



# Free is Key

ENSURING YOUR LIBRARY IS MEETING ITS MISSION

[DAWN@LACROSSELIBRARY.ORG](mailto:DAWN@LACROSSELIBRARY.ORG)



Who's here?  
Let's get to  
know one  
another

LIBRARIES  
ARE FOR  
EVERYONE

Madison Public Library provides free and equitable access to cultural and educational experiences. We celebrate ideas, promote creativity, connect people, and enrich lives.

The purpose of the Big Bend Village Library is to provide all individuals in the community with free and open access to a broad range of materials and services. The public library supports a sense of community within the population it serves.

"The mission of the Springfield-Greene County Library District is to improve and enrich the lives of our users through information, education and recreation. The Library values the citizens of Greene County and responds to their needs by providing clean and inviting buildings, well-organized and up-to-date collections, friendly professional service and well-trained staff who are committed to the Library vision."

Mission Statement: *"The Monona Public Library enriches lives by building community connections, fostering imagination, and opening up a world of ideas."*

The library promotes lifelong learning, creates collaborative spaces, and supports open access to diverse materials and resources to enhance the quality of life in the community.



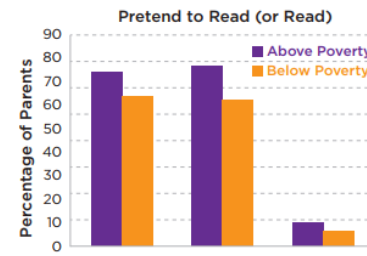
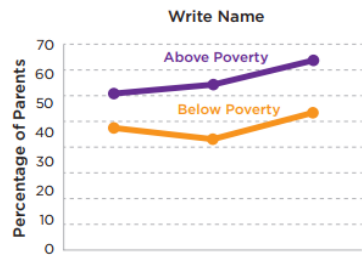
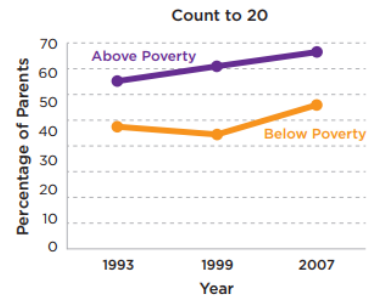
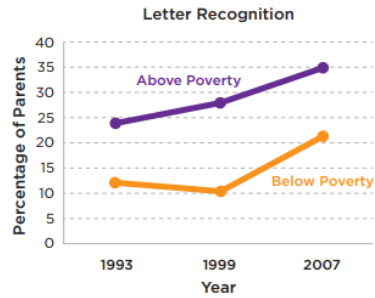




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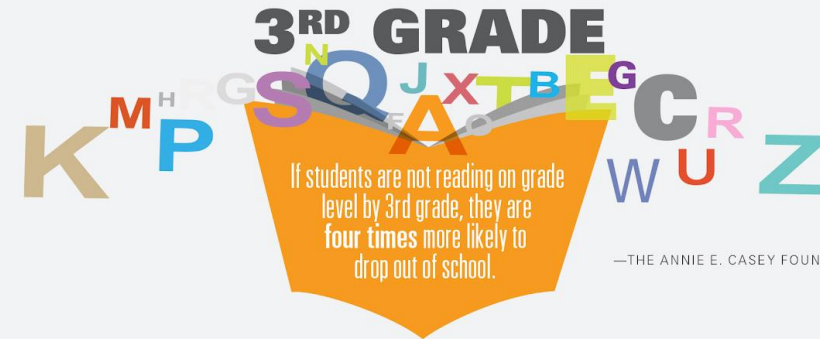
- Who is "everyone" in your community?
- What is your population?
- What percentage are living with incomes below the poverty line?
- Who qualifies for free and reduced lunch?
- Who is disabled, homebound, elderly?
- What does public transit look like?
- How are unemployment rates?
- How many people experiencing homelessness?
- Transition rates at schools?

