

WCLS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 – 2025: WCLS CARES

MISSION / WHAT we do: *Connect information, ideas and community.*

PURPOSE / WHY we do it: *WCLS shares information to promote understanding, stories to cultivate empathy and spaces to support community.*

VISION / WHAT we want as a result: *An engaged community where curiosity is cultivated, literacy flourishes and democratic ideals thrive.*

VALUES / HOW we do it:

<u>People</u>	<u>Community</u>	<u>Curiosity</u>	<u>Stewardship</u>
<i>In our relationships with all patrons, staff and volunteers, we commit to</i>	<i>As the meeting point for strangers, neighbors and friends, we believe in</i>	<i>With free, convenient access to a universe of information, we encourage</i>	<i>In our duty to the residents of Whatcom County, we undertake our work with</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kindness• Respect• Equity• Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement• Connection• Partnerships• Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading• Intellectual Freedom• Learning• Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility• Innovation• Effectiveness• Sustainability

To realize our vision by 2025, our plan builds on these five concepts:

COMMUNITY: WCLS is at the heart of the community, introducing neighbors, building connections, and creating opportunities to learn from each other and understand one another.

ACCESS: All Whatcom County residents are aware of the full range of WCLS services and can easily access them.

RESOURCES: Community members choose library materials as catalysts for imagination, exploration, learning and growth.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: WCLS is intentional in our commitment to serving everyone in our communities equitably.

STEWARDSHIP: WCLS earns the trust of the residents of Whatcom County through responsible, efficient and sustainable business practices.

Our bottom line: WCLS CARES.

COMMUNITY

Goal: WCLS is at the heart of the community, introducing neighbors, building connections, and creating opportunities to learn from each other and understand one another.

Objective 1: WCLS is an active participant in significant community discussions.

- Build working relationships with community leaders by assigning managers and supervisors to connect with various leaders and meet contacts annually.
- Assign staff to represent WCLS in key community working groups.
- Formalize partnership(s) with local governments or nonprofits to help people find living wage jobs and develop careers.

Objective 2: WCLS connects neighbors to reduce social isolation and polarization.

- Curate annual schedule of events that bring people to libraries and WCLS to the people.
- Participate in community gatherings annually in each community we serve.
- Develop library events that include opportunities for participant interaction.
- Design programs with a focus on “local”: local history and or local talent (musicians, artists, people with skills to share).

Objective 3: WCLS renews its reputation as a trusted reference source for unbiased local news and information.

- Research concept of libraries as community news organization.
- Evaluate and transform social media content to elevate local community news.
- Partner with existing news organizations or volunteers for research support.
- Share local history via digitization projects, etc.

ACCESS

Goal: All Whatcom County residents are aware of the full range of WCLS services and can easily access them.

Objective 1: Awareness and appreciation of library services increases.

- Communicate WCLS programs and services via marketing plan featuring a multi-platform media schedule.
- Increase library visibility at community events.
- Partner with agencies serving traditionally marginalized communities to share library information and recruit cardholders.

Objective 2: Students can pick up holds for WCLS materials at school, via enhanced ConnectED partnerships.

- Build out centralized distribution system.
- Enhance BiblioCommons with ConnectED pickup location.
- Push information to school and community partners.

Objective 3: Whatcom County residents are digitally and information literate.

- Train staff in digital and information literacy skills to ensure they are prepared to assist the public.
- Foster digital and information literacy skills with the public.
- Optimize opportunities for state and federal funding to support technology initiatives that benefit Whatcom County residents.

Objective 4: Staff employ restorative practice concepts to allow patrons who have damaged their relationships with the library to begin using the library again in good standing.

- Train staff in basic principles of restorative practice.
- Review conduct, collection and other policies with an eye to restorative practice.

Objective 5: Library services evolve as community needs change.

- Expand existing services that have proven successful and desirable (e.g., Library Express).
- Innovate new services as circumstances change and/or demand warrants.
- Seek out additional items to circulate as part of the Library of Things collection.
- Align world languages collections to local demographics and interests and ensure items are discoverable in our catalog.

RESOURCES

Goal: Community members choose library materials as catalysts for imagination, exploration, learning and growth.

Objective 1: Everyone from children to adults celebrates the joy of reading.

- Conduct annual Reading Conversation training sessions for staff.
- Highlight reading culture and library materials in marketing efforts.

Objective 2: Residents have multiple opportunities throughout the year to connect via shared reading experiences.

- Establish four marquee system-wide reading programs
 - Spring: Whatcom READS
 - Summer: Summer Reading
 - Fall: Read and Share
 - Winter: Program to come.
- Foster best practices for staff book discussion leaders.

Objective 3: Community members understand the vast variety of library resources available to them.

- Optimize website to highlight library resources in various formats.
- Provide opportunities for a wide variety of discussion groups.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Goal: WCLS is intentional in our commitment to serving everyone in our communities equitably, as described in the WCLS Diversity Statement.

Objective 1: WCLS staff and Board of Trustees reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

- Develop comprehensive plan for ongoing recruitment, support and retention of staff and trustees from underserved communities.

Objective 2: WCLS staff are skilled allies to people from diverse populations. We honor multiple cultural perspectives and provide opportunities to learn about them.

- Partner with local tribes to be more responsive to the needs of indigenous communities.
- Conduct staff trainings related to active bystander and allyship.
- Review programs with cultural content with “in-group” advisors whenever possible to design programs that are respectful and accurate.
- Provide opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to see and share their stories.

Objective 3: WCLS spaces are accessible and welcoming to everyone in the community.

- Conduct ADA audit of WCLS facilities and include input from members of disability communities; develop implementation plan.
- Provide assistive technology and/or services at library branches and bookmobile.
- Enhance signage and resources to welcome local non-English language readers and speakers.

STEWARDSHIP

Goal: WCLS earns the trust of the residents of Whatcom County through responsible, efficient and sustainable business practices.

Objective 1: Voters support levy lid lift election that provides long-term fiscal sustainability.

- Communicate value to taxpayers regularly.
- Convene countywide “supergroup” of advocates: employees, trustees, Friends of the Library, and Whatcom County Library Foundation (WCLF).
- Develop comprehensive plan before approaching taxpayers for levy lid lift.

Objective 2: Staff are compensated fairly comparable to market as described in WCLS Compensation Philosophy.

- After successful levy lid lift, hire independent consultant to conduct a classification and compensation study.
- Review total compensation including benefits and classification levels.

Objective 3: Capital assets are thoughtfully developed and maintained and long-term funding needs secured.

- Complete Birch Bay Library project.
- Proceed with Blaine Library renovation and expansion.
- Develop long-term plan for South Whatcom Library.
- Develop long-term plan for Administrative Services building.
- Incorporate 2021 Facilities Assessment into Capital Plan, including annual maintenance plans for Administrative Services, North Fork and Birch Bay and a schedule of fixture, furnishing, and equipment updates at all locations.

Objective 4: WCLF has a vibrant fund development program, with increased donor diversity and increased value of donations, sponsorships and endowment.

- Conduct staff education so that staff have a positive perception of their fundraising role.
- Partner with WCLF to complete strategic and fundraising plan to align with WCLS plan.

Objective 5: WCLS operations have a positive impact on the environment.

- Complete environmental impact and sustainability audit and implement recommendations, perhaps following Sustainable Libraries Initiative.
- Seek partnerships for possible initiatives such as electric vehicle charging stations, solar panels, fleet improvements, etc.

Objective 6: WCLS is prepared for emergencies.

- Finalize Emergency Preparedness Plan and share findings with community.
- Approve Crisis Communication Plan for crises and other events that affect WCLS operations.