# Financial Hardship & Account Resolution Policy

*Adopted 11/2026*
*Approved by the WiLS Board on 11/3/2026*

## Purpose & Scope

This policy protects the financial stability and collective purchasing power of WiLS while supporting members facing severe financial hardship such as organizational closures, natural disasters, or significant budget reductions.

To secure third-party discounts or streamline services, WiLS often pays third-party vendor invoices upfront on behalf of our members. Unpaid commitments create financial risk for the entire consortium.

This policy outlines how WiLS collaborates with members to resolve unpaid obligations, balancing compassion with fiscal responsibility. It applies to all WiLS members and partner organizations with committed orders or service contracts through WiLS, including electronic resource subscriptions in our Cooperative Purchasing Program and contracted professional services managed by WiLS.

## Guiding Principles

- **Proactive communication**: Members are expected to notify WiLS as soon as financial instability is identified, ideally before third-party vendor payment is finalized.
- **Shared responsibility**: WiLS will work collaboratively to minimize financial impact on both the member and WiLS, leveraging vendor relationships to negotiate adjusted terms whenever possible.
- **Consortium integrity:** Remediation efforts with third-party vendors must protect the financial reputation of WiLS so that future negotiated discounts and services remain stable for all participating organizations.

## When is this policy activated?

This policy is enacted when a member determines they cannot meet a financial obligation for an ordered resource or contracted service, or when a member is sent a 3rd overdue notice without an agreed-upon payment plan.

## Member Request Process

Members are strongly encouraged to contact WiLS as soon as financial instability is identified, ideally before third-party vendor payments are finalized. Members facing financial distress should submit a formal hardship request to financials@wils.org and their WiLS liaison. The request must include:

- The specific subscription(s) or invoice numbers in question.
- A brief summary of the financial situation or timeline of the budget resolution.
- The requested remediation format (e.g., adjusted payment plan, downsizing, or temporary deferral).

## Account Resolution Options

WiLS staff will explore the following account resolution options, generally in the order presented below. If an initial approach does not resolve the balance, WiLS will escalate to the next tier.

- **Flexible invoicing or installment plans**: WiLS will suggest a modified invoicing schedule or a formal payment plan allowing the member to pay their balance in a series of payments over a set number of months.
- **Downsizing scope:** WiLS will attempt to renegotiate a smaller package, a multi-year step-up plan, or a temporary lower product tier with the vendor.
- **Vendor negotiation:** WiLS will immediately contact the vendor to request a product cancellation, service termination, or deferral of the commitment.

If no resolution can be reached, WiLS will enact the following:

- **Subscription deactivation**: WiLS staff will request the vendor shut off access to the electronic resource to mitigate further usage or trailing liabilities.
- **Debt deferral / forgiveness review**: The WiLS Board or leadership team will review the case to determine if a partial write-off is warranted based on extreme circumstances (e.g., permanent institution closure).
- **Participation freeze**: The member's ability to request new quotes, place new orders, or sign new contracts will be suspended until a resolution is reached.