

FY2028 RAILS LLSAP Support Grant Program Guide

Local Library System Automation Programs (LLSAPs) are invited to [apply](#) for financial support from RAILS via an annual grant process. RAILS will award a total of \$2,250,000, with allocations to each applicant organization determined by the support formula detailed below. Awards are contingent on the availability of state funding.

LLSAP Definition

LLSAP is a term used statewide and rooted in historical relationships between Illinois' regional library systems and shared catalog consortia. 23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030 states: "Local Library System Automation Program means an integrated library system open to membership by full library system members of all types developed by or receiving financial or in kind support from a library system." To foster resource sharing and make a library management system affordable for any interested member library, RAILS supports shared catalog consortia based in its service area. The RAILS Board has approved this expanded definition of LLSAPs:

Local Library System Automation Programs are shared library management systems that are supported by RAILS and that are open to membership by all types and sizes of RAILS member libraries. All LLSAPs affiliated with RAILS:

Support members whose primary service point is within the RAILS service area (Although non-RAILS members may belong to an LLSAP, they will not be included in allocation of RAILS support.);

Operate in a reciprocal contractual partnership with RAILS;

Are supported by RAILS through in-kind and/or financial support;

Maintain policies that broaden resource sharing throughout RAILS' service area;

Foster cooperation to support RAILS' mission and to make library management systems affordable for every interested member library in RAILS, regardless of type or size; and

Work together to ensure the ability of all LLSAPs to meet the needs of their members, to increase the use of shared online catalogs by RAILS members, and to develop services that will further resource sharing throughout RAILS by providing staff, technical expertise, and assistance when needed.

Eligibility

Consortia in the RAILS service area meeting the criteria outlined in the LLSAP Definition are invited to apply for this grant. Eligibility requirements include:

- Newly formed consortia will not be eligible unless RAILS agrees a new consortium is in the best interests of the communities served.
- The consortium must demonstrate commitment to resource sharing within and beyond the consortium in a multitype library environment, and to compliance with the LLSAP Requirements detailed below.
- The consortium must be open to increasing its membership.

How to Apply

1. Complete the [application form](#). Your progress will be saved if you wish to complete the form in multiple sessions.
2. Download and complete the spreadsheet linked in the application form.
3. Submit questions or additional documents via email to [Anne Slaughter](#)

FY2028 Funding Timeline

Final timing may be subject to change based on factors including the status of RAILS' System Area and Per Capita Grant from the Illinois State Library, and RAILS Board actions that may affect LLSAP funding.

Date	Deliverable
September 15, 2026	Application package due to RAILS
September— October 2026	RAILS reviews grant applications and determines awards
October 2026	RAILS responds with award letter and grant agreement
January 31, 2027	Signed grant agreements due to RAILS
July 1, 2027	FY2028 grant payments and services begin
July 31, 2028	Annual reports due to RAILS

Questions?

Contact [Anne Slaughter](#), RAILS Director of Technology Services.

Allocation of Funding

Each fiscal year, RAILS budgets a set amount for support grants to LLSAPs and allocates that funding according to a formula using data collected from each LLSAP. Financial awards are disbursed in quarterly payments.

LLSAP Support Grant Formula

	Quartile Allocations					
Metric	Allocated	Tier 1 Bottom 25%	Tier 2 25-50%	Tier 3 50-75%	Tier 4 Top 25%	Data Source
Collection Expenditures Collection expenditures per capita (total budget for books, periodicals, audiovisual, CDs, and electronic resources)	\$750,000	40%	30%	20%	10%	Public libraries: Illinois Public Library Annual Report (IPLAR) Nonpublic libraries: collected and reported by LLSAP, as of the time of application Three-year average.
Annual Fee % of Operating Budget LLSAP annual fee as a percentage of library's total annual operating budget (public libraries only). Libraries' OCLC membership fees will be added if not included in LLSAP budget.	\$700,000	40%	30%	20%	10%	Operating budget: IPLAR Annual fee: reported by LLSAP in application OCLC fee: provided by Illinois State Library
ILL/RB Transactions Total annual interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing transactions	\$400,000	Allocation is relative to the percentage of the total transactions each LLSAP accounts for.				zILLANE reports. Three-year average.
Multi-type Bonus Multitype membership bonus (nonpublic libraries only)	\$400,000	Allocation is relative to the percentage of the total nonpublic member library agencies each LLSAP accounts for.				Reported by LLSAP in application. Three-year average.

Services from RAILS

All LLSAPs receive the following services from RAILS in addition to their funding allocation.

Meeting Rooms

RAILS shall provide use of meeting rooms and other reservable spaces at RAILS facilities to LLSAP, subject to availability and other relevant guidelines and restrictions. Access for scheduling and event management is provided via L2.

Communication and Collaboration

Coordination of opportunities for communication and collaboration among LLSAPs, including representation on the RAILS Board Consortia Committee.

Sponsor Access to L2

Use of L2 (librarylearning.org) with an elevated level of permissions to create and manage events and directory data, as well as API access for event and directory data.

Grants for New Members

When funds are available, and subject to the application and award process, prospective new LLSAP members are eligible to apply for grant funding from RAILS covering the startup costs of membership. Funds are generally awarded directly to libraries, but in the case of a group migration, funding may be applied for by and awarded to the LLSAP.

LLSAP Requirements

These requirements are appended to the RAILS LLSAP Support Grant Agreement. You will indicate your intent to comply when submitting the application.

1. Support members whose primary service point is within the RAILS service area (Although non- RAILS members may belong to an LLSAP, they will not be included in allocation of RAILS support).
2. Be open to new members and work to keep membership affordable.
3. Work with RAILS and other LLSAPs to:
 - a. Ensure the ability of all LLSAPs to meet the needs of their members.
 - b. Increase the prevalence of automation and the use of shared bibliographic catalogs by RAILS members by actively participating in marketing and other efforts.
 - c. Develop services that will further resource sharing throughout RAILS by providing staff, technical expertise, and assistance when needed and working toward standardization whenever possible.
 - d. Develop streamlined, cost-effective procedures and services.
 - e. Participate in collaborative projects.
 - f. Provide input on RAILS' LLSAP-related planning and decision making.
4. Comply with all RAILS and Illinois State Library reporting requirements resulting from its designation as a Local Library System Automation Program, including an annual report to RAILS due July 31.
5. Promote RAILS events and communications either proactively or upon request as relevant to your participating libraries.
6. Be willing to collaborate in providing technical support and enabling member library participation in RAILS services and group purchases that expand access to digital content and/or require ILS interoperability, and to provide feedback to RAILS staff on your needs and experiences.
7. Participate in the use and maintenance of the L2 library directory and event calendar. Help ensure that LLSAP member libraries' directory entries are kept up to date. Adhere to established procedures and communication practices as well as all terms, conditions, limitations, and obligations regarding the use of data that are set forth in the [L2 Privacy Policy](#).
8. Support efforts to maintain the quality and efficiency of RAILS delivery services, including:
 - a. Provide statistics to support delivery improvements
 - b. Involve RAILS staff in consortium meetings where delivery is an agenda item
 - c. Where practical, investigate holds routing within the ILS to avoid interhub transfers

9. Govern the LLSAP in accordance with its bylaws and develop service policies and operational procedures that support effective and affordable participation in resource sharing.
10. Arrange and pay for all operating costs, including ILS and related third-party vendor and technology infrastructure costs; financial audits and other compliance requirements; insurance for LLSAP officers and LLSAP-owned property and digital records; and other personnel, goods, and services required to maintain LLSAP operations.

Application Form and Data Collection

Applications are submitted via a [webform](#). The questions on the application webform are listed below for your reference. Login to the RAILS website is required to access the form. You may save a draft of a partially complete form and return to finish and submit it later if needed.

RAILS collects key data about your consortium as a part of this application, which helps us determine grant awards and supports our ongoing work with and understanding of RAILS LLSAPs.

Member Library Data and zILLANE Report Template

In addition to the data collected via the form itself, you will find a link to download and complete a [member library data and zILLANE report spreadsheet template \(.XLSX\)](#) as a part of your form submission. Detailed instructions are provided in the document. Please note that for the FY2028 application we are requesting data from only FY2026 and are no longer providing individual LLSAP-specific templates.

The data collected in the template and application form comprises an expansion of the original [zILLANE report](#), which was commissioned by the Illinois State Library to help identify strategies for enhancing resource sharing in Illinois.

RAILS Consortia Annual Report (RAILCAR)

RAILCAR uses the data submitted via this application, in addition to data from other standard sources such as IPLAR, to provide a tool for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data related to LLSAPs' operations and member libraries. The report provides useful information for [LLSAP self-assessments and comparisons](#), and to help [member libraries](#) make informed decisions about the affordability and sustainability of LLSAP membership.

