

AGN. NO.

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL

April 18, 2017

The County of Los Angeles Public Library (Public Library), established in 1912, is today, one of the major library systems in our nation. Our Public Library provides critical library services to over 3.5 million residents living in unincorporated areas and to the residents of 49 of the 88 incorporated cities of Los Angeles County. On November 22, 2016, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the White House Library Card Challenge motion to support and enhance the Public Library's mission of providing the widest possible access to free learning resources by partnering with school districts throughout Los Angeles County to sign school-aged children up for library cards. The White House Library Card Challenge is only one of the various efforts that the Public Library will roll out in the coming year to ensure broader access to library service.

The Public Library continuously evaluates its programs and services to ensure that they align with patron needs. As part of this evaluation, it has become clear that there are some library policies that impede access to the vital resources and services provided. The Public Library has embarked upon an effort to proactively eliminate

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barriers to library services. Less than 1% of the Public Library's revenues annually are collected from fines and fees related to overdue or lost materials. Implementing programs that have minimal revenue impact, yet have such a monumental effect on making materials more accessible to patrons, is vital to ensuring lifelong learning for all patrons.

The Public Library will implement the following three programs that will offer library patrons a fresh start and an opportunity to be relieved of any financial obstacles that may prevent them from continued use of library services:

- 1) A one-month "Amnesty" for all library patrons to take effect from May 1, 2017 through May 31, 2017;
- 2) "Great Read Away" program for library cardholders under age 21 launching on June 1, 2017; and
- 3) the permanent elimination of the "Processing Fee" associated with lost items, effective upon board approval.

The one-month "amnesty" period will allow library customers to return overdue materials without paying the applicable overdue fees. The last amnesty was implemented in 2008 and yielded over one hundred thousand returned materials. In addition to allowing library patrons to avoid the payment of overdue fees for books returned during the amnesty period, this amnesty has the added benefit of allowing the Public Library to recover valuable library materials which may not otherwise be returned for use by other customers. The one-month amnesty will eliminate barriers to service by allowing patrons to use library services once again and will foster good will in the communities we serve. All materials may be returned with the exception of damaged or

unusable items. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement for previously paid fines/fees.

Libraries have long served as trusted and treasured institutions. When youth incur fines on their accounts and are unable to pay them, an impediment is created in that they are no longer able to enjoy the privileges associated with library access. Currently, 13% of Los Angeles County library card holders age 21 and under are blocked from library access because of fines on their accounts. While there is a possibility that some of those youths may indeed pay outstanding fines, historically, in Los Angeles County and in library systems throughout the nation, those fees are never paid and instead, these young patrons simply choose not to access our system. Consequently, beginning on June 1, 2017, the Public Library will allow all library cardholders under age 21 to participate in the "Great Read Away" program which will allow them to reduce their outstanding fines by reading in the library. The Public Library will reduce outstanding fines by \$5.00 for every hour they read while inside the library.

For lost materials, library patrons are currently charged the cost of the materials as well as a \$10.00 processing fee for each lost item (except magazines). The library processing fee is intended to recoup library costs associated with re-ordering materials, processing materials and restoring them to the library database. Effective immediately upon Board approval, the Public Library will eliminate the \$10.00 processing fee associated with lost material replacement. The charge to replace the item will still be applicable to ensure that the library collection is replenished.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

- 1) Find the proposed actions are not a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) since they are activities that are excluded from the definition of a 'project' per Section 15378 (b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The proposed actions do not involve any commitment to a specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment;
- 2) Instruct the County Librarian to waive fines and fees for overdue books returned to the Public Library during the "Amnesty" period from May 1, 2017 through May 31, 2017;
- 3) Instruct the County Librarian to implement, starting June 1, 2017, the "Great Read Away" program for library cardholders under age 21 and to reduce outstanding fees by \$5.00 for every hour they read inside the library; and
- 4) Instruct the County Librarian, upon Board approval, to eliminate the \$10.00 "Processing Fee" for all library cardholders and bill only for replacement materials costs.