



Bad Debt Policy

Adopted by the Board of Trustees, March 11, 2026

As part of the decision to become a “fine free” library, the Eckhart Public Library (EPL) eliminated all fines of active patrons. The only EPL related “debt” of patrons moving forward will be fees for lost or damaged materials belonging to Eckhart Public Library.

On an annual basis, a list will be prepared of patron accounts and their associated lost and damaged material replacement fee balances eligible for write-off despite established Evergreen collection efforts.

An account and its debt must meet **all three** of the following criteria:

1. **Age of Debt:** The debt was incurred more than three (3) calendar years prior to the date of the review.
2. **Account Inactivity:** The associated patron account has been demonstrably inactive for a minimum of the preceding three (3) calendar years.
 - a. *Inactivity Definition:* An account is considered inactive if it has no documented circulation activity (check-outs, renewals) and no documented use of EPL-provided electronic resources (e.g., databases, streaming services) within the specified timeframe.
3. **No New Debt:** The account has had no new debt (replacement fees, collection agency fees, etc.) assigned to it during the preceding three (3) calendar years.

The total calculated write-off amount and a summary list of affected accounts will be formally presented to the Library Board of Trustees in the form of a Resolution for review and official approval each calendar year. Upon Library Board approval of the Resolution, the identified accounts will be cleared of the specified debt, and the balance will be formally written off from the library’s financial records.

Writing off debt under this policy does not prevent the library from taking collection action or restricting borrowing privileges for new, uncollected debt incurred *after* the write-off date, should a previously affected patron return to active status and lose materials again.