



Portage County District Library — Your Digital Card & Apps

Your Digital Card & Apps at the Portage County Library

————— An Extended Guide · No. 1780 —————

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Here is the whole guide in a nutshell. The Portage County District Library, or PCDL, gives you a free card if you live, work, or go to school in Ohio. That one card number and PIN open a digital library that is available any hour of the day. Start only at portagelibrary.org, and type the address yourself, because a library in Michigan has a similar name and a different website. Libby gives you ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines. Hoopla offers movies, television, music, and more. Kanopy brings thoughtful films and documentaries. Install one app first, choose Portage County District Library when asked, and enter your card number and PIN. If you forget the PIN or lose the card, any branch can help. The library will never ask for gift cards or a code read over the phone. If any of this feels tangled, that is exactly what I help neighbors with, so please call me.

1. What Your Library Card Unlocks Online

One free card opens a whole digital library.

Most people think of a library card as a way to carry home a stack of paperbacks. At the Portage County District Library, which most folks call PCDL, the same card also opens a digital library that is available around the clock. You can borrow ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, television shows, and music without leaving your chair.

I wrote this guide because many neighbors tell me they have a card in a drawer but have never used it on a phone, tablet, or computer. The apps can look confusing at first, with strange names and several different logins. Here we will go one app at a time, in plain English, and describe what you will see on the screen.

- Libby for ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines.
- Hoopla for movies, television, music, ebooks, and audiobooks.
- Kanopy for movies and documentaries.
- Flipster for digital magazines.
- Creativebug for craft and art video classes.

Everything starts with the card itself, so the early chapters cover how to get one, how to find your number and PIN, and what to do if either goes missing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Borrowing digital items from PCDL is free with your library card. Be cautious of any site that asks you to pay just to start borrowing.

2. Meet the Library's Digital Apps

Five names, five different jobs.

The library's Digital Library page lists several services, and each one is a separate app or website with its own sign-in. That is the main reason people feel lost. The library did not build one giant app. Instead it pays for several outside services and gives you access with your card.

Think of it like a strip of stores in one shopping center. All of them accept the same membership card, but you walk into each shop separately. Libby is the bookstore. Hoopla is the video and music store. Kanopy is the film house. Flipster is the magazine rack. Creativebug is the craft classroom.

- Libby: reading and listening.
- Hoopla: watching, listening, and reading.
- Kanopy: films, documentaries, and classic cinema.
- Flipster: magazines you can flip through on a screen.
- Creativebug: sewing, drawing, and other craft lessons.

You do not need all of them. Many people start with only one, usually Libby for audiobooks or Hoopla for a movie night, and add another later when they feel curious.

TIP

Pick just one app to learn first. Once one works, the others feel familiar, because they all ask for the same library card information.

3. Getting to the Real Library Website

Type the address yourself.

The official website for the Portage County District Library is portagelibrary.org. Type that into the address bar at the top of your browser yourself. This is the best habit you can build for any online service.

Here is an important warning from my own checking. There is another library, the Portage District Library, in Portage, Michigan, and its website ends in dot info. It is a different library in a different state. If you search the web for a Portage library, you may land on the wrong one by mistake. The Ohio library you want is the Portage County District Library, with branches in Aurora, Garrettsville, Streetsboro, Brimfield, Randolph, and Windham.

- 1 Open your web browser.
- 2 Click in the long address bar at the very top.
- 3 Type portagelibrary.org and press Enter.
- 4 Look for the name Portage County District Library and the logo at the top of the page.

WATCH OUT

Search results sometimes show paid ads above the real site. Look past anything labeled Ad, or skip searching and type the address yourself. A real library never asks for gift cards or for your bank password.

4. What You Need Before You Start

A short list makes everything smoother.

Getting set up takes much less time if you gather a few things first. Nothing on this list is hard to find, and most people already own everything except the card number itself.

- Your PCDL library card, or a way to get one (later chapters cover this).
- Your card number, the long number on the card.
- Your PIN, which works like a short password.
- A phone, tablet, or computer connected to the internet.
- An email address you can open, because some apps ask for one.

If you plan to use a phone or tablet, make sure it has a little free storage space and that you know your Apple or Google account password. Downloading an app asks for that password, and it is the single most common place people get stuck.

If you have no device at all, do not worry. Branch staff can often show you how to use the library's own computers, and the shelves of printed books are still there as always.

TIP

Put your library card, a pen, and a notebook on the table before you begin. Writing your number and PIN in the notebook saves a lot of hunting later.

5. Who Can Get a Card

Free for people who live, work, or study in Ohio.

According to the library's website, a free PCDL card is available to anyone who lives, works, or goes to school in Ohio. That is a generous rule, and it means many people qualify even if they do not live inside Portage County.

Children over a certain age may get a card with a parent or legal guardian's signature, and there is a separate Children's Card for younger patrons. Teachers and homeschool teachers can ask about institution cards with proof of employment. The library also notes that adults aged sixty and over are given fine-free status, which is a nice perk for seniors.

- Adults who live in Ohio.
- People who work in Ohio.
- Students who attend school in Ohio.
- Children, with a parent or guardian signature.

Card rules can change over time, so treat this chapter as a friendly overview and confirm the details on the My PCDL Card page of the library's website or by calling your nearest branch.

GOOD TO KNOW

A first card is free. The library's site mentions only a small charge to replace a lost card, so ask at the desk if you need one.

6. Getting Your First Card

Two ways to start, and both are simple.

There are two usual paths to a first card. You can visit any PCDL branch and apply in person, or an adult can print the application from the library's website and mail it in. In person is faster and lets you ask questions, so I suggest it if you can manage the trip.

- 1 Choose a branch: Aurora Memorial, Garrettsville, Pierce Streetsboro, Brimfield, Randolph, or Windham.
- 2 Bring something showing you live in Ohio, such as a valid Ohio driver's license.
- 3 Tell the staff member you would like a library card and also want to use the digital library.
- 4 Fill out the short form with your name, address, phone number, and signature.
- 5 Ask the staff to write down your card number and help you set a PIN.

The library's website says a card will not be issued without the required information, so double check your form before you hand it over. Staff members are friendly and helpful, and they sign people up all the time.

TIP

While you are at the desk, say out loud that you plan to use apps on your phone. Staff can often tell you right then which sign-in steps to expect.

7. Showing Proof of Address

What the library asks you to bring.

When you apply for a card, the library asks for proof that you live locally. The My PCDL Card page lists a few examples, including a valid Ohio driver's license, a checkbook, or a stamped, canceled envelope addressed to you and dated within the last thirty days.

If you carry a driver's license, that is usually the easiest. If your license shows an old address, bring a piece of mail with the current one. Teachers and others who qualify through work are asked to show proof of employment, such as a paycheck stub or school documentation.

- A valid Ohio driver's license.
- A checkbook with your name and address.
- A stamped, canceled envelope sent to you in the last thirty days.
- For work-based cards, proof of employment.

Because rules sometimes change, a quick phone call to the branch before you go can save a wasted trip. A friendly voice can tell you exactly what to bring on the day you visit.

GOOD TO KNOW

Staff are asking about your address only to confirm eligibility. You never need to share your Social Security number, bank number, or passwords to get a library card.

8. Applying for a Card by Mail

For when you cannot get to a branch.

If travel is hard, the library offers a mail-in route for adults aged eighteen and over. You print the application from the My PCDL Card page, fill it out, and mail it to the library. About two weeks after the library receives your completed application and consent form, a card is mailed to your home along with a copy of the lending policies.

If you do not own a printer, ask a family member, a neighbor, or a branch to print the form for you. You can also call a branch and ask what other options exist.

- 1 Open portagelibrary.org and find the My PCDL Card page.
- 2 Print the application form.
- 3 Fill in your name, current address, phone number, and signature.
- 4 Address an envelope to the Portage County District Library, Attention Outreach Services Manager, 10482 South Street, Garrettsville, OH 44231.
- 5 Add a stamp and mail it, then watch your mailbox.

This route takes patience because of the mailing time on both ends. If you would rather not wait, ask a relative to drive you to the nearest branch, where the process is quicker and you can ask questions.

TIP

Keep a photocopy of your filled-in form. If a question comes up while you wait, you will know exactly what you wrote.

9. Your Card Number and PIN

The two things every app asks for.

Nearly every digital app from the library asks for the same two items: your library card number and your PIN. The card number is printed on your card. The PIN is a short secret code that you chose, or that the library gave you when you signed up.

People often mix these up. The card number identifies you. The PIN proves it is really you. Think of it like an account number and a password at a bank, only far less risky because the library is not holding any money for you.

- Write the card number in a notebook kept at home.
- Write the PIN in a different spot, such as inside a password notebook.
- Never text or email your PIN to anyone.
- Some apps let you scan the card or save the login to your phone.

Once an app has remembered your login, you may not type them for months. That is convenient, but it is also why the number should be written down somewhere safe before you need it again.

WATCH OUT

Library staff may ask for your card number to look up your account, but they will not ask you to read out your PIN or any one-time code sent to your phone.

10. If You Forget Your PIN

This is common and easy to fix.

Forgetting a PIN happens to nearly everyone, especially when the card sat in a drawer for a year. The library's website provides help for this, and branch staff can help in person or by phone.

The simplest path is to call or visit your nearest branch with your card in hand. Staff may ask you a couple of questions to confirm who you are, and then help you reset it. Look on the library website's account area as well, because reset options are sometimes offered there.

- 1 Find your library card and your card number.
- 2 Try the account page on portagelibrary.org to see if a reset option is offered.
- 3 If not, call your branch, such as Garrettsville at 330-527-4378.
- 4 Answer the identity questions the staff member asks.
- 5 Choose a new PIN you can remember and write it down at home.

Do not be embarrassed. Staff reset PINs every day, and no one will think less of you. Having the card in your hand makes the whole conversation faster. Once you have a new PIN, try it in each app you use so they all match.

WATCH OUT

Pick a PIN that is easy for you but not obvious to a stranger. Avoid using 1234 or your birth year.

11. Replacing a Lost Card

You do not need to start over.

Cards get lost in coats, purses, and the backs of couches. The good news is that your account, your holds, and your history are tied to your name, not to the plastic. A replacement card keeps your account working.

The library's website mentions a small charge for a replacement card, so ask at the desk when you request one. Once you have your new card, you may get a new number, which means you will need to update the apps on your phone.

- Tell the library as soon as you notice the loss.
- Bring photo identification when you go to pick up a new card.
- Ask whether your card number changed.
- Update the number in Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy if it did.

Until the new card arrives, ask a branch whether they can look up your number so you can keep reading and listening.

A small habit helps next time. Take a photo of the front of your card and keep it in a private folder on your phone, or copy the number into your notebook, so a lost card never leaves you stranded.

WATCH OUT

If you think someone else found your card and might be using it, tell the library right away. Ask them to note your account so you can check for items you did not borrow.

12. Searching the Library Catalog

Find what the library owns.

The catalog is the library's searchable list of everything it owns, from large print books to DVDs. You can reach it from the top menu of portagelibrary.org, where it is labeled Catalog. It also shows items from other libraries in the Portage Library Consortium.

A search box appears on the screen. You type a title, an author, or a subject, and press Enter. The results show whether a copy is on the shelf and at which branch.

- 1 Go to portagelibrary.org.
 - 2 Click Catalog in the top menu.
 - 3 Type a title or author into the search box.
 - 4 Press Enter and look at the list of results.
 - 5 Click a title to see which branch holds a copy and whether it is available.
- The catalog covers physical items. Digital books live inside the apps, which have their own search boxes, so searching in one place does not show the other.

GOOD TO KNOW

If the catalog does not list a book you want, ask a staff member. The library mentions that your card can also be used to borrow from libraries around the state through services such as SearchOhio and OhioLINK.

13. Placing a Hold on a Book

Reserve it and let the library call you.

A hold is a request that sets an item aside for you. When it is your turn, the library lets you know and you pick it up at the branch you chose. Holds are the best way to get a popular new book without checking the shelf every week.

The library's website explains that you can use your card to place your own holds from home. You sign in to your account on the catalog with your card number and PIN.

- 1 Search the catalog for the title.
- 2 Click the title to open its details.

- 3 Choose the option to place a hold or request it.
- 4 Sign in with your card number and PIN if asked.
- 5 Pick the branch where you want to pick it up and confirm.

The library also lists a service called On the List Holds Service on its website. Read that page, or ask staff, if you would like help choosing books.

When your item is ready, the library will notify you, and it will wait for you at the desk for a limited time. Ask the staff how long, so you are not surprised and your turn does not pass to someone else.

GOOD TO KNOW

Choose the pickup branch closest to where you shop or run errands, so grabbing your book fits into a trip you already make.

14. Fines, Fees, and Fine-Free Status

What costs money and what does not.

The library says it is fine free on most items, which means you are not charged daily late fees for the majority of what you borrow. A few categories are different. Items from outside libraries through services like SearchOhio and OhioLINK, along with Launchpads and Mobile Hotspots, can still collect daily overdue charges.

For seniors, there is more good news. The library states that adults aged sixty and over are given fine-free status. Still, a lost or damaged item may be billed based on the item's cost, so take care of what you borrow.

- Most items: no daily late fees.
- Outside-library items and some equipment: daily fees may apply.
- Lost or damaged items: charges depend on the item.
- Digital items return themselves when the loan ends.

That last point is a real comfort. Ebooks and audiobooks in the apps usually go away on their own when time is up, so you cannot forget to bring one back.

