

LIBRARY LEVY PROPOSITION 2025-02

Restore the Library Levy rate to \$0.42/\$1,000

WCLS's Board of Trustees is asking voters to restore the library levy rate to \$0.42 in response to increased costs and demand for services.

- Whatcom County Library System last asked voters to approve a levy lid lift in 2009. At that time, voters approved a rate of \$0.44 per thousand dollars.* WCLS has been frugal and strategic with its last levy lid lift annual funding and reserves.
- Since then, the number of people we serve and operating costs have significantly increased, and the library system's expenses now exceed annual revenues.

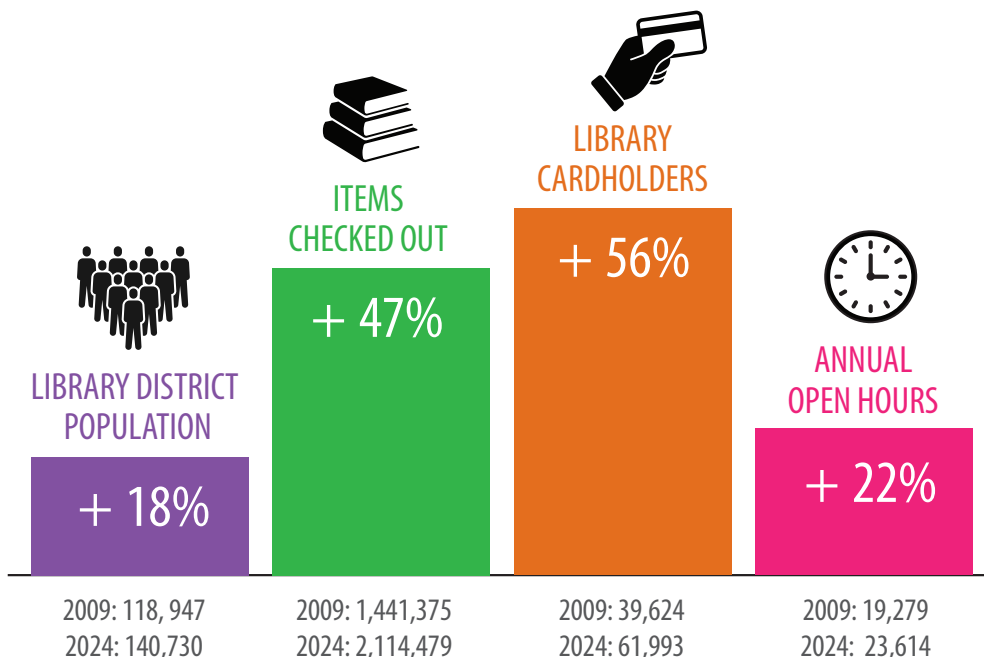
**VOTE
AUG. 5,
2025**

If the levy rate is not restored, the library will need to cut services and eliminate staff positions.

**Over the past 16 years, WCLS's levy rate has fallen to \$0.26/\$1,000. In today's market, a levy rate of \$0.42 will provide sufficient funding to support current services and will sustain the system into the future. State law allows library systems to request up to \$0.50 per thousand dollars of assessed value. WCLS is asking for what we need, not the maximum allowed. Learn how levies work at wcls.org/levy.*



CHANGES SINCE LAST LEVY LID LIFT:



Inflation and other factors have driven up the cost of library materials, staff minimum wage, supplies, utilities and fuel.

For example:
In the past decade, the library's cost to purchase eBooks and eAudiobooks has increased 164%. In the past year alone, demand for eBooks and eAudio has increased 12%.

WHAT WOULD IT FUND?



HOW WOULD THIS NEW LEVY RATE AFFECT MY PROPERTY TAXES?

Local property taxes provide 95.1% of the library system's operating budget. If approved by voters, this proposition would authorize WCLS to restore its property tax levy rate from its current level of 26 cents to 42 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value.

HOME VALUE*	CURRENT YEARLY COST	NEW YEARLY COST
\$400,000	\$104	\$168 (\$14 per month)
\$600,000	\$156	\$252 (\$21 per month)
\$800,000	\$208	\$336 (\$28 per month)

**Exemptions are available for qualifying seniors, people retired due to disabilities and veterans with disabilities.*

A YES VOTE MEANS:

- ☒ Maintain current level of staffing, open hours and services
- ☒ Continue supporting a robust collection of library materials, including physical and digital items, with minimal wait times and online/streaming resources
- ☒ Address deferred maintenance and facilities needs
- ☒ Pursue opportunities for library building projects

A NO VOTE MEANS:

- ☒ Cut staff, reduce open hours and eliminate services, which may include closing branches one or two days a week
- ☒ Reduce investment in library materials, including physical & digital items, increasing wait time and decreasing selection
- ☒ Cannot address deferred maintenance and facilities needs
- ☒ Abandon opportunities for library building projects

FIND MORE INFORMATION

wcls.org/levy



REGISTER TO VOTE

votewa.gov



For more information or to schedule a community presentation: wclslevy@wcls.org

YOUR LIBRARY PROVIDES:

- **680,000+ items**, including books, eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming movies and music
- Over **2,200 free programs** each year for children, teens and adults
- High-speed **WiFi, printers, computers and tech** assistance
- Public meeting **spaces for community** gatherings
- Friendly, **knowledgeable staff to help** with research, services and reading suggestions
- Library **services for K-12 students and support for homeschool families**
- Delivery of **library materials for homebound community** members
- Innovative "Library of Things" to save you money. Borrow **board games, Discover Passes, WiFi hotspots, American Girl Dolls** and more

WCLS SERVES PEOPLE ACROSS WHATCOM COUNTY WHO LIVE OUTSIDE THE CITY LIMITS OF BELLINGHAM

- **10 Library branches:** Blaine, Deming, Everson, Ferndale, Lummi Island, Lynden, Kendall, Point Roberts, Sudden Valley, Sumas
- **4 Bookmobile stops:** Glenhaven, Birch Bay, Wickersham, Lake Samish
- **Library Express locations:** Northwest Drive, Birch Bay (under construction)
- **Outreach services:** schools, senior centers, homebound patrons, Whatcom County Jail, events
- **Online** 24/7 wcls.org