

TIMELINES & SERVICE CHANGES

Why is the City of Irvine taking over library services from the County?

The City of Irvine is transitioning library operations from the Orange County Public Library (OCPL) system to establish a City-run library system. This decision allows Irvine to tailor their libraries to better meet the needs of residents and expand programming, collections, and services. At its July 23, 2024, meeting, the Irvine City Council approved the transition of library services from County of Orange to the City of Irvine beginning July 1, 2025, when Irvine Public Library (IPL) will be formally established. On January 14, 2025, the Irvine City Council approved an agreement to transition the Katie Wheeler Library to Irvine management as well.

When will the transition take place?

The transition will happen in phases.

Through March 31	April 1–May 15	May 16–June 30	July 1
Orange County Public Libraries (OCPL) will operate Heritage Park and University Park Libraries at current service levels.	OCPL will operate Heritage Park and University Park Libraries at reduced service levels.	Heritage Park and University Park Libraries will be closed to finalize the transition.	Heritage Park and University Park Libraries will transition as the first branches of a new City-run Irvine Public Library System.

What will happen to the Katie Wheeler Library?

Because the Katie Wheeler Library is located on County-owned property, it was not included in the initial transition agreement. However, responding to an outpouring of community interest in maintaining Katie Wheeler as part of the Irvine system, the City Council approved a three-year lease agreement for that site, starting January 1, 2026.

Will library services be interrupted or libraries closed during the transition?

The Heritage Park and University Park libraries will be temporarily closed to facilitate the transition from County-operated to City-operated libraries beginning May 16, 2025. On July 1, 2025, the Katie Wheeler Library will be closed to facilitate the transition of services. The City will announce reopening dates as soon as possible. Some services, including access to the OCPL digital collection, will continue throughout the closure.

Will library hours or locations change?

The City intends to maintain the hours of operation for Heritage Park and University Park Libraries. During the transition period (April–June 2025), there will be temporary closures and adjusted hours as required by the County. The City will provide updates as reopening dates approach.

What are the closest library options for us during the Heritage Park, University Park, and Katie Wheeler Library closures?

There are other public libraries located close to the City of Irvine including the OCPL Tustin Public Library branch, the Newport Beach Public Library, and the Huntington Beach Public Library. Residents of the State of California may apply for a free library card to access materials and services at any of these libraries before, during, and after the transition. To learn how to apply for a library card at any of these libraries, please visit their website or call the County/City library directly.

How is the transition being funded?

The transition is funded through a combination of budget allocations and tax transfer agreements with the County. Initial costs, including staffing and operational expenses, will be covered by an appropriation from the City's Asset Management Plan, with repayment from future library funds.

LIBRARY CARDS, COLLECTIONS & PROGRAMS

Will I need to get a new library card?

Yes. Irvine Public Library will be a separate system, independent of the OCPL system. IPL will issue new library cards to access collections and other services.

Will my current OCPL library card still work?

Yes, it will still work at all OCPL locations, including during the closures. Irvine residents wishing to use IPL will need to register for a new library card and can use both library systems if desired.

Will I be able to request OCPL items for pick up at Irvine Public Library locations?

Will I be able to return OCPL items to Irvine Public Library locations?

OCPL library users can request OCPL items to be delivered to any OCPL branch, including the nearby Tustin Library. OCPL items should be returned to an OCPL location. Within IPL, users will be able to request items from any branch (Heritage Park, Katie Wheeler, University Park) be moved to another branch for convenient pickup. IPL items may be returned to any IPL location. For items not in the IPL collection, users may request an interlibrary loan from outside of Irvine or may suggest IPL purchase the item of interest.

Will Irvine have digital books available?

Yes. IPL will have eBooks, eAudiobooks, and more digital items available for patrons.

Will you offer a Library of Things?

A Library of Things (LoT) is a lendable collection of non-traditional items, usually tailored to community needs and interests. LoT collections that have been established around the country include everything from seeds to musical instruments to baking pans to tools. IPL will be working on implementing LoT after the transition.

Will the programs at the Irvine libraries continue, and will they remain free to the community?

The City will continue to offer library programs, free of charge, to all ages.

FUTURE PLANS

What changes can residents expect with the new City-run library system?

Residents can expect enhanced programming, expanded collections tailored to local needs, improved digital resources, and a strong focus on community engagement. We are also planning for immediate improvements to the Heritage Park and University Park branches including new carpet, paint, and furniture.

What will be the role of the Friends of the Library (FOL) and the bookstores?

The City values and respects the support the FOL organizations provide to Irvine libraries. No changes are anticipated for the Friends groups or their bookstores.

Will there be a library in my district?

The City of Irvine will be working to identify the library needs in the community, including the opportunity to expand the number of libraries throughout the City. In fact, the City is currently exploring opportunities to add library locations at both the Great Park and the Woodbridge neighborhoods. The City will also be looking towards developing a master plan for the scope and scale of libraries throughout the City, which will include community engagement opportunities for feedback on future locations and services. Stay tuned for more opportunities to get involved and provide input with this process!

How can I stay informed and provide input?

The City will provide regular updates through community meetings, the City's website, and library newsletters. Residents are encouraged to participate in public forums, surveys, and outreach events to help shape the future of Irvine Public Library. Visit irvinepubliclibrary.org to learn more and sign up for library updates.