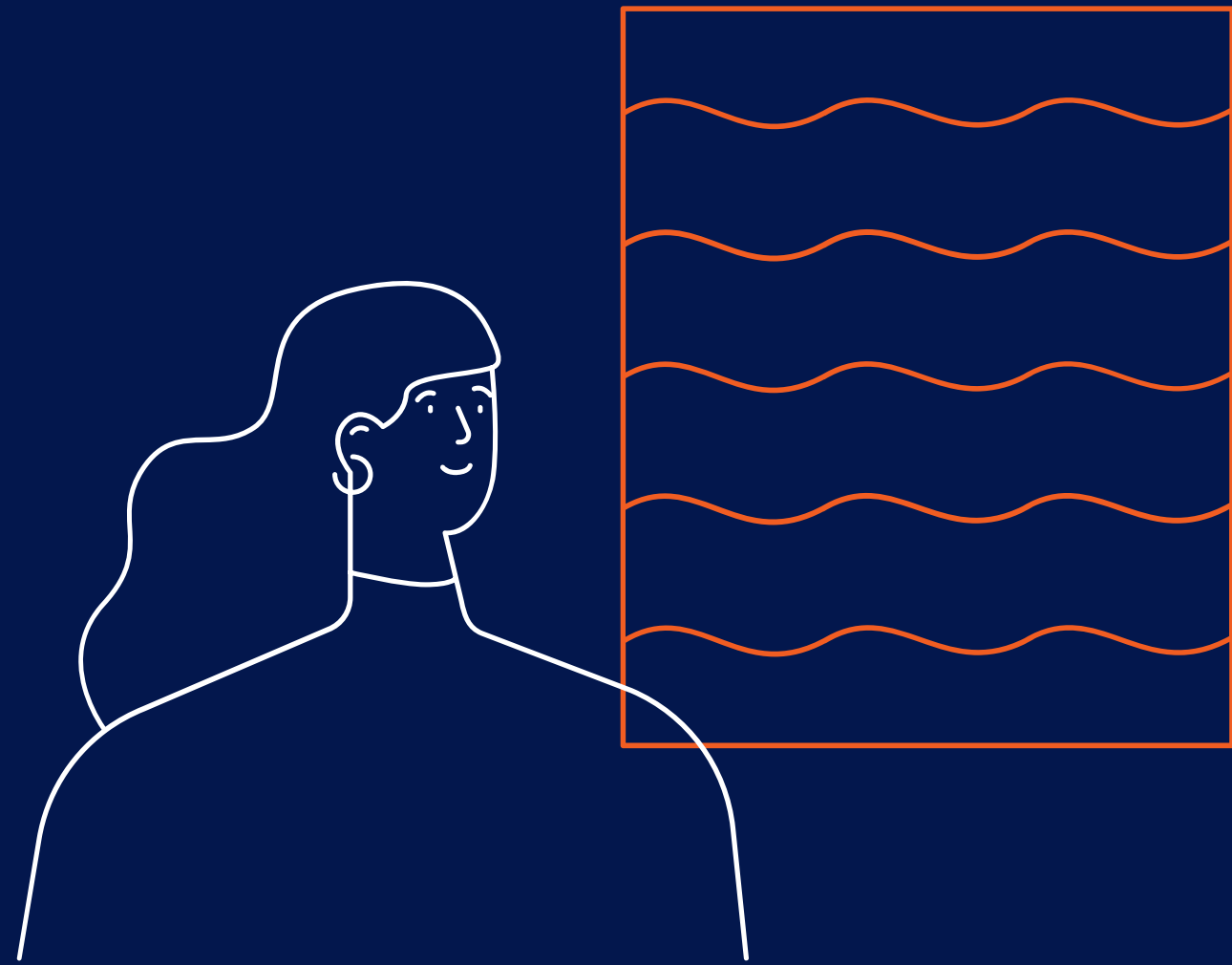


Forget What You Believe About Library Fines

Myth #1: Fines are a key source of library revenue.



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Fact: Studies show that fines account for less than 1% of library budgets, and cost far more administrative effort to collect.

