

**Quality and Productivity Commission
32nd Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Innovating for Impact"**

2018 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):
NAME OF PROJECT: THE GREAT READ AWAY: FINE FORGIVENESS FOR YOUTH

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JUNE 1, 2017
(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2017)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

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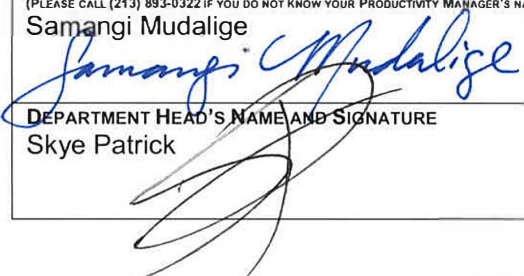
The Great Read Away is an LA County Library initiative that allows young cardholders ages 21 and under to reduce fines that have accrued on their accounts by spending time reading in the library. For every hour spent reading, \$5 in fines is removed from the customer's account. The program waives nearly all fee types, including overdue fees, lost and damaged material replacement fees, and library card replacement fees. Participants can read books or eBooks, graphic novels, comic books, magazines, newspapers, digital databases, or articles. A parent or caregiver can also read to a child and count this time toward fine removal. While removing economic barriers, the program successfully encourages reading and increases access to information, which helps better the lives of youth, improving their employability and decreasing their chances of incarceration. Furthering the goal of getting youth from lower socio-economic communities back in the library, results look promising so far: as of April 30, 2018, 1.6 million reading minutes had been logged in 29,000 reading sessions, more than 7,000 accounts had been unblocked, and more than 10,000 cleared of all fines.

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY				
(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS LA County Library 7400 E Imperial Hwy Downey, CA 90242	TELEPHONE NUMBER 562.940.8462
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PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Deborah Anderson	TELEPHONE NUMBER 562.940.8522
	EMAIL danderson@library.lacounty.gov

PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Samangi Mudalige 	DATE 07/02/2018	TELEPHONE NUMBER 562.940.4106
		EMAIL smudalige@library.lacounty.gov

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Skye Patrick 	DATE 06.29.18	TELEPHONE NUMBER 562.940.8400
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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project **to the County**. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and **specify assessment time frame**. Use Arial 12 point font.

Challenge: Over 30% of Library cardholders are age 21 or under. Prior to June 1, 2017, 13% of these young cardholders had accounts that were blocked due to excessive fines or fees (\$10.00 or more), and another 21% were on their way, with fines under \$10.00 accumulated, but slowly growing. While there is a possibility that some of those youth may have paid off outstanding fines, historically, in LA County and in library systems throughout the nation, these fees are never paid and instead, these young customers no longer have access to library services. Based on librarians’ observations, these fines often accumulated due to caregivers borrowing items on their children’s cards and neglecting to return them, and accumulated fines are not typically paid. When a card is blocked, it means that customers cannot enjoy the features of the Library, including checking out physical materials and using free online services, like Tutor.com, Lynda.com, and more; this is in direct opposition with LA County Library’s strategic priority to eliminate barriers to access library service, especially for young customers. Forgiving fines with an amnesty program like the Great Read Away does not have significant impact to the Library’s bottom line; less than one percent of the Library’s annual revenues are collected from fines and fees related to overdue or lost materials, and an even smaller fraction come specifically from youth accounts. Therefore, the benefit of waiving fees outweighs the potential revenue, if it were to be collected at all. The Library sought a way to offer young people with blocked library cards a fresh start and an opportunity to be relieved of any financial obstacles that may prevent them from continued use of library resources.

Solution: Rather than simply waiving fines and fees to encourage use, the Library thought outside the box to come up with a solution that would simultaneously encourage reading—a key success measure for young people—and spending time in the library. The Great Read Away program aims to help young cardholders remove fines from their accounts, giving them a fresh start, while simultaneously encouraging reading in the safety of a library. A motion by Supervisor Kuehl, written March 21, 2017, was approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 18, 2017, and launched June 1, 2017. A payment category labeled Great Read Away (as opposed to cash or credit card) was implemented by the Library’s Integrated Library Systems team, and the program kicked off on June 1, 2017, with a publicity push from the Library’s Marketing & Communications team. To participate in the program, children, teens and young adults up to age 21 may visit any staff member at their local library, who will register them for the program and provide an overview of how it works.

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Participants sign in on arrival, read for the desired amount of time, and sign out when finished, at which time the corresponding fee amount is removed from their account. Reading must be done in the library. Library staff maintain a log and record information for each reader. Implementing a program like this that has minimal revenue impact, yet such a monumental effect on making materials accessible to customers, is vital to ensuring lifelong learning for all customers.

Benefits: Libraries have long served as trusted and treasured institutions. When youth incur fines on their accounts and are unable to pay them, an impediment is created in that they are no longer able to enjoy the privileges associated with library access. The Great Read Away provides an ongoing solution for fine reduction, so that a temporary burden doesn't become a permanent blockade.

Between June 2017 and April 2018 (11 months), there have been 29,099 Great Read Away sessions, with 8,176 first-time sessions, a good indication of how many young people have taken advantage of the amnesty program so far. Youth have spent 1,655,845 total minutes reading, or approximately 27,597 hours, for an average of just under one-hour-a-session logged, and an average 202 minutes per user, a little over 3 hours. 7,482 youth accounts have been unblocked—meaning their fines and fees are now down below \$10—and 10,013 accounts have been completely cleared. An estimated \$137,985 in fines and fees has been waived (\$5 times hours read).

Library staff have reported that developing a fine forgiveness initiative based on gamification—or, applying incentives of game playing, like point scoring—has added to the fun, and many young readers want to “keep playing” after their fines have been cleared. The Library hopes this will continue to encourage reading, whether young cardholders have fines and fees, or not.

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

The project supports Strategic Plan Goal I, *Make Investments that Transform Lives*. Specifically, it addresses Strategy I.1.7, which is to Support Library Efforts to Engage Children and Families. By tailoring the program specifically to increase opportunities and remove barriers for customers ages 21 and under, the program specifically benefits young people, not only by encouraging time spent in the library, but more importantly by providing an opportunity to re-open doors to all the other programs and services the library offers.

The project also supports Goal II, *Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities*. Specifically, Strategy III.3.2, which is to Expand Access to Recreational and Cultural Opportunities for all County residents, particularly those in unincorporated and high-needs areas, who have traditionally underutilized the County’s museums, theatres, beaches, parks, and other recreational facilities. While the Library may not be considered a traditional cultural facility, it is certainly a gateway to recreation, the arts, learning, and innovation. The Great Read Away not only encourages young people to read recreationally—an alternative to other less healthy options—but it also broadens their awareness of offerings of the Library.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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N/A – No cost benefits claimed. Service enhancement project only.