

Draft Updated 10/8/2026

(update included staff title changes for committee as voted on in October 6, 2026
OCSLD Meeting and updated ORG chart)

Memorandum of Understanding Between the Onondaga County Public Library System and its Member Libraries

Approved October 21st , 2026

Memorandum of Understanding Between the Onondaga County Public Library System and its Member Libraries

This document reflects an understanding of the major responsibilities of the Onondaga County Public Library System (OCPL:System) and its Member Libraries (Members) encompassing OCPL:City (Central & City Branches) along with Suburban Libraries. These libraries serve the public directly, and the System provides services that support the libraries in that role. Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) is one of 23 New York State systems chartered by the Board of Regents. OCPL was formed in 1974 – Provisional Charter – absolute charter in 1979- with the merger of the Onondaga Library System and the former Syracuse Public Library, anticipating that consolidation of services could result in increased efficiency, lower costs and seamless library services for county residents.

The System stands as a cooperative effort to bring exceptional library services to all people in Onondaga County. The System and Members will support cooperative efforts to allow every library in the System to thrive. Library users and their communities will benefit from this cooperation in the vibrant heart of Central New York.

Therefore, for the purpose of improving library services in Onondaga County, and through cooperation, to reduce costs, to secure state aid, and to accomplish the above without sacrifice of local autonomy, responsibility and initiative, the Onondaga County Public Library System and the Members understand the following:

System Services Mandated Under State Education Law:

1. The System will provide a means of location of materials available in the libraries of the System ([Title 8, Chapter 2, Part 90, CRR-NY section 90.3](#)).
2. The System will provide Coordinated Outreach Services as mandated by section 90.3 (I) of the Education Commissioner's Regulations.
3. The Central Library will support the residents in the system service area as detailed under [Section 90.4 of the Commissioner's Regulations](#).
4. The System will inform Members of New York State grant opportunities, and will administer any grants received by the System for the benefit of Members as well as provide support for appropriate programs.
5. The System will develop and submit a System Plan of Service to the State Education Department every five years.
6. The System will develop and review the Free Direct Access Plan to establish and ensure the borrowing rights of residents in the geographic area served by the system and its Members.

7. The System will furnish the Commissioner of Education with information and reports as required to qualify for state aid.
8. In addition to a qualified System Director, the System will employ at least three full-time (or the equivalent) certified public librarians who will be engaged solely in system services, exclusive of librarians employed in technical processing, and one of whom will be designated to serve as administrator of the Outreach Services Program, as required under [CR section 90.3](#). In addition, a full-time member library liaison will be designated-

Member Libraries Services Mandated Under State Education Law:

1. Members are expected to maintain and contribute to an up-to-date online catalog of their holdings.
2. Members are expected to provide borrowing privileges to patrons of other libraries in the System. This provision occurs in the OCPL Free Direct Access Plan. (See Appendix C, Direct Access Policy)
3. Members are expected to provide, in a timely manner, the various reports and data required by the System and the New York State Education Department, Division of Library Development. Annual reports from each Suburban Library required by New York State should be completed and submitted by the mandated submission date.

Additional System Services:

These services are jointly supported and will require a fee or charge to the Members as described in the cost share model included as Appendix B.

1. The System will provide an integrated library system (ILS). The ILS will include a relational database, software to interact with that database, and two graphical user interfaces (one for patrons, one for staff). The following modules will be included; acquisitions, cataloging, circulations, serials. Additional modules may be added as they are developed if they fit the needs of the System.
2. The System will perform the delivery schedule established by the Delivery Advisory Committee's recommendations. Regular communication between the System and Members will be maintained to assure delivery expectations are met.
3. The System will provide training and professional development opportunities for staff and trustees.
4. The System will be available for consultation with staff and trustees on library issues as outlined in the Plan of Service.
5. The System will support library development and advocacy, and will provide guidance on national, state, and regional issues.

6. The System will secure and support shared digital resources such as Overdrive which will be made available to users at all libraries in the system. This will include cost as well as maintenance ensuring stable and strong access to resources for Onondaga County library users.
7. The System will provide coordinated purchasing for various supplies and materials when deemed appropriate by the System and Members.

Responsibilities & Expectations of the System:

1. The System will manage the System infrastructure with transparency.
 - a. The OCPL System budget for the upcoming fiscal year will be shared in draft form with the Members at a Member Council meeting each year.
 - b. The System Director will share monthly board reports with the Members.
2. The System will maintain open communication between the System and its Members and will coordinate all system reports and grants.
3. The System will inform all Members in a timely manner when making major decisions which will impact System services, change their physical plant, make significant cuts to budget or staff as compared to the previous year, or will be widely covered in the press.

Responsibilities & Expectations of the Members:

1. Through the OCPL Member Council (see Appendix E – Member Council By-Laws), Members are expected to participate in System planning for services and funding. The System and Members will meet in a retreat each January to review the previous year and plan for the next year.
2. Members are expected to participate in financial support for the cost of Essential Services. Cost shares are billed to Members quarterly. (See Appendix B, OCPL Cost Shares)
3. Members are expected to adhere to the OCPL Free Direct Access Plan.
4. Members will discuss and prioritize system initiatives.
5. Members will respect the integrity of the System catalog- and follow best practices as outlined by the ILS Review Committee.
6. Members will encourage their staff to participate in System committees, workgroups and task forces in order to create new services and support current services.

7. Members will inform the System in a timely manner when making large decisions which will impact service, change their physical plant, experience significant cuts to budget and staff, or be widely covered in the press.
8. Members are expected to spend a minimum % of their materials budget on shared-content for OverDrive. The percent to spend on e-content for the following year will be reviewed on an annual basis at the January Member Council meeting.
9. Members will advocate on a state and county level for System funding.

Member Charges and Sharing Costs

Overall individual Member charges for the calendar year 2027 will be calculated by adding 5% to the total of the Member charges from 2026. Thereafter, individual Member charges will be calculated proportionately, using the average circulation per library for the three-year period 2024-2026 as reported in the NYS Annual Report. The baseline circulation average will be reviewed prior to the approval of the 2030 System budget and every other year thereafter.

A 5% increase will be added to the total Member contribution for Additional System Services each year until changed by a vote of the Member Libraries. Overall Member charges will be reviewed annually by the MOU Committee. In the event a greater than 5% increase is needed for additional System support for new or enhanced services it will go to the MOU committee for review and a recommendation will be made to the OCPL Member Council for approval by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Members.

MOU Committee

A permanent MOU Committee will meet a minimum of twice a year to review shared costs and Member charges. Committee members will be voted in at the January Member Council Meeting every 3 years starting in 2027. Each member can serve 2 consecutive terms.

The MOU committee will include:

- OCPL Executive Director (ex-officio)
- OCPL System staff (non-voting)
 - Administrative Director
 - Coordinator for Member Services (Co-Chair)
 - Director of Library Information Systems
- OCPL Board President or designee (Non-voting Co-Chair)
- Administrator for Central Library
- Administrator for Branches
- 4 Suburban Library Directors nominated by Onondaga County Suburban Library Directors (OCSLD)
- 2 Suburban Library trustees from libraries not represented by one of the 4 Suburban Library Directors

Effective Date and Termination

This Memorandum of Understanding must be approved by 75% of Member Library Boards, and by the OCPL Board of Trustees. The effective date will be set by the System Director upon final approval of the OCPL Board. In no case will it be later than November 1, 2026. The MOU committee described above will review and recommend revisions to this document every five years. Those recommendations will be submitted to Member boards and the OCPL Board for approval.

Additional Services as described in this Memorandum of Understanding may be terminated by any Member, by giving at least 30 days written notice of termination prior to the January 1st renewal date of any year to the Library System. Neither the System nor Members will have or make any claim for damages against the terminating party. Libraries terminating their participation in Essential Services will only be provided mandated services as specified under [CR 90.3](#) and not subject to Member charges.

Procedure to address complaints or problems concerning the terms of this MOU

The Coordinator for Member Services will work closely with the Members to find amicable solutions to complaints or problems. In those rare occasions where no resolution can be reached, a written summary of the problem will be sent to the MOU Committee which will consider the issue and make recommendations to the System Director.

It is expected that Suburban Library Boards of Trustees will bring their deliberations on issues that will impact the System and other Members to the MOU Committee for a consideration of implications for MOU compliance.

Issues impacting Onondaga County assets, budget, personnel and financial matters will be referred to the Onondaga County Division of Management and Budget or Onondaga County Law Department.

Those libraries not meeting payment schedules set by Onondaga County for Member Charges may be denied services.

In the event the System fails to fulfill its obligations under this Agreement the MOU Committee will convene to address the issue, consider solutions and report to the Member Libraries.

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL

Onondaga County Public Library

Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding was presented to the Trustees of the

(name of library)

at a legal meeting on _____ when the following trustee/board members were present:

(date)

Names of those present at the meeting:

The vote was _____ for and _____ against.

