



Date: October 3, 2022  
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### **Three more Genesee County libraries are fine-free!**

Richmond Memorial, Byron-Bergen, and Haxton Libraries join other Genesee County Libraries in eliminating overdue fees for a trial period.

The Richmond Memorial, Byron-Bergen and the Haxton Memorial Libraries are excited to announce they will eliminate late fees for a trial period from October 1 to December 31, 2022. They join the other Genesee County libraries – the Corfu Public, Hollwedel Memorial, and the Woodward Memorial Libraries – that have and will continue to offer fine-free circulation. These Nioga Library System libraries are joining public libraries nationwide that have eliminated late fees as a part of their library practice. The NIOGA trustees representing Genesee County have asked the 3 libraries located in Batavia, Byron-Bergen and Oakfield to join the other 3 libraries that have already eliminated overdue fines.

### **What does going fine-free mean?**

Along with the good news that overdue fines will be eliminated, there are still responsibilities for borrowers. Items belonging to the libraries in Genesee County that are checked out from October 1 until December 31, 2022 will not incur overdue fines, and any fines accruing or maximized to currently late or lost materials will be forgiven if returned during the trial. Other library charges for printing, replacement cards, lost and damaged materials, or unpaid fines on materials previously returned late, will still apply.

Materials will still have due dates and patrons are still expected to renew, if possible, or return materials on time. Patrons will receive two reminders to return their items if they are overdue. Materials that are 28 days overdue are assumed lost, and patrons will be charged replacement costs. Patrons with overdue materials will be blocked from library services until the items are returned, and/or bills are paid.

“The Genesee County libraries that have been fine-free have had great success with recovering lost books, and patrons with previous fines are coming back to the libraries to take advantage of our materials, programs, and services,” says Kristie Miller, a Nioga Trustee representing

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Genesee County. “This is why we have asked the other 3 Genesee County libraries to try a fine-free period from October to the end of December.”

### **Why would public libraries do this?**

Because it works! In an article from CNN, the New York Public Library reported a record number of library card sign-ups after announcing that they would be dropping all fines. Chicago Public Library indicated that they have seen an increase in the number of materials returned of almost 85% after going fine-free.

Anecdotal evidence from local parent groups indicates that many families avoid using the library for fear of accumulating fines and creating financial hardship during already economically trying times. Eliminating fines reduces barriers to access: many of the people that need libraries the most are often driven away by late fees and are a deterrent to returning to take part in other programs or services.

“Some may have concerns that going fine-free will cause a deficit in the library’s operating budget. We do not collect anywhere near enough fines to significantly impact our budget. Most months, the amount of overdue fees we collect totals up to a fraction of 1% of our operating budget,” says Kim Gibson, Library Director at the Haxton Memorial Library in Oakfield. “Our goal is to keep the library as a community resource for as many people as possible, so we are eager to go fine-free,” she adds.

Those with questions can contact their local library’s director or manager!

Byron Bergen Public Library: Nancy Bailey (585-494-1120)

Corfu Public Library: Diana Reding (585-599-3321)

Haxton Memorial Library (Oakfield): Kim Gibson (585-948-9900)

Hollwedel Memorial Library (Pavilion): Josselyn Borowiec (585-584-8843)

Richmond Memorial Library (Batavia): Bob Conrad (585-343-9550)

Woodward Memorial Library (LeRoy): Betsy Halvorsen (585-768-8300)

The Nioga Library System is a non-profit cooperative library system serving the twenty-one public libraries in Niagara, Orleans and Genesee Counties. The system is one of twenty-three similar systems in New York State. More information is available on the library system’s website at [www.Nioga.org](http://www.Nioga.org).