GOOD TO KNOW

Fees and rules are set by the library and can change. Confirm details on the My PCDL Card page or with a branch before you borrow something unusual.

15. Libby: What It Is

Your library's ebook and audiobook shelf.

Libby is a free app from a company called OverDrive. The library's Digital Library page says Libby replaced the older OverDrive app, so if you remember that name, Libby is the new one to use. It gives you ebooks, audiobooks, videos, and magazines.

Libby shows only titles your library has bought, so it does not feel like a store that tries to sell you something. When you find a book you want, you borrow it for a set number of days. When time is up, it returns itself.

- Ebooks you read on a screen.
- Audiobooks you listen to, even while driving or gardening.
- Magazines and some videos.
- Reading on a phone, tablet, or computer.

The library also offers a web version. The address listed on the library's Digital Library page is portagelibrary.overdrive.com, which opens the library's collection in your browser if you prefer not to install an app.

Libby is made to be friendly for beginners. It has a search box, large covers, and clear buttons that say Borrow or Place Hold. You can explore without borrowing anything, so look around for a while before you decide.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you are new to digital books, try a free audiobook first. Many people are surprised how much they enjoy listening while they cook or walk.

16. Installing Libby on Your Device

Find it in your phone's store.

To use Libby on a phone or tablet, you download it from your device's app store. iPhones and iPads use the App Store. Android phones and tablets use the Google Play Store. The app itself is free.

The app store will ask for your Apple or Google password before it installs anything. That is normal. It is protecting your device, not charging you.

- 1 Open the App Store on an iPhone or iPad, or Play Store on an Android device.
- 2 Tap the search box and type Libby.
- 3 Look for Libby, by OverDrive.

- 4 Tap Get or Install.
- 5 Enter your device password if it asks.
- 6 Tap Open when it finishes.

The library's website links straight to the store pages from its Digital Library page, which is a safe way to land on the genuine app.

Installation usually takes under a minute on a good connection. If it seems stuck, wait a bit, then check that your device has enough free storage and that you are connected to Wi-Fi.

WATCH OUT

Several look-alike apps exist. Make sure the name says Libby and the maker is OverDrive. Do not install anything that asks you to pay before you can borrow.

17. Adding Your Library in Libby

Teach the app who you are.

The first time you open Libby, it welcomes you and asks a few questions. It wants to know whether you have a library card, then which library you belong to. Take your time and read each screen.

- 1 Open Libby and tap Yes when it asks if you have a library card.
- 2 Choose to search for a library.
- 3 Type Portage County District Library into the search box.
- 4 Pick the matching Ohio library from the list.
- 5 Choose to sign in with your library card.
- 6 Type your card number and PIN, then continue.

When it works, you will see the library's collection with rows of covers you can scroll through. If the search lists more than one similar name, choose the one in Ohio. A library with a similar name in Michigan is a different place.

If the app says your card was not found, check the digits against your card and try again slowly.

After the first sign-in, Libby remembers you. You should not need to type your card number again unless you sign out or switch to a new device, which is why writing it down matters.

TIP

You can add more than one library to Libby. If you also hold a card elsewhere, Libby can keep both shelves in one app.

18. Borrowing Your First Ebook

From tapping a cover to turning pages.

With the library added, you are ready for your first borrow. Libby's home screen shows rows of covers. You can scroll through them or use the search tool to look for a favorite author.

- 1 Tap the search icon and type a title or author.
- 2 Tap a cover to see the details.
- 3 Tap Borrow if it is available.
- 4 Tap Open Book to start reading right away.
- 5 Tap the middle of the screen to bring up the menu.

Inside a book, tapping the center of the page brings up a menu that lets you change the type size, the background color, and the font. Swipe or tap the edge of the screen to turn pages.

Borrowed titles appear on a shelf in the app, so you can come back to them later. The place you stopped is remembered automatically.

Borrowing a book does not lock you into finishing it. If you do not like the first chapter, return it and pick another. Libraries are meant for sampling, and no one is keeping score of how many you try.

GOOD TO KNOW

If a title shows Place Hold instead of Borrow, someone else has it. That is common with popular books and is covered in the waiting list chapter.

19. Listening to Audiobooks

Sit back and let the book read to you.

Audiobooks are a wonderful choice if your eyes tire easily. The narrator reads the book aloud, and you can listen while you cook, drive, garden, or rest. Libby plays them in the same app.

Once borrowed, you open the audiobook from your shelf. A player appears with a large play button, a skip-back button, and a speed control. The skip-back button jumps backward a few seconds, which is handy if you drifted off.

- Tap play to start and pause to stop.

- Use skip back to hear a missed sentence again.
- Change the speed if the narrator seems too fast or slow.
- Set a sleep timer so it stops by itself.

You can listen through the phone speaker, earbuds, or a Bluetooth speaker, and some cars connect to the phone as well. Audiobook files can be large, so connecting to Wi-Fi at home before you download helps avoid using up mobile data.

Some audiobooks come in many parts, and Libby plays them in order for you. If you borrow a long one, ask for a longer loan period in the settings, so you can listen at a leisurely pace.

TIP

Try the sample before you borrow. A narrator's voice matters, and a sample takes only a minute to tell you whether you will enjoy it.

20. Wait Lists and Holds in Libby

Popular books have a line.

The library buys a limited number of copies of each digital title, and only one person at a time can borrow each copy. When all copies are out, Libby lets you place a hold, and you join a line.

When your turn comes, Libby sends a notification, if you allowed notifications, or you can see it on your shelf. You then have a short window to borrow before it passes to the next person. Check the app often if you have a hold you want.

- 1 Find the title and tap Place Hold.
- 2 Confirm your email address if Libby asks.
- 3 Open your shelf to see your place in line.
- 4 When it says available, tap Borrow.
- 5 Start reading or listening.

Libby also offers a way to see which titles are available now. Looking through those can give you a good book without any waiting at all.

Your place in line moves as others return their books. Waits can be short or long depending on the title, and Libby shows an estimate. Be patient, and do something else enjoyable while you wait your turn.

TIP

Place holds on three or four titles at once. Whichever arrives first, you will have something good to read.

21. Reading Magazines with Flipster

Flip through digital magazines.

The library's Digital Library page lists Flipster as a source of digital versions of print magazines. If you enjoy browsing a home magazine, cooking magazine, or news weekly, this is a pleasant option.

Flipster pages look like the printed pages, and you flip or swipe through them. It is a different service from Libby, with its own app, though Libby also carries some magazines. The page on the library's site links to Flipster, and the app is free to download from your device's store.

- 1 Open portagelibrary.org and go to the Digital Library page.
- 2 Choose the Flipster link.
- 3 Follow the prompts to sign in with your library card.
- 4 Browse the covers and tap one to open it.
- 5 Use two fingers to spread the page larger.

If you prefer reading on the larger screen of a tablet or computer, that works well with magazines, since the pages are laid out like print.

Magazines are a good low-pressure way to try digital reading, since you can dip in for a few minutes at a time. There is no plot to remember, and you can stop whenever you like.

GOOD TO KNOW

Which magazines the library carries can change, so if you do not see your favorite, check back later or ask a staff member.

22. Making Text Bigger in the Apps

Comfortable reading is built in.

If small print tires your eyes, you are not stuck with it. Both the library website and its apps let you enlarge things. You will find these helpful whether you read on a phone, tablet, or computer.

On portagelibrary.org, look at the top of the page for accessibility options. The site offers font size choices, shown as a small, medium, and large letter A, and several color contrast choices. Pick the combination that gives you the clearest view.

- Libby: open a book, tap the middle of the page, and look for the text or display settings.
- Phones and tablets: use the device accessibility settings for larger text everywhere.
- Computer browsers: hold Ctrl or Command and press the plus key.
- Audiobooks avoid small print altogether.

Dark backgrounds with light text can reduce glare for some readers, especially in the evening.

If you change a setting and dislike the result, simply change it back. Settings are easy to undo, so experiment freely until the page looks just right for your eyes.

TIP

Change the size until you can read comfortably at arm's length without squinting. Comfort matters more than fitting more words on a page.

23. Hoopla: Movies, Music, and More

A different kind of digital shelf.

Hoopla is another free service the library offers. According to the library's website, Hoopla provides movies, television, music, ebooks, and audiobooks, and it works on mobile devices as well as smart TVs, Roku, Chromecast, and Alexa.

Unlike Libby, Hoopla usually has no waiting list. If you see a title, you can generally borrow it and start right away. In exchange, the library may limit how many titles you can borrow in a month, so choose with care.

- Movies and television shows.
- Music albums.
- Ebooks and audiobooks.
- Comics and more, depending on what is offered.

Hoopla lives at hoopladigital.com on a computer, and the Hoopla app is available for phones and tablets. You must pick the Portage County District Library as your library when you sign up, or the app will not know your card.

Because Hoopla works differently from Libby, many people are pleasantly surprised. It feels more like picking a movie from a shelf than joining a line, and you get what you choose immediately.

GOOD TO KNOW

The monthly borrow limit and loan lengths are set by the library and can change. Check the Hoopla app or the library's website for the figures that apply to you.

24. Setting Up Hoopla Step by Step

Make an account once, then borrow.

Hoopla asks you to create its own account, separate from the library's, and then connect it to your library card. You do this only once.

- 1 Go to hoopladigital.com on a computer, or install the Hoopla app from your app store.
- 2 Choose Sign Up or Create Account.
- 3 Enter your email address and make a password.
- 4 Search for Portage County District Library when asked to choose a library.
- 5 Enter your library card number and PIN when asked.
- 6 Accept the terms and finish.

Afterward you will see a home screen of colorful tiles. You can browse by type, such as movies or music, or use the search icon.

Write down the email and password you chose for Hoopla in your home notebook. This is a new login, and it is a common thing to forget.

If a screen does not match my description, do not panic. Companies redesign their screens from time to time. Look for the same ideas, such as email, password, and library choice, in whatever order they appear.

WATCH OUT

Only enter your card number and PIN inside Hoopla itself or the library's website. A message that arrives by text or email asking you to sign in to Hoopla through a link is not safe to trust.

25. Watching Hoopla on a TV

The big screen is better for movies.

The library's Digital Library page says Hoopla is available for smart TVs, Roku, Chromecast, and Alexa. That means you can watch on a television rather than squinting at a phone.

Each device has its own steps, and the exact screens vary, so I will keep this general. Usually you install the Hoopla app on your TV or streaming stick, then sign in with the email and password you made.

- 1 Find the app store on your TV or streaming device.
- 2 Search for Hoopla and install it.
- 3 Open it and choose to sign in.
- 4 Follow the on-screen instructions, which may show a short code to type at a Hoopla web page.
- 5 Pick a movie and press play.

If setting up a TV feels like too much, you can still use a tablet and prop it up comfortably, or ask me to set it up with you.

Before you start, check that your television or streaming device is connected to the internet. A poor connection is the usual reason a movie stutters or will not load.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the remote handy and take your time. Typing on a TV with a remote is slow for everyone.

26. Kanopy: Films and Documentaries

Thoughtful movies from the library.

The Digital Library page lists Kanopy as a service where your library card gives you access to thousands of movies, including critically acclaimed films, documentaries, and foreign titles. It tends to feel more like an art house than a blockbuster theater.

Kanopy has its own app and website. The library's page links to the Portage County District Library's entry on [kanopy.com](https://www.kanopy.com), which is the safest way to begin. You create a Kanopy account and connect your library card.

- 1 Open the Digital Library page on portagelibrary.org.
- 2 Click the Kanopy link.
- 3 Choose to sign up, then pick Portage County District Library as your library.
- 4 Enter your card number and finish making your account.
- 5 Search for a film and press play.

Kanopy may limit how many films you can play in a period, so check the app for your count. Plan your viewing the way you would plan a night at a theater.

Kanopy suits viewers who enjoy classic and thoughtful films. If you are not sure what to watch, search by a director or actor you already like, and the service will suggest similar titles to try.

GOOD TO KNOW

Which apps the library offers can change over time. Check the Digital Library page on portagelibrary.org to see the current list.

27. Creativebug for Crafts and Art

Learn something with your hands.

Creativebug is listed on the library's Digital Library page as a way to learn arts and crafts through online classes and workshops. It features video lessons taught by artists and makers, and covers subjects such as sewing, drawing, and other creative skills.

It can be a pleasant activity for a rainy afternoon. You watch the teacher on the screen and work along at your own pace. You can pause and replay a step as many times as you like, which no live class allows.

- Video classes you can pause and replay.
- Free with your library card.
- Available through the library's link, plus an app.
- Good for knitting, sewing, drawing, and more.

As with the other services, begin from the library's Digital Library page so you arrive at the real service connected to PCDL, and follow the sign-in prompts.

Beginners are welcome. Classes usually start with the basics, and you do not need expensive tools. A simple kit from your closet may be enough to try your first project.

TIP

Gather your supplies before you press play. It is much less stressful to pause a video for a missing needle than to hunt for one midway through.

28. The PCDL Mobile App

The library's own app.

In addition to the borrowing apps, PCDL has a mobile app of its own, listed in the For You menu of the library website as PCDL Mobile App. Library apps of this type typically let you see your account, search the catalog, and place holds.

To get it, open the library's website page for the app and follow the link to the store for your device. Because this guide cannot promise every feature, I would read the app's page on the library site for the current list of what it does.

- 1 On portagelibrary.org, open the For You menu.
- 2 Choose PCDL Mobile App.
- 3 Follow the link for your iPhone or Android device.
- 4 Install the app and open it.
- 5 Sign in with your card number and PIN.

