RAILS
REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

19 March 2021

TO: RAILS Board of Directors

FROM: Deirdre Brennan

SUBJECT: Executive Director Report – March, 2021

> **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**

Statewide database funding

As we discussed last month, we are reaching out to RAILS members who are, in turn, reaching out to their legislators seeking feedback and support for the statewide database proposal. The updated proposal and talking points are included in the packet. I will provide an update at the meeting.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

A summary of the federal legislation from ALA is in the packet. It outlines provisions for libraries, such as $200 million increase in IMLS of which $178 million is allocated for state library agencies, new $7.172 billion for E-rate, providing 100% reimbursement to libraries for Wi-Fi capable devices, and more. Please thank your Senators and Representatives for this funding. Diane Foote at ILA has requested help getting word out about grant and funding opportunities for libraries.

REALM

Update on REALM work can be found here. A new toolkit provides very helpful resources related to library reopening concerns and vaccines among others.

> **Work with libraries of all types to tell the library story**

Podcast

I have done two podcasts since the last meeting. The first was with Nicole Steeves, Director at Fox River Grove Public Library District (Michael's library!) who did two delightful and effective videos as part of a My Library Is grant.

The second was with staff from the Gerber/Hart Library and Archives, www.gerberhart.org. Gerber/Hart is one of the larger independent LGBTQ libraries and archives in the US. Their mission is to "preserve and make accessible the history and culture of the LGBTQ communities in Chicago and the Midwest to advance the larger goal of achieving justice and equality."

They are using the grant funds to make 8 podcasts that tell the audio story of their collections. It was a really fascinating conversation.

Help libraries be the best they can be

Directors University, ILA, ALA
Upcoming conferences will continue to be virtual. Planning continues for the Directors University which is a joint project of RAILS, IHLS and the State Library. New public library directors, appointed in the past twelve months, receive training in all aspects of library directorship – budgets, human resources, facilities management, strategic planning, Illinois laws and other topics.

Both ILA and the annual ALA conference will be virtual. Registration is now open for ALA. We are working on submitting proposals for the ILA conference to be held this October.

Prepare libraries for the future

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
We have established three subcommittees; Recruitment, Hiring and Retention; Training, Leadership and Advocacy; and Programming and Outreach Services. All three subcommittees will meet in April, (we hope) to begin their work of developing best practices, and resource materials for libraries in their focus areas. The next meeting of the EDI committee is on April 21.

RAILS staff members are working with committee members on a resource list of books, articles, Ted Talks, podcasts and others to assist in training and development of best practice documents.

Universal Service
I will report on universal service efforts at the meeting as the board development report. There are some historical reports, relating the long history of these efforts, in the packet.

Vaccines for library workers
A report prepared by ALA Council is included in the packet.

Aim to be the best library system in the country

Board engagement survey results
This is on the agenda for discussion. We received many great comments and suggestions. We have provided some possible next steps and look forward to talking with the board about them.

Statement of Economic Interest
You should receive an email from the Cook County Clerk's Ethics Department regarding filing of your Statement of Economic Interests (SEI).
If you do not receive an email, please let Emily know. Also, after you file, forward Emily your confirmation email from Cook County. The confirmation is submitted to the Illinois State Library with our annual System Area and Per Capita Grant Application.

This Month at RAILS – March 2021

Promoting/Supporting/Expanding Resource Sharing

Providing Access to Digital Content/E-Resources/Other Innovative Projects

Collaborative E-Resources Program a Success!

RAILS, IHLS, and AISLE partnered on a successful March 4 webinar on "System E-Content and E-Resources for Illinois Educators." A total of 75 RAILS and IHLS members registered. The virtual panel included RAILS and IHLS staff, and a librarian from Bloom High School District #206 who gave a strong testimonial for eRead Illinois Axis 360.

School librarians in attendance received information on a variety of system-supported resources, including eRead Illinois, inkie.org, and BiblioBoard. A recording of the event is available in the RAILS CE Archives. RAILS and IHLS plan to host another program in August as a "back to school" event.

E-Book Grant Update

In November 2020, RAILS received a $125,000 e-book grant from the Illinois State Library to acquire additional educational and recreational titles for juvenile and young adult users of the eRead Illinois Axis 360 shared digital collection.

As of March 1, RAILS spent $65,488 of the grant money: $40,545 for 1,646 e-books and $24,943 for 486 audiobooks. RAILS continues to receive suggestions for titles to purchase with grant funds; eRead members can make suggestions via this form.

In mid-March, RAILS sent a press release to a variety of local media outlets and the library press promoting the grant.

eRead Illinois Update

RAILS is receiving questions from schools about eRead Illinois Axis 360 and SOPPA compliance. SOPPA (Student Online Personal Protection Act) is designed to ensure that student privacy is protected. It goes into effect on July 1, 2021. We are currently discussing this issue with Baker & Taylor, our eRead Illinois vendor.

In other news, eRead Illinois renewals start in April. RAILS staff are reviewing our procedures to ensure a smooth process. Like last year, renewals and sign-ups will be available online via the RAILS eRead Illinois website.

Explore More Illinois Resumes April 1

We are thrilled to announce that Explore More Illinois, our online cultural pass program, will restart April 1, barring any further major COVID-19 disruptions. April 1 also marks the two-year anniversary of Explore More Illinois. Twelve attractions with more than 20 offers will be

available in April, and other attractions have committed to resuming their offers when capacity at their locations can increase.

Currently, 333 libraries (292 RAILS libraries and 41 IHLS libraries) participate, and we will continue to work on adding libraries and recruiting new attractions before April 1.

Providing Greater Purchasing Power

RAILS Purchases ConsortiaManager to Streamline Group Purchase Processes
RAILS recently purchased ConsortiaManager, an online resource designed specifically for consortia. ConsortiaManager will help us increase efficiency, capacity, and member communications related to our group purchases, and will save a lot of staff time. Several RAILS staff attended a Zoom overview of the product in early March.

Comics Plus Discounted Pricing for K-12 Schools
Comics Plus gives students unlimited, simultaneous access to thousands of age-appropriate digital comics, graphic novels, and manga—at school and at home. Elementary, middle school, and high school packages are available, along with educational resources to help integrate comics into the curriculum and/or extracurricular activities.

RAILS held a webinar for members on March 9. Members can also register for a free 28-day trial.

Career Online High School (COHS)/Smart Horizons Career Online Education Update
RAILS met with staff at Flossmoor Public Library to discuss ways to promote COHS to youth and teen librarians. The majority of COHS students are parents, and working with youth services staff is one way to increase visibility of the program.

We also talked with Smart Horizons about their marketing team creating social media content that RAILS and member libraries can use. They were very receptive to our ideas, and we will be working with them as we get closer to July, when Smart Horizons will take over the marketing of COHS from Gale.

Building Collaborative Relationships & Fostering Networking

RAILS Provides Guidance for Member Networking Groups
Networking groups have long played an important part in the RAILS community. These groups help members from all types of libraries share knowledge and connect with colleagues from other RAILS libraries. RAILS has over 80 official groups in our networking group directory.

In our ongoing virtual meetings with networking groups, many have told us they would like a stronger definition of what a networking group is, as well as advice on how to start a new one. To address these issues, RAILS recently created two new documents:

- Networking Group FAQ – information on what networking groups do and how they operate
- Starting a New Networking Group - a guide to creating a networking group

Both of these documents are also available on the Support for Networking Groups page on the RAILS website.

Telling the Library Story

Helping Members Tell Their Story

RAILS Awards My Library Is… Grants to 14 School Libraries
RAILS awarded 14 My Library Is… Grants to school library members in March. These grants help school libraries focus on projects that tell their story and increase visibility and support for school libraries in general. AISLE helped evaluate the grants. Awardees include:

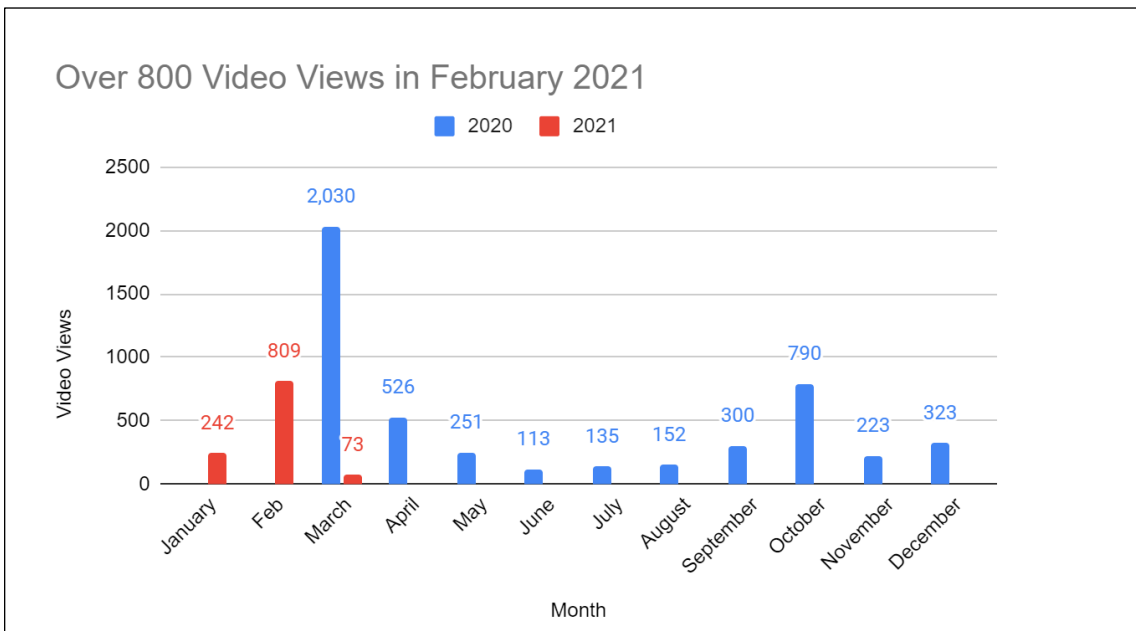| School/District	Project Name
Batavia High School	How Can We Help?
Beach Park Community Consolidated School District 3	My Library Is… Moving Forward
City of Chicago School District #299	My Library Is Inclusive
Deer Creek-Mackinaw CUSD #701	3-D for 3-P: Printing, Promoting, and Public Relations
Deerfield Public School District #109	Virtual Shepard Learning Commons
Durand CUSD #322	There's a Library in Durand!?
Kaneland High School	#KanelandReads
Kankakee School District	KSD/KPL Young Author's Contest
Lockport School District 91	KGTV Meets #KGLRC
Prospect Heights School District 23	Axis360

School/District	Project Name
Reed-Custer CUSD 225U	My Library Will Be…Current!
Woodland CUSD 5	Culture & Diversity Collection w/Programming
Woodland CCSD #50 - Woodland Middle School	A Beautiful MOSAIC of Cultures!
Zion School District 6	East Elementary School's NEW Dual Language Program

Relaunch of *Elders of the Internet* Video

In February, RAILS re-launched the [Elders of the Internet](#) video with a [media kit](#) that includes sample messages, images, and hashtags to help members demonstrate that libraries are needed more than ever in the internet age. We shared information on the kit via:

- *RAILS E-News* articles
- RAILS press release
- RAILS email list messages
- Facebook ads ($166.09 spent)
- Twitter ads ($160 spent)
- LinkedIn posts
- Instagram posts

The chart below shows the video's performance. February 2020 has been removed for scale. (There were 35,519 video views in February 2020, when the video debuted.)

Advocating for Libraries

March Meeting with AISLE, IHLS, and ILA
RAILS staff meet monthly with staff from AISLE, IHLS, and ILA to discuss ways we can advocate for school libraries. Topics discussed at the March meeting included:

- March 4 Collaborative E-Content and E-Resources Program (see above)
- Ongoing project to collect more data on Illinois school libraries
- Collaboration opportunity with academic libraries on developing college ready skills
- Statewide database possibilities
- ILA Public Policy Committee and Legislative Meetups update
- Reminder about certification requirement for all RAILS member libraries (see below)

Our next meeting is Tuesday, April 6.

Helping Libraries Be the Best They Can Be

Ensuring Ongoing Library Staff Development

Upcoming RAILS CE Highlights
Upcoming April RAILS CE events include:

- "Marketing with Infographics," April 13
- Two sessions focused on harassment prevention training, April 14 and April 21

Helping All Libraries Provide the Best Possible Service

RAILS Board Asked to Help Spread the Word about Certification
All RAILS libraries must complete the online certification process by May 15 to continue to be eligible to receive RAILS services and Illinois State Library grants. Libraries will use L2 to complete certification this year, and will no longer need a separate login to certify. They must complete the FY 2020 interlibrary loan statistical survey before starting the certification form.

The table below shows the number of RAILS libraries of all types that have completed the entire certification process thus far (including completing the ILL survey). RAILS Board members are asked to spread the word about the need to certify to all RAILS libraries they have contact with.

Library Type	Total #	# Completing Certification
Academic	118	**75**
Public	412	**298**
School	558	**322**
Special	178	**73**

Developing Library Leaders

Elevate Leadership Conference Update
A total of 83 library staff registered to attend the 2021 Elevate Library Leadership Conference on April 24. Sixty-eight of those registered are RAILS members, and approximately 30% currently work in a nonpublic library (academic, school, or special). This year's virtual conference will focus on EDI concepts.

Trustee Training Opportunities
RAILS continues to offer library trustees across the state access to United for Libraries' online "Short Takes for Trustees" training videos. United for Libraries recently transitioned their content to a new platform, and the process for accessing these videos has changed. View the revised process on the RAILS website.

Preparing Libraries for the Future

Helping Libraries Respond to Change

Advocating for COVID-19 Vaccines for Library Workers
RAILS continues to share the most recent information about COVID-19 vaccines (and other pandemic news) on our COVID-19 Pulse Page. This includes a link to the latest information from ILA on the availability of the vaccine for library workers in different Illinois counties.

RAILS sent letters and emails to the departments of public health in each county to encourage the placement of library workers (including delivery staff) in Phase 1b.

Vaccines were also a regular topic of conversation during the recent ILA Legislative Meetups. On March 11, President Joe Biden also directed states to make all U.S. adults eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine by May 1.

Support for Independent Illinois Authors Writing in Spanish
Since 2013, the Soon to Be Famous Illinois Author Project (STBF) has provided opportunities for self-published authors to gain attention. RAILS is one of the many library-related partners that has helped with these efforts.

On April 1, STBF will launch a new Spanish language contest: De la Página a la Fama (From Page to Fame). The focus is to support independent authors in Illinois who are writing in Spanish and to connect them with readers.

STBF joined forces with the members of HOLA, a networking group of library staff that serve Hispanics, to make sure to reach everyone who can benefit from this new initiative. The contest kicks off with a bilingual Facebook Live event on March 30.

LIBRARY RECOVERY FUNDING SUMMARY

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

The $1.9 trillion [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#) (ARPA) provides $200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and billions more for library-eligible programs, including over $7 billion for broadband. Libraries can position themselves now to seek portions of this funding through multiple channels.

Relief provisions helpful to the library community include:

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

The **$200 million** allocation is the largest increase for IMLS in the agency's 25-year history. **$178 million** is allocated for state library administrative agencies on a population-based formula, with a **$2 million state minimum**. In the coming weeks, IMLS will work with state library agencies to confirm state allotments and specify allowable uses for the funding.

EMERGENCY CONNECTIVITY FUND

Libraries are eligible to apply for the new **$7. 172 billion** Emergency Connectivity Fund through the FCC's E-rate program. Participating libraries will receive 100 percent reimbursement for the cost of hotspots and other Wi-Fi capable devices, modems, routers, laptops, tablets and similar devices to loan to patrons. ALA will provide input during the 60-day rulemaking process.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ARPA includes a massive influx – **more than $360 billion** – of emergency assistance to state, local and tribal community governments. This influx is intended to offset potential cuts to public health, safety, education, and library programs. For states facing less dire economic conditions, ARPA funds present an opportunity for innovative new programs and resources. Approximately 60 percent of the $360 billion will go to states, with 40 percent going to local and tribal governments.

EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUND

Funding of **$130 billion** is included for education costs associated with the safe reopening of K-12 schools, hiring additional staff, reducing class size, modifying school spaces, and addressing student, academic, and mental health needs. Schools will be allowed to invest in technology and support distance learning, with at least 20 percent to be used to address learning loss. Funding will flow from the Department of Education to states based on their Title I funding—the federal government's primary program for high-poverty schools.

ALA American Library Association

HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges and institutions of higher education will receive **$40 billion** to defray pandemic-related costs and provide emergency aid to students to cover expenses such as food, housing, and computer equipment. At least half of the $40 billion for higher education must be dedicated to emergency student financial aid. ARPA makes all COVID-19 student loan relief tax-free.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM FUNDING

- **$135 million** each for National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities will support state and regional arts and humanities agencies. 60 percent of the funds are designated for direct grants eligible to libraries and 40 percent for grants and administration for state arts and humanities agencies.
- **$39 billion** for Child Care and Development Block Grants and Stabilization Fund and $1 billion for Head Start are partnership opportunities for school and public libraries.
- **$9.1 billion** is available for state-level afterschool and summer programs, and **$21.9 billion** for programs at the local level.

ALA Vaccine Working Group
Report to Council

Background

Council Resolution

During ALA Virtual Midwinter 2021, members of ALA Council introduced resolution ALA CD #45, requesting that ALA ask the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to include library workers in priority phase 1b recommendations for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Floor discussion clarified that the CDC prioritizes industries and not workers. Council members raised concern that the resolution might violate ALA's protocol for working on state and local issues.

After discussion, an amended resolution was adopted by Council, affirming "that library workers have a fundamental right to a safe work environment. This includes, but is not limited to, a library or other work setting that minimizes an employee's environmental risk of exposure to Covid-19." The resolution also directed this working group to gather information and provide a report to Council.

ALA Protocol for State & Local Issues

In 2008, at the direction of ALA's Executive Board, the then Office of Library Advocacy (OLA) was asked to develop a protocol for determining when and how the Office would intercede in urgent state or local library issues, such as library bond referendums or censorship challenges to library materials, services, and programs. The rationale behind the request was that while ALA as an organization can engage with states to assist with local concerns, state library associations are self-governing and are in the best position to know the political climate and local governing structures, citizen viewpoints, and other intricacies of their communities. The protocol advises that ALA provide assistance only with the permission of and in coordination with the state. Based on our findings and the wide divergence in practices in each state, this policy remains well-founded as well as practical.

CDC Immunization Guidance

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) makes recommendations about who should be vaccinated first when vaccine supplies are limited. [1] Those recommendations are based on the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) Critical Infrastructure Workforce Assessment, first developed in March 2020 to help determine which

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[1] Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce," Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, accessed March 4, 2021, https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce

industries were essential to continued operations of a national infrastructure and would be exempted from shutdown orders.

Through the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services, the federal government began sharing information with state and local governments about a massive vaccination program during summer 2020. Health policy experts anticipated gaps in coordination, noting "federalism has benefits for public health, particularly the ability to localize responses, but raises unique challenges in a pandemic, with the potential for a complicated patchwork of different rules and regulations to navigate across jurisdictions, which could result in different timetables for receiving and shipping vaccines to providers, different levels of success in reaching target outcomes across the country, and differential access by geography, which could exacerbate existing inequalities in access and care and ultimately have implications for public health and broader population immunity." [2]

In December 2020, CDC released guidance on a phased rollout of vaccines, recommending that health care providers and residents in long-term care facilities (1a) be the first to receive the vaccine.[3] "Frontline essential workers such as fire fighters, police officers, corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, United States Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the educational sector (teachers, support staff, and daycare workers)" receive the vaccine in second phase (1b). A third phase (1c) specified "other essential workers, such as people who work in transportation and logistics, food service, housing construction and finance, information technology, communications, energy, law, media, public safety, and public health." Each tier in phase 1 reflects prioritization at a time when demand for the vaccine exceeds supply. Phase 2 includes all other persons aged ≥16 years not already recommended for vaccination in phases 1a, 1b, or 1c. Libraries and library workers were not specifically identified in the December 2020 document.

The CDC followed this guidance on January 19 with an "Interim List of Categories of Essential Workers Mapped to Standardized Industry Codes and Titles," a more detailed mapping of essential worker industries developed according to the CISA Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce and "intended to help state, local, tribal, and territorial officials and organizations prepare for the

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[2] Josh Michaud and Jennifer Kates , "Distributing a COVID-19 Vaccine Across the U.S. - A Look at Key Issues, KFF: Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues, "October 20, 2020, https://www.kff.org/report-section/distributing-a-covid-19-vaccine-across-the-u-s-a-look-at-key-issues-issue-brief/#VaccinationRequirements

[3] Kathleen Dooling, MD et al. "The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 2020," US Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report MMWR, January 1, 2021/Vol. 69/No. 51-521657, https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm695152e2-H.pdf

allocation of initially limited COVID-19 vaccine supply."[4] Elementary, secondary and postsecondary education are specified in phase 1b. Libraries are specified in phase 1C.

It is important to note that CDC mapping "categorizes workers based on the industry (type of business) in which they work, not based on their occupation (a person's specific job)." In addition, the guidance states that "jurisdictions have flexibility in weighing local economic and infrastructure needs, ethical considerations, and other equity factors in order to prioritize those working in industries in the CISA ECIW list for COVID-19 vaccine allocation." This industry mapping was also disseminated in the January update of "COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdictions Operations Annex," a vaccine rollout planning resource for local jurisdictions. [5]

CDC advises that phases may overlap with one another, and states are not moving through distribution phases in unison. The biggest challenge at this time is availability of the vaccine. Supplies are limited but expected to increase significantly in the spring 2021, particularly with the emergency authorization for a third vaccine.[6] President Biden recently announced that with the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine and an agreement with Merck to assist in manufacturing, there will be enough vaccine for all adults by the end of May.[7] Already, the pace of vaccinations has increased substantially,[8] and, in a national address on March 11, President Biden announced that he will "direct states, Tribes, and territories to make all adults eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine no later than May 1."[9]

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[4] "Interim List of Categories of Essential Workers Mapped to Standardized Industry Codes and Titles," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Vaccines & Immunizations, January 13, 2021, https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/categories-essential-workers.html.

[5] Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce," Cybersecurity & Infrastructure security agency, accessed March 4, 2021, https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce

[6] "FDA Issues Emergency Use Authorization for Third COVID-19 Vaccine Action Advances Fight Against COVID-19, Follows Comprehensive Evaluation of Available Safety, Effectiveness and Manufacturing Quality Information by FDA Career Scientists, Input from External Experts," U.S. Food and Drug Administration, February 27, 2021, https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-issues-emergency-use-authorization-third-covid-19-vaccine

[7] Kevin Liptak, Jeff Zeleny and John Harwood, "Biden now says US will have enough vaccine for every adult by the end of May," *CNN Politics*, March 2, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/02/politics/biden-merck-johnson--johnson-vaccine/index.html

[8] Ruth Graham, "The United States is now averaging 2 million vaccine doses administered per day," *The New York Times*, March 4, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/04/world/covid-19-coronavirus/the-united-states-is-now-averaging-2-million-vaccine-doses-administered-per-day

[9] White House Briefing Room, "President Biden implements next phase of national strategy to put the pandemic behind us; will direct states, Tribes, and territories to make all adults eligible for vaccine by May 1," March 11, 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/11/fact-sheet-president-biden-

State and Local Immunization Guidance

As noted above, each U.S. state decides how to implement the CDC guidance, including deciding who will be vaccinated and how they can receive vaccines. State health departments, whose governance varies from state to state, make these determinations. Their relationship with regional/local public health departments also differs across states. Because of this, how vaccines are deployed can vary from one locality to the next.

This is reflected in the wide variety of rollout plans that have been introduced. Only two states, Alabama and Hawaii, appear to follow the CDC guidance in its entirety, while 20 states have developed their own prioritization schedules. For example, Rhode Island has shifted to an age-based distribution model after vaccinating healthcare workers, first responders, and those in congregate settings.[10] Most other states fall somewhere in between, adopting components of CDC guidance and customizing other elements of their rollout plans.

Despite the 1b categorization by CDC, states differ on prioritizing higher education and pre-K-12 workers for vaccination.[11] Public colleges in West Virginia and Florida are among the first in the country to begin administering COVID-19 vaccines to faculty and staff who do not work in health care.[12] Some states, like Alabama,[13] prioritize school staff in second tier (1b); others, like New Hampshire, do not include teachers as a prioritized group, even after extensive lobbying by the New Hampshire Education Association. In addition, some states prioritize K-12 educators but not post-secondary educators; and some explicitly identify different types of educational staff, including library workers, while others do not.

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to-announce-all-americans-to-be-eligible-for-vaccinations-by-may-1-puts-the-nation-on-a-path-to-get-closer-to-normal-by-july-4th/

[10] "COVID-19 Information," Rhode Island, Department of Health, accessed March 4, 2021, https://covid.ri.gov/vaccination

[11] Elizabeth Redden, "Vaccines for Educators -- but Not All Educators," *Inside Higher Ed*, February 15, 2021, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/02/15/evolving-patchwork-approaches-how-states-prioritize-educators-covid-vaccines-raises

[12] Elizabeth Redden, "Higher Ed Workers Get in the COVID Vaccine Line," Inside Higher Ed, January 13, 2021, https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/01/13/first-faculty-and-staff-outside-health-care-fields-become-eligible-covid-vaccines

[13] Alabama Public Health, "COVID-19 vaccination eligibility expanded in Alabama to include persons ages 65 through 74 and others," [press release], January 29, 2021, https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/news/2021/01/29.html

States continue to make changes to their rollout plans. For example, on February 26, Maine Governor Janet Mills announced her state would shift to an age-based rollout plan. [14] Arizona made a similar announcement on March 1.[15] In some cases, these changes are causing friction with local jurisdictions, as when Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker diverted some vaccine allocations from small towns to mass vaccination sites.[16] Ultimately, however, these are decisions that are being made by local and state governments.

Lobbying for Change

Lobbying for changes to vaccine priority status has occurred at both the state and national level, with industry groups primarily targeting state governments or state health officials and having limited impact.[17] The most significant change from the federal government was the January guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services to adjust the age cutoff for early prioritization from 75 to 65. Most groups lobbying the CDC represent the health care industry or health advocacy groups.

While states continue to adjust their rollout plans, as indicated above, the CDC has not released an updated industry map of essential workers since January.

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[14]Gabrielle Mannino, "Maine adopts age-based COVID-19 vaccine strategy, those age 60+ eligible starting next week," News Center Maine, February 27, 2021, https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/vaccine/maine-adopts-age-based-covid-19-vaccine-strategy-those-age-60-and-older-eligible-starting-next-week/97-21c10f19-52a5-4736-9123-9288f0a9b759

[15] Danielle Woodward, Grace Palmieri and Alison Steinbach, "Arizona just changed who can get the COVID-19 vaccine. We help answer your questions," AZCentral, March 2, 2021, https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona-health/2021/03/02/arizona-changed-who-can-get-covid-19-vaccine-we-answer-your-questions/6821350002/

[16]Beth Teitell, "Is it COVID… or just 'coronaphobia'? In a pandemic, it's easy to convince yourself you're sick," *The Boston Globe*, February 22, 2021, https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/02/22/metro/we-dont-have-any-good-answers-local-leaders-frustrated-with-bakers-decision-stop-sending-doses-local-vaccination-sites/
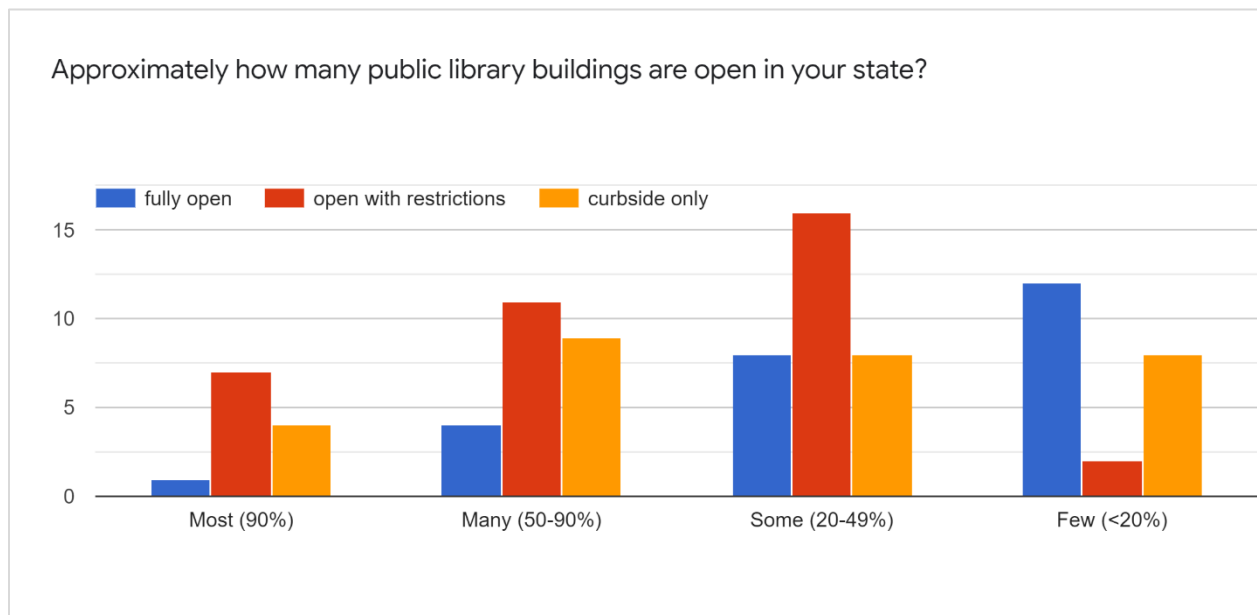
[17] Elaine S. Povich, "Interest Groups Lobby to Get Ahead in Vaccine Line," PEW Stateline, January 14, 2021, [https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/01/14/interest-groups-lobby-to-get-ahead-in-vaccine-line

Survey of State Associations

The Vaccine Working Group distributed a survey to all 50 states and the District of Columbia via the ALA chapters, receiving 41 responses. It is important to note that these survey responses reflect a snapshot in time (responses were collected February 8-March 2) and that some responses might change over time. Highlights of the findings are shared here. You can view the full survey and anonymized responses [here](#).
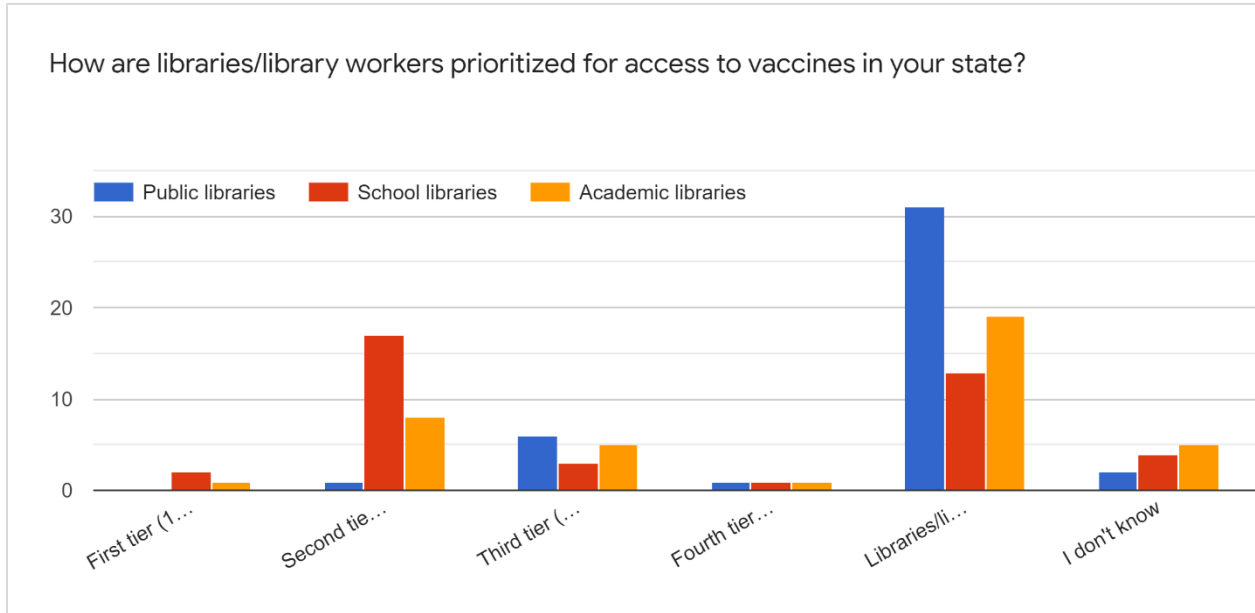
Only two out of 41 respondents said that "most" (>90%) public library buildings are fully open, with the majority of states indicating that library buildings are open with restrictions or for curbside service.
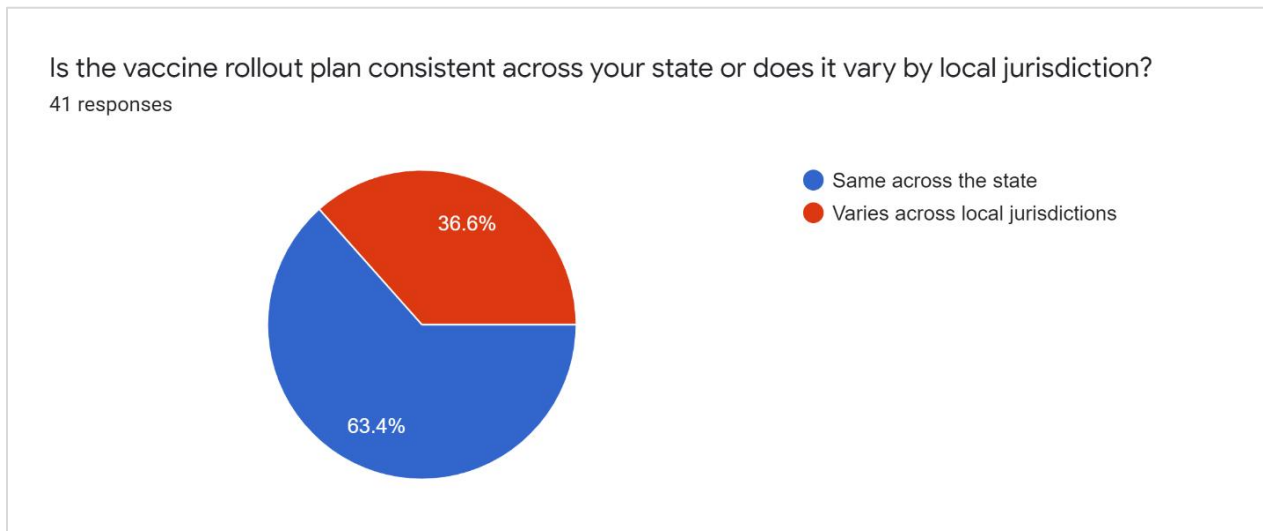
Figure 1-Public Library Building Status

Three quarters of states responded that libraries/library workers are not specified in state vaccine rollout plans.
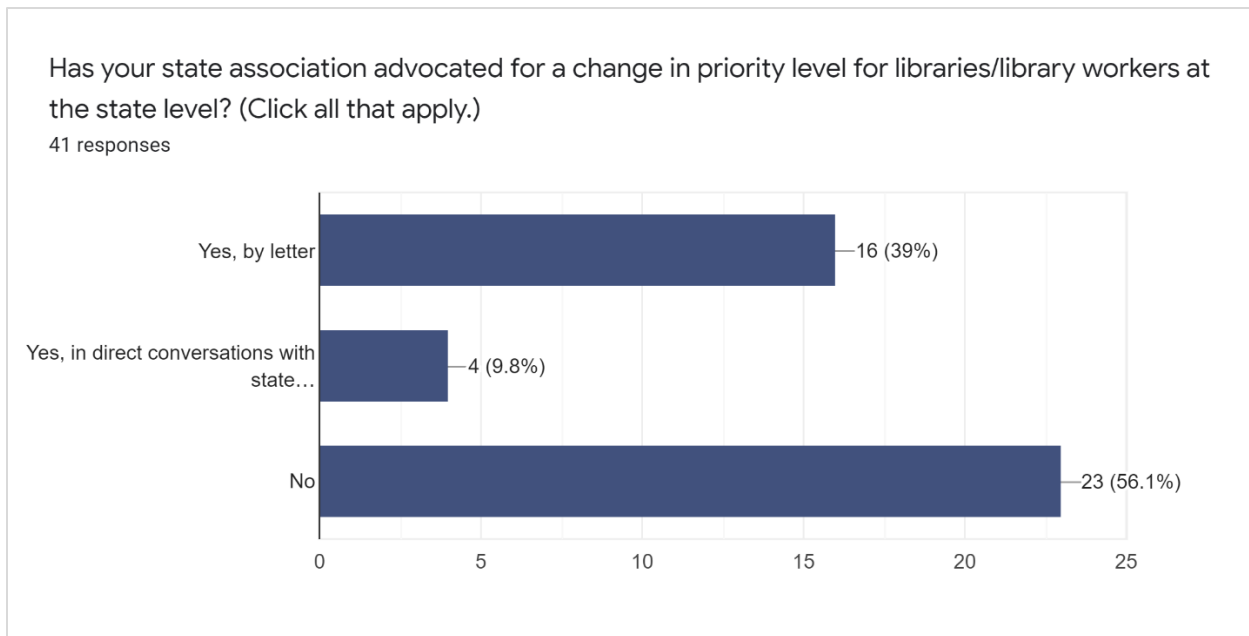
Figure 2-State Vaccine Prioritization

In addition, 37% of respondents indicated that vaccine rollout plans varied across jurisdictions in their states.

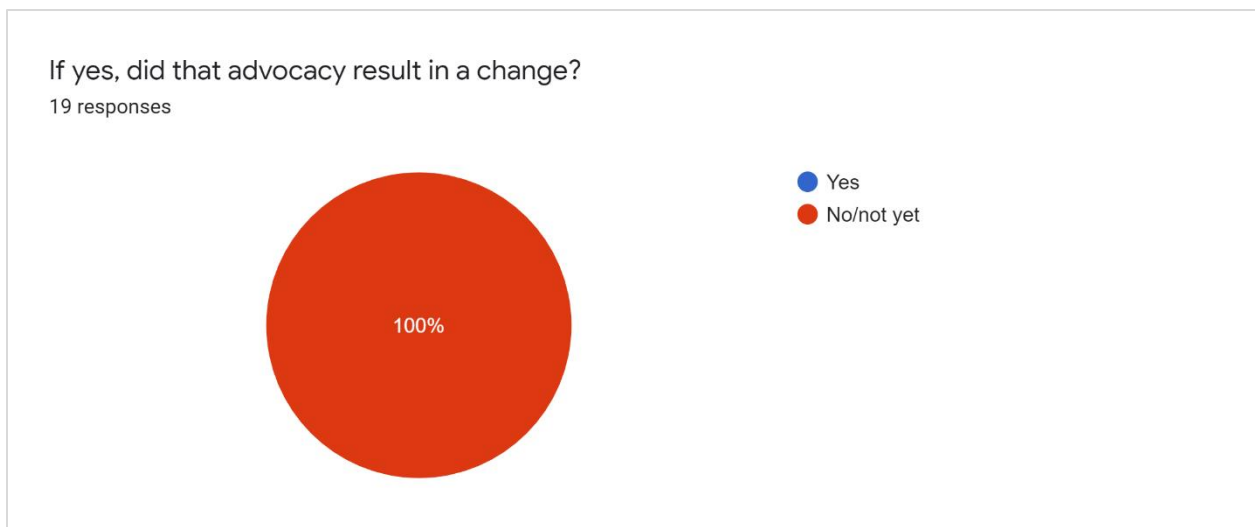*Figure 3-Vaccine Prioritization Consistency*

Fewer than half of responding state associations have advocated for a change in priority level for libraries/library workers. Of the 19 states that did advocate for a change in priority level, four (10%) did so through direct conversation with state officials. One of those four states reported: "We have been working with the Governor's Office and the Department of Health by participating in one of their weekly Vaccine Team Meetings. The state is taking a scientific approach to distributing our extremely limited number of vaccines by focusing on medical workers, seniors where we have the most deaths and now K-12 employees so that schools can reopen. While the Governor has not decided who will be in group 1c yet, that is the group where we are advocating for public library employees."
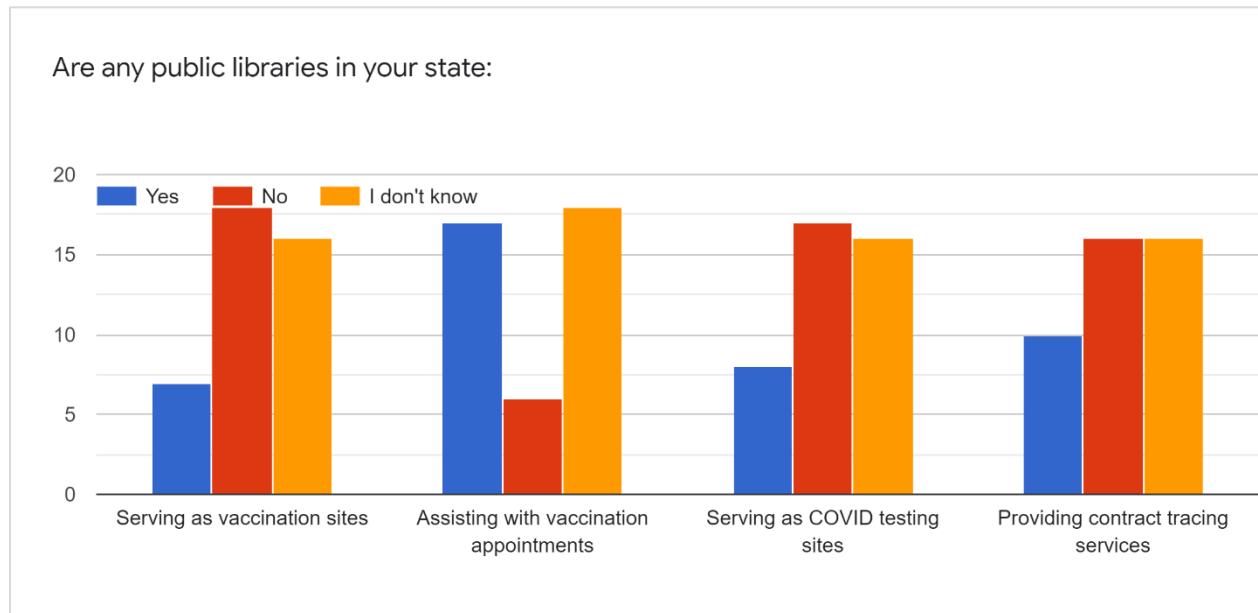
Figure 4-State Advocacy

Of those that responded affirmatively, none report a change in prioritization category at the state level at the time of their response.

Figure 5-State Advocacy Impact

Many libraries have worked closely with local health agencies throughout the pandemic, with 41% reporting that some libraries offer vaccine registration assistance, and about one quarter reporting that some libraries have assisted with contract tracing services.

Figure 6-Libraries and COVID Assistance

Are any public libraries in your state:

Library Contexts

In addition to the state survey, the working group reviewed news stories and spoke with individual librarians as well as some state leaders. With responses reflecting diverse approaches to vaccine rollout support and advocacy, these individual stories reinforced the wide-ranging feedback received from the surveys. Some states and specific libraries have concentrated advocacy efforts on ensuring that libraries are included in early vaccine eligibility tiers. Many libraries and states have emphasized leveraging the trusted role of libraries in providing communities with accurate information about the vaccine, as well as information about how to sign up. Some states and locations have done both.

State efforts

Illinois

In Illinois, rollout plans are released phase by phase; to date, detail about eligibility is only released through phase 1b. School libraries are included with K-12 educators. Academic institutions and public libraries are not included. Illinois Library Association submitted a request to the Illinois Department of Public Health to include libraries in phase 1b, without response, and it encouraged libraries to reach out

to county health departments, providing a template letter and noting that "individual counties are handling eligibility for librarians differently."[18]

As of February 26, library workers are eligible for the vaccine in phase 1b in six counties (Douglas, Edgar, Franklin-Williamson, Piatt, Rock Island, and Sangamon). Some libraries in these counties reported using the ILA template to contact local health department officials. Despite being singled out as critical to city operations, workers in Illinois largest system, Chicago Public Library, are not included in phase 1b; it is anticipated that they will be included in phase 1c.[19]

Service levels vary across the state. "We do want to be careful with the state-level advocacy, because if we as an association came out and said, 'Libraries are essential, and therefore we need the vaccine,' we run the risk of being told by the state that all libraries in the state must be fully open," ILA Executive Director Diane Foote told *Library Journal* in February—and not all libraries in Illinois are ready to open for in-person services now."[20]

New Hampshire

New Hampshire's vaccine allocation plan, published on January 16, 2021, is primarily age-based with two exceptions: first responders are in phase 1a and K-12 teachers are in phase 2a.[21] This last phase allocation for teachers is different from CDC recommendations, which places K-12 teachers in phase 1b. NEA-NH lobbied unsuccessfully to have teachers moved from phase 2 to phase 1. Library workers are not mentioned specifically in the state's vaccination allocation plan.

New Hampshire Library Association voted on February 9, 2021 not to send a letter to the Governor or Department of Health and Human Services asking for library workers to be specifically mentioned in any

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[18] Gaby Galvin ,"As States Prioritize Who Gets COVID-19 Vaccines, Essential Worker Groups, Businesses Make Their Case," Morning Consult, December 9, 2020, https://morningconsult.com/2020/12/09/covid-19-vaccines-states-distribution-prioritization/ https://morningconsult.com/2020/12/09/covid-19-vaccines-states-distribution-prioritization/

[19] Justin Laurence, "Aldermen push for librarians to be vaccinated soon, but city's top doc says that'd slow rollout for seniors," Block Club Chicago, February 9, 2021, https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/02/09/aldermen-push-for-librarians-to-be-vaccinated-soon-but-citys-top-doc-says-thatd-slow-rollout-for-seniors/

[20] Lisa Peet, "Library Associations, Agencies, Workers Advocate for Early Vaccination Priority," *Library Journal*, February 9, 2021, https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=library-associations-agencies-workers-advocate-for-early-vaccination-priority

[21] New Hampshire COVID-19 Vaccination Allocation Plan Summary," NH Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control, January 16, 2021, https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid19-vaccine-allocation-plan-summary.pdf

phase of the state's vaccination plan. A member survey that discussed this vote and asked for feedback found that a majority of survey respondents agreed with the Association's executive board decision. One librarian wrote, "Library workers who fall into the categories of priority by age or a qualifying condition should receive the vaccine. Others should not. Many (though not all) library employees did not work outside their homes for a period of months while the Stay-at-Home Orders were in effect. I think that those who did and continue to work on the front lines of service and care throughout all phases of the pandemic should receive vaccine priority before librarians."

Local efforts

Alaska: Juneau Public Library

Neither the Alaska Library Association nor the Juneau Public Library has advocated for a change in prioritization for library workers.

Juneau Public Library Director Robert Barr leads the city and borough's vaccine planning and operational efforts, including mass vaccination clinics, which are a partnership between the library, state public health department, and local hospital. Based on state eligibility guidelines, the library assists with local allocation of vaccines and provides interpretation when the state eligibility guidance needs it. The library has been very successful at getting the vaccines into people's arms quickly, while sticking within the state's eligibility tiers.

Most frontline library staff in Alaska became eligible during the week of February 22 when the state determined that people who work in systems that provide services to people who live in congregate settings (e.g. shelters) are themselves eligible. Those library staff who regularly provide direct public service are included in this designation.

Nebraska: University of Nebraska-Lincoln

In Nebraska, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) developed a partnership with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD), making a COVID vaccination registry available for UNL employees living or working in Lancaster County. All UNL employees including library student employees will be vaccinated in phase 1b as part of the education sector.[22]

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[22] "Covid vaccine registry," University of New Hampshire - Lincoln, Office of the Chancellor, February 16, 2021, https://www.unl.edu/chancellor/covid-vaccination-registry

Findings

Responses to the survey, and states' approaches to vaccines for library workers, are varied. While one state indicated that they "appreciate the language in the resolution, advocating for phase 1b vaccination for library staff who work in buildings that the public are also using," another responded that the state association determined "that a template for library workers to advocate for themselves to their local health department/elected official would be more effective than a letter from the [state] association." Another state that opted not to advocate for 1b prioritization noted, "Our members have discussed how if we are really about science and evidence-based practices, then why wouldn't we respect the data from the state's eligibility and ethics committees?"

More than one state emphasized the desire to leave facility reopening decisions in the hands of local libraries. Some felt that lobbying for designation as an "essential frontline industry (1b)," rather than an "other essential industry (1c)," would force some libraries to fully reopen their facilities before the staff and trustees were prepared to do so.

Inaccurate information, magnified on social media and in the press,[23] about CDC's prioritization schedule for essential workers has added to the confusion for many state associations and individual library workers, exacerbated by a lack of clear and consistent vaccine implementation strategy across national, state, and local levels. CDC includes libraries in its priority phase 1c industry map. Still, CISA recognizes that the industry mapping would need to be paired with analysis at the local jurisdiction: "Although workers' status as essential under the CISA guidance is most readily determined by the industry in which they work, their exposure risk may be largely determined by their occupation. Because the most efficient vaccination allocation strategy will take both essentiality and risk into account, jurisdictions should, where feasible, make efforts to prioritize workers in occupations characterized by the inability to work remotely and the need to work in close proximity to others within the below industries." This working group reasserts ALA's recommendation that "library workers who are at heightened risk for exposure to COVID-19, such as those providing in-person services, be prioritized for access to vaccinations." Based on information gathered by this working group, that determination cannot be made for libraries uniformly.

ALA's federal [advocacy priorities](#) are reviewed and approved annually by the Committee on Legislation (COL), and shared with the Committee on Library Advocacy (COLA), Chapter Relations Committee (CRC), and ALA Council. It is imperative that ALA advocacy efforts be focused on issues where library representation is necessary, such as federal funding for libraries, broadband, copyright and government

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[23] For example, in a Newsweek op-Ed, the author wrote "the CDC failed to name librarians and library workers specifically in their vaccine guidance." This is incorrect: the CDC mapped industries, not workers, and includes libraries in priority category 1c. John Chrastka, "Libraries Are an Essential Service. Give Librarians the Vaccine Now," Newsweek, February 26, 2021, https://www.newsweek.com/libraries-are-essential-service-give-librarians-vaccine-now-opinion-1572082

information. These are library-centered issues that involve federal action, where ALA must lead and where federal advocacy can make a difference. This has been an exceptional year and PPA staff and COL are in frequent communication about focusing limited resources in a way that is most effective for ALA members and for libraries of all types, across the country.

Strong working relationships with state and local elected officials are critical, and ALA is committed to honoring and supporting those strong relationships that state associations have cultivated.

Conclusion

The Vaccine Working Group members strongly support the importance of library workers being vaccinated. The working group believes that an ALA statement asking the CDC to include library workers in vaccine phase 1b will have unintentional and potentially adverse consequences on state and local advocacy efforts in the future. It is the choice of the state chapter whether to invoke the existing federal phase 1c designation and/or pursue a change in state/local vaccination priorities given their specific knowledge about those vaccination plans, phases, and the local political climate.

It is clear from the chapter survey results that the desire and ability to prioritize library workers for the vaccine varies dramatically not just by state, but by locality within states. Given this advocacy environment, a local/state approach is best, and fits within the protocol created by ALA leadership in 2008 to provide assistance only with the permission of and in coordination with the state chapter.

Last, the legislative priorities approved by the Committee on Legislation, which directs the activities and allocation of resources of the ALA Public Policy & Advocacy office, reflect the current top advocacy priorities for our profession. It is not only good practice, but sound management, to continue to be responsive to issues as they arise and in a manner that takes into account the effective allocation of resources to promote ongoing development of key relationships in federal agencies, as well as Congress, in support of current designated legislative priorities.

Respectfully submitted: March 12, 2021

by the ALA Vaccine Working Group

ALA Vaccine Working Group Members

On behalf of the Chapter Relations Committee
Amy Lappin, Chair
Brianna Hoffman
Michael Dowling, Staff Liaison

On behalf of the Committee on Legislation
Joseph Thompson, Chair
Lori Fisher
Carrie Russell, Staff Liaison

On behalf of the Committee on Library Advocacy
Justin de la Cruz, Chair
Cindy Bhatti
Megan Cusick, Staff Liaison

⫿⫿⫿⫿R A I L S

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report
Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: __Pinnacle Library Cooperative__

Date of report: __February 19, 2021__

Time period covered by this report:

[✓] July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

[ ] January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: __Matt Hammermeister__

Title: __ILS Manager__

Email: __mhammermeister@pinnaclelibraries.org__

Phone number: __(815) 552-4277__

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to *anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.*

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

As with past grant funding, FY2021 LLSAP Support Grant funds are being deposited into the Pinnacle Library Cooperative reserve fund. The reserve fund currently serves two purposes.

(1) Funds were initially set aside to help offset the cost of paying for an eventual ILS upgrade. Our ILS vendor will be launching a next-generation product over the next several years and has indicated that there will be costs for each module. The grant funding will help alleviate some of those costs.

(2) The reserve fund has also been used in the past to pay the first-year costs of new group purchases. In the past this has included services like MyLibraryRewards and an Online Book Club. Most recently, we've added the magazine module to our OverDrive platform. For all of these services, the first-year costs were paid using Support Grant funding.

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

This fall, Pinnacle hired a second staff member! The Member Services Librarian is focusing on expanding our training resources for member libraries.

In November, Pinnacle upgraded the ILS to the latest version. The new upgrade contains several new features for the web-based version of the ILS.

Pinnacle was also invited to participate Innovative's development partner program for the next generation discovery solution. Throughout the next 18 months, Pinnacle libraries will be testing the new software and providing feedback to Innovative about its use with consortia.

This fall, many of our libraries partnered with local school districts to provide library cards to all students in their district, including 15,185 students in the Valley View school district. Using school registration data, Pinnacle batch-created library accounts in the ILS. The cooperative has also enabled "Sora" in its OverDrive collection, which allows nearby schools to access our digital collection.

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

(no in-kind services)

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

3 libraries participate - Fountaindale, Joliet, Plainfield.

No significant changes have been made.

Find More Illinois

No libraries participate.

Explore More Illinois

All six libraries participate.

No significant changes have been made.

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

No new projects in this period. The consortium continues to provide a testing environment for RAILS for the SimplyE platform.

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

Pinnacle appreciates RAILS' commitment to serving our consortium and member libraries. The Support Grant funding has given our consortium the ability to try new services and adopt new platforms quickly.

![RAILS - REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM logo]

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report

Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: __Cooperative Computer Services__

Date of report: __March 5, 2021__

Time period covered by this report:

[✓] July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

[ ] January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: __Rebecca Malinowski__

Title: __Executive Director__

Email: __rmalinowski@ccslib.org__

Phone number: __847-483-8604__

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

> RAILS funds were distributed to members as a quarterly rebate. This method helps keep CCS member fees stable year to year, while allowing members to directly benefit from the RAILS support. A sample memo is included with this report.
>
> CCS will reevaluate this use of funds during this budget planning cycle.

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

CCS joined the Innovative Partner Development Program for Vega Discover. The RAILS support grant has indirectly supported this partnership as CCS will be able to cover years 1-3 of the subscription from our existing Development Fund. As Innovative partners, we are looking forward to advocating for consortia needs and features that facilitate resource sharing.

During the reporting period, CCS's Long Range Planning Committee worked on a new strategic plan, which was approved in January 2021. The plan is available at http://www.ccslib.org/governance

Services and policies were continuously reviewed as part of our ongoing response to COVID-19, with a focus on being flexible and responsive as member needs changed. No significant changes were made to policy. We continued to build out training.ccslib.org and reinstated synchronous group training, but in a virtual environment.

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

N/A

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

> Yes - nothing to report

Find More Illinois

> No

Explore More Illinois

> Yes - nothing to report

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

> CCS supports libraries participating in the following group purchases:
> Communico
> Gale Analytics
> OpenGov
> Patron Point
> Support includes automating delivery of ILS reports where SIP/API interoperability are not sufficient.

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

RAILS

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report
Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: __PrairieCat__

Date of report: __2/11/2021__

Time period covered by this report:

[✓] July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

[ ] January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: __Carolyn Coulter__

Title: __director__

Email: __carolyn.coulter@railslibraries.info__

Phone number: __630.734.5234__

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

> RAILS grant funds are incorporated in to our annual budget as a revenue. In FY21, RAILS grant funds accounted for approximately 30% of our overall revenues, the rest made up of member fees. As you can see from the attached budget information, these funds are applied to our operating expenses, which cover the operation and maintenance of our systems, staff, and associated costs.

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

During the period covered by this report, PrairieCat was faced-like all institutions-with challenges brought about by the global pandemic. During this time, we attempted to support our members as they faced the changes that were thrust upon them. We made numerous changes to system configurations and procedures in order to facilitate the openings, closings, and changes to service that our membership were dealing with. We held several online "member updates" to pass along information and gather feedback during these times. Our staff worked closely with our vendors to change our configurations multiple times in reaction to needs.

This year, our annual PUG Day conference was cancelled, so we moved the sessions online. We held numerous sessions over the course of several weeks, and they were very well attended. We will be offering a similar online conference in FY22.

While this was our day-to-day reality, we also worked to bring our new mobile application up to participating members. This project, which was underway when the pandemic struck, is an opt-in service that we are now providing for those members who wish to purchase it. As more of our libraries began offering curbside services, our vendor (Capira) developed a curbside application that our members could also purchase. Several implemented this as well.

We saw expanded needs for self check services during this time, and an expanded emphasis ⊞

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

As mentioned above, we have moved our test environment out of the RAILS datacenter, and are in the process of moving off of RAILS web servers. When this is completed, we will have less of a footprint in the datacenter, and will then prepare to move forward with more movement toward independence in this regard. We continue to leverage RAILS online ticketing system, helpdesk, and end user devices, which are much appreciated. Indeed, as we have moved away from in-office work and toward remote work for all of our staff, the online services and support provided by RAILS have proved invaluable to our staff. Our staff are for the most part only visiting the offices at Coal Valley and Bolingbrook on an occasional basis, doing most of our work from home via VPN. The support that RAILS provides us to facilitate our work is very much appreciated. It is assumed that our presence in the RAILS facilities will increase in the coming fiscal year, as the vaccines become more available.

As always, the financial services that we are provided by RAILS have been outstanding. As mentioned above, we have worked this year to re-join IMRF, and the support and expertise of RAILS finance staff has been invaluable to us during this process. Our accountant, Sharon Swanson, provides us with excellent support and goes above and beyond in service to our members.

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

> Some of our members subscribe, however this is not mandated by PrairieCat. Members deal with billing and service needs directly with RAILS.

Find More Illinois

> Some of our members subscribe, however this is not mandated by PrairieCat. Members deal with billing and service needs directly with RAILS.

Explore More Illinois

> Some of our members subscribe, however this is not mandated by PrairieCat. Members deal with billing and service needs directly with RAILS.

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

> PrairieCat is very appreciative of all that RAILS does for us, in all regards. We thank the administration, staff and board members of RAILS for supporting us and helping us serve our membership and their patrons. We would be hard pressed to do so without the support provided by RAILS.

RAILS

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report
Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: **Rock River Library Consortium (RRLC)**

Date of report: **February 18, 2021**

Time period covered by this report:

☑ July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

☐ January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: **Jennifer Slaney**

Title: **Director**

Email: **Jennifer.Slaney@SterlingPublicLibrary.org**

Phone number: **815-625-1370**

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

> A portion of the funds were used to help offsite the annual cost of our yearly agreement with The Library Corportation. Funds were also used to pay for The Library Corporations Annual meeting/conference.

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

The recent pandamic changed the way we do business as a consortium. The schools decided to limit their material to their students only were the public libraries were exchanging material. All libraries quarantined their materials before and after receiving from patrons and RAILS delivery.

A majority of the members attend The Library Corporations online conference. We all came away with new ideas and understanding of the product

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

> Dixon, Milledgeville, Rock Falls and Sterling Public Libraries, Sterling and Rock Falls High School

Find More Illinois

> Dixon, Milledgeville, Rock Falls and Sterling Public Libraries, Sterling and Rock Falls High School

Explore More Illinois

> Dixon, Milledgeville and Sterling Public Libraries

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

> Very appreciative of the support will receive from RAILS either monetarily to the consortium or through training, expertise or delivery.

RAILS

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report
Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: ___SWAN___

Date of report: ___2/11/2021___

Time period covered by this report:

[✓] July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

[ ] January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: __Aaron Skog__

Title: __Executive Director__

Email: __aaron@swanlibraries.net__

Phone number: __630-326-7022__

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to
anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

LLSAP funding to SWAN is directly used for all public member libraries to lower the annual membership fee. Each public library in SWAN receives an equal amount based on the equal distribution of the LLSAP fund award. For FY21, each public library in SWAN was awarded $6,109 against their membership fees.

SWAN's FY21 membership fee chart:
https://support.swanlibraries.net/system/files/Public/202003/SWAN_FY21_Fees.pdf

Explanation of SWAN membership fees for our multi-type consortium:
https://support.swanlibraries.net/about/budget

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

> SWAN provides a library services platform (LSP) to all member libraries which includes a shared ILS for resource sharing, and a e-content platform for all member libraries to provide a single search interface for physical material, eBooks, eAudio, eStreaming, and subscription e-content from EBSCO, Gale, and other vendors. The public catalog discovery platform is being evaluated for replacement with the Aspen Discovery web-based platform.
> https://support.swanlibraries.net/aspen
>
> SWAN provided a PPE purchasing program for libraries for the April - August months; we acquired masks, sanitizer, face shields, and gloves in bulk and sold those back to libraries at-cost in smaller quantities. SWAN provided at no additional cost to libraries the Unique Management Services mobile app Curbside Communicator as a tool to chat online with library patrons.
>
> The addition of three standalone public library districts Glenside, Roselle, and Warrenville was completed December 9, 2020. These three libraries brings SWAN's total membership to 100 libraries, capping a period of 25 libraries joining during the past 5 years.

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

> Website Hosting: the membership support site is hosted and serviced by RAILS, along with three email lists for membership communication. This system will be moved to a new SWAN provide platform before June 30, 2021.
>
> ILS Phone Notification Dialer Co-Location: SWAN provides a unified patron notification for phone, email, and text to all member libraries. The phone dialer is located in RAILS Burr Ridge datacenter, which has been in use since 2015. This system will be moved to a new SWAN provided platform before June 30, 2021.
>
> Help Desk Ticket System: SWAN provides access to the RAILS hosted OTRS system integrated with L2 for an easy to use single-sign-on for member library staff to ask questions, report issues, or request services. This system will be moved to a new SWAN provided platform before June 30, 2021.
>
> Delivery to SWAN Headquarters: SWAN receives delivery at its headquarters to correct mislabeled member library material destined for other locations.

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

46 libraries within SWAN's 100 library membership participate in eRead Illinois. This eBook platform is integrated within SWAN's catalog and is maintained by SWAN staff centrally.

Find More Illinois

SWAN established a secure HTTPS connection using SAML based authentication as part of the OpenAthens e-content access within SWAN's LSP. Frankfort Public Library District is the only participating library.

Explore More Illinois

SWAN established a secure HTTPS connection to the EMI service in July 2019. EMI was mostly inactive due to the pandemic so the number of libraries participating is not certain, but the prior year had 75 libraries that are also SWAN members.

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

RAILS group-purchases and deals offered have required SWAN to provide consultation, setup, and ongoing maintenance within SWAN's LSP for EBSCO group-purchase database packages, RBdigital Unlimited Audiobooks, RDA Toolkit, BiblioBoard, collectionHQ, Communico, Gale Analytics on Demand, OCLC WebDewey, Patron Point, and TeamSoftware Solutions Public Web Browser.

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

RAILS

REACHING ACROSS ILLINOIS LIBRARY SYSTEM

RAILS LLSAP Support Grant: Semiannual Report
Due on January 31 and July 31

LLSAP name: RSA NFP

Date of report: February 11, 2021

Time period covered by this report:

   X July 1 to December 31   *Report due January 31*

   ☐ January 1 to June 30   *Report due July 31*

LLSAP staff member or representative preparing report

Name: Kendal Orrison

Title: RSA NFP LLSAP Services Manager / RSA Executive Director

Email: kendal.orrison@railslibraries.info

Phone number: 630-734-5261

Submission: Submission of reports by email is preferred. Please email the report as an attachment to anne.slaughter@railslibraries.info.

1. Describe how RAILS grant funds were used. Attach any applicable supporting documents (such as LLSAP budget, memos, etc.) demonstrating the use of RAILS funds.

RAILS grant funds are included in RSA's budget in two ways, as a direct grant payment amount and as in-kind income for tax purposes. In-kind support costs are new for RSA in FY21 as RAILS transitioned to grants rather than contracts. Our Not for Profit status requires us to report both support types on our taxes. The direct payment is ~43% of RSA's income, the in-kind support adds a further ~10% income. Operationally, the direct grant payments cover RSA's current 12 FTE member support staff, all of whom are RAILS staff members. RSA may be the only consortia required to account for and report in-kind RAILS support. RSA had budgeted to increase our support staff to 15 FTE on July 1st, but the economic uncertainty caused RAILS and RSA to agree to hold off hiring those addition new staff for now. RSA did work with RAILS to fill a vacant position in late November with the start date in early January 2021. Without RAILS grant funds, it would be difficult for RSA to continue to support our 44 school libraries and 66 public libraries with service populations under 5,000. The fee increases required to cover the grant loss would price us out of the market for most of these members. FY21 Budget attached.

2. Please describe any significant LLSAP activities in the time period covered by the report, such as membership changes, new services or policies, ILS platform updates and changes, governance changes, etc.

RSA continues to work with our newer members: Williamsfield PL, Ransom Memorial PL, and Astoria PL. All are in the final phases of cataloging but Williamsfield and Ransom had stopped work completely to deal with COVID related issues. We will be training all 3 in early 2021 for circulation go-live. Stark County combined their Jr HS and HS libraries, then used the empty Jr HS branch to automate their Elementary school. The ES is live and circulating now. RSA will follow up to ensure everything in working for them as they 'went live' without telling us. ROWVA's HS library de-automated due to staffing issues; their are going to start automating their ES instead. Both of these school branch changes are no-cost swaps as RSA can do the work in-house. We await the inevitable changes in other schools as COVID continues...
Like all other consortia, RSA continued to tweak and change the system based on our individual member needs for COVID activities. We work with each library to configure the system to support their needs as closely as possible which has led to many, many system changes. Patron holds requests/filling remains at historically high levels as curbside continues to be the norm in most libraries. RSA converted several more libraries to fine free during this period as well. Most of our large libraries are now fine free.
RSA has updated every software offering in our system over the last 6 months.

3. If optional in-kind services are used, please list services and describe any significant activities related to them. If your needs regarding these services have changed or you anticipate them changing, please describe how. (In-kind services include datacenter, delivery services to LLSAP facility, financial services, help desk ticket system, use of RAILS facilities for LLSAP staff, consortium staffed by RAILS employees, use of RAILS vehicles, website, and ILS phone notification dialer co-location.)

RSA staff are still mostly working at home; we are targeting having 1 supervisor in the building daily starting Jan 2021. The remaining staff will return when RAILS allows it. Work from home has gone well and RAILS support has been very helpful making that work. However, there is a growing loss in team cohesion, intra-team communications, and overall productivity over time due to the isolation.
RSA will transition from the RAILS provided OTRS help desk to RSA funded Salesforce help desk in Jan 2021. We will continue to need OTRS for some time as the CMC has agreed to start processing the MARC record upgrade requests (4,000+) that have built up in there. RSA has obtained a forms replacement for the two RAILS hosted forms and will be live with them in April 2021. Once finished, RSA will have no hosting other than OTRS. Our use of the RAILS vehicles has been minimal due to work from home, but I expect increased use later in 2021 as we move back to working in the office and can visit libraries. RSA continues to review our options for staff independence from RAILS in the 2024-2026 time frame. An agreement with a local library or other consortia remain at the top of the list.

We changed auditors this year and the new company performed and incredibly detailed examination of all RSA/RAILS financial processes. As usual, Sharon Swanson, Jim Kregor, and the rest of the RAILS Finance staff emerged with zero issues noted! RAILS support for RSA operations continues to be excellent even during these difficult times.

4. For the RAILS services listed below, please indicate the ones in which any or all of your member libraries participate, and describe any significant activities, changes, or needs related to the services:

eRead Illinois

All 138 automated RSA libraries are members of eRead Illinois. Our public libraries report that patrons greatly prefer the OverDrive experience to the Axis360 experience and our system-wide circulation numbers reflect this.

Find More Illinois

RSA has 7 active and 1 inactive members of Find More IL member. We have one library in our service area that chose to join FMI rather than RSA due to pricing. That library is using z39.50 searches of RSA's collection to populate FMI.

Explore More Illinois

All RSA public libraries, which the exception of ~6, are setup to use EMI. I don't have usage statistics to know how often they are using it. Approximately 95% of RSA's public library patrons can authenticate and use EMI.

Any other RAILS projects and group purchases that require ILS interoperability

RSA provides SIP2 or Web Services patron authentication on request of our member libraries. If any RAILS products require authentication, RSA has or will make it work.

5. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns you would like to share with us? *(optional)*

Thank you for the continued support of RSA and the other LLSAPs inside RAILS. That support is what allows smaller public and most school libraries to be able to be members of consortia. Without your support I fear for these libraries falling backwards into a non-automated, non-holdable world.

As the budget picture becomes clearer, RSA would like to reexamine the possibility of adding at least one of the three on hold staff positions. We would target the area of greatest need for internal staffing pressure and member library requests. The RSA Board has set aside $90,000 in FY22 funds for contract consulting or part time help for specific tasks, but this wouldn't replace the need for the additional FTE positions.