



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
Whatcom County Library System
December 16, 2025

Online via Teams and In-Person at Blaine Library
610 3rd St.
Blaine, WA 98230

WCLS Vision: *An engaged community where curiosity is cultivated, literacy flourishes and democratic ideals thrive.*

1. 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order.** Quorum determined. Land Acknowledgement.
We are on the ancestral territory of the Nooksack, Lummi and other Coast Salish peoples. They are the original inhabitants of this place. They are fishers, hunters, gatherers and harvesters of nature's abundance, and have been so since time immemorial. We are neighbors and friends, and we are grateful for our numerous opportunities to learn, live and grow together, building lasting relationships so that all may prosper.
2. 9:05 a.m. **Open Public Comment Opportunity**
This period is set aside for persons wishing to address the Board. Each person may have up to three minutes for this purpose. Written comments may be submitted to Allyson.McBride@wcls.org prior to the meeting.
3. 9:15 a.m. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Meeting Minutes
 - b. Expenditures
4. 9:20 a.m. **Financial Report and Resolutions**
 - a. Audit Introduction with State Auditor's Office - Karyna Orcutt and Annika Grande
 - b. Finance Committee Report
 - c. Resolutions: A Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Whatcom County Rural Library District...
 - 12/16/25-20 Adopting the 2026 General and Capital Fund Budgets
 - 12/16/25-21 Adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan
5. 10:00 a.m. **Policy Update**
 - a. Hours of Work Policy 12.12
 - b. Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21
 - c. Family Medical Leave Policy 12.23
 - d. Domestic Violence Leave Policy 12.24
 - e. Temporary Adverse Working Conditions Policy 12.45
 - f. Public Records Policy 21.01
6. 10:20 a.m. **Flood Update**
7. 10:30 a.m. **BREAK**
8. 10:40 a.m. **Strategic Planning Discussion**
9. 11:00 a.m. **Staff Reports**

Board of Trustees Meetings are open to the public in accordance with RCW 42.30. The Board is currently holding meetings with options for in-person or remote participation. Persons wishing to be provided with an internet link or telephone number to access the meeting are asked to please email Allyson.McBride@wcls.org before 4:00 p.m. Monday, December 15, 2025. Written comments may be submitted to Allyson.McBride@wcls.org prior to the meeting.

10. 11:10 a.m. **Performance Measures and Committee Reports**
 - a. Marketing Committee
 - b. Personnel Committee

11. 11:20 a.m. **Announcements and Adjourn**

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Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	12/16/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration Department
Subject:	Consent Agenda – Board Meeting Minutes, Monthly Expenditures
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of consent agenda items

Suggested Motion for Consideration: Move approval of consent agenda items as presented

Summary:

Meeting Minutes:

- November 18, 2025 Regular Board Meeting

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- October 16-31, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1044984730-1044984734 and voucher nos. 564396-564544 totaling \$250,948.04 and November 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1045149599-1045149603 and voucher nos. 564549-564697 totaling \$241,809.41.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$85,519.55; \$44,084.85 of this is for employee-funded contributions to dental and vision insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, and PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-44G: warrant nos. 1266723-1266740 totaling \$38,800.83
- Claim 2025-45G: warrant nos. 1266929-1266947 totaling \$117,131.59
- Claim 2025-46G: warrant nos. 1267048-1267088 totaling \$94,837.55
- Claim 2025-47G: warrant nos. 1267793-1267823 totaling \$71,207.39

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-19C: warrant no. 1266741 totaling \$1,177.22
- Claim 2025-20C: warrant no. 1267089 totaling \$1,254.76
- Claim 2025-21C: warrant no. 1267090 totaling \$307.50
- Claim 2025-22C: warrant no. 1267824 totaling \$4,631.91

Alternatives: N/A

Fiscal Impact: Expenditures for approval paid from available 2025 budgeted funds.

Comments: The Finance Committee has reviewed the General and Capital Fund claims listed above. They reviewed that there were no General Journal entries made in November.

Library Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

November 18, 2025

Location

This meeting was held in a hybrid manner, with remote attendance via Microsoft Teams and in-person attendance at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

In Attendance

Trustees: Rodney Lofdahl, Chair; Matthew Santos, Vice Chair; Danielle Gaughen, Secretary; John Miller and Jes Stugelmayer. Absent: None.

Staff: Christine Perkins, Executive Director; Michael Cox, Deputy Director; Jackie Saul, Director of Finance and Administration; Mary Vermillion, Community Relations Manager; Lisa Gresham, Collection Services Manager; Ryan Cullup, Facilities Services Manager; Beth Andrews, Human Resources Manager; Dianne Marrs-Smith, Birch Bay and Lynden Library Manager and Friends of the Birch Bay Library (FOBBL) President; Allyson McBride, Records Management Specialist & Executive Assistant; Marty Jimmy, PSA – Nooksack Cultural Liaison Deming Library; Jamie Jedinak, Page Deming Library; Christian Cultee, PSA – Lummi Cultural Liaison Ferndale Library

Guests: Virginia Naef and Beth Basabe, Friends of the Deming Library; Grace McCarthy, *The Northern Light*; Calvin Bratt

Call to Order

Rod determined quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., followed by a reading of the WCLS Land Acknowledgement by Michael.

Open Public Comment

Virigina Naef, a Friend of the Deming Library, addressed the online wording on the location of the monthly Board meetings. It was mentioned that as a member of the public, it can be quite confusing if you do not know where the Administrative Services building is. When you look up the location on the WCLS website, it is noted as just Northwest Drive. Virginia requested that the online resources are updated to be more clear.

Jes joined the meeting at 9:03 a.m.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda included minutes of the October 21, 2025, Board of Trustees Regular Meeting as well as the following:

Expenditures:

General Fund:

- Sep 16-30, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1044624520-1044624528 and voucher nos. 564084-564228 totaling \$241,247.17 and October 1-15, 2025 payroll: check nos. 1044799835-1044799842 and voucher nos. 564233-564391 totaling \$270,137.78.
- ACH transactions for employee benefits, telecommunication services and monthly sales/use tax filings totaling \$107,582.93; \$63,578.95 of this is for employee-funded contributions to dental and vision insurance premiums, Health Savings Accounts, state-paid family medical leave and long-term care fund premiums, and PERS and deferred compensation plans (made via payroll deduction).
- Claim 2025-40G: warrant nos. 1264860-1264873 totaling \$32,559.13
- Claim 2025-41G: warrant nos. 1265151-1265182 totaling \$104,717.68
- Claim 2025-42G: warrant nos. 1265510-1265533 totaling \$61,425.26
- Claim 2025-43G: warrant nos. 1266069-1266083 totaling \$43,547.67

Capital Fund:

- Claim 2025-16C: warrant no. 1264874 totaling \$570.79
- Claim 2025-17C: warrant no. 1265183 totaling \$23,806.54
- Claim 2025-18C: warrant nos. 1266084-1266086 totaling \$26,334.31

Rod moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded. Unanimous Board approval.

Financial Report and Resolutions: Finance Committee Report

Jackie reviewed her report, including the October notes and highlights section. She pointed out that majority of categories are on track with the exception of Collection Materials. She noted we have received 94% of the property tax levy as of the end of October, and an additional \$400,000 was received at the beginning of November. Jackie reported that there are outside factors impacting collection materials spending due to the closure of Baker & Taylor. Baker & Taylor was not a vendor for WCLS but their closing is increasing demand on our vendor, Ingram.

PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed 2026 Operating Budget Revenue Sources

Jackie presented the Preliminary 2026 Budget and Capital Plan. The final budget will be presented in December. Jackie explained how the 2026 property tax levy is calculated, and noted that the levy amount must be approved in November, before final district valuations are known. Once set, the levy cannot be increased so a cushion is added in the event the final district assessed valuation is higher than preliminary values provided by the County Assessor.

Jackie reviewed other revenue sources and expenditures. The 2026 Wage and Benefit Agreement approved last month includes a 3% COLA increase and a 4% proficiency increase. Wages are further increased by restoring the partially vacant full-time Facilities Planning Coordinator position and adding a Communications Assistant position and a second, part-time, Custodial position at Administrative Services. WCLS will also be adding limited accrued paid leave for non-bargaining unit staff members to provide compensation when hours are lost due to holiday closures or for other time off.

Jackie reported some areas of cost savings in 2026, including decreased toner costs through swapping to leased copier/printer equipment at the Blaine, Ferndale and Lynden libraries and energy savings through a lightning update at Administrative Services, and insurance renewals. Reduced electricity costs from solar panels at the Deming Library will be reallocated to cultural programming.

Jackie shared the 2026-2030 Capital plan and noted that it will be fleshed out further during next year's strategic planning process. She reviewed the projects planned for the next few years. Regarding the lighting upgrade projects, Ms. Basabe asked why we were replacing bulbs that are still working. Ryan confirmed that most of these lights are close to or at end of life, and will be disposed of properly. He noted that replacing fluorescent bulbs with LED will result in energy savings.

John congratulated Jackie on her report and the detail she included. He asked for confirmation on increasing insurance deductibles which Jackie confirmed are not changing. Jackie shared a spreadsheet which showed how she is tracking levy funds; this will be updated and shared each year. Danielle pointed out that the levy rate listed goes up continuously. Jackie will investigate to confirm the tracking system is showing the correct information. Jes reiterated thanks to Jackie for making this a transparent and digestible report for non-finance savvy individuals.

Rod moved to approve resolution 11/18/25-18 Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary General and Capital Fund Budgets. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Rod moved to approve resolution 11/18/25-19 Adopting the 2026-2030 Preliminary Capital Plan. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Danielle asked if the Public Hearing needed to be announced. Rod confirmed that it was announced in writing and this meeting is a public forum. Rod brought this to the group and asked if they are in agreement about how the public hearing was discussed.

John motioned that an open discussion was had in lieu of announcing the public hearing. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Policy Updates

Animals in the Library Policy 6.02 – Michael presented this new policy, which is presented in response to two minor animal incidents in WCLS branches and guidance from our insurance carrier. If approved, the new policy will go into effect December 1st. Jes requested confirmation on signage that will be posted at branches. Michael provided an example of the message that is to be communicated, including being clear that service animals are still welcome. Mary confirmed that South Whatcom is working on a plan to still provide dog treats outside of the library. John gave thanks to Michael for the paragraph which explains the limits of the law and confirmed that he was unaware of the last sentence "By law, staff may ask if the animal is required because of a disability; they can also ask what tasks the animal has been trained to perform."

Rod moved to approve the updated Policy 6.02, as presented. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Land Acknowledgement

John noted it has recently been learned that land acknowledgment readings may be controversial in some indigenous communities. He wants to be sure that we are being respectful of our tribal community members and that readings of the land acknowledgements are not just performative or rote. With this in mind, a committee was created to discuss how WCLS may want to move forward. Mary Vermillion, Marty Jimmy and Christian Cultee represented the committee at the today's meeting.

The committee shared initial discussions on the feelings of the current acknowledgement and how it may be rephrased. They also confirmed, though the conversations were good, they feel that more time to discuss is needed. Marty thanked those involved for bringing this issue and discussion forward. Christine confirmed that

WCLS is looking into having new signs at each branch to acknowledge the land and our local tribes. There is a wait on posting as the accurate locations and place names in local languages need to be identified. It was discussed that some feel the new signs may be enough and some feel they will be glossed over and a verbal reading will still be needed. The committee confirmed this is a large reason why conversations are needing to continue, so they can find the right balance.

John informed the group of a film titled "Unconquering Last Frontier", which he strongly recommended folks watch.

Christian joined the meeting.

Christian stated that he feels it would be good to highlight the actual actions that WCLS is taking to truly acknowledge and uphold our relationships with the local tribal communities. Rod stated that he appreciates what this team is doing and thanks them for sharing what they are working on. Matthew requested clarification that this discussion is not around policy. Christine confirmed that this is procedure but she appreciates the Board's input, which is why it was brought to them today. Rod thanked the committee.

Marty and Christian left the meeting.

Executive Session to Discuss the Executive Director's Annual Review

At 10:15 a.m., Board Chair Rod Lofdahl moved the meeting to Closed Session, as per RCW 42.30.140(4)(a), to discuss the Executive Director's Annual Review. He stated that the Closed Session would end at 10:30 a.m.

At 10:30 a.m., Rod reconvened Open Session for final action on the Executive Director's Annual Review.

Executive Director's Annual Review

John read a memo written to WCLS Board of Trustees from Rod and John serving as personnel committee with conclusion of the status of Executive Director's review. The personnel committee recommends that the Executive Director receive the same consideration for compensation adjustment in 2026 as the rest of the staff: a 3% COLA and 4% proficiency increase. These changes will be effective January 1, 2026.

John moved to approve the recommendation as written. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Break

Rod adjourned for a break from 10:35 to 10:50am.

Strategic Planning Process

Christine began conversations around the 2026 Strategic Planning Process with the understanding that this is a preliminary discussion. She confirmed that when the last planning process happened, it was kicked off with a Board retreat. The Board discussed whether they would like to move forward with a retreat or reserve time at each meeting to discuss the plan.

The Board was in agreement that a retreat would be beneficial, but the timing would need to be discussed. The Board discussed the benefit of waiting for the application process to be completed for the new Board member before confirming a date for a retreat. The Board requested the results from community surveys from the last

planning process to help gather thoughts on what is needed. Christine said that she will gather the previous survey results, as well as the agenda from the previous retreat, to share with the Board. Danielle requested information about the deadline to complete the strategic plan. Christine confirmed planning should begin in January and wrap up in August so that the plan can inform budget discussions. Rod said that the Board will take this next month to organize thoughts around the process and further conclusions will be made at the December meeting.

Christine shared three handouts: the current Mission, Vision and Values statements, an example of the 2022-2025 Strategic Goals, and a timeline of how WCLS wants to move forward through the next 20 years.

Grace McCarthy joined the meeting.

2026 Addendum to Agreement with Whatcom County Library Foundation

Friends of the Deming Library, Virginia and Beth, and staff member Jamie left the meeting.

Christine brought the yearly addendum to the Board with the updated pay scale and other changes for 2026. This is legally required each year, and defines the relationship between Whatcom County Library Foundation and Whatcom County Library System.

Rod motioned to approve. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Blaine Library Staff Area Remodel

Ryan presented a PowerPoint, including a floorplan, showing a number of issues that need to be addressed at the Blaine library and the plan for the remodel. Ryan discussed the impact of a closure due to the remodel that is predicted to last approximately three days. Christine noted that during Deming library carpet installation project some staff members experienced a reaction to the products used. Learning from that experience is helping Facilities navigate the Blaine project. The funds to be able to fully update or replace the Blaine library will not be available for a few years. In the meantime, WCLS will be doing what it can to make the branch feel fresh for staff and patrons. Ryan noted that several items purchased for this project can be used in the new facility when the time comes. The Board discussed adding the Blaine branch to the strategic plan to prioritize advocating some much-needed updates. Michael thanked the Board for their input and support.

Staff Reports: Executive Director

In addition to her written report, Christine introduced Allyson McBride as the new Executive Assistant and Records Management Specialist.

Staff Reports: Deputy Director

In addition to his written report, Michael shared this year's Whatcom Literacy Council breakfast was held at the Four Points on Lakeway. The event had Nancy Pearl as the speaker, who has been the speaker for the last 15 years. Michael was recently elected Chair of the Whatcom Literacy Council.

Staff Reports: Youth Services Manager

Christine highlighted, on Thom's behalf, the visit from author Dan Gemeinhart this month. Dan was able to meet students at Blaine Middle School, Vista Middle School and the Juvenile Detention center. He also spent a

morning with educators across the county where he was able to express appreciation and gratitude for the work WCLS does with the ConnectED program. WCLS is thankful to the Whatcom County Library Foundation for making this possible.

Staff Reports: Community Relations Manager

Mary had no further notes on her report.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Performance Measures

In addition to his written report, Michael shared that jail stats have been adjusted due to changing the formula for how stats are counted. A note can be found at the end of the report stating the change. Digital materials were mistakenly excluded in this month's report. Allyson will investigate and the stats will be included at next month's meeting.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Personnel Committee

There were no further notes.

Performance Measures & Committee Reports: Whatcom County Library Foundation

No discussion on the report.

Announcements and Adjourn

No further announcements. Christine wished all a happy Thanksgiving.

Rod adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on December 16, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams and at Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226.