Some people like having everything in the one app. Others prefer to keep it simple and stay with just Libby. Both are perfectly fine ways to use the library.

One thing to remember is that an app is only a convenience. Everything it does can also be done by visiting the website or calling a branch, so you never have to use it if you would rather not.

GOOD TO KNOW

This app is separate from Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy. Signing in to one does not sign you in to the others.

29. Returning and Renewing Digital Items

Mostly automatic.

One of the nicest things about digital borrowing is that returning is usually automatic. When the loan period ends, the book or movie simply stops opening on your device. There is no trip to the branch and no late fee for digital items.

If you want more time, Libby may offer a Renew option on your shelf, which can place you back in line if others are waiting. If you finish early, you can return a title yourself so someone else can have a turn.

- 1 Open the app and go to your shelf or loans.
- 2 Tap the item you want to manage.

- 3 Choose Return to give it back early.
- 4 Or choose Renew if the option appears.
- 5 Confirm your choice.

Physical items work differently. The library's site notes that most items renew automatically up to a set number of times, unless another patron has placed a hold.

If a title is gone from your shelf and you did not return it, do not worry. That simply means the loan ended on its own, and you can borrow it again later if you want to read more.

GOOD TO KNOW

Returning early is a kindness to other readers waiting in line. It never costs you anything.

30. PCDL Branches and Locations

Six libraries across the county.

PCDL has several branches. The numbers below are the ones the library lists on its own website. Hours and other details vary, so ask when you call.

- Aurora Memorial Library: 330-562-6502.
- Garrettsville: 330-527-4378.
- Pierce Streetsboro: 330-626-4458.
- Brimfield: 330-442-4441.
- Randolph Library: 330-325-7003.
- Windham Library: 330-326-3145.

The administrative offices and Outreach Services are at 10482 South Street in Garrettsville. The library also lists an Outreach and Library Express number, 1-800-500-5179 with extension 220.

Pick the branch most convenient to you, and remember that your card works at all of them. Staff at any branch can usually answer questions about the apps, though a quick call first helps ensure someone is free to sit with you. Each branch has its own character, and some have special collections or programs. A first visit is a good chance to wander the shelves, pick up a schedule of events, and meet the people who work there.

If you are not sure which branch is nearest, the Hours and Locations page lists them all, and a branch staff member can also help you work out a convenient choice.

TIP

The Hours and Locations page on portagelibrary.org lists current hours. Look there before you drive, since hours and holiday closings can differ.

31. Getting Help in Person

Staff would love to show you.

You do not have to figure all this out alone. Library staff help people with phones, tablets, and apps all the time, and most of them enjoy it. Asking is not a bother. It is part of their job.

The library website includes a Tools and Tech page, and it also lists a Digital Library section. Call a branch and ask whether staff or volunteers can help with Libby or Hoopla, and whether you need an appointment.

- 1 Charge your device and bring it with you.
- 2 Bring your library card and your Apple or Google password.
- 3 Tell the staff member which app you want to try.
- 4 Ask them to go slowly and let you do the tapping.
- 5 Write down the steps as you go.

Doing the tapping yourself matters, because that is how the steps stick in your memory afterward. Having someone just do it for you is quicker, but you will be stuck again next time.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you would like help at home, I do this for neighbors. Call Bill at (330) 200-8042, and we will set up your apps together.

32. Library Services for Homebound Readers

If getting out is hard.

Not everyone can easily travel to a branch. The library lists Outreach Services on its website, and the For You menu also lists items such as Adult Memory Care Kits and a Bookmobile. These are meant to serve people who find it hard to visit in person.

The Outreach number is 1-800-500-5179 with extension 220. A call can explain what is offered and how to sign up. Digital borrowing can also help, because once you are set up, books and audiobooks come to you without a trip.

- Call Outreach to ask about options.
- Ask whether a card can be arranged by mail.
- Use audiobooks if reading is tiring.
- Ask a family member to help with the first setup.

A caregiver or family member is welcome to help with the technology, though the card and account stay in the cardholder's name.

If you are calling on behalf of someone else, have their name and address ready. Staff will explain what they can do and whether the person must speak with them directly.

TIP

Audiobooks can be a gift to a person with failing eyesight. A relative can set up the app once, and the listener only needs to press play.

33. Free Research Databases

More than books and movies.

The library website's For You menu includes Free Research Databases. These are online collections, such as encyclopedias, newspapers, and reference tools, that the library pays for so that you can use them for free.

You might use a database to research your family tree, look up a health topic from a trusted source, or read old newspapers. Some require your card number to get in from home, which keeps them free for local patrons while keeping outsiders away.

