



whatcom county  
**library system**

## COLLECTION POLICY

**POLICY NUMBER: 3.01**

**SCOPE:** This policy designates responsibility for selecting materials for the library's collection to library staff and provides guidelines for selection.

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**Statement of Purpose:** The Whatcom County Library System exists because of its collection, both physical and electronic. This policy guides the library staff in the management of WCLS's collection (books, magazines, audio-visual materials, electronic and other information sources) and informs the public of the principles used by the staff to build and maintain the collection.

1. WCLS's collections will be designed to meet the particular needs of Whatcom County's population, taking into account its economy, lifestyle, demographics and the elements of WCLS's Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees recognizes that within the service area there are groups and individuals with widely separate and diverse interests, backgrounds, cultural heritages, social values, and needs. The Board further recognizes that WCLS serves all the people within the service area of the region regardless of age, race, sex, creed, national origin, sexual orientation, or ideology, including those who are physically or mentally disabled, or in institutions. The interests and needs of all are taken into account in the selection of WCLS's collection.

2. The Board believes that censorship is purely an individual matter and declares that, while anyone is free to reject for themselves materials of which they do not approve, they cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom of others to read or inquire. The Board also recognizes that parents have the primary responsibility to guide and direct the reading, listening, and viewing of their own minor children. WCLS does not stand *in loco parentis* (that is, in place of a parent, or charged with a parent's rights, duties and responsibilities).

The Library Board further defends the principles of the freedom to read and declares that whenever censorship is involved, WCLS material shall not be removed from the library save under the order of a court of competent jurisdiction, nor will library materials be sequestered except for the express purpose of protecting them from damage or theft.

The Library Board adopts and declares that it will adhere to and support:

- **Library Bill of Rights:** Adopted June 19, 1939 by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996; amended January 29, 2019.
- **Freedom to Read Statement:** Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.
- **Free Access to Libraries for Minors:** Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004.
- **WLA Intellectual Freedom Statement:** Ratified April 6, 2001.

3. To serve Whatcom County's diverse community, library selectors shall choose a balance of materials representing a wide range of non-fiction topics, fiction genres, authors, performers, and style. The focus of the collection is breadth rather than depth, and materials suitable for the general reader rather than the advanced student or the expert.

Materials acquired by WCLS support library patrons who are:

- a. Pursuing life-long learning;
- b. Using leisure time to enjoy books and other library materials;
- c. Improving skills in daily life and pursuing hobbies;
- d. Keeping abreast of new ideas;
- e. Examining various sides of issues;
- f. Becoming informed citizens of the community, the nation and the world;
- g. Improving business success and occupational performance;
- h. Discovering and developing creativity.

Over the years, the share of the budget and shelf space allotted to each of these purposes will shift according to use and demand, but each one will always be represented in WCLS's collection.

4. Materials are selected according to one or more of the following guidelines:

- a. Favorable reviews and/or critical acclaim;
- b. Community requests and/or anticipated popular demand;
- c. Enduring quality and renown;
- d. Attention of critics, reviewers and the public;
- e. Reputation of author or publisher;
- f. Artistic, literary, and/or scientific merit;
- g. Practical usefulness;
- h. Suitability for the lay person;
- i. Contribution to the balance of the collection;
- j. Support for school reports;
- k. Contribution to a diversity of taste and opinion;
- l. Representation of ideas that are unique, alternative, experimental or controversial;
- m. Anticipation of new trends in literature, technology, leisure and culture;
- n. Durability sufficient to withstand its intended use;
- o. Technical quality (nonprint);
- p. Price.

5. WCLS accepts gifts of books and other materials as outlined in the Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12.

6. WCLS has an established process for regularly assessing the materials in its collection for retention or withdrawal. Except for local history and local documents, WCLS does not serve an archival function. (See Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02)

7. WCLS welcomes the comments of library patron about library materials and has established a process for reviewing and responding to those comments if a library patron wishes to initiate the process. Library patrons submitting written comments to WCLS will receive a written response in a timely fashion. As part of this process, materials under review will remain available to patrons.

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**RELATED POLICIES:** Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02; Borrower's Policy 4.01; Postings, Petitions and Exhibit Policy 7.04; Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12.

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**STATUTORY REFERENCE:** U.S. Constitution Amendment I; RCW 27.12.210(9) Library trustees — Organization — Bylaws — Powers and duties; RCW 27.12.270 Rules and regulations – Free use of libraries.

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ADOPTED by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees March 20, 2001.

**REVISED: March 19, 2019;** December 20, 2016; March 18, 2014; July 22, 2008; December 16, 2003; September 17, 2002.