**School Readiness Skills Reported by Parents of Children Ages 3-6:  
Above Poverty Threshold and Below Poverty Threshold**



# THE 30 MILLION WORD GAP BY AGE 3

A groundbreaking study found that children from high-income families are exposed to 30 million more words than children from families on welfare. Follow-up studies showed that these differences in language and interaction experiences have lasting effects on a child's performance later in life.



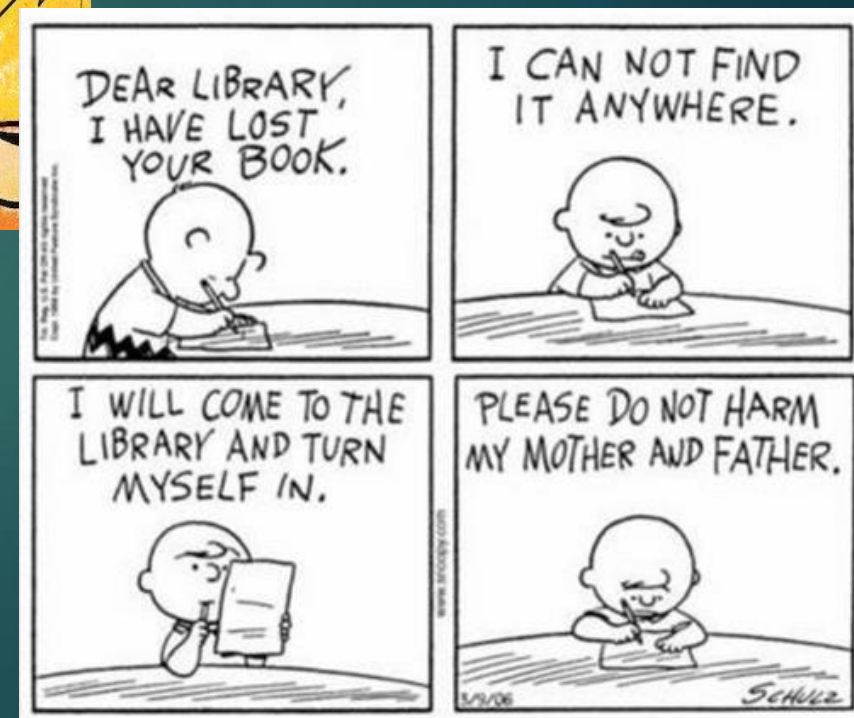
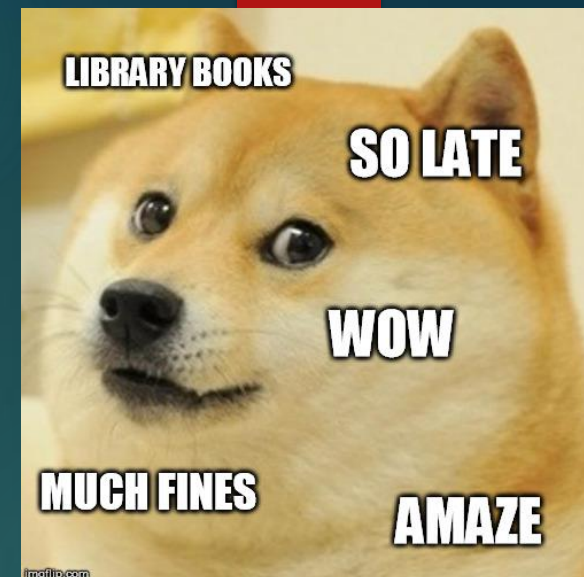
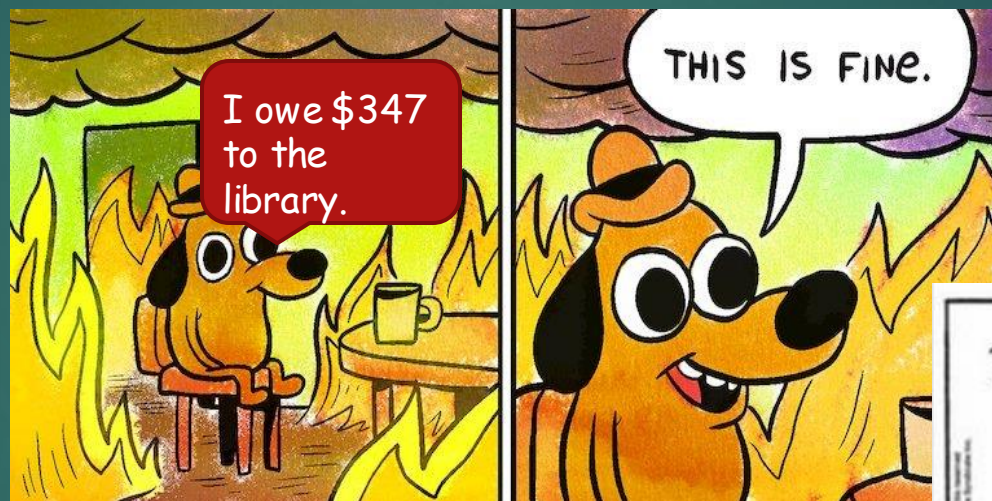
—THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