Danielle Gaughen, Board
Secretary

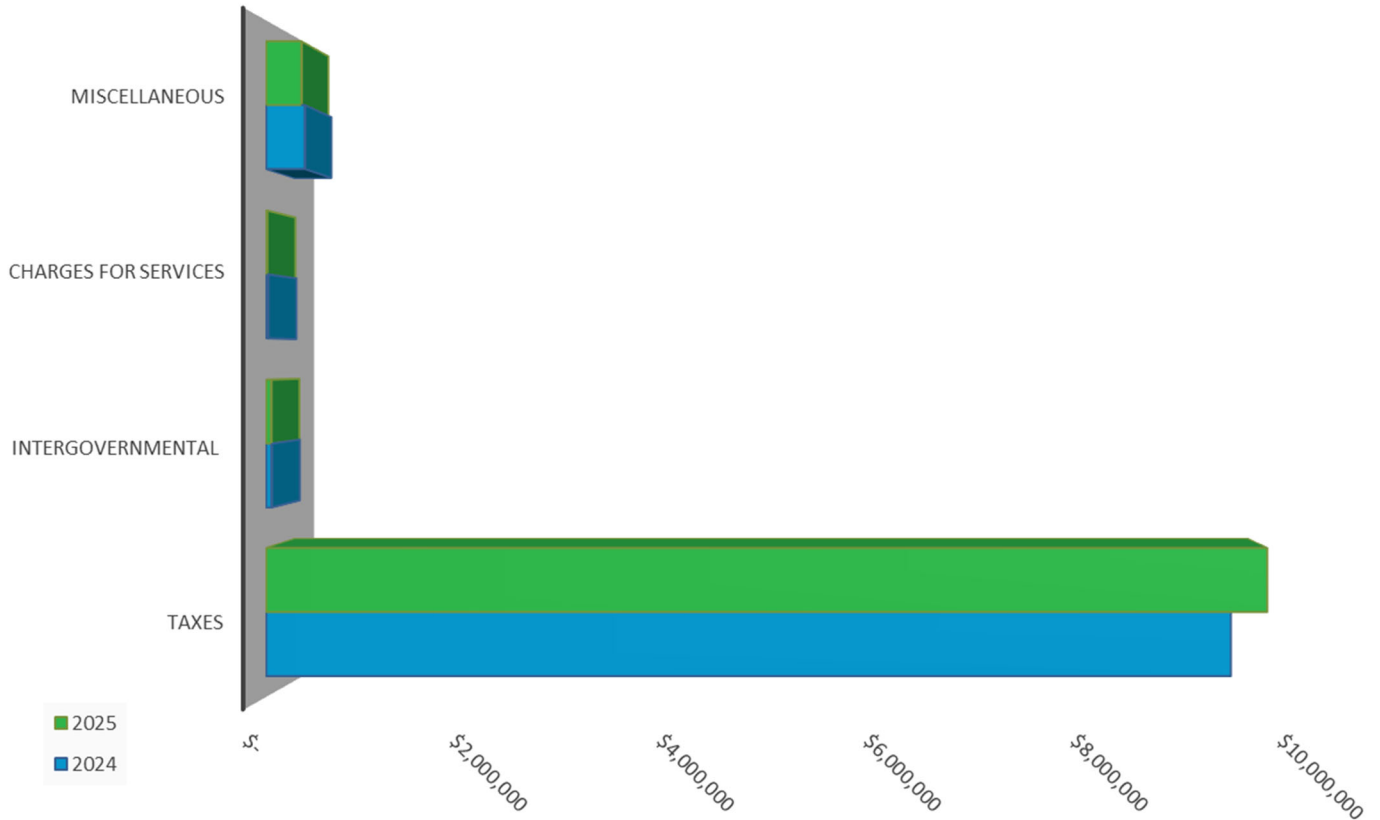
12/16/2025
Date

Allyson McBride, Exec. Assistant

2025 Budget Revenues - Year-To-Date November 2025 (92% of FY)

Acct No	Description	Budgeted Revenues	Actual Revenues YTD	% of Actual Revenues YTD	% of Budgeted Revenues Received YTD	Budget Variance
310	TAXES					
311.10	General Property Taxes	\$ 10,153,717	\$ 10,036,181	96.07%	98.84%	\$ (117,536)
	TOTAL TAXES	10,153,717	10,036,181	96.07%	98.84%	(117,536)
330	INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE					
333.4530	Fed Indirect Grant - IMLS	2,000	400	0.00%	20.00%	(1,600)
337.1000	Local Grants, Entitlements & Other	45,000	27,616	0.26%	61.37%	(17,384)
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	30,000	21,198	0.20%	70.66%	(8,802)
	TOTAL INTERGOV. REVENUE	77,000	49,214	0.47%	63.91%	(27,786)
340	CHARGES FOR GOODS & SERVICES					
347.2001	Printing & Duplication Services	6,000	6,687	0.06%	111.45%	687
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,400	937	0.01%	7.56%	(11,463)
	TOTAL CHARGES FOR SERVICES	18,400	7,624	0.07%	41.44%	(10,776)
360	MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES					
361.1100	Investment Interest	352,000	272,817	2.61%	77.50%	(79,183)
362.1000	Rents & Leases	3,000	3,830	0.04%	127.67%	830
367.1000	Contributions & Donations	44,000	43,186	0.41%	98.15%	(814)
369.1000	Sale of Surplus	100	95	0.00%	95.00%	(5)
369.8100	Cashier's Overages or Shortages	-	20.07	0.00%	0.00%	20
369.9101	Other Misc. Revenue	33,000	24,320	0.23%	73.70%	(8,680)
369.9102	Reimburse Lost/Damaged Books	11,000	9,086	0.09%	82.60%	(1,914)
	TOTAL MISC. REVENUES	443,100	353,355	3.38%	79.75%	(89,745)
	TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE	10,692,217	10,446,374	100.00%	97.70%	(245,843)
390	OTHER FINANCING SOURCES					
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Capital Assets	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	-	-	0.00%	0.00%	-
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 10,692,217	\$ 10,446,374	100.00%	97.70%	\$ (245,843)

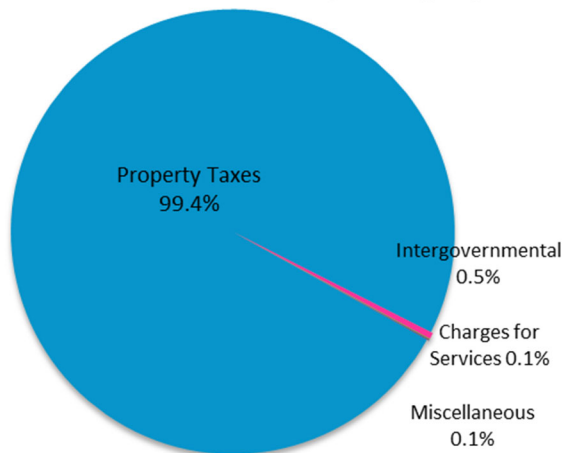
General Fund Operating Revenue to Date-Compared to Prior Year



Actual General Fund Revenue Year to Date Comparison

	2024	2025	% Change
Taxes	\$ 9,671,493	\$ 10,036,181	3.77%
Intergovernmental	54,214	49,214	-9.22%
Charges for Services	17,566	7,624	-56.60%
Miscellaneous	386,367	353,355	-8.54%
Total Operating Revenue	10,129,641	10,446,374	3.13%
Other Financing Sources	7,752	-	-100.00%
Total Revenue	\$ 10,137,393	\$ 10,446,374	3.05%

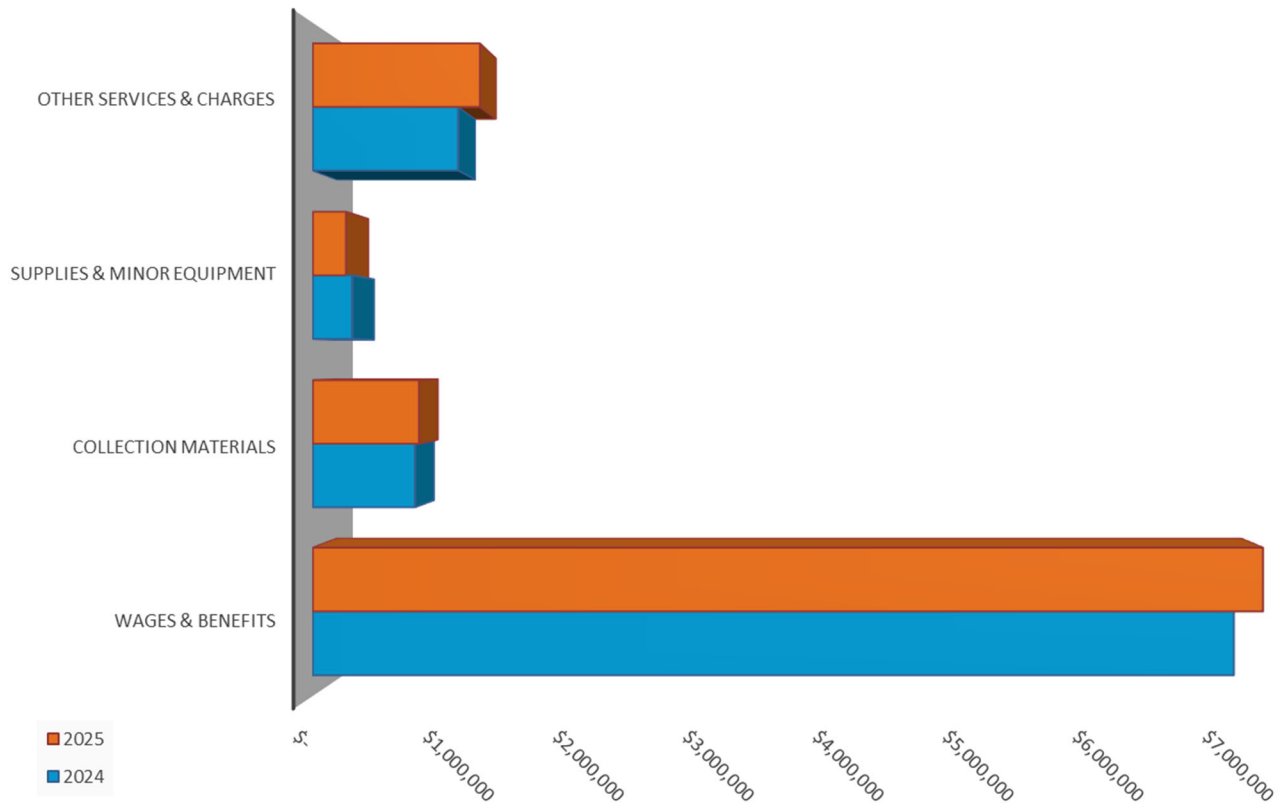
YTD Revenue by category



**2025 Budget Expenditures - Year-To-Date
November 2025 (92% of FY)**

Acct No	Description	Budgeted Expenditures	Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Actual Expenditures YTD	% of Budgeted Expenditures Spent YTD	Budget Variance
572	SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS					
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	\$ 6,289,075	5,693,030	56.32%	90.52%	\$ (596,045)
572.2000	Benefits	2,083,374	1,889,980	18.70%	90.72%	(193,394)
	TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES, & BENEFITS	8,372,449	7,583,010	75.02%	90.57%	(789,440)
572.30	SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT					
572.3031	Office & Operating Supplies	169,570	159,097	1.57%	93.82%	(10,473)
572.3032	Fuel	24,050	24,532	0.24%	102.00%	482
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,275,000	847,537	8.38%	66.47%	(427,463)
572.3035	Small Tools & Minor Equipment	164,650	81,627	0.81%	49.58%	(83,023)
	TOTAL SUPPLIES & MINOR EQUIPMENT	1,633,270	1,112,793	11.01%	68.13%	(520,477)
572.40	OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES					
572.4041	Professional Services	857,205	751,665	7.44%	87.69%	(105,540)
572.4042	Communication	140,788	133,719	1.32%	94.98%	(7,069)
572.4043	Travel	30,600	21,057	0.21%	68.81%	(9,543)
572.4044	Taxes & Operating Assessments	700	602	0.01%	85.95%	(98)
572.4045	Operating Rentals & Leases	22,423	20,164	0.20%	89.92%	(2,260)
572.4046	Insurance	105,737	85,234	0.84%	80.61%	(20,503)
572.4047	Utilities	186,424	159,559	1.58%	85.59%	(26,865)
572.4048	Repair & Maintenance	112,740	77,850	0.77%	69.05%	(34,890)
572.4049	Miscellaneous	110,920	84,345	0.83%	76.04%	(26,575)
	TOTAL OTHER SERVICES & CHARGES	1,567,537	1,334,194	13.20%	85.11%	(233,343)
	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	11,573,257	10,029,997	99.23%	86.67%	(1,543,259)
590	OTHER FINANCING USES					
597.1000	Transfers to Capital	78,164	78,164	0.77%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL OTHER FINANCING USES	78,164	78,164	0.77%	100.00%	-
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 11,651,420	10,108,161	100.00%	86.75%	\$ (1,543,259)
	NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (959,203)	338,212			\$ 1,297,416
	FUND BALANCE SUMMARY					
	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	9,932,448			
	Net Income	(959,203)	338,212			1,297,416
	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 8,973,245	10,270,661			\$ 1,297,416

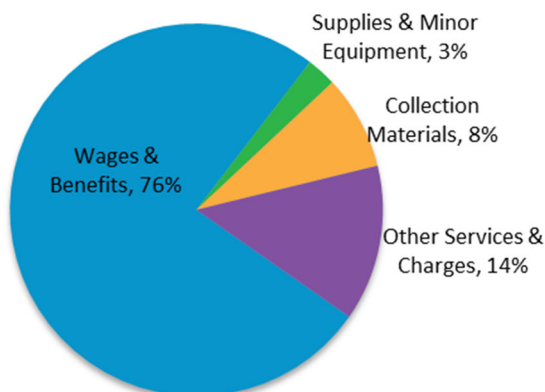
General Fund Operating Expenditures to Date-Compared to Prior Year



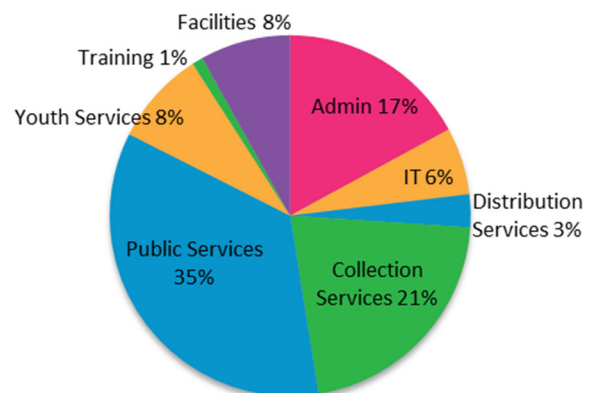
Actual General Fund Expenditures Year to Date Comparison

	2024	2025	% Change
Wages & Benefits	\$ 7,350,892	\$ 7,583,010	3.16%
Collection Materials	815,470	847,537	3.93%
Supplies & Minor Equipment	313,842	265,256	-15.48%
Other Services & Charges	1,160,089	1,334,194	15.01%
Total Operating Expenditures	9,640,292	10,029,997	4.04%
Other Financing Uses	94,135	78,164	-16.97%
Total Expenditures	\$ 9,734,427	\$ 10,108,161	3.84%
Net Operating Income	\$ 402,965	\$ 338,212	16.07%

YTD Expense by Category



YTD Expense by Department



Fund Balance Summary	2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted	2025 Actual to Date
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 10,612,545	9,932,448	\$ 9,932,448
Revenue	10,517,581	10,692,217	10,446,374
Expenditures	(10,967,678)	(11,651,420)	(10,108,161)
Transfer to (from) Reserves	(230,000)	-	-
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 8,973,245	\$ 10,270,661

Ending Fund Balance Designation Detail	2024 Actual	2025 Budgeted	2025 Actual to Date
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Cash Flow	\$ 3,639,587	\$ 3,767,044	\$ 3,767,044
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Emergency	926,588	951,274	951,274
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Capital Transfer	94,135	78,164	78,164
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Reserve	14,662	15,560	15,560
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund	600,000	580,000	600,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund	3,192,315	2,967,315	2,967,315
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund	650,000	550,000	550,000
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Levy Sustainability Fund	250,000	-	-
Designated Ending Fund Balance - Collection Project Fund	172,000	-	-
Total Designated Ending Fund Balance	9,539,286	8,909,357	8,929,357
Beginning Fund Balance less designated funds	1,073,259	1,023,091	1,003,091
Transfer to (from) Reserves	(230,000)	-	-
Net Income	(450,097)	(959,203)	338,212
Ending Unassigned Funds with no designation	393,162	63,888	1,341,303
Ending Designated Funds	9,539,286	8,909,357	8,929,357
Total Ending Fund Balance	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 8,973,245	\$ 10,270,661

November Summary

- As of the end of November we have received \$10,036,181 in property tax revenue, which is approximately \$117,000 shy of our total annual levy. Total revenue is at \$10,446,374, which is 98% of budget.
- Overall expenditures are tracking slightly below the budget target of 92% (11 of 12 months). Wage and benefit costs are at 91% of budget and total operating expenditures are at 87% of budget.
- The 2026 WCLS levy was formally approved by Whatcom County Council on December 1. This is a formality that happens every year but is worth noting this year thanks to the levy lid lift.



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	12/16/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration/Finance
Subject:	Resolution 12/16/25-20 Adopting the 2026 General and Capital Fund Budgets and Resolution 12/16/25-21 Adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of Resolution 12/16/25-20 adopting the 2026 General and Capital Fund Budgets and approval of Resolution 12/16/25-21 adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan.

Suggested Motion for Consideration:

Approve Resolution 12/16/25-20 adopting the 2026 General and Capital Fund Budgets.

Approve Resolution 12/16/25-21 adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan.

Summary: See budget document for detail of General and Capital Fund budgeted revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 2026, and for a summary of the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

Alternatives: None

Fiscal Impact: See budget document for detail of fiscal impacts

Comments: None

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

FINAL OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2026

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rodney Lofdahl
Chair

Danielle Gaughen
Board Member

John Miller
Board Member

Matthew Santos
Board Member

Jes Stugelmayer
Board Member

Prepared By

Jackie Saul
Director of Finance and Administration

With Assistance From:

Christine Perkins, *Executive Director*

Michael Cox, *Deputy Director*

Beth Andrews, *Human Resources Manager*

Thom Barthelmess, *Youth Services Manager*

Ryan Cullup, *Facilities Services Manager*

Geoff Fitzpatrick, *Information Technology Manager*

Lisa Gresham, *Collection Services Manager*

Mary Vermillion, *Community Relations Manager*

WHATCOM COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET
FISCAL YEAR 2026

To obtain copies of this document, or for questions regarding its content, please contact:

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This document is also available online at www.wcls.org/board.

2026 Budget Introduction – Executive Director’s Message

With sincere gratitude to the 56.7% of Whatcom County voters who approved the levy lid lift this past August, we head into our 2026 budget year knowing that our revenue prospects are strong and our fiscal sustainability is secure for the foreseeable future.

It was with profound relief that we entered our annual union negotiations this Fall knowing that not only would we avoid any reductions in force, but we could accommodate a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (in line with the CPI-W August to August) that keeps up with increases to Washington State minimum wage. We were also able to implement a 4% proficiency increase for our staff, who had foregone meaningful proficiency adjustments for the past few years. We agreed to undertake a Classification & Compensation Study in the new year, which could have budgetary implications as we adjust pay rates to reflect market comparables.

The levy lid lift process was all-encompassing and required significant staff attention in 2025. Nevertheless, we launched two new programs, “The First 500” aimed at increasing early literacy skills amongst our youngest patrons, and “The Library Game” which encouraged patrons to visit all WCLS locations and experience various services to become Library Legends. To date, more than 50 people have collected 16 or more game cards to achieve Legendary status – with many more playing the game and traveling across the county collecting cards. The First 500 will expand to more branches in 2026 and we will continue The Library Game through October, with a grand finale at Open Book, which will return after a one-year hiatus.

On a more serious note, we did a thorough cybersecurity audit process last year under the guidance of Securance Consulting. They assured us that overall, our systems are in good shape. They compiled a detailed list of recommendations which we have dutifully addressed.

