

**2017-2018 BUDGET QUESTION**  
***Response to Request for Information***

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**DEPARTMENT:** Library

**REQUEST NO.:** 61

**REQUESTED BY:** Kitchen

**DATE REQUESTED:** 8/1/17

**DATE POSTED:** 8/3/17

**REQUEST:** Are library services suspended for non-payment of fines by customers? If so, how many and what percentage of library card holders were unable to access services due to any delinquencies or having outstanding fines?

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**RESPONSE:**

The Austin Public Library (APL) serves citizens of the community with or without a library card. For example, a Library Card is not required to use the library's facilities including public computers and Wi-Fi. Community members can come in to a public library and read books, do research, attend Library events and use most of the Library's online databases. A library card provides access to other services such as borrowing physical material and accessing our virtual library from anywhere in the world.

In the event that a library cardholder accrues late fines, the customer may continue to borrow material as long as the amount owed is less than or equal to \$10. When a customer's library card expires, all money owed to the Library must be paid in full in order to renew the card. *Residents of the City of Austin must renew their library card every two years. Non-residents are also able to obtain a library card but must renew it annually or every 3 months.*

When a library cardholder owes \$10.01 or more, their account goes into a blocked status that effectively prevents further borrowing privileges. In most cases, APL grants a courtesy checkout to blocked accounts after which the customer would have to reduce the outstanding balance down to at least \$10 on their next visit in order to reinstate borrowing privileges.

Customers who owe \$25 or more for at least 56 days are referred to our collection agency. Once an account has been referred, all fees must be paid in full in order for the cardholder's borrowing privileges to be restored.

As of July 25, 2017, there were 100,388 accounts that were in blocked or collection status, which prevents full borrowing privileges. This is 16.9% of all customer accounts. It is important to note that we currently have over 592,000 accounts. Of currently active accounts, only 5.78% do not have full borrowing privileges.