

FAQ for Zip Books Libraries

This FAQ sheet is intended to answer common questions asked by participating libraries regarding Zip Books policies, procedures, and more, which are set forth by the NorthNet Library System and the California State Library. If you have additional questions, please contact the Project Coordinator at nuesca@northnetlibs.org.

1. What restrictions are there on the type of materials that we can order through this service?

The following are items your library is allowed to purchase using Zip Books funds:

- Books available in tangible format – regular print, large print, or audiobook, including current titles in hardback or paperback, and in any genre
- Prime and Non-Prime materials – so long as it can be purchased on the Amazon.com website and the cheapest shipping option is selected
- Used copies – if they are in good condition
- Textbooks and Study Guides – if they are general enough in nature to appeal to a broad audience and will be added to your collection
- Best sellers in alternative formats only (large print or audiobook)
- Items that would have formerly been requested through interlibrary loan

The following items should NOT be purchased with Zip Books funds, and should be purchased with library funds instead:

- Items that are already owned by your library
- Best sellers in regular print
- Core materials that would normally be ordered by your library
- Textbooks and Study Guides that are narrow in scope
- E-books, E-audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and any other non-book related items

2. Why can't we order best sellers? And what counts as a best seller?

This policy was created to weed out the requests for core materials or items (mainly fiction) from popular authors that would normally be purchased with a library's own funds. Keep in mind that Zip Books is intended as an alternative to traditional interlibrary loans, so the rule of thumb is that purchases should be for items that would normally be ordered through ILL if Zip Books was not available. However, current best seller items can be purchased in alternative format (large print or audiobook) if your library does not already own them in that format. The New York Times Best Seller list should be used to gauge if an item is a best seller or not. Titles not on the current list are okay to purchase. To accommodate this policy, some libraries have chosen to limit Zip Books requests to items 6 months or older.

3. A patron submitted a Zip Books request for an item that is over the expenditure cap. Can we still purchase it?

There is a two-tier expenditure cap of \$50 pre-tax for books and \$75 pre-tax for audiobooks and foreign-language items. Items over the set expenditure caps can be purchased with pre-approval from the Project Coordinator. To get approval, send an email to nuesca@northnetlibs.org with a link to the item or the item details.



4. A patron submitted multiple Zip Books requests for a research project. Can we purchase those books for them all at the same time?

Yes, you are allowed to do this. Although we do recommend libraries to limit patrons to one item at a time, in order to ensure the item is returned and the patron remains in good standing, this may not work for everyone. Libraries are given the flexibility of determining their own maximum number of requests allowed by a patron at one time, with the condition that this not exceed 5 items per customer per month.

5. Can we have the materials delivered to our library for cataloging/inventory first?

One of the most attractive things about this model is the speed with which patrons receive service over traditional ILL. Having the materials delivered to your library for cataloging first would take the “zip” out of Zip Books. The policy is to have the items delivered directly to requesting patrons at the point of ordering. Procedures and guidelines can be put in place to minimize problems that might occur (patrons not returning books, etc.), such as requiring patrons to be in “good standing” in order to participate in the program. In special cases or areas where theft is a concern, arrangements can be made to have items delivered to an Amazon Locker, PO Box, or to the library for pick-up from the patron.

6. Are staff allowed to request Zip Books for personal use?

Yes! In fact, we encourage staff to use the program at least once, so they can become familiar with the process and be able to “talk it up” to patrons. Library staff members are limited to no more than 1 or 2 items per month, which should be monitored onsite by the Zip Books coordinator. This will help to ensure that grant funds are used as intended.

7. Are we allowed to charge for Zip Books?

Part of the appeal of Zip Books is that it is a free and convenient service. However, we do understand that the program does require time and labor to implement. As such, libraries may choose to charge patrons to use the service or to charge patrons the cost of a replacement if an item is lost, not returned, or damaged. Some libraries also give patrons the option to purchase their requested Zip Books if it is not added to their library collection.

8. Some Zip Books orders were accidentally charged to my city credit card instead of our Amazon Corporate Credit Line, what should I do?

If the order has not yet been delivered, you may be able to call Amazon Customer Service to reverse the charges. However, if the items have already been delivered, they will not be able to help you. Instead, you must submit a “Zip Books Expense Reimbursement Request Form” in order to get reimbursed for those purchases. This form and the “Amazon Prime Fee Reimbursement Claim Form” are available on the Zip Books website at <https://northnetlibs.org/zip-books/>. The completed form and relevant order invoices should be submitted to ZipBooksInvoice@northnetlibs.org.

9. What’s the future of the program? How do we apply for funds for the next grant period? Is it possible to get additional funds if we run out?

The Zip Books project is currently being funded with the support of the California Library Services Act funds and an additional \$1 million allocation was approved by the California Library Services Board for the continued support and expansion of our project through June 30, 2022. This will allow us to provide Zip Books funding for several years at the current allocations. If your library has



already joined the Zip Books program, you do not have to reapply for funds again. Allocations are determined annually by the California State Library using a formula that also takes into account the number of registered borrowers. If additional funds are needed, contact the Project Coordinator and we will work to get your allocation increased.

10. How do I get more marketing materials? Are we allowed to create our own?

Marketing materials are available in bookmark, bookplate, postcard, and poster formats. To request additional or replacement stock, send an email to Jacquie Brinkley at brinkley@plpinfo.org indicating the amount of materials needed. Libraries are also welcome to create their own marketing materials to fit their specific needs. The files of our marketing materials and logo will be made available on the Zip Books website at <https://northnetlibs.org/zip-books/> for you to download. If a file is needed in a different format than what is provided, send a request to Jacquie Brinkley.

11. How do I join or remove myself from the Zip Books listserv?

Our listserv is a handy tool for Zip Books libraries to post questions to other participating libraries, as well as share discard lists of Zip Books not chosen for their library collection. To join the Zip Books listserv, email Jacquie Brinkley at brinkley@plpinfo.org. To send an email to the entire list, email your message to ZIPBOOKS@LISTSERV.PLSINFO.ORG. To unsubscribe from the list, send an email to ZIPBOOKS-signoffrequest@LISTSERV.PLSINFO.ORG.

12. Help! There's something wrong with my Amazon account, what should I do?

No matter the issue, the first thing you should do is contact Amazon Customer Service to see if they can assist with the problem or provide additional information on what could be wrong. The following are the numbers to call depending on your issue:

- General Amazon account issues: 1-888-280-4331
- Invoicing issues: 1-866-634-8381
- Credit Line issues: 1-866-634-8380

For libraries having issues with their NLS credit card, the authorized user should call the credit card company (US Bank: 800-344-5696) to understand the issue. If the library needs assistance with their credit card limit or other specifics about the credit card, please contact the Project Coordinator by email or phone.

13. Who do I contact if I have additional questions or have a Zip Books related issue?

The primary contact for this project is Mercy Nuesca, Zip Books Project Coordinator working with the NorthNet Library System and Pacific Library Partnership. Her contact information is:

Mercedith Nuesca
Project Coordinator
650-847-8869 Cell (Preferred)
650-349-5538 General Office
nuesca@northnetlibs.org
<https://northnetlibs.org/zip-books/>