Facilities projects will be a major focus for 2026. With the successful levy lid lift, we can tackle some deferred maintenance projects. The first order of business is filling our Facilities Planning Coordinator position so that we have staff capacity to plan for and oversee all the work. The team will be completing the meeting room wall at the North Fork Library, staff area renovations at the Blaine Library, and going out to bid for the Birch Bay Vogt Library Express. We expect to open the Birch Bay location at long last in 2026. Other projects include the final electrical work to complete the connection of our EV Charging Stations at Administrative Services. Two electric vehicles have been ordered and are expected to arrive in March 2026.

Two facilities projects outside of our system may have a significant impact on the use of WCLS facilities in 2026. First, the Ferndale Civic Campus project will affect the library parking lot for the next 20+ months. A temporary dirt lot has been provided during the construction process but this is not ideal and may reduce the number of visits to the Ferndale Library, particularly during the winter months. The second project is interior renovations at the Bellingham Central Library. BPL expects to close the Central Library some time in the summer of 2026 once full funding has been secured. They are leasing additional space at Bellis Fair Mall and plan to keep the Fairhaven and Barkley Branches open additional hours. However, we may see increased use of Ferndale, Deming and South Whatcom Libraries while construction is underway.

Much of our attention in 2026 will be on Strategic Planning. Trustees will work with leadership to determine our process, which will likely include a survey of county residents and multiple opportunities to gather community input. The strategic plan will help us map out our direction for the next 10 years and beyond – until our next levy lid lift.

This past Spring we welcomed Jessica Burson as our new part-time Foundation Development Director. Jessica arrived in time to participate in Whatcom County Library Foundation's annual Branch Out fundraiser and is coordinating an end-of-year giving campaign including a Giving Tuesday element. WCLF will undertake a strategic planning process that follows WCLS's efforts for maximum synergy.

A last note on the financial front: we will participate in a state financial audit starting this month and wrapping up in early 2026. The biennial audit covers fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

-- Christine Perkins
Executive Director

Whatcom County Library System Services Summary

Service Area

Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) provides library services in the unincorporated areas of Whatcom County, Washington and five annexed cities and towns.

WCLS served an estimated population of 142,160 in 2025. WCLS offers close to 704,000 books, audiobooks, DVDs, digital resources and other items. In 2025, WCLS patrons checked out over 2,130,000 items, made close to 560,000 visits to branch libraries and there were over 53,500 participants in online and in-person programming and events.

WCLS services are available to anyone who lives, works, attends school or owns property in the WCLS service area, as well as individuals who live in Bellingham and any Washington resident with a public library card. Library materials are available to teachers in public and independent schools, homeschools, preschools and childcare centers in the service area.

WCLS holds formal reciprocal borrowing agreements with Bellingham Public Library, the Fraser Valley Library System, Upper Skagit Library District and La Conner Regional Library District.

Services

WCLS provides services through ten branch libraries, a bookmobile, three express libraries, homebound and jail services, outreach, its website and in partnership with public and independent school districts across the county.

WCLS service hours provide access to a branch seven days a week. Hours are designed so that as much as possible, there is access to library services mornings, afternoons and evenings to meet the needs of the diverse population. Express libraries offer extended holds pick-up hours seven days a week from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM.

In addition to branch locations, the WCLS Mobile Services team provides services to those unable to visit a library. Mobile Services staff provided library materials to fourteen health care, retirement, residential treatment and assisted living facilities, the Whatcom County Jail and to those who are homebound through the Books-by-Mail program.

Teen and Children's Services partner with Whatcom County school districts and independent schools to provide annual book talks and programming at elementary, middle and high schools throughout the county.

In Whatcom County Library System's branch libraries, people can access:

- Books, movies, music, games and more available for checkout
- No-contact curbside pickup of items, including curated "to-go" bags and printing services
- Free internet access on public library computers, personal or loaner laptops and other devices on the Library's WiFi network
- Drive-up WiFi internet service
- Early learning programs and support for children ages birth-to-5, along with programs for children, teens and adults
- Job and business development assistance
- Materials and programs in world languages including Punjabi, Russian and Spanish
- Public meeting rooms
- Private spaces and equipment for online meetings
- Local history collections
- Staff to provide expert support for information access and reading recommendations
- Staff members who speak Punjabi, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian and staff who are members of Lummi Nation and the Nooksack Tribe

Online, people can access:

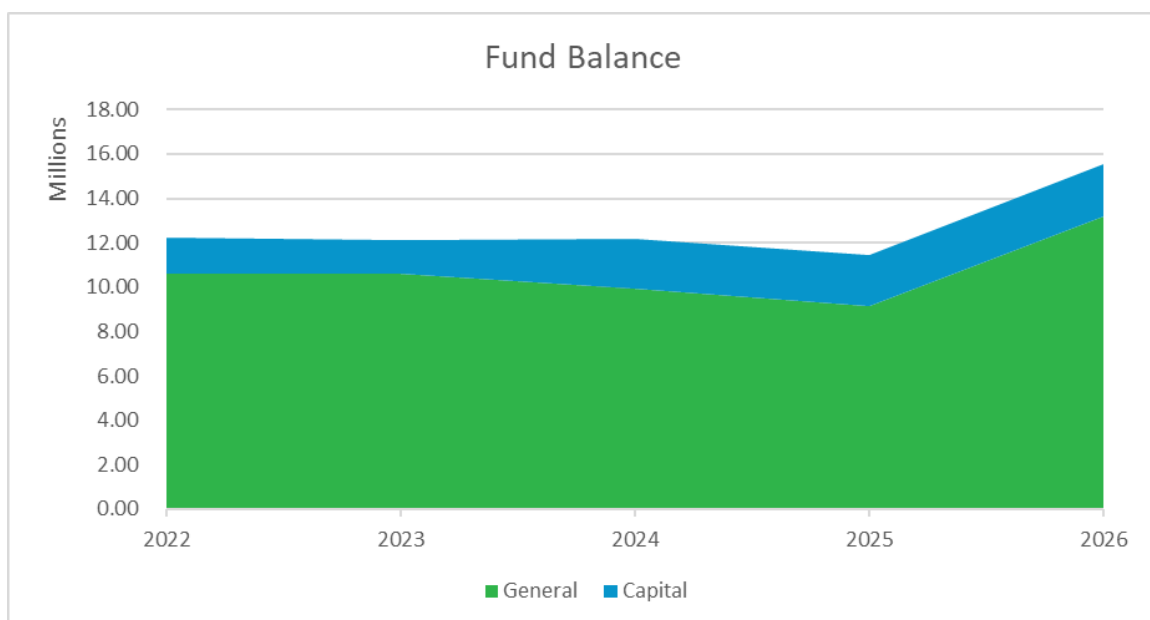
- Digital audiobooks, eBooks and eMagazines
- Online streaming of music, movies and documentaries
- Online programs including prerecorded storytime videos and online book clubs for adults and teens
- Credible, reliable information from online resources including newspaper and magazine articles, consumer information, vehicle repair manuals, encyclopedias and more
- Online reference and homework help
- Help for writing resumes, career planning and finding jobs
- A robust website, podcast and social media accounts to learn more about library services
- Online language learning for over 70 world languages, including Spanish, French, Italian, German and Japanese, as well as English courses for speakers of 21 world languages

2026 Major Fund Balance Summary

	General Fund	Capital Fund	Total Funds
Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 9,138,159	\$ 2,333,871	\$ 11,472,029
Total Revenues	17,488,002	2,448,960	19,936,962
Total Expenditures	13,448,463	2,406,875	15,855,339
Total Revenues Net of Total Expenditures	\$ 4,039,539	\$ 42,085	\$ 4,081,623

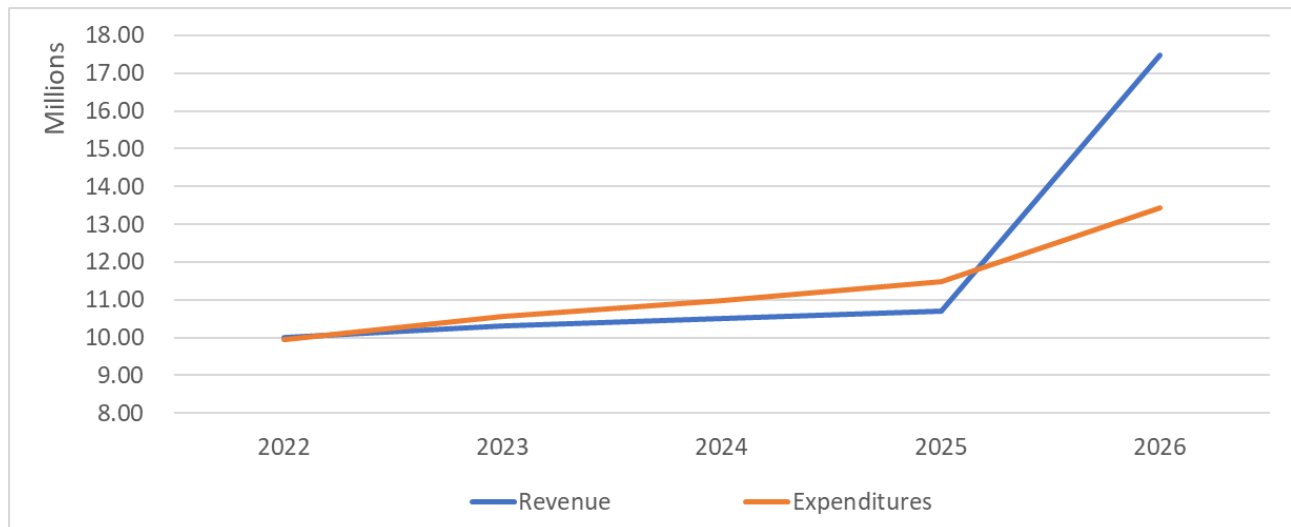
Ending Fund Balance

Assigned Fund Balance - Capital	\$ -	\$ 2,144,055	\$ 2,144,055
Designated Fund Balance - Cash Flow	4,107,993	-	4,107,993
Designated Fund Balance - Emergency	1,037,372	231,900	1,269,272
Designated Fund Balance - Capital Transfer	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
Designated Fund Balance - Unemployment Comp Fund	17,254	-	17,254
Designated Fund Balance - Birch Bay Operating Fund	505,000	-	505,000
Designated Fund Balance - Facility Ownership & Library Svcs Fund	2,967,315	-	2,967,315
Designated Fund Balance - Facility Maintenance Fund	550,000	-	550,000
Designated Fund Balance - Levy Stabilization Fund	1,000,000	-	1,000,000
Total Assigned & Designated Ending Fund Balance	11,184,933	2,375,955	13,560,889
Unassigned, Undesignated Ending Fund Balance	1,992,764	-	1,992,764
Total Estimated Ending Fund Balance	\$ 13,177,697	\$ 2,375,955	\$ 15,553,653



2026 General Fund Budget Summary

Budget Number	Description	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2026 Budgeted	% Change over 2025 Projected
308.0000	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 10,583,985	\$ 10,630,324	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 9,138,159	-8.00%
Operating Revenue							
310.0000	Taxes	9,408,229	9,827,497	9,724,963	10,153,717	16,866,352	66.11%
330.0000	Intergovernmental Revenue	195,188	157,899	78,164	75,400	75,000	-0.53%
340.0000	Charges for Goods and Services	16,089	16,991	30,242	20,000	20,000	0.00%
360.0000	Miscellaneous Revenue	195,402	303,410	446,460	446,100	526,650	18.06%
	Total Operating Revenue	9,814,908	10,305,797	10,279,829	10,695,217	17,488,002	63.51%
390.0000	Other Financing Sources	179,642	-	237,752	-	-	
Operating Expenditures							
572.1000	Salaries and Wages	5,131,974	5,573,808	5,931,178	6,253,762	6,901,446	10.36%
572.2000	Personnel Benefits	1,805,438	1,973,700	2,069,542	2,071,713	2,216,050	6.97%
572.3000	Supplies	1,583,026	1,546,070	1,554,499	1,607,326	1,828,125	13.74%
572.4000	Services	1,077,193	1,184,998	1,318,324	1,478,541	1,502,843	1.64%
	Total Operating Expenditures	9,597,630	10,278,576	10,873,543	11,411,342	12,448,463	9.09%
590.0000	Other Financing Uses	350,581	275,000	94,135	78,165	1,000,000	1179.35%
	Net Operating Income (Loss)	217,278	27,221	(593,714)	(716,125)	5,039,539	-803.72%
	Net Other Financing Sources (Uses)	(170,939)	(275,000)	143,617	(78,165)	(1,000,000)	1179.35%
	Net Income (Loss)	46,339	(247,779)	(450,097)	(794,290)	4,039,539	-608.57%
	Use of Fund Balance	-	230,000	(230,000)	-	-	
508.0000	Ending Fund Balance	\$ 10,630,324	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 9,138,159	\$ 13,177,697	44.21%



2026 General Fund Revenues

Budget Number	Description	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2026 Budgeted	% Change over 2025 Projected
308.0000	Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 10,583,985	\$ 10,630,324	\$ 10,612,545	\$ 9,932,448	\$ 9,138,159	
311.1000	General Property Taxes	9,408,229	9,827,497	9,724,963	10,153,717	16,866,352	66.11%
310.0000	Total Taxes	9,408,229	9,827,497	9,724,963	10,153,717	16,866,352	66.11%
333.4530	Federal Indirect Grant IMLS	13,634	19,546	-	400	-	-100.00%
333.9700	Federal Indirect Grant DHS	40,207	43,568	-	-	-	
334.0690	State Grant Other	-	650	-	-	-	0.00%
337.1000	Local Entitlements	115,572	69,660	54,589	45,000	45,000	0.00%
337.2000	Leasehold Excise Tax	25,775	24,475	23,575	30,000	30,000	0.00%
330.0000	Total Intergovernmental Revenues	195,188	157,899	78,164	75,400	75,000	-0.53%
347.2001	Printing and Duplication Services	3,709	4,659	5,802	7,000	7,000	0.00%
347.2002	Library Use Fees	12,380	12,332	24,440	13,000	13,000	0.00%
340.0000	Total Charges for Goods and Services	16,089	16,991	30,242	20,000	20,000	0.00%
361.1100	Investment Interest	104,090	230,261	351,048	352,000	404,800	15.00%
361.4000	Other Interest Earnings	0	-	-	-	-	0.00%
362.1000	Rents and Leases	2,225	3,720	950	4,000	4,000	0.00%
367.1000	Contributions and Donations	53,142	35,642	61,655	47,000	83,000	76.60%
369.1000	Sale of Discards	272	53	80	100	100	0.00%
369.4100	Judgements and Settlements	-	1,546	67	-	-	
369.8100	Overage/Underage	22	9	1	-	-	0.00%
369.9101	Other Miscellaneous	25,037	18,989	21,484	33,000	24,750	-25.00%
369.9102	Lost/Damaged Materials	10,088	11,385	10,624	10,000	10,000	0.00%
369.9103	NSF Fee Recoveries	-	-	-	-	-	0.00%
369.9106	COBRA Reimbursement	527	1,804	550	-	-	0.00%
360.0000	Total Miscellaneous Revenues	195,402	303,410	446,460	446,100	526,650	18.06%
	Total Operating Revenues	9,814,908	10,305,797	10,279,829	10,695,217	17,488,002	63.51%
395.1000	Proceeds from Sale of Cap. Assets	-	-	7,752	-	-	0.00%
395.2000	Insurance Recoveries	179,642	-	-	-	-	0.00%
397.3000	Transfer from Designated Fund Balance	-	-	230,000	-	-	0.00%
	Total Other Financing Sources	179,642	-	237,752	-	-	0.00%
	Total General Fund Revenues	\$ 9,994,550	\$ 10,305,797	\$ 10,517,581	\$ 10,695,217	\$ 17,488,002	63.51%

Taxes: Taxes on real and personal property are the primary revenue source for the Library System, making up 96% of operating revenues received.

In August 2025 Whatcom County voters approved Proposition 2025-02, restoring the WCLS levy rate to \$0.42 per \$1000 of assessed valuation. The 2026 levy amount presented in this budget is based on this new rate and preliminary district valuations provided by the Whatcom County Assessor. Assessed valuations are projected to increase by 3.2% to \$39.9 billion, based on valuations of existing properties within the WCLS taxing district. The impact of this, along with the value of new construction and state assessed properties, has been factored into 2026 budgeted property tax collections.

Revenue from the sale of tax title property, along with the debiting of property tax refund interest, is not budgeted but recorded in mid-year budget adjustments as needed.

Intergovernmental Revenue: Sources of intergovernmental revenue include grant revenues received from state and federal sources and revenues resulting from the sale of timber and other products from state forest lands that are managed by the Department of Natural Resources.

State or federal grants received in 2026 will be added as mid-year adjustments as needed.

Private harvest timber tax and the leasehold excise tax are also included in this revenue category. When timber is harvested from private lands, the entity who owns the timber at the time of the harvest pays a harvest tax. The leasehold excise tax is a tax paid by persons or businesses that use or lease publicly owned property. These sources are budgeted at levels consistent with the prior year's amount.

Historically, revenues from the sale of timber and other products from state forest lands have fluctuated from year to year as market forces, including variations in the housing market, impact the rate of harvest in Whatcom County. 2026 revenues have been budgeted to be consistent with the prior year's amount.

Due the variability in the distribution of these revenues, WCLS will budget to reserve these and other similar shared revenues for transfer to the Capital Fund.

Charges for Goods and Services: Sources of revenues from charges for goods and services include printing and photocopy fees and library use fees.

All WCLS branch libraries provide printers and copiers for public use. The amount budgeted for 2026 is consistent with amounts received in 2025. Printing revenue reflects a waiver of the fees for this service of up to \$7.00 per patron per week in accordance with Resolution 07/20/21-10.

Library use fee revenues are generated from the sale of library cards to people outside of the WCLS service area and through contracted services with other entities. Patrons who are not residents of the library district and who are not covered by a reciprocal borrowing agreement with another library system, can check out books, movies, music, and other materials from any WCLS branch library by obtaining a non-resident card. WCLS currently contracts with the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office to provide library services at the Whatcom County Jail, with fees paid annually.

Miscellaneous Revenues: This source of revenue includes investment interest, rents and leases (meeting room use fees), donations, COBRA and other reimbursements, charges for lost or damaged library materials, and other miscellaneous revenue.

On a monthly basis, WCLS invests any substantial amount of excess cash available after calculating immediate expenditure needs. WCLS participates in the Whatcom County Investment Pool program administered by the Whatcom County Treasurer. The program is a stable investment pool with various taxing district participants. Given the recent rate of return of the investment pool and anticipated increase in account balances due to the Levy Lid Lift mentioned above, the amount budgeted for 2026 is \$408,800, a 15% increase over projected 2025 interest revenue.

No significant changes are anticipated for revenue from rents and leases, sales of discards or payments for lost or damaged library materials.

WCLS receives contributions from the Whatcom County Library Foundation, Friends of the Library groups, and other private funding sources. Contributions and donations are expected to increase by 70% in 2026 as WCLS will be seeking grant funding for new projects and initiatives.

Other miscellaneous revenues come from reimbursements from Bellingham Public Library for distributing patron notices and other miscellaneous cash receipts.

COBRA reimbursements are from separated employees or those who lose health insurance coverage because of reduced work hours; federal law allows these employees to purchase group health insurance coverage for themselves and their families for limited periods of time. Due to the nature of COBRA revenues, no amount will be budgeted for 2026, but the budget will be amended throughout the year to reflect actual collections.

Other Financing Sources: This source of revenue includes proceeds from the sale of capital assets and insurance recoveries. Payments received, if any, will be added as mid-year adjustments as needed.

2025 General Fund Expenditures

Budget Number	Description	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2026 Budgeted	% Change over 2025 Projected
572.1000	Total Salaries and Wages	\$ 5,131,974	5,573,808	\$ 5,931,178	\$ 6,253,762	\$ 6,901,446	10.36%
572.2010	Retirement	477,319	496,704	494,292	412,775	366,117	-11.30%
572.2030	Social Security	382,466	411,334	440,502	478,413	526,148	9.98%
572.2045	Health Insurance	890,723	972,653	1,082,069	1,111,039	1,219,092	9.73%
572.2055	Disability Insurance	9,752	10,637	11,505	13,092	14,435	10.26%
572.2059	Industrial Insurance	43,603	31,791	40,035	40,816	63,342	55.19%
572.2069	Paid Family Medical Leave	-	49,830	1,139	15,345	22,539	46.88%
572.2079	Unemployment Compensation	1,575	-	-	233	4,377	1776.73%
572.2099	Qualified Moving	-	750	-	-	-	0.00%
572.2000	Total Personnel Benefits	1,805,438	1,973,700	2,069,542	2,071,713	2,216,050	6.97%
	Total Salaries, Wages, & Benefits	6,937,412	7,547,508	8,000,720	8,325,475	9,117,496	9.51%
572.3031	Office and Operating Supplies	132,873	144,131	181,280	168,934	178,225	5.50%
572.3032	Fuel Consumed	27,471	24,787	19,525	24,050	27,650	14.97%
572.3034	Collection Materials	1,238,277	1,275,608	1,208,590	1,275,000	1,400,000	9.80%
572.3035	Small Tools and Minor Equipment	184,405	101,545	145,104	139,342	222,250	59.50%
572.3000	Total Supplies	1,583,026	1,546,070	1,554,499	1,607,326	1,828,125	13.74%
572.4041	Professional Services	436,967	528,286	573,916	828,318	746,010	-9.94%
572.4042	Communication	140,989	139,618	157,003	140,707	140,450	-0.18%
572.4043	Travel	29,965	37,304	44,529	21,808	53,025	143.14%
572.4044	Taxes and Operating Assessments	326	378	500	700	750	7.14%
572.4045	Operating Rentals and Leases	23,127	20,812	64,806	22,278	27,447	23.20%
572.4046	Insurance	63,232	75,718	112,500	106,551	112,124	5.23%
572.4047	Utility Services	144,325	156,255	160,964	185,782	186,066	0.15%
572.4048	Repairs and Maintenance	140,554	140,483	114,105	83,434	120,255	44.13%
572.4049	Miscellaneous	97,708	86,143	90,001	88,962	116,715	31.20%
572.4000	Total Services	1,077,193	1,184,998	1,318,324	1,478,541	1,502,843	1.64%
	Total Operating Expenditures	9,597,630	10,278,576	10,873,543	11,411,342	12,448,463	9.09%
597.1000	Transfer to Capital	350,581	45,000	94,135	78,165	1,000,000	1179.35%
597.2000	Transfer to Designated Fund Balance	-	230,000	-	-	-	0.00%
	Total Other Financing Uses	350,581	275,000	94,135	78,165	1,000,000	1179.35%
	Total General Fund Expenditures	\$ 9,948,211	10,553,576	\$ 10,967,678	\$ 11,489,507	\$ 13,448,463	17.05%

Salaries and Benefits: WCLS continually monitors staffing levels, allocating staff to maintain appropriate service needs while balancing current and future budgetary constraints.

A 3% Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and a 4% proficiency increase are included in staff salaries and wages based on the results of Interest-Based Bargaining union negotiations. The COLA is intended to keep WCLS wages in step with state minimum wage requirements and increased inflation.

Personnel expenses also include anticipated costs for covering substitution needs in our branches. Starting in 2026, WCLS will offer paid discretionary leave to staff who are not members of the bargaining unit or management team. Additional sub coverage has been added to the 2026 budget in anticipation of use of this new leave type.

Benefit costs include employer contributions for employees enrolled in the State of Washington Public Employee Retirement System (PERS); contributions into the Social Security and Medicare systems; medical, dental and vision insurance premiums; Health Savings Account contributions; workers' compensation (Labor and Industries); Washington State Paid Family and Medical Leave; long-term disability insurance; and unemployment compensation.

Retirement contributions are based on rates set by the State of Washington Department of Retirement Systems. The employer contribution rate in 2026 will be 5.58% of gross wages.

The employer contribution for Social Security and Medicare is 7.65% of gross wages and salaries. This rate is set by the Social Security Administration and is not projected to increase in 2026.

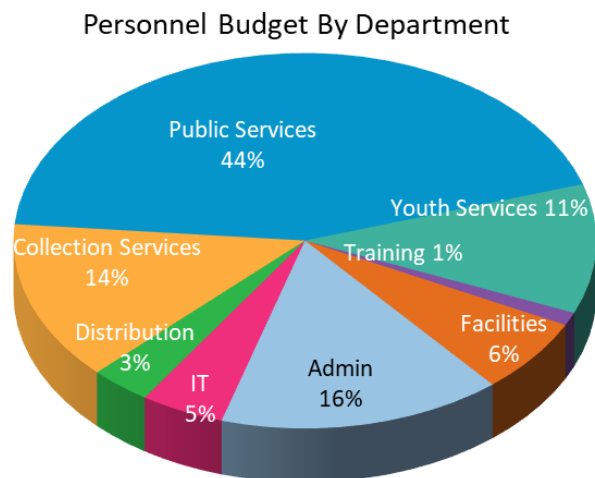
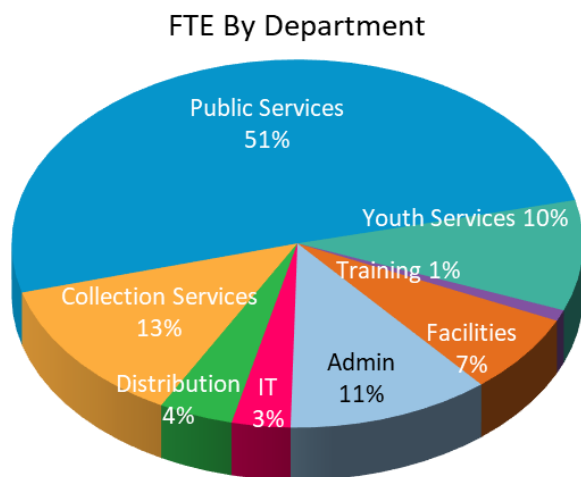
Medical, dental and vision insurance premium costs are covered at 100% for eligible employees. Costs for dependents are shared by the employer and employees. WCLS participates in the Washington State Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), which offers multiple plan options including QHDHP (Qualified High Deductible Health Plan) combined with a Health Savings Account and PPO (Preferred Provider Organization) plans. Rates for PEBB medical insurance plans will increase by 6.5-10.5% in 2026.

Dental, vision and long-term disability are provided by a private carrier. Dental rates will increase by 5% while vision and long-term disability rates will remain flat for 2026.

Workers' compensation rates are set by the State of Washington Department of Labor and Industries and are based on statewide trends and WCLS' experience factor. Rates will increase by 29% in 2026.

WCLS is on a reimbursable plan with the State of Washington for unemployment compensation. 0.06% of gross wages are budgeted for possible reimbursements, in addition to a fund reserve made up of 0.25% of wages.

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a state-mandated paid leave program that began in 2019. Leave is available to qualifying employees and premium costs are shared by the employer and employees. Rates are set by the Washington State Employment Services Division (ESD). In 2026 employers will contribute 0.2848% of 1.13% of gross wages.



Office and Operating Supplies: The supplies category includes office supplies; custodial and maintenance supplies; computer, copier, and printer supplies; materials processing supplies; mailing and shipping supplies; and vehicle supplies and replacement parts. The amount budgeted for 2026 reflects an inflationary increase as well as additional supplies for various programs and initiatives.

Fuel: This category is for diesel and gasoline for WCLS’s Bookmobile and eight other fleet vehicles. The amount budgeted for 2026 has increased by 15% over 2025 due to anticipated usage and rising fuel costs. Ultimately, fuel costs are expected to decrease over the next few years as WCLS transitions some of its fleet vehicles to electric vehicles.

Collection Materials: The collection materials budget provides for the books, magazines, audiobooks, CDs, and DVDs, along with the Library of Things and other items that comprise the lending collection. WCLS provides its patrons with a continuous supply of new materials in print, sound, video and digital format, and current information to support school, work and recreational activities. WCLS has set a target of 13% of operating expenditures for collection spending; this is made up of collection materials as well as the cost of services needed to maintain the collection, such as the integrated library system (ILS) and various cataloging, interlibrary loan, data maintenance and processing costs. The 2026 budget includes a 10% increase in collection materials spending, after nominal increases over the past few years.

WCLS anticipates materials circulation may be negatively impacted by the Bellingham Public Library and Ferndale Civic Campus construction projects, which could decrease collection materials spending. Collection purchases may be further impacted by the closure of vendor Baker & Taylor, and the subsequent increased demand on our usual vendor Ingram Library Services. If collection materials spending is significantly reduced due to these outside factors, it will be addressed in a mid-year budget amendment.

Small Tools and Minor Equipment: This category includes furnishings, computers, computer hardware, software, printers, shelving, book carts and other fixtures and equipment. The 2026 budget includes an 60% increase over 2025 spending, due to reduced spending in 2025 and anticipated replacements and other projects in 2026. WCLS aims to refurbish and reuse furnishings and equipment when possible, however, in 2026 several necessary replacements and upgrades are planned.

Professional Services: The amount budgeted in this category includes costs for legal services, payroll services, the collection services described above, advertising, IT-related subscription services, consultant services and participation in an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) program. This category also includes costs for adult and youth programming at libraries or online. In 2025 this category included a follow-up cyber security audit and the cost of the Levy Lid Lift election. In 2026 WCLS will conduct a Classification and Compensation study, as agreed upon during union negotiations. Such a study has not taken place since 2017. Overall, professional services costs are budgeted to decrease by 10% in 2026.

This category also includes payments to local fire districts for emergency and fire protection services at WCLS owned properties. According to Washington State statute, this payment to local fire districts is in lieu of property taxes because as a government entity, WCLS does not pay property taxes on the property it owns.

Communications: This category includes postage; UPS, FedEx and other courier services; local and long-distance voice service; fiber optic circuits which link Administrative Services to the integrated library system, the branch libraries, the library network and the Internet; DSL circuits in the smaller libraries to meet patron demand for additional Internet services; and cable data circuits for Bookmobile sites. Although rate increases are anticipated for the services listed, WCLS anticipates reduced internet service costs resulting from e-Rate discounts. This will result in costs remaining flat in 2026.

Travel: This includes reimbursement to employees and Trustees for use of personal automobiles on WCLS business such driving to another branch location to provide substitute coverage, and travel expenses associated with attendance at continuing education events, conferences and seminars. The WCLS mileage reimbursement rate mirrors the national IRS reimbursement rate, currently set at \$0.70 per mile and expected to increase in 2026. Employee travel has been limited over the past few years; in 2026 we plan to increase conference and professional development opportunities for staff, that when combined with mileage reimbursement will result in an increase of 143% over 2025 costs.

Taxes and Operating Assessments: This category includes the sales taxes paid on printing and duplication services provided to patrons. The amount budgeted will increase by 7% over 2025 as WCLS continues to see increased use of printing services.

Rentals: This category includes costs for leasing a postage meter, copiers and post office box rentals. This category also includes rental costs associated with usage of the Sudden Valley Adult Center for the South Whatcom branch library. Budgeted amounts are expected to increase by 23% due to scheduled rent increases and new leased copier equipment.

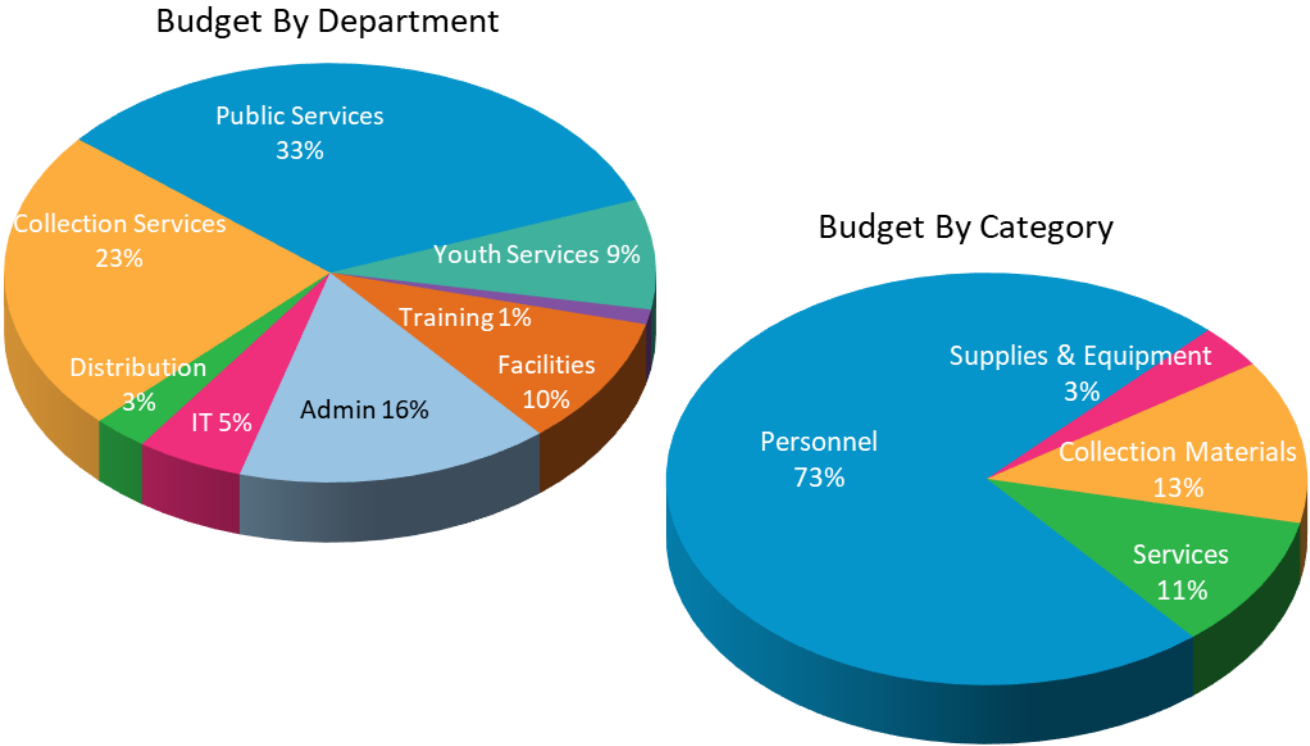
Insurance: This includes insurance for WCLS's real and personal property, flood insurance, vehicle insurance, errors and omissions coverage, employment practices and an umbrella liability plan. 2026 costs are budgeted to increase by 5% over 2025 based on renewal quotes.

Utilities: This category includes costs for electricity, natural gas, water, sewer and refuse collection for all WCLS locations. Electricity costs are expected to decrease due to an LED lighting upgrade at Administrative Services and installation of solar panels at the Deming Library. 3% rate increases are expected for other utilities, resulting in overall costs remaining flat in 2026.

Repair and Maintenance: This category includes costs for office and telecommunications equipment maintenance and on-going fleet and facilities maintenance. While several projects are planned for 2026, the amount budgeted also includes a contingency for unanticipated vehicle and facility repairs. The repair and maintenance budget will increase by 44% in 2026 due to reduced costs in 2025. Additional amounts needed for unanticipated costs beyond the contingency amount will be added through mid-year budget amendments.

Miscellaneous: This expense category includes trustee and staff WCLS memberships in the Washington Library Association (WLA) and other professional organizations, refunds to patrons who have paid for lost items and later returned them, along with training registrations, printing services and other, and miscellaneous fees. A 31% increase is budget for 2016, to support additional project and training needs.

Other Financing Uses: Traditionally, WCLS has transferred from the General to the Capital fund an amount that is equal to the previous year’s revenue received from certain intergovernmental sources such as those resulting from the sale of timber and other products from state forest lands. As this funding source has dwindled in the past few years, it is no longer sufficient to fully support the Capital fund. In 2026 WCLS will be transferring \$1 million from the General to the Capital fund in order to fully fund the projects described in the Capital Plan that follows.



Schedules of Fines and Fees

Administrative Procedure 4.01.04 Schedule of Fines and Fees

Policy Authority: 4.01 Borrower's Policy

1. Nonresident card fees:	
a. Family Fee	\$52.00 (up to 8 cards)
b. Adult Fee (18-65)	\$40.00
c. Child Fee (under 18)	\$20.00
d. Senior (65 and older)/Disabled Fee	\$20.00
2. If library materials are returned late:	
No overdue fines; items that are more than 28 days overdue will be considered lost. Damaged and lost fees may apply.	
3. If the account is submitted to collection agency:	\$10.00
4. Lost items or missing parts:	
Lost items will be charged to the patron's account based on their replacement value.	

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees May 18, 2010.

Revised: August 17, 2021, January 21, 2020, September 17, 2019; August 15, 2017; December 20, 2016; March 15, 2016; November 27, 2012; December 13, 2011; December 17, 2010.

