskatoon residents has always been our top priority, and removing late fines represents a major milestone in that regard. We are excited to welcome back many patrons who may have been avoiding the library in recent years due to late fines."

SPL has not been changing late fines since mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this fines-amnesty period has been extended to Dec 31. As such, late fines at SPL are officially a thing of the past.

Fines most negatively impact Saskatoon's most vulnerable residents, including children, newcomers and those with fixed and low incomes. Today, there are nearly 20,000 members who have blocks on their card and are unable to borrow due to owing fines over \$10 (this restriction has been temporarily removed during the COVID-19 pandemic). Libraries serving neighbourhoods with lower-than-average incomes and more single-parent families have significantly higher rates of blocked patrons.

Late fines represent an extremely small amount of revenue for SPL; in 2019, the collection of fines represented 0.44% of total revenue. SPL is confident it will be able to offset any revenue losses through operating efficiencies and cost savings as a result of no longer collecting fines.

Removing fines does not remove the accountability to return library materials. Due dates will remain in place, and patrons who do not return library materials will be charged replacement fees and/or have their membership suspended until items are returned. Charges will also remain in place for lost, stolen or damaged items.

– 30 –

### **For more information, contact:**

Kirk Sibbald, Marketing & Communications  
Saskatoon Public Library  
e. [k.sibbald@saskatoonlibrary.ca](mailto:k.sibbald@saskatoonlibrary.ca)  
p. (306) 281-2926