

Unique Management vs. City/County Services

QUESTION: Why should we use Unique Management's Library recovery services when we can use our city/county attorney or collection department?

THE FACTS:

- Most Libraries using city/county collection services find that the process of transferring data and handling past due patron accounts is a manual effort and requires Library staff time. Unique Management has strategic partnerships with software vendors and has developed automated approaches which eliminate the staff time involved in selecting patrons who qualify for collection and tracking the updates as those patrons respond. A value must be placed on time required from Library staff.
- Most city/county collection services are not geared to handle the volume of past due accounts that most Libraries have. Consequently, we frequently hear Libraries say that city/county services are slow and/or sporadic at processing accounts.
- Most city/county collection services are not geared to provide detailed monthly reports regarding status of each patron. The UMS monthly reports summarize recoveries and are designed exclusively for Libraries. Libraries many times are frustrated when using city/county services because they don't receive frequent reporting and are therefore unable to use that information to make management decisions.
- City/county collection services will usually only handle patrons with large balances. Past due patrons with smaller balances are ignored because the city/county does not have the resources to pursue these accounts. As a result, huge amounts of materials/fines are not recovered.
- Using city/county attorneys to recover past due Library materials dramatically reduces or eliminates the possibility of maintaining patron goodwill.
- There is always a cost for city/county collection services. It's usually the tax payers that ultimately foot the bill for those services
- Most Libraries like the idea of using Unique Management to gently nudge past due patrons to recover the majority of materials while maintaining patron goodwill. The more difficult and larger non-responding accounts can still be passed on to county attorney or taken to small claims court if the Library desires to do so.
- Many times city/county attorneys or collection services are not geared to do extensive skip tracing to locate patrons with incorrect addresses. Consequently, many patrons are never located and the outstanding amounts are never recovered. Unique Management utilizes five different types of skip traces to locate patrons who have moved and in most cases recovers the materials.
- City/county attorneys are usually not geared to credit report non-responding accounts. Unique Management credit reports non-responding patrons to the largest credit reporting agencies. This way, no matter where the patron moves, the unpaid accounts appears on the credit report. Most creditors will require them to pay the outstanding balance before a loan is extended.

- City/county attorneys or collection services are more geared to collecting money. Libraries are unique because your main objective is to get the materials back into circulation. Recovering materials is substantially different than collecting money.

SUMMARY:

Using Unique Management will cost your Library less than using a city/county collection service. The materials can be recovered at no out of pocket cost to the Library. Significant amounts of staff time can be realized when comparing the use of Unique Management to a city/county service. Libraries experience better results in terms of overall recoveries with an emphasis on recovered materials.