7.03 Meeting Room and Facilities Use Policy Attachment A Schedule of Fees

Base Rental Fees (Rate covers 2 hours of use)			
Meeting Room	Capacity	Schedule A	Schedule B
Blaine Library Multi-Use Space	45	No Fee	\$30
Deming Library Meeting Room	58	No Fee	\$30
Ferndale Library Meeting Room	80	No Fee	\$30
Ferndale Library Conference Room	10	No Fee	\$25
Ferndale Library Study Room	3	No Fee	\$15
Lynden Library Meeting Room	80	No Fee	\$30
Lynden Library Conference Room	10	No Fee	\$25
Lynden Library Study Room	3	No Fee	\$15
North Fork Library Outdoor Side Lot	40' x 40'	No Fee	\$15
Point Roberts Library Meeting Room	30	No Fee	\$30
Additional Fees			
The following is charged in addition to the base rental fee:			
1. Additional time incurs additional fees charged in two hour blocks.			
2. Before/Afterhours use fee will be assessed by WCLS, the building owner, or Friends of the Library group on a case-by-case basis. Staff time is assessed at \$20 per hour and subject to availability.			
3. If special cleaning or repair is required as a result of use by a person or group, WCLS may charge the contact person an amount equal to the cost incurred by WCLS to return the meeting room to its previous condition.			

Adopted by the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees May 17, 2016

Revised: July 20, 2021, August 17, 2018, March 28, 2017



Whatcom County Library System Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2026-2030

Whatcom County Library System's Financial Planning and Budgeting Policy requires that the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan be updated annually. The purpose of this plan is to forecast and facilitate adequate capital spending levels, and to help ensure WCLS's future financial health and the continued delivery of services as WCLS continues to grow and change.

The Capital Improvement Plan outlines revenues and expenditures for current and new capital projects necessary to support WCLS operations and meet the service demands of the residents of Whatcom County. As most library buildings that WCLS operates are owned by the cities and communities that WCLS serves, WCLS works with building owners to maintain, improve and expand facilities to meet community needs.

The Capital Fund is primarily funded through interest earnings on its fund balance and transfers from the WCLS General Fund. WCLS transfers shared revenues distributed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and others to the WCLS Capital Fund on an annual basis to fund capital expenditures. When possible, WCLS may seek outside public and private grant funding for certain capital projects.

Although not specifically mentioned below, capital purchases in 2026 may also include items or projects identified and approved for 2025 but carried forward into 2026. When this is the case, the 2026 budget will be amended to reflect the revised spending amounts.

In 2026 WCLS will be developing a five-year strategic plan, to be implemented in 2027. Additional Capital projects will be identified during this process and the plan will be updated accordingly.

Project Descriptions

Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement Program

Projects in this category are intended to further WCLS's efforts to replace aging furnishings and make improvements in its branch libraries. With these projects WCLS hopes to create welcoming public areas that improve patrons' experiences while also increasing staff efficiency and safety through the creation of well-designed, ergonomic workspaces.

2026

- Complete Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project.
- Update teen area furnishings at Deming Library.
- Update patron lounge and task furnishings at the Lynden Library.
- Purchase furnishings for updated meeting space at the North Fork Library.
- Review use, size and capacity of existing youth spaces at WCLS libraries for possible updates and expansion where possible.

2027

- Make updates to circulation and staff work area at Deming Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Update circulation area at South Whatcom Library.

2028

- Install outdoor play area at North Fork Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Funds are earmarked for projects not yet identified.

2029-2030

- Funds are earmarked for projects not yet identified.

Building Repair and Maintenance Program

This category includes major improvement, repair and maintenance projects at WCLS facilities, including those recommended in the 2021 Facilities Assessment. Funds are budgeted to update aging or outdated exterior signage at branch libraries and to address infrastructure needs at Administrative Services. Additional projects may be added.

2026

- Update reception area and flooring in common areas at Administrative Services.
- Reseal and restripe parking lots at Administrative Services and North Fork Library.
- Update manager workspace and complete staff area updates at the Blaine Library.
- Complete North Fork Library meeting room project.
- Enlist designer to develop plans for a playground/outdoor activity area at the North Fork Library.
- Continue monument and wayfinding signage updates, focusing on Sumas Library in 2026.
- Continue to address items identified in Facilities Assessment including ADA needs.

2027

- Partner with Deming Friends to update exterior areas at Deming Library.
- Create additional private meeting space at Deming Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Updates at Everson Library including carpeting, exterior, storage, water fountain/bottle refill station (pending grant or other funding).
- Partner with the City of Ferndale to improve lighting at the Ferndale Library
- Investigate solar panels for North Fork Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Build playground at North Fork Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Partner with Sudden Valley Community Association for LED lighting updates at South Whatcom Library.
- Continue to address items identified in Facilities Assessment.
- Continue efforts to update monument and wayfinding signage.

2028

- Update staff and manager areas at Lynden Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Partner with City of Lynden to make restroom updates at Lynden Library.
- Continue to address items identified in Facilities Assessment.

2029

- Install acoustical noise reduction system at Ferndale Library (pending grant or other funding).
- Partner with City of Ferndale to replace carpet at the Ferndale Library
- Continue to address items identified in Facilities Assessment.

2030

- Funds are earmarked for projects not yet identified.

Equipment Replacement Program

WCLS budgets to replace aging equipment, particularly vehicles, on a regular basis. In accordance with our Strategic Plan focus of Stewardship, both fiscal and environmental, WCLS will aim to purchase electric vehicles when possible. The vehicle replacement schedule is as follows:

2026

- Install AV equipment in Blaine Library meeting room.
- Replace mid-sized passenger vehicle and mini-vans with electric vehicles (planned for 2025 but vehicles will be delivered and paid for in March 2026).
- Replace Nissan NV or similar style work van.
- Update vehicle wraps, decals and branding on existing fleet vehicles.

2027

- Replace second mini-van with an electric vehicle.

2028:

- Replace Toyota Prius passenger vehicle with electric vehicle or hybrid.

2029-2030:

- No replacements planned.

Land Purchases, New Branches, Branch Upgrades

This category includes costs related to new or updated library facilities, including real estate purchases, architectural design, and construction costs.

2026

- Complete Birch Bay Vogt Library Express project.
- Purchase and install meeting pod at Everson Library.

2027-2030:

- Additional projects to be identified as part of Strategic Planning process.

2026 Capital Budget

Project	2025 Projected	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Est. plan Total
Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement program							
Birch Bay New Branch Furnishings	\$ 150,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Branch Renovations/Upgrades	4,083	151,560	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	551,560
Sub-Total Building and Furnishings Enhancement and Replacement Program	154,083	151,560	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	551,560
Building Repair and Maintenance Program							
Admin Services Maintenance & Improvements	48,000	60,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	260,000
Branch Lighting Retrofit Upgrades	-	-	75,000	-	-	-	75,000
Branch Building Updates	58,606	199,806	143,000	67,000	90,000	50,000	549,806
Exterior Signage Updates	-	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	150,000
Parking Updates	-	100,000	-	-	-	-	100,000
Solar Panels	-	-	75,000	-	-	-	75,000
Sub-Total Building Repair and Maintenance Program	106,606	389,806	373,000	147,000	170,000	130,000	1,209,806
Equipment Replacement Program							
Vehicle Replacements & Upgrades	13,473	245,000	60,000	60,000	-	-	365,000
Book Return	5,838	-	-	-	-	-	-
AV Equipment	-	15,000					15,000
Sub-Total Equipment Replacement Program	19,311	260,000	60,000	60,000	-	-	380,000
Land Purchase/New Branch Libraries/Building Upgrades							
Birch Bay Library Design and Construction	192,711	1,525,509	-	-	-	-	1,525,509
AS Feasibility Study	1,741	-	-	-	-	-	-
Electric Vehicle Charging Initiative	220,161	-	-	-	-	-	-
Meeting Pod	-	40,000	-	-	-	-	40,000
Sub-total Land Purchase/New Branch Libraries/Building Upgrades	414,613	1,565,509	-	-	-	-	1,565,509
Total Expenditures	\$ 694,613	\$ 2,406,875	\$ 533,000	\$ 307,000	\$ 270,000	\$ 230,000	\$ 3,746,875

Funding Summary:	2025 Projected	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Est. Plan Total
Investment Interest	\$ 66,500	\$ 75,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 85,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 95,000	\$ 425,000
Grants/Donations/Reimbursements	628,109	1,373,960	226,934	67,000	45,000	-	1,712,894
Transfer From General Fund	78,164	1,000,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	2,000,000
Prior Period Ending Fund Balance	2,255,711	2,333,871	2,375,955	2,399,889	2,494,889	2,609,889	
Total Funding	\$ 3,028,484	\$ 4,782,831	\$ 2,932,889	\$ 2,801,889	\$ 2,879,889	\$ 2,954,889	

Fund Balance:	2025 Projected	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	
Assigned Beginning Fund Balance	\$ 2,023,811	2,101,971	\$ 2,144,055	\$ 2,167,989	\$ 2,262,989	\$ 2,377,989	
Designated Beginning Fund Balance - Emergency	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	231,900	
Total Beginning Fund Balance	2,255,711	2,333,871	2,375,955	2,399,889	2,494,889	2,609,889	
Revenues	694,609	1,448,960	306,934	152,000	135,000	95,000	
Transfer From General Fund	78,164	1,000,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	
Expenditures	694,613	2,406,875	533,000	307,000	270,000	230,000	
Net Income	78,160	42,085	23,934	95,000	115,000	115,000	
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 2,333,871	\$ 2,375,955	\$ 2,399,889	\$ 2,494,889	\$ 2,609,889	\$ 2,724,889	

Note: Projected revenues and expenditures represent current estimates. The priority, timing and available funding for budgeted projects are subject to change based on the changing needs of WCLS, its staff and the patrons and communities that it serves.



RESOLUTION NO. 12/16/25-20

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT ADOPTING THE 2026 GENERAL AND CAPITAL FUND BUDGETS

WHEREAS, after study and discussion by the Whatcom County Rural Library District Board of Trustees, Executive Director, and staff, the fiscal year 2026 General Fund and Capital Fund Budgets have been finalized; and,

WHEREAS, the voters in Whatcom County Rural Library District approved a proposition to increase the property tax levy to \$0.42 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to maintain its community libraries and library services; and,

WHEREAS, changes have been made to the Preliminary 2026 General and Capital Fund Budgets, including the estimated beginning and ending fund balances;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the attached General Fund Budget be adopted as the Whatcom County Rural Library District's official General Fund Budget for the year 2026 in the amount of \$26,626,160; and,

ALSO, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the attached Capital Fund Budget be adopted as the Whatcom County Rural Library District's official Capital Fund Budget for the year 2026 in the amount of \$4,782,830; and,

ALSO, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the attached Schedules of Fines and Fees remain in effect in support of the 2026 General Fund Budget.

General Operating Fund - Budgetary Accounts		
308 Beginning Fund Balance	\$9,138,159	
310-360 Total Revenue	17,488,001	
572 Operating Expenditures		\$12,448,463
597 Transfers Out		1,000,000
508 Ending Fund Balance		13,177,697
Total	\$26,626,160	\$26,626,160

Capital Fund - Budgetary Accounts		
308 Beginning Fund Balance	\$2,333,870	
360 Miscellaneous Revenue	1,448,960	
397 Transfers In	1,000,000	
594 Capital Expenditures		\$2,406,875
508 Ending Fund Balance		2,375,955
Total	\$4,782,830	\$4,782,830

Adopted by the Whatcom County Rural Library District Board of Trustees this 16th day of December 2025.

Rodney Lofdahl, Chair



RESOLUTION NO. 12/16/25-21

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE
WHATCOM COUNTY RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT ADOPTING
THE 2026-2030 CAPITAL PLAN**

WHEREAS, at the August 18, 2009 Board of Trustees meeting, the Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees adopted the Capital Budgeting Policy for the District; and,

WHEREAS, at the March 15, 2015 Board of Trustees meeting, the Capital Budgeting Policy was superseded by the Financial Planning and Budgeting Policy; and,

WHEREAS, said policy requires that the District develop a five-year plan for capital improvements and update it annually; and,

WHEREAS, the District has updated its initial capital improvement program based on identified needs, anticipated available funding, and the priorities established by the District's Strategic Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the attached 2026-2030 Capital Plan be adopted as the Whatcom County Rural Library District's capital improvement program.

Adopted by the Whatcom County Rural Library District Board of Trustees this 16th day of December 2025.

Rodney Lofdahl, Chair



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	12/16/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration and Human Services
Subject:	Personnel Policy Updates
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of updates to Hours of Work Policy 12.12, Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21, Family Medical Leave Policy 12.23, Domestic Violence Leave Policy 12.24, and Temporary Adverse Working Conditions Policy 12.45

Suggested Motion for Consideration:

Approve update to Hours of Work Policy 12.12.

Approve Update to Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21.

Approve Update to Family Medical Leave Policy 12.23.

Approve Update to Domestic Violence Leave Policy 12.24

Approve Update to Temporary Adverse Working Conditions Policy 12.45

Summary: At the October and November Board of Trustees meetings, we mentioned adding a new accrued paid leave type for non-bargaining unit staff. This new leave, discretionary time off (DTO) needs to be incorporated into several existing personnel policies as described below.

The Hours of Work Policy 12.12 is updated to include DTO and to indicate that DTO may not be used to exceed a staff member's budgeted weekly hours. A provision is also added to reflect how DTO and sick leave are used for adjunct and substitute staff who work on an as needed basis and do not have budgeted hours.

The Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21 is updated to clarify that employees may retain DTO before taking unpaid leave.

The Family Medical Leave Policy 12.32 is updated to note that an employee may retain DTO in addition to vacation and sick leave when using FMLA and to clarify that DTO will not accrue during unpaid leave. We are also updating some language for clarity and removing a provision that is no longer applicable.

The Domestic Violence Leave Policy 12.24 is updated to clarify that DTO will not accrue during unpaid leave.

The Temporary Adverse Working Conditions policy 12.45 is updated to state that non-bargaining unit employees may use DTO to make up for hours lost during a closure related to Temporary Adverse Working Conditions.

Alternatives: None

Fiscal Impact: None

Comments: None



HOURS OF WORK POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.12

SCOPE

This policy applies to all WCLS employees.

Flexibility in scheduling employee work hours is necessary to provide optimum service to the public within WCLS's revenue limitations. Allowing for management oversight, WCLS will attempt to accommodate the needs of the employee to the extent possible. WCLS will maintain as regular a work schedule as conditions permit to minimize the disruption to WCLS and employees caused by fluctuating work schedules.

The normal full-time work day shall consist of eight hours, excluding the normal lunch period of one hour. The normal full-time work week shall consist of forty (40) hours in five (5) days, as conditions permit.

The use of paid sick, vacation, ~~or~~ personal leave, or discretionary time off will not result in an employee exceeding their budgeted hours in a work week, except for cash-outs as described in the current bargaining agreement. Staff with zero budgeted hours may use accrued discretionary time off up to a total of 40 hours per week. Staff with zero budgeted hours may use sick leave when they miss a scheduled shift due to the eligible reasons for use outlined in the Sick Leave Policy 12.22.

The WCLS workweek is the seven (7) day period between 12:00 a.m. Sunday and 11:59 p.m. Saturday.

RELATED POLICIES: [Sick Leave Policy 12.22](#); [Overtime Pay/Compensatory Time Policy 12.43](#); [Rest and Meal Periods Policy 12.44](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCE: The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); [RCW 49.12 INDUSTRIAL WELFARE](#).

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
April 1988	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
May 15, 2007	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
January 21, 2014	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
February 16, 2021	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
<u>December 16, 2025</u>	<u>Revised to include Discretionary Time Off.</u>	<u>Jackie Saul</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	



UNPAID PERSONAL LEAVE POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.21

SCOPE

All employees of the Whatcom County Library System.

The Whatcom County Library System may grant unpaid personal leave when requested by the employee and workload requirements and staffing considerations permit.

In general, unpaid personal leave may be granted only after all appropriate paid leave accruals have been exhausted, with the exception that the employee shall have the option of retaining up to eighty (80) hours of vacation leave when going on Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. Employees may retain any paid leave accruals when leave is claimed under Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (WApfml). Employees may also retain accrued discretionary time off (as applicable). Additional exceptions may be made with the prior approval of the Executive Director.

If WApfml is denied, the employee will be required to use accruals in accordance with these guidelines and appropriate accruals may be applied retroactively.

I. BENEFITED EMPLOYEES

- A. Leave Requests: Request for unpaid personal leave must be made by submitting an Unpaid Personal Leave Request Form to the Executive Director and may be granted or denied at their discretion. Except in emergency situations, requests for unpaid leave shall be made as far in advance as possible, no less than 2 weeks before the leave is to begin. Emergency leave of three (3) days or less may be requested and granted verbally or via email.
- B. Leave Accrual: Employees on unpaid leave shall not accrue sick leave or vacation benefits and shall not be eligible for holiday pay for a holiday that falls within the unpaid leave period (unless qualifying family and medical leave applies as noted in the Family and Medical Leave Policy). During unpaid leave, an employee shall maintain their sick leave and vacation benefit accrued but not used, if any, prior to the effective date of the leave. Such accrued sick leave and vacation benefits shall be available for the use of the employee on returning to active employment.
- C. Continuation of Benefits: Benefited employees on unpaid leave other than FMLA or WApfml, for one or more complete calendar months, may be eligible to continue participation in WCLS's group insurance plans by paying the total premium for such plans on a monthly basis. Continued participation in such plans shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the applicable group insurance plan.

II. NON-BENEFITED EMPLOYEES

- A. Leave Requests: Unpaid leave up to the amounts listed below may be requested from and approved by the employee's immediate supervisor. Requests for leave beyond that authorized below must be made

by submitting the Unpaid Personal Leave Request Form to the Executive Director and may be granted or denied at their discretion. Requests must be made in writing and must occur as far in advance of the leave as possible, no less than 2 weeks before the leave is to begin. Emergency leave of 3 days or less may be requested and granted verbally or via email.

- B. Leave Accrual: Employees on unpaid leave shall not accrue sick leave during the unpaid leave period. During Unpaid Leave an employee shall maintain their sick leave accrued but not used, if any, prior to the effective date of the leave. Such accrued sick leave shall be available for the use of the employee on returning to active employment.
- C. Annual Unpaid Leave Amount: Non-benefited employees may request the equivalent of up to three weeks of unpaid personal leave per calendar year, increasing to a total of four weeks following five years of employment. Additional unpaid leave may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director. Employees should follow the guidelines in the Attendance & Punctuality Procedure 12.14.01 for notification requirements.

