

RAILS Report

RSC FY2021 Goal 1: Increase a Statewide Culture of Resource Sharing

Databases, Deals, and Discounts

Gale Career Online High School (COHS) Program

More than 1.1 million or 11% of Illinois adult residents do not have a high school diploma. COHS is an 18-credit, vocation-based high school completion program that enables libraries to offer adult learners accredited high school diplomas along with career certificates in one of 10 high-demand employment fields.

Gale provides extensive training, implementation, and student recruitment support, and this is paid for by RAILS. We are currently updating COHS documentation, including procedures for libraries accepting out-of-district students and the list of RAILS scholarship recipients.

Other RAILS Deals and Discounts News

RAILS has discounted pricing for a new resource, Gale Engage, a tool for targeted outreach. We also renegotiated terms for established Gale resources, which saved current member library participants \$8,300 in renewal costs. Communico negotiations resulted in savings or added value of up to \$76,000 for current subscribers.

About 50 RAILS member libraries attended webinars highlighting advantageously priced resources, including Gale Engage/Analytics and Communico.

Leila Heath, RAILS Library Resources and Programs Manager, presented the latest information about RAILS deals & discounts at the October 19 RAILS Board Consortia Committee meeting.

For more details on offers, log into the RAILS website with your L2 login information and go to the [Deals and Discounts](#) page.

E-books and E-Content

In September, Anna Behm, E-Content Specialist, spoke at a webinar for eRead Illinois libraries that use Follett Destiny. Representatives from Baker & Taylor and Follett also discussed how eRead school libraries can take advantage of the integration between the two companies' services. Anna also spoke at the RAILS Roundtable on "E-Content for Schools." The webinar recording and presentation slides are available on the RAILS website.

Jessica Barnes, Special Projects Librarian; Anna Behm; and Leila Heath, Library Resources & Programs Manager; gave a presentation at PrairieCat's virtual PUG Days, and highlighted what's new with Explore More Illinois, Career Online High School, BiblioBoard, inkie.org, eRead Illinois, RAILS deals & discounts, and more.

Library Directory & Learning Calendar (L2)

The new and improved Library Directory & Learning Calendar (L2) has launched. L2 provides a statewide continuing education calendar where you can find and register for events and meetings hosted by RAILS, IHLS, shared catalog consortia, and many library-related continuing education and networking groups. It also provides a directory of all ILLINET member libraries and staff in Illinois, including public library trustees. (Any library that is a member of a system is an ILLINET library.) In addition to a new, more intuitive design, the new L2 makes it much easier to find events that fit your interests, and to search, compare, and download information about Illinois libraries.

Delivery

Greg Pronevitz, the consultant RAILS has been working with to help us plan for the future of delivery, has completed phase two of his work. This spring, RAILS released an RFI seeking information from vendors across the country on potential efficient and cost-effective delivery strategies. Greg will be presenting his findings to the Resource Sharing Committee at the December meeting.

On October 27, RAILS reduced the delivery quarantine period from 7 days to 3 days. RAILS staff have continued to monitor the updated information coming from the REALM study as well as a review of the REALM data by qualified staff from the Oregon Department of Health via the Oregon State Library and similar agencies. After a careful review of this information, as well as our ongoing understanding of the most likely ways that the current iteration of the COVID-19 virus is transmitted, led RAILS to determine that a shorter quarantine time for delivery materials was an appropriate response.

The Illinois State Library and State Archives have reached out to the Illinois Department of Public Health in hopes that they could help to issue guidance around the quarantine of library materials. They have not yet issued a response but we are hopeful that some additional guidance could be offered in the future.

RAILS staff continued to meet with other Illinois delivery stakeholders, including the Illinois State Library, the Illinois Heartland Library System, and CARLI to discuss delivery plans and communications. We have also met with the Midwest Delivery Group and ALA's Association of Specialized, Government, and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASGCLA) (now part of ALA CORE). All of these meetings have been extremely helpful in determining a best course of action for RAILS.

Explore More Illinois

Although the Explore More Illinois cultural pass program is still suspended due to COVID-19, we continue to add libraries in preparation for the relaunch when our attractions are ready. Currently, 321 libraries (281 RAILS, 40 IHLS) are enrolled. We also made modifications to the website in December for easier access and readability and are having the most success reaching libraries by phone.

RSC FY2021 Goal 2: Improve Awareness of Resource Sharing

RAILS Awarded E-Book Grant from Illinois State Library

RAILS applied for and received a \$125,000 grant offered through the Illinois State Library to purchase e-books of interest to K-12 students for the eRead Illinois platform. In addition to the many library partners already participating, over 50 school libraries have joined eRead since the start of the pandemic. This grant will help us improve offerings to students and children in need of remote learning opportunities. Project spending began December 1.

RAILS Illinois Library Association Booth Recap

RAILS had 236 unique visitors to our ILA virtual booth. Though this is not close to the number of visitors we usually attract in person (last year we had a record 592 visitors), we considered it successful for the online environment.

Booth visitors were invited to indicate specific RAILS programs/services they would like more information on. CE and trustee training were the areas mentioned most often, and there was also interest in the *RAILS E-News*, RAILS e-resources, the My Library Is... campaign, networking opportunities, Explore More Illinois, and deals & discounts. RAILS staff are following up on these requests.

Collaboration on Statewide Initiatives

RAILS staff continues to meet with IHLS staff to talk about several statewide initiatives, including BiblioBoard and inkie.org. We updated IHLS on the BiblioBoard statistics dashboard, as well as the new Recovering the Classics titles. These meetings will continue in the future.

Impact of COVID-19 Related Closures on Library E-Content Usage

Like many states, Illinois ordered a mandatory shutdown of non-essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public libraries closed their buildings when the Illinois stay-at-home order took effect on March 21, 2020. This analysis explores the impact of this lockdown period on library e-content usage.

This [My Library Is... post](#) by Anna Behm, RAILS E-Content Specialist, details how e-content bridged the gap during library building closures caused by the pandemic. You can also read [RAILS' report](#) on "The Impact of COVID-19 Related Closures on Library E-Content Usage."

RAILS Resumes Monthly Meetings with AISLE Board and IHLS

In FY 2020, RAILS met regularly with IHLS staff and Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE) Board members to collaborate on activities to help advocate for school libraries and to help schools advocate for themselves. RAILS resumed these monthly meetings beginning in early November. RAILS also hosted a virtual booth at the 2020 AISLE Conference with information about the RAILS programs/services especially for schools.

RAILS Offers Grants to Help School Libraries Promote Their Value

RAILS is offering up to ten \$1,000 [My Library Is... Grants for School Libraries](#) to help them promote their value and tell their stories in a more impactful way. We sought input from our AISLE Board colleagues in developing this program to ensure that school libraries would be able to meet grant requirements. AISLE will also help us promote the grants to RAILS school libraries.

RSC FY2021 Goal 3: Provide Services for the Unserved

Universal Service/Unserved

On August 5, RAILS offered the webinar “Every Student Gets a Card: Leveraging IGAs to Grant Library Access to Illinois Students.” This webinar featured two staff members from Roselle Public Library who spoke about their experience working with their school district to establish an intergovernmental agreement (IGA). Their IGA resulted in a number of students in unserved areas receiving library cards. Several participants said that they would like to pursue a similar IGA as a result of attending this webinar. The recording is available in the RAILS CE Archives.

BiblioBoard

RAILS continues to actively promote new collections on BiblioBoard, including the Illinois Census 2020 titles and new Recovering the Classics titles and images. The census collection includes e-books on civil and human rights, feminism, and topics of interest to African Americans and other underrepresented groups.

The Recovering the Classics collection includes new book covers created by contemporary artists for public domain titles that libraries can use for programs, promotions, and more. All BiblioBoard collections are freely available to anyone in Illinois through RAILS’ partnership with BiblioBoard.

2020 Census

Amy de la Fuente’s last day with RAILS was November 30. Amy did an amazing job on the census project and has been a great colleague and friend for us all at RAILS. Amy and her colleagues at the other Regional Intermediaries, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the team at RAILS that assisted her, and all the sub recipients have done amazing work, pivoting time and again, having end-dates and extensions appearing and disappearing daily.