

## **Allegany County Library System is joining the Western Maryland catalog Information for the public**

### What's happening?

On March 5, Allegany County Library System is going to start using the library catalog that is currently shared by Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County and Washington County Free Library. Library customers in all 3 counties will be able to look up and easily request items in all 3 libraries. Also, a library card from one county will automatically work in the other 2 counties.

### What changes will this bring?

In Garrett County and Washington County, customers will notice items in the catalog from branches in Allegany County. For many titles, there will be more copies than before, and there will be many thousands of new titles that are unique to Allegany County, which can now be found and easily requested by customers in the other 2 counties.

In Allegany County, customers will see many new titles in the catalog that their library didn't have in the past, and many extra copies from branches in the neighboring counties. They'll find that the online catalog looks somewhat different, but all of the functions are the same: you can log on with your usual library card number and password or PIN, view your account, renew items, request items (from any of the 3 libraries), and join the waiting list for a popular item.

### What about those waiting lists – how does that work when we all share the catalog?

A title in the catalog has one overall waiting list. Allegany customers will be merged into these queues, but – **each copy of a title will always go to fill a request in its own county first**. It will only go to other counties if there are no requests from customers in its home county. This means:

If you're on a waiting list you may notice that you are further down the list after the merger – but ***this will not affect how soon you get a copy of that title***. All of your county's copies of that title will be available only to you and other residents of your county, just as they were before the merger. If you're the first person on the list from your county, you'll get the next copy from your county that comes available, even if there are people ahead of you from the other counties.

### Do Allegany County customers need to re-register in the new system?

No – your registration information will be transferred automatically, along with the information about anything you currently have checked out, any requests you have pending, and other data from your existing account.

### How does the transition happen?

As with most big changes, there will be some inconvenience. We're very sorry about that, and we hope you'll agree that the improvements are worth it!

On March 2, 3, and 4 in all 3 counties:

- The biggest difference: ***you must have your library card with you to check out items***. Please remember to bring your card along when you visit us on those 3 days!
- Also:
  - No checked out items will be due on these days, and no fines will be accruing.

- The web catalog will be unavailable: you can't look things up or sign in to your account.
- Parts of Overdrive, Hoopla, RBDigital, and Kanopy won't work. They can't verify your library card, so you won't be able to sign in to their websites or check out new items. Items that you've checked out previously and downloaded to a device should still be usable – so be sure to stock up before March 2!
- Branches in Allegany County will be closed on March 2, open their regular hours on March 3 and 4.
- Branches in Washington and Garrett Counties will be open their regular hours all 3 days.
- At all branches in all counties, we won't be able to look things up in the catalog, we won't be able to place requests for items and we won't be able to register new customers. We apologize in advance for the inconvenience!