

# Lethbridge Public Library is now Fine Free!

We are committed to:

## 2 REMOVING BARRIERS

Overdue fees put up barriers to many, and disproportionality impact specific populations. Eliminating overdue fines is just part of our commitment to the Canadian Urban Libraries' Council Statement on Race & Social Equity.

## 1 MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS

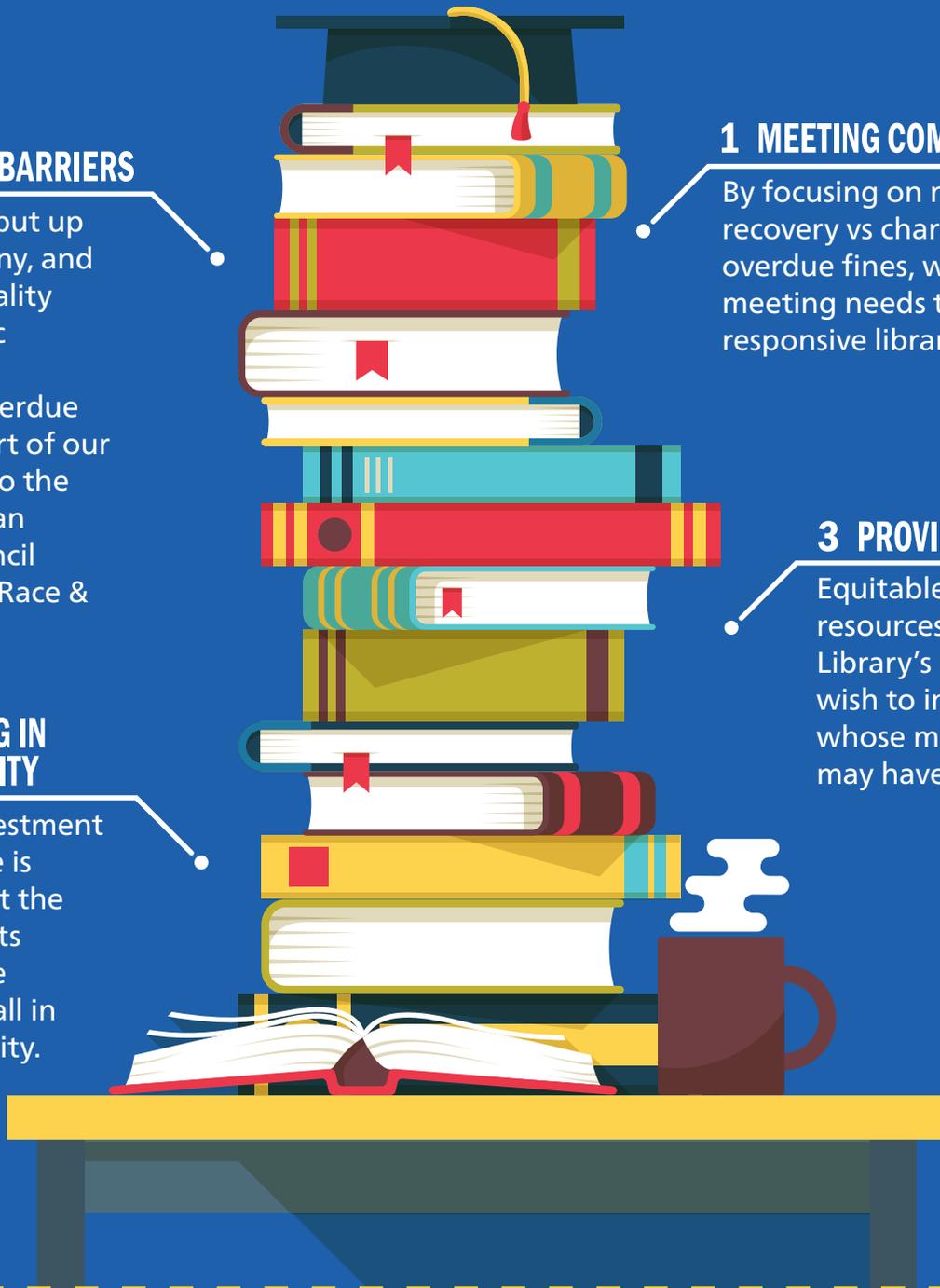
By focusing on materials recovery vs charging overdue fines, we are meeting needs through responsive library services.

## 3 PROVIDING ACCESS

Equitable access to resources is key to the Library's mission and we wish to invite back those whose memberships may have lapsed.

## 4 INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

The best investment we can make is ensuring that the Library and its resources are available to all in the community.



Removing fines will have a positive impact on our community and on Library services. Fines provide a significant barrier to many, and eliminating them ensures that all residents are able to access the Library's physical and virtual services equally. And now, more than ever our community needs access to the Library.

More than 300 public libraries across North America have either eliminated or reduced fines, including: Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Sylvan Lake, and Strathcona County. We're excited to be joining them!

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## *How it will work*

- Initial loan periods and renewal options will remain the same.
- After the due date, a 28-day grace period will be applied.
- Items not returned by the end of the grace period will be identified as lost, and replacement fees will be applied.
- The item(s) will need to be returned, or replacement fees paid, prior to borrowing additional materials.

**Note:** the above applies to Lethbridge Public Library cardholders only. Local library policies apply for customers whose home membership is with another library.

## *Going Fine Free Myths & Facts*

**Myth:** People won't return their Library items.

**Fact:** Studies of public libraries that have gone fine free show that there was no marked increase in late returns, and in some cases saw a drop in rate of late returns. Customers will still receive reminder notices, and are still responsible for returning their items.

**Myth:** I'll have to wait longer for my holds.

**Fact:** Of the libraries studied that have implemented a fine free model, there was no marked increase in hold wait times or gaps in collections.

**Myth:** The Library relies on fines as a revenue source.

**Fact:** Our overdue fine revenue has consistently declined since 2013 with the growth in use of e-materials, which don't accrue fines. Studies also show that it costs the Library more in time and resources to collect fines than the revenue it brings in. This is one more way for us to responsibly manage the public dollars we receive and reinvest in our community.

## *Overdue fines impact customers in different ways*

- Customers can't always pay fines, which may prevent materials from being returned.
- Customers may be embarrassed or ashamed to have overdue fines so may avoid visiting the Library altogether.
- Customers may stop borrowing items in order to avoid accruing fines.
- Fines may disproportionately impact specific populations: including youth, customers living in poverty, families with children, older adults, newcomers to Canada and marginalized individuals.

As of February 1, if you have overdue fines on your account, they will be waived.  
Please note that other library fees may still apply.

For more information, and if you have questions, please contact your Lethbridge Public Library at 403-380-7310, 403-320-4037, or [questions@lethlib.ca](mailto:questions@lethlib.ca).