earlymattersdallas

# The impact of access



# How do fines make your community feel?





# Why have we been fining?

- ▶ civic responsibility
- ▶ provide equal access to materials
- ▶ timely return of library materials
- ▶ source of revenue
- ▶ "that's what we've always done..."





Does it do what we think it does?



The background features a dark teal gradient. In the center, a faint, stylized illustration of a person in a business suit is shown from the waist up, holding a large dollar sign (\$). Several coins with dollar signs are floating around the central figure. In the top right corner, there is a solid red rectangular block.

How will we afford  
the lost revenue?

# Let's get risky!

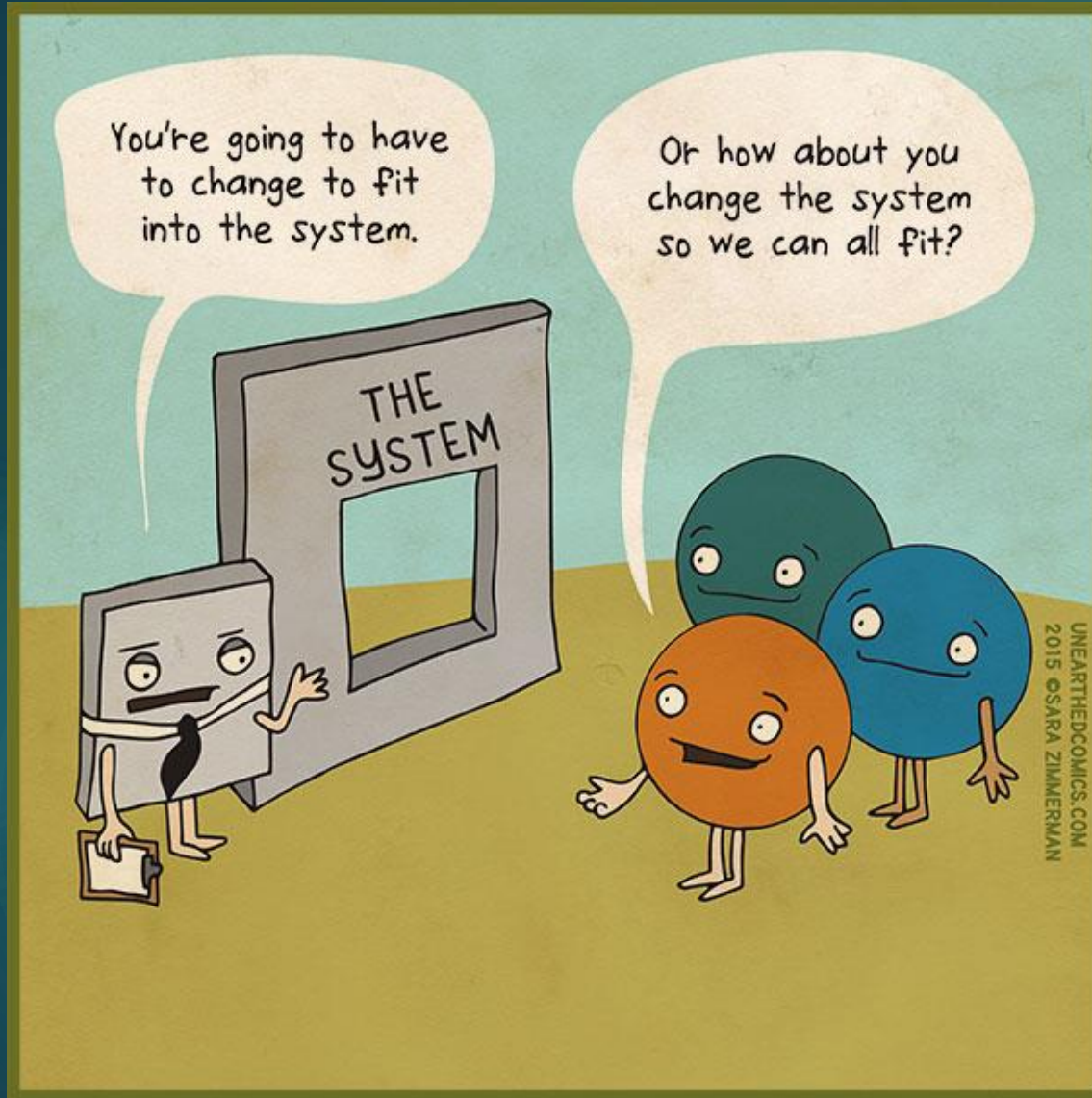
- ▶ encourage library use
- ▶ circulation could (potentially) go up
- ▶ donations could (potentially) go up
- ▶ remove patron's library fine anxiety
- ▶ Eliminate the idea that we are trying to make money
- ▶ Remove a point of friction between patrons & staff





