

Washington County Measure 34-180

Library Levy Renewal Explanatory Statement

Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) has provided funding for public library operations, central support and outreach programs linking together city and community libraries for 34 years.

Measure 34-180 would continue support for public library services countywide. A five-year local option levy is proposed to replace a four-year levy which will expire June 2011. This measure would run from July 2011 through June 2016. The 17¢ rate per \$1,000 of assessed value would remain unchanged from the current rate. The expiring levy provides approximately 1/3 of funding for WCCLS.

What would renewal of this levy do?

Continue support for countywide library operations:

- The levy would continue support for WCCLS public libraries in Banks, Beaverton, Cedar Mill, Cornelius, Forest Grove, Garden Home, Hillsboro, North Plains, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, and West Slope.
- Approximately 80% of levy funds would be distributed to these libraries.
- These libraries have responded to increased use from residents over the last two years including increased checkouts (32%) and library visitors (23%).

Support reading programs for children:

- Funds would continue support for children's programs such as the annual summer reading program and literacy programs that help prepare preschoolers to enter school "ready to read."
- Over 170,000 residents participated in children's library programs last year, and participation has increased 27% in two years.
- About 25,000 children participate in summer reading activities designed to sustain reading retention between school years.

Purchase books:

- Levy funds would be used to purchase books and other materials that are available to residents through all WCCLS libraries.

Provide information and resources for job-seekers:

- Funds would continue library services that provide information, resources and instruction to assist those looking for jobs.

Support central and outreach services that link libraries together and serve all residents:

- Funds would maintain daily book deliveries among libraries to fill patron requests. Deliveries have increased 52% in two years as library use has increased.
- Funds would maintain the WCCLS website and shared library catalog used by all public libraries countywide.
- Funds would provide outreach services to special populations such as mail delivery of books to homebound residents, and literacy training in English and Spanish to instruct child care providers and parents on reading activities that can be incorporated into child care routines.
- In combination with existing technology reserves, funds would continue supporting services and technologies designed to increase library efficiency.

How would this renewal affect a homeowner's taxes?

The levy would continue a fixed-rate of 17¢ per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would be unchanged from the current rate. Owners of a home with an average assessed value of \$215,089 (not market value) would pay about \$37 in 2011-2012, or an average of about \$3 per month.

What happens if the levy renewal does not pass?

The expiring levy provides approximately 1/3 of WCCLS funding. If it is not renewed, reductions in library hours, book purchases and service levels would likely occur.