



## City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item

19-0167

Agenda Date: 3/7/2019

**2019 COUNCIL STUDY ISSUE****NUMBER**

LCS 19-02

**TITLE** Consider Options for Establishing an Amnesty Program for Overdue Library Material Fines**BACKGROUND****Lead Department:** Library and Community Services**Support Departments:** Office of the City Manager

Office of the City Attorney

Department of Finance

**Sponsor(s):** Councilmembers: Fong, Melton, Larsson, Goldman**History:** 1 year ago: N/A

2 years ago: N/A

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY****What precipitated this Study?**

Across North America, many library systems are going “fine free,” ceasing or limiting their use of overdue material fines in recognition that fines can represent a barrier to library use for many, particularly those with low incomes. Elimination of fines promotes library usage by removing a concern that individuals may need to pay in the future for using the library now. Other libraries have established fine amnesty programs, which remove fines that were accrued in the past. Still other libraries have chosen to do both, removing fines accrued in the past as well as the potential for accruing fines in the future.

Council Policy 7.1.1B.5.8 Fiscal Long Range Goals - User Fees outlines the circumstances under which the waiving of fines is permitted. A library fine amnesty program would require a change in this policy.

**What are the key elements of the Study?**

This Study issue would present an overview of Sunnyvale Public Library borrowing policies, patron usage data, the goals of an amnesty program, a discussion of the major types of amnesty programs, and potential fiscal impacts. The Study issue would also evaluate the necessity to introduce a new council policy or add language to an existing Council policy, that would allow the Department of Library and Community Services to establish library fine amnesty programs. The study could identify a new or revised policy that would clearly articulate the goals and parameters for library fine amnesty program, and ensure consistency with other City policies. At the Sunnyvale Public Library, a snapshot taken in August 2018 showed 87,260 active library accounts, and 10,107 blocked accounts with outstanding fines of \$828,760. Of the blocked accounts, more than 1,300 belonged to minors.

**Estimated years to complete Study:** 1 year

**FISCAL IMPACT****Cost to Conduct Study**

Level of staff effort required (opportunity cost): Minor

Funding Required for Non-Budgeted Costs: \$0

The Study would require moderate staff time from the Department of Library and Community Services, Department of Finance, Office of the City Manager, and Office of the City Attorney to conduct policy research, develop Council policy language, and analyze potential fiscal impacts.

**Cost to Implement Study Results**

Unknown. Study would include assessment of potential costs, including capital and operating, as well as revenue/savings.

**EXPECTED CITY COUNCIL, BOARD OR COMMISSION PARTICIPATION**

Council-Approved Work Plan: No

Council Study Session: No

Reviewed by Boards/Commissions: Board of Library Trustees

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Support. This policy issue merits discussion at the 2019 Study Issues Workshop.

Over the past year, there has been increasing interest from library patrons in whether or not the Sunnyvale Public Library offers a fine amnesty program.

Prepared by: Steve Sloan, Superintendent of Libraries

Reviewed by: Cynthia E. Bojorquez, Director, Library and Community Services

Reviewed by: Timothy Kirby, Director, Finance

Reviewed by: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager