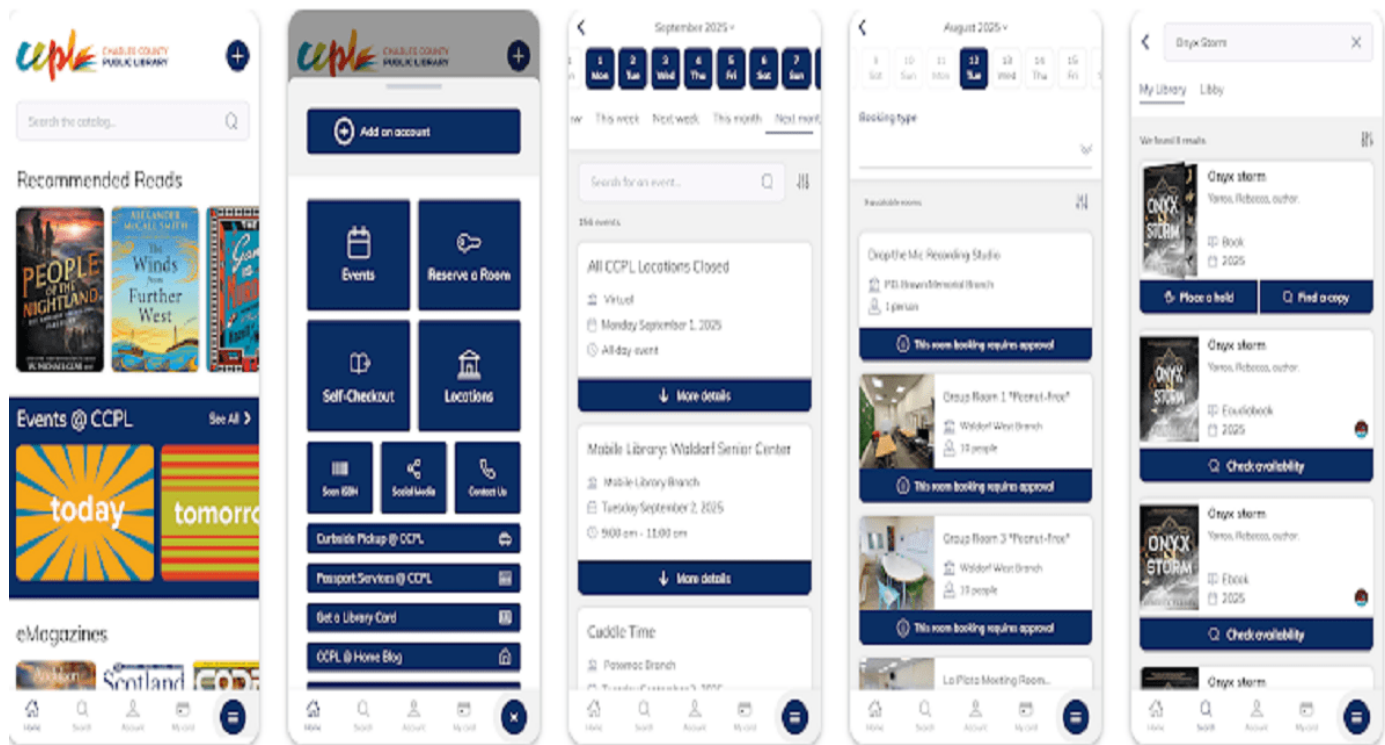


CCPL Enhances Mobile App for Easier Access

southernmarylandchronicle.com/2025/11/04/ccpl-enhances-mobile-app-for-easier-access

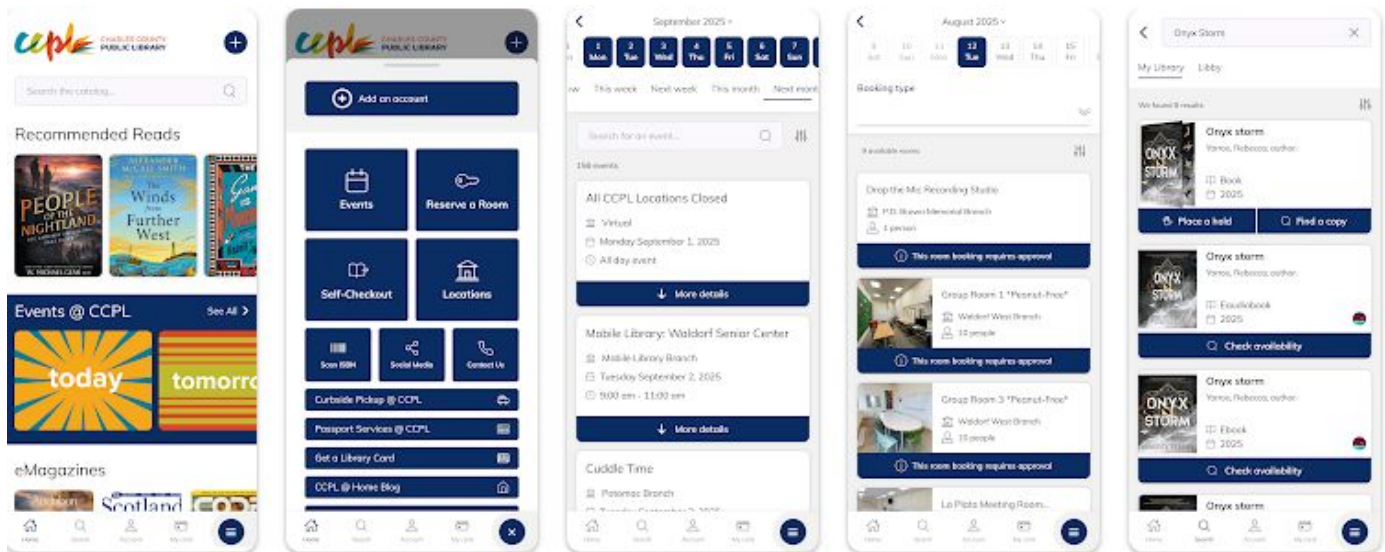
David M. Higgins II, Publisher/Editor

November 4, 2025



The Charles County Public Library unveiled improvements to its mobile app this week, enabling users to manage accounts, check out materials and reserve spaces directly from smartphones and tablets.

The updates, available immediately for Apple and Android devices, build on the app's core functions to streamline services for the library's 50,000 cardholders across Charles County. Users can now handle multiple library cards within a single profile, add digital versions to Apple or Google Wallet for quick scans at checkouts, and initiate self-checkouts by scanning item ISBNs on the go. These changes address common requests from families and frequent borrowers who juggle holds across branches like La Plata and Potomac.



The app connects patrons to essential tools without requiring a branch visit. Account holders view checkouts, holds and reading history, request personalized recommendations based on past borrows, and adjust pickup locations between the system’s five outlets: La Plata headquarters on Garrett Avenue, Potomac in Newburg, Nanjemoy on Port Tobacco Road, Hughesville on Leonardtown Road, and Waldorf West on O’Donnell Place. Self-checkout covers physical items such as books, DVDs and video games, while ISBN scans confirm availability before trips. Additional tabs link to the library’s social media feeds, blog posts on local events, meeting room bookings at facilities equipped for groups up to 100, and event registrations for programs ranging from story times to adult workshops.

For those with auto-updates enabled, the enhancements download seamlessly; manual updaters may need to re-enter card numbers and PINs upon first launch. Developers integrated these features through a partnership with Communico, the app’s platform provider, ensuring compatibility with iOS 14 and later or Android 8.0 equivalents. The free download appears under “Charles County Public Library” in the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

These refinements support the library’s push toward digital equity in Southern Maryland, where rural stretches from Nanjemoy to Indian Head limit access for some residents. Charles County, with its mix of farmland and growing suburbs around Waldorf, relies on such tools to extend reach. The app facilitates passport applications — a service processed at La Plata and Potomac branches, with 285 forms accepted in a recent month at similar regional libraries — and job search databases that draw from federal resources like USAJOBS.

The library tracks usage through an interactive dashboard updated monthly, showing year-to-date circulation exceeding 500,000 items in fiscal 2025 so far, alongside program attendance topping 10,000 participants. Digital checkouts, including e-books via platforms like Libby, account for 30 percent of total loans, per state reports on Maryland public libraries. While specific app metrics

remain internal, the updates coincide with a 15 percent rise in mobile logins since 2024, reflecting broader trends in Southern Maryland where smartphone penetration nears 85 percent among adults.

Services extend beyond borrowing to community anchors. Branches host free Wi-Fi hotspots, public computers with printing at 10 cents per page, and notary services for \$5. The Imagination Library mails monthly books to children under 5, reaching 2,500 households. Recent fiscal year data highlights engagement: 1,280 participants in the 2023 Winter Learning Challenge tracked reading goals online, while the 2024 Summer edition drew 2,178 across virtual and in-person activities focused on themes like ocean conservation tied to the Potomac River watershed.

In Southern Maryland, the library collaborates with the College of Southern Maryland for the Southern Maryland Studies Center, offering archives on regional tobacco farming and Civil War sites near Port Tobacco. Events via the app include virtual author talks and teen gaming nights, with sign-ups peaking during school breaks. For passport needs, users reserve slots online, submitting photos and forms during 15-minute appointments; processing times average six weeks for first-time books.

The app's blog section spotlights these ties, with posts on local history like the 1634 founding of Maryland at nearby St. Clement's Island. Social channels on Facebook and Instagram share updates, such as the Mobile Library's monthly stops at community centers in Bryans Road and Marbury, where it delivers holds to underserved areas.

These enhancements align with Maryland's public library standards, mandating accessible tech under the State Library Resource Center. Users report fewer barriers, as one fiscal review noted a 20 percent drop in in-person checkout lines post-digital rollout. For assistance, call 301-934-9001 or visit branches during hours: Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. More details appear at <https://ccplonline.org/ccpl-app/>.