



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. **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.

3. **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.

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

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

5. **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.

6. **Nonresidents of the Library District** who do not meet the criteria described in sections 2, 3, 4 or 5 above may purchase a library card for an annual fee to borrow materials.

7. **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.

8. **Minors under 18 years of age** may receive a limited use library card without an adult's signature or a full use library card with a parent's or guardian's signature. Parent/guardian signatures will not be required for a full use card for minors who are demonstrably free of parental control, such as through marriage.

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. **Effective January 1, 2020, WCLS will no longer 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. 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: Borrower's Policy Fee Schedule 4.01.04, Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy 5.01.

ADOPTED by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees January 15, 1980.

REVISED: August 17, 2021; January 21, 2020; September 17, 2019; December 18, 2018; June 20, 2017; March 28, 2017; July 19, 2016; April 19, 2016; August 20, 2013; September 18, 2012; December 17, 2010; May 18, 2010; March 17, 2009; Dec. 16, 2008; May 20, 2008; September 18, 2007; May 24, 2005; July 22, 2004; September 16, 2003; November 21, 2000; March 18, 1997; August 16, 1994; July 16, 1991; October 17, 1989; June 17, 1988; February 19, 1988; March 12, 1986; January 11, 1983.