



## City of Long Beach

Working Together to Serve

## Memorandum

**Date:** May 25, 2017  
**To:** Patrick H. West, City Manager *T.M.L.*  
**From:** Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services *G.Williams*  
**For:** Mayor and Members of the City Council  
**Subject:** Amnesty Program at Long Beach Public Library

With the City Council's approval on March 7, 2017, the Department of Library Services offered an overdue fine amnesty program as part of its annual celebration of National Library Month in April. This is the second year the City has offered an amnesty program. Patrons were given the opportunity to return all overdue materials without having to pay outstanding fines. In addition, patrons with unpaid overdue fines for materials they had previously returned could have their fines waived upon the donation of a new book to the library's collection.

The goals of the amnesty program were:

- Return of overdue books to make them available once again for checkout by Long Beach residents;
- Restore to good standing patron accounts so that more Long Beach residents might benefit from library resources, services and programs; and,
- Add new donated books into the library's collection.

The response to this program was overwhelming and the feedback received from patrons was extremely positive. More than 5,800 patrons participated, returning 12,668 items with an estimated value of \$247,648. Also, 3,242 items previously considered lost were returned. These items have an estimated value of \$63,378. Additionally, the library received 1,392 new donated books to add to its collection. The total amount of overdue fines waived during the month-long program was \$65,183.

While very successful in achieving the objective, the Department of Library Services recommends providing the amnesty program on an intermittent basis for maximum benefit and impact to the community. Typically, amnesty programs are offered once every several years not only to allow participants to clear their record, but also to ensure the timely return of materials through the Library's normal fine process. Library Services will be adding the use of an amnesty program into its toolbox as one of the methods to return overdue books, in addition to the normal fine structure. Library Services will propose an amnesty program in future years, when appropriate.

If you have additional questions or comments regarding the overdue fine amnesty program, please contact Glenda Williams at (562) 570-6016.

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