Proposed Policy Change to Circulation and Access Policy of the Caldwell County Public Library

Background

Hoopla

Hoopla is a digital streaming service that lets you instantly borrow ebooks, audiobooks, movies, and music using your library card. Caldwell County library card holders can check out up to five items per month.

Our annual Hoopla budget is $36,000, but our demand far exceeds our budget. Our solution has been to have a daily limit of downloads. We took our annual Hoopla budget of $36,000 and divided it by 365 days in a year. Our daily budget is $98.63 per day. Most Hoopla downloads cost between $2 and $4.59, so the collective day limit of borrows is between 21 and 49. Patrons call or stop by frequently to complain about the collective daily limit as it is often reached before 8 am.

Libby

Libby is a free web app that allows you to borrow ebooks, audiobooks, and digital magazines using your Caldwell County library card. It works like a library. If there are five copies of a book, five people can check them out and then the sixth person would go on a waiting list until a copy is available.

The issue with Libby is that the limited number of available copies can make the wait time for popular books extremely long. Patrons have expressed frustration when the wait is estimated to be six months or longer.

Issue

Within the Cardinal network, we have an agreement that provides reciprocity for those residents of the seven surrounding counties (Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Catawba, Watauga, and Wilkes). Residents from those counties can apply for and receive a Caldwell County library card free of charge. Individuals outside of Caldwell or a surrounding county may apply for a card with a $25 fee.

In the past, some of the surrounding counties have offered Hoopla and/or Libby to their patrons. Currently, none of these library systems offer Hoopla to their patrons. In the last few months, we have seen a surge in requests for Caldwell County library cards from residents of our reciprocal counties. We have also noted that some neighboring library systems are actively encouraging their patrons to come to Caldwell County to obtain cards specifically to regain access to these digital platforms.

Our recent data analysis reveals that 806 active library cards are currently held by non-Caldwell County residents. This high volume of non-resident usage has placed a significant strain on our digital resources, causing Hoopla to reach its daily collective borrowing limit prematurely and increasing wait times for Libby users. Consequently, these services—funded by Caldwell County tax payers—are becoming less accessible to the local residents they are intended to serve.

Our Solution

We would like to limit out of county cards only to items available through our physical collection and resource sharing. This should decrease the number of requested downloads from Hoopla each day and make wait times shorter in Libby for Caldwell County residents.

Proposed Policy Change to the Circulation and Access Policy

We would like to amend the **Library Cards: Eligibility & Registration section** of Circulation and Access Policy so that only residents or taxpayers of, or those who work in or attend school in Caldwell County, North Carolina can access our electronic resources. This revision was approved by the Caldwell County Public Library Board of Trustees on March 26, 2026.

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To be eligible for a library card that grants access to our physical and digital collections as well as resource sharing, you must be a resident or taxpayer of, or work in, or attend school in Caldwell County, North Carolina. ~~Caldwell County Public Library provides reciprocity for those residents of the five surrounding counties (Watauga, Wilkes, Catawba, Burke, Wilkes, and Alexander).~~ **Non-county residents must provide proof of eligibility. Accepted documents include but are not limited to: a current property tax statement, a recent employer pay stub, or a current student ID.**

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Caldwell County Public Library provides reciprocity for the residents of the seven surrounding counties (Alexander, Ashe, Avery, Burke, Catawba, Watauga, and Wilkes) by offering free Caldwell County library cards. Individuals outside of Caldwell or a surrounding county may apply for a card with a $25 fee. **These non-resident cards will provide access to our physical collection and resource sharing. Non-resident cards will not provide access to our digital collections on Libby and Hoopla.**