

Responsibility is difficult or impossible to **measure as an outcome.**

We can't tell if fines actually have an impact on responsibility.

- LPL Strategic Plan: “The Library will establish a process for outcomes evaluation.”²⁰ How do we count how much responsibility we are creating with fines?
- Of the roughly 53,000 patrons that have been active in the system since 2017, about 32,000 have had some sort of fee charged to their account, and about 25,000 have had an overdue fee. Do we count that as a success or a failure?
- If late fines encourage responsibility, why do overdue rates tend to be the same with or without them?
 - The only objective measure we can place on responsibility in this context says fines make no difference.

Responsibility is **not encouraged with late fines, at least not the kind of responsibility we are interested in fostering.**

- The consequence faced for not returning your items on time should not be a financial penalty but the knowledge that you deprived another person of a community resource.
- Charging patrons late fees lets them pay their way out of responsibility. Patrons at LPL routinely rationalize their fine payments as “their donation to the library.” The message we send is: sure, they kept the item past the due date, but they paid for the privilege, so it is okay. Late fees become extended use fees.
- From LONG OVERDUE: Eliminating Fines on Overdue Materials to Improve Access to San Francisco Public Library, “Missing deadlines, misplacing items, having to change plans, and reprioritize —these are universal human realities. Overdue fines do not turn irresponsible patrons into responsible ones, they only distinguish between patrons who can afford to pay for the common mistake of late returns and those who cannot.”²¹