

Statement on Hoopla Costs

Since starting Hoopla, the costs associated with the service have risen steadily. Although it is free for patrons to use, Central Skagit Library District (CSLD) gets charged for every item that a patron checks out, even if they don't end up using it before it expires. The average cost of an item on Hoopla is \$2.19 per use. There are over 420 regular users of Hoopla at the CSLD and each patron averages 11 uses per month. The popularity of the service is growing, and the more Hoopla gets used, the more it costs. We believe the pricing model and cost of Hoopla make it unsustainable when left with no limits, so we have had to set the limit to 10 per month. CSLD may have to impose more limits to keep costs reasonable. Last year CSLD spent \$39,013 for the use of Hoopla content. So far in 2023, the library has spent \$10,125.

The licensing models employed by the large publishing houses for digital materials is out of the control of Hoopla and other digital content providers to libraries. Some publishers will not sell digital content to libraries at all. The cost for a physical hardcover book averages \$25 and for physical audiobooks it averages \$45. For the same title in ebook format the average cost is \$60 and that title will only be available for two years before it has to be purchased again. Digital audiobooks average over \$70 per title and also have the same licensing restrictions where the library may only be able to offer it for 1 to 2 years.

Costs for the Washington Anytime Library available through Overdrive and Libby have also escalated over the years. Each year CSLD pays into the Washington Anytime Library and those costs have increased more than 25% in the last 7 years.

Increasing costs of digital materials, coupled with high inflation on goods and services, is forcing CSLD to examine where savings can be made. The CSLD is limited to only a 1% increase in tax funding every year. All of these challenges are forcing the CSLD to make hard choices in the services that can be provided.