

## Fines-Only Accounts

**QUESTION:** Should our Library allow Unique Management to pursue collection activity on fines-only accounts? (A fines-only account is one that hits the minimum balance threshold with a total amount consisting of only fines)

**THE FACTS:**

- Our Library clients submit accounts based on a minimum balance amount owed. While a majority of the accounts we receive do include unreturned materials, most libraries send accounts that meet their minimum balance requirement regardless of the make-up of the balance.
- Many patrons will never respond to internal notices sent by the Library. If the Library chooses not to submit fines-only accounts to for collection, these accounts will usually stay on the patron's record and never be resolved.
- Unique Management's gentle nudge approach is a great way to remind patrons that their accounts are still delinquent even after they have returned their materials. Often, patrons will respond and pay their account in full, thus clearing the Library's records and allowing patrons to continue using the Library.
- If Unique Management can help the Library recover unpaid fines, the Library will generate increased revenue to cover the cost of pursuing delinquent patrons. These costs include internal expenses such as staff time and postage as well as the fees paid to Unique Management.
- Many Libraries are strong defendants of equity, yet it is difficult to be fair if the Library submits patrons to collection for owing \$25 in materials while not submitting patrons for owing \$25 in fines. Both patrons owe a debt to the library, and thus should be treated equally
- The main goal of most Libraries is to recover their materials. Unique Management also helps over 1000 Libraries recover a significant amount of fine revenue as well with no loss in patron goodwill.
- Many times fines often go unpaid because patrons return their materials to the night drop box and simply never think about the fines that have accrued. In many cases, a gentle reminder from Unique Management in the form of our Remaining Balance letter will prompt patrons to return to the Library and clear their account.
- By choosing to submit and pursue fines-only accounts, the Library can maximize the benefits of the Collection Agency Module, allowing it to work as it was designed and keep the entire process automated.

**SUMMARY:**

It is in the Library's best interest, from both a fiscal and a fairness standpoint, to submit fines-only accounts.