

Roseburg Library Building Spanish Language Collection
Kris Wiley for The News Review

Spanish language readers now can get new, popular titles at Roseburg Public Library.

Thanks in part to a Good Neighbor grant from The Ford Family Foundation, the library is focusing on developing a robust collection of books in Spanish for all ages.

There will be an influx of materials over the next 18 months, then we will transition to maintaining the collection at a more moderate rate. The goal is to provide a selection of books that supports the literacy and lifelong learning needs of community members who speak Spanish only or Spanish along with other languages.

Although we have purchased books in Spanish over the past five years, we primarily have focused on our English language materials. We will continue to add English books at essentially the same level, but we now are carving out time and resources to purchase books in Spanish.

After all, Spanish is the second most common language spoken in our community, yet Spanish language materials account for less than 1 percent of the library's holdings.

According to U.S. Census Bureau 2022 population estimates, more than 6 percent of the Roseburg general population identifies as Hispanic/Latino.

According to 2022-23 spring student enrollment statistics, 12 percent of students in the Roseburg School District identified as Hispanic/Latino. Less than 5 percent of students were identified as current or former English language learners.

To get started, Youth Services Librarian Aurora Ropp and I are relying on book vendors to help us select Spanish language materials. We have been working with our primary vendors, who have books in Spanish, and are in the process of adding another company because librarians around Oregon recommended them specifically for their Spanish titles.

We also are relying on librarians who write about their experiences developing Spanish language collections. For example, some of them have indicated that nonfiction titles circulate better than novels for adult readers.

That assistance is great, but Aurora and I prefer to balance book vendor and librarian recommendations with input from the Roseburg community.

To that end, we have created a survey soliciting input from local Spanish language readers. The survey, located on the library's website at www.roseburgpubliclibrary.org and in paper format at the library, asks participants to share preferences for fiction or nonfiction materials and materials by age group.

We want to know whether readers prefer materials originating in Spanish and/or would like books translated from other languages. We also are interested in specific subjects, authors and titles.

So far, we have heard that readers are interested in books published in Mexico, history books and picture books on a variety of topics.

The survey will be available indefinitely. Please share this information with your Spanish speaking friends and neighbors. The more feedback from our community, the better the collection will be.

This Week's Library Events

Tuesday, March 12, 3-5 p.m. – Maker Space Time

Tuesday, March 12, 6:30 p.m. – Online Book Group (email kwiley@cityofroseburg.org for the Zoom link)

Wednesday, March 13, 10:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Wednesday, March 13, 4-4:45 p.m. – Club de Idioma Español | Spanish Club for 2nd through 8th graders

Thursday, March 14, 11:15 a.m. – Storytime with Aurora

Thursday, March 14, 3:30-5 p.m. – Building & Legos for all ages