



To: WCCLS Executive Board

From: Lisa Tattersall, Washington County Cooperative Library Services

Date: March 14, 2022

Subject: Draft Public Library Network, Services, and Funding Intergovernmental Agreement

Public Library Network, Services, and Funding Intergovernmental Agreement

Public library service in Washington County is a cooperative partnership between the county (WCCLS), nine cities and three nonprofits. WCCLS has worked with the WCCLS Executive Board (advisory to the Board of Commissioners) and the WCCLS Policy Group to revise two of our intergovernmental agreements ([Public Library Services Agreement](#) and [Network Agreement](#)), merging them into one updated agreement that will be effective July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2026. The revised draft of the agreement is called the Public Library Network, Services, and Funding Agreement, and was developed over the past 12 months with the WCCLS Executive Board and Policy Group.

At their meeting on February 16, 2022, the WCCLS Executive Board voted unanimously in support of WCCLS staff bringing the final draft agreement forward to the Board of County Commissioners. The final draft was reviewed by the Board at their work session on March 8, 2022, and the Board supported moving this agreement forward to cities and nonprofits for their formal review. [The video of the work session discussion is available online.](#)

The final draft agreement has a greater emphasis on data confidentiality and network security, improved clarity of roles and responsibilities for library services, identifies an ending fund balance strategy and target, and includes detailed library funding allocation language. In addition, the draft agreement introduces compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act for libraries with WCCLS support. The draft agreement also highlights our commitment to a thoughtful reevaluation of our funding and governance, as we look ahead to the next levy cycle, which begins in FY26-27.

Library Funding Allocations

Our previous approach to funding did not adequately address equity concerns that are central to the county's commitment to ensure that libraries are accessible for all Washington County residents, nor did it address whether service funding is aligned with community needs. The underlying foundations of this system haven't been fundamentally evaluated. However, there have



been beneficial corrections over the years, most recently in 2016 when voters approved a five-cent increase in our levy rate.

The rate increase allowed each library to receive a one-time 4% allocation increase from WCCLS in FY16-17. An additional weighted increase was made for each library, ranging from 3% to 11%. This additional increase was determined by using a set of metrics: circulation (check-outs), library visits, and the number of residents in each library's service area.

On top of the one-time increase in FY16-17, each library has received an annual 3% increase in their allocation, through this fiscal year (FY21-22). In addition, some libraries saw expanded operational funding to support expanding services in larger facilities. These funds were called Jump Start Operating Funds, and the operational funding increases, once awarded, were incorporated in the library's funding every year going forward. This is according to the terms of the previously agreed upon [Public Library Services Agreement](#).

In FY17-18, Banks added a new meeting room and their funding increased by 29% from the previous year. The same fiscal year, Garden Home added an annex space for community events, and their funding increased by 24% from the previous year. In FY18-19, Cornelius built a new library building, and their funding increased by 91% from the previous year. In FY19-20 Cedar Mill Bethany added an annex space for events, and funding was increased by 5%. (See a [summary of historical allocations](#).)

In May 2020, voters approved the renewal of the \$0.22 levy rate, which maintained our levy funding. In keeping with the [commitment we made to voters](#) with the May 2020 levy ballot, the primary library funding allocations remain consistent, with 3% annual increases through FY25-26: "Renewal of the levy helps libraries by... [m]aintaining open hours at all libraries, avoiding cuts in service."

WCCLS' commitment to undertaking an evaluation process of our funding structures and mechanisms as we lead up to the next levy in 2025-2026 is captured in the draft agreement language (paragraph 15.3.3.2). WCCLS will use recently updated Census data in this process, which will be guided by the [Board of Commissioners' Equity Resolution](#).

Paragraph 15.3.3.2: "Commencing a multi-year process to analyze cooperative governance and funding structures, including data analysis, community indicators, and community and stakeholder engagement. Evaluating the funding structure and recommending solutions to address inequities with future library funding allocations and services. Planning for the structural and funding



investments needed during the next levy. Contracting with firms to support this evaluation and engagement work.”

WCCLS plans to begin this process in the first quarter of 2023, and we look forward to working with cities and nonprofits over the coming years on this important initiative.

Next Steps

The draft agreement has been reviewed by library directors, WCCLS Executive Board representatives, County Counsel, and the Board of Commissioners. If your organization has concerns about the agreement that rise to the level of preventing your organization from signing the agreement, please reach out to Lisa Tattersall as soon as possible.

Once they have determined that they are prepared to sign the agreement, all organizations should notify Lisa Tattersall of this no later than Friday, May 20, 2022. Also, please include the following information for your organization’s signing authority: full name, email address, and phone number. This information will be used in the DocuSign process.

WCCLS is scheduled to return to the Board of County Commissioners on June 7, 2022, and WCCLS will request the authorization from the Board to formally sign the Public Library Network, Services, and Funding Agreement.

Washington County will email the signing authority you identified for your organization soon after June 7, 2022, initiating the DocuSign process, which will allow us to execute the agreements digitally.

Thank you in advance for prioritizing the DocuSign process in June. Timely signing by June 30 will allow WCCLS to distribute library funding allocations on time in July 2022. If your signing authority will be on vacation during this time, consider sharing an alternate signing authority.

Please reach out to Lisa Tattersall with any questions at lisat@wccls.org or [503-846-3233](tel:503-846-3233).