

Clarification of SCPL library cards, items and charges

Schenectady County Public Library (SCPL) plans to leave the Joint Automation Project (JA) and the shared Polaris catalog. Many library staff have questions about this and have received questions from patrons; we hope to answer some of those questions here.

Library Cards

- Up until the date of SCPL's exit from the shared ILS, there are no changes to patron registration procedures. Continue to register patrons and assign appropriate Patron Codes as you always have. A patron's Registered Branch should always match their Statistical Class (unless they are unserved). See the Patron Registration and Updating Patrons documentation on the [JA Intranet](#).
- At the time of SCPL's exit from the Joint Automation Project, patron records with a statistical class of "Schenectady County Public Library" will be provided to SCPL.
- SCPL patron cards will not be immediately removed from Polaris and will continue to work after SCPL leaves the Joint Automation Project; honoring SCPL patron cards is a local policy that each library can determine individually.
- After SCPL's exit, we will create a new library branch called "Schenectady County Public Library" and a new patron code called "Schenectady Resident" to control access to materials. Each library may determine the level of access Schenectady County resident patrons have to their libraries' materials through the patron and material type loan limit settings. Each library will need to define the Fines, Loan Periods, and Patron/Material Type Loan Limit Blocks for this new patron code. At implementation, all Fines, Loan Periods and Patron/Material Type Loan Limit Blocks for "Schenectady Resident" are copied from the corresponding values for "Regular" patrons.
- For existing SCPL cards after exit, staff may issue a new barcode on the existing patron record (this is not mandatory, but some libraries or patrons may prefer this). At the same time, staff should also update the patron record by confirming or correcting name/address/patron code. Staff are encouraged to add/verify/correct other information as well:
 - Notification options: collect email address and encourage email notification
 - Fill in ID, birthdate, etc. if not in record
 - Verify statistical class (where they live-primary residence)
 - If the patron address has changed, registered at branch, statistical class, town/city, and school district may need to be changed as well. Use the eCard Lookup Tool to find the correct information (ecardlookup.sals.edu)
- We will update the patron registration documentation to reflect how Schenectady County resident patrons should be registered and share it with everyone.
- Since reciprocal borrowing is required within library systems, all Mohawk Valley Library System (MVLS) libraries must provide onsite access to the residents of all other counties served by MVLS. This is one reason why SCPL patron cards will remain in the database and continue to work after SCPL exits Polaris.
- It is unknown how Schenectady County resident patron access to the MVLS OverDrive collection will be affected. However, Schenectady County resident patrons should not have their registered branch changed to enable use of the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS) OverDrive collection.

Updated 11/05/2024

- The Polaris ILS will not communicate in any way with SCPL's new ILS. Patron information in the Polaris ILS will remain secure. Patrons may need to have two separate cards depending on how SCPL handles the transition to their new ILS. Any questions about SCPL's new ILS should be directed to SCPL.

Library Items and Charges

- Staff should instruct patrons to return items to the library they were checked out from to mitigate confusion after SCPL's exit from the shared ILS.
- After SCPL's exit from JA, existing SCPL items will remain in the catalog and can be checked-in if returned to another MVLS/SALS library. Polaris will route them to SCPL, and they will be returned in the delivery. SCPL items will not display in the PAC after exit. Staff should not override to place holds on SCPL items after their exit, as those holds will never be filled. At a later date, there will be a plan to purge these items.
- If staff check-in SCPL items and get the "No matching item record was found. Check the item barcode." error message, staff should manually label the item SCP and place in delivery.
- Non-SCPL items that are returned to SCPL after they have exited JA should be handled the same way as items above (SCPL staff should manually label the item to the owning library and place in delivery).
- CBA items owned by MVLS will often have SCPL barcodes – SCPL staff should consult the ownership stamp/label inside of the item on the title page to determine if the item is a CBA item and manually label the item MVLS for delivery. MVLS CBA items will remain in the JA catalog and will not be rebarcoded.
- How to handle pre-existing charges (charges for SCPL items on non-SCPL patron accounts and vice versa) is yet to be determined.

If you have questions, please send them to jawithdrawal@sals.edu.