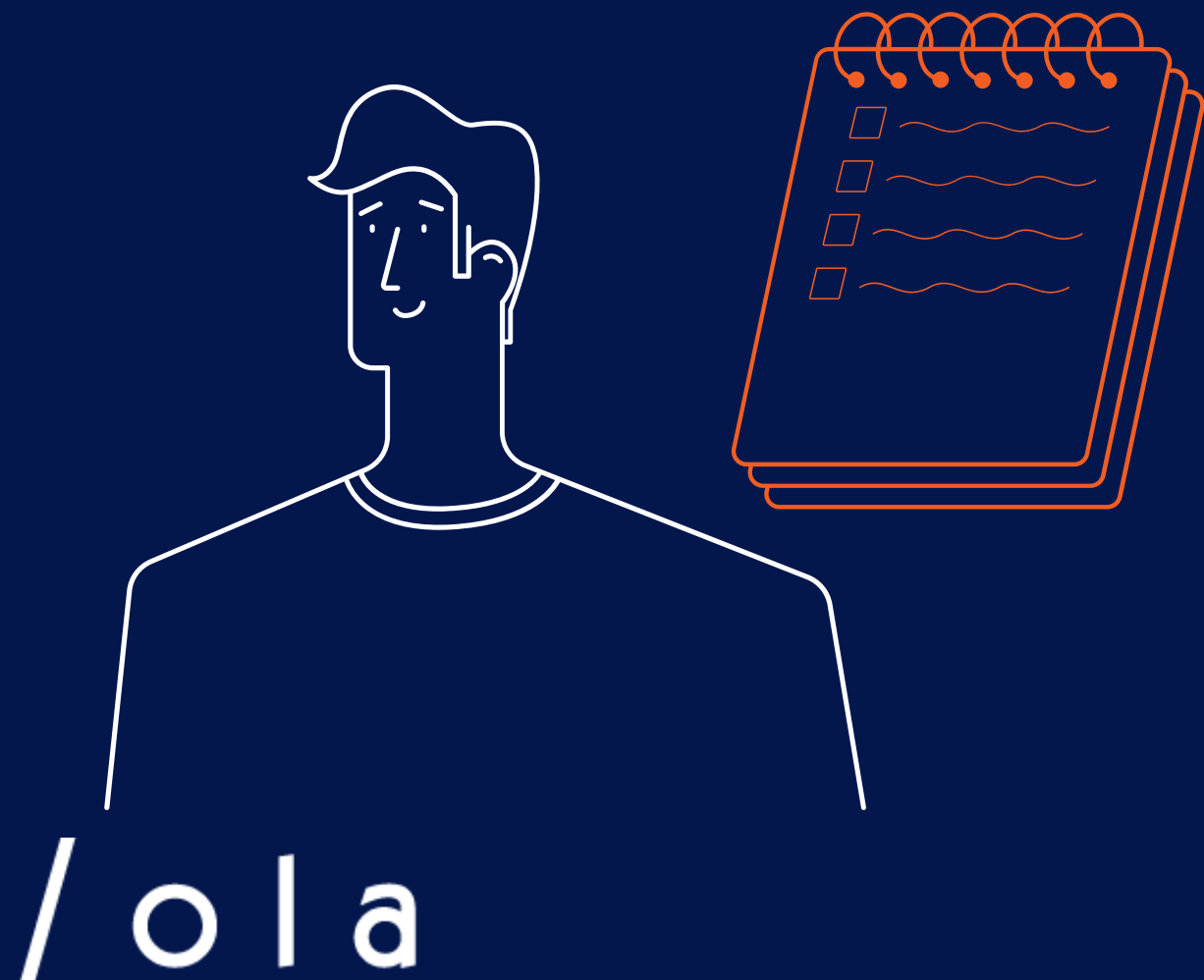
Given the increasing prevalence of digital materials, fines continue to be a declining source of revenue.

Sources:

Depriest, "Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Library Fines and Fees on Children's Materials".

Dixon, "Doing Fine(s)?"

Myth #2: Fines are an effective incentive to return library materials on time.



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Fact: Multiple studies show that there is no empirical evidence that charging late fines is a successful way to have people return items on time.

In fact, libraries who have eliminated fines report the opposite.

Sources:

Depriest, "Removing Barriers to Access: Eliminating Library Fines and Fees on Children's Materials," 20.

Dixon, "Nashville, Salt Lake City, Columbus Go Fine-Free."

Unrein, "Five Unexpected Benefits of Eliminating Library Fines," 9.

Myth #3: Library fines are a minor cost to library users.



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Fact: Library fines exclude and marginalize vulnerable communities.