III. PERFORMANCE AND SALARY REVIEW

An unpaid leave of more than one full calendar month will affect an employee's performance and salary review date, except as noted in the Family and Medical Leave policy. The review date will be adjusted forward for each unpaid calendar month until the employee returns from leave.

IV. DURATION OF LEAVE

Personal leave in the form of paid and/or unpaid leave may be approved for up to a total of nine months unless a longer period is required by law. In the event that an employee has paid leave accruals that extend beyond nine months, an extension through the end of the paid leave accruals may be considered.

Factors that may influence ability to extend leave beyond nine months include necessity of temporary staffing, impact of the absence on the system and on library resources, and the amount of advance notice given regarding the extended leave.

V. RETURN TO WORK

When possible, an employee returning from unpaid leave shall be reinstated to their original position, or one equivalent, unless the leave has extended beyond nine months and/or business necessity has dictated otherwise. WCLS shall provide such employees with their original position or another position for which they are qualified by reason of skill, experience, ability and physical capacity, consistent with the terms of the current bargaining agreement, unless business necessity dictates otherwise.

VI. FAILURE TO RETURN TO WORK

An employee who fails to return from leave by the end of the period authorized, or accepts non-WCLS employment while on leave, unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director, shall be considered to have voluntarily resigned and forfeited their reinstatement rights to their original position.

RELATED POLICIES: [Attendance and Punctuality Policy 12.14](#); [Sick Leave Policy 12.22](#); [Family and Medical Leave Policy 12.23](#); [Time and Attendance Records Policy 12.40](#).

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
April 1988	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
March 17, 1993	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
February 19, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
November 16, 2010	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Deb Lambert
June 21, 2016	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
February 20, 2018	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
September 19, 2023	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
<u>December 16, 2023</u>	<u>Revised to include Discretionary Time Off exemption</u>	<u>Jackie Saul</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	

SCOPE

All eligible employees of Whatcom County Library System.

A. Family and Medical Leave Policy Statement

Eligible employees experiencing a need for Family and Medical leave may qualify for leave according to the program and eligibility requirements outlined below.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): FMLA is an unpaid federal family and medical leave program. FMLA rules and forms are set by the federal government. FMLA is administered by the employer's Human Resources department. Eligible full-time employees may take up to 480 hours – the equivalent of 12 40-hour weeks (pro-rated for eligible part-time employees, see Section D) – of job and benefit-protected leave during a 12-month period when the leave is necessary due a qualifying event (see below). Leave may be paid using paid time accruals, unpaid or combinations thereof, see Section E.

Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (WApfml): WApfml is a paid family and medical leave program that is administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD) for workers in Washington State. WApfml applications and determinations are between the employee and the ESD. Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks, or up to 18 weeks in some cases, in a claim year for eligible qualifying events. WApfml provides compensation of up to 90% of the employee's weekly pay. The ESD defines the weekly compensation limit annually.

FMLA and WApfml run concurrently when an employee is eligible and utilizing both programs.

FMLA Qualifying Events:

1. The birth of a child or placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care and to bond with the newborn or newly-placed child. Leave to care for a child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care must be concluded within 12 months of the birth or placement.
2. To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) who has a serious health condition, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care (see 12.23.02 Family and Medical Leave Policy – Appendix A). Note that FMLA guidelines regarding immediate family members may differ from the Bargaining Agreement definition of a close relative.
3. A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job, including incapacity due to pregnancy and for prenatal medical care.
4. Qualifying exigency arising out of the active military duty (or notice of impending call or order to active duty) of an employee's spouse, parent, or child.
5. Care of a service member seriously injured while serving on active duty or a veteran injured any time during the five years preceding the date of treatment (see Section C).

WApfml Qualifying Events:

An eligible employee can take medical or family leave when a serious health condition prevents the employee from working, or to care for a family member (see Section C) with a serious health condition, or for bonding with a new baby or child in their family. Examples of qualifying events include major surgery, pregnancy and childbirth, receiving medical treatment for a chronic health condition, and receiving inpatient treatment for substance abuse or mental health. The amount of paid leave that can be taken is determined by the employee's medical provider up to the maximum allowed as outlined in Section D.

B. Eligibility

FMLA eligibility: To be eligible for FMLA leave, the staff member must have worked for WCLS for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the start of FMLA leave.

WApfml eligibility: To be eligible for WApfml leave, the staff member must have worked for a Washington State employer for a minimum of 820 hours during the qualifying period (generally the last year) as determined by the Employment Security Department.

C. Caregiver or Family Leave

FMLA Caregiver Leave: An eligible employee who is the spouse, parent, child or next of kin of a service member injured while serving on active duty, or a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, and/or recuperating or in therapy for a serious injury or illness that occurred any time during the five years preceding the date of treatment while serving on active duty, may be eligible for up to 1040 hours – the equivalent of twenty-six 40-hour weeks (pro-rated for eligible part-time employees, see Section D) – of job-protected caregiver leave during a 12 month period. The total amount of leave available under the FMLA available to family members of individuals in the Armed Forces cannot exceed the equivalent of 26 weeks in any 12-month period for any employee.

WApfml Family Leave: Employees may use family leave to care for: spouses and domestic partners, children (biological, adopted, foster or stepchild), parents and legal guardians (or spouse's parents), siblings, grandchildren, grandparents (or spouse's grandparents), son-in-law and daughter-in-law, or someone who has an expectation to rely on the employee for care, whether they live together or not, as outlined by the ESD. Military family leave allows an employee to spend time with a family member who is about to be deployed overseas or is returning from overseas deployment.

D. Period of Leave

FMLA: An eligible full-time employee may be entitled to a maximum of 12 work weeks of FMLA leave, including paid and unpaid leave, during a "rolling" 12 months period measured back 12 months from the first date the employee uses FMLA Leave. An eligible employee who works less than full time (but more than 1250 hours in the prior 12 months) is entitled to FMLA leave on a pro rata basis determined by the average number of hours worked by the employee per week during the prior 12 months. FMLA leave runs concurrently with Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave.

Intermittent Leave: Under qualifying conditions, FMLA leave may be taken intermittently in either blocks of time, or by reducing the normal weekly or daily work schedule. Since a work week consists of the average number of hours an employee is regularly scheduled to work each week, a reduced or intermittent work schedule may result in an employee being on FMLA for more than 12 calendar weeks. FMLA leave may be taken intermittently if medically necessary because of a serious health condition of the staff

member or family member as defined above. If FMLA leave is for birth or placement for adoption or foster care, use of intermittent leave requires specific approval of the Executive Director.

When intermittent leave is needed for planned medical treatment or care for a serious health condition of the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule time off so as to avoid undue disruption to WCLS operations.

WApfml: Within a claim year, a qualifying employee may take:

- Up to 12 weeks of medical leave or family leave. Medical leave is for recovering from or getting treatment for a serious health condition. Family leave is for taking care of a qualifying family member who has a serious health condition, for bonding with a new child, or for certain military events.
- Up to 16 weeks of combined medical and family leave if an employee has more than one qualifying medical and family leave event in the same claim year.
- Up to 18 weeks of combined medical and family leave if an employee experiences a condition in pregnancy that results in incapacity, such as being put on bed rest or having a C-section or post-partum depression. A medical provider will need to certify that the employee's serious health condition is related to pregnancy using the appropriate certification form provided by the ESD.
- Intermittent Leave: Employees are not required to use leave all at once. Effective 1/1/2026, employees must claim four consecutive hours of leave each week or claim zero hours if taking intermittent leave. Parental leave applicants can take their leave anytime within the first year after birth or placement.

E. Use of sick and vacation leave, personal days and unpaid leave while on Family and Medical leave

Appropriate paid leave accruals may be taken as follows:

- An employee may elect to retain some or all of their paid sick leave accruals as allowed by the Washington State Paid Sick Leave Law; and/or
- An employee may elect to retain some or all vacation, discretionary time off or personal leave accruals when claiming WApfml.
- If only FMLA applies, an employee will need to use their paid leave accruals during their leave, however, they may retain up to 80 hours of their accrued vacation or discretionary time off leave.
- Employees may use all of their accrued sick leave, ~~and/or~~ vacation leave, and/or discretionary time off during medical leave but are not required to do so.
- Employees are permitted to use paid leave accruals to supplement WApfml up to 100% of lost wages but are not permitted to apply full shifts of WCLS paid leave accruals to shifts also claimed under WApfml to avoid double payment.
- If any FMLA leave remains after WApfml or paid leave accruals have been exhausted, the leave will be unpaid unless the employee is eligible, requests and is granted~~receives~~ Shared Sick Leave.
- If the employee applies for Shared Sick Leave, all paid leave must first be exhausted as described in the Shared Sick Leave policy.
- If WApfml is denied, the employee will be required to use accruals in accordance with FMLA and/or Unpaid Leave guidelines and appropriate accruals may be applied retro-actively.
- Employees may not receive double compensation for hours missed. Hours requested to be paid through WCLS accruals are not eligible to be claimed under WApfml. WCLS will be unable to retro-actively refund any paid leave accruals for time off that is later approved under WApfml.

Vacation leave, sick leave and holiday pay for employees who work less than full time will be pro-rated according to the hours the employee is budgeted to work. ~~Employees who have worked for WCLS for less~~

~~than six months may use their vacation for WApfml situations, even though they are not eligible for FMLA leave.~~

F. Health Insurance and Other Benefits

1. Health Insurance During Family Medical Leave

WCLS will continue to pay premiums for health insurance, on the same basis as during regular employment, through the last day of the month in which the FMLA or WApfml leave ends, to not extend beyond a period of unpaid FMLA leave where the employee was eligible for WApfml but did not use it. Employees who pay part of the premium for their own coverage or for dependent coverage during regular employment must continue to make these payments during their approved family and medical leave. If the staff member terminates employment with WCLS during or after their family and medical leave, the continuation of health benefits is covered under the COBRA regulations.

2. Health Insurance and Other Benefits After Qualifying Medical Leave

Family and Medical leave ends when the employee returns to work or exhausts all [available](#) FMLA or WApfml hours, ~~to not extend beyond a period of unpaid FMLA leave where the employee was eligible for WApfml but did not use it.~~ Additional time off under WCLS's general medical leave or leave without pay policies may be available, if needed and requested by the employee before the end of the family and medical leave period and approved by WCLS.

During unpaid leave time after FMLA and/or WApfml ends, the employee and dependents may receive health insurance benefits in accordance with the Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21. COBRA coverage may also be available. The terms of the policy in effect at the time will determine the coverage of the employee and any dependents.

A staff member who chooses to remove coverage for dependents at any time should be aware that renewal coverage for those dependents may not be available until the next open enrollment period. A staff member who does not return to work after qualifying medical leave will be required to reimburse WCLS for the insurance premiums paid by WCLS during their qualifying medical leave, unless failure to return is beyond the control of the staff member.

WCLS will pay benefits as if WApfml is approved starting from the application date, but if FMLA doesn't apply AND the WApfml request is denied, the employee may have to pay back benefits, including holidays, insurance, etc.

3. Leave Pay and Accrual

Staff members will not accrue sick leave, vacation leave, [discretionary time off](#), or personal days during periods of unpaid leave. Leave is not accrued while a staff member is using shared leave, but holiday pay, pro-rated according to the hours the employee is budgeted to work, will be paid when on an approved [family or](#) medical leave.

A staff member's performance and salary review date, or the date for their vacation benefit increase will not change during periods of qualifying family and medical leave.

G. Return to Work

An employee returning from FMLA or WApfml leave Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), Family and Medical Leave Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule, National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), Washington State Paid Sick Leave Law will be restored to the same position the employee would be working in if the family or medical leave had not been taken. In most cases this will mean returning to work in the employee’s former position, or an equivalent position. Restoration is not an option if the employee’s former position no longer exists.

WCLS may require a statement from a certified medical provider that the employee is able to return to work. If required, this statement must be made on the “Certification of Physician or Practitioner” form. A copy is available from the Human Resources Department.

If an employee does not return to work after FMLA or WApfml leave, employment with WCLS may be terminated. In most circumstances, extended health insurance coverage is available to the employee on a self-pay basis under COBRA. More information can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

RELATED POLICIES: [Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21](#); [Sick Leave Policy 12.22](#); [Military Leave Policy 12.25](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCE: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA); Family and Medical Leave Act; Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule; National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA); Pregnancy Discrimination Act; Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA); Washington State Paid Sick Leave Law; RCW Chapter 50A.04; RCW 49.46.210.

Legal review by attorney Deborra Garrett July 20, 2007.

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
May 21, 2002	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/
September 18, 2007	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
April 15, 2008	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/Amory Peck
November 17, 2009	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Janneth Hunter

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
November 19, 2019	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
September 19, 2023	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
July 15, 2025	Revised to align with legislative updates.	Beth Andrews	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
August 19, 2025	Revised to clarify effective date in Section D.	Beth Andrews	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
<u>December 16, 2025</u>	<u>Revised to include Discretionary Time Off</u>	<u>Beth Andrews</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.24

SCOPE

This policy applies to all WCLS employees.

A. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEAVE POLICY STATEMENT

Victims or family members of victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or hate crimes as defined in RCW 9A.36.080, may take leave from work when leave is needed for legal, medical or safety reasons, as described in this policy. Leave must be reasonable under all the circumstances, and may be paid, unpaid, or a combination of both. See Section C.

Leave may be taken to:

1. Seek legal or law enforcement assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's family members, including, but not limited to, preparing for, or participating in, any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or hate crime;
2. Seek treatment by a health care provider for physical or mental injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or hate crime, or to attend to health care treatment for a victim who is a member of the employee's family;
3. Obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, or other social services program for relief from domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or hate crime;
4. Obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, mental health counseling related to an incident of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or hate crime in which the employee or the family member was a victim; or
5. Participate in safety planning for the employee or the employee's family members, specifically including relocation (temporary or permanent) or other actions to increase the safety of the employee or their family members from future domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or hate crime.

"Family members" include the employee's spouse or domestic partner, and the employee's child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, and sibling (including biological, adopted, foster, step or legal guardian); and the child, parent, and sibling of the spouse or domestic partner of the employee, and also includes any individual who regularly resides in the employee's home or where the relationship creates an expectation that the employee care for the person, and that individual depends on the employee for care. "Family member" includes any individual who regularly resides in the employee's home, except that it does not include an individual who simply resides in the same home with no expectation that the employee care for the individual.

B. PERIOD OF LEAVE

When leave is necessary for the reasons and activities described above, employees may take leave, or work a reduced schedule that is reasonable under the circumstances. Because of the uniqueness of such situations, each request for leave will be evaluated and determined on a case-by-case basis.

C. USE OF ACCURED PAID LEAVE AND UNPAID LEAVE

Employees may use accrued paid time off for Domestic Violence Leave, or may take unpaid leave.

D. HEALTH INSURANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

1. Health Insurance During Domestic Violence Leave

WCLS will continue to pay premiums for health insurance coverage during a Domestic Violence Leave, on the same basis as during regular employment. Employees who pay part of the premium for their own coverage or for dependent coverage during regular employment must continue to make these payments during Domestic Violence Leave.

2. Leave Pay and Accrual

Staff members will not accrue sick leave, vacation leave, discretionary time off, or -and holiday pay during periods of **unpaid** leave. Seniority may be affected during periods of unpaid leave, including Domestic Violence Leave, because seniority is based upon the number of hours in paid status. A staff member's anniversary date or the date for their vacation benefit increase will not change during periods of Domestic Violence Leave.

E. RETURN TO WORK

An employee returning from Domestic Violence Leave will be restored to the same position the employee would be working in if Domestic Violence leave had not been taken. In most cases this will mean returning to work in the employee's former position, or an equivalent position. Restoration is not an option if the employee's former position no longer exists.

If an employee does not return to work after Domestic Violence Leave, employment with WCLS may be terminated. In most circumstances, extended health insurance coverage is available to the employee on a self-pay basis under COBRA. More information can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

F. CONFIDENTIALITY

WCLS will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of an employee who takes Domestic Violence Leave, and will not disclose information regarding the leave unless necessary for operational or safety reasons.

RELATED POLICIES: [Unpaid Personal Leave Policy 12.21](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCE: [RCW 49.76 – Employment Leave for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking](#); [RCW 9A.36.080 – Hate crime offense-Definition and criminal penalty](#).

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
May 20, 2008	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
July 15, 2025	Revised to align with legislative updates.	Beth Andrews	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
<u>December 16, 2025</u>	<u>Revised to include Discretionary Time Off</u>	<u>Jackie Saul</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	



TEMPORARY ADVERSE WORKING CONDITIONS POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 12.45

SCOPE

This policy applies to all WCLS employees.

PURPOSE

The Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) will take all precautions to prevent employees and patrons from being exposed to any unsafe or adverse working conditions posed by planned WCLS facility projects. These precautions include mitigating the potential negative effects of the project to the extent feasible, especially if the adverse condition will last more than two days.

FACILITY PROJECTS

WCLS realizes that planned facility remodel and construction projects can sometimes create temporary adverse working conditions. These projects can produce dust, fumes, and other irritants that may pose a problem for employees who are sensitive or allergic to the environmental by-products. These projects may include, but are not limited to, painting, carpet removal and installation, roofing removal and installation, parking lot repairs, facility additions, and other remodel or construction projects.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Safety Committee will determine the existence and duration of a temporary adverse working condition due to a facility project. Two members of the committee, one management and one elected, will review the project and bring a recommendation to the full committee. Based on the recommendation of the full committee, the chair of the committee will notify management if a temporary adverse working condition exists and if so the duration also.

ALTERNATIVE WORK LOCATIONS

When such conditions exist due to planned facility projects, management will make every effort to remove employees who are sensitive or allergic to the physical effects of such projects from the impacted area. When feasible or possible, management will find alternative work locations for those employees. Alternative work locations may include the following: working at another branch, telecommuting (working from home or another location via computer), or finding another work station within the same facility that is not impacted by the project. Alternative work locations will be used through the duration of the temporary adverse working condition. Management will determine if an alternative work location is not feasible or possible.

PAID TIME OFF

If management determines that an alternative work location is not feasible or possible, then Bargaining Unit employees will be granted paid time off for any scheduled time missed during the temporary adverse working condition. This paid time off will not be deducted from their sick or vacation leave balances.

Bargaining Unit employees should enter any scheduled time missed on their time sheets as “other leave” column and note “facility project” under comments.

If a Bargaining Unit employee cannot return to work after the Safety Committee determines the temporary adverse working condition is over, then they must begin using their leave balances.