# What are the consequences

BUM BUM BUM!



What's the best way to manage this change?





"We moved and I had a book checked out. I found the book and returned it. Unfortunately — late fees. But thanks to Fine Forgiveness, I was OK, and my daughter could get a new library card, check out a book and use the computer for a project she needed to work on." Melanie C.

"My ma had a stroke and dementia. We checked out a book for her and she took it to board and care. The book was lost for several months. But during the fine amnesty month, we were forgiven!" Catherine W.

"I had overdue books because I had checked out several as part of research I was doing for my book I am writing. I didn't want to stop in the middle of writing and research. Thanks for forgiving the fine. I hope to have my book in the library one of these days." Isaac C.

"Just wanted to say that the Fine Forgiveness was much appreciated. The last couple years have been very difficult, financially and otherwise, and unfortunately it has taken a toll on my avid 6-year-old reader. We greatly appreciate the opportunity for a fresh start and will continue to come to the library and keep a book in my little girl's hands. Thank you!" Janet M.

"This would have been my first fine. You saved me!" Marty K.

"My daughter is a 4.0 student, but often forgets things and she can cost me lots of dollars. My older daughter has been diagnosed with stage 3 kidney cancer and funds have been scarce due to all we have been going through. This program is very much appreciated." Irene H.

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# Resources

<http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2015/11/the-end-of-overdue-fines/>

<http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2014/04/the-book-thieves/>

<http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2012/12/fine-forgiveness-for-all/>

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=doing-fines-fines-fees>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/06/01/library-fines-overdue-discussion/>

<http://spellproject.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/3/3/15331602/spellwhitepaperfinal.pdf>

<https://slate.com/culture/2017/02/librarians-are-realizing-that-overdue-fines-undercut-libraries-missions.html>

<http://libr.org/isc/articles/21/9.pdf>

<https://sfpl.org/releases/2017/02/27/san-francisco-public-library-recovers-699000-items-during-its-fine-forgiveness-period/>

<http://lj.libraryjournal.com/2017/04/budgets-funding/doing-fines-fines-fees/#>

<https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf>

[https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/0161-1461\(2007/018\)](https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/0161-1461(2007/018))

[https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/13041206/Rowe\\_JCL\\_2008.pdf?sequence=1](https://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/13041206/Rowe_JCL_2008.pdf?sequence=1)