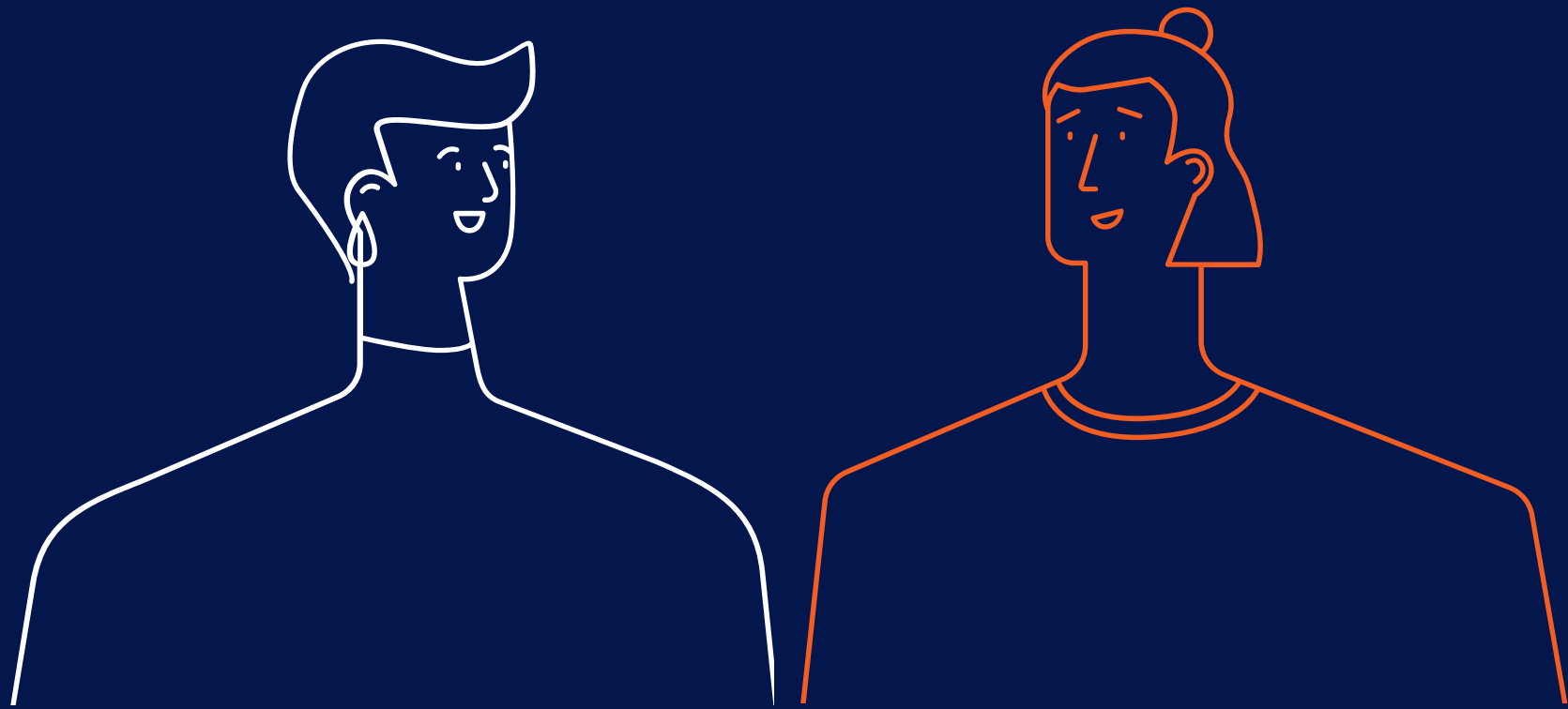
Library fines are a significant expense to those with low or no income and cause people to stop using the library.

Sources:

San Francisco Public Library, "Long Overdue: Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library," 5.

Bernstein, "A Fine Balance: How Eliminating Library Fines Removes Economic Barriers to an Essential Public Service," 9.

Myth #4: Library fines teach responsibility.



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Fact: Eliminating fines does not eliminate consequences or personal responsibility.

The library's mission is to ensure equitable access to information for all. Overdue fines don't teach responsibility: they distinguish between people who can afford to pay and those who cannot.

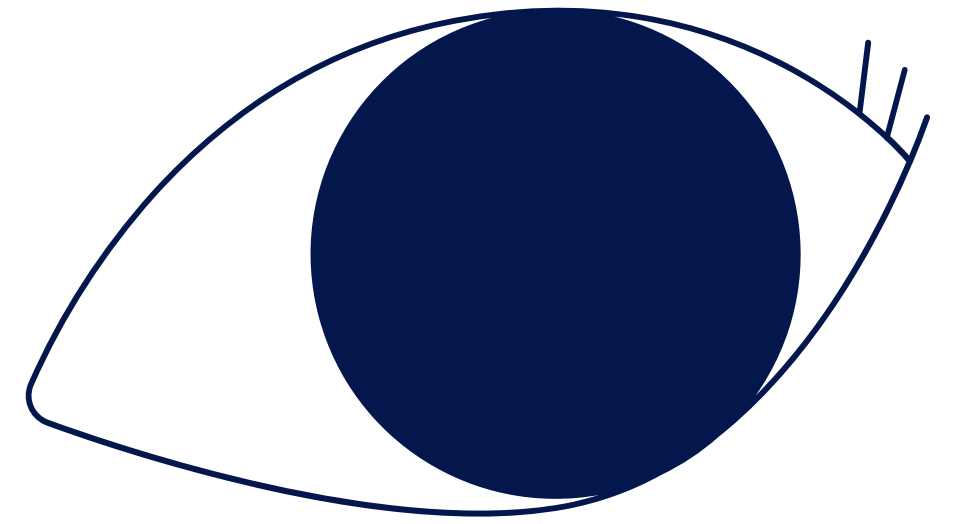
Sources:

American Library Association, "A.1 Mission, Priority Areas, Goals (Old Number 1)."

Ontario Library Association, "OLA Values."

San Francisco Public Library, "Long Overdue: Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library."

Get the Facts about Library Fines



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San Francisco Public Library. "Long Overdue: Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library." San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Public Library, n.d. <https://sfpl.org/uploads/files/pdfs/commission/Fine-Free-Report011719.pdf>.

Unrein, Sabrina. "Five Unexpected Benefits of Eliminating Library Fines." *ISchool | Syracuse University (blog)*, April 21, 2020. <https://ischool.syr.edu/five-unexpected-benefits-to-eliminating-library-fines/>.