Non-Bargaining Unit employees will not receive paid time off; however, they can make up the time if arranged with their supervisor, or they can use discretionary time off.

The supervisor responsible for each location should notify the Payroll Specialist of a Closure as soon as possible.

RELATED POLICIES: [Emergency Closure Policy 12.35](#); [Telework Policy 12.47](#).

APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
May 15, 2007	Adopted.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
May 15, 2018	Revised.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Marvin Waschke
<u>December 16, 2025</u>	<u>Revised to include Discretionary Time Off.</u>	<u>Jackie Saul</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	



Board Meeting Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date:	12/16/2025
Committee or Department:	Administration
Subject:	Public Records Policy 21.01 Update
Prepared By:	Jackie Saul
Impact upon Budget?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Supporting Documents:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Recommendation or Request: Approval of update to Public Records Policy 21.01

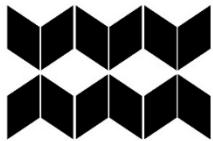
Suggested Motion for Consideration: Approve update to Public Records Policy 21.01

Summary: The Public Records Policy notes that records are not available at Administrative Services during holiday closures. This policy update clarifies that that records are also not available during other times when Administrative Services is closed to the public, such as during a weather-related closure.

Alternatives: leave policy as is

Fiscal Impact: none

Comments: none



whatcom county
library system

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

POLICY NUMBER: 21.01

SCOPE

Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) records subject to RCW 42.56.

PURPOSE

Pursuant to RCW 42.56, it is the policy of WCLS to make available for inspection and copying, upon request, its public records that are not exempt under RCW 42.56 or other applicable law.

DEFINITIONS

A *public record* includes any writing which contains information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function.

A *writing* includes any form of communication or representation. The forms of communication or representation include documents (paper and electronic), minutes, email, pictures, audio recordings, film, electronic databases, budgets, and charts. Refer to RCW 42.56.010(4) for a complete definition.

The *requestor* is the person requesting a public record for inspection or copying.

Redact means to remove, delete, or black out information that is exempt from public disclosure.

PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICER DESIGNATION

WCLS designates the Records Management Specialist as its Public Records Officer. The Public Records Officer shall ensure compliance with the Public Records Act, track all requests for public records, respond to all requests for public records or designate another individual to respond, and coordinate the review and retention of records.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

All requests either for inspection or for copying of public records should be made in writing using WCLS' Public Records Request Form. The Public Records Officer or their designee shall respond to the request within five (5) business days of receipt (excluding the day the request is received, and excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays). The response shall be one of the following based on the information provided by the requestor:

1. Make records available for inspection and/or copying.
2. Deny the request based on legal reasons.
3. Acknowledge receipt and provide an estimate of how much time it will take to provide the record(s).
4. Ask for clarification of the request.

The Public Records Officer or designee may need to revise an estimate of time to provide the records, and will notify the requestor if so.

If WCLS seeks clarification of an unclear request, the requestor has 30 calendar days to respond to WCLS' request for clarification. If the requestor does not respond within 30 calendar days, WCLS will consider the public records request abandoned. The Public Records Officer or designee will send a closing letter to the requestor stating that the request has been closed.

WCLS will make public records available for inspection and copying at Administrative Services Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (or such other times as WCLS and the requestor may mutually agree), excluding holidays and days when Administrative Services is closed to the public, provided that inspection may not be available immediately upon demand depending on a variety of factors, including (but not limited to): the scope, nature, and availability of requested records; the need to review and apply exemptions; and the availability of staff to oversee the inspection process to protect public records from damage or disorganization. WCLS will make efforts to arrange for timely access to public records in a manner that avoids excessive interference with other essential functions. WCLS may request that a person seeking to inspect public records schedule an appointment for inspection. WCLS public records shall not be removed, disassembled, or altered by the requestor.

If WCLS denies the request, WCLS will issue a written statement of the reason for the denial. Any person who objects to the initial denial may petition in writing to the Public Records Officer, who will forward it to the Director of Finance and Administration for a review of that decision. The petition shall include a copy or reasonably identify the written statement by the Public Records Officer denying the request. The Director of Finance and Administration will consider the petition within two business days and will either affirm or reverse the denial.

WCLS is not obligated to create records that do not exist, obtain records from another agency that WCLS does not have, mail records at WCLS expense, or respond to unclear requests that are not clarified upon request.

STATUTORY EXEMPTIONS – EXEMPTIONS LISTED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES

RCW 42.56 provides that a number of categories of public records are exempt from public inspection and copying. In addition, the Act provides that certain public records may be exempt from disclosure if any other statute or law exempts or prohibits disclosure. WCLS includes a list of exemptions, below, for informational purposes only. This list is not inclusive or exhaustive of all exemptions. WCLS's failure to list an exemption below shall not affect the efficacy of any exemption.

RCW 42.56.070(8) prohibits the disclosure of lists of individuals for commercial purposes. Therefore, if a public records request seeks a list of individuals, WCLS shall require that the requestor provide information necessary to determine if disclosure of the list of individuals is permitted or prohibited by RCW 42.56.070(8). (The Commercial Purpose Declaration can be found on the Public Records Request Form.)

According to RCW 42.56.310, any library record, the primary purpose of which is to maintain control of library materials, or to gain access to information, which discloses or could be used to disclose the identity of a library user is exempt from public disclosure.

According to RCW 42.56.230, personal information in files maintained for employees that would violate their right to privacy is exempt from public inspection and copying.

According to RCW 42.56.250, certain personal information, such as residential addresses and phone numbers, in records related to volunteers and employees of WCLS are exempt. Routine performance evaluations which do not discuss specific instances of gross misconduct are also exempt. Other items that are exempt may include industrial insurance (workers' compensation) claim files and records and certain tax information. Applications for employment, including résumés and other related materials submitted with respect to an applicant, are exempt as well as test questions and scoring.

Other exemptions are defined in RCW 42.56 and other applicable laws.

If any record is withheld, the Public Records Officer or designee shall cite the legal exemption that authorizes such withholding and provide a brief explanation for the withholding.

If certain public records contain some material that is subject to public disclosure and some material that is exempt, WCLS shall redact the material that is exempt before providing the records. WCLS shall provide the reason for the redaction and cite the applicable exemption(s).

COPYING AND MAILING COSTS

WCLS may charge fees for providing copies of public records as described below. No fee shall be charged for in-person inspection of public records.

It would be unduly burdensome for WCLS to calculate the actual costs for providing public records. RCW 42.56.070 permits a variety of types of costs to be included in the calculation of "actual costs," and the cost of each item in those categories may change over time. Calculating actual costs on a case-by-case basis for each of those categories for each request would be unduly burdensome for a variety of reasons, including the breadth of categories at issue, the need to track potential changes in the cost of each category over time, and the difficulty of determining the precise costs for some of these categories (such as the "actual cost of the electronic production or file transfer of the record and the use of any cloud-based data storage and processing service") as applicable to each particular public records request. Regarding actual costs of staff time, WCLS would need to track the precise amount of staff time to copy and send requested records for each request. If multiple staff members are involved in this process, WCLS may need to calculate and charge different amounts for different pages or records within a single request, which could be burdensome to track and calculate because WCLS employs over 160 employees who earn different salaries and different rates of pay that may change over time.

Based on the reasons above, WCLS will charge the requestor for photocopies or electronically produced copies of public records in accordance with the charges set forth in RCW 42.56.120(2) for any requests that exceed a total of ten responsive records, as further described in the "Fee Waiver" section below.

According to RCW 42.56.120 (2), WCLS will charge the requestor:

- Fifteen cents (\$0.15) per page for photo copies of public records or printed copies of electronic public records
- Ten cents (\$0.10) per page if public records that exist in paper format must be scanned to electronic format to fulfill a request to have electronic files provided.
- The actual cost of any digital storage media or device provided by WCLS, and the actual costs of postage, delivery, and the container or envelope used to mail copies to the requestor.
- Five cents (\$0.05) per each four electronic files or attachments uploaded to email, cloud-based data storage service, or other means of electronic delivery.

- Ten cents (\$0.10) per gigabyte for the transmission of records in an electronic format.

The charges described above may be combined to the extent that more than one type of charge applies to a particular request. WCLS reserves the right to include a customized service charge pursuant to RCW 42.56.120(3) in addition to the charges described above.

Alternatively, WCLS may choose to charge a flat fee of up to two dollars (\$2.00) for any request as an alternative to the fees described above when WCLS reasonably estimates and documents that the costs above are clearly equal to or more than two dollars. The Public Records Officer shall have discretion to determine when to charge this flat fee in lieu of the charges above.

If requested, WCLS will provide a summary of the applicable charges before any copies are made to allow the requestor to revise the request to reduce the number of copies to be made and reduce the applicable charges.

Fee Waiver: WCLS waives charges when an entire request results in the production of ten or fewer responsive records. The Public Records Officer shall have discretion to determine what constitutes a single “record” for any records where that distinction may be unclear for purposes of this waiver. Such charges will not be waived, however, when it appears that the request or a series of requests have been tailored to take advantage of this waiver.

Payment may be made by personal check or money order made out to Whatcom County Library System. Checks returned to Whatcom County Library System for non-sufficient funds are treated as non-payment. Payments may be mailed to Administrative Services, 5205 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, WA 98226 or presented in person during hours described in the Public Records Request section above. Cash payments will only be accepted in person at Administrative Services.

WCLS may require a deposit of up to 10% for the estimated costs of providing copies for a request and may require that the requestor make full payment of the copying and mailing costs before providing the records for a request (or for each installment of a request, if produced on an installment basis).

If the requestor does not complete the payment requested by WCLS within 30 calendar days, WCLS will treat the request as abandoned and close the request.

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

WCLS adopts the State of Washington Local Records Committee’s Local Government General Records Retention Schedule and Records Management guidelines as its public records retention schedule and authorization for destruction. These State guidelines have been reviewed by the State Attorney General and the State Auditor offices. A copy of the Local Government General Records Retention Schedule and Records Management guidelines is on file in the Public Records Officer’s office at Administrative Services.

RELATED POLICIES: [Confidentiality of Patron Records Policy 5.01](#).

STATUTORY REFERENCE: [RCW 42.56 Public Records Act](#)

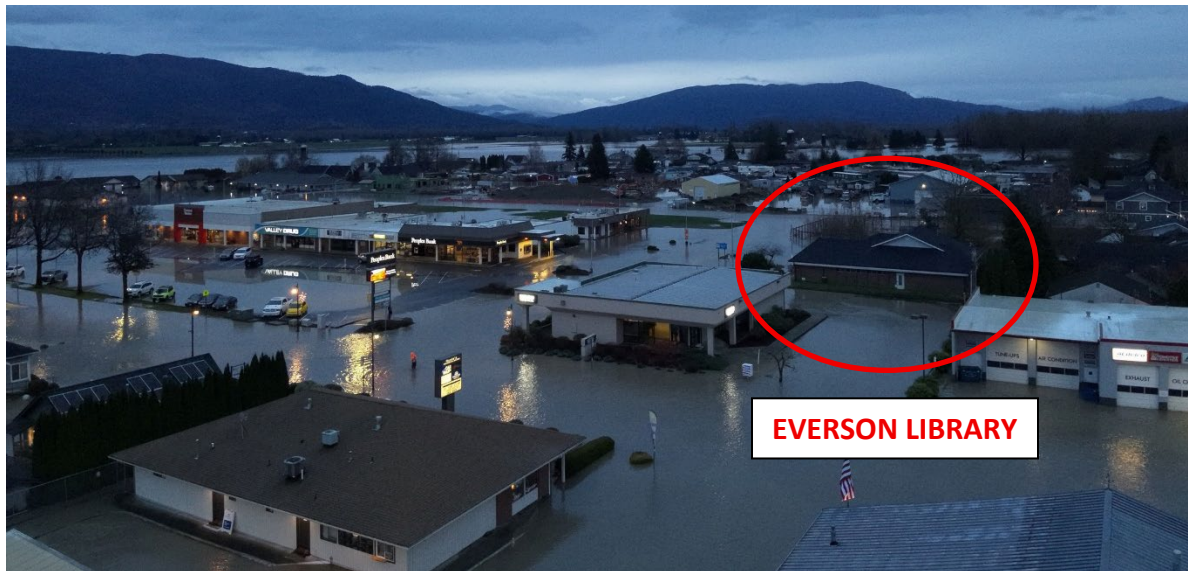
APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Date	Action	Reviewer	Approved By	Approval Signature
November 20, 2007	Approved.	-	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Amory Peck
March 19, 2024	Updated Public Records Officer.	Christine Perkins	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Matthew Santos
July 16, 2024	Updated to reflect best practices.	Christine Perkins	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
January 21, 2025	Updated to amend AS hours.	Christine Perkins	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Matthew Santos
June 17, 2025	Updated to add language about charging and payments.	Christine Perkins	Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees	/s/ Rodney Lofdahl
<u>December 16, 2025</u>	<u>Update to add language around AS closures.</u>	<u>Christine Perkins</u>	<u>Whatcom County Library System Board of Trustees</u>	

COMMUNITY

We said goodbye to longtime Friends of the Point Roberts Library President Judy Ross this month. After 25+ years on the Point and significant success raising funds for the new Point Roberts Library along with her husband Ed Park (now deceased), Judy is moving to be closer to family. We will miss her creativity and tenaciousness. A quilt that she made hangs on the wall in the A.S. conference room.

ACCESS



The recent atmospheric river and subsequent flooding impacted access to the Deming, Everson, Ferndale and Sumas libraries and led us to close these locations. We forwarded incoming phone calls to be answered by staff at the Lynden library and kept our website and news media updated. The full impact of water damage at Sumas and Everson libraries still needs to be assessed.

RESOURCES

Recent efforts to propose state legislation to support fair pricing for eBooks have stalled due to lack of consensus amongst libraries. We are regrouping to map out next steps.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

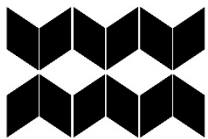
We were recently awarded a grant from the Nooksack Tribe to provide some cultural programming. Our PSA Nooksack Tribal Liaison Marty Jimmy has several events planned in the new year.

We were approached by the Los Angeles Public Library to participate in a “One Book One Coast” reading program to celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Month in May 2026. They are enlisting partners from California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska. We indicated initial interest and look forward to learning more.

STEWARDSHIP

Our bi-annual state financial audit has begun. Thank you to our Finance Director Jackie Saul for keeping such organized, detailed and accurate financial records.

Christine Perkins, Executive Director



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library system

Deputy Director Report

December 2025

COMMUNITY – LYNDEN LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

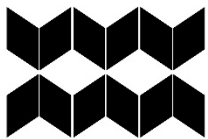
The Lynden Library is a landmark in the community with a clock tower and a peaked ceiling that provides fantastic acoustics for musical performances. Inside you'll find a fish tank (Winken, Blinken, Nod & Bob) that has been there for over 15 years. This beloved feature is cared for by the Friends of Lynden Library and is a dedication to a treasured past Friends member. This is the only WCLS location with a microfilm reader. Patrons may access historic newspapers and census records or borrow microfilm from other libraries to be viewed here. Also unique to LY is a video relay service monitor that allows patrons to communicate using American Sign Language to make calls and take care of business with the help of a live interpreter. Curbside service continues to be well used. LY is one of two locations open 7 days a week.

The service desk model designed to easily allow staff to get out from behind the desk and help patrons where they are was first developed at LY. That initial design has been improved upon and implemented at Everson, North Fork, and Sumas libraries. Recent updates to the facility include a refreshed delivery area, new carpet throughout the entire library in partnership with the City, a remodeled Teen Area, and new furniture in the Children's Area. In 2026, we will be replacing all furniture in reading areas throughout the library.

Staff at LY provide some key functions that benefit patrons across the system. All Ask-a-Librarian questions submitted electronically are responded to by LY staff. They also oversee the process needed to merge Libby accounts when patrons are issued new library card numbers. Two full-time PSA Substitute staff based at LY help provide coverage across the system as needed. Earlier this year, 10 Page hours were reallocated to the South Whatcom Library in response to increased circulation there. Plans for staffing at the Birch Bay Library include sharing some staff from LY.

In addition to programs that cater to patrons of all ages, you'll find a number of programs designed to engage Spanish speaking patrons and to celebrate cultural traditions of Hispanic cultures with the community at large. Partnerships with a number of community organizations are strong. For example, working with Cascade Community Connections, we help to empower people with disabilities to gain work experience. Local quilters regularly display their art in the library. Programs in partnership with the Senior Center are common. The Lynden Library is a place to see the many faces of the Lynden Community.

Dianne Marrs-Smith, Branch Manager & **Michael Cox**, Deputy Director



whatcom county
library system

Youth Services Report

December 2025

ACCESS

The Ferndale School Board approved the ConnectED Memorandum of Understanding with WCLS, completed an opt-out process with families, and shared updated student data with WCLS, allowing us to resume ConnectED service. Throughout the pause we heard from students and teachers about how much they missed the program. As soon as the ConnectED accounts went live again, holds began appearing, resulting in the largest delivery we have had to date.



These images represent books on their way to students at Cascadia, Custer, Eagleridge, and Skyline Elementary Schools, Horizon and Vista Middle Schools, and Ferndale High School. All of this is evidence of how important it is to bring library service to young people where they are, and commit ourselves to holds pickup in schools.

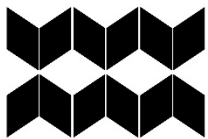
RESOURCES

Two new staff have joined the Youth Services Team this month. Thomas Lynn, formerly a Page at South Whatcom, is now the Youth Services Assistant at the North Fork Library. And Sawyer Elms has joined the team as the new Youth Services Assistant at Lynden. We're thrilled to welcome both to Youth Services and excited to work alongside them.

The First 500 picture book subscription service pilot is expanding. Beginning in January, patrons at Blaine and South Whatcom will be able to register to pick up a weekly bag of ten picture books on their way to 500. We began the pilot in Deming, a library that enjoys a lot of real estate relative to its business. The inclusion of Blaine and Deming will allow us to test running the program in busy libraries with small footprints and limited picture book collections. Once this second phase of the pilot is complete, we'll be able to move out to the entire system.

Thom Barthelmess

Youth Services Manager



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Community Relations Report

December 2025

COMMUNITY/RESOURCES



whatcomresources.org

When severe weather impacts branch operations and/or the lives of our patrons, Community Relations staff assist by sharing important closure updates and community resources via our website and social media. We post closure information as soon as possible and update it as needed throughout the day.

Online, in patron emails and in branches, we also highlight Whatcom Resource Information Cooperative's searchable website, whatcomresources.org, which connects community members with local services and organizations that can help in times of need. WCLS staff have been integral in the development and implementation of this website, which was an idea born from the severe flooding in 2021. Former Trustee Lori Jump suggested WCLS create a searchable database to help with flood relief and other emergencies. Neil McKay and Michael Cox developed an online collection of organizations, websites, phone numbers and information. It quickly became a popular and highly regarded tool, illustrating the library system's role as a trusted community resource. Eventually, the WCLS site merged with WRIC's efforts to become the invaluable cooperative resource it is today.

News Releases

- [Whatcom READS announces 2026 programs](#)

Podcast: wcls.org/podcast or subscribe on your favorite podcast platform

- [Episode 58: Hot Takes from WCLS Staff](#)

Book Reviews

- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 12, 2025, *Blaine book review: 'The Lost Journals of Sacajewea'*
- *Cascadia Daily News*, Nov. 16, 2025, *Review: 'Ian's Ride: A Long-Distance Journey to Joy' by Karen Polinsky*
- Bellingham Alive, November/December 2025, see clip below

Book Reviews

WRITTEN BY EMMA RADOSEVICH



"American Bulk: Essays on Excess"
by Emily Mester

In Emily Mester's childhood home, the dining table was cleared for dining only on Christmas and Easter. Every other day was for piles: of shopping bags, hauls from Chicagoland big box stores, but especially from the closest place Emily's family had to a church: Costco.

As a kid, she and her grandma bonded over their love for samples and freebies—a love that Mester later connects to her grandma's hoarding disorder, her dad's passion for deals, and her own struggles with excess.

But that struggle doesn't extend to Mester's writing: "American Bulk" is a tightly-written balance of humor and humanity. With wit and hard-earned insight, Mester's life stories become a rich text for understanding American consumer culture. She unravels a lifelong obsession with online product reviews, wins a lifetime supply of LaCroix, and muses about her complicated relationship with Olive Garden. At the heart of this memoir-in-essays is her grandma, a proud former teacher whose inability to let things go meant losing the biggest thing of all: her home.



"Algospeak: How Social Media Is Transforming the Future of Language"
by Alec Aleksic

Why are young people saying "unalive" instead of "dead"? Why do all influencers sound the same? How is TikTok changing the way we speak—even for people who don't use the app?

Using his experience as TikTok's @etymologynerd, linguist Alec Aleksic answers these questions and more in "Algospeak." Aleksic turned his account into a linguistic experiment, changing his cadence, inflection, and word choice to gather data about the mysterious TikTok algorithm. His research revealed a sprawling, rapidly shifting linguistic landscape accessible to anyone with a short-form video app like Instagram or YouTube—but especially Tiktok.

As in his own videos, "Algospeak" unpacks complex linguistic ideas like the euphemism treadmill, sociolects, and the popularity of incel memes in a highly accessible format. Aleksic's attitude toward the way we speak is descriptive rather than judgmental, saving his criticism for the platforms themselves. Languages never stop evolving, and it's more fun to ask "how" rather than "how dare."

Media Coverage

- *All Point Bulletin*, Nov. 5, 2025, [WCLS seeks Board of Trustees member](#)
- *The Skanner*, Nov. 10, 2025, [Washington State Library Launches New Certification Portal for Library Cardholders](#)
- *Salish Current*, Nov. 12, 2025, [Keeping Icelandic ways alive — in Point Roberts](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 12, 2025, [WSU Extension focuses on Blaine for good neighboring research](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 12, 2025, [Local UFO investigator invites 'curious' minds to share stories](#)
- *Lynden Tribune*, Nov. 12, 2025, [WHATCOM NEWS: Nov. 12, 2025](#)
- *425 Magazine*, Nov. 12, 2025, [WSL Launches Certification Portal for Library Cardholders](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 19, 2025, [Holiday Harbor Lights to kick off winter celebrations](#)
- *The Bellingham Herald*, Nov. 21, 2025, [Whatcom County mobile market seeks help for rural food access](#)
- *All Point Bulletin*, Nov. 21, 2025, [Library quick picks: December](#)
- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 25, 2025, [In the Garden with Kelle: Winterizing your garden](#)

- *Cascadia Daily News*, Nov. 25, 2025, 'Mischief makers,' teachers and visionaries get a nod in inaugural Whatcom Arts Awards (Whatcom READS wins literary arts award.)
- *The Northern Light*, Nov. 29, 2025, WCLS eyes Blaine Public Library upgrades for 2026

Salish Current, Nov. 6, 2025 (see clips below)

All About Owls. Kids, come and learn all about these nocturnal birds of prey, from diet to habitat to wingspan, and discover what you can do to conserve and protect them. Nov. 15, 10:30–11:30 a.m., Deming Library.

Paper stars. Learn to make two different kinds of beautiful paper star ornaments. Materials provided. Nov. 22, 3–4:30 p.m., Deming Library. Space is limited; [registration is required.](#)

All Point Bulletin, Nov. 20 and Nov. 26, 2025 (see clips below)

Paper Star Ornament Workshop: Saturday, December 13, 11 to 2:30 p.m. library meeting room. Learn how to make two kinds of paper star ornaments. Space limited; registration required. Materials provided.

Let's Make Presents: Wednesday, December 17, 3 to 4 p.m., library meeting room. We'll have all the supplies and ideas you need to make beautiful meaningful gifts for the loved ones in your life. This event is for kids. Teen corps volunteers needed from 2:45 to 4:15 p.m.

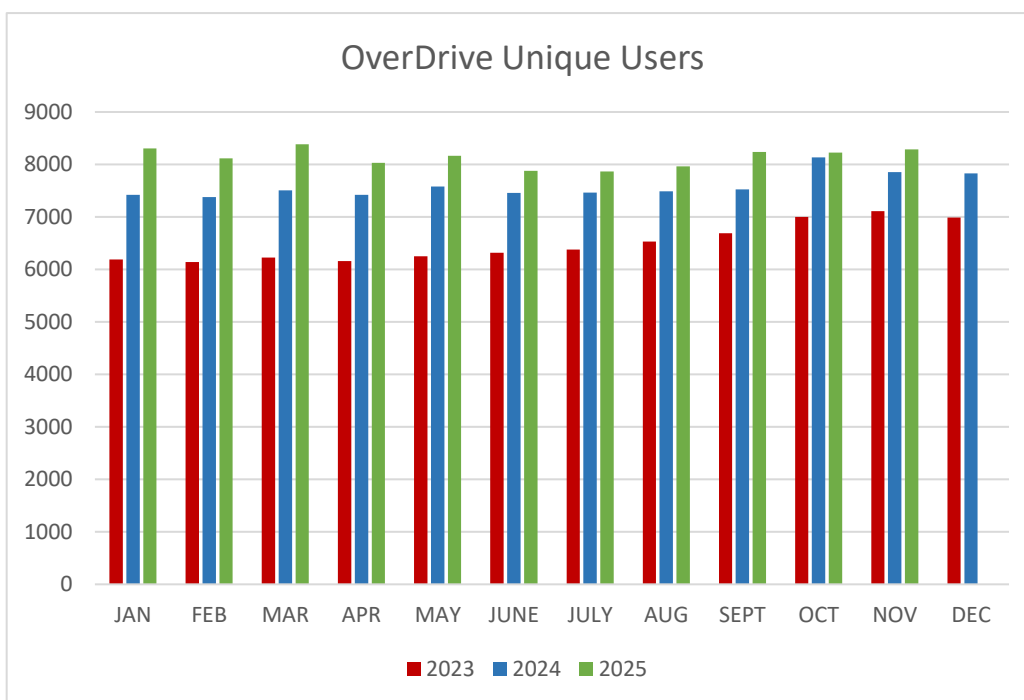
Point Roberts New Years at Noon: Wednesday, December 31, 11:30 to 12:30 p.m., library. Celebrate the New Year with stories and activities. Watch balloons drop at noon and dance the hour away. It's sure to be a blast! For young children and their families.

Mary Vermillion

Community Relations Manager

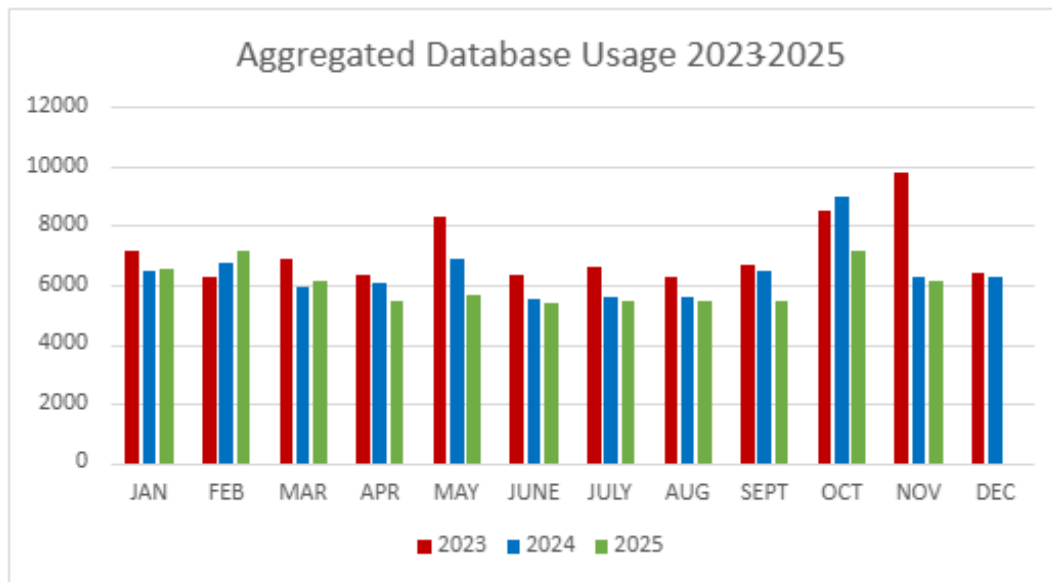
OVERDRIVE UNIQUE USERS

Unique users of OverDrive continue to exceed previous years but by consistently smaller amounts. New users made up only about 4% of total OverDrive users (347 of 8,289 people), evidence that the trend of shifting to digital access that started with the pandemic is cooling. Use of eAudiobooks and eMagazines continues to grow, shrinking the percentage of use attributed to eBooks. The top five trending subjects with the most holds/checkouts are: Contemporary women/fiction, Thrillers, Literary fiction, Contemporary romance and Historical fiction.



DATABASE USAGE

Three databases that had strong usage in November were Creativebug, Mango and Newsbank. 80 active (38 of them new users) participated in 89 distinct Creativebug classes, watching 321 how-to videos. Mango users accessed language learning content for 27 different languages; among them, Punjabi (4th most popular), Bengali, ASL, Pirate, Finnish, Latin and Biblical Hebrew. In Newsbank, the Bellingham Herald and Seattle Times continued to be the most popular content, garnering 16,947 and 15,444 document views respectively.



Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	294,852	415,083	709,935

Circulation	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	14,497	11,974	148,891	141,783	-4.8%
Bookmobile & Outreach	3,692	5,826	49,141	64,303	30.9%
Deming	7,379	7,768	81,880	83,593	2.1%
Everson	8,566	8,026	97,355	91,905	-5.6%
Ferndale	31,209	26,151	351,552	323,009	-8.1%
Island	1,740	1,627	18,471	19,380	4.9%
Lynden	34,526	32,954	402,765	384,809	-4.5%
North Fork	3,451	3,340	41,871	38,106	-9.0%
NWIC	8	5	101	224	121.8%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,833	2,022	25,060	26,222	4.6%
Sumas + SLX	2,432	2,328	27,521	26,920	-2.2%
South Whatcom	7,098	7,868	84,543	90,204	6.7%
NDX	3,926	3,619	37,525	42,529	13.3%
Physical Circulation Total	120,357	113,508	1,366,676	1,332,987	-2.5%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	23,991	21,682	285,205	258,793	-9.3%
All other materials	94,476	88,826	1,066,848	1,040,102	-2.5%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	35,289	36,453	397,589	408,488	2.7%
eMagazines	5,508	5,698	52,106	64,737	24.2%
eMusic	8,897	11,561	108,701	124,143	14.2%
Streaming Video	3,196	3,738	29,869	36,345	21.7%
Digital Circulation Total	52,890	57,450	588,265	633,713	7.7%
Grand Total	173,247	170,958	1,954,941	1,966,700	0.6%

Visitors (Door counts)	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Blaine	7,446	6,660	78,437	76,086	-3.0%
Deming	2,438	2,416	30,191	29,883	-1.0%
Everson	3,191	3,040	35,572	38,319	7.7%
Ferndale	11,870	10,991	140,842	135,612	-3.7%
Island	379	1,626	13,549	19,948	47.2%
Lynden	10,987	10,529	125,963	128,437	2.0%
NDX	300	299	3,525	3,559	1.0%
North Fork	1,655	1,691	20,621	21,134	2.5%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,260	1,268	17,422	16,583	-4.8%
Sumas + SLX	739	1,365	12,978	14,870	14.6%
South Whatcom	2,688	2,761	34,320	36,916	7.6%
Total	42,953	42,646	513,420	521,347	1.5%

New Borrowers	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
	506	427	7,165	6,337	-11.6%

Interlibrary Loan	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	11,969	10,296	131,258	125,293	-4.5%
Lent to BPL	22,579	21,081	237,361	240,424	1.3%
Borrowed: other libraries	571	414	6,960	6,430	-7.6%
Lent: other libraries	623	482	6,448	6,037	-6.4%

Electronic Resources	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	33,191	39,873	422,097	423,732	0.4%
Bibliocommons Sessions	84,977	76,610	1,082,146	983,520	-9.1%
Internet Sessions	3,593	3,568	40,409	44,528	10.2%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	7,134	7,617	78,739	86,943	10.4%

Activities	Nov 2024	Nov 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	84	109	800	1,246	55.8%
Teens	39	33	268	381	42.2%
Children	103	81	1,022	901	-11.8%
Total	226	223	2,090	2,528	21.0%
Attendance					
Adults	1,789	730	10,058	12,195	21.2%
Teens	861	867	10,568	9,700	-8.2%
Children	2,289	2,083	31,130	27,480	-11.7%
Total	4,939	3,680	51,756	49,375	-4.6%

Notes/Corrections:

- Issue with Kanopy stat tracking by title, so we now track Plays. Previous Year streaming video stats in 2025 Board Report will be inconsistent with 2024 Board Report.
- Updated Jail numbers were provided for all of 2025. Stats have been updated to reflect this recalculation.

Collection Size	Physical	Electronic	Total
	293,432	410,523	703,955

Circulation	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Physical Circulation					
Blaine	15,334	11,817	134,394	129,809	-3.4%
Bookmobile & Outreach	4,739	7,293	45,449	49,266	8.4%
Deming	7,482	8,108	74,501	75,825	1.8%
Everson	9,198	8,293	88,789	83,879	-5.5%
Ferndale	31,919	27,869	320,343	296,858	-7.3%
Island	1,826	1,810	16,731	17,753	6.1%
Lynden	37,346	35,069	368,239	351,855	-4.4%
North Fork	4,274	3,562	38,420	34,766	-9.5%
NWIC	10	10	93	219	135.5%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,933	2,061	23,227	24,200	4.2%
Sumas + SLX	2,656	2,324	25,089	24,592	-2.0%
South Whatcom	8,121	8,182	77,445	82,336	6.3%
NDX	3,756	4,119	33,599	38,910	15.8%
Physical Circulation Total	128,594	120,517	1,246,319	1,210,268	-2.9%
Disc materials: DVDs, CDs	25,973	23,004	261,214	237,111	-9.2%
All other materials	100,153	93,763	972,372	951,276	-2.2%
Digital Circulation					
eBooks/eAudiobooks	36,875	36,993	362,300	372,035	2.7%
eMagazines	4,764	6,322	46,598	59,039	26.7%
eMusic	9,291	9,557	99,804	112,582	12.8%
Streaming Video	2,677	3,370	26,673	32,607	22.2%
Digital Circulation Total	53,607	56,242	535,375	576,263	7.6%
Grand Total	182,201	176,759	1,781,694	1,786,531	0.3%

Visitors (Door counts)	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Blaine	7,988	7,645	70,991	69,426	-2.2%
Deming	2,931	3,001	27,753	27,467	-1.0%
Everson	3,792	3,687	32,381	35,279	8.9%
Ferndale	13,098	11,093	128,972	124,621	-3.4%
Island	442	1,799	13,170	18,322	39.1%
Lynden	12,799	12,516	114,976	117,908	2.6%
NDX	329	375	3,225	3,260	1.1%
North Fork	2,195	2,051	18,966	19,443	2.5%
Point Roberts + PRX	1,357	1,293	16,162	15,315	-5.2%
Sumas + SLX	794	1,308	12,239	13,505	10.3%
South Whatcom	3,349	3,577	31,632	34,155	8.0%
Total	49,074	48,345	470,467	478,701	1.8%

New Borrowers	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
	657	586	6,659	5,910	-11.2%

Interlibrary Loan	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Borrowed from BPL	13,135	10,868	119,289	114,997	-3.6%
Lent to BPL	23,106	22,446	214,782	219,343	2.1%
Borrowed: other libraries	713	640	6,389	6,016	-5.8%
Lent: other libraries	451	554	5,825	5,555	-4.6%

Electronic Resources	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
WCLS.org Sessions	40,667	40,294	388,906	383,859	-1.3%
Bibliocommons Sessions	93,734	82,351	997,169	906,910	-9.1%
Internet Sessions	4,403	4,119	36,816	40,960	11.3%
Wifi Clients / Sessions	7,811	7,767	71,605	79,326	10.8%

Activities	Oct 2024	Oct 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2025	YTD % chg
Programs					
Adults	84	143	716	1,137	58.8%
Teens	46	44	229	348	52.0%
Children	155	104	919	820	-10.8%
Total	285	291	1,864	2,305	23.7%
Attendance					
Adults	787	1,258	8,269	11,465	38.7%
Teens	3,936	659	9,707	8,833	-9.0%
Children	3,998	2,820	28,841	25,397	-11.9%
Total	8,721	4,737	46,817	45,695	-2.4%

Notes/Corrections:

Issue with Kanopy stat tracking by title, so we now track Plays. Previous Year streaming video stats in 2025 Board Report will be inconsistent with 2024 Board Report.

Jail stats multiplication formula changed this month