



SCOPE

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

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Whatcom County Library System Collection Policy guides library staff in the management of WCLS's collection (both physical and digital content) and informs the public of the principles used to build and maintain the collection.

1. WCLS's collections are designed to meet the needs of Whatcom County's population, taking into account demographics and elements of WCLS's Strategic Plan. The Board of Trustees recognizes that within the service area there are groups and individuals with widely diverse interests, backgrounds, cultures, values and needs. The WCLS collection strives to serve the interests and needs of all residents in the WCLS service area.
2. The Board of Trustees believes that reading, listening to, viewing and using library materials are individual, private matters, and that while one is free to select or reject materials for oneself, one cannot restrict the freedom of others to read, view 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 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.
- [Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors](#): Adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, June 30, 2004, July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.
- [WLA Intellectual Freedom Statement](#): Ratified April 6, 2001.

SELECTION RESPONSIBILITY AND SCOPE

To serve Whatcom County's diverse community, library selectors choose a balance of materials representing a wide range of non-fiction topics, fiction genres, authors, performers, and styles. The responsibility of administering and maintaining the library collection lies with professionally trained library staff under the direction of the Executive Director and Collection Services Manager. 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. While the collection should serve the individual needs of students, it is not intended to be a substitute for school or homeschool curricular needs.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Materials are selected based on multiple factors, including budget, space constraints, reviews and demand. Criteria include, but are not limited to:

- Favorable reviews from professional resources and/or critical acclaim;
- Patron requests and/or anticipated popular demand;
- Reputation of author or publisher;
- Artistic, literary, and/or scientific merit;
- Support of early/emergent literacy;
- Suitability for the lay person;
- Contribution to the balance of the collection;
- Representation of ideas that are unique, alternative, experimental or controversial;
- Documentation of the content creator in the case of AI-generated content;
- Anticipation of new trends in literature, technology, leisure and culture;
- Durability sufficient to withstand the intended use;
- Technical characteristics (such as paper quality, binding, margins);
- Utility and value to the patron (for Library of Things);
- Conditions imposed by licenses (for electronic materials);
- Price, stewardship of resources and availability of purchase.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Digital resources fall into two categories: owned materials and accessed materials. Accessed materials include databases and subscription collections and are made available through licensing agreements. Accessed digital resources may be curated by third-party sources in which case the library does not select the content. Digital content that is selected by WCLS staff is subject to the general guidelines for selection. Digital resources from third-party sources are evaluated annually to review their relevance to the collection. WCLS may participate in consortia to share expenses and broaden the number of digital resources we are able to offer.

DONATIONS

WCLS accepts gifts of books and other materials as outlined in the Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12. Authors who wish to bring their content to the attention of selectors should fill out the Collection Suggestions from Authors form found on the Library Policies page at wcls.org.

DESELECTION

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)

COMMENTS ON LIBRARY MATERIAL

WCLS welcomes the comments of WCLS cardholders about library materials and has an established process for reviewing and responding to comments if a WCLS cardholder wishes to initiate the process. Comments

submitted through this process will receive a written response. As part of this process, materials under review will remain available.

RELATED POLICIES: [Diversity Statement 1.03](#); [Disposal of Library Materials Policy 3.02](#); [Borrower's Policy 4.01](#); [Postings, Petitions and Exhibit Policy 7.04](#); [Gift Acceptance Policy 20.12](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCES: 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.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
March 20, 2001	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
September 17, 2002	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
December 16, 2003	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
July 22, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
March 18, 2014	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
December 20, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
March 19, 2019	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
April 15, 2025	Revised.	Lisa Gresham	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rod Lofdahl