

Washington County
Library Levy Replacement
Explanatory Statement

Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) is the primary source of funding for public libraries in our county, supporting open hours at libraries in Aloha, Banks, Beaverton, Bethany, Cedar Mill, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Garden Home, Hillsboro, North Plains, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, and West Slope. WCCLS provides systems and support that link 16 full-service libraries into one system, supporting access to books and community events for all county residents. Most libraries are open at least 6 days a week.

This measure would replace a five-year levy that will expire in June 2026. The expiring levy provides 45% of total WCCLS funding. The replacement levy would run from July 2026 through June 2031.

What would the library levy do?

Last year, there were over 2.4 million visits to Washington County libraries. Total checkouts exceeded 7.2 million, saving users \$140 million by borrowing items instead of purchasing them. Demand for e-book and audiobook checkouts has increased 34% in the past four years, and over 75,000 users borrowed an e-book or audiobook last year.

Libraries hosted over 200,000 participants at 6,000 in-person events for kids and teens including summer reading. Additionally, over 10,000 students participated in library programs designed to support reading, learning and student success. Libraries also offer assistance and resources to job seekers or those who want to develop new skills.

The replacement levy would help maintain and provide services for all county residents.

Reading and learning support for kids and teens, including homework help and online tutoring for students.

Central services that efficiently link libraries together so users can browse collections and reserve materials for pickup at any of the 16 libraries in the county.

Open hours and access to books and materials for everyone in the community.

Children's reading events including storytimes for babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

How would this levy impact a homeowner's taxes?

The replacement levy would set a fixed rate of 37¢ per \$1,000 of assessed value, an increase of 15¢. In 2026, typical homeowners with an assessed value (not market value) of \$348,600 would pay an estimated total of \$129 annually. The annual increase in cost for the typical homeowner would be just over \$54 per year, or \$4.55 per month more than the current levy.

Why would the tax rate go up?

Since voters approved the last levy in May 2020, demand for service has increased and costs have risen. Library services cannot be maintained at the current rate. Replacing the levy would help libraries provide service for all county residents.

What would happen if the replacement levy does not pass?

The expiring levy provides 45% of WCCLS funding for libraries. If the levy does not pass, reductions in library service would occur, including reductions in open hours, book purchases, reading events and reduced level of services that link libraries together. Examples of these services include providing the online library catalog, delivering books to libraries and maintaining access to technology. Reductions would likely begin in July 2026.

For more information, visit wccls.org/levy.

497/500

Version: May 27, 2025