

Long Lost Consortium Loan Services (CLS) Audit

Consortium Loan Services (CLS) Agreed Policies

These policies guide WRLC's handling of lost Consortium Loan Services (CLS) materials. Consistent with Interlibrary Loan (ILL) practice, responsibility for replacing borrowed material rests with the patron's home institution.

Why This Process Exists

- Fairly assign financial responsibility for lost CLS materials
- Confirm that reasonable efforts have been made to retrieve items before Lost Item Replacement costs are assessed
- Establish a consistent process for addressing Long Lost CLS items

Background

Due to the Alma migration, COVID and pandemic-era campus logistics, local circulation desk payment workflow changes, and related factors, WRLC's lending libraries accumulated a backlog of lost CLS items dating back to 2018. These items had not been systematically reviewed or resolved.

In addition, not all member libraries are able to collect fees. Because of this, the consortium will focus on resolving outstanding lost-item records between institutions instead of pursuing patron payments to the lending institutions.

In April 2026, the Resource Sharing Committee's Long Lost Fine/Fee (LLFF) Task Force developed a policy proposal to address lost CLS materials and submitted it to the Library Directors Council (LDC) for approval.

The LLFF Task Force proposed aligning CLS lost-item handling with existing ILL practices. Under this approach, member institutions reconcile replacement fees for CLS items lost by their patrons when those items are not returned within an established timeframe. All inter-institutional accounting and logistics would be managed centrally by WRLC Headquarters.

LDC Approved Policy Direction

In May 2026, the LDC approved the LLFF Task Force proposal. RSC also voted on how to address the existing backlog, which years to prioritize first, and the timeline for future long-lost item audits. The approved approach includes:

- A one-time payment for the backlog of CLS Lost Item Replacement fees dating from 2018-2025
- A regular Lost and Paid schedule for future CLS items lost by member institutions' patrons
- An accelerated timeline for moving items from Lost to Lost and Paid, as finalized by the LLFF Task Force and RSC
- Annual inter-institutional payments coordinated by WRLC, regardless of the final Lost and Paid timeline

Lost and Paid Process

Per CLS agreed policies, items age into Lost status in Alma when they are 40 days overdue. Under the Long Lost CLS audit process, items that remain in Lost status for three to six months are reviewed and resolved through the steps below.

The process shifts responsibility for replacement fees from the lending library to the patron's home institution, which manages patron billing according to local practices.

- In the lending IZ, the Lost Item Replacement Fee is removed from the linked WRLC user account, and the item is marked Lost and Paid
- The Lost Item Replacement Fee is then applied to the patron's account at their home library
- The patron's home institution assumes responsibility for reimbursing the lending library
- WRLC centrally manages inter-consortial invoicing for CLS Lost Item Replacement Fees, and these amounts are added to each library's annual assessment
- The patron reimburses their home library according to local practices, such as direct payment through Alma, bursar billing, etc.
- Consistent with ILL practice, Lost and Paid items are considered non-returnable, and the fee remains on the patron's account even if the item is later returned

Patron Notifications

WRLC will manage pre-charge patron notifications beginning one month before the Lost and Paid process outlined above

Notifications will be sent from a WRLC-managed email address and will include patron-specific information, such as:

- Patron name
- Lost item list
- Loan details

Based on each library's preference, WRLC will support two notification templates:

- A replacement-fee notice for patrons subject to charges
- A reminder-only notice for faculty, staff, or exempt patron groups

Patron replies will be routed directly to each institution's preferred circulation email address.

Invoicing and Institutional Balances

WRLC will manage invoicing for CLS Lost Item Replacement fees. Balances will be applied to each institution's annual consortium assessment. Member libraries are responsible for working with their patrons to recover payment for lost material that has been added to the patron's home library account.

2026 Audit Timeline

- **June 2026** CLS loan reports were shared with all Alma Fulfillment Network (AFN) libraries that participate in CLS lending, as well as corresponding university professional libraries that borrow from AFN libraries but do not lend material. The reports identify lost items borrowed by patrons at each institution and owed to the AFN lending libraries.
- **August 2026** WRLC will manage borrower notifications for lost CLS items. Emails will be tailored to each patron and will include:
 - Patron name
 - Lost item title or titles
 - Relevant loan details

Based on each AFN lending library's preference, WRLC can provide two notification templates:

- Replacement-fee notices for patrons subject to charges
- Reminder-only notices for faculty, staff, or exempt patron groups

During this period, library staff will work with their patrons to retrieve and return lost material.

- **October 1, 2026** The window for retrieved material to be returned to the lending libraries will close. Per the new policy:
 - In the lending library's IZ, the Lost Item Replacement Fee of \$110.00 will be removed from the linked WRLC user account
 - Item's status will be updated to Lost and Paid in the owning library's IZ
 - The Lost Item Replacement Fee will be added to the patron's home library account, including item details such as title, barcode, and loan information
 - Patron will be notified that the item has been paid for by their home institution
- **February 1, 2027** The Spring 2027 Long Lost CLS audit will resolve items that aged into Lost status between January 1, 2026, and November 15, 2026.
- **Post-February 2027**, the audit procedure will transition to RSC's approved semester-based schedule

	Long Lost Item (loans that have aged into Lost status)	WRLC Patron notifications	Final Return Date	Marked as Lost and Paid at Lending IZ
Spring Semester	Nov 16- April 15	April- May	June 1	June 2
Summer Semester	April 16- August 15	August - Sept	October 1	October 2
Fall Semester	August 16- Nov 15	Dec- Jan	February 1	February 2

Frequently Asked Questions

- *Who is responsible when a CLS item is lost?*
 - The patron's home institution is responsible for reimbursing the lending library once the item has been marked as Lost for 3-6 months. This approach aligns CLS lost-item handling with existing Interlibrary Loan practice.
- *Will patrons be notified before charges are applied?*
 - Yes. WRLC will send pre-charge notifications beginning about one month before the Lost and Paid process. Notices will include patron-specific information, such as the patron's name, lost item title or titles, and relevant loan details. Patron replies will go directly to the institution's preferred circulation email address.
- *Are all patrons charged the same way?*
 - No. Each home institution manages patron billing according to its own local practices. WRLC can support either a replacement-fee notice for patrons subject to charges or a reminder-only notice for faculty, staff, or other exempt patron groups.
- *What if the item is returned after it is marked Lost and Paid?*
 - Once an item is marked Lost and Paid, it is considered non-returnable. The replacement fee remains on the patron's home library account until it is resolved by the home library
- *Are replacement copies accepted?*
 - No. Similar to if an item is returned after it is marked Lost and Paid, it is no longer eligible for replacement consideration
- *How will libraries be invoiced?*
 - WRLC will centrally manage inter-institutional invoicing for CLS Lost Item Replacement Fees. Amounts owed will be added to each institution's annual consortium assessment. Member libraries are responsible for working with their own patrons to recover payment locally.