



Frequently Asked Question

How is the library funded?

The Asotin County Rural Library District is an independent taxing district which derives funding from property taxes. The library does not receive state or federal tax funding. State law allows taxing districts to levy property taxes in the amount of 50¢ per \$1,000 of property value. The 1% lid on revenue increases enacted in 2001 decreases the library's ability to levy those funds. Currently the effective rate is 40.25¢ per \$1,000 of property value. The only way to restore the 50¢ levy rate is to ask for a levy lid lift from voters.

Why do the main library and Heights branch need more money?

Due to Washington State's 1% levy lid, the Asotin County Library has experienced years of declining levy rates. The amount collected has dropped from \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$0.402 per \$1,000. This reduction has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of dollars in essential funding—resources that are critical to maintaining library operations and services.

What will a "yes" vote on the levy do for the libraries in terms of more money?

It will increase the library's levy rate of 40.25¢ per \$1,000 back to 50¢ per \$1,000; a 9.75¢ per \$1,000 increase, enabling the library to maintain services, facilities, and programs.

What does that 9.75¢ increase mean to the average home owner's taxes?

For a \$300,000 home, it would be an additional \$29.25 per year.

When did the libraries last run a levy?

The Asotin County Library last pursued a levy lid lift in 2009, accompanied by a public commitment not to seek another for at least five years. Remarkably, it has now been 16 years since that measure was enacted. Throughout this extended period, library leadership has demonstrated consistent fiscal responsibility, working diligently to steward public funds and sustain services without additional levy increases.

Why is a lid lift necessary?

In 2001, voters in Washington modified state law to limit revenue increases to 1 percent per year (plus revenues from new construction) no matter how much costs increased. The costs of operating and maintaining the library have grown much quicker and the 1% increase doesn't cover costs.

Why have the costs gone up?

Rising costs at the Asotin County Library are largely due to inflation and unfunded mandates. Another key factor is the need to provide materials in multiple formats. Some community members continue to use physical books and DVDs, while others prefer digital options like

eBooks and audiobooks. To make sure everyone can access the materials they need, the library must purchase both physical and electronic versions—adding to the overall expense.

Can you track library usage?

Yes. In the past year:

- 111,231 items checked out
- 7,187 Valnet library cards issued
- 4,538 people attended 383 library programs
- 1,362 people received Career Coach or Digital Navigator services
- Library computers used 15,660 times
- Wireless network accessed 11,125 times
- Databases accessed 4,092 times and 20,321 articles retrieved.
- 78,260 website hits.
- 11,409 documents/photos accessed from Heritage Collection.
- 35,571 interactions with other online resources.

How has the library helped our community in other ways?

Digital access in our community is a growing need. The library took the lead in creating the Asotin County Broadband Action Team, a group of approximately 40 community leaders, to evaluate the broadband and digital equity needs of Asotin County. The Team was able to demonstrate that we had a community working together toward the goal of connectivity and were able to secure grant funding championed by the Port of Clarkston. The result was two major construction projects completed and valued at \$4.57 million.

What has the library done to control costs?

The Asotin County Library operates with a lean budget and has consistently demonstrated responsible use of taxpayer dollars. Until now, the library has avoided major cuts by supplementing its funding with grants and private donations. However, this year brought a significant—though temporary—reduction in grant support. These outside funds are not guaranteed year to year, making it difficult to rely on them to sustain core services over time.

Are there ways to increase revenue besides a levy?

Since 2015, the Asotin County Library—alongside the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation—has secured more than \$2.18 million in grant funding and private donations. These efforts reflect a strong commitment to seeking support beyond tax dollars. However, while outside funding helps, it can be unpredictable and temporary. To ensure stable, reliable funding for core library services, a levy lid lift is now essential.

How will passage of this levy lid lift impact other County or State Departments?

It won't. The Library District is a separate entity from the County and because it does not receive funds from the State, passage of the levy lid lift will not diminish funds in other County or State agencies.

Will you need to run a levy every year?

No. If the levy passes, the new amounts should permit the library to maintain operations for at least five years (assuming current economic trends).