RAILS Report

Consortial Staff In-Service Day

The annual in-service day for consortial staff will be held November 22, 2019 at Joliet Junior College. The day will include a presentation by Grant Halter (RAILS Data Coordinator and Research Analyst), consortia updates, and breakout sessions. The deadline to register and make lunch selections is November 1. There are several slots open for brief project presentations; contact Anne Slaughter if you would like to present.

FY 2020 RAILS Catalog Membership Grants

The first of two application deadlines for FY 2020 catalog membership grants is approaching rapidly—October 15, 2019. The second application period ends April 15, 2020. Additional information and the application form are available at https://www.railslibraries.info/services/catalog-grants.

Find More Illinois

Work on developing patron authentication via OpenAthens (an identity and access management service) to meet SWAN's needs has been completed, and Frankfort Public Library District is the first SWAN library to join Find More Illinois. Find More Illinois searches now return results from four of the six RAILS LLSAPs: PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA, and SWAN, as well as seven standalone libraries. (Although University of Illinois at Chicago is an I-Share member, it appears as a standalone catalog in Find More Illinois, as each I-Share library has a separate Z39.50 connection.)

Jane Plass did a full in-person presentation at RAILS East Peoria on September 11, 2019 and a short demonstration at the SWAN ILL meeting on October 2, 2019, as well as several webinars. Two more webinars are scheduled for October 14 and November 6, 2019.

SimplyE

As previously reported, RAILS is a partner with Minitex and the Massachusetts Library System on the SimplyE for Consortia grant. Paul Swanson at Minitex has been working with Pinnacle Library Cooperative and several other libraries on testing SimplyE. He reported that, as of September 19, 2019, Pinnacle, Schaumburg Township District Library, and Green Hills Public Library District are testing on both iOS and Android.

Census Activities

RAILS has submitted a grant application for approximately 1.3 million dollars to the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to become a Regional Intermediary for the collar county region (DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties). If RAILS is awarded the grant, about 80% of the grant funds would be awarded to subrecipients (both libraries and county agencies) to encourage participation in the 2020 census by hard-to-count communities.

RAILS is also encouraging all its libraries to support census efforts. A census email list has been established, and census CE events are being scheduled. Results of the 2020 census will impact future funding of libraries and library systems, so getting an accurate count is important.