



BORROWER'S POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 4.01

SCOPE: This policy defines who is eligible for a WCLS library card and limitations to borrowing privileges.

A. The Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) is a system of libraries serving the diverse needs of area residents of all ages.

All WCLS branches and bookmobile are open to the public. Anyone may browse or use materials, attend WCLS programs, and otherwise use services in WCLS facilities.

B. Eligibility for a Library Card

The following categories of individuals are eligible to register for WCLS library cards with provision of current address and proof of identity:

1. All residents of Whatcom County.

NOTE: Residents of the City of Bellingham will be provided a Bellingham Public Library card when registering at WCLS and may use their Bellingham Public Library cards to borrow materials at WCLS libraries and bookmobile through a reciprocal agreement.

2. Students who attend school in Whatcom County, including college and university students from out of the area and elementary and secondary students from neighboring counties.

3. Teachers in public and independent schools, homeschools, preschools, and child care centers may be issued educator library cards to facilitate the use of WCLS materials in classrooms.

4. Students in participating Whatcom County school districts may have limited WCLS borrowing privileges in special accounts associated with their student status.

5. Non-residents of the Library District who pay taxes to support the Library District, such as individuals who work in Whatcom County or own businesses or property located in Whatcom County.

6. Residents of communities with which WCLS has a reciprocal borrowing agreement, including but not limited to:

a. Fraser Valley Regional Library (British Columbia, Canada)

7. Residents of jurisdictions within Washington State that provide equitable tax support for public library service. In addition to current address and proof of identity, applicants must present a library card from their local jurisdiction.

NOTE: Borrowing privileges for electronic materials and/or access to online services may be limited depending on vendor contracts.

8. Nonresidents of the Library District who do not meet any of the criteria described above may purchase a library card for an annual fee to borrow materials.

9. **Whatcom County business firms and institutions** may be issued agency library cards upon the written approval of the owner and/or official authorized to enter contracts on behalf of the business or institution.

C. Limitations on borrowing privileges

1. Borrowing privileges may be denied for:

- a. **Failure to return overdue WCLS materials or failure to pay for damaged or overdue materials.** Money received for lost material will be refunded or credited if the materials are returned within one year of the last transaction.
- b. **Due cause,** including failure to comply with WCLS rules, destruction of WCLS property, and disturbance of other WCLS patrons. See WCLS Disruptive Behavior Policy.

2. **Lost or stolen cards:** Lost or stolen library cards should be reported to the WCLS immediately. A replacement card will be issued at no cost.

3. **It is recommended that library cards not be loaned as the Borrower is still responsible for all materials borrowed on the card.**

4. **Borrowers are normally expected to authenticate their eligibility to borrow materials each time they wish to borrow materials from the WCLS.**

5. **WCLS does not levy overdue fees.**

6. Other charges, as outlined in 4.01.04 Fee Schedule:

- a. Item(s) will be considered lost, and the borrower will be charged a replacement fee, when WCLS materials are not returned within a number of days, as specified in the Fee Schedule.
- b. If an item is returned damaged or with missing parts, the borrower may be charged according to guidelines maintained by WCLS.
- c. Past due financial accounts may be submitted to a private collection agency for collection. An additional fee(s) may be charged to any account submitted to a collection agency.

7. Exceptions:

- a. Fines and other charges may be waived in cases of WCLS error or exceptional circumstances, according to guidelines established by WCLS.
- b. If a payment plan is developed and followed, collection agency accounts may be temporarily suspended and limited checkout privileges may be restored.

D. Acceptable anticipated loss

WCLS may forgive limited loss of materials for educator cards and student ID accounts on an annual basis according to the procedures and memoranda of understanding governing those accounts.

E. Privacy

It is the policy of Whatcom County Library System to protect the privacy of library borrowers. See the WCLS Policy on Confidentiality of Patron Records.

RELATED POLICIES: [Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy 5.01](#); [Write-Off of Uncollectable Debts Policy 20.13](#).

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
January 15, 1980	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
January 11, 1983	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
March 12, 1986	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
February 19, 1988	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
June 17, 1988	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
October 17, 1989	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
July 16, 1991	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
August 16, 1994	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
March 18, 1997	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
November 21, 2000	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
September 16, 2003	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
July 22, 2004	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
May 24, 2005	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
September 18, 2007	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
May 20, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
December 16, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
March 17, 2009	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Nina Cox
May 18, 2010	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
September 18, 2012	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
August 20, 2013	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
April 19, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
July 19, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
March 28, 2017	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
June 20, 2017	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
December 18, 2018	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
September 17, 2019	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
January 21, 2020	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
August 17, 2021	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
March 15, 2022	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke