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# City of San Diego Public Library Launches Program to Erase Library Fines and Fees for Youth

## FRESH START PROGRAM WILL RESTORE LIBRARY ACCESS TO MORE THAN 2,700 YOUNG PEOPLE

SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Public Library (SDPL) is removing barriers to library access with the new [Fresh Start](#) program. As of this week, the program offers one-time fine forgiveness for patrons whose juvenile accounts have been suspended for unreturned items, allowing them full access to library programs and services.

Fresh Start will erase any past debts owed by SDPL library card holders under the age of 18 and lift suspensions on those accounts.

**“Library access is vitally important and SDPL is committed to making the library open to everyone, regardless of their circumstances,”** said Library Director Misty Jones. **“The library eliminated fines and fees in 2018 and the Fresh Start program builds on that, removing the financial barrier to library access for youth and allowing them full access to the books, programs and educational resources that will benefit them throughout their lives.”**

There are currently more than 2,770 people under the age of 18 whose SDPL accounts have been suspended because they did not return items. [Library Foundation SD](#) has pledged \$175,500 to replace the missing items and clear the accounts. Moving forward, young people who do not return items will not have their debt turned over to collections. Instead, library staff will work with them to get the items back or find another way to reinstate the account.

**“As a city, we are focused on identifying and eliminating systemic inequities that have existed for years in many of the programs and services we provide to San Diegans,”** said Kim Desmond, Chief Race and Equity Officer for the City of San Diego. **“This program is one example of how using an equity lens cultivates expanding access so that everyone in our communities has the same opportunities and access to resources. I'm proud to join SDPL in rolling out this program and for the young people who will benefit from this.”**

**"The Library Foundation SD and our supporters are committed to taking steps to remove barriers that ensure equal access to the life-changing impact of the library," said Library Foundation SD CEO Patrick Stewart. "We are proud to support the Fresh Start Program and increase library access for young people."**

Youth patrons whose accounts have been suspended can apply for Fresh Start [online](#) or at any [SDPL location](#). Parents and guardians can apply on behalf of a juvenile account holder. Patrons who have fines on juvenile accounts but are now adults are also eligible to apply. Applications will be processed, and the accounts reinstated within 10 business days. Fresh Start is a one-time waiver and youth patrons who fail to return items and accrue new fees after their accounts are cleared will not be allowed to apply again.

For more information on Fresh Start, library locations and other SDPL programs and services, visit the library's website at [sandiego.gov/publiclibrary](http://sandiego.gov/publiclibrary).

### **About the San Diego Public Library**

With a vision of being the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration, the San Diego Public Library is a hub for knowledge and lifelong learning. As the largest library system in the region, it serves a population of more than 1.4 million people. Learn about events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to programs and resources or search for materials in the online catalog at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org).

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