RAILS
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

17 April 2020

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Overview of FY 20-21 operational plan

Board members, this memo is an overview of our Annual Area and Per Capita Grant operational plan. The plan is due to the State Library on June 1 along with our FY 21 budget.

Obviously, we are writing this plan and developing the budget during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is impossible to predict the effect the pandemic will have on our next year's budget and operational plan. The State Library, as in past years, told us to assume level funding in our budget. I think it is highly doubtful that this will be the case. Whatever happens, we are prepared to adapt our budget and activities as needed, to meet the needs of our member libraries.

We will discuss the operational plan in detail at the meeting. This memo will highlight some key projects, changes and additions.

Goal 1 is about resource sharing.
Operational plan page 3:
    New LLSAP funding formula: the formula will change in FY 22, LLSAPs will apply for the funding during FY21.
    Changes in the administrative rules will occur in 2021. All libraries will be required to have a plan for evaluating how they will make their holdings available via a shared collection/database.
Page 5:
    Evaluate our eRead vendor and our digital strategy in general. We are making great strides in understanding usage of the eRead collection as well as how to manage the variations in pricing of items. We will also be looking at different vendors for eRead.
Page 6:
    Explore More Illinois has grown exponentially in one year, and we expect it to continue. We are beginning to work with Wisconsin already on a multi-state project, and hope to discuss with Indiana and Michigan also.
    Also, I think this will be an important year for Find More Illinois. Budget cutbacks may affect libraries' ability to pay for consortia membership. The change in the administrative rules means that libraries will be searching for an affordable way of exposing their collections. We will be working on a marketing plan for Find More later this year.

Goal 2 is about telling the library story. This work will be even more important as we – systems and libraries - will undoubtedly be faced with revenue and funding challenges as a result of the pandemic and the economic slowdown. On page 9, some strategies and projects are laid out. We also plan to continue a strong focus on school libraries.

Goal 3 is about helping libraries be the best they can be.
Page 13:
We propose to establish a requirement that libraries have a strategic plan. We will assist libraries in creating the plan through training and templates. We are not envisioning "fancy" plans or plans that exceed the ability of libraries to implement, but we do think it is essential that libraries have a plan in place that includes input from the community and goals and objectives to meet the needs of the user community.

Goal 4 is about preparing libraries for the future.
On page 14, you will see discussion of leadership related to dealing with COVID-19, work on expanding service to the unserved with the advice of our board committee and in collaboration with ILA.

Goal 5 is about being the best library system in the country.
Our main goals in this area are continued member engagement work, building our data culture and evaluating the impact and cost/benefit of our services, and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work for staff and member libraries.

These are not all of the activities that we are planning, by any means, just some highlights. I look forward to discussing it at the meeting.

RAILS FY 2021 System Area and Per Capita Grant Application

3.0 System Operational Plan

This document presents the Reaching Across Illinois Library System's (RAILS) operational plan for FY 2021. Our overarching goal in implementing this plan will be to ensure that we are providing the best possible service to RAILS member libraries and helping them to provide the best possible service to their customers.

This plan was developed with a great deal of input from RAILS member libraries as is required by the Illinois State Library and administrative rules related to library systems. It follows the arrangement of the revised RAILS strategic plan approved by the RAILS Board in September 2018. All activities included in the plan are aligned with and support statutory priorities for Illinois library systems.

RAILS developed this plan during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as possible, we have addressed the pandemic and its anticipated effect on RAILS libraries in FY 2021 in the activities specified below. While this plan represents our best intentions for FY 2021, planned activities may change based on the duration and outcome of the pandemic. There may also be unforeseen effects on RAILS members that we will need to address in FY 2021 to achieve our overall goal to help our libraries provide the best possible service to their communities. And, the effects on future budgets are completely unknowable at this point, so our plan and budget assume level funding as directed by the State Library.

Strategic Plan Goal One: *Promote, support, and expand resource sharing to optimize use of tax dollars and other funding and help libraries share resources to the fullest extent possible*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Promote, support, and expand resource sharing among RAILS libraries and beyond	Provide continuing education (CE) and consulting on general resource sharing issues, interlibrary loan (ILL), issues related to nonresidents, etc. This will include providing basic ILL training (how to do it, options/sources for requesting materials, etc.) – a strong need repeatedly expressed by RAILS members. Promote/strongly encourage resource sharing via RAILS communication tools and member encounters Work with the RAILS Resource Sharing Committee to investigate and recommend ways to improve, increase, and promote resource sharing to all types of libraries in Illinois. Priorities include creating a statewide culture of resource sharing, improving awareness of resource sharing, and serving the unserved.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Collaborate with the Illinois State Library (ISL), Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS), Chicago Public Library System (CPLS), Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE), Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries (IACRL), Illinois Library Association (ILA), Special Libraries Association-Illinois Chapter (SLA-Illinois), and other stakeholders to expand resource sharing in Illinois Collaborate with and support the work of the International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) Participate in ICOLC task force investigating current OCLC business practices and products, pricing, and interoperability with other vendors to assess whether the long-term partnership between libraries and OCLC is still working and viable. Participate in meetings with OCLC leadership. Help assess alternatives to OCLC like ReShare. Participate in other ICOLC activities that are relevant to RAILS priorities. Provide ongoing support for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and Illinois Digital Heritage Hub and continue to participate in the SimplyE Community Advisory Group, the Network Council, and the Illinois Digital Heritage Hub. Leverage DPLA work and resources to provide enhanced e-resources to RAILS members.	
Lead and work with RAILS-area consortia and standalone libraries to expand resource sharing	**Promote/Support LLSAP Membership** Provide a mix of financial support and in-kind services to six RAILS LLSAPs: CCS, Pinnacle, PrairieCat, Rock River Library Consortium, RSA-NFP, and SWAN. Approximately 466 RAILS libraries (individual buildings) participate in one of these LLSAPs. Work with the three LLSAPs that currently receive website support from RAILS (PrairieCat, RSA-NFP, and SWAN) to transition this service. (FY 2021 is the last year that RAILS will offer website support as an in-kind service.)	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Publicize new formula for LLSAP support for FY 2022. (LLSAPs will apply for this support in FY 2021.)	
	Offer catalog membership grants to encourage libraries to join one of the six RAILS LLSAPs	
	Help members prepare for the upcoming requirement in the Illinois administrative rules to evaluate whether they will make their holdings available via a shared collection. Publicize Find More Illinois as an option for meeting this requirement.	
	Promote the value of consortia membership to all types and sizes of RAILS libraries via RAILS communication tools and member encounters	
	Work with the RAILS Consortia Committee to expand resource sharing and promote consortial membership	
	Expand and Promote Find More Illinois	
	Recruit libraries to join Find More Illinois (FMI). Provide training/consulting. Heavily publicize FMI benefits to all types of libraries (academic, public, school, and special) via RAILS communication tools and member encounters.	
	Heavily promote the benefits of FMI to standalone libraries and encourage them to participate	
	Offer financial incentives for libraries to participate in FMI, including those in the lowest tiers of the current FMI fee structure and standalone libraries	
	Promote FMI's new status check feature for reciprocal borrowers to participants (at no cost to them). Investigate the feasibility of offering this feature to libraries that do not participate in FMI.	
	Continue to offer IHLS the opportunity to participate in FMI	
	Once the shared databases of four of the six RAILS LLSAPs are discoverable in FMI, sunset RAILS	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	support for SHARE Illinois, an informal cooperative project that facilitates staff-initiated interlibrary loans among participating Illinois library automation consortia	
	Support High-Quality Cataloging	
	Continue and expand basic cataloging training implemented in FY 2020. Deliver training quarterly in different parts of the RAILS area in response to member demand.	
	Offer additional training in response to member feedback, including sessions on MARC Basics, original cataloging, AV cataloging, and Linked Data.	
Work with the Illinois State Library, Illinois Heartland Library System, and other stakeholders to improve physical delivery services through streamlining and standardizing operations and evaluating alternative methods and best practices	**Providing Delivery Service Based on Need**	
	Work with RAILS members of all types (academic, public, school, and special) to determine the most appropriate delivery method to meet their needs	
	Continue contracting with Continental Transportation Logistics and Comet Messenger Service to provide outsourced delivery service	
	Continue providing high-quality statewide delivery services to CARLI libraries via ILDS	
	Promote the need to complete quarterly delivery volume counts to RAILS members. Consult with libraries on an individual basis as needed. Examine delivery count data to determine potential changes to existing delivery routes.	
	Continue to seek guidance/assistance from ISL to offer additional delivery points per library agency where needed to offer more equitable delivery service. This includes providing more than one delivery point to the 400+ Chicago Public School libraries.	
	Work with ISL to research capital funding options to help automate different aspects of delivery service to achieve greater efficiency	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis (LASA) Continue working with LASA on a plan to optimize the number and locations of RAILS buildings and delivery hubs, and to make resulting routing changes as efficient as possible Using data from LASA, work with ISL and IHLS to provide more efficient and cost-effective ILDS service Work with LASA to develop a portal for RAILS to have direct access into LASA's system **Delivery CE/Consulting** Consult with members on delivery issues/concerns. Widely promote the use of the delivery helpdesk ticketing system via RAILS communication tools and member encounters. Promote delivery training videos available on the RAILS website Promote availability of RAILS delivery staff to visit member libraries to consult on delivery issues Find additional ways to ensure that RAILS school libraries know about available delivery options, including having delivery staff present at the RAILS booth at the FY 2021 AISLE conference	
Develop and implement innovative projects to expand access to a wider variety of resources for Illinois residents, including providing access to digital content/e-resources and expertise	**eRead Illinois Axis 360** Explore alternative vendor options for eRead Illinois to ensure optimal user experience and potential growth Recruit RAILS libraries and IHLS non-SHARE libraries to join eRead Illinois. Support the training and marketing needs of participants. Evaluate eRead content to ensure that it continues to meet member needs	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Explore the possibility of partnering with AISLE to present a program on eRead Illinois at the 2020 AISLE conference **BiblioBoard/inkie.org** Continue to partner with BiblioLabs to offer a variety of e-resources via the BiblioBoard platform Continue to widely publicize BiblioBoard/inkie.org resources as being free to all Illinois libraries courtesy of RAILS. Find ways to target these promotions at unserved areas as mentioned below. Examine current marketing strategy to achieve deeper knowledge and use of all BiblioBoard and inkie.org resources by Illinois libraries. Continue offering group purchase pricing on BiblioBoard products for self-published authors **Explore More Illinois** Publicize the program to all Illinois public libraries and encourage them to participate Grow/expand the number and types of participating attractions Continue to work with WiLS to extend and publicize the program to Wisconsin residents Explore additional multi-state partnerships Change program branding as appropriate to reflect multi-state participation **Expand Member Access to Additional E-Resources** Evaluate and update RAILS' overall e-content acquisition strategy to reflect current member needs and current developments with e-resources in general. Publicize strategy to members via the RAILS website and other means.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Investigate and implement new RAILS e-resources to meet member needs, including potential streaming services Continue to work with ISL, IHLS, and other stakeholders to offer state-funded database(s) to all system members Work with appropriate stakeholders to develop more efficient and streamlined access to OERs (Open Educational Resources) Provide infrastructure support for the Electronic Content Consortium Continue dialogue with publishers on need for better e-book access/pricing for libraries/consortia Continue participation in Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author project to promote and encourage self-publishing	
Use economies of scale to provide greater purchasing power for member libraries so they can offer more resources to their customers than they would be able to afford on their own	Explore new and advantageous deals for member libraries Gather member input on desired discounts/group purchases and implement new offerings as appropriate Promote ISL Try-It! Illinois database trial to RAILS members as a way for them to try new databases before purchase	
Offer members a variety of opportunities to build collaborative relationships to share best practices, expertise, and to develop innovative solutions to common issues and challenges	Encourage use of RAILS mailing lists/online forums. Establish new mailing lists/forums as needed. Publicize existing networking groups. Assist in the formation of new networking groups as needed. Schedule RAILS Online Roundtables (online forums hosted by networking groups) on a variety of topics of interest to RAILS member libraries of all types Offer new ways for RAILS networking groups to meet and share ideas, including providing online meeting software and social media sharing events	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Foster networking and collaboration between staff from all types of libraries (academic, public, school, and special) to create a community of connected peers and to build on the strengths of multitype cooperation	Schedule in-person member networking events (member meetups) for staff from all types of libraries and in all areas of the system Schedule virtual networking events as appropriate Offer networking opportunities targeted specifically at staff from academic, school, and special libraries Work with other library organizations (such as IACRL, AISLE, SLA-Illinois, etc.) to organize networking events and peer-to-peer learning	

Strategic Plan Goal Two: *Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Help member libraries ensure that current/ potential customers are aware of all of the programs/services/resources the library has to offer	**Expand My Library Is… Initiative** Conduct follow-up member survey to determine effectiveness of the first year of the initiative and to set priorities for FY 2021. Develop additional activities in direct response to member feedback. Work with IHLS to further expand the initiative statewide Continue to promote the "Elders of the Internet" video to help all types of libraries in Illinois and beyond to demonstrate why libraries are still needed in the age of Google. Provide ongoing suggestions for libraries on how they can use the video to promote their programs/services. Expand the library stories, talking points, and blog sections of the My Library Is … website to include programs/services that libraries provide and other current issues affecting libraries, including: • Value of resource sharing • Services to nonresidents • Library e-initiatives	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Essential nature of library services during COVID-19 and the crucial role they will play in helping their communities recover from the pandemic (job-hunting assistance, etc.) Investigate expanding and/or restructuring RAILS' My Library Is… grant program to reach more libraries, including libraries of all types and sizes and libraries that have not received a RAILS grant in the past Present panel discussion at ILA conference (if accepted) on Effective Library Marketing Campaigns, to include info on reaching non-library users, a high-priority need identified by members on the FY 2020 My Library Is… campaign survey	
Help member libraries prove their value to administrative bodies, funders, elected officials, etc.	Include tools/strategies on the My Library Is… website to help libraries promote their value as an essential service in helping their communities recover from COVID-19 Widely promote new talking points for all types of libraries created as part of the My Library Is… campaign. Provide guidelines on how staff from all types of libraries can use the talking points effectively. Work with AISLE to help make school library talking points a focal point of the FY 2021 AISLE conference The activities in the previous section will also help to meet this objective.	
Advocate for and help members advocate for all libraries as they face funding and other challenges	Initiate and participate in a wide variety of advocacy efforts to help all types of libraries to respond to any lingering effects/results of the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding challenges • Work with ILA and IHLS to develop a suite of advocacy services for Illinois libraries	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Help libraries advocate for themselves as "essential services," by utilizing stories of how they helped their communities survive the COVID-19 pandemic and the after-effects (loss of jobs, etc.) • Help libraries utilize the general talking points referenced above to advocate for continued funding • Offer a variety of activities throughout the year to help libraries promote themselves as essential services 24/7/365 to their community of users and potential users Work with the RAILS Board Advocacy Committee to educate the board about issues affecting RAILS and libraries that may require advocacy efforts locally, regionally, or nationally Work with Advocacy Committee to present programs at the FY 2021 ILA and AISLE conferences (if accepted). The ILA program would focus on educating library trustees on how to communicate the need for school librarians with school boards. Continue to schedule regular meetings with the AISLE Board to build a strong relationship and discuss collaborative projects to help school libraries deal with the challenges affecting them Approach school library districts in the RAILS area that are not currently system members to promote the value of system membership and the availability of school per capita grant funding for system members. At the time of this writing, 62 of 548 school districts fall into this category. Continue to work with the ILA Public Policy Committee to discuss upcoming legislation of importance to libraries. Keep RAILS libraries informed of important legislative issues. Provide advocacy alerts as needed via the *RAILS E-News* and website to help members advocate on important issues	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Encourage members to attend ILA legislative meetups and other events to advocate with legislators re the importance of libraries	

Strategic Plan Goal Three: *Help libraries be the best they can be*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Continue to provide continuing education (CE) to ensure ongoing staff development for all levels of staff at all types of libraries	Offer consulting/CE on resource sharing, library advocacy, management and practice, and other core service areas identified in the administrative rules. (See also other sections of this document for information on CE/consulting for specific core system services.) Offer CE to help members meet core revised system membership standards (see next section) and per capita grant requirements, including providing training on developing a strategic plan Offer training and consulting in other mandated areas as needed, including mandated harassment training and the minimum wage Continue to gather member input on CE needs and implement training to meet those needs. This will include creating a revised CE event post-evaluation. Partner with AISLE to offer CE based on AISLE member feedback Apply to become a PDH (professional development hours) provider to make it easier and faster to deliver CE to schools Explore offering an Administrator's Academy for school administrators to learn more about the value of the school library Broaden the scope of RAILS' CE event grants. (These grants focused on the My Library Is … campaign in FY 2020). Continue partnership with HR Source to provide CE and discounted membership	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Continue partnership with Ancel Glink to offer statewide FOIA/OMA hotline Continue to serve as sponsor for library-related conferences as possible	
Ensure that all libraries are able to offer the best possible service to their community of users	**New L2 (librarylearning.info)** Rollout new version of L2: • Conduct widespread communication campaign to ensure that all Illinois libraries are aware of the advantages of the new L2, how to use the new system, etc. • Pay special attention to school library communication to ensure they are aware of the new L2 and how to update their information • Conduct training for all who need it, including consortia and system staff • Work with ISL and IHLS to administer FY 2021 certification via L2 for the first time. This will help streamline the number of places where libraries are required to enter data. • Continue development work as needed **Certification** Work with RAILS members to ensure that they complete the certification process via L2 (see above) **Revised System Membership Standards** Transition RAILS members to revised membership standards throughout FY 2021: • Work with all RAILS members to ensure they meet core revised membership standards • Work with all RAILS members to ensure that they complete a strategic plan for their library. Provide CE and consulting to help with this effort. Offer training and templates for different sizes and different types of libraries.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Form system membership standards committee, including representatives from system member libraries, Illinois library systems, and ISL, to oversee compliance with the revised standards • Work with ISL, IHLS and ILA to build a website that incorporates standards information, training, and resources on how to achieve the standards and progress beyond the basics • Identify ownership of standards, especially in relation to compliance and professional development • Work on development of standards for school, academic, and special libraries to be added to annual certification process in coming years	
Ensure the ongoing education of library leaders and the development of leadership skills for library staff	Explore possible leadership development initiative for members. Potential target audiences include middle management staff who want to move into the library director role and/or public library trustees. Work with other stakeholders to plan/implement Directors University and Elevate. Determine what changes should be made to both events to make them more effective and to benefit as many library staff members as possible. Continue to offer CE workshops to help members to develop leadership skills Continue partnership with United for Libraries to provide statewide online, on-demand trustee training Provide in-person trustee training in selected locations to promote successful trustee onboarding Consult with/attend library board meetings as appropriate to help boards meet legal requirements and to develop leadership skills Partner with ISL, IHLS, and ILA to discuss ways to encourage library trustees to take advantage of existing training opportunities and to avoid a duplication of efforts	

Strategic Plan Goal Four: *Prepare libraries for the future*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Help libraries anticipate, understand and respond to changing social issues and customer needs	Continue to provide leadership to help libraries respond to challenges in the outside world affecting library service, including helping them deal with any remaining challenges related to COVID-19 Address continuing needs related to COVID-19 through both training and consulting Identify/monitor additional issues and trends affecting RAILS members and provide CE/consulting to help members respond to those issues • Plan and participate in CE and consulting initiatives to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in libraries Continue to develop Library Pulse pages on the RAILS website to help members respond to current issues and trends Produce monthly RAILS *Sparks* podcast featuring interviews on current issues/trends affecting libraries of all types • Determine effective way to gather feedback from *Sparks* listeners and respond to this feedback as appropriate	
Partner with libraries and other stakeholders to foster an educated, engaged, and civil society	Offer CE/consulting and find additional ways to promote core library values such as privacy, intellectual freedom, access to information, and net neutrality	
Expand access to library resources and services by addressing issues related to unserved and underserved Illinois residents and continuing to work toward a statewide library card	Continue to work with the RAILS Board Universal Service Committee to explore solutions to challenges related to the unserved in Illinois Analyze all available demographic data and work with appropriate stakeholders to gain an understanding of exactly who is unserved in Illinois and why. The more we can find out about the unserved and their needs, the better equipped we will be to demonstrate how public library service can help meet those needs.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Work with ISL and other stakeholders to simplify nonresident card laws and rules and to expand the law to include innovative practices select RAILS libraries have already implemented • Prioritize offering library cards without fees to unserved children as an initial effort. • Continue working with ISL to allow libraries to give students a "free" library card until at least September 1, 2020, and possibly beyond that date. This would help students bounce back from some of the educational hardships suffered as a result of COVID-19. • Work with ISL on an FAQ with answers to frequently asked questions re nonresident laws and rules Use different RAILS communication channels (website, *E-News*, podcast, member updates, library visits, conference exhibit booths, and other member encounters) to share innovative library practices related to the unserved Work with the Universal Service Committee to plan/conduct a panel discussion at the FY 2021 ILA conference (if approved) focusing on innovative library practices related to the unserved Work with the Resource Sharing Committee to increase awareness within the library community to the significant number of Illinois unserved. Continue to work with ISL, IHLS, and ILA on a proposal for annual statewide funding of a core suite of electronic databases that would be available to all system member libraries and unserved residents Promote BiblioBoard platform as a way to deliver e-content to anyone in Illinois, including the unserved. Target these promotions at unserved areas. Provide more information on intergovernmental agreements (IGA) in response to member feedback:	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Provide consulting and CE on IGA's. Investigate possibility of providing basic legal assistance to help members develop an IGA. • Expand IGA information on the RAILS website. Include example IGAs from member libraries on the website. • Promote IGA materials available on the RAILS website Continue to work with ILA's Public Policy Committee to enact an amendment to the Public Library District Act designed to remove barriers to libraries merging Promote the value of extending library services to the unserved to member libraries and help libraries promote services available to the unserved • Include section on the unserved on My Library Is… website as specified above with suggestions on how libraries can effectively reach out to unserved populations • Provide talking points via the My Library Is… website to help libraries promote the value of universal library service to legislators Publicize requirement for library boards to vote annually on participation in the nonresident program and for members to update their participation information via L2. Publicize the names of participating/nonparticipating libraries. Partner with ISL, IHLS, and ILA on efforts to issue a statewide library card and to lead efforts to achieve universal library service in Illinois	

Strategic Plan Goal Five: *Aim to be the best library system in the country*

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
Fully communicate and engage with members from all types of libraries throughout the RAILS area to ensure they are aware of system programs/ services of benefit to them and to better understand, anticipate, and meet their needs	**Member Recruitment** Engage with libraries interested in RAILS membership. Visit potential members to ensure they meet membership criteria. Work with RAILS Board on new member recommendations for approval by ISL. Ensure that all non-member school districts in the RAILS area know the value of system membership as described above. **General Member Communication/Engagement** Promote available programs/services via RAILS communication tools and member encounters Redesign RAILS website and add more content that is needed/useful to members. Develop additional and rotating Library Pulse Pages dealing with current issues, trends, and challenges faced by RAILS libraries of all types. Migrate the RAILS website and project sites to the latest version of the Drupal content management system as a part of the redesign Implement new email list software system. Communicate resulting changes in RAILS email lists to all members to ensure a smooth transition and uninterrupted use of all mailing lists. Conduct survey on weekly *RAILS E-News* to determine what (if any) changes should be made to the structure and content. Our *E-News* reaches more members in one place than any other single communication vehicle, with over 6,000 subscribers. Develop new communication strategies to ensure that all staff at all RAILS member libraries are aware of the programs/services RAILS offers of direct benefit to them. Experiment with direct	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	mail marketing as one strategy. Groups to target include, but are not limited to: • Non-director level staff at RAILS public libraries • School library staff • Academic library staff • Special library staff • Public library trustees Visit as many member libraries throughout the RAILS area as possible either in person or virtually. Concentrate on libraries that have not been visited in two years. Schedule quarterly RAILS member updates to share the latest RAILS news with members Offer "New Director Welcome" online discussions to promote RAILS programs/services Exhibit at ILA, AISLE, Illinois Youth Services Institute, Reaching Forward, Reaching Forward South, and other conferences as appropriate. Explore new conference opportunities that will help RAILS spread the word about our programs/ services to difficult-to-reach member audiences. Present programs at library-related conferences as appropriate **Multitype Communication/Engagement** Publish periodic e-newsletters for academic, school, and special libraries Schedule informational/networking meetings for different library types, including virtual meetings Target nonpublic members for library visits, either in person or virtual Use available type of library mailing lists to communicate system membership benefits	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Conduct "school library tune-ups" to acquaint schools with system offerings Present programs/sponsor exhibit booths at conferences for different types of libraries **Social Media Communication/Engagement** Expand/enhance RAILS' social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) to engage members Create social media campaigns as needed to promote RAILS services and resources; develop contests, advertising, and other ways for members to engage with each other via social media Track social media metrics and make strategy adjustments as necessary	
Continuously evaluate RAILS programs and services to ensure that they are having an impact and are helping to create the best possible future for all of our libraries	Continue to develop and foster a data culture at RAILS Continue to evaluate RAILS' programs/services to show their effectiveness and impact on members. Implement changes to RAILS programs/services as a result of these activities as appropriate. Include the following areas/topics as priorities in RAILS' data analysis and evaluation efforts: • eRead Illinois and cooperative purchasing in general • CE and consulting • Delivery • Certification and membership standards • Unserved • Mapping resources – including a more streamlined way to produce the State of Resource Sharing in RAILS map and other maps with helpful data on our members • Work with ILA, ISL, and IHLS on taking "deeper dives" into the state of libraries in Illinois and all of the associated data. Concentrate on school libraries as a first priority.	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	• Continue working with OpenGov and helping other staff to use this tool to present data Continue to solicit member feedback via RAILS communication tools, surveys, and member encounters. Implement changes/additions to RAILS programs/services based on member input as appropriate.	
Recruit and engage a RAILS Board that is representative of the system membership and that creates and models best practices for board leadership	Communicate regularly with board through board mailing list and other means Keep board informed about important issues for RAILS and for libraries of all types Plan/implement orientation session at Burr Ridge service center for all new RAILS Board members. Invite existing board members to attend for a refresher. Schedule board meetings in different parts of the RAILS area as possible so the board can learn about different areas of the system Continue to promote and encourage diversity on the RAILS Board Support board conference/meeting attendance as appropriate Conduct board self-assessment to ensure continued board development Evaluate board portal on RAILS website to determine what changes can be made to make it a more useful tool for board members	
Ensure that all aspects of the RAILS organization use and model best practices in all that we do	Model effective internal EDI practices for members by sharing information on RAILS' staff initiative (see below) See other sections of this document for activities related to modeling best practices, including modeling innovative ways for members to share resources (BiblioBoard, SimplyE, Find More Illinois, Explore More Illinois, etc.); modeling effective	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	ways to tell the library story; modeling effective ways to evaluate the impact of programs/services; etc.	
Deliver on the promise of organizational excellence by being agile, innovative, future-oriented, and member-focused	**Support & Develop RAILS Staff** Recruit RAILS staff as needed to meet roles specified in administrative rules and to support strategic plan goals and objectives Encourage/support professional development for staff Continue to develop and promote a RAILS Staff EDI Initiative • Work with a consultant to develop a strategy and to create a staff-led climate team to work on ongoing issues • Coordinate and tailor staff EDI training for all RAILS service centers Continue working on a staff wellness program by following up on feedback from a FY 2020 staff survey. Form internal wellness committee to help implement activities based on staff feedback. Continue work of RAILS Employee Committee to develop collaborative activities for all staff Coordinate annual all-staff in-service day Introduce internal RAILS branding handbook to help staff promote RAILS and the RAILS brand **Maintain Robust Technology Infrastructure** Perform necessary infrastructure work, including evaluating and possibly replacing host and storage servers Order and distribute new staff computers Transition to Office 365 Move forward on development of a delivery app	

Objectives	Planned Activities	System Standard
	Rollout offering Zoom to RAILS networking and CE groups Continue providing subsidized conference calling accounts to appropriate RAILS member groups	
Engage in innovative projects on a statewide, national, and international level and help RAILS members model these projects for their community of users	**Grow/Enhance SimplyE Partnership** Continue to partner with Massachusetts Library System, New York Public Library, and Minitex on Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) SimplyE for Consortia grant project Follow-up on FY 2020 pilot test with Pinnacle Consortium to determine an appropriate strategy for extending SimplyE to additional consortia/libraries. Offer incentives for other consortia to participate in SimplyE for Consortia. Lay groundwork and stay abreast of developments to prepare for potential wider adoption and beta testing, including promoting SimplyE as a tool all libraries can use to offer universal sign-on to their different library e-book collections See other sections of this document for additional information on innovative projects, including BiblioBoard and inkie.org, MyLibraryIs…, L2, online roundtables, staff EDI initiative, etc.	
Provide excellent stewardship of RAILS financial resources to ensure maximum benefit to member libraries, library users, and Illinois taxpayers	Closely monitor RAILS investments and make changes as appropriate Continue to investigate and find efficiencies and cost savings, primarily through the budgeting and financial reporting processes, for RAILS operations	
Maintain a research and development role to provide leadership and innovation to help members provide the best possible service to their customers	See other sections of this document for activities related to research and development, including a variety of resource sharing initiatives (SimplyE, LASA/delivery research, etc.)	