- 1 Open portagelibrary.org.
- 2 Open the For You menu and choose Free Research Databases.
- 3 Browse the list and choose one.
- 4 Enter your card number if asked.
- 5 Search with simple keywords.

Because the available databases may change, read the page rather than relying on any list in this guide.

Databases are a bit like a reference shelf at the library that you can open from your kitchen table. If you feel lost, call a branch and ask which database fits your question.

GOOD TO KNOW

Information from a library database is usually more reliable than a random web search. When in doubt about a health or money question, start here.

34. Scams That Use the Library's Name

Know what the library will never ask.

Scammers like to borrow the names of trusted places, and a library is as trusted as they come. Messages may claim you owe an overdue fee, that your card has been suspended, or that your account needs verification, all with a link to click.

The library's real communications come from the library itself. Remember that the library says it is fine free on most items, so a message threatening big charges for an ordinary late book should make you suspicious. When in doubt, call the branch at the number printed on your card or listed on the website.

- Do not click links in unexpected texts or emails.
- Never give your PIN to a caller.
- The library will not demand gift cards.
- Visit portagelibrary.org by typing it yourself.
- Call a branch to check any strange notice.

A simple rule covers most scams. If a message makes you feel rushed or frightened, stop. Real libraries are patient places and do not need an answer within minutes.

WATCH OUT

The real library never asks for your password, a one-time code read aloud, or payment in gift cards. If anyone does, hang up and call a branch yourself.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this by the computer. I want to... Find the real library: type portagelibrary.org yourself. Get a card: visit any branch with proof of address. Read or listen to a book: open Libby and choose Portage County District Library. Watch a movie: use Hoopla or Kanopy. Reset a PIN: call your branch, such as Garrettsville at 330-527-4378. Place a hold: search the catalog and sign in. Make the text bigger: tap the large letter A on the website, or change the font size in the app or on the website. Fix an app: close it, reopen it, and retype your number slowly. Get help: call Bill at (330) 200-8042.

AT A GLANCE

A Picture to Follow Along

From Card to First Book

Four steps to borrow digitally.

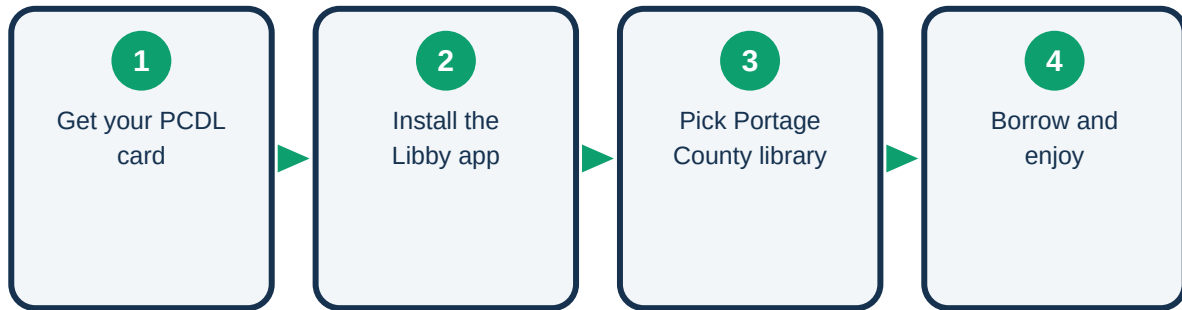
**Your card number and PIN open every app.**

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

AT A GLANCE

A Second Look

Which App Does What

Each app has its own job.

Libby	Hoopla	Kanopy
Ebooks Audiobooks Magazines	Movies Music TV shows	Films Documentaries Classics

All are free with your library card.

Illustration - details vary by device, plan, and provider. Always check your own setup.

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.



HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

In-home visit — \$99 flat for your first visit. No contracts and no surprise charges, and a 30-day follow-up is included.

Remote Support — \$49 for a screen-share session. I only connect with your permission, you watch the whole time, and you can end anytime. If I can't fix it over the screen-share, I refund the \$49 — and if it turns out you need me in person, that \$49 goes toward your visit. It's included free for Support Plan members (\$39/mo).

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full \$99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Call or text **(330) 200-8042** · Book a visit: billshometech.com/book · bill@billshometech.com

This free guide is for general information only — not professional advice, and no substitute for your device's own manual. Any prices or outside products mentioned can change; please confirm current details before you buy. Please use your own good judgment and follow it at your own risk — for anything involving electricity, gas, water, or heights, stop and call a licensed professional. Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results. © 2026 Bill's Home Tech, LLC.