Print Name of Board President: _____

Signature of Board President: _____

Appendix A

OCPL MOU Definitions

Coordinated Outreach Services: NYS Education Law, section 90.3 states coordinated outreach services shall mean a planned and integrated program of library services designed to identify, contact and serve persons who are educationally disadvantaged, members of ethnic or minority groups in need of special library services, unemployed and in need of job placement assistance, living in areas underserved by a library, blind, physically disabled, developmentally or learning disabled, aged or residents of institutions. [90.3 \(l\) of the Education Commissioner's Regulations.](#)

Coordinator for Member Services: OCPL System staff member dedicated to providing services and assistance to the member libraries. Duties would include, but not limited to, assistance with state grant applications; annual report guidance; continuing education, board development, liaison between DLD and Suburban Libraries.

Free Direct Access Plan: Direct access means the ability of an individual, who resides within the boundaries of a public library system and who has a valid borrower's card issued by any member library in the system, to borrow materials for home use directly from the premises of any library that is a member of the public library system on the same basis as that specified for cardholders in each individual library. The public library system reviews their direct access plans every five years.

Division of Library Development (DLD): Library Development is a major unit of the New York State Library. Organizationally, the New York State Library is located within the Office of Cultural Education within the New York State Education Department and is headed by the State Librarian and Assistant Commissioner for Libraries. The New York State Library has two divisions, Library Development and the Research Library. Both serve the people and the libraries of the State. <https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/>

ILS (Integrated Library System): Integrated library systems provide libraries with a variety of automated functions including cataloging, circulation, the online catalog (OPAC), acquisitions, serials and electronic resource management.

Member Charges: The supplemental contribution charged to OCPL member libraries for additional system services beyond those mandated in CR 90.3. Each member's annual contribution is determined as their proportion of a three-year average of circulation of all members as reported in the N.Y.S. Annual report.

Member Library: Member libraries are free-standing, legal entities that pay into the system. Member Libraries are the public libraries in the library system's service area chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York to provide public library service to the residents of their chartered service areas within Onondaga County. This includes OCPL:City.

List of Member Libraries

- Onondaga County Public Library “City”
0 inclusive of Central, 8 Branches, and 2 Community Center Libraries
- Baldwinsville Public Library
- Community Library of DeWitt & Jamesville
- East Syracuse Free Library
- Elbridge Free Library
- Fairmount Community Library
- Fayetteville Free Library
- Jordan Bramley Library
- Lafayette Public Library
- Liverpool Public Library
- Manlius Library
- Marcellus Free Library
- Maxwell Memorial Library
- Minoa Library
- Northern Onondaga Public Library
0 inclusive of Brewerton, Cicero, and North Syracuse Libraries
- Onondaga Free Library
- Salina Library
- Skaneateles Library
- Solway Public Library
- Tully Free Library

Mini Grants (Formerly Literacy Library Services Program): The program consists of ~~two~~ one annual grant program for member libraries interested in pursuing the following enhancements to their communities for approved expenses as outlined in the grant application. Subject to continued NYS funding:

- Adult Literacy - library-based programs conducted by public library systems and public and free association libraries which are members of OCPL: System to assist adults to increase their literacy skills.
- Family Literacy - library-based family literacy programs for preschool and school age children and their parents conducted by public library systems and public libraries and free association libraries which are members of OCPL: System
- Outreach Services - library-based outreach programs/events conducted by public library systems and public libraries and free association libraries which are members OCPL: System

OCPL Board of Trustees: The OCPL System and City are governed by an eleven-member Board of Trustees appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the Onondaga County Legislature.

OCPL:City: This entity provides library services to the City of Syracuse. It is made up of the Central Library, 8 Branches, and 2 Community Center Libraries. It has its own budget and organizational structure. It shares a Board of Trustees, some staff, and an Executive Director with the OCPL System. It is a Member Library.

Central Library: The Robert P. Kinchen Library located at 447 South Salina Street in the heart of downtown Syracuse, serves as the Central Library for the Onondaga County Library System. As such, it receives extra funding and performs a special role in serving all residents of the County. It offers materials to function as a research hub, houses local history & special collections, and the transit and sorting hub for the Onondaga County Library System. Its budget, staff, and organizational structure are part of OCPL:City.

Branch Libraries: These libraries are free standing buildings in various neighborhoods within the City of Syracuse. They provide essential point of service contact within the community. Their budget, staff, and organizational structure are part of OCPL:City. The Branch Libraries are:

- Beauchamp Branch Library
- Betts Branch Library
- Hazard Branch Library
- Mundy Branch Library
- Paine Branch Library
- Petit Branch Library
- Soule Branch Library
- White Branch Library

Community Center Libraries: Are small satellite libraries housed within community centers. They are staffed with Branch staff. Their budget, staff, and organizational structure are part of OCPL:City. The Community Center Libraries are:

- Northeast Community Center Library
- Syracuse Community Connections Library

OCPL Executive Director: The OCPL Executive Director shall provide leadership to both the OCPL:City and the OCPL:System.

- The OCPL Executive Director has authority over the OCPL:City.
- While the OCPL Executive Director has authority over the System Services we offer, they have no authority over the suburban libraries.

OCPL Member Council (MC): The Member Council serves as a platform for Member Libraries (City and Suburban) to exchange ideas and address system wide concerns.

OCPL: System: The Onondaga County Public Library System provides general overarching services and support for its member libraries. It has its own budget, and it shares its Board of Trustees, staff, and Executive Director with the OCPL:City Libraries. Its funding is derived from Onondaga County, New York State Aid, and the Member Charges. It is not a Member Library, instead it provides services for the Member Libraries, as outlined in the MOU.

Onondaga County Suburban Library Directors (OCSLD): The mission of this group is to maximize the potential of each member to provide the best possible public library service in all libraries represented by the membership. Membership is made up of a director from each of the 19 suburban libraries.

Suburban Libraries: These libraries serve towns, villages, and school districts in Onondaga County. They each have their own budget, Board of Trustees, staff, organizational structure, and Director. They get their funding from a variety of public funding streams.

System Catalog (Union Catalog): Public library systems are mandated by the state to provide a list of the combined holdings of the libraries in their service area.

System Plan of Service (POS): The System Plan of Service is a planning document which identifies, organizes, and provides an overview of the library system's service program including intended changes in services or priorities. The Plan emphasizes what the library system proposes to accomplish and whom the library system serves. The Plan demonstrates how the library system anticipates it will fulfill the major roles expected of library systems. The public library system reviews and creates a new POS every five years.

Appendix B

OCPL Member Library Cost Sharing Model¹

For the past fifteen years the methodology for determining each member library's share of support of System-wide Additional System Services"; (those not stipulated under CR 90.3 as mandated with annual System state aid) for OCPL member libraries has been determined by their percentage of overall county circulation averaged over a three-year period. This includes the Central Library and City branches. The individual library circulation was based on the "Total Circulation" as reported in the N.Y.S. Annual Report².

¹ Please refer to *OCPL Percent Change and MOU Charges Spreadsheets* as reference. ² This includes digital circulation of System supported services; but also includes circulation of local library purchased digital resources.

The last formally approved OCPL MOU utilized the 2019-2021 circulation figures for each library and the county as a whole. This formula will be reviewed at MOU Committee meetings as needed.

Summary explanation of Member charges for 2027-2031

We will review and update the circulation numbers every other year. Below is a breakdown using a three-year average and updating the numbers every other year.

2027 A 5% increase will be added to the total Member charges number from 2026. No update of the circulation numbers.

2028 The circulation numbers will be updated using the years 21/22/23 along with a 5% increase.

2029 A 5% increase will be added to the total Member charges from 2028. No update of the circulation numbers.

2030 The circulation numbers will be updated using the years 22/23/24 along with a 5% increase.

2031 A 5% increase will be added to the total Member charges from 2030.

Appendix C

2027 OCPL System Budget Narrative

The revenues and expenditures below represent the current **2026** OCPL **System** Budget. Onondaga County funds OCPL through a Library Fund, which OCPL divides into three Program Tracks: **Central**, **City** and **System**. The **System** Budget reflects the library funds adopted by the County prior to the start of the **2027** fiscal year for system-wide services to Suburban Member Libraries, Central Library and City Branches² as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding. This budget is supported by State, County and Member Library funding, all of which flows through, and is managed by, Onondaga County. Though state and county revenues are budgeted they are subject to revenue shortfalls and unilateral reductions by the state and county as recently evidenced.

The accompanying Financial FAQs (Appendix D) provide supplementary information regarding the OCPL budgetary process.

² Note: Central and City Library contributions are shown separately from “Member” Contributions. ⁴ See FAQs for fund balance discussion (Appendix D).

2026 System Budget Expenditures / Revenue

2026 System Expenses		Amount
Employee Wages	\$	946,410 full time equivalents
Fringe Benefits	\$	377,181 system employee benefits
Office Supplies	\$	8,530 office supplies, purch card items, computer supplies, prgm sup, printers
Books & Materials	\$	128,015 ebooks, databases, etc.
Maintenance & Utilities	\$	5,253 Postage machine lease, galleries rent, copy machine lease, etc
Cash Grants to Member Libraries	\$	10,000 County Legislative grants to individual member libraries
Rents	\$	16,501 galleries, copiers, postage machine
Telecommunications	\$	61,147 tech packs program, internet, fiber network
Software Licenses	\$	8,197 General use software licensing
Software Support and Maintenance	\$	390,182 evanced lic, overdrive platform maint, polaris ILS, Hosting, Migration
Professional Services	\$	4,250 Outside vendors for expertise
Software Training	\$	1,500 continuing ed for system staff
Memberships	\$	2,193 Pulisdo, CLRC, NYLA, etc.
Audit Expenses	\$	126 Billed cost of annual county audit
Postage	\$	27,429 ILL shipping, empire delivery
Taxes	\$	925 taxes as necessary
Travel & Training	\$	10,940 training and travel for system staff
Interdepartmental Charges	\$	331,083 IT, Maint, legal, fin ops, purchasing, insurance, fleet maintenance, hr
Total Expenses	\$	2,329,862
2024 System Revenue		Amount
State Aid	\$	1,103,594 Basic Aid, Supplemental Operating Aid
Member Charges	\$	428,183 Member dues (includes central and branches \$99,591)
Additional County Funds	\$	787,505 Additional County Funds required to meet system expenses
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	10,580
Total Revenue	\$	2,329,862

Appendix D

OCPL System Financial FAQs

Below is a sampling of common questions regarding the financial operations of “System” services of the Onondaga County Public Library, as distinct from “City Branches” and “Central Library” operations.

1. *Aren’t OCPL System services funded by NY State aid?*

New York State established public library systems in 1950 and budgeted funding to support their mission to provide public library service to every resident in the state through “System” and “Central Library” funding. The intent was to support all local libraries with robust regional central libraries along with a cooperative structure to share resources. Of course over the years the state has not kept up with its vision of fully supporting such an effort and public library systems continue to struggle with their mission and their funding to meet at the very least the requirements stipulated in the [Education Commissioner’s Regulation 90.3](#) which governs library system operations.

Of course the demand for cooperative services has grown far beyond the original mission articulated by the State decades ago and public library systems have expanded their cooperative services with the financial investment of their members.

2. *What is the difference between Mandated Services and Additional System Services and why do we need to pay for Additional System Services?*

Library System services stipulated under the Education Commissioner’s Regulations ([CR 90.3](#)) and technically funded by NY State aid are considered to be “required” and available to all libraries in Onondaga County who choose to be members of the OCPL System and abide by the member library responsibilities detailed in the OCPL Memorandum of Understanding.

Additional System Services are those cooperative services, such as the automated Integrated Library System (ILS) “Polaris” that the member libraries have agreed to support jointly and are managed by the System. These services typically range far beyond what New York State originally envisioned in 1950 and vary greatly among N.Y.S. public library systems. In effect, they are cooperative purchasing agreements managed by the regional Library System. The cost sharing models for such endeavors vary greatly throughout the state.

3. *We understand the budget is developed in the previous summer and fall from “estimated” revenues; especially state aid. Is it amended when the final amounts are established in the spring? If there are unanticipated revenues, are they credited to the Library Fund?*

Once the County determines the Library appropriation and adopts its budget for the coming year it has historically been stable with the exception of years with significant recessions.

The New York State budget is not determined until April of the Library's fiscal year, at the earliest. The Library uses the previous year's funding as its budget estimate. At this time it appears the Library will receive funding similar to previous years.

Once member library and system annual reports have been received and approved by the State, OCPL will receive System funding. All such funds will be applied by the County to the "Library Fund". Any unanticipated revenues will be credited in subsequent years.

4. *How are staff allocated between "System" work and "City Library" work? Who works specifically on "System" tasks helping all member libraries?*

In the 1970's, when the Onondaga Library System was merged into the Syracuse Public Library and both assumed by Onondaga County, all "System" functions were taken over by the newly created Onondaga County Public Library. The intent was to save money by streamlining administration and combining many library functions. Therefore, many staff serve both the "City Libraries" and the "Member Libraries" in their various capacities. That said, OCPL makes every effort to properly allocate the salaries and benefits of shared staff between the two programs.

However, there are numerous staff solely dedicated to "System" work, including the Outreach Coordinator, the Coordinator for Member Services, Integrated Tech Librarian as well as the various staff dedicated to the Delivery Service (i.e. sorters, drivers, and supervisor).

In addition, the OCPL Executive Director is responsible for the overall administration of the System service program and is available to all member libraries for consultation on library matters.

5. *What materials are purchased using the System budget?*

Historically these State aid funds to both the System and Central Library were used for the purchase of reference material accessible by all member libraries and residents. In the last two decades these funds have migrated to the purchase of database licenses; though a small amount is still dedicated to unique print materials.

6. *What are the Cash Grants to Members?*

These are Legislative Grants to individual member libraries by the County Legislature channeled through the System.

7. *How are the "Telecom" costs divided between the "System" and "City" operations?*

Contracted Fiber Optic services through Crown Castle are allocated at 10% to the System and 90% towards City operations. Crown Castle internet services are allocated at 10% System and 90% City. Data service for the Tech packs are allocated at 50% System and 50% City.

8. Who does the annual audit for OCPL? Can the members get a copy?

Onondaga County manages the finances for OCPL, including the receipt and investment of revenues and the auditing and payment of vouchers. The Library finances are audited as a part of the County's annual audit. Unfortunately, the County does not specifically break out OCPL's finances in their published audit, which is available online. Yet they do charge the Library for its small share of the work.

9. How much does delivery cost?

Fleet Maintenance:	\$23,000
Galleries Rent:	\$5,400
Staff:	
1 full time supervisor:	\$62,932
2 full time drivers:	\$88,559
1 part time driver:	\$16,915
3 part time sorters:	\$45,386
Total Delivery:	\$242,191

10. Does the "System" get to keep its year end surplus? How is that treated?

Yes. The County applies the surplus "System" funds toward the next year's budget. However, since this amount is not known until well into the fiscal year (Jan. 1- Dec. 31) the current fund balance is estimated on the previous year's amount.

The "System" fund balance is generally small and, unlike most Library Systems, there is no need to grow the fund balance for cash flow purposes to tide them over until the receipt of State Aid sometime in the late spring. In effect, the County lends the System funds for these months.

Since it appears the System State Aid will not be significantly reduced for 2021, the unanticipated revenues will be credited to the County Library Fund for use in future years.

11. How much (approximately) does the Polaris ILS (Polaris) actually cost each year; including staff?

Software:

<i>Polaris/Polaris Hosting Services</i>	\$234, 581
<i>SMS Notifications (Message Bee)</i>	\$9,170
<i>Telephone Notifications (Vega Interact/IPA)</i>	\$12,600
<i>Discovery Layer & Mobile App (Projection)</i>	\$80k-90k*
<i>OCLC Cataloging & WorldShare ILL Service</i>	\$35,754

Staffing:

Director of Info Systems:	\$53, 683
Acquisitions Manager (40%):	\$34,727
Clerk 2 catalog (30%):	\$14,423
Librarian 2 ILL (50%):	\$36,926
Librarian 2 Catalog (100%):	\$73,852
Clerk 2 (50% ILL, 50% Acq)	\$43,834
Librarian 2 (Systems) (70%)	\$ \$51,696

Total ILS: \$686,246*

12. *What does “Interdepartmental Charges” mean?*

Onondaga County provides nearly all administrative services for OCPL and the OCPL System, including HR, Purchasing, Finance and maintenance of the Delivery Fleet. This represents the “System’s” portion of the “charge back” for County services.

13. *How are the Additional System Service costs shared among OCPL members?*

The system costs are covered using funding from State, County and Federal (when applicable) sources along with contributions from all the member libraries (inclusive of **OCPL:City** Libraries). OCPL Member Libraries' overall contribution is distributed amongst each member using their corresponding percentage of total circulation over a multi-year period. This is considered a valid approximation of the use of System services by each library.

14. *Can an OCPL member library choose not to participate and pay for Additional System Services?*

Yes, but they would only receive those services mandated under [CR 90.3](#). This would mean they would no longer participate in the county-wide Polaris ILS, receive delivery services, nor numerous other services beyond the state requirements.

Onondaga County Public Library
Free Direct Access Plan
2027-2031

In fulfillment of Commissioner's Regulation 90.3(a) through (d)(4)

The Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) is a federated public library system chartered to serve all residents of Onondaga County, New York. The system includes 19 independent member libraries, 8 Syracuse City branch libraries, 2 community center libraries, and the Central Library located in the City of Syracuse. The Central Library is chartered to serve all residents of Onondaga County.

This plan supports the principles of free direct access established under New York State Commissioner's Regulations §90.3 and the guidance provided by the New York State Library Division of Library Development.

DEFINITIONS

Direct Access is defined as the ability of an individual, who resides within the boundaries of a public library system and who has a valid borrower's card issued by the system or any member library in the system, to borrow materials for home use directly from the premises of any library that is a member of the public library system on the same basis as that specified for cardholders in each individual library.

Chartered service area is defined as the geographic area served by a library as stated in charter documents approved by the Board of Regents and on file with the department. Please note that the phrase "and its environs" or equivalent as contained in any charter document will not be recognized by the commissioner as a valid part of the library's chartered service area. For purposes of this section, the commissioner will not recognize areas served by the library under contract or agreement as a valid part of a library's chartered service area.

Resident borrower is defined as an individual who resides within the boundaries of the chartered service area of a public library as defined in section 253 of the Education Law and who is a library cardholder at that library.

Non-resident borrower is defined as an individual who resides outside the boundaries of the chartered service area of a public library as defined in section 253 of the Education Law and who is a library cardholder at that library or at another member library of the public library system or who is a system cardholder. This definition and plan does not include or address individuals residing outside of the boundaries of the Onondaga County Public Library system.

Library resources are defined as the print and non-print materials owned by the library and any other services provided by the library to the resident borrowers of the library's chartered service area.

On-site use is defined as the ability of an individual to use library resources on the premises of a library.

Serious inequities and hardships are defined as those conditions which adversely affect resident borrowers of member libraries, such as when circulation of library materials to non-resident users is excessive and significantly deprives local residents of the opportunity to borrow library materials.

Unserved is defined as those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the boundaries of a public library system but outside the boundaries of a chartered service area of a library which is a member of that system. Note that since the OCPL Central Library is chartered to serve all of Onondaga County there are no unserved individuals in Onondaga County

Underserved is defined as those individuals residing in geographic areas that are within the chartered service area of a member library and which the public library system had identified as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library services.

Member Libraries means the public libraries in the library system's service area chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York to provide public library service to the residents of their chartered service areas within the Onondaga County (and associated school districts for a school district library). This includes the Syracuse City Branches and the Central library.

System Meeting is a meeting organized by the OCPL system that includes representation from member library directors and/or trustees.

1. Describe how all individuals residing within the boundaries of the system but outside a member public library's chartered service area will receive library services.

Individuals residing within the boundaries of OCPL but outside a member library's-chartered service area will continue to receive library services through:

1. Free direct access at all OCPL member libraries
2. Intra-system borrowing through the integrated library system (ILS) shared by all OCPL member libraries
3. Access to downloadable and streaming digital collections
4. Library services provided by the OCPL Central Library, chartered to serve all of Onondaga County
5. Access to electronic resources through the OCPL website and online catalog
6. Participation in library programs and outreach services, subject to local capacity limitations permitted under Commissioner's Regulations
7. Mobile, pop-up, outreach, and community-based library services where available

OCPL libraries participate in a shared library card environment in which cards issued by any member library are honored system-wide. No fees are charged to Onondaga County residents for library cards.

2. Describe how the system will assure that those persons living within the system boundaries in an area where a member library chooses to withdraw from the system, or where a chartered and registered library was never a member of the system, will be served by the system.

Individuals residing within the boundaries of Onondaga County in an area where a member library chooses to withdraw from OCPL will continue to receive the same suite of library services available to all residents of the OCPL service area (see #1 above):

1. Free direct access at any member library
2. Shared borrowing and delivery services from any member library
3. Access to digital collections and electronic resources
4. Access to the OCPL Central Library and their services
5. Remote access to the online catalog and library services
6. Outreach and community-based library services as feasible

3. Describe what the system considers “serious inequities and hardships” and the criteria used by the system to make the determination.

OCPL recognizes that resource sharing is a core value of the federated system and that equitable access benefits all county residents. Serious inequities and hardships may exist when:

- Non-resident borrowing significantly limits county residents’ access to high-demand materials or services
- Excessive lending patterns create substantial financial or operational burdens on a member library
- Demand for programs, technology, or equipment exceeds a library’s capacity to serve local residents
- Digital licensing or vendor restrictions create inequitable access pressures
- Persistent circulation imbalances materially affect collection development or service delivery

Criteria used in determining serious inequities and hardships may include:

- Borrowing-to-lending ratios
- Hold fulfillment delays
- Financial impact on member libraries
- Usage data for electronic resources
- Program attendance and facility capacity
- Loss or replacement rates for shared materials
- Collection turnover rates

4. Describe what constitutes excessive out of chartered service area borrowing in the system.

OCPL recognizes that resource sharing is a core strength of the federated system. However, borrowing activity may warrant review when sustained patterns of non-resident use create service pressures or inequities that significantly affect a member library's ability to respond to the needs of its resident community.

More specifically, a review of out-of-chartered-service-area borrowing may be initiated when circulation and resource-sharing patterns demonstrate sustained imbalances or usage trends that materially affect collection availability, delivery operations, digital resource access, or service capacity for resident borrowers.

Circulation involving the Central Library will continue to be treated separately because the Central Library is chartered to serve all residents of Onondaga County.

5. Analyze the library resources available to unserved and underserved populations residing within the system boundaries.

a) Describe the unserved and the underserved populations within the system.

Because the OCPL Central Library is chartered to serve all residents of Onondaga County, there are no unserved populations within the system boundaries.

OCPL recognizes, however, that some residents may experience barriers to library access due to geography, transportation limitations, economic conditions, disabilities, language barriers, broadband availability, or limited local funding.

Underserved populations may include:

- Residents in economically disadvantaged communities
- Individuals without reliable internet access
- Older adults and homebound residents
- Individuals with disabilities
- New Americans and multilingual populations
- Residents with limited transportation access
- Communities with limited local funding capacity

b) Describe the criteria used by the system to identify libraries as having an inadequate level of local income to support the delivery of acceptable library service (underserved). List those libraries so identified.

OCPL uses compliance with New York State minimum standards for public libraries, as described in New York State education law and New York State Commissioner's Regulations, as a primary measure of adequate support.

Each member library reports on their compliance with the NYS minimum standards in the state annual report. If the library is in compliance with the minimum standards, or if the Commissioner of Education has granted a waiver from one or more of the standards, the library is deemed to have an adequate level of support.

All libraries in the Onondaga County Public Library system report compliance with NYS minimum standards or have a waiver granted by the Commissioner of Education.

c) Describe the actions the system will take to expand the availability of library services to unserved and underserved individuals residing within the boundaries of the system.

Onondaga County is a compact geographic area, with most residents living within a short distance of a library building where they are welcome, regardless of their physical location within the County. OCPL will continue to support equitable library access through:

- Countywide reciprocal borrowing and resource sharing
- Shared digital collections and databases
- Delivery services among member libraries
- Technology access initiatives
- Outreach and mobile services
- Community partnerships

OCPL will expand the availability of library services by:

- Improving our digital platforms and web presence
- Increasing the visibility of library services
- Building on our accessibility and inclusion efforts

d) Provide a timetable for such actions.

These actions will occur on an ongoing basis throughout the 2027–2031 Plan of Service period and will be reviewed annually as part of OCPL system planning and evaluation activities.

e) Identify who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Responsibility for these actions will be shared among:

- OCPL's Executive Director
- OCPL's Director of Library Information Systems
- Member Services staff
- Member library directors and trustees

- The OCPL Board of Trustees
- Relevant system committees and working groups

6. Describe the conditions under which modifications to the free direct access plan can be made:

a) Without the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education

Subject to approval by a majority of member libraries and consistent with Commissioner's Regulations, member libraries may implement limited restrictions including:

- Restricting holds on newly acquired locally funded materials for a limited period
- Restricting circulation of specialized equipment, non-print materials, or fragile items purchased with local funds
- Limiting attendance at programs funded entirely with local funds when space or capacity requires priority for local residents
- Applying vendor-imposed limitations on licensed electronic resources

Materials restricted from holds may still be available for on-site use or direct borrowing by visitors at the owning library. OCPL also supports cooperative purchasing of electronic resources and shared digital platforms intended to maximize equitable access across the system.

b) With prior approval of the Commissioner of Education

Although the system does not anticipate the need for any modifications requiring the prior approval of the Commissioner of Education, the following path may be followed by a member library:

A library may request a waiver from the Commissioner of Education to impose restrictions beyond those mentioned in this plan if a majority of the other member libraries agree to support such a waiver. The request for this waiver will be made in writing to OCPL and must include the following:

1. Documentation of the serious inequities and hardships affecting the resident borrowers of the member library making the request.
2. The proposed restrictions that will be implemented and a description of the anticipated impact on resident and non-resident borrowers.
3. Recommendations for remedying the underlying inequity with a proposed timetable for action.

7. Describe how the system will assure that member libraries are complying with the system free direct access plan approved by a majority of member libraries.

Upon approval by the OCPL Board of Trustees and the Commissioner of Education, the Free Direct Access Plan will be:

- Distributed to all member libraries
- Posted on the OCPL website
- Reviewed periodically at system meetings
- Incorporated into member library orientation and training activities as appropriate

OCPL will provide guidance and consultation regarding compliance with the plan and applicable Commissioner's Regulations and will work collaboratively with member libraries to resolve concerns related to implementation.

8. Describe how the system obtained member library input to the plan for free direct access.

This plan was developed through a collaborative process involving OCPL system staff, member library directors, and system stakeholders.

The development process includes:

- Review of the previous 2022–2026 Free Direct Access Plan
- Review of updated guidance from the New York State Library Division of Library Development
- Distribution of draft versions for member review and feedback
- Review and discussion at a scheduled OCPL System Meeting
- Approval by a majority vote of member library boards
- Approval by the OCPL Board of Trustees

A copy of the member library vote results will be attached to the final submitted plan in accordance with New York State Library requirements.

OCPL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