Application Webform Questions

Introduction

1. **LLSAP Name:** Select your LLSAP
2. **Primary LLSAP Contact:** Name and contact information of the primary contact person authorized to submit this form on behalf of the LLSAP
3. **Secondary Contact (optional)**

Governance

1. **LLSAP Organizational Changes:** Describe changes made to any of the following items in the past year. If relevant, please include links or email documents to [Anne Slaughter](#).
 - Organization type (legal designation such as intergovernmental instrumentality, not-for-profit, etc.).
 - Any newly created or significantly updated governance, financial, planning, and other documents such as bylaws, policies, and strategic plans.
 - Technology assessment (current state of the technology used to provide the consortium's services, including description, age, & condition of hardware and network environment, upgrade or migration plans, etc.).
 - Services provided, including membership levels and associated service levels
 - Resource sharing activities, including policies, documented practices, board decisions, etc.
 - Commitment to membership growth, including procedures for soliciting, approving, and adding new members.
 - Membership criteria and requirements.
 - Membership composition, including new member libraries, departing member libraries, or other changes in membership status.
 - Investigation of merger or consolidation with another consortium.
2. **Governing Board Seats:** Enter the number of seats on the LLSAP's governing board, or equivalent leadership group, responsible for overseeing the Executive Director, policies, finances, and strategic planning.

Operations

Staff

1. **FTE employees:** Total number of FTE employees working for the LLSAP.
2. **FTE administrative employees:** Number of FTE administrative employees working for the LLSAP.
3. **FTE IT employees:** Number of FTE information technology staff working for the LLSAP.
4. **FTE Member Services employees:** Number of FTE member services employees working for the LLSAP.
5. **Employees with an MLS:** Number of individual employees with a Master of Library Science degree or equivalent.

Expenditures

1. **Total staff development/training expenditures:** Total costs for staff development and training.
2. **Total discovery interface expenditures:** Total cost of your discovery interface.
3. **Total ILS Expenditures:** Total cost for the LLSAP's integrated library system software.
4. **Describe what contributes to the ILS expenditures amount.**

Services

General Services

1. **Which of the following BASE services are included in your ILS software? Please check all that apply.** Options: Bibliographic database, Circulation functions, Patron database, OPAC
2. **Which of the following ADDITIONAL services are to full members? Please check all that apply.** Options: Discovery options; digital collections; databases; e-commerce; cataloging tools; mobile app; notifications; none of the above
3. **Which of the following STAFF-PROVIDED services are offered to full members? Please check all that apply.** Options: cataloging, training, consulting; custom reports
4. **Please describe any other services offered within the ILS software.**

Integrated Library System

1. **Is the staff software local or web-based?**
2. **Are ILS notices opt-in or opt-out for the following options?** Options: Item due dates, item overdues; item holds. Select for each: Opt-in; opt-out; mandatory for membership; or, N/A.

Training/Consulting

1. **Live training events:** Enter the number of live training events, in-person or virtual, provided by LLSAP staff or guest presenter(s).
2. **Pre-recorded training events:** Enter the number of pre-recorded training events, hosted by LLSAP staff or guest presenter(s), accessible to members as of the end of the most recently completed fiscal year.
3. **Do you offer self-directed training programs for your member library staff?** Self-directed training programs may be created by LLSAP staff or purchased from a vendor for member library staff to take at their own pace.
4. **Total hours of live training events:** Enter the total hours of live training events offered in the most recently completed fiscal year.
5. **Total hours of pre-recorded training events:** Total hours of pre-recorded training events accessible to member libraries as of the end of the most recently completed fiscal year.
6. **Total hours of self-directed training events:** Total estimated hours of self-directed training offered as of the end of the most recently completed fiscal year.

7. **LLSAP-led events:** Enter the number of events that LLSAP staff hosted or facilitated.
8. **Guest-led events:** Enter the number of events hosted or facilitated by individuals other than LLSAP staff. Include events led by member library staff.
9. **Networking events:** Enter the number of networking events for which the primary goal was for member library staff to meet and share information, knowledge, and best practices.

Conference

1. **Does the LLSAP host an annual conference?** Annual conference is considered to be an all-day or multi-day event that may include featured speakers, breakout sessions, professional development, continuing education, networking, and/or vendor demos.

Support Tickets

1. **Number of support tickets opened:** Enter the number of general support/help desk tickets opened in the most recently completed fiscal year.
2. **Number of support tickets closed:** Enter the number of general support/help desk tickets closed in the most recently completed fiscal year.

Reporting

1. **Does the LLSAP offer pre-created reports to assist member libraries submitting their IPLAR?**

Annual Fee Components

1. **Are your member libraries' OCLC fees included in the LLSAP's annual fee calculations?**

Requirements

1. **Use of RAILS Funds:** While RAILS places no specific restrictions on how LLSAPs use the funding allocated to them, we expect that it will be used to enhance the financial sustainability of the LLSAP, and that the LLSAP can demonstrate the benefit to the consortium or its member libraries. Please describe how your consortium plans to use RAILS financial support.

If any or all of the funding will be used to directly offset member library fees via a discount, rebate, or other mechanism, detail how the funds are distributed and to which fiscal year's fees the FY2028 LLSAP Support Grant award will be applied.

2. **Agreement to LLSAP Requirements**