RAILS
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

15 March 2019

TO: RAILS Board of Trustees

FROM: Anne Slaughter

SUBJECT: RAILS Service of the Month

Catalog Consortia in RAILS

36% of RAILS libraries belong to a catalog consortium. The rest are "standalone" – they either maintain their own catalog software, or are nonautomated and do not currently have a library catalog.

RAILS Libraries	Agencies	% of RAILS Members
Consortium members*	457	36%
Standalone catalogs	690	54%
Nonautomated libraries	139	10%
	1286	

*Includes CARLI members using I-SHARE, an academic library consortium comprised of RAILS and IHLS members and supported by the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana

Within the RAILS service area are six groups of libraries who share catalog (integrated library system, or ILS) software. These consortia vary in size, and also provide a range of other services to their members. They primarily serve public libraries, but also include academic, school, and special libraries.

Consortium	Agencies	Buildings
Cooperative Computer Services (CCS)	25	29
Pinnacle Library Cooperative	6	9
PrairieCat	136	175
Rock River Library Consortium	9	12
Resource Sharing Alliance (RSA)	147	196
SWAN	97	102
Total	420	523

RAILS Support for Consortia

RAILS support for consortia has evolved since 2014, when we had a mix of some consortia that were independently supported by member fees, and some that were considered Local Library System Automation Programs and received direct support from RAILS. Local Library System Automation Program (LLSAP) is a term used statewide and rooted in historical relationships between the regional library systems and consortia, and is defined in 23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030 as "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." An expanded definition of LLSAPs was approved by the RAILS Board in 2016, and we developed an annual grant model to allow any consortium within our service area to qualify for RAILS support by meeting the criteria within the LLSAP definition. As of FY2019, all six consortia within RAILS are considered LLSAPs.

RAILS provides support to each of these groups via a mix of financial support and in kind services of their choice, totaling about $2.25M in the RAILS budget. Support is allocated using a formula that considers key elements of consortial customer service (cataloging standards, UX improvements, etc.), numbers of interlibrary loan and reciprocal borrowing transactions, number of libraries served, and library funding/ability to pay consortial costs. In kind services offered currently include financial services, datacenter services, delivery to LLSAP headquarters, use of RAILS facilities for consortium staff (PrairieCat and RSA), and consortium staff provided by RAILS (RSA only).

Catalog Membership Grant

Catalog membership grants are a key avenue for supporting LLSAPs. These grants help expand their membership by providing support to libraries for many of the one-time costs associated with joining a consortium, including vendor services and necessary technology.

Since FY2015, this grant program has made 54 awards totaling $1,423,943, supporting 51 individual libraries and three group migrations. There is one grant period remaining in FY2019, with an application deadline of April 17, 2019.