

Library Take Out

The Onondaga County Public Library is ready with a new opportunity to serve our public. These have been difficult and disruptive times. As we all try and stay calm and keep moving forward it can be the small comforts that offer the best solace. Getting away from it all by losing yourself in a good book or great movie is more important now than ever, The hardworking staff of the Onondaga County Public Library System are ready to step up and do our part to help our community and the people of all ages who make it up.

Starting on the 26th people will be able to have Library Take Out and get books, DVDs and other materials in a convenient and safe take out manner. It will be a while before we can open the doors of the library but we are getting ready to serve our community in new and dynamic ways in response to COVID-19.

People will be able to make reserves like they always have via the website and by calling the library on the phone. We will be happy to pull them and get them ready. They will also be able to submit a preference sheet giving us some feedback about what they like and get a “Librarian Special” where our staff will select a blind bag for you based off of your preferences, likes, and favorite authors.

It is going to be important that our community be patient with us while we start this new service. We are being very cautious in how we take returned materials into the library as well as how we give the public the items they check out. Everything that gets returned will be held in quarantine for a week before being checked in and available for other people to check out. This is for your safety, your neighbors' safety, and the safety of our staff. This is going to slow things down a little bit but that is something that all of us have become used to at this point.

As we are doing our Library Take out we are asking that people make reservations for pickup so we can have your materials ready to go and get you on your way as quickly and efficiently as we can. This is going to be particularly important when we are beginning the service. After you have placed your order we will let you know when it is ready to be picked up. We ask that you please contact the library you will be getting your materials at and schedule a half hour time slot to come pick up your materials. We are doing it this way to make sure that you don't come to the library and find a huge line waiting for you.

When you get to the library please wait in line if necessary (we are going to try and minimize this as much as possible and we will provide some spacing guides to help out). When you get up to the door please show Library Staff your photo ID. They will then pull your materials which will be in a new paper bag and leave it on a table for you to take and go. You will not have to come into contact with staff at all. Everything will already be checked out to you and your receipt will be in the bag.

We ask that patrons wear masks, practice social distancing, and be as patient with us as possible. We are figuring this out as we go. Things are going to move slower since this is all new to us and we want to be careful in order to keep our community safe.

Not every library in the County will be able to reopen at the same time. Because of the way they are legally incorporated, most of our suburban libraries are still subject to the Governor's Executive Order and are not able to open without approval from the state . A determination still needs to be made regarding which Phase most libraries will fall under across the state.

We can open the OCPL libraries in the City of Syracuse because they are a part of local government. There may be a few suburban libraries with the same ability.

All of our librarians and library staff are dedicated to serving their public. They want to help people, and they've been working all through the shutdown to continue to provide services remotely. We'll launch Library Takeout with the city libraries, and the suburban libraries will come on board when they can.

People have a LOT of stuff checked out of the library. Currently there are over 120,000 items in people's homes across the county. We don't want it all back right away and we are not going to be collecting fines on any of this for the next few months at the very least. It's OK, it can wait a bit, we promise. Everything that gets returned to any library in the county will go into an immediate mandatory 7 day quarantine. If everything comes back at once the library will be flooded with materials which we need to park in our limited quarantine space. Again, we are not collecting or accruing fines on library materials at this time.

As a way to make that easier we are asking people to return materials to the library on every other day. If your birthday ends in an even number then please return all materials on even numbered days, likewise if your birthday is on an odd numbered day then you return materials on odd numbered dates. While this seems unwieldy it will help a lot as we start getting our materials back and process them through quarantine.

It is still going to be some weeks before the library is physically open to the public. We need to install things like breathguards, reconfigure a lot of our public spaces, and create new pathways to get around the library. When we do reopen we may have to limit how many people are in the library at any given time. We are going to ask all patrons to wear masks when they are in the library at any time for the foreseeable future. It's going to be a learning process and we are going to be experimenting and adapting a lot as we go along so the library may look different from one day to the next while we try new things and figure out how to serve you better while keeping you safe.

We are prepared and ready to offer this new service and give our community educational and entertaining options as we all begin to move forward. These have been very challenging times

for all of us and our community has had a lot of loss. We hope that the library can be a way for everyone from kids to seniors to start having a small slice of normalcy in the form of curling up with a new book from the library. We are deeply committed to your safety and that of your neighbors. These are challenging times and OCPL libraries are ready to accept this new challenge to help the communities that rely on us.