

RAILS Report

FY2019 RAILS Catalog Membership Grants

The second and final application deadline for FY2019 grants is April 17, 2019. RAILS awarded funding for two projects in the fall 2018 application period: Morton Grove Public Library received \$31,195 to join CCS, and SWAN received \$38,480 to add Green Hills Public Library District.

Consortial Staff In-service Day

The 2018 in-service day for consortial staff was held on November 2 at Joliet Junior College. Forty-eight attendees from most ILS consortia across Illinois attended. It's always challenging to find a location that everyone is happy with, but overall the feedback on the day was very positive. RAILS plans to continue providing these opportunities for shop talk and collaboration.

Membership Standards Data Collection

On April 27, 2018, the RAILS Board approved a second amended version of the proposed system membership standards. With the support of the Illinois State Library, RAILS is currently collecting data from RAILS members about how libraries meet the core standards, so that we can understand the full impact of the proposed standards and make any necessary changes. A library's responses will not affect its membership in RAILS or eligibility for state grants. Responses are due by March 31, 2019.

Consortial staff may be asked for reports to help their libraries gather data. Collection is being done via a web form, but the form can be previewed in PDF format at <https://standards.railslibraries.info/special/StandardsFormPreview.pdf>.

This data collection requirement is in addition to the required ILLINET ILL Traffic Survey and the annual certification process, both of which libraries must complete by March 31, 2019 to retain their system membership.

RAILS Staffing Changes

Nincy George began as Cataloging Services Coordinator on November 7, 2018. She is responsible for assessing and implementing the recommendations of the Cataloging Working Group, including the development of an ongoing basic cataloging skills curriculum for library staff, and developing other cataloging services for RAILS members.

In late 2018, several RAILS staff members moved on to other jobs: Amanda Musacchio, Resource Sharing Specialist, in August; Veronda Pitchford, Director, Membership Development and Resource Sharing, in November; and Louise Svehla, Consulting and Continuing Education Specialist, in November. Although these colleagues are missed, with change comes opportunity. RAILS has reviewed job responsibilities in relation to member needs and adjusted job responsibilities and descriptions accordingly before hiring new staff. Recruitment is currently underway for the following positions; the application periods close January 31, 2019.

- RAILS has two positions open for Consulting and Continuing Education Specialists. The Consulting and Continuing Education department will handle membership questions requiring

consulting, including but not limited to questions on resource sharing, reciprocal borrowing, and nonresident cards.

- The Library Resources and Programs Manager will manage RAILS' cooperative purchasing and vendor discounts, work with the E-Content Specialist on RAILS e-content programs (including BiblioBoard Library and the eRead Illinois Axis 360 collection), and oversee the RAILS Explore More Illinois program, which will connect libraries and their patrons with museums and other attractions.
- The Data Coordinator and Research Analyst will oversee data collection, analysis, and related research for and about libraries in Illinois and beyond to assist libraries, library systems, and other affiliated organizations in making informed decisions about services, resources, and developing trends or issues.

A software developer position is being considered, but timing and specific job responsibilities are not yet determined.

In the interim, questions related to resource sharing are being directed to resourcesharing@railslibraries.info and handled by Jane Plass, Associate Executive Director, and/or Jeanne Johansen, Accounting Specialist. Existing group purchases and vendor discounts will continue, but work on new deals and discounts is temporarily on hold. Anna Behm, RAILS E-Content Specialist, handles questions about RAILS e-books (eRead Illinois, BiblioBoard, etc.). Questions about RAILS continuing education or consulting are handled by Joe Filapek, Director of Continuing Education and Consulting.

Consortial Value and Benefits

RAILS research into data about the value and benefits of joining a shared catalog consortium has been deferred pending the hire of the Data Coordinator and Research Analyst.

Find More Illinois

Six libraries went live on Find More Illinois during the week of November 12, 2018. The new libraries are:

- Alpha Park Public Library District (Bartonville) (RSA)
- East Moline Public Library (PrairieCat)
- Hinckley Public Library District (PrairieCat)
- Illinois Prairie District Public Library (RSA)
- Kewanee Public Library District (RSA)
- Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library (Standalone Polaris system)

A single search in Find More Illinois now returns results from the PrairieCat shared catalog, the Resource Sharing Alliance shared catalog, and the catalogs of Joliet Junior College, Morton College, Parlin-Ingersoll Public Library, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Seven more libraries will go live in early February, and two more in early March as the third cohort. The sign-up period for the third cohort closed on January 4, 2019. Moving forward, RAILS will work one-on-one with each library that signs up to develop a customized timeline for implementation. RAILS appreciates the work of consortial staff in helping with their member libraries implementations.

Auto-Graphics is working with RAILS, SWAN, and EBSCO on developing patron authentication via OpenAthens (an identity and access management service) to meet SWAN's needs, is working on software development to support reciprocal borrowing, and has incorporated a number of suggestions from RAILS for potential 2019 enhancements. Software development work is based on Auto-Graphics version 6 code base, which is expected to be released later in 2019.

Recruitment for additional Find More Illinois participants continues. Eric Bain and Anne Slaughter presented about Find More Illinois at PrairieCat Users Group (PUG) Day on September 28. Jane Plass did seven in-person presentations around the RAILS service area in September and October, a presentation in Edwardsville for Illinois Heartland Library System staff, and three webinars between September and December. Three more webinars have been scheduled between January and March 2019; see <https://www.librarylearning.info/tags/?FMIdemo> for details.

Explore More Illinois

Authentication for Explore More Illinois has been completed for all Pinnacle libraries, all RSA libraries, and two PrairieCat libraries (Edward Chipman Public Library in Momence and Bloomington Public Library). Sixteen museums and other attractions have agreed to participate, some with more than one offer. RAILS plans to do a soft launch in spring 2019.

Replacing L2 Grant

RAILS has been awarded special grant funding from the Illinois Secretary of State, through the Illinois State Library, to replace L2. Originally conceived as a continuing education calendar and membership directory, Library Learning (L2) has evolved into a critical tool for library staff and library systems across Illinois, and the platform can no longer support our evolving needs. This replacement project will allow us to continue this important work. RAILS anticipates the project will take the full 18 months of the grant period. We will kick it off internally in January 2019 and will engage all stakeholders across Illinois as the project develops. Stay tuned for opportunities to weigh in on the future of this platform.