

Circulation Policy

Western Allegheny Community Library's circulation department aims to provide the quick and efficient access of materials to the greatest number of people in a welcoming, interactive environment that respects diversity and ensures privacy of patron information.

Applying for a Library Card

Library cards are available free of charge either in person or when an online registration form is filled out, then with the required documentation. Children ages two (2) and older may apply for their own library card. A parent or legal guardian must verify the account of a juvenile cardholder, 15 years or younger. Library cards shall be valid for three (3) years. Active accounts will be automatically renewed. An individual may not use another borrower's card. The current replacement card(s) fee is \$1.00

To get a library card:

- Fill out the library card registration form online or ask to register at the library's Circulation Desk.
- Account verification requires that you present either government-issued photo ID or proof of your current mailing address. Either your library card or valid ID is required for all transactions concerning library books and materials. Each registered borrower assumes full responsibility for the materials and fines charged to the card.

Designated Proxy Borrowers

Patrons often request other family, friends, neighbors, etc., to pick up their materials at the Circulation Desk. Patrons may authorize someone to check out library materials in their name and have full access to their record, only after they are designated as a proxy. Under this agreement, the cardholder is responsible for any fines or fees associated with materials checked out in their name.

Designated Proxy Borrower forms are available at the Circulation Desk for any cardholder to name any person or persons that are permitted to pick up and place holds, pay fines and access account information. Designated Proxy Borrower names can be added to a patrons account via a telephone request once ownership of the account has been satisfied. A paper copy of the Designated Proxy Borrower form will be mailed to those individuals who may not be able to make it into the library. The Designated Proxy Borrower status will be *pending* until the signed form is returned to the library.

Materials Check-out

The Western Allegheny Community Library allows customers to borrow unlimited library materials as long as their account is in good standing. In order to check-out materials a customer must have their library card or a valid form of identification. Only the actual cardholder may check out materials on their account, with the exception of minor children, by proxy request or if the person checking out materials has the card holder's actual card in hand (implied permission).

Renewing Items

Items will automatically renew up to six times if no one has the item on hold.

Returning Items

Items checked out from Western Allegheny Community Library may be returned to any Allegheny County library location. There is a book drop accessible from the exterior of the library. Some items are marked, "Please Do Not Place In Book Drop", these items must be returned to the Circulation Desk inside the Library. Library customers are also able to return any library materials at the library Circulation Desk during regular business hours.

Items checked out during outreach visits or on the library Book Bus should be returned to that location if possible.

Items returned with missing parts will be kept on the patron's record until all parts are returned. If possible, the item will be renewed to allow time for the patron to return missing parts.

Items returned in damaged condition will remain on the record and the patron will be billed.

Long Overdue/Billed Items

In order to maintain the collection for our customers, borrowed materials without holds which have not been returned or renewed within 60 days after the due date will be billed to the customer. The replacement cost plus a \$5.00 processing fee will be assessed. The customer must pay this amount or return the item if found.

The Library will attempt to contact patrons up to three times regarding overdue items, but it is the patron's ultimate responsibility to take note of due dates and return items in a timely manner. Failure to receive notices from the Library is not grounds for dismissal of fees or fines.

Claims Returned

If a customer feels certain that they have returned an item; but Library records indicate that it has not been returned, the library staff will:

1. Initiate a library search for the material
2. If the item is not found, the item will be renewed once to allow the customer time to search for the item.
3. If the item is still not found, library staff will mark the item as claimed returned and notify the customer.
4. The Systems Specialist will run quarterly claims returned reports. The claims returned items will be searched for and checked in if found on the shelf. If not found after 6 months the items will be withdrawn.

Holds

Customers may ask that an item that is checked-out, or available at another library be placed on hold and that they be notified when it is available. Holds may be made online on the Library's catalog or app, or by phone, voicemail, email, or at the Library Circulation Desk. Once the customer is notified that the item they requested is available they have seven days to pick it up. After seven days, the item is returned to the shelf or passed to the next person who has requested the item. The original hold will be removed. If the customer cannot be notified within seven days due to incorrect or outdated contact information, the hold will be removed and passed on to the next person. In extenuating circumstances, staff may decide to hold the item for more than seven days.

Notes for Staff

- Staff must first check to verify that library card applicant does not have a previous library card in the system. Check name (last name, first initial), address, and phone number.
- Valid forms of current address can include mail, you may use your discretion.
- You may use your discretion when charging the replacement card fee.
- Patrons may check-out materials without a library card or id if they can verify their name, address and birthdate (do not read patron information, have patron give it to you).
- Any items returned that may be missing parts need to be left (or put back on) patron record. Fill out a *Missing Parts Form* and store item on *Problem/Missing Parts shelf* in the workroom. The Circulation Supervisor will monitor items on the Missing Parts shelf. If a patron returns a Missing Part, please locate the item and reunite.
- Any damaged item that is returned should be taken to the correct department for the purchasing librarian to assess and decide if the item should be billed.
- Staff are not to show patrons or read messages out loud from Sierra. If patrons asks, nicely tell them that it is against library policy.

Designated Proxy Borrower Notes

- As of January 1, 2021 all patrons must have a Designated Proxy Borrower form filled out to have someone else checkout their items, pick up or place holds, pay fines, or inquire about account information. This does not apply if they have the cardholder's library card on hand (implied permission). All proxy forms will be kept in a file at the Circulation Desk.
- A borrower may add or remove a proxy at any time. Please have them fill out a new proxy form and date. Attach new form to the previous one as a record.
- Some patrons may not be able to physically come to the library to fill out the proxy form. If so, they can call the library and have a form mailed to their home. Their proxy status will remain as *pending* until a signed form is returned.
- To add a proxy:
 - Open the patron record in Sierra
 - Select Edit then select insert
 - From the drop down menu select the "x" field for note
 - Proxy notes should be in the following format: PROXY: First MI Last staff initials and date
- Patrons may come in to pick up another person's items and be unaware of the proxy policy. For these patrons, explain that the library has this policy to protect their privacy, but that we can make a one-time exception. To do this you must first call the cardholder and verify name, address and date of birth and receive verbal permission to check out the item. You can then have the patron at the library fill out the proxy form. Inform them that you will be mailing a copy to the cardholder to sign and return and that their proxy status will be *pending* until complete. Once a signed form is returned, remove the *pending* status from their record.
- Every month a report will be run to pull any *pending* records. These patrons will be notified by phone and a message should be placed on their record indicating this. If by the next month's report the status is still *pending* then